

Appendix with external contributions to Sweden's national reform programme **2015**

Europe 2020 – the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth



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contributions to Sweden's national
reform programme
2015**

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1. Contributions from social partners

Introduction

The central labour market organisations in Sweden – the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco), the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and the Swedish Agency for Government Employers – give the following examples of activities that we believe contribute to the fulfilment of the targets for the Europe 2020 strategy.

The examples do not give a comprehensive account but a selection. Some of them are based on common agreements with all the organisations; others are agreed between some of the organisations. Other examples are unilateral measures by one of the central labour market organisations and/or their affiliates.

A brief description of wage formation in Sweden

The social partners are responsible for wage formation on the Swedish labour market and they safeguard their autonomy as a party. The fundamental components of the model include trade unions with a high organisation rate, employer organisations with a broad membership, the strong status of collective agreements, workplace representatives with a mandate to negotiate, as well as the independence of the social partners from central government.

Among other things, independence is manifested in the fact that the majority of the labour market is regulated by a number of principal agreements met at central level between employers and trade unions that regulate aspects including negotiation procedures, dispute procedures and development issues. At present there are more than 650 central collective agreements on wages and general terms and conditions of employment in Sweden.

Examples of the partners' activities that contribute to fulfilment of Europe 2020 targets

1. Employment – 80 % of women and men aged 20-64 are to be in work

1.1. Integration of young people in the labour market

Vocational introduction agreements

In autumn 2011 the Government initiated tripartite talks with the social partners. The purpose was to find solutions to identified problems in the labour market such as high unemployment. The tripartite talks were conducted with the central social partner organisations and since January 2013 with contracting parties at industry level.

Vocational introduction employments are based on collective agreements signed independently between the social partners. The target group for the agreements

is young people with no relevant job experience. The construction of the agreements varies between industries but common to all of them is that work is combined with education (the education component is restricted to a maximum of 25 per cent of working hours). The education can be either at the workplace or supplied by an external provider. The education period does not give any wage entitlement.

Central agreements on vocational introduction have been signed in the following industries: Retail sector (Swedish Trade Federation and the Swedish Commercial Employees' Union), municipal sector (SALAR/Pacta and the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union), sawmill industry (Swedish Forest Industries Association and GS Swedish Union of Forestry, Wood and Graphical Workers), parts of the manufacturing industry (Engineering companies' employer organisation/IKEM/Svemek/GAF/Steel and Metal Employers Association and IF Metall) and the property industry (Almega Service Associations property employers and the Building Maintenance Workers' Union). More industries are discussing development of agreements with the Government, with the exception of the Building Workers' Union and the Transport Workers' Union.

The municipal sector (SALAR/Pacta and the Municipal Workers' Union) has also signed an agreement (BAL13) aimed at unemployed young people aged 19-25 with no previous experience of the industry. This is a temporary job format and the employee is employed for a period of one year.

The Government supports the parties' signing of vocational introduction agreements through support structures for the agreements:

- Wage subsidy equivalent to an ordinary employer's contribution (31.42 per cent)
- Supervisor support equivalent to SEK 2 500 per month and employee
- National support structure for educational content

Student employees

In 2014 a collective agreement on "student employees" was signed in the private, municipal and central government sectors. The private sector agreement refers to the property industry. The agreements vary but target students in universities, other higher education institutions or post-secondary education and refer to qualified work for a limited period, for a maximum of 10-15 hours on average per week. For the employees the agreement provides an opportunity to work on qualified tasks with a clear link to their ongoing studies, as well as facilitating the transition from studies to working life. The employers gain the opportunity to utilise the competence of students in tertiary education while at the same time having the chance to show their business to be able to attract a competent workforce. Within the central government agreement area the Swedish Agency for Government Employers has agreed with Saco-S and OFR/S,P,O (Public Employees Negotiation Council/government employees, police, officers) on an *Agreement on conditions for fixed term employment as a student employee*. The

agreement allows new grounds for time limits, called student employee contracts and regulates terms of employment for these contracts. The agreement can be applied to temporary employment of full-time students with at least one year's completed study at university or other higher education institution for a maximum of four terms if equivalent to a maximum of 25 per cent of a full time position. In the opinion of the parties the possibility of combining theoretical studies with practical work experience facilitates the transition between studies and working life while contributing up to date knowledge to the operations concerned. Through the agreement central government operations can also facilitate future recruitment of fully qualified academics. For the students a student employee contract can facilitate the transition from studies to working life. According to the parties, doing qualified work with a clear link to ongoing studies is intended to improve quality of studies while allowing the student employee to put theoretical knowledge into practice, thus contributing to the development and performance of central government operations. A student employee position is filled on the basis of the regulations applicable to other government appointments. These regulations entail in brief that only objective grounds such as merit and competence should be given weight when making appointments and that all employment decisions can be appealed.

SALAR/Pacta and the Alliance of Graduates, (16 Saco affiliates) and the General Local Government Operations (Vision, Union for Professionals, the Swedish Union for Performing Arts and Film and Ledarna) signed a Student Employee agreement in mid-December 2014, applicable from 1 January 2015. The agreement allows students at universities, higher education institutions and in post-upper secondary education to combine studies with more qualified extra work in the area of study. The agreement makes it possible to work on average 15 hours per week during the study term. The employment is time limited by term with the possibility of one month's mutual period of notice. The employer is to designate a mentor as a resource for the student employee during the employment. The pay is to be individual and differentiated.

Youth to Work

Youth to work is one of SALAR's priorities also in 2015 and the focus will be on increasing young people's chances of entering the labour market. Work is partly carried out through *the Sweden's Most Important Jobs communications initiative* to encourage young people to choose paths that lead to jobs, with the aim of recruiting people to the welfare sector.

Work within the priority issue will be based on three different indicators, which influence the chances of young people becoming established in the labour market in different ways.

- Municipalities' work with holiday jobs
- Development of the Plug In project
- Implementing and spreading vocational introduction employments

A register study being processed by SALAR shows that young people who worked while at upper secondary school have greater chances of being in work after completing upper secondary school. In a report the Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU) has shown that young people who worked while studying or during their holidays in an industry linked to the programme they were studying, have considerably greater chances of being in work compared with young people who had jobs not connected to their education or who did not work while in upper secondary school.

In 2014 the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions arranged about 82 000 holiday jobs for young people who are to start or study at upper secondary school. These holiday jobs are the first contact with the labour market for many young people and provide valuable experiences and references for the future. SALAR would now like to develop the holiday jobs so that more young people can have the opportunity of a holiday job and more employers can contribute while themselves gaining an opportunity to market themselves and their industry. This work includes SALAR's initiative *Sweden's most important jobs* in which holiday jobs are a way of marketing jobs in municipalities and county councils/regions.

During the year the work of highlighting the vocational introduction agreements as a possibility for municipalities to recruit and at the same time train young people who are interested in working in the municipal sector.

Guidance for young people

The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations publishes three books annually that mainly target pupils who will soon complete their upper secondary school studies: fact book about some 160 higher education professions *Choose a profession*. There is information on work content, required training, salary levels etc. The report *Future prospects* contains five-year forecasts for the labour market for a selection of about 60 higher education professions. *The art of choosing an education* provides tips and study choice inspiration. The publications can be ordered free of charge from www.saco.se/studieval, where it is also possible to do a personality test, receive planning support and ask questions relating to occupations. The site had about 2 million page views in 2014.

Saco Student Fairs are arranged every year in Stockholm and Malmö. Representatives from Swedish and international education providers, future employers and several agencies and organisations, including Saco's member organisations, are represented at these fairs, so that the students can be in contact with them during their studies. In 2014 the fairs were visited by just over a quarter of all final year upper secondary pupils in Sweden. Saco also runs skill development programmes for study advisers.

Cooperation and quality assurance

It is crucial that upper secondary school maintains high quality and relevance to enable pupils to get their first job or make a good transition to further study.

For companies skills provision is one of the very greatest challenges. Consequently many industries are highly involved in various projects aimed at increasing the quality and relevance of upper secondary schooling.

An example of this is the involvement in technical colleges (Teknikcollege) that leading representatives of Swedish employer and employee organisations in the industrial sector have had since 2004. At present there are 26 regions with almost 150 Teknikcollege certified education providers and more than 2 000 participating companies from north to south. Within the construction industry it is possible for upper secondary schools offering the construction and civil engineering programme to apply for quality labelling. Schools that meet the criteria are regarded as being in a position to provide basic vocational education and training that fulfils the requirements of the construction industry and become industry recommended. There are similar arrangements in HVAC with the concept “first class school”.

1.2. Integration of foreign-born people in the labour market

The Council for Integration in Working Life against xenophobia and racism

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, SALAR, the Swedish Agency for Government Employers, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco) together run the Council for Integration in Working Life. A conference in October 2013 gathered representatives of local parties to a discussion with the Council and the Swedish Minister for Integration on “*The Swedish Model and Integration. Xenophobia and racism must be opposed*”. At the same time a joint article on the same theme was published. The main message is that xenophobia and racism not only violate the individual and are indefensible from the point of view of human compassion; they also create anxiety and strains in society and impair well-being, profitability and efficiency at the workplace. The Swedish model of divided responsibility between the social partners and the State is a strength in this context. It has emerged because it allows forms for effective solution of problems and challenges in working life.

The Omstart (Re-start) web portal

Omstart, www.saco.se/omstart, is a web portal for immigrant academics. The web portal has been further developed in 2014 and adapted for different types of mobile screens. Omstart and Saco’s integration work have been presented on various occasions during the year, including at the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations’ student fair in Malmö, to various decision-makers and schools as well as at the labour market training programme *The short route* in Jönköping and in Stockholm.

Recruitment Bazaar

The Bazaar is a fair at Stockholm’s cultural centre that attracts about 70 exhibitors and 10 000 visitors every year. Saco has participated in the working group that arranges the Bazaar, led by the County Administrative Board in

Stockholm. The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations and a number of Saco affiliates participate in the Bazaar with stands providing information on education and the labour market for academics, as well as arranging some 70 training interviews for those who want to try out a job interview.

Mentoring programmes and introduction guides

Several Saco associations have mentoring programmes for newly arrived academics. In the programmes a newly arrived academic will be paired with a colleague in the same profession. The objective is for the immigrant academic to expand his or her professional network and gain improved self-confidence in his or her career efforts.

1.3. Integration of individuals with a weak foothold in the ordinary labour market

Special conditional agreement in central government for certain fixed term employment contracts signed by the employer within the framework of labour market policy objectives

In the central government sector a special conditional agreement for some fixed term employment contracts has existed since 2013. The agreement regulates terms of employment for contracts of a maximum of 12 months, which the employer considers justified within the framework of a labour market policy objective. The agreement conditions have been formulated to give the employer, when deciding on such employment contracts, greater opportunities to design the job to suit the individual employee's needs as regards support, development and experience. Through the agreement the parties accept joint responsibility for providing relevant terms of employment for the employees the agreement may apply to. Individuals can thus gain working life experience and increased employability.

1.4. Gender equality in the labour market

Gender mainstreaming

SALAR is one of the initiators of the web portal Jämställ.nu. The portal is a national resource for gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The portal has facts and news about gender equality, practical examples and concrete tools for gender mainstreaming. Jämställ.nu was launched in December 2009 and is currently operated as a unique cooperation initiative between the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, the County Administrative Boards, the Swedish ESF Council, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and VINNOVA.

Jämställ.nu was financed in 2011–2013 through funds from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions programme for sustainable gender equality (HåJ). As of 2014 the portal is funded by the Government.

1.5. Transition

Transition agreements

Most employees in the Swedish labour market are covered by transition agreements. Such agreements are intended to make it easier for employees whose jobs have been, or risk being, terminated, to obtain help in finding a new job through active transition processes and financial benefits on termination due to shortage of work. Parties on the Swedish labour market, where there are collective agreements, have transition agreements in the private sector, the central government sector and the municipal sector. Sweden is unique in that the social partners assume responsibility in this way for such a major part of the active employment policy measures.

There are two new transition agreements from the beginning of the year that support effective transition in the central government sector based on a holistic perspective: The agreement on local transition funds, aimed at strengthening proactive transition by the respective employers and the agreement on local transition, which regulates the conditions for individual support that employees can utilise in the event of termination due to shortage of work or when a fixed term employment contract of at least two years expires, to enable a return to work as rapidly as possible. The agreements are based on labour market needs and together form a transition chain that supports the work-first principle, the individual's possibilities of a longer working life and the change and development of central government operations required at all times.

2. Education – The proportion of pupils without an upper secondary leaving certificate is to be less than 10 per cent

Fewer upper secondary school dropouts and Plug-In 2.0

SALAR's work with upper secondary school dropouts in 2015 will also focus on the Plug-In project. Within the framework of the new programme period for the European Social Fund (ESF), SALAR has submitted an application to continue and extend the Plug In 2.0 project. In the project plan for the coming three years there are 6 regional councils that are co-applicants and the plan is to develop existing projects to get more young people to complete their upper secondary school studies. The planned project will have a greater focus on developing methods in upper secondary school that prevent dropouts.

PlugInnovation will play an important part in Plug In 2.0 as a national platform to prevent dropouts from upper secondary school. It offers for example information on research and studies on school absenteeism.

Comments for the national reform programme

Comments from the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco)

The Swedish trade union movement on the whole shares the description of Sweden that is presented in the country report the Commission published on 26 February. We agree that there are risks associated with the high indebtedness of Swedish households and the rapidly rising housing prices. In the same way we share the opinion that the high unemployment rate for young people and immigrants is a failure of education. Consequently it is urgent to invest in higher quality education and investments in infrastructure and measures to increase competitiveness in the construction sector to pick up the pace of building.

In the case of the Government's measures as regards the national recommendations last year the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, the Confederation of Professional Employees and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations hold the following views.

Sustainable public finances

It is good that the Government has now decided to review the balance target, since the surplus target has been abandoned in practice for several years. Even if the surplus target has served us well, the reasons for introducing it have disappeared and today Sweden has a very favourable relative position in public finances. As we are still in a very long drawn-out recession the most important tasks of fiscal policy should be to prevent high unemployment becoming persistent and strengthening Sweden for the future. This should take place by increasing public infrastructure investments in connection with a desired increase in housing construction. However, we would like to stress that it is important to have a clear fiscal policy framework in the future as well.

Sweden needs a high tax levy if we are to deliver welfare. At the same time we see that the principles established in the early 1990s for the Swedish tax system have been gradually undermined. We would therefore like to see a major overhaul of the tax system, in which a more uniform taxation of capital is considered, among other things.

Establishment in the labour market (young people with insufficient education and people with a foreign background)

Difficulties in becoming established in the labour market for young adults and people who have immigrated to Sweden mainly apply to people with insufficient education. People without completed upper secondary education are in a vulnerable situation in the labour market. To reduce dropouts from upper secondary school the Government should therefore give priority to measures to improve the quality of schools, both in terms of teacher competence and early support, mainly in compulsory school. At the same time it is of utmost importance that post-secondary education is given sufficient resources to maintain high quality in education. Higher vocational education and training

should be expanded and more higher education places must be accompanied by sufficient resources to prevent quality from suffering.

People who immigrate to Sweden are a very heterogeneous group. For increased growth and a more effective labour market, focus should to a greater extent be on the individual's skills, competence, capacity and ambitions. For people who immigrate to Sweden, the access to validation of previous education and work experience, as well as good opportunities to supplement studies at compulsory, upper secondary and post-secondary level is key. Swedish for immigrants must also be of high quality and be adapted to the level and needs of the individual.

Everyone who immigrates to Sweden would benefit from information and guidance on the Swedish labour market, and should be offered Swedish language training and validation services. We are critical that no agency has a single, coordinating and proactive remit to provide information and guidance to newly arrived immigrants apart from those who are included in the introduction assignment.

In conclusion, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, the Confederation of Professional Employees and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations welcome the decision to raise the income ceiling in unemployment insurance. At present the insurance only gives low basic protection to most employees and thus functions badly as readjustment insurance between two jobs.

Comments from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

As stated in the Commission's country report for Sweden 2015, Sweden has low wage spread, high minimum wages and small wage progression. In combination with the design of employment protection and industrial conflict rules that favour the interests of those already established, this makes establishment difficult for weaker groups in the labour market.

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise considers that employment protection for permanent employment contracts should be reformed to stimulate job creation, increase the possibilities for weak groups' establishment and enable companies to recruit and retain the employees with the best skills for the company's business, for example in accordance with OECD recommendations. Moreover there should be proportionality between the purpose or scope of industrial action and the harm it causes. The protection of industrial peace should be strengthened by making it impossible to force companies into others' conflicts by means of sympathy action.

The surplus target has fulfilled its original purpose of repaying net debt. In the context of a continued stable framework the target can now be adjusted to a balance target. To ensure a transparent and confidence maintaining transition this should be preceded by a government inquiry.

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise welcomes the Commission's analysis of household debt, as experience shows that too high a level of indebtedness can cause extensive problems. The Government should follow developments closely and investigate how the risks of rising debt can be reduced.

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise shares the view that rent regulation aggravates the housing shortage, which has negative effects on matching in the labour market. Simplified building regulations and planning processes are essential for increasing building. As a first step free rent setting for new construction should be introduced even after the first 15 years.

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise sees that several political reforms in recent years have strengthened incentives to work and led to increased labour supply. The reforms have contributed to strong employment growth in Sweden despite the financial crisis and its aftermath. More measures serving the same purpose are required to further integrate groups with a weak foothold in the labour market. Increased taxation of labour, further statutory regulation of employment and regulations that reduce competition risk having a negative impact on employment growth.

It is crucial that pupils' performance in compulsory school improves and pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, for example, are strengthened. More pupils need to achieve the goals of compulsory school and be eligible for upper secondary school. It is also important to increase the attractiveness of upper secondary vocational programmes and strengthen their quality and relevance.

Increased cooperation and increased influence from the industries are necessary to succeed in this. Pupils in the preparatory programmes for higher education also need to achieve more and be better equipped for coping with university and other higher education studies. Adult vocational training should be a permanent part of adult education and the number of places in higher vocational education needs to increase. Higher education should be supplemented by targets for completion rates and establishment.

2. Contribution from SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions) – as representative of regional and local levels in Sweden

Local and regional work on the Europe 2020 strategy

The activities of municipalities and county councils constitute about 21 per cent of Sweden's GDP and account for about 30 per cent of employment. The Europe 2020 strategy affects several policy areas that in Sweden fall within the responsibility of municipalities, county councils and regions. Many of Sweden's municipalities, county councils and regions have integrated the Europe 2020 targets into their development plans, operational plans and annual budgets. There are solid strategic efforts to follow up on the targets with fixed indicators as part of the strategy. In this context, it is emphasised that for the regions and county councils that have regional development responsibility, their basic remit includes working on and driving many of the issues highlighted in the strategy. The 290 municipalities throughout Sweden also work within many of their core activities on measures that can be linked to the Europe 2020 objectives.

On 20 January 2015 the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), the Government Offices and the Commission arranged a conference on implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy in Sweden. A broad discussion was held between actors from different sectors and social levels on the country-specific recommendations. This type of arrangement increases the feeling of participation for all actors in implementing the Europe 2020 strategy and a new conference is planned for 2016.

The importance of multi-level governance and the European structural and investment funds for implementation of the strategy

The Europe 2020 strategy has set a credible and appropriate framework for the European structural and investment funds and contributed to focusing measures in the Member States. SALAR considers that the funds are the most important tool and an important force for mobilisation to achieve fulfilment of the targets for the Europe 2020 strategy.

The European structural and investment funds not only contribute great economic resources, but also a working method that now characterises the implementation of by and large all policy at local and regional level. The method of work means a more structured way of approaching the problem scenarios and challenges identified through initiatives that utilise the regional strengths and opportunities. SALAR therefore emphasises the importance of involving local and regional levels in all parts of the Europe 2020 strategy: in dialogue on objectives, priorities, decisions and implementation.

Regional and local examples contributing to the fulfilment of Sweden's national targets

Around Sweden, numerous different projects are in progress at the local and regional levels with the aim of fulfilling the targets for the Europe 2020 strategy.

The examples presented below should be seen as a small selection of good examples of successful efforts in various parts of the country.

Examples from SALAR

Yrkesintroduktionsavtal (Vocational introduction agreements)

SALAR/Pacta and the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union have two agreements for vocational introduction. The BUI agreement is for workers in training positions and introductory employment. The employees must have completed health and social care training but have no relevant occupational experience. The BAL agreement is for employees in vocational introduction employment. Workers must be unemployed and need vocational introduction to enter the labour market. The purpose of the agreements is to meet the need for recruitment to municipalities and county councils and at the same time increase employment in Sweden. The agreements are important to facilitate the transition between school or unemployment and working life.

The Swedish Municipal Workers' Union has provided information about the local collective agreements signed at central level. Local collective agreements for BAL have been signed by 11 municipalities and two county councils. Local collective agreements for BUI have been signed by 15 municipalities and one county council. The parties intend to apply for financial support, called promotion funds, from the Government for evaluating BAL and BUI.

Studentmedarbetaravtal (Student employee agreements)

SALAR/Pacta and the Alliance of Graduates, (16 Saco affiliates) and the General Local Government Operations (Vision, Union for Professionals, the Swedish Union for Performing Arts and Film and Ledarna) signed a Student Employee agreement in mid-December 2014, applicable from 1 January 2015. The agreement allows students at universities, higher education institutions and in post-upper secondary education to combine studies with more qualified extra work in the area of study. The agreement makes it possible to work on average 15 hours per week during the study term. The employment is time limited by term with the possibility of one month's mutual period of notice. The employer is to designate a mentor as a resource for the student employee during the employment. The pay is to be individual and differentiated. For students the agreement can facilitate the transition from studies to working life and contribute to more qualified extra jobs while studying. For employers it creates the possibility of partially solving future staff supply needs.

Collaborative Assessment Alliance

For a long time discussions and analyses of pupils' performance and performance trends have to a great extent concerned reading comprehension, mathematics and science. There has sometimes been criticism that this focus is too narrow and does not encompass the entire responsibility of schools. The challenge facing the education system is to transform education and learning so

that pupils are equipped for the society and labour market of today and tomorrow.

In 2009–2012 the Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills project between the University of Melbourne and Cisco, Intel and Microsoft was implemented. In the course of the project ten “21st Century Skills” were defined; key competencies such as ability to cooperate and digital literacy, which young people need for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Examples of how collaborative problem solving and digital competence could be assessed in a digital environment were also drawn up.

The Collaborative Assessment Alliance builds on the experiences and results of the project. In May 2014 a government decision was made that for a year Sweden would participate in the Collaborative Assessment Alliance. The Alliance currently consists of Australia, Ireland and Sweden.

Swedish participation is conducted by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. Schools in the six municipalities of Falkenberg, Halmstad, Nacka, Sollentuna, Upplands Väsby and Sigtuna are participating and the target group is pupils in year 8. Researchers from the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences at Stockholm University will study whether it is possible to assess and measure, and on that basis develop, pupils’ ability to cooperate through this type of assignment.

Regional examples

Miljötinget (The Environmental Conference)

The Environmental Conference is the largest environmental event in the Nordic countries for young people and is arranged every year by Region Gävleborg and Region Dalarna. Each year one municipality hosts the event and contributes to its arrangement. The purpose is to create a meeting place to increase interest and commitment for environmental and social questions among young people. The Environmental Conference wants to create future environmental heroes that dare to bring about change. The Environmental Conference is open to all children in years eight and nine and upper secondary pupils in Dalarna and Gävleborg. In 2015 the Environmental Conference is celebrating 25 years and 350 young people are expected to participate. The programme is determined by a programme council consisting of 20 young people who have previously participated in the Environmental Conference.

The Environmental Conference is an example of how young people can be mobilised to discuss current and future challenges and opportunities in the Union, for example animal health, emission allowances, a non-toxic everyday life and a circular economy. The Environmental Conference is also an important part of the renewal project ahead of regions in central and northern Sweden. The Environmental Conference was awarded the European Citizens' Prize, the European Parliament's prize for exceptional Europeans.

Studentmedarbetare (Student employees)

The Southern Småland regional council has built further on a Danish concept of Student employees. Through the project, students in higher education are offered qualified and relevant jobs while studying, which offers them the opportunity to create a network of contacts in the working life of the region. The purpose is to improve the possibilities of employers in the county of Kronoberg to recruit graduates and to increase the inclination of students to remain in the region after graduating. Student employees in Kronoberg started in January 2013 and will run for three years. The concept has spread and more municipalities, county councils and regions have started to use it and several of them meet and discuss their experiences in the SALAR network for municipal higher education coordinators. The municipalities of Helsingborg and Karlstad can be mentioned.

Blekinge Unga Lyfter (Blekinge Lifting Young People)

Blekinge has a regional project in which all five municipalities in the county are included to increase young people's employment and participation in education. Navigator centres have been established in each municipality, targeting young people who may find it difficult to cope with finances, work, studies and leisure on their own. Navigator centres have staff familiar with knowledge of different areas, who can provide support and information on opportunities, rights and activities for young people. Navigator centres are a national concept developed with the support of for example: The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, where different actors that come into contact with young people between the ages of 16–24 are gathered.

A unique initiative in the project in Blekinge has been to employ jobless young women and men as youth observers, whose role is to increase contact with unemployed young adults in the county and motivate them to visit the Navigator centre. *Blekinge Lifting Young People* uses a cooperation model that gathers together the county council, the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Labour Market Administrations, social services, upper secondary and adult education and psychiatric services in all five municipalities. It is hoped that the project will continue as a social fund project from 1 May 2015.

Regions4GreenGrowth

The Norrbotten county council has received training through the Interreg IVC project *Regions4GreenGrowth* in methods and tools to improve financing and commercialisation opportunities of business ideas in renewable energy and energy efficiency. One of the main activities in the project was peer reviews, a three-day evaluation of the respective partner region that results in recommendations for continued development. Together with other actors from Norrbotten the county council participated in evaluation of four European regions as well as hosting an evaluation of the work in Norrbotten. The project has resulted in 20 good examples, seven of which have been transferred between participating regions.

The project has further resulted in the Norrbotten county council being Sweden's first regional coordinator for the Covenant of Mayors, an initiative within the Commission that promotes active and ambitious climate work. Through the Covenant the county council contributes to sustainable regional development and to making the county's energy and climate objectives specific, time-bound and possible to implement at local level. The project has also resulted in the creation of a regional energy industry council in Norrbotten to strengthen cooperation between regional actors aimed at developing projects, cooperation and business opportunities in environmental technology.

Unga till arbete (Youth to work)

The *Youth to work* project was initiated in 2009 by Region Dalarna and the fifteen municipalities in the county, when it was noted that many young people in the county were unemployed. The purpose of Youth to work has been to develop a regional model for how municipalities and public employment services can work with young unemployed people, as well as developing cooperation between different actors and putting those in need of social support in focus. The project has had a particular focus on gender equality.

In the five years of the project 60 per cent of about 3 000 participating unemployed young people went on to work or study. At the follow-up after another two years the percentage in work had grown. Youth unemployment in Dalarna is lower than in many other counties and according to the Public Employment Service one of the reasons is the Youth to work initiative. Dalarna is now planning to continue Youth to work for another three years with funding from the European Social Fund. In December 2014, 11 municipalities planned to implement Youth to work in their ordinary activities.

Uppsala Innovation Centre

Uppsala Innovation Centre (UIC) is the Uppsala region's joint incubator and a result of determined work to build a strong innovation eco-system for smart growth. UIC is a leading business incubator with documented sound results and a survival rate of 90 per cent among participating companies.

UIC is industry-independent and offers qualified advice and support for successful business development to idea bearers, businesses, entrepreneurs, researchers and growth companies that wish to establish their idea in the market and develop their business skills. UIC takes no ownership in the companies, focuses on the companies' business development and not on office rentals. The UIC model includes five business development programmes and 60 carefully selected business coaches from the commercial sector that help the companies. UIC has a network of about 20 specialists, industrialisation coaches, experienced in moving from prototype to series production.

In 2014 the incubator received 232 new ideas, 31 per cent of which were from women who are idea bearers. 32 per cent of the inflow originated in the commercial sector, 37 per cent in universities, 27 per cent are independent

innovators and 4 per cent came from the public sector. Particular efforts are in progress to increase the percentage of idea bearers from the public sector, as well as to attract and promote women who are entrepreneurs.

Local examples

Karlstad municipality reduces climate impact

In 2008 Karlstad introduced a tool for climate compensation of business travel by air and road. In 2014 SEK 2.3 million was allocated to 17 projects in municipalities that reduce climate impact of the organisations. In 2014 focus was on children's and school activities and examples of projects are purchase of bike trailers, bus trailers, loan bicycles and a project to reduce food wastage in schools.

At the same time the *Climate innovation of the year* prize was introduced, which will be awarded to a person, organisation or company in the municipality of Karlstad who has made a major contribution to reducing climate impact. The initiative is part of reducing climate impact from the energy and transport sector by 25 per cent between 2008 and 2020 in the municipality.

Labour market policy initiatives in Norrköping municipality

In 2015 Norrköping municipality had 12 labour market policy initiatives, two of which are projects. The municipality offers anything from guidance, work training and practical work experience to fixed-term and permanent employment contracts with employer support as labour market policy measures. The municipality has targeted measures for young people, people with a foreign background and people with impaired capacity to work due to disabilities. Common to all target groups is that they are particularly detached from the labour market. Many also receive social assistance from the municipality.

Introduction to working life in pre-school is a new project for 2015 and targets young people aged 20–25 who want to work in pre-school but have no training or work experience in the occupation. Within the framework of vocational introduction jobs the municipality will employ 22 participants in the project in 2015. Participants are offered a fixed-term full time employment contract where work is combined with half-time studies. During the year the young people will at the same time be offered study and vocational guidance for childcare worker training and to encourage continued higher education studies in the teacher training programme, for example. The participants who complete the project will have earned 500 upper secondary school credits in programme specific subjects in the upper secondary childcare and recreation programme. After the project the participants are eligible for employment as replacement staff in pre-school.

Service trainee is a labour market policy initiative, which was previously a project in the municipality but which has been incorporated into ordinary activities as of 2015. The initiative targets unemployed people who qualify for social assistance and whose native language is not Swedish but is one of the major native languages spoken in the municipality. The participants are offered one-year fixed

term employment contracts in municipal activities. The purpose of the initiative is to give the participants experience of Swedish working life in the municipal sector and allow the participant to earn a salary instead of receiving benefit.

GrowSmarter

The City of Stockholm has been chosen to lead the European project *GrowSmarter*. It concerns how towns and cities can create more jobs locally with the help of smart environmental technology while at the same time being more energy efficient. Eight European towns and a number of environmental technology companies are participating in *GrowSmarter*. Stockholm, Barcelona and Cologne are “lighthouse cities”, which means that they will be showcases. Altogether twelve smart solutions will be tested and then evaluated.

The objective of the project is to reduce energy use and emissions from transport by 60 per cent in the areas selected, while creating growth and new jobs. It is hoped to give 1 500 new jobs in the pilot areas and in close collaboration with the environmental technology companies. *GrowSmarter* will run for five years and is funded with EUR 25 million from the EU framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020. It is an initiative to meet the challenge of secure, clean and efficient energy, part of the framework programme’s priority area *societal challenges*.

Stadslandet Gothenburg (urban agriculture)

Stadslandet Gothenburg is a collaboration platform run by Utveckling Nordost (Development Northeast), the City of Gothenburg, aimed at contributing to climate smart green business development and innovation between town and country. *Stadslandet Gothenburg* has been developed into a platform for cooperation, commitment, knowledge exchange and learning between citizens, voluntary associations, the business sector, civic administration, educational institutions and academia/research. Together the actors want to promote innovative use of natural resources for increased local production of food, goods and services and develop models for local creative participation that increases employment, reduces exclusion and breaks segregation both in the city and between city and country. The aim is multi-fund financing, with a combination of *locally led development* and urban development as part of the West Sweden regional fund programme and the social fund.

3. Contributions from organisations in civil society

COOMPANION

Coompanion is a corporate advisory organisation for people who want to develop enterprises or start companies together as cooperatives. Cooperative companies are part of the social economy where business operating non-profit associations, foundations and mutual companies are also found. These are often referred to as values-based enterprises. Above all they are democratic businesses based on participation of the people the business affects. Coompanion can be found at 25 locations throughout the country, with representation in all counties of Sweden. Coompanion has about 120 employees and is owned and controlled locally by more than 950 members who, just like us, want to promote democratic enterprise in which cooperation and everyone's commitment are the pure driving force for economic, social and sustainable growth.

All Coompanion's areas of operation include objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and we welcome the Commission's ambitions for multi-level governance in implementation of the strategy, where the social economy constitutes an important actor. The examples mentioned here are to be seen as a limited selection of Coompanion's contributions to the Europe 2020 strategy.

Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

Coompanion works to support more organisations and companies being run in cooperation. Coompanion works to develop the social economy and social innovation where all activities are central elements of both the territorial cohesion and in the search for new solutions to social problems in accordance with the Europe 2020 strategy. In that Coompanion advises and supports start-up of activities and companies that use social innovation to meet unfilled social needs, we contribute to smart growth. Through taking environmental impact into account and our long-term vision we and the companies we advise create sustainable growth. By emphasising human and social cohesion we, the cooperative movement, and newly started companies are at the centre of inclusive growth. The motive behind our activities is, in other words, to create social and economic changes that contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy objectives.

Smart specialisation

It is often necessary for small companies to collaborate with other companies. Companies that are part of a network manage knowledge building better, have faster adaptation to the needs of the market and work more cost effectively. Coompanion contributes to organised cooperation through the economic association form of incorporation. Examples of this are: Finnskogarna (tourist industry), Nordic Innovation Food Arena (meals) and Företagsutbildarna (skills provision).

A large proportion of Coompanion's business consists of promoting regional and local development through cooperation. Examples of this that can be mentioned are: the Torek ekonomisk förening in Haradsbyarna, in the municipality of Boden, which is an engine for local development where their activities include organising rental of private cottages, training refugees in forestry, running a café and manufacturing window frames. Another example is Västgötalandet where around 50 companies are cooperating on tourism and hospitality in Vara and neighbouring municipalities. Coompanion also helps in establishing fibre associations that ensure that you can live and work in the country, but that can also be seen as one of today's largest popular movements in Sweden. Access to a fibre connection is a prerequisite for smart growth throughout Sweden.

Sustainable growth

Coompanion supports, advises and helps in starting small-scale renewable energy production. This mainly concerns companies in wind power, solar power and biogas. For example these economic associations can be mentioned: Egen Kraft i Sverige, Karrydvind, Solel i Sala och Heby and Biogas Dalsland. Another example is Qvinnovindar, which invests shares in wind turbines, among other things to increase gender equality in energy production. Qvinnovindar has 90 members at different levels.

Coompanion also supports other environmental and sustainability initiatives where Ingebo Hagar in the county of Kalmar can serve as one example. Ingebo Hagar is a model village that acts as a competence hub for training and inspiration concerning practical work and concrete action for sustainable living, agriculture and forestry and a sustainable lifestyle. Ingebo Hagar's inhabitants share resources and create income opportunities and earn a living in a way that does not drain resources but instead returns them to the land they cultivate.

Inclusive growth

Coompanion has contributed directly to the formation of more than 300 work integration social enterprises and working cooperatives. Most work integration social enterprises supported by Coompanion are for people who do not make their own living. About 10 000 people currently earn their income from these enterprises; people who previously were far from the labour market. These enterprises create the opportunity of work by being an alternative to the private and public sectors, i.e. broaden the labour market. Coompanion also works to create support structures for more and growing work integration social enterprises, where Kooptjänst in Östergötland, Gotland Skog och Miljö, Villa Vägen Ut in Gothenburg and PASS in Skaraborg can be mentioned.

To further link the EU work and understanding for strategic implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, Coompanion, FAMNA and FORUM National Forum for Voluntary Organizations collaborate, mainly through coordination related to the social enterprise initiative, multi-level governance, social innovations and social investments. Coompanion continues to look forward to

being an actor in Sweden's ambitions to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives, where we also hope that the Commission's initiative for social enterprise and innovation will play a more prominent role.

Famna - The Swedish Association for Non-Profit Health and Social Service Providers

Joint text from Forum, Famna and Coompanion (i.e. this paragraph): “To further link the EU work and understanding for strategic implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, Coompanion, FAMNA and FORUM values based organisations collaborate, mainly through coordination related to the social enterprise initiative, multi-level governance, social innovations and social investments.”

Famna’s contribution to the national reform programme.

Swedish civil society is an important actor in the work to achieve the Europe 2020 strategy objectives. As far as Famna is concerned it is mainly a matter of how values-based enterprise in health and social services contributes to a society with less poverty and exclusion, more employment and strengthened enterprise with social innovations.

Famna has around 50 member organisations throughout Sweden with a total turnover of about SEK 4.5 billion and about 6 000 employees. Almost 90 per cent of members’ turnover consists of remuneration for health and social care services with municipalities and county councils as customer, services that are largely subject to public procurement procedures.

All Famna’s members are values-based enterprises where profits are re-invested as a means of achieving social objectives. The activities have developed on the basis of needs that have attracted attention in society and that are not met in any other way. When activities are permeated by the needs of the user or patient in this way a closeness is created to flexible and innovative solutions.

Values-based healthcare and social services currently constitute an important actor to meet the needs of people in poverty or otherwise outside society. In that Famna supports growth and development of organisations such as Unizon (formerly National Association of Women’s Shelters in Sweden), the Swedish Red Cross, the City Missions and Skyddsvärnet opportunities are created for a multitude of actors to contribute to the work of reducing poverty and exclusion. In 2014 Famna worked actively to strengthen possibilities for municipalities and county councils to procure services with social objectives.

Healthcare and social services are seen by many as a future sector for employment. At the same time as increasingly high-level competence is needed to work with new technology and the latest forms of nursing and treatment there must be openings for people starting their working lives. The values-based sector is an important part of working life for many people, both through its close links to voluntary associations and local involvement and through working in accordance with its own values.

To contribute to increased employment in 2014 Famna carried out competence initiatives in eHealth and quality work. The training was carried out as concrete improvements in the framework of *the Value Forum* and the project financed by

the ESF: *Famna's programme for quality and leadership*. In 2014 there were 125 participants from 22 different organisations in these competence initiatives. In total more than 1 000 people carried out 170 development projects in the past five years.

Values-based enterprise constitutes an important opportunity both to start and run companies with social objectives. Conducting activities in this way in close proximity to identified social needs is in addition the engine of social innovation. In 2014 Famna worked on a project funded by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth aimed at stimulating increased values-based enterprise in health and social care. The project involved cooperation with some selected municipalities and county councils. The project also aimed to reach various stakeholders with knowledge of values-based enterprise in health and social care. These stakeholders are potential providers, such as faith communities, interest organisations, user organisations, popular movements and health and social care personnel. The project also aimed at increasing enterprise among values-based organisations that are already providers of health and social care. Experience from Famna's growth reports shows that there is great growth potential in these organisations but they need more support and skills enhancing measures, not least concerning procurement, freedom of choice systems and good business practice.

To develop the potential for social innovations in values-based driven health and social care Famna runs a test bed for person-centred health and social care. The project has been granted funds from Vinnova with the objective of developing a long-term model to support values-based organisations in their innovation work. The starting point for the project is that Famna's members are all social innovators. By turning this concept round we want to make it possible for members to develop innovations by external resources and competences learning about values-based organisations, their closeness to real needs and ideas on how social challenges can be solved.

At the same time as the social economy's enterprise contributes considerably to achieving the EU 2020 objectives there is currently no coherent policy to facilitate this sector. In 2014 Famna identified the following areas as important for increasing the possibility of civil society to contribute:

- Legislation to improve conditions for values-based organisations to enter into agreements with municipalities and county councils
- Access to investment and development capital
- Research and development of values-based enterprise in health and social care
- Public statistics that report on values-based health and social care
- Quality descriptions that capture the values we create
- industrial policy that covers values-based enterprise

In line with the Commission's initiative for social enterprise (2011) these areas should be followed up and given priority in a national strategy for development of values-based enterprise in Sweden. This is so as to fully utilise the potential of the social economy's enterprise and its contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy objectives. One step in this direction is to strengthen forms of consultation in the work of the national reform programme and regularly moving in accordance with the European semester. In our opinion regular consultation and cooperation with values-based enterprise has unfortunately not been given priority in the Swedish work.

Folkbildningsrådet (Swedish National Council of Adult Education)

The Swedish adult education model – a sustainable contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy

The Europe 2020 strategy focuses on smart and sustainable growth that means high employment and cohesion in Europe. The particular targets of 75 per cent of the population aged 20–64 should be employed, 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty and the education targets of a share of early school leavers of under 10 per cent and at least 40 per cent of 30–34 year-olds should have a tertiary degree are targets that adult education actively contributes to in its everyday activities.

The Swedish adult education model is a sustainable and effective contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy. It contains aspects that are relevant not only in a Swedish national perspective. Adult education contributes to a great extent to Sweden, along with other Nordic countries, being at the top in Europe as regards participation in adult education. In many other EU countries participation is worryingly low. Participation is particularly low among people with a short education and older people. Adult education is described as the weakest link in life-long learning in the European agenda for adult education. A target for 2020 in the EU countries is that 15 per cent of the population aged 25 to 64 should participate in adult education. In 2012 the average was only 9 per cent, and only five EU countries have achieved the target.

The Europe 2020 strategy was formulated during the economic downturn following the 2008 financial crisis. The strategy focuses to a great extent on measures for economic growth. The targets of the strategy continue to be relevant. At the same time there is reason to widen the focus more and analyse how implementation of the strategy can contribute to sustainable democratic development of society in Europe. Recent years have been characterised by rapidly growing social and political tensions in many of the EU member countries, expressed in xenophobic and non-democratic movements gaining a foothold while more people are turning to EU countries to seek protection from wars and conflicts in other parts of the world. Democracy and cohesion in society are being challenged and put under pressure both in Sweden and other EU countries. The democratic perspective therefore needs to be strengthened in implementing the strategy. Formal and liberal adult education play an important part in equipping people for further study, for becoming established in the labour market and for the role of citizen in a democratic society.

Central government support to adult education in Sweden is based on its contribution to developing and strengthening democracy, to making it possible for people to influence their life situation and participate in social life, to levelling education gaps and raising the cultural and educational level in the country as well as to broadening interest in participation in cultural life.

The 10 study associations with their local units and the 150 folk high schools are spread throughout the country and annually involve large parts of the population. Adult education reflects large parts of Swedish civil society. The study associations and folk high schools constitute a national structure for learning and personal development that is open to all citizens.

Adult education activities are mainly conducted in the framework of the central government adult education appropriation, but also with other financing in the form of assignments and projects. Study motivating folk high school courses (3 months) for young unemployed people who have not completed their upper secondary studies and establishment courses for newly arrived immigrants (6 months) are examples of activities conducted in collaboration with the Swedish Public Employment Service. The folk high schools and study associations contribute to regional skills provision. Adult education is multifaceted and flexible so as to be able to meet the needs of participants at various stages of life.

In the context of EU policy, Sweden can work to make formal and liberal adult education visible as a strategic factor in enabling fulfilment of the Europe 2020 strategy targets throughout the EU. Sweden can also call attention to the importance of involving formal/liberal adult education and civil society in the work for sustainable democratic development in the framework of the strategy.

There are a number of examples of activities in folk high schools and study associations that illustrate what has been presented here more generally and in principle. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education submits an annual overall assessment of the effects on society of adult education to the Government.

FORUM – National Forum for Voluntary Organizations

Joint text from Forum, Famna and Coompanion (i.e. this paragraph): “To further link the EU work and understanding for strategic implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, Coompanion, FAMNA and FORUM values based organisations collaborate, mainly through coordination related to the social enterprise initiative, multi-level governance, social innovations and social investments.”

Social work=employment policy

Forum’s member organisations represent just over 9 million of the 32 million memberships held today by the Swedish population. This is one way to describe the scope of what we stand for. Another is that about one million people in Sweden carry out voluntary work with a social focus. It is a very extensive social work that reaches many people in different situations in life, from crisis to everyday life, as newly arrived refugees or as girls whose lives are destroyed by a violent man, but also in preventive contexts where scouting, choirs, adult education, homework help and many other activities reach millions of people every year.

Does this work have any relevance for the total Swedish effort to achieve the Europe 2020 strategy targets?

Since Sweden joined the EU in 1995 and a link was created between the work on social development carried out in our country and the common agenda of the EU, there has been a gap when it comes to socially focused organisations. Since social issues are fundamentally a national competence, it has been difficult to describe the relevance of the work done in our organisations for the common EU agenda. Employment and labour market policy on the other hand is an EU competence and the language in programmes and calls for proposals for various projects etc. follow that emphasis.

Forum and our member organisations believe, however, that large parts of our social work are also of importance for achieving the Europe 2020 strategy targets. In our opinion, our central grant is within target 5, on reduced poverty and exclusion, but also target 1, on increased employment and target 4, on education.

Part of the concrete work done is in various projects in which organisations work to create sufficient self-reliance and self-confidence in people so that they have the strength/confidence to seek work. It may concern people who have one or more physical or mental disabilities, who have been in prison, who have a name that means they are automatically rejected, who have simply become a bit older in a labour market that is looking for youth, who are or were drug abusers. Experiences in many evaluations show that these groups seldom manage very well in more general programmes provided by public sector actors or in procured solutions where companies offer coaching or similar. Instead these people need other activities that start from themselves, that have a method that

is more receptive, often with a small scale focus and identification. These activities are often a part of the organisations' general work and are funded by general grants to the organisation, voluntary work, donations, membership fees or fund resources. However, it is of course also the case that there are projects financed by municipalities, public employment services and financial coordination associations, sometimes as activity grants but often as project grants.

Another part of the work, which partially meets the same groups, is when our organisations arrange places for people in labour market policy measures. This concerns thousands of places every year where these people get a chance to contribute to the work the organisation is doing. The organisations put a lot of energy into arranging continuing training and development work.

A third of the work is the social/values-based enterprise that exists and is growing in our organisations. Sometimes this is in the form of a cooperative, sometimes a non-profit association, sometimes a company with special limitation on dividends (SVB company) and sometimes an ordinary limited company. Jobs are created here, still on a fairly small scale, but the potential is great. One example is *Yalla-trappan* in Skåne, a social company with immigrant women focusing on catering. Towards the end of 2014 the Skåne Regional Council decided to buy services from *Yalla-trappan*, which laid the foundation for growth of the company. This is an example of procurement taking social considerations into account creates value for society additional to price comparison, when procurement is used as a tool for strategic choices that promote increased employment in groups that would otherwise find it difficult in the labour market.

We would like to exemplify a further part of the work through Fryshuset, not only in Stockholm but in more places in Sweden. This is an organisation with its ideological and organisational roots in the YMCA movement. This type of youth-focused work involves initiatives of significance to the issue of young people leaving education early. A decision to drop out of education is a big step. Most people understand that it is not a good thing, it will have consequences. At the same time the total situation around the young person makes it impossible to continue. The solution to this type of problem does not lie in admonitions, simple programmes or job coaching. Instead it is activities that bring the young person into a sound social context, being able to see role models, build self-confidence, become inspired and again get to grips with their life.

The broad work with people newly arrived in Sweden is also relevant. Asylum seekers, family member immigrants, undocumented migrants, EU migrants, where meetings with local voluntary groups in the Red Cross, one of the churches, the city missions, study associations, are often the first step into society, later leading to SFI (Swedish for immigrants) and other education.

There are of course more components to social work that can be described, but we will conclude our list here, in the hope that there is interest, together with

many organisations, in discovering more about this broad social work and its significance for the development of society

A few words on Forum's work to support development. Part of it is the work our representative on the EESC, Ariane Rodert does, where a long series of proposals have been submitted over several years, including 2014. These are proposals for example concerning a European definition/description of social/values-based enterprises, but also proposals concerning support of the work and proposals on infrastructure for social innovation and social investment, but also better methods of measuring effects.

We have also worked for several years, including in 2014, on enabling partnership solutions between public sector (municipalities, regions and central government agencies) actors and values-based organisations. Voluntary Sector Organisation Public Partnership (VSOPP) is the concept we have developed that is now growing around Sweden.

Forum's organisation Volontärbyrån enables contacts between people who want to work as volunteers and organisations that need them. We can see that there is an integration effect in its activities. People find organisations they would not otherwise have found and that are in areas where they seldom go. City centre to the suburbs and vice versa. Volontärbyrån also runs training courses that builds the organisation's capacity to find and look after the volunteers. Apart from this basic training we also conduct training that aims to reduce thresholds and expand diversity in the activities. Finding what it is that stops various people from coming in: Language, places, forms of activity, representatives, etc., and working to reduce the obstacles. Volontärbyrån also has agreements with a number of large companies allowing their staff to work as volunteers in organisations in working hours.

In 2014 Forum completed a project funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs together with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the Swedish Village Action Movement, called Municipal and non-profit co-creation. Questions that cannot be solved by one or another organisation, or between them in collaboration, but that perhaps can be addressed together with a municipality or agency have been in focus. The social challenges faced by the project's local actors are very close to all five Europe 2020 strategy targets.

Lika Unika (Equally Unique)

Equally Unique is a Swedish federation that wants to increase respect for human rights in Swedish politics, so that everyone may participate in and contribute to society. Equally Unique promotes human rights for people with disabilities, mainly from the perspective of sight, hearing and movement. Equally Unique was formed in December 2009. The affiliates are: The Association for Sweden's Deaf-Blind (FSDB), the National Association for the Hearing Impaired (HRF), the National Association for Disabled Children and Young People (RBU), Neuro Sweden, the Swedish National Association for the Deaf (SDR) and the Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired (SRF).

Introductory comments

Our point of departure is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that Sweden ratified in 2008 and that the EU has also given its support to, the first convention to which the EU became a party as regards human rights. The purpose of the Convention is to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities.” The fact that both Sweden and the EU has undertaken to realise the Convention also entails demands on policy, not least in the areas covered by the national strategy in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy.

We are positive to the three priorities on which the Europe 2020 strategy is based; smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. Equally Unique want to stress here that the Convention means that the signatory states “emphasise the importance of integrating issues of disability as a material part of relevant strategies for sustainable growth”. The Europe 2020 strategy with its focus on sustainable growth and not least in the labour market, is in our eyes a strategy that must include both analysis of social problems and being offensive in the concrete proposals based on a disability perspective.

Equally Unique's work for human rights in Sweden

Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Equally Unique is active in lobbying and moulding public opinion. We want this work to contribute to increased respect for human rights in Swedish policy. We also wish to be proactive in bringing about a paradigm shift in Swedish disability policy that entails a shift in perspective in society, from the present patient and medicine perspective to a citizen and rights perspective for people with disabilities.

This financial year we are working on the basis of three overall goals:

1. Equally Unique is to work to ensure that political decision-makers must base their political decisions on the UN Convention's rights for people with disabilities.

2. We are to influence the political parties and political assemblies to take positions based on Equally Unique's long-term and social justice platform.
3. To work to ensure the establishment in Sweden of an independent human rights institution that promotes a clear disability perspective.

After five years we are an established umbrella organisation for six affiliates. Equally Unique conducts its lobbying activities for example in the consultations we take part in. We are represented on the Government's disability delegation and in priority consultations with certain strategic agencies, such as the disability council of the Swedish Agency for Participation. Along with consultation, direct contacts with decision makers, mainly at national level, are important for us. But not least against the background of the great differences between the municipalities in the country in implementing the Convention, we direct some opinion creation initiatives at local decision-makers.

A strong focus for us in the past year has been to contribute our perspective when the UN Committee reviewed Sweden's work with the UN Convention. Besides written documents to the UN, Equally Unique has also participated on site in Geneva on two occasions, including conducting seminars for the committee together with the Swedish Disability Federation. After the UN recommendations were issued (April 2014) we have also tried to communicate them and bring about important political solutions to the deficiencies highlighted. At the same time Equally Unique is involved when Sweden is examined on the basis of how we work with other UN Conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on Women. We make efforts in that respect to get the disability perspective included.

For several years, together with the rest of the disability movement, we have actively pushed for inadequate accessibility to be classified as discrimination. Through the Thursday Campaign we were outside each meeting of the Government at Rosenbad with flyers exhorting the presentation of draft legislation. After a Riksdag decision in 2014 the work is continuing in other forms to remove the unfortunate exemptions from legislation that were the case through the Riksdag decision on the Government Bill on inadequate accessibility as a form of discrimination. In the work of moulding opinion on the Discrimination Act a report prepared by the former Chief Economist of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, Dan Andersson, together with the disability movement provided important arguments. The document describes all the positive effects investment in good accessibility would give in various areas of society.

Equally Unique endeavours to be present where decision makers are and where human rights issues must be incorporated. Examples of these are: the

annual HR days, the Almedalen week and participation in various parties' national assemblies.

Our objective of bringing about an independent institution for human rights that promotes a clear disability perspective in Sweden is addressed on the basis of the argument that it is a Swedish commitment in that we have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. But the institution is important in relation to all Conventions and consequently we endeavour to be part of a broader network of organisations in civil society with the same objective.

RFSL – The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights

RFSL, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, works to give homosexual, bisexual and transgender people, and other people with queer expression and identities, the same rights, opportunities and obligations as others. The activities of RFSL are multifaceted and include political advocacy, information activities and social and supportive activities. In concrete terms it may be a matter of anything from lobbying politicians and agencies and offering education to arranging parties and other social activities. Much of the political work is at central level, while individual support and social activities is usually at branch level.

One of the most important objectives of the European platform against poverty, which is part of the Europe 2020 strategy, is to guarantee respect for the fundamental rights of people living in poverty and social exclusion. It concerns giving them the opportunity to live in dignity and take an active part in society. RFSL works towards this objective through its programmes.

Working life and the business sector

LGBT issues must have a sustainable and established place in working life. Discrimination and differential treatment must cease. RFSL works towards a broad network of contacts in the business sector, to be able to conduct effective advocacy.

- RFSL works towards a high demand for our training courses and LGBT certification of for example companies, public sector organisations, schools, home-help services and organisations. They must be established, known and self-supporting, available throughout the country with operations that are quality assured.
- RFSL works towards good cooperation on equal treatment issues with the social partners, so that competence on LGBT issues increases and prevention of discrimination can be improved.
- It must be possible to change all forms of certificates from employers retroactively, to match the person's current name and personal identity number.
- RFSL initiates projects and cooperation directed at key people and key organisations in the private business sector.
- RFSL is active in spreading knowledge on the various advantages of having broad diversity in the business sector as well.

Recreational life

RFSL works to ensure that all LGBT people can have a recreational life in the form the person wishes, free of discrimination and degrading treatment. Participation in various arenas and in activities is to be on the same terms for all LGBT people.

- RFSL works to encourage all municipalities and county councils to set aside funds to ensure secure meeting places for young LGBT people. In

places where RFSL and/or other LGBT organisations exist they must be involved in this work.

- RFSL endeavours to carry out at least one publicly funded activity per year for young transgender people, or another group in special need of this, at national or regional level.
- RFSL works, together with other LGBT organisations and organisations for the rights of older people, to ensure that municipalities and county councils set aside funds to secure meeting places for older LGBT people, with a focus on empowerment and preferably in collaboration with RFSL and/or other LGBT organisations or pensioners' organisations.
- RFSL works to enable branches to develop their own activities/social arenas that target older LGBT people, developed by the older people themselves. RFSL supports self-organisation by older LGBT people.
- RFSL initiates projects and cooperation targeting key people and key organisations in the sports movement, as well as cooperating with existing LGBT-oriented sports clubs. Examples of issues that may be highlighted are for example gender-neutral sports at junior level and other questions that concern transgender and intersexual people.
- RFSL works towards full access to all premises in municipal sports facilities and arenas, including changing rooms, for all people including transgender persons.
- RFSL works to ensure that public support to LGBT organisations is given priority at national, regional and local level.
- RFSL continues to have constructive and effective cooperation with other LGBT organisations and works to include the entire LGBT community in the initiatives undertaken by both the public sector and the organisations themselves. RFSL shall also participate actively in pride celebrations and similar events throughout Sweden, and also ensure then that the entire community is included in the arrangements. Particular focus may sometimes be necessary on issues concerning bisexual or transgender people, for example.
- RFSL is an organisation without religious affiliation, but shall endeavour to cooperate with religious communities for the purpose of ensuring that LGBT people wishing to participate in the activities of the community are able to do so without discrimination.
- RFSL encourages documentation of LGBT history and culture, as well as flourishing contemporary LGBT culture.

Strategies used to deal with working life issues must include an LGBT perspective based on information on the specific conditions of LGBT people, which not infrequently differ from the personal circumstances of other people. Without awareness of the conditions of LGBT people strategies will not address the problems encountered by them and in practice their problems will be neglected. Strategies that focus on reducing differences between women and men without raising an LGBT perspective in practice exclude LGBT people from effective measures. Transgender people, who suffer a disproportionately high

unemployment rate in several countries as a result of discrimination, constitute a group that broader strategies miss entirely. The Europe 2020 strategy must draw attention to the needs of LGBT people and work should be done in consultation with relevant organisations in civil society.

Church of Sweden

The Church of Sweden is Sweden's largest membership organisation with 6.5 million members. Openness, commitment and dialogue with people who follow Jesus are the foundation of the life and work of the Church. The meeting, wherever a person is in life, is what the Church of Sweden wants to make use of. This may be in a private conversation with a person in crisis, in the social initiatives and activities, in the involvement in international work or in the meeting with children and young people. The Church of Sweden is also found at hospitals and correctional institutions, in work with cultural meetings and where there is a crisis or catastrophe. The work of the church is conducted in many different arenas where several may be regarded as concerning the Europe 2020 strategy, not least the target concerning increased social inclusion. Ahead of this report we decided to highlight a few examples of how we contribute to the climate and energy target as well as the Church of Sweden project to support people who are unemployed.

Church of Sweden support to people who are unemployed

The Church of Sweden at national level has decided, in collaboration with the Church of Sweden's employer organisation, to implement the project *Church of Sweden support to people who are unemployed* in 2015–2017, which will be carried out in close cooperation with the Swedish Public Employment Service. The project will be led by the Church of Sweden Central Office and representatives of the Church of Sweden employer organisation, Luleå diocese, Strängnäs diocese and Västerås diocese will make up the project group.

The project is intended to develop cooperation between the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Church of Sweden employer organisation and the Church of Sweden, as well as to create conditions for implementing methods and long-term solutions in the work of the parishes with people who are living in exclusion due to unemployment. In 2015 the project will map and analyse the activities of the Church of Sweden parishes for the unemployed, as well as making an inventory and analysis of models used previously that lead to practical work experience, education and employment. In 2016 and 2017 employers and employees of the Church of Sweden parishes who are interested will be invited via the dioceses to participate in exchange of experience and skills development to strengthen and develop activities for people living in exclusion due to unemployment. The project can be said to contribute to both the employment target and the target for increased social inclusion.

The environmental work of the Church of Sweden

The Church of Sweden conducts broad climate efforts, based on the idea of justice and the responsibility of humans to safeguard creation. The Church of Sweden has drawn up its own standard for environmental diplomas, which is used in the parishes. The Church of Sweden's environmental diplomas are based on commitment and reflection among the employees and elected representatives and at the same time constitute a management system that will assure the quality

of environmental work in the parish. This is a unique system for the Church of Sweden which other churches are now interested in using. The national level of the Church of Sweden supports the environmental work of the dioceses by offering theme days, training and network meetings.

In 2014 the bishops of the Church of Sweden wrote A Bishops' letter on the climate. It is a theological contribution to the climate and sustainability discussion. The Bishops' letter starts with a summary of the current state of knowledge and results in concrete exhortations to the Church of Sweden and churches throughout the world, to decision-makers in Sweden and internationally, to companies and organisations as well as to individuals.

Apart from national and international and interreligious advocacy, at parish and diocese level various energy projects aimed at reducing climate impact are being implemented. One example is the diocese of Linköping, which is project owner of an energy cooperation project in 2012–2014. A cooperation project has been started with the Swedish Village Action Movement, called *Energy cooperation for sustainable growth*, to facilitate cooperation on the part of the diocese with other actors in society. The energy cooperation project will investigate the possibility of the church and actors in the local community cooperating on block heating solutions and other energy initiatives that invest in transition to green energy. At the national level in the Church of Sweden all fossil energy has been phased out of the Church of Sweden share portfolio in favour of investments in renewable operations/energy sources.

In its asset management the Church of Sweden is to endeavour to be a responsible investor. Investments must follow the UN's six Principles for Responsible Investment, PRI. The Church must invest in companies that are responsible and contribute to sustainable development economically, ecologically and socially. Holdings must be reviewed by an external consultant once a year.

In the climate issue the Church of Sweden also highlights the question of ecological and social sustainability in the Arctic and the right of indigenous peoples to live in these areas.

Social cohesion

The Church of Sweden works actively on matters concerning social inclusion and social cohesion, intolerance and increased racism. The work includes increasing the participation of the Roma people and travellers in the church and society. The Church of Sweden works to combat antiziganism and other forms of intolerance and to strengthen children and young people who belong to national minorities and the native Sami people.

The Swedish Women's Lobby

The Swedish Women's Lobby is a feminist non-party political and non-profit umbrella organisation for the Swedish women's movement. We are the national coordinator for the EWL and have 44 member organisations working to strengthen women's position in society. We work actively for the Europe 2020 strategy to sharpen the gender equality requirement in implementation. In 2014 we conducted the Nordic Forum Malmö – New Action on Women's Rights to show our determination to enforce the promises on gender equality made for example in EU documents. This requires determined work focusing on women's rights to live up to undertakings made. Not least the Commission's work and budget should be clarified. Sweden's role should be to actively contribute to raising gender equality issues and women's rights in the EU.

Nordic Forum and Europe 2020

One deficiency in the Europe 2020 strategy is that the gender equality perspective is not sufficiently well integrated. The strategy does not correspond to adopted documents, nor to the significance attached to gender equality by the general public. The 30 000 visits to the Nordic Forum speak for themselves – the importance of and interest in gender equality is great. The Forum showed the capacity that exists in civil society, and in this case in the women's movement, to concentrate efforts concerning social development and create fora where politicians, other leaders and thousands of professionals and activists can meet to discuss the development of society from the perspective of gender equality.

Gender equality issues in the EU were well represented at the Nordic Forum, for example through the European Women's Lobby, the European Institute for Gender Equality and individual EU parliamentarians. The European women's movement has expressed concern that gender equality issues have been weakened in the Europe 2020 strategy and given lower priority than in previous strategies. There is also criticism that the welfare area, which is of decisive importance for gender equality and the life situation of women, has to take a back seat at times of economic crisis. Many of these issues, which are central to EU development, were raised at the Nordic Forum. For example, the demographic issue, the national economy, working conditions, sexualisation of the public space, women's right to a life without violence, representation and the possibility to speak for oneself etc.

Nordic Forum Malmö 2014 – New Action on Women's Rights

The Nordic Forum was a result of the determination of the women's movement not to sit back while women's rights are threatened and being withdrawn, in the world, in Europe, in the Nordic countries. The Nordic Forum was arranged by 200 organisations from the Nordic women's movement in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and in cooperation with the women's movement in Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland. The purpose was to draw attention to the questioning of women's rights, set the agenda for future gender equality policy and formulate concrete demands and strategies to achieve gender equal societies.

Background

The UN held the fourth and most recent World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It was prepared at Nordic level through a conference in Åbo in 1994. At that time *the Platform for Action*, the programme of action from Beijing, was adopted. The governments that signed the twelve articles of the action plan, including all the European governments, made an undertaking to realise the Convention on Women, CEDAW. The Nordic Forum programme and discussions were based on the CEDAW (the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women) and the BDPFA (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action).

No world conference on women's rights has been held since 1995. Voices have been raised about the need for such a conference, but there have also been warnings against a conference that would open up the action plan to renegotiation. This year Beijing+20 is being celebrated, but without a world conference. There is no confidence that the world's governments will adhere to their previous undertakings. Women's rights and life conditions might instead be going backwards. Since the global situation for gender equality questions is so critical the Swedish Women's Lobby decided that it was time for a regional conference just to speak up and work even more intensely to achieve gender equality.

We invited the Nordic women's movement to a meeting to form a Nordic steering group, national committees and programme groups. Hundreds of people from the women's movement's organisations in the Nordic countries were involved in planning programmes, seminars, speakers and cultural events at the Nordic Forum. At the end of 2012 we were given support from the Swedish Government, which made it possible to take the decisive step of employing people to implement it. The city of Malmö gave its support right from the start and made concrete contributions. The extensive work for the Nordic Forum would not have been possible, despite these professionals and employees, without the voluntary input from the people, groups and networks of the women's movement.

Four days to put women's rights on the agenda

The Nordic Forum started on 12 June with a big opening ceremony. The present Prime Minister Stefan Löfven spoke on the first day. After that followed four days packed with seminars, workshops, demonstrations, cultural events and much more. In addition there were activities in the large exhibition hall at Malmömässan where more than a hundred organisations, agencies, parties, periodicals and others could be visited. In all the programme included more than 1 000 speakers and 400 programme items. About half of the programme items were without charge and completely open to the public. The Nordic Forum had 30 000 visitors and participants from more than 50 countries.

We went in depth and analysed the challenges for women's rights on the basis of the UN Convention on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. Based on

the twelve themes of the Forum we joined together in formulating the clear demands to decision-makers that formed the framework of the Forum's joint Final Document.

Star academics, top politicians, activists, debaters, artists and cultural profiles participated. In snappy impassioned speeches, conversations and cultural acts there were sound and thought-provoking examples of how we advance our positions for women's rights and gender equality. Eighty per cent of the conference programme was arranged by interested organisations and people from all walks of society: Civil society organisations, activists, agencies, the business sector, companies, municipalities, political parties, trade unions and universities.

Feminist agreements and demands are a forward-looking final outcome of the Nordic Forum. There we remind our governments of the commitments they made already in 1995. We sharpen awareness of their absolute responsibility to act for all women's full human rights. The Nordic countries' governments were invited to the Nordic Forum to receive our joint demands, eye to eye. The document was also presented to the Head of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

This is how we take the Nordic Forum forward

The final document has been translated into English and the Nordic languages. It has been spread to decision-makers in Sweden, the Nordic countries, the EU and the UN. It has been printed in braille and is available in sign language and as an audio recording. We call on the Government and other decision-makers to ensure that our common demands are realised. We also work to document the events of the Forum. We will ensure that no historical forgetfulness falls over our common efforts.

Verdandi

Verdandi – the workers’ socio-political organisation, works with moulding public opinion, peer support, networking and work integration social enterprise and activities. Verdandi works for social justice and a society free of alcohol-related harm by organising vulnerable groups to fight for better conditions. Verdandi has no party political or religious affiliation. The key issues we work with are fighting poverty, fighting substance misuse, fighting for a universal welfare policy of solidarity, fighting racism, xenophobia and homophobia and fighting for gender equality.

An important part of Verdandi’s work is to promote the increase of social cohesion in society and to prevent segregation and exclusion. We do this for example through our social contact activities that offer meeting places and support for everyone, regardless of gender, age and ethnic origin, and through studies and moulding political opinion. An important part of Verdandi's work is also supporting people in becoming employable through concrete activities and projects, as well as contributing to the creation of employment and work. Verdandi also promotes development in the social economy and social innovations, which contributes to social cohesion and seeking new solutions to social problems in accordance with the Europe 2020 strategy. Verdandi is found in about 40 places in Sweden.

Sweden describes five national targets for Europe 2020 – the EU’s common growth and employment strategy. A description is given below of how Verdandi works with two of these five targets.

1. “To strive for a level of employment well above 80 per cent for women and men aged 20-64 by 2020. The increase is mainly to be achieved among groups with a weak foothold in in the labour market, such as young people and people born outside Sweden, as well as by counteracting long periods without work. The difference in the level of employment between women and men is to decrease through an increase in the level of employment among women.”
2. “To improve social inclusion by reducing the percentage of women and men aged 20–64 who are not in the labour force (except full-time students), the long-term unemployed or those on long-term sick leave to well below 14 per cent by 2020.”

The objective of Verdandi’s employment creation and work integration activities is to give everyone the opportunity to work to 100 per cent of their own capacity. This is an important starting point to give more people who are outside the labour market, due to such things as long-term unemployment, foreign origin or discrimination, an opportunity to enter the labour market. Being outside the labour market for a long period may make it difficult to enter, or re-enter, the labour market. The step from no employment to, in the best case, full employment often needs to be gradual for people who have been outside the

labour market for a long time, and be adapted to individual conditions. Physical, mental and educational conditions must be taken into account as well as the individual's life situation in other respects.

For people who find it difficult to enter or return to the labour market the step to employment must often be preceded by a long process of training and competence enhancement in social, theoretical and practical skills. Through our outreach and peer support activities in the places where people live we achieve contact with people living in exclusion in a natural and non-discriminatory way. Through participation in the social fellowship of our activities we can take a first step in successively building self-confidence and basic skills, including Swedish language training, contributing to making the individual employable. One concrete activity is for example Verdandi's *Steget framåt* (Step forward) – a course for persons in Borlänge who are long-term unemployed or on sick leave, both newly arrived and persons born in Sweden. The course contains Swedish, social studies, health promotion, cookery and peer support. Through targeted measures such as budget advice and assistance in obtaining debt restructuring, help in contacts with authorities and applying for benefit and support in finding housing solutions, we contribute to removing practical and mental barriers to job seeking. The lack of a fixed address is one of the first obstacles that must be removed to enable the individual to seek and find work. In Örebro we offer support in finding housing based on the “housing first” model. Other types of help with housing also exist.

With our local social peer support work based at our premises, as a second step we try to supplement activities with employment opportunities to create social participation, involvement and work training. This is both a part of increasing social cohesion and an individually targeted measure to increase employability. The activities may be anything from keeping things going in our premises, cafeteria service, participating in the organisation's contract activities, for example by being responsible for local recycling stations and refuse collection on contract from property companies for example.

As a third step we also contribute, where possible, to creating jobs through work integrating social enterprises and activities in sectors such as second-hand sales, removals and repairs, computers and IT as well as textile production. An important starting point for this work is to meet the participants at the level and on the basis of the competence they have. One example is Verdandi's work integrating social enterprise *Trappstegen* (Stepladder) in the county of Stockholm, which works with mat making among other things. The mat making activities are based on being able to make use of and take our cue from the immigrant women's unique competence. Many are illiterate, speak only a little Swedish and have a culture that restricts their mobility. However, they have considerable knowledge of how to weave traditional quality carpets, which can be done both full and part-time depending on the individual's health and family situation. To further strengthen the participants, mat-making is supplemented by Swedish lessons.

When deciding what can be run as a work integrated social enterprise we try of course to take into account, apart from the participants' competence and individual capacity, which businesses can be economically viable. An important point of departure is also what businesses strengthen the social situation in the area, for example by making services and goods economically and practically available to larger groups; for example cafeteria and catering businesses, sewing workshops for production and mending of clothes. In Botkyrka the sewing workshop is a valued business that allows the opportunity to obtain clothes and costumes for traditional parties and festivities. Other activities with a high level of benefit to society are management of refuse and recycling stations in residential areas such as Nyköping and Trollhättan. This is often combined with information and education targeting the people living there so that irregularities and conflicts in the area arising from waste management can be avoided.

The examples given here are only a selection of Verdandi's work in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

Public and Science (VA)

Public & Science (VA) is a non-profit association with the objective of promoting openness and dialogue between researchers and the surrounding community. To achieve the objective we work to bring about conversations in new forms on research and to increase cooperation between researchers and the surrounding community. We also develop new knowledge through opinion surveys and studies. The association was formed 13 years ago and now has about 80 affiliated organisations such as agencies, higher education institutions, companies, adult education organisations and research financiers. Our activities are funded by membership fees, project funds and a grant from the Government.

Public and Science and Europe 2020

The growth strategy Europe 2020 has a clear focus on solving the major social challenges of our time. Research plays a key role in that task and public support is decisive for the strategic initiatives required by the Europe 2020 strategy. By making knowledge of research-related questions accessible and by giving different target groups the opportunity to conduct a dialogue with the research community, VA contributes in several ways to achieve the Europe 2020 strategy targets. Our activities touch most closely on two of the Europe 2020 strategy's overall targets: the research and development target and the education target. We give an account below of the activities that are particularly relevant to these two targets.

Research and development target

Related VA activities: Many of the association's activities contribute to fulfilling the EU and national targets. VA's operational concept is also closely related to the work of the EU on Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). In addition we see an international trend towards increasing involvement of the public and various stakeholders in research, development and innovation. Concepts such as Integrated research, Responsible research and innovation, Public engagement with science, Science with and for Society, Participatory research and Citizen science all concern also involving in various degrees other stakeholders than the researchers themselves in research. VA follows these developments carefully and also participates in research and innovation projects aimed at testing active participation in various stakeholder groups.

National advocacy platform for Swedish participation in SwafS

Since mid-2004 VA coordinates the national advocacy work to increase Swedish participation in Horizon 2020's sub-programme *Science with and for Society (SwafS)*. The purpose of this national advocacy platform is to gather Swedish actors within the areas of the sub-programme *gender equality, RRI governance, public engagement, science education, ethics and open science*. Together we want to develop a common vision, identify advocacy channels and develop a concrete plan of action to influence future calls for proposals within Horizon 2020. The platform includes a number of organisations in academia, the business sector,

civil society, the public sector, as well as individual researchers who have worked with SwafS related questions.

The sub-programme *Science with and for Society (SwafS)* is of great strategic importance. Research needs to be supported and take place in dialogue with citizens if it is to be able to meet the needs and challenges of society. A Swedish concerted effort around SwafS is necessary so that the calls for proposals in the sub-programme will meet our national areas of strength and development needs. The national advocacy platforms are an initiative from EU-Sam, which coordinates Swedish research financiers' EU cooperation.

The RRI Tools project

Responsible Research and Innovation, RRI, is a central concept that is to permeate all research within Horizon 2020. The concept means that all parties concerned must be involved in dialogue around the research and development processes. The dialogue should lead to the research and innovation activities undertaken being broadly supported, and to the investments made benefiting society. The parties included in the dialogue may be within civil society, education, the business sector, research and politics. Public & Science is the hub for Sweden's participation in the flagship project *RRI Tools*. The project is run together with 25 partners in Europe with funding from the EU's Seventh Framework Programme. It is intended to develop innovative tools for more responsible research and innovation. The tools are then to be used and spread in dialogue with the actors concerned. There is a particular focus on decision-makers to influence future research policy. Societal support and broad democratic support are prerequisites for the success of EU's long-term investments in research and innovation. RRI is not intended to seek compromises – rather it is an approach that seeks the best solution that satisfies all parties' needs, and that leads to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Smedpack

VA also participates in concrete cooperation projects that actively involve the public in research and development. The Smedpack project develops pharmaceutical packaging and distribution models that ensure that consumers of medicinal products are not exposed to the risk of counterfeit pharmaceuticals. Some thirty organisations are participating in the project, including researchers, material manufacturers, designers, logisticians and end consumers. The role of VA is to involve the public in the entire development process.

The VA barometer

Each year, VA conducts surveys of the general public's confidence in, and views on, research and researchers. The data we have compiled, analysed and reported on through the years can form a foundation for a structured approach to creating the conditions for investment appetite and confidence in research.

The 2014 VA barometer showed a fall in Swedish public confidence in researchers: 78 per cent stated that their confidence in researchers in academia was fairly or very high, compared with 89 per cent in 2013. At the same time, 87 per cent considered that it is important to involve the public in the research process, and more than half could consider taking part themselves. It is still not possible to say if the fall in confidence is a temporary deviation or the start of a trend – but here lies the strength of the barometer, as a recurrent survey that enables analyses and comparisons over time. The material constitutes important supporting data for the dialogue between research and society – not least in view of society's increased involvement in, and requirement for, public benefit in the research and innovation processes.

Media seminars for researchers

In collaboration with the research councils Formas, Forte, the Swedish Research Council and VINNOVA VA arranges a series of seminars where researchers at various higher education institutions around the country are able to meet journalists to learn more on how the mass media function. For ordinary people the mass media are the most important source of news on research and the image of researchers. It is therefore important that researchers participate in the public debate – to spread and illuminate new research findings, and to communicate a positive image of researchers as a professional group. To retain willingness to invest public funds in research the public needs to know what research is and why it is necessary, as well as being able to conduct a dialogue on and be able to influence the focus and ethics of research. For researchers an increased understanding of how the media operate can reduce uncertainty in contacts with journalists and stimulate interest in contributing to the public dialogue. Another important part of the seminars is to convey how higher education institutions' communication departments can give researchers support and advice in connection with contacts with the media. Six media seminars have been held since 2013, where a total of about 400 researchers have participated.

ResearchFriday, Research Grand Prix and Science Cafés

For reasons of democracy it is important that research efforts and research as a whole is supported by and takes place in dialogue with citizens. As part of this process, VA develops and disseminates methods for communication and dialogue on research. The annual science fair ForskarFredag (ResearchFriday) will take place on 25 September 2015 in about 30 places in Sweden and hundreds of places in Europe under the name *Researchers' Night*. VA has been coordinating the event in Sweden since 2006 and is responsible for joint marketing, website, activities, evaluation and for applying for EU grants for implementation. More than 400 researchers took part in ResearchFriday in 2014, at events visited by more than 17 000 people. A total of 447 activities were offered: experiments, workshops, try-out activities, science shows, science cafés, exhibitions, open houses and many other interactive formats to bring about a dialogue between the public and researchers.

A common activity on ResearchFriday is *Science Cafés*. The purpose is to give people the possibility of discussing topical subjects with researchers and experts in an informal way, preferably over tea or coffee. The invited researcher gives a short introduction. Then the audience can ask questions, comment and give their views, and then the discussion gets going. After the discussion the participants are usually available for a while for people who did not want to ask questions in front of an audience.

Researchers' Grand Prix is a national competition in which researchers have four minutes to present their own research in the most engaging, inspiring and educational way as possible in front of an audience. The audience, together with a jury, votes for the winner. Researchers' Grand Prix is organised by VA and the research councils Formas, Forte, VINNOVA and the Swedish Research Council. For the participating researchers the event has meant increased skills in presentation techniques, important exposure and new contacts with cooperation partners and financiers, for example. Regional heats will be arranged in about ten places this year as part of ResearchFriday.

Education target

Several activities described under the Research and Development target also contribute to meeting the Education target. Two activities are particularly relevant and are described below.

Mass experiments for children and young people

For seven years VA has been coordinating an annual mass experiment as part of *ResearchFriday*, part of *European Researchers' Night*. In the experiment school classes throughout Sweden are invited to help researchers with real research. The 2015 mass experiment, *The teabag trial* will be conducted in collaboration with researchers at Umeå University. 250 classes will help the researchers to collect data about the earth's degradation processes and how they are linked to climate change. Earlier years' experiments have engaged thousands of pupils in areas such as Swedish deciduous trees' autumn leaf development, storage of chilled goods, children's and young people's fruit and vegetable consumption, the sound environment in classrooms and young people's perception of risks in the immediate environment. Through the mass experiments pupils participate in real research, and contribute to developing new and important knowledge. During the experiments the classes were able to communicate directly with the researchers via social media. All mass experiments are returned to the schools in the form of popular science reports in VA's report series and are presented in various contexts, for example at "Meet the Researchers" at the Gothenburg Book Fair. A guiding principle for the mass experiments is that the children must participate as research assistants – not research subjects. In that way they get a better understanding of the conditions of science and direct contact with researchers. The mass experiments are ultimately intended to increase pupils' interest in research and higher education as possible choices for the future. A

clear confirmation that the pupils participate in “real” research is that several previous mass experiments resulted in scientific publications.

School meets science

In 2012–2014 VA worked on a project about interaction between schools and research. The objective is to give teachers and school managements around Sweden ideas and inspiration through developing new knowledge and good project examples. The first part of the project investigated how teachers and school managers regard science and what contacts they have with researchers. In the second part of the the non-profit association Forskningsnätet Skåne developed and conducted activities in which teachers, pupils and researchers met and the third part of the project evaluated the effects of these activities in contributing to scientific understanding and capability.

By examining and highlighting the role of science in school VA contributes to increasing the interest of children and young people in education, as well as the interest of teachers and school managers in research-based knowledge and scientifically based methods. The purpose is also to increase the scientific understanding and aptitude of young people. The project will be completed in spring 2015.

Through a series of different continual activities and individual projects VA’s activities contribute on a general level to improving the conditions for research and researchers, to making research-based knowledge accessible, to stimulating dialogue between the research community and the surrounding community, and to inviting social groups that seldom come into contact with researchers to the discussion table.



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