



Sweden

Jan Björklund
Minister for Education



Jan Björklund has been Minister for Education since September 2007. He served as Minister for Schools between 2006 and 2007. 1998 through 2002 Mr. Björklund served as Vice Mayor of Stockholm, responsible for education. Mr. Björklund is the current leader of the Swedish Liberal Party (Folkpartiet Liberalerna). He graduated from the Military Academy Karlberg in 1985 and served as a career officer in the Swedish Armed Forces from 1982 until 1994. Since taking office, Mr. Björklund has been working to promote student achievement and to ensure that every child acquires the knowledge necessary in order to pursue a successful life.

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Education for all constitutes a basic Human Right. Education and the right to education is at the core of all human development, of all other Human Rights and a prerequisite for the future of the world. Education started off as a privilege for the few but has become the engine of change and progress for each individual and all societies.

In Sweden, all pupils enjoy the right to education, regardless of gender, geographical place of residence and social and economic conditions. In order to guarantee an education system of equal value, consideration is being taken to pupils with special needs. Within the framework of lifelong learning, also adults are guaranteed the right to education. In creating an educational system where these rights are at the centre and where all age groups can better their individual possibilities we have the foundation for a society that can adapt to change and globalization.

The overall vision for educational policy in Sweden is to create "a school for all", which can also be expressed as an inclusive school.

The educational system is organized in a manner where the government sets up national general objectives, evaluates results and supports quality development, while the municipalities are responsible for the achievement of national objectives. In this way we have moved the implementation of central policies out to the rather small municipalities where local knowledge is available and where creativity in solving problems and challenges are encouraged among the decision makers who know, and have to face, their constituencies in local elections.

The ambition to create a "school for all" becomes particularly clear when it comes to children and young people with disabilities.

In order to establish what we see as the future of education for pupils with special needs we have established a National Action Plan. It has been formulated with the ambition to give pupils with functional disabilities the opportunity, in the same way as other pupils, to live together with, or close to, their parents and attend school close to home.

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Since the Swedish school is based upon the principles of inclusion, 98,5 per cent of all pupils from the age of 7 to 15 attended regular compulsory school during the academic year 2007/08. The majority of those who did not attend were enrolled at schools for children with learning disabilities.

The ICE gives us an important opportunity for the international community to further the debate on inclusive education, to share experiences and to formulate together the goals we all are to work for during the years to come.