



NATIONAL PROFILES OF
WORK INTEGRATION SOCIAL ENTERPRISES :
SWEDEN

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WP no. 02/08

This paper is part of a larger research project entitled "L'entreprise sociale : lutte contre l'exclusion par l'insertion économique et sociale" (ELEXIES). This project is run jointly by the European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE), the European Confederation of Workers' Co-operatives, Social Co-operatives and Participative Enterprises (CECOP) and the EMES European Research Network.

The ELEXIES project is financed by the European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs) in the framework of the "Preparatory Action to Combat and Prevent Social Exclusion".

The part of the project in which this paper takes place is co-ordinated by Eric BIDET (Centre d'Economie Sociale, University of Liège, Belgium) and Roger SPEAR (Co-ops Research Unit, Open University, Milton Keynes, UK).

The "ELEXIES" Project

This project is specifically concerned with the different types of social enterprise for integration, also known as work integration social enterprise (WISE) in 12 EU countries. Its aim is to identify and describe their main characteristics as social enterprises, the type of work integration they provide, their numbers, and how they have developed and are supported. The ultimate goal of the project is to build a database accessible on internet.

The study is conducted using the EMES Network definition of social enterprise as a common reference point and guideline for determining the social enterprises to be included in the study. The EMES definition distinguishes, on the one hand, between criteria that are more economic and, on the other hand, indicators that are predominantly social.¹

Four factors have been applied to corroborate the economic and entrepreneurial nature of the initiatives.

a) A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

Social enterprises, unlike the traditional non-profit organisations, are normally not engaged in advisory activities as a major goal or in the redistribution of financial flows (as, for example, grant-giving foundations). Instead they are directly involved in the production of goods and the provision of services to people on a continuous basis. The provision of services represents, therefore, the reason, or one of the main reasons, for the existence of social enterprises.

b) A high degree of autonomy

Social enterprises are voluntarily created by a group of people and are governed by them in the framework of an autonomous project. Although they may depend on public subsidies, public authorities or other organisations (federations, private firms, etc.) do not manage them, directly or indirectly. They also have the right of participation and to terminate the project.

c) A significant level of economic risk

Those who establish a social enterprise assume totally or partly the risk of the initiative. Unlike most public institutions, their financial viability depends on the efforts of their members and workers to secure adequate resources.

d) A minimum amount of paid work

As in the case of most traditional non-profit associations, social enterprises may also combine monetary and non-monetary resources, voluntary and paid workers. However, the activity carried out in social enterprises requires a minimum level of paid workers.

¹ See C. Borzaga & J. Defourny (2001), *The Emergence of Social Enterprise*, London, Routledge, pp.16-18.

To encapsulate the social dimensions of the initiative, five indicators have been selected:

i) An initiative launched by a group of citizens

Social enterprises are the result of collective dynamics involving people belonging to a community or to a group that shares a certain need or aim. They must maintain this dimension in one form or another.

ii) A decision-making power not based on capital ownership

This generally means the principle of "one member, one vote" or at least a voting power not distributed according to capital shares on the governing body which has the ultimate decision-making rights. The owners of the capital are obviously important, but the decision-making rights are shared with the other stakeholders.

iii) A participatory nature, which involves the persons affected by the activity

Representation and participation of customers, stakeholder orientation and a democratic management style are important characteristics of social enterprises. In many cases, one of the aims of social enterprises is to further democracy at local level through economic activity.

iv) Limited profit distribution

Social enterprises not only include organisations that are characterised by a total non-distribution constraint, but also organisations like co-operatives in some countries, which may distribute profits only to a limited extent, thus avoiding a profit-maximising behaviour.

v) An explicit aim to benefit the community

- One of the principal aims of social enterprises is to serve the community or a specific group of people. To the same end, a feature of social enterprises is their desire to promote a sense of responsibility at local level.
- The database of work integration social enterprise has been produced for each country. Due to different circumstances in each country (especially legislative frameworks) there have been slightly varied approaches to mapping the sector. Researchers have generally made a great effort to ensure that the most interesting and progressive initiatives are represented. There are certain types of social enterprise which have their own legislative framework, and which are *exclusively* concerned with work integration. The second type, concerns those social enterprise which are exclusively engaged in work integration, but though they are recognisable as a distinctive type, they do not enjoy a complete and specific legal recognition, and thus generally operate under a range of different legal forms also used by organisations out of the field of work integration. Other types of social enterprise do not have their own specific legislation, and only a proportion of that type will be engaged with work integration. Researchers have made particularly strong efforts to ensure that the first two categories are included, but lack of data has meant that some of the latter category may be missing.

National Profiles of Work Integration Social Enterprises: Sweden

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Introduction

The mature Swedish model's universal and comprehensive welfare state, as developed from the 1930s and onwards, rested on a basically corporatist division of tasks between organized societal sectors: state, business community, and popular movements (Stryjan, 1994). In this division, production and accumulation were entrusted to the "business community" (*näringslivet*) (cf Erixon, 1996); the State was to administer (re)distribution (Abrahamsson and Broström, 1980) and popular movements were to focus on articulation of interests, and on central aspects of consumption. Full employment and general welfare were conceived as central instruments of integrative mechanisms. The strong emphasis on self-help, the collective pursuit of collective interests and the *arbetslinjen*-ethos of integration through the mainstream labour market institutions contributed to the model's normative consistency and stability and paved the way for the emergence of strong and articulate organizations of the physically handicapped, that were able to drive forth active policies of work integration and functional modification of work-places. At the same time, it also unwittingly cemented the marginalization of groups who were neither able to articulate their own interests nor could fit the requirements of employers on the programmatically uniform labour market. A further stratification of this "rest" group ensued: a) a system of wage subventions was introduced to offset the disadvantages of handicapped people on the labour market; b) a network of state-run sheltered workshops, *Samhällsföretaget* (later renamed Samhall), was created to accommodate those capable of regular work who did not find employment; c) a substantial group was defined out of the labour market altogether, through measures such as early retirement, disability pension, indefinite sick-leave or institutionalization. Voluntary and charitable organizations were effectively barred from involvement in "job creation" or integration, in the ordinary sense of the term. Throughout the 70s and the 80s, their impact in the field of job creation was concentrated to boundary cases and "non-market" jobs, mostly under a range of temporary labour-market board job-placement programs.

At present, the number of persons excluded from the labour market through quasi-medical labelling remains high (488,500 in December 2002²). However, the fairly rigid compartmentalization has undergone a substantial change in the course of the last two decades. Shifts in public attitudes, largely achieved by increasingly vocal interest organizations, the disbandment of big mental institutions, and the transfer of responsibility for integration from central and county levels to municipalities, all

² *Dagens Nyheter* daily, 21 Dec 2002.

contributed to the emergence of new initiatives and solutions. The availability of EU financing has further shifted the balance between central policy measures and local initiatives, to the advantage of the latter.

The development trends of the last decade in the field of integration can be summed up as follows:

State involvement: an ongoing restructuring of the network of state-run sheltered workshops Samhall and a gradual refocusing on economic performance have led to a decrease in the number of people employed through the organization. At the same time, part of the human resources of Samhall were diverted to consulting tasks, assisting other actors (primarily municipalities) in developing their own solutions.

Municipal involvement: social legislation reforms placed the primary responsibility for rehabilitation and integration of large "patient" groups (e.g. drug addicts or former mental patients), who were previously under the charge of the county council health system or of the national "*institutionsstyrelse*", on municipal authorities. This situation has created strong demand for new solutions as well as for professional competence. Some municipalities engaged in the creation of their own, municipal solutions, while others opened themselves for new actors, such as social co-operatives or voluntary organizations.

Grass-root involvement led to the appearance of the first social enterprises in the field of local development in the early 80s. Towards the mid-80s, a national network of co-operative development agencies emerged, aided by a growing involvement of the established popular movements (Stryjan and Wijkström, 1996). Since the mid-90s, this infrastructure has proven instrumental in the development of initiatives aimed at new, or newly acknowledged, problem-groups, namely the inhabitants of problematic residential suburbs, the young unemployed, and immigrants (SOU 1996, p. 54). Rather than integration or "job creation" in the narrow sense, these initiatives are often geared to create a blend of "non jobs", carried on voluntary basis, and regular jobs, often within emergent small businesses. In keeping with the Swedish organizational tradition, a strong emphasis is placed on mutuality and self-reliance. The growth pattern followed is, generally, that of *proliferation*, rather than *expansion* (Stryjan, 1997), i.e. facilitating the formation of new organizations, in emerging fields, rather than expanding and diversifying established ones.

Social co-operatives in Sweden

1. Brief historical description

The initial impulse for the formation of social co-operatives was provided by the Mental Health Services reform in the mid-1980s. Emancipatory aspirations, and growing militancy on the part of patient organizations, phased in well with advances in the field of psycho-pharmaceutics, and with growing cost-awareness in the health and welfare sectors. This resulted in a concerted drive, strongly advocated by mental patients' organizations, to "deinstitutionalize" mental care, phasing out big mental health institutions. Laudable intentions notwithstanding, the resources initially earmarked for creating alternative frameworks for the released patients were quite insufficient. Roughly at the same time, the admission practices of Samhall, the public sheltered workplace system, became increasingly selective, further reducing the options available for mental patients. Though ensuring physical subsistence the authorities thus generally failed to provide an acceptable social context for the persons involved. For the first time in the Swedish model's history a highly visible problem group was (re)created and released into society.

A first effort to address the issue by organizing worker co-operatives for mental patients was initiated in 1989, by actors within mental care: care personnel, patients and ex-patients. At present, there are around 90 social work co-operatives. Co-operative membership has been extended to include other groups who are excluded from the labour market because of various work disabilities. The co-operatives also offer trainee employment and work training, operating, in some cases, as contractors to the National Insurance Office or the National Employment Office. The social co-operatives are in a process of development, and a national organisation (Skooppi), was created in 2000.

2. Key features

2.1. Legal form(s) and structure of ownership

No legal incorporation form was expressly created to fit the requirements of social work co-operatives in Sweden. Consequently, the co-operatives formed adopt and try to adapt to pre-existing legal forms. Most adopt the economic association (*ekonomisk förening*) form of organisation that is intended for commercially operating co-operatives.

In accordance with the Association Act, the purpose of an economic association is to promote its members' economic interests by running an economic (commercial) business activity in which members participate, e.g. through their own work. Basic co-operative principles are incorporated in the legislation. Thus, membership is open to the relevant group of potential beneficiaries, in this case the disabled who work in the association, and the principle of "one person – one vote" applies. The economic association is NOT a non-profit incorporation form, nor is it expected to have

charitable aims. On the other hand, it is well suited for handling economic risks under democratic governance. Accordingly, associations whose objectives are to create opportunities for salaried work for its members in a business activity generally opt for the economic association form. Social work co-operatives with a primarily social emphasis, whose business activities are of minor financial proportions, tend to be organised as voluntary (in Swedish *ideell*) associations. This form is not regulated by legislation. As a rule of thumb, rules set up by the Law on Economic Associations apply to voluntary (*ideell*) associations as well, unless specifically stated otherwise in the association's bylaws. Thus, the voluntary association form supports democratic governance and non-profit operation but, since it is not a fully-fledged legal form, it is not adequate for operations that involve considerable economic risk-taking.

Association forms of incorporation

	Economic association	<i>Ideell</i> association
Legal definition	Yes	No
Minimum Capital requirement	No	No
Members	Required	Required
Articles/Charter	Yes	Yes
Democratic governance	Mandatory	Strongly encouraged
Registration	Necessary	Optional
Limited liability provision in commercial operations	Yes	No
Profit aim	Yes	No
Priority/exclusivity for social/charitable aims	No	Yes

Source: Stryjan (2002)

Formal authority in the co-operative is held by the general assembly and the board it elects. Membership consists of (and is in practice limited to) disabled persons who work or are otherwise active in the social work co-operative and from which the board members are appointed. The board handles the association's finances, recruitment and internal affairs.

Social co-operatives commonly have one or two tutors that provide support in the group's daily work and business activities. In most cases tutors are not members in the association, and are not eligible to the board either. However, they can exercise influence as co-opted (adjoint) board members.

2.2. Pursued goals

The goal is to create a workplace based on the abilities of the members, and where genuine work duties and participation in the operations of a company create empowerment and rehabilitation effects. Activities are primarily aimed at persons excluded from the labour market who otherwise would not have employment, or those who need a long time to enter or return to the labour market. By running a business activity, and producing goods and services that are commercially attractive, the objective is to get away from "therapy / occupational treatment" and create a social

context for the long-term sick and disabled people who cannot compete on the labour market, and where the Government-owned protected agencies are not a viable alternative. This goal is based on self-help, empowerment and social entrepreneurship. Ideally, the aspiration is that work-tasks would evolve into regular employment.

2.3. Type of jobs provided

The majority (about 65%) of members in social work co-operatives support themselves through the National Health Insurance System and do not receive a salary from the co-operative. 13% of the workforce in the co-operatives have employment covered by customary employment contracts. In these cases the company gets a salary subvention / supplement (representing from 50 to 90 percent of the wage) from the Labour Market Administration to compensate the company for the person's reduced work capacity. Similar subventions are available to commercial employers as well. One fifth of the co-operatives have members employed receiving salary subsidy.

22% of the workforce are non-members in work training programs of limited duration that are paid for by the National Insurance Office or by the National Employment Office.

In a few cases work is offered in the co-operative as a springboard to the open market through a Government employment subsidy scheme that lasts for up to two years.

2.4. Weight of training

Generally, social work-co-operatives start with a training program as preparation for a co-operative enterprise. Depending on the group's qualifications, the training may last from 6 months up to 2 years, and includes Business Concept Development, Co-operation, Finance and Association Studies, and in certain cases general subjects such as Swedish, Maths, Computing and Social Studies. Great importance is attached to the development of empowerment and democracy in the group and in the future enterprise.

Extensive further training was made available for existing co-operatives, financed by a range of EU projects. Courses in Accounting, Computing, Finance and Management are offered to those co-operatives that have more extensive financial activities.

2.5. Type of employed workers

Two-thirds of the co-operatives are aimed at people with psychic disabilities. Other co-operatives have members with drug abuse backgrounds, or intellectual or physical disabilities. 20 % have mixed member groups.

2.6. Type of resources

Start-up grants (for training and initial investment) are commonly provided by the respective municipality, with co-financing from a variety of actors, such as The State Inheritance Fund (*Allmänna arvsfonden*), the Labour Market Administration (central or county level), National Health Insurance (county or local level), etc. The European

Social Fund is also often approached. Beyond that, different types of fixed costs, such as premise rental, and tutors' salaries, as well as the cost of labour, would be met in a variety of ways. Thus:

- **Premises** may be put rent-free at the co-operative's disposal, generally by the municipality; alternatively, the co-operative may receive regular grants to cover premise-related cost. In some exceptional cases premises are mobilized by the members themselves, or put at the co-operative's disposal by other actors.

- **Tutors:** Generally, one or two tutors are employed in the co-operative as support to the group. As is the case with premises, tutors may be municipal employees put at the co-operative's disposal (performance donated "in kind"), or employees of the co-operative, whose salaries are wholly or partly covered by municipal grants. In about 20 percent of the cases, tutors' wages are wholly financed by the co-operative.

- **Labour:** co-operatives that pay wages are generally entitled to a wage-subvention. In other co-operatives that do not have employees (due either to limited scope of operation or to members being hindered by their state or by the social insurance regulations from moving from income-maintenance funding to regular employment) members are supported by individual pension or subsidy, and contribute with unpaid work.

- **Revenues:** All the social work co-operatives run some business operations. The relationship between revenues from business activity and direct public financing varies greatly. The goal is to reduce the amount of public support over time with the aim of eventually achieving the co-operative's autonomy and normalisation. However, for some co-operatives this goal is unrealistic due to the type of business they run. Around a fifth of the co-operatives have income that cover the enterprise's expenses, and only receive support from the Labour Market Administration with respect to members' salary subvention. Members covered by the Special Support Act (rights legislation for people with intellectual disabilities) run their own daily activities in the co-operative form and in so doing receive public finance as a part of their business activity, and pay for instructor services and the premises themselves.

15-20% of the co-operatives sell trainee workplaces to the National Insurance Office, the Social Services or the National Employment Office.

2.7. Links with public policies

As noted above, the emergence of social work co-operatives was triggered by the introduction of new public policies aiming to move mental patients and other excluded groups out of institutions and into mainstream society. The *Psyk-ädel* reform, during the 1990s, strengthened the responsibility of the municipalities for care and integration of people with psychical and intellectual disabilities, and led to the creation of public occupational programs at municipal level. Social work co-operatives have become an alternative encouraged by certain municipalities.

Finally, from the late 90s and onwards, government policies implemented by the Labour Market Board have been expressly aimed at increasing labour-force

participation. The Swedish Government's target is that 80% of the working population be gainfully employed by 2004.

The co-operatives are initiated either by special interest groups or by personnel from the municipalities or from within psychiatry. In most cases they are created as projects that are supported locally by a joint action group with representatives from the municipality, the National Insurance Office and the National Employment Office. While opening the way for flexible solutions, the project form also means that financing is time-limited. Consequently, there is a continuous process of negotiation with and between the different tiers of local and central authorities to address the issue of responsibility for financing support to the activities.

Social work co-operatives' activities are primarily associated to the sphere of responsibility of the municipalities and the socio-political domain, because they offer employment to people who have been totally excluded from entering the labour market. The development of the co-operatives and the realisation that it is employment that is being pursued has meant a shift to employment and economic policies.

2.8. Basic data

There are presently about 90 social work co-operatives in Sweden. A physical count of 44 of these was conducted in 2001. Based on this count, it is estimated that there are about 1 400 people who work in the 90 co-operatives, of which:

- about 900 are supported via the National Health Insurance System;
- about 200 receive a subventioned salary; and
- about 300 are participating in co-operatives through work training programs on remuneration from various Government subsidies or activity support.

Turnover varies significantly, from about 3 000 euro to 600 000 euro. Estimates based on the physical count show that approximately 50% of the co-operatives have a turnover comprised between 10 000 and 40 000 euro, while a quarter have a turnover over 100 000 euro. Total turnover for the business activities for the 90 co-operatives is estimated to be around 6 million euro.

3. The relation to the EMES socio-economic criteria

3.1. A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

All social work co-operatives in Sweden produce goods and services for the open market. However, there are large variations with respect to the scope of business activity. In this regard, it is possible to identify three types of social work co-operatives:

- A: Associated social work co-operatives, which have relatively minor business activities, and whose primary objective is to create a social context and promote empowerment. Such co-operatives often work in co-operation with municipal and foundation-run activity centres.

- B: Social work co-operatives, which run business activities that have little economic potential, but have major rehabilitation effects, e.g. work with dogs (dog nursery), plantations, handicraft or other cultural activities.

- C: Co-operatives that run business activities with a clear objective of offering its members work and employment.

All social work co-operatives are based on the self-help principle, the development of the co-operative's identity, the participation of members and their taking responsibility, which means that the process of building up the business very often takes a long time, as it is dependent on the group's decision-making ability and level of experience. Training in the decision-making process, business affairs and co-operation is therefore an important part of the co-operatives' work.

3.2. A high degree of autonomy

Formally speaking, each co-operative is an independent legal person, governed by its elected board and officers. Formal positions in the board are held by the co-operative's members. Membership is normally offered to the co-operative's users only. In practice, however, the actual scope of autonomy is largely determined by the level of consciousness and knowledge of the members in the co-operatives, and the informal dialogue with the co-operative's tutors and the civil servants that administer the public support to the co-operatives.

In most cases (approximately 80%), tutors are employed by the respective municipality and "lent out" to the co-operatives. Their attitude as co-opted members of the board, as well as the attitude of the instructors' employer towards the co-operative, strongly influence the level of autonomy of the board and members of the co-operative. The informal authority that can be exercised from the public sector is difficult to judge, and varies from co-operative to co-operative. Written contracts are only found in a handful of cases.

The degree of dependence on public grants does, naturally, influence the degree of independence. The social work co-operatives that receive a large share of their income from sales to the private and/or public sector generally have a higher level of autonomy. The instructors in these co-operatives are employed by the co-operative itself or by an umbrella organisation.

3.3. A significant level of economic risk

Typically, social work co-operatives operate in low-capital branches and the investments involved are small (or, alternatively, are borne by other parts). The direct business risk, set in financial terms, is rather low. Nonetheless, the risks for the enterprise's survival as an economic enterprise are considerable. This is evident for the co-operatives that base their activities principally on sales; in some cases such co-operatives have been forced to cease operations. The picture is hardly much different for those co-operatives that are dependent on public grants. The rule regimes that govern public-sector financing and contracting are prone to drastic and largely

unpredictable changes. Thus, the unclear period that followed the transfer of financing responsibility for psychiatric care from county to municipal level in the early 90s literally wiped out over one half of the first cohort of social co-operatives.

Members' personal financial risk in the co-operatives is minimal. Unlike joint-stock companies, there is no legally set minimum own capital requirement for economic associations. In the social work co-operatives, member's shares are normally set at a symbolic level in the range of 10 to 50 euro. Since members' personal income is guaranteed through the social insurance system, the collapse of a co-operative would not significantly affect members' income.

This low level of financial risk needs paradoxically *not* be seen as a sign of low independence. Two contesting claims can be made:

- a) the financial risk in this case is on a par with members' low income and collateral level, and should be judged in this way. Put in other words, the risk seems low only to observers with an average income level. For the persons involved, the risk - both in pecuniary and in cognitive terms - may appear considerable indeed;
- b) the low level of investment does prevent lock-in effects, ensuring the enterprise can maintain a realistic option of exit. The ability to cease operations may improve the enterprise's negotiating position vs. municipal authorities, effectively *increasing* its autonomy.

3.4. A minimum amount of paid work

The social work co-operatives are run, to a large extent, by members who are supported by the National Health Insurance System or by Government-backed labour market programs. A large portion of the labour invested by members is, in fact, voluntary. However, the objective for the majority of co-operatives is to move from subsidy to salary, and this has been successfully achieved by those co-operatives that have a business concept that generates a turnover covering all salary expenses.

The board and association activities of the company are, as a rule, carried on a voluntary basis. Even part of the cooperative's trade activity may be carried out as voluntary (i.e. non salaried) work. Thus, the bulk of voluntary work is contributed by the co-operative's members. Voluntary work from people who are not members in a co-operative is very rare, and normally *not* encouraged within the core activities. It usually involves secondary work duties such as supporting functions to the board, financial accounting or auditing work.

3.5. An explicit aim to benefit the community

Social work co-operatives are formed by people who find themselves excluded from the ordinary labour market, and who are not covered by the usual labour market programs. The alternative for these people is total exclusion from the social status and from the feeling of social community that employment provides. The co-operatives develop participation, and help to reduce costs for healthcare and social services. Running a common workplace based on the principles of a co-operative whose aims

are self-help, empowerment and social entrepreneurship has rehabilitation effects for co-operative members.

The co-operatives work on a scale between, on the one hand, the goal of using employment in the co-operative as a way of integration into local community, and on the other, the goal of integrating people into the labour market, either through paid employment in the co-operatives or using employment in the co-operative as a stepping stone to new employment. Added value to local community is created by producing services that could not be commercially viable in other forms of enterprise. Relations to customers and others in the local work environment contribute to integration, and lead to innovative ways of satisfying local needs through the activities of the co-operative.

3.6. An initiative launched by a group of citizens

In many parts of the country, adult education organisations offer co-operative training to those interested in starting a social work co-operative. Groups that are formed in this way develop their business concepts; these are then put into practice as co-operative activities. Initiatives can also originate from participants in a municipality work program that wish to take over and develop a business activity in co-operative form.

Social co-operatives may also be started on the initiative of municipality personnel. Rehabilitation staff members are often initiators, as they work with groups that need to progress from therapeutic measures to employment.

Interest organisations for the disabled are often initiators for starting a social work co-operative, or for initiating an adult education program.

3.7. A decision-making power not based on capital ownership

The decision-making process in the co-operatives is vested in its members. The principle one member – one vote applies, and the board consists, for the most part, of members in the co-operative. Membership shares are kept low so as not to exclude or deter potential members.

3.8. A participatory nature involving the persons affected by the activity

Members make decisions and control the business activity and association with support from the co-operative's instructors. Everyone working in the co-operative is offered membership after a trainee period, often 3 – 6 months.

3.9. A limited profit distribution

The profits declared are taxed in line with normal corporate income tax. Distribution of these profits is often passed up in favour of reinvestment in the business activity. According to the co-operatives' statutes, however, the profits may be used for social activities, trips and training programs following the decision of the members.

4. Supporting umbrella structures

Co-operative development agencies: A network of 26 co-operative development agencies (*Lokala Kooperativa Utvecklingscentrer*, or LKU) provides national coverage as to advice, information and training for co-operatives and for social enterprises. Each local agency is a free standing legal person, generally incorporated as an economic association, established by individuals and organizations in the region (Stryjan, 1997). Membership in these associations varies from case to case and typically consists of co-operative enterprises (or their local branches), civic organisations (popular movements) and (in part of the cases) municipal authorities. Central government funds are granted as matching financing. In return, the LKU is obliged to provide a statutory volume of free of charge advisory and educational services. Deeper involvement in specific projects (such as the formation of a particular social co-operative) is normally provided as contracted consulting service. The LKUs collaborate with the authorities that finance training and advice to the social work co-operatives. Training often takes place in consultation with LKU and the various adult education organisations. The LKUs are presently organized in a national association, the Association for co-operative development (*Föreningen Kooperativ Utveckling*, or FKU).

The Social Co-operative Project: This project, which was formed in 1998, is run by the Co-operative Development Agencies' joint organisation (FKU) and national organizations of disabled people³. It is financed by the Swedish State Inheritance Fund and the European Social Fund. At the national level, the Social Co-operative Project has run an information and training program on social work co-operatives, produced information material, run lobby activities and supported the formation of Skoopi, the interest organisation for the social work co-operatives.

Skoopi: This association of social co-operatives was formed in 2000, and is presently building up a common interest organisation that is to take over parts of the activities of the Social Co-operative Project, as well as looking after the interests, networking and training investments for members of the co-operative and instructors. Around 40 social work co-operatives are currently members of Skoopi.

5. The innovative features

The distinguishing feature of the social co-operatives is the strong emphasis on empowerment and self-reliance, to a degree that is somewhat unusual for this particular target group. Social work co-operatives cover the needs of the disabled that otherwise would not be met by either the public or private sector. People that find themselves totally excluded from the labour market are given the option of developing and using their own resources in employment opportunities that they have created and generated themselves.

³ *Riksförbundet för Social och Mental Hälsa* (RSMH, National Association for Social and Mental Health), *Schizofreniförbundet* (Schizophrenia Association) and *Handikappförbunden Samarbetsorgan* (HSO, Co-operation Organisation of the Handicap Associations).

As a rule, members have severe functional or work disabilities, but despite this they participate in the democratic processes, control and running of the company. Participation and taking responsibility are important rehabilitation factors in the social work co-operatives. This means a new identity and an active role, as opposed to being a passive recipient of various public programs.

The formal authority is in the hands of the members in the co-operative with support from instructors, whose task is not to be working managers, but to support the board's internal management of the co-operative. The profession of instructor for the co-operatives is new, and means an educational role for the development of empowerment, democracy and enterprise for the members in the co-operative.

Local Community Business (*Lokala Gemenskapsföretag*)

1. Brief historical description

"Local community businesses" (*Lokala Gemenskapsföretag*) are a group of social enterprises that combine community development with job creation and integration of the long-time unemployed in the community. Community businesses are a relatively new phenomenon; the oldest of the enterprises identified as such was established in 1998. Contacts with community businesses in Scotland, in the early 90s, seem to have provided an important stimulus. Eight community businesses operate at present, in communities where the development of welfare services and job possibilities are closely linked to community survival, primarily in sparsely populated areas in the north of Sweden (one operates, however, in a metropolitan "problem" suburb). They were created by varying coalitions of individuals and/or associations/organizations in the local society.

2. Key features

2.1. Legal form(s) and structure of ownership

Enterprises in this group apply highly complex multi-stakeholder and multi-tier structural solutions. Generally, the different groups of stakeholders and supporters organize in a voluntary association (*ideell förening*), that may consist of individuals or be a mix of physical and legal persons that share a common interest in developing the community. Business operations are incorporated separately, as an economic association or a joint stock company, whose stock (or membership shares, as the case may be) is held by the voluntary association alone, or together with additional legal person-partners. The democratic structure is encoded primarily in the voluntary association, and, in part of the cases, in the ownership arrangements whereby influence is allocated among the various stakeholders.

2.2. Pursued goals

The primary goal is to establish a self-sustaining enterprise, as a means to develop the local community and its service infrastructure. The only urban case, *Grogrunden* in Gothenburg, seems to balance between the goal of direct service development, and the aspiration to act as an entrepreneurial incubator that assists its employees in moving on to independent enterprising. Creating meaningful employment and developing skills and work capacity for disadvantaged groups are important elements of the idea. The enterprises utilize familiarity and proximity of needs, possibilities and means in the local community, to identify or generate business opportunities.

2.3. Type of jobs provided

The range of jobs provided varies from regular jobs to voluntary work, and from ordinary employment contracts to employment contracts with a salary subsidy for

persons with reduced work capacity. A variety of labour market board placements (fully public-funded employment of limited duration) could also be observed. Voluntary work contributions are primarily to be found in management- and board work.

2.4. Weight of training

There is no uniform policy as regards regular training. Training programs may be a part of the activities depending on the availability of funding from the National Health Insurance System or the Labour Market Administration.

2.5. Type of employed workers

The initiatives address all types of people that are excluded from the labour market and are not restricted to a definite social or handicap-defined group. Disabled, long-term unemployed, young unemployed and disadvantaged people on social benefit programs (in some cases of immigrant origin) or persons who need a long term rehabilitation may be recruited.

2.6. Type of resources

The enterprises combine a mixture of market and non-market resources. For most initiatives, however, revenues from sales on the market are the central component of the resource mix. Public funding (budgetary or in kind) covers the cost of premises in two of the eight local community businesses and tutors' wages in four of them. The remaining ones cover these expenses with own revenue. A publicly financed wage supplement is being paid to a large portion of the employees. Wage subventions of this type are tied to the person employed, and may be claimed by any employer, private or public. In a sense, they are a feature of the (labour) market, rather than an enterprise-specific public subvention.

Significant inputs of voluntary labour from the community (others than service on the board) are rather rare. The proximity and connection to the local community opens the possibility (and the information inputs) to design services that are locally suitable. In a sense, the surrounding community's willingness to patronize the services offered is seldom a purely economic decision. Local demand generally rests on a substantial foundation of local goodwill.

2.7. Links with public policies

The enterprises naturally link to the policies of insertion and rehabilitation that apply, and are keyed to claim those sources of funding for wage supplement for the handicapped people employed that the labour market authorities and the health insurance provide at the given time. Where applicable, funds for local development are mobilized. One enterprise (Grogrunden) was consciously designed to provide a complement to an operating municipal rehabilitation/insertion workshop.

2.8. Basic data

There are 8 community businesses in Sweden today with the main aim of creating jobs for people excluded from the labour market. The estimated aggregate turnover is 1 million euro.

Around 110 persons work in these eight enterprises. 10 % are employed as managers or tutors. 25% have work disabilities and their employment is covered by customary employment contracts. The rest are trainees in different kinds of labour market programs or paid by the social security system.

3. The relation to the EMES socio-economic criteria

3.1. A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

All community businesses sell services or goods to private customers and to public authorities in the locality. The selling of work-training places is included as a source of commercial revenue in the business idea of two of the enterprises.

3.2. A high degree of autonomy

Four of the enterprises have representatives from municipalities, public agencies, or Samhall (which is described in the next identification sheet) included in their board of directors. The remainder are fully controlled by individuals and representatives of voluntary organisations and associations formed by different disability groups. The multitude of stakeholders involved may in fact enhance the enterprise's autonomy vs. any single one of them.

The level of investment varies widely among the enterprises. It would seem that some enterprises counter the instability inherent in dependence on public policies by ploughing in profits and raising capital intensity (and thus autonomy), while others pursue an opposite strategy of extreme reduction of fixed costs, and reliance on transfers in kind and loaned facilities. Thus, in half the cases (4), the enterprises are fully self-financing, and cover the employment of management and tutors with own revenue. Four others are considerably less robust. Instructors are financed by the local authorities or through EU funds, which makes the business vulnerable to political changes, the vagaries of project-financing, etc.

3.3. A significant level of economic risk

All enterprises are fully fledged legal persons, engaged in economic activity. Their operation thus involves, *ex definitio*, a considerable economic risk. One case of bankruptcy is known. Further, the cost of labour recruited from the target group(s) is directly influenced by policy measures (such as the introduction, adjustment, or withdrawal of wage-support). This makes the enterprises highly sensitive to policy shifts. A variety of strategies are pursued in order to contain risk. Investment strategies diverge widely (see above, 3.2). While some enterprises choose to invest into a more stable state, others pursue the opposite path of reducing fixed costs. The

commercial activity is normally incorporated either as a joint-stock firm or as an economic association, legal forms that both safeguard limited liability.

3.4. A minimum amount of paid work

See above. As a rule, the community businesses strive to create workplaces governed by regular employment contracts, within a regular business operation. Voluntary work inputs are intentionally kept at low level, and would mostly be contributed by association members, and located in board functions and in auxiliary tasks.

3.5. An explicit aim to benefit the community

The enterprises' obligations to the local community are encoded in their multi-stakeholder governance structure, that is designed to balance and represent local interests, as well as in their statements of purpose. The precise goals chosen would necessarily vary from one locality to another. In smaller or remote communities, the generation of local workplaces is in itself of direct benefit. The same can be said of the creation of new services (such as e.g. the opening of a lunch restaurant in a suburb that could previously not even boast of a hot-dog stand) and of work integration of marginalized inhabitants contribute to the community's social fabric and to improving life quality.

3.6. An initiative launched by a group of citizens

Founding initiatives may come from a range of entrepreneurial actors, such as local activists and residents, consultants in support organisations (for example co-operative development agencies) or from people in different local associations.

3.7. A decision-making power not based on capital ownership

The governance structures of the community enterprises balance the interests of the founding stakeholders, through complex two-tier arrangements that combine and blend elements of ownership and membership (Stryjan, 1989). The governance structures adopted conform, roughly, to the pattern outlined below:

- a) Ownership rights are vested (wholly or partly) in a voluntary association that is established by a coalition of stakeholder organizations (local associations and/or local branches of national associations, contingently also local levels of national authorities and/or local government organs). Some of the associations consist of legal persons only. In others also physical persons (local activists, members of the community) are invited to join. The distribution and weighting of stakeholders' voting rights in the founding association is regulated in the bylaws, and is *not* based on capital ownership.
- b) The founding association incorporates, and owns shares of (or stock of, respectively) an economic association or a joint stock company that manages the commercial operations. Additional stakeholders (e.g. the employees, collectively organized as an association, or the management) may, in some cases, be invited in as share/stock owners. In such cases, the distribution of voting rights between the founding association and the other

shareholders is regulated in the company's bylaws or by a pre-agreed distribution of shares, and the founding association exercises its voting rights *en bloc*.

- c) Business operations are owned and run by the incorporated entity under a management board that is elected by the stockholders or the members. The enterprise board is a legally separate entity that may, but needs not, have the same personal composition as the board of the founding association.

3.8. A participatory nature involving the persons affected by the activity

In three of the local community businesses some (but not all) of the workers are members of the economic association. In one more case an association that is formed by employees, sympathisers and support persons holds a stock post in the company. In the remaining four cases there is no formal participation of the persons affected by the activity.

3.9. A limited profit distribution

The business operations of the local community businesses are incorporated as economic associations or as joint-stock companies. As such, they are not bound *formally* by a non-distribution constraint. However, the potential recipients of any hypothetical dividends - the respective founding associations - are non-profit associations. As noted, the incorporation form is primarily adopted as a means to contain business risk, and *not* in order to facilitate a distribution of profits. The legal construction opens, in some cases, a legal way of paying dividends to the users/workers. We have no information to date of this actually being done.

4. Supporting umbrella structures

A company with the aim to support community businesses in Sweden and promote the model, *CB Support Sweden*, was established in 1999. It is owned by five community businesses in the north of Sweden.

The Co-operative Development Agencies (CDAs) can provide some professional support as part of their mandatory function. The Gothenburg CDA is closely involved at present in the development of a community business along these lines in the Gothenburg metropolitan area.

5. The innovative features

The model combines, in an innovative way, the goals of community development (perceived in a broad way) and labour-market integration. The mobilization of a broad range of local stakeholders gives rise to an innovative corporate multi-stakeholder governance structure (see above, 3.7).

Samhall

1. Brief historical description

The Swedish model of welfare makes the right to employment a general civic right. Accordingly, work integration has been a public responsibility from the 30s onwards. In principle, integration was to be guaranteed through proper maintenance of the labour market, and primarily achieved within enterprises in the private sector. This implied subsidies for enterprises that employ disabled people and/or for the adjustment of individual working places to accommodate workers with disabilities. Public sheltered workshops for disabled were created to meet the increasing requirements for industrial workforce. These were organized, initially within a public authority, *Samhällsföretaget*, that was restructured in 1980 as a State-owned company under the name *Samhall*.

Commercially, Samhall has proven to be a successful enterprise, that managed to combine work-integration and rehabilitation with profitable business-ideas. Revenues were mainly generated through menial subcontractor work (assembly, packaging, component production) for big enterprises.

Samhall's economic environment changed unfavourably in the last decade, as former contractors (especially in the car, engineering and telecommunications industries) moved their production to other countries or were hit by economic downturn. Simultaneously, the public subsidies to Samhall were reduced, and owner's (i.e. the state, in its capacity as owner) claims on performance were stepped up. The pressure to rationalize and to generate surplus in a hardening economic climate has, according to critics, led to workers with lower work-capacity being selected against. Official reports⁴ indicate that this has in effect led Samhall to shut out people with particular disabilities, especially those with mental health and learning problems.

Samhall is currently undergoing a major reconstruction that expressly emphasises the importance of rehabilitation activity as a viable business option. New business areas are explored within the service sector, and the goal is to increase the percentage of the workforce employed in the service sector from the present 40 percent to 55 percent in 2004. There is also an interest to establish co-operation with local authorities and other actors in the work integration field.

2. Key features

2.1. Legal form(s) and structure of ownership

Samhall AB is a for-profit corporation with the Swedish state as its sole owner. Until this year (January 1st, 2002) the corporation encompassed seven daughter-companies,

⁴ Among others SOU 2001:34 *Inriktning och styrning av Samhalls verksamhet* and SOU 2002:22, *Utredningen om arbetsmarknadsprogram för personer med nedsatt arbetsförmåga*.

that were amalgamated into a single company with six divisions, of which four were to deal with business activity and two with human resources development. Activities are organized in six geographical regions (Yearly Report, 2002).

2.2. Pursued goals

The Government has commissioned Samhall to pursue four goals:

- employment goal: providing employment for persons with a handicap. For 2001, the goal was to provide not less than 31 million hours of work;
- recruitment goal: recruiting not less than 40% people with mental or intellectual disabilities and/or people with multi-handicap;
- insertion goal: five percent of the disabled employed should leave Samhall for regular employment in the labour market in the course of the year;
- economic outcome goal, implying effectiveness and a high utility of resources.

2.3. Type of jobs provided

Samhall has about 27 000 employees, of which 93% have some sort of work disability. The type of jobs provided includes full-time and part-time labour contracts (39% of the women and 21% of the men work part-time). There are also employees that are recruited "directly", i.e. *not* from the target-group, primarily for tasks that are difficult for people with a disability. "Directly employed" may also be recruited to meet peaks in production. Working conditions and labour contracts differ between disabled employees and those "directly" employed.

A Government grant compensates for the costs borne by the company according to regional distribution of the workshops, the possibility to offer work in different sectors and the adjustment to the workers with less capacity and tempo. Samhall also offers training and rehabilitation and technical adjustment for workers with special needs.

An average of 1 000 employees leaves Samhall every year, presumably for other jobs outside the sheltered sector. 1 744 employees were offered practice placements in regular workplaces outside Samhall in the course of the year.

2.4. Weight of training

Beside work participation, that is considered the main base for personal development and learning, Samhall offers a range of counselling and courses that address the person's actual work task at Samhall or may increase the possibilities for the person to get another job on the labour market. Training may also include basic skills, such as Swedish, reading, arithmetic, etc.

Two-thirds of the target group of employees with a disability underwent some training in the course of the year 2001; the average for the entire target group was of 47 hours per employee/year. This was somewhat less than the internal goal originally set for the year, which was 50 hours education/training per employee/year.

1 744 employees at Samhall had a practical experience on the ordinary market during 2001 with the purpose of obtaining an ordinary job.

A 30-hour course and counselling package (titled *Våga Vinn*) that is intended to cover the entire target workforce in the course of three years was launched in 2000.

2.5. Type of employed workers

The local employment office assigns work at Samhall after analysing the possibilities for the person to get a job on the ordinary labour market. Samhall employs people with a broad range of functional work disabilities. The breakdown for 2001 by category of handicap was as follows:

Category of handicap	Percentage
Physical	35%
Mental	16%
Intellectual	15%
Socio-medical	10%
Others	9%

A basic requirement for employment is the ability to work at least halftime. This requirement automatically excludes large groups.

2.6. Type of resources

Revenues from the sale of goods and services account for more than half of Samhall's income. The balance is made up of state grants (see also section 2.7, below). The grants are approved, on a yearly basis, by the Swedish Parliament, that allocates the volume of employment that is to be offered by Samhall. The grant is calculated as a reimbursement for the extra costs that are borne by Samhall (as compared to a conventional enterprise employing conventional labour force) for following policy directives, such as geographic coverage, lower work-tempo, personal counselling, etc. Formally, the state-grant is entered in Samhall's balance sheet as a revenue for a service contracted by the state.

2.7. Links with public policies

Samhall is primarily an instrument of the state's labour market policy. As noted above, state grants are calculated as a reimbursement for the expense incurred in following the state's policy. The level of reimbursement has been steadily decreasing from the mid-90s onwards, and kept unchanged in nominal terms, despite increasing wages and costs, during the last five years. The grant shortfall has been offset by increasing revenues, and by lowering the contracted volume of employment. On the whole, the pressures for rationalization and profitability have increased.

Year	Contracted volume (in millions of working hours)	Business revenue (in millions of Swedish crowns)	State grant (in millions of Swedish crowns)
1994	33,6	3825	4960
1997	32,2	4499	4424
1998	32,3	4974	4456
1999	31,9	5017	4262
2000	31,9	5744	4262
2201	31,0	4689	4262
2002	28,5		4262

2.8. Basic data

Samhall is Sweden's biggest subcontractor. In 2001 Samhall employed 27 726 persons, of which 25 328 with a disability. Employment for people in the target group amounted to 22 436 FTA (*Personalberättelse* - Personnel report 2001). These worked in 800 workshops, located in 300 places all over Sweden.

Fields of operation include electronics, wiring, packing, components for telecommunication and mechanics. Sewing, quality assemblage and medicine technology are traditionally important lines of operation. A reorientation towards the service sector has been started, in response to the ongoing realignment of Swedish industry. In this field Samhall established operations in manpower, cleaning, house maintenance, IT, service of facilities for the disabled, home-help services and restaurants.

The turnover for 2001 was about 900 million euro.

3. The relation to the EMES socio-economic criteria

3.1. A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

The main activities are production of goods and selling of services. To achieve the labour market policy goal decreed by the Government there are also extensive teaching and training programs (in terms of coverage; it should be noted that the volume of training amounts to roughly two percent of the work-hours worked) to develop employees' ability and to enhance their prospects of entering the ordinary labour market.

3.2. A high degree of autonomy

Samhall enjoys a wide autonomy as regards the choice of business strategy, development of new products and business lines, etc. Yet its principal policy goals are determined by the Swedish State, its formal owner, that also appoints its board. The management may decide to exit from particular operations, but not from the field as a whole.

3.3. A significant level of economic risk

As an enterprise, Samhall is exposed to a considerable level of economic risk, to the extent that it may close its balance at loss. However, its specific institutional make-up - as a hybrid between a policy organ and a commercial operation - virtually excludes the possibility of bankruptcy.

3.4. A minimum amount of paid work

All work carried within Samhall is governed by employment contracts.

3.5. An explicit aim to benefit to the community

The location of Samhall's workshops may be influenced by (centrally formulated) regional planning considerations. There is, however, no explicit link between Samhall's policy and community goals.

3.6. An initiative launched by a group of citizens

The initiative was formulated and driven by the state. Indirectly, the principles behind the organization can be traced back to the labour movement's post-war program of 1945.

3.7. A decision-making power not based on capital ownership

The decision-making prerogative is delegated from the state, in its capacity as the enterprise's owner.

3.8. A participatory nature involving the persons affected by the activity

The enterprise has no formal participative mechanisms other than those stipulated by the (general) Law on Co-determination.

3.9. A limited profit distribution

There is no distribution constraint legislated, nor written into the enterprise's bylaws. The state is entitled by statute to appropriate the enterprise's residual.

4. The supporting umbrella structures

Samhall has a national coverage. In this respect it may be considered the umbrella organization integrating a large number of scattered workshops. These are subsidiaries of the central organization and have no formal say in policy formation.

5. The innovative features

The institutional make-up of Samhall is an interesting example of the superimposition of enterprise models on what is in essence a state agency. As such, it provides a wealth of interesting illustration as regards the budgeting of inclusion-oriented policies, balance sheet construction, and the combination of entrepreneurship and policy implementation.

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