

Arbeitsassistentz
– Support for the Integration of Disabled People
into the Labour Market
Peer review: Sweden

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Introduction

The statements and comments in this paper are based on the presentation and assessment of Arbeitsassistenz by the Independent Expert (Univ.-Doz. Dr. Walter Blumberger). The note follows the structure outlined by ÖSB for peer country comments¹.

Part 1: Brief assessment of the relevance of the policy/measure to the peer country

One of the special measures in Sweden for persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work is called SIUS (Special introductory and follow-up support). There are some similarities between SIUS and Arbeitsassistenz (see part 2 of this paper).

There sure are also some other similarities between the labour market situation in Sweden and that in Austria. But there are also a number of important differences. Among these the following tables may illustrate some aspects that are of significant importance.

Table 1: Employment rate (yearly average for 1999)

	Total	Men	Women
Persons in the age group 16-64 years	72.9 %	74.8 %	70.9 %

The average employment rate is higher in Sweden than in Austria (Table 1)². On the other hand the unemployment rate is maybe a little bit lower in Austria than in Sweden (Table 2). In certain parts of Sweden, unemployment is still considerably higher and the employment ratio considerably lower than in the rest of the country.

Table 2: Unemployment rate (ILO-definition, yearly average for 1999)

	Total	Men	Women
Persons in the age group 16-64 years	7.1 %	7.5 %	6.7 %

The open unemployment has decreased to below 4 % in the end of 2000 according to the national definition. In addition, at present 3.1 % of the labour force are in labour market policy programmes (the same as in 1999).

For men the workforce ratio has decreased every decade since the 60s. For women the situation has been different. The workforce ratio was rising rapidly during the 70s and 80s, but during the 90s the ratio decreased with the same percentage as for men.

¹ I want to express my sincere gratitude to Ms Mona Stål, the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications for valuable contributions.

² Based on information from the Swedish National Labour Market Board (Årsredovisning 1999. Only available in Swedish)

The employment rate is lower - and the unemployment rate higher - among persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work compared to the labour force as a whole (Table 3).

Table 3: Persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work 1999

	Total	Men	Women
Unemployment rate (national definition)	9.1 %	10.6%	7.7%
Employment rate	68.1 %	71.3%	65.1%

Both the employment rate and the unemployment rate are lower among women having functional limitation with reduced ability to work compared with men in the same situation (Table 3). The relation is the same in labour market policy programmes, as will be shown later.

Among the persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work 32% are working part-time compared to 23% in the population as a whole.

The share of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work in active labour market measures is higher than the corresponding percentage of unemployment (Table 4). This shows that disabled are prioritised in the active labour market measures.

Table 4: Persons having functional limitation - registered at AMV - with reduced ability to work, share of

Unemployment	11 %
Active labour market measures	16 %

The labour force participation rate is much lower among persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work than in the labour force as a whole (Table 5). The Swedish pensions system (and other social benefits as well) has provided incentives for early retirement, which has become a benefit trap in discouraging persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work from entering or re-entering the labour market³.

Table 5: Labour force participation rate 1999

	Total	Men	Women
Persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work	61.9 %	63.8 %	60.3 %
Persons 16-64 years	77.2 %	79.5 %	74.8 %

³ Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications: Alla lika olika – Mångfald i arbetslivet (Ds 2000:69). Only available in Swedish.

Some ten per cent of the population are having functional limitation with reduced ability to work. The percentage is higher for old workers than for the younger groups (Table 6).

Table 6: Persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work in different age groups 1999⁴

Age	Total number	Labour force participation	Labour force participation rate	Part of the population of the same age
16-29	68 000	39 000	56.0%	4.5%
30-49	223 000	171 000	76.9%	9.2%
50-64	293 000	171 000	58.5%	18.0%
16-64	584 000	381 000	65.2%	10.5%

The number of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work is 584,000. Among them 381,000 participated in the labour force. The number of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work is expected to increase to 600,000 in the year 2015⁵.

The employment rate in Austria was 66,1 per cent in 1998. This is significant lower than Sweden's. Sweden now has the opportunity to once again achieve **full employment**. In the 1999 Budget Bill, the government supplemented the existing target of halved open unemployment by 2000 with an employment target. The driving forces behind this was the significance of employment for growth, an endeavour to bring about a more even distribution of income opportunities in society and the need to secure the future financing of welfare. This target means that the proportion of the population aged between 20 and 64 in regular employment needs to increase from 74 per cent in 1997 to 80 per cent in 2004. A higher employment ratio is necessary in the light of the expected demographic developments involving an increase in the number of older people with the accompanying need for increased resources for health care, social services and pensions⁶. Simultaneously we are witnessing another serious development: elimination from the labour market due to physical or psychological reasons is on the increase. Some of the people thus eliminated are given early retirement, although due to the stricter interpretation of the regulations now applied by the social insurance office when granting early retirement pensions, many of these people will end up on the employment agency books. Those affected need to find a new kind of employment requiring a long rehabilitation period. This implies more difficult cases and greater strain on operations.

The integration of disabled people into the labour market has been a high political priority in Sweden for many years, driven by concerns to eliminate discrimination and reduce social exclusion among disabled people. More recently it has also been obvious that every citizen

⁴ Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications: Alla lika olika – Mångfald i arbetslivet (Ds 2000:69). Only available in Swedish.

⁵ Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications: Alla lika olika – Mångfald i arbetslivet (Ds 2000:69). Only available in Swedish.

⁶ Sweden's Action Plan for Employment (May, 2000)

will be important in a market situation characterised by bottlenecks and scarcity of personnel. This concern has been reflected both in major legislative changes and in the development of new active labour market measures during the 90s targeted at disabled people. The Ombudsman system in Sweden is of great importance as a guarantee against oppressive measures within the judicial system and the civil administration. A **Handicap Ombudsman** was introduced in 1994 with similar duties of surveillance in this sphere. A new anti-discrimination legislation was implemented in 1999, in the form of the **Disability Discrimination Act**.

In general the disabled labour force group has attained an improved labour market situation, with the exception of the 55-64 year old group. In this group we find a worrying tendency for the number of women to increase. This could be a first indication that women are beginning to experience more problems on the labour market and are becoming disabled as a consequence.

In recent years labour market policy has been increasingly oriented towards preventing the marginalization of those groups having a weak link to the labour market, and this has contributed to a reduction in the number of long-term unemployed and the number of long-term registrations. Long-term registrations have dropped by 30 percent in a single year. This reduction applies to both men and women.

The **activation principle** in Swedish labour market policy means that employment will always take precedence over programmes or the passive payment of unemployment benefit. The employment service will continue to prioritise the long-term unemployed and those who have been, or who risk being, registered for lengthy periods with the employment services. The individual action plans are to be further developed and established before the end of three months of unemployment. Labour market policy regulations are to be simplified. In order to further enhance the work opportunities for those people registered at job centres for a long period the government introduced on 1 October 1999 a special subsidy for employers. The subsidy, known as an extended recruitment incentive, is supplementary to the previously introduced general recruitment incentive.

From 1 August 2000, an **activity guarantee** has been introduced. The activity guarantee is intended for persons who are, or are in danger of becoming, long-term registered. In the long term, this should mean that few persons would need to be openly unemployed for more than two years. One purpose of the activity guarantee is to break the vicious cycle between open unemployment and measures, and give unemployed people a stable and sustainable full-time activity until they find employment or enrol in education/training. The activity guarantee is to be based on individual action plans that are drawn up in consultation between the job centre and the unemployed person. The activity guarantee should be an integrated programme characterised by frequent contacts with job centre representatives, where the basis of these activities is organised job seeking. The activity guarantee will include the traditional labour market policy measures, such as labour market training, rehabilitation, practical work experience and employment with the help of a recruitment subsidy. Participants will be admitted for up to six months at a time. After that the employment service can resolve of continuing participation if necessary. The AMS guidelines for the activity guarantee emphasise that:

- The activities are to be headed by qualified counsellors. Work is to be based on individual action plans, referred to as “jobseeker plans”, and drawn up in consultation with the jobseekers.
- Broad-based partnership and co-operation, e.g. with the State, municipal authorities, business enterprise, the labour market parties and other organisations, is necessary.
- Financial benefits for participants will mainly comprise activity allowance/training allowance, i.e. the same payment as under most other labour market policy programmes or from unemployment insurance. Other benefit arrangements are possible.
- Compensation for providers can be agreed on between the employment service and the partners.

It should be possible to use existing labour market policy measures within the framework of the activity guarantee. The activity guarantee is expected to have major significance for the situation of disadvantaged groups on the labour market. In the light of such factors as the introduction of the activity guarantee, the government has also, for 2000, appropriated special funds for temporary personnel reinforcements at job centres and labour market institutes.

Within the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, a special diversity project has been initiated. The project has the task of, in a single context and from a growth perspective, surveying and describing how considerations of gender, age, class, ethnic origin, sexual orientation and physical disability affect an individual's opportunities in working life. In December 2000, the project presented a proposal for a national programme as to how increased and better-managed diversity can promote growth and employment⁷.

As far as persons with a physical disability in particular are concerned, the government presented in March 2000 a bill in the form of a national disability policy action plan. As a part of the action plan, an investigation will be carried out to highlight the opportunities employers perceive when it comes to employing persons with physical disabilities. Initiatives have also been taken to collect statistics concerning the circumstances of a person with physical disability in working life.

In April 2000, the Adult Education Initiative Committee submitted proposals for the orientation, scope and organisation of the future community-supported adult education. The committee had the additional task of reviewing and producing proposals as to how to enable persons with physical disabilities to participate to a greater extent in lifelong learning.

Every year the Swedish Riksdag and Government define targets for a limited period, usually one year. **The Swedish National Labour Market Board's (AMV)** assignment is to achieve the goals within the budget decided by the Parliament, to promote an efficient and flexible labour market, to prevent the exclusion of disadvantaged individuals from the labour market and to work for equality between women and men in the labour market. This is to be done by means of placement, counselling, vocational rehabilitation, training and other active labour market policy programmes, and also through the supervision of unemployment insurance.

⁷ Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications: Alla lika olika – Mångfald i arbetslivet (Ds 2000:69). Only available in Swedish.

Long-term unemployment shall be counteracted through programmes aimed at strengthening the prospects of the unemployed. The work and competence strategy means that an unemployed person who cannot obtain regular employment shall in the first instance be offered employment training or some other labour market policy programme, with cash unemployment benefit as a second resort only. AMV bases its implementation of labour market policy on management by results. AMV's 418 **Employment Offices** offers recruitment and placement services for unemployed persons and for employers. The 110 **Employability Institutes (AMI)** provide support for disabled and other job seekers who need special help in order to obtain work. **Sheltered employment (the Samhall Group)** provides employment for some 27,000 (cost for the government 4,200 MSEK, which is equivalent to 88 per cent of the total cost for the Samhall Group).

Sweden has a strong tradition of collaboration between the government and the social partners on issues concerning working life. The government and the employee and employer organisations agree that people's knowledge and occupational skills constitute one of the decisive factors in the economy's productivity and growth.

The discussion on lifelong learning is of great interest in the Swedish context. Sweden has a well-developed infrastructure for lifelong learning including not only formal education but also the informal learning that takes place in both working life and people's spare time. An important factor in this context is the right to absence of leave for studying. In lifelong learning, adult education plays a special role. An example of a target promoting lifelong learning is that higher education establishments are to intensify their efforts to make education available to all people, not least those who are professionally active persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work.

Part 2: Brief assessment of the potential transferability of the policy/measure

Persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work are an extremely diverse and heterogeneous target group. It is difficult to compare the target group for *Arbeitsassistanz* with the target groups for different labour market policy programmes in Sweden. In spite of that I still believe that the similarities between the two countries are greater than the differences when it comes to measures to improve the situation for persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work.

In 1999 as an average every month 78,300 persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work (31,400 women and 46,900 men) participated in labour market policy programmes. Most of them participated in special measures for occupationally handicapped persons (71.5%).

At present the labour market policy programmes in Sweden includes the following special measures for occupationally handicapped persons⁸:

⁸ www.ams.se

- Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS)
- Support for personal assistant
- Support for assistive devices at the workplace (including start-up grants)
- Wage subsidies (including OSA)

The costs for these special measures have been more or less the same the last years. In 1999 as an average every month some 56,000 persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work (37% women and 63% men) received support through these measures, at a cost of 6,674 MSEK, and similar numbers of recipients are anticipated for 2000 (at a budgeted cost of 6,800 MSEK). The total number of disabled people supported by these measures was in 1999 some 67,000 persons. In 1997 the cost was 6,982 MSEK and in 1998 the cost was 6,292 MSEK.

Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS)

The goal for this measure is to provide the job seeker with an employment on the regular labour market after a period of special introductory support. Support through a SIUS consultant is not expected to continue for more than six months. The SIUS-consultants are employed by AMV's Employment Offices.

A brief description of the measure

Special introductory and follow-up support – SIUS – is an individual pre-hiring supportive arrangement for job seekers with occupational disabilities. This special support is awarded both to the job seeker and to the workplace by a SIUS-consultant with a special knowledge of introductory methodology. The purpose of SIUS is to provide special pre-hiring introductory support if the job seeker is in great need of individual support for training in the duties of the job and other requirements involved by the work situation.

Previous to the hiring of an occupational handicapped job seeker, the SIUS consultant can award special support for the introduction process. The SIUS consultant co-operates with the workplace in planning the introduction and is responsible for providing the job seeker with individual support in accordance with a plan of action. Sometimes this can mean the SIUS consultant working for a time together with the job seeker at the duties concerned. The support is successively scaled down during the benefit period and is discontinued entirely when the job seeker is able to perform the intended tasks unassisted. If necessary, a certain measure of follow-up support can be provided for one year from the commencement of the hiring.

During the introductory period there is no employer-employee relationship, but, just as with work experience, the job seeker is equated with employees where certain provisions of the Work Environment Act are concerned. This means, for example, that the employer is responsible for the work being conducted in a safe manner and for personal protective equipment being provided when necessary. Otherwise SIUS does not involve the employer in any additional expenditure. During the introductory period, the job seeker receives activity support in the form of daily benefit. The job seeker is insured for work injury, pain and

suffering etc. and fatality. The State can provide compensation for damage caused by the job seeker.

The SIUS consultant contacts the employer concerning the possibility of hiring the job seeker. After exploring possible duties and assessing the need for supportive measures, the employer, the job seeker and the SIUS consultant make an agreement on the structure and extent of the introduction. The Employment Service decides on special introductory and follow-up support through the SIUS consultant.⁹

Experience from the special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS)

SIUS has been developed during the first half of the 90s as a five years pilot project. The method is based on experience from USA and Canada. After an evaluation¹⁰ in 1996 SIUS was introduced as a regular labour market policy programme from 1998-06-30. Table 7 shows the number of participants that started during 1999. In addition 458 persons who started 1998 took part in the measure during the first six months 1999.

The total cost for SIUS 1999 was 43 MSEK, including the wage costs for the SIUS-consultants and the benefits for the job seekers.

The average time in the programme was 85 days – the same for women and men. Directly after the programme 43% of the participants had a work. After 90 days 39% of the participants were working (38% for women and 40% for men).

Table 7: Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS)

	1999
Cost (MSEK)	43
Total number of participants	666
Number of participants per month (average)	188
Days per participant (average)	85
Cost per participant and month	19,060
Working 90 days later (%)	39

The goal was to support 1,000 jobseekers per year. During the period 1999-07-01—2000-06-31 the number of jobseekers were 923. The public Employment Service had 111 SIUS-consultants as an average 1999. The average number of jobseekers per SIUS-consultant was 8.3.

Three out of four participating in SIUS was 25 years old or more and 43 per cent were women (Table 8). Only six per cent of the women and three per cent of the men had some kind of education on the university level longer than two years. The average time of unemployment was 3.5 months (one month longer for men than women).

⁹ The Occupational Disabled Persons (Special Measures) Ordinance (SFS 2000:630). Administrative Regulations of the National Labour Market Board for the handling of matters concerning special measures for persons with occupational disabilities.

¹⁰ National Labour Market Board: SIUS – uppföljning av försöksverksamheten med särskilt introduktions- och uppföljningsstöd för funktionshindrade i arbetslivet. Delrapport II (1996). Only available in Swedish.

Table 8: Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS) 1999 (%)

Age	Total	Men	Women
-19	2	2	1
20-24	25	25	26
25-34	38	38	38
35-44	21	22	20
45-54	13	12	13
55-60	1	1	2
61-	0	0	0
	100 %	100 %	100 %

The method of working in SIUS is based on the so-called supported-employment methodology, which can be described in six steps¹¹.

1. An individual action plan for the jobseeker
2. Acquisition of work
3. Analyse of workplace
4. Promotion of integration in the workplace
5. Contract of employment
6. Active follow-up

According to a follow-up¹² made recently by the Swedish National Labour Market Board (AMV) there has been problems to find and keep SIUS-consultants in some parts of the country. Intensified recruitment and education of the SIUS-consultants is recommended. There is also a need for better information within AMV on the role of the SIUS-consultants. SIUS as a measure within the activity guarantee should be further developed.

The percentage of the participants having work 90 days after leaving SIUS has increased to 47% (based on the persons who finalised SIUS during the period January 1999 to February 2000). Most of them were employed with wage subsidies (38%), recruitment incentive (1%) or a sheltered employment at the Samhall group (1%). The remaining 7% have a job without any subsidy.

The job seekers in SIUS are younger than the average of disabled job seekers in labour market policy programmes. Most of them have mental health or intellectual disabilities (Table 9). Only 7% had some kind of physical disability (compared to 45% of the participants in the measure Wage Subsidies).

¹¹ Handbok för SIUS-konsulenter 1996-12-03. Only available in Swedish.

¹² Swedish National Labour Market Board (AMV) "Uppföljning av SIUS" 2000-10-15. Only available in Swedish

Table 9: Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS) 1999-01-01--2000-06-30

Persons under 30 years of age	42%
Persons with mental health disabilities	32%
Persons with intellectual disabilities	39%
Unemployed 90 days after SIUS	30%

SIUS is well received among jobseekers and employers. A study published recently shows that eight out of ten companies want to use SIUS again¹³. Nine out of ten jobseekers are of the opinion that the support from SIUS has been beneficial. The study also shows that most of the jobseekers are working in private companies. Only 5% are working in the public sector. The government has recently pointed out the importance of the public sector being a better employer when it comes to people who are at the risk of social exclusion¹⁴.

Wage subsidies (including Public sheltered employment – OSA)

An employer hiring a person, referred by the Employment Service, with reduced work capacity can receive financial compensation in the form of a wage subsidy. The purpose of the wage subsidy is to enable persons with occupational disabilities to obtain employment where the competence and skills of the individual are utilised and where functional impairment and reduced work capacity are allowed for.

The employee shall receive wages and other benefits provided by or comparable with collective agreements in the branch of activity concerned. In the absence of a collective agreement, the employer shall produce a document showing that the employee enjoys insurance coverage equivalent to that required by collective agreements. The employer, acting together with the Employment Service, the employee and the trade union organisation, shall draw up an individual plan of action. This plan of action shall include elements, which make it possible for the employee's work capacity to increase, so that the wage subsidy will not be needed in the long term. Supplementary training, worker-to-worker support and assistive devices in the workplace are examples of such elements.

As a general rule, wage subsidies are payable for up to four years. An initial award can be made for up to one year.

The subsidy payable depends on the wage cost of the employee and the employee's work capacity.

¹³ Employability Institute: Kundundersökning SIUS-verksamheten, Stockholms län våren 2000. Only available in Swedish. The survey was done during four weeks in March/April. The inquiry comprised both job seekers (n=55) and employers (n=56) in the county of Stockholm.

¹⁴ Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications: Alla lika olika – Mångfald i arbetslivet (Ds 2000:69). Only available in Swedish.

The wage cost on which the subsidy is based consists of gross pay inclusive of sick pay, holiday pay or previously paid holiday compensation, together with charges payable under the Social Security Contributions Act and premiums for collective labour market insurance policies or corresponding insurance. If the employee's wages exceed SEK 13,700 (full time), the excess may not be included in the compensation. As regards work capacity, the employer, the employee and the employment office must together work out the extent to which it is reduced, so that the rate of subsidisation can be established. It is important that work capacity and functional impairment should be viewed in relation to the requirements of the job when making the assessment. The wage subsidy is awarded at a rate, which will apply for the whole of the period for which the decision refers. Special rules apply to certain non-profit public organisations.

For as long as wage subsidies continue to be paid, the Employment Service shall help to ensure that the plan of action is followed up regularly. The employer supplies input data for calculating the wage subsidy to the Employment Service, which decides the amount payable¹⁵.

Some key figures regarding the measures wage subsidies and OSA are shown in table 10 and 11¹⁶.

Table 10: Wage subsidies

	1997	1998	1999
Cost (MSEK)	5,156	5,409	5,761
Total number of participants	56,984	61,135	60,122
Number of participants per month (average)	45,651	49,031	50,077
Cost per participant and month	9,700	10,100	9,700

Table 11: Public sheltered employment (OSA)

	1997	1998	1999
Cost (MSEK)	629	672	687
	7,504	8,289	7,800
	5,462	5,943	5,758
	9,700	10,300	10,000

¹⁵ The Occupational Disabled Persons (Special Measures) Ordinance (SFS 2000:630).

¹⁶ Based on information from the Swedish National Labour Market Board (Arbetsmarknadspolitiska program Årsrapport 1999. APra 2000:1. Only available in Swedish)

Support for personal assistant

The purpose of support for a personal assistant is to enable persons with occupational disabilities to obtain and keep a job and to take part in labour market policy programmes or in practical working life orientation in school. This support is intended to provide an employer with financial compensation for the additional cost entailed by the workplace allocating personnel resources to support the occupational handicapped employee at work. This financial support can also be paid to another person incurring expenditure through the provision of a personal assistant.

An employer who hires a person with an occupational disability or who has an employee with an occupational disability can obtain financial support, as can an entrepreneur or a freelancer with an occupational disability. The support can also be awarded to employers receiving a young person with an occupational disability for practical working life orientation or as a participant in a labour market policy programme. In addition, support can be provided to a person other than the employer who incurs expenditure on personal assistance in connection with employment, practical working life orientation or work experience.

Support for personal assistance can be paid at rates of up to SEK 50,000 per annum. In the case of entrepreneurs with occupational disabilities entailing great communication difficulties, the maximum rate of support is SEK 100,000 per annum.

Documentation confirming the need for personal assistance must be supplied to the Employment Service. Before support for personal assistance is decided on, the appropriate local organisation of employees shall be given the opportunity of returning a statement. The Employment Service decides the amount of support payable and its duration.¹⁷

Support for assistive devices at the workplace

The purpose of support for assistive devices is to enable persons with occupational disabilities to obtain employment, to start up in business on their own, to take part in labour market policy programmes or to take part in practical working life orientation in schools.

Support for assistive devices refer both to individual working aids allotted to a person with an occupational disability and to special devices at the workplace allotted to the employer. Support can be provided for needs occurring during the first 12 months of employment, after which a special responsibility devolves on the employer and/or the Social Insurance Office. Support for assistive devices can also be provided to a person with an occupational disability who is taking part in a labour market policy programme, other than employment training within the regular school system. Support can also be provided for renting assistive devices, where this is considered more appropriate than purchase. Where expert participation is

¹⁷ The Occupational Disabled Persons (Special Measures) Ordinance (SFS 2000:630).

necessary for the assessment of suitable assistive devices, support can be provided for this purpose.

The employer and the disabled employee can each receive up to SEK 50,000. Support for computer-based assistive devices can be awarded at higher Rates. Grants are awarded to cover the full cost if the assistive device is of no value to anybody but the disabled employee. Otherwise grants are paid to cover at least half the cost.

The Employment Service shall have decided to award support before an order is placed or a rental agreement entered into. The relevant organisation of employees shall be given the opportunity of returning a statement before an application for support is decided. The assistive device is the recipient's property, and the recipient is also responsible for ensuring that the device is securely stored and adequately insured. The Employment Service decides and awards support for assistive devices.

Objective 3

The European Social Fund grant corresponds in Sweden to a relatively small proportion of resources, on average 2-3 per cent of the national labour market policy. When viewed in relation to the fact that the measures have been given a special profile, often development-oriented and occasionally experimental - the resources can however be regarded as a considerable contribution to the implementation of the employment strategy. Objective 3 has in the programme period 1995 - 1999 been oriented to combating long-term employment and supporting persons that are in danger of being excluded from the labour market. Experience with the implementation of the programme has been good compared with the normal labour market policy measure. It has been shown that a predominant part of the programme has, as intended, embraced innovative measures, which have partially been absorbed into normal activities.

The fundamental strategy for the new objective 3 in Sweden 2000-2006 will be to strengthen individuals' status on the labour market. The objective of the action area diversity, integration and equal opportunities is to facilitate the participation of functionally disabled persons on the labour market.

The total budget for 1995-1999 was 6,000 MSEK (3,000 MSEK from ESF). The total number of participants in Objective 3 was 165,000. Among them 10,399 persons were having functional limitation with reduced ability to work

The use of measures in different groups of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work

Table 12 gives an overview over the use of different labour market policy programmes for persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work.¹⁸

Table 12: The number of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work in labour market programmes 1999 (average per month)

	Total	Men	Women
Wage subsidies	49,306	29,924	19,382
Public sheltered employment (OSA)	5,549	4,401	1,148
Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS)	179	103	76
Subtotal (measures for occupationally handicapped persons):	55,034	34,428	20,606
Employability Institutes (AMI)	5,638	2,959	2,679
Recruitment incentive	711	442	269
General recruitment incentive	358	227	131
Extended recruitment incentive	495	327	168
Work experience scheme	1,255	670	585
Employment training	6,523	3,237	3,286
Workplace introduction	435	259	176
Work placement scheme	3,858	2,277	1,581
Computer/Activity Centre	776	360	416
Information Technology Education Initiative	139	88	51
Municipal Youth Programme	43	24	19
Public temporary work for older people	1,480	757	723
Active unemployment benefits	104	57	47
Resource jobs	304	133	171
Start-up grant	924	496	428
Activity guarantee for jobless youngsters	203	123	80
Subtotal	23,246	12,436	10,810
Total	78,280	46,864	31,416

¹⁸ Based on information from the Swedish National Labour Market Board (Årsredovisning 1999. Only available in Swedish)

Table 13 gives a detailed picture over the use of different labour market policy programmes for different groups persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work¹⁹.

Table 13: The number of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work in labour market programmes 1999 (average per month)

	Hart etc.	Hard of hearing	Visually impaired	Physical disabilities	Other somatic	Mental health disabilities	Intellectual disabilities	Socio- medical
Wage subsidies	1,516	1,809	1,349	22,692	9,244	4,493	4,516	3,687
Public sheltered employment (OSA)	22	29	19	332	312	592	344	3,899
Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS)	0	3	3	13	10	71	67	12
Subtotal (measures for occupationally handicapped persons):	1,538	1,841	1,371	23,037	9,566	5,156	4,927	7,598
Employability Institutes (AMI)	123	152	93	2,149	990	714	549	868
Recruitment incentive	20	16	12	298	165	47	21	132
General recruitment incentive	4	7	5	169	82	26	14	51
Extended recruitment incentive	14	13	10	214	112	38	17	77
Work experience scheme	51	29	17	587	292	85	34	160
Employment training	175	287	142	2,641	1,658	586	312	722
Workplace introduction	10	15	10	112	74	34	135	45
Work placement scheme	133	147	53	1,527	868	251	342	537
Computer/Activity Centre	25	22	8	350	192	63	27	89
IT Education Initiative	9	12	5	59	32	15	1	6
Municipal Youth Programme	0	5	1	7	10	5	9	6
Public temporary work	123	48	25	800	321	54	7	100
Active unemployment benefits	5	1	2	47	30	7	1	11
Resource jobs	9	7	3	141	83	18	7	36
Start-up grant	32	24	17	513	201	77	2	58
Activity guarantee	3	15	4	38	60	14	31	38
Subtotal	738	800	407	9,652	5,170	2,034	1,509	2,936
Total	2,276	2,646	1,778	32,689	14,736	7,190	6,436	10,534

Table 14 shows the main indicator of results of the measures when it comes to persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work²⁰.

¹⁹ Based on information from the Swedish National Labour Market Board (Årsredovisning 1999. Only available in Swedish). The groups in the table are identified through the handicap-code for the different categories used in the nationwide computer-based employer service system (AIS).

²⁰ Based on information from the Swedish National Labour Market Board (Årsredovisning 1999. Only available in Swedish)

Table 14: Persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work in labour market programmes 1999 in work 30 days after finalising the measure (%)

	Total
Wage subsidies	18
Public sheltered employment (OSA)	22
Special introductory and follow-up support (SIUS)	44
Subtotal (measures for occupationally handicapped persons):	19
Employability Institutes (AMI)	24
Recruitment incentive	48
General recruitment incentive	41
Extended recruitment incentive	15
Work experience scheme	9
Employment training	13
Workplace introduction	25
Work placement scheme	20
Computer/Activity Centre	8
Information Technology Education Initiative	22
Municipal Youth Programme	16
Public temporary work for older people	15
Active unemployment benefits	14
Resource jobs	28
Start-up grant	65
Activity guarantee for jobless youngsters	22
Subtotal	20
Total	20

Part 3: Note on some questions being raised and debated

Needless to say, the problems of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work are diverse and heterogeneous rather than homogeneous or unified and putting together them all in one group will create a lot of confusion in the benchmarking process.

Some remarks on our debate in Sweden and questions to our hosts:

There is not really a political debate going on in Sweden on SIUS or the other measures for persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work. The Swedish citizens

strongly support initiatives to increase the quality of life for disabled people. The social partners approve SIUS as an efficient measure among the other labour market policy programmes. For many of the individuals that have taken part in SIUS this has been the most important step so far to richer life. On the other hand SIUS has a limited impact on the situation as a whole for the large group of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work. There is a constant need for additional measures that can meet the special situation for different parts of this extremely heterogeneous group. Therefore it is of great interest for Sweden to learn from the experience of other countries.

The conditions and benefits for SIUS participants are in some respects different from persons in care of the Arbeitsassistanz. In addition the handling procedure and the agreements and rules concerning wage subsidies are different. Which are from your point of view the strengths and weaknesses in the Arbeitsassistanz-modell compared with SIUS?

In the next few years, the number of people over the age of 55 in the labour market will greatly increase. Parallel with the diminishing entry of young people into the labour market, an increasing number of people will retire, since many employees are due for retirement in the next ten years. This may lead to labour shortages unless the skills and experience of persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work are used to the full extent. Enterprises and organizations will have to pursue forceful strategies in order to. It will also be necessary to influence attitudes to persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work in order to avoid conflicts. In the scenarios up to 2015 the economic development in Sweden is held back by a too slow increase in the workforce. If persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work had the same labour force participation rate as the population as a whole the labour force would increase with 90 000 persons 2015. It would be of interest to discuss the impact of the persons having functional limitation with reduced ability on the economic development in Austria as well.

In Sweden - as in the other Nordic countries - the municipalities are responsible for the most comprehensive range of services, for example the care of the elderly, education, childcare and other social services. In the near future the workforce will decrease but the number of elderly and children will increase. The municipalities have already some difficulties finding employees for the care of elderly, especially in the Stockholm - area. Young people prefer working with IT, telecommunications, and music or within other areas where Sweden has been quite successful during the 90s. As shown in the previous part of the paper only a small percentage of the persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work are employed by the municipalities. Is it possible to organize some of the communal services in a way that makes it possible to integrate a larger number of disabled persons? Have you found a solution on this problem in Austria?

The general trend in the Swedish labour market is also a rise in individualisation and a need for flexible, individually tailored solutions. It is of significant importance to establish broader views on the issue of integrating disabled persons in the labour market. In order to stimulate participation in the labour force, it is important to create new and innovative measures for occupationally handicapped people. Continual skills development increases individuals' opportunities to obtain and change jobs, which will lead to increased flexibility on the labour

market. One step in stimulating lifelong learning is a system for individual saving towards skills development, which will be stimulated through reduced tax, and will be available to all individuals and companies. A commission has been appointed to produce proposals for a system for skills development. Is this kind of system discussed in Austria?

The use of computers and the Internet varies according to age, ethnic affiliation, gender, income and housing conditions. More women than men completely lack experience in using computers and the Internet. This usage falls steeply with increasing age and is higher for high-income earners than for low-income earners. People with a higher level of education have considerably more experience of computers than those with a low level of education. Persons having functional limitation with reduced ability to work are the most discriminated group. Is the distribution of skills in this area of competence relevant also in Austria?