

## WP 4 Case Studies

### Evaluation report –October 2016

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To take advantage of new-arrived pupils' earlier experiences and knowledge - A Swedish School Reform

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## Executive summery

During the past year much of the European political debate centered on ways of handling the 'refugee crises', as well of how the European welfare states will cope with large groups of refugees in the long term. Issues surrounding immigration and the reception of refugees have in the main been linked to questions connected to social welfare, employment, education, and care for children and the elderly. Integration of new arrivals is a huge challenge and a key issue in all European countries. It is also a pressing concern on national, as well as on regional and local levels.

As part of the issue of how the integration will be improved, recently increasing emphasis has been placed on making use of the knowledge and experience of immigrants, including, for example, their language skills, knowledge of local conditions, and high levels of education. Right now there is a similar development in the Swedish school system. From the middle of the 2000s, Swedish school authorities (for example the National Agency for Education), researchers, and practicing teachers and principals have increasingly focused on how one may better start from and take advantage of new-arrived pupils' earlier experiences and knowledge.

Previous studies have shown that Swedish-born pupils achieve higher average marks in their compulsory schooling than foreign-born pupils. This is also reflected in the proportion of pupils meeting the entrance requirements for upper secondary school. These studies also show that teachers have often lacked knowledge about pupils' experiences, needs and interests, as well as of their language and knowledge levels. Consequently, teaching has not been adapted to pupils' circumstances. Schools have largely focused on what are perceived to be pupils' shortcomings and have come to conclusions about pupils' knowledge based on their Swedish language skills. Pupils' prior experiences, language skills and subject knowledge have not been regarded as resources.

As a result, the Swedish government has presented a reform package for improving the education of foreign-born pupils, and this is the object of this case study. The reforms are therefore regulated nationally, but has to be implemented locally. At the same time it is important to note that the reforms may be seen as the result of interplay between politics, research, and the schools themselves. Support and regulations for handling newly-arrived pupils had already been in great demand from teachers and principals before the reform package took effect.

The reform package includes, for example, the requirement that all schools have to map the knowledge of all new arrivals from January 2016. Schools are expected to use material developed by the Swedish National Agency for Education in the mapping process to ensure equivalence and maintain quality. The mapping results shall then be the basis of planning the pupils' future schooling.

This is thus a new reform that is by and large still in the implementation phase, so introduced methods and their results may be evaluated to a limited extent only. It should therefore be noted that this study first and foremost deals with the implementation and short-term results of the introduced reform, but the medium-term and long-term effects are also discussed. This study addresses the following questions: To which extent has the reform been implemented? Which problems or opportunities have been identified during the implementation? Which short-term results have been achieved? What medium-term and long-term effects are expected? What is the relationship between expected results and the costs of the reform? To what extent do the schools cooperate with other actors, such as volunteer organisations, but also other government agencies, and what is the basis for such cooperation?

The evaluation is mainly based on qualitative in-depth interviews conducted in six different municipalities. Teachers and/or other staff handling new arrivals, as well as principals and heads of reception centres have been interviewed.

The evaluation shows that the persons interviewed in this study have positive attitudes and a high level of acceptance of the reform. Interviewees provided different examples of the appropriacy of the reform. All municipalities studied intended to implement the reform fully, although only three of the six currently perform all of the mapping stages with all newly-arrived pupils. Partial implementation was attributed to a lack of skilled staff and the organisation of schools. Here we can see parallels to earlier research about the importance of the local context in the implementation of school reforms.

The interviewees more or less unanimously agreed that the reform has the potential to benefit pupils' prospects of integration, in the sense that it could contribute to improving their schooling, thus opening up future opportunities for further education and for joining the labour force. At the same time, interviewees identified the risk that the reform will not be fully implemented and that mapping results will not be used in subsequent teaching. The interviewees more or less unanimously noted that should this

be the case, most of the potential of the reform to achieve desired results and the affect changes will be lost. Nevertheless, the reform is still in its implementation phase and interviewees were hoping that things may soon look different.

One important result is that some interviewees gave examples of cooperation with civil society and other authorities in connection with the receipt of newly-arrived pupils. For example, two municipal have cooperation's with the local employment office or the local Migration Agency and adult migrants had been appointed as language assistants at reception centres and schools. Some municipalities and schools have been relying on retirees to improve the reception of newly-arrived pupils. The reform may also lead to other partnerships between schools and civil society, since interviewees identified a substantial need for such collaboration, especially after after mapping had been done – to build bridges and promote integration, and some interviewees also gave concrete examples of such collaborative activities at their schools.

Furthermore, it is at present very difficult to assess the economic costs and cost-effectiveness of the reform in relation to its expected results. This is in part due to the lack of uniformity in Swedish municipalities and schools as regards definitions of expenses in their accounting statements. At the same time it is important to emphasise that interviewees in the main perceived the reform as potentially cost-effective in the long term.

## 1. Introduction

As large numbers of asylum seekers made their way to Europe during the past year, much of the political debate centred on ways of handling the 'refugee crises. During 2015, 160 000 people sought asylum in Sweden alone. Around 70 000 of these were children and young people under the age of 18. However, various countries, including Sweden, have also debated how welfare states will cope with large groups of refugees in the long term. Issues surrounding immigration and the reception of refugees have in the main been linked to questions connected to social welfare, employment, education, and care for children and the elderly. In the media, we have repeatedly seen headlines such as "Refugee crisis – A challenge for the Nordic welfare system"<sup>1</sup> (YLE, the Finnish Broadcasting Company 2016-01-27) and "The refugee crisis dismantles social welfare"<sup>2</sup> (*Bohusläningen*, a regional Swedish daily 2015-10-17). At the same time, there are also examples of the opposite reaction: "Experts: Nordic welfare can cope with a large stream of refugees"<sup>3</sup> reads a headline in *SvD*, a national Swedish newspaper (2015-12-27). Researchers and politicians are divided, both as regards if and to which extent immigration threatens the welfare state, and as far as the possible solutions to problems that may arise are concerned. Some themes and issues recur in the debate. Irrespective of party-political allegiances and attitudes to current asylum and immigration policies, the integration of new arrivals is a huge challenge and a key issue in all European countries. It is also a pressing concern on national, as well as on regional and local levels.

In the Nordic countries, integration has traditionally mainly involved teaching immigrants the language and introducing them to the labour market, with the main aim of making it easier to find employment. This is in line with the welfare model's emphasis on high employment. As part of this policy, it recently increasing emphasis has been placed on making use of the knowledge and experience of immigrants, including, for example, their language skills, knowledge of local conditions, and high levels of education. Both national and regional reports have pointed out that systemic deficiencies lead to poor resource use and unexploited potential, and that an improvement may result in more effective integration. This in turn has social and

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<sup>1</sup> "Flyktingkrisen - utmaning för den nordiska välfärden"

<sup>2</sup> "Flyktingkrisen monterar ner välfärden"

<sup>3</sup> "Experter: Nordisk välfärd tål stor flyktingström"

economic advantages, both for individuals and society at large (See, e.g. RiR 2014:11; OECD Territorial Review Skåne 2012; Svenskt näringsliv 2008).

In Sweden, a series of different measures has been taken. The government has, for instance, instructed all employment offices to increase the extent to which qualifications of newly-arrived immigrants are evaluated, and to develop the methods used to do so. According to the instruction, “the qualifications of a person with education and work experience from a different country [have] to be evaluated at an early stage. This is important both from the point of view of the individual, and from a societal perspective. A properly conducted evaluation leads to integration in society and faster employment”<sup>4</sup> (Länsstyrelsen 2015 website). So-called fast tracks have been developed, particularly for those holding qualifications in medicine and education. In addition to evaluations of previous education, these fast tracks involve teaching Swedish for professional purposes, as well as providing more opportunities for auscultation and practice (see e.g. SKL 2016 website).

Right now there is a similar development in the Swedish school system. From the middle of the 2000s, Swedish school authorities, researchers, and practicing teachers and principals have increasingly focused on how one may better start from and take advantage of new-arrived pupils’ earlier experiences and knowledge (see e.g. Bunar 2010; Bunar 2015; Skolinspektionen 2009; Skolinspektionen 2013). Ideas about how pupils’ knowledge may be mapped and drawn on have been debated. Organising and planning teaching for new arrivals based on their individual circumstances and needs has been noted as a potential success factor in including them more quickly in the Swedish school system and improving their results (see e.g. Bunar 2015). The long-term prospect is to increase their opportunities to study further and join the labour force. In this case, the emphasis has been placed on evaluating the knowledge and experience of new-arrived pupils, and on finding a “faster track” that will promote integration and individual opportunities in their new society. These efforts form the basis of this case study.

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<sup>4</sup> ”en person med utbildning och yrkeserfarenhet från ett annat land få sin kompetens validerad i ett tidigt skede. Det är viktigt både ur individens perspektiv och ur ett samhällsperspektiv. En väl genomförd validering möjliggör en snabbare etablering i samhälls- och arbetslivet”

This development should also be seen in a larger context. With increased refugee immigration to Europe in general and Sweden in particular, more attention has recently been paid to the role played by schools in integration processes. This represents a major challenge for the national school system in general, but also for individual teachers. One of the key issues raised is the ways in which conditions may be improved, so that newly-arrived children and young people can cope with their compulsory schooling. Several studies of the results achieved by pupils during the later years of their compulsory schooling have identified this as a problem (see e.g. Bunar 2015; SCB 2014 website).

Swedish-born pupils achieve higher average marks in their compulsory schooling than foreign-born pupils. This is also reflected in the proportion of pupils meeting the entrance requirements for upper secondary school. During the period 2007–2011, 91% of Swedish-born pupils were qualified for upper secondary school, compared with 65% of foreign-born pupils. Within the group of foreign-born pupils, there are differences between girls and boys, between pupils born in different countries, and between pupils who have resided for different periods of time in Sweden (SCB 2014 website).

Poor school results achieved by newly-arrived pupils are seen as a problem for society as a whole, but also as a failure of the education system at large. One reason for this is that schools are not fully capable of fulfilling the task of creating opportunities for all children and young people to develop the skills deemed necessary to function well in society. Ultimately, individual pupils have to bear the brunt. Failure at school can affect self-esteem, and failure to complete compulsory education also has an impact on the futures of individuals, since their choices for further education and work are limited.

While the results of newly-arrived pupils are discussed nationally, regional, as well as locally, various inquiries have shown the importance of clearer guidelines and regulations, as well as of identifying a number of success factors in working with this group. As discussed in more detail in Section 2, different studies have shown serious shortcomings in how schools have been handling newly-arrived pupils. In the discussion of newly-arrived pupils' results, schools with high proportions of immigrant pupils has long been viewed as 'problem schools' and low grades have been explained with reference to these pupils' backgrounds and lack of Swedish language skills. By blaming

their language skills, these pupils are placed in focus and problems become synonymous with individual pupils: individual factors are unilaterally cited as explanations and structural causes, such as families' socioeconomic circumstances and the organisation and content of schooling, are ignored (Bunar 2004). There are similar trends in other countries. Work with newly-arrived pupils focuses on problems and pupils' real or foreseen difficulties, ranging from language, trauma and poverty to culture and traditions. Their strengths and opportunities are not at all (or only fleetingly) taken into account, and this has been criticised by a number of different international researchers (see Bunar 2010 and his references Permisán & Fernández 2007; Taylor, 2008).

These studies also show that teachers have often lacked knowledge about pupils' experiences, needs and interests, as well as of their language and knowledge levels. Consequently, teaching has not been adapted to pupils' circumstances. Schools have, according to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, largely focused on what are perceived to be pupils' shortcomings and have come to conclusions about pupils' knowledge based on their Swedish language skills. Pupils' prior experiences, language skills and subject knowledge have not been regarded as resources, neither for schools, nor for the individuals concerned. Mapping pupils' knowledge has therefore been identified as a success factor. During mapping, pupils have the opportunity to showcase their skills and knowledge using their mother tongues. The aim of such an exercise is to enable schools to adapt their teaching to the experience and existing skills of individual pupils. Mapping has also been advocated in various contexts as a tool for identifying those pupils who have not previously attended school or who have had irregular schooling. Importantly, there are vast differences between schools as regards the degree to which the prior knowledge and experiences of individual pupils are taken into consideration (Skolinspektionen 2009).

As mentioned above, the potential of newly-arrived immigrants is currently emphasised in the area of education. The short-term goal is to better adapt teaching to individual circumstances and needs, so that pupils can join regular classes more quickly. The long-term goal is to improve school results and therefore give this group of pupils better opportunities to integrate. The question is how the mapping of pupils' knowledge has developed, and which challenges and advantages there are in this undertaking.

A further question, relevant to this context, is how the school system copes with simultaneously receiving large groups of new arrivals and improving their teaching. During recent years there has been a clear trend towards involving civil society actors in the school system. Several municipalities have for instance organised so-called homework groups. Such groups for homework assistance are for example run by the Red Cross and other volunteer organisations (Röda korset website; IM website). Just now it is also possible for volunteer organisations to apply for grants from the National Agency for Education to start these types of activities (Skolverket website “läxhjälp”). In some cities, university students, retirees and different companies also provide assistance with homework (Skolvärlden 2015). Individuals and organisations also teach Swedish with the help of interpreters. These activities are free of charge for the children who want to attend. In addition to these voluntary efforts, there are also a number of private companies that offer homework assistance against payment. It should also be noted that schools and municipalities themselves also organise so-called homework groups.

### 1.1 The policy

During recent years, both government agencies and academic studies have highlighted the need for improving the way schools handle newly-arrived pupils. At the same time there has long been a considerable local need and demand from teachers and principals for different local – and even more importantly, national – initiatives in the form of more guidelines, better coordination, and teaching materials.

As a result, the Swedish government presented a reform package for improving the education of foreign-born pupils during the spring of 2012, and this is the object of this study. The reform package includes, for example, the requirement that all schools have to map the knowledge of all new arrivals from January 2016. The period pupils may be in so-called preparatory classes has been limited to two years. Schools are expected to use material developed by the Swedish National Agency for Education in the mapping process to ensure equivalence and maintain quality. The material enables thorough mapping of newly-arrived pupils’ backgrounds and experiences, their abilities, language skills, and subject knowledge in particularly languages and mathematics, but also in

other subjects. Mapping needs to be done during the first two months of a pupil's education and results in a knowledge profile, on the basis of which pupils are placed and their future schooling is planned (Skollagen 2010:800; Skolverkets föreskrifter SKOLFS 2016:10).

The mapping of newly-arrived pupils may be compared to a jigsaw being built piece by piece, through pupil-teacher interaction. The aim is to give teachers an indication of newly-arrived pupils' language skills and subject knowledge, so that pupils may be placed in the correct years and classes, based on their needs and circumstances. An even more important aim is to give teachers a sense of pupils' resources and strengths, so that adequate, individually-adapted teaching may be offered. The intention is to enable schools and teachers to better utilise pupils' skills, and to adapt their further education in the light of the mapping results (see, e.g. Sandell Ring & Hassanpour, 2012; Bunar 2015; Skolverket 2016 website).

Some organisational flexibility is needed to systematically implement mapping. Newly-arrived pupils are continually channelled into the system during the school year, so time has to be allocated to teachers to conduct mapping. In addition, mapping needs to be done in conjunction with a home language teacher, a guidance counsellor, or, if needs be, an interpreter. It is especially important that schools develop individual study plans for older pupils as soon as possible. Older pupils have less time to acquire the language and other skills needed to progress in the school system, and therefore mapping should be both effective and broad, so that teachers can obtain reliable information about the skills of new arrivals (Sandell Ring & Hassanpour, 2012, , see also e.g. Bunar 2015)).

This is a new reform that is by and large still in the implementation phase, so introduced methods and their results may be evaluated to a limited extent only. It should therefore be noted that this evaluation first and foremost deals with the implementation and short-term results of the introduced reform. This study addresses the following questions: To which extent has the reform been implemented? Which problems or opportunities have been identified during the implementation? Which short-term results have been achieved? What is the relationship between expected results and the costs of the reform? To what extent do they cooperate with other actors, such as

volunteer organisations, but also other government agencies, and what is the basis for such cooperation?

The target group of the reform is newly-arrived pupils: the mid- to long-term goal is to improve their results and their long-term opportunities in society. Since the main focus of this study falls on the short-term effects of the reform, we regard schools and teaching staff as the main actors, and study their implementation of mapping and the ways in which they base their planning on the results. The actors are accordingly mainly from the public sector, but the reform also affects private schools, which are also regarded as actors. Nevertheless, these private actors may be deemed less important, because a considerable proportion of newly-arrived pupils attend municipal schools. Other types of actors are also included in this evaluation: as stated above, we address the question of whether municipal schools regard themselves as successful in receiving and teaching newly-arrived pupils or whether they cooperate with civil society in the form of volunteer organisations and private individuals and/or with other government agencies, etc. The government's design of the reform did not include these as actors, but they may possibly become involved in receiving, mapping and/or teaching newly-arrived pupils.

## 1.2 Local context

This reform is regulated nationally, but has to be implemented locally. At the same time it is important to note that the reform may be seen as the result of interplay between politics, research, and the schools themselves. Support and regulations for handling newly-arrived pupils had already been in great demand from teachers and principals before the reform took effect, as seen above. Additionally, various municipalities, schools and individual teachers developed and used different types of mapping materials themselves.

The reform affects the entire school system – both municipal and private schools. The last year's large number of refugees has also meant that a larger proportion of Swedish schools have to work with newly-arrived pupils. During recent years, both large and small schools throughout Sweden have received new pupils practically each week. Consequently, the reform is not restricted to a certain local or regional context. This in turn means that the conditions under which it is implemented differ widely. First and

foremost, schools have varying experiences of working with newly-arrived pupils and the extents to which they have received such pupils vary considerably. Schools not only have different types of resources to draw on (as regards classrooms, as well as trained and experienced staff), they are also located in municipalities with differing social and economic conditions. Earlier research has shown that the local context is paramount in implementing different types of school reforms (Ball et al 2012). This has meant that we had to select a number of schools to study and to ensure adequate distribution of the factors mentioned above in this sample. Our selection criteria are discussed in more detail in Sections 4, 5 and 6.

### 1.3 Selection of the policy

This reform is associated with some of the main issues faced by European welfare states: their refugee and immigration policies and ongoing integration efforts. In the general debate, the focus is frequently on the integration of adult migrants into the labour force. Less attention is paid to how children and young people can be given improved opportunities for long-term integration into the labour force and society as a whole. The school system plays a central role in this question and the provision of good education and quality teaching is at present one of the main welfare concerns. As detailed above, the serious problems currently faced include that pupils with migrant backgrounds achieve lower results and that they also have fewer opportunities to receive education that is adapted to their individual needs and circumstances. At the same time there is a comprehensive general debate about the quality of education, teacher shortages, etc. There is also a growing trend of different volunteer organisations becoming actors in the area of education (see e.g. European commission 2015). Although they had already been involved earlier, the Red Cross, different senior citizen societies and others have increasingly begun to work in schools, first and foremost providing homework assistance, but also providing language classes to newly-arrived pupils. This case study can therefore shed light not only on the local implementation of a government-regulated policy reform in a specific area, but also on the reception, teaching and integration of new arrivals, while at the same time examining the current extent of cooperation between schools and civil society.

## 1.4 Report structure

This introduction is followed by a literature review that describes the background to the reform in more detail. The focus is here on the inquiry done by the Schools Inspectorate in 2009, which indicated failings and vast differences in the reception and education of newly-arrived pupils. The regulatory framework for the schooling of new arrivals and the changes brought about by the reform are presented next. This is followed by an overview of the current state of research in five fields connected to the case study. This includes research on the implementation of educational reforms, on the role played by education in the integration of children, and on cooperation between schools and civil society. This section is concluded with a discussion of earlier evaluations of the reform in question, as well as the availability of relevant sources.

The needs assessment is presented in Section 3. Here the target groups of the reform and this study are defined and we also discuss the connection between the reform's design and its aims. We also consider correlations between the results achieved by new arrivals and their labour market opportunities in particular, and their integration more generally. Section 4 includes a presentation of the theory of change. Here we discuss the ways in which the different phases of the reform, as well as its short- and long-term effects may be studied. Sections 5 and 6 present the process implementation and the impact evaluation, respectively. Since the focus of this study is on the implementation of the reform, the first of these sections also contains the main findings of this study. Both sections start with an overview of methods used, followed by the results. Finally, the economic evaluation, the methods used and results achieved are presented in Section 7. Since the reform is still being implemented, this evaluation centres on the results expected by all the actors involved, and the relationship between these results and the financial resources required and time involved in mapping new arrivals.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Policy analysis

In recent years, government institutions, researchers, teachers and principals have increasingly drawn attention to the reception, introduction and education of newly-arrived pupils. A number of different inquiries and studies have unanimously pointed

toward the need of clear guidelines and regulations regarding this group of pupils. Here we discuss the developments leading to the reform in question in more detail.

#### 2.1.1. Development of the reform

In 2004, the then Agency for Educational Development assessed the quality of newly-arrived pupils' education. This resulted in the report *Sidelined or at the Centre? On the primary and secondary education of newly-arrived pupils*<sup>5</sup> (Skolverket 2005). The report finds that more attention should be paid to the way in which new arrivals are handled, both nationally and locally. In general, little information was available about the kind of education offered to these pupils, its organisation and the general methods employed, and the report shows that national regulations for the education of new arrivals are needed. The report further focuses on the hallmarks of quality education and presents a number of success factors for working with this group of pupils. The aim of the report was to support teachers and principals of primary and secondary schools, as well as municipal officials and politicians, in their development work and in improving the standard of education, and to also support them in finding workable ways of organising their activities (Sandell Ring & Hassanpour 2012).

After the publication of this report, the National Agency for Education produced another report on newly-arrived pupils (Skolverket 2006). This report also identifies shortcomings, including the mapping of new arrivals. The report emphasises the importance of allowing pupils to showcase their knowledge via their mother tongues during mapping, and also advises against focusing on pupils' weaknesses and limitations. The report further indicates which subject areas should be mapped so that schools can adapt education to individual needs and circumstances. The subject areas mapped may differ as to content and extent, depending on pupils' experience and prior knowledge. Mapping is also deemed significant for identifying those pupils who have not previously attended school or who have had irregular schooling. The subject areas discussed in the report were later included in the general guidelines for educating newly-arrived pupils (Skolverket 2008). These guidelines are intended to support the implementation of education legislation and aim to direct educational developments and to promote uniform application of the law. The general guidelines cover all aspects of

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<sup>5</sup>Vid sidan av eller mitt i? – om undervisningen för sent anlända elever i grund- och gymnasieskolan

the school system and have to be followed, if requirements cannot be met in a different way. If school authorities and schools successfully implement and adhere to the general guidelines, they may rest assured that they are doing their statutory duty as regards new arrivals. The general guidelines for education of newly-arrived pupils also clarify the responsibilities of school authorities and schools as far as reception and education are concerned. According to the guidelines, pedagogical mapping is no “quick fix”: mapping the background, abilities and knowledge of pupils takes time, especially if pupils start in lower or upper secondary schools (Sandell Ring & Hassanpour, 2012).

After the publication of these general guidelines, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate assessed the quality of education provided to newly-arrived pupils (Skolinspektionen 2009). The Schools Inspectorate is mandated to scrutinise the quality of education and pedagogical activities in its area of responsibility. Such inquiries often involve the systematic assessment of operations in a defined area, in relation to national goals and guidelines. The main purpose of quality assessments is to further development. Additionally, the aim is to describe properly functioning elements and highlight success factors. The Schools Inspectorate's observations, analyses and assessments are presented partly in the form of individual reports made to the assessed schools and school authorities, and partly in overall and summary reports that are to support the development of schools that have not been assessed.

The Schools Inspectorate's 2009 quality assessment found deficiencies in the education provided to newly-arrived pupils in lower secondary (Grades 8 and 9) and upper secondary schools in most of the municipalities inspected. In summary, the Inspectorate found that shortcomings in the education of new arrivals mean that these pupils do not have the same opportunities to achieve school goals, and that they do not become involved in or contribute to the school community or to society. These conclusions precipitated the changes in educating newly-arrived pupils that now have been introduced in Swedish schools, and which we evaluate in this study. Since the report is so central to the policy we want to evaluate, we here give a fairly detailed description of its contents.

The report indicates that the situation of newly-arrived pupils is highly dependent on how a municipality and school handle the reception, introduction and integration of pupils. Schools are frequently deficient in this regard. According to the report, in several cases it seems that the school system, contrary to its mandate, initiates and consolidates segregation. Schools must review their organisation so that the integration of *all* students is promoted. Principals and teachers need to take action so that newly-arrived pupils are included in social communities and in schools' promotion of core values. The Schools Inspectorate indicates that new arrivals concern the whole school. Irrespective of the capacity in which they meet new arrivals, staff have to show respect, and take into account and take advantage of pupils' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

More specifically, the Schools Inspectorate emphasises that if schools are to succeed in providing appropriate teaching to newly-arrived pupils, they need to find out which skills pupils have and adapt their education, based on individual needs and abilities. There were shortcomings in the manner in which inspected municipalities and schools mapped and assessed the prior schooling and skills of newly-arrived pupils. Primary and secondary schools accordingly need to take urgent measures to develop tools to quickly map and evaluate pupils' and provide appropriate guidance and counselling. All pupils are entitled to education based on their individual abilities and personal goals under the Swedish Education Act. According to the Schools Inspectorate, the duty of municipalities and schools to map and assess the prior education and knowledge of newly-arrived pupils in lower and upper secondary classes needs therefore to be clarified.

The Schools Inspectorate's observations include the fact that schools have low or no expectations of newly-arrived pupils. As a result, pupils are routinely placed in preparatory classes and receive a "one-size-fits-all" education. The Schools Inspectorate points out that schools instead must plan each pupil's education based on thorough mapping and assessment. Furthermore, it notes that newly-arrived pupils in the inspected municipalities and schools were not receiving the education they are legally entitled to. Further measures should therefore be taken to facilitate an in-depth discussion of the inner workings of education and the ways in which teaching may be adapted for pupils with a mother tongue other than Swedish. Teaching in pupils' "strongest languages" should be encouraged in all subjects, if schools want to take

advantage of pupils' prior knowledge and thus achieve better results. One may, for example, work with tutors fluent in these languages.

The Schools Inspectorate's report also shows that teachers teaching new arrivals have varying degrees of competence in doing so. Municipalities therefore need to take action and make the necessary recruitments to develop the competence of their staff. Smaller municipalities need to develop their cooperation with other municipalities to meet the needs for, for example, mother tongue teachers. Accordingly, there is a need to take national action in the form of providing professional development to teachers and principals, starting with these areas.

Furthermore, the report stresses the need for national, regional and municipal collaboration. Authorities that should be included are those agencies responsible for immigrants on a national level, such as the Migration Agency, the National Agency for Education, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, and the Schools Inspectorate, together with Swedish municipalities and county councils. Their cooperation should be linked to current research, and collaboration between central and local authorities is needed regionally. Regional collaboration between different parties is necessary to achieve a holistic introduction that promotes individual development and facilitates entrance into Swedish society. Furthermore, collaboration between municipalities has to be developed further and there is considerable need for collaboration in municipalities, between different municipal administrations, as well as within various municipal administrations.

In 2014, the Schools Inspectorate conducted a similar study, *Quality Assessment Report, Education for Newly-Arrived Pupils*<sup>6</sup> (Skolinspektionen 2014:03). The results of this report show, above all, that newly-arrived pupils are not to a great enough extent offered stimulating teaching, characterised by challenges and personalisation. This is primarily due to the fact that schools do not take an overall approach to the education of new arrivals and instead hold individual teachers responsible for doing so.

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<sup>6</sup> Kvalitetsgranskning Rapport 2014:03 *Utbildningen för nyanlända elever*

In parallel with and also as a consequence of the School Inspectorate's report, the government, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Swedish National Agency for Education, and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions interest organisation have in recent years initiated several studies related to the reception of newly-arrived pupils. These include the following reports: *Promoting the knowledge development of newly-arrived pupils: Focusing on cooperation, communication, and the design and content of teaching*<sup>7</sup> (Skolverket 2012); *Education for newly-arrived pupils: Reception and schooling*<sup>8</sup> (Utbildningsdepartementet DS 2013:6); and *Educating newly-arrived pupils: Good examples from ten municipalities*<sup>9</sup> (SKL 2010).

In this context, it is also important to point out that the need for providing support and guidance in receiving newly-arrived pupils has long been discussed by schools and municipalities. In 2013, the National Agency for Education ordered a smaller study from Karlstad University. In this study, principals and teachers were interviewed about how they organise reception and asked whether they map the skills of newly-arrived pupils. A great need for national guidelines and a national mapping material was revealed. This was again the case when the mapping material developed by the National Agency for Education was tried out in Swedish schools. Many teachers reacted positively to receiving complete mapping material which enables them to identify newly-arrived students' knowledge and thus also offers a better way of integrating such pupils into the teaching offered.

To conclude, there has been widespread agreement, both nationally and locally, that the process of receiving newly-arrived pupils in Swedish schools has to be overhauled. Changes were initiated by the previous centre-right Swedish government and this process has now been continued by the current government comprising the Social Democrats and the Green Party. Many municipalities have seen the need to cooperate at the local level, while they have also requested guidelines and concrete support from above. As shall be seen in the overview below, research has also debated the best way of organising the reception of newly-arrived pupils. Some opposing suggestions include

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<sup>7</sup> *Att främja nyanlända elevers kunskapsutveckling: med fokus på samverkan, kommunikation samt undervisningens utformning och innehåll*

<sup>8</sup> *Utbildning för nyanlända elever: mottagande och skolgång*

<sup>9</sup> *Nyanlända elevers utbildning: goda exempel från tio kommuner*

working with separate reception centres and preparatory classes, or promoting direct inclusion in class (see, e.g. Bunar, 2010; Bunar, 2014; Bunar, 2015; Nilsson & Axelsson, 2013; Skowronski, 2013). Again it is clear that local conditions determine the organisation of reception. This debate does not contradict the consensus that action must be taken to better integrate newly-arrived pupils in schools and in Swedish society more broadly.

However, nationally and locally the questions of finding financial resources for reception and how they will be allocated became subjects of political debate. Teachers and other staff are concerned about finding the time and financial support needed to map pupils when mapping becomes mandatory. Further, there is a very real problem in sourcing teachers, interpreters and other staff with appropriate language skills and the necessary knowledge and experience for the education of new arrivals. There is currently a great shortage of staff in municipalities and schools (Skolverket 2014). This is the context in which the extent to which schools receive assistance from civil society becomes interesting, as discussed below.

The needs and deficiencies detailed in the above reports had also been demonstrated by people in the field, and as a consequence the government presented a reform package for improving the education of foreign-born pupils. An inquiry was launched, resulting in a memorandum (Utbildningsdepartementet 2013). In 2015, parliament decided to change the legislation regarding newly-arrived pupils. The Swedish National Agency for Education had already been mandated to develop material and to provide information and training initiatives, in order to raise the competence levels in schools and specifically of teachers working with new arrivals. Our case study focuses on these changes and whether teachers and principals feel that they improve the reception of newly-arrived pupils and their opportunities in the Swedish school system. In addition, we concentrate on schools' collaboration and/or need to collaborate with different civil society actors when handling new arrivals.

### 2.1.2. Legislative framework

Until 1 January 2016, Sweden lacked a uniform definition of newly-arrived pupils. At the turn of 2015/2016, new provisions were introduced on who should be defined as new arrivals, and which rights these students have. The Swedish Education Act stipulates:

*New arrival* refers to a person who had been living abroad, and now lives in Sweden, and has commenced his/her education here after the start of the autumn term of the year in which he/she turns seven. A pupil will no longer be considered newly arrived after four years' schooling in this country. (Ch. 3, § 12a, Skollagen 2010:800)

The Act further stipulates that the knowledge of a newly-arrived pupil shall be assessed, and that this assessment shall be taken into consideration when a pupil is placed in a grade and class, as well as when his/her education is planned. Assessment shall take place within two months from the date a new arrival enters the school system and such a pupil shall be placed in an appropriate grade and class, as regards age, prior knowledge and other personal circumstances. Newly-arrived pupils lacking sufficient knowledge of Swedish may partly be taught in preparatory classes, for a maximum of two years (Ch. 3 §§ 12c–f, Skollagen 2010:800). The Education Act now includes a clear definition of newly-arrived pupils, as well as the requirement that all schools receiving such pupils have to assess their skills. In addition it stipulates how such assessments are to be used and also regulates when pupils are to be completely integrated in “regular” classes.

These provisions entail that all municipalities and individual schools receiving new arrivals have to organise their reception so as to enable individual mapping of all pupils within two months of their arrival. This in turn drives the demand for skilled staff to conduct mapping, including interpreters. It also presupposes that staff working with newly-arrived pupils closely cooperates with other teachers to plan pupils' continued education.

As a result of these changes, the government tasked the National Agency for Education in 2013 with developing mapping material for newly-arrived pupils. The material is in part intended to determine which grade new arrivals should be placed in, and in part to

provide information on the support individual pupils will need to meet curricular proficiency requirements. A dozen Swedish university and college departments were in turn tasked with designing the material for various subjects. Departments worked closely with the National Agency for Education in designing the national mapping material it now provides. The Agency has also developed a variety of educational materials (videos, written material, etc.) to support staff members who receive pupils and assess them.

The new legislation and initiatives involve extensive labour for schools, not only in reorganising reception to meet the requirements, but also in training and recruiting teachers and interpreters. Significantly, implementation of the legislation coincided with a dramatic increase in the number of new arrivals, particularly during the latter part of 2015.

### [2.1.3 Academic analysis](#)

Although the Schools Inspectorate's 2009 report is central to the implementation of the reform, this is also the result of extensive academic research on the reception of newly-arrived pupils. At the same time, there is a great need for further research. A research overview done by Nihad Bunar, and presented by the Swedish Research Council in 2010, emphasised that academic research on newly-arrived pupils in Sweden is underdeveloped. More research in the form of interdisciplinary studies representing educational and social science disciplines, as well as comparative international studies, is needed (Bunar, 2010). There has been a recent increase in research on this area, resulting for example in a number of books aimed at practicing teachers and principals.

Here we provide an overview of current research in some of the areas related to this reform. The overview is not exhaustive, but had to be limited certain issues.

#### [2.1.3.1 The role played by schools in the integration of children and young people](#)

Firstly, we want to highlight research about the role played by schools in the integration of children and young people. Undoubtedly, schools have been deemed important to the integration processes of immigrant children and young people for several decades, both in Sweden and in other countries. Bunar (2001) concludes in his dissertation that youth

development mostly takes place in schools – schools are central to the lives of young people. Swedish preschools and schools have since the 1970s played an important role in Sweden’s integration policy, as highlighted in all central and local documents on this topic. In addition to fulfilling a central function in providing newly-arrived pupils with an education that will determine their employment prospects, more comprehensive responsibilities have also been ascribed to the school system. The integrative function of schools involves giving all pupils equal opportunities and providing meeting places where pupils from different backgrounds interact on an equal basis. Particularly in socially disadvantaged areas and areas with a high proportion of immigrants, the role played by schools in the integration process has now surpassed educating citizens and also includes collaboration with civil society (Bunar, 2004).

In recent decades, Sweden’s population composition has changed considerably. This means that diversity is the norm and immigration is a natural and permanent part of society. Today many children have their roots in other countries. In such a multicultural society, schools become an important meeting place for different cultures and are largely responsible for integration into Swedish society (Andreasson, 2014). Furthermore, Hesse (2009) indicates that schools are significant in the everyday lives of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, who are highly motivated to attend school. This is not just about education: schools provide structure in their lives.

Swedish and international research virtually unanimously highlights the central role played by schools in the lives of newly-arrived children. At the same time, it should be noted that children’s integration processes are complex and that there may be a risk that schools contribute to segregation. A few Swedish studies have highlighted how schools unintentionally can contribute to the institutionalisation of a segregated society through their social order (e.g. Runfors, 2003; Gruber, 2007). Furthermore, there is always a risk of overly idealising what schools really can achieve (e.g. Säfström, 2010; Alvesson, 1999).

Additionally, studies have shown that both age and different socio-economic factors affect the possibilities of new arrivals to integrate into Swedish society. There is, for instance, a large body of research on the importance of residential segregation, parental education and socio-economic situations (e.g. Bouakaz, 2007; Bunar, 20001; Bunar,

2004; Hessle, 2009). These factors obviously interact with the role played by schools in integration, and therefore must form part of the whole picture. The focus of our evaluation is, however, on how a single change in the reception of newly-arrived pupils may influence the potential for their inclusion in the short term and their integration in the long term. We are nevertheless aware that this cannot wholly be separated from other interacting factors.

#### *2.1.3.2. Different organizational models for receiving newly-arrived pupils*

A number of international studies have pointed towards the important role played by the initial time pupils spend at school for the rest of their schooling (Dennis, 2002; Hek & Sales, 2002; Rutter, 2003). Therefore the reception and initial teaching of new arrivals are vitally important. In summary, the discussion focuses on whether there should be separate classes for newly-arrived pupils, or whether they should be integrated into regular classes from the outset, and these issues have been relatively extensively researched. According to several Swedish studies (Nilsson & Axelsson, 2013; Skowronski, 2013; Skolinspektionen, 2014; Jenny Nilsson Folke 2015; Bunar 2015), introductory education is characterised by safe environments, committed teachers, a focus on language development, small pupil groups, good opportunities to get support, and a sense of community. At the same time, pupils feel that their schooling is on hold during this introductory period, since their education is so strongly focused on Swedish language skills that they have little opportunity to study and get grades in other subjects. Newly-arrived pupils wish to join regular classes both to resume their subject studies and to become part of the larger school community (Nilsson & Axelsson, 2013; Jenny Nilsson Folke 2015).

International research shows that most countries make use of some form of preparatory class. Their regulation differs widely and ranges from separate schools providing complete primary and secondary education in some US states, as well as application of the opt-in principle and strict time restrictions in Spain, to the strictly-regulated mandatory *accueil* classes in Quebec (see Bunar 2010 and his references, including Short, 1999; Short & Boyson, 2000; Feinberg, 2000; Permisán & Fernández, 2007; Szilassy & Árendás, 2007; Ricucci, 2008; Taylor, 2008; Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Pinson & Arnot, 2009; Allen, 2004; Allen, 2006). Opinions are divided as to the advantages and

drawbacks of the different systems, as is shown in research and analyses, as well as in the interviews conducted with newly-arrived pupils as part of more qualitative studies. On the one hand, there are warnings about the risk of isolating and stigmatising pupils, particularly if there are no clear syllabi or goals governing their education, or if there is a lack of resources and teachers with appropriate training and experience. On the other hand, studies indicate that there are risks involved in incorporating these pupils in ordinary classes at too early a stage, without adequate knowledge of the majority language and with teachers who are unable to give them adequate attention (either because of time constraints or as a result of a lack of training). All these factors may lead to their social isolation in the classroom, eroded self-confidence, low results, increased dropout, and placing all the blame for academic failure on the pupils and their parents. The international and Swedish results are therefore strikingly similar.

Bunar sketches the following optimal scenario based on international studies on the issue of separate classes: offering preparatory classes for a strictly limited period of time (6–12 months); basing placement on a combination of the pot-in principle and proper information and consultation with parents; locating classes on school premises; establishing close cooperation with regular classes from the first day; allowing pupils to participate in activities that do not require developed skills in the majority language; and gradually incorporating these pupils in all subjects (Bunar, 2010).

In addition to studies directly focusing on the practical organisation of reception, there is a wealth of research related to pupils' ability to succeed at school and to integrate into both school communities and the rest of society. Research from a linguistic perspective has, for instance, focused on issues related to different approaches to second language acquisition. We observe a trend towards increased recognition that all school staff need to be included in pupils' language development and that languages have to be taught parallel to other subjects. This reduces the risk of knowledge atrophy in these subjects, as well as of pupils' falling behind, which in turn may have an impact on their possibilities for integration (Bunar, 2010, 2014, 2015).

### 2.1.3.3. Mapping the knowledge of newly-arrived pupils

Earlier research on the mapping of newly-arrived pupils' knowledge is of course highly relevant to our case study. One research overview, conducted by Nihad Bunar, is central. Bunar emphasises the lack of clear national directives on making the transition to regular classes, which in turn means that assessments of newly-arrived pupils' knowledge and skills tend to amount to subjective, arbitrary assessments of their maturity. This could have a negative impact on pupils' development and motivation to attend school. Bunar shows that newly-arrived pupils' knowledge and skills are unfairly graded. Pupils' grades are for example based on how long they have been in Sweden, rather than on their subject knowledge. In addition, unfair grading marks the boundary between inclusion and exclusion (Bunar, 2010; Bunar 2015).

International studies are often linked to a specific group of newly-arrived pupils, and much of the research focuses on language teaching. The importance of mapping and obtaining information about pupils' previous schooling has long attracted international attention, as for example in the report *Transforming Education for New York's Newest* (1998):

Assessment, the gathering and interpreting of information about students' knowledge, achievements, or accomplishments in relation to an educational goal or goals, must be appropriate for the learners being assessed .... Assessment systems must be designed with the whole learning experience--linguistic and academic--of each group of students in mind ... [While English language learners] share one educationally relevant variable--the need to increase their proficiency in English--they differ in language, cultural background, and family history.

Many researchers have shown that mapping plays a significant role in the United States. Hickey discusses the importance of teaching based on pupils' prior knowledge (see Taylor, 2013) and other studies have focused on the assessment of newly-arrived pupils' skills in specific subjects (e.g. Cho & Reich, 2008). It is common knowledge that new arrivals to the United States are identified using various forms of assessment. Results are used to determine at which level pupils should be placed, and can also be used to see how their knowledge develops. Studies have found that diagnostics and the monitoring of pupil data are important for learning development of new arrivals (Short & Boyson, 2002, for more about mapping see also e.g Bransford, Brown & Cocking 2000; Dovovan & Bransford 2005).

In other countries the question of mapping has also received attention (for international research overview, see Bunar 2010.) According to Bunar (2010), British research emphasises the importance of adapting the education of asylum-seeking children to their individual circumstances and needs (Pinson & Arnot, 2009). Reakes (2007) has analysed the education offered to asylum seekers in five different areas in Wales, Scotland and England, and has identified a number of local strategies used to integrate these pupils into schools. One of these strategies involves more effective collection and analysis of information on pupils' educational background and knowledge. In another study, Whiteman (2005) examined the difficulties faced by school staff and the changes they would like to see to improve the integration of newly-arrived pupils. These difficulties include the language barrier and subsequent difficulties in communicating with parents, misunderstandings, as well as a lack of information about the cultural and educational backgrounds of pupils.

The introduction of mapping is therefore supported both by Swedish and international research. Mapping has been shown to be significant in different contexts and is regarded as a success factor both in integrating pupils in schools and in improving their chances of development.

#### *2.1.3.4 Cooperation between schools and civil society*

In our case study, we also consider whether schools believe themselves capable of receiving newly-arrived pupils as per the new requirements, or whether they need to cooperate with other actors. Swedish research has specifically highlighted the importance of schools' cooperation with parents and guardians (e.g. Bouakaz, 2007; Bunar, 2010). Nevertheless, an international comparison shows, according to Bunar, that limited research has been done in the Swedish context. In their evaluation of the British Children's Fund (CF), Hughes and Beirens (2007) have illustrated which forms productive collaboration between schools, parents and other civil societies may take, as well as the results that may be achieved (also see Clarke, 2003; Hamilton & Moore, 2003). At the start of the 2000s, the British government established and financed the CF network of local strategic alliances in 149 municipalities, as a way of providing further support to children and young people deemed to be at risk. The idea was not for CF to

enter schools and “take over”, but rather to provide workshops that provide guidance and support to school staff and parents, in close cooperation with other welfare providers (Bunar, 2010).

According to Bunar, Hughes and Beirens emphasise the positive aspects of this initiative. One of these is that CF staff are trained to and experienced in working with children who lack English language proficiency; some staff members are bilingual. They could therefore provide classroom support to children and teachers, and could also produce new teaching material in different languages. CF also financed, and if they had the necessary skills, provided therapeutic assistance to newly-arrived pupils in the framework of their education. This was needed, judging by the description offered by Hughes and Beirens. According to Bunar, they further emphasise the ways in which the organisation facilitated collaboration between homes and schools. The reasons for CF’s presence and their activities were actively discussed with teachers, principals and local school authorities. CF also gave feedback to the regular school system on its activities and their effects. Hughes and Beirens praise CF for becoming the missing between forces inside and outside schools, thus improving the education provided to new arrivals (Bunar, 2010).

Research from the United States has also examined successful interaction with pupils’ families and civil society (e.g. Goodwin, 2002; Short & Boyson, 2012). Various examples are given of concrete actions taken, such as training a cadre of parent volunteers who would welcome new families, offering help in school, and providing other forms of orientation to schools and communities. Research emphasises that surrounding communities can provide better conditions for pupils’ schooling. Taylor (2008) conducted case studies in four Australian schools receiving newly-arrived pupils and analysed the organisation and operation of local school programmes for new arrivals. One interesting aspect is that community organisations are invited and paid to help school staff to streamline integration. But, on the whole, Taylor is however very critical of the schools and the design of this system. Resources are limited and there are not enough adequately-trained language teachers. Community organisations had been forced to compete with each other, and as a result the best, locally-based programmes did not always win tenders – projects were instead assigned to the lowest bidders and

organisations relying on external consultants to write their applications (see Bunar 2010).

According to Bunar, Sweden has not made as much progress as many other countries in respect of cooperation between schools and local communities, organisations and societies that can provide teaching assistance, or can act as mentors, interpreters and role models. Bunar notes that relatively few resources will be needed to draw on much untapped potential. There is existing knowledge about and experience of organising partnerships, regulating and financing such arrangements, expected positive results and avoiding pitfalls. Bunar concludes that Sweden has much to learn from other countries in the area of cooperation with communities and local actors (Bunar, 2010).

## 2.2 Previous evaluations

### 2.2.1 Available information

No major previous evaluations of the current reform has been done. As will be seen in chapter four The Schools Inspectorate will begin a review of schools' implementation in the autumn in 2016. But, since this reform is implemented by Swedish government agencies, a vast amount of information has been published and much of it is available on the Internet. The Swedish National Agency for Education's website provides detailed background information on regulations, recommendations, various kinds of materials, which principals and school staff can use in connection with the reception of newly-arrived pupils and mapping their skills. Several reports and studies conducted by the National Agency for Education have also been published. A large part of this information is available in English. The Schools Inspectorate's evaluations and reports can be accessed via their website. The Ministry of Education and Research also publishes reports, studies and legislative changes on its website.

Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Migration Agency provide statistics and electronic databases on the number of newly-arrived pupils, the school performance of different groups on their website. This includes information that pertains to the integration of new arrivals, such as the proportion of pupils with school-leaving qualifications, the proportion who have continued to higher education, unemployment figures for people with migrant backgrounds, etc. The websites of individual schools and municipalities

provide information about their reception of newly-arrived pupils, as well as on their cooperation with civil society, organisations and individuals. As discussed in more detail in Section 7, compiling data from different schools and municipalities presents great difficulties, since they use different budget and accounting systems. This affects the possibility of assessing costs of the implementation of the reform, for example.

### 2.2.2. Results of previous evaluations

This particular reform has begun to be implemented so recently that there are few earlier evaluations available. The National Agency for Education has evaluated the mapping material during its development. Various drafts of the material were first tested by a large number of teachers across Sweden, as per usual when new school material is developed. Karlstad University was tasked with conducting a comprehensive study in eleven different municipalities using the material. This qualitative study was based on interviews with principals and staff engaged in mapping; participant observations during mapping; as well as a web-based questionnaire answered by staff involved in mapping. Although this report has not been published, it may later result in various articles. Since we were involved in this evaluation, we can mention that it clearly shows that national mapping material potentially may contribute to greater equality (all newly-arrived pupils will be mapped using the same template and with the same goals). Structural inequalities, however, have an impact on mapping processes in different parts of the country (different resources are available at different schools). The short-term consequences of this reform have not been studied earlier, although qualitative interviews with teachers and principals about the functionality of the mapping material have previously been done. As will be seen in chapter four The Schools Inspectorate will also begin a review of schools' implementation in the autumn in 2016. The middle-long, and long-term consequences of this reform have not been studied earlier.

## 3. Needs assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

As noted above, this reform was largely based on a 2009 report by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. The report showed that newly-arrived pupils do not enjoy the same opportunities to achieve school goals, and that they do not become involved in or contribute to their schools or local communities (Skolinspektionen 2009). The report's

findings correspond well with the picture emerging from research on the situation of newly-arrived pupils in Sweden, as sketched in the literature review above and Section 3.2.2 below.

Broadly speaking, the reform requires all schools to give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their prior knowledge and experience, through mapping their skills in relation to the Swedish school plans. This should be done as quickly as possible and within two months of arrival. Continued education is planned based on mapping, and special attention is paid to identifying the subjects in which pupils can quickly join regular teaching and those in which they may need extra support. The reform has brought about clear definitions of new arrivals, their rights and obligations. The new legislation came into effect on 1 January 2016, but many schools had by then already been incorporating mapping in receiving newly-arrived pupils.

## 3.2 Existing needs assessment

### 3.2.1. Target group

The reform is aimed at a large, but still fairly well-defined group of newly-arrived pupils. According to the legislation, each municipality receiving new arrivals is responsible for mapping their knowledge and experience. Newly-arrived pupils have been defined in the Education Act as children who have resided abroad but who now live in Sweden, and who start their education in Sweden later than the autumn term of the calendar year when they turn seven. Pupils are only considered new arrivals for their first four years of schooling in Sweden. Children who arrived in Sweden before their compulsory schooling commenced (such as children who could join preschool classes) are thus not included in the definition, while children who left Sweden after a period of schooling and then later return to Sweden are included.

The Education Act stipulates that even when pupils are not defined as new arrivals, they may still receive the support that new arrivals are entitled to, if this is deemed necessary in individual cases. The determining factors are the needs of individual pupils, and whether their circumstances are comparable to those of new arrivals. According to the Education Act it is important to ensure that all children arriving to Sweden have the best possible opportunities to progress towards the educational goals.

Schooling is compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 16 years residing in Sweden, and these children are entitled to education. In the Education Act, *residents* refer to children registered in Sweden. Some children are not registered but must still be regarded as residents, such as undocumented immigrant children. While school attendance is not mandatory for such children, they have the same right to education as all other school-aged children. This group includes children:

- seeking asylum,
- holding certain temporary residence permits,
- entitled to education under EU legislation,
- from diplomat families, and
- residing in Sweden without official documentation or constitutional support.

Pupils' home municipalities are responsible for their schooling, and for offering them places at municipal schools. According to the National Agency for Education's general guidelines for the education of new arrivals, it is important that newly-arrived children, young people and their guardians come into contact with compulsory schools, upper secondary schools, or other institutions providing training and education without undue delay. Although there is no detailed regulation as regards how soon new arrivals not seeking asylum need to be received in the school system, it should be as soon as possible and without undue delay. Asylum seekers should be received in primary education or be offered a place in upper secondary schools as soon as appropriate, taking their personal circumstances into account, but at the latest one month after their arrival. *Arrival* is not defined, but the National Agency for Education advocates counting from when someone arrives in Sweden. If it is impossible to offer schooling within a month, for example, when many new arrivals have to be accommodated in a short time, it may take longer. Sometimes children or young people only arrive in the municipality more than a month after coming to Sweden. Nevertheless, it is important that municipalities endeavour to receive all new arrivals as soon as possible.

Although upper secondary education is voluntary, nearly all young people in Sweden choose to continue to upper secondary school. Young people not registered in Sweden, but considered residents, have as a rule the same right to secondary education that

younger children have to compulsory education. Asylum-seeking youths, young people granted certain temporary residence permits and undocumented youths are only entitled to upper secondary education if it is commenced before the age of 18 (Skolverket 2016).

Although the target group of the reform is clearly described, it is worth emphasising its heterogeneity. Newly-arrived pupils stay in Sweden on different terms and under varying conditions. They can for instance be asylum seekers, family reunion immigrants, or the children of migrant workers. The families of some pupils are undocumented. Some children have come with their guardians, while others have arrived alone. Some newly-arrived pupils are Swedish citizens that had, for example, not previously been in the Swedish school system. Pupils in this heterogeneous group also have very different educational backgrounds. However, most of them have one thing in common: they are now in a new context. Usually these pupils also do not speak Swedish as their mother tongue (Skolverket 2016).

### 3.2.2. Needs of the target group

The key aim of the reform is improving conditions and thereby enabling new arrivals to cope better with their compulsory schooling, since several studies have identified this as a problem area in recent years. Pupils born in Sweden achieve higher school-leaving grades than foreign-born pupils, as can be seen in Figure 1 below. The graph shows the marks achieved by pupils in their last year in the compulsory school system. The blue line indicates the total average, the orange line reflects the results of Swedish-born pupils, and the green line indicates the results achieved by foreign-born pupils.

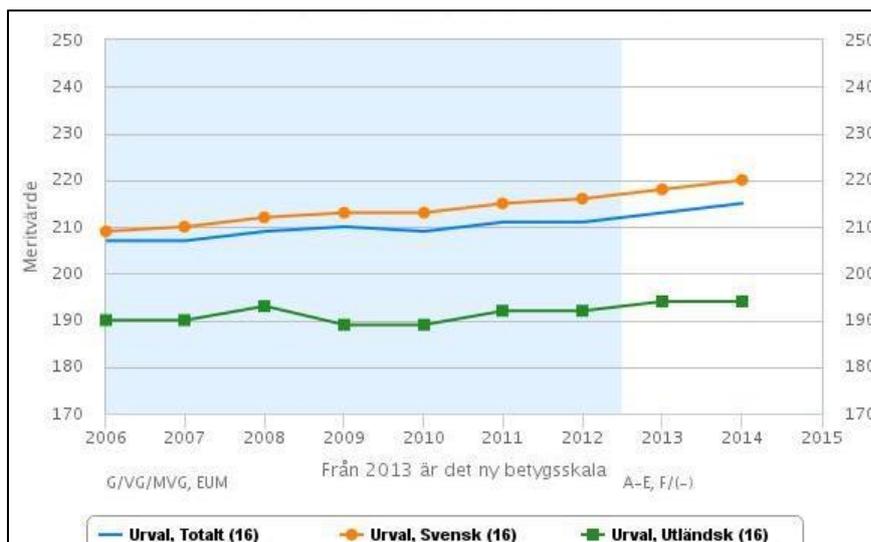


Figure 1: Average ratings, Grade 9

Source: <http://siris.skolverket.se/siris/f?p=Siris:1:0>

These differences are also reflected in the proportions of pupils eligible to upper secondary school. During the period 2007–2011, 91% of Swedish-born pupils were qualified to continue to upper secondary school, compared to 65% of foreign-born pupils. Within the group of foreign-born pupils there are further differences between girls and boys, between pupils born in different countries, and between pupils who spent different lengths of time in Sweden. More girls than boys are eligible to upper secondary school. This is the case regardless of their region of birth, with the exception of students born in South America. A larger proportion of pupils born in Sweden are eligible to enter upper secondary school. These pupils are followed by those born in the Nordic countries and North America/Oceania, while pupils born in Africa and Asia achieve the lowest school results – less than half of pupils born in Africa are duly qualified to enter upper secondary school. This difference may be explained by the varying conditions for studies in the countries pupils hail from: the results of pupils from countries with low literacy levels are probably negatively affected. It is also known that pupils with highly-educated parents achieve better results than other pupils, irrespective of where they are born. Several studies have also shown that the time spent in Sweden is crucial in determining school success. A considerably greater proportion of pupils who lived in Sweden during their entire schooling are eligible to upper secondary school than pupils who have lived for shorter periods in the country. This applies

regardless of their region of birth ([http://www.scb.se/sv\\_/Hitta-statistik/Artiklar/Tid-i-Sverige-viktigt-for-skolresultat/](http://www.scb.se/sv_/Hitta-statistik/Artiklar/Tid-i-Sverige-viktigt-for-skolresultat/)).

### 3.2.2.1. Time spent in the Swedish school system

The number of years pupils attend Swedish schools greatly impacts their opportunities to obtain school-leaving grades in Grade 9 that allow them to continue to upper secondary school. Sweden has experienced increased difficulties as regards pupils arriving after the start of compulsory schooling. In 2001, the average achieved by such late-arriving pupils who were eligible to upper secondary school was 23 percentage points lower than the national average. In 2015, this difference has increased to 36 percentage points (National Agency for Education, 2015, School-leaving marks, spring 2015).<sup>10</sup> Fewer foreign-born pupils have achieved passing grades in all compulsory school subjects in the 2014/2015 school year than in 2004/2005 (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Table 1: Compulsory school – passing grades for Grade 9, 2004/2005

|   | Pupils with Swedish backgrounds* |                            | Pupils with foreign backgrounds, born in Sweden** |                            | Pupils with foreign backgrounds, born abroad*** |                            |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|   | Number of pupils                 | Passes in all subjects (%) | Number of pupils                                  | Passes in all subjects (%) | Number of pupils                                | Passes in all subjects (%) |
| National totals   | 103 430                          | 77,8                       | 7 110   | 65,8                       | 9 354   | 56,9                       |
| * Pupils born in Sweden with at least one parent born in Sweden. Pupils with an unknown background are not included.<br>** Pupils with both parents born abroad, but they themselves were born in Sweden<br>*** Students born outside of Sweden who immigrated to Sweden.<br>Source:<br><a href="http://siris.skolverket.se/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=common&amp;notgeo=&amp;report=grbetyg&amp;p_ar=2005&amp;p_lankod=&amp;p_kommunkod=&amp;p_flik=U">http://siris.skolverket.se/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=common&amp;notgeo=&amp;report=grbetyg&amp;p_ar=2005&amp;p_lankod=&amp;p_kommunkod=&amp;p_flik=U</a> |                                  |                            |   |                            |   |                            |

Table 2: Compulsory school – passing grades for year 9, 2014/2015

|  | Pupils with Swedish backgrounds* |                            | Pupils with foreign backgrounds, born in Sweden** |                            | Pupils with foreign backgrounds, born abroad*** |                            |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Number of pupils                 | Passes in all subjects (%) | Number of pupils                                  | Passes in all subjects (%) | Number of pupils                                | Passes in all subjects (%) |
|  |                                  |                            |   |                            |   |                            |

<sup>10</sup> Slutbetyg i grundskolan, våren 2015

|  |        |      |       |      |        |      |
|--|--------|------|-------|------|--------|------|
| National totals  | 74 637 | 83,2 | 9 458 | 71,4 | 12 493 | 49,5 |
| <p>* Pupils born in Sweden with at least one parent born in Sweden. Pupils with an unknown background are not included.</p> <p>** Pupils with both parents born abroad, but they themselves were born in Sweden</p> <p>*** Students born outside of Sweden who immigrated to Sweden.</p> <p>Source:<br/> <a href="http://siris.skolverket.se/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=common&amp;notgeo=&amp;report=grbetyg_2015&amp;p_ar=2015&amp;p_lankod=&amp;p_kommunkod=&amp;p_flik=U">http://siris.skolverket.se/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=common&amp;notgeo=&amp;report=grbetyg_2015&amp;p_ar=2015&amp;p_lankod=&amp;p_kommunkod=&amp;p_flik=U</a></p> |        |      |       |      |        |      |

During the period 2006–2015, the proportion of pupils in Grade 9 who entered the school system after the regular school-starting age, has increased from about 3 to 8 percent. Pupils who immigrated after regular start of compulsory schooling made less progress than other pupils. The proportion of these pupils eligible to upper secondary school deteriorated during this period: 54% failed to qualify in 2015, compared to 45% in 2006.

This decline is due to several factors. One reason is that the average age of immigration has increased by two years, which means that pupils have less time to reach upper secondary school eligibility. Another reason is that pupils are increasingly arriving from countries with a lower development level, and tend to have mother tongues which make it harder to learn Swedish than those of earlier generations of immigrants. Pupils may also have experienced a long period without education, for instance while fleeing. The parents of such pupils also have a relatively lower level of education than used to be the case. The National Agency for Education's *Current Analyses* report<sup>11</sup> cannot conclude that schools have become worse at educating immigrant students; pupils who immigrated before reaching the age of compulsory schooling have for instance slightly improved their eligibility to upper secondary education in recent years. Due to the large number of asylum seekers arriving during the autumn of 2015, extraordinary efforts will be required to prevent further decline in the numbers of qualified school-leavers during coming years (Skolverket 2016).

### 3.2.2.2. School results and entering the labour market

Completing all three years of upper secondary school is the most important determining factor for young people's success on the labour market, and is also the most important

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<sup>11</sup> *Skolverkets aktuella analyser*

factor in entering tertiary education. The percentages of students completing their upper secondary education within three years differ from programme to programme (see Table 3 below). Only a few students in the introductory program complete training within three years, for example, while 75 percent of students in a college preparatory programme complete within the same period.

Table 3: Upper secondary school – graduation 2012/2013

| <b>Upper secondary school programme</b>   | <b>Number of pupils</b> | <b>Graduated within 3 years (%)</b> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Upper secondary school, total   | 103 520                 | 65,2                                |
| Vocational programmes, total  | 28 976                  | 69,9                                |
| College preparatory programmes, total   | 61 412                  | 75,5                                |
| Introduction programmes, total  | 13 132                  | 6,7                                 |
| Introduction programme: Language introduction class   | 3 806                   | 0,3                                 |
| <b>Source:</b>  |                         |                                     |
| <a href="http://sir.is.skolverket.se/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=common&amp;notgeo=&amp;report=gy_genomstromning&amp;p_skolkod=&amp;p_verksamhetsar=2012&amp;p_hman=&amp;p_lankod=&amp;p_kommunkod=">http://sir.is.skolverket.se/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=common&amp;notgeo=&amp;report=gy_genomstromning&amp;p_skolkod=&amp;p_verksamhetsar=2012&amp;p_hman=&amp;p_lankod=&amp;p_kommunkod=</a> |                         |                                     |

Even though the table does not compare Swedish-born students with foreign-born ones, newly-arrived youths often start in language introduction class. The table thus indicates that there is a risk that these students will fail to complete upper secondary school if they arrived after compulsory schooling age. The proportion of young people neither participating in the labour market nor in tertiary education, is greatest among those who have not passed the third year of upper secondary school, irrespective of the programme studied. The percentage of young people neither working nor studying remains largely unchanged five years after the end of their upper secondary education. This group of students may therefore have difficulty in establishing themselves and is at risk of never doing so.

This is a well-described problem in terms of newly arrived students' school results and their integration on the labour market and in Swedish society. Although the need for change can be measured in quantitative measures (for example school results), other factors such as the school situation and living conditions of new arrivals are more

difficult to measure. Today the school results of newly-arrived pupils are seen as a problem for Swedish society as a whole, but also as a failure of the education system at large. Schools are not deemed fully capable of fulfilling the task of creating opportunities for all children and young people to develop the skills needed to function well in society. Ultimately, however, it is primarily individuals who bear the consequences. Failure at school can affect self-esteem, and an incomplete compulsory education limits individual life chances, such as choices for further education and work.

### 3.2.3 Evaluations of previous needs assessments

#### 3.2.3.1. *Agreement on the need – but a demand for more knowledge about the methods*

The reform in question intends to address a relatively well-described problem associated with the target group. Hardly any researchers or other parties and organisations seriously question that the conditions for newly-arrived pupils' education, their school results, and their possibilities for integration into Swedish society must be improved. Debating how much resources should be spent on this effort is, at least partly, a different matter. Furthermore, there is a clear link between the reform's goal of identifying the skills of all new arrivals, and recent Swedish research on newly-arrived pupils' education, which has largely focused on the impact of the initial period on pupils' subsequent education. The success factors identified in research, as well as by the National Agency for Education and the Schools Inspectorate, include the following (National Agency for Education homepage):

- That newly-arrived pupils' initial time in school is crucial for their continued schooling;
- That initial assessments of pupils' knowledge and experience should be conducted;
- That education is planned and implemented on the basis of pupils' needs and circumstances, as identified in the assessment; and
- That educational resources are allocated based on the circumstances and needs of new arrivals.

At the same time, as discussed in the literature review, researchers still see the need for further knowledge of and research on different methods of approaching newly-arrived pupils and their education (e.g. Bunar). This need is also evident at local levels (among teachers and principals) and on a national level (among politicians and school authorities). During the last three or four years, a number of projects have been

implemented. The National Agency for Education has, for instance, received more government resources. In October 2015, the government presented the following policy:

To strengthen the quality of education for newly arrived pupils, the Government has given the National Agency for Education the mission to provide additional support and interventions that will last until 2019. The plan describes how the National Agency will work with the action in the future with a focus on strengthen the quality of education for new arrivals, including various forms of support materials, training and information to strengthen the capacity of schools to provide newly arrived students a good education. In addition to the Agency presented the assignment, the government has announced a number of initiatives in the budget proposal for 2016 to strengthen principals' ability to provide newly arrived students a quality education. The government has also previously initiated measures, for example by multiple government assignments to the National Agency for Education and by the bill "Education for newly arrived pupils – the reception and schooling". Preparations are under way in the Government Offices for, if necessary, take further measures to assist the responsible authorities and school principals in their mission to give all students an equal education. (Regeringen 2015 website).

Furthermore, various research councils have in recent years funded major projects focused on newly-arrived pupils (e.g. Bunar, 2010). The conclusion is that there is still deemed to be a great need for knowledge about the effects of different methods of receiving and integrating new arrivals and improving pupils' school performance. This becomes particularly evident, since the situation in many Swedish schools has changed fairly drastically just in the last year, with a sharp increase in the number of arrivals. In conclusion, the issue at hand is not a lack of knowledge about or different interpretations of the actual needs of the target group, but a demand for more knowledge about the effects of different methods used to solve the problem.

#### *3.2.3.2. Wider context of the reform*

This reform resulted from the need to map the prior knowledge and circumstances of each pupils, so that their school performance may improve. Nihad Bunar, one of the leading Swedish researchers in the field, particularly emphasises that this may result in viewing new arrivals as a category that is approached in a certain way, and not seeing them as pupils with individual needs.

This should be seen against the backdrop of the compulsory school curriculum in Sweden, which has been emphasising that education should be based on individual needs and circumstances for several years. There has long been the desire in the Swedish school system to develop an individualised approach that would increase the opportunities of pupils to learn and develop on their own terms. *Individualisation* is a frequently-used notion in the Swedish school context, and occurs in all national curricula (see e.g. Giota 2013; Vinterek, 2006). Placing the “pupil in focus” has come to be regarded as an important element of teaching, and accordingly work based on individual circumstances and abilities is seen as ideal. Teachers’ main focus will be on how pupils acquire subject knowledge: this in turn requires teachers to be familiar with pupils’ knowledge and about subject-specific teaching.

Neither research nor the political sphere has extensively debated or questioned this focus on each pupil’s individual circumstances. However, not least in schools, there is discussion about the ways this works in practice. This discussion also forms part of a larger debate on the resources allocated to education, and the ways in which they are used. In addition, in conjunction with the importance of the initial introductory period, studies and responsible authorities have also identified other success factors in working with newly-arrived pupils. The strong link between the health of newly-arrived children and their school results has been highlighted and the responsibility of teachers and other school staff for the health and wellbeing of newly-arrived children cannot be ignored. Using simple means, teachers and staff can promote the health of new arrivals. Pupils can, for example, be given security, affirmation, possibilities to exert influence on their situations, a sense of belonging, as well as protection against violence, xenophobia, racism and crime (Ascher, 2013 & 2014). Special educational programmes provide assistance to vulnerable new arrivals in the classroom, and have good outcomes when newly-arrived pupils can participate (Kästen-Ebeling, 2014). Research also stresses that

the complex needs and situations of asylum-seeking children cannot be handled by schools alone. Cooperation with other actors and professionals qualified to do psychosocial work with refugee children is an important complement to the work done by schools (Unenge, 2014; Eklund, Högdin, Rydin and Sjöberg, 2012).

Research has further, for example, emphasised the need for good information and cooperation with pupils' parents (or guardians). The prospects and academic achievements of asylum-seeking children, as well as their behaviour in and outside the classroom, are also affected by parents' inclusion in society and by parents' health and wellbeing. Without support from home it can be difficult to succeed in school. Therefore it is important that schools cooperate with parents to increase their involvement in their children's schooling. Research reviews also show that schools can advantageously serve as hubs in the design of training programmes for parents. Educational programmes designed to teach parents the majority language of their new country and to develop their ability to better support their children in school have had positive effects on the school performance of asylum-seeking children (Skolverket 2016). Other success factors, highlighted by the research, include:

- That is essential that all teachers have knowledge about the education of newly-arrived pupils and about the importance of organising the entire education environment, irrespective of the form of organisation chosen;
- That consensus is achieved on the approach taken, with all staff taking joint responsibility for newly-arrived pupils;
- That it is important to provide opportunities for pupils' social participation, so that the newly-arrived pupils are given the opportunity to get to know other peers, who are not new arrivals themselves;
- That newly-arrived pupils with a mother tongue other than Swedish meet high expectations;
- That newly-arrived pupils are offered qualified second-language teaching;
- That all teachers pay attention to language and knowledge development in subject teaching; and
- That newly-arrived pupils are offered counselling in their mother tongues, on the basis of individual abilities and needs (SKL 2016).

In conclusion, there is a relatively high awareness and knowledge of what the needs of new arrivals are and of ways of dealing with these problems. At the same time, there is a need for further research on and evaluations of the methods to approach newly-arrived pupils' school attendance and learning. In this context, it is important to ensure that the interpretation needs and solutions is also related to the political consensus about education, including pursuing more individualised schooling. The reform evaluated here focuses extensively on the role of individualisation in schools' efforts to improve the results of new arrivals and facilitate their integration. This should not just be seen as a consequence of current research, but also as part of a larger political context.

## 4. Theories of change

### 4.1 Introduction

We begin this section with a more general overview of evaluations of different types of educational reforms in Sweden, based on an official Swedish government report from 2014. This report shows evidence of a long debate on the ways in which a culture of evaluation may be promoted in the Swedish educational system, both locally and nationally. Although this does not mean that the question has always been at the centre of debates on educational policy or formed part of political initiatives, the existence of this report speaks to the fact that Sweden needs to accord more importance to issues surrounding the evaluation of educational reforms. According to the report, Sweden shares such increased emphasis on evaluation with other European countries (SOU 2014:12).

The report notes that educational reforms may benefit from more in-depth review prior to being instated. It is therefore desirable that more time should be given to decision-making processes than is the case at present, so that decisions to a greater extent may be based on proven knowledge. Under increasingly complex conditions, the report further recommends basing politics on evidence, if reforms are to have the outcomes intended. The report claims that there is no tradition of evaluating educational reforms in Sweden, or not in the ways this is done in some other countries. As far back as the report goes there are few examples of thorough evaluations of educational reforms in Sweden, either conducted by order of the government or the parliament. Existing examples of evaluations are almost all the initiatives of individual researchers. Additionally, no

programme of evaluation has been implemented to review the important reforms of recent years (SOU 2014:12).

According to the report, systematic evaluation of reforms is essential to ensure wide-ranging and in-depth knowledge about the education system. Not least, it is important for political accountability to know whether pursued policies have the desired effects and whether public spending is effective. Knowledge gained from evaluations may also contribute to increasing the impact of reforms, and to give indications when things are going wrong. Finally, evaluating reforms may also help when designing subsequent reforms. The report recommends the establishment of a national framework for evaluations of the school system, and a similar framework has been proposed by the OECD. According to the report, a long-term perspective is central to such evaluations, both to promote the usefulness and quality of such evaluations, but also from a democratic point of view. A new commission of inquiry into schools appointed by the Swedish government confirms the findings of the report and the need for evaluations. In its 2016 report the commission advocates increased systematic trials in schools, with the aim of testing ideas and evaluating their effects on a small scale before implementing them nationally or basing national reforms on such ideas. In this context the commission also notes that the question of access to data needs to be considered when introducing such trials (SOU 2016:38).

According to the 2016 report, different systems of evaluation have long been discussed by academics, assessment institutes and networks of assessors. The debate concerns what may and may not be considered evaluation, as well as the methods on which dependable evaluations may be based. The report observes that the OECD and the European Commission both take a broad view of evaluation which allows room for a variety of designs and methods. The report further discusses the need to evaluate the entire reform process, from initiation to institutionalisation.

Accordingly, both the government report from 2014 and the 2016 report from the commission of inquiry into schools have highlighted serious shortcomings in the evaluation of educational reforms in Sweden, as well as the importance of evaluating all components of a reform. This case study is a first attempt at evaluating the reform

intended to improve the reception and education of newly-arrived pupils through mapping their prior knowledge and experience. As will be seen below, there are many reasons for not evaluating the entire reform process in this study, and for not considering the long-term effects of the reform. Our focus is instead on the implementation phase of the reform and its short-term effects.

#### 4.2 Existing theories of change

Our case study is focused on a fresh reform that has not yet been evaluated extensively. Nevertheless, the inquiries that preceded the reform contain explicit expectations of the results that it may achieve, including many assumptions about how mapping will be done and how the education of new arrivals will be planned. We give a fairly extensive overview of the issues at stake in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.

As described in Section 2.2.2, the National Agency for Education has done an evaluation focused on problems in the implementation of the reform. This study was done at a very early stage, and before mapping became mandatory in January 2016. The central questions were the experiences of those involved, their understanding of the proposed changes, the organisation of and responsibility for the mapping process, the appropriateness of the mapping material and its use, as well as the comparability of mapping. The main aim was to ascertain whether the mapping material itself fulfils its intended functions, as well as to identify the factors determining the conditions and limitations of mapping processes and situations. The aim was therefore neither to evaluate schools' implementation of the reform itself, nor its results.

By the time we embarked on our case study, neither the Swedish Schools Inspectorate nor the National Agency for Education had presented a programme for evaluating the reform and the mapping method. From conversations with the government agencies involved it has emerged that the National Agency for Education had been tasked with evaluating the reform by the Swedish government from the outset. At the time of submitting this report it is still unclear when and how this evaluation shall be done (Camilla Schieche, National Agency for Education, 4 Oct. 2016).

Based on its mandate to ensure that Swedish schools implement the Education Act, the Schools Inspectorate has now, during the autumn term of 2016, started to examine the ways in which schools handle newly-arrived pupils, based on the reform in question (Skolinspektionen 2016 website). The main aim of this inspection is not to evaluate the reform itself, but to assess the manner in which primary school authorities (municipal and private) receive new arrivals. The first stage is based on a questionnaire that will be distributed to all school authorities in Sweden. It has a dual aim: to provide a broad overview of school authorities' initiatives and organisation of the reception of newly-arrived pupils, and to give the Schools Inspectorate an idea of which authorities warrant further investigation. The second stage of the investigation will comprise visits to a number of school authorities. To evaluate the quality of reception and the introductory assessment of new arrivals, a number of schools under each authority will be assessed.

According to the Schools Inspectorate, this inspection project will contribute on an overarching level to identifying good examples and areas for development, thus eventually leading to improved reception of newly-arrived pupils in all school authorities and at all schools. The school authorities included in the second stage will also receive activity reports, including a decision regarding areas in need of development. Decisions will also indicate how the Schools Inspectorate will monitor implementation.

The inspections will address the following questions:

- Is the school authority monitoring the reception of newly-arrived pupils on which analyses and measures for improvement are based?
- Is the school authority taking the needed measures for improvement (e.g. resource allocation, professional development, allocation of duties)?
- Are the introductory assessments of new arrivals done in such a way so as to benefit their continued schooling?
- Are the results of introductory assessments circulated internally?
- Are the results of introductory assessments used to plan the schooling of pupils?

The Schools Inspectorate's inspection will therefore examine the same issues we concentrate on in our case study: whether schools are mapping the knowledge of new

arrivals, and whether planning is based on mapping results. The questionnaire that will be used has been presented by the Schools Inspectorate and shows that the emphasis will be on the first introductory period and on how mapping is done. There are almost no questions about the monitoring of mapping results and planning schooling based on pupils' individual needs and circumstances. Based on the questionnaire, the Schools Inspectorate will by and large focus on the implementation of mapping, not on the impact mapping has on continued teaching. More attention is paid to the latter in our study (Skolinspektionen 2016 website).

Additionally, we note that the questionnaire does not include questions on how the actors involved (particularly principals and teachers) view the mapping method and its proposed results. The Schools Inspectorate seems to be mainly focused on the future, and aims to recommend measures and improvements in the reception of newly-arrived pupils. It cannot be seen as an evaluation of the reform itself, of its possible results, or of the advantages and disadvantages experienced by actors involved in the mapping process. Our study, however, concentrates on the latter aspects (Skolinspektionen 2016 website).

Interestingly, the Schools Inspectorate pays some attention to the ways in which schools and municipalities cooperate with other government agencies and civil society. The focus falls on establishing contact with newly-arrived pupils and their families through such cooperation. No questions are included about the manner in which different organisations cooperate during the reception process itself or in supporting pupils' schoolwork, but these aspects are considered in our case study (Skolinspektionen 2016 website).

The inspections planned by the Schools Inspectorate will be quantitatively more extensive than our own evaluation, and will provide an opportunity to follow up the results from our case study. Our study is at the same time more focused on the effects the reform and implementation of mapping may have. It should also be noted that parallel to the reform in question and our evaluation, Swedish schools are engaging in a range of developmental initiatives. Educational authorities and individual schools have a lot on their plates at the moment. This includes the extensive national development programme for schools, entitled "Improving Schools" (Regeringen 2015 website).

## 4.3 New theory of change

### 4.3.1. Methodology

Reforms, programmes or methods may be evaluated in different ways. In this section we present an overview of the premises of the process evaluation and impact evaluation presented in this report. More detailed descriptions of concepts and methods may be found in Sections 5 and 6, where we describe our results. The premises of the economic evaluation are discussed in Section 7.

This reform may also be described as the implementation of a new method. Our initial premise is that the implementation of the reform should be seen as a process with different phases. The Swedish government report on educational reforms described above also presents a model of such processes. This model has also been recommended by the European Commission. In short, the model comprises the following phases: (1) the *policy formation phase* that includes defining problems and deciding on strategies for the reform, its implementation and its evaluation; (2) the *process implementation phase* that includes initial implementation efforts and formative evaluation; and (3) the *institutionalisation phase*, when the reform is completely implemented and becomes integrated into activities (SOU 2014:12). According to this model, implementation is already initiated when a problem is defined and policy is formulated. Implementation of course continues during the phase of process implementation, and is completed with the institutionalisation of reforms. This is a protracted process; in the case of educational reforms it may take from five up to fifteen years before a reform may be regarded as institutionalised (SOU 2014:12). The reform in question is not as extensive as the introduction of a new grading system or new syllabi, for instance, and the period from initial implementation to institutionalisation should accordingly be shorter.

In the process evaluation done as part of this study, the focus falls in the main on the process implementation phase, although we will also touch on the other two phases. It may well be necessary to study the policy formation phase too in future, particularly if the reform or the mapping method leads to serious difficulties or if it fails to achieve the desired results. Flaws in the formulation phase may of course influence the possibilities of full implementation and may lead to undesired results (Knill & Tosun, 2012). Our

hope is that at least some such flaws may be discovered through analysing the process implementation phase of the reform. Based on the overarching aim of the INNOSI project, however, we need to focus on studying the reform itself, as well as the possibilities it offers for full implementation and achieving intended results (Knill & Tosun, 2012), i.e. for affecting change in the reception and education of newly-arrived pupils.

As described earlier, there is currently little opportunity to study the institutionalisation phase. The reform is recent and is still largely in the process implementation phase. Nevertheless, our study touches on institutionalisation and we hope to contribute to understanding the ways in which mapping may be institutionalised in order to change the handling of new-arrivals in the long term. Since our case study concerns a recently introduced reform, our evaluation includes both formative and summative elements (see Lincoln and Guba 1986 for a distinction between formative and summative evaluations). We evaluate the extent to which the reform has been implemented as well as possible reasons for failure to implement the reform. This more formative part is important: it may contribute to highlighting problems with the implementation of the reform and may also propose changes. Here the issue of schools' relying on the support of civil society (in the form of organisations and individuals) come to the fore.

While our basic assumption is that reforms are implemented in different phases, one may also describe reforms in terms of short- and long-term results (see next section). In the case of this reform, short-term results are connected to the process implementation phase and long-term results to the institutionalisation phase. It is only when the reform has been institutionalised, when all pupils' knowledge has been mapped, and when mapping results have been routinely integrated in the planning of their schooling that the reform may lead to long-term results. Short-term results are more closely connected to school staff and their actions, while long-term results involve new arrivals, as well as whether their school performance and opportunities have been affected by the implementation of the reform by school staff (i.e. how mapping is done and incorporated into the planning of further teaching).

#### 4.3.2. Intermediate and long-term outcomes

As described in Sections 1, 2 and 4.2 above, the responsible actors (the National Agency for Education and the Schools Inspectorate) have specified their aims with the reform. These may be termed intermediate and long-term outcomes. When information about the reform is examined, however, short-term results appear to be particularly stressed. The main intended outcome is the implementation of mapping and using mapping results in the planning of subsequent teaching, so that education may be based on pupils' individual circumstances (their strengths and needs). Long-term results, such as improved school performance, as well as better prospects and integration, are seldom mentioned.

Based on our examination of the background to the reform, we could identify the following desired short- and long-term outcomes:

- Identifying pupils' strengths in terms of existing knowledge and experience, as well as their needs (in the short term)
- Planning teaching and other activities based on individual pupils' strengths and needs (in the short term)
- Quicker inclusion in regular teaching (in the short term)
- Improving school performance and achievement of syllabus requirements (in the long term)
- Improving opportunities on the labour market, for further study, and for integration (in the long term)

In the short term, the reform compels schools and school staff to map the knowledge of newly-arrived pupils as soon as they are received, and to then take pupils' prior knowledge and experience into account when their further teaching is planned. This may mean, for example, that pupils can quickly continue with the subjects in which they already have a solid foundation, while schools are able to take immediate action when pupils have major shortcomings. In the longer term, this reform is intended to improve pupils' school results and their ability to achieve syllabus outcomes. The long-term goal is that this in turn will increase pupils' opportunities to continue to higher education, to enter the labour market and thus also to integrate into Swedish society.

#### 4.3.3 Assumptions and justifications

Many factors affect the implementation of a reform (or method) and its results. Research on policy implementation tends to distinguish between implementation problems and factors that may contribute to successful implementation and good results (Knill & Tosun, 2012). While a detailed discussion of these factors falls beyond the scope of this report, we briefly mention some of the most important ones here. A central factor is the clarity with which the reform and its aims are formulated. This factor is of course linked to the policy formulation phase. The reform in question has been incorporated in legislation, and has accordingly been subject to thorough debate by various bodies.

Usually the number of actors involved in the process is regarded as a second determining factor (Knill & Tosun, 2012). On the one hand, this reform involves a considerable number of actors: it is to be implemented by all Swedish schools and is not restricted geographically or organisationally. Responsibility for implementation of the reform, on the other hand, is restricted to school staff, but different categories of staff are involved. Cooperation between principals, teachers, home language teachers, and guidance counsellors is needed to ensure that mapping results really are used in the planning of pupils' schooling. Other actors, such as volunteer organisations and other government agencies, may also be involved, and their involvement is considered in our study. Accordingly, it is necessary to specifically consider how the number of actors that needs to cooperate influence the implementation process and achieved results.

Further, existing international research on the implementation of educational reforms should be briefly considered. Ball et al have studied numerous reforms that have been implemented (interpreted, translated and enacted) in several stages, by various actors and groups in a number of schools and their local contexts. The point of their analysis is to show how reforms change and are invested with new and varied meaning in different contexts. Those involved (e.g. teachers, principals and responsible authorities) interpret the governing documents, translate them into something that works in their own practice and perform state-prescribed changes somewhat differently. The reforms are made in specific practices (Ball, Maguire & Braun 2012; Osgood 2012).

Ball et al emphasise the complexity of the implementation of various reforms and the importance of studying local conditions for understanding their results. A national, top-down reform may achieve different results when implemented locally. We therefore found it important to consider conditions at individual schools and the manner in which they affect chances of reaching the reform's short- and long-term goals.

It should already be noted that the conditions for implementing the reform vary widely between municipalities and schools, for example due to the following:

- Different levels of experience in receiving newly-arrived pupils;
- Differing access to resources, as regards financing and staff; and
- Different geographical conditions, which dictate opportunities for cooperation and resource allocation (e.g. differences between rural and metropolitan areas).

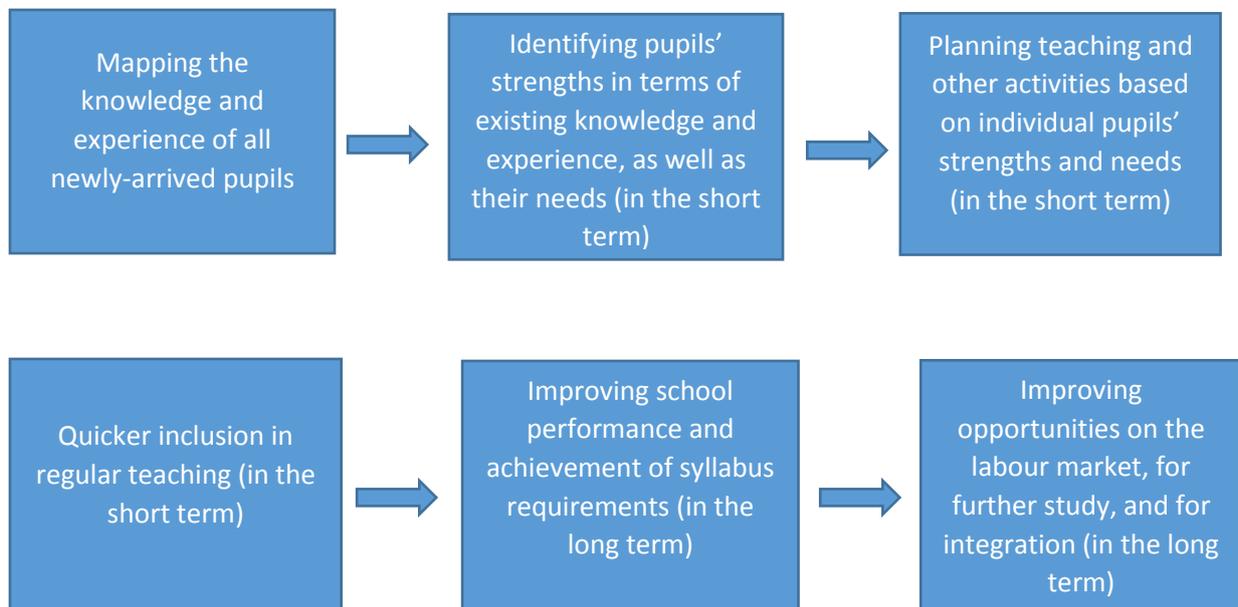
#### 4.3.4 Inputs

In the introductory sections, we have described steps taken by the responsible authorities to facilitate implementation of this reform. Steps range from practical issues, such as the development of mapping materials and professional development initiatives, to providing different kinds of financial support. The most important step has been to develop mapping materials and make them available nationally. In connection with this a national, web-based professional development course has also been developed, and all school staff may participate free of charge. The National Agency for Education has further initiated and partially financed a range of other professional development initiatives for different categories of staff (from guidance counsellors and teachers to principals and municipal officials). Additionally, the National Agency for Education supports and contributes financially to reports on their present situations prepared by municipalities and schools, as well as to their development of strategies for the implementation of mapping and incorporation of results into subsequent teaching (Skolverket 2016 website). Municipalities and schools have been involved in the development of mapping material and in testing different ways of handling the reception and teaching of new arrivals. Many schools and teachers have volunteered time and resources to do this work.

In conclusion, many steps have taken in connection with inscribing the reform in question in law. This evaluation ought to provide some indication of whether these steps were targeted correctly and whether they were adequate. At the same time, our evaluation may highlight differences resulting from the conditions faced by various schools.

#### 4.3.5 Program Logic

As stated in section 4.3.2, based on our examination of the background to the reform we could identify desired short- and long-term outcomes. These are visualized in the model below, as well as an overview of the different phases of the reform.



## 5. Process implementation evaluation

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous section described the different phases of the implementation of a reform, and this section focuses on the process implementation phase. This is the phase during which a reform (or method) reaches those who will ultimately be responsible for its implementation (school staff), as well as the target group of the reform (newly-arrived pupils). The implementation process involves the transformation of a policy input into a policy output and is broadly speaking concerned with what happens to a policy after its official passing by the government or legislature. “How do the formal transposition and the practical application of legal acts take shape? Which problems and deviations from

the initial objectives can be observed?" (Knill & Tosun, 2012). A process evaluation accordingly verifies what the program is and whether or not it is delivered as intended to the targeted recipients (Scheried, 1994, cited in Rossi et al, 2004). Questions answered are primarily of the type: "how was the policy delivered?" (HM Treasury, 2013) and "what is going on?" (Robson, 2011).

We have identified three process indicators as central to our evaluation. These may also be regarded as short-term output indicators:

- A. The extent to which the reform has been implemented; i.e. whether all newly-arrived pupils are mapped and whether their schooling is planned based on mapping results.
- B. Potential problems in the implementation of mapping and planning of teaching based on mapping results.
- C. Perceived need to cooperate with different civil society partners.

Using these indicators as a starting point, process implementation will be analysed on the basis of a number of categories (Centrum för epidemiologi och samhällsmedicin (2013; Sundell 2012). These categories have been deemed appropriate in the context, since they provide different perspectives on the above indicators. The categories, which overlap to some extent, are:

1. **Intentions:** The initial intentions of the target group (those potentially responsible for carrying out the reform). In our case study this involved investigating the intentions and willingness of school staff to map all newly-arrived pupils and to plan teaching based on these results. Since schools are legally compelled to implement mapping this may be deemed an irrelevant category. However, considering intentions is important, since they may influence the implementation of the method and its short- and long-term effects.
2. **Appropriacy:** The target group's (teachers and principals) perception of the appropriacy of the method; whether it is deemed fit for purpose, and its compatibility with current working methods. These aspects are relevant in relation to the extent to which school staff wants to promote and facilitate the implementation of the reform and, more concretely, refer to the extent to which mapping of newly-arrived pupils' knowledge has been implemented.

3. **Acceptance:** The target group's acceptance of the method, whether it is deemed useful and whether it has advantages over other methods. This category is very close to number 2 above, since perceptions of the appropriacy of the policy are intimately connected to acceptance of the reform. This also influences the target group's willingness to implement the method in their own schools and accordingly the extent to which mapping is implemented.
4. **Feasibility:** Practical implementation of the method in a specific environment. Here the focus falls on possible problems connected to schools' capability to implement mapping and planning. Possible need for cooperation with other government agencies or civil society may be expressed.
5. **Flexibility:** The extent to which the mapping method is used in practice, as opposed to the original description of the method.
6. **Institutionalisation:** The extent to which a method is used in an organisation, i.e. the extent to which mapping is implemented and individual planning is based on mapping results.

## 5.2 Methodology

The process evaluation is mainly based on in-depth, qualitative interviews. Teachers and/or other staff handling new arrivals, as well as principals and heads of reception centres have been interviewed. Using in-depth interviews is justified: our objective is not only to determine whether the reform is being implemented, but also to gain deeper understanding of the possible obstacles actors perceive as impeding successful implementation. Based on the aims of our evaluation, interviews were also used to pose questions about possible cooperation with civil society – using questionnaires would not have yielded the same understanding. Qualitative interviews allow us to capture participants' language and categorisations through their own descriptions of the implementation process and the problems they encountered.

Local conditions vary, for example as regards the number of students received, teachers' experiences of handling new arrivals and schools' other economic and social circumstances. Therefore interviews were conducted in six different Swedish municipalities. In two of these municipalities, interviews were conducted both at a reception centre and at a school. Our study accordingly comprises a total of six schools

and two reception centres and 14 interviews were conducted with teachers and principals. Teachers were selected based on their active involvement in implementation of the reform (selected teachers receive newly-arrived pupils and map their knowledge), since these teachers are deemed to be most knowledgeable about the implementation of the reform, its advantages, and problems encountered during the process. Frequently, these teachers have most knowledge and experience of working with new arrivals and their education, and they are therefore in the best position to judge the reform's importance and the possibility that it will have the desired effects. At the same time, however, it should be noted that the picture of the reform sketched in our study may be influenced by our sample: to a relatively large degree these teachers have chosen to work with newly-arrived pupils and are highly interested in their education. By focusing on these teachers, we are not considering how other teachers, who are not as experienced at handling new arrivals, view the reform.

One of the basic principles of selecting our sample of municipalities and schools was to ensure inclusion of larger and smaller municipalities and of municipalities with different conditions. A metropolitan municipality is included in the final study, as well as a large municipality, a medium-sized municipality and three smaller municipalities. Municipality size affects schools' available staff resources, and their access and proximity to other schools, government agencies and organisations affect prospects for cooperation. Municipality size may affect experiences of receiving newly-arrived pupils, our second principle for selection. It has been important to ensure that our sample includes municipalities that are experienced in receiving new arrivals, as well as municipalities with less experience. The third principle for selection was ensuring geographic distribution of participating municipalities. For practical and financial reasons, most of the studied schools are located in the western part of central Sweden.

Some of the schools and municipalities we approached declined to participate in the study, or never responded to our request. There may be different reasons for this. Since many schools have been under severe pressure during the last year due to the influx of new arrivals, a lack of time may in many cases have been a good reason to decline to participate. It is impossible to determine whether problems experienced during implementation of the reform or critique of the reform itself could have led to refusals.

We can note that several of the participating schools experience implementation problems and these have been part of the public debate on the reform, so this in itself should not constitute a reason for not participating.

We used semi-structured, individual interviews, to reduce the risk for undue influence. Interviews relied on a joint interview template, which in turn is based on the questions presented in Section 5.1. Different templates were used for different categories of interviewees (teachers and principals). Interviews were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis.

Our evaluation of the implementation process is thus overwhelmingly qualitative. This does not mean that the interview material cannot be used quantitatively. Extent of implementation may well be measured quantitatively, for example. We would like to stress, however, that our evaluation is only based on the implementation of the reform in six different municipalities including six different schools and two reception centers and cannot lead to generalised conclusions. Since our approach is qualitative, we do not have ambitions to do statistical generalizations in relation to the schools in general. Rather the results will be compared with earlier studies in the same field. Nevertheless, based on the distribution of our sample in terms of experience and conditions, as well as geographical diversification, we believe that this evaluation can give a first picture of the extent to which the reform has been implemented. Our evaluation is also too small to enable generalised comparisons between different categories of schools, but may serve to highlight examples of the challenges and advantages experienced by schools with, for example, little or extensive experience of receiving newly-arrived pupils.

### 5.3 Results

Results are presented in different subsections, based on the categories presented in Section 5.1. Each subsection concludes with a short summary.

#### 5.3.1 Intentions, appropriacy and acceptance

It emerged during the interviews that the interviewed staff and principals, as well as the municipalities and schools where they work, on the whole are positively disposed to the new reform. All interviewees intend to follow the guidelines for the reform, despite the fact that they have not yet succeeded in implementing the reform in its entirety. Most of

the schools have made use of mapping before, but to varying degrees. The extent of mapping varies between different municipalities, and depends mainly on their prior experience of receiving newly-arrived pupils, but also on the availability of skilled staff. All interviewees regarded the mapping method itself as an appropriate tool for taking advantage of the prior knowledge and experience of newly-arrived pupils, and for offering schooling that is adapted to individual levels. Before implementation of the reform they felt the need for more uniform and structured material. Some of the municipalities have purchased mapping material developed by other municipalities, while others have developed their own. Several interviewees, both teachers and principals, expressed the view that they have been awaiting material for a long time and that new mapping material ought to have been distributed earlier.

“We felt a need for more structured material and think that the new material on the whole is good.” (Teacher 1, medium-sized municipality)

“We’ve had to develop our own mapping material, so it’s a bit as if this reform that came now on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January is just a clarification. So I can say that this is nothing new for us, but it’s a lot more structured now.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, small municipality A)

There is a high rate of acceptance of mapping as a method among interviewees, and mapping is deemed appropriate to this context. National mapping material is viewed as a resource, since it provides equal guidelines for assessing pupils’ knowledge. It also contributes to promoting equal conditions for mapping, since all municipalities now have access to mapping material. However, interviewees pointed out that the circumstances under which mapping is conducted vary, and depend on a variety of factors, such as access to staff with the necessary skills, as well as organisational constraints. Interviewees were positively disposed to the reform and thought it important that the issue of the education of new arrivals and their prospects of succeeding at school and in the community are taken seriously.

“It’s actually embarrassing that Swedish schools have not had better reception before. That these questions have only become important now. Because we’ve been receiving people for many, many, many years, but these issues have never been raised before. They’ve just never been very trendy. Just a small group has been working with them. And I think this is a bit embarrassing, this should’ve been done a long time ago. A long time ago – but, yes, better late than never!” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

While all interviewees were positively disposed to the reform as regards the requirement that all schools are to map all new arrivals, one of the interviewed principals expressed a degree of ambivalence regarding the requirement that all schools need to use the national mapping material supplied by the National Agency for Education.

“In the worst case the risk would be that all the good work we’ve done before is lost, I mean that we cannot make use of all the important experiences gained if everyone needs to do everything in exactly the same way.” (Principal, metropolitan municipality)

This principal emphasised that there was a need for legislation, and that it was good that mapping became mandatory and that the time spend in preparatory classes has been limited to two years. Nevertheless he was not convinced that doing everything uniformly is entirely positive. Most of the interviewees did think that it is good that everyone uses the same material. They saw using the same material as positive and saw advantages in using material developed by experts that simplifies matters for a pupil and staff, in cases where pupils change schools, for example.

“When a child lives here and we map here and the child moves later, we can send the mapping results with the child. Then the next place where the child lives gets a quicker...the next teacher can meet the child more quickly, because then they know that they’ve done this at the child’s previous school and we’ve used the same material. So it helps the child.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, small municipality A)

To summarise, our study shows that there is both a positive intention among the interviewees themselves and at the schools and reception centres in the municipalities where they work. Acceptance of the reform has to be regarded as high and interviewees supply different examples of the appropriacy of the reform.

### 5.3.2 Flexibility and institutionalisation

#### 5.3.2.1 *The extent of mapping*

The conducted interviews show relatively clear evidence of the implementation of the reform. Only three of the six municipalities in which interviews were conducted have implemented both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the mapping process. Stage 1 is introductory and maps pupils’ previous education, their language (home language, school language,

etc.), their interests in terms of school subjects and their previous experience. Stage 2 is twofold and involves the mapping of pupils' literacy and numeracy. There are clear differences in the implementation of these stages. All of the municipalities perform Stage 1 of the mapping process with all newly-arrived pupils, while only three of the municipalities also perform Stage 2 with all pupils. There is considerable variation among the municipalities that do not perform Stage 2 mapping with all pupils: some map almost all pupils, while others only map a few pupils. Implementing the literacy part of Stage 2 seems to be more common than implementation of the numeracy part.

“This term we've been implementing Stage 1. We haven't come to Stage 2 yet, because of a lack of staff. We've had more pupils than we've expected, so I've had to teach and had no time left for mapping.” (Teacher, small municipality A)

The above quotation is from an interview with a teacher working in a municipality that has a lot of experience with receiving newly-arrived pupils. They have been using mapping for a long time and are used to the method, even though the mapping material is new and more comprehensive than before. Their reason for not performing Stage 2 with all pupils was not that they needed to change their routines, but was organisational or structural. The principal and head of the reception centre in the same municipality said that they do have the economic resources to appoint more staff, but that no adequately-qualified staff wanted to work in their municipality – the nearest city is some distance away from this municipality.

“We're trying to recruit staff with adequate training, but nobody is applying.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, small municipality A)

Interviewees from the other schools in small municipality B and C that have not yet completely implemented Stage 2 also highlighted obstacles such as the lack of qualified staff and the need to reorganise teaching duties so that all pupils can be mapped.

Some of the municipalities that have implemented both Stage 1 and 2 are experienced in receiving new arrivals, but one of them has basically no previous experience. This shows how important the context is – in this case proximity to large cities may improve chances of recruiting qualified staff (Ball has also emphasised the importance of context; see Ball et al, 2012). Mapping is new to this inexperienced municipality, and has demanded extensive reorganisation. Nevertheless all the interviewees from this municipality felt that they have made considerable progress in implementing the reform

and in organising mapping processes. A reception centre that cooperates with primary and secondary schools has been established in this municipality, and both stages of the mapping process have been performed with all pupils, in accordance with the legislation. Additionally, some upper secondary students have also been mapped.

“We’ve mapped everyone who needs to be mapped and even a few extra ones, as desired by the teachers doing language introduction in upper secondary school.”  
(Guidance counsellor, medium-sized municipality)

The head of the reception centre in the large municipality described the severe pressure they were under. The number of newly-arrived pupils has increased and a month after the start of the school year in the autumn of 2016, they have received 110 pupils. Despite the increased pressure they have performed both stages of the mapping process with all pupils. Interviewees ascribed this to their familiarity with the working method, to the fact that they already had been thinking about the organisation of strategies for the reception and mapping of new arrivals before the reform, as well as to the fact that they had access to appropriately trained staff. Here we can draw parallels with Ball’s (Ball et al 2012) discussion about the importance of the local context in the implementation of reforms.

Although all municipalities included in our study have implemented at least the first stage with all newly-arrived pupils, it emerged from the interviews that this is not the case in all other municipalities. When contacting the previous school of a pupil who used to live in another municipality, no information about earlier mapping could be obtained, because no mapping had been done.

“Well, we’ve noticed that all municipalities [do not map], although a date has been set, that from this date you have to start. Pupils have moved here from places where this is not done. So when we call them and ask:

‘This pupil, has he been in your school?’

‘Yes, he’s been here.’

‘Are there mapping results for him?’

‘No, we didn’t have time.’

So it’s going to be a while before all municipalities do exactly what they’re supposed to.” (Principal and head of reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

Schools included in our study implement Stage 1 to a very large extent, but at many schools routines are not yet in place so that both parts of Stage 2 may be performed. The

main reason given for failing to implement mapping is a lack of staff familiar with the material; staff with the appropriate training do not always have time to conduct mapping. Failure is thus due both to a lack of human resources and to the organisation of schools.

#### *5.3.2.2. The extent to which mapping results are used*

Mapping results are intended to be used both when determining in which year and class pupils should be placed, as well as when pupils' subsequent schooling is planned. While interviewees regarded mandatory mapping as providing a better basis for placement decisions, they also described the difficulty of taking such decisions if other factors are taken into consideration, such as social reasons or pupils' own wishes. At the time the interviews were conducted, most of the interviewees were uncertain as to how well they make use of the information gained through mandatory mapping.

“I don't think that we, that we've ever placed anyone more than a year lower, for social reasons too. One needs to take many factors into account.” (Principal and head of reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

“A principal now has more comprehensive, better documentation. In this way it's simplified things somewhat, but the main problems, the difficulties and figuring out still remain. What would be the best here, the best there, how much should parents' wishes be weighed in and how should you value the pupils' own wishes against the mapping results. That's not changed in the slightest. Those difficulties are still there.” (Principal, metropolitan municipality)

Several of the interviewees described difficulties in circulating mapping results and turning them into living documents. A teacher in the metropolitan municipality described how results were mainly used to adapt teaching in preparatory classes on the basis of pupils' knowledge and needs. However, she was sceptical about what happens when pupils are channelled to ordinary classes.

“I've got this under control, but I feel that it doesn't really work for channelling them further. Sometimes I wonder, what am I sending them to?” (Teacher, metropolitan municipality)

Several other interviewees, teachers as well as principals, expressed similar arguments when describing their uncertainty about the extent to which mapping results from Stages 1 and 2 are used to plan teaching. In most of the municipalities certain persons

are tasked with implementing mapping, and a relatively small number of people are involved in the mapping process. Those responsible for conducting mapping give the results to the receiving teacher and in most cases there is currently a lack of transparency about the ways in which results are used. It further emerged that those performing mandatory mapping did not know to which extent subject teachers were performing or intended to perform further mapping in their subjects. A guidance counsellor working at a reception centre in a medium-sized municipality feared that receiving teachers only will read pupils' knowledge profiles, and that these profiles will not be used as intended, i.e. as the basis for pupils' continued schooling. He feared that mapping results would only be used to a limited extent in the planning of subject teaching. He thought that this is in part due to teachers' lack of skills in teaching newly-arrived pupils, and in some cases even to their lack of interest.

“In general, I don't think there are many subject teachers who know how they should teach newly-arrived pupils. Nothing has been organised. There are some teachers who try to help as much as they can and as far as it's possible, but most teachers don't have the knowledge required for helping new arrivals, and some are even sort of ignorant. They don't know whether these pupils are present or how far they've come or how much they know, and they simply don't really care. This is not everyone, but there's a feeling that it's mostly up to teachers teaching Swedish as a second language to take action.” (Guidance counsellor, medium-sized municipality)

Teachers were described as having an acute lack of time and this was seen as increasing the risk that results are not used to the extent intended by the reform. Interviewees also felt that the lack of time may lead to a failure to prioritise further mapping in subjects, since teachers already have too many tasks vying for their attention.

“Since [further mapping in subjects] is not mandatory, I think, unfortunately, that it won't become common practice. I hope we in xxx will really get it done in all subjects, but when I listen to my colleagues in the rest of the country, I realise that this has not in any way been a priority. I think it's a shame that it's not mandatory, really, it's a shame.” (Head of reception unit, large municipality)

Interviewees saw using mapping results as important. They expressed the hope that organisation eventually will be improved so that mapping may be conducted under better conditions, as well as that professional development will be provided to those teachers who are inexperienced in receiving newly-arrived pupils.

Interviewee: “Stages 1 and 2 of the mapping process are important, but the most important thing is to get the pupil quickly into school, into a class, to make friends, and to work based on the outcomes that are already there. So this right after, that is it [that is important]!”

Interviewer: “Using the results?”

Interviewee: “Yes, that’s the important bit, in my opinion.” (Principal, large municipality)

It is hard to estimate the extent to which mapping results are used to plan teaching in most of the municipalities, but there are examples showing that first steps have been taken. Nevertheless, some interviewees emphasised that they have focused on implementing Stages 1 and 2 to be sure that they are following the legal requirements, and once routines have been established, they have started to consider how they may proceed with using the results. Similar arguments were made by other interviewees who described themselves as still being in the implementation phase and as trusting that things will look different in the future.

### 5.3.3. Feasibility

Our results show that certain factors are critical for the feasibility of implementation. As mentioned in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, the different extents to which the two mapping stages have been implemented may partly be explained by the fact that, even before mapping became mandatory, many schools had already been engaged in debating the topics raised in the first stage. Often procedures were already in place for conducting similar (but usually less extensive) mapping of newly-arrived pupils’ educational backgrounds, languages, etc. Prior to the reform, few schools had routines in place or experience of assessing literacy and numeracy in the manner required in Stage 2. Furthermore, it is clear that Stage 2 mapping requires more effort to implement, since it relies on subject knowledge; it cannot be implemented by ‘anyone’. The implementation process does not only depend on previous experience and practices, but also on the availability of human resources, time and organisational resources at each school.

#### 5.3.3.1 Possibilities for implementation and cooperation with the civil society

Our interviews show that three of the municipalities have had good possibilities of implementing the reform and now also perform Stages 1 and 2 with all pupils. Two of these municipalities have extensive experience of receiving newly-arrived pupils and

mapping their knowledge, while one of them is relatively inexperienced. Experienced interviewees described their adjustment as fairly easy, because routines and thoughts on the subject had already been in place for a long period. Again, we can draw parallels with Ball's (Ball et al 2012) discussion about the importance of the local context in the implementation of reforms. It had instead been a question of becoming familiar with the more comprehensive material and of adapting existing routines and organisation to the new situation.

"We didn't need to make big changes based on what the law said when it came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January; the changes we made were not that big." (Principal, metropolitan municipality)

Access to staff with appropriate skills also simplifies implementation. Some interviewees considered themselves privileged, for example because they had the opportunity to appoint staff members who speak the languages of pupils.

"We have extremely good guidance counsellors too, so we have a huge advantage. There are more than a hundred people working as home language teachers in forty different languages. So we are unbelievably privileged. We really are!" (Head of reception centre, large municipality)

A principal of one of the schools in the same municipality as the above reception centre head also described the conditions for implementing the reform as particularly good at his school. Teachers in preparatory classes as well as those teaching regular classes had been trained to teach new arrivals. The school had extensive experience in teaching newly-arrived pupils and had acquired the necessary skills and routines long before the reform came into effect.

Interviewee: "I'd like to say that it's very good...we have excellent skills, at all stages. But then of course there are the finances. That's a big but."

Interviewer: "What do you mean?"

Interviewee: "Well, I've got big classes. Of course we don't always have the resources; not enough money to offer as much study guidance as would be necessary, and such things." (Principal, large municipality)

Even when there are financial challenges most of the interviewed principals emphasised the possibility of applying for increased funding from the state. At the time the interviews were conducted, principals and heads of reception centres were unable to comment on whether increased funding covered the total costs of the reform. They

estimated that they would be able to keep within their budgets, but all were of the opinion that it was too early to comment and this aspect will have to be evaluated in the future.

A further possibility opened by implementation of the reform is that of cooperation between schools and civil society. Some municipalities and schools have been relying on retirees to improve the reception of newly-arrived pupils and one school had a homework assistance run by the Red Cross. One school in one of the small municipalities has cooperation with the local Migration Agency and some adult migrants had been appointed as language assistants. Furthermore, a principal from another small municipality described that a municipal integration strategist has been appointed, and that this had led to close cooperation between the school and the local employment office. Through the 'fresh start' initiative of the national employment agency, adult migrants had been appointed as language assistants at reception centres and schools in this municipality. They are paid by the employment agency and the municipality, although the municipality pays a smaller amount. Some of the first people who were appointed to these positions after they had completed their "Swedish for immigrants" courses, had been given permanent positions as municipal language assistants. These language assistants were described as an incredible resource, because they provide mother-tongue support to pupils in class during the entire school day. They do not help to facilitate the implementation of the reform, but are also obtaining insight into the Swedish school system and Swedish society, and their prospects of integration had been improved. Language assistants had also become an important link between the school and parents; not just for new arrivals, but even for other children.

"Not all the residents here in xxx are applauding the fact that we've received so many asylum seekers. And then you can guess what the conversations around the breakfast table sound like. Well, now we've taken in so many new arrivals and we have to think of our children. But when the children come home and tell them that this guy's name is Ahmed and he's so nice and he helps me in school, then the children take a positive message home to the whole family, to mum and dad. Aha, he works at the school and my children know him and think he's nice. So we're helping building bridges, so we're contributing to broader integration into the community." (Principal and head of reception unit, small municipality A)

Even if small municipality A above currently still has to implement Stage 2 because of a lack of staff, experience, financial resources and cooperation provide real possibilities for implementation.

#### *5.3.3.2 Challenges*

Different problems and challenges were mentioned that limit possibilities to implement the reform in its entirety (conducting Stage 1 and Stage 2 mapping and then using the results in planning continued schooling). As mentioned earlier, interviewees viewed access to adequately-trained staff, teachers' available time and organisation as central issues.

The interviewees regarded the fact that new arrivals frequently move as a cause for concern. Asylum-seeking children sometimes disappear from schools, without any information from the Migration Agency about where they are going. Teachers and principals would like to send mapping results with pupils, but because they do not know where pupils will end up they cannot inform their next school. This may mean that the mapping process will be repeated by the new school. Municipalities were trying to establish routines for documenting and saving mapping results in the best possible manner, in case someone later contacts the school. One school has begun to send notes with pupils and asked them to pass these on to their new teachers. Such notes contain contact details for more information about Stage 1 and 2 mapping results.

“Of course we want these pupils to have their mapping results. The results should kind of follow them, so we've done this so that they don't have to start from scratch. But we don't know where they go; we get no information from the Migration Agency about where they move.” (Head of reception centre, large municipality)

The interviewees thought that the relationship between the Migration Agency and municipalities could be improved. At the same time they stressed that they understand that the Migration Agency regards certain information as confidential. They also showed understanding for the pressured situation at the Migration Agency, which for example has led to long waiting times. Nevertheless they expressed not just the wish to be informed when pupils move, but also to receive information and official notices at an earlier stage if pupils are moving into a municipality.

“I don’t know whether there’ll be five new children or ten new children when I’m back in August. And it also puts me in a difficult position here; do I have enough space, do I have enough adults? Because I cannot appoint too many, but I cannot start appointing people in August. If I want to appoint new people I have to do it now so that everything is sorted out. So I take a guess and estimate that if I think I’ll get 20 children then I’ll have to have the staff to receive 20 children. Or I could get 40, and I don’t know until August. So it’s not easy!” (Principal and head of reception centre, small municipality A)

This principal was of the opinion that it is difficult to act professionally under the circumstances.

Access to classrooms presents another organisational challenge. In one of the municipalities, the possibilities of using mapping results and gradually channelling pupils into ordinary classes are limited: the reception centre and preparatory classes are located 1.5 km from the main school premises. It is therefore difficult to allow a pupil who is strong in one or more subjects to join regular classes.

“If we had been located closer to the main school, the middle school, I mean, our circumstances would’ve been different. Then juggling is easier. See, this pupil is really great at natural sciences, see they already know this and this and this. So they can join the regular natural science classes and then come back here and then go to math...then you can draw up an individual schedule, a kind of loose one. But we can’t do that at present.” (Teacher, small municipality A)

The skills and attitudes of staff further constrain implementation of the reform. On the one hand there are difficulties in recruiting staff with the needed skills, and on the other there is the challenge of providing professional development to existing members of staff and improving their attitudes to teaching this group of pupils. Our interviewees identified challenges in using mapping results, and to a large degree they did not think that mapping results were circulated.

“The big challenge for those of us who work with these pupils, is to get subject teachers to understand that there is knowledge here. It’s an enormous challenge, because it still mostly happens, well, we have very competent subject teachers so it is not that, but many of them still say...still see language as a barrier.” (Head of reception centre, large municipality)

“We need more involved principals to take charge of the situation. Right now much of the burden of responsibility is on teachers of Swedish as a second language and

to some extent on the guidance counsellors. But the subject teachers are just as much teachers to normal pupils as to new arrivals, so the main responsibility is theirs and they should take it on. But those higher up, like principals, have to organise them.” (Guidance counsellor, medium-sized municipality)

A further challenge is recruiting the necessary staff. Interviewees working in municipalities located closer to larger cities, or based in metropolitan areas, said that they have good recruitment opportunities, even if there is a lack of teachers trained to teach Swedish as a second language. Municipalities located further away sometimes have to be satisfied with being able to find someone who wants to work there at all. Sometimes such new appointees are only aged 20 and have no previous work experience in schools, and also no experience of working with pupils who have been traumatised. To further complicate matters, they have no knowledge about handling children who are experiencing crises. Implementation of the reform requires more resources than previously needed, in the form of staff, time and finances.

“We’re spending three times the amount of time on this.” (Teacher 2, medium-sized municipality)

“It actually takes an enormous amount of time to do these mappings and it’s a considerable amount of material and then you have to analyse it as well as you can. So it’s actually a waste of time if you’re not using the results, because it requires such an amount of resources to go through the process. So in that way it’s a shame that we’re not using the results better.” (Teacher, metropolitan municipality)

This is clearly something that can limit the implementation of the reform. Although there are strategies in place in many cases, interviewees felt that this is an area in need of development if the reform is to be implemented in the best manner.

#### *5.3.3.3 The need for cooperation— a prerequisite for implementing the reform?*

Our results show that mapping mainly is felt to be reliant on suitably-trained staff, particularly qualified teachers. At the same time, interviewees identified the need for cooperation between schools and reception centres, and of exchanging experiences between municipalities so that better routines could be developed and the organisation of mapping may be improved.

Most of the interviewees expressed the view that they first feel the need to partner with civil society after mandatory mapping has been performed. A principal in a metropolitan area expressed a desire for more fully developed partnerships between volunteer organisations, government agencies and his school. At the time there were no such partnerships at his school, mainly because the school had been under so much pressure that questions of cooperation simply had not been given priority. A head of a reception centre in a large municipality sketched a similar picture.

“Maybe we have this, but right now we’re just trying to keep our heads above water, that’s why it’s so hectic.” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

Cooperation with other actors is viewed as contributing to quicker inclusion in regular classes. If volunteers practise Swedish with pupils, for example, it becomes easier for them to participate in ordinary classes in those subjects they have a good foundation in, as identified during Stage 1 and 2 mapping. Cooperation is also seen as a way of facilitating pupils’ integration into the community. One of the principals stated, for example, that no cooperation is needed during the initial phase (reception and mapping). According to this interviewee, there is a desire and a real need for partnering for example with businesses, so that pupils may be offered individualised schooling that incorporates practical placements for certain pupils. He experienced difficulties in finding businesses that are willing to offer practical placements to pupils, irrespective of whether these are ‘regular’ pupils or new arrivals. There had been even more problems when pupils cannot speak Swedish.

Interviewee: “No, not during the reception, later rather.”

Interviewer: “What do you mean?”

Interviewee: “With integration and that you maybe, that there maybe could be... Not all new arrivals sit there with bright eyes, eager to learn as quickly as possible when they start their schooling here, it’s simply not the case. There’s the same distribution as there is for all other pupils and people. And then you sometimes can...if you take a pupil that doesn’t want to go to school or for some reason has difficulties in doing so. Then you could get some help from the business sector, for example, when you have educated or trained people and businesses that think, yes, this suits our profile, or this is a good way to promote ourselves, or whatever. But it’s difficult.” (Principal, large municipality)

In addition to partnering with businesses as regards practical placements, interviewees felt the need to cooperate so that pupils can practise running errands and shopping. This is to practise Swedish, to understand how everyday things work in Sweden, and to meet

people outside the school. Collaboration with, for instance, sports clubs, the Red Cross, retirees and other individuals was mentioned as a significant contributing factor to pupils' inclusion in school and to their integration into the community. Interviewees described how pupils expressed the desire to learn how Sweden works and to get in touch with Swedes.

“We want lots of contact and we need contact with Swedish persons too.” (Teacher 1, medium-sized municipality)

“They really want to know, they don't want to make mistakes; they want to learn how to function in our society.” (Principal and head of reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

Interviewees felt that there is relatively little need for cooperation during the implementation of the reform itself, but highlighted the considerable need for partnering with civil society and businesses to improve pupils' prospects of inclusion at school and in the community. As indicated in 5.3.3.1., are also specific examples of schools that collaborate with other authorities, for example to find adult migrants who can work in schools as language assistant and interpreters.

#### *5.3.3.4 Summary*

The persons interviewed in this study have positive attitudes and a high level of acceptance of the reform. Interviewees provided different examples of the appropriacy of the reform. All municipalities studied intended to implement the reform fully, although only three of the six currently perform both mapping stages with all newly-arrived pupils. Partial implementation was attributed to a lack of skilled staff and the organisation of schools. Interviewees were additionally uncertain as to the extent to which results from the mandatory mapping process are used to plan further subject teaching. Nevertheless, the reform is still in its implementation phase and interviewees were hoping that things may soon look different. One important result is that some interviewees gave examples of cooperation with civil society and other authorities in connection with the receipt of newly-arrived pupils. Two municipal have cooperation's with the local employment office or the local Migration Agency and adult migrants had been appointed as language assistants at reception centres and schools. Some municipalities and schools have been relying on retirees to improve the reception of newly-arrived pupils and one school had a homework assistance run by the Red Cross.

The reform may also lead to other partnerships between schools and civil society, since interviewees identified a substantial need for such collaboration after mapping had been done – to build bridges and promote integration.

## 6. Impact evaluation

### 6.1. Introduction

We start this section with a brief overview of impact evaluations in general and of previous Swedish research on impact evaluations of educational reforms. Outcomes are central when impact is evaluated. *Impact* is the difference between measured (or estimated) development and the development that would have taken place even if the initiative had not been implemented. As noted earlier, evaluating impact of educational reforms is problematic. Although impact evaluations may be effective, impact studies, just like process evaluations, are associated with difficulties and limitations. They may require much time and resources, and also depend on the design of reforms. According to the Swedish government report *Reaching Out and Reaching All the Way* (SOU 2009:94), it is often difficult to determine final impact if a series of outcomes are achieved in different stages. Similar problems result if many changes occur at the same time: it is difficult to separate different outcomes. Education is, according to another government report, exactly such an area where distinguishing between series of outcomes is fraught with difficulties (SOU 2014:12). The notion that there are so many factors involved in a change that it is frequently difficult, if not impossible, to relate a specific change to a specific intervention, is well represented in the research. White (2010) holds for instance that “to measure is not to assess”. He advocates focusing on contribution rather than on attribution. "Ball et al (2012) have also noted that schools often are exposed to a variety of different and parallel policy processes. In many cases change is effected by more than one action, and outcomes are often not dichotomous. The question is rather to what extent cumulative impact may be ascribed to a certain intervention (SOU 2014:12; cf. White 2010).

The reform in question corresponds well to the picture sketched above. As shown in Section 5, it is relatively simple to evaluate whether and how schools map the knowledge and experience of newly-arrived pupils. Planning schooling on the basis of mapping results and thereby tailoring education to individual circumstances is, on the

contrary, a long-term process, and results may only be observable after a number of years. It is also difficult to distinguish between factors that may have influenced prospects for inclusion, improved school performance and integration. In this specific case, the reform is being implemented at a time when a series of other changes are made to the reception of new arrivals.

It is at present extremely difficult to evaluate the impact of this reform, since it is still in the implementation phase. Yet, it is also necessary to start considering its possible impact. Our evaluation is in theory and focuses on the assumptions of decision makers regarding the conditions, mechanisms and frameworks needed for the reform to be successful. Theory-based impact evaluations test these assumptions against empirically-observed outcomes, and also examine other factors that may have played a part. Our aim is to contribute to a discussion of the effects expected by the actors involved, the basis of their expectations, and the other factors they suspect will contribute. The European Commission has noted that understanding successful reforms and preconditions for their success is essential for decision-making processes (SOU 2014:12) Theory-based evaluations may assist in assessing a reform's success; how it works, and in which contexts it works. At the same time, they create a framework for assessing the impact of complex reforms that are also influenced by many other factors.

There is thus good reason for evaluating this reform at such an early stage. In this way we can highlight the opportunities and challenges identified by those involved in its implementation in the light of expected outcomes. This is therefore a formative, future-oriented impact evaluation, and not a direct comparison between measured developments and developments that would have taken place irrespective of its implementation.

#### 6.1.1. Key issues

The process evaluation presented in Section 5 concentrated on the extent to which schools have implemented mapping of new arrivals, as well as the extent to which placement and planning is based on individual mapping results. Possibilities and challenges connected to the implementation process are also discussed. This part of the evaluation focuses on medium- and long-term effects of the reform. As described above,

these are as yet difficult to measure, so our study is based on the involved actors' perceptions of the types of outcomes they expect from the reform, as well as of the factors influencing the degree to which the reform can effect change.

The evaluation is based on the medium- and long-term output indicators listed below. Our evaluation also highlights the other factors actors involved perceive as possibly influencing the outcome of the reform and the achievement of intended results.

- A. Utilising mapping for individualised planning and teaching that rely to a greater degree on pupils' prior knowledge and experience.
- B. Pupils' experiences of the mapping process and of the fact that their schooling will be planned in accordance with mapping results.
- C. The importance of mapping in including pupils in regular teaching.
- D. Possible consequences for pupils' school performance.
- E. Possible effects on pupils' prospects of integration into society as a whole.

## 6.2 Methodology

Outcome assessments are often associated with quantitative analysis and presentations of results, to the exclusion of qualitative data in the form of answers to questionnaires or interviews. Others have noted that there are relevant 'why-questions' which are difficult to answer in a quantitative impact evaluation. Yet these are often precisely the kinds of questions that politicians and decision-makers want to see answered. Our study is entirely based on qualitative interviews focused on involved actors' perceptions of the possible outcomes of the reform and the factors that may affect achievement of desired results.

Our study is based on in-depth interviews, which provide one of few opportunities for evaluation at a relatively early stage. Although questionnaires could also be used, perceptions of a reform's impact are difficult to capture in writing. Future evaluations of the long-term results would provide completely different opportunities for using quantitative data in the form of grades, national test results, eligibility to upper secondary school, eligibility to university, etc.

As was the case in the process evaluation presented in Section 5, local conditions vary as regards the number of students received, teachers' experience in handling new arrivals, and schools' other economic circumstances and social conditions. Interviews have accordingly been conducted in the same six Swedish municipalities included in the evaluation of the implementation process. Interviews in two of these municipalities were conducted both at a reception centre and at a school, and our study comprises a total of six schools and two reception centres. 14 interviews were conducted with teachers and principals. Teachers were selected based on their active involvement in implementation of the reform (selected teachers receive newly-arrived pupils and plan and conduct mapping). These teachers are deemed to be most knowledgeable and experienced as regards new arrivals and their education, and are therefore in the best position to judge the possible outcomes of the reform and the possibility that it will effect change. Again it should be noted that the picture of the implementation of the reform sketched in our study may be influenced by our sample: to a relatively large degree these teachers have chosen to work with newly-arrived pupils and are engaged in issues surrounding their education. By interviewing these teachers, we are unable to consider how other teachers, who are not as experienced at handling new arrivals, perceive the reform.

One of the basic principles of selecting our sample of municipalities and schools was to ensure inclusion of larger and smaller municipalities and of municipalities with different conditions. A metropolitan municipality is included in the final study, as well as a large municipality, a medium-sized municipality and three smaller municipalities. Municipality size affects human resources available to schools; their access and proximity to other schools, government agencies and organisations affect prospects for cooperation. Municipality size may also affect experiences of receiving newly-arrived pupils, our second principle for selection. It has been important to ensure that our sample includes municipalities that have extensive experience of receiving new arrivals, as well as municipalities with less experience. The third principle for selection was ensuring geographic distribution of participating municipalities. For practical and financial reasons, most of the studied schools are located in the western part of central Sweden.

## 6.3 Results

Results are presented in different subsections, based on the output indicators listed presented in Section 6.1. Each subsection concludes with a short summary.

### 6.3.1 Utilising pupils' prior knowledge and experience

As shown in Section 5.3, the reform simplifies the placement of pupils in years and classes, since schools now conduct extensive mapping which provides information about pupils' earlier schooling, language, experiences, literacy and numeracy.

“Yes, that's clear. If you follow the mapping material closely, you definitely get a clearer picture.” (Principal and head of reception centre, small municipality A)

“We were basing decisions on our own mapping material, but this is much more comprehensive. You get a more detailed picture.” (Teacher 2, medium-sized municipality)

The principal and head of a reception centre in a medium-sized municipality with little experience of receiving new arrivals or using mapping, said that she was not sure, but guessed that placements were probably based on age alone before the reform. Now more factors were considered when making placement decisions. The head of a reception centre in a large municipality pointed out that the new mapping material may have greater impact, since it recognises and utilises knowledge and experience not specific to school subjects.

“We can above all pinpoint this...they have skills and knowledge and what support they may need if they don't have good foundations in school subjects. But you can also have other knowledge, unrelated to school...all people have their resources and we should draw on them.” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

Several interviewees also pointed out that it was difficult to know whether the new mapping method and material in practice have led to a different, better way of utilising pupils' knowledge. A teacher in small municipality A, who has extensive experience of mapping and teaching new arrivals, did not feel that the new material or the reform was having any effect on the utilisation of pupils' prior knowledge and experiences. At the same time, she emphasised that it was difficult to know what the outcome of the reform will be, since they were still in the implementation phase and have only been performing Stage 1 mapping (language and experience). She felt that Stage 2 mapping may generate more information and may therefore contribute to taking account of pupils' individual circumstances, even if she was unable to comment with any certainty at this early stage.

A teacher in a metropolitan municipality described the thorough (and very similar) mapping process they already had in place before the reform took effect and did not think that the reform will have such a great impact on the utilisation of pupils' knowledge, when compared to earlier practices. Nevertheless she regarded the literacy part of Stage 2 mapping as more comprehensive than the material they used before and thus as giving more detailed information. Similar to the reasoning described in Section 5.3.2.2, interviewees felt that Stage 1 and 2 mapping includes more aspects and provides more information about pupils, when compared their earlier practices; more skills and experiences are recognised and can thus be drawn on. So this is regarded as an improvement. At the same time, it is important to stress that the interviewees are unsure as to how well the information gained through mapping is used. Several of the interviewees described difficulties in circulating mapping results and in converting them into living documents, as well as the lack of transparency surrounding the use of mapping results in practice. One reason for this is that mapping relies on close cooperation and information exchange between staff involved in the mapping process and different subject teachers. Many interviewees also experienced difficulties in involving all teachers in this process. These difficulties were ascribed, for instance, to time constraints, to teachers not feeling that they have the adequate skills to teach new arrivals, and in some cases even to a lack of interest.

"Some teachers say, I teach math, not languages, or I'm a civics teacher, not a language teacher. While I think all of them are teachers of Swedish as a second language – as soon as you have a pupil who doesn't understand Swedish you automatically become a Swedish teacher. Everyone doesn't agree with my philosophy, and I think that's an obstacle, because then they're not really interested in adapting to the pupil. Then there are also some teachers who really want to and really try to develop, but I think the biggest stumbling block is that all subject teachers are not on board. It doesn't matter how much you map, if they're not interested." (Teacher 2, medium-sized municipality)

"Some subject teachers pass the buck to the Swedish as a second language teacher, and want that teacher to act as mentor, or want the teacher teaching Swedish as a second language to take charge and so, and then it's great to have a principal who insists: 'No! We have someone teaching Swedish as a second language here, and she does a great job, but that does not mean that you can transfer your responsibility for these pupils to her.' So it's only when all teachers are skilled and prepared that this will work really well." (Principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

The interviews we conducted show that the reform has some effect on the utilisation of pupils' prior knowledge and experience, in the sense that schools obtain more information about pupils. No certain pronouncements can be made on the practical outcomes or impact on pupils' schools performance, because it is unclear in which ways mapping results are used as pedagogical tools in the planning of teaching.

#### *6.3.1.1 Pupils' experiences and expectations*

According to the interviewees, older pupils for the most part experience mapping as something positive, and understand the aim of the process. Most pupils are motivated, want to showcase their knowledge and seem to think that it is good if they can avoid starting from scratch if they already have solid foundations in subjects.

“The older ones certainly understand why and think it's positive. They've also like it when we ask them what they want; they like questions about school year placement, for example. They like showing that they know things.” (Teacher 2, medium-sized municipality)

“When the time comes to be mapped they are calm and think it's natural that they need to check how much you know. And they really want to show what they know; they do their best to give the right answers during mapping.” (Guidance counsellor, medium-sized municipality)

“Pupils can think, or sometimes also say, yes, but I know a lot more than this. So that they in some way...in those cases you feel it's really important for them to continue with subject studies.” (Teacher 1, medium-sized municipality)

Interviewees did not think that younger pupils are as aware of the aim of mapping, and they also do not seem to have the same expectations of what they may achieve. Teachers regarded this as a consequence of younger children not having had as much time to develop and think about their future schooling.

#### *6.3.1.2 Quicker inclusion in regular teaching*

One clear aim of the reform is quicker inclusion in regular subject teaching. As shown in the introductory sections of this report, much emphasis is placed on the idea that newly-arrived pupils should not be attending different kinds of introductory and preparatory classes for too long a period, but that they should be included in regular school activities. It has also been stressed that insufficient language skills do not prohibit participation in

different subjects. Language teaching should be offered concurrently with teaching in other subjects.

A teacher in a metropolitan municipality described how she was allocated a room on the perimeter of the school before the reform took effect. The room was unsuitable for teaching – it was a kitchen. She described how one pupil had to keep books and material in a cutlery drawer. The teacher experienced the situation as untenable and felt that she had little opportunity to work with other teachers. She felt that the reform had achieved results, because preparatory classes are now located in a central part of the school. According to her, the reorganisation was in part due to the fact that it was possible to maintain that “the general guidelines says” that these pupils should be part of the school. Preparatory classes are now offered in a proper classroom that is located close to classrooms used by subject teachers, thus furthering cooperation and giving pupils the opportunity to participate in regular teaching in different subjects.

“It came more or less with this new directive about new arrivals, that they should be in a central part of the school and not outside in barracks or other buildings. So then they moved things around and we got this classroom.” (Teacher, metropolitan municipality)

While this teacher was positively disposed to the reorganisation and the new opportunities for working with other teachers, she was also concerned about the situation newly-arrived pupils find themselves in when they do join regular classes.

Interviewee: “I don’t know how much attention is paid when pupils from preparatory classes just join.”

Interviewer: “Do you mean, in regular classes?”

Interviewee: “Yes, that’s what I’m wondering. Here in the preparatory class, here we look closely at what it says and what the reception centre found and base our planning on that. But I think that falls through the cracks, or sort of collapses during this transition to regular classes.” (Teacher, metropolitan municipality)

As noted, opportunities for quicker inclusion in regular subject teaching were felt to have been improved by the reform. Yet this interviewee felt that it was a problem if regular teaching was not adapted with respect to mapping results. Although she understood that subject teachers may experience difficulties in doing so, since they do not all have the necessary skills. She further said that she was not sure how familiar subject teachers were with the new reform, or whether they knew that material is available for voluntary mapping in their subjects. The interviewee identified the

workload of teachers as a possible reason; teachers have limited time available for professional development, for instance.

“I’m not even sure that they know it exists.” (Teacher, metropolitan municipality)

A teacher in small municipality A thought that the new guidelines to include new arrival more quickly in regular classes were good, in the sense that the goal is for pupils to continue their regular schooling as soon as possible. At the same time, she stressed the word *possible*: pupils should not be channelled into regular teaching at any cost. She stressed that pupils should feel secure and be offered language assistance if they are to join regular classes. From time to time she had to take pupils back into preparatory classes because they had been “sidelined”. Because pupils do not understand what is said and are not offered help to understand, they are only present in classrooms and not included in teaching. Just like the teacher from the metropolitan municipality, she stressed the importance of staff giving support to these pupils, also in regular subject teaching. At the time, she experienced difficulties in meeting the needs of new arrivals regarding support in regular subject teaching, because of their municipality’s lack of adequately-trained staff and organisational issues.

“If the school has many language assistants or guidance counsellors that can be present the whole time, well, then it’s completely different. But [it is difficult] for such a small school in a poor municipality where it’s hard to find language assistants able to speak both Swedish and Tigrinya, for example.” (Teacher, small municipality A)

The head of a reception centre in a large municipality stressed that new arrivals should not be isolated or excluded as a group, and also focused on how important it is that all teachers and school staff take responsibility for this group of pupils. She thought it was vital to include these pupils and to let them become part of the school as a whole.

“A pupil is the school’s pupil. And it’s extremely important that these pupils feel that they are part of a whole if we want to succeed with integration. And we want to. I think that’s more important than anything else.” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

Similar arguments were presented by other interviewees. The head of a reception centre in a medium-sized municipality thought that all school principals in Sweden should be thinking of ways of improving this aspect. She thought that it was imperative for principals to emphasise the responsibility of subject teachers in this process, but they should also consider subject teachers’ circumstances and the extent to which they can meet pupils’ needs.

“How much responsibility do subject teachers have in the integration process?” (Principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

There are several examples of interviewees describing how pupils are leaving preparatory classes to join regular ones in some subjects. According to teacher 1 in the medium-sized municipality, mapping results showed that a certain pupil was good at English and this pupil joined regular English classes. At the same time, she pointed out that it was difficult to know what happens in regular teaching and which impact it has.

“We don’t see, and we haven’t had time to see all the effects and what happens afterwards, when pupils have started.” (Teacher 1, medium-sized municipality)

Accordingly, there are many examples that show that the reform has facilitated quicker inclusion in regular subject teaching. So in this regard the reform has had an impact. Simultaneously, interviewees expressed the view that there were shortcomings and that it was unclear what was happening in regular classes or what the effects of inclusion in regular teaching would be. Our study shows that organisational issues and human resources affect pupils’ opportunities to benefit from regular classes. This in turn affects their prospects of real inclusion in teaching.

### 6.3.2 Prospects for social integration – importance of cooperation with civil society

Since the reform is still by and large in an implementation phase, it is at present difficult to come to any conclusions regarding outcomes related to pupils’ prospects of integration. Yet the interviewees felt that the reform potentially could have positive long-term effects, on the condition that it is fully implemented and that the necessary resources and organisation are in place.

Interviewee: “The quicker we succeed in getting them in and having them start to learn things, the better their chances in our society will be.”

Interviewer: “Do you think this material can contribute?”

Interviewee: “I don’t really know. I only know that we’re giving them a better start at school and I think the material contributes to that. So maybe it does contribute, after all.” (Principal, large municipality)

“Yes, if we have a pupil who doesn’t know anything else, but is really good at math. Then we say that they can do mathematics in a Swedish class, because they are so good. Yes, and then it will...it’s possible...it’s easier to become part of the community. You have classmates, you hear Swedish; so in that way, I think it’s easier.” (Teacher, small municipality A)

Interviewees were also of the opinion that the reform may have a positive impact in the sense that it focuses on newly-arrived pupils' education and further schooling. This in turn influences school activities and organisation.

“Many schools have really changed their methods. We have several schools that have really gone all out to change and principals who have gone all out to effect change. So I feel that, yes, it's great to be part of such a process of change. It's fantastic!” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

The interviewees were further of the opinion that this may enhance pupils' opportunities to receive a good education and attain syllabus goals, as well as to continue on to higher education and join the labour force. But even if the reform was seen to contribute to pupils' prospects of integration, several of the interviewees were sceptical. They wondered whether the reform was going far enough, and viewed it instead as the start of a complex process.

“The reform is not enough, and schools have a huge amount of work to do in this respect, I'd say. But it still is a good...it's a good clarification. But it does not do everything that's needed, and I don't think anyone believes it will either.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

“It's not the case that more Swedish pupils become my friends because I've been mapped...that's a whole different story.” (Teacher 2, medium-sized municipality)

The reform per se was not seen as the answer to all problems; it was viewed as a good start, but other types of measures need to be taken to promote integration. Interviewees stressed the need for cooperation, as well as the fact that work was needed on several fronts to facilitate integration. Many interviewees emphasised that the issue is not restricted to schools – attention should also be paid to how pupils spend their free time. They said it was vital for people to meet on a voluntary basis, for example via sports clubs. Small municipality A had opened a type of all-purpose community youth centre to facilitate such meetings and invited all children and young people that had no access to other after-school activities. This municipality has also established a partnership with the principal town's football team, since sports are seen to further integration.

The medium-sized municipality cooperates with different societies that visit schools and inform children about their activities. They have also entered into a partnership with shops and businesses in the principal town and children can run errands and perform practical tasks during school time. This may involve asking the price of a product, or

asking how to get to the library. The school and businesses set a time when pupils will come, so that they are prepared. In addition to these partnerships, they also work with the Red Cross, who arranges a language café where retirees practise Swedish with pupils and read with them. The interviewees described such partnerships as beneficial both to the newly-arrived pupils and the local residents: both groups are enriched.

“Both with the aim of meeting people and of daring to speak to other people. But for the town as well, a bit vice versa, so that the town can know that our municipality has received people from other countries and that they are here and that they are resources for the community too. And attitudes are usually positive and people are helpful and so.” (Teacher 1, medium-sized municipality)

“I think they do a fantastic job. There are pensioners coming to the language café, who volunteer lots of time and who really establish connections with these children. For example, an older man befriended some boys and now he drives them to the mosque because they cannot get to xxx themselves and then he was invited to one of those night meals during Ramadan. This was a really big thing for him. So there’s a ripple effect, it’s not just that they get time to speak. The goal is to give them time to speak Swedish, but a network is also built positively.” (Teacher 2, medium-sized municipality)

The example above describes wide-reaching cooperation between the school and civil society, something established in far from all municipalities. Nevertheless there are many examples from other municipalities that have partnered with sports clubs and volunteer organisations such as the Red Cross and groups of retirees, to offer after-school activities, language teaching and homework assistance.

The interviewees more or less unanimously agreed that the reform has the potential to benefit pupils’ prospects of integration, in the sense that it could contribute to improving their schooling, thus opening up future opportunities for further education and for joining the labour force. However, we have difficulty with the aid of this material, drawing firm conclusions about the long-term effects. Simultaneously they also emphasised the importance of civil society partnerships concerning integration, and some interviewees gave examples of such collaborative activities at their schools.

## 7. Economic evaluation

### 7.1 Introduction

An economic evaluation of a policy concentrates on issues such as its true costs and its cost-effectiveness; i.e. whether the outcomes achieved justify the investment of resources and/or whether the policy was the most efficient way of realising the desired outcomes, or if the same outcomes could have been achieved at a lower cost through an alternate course of action. An important question in this context concerns the social returns of interventions for the various actors, contributors and beneficiaries (see Dhiri & Brandt, 1999). In the case of the reform in question, possibilities of answering these questions and doing an economic evaluation are limited. The most important reasons for this are that the policy is still largely in an implementation phase, and that access to statistics and other relevant information is limited. Methodological problems also arise when doing an economic evaluation of a reform of this type, as discussed in more detail below.

As far as the true costs of mandatory mapping of all newly-arrived pupils in all schools nationwide is concerned, a reasonable conclusion is that reception now costs more than before. An examination of minutes, reports and other information both from the Ministry of Education and Research and the National Agency for Education shows awareness that government initiatives to improve the quality of education offered to newly-arrived pupils, including mandatory mapping, will entail increased costs for municipalities. In the Budget Bill for 2016, presented during the autumn of 2015, the government announced several measures intended to support municipalities. One of these measures was to increase the fixed-rate payments municipalities receive for asylum-seeking children's preschool and schooling. In addition, municipalities may apply for various government grants related to the reception of newly-arrived pupils (Regeringen 2015 website). These include a grant enabling newly-arrived pupils to spend more time learning Swedish and a grant funding further training for teachers in Swedish as a Second Language and Swedish for Immigrants (Skolverket 2016 website). The National Agency for Education has invested in professional development initiatives and has developed training material, films, and a relatively comprehensive web-based course, available free of cost to all teachers and schools, to help facilitate the reception of newly-arrived pupils and the mapping of their prior knowledge. Municipalities can also

apply for other grants from the National Agency for Education. These include appointing a municipal coordinator for a set period, tasked with inventorying municipal needs as regards newly-arrived pupils (Skolverket 2016 website). The question of increased costs related to the reception and schooling of new arrivals has been examined and debated on municipal level too, both from a financial point of view, but also as far as the availability of trained staff is concerned.

It is nevertheless difficult to form an overall impression of the total costs of the reform and of receiving new arrivals. In 2014, a comprehensive inquiry found serious shortcomings in earlier Swedish economic evaluations of reforms. Researchers have, for example, shown that little is known about the effects of compensatory elements in school authorities' distribution of resources or about the effects different types of resources have on pupils' school performance (SOU 2014:12). The lack of knowledge is due to the fact that educational reforms are legislated on a national level, but municipalities and schools allocate resources, implement changes and take measures locally (albeit with government funds). Municipalities use different administrative and economic systems, which makes it difficult to conduct national analyses. Municipalities also use different budget tracking systems, and the National Agency for Education experiences difficulties in obtaining comparable information. The inquiry recommended compiling cost data at school level to a greater extent, and preferably breaking it down to different items of expenditure. In addition, it suggested that more access to municipal principles for resource allocation would be preferable. Nevertheless the inquiry found that little could be done as regards the different administrative and financial systems in use at different municipalities – although the state may legislatively prescribe a uniform system for all municipalities and county councils, the inquiry felt that this course of action was unrealistic. The OECD has also noted that Swedish municipalities use different systems for data compilation that have not been standardised and therefore cannot be used comparatively. This is also the case for private schools: each education provider collects its own data and there is no will to harmonise. Different data systems are used at school level and at some schools there is an almost complete absence of data management systems. Accordingly, the inquiry found that infrastructural improvements are needed to enable economic evaluations throughout the school system, particularly in the case of recent reforms (SOU 2014:12).

Despite this, some earlier economic compilations have been done. Yet these clearly show how difficult it is to evaluate municipal costs associated with the reception of newly-arrived pupils. The Migration Agency studied some municipalities (including one in which we conducted our interviews), and its report shows that many municipalities experience difficulties in identifying specific costs and answering questions about reception in detail. There are therefore serious complications when comparisons are done over time or between different municipalities. The Migration Agency's report includes concrete examples of how municipalities justified their inability to report costs connected to asylum-seeking children or newly-arrived pupils by explaining that these are not a "separate part of our activities that can easily be monitored and reported" (Migrationsverket 2014). The Schools Inspectorate's report "Municipal Initiatives to Counter Negative Effects of Segregation",<sup>12</sup> provides another example of the problems involved: it found that 25 of 30 municipalities needed to improve their monitoring and assessment of their resource allocation and its results (Skolinspektionen 2014).

Obtaining information about the total costs of the reform we studied is not just complicated by the different systems in use for budget tracking and reporting in various municipalities, costs are also distributed to different parts of the school system and involve everything from classrooms and administration to staff expenses. Teachers, for example, do not work exclusively with mapping and mapping results, but have many other duties to perform. The costs for development, implementation and other activities related to the reform are distributed throughout the school system: from the Ministry of Education and Research and the National Agency for Education, to municipalities and individual schools. National costs include investigating and researching these issues, legislating, and developing of mapping materials.

Determining the long- and short-term cost-effectiveness of the reform is likewise problematic. At such an early stage, the possible impact of the reform cannot yet, for example, be measured in terms of pupils' school performance. When such outcomes can be measured in future, it will also be difficult to isolate mapping from other factors

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<sup>12</sup> Kommunernas resursfördelning och arbete mot segregationens negativa effekter i skolväsendet.

influencing school performance. Determining correlation reliably will depend on comprehensive data, collected during a long period. From a broader, long-term point of view, there are even more obstacles to isolating the impact of the reform on pupils' integration in schools and the community as a whole. Many factors play a role in this complex issue, as is the case when similar initiatives are evaluated. As noted in the evaluation of the implementation process, this includes pupils' social experiences of their inclusion in the Swedish school system and the way this affects their subsequent schooling.

As a result, the aim of our evaluation has not been to measure the total costs and cost-effectiveness of the reform quantitatively. Instead a qualitative study was done of how the persons responsible view the possible effects of the reform (aspects such as improved reception, school performance and social integration) in relation to the costs and time involved in mapping new arrivals.

## 7.2 Methodology

This economic evaluation is based on interviews with heads of local reception centres and principals on the reform's short- and long-term effectiveness. We focused on two aspects of effectiveness:

- Effectiveness based on the short- and long-term school performance of newly-arrived pupils, i.e. whether the reform is perceived to contribute to improving to the reception of new arrivals in the short term, and to their school performance and integration into schools and the community in the longer term.
- Effectiveness as regards the relationship between the short- and long-term costs involved in the reception of newly-arrived pupils. Costs include the time teachers (and pupils) spend on mapping. Are the increased costs associated with mapping perceived to lead to lower long-term economic costs if pupils' school performance improves? Or is the reform felt to involve inefficient uses of money and time?

Using these questions as a starting point, the aim was to give interviewees the opportunity to discuss the reform's effectiveness more generally in terms of possible

results, and as regards other possible uses for the financial resources. As already discussed, asking questions about cost-effectiveness in purely monetary terms is problematic, since it is difficult to weigh social costs in relation economic ones. For example: how much is it worth if pupils feel that their knowledge is utilised? How much does it mean if these pupils are in a better position to meet the school's goals?

Using semi-structured interviews, we asked interviewees about their expectations of the reform, in terms of the two points above. At this early stage, our focus was not on results achieved. The interviewees are the same persons who participated in the process and impact evaluations presented in Sections 5 and 6 (see Sections 5.2 and 6.2 for more information about their selection). All interviewees were asked about the possible short- and long-term results if the reform, while only the participating principals and heads of reception centres (a total of 7 persons) were asked about relationship between the costs of the reform and other expenses related to new arrivals.

### 7.3 Results

Results are presented in two subsections, based on the main aspects presented above. Each subsection concludes with a short summary.

#### 7.3.1 Expected results of the reform

Increased equality is central to expectations about the results of the reform, as emerges from the interviews. The reform is expected to contribute to more uniform reception throughout Sweden and to reduce the risk that pupils face very different circumstances, purely because they are in different municipalities. According to the interviewees, schools and municipalities now enjoy more equal opportunities to conduct mapping, since they no longer need to decide which material to use or need to develop their own.

“Now it's really the same for everyone, it provides a type of consensus, what we take into account, what is important, that's now the same in the whole country. I think that's a great advantage, that reception becomes equal in a different way. It's no longer a case of oh, you ended up in that municipality, you're really lucky because they're great, or, poor you, you ended up there and they do nothing.” (Teacher 2, medium-sized municipality)

The reform is also expected to contribute to a more equal approach and to both simplify placement decisions and to provide a means of justifying such placements to pupils and parents/guardians. In the long term, the reform is expected to contribute to improved

organisation and better cooperation between schools and teachers. It is also clear that interviewees thought that the reform may lead to better utilisation of pupils' prior knowledge: by adapting teaching to individual levels, both language acquisition and the attainment of subject knowledge may be promoted, as well as pupils' inclusion in the school. It is believed that the reform may achieve long-term results, as discussed earlier (cf. the introductory sections, as well as Sections 4 and 6).

“My hope is anyway that in the long term you can adapt subject teaching better, so that it won't just be the same for everyone, but that you take account of pupils' prior knowledge.”  
(Principal, metropolitan municipality)

At the same time, they stressed that these expectations will only be realised if the reform is implemented to the full and mapping results are used by teachers at all stages to plan their teaching.

“If it's to be a good resource and if you want to get out of it what you want, it's imperative that we succeed. If it becomes a half-measure, if you perform mapping in the municipalities that nobody looks at, [...] then it doesn't become good documentation for getting these pupils quickly out into regular classes and getting them the right help more quickly. If it becomes something you only do because you have to, well, then it's completely worthless. So it depends on our success and also on the National Agency for Education that governs the implementation of these measures.” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

“I think it depends so much on how you use it. As I've already said, I don't think we use the mapping material well enough when they go out to the classes, I don't think we transfer it well enough... I think it'll have a positive effect on them if you use it correctly.” (Teacher, metropolitan municipality)

It further emerged that particularly the interviewed principals and heads of reception centres expected the reform to make it easier for them to explain to school authorities which resources they need. The reform is legally inscribed, thus helping them to demand resources needed for mapping, such as appointing staff able to teach Swedish as a second language or staff who speak pupils' languages. In relation to perceptions of the reform's long-term results, it also became clear that the reform is expected to increase the status of working with newly-arrived pupils, and to viewing pupils' existing knowledge as a valuable resource. The reform is also expected to help pupils understand that they do not have to start from scratch, which may in turn give them the self-confidence and motivation needed to continue, thus increasing their chances of success. One of the principals said that all people have their positive and negative sides, but that

certain environments favour the positive sides and that this reform may be vital in establishing these kinds of environments in schools.

“I believe in the idea of watering our positive seeds.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

In conclusion, we can say that the interviewees have very high expectations of the possible effects of the reform. These include short-term results, such as better and more equal receptions, and taking note of pupils’ prior knowledge and experience and utilising them better, as well as results in the longer term in the form of improved school performance and increased chances of integration. At the same time, interviewees identified the risk that the reform will not be fully implemented and that mapping results will not be used in subsequent teaching. The interviewees more or less unanimously noted that should this be the case, most of the potential of the reform to achieve desired results and affect change will be lost.

### 7.3.2 Expected results of the reform in relation to its costs in time and money

All of the interviewed principals and heads of reception centres noted that it is difficult to calculate the costs of the implementation of the reform. They thought that because the reform is so recent, cost assessment should be left to a later stage. Interviewees were also of the opinion that it will be difficult to determine costs, because these are not restricted to individual schools, but are distributed across different units such as reception centres, home language units and schools.

“It’s actually extremely difficult to comment, I know I’m not the right person to comment. Or it is hard to know at the moment, I think one will have to look at that in the future, it’s impossible to say.” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

“It’s hard to say, I don’t know if we’re going to end up in a financial crisis, but we haven’t yet.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

“It’s difficult to estimate.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, small municipality A)

The principal from the metropolitan municipality said that he at the time had no idea about the costs and thought the question was very difficult to answer. He further stressed that he did not know how cost-effective the reform is, or whether resources are being used correctly.

“I actually don’t know how cost-effective it is.” (Principal, metropolitan municipality)

“It’s worth considering assessment, both on a government level for the National Agency for Education, and also for school units throughout Sweden. What do we get out in the end, how much does the pupil get out in the end from this? It’s worth thinking about, I feel.” (Principal, metropolitan municipality)

He would like to see more resources allocated to creating partnerships between schools, volunteer organisations, societies and government agencies, so as to facilitate better initial reception in Sweden. Such cooperation should provide an introduction to how Swedish schools work, but should also involve going out into the community and getting an introduction to how Swedish society functions. This may involve learning things that are “taken for granted”, such as how to buy groceries, what to do at a bank, how the library works, etc. However, an overwhelming majority of the interviewees (principals and teachers), regarded the reform as cost-effective in the long term, on the condition that it is implemented as was intended.

“If we can get this going, then we can support pupils, then it is, well, then it’s cost-effective.” (Head of a reception centre, large municipality)

“Yes, I think so, I rather think so. Time will tell whether I was wrong.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

The principal from the large municipality was of the opinion that current costs outweigh results. Yet he felt that the reform may be cost-effective in the long term.

“Of course there are huge gains to be made, but only if local politicians, and maybe the government too, allow us to look at other things than a year at a time and balanced books.” (Principal, large municipality)

“The more pupils we can help to attain the goals, the cheaper it will be for society, I think.” (Principal, large municipality)

One of the principals stressed that she does not calculate costs in monetary terms, but emphasised that it is her task to provide the best possible school to all pupils, regardless of whether they are new arrivals or not. She was of the opinion that the reform definitely will be cost-effective in the long term, because investing in pupils now will benefit society in the future.

“These children have the right to get good schooling so that they can manage the rest of their lives, that’s my basic principle, no matter what it costs.” (Principal and head of reception centre, small municipality A)

Some of the interviewees also regarded the reform as cost-effective in the long term, because it creates job opportunities, which in turn generate taxes. The reform may also enable people who otherwise have had difficulties to find employment to work as guidance counsellors and as assistants to teachers and pupils in the classroom.

“What I think is interesting is also that you can see, well we’ve appointed lots of new people because of this. We’ve appointed those Swedish teachers, but we’ve also appointed many guidance counsellors, people who may have been unemployed otherwise. And, if you think about it, we’re just a small municipality, so you see, or I think in any case, that appointing these people in the municipality should have a long-term effect. People with migrant backgrounds who speak Swedish well and who can work as guidance counsellors.” (Principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality)

To summarise, it is at present very difficult to assess the economic costs and cost-effectiveness of the reform in relation to its expected results. This corresponds to the arguments presented in Section 7.1 above on the complexity of evaluating these types of reforms in economic terms. This is in part due to the lack of uniformity in Swedish municipalities and schools as regards definitions of expenses in their accounting statements. At the same time it is important to emphasise that interviewees in the main perceived the reform as potentially cost-effective in the long term.

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## Interviews

Interviewee 1, teacher, small municipality A 2016-06-17

Interviewee 2, principal and head of reception centre, small municipality A 2016-06-17

Interviewee 1, teacher, small municipality B 2016-06-09

Interviewee 2, teacher, small municipality B 2016-06-09

Interviewee 1, teacher, small municipality C 2016-06-10

Interviewee 2, principal, small municipality C 2016-06-10

Interviewee 1, teacher 1, medium-sized municipality, 2016-06-13

Interviewee 2, teacher 2, medium-sized municipality, 2016-06-13

Interviewee 3, guidance counsellor, medium-sized municipality, 2016-06-13

Interviewee 4, principal and head of a reception centre, medium-sized municipality  
2016-08-29

Interviewee 1, principal, large municipality, 2016-06-20

Interviewee 2, head of reception centre, large municipality, 2016-09-16

Interviewee 1, teacher, metropolitan municipality, 2016-09-21

Interviewee 2, principal, metropolitan municipality, 2016-09-21