INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR LIFE OPPORTUNITIES IN A CHALLENGING FUTURE

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Education is a key factor in promoting and facilitating the collective transition to using alternative non-carbon renewable sources, which can mitigate the adverse impact of climate change. To make the shift away from carbon to non-carbon energy sources, we need to change beliefs and perceptions and foster mind sets that facilitate the transition.

(UNESCO, 2015, p. 28)
Basic education has over the past two decades had an extremely strong focus on measurement of results, rankings, accountability, and competition and very little on its fundamental purposes in society.
A humanistic approach takes the debate on education beyond its utilitarian role in economic development. It has a central concern for inclusiveness and for an education that does not exclude and marginalize. It serves as a guide to dealing with the transformation of the global learning landscape, one in which the role of teachers and other educators continues as central to facilitating learning for the sustainable development of all.

UNESCO (2015, p. 37)
Myths to expel about schooling

- Deprivation is destiny
- Immigrants drag down overall school performances
  - It’s all about money
- Success in education is about talent
  - Excellence is about selection
    - (OECD, 2015, p. 28)
Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. … The pupil is thereby ”schooled” to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new.

(Illich 1972, p. 1)
I believe that a desirable future depends on our deliberately choosing a life of action over a life of consumption, on our engendering a lifestyle which will enable us to be spontaneous, independent, yet related to each other, rather than maintaining a lifestyle which only allows to make and unmake, produce and consume – a style of life which is merely a way station on the road to the depletion and pollution of the environment.

(Illich 1972, p. 57)
But it is far from certain that today's knowledge frustrated school is able to provide its students with such knowledge that they can understand their environment, act rationally and make sensible decisions. When learning is not part of life itself, there is a risk that the role of school is to provide evidence on achieved learning outcomes. Such artefacts become hard value and more important than the content of knowledge itself.

(Persson and Persson, 2016, p. 24)
The Cold War has been replaced by other threats to our future, as our knowledge of climate change and the increasing military build-up in our region escalates.

School and education can not live in political isolation, which means that other issues than before must be set. Climate change is the most significant threat to our future. Educational researchers, policymakers and politicians seem to ignore the changes we are likely to experience in a few decades.

(Persson and Persson, 2016, p. 26)
Inclusive education is about responding to diversity; it is about listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering all members and about celebrating 'difference' in dignified ways.

(Barton, 1997, s. 234).
Today Germany and Sweden are under exceptional pressure due to humanitarian refugee politics. In combination with the terror attacks in Paris two weeks ago, the ideal of an inclusive society by som is seen as even more utopian than ever.

Bengt Persson; 15.11.2015
Educational disadvantage should be addressed by providing high quality education and targeted support, and by promoting inclusive education. ... Education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds. 
(Council of the European Union 2009, s. 4)
However, we need to stick to the European ideal of schooling expressed in this statement. We should also remember that democracy is present on the national and European levels but not on the global level.

Bengt Persson; 15.11.2015
How can Inclusive education be defined?
...integration of students with different kinds of disabilities or special needs
...whether a student is included in the daily school practice or not
…Education for All (EFA)

Six internationally agreed education goals aim to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015
...a thought style in which inclusion represents a guiding principle for the everyday work in school but where the broader aim is a more inclusive and sustainable society
Raising achievement through inclusion

Duration 2010 – 2016

Bengt Persson
Elisabeth Persson
Julie Allan
In this research (2010 – 2016), a Swedish municipality that succeeded in converting a negative trend of school failure into success is in focus.
ESSUNGA MUNICIPALITY

- 3 schools

- No Upper secondary school

- Less than 50 % among 19-year olds were eligible for tertiary education 2009

- 15 % of the population had tertiary education compared with 29 % in the nation as a whole
Open comparisons comprehensive school year 9, 2007 – 2010, Essunga municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achieved goals in all school subjects (%)</th>
<th>Eligibility for Upper secondary education (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>62,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>78,1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>80,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>96,3</td>
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The purpose of the study is to

- examine and isolate key elements that make a difference in schools and classrooms in an inclusive work with all students.

- follow two batches of students through their upper secondary education
Data were collected through qualitative interviews with politicians, managers, headmasters, special educators, teachers, pupils, parents and other staff within the municipality’s school activities. Participant observation was carried out in classes and meetings of various kinds.
All students were given the opportunity to succeed in their regular classes from the academic year 2006-07 and on. Ability grouping and special education groups, common in Swedish schools, were abandoned.
The educational leadership was crucial as well as leadership in the classroom.

School administration and teachers gathered modern and relevant educational research, which led to a collective capacity-building.

No extra funding
It is not claimed that the improvement in academic results was directly brought about by moves to inclusion. However, the greater level of awareness about research, curriculum and teaching methods, etc. was said during all the interviews to be dependent on the idea of inclusion.
PART TWO

Data were collected through
Statistics
Qualitative interviews, 10 x 2 pupils
Gender spread
Ability spread
Programmes spread
Social capital theory

Whereas economic capital is in people’s bank’s accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships. To possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself who are the actual source of his or her advantage (Portes, 1998, p. 7).
"I think you get an insight into the different difficulties for some and the extra help that some need and you know how to handle situations in the future."
"We had no such student in our class so I don’t know how it was”.

"I had probably no such in my class. So I have no references to it directly”.

"We had no one in our class. But I did not feel that there was something problematic or that I heard something. There was never any problem with it. No, there was nothing that I noticed”.
"So, as it was in the small group, then I do not think I had passed the national exams. I passed the course that the teacher presented. It was for that group. If I had been staying at the Oasis [special class] I probably would not have made the national test in ninth grade."
"The experience I have of people with disabilities is that the worst that can happen is you are treated as a restricted person. One should have the same opportunities and values and the conditions should be the same and one should have the same platform to stand on".
"In ninth grade we were even a group of fellows who trained for the tests. To get the best results possible. So we met, extra at our leisure time. It was quite unusual as well. It was, if one may call it a culture so it was pretty, pretty strange, because there were not many who had done that before. I had never done so neither. Met with friends to study. I had never done anything like that in my life before".


