Impact of training on people’s employability: Sweden

This is the Swedish contribution to the topic report on the impact of training on people’s employability coordinated via questionnaire by AWWW GmbH for the European Working Conditions Observatory.

1. General remarks

*Please describe the methodology of the survey(s) and the definitions used.*

An important general remark must be put forward here: in Sweden, there seems to be a lot of data available on transitions to and from non-permanent employment (see, for example, Storrie, Håkansson, Levin, Wikman, Aronsson). There is also information on the health status of non-permanent workers (see, for example, Aronsson). However, research focusing specifically on the training of a non-permanent workforce could not be located. Partly, this is due to the fact that non-permanent work is seen as a negative feature that is actively discouraged. Therefore, it would be illogical to promote and develop training and legislation for this group as it would give the group greater legitimacy. As Sweden is a country where the social partners play a strong role, and the fact that trade unions oppose non-permanent contracts has caused a contradiction: official policies and regulations largely disregard non-permanent employees while the amount of individuals belonging to the group continues to grow.

From a practical point of view, the lack of information on training of non-permanent employees has caused a major difficulty for the study in hand. An attempt has been made to gather pieces of information from different sources that touch on the topic, but the main finding remains that there is very little information to be found on this topic in Sweden.

Regarding the key surveys used:

1) **Work Environment surveys (Arbetsmarknadsundersökningar; AMU)**

Statistics Sweden has carried out Work Environment surveys every second year since 1989. The 2003 survey was conducted on behalf of the Swedish Working Environment Authority (SWEA). Results are now available from eight surveys that have been conducted in a similar way, thus yielding comparable results. The purpose of the surveys is to describe the work environment (both physical and psychological) of the population in employment between 16 and 64 years of age. The 2003 Work Environment Survey is based on a sample of just over 14,000 members of the employed population. The survey is carried out by means of supplementary questions in connection with Statistics Sweden’s regular labour force surveys, which are conducted by means of telephone interviews. Those who have taken part in the interview survey and answered the supplementary questions receive additional questions in a postal questionnaire. The Work Environment survey is linked to the Labour Force survey, thus enabling further analysis on the backgrounds of individuals who have responded.

Unfortunately, there are very few questions related to training in the survey, and there are no other surveys that deal with the issue in more detail (see Question 3.3 for more details).

2) **Labour force surveys (Arbetskraftsundersökningar; AKU, LFS in English)**

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is carried out on an ongoing basis by Statistics Sweden. The objectives of the survey are to describe the current employment conditions and to give information on labour market developments. The surveys are carried out every month through telephone interviews with a representative sample of 17,000 persons in the 16-64 age group. Each individual is interviewed eight times over a two-year period. The list of variables includes sex, age, marital status, amount of children, nationality, labour market status and participation level, education level and sector, etc. For those who are employed (which is the key interest group here), there is information on working time, occupation, sector, contract type (continuous, fixed-term, temporary), additional jobs, studies, periods of absence, reasons for absence, underemployment, etc.
2. Extent and structure of the non-permanent workforce

Give data on the extent of employment in a fixed-term or a temporary agency job.

Table 1: Amount of non-permanent employees among all employees 1987-1999 (Håkansson, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1991, the amount of women in non-permanent employment was 12% and, in 2003, this had increased to 16.8%. Similar figures for men were 7.5% in 1991 and 14.8% in 2003 (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2003).

Give data on the structure of the workforce on non-permanent contracts, by education, occupation, age, sex, sector or company size.

Table 2: Fixed-term contract rate (percentage of wage and salary employment) and share (of all fixed-term contracts) by economic sector 1990 and 2000 (Statistics Sweden according to Holmlund and Storrie, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate (%)</td>
<td>Share (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary sectors</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing and mining</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial and business services | 6.7 | 5.6 | 13.5 | 11.1  
Education and research | 13.1 | 9.8 | 19.1 | 12.0  
Health and care | 17.3 | 36.8 | 18.8 | 25.0  
Personal and cultural services | 18.2 | 10.7 | 29.7 | 13.8  
Public administration | 7.7 | 4.5 | 12.1 | 4.7  
Unknown | 14.6 | 0.2 | 30.9 | 0.3  
Total | 10.1 | 100.0 | 15.2 | 100.0

Table 3: Features between temporary agency workers and other workers (Anderson and Wadensjö, 2004) (% if not otherwise indicated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>34.8 years</td>
<td>41.1 years</td>
<td>34.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Sweden</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Sweden, both parents born abroad</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Sweden, one parent born abroad</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born abroad</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest level of education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 9 years (pre-gymnasium)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 (10) years (pre-gymnasium)</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;11 years (gymnasium education &lt; 2 years)</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 11 years (gymnasium education &gt; 2 years)</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-gymnasium education &lt; 2 years</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Company training initiatives

3.1 General
Give data on training initiatives provided by the company, according to contract status and, in the case of non-permanent employees, according to fixed-term or temporary agency employment.

Many of the temporary agencies provide training for their employees. However, this training often only takes place before the first assignment, even though most of the employees work in the temporary agency on a permanent basis (Andersson and Wadensjö, 2004, pp. 3, 16).

Give data on training measures according to the structure of the workforce on non-permanent contracts, by education, occupation, age, sex, sector or company size.

No such information could be located.

3.2 Type, place and duration of training

- Give information on the type of training provided by the company: internal training measures; course/measure organised by external training institutions; on-the-job training.
- Distinguish between training hours during and outside working hours.
- Is the training measure paid for by the employer?
- What is the duration (number of days) of training measures provided by companies?

No information could be located on these matters, other than that, in the AMU, there is a question on training hours during working hours. There are no questions related to training outside working hours.

3.3 Content and target of training
The content and target of training can differ. Therefore, the focus is on corresponding questions in the national working conditions surveys. Please provide examples of questions and data if possible.

In the national survey on the work environment (AMU), there are the following questions:
‘In the last 12 months, have you received training during company time?’
‘If yes, how many days?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Total observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>18 296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>3 906 862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>28 897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>178 876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>9.9</th>
<th>13.6</th>
<th>17.5</th>
<th>17.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher education</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in a big city</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3.3 Content and target of training
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In the national survey on the work environment (AMU), there are the following questions:
‘In the last 12 months, have you received training during company time?’
‘If yes, how many days?’
‘Does your work require any classroom education or courses beyond (lower-secondary) compulsory or elementary school?’
‘Besides education or courses, is there any on-the-job training or introductory training necessary to perform your job?’ (Possible answers being: ‘No, Only a few days, A few weeks, Six months, One year, Two years, Three years, Four years or more’)

The data from the AMU can be linked to information from the Labour Force Survey (Arbetsmarknadsundersökningen, AKU). In the AKU, there are two very specific questions on employment status:
1) ‘Do you have a job of limited duration or is it employment on a permanent/further-notice basis?’ Possible answers are:
   1 Job/work of limited duration
   2 Job/work of limited duration with the solid basis of a permanent job
   3 Job/work on a permanent/further-notice basis.

2) ‘What sort of temporary employment do you have?’ Possible answers are:
   1 Substitute employment without the solid basis of a permanent job
   2 Trial employment
   3 Probationary employment, apprenticeship
   4 Holiday work
   5 Seasonal employment
   6 Project work (fixed period/contract job)
   7 Sent for when needed (on-call)
   8 Elected representative
   9 School staff only employed during school terms
   88 Other temporary employment; Describe ....................................................

Therefore, the questions from AMU and AKU could potentially be used jointly to give information on the extent of training for and on the job.

- Is the training provided company-specific or of a more general nature?
   When it comes to temporary agency workers, research suggests that training is more of a general nature and mainly occurs before the first assignment (Andersson and Wadensjö, 2004).

- Is the training provided aimed at short-term adaptation to skills needs for the current job? Or is the training transferable to other jobs/employment?
   In temporary agencies, training is transferable to other jobs/employment as it is mainly general by nature (Andersson and Wadensjö, 2004).

3.4 Training on health and safety issues
Employees on fixed-term or temporary agency contracts are particularly at risk due to the short-term duration of their employment or to being new in the job or company, etc. Is any training on health and safety issues provided at the workplace/by the company?
No information specifically on non-permanent employees could be located.

4. Newcomers to the job – (Re)entry to the labour market and occupational biography
- Provide information on the phase prior to the (re)entry into the current job (first job, non-employment, education, unemployment, etc).
   Research from Sweden suggests that both unemployed people and non-participants are much more likely to end up in temporary than permanent jobs. Temporary agency workers typically end up in non-participation or in permanent jobs. On average, for the period 1987-2000, 10% of workers on temporary contracts had made a transition to permanent jobs after three months. Research has also
suggested that, between 1990 and 2000, while it was increasingly difficult to find a permanent job while unemployed, similar changes did not take place for those on temporary contracts seeking permanent employment. In other words, it was just as difficult (or easy) to make the leap from non-permanent employment to permanent employment in 2000 as it was in 1990. This suggests that non-permanent jobs have become increasingly important as stepping stones to permanent jobs (Holmlund and Storrie, 2002).

However, the risk of unemployment is significantly higher for non-permanent employees than for permanent staff. For example, Levin has shown that the risk of non-permanent employees being unemployed at some point between 1991 and 1996 was four times higher than that of permanent employees (Levin, 1998).

- *Are the ‘newcomers’ employed in the job educated or trained?*

When it comes to temporary agency workers, research suggests that training is more of a general nature and mainly occurs before the first assignment by the temporary agency (not by the user company) (Andersson and Wadensjö, 2004).

- *Provide data on specific trends on newcomers in the job on non-permanent contracts as regards training measures.*

No information could be located.

5. Job–skills match

*Do the skills of the workers match the demands of their jobs or are the demands of the job too high or too low?*

Aronsson has shown in a comparative study of 1,500 non-permanent and permanent workers that the amount of individuals reporting lapses in training is higher among those who are non-permanently employed. The latter also indicated that their training needs were often brushed aside, and it was more difficult for them to put forward any critique and to be heard when it came to issues related to the working environment (Aronsson, 1999, Aronsson and Göransson, 1998).

6. Competence and on-the-job skills development

*Competence and on-the-job skills development can be assessed by a number of indicators. Describe relevant questions in the national working conditions surveys and provide data as far as available.*

- *Is the employee involved in competencies development plans/talks in the company?*

There are no relevant questions in either AMU or AKU.

- *Is the current job in line with the studied profession, educational attainment level?*

This information could potentially be found by linking AKU and AMU. However, no information has been located.

- *Does the current job provide the opportunity for further qualification by learning new things on the job?*

The question: ‘Besides education or courses, is there any on-the-job training or introductory training necessary to perform your job?’ in AMU could provide some answers on this.

- *Does the job entail complex tasks?*

In the AMU, there is the following question: ‘Do you spend part of your workday comprehending or solving complex problems?’

- *Is the employee involved in task rotation / team work, etc?*

No information could be found.

- *What is the judgment of occupational prospects as regards occupational promotion within the current job/company?*

No information could be found.
7. Training, competence development and employability

This question focuses more generally on the impact of training and competence development on people’s career development and perception of employment security. Describe questions and/or provide data on the following issues:

- (expected) transition from non-permanent into permanent employment;

There are marked differences between different types of non-permanent contracts when it comes to making the step from non-permanent to permanent work. Håkansson has shown that those on probationary contracts have – logically – the highest likelihood of becoming permanently employed. After two years, three out of four of those on a probationary contract had become permanent. Within the same timeframe, 40% of workers on leave replacements or employed on a project had been made permanent, but this was the case for only 30% of seasonal and on-call workers. Overall, Håkansson concludes that it is more likely than not that non-permanent employment does act as a spring board into permanent employment (Håkansson, 2001).

Wikman has also shown similar results. His work is based on longitudinal analysis of the labour force and working environment surveys. Comparing those who were on non-permanent contracts between 1993 and 1996 (during the economic recession), and those who were on them between 1998 and 2000 (when the recession had passed), the overall situation of the labour market did not seem to have a very marked impact on non-permanent employees getting a permanent contract. Some 30% had obtained permanent employment after two years in the first time period, compared with just under 40% in the second time period (Wikman, 2002).

There were, however, marked differences between men and women on non-permanent contracts when it comes to making the leap from non-permanent to permanent employment. It was easier for men than for women to take this step (47 vs. 30%), perhaps due to the fact that women were over-represented in the types of non-permanent contracts that Håkansson calls unsafe (contract types that alternated most between unemployment and employment spells). The difference between the sexes was most apparent when it came to those who were employed on a project basis (the majority of which were men). In this group, men were twice as likely to get a permanent job than were women (Håkansson, 2001).

Walette has, in his thesis, also shown that non-permanent workers with a foreign background are more likely to remain in non-permanent status than native Swedes, and are more likely to work on a probationary contract (Wallette, 2004).

- perception of employment opportunities and job security (or risk of unemployment).

In their analysis, Furåker and Berglund have shown that non-permanent workers not only feel more at risk of losing their job, but that they also have a somewhat more instrumentalist attitude to working (‘I work just to earn money’). However, Furåker and Berglund also point out that, in general, both those who are permanently and those who are non-permanently employed expressed quite high levels of anxiety about losing their jobs. In fact, a more decisive factor than permanency/non-permanency seemed to be, for example, occupation and age (e.g. older workers worried more about getting laid off than the younger ones). In their work, Furåker and Berglund did not take up differences in perceptions of employment opportunities between non-permanent and permanent employees; possibly because they may not have found such differences (Furåker and Berglund, 2001).
8. Legal obligations on training measures

Give information on any legal obligations or specific national regulations related to training measures for employees on fixed-term or temporary agency contracts.

In Sweden, there are no legal obligations when it comes to training of non-permanent employees. However, there are general obligations that apply to the whole workforce. Nyström has, in her article, reviewed the situation of temporary agency workers in the following way (quote taken directly from her abstract):

Public employment service enjoyed a monopoly in Sweden between 1935 and 1993. Hiring out of labour (temporary work) was, in principle, forbidden between 1942 and 1991. Nevertheless, there existed (illegal) temporary work agencies in Sweden before 1992. In recent years, employment exchange and temporary work legislation has changed completely. Deregulation was completed in 1993. Private employment agencies and hiring out of labour are treated in the same Swedish Act. The relevant legislation is applicable to all kinds of employees and job seekers, blue-collar and white-collar, private and public.

Since the deregulation process started in the beginning of the 1990s, the sector has expanded very quickly. Private employment agencies are still not very common in the Swedish labour market and temporary work still includes only a small number of employees, less than 1% of the work force.

The 1993 Act legalises profit-oriented private employment agencies as well as temporary work agencies and treats them like any other business. There are only a few remaining restrictions: for example, that the agencies are forbidden to charge job seekers and employees any kind of fee. By the 1993 Act, Sweden was among the countries with the least legislation in this area.

Swedish general labour and social security legislation applies to temporary employees in the same way as other employees. It is the temporary work firm that is considered to be the employer, even during periods when the temporary employee works at a user company. The temporary work agency has all employers’ rights and responsibilities, except for working conditions at a user company, where the user has responsibility and authority. (Nyström, 2001)

- If possible, provide information on surveillance of the provisions respectively their effective application.

No information could be found.

9. Recent studies results

Provide results of recent studies in your country on the issue of training and competence development and employability of non-permanent employees.

In his doctoral thesis Temporary jobs in Sweden: Incidence, exit, and on-the-job training, Wallette focuses mainly on the incidence and exit to and from temporary jobs. He does, however, also look briefly at the nexus between different types of temporary jobs and on-the-job training (OJT) in Sweden. According to the standard human capital theory, the prospect for temporary job holders to receive OJT should be very low. However, models taking into account that the labour market is characterised by imperfect information might explain that temporary job holders do receive OJT. Empirical results show that the probability of receiving OJT is much lower for temporary job holders, and even more so for workers born outside Sweden. Regarding the amount of OJT received (assuming that a person receives OJT) the results show that male temporary job holders receive more OJT than females, and that foreign-born temporary workers receive more OJT than comparable Swedish-born workers. It is also the case that holding a temporary job does not necessarily imply fewer days of OJT than holding an open-ended job (Wallette, 2004).
Regarding the total working population, there is more information on the extent of training:

Sweden has among the highest levels of worker training in the OECD with 61% of workers participating in training in 1999. Time spent on training as a proportion of total working hours underlines the priority that businesses place on up-skilling their employees (Nestler and Kailis, 2003). Intensity of training, measured by hours per employee, is also higher than in many OECD countries, reflecting relative equity in access to training across workers. As in all Nordic countries, women are more likely to participate in training than men, though the difference in Sweden is less pronounced. Access to training also increases with educational attainment. The bulk of workplace training is given by private course providers, primarily in the fields of computer science (23%) and engineering (15%). Overall adult education and training in Sweden was significantly upgraded through the Adult Education Initiative (AEI) which ran from 1997-2002.

Most training is paid by employers. Over 90% of Swedish enterprises offer training to their employees, one of the highest shares in the OECD (Eurostat, 2002). Estimates derived from the Swedish Labour Force Survey suggest that employers spent SEK 62 billion on training in 1999, a sum equal to over 3% of GDP. In the same year, Swedish enterprise investments in training were estimated at 2.8% of total labour costs. As in most OECD countries, companies receive an immediate deduction of expenditure on worker training and associated costs from income tax. They also receive indirect support through the Advanced Vocational Education (AVE) programme which matches enterprises and course providers in supplying practical workplace-based training. In 1974, Sweden initiated a policy of training leave for both public and private sector employees. It is estimated that about 1% of the workforce are on such leave at any one time. Workers who have tenure of at least six consecutive months with their employer, or 12 months during the previous two years, may take unpaid leave to pursue vocational, general or popular education. The date of departure for studies is negotiated between workers and employers, who may postpone leave for a period not exceeding six months. This is an important statutory arrangement that grants the employer flexibility in planning for periods of study leave, particularly since there is no legal limit on the length of absence. Upon completion of the study leave, workers have the right to return to the same or similar work. The loss of wages foregone while away from regular work is covered in part by government grants and loans available to those undertaking study leave.

Employees of large firms are more likely to receive training than those in small or medium-sized firms, although the disparity is less in Sweden than in the majority of OECD countries. In firms employing 10 to 49 workers, 61% of employees participated in training compared to 67% for firms with over 250 employees. However, only 54% of employees in medium-sized firms employing between 50 and 249 workers received training. Nearly all large firms and 88% of small firms offer training compared to a far smaller share of medium-sized firms. (OECD, 2004).

10. National context, initiatives and company best practice

Describe the national context and the evolution of non-permanent employment.

See also general remark at the beginning of the questionnaire.

In Sweden, the literature nearly always distinguishes between different forms of fixed-term contracts, in terms of working conditions and training. In other words, individuals working as leave replacements, those ‘on call’ or employed on a project basis, and those on probationary contracts and seasonal workers are rarely treated as a homogeneous group.

Aronsson has shown that those working as project workers have working conditions that are most like those for permanently employed staff, including participation in training. They are, on average, higher educated than a comparative group who are permanently employed, and they are mostly men. This group is spread across different sectors. In Aronsson’s periphery/centre module (the centre consisting of permanently employed staff, followed by other contract types that are further or nearer to the centre when it comes to working conditions), those who are on probationary contract come second when it
comes to quality of working conditions for non-permanent workers. This group is also mainly male, but they are, on average, younger and work mainly in industry and sales.

The leave replacements group follows the probationary contract group and is mainly female, with on average lower educational levels, and working mainly within the social and care sectors. The outer layers of Aronsson’s module consist of seasonal and on call workers. This means that these groups of fixed-term employees have the least possibility of influencing their working conditions. They also have least access to training. Those who are seasonally employed have the lowest education levels of all groups, and there are slightly more men than women in this group. The seasonal group also has the lowest amount of people receiving more than five training days provided during working time. Among the on call workers, a vast majority are women and, because they have so little influence on their working conditions, they have the highest risk for work-related health problems. Most of these workers work in the hotel or restaurant, or health and care sector, or in different forms of social work. Of all the various forms of fixed-term contracts, the on call contracts and the project contracts have increased most (Aronsson, 2004, pp. 223-224).

Describe initiatives by social partners, ministries, TAW associations, training organisations/foundations etc. in your country aiming specifically at the promotion of training of fixed-term or temporary agency workers. This can also include measures that explicitly emphasise the equal treatment of a non-permanent workforce.

No such initiatives have been located. Please see general remark at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Give company examples of best practice on training initiatives and competence development of employees on non-permanent contracts. This can also cover examples of inter-company training measures where several companies jointly offer training measures to non-permanent workers.

No such initiatives have been located. Searching for information, three large Swedish companies were telephoned, one of which was a temporary work agency that had head offices abroad. None of the HR offices in the companies were willing to discuss training measures designed specifically for non-permanent employees. There seemed to be a few reasons for this refusal. Some stated that, as they predominantly employed workers on a permanent basis, they considered each non-permanent case on an individual basis – sometimes, training was provided but there were no rules or systems in place for this. One main reason for the refusal to answer the question seemed to be the fear of being labelled as a ‘bad’ employer in promoting this type of employment through providing training for non-permanent employees.

Concluding remark
It seems that in Sweden, the non-permanent workforce is in a rather problematic situation: while different forms of non-permanent work are increasing in the labour market, trade unions and other relevant actors are not willing to respond to the group’s specific needs, such as training. The opinion seems to be that the status of non-permanent worker should not exist in the first place and, to give them any additional rights or benefits, will lead to corrosion of employment contracts and workers’ rights.

References


