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## Swedish municipalities' collaboration on upper secondary education: driving forces, preconditions and obstacles

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### Abstract

Upper secondary school is an area where inter-municipal cooperation has become more common in recent years. Strong hopes are attached to the municipalities, by collaborating with each other, to be able to produce education more efficiently and effectively. However, previous research indicates that inter-municipal collaboration on upper secondary education may be associated with significant costs and risks. Although inter-municipal cooperation on upper secondary education is necessary for most municipalities, in this area there are at the same time strong incentives for municipalities to compete with each other for upper secondary school students. The purpose of this study is to analyse Swedish municipalities' views on driving forces, conditions and obstacles for intermunicipal collaboration on upper secondary education. The study is based on empirical data from a survey aimed at officials responsible for upper secondary education in the municipalities. The study shows that the municipalities' collaboration is largely driven by a desire to broaden the range of education. The study also shows that collaboration is made more difficult by what is perceived as complicated collaboration processes and an uneven distribution of power between the municipalities. On the other hand, a lack of trust between participating municipalities, or having bad experiences of previous collaborations, does not seem to constitute any major obstacles to co-operation. Finally, the study shows that the larger urban municipalities are perceived as central nodes for inter-municipal collaboration in this area.

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