

Careers Europe Placement Report

“The new guidance reform in Denmark. Changes and innovative practices in Danish Guidance”

**The Danish Academia Programme
Copenhagen, 22 – 26 March 2004**

Organised by Careers Europe and the R.U.E. (The Danish National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance)/The Danish Ministry of Education (Leonardo Project)

Monday, 22 March

(AM)

We had a welcome, presentation of participants and introduction to this week's programme.

We were introduced to the **Danish Education System**. In Denmark education is compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 16. The 10th grade is optional. The Danish post-16 year old education system is based on three traditions which can still be recognised: the Latin school from which the different forms of the Gymnasium were derived, the old principles of master-apprentice training and a large number of so-called free schools which also provide a practically oriented training, they are called Folkeskole and which specialise in different subjects. There are also private schools.

Trainees doing apprenticeships get a higher training allowance than HE students in their grants.

The basic student grant offered by the state is not based on parental contribution and the state subsidises students that have children while studying.

HE students can also have loans at reduced interest rates.

Many people live alone in Denmark and in general they are very proud of their “Welfare System”, which is very generous. The state is based on wealth equity with people.

Denmark has an older society/population and there is a low birth rate. Denmark has 5 millions inhabitants (like the city of Hamburg).

There are 2 kinds of unemployment benefit: the one for people belonging to Unions and they get more money (unemployment benefit) and different type of guidance; then there is the unemployment benefit for people who are not members of the unions, funds are given by the municipalities and they use a different guidance system.

(PM)

We had an introduction to the **Ministry's Division for Guidance** and its activities. Guidance services were introduced during the 60s and 70s.

There are 25 types of guidance services in Denmark. Too many different types of guidance, therefore new reform will make things better because the existing pattern is as follows:

- does not pay enough attention to young people with special needs
- it is too sectorised

- it focuses too much on well known educational options and does not include labour market/career perspectives
- there is also lack of professional guidance counsellors
- needs a more efficient quality assurance system

The New Act on Guidance will be effective from 1st August this year. There is going to be more focus on the labour market and mainly concerned with youth guidance and the education sector. It will not be applicable to guidance services to adults (the second phase of the reform: guidance for adults in employment will take place later on).

There will be still guidance counsellors in schools as well as in 50 municipal Youth Guidance Centres where they will operate (in Denmark there is a high drop out rate in education). These counsellors will be employed full time, which is a new thing in Denmark, and they will be responsible to a line manager.

Presently guidance counsellors are teachers who also do counselling part time, the good thing about it, is that they know their students.

Guidance will not only be just careers, but dealing with problems, e.g. like Connexions PAs and guidance is seen as a continuous process.

Danish schools are very informal, e.g. pupils call teachers with their first names.

Pupils have interviews with guidance counsellors, usually about 6 or more and then write the outcomes in a book, which is signed by the young person, parents and guidance counsellors.

Pupils only have an action plan in the last year in school, but throughout their schooling they record their interviews in special books from form 6 to form 9/10. The books are signed each time by the young person, their parents and the guidance counsellor.

Tuesday, 23 March

(AM)

We visited the forthcoming **“Youth Guidance Centre”** in the Municipality of Frederiksberg. The new location of the centre has not been decided yet, but some of the people who will be working at the centre, including the Director, have already started the “establishing process” to make sure that the centre is ready to provide the required guidance services from 1st August 2004.

The Director explained that in Denmark there are 275 municipalities (councils) and they want to cut them down to 140. He also said that there are 5 million people living in Denmark (equivalent to the city of Hamburg).

There are political differences between the municipalities.

Their Folkskole or public school (State school) is run by local authorities who subsidises them and they have a state curriculum. In many municipalities things have been decentralised. The school system is very decentralised.

Local authorities can decide what they want and because they are taxed locally, there is freedom to decide the standard of service. There is a system where rich areas give money to poor areas.

The City Council of this municipality in Frederiksberg is run by Social Democrats.

It has a Financial Committee which has 5 subcommittee as follows: Social Committee, Children and Education Committee, Culture, Leisure and Sports

Committee, Environmental Committee and the Committee of Transport and Technology.

From 1974 onwards, Denmark has had a formal system of guidance counsellors in education. In the 90's youth education became more complex, e.g. FE. It became a professional job full-time, e.g. people from different backgrounds came into the profession, like social workers, teachers etc.

The new reform law has been passed in the beginning of January last year and its implementation will be on 1st August 04.

Presently there is school guidance or Youth Guidance, from the ages of 16-18. Pupils can leave school at 16 years of age.

In each municipality, the main city runs the guidance centres. In Frederiksberg, they have formed a co-operation called UU-North, i.e. Youth Education Guidance North. Six equal municipalities joined and they have their own budget and freedom and they will start on 1st August 04. On 1st April, the Chief Executive of the Centre will be starting work at the Centre and will have a youth education background.

The next step will be to get the guidance counsellors. They have a budget to interview young people for ½ hour to 2 hours per budget.

Guidance Counsellors should be in schools, youth clubs or out in the streets, but also they will also see 18-25 years old at the Centre.

The new full time counsellors will have a caseload, e.g. 1, 3 or 4 schools and then see the young people in the centres and have satellites/outreach places where young people can go. The Centre will be responsible for administering and organising 2 weeks work experience for young people. They will contact employers about placements and will have specialist counsellors. They are also hoping to decrease the pupils drop out rates in schools etc.

At present in many places in Denmark teachers deliver guidance counselling part time, but from 1st of August 04, the system will change and they will have full time guidance counsellors working 37 hours a week.

(PM)

Visit to **IVU*C/Copenhagen**, one of 4 centres appointed by the Danish Ministry of Education. The Centres offer information about programmes of HE in Denmark. IVU*C have open offices located in Copenhagen, Odense, Kolding, Aarhus and Aalborg.

IVU*C/ the University of Copenhagen will be responsible for establishing the new Regional Guidance Centre in the Copenhagen/Northern Zealand/Bornholm regions.

Guidance Centre for HE, guidance of people that do not know what they want to do in the future in HE. This centre we visited is closing down at the end of July 04.

Competitive tender e.g. University of Copenhagen main bidder.

2 Group in FE: 1. students in the upper secondary programs, 2. Young and adults outside the youth programmes.

Guidance offering

1. Area: HE choice education and occupation
2. Nation: wide and independent institutions
3. Locally and centrally guidance
4. Centre will open on 1st August 04

What groups are they offering guidance to:

A. Students in FE and other youth educational programmes

Year 1: they will look it up on the Internet “The Portal” in August/Sept.

Year 2: to choose the right choice, Sept/October

Year 3: Applying for HE in April/May

B. Vocational programme group (18/60 years of age)

Open programme: this group have to visit the centre here.

Outreach counsellors also see people in libraries.

Most guidance given to group from the youth programmes especially preparing for HE.

In Denmark pupils start school in August and they have workshops, e.g. choosing the right job, studying in a foreign country etc. They have group sessions/presentations, info sessions and also individual interviews, about 3 hours per month. In different regions there are different programmes not the same as here.

Individual guidance:

1. “short interview”, e.g. info giving
2. “long interview”, e.g. discussion of subject choices, options etc. Usually half an hour.
3. “reflective interview”, e.g. undecided on what to do (it is important for people to find out what a job role involves etc.)

They do see people with special needs and other specific/individual needs.

At the There are 12 full time people at the Centre now, they may be more in the future.

They have a contract until 2008, which can be renewed.

Wednesday, 24.3.04

(AM)

Study visits in 4 groups (other groups were: group 2/theme: Young people at risk of social exclusion; group 3/theme: Projects about quality in youth guidance and new initiatives to integrate young people into the labour market and group 4/theme: Special initiatives for adults.

Group one/theme: initiatives aimed at ethnic minorities.

We visited **Avedore Gymnasium** (General Upper Secondary School). It is a multicultural upper secondary school with 40% bi/lingual pupils. This particular school has been very active in relation to the integration of the bi/lingual pupils.

We spoke to a teacher of Danish and German and also part time guidance counsellor there who told us the background of the school and area. They used to have middle class children going to the school, then social housing was built and more ethnic minorities and students from working class families started going to the school with their different issues/problems.

Counsellors look at individual problems with each young person. They have their own Danish culture and had to learn about other cultures e.g. Islam.

Young people have different problems, e.g. ethnic problems and also typical teenage problems.

This counsellor said that the school's cultural background is Danish, but they have had to change the image of the school, as like other Danish schools, they have pupils from ethnic minority background with their own problems/issues.

"Immigration law" is very restrictive in Denmark and in schools, they try to be very tolerant and treat each student as a human being. The school Counsellor said that these young people have some serious issues, e.g. problems with girls being raped in the family, arranged marriages etc. Some young people want to move away from home and be independent, also visible in ethnic groups the control of male students over the female students.

Counsellors need more time counselling ethnic minority students. Most of them are refugees from Iran and Iraq born from academic homes and very able students, who usually will go onto HE.

Interviews with ethnic minority students

We spoke to 3 girls in the Year 2, the penultimate year in Upper secondary school (Year 10 in UK). They were from Pakistani background. Two born in Denmark and one came to the country when she was 5 years old. They said that, although they mix with Danish students in the classroom they feel they are "foreigners" and socialise with the other foreign students.

These girls said that their religion of Islam plays a very important role when socialising and when choosing partners/future husbands. Because of this factors, the girls said that there was difference between their culture, more family orientated and Danish culture, where young people are more independent and choose to leave home and being independent at a young age ("culture clash"). Therefore there is a difficulty of integration of these 2 cultures, as they are very different from each other.

At the school extra languages are offered to people who's Danish is their second language. They are very helpful in this school with ethnic minorities as "Avedore Gymnasium" has set an excellent example and good practice all over Denmark. Other schools look up to this secondary school for initiatives.

(PM)

We visited the "Blaeksprutten" (The Octopus), a social pedagogical project aimed at boys from 12- 16 years of age from all nationalities. The main aim is the prevention of crime and racism among groups of youngsters.

The 2 workers there said that they take in younger and younger kids, from ethnic minorities, mostly Turkish. There are 80 different ethnic minorities in the area within and around Copenhagen.

This Project started in 1989, based on a ghetto outside Copenhagen. It started because they had lots of problems with gangs of youths and the project workers had to go to work in the streets, to reach those young people and to work with them. They started outreach work in schools and worked alongside teachers and social workers.

From 10.00 am to 1.00 pm they visit places and talk to pupils who have been truanting. Their aim is to raise young people's aspirations, finding what their talents are, e.g. Maths and also to follow them up and give them ongoing support.

They get referrals from teachers to social workers, e.g. social workers contacts the "Octopus" and the workers there start to build a rapport with the young people. The young people need to trust them and they open to one another other emotionally. Children are from families with various issues, e.g. mental problems, alcohol/drug misuse, etc.

The project workers also have a meeting with other professionals to discuss the young people's cases and to get them to attend the Centre, they also have family counselling sessions. One to one contact. At the centre there are 3 social pedagogs/youth workers, 1 social worker and the Director and a student doing work experience. They also work with the young people's emotions and organise events and activity week ends, like ski trips, rock climbing in Sweden (used as rewards and bonding the group). The counsellors also help young people with homework, e.g. languages, English and Danish.

The young people attending the Centre are there for different lengths of time and there are different arrangements in place for each young person.

These workers/counsellors act like Connexions Personal Advisers in their roles and their clients can call them even when they leave the Centre. The counsellors also take kids to school and even stay in the classroom with them, to make sure they attend, they even go to the kids' home to have breakfast with them, to make sure they get up and go to school. These workers are "on call". The young people have the worker's mobile phone nos., but the workers do not usually work at week ends.

They have good links with social workers and they get very involved with the young people and set ground rules when the young people join. They are known in this town and well respected.

They have to be accountable to the organisations funding them. They would like to employ a woman worker there, to show a role model to their clients. Every Friday they have a staff meeting where they talk about their caseloads and get background info before the young people start attending the Centre. The centre is also open to other boys and they can come and relax there, have counselling sessions and use the Internet etc.

They have also young people from Danish background, but they have to work differently with kids from ethnic minority background, taking the young people's culture into account. They also deal with crime prevention and they work closely with the police.

Thursday, 25th March

(AM)

We visited the **Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory** where they have some guidance counsellors working there. They have a "Guidance Corner" located in their canteen, available to all staff members. The counsellors provide careers counselling and personal guidance and also job searches and look at Education Vocational Training courses, e.g. for members of staff who cannot work for the company, e.g. redundancy, industrial accidents etc.

Guidance provided in companies, e.g. Royal Copenhagen where **VUS Kontakt** (The Adult Education and Training Services) provides guidance for employers at the Royal Copenhagen premises (see above).

VUS Kontakt was established in 1992 by the County of Copenhagen and the Municipalities of Copenhagen and Frederiksberg. It provides information and guidance for enterprises, organisations and employees.

(PM)

Visited the “**Karrierecenter**” Careers Centre, which is a new initiative where the public employment services in Copenhagen and the municipality of Copenhagen in cooperation have established a career centre aimed at both young people and adults who are looking for inspiration, information or guidance in relation to their career or job search.

Clients can use the computers and have careers or counselling sessions/interviews. The interesting thing is that the guidance counsellor working at the Centre do not have to put any clients’ details onto a database.

Friday, 26th March

(AM)

The new common **training programme for Danish guidance counsellors.**

- One common training programme available for guidance counsellors from all sectors (starts August 2004)
- Not obligatory, but highly recommended
- Tuition fee
- Not just for people who have already been appointed guidance counsellor
- Minimum entry requirements: completed short cycle HE programme and 2 years relevant work experience

Before the reform, you needed a degree from any subject and you could work as a guidance counsellor part time and you trained on the job.

The contents and structure of the new part time programme

- part time programme (equivalent to 6 months full time studies)
- 3 modules (guidance theories and methodologies, ethics, ICT in guidance; labour market conditions, the education system and society; different target groups, human development, learning theories etc.)
- qualification level: corresponds to half a diploma degree

We were shown how the Copenhagen Centre for HE is planning to organise the programme they are going to offer in Sept 04.

(PM)

We had a presentation on “**Gender blind counselling**”. Perspectives on gender equality in educational and vocational guidance in Danish primary and lower secondary schools. Research results from an Equal Opportunities Project called “Gender blind counselling?-Youth, Gender and Careers” (copy available from myself and Careers Europe). It was produced by the Danish Research Centre on Gender Equality.

They were trying to create strategies to get gender equality in jobs, e.g. getting more women into male occupations. It was not successful as girls could not find a suitable training place, e.g. motor mechanics.

Even careers counsellors today in Denmark are reluctant to raise the issue of gender equality.

Gender blind counselling? /Youth, gender and careers

This report on the gender equality perspective in educational and occupational counselling in Danish primary and lower secondary schools shows that the labour market is still gender segregated. Division of men and women in the workforce is still not equal, therefore there is unequal pay between men and women, unequal careers opportunities, e.g. lack of men in the care/healthcare sector, fewer men than women enter HE in Denmark. The research project wanted to see what happens from school to the division of labour.

They noticed that parents influence their children and this helps to create a gender segregated labour market, which is a barrier to gender equality. They wanted to see what the attitudes of young people to different careers were etc. Is it possible to change stereotypes?

They have also found that 50% of counsellors feel that market gender equality is less important, they are gender blind, not being aware of gender differences.

The researchers get support from the ESF and have set up links with other countries in Europe.

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