

**Careers Europe
Academia Exchange Programme
Oslo, Norway 10 – 14 May 2004**

The theme of this exchange was ‘Guidance Methodology and Practice, mainly in relation to drop-out youth and of citizens of multi-cultural background’.

Monday 10 May

On the first day of the programme, we attended several presentations at the Directorate of Labour on the education system and labour market in Norway.

- the population of Norway is approximately 4.5 million
- the unemployment rate nationally is 4%
- However, there is a higher representation of young men within this 4%

The Directorate of Labour is going to merge with the Social Services department in order to become a more ‘user-orientated service’ – where they can focus on the whole person rather than several separate issues.

The target groups for the Directorate of Labour include:

- long term unemployed
- immigrants
- young people (16-19)
- occupationally disadvantaged (those with special needs etc).

In Norway, 95% of 16-19 year olds are classed as still being in education/training. They can choose an upper secondary school (16-19 years) based on the route they wish to follow i.e. academic/vocational courses. Those young people wanting to do apprenticeships have to spend two years in an upper secondary school doing a mixture of practical/ vocational tasks before they are placed with an employer.

However, there is a high drop-out rate, as only 70% of young people complete their qualifications. This drop-out rate is particularly high amongst those undertaking vocational training.

All young people in Norwegian Schools have a right to ‘necessary’ guidance. This means in reality that guidance is often left to school/teachers. In Norway, teachers also act as guidance counsellors. In the final year of lower secondary school (aged 15 – 16) young people should receive an average of ten hours a year of careers related lessons/ counselling with guidance teacher. However, a recent survey showed that they had received an average of ten minutes individual careers counselling in a year.

In Norway, young people are entitled to one week’s work experience.

Tuesday 11 May

There were several presentations again at the Directorate of Labour on inclusion projects currently being undertaken in Norway.

'Drop-outs back on track' – this was a Leonardo funded project – with the Norwegian project being based in Vennesla Upper Secondary School. It looked at the different services working together to help young people who have dropped out get back into education and training.

Prindsal Team

This was a project run by two special needs teachers. They worked in close collaboration with schools to look at improving standards and behaviour within the classroom. This involved working with young people to examine their behaviour and how they engage with other students, staff etc.

Wednesday 12 May

We visited **Sollerudstranda Lower Secondary School**. This was an alternative school for young people aged 14-16 who had experienced problems within a mainstream setting. This school offered mainly practical/vocational courses including Motor Mechanics, Boat Building, Catering, Childcare etc.

Our second visit was to the **Havnoy Foundation** – which was another small scale project for young people, who have emotional/behaviour difficulties. The young people were based with foster parents and spend time working mainly one to one with tutors on maritime and environmental projects.

Thursday 13 May

Visited **Stovner Upper Secondary School** – this was a school which had managed to reduce its high drop-out rate by totally changing its learning environment, curriculum content. The majority of its lessons were now Information Technology based, with large IT suites where every student had their own PC/workstation. They had a small number of taught sessions but the rest was self-study with some support from teaching staff. All the day's lesson plans/assignment titles were publicised on the website and could be downloaded by the student from home. They had also changed the timetable so that one subject had all its lessons on the same day – i.e. Monday Norwegian, Tuesday Maths etc.

Visit to **Rosenhoff School for Refugees and Immigrants** – this was an adult education college, offering Norwegian lessons for people who had just arrived in the country.

The lessons are currently free to non EU immigrants and there were different levels of course depending on the educational/language knowledge of the applicant. In the future,

a new law might be passed which required a newly arrived person to complete 300 hours of compulsory Norwegian lessons before being granted a work permit.

There was a guidance and counselling service at Rosenhoff to help students with advice, job search, C.V.'s. They also helped students gain information about what their qualifications were equivalent to in Norway. They have found that far too many highly educated refugees ended with low paid jobs because they could not prove their qualification level, access appropriate training etc.

Friday 14 May

Presentation from **New Page Project** – a detached youth work style project using Sport to re-motivate young people. They were working with a small group of students in danger of dropping out, mainly on a one to one basis.

Visit to University of Oslo – presentation from **Minorities in Focus in Academia Project**.

This project was looking at recruiting more students from minority ethnic backgrounds into the university. It was also looking at supporting them whilst they were there, retention rates etc.

They were also looking at why there was considerable under-representation of ethnic minorities within certain faculty areas at the university, especially, human and social sciences and journalism.