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Careers Europe Placement Report

**“Guidance related to the transition from compulsory to youth education.
Examples of good practice in Denmark”**

**The Danish Academia Programme
Copenhagen, 4 - 8 April 2005**

Monday, 4th April.
(AM)

We started the day with a welcome, then an introduction of ourselves to the group. We were then introduced to CIRIUS as an organisation. At the moment they are going through a period of change. They have just become a new authority under the Ministry of Education, and they will be changing their name, but they haven't devised a suitable one yet. The new international authority (CIRIUS) is now composed of –

- The “old” Cirius
- The Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications
- The Danish Euroguidance centre
- Eurydice

Their new mission is to work for internationalisation of education and training at all levels with specific focus on –

- Mobility of students and staff
- Transnational co-operation
- Transparency and recognition of qualifications
- Intercultural understanding

Denmark is very proud of the fact it is a welfare state. They redistribute their wealth through taxes. They have free public services in many areas, including education. Education is state funded. Public expenditure on education is 7%. 75% of Danish women are engaged in the labour market.

Education is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 15, the 10th grade is optional. The 10th grade is used to help increase grades in particular subjects, also to help with confidence and motivation (see appendix 1 for a diagram illustrating the Danish Education System).

After compulsory education 97% of the year group continue into a youth education programme. 54% of them will go into general upper secondary education, 36% will go into vocational education and training, and the final 7% go into educational programmes not leading to formal qualifications.

Following this, we had a presentation on Guidance in Education – a new Danish guidance system. Since 1st August 2004 the Danish have introduced a new guidance system to Denmark. They had this reform because the old system –

- Did not pay enough attention to young people with special needs for guidance
- Was too sectorised

- Focused too much on well-known educational options and did not include labour market/career perspectives
- Lacked an efficient quality assurance system
- Lacked professional guidance counsellors

The main aims of the new Act –

- Guidance shall help ensure that choice of education and career will be of greatest possible benefit to the individual and society
- Guidance shall take into account the individual's interests and personal qualifications as well as the anticipated need for qualified labour and self-employed businessmen
- Guidance shall be targeted especially at young people with special needs for guidance
- Guidance shall contribute to a reduction of drop out rates
- Guidance shall contribute to improving the individual's ability to seek and use information about choice of education and career
- Guidance shall be independent of institution – and sector specific interests
- The qualifications and competencies of guidance counsellors shall be improved.

They have developed a new structure with –

- Fewer types of guidance services
- Establishment of 46 municipal youth guidance centres (271 municipalities)
 - Guidance related to the transition from compulsory to youth education
- Establishment of 7 regional guidance centres
 - Guidance related to the transition from youth education to higher education
- Still part-time teachers / part-time guidance counsellors in schools as well

The main target groups for the new Youth Guidance Centres are –

- Pupils in compulsory school – forms 6 – 9 (10)
 - Guidance is still provided at the pupils' schools
- Young people under the age of 19 not involved in education, training and employment. The centres are obliged to contact this group and find a suitable offer for them
- Young people between the age of 19 and 25 who ASK for guidance
- Across target groups: Youths with special needs for guidance

The Regional guidance centres are responsible for –

- Providing information about all higher education programmes in Denmark
- Providing information about possible occupations/professions after higher education
- Target groups:
 - Pupils in youth education programmes (both in schools and at centres)
 - Young people and adults outside the education system wishing to enter a HE programme

The final presentation of the morning was given by Hanne Meldal from the Division for Guidance at the Ministry of Education. The official definition of Educational and Vocational guidance they use is –

“A process involving and interaction between –

- Information
- Education
- Practical activities
- Personal activities

Guidance thus becomes a –

- Development-oriented
- Pedagogical (study of teaching)

and often also

- Social

active dialogue between the guidance counsellor and the client is encouraged.

The guidance system within lower secondary schools is a learning process including three guidance layers. The aim is to develop the pupils’ –

- Self-knowledge
- Ability to make decisions regarding education and career

The first layer concerns “the pupil’s continuous internal evaluation”

This includes social and educational development as an ongoing process. The school (the class teacher and the class teams) is responsible.

The second layer concerns “orientation and teaching about education, vocations and labour market issues”.

Common education perspective, integrated and interdisciplined in teaching 1st – 9th grade. The school is responsible – the Youth Guidance Centres should serve as a source of coordination, inspiration and development. Step by step goals –

- After third grade
- After sixth grade
- After ninth grade

(Please see appendix 2 for a copy of the step-by-step goals)

The third layer is concerned with “individual guidance”. Sixth to tenth grade –

- From education logbook to personal education plan – process and conclusion
- Personal guidance sessions
- Learning process, dialogue with the guidance counsellor, provided at the pupils school

(PM)

After lunch was devoted to a discussion about the new guidance system, and if indeed it was working on the ground. We had presentations and discussions with Jorgen Brock from the Division for Guidance, Ministry of Education, and John Knudsen from the Youth Guidance Centre in Copenhagen. Jorgen spent some time telling us how they developed the new guidance system. They had to bear in mind –

- What does the individual want and need?
- What does the country need?
- What direction is society going?
- Labour market information

- Personal qualifications
- They would also prefer some self-employed people, rather than everyone being a wage earner

The municipal aims then have to be completed in accordance with the national aims. The municipal aims are that –

- 95% of young people should have further education after leaving compulsory school
- Copenhagen to be one of the 10th best cities in Denmark to integrate ethnic young people

The Guidance centre in Copenhagen aims focus on what needs to be done to get where they want to be. The aims change according to the time of year, but at the moment their aims are –

- Focussing on contacting the NEET's, earlier in the year they have focused on all 9th grade interviews. They find that people are usually pleased to be contacted, as they have been too scared to approach the agencies.
- Guidance targeted at special needs. The government let the local partnerships decide on who has special needs –
 - Immigrants
 - Weak social background e.g. single parent, family/mother with no education/training
 - Dyslexia / aspergers / tourettes etc
- Reduction of drop out rates – high in vocational schools

At the Copenhagen Youth Guidance Centre, they have 64 counsellors based there. They have a 35-hour week, and 5 weeks holiday. They go out to 66 schools in the area. People also visit them at the centre. They have a flexible week, and also attend youth clubs etc in the evenings.

We then spent the last 30 minutes going over the travel arrangements for the rest of the week. We all had to travel independently. CIRIUS had completed detailed directions and maps for us to follow for the rest of the week.

Tuesday 5th April **(AM)**

This morning we visited a Youth Guidance Centre (UU Centre). We had been split into 4 groups of 4 people each. This was a good opportunity to mix with some of the other group members. We went to the UU Center Syd. We spent the day with Ingelise Wulff, a guidance practitioner. She has 2 schools on her caseload, but spends most of her time at the centre we visited.

She told us that the guidance started at 11-12 years old. She is also responsible for the young people under 19 who have attended her schools. All the guidance practitioners have a computer package that lists the people she has to contact. They will get a message directly for the gymnasium, or technical school if they have left. They will then contact the young person as soon as possible.

In the 6th and 7th form (age 11- 12) they will have group interviews of 2 girls and 2 boys; the teacher chooses the groups to promote maximum interaction. They will start by writing a letter to the guidance counsellor telling her about themselves, from this letter she will prepare the group work accordingly, around their interests, and what they like both in and out of school, and what they want to do in the future.

In the 6th form the young person has to decide if they want to take a second foreign language. If they decide they don't, they cannot go to the Gymnasium to study, so they need to have discussion around the implications of this. If at any point the young person is struggling with the second foreign language, the guidance counsellor will then have a meeting with the parents and teachers to try to rectify the situation.

In the 8th form (age 13 – 14), students will have 1-week work experience, which they have to find themselves. The guidance counsellor will help with this if necessary. In some areas they have difficulty finding placements, such as army and the police etc. In these cases they will have to go for something else. They have a computer-based system like Kudos to help them decide what they want to do. The students will also spend 1 week at the further education college they would like to go to after the 9th form. Each student will have 1 or 2 interviews each depending on how many they need. Some people may be tired of school, so they have the opportunity to spend 1 month doing some sort of vocational training.

In the 9th form (15-16) they will have another week work experience, which they will have to find themselves. The students will have to decide if they want to stay in the 10th form, or if they would like to go straight into further education. The students will all devise an education plan with the guidance counsellors. This will begin after they have left School and follow through their entire career path. This plan is a summary of their logbook, which asks –

- What do you want to do?
- Where do you want to go?
- What subjects do you want to take at higher level?
- Who are you?
- Special needs?
- What guidance activities have you had?
- What do you want in the future?

In the optional 10th form the students have a similar guidance programme as in the 9th form. They will also have the opportunity to spend 4 weeks at a further education college.

(PM)

In the afternoon we had the opportunity to visit the Ungdomsvejledningen. This is the centre that can see people from ages 16 – 25. At the centre they need to follow up the young people in School from care, and after care. They will help with further education and training etc.

They can help with homelessness through the Internet, looking for rooms for rent or through the central hall as they are obligated to house them in hostels, YMCA Foyer etc.

They will help with jobs for 16-18 year olds, as the job centre won't help under 18's. They will also help with CV's, letters and application forms.

They will also do work with immigrants and ethnic minorities to help them integrate into society.

Wednesday 6th April **(AM)**

This morning together as a group we all visited the Avedore Gymnasium (general upper secondary school). It was built in 1973, and was a pilot school for democratic leadership, with no headmaster, just run by the teachers and the students. This lasted 6 years, then the government changed and reintroduced the traditional format.

43% of the pupils that attend this school are bilingual, as 80% of the houses around the school house immigrants. One of the school's aims is to ensure that everyone feels comfortable. All immigrants will have to complete 1 full year of school in Danish before they can move onto higher education.

The School has 3 flagships –

IT – They have sensors in all the ceilings so students can access the network and Internet from their laptops anywhere in the school.

Film – 6 years ago Dogmar (Danish film maker) built his institute nearby, he needed students interested in film, so they formed the link.

Bilingual – without racism and encouraging tolerance, students in the school speak many languages.

The teacher, who showed us around the school, was an original guidance teacher in the school. Her role was split 50/50 teaching Danish and German 50% of the time. The other 50% was guidance.

The year was structured. At the beginning of the first year (September), she would see everyone for a “get to know you” appointment. This would be where she would establish if they have special needs etc.

During October/November, she would visit the classes to teach them how to take notes, how to remember, and how to be active during lessons. They will also look at what role they play in the class e.g. active/passive and what they can do to change that image.

In February, she would coach in choosing subjects for the 2nd and 3rd year. The pupils have 4 obligatory lessons and 4 options. This has to be done with careful consideration, as some universities will demand certain subjects. Over the year, the guidance teacher will have at least 3 meetings with the teachers to see if each student is getting on ok, if they aren't they will look at changing their subjects.

In the 2nd year, the teacher will give the same option talk, and have regular meetings with the teachers as mentioned previously.

In the 3rd year, she will coach the students on their university options.

They have a 4/5% drop out rate. In August their guidance system will change to that of the reform, where the guidance practitioners will come out from 1 central base. It will be interesting to see if this change affects the drop out rate.

(PM)

This afternoon, again as a group we visited Kobenhavns Tekniske Skole (Copenhagen Business Academy; a vocational college). This school offered training as goldsmiths, industrial technicians and toolmakers. They have students attending there from 15/16 through to 50 years old.

To assist on the basic course level, they have introduced contract teachers. They were introduced to complement the guidance practitioners, to help the students decide on the options available at the technical school and after school. They will also provide support for different problems relating to the school e.g. technical and behavioural. They will also help the students find work experience and apprenticeship placements.

The contract teachers were introduced to stop students wasting time, and to reduce the drop out rate. They wanted to get the pupil to share the responsibility of their education. Before every young person starts they have a meeting about their rights, their duty and what is expected from them at the school. They will also get a career plan.

All the staff gets together once a month to talk about the pupils, and if there are any problems, they will have a meeting with the student to resolve any issues.

Thursday 7th April

(AM)

This morning, together as a group we visited Produktionskolen I flong (a production school). These were started in 1979 to reduce unemployment. The theory behind the schools is to handle, see, then write the theory behind it. They hoped it was a way of inspiring people to do more. Many of the students that pass through their doors have problems with motivation, and have had difficulty in making friends at compulsory school. They don't have structured lessons or learning plans, as they will have new people starting all the time.

Before the guidance reform, anybody could start between the ages of 16-25 as soon as they arrived at the centre. There are 200 production schools across Denmark, although some of the smaller schools are now beginning to close because of all the paperwork involved.

Since the guidance reform, which they think is a good idea, they aren't completely happy. Now, any client who wants to go to the production school needs to be referred

by the new guidance practitioners. This is to check that the production school is the right choice for them. The downside to this is that it takes several weeks to get an appointment, and when the young person gets an appointment, they have to find the UU Centre where the interview will take place. In their experience, by the time the young person gets to this point they have lost interest and won't attend.

Usually they will have 300/400 students who pass through their doors every year. They have 80 students on programme there at the moment, its usually 100 at any one time. They think the other 20 students are lost between the UU centre and the school.

The only entry requirement to attend the production schools is that they have had the 9 years compulsory education, but they don't need to have actually taken the exams. Usually the workshops last 3 months. They can take workshops in metal and woodwork, drama, music, textiles, cooking and ecology. If necessary the student can stay on another 3 months, up to a maximum of 1 year. If the student didn't take any exams after compulsory school in year 9, they have the opportunity to take them here in maths, English and Danish.

The students don't get any formal qualifications by attending the production school; they just get a written statement from the teachers. After leaving the production school it is hoped they will move into a vocational school where they will begin to work on their qualifications. 80% of people upon leaving the production school will stay in education.

Students who attend the production schools receive state benefit. If they stay at home 16-18 year olds receive nothing. 18+ years, students receive 1200 DK (Around £100) per week to attend college or University. This is attendance based, if they don't attend, they don't get any money. Students will also get subsidised travel, for example, if their travel costs 800DK per week, the student would usually pay around 200DK.

(PM)

This afternoon, we split into separate small groups. I had the opportunity to visit Blaeksprutten (the octopus); Ahmed and 2 others started this in 1989. They had been contacted by the SSP, which is a group made up of the police, social workers and the community. A gang had set up in Blaeksprutten called the warriors; the SSP wanted the gang disbanded, so Ahmed and his colleagues worked with the gang to give them something to do. After the initial resistance, the boys where glad to be there, then the other kids wanted to get involved.

At any one time, they will only have 12 boys on programme ranging from 12-16 years old. They only have boys on their caseload so they can just focus on each other, so they boys don't try to be someone else in front of the girls. Octopus works with families to try to iron out problems. They work together for as long is necessary, from 3/4 months up to 4 years.

Octopus's name was developed because an octopus has many hands, so they are able to reach out and help. The bandana was added to their logo because this was part of

the gang's clothing. They wanted to remove the exclusivity of the bandana away from the gang. This worked, as the gang members stopped wearing it.

Pedagogs (English = mentors) staff the Octopus centre and not teachers, so it is only available to open in the evenings. The staff are all employed by the social services, there are 5 staff who operate at the centre, 4 pedagogs and 1 social worker. There are no voluntary workers, although this is normal across Denmark. The only voluntary workers they have are the Red Cross.

The boys on their caseload are usually violent in school, they can't sit still. The boys usually behave like this because of problems at home with their parents, such as, drinking, behaviour etc. Initially the advisors see the boys on a one to one basis. Usually they will go out for some food or to the movies etc, this is so they can get to know each other. The advisors give their clients and their parents their mobile numbers and they can contact them at ANYTIME. As the relationship grows, the advisors will sit in class with the boys if necessary. The boy then begins to feel wanted, and that they have someone who cares. They then motivate them to work through their problems one at a time.

Referrals come through social workers (the boys are usually one step away from being removed from their parents), or sometimes the library (more like a youth club). Boys will also drop in to ask questions etc.

Every Friday morning between 9-12, all the staff get together to discuss each client and how they can move them on. Between the pedagogs and the social worker, they complete the paperwork on the recommended actions.

The staff at the centre has a routine for the day. They all start at 9am; they go into the city to visit teachers, social workers and police to find out about any new gangs or groups hanging around. Sometimes they will go into schools, or the boys may have appointments to see the advisors at Octopus between 12 – 1pm. At 2pm every day, all the staff and the boys prepare, and then sit down for lunch together. Some of the boys don't eat very well; some don't even know how to use a knife and fork. As a group they talk about politics, and the world. Ex-clients will often visit during this time, and speak with the current clients about how they have moved on.

After lunch the advisors will help with homework, play on the playstation, go to the gym, or simply just go for a walk. Many of the clients just want to do simple, ordinary things that they don't get the opportunity to do with their parents. Every advisor works 37 hours per week, and they can work flexi hours if necessary.

The staff has supervision as a group once a month from an outside psychologist. They will also coach each other, and they have recently attended training on this.

Every year they have a mini Olympics for all the children within the area with games like toss the welly, and egg and spoon races. Once a month they have funny Saturdays, again for everyone. The whole community, including, teachers and community workers get involved in all the events.

Last year 10 boys moved on from their programme out of the 10, 9 are either working or in full time education.

Friday 8th April

(AM)

Our very last morning was spent together at the main CIRIUS building where we started on Monday. The first session was to inform us of the euroguidance network. This was established in 1992, and they now have approximately 60 centres in 31 European countries (EU/Leonardo funding). The main aims are to –

- Promote mobility
- Promote the development of educational and vocational guidance in Europe, including the international dimension in guidance.

The website is www.euroguidance.org.uk. Other related websites are <http://europa.eu.int/ploteus> this website will help to research what qualifications you can study abroad in different languages.

www.guidenet.org this is a website to network with other guidance practitioners across Europe. Another is www.onthemove-eu.hi.is this is for young people considering going abroad to study. Eurodesk is another useful website, for those working with young people. It is a specially developed online information tool, go to www.eurodesk.org. It has –

- European information centre
- Support centre
- Partners' area with personal login
- Online discussion forum
- Access to “first class” – direct communication with 600 colleagues across Europe

After this we learned about the new training programme for guidance counsellors.

This programme lasts 6 months, and was introduced to –

- Improve the qualifications and competencies of guidance practitioners
- To professionalise Danish guidance services
- To develop a common, professional guidance identity
- To replace the great number of different, mainly short, sector-specific further training courses by one common training programme.

(PM)

We spent the rest of the day as a group talking about –

- The main focus points at national and policy level in our countries
- What is done in our countries at policy level in relation to “enabling citizens”
- How can we influence policy level

Then we talked about what we had noticed about empowerment by the Danish guidance counsellors, if there is a connection from policy level to practice and what are the perspectives in relation to our own countries.

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