



Vet study visit, Vejle, DENMARK

15-17 JUNE, 2011

VISIT DETAILS

Study visit participants :

Lucie Procházková (expert from Czeck Republic)
Thordis H. Olafsdóttir (expert from Iceland)
Preben Siersbaek (Project Advisory Group from Denmark)
Pia Cort (expert from Denmark and host)
Henrik Hedelund (expert from Denmark and host)
Mary Kyriazopoulou (European Agency staff member)
Maja Becher Johannesen (European Agency staff member)

Programme:

1st day morning

Study group's internal meeting

The participating experts briefly presented their work and discussed the aim and objectives of the VET project, the study visit and the main outcomes of the project. A discussion then took place on "further steps" for the project analysis and the experts presented their comments on the draft questionnaire for information collection at national level.

The questionnaire:

An issue was raised, namely, that it is difficult to define "Drop-outs". There is a need to define the term.

The experts discussed the defined age group for the questionnaire, which has been set at 14-25 years. The experts argued that this definition could be seen as somewhat forced as school systems throughout Europe have different set-ups and upper secondary education begins at different ages depending on the country.

Information about the Danish school system was also provided by the hosts.

Info on the Danish school system.

Pupils seldom repeat classes, although there are some cases of this in the 0 grade.

The Danish VET system is a dual system which is inclusive in itself and there is therefore no inclusion strategy as such.

There is legislation for guidance in education, which the experts considered a good thing for both learners and society ([see presentation VET-and-education-in-DK.pdf](#)).



1st day afternoon

Presentation on the Danish VET system by Pia Cort- National Vet expert:

The Key phrase for the Danish educational system is “Educational for all”; the system is as inclusive as possible. Denmark began to focus on inclusive education in 1995.

The completion rate for students is approximately 80 percent, which has not changed despite varied attempts to improve the drop out rate.

Of all countries in the EU, Denmark provides the most specific guidance for students aimed at ensuring that they complete their education. Pia commented that, in her experience, the more pressure placed on learners to complete their studies, the more drop outs are observed.

In the last few years there has been a 60 percent increase in students taking 10th grade.

97 percent of youngsters complete youth education. 45 percent of these relate to general upper secondary and vocational upper secondary and 55 percent relates to VET.

There is a tendency for learners to be guided to study for an upper secondary-degree as the professionals at the guidance centres (“UU”) have themselves completed upper secondary school.

What is special about the Danish system:

There is a basic training programme, which can take from 20-60 weeks depending on the learner’s abilities. The educational system is dual, meaning that the training is a mix of school training and work shop training in a firm where the learner has a contract throughout the training. The training involves both a general education and societal focus. It is not the labour market that decides on the output of the education. The learner’s competences are decided upon by the partners on the labour market, namely, the parliament and the Ministry together with the trade committees. They decide upon the ideal framework for the educational system.

In 1992, the VET system was decentralised and schools became independent institutions that need to compete to get as many learners in their schools as possible. The more learners that are enrolled, the more money they receive!

The fact that the system is dual is both a weakness and a strength. A workshop contract is needed in order to complete education but during periods of recession there are fewer firms able to offer contracts, meaning that fewer learners will be able to complete their education.

The firm receives 70 000 Danish kroner from the state when it signs a three year contact with a learner. The firm must give the learner a salary, although this is very low.

In the 1980s larger building projects were compelled by law to employ a certain percentage of VET learners ([see presentation Information on the Danish Education and VET system-in-DK.pdf](#)).

The Danish VET system and learners with special needs by Henrik Hedelund – National VET expert

A central support centre is responsible for technical support for all learners. This means that the individual VET centre is not itself obliged to finance the technical support for the learner, but only needs to apply for the support. In some cases however, it can be some



time before the learner receives the technical equipment applied for and thus the basic term may have terminated before the learner even receives the technical support.

All learners are free to independently choose their own school, however the municipality encourages learners to attend the school in their municipality, which is best equipped for the special needs of the learner (see [Presentation Special-Needs-in-VET.pdf](#)).

Introduction to AspIT – Ole Bay Jensen – Educational Principal



The VET study visit team at AspIT

The school terms are dual, as is the case with other Danish VET systems. They can almost be considered triple, taking into account the school training > Hot house with workshop training in the school > Training in a work shop/firm. The terms are much shorter however, and after each term the learner is evaluated in order to make adaptation to the school system to better suit the learner.

The focus is upon adapting the education, physical framework etc to the needs of the learner. The learner is not flexible, so everything around the learner has to be flexible.

All learners will succeed in either finding or going into further education after completing the training. (see [presentation AspIT-project.pdf](#)). The AspIT Brochure is available at: <http://www.aspit.dk/index.php?id=370>

Cooperation with UU (Educational guidance for young people-Youth guidance centre) – Mette Rasmussen – UU manager, Vejle

The guidance centre evaluates and guides the learners to order to provide the best education for them. However, the centre does not have the finance to support the education best suited to the learner and it therefore depends on cooperation with the municipality or state, which has the money.



The councillor from UU negotiates on behalf of the learner between all the stakeholders in order to protect the best interests of the young person. The stakeholders are the school, municipality, psychiatric hospital, family and social authorities.

A committee assesses whether the learner can adapt to the mainstream school system or special support is needed, which includes special funding from the municipality/state (see [Educational-and-vocational-guidance.pdf](#))

Evaluation results: what are the experiences from AspIT, by Peter Toft from the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)

(See [Evaluation-results.pdf](#))

2nd day

Visit Campus Vejle and AspIT



The VET study visit team at AspIT

The project started 6 years ago – an AspIT education is estimated to take three years, so only a few classes have completed the education and found real jobs on the labour market.

The goal of the director of AspIT Ole Bay Jensen is to export the idea of the school to the world, which is another approach to the learners; “all learners have potential, we just need to find it”. “Focused talent”

The physical surroundings were very important to how the teachers train. Each student has his/her own box/work station. There are no papers; everything was on computers -



one screen for assignments and one screen for work, with a focus on sounds and smells. The school integrates as many technical solutions as possible in order to avoid a mess.

The AspIT learners are not included in the rest of the campus. The school is not inclusive in its approach, but very selective about the students and their capabilities; they only take those students that they believe they will ultimately be able to find a job for.

The teachers/staff hold either an education in IT or are trained in dealing with special learners. There is a slight overlap of staff competences; the IT teachers are informed on special needs and vice versa.

Learners come from either the mainstream school or from special schools. There are 45 learners at the school which consists of 8 classes and 8 teachers. Most learners are boys as boys are more likely to have aspergers than girls. Learners have mostly either aspergers or ADHD.

Selection criteria:

Age is important as the learners need to be mature enough to work on the labour market once the training education is completed.

- 1) Information meetings for parents are held on a regular basis.
- 2) A committee from the municipality assesses and provides money for education so that the learner can start at the school
- 3) The learner's abilities are tested over a 6 week programme to see if they fit the AspIT criteria.
- 4) The learner starts the training programme with terms of 6 weeks. The learner is assessed at the end of each term.

The staff has improved their selection to make it more targeted, with a view to eliminating drop outs.

The most important task of the teachers is to put into words the learners' lacking social and emphatically abilities, so that the learner can define him or herself. The school considers it important for the learners to understand their own situation before they can be motivated to complete the training.

Drop outs:

Drop outs exist for various reasons. Typically it results from being lonely or having girlfriend problems. The learner can be given a second chance, in the event that the learner has been shown to have improved in the abilities that were lacking or the reason for the drop out no longer exists.

Elements of the education:

It is important for the success of the school to not only teach IT, but also teach learners about being good citizens; this equips them with the tools needed to cope with every day life and succeed in their work/education.



Each learner must also choose one type of physical activity to do twice a week.

Experts are used when needed. There are no rules on which method to use (see [Introduction-AspIT.pdf](#)).

Cooperation with enterprises - Visit in the firm ScanCommerce A/S:



The VET study visit team in the firm ScanCommerce A/S

Why employ a person with special needs in the firm? The firm's board has decided that the firm should have a strong environmental and social profile.

The firm consists of people with a high level of IT education and a special environment where they are used to people with certain characteristics.

Theory:

They work according to the "SCRUM model", working on projects with two week intervals after which the progress of the project is assessed. This very tight structure works for the trainee/employee Michelle. Every morning there are 15 minute meetings with an evaluation and structuring of work tasks, so everything is put into a structured frame. The team, together with Michelle, sets deadlines for delivery.

Special considerations for the special employee:

The special employee has a mentor, which is a normal part of the Danish VET dual system. The mentor pushes Michelle to develop both in a human, as well as a work capacity. The work tasks are never with a creative focus and are well defined and recognisable from earlier assignments. A maximum of 30 minutes support from colleagues is needed per day. The mentor can take on the more tedious and routine tasks, which is a benefit for the colleagues. Michelle is always in a team with the same colleagues. Lunch is taken when there are not many people in the canteen.



Michelle is now employed on normal conditions for 32 hours, which has been shown to be an adequate amount of hours that she can perform. The firm makes no money from him. The most significant obstacle for Michelle is that she can never have direct communication with the client – there will always be a need for a colleague to “bridge” the gap between the client and Michelle.

Teachers'/trainers' role. Teachers'/trainers' qualifications and further training possibilities, multidisciplinary working approach:

Presentation of the role and qualifications of teachers/trainers by Ole Bay Jensen and presentation of 2 documentary films (see documentary films)

Information and involvement of families by Bodil Hylleberg Christensen – Project manager – AspIT ([see cooperation-with-parents.pdf](#))