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Clearing

Assistance for young persons with special needs in their transition from school to working life

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Clearing indicates a wide cooperation between all bodies and institutions concerned around the individual regarding possibilities and obstacles and aims to outline these for young persons and their parents. This resembles various models tried out in Norway over the last years. We refer to Appendix 1 – The Hordaland model.

There is a wide political agreement in Norway on the need for cooperation and coordination around each individual on all levels – both nationally and locally.

A policy for the disabled is ultimately a question of democracy. It is all about the right to participate in society, and that all people are equal. Equal status reflects a basic norm of equality - but equality does not mean that we are all the same or that we should receive the same treatment. Formal equality is not sufficient to ensure equal status. The goal must be real equality. The goal of equal status to mean equal chances, i.e. equal chances for equal enjoyment of life and participation. Full participation must include the opportunity to participate on your own terms in a society where there is room for different ways of functioning.

The main challenges for achieving full participation and equal status are linked to the way our society is designed. If these goals are to be taken seriously, it requires both resources and competence. The right to participate in society is a question of basic human rights. Seen in this perspective the question of economy becomes a secondary concern, even if, due to considerations relating to resources, it may take time to realise these goals.

Education and work

Working life is one of the most important gateways to a sense of community with others and participation in society. The workplace provides an income and is an arena for social participation. Many people also feel that, through meaningful work, their workplace contributes to them having a higher quality of life.

Education is an important prerequisite for taking part in working life. Education in general and higher education in particular are far more important to persons with a reduced functional ability as regards their chances of getting work than they are to other people.



Primary/lower secondary schooling and upper secondary schooling

Important guidelines for the work of preparing the education to be offered to pupils with special needs are stated in chapter 5 of the Education Act and in its regulations (including on rights, expert assessments, procedures, individual teaching plans, the psychological pedagogical service, and special education help before school age, etc).

At the beginning of 2001, the Ministry of Education and Research prepared a guidance booklet entitled "Special education in primary/lower secondary and upper secondary schooling. Regulations, procedures and processes". This booklet is intended to help develop the cooperation between the school, the psychological pedagogical service and others with the aim of improving the quality of the education provided.

The number of pupils in Norwegian primary/lower secondary schooling that have been subject to separate teaching measures has never been more than one per cent. Today, this figure is approximately 0.5 per cent.

Although primary/lower secondary schooling and upper secondary schooling has clearly improved as regards individual rights for children and adults the goal of an including school has not been reached. The methods and the ways of organisation used in schools do not sufficiently reflect the goals of including pupils with special needs. There are weaknesses in the planning of the transition from kindergarten to primary/lower secondary school, and from here to upper secondary schooling and work.

The Government's objectives

- Pupils are to experience an inclusive and adapted school where everyone is given a chance to succeed based on their capabilities, talents and interests.
- Pupils with a reduced functional ability are to experience good planning, help and guidance in the transition from primary/lower secondary schooling to upper secondary schooling and to higher education/work.

Better educational environment and greater opportunities for educational differentiation in primary/lower secondary school.

Norwegian schools have a good starting point in that they have large financial resources and good teachers. There are also many satisfied parents and pupils. NOU 2001:22 states that:



- 90 per cent of the parents of children receiving special education say that their child is happy or very happy at school.
- The quality of the school day for pupils with mobility difficulties is good. Pupils, parents and teachers are all satisfied with the school.

The Ministry of Education and Research has changed the class-division rules. Schools are allowed to organise the pupils in groups in a way that the school itself finds expedient. At the same time, these groups should not be larger than that which is educationally justifiable.

The opportunities for greater educational differentiation are intended to promote forms of teaching that enable individually adapted education within the normal school community in line with the objective of an inclusive and adapted school.

The scheme involving bonus and demonstration schools is to be continued and further developed. These measures will together contribute to a new way of thinking in education and an increased focus on what the individual pupil gets out of his/her education and on his/her educational environment.

The project entitled "How to make more people meet the general university/occupational entrance requirements" was carried out by three county councils and completed in 2002. This project was part of the Plan of Action for persons with disabilities. Its objective was to develop measures that would contribute to more young people with a reduced functional ability completing upper secondary school in ordinary classes and meeting the general university/occupational entrance requirements. The focus was also put on measures relating to the choice of branch of studies. The results of this project are good and the Norwegian Board of Education has been assigned responsibility for following up these positive experiences in the further development work in this field.

Great deficiencies in the physical accessibility are a problem for students with mobility problems and students with orientation difficulties. New schools are still being built, where disabled people can not make use of all its educational facilities. The municipality of Oslo's own Clerical Firm revealed that all eight of the inspected schools in Oslo that were new or newly renovated in the autumn of 1999 had violated the provisions of the Planning and Construction Act relating to the accessibility requirements for persons with mobility problems.



Access to Education Opportunities for Disabled Persons after Compulsory Education

There are several activities and training programmes, meant to promote professional training of young disabled people after compulsory schooling. The training programme depends on the disability of the person and leads seldom to an effective and lasting employment.

In Norway there are services and centres that include:

- a) orientation and professional training, offering a theoretical and practical training in different specialities, such as cooking, house-keeping, and gardening,
- b) A service that assures integration (if possible) and guidance for disabled persons,
- c) A service of re-education.

The “Service and centre for disabled workers” has a mission to train and re-educate disabled persons suffering from their ability to work.

Educational and vocational guidance and personal counselling

Current policy concerns are; maximise participation in labour market, maximise participation in life-long learning, strong tradition and concern for social equity, need to address gender segregation (education – labour), boost recruitment to vocational options, mismatches between supply and demand and reduce high rates of drop-outs.

The services are mostly located within the school system. The Education Act states the right to necessary services. There is a focus within the curricula - interdisciplinary topics and a responsibility for the school as a whole. There is special focus of experience based school – enterprise links and entrepreneurship and a strong concern expressed by employers’ organisations about the extent and quality of the guidance provision within schools

Other youth services

- The youth follow-up service (1994) for all aged 16-19 who are neither in school nor at work
- 13 Youth Information Centers in Norway



Strategy for educational and vocational guidance and personal counselling in lower secondary and upper secondary education in Norway

- Conscious Educational Choices – R&D-project
- Separate Guidance and Counselling Services – R&D-project
- YOU – database – web-based information system for pupils, counsellors and parents
- Competence building
- The Action Plan against Poverty – the Follow-up service
- Efforts against dropout 2003-2005 - R&D-project
- Website for counsellors

In a National report for Norway on vocational guidance and personal counselling in lower secondary and upper secondary education in Norway, OECD concludes that Norway has a well established guidance and information services within the schools systems with strong local ownership and a well structured follow-up service to support individuals. There are some promising new services including a website (YOU) and Norway has paid attention to innovation through systematic trial and evaluation. The current provisions are fragmented and there are gaps – particularly for adults. The professionalisation is rather weak and there is a tendency to focus more on information than guidance (Appendix 4)

The transition from upper secondary schools to higher education/work

It is a barrier that the school fails to adequately prepare students for the world of work, and for the actual transition between school and work. There is a lack of systematic work throughout education whose goal is employment. There is a lack of clarity as to what the contents of upper secondary education shall consist of for severely disabled, and the schools still lacks competence concerning the opportunities for disabled people in the world of work.

For adults, there has been a clear improvement in that the right to elementary and upper secondary education has become established by law. In this area, Norway is far more advanced than others. It is however hard to envision how the goal of life-long learning for all adults can be realised as long there are no offers available for adults who are left out of the labour market. The Further and Additional Education Reform seems to have been given a form that serves to increase the differences between those inside and those outside the world of work.



In order to ensure that pupils receive help and guidance during the transition between primary/lower secondary school and upper secondary school and during the transition to higher education, the Ministry of Education and Research has initiated a project entitled “Divided advisory services”. (See Appendix 3)

Existing Transition Programmes

There are different transition programmes in Norway, it is the community’s responsibility to choose and decide what and how to deal with the transition process. After compulsory education, disabled persons often get their service in the “Centres for protected workshop”.

The biggest challenge associated with transitions is from upper secondary school tuition to employment – too few youths secure employment and too many secure inappropriate offers of employment. The transition from lower secondary school to upper secondary school tuition however is also important because it is in this period that a pupil’s vocational career or vocation planning should begin. Dropping out of and failing vocational academic tuition in upper secondary school tuition tells us that there is a need for plans that deal with:

- analysis
- guidance
- development of transition plans

Employment Situation for people with disabilities.

The disabled persons, who cannot do an ordinary job, have to find their place in the sector of protected work. It is difficult to find an ordinary job with a regular payment for disabled persons. Despite some open-minded employers, it is difficult to find employment for people with disabilities.

Transition from studying to work

One of the key motivations for studying lies in the possibility of obtaining work. Many persons with a reduced functional ability experience difficulties in finding work once they have completed their education. This is due to several factors. Persons with a reduced functional ability have fewer opportunities than other students to obtain job experience through summer jobs, etc, while they are studying. The lack of job experience and barriers in working life and in the help system are factors that can explain some of the difficulties.



In order to facilitate the transition from studying to work, more focus must be placed on the role of the educational institutions. The educational institutions can, through the advisory service and/or career centres, develop a cross-sector collaboration that may also include the Norwegian Directorate of Labour. By starting to plan for the transition from studying to work in plenty of time before the end of the studies, the opportunities to get a job may be increased.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Administration, the Ministry of Education and Research will prepare a circular that explains in greater detail the schemes and opportunities that currently exist to facilitate the transition from education to work. It appears as if these schemes are not sufficiently well known. The circular will also make it easier for the educational institutions and the Norwegian Directorate of Labour to enter into local forms of cooperation. The effect of the circular and some key schemes that may facilitate the transition from education to work will be evaluated.

The role of the Norwegian Directorate of Labour is to take care of the links with working life. The Norwegian Directorate of Labour's help to young people starts when they leave school. For young people with a reduced functional ability or with a special need for adaptation, this is not always sufficient. Young people with a reduced functional ability may require guidance regarding their opportunities in the job market earlier on, and the Norwegian Directorate of Labour requires good information on what the school and pupil have thought of when it is to provide help.

It is important that the Norwegian Directorate of Labour comes into the process early on in order to prevent young people from being turned into disability pensioners. In 2000, a model for cooperation between the Norwegian Directorate of Labour, the education authorities and the social services was prepared regarding the transition from school to working life for pupils with a reduced functional ability and other pupils with special needs in upper secondary schools. This model was tested in Hordaland county. On the basis of the findings made here, the Ministry of Education and Research asked the state education offices to inform the municipalities and county councils of the "Hordaland model". The National Education Offices were also asked to initiate discussions with relevant players to assess whether this model could form the basis for the creation of local cooperation agreements in other counties. (See Appendix 1)



So far, experience has shown that a lot of work remains before such cooperation functions satisfactorily in all counties. The work of developing routines for cooperation between the school authorities and the Norwegian Directorate of Labour will be given priority. An important part of this work will be to clarify the division of responsibilities between the various players relating to the transition from school to work.

Legislation used as Strategy

Legislation has traditionally been regarded as appropriate measures to achieve various objectives. In Norway, legislation is used as one of several means to ensure that all citizens have the same rights and opportunities in society.

People with functional limitations have no special legal status in Norwegian law. Contrary to what is the case in some other states, no special legislation has been laid down to especially safeguard this group the way for instance an Anti-discrimination Act would. The intention is that it is the general legislation which is to safeguard the rights of people with functional limitations. In some areas however, it has been considered necessary to incorporate special rights into the general legislation, such as for instance the Education Act and the Day Care Institution Act.

Legislation has had a varying effect as a strategy to achieve equality for people with functional limitations. One important experience is that legislative means are not utilised optimally. It is especially the opportunity to stipulate conditions that is being used minimally. It is also true that the intended effect of legislation is dependent on its economic, social and political context: Legislation is very seldom effective when used as the sole strategy, but may have a positive effect when used in combination with other means.



APPENDIX 1

Hordalandsmodellen

Contact Information

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A model for co-operation between labour sector and education sector in transition from school to work

- **Project Description**

The aim of the model is to make sure that students who need support in getting work after upper secondary school receive the required support.

The existing experience with the Individual Educational Plan in primary school, which has not been followed up or continued in secondary school, is that the individual plan elaborated in upper secondary school does not continue in the vocational rehabilitation plan. The main aim for the model is to work out good routines for transition support and follow up.

The idea is that formal meetings between the two sectors would ensure a better security for the students. The meetings would give the involved professionals an overview of the account of students needing support, and the type and dimensions of the support.

- **1st Meeting on Transition from Primary School to Secondary School**

- Information on co-operation of follow-up work
- Information on rights and responsibility under the act of Vocational rehabilitation,

Target group: Students, parents, disability organisations, professionals in the field of rehabilitation, headmasters from primary- and secondary schools, psychological- and pedagogical advisers (PPT), employment office and social insurance office.

Time: When the student attends last year (10th) in primary school, in the late autumn term.

Place: in a functional place, for exempla secondary school.

Responsible for the arrangement: PPT for the secondary school, OT (follow up services for students who have dropped out of school), PPT for primary school.



- **2nd Meeting Concerning Students in Upper Secondary School**

- Exchange information about new students
- Make status about the students already in the study courses (in the progress)
- Exchange information about transition plans
- Discuss and clarify any difficulty about the rules
- Discuss and distribute discrete subjects to the right instance.

Target group: OT, PPT for secondary school, responsible teachers in secondary school, employment office, social service office and social insurance office.

Time: September/ October 1st year of secondary School

Organisation: At school level (one school at the time)

Responsible for the arrangement: OT/PPT for secondary school and the schools

- **3rd Meeting Concerning School Graduates: Transition to Work**

- Advice and co-operate with students who start their last year in upper secondary school, concerning work or higher education
- Start developing a vocational rehabilitation plan for students, who have a right for that.
- Establish contact between student and a specific suitable vocational rehabilitation activity

Target group: Employment office, social insurance office, social service Office, OT/PPT, responsible teachers.

Time: January/February

Organisation: At school level

Responsible for the arrangement: OT/PPT for upper secondary school and the schools.

- **A Leader Meeting**

Aim: evaluate and follow up the transition work

Target group: The County directors of education, work and social insurance, and the Government director on education in the county.

There is an assumption that each of the sectors develops their own internal routines for following up the co-operation model, and that they do an annual evaluation

Responsible: The Government director on education in the county.



APPENDIX 3

The project “Increased Efforts to Prevent Young People from Dropping Out of Upper Secondary Education”.

Every year pupils drop out of upper secondary school. Some leave because they are not given an education they can utilize, or because they have problems following the education. Now efforts will be directed at reversing this trend.

The Norwegian Board of Education has been given the task of following up measures according to the Report to the Storting no. 6 (2002-2003): “Plan for Efforts against Poverty, 5.3.2. Measures for Children and Young People: Increased Efforts to Prevent Young People from Dropping Out of Upper Secondary Education”.

The Ministry of Education and Research has formulated three objectives for their commitment:

“The measures shall be aimed at:

1. Preventing and stopping dropout
2. Recognising which pupils is in danger of dropping out and counselling them so they return to work or education
3. Further developing work on improving statistics and documentation in this field”

Who are the pupils who do not complete their education?

The questions of why pupils drop out of school are complex and concern many parties. There are different groups that do not complete upper secondary school. This project will focus on pupils who need support and counselling in order to return to education or work. Examples could be pupils from a minority language background, pupils living away from home, pupils with drug or alcohol problems or psycho-social problems, or are in special circumstances for other reasons. There is a higher incidence of dropout among pupils who apply to upper secondary school on special grounds.

The support system surrounding the pupils

The cooperative structures and arenas surrounding the individual pupil are essential for preventing pupils from dropping out of school and for counselling them to return to school or work. It is essential to involve more organisations than the follow-up service, with the lower and secondary schools here playing important parts.



Experience and research all point to the pupil's circumstances, the transition processes between school levels and how education in the upper secondary school is adapted to the individual. The cooperation between the different parties and the support system that can be established round each pupil is important in this context. Competence development for and cooperation between the pupils' various "helpers" are among the most important areas for commitment. The follow-up service must start its cooperation round the individual pupil at the latest when he/she applies for admission to the upper secondary school, and measures should be implemented to improve the admission process.

Experiencing success is a decisive factor as to whether the pupil finishes his/her education. Important factors are pupil participation and good counselling, both when it comes to choices of study area, subjects and tasks, as well as in socio-educational areas.

Four pilot counties

The Counties of Vest-Agder, Oslo, Sør-Trøndelag and Finnmark have been chosen as pilot counties in 2003. The main focus for commitment in the four pilot counties is to prevent dropout and to recognize which pupils are in the danger zone and give them counselling so they return to work or education. Some of the measures in the pilot counties are trying out pupil conversations, basic groups and alternative day schedules. Others may be about career planning and support for teachers, developing and trying out an alternative training year outside the upper secondary school, for example alternative training in the work place and training establishments. APO (i.e. training in work, production and education) for young people (16-19 years old) from a minority language background, trying out an alternative introductory course for vocational subjects and strengthening competence regarding counselling and guidance for pupils from a minority language background, are all examples of measures directed specially at this target group. Establishing systematic cooperative arenas and agreements may involve schools, the employment service, working life, social services and others.

The pilot counties will implement their measures during the school year of 2003-2004. At the same time these counties will try out newly developed competence programmes. Experiences from the project counties will be disseminated during 2004 and 2005. At the same time, efforts will be spent on competence development on a national level aimed at the follow-up service, school advisers, the employment service and other parties, in order to strengthen the work



done to combat dropout and to counsel the young people so they return to work or education.

New routines for gathering statistics about dropout using VIGO (an Internet service for upper secondary schools) will be tried out at the end of 2003.

The project will be evaluated by NIBR, the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional research.

APPENDIX 4

Project Divided Advisory Services - educational/vocational guidance and personal counselling

To strengthen the educational and vocational guidance by testing models of separate guidance and counselling services, in such a way that pupils in lower and upper secondary schools are enabled to make more conscious educational choices without weakening the personal counselling.

The aim was to: Develop, try out and evaluate different models for:

- Organising the educational and vocational guidance as a separate service
- Local and regional cooperation, networking and routines/systems for sharing experiences and knowledge between school levels and between the schools and the local environment and employers/working life
- Cooperation between schools, employers and other partners in the region/county

Experiences and results:

- The project has initiated a large variety of initiatives and models
- It is the combination of a variety of initiatives combined with a systematic approach to the work which is important – not the single initiative itself
- The pupils – most useful is when given the opportunity to make own experiences
- Variety, coherence and quality in the initiatives/models – important for the pupils



- Probably increased quality in educational/vocational guidance
- The quality and extent of personal counselling is not weakened
- Guidance/counselling – a matter for the school as a whole
- Must be followed up in the schools' yearly plans
- The role of the school leaders and the counties/ municipalities
- The quality of the service must be evaluated and followed up on a regular basis
- One of the most important parts of the school projects has been to sort out and define the responsibilities of the different parties and develop the guidance/counselling field in a systematic way