



Cities for Active Inclusion



CITY OF COPENHAGEN

The active inclusion of young people: Copenhagen

**EUROCITIES NETWORK
OF LOCAL AUTHORITY
OBSERVATORIES ON
ACTIVE INCLUSION**

CITIES FOR ACTIVE INCLUSION

The EUROCIITIES Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (EUROCITIES-NLAO) is a dynamic network of nine European cities - Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Krakow, Lille Métropole - Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm - each with a local authority observatory (LAO) within its administration.

Their aim is to share information, promote mutual learning and carry out research on the implementation of active inclusion strategies at the local level. The nine observatories are coordinated by EUROCIITIES, the network of major cities in Europe, and supported through a partnership with the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

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1. Introduction

1.1 Copenhagen context

The city of Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark, with a population of 550,000 people. In Copenhagen, young people are defined in different ways for different areas of legislation. For employment policies, young people are those aged 18-29 years, but for educational policies, they are those aged 15-24 years, and for social policies, 14-17 years. This report will mainly use the employment policy definition of young people: those aged 18-29 years. But where other definitions are used, the relevant ages will be described.

The target group for the active inclusion of young people in The Employment and Integration Administration (EIA) is primarily defined as unemployed young people with no further education beyond pre-primary and primary education (to 15 or 16 years old), and no work-related training, as well as unemployed young people who have had further education and/or training. Excluded from the EIAs active inclusion policy are young people who are not fit for work, and who are living on public benefits, for example due to mental or physical disabilities. Instead these groups are serviced by other administrations with the Social Services and Health and Care Administrations being the primary custodians.

On 1 January 2011, there were 134,865 young people aged 18-29 years old living in Copenhagen: 25.0% of the total population. If 15-17 year olds are included, the proportion of young people in Copenhagen increases to 27.3%. Of this total, around 10,000 young people are not receiving public benefits, and are not in employment or education. The majority of these (between 8,000 and 8,500) do not have a formal education. This group is commonly referred to as NEETs (not in employment, education or training).

However, some training courses are not included in the public records. These include courses not formally approved by the state, such as some beauty and fitness courses, and courses for foreign exchange students. Thus the data exaggerates the true number of NEETs in Copenhagen by an estimated 500 to 1,000 young people. So the true number of young people who are NEETs in Copenhagen is some 7,000 to 8,000: between 5% and 6% of the city's population of young people.

In terms of youth unemployment in Copenhagen, currently, some 6,200 young people aged 16 to 29 are registered as unemployed. This translates to an unemployment rate of 6.3%¹. Prior to the financial crisis, the city's youth unemployment rate was much lower. In the last two years, youth unemployment has nearly doubled. (See Annex 2: Figure 1).

In addition, a recent report from The Economic Council of the Labour Movement², a Danish economic think-tank on the political left, suggests that official statistics understate the actual level of youth unemployment. This is because a large proportion of young people in the labour force are students with part time employment. They cannot be registered as unemployed, but they are counted as being part of the labour force. The Economic Council of the Labour Movement suggests that youth unemployment for Denmark as a whole is nearly twice as high as official statistics suggest. Calculations by the city's Employment and Integration Administration indicate that this also applies in Copenhagen itself.

¹ Danish Register based unemployment figures, which are not comparable to survey based unemployment figures.

² Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd 1.



In addition to young people who are NEETs and young people who are unemployed, some 2,600 young people in Copenhagen receive welfare benefits because they are unable to work. As they are not included in the labour force, they are not included in the official unemployment statistics. The major reasons why people are classified as unfit to work are:

- substance abuse problems;
- mental problems;
- physical disabilities.

There has been a significant increase in the number of young people registered as unfit to work in the last couple of years (see Annex 2: Figures 2 and 3). It is still uncertain if this trend will continue, as the number of people unfit to work is only slightly affected by general trends in the labour market.

Copenhagen is home to numerous educational institutions. These include the University of Copenhagen, which is the largest university in Denmark, as well as other forms of secondary and tertiary educational institutions. Each year, the city attracts young people from all over the country and elsewhere, to live and study. To indicate the scale of this migration: in 1996, there were 3,096 young people aged 16 who were living in Copenhagen and who were born in 1980. By 2010, the number of young people living in Copenhagen who had been born in 1980 had expanded to 13,055: an increase of more than 300%. This suggests that only a quarter of young people now living in the city received their basic pre-primary and primary education (to age 16) in Copenhagen. In addition, a significant number of young students who move to the city drop out before graduating. They often remain in Copenhagen but may fail to get a job, thus adding to the group of young people not in education or employment.

As a result of having multiple tertiary educational institutions, Copenhagen has one of the highest concentrations of university graduates in Denmark. However, a relatively large share (28%) of Copenhagen's population has no further education: they left after completing their compulsory primary schooling. Thus Copenhagen is a city of educational extremes. On the one hand, on average, citizens in Copenhagen have received the 8th longest education in Denmark, as measured by the number of years of studying. But on the other hand, in the national league tables, Copenhagen is among the bottom five municipalities in terms of the share of young people who have graduated from secondary education (for people aged 16 - 20 years). At present, only 72% of the population in Copenhagen have graduated from secondary schooling, according to the model used by the Ministry of Education³. These two conflicting statements can somewhat be explained by the large inward migration of young people to attend Copenhagen's educational facilities.

The significant share of young people in Copenhagen without further education underlines the importance of an active inclusion strategy. The national goal of ensuring that 95% of all young people graduate from secondary education is not only targeting the youngsters for their own sake. The labour market demands a skilled labour force to maintain the competitiveness of the city and the region. Furthermore the tax income is needed to maintain the welfare system and other services, as well as financing an attractive urban environment, with thriving leisure and cultural facilities, restaurants and shops across the city.

1.2 The division of responsibilities

In Denmark, public sector responsibilities are divided between the national, regional and municipal governments. Overall, national government agencies are responsible for further education: secondary and

³ Source: Economic Council of the Labour Movement (Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd). Note that the 95% target is measured at age 40 whilst the reported figure for Copenhagen is at age 26. Normally these two measures differ by 5 percentage points.



tertiary education. Regional government is responsible for health care, including hospitals and general practitioners. The municipalities are responsible, by law, for most other services. However, in addition to legally required services, Copenhagen's administrations also develop new initiatives: either to improve core services or to offer more services than they are obliged to. These are funded both by the city and from other sources, including government funds.

At the municipal level, Copenhagen has seven specialist administrations, five of which are relevant for young people. Four of these have a wider role, while one is specifically focused on young people: the Children and Youth Administration.

The active inclusion of young people is handled within each administration's budget. In some cases a special subdivision is set up with a specific fund for the active inclusion of young people.

The five municipal administrations that provide services for young people in the city are listed below.

The Children and Youth Administration

Copenhagen's Children and Youth Administration runs kindergartens, primary schools, after school institutions, youth clubs, and educational guidance. Focused entirely on children and young people under 18 years old, its emphasis is on pre-school and primary school education⁴. With compulsory education finishing at the 9th primary grade in Denmark, most children graduate from primary school at age 16. Secondary and tertiary education is governed by the state, so the city's Children and Youth Administration has less of a role in further education.

The Children and Youth Administration focuses particularly on children and youngsters in risk groups. Staff in kindergartens and schools are obliged by law to offer support and guidance to children in their care. An important aim for kindergartens is to prepare children for school, by following the cognitive and physical development of the child according to a development plan worked out by each kindergarten. These development plans are agreed according to guidelines approved by the kindergarten's board of governors, which includes representatives of parents, staff and the Children and Youth Administration. If a child does not develop satisfactorily, special support is given to the child, and the parents are consulted and supervised. If this does not improve matters, or if staff suspect neglect or abuse at home, they are obliged to report this to the Social Services Administration and ask for intervention: this reporting obligation is the same for all institutions for children and young people.

In primary schools, a learning plan has to be created for every pupil. This is to ensure that each child meets the learning targets for each grade, by measuring and evaluating their reading skills, maths skills, physical development, and social competences. If the child does not meet these targets, the school has to offer special education and support, as well as consultations with the child's parents. In the last two grades of compulsory schooling, the Children and Youth Administration has to work out a further education plan in collaboration with each pupil and their parents.

In a recent government initiative to improve the numbers going on to further education, the Children and Youth Administration must also help young people successfully transfer from compulsory primary school to secondary education. For all youngsters at risk, the Children and Youth Administration must arrange a transfer meeting between the education institution, the young person and the parents, to discuss their further education plan, and to evaluate whether the young person has sufficient skills to meet the demands of further education. If not, an educational improvement plan is created for the young person, so they can attend, for example, youth school, a residential youth institution, or a work placement.

⁴This also includes institutions known as 'fritidshjem/SFO', where school children can stay after school under the supervision of qualified staff members.



The Social Services Administration

The Social Services Administration provides services for vulnerable people, such as people with physical and mental disabilities, substance abusers, young people at risk and families at risk. Services include residential care centres, day care centres, at-home care, and activity centres. The Social Services Administration also offers housing for homeless people and vulnerable women; and advice and support centres for children, young people, and families at risk.

The Social Services Administration is obliged to offer services for children, young people and families in risk groups, whether they are referred by the school staff or the parents, or self-referred by the child or young person. Normally, Social Services Administration staff work with the family to agree a family intervention plan. This might include a family support worker visiting the family twice a week; a special training programme for their children, in school; and a parenting training programme. In other cases, the child is offered a place in a residential home, supported by social workers 24 hours a day. The Social Services' youth advice and support centres are also very popular. These guide and support young people at risk towards further education, housing possibilities, student grants, financial assistance, and leisure facilities, as well as offering help with paperwork, such as applying for an apartment or filling out tax forms.

The Health and Care Administration

The Health and Care Administration mainly offers services for older citizens, aged 65+, including home care, residential accommodation for older people, day care centres, meals on wheels, and health care centres. As a growing number of young people in the city have mental and physical health care problems, the health care centres have extended their services to include young people, by offering training programmes and advice.

The Culture and Leisure Administration

Copenhagen's Culture and Leisure Administration is responsible for maintaining many of Copenhagen's buildings and providing associated services. These include libraries, theatres, concert halls and museums, as well as local community centres, and leisure and sporting facilities. It also provides guidance on fund raising. Approximately 30% of the Culture and Leisure Administration's activities target children and young people, especially the sport and leisure facilities and the libraries.

The Culture and Leisure Administration is obliged to offer cultural, leisure and sport activities to all young people, either free or at a small cost. This helps to actively include children and young people from low income families into the cultural and social life of the city. In deprived areas, a wide range of activities is provided. Some of these target minority groups, including families who are immigrants, in order to actively improve their social inclusion. Football clubs are offered for children and young people, as well as other activities to help their social skills and language skills, and to improve their access to education and employment.

The Employment and Integration Administration

The Employment and Integration Administration runs the city's employment centres, and also organises municipal contracts with the private sector to deliver job opportunities and other employment initiatives. It oversees all aspects of unemployment, such as registration, counselling, active labour market programmes and the payment of welfare benefits⁵. These services are provided for everyone, not just younger people

⁵ The EIA is also partly responsible for the payment of the unemployment benefits, as the EIA is auditing the work done by the independent unemployment insurance funds (a-kasser).



and older people. In addition, as unemployment and social issues tend to go hand in hand, it also provides a gateway to the Social Services Administration.

The Employment and Integration Administration is governed by the law on active labour market policy⁶, which requires it to offer special services to young people. Unemployed young people aged 18-29 are offered an earlier and more pro-active service than those aged 30+, in order to get them into work: intervention at an early stage has been shown to reduce the risk of long-term unemployment for young people. After only four weeks of unemployment, they are offered a counselling session when they create a job plan. This contrasts with people who are 30+ who have to be unemployed for three months before they are required to participate. In addition, after only three months of unemployment, 18-29 year olds need to participate in employment training programmes lasting at least 26 weeks; 30+ year olds have to be unemployed for nine months before they are met with the same requirements.

Unemployed young people with a vocational or general labour market education are offered active labour market services, for example, job seeking programmes; job guidance; the possibility of further education; and/or job-based training programmes and apprenticeships, mainly within in the public administration services. There is a particular focus on young people who have just graduated from secondary or tertiary education: it is well known from the high youth unemployment of the 1980s that the longer graduates are unemployed, the higher the risk that they will never get a skilled job.

Unemployed young people without a labour market education no longer have a right to welfare benefit, but are asked to start a formal education. Benefits are paid until the beginning of the education, and when they become students, they receive a student grant, as long as they continue to meet the requirements of their education.

To provide employment services specifically to young people, the Employment and Integration Administration runs a municipal jobcentre solely focussed on this group, called the Skelbækgade Jobcentre. Here, staff understand the laws relating to young people, as well as understanding the education system.

2. Policy and practices for the active inclusion of young people

2.1 Recent trends: a cause for action

Any description of recent trends has to start with the financial crisis. At the outbreak of the crisis, in summer 2008, the unemployment rate amongst young people in Copenhagen was at an all time low at around 3% (see Annex 2: Figure 1). In the ensuing two and a half years, youth unemployment has more than doubled.

One of the benefits of the excellent pre-2008 economic climate in Copenhagen, was that it was possible for a young person who had just finished their primary or secondary education to find work as an unskilled labourer, for example in the construction industry, and still receive a relatively high wage. This may have influenced some young people to either postpone the start of their tertiary education, or even to choose not to take up a tertiary course. Since then, the worsening economic climate has changed this trend and more young people are choosing to start a tertiary education.

⁶ Lov om Aktiv Beskæftigelsespolitik (LAB).



Arguably, the group hit hardest by the financial crisis has been young people who have just finished their education or training. This includes university graduates and also graduates from other types of education such as vocational training courses. By December 2010, the unemployment rate for newly graduated university students had reached 14.5% which is between two and three times higher than in summer 2008, at the peak of the business cycle. The nursing profession provides just one example: for the first time since the early 80's, newly graduated registered nurses are finding it difficult to find work. Their union, the Danish Nurses Organisation (Dansk Sygeplejeråd)⁷, has warned the public that newly graduated nurses are leaving the profession without ever having worked as a nurse, because there are so few jobs available. Currently, the unemployment rate among newly graduated nurses is reported to be around 65%!⁸

This is a cause for concern, as it is believed that there will be an excess demand for nurses in the near future, when a large part of the current labour force of registered nurses reaches pensionable age and retires.

Although no data is currently available for other specific types of education, the perception in Copenhagen's municipal Jobcentres is that unemployment has increased significantly for all types of new graduates.

A major issue that was mentioned earlier is that almost a fifth of young people in Copenhagen never graduate: they never obtain academic or vocational qualifications. The Copenhagen labour market will demand a highly skilled labour force in the future, so unskilled young people are at risk of unemployment.

Looking back at the high youth unemployment 30 years ago, two important trends emerge. Firstly, young people who had few or no skills 30 years ago are now over represented among those who are currently unemployed. Secondly, those who graduated 30 years ago and therefore had skills, but who failed to get a job shortly after graduation, still failed to find skilled work even when the economy improved. These two observations highlight why it is so important to actively help young people into further education and then into employment as early as possible.

2.2 The target groups for the active inclusion of young people

The importance of getting young people into further education and then into work as soon as possible after graduating, has led to a focus on four specific target groups of young people in Denmark's Employment Agreement 2012. This Agreement makes a distinction between the different groups, as each may respond differently to the proposed incentives and measures. The four groups are described below: the first three consist of unskilled young people, the fourth consists of new graduates.

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)

As mentioned in Section 1, Copenhagen has relatively high numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Some of these young people may be planning to go on to further education after a gap-year or sabbatical. Even though the Danish government has tried to make it less acceptable for young people to take a sabbatical after graduating from school, the practice is still quite widespread. However, it is the other young NEETs that are the focus of the Employment Agreement 2012: those not planning to go into further education.

⁷ Members of the Danish Nurses Organisation are insured for unemployment by the Danish Healthworkers Unemployment Fund (DSA). The fund has around 8,000 members in Copenhagen of which 2,200 are under the age of 30. The unemployment rate is currently (February 2011): 1.6% overall, and 2.7% amongst those under 30, compared to an unemployment rate of 0.2%-0.3% at the beginning of 2010.

⁸ Source: www.dsa.dk/NewsArchive/2011/nyuddannede_uden_job_marts2011.aspx



Firstly, the most significant factor characterising young people who are NEETs, and also the next two groups of unskilled young people listed below, is that their parents have not had a further education. Secondly, many of the unskilled young people in these three groups have experienced social problems during their childhood, such as divorce, poverty, and alcohol abuse. Thirdly, many of these unskilled young people have an immigrant background.

The new practise for young people who are NEETS is to offer them a flexicurity model: this combines a job and a vocational training, supported by guidance from the Jobcentre. In the majority of instances, the people in this group are not able to benefit from further education or educational advice. Instead, they need to start learning by doing, and they also need to learn by experience the negative effect that their lack of education has on their ability to do the job they are required to do. This will lead to some of them becoming motivated enough to go back into further education.

Young people with only a non-vocational secondary education⁹

Young people who have had an academic, non-vocational secondary education form a complex group. Some 70% of them continue their educational path by going on to tertiary education. But the target group for active inclusion activity under the Employment Agreement comprises the remaining 30%: those who decide not to go on to tertiary education. Many of these young people are either already employed or are also part of the NEETs target group.

Just 15 years ago, almost all youngsters graduating from non-vocational secondary schooling continued in the educational system. However, in recent years a growing number have chosen to leave the educational system after finishing their secondary schooling. Copenhagen's Jobcentre staff, who have first-hand knowledge of the situation, believe that this new development is largely a result of the social heritage of these young people: the parents do not have an academic further education, which encourages their children not to aspire to one.

The new practise for young people who have graduated from academic secondary education, but who are not going on to further academic education, is to guide and support them, mainly into vocational further education, because many of them do not have the grades to qualify for university. It is however important to broaden their horizons and show them the wide range of educational opportunities they are qualified for but were not guided towards during secondary school. To emphasise the success of this approach, the group of young secondary education graduates now dominates the admission figures for entry into the secretary to general medical practitioner education. Only five years ago, young people going into vocational further education was dominated by students who had only achieved a basic primary school education.

Young people who have dropped out of secondary or tertiary education

Primary school is mandatory in Denmark until the ninth school year (to age 15 or 16), and dropping out of school before then is rare. Most young people who drop out of education are dropping out of secondary or tertiary education. As previously mentioned, the dropout rate from vocational schools is high although the numbers are small. At the non-vocational secondary schools, or gymnasiums, dropout rates are lower, but the actual numbers are larger. Finally, dropouts from tertiary education are also a concern, as they are at risk of becoming young people with only a non-vocational secondary education.

The practise for this group is to continue and strengthen the work of recent years, by creating further initiatives across Copenhagen, and across the educational systems.

⁹ Non-vocational secondary schooling is provided by the various forms of the Danish gymnasium. See footnote 11 for more on the Danish gymnasium schools.



As a government initiative, all vocational schools are obliged to develop dropout prevention programmes. These may include guidance for students in high risk groups; mentoring; flexible education plans, with the option to extend the modules or add Danish or maths classes; or the option to transfer to a less demanding course.

In recent years, the city and the vocational schools have also been working to integrate their services. Under a 2010 government initiative, the Youth Education Guidance and Counselling service, which is part of the Children and Youth Administration in each municipality, must now ensure that all young people leaving primary school either go into further education or are in programmes to prepare them for further education. As part of this obligation, the job centres, run by the Employment and Integration Administration, can offer 15-17 year olds an educationally-motivating job training placement, in an enterprise. For young people at risk, the Children and Youth Administration must also ensure that the transfer into further education is successful. These initiatives ensure that young people are not only qualified to start their chosen course, but also to prevent them dropping out, and thereby increase the proportion of young people in further education.

In addition, the municipality and the vocational schools are working even more closely, and there is also more integration across the work of the city's Administrations. For example, the Employment and Integration Administration offers young people an introductory course at a vocational school, lasting up to 13 weeks. These help young people accurately evaluate how their qualifications match their educational opportunities. This is supported by guidance from the jobcentre, including contact with the Social Services Administration if necessary. Currently, both the Children and Youth Administration and the Employment and Integration Administration have staff based at the vocational schools, to help with dropout prevention through intervention and guidance. This also helps administration staff gain additional insight into the challenges faced by young people and the demands faced by the education system, which helps them improve the initiatives further.

So far there are no initiatives for drop outs from academic secondary schools, as they are normally just advised to transfer to secondary vocational schools instead.

Young people who are newly graduated from vocational and tertiary education

As highlighted earlier, the current economic climate makes it hard for new graduates to enter the labour market. This applies to both the academically educated as well as the vocationally educated.

In Copenhagen, the current new practise is to immediately offer 26 weeks of in-work training to all new vocational and academic graduates, in one of Copenhagen's seven municipal administrations. The training is combined with support from the Jobcentre through a labour market guidance programme.



3. THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR THE ACTIVE INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1 Education and migration

In a labour market that is increasingly requiring skilled workers, it is imperative that young people receive an education that is relevant to the labour market. However, in Copenhagen, as mentioned in Section 1, the share of the current generation of young people receiving secondary schooling is only 72%, compared with the national target of 95%¹⁰.

A major reason for this low rate of secondary schooling is that relatively large numbers of young people drop out of secondary education. The high drop-out rate is especially a problem for vocational educational institutions, where the dropout rate exceeds 40% nationally.

The reasons for these high vocational school dropout rates are twofold:

- First, vocational schools are often a second choice when it comes to further education: the preferred option is the various types of academic secondary schools, or gymnasiums¹¹. So students who apply to the vocational schools are the ones that are less academic, and less inclined to learn through textbooks. Even though vocational schools are less textbook-orientated and more practically- orientated than the gymnasium schools, vocational schools still require some reading and textbook study.
- Second, the financial incentives offered to the schools may not be in the best interest of young people at risk of dropping out. Since 2008, the schools receive a fixed fee per student from the state, and are then paid a further sum for each student graduating. This scheme was designed as an incentive to increase the percentage of students graduating and to decrease the average length students took to complete their studies. However, the system has had the opposite effect for the weaker vocational students, and vocational schools are now more likely to give up on the weaker students who they believe are unlikely to graduate. However, some of these students could perhaps be prevented from dropping out: through better counselling by the school or by transferring to a different course. Denmark's prime minister recently criticised vocational schools for not making enough effort to retain their weaker students, and suggesting that this lack of effort was perhaps one reason for the high dropout rates.

The academically-orientated gymnasium schools are the more commonly attended form of post-16 secondary education in Denmark. The dropout rates are around 18% nationally: lower than for vocational schools, but still relatively high.

In addition, the high rate of inward migration of young people into Copenhagen can also constitute a challenge for the city. If the dropout rate remains stable, the more young people migrating into the city for further education, the higher the number dropping out, and the higher the number who fail to graduate from higher education. When young people do graduate, this can also create a challenge: there is an excess supply of highly educated labour in Copenhagen, and the unemployment rate among university graduates in Copenhagen is the same as the general unemployment rate.

¹⁰ It should be noted, that the national target of 95% secondary schooling is measured at age 40, whereas the figure from Copenhagen is measured at age 26. Normally the difference between the two measuring points can amount to approximately 5 percentage points. If the difference in measurements is taken into account, this would give Copenhagen a 77% secondary schooling rate, still well below of the national target.

¹¹ The gymnasium provides the 10th, 11th and 12th years of education and prepares students for tertiary education. Thus the gymnasium does not provide qualifications for entering the labour market.



Currently, almost 75% of young people living in Copenhagen have received their pre-primary and primary education elsewhere. For most of these young people, the Copenhagen municipality can only provide services when something goes wrong and they apply for assistance: for example, when they are unemployed, or have social problems or health problems. This contrasts with those young people who have attended pre-primary and primary school in Copenhagen: the Children and Youth Administration follows their progress through the school system and is obligated to intervene if problems occur before they enter the labour market.

A recent study by the Danish National Centre for Social Research¹² has confirmed that to improve the educational level of socially vulnerable groups, intervention has to start at an early age. By the time they start primary school, many vulnerable children have already been influenced enough to continue on the same disadvantaged path as their parents. There are relatively large numbers of vulnerable children in Copenhagen compared with other municipalities in Denmark. On the positive side, Copenhagen is better suited to solving these issues, and is more focused on doing so, than smaller municipalities which have smaller scale problems.

There are also issues with the active inclusion approaches in the education system. In 2010, the Ministry of Education initiated a study to explain why a growing number of graduates from secondary schools got low grades and did not continue into a labour market education. The study shows that methods for encouraging pupils to stay in education do not work universally: they work for young people with educated parents but exclude young people from families without an educational tradition, no matter how hard these students work. So, the secondary school system has not given all young people equal opportunities: instead, it acts to exclude many of them.

This is related to another issue. Traditionally, the secondary and tertiary education systems in Copenhagen received students with the same background as their parents: youngsters followed in the footsteps of their families. Today, more than half the students have not followed their parents. 15 years ago, 75% of vocational students had a vocational family background, today only 25% have a vocational background. 20 years ago, 80% of students in secondary schools had parents with a university education; today only 45% have parents with a university education. So, the background of the students has changed radically within the last generation. Methods to actively encourage pupils to stay in education therefore need to change radically, to ensure the inclusion of all young people.

3.2 Vulnerable young people

In Copenhagen, vulnerable young people are usually defined as recipients of welfare benefits who are unable to work. In Copenhagen, this group is relatively large: using this definition, around 2,500 young people would currently be considered vulnerable. (See Annex 2: Figure 3.)

Of these, approximately 40%, or around 1,000 young people, are considered especially vulnerable, as a result of assessments by the Social Services Administration¹³. Of these 1,000 young people, 70% suffer from mental disabilities; 20% have physical disabilities; and the remaining 10% have substance abuse problems.

Even though these vulnerable young people are defined as unfit for work, there has been a correlation between the size of the group and the worsening of the business cycle (see Figure 3: Annex 2). However, the group is less sensitive to changes in the economic climate than other groups, such as people with unemployment insurance, or people who are job-ready and uninsured.

¹² Source: The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI).

¹³ See the LAO Copenhagen report from the fall of 2010 for more on the cooperation between the SSA and the EIA.



Those young citizens with cases in both the Employment and Integration Administration and the Social Services Administration are less affected by the economy than other groups of young people. The number of young people in this inter-administrative group has been relatively constant over time.

One of the challenges of creating active inclusion initiatives for vulnerable young people is that only some of them can benefit from improvements in the general economic climate. The rest need to participate in special programmes before they have any chance of being reintroduced into the labour market. These programmes need to have a social dimension as well as including some aspects of the traditional active labour market programmes, and possibly also a health related component. Even with these measures, the pathway back into the labour market for these young people is long and uncertain.

The Danish welfare system can also be a challenge for vulnerable young people to negotiate. According to a recent study by Local Government Denmark¹⁴, the average vulnerable young person had contact with 16 different municipal social workers during the time they needed social services, employment services and health services. This includes jobcentre employees, social centre employees and other institutional personnel. Having multiple contacts with staff in this way would be a challenge for most people. It represents even more of a challenge for vulnerable young people. The major problem with multiple contacts is that service users often feel lost in the system, or feel the service is not helping and that time is wasted on repeating information. This in turn risks some users becoming disillusioned and voluntarily leaving the system without receiving the right service and care. A survey amongst recipients of welfare benefits in the Greve Municipality¹⁵ reinforces these points, and concludes that service users prefer to have a single case worker, as this provides a more personal approach.

3.3 Budget cuts

In the wake of the financial crisis and the resulting increase in unemployment, the Employment and Integration Administration budget for services to the unemployed has been stretched: the same amount of money has to provide services to more people. Also, this Administration will lose a substantial amount of money as a result of a new reimbursement scheme implemented late in 2010: this has decreased the share of the welfare benefit paid by the state. Also, the Employment and Integration Administration has lost temporary funding from the state. In total, these two budgetary cuts will lower the available service funds by approximately €27 million in 2012 (DKK 200 million).

This will seriously challenge the quality of active labour market policy services offered to the unemployed. The Employment and Integration Administration has already started a process of prioritising its services. The principle of managing a decreasing budget is known as intelligent restructuring: looking into the efficiency of each initiative, strengthening the most efficient initiatives, reducing less efficient initiatives, and changing the focus for different target groups. In Copenhagen, this involves cutting back the services offered to the unemployed by cutting the duration or intensity, for example, fewer hours per week. Both the duration and the intensity of the active labour market policies were previously at a higher level than required by legislation, but even with the cut backs this will still be the case. The law still requires that young unemployed people receive active efforts to get them into employment.

Budget cuts in other parts of the public sector have been an ongoing process that is likely to continue. At the moment it is not clear how much and in what way these budget cuts will affect young people in Copenhagen. Budgets are not just being cut for the Employment and Integration Administration, but across all Copenhagen's administrations. This may not necessary reduce the quality of the services, as all administrations aim to

¹⁴ Source: Local Government Denmark (KL).

¹⁵ Source: Borgerundersøgelsen fra Greve Kommune. Greve Municipality is located approximately 20 km south west of Copenhagen.



achieve intelligent restructuring. However, it will certainly affect the ability of the administrations to initiate new, innovative services and to collaborate with the NGOs.

4. Good lessons: collaboration between administrations to help 15-17 year old NEETs

An innovative collaboration between Copenhagen's Children and Youth Administration and its Employment and Integration Administration has been on trial from August of 2010 and lasting through August of 2011. The initiative offers young people who are 15 to 17 years old and not in education, employment or training (NEETs), a training programme that spans both administrations. The target group is young people assessed by the CYA as being unable to benefit from education guidance: either because they have already dropped out of further education; or because they have never started further education. The idea is to offer them a work-based training programme in a public or private enterprise, according to their work goals. In this way they obtain first-hand experience of the social and vocational qualifications required by the labour market. It allows participants to discover the necessity of education and personal development. During the training, they are supported and guided by jobcentre staff as well as by educational counsellors from the Children and Youth Administration. During the programme, the Children and Youth Administration and the Social Services Administration collaborate together, so that, if necessary, social services can be requested for the young person.

Unemployment services to young people aged 18 years and above are provided by the Employment and Integration Administration. The young are required to register at a jobcentre, which means they then have to participate in active labour market programmes. Accepting these services means the unemployed person qualifies either for unemployment benefits (if they are insured in an unemployment insurance fund), or alternatively for welfare benefits¹⁶. But in recent years a growing number of 18-19 year olds have approached the jobcentre to claim welfare benefits after having been inactive for while. Most of these are dropouts from the education system, but occasionally they have had short-term employment. After a long spell of inactivity, it tends to be difficult to motivate this group of young people, either to restart or continue their education, or to find a low-skilled, low-paid job. This is why the Employment and Integration Administration has joined in with the collaboration initiative: to decrease the number of young people aged 18+ registering as unemployed, and to improve their employment prospects by making an earlier start. The Children and Youth Administration also benefits from this collaboration because jobcentre staff are experts in the labour market and can help improve the educational advice given to young people in risk groups.

This collaboration initiative between different administrations points towards the future for Copenhagen, as this type of collaboration delivers:

- **Integrated services:** Instead of the various municipal administrations providing separate parallel services targeting the same group, Copenhagen's administrations can work out new integrated approaches, to capitalise on their various competences.
- **Continuous monitoring:** The outcomes for each initiative can be regularly measured, on a continuous basis, so that programmes can be adjusted and refined.
- **Joint planning:** Instead of planning separate active inclusion initiatives, the municipal services can

¹⁶ Welfare benefits are only offered to unemployed with little wealth. If an unemployed person is not qualified for welfare benefits, then that person is not obliged to participate in an active labour market programme.



plan and deliver the services together in a collaborative integrated way, to offer personalised services to young people that meet their individual needs.

- **Training:** Training programmes for young people at risk benefit from an inclusive approach, through an innovative flexication model that combines job training, support, education guidance and social services, which represents best practice for the future.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** To ensure effective initiatives that include youngsters at risk, all the relevant stakeholders will be involved, including educational institutions, trade unions and employers' representatives as well as the municipal administrations.

5. Future plans for promoting the active inclusion of young people

An active inclusion strategy for young people needs to incorporate all the necessary services for children, young people and their families. It is well known that high quality services, focusing on children and youth from socially excluded families, have a considerable positive impact.

It would be useful in future to measure the results of each service provided, rather than just measuring the final output, as is currently the case. If outcome targets are not met, the municipal administrations can then investigate the need for new innovative approaches to improve the outcome.

Although the overall principle in Denmark is to provide active inclusion initiatives that meet the needs of all those at risk, the division of horizontal and vertical division of tasks in Danish society can lead to people in need of services not receiving the optimal care.

In Copenhagen this has led to talks between the Children and Youth Administration and the Employment and Integration Administration on how to better include young people on labour market and in society. These talks are in the early phases as of this writing, but the envisioned approach broadens the scope, to not only focus on young people aged 18-29 but also integrate inclusive initiatives in kindergartens, primary schools as well as help transitions between the different levels of education (primary to secondary, secondary to tertiary and between education and employment).



ANNEX 1. References

AERådet 1: Ungdomsarbejdsløshedenerkraftigt undervurderet: www.ae.dk/files/AE_ungdomsarbejdslosheden-er-kraftigt-undervurderet.pdf

SFI: Børnehavens betydning for børns udvikling, Mogens Christoffersen og Alva Albæk Nielsen: www.sfi.dk/Default.aspx?ID=4681&Action=1&NewsId=2328&PID=9267

Borgerundersøgelsen fra Greve Kommune: Greve Kommune



ANNEX 2

Figure 1: Unemployment rates for young people aged 16-29: Copenhagen and Denmark: January 2006 - December 2010

Source: jobindsats.dk



Note: The graph is based on the number of people who are registered as unemployed: this is not comparable to survey-based unemployment figures.



Figure 2: Index of young people aged 16-29 not fit for work and receiving welfare benefit (Index: Jan 2006 = 100): Copenhagen and Denmark: January 2006 - December 2010

Source: jobindsats.dk

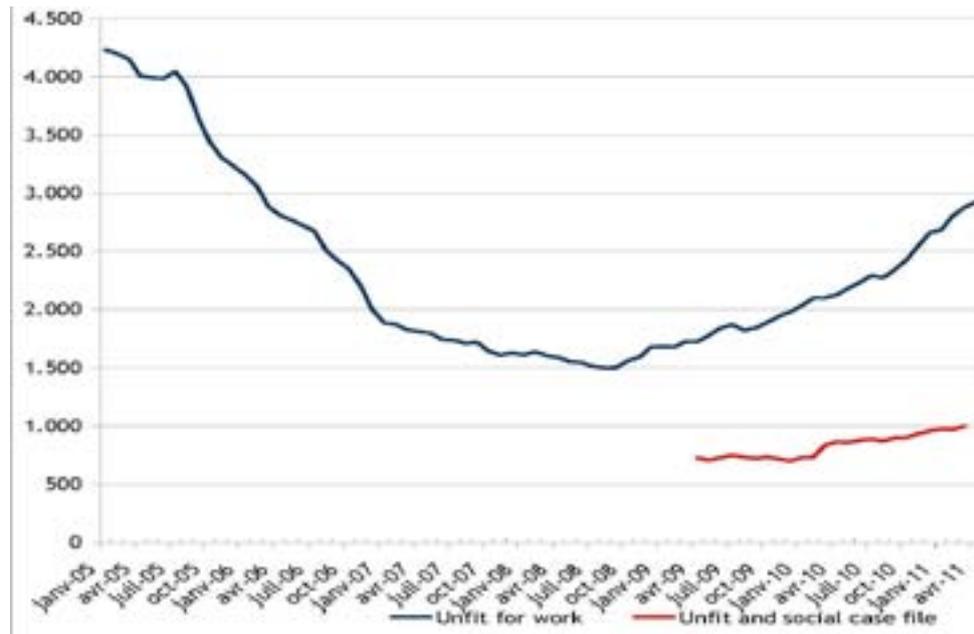


Note: The graph is based on the number of people who are registered as unemployed: this is not comparable to survey-based unemployment figures.



Figure 3: Number of young people aged 16-29 not fit for work and receiving welfare benefit: total number (January 2005 - January 2011); and number who also have a Social Services Administration case file (April 2009 - January 2011).

Source: jobindsats.dk and BIF-LIS



Note 1: The graph is based on the number of people who are registered as unemployed: this is not comparable to survey-based unemployment figures.

Note 2: Data for young people with a case file is only available from April 2009, when the Employment and Integration Administration and Social Services Administration started collaborating on data collection.