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Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

NORWAY

School year 2007/08

Education is compulsory for pupils between the ages of 6 and 16. It is offered in primary education and lower secondary education as a single structure *(Grunnskole).* Thus compulsory education consists of two levels, namely primary (years 1-7) and lower secondary (years 8-10). Pupils remain in the same education system according to the basic national curriculum. Reaching the end of compulsory education is a key moment in terms of guidance. At this point, pupils have the choice to continue in general or vocational studies in upper secondary education.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The 1998 Education Act, with amendments in 2000, concludes pupils' right to 'adequate educational, social and vocational guidance' (§9.2). Pupils shall receive an education corresponding to their skills, interests and knowledge (§ 1.2).

In the labour sector, the public employment and welfare service (NAV) is required by law to offer vocational guidance services to those requiring these services. In 2003, this service was responsible for setting up a second working group aimed at identifying means to ensure national and local coordination of all guidance services in the education sector as well as in the labour sector, including the possibility to create a permanent coordination. In 2008, there will be further debates about the role and positioning of a possible national body. At regional level, 19 partnerships for career guidance will be functioning from 2009.

International relations

International relations within career guidance are maintained by the Norwegian Centre for international cooperation in Higher Education (SIU), which is also the National Agency for Lifelong learning programmes. In the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, international relations are the responsibility of Euroguidance Norway. A Norwegian delegation of the education sector and the labour sector is represented in the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility to offer educational and vocational guidance is shared by the education authorities at national, regional and local levels (municipalities), and the public employment services. The Norwegian Ministry of education and Research *(Kunnskapsdepartementet)* and the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training have a nationwide responsibility. In each county, there is an education office representing central authorities. The education office, integrated into the office of the county governors, links the national authorities with the municipalities and counties.

The main responsibilities for the education offices are reporting, inspection and supervision of existing legislation, administration, quality development, information and guidance. With wide autonomy in their choice of pedagogic tools, the municipalities have the responsibility for the actual education at primary and lower secondary level. The counties are directly responsible for upper secondary level. In relation to private schools at primary level, the local community has no responsibility.

The relationship between the education sector and the labour sector is guaranteed by 'partnerships for career guidance', which will exist in each county from 2009. These partnerships will consist of representatives from education, public employment, higher education, employers' organisations and other stakeholders in career guidance.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Educational and vocational guidance is defined in the curriculum as 'having an interdisciplinary character and as being the responsibility of all stakeholders in the school system'. Theoretically, the initiation to working life is included each year in the national curriculum of primary schools. The subject takes shape in lower secondary school in the curriculum of 'educational choices' *(utdanningsvalg)* consisting of a total of 113 hours in this subject.

Guidance portfolio systems

The implementation of a national guidance portfolio system is in process. The web-based portfolio will be running as a pilot from September 2009, and is expected to be implemented at national level by about 2011.

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

Links between school and workplaces are encouraged. Teachers organise visits to workplaces. Much of this contact also takes place through the career guidance subject 'educational choices'. Other contacts with working life can be arranged by 'Partnerships in Career Guidance', the regional cooperation between the educational sector and the labour sector. For further information, see the Internet references.

Guidance services at school

Guidance services at school are regulated in the Education Act as pupils' rights. Lower and upper secondary schools have their own guidance counsellors. Guidance services are divided into career guidance and social counselling, in order to make room for improvements in the provision of career guidance. The amount of time allocated to guidance is a minimum of one hour per 25 pupils. This minimum is often seen as the standard.

Every county has a guidance coordinator (often at the county education office). This coordinator acts as a link between the directorate of education and training and the practitioners. Guidance coordinators form a nationwide network financed by the directorate and meet twice a year.

In addition to guidance services, there is a specialised service which focuses on early school leavers.

These services are organised by the county administration. Management is regional, and some national networking exists between the centres (www.ks.no).

Guidance services outside school

Very few private career guidance services exist in Norway. They are concentrated in and around the capital. There seems to be a limited market for these private services.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

In the schools

Guidance staff in schools are basically teachers, though there is no official sanctioning for this. It is often preferred both by employers and employees.

A new regulation is being prepared, stating the recommended minimum requirements for the qualifications of guidance practitioners in schools.

A number of university colleges offer specialist courses in career guidance. These courses range from 15 to 60 Norwegian study points, i.e. 15-60 ECTS points.

Traditionally, about half of the guidance counsellors in schools had undertaken specialist training, and this number seems to be increasing at present.

In other guidance services

No formal requirements exist for the qualifications of guidance practitioners in public employment services. Some districts have introduced minimum requirements locally.

Online and in-service training is available for the staff.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The National Education Council and the Employment Directorate cooperate in the exchange of information on educational and vocational guidance via the 'YoU' Internet database. Their major partners in these exchanges are the local authorities and trade associations.

Both sides of industry are invited to cooperate with schools in the development of projects.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Within the framework of the Norwegian strategy for e-learning, efforts have been made to provide information in electronic form in the field of career guidance. A number of electronic databases are available on the Internet. The two most well-known and well-used are:

www.utdanning.no, a national database on all levels of the education system, and

www.vilbli.no, a national database specialising in upper secondary education.

The Norwegian part of the PLOTEUS database and the website of the Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA) provide guidance information concerning studies abroad.

A dedicated website *(radgiver)* for Norwegian guidance counsellors was launched in May 2008, hosted by the guidance department in the directorate of education (www.udir.no/radgiver).

The public employment services (NAV) host a website for jobseekers, where vacancies can be found as well as general information about the labour market, measures taken by the authorities, and a few tests concerning vocational interest (http://www.nav.no/page?id=318).

Internet references

www.utdanning.no

www.vilbli.no

www.ec.europa.eu/ploteus

www.ansa.no

www.udir.no/radgiver

http://www.nav.no/page?id=318

Sources

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3. ETV and Cedefop thematic analysis ‘Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment’ on www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_ressources/NationalVet/Thematic
4. Eurybase; Eurydice.
5. Career Guidance and Public Policy. Bridging the gap. OECD 2004.