



Employer Led Vocational Education and Training in Europe (ELVETE)

Case Study no. 4: “Gøglerskolen circus production school in Aarhus, Denmark – another vision”

Highlighting of good practise in 14 -19 VET education

Work Package 2

Developed by: A.I.P., Romania



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Executive Summary

Case study Report structure

Summary

The case study will present the Gøglerskolen circus production school in Aarhus, Denmark which is a second change school open to all young people without higher education under 25 years old.

Circus school/School of entertainment is one examples of the offer of Production Schools in the municipality of Aarhus and an offer to all young people not connected to labor marked or formal education. The school's pedagogy is based on the fairground and craftsman philosophy of autonomy and focus on possibilities rather than limitations.

The school combines the educational foundation from circus and theatre; the playful and creative with order and discipline.

The school offers 10 main training programmes/departments, conceived as workshops: Idea and Textiles, Dance, Artist, Media, Wood and janitorial, Café, Business Class, Rap scene and Technology and Business School.

The Gøglerskolen school in Aarhus represents an alternative for the students who have not finished education and want to learn practical skills.

The focus of the school is on practical work and production, on acquiring practical skills, together with the personal development of the young person.

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General Information on VET Organisation

Gøglerskolen circus production school is a second change school, based on practical work and production, open to all young people without higher education under 25 years old. The school is based in Aarhus, Denmark.

The school offers 10 main training programmes/departments, conceived as workshops: Idea and Textiles, Dance, Artist, Media, Wood and janitorial, Café, Business Class, Rap scene and Technology and Business School.

Additionally, the school offers a selection of courses in Danish, Mathematics, and English, and the students are free to decide if they want to take part in. These courses are offered across departments, with a maximum of 6 students to a class.

During the first month, each student, together with his/her personal counsellor assigned, will make a plan of his/her stay at Gøglerskolen, considering his/her current and future situation, with particular emphasis on job and education.

The school's pedagogy is based on the street performers' and craftsmen's trades' traditional philosophy of autonomy, and focus on possibilities rather than obstacles.

They make use of educational principles, combining play and creativity with order and discipline, from the world of circus and theatre.

The school's educational aim is training and jobs, and emphasis is placed on distinguishing between realistic and unrealistic dreams and goals.

The school attaches great importance to both process and product, and to a clear distinction between practice, training, work demonstrations (on the one hand) and an actual professional product (on the other hand).

With the student's resources as starting point, the school endeavours to attain the highest possible degree of positive experiences.

The school's educational principles aim to unite physical and craft-related skills with academic skills and competencies.

The training programmes at the Gøglerskolen do not result in any formal qualifications. However, students receive school benefits from the Danish state while studying at Gøglerskolen.

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General Information on business involved

For each of the 10 departments of the school, the training programme includes:

Company visits

Internships four weeks every six months.

The companies involved are different according to the profile of the department (e.g. supermarkets for the Cafe department).

Examples of partners of the school:

Tivoli Friheden, Festugen/Musikhuset Aarhus, Vestas vindmøllefabrik, Jyske Bank, Kulturhus Aarhus, Aarhus City Forening, Børnenes Magasin, day care in Aarhus, Den Jyske Opera.

On the other hand, the Gøglerskolen is mainly a production school, meaning that everything that is produced in the school is valorized (e.g. the products from the Café are sold; the students in the textiles sell their products in different fairs, etc.).

Thus, the main focus in all departments is actually the practical activities in which students are engaged, resulting into the acquirement of specific competences for that job.

Detailed information on areas of cooperation

For this section we will take the example of the department dedicated to the Cafe of the school.

The Cafe produces breakfast and lunch for the students and staff at Gøglerskolen on a daily basis. The production is centred on offering a healthy and varied selection, and as a general rule everything is made from scratch.

- Cooking
- Using recipes
- Planning menus
- Ordering produce
- Understanding goods and ingredients
- Organic products
- Workplan
- Hygiene
- Monitoring (smiley-system)
- Economics and budgeting
- Teamwork
- Fellowship

The main idea for the students is not to become a chef after studying at the café, but to get the chance to figure out whether that is the right direction for them.

The cafe prepares students for training as a cook, kitchen assistant, or other positions in the food industry.

During theme weeks students get the chance to visit a butcher, baker or pastry chef, and explore organic cooking, ethnic cuisines, etc.

The evaluation and testing of students is mainly through the practical activities during the training programme under the supervision of the instructors (there is no formal assessment during or at the end of the training).

An important role in the evaluation is played by the counsellors who guide the students during the entire process.

Also, a mentor programme is offered to students with special challenges related to their course, either during a shorter period of time, or throughout the course.

A mentor is an experienced, professional person, who can support students in clarifying circumstances surrounding their personal well-being, through conversation and counselling.

Thus, the focus is not actually on evaluation/assessment, but on the personal development of the students.

Curriculum and influence of the companies on the curriculum

The school is very flexible in the curriculum for each of the 10 departments. Apart from the general skills that students should acquire in each department, the activities are planned differently according to the dynamics of the training programme. Thus, the company/on-going events can influence greatly the curriculum (e.g. if the students in textiles are engaged in a certain fair, the whole focus is on producing clothes for that fair).

Visit schedule and Visit report

The Gøglerskolen school in Aarhus, Denmark was visited by Simona Musteata from AIP, Romania on 30th September 2014, as part of a study visit within the EU funded Project *NETnotNEET* (ref. no. 543229-LLP-1-2013-1-IT-KA1-KA1NW) as an example of best practice for the integration of NEET young people (not in education, employment or training).

We considered the Gøglerskolen school not only a best practice for the integration of NEETs, but also a best practice in the VET education and therefore we decided to include it as a case study also in the current ELVETE project, fostering thus also a synergy between the two Lifelong Learning projects.

The visit at the Gøglerskolen school centre on 30th September 2014 was facilitated by P. C. Asmussen, the principle of the school who presented the school, its history, pedagogy used, results obtained. Three students were also invited to the meeting (2 from the Cafe department and 1 from the Media department) to share their opinions about the school, how they feel, etc.

The students stated that they feel very happy for having chosen the Gøglerskolen school, as now they know what they want to achieve in the future. For example, one boy in the Café department was very confident that he will continue his education and become a chef, having discovered that this is his passion and what he wants to do in the future, while a girl from the same department said that she discovered such a job is not for her.

ICT seems to be relevant in all departments of the school as students need and work with such skills (for example in the textiles classes some designs are made on computers; at the café for the budget planning, searching for recipes etc. computers skills are needed, etc.)

Short analysis of the information

The Gøglerskolen school in Aarhus represents an alternative for the students who have not finished education and want to learn practical skills.

The focus of the school is on practical work and production, on acquiring practical skills, together with the personal development of the young person.

The departments/training programmes offered by the school are very fashionable and attractive for young people, in accordance with their interests (fashion, dancing, media production). Although the activities are apparently easy and fun, they actually teach students not only the skills specific to the job, but also responsibility, team work, entrepreneurship skills, etc.

In parallel, the school offers also a selection of courses in Danish, Mathematics, and English and students are free to decide if they want to enrol to those. The pedagogy also in these courses is very much focussed on the individual student and his/her needs.

Commonalities/differences – compare and contrast

The Gøglerskolen school is definitely an alternative to traditional education students are usually offered in most of the European countries. It is an alternative offer for young people not connected to labor market or formal education.

The innovation of the school resides also in the pedagogy used that is based on the fairground and craftsman philosophy of autonomy and focus on possibilities rather than limitations.

A very important aspect are the school benefits (a monthly pay) that students receive for attending the school, presenting an extra motivation for the students.

On the other hand, the training programmes at the Gøglerskolen do not result in any formal qualifications, which one could argue it is a negative aspect.

But while studying at Gøglerskolen the students acquire practical skills and personal development to help them continue their education/vocational training.

The school is very much engaged in the counselling and mentoring of students.