

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF MEDIATORS, PATH-PLANNERS, MENTORS (SUCCESS2)

In Sweden, a lack of collaboration between services has long been a major problem, as one user explained, *“I wore myself out. I used way too much energy to figure out the system when I looked for help and wanted to know more about my rights. Better cooperation among agencies and institutions is necessary to make the situation easier for people who need help. For somebody who is weak from before, it is easy to give up when you have to continually contact new people and new offices”*.

The use of individual plans was seen as one way to meet this problem, but without an active coordinator who knows the system and who is willing to cooperate with the person in question, the use of individual plans tends to become a more theoretical than an active exercise. Success was therefore tried out a solution that involved the introduction of personal coordinators.

The task of the coordinator was to be a link between the person and the system, to ensure that progress in the process was made, and to ensure that the person had complete information and significant influence in the process. The coordinator's place of employment varied according to the user's needs. The coordinator may have come from the labour market administration, the social security office, the health sector, social welfare office or another sector. The point was that the coordinator acted on behalf of the system as a whole, and thus communicated with relevant agencies or service providers to clarify, mandate and negotiate different terms and contributions.

The facilitators active in the DP tried out the role of personal coordinator, on behalf of the agencies involved. The experiences were very good. It made the one-to-one support much more concrete. The problem, however, was that the generic structures that had formal responsibility for the services could distance themselves from the process. This was evident in the cooperation around individual plans.

In the next phase, representatives of public agencies involved took on the responsibility as personal coordinators themselves, supervised by facilitators from the DP. The candidates for the role were enthusiastic about the idea. They saw the need for better coordination, not only on the system level, but also even around individuals, but were somewhat uncertain as to how they would be able to act on behalf of other agencies than their own. However, they found the experience of working with the whole person, and not only with “cases” to be very rewarding.

Contact

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