



PES Tutors in upper secondary schools Pilot Project

PES TUTORS BASED IN SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT TO UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, AND CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCING THE DROPOUT RATE

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NORWAY

The pilot project on PES tutors in upper secondary schools was introduced against a background of a high rate of early school leaving. One in three students do not complete their upper secondary school education in Norway. The project aims to prevent young people from dropping out of upper secondary school and to test a model of cross-sectoral and close collaboration between the PES and upper secondary schools.

45 PES tutors from 33 PES offices are located in 28 upper secondary schools across Norway. Within one school, the dropout has reduced from 4.8% to 3.1% from 2012/2013 to 2014/15 and drop-outs now only account for 11 out of over 800 students in this school.

Integrating PES tutors within upper secondary schools has developed both parties' knowledge of each other and has helped to ensure that no young person is 'lost' between school and employment.

Name of the PES

Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

When was the practice implemented?

2013-2016

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

NAV and upper secondary schools

At a more strategic level, the activity required close collaboration between the Directorates of Labour and Welfare, and Education and Training.

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

Pupils in upper secondary schools (aged between 15 and 21 years old) at risk of early school leaving.

What were the practice's main objectives?

In Norway one in three students do not complete their upper secondary school education, which is considered essential for good employment prospects. This initiative emerged as a response to the need to **target young people that are experiencing complex challenges, such as mental health or social problems.**

The practice has four main objectives:

- ▶ To prevent young people from dropping out of upper secondary school and to integrate them into the labour market, by providing them with individually tailored follow-up based on the young person's needs.
- ▶ To trial, and encourage, a model of cross-sectorial collaboration.
- ▶ To develop knowledge about the need for, and use of, services and measures from PES in combination with adapted training for young people (provided by county administrations).
- ▶ To develop knowledge within the PES about the living conditions and social problems among pupils in upper secondary schools.

The initiative reduces the physical and mental distance between schools and PES, as PES tutors are placed inside secondary schools.

The practice is based on the principals of providing training and other similar interventions as soon as possible; taking preventative measures; and reaching out to young people by offering support and guidance services that are open to all – no matter what the situation of the young person is.

What activities were carried out?

PES tutors work with those who are at risk of dropping out of education, including young people who are struggling with motivation, drug and health issues, or experiencing severe poverty. They provide them with a range of support, including:

- ▶ undertaking 'reality checks' – talking through young people's aspirations in practical, realistic steps;
- ▶ providing support and signposting to PES activities, focusing on the need for students to complete their education first and foremost;

- ▶ helping those who need a subsistence for basic needs (e.g. to cover travel costs to upper secondary school);
- ▶ facilitating work experience opportunities; and
- ▶ offering a specific class for the most disengaged – the curriculum is more relaxed and tailored to their needs.

Each PES tutor is based in school for 50% of their time and when they are not in school they sit within the youth team at the PES office. They also operate a 'drop-in' office for pupils.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

The practice is piloted in each county within Norway (19 in total). 45 PES offices and 28 upper secondary schools had to apply together to receive funding. In 2016, NOK 28 million (EUR 2 942 289.10) will be spent on the pilot projects, with NOK 610 000 (EUR 640 99.87) allocated for every full time PES tutor position for one year. Funding is allocated on an annual basis, however, if the project is successful and meets the financial and reporting requirements then the PES office and school can receive an additional three years of funding. The projects are delivered in areas that met certain criteria. Areas must have:

- ▶ social problems and poverty;
- ▶ problems with living conditions;
- ▶ large upper secondary schools with a high number of drop outs, and the school(s) work well with addressing this problem;
- ▶ PES offices that have an organised youth team.

Within the school, the PES tutor works within the school pupil service team – counsellors, health care services and the follow-up services. The PES tutor participates in teachers' team meetings and one-to-one teacher-pupil meetings. Externally, the PES tutor works with employers; child welfare authorities; follow-up services at county level; and others as relevant.

What were the source(s) of funding?

National

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

People reached:

- ▶ 45 PES tutors from 33 PES offices are trained and located in 28 upper secondary schools across Norway;
- ▶ approximately, one PES tutor is responsible for 60 pupils; and
- ▶ approximately 2 700 pupils are covered each year.

Products:

- ▶ training package for headmasters and PES leaders, which focuses on collaborative management; and
- ▶ training package for PES tutors, focusing on guidance.

What outcomes have been identified?

The practice has enabled PES tutors to develop knowledge about the school system in which they work, the students there, and the challenges they face. Headmasters and PES leaders have reported improved cooperation between the schools and PES offices.

In one school, the **drop-out rate has reduced from 4.8% to 3.1%** from 2012/2013 to 2014/15 and drop-outs now only account for 11 out of over 800 students in this school. In addition, five students have now gained qualifications who would have otherwise dropped out of school.

Headmasters have also noted the positive impact of PES tutors assisting pupils who are facing challenges outside of school. They also noticed that more pupils are finishing their education and are more likely to stay in touch with their school.

On a wider level, the close working partnership between the PES, schools and other services means that students are less likely to fall into a gap between school and their next steps. In addition, collaboration between PES and schools has opened up opportunities for further collaboration. For example, in Jessheim the PES office has started to send young people from the PES office back to school to finish their studies.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The practice has identified a number of success factors during its activities. Firstly, the PES tutors are integrated within each school's student support activities as they work alongside the pupil services' team, attend weekly teachers' team meetings and also attend any one-to-one meetings between teachers and specific students. This provides the PES tutor with a wealth of information about students and the school system that can help them provide more appropriate support to individual students. The 'buy-in' from each school and PES office, right up to ministry level, also helps to embed the practice. Secondly, there are clear roles and responsibilities between the PES tutor and the pupil services within each school. They understand the mutual usefulness of working together and keep in mind the benefits for the young person at all times. In some cases, the PES tutor and teachers are able to adapt the curriculum so that it is more appropriate and flexible to the specific needs of the young person.

Thirdly, reducing the physical distance between school and PES support ensures close cooperation and means that no time is lost once the young person leaves school.

In terms of lessons learnt, PES tutors have addressed the issue of data protection by asking each young person to sign a confidentiality agreement. This explains how their data will be used and they select which organisations the PES tutor can share their data with. Data is only used to provide the student with help and support and it is not shared with the local PES office.

Another important lesson was involving stakeholders from the beginning of the project, providing them with information at the same time, and involving the different stakeholders to the same extent.

The pilot project phase lasts three years and it will be externally evaluated in April 2016. It is due to be rolled out nationally in 2018.



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