

'We Need All Youngsters' initiative for migrant learners in Denmark – presentation and development of the project

A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a black jacket, is painting a wall yellow. The wall is partially painted, with the yellow paint being applied to the right side. The background is a white wall with a door frame visible on the right.

**We Need all Youngsters
- a national initiative under the
Ministry for Education**

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The main aim of the Project

- Increase the number of youth with ethnic minority background in youth education and get more of them to complete their youth educational programs.

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History and Background

- Founded and established by Ministry of Integration in 2003.
 - Moved over to Ministry of Education in year 2011 as a result of Denmark got a new national government.
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The target group

- Ethnic minority youth in age group 13 – 20 years old, who are marginalized and at risk of not completing an youth education.
- Additional focus on boys in this age group.



What are the main challenges?

- PISA Ethnic surveys in 2009/2012 say around 38 % of ethnic minorities have serious reading problems when they leave the lower public schools, and its reduce their chances to enter and finish a youth education.
- In future more their will be more youth in this category in urban areas.

What are the main challenges



- 25 % of the boys with an ethnic minority background are at risk of not completing an youth education.
 - Deprived urban areas with high unemployment and crime rate.
 - Many parents to these youth lack basic knowledge about the Danish education system.
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Our focuses and tools

- Role models
- Youth-to-youth Methods
- Home Work Cafes
- Parents networks
- Competence development
- Social entrepreneurship
- Educational counselling
- Motivation – combinations of Sports/Culture and educational training



Our local initiatives are bases on

- Holistic approach to education (social, personal, educational capacities)
- Making a positive change in deprived urban areas.
- Local ownership, Local anchorage and local resources.

Methodes and approach

- Involvement of local shareholders, who has daily day contact and interaction with the youth and their parents.
- Local schools and youth clubs
- Urban development plans(Helhedsplaner)
- Educational counselors and educational counselling centers
- NGOS and other voluntary organizations
- Sports clubs
- Cultivate and maintain network on local levels to support and strengthen our local projects

Examples of local projects:

- Quick projects - ”Lynprojekter”
- Parental network
- Young local ambassadors

Main results from evaluation

Midterm evaluation of local Projects

Successes:

- Most projects reach their targets.
- Successful in sustain the parents interest and participation in educational events and fairs.
- The participants social, personal and educational skills have improved.
- The local shareholders feel they were involved and given a role to play.

Evaluation results

Challenges:

- It takes time to recruit and sustain the youth and their parents in the projects.
 - Real changes take time.
 - The current national reform of the public schools
 - Too many actors in the same area -many projects try to reach out to the same group at the same time.
 - The understanding of the youth group and approach to the youth group.
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The current National initiatives



Homework Cafes

- More than 350 Homework Cafes around the country
- Implement alternative learning styles and methods in addition to traditional way of learning in order to reach out to more youth in this group- Combined physical activities and studies.



Other national initiatives

Role Models

- Young Role Models: They can motivate and inspire the other youth in same situation.
- Parental Role Models: Improve communication between home and school, change parents view and prejudices on certain educations.



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The new project

- The government has allocated 28 mil. Danish kr. to continuation of the current project between 2015 to 2018.
- The core target group will be "all youngsters who are not ready or qualified to start a youth education.
- The project will be implemented in cooperation with local educational counselling centers.

‘We Need All Youngsters’ - development and milestones of the project

In 2001 a Ministry of Immigration was established in Denmark. Leading up to this new Ministry, there had been considerable debate concerning immigration; particularly in relation to the low employment rates of immigrants and the poor school performance of immigrant children.

On this basis, the Minister of Immigration invited 200 young people from ethnic minority backgrounds to participate in a ‘boot camp’ type activity. On this occasion, participants had the opportunity to discuss and advise the Minister on reasons why young people from ethnic minorities experienced difficulties in school and to discuss solutions to address such issues.

Some of the issues raised by the young people include:

- There are many young people from ethnic minority backgrounds who may not necessarily receive the school related guidance they need from their parents. This was because parents often lack Danish language skills or knowledge of the Danish educational structure/system.
- Many were of the view that an education would not help them secure employment later in life due to discrimination.
- Many young people were not aware of the range of possibilities within the Danish educational system – especially as regards to youth education
- Parents typically hold upper secondary school/education in high regard. This places added pressure on children to choose upper secondary, even though they perhaps did not want to.

On the basis of this boot camp, the Ministry of Immigration launched a campaign called “We need all youngsters”. This campaign was run by a group of consultants with different expertise. Each consultant contributed to different activities with the common goal of encouraging children to develop a more positive attitude towards education. The activities included amongst other things:

- The establishment of a **national role model group** with ethnic minority youngsters. This would give people, institutions, networks or other groups the opportunity to invite role model to present lectures/talks for free. The role models discuss the challenges they had faced, trying to explain the different myths regarding education that were circulating.
- A **role model group with ethnic minority parents** was also formed. Their task was to tell other parents about how to guide and help their child with their education.
- Establishment of **homework cafes** in the deprived urban areas, where young people could get help with their homework for free provided by the charity organizations such as “Danish refugee aid” “The Red Cross Youth” “Save the Children” and “The Red Cross”
- **National campaigns** trying to get ethnic minority young people to choose “uniformed educations” such as the police, the army, the fire department, nurses and other.
- The establishment of an **educational bazar** targeting ethnic minority young people.

Approximately 40 million DKR was allocated to these activities in the period of 2003-2006.

From 2006 to 2007 the “We need all youngsters” campaign put together a Task Force who had **vocational education** as their primary focus.

The Task Force was to:

- Influence the attitude and approach of the teachers towards ethnic minority young people. This was done by creating different educational programmes for teachers.
- Make different short and intense programmes for ethnic minority young people with the purpose of broadening their knowledge in regards to various educations.
- Create different activities which would encourage young people to stay in vocational education and prevent drop-out.
- Establish homework cafes in the vocational educations.

Besides the funds from the “We need all youngsters” campaign, an extra 8 million DKR was provided by the EU Social Fund.

In 2007, the statistics showed vocational education had high dropout rates within the ethnic minority group. The government put together a goal which stated that 95 % of all young people in a year should finish a youth education.

To help achieve this goal a number of campaigns were initiated, amongst those “Retention Taskforce” was in place. This was partially funded by “We need all youngsters” and by the EU Social Fund – in total 73 million DKR over a period of 4 years. The purpose of “Retention Taskforce” was to develop and create different tools that could reduce dropout rates. The tools were created to target young people in vocational schools around the country.

In 2010 there was a significant debate concerning the many challenges faced in the various deprived urban areas with high unemployment and crime rates. On the basis of this debate, the government funded over a 4-year period “We need all youngsters” with the aim of creating educational activities in these areas. The cost was 30 million DKR. The purpose of these activities was to encourage ethnic minority young people to become involved in education. The activities were created in cooperation with local stakeholders such as public schools and charity organizations.

The government has funded “We need all youngsters” with 28 million DKR for an additional 4-year period (2015 – 2018). In this period, the focus will be on creating and trying out activities which will help strengthening the educational guidance effort. This will happen in close cooperation with the “Guidance Centers” throughout the country.

Evaluation of “We need all youngsters” through the years

In the first phase of implementation (2003-2006), a six-month plan was established, which was monitored closely by the relevant Minister. Assessment and follow-up was mainly based on self-evaluation.

- 2006-2008: The evaluation of “We need all youngsters” was done by an external organization focusing on qualitative and quantitative methods
- 2008-2014: The evaluation of “we need all youngsters” was done by an external organization focusing on effect-measurement.
- In the coming period the evaluation based on both effect and evidence-measurements will be undertaken by a scientist and an external organization.