

# «Studier med støtte»

*Supported Education in Bergen*

**ImpulSE**



# Supported Education in Norway

- From Vacuum to «Pilot Project» in the blink of an eye.
  - Local prerequisites for SupEd implementation:
  - New «Rehab Clinic» started in 1999 with long-term follow-up of patients with chronic psychiatric disabilities. Subsequent appreciation of unused capacities/goals in target population.
  - Rehabilitation Conference, Bergen 2004: Lecture and lunch with Lies Korevaar and Audun Pedersen of Bergen Municipalities Health Services.
  - Serendipity in timing: 2006 National Strategy Plan for Mental Health and Employment. Labor Directorate approaches Student Welfare Organization i Bergen (SiB) for housing of 2-year pilot project.
  - Mette Kolbjørnsen and Evan Toft employed as first SupEd workers in Norway – Scandinavia? One office, no phones, no computer.
  - 2006: Learning Expedition to Amsterdamn. Lies Korevaar Host.



# Supported Education in Studentsamskipnaden i Bergen (SiB = Student Welfare Organization)

- Project financed by Norwegian Labor Directorate
- Housed in Student Welfare Organization SiB. SiB our employer. Localized on campus.
- Began with two 50% positions, now 1 position at 100% and one at 50%.
- Catering to at present 36 students, almost exclusively as individual follow-up – except for optional group meetings, cultural events and occasional educational conferences requested by students.
- Long waiting list with 40-50 applicants.
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation principles at outset, moving forward and closer to Recovery principles in our collaboration with students.



## Supported Education in Norway

- From isolated Pilot Project to «Sister Projects» throughout Norway
- Mette Kolbjørnsen and Evan Toft accept formal «consultant» duties from central government to help spread SupEd to other locations where higher educational institutions house large student populations.
- SupEd Norway: Trondheim in 2008, followed by Tromsø, Stavanger, Kristiansand, Sogndal, Grimstad and finally Oslo in 2010 create projects based on Bergen SupEd principles, though organized according to local considerations.
- Presently uncertain as to future anchoring in bureaucratic systems. All projects are still only «projects» and hence subject to dismantling.



## Chosen SupEd «Model» in Bergen

- Norwegian health care and educational systems relevant for our chosen model.
- Target Group Criteria: Moderate to serious mental health disabilities. Dictated at outset by biomedical considerations (diagnoses and degrees of functional disability) and traditions in psychiatry in Norway.
- Local recruiting to project: Very little advertisement needed. Visited known health care institutions, grapevine and pamphlet dissemination of information.
- Average age at outset: 33 years, approximately half and half male/female ratio. Average age now 29.



## Roles/Activities/Functions in SupEd Bergen

- Choose-Get-Keep principles with overriding focus on «keep»
- Superordinate role as «student counselors» for target group operating under the auspices of the local student welfare organization and independently of educational institution.
- Highly individualized counseling, dictated almost in its entirety by student's own appreciation of needs.
- Relational continuity throughout entire educational experience if desired.
- Transitional period of up to 6 months after fulfillment of education to aid in transition to employment or supported employment for those who choose to look for jobs.



## Roles/Functions/Activites continued..

- Schedule/Structure development and maintenance: help students maintain administrative control over own studies, herein help with applications, deadlines, meetings, seminar requirements, exam preparations – insure use of existing supports and look to build new supports vis a vis university or college.
- Cooperate with faculty student advisors and enhance communication, study techniques and social skills where relevant.
- Create arenas wherein students can meet one another if they choose
- Introduce students to student activities, organizations (political, sports, cultural).
- Function as stabil, safe conversational partners with specific person knowledge of student.



## Our (more or less?) «Specific» contributions to project

- Focus on efficacy of interpersonal skills as prerequisite for Recovery-oriented services, herein capacity for reciprocal, long term cooperation with student. Reflecting research: «the relationship IS the cure»
- Experience with implementation of SupEd projects within varying local organizations.
- Hope to include sister projects around Norway into EU Consortium as well as reach out to Scandinavian countries with similar foundations upon which to advance SupEd services.





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