



Supported Employment in the Nordic countries

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"SE-Norden" (2008 – 2011)

Funded by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV FARVE)

- **National & Nordic dialogue on Supported Employment**
 - Strengths & weaknesses, reflection in and on practice, compare experiences
 - Methods to get and keep a job
- **Professional development supported by research**
 - Common concepts and framework of understanding as basis for practical development of quality-based SE
 - An improved basis for unique policy and guidelines for SE
 - Develop skills training for Job Coaches



The report:

'Supported Employment i Norden'

- Download: <http://www.afi.no>
- Features English Summary and attachments in English by:
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A research perspective

The Nordic challenges

- Clients with 'reduced workability' and complex support needs
- Many actors, weak coordination
 - Many into activity, few into paid jobs
- Employers not active, in spite of active inclusion policy
 - Fear increased costs, use of resources to training and guidance
 - Fear of being alone with the responsibility
 - Lack of practical experiences
 - Prejudice, discrimination, legislation
- Buy & Supply model: Most definitions have 'train – place' models as a basis
 - This approach is financially rewarding for Service Providers, who are also strong political lobbyists helping to cement the model



Nordic project

General lessons

- All countries have services that **resemble SE**. Varying, but promising results, not a very great expansion since the 1990s, not yet a mainstream service in all countries.
 - Struggle to find a place in a field dominated by sheltered employment, 'train – place' & 'flow-through' models and wage subsidies
- 'Place – Train' requires supply of **inclusion expertise** (proactive follow-up and facilitation in the broad sense)
 - Generally weak knowledge on Supported Employment
 - National EUSE organisations lack political influence



Examples of services that resemble Supported Employment in the Nordic countries

- Särskilt introduktions- och uppföljningsstöd (SIUS) at the Swedish PES
- Arbeid med bistand, administered by NAV and performed by Service Providers
- Atvinna med studning in some Icelandic municipalities
- Arbete med stöd in some Finnish-Swedish municipalities
- Individual follow-up combined with time unlimited wage subsidy schemes (fleksjob)
- Short term Job Coach-services, e.g. at the Finnish PES
- IPS connected to Mental institutions



Clients' aims & claims

Why participate in Supported Employment?

- To be respected and included in a workplace, and have both rights and duties as other employees
- To get wage and be treated like other employees and be part of a work environment

What makes a good Job Coach?

- knows the right way through the system and to resolve difficulties to achieve the goal
- provides assistance and opportunities for career development
- helps with paperwork and administration that are difficult for both employee and employer
- provides support in the workplace, help to solve practical problems and helps to structure the work



Clients that got a job through SE

- Jobs mostly in the private sector, steady work contract, often part-time, often wage subsidy, sometimes specially designed contracts
- High job satisfaction, lack of opportunities for continued development, some resignation
- Unclear job titles, weak job identity
- Many have continued relationship with SE after a long time in the job: Uncertainty, adaptation, wages, working conditions, advancement, job change
- Some want more support at the work site, others more support outside the work site



Nordic Caseworkers

- Weak knowledge about quality SE
- Experience of several 'good practices' in SE
- Success criteria of SE: **Proactive follow-up of client and employer**
- Yet little faith that an ordinary workplace can be used for those with severely reduced workability
- Recognise the need of SE where close individual follow-up may improve job performance and retention



What makes a good Job Coach?

Nordic employers on SE-service

- **A permanent contact person:**

- preparing client and workplace, provides good information in advance about the user's limitations in a work situation, provides predictability, making clear agreements on roles, responsibilities and contact form, follows up closely

- **Proactive follow-up:**

- be ahead of any problems at work; provide solutions; understand both the company and the employee; provide support, advice and guidance to both employer and employee; knowledge of the conditions of the employee's life that may affect the job performance; knowledge about tasks, work process and business culture and thereby facilitate the will and ability to adjust for both the employee and the company

- **Trial period provides opportunities to assess:**

- whether the client is suitable for relevant tasks
- whether the company can provide relevant tasks of employment



Nordic Job Coaches

- Often employed in organisations where SE plays only a minor financial role
- Want clients with clear motivation for job
- Frequent difficulties in job coaching performance:
 - contact employers, providing jobs and follow-up at the workplace
 - to be both contact and job consultant, unclear role in relation to other support services
 - time to follow up at the workplace
- Often social & health education, self-taught, express need for specific Job Coach-related skills



Strengths of Nordic Supported Employment

- Although SE in the Nordic countries have not had any great dissemination, a series of evaluations and various reports show that SE represents a very valuable alternative to the dominant services available to assist people with reduced work capacity to get a job in the regular labor market



Weaknesses of Nordic SE

- The 'buyers' are not convinced
- SE is unclear – especially the principle of 'Place – Train'
 - Many Work Experience Placements, but lack of methodology
 - Many clients fall out of work; unclear results and long-term effect
 - Job Coaches have more expertise on clients than on workplaces
 - Difficulty to achieve coordination and parallel support
 - Individual follow-up in accordance to 'Place – Train' is poorly defined and lacks funding
- Job Coaches lack possibilities for skills development in quality Supported Employment



A critical view

SE in the Nordic countries

- Defined and implemented in a number of different ways depending on
 - the knowledge and financing market authorities
 - the interests, incentives and competence of service providers
- Supported Employment is associated with everything from sheltered social activation and different qualification or work clarification schemes to group placements, on the job training and sick leave follow-up
- Services described as SE in the Nordic countries contain several elements of traditional 'Train – Place'



General challenges

Nordic Supported Employment

- Improved knowledge on quality SE – a great need to develop from services that **'resemble SE'** to **'quality-based SE'**
- Development of methodology:
 - Mapping of interest & job match for different target groups; job development; Work Experience Placements; handling of varying motivation and degrees of disability
 - Career guidance and employment skills
 - Cooperation with employers, follow-up in jobs, job retention, (social, mental & physical) adaptation, stability, career development



Policy challenges

Nordic Supported Employment

- Existing policy regulations: Allow that all steps of the SE-process can be completed
- In practice: The SE-process is often split up between different responsibilities
 - Different bureaucratic procedures and formalities create problems for both disabled job seekers, Job Coaches and employers
 - For example, health and social policy and employment policy efforts do not always share a common facility and goal, which contributes to poor cooperation between stakeholders to implement policy
 - Lack of incentives for Service Providers



Nordic challenges 1

Implementation of SE

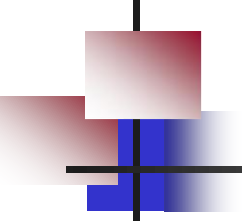
- Develop and reinforce Supported Employment in accordance with international quality standards in each country and on Nordic level
- Nordic EUSE organisations:
 - Provide far greater marketing of a professional practice that is in line with international quality SE
 - Must be a driving force for development from practices that resemble **SE to quality-based SE**.
 - Other practices may be of high importance, but should not be labeled 'Supported Employment'



Nordic challenges 2

Bureaucracy and administration

- Create incentives to ensure further development and strengthening efforts in Supported Employment services
 - It should not be financially rewarding for Service Providers to do clarification and training of clients in a sheltered environment than in ordinary workplaces
- Ensure continuity of the SE-process, also after a job contract – increased attention to job retention and career development



Nordic challenges 3

Access criteria

- Develop Supported Employment as a **mainstream service** for all job seekers with needs and motivation, regardless of workability or disability
 - Remove access criteria associated with diagnosis, workability and pension benefits - **focus on needs & motivation**



Nordic challenges 4

Time and continuity

- Flexible time limitation in SE that ensures the service also to those who need long term support
- Continued follow-up of the employee as part of the job contract
- Ensure that the SE-process encompasses support to workplace and employer



Nordic challenges 5

Competence, professionalism & quality

- Principles and methodology of quality SE must be made visible
- Governmental organisations need knowledge on Supported Employment to buy and monitor high quality performance
- Job Coach education specifically aimed at quality standards and knowledge-based Supported Employment must be available
- Short and long term results must be documented
 - Overviews of how many clients get / are in jobs