

# Social Pedagogy

## Mobility Project March 2012

---

*Participant Report by Dee Baron, Lancashire County Council*

### Preparation

#### Social Pedagogy Course

In preparation for the mobility I attended an 8 day introduction into social pedagogy looking at;

- Concepts of social pedagogy ; life space, 3P's, hands heart and head, common third, challenge by choice, learning zone,
- Looking at the ethos and values of social pedagogy,
- the reflective practitioner I began to keep a reflective journal
- Nurture, philosophy, teamwork, communication. Child development.

I was also part of a group that attended 3day social pedagogy champions workshop where we put together a workbook as a workable tool to enable us to implement and further develop social pedagogy into our work settings.

### Team Development

I facilitated a team development day, where we looked at communication.

#### Communication - what it means

*Definitions: Non verbal types of communication.*

We did the Lakota Indian medicine wheel, looking at individual differences creating an understanding on how diversity impacts on a team and discussing the dynamics of the group. If we value all skills and styles diversity can become strength.

### Recruitment Challenge

As part of the preparations for the mobility project all participants were asked to create a recipe, working within the social pedagogy concepts and present this to a panel of professionals who interviewed us about our project and the impact this had on our self and the young person..

*The task - Working in the common third*

I was led by R.S. (young person) to create the presentation as his artistic ability was far greater than mine. He seemed to enjoy the sense of empowerment this gave him, and sense of achievement when I followed his lead. We both enjoyed the task and I felt he had begun to feel more relaxed in

my company. We spent quite a bit of time discussing and researching what we wanted to achieve and R.S began to seek me out, I am now his co keyworker at his request.

We had a chilli challenge in the home, we had four groups and four different chilli recipes and the challenge was to create the best chilli and this would become our recipe

The outcome from this task was ;

R.S. was empowered and has grown in confidence

Educational outcome: He could possibly use this assignment toward a cope award. Our relationship is enriched; we have a better understanding of each other.

We can both cook a mean chilli and the competition continues. We make hot food to see who can eat the hottest!!!

### **Preparation Seminar**

Once I was successful in securing a place on the mobility project along with 5 other participants from Lancashire, we had a two day training course in Scotland where we met with the other six Scottish participants and the group leaders. This involved team building, hopes and ambitions for the mobility, buddy pairing.

Once home we planned on having a Danish evening but due to people work commitment this didn't happen as a group, I did cook for my family Bagte fiskefilet (baked fillet of sole, as fish is very popular in Denmark) and Pandrkager (Danish pancakes).

I tried to learn some Danish but soon realised the sound of the words is much different to how it is spoken. My Danish was very limited to just a few words. The language barrier didn't hinder me in the slightest as most Danish people speak very good English.

## Mobility:

Whilst out and about in Copenhagen I managed to see some of the wonderful architecture landmarks and museums, including the little mermaid, the medieval round tower, Nyhavn port, and the museum of Danish resistance. I also managed a couple of trips to Christiania and lots of shopping in the fabulous shops and boutiques. A large part of Danish culture is riding a bicycle, which I took to like a fish to water!!! This enabled me much freedom to see the city. I took the train over to Malmö in Sweden and spent the day sightseeing and shopping.

## Placement - Den Grønne Giraf

My first placement was at Den Grønne Giraf (green giraffe), a day care facility for 150 children. I worked in the early years rooms with children up to the age of 2 years 10 months. The Kindergarten used the giraffe language model - hence the name - based on Marshall Rosenberg's nonviolent communication model.

What came across very loud and clear during this placement was the unconditional positive regard the pedagogues have for the children and their parents. The children are treated as whole human beings; their practice supports the child's development, care, health and general wellbeing and these are all viewed as inseparable.

### Key finding in Gronne Giraf

- ✚ Education starts when a child is ready to learn
- ✚ Questioning feelings, to be considerate of others' feelings: A child knocked another child over whilst playing boisterously; he wasn't told off by the pedagogue, he was asked to look at the other child and he could see the child was upset. He was asked why he thought the child was upset, and he answered it was because he had pushed him over. The child was helped in realising that he was responsible for his actions.
- ✚ Independence is encouraged from a very early stage: Babies as young as 14 months are given jugs with a small amount of water or juice in and they pour this into their cup. If they spill they are given a cloth to wipe it up.
- ✚ Self awareness: photographs of each child are displayed on the wall. Each child is showing a happy face, a sad face and a grumpy face. This encourages the child be able to recognize feelings.
- ✚ Interaction is spontaneous.
- ✚ Conflict is resolved by explanation, talking to the child in a age appropriate manner, non aggressive; no raised voices or anger in body language.
- ✚ Cuddles are acceptable and given freely
- ✚ Primary carer identified and is known to the parents: Pedagogues gain information/knowledge about the child and family circumstances to enable the appropriate primary carer to be identified
- ✚ The child trusting in the adult remembering you are the adult.
- ✚ Pedagogues not being afraid to talk about their feeling.
- ✚ **Risk taking: this is part of everyday life, even children as young as 3 will be allowed to use handheld tools, without a prior written risk assessment.**
- ✚ The environment is one that is very calm, with lots of down time.

## The second placement at Jens Jessensvej

The home holds up to 12 young people aged 14-18 years. Additionally they have 5 re-entry rooms (hybelpladser) to young people aged 16-23 years. Most of the young people have during their childhood been exposed to different kinds of parental neglect and following mental and emotional difficulties. Normally Jens Jessensvej offers long-term placements followed by re-entry.

## Key findings at Jens Jessensvej

- ✚ Fixed boundaries and rules
- ✚ Continuity and a sense of work with the whole person
- ✚ Professionalism: Following the three P's intimacy with a distance, fixed boundaries between private and work life.
- ✚ Commitment of the staff, staff feel it's a privilege to work with the young people and not a challenge. Staff stated it was a great privilege to be part of the development / growth of a child.
- ✚ Staff trained to a high level in core subjects/theories such as sociology, philosophy and psychology. This gives them a pedagogical perspective working towards the same objectives with good knowledge and understanding of young people, using a shared common language. Due to this they are seen as professionals and trusted in the decisions they make about the young people they work with.
- ✚ Care doesn't stop at 18, it continues until 23. At Jens Jessensvej they have a re-entry unit. This is a 5 bedded unit where 18 – 23 year olds live independently, they are free to come and go as they please, have friends staying over, are responsible for all their own cooking cleaning, budgeting. One member of staff works within the re-entry unit and she is seen more as a mentor. Most of the young people in the re-entry unit have lived in the main building and have progressed to the re-entry unit, but some have left the main unit, gone living independently and returned because this has not worked out.
- ✚ The image of the child is one of rights and strengths rather than needs and risk.
- ✚ The child is in charge of their own life, social pedagogues work alongside rather than dictate.
- ✚ The maturity of the young people stood out.

## **Evaluation:**

What I feel I gained most from my two placements and my time in Denmark was the essence of social pedagogy being a personal journey. You feel pedagogy in your heart. This is what makes a good practitioner.

What I take away is the sense of solidarity within both units; staff, young people and parents all working together toward a shared aim.

What I hope to share with others is the sense of the whole child.

What I began to understand is that we are good at what we do. We have some very good practice and very good staff who are committed to the work we do.

What is evident in Denmark is that social pedagogy is a part of society it is integral to how people live their lives. We are not going to change the whole of society but if, by being more aware, better educated and having a greater understanding, we enhance the life experience of the young people we care for then perhaps this is justification for making the changes.

How I feel we can move forward:

This needs to begin with

- 🚦 Professional development: staff to be invested in and trained to a higher level, with a shared knowledge basis and common goals;
- 🚦 Staff who are not child-centered and their work practice evidences they should not be working with children or young people.

As I have said social pedagogy is felt in the heart - "we all have a heart".

Dee Leigh