

## Inclusive education: International conference will help more people in joining society



When Hotel Nyborg Strand on 25 November 2021 is hosting the international conference, it will also help building a foundation for several issues such as social inclusion, integration, upgrading of qualifications, and life-long learning. At first glance one would think that the main purpose of the conference is to develop more independent business owners, but even though several of the themes on the agenda include words like 'innovation' and 'entrepreneurship', the goal is social inclusion. The project is supported by EU/Erasmus+, and involves five different countries, including Denmark, where it is HF & VUC FYN and VUC Storstrøm which participate.

Research has made it clear that a connection to the job market is crucial for integration, but it is not the only thing. Also, on a personal level one can benefit for instance by feeling part of a community, better finances, and decrease mental health issues. VIA University College has been through the research from 2019, but we lack the knowledge on the "how". Which tools work, and which ones do not? It is this matter that the project tries to address and gather information and experiences from four nations.

"Throughout the project we want to look at what works and why it works, but also how to implement it," says Rasmus Kjær Kristiansen, one of the architects behind the project.

### A life on the edge

He holds a position as head of development at VUC Storstrøm, and with his background he knows why it is VUC which engages in the project. It is no coincidence that it is VUC who is first mover on the project in Denmark. As he explains:

"On a daily basis we here from people who want to move forward in their lives. Some of them lives a life on the edge. Maybe it is Jens who never has completed a youth education program, or maybe even dropped out of elementary school. In these cases, I think that entrepreneurship could be part of a solution, as they can see themselves as part of our educational offers."

### We can all profit: Innovation and the desire to learn are contagious

The 2015 report from the EU Commission "Entrepreneurship Education - Road to Success" shows many beneficial effects from teaching the individual. Many people develop greater ambitions on their own behalf, and they get more self-esteem, and want to learn more and to get an education. But the report also shows that there will be a surge in new ideas which can benefit the whole society when a nation actively supports new entrepreneurs.

"If more people think that our educational offers are relevant then we have come a long way," states Rasmus Kjær Kristiansen.

His colleague from HF & VUC Fyn, Peter Vestergaard, agrees. He points out that 80 percent of the students belong to an ethnic minority. Danish research shows that people from an ethnic minority are twice as likely to become self-employed, but the numbers also show that it is often this group who does not cut it as self-employed and must face defeat. One of the reasons for this could be lack of knowledge and education.

Peter Vestergaard thinks that is a shame as he sees entrepreneurship as a significant tool when it comes to social inclusion, no matter ethnicity. But the first thing that we need to look at is what works and what does not if we should be able to recommend the necessary changes to the politicians. In this case the conference here in Nyborg is an important step.

## PRESS RELEASE



” Often when it comes to entrepreneurship no one thinks of adult education or people who are not so well educated. It is a shame because there is a huge unresolved potential, and here VUC can play a central part. “

( Head of development Rasmus Kjær Kristiansen)

### Helpful links:

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/siateproject/>

Webpage: <https://www.siate.eu/>

Webpage for the conference: <https://www.siate.eu/international-conference-denmark/>

Our development department: <https://www.vucstor.dk/udvikling/>

EU report/research mentioned in the article: <http://kortlink.dk/2dw6p>

(Picture of green lightbulb): <http://www.kortlink.dk/2dw77>

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