

info

YOUTH SCHOOLS
IN DENMARK





Colophon

Title: Info – Youth Schools in Denmark

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DNA OF DANISH YOUTH SCHOOLS

The municipal Youth School plays an important role in securing and helping young people towards education and a good adult life with focus on improving social skills, personal skills and academic achievement. By doing so, Youth Schools prepare young people for further and higher education.

Youth Schools – a liaison in the field of education and youth

Different but still alike

Youth Schools are located in every municipality and carry out many different tasks to support young people living in the municipality. These tasks are often carried out in collaboration with municipal schools, youth education programs and other local institutions and associations. Youth Schools are often considered a link between several players who work within the field of youth and education.

Municipalities face different challenges and therefore, the tasks carried out and services offered by Youth Schools varies by municipality. One could argue, that no two Youth Schools are the same but they all share the same ideology and approach to education. All Danish Youth Schools share the same DNA; they share the same object clause, the





same flexible requirements by law and they share the same history. The goal is to help, guide and educate young people especially, those who may be considered socially marginalized.

Popular enlightenment

In Denmark, we have a strong tradition for and believe in lifelong learning, also referred to as popular enlightenment. Lifelong learning is based on the principles of non-formal education, the free initiative to learn, the educational approach of whole-person learning and the option to choose freely among educators who do not need to be trained or qualified as teachers. Youth Schools, People's Colleges, continuation schools and evening schools are all founded on the tradition of lifelong learning.

Traces of the tradition are visible in every single task and service performed by Youth Schools. The core value of Youth Schools is to support the development of young people's academic, social and personal skills and to help them become socially responsible citizens. Also, to help young people to an education, a job and a good adult life.

Object clause

"The Youth School is to give young people the opportunity to deepen their knowledge, give them an understanding of and perfect them to society life. Additionally, Youth Schools is to give young people's lives increased content and to develop young people's interest and ability to participate actively in a democratic society"

Youth Schools' main tasks

Youth Schools are expected to offer:

- Leisure-time learning
- Test preparation classes
- Special education programs
- Education programs for immigrants to prepare them for a good life in Denmark both academically and socially

Offers may also include:

- Road safety education and teachings in operating a moped
- Full time teaching programs
- Special reception classes for refugees and immigrants 18-25 years-old
- Youth clubs and other leisure-time activities
- As well as other activities aligned with the mission statement



AN EDUCATIONAL LINK

In a perfect world, every young person would manage the change from lower secondary to upper secondary education perfectly, without any problems. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It is not everyone who are ready to leave lower secondary school by their final year. Some need more time or additional learning before they are ready to consider upper secondary education.

Building bridges between lower and upper secondary education

With its central location in the field of youth and education, Youth Schools are essential partners in the efforts to ensure that as many young people as possible are prepared to begin and complete an upper secondary education. Youth Schools collaborate with municipal schools to make

the transition from lower to upper secondary easier by offering various programs and courses that supports the development of young people academically, personally and socially. In addition to municipal schools, youth schools also collaborate with Youth Guidance Centers, leisure clubs and the SSP (a cooperation between schools, social services and the police) for the benefit of young people and their prospects. Youth Schools can therefore be seen as an institution that functions as a bridge between lower secondary and upper secondary education. Youth Schools are known for their ability to build bridges and offer support wherever it is needed.

Open School

Youth Schools enter into binding partnerships with different municipal schools in the municipality to ensure a wide and more varied range of electives, assistive learning and homework assistance.

Studies have shown that the combination of different teaching styles and learning

environments from the municipal schools and Youth Schools are conducive to the pupils' motivation and desire to learn. In other words, new settings and different teaching methods makes for better results.

Similarly, municipal schools and Youth Schools work closely together in a nationwide intensive learning program designed to give pupils the necessary incentive to regain the desire to learn. Short intensive courses improve academic achievement, the social and personal development in young people. Subsequently, pupils will obtain a better understanding of the theory taught in schools.

When all you need is one more year

Several Youth Schools offers 10th grade in different learning environments or at 10th grade-learning-centres. The target group are students who, for various reasons, are not yet ready for further education. What they need is one more year to achieve an adequate academic level, time to mature or time to decide on future educational options. 10th grade at Youth Schools is not the same as 10th grade in municipal schools. It is not just the final year of lower secondary but an entry point to upper secondary education.

Similarly, several Youth Schools offers vocational 10th grade. An offer aimed to help young people motivated for vocational training but who do not yet meet the prerequisites to be admitted.

What do we mean by Open School in Denmark?

Open School is a new concept introduced in the school reform act of 2014. The reform states that all municipal schools must form partnerships with local Youth Schools, youth clubs, music schools, museums and cultural institutions, local business, local sports associations etc. to enhance the coherence between the theory taught in classrooms and how theory works in general practice. The Open School program invites the local community and businesses to take active part in the education of children and young people.



Going to the garage

Copenhagen Youth School has initiated a cooperation between local public schools and a local technical college to offer an elective course on mechanical maintenance. Pupils will get an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the work that goes on at a garage and what to expect of an education in mechanical maintenance.

Course objectives:

- The pupil will be able to behave independently and safely at a garage
- Pupils acquire knowledge about the structure of the labour market
- Pupils acquire knowledge about safety at a garage and requirements in this regard
- The pupil will be able to change and repair parts for mopeds and various types of bicycles

Educational diving

Kolding Youth School offers diving courses as an elective subject at the local municipal schools. The course introduces pupils to diving in theory and practice, safety rules, use of equipment etc.

The following course objectives have been devised and at the end of the course pupils must:

- show an understanding of the correlation between physical activity and theory,
- be able to move confidently and safely in water,
- apply physical and physiological laws of body, and
- complete underwater exercises while wearing and operating diving equipment



Going turbo

In Aalborg, the local Youth School has had great success with a new project called: Accelerator. In cooperation with four public schools young people participate in a learning camp, where they receive additional training in Danish, mathematics and English. The learning camp has great focus on exercise, health, diet and the development of personal and social skills.

Among project evaluations, one pupil noted that the project had had a big effect on her and her fellow pupils' motivation for learning and their ability to concentrate better - which is a prerequisite for academic advancement.

In Odense, they have great experience with a similar project where young people participate in reading camps to improve their

reading skills. The project is called PLAN T and combines reading and IT-based literacy support tools with the teaching and development of personal and social skills. When the reading camp is over, the pupil returns to the municipal school and through coaching and parental cooperation the positive development is sustained.



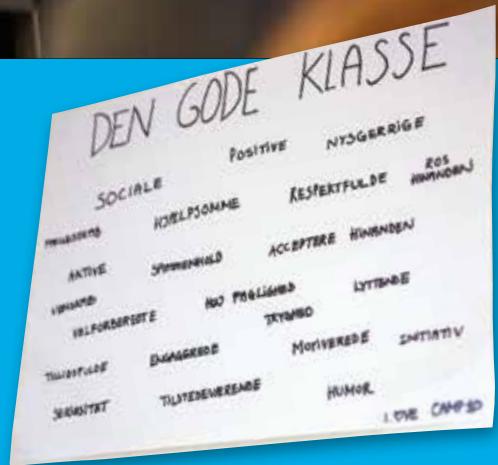
Education centres

More and more Youth Schools are involved in campus-like education centres, where different educational offers are collected in an inspiring youthful environment.

In Aalborg, they have collected several offers in a learning community called UngAUC (YoungAUC). The offers include: basic class for 17-23-year-old immigrants, vocational preparatory courses with the option of either

10th grade, individually organized courses or clarification courses for 14-16-year-olds. All courses that prepare young people for further education.

Due to the amount of offers and a high degree of flexibility, UngAUC has become an attractive partner to all institutions and organisations who works with and for young people in Aalborg.



LEARNING THROUGH LEISURE

An important aspect of the Danish Youth Schools is learning through leisure. The municipality is obliged to offer young people between the age of 14 and 18, the opportunity to improve in common and creative subjects as a supplement to lower secondary school e.g. exam preparation courses and courses that prepare young people for the adult life as an engaged and active citizen.

Learning through leisure: A place to develop academic and personal qualifications

Courses or classes runs in shorter modules or over a six-month period. The course facilitators are typically from different backgrounds and with different skillsets. Youth Schools are not obliged to engage teachers with a degree in teaching; they can hire whomever

they like. Youth Schools often hire committed practitioners with a passion for a specific subject e.g. school teachers, volunteers, business professionals, tradesmen, athletes, artists etc. to teach their courses and classes. In learning through leisure, it is important that teachers and committed practitioners have a different approach to learning and teaching than those pupils experience at the municipal school. Teachers must be able to meet every pupil at eye-level and their courses must aim to develop young people's professional, academic and social skills.

An enjoyable read

Young people enjoy leafing through a brochure from the local Youth School or surf among the many offers on the Youth School's website. Nowhere else is it possible for young people to find a better variety of exciting and educative offers. Youth Schools offer the opportunity to acquire licenses and certificates such as a moped license and a first aid certificate. Moreover, Youth Schools offers language training and further training in Danish and mathematics. Young people are taught creative subjects: cooking, sewing, film direction and make-up classes. At Youth Schools

young people exercise, they enjoy nature and the outdoor. They arrange exchange programs in order to learn more about cultures and to get a better understanding of the global world we live in. Youth Schools provides a place for young people where they can get homework assistance, they can participate in gaming events, cultural events or large musical productions.

The sky is the limit – and if any young person has an idea for an activity, the youth school is ready to listen.

Community

When young people get the opportunity to spend time together across gender, age, social background and ethnicity they do more than just relax and enjoy each other's company – They develop social skills and the ability to work well with others.

For that reason, Youth Schools offers young people a safe and casual place to meet with assistance from adults if needed. These places can vary from each district but they often take place at youth clubs or cafés where young people can play videogames, pool or just relax in a big and cosy armchair.



It is a place where young people can meet up during the weekend or during school breaks.

Young people are not passive members of these places; they are active users who gets

a say in all activities planned. At some Youth Schools, they have organized youth committees to help run the Youth School.





Playmaker of leisure activities

Several organizations, associations and leisure-time clubs care about how young people choose to spend their free time. To provide young people with the best offers on leisure-time activities Youth Schools work in close cooperation with different organizations.

In Odense, the local Youth School functions as a distributor that allocates for young

people to spend their leisure time in an active way. They do more than offer different leisure-time activities; they also guide young people to other offers outside the Youth School. With great focus on marginalized young people who might not otherwise spend time on sound leisure activities. Youth Schools are facilitators of projects, collaborations and new leisure activities – much the same as they collaborate with local schools regarding the Open School program. One could argue that Youth Schools minimizes the gap between school and leisure.



Youthful environment

In Rebild Municipality they no longer have traditional youth clubs. Instead, they have established youth centres where young people are welcome from early in the afternoon and into the evening. The local Youth School runs the youth centre in collaboration with schools and other educational institutions.

Youth centres are located in different places throughout the municipality and offers leisure-time classes, club activities, homework cafés and professional guidance. Thus, providing a framework for various training and transitional programs.



BOOST YOUR SKILLS

A large percentage of young people in Denmark continue education after lower secondary school but a small group do not have the resources for further education due to special needs. To ensure the education of this group of young people the local Youth School provides great opportunities.

The municipal Youth School has always cherished working with young people who are challenged in life. What the young people need are the tools to improve their social, personal and academic skills to gain a foothold and find their place in life.



Youth Schools offers individual mentoring and launch specially organized and targeted courses to this group of young people.

Choose among the many options

Full-time teaching programs in Youth Schools are offered to young people who are challenged socially, personally or academically. A teaching program that offers a different learning environment with greater focus on individual needs and with a high degree of practical work.

Youth Schools are also involved in educational offers with a more practical approach to learning. An approach that prepares young people for the labour market and perhaps, encourages them for further education. Likewise, there are Youth Schools who provide educational offers for those who are mentally impaired or with special needs.

Another group who faces unusual challenges are young people with a different ethnic origin such as unaccompanied young refugees. Danish Youth Schools have years of experience teaching the Danish language and culture to young people from different

ethnic backgrounds. They also have years of experience offering special integration programs to ensure that this group of young people at some point will be a part of Danish society and school system.

Full-time teaching programs

Full-time teaching programs includes practical tasks during the day such as repair of bicycles and cooking for other pupils. These tasks are not considered chores they are included in the teachings and ties in with general school subjects such as Danish, mathematics and English.

The municipal Youth School have always safeguarded the rights of challenged young people



Pupils in lower secondary school have the opportunity to attend full-time teaching programs instead.

The full-time teaching programme is equal to lower secondary school, but it differs by using other teaching methods and takes place in a different school environment; a teaching environment where it is possible to meet the individual needs of young people. In addition to academic and practical teachings the full-time teaching programs also includes training in topics such as coping with social relationships, good manners and conflict resolution.

Other educational pathways

Several Youth Schools provides and takes part in providing special educational pro-

grams for young people. Vocational Basic Training (Erhvervsgrunduddannelsen – EGU) is a two-year program aimed at young people under 30 who do not possess the necessary skills to complete upper secondary education. Unlike upper secondary schools, the vocational program emphasizes on learning by doing and much less on theory. An individual educational plan is made for each student before school starts. The course can be composed of elements from different types of schools.

Combined Secondary education (Kombineret Ungdomssuddannelse – KUU) is a two-year vocational upper secondary education for young people under 25, who do not have the prerequisite for implementing a vocational or secondary education. The program is offered in cooperation with several educational institutions including

Youth Schools. The program is organized and based on industry needs and consists of workshop-training and academic courses and partly of special vocational subjects and vocational training in companies.

At the forefront

Youth Schools collaborates with municipalities and the SSP cooperation to prevent crime committed by young people. The goal is to constantly be aware of young people heading in the wrong direction and how to help them get back on track. In other words, to prevent crime, violence and abuse among young people.

There is also the task of preventing and creating awareness on topics such as peer-to-peer counselling on drugs, abuse and sexuality. Many Youth Schools collaborate with outreach workers who is present and visible in social housing areas, which is one way, Youth Schools establish close contact with young people.

In government appointed ghetto areas and other social housing areas, youth schools cooperate closely with different stakeholders to create leisure activities in the area and to initiate sound solutions in relation to education, employment and a good leisure life.





Helping young asylum seekers

In Sorø, it is the local Youth School's job to find lodgings and help young asylum seekers – especially unaccompanied young people coming to Denmark. When young people arrive to the municipality from one of Denmark's centers for asylum seekers, it is a team from the local Youth School who helps them settle into new lodgings. A contact person from the youth school acts as a mentor and helps the young asylum seeker academically, socially and personally. It is the mentor's job to introduce asylum seekers to the Danish educational system and leisure activities in the area.



Mentoring in Vejle

It is not always easy to be young and some need a trusted adult to support and advise them on everyday life. The young people may need help to get up in the morning, someone to help them survey their personal finances or the support to establish a good network. They may also require help finding an apprenticeship or hobbies.

Vejle Youth School has named such a mentoring program Grandfather. The Grandfather program consists of a voluntary corps of resourceful and mature adults who helps young people in the program to prepare for further education. Each young person in the program is assigned a mentor who supports and helps them to overcome any academic, social or personal challenges.





On their own terms

Full-time teaching programs are made up of both boys and girls. When dealing with vulnerable young people, especially girls who are very quiet, it is sometimes beneficial to

separate by gender. In Faxe Youth School, they have established girls only classes and by experience, they have learned that these classes provide the young girls with the peace and quiet needed to develop and learn on their own terms. Another initiative from

Faxe Youth School, is the hiring of an abuse consultant and a psychologist to help young people on the right path and prepare them for further education.

WITH GREAT INFLUENCE COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Learning through leisure is an educational program offered by Youth Schools and is based upon voluntariness and pupils taking responsibility for their own learning. At Youth Schools responsibility and influence is two sides of the same coin. Young people who are involved with Youth Schools are trained to take responsibility for their own learning and how they can influence education, the community and society.

Two sides of the same coin

It is clearly stated in the mission statement that Youth Schools must: "develop young people's interest in and ability to participate actively in a democratic society".

Danish Youth Schools live and practice by these words. Young people are represented in the youth schools board of directors, they are active in club- and youth councils, they participate in conferences and international exchange programs.

Several Youth Schools participates in the preparation of the local youth policy, as Youth Schools have much experience with young people and knows how to involve them in political and democratic processes. In the same way as many Youth Schools together with pupils participates in the Danish people's political festival held each year.

To promote democratic processes and young people's interests in politics, a network was established in 2000 called DUSK-net. A network which purpose is to upgrade youth democracy in schools. Furthermore, this group of young people are also represented in a committee counselling the minister of education.





Young people in council

Throughout the country, young people are invited to the city council chambers where they take the politicians' seats and discuss relevant topics with local politicians. We call this Young people in council.

The democratic debate revolves around topics such as the need for internships, what it means to be Danish, and other highly relevant topics from a young person's perspective. Young people in council provides young people with the opportunity to influence their own lives and at the same time increases their interest in the democratic processes. The topics discussed and the conclusions made will afterwards be discussed and considered by the city council.



HOW EVERYTHING STARTED - A BRIEF LOOK BACK

In today's society, we have great concerns about radicalisation of young people. This was also the case 75 years ago during the Second World War. The concern for radicalisation during WWII was one of the reasons why Danish Youth Schools were established. Before WWII, young people in Denmark were offered different optional education programmes but it was not until 1942 that Youth Schools were written into the Danish legislation. By offering evening classes at Youth Schools, the aim was to qualify young people for vocational life. Especially, those who left school early.

Since 1942, the law concerning Danish Youth Schools have been improved and extended many times. The target group has been specified to young people between the age of 14 and 18 and in 1975 the Youth Schools full-time teaching programs were introduced as an alternative for young people who had a hard time in municipal schools. In 1979, it became compulsory to require a permit to drive a moped and this became a great task for Youth Schools.

The number of Youth Schools grew steadily through the years but due to reforms in

1970 and 2007 the number decreased. Even though, there has been a decrease in Youth Schools the volume and variety of tasks have increased during the past years.

Education and youth participation in democratic life has always been a central task. Today Youth Schools has become a leading partner in the joint effort to help young people succeed in life.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Danish Youth School Association is a nationwide organization for all Danish municipal Youth Schools. An association aiming at strengthening the dialogue with and between Youth Schools.

The Danish Youth School Association organises conferences and courses, launch larger development projects and facilitates networks aimed to secure information and strengthen the dialogue between Youth Schools, ministries, politicians and other relevant business partners and stakeholders.

If you want to know more about the Danish Youth Schools and the Youth School Association please contact us by phone +45 66 149 149 or by email ung@ungdomsskoleforeningen.dk.





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