



BUSKERUD
FYLKESKOMMUNE

ung INVEST

**ARBEIDS-
INSTITUTTET
BUSKERUD**

**A SCHOOL EXPERIENCE THAT CONVEYS THE
JOY OF LEARNING AND A SENSE OF MASTERY**



UNGINVEST IN BRIEF

UngInvest – Arbeidsinstituttet Buskerud (AIB) is a county municipal, practice-oriented and strength-based training offer for young people aged 16-24. The aim is to recruit and retain young people in upper-secondary education (upper-secondary school and apprenticeships) such that more young people gain qualifications and become attractive prospects for future working life. Trusting relationships are built through dialogue that emphasises the young person's strengths, enabling each individual to start using his or her unique potential. This contributes to higher completion rates, improved learning outcomes and young people becoming active members of society with jobs and meaningful lives. Admissions are ongoing throughout the school year, and it must be possible for someone to obtain a place within two days.

UngInvest AIB's vision is: «We learn together every day in a secure, strength-based and humour-filled environment, enabling all the young people to find their way in the education system».

MINIMISING DROP-OUT RATES AND MAXIMISING LEARNING OUTCOMES

UngInvest AIB wants to help young people to believe in themselves and their opportunities. We work with the young people to create positive pictures of a future where they have a job, their own income, a car, a family – an ordinary life with as much fun and well-being as possible. We facilitate flexible ways of learning, adapted to the young people's starting point and needs. We work closely with upper-secondary schools, vocational training boards and the business community, as well as other support services such as the Norwegian Welfare and Labour Administration (NAV), the educational and psychological counselling service (PPT) and the Follow-up Service. A coordinated approach is effective, particularly when it involves young people, parents/guardians and partners in a genuine, offensive and caring way, with high expectations of what we can achieve. All teaching is linked to the national curricula for upper-secondary education.

TARGET GROUP

UngInvest AIB works with young people who, for various reasons, are not in upper-secondary education. Young people may be uncertain about their educational options, and need time to gain clarity and motivation before continuing. Some need to catch up in fundamental subjects such as Norwegian, mathematics and English before they are ready to cope with upper-secondary school or enter working life.

Many young people have experienced a range of challenges in their lives that mean that time and energy have been devoted to coping with day-to-day life. These young people have little energy and few resources left to concentrate on school subjects. There may also be issues with learning difficulties that have not been adequately dealt with, and young people perceiving themselves as failures. The experience of not being seen and understood means that they lose faith in their ability to do anything. Everything becomes useless. This is sometimes confused with laziness or stupidity. The young people often need time and positive experiences with adults they can rely on before trust is built. This is where we at *UngInvest AIB* want to help.

ORGANISATION

UngInvest AIB has four departments in Buskerud: Kongsberg, Ringerike, Modum and Drammen. Each of the departments has practical workshops, as well as a pedagogic workshop providing teaching in Norwegian, mathematics, English, IT, social studies, etc. All teaching is based on the upper-secondary school education programme and national curricula. Work placements are used to help young people decide what they want to do, and involve close follow-up and skilled careers guidance. *UngInvest AIB* also enables young people to pick up subjects from the 10-year compulsory primary and lower-secondary school and provides support for external exams.

Young people can be part of *UngInvest AIB* in two different ways, something which provides important flexibility.

- Those who do not feel ready for upper-secondary education can apply to *UngInvest AIB* via the standard upper-secondary school admissions procedure. They then have a full year to mature, decide what they want to do and top up their basic skills. This does not «use up» the entitlement to upper-secondary education.
- Young people can apply to an upper-secondary school and request all or part of their education to be assigned to *UngInvest AIB*. In this case, *UngInvest AIB* is used as an alternative teaching arena, and the young people have student status at the school. There is close collaboration on adaptation, linked to an individual training programme.

HOW WE WORK

At UngInvest AIB, we want young people to be aware of the opportunities open to them rather than focusing on limitations. Each individual must experience a sense of being genuinely wanted and important, and that we want to learn with them. This increases young people's belief that they mean something to others, and that they really can achieve something and want to.

At UngInvest AIB, our teaching effort is continuous, which means changing the young person's way of thinking from being defensive and destructive to offensive and constructive. This is linked to theoretical approaches, for example from positive psychology, and takes its starting point in the strength-based applied research approach Appreciative Inquiry (AI). This way of thinking builds on learning-based rather than control-based leadership, and entails systematic investigations of when organisations and people function at their very best.

This is a relational approach to learning and change work, with the emphasis on utilising the strengths of each individual. This triggers joy in learning, pride and curiosity. This helps to create results that exceed expectations. Relational responsibility develops, such that we jointly take responsibility for creating an inclusive learning community.





OUTCOMES

UngInvest AIB carries out annual follow-up surveys, the results of which have attracted national and international attention. In summary, the surveys show that between 75% and 85% of participants are in upper-secondary education or work a year later. If we add in other active measures, such as adapted work or courses under the aegis of NAV, sheltered workshops, caring for own children, military service or in a treatment programme, the results show that more than 90% are involved in some form of positive activity. Very few young people end up unemployed.

UngInvest AIB was one of the projects included in a socioeconomic analysis conducted by the international certification and classification body DNV GL in the period 2013-14. The analysis showed that for each krone of public money that goes into *UngInvest AIB*, Norwegian society gets five kroner back. The analysis showed a significant development in social and psychological capital among the young people who have been students with *UngInvest AIB*. This means that the young people are building resources they can use when life deals them a poor hand.

UNGINVEST ON TOUR

– young people as applied researchers

The young people involved in *UngInvest AIB* want to help all young people in Norway to experience the joy of learning and a sense of mastery every day. Having experienced being seen and heard, and having regained their motivation for education, they want to help more young people to have this experience. The young people themselves, and the employees of *UngInvest AIB*, are keen to share methods, expertise and experiences with other schools and services that work with children and young people in Norway, and learn with them. It's a question of working offensively! *UngInvest AIB* wants to focus attention on all the good things happening in Norwegian schools. This is why, from 2016 to 2019, *UngInvest AIB* is embarking on a nationwide tour to highlight positive learning stories, identify the success factors behind them and, in this way, spread the approach and methodology to others. We hope this will contribute to an even better school experience for all children and young people.

Would your school or service like a visit? Contact *UngInvest AIB* at post@aib.bfk.no / tlf. 32 26 12 00 (01 or 02).

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME IN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

UngInvest AIB is collaborating with the University College of Southeast Norway and Lent AS on a programme in Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The programme is session-based and organised in three courses: **15 credits + 15 credits + 30 credits**. See website for start dates.

The programme is based at *UngInvest AIB*'s premises in Drammen, and provides an opportunity to experience the strength-based learning community at close quarters.

AI is an alternative to other theories of development work that assume that there is a problem and that the aim of the development work is to solve the problems. The idea behind AI is that the aim of development work should be far more offensive than solving problems. The aim is to release the maximum potential of organisations and/or people. The emphasis of the programme is on training up practical skills in leading appreciative change work and in using different strength-based methods for learning when working with children and young people.

Read more at:

<https://www.usn.no/studier/finn-studier/larer-lektor-og-pedagogikk/appreciative-inquiry/>



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