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Learning from young people's narratives and biographies

In the three-year-long MaCE project, students and scholars across UK, Norway and Denmark talked to more than 120 young people about their life conditions. Their school experiences, family life, friendships, concerns and aspirations. On the basis of the interviewing technique *The indirect Approach*, we have learned from young people's narratives and biographies, and the insights have sparked challenging discussions and informed our views on marginalization in education. Marginalization is many things, as is education. What unites the reflections and findings in the MaCE project, and indeed in this issue, is that they all derive from the perspectives of young people, who experienced the joys and sorrows of forming a trajectory build around schools, family and friends. Therefore, we all wish to thank the young people that agreed to share their narratives and biographies as informants in the project. Without their generosity, there could have been no MaCE. There could have been no learning.

In the first paper, *The importance of friendship and social relationships in youth*, authors Ruth H. Walttila, Rikke Jacobsen & Marie Møller-Skau examine the importance of friendships, or the lack of them, in young people's lives. Struggling to understand social codes and choosing to be alone are negative patterns, that can be difficult to break out of.

Marianne Vikanes' & Susann Steinvik's paper entitled *Relationships as a possible risk factor* is also about relationships and their strong influence on our development. The analysis illustrates that an environment with negative relationships can pose a risk of marginalization that affects one's self-esteem, mental health and social life.

The third paper, *Bullying as social exclusion processes - effect and repercussion*, by Mette Elgaard Dyrholm & Camilla Haven Pagh, is also about difficult and unhealthy relationships. Dyrholm and Pagh explore the effects and repercussions of having experienced bullying, and they show that feelings of depression and struggling in education still affect the informants in their adult lives.

From negative social heritage to breaking patterns - Emma's story, by Hana Mohamed & Josefine Smed Andersen, revolves around the informant Emma, that experienced being let down by various caregivers and teachers in school. Mohamed and Andersen accentuate that supportive teachers might have helped Emma change her situation much earlier, and the paper is a reminder of the school's crucial responsibility.

The fifth paper, *The experience of adapted learning*, by Christine Vibe Langerud, Kamilla Lærum Sandok & Thomas Lindstad, examines adapted learning and how it impacts young learners' motivation in school. Informants express that when teachers did not build the school activities around the young learners' prerequisites, it affected their motivation and interest negatively.

In Christian Delfs Lehmann's, Daniel Andreas Bye Walus' & Mikkel Madsen's paper *The importance of the caregiver's actions*, the authors highlight the negative consequences of lacking caring skills in professional practices. On the contrary, when young people are met with understanding, positive changes are possible. Ultimately, Lehmann, Walus & Madsen encourage all professionals to reflect a simple, but very important question.

The seventh paper, entitled *TO BE SEEN = TO LEARN. The teacher-student relationship and its significance for professional development*, by Veronica Rønning & Lillian Dyhre Lia, revolves around teachers' ability to see their students and be clear leaders and how such competences help to develop safe relationships between teachers and their students. The paper concludes that safe relationships create better conditions for learning and coping.

Fathia Mahmoud Farah's paper, *"We had dreams" – In-between duty and ability. A qualitative study of academic expectations and support from home within young men with minority background*, is about young men with minority background, and the expectations and (sometimes lack of) academic support that they experience from their parents. The pressure to do well in school is related to issues regarding mental health.

The last paper in this issue is a contribution from German scholar Marlena Dorniak from University of Bielefeld in Germany. The paper, entitled *Anchoring and Breaking Points - Biographies of Young People without School-Leaving Certificates*, revolves around young people's experiences with exclusion, stigmatisation and structural violence. Dorniak accentuates that *"there must be a shift of the responsibility for performance in the educational process away from the individual person to the educational system"*, and this notion is important to keep in mind for all professionals working with young people in youth work, schools and higher education.

Happy reading – and learning!

David Thore Gravesen

Editor