
WORKSHOP IN BÆRUM KOMMUNE



Organisation's profile

Bærum - Norway on a small scale

It is often said that Bærum is Norway in miniature. Here, examples of most of Norway's varied nature can be found.

The municipality enjoys a sheltered position, protected from the north and open towards the sun and the sea to the south. We have it all: the fjord with its spell-binding islands and small island communities, wide, open verdant valleys, cultivated land, rolling landscapes, challenging rock faces and dense woodland. In short, an ideal place to seek peace and quiet, but at the other extreme - also a place to enjoy a bustling town life.

Bærum covers an area of 191.3 square kilometres and borders on Norway's capital to the east. An idyllic coastline stretching from Oslo to Asker, forms the municipality's southern boundary. The border with Asker, further inland to the south west, is characterised by steep hills. To the north west, beyond Sollihøgda lies the Municipality of Hole in Ringerike.

Quality schools and kindergartens

Bærum has long been a pioneer among municipalities when it comes to education, and several exciting reforms have been implemented. Quality has always been of paramount importance as regards teaching and pastoral care and the high technical standard of the school buildings. Bærum's schools are the workplace of 2,500 staff and 14,000 pupils. Pupils are taught at 23 primary schools, ten lower secondary schools and two combined primary and lower secondary schools. Haug school and Resource Centre attends to the needs of children with various learning difficulties. Some 1,200, or 9.3 per cent, of Bærum's school children belong to linguistic minorities, and mother tongue classes are given in 45 different languages. In addition, Bærum has an international school for foreign pupils and one Rudolf Steiner school.

Bærum's kindergarten facilities are well above the country's average. Some 2,575 children attend the 46 municipal kindergartens, whilst more than 2,775 go to private kindergartens. In all, there are 138 kindergartens in Bærum.

Within the municipality's borders there are seven upper secondary schools, two of which specialise in vocational training in addition to courses in general subjects, and one of which teaches commercial and secretarial courses. There is also a school specialising in top-level athletics.

Security for the young and the elderly

Every effort is made to ensure that Bærum's senior citizens feel secure in their everyday life. One of the municipality's objectives is that the elderly in Bærum should be able to live in their own homes

for as long as possible. To this end, the municipality is concentrating on services adapted to the individual user, eg. district nursing, home help, alarm call systems, benefits for carers, and stays at various lengths in an institution (<http://www.baerum.kommune.no>).

Place and date(s) of the session (8 hours)

1304 Sandvika - Norway, 1 March 2005.

Application field

Public sector, public services

Creative Phases involved

Predisposition, Idea Generation, Evaluation

Description of the participants

There were all in all 22 persons that participated in the workshop. These people represent the following departments at Baerum Kommune (in Norwegian):

- Department Service development (Tjenesteutvikling),
- Department Social Development (Samfunnsutvikling),
- Development of Fornebu – leader network; manager of a kinder garden, principal of a school, manager of hospital, manager of for a department for handicapped, manager of rehabilitation center and a manger for the “health office.

Agenda of the session

| Starts on | Ends on | Item |
|------------------------|---------|--|
| Tuesday 1 March | | |
| 09.00 | 09.30 | Introduction and CREATE project presentation |
| 09.30 | 10.30 | About creativity and creative techniques |
| 10.30 | 11.30 | Presentation Visual Explorer |
| 11.30 | 12.30 | Lunch |
| 12.30 | 13.30 | Exercise: Visual Explorer |
| 13.30 | 13.45 | Coffee break |
| 13.45 | 14.45 | Presentation: Provocation & Movement |
| 14.45 | 15.45 | Exercise: Provocation & Movement |
| 15.45 | 16.00 | Final discussion and conclusions |

Description of the session

PREDISPOSITION PHASE

We began the workshop telling about the create project and the participants seemed very excited about the project. Then we, led by Sebastiano Lombardo, held a lecture about the principals behind

creativity thinking, focusing on Lateral thinking. The point of lateral thinking is that many problems require a different perspective to solve successfully. Lombardo referred to Edward de Bono (1967).

Our main purpose was to raise the awareness of the participants about the importance and usefulness of creativity and of predisposing them to the use of creative techniques for the following phases. The participants reported that they have very limited experiences with working with creative techniques in their daily work. Therefore they found the introduction phase very interesting and useful.

Using pictures in creativity Work

In this workshop we choose to include a technique called “the visual explorer (VE)” which is not a part of CREATE’s basic techniques. This choice was done to satisfy a specific need, expressed by Bærum, for focusing on creativity in leadership development. This technique involves the use of pictures working with different creativity and management challenges, and focuses on the non verbal aspects of problem solving. Firstly, Tord M. Mortensen, psychologist and researcher in SINTEF, held a lecture about creativity in a leadership development context. Mortensen argued the importance of using symbols in creative thinking such as pictures, stories etc. This technique is based on the same principles for creative thinking that we can find in the Provocation and Movement technique.

The Visual Explorer Exercise

After the introduction phase we divided the participants into three different groups. Each of the groups was then asked to identify and focus on one individual leadership challenge, and then chose one picture from 204 different pictures that they thought illustrated their challenge. Finally the different groups each presented their work in plenum.

VE is comprised of 204 high-quality color images and the main purpose is to support constructive dialogue. VE is also a way to make sense of complexity that we find in organizations. The participants found the exercise very useful in order to be able to facilitate a dialogue for discussion of difficult management dilemmas. We asked the participants to write down their experiences so they later on could show and tell other members of their respective organizations. The idea is that this exercise could be valuable in building a shared understanding of complex problem areas, and then prepare for taking concrete actions according to the dilemmas discussed.



Provocation & Movement

Then Sebastiano Lombardo held a lecture about the ground principals in “Provocation and movement”. See pictures from the séance:



Then we once more divided the participants into three different working groups. Tord Mortensen, Sebastiano Lombardo and Kenneth Kongsvold (Researchers, SINTEF) facilitated the exercises. The groups followed the instructions and defined one provocation each. Then they used different techniques to move (movement). One of the groups ended up with a new slogan in their department.

An example from one of the groups:

Focus: Public Health

Goal: Developing a strategy plan for Bærum kommune’s work with public health issues.

Some truths and facts:

- People should have good health
- Our organisation has the responsibility to help people have good health
- Motion and fresh air are good for your health

- We need a plan for coordinated actions
- New social groups (immigrants) deserve particular attention

Some Provocations (POs)

- We do not need to think about public health
- The strategy document should not cover public health issues
- Elderly people must be ignored
- We force everybody to stay at home all the time

Chosen Provocation:

- Elderly people must be ignored

Some Movements

- What are the specific need of elderly people in Bærum
- We should have a couple of chapters on elderly people
- It is important to stress the relationship between younger and older generations
- We could interview people on the needs of elderly people in Bærum
- Collaboration with the responsible for outdoor activity services is necessary

The idea generation that followed the Movement session contributed to define the contents of the strategy plan.

Conclusions

The participants in “Baerum Kommune” found both “visual explorer” and “Provocation and Movement” very interesting and useful. They reported that there is a need for creative thinking and practice in Baerum Kommune and that they will try to use the techniques in their own organizations. Some of them have already started introducing both techniques in their work processes with success.

References:

Charles J. Pauls and David M. Horth. *Visual Explorer. Picturing Approaches to Complex Challenges*. 2001.