

Group report on IUW 2022 in the module 15.4.: International Development



International University Week in Porsgrunn, Norway

Monday, 25th April 2022 – Friday, 29th April 2022

University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer

Faculty Social Work and Health

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International University Week in Porsgrunn, Norway

Introduction:

We are eight students from Emden and were lucky enough to take part in the International University Week (IUW). After being drawn for the University of south-eastern Norway (USN) in Norway, we started planning the trip and getting to know each other better. We agreed to travel by train and boat, as this was the more sustainable alternative to flying and so we started our journey with the train journey from Emden to Kiel. After that we drove with the Color line from Kiel to Oslo and spent our first night on the cruise ship Color line Magic. We had already decided to go to Oslo three days before the beginning of the IUW and so we spent two more days sightseeing in Oslo. After we had explored almost every corner of Oslo by bus, bicycle or on foot, we went by train from Oslo to Porsgrunn on Sunday to check in at the planned hotel. On Monday the program started at the USN in Porsgrunn. All participants introduced themselves, their university and their country. Afterwards there were two lectures on the topics: “The Norwegian welfare state – more than just oil money” and “friluftsliv – nature experiences and Outdoor Activities in social work”.



Personal experience:

One of eight girls was able to get the personal experience. The personal experience is the possibility to spend the nights in an apartment from a Norwegian.

After we arrived in Porsgrunn by train, a Norwegian girl picked me up from the train station. We drove to her apartment with the car and after we arrived, she showed me my room and I met her puppy. I shared the room with a girl from Spain. The Norwegian and I talked for a bit and we got to know each other better. It was very interesting to learn so many things about another country and about her person itself. It turned out that many things were different in Norway than in Germany, but it turned out that many things were also the same as in Germany. We talked for many hours until we had to pick up the Spanish girl. We picked her up from the train station and drove back home. The Norwegian girl drove us to university and picked us up as well. She tried to spend as much time in the University as she could. She was also a part of the Party on Tuesday and we had much fun. We all recognized very quickly that we had a good connection to each other. We spent many evenings talking and watching movies and her friends came over to meet us as well. We enjoyed the company of each other a lot.

We were very very sad at the goodbye. Even when it was only a total of 5 days together, it felt like we are friends since forever. All in all was is one of the best experience of the whole trip, because I got to meet many Norwegian and got to know many things about Norway. I can highly recommend doing the personal experience because you can meet many new friends and sometimes you get insider tips for your trip.

Programme & workshops

On Tuesday and Wednesday we took part in workshops that we could choose. We had the options:

1. Using leisure activities to reach marginalised young black men in open drug scenes in downtown Oslo: The Youth-in-Charge Project.
2. Design Thinking - workshop in Social Work
3. Diversity and inclusion is the way to go!
4. Green pedagogy - which was the workshop that we (the students from Emden) did!
5. Therapeutic interventions for outdoor and indoor activities within the Narrative Therapy paradigm.
6. Get a grip on resilience and agility.
7. Animal Assisted interventions.
8. Rehabilitation and First Aid in social work.
9. Gatelagsfotball - Co-creation and Recovery on the Pitch and in the Community.
10. Working with Talent.
11. Diversity in social work.
12. Keep talking and nobody explodes.

As the theme of the International University Week in Porsgrunn was “**activities in social work**”, all the workshops had something in common with that. Every student took part in 4 workshops. I took part in workshop 1, which was about a project in Oslo about *marginalised young black men in drug scenes*. The moderators presented their project and spoke about how to reach those people. The keywords were: Provide food, do concrete activities with set dates (f. ex. Paintball, Movies, Escape Room, Bowling, ...), travel with them (Milan, London, Kiel, Barcelona, ...) and just offer them something that is worth spending time there instead of selling drugs on the street. The workshop about *Gatelagsfotball* had a similar topic: People that struggle with mental health issues or drug addicts can join the football team which is especially for them. They train together but also get food and can speak to a social worker before or after the training. The team spirit, the set dates and the fact, that they have to come sober to the training helps them to get a (better) daily routine. Statistics showed, that only in 2021 around 450 people of those 29 Gatelagsfotball Clubs in Norway got a new job and are working now. It's about another way of using football, instead of only seeing it as a “money-machine” and only about winning. The moderators said, if they are on the field they are already winners as they are starting to get a change in life.

Green pedagogy workshops:

The green pedagogy workshops had been supervised by our group. On Tuesday and Wednesday four of us lead through the workshop for three hours. The workshops consisted of games which could only be managed by working together as a team. They took place outside among the Lavoo (campsite) and near the fireplace. On both days the games started on a low level and got more difficult in every run.

Most of the participants/students had never heard about green pedagogy before. Green pedagogy enhances individual and collective processes of environmental knowledge and helps to implement human skills by studying and by making experiences yourself. First we introduced our three current pedagogy projects in Emden: **pedagogy in movement, pedagogy in aesthetic expression and green pedagogy.**

For warming up we did an exercise of mindfulness meditation. Everyone should find a place in nature to feel welcome, safe and cosy and stay there for 5 minutes closing one's eyes. A reflexion followed what impact silence and nature sounds had on the participants.

The group was divided into two participating teams at the same time. At the end of Tuesday everyone should have passed 4 games. On Wednesday new participants could join in.

Game 1 - Building a marble run. (green pedagogy):

Every person had to take part in building a complete marble run by managing a single rain each. The marble was not allowed to fall down, everyone had to communicate and move carefully being part of a whole unit.

Game 2 – drawing alive (aesthetic expression)

A large piece of paper was lying in the middle, each person held onto the end of a different coloured cord which was connected to a crayon in the middle. Drawing determined forms every member of the group had to pull the cord to make it work.

Game 3 - human pyramid (pedagogy in movement)

A human pyramid was formed by persons who were first encouraged to build a solid ground level out of their bodies which was followed by the next body-level until the last remaining person built the top off the pyramid.

Game 4 – viking (green pedagogy)

A wooden figure (the Viking) was placed on a black tarp. The group had to carry the tarp with the Viking over an obstacle while the viking was not allowed to tumble. Raising the level of difficulty the next turn talking was not allowed, the third turn talking was not allowed and every second person had to close his eyes.

After the games the whole group reunited to do rope skipping with a very long rope, which was swung by two people in a high arc. First everyone ran through the arc, then everyone ran in, skipped the rope one time and ran out, then one person ran in, skipped the rope and when the first one ran out the second one ran in. At last more and more people ran in and tried to skip the rope at the same time.

At the very end the participants were asked for a feedback: they had fun and enjoyed being outside and being in contact with others. Being not familiar with the games they appreciated to make new experiences. Most participants praised the games because they planned to use them practically in their study and work.

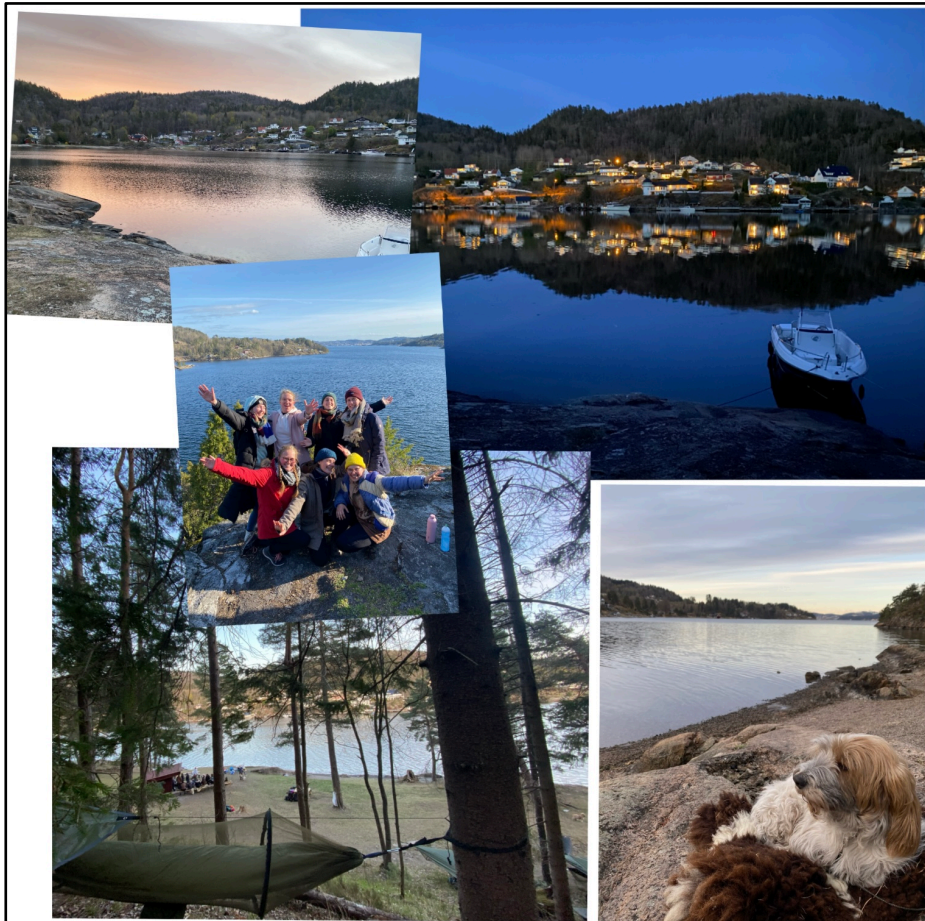


Wilderness experience:

On Wednesday afternoon we took the bus with the other students to the island of Kattoya. As soon as we arrived with the bus, we had to walk with our luggage a long distance through the forest. After finishing the hike at a clearing, we could not believe our eyes. It was just so incredibly beautiful. We dropped off all our luggage and went for a hike deeper into the forest and up a mountain. After we walked all the way up the hill, we have seen the fjord and mountains in the background. Everyone took pictures and enjoyed the view. When we got back to the camp, a Norwegian teacher showed us how to hang up our hammocks and what to watch out for. Afterwards we were allowed to choose two trees and hang up our hammocks wherever we want. We choose a nice place as a group together and set up our camp. It turned out that it was not as easy as it looked like at the beginning. Before we were able to set up the camp, we had to look for strong trees. It turned out as a challenge because most of the ribbons were either too short or too long, which means we exchanged ribbons for each other until it finally fitted. We also hung up a wind sail over our hammocks. So we don't get wet in case it rains. It was also less windy under the sail.

As soon as we set up all our hammocks, we went down to the campfire. There were two students cooking dinner. The rice was boiling on the campfire, a sheep got grilled on the grill and soup was cooked on two gas cookers. Everyone tried to help and after cooking we all ate

together at the campfire and talked. We went to our hammocks after enjoying the company of the other students. It was a challenge to get into the hammocks without falling off again. It was definitely an adventurous and cold night, but still a great experience in the wilderness of Norway.



Norway:

Norway is known for its beautiful nature with many fjords, and I think I can say we all agree. I knew before that Norway is sparsely populated but I was still astonished that there are only 5 million inhabitants in total. This is like combining Berlin and Hamburg and that's it. Especially Oslo felt so relaxing for capital city. There was no typical hustle which you would expect keeping in mind that not even 700.000 people live there. In one of our lectures, we learned about the different types of welfare states. Norway is social-democratic welfare state whereas Germany is a conservative welfare state. In case of Norway this means that healthcare is free for example. Another interesting fact we got to know about was the Norwegian like to keep to themselves and their social bubbles in their everyday life. Therefore no one would greet a stranger on the street even if the town is rather small. However, if you are in nature, it is common to greet everyone you meet on your way. When it comes to the university, I noticed that the relationship between students and lecturers is pretty close, and they are often on first

name basis. Further I must say that I was very impressed how modern the campus was. Furthermore, the learning spaces were very aesthetically pleasing and created a positive learning environment. On top of that they have for their “vernepleier” (=disability nurse) students a hospital-like setup to practice their clinical skills. This setup can actually be used for emergencies in real life.



Reflection:

We are very happy to have met so many new people. The exchange with the international students was very well. Everyone was open and empathetic. The first contacts were made as soon as we arrived in Porsgrunn and at the hotel. The language barriers could be broken down quickly and everyone was very error friendly. We mostly talked in English. It didn't matter, if the grammar was used correctly, other persons helped to find answers to word searches. We noticed that (almost) everyone wanted to socialize and meet new people, whether it was at breakfast in the hotel, on campus, at the party, during the Wilderness Experience or during

free time. In our group meanwhile we tried to speak English to brush up on it. I personally think that the exchange has been even better, if the language skills had been even better, too. We found many similarities (also with regard to the studies), news and other approaches could be made known to each other through the always possible exchange and the workshops during the time at the University. Learning with international students was easier than expected. Many people exchanged mobile numbers or subscribed to each other on social platforms, sent each other photos and videos. Some made first friendships and received invitations to visit their hometowns for a vacation. When our group was back in Oslo, two girls from Vienna, Austria, came to visit us. We had a game night together.

We are very thankful for the great experiences we had during the international Week in Porsgrunn. It was a pleasant experience for all of us, we made new friends and had also many interesting conversations and discussions with other students from different countries. The different workshops were rich in variety, instructive and funny. We learned a lot during visiting the IUW 2022 in Porsgrunn. It was a decision that none of us regrets. We would like to thank all the students from the UNL University in Porsgrunn, It was a unforgettable time in Norway.

