

# INTERVIEW GUIDE

## on 'Empowerment'

*Empower: 'to promote self-actualisation or influence'*

Describe one example of 'empowerment' practice (training, methodology or strategy) of your host organisation. Before describing the practice research the following aspects and use the headings as lay-out for your report.

### 1. Title of the empowerment practice

**TO DO WORSE - LESS WORSE.**

**“Don't talk with me about the difficulties – talk with me about the opportunities”.**

### 2. Give a short description of the practice you selected

**The Migrations Boards 2-3 conversations with the rejected asylum seeker families about returning to home country, because they especially works with empowerment. They use “lösningfokuserad samtalmetik” as method. A technic which is target on solutions. The focus is on the rejected families own solutions. The Migration Board Staffs are helping the rejected families to find new ways to build up new solutions in their life. The staffs are focused, clear, believable and working with open questions. They make discussion in a way which generate and encourage bright sight, cooperation and believe in asylum seekers own resources and responsibility, even though the situation are very serious and difficult.**

**15 % of the asylum seekers are rejected because of the Dublin Regulation. 85 % tries their case in Sweden.**

**85% of those who try their case are rejected and has to return to their home country.**

### 3. Policy

**It is an informal practice.**

**There is no official statement of using the method, but all case officers are supposed to have training in the method.**

**Other units of Migration Board in Sweden doesn't necessarily work with it. It is different in Karlstad, because they all work with the method.**

### 4. Development

**It has been giving from the government that all units have to place the responsible for rejected asylum seeker to certain case officers. The different units may decide how they will organize it.**

In Karlstad there are four people who work with the rejected families since 1. April 2008. They believe that it is important to keep the competence in a small group, so they can discuss, help and develop their practice in the unit. It will also be possible in a small group to change the cases among the case officers if problems occur.

They are all four educated in the method in different times caused by the time of employment.

#### **5. Target group**

Empowerment practice in Karlstad Migration Board is related to the residents, but it also influenced the total environment for both staff and residents, because the “good practice”, the attitudes and values are spread to the whole unit.

I noticed that the method is used all over in the unit and ex. also at the police who works with the rejected asylum seekers returning to home country.

Also Traumatic centre in Karlstad are working with the skills.

Children does not normally participate in the conversation.

#### **6. Timing**

The theme for fall exchange 2008 in Enaro is empowerment in relation to return and/or resettlement so my exchange has had that focus, and the following is related to return, even though the method is used in all the phases.

When the asylum seeker has got negative/rejection there is a change of case officer because the unit want to make it clear, there are a change to something else, a new situation. There are directive that the time from rejection to deportation must not be longer than 2 month. It can be estimated from family to family.

The special case officer for the rejected asylum seekers will have 2-3 meetings with the family. The case officer will use the communication skills from the method very clearly to help the asylum seekers to feel motivated to take the responsibility and to make the return to home country as successful as possible.

#### **7. Methodology**

It is an individual guidance.

The Migration Board are buying courses where the staffs are educated and trained in the method. Everyone who is working in the reception centre in Karlstad/Säffle has been trained or will be trained in the near future. Different levels depend of the function of job. (About the course see app 1.)

There a no manuals, but guidelines to read before the conversation. (See app. 2)

#### **8. Implementation**

The case officer is responsible for implementing the program.

When a new case officer begins working with rejected asylum seekers in the Migration Board the ordinary staff will supervise and support the new person. The small group discuss and help each other to get very good skills in communication.

Sometimes they are two case officers to talk with the family/person to support each other, or to develop ones skills.

Normally it will take a year to educate a new case officer.

They also have half day supervision every month with a psychologist to talk and train their skills.

Each case officer has about 100 asylum seekers to take care of. They are not all rejected persons.

They are called Handläggare in Swedish. The direct translation is “put hands on” or “take hands of”. It means the case officer has the responsibility of the case.

## **9. Accessibility**

The rejected family or person will receive a letter from the case officer with a date and time for the conversation, and the purpose. They are all ready been told about the rejection by the advocate or court.

If it is necessary there will be interpreter either telephone or in person by the conversation.

One can say it's voluntary to participate, but it has severe consequences if the family/person don't show up. They will have a new invitation, but if they don't come or if they will not cooperate, then the case will be handled over to the police. The case officer can also use economic consequences in a short period to motivate to cooperate before overhand the case to the police.

The conversation is a part of their asylum case.

## **10. Participation**

The asylum seekers do not have any influence on the decision that it is 2-3- conversations. This decision are made by the case officers, and they tell the asylum seekers about the time. They estimate that 2-3 conversations are enough, from the knowledge to the asylum seekers situation, their wisdom about the method working. Also not to prolong the period, so the asylum seeker thinks that the case is taken up again. The decision to leave has all ready been taken by law.

The case officers can use an evaluation sheet of paper which the case officer can fulfill together with the asylum seeker. It is anonymous and should not be kept in the case.

The case officers have not used the evaluation sheet of paper.

## **11. Holistic approach**

It is a part of the asylum procedure.

## **12. Cultural sensitivity**

The conversation method is not related to at specify ethnic group, but can be used to all human beings.

## **13. Evaluation**

The practice will be evaluated in autumn 2008 by the case officers. There are no written aims to evaluate. There is no extern evaluators involved.

The case officers will evaluate from the amount of conversations they have had. Were the aim about 2-3 conversations mostly fulfilled? If not, why? What did the asylum seeker mean about the conversation? How many did fulfill the evaluation paper? What was the value of the four's work together seen from the workers point? Will they continue the practice? Other questions?

The four case officers are wondering why there are more people from Iraq which have returned to Bagdad from their unit in Karlstad comparing to other units , and is there a connection between/or could it be a result of the organization of the case officers or/and the awareness of and education in using the specific conversation method?

An example: A rejected asylum seeker did tell me after the second conversation, that he felt that the case officer helped him to find out what he could and will do, he felt that the case officer has been listening to him, and also that he got the help that he wanted and he got the necessary information. Even though he has to go back to a country that he didn't want to go back to. He became one more conversation.

#### **14. Conclusion:**

I am very positive about the way The Migration Board solve the very complicated situation, when a rejected familie/person have to go home to their home country. I find the case officers very competent and well educated to solve the diffucult tasks. I also find the way the unit cooperate together very good.

Naturally the method is not a key and can solve all the problems with the rejected asylum seekers. But I think it is a very good help in the proces, and support the empowerment of the rejected persons.

What could be a missing part, is the childrens perspektive. They are not participating in the conversation for the rejected asylum seekers, for many good reasons. What I wonder is how could or should children participate? Could a practice be developed also to support the empowerment of the children?

I would very much like my organisation to work with the skills/method even though we do it some way or another. But I think we could be more consciusly about working with the skills and by training the personal.

**App. 1. About the course.** (My translation from my visit in sweden.)

Description of course. Asylum reception.

Conversation Method Level II

Target Group: Case officers (16 participants).

Aim:

To develop the conversation in the daily work

After the course you are able to:

Have fundamental knowledge in the meaning of communication

Knowledge about different factors influence to the conversation

Knowledge in different techniques to begin, continue and end a conversation, and special focus in motivated.

Have trained different technique in conversation and got supervision on your practice.

Method: The course is made by extern advisers. In this case: Tomas Danilsons Psykologkonsult AB

The length of course is five days spread over 2+2+1 days.

Day 1: General about conversation, and special about the method. Video with role playing as client and case officer and case officers act both.

Day 2: Supervision of the acting. What was good and not so good, discussions about alternative solutions. In the afternoon we have more theory, including conversation with persons in crisis and potential suicide.

Day 3-4: Video and supervision of new role playing. Now the participants play case officers, and actors are different types of clients.

Day 5: Follow up. Discussion about how have we use the conversation method in our work. Also looked at old videos and have discussions of some of the role playing, good and not so good.

## **App 2.**

### **The skills good practice to the case officer.**

My translation from different paper in the unit and the visit in Sweden.

Think and express the purpose about the conversation in good time before you meet the asylum seeker. Ensure that the asylum seeker also understands your purpose of the conversation.

Give a presentation of yourselves and the time framework for the conversation.

Establish contact before talking about the problem.

How are the complex of problems and ex what feelings are there, how do others in the surrounding look at the situation, what has been done up to now?

Use open questions and follow up the questions carefully. Avoid giving your own evaluation in the beginning of the conversation. Be active listening and show that you are attentive to the conversation. Don't be afraid of quiet periods during the conversation. It gives time for reflection. Be very clear in speaking.

Who own the problem? Estimate your field of responsibility and if there are something you just need to give an answer or information about. The rest are the asylum seekers responsibility.

How would the asylum seeker want the situation to look like – (ideal).

What has been done until now to solve the problem, and why is it not succeeded?

What imaginable alternative solution does the asylum seekers have?

What will the consequences be if one do as suggested? Let the asylum seeker utvärdera the suggestions.

Follow up the promising alternatives by asking questions ex. what will you say when.... when will you meet/call.....what are the best case....what will you do if..

If the asylum seeker in spite of all effort will not find own recommendation for alternative acting you may present your alternative. If possible give more alternatives. Don't give your evaluation of the alternatives.

Many times there are no good alternatives or solutions that asylum seeker can accept. Also this can be knowledge good to note. They may have to accept that they have to continue living with their worries or they have to choose the less harmful solution.

Try to get the asylum seeker to sum up of the conversation.

It can take some time for the asylum seeker to realize that there is no direct happy way out of their situation, so you have to be patience.

It's important not to press to much to get to an ending, it could be necessary to have an extra conversation. It's often better to have a new meeting instead of fighting with a blocked person.

Many people can have many negative experience in his or hers mind, and some of them could still be in crisis or have old traumas. Therefore be careful and extra sensitive in the conversation.

