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The fourth LINK newsletter

Welcome to the fourth newsletter of the **Learning and Innovation Network (LINK)** project, where we will update you on the status of our activities, foremost the launch of our second piloting phase of our learning programme. This newsletter highlights the learning and innovation labs in two of our participating countries: Spain (Barcelona) and Norway (Trondheim).

Transnational meeting held in Lund

At the beginning of March, the project partners met in person for the last time in Lund, Sweden, to reflect on the learnings from the learning and innovation labs and to assess the feedback we received about the learning programme, before making the final amendments.



Our online platform

We encourage you to visit our [online platform](#) where you will find general information [about LINK](#), our partnership, and the learning and innovation lab model, as well as in-depth information about all six [learning and innovation labs](#). If you have any questions, feel free to email us at fou@linkoping.se.

The second piloting of our learning programme

We want to thank everyone who completed our [learning programme](#) and provided such constructive feedback. We have implemented some changes and are now thrilled to start the second piloting phase of our learning programme, scheduled to take place between May and June 2025.

This online course is designed for everyone who works or wishes to work in the health or social sector and wants to know how to creatively address societal challenges. Comprising five learning units, the programme takes approximately 5 hours and covers:

- Which trends influence the delivery of welfare services and which challenges different target groups experience.
- What social innovations are and how learning and innovations labs can help find new solutions to 'wicked problems'.
- How to set up and run a lab, step-by-step, according to the LINK learning and innovation lab model and with practical examples from the LINK labs.
- How to better understand complex societal problems and find creative solutions to them, work with multidisciplinary teams, and involve stakeholders and users.

- How to evaluate and effectively disseminate impact and mainstream successful innovations.

To start your learning journey, please sign into our online platform at [linklearning.online](#) and register for the learning programme within it. Please note you can complete the learning programme in your preferred language; you can select this under 'Profile' → 'Personal data' → 'Translation'.

Once you have completed the learning programme and provided your invaluable feedback, you will receive a certificate as proof of your contribution to our project.

The Spanish lab

Konsulta'm Lab

The Spanish team works within the Konsulta'm programme in the Barcelona City Council, a service specifically designed for young people facing emotional challenges in their daily lives. The programme focuses on the early detection of and intervention on psychological issues that young people may encounter within school, family, or community contexts. As a community-based service, Konsulta'm fosters collaboration with a wide range of services supporting young people, including educational services, youth programmes, sports and leisure services, and social services. It also facilitates coordination and access to youth mental health specialized services, when needed. This integrated approach ensures a comprehensive support network tailored to the diverse needs of the youth.



We have recently developed a guide to integrate an intercultural perspective into strategies for addressing young people's emotional challenges. This initiative aims to provide more inclusive and effective support tailored to diverse communities. In addition, a collaborative workshop brought together professionals from Konsulta'm, the Drug Guidance Service of the Barcelona Public Health Agency, and the Horta-Guinardó Drug Dependence Care and Follow-up Centre. This session fostered mutual learning, improved coordination, and enhanced case management strategies.

Staying true to its mission, we continue to facilitate sessions focused on highly complex cases, enabling professionals to brainstorm and co-create solutions. Recent training initiatives have also included sessions on masculinity and violence prevention, equipping professionals with tools to address these critical issues effectively. Looking ahead, the Konsulta'm professionals will take on a key role as trainers in the Mental Health Support Programme. This initiative will equip agents and community members from diverse target groups with first-aid mental health techniques, enabling them to manage mental health crises and provide timely support to those in need.

The Norwegian lab

FamWel Lab

The Norwegian team has been testing various innovative projects in several municipalities for two years, mostly in collaboration with child welfare services and institutions. We have also held innovation activities at a structural level in partnership with the Trondheim Municipality. The key players are managers and social workers, master's students, and a research group from NTNU. We have noticed that those who have conducted innovation measures in their service are the ones who have been most successful in implementing them and have also seen changes in the service. This is because they already have a foothold in the service and can work on the measures long-term, even after the project period has ended.

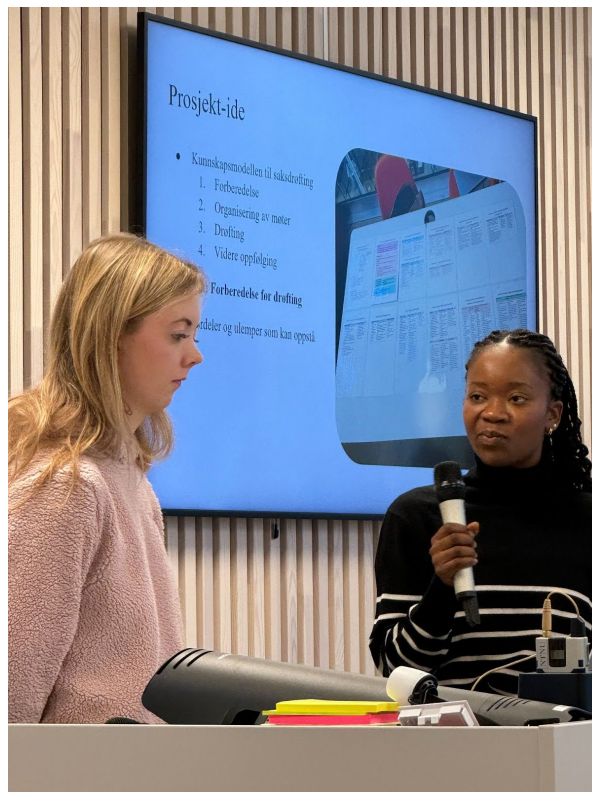
In a small city involved with the lab, the child welfare service wanted to improve the work they did with parents who have lost custody of their children. One of the managers noted that there were previously no support systems or measures in place for these parents, many of whom experience feelings of loneliness and isolation after their child has been placed in the care of the child welfare service. According to the Child Welfare Act, these parents are required to receive follow-up support and assistance. Care placements are intended to be temporary, and the law mandates that parents be allowed to regain custody of their child if their circumstances improve and it is deemed to be in the child's best interest. Therefore, it is essential to focus on enhancing the parents' caregiving skills. The innovation project aimed to establish a permanent group within the child welfare service, enabling parents to meet, share their experiences, and participate in activities tailored to their needs. Since its launch in September 2024, this initiative has enabled parents to connect with and support one another, fostering greater openness to collaborate with the child welfare service. In the long term, this will also benefit the children, as parents develop better life skills and feel empowered to improve their situations, making them more receptive to receiving help.

Additionally, we have utilized the LINK learning programme to teach innovation at both master's and bachelor's levels. We received positive feedback from the students, who are the future social workers who will benefit from this practical experience. They gained valuable skills in innovative thinking and tools to initiate micro-innovations in various social services and child welfare.

Upcoming dissemination events

As the LINK project is coming to a close, we will be holding a number of dissemination events in the coming months. Our first event will take place online on 11 June 2025, during which the Latvian and Serbian labs will present their results. On 23 June 2025, we will hold an interactive workshop at the [European Social Services Conference](#) in Aarhus, Denmark, during which we will showcase our learning and innovation lab model.

If you are interested in participating in these or other dissemination events, please keep an eye on the homepage of our [online platform](#)!



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