# Abstract

The following thesis comprises an evaluation of Brønderslev municipality’s ‘health activation initiative’ for unemployable citizens who are receiving sickness benefits or social security. The main objective of the health activation initiative, which is a combination of a health- and labor market activation effort, is to improve the health of the unemployable in order for them to get closer into the labor market, hence increasing their opportunities to join the workforce again.

As the empirical foundation is mainly occupied with ‘effect evaluations’ with employment and being self-supporting as the main criteria for success, the knowledge on the topic, and more specifically on what works, is arguably very limiting. The fact of the matter is, that unemployable citizens are further distanced to the labor market, compared to those who are employable, due to social- and/or health grounds – and by such, the aforementioned criteria of success can therefore not be seen as realistic and valid measures for unemployable citizens. Within the employment area, this type of inadequate measurement has entailed that a large part of the municipalities’ resource demanding activation initiatives fail, as it neglects to identify positive indicators in the employment- and self supporting area.

To meet the shortcomings of today’s methods, the evaluation of this thesis thereby seeks to increase the focus on relevant intermediate aims to increase the awareness of “what works” in the activation initiatives for unemployable citizens, with the aim of bringing them closer into the labor market.

The main objective of the respective evaluation is thus to investigate how these initiatives can balance a focus on a health- and employment perspective successfully, without jeopardizing that the health perspective is dominating the sole purpose of the matter, which in the end is the activation initiative.

The theoretical foundation for the evaluation is based on Ray Pawson and Nick Tilleys’ theory on Realistic Evaluation, by which the evaluation includes a construction of the program theory behind the initiative, which accounts for the causal connections between efforts and outcome. The program theory is subsequently tested, as are the implementation of the initiative, with the purpose of concretizing and specifying what works for whom, when and under which circumstances.

From the investigation, it were concluded that the unemployable citizens receiving sickness benefits or social security have gained short-termed health-oriented goals, which overall contributes to a general improvement of the participants’ health. The activation initiative has further entailed that the participants, to some extent, have moved closer into the labor market, and the main reason to this is the improvement of the participants’ state of health, and to a lesser degree the employment-oriented perspective of the initiative. However, the activation initiative has unfortunately not brought the participants as close into the labor market as expected, due to the fact that the health perspective overshadowed the employment perspective.

On behalf of the conclusion reached in the evaluation, recommendations and improvements in regards to the initiative will be presented, with the objective to secure a higher degree of goal attainment in the future.