

Bridge to Employment Success Story

BTE Success Story

Helsingborg, Sweden

April 2023



Why BTE?

The BTE Helsingborg program was designed to inspire students at Olympiaskolan (secondary school) while preparing them for post-secondary education and their future. BTE Helsingborg aimed to introduce students to the career opportunities available to them by showing them what businesses looked like from the inside. In addition, the BTE Helsingborg program partners hoped to increase BTE students' life skills and boost their confidence during this important time in their lives.

BTE is designed specifically to prepare students for their postsecondary journeys. Working together, Johnson & Johnson (J&J), secondary schools, institutions of higher education and other community organizations and partners develop programs that feature academic enrichment, post-secondary education preparation, and career exploration and readiness activities. They aim to increase the number of students enrolling in post-secondary education and pursuing careers in STEM²D or healthcare. BTE is designed specifically to provide these types of college and career readiness exposure opportunities to students. Working together, Johnson & Johnson, secondary and postsecondary schools, and community organizations develop programs that feature academic enrichment, career exploration and readiness activities, and post-secondary education preparation activities. They aim to increase the number of students enrolling in post-secondary education and pursuing careers in STEM²D or health care.

BTE: A Catalyst for Higher Education & Careers

The BTE Helsingborg team invited all upper secondary school Olympiaskolan students in the Natural Science program, one of the most difficult educational pathways at the school, to participate in BTE. Forty-two students enrolled.

Understanding the challenges facing the students, and to adequately support their academic achievement, BTE Helsingborg provided weekly supplemental instruction sessions where students received small-group tutoring in math and science. These sessions were critical to supporting improved academic performance among students.

With the objective of introducing students to a wide variety of careers in STEM²D and healthcare, Lund University, in conjunction with local BTE partners, facilitated career planning workshops, which provided students with a broader view of possible career paths. In addition, there were a number of guest speakers from across the STEM²D sectors who provided a glimpse into their own educational and career journeys. Students also had an incredible opportunity to engage with J&J employee volunteers during visits to the J&J plant. During these visits, students learned about different jobs within the company. They also got to work with J&J employees on career assessments and planning exercises, and met with career readiness experts to work on developing job readiness skills.

A key part of the BTE Helsingborg model was the emphasis on application of knowledge, using a mix of real-world experience and theatre arts to reinforce lessons learned. Thus, to learn more about careers and to develop professional skills, the students participated in a job shadowing experience. To practice their interviewing and resume writing skills, students participated in role-play exercises with J&J volunteers. For instance, students drafted their own CVs which were then reviewed by Johnson & Johnson volunteers acting as hiring managers. In other sessions, students roleplayed as interviewers and interviewees. After learning successful interview tips, students practiced interviewing with J&J volunteers for roles that they were interested in and had “applied” for. At another session, the roles were reversed, and students had the opportunity to be the

SITE PROFILE

Location
Helsingborg, Sweden

Grant Period
2019 - 2022

Sponsor
Johnson & Johnson /
McNeil AB

Coordinator
Lund University
(Helsingborg Campus)

Community Partners
Olympiaskolan

Volunteers
10 volunteers

Students Directly Served
42 students

interviewers. This helped to reinforce interview skills by providing them with different perspectives of the process, as well as build their confidence. In addition, BTE Helsingborg included cultural awareness workshops which supported students' interpersonal skills, teamwork, and professionalism, all with a view toward preparing BTE students to be global citizens.

To encourage students to consider pursuing higher education, the program offered guest lectures, university tours including visits to medical campuses, and informational fairs. Recognizing the value of peers and their influence, BTE Helsingborg partners launched a near-peer mentoring component of the BTE program, where BTE students connected with university students and were able to ask questions about university life, career trajectories, and the fields of study offered by the university, as well as the education requirements. This was key to motivating the students to pursue post-secondary education and gave them real insight into university life.

Impact of BTE

Of the 42 students who started BTE in 2019, 24% completed the program in 2022. In an exit interview, the BTE Helsingborg partners mentioned that the program's high attrition was related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic recession. Many of the students were from immigrant families who lost work in Helsingborg and had to relocate as they sought employment in other countries. Others left the program due to increased family responsibilities, needing to either work or care for family members. Of the students who completed the BTE program, all 100% graduated from Olympiaskolan. In addition, 90% had plans for post-secondary education, and 80% also had career plans.

The BTE students reported growth in their work readiness skills, and BTE partners recognized increased student confidence and self-efficacy. One partner stated that networking was a key benefit of the program, explaining, "When we asked [BTE students] each year what they have appreciated, often they mentioned meeting people in J&J. And

STUDENT OUTCOMES

100% of BTE students who completed the three-year BTE program graduated from Olympiaskolan

100% of BTE graduates are eligible for post-secondary education

80% of BTE graduates have a higher education and career plan

100% of BTE graduates exhibit key work readiness skills

“BTE has had an impact, that’s for sure. And I think it has to do with a little more personal self-confidence and self-efficacy. And the group has come together... taking care of each other.”

- BTE partner

meeting the university students – talking to people close to their age. I know they really appreciated the time they had with [university] students.”

Sustainability

The BTE partners explained that there were businesses in the area that heard about the BTE Helsingborg program and were interested in talking about a partnership. The Regional Skona (state council) has a mission from the government to secure STEM competencies in all fields—many businesses lack these competencies and see BTE as key to filling those gaps. Lund University (Helsingborg Campus) and Campus Friends are interested, and in late summer 2022, three schools had been identified to continue the initiative. Olympiaskolan has a teacher who will lead the project, and the team will explore funding from area businesses. Outside of Helsingborg, news of BTE

also spread to Malmo (Sweden’s third biggest city). A Technical College there is interested in incorporating BTE’s model, particularly in the area of career exploration and readiness, collaborating with companies and schools to better prepare students for work life. The partners plan to continue to promote the impact and value of BTE and consult with and provide guidance to companies with the resources and who have committed to adapting BTE in their communities.

