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# NORWAY NATIONAL REPORT

**I01: INCLUSION CHAMPION PROFILE  
DESK AND FIELD RESEARCH**

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## Work-Aut

Leveraging WBL to foster professional inclusion of people affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder

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# 1.Summary

After doing interviews and reading several reports, the impression is that the landscape, which facilitates a healthy and dignified life for people with ASD in Norway, is ready to blossom. The last couple of decades, knowledge, legal processes, systems thinking in the public sector, and organizing interest-organization have laid the foundation for a society that is soon ready to integrate ASD in society. This study shows that a lot of positive things are ongoing, but there is still a way to go before this group can fully blossom in our common garden.

The public sector needs more competence, although there is a lot of knowledge out there. Systems thinking is required to organize facilitation and qualification throughout the country. Especially is there a big need for more competence aimed for adults. It is clearly stated that we need to focus on periods where ASD persons are in transfer, as between education and job. More competence is needed among those who are supporting this group towards jobs, and as well at workspaces. More focus on skilled mentors in such processes and at the job is suggested, following this, there is a need for further research among adults with ASD and their situation towards and within work.

The interest organization and the Norwegian State have put much effort in the last years to do research and “paint” the landscape, and it is very positive and brings hope.

## **2. Aim and scope of the National Report**

This report aims to give a picture of the situation in Norway concerning ASD diagnosed people in the country, which is related to work-life. As the report will highlight, it is a challenge that everything is connected. A transfer into an adult work-life situation is connected to how the person was met as a child, in school, at home, and in spare time. The report will include some holistic aspects concerning the ASD situation in Norway, but mainly focus on young, adult life and transfer to work. Work can be defined in several ways, it can be full-time employment, it can be part-time employment, and also state financially supported employment. The right to be met as an individual, with individual rights and needs are crucial.

This report is based on a literature review from studies and other reports, on interviews and informal dialogues with persons related to competence in the field.

## **3. National situation of the inclusion of people affected by ASD in the labour market**

### ***3.1 Policies and strategies***

In 2020, Norway had its second public report concerning ASD, NOU 2020:1. The first was delivered in 1988. The aim of the report was to put light on services specially aimed for this group. A lot has changed since the last national report in 1989, and Norway has ratified several international agreements. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified by Norway in 2007. Through this agreement, Norway has committed to ensuring services for this group and ensuring co-determination. Within health, special education, formal education, and labor there are tremendous developments and changes for this group. The report describes these changes.

The Work-Aut project aims to focus on policies and strategies for inclusion in the labor market. The national report focused on all age groups and from a lifelong perspective. It is valuable to bear in mind that everything is related, education, health, social service, job, personal and family situation. And, what is good for one person might not relate to another, this is also highlighted in the national report 2020:1.

### ***3.2 Legislative framework***

Norway has a legal framework which should indicate that persons within the ASD definition are in good hands. But the NOU shows that training and knowledge about the diagnosis are requested among many parts, also among persons with the diagnosis. Work situations and adulthood are especially lacking in research.

Section 92 of the Norwegian Constitution stipulates that the authorities shall respect and ensure human rights as enshrined in this Constitution and in binding human rights treaties for Norway". Norway has acceded to various agreements related to human rights, which have been drawn up in co-operation between different countries.



Some of the main ratified Acts are Act no. 30 of 21 May 1999 on strengthening the position of human rights in Norwegian law (the Human Rights Act), the European Convention on Human Rights, the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Women Norwegian law (NOU 2020:1).

In the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) the purpose is "to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal right of persons with disabilities to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to promote respect for their inherent dignity", cf. Article 1. The term "disability" is defined in the second paragraph of Article 1: "People with disabilities include people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disabilities who, in the face of various barriers, can prevent them from participating fully and effectively in society, on an equal footing with others." People with autism and Tourette's have symptoms and difficulties that affect their ability to function, and will therefore be protected by the convention.

The convention is based on eight principles:

- Self-determination
- Non-discrimination
- Participation and inclusion
- Respect for differences
- Equal opportunities
- Availability
- Equality
- Respect for the development opportunities and identity of children

Norway has a law that forbids discrimination and relates to the CRPD; Act of 16 June 2017 no. 51 on equality and prohibition of discrimination (the Equality and Discrimination Act) contains a prohibition against discrimination in accordance with CRPD's requirements.

There are other laws within health and education that affect the rights of this group, these are related to the above-mentioned ratifications and laws.

Crucial laws are made concerning the duty of interaction and cooperation between different actors in the health sector, there is for example a duty within the health sector to take the responsibility of a holistic plan for each individual.

The government and the main organizations in working life in Norway have signed a letter of intent for a more inclusive working life (IA agreement 2019-2022). This is the fifth agreement that has been continued since the first was signed in 2001. Through the letter of intent, the government and the social partners work for a more inclusive working life for the benefit of the individual employee, workplace, and society.

Inclusive working life is a working life for everyone who can and will contribute. The agreement applies to the entire working life in Norway and shall contribute to preventing and reducing sick leave, strengthening the work presence and improving the working environment, as well as preventing exclusion and drop-out from working life.

[https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/arbeidsliv/arbeidsmiljo-og-sikkerhet/inkluderende\\_arbeidsliv/ia-avtalen-20192022/ia-avtalen-20192022/id2623741/](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/arbeidsliv/arbeidsmiljo-og-sikkerhet/inkluderende_arbeidsliv/ia-avtalen-20192022/ia-avtalen-20192022/id2623741/)

Norwegian Labor and Welfare Service (NAV) offers rights for special support in adult and higher education. When persons are heading towards work-life, there are also several incentives available through NAV. These are related to the Labor Market Act. Everyone who contacts NAV related to work has the right to have their needs for support evaluated. There are different possibilities concerning work support through NAV. It can help to find a suitable job, define and facilitate mentors in the job, it can also be the facilitation of partly economical support to the employer.



NAV has a number of measures and support schemes that aim to assist people who want to get into work, and which are relevant for the committee's groups. These are regulated in the Measures Regulations, which are issued on the basis of the Labor Market Act. The measures include clarification, follow-up services, work practice, and work preparation training, training, wage subsidies, work-oriented rehabilitation, facilitation, and permanently arranged work. Everyone who applies to the NAV office, and who wants or needs assistance to get to work, has the right to have their need for assistance assessed, this based on the NAV Act § 14 a. (NOU 2020:1).

NAV supporting facilitation:

- Mentoring
- Job specialists, based on Supported Employment Method (From England?)
- Individual Placement and Support
- Wage subsidy for employers
- Digital Talents-courses in game-based development

*The report describes young adults with ASD as untapped potential in Norway.*

The national report shares how many with ASD describe their need for assistance with structure and planning of tasks. This relates both to training, work, and home. They suggest more mentoring support in studies and work. More focus on good transfers between different stages in life, like from education to work is highly recommended.

Lack of intersectional cooperation and coordination between different actors in the system; health, financial support, and work are described as challenges. There is a need for more seamless cooperation. Further, the NOU 2020: 1 describes a lack of competence among people working within the ASD group. Therefore the reports committee recommends that compulsory training programs shall be developed with competence requirements, and aimed at employees in municipal services who are to work with the ASD group. Among such employees includes mentors at the workplace and job specialists in NAV.

In order to support the municipalities and county municipalities in being able to offer knowledge-based services, the report recommends an online resource to be developed that will contribute basic knowledge about neurodevelopmental disorders, including autism and Tourette. An online resource would also be helpful for the regions. Such an online resource could be helpful in terms of neurodevelopment disturbances in general, as well as the autism spectrum.

This national research shows that there is a lack of research about ASD related to work and adulthood.

### ***3.3 Identification of the problems (prejudices and barriers)***

There might not be large legislative framework problems in Norway, more challenges in practical implementation and coordination. See 3.2

### ***3.4 Implications for employers and young adults with ASD***

Although the young adults do have their rights to different support, they are expressing a lack of support in the transition from education to employment. (rapport). There is competence in the NAV system, there are information sheets available in the NAV system, but somehow a challenge in getting competence out where it is needed the most, in the young person's daily life.

## 4. Relevant studies on inclusion of people affected by ASD in the labour market

A2G kompetanse (2019). *Arbeidslivskompetanse for personer med Asperger syndrom*. Hentet november 1, 2019 fra <https://a2gkompetanse.no>

Baldwin S., Costley D., Warren A. (2014). Employment activities and experiences of adults with high-functioning autism and Asperger's Disorder. *J Autism Dev Disord*, 44(10):2440-9. doi: 10.1007/s10803-014-2112-z

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Groven, G., Hoemsnes, H., Skrove, G. K., Bachmann, K. (2015) Inkludering av personer med Asperger Syndrom i arbeidslivet- Arbeidsrapport nr. M 1601. Møreforskning Molde

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Howlin, P. and Moss, P. (2012). Adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. Revue Canadienne de Psychiatrie*, 57(5), ss. 257-283. doi:10.1177/070674371205700502



Howlin, P., Moss, P., Savage, S. and Rutter, M. (2013). Social outcomes in mid-to later adulthood among individuals diagnosed with autism and average nonverbal IQ as children. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 52(6), ss. 572–581. doi:10.1016/j.jaac.2013.02.017

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NAV (2019d). Veiviser for inkludering. Hentet oktober 1, 2019 fra <https://tjenester.nav.no>

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NOU 2019: 3 Nye sjanser – bedre læring

NOU 2019: 12 Lærekraftig utvikling

Nøkleby, H., Blaasvær, N. og Berg, R. C. (2017). Supported Employment for arbeidssøkere med bistandsbehov: en systematisk oversikt. Rapport fra Folkehelseinstituttet. Hentet fra <https://www.fhi.no>

Rundskriv 1-9/2015. Rettighetsfesting av brukerstyrt personlig assistanse (BPA). Helse- og omsorgsdepartementet. Hentet oktober 1, 2019 fra <https://www.regjeringen.no>

Unicus (2019). Assignments within Software Development / Testing / QA & Data Science. Hentet november 1, 2019 fra <https://www.unicus.com>

Universell (2016). Studenter med ADHD og Asperger syndrom – En veileder for innsikt, forståelse og kunnskap om tilrettelegging. Universellrapport 1:

[https://www.kunnskapsbanken.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Arbeidss%  
c3%b8kere-med-Asperger-syndrom-veiledningshefte-A5-per-200616.pdf](https://www.kunnskapsbanken.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Arbeidss%c3%b8kere-med-Asperger-syndrom-veiledningshefte-A5-per-200616.pdf)

## 5. Identification of good practices at National and European level on professional inclusion of people affected by ASD

<b><i>Title of the good practice</i></b>	<b>Spesialistbedriften</b>
<b><i>Country</i></b>	Norway
<b><i>Level</i></b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> European <input type="checkbox"/> International
<b><i>Responsible organization</i></b>	<b>Spesialistbedriften</b>
<b><i>Year/Duration</i></b>	Since 2014
<b><i>Website of the practice</i></b>	<a href="https://spesialistbedriften.no/om-oss/">https://spesialistbedriften.no/om-oss/</a>
<b><i>Description of the good practice</i></b>	The company is non-profit, they hire well skilled people with ASD with special skills related to the digital sector.
<b><i>Target group(s)</i></b>	Young adults and adults with ASD
<b><i>Impact</i></b>	Facilitating for jobs
<b><i>Conclusions</i></b>	A good example of how to facilitate jobs for people with ASD



<b><i>Title of the good practice</i></b>	<b>Digitale Talenter</b>
<b><i>Country</i></b>	Norway
<b><i>Level</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> European <input type="checkbox"/> International
<b><i>Responsible organization</i></b>	<b>NAV-Møre og Romsdal Kunnskapstrening IT</b>
<b><i>Year/Duration</i></b>	Since 2017
<b><i>Website of the practice</i></b>	<a href="http://www.kunnskapstrening.no">www.kunnskapstrening.no</a>
<b><i>Description of the good practice</i></b>	<p>The project is recruiting skilled, young online gamers and facilitating a university course in game development. Afterwards the young adults can have work training related to their developed skills.</p> <p>Kunnskapstrening IT are connecting them to companies for further jobs.</p>
<b><i>Target group(s)</i></b>	Digital skilled, young persons within NEET.
<b><i>Impact</i></b>	A system that is developed for people who mostly need to learn and work from their homes.
<b><i>Conclusions</i></b>	About 5-10 percent of participants are related to ASD. Almost all are continuing personal development towards a job. Some got a 100% job offer.

<b><i>Title of the good practice</i></b>	<b>UNICUS</b>
<b><i>Country</i></b>	Norway
<b><i>Level</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> European <input type="checkbox"/> International
<b><i>Responsible organization</i></b>	UNICUS
<b><i>Year/Duration</i></b>	N/A
<b><i>Website of the practice</i></b>	<a href="http://www.unicus.com">www.unicus.com</a>
<b><i>Description of the good practice</i></b>	This is a company which operates similar as Spesialistbedriften in Norway. UNICUS operates in several countries. Norway, Sweden, Finland. They hire people with Asperger and sell competence within IT service in Software Development.
<b><i>Target group(s)</i></b>	People with ASD
<b><i>Impact</i></b>	Job offers
<b><i>Conclusions</i></b>	Good example of company which facilitates for ASD group and make sure they can use their special skills.

## 6. Desk research – Interviews’ evaluation

Knowledge	Skills	Competences (Autonomy and Responsibility)
<p><b>Understand the needs of people with ASD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all people with ASD are different and have different needs, and are affected differently by the diagnosis.</li> <li>- focus on the strengths more than weakness</li> <li>- they need tailor made workplace</li> <li>-they might need structure</li> <li>- need for predictability</li> <li>-adapted recruitment process</li> </ul>	<p><i>Inclusive</i> <i>Respectful</i> <i>Good listener</i> <i>Open minded</i> EQ</p> <p>Be able to create a safe, good environment, where the employee is confident about what is happening, what tasks are to be performed and who to ask.</p>	<p>In facilitating: Competence in what the diagnosis means for the individual employee, and how to facilitate in the best possible way for inclusion for him/her:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- facilitate the workplace for an inclusive environment</li> <li>-tailor-made work tasks with a focus on the person's strengths. Focus on strengths will often make the challenges less.</li> <li>- access to a sensory-free zone where the stress level is not challenged at all</li> <li>- respectful working environment that includes differences among employees</li> <li>-know the need for structure for the individual</li> <li>- predictability will often reduce stress</li> <li>- custom recruitment processes, which take into account ASD with a focus on the person's resources and strengths, to promote mastery in the jobseeker</li> </ul>



<p><b>Understand the needs of the workplace</b></p> <p>Understand that:  instruments to finance mentor is helpful for the workplace  -Instrument to finance economical risk in the beginning</p>	<p>Apply for schemes for mentoring and facilitation in the company</p>	<p>Expertise that financial schemes, as well as schemes with a mentor, will ensure that the company does not expose itself to a risk by hiring a person with ASD.</p>
<p><b>Understand the biggest challenges for a person with ASD when entering a workplace:</b></p> <p>-Fulfillment of various requirements related to employment and selection phase</p>	<p>Flexibility  Patience  Understanding  Adaptability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tailor-mace work tasks for the individual person with ASD related to their areas of strength</li> <li>- Value their unique competence</li> <li>- They are often accurate, honest, conscientious and precise.</li> </ul>
<p>Difficulties with teamwork  Sensory sensitive  Most people with ASD will probably need some form of adaptation in terms of sensory sensitivity, but most can be solved with simple tools.</p>	<p>Flexibility</p>	<p>Teamwork often requires clarified work tasks and work areas for persons with ASD, and should sometimes be avoided.  Competence in that sensory disturbances can be extra distracting (such as sound, light, movement, temperature etc), and also increase stress levels.</p>

<p>A person with knowledge about ASD is the most important person for the ASD diagnosed person. This is related to work.</p>	<p>Create a safe framework in communication, and do not seek eye contact where the person avoids this.</p>	<p>Mentor competence related to ASD and the individual's strengths and challenges (stress reactions and vulnerability).</p>
<p>Understanding of these persons often works in different ways than average.</p>	<p>Flexibility Adaptability</p>	<p>Work plans and individual follow-up adapted to the individual</p>
<p>Need to feel safe</p>		<p>Security is the single most important factor, because it will solve many of the other problems they have associated with ASF.</p> <p>People with ASD are very wary of others' moods and how they appear.</p>
<p>Reduce stress</p>		<p>Competence in situations that trigger stress reactions.</p>

<p>Misunderstanding in social communication. Need clear messages and instructions.</p>	<p>Communication skills that are important to be aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- open questions is often challenging</li> <li>- avoid using jokes, irony and imagery can be challenging to understand, as it can be interpreted literally</li> <li>- ensure common understanding</li> </ul>	<p>One must be clear and concise in communication, it can almost never be clear enough. This creates extra security.</p>
<p>Importance of openness</p>	<p>EQ Respectful Open minded</p>	<p>Openness about the diagnosis and what it means for the individual creates greater understanding, and can prevent unfortunate situations.</p>
<p>Set aside time to prepare them and give them time for planning and follow-up.</p>	<p>Flexibility Adaptability Patience Respectful Open minded</p>	<p>Allocation of time is generally a challenge for people with ASD, and it is, therefore, necessary for the company to set aside enough time for training new work tasks, and for following up and giving reminders along the way.</p>

		<p>Challenges can arise that do not correspond to reality, people with ASD can get hung up on details that are not important to the end result, and spend a lot of time on this, which can have financial consequences for the company. This requires that the company has enough time and resources to follow up with the person with ASD. There will be a need for reminders along the way, for necessary progress. People with ASD often need to complete a task before he/she begins a new task. It will be important to be able to use the time he/she needs.</p>
		<p>People with ASD must be able to take breaks when they need it, as only defined, regular breaks are not sufficient.</p>



## **7. Conclusions and future remarks**

This project is based on other national research and reports. Our conclusion is that there is a very clear need for more competence among people who facilitate ASD persons over to work, and among staff at the new workplace. There is also a need for more research among adult ASD persons.

A mentor is often mentioned in Norwegian research, a person that supports the adult ASD person at work. The mentor is also in need for more competence about ASD.

In the national report, NOU 2020:1, it is suggested that an online course about ASD would be helpful if developed.

## 8.References

NOU 2020:1 (2020) Tjenester til personer med autismespekterforstyrrelser og til personer med Tourettes syndrom, Helse og Omsorgsdepartementet