

# European Research Knowledge Network on Planning Inclusive Communities



## **Disability Policy Strategies in the Nordic Countries**

Maarit Aalto

Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues

# Nordic Council of Ministers

Nordic Council of Ministers is the Nordic governments' official co-operation forum. The Ministers for Co-operation and selected parliamentarians lead Nordic co-operation.

## Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues (NVC)

Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues (NVC) is one of the Institutes under Nordic Council of Ministers and work in the field of Social and Welfare issues.

### How we work

- **Knowledge:** We gather and compare experiences from the Nordic countries within the area of welfare policy.
- **Development:** We spread experience and best practice through our activities and networks.
- **Dialogue:** We create dialogue between politicians, researchers, professionals and practitioners.



# The North Region

- North region have ca 21milj. Inhabitants

Sweden 9,1, Finland 5,5, Norway 4,7, Denmark 5,5 Iceland 320000, Faroe Island 50000, Greenland 56500 and Åland Island 28000

- All inhabitants are divided in total 1212 municipalities, who have the responsible to offer service to persons with disabilities;

Sweden 290 municipalities, Finland 320, Norway 428, Denmark 98 and Iceland 76 Faroe Island 30 , Greenland 4 and Åland Island 16



# Strategies of disability policies in the NVC-project

- A strategy for Implementation of Disability Policy, 2011-2016 (Sweden)
- Job Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2011-2013 (Norway have chosen to include the policy to different sectors. The Job Strategy is one example)
- A strong basis for Inclusion and Equality 2010-2015 (Finland)
- Plan of Action of Disability Persons Affairs 2012-2014 (Iceland)
- The Disability political Action plan 2013 - A Society for all (Denmark)



# Disability Policy in the Nordic Countries

## **Three basis for Disability Policy**

- The Nordic Welfare Model
- The Principle of Sector Responsibility
- UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability



# The Nordic Welfare Model

- Nordic societies are based on a common set of basic values. Universal, solidarity, security and the nearness to labor market
- Nordic Welfare Model more than just public sector of service provision, everyone is entitled to equal access to social and health services, education and culture.
- The disability policy has undergone a change from the dominating social policy to be included to welfare policy.
- The general responsibility and general efforts is to be used first and the special efforts for persons with disability are complements.
- The Nordic Welfare Model are "struggling but surviving"



## 2. The Principle of Sector Responsibility

**The Principle of Sector Responsibility is an official adopted principle in the Nordic countries.**

### **Action for inclusion**

**A.** Every sector in the society is responsible to frame and describe the activities so they includes persons with disabilities (ex. education, housing, sport)

See an Icelandic example!



From the year 1995 to 2013 the total number of students at the University of Iceland has increased from 5692 to 14009 students but during the same period the number of students with disabilities has increased considerably more (Figure Maria Dóra Björnsdóttir director of Student Counselling and Career Centre at University of Iceland)

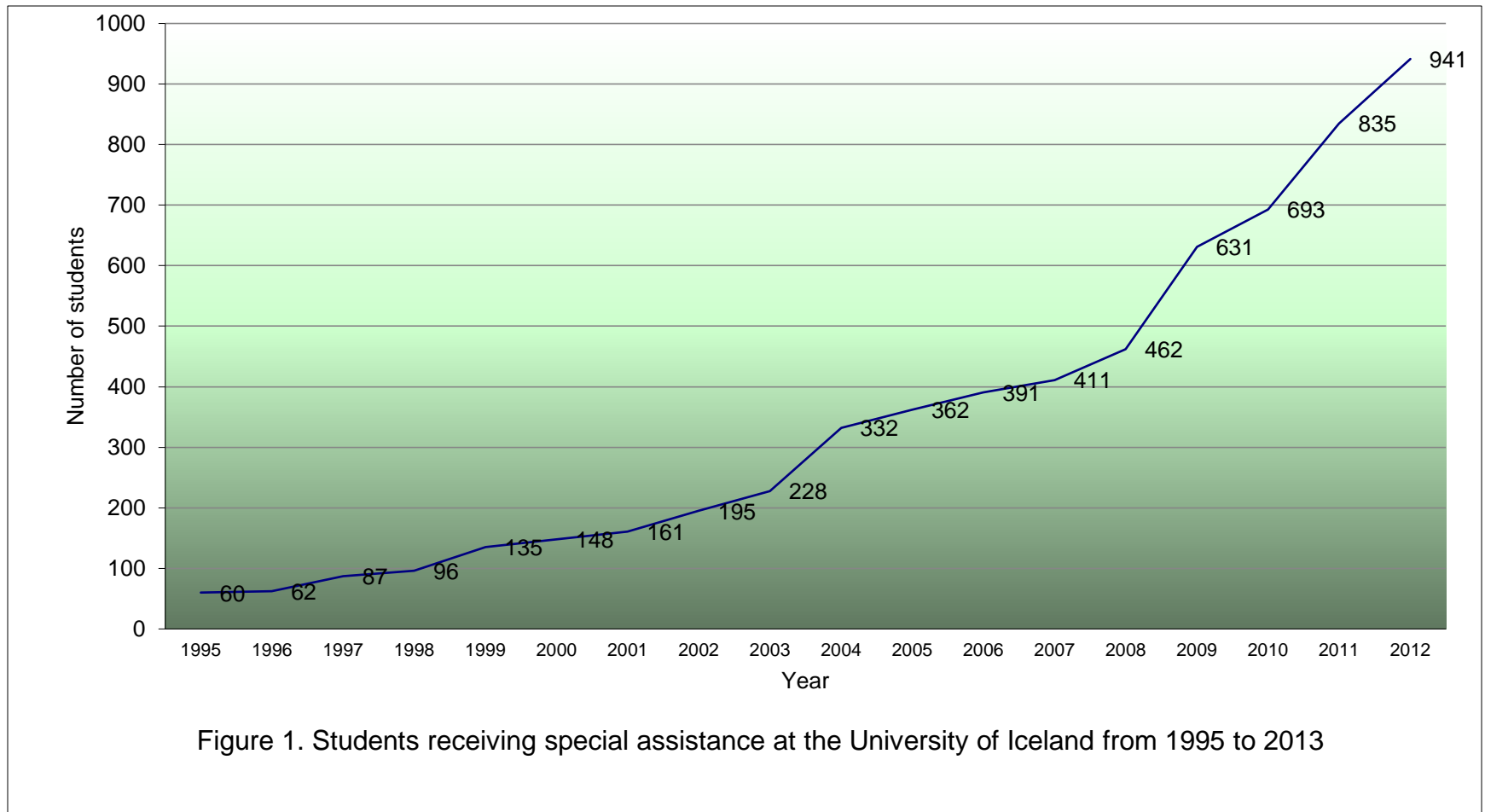


Figure 1. Students receiving special assistance at the University of Iceland from 1995 to 2013





## Action for Inclusion

### Identify challenges and obstacles

C.To identify challenges and obstacles; leads to intensification of concrete efforts, coordination of the involved sectors and to evaluate the on going decentralization

**Example:** Challenge in the Jobstrategy in Norway; 84000 persons with disability want to have a job but are unemployed of these 18000 under 25 years old. Same goes for all Nordic countries. Why is the development so slow, even if the policies include many efforts?



# More actors in the society involded – more inclusion?

## Not any more only a social and a special question!

‘Taxidrivrs

**Staff in daycarecenters**

Teachers in schools

Staff in vocational schools and

Universities

**Architects**

Private employers

**Public employers**

**People working in all kind of authorities**

(Sweden have 22 strategic authorities involved in the Disability policy strategy)

**Leisure time organizers etc.etc.**



### 3. UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability

Nordic Countries have ratified UN-Convention as follows:

Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Finland	Iceland
Ratified UN-Convention and the Optional Protocol 4.12.2008	Ratified UN-Convention 3.6.2013	Ratified UN-Convention 24.7.2009	Have not ratified UN-Convention. Preparations on going in Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Have not ratified UN-Convention. Preparations on going in Ministry of Interior.

Nordic Countries establishment of Independent Mechanisms :

Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Finland	Iceland
Decision not made. Handisam - The Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Co-ordination or/and The Equality Ombudsman (DO)?	Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (LDO)	The Danish Institute for Human Rights	Decision not made.	Decision not made





Welcome to Oslo, Norway 9-10.10.2014  
EASPD conference of Social Housing

Thank You!

[maarit.aalto@nordicwelfare.org](mailto:maarit.aalto@nordicwelfare.org)