



## Towards a more work focused benefit system and assessment (Denmark)

ANED annual meeting Brussel, 11.11 2011  
Steen Bengtsson

## Danish disability policy

employment – welfare – education

Danish disability policy:

- Employment orientation
- Mainstreaming

The situation for people with disability:

- A result of societal development
- A result of disability policy

## Employment orientation

Employment orientation is an old tradition in all Scandinavian welfare systems

Except for the 25 year period 1965-1990:

*1965-1975: Welfare optimism*

*1975-1990: Mass unemployment*

Since 1990: new employment orientation

Connection between social policy and disability policy

## Mainstreaming

No special laws, no special agencies

Like gender equality policy

History:

1950-1980 Niels Erik Bank-Mikkelsen

1980 The Central Disability Council

1998 A minister with responsibility for disability policy

2007 Municipal disability councils mandatory

## Employment policy

- people with disabilities: new legislation, flex jobs

1995: permanent wage support

1998: flex jobs, gradually growing number, now 53.000  
(corresponding to 1½ % of the working force)

1998: law on disabled persons in employment

- personal assistant (from 2008 also intellectually d. and pwmhp)
- ice breaker scheme

2002-2008: programmes like 31 projects, 12 projects, ...

Employment policy for pwd as legitimation of a tough policy

## Welfare policy

- people with disabilities: from pensions to services

1992-1998: considerable reduction in the award of disability  
pensions: from 28.000 to 14.000 a year

A steadily growing proportion of disability pensions are awarded  
with psychiatric background: now more than 50 %

Expences for services for people with disabilities are doubled  
every decade since 1990

## Education

- people with disabilities: new support

2004: Special study support for students with disabilities.

- 50 % of these students have mental health problems

Ordinary study support: 736 € / month

Disability addition: 1047 € / month

## Effect of the employment policy

- for people with disabilities

Survey studies 2002, 2005, 2008, 2010

Random samples 16-64 years, 10.000 – 20.000 respondents

47 % of persons with disability have a job (77 % of others)

Growing employment during the first period, then falling

But the crisis does not hit disabled people more than others

More acceptance of disabled colleagues on the workplace

More pvmhp in job: from 22 % in 2008 to 31 % in 2010

Method problem: the respondents' definition of disability varies  
with the unemployment rate

## Effect of the welfare policy

- for people with disabilities

1990 – a wheelchair user got automatically a disability pension

2003 – all have to try rehabilitation, regardless of impairment

A rather drastic policy change – but we do not have any research that shows the effect: some aimless years in the municipal social protection system, or a real chance to get a place in the working life

## Effects of the education policy

Research shows that people that attend special need classes as children only in few cases rarely are equipped for an active adult life. Most of them are rapidly changing interests or meeting obstacles that force them to try something new, again and again.

But we do not know if this is *because of* the special classes. If they *could have been* better equipped.