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# Changes in services - changes in attitudes?

Anna Margareth Kittelsaa\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NTNU Social Research – N-7491, Trondheim, Norway

## Abstract

The dismantling of institutions for people with intellectual disabilities in Norway took place through a reform in the 1990's. The ideals of the reform were that people with intellectual disabilities should live in their own apartments, take part in work life or other daytime activities and lead an active life in their leisure time. The support needed should be given on an individual basis. Today, these ideals seem to have been left. Living arrangements are more institutionalized, few are in paid work and many take part in segregated leisure time activities. The driving forces behind this rather negative development could for instance be: organizational changes in the municipalities, less media attention, less power among professionals and advocates, other groups in focus. In addition, it is possible to ask whether the new situation has to do with attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities. Based on studies of the living conditions for people with intellectual disabilities in the period from 1992 to 2010, and a qualitative study about the experiences of seven young individuals with intellectual disabilities, this paper will discuss possible connections between societal attitudes people with intellectual disabilities and how the services are constructed. The qualitative study is analyzed with a hermeneutic approach in order to catch the first person perspective of the participants. Results from this study indicate that even if these young individuals want to live what they call ordinary lives, they have experienced barriers because of negative attitudes from both individuals and organisations.

**Keywords:** intellectual disability, living conditions, attitudes

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\*Speaker