

## Summary

The purpose of this project was to obtain more knowledge about whether the municipal sector succeeded in meeting the sub-goal 2 of the IA (Inclusive Working Life) Agreement. We have assessed the municipal sector's initiatives to workplace adaptation for its own employees with reduced capacity for work in order for them to continue working and prevent them from ending up on disability pension. We have also looked into the municipal sector's measures to provide work training for other people with reduced capacity for work.

Rambøll has conducted a survey amongst a representative selection of municipalities and every county, and qualitative interviews with representatives from the municipal sector, the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and relevant NGOs.

### **The municipal sector's effort to facilitate and retain employment for its own employees**

The municipal sector succeeds to a large extent in facilitating and retaining the employment for its own employees. The survey shows that a clear majority of local and regional authorities have initiated activity goals for employees with reduced capacity for work. All respondents report having a primary goal for the IA work and that it is incorporated in local and regional plans. Only a small number report having prepared an internal overview of follow-up schemes, and hence if facilitating prevents employees from ending up on disability pension.

The interviews show that the municipal sector consider that facilitating works well and help employees in coming back to its ordinary employment. The study therefore suggests that the municipal sector achieve its goals in facilitation, although the sector have little documentation to support this.

Both local and regional authorities are goal-oriented in their approach and various facilitation measures have been launched. The most common measures regarding workplace adaptation in the municipalities are use of technical aids and changes in work tasks. Counties are to a larger extent using competence-raising programmes and flexible or reduced working hours. Managers spend a lot of time and resources on individual follow-up measures. A dilemma the municipal sector is facing is the balance between facilitating for individuals and the increased work load this might cause on other employees.

### **Work training in the municipal sector**

The municipal sector reaches the goal of providing work training places to people needing the assistance. Most work experience places are offered within health and care services as well as in the day-care sector. The study show that jobs within the municipal sector are attractive to people who need work training, and that these places are largely used. The findings show that local government to a large extent offer more work training places than initially planned. The reason for this might be the collaboration directly between an unit in the municipality and the NAV Workplace Support Centres or one of NAV's local offices in recruiting candidates to a work training. Especially small municipalities experience lack of time and resources, and hence challenges in following-up candidates. This may be one reason why these municipalities offer less work training places.

The work training programme may last for up to one year. In the municipal sector, the work training period lasts in average up to 4-6 months. The candidates obtain increased sector skills and general work experience. 31 percent of the municipalities said in the survey that they have hired candidates participating in the work experience programme in ordinary jobs in hindsight.

There is generally little correlation between the municipality sectors needs and the candidates' qualifications. This is explained by the fact that work training is primarily used for candidates who find it difficult to get access to the labour market. Moreover, the respondents said they have not been clearly in communicating with NAV what kind of qualification the different units need.

### **People under the age of 30**

The study shows that the municipality sector have not a particular focus on young people under the age of 30, despite national initiatives targeting this group. The majority of the respondents answer that they have not received an explicit initiative from NAV to create work experience places targeting young people. Due to poor information, nearly half of the municipalities in the survey are unable to account for how many people under the age of 30 participate in the work training programme. Among those being able to answer are the smaller municipalities, where we find the largest number of young people under the age of 30 participate in the work training programme.

### **Time and resources spent on follow-ups of employees**

The respondents find it difficult to estimate the amount of time and resources spent on meetings, planning and guidance in the follow-up and facilitation work. The time consumption varies greatly depending on the number of own employees who are in a facilitated work environment and the number of people who are offered work training. The manager has the overall responsibility for the adaptation and following it up in a unit. In addition, a supervisor/other employee is involved as well.

Estimated time consumption in relation to the follow-up work varies from 1 hour per week to a leader spending up to 50 percent of his/hers week's work. The feedback is that the managers see the need for increased capacity, both for mentoring, follow-ups and facilitation.

### **Identification of success factors and obstacles to increased goal attainment of sub-goal 2 of the IA Agreement**

The collaboration with NAV is essential both in facilitating the work within the municipal sector, and the follow-up of candidates on the work training programme. This applies to NAV Workplace Support Centres and the local NAV offices. Their competence, will to guide and coach are particularly emphasized, in relation to sub-goal 2 measures, and generally in the municipalities' other IA -work. Permanent contact persons and close collaboration are key success factors in both the recruitment of suitable candidates for work training programmes and throughout the work training process.

Facilitation grants for IA-businesses and remuneration of occupational health service is highlighted as the most important financial instruments. Cooperation with employee representatives, the occupational health service and general practitioner is specifically mentioned as a key success factor. Clarity in expectations from both employer and employee/candidates about responsibility and roles in a facilitated work situation or work training programme and use of a supervisor with experience from the workplace are as well key success factors.

Lack of predictability in the assistance scheme is challenging. This correlates both to available time for a manager to follow-up own employees or candidates in work training programmes. Regulatory changes and NAV not being able to attend meetings due to scarce resources might hinder the work as well.

Low goal attainment on sub-goal 2 is also about lack of motivation. Not everyone is motivated to facilitate for own employees, and follow-up of employees and candidates in work training programs requires both time and dedication. In addition, given limited opportunities for hiring of temporary staff or additional staffing is are considered a challenge.

A widely used means of facilitation is changes in work tasks. This is challenging to implement because it often leads to increased work load on other employees. In units with a high degree of facilitation and several candidates on work training programmes this can be a difficult dilemma.