

## Personal assistance is custom-designed

Norway - Uloba

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Uloba, Independent Living Norway, is a cross-disability organization that has developed the concept of 'personal assistance' based on the Independent Living ideology. Five disabled entrepreneurs founded the organization in 1991 with the goal of achieving equality for disabled people by providing them with personal assistance and the opportunity to live independently and join the work force on an equal basis with others. Uloba is organized as a cooperative society owned by its members – all disabled.

“Uloba puts the Independent Living ideology’s vision into practice.”

—Vibeke MARØY MELSTRØM, CEO and co-founder, Uloba

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Half of Uloba's administrative staff consists of disabled people.
- Some 2,900 disabled people in 150 Norwegian municipalities currently make use of personal assistance.
- There are 1,100 members and 5,700 assistants on the Uloba payroll.
- Uloba played a key role in implementing a new law making personal assistance a legal right for individuals who need assistance for more than 25 hours a week and are under the age of 67.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

Disabled people in Norway have been at the mercy of institutions, home care services, and various measures based on the medical model of disability. They have not been considered as a discriminated group with the same right as others to enjoy human rights and participate in society, nor have they viewed themselves in such a perspective. The medical approach to disability is still strong in the health care and assistant service sectors.

## SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Since Uloba was founded disabled people have come to believe that personal assistance (PA) is the best way to achieve participation in society and full human rights. Under the PA scheme, disabled people learn to supervise their own assistance. They are given responsibility and freedom of choice, and they learn how to use it. Uloba has also developed the "assisted work leader" scheme to give people who cannot lead their assistance without support access to user-controlled personal assistance. This was mainly developed to give children and people with social or intellectual impairment the same access to Independent Living as everybody else who needs assistance.

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The Uloba concept has great transfer value for countries where disabled people are fighting for equality and an independent life. Notably, this form of assistance involves no additional expense, but is simply a matter of shifting funds from institutions and home-care services to personal assistants and to teaching and facilitating people to work. Our system also entails savings in public administration costs relating to counselling, training, and work supervision.

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