

Universal Design

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2 Universal Design Practices in Norway

2.1 The Disability Gap Model – the view on disability in Norway

In Norway, the relational model of disability is commonly known as the disability Gap model. The disability GAP model was first promoted in Norway by Professor Ivar Lie, at the University of Oslo in the 1970's. This model is also known as the Nordic or Scandinavian Model of Disability. The model is based on the participation in one's community and society and relates disability to the environment in that disability is seen as something a person experiences when encountering barriers or limitations when



The Disability Gap model, in St. meld. nr 40 (2002-2003)

taking part in activities seen as important in the society in which the person lives. The figure showing the disability GAP model is taken from the Norwegian Report to the

Storting, no. 40 2002–2003 (<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/stmeld-nr-40-2002-2003-/id197129/>). It illustrates how universal design can help to reduce the gap between the individual's capabilities and the demands of society by reducing the requirements put on individuals. In the disability GAP model, disability is defined as occurring in the mismatch or gap between the demands from society and the individual conditions. The challenge is to strengthen the individual conditions and change (reduce) the demands from society.

Disability is here viewed in relation to the environment that surrounds a person, so the focus is not only on the person's function or ability, but also, to a greater extent, on factors that can be changed to decrease the requirements or increase the functioning and, in this way, reduce disability. The emphasis in the disability GAP model is on the individual's own evaluation of their opportunities, based on their experience of the gap between their abilities and the requirements from their environment.

2.2 Norwegian laws and regulations relevant to Universal design of ICT

In Norway, new ICT solutions has had to be universally designed since 1st of July 2014. The education sector had to be universally designed from 1st of January 2019, and this includes digital learning materials. Existing ICT solutions had to be universally designed before 1st of January 2021. (Sect. 41 Transitions, the Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Act from 2017).