



UPR Report from Javni (NGO)



Javni is the Faroese association for people with learning disabilities and their families. Javni was founded in 1971 and has between 800 and 900 members.

The name Javni was taken from a wild plant that is incredibly tough and viable in the harsh Faroese nature. The word Javni also means equality or parity. The Latin synonym for javni is lycopodiaceae. The green leaves in Javni's logo symbolize the plant.

Javni works to provide people with a learning disability equality in all areas of life.

The Faroese society:

The Faroe Islands are located in the North Atlantic Ocean right between Iceland and Norway. The Faroe Islands are a small community of 48,000 residents. It is a relatively autonomous part of Denmark and therefore it must generally be represented by Denmark in the international arena.

Faroe Islands are divided into a public and several municipal sectors. The public sector is responsible for most of the spending on education, health, social benefits and services while service to senior citizens per January 2015 was taken over by the municipalities. The challenge to set the boundaries between public and municipal tasks is still ongoing.



Tórshavn, June 22. 2015

1. Devices for people living in sheltered housing

Regarding United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities article 26.3.

In the Faroe Islands there are applicable rules when you need a tool to be able to live an active life. You have the right to borrow it from an equipment center. <http://av.fo/upload/vegleiding/kunnger-d-um-hjalparrad.pdf> (only in Faroese language).

For people living in sheltered housing in need of help with daily activities another law is in force - the Public Assistance Act §18b, pc.4, which says that: There will not be compensated for furniture and equipment for people in institutions or cohabitation. However, there will be compensated for customized equipment.

If the device in turn is universal the institution or cohabitation have to pay. But only if they have money. Otherwise the disabled citizens have to pay themselves.

Javni has received several inquiries from citizens who find themselves in this predicament. For example from this citizen with learning disabilities: The citizen can not read the time. Often he stands up in the middle of the night and thinks he must go to work in the sheltered workshop.

The staff in the community suggested that a special bell, originally designed for people with dementia, could help the problem - which it did. The price of the bell is around 4000 Danish kroner which is a lot of money for an early retirement citizen. Unfortunately, this residence as an institution had no money. Therefore the citizen had to pay for the bell himself. In contrast to this citizens living in their own homes have the right to free tools for unlimited time.

Javni claims that this practice shows that not everyone is equal to the law, why we see it as violation of handicap Convention Article 26.3



2. Selection of housing has an impact on the level of help and support

Regarding United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities article 19.a living independently and being included in the community.

In the Faroe Islands there is a great lack of suitable housing for people with learning disabilities. The Government is in the process of improving the situation, but the location of the residences is unreasonable in relation to where the greatest need is.

In the Faroe Islands there are regulations which define that if you have a learning disability or some other challenges in daily life which means that you have extensive need of help and support, you need to stay in a specific type of accommodation which is defined by Ministry of Social Affairs in relation to how much support and care you need.

This, coupled with the fact that there is a shortage of housing, especially in the metropolitan area, means that the citizen is at risk of being located far from where he or she wants to live. Javni has been contacted several times by people in this situation. If the citizen because of this choose to stay in their own homes or in their childhood home he/she will not receive the necessary staff service in order to live in society. The lack of service is usually justified by economics.

Javni has several examples where it has gone wrong. One example is an adult citizen with learning disabilities who six years ago was forced to move from his living community home to his mother because of failure to thrive.

Subsequently the citizen was offered an accommodation located far from the area where he wanted to live. The citizen's nature is, that he must have someone close to him around the clock. After he moved back home he could not be granted the necessary extent of staff time. Therefore his mother was forced to quit her job. The family has no income other than the citizen's pension. If the citizen had the necessary staff service his mother would be able to be on the labor market.

Javni claims that this example shows a violation of the Handicap Conventions Article 19.a , because of the Social Ministry's rules on housing allocation and maybe lack of economy to this area as well.