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NEGOTIATE

Overcoming job-insecurity in Europe

NEGOTIATE – Negotiating early job-insecurity and labour market exclusion in Europe

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1. Introduction

When comparing the general state of the Norwegian labour market to that of most other European countries, the contrast is of course striking. The labour market situation of youth and young adults in Norway was not hugely affected by the economic crisis as such. The picture is also confirmed if one adopts a national perspective comparing the youngest age groups with the overall working age population. There has been no dramatic increase in NEET rates (Bø & Vigran, 2014). In fact, the available data show stability rather than great variations. Across the whole period the share of NEETs was higher among the oldest young adults and lowest among those who were still teenagers (table 1.1). Recently the NEET rates have been very similar for women and men with the exception of those aged 25-29. For the latter group young males are doing better than their female colleagues.

If one looks at the level of unemployment instead of NEET rates, there was a general increase in youth unemployment in the period following 2008 (table 1.2). For those with tertiary education the worsening of the situation seems to have been temporary. It is too early to say how the latest slowdown in the Norwegian economy will affect this picture.

Age	Gender	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
15-29 years	Both men & women	6	6	5	6	7	6	6	7	7	7
	Men	5	4	4	6	7	6	6	6	6	7
	Women	7	7	6	7	7	7	7	8	8	7
15-19 years	Both men & women	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Men	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2
	Women	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
20-24 years	Both men & women	7	7	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Men	6	6	6	8	8	7	8	8	8	8
	Women	8	7	5	7	7	8	8	9	8	8
25-29 years	Both men & women	9	8	7	9	10	10	9	10	10	11
	Men	6	5	5	6	9	8	7	8	8	9
	Women	11	11	10	11	12	11	11	12	12	12

Table 1.1: NEET rates by age group and gender, 2006-2015. Per cent

Statistics Norway, Labour Force Survey, table 09858

Gender	Age	Level of education	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Both women & men	15-74 years	All	3.4	2.5	2.6	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.5	4.4
		Primary and lower secondary school	6.4	5.1	6.1	6.7	7.4	6.8	6.2	7.9	7.4	8.8
		Upper secondary school	2.8	1.6	1.8	2.5	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.9
		Tertiary education	2.0	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.6
	15-24 years	All	8.6	7.1	7.6	9.1	9.3	8.5	8.7	9.1	7.8	10.0
		Primary and lower secondary school	10.7	9.5	10.3	11.2	12.0	11.0	10.5	12.6	10.4	12.6
		Upper secondary school	5.6	4.6	4.1	6.2	6.0	5.8	5.7	5.7	6.2	7.6
		Tertiary education	3.2	3.2	3.3	4.0	7.7	7.1	8.6	5.6	3.1	2.8
	25-29 years	All	4.5	2.8	3.5	3.8	5.4	4.9	4.7	5.3	5.9	6.4
		Primary and lower secondary school	7.9	4.4	9.1	9.1	13.6	11.4	8.7	11.6	15.0	11.1
		Upper secondary school	4.7	2.0	2.8	1.9	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.8	5.3	5.1
		Tertiary education	3.9	1.9	2.7	3.5	2.6	4.1	3.3	3.8	3.8	3.8

Table 1.2: Unemployment rates by age and level of education (see table A1.2 for unemployment rates by gender, age and level of education). Per cent.

Source: Statistics Norway, Labour Force Survey, own calculations based on table 08338

Table 1.3 and 1.4 shows that part-time work is very common among young people. Gender differences are considerable with clearly more women taking-up part-time work than their male counterparts. The trend has been quite stable over the past ten years.

Age	Gender	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
15-74 years	Both men & women	27.3	26.7	26.7	26.8	26.6	26.4	26.4	26.2	25.1	25.3
	Men	12.8	12.7	13.2	13.8	13.8	13.4	14.0	14.2	13.6	14.8
	Women	43.7	42.5	41.8	41.3	40.9	40.9	40.1	39.8	38.0	37.2
15-24 years	Both men & women	52.6	50.8	51.7	53.0	53.0	53.9	55.0	54.4	53.4	55.6
	Men	38.2	36.6	39.1	40.0	40.7	38.8	40.6	41.7	38.8	42.8
	Women	68.0	65.0	64.7	66.7	66.3	68.9	68.8	67.2	67.8	68.6

Table 1.3: Share of part-time employment (per cent)

Source: Statistics Norway, Labour Force Survey (AKU), own calculations based on table 11132

Age	Gender	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
15-74 years	Both men & women	72.5	73.1	73.1	72.9	73.2	73.4	73.3	73.4	74.6	74.3
	Men	87.0	87.2	86.6	86.0	86.0	86.4	85.7	85.6	86.1	85.0
	Women	56.3	57.4	58.0	58.4	58.9	58.9	59.4	59.9	61.7	62.4
15-24 years	Both men & women	47.1	48.6	47.7	46.1	46.4	45.5	44.1	45.0	45.7	43.3
	Men	61.8	62.8	60.9	60.0	59.3	60.0	58.3	57.7	60.6	56.6
	Women	32.0	34.4	34.1	32.7	33.1	30.5	29.5	32.2	31.0	30.2

Table 1.4: Share of full-time employment (per cent)

Source: Statistics Norway, Labour Force Survey (AKU), own calculations based on table 11132

Statistics Norway also carries out an annual living conditions survey (*levekårsundersøkelsen*). Every three years there is a rotating module on working and employment conditions. The data from this survey confirm that while young adults in Norway have a weaker level of labour market attachment than older workers, employment conditions are overall quite good. They do not seem to have deteriorated to any significant degree since the mid-1990s. Temporary employment (table 1.5) is quite common among young workers, and gender differences are rather small in this regard. The proportion of young workers without a written employment contract was clearly smaller in 2015 compared with ten years ago (table 1.6). Most young people, who state that they are working, receive a fixed pay but there has been some variation in this share over the past twenty years (table 1.7). It is worth noting that in the aftermath of the economic crisis, there has been no increase in the share of young workers who state that they are afraid of losing their job (table 1.8). Job satisfaction among young adults has been stable over the past 20-year period (table 1.9). There are also fewer young adults who feel that they are unable to make use of their education and previous work experience in their job (table 1.10).

Gender	Age	1996	2000	2003	2006	2009	2013
Both men and women	All	12	11	11	12	10	10
	16-24 years	34	32	34	33	30	33
	25-44 years	11	11	11	12	11	11
	45-66 years	7	4	5	5	4	3
Men	All	10	9	9	9	8	8
	16-24 years	35	35	35	32	29	30
	25-44 years	8	8	7	9	8	8
	45-66 years	5	3	4	4	3	3
Women	All	15	13	14	15	12	12
	16-24 years	33	29	32	34	30	35
	25-44 years	14	15	14	16	14	13
	45-66 years	9	5	7	7	5	5

Table 1.5: Temporary employment, share of employees (per cent)

Source: Statistics Norway, Living Conditions Survey, rotating module on employment and working conditions, table 07850

Gender	Age	1996	2000	2003	2006	2009	2013
Both men and women	All	17	12	10	7	6	4
	16-24 years	33	25	21	13	10	9
	25-44 years	15	10	8	6	4	4
	45-66 years	17	11	10	8	6	4
Men	All	20	12	12	9	7	5
	16-24 years	29	21	20	14	12	12
	25-44 years	19	10	9	7	5	4
	45-66 years	20	10	13	10	7	5
Women	All	15	12	9	5	5	3
	16-24 years	36	28	23	12	8	7
	25-44 years	11	9	7	4	4	3
	45-66 years	13	11	7	6	5	3

Table 1.6: Without a written employment contract, share of employees (per cent)

Source: Statistics Norway, Living Conditions Survey, rotating module on employment and working conditions, table 07850

Gender	Age	1996	2000	2003	2006	2009	2013
Both men and women	All	91	80	71	77	97	75
	16-24 years	90	81	77	80	96	83
	25-44 years	90	78	68	74	97	72
	45-66 years	92	82	72	80	98	77
Men	All	86	74	62	69	97	67
	16-24 years	86	78	67	75	96	78
	25-44 years	85	72	61	66	97	63
	45-66 years	88	77	63	72	97	69
Women	All	96	85	79	86	97	84
	16-24 years	94	84	87	85	96	88
	25-44 years	95	84	76	83	97	81
	45-66 years	97	87	82	89	98	87

Table 1.7: Fixed pay, share of employees (per cent)

Source: Statistics Norway, Living Conditions Survey, rotating module on employment and working conditions, table 07850

Gender	Age	1996	2000	2003	2006	2009	2013
Both men and women	All	12	11	20	11	10	9
	16-24 years	15	10	20	11	10	10
	25-44 years	11	12	21	11	10	10
	45-66 years	12	11	18	11	9	8
Men	All	11	11	20	9	10	9
	16-24 years	15	12	24	11	10	11
	25-44 years	10	12	20	9	10	9
	45-66 years	12	10	18	9	10	8
Women	All	13	11	20	12	10	10

	16-24 years	16	7	16	10	9	10
	25-44 years	13	12	22	13	10	12
	45-66 years	13	12	19	12	9	8

Table 1.8: At risk of losing current employment, share of employees (per cent)

Source: Statistics Norway, Living Conditions Survey, rotating module on employment and working conditions, table 07850

Gender	Age	1996	2000	2003	2006	2009	2013
Both men and women	All	89	89	90	89	90	90
	16-24 years	83	80	87	84	86	87
	25-44 years	89	90	89	87	89	88
	45-66 years	90	90	93	92	92	92
Men	All	88	90	90	89	91	90
	16-24 years	85	80	84	83	86	86
	25-44 years	89	90	90	88	90	88
	45-66 years	89	91	92	92	92	92
Women	All	89	88	90	89	89	90
	16-24 years	81	80	90	85	85	87
	25-44 years	90	90	87	86	87	88
	45-66 years	92	89	94	93	92	92

Table 1.9: Satisfied with current job, per cent of active population

Source: Statistics Norway, Living Conditions Survey, rotating module on employment and working conditions, table 07850

Gender	Age	1996	2000	2003	2006	2009	2013
Both men and women	All	13	11	11	10	8	8
	16-24 years	33	30	27	24	18	16
	25-44 years	11	9	11	9	7	8
	45-66 years	10	8	7	7	6	6
Men	All	12	9	10	9	7	7
	16-24 years	31	24	27	21	16	16
	25-44 years	11	8	9	9	6	7
	45-66 years	8	6	6	6	5	6
Women	All	15	13	12	11	9	8
	16-24 years	35	36	27	26	20	15
	25-44 years	12	10	12	10	7	8
	45-66 years	13	10	7	8	8	6

Table 1.10: Poor opportunities to use education and accumulated work experience, share of employees (per cent)

Source: Statistics Norway, Living Conditions Survey, rotating module on employment and working conditions, table 07850

Even if the overall picture, especially from a comparative perspective, is quite positive, young people's transition from education to the labour market remains an important topic on the political agenda also in Norway. There has been a particular concern for the disadvantaged position of youth who do not complete upper secondary education and/or have health-related or other problems that affect their

work and earnings capacity. In the remainder of this report we look at some of the institutional structures that influence young people's trajectory from the education system to the labour market and their degree of job security, as well as policies and programmes that have been set up to support the transition into the labour market.

2. Education

Policy objectives

The present Government presented its main policy objectives in its political platform in October 2013.¹ As to education, the Government states that “[t]he objective of the schools is to ensure that all pupils acquire basic skills in reading, mathematics, oral and written language, and use of digital tools. The primary challenge in Norwegian schools is that too many children do not acquire these skills. This is a major cause of drop out or failure in upper secondary education. The Government will implement measures to ensure that more pupils acquire basic skills”. The Government aims to “[g]radually increase the national target for proportion of students who successfully complete upper secondary education to 90 per cent”.

Through the EEA agreement Norway participates in most of the European programs and collaborative processes in the field of education. Education plays a key role in *Europe 2020*, the EU's, overarching ten-year strategy for growth and employment. Two of the primary objectives involve education: the EU intends to reduce school dropout rates to below 10 % and to increase the number of young people who complete tertiary education to at least 40 %. Education and lifelong learning are highlighted as extremely important, not only for individuals, but also for democracy, society, economic growth, welfare and employment in Europe.

The Norwegian educational policy objectives in general and policy objectives regarding school to work transition and adjustment to labour market demands are in line with these.

The most important reform of the schooling system in the last decade was introduced in fall of 2006, the so-called The Knowledge Promotion (*Kunnskapsløftet*).

“The objectives and quality framework for primary and secondary education and training are laid down in The National Curriculum for the Knowledge Promotion which applies to all levels of primary and secondary education and training and comprises: - The Core Curriculum - Quality Framework - Subject Curricula - Distribution of teaching hours per subject - Individual Assessment The subject curricula include competence aims for the pupils after certain grades. All the subjects have competence aims after grades 4, 7 and 10 and after each level in upper secondary education and training. Some subjects also have competence aims after grade 2.”²

In higher education a reform was introduced in 2003, the so-called Quality Reform, which “introduced a degree structure, grading system and quality assurance system in line with the Bologna Process”³.

¹ “Political platform”, see:

https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/a93b067d9b604c5a82bd3b5590096f74/politisk_platform_eng.pdf

² “Education”, p. 9, see: http://www.udir.no/Upload/Brosyrer/5/Education_in_Norway.pdf?epslanguage=no

³ “Education”, p. 16, see: http://www.udir.no/Upload/Brosyrer/5/Education_in_Norway.pdf?epslanguage=no

Institutional set up/framework and the changes (brief overview):

The structure of the educational and training institutions

“All public education in Norway is free of charge, while kindergartens have parental fees.”⁴ From the age of six until the age of 16, education is compulsory.⁵ All children are presented the same curriculum until they start in upper secondary. There are very few private schools providing primary and lower secondary education.

Figure 2.1 shows the general educational system, while figure 2.2 shows the transition points after compulsory school. Table 2.1 refers to the basic facts and figures about education in Norway.

⁴ “Education in Norway”, see: http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/brosjyrer/5/education_in_norway.pdf

⁵ The following outline is based on the report by Albæk, Asplund, Barth, Lindahl, von Simson & Vanhala (2015).

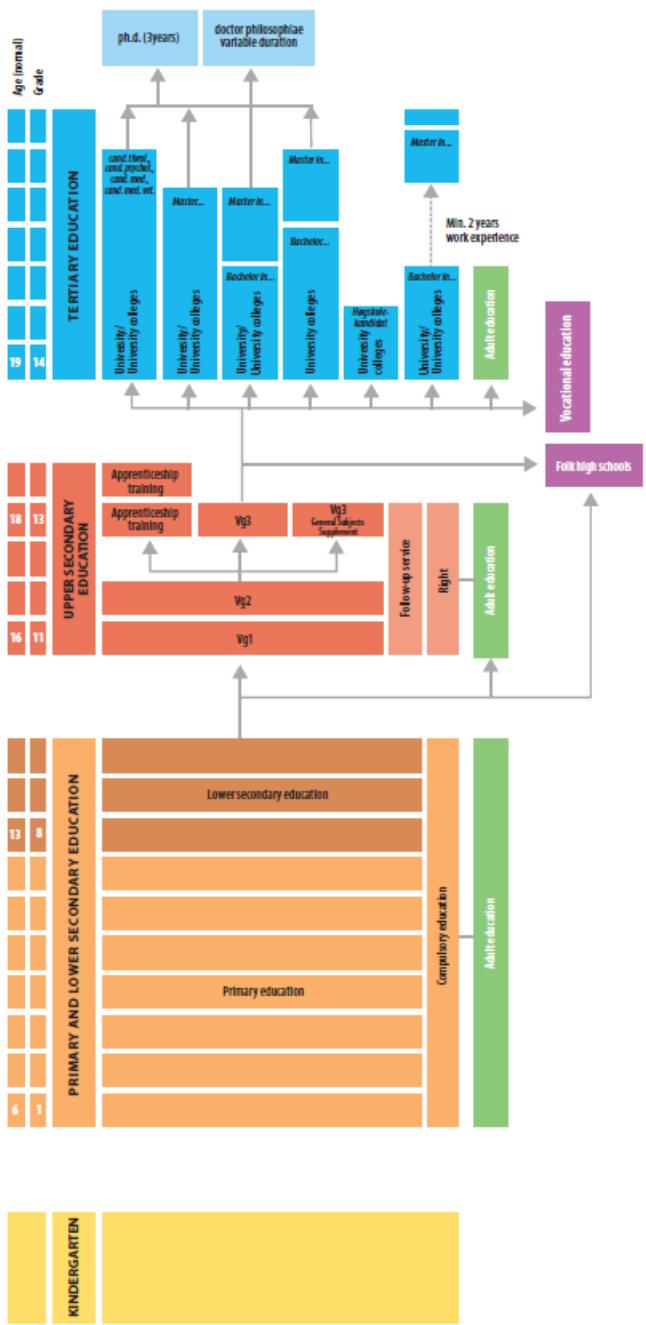


Figure 2.1.: The Norwegian education system⁶

⁶ "Education in Norway", p. 25, see:
http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/brosjyrer/5/education_in_norway.pdf

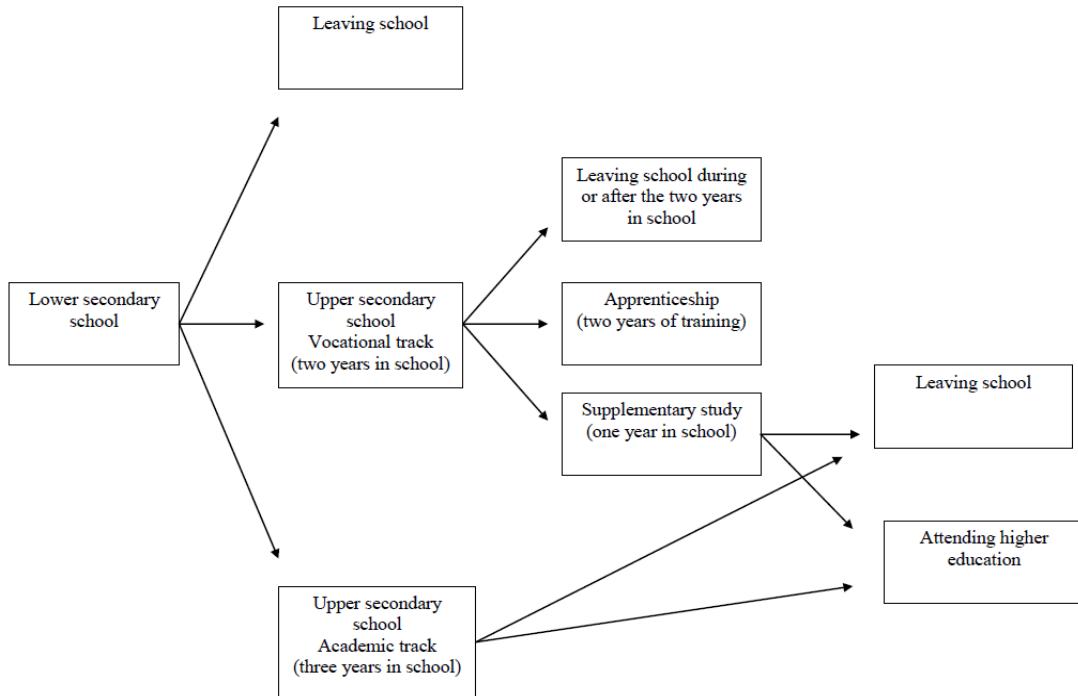


Figure 2.2.: Transition points after compulsory school

Source: Dæhlen (2014)

- Of a population of over 4.5 million, more than 900 000 people are currently undergoing education or training. In addition approx. 1 million people participate in adult education courses each year.
- Approx. 32 per cent of the population over 16 does not have education above the lower secondary level, 44 per cent do not have education above upper secondary level, and 25 per cent have an education at university and/or university college level.
- Approx. 235 000 children have places in ordinary kindergartens or family kindergartens (2006). Kindergartens are voluntary, but it is a goal that everyone who so wishes is to have the opportunity to attend a kindergarten.
- Approx. 607 500 pupils attend public primary and lower secondary schools in the school year of 2006–2007. In addition there are almost 10 000 pupils at private primary and lower secondary schools. Never before has Norway had so many pupils at this level.
- During the school year of 2006–2007 more than 180 000 pupils attend public upper secondary schools, while there are about 14 000 pupils at private upper secondary schools. In addition there are about 32 000 apprentices.
- There are about 195 000 students at Norwegian universities and university colleges (both public and private).
- Approx. 143 000 students in Norway receive support from the State Educational Loan fund. In addition approx. 14 000 Norwegian students receive support to take full studies abroad, whereas about 8 000 receive support to take parts of a degree or to participate in exchange programmes abroad.
- Education in Norway costs 6.6 per cent of the gross domestic product, while the average for the OECD countries is 5.9 per cent (2003).

Table 2.1 Facts and figures about education in Norway, 2007⁷

⁷ "Education in Norway", p. 5, see:
http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/brosjyrer/5/education_in_norway.pdf

There is a statutory right for every young person (*ungdomsretten*) to attend three years of upper secondary education (*videregående*) – free of charge. The right must be utilized during a period of five consecutive years and must be started within five years after completing compulsory school. In upper secondary education the student can choose either academic or vocational studies. A standard academic course lasts three years whereas a vocational program may follow a 2+2 model: two years of school-based training and two years of apprenticeship or adding one year of supplementary study to achieve the requirements needed to attend higher education (please be referred to figure 2.2.).

The statutory right to secondary education and the integration of apprenticeships in the 2+2 model is part of the so-called Reform 94 – a reorganization of upper secondary education introduced in 1994. The non-completion rates have been stable since the introduction: The government operates with figures that estimate that approximately 30 % of upper secondary pupils do not finish their education within five years after enrolment.⁸

However, researchers argue that there is a need to distinguish between those who quit school and those who need more than five years to complete and those who complete but fail in one or more subjects (Markussen, 2016). Figure 2.3 shows the trend in the years 1994-2009 among all pupils in upper secondary school. The blue line indicates all those who complete, the orange those who needed more than five years to complete, the green line all those who failed in one or more subject, and the purple all those who quitted. Subsequently these figures show that only every sixth pupil do not complete. According to Markussen (2016), these distinctions are important as the measures needed will be different if they target the group that fail in one or more subject or if they are to target a pupil who quits school.

⁸ Completion rates in upper secondary education, see: <http://www.udir.no/tall-og-forskning/finn-forskning/tema/Gjennomforingsbarometer/>

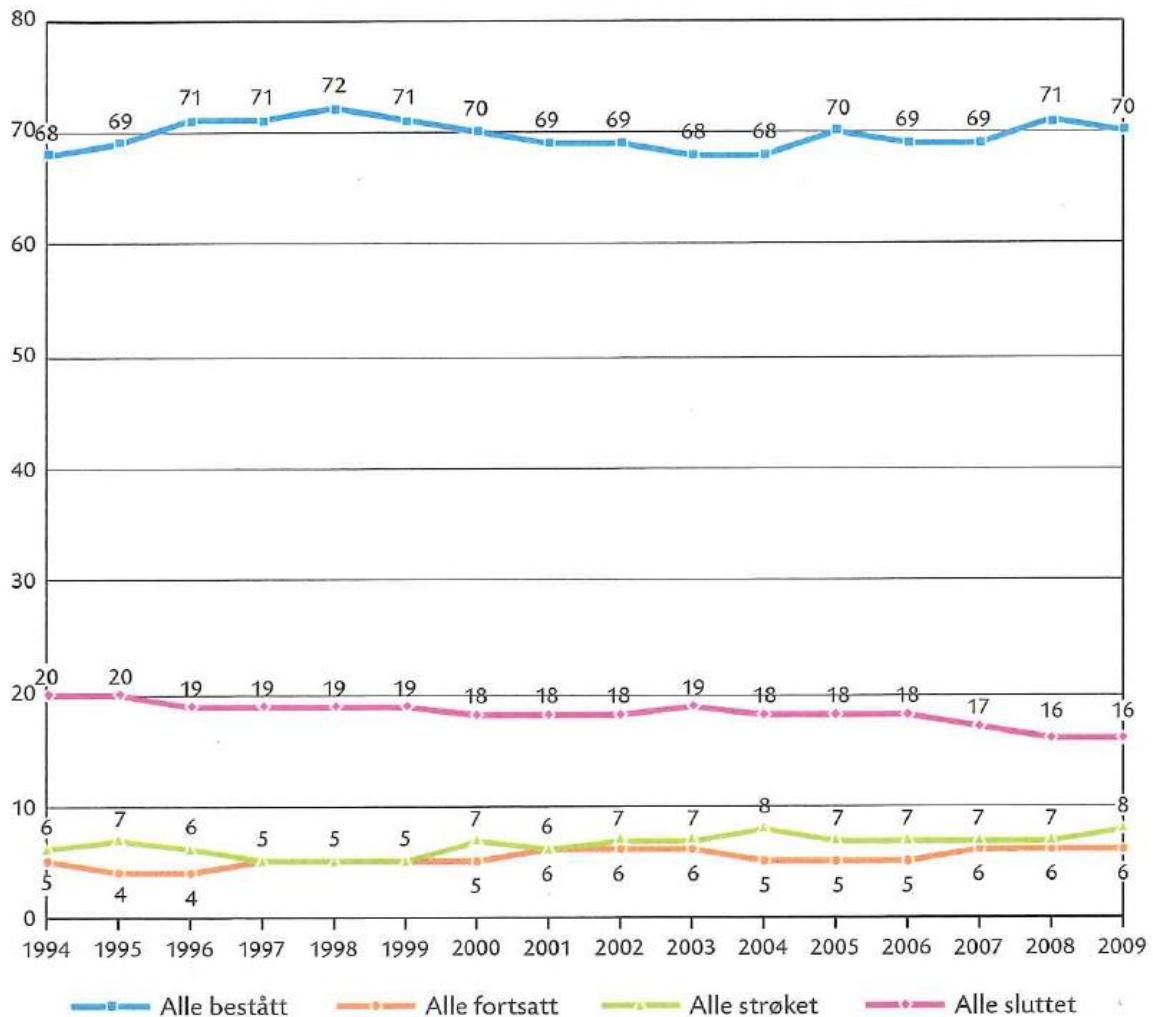


Figure 2.3: Completed upper secondary education. All pupils. The blue dotted line: All completed; the orange dotted line: all continued; the green dotted line: all failed; the pink dotted line: all quitted
Source: Markussen (2016, p. 26)

In 2014, approximately 20 % of upper secondary schools were private. The proportion of pupils in private upper secondary schools was 8 %.

Currently there are 8 universities, 20 university colleges and 5 scientific colleges owned by the state. In addition, there is also a large number of private higher education institutions, 23 of which receive government support. As a student one is entitled to educational loans and grants to provide adequate support to cover living expenses while pursuing an education. Student loans are interest-free while in education.

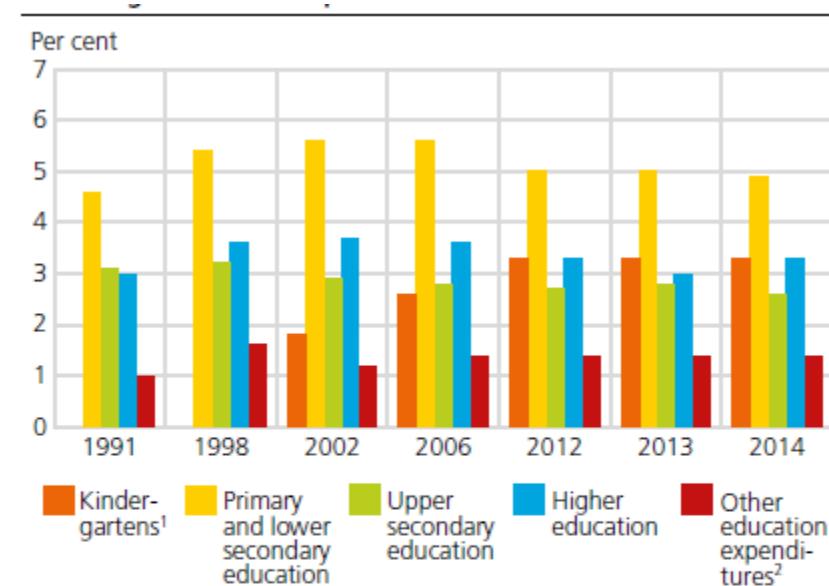
Governance of education

The Norwegian parliament and the Government define the goals and decide the budgetary frameworks for education. The Ministry of Education and Research is Norway's highest public administrative agency for educational matters, and is responsible for implementing national educational policy. The Education Act of 1998 and a national curriculum ensure a common standard.

The municipalities are responsible for primary and lower secondary schools. County authorities have responsibility for upper secondary schools. A National Education Office represents the central

government at the regional level. “In cooperation with municipal and county authorities, the National Education Office ensures that appropriate schooling is provided for young people in compliance with all regulations concerning the school, and also ensures the provision of adequate adult education facilities.”⁹

Total government expenditure covers administrative bodies at state, county and municipal level.



¹ Expenditures to kindergartens are only available from 2002, and include expenditures related to both education and care.

² Includes expenditures for 1. Education irrespective of level (e.g. adult education) 2. Services related to education (e.g. food, lodging, doctor and dentist costs) 3. Miscellaneous (e.g. administration, coordination, monitoring/follow up of education plans and budgets).

More information: <http://www.ssb.no/en/offinnut/>

Figure 2.4: Educational expenditure by type of education as a percentage of total government expenditure

Source: Statistics Norway (2016, p. 29)

Students in higher education pay a small administrative fee. “The State Educational Loan Fund helps make it possible for everyone, irrespective of their social or economic background, to take an education. Financial support may also be awarded for studies abroad.”¹⁰

Policy content/substance

Initial education system (basic/traditional levels of education: primary, secondary, tertiary)

As noted above, the present government – like the preceding ones – explicitly states that it is a priority to have more pupils finish and complete upper secondary education. As shown in

⁹ “The education system”, see: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/school/the-norwegian-education-system/id445118/>

¹⁰ “Education”, p. 22, see: http://www.udir.no/Upload/Brosjyrer/5/Education_in_Norway.pdf?epslanguage=no

table 1, 73 per cent of pupils in general studies complete upper secondary school according to the stipulated length of study; in vocational studies, the percentage is 39.

		Pupils	Per cent
General studies	Total	32130	100
	Completed according to normativ length of study	23566	73
	Completed beyond normativ length of study	3124	10
	Still inn upper secondary education after five years	751	2
	Enrolled in final year but failed exams	2363	7
	Not completed	2326	7
Vocational studies	Total	30657	100
	Completed according to normativ length of study	11831	39
	Completed beyond normativ length of study	5923	19
	Still inn upper secondary education after five years	2813	9
	Enrolled in final year but failed exams	2379	8
	Not completed	7711	25

Table 2.2: Number of pupils in upper secondary education, area of study/education programme and completion rate

Source: Statistics Norway Statbank, table 08813

To increase the completion rate of pupils, one important step has been to establish a long-term collaboration between the central government, counties and municipalities in this area. This was initially done through the “Ny GIV” project, which ran from 2010 to 2013.

The overarching goal was to increase the proportion of young people who successfully complete secondary education to 75 percent by 2015 (from 69 percent in 2010). The effort comprised three major sub-projects, in which a “follow up”-measure (“Oppfølgingsprosjektet”) was implemented targeting young people aged 15-21 years who were neither in education nor employment. The measure included testing of training models that combine work experience with learning objectives in upper secondary school, a strengthening of cooperation between relevant actors (the counties, the welfare and labour services (NAV), schools) responsible for the follow-up of young people not in employment or education, and skills training for employees working in the counties or NAV. An evaluation of this measure concludes that:

“there has been an increase in the proportion of young people neither in education nor in regular employment who has attended training models that combine work experience with learning objectives in upper secondary school. (...) There has been an improvement in the collaborative relationships between the actors who are responsible for young people not attending secondary school. The follow-up service in the counties has now a better overview of their target group than before the intervention, it has been closer and better cooperation between the schools, the follow-up service and NAV and according to employees of these agencies, the management has given more priority to dropout prevention in the counties. A large proportion of the employees in these agencies believe that they have become better in this work. The training of skills to improve how the employees work has primarily strengthened

cooperation competence of the participants, and to a lesser extent given skills that can be applied to the development and planning of measures and activities that are competence in relation to the implementation of secondary education" (Sletten, Bakken, & Andersen, 2015, pp. 161-162).

"Ny GIV" has been followed up by a new effort, the Programme for enhanced completion of Upper Secondary Education and Training (*Program for bedre gjennomføring i videregående opplæring*). The project aims

"to increase completion rates at upper secondary schools by developing, communicating and implementing effective tools to prevent students from dropping out and to help them to return to school [...]. There are two target groups: students at risk of not completing their upper secondary education and young people between the ages of 15 and 21 who are neither studying nor working. The Ministry has worked with the counties to identify the critical transitions where support measures are particularly important, and to establish a framework for improving completion rates. The framework will help county authorities to be more systematic in their efforts to provide appropriate assistance to the target groups".¹¹

Implementation of measures and subsequent evaluations started in early 2016 and will continue until 2019.

Figure 2.5 shows the education level for the population in 2014.

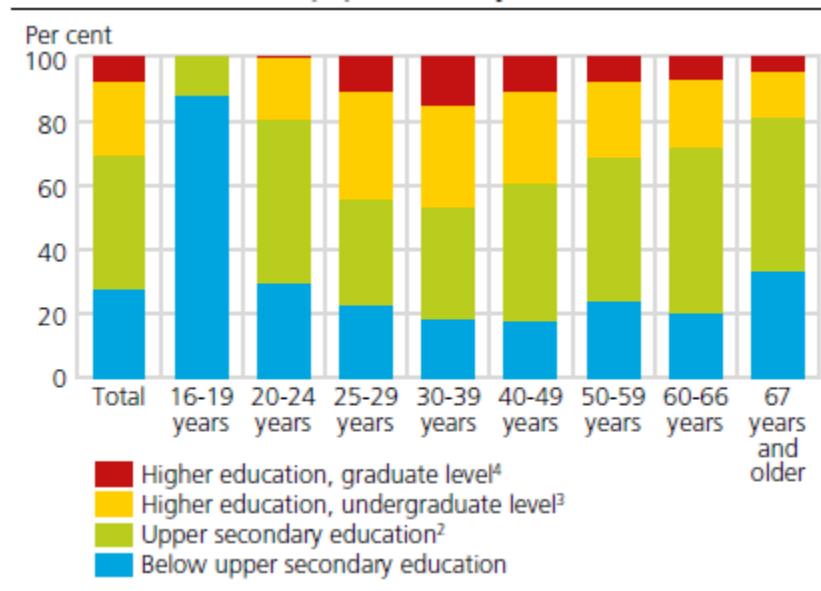


Figure 2.5: Education level for the population 16 years and older. 2014

Source: Statistics Norway (2016, p. 23)

¹¹ "Increasing completion rates at upper secondary schools", see:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/school/innsiktartikler/program-for-bedre-gjennomføring-i-videregående-opplaring/id2005356/>

Life-long learning paradigm in education (the transmittance of education system and opportunities for further education and training)

Facts:

Approx. 10 000 adults each year receive education at primary and lower secondary level

Approx. 20 000 adults participate in upper secondary education and training each year

Approx. 15 000 students attend continuing education courses at public universities and university colleges

Approx. 70 000 participate in supplementary training courses

Table 2.3: Facts about education and training for adults

Source: "Education", p. 19¹²

The Government acknowledges that there is a need for a comprehensive policy for adults with weak basic skills.¹³ In February 2016 it presented a white paper on how to improve access to education and training for adults and to improve the collaboration between the authorities of education, integration and labour.¹⁴ Three main areas to be improved are identified: 1) a need for better training/education (*opplæring*) of adults with weak basic skills, 2) improve opportunities for completion of upper secondary education, and 3) improve the quality of services targeting immigrants. Important to note is the Governments' suggestion to reduce the potential time lag between expiry of the statutory right of every young person (*ungdomsretten*) to upper secondary education and the lower age limit of 25 years attached to the statutory right to upper secondary education as an adult (*voksenretten*).

Table 2.4 shows the percentage of pupils in post-secondary education.

	Total	Public	Private
Number of students, in total	15 249	7 588	7 661
Percentage 20 years and younger	8	6	10
21-25 years	32	34	30
26-30 years	19	20	18
31-35 years	13	14	12
36-40 years	9	9	9
41-45 years	8	8	8
46-50 years	6	5	7
51 years and older	5	4	5

Table 2.4: Students by age in public and private post-secondary vocational education. Number and per cent 2014

¹² http://www.udir.no/Upload/Brosjyrer/5/Education_in_Norway.pdf?epslanguage=no

¹³ "Adult education", see: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/voksnes-laring-og-kompetanse/innsiktsartikler/opplaring-for-voksne/id2343654/>

¹⁴ Meld. St. 16 (2015–2016) Fra utenforsk til ny sjanse — Samordnet innsats for voksnes læring (not available in English), see: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-16-20152016/id2476199/?q=&ch=2#KAP1-5>

Source: Statistics Norway (2016, p. 15)

Statistics Norway (2016, p. 15) shows that among the students who started post-secondary vocational education for the first time in 2009, 38 % (41 men and 34 women) had not completed five years later.

Assessment: gaps, weaknesses/strengths, policy outcomes

The societal and individual consequences of poor throughput from upper secondary education are significant. Persons who have not completed upper secondary education have lower income, have lower labour market participation, have greater likelihood of becoming recipients of social assistance, are more likely to have or acquire poorer health. Estimates reveal that if the completion rate from upper secondary education increases from 70 to 80 % that would result in a reduction in costs for society of approximately 5.4 billion for each cohort (Falch, Johannessen, & Strøm, 2009). As shown above, the poor throughput has received much public and political debate.

The following table, 2.5, shows the risks of unemployment according to the level of education.

Level of education	Employed	Public support	Unemployed
Below upper secondary education	65.9	23.9	6.9
Upper secondary education, vocational track 1 year	72.5	20.1	6.0
Upper secondary education, academic track 1 year	78.4	16.5	3.1
Upper secondary education, completed academic track	88.9	7.0	2.7
Upper secondary education, Vocational track, apprenticeship	94.5	2.3	1.7
Upper secondary education, vocational track + supplementary study	96.8	0.6	1.9

Table 2.5: The relationship between level of education and employment status. Per cent. N = 4174.

Source: Revised table, see Markussen 2016, p. 42

The recent reforms in upper secondary education have aimed to improve the completion rates as the risks associated with unemployment and the receiving public support are higher among young people who do not finish their education.

3. Labour market regulations and wage setting

Summary

Between 1990 and 2015 Norway benefitted from a strong economy, which has contributed to highly favourable labour market outcomes. A strong demand for labour has kept unemployment low and allowed an increase in employment rates. In addition, there has been a strong growth in real wages. Nonetheless, the present bourgeois government has in recent years introduced some more flexibility for employers. They argue it is a necessary response to strong international competition. In addition, there is a widespread belief among the political centre-right that easier hiring-and-firing arrangements are beneficial to groups with a higher-than-average risk of labour market marginalisation. Examples of risk factors are a low level of education, disability, having an ethnic minority background or lacking work experience, as is often the case with young people when they enter the labour market. A higher degree of flexibility makes it less risky for employers to hire persons whose productivity is uncertain. Less rigid working time regulations will also make it easier to meet market competition. However, the trend towards increased flexibility is far from unfettered in Norway. In general, the collective actors are strong, and the main trade union confederations have considerable power. They made sure that the new measures of flexibility had important limitations, for instance, on the use of temporary contracts. Overall, industrial relations and working life in Norway are still strongly coordinated. Centralised collective bargaining and tripartite cooperation continue to play an important role in governing the labour market.

A Basic institutional features and policy substance

A key feature of Norwegian labour relations is a high degree of unionisation and a two-tier framework that combines central and local (i.e. firm or company level) coordination and wage bargaining. For a wide group of workers, so-called tariff wages are regulated by centrally negotiated collective agreements applying to the industry or sectorial level. Next, local negotiations over how to implement the sector-wide collective agreements take place at the local level. Local bargaining may result in individual wage increases that come on top of the general increases negotiated centrally (Barth et al., 2014).

There is no statutory minimum wage, and the possibility of introducing it is not an issue on the current political agenda. Despite the absence of a statutory minimum wage in Norway (as well as the other Nordic countries), the earnings structure is more compressed compared to most other OECD countries (Halvorsen et al., 2015; Moene and Wallerstein, 2005). Wages at the lower end of the income range are relatively high making in-work poverty a less common phenomenon than in Southern European and Anglo-Saxon economies in particular (Eldring and Alsos, 2012; Hussain et al., 2012; Spannagel, 2013).

As in many other advanced political economies, trade union density has experienced a small decline since the early 1990s. However, it has remained relatively stable since the turn of the millennium (Nergaard, 2014). While trade union density is not quite as high as in the other Scandinavian countries, it is still above 50 per cent, which is higher than in most other European countries. There is a deeply consolidated belief that the economy as a whole, as well as individual employers and workers, benefit

from cooperation between the social partners. As Løken et al. (2013: 8) explains with reference to the Norwegian approach to industrial and labour relations,

“[b]oth laws and collective agreements are used as tools to implement the model. The power of these tools resides in the recognition by the parties both rights and duties, and acknowledgement of a common goal, which is beneficial for the community and companies, and of the recognition that the parties have both common and conflicting interests”.

Thus, an important trait of Norwegian industrial relations is the ‘relative stable balance of power between capital and labour’ rooted in a historical class settlement struck in the 1930s (Dølvik, 2007).

Governance: Main actors and legal framework

Norwegian industrial relations are characterised by strong collective actors, most importantly a small number of powerful and highly coordinated employers’ and workers’ confederations, the largest of which being respectively NHO (the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise) and LO (the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions). Tables A3.1 and A3.2 give an overview of the main social partners, which are all involved in centralised collective bargaining on behalf of their members. As it says on their English website, LO ‘has a strong position in society and has set its stamp on society’s development for more than 100 years’ (LO-Norway, 2015).

Tripartite and centralised cooperation with representation from employers’ and workers’ peak associations and the state, covers broad industrial sectors and takes place at the national level. The model is further reinforced through decentralised cooperation at local level ensuring a high degree of accountability and legitimacy of the system among the majority of workers and employers.

With regard to wage setting, the Norwegian collective bargaining system relies on a frontrunner or trend-setting industries’ model (frontfagsmodellen). The idea is to give particular consideration to the needs of sectors that are particularly exposed to international competition. In the coordinated national bargaining rounds, these export-exposed sectors are allowed to carry out their negotiations first. The wage increases agreed here set the norm for all other sectors and industries (Løken et al., 2013). The state often plays a key role as a mediator when the social partners disagree about wages and/or questions related to working conditions. That is, the state may actively involve itself in order to prevent or resolve long-drawn disputes about, for instance, wages or working-time. The National Mediator’s Office is a key actor in this regard.¹⁵

Moreover, the general thrust of this model based on cooperation between highly coordinated and strong social partners, enjoys considerable support among all the main political parties – that is, on both sides of the political spectrum. There is cooperation not only in the area of wage setting but also in how the overall legal framework regulating Norwegian industrial relations and working life is governed. This is done through a combination of national labour laws and binding collective agreements between the social partners.

¹⁵For a brief description of the tasks of the National Mediator, see <http://www.riksmekleren.no/index.php?module=Pagesetter&tid=5&tpl=engelsk&filter=engelsk:notnull>. Accessed on 25 March 2016.

The Working Environment Act (Arbeidsmiljøloven) is the main piece of legislation regulating the employment and working conditions of persons employed in Norway. It addresses matters related to the duties of employers and employees, the working environment, health and safety measures, working hours and overtime, leaves of absences, protection against discrimination, recruitment procedures, and dismissals. Other relevant laws include the Annual Holiday Act (Ferie-loven), the Civil Servants' Act (for the state level employees), the Labour Disputes Act (Arbeidstvistloven), the Civil Service Disputes Act (Tjenestetvistloven) and the National Insurance Act (folketrygdloven). The latter does not address labour relations directly but regulates rights and duties with regard to social services and benefits.

Collectively bargained basic agreements complement the mentioned national labour laws. The purpose of the basic agreements is to 'create the best possible basis for co-operation between the parties at all levels' (Løken et al., 2013: 20). The first Basic Agreement, which codified a cooperative approach to industrial relations, was endorsed by the forerunners to NHO and LO already in 1935. This happened after a period dominated by economic crisis, mass unemployment and industrial conflict. The Basic Agreement between NHO and LO for the period 2014-2017 includes, inter alia, chapters on matters related to lay-offs, health and safety, cooperation and co-determination at the firm level, recruitment, procedures in the event of industrial disputes, the composition and role of work councils.¹⁶

B Key institutional and policy changes

The mentioned Working Environment Act establishes that, as a general rule, employment contracts in Norway should be permanent. Nonetheless, the most recent amendments to the Working Environment Act, in force from 1 July 2015, made it easier for employers to hire on temporary contracts. This change represented a more flexible approach for employers. As opposed to in the past, it is no longer necessary to justify temporary employment with reference to one of the specific purposes (e.g., tasks of a temporary nature, temporary replacement for another person, trainee work) defined in the Working Environment Act prior to the last round of amendments.

The new legislation introduced a general right to use temporary employment for up to 12 months. However, the new flexibility is subject to important limitations. The share of temporary workers employed with reference to the new, more flexible rule cannot exceed 15 per cent of the total number of employees (or 1 employee in the case of small companies). Moreover, if after 12 months, the person employed on a general basis is not offered a permanent contract or a temporary contract established on a specific rather than general legal grounds, the employer faces a 12-month quarantine period on new appointments to do the same type of work. After 3 years continuous employment on a general basis and then as a temporary substitute, the employer has to offer the temporary worker a permanent contract.

Relevant for the possibility of combining labour market activity and family formation is the issue of parental leave arrangements, which also connects to questions of gender equality. In this regard, it is worth noting that paid parental leave including a considerable 'daddy quota' has been gradually extended over the years in order to make it easier to reconcile labour market participation and family

¹⁶ The full text of the Basic Agreement 2014-2017 between NHO and LO is available at:
<https://www.nho.no/siteassets/nhos-filer-og-bilder/filer-og-dokumenter/lonn-og-tariff/hovedavtalen-2014-2017eng.pdf>. Accessed: 26 March 2016.

life. From July 2011 the total length of paid parental leave was 47 weeks at 100 per cent income replacement on income up to six times the National Insurance basic amount (referred to as 6G). The benefit ceiling corresponds roughly to an average Norwegian annual wage. Alternatively, parents could choose to extend the paid parental leave by 10 weeks at 80 per cent income compensation for a total of 57 weeks. At least 12 of these weeks had to be taken by the father (making up the so-called 'daddy quota').

From July 2013 the total paid parental leave was extended by two weeks to 49 weeks (or 59 weeks at 80 per cent wage compensation). The daddy quota was increased to 14 weeks. The most recent change to the parental leave rules, pushed through by the incumbent Solberg government, came in July 2014. On the grounds that parents should have more freedom to decide how they want to divide child care responsibilities, the daddy quota was reduced to 10 weeks. Mothers enjoy the same quota of 10 weeks. The division of the remaining weeks are at the discretion of the parents. The reduction of the daddy quota was predictably criticised by parties to the left of the political centre. Perhaps more surprisingly, not only LO but also NHO expressed strong opposition to the latest changes to the daddy quota. From a gender equality perspective, NHO argued that it represented a step in the wrong direction, with the risk of undoing some of the progress that had been made over the years.¹⁷ All persons, who have earned a taxable and pensionable income for at least six of the ten months prior to the period of parental leave, is entitled to a parental benefit. Thus, the type of labour market attachment (e.g., permanent or temporary employment, part-time work or self-employment) does not matter for the entitlement to paid parental leave.

C Assessment of the changes and their impacts

The most recent figures from Statistics Norway's Labour Force Survey show that 7.9 per cent of all employees had temporary contracts. Temporary employment is most widespread among young workers. In the age group 15-24 nearly 25 per cent of employees do not have permanent employment. Around 40 per cent of all temporary employees belong to the youngest age group. However, if we look at the long-term trend, we see that the share of temporary employment has declined quite a bit since the mid-1990s. In 1996 the share of temporary employees were as much as 36 per cent for the youngest age group and nearly 13 per cent of all employed workers. An interesting question is whether the revisions to the Working Environment Act discussed above will change this picture. It will be a task of future assessments to investigate the effects of the increased flexibility.

Part-time employment is a common phenomenon in Norway. One in four employees works part-time. This share has been fairly stable over the past 20 years. However, in this period we observe notable gender differences both in terms of levels and trends. While the share of men who work part-time has increased from 10 to 15 per cent, we observe the opposite trend for women with the share of part-time workers declining steadily from 46 to 37 per cent. A recent study conducted of three cohorts of graduating nurses – a strongly female dominated occupational sector – showed that a significantly larger share of nurses who graduated in 2003 worked full-time compared to those graduating a decade earlier (Abrahamsen, 2010).

¹⁷ See, for instance, the opinion piece from NHO President Kristin Skogen Lund in the newspaper Aftenposten from 19 September 2014 available at: <http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/Nye-grep-for-et-likestilt-arbeidsliv-7712770.html>. Accessed: 26 March 2016.

One may argue that from a gender perspective we should welcome this development. Full-time work among women increases the opportunities for financial independence. At the same time, there has been a clear downward trend in fertility rates since 2009. Between 2009 and 2014 the total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from 1.98 to 1.76. The mean age for a Norwegian woman to have her first child has increased regardless of education level (Lappegård and Dommermuth, 2015). Coupled with the information about less part-time work among women in female-dominated occupations, an interesting question is whether postponed family formation is affected by the choice between full and part-time work.

Moreover, there are considerable differences across age groups. Part-time employment is more widespread among young people aged 15-24 than for the rest of the working age population. One explanation for the high share of young people working part-time is that many of them combine school or studies with part-time work – often on evenings or weekends (Statistics Norway, 2016). In a study from 2011, Svalund (2011) shows that prolonged involuntary part-time or underemployment is not a major problem for young adults. That is, young people aged 15-24 who are active in the labour market, do have a relatively high risk of experiencing a period of involuntary part-time or underemployment. Data from eight (quarterly) waves of the Norwegian Labour Force Survey show that in this age group 17 per cent has experienced underemployment in at least one of the eight quarters. However, in terms of duration, periods of underemployment are quite short, lasting on average 1.5 quarters for the age group 15-24. Thus, it appears that youngest age group do not have a particularly high risk of being locked into a situation of underemployment. Among the persons who have experienced underemployment in this age group, only 1 per cent experience that the period of underemployment lasts for 5 quarters or more. In the group aged 25-34, the share that has been underemployed at least once over the 2-year period is 11 per cent, i.e., notably lower than for the youngest age group. Conversely, the average duration of underemployment is slightly higher at 1.9 quarters. For 5 per cent of the underemployed, the period of underemployment has lasted for more than five quarters.

4. Active labour market policies and activation

Policy objectives

The present Government presented its main policy objectives in its political platform in October 2013. As to employment, “[t]he Government’s aim is to achieve a reliable, flexible labour market that promotes low unemployment levels and a high rate of employment. A well-functioning labour market is essential to enabling each individual to realise his or her dreams and ambitions, and it should pay to work.” Within the field of employment and youth, the Government will “[d]iscuss a system of working in return for national insurance/social security benefits for young people at risk of permanent exclusion from working life.”

A focus on youth and employment has been evident in policy documents and employment agencies practices for years. In June 2006, a new Norwegian Labor and Welfare Service (abbreviation NAV) was established by merging of Public Employment Services (state), the National Insurance Services (state) and the municipal social assistance services. NAV’s purpose is to (better) assist vulnerable groups like the youth to find employment. The first of NAV’s expressed goals is: “More people active and in work, fewer people on benefits.”

Of more specific schemes, youth guarantees and a job strategy have been implemented to facilitate the transition into employment. In 1979 a youth guarantee targeting persons between 16 and 19 years of age was introduced. It guarantees labor market measures if there is no opportunity of finding a suitable school place or a job. The scheme has been developed over the years and now covers young people up to the age 24. Another policy measure targeting young people in particular is the Job strategy for persons with disabilities, in which the main target group is persons up to the age of 30. The strategy was introduced in 2012. It aims is to increase the number of young people with disabilities in employment and facilitate a smoother transition from education into employment.

Institutional set up/framework

The structure of the institutions

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration – better known by the acronym NAV – is the central actor within the field of labour market measures. NAV is a unified public agency, established in 2006 as the result of a major administrative public sector reform passed by the Norwegian parliament in 2005 (for an account of the reform process, see Christensen and Lægreid, 2010). The reform merged the national employment services (*Aetat*), the national social insurance administration (*trygdeetaten*) and the municipal social services (*kommunal sosialtjeneste*). As responsible for the management of most social benefits and services (e.g., old age pensions, unemployment benefits, child allowance, social assistance, employment services and activation measures), today NAV manages about a third of Norwegian public spending.

All municipalities have a NAV office, organized as a “One stop shop” that provides coordinated services to the public. The “one stop shops” offer joint, front line labor market measures, social assistance and social insurance benefits, and other services rendered by local government. “The local authorities and central government cooperate to find good solutions for users through 456 NAV offices in municipalities and city boroughs. Each local authority and NAV agree on what local authority services

their office should provide. The services provided by a NAV office will thus vary from local authority to local authority.”¹⁸ NAV is regulated by the Labour and Welfare Administration Act, which defines the purpose and organization of the services offered. “The Act lays down important principles of confidentiality, consumer involvement, and its duty to provide information and guidance to the individual user.”¹⁹

The NAV reform has been subject to extensive evaluation. As to its goal of facilitating increased employment participation and fewer people on benefit, a recent study observes that although less people became employed and more people remained on benefits in the first years of the reform, the transition into employment is now on the same level as prior to the reform (Fevang, Markussen, & Røed, 2014). What is more alarming, the study concludes, is that the situation of young persons who receives health related benefits has worsened. The reform seems to have reduced the prospects of this group to secure employment.

In a study of how NAV offices follow up young clients, NAV supervisors/case workers (*veiledere*) relate particular challenges in the follow-up work with young people who for instance have dropped out of school and/or have complex and comprehensive challenges due to factors such as social adaptation difficulties or mental health problems (Strand, Bråthen, & Grønningsæter, 2015). Although not all NAV supervisors/case workers are aware of schemes like the youth guarantees, the study shows that follow up of young people is a priority in the offices. The supervisors also note that the number of placements sometimes takes prerogative over the quality of these placements, a factor that is recognized as a hinder to good follow-up work of the young clients. Some offices have their own youth teams whereas in others the work targeting youth is done on equal terms with other users. The supervisors/case workers employed in offices that have youth teams, seem to be more satisfied with the way services to young people are provided. These offices also have more frequent collaboration with other agencies.

An important political initiative that has received much public attention and debate the last one and a half decade was taken in 2001 when the Norwegian Government and social partners signed the “Inclusive Working Life Agreement”. The agreement was renewed for the fourth time in 2014 for another four years period. The main objectives of the agreement are to improve working life environment, strengthen job presence, prevent and reduce sickness absence, prevent exclusion and drop-out from working life. It has three sub-goals, in which the second is to recruit and maintain person with disabilities in employment. In the renewed agreement a particular focus of this second sub-goal is on young people. Enterprises joining the agreement are called “inclusive workplace enterprises” and are granted access to several incentives. In the first quarter of 2009, there were 44 067 enterprises that had signed the agreement, and 56.4 % of all employees worked in an inclusive workplace enterprise.

Governance/responsibilities of the institutions

The main objective of the labor market measures is to facilitate the existence of a labor market characterized by high employment, low unemployment, and an inclusive working life. Labor market

¹⁸ See What is NAV? <https://www.nav.no/en/Home/About+NAV/What+is+NAV>

¹⁹ See NAV website about Legislation:
<https://www.nav.no/en/Home/About+NAV/Relatert+informasjon/legislation>

measures are regulated by the *Forskrift om arbeidsmarkedstiltak* (Regulations Concerning Labor Market Measures, not available in English). Some groups are given priority, including young people.

In 2015 the Parliament allocated 7.65 billion Norwegian kroner to labor market measures. Every month an estimated 60 900 persons participate in these measures. About 12 700 placements are available for those seeking employment and approximately 48 200 are reserved for persons with reduced work capacity.

Policy content/substance

Services available to young people

A wide range of labour market measures is available. There are two main categories: “Qualification and training” and “placement” (*tiltakssteller*) measures. A short description of some of the measures is given below.

The training measures offer labour market courses to help participants qualify for vacant positions, and there is also an education measure that provides economic support for persons with reduced work capacity to be enrolled in education for up to three years.

A work experience measure is available in ordinary enterprises and the measure has several different purposes. It provides coached work experience; can also be used to determine whether this kind of work is suitable for the participant; and it provides employers the opportunity to assess a participant's suitability for the job. Participants receive national insurance benefits under this measure.

A follow-up measure was introduced in 2009 targeting persons who are in need of more comprehensive follow-up aid. The purpose is to strengthen the job seeker's competence and motivation and help with improving job searching strategies (Brage et al., 2013:203).

A wage-subsidy measure grants a time-limited subsidy up to a year to employers who hire an unemployed person with the goal of permanent employment. If the participant has reduced work capacity such wage subsidy can be granted for up to three years. There is also a wage subsidy measure available that has no time limit and that targets persons with severely reduced work capacity of a permanent nature. NAV can provide up until 67 percent of employer's expenditure on wages and social spending for the position. In the first year NAV provides grants for up to 75 percent of wages and social spending. The refund may be up to a maximum of 5 times National Insurance basic amount (5G) per year.²⁰

A supported employment measure is available for those who need job coaching and follow-up to obtain and retain employment. Participants can be supported by the measure from six months up to a year; persons with reduced work capacity may be provided the measure for up to three years.

²⁰ “Varige lønnstilskudd”, see:

<https://www.nav.no/no/Person/Arbeid/Oppfolging+og+tiltak+for+a+komme+i+jobb/Tiltak+for+a+komme+i+jobb/tidsbestemt-l%C3%B8nnstilskudd--805374506#chapter-2>

Some of NAV's participants/users with reduced work capacity need training in sheltered and adapted enterprises and may be provided a sheltered and adapted measure. These sheltered enterprises provide work training and experience to participants.

A permanent adapted employment measure is available to persons who receive a disability benefit. The measure has no time limit. The enterprise must be a non-profit entity whose primary activity is permanent adapted employment.

Youth guarantees are schemes with the purpose of preventing long-term unemployment among young people. The guarantees cover youth between the age of 16 and 19 and 20 and 24 (the expansion came in 1995). For the youngest group the guarantee ensures the offer of employment measures to those who are neither in employment nor in education. As such the guarantee is part of the follow-up work to increase the number of students completing secondary education. For the oldest group the guarantee ensures that unemployed youth are provided an activity plan one month after NAV has made a decision to follow-up the claimant. The aim of such a quick response is the recognized need to get started with activities as soon as possible.

The youth guarantees were evaluated in 1998 after an expansion of the guarantee that targets the oldest group (Hardoy, Røed, Torp, & Zhang, 2006). Youth who had been registered unemployed for more than six months were to be provided/ensured the offer of employment, education or participation in a labour market measure. The employment agency summoned those who had been employed for four months. Individual plans were drafted that included job seeking (individual effort) and different types of labour market measures as well as employment and education. The study concludes that the improved effort lead to an increase in labour market measure participation among long-term unemployed young people and to increased transition from unemployment to employment for those covered by the guarantee. The guarantee did not lead to an increase in unemployed youth in education.

The job strategy for persons with disabilities was introduced in 2012, and comprises a number of measures that aims to provide services to employers and job seekers. This includes a workplace accommodation guarantee, a new accommodation grant and several follow-up measures.

The implementation of the strategy has been evaluated (Dyrstad, Mandal, & Ose, 2014). As part of the strategy specific positions in NAV offices on regional (county) level were created, one coordinator and one working life coach. The evaluation finds variation in the assignments and tasks of these positions. In a few municipalities the work with the job strategy seems to be fused into the office's general work that targets youth. As noted, NAV gives priority to young people.

In its draft resolutions and bills of 2015, the Government states that it will «assess changes in the regulations of employment scheme benefit (*tiltakspenger*) based on an on-going evaluation». The evaluation is now completed, and it concludes that the use of employment scheme benefits does not "lure" young people out of school as some seem to assume (Drange, Frøyland, & Mamelund, 2015). Rather, the evaluation observes, employment scheme benefits and participation in measures facilitate increased levels of activity.

Scope and targeting

The following table from NAV shows the distribution of job seekers participating in labour market measures according to age:

Age group	2007	2009	2015
< 20	1 542	2 305	1 180
20 - 24	1 549	2 727	2 568
25 - 29	1 329	2 199	1 885
30 - 39	2 761	4 126	3 521
40 - 49	1 831	2 893	2 316
50 - 59	904	1 371	1 191
60 <	205	281	207
All	10 121	15 901	12 867

Table 3.1: Distribution of job seekers participating in labour market measures according to age

Source: NAV²¹

Brief information on the quality of the measures

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic review available that covers all the schemes. Nonetheless, a recent study by von Simson shows that whereas the work experience measure has a negative effect on subsequent employment, the training measure increases the likelihood of gaining ordinary employment by 40 per cent and the wage-subsidy measure by 65 per cent.²² In a recent report from the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services on the effects of active labor market programs for immigrants, the authors conclude :

“For wage subsidies, overall effect estimates showed that the likelihood of finding employment during the intervention period was not statistically significant different from those who did not participate in programmes. There was, however, a statistically significant increased probability of being employed at two years after intervention, and increased probability of finding employment during the follow up period (4-5 years) after the intervention, for immigrants who were on wage subsidies compared with immigrants who were not on a programme.

For direct employment programmes, overall effect estimates showed that the likelihood of finding employment during the intervention period was similar to those who did not receive any intervention. There was, however, a statistically significant increased probability of being employed at two years after intervention and increased probability of finding employment during the follow up period (4-5 years), for immigrants who were on direct employment programmes compared with those who were not on a programme.

For special employment programmes, the overall effect estimate from three studies showed that the likelihood of being employed after completion of the programme, was not

²¹ <https://www.nav.no/no/NAV+og+samfunn/Statistikk/Arbeidssokere+og+stillinger+-+statistikk/Tiltaksdeltakere>

²² «Arbeidspraksis virker mot sin hensikt», see: <http://forskning.no/barn-og-ungdom-pedagogiske-fag-skole-og-utdanning/2014/05/arbeidspraksis-virker-mot-sin-hensikt>

statistically significantly different from immigrants who were not participating in programmes or were on the train-then-place programmes.

The quality of the evidence for all outcomes was judged low or very low, and downgraded mainly due to the observational study design.”²³

A brief summary of the changes in policies between 2007-2015:

- The main change is the implementation of the NAV reform
- Some NAV-offices have their own youth team – these offices report better satisfaction with the way they follow up the young clients
- The implementation of the job strategy for persons with disabilities introduced in 2012. It focuses particularly on young people

²³ “Effect of active labor market programs for immigrants”, see:
<http://www.kunnskapssenteret.no/en/publications/Effect+of+active+labor+market+programs+for+immigrants?vis=sammendrag>

5. Unemployment income protection

Summary

Norwegian state welfare provisions are extensive and include a comprehensive package of income protection schemes that offer cash benefits or allowances to cover different kinds of social risks. Often benefit receipt is conditional on activities such as rehabilitation, training/education, and/or job search. However, none of the cash benefits are targeted specifically at youth or young adults. Nonetheless, it seems fair to say that young adults receive considerable attention through the mix of available cash benefits and active labour market policies.

A Basic institutional features and policy substance

There are several different types of cash benefits in the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme (*folketrygden*). They have in common that they protect against a lack of income associated with social risks such as unemployment, poor health and disability, child birth and different family care obligations. None of these cash benefits are specifically targeted at young people (Brage et al., 2013).

Unemployment benefits: Particularly in the case of traditional unemployment benefits (*dagpenger* in Norwegian), the entry requirements may represent a considerable hurdle for young people who tend to have only a limited or no record of past income. The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) is responsible for the administration and payment of unemployment benefits. To be entitled to the unemployment benefit, the unemployed person has to register with NAV and file a benefit claim. There is a three-day waiting period from the day the claim is submitted. Moreover, further requirements include a reduction in working time of at least 50 per cent and your previous income must have exceeded the income threshold (1.5 times the National Insurance Basic amount (G) during the last year, corresponding to NOK 135,102 in 2015). The replacement rate is 62.4 per cent of gross income up to 6G (equivalent to NOK 504,408). That means that any income above this threshold is not included when the benefit amount is calculated. Several social insurance benefits (e.g., sick pay, parental benefits and unemployment benefits) are included as qualifying income. Unemployment benefits count as taxable income.²⁴

Particularly young people who leave the education system early are in a vulnerable position. Even if they do not find a job and register as unemployed, they often do not qualify for an unemployment benefit (Furuberg, 2012). Moreover, they cannot automatically expect continued maintenance payments from their parents. The duty for parents to provide for their children is regulated in Chapter 8 of the Children Act of 1981 and lasts until ‘the child reaches the age of 18 [...].²⁵ If the child is still in ‘normal education’ – typically upper secondary school – after the age of 18, she is entitled to maintenance until completion. Only in rare cases does the maintenance obligation continue beyond the age of 20. That is not to say that parents are advised against financially supporting their children’s

²⁴ The rules are further specified on the NAV website:

<https://www.nav.no/en/Home/Benefits+and+services/Relatert+informasjon/unemployment-benefits>

²⁵ For an English version of the 1981 Children Act, see <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/the-children-act/id448389/>.

higher education on a voluntary basis. As a result, young people without work experience typically have to resort to other types of income protection than traditional unemployment benefits.

Employment scheme benefits: Persons without a sufficient income record to qualify for unemployment benefits can claim a daily allowance referred to as an employment scheme benefit (*tiltakspenger*, formerly *individstønad*) for each day they participate in a labour market activation programme.²⁶ The purpose of this allowance is to cover subsistence costs (including rent) and costs related to participation in the programme for the duration of the measure. This form of benefit is not taxable and nor does it classify as pensionable income. There are two different benefit rates – one for persons age 19 and above and a lower rate for persons below the age of 19 (see table 5.1). The rationale behind a lower rate for young people below age 19 is that persons in this group tend to still live with their parents.

	Per day
Normal rate	NOK 355
Low rate	NOK 257
Child supplement per child below age 16	NOK 44

Table 5.1: Daily individual allowance for participants in employment schemes

Source: NAV²⁷

Work assessment: Another type of benefit of particular relevance to jobless young people is the work assessment allowance (*arbeidsavklaringspenger*).²⁸ It is particularly targeted at persons with health problems. The work assessment allowance (WAA) was introduced in March 2010 in an attempt to simplify the system by replacing three different benefit categories (temporary disability pension, rehabilitation allowance and reintegration benefit) with one allowance. The purpose is to provide individuals who due to illness or injury need assistance from NAV to (re-)enter the labour market. With the old arrangements that had three different benefits serving similar purposes, the welfare services spent a lot of resources assessing in which category to place each case. To receive the WAA, a person's ability to work has to be reduced by at least 50 per cent in order to be eligible for the WAA and you have to be at least 18 years of age. In some cases you might be able to claim the WAA even if you have no income record from paid work in the past.

A series of further conditions is attached to the receipt of the WAA. The conditions centre on the creation and implementation of an activity plan in collaboration with NAV. The aim is that the agreed activities will help the process of returning to work. Failure to perform the stated activities may result in a deduction in or withdrawal of the WAA.

With regard to generosity, the WAA is calculated per day based on a 5-day workweek and replaces 66 per cent of previous income below the ceiling of 6G. If the claimant has a very low or no previous income record, the minimum yearly amount is 2G. The WAA is subject to income tax and qualify as pensionable income. The present government has proposed tightening the eligibility criteria for WAA

²⁶ The rules and benefits associated with the participation in public employment schemes are detailed here: <https://www.nav.no/en/Home/Benefits+and+services/Relatert+informasjon/benefits-while-participating-in-employment-schemes>

²⁷ See NAV website <https://www.nav.no/no/NAV+og+samfunn/Kontakt+NAV/Utbetalinger/Snarveier/satser--380089?kap=380107>, accessed 18 April 2016.

²⁸ <https://www.nav.no/en/Home/Benefits+and+services/Relatert+informasjon/work-assessment-allowance-aap#chapter-2>

(including shortening its duration, tightening access, increased targeting, tougher activity and mobility requirements), but the proposal is still being discussed.

Disability benefits: Disability pensions should also be mentioned in relation to young people. It is a benefit designed to offer protection for persons with health problems and a related permanently reduced ability to work. The earliest age at which a person can claim a disability pension is 18 years. As with the WAA eligibility is conditional on an at least 50 per cent reduction in the individual earnings potential. The minimum annual benefit rate for single person households is equivalent to 2G.

Social assistance: Often means-tested social assistance (known as *financial assistance* or *økonomisk stønad*)²⁹ is the only kind of financial support available to young unemployed persons. The purpose of financial assistance is to provide a temporary basic safety net when all other own financial means and benefits entitlements have been exhausted. Financial assistance is administered and determined locally on a case-to-case basis. While national guidelines and recommended rates (see table 5.2) for financial assistance exist, there is no statutory minimum benefit rate. Instead, the local NAV office determines the benefit rate based on a discretionary individual assessment of the person's needs in order to guarantee subsistence.

Household type	2016	2015
Single persons	NOK 5,850	NOK 5,700
Couples	NOK 9,750	NOK 9,500
Single persons in shared accommodation	NOK 4,850	NOK 4,750
Per child aged 0-5	NOK 2,250	NOK 2,200
Per child aged 6-10	NOK 2,950	NOK 2,900
Per child aged 11-17	NOK 3,800	NOK 3,700

Table 5.2: Recommended rates for financial assistance, 2015 and 2016

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs³⁰

Qualification allowance: Persons who have received social assistance as their main income for a long time 'or are at risk of ending up in this situation' are entitled to participation in a Qualification Programme (*kvalifiseringsprogram*).³¹ In the target group for the programme are persons who want to work but have been unemployed for a long time and have no or only very limited rights to other social benefits beyond social assistance. The idea is that participants receive work-oriented (vocational) training, follow-up and guidance (e.g., financial advice or medical treatment) tailored to individual needs. Together with a personal adviser from the NAV office, participants set up a full-time schedule (i.e., 37.5 hours per week) of activities that should lead to entry in the labour market or other

²⁹ NAV gives more detailed information about financial assistance here:

<https://www.nav.no/en/Home/Benefits+and+services/Relatert+informasjon/financial-assistance-social-assistance#chapter-2>

³⁰ See Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/rundskriv-a-12015-statlige-veilede-retningslinjer-for-okonomisk-stonad-2016/id2469018/>, accessed 19 April 2016.

³¹ For more information about the Qualification Programme and the associated benefit, see the following information from NAV:

<https://www.nav.no/en/Home/Benefits+and+services/Relatert+informasjon/qualification-programme#chapter-3>

meaningful activity. Initially the programme lasts up to a year with the possibility of an extension of up to another year if NAV considers it useful.

Qualification Programme participants receive a qualification allowance (*kvalifiseringsstønad*) equal to two times the National Insurance basic amount (2G). The exception is if a person is under 25 years. She or he will then be entitled to only 2/3 of the full benefit. It should not be financially more beneficial to participate in the Qualification Programme than to pursue a regular path in the education system. Students are generally entitled to financial support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (*Lånekassen*) and the Qualification Allowance for young people is equal to the level of financial support granted to students (awarded as combination of student grants and loans). There is a child supplement for persons with children and it is possible to apply for an extra housing allowance. The benefit is taxable.

The Qualification Programme was introduced in 2007 as a high-profile policy instrument to prevent poverty and social exclusion. It is not targeted specifically at young people but a considerable share of the participants are, nonetheless, young adults. At the end of 2012, every fifth participant was below the age of 25 (Lima and Naper, 2013). At the same time, there are large geographical variation in the extent to which municipalities use the Qualification Programme in the effort to prevent inactivity among young people. Oslo stands out for its low share of young Qualification Programme participants (Langeng and Dehli, 2011).

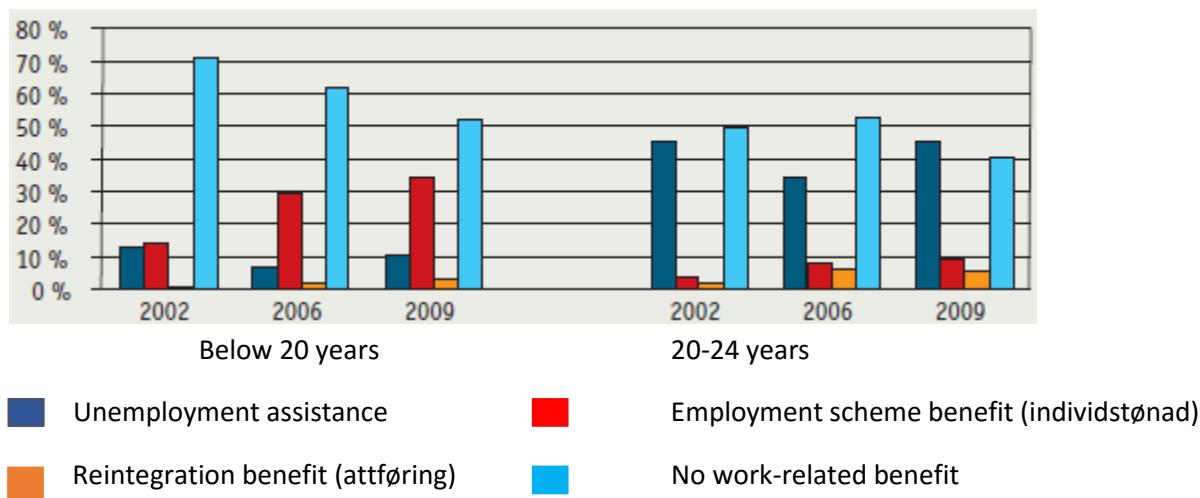


Figure 5.1: Share (per cent) of unemployed youth receiving work-related benefits in years 2002, 2006 and 2009

Source: NAV

B Key institutional and policy changes

During the period of interest, the most significant changes in the area of income protection in the context of unemployment were brought about by the comprehensive NAV reform described above. The reform was, above all, administrative and involved important organisational changes to the institutional architecture of the Norwegian welfare state. An important aim was better coordination across services and income protection schemes. The economic crisis has not been a significant driver

of further reforms. Rather, new policies – for instance, the introduction of the Qualification Programme in 2007 and the Work Assessment Allowance in 2010 – have been a result of more long-term policies challenges like high take-up rates of health-related benefits (e.g., sickness benefits and disability pensions). Taking a historical outlook, the most controversial aspect has arguably been the duration of the unemployment benefit period. Between 1997 and 2003, the rules concerning the maximum benefit duration were tightened several times. In 1997 the duration was reduced from maximum 2*80 weeks (with a 13-week waiting period after 80 weeks) to an uninterrupted period limited upwards to 156 weeks conditional on earnings of at least 2G during the last calendar year. Persons with income below 2G were entitled to 78 weeks of benefit receipt. The next significant change to the benefit duration came in 2003 when it was reduced from 156 to 104 for persons earning at least 2G. Finally, in 2004 persons on low income (defined as less than 2G) saw the maximum benefit duration reduced from 1.5 to 1 year (52 weeks).

C Assessment of the changes and their impacts

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Age group									
Total	122402	109608	109349	117727	119444	118009	114804	120775	125407
16-17 yrs	131	111	101	125	136	77	51	57	52
18-24 yrs	26685	22858	22582	25947	26926	26381	25872	26721	27457
25-29 yrs	16638	15000	14957	16242	16623	16764	16524	17886	19078

Table 5.3: Number of financial assistance beneficiaries by age

Source: Statistics Norway, table 05082

Table 5.3 shows that a considerable share of the overall number of financial assistance recipients are young people. Of all financial assistance beneficiaries, 39 per cent belonged in the age group 18-29 years in 2014. The share of young financial assistance recipients relative to the total population aged 18-29 years has remained quite stable over the past five years.

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
Age group	Persons	Per cent										
19 and younger	1447	1.1	1457	1.1	1391	1.1	1291	1.0	1436	1.1	1539	1.2
20-24	11140	3.5	11890	3.6	11999	3.5	11788	3.4	12073	3.5	12502	3.6
25-29	15289	4.8	15238	4.7	14663	4.4	14317	4.2	13828	3.9	14365	4.1
Total population	174324	5.5	172609	5.4	166945	5.1	163192	5.0	151297	4.5	31179	4.5

Table 5.4: Number and share of young work assessment allowance recipients in the period 2010-2015
Source: NAV³²

³² See statistics from NAV, available at:

<https://www.nav.no/no/NAV+og+samfunn/Statistikk/AAP+nedsatt+arbeidsevne+og+uforetrygd+statistikk/Arbeidsavklaringspenger>, accessed 20 April 2016

Table 5.4 demonstrates that the share of young people who receive the WAA has been stable over the past five years. For all age groups there is a slightly higher share of female beneficiaries than male.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number	18 748	19 983	22 082	25 502	28 252	30 934	29 252	23 904	32 094	30 402
Age										
18-19	462	520	558	648	598	617	648	630	745	786
20-24	334	333	336	377	411	473	485	486	747	890
25-29	247	237	298	359	520	743	761	650	1 186	1 150

Table 5.5: Number of new disability pension beneficiaries

Source: NAV³³

Over the past 10 years there have been a steady increase in new entries to the disability benefit system among young adults (table 5.5). The trend has been particularly strong for the age group 25-29 years. The increase in young disability benefit recipients is subject to much public attention and is a cause for political concern. Mental illnesses of different degrees of severity represent a main cause for the take-up of disability pensions at a young age (Brage et al., 2013). The take-up of disability pensions by young people receives considerable attention and is considered particularly worrying since once awarded disability pensions tend to be permanent. This means that these individuals will likely remain outside the labour market for the rest of their lives.

Do unemployment and other relevant income protection provide adequate protection from risks of social exclusion among youth in terms of economic exclusion/material deprivation?

Overall, social or material deprivation is not very widespread among young adults in Norway.

		Young adults 18-30 years not living at home, 2010	Young adults 18-30 years living at home, 2010	31 years and above
Cannot afford ... 1 week holiday	After 1 yr	10	11	5
	2 yrs	4	2	3
	3 yrs	3	1	2
... meat/fish	1 yr	6	5	2
	2 yrs	2	0	0
	3 yrs	1	0	0
... home heating	1 yr	2	2	1
	2 yrs	0	0	0
	3 yrs	0	0	0
... TV	1 yr	2	0	1
	2 yrs	1	0	0
	3 yrs	0	0	0
... washing machine	1 yr	2	0	0

³³ See statistics from NAV available at:

<https://www.nav.no/no/NAV+og+samfunn/Statistikk/AAP+nedsatt+arbeidsevne+og+uforetrygd+-+statistikk/Tabeller/nye-mottakere-av-uforetrygd-etter-kjønn-og-alder.året-2006-2015.antall>, accessed 20 April 2016.

	2 yrs	0	0	0
	3 yrs	0	0	0
... private car	1 yr	13	4	2
	2 yrs	6	1	1
	3 yrs	6	0	1
... an unforeseen bill of NOK 10 000	1 yr	23	26	13
	2 yrs	16	13	7
	3 yrs	18	2	9
Financial problems	1 yr	14	11	6
	2 yrs	7	2	4
	3 yrs	4	0	3
Hard to make ends meet	1 yr	12	11	6
	2 yrs	4	2	2
	3 yrs	2	0	2

Table 5.6: Persons with challenging living conditions by different indicators, duration and age. Panel 2008-2010. Per cent.

Source: EU-SILC 2008-2010, Statistics Norway, table 5.5 in Thorsen 2013

6. Conclusion

The economic crisis has not acted as an important driver for major labour market and social policy reform in the Norwegian case. Nor have there been any radical changes in the underlying principles or logic on which the Norwegian welfare state rests and for which there is broad political and popular support. The policy changes described in this report have rather been a result of a continuous process to find the most efficient means to integrate as many people as possible in the labour market in order to increase their financial independence. The focus in recent years has been to find ways to activate people with reduced earnings and work capacity. The philosophy is that everyone should be able to take part in the labour market, exploiting as much of his or her capacity as possible. While most schemes are designed to target specific individual challenges rather than particular age groups, youth and young adults are a prioritised group since the consequences of marginalisation for this group is considered particularly unfortunate for society as well as for the individuals in question.

In terms of coordination between different services and programmes, on the one hand, and the different schemes in place to provide income protection for different groups, on the other, the NAV reform was hugely important. The new welfare and labour administration has been subject to considerable scrutiny after its implementation and there is little doubt that the first years after NAV was established were rather problematic. Whether the new system, based on a one-stop-shop, is today better, worse or more or less the same as before in terms of quality of services and efficiency is more difficult to say. Since it is the local NAV offices that are responsible for the day-to-day contact with highly diverse user groups with different needs, there are likely to be significant local differences. Studies so far suggest that the introduction of the organisational and administrative structure has generally been smoother at the smaller NAV offices (Fevang et al., 2014).

Annex

Gender	Age	Level of education	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Men	15-74 years	All	3.5	2.6	2.8	3.6	4.1	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.7	4.6
		Primary and lower secondary school	6.9	5.3	6.6	8.0	8.5	7.3	6.5	8.0	8.1	9.4
		Upper secondary school	2.7	1.6	1.7	2.7	3.4	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.2	3.9
	15-24 years	Tertiary education	2.1	1.7	1.2	1.4	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.7
		All	8.7	7.9	8.7	10.3	11.2	9.1	9.8	10.7	9.1	11.3
		Primary and lower secondary school	9.8	9.1	11.1	12.5	12.5	10.4	11.7	14.0	11.6	13.8
	25-29 years	Upper secondary school	4.8	4.8	4.0	6.8	8.0	6.5	6.0	7.6	7.0	8.2
		Tertiary education	9.1	0.0	0.0	12.5	9.1	0.0	11.1	10.0	0.0	0.0
		All	4.6	3.0	3.7	3.6	6.6	5.7	4.9	6.1	6.0	6.4
Women	15-74 years	Primary and lower secondary school	4.3	6.9	7.4	11.1	14.3	13.8	10.0	11.1	12.5	14.8
		Upper secondary school	3.2	1.6	1.6	3.1	5.0	5.0	3.1	4.5	4.2	4.1
		Tertiary education	4.5	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.1	3.9	4.1	3.8	3.7	5.5
	15-24 years	All	3.4	2.5	2.5	2.7	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.4	3.3	4.1
		Primary and lower secondary school	6.6	4.8	5.2	4.9	6.0	6.5	5.7	7.9	6.5	8.2
		Upper secondary school	2.9	1.7	1.8	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.9	3.8
	25-29 years	Tertiary education	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.5
		All	9.1	6.9	6.5	7.8	7.4	7.9	7.0	7.9	6.6	8.6
		Primary and lower secondary school	10.7	8.8	9.2	8.6	10.3	10.7	10.3	12.2	9.0	11.3
	15-24 years	Upper secondary school	6.5	2.9	4.1	5.6	3.9	5.2	4.1	3.7	5.3	6.9
		Tertiary education	9.5	0.0	0.0	5.9	6.7	5.0	3.8	3.8	4.5	3.7
		All	4.3	3.4	3.2	3.2	4.1	4.0	3.1	4.5	4.4	5.8
	25-29 years	Primary and lower secondary school	6.7	11.8	6.3	5.9	12.5	6.7	6.3	12.5	6.7	5.6
		Upper secondary school	4.7	2.6	4.7	2.4	5.3	2.4	4.9	5.3	2.4	6.8
		Tertiary education	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	4.3	2.8	3.8	3.8	4.0

Table A1.2: Unemployment rates by gender age and level of education

Source: Statistics Norway, Labour Force Survey, own calculations based on table 08338

English name	Full Norwegian name	Abbreviation	Founded (year)	Members, 2014 (thousands)
Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions	Landsorganisasjonen i Norge	LO	1899	910
Confederation of Unions for Professionals	Unio	Unio	2001	332
Confederation of Vocational Unions	Yrkessorganisasjonenes Sentralforbund	YS	1977	222
The Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations	Akademikerne	Akademikerne	1997	186
Others				128

Table A3.1: Main social partners (peak associations), trade unions

English name	Full Norwegian name	Abbreviation	Founded (year)	Member enterprises, 2013
The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise	Næringslivets Hovedorganisasjon	NHO	1989 (with roots from 1886)	21,713
Enterprise Federation of Norway	Virke	Virke	1990	17,334
The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities	Kommunesektorens Organisasjon	KS	1992 (but with roots as far back as 1903)	953
The Employers' Association Spekter	Spekter	Spekter	1993	206

Table A3.2: Main social partners (peak associations), employers

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