



*Norwegian Association for  
Persons with Developmental Disabilities*

**NFU – We are here for you**

**NFU – Norwegian Association for  
Persons with Developmental Disabilities**

**E-mail: [post@nfunorge.org](mailto:post@nfunorge.org)**

**Tel.: +47 22 39 60 50**

**[www.nfunorge.org](http://www.nfunorge.org)**



# Innhold

**We are here for you** ..... s. 4

Easy Read Version

**For families with young children** ..... s. 7

We speak up for you

Easy Read Version

**For Families with children at school** ..... s. 8

We speak up for you

Easy Read Version

**For persons who want to work** ..... s. 11

We speak up for you

Easy Read Version

**For persons who  
want their own home** ..... s. 13

We speak up for you

Easy Read Version

**For an active leisure time** ..... s. 16

We speak up for you

Easy Read Version

**For a real holiday** ..... s. 19

We speak up for you

Easy Read Version

**For a meaningful old age** ..... s. 21

We speak up for you

**For those who have least** ..... s. 23

Easy Read Version

**We have come far** ..... s. 24

Easy Read Version

**We need you!** ..... s. 26

Easy Read Version

**NFU's principles** ..... s. 27

A close-up photograph of two young girls smiling. The girl on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a pink shirt. The girl on the right has brown hair with a blue bow and is also smiling. The background is a warm, yellowish wall.

## We are here for you

Being a mother or father is very demanding, especially if your son or daughter has developmental disabilities. No one should feel alone in a situation like this. The Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (NFU) was founded to make life easier for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Our vision is a society for all.

NFU is there for you, whether you have a developmental disability yourself or someone in your family does. We believe knowledge is important so that families

can get the help and support they need. That's why we offer our members advice and courses. We can offer assistance to parents, brothers and sisters and people with developmental disabilities themselves, no matter which phase of life they are in.

What sort of help are you entitled to? What can you do to get the assistance your family needs? Perhaps you disagree with a decision your municipality has made? NFU has lawyers and other employees who can give its members advice and assistance in these matters.



## Easy Read Version

**NFU wants to make life easier for people with developmental disabilities. Our vision is a society for everyone.**

**We have courses for people with developmental disabilities and their parents. This is so they can learn about the help they can get.**

**NFU has lawyers and other workers. They can give you advice and guidance.**

**We have 7.000 members.**

**NFU often meets politicians. We ask them to make sure that people with developmental disabilities get better living conditions.**

We know it's not always easy to get the help you need. And that's exactly why we're here – to help you. NFU has more than 7.000 members throughout Norway. Hundreds of representatives and active members arrange courses, meetings and other activities year-round.

At the same time we work to improve the living conditions and future of people with developmental disabilities by lobbying politicians and government bodies. We arrange meetings with ministers and other

key politicians and we often attend hearings when new laws and rules are being developed.

In addition we sit on a number of working groups at national and local level. The organization also has direct contact with local politicians and municipal representatives. Overall, this means that we are an important part of the effort for better living conditions and rights for people with developmental disabilities.



**For families with  
young children**

All parents with small children find life hectic at times. Families who have children with developmental disabilities often find their day even busier. That's why NFU has courses for you and other people who have children with developmental disabilities. The courses can teach you how to get the correct follow-up from the Health Service.

Perhaps your son or daughter needs education suitable for people with special needs. Our courses tell you which rights your son or daughter has, and what sort of help that is available. Families can get different types of assistance, from getting someone to look after your child at home, to relief housing. The family's needs decide this.

We offer our members the opportunity to share experiences. Other people who have been through the same experiences can give you good advice when you meet a new situation. Parents and brothers or sisters of the child with developmental disabilities can benefit a lot from this. We call this equal advocacy work – in NFU we are there for each other.

We also offer people valuable opportunities to meet each other by arranging Christmas parties, summer gatherings and trips. Sometimes it's nice just to be able to get together and spend time with each other. Many people have met new friends thanks to their NFU membership.

## **We speak up for you**

But we are not only concerned with supporting your situation as it is today. NFU also works to ensure better everyday life for families with small children in the future. That's why we work with the Government to make the rules concerning us and the assistance provided the best they can be.

NFU has played an important role in developing the 'What About Us?' project, which concerns parents with a son or daughter with disabilities. It's not just the child who needs help – the whole family needs assistance. A child with disabilities is an extra challenge for families. 'What About Us?' helps parents to tackle the challenges they face on an everyday basis.

## **Easy Read Version**

**We have courses for parents with young children. They can learn about what sort of help children with developmental disabilities can get. For instance, they can learn about how families can get a babysitter.**

**Our members can also meet each other and talk about their experienc-**

**es. They can also meet just to enjoy each other's company.**

**We ask politicians to give children with developmental disabilities more help. We have taken part in a project called 'What About Us?'. The project helps parents to have a better situation together.**



**For Families with  
children at school**



Pupils with developmental disabilities are like most kids – they learn from children their own age. That’s why NFU has a course on which rights and opportunities children have at school. We want to help you so that your son or daughter can go to school with his or her brothers and sisters, children of their own age and other kids from the neighbourhood. NFU wants a school for all.

Do you know about your child’s rights at school? All children are entitled to education from their birth until they leave school. But some municipalities have schools especially for children with developmental disabilities. Children with special needs are refused a suitable education unless they go to a special school. Municipalities are not allowed to do this, and NFU gives training and support to families who do not get the type of help they are entitled to.

Children with developmental disabilities need an education which suits them. The process involved in developing appropriate methods and teaching aids

may be long and demanding. But this process does not need to start from scratch. NFU focuses on gathering know-how and experience from the various offers available, so that they can benefit pupils and teachers in the future.

## **We speak up for you**

Whenever reforms are carried out to improve quality in schools, children with special needs also need to benefit from this. That’s why NFU lobbies the Government and the Minister of Education to make Norwegian schools better for all children in Norway.

Our aim is a school for all. This is also the official Norwegian political position, at least on paper. In reality, however, a number of municipalities still have special schools for children with special needs. And in parts of the country so-called “mainstreaming schools” are being set up. NFU pressures the Government because we want this reversed. NFU wants a school for all – not just in theory, but in practice too.

## **Easy Read Version**

**Children learn from other children who are the same age. That’s why NFU wants schools for all. We want different children to go to the same school. Our courses can tell you about what rights children have.**

**Children with special needs should go to the same school as other children. But this does not happen in all places in Norway. NFU gives politicians a clear message – schools must be for everyone.**



**For persons who  
want to work**

It isn't always easy for people with developmental abilities to find themselves a place in the world of work. Courses and advice from NFU can make this process easier. There are many examples of people with developmental disabilities doing a good job in ordinary companies. That's why we want companies to make arrangements for this.

Our vision is that adults with developmental disabilities should have the right to work. Not everyone can work "9 to 5" but everyone needs to do something useful and meet other people. That's why NFU is working to encourage reputable companies to set up permanently adapted positions for those with disabilities, in addition to the positions on offer in ordinary enterprises.

Many parents seem unsure whether their son or daughter will get a job after finishing school. That's why this is an important part of our courses. Pupils with developmental disabilities ought to get help to set targets during their time at school and for their future working life. NFU is in contact with schools and job centres and we encourage them to cooperate with us on this issue. When we succeed in our aims, our experiences have been very good.

### **We speak up for you**

When they try to get a job, persons with disabilities often feel that they are not judged on their merits. Some are even told 'You don't really need a job, do you? You're on disability benefit!' NFU wants persons with developmental disabilities to have greater choice and not just have to rely on work permanently adapted to

their situation. NFU also campaigns for people who want to be given the right to a place at a municipal day centre. NFU also wants people with developmental disabilities to be included in the wage agreement arrangements and have other employees' rights.

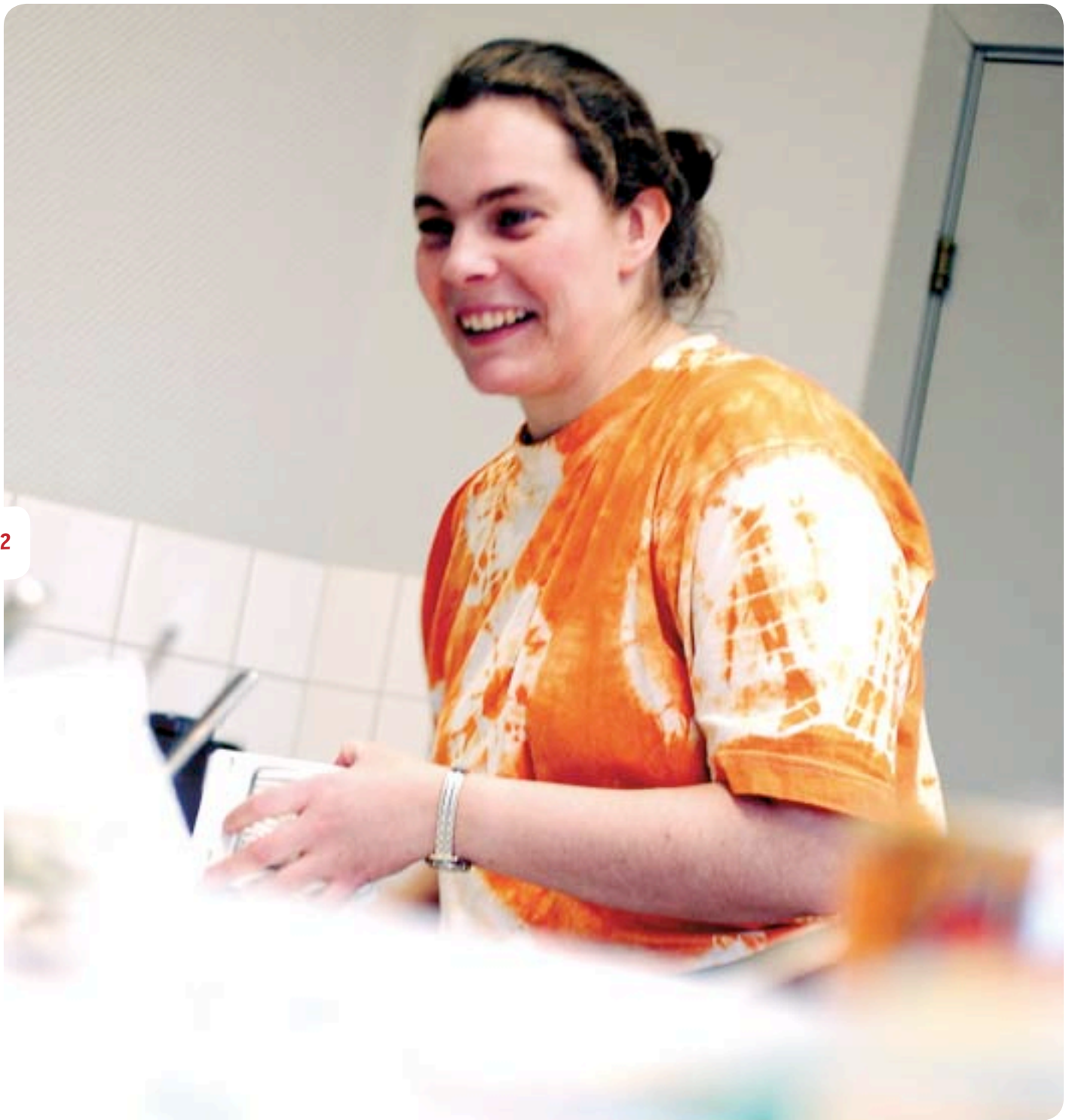
We also work to advocate on educational policies. NFU sits on the Directorate of Education's User Forum. NFU's Education Policy Committee works on education at national level whilst local school contacts can raise issues concerning schools and education that are important to you.

## **Easy Read Version**

**It can be difficult to get a job after school. That's why we give our members advice and help. We want persons with developmental disabilities to be able work in ordinary companies.**

**Schools and job centres should cooperate on this. They can help young people plan their future.**

**NFU influences education in Norway. We also cooperate with the Directorate of Education.**



# For persons who want their own home

Norwegian law is quite clear – you are entitled to help where you live. However, many find that they do not get the assistance they need. That's why it is vital to know about rights you have and how you can go about getting the right help. That's what our courses are for.

Our vision is for adults with developmental disabilities to have the right to their own home. This is not, in fact, as easy as it sounds. Many municipalities require

## Easy Read Version

**You have the right to get help where you live. But not everyone feels this is what they get. Our courses explain which rights you have. You can learn about how to get the help you need.**

**Everyone is different. NFU wants services, which suit each individual.**

**The user can talk to the assistant. They can agree on a good solution. Help can be adapted to the individual.**

people to move into special housing to get help. NFU believes this is against the law, and we can offer valuable advice to people who end up in a difficult situation like this.

No two people are the same, and all persons with developmental disabilities have their own individual needs. That's why NFU is working towards having personalized services. We want the help on offer to be adapted to each individual's situation, and not limited by old-fashioned and complicated practices within the public sector.

## We speak up for you

NFU works actively to ensure that everyone gets the help they need in their own home. Currently municipalities use people who work traditional shifts to give people with developmental disabilities help. This means that a huge number of different people are in and out of your home just once a month. We try to get the politicians to understand that this is hardly a good solution.

A different way of giving help is to have user conducted personal assistance. This involves each individual having assistants and then agreeing with the assistants when the user will get the help he or she needs. In this way, the services will be adapted to the user and experience has demonstrated that this need not be more expensive than the solutions currently in use.



14

**"We give our members the opportunity to share experiences. If you find yourself in a situation which is new to you, you can get good advice from others who have been through the same thing before."**





“What sort of help are you entitled to? How do you go about getting the help your family needs? Perhaps you disagree with a decision the municipality has made? NFU answers questions like these every single day.”



# For an active leisure time

Many people think that persons with developmental disabilities cannot participate in the same leisure activities as others can. But why shouldn't they do the same activities? No sports club we have contacted has ever given us a no. We work nationally and locally so that people with developmental disabilities can participate in sport and other leisure activities.

Our vision is that persons with developmental disabilities will have the right to take part in ordinary cultural and leisure activities. But this is not just for young people. Adults must also have the opportunity to exercise and take part in the physical side of life. And everyone ought to be able to take part in hobby activities. Many people take great pleasure in actively participating in choirs, church work, folk dancing and other cultural activities.

Persons with developmental disabilities often need help so that they can spend their leisure time actively.

But some municipalities cut their budgets, so there is no support for leisure activities. However, if your application is formulated correctly, it is usually possible to get help!

## We speak up for you

NFU believes that everyone ought to be able to take part in sports clubs' training sessions, whether you are a child, a young person or an adult. Support persons and leisure assistants can help the sports club make the necessary arrangements. Good cooperation with the Housing Service can also make it possible for adults with developmental disabilities to participate.

We would also like persons with developmental disabilities to take part in sports competitions. There are already rules for this and we would like to ensure this opportunity is utilized. NFU liases with sports clubs locally and nationally, and we hope this will lead to better offers and more competitions, which people with developmental disabilities can participate in.

## Easy Read Version

Many persons with developmental disabilities can do sport. Some people think this is difficult to do. NFU does not agree with this. We try to make it possible for you to take part.

Adults should be active as well.  
That's why you should go to training.

NFU cooperates with sports clubs.  
We want them to make it possible for persons with developmental disabilities to take part.

We want everyone to be able to do cultural activities. From folk dancing to church work.







# For a real holiday

A holiday does everyone good. But a weekend away or a week in the sun can seem impossible for people with special needs. But does it really have to be like this? NFU seeks to find solutions so that persons with developmental disabilities can go on holiday – without this leading to additional expenses.

As of today, you have the right to help no matter where you live in Norway. But there are few persons with developmental disabilities who can actually use this right. We are working for persons with disabilities' right to take support persons with them on holiday, according to their own desire and needs.

NFU's summer camp offers a great opportunity to get away from it all. We set up camp each summer where you can relax on holiday and learn about the organization's work.

## **We speak up for you**

NFU believes that people should have the right to take support persons with them on holiday. In some places, municipalities require the person with developmental disabilities to pay for the support person's transport, accommodation and salary. This is an unfair obstacle, which NFU wants to get rid of. We demand that you be given the same help on holiday as you are given in your own home.

We are lobbying the Government and Parliament to get this right to take a support person on holiday. NFU also takes part in the Directorate of Health and Social Affairs' survey on people with disabilities' holiday habits. The aim of this is to gather information on how persons with disabilities want to go on holiday, so that the best possible arrangements can be made for this for everyone.

## **Easy Read Version**

**Everyone needs a holiday, including people with developmental disabilities. NFU wants to make this possible for everyone.**

**Not all municipalities let you take support persons on holiday with you today. NFU wants everyone to be able to take support persons on holiday.**

**That's why we talk to the Government and Parliament. We want everyone to have the right to a real holiday.**



# For a meaningful old age

What kind of old age do persons with developmental disabilities want? How do they want to slow down so they can work less? These are important questions for NFU and they are becoming even more important. Thanks to improvements in the Health Services, people with developmental disabilities live longer than before. Working for the elderly is a new field for NFU, and we would like to learn more about this group and their needs and wishes.

## **We speak up for you**

We believe special policies for the elderly with developmental disabilities are needed. Many of them are in work but they may not want to work for the whole of their lives. Some persons age more quickly than others. When they want to slow down at work, it's important that other activities are available. We believe that the public sector must make the necessary arrangements so that everyone can have a meaningful old age.

NFU takes part in a reference group on the development project 'Persons with Developmental Disabilities' Ageing'. This project is currently gathering information and ideas so that we can form an appropriate policy within this area. Our members play an important role here – they're the ones who know the challenges they face and these will form the basis of our policies.

## **Easy Read Version**

**NFU wants everyone to have a meaningful old age.**

**We also want policies for the elderly with developmental disabilities.**



# For those who have least

NFU believes we must stand shoulder to shoulder with persons with developmental disabilities in other countries, especially in developing countries. Via our international work, we support the development of democratic organizations for people with developmental disabilities and we provide economic aid and share experiences.

NFU is one of the organizations behind the Atlas Alliance. This foundation provides support to people with disabilities in developing countries. The Atlas Alliance has its own financial means, which come from national fundraising campaigns. The last one was the Thelethon in NRK in 2002. The foundation also serves as a link to the Norwegian government and NORAD.

Fighting poverty is one of NFU's central pillars. We support organizations in developing countries and we provide information about international grants and the various arrangements available. These arrangements and the UN's policies on persons with developmental disabilities form a central part of the organizations' work in their own countries.

## Easy Read Version

NFU supports persons with developmental disabilities in other countries.

We take part in the Atlas Alliance. The Alliance helps disabled people's organizations in poor countries.





24

**We have come far**



Although a great deal still remains to be done, we have come far as far as equality, participation in society and rights for persons with developmental disabilities are concerned.

Only a few decades ago, persons with developmental disabilities were a neglected group. The arrangements provided by the public sector, where they existed, were often most inadequate and families stood alone, solely responsible for providing care.

This was the background on which the NFU was founded in 1967. The NFU demanded the public sector take care of training and services for persons with developmental disabilities, as it did for other people.

Our first great victory came in 1975, when the Primary Education Act for all was introduced. Everyone was granted the right to go to school. Previously, not all children with developmental disabilities could do so. The new law gave everyone the right and duty to go to school and everyone was to be admitted to the school in their catchment area.

Our second great victory was what is known as the 'Reform for People with Developmental Disabilities'. Prior to this, it had been unclear who was responsible for persons with disabilities.

Municipalities were responsible for some services, whilst the County Council was responsible for others. The help on offer was rather random – it depended more on where you lived than the actual help you needed. The 'Reform for People with Developmental Disabilities' in 1991 changed this. Persons with disabilities became entitled to ordinary municipal services and were integrated into the larger Health Service.

It is taken for granted nowadays that children with disabilities can grow up in the bosom of their families, and that they can go to the kindergarten where they live so that they can be a part of the neighbourhood as other children are.

As of today, NFU has 19 county organizations and 230 local branches. We cooperate with organizations in Norway, the Nordic countries, Europe and in other parts of the world.

## Easy Read Version

**NFU was founded in 1967. We have achieved a lot since then.**

**Our first victory was the law on primary schools. This gave everyone the right to go to school.**

**Another victory was the 'Reform for People with Developmental Disabilities'. This gave all people with developmental disabilities the right to the services they needed from the municipality.**

**All children with developmental disabilities live today with their families.**

**NFU has 19 county organizations and 230 local branches.**



## We need you!

NFU is a member organization. This means that the members decide NFU's work via our organizational democracy. Our activities nationally are determined by our representatives and members.

NFU is an organization for people affected by disability, other interested parties and not least for people with disabilities themselves.

Our members with developmental disabilities are an important resource for the organization, of many which are great spokespeople for our aims. We have our own courses for people who want to represent the organization. Our representatives with disabilities are provided with a support person from NFU, should they wish it so, they can get help with going through papers and preparing themselves for meetings.

### Easy Read Version

**NFU's members are important. They take the decisions in the organization. And they do important work all over the country.**

**We want to include people with developmental disabilities in this work. You can get help to read papers and prepare yourself for meetings.**



## NFU's principles

1. Persons with developmental disabilities have the same value, the same fundamental needs and rights as every other human being.
2. Persons with developmental disabilities have an equal right to life.
3. Persons with developmental disabilities have the right to real influence over their lives and to make their own decisions.
4. Persons with developmental disabilities and families with a member with developmental disability have the right to individually adapted services and financial aid.
5. Persons with developmental disabilities have the right to equal and specially adapted education at all levels of within the school system and within the same organizational framework as everybody else.
6. Adult persons with developmental disabilities have the right to their own homes.
7. Adult persons with developmental disabilities have the right to a sexual life and to choose their own way of living together.
8. Adult persons with developmental disabilities have the right to work.
9. Persons with developmental disabilities have the right to participate in general cultural and leisure time activities.
10. People with developmental disabilities have the right to an advocacy organization that works to ensure ensure that equal rights and equality are maintained and safeguarded in all areas of society.



[www.nfunorge.org](http://www.nfunorge.org)