



More than just forced marriage

A collection of articles

FINAL REPORT FROM IMDI'S WORK WITH THE ACTION PLAN AGAINST FORCED MARRIAGE 2008-2011



Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet

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Preface

The right to choose one's own spouse is enshrined in international conventions. Forcing someone to enter into a marriage is prohibited under Norwegian law, and it is a violation of fundamental human rights, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We nevertheless see that young people in certain circles in today's Norway are pressured into marrying against their will.

Forced marriage is a social problem that Norwegian authorities are making active endeavours to combat. The main goal of the Action Plan against Forced Marriage (2008–2011) was to combat forced marriage through prevention and by helping the victims of such abuse.

The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) has had responsibility for several of the measures in this Action Plan. The presence of minority counsellors in upper secondary schools has resulted in more young people who need help being identified. The system has contributed to raising awareness in schools through conversation and preventive measures. The presence of integration counsellors at foreign service missions has resulted in several victims and people at risk receiving assistance. Forced marriage has been placed in a broader context. Among other things, its occurrence is closely related to women's situation and standing in the country of origin. The support given to voluntary organisations working for change and development both in Norway and in the countries of origin has proven to be an important contribution to the preventive efforts.

In order to combat forced marriage, endeavours must be made on several fronts simultaneously. The work has uncovered that the problems young people struggle with are very complex. The families feel a sense of belonging to several different places. The stories that IMDi's counsellors have heard from young people and their families, and the individual fates they have come into contact with, remind us that people's lives cannot be neatly compartmentalised into boxes and sectors. This is a field with several overlapping sectors and disciplines. Services such as the police, the child welfare service, schools, the family counselling service, health and social services and the foreign service are all involved. This requires a uniform and coordinated approach. Good cooperation across agencies, disciplines and national borders is necessary, both to help victims and to prevent abuse.

'More than just forced marriage' summarises the experience from IMDi's work. We present some good measures and provide examples of approaches that have been tested during the period. The report also points to several areas where greater efforts and more targeted measures will be necessary. The report is primarily aimed at IMDi's partners in the school sector and the foreign service, as well as staff in the first-line services. The contents of the report will be relevant and useful to everyone who comes into contact with children, young people and their families in their work.

IMDi hopes that the report will be a contribution to the exchange of experience and the development of knowledge in this field.

Oslo, autumn 2011



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Illustrations: Bjørn Sæthren, 07 Gruppen

Design and graphic production: 07 Gruppen November /2011

Print-run: 3,000

ISBN english version: 978-82-8246-110-8

ISBN norwegian version: Electronic: 978-82-8246-095-8 Paper: 978-82-8246-088-0

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Introduction

MDi mobilises against forced marriage

In 2007, IMDi was assigned chief responsibility for four of the measures in the Government's new *Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008-2011* (Ministry of Children and Equality 2007):

- ▶ Measure 4 *Establish a system of minority counsellors in upper secondary schools*
- ▶ Measure 17 *Increase support for the awareness-raising efforts of voluntary organisations*
- ▶ Measure 19 *Strengthen and maintain the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage*
- ▶ Measure 31 *Establish positions for Integration Attachés at selected foreign service missions*

The work against forced marriage was organised in one unit at IMDi, called the Prevention Unit, which was operational during the Action Plan period from 2008 to 2011. Unlike other departments in IMDi, the Prevention Unit largely consisted of employees in the first-line services.

In 2010, because IMDi had administrative responsibility for the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage (referred to in the following as the Expert Team), IMDi was also assigned responsibility for:

- ▶ Measure 34 *Refund the cost of repatriating victims of forced marriage*

In 2010, IMDi was also assigned responsibility for developing a plan for the following measure:

- ▶ Measure 23 *Establish local cooperation projects at the regional level, based on experience from the Drammen project.*

During the project period, the Prevention Unit has also been involved in work on the following measures:

- ▶ Measure 5 *Develop resource material on forced marriage for use by pupils and teachers*
- ▶ Measure 6 *Improve the socio-educational counselling service in schools*
- ▶ Measure 9 *Update information material adapted to different target groups*

- ▶ Measure 21 *Prepare handbooks and provide training for support agencies*
- ▶ Measure 32 *Improve procedures for dealing with cases of forced marriage*
- ▶ Measure 33 *Improve competence in the Foreign Service*
- ▶ Measure 35 *Promote cooperation between authorities and voluntary organisations in Norway and in the parents' country of origin*
- ▶ Measure 40 *Establish procedures for systematic registration of forced marriage cases*

Strategic goals for the work

The main goal of the Action Plan is to combat forced marriage through prevention and by helping victims of forced marriage. The goal for the status of IMDi's work at the end of the project period on 31 December 2011 was worded as follows:

- ▶ Schools and foreign service missions at which minority counsellors and integration counsellors are deployed shall have expertise, procedures and instruments for preventing, uncovering and dealing with cases of forced marriage.
- ▶ Relevant youth groups and immigrant milieus shall be aware of and familiar with forced marriage and relevant support services.
- ▶ The first line services (child welfare service, education sector, the police) shall be knowledgeable about forced marriage and know which agencies can provide assistance in individual cases.
- ▶ New trial and permanent measures based on documented experience have been proposed to the relevant authorities.

Important experience from the work

Like the Action Plan 2008-2011, the project period has now come to an end.

The counsellors have met many young women and men who are struggling and need help. They have also run parent groups and pupil groups and provided guidance for school and embassy staff. They have employed various methods, run competence-raising measures, worked on projects, built networks and collaborations, and they have endeavoured to raise the awareness of central agencies by establishing systems and struc-

tures. At the same time, the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage and the voluntary organisations have also collected important experience relating to central issues and methods in this work.

The main experience from IMDi's work against forced marriage can be summarised as follows:

- ▶ A broad approach, low-threshold measures and preventive efforts produce results.
- ▶ In order to provide good help, it is important to know something about the logic of collectivist societies in general and honour-related violence in particular.
- ▶ Forced marriage is not just about honour and culture. Important perspectives include the law and legislation, human rights, violence, gender equality, financial agreements, challenges relating to growing up, integration, culture and religion.
- ▶ Most conversations and cases in schools have concerned extreme control and threats/violence, and not actual instances of forced marriage.
- ▶ Most cases at the foreign service missions concern children and young people left behind abroad (forcibly relocated) and fear of forced marriage.
- ▶ Forced engagements and forced marriages are often entered into in the country of origin. They also occur in Norway, however, in the form of religious engagements or marriages at a young age.
- ▶ Both boys and girls are subjected to honour-related violence and coercion, but in different ways.
- ▶ People with mental disabilities are also subjected to forced marriage.
- ▶ Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons (LGBT) are particularly subject to honour-related violence because of their sexual orientation.
- ▶ Efforts targeting young people alone are not enough, it is also important to get through to the parents.
- ▶ Parents can also be subjected to pressure and coercion. They can feel trapped in a situation where they experience expectations from and obligations to other family members both in Norway and in other countries.

- ▶ In some families, acute 'emergency help', crises and deadlocked conflicts can be avoided if preventive efforts are implemented early enough.
- ▶ Young people's safety must be given precedence over dialogue with their families.
- ▶ Efforts in Norway are not enough on their own, it is also important to link these efforts to work in the field of migration and foreign affairs.
- ▶ People who migrate maintain strong ties with their family in their home country and other countries. What happens in the country of origin and to family members elsewhere in the world will be of importance to the diaspora in Norway, and vice versa.
- ▶ Cooperation across agencies and across national borders is important both in the preventive context and in order to offer the best help and support possible.

Legislation

Forcing someone to enter into or remain in a marriage against their will is a violation of fundamental human rights. Forced marriage is a violation of both Norwegian law and international conventions. The Marriage Act Section 1a, the General Civil Penal Code Section 222 second paragraph, the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights Article 23, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Article 16, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 all establish by law that the individual has a right to freely choose his/her spouse.¹

Definitions of terms

By a forced marriage is meant that at least one of the spouses has no real possibility of

- ▶ choosing to remain unmarried without being subject to reprisals
- ▶ choosing to break an engagement or leave a marriage without being subject to reprisals

¹ *Konvensjoner og lover om tvangsekteskap 2009* ('Conventions and acts relating to forced marriage' – in Norwegian only), the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion.

- ▶ choosing a different partner contrary to the family's wishes without being subject to reprisals

In the work against forced marriage, the victim's own experience of what constitutes force must be given great weight.

By reprisals is meant unwarranted pressure, threats or other physical or psychological violence. In addition to abuse such as blows and kicks, strategies such as spreading rumours, exclusion, harassment and ostracism are widespread methods of persuasion or punishment for resisting. More implicit methods of pressure and persuasion include pointing out that someone who refuses to comply with the family's wishes in relation to marriage will cause other family members to become ill or cause damage to their reputation.

Not all arranged marriages are forced marriages, but all forced marriages are arranged. The tradition of arranged marriages has a strong foothold in many countries and it also occurs in Norway. Arranged marriage is not in violation of Norwegian law. In an arranged marriage, the families play the leading role in finding a suitable partner for their sons and daughters, but it is up to the young people themselves to decide whether to accept the person their parents or family have found. The distinction is one of degree, however, and it can often be difficult to distinguish between arranged and forced marriages. Based on cases where not marrying is not a real alternative in practice, some have argued that the freedom of choice in arranged marriages is illusory. Others, however, say that they never felt pressured into marrying someone their parents proposed, but that, on the contrary, it was their choice to let their parents pick/propose a spouse for them. The individual knows best what is perceived as an obligation under coercion and what is not. What separates a forced marriage from an arranged marriage is therefore the degree of co-determination and pressure that the individual experiences.

Experts with practical experience and the academic community in both Norway and other countries have long argued that the term 'forced

marriage' is too narrow. In their experience, the pressure to marry is often related to a broader set of problems comprising a strict and authoritarian upbringing, oppression, control during childhood and violence in the family. Many argue that the terms 'honour-related violence' or 'honour-related crime' are more accurate than 'forced marriage'. Honour-related violence is defined as violence triggered by the family's need to protect or restore its honour and respect – a logic that is often referred to as a 'code of honour' or 'honour culture'.² The Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008–2011 also points to the connection between strong control and a strict upbringing during childhood and adolescence, and subsequent pressure to marry or forced marriage.

An integration challenge or a more general challenge for society? Organisation of the work against forced marriage in Norway – a brief historical overview

FACTS

Action plans and measures against forced marriage in Norway 1998-2010

- Action Plan against Forced Marriage 1998
- Renewed initiative against forced marriage 2002
- Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion of the Immigrant Population and Goals for Social Inclusion 2006
- Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008-2011

Forced marriage has been on the political agenda in Norway for around 15 years now, and the issue first attracted serious public attention in the mid-1990s. As policy instruments, action plans mean giving priority to certain policy areas and intensifying efforts in relation to them for a limited period. Although integrating the work against forced marriage with the work of the ordinary support agencies, i.e. 'mainstreaming', is often seen as a goal, certain areas require dedicated measures. The first Action Plan against forced marriage was published in 1998. It comprised 40 measures. A further 30 measures were

² See Wikan 2008 for a more detailed description of the concept of honour.

presented in *Renewed initiative against forced marriage* in 2002. The *Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion of the Immigrant Population and Goals for Social Inclusion (2006)* also included some measures against forced marriage. During this period, work against forced marriage in Norway was organised as a field requiring special mobilisation in addition to the general efforts targeting related policy areas, such as domestic violence, human rights, equality and aid.

FACTS

Forced marriage in the Norwegian legal system:

During the last ten years, there have been two important legislative amendments and four criminal prosecutions before the Norwegian courts.

2003. The General Civil Penal Code Section 222 second paragraph entered into force – it explicitly criminalises people who force or pressure someone into marrying.

2004. A forced marriage case was taken to court in Bergen.

2006. Drammen District Court pronounced Norway's first judgment against forced marriage.

2007. Amendments to the Marriage Act, whereby it is specified that marriages entered into abroad will not be lawful in Norway if one of the parties is under the age of 18 years when the marriage is entered into.

2008. A new case is brought before Drammen District Court.

2011. Oslo District Court pronounces judgment in the most extensive forced marriage case in Norway to date.

2011. A new forced marriage prosecution.

During these early years, forced marriage was primarily seen as an integration challenge – an issue that concerned immigrants, cultural minorities and 'the others'. After several unsuccessful pilot projects involving family mediation after the breakdown of relations, the attitude that the parents were criminals and that negotiation or dialogue were ruled out gradually came to dominate the field. The work was largely project-oriented and was administered by voluntary organi-

sations. The phenomenon of forced marriage was 'invisible' in general public policy documents about domestic violence. Instead, they included references to documents and plans in which the issue of forced marriage was dealt with in particular.³ Forced marriage and honour-related violence were thereby seen as something special and distinct from other types of domestic violence. The media largely reinforced this culturalisation and specialisation perspective by relying on explanatory models such as mental health when discussing violence in ethnic Norwegian families, while emphasising culture as the cause in cases in which the offender was not an ethnic Norwegian. There was a lot of talk *about* and little talking *with* those involved. A contrast thereby emerged whereby the issue was invisible in public policy documents and hyper-visible in the media.⁴

A report was published in 2007, *Tvangsekteskapsaker i hjelpeapparatet. Omfang og utfordringer* ('Forced Marriage Cases in the Support Agencies. Scope and Challenges' – in Norwegian only) (Bredal and Salole Skjerven 2007). It was based on a survey of public and voluntary agencies' dealings with forced marriage cases. It was commissioned by the Ministry of Children and Equality. The report concluded by pointing to the importance of normalising the work and strengthening the public and government support agencies. Concrete recommendations were included, such as moving the Expert Team from the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) to a body working against domestic violence, strengthening the counselling service in schools and raising competence in the foreign service missions. In general, the researchers called for less 'specialisation' of the forced marriage issue, a clearer focus on 'mainstreaming' and on making the ordinary support agencies more accountable. The main argument was that the distinction between violence among partners, on the one hand, and violence committed by parents, siblings, cousins or other family members, on the other, was an artificial one.

3 See Bredal 2009 and Bredal & Salole Skjerven 2007 for a discussion of the 'invisibility' of forced marriage and honour-related violence in public policy documents.

4 For a more thorough review of the media coverage of forced marriage, see Lynggard 2009.

A new Action Plan against Forced Marriage for the period 2008–2011 was adopted by the Government in 2007. Comprising 40 measures and accompanied by substantial financial investment, this Action Plan represented a new determination to combat forced marriage in Norway. Eight ministries have been involved, and the work has been coordinated by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion.⁵ The Action Plan breaks with the previous action plans by emphasising that forced marriage must be considered to be a form of domestic violence, that more resources should be devoted to preventive work and that the work should to a greater extent be administered by the public support agencies. In addition to IMDi's measures, the Action Plan includes contingency measures in relation to mental health, better provision of accommodation for those over and under the age of 18, as well as regional collaboration and competence-raising measures.

At the same time as the Action Plan was published, the Drammen project and the Brobyggerprosjektet (the 'Bridgebuilder project') also received funding from the authorities to further strengthen the public support agencies in their work against forced marriage. Both these projects were based on an understanding of forced marriage as a form of domestic violence and a violation of fundamental human rights.

The Ministry of Justice and the Police's plan *Turning point – Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2008-2011* does not incorporate the measures against forced marriage. It refers to separate action plans against forced marriage and female genital mutilation and to the connection between the measures in the plans. In the introduction, it is emphasised that special efforts are still necessary to combat forced marriage, but that they must be understood as part of the general, overall efforts to combat violence. During

5 The responsible ministries are the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Each ministry has chief responsibility for implementing measures in their own area and acts as a partner in the work on implementing other measures.

the period 2008–2011, forced marriage and honour-related violence were included to a greater extent in key policy documents relating to violence.⁶

Also in the *Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008-2011*, the work was grounded in integration policy, among other things by assigning responsibility for the four most important measures to IMDi. Responsibility for coordinating work on the measures was gradually transferred from the Department of Family Affairs and Equality to the Department of Integration and Diversity at the Ministry of Children and Equality. IMDi's measures were also listed in *Handlingsplan for integrering og inkludering av innvandrerbefolkningen – styrket innsats 2008*. ('Action plan for integration and social inclusion of the immigrant population and goals for social inclusion – greater efforts 2008' – in Norwegian only)⁷

At the beginning of the current action plan period, work against forced marriage was thereby organised as both an integration challenge and a family violence-related social challenge to a greater extent than in previous periods.

Swings of the pendulum. Tendencies and developments in the work against forced marriage during the Action Plan period

During this Action Plan period, some significant changes have taken place both in terms of understanding the subject matter and working methodologies. The tendencies and developments in the field can be roughly summed up as follows:

- ▶ From special to mainstream

6 *Kvinnepanelets rapport* ('Report of the Women's Panel' – in Norwegian only), 2010, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, and *Veileder for utvikling av kommunale handlingsplaner* ('Guide to developing municipal action plans' – in Norwegian only), 2008, the Ministry of Justice and the Police are examples.

7 See measures 21, 23, 24 and 25 in *Handlingsplan for integrering og inkludering av innvandrerbefolkningen – styrket innsats 2008* ('Action Plan for integration and social inclusion of the immigrant population and goals for social inclusion – greater efforts 2008' – in Norwegian only)!

- ▶ From a non-governmental to a public agency-based approach
- ▶ From separate and independent projects to more exchange of knowledge and cooperation across agencies
- ▶ From a focus on the individual to a focus on the family
- ▶ From 'break or stay' with the family to *supplementary* solutions such as dialogue, negotiation and mediation
- ▶ From acute emergency help to increased focus on early intervention and negotiation before a conflict escalates
- ▶ From one-sidedly viewing young people as victims to increasingly regarding young people as active agents subject to difficult cross-pressure
- ▶ From mostly focussing on girls to an increased awareness of the situation of other vulnerable groups (boys, parents, gay people and people with mental disabilities)
- ▶ From a perspective of 'just' forced marriage to understanding the subject matter as a complex set of issues comprising authoritarian upbringing, control, domestic violence, forced relocation, gender equality and human rights
- ▶ From a focus on honour and culture to greater focus on challenges relating to migration, transnational family life and challenges relating to living conditions in the new home country
- ▶ From a focus on youth and adults to also looking at the situation of younger children, and child-raising and upbringing practices
- ▶ From little to greater focus on mental health follow-up after a breakdown of family relations, both for the individual and the family

Presentation of IMDi's measures against forced marriage

The interpretation of IMDi's assignment and the organisation of the work in the Prevention Unit at IMDi have been described in detail in previous reports and on IMDi's website.⁸ The schemes are only presented in brief here.

1. The minority counsellor system

During the project period, IMDi has been responsible for minority counsellors deployed in selected upper secondary schools in the following eight counties: Oslo, Akershus, Østfold, Buskerud, Vest-Agder, Rogaland, Hordaland and Sør-Trøndelag. The schools were chosen on the basis of two criteria: A proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds higher than 20%, or more than 100 of the school's pupils being from non-Western minority backgrounds.⁹

The minority counsellors' remit has been to prevent forced marriages and honour-related violence, to contribute to raising the level of competence in schools in relation to forced marriage, and to establish a dialogue with parents. The work was to be seen in conjunction with the efforts to prevent pupils from dropping out. Their tasks were to:

- ▶ provide concrete advice and follow-up of individual pupils in cases that concern forced marriage and related problems
- ▶ form pupil and parent networks to prevent forced marriages
- ▶ raise the level of competence in relation to forced marriage in their respective workplaces
- ▶ develop procedures for the prevention and handling of forced marriage in their workplaces
- ▶ contribute to closer collaboration between the school, the public support agencies and voluntary organisations in work on concrete cases

IMDi has continually assessed whether the measures are working as intended and whether optimal use is being made of the resources. For example, in consultation with school owners and school managers, some minority counsellors have been transferred on the basis of actual needs and possibilities. Some minority counsellors also cover lower secondary schools, while others focus on the system itself in order to test effective means of reaching the target group.

⁸ See 'Integration Map. Forced Marriage – an Information Base', 2008, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, and 'Interim report' 2010, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, for a more detailed description.

⁹ The term pupils from non-Western minority backgrounds refers to pupils with one or both parents from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, and Europe excluding the EEA/EU.

2. The integration counsellor system

The integration counsellors (referred to in the Action Plan as integration attachés) work at selected foreign service missions in areas where forced marriage occurs. During the period, there have been integration counsellors at the following foreign service missions:

- ▶ Amman, Jordan (covers Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories)
- ▶ Ankara, Turkey (covers Iran)
- ▶ Islamabad, Pakistan¹⁰ (also covers Afghanistan)
- ▶ Nairobi, Kenya (covers Somalia and the Horn of Africa)
- ▶ Rabat, Morocco (covers North Africa)
- ▶ Colombo, Sri Lanka (also covers Bangladesh and India)

In consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, changes have been made with respect to the placement and organisation of the integration counsellors, similar to those made for the minority counsellors. The positions in Sri Lanka and Morocco were phased out during the project period. The integration counsellors' remit was to:

- ▶ work at selected foreign service missions in areas where forced marriage occurs
- ▶ strengthen case processing in cases concerning forced marriage and similar family-related issues
- ▶ contribute to raising competence about the issue at the foreign service missions
- ▶ increase knowledge in the government administration and other institutions in Norway.

3. The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage

The Expert Team is a national team and a permanent body that is independent of the Action Plan. It was initially established as a trial project in 2004. In 2007, it was established as a permanent body that was initially administered by the UDI. From January 2008, IMDi took over responsibility for coordination of the team.

During the current Action Plan period, the Expert Team has consisted of one representative from IMDi (a full-time position), one representative from the National Police Directorate (a full-time position), one representative from the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) (50% position) and one representative from the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) (50% position). From summer 2010, the team was further strengthened through Bufdir's part-time position becoming a full-time position. The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) has also been represented at some meetings since responsibility for the team was transferred to IMDi, and it has attended all team meetings in the last six months of the current Action Plan period. The team members have clearly defined areas of responsibility and roles in the team.

Pursuant to the Expert Team's remit, the target group comprises 'primarily employees of first-line services who come into contact with and whose job is to help women, men, children and couples who, with a view to marriage, are subjected to or threatened with physical violence, psychological pressure, honour-related violence or similar sanctions'. They shall:

- ▶ provide advice and guidance to the first-line services in individual cases
- ▶ ensure that individuals who contact the team receive the necessary follow-up from the first-line services
- ▶ help to ensure that cases are dealt with by the agency best suited to following them up
- ▶ contribute to improving the existing framework and procedures for inter-agency cooperation in order to ensure better coordination and more efficient help in individual cases
- ▶ contribute to raising the competence level in the first-line services

New tasks have also been added through allocation letters during the period:

- ▶ responsibility for administering the national accommodation and support scheme for young people over the age of 18 who are victims/ at risk of forced marriage

¹⁰ The integration counsellor in Islamabad is a special representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- ▶ staffing the Q&A service about forced marriage at ung.no
- ▶ administering the refund scheme for repatriating victims of forced marriage

The Expert Team also coordinates repatriation cases upon arrival in Norway.

4. Support for voluntary organisations

A number of voluntary organisations have received financial support for work carried out internally within their own groups and to mobilise their members in the work against forced marriage. Twenty-one organisations received support in 2008, and an average of 25 organisations have received project funding in the years since. A total of NOK 40 million has been allocated for this work during the period. Both small and large projects have received funding. The measures have included:

- ▶ development of information material
- ▶ dialogue and debates at seminars
- ▶ theme nights and network groups
- ▶ empowerment courses, especially for young girls
- ▶ documentaries, drama and theatre projects

In addition to the organisations in Norway, projects have been initiated and established in some countries of origin with a view to changing attitudes and preventing forced marriages. In order to strengthen cooperation and ensure the exchange of experience, the minority and integration counsellors have been responsible for professional follow-up of the projects.

5. Refunding of expenses

In 2010, IMDi and the Expert Team were assigned responsibility for administering the refund scheme for the repatriation of victims of forced marriage. Funds have been earmarked for the repatriation of young people subjected to forced marriage, attempted forced marriage or female genital mutilation abroad. Financial support for repatriation is only granted if the person involved is not able to pay for a return ticket him/herself. If the conditions are met, the indi-

vidual foreign service missions can apply to IMDi, represented by the Expert Team, for such coverage on behalf of the victim.

6. Establish local cooperation projects in the regions

Measure 23 in the Action Plan stipulates that, in collaboration with the regional

Resource Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS), local projects will be established based on the lessons learned from the Drammen project. However, responsibility for this measure was transferred to IMDi in 2010, the final year of the Action Plan period. A model for the transfer of experience and expertise was developed by IMDi. The main elements of this strategy included a multi-step course for municipalities comprising both inspirational lectures and training modules held in close collaboration with Bufdir and RVTS. The underlying goal was to raise the level of professional competence and cooperation among the agencies involved.

During the project period, the municipalities of Stavanger, Kristiansand, Skien and Trondheim have been granted funding for the development of local cooperation projects.

THE GOAL AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT – A READER'S GUIDE

It has been a complex task to carry out the assignments as minority counsellors and integration counsellors. No two work situations have been alike. The basis for the counsellors' positions has varied, both in schools and at the embassies. IMDi's counsellors in the field have therefore taken different approaches to their work. For reasons of space, we are unfortunately unable to collate and present all the work that has been done in the last four years.

We have chosen to summarise some topics that illustrate important lessons learned during the project period. To show the range of the work of the counsellors and the voluntary organisations,

we will present the topics in depth by describing selected experiences from cases, methods and projects. We will also present a few discipline areas, problems and connections that have proven to be especially important during the project period. The material in the report is based on continuous case reporting, R&D projects and internal professional development groups.

In order to achieve the best possible practice-based approach, we have chosen to structure the report on the basis of five key findings and experience from the project period, and not on the basis of the above-mentioned measures that formed the basis for the assignment in 2008.¹¹ A heading and part of the report has been devoted to each of these findings. Each part comprises several articles.

The intention is that it should be possible to read the articles both separately and as independent units. It is our intention that readers should be able to select and find articles that discuss topics, cases, ideas and examples that are relevant to their own work. To make it as easy as possible for readers to find the texts they wish to read, each part also has a separate table of contents and colour code.

The target group for this collection of articles primarily consists of professional practitioners, especially employees in the school sector and embassy personnel, as they are our closest partners. However, we also believe that the contents can be useful for the child welfare service, the police, school nurses, family counselling services, the voluntary sector and other employees of first-line services.

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE REPORT

The next article in the **Introduction part** is *Figures and trends during the project period*. It is based on statistics from IMDi's work to combat

forced marriage. The article starts with the number of cases and registration categories and describes the breakdown of cases by gender, age, country of origin and issues. There is also a *List of terms*, aimed at ensuring that the reader understands how we define the terms we use.

The rest of the report looks behind the figures and categories. By describing qualitative experience from the work, light is shed on key issues, and we gain a more in-depth understanding of factors in forced marriage cases and related discipline areas.

IMDi's remit has been to prevent forced marriages and honour-related violence and help victims and those at risk. The statistics show that the minority counsellors' cases involve many other related problems, control and violence in the family in particular. The Expert Team also emphasises that virtually all the cases they have been involved in have contained elements of violence and/or threats. In **Part 1, More than just forced marriage**, we focus in particular on the minority counsellors' work in relation to these cases.

Work on combating forced marriage traditionally focuses on girls, since they top the support agencies' case statistics. Experience shows, however, that boys are also subjected to control, honour-related violence and forced marriages. Cases also show that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons can be particularly at risk because of their sexual orientation. This is also the case for people with mental disabilities. **Part 2, Not just girls**, discusses these issues. The material presented in this part is based on reporting from minority counsellors, integration counsellors, the Expert Team and voluntary organisations.

Cases have transnational elements. Decision makers in the family, persons with power and the appointed spouses are often spread over several continents. What happens in the country of origin has consequences for immigrant families in Norway, and vice versa. One important lesson is that, in order to combat forced marriage, the work cannot focus on Norway alone – it is also important to look beyond Norway's borders. In **Part 3, Across national borders**, we dwell on

¹¹ For a more detailed review of the organisational and structural framework for IMDi's measures, see Steen-Johnsen, Lidén and Five Aarset, reports 2009, 2010 and 2011, the Institute of Social Research (ISF) (the latter is still under preparation). ISF has been responsible for carrying out a continuous evaluation of the work on the Action Plan measures.

this issue. The problems highlighted here are largely based on the experience of the integration counsellors and, in part, the Expert Team.


The voices of parents have largely been lacking in public efforts to combat forced marriage. Understanding has grown in recent years, however. In **Part 4, Parents as a target group**, we examine the work targeting parents during the project period. This part of the report is based in particular on the work of the minority counsellors and voluntary organisations.

Complex challenges require complex solutions. In **Part 5, Cooperation and coordinated efforts**, we discuss how cooperation across agencies leads to a strengthened outreach response – both in cases that involve actual instances of forced marriage and in cases that concern related problems.

The report ends with a concluding part, **Conclusion**. In the article *Concluding reflections and recommendations*, we briefly summarise important goals that have been attained and some main points. We also make some recommendations and include some ideas about further work. This part also includes a *List of resources* containing proposals for further studies in the field. The material on the list can be used as a tool or background information in teaching, dialogue or group contexts.

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Figures and trends during the project period

'Complex and very different stories lie behind the figures, and the outcomes vary greatly'

Since the start of the project in 2008, the minority and integration counsellors and the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage have submitted four reports per year about their work on individual cases. The main purpose of the reporting has been to find out the extent to which the services are used and what problems they concern. The reporting has provided an overview of how many new cases they have worked on each quarter, what the cases concerned, the gender, age and country of origin of those involved, who first reported the case, and which support agencies have been involved. The figures have been reported to the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and published on imdi.no. In this article, we summarise developments during the project period, from the last six months of 2008 up to and including the last six months of 2011, i.e. a period of three years.¹² Statistics for some variables were not obtained until 2009 and 2010.

Limitations

The reporting has been limited to *new cases* each quarter. This means that the issues the cases have been registered under are the issues that applied when an enquiry was first defined as a case. How a case develops over time – it can prove to be less serious than first assumed, or more serious matters can be uncovered over time, and a case can also alternate between being urgent and less urgent – is not covered by these statistics. Experience also shows that it can be difficult to tell when a case is concluded. It can re-emerge after some time, perhaps several times over a period of several years. Some cases are only worked on for short periods, while others require close follow-up, perhaps over a prolonged period. In other words, this is a field in which it is difficult to use precise categories and statistics, but overall reporting can give an indication of some selected variables over a given period.

For protection of privacy reasons, the reporting has been at an aggregated level, and it has not

been possible to link the different variables. It has therefore not been possible to carry out detailed analyses of what characterises cases from, for example, the same group of countries, or to analyse what characterises cases that concern a special problem or issue.

Categories for the registration of cases

IMDi's remit has been to work on the prevention of forced marriage and other honour-related violence. The minority counsellors in the schools have experienced in particular that they have been contacted by pupils from minority backgrounds seeking guidance or help with a broad spectrum of challenges. They include everything from problems relating to dropping-out, career guidance and social and/or financial problems to family violence etc.¹³ It was necessary to limit the registration of cases to a few selected categories that reflected the remit under the Action Plan against Forced Marriage. The following definition of a 'case' was given:

If the counsellor takes active action in relation to persons who contact him/her, or who are in other ways identified by the school/ embassy/ Expert Team, about one of the following problems:

- ▶ Forced marriages
- ▶ Fear of forced marriage
- ▶ Left behind abroad
- ▶ Fear of being left behind abroad
- ▶ Threats and violence
- ▶ Extreme control

(Some counsellors have also been contacted about female genital mutilation or fear of it. Such enquiries are registered as 'other' as they are not part of our remit.)

An active action is defined as advice, guidance and/or other forms of follow-up, and it can take place once (e.g. in a conversation with the counsellor) or extend over a prolonged period. Reg-

¹² The article is written before the figures for the last half-year 2011 were available.

¹³ The breadth of the minority counsellors' experience from work in schools is discussed in more detail in Part 1 in the article *Can educational pressure from parents be linked to extreme control and forced marriage?*

istering a case where a conversation with a counsellor is the only active action taken has been important in relation to gaining an impression of the scope of cases of this type and the extent to which the services are known and used.

The categories provide a simplified picture of reality, and the figures must be read with this in mind. The cases often contain several elements, and the categories do not fully reflect this complexity. For example, the Expert Team has reported that most of the cases they deal with contain elements of threats and violence. It can also be unclear what the different categories mean: for example, the dividing line between extreme control and threats/violence may be unclear. To avoid cases being registered twice, it has only been possible to report one category per case, i.e. the problem that was considered most important at the time the case was reported.

How a case is defined will necessarily be subjective. The individual counsellor must assess which category the case falls under. This means that it will vary who decides that the control the young person is subjected to is extreme: is it the young person him/herself or the case officer? The same applies to cases registered as 'fear of either forced marriage or being left behind abroad. In some cases, it is the fear of the person at risk that results in the case being followed up and registered, while, in other cases, it can be the fear of a friend, teacher or case officer.

The table below shows how the cases received by the minority counsellors, integration counsellors and the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage break down by problem area. Some of the cases registered by the counsellors are also registered by the Expert Team, since the latter provides guidance to the first-line services. The minority and integration counsellors also make use of the team. Some cases also end up with integration counsellors via the Expert Team.

The number of enquiries to the minority and integration counsellors

The table below shows cases broken down by category per year and which problems the minority and integration counsellors have reported. A total of 1,178 cases have been reported since the start-up of the project:

CATEGORY	2008*	2009		2010			2011 - first half-year			TOTAL	
	Total	IC	MC	Total	IC	MC	Total	IC	MC		Total
Forced marriages	14	10	15	25	11	12	23	13	1	14	76
Fear of forced marriage	63	27	102	129	21	71	92	4	48	52	336
Left behind abroad	-	24	15	39	38	10	48	25	3	28	115
Fear of being left behind abroad	-	14	30	44	1	28	29	8	6	14	87
Threats/violence	-	7	63	70	4	63	67	0	30	30	167
Extreme control	-	5	117	122	0	110	110	0	51	51	283
Other**	96	7	2	9	1	3	4	3	2	5	114
Total	173	94	344	438	76	297	373	53	141	194	1,178

* The project started in June 2008 and the figures are for the period from June to December 2008. Other categories were used.

** From 2009 to 2011, 'Other' concerns actual instances of and fear of female genital mutilation.

The number of enquires received by the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage

The Expert Team was established in November 2004, since when it has registered a total of 1,636 cases.

The table below shows the number of cases (1,099) during the action plan period, broken down by category:

CATEGORY	2008	2009	2010	2011 - first half-year	TOTAL
Forced marriages	50	46	73	32	201
Fear of forced marriage	91	73	114	55	333
Left behind abroad	10*	17	36	32	95
Fear of being left behind abroad	-	26	45	11	82
Threats/violence	44	77	78	45	244
Extreme control	18	19	10	4	51
Other*	35	18	22	18	93
Total	248	276	378	197	1,099

* No distinction was made between 'fear of being left behind abroad' and 'left behind abroad' in 2008.

** The category 'Other' concerns female genital mutilation, marriages of convenience, bigamy etc.

Assistance with repatriation for victims or people at risk abroad

There are limits to what the Norwegian authorities can do for persons staying abroad who ask for help, even if the person concerned is a Norwegian citizen. In some cases, however, foreign service missions can provide practical assistance for victims who are abroad. In the integration counsellors' experience, it is particularly difficult to help people under the age of 18 to return to Norway, because they are still under their parents' (in many countries, just under the father's) care and control. Helping people to return to Norway may involve a big security risk, both for the person returning home and for those helping them. In cases where people have been helped to return home, the help has almost always been provided by people in the country where the girl or the boy is staying.

During the project period, the foreign service missions with integration counsellors have helped 30 persons to return home.

The refund scheme for the repatriation of victims of forced marriage

In 2010, the Expert Team was assigned responsibility for administering the refund scheme in connection with the repatriation of victims of forced marriage. If the conditions are met, foreign service missions can apply to IMDi, represented by the Expert Team, for coverage of expenses on behalf of the victim. Financial support for repatriation can only be granted when it is not possible for the young person to pay for a return ticket him/herself.

In all, five persons have received financial support to return home since January 2010, in cooperation with foreign service missions and integration counsellors.

Whether the services are used

Minority and integration counsellors:

A total of 1,178 cases have been registered by IMDi's counsellors in the three years since start-up. On average, the integration counsellors have registered 23% of these cases, i.e. slightly more

than a quarter of all cases were registered through the foreign service missions. That is a substantial proportion. Almost 300 persons have either applied for assistance themselves or been identified by the integration counsellors in other ways. The minority counsellors at schools have also had a steady flow of new cases, but with some periodic variations. On average, the minority counsellors have registered a total of approximately 300 cases a year that fall under the categories defined above. In addition, the minority counsellors have handled a large number of cases that they have dealt with by virtue of their being an integration resource in schools, as discussed above.



The services meet a need – many have sought and received help to deal with challenges that have proven to be very complex.

In the media, the figures have resulted in headlines such as *Number of forced marriages increasing* and *Increase in honour-related violence*.¹⁴ This is misleading, firstly because the cases concern a wide range of problems where fear of forced marriage or actual instances of forced marriage account for a relatively small percentage. Secondly, the services and the reporting are new, so that the fact that such cases are now being uncovered does not mean that there are more such cases now than in the past. However, the figures clearly bear witness to the fact that the services meet a need: many people have sought and received help to deal with challenges that have proven to be highly complex. In this way, we have increased our knowledge and become better equipped to meet these challenges.

¹⁴ Headline in a news item on NRK Norge: <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/norge/1.6990078>



The Expert Team knows of several cases in which the victim has contacted the first-line services for help, but where the case officer has not believed his/her story because it sounded too extreme to be true.

The Expert Team:

If we look at the figures broken down by year, we see a steady increase in the number of cases handled by the Expert Team. In the first three years (November 2004 to 2007), the team registered a total of 537 cases, i.e. 179 cases a year on average. In 2008, 248 cases were registered, while 279 cases were registered in 2009. Since 2010, the number of cases per year has been almost 400, slightly more than a doubling of the number of cases registered per year since the start of the Action Plan period. In the section *Who initiates contact?* (below), it is stated that about one third of all the Expert Team's cases come via the integration and minority counsellors. This can explain part of the increase, but not all of it. We cannot say for certain what the rest of the increase is due to. Explanations based on the assumption that the problem is increasing in general are problematic, as there are no data to support this view. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that the explanation is a combination of two factors that both have to do with greater visibility. Firstly, the Expert Team has become better known and thereby more used by the first-line services. Secondly, employees in the first-line services are now more familiar with the problem than in the past (as a result of various competence-raising measures), and therefore seek advice and guidance instead of categorising the cases as 'ordinary cases of violence'¹⁵ or rejecting the cases because they do not understand how serious they are. The Expert Team knows of several cases in which the victim has

¹⁵ Honour-related violence is also family violence, but it often follows a very different track from what is perceived as domestic violence in a Norwegian context. This is discussed in more detail in the article *Forced marriage in a violence and human rights perspective* in Part 1.

contacted the first-line services for help, but where the case officer has not believed his/her story because it sounded too extreme to be true.

Which problems are received by the different services?

The tables above show how the cases break down by problem area. They show that the cases raised with the minority counsellors, integration counsellors and Expert Team, respectively, differ somewhat in type. Some of the cases reported by the counsellors and the Expert Team overlap, as the Expert Team is an advisory service that the counsellors also use to a great extent. Some cases are also forwarded to the integration counsellors by the Expert Team.

Forced marriages – fewest cases via schools

The category 'forced marriages' accounts for 6.5% of all cases received by the counsellors. Broken down by foreign service missions and schools, respectively, however, we see that actual instances of forced marriage account for 15% of the integration counsellors' cases and only 3.6% of the minority counsellors' cases.

The Expert Team has reported that 18% of the cases it dealt with concerned actual instances of forced marriage.

Fear of forced marriage – a large proportion of cases received by all the services:

This problem accounts for a large proportion of the cases received by the integration counsellors (23%), the minority counsellors (28%) and the Expert Team (30%).

Left behind abroad – most cases registered via the foreign service missions

About 10% of all cases raised with the counselling services concern people left behind abroad. This category accounts for 39% of the integration counsellors' cases and 3.6% of the minority counsellors' cases.

People left behind abroad account for 8.6% of the Expert Team's cases.

Fear of being left behind abroad – a relatively small proportion of all cases

Cases that concern fear of being left behind abroad account for 7.4% of all the counsellors' cases. There is little difference between the foreign service missions and the schools in relation to this category. This category accounts for 10% of all the integration counsellors' cases and 8% of the minority counsellors' cases.

As regards the Expert Team, the category accounts for 7.5% of all cases.

Threats and violence – one of five cases received by the minority counsellors and the Expert Team

Of all cases received by the integration and minority counsellors combined, 14% concern threats and violence. By violence is meant physical and psychological violence. Of all the integration counsellors' cases, threats and violence account for only 5%, while this category accounts for 20% of the minority counsellors' cases.

Threats and violence account for 22% of all the Expert Team's cases.

Extreme control – primarily discovered via schools

Of all the counsellors' cases, 24% concerned extreme control. Most of the cases are received by the minority counsellors; as many as 35% of their cases concern extreme control. The integration counsellors have only reported a few such cases, only 2%.

Extreme control accounts for 4.6% of the Expert Team's cases during the project period.



The minority counsellors mainly receive cases where early intervention and prevention is possible.

The services cover different needs

The figures above show that the different services cover different needs. For the most part, the minority counsellors receive cases where early intervention and prevention is possible: cases that concern extreme control, fear of forced marriage and threats/violence. This indicates that a low-threshold service is important in order to identify young people who are experiencing difficulties and/or who fear being married against their will. The service has largely been available at upper secondary schools. If we look at the age distribution in most cases reported to IMDi, we see that the majority of cases involve people between the ages of 16 and 23. This indicates that preventive measures should perhaps be taken even earlier, for instance at primary and lower secondary school level.

The integration counsellor service has identified cases that are often of a very serious nature in which the victim has been sent abroad. This service targets those who are often most vulnerable: Norwegian citizens and persons with legal residence in Norway who are being kept abroad against their will. Some of them have already been married against their will, some fear an imminent marriage, while others are in conflict with their parents for various reasons. Migration means that more Norwegian citizens have transnational family ties – they are in close contact with people in their country of origin and other countries where their relatives and friends live. In practice, this means that, in some cases, there will be a need for assistance outside Norway's borders as well. The integration counsellor service at Norwegian foreign service missions has called attention to the need for help of a group that has few other help alternatives, and it has succeeded in helping a number of individuals who find themselves in a very demanding situation.



The integration counsellor service has identified cases that are often of a very serious nature and in which the victim has been sent abroad.

The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage provides advice and guidance, and implements competence-raising measures in the first-line services. It also administers admission to the national accommodation and support scheme for young people over the age of 18 who are victims of or at risk of forced marriage, and it administers the refund scheme for the repatriation of victims of forced marriage. It also serves as the point of contact for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with repatriation from abroad. The team is also responsible for answering questions about forced marriage on the website ung.no. If we look at the distribution of categories, the Expert Team primarily receives enquiries in cases concerning fear of forced marriage, threats/violence and actual instances of forced marriage. The Expert Team deals with very few cases involving extreme control. This could be because young people have a higher threshold in relation to contacting help services outside school. Instead, they tend to wait until the situation has become more serious. It could also be because the support agencies fail to pick up on the phenomenon of extreme control, or because the phenomenon overlaps with threats/violence in many cases and is thereby reported in that category.

Who do the cases concern – brief information about gender, age and country of origin

The variables gender and age were reported from 2009 onwards. Here, the total for the period from 2009 until the first half-year 2011 are presented to give an indication of the distribution. There have been some variations from one half-year to the next, particularly in relation to how the cases break down by gender. For the

purposes of this report, it is the main tendencies that are most important.

Gender – most cases concern girls

Most cases reported to IMDi concern girls. However, as many as 20% of the cases the minority and integration counsellors have worked on during the period concern boys. The proportion of boys has varied somewhat during the reporting period. In 2009, it was 18%, while, in 2010, it had increased to 22%. As of the first half-year 2011, the proportion of cases concerning boys was 16%. This variation may have had something to do with IMDi increasing its focus on boys in 2010, but it could also be partly coincidental.

The Expert Team has had a somewhat lower proportion of cases concerning boys, 14.7%. However, the variations are greater from year to year. In 2009, the proportion of cases concerning boys was 12%, compared with 18% in 2010. As of the first half-year 2011, the proportion of cases concerning boys has again fallen to 12%,

Age – most young adults aged between 16 and 23

The majority of all cases concern the 16–23 age group. The reporting also distinguishes between persons over and under the age of 18. Of the cases received by the minority and integration counsellors during the period, 46% concern persons under the age of 18, which means that the distribution is relatively even. There have also been some variations from year to year: in 2009, 42% of cases concerned persons under the age of 18, while the proportion was 53% in the first half-year 2011.

The Expert Team has received most enquiries about persons over the age of 18. The proportion was 59% for the period as a whole. The distribution has remained relatively stable every year.

Country of origin – reflects the minority population

Forced marriage and other honour-related violence take place all over the world and in all the big world religions.¹⁶ During the project period, IMDi has not published figures broken down by country of origin, but it has listed which countries are represented with most cases. This is because quantification in this context can lead to a kind of ranking of countries of origin that could be misleading. We note that the number of cases coincides to a large extent with the size of the immigrant groups from different countries. The countries with the most cases are Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, the Palestinian territories, Sri Lanka, Morocco and Chechnya.



Forced marriage and other honour-related violence take place all over the world and in all the big world religions.

Who initiates contact?

Information about how cases ended up with the minority counsellors, integration counsellors or the Expert Team was registered from the second quarter 2010 onwards. The figures show who first initiated contact, so that the case was included in IMDi's reporting. They show that the services reach different groups and thereby function as supplementary services and help to provide a broad spectrum of help.

How cases came to the attention of the minority counsellors:

Based on 332 cases:

- 23% – via a counsellor
- 20.5% – via a contact teacher
- 20% – the person initiated contact him/herself
- 7.8% – via other channels*
- 6.6% – via a teacher
- 5.7% – via the school health service
- 5.7% – via the child welfare service

* Other channels: The minority counsellors' Facebook page, the school principal, the health service at another school etc.

In one of five cases, the pupil contacted a minority counsellor him/herself. More than half (55.8%) of cases went via a member of the school staff. This indicates that school staff see and follow up pupils who are experiencing difficulties. One of the goals of the minority counsellor service is to help to enable school staff to handle cases of this kind themselves. The figures do not show the extent to which the minority counsellors have taken over in cases where further follow-up is required, or whether school staff have been given advice and guidance about how they should do this themselves. This has been an explicit goal in the final phase of the project, however, and, through other reporting, the minority counsellors have reported that the schools are handling more and more cases themselves.

How cases came to the attention of the integration counsellors:

Based on 99 cases:

- 27.3% – the person initiated contact him/herself
- 13% – via the Expert Team
- 9% – via other Norwegian foreign service missions
- 8% – via other channels*
- 7% – via the victim's family
- 7% – via the consular section at a foreign service mission
- 5% – via the victim's friends
- 5% – via a minority counsellor

* Other channels: The police liaison section at foreign service missions, asylum reception centres, lawyers, the victim's personal support contact etc.

In just over a quarter of all the integration counsellors' cases, the victim/person at risk has contacted the foreign service mission him/herself by letter, email, telephone or by going there in person. As regards the support agencies in Norway, we see that very few have contacted an integration counsellor for advice, guidance or follow-up

¹⁶ Wikan, 2003.

so far. This contact is mainly mediated via the Expert Team, although the minority counsellors have initiated contact in a few cases. Other foreign service missions have initiated contact about cases, and some cases are uncovered via the consular section at the foreign service mission where the integration counsellor works. The figures indicate that the presence of counsellors at foreign service missions meets a need and that the service is relatively well known in the Foreign Service. They also indicate, however, that the service could be better advertised among the support agencies in Norway, including in schools.

How cases came to the attention of the Expert Team:

Based on a total of 488 cases:

- 20% – via a minority counsellor
- 11% – via an integration counsellor
- 9.2% – via the police (excluding the Expert Team)
- 8% – via other channels*
- 7.4% – via the UDI (excluding the Expert Team)
- 6% – the person initiated contact him/herself
- 5.5% – via the child welfare service
- 5.5% – via a women's shelter
- 5.5% – via voluntary organisations
- 5% – via the victim's friends
- 4.5% – via others at a school (including contact teachers, counsellors, teachers, the health service)

* Other channels: the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the District Psychiatric Centres, lawyers, the refugee service, reception centres, the Ullevål team, outreach services etc.

One out of five enquiries to the Expert Team during the period has come from a minority counsellor, and around one out of ten from an integration counsellor. In total, the counsellors account for almost a third of all enquiries received by the Expert Team. The police, child welfare service and the UDI account for 22% of all enquiries during the period. Women's shelters, voluntary organisations, schools (excluding minority counsellors) and a number of agencies and bodies included in the 'other channels' category come in addition. Taken together, they

account for almost half (45.5%) of all enquiries. Nevertheless, we see that there is a potential for the service to become even better known in the first-line services.

Conclusion

As already mentioned, the figures presented above are at a general level. The goal has been to obtain information about how the services offered by integration counsellors at foreign service missions, minority counsellors in schools and the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage have been used, and to what extent they have reached the target group for the Action Plan against Forced Marriage. IMDi believes the figures show that the measures have reached the target group. All of the services have reached both victims and helpers in a problem area that, with greater visibility, could lead to more cases being uncovered. This does not necessarily mean that the problem is increasing, on the contrary: it could also mean that some important steps have been taken to eliminate the problem. The fact that more cases are being uncovered and being dealt with by the support services means that the victims know that they can get help and that they are seeking this help.

Complex and very different stories lie behind the figures, and the outcomes vary greatly. Work against forced marriage and other honour-related violence is a process that takes a long time in many cases, and cases can develop in different directions and take unexpected turns. In some cases, a solution that all parties are satisfied with is reached, while others involve much more conflict. The other articles in this report go behind the figures and look more closely at perspectives and connections that the figures alone cannot reveal.

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Æresrelatert vold øker, article in *Utrop* 4 October 2010, <http://www.utrop.no/print/18983>



List of terms

ARRANGED MARRIAGES

Marriages in which the family is involved in finding a suitable partner.

DIASPORA

Term for religious and national groups living outside their mother country or historical cultural area.

EXTREME CONTROL

Systematic social control that violates the individual's fundamental right to self-determination and freedom of movement (in relation to age and maturity). Control is exercised through the use of violence or threats of violence.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

LEFT BEHIND

Children who are left behind abroad against their will by their parents or care persons. Also referred to as 'abandoned', or, alternatively, 'forcibly relocated'.

INDIVIDUALISM

A value system that stresses freedom of the individual more than the common good.

COLLECTIVISM

A value system that stresses the common good more than freedom of the individual.

MIGRATION

Movement of people, or immigration and emigration.

The term is normally used to describe migration between, and not within, states.

PATRIARCHAL FAMILY STRUCTURE

Families in which the father or father's father is normally at the top of the hierarchy and the remaining men are ranked by age. The women are ranked after the men, also by age. The daughters in the family are at the bottom of the internal social hierarchy.

RELIGIOUS/ UNREGISTERED MARRIAGES

Illegal marriage agreements that are neither registered with the authorities in Norway nor in the country of origin. Legally, the parties are not married, neither pursuant to the legislation of the country of origin nor pursuant to Norwegian law. In practice, however, within the family the parties are considered to be 'married'. Many of these 'marriages' are entered into in a religious ceremony before the person has reached the minimum marriageable age.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The influence that society, groups or individuals exercise on individuals by various means. Social control can be informal or formal, direct or indirect.

TRANSNATIONALISM

The maintenance of familial, social, political, cultural or financial bonds across national borders.

FORCED MARRIAGE

That at least one of the spouses has no real possibility of choosing to remain unmarried, choosing to break an engagement or a marriage that he/she has entered into, or of choosing a different partner contrary to the family's wishes without being subject to reprisals.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Violence where the offender and victim are related to each other through close family ties or are in other ways important to each other in their everyday lives.

HONOUR-RELATED VIOLENCE

Violence triggered by the family's need to protect or restore its honour, standing and respect.

HONOUR CODE

Rules for maintaining and restoring honour (values, standing and respect) in the eyes of others.



More than just forced marriage

'Young people's problems are about more than just forced marriage. They are also about an authoritarian upbringing and different forms of control and violence.'

- Introduction: More than just forced marriage
- Forced marriage in a violence and human rights perspective
- Urgent cases – when life and health are at risk
- Early intervention is important – before the conflict comes to a head
- Flexible identity – the challenges and possibilities of several cultures
- Girls groups – 'a lot more than just talking'
- Learning about forced marriage and the right to make one's own choices. Experience from schools
- Can educational pressure from parents be linked to extreme control and forced marriage?
- Decide for myself? – Autonomy in relation to choice of partner among Norwegian minority youth



Introduction:

More than just forced marriage

'Our remit is to work against honour-related violence – but there are many hungry children out there...'

Quote from a minority counsellor

The minority counselling scheme in upper secondary schools is among the most extensive measures in the Action Plan.¹ Since June 2008, between 25 and 30 minority counsellors have served at selected upper secondary schools in eight counties.² The purpose of the measure has been to prevent forced marriage by improving knowledge about this topic and related problems in schools.³

The minority counsellors' work has focused on both individuals and the system. Raising the competence of employees and ensuring support for the work in the school organisation play an important part.⁴ At the same time, the minority counsellors have also given advice and guidance in individual cases where pupils have been victims of forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence. They have also organised preventive measures and other activities targeting pupils. In this way, they have established close contact with the young people and gained good insight into their situation.

Young people's problems are about more than just forced marriage. They are also about an authoritarian upbringing and different forms of control

and violence. Some of the cases the minority counsellors deal with concern young people with social problems that *could* be related to forced marriage.

In this part of the report, we wish to highlight the broad range of challenges that have been encountered. We wish to share what we have learned about the concrete experiences of young people and present some perspectives on and approaches to the work against forced marriage that have proven to be expedient in relation to reaching those who need guidance, advice or help.⁵

Extreme control and other forms of violence

With reference to both the work on individual cases and other types of contact with pupils, the minority counsellors report that 'forced marriage' can be a misleading term, because the challenges these young people face are about so much more.

Since the focus has been on prevention, most cases have concerned fear of forced marriage, fear of being left behind abroad, threats, violence and extreme control.⁶ Only a few cases involved actual instances of forced marriage. The term 'work against forced marriage' may therefore be too narrow a description of the complex challenges that minority counsellors have had to deal with and what these young people are actually struggling most with. This particularly applies to different forms and degrees of social control.

Together with 'fear of forced marriage', 'extreme control' is the problem category that young people most frequently contact minority counsellors about. This is a type of social control and violence that is exercised in some families and communities in order to ensure that family members act in accordance with the norms of the family/community. Young people talk about different forms and degrees of psychological and physical vio-

1 The minority counsellors account for a large proportion of the allocations for work on the Action Plan.

2 Oslo: Bjørnholt up. sec. school, Etterstad up. sec. school, Hellerud up. sec. school, Holtet up. sec. school, Manglerud up. sec. school, Oslo handelsgymnasium, Sandaker up. sec. school, Sofienberg up. sec. school, Sogn up. sec. school, Stovner up. sec. school, Ulsrud up. sec. school, Rommen school. Akershus: Rud up. sec. school, Lillestrøm up. sec. school, Lørenskog up. sec. school. Østfold: Greåker up. sec. school and the educational and psychological counselling service for upper secondary education, Nedre Glomma branch. Rogaland: Bergeland up. sec. school and the Karriereporten career guidance centre. Hordaland: Årstad up. sec. school, Bergen Katedralskole, Gimle school. Sør-Trøndelag: Thora Storm up. sec. school (formerly Gerhard Schønings school), Tiller up. sec. school. Vest-Agder: Kvadraturen Skolesenter, Tangen up. sec. school. Buskerud: Åssiden up. sec. school, Drammen up. sec. school. IMDi has continually assessed whether the measures are working as intended and whether resources are being utilised in the best possible way. In consultation with school owners and school managers, minority counsellors have been transferred on the basis of actual needs and possibilities. Some minority counsellors also cover lower secondary schools, while others focus on the system itself in order to test effective means of reaching the target group.

3 Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008–2011.

4 For a more thorough description of the remit, see the article *IMDi mobilises against forced marriage* in the Introduction.

5 The articles in this part of the report are primarily based on the minority counsellors' experience of work in schools targeting pupils.

6 For more information about the minority counsellors' cases, see the article *Figures and trends* in the Introduction.



lence that they have been subjected to because they have crossed the line in relation to what the family considers to be decent behaviour, or because there are rumours that they have. Extreme control means that the young person is or could be subjected to violence. Some cases involve serious abuse and physical violence. In the most extreme cases, young people are sent abroad and/or forced to marry.

Not just honour

The violence is often based on the ideal of maintaining or restoring honour, particularly as regards safeguarding girls' sexuality and virginity. The control and violence is thus often 'related to honour and standing'. The stories that the young people tell, however, contain examples of many different forms and manifestations of violence. We will discuss this in more detail in the article *Forced marriage in a violence and human rights perspective*. It describes and defines violence as a phenomenon and concept, and we discuss experience from the project that indicates that the violence that young people are subjected to is not just based on culture and tradition. Among other things, reference is made to the fact that violence can be related to factors such as migration, integration, finances and mental health. It can be about agreements entered into with the extended family in connection with migration, inherited debt and obligations, difficulties in adapting to society at large and loss of status.⁷

Important to intervene at an early stage

The minority counsellors' experience from schools is that most of the cases are identified and gradually come to light via other problems. At the same time, we have seen that cases vary in nature and how they progress. A case can prove to be less serious than initially assumed. It can develop and become more serious over time. It

⁷ From the article *Forced marriage in a violence and human rights perspective*, which follows this introduction.

can also alternate between being urgent and less urgent. Some cases only involve the minority counsellors for a short time, while others take longer and are more time-consuming. In some cases, the young people themselves fail to realise how serious their own situation is.

Since June 2008, the minority counsellors have given advice and guidance or other types of follow-up in cases where *the young person is a victim of or fears forced marriage, or has been left behind abroad or fears being left behind, or is subjected to extreme control or violence/threats*.⁸ The minority counsellors have also dealt with a large number of other cases by virtue of being an integration resource in schools.

The nature and seriousness of the violence and control have a bearing on what school staff and others should do. In the article *Urgent cases – when life and health are at risk*, we describe some of IMDi's experience and recommendations in cases that trigger a duty to notify the child welfare service and the police. In the article *Early intervention is important*, we share our experience of how to uncover extreme control, and we discuss in more detail how minority counsellors have endeavoured to become involved in cases at an early stage and thereby been able to prevent the conflict from developing further. This is about prevention both before and during a conflict.

The right to make one's own choices

Forced marriage is about not having or only having a limited possibility of making one's own choices. The same is true of extreme control. Own choices can be met with sanctions and punishment, and various reprisals can be taken. That is why the minority counsellors' preventive work has, in different ways, been about the right

to make one's own choices – and about how to balance this right against the demand that one conform to the family's norms and expectations. Through various preventive measures and projects, the minority counsellors' goal has been to strengthen the ability of the individual to assert his/her own opinions and rights and to cope with his/her multicultural identity.

In the article *Flexible identity – the challenges and possibilities of several cultures*, we discuss in more detail how young people feel that they have a foot in several different cultures and therefore experience conflicting pressure and expectations: 'Parents and family may think that young people should act and make choices on the basis of the values of their culture of origin, while friends and teachers expect them to act on the basis of the norms of society at large. This can be about everything from codes of politeness and education to matters like careers and marriage. We therefore say that young people may experience a conflict of loyalty – and are not able or willing to choose one alternative over the other.'

Based on a similar point of departure, other minority counsellors have gathered girls to discuss the right to make one's own choices and other related topics. The article *Girls groups – 'a lot more than just talking'* presents experience from the work with girls groups. Several pupils have reported feeling more self-confident and that the girls group is important because it helps them to sort through their thoughts and feelings.

Retten til å ta egne valg ('The right to make one's own choices' – in Norwegian only) is also the name of a guide targeting upper secondary school teachers. The guide contains tips and ideas for how the topic of forced marriage can be included in tuition and linked to the learning outcome goals at different levels, and it shows how the issue can be linked to subject matter on the pupils' curriculum in subjects such as social studies and Norwegian. The article *Learning about forced marriage and the right to make one's own choices. Experience from schools* presents positive results: 'By imparting knowledge about forced marriage to upper secondary pupils, we are contributing to

⁸ The cases are reported under the problem category that was most prominent at the time the young person first made contact. Read more about the categories and reporting in the article *Figures and trends* in the Introduction.

raising young people's awareness about their own rights and about the help that is available.'

Truancy and dropping-out⁹

Conversations with pupils about truancy and/or poor grades have been a way of reaching those with problems. Via these topics, it has been possible to build trust and contact that has proven important if pupils are to talk about problems at home – in cases where this has been relevant. This approach to the work shows that the reactions of pupils who are subjected to extreme control and other problems related to forced marriage can include reduced concentration, fatigue, depression and difficulties paying attention in class. Some, especially boys, can react with noisy and disruptive behaviour. Truancy and poor performance *may* be caused by a difficult situation in the home. These are some of the topics discussed in the article *Can educational pressure from parents be linked to extreme control and forced marriage?*

Living conditions and equality

Knowledge is important in relation to uncovering and preventing extreme control and forced marriage. We know that it is about honour. At the same time, we see that it is also about something more. The project *Levekår, familiepraksis og likestilling blant unge med ulik grad av innflytelse over valg av egen ektefelle* ('Living conditions, family practices and gender equality among young people with varying degrees of influence over the choice of their own spouse' – in Norwegian only)¹⁰ analyses the importance of education, labour market participation, parents' education and labour market participation, religiousness,

gender and country of origin. The researchers also touch on potential correlations between lack of influence over choice of spouse and labour market participation in different life stages, attitudes to gender equality, division of housework, relationship to the extended family, mental and physical health, psychosomatic complaints etc. Important findings from the survey are summarised in the article *Decide for myself? – Autonomy in relation to choice of partner among Norwegian minority youth*. It increases our knowledge about the potential causes and consequences of having little or no influence on the choice of one's spouse and gives us a clearer profile of the target group for the work against forced marriage.

Eight articles

The minority counsellor scheme has shown that a low-threshold counselling service is needed in schools. A broad approach and an open door has lowered the threshold in relation to seeking advice and help. It has been possible to 'see' the individual – to ask and listen in ways that have helped many to open up and tell their stories.

It is not just about the issue of forced marriage. Families' transnational lives, the income and education level of parents, family practices and gender equality are among the factors that seem to have a bearing. Most cases are complex. They require a holistic understanding and a broader approach without the limitations of a narrow focus on forced marriage.

In this part of the report we will, in eight articles, look more closely at different ways of providing low-threshold services and show the range of problems that the young people have given us an insight into. The first article, *Forced marriage in a violence and human rights perspective*, stands out by ploughing even deeper. It forms the backdrop to the ensuing articles and is a scholarly article that relates IMDi's experience to research-based knowledge about violence. It provides a good theoretical basis for reading the next seven articles, which all deal with the more practical aspects of the work. Here, we will share our

9 NIFU STEP's report 13/2009, *Sluttere, slitere og sertifiserte. Bortvalg, gjenmonføring og kompetanseoppnåelse blant minoritetsspråklige ungdommer i videregående opplæring* ('Drop-outs, strugglers and those who take qualification. Dropping-out, completion and competence attainment among minority language-speaking youth in upper secondary schools' – in Norwegian only) is a survey of the reasons why minority language-speaking youth drop out that proposes measures to prevent this. The report is the result of an R&D project commissioned by IMDi in connection with the work on the *Action Plan against Forced Marriage*.

10 Project conducted by the Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research on assignment for IMDi. The report will be published in autumn 2011.

experience of how school employees and others who come into direct contact with young people can raise young people's awareness of their own rights and enable them to take the difficult step of talking about the situation at home.

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**Forced marriage in a
violence and human
rights perspective**

In 2009, a monthly guidance and lecture series was established for minority counsellors in the Eastern Region in cooperation with the Regional Centre – Violence, Trauma and Suicide Prevention – Region East (RVTS-East). The collaboration was based on a similar model in the Southern Region. Through this initiative, the importance of linking the work against forced marriage and honour-related violence to work with children who live with violence in the family was highlighted. This article is based on experience and perspectives that emerged in this forum.

First, we would like to specify that this article does not discuss groups of people or whole communities. We are talking about certain families.

Children and young people living with family violence

During the project period, the minority and integration counsellors and the Expert Team have come into contact with young people who report that they have been or are being subjected to violence and neglect. The violence and neglect is carried out by care persons, family members or other people they are closely related to. The stories are many and diverse, but several cases of serious violence have been uncovered during the project period.

Control and honour

In many cases, the abuse is related to an authoritarian, patriarchal and violent style of upbringing, referred to in the project as 'extreme control'. As already discussed, a connection has long been pointed out between this form of upbringing and the ideal of maintaining or restoring honour, especially as regards preserving girls' virginity and virtue. The control and violence is thereby often 'related to honour and standing' – it is linked to culture and tradition.¹¹ It is important not to underestimate the cultural and contextual aspects of the violence in such cases.

This means that, in order to identify signs of violence and provide good help, it is important to know something about the world view, norms and values that underlie the problem.

Violence is not just honour-related

However, it is equally important to know something about how the individual concerned sees the situation and the family that he/she lives with. Experience from the project indicates that such violence is not just 'honour-related' – it is not just based on culture and tradition. Violence can also be related to factors such as migration, integration, finances, mental health and miscommunication. It can be about agreements entered into with the extended family in connection with migration, inherited debt and obligations, difficulties in adapting to society at large and loss of status. Concerns about Norwegian society having a bad influence on the children are also not uncommon. Parents and children can speak different languages, both literally and metaphorically speaking. Several different mechanisms are often operating at the same time. It is therefore also important to map migration and integration problems as a possible backdrop to an escalating conflict in the family.

No matter how we examine the concepts and causes involved, whether sociocultural, structural or both, it is a fact that some children and young people, also in families from ethnic minorities, live with violence and abuse in their domestic situation. We have to do something about this, and we must be very careful not to deny the seriousness of the situation by explaining it away on grounds of cultural relativism. The symptoms and signals of living with extreme control or sexual abuse are often the same. The damage can be just as extensive. In the following, we provide some pointers as to why and how a violence and human rights perspective can enhance the work against forced marriage.

¹¹ See Wikan 2008 for a more detailed description of the concept of honour.

Violence against children on the local and global agenda

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Norway has ratified, states that states are obliged to 'protect the child from physical or mental abuse, neglect or exploitation by parents or any other person who has the care of the child.'¹² All forms of violence against children are now prohibited in Norway. Focus on this social problem has increased in recent years. The establishment of Children's Houses has highlighted the need for greater provision for emergencies. Save the Children Norway put the topic of caring for children who are struggling on the agenda through its two-year campaign 'Please disturb', and UNICEF did the same through its campaign 'You can be the one'. The Ombudsman for Children in Norway has appointed a special expert and advisory group for the Government. It comprises children and young people who have been victims of violence.

FACTS

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 19: 'The state shall protect the child from physical or mental abuse, neglect or exploitation by parents or any other person who has the care of the child.'

Article 27: The child is entitled to a standard of living which is adequate in all areas.'

Article 37: No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'

Violence against children in the family and the local community is attracting more attention, also at the international level. The UN reports that violence against children is a global epidemic that affects children in all countries and cultures, and

that is found in all social classes.¹³ The conclusion is clear: children experience violence as equally painful, humiliating and denigrating regardless of the cultural context in which the violence takes place. On this basis, the UN has established a separate 'ombudsman': 'Special Representative on Violence against Children'. Resolution 1325 on the protection of women and girls in war was adopted as a result of the many armed conflicts in the world in which women and children are systematically and brutally subjected to violence and torture. Norway has a special action plan for work on this resolution.¹⁴ Many aid and knowledge-based organisations have put violence against children and young people on the agenda in recent years. The global campaign 'Girls Not Brides' focuses on child marriages.¹⁵ Save the Children International has implemented the biggest ever global initiative for children's right to safety and protection – the Child Protection Initiative (CPI). The goal is to give the children of the world better protection against violence and abuse by 2015.

“*Children experience violence as equally painful, humiliating and denigrating, regardless of the cultural context of the violence.*”

What is violence?

Per Isdal (2000) defines violence as any action directed against another person that, by injuring,

¹³ See the UN's *World Report on Violence against Children 2006*. The report describes how one or more forms of violence against children are legal, socially acceptable and normal practice in several parts of the world. Violence against children takes place in schools, in the local community, in the legal and judicial system, in care facilities such as orphanages, and in the home. The study also shows that much of the violence is hidden, not least within the family. It is pointed out that violence against children is under-reported and that the consequences of the violence are greatly underestimated.

¹⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006: *The Norwegian Government's Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council*

Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

¹⁵ <http://girlsnotbrides.org/>

¹² The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 2003.

inflicting pain on, frightening or denigrating this person, makes him/her do something against his/her will or stop doing something he/she wants to do. The mechanisms of violence are power and powerlessness.

It is common to distinguish between different types of violence. *Physical violence* comprises actions that injure or inflict pain directly. They involve everything from restraining or slapping someone to the use of weapons, torture and murder. *Psychological violence* works by frightening, humiliating or controlling people. This category covers actions such as verbal abuse, extensive control over other people's movements, and direct and indirect threats. *Material violence* comprises smashing objects, hitting a wall or table, throwing food etc. *Verbal violence* can be described as the use of brutal 'power language', yelling, verbal abuse, threats or derogatory statements. *Structural and social violence* is about different forms of social exclusion, isolation, the spreading of rumours and stigmatisation. *Sexual violence* covers rape, but also other offensive or demeaning sexual acts. These forms of violence are often not clearly distinct from and can merge into each other (Van der Weele & Jørgensen 2009; Hammerlin 2004).

” *Violence is any action directed against another person that, by injuring, inflicting pain on, frightening or denigrating this person, makes him/her do something against his/her will or stop doing something he/she wants to do.*
Per Isdal

Extreme control and forced marriage are also violence

Young people who contact the support agencies that work against forced marriage report systematic corporal discipline and punishment, strict sanctions and limited freedom of movement. They

report violence during their childhood and youth. Their stories are about being subjected to physical punishment, systematic verbal insults, being made a scapegoat, locked in or denied food and drink. Some also describe being present when parents or siblings are subjected to violence. Some are forced to participate in punishing other family members. Many young people are not allowed to participate in leisure activities and have parents who regularly check their mobile phones and limit their use of the internet. Others describe siblings or other people in the community making sure that they do not do anything they are not supposed to. Some are subjected to sexual abuse by people they have a close relationship with, either a boyfriend or a family member. Some report having been threatened or pressured into getting engaged or married, others have been engaged or married off against their will. These stories contain examples of many different forms of violence.

Forced marriage, honour-related violence and related problems are thus by definition violence. Boys and girls are pressured into obeying. The most extreme consequence is when they are forced to marry against their will – by the use of physical, psychological, verbal, social and/or material means. One consequence of a forced marriage can be repeated rape, which is sexual violence. Understanding 'extreme control' and forced marriage as a form of violence and a violation of fundamental human rights is thus in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and key definitions of violence. Since this involves violence within the framework of the family, 'extreme control' and forced marriage are also regarded as family violence.

Violence as part of children's upbringing

To put it simply, children's upbringing is the way in which care persons prepare children to function in the society in which they grow up. Through their upbringing, children learn the basic skills that they are expected to master, and how they should behave in interaction with other people. It is normal to distinguish between different types of upbringing. Two of these categories are authoritarian and authoritative parenting. The

authoritative approach to parenting is based on explanation and reasoning about accepted behaviour. The authoritarian approach is based on threats and physical punishment, where parents use external means of coercion to get the child to conform with the rules of the home, community and family. In practice, however, the socialisation process often combines different styles and degrees of control.¹⁶

Violence in children's upbringing is the use of psychological or physical discipline with the intention of teaching the child accepted behaviour. It is often about something the parents want a child to do or something they want it to stop doing. One example of psychological discipline is verbal scolding. Other examples are exclusion, ignoring the child, derogatory remarks and threats. Physical discipline can include time-outs, slapping, pulling the child's hair and hitting the child with one's hand or an object.

To distinguish between violence in the upbringing context and other forms of child abuse, a distinction can be drawn between *instrumental* and *impulsive* violence. Instrumental violence is carried out in a controlled manner and is intended to serve a specific purpose. Impulsive violence is spontaneous, uncontrolled and triggered by strong feelings such as anger, frustration and aggression. However, this is an artificial distinction, since instrumental violence can also have impulsive aspects and escalate into abuse. The term 'parental violence' is therefore problematic, as it does not distinguish between intention and instinctive reaction. Not all the violence children experience in the family is related to their upbringing (Van der Weele, Ansar & Castro 2011). The term can also be criticised for legitimising violence that takes place for upbringing purposes, and for adopting a distanced parental, adult perspective.

Sociologist Yngve Hammerlin (2004) writes about the 'totalitarian family', which is characterised by extensive control activities and discipline. The analysis is seen from a child's perspective. It takes as its starting point what it feels like to

grow up in a family where someone uses power and violence to ensure dominance, while others are passive abettors. He does not distinguish between being a victim of or a witness to violence, but argues that these are two sides of the same coin. His view is supported by much recent research on the harm caused by violence and neglect during childhood.¹⁷ On this basis, it is natural to understand extreme control and strict obedience requirements as family regimes under which children's integrity is violated – regardless of whether the violence is impulsive or intentional. The important thing is to identify markers and signs that someone is living in an 'authoritarian' or 'totalitarian' family.

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All violence has a context. This context affects the nature of the violence, its consequences and what help the people involved need

Judith Van der Weele and Harald Jørgensen

Violence in a cultural perspective

There has been much debate about the connection between culture and violence in recent years. Do immigrant parents use more violence in the upbringing of their children? Can it be said that 'family tragedies' in which ethnic Norwegian men kill their wives, and sometimes their children and themselves as well, are also based on a loss of honour? Bredal (2007) writes about the polarisation between 'cultural minority violence' and 'individual majority violence'. She refers to the widespread understanding that violence between partners is understood as normal/general violence, while violence against teenage daughters and sisters in minority groups is seen as something different, and thus something special. The terms 'domestic violence' and 'men's violence against women' are thus regarded as synonymous with violence against partners,

¹⁶ See Lynggard (ed.) 2010 for a discussion of parenting styles and the concept of social control.

¹⁷ See Moe, V., Slinning, K. & Bergum Hansen, M. (ed.), 2010, for an in-depth discussion of the psychology of infants and small children and the effect of neglect.

without this being specified. She also points out that the media often describe the violence of the majority population as individual manifestations of feelings or illness. Culture is rarely mentioned as an explanation. When violence in minority families is discussed, on the other hand, culture is frequently used as an explanation.

All violence has a context. This context affects the nature of the violence, its consequences and what help the people involved need (Van der Weele & Jørgensen 2009). Societies and cultures around the world attribute different weight to key values. There is great variation in norms for communication, politeness, the exercising of power, development goals, and expectations of children's development. Society's requirements shape children's upbringing and orientation through the way in which families are organised, and through care and upbringing practices.

The values *individualism/collectivism* are often highlighted to exemplify fundamentally different ways of thinking and of organising life. *Individualism* is characterised by individual considerations being given priority over group considerations. Independence and autonomy are highly valued. *Collectivism* is characterised by group considerations taking priority over individual considerations. Or rather, group considerations are understood as being the same as individual considerations. Mutual dependence and community are seen as key ideals.

The values individualism and collectivism can describe variations in how family life is organised.¹⁸ The *nuclear family* is typical of individualistically oriented societies and the *extended family* is typical of collectivist-minded societies. The family unit in nuclear families typically consists of parents and children. In extended families, the family unit consists of an extended circle: parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and, in many cases, other relatives and the whole village, clan or local community.

18 See Salole and Van der Weele 2010 for a more thorough explanation of how values such as individualism and collectivism shape children's development and upbringing practices.

In a discussion of cultural differences in family violence, psychologists Van der Weele and Jørgensen (2009) categorise violence that arises in families where the dominant value is individualism as 'violence in a nuclear family context'. They call violence that arises in collectivist-minded families 'violence in an extended family context'. The term largely overlaps with 'honour-related violence', but the meaning is somewhat wider. Roughly speaking, what separates violence in extended families from violence in nuclear families is:

- ▶ Multiple perpetrators
- ▶ The perpetrators can be in another country
- ▶ Legitimised to a greater extent by the group

These characteristics are worth discussing. Among other things, it can be discussed whether 'violence in a nuclear family context' also involves multiple perpetrators and is legitimised by the group. The term 'passive abettor', for example, is used in cases where a care person fails to help his/her child when he/she knows that it is being subjected to violence and abuse. Is this not also a form of collective legitimisation and an example of multiple perpetrators? Violence in extended families can also be based on jealousy and individual motives, where the group certainly does not legitimise the actions.¹⁹ We must therefore be careful of schematising and polarising the issue.

Nevertheless, the categories and terms mentioned here are useful as a backdrop and working hypotheses to understand some of the variation in the manifestations and consequences of violence. We need to problematise what happens if we use the same strategies in relation to parents who are 'too present' in their children's lives, as we do in relation to those who are 'too distant' (Bredal 2009).

Violence in a migration perspective

Migration can involve strong and stressful experiences of sorrow and loss. The encounter with a society that is based on different principles than

19 See Ølnes 2009 for an in-depth discussion of individual motivation for honour killings in Turkey.



the migrants are used to comes in addition. People who have grown up in a society that views corporal punishment of children as normal, accepted, expected and not harmful are confronted with the fact that, in Norway, this is defined as child abuse and prohibited by law (Neumayer, Meyer and Sveaass 2008). Several of the countries that top IMDi's forced marriage statistics practise corporal punishment of children, for example in school. Oppression and violence against women are also widespread. Experience from the project period also indicates that there may be connections between war and conflicts in the country of origin and forced marriage cases in Norway. This does not mean that everyone from these countries subjects their children to violence, but it does mean that many who grew up in cultures where this is normal practice, have their own experience of such discipline techniques – both in the upbringing context and in other contexts.

Many struggle with psychological reactions to the migration process, some are traumatised by war and flight. They have left their network behind, and the family unit is more vulnerable. Not understanding the language and fundamental cultural codes is a handicap. It takes time to build new networks, understand the frames of reference and create a sense of belonging in the new country. At the same time, they must maintain the relationship with those they have left behind: they have a responsibility to share what they have with the extended family in the home country, which often lives under worse conditions.

Moreover, it is common for family members to experience a loss or change of status when they migrate. Perhaps they had a reputation or an important occupation where they came from, while in Norway they can only get low-status jobs. Perhaps they had a certain standing because of their gender or extended family, which means less here in Norway, where factors such as education and career are more important. Perhaps the mother in the family gains more power by virtue of having a stronger position in society. Nor is it uncommon, unfortunately, to experience racism and discrimination when you both

look and sound differently from the rest of society.

For parents who were raised with a completely different set of values, much of what they are exposed to through the media and in society can seem strange and threatening. If you grew up in a society where boys and girls had to have separate arenas, events such as school trips can seem wrong. Many do not have their presumptions and prejudices explained or corrected. One common consequence is that migrants become protective of their original culture and become more convinced of its superiority. Many parents also live in hope and believe that they will return to their home country. The need to pass on their own culture of origin to their children is thereby cemented and strengthened. Some recent research points out that it is the migration and diaspora situation in the new home country that increases the risk of control and honour-related violence, rather than the original culture itself (Forsberg 2005; Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Maynard 2003).

Intercultural communication about difficult subjects

- Building relations and an indirect non-confrontational style is especially important when talking about taboo topics across cultures.
- For example, use words such as 'one', and not 'you', or 'someone I know'.
- Through practice you will eventually be able to recognise indirect and non-verbal messages communicated by a conversation partner by means of body language and behaviour
- For many people who belong to cultures where collectivism is a key value, actions speak louder than words. Helping out by making a phone call, coming along to a meeting, writing a letter etc. is important in relation to building trust and a relationship.
- Take the whole family into account, even if you are only talking to one person. For example, ask: 'what would your sister/brother do in this situation?'

Consequences for practice

All the factors outlined above do something to the family's inner life. Research shows that mental health problems and poor socio-economic conditions are related to increased use of violence in the family (Mossige and Dyb 2009). Care persons who have been victims of violence and abuse themselves are more likely to be insensitive and, at worst, also violent towards their children.²⁰ The factors pointed out here are therefore important indicators of risk and protection. They are areas that should be studied when working with children who are at risk of or are victims of violence and when developing effective preventive measures.

When studying violence in a cultural and migration perspective, we must be aware of several things. What we regard as violence in one cultural setting is not necessarily perceived as such in another culture. For example, the criteria for being a good son or father in a collectivist-minded society can entail following the women in the family around to protect them against potential dangers and threats. In an individualistically oriented society, however, the same type of behaviour will be regarded as oppressive and controlling. This does *not* mean that one should not intervene if a girl feels that she is being kept under surveillance. It does, however, mean that the hypothesis that the family's intention is to demonstrate care and protection can be helpful in the work.

Certain types of violence can be perceived as more abusive by some people than by others. Interpretation and perception have to do with whether you are collectivist-minded, individualistic or religiously oriented. When young people report something that can be interpreted as insignificant from an individualistic or non-religious perspective, we must be aware of these contextual differences. Rumours of inappropriate behaviour and threats of exclusion can be just as harmful as physical violence for some people. Psychological and verbal violence can be just as humiliating as being physically hit.

If parents are traumatised, their 'state of alert' is activated at all times. The body thinks it is in danger and is stressed. In psychological terms, this has to do with a low tolerance for stress, black-and-white thinking and increased physical activation. The more traumatised a person is, the higher the risk of impulsive and spontaneous (over)reaction to trivial matters. In such contexts, violence will not necessarily have any intention or purpose. Similarly, care persons who are struggling with psychological reactions to migration, worries about the family or the home country, financial problems, sleep problems, adapting to a new country and new roles, will be more prone to impulsive and violent reactions.

The sense of loyalty and community is also strengthened by crossing national borders – when their network disappears, those travelling together become each other's most important source of support. Expectations and obligations can be strengthened. Many young people say that they fear what will happen to their siblings if they break with their family. Will those left behind have to pay the price of a stricter control regime? Young people report long and disturbing inner conflicts based on all of these mechanisms. As a result, many wait for a long time before seeking help or breaking out of difficult and dangerous family relationships.

What are the symptoms of the young people the minority counsellors meet?

The most important reason for viewing forced marriage and related topics from a violence perspective is that it is meaningful in relation to young people's symptoms, reactions and behavioural patterns. The minority counsellors report that the problems they see and have described to them include apathy and inability to act, sleep disorders, intense anxiety, problems concentrating, dropping out and poor school performance. Many also have mental health problems such as self-harm, suicidal thoughts, depression and anxiety. The counsellors also report strong ambivalence among the young people who come to see them. One day they ask for urgent help, but, at the next meeting, they say that everything has been sorted out. Some say that they are terrified,

²⁰ See also Mossige and Stefansen 2007 for a more detailed description of causal connections and the occurrence of violence during childhood.

and then do things that make them more vulnerable to reprisals. Sometimes the young person just stops coming to meetings for a period and cannot be reached. Many also describe thoughts and logic that do not correspond to objective reality. Another consistent experience is that establishing trust takes time and requires presence. The real reason why young people seek counselling, advice and help often does not emerge until some time has passed and a relationship has been established.

The psychology of violence

In recent years, we have learned more about the psychological, physical, cognitive and behavioural effects of children living with violence in the family. In the following, we will show how the symptoms described above are characteristic of children who are victims of domestic violence, regardless of their ethnic and cultural background.

What do children and young people who are subjected to violence need?

- the violence to stop
- the silence to be broken
- to know that they and their immediate family are safe if the silence is broken
- validation of their experience
- to be told that it was not their fault
- to have an opportunity to review their traumas and feeling of powerlessness in safe surroundings
- to stop using destructive ways of coping with the violence
- to learn that violence is unacceptable
- to learn that there are alternatives to violence.

Barn som lever med vold i familien. ('Children who live with violence in the family' – in Norwegian only).

Expert report 3 (2005). Alternative to Violence (ATV) and the Center for Crisis Psychology

Many children who are victims of violence do not understand that this is not something everyone experiences. They do not have a language

they can use to describe the violence, and they underestimate the extent to which acts committed against them are illegal (Cater 2010). This phenomenon is illustrated by some of the young people who the minority counsellors have talked to who do not identify with terms such as 'forced marriage' or 'parental violence' at all: they have never thought that what they are experiencing can be described in these terms.

Victims of domestic violence also find it difficult to turn in and break off relations with the perpetrator because of ambivalent feelings. Abused children are reluctant to say anything due to loyalty, threats or guilt. They both love and fear the person who is hurting them. At the same time, they are also dependent on the perpetrator(s) of violence for protection and help to meet their basic needs, while being painfully aware of the danger. To many, this is an impossible dilemma. The majority of the minority youth who seek help from IMDi's counsellors have also been brought up to put the family's needs above their own: loyalty and obedience are instilled in them from birth. Their feelings of ambivalence are therefore reinforced.

Violence and neglect means that the body and brain's stress system is continuously activated. Recent neurobiological research has shown that overactivation of the stress system in infants and toddlers has an inhibiting effect on the healthy development of the brain (Hart 2011). Functions such as memory and concentration are disturbed, since the organism uses all its energy to 'scan' the surroundings for danger. Disruptive behaviour at school, problems concentrating and poorer grades can therefore be typical expressions of a brain that is 'constantly on the alert'.

Sleep problems are widespread among victims of violence – it is difficult to sleep while reliving traumatic experiences. Children and young people are typically on the defensive at night, in a state of alert for violence against themselves or family members. However, some children use other strategies to deal with the feeling of being overwhelmed – for example by underactivation, numbness and silence. They try to blend in with their surroundings and attract as little attention as possible. Anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders and

depression are widespread among children and young people subjected to violence.

It is often said that children subjected to violence become 'relationally disturbed', since the people who are supposed to protect them and make them feel safe also harm them. They are met with abuse where they need a refuge. Their attachment system is thus confused and disturbed (Benum 2006). Two common manifestations of disturbed attachment are not trusting anyone (often classified as a 'dismissive' attachment style), or being uncritical, without limits and connecting intensely and quickly to people (classified as an 'anxious' attachment style). Children subjected to violence can also alternate between these forms of expression and several others, thereby displaying what is called a 'disorganised' and insecure attachment style. Insecure attachment also manifests itself as ambivalence and makes establishing trust a time-consuming task.

The ability to regulate emotions and behaviour is also damaged by growing up in a violent home. There are no adults who can serve as a model for or help the child with affect regulation in relation to emotions such as aggression, anger and fear. Children subjected to violence can therefore display sudden mood swings, have problems calming down or increasing their activity level due to a high level of anxiety. Some become apathetic. Others show behavioural impulsiveness. Their assessment of safety and danger can be disturbed. Seemingly safe things can be seen as frightening, or the person can act as if she/he has not understood the seriousness of a situation by exposing her/himself to danger. Social functioning is disturbed by these factors (Mullender, Hague, Imam, Kelly, Malos & Regan 2009).

Guilt and shame are widespread among children who are victims of violence. They ask themselves what it is about them that causes them or those close to them to be subjected to such abuse, and they often blame themselves. Advanced methods to conceal and cover up the violence at home are common. Many are also threatened into silence by the perpetrator(s). This applies both to children in ethnic Norwegian families and to

young people in ethnic minority families. Trust and relations are therefore often important factors in uncovering such violence.

People's thinking is strongly affected by living with violence in the family – and the results may be black-and-white thinking. It is not uncommon for example to develop a limited and oversimplified cognitive style, which is a mechanism used to prevent their unpredictable world from becoming too overwhelming²¹.

Children who live with violence in the family can develop traumas. Traumas do not reflect the magnitude of an incident, but the extent of the effect that the incident had on the person. Traumatized people often appear to function normally. In addition to the symptoms described above, trauma disorders can be identified by flashbacks, overactivation / being 'on guard', possible numbness or a reduced ability to sense danger, and a strong reaction to triggers (Van der Hart, Nijenhuis, Steele & Brown 2006). Traumas, violations and a body that is continuously in a state of alert can also have physical, somatic effects such as joint and muscular pains, asthma, impaired immune system, motor problems, stomach pains and headaches, as well as poor coordination (Kirkengen 2009). In addition to ambivalence and a lack of limits, dissociation and amnesia are expressions of serious trauma in both children and adults.²²

Concluding reflections. Human rights and pragmatism as a guide in this work

Regardless of the context in which violence takes place, whether it involves a nuclear family or an extended family, or the reasons for using violence against one's children – violence is harmful. All forms of violence that children and young people are subjected to must therefore be combated – they must be prevented and uncovered, and the damage must be repaired. Adults

21 See the expert report from the project *Barn som lever med vold i familien* ('Children living with violence in the family') 2009, Alternative to Violence (ATV) and the Center for Crisis Psychology for a more detailed account of children's reactions to violence.

22 See Blindheim 2011 for more about chronically traumatised children.

must dare to ask questions about the causes of behavioural changes, mental health problems, diffuse pain and other non-verbal signals. We must also be prepared to hear painful stories from children and young people who trust us.



What is different, but not harmful, practice? What is different and harmful practice?

The support agencies are facing some difficult ethical and moral dilemmas as a result of migration and cultural differences. Navigating this landscape requires cultural humility and recognition of differences. At the same time, we must navigate using similarities, both human and legal similarities. A human rights perspective and pragmatism have proven to be good guides in this context. It is important to know what compromises you are willing to make as a helper and what you must insist on. You should make these decisions by continuously asking yourself the following questions: *What is different, but not harmful, practice? What is different and harmful practice?*

READING TIPS

Fagbrev, Barn som lever med vold i familien 1-4 ('Expert report, Children who live with violence in the family' – in Norwegian only) Alternative to Violence and the Center for Crisis Psychology (available at the Center for Crisis Psychology's website)

Rapport fra prosjektet familievold og etnisitet 2005-2007 ('Report from the family violence and ethnicity project 2005-2007' – in Norwegian only) Alternative to Violence

Barn som lever med vold i familien. Grunnlag for beskyttelse og hjelp ('Children who live with violence in the family. Basis for protection and help' – in Norwegian only) Unni Heltne and Per Øystein Steinsvåg (eds.)

Barns stemmer om vold. Å tolke og forstå ('Children's voices about violence. To interpret and understand' – in Norwegian only) Maria Eriksson, Åsa Kallstrom Cater, Gunilla Dahlkild-Ohman, Elisabeth Nasman

Se meg nå. Faktakunnskap om vanlige barn med uvanlige livserfaringer ('See me now. Facts about normal children with unusual life experience' – in Norwegian only). Save the Children Norway (free booklet)

See also <http://www.statensbarnehus.no> for information about signs of violence, tips on what to do, and how to communicate with children who are victims of or at risk of violence

The violence and human rights perspective outlined in this article adds weight to the argument that you should not exaggerate or understate the culturalisation of the violence of 'the others'. Instead, we must listen to the stories that young people tell us, and the signs and symptoms they show. Cultural and contextual understanding should be used as a means to clarifying the background, communicating and finding solutions – but never as an explanation or excuse that trivialises or exaggerates.

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Urgent cases
– when life and health are
at risk

During the action plan period from June 2008 to June 2011, IMDi's counsellors have given advice, guidance or other forms of follow-up to young people who

- ▶ are victims of or who fear forced marriage
- ▶ have been left behind abroad or fear being left behind
- ▶ are subjected to extreme control, threats and violence.

The cases have concerned different forms of control, violence and coercion, and the seriousness and progress of cases have varied greatly.

Some of the cases have developed over time. The minority counsellor may have had many conversations with the pupil about problems that are of a less serious nature before the level of conflict and threat in the family gradually or suddenly escalated. In other cases, the young person has kept his/her problems to him/herself and not talked to anyone before the situation has become acute and critical.

In several cases, the threat situation has been so serious that it has been necessary to consider special safety measures to safeguard the person's life and health. In this article, we will present some of IMDi's experience and recommendations in relation to such urgent cases.

We will start by presenting a very serious forced marriage case in which a minority counsellor played a key role in the process of reporting the case to the child welfare service and the police.

Convicted pursuant to the General Civil Penal Code Section 222

'Mummy's innocent' (girl, 16 years old)²³

²³ Statement made during the court case against her parents. She said this despite the fact that the girl's mother did not help her own daughter when she knew that she was suffering, and turned a blind eye to the abuse that she probably knew had taken place.

FACTS

Pursuant to the provisions of the Norwegian Child Welfare Act, public servants are obliged to notify the child welfare service if they have reason to believe that a child is being abused or subjected to serious neglect, including forced marriage.

This provision is also explicitly included in other legislation, e.g. the Norwegian Education Act. Like everyone else, school staff are obliged to report or prevent certain serious crimes, including forced marriage, cf. the General Civil Penal Code.

The importance of a low-threshold service at schools became particularly clear in spring 2010, when a minority counsellor at an upper secondary school was contacted by a 16-year-old girl. For the past three years, she had been living in a marriage characterised by repeated rape, serious abuse and physical and psychological violence. She had waited as long as possible before asking for help. When she was 13 years old, she had been forced to marry her cousin in an illegal 'wedding ceremony' in Norway with an imam and two witnesses present. The case was reported to the police, and charges were brought against her parents, aunt, uncle and cousin.

An important matter in dispute in the case was whether or not the ceremony that the girl participated in when she was 13 years old was the contracting of marriage. In the prosecutor's argument, it was emphasised that the victim was forced to live with her cousin as a married couple in his parents' apartment and that during this relationship, she was subjected to repeated physical punishment by both her cousin, uncle and aunt. The girl's pleas for help were rejected, and her parents made no attempt to help their daughter out of the situation. In their testimony, her parents denied that she was married and claimed that they had never heard her say that she was beaten, kicked or sexually abused. In the prosecutor's opinion, there was little reason to believe this testimony.

The cousin, who was six years older than the girl, was found guilty of rape and coercion of his cousin over several years, and sentenced to five and a half years' imprisonment. The girl's aunt, father and mother were all sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment. For the mother, two and a half years of the sentence were suspended. In addition, the four had to pay the girl NOK 250,000 in damages for non-economic loss. Charges were also brought against the girl's uncle, who is described as the head of the family and the person who arranged for the marriage to take place, but he was not present during the trial. He is still internationally wanted and is believed to be staying in Iraq.

The judgment was appealed and the case was heard by the court of appeal in August 2011. The cousin's sentence was increased from five and a half years to six years. The mother was acquitted on all counts in the court of appeal, also for turning a blind eye to the abuse her daughter suffered.²⁴



The girl, who is now 18 years old, lives at a secret address. Despite the fact that her aunt, cousin and her own father have been convicted in the case, she lives in constant fear for her life. The police's assessment of the threat level con-

cludes that she is at risk of honour killing. She is still attending upper secondary school, but she has to be cautious. The girl is in a very difficult situation and feels very guilty about her siblings, who were placed in foster homes after the abuse became known. The family as a whole was severely affected.²⁵

FACTS

'The national residential provision scheme' is a service that provides safe accommodation with follow-up for young people over the age of 18 (women, men, couples, single parents with children) for a period, and help and support to move on.

All enquiries about residential provision can be addressed to the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, tel. (+47) 4780950 or e-mail kompetanseteamet@imdi.no

Need for protection – the national residential provision scheme

Not only the case described above, but also many other enquiries concern persons whose situation is so serious that it is necessary to implement special security measures. In some cases, it is necessary to move the person concerned from the family/home environment for safety reasons.

Since 2009, approximately 70 people, mostly women, have received protection under the residential provision scheme. In the Expert Team's experience, many of them have limited ability to manage on their own. The young people often need close follow-up because of mental health problems, but also in relation to coping with the practical aspects of everyday life. In the Expert Team's assessment, the provision of residential accommodation such as emergency shelter homes and family homes modelled on the residential provision offered by the child welfare service could be an alternative, also for persons over the age of 18. Follow-up in a more family-like residential situation can contribute to ensuring the necessary follow-up and training in being independent.

²⁴ <http://lovdata.no/lr/lrb/lb-2011-075341.html>

²⁵ http://mobil.aftenposten.no/a_mob?i=4233154&p=aftenposten

Few reports to the police despite the duty to report

Despite the fact that many of the cases involve violence and criminal offences, experience shows that forced marriage cases are rarely reported to the police. Nor do criminal proceedings appear to be instigated often in cases of this type. It is natural to believe that this is because young people are reluctant to report and/or testify against their own parents or other family members. It will therefore be difficult to secure a conviction, and a court case can both threaten the young person's safety in future and make further contact with the family – which most young people wish to have – impossible.

This is a dilemma for the support agencies. It is a goal that legislation be enforced and those guilty of abuse punished. At the same time, considerations must be given to the situation of the individual victims. It is important that the question of whether to report the case to the police is discussed and assessed in each individual case.

■ ■ CASE

No prosecution despite good evidence

A pupil contacted the minority counsellor at her school because she was worried about her 19-year-old friend who was kept confined in her home by her parents. Her mobile phone and computer had been taken away from her, and she could not leave the house without being accompanied by a family member.

The minority counsellor succeeded in contacting the girl, and a conversation was arranged. She told about prolonged deprivation of liberty, control and violence relating to pressure to marry a cousin.

The minority counsellor was in continuous contact with the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage and the police about the girl's safety and how the case should be dealt with.

The girl ended up reporting her own parents to the police and was brought to safety at a secret address. She later withdrew the complaint and has resumed contact with her parents. No professional agencies have been involved as mediator or

facilitator in the dialogue between the girl and her parents. She did not want to lose them, but wanted to find her way back to them on her own and using her own words. She succeeded. The girl is now married to a man she has chosen herself and whom the parents accept.

When asked what she thought about the girl withdrawing her complaint and her parents not being prosecuted, the minority counsellor said:

'This is a dilemma. On the one hand, the parents should be punished for the crimes they have committed. But the girl had a good relationship with her parents before her cousin entered the picture. And the parents, despite having abused the girl and used violence against her, were in turn being pressured by the girl's uncle, who wanted his son married in Norway. They were clearly experiencing difficult conflicting pressures that may have involved violence and threats from the extended family. The girl feared that a court case against her parents resulting in a conviction and possible prison sentence would have destroyed their relationship forever. She did not want this, neither for herself nor her parents. A lot could be lost by choosing this solution, at the same time as not prosecuting actually entailed a hope of some sort of reconciliation. She chose the latter alternative, and has achieved some of her wishes. Although she will never forget what happened, the family now has a lot of contact.'

The public prosecutor of Hordaland county decided to drop the charges against the two parents who were long charged with deprivation of liberty. Instead, the prosecution was waived, which means that the prosecuting authority does not prefer charges even though it is believed that there is sufficient evidence. 'This is based on an overall assessment. The manner in which the relationship between the parties in the case developed after the incident played a decisive role in our decision', says chief public prosecutor Eirik Stolt-Nilsen in an interview with the newspaper Bergens Tidende on 26 October 2011. ■ ■

Anonymous discussions

The police are responsible for threat assessments in cases of this kind, but the person who first talks to the young person must assess the case in relation to his/her duty to report. An initial assessment must therefore be carried out on the basis of the information that comes to light in conversations with the victim/person at risk.





In individual cases that concern coercion, control and violence, it is the school's responsibility to refer the cases to agencies whose work is based on legislation and that have formal coordination responsibility, i.e. the child welfare service, the police or the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV).

– From the article 'Cooperation, competence and coordination in forced marriage cases' in Part 5.

In IMDi's experience, this is difficult to do alone, so the case should be discussed with the child welfare service or the police before a decision is made to report it. This discussion can take place anonymously, in that only information about the situation and what the person concerned is being subjected to is relayed. The case can also be discussed with the Expert Team.

Such discussions have proven useful in several ways. Firstly, the case will actually be reported to the police if necessary, and no one has to make such a difficult assessment on their own. Secondly, the child welfare service / police / Expert Team will be able to give advice on what information should be obtained in order to enable the case to be better assessed. Thirdly, the child welfare service/police will remember the case if a police report is filed at a later time. This is an advantage, particularly in cases where forced marriage is feared in connection with an imminent trip abroad. In such cases, there is little time, and it is important that the child welfare service and/or the police are familiar with the young person's situation.

In IMDi's experience, an anonymous discussion of a case is useful regardless of how serious it is. By discussing the case, useful advice can be obtained about how the young person can best be taken care of. In a conversation with the child welfare service / the police / the Expert Team, it is possible to present one's own thoughts about measures and follow-up and receive professional

and well-founded expert feedback. One can be assured that one's own assessments are correct and/or receive input about other approaches and about agencies that one should cooperate with.

The agency initiating the discussion is not the only one to benefit from it. Reviews and discussions of cases have proven to contribute to mutual learning and competence-raising for all participants.

Cooperation, competence and procedures

Minority counsellors report that school staff appear to have a high threshold in relation to contacting the child welfare service and/or the police. The impression is that anonymous discussions are used too little, and that pupils subjected to honour-related violence could have been helped and followed up better if the school had referred more cases to and/or cooperated more with other agencies.²⁶

If pupils who have problems relating to extreme control and/or forced marriage are to receive advice or help, it is important that school staff know about honour-related violence and the signs of a possible forced marriage, and that they know what to do. During the project period, the transnational perspective has proven to be important in relation to understanding the situation of the young person and how the family 'works', and in relation to helping (see Part 3 – Across national borders). The minority counsellors at the schools have therefore organised and contributed to competence-raising measures for staff. Such training has also been provided to other schools and bodies in the school district.

IMDi has prepared a proposal for procedures that schools can use in their work against forced marriage.²⁷ The procedure states who should do what, depending on whether the situation is acute or not. It is intended to clarify roles and

²⁶ This is documented and analysed in more detail in the article *We lift each other and become better together* in Part 5.

²⁷ http://www.imdi.no/Documents/BrosjyrerHefterHaandbok/Arbeid_mot_tvangsekteskap_net.pdf. In addition to procedures, the booklet contains a list of signs that may indicate problems relating to forced marriage.

increase staff's expertise in dealing with forced marriage. The fundamental thing is to know what the duty to report, the duty to prevent and the duty of disclosure entail.

The minority counsellors have been active advocates for the implementation of these procedures, which have been presented in connection with the competence-raising efforts for school staff. A large majority of the schools where the minority counsellors have been stationed have now introduced these procedures.

You have to ask the right questions

Procedures and competence are important if school staff and others are to be able to see and help young people who are victims of or at risk of honour-related violence. At the same time, it is IMDi's experience that the conversation with the young person is crucial. Trust in a teacher/counsellor has proven to be an important precondition for young people asking for advice/help.

In connection with the initial contact, the Expert Team recommends that endeavours should be made to gain as much insight as possible into what the young person is worried about. He or she must be allowed to tell his/her story. It is also vital to ask the right questions, so that it is possible to assess the seriousness of the situation and how the support agencies should proceed in order to safeguard the young person's needs and safety.²⁸

The Expert Team recommends prioritising in order to gain the best possible overview of the family and the risk situation:

- ▶ What is the situation?
- ▶ Why has the person contacted the support agencies?
- ▶ Are there real grounds to be frightened?
- ▶ Has he/she been subjected to direct or indirect threats, violence or pressure?

- ▶ Have other family members been pressured to marry?
- ▶ Is there a risk of a trip abroad?
- ▶ Who decides or is in a position to exercise power and make decisions in the family? Does this person live in Norway or abroad?

Mapping method

The extended family can be big and difficult to gain an overview of, both for the young person him/herself and the helper. In the minority counsellors' experience, it can be useful to draw a map of the family members and their network. By writing the names one by one, for example on flip charts, while the young person talks about who each person is, and the role he/she thinks this person plays in relation to violence, control and coercion, it is easier to gain an understanding of the situation. In this way, you can also identify resource persons and become aware of the power situation in the family and of whom the young person can turn to for support. The helper will have more information and be better prepared to follow up the case in a good and appropriate manner.

Conclusion

In this article we have described IMDi's experience of cases where a young person's life or health is at risk. These are cases that involve psychological or physical violence, and there are legal guidelines for how the person should be looked after. School staff and other public services have a statutory duty to report, disclose information and prevent violence.

IMDi's proposal for procedures for schools' work against forced marriage has been adopted by the vast majority of the schools where minority counsellors have been stationed. In addition, the minority counsellors have contributed to strengthening knowledge about families that live transnational lives and think and act in accordance with certain honour norms. The goal has been that a combination of procedures and competence will put schools in a better position to see and help young people who are at risk of being forced to marry.

In the conversation with the victim or person at risk, it is important to ask the right questions, so that it is possible to assess how serious the situation is. Such mapping questions have been proposed in this article, and we have recommended anonymous discussions and cooperation with other agencies, so that the law is enforced and the young person is followed up in the best possible manner.

²⁸ This is also described in *Arbeid mot tvangsekteskap – en veileder* ('Work against forced marriage – a guide' – in Norwegian only), http://www.imdi.no/Documents/BrosjyrerHefter-Haandbok/Arbeid_mot_tvangsekteskap_net.pdf





Early intervention is important

– before the conflict comes to a head

'In terms of values, many feel torn between the family's honour norms and the requirement to conform, on the one hand, and the right to make their own choices, on the other.'

Through their work, the minority counsellors have come into contact with most of the pupils at the schools where they have been stationed. They have introduced themselves to the classes, raised the topic of forced marriage in connection with the teaching of various subjects, organised girls and boys nights, organised film and theatre projects, produced school newspapers together with pupils etc. Information about forced marriage has been distributed in the form of information material and by informing pupils about their rights and what advice/help is available.

The minority counsellors have rarely concentrated on forced marriage alone. Most of them have taken a broad-based outreach approach, and they have seen it as important to find out what is going on among the young people. Informal conversations with pupils in the school corridors, the canteen and in the school playground have been important. Minority counsellors have also seen students in their offices. They have been welcome to talk about what is important to them, not just forced marriage.

This broad approach, combined with the minority counsellors' presence and availability in schools, has contributed to them functioning as a low-threshold counselling service that has made it easier to intervene at an early stage. Many pupils have talked to the minority counsellors about problems at home or conflicts with their parents. It has been possible to see, provide guidance and help while there is still room for prevention and not just crisis management.

Social control

Most of the young people the minority counsellors have helped come from families where girls are brought up under strict rules. There are often many limitations on what they are allowed to do. They have reported many rules about what the family considers decent behaviour. This is largely related to their virtue. Parents are not the only ones looking after them. Brothers, other relatives and people in the family's network can help to check that the girl behaves in accordance with their expectations.



Published by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), IMDi, the Directorate of Health, the National Police Directorate and the Directorate of Immigration in 2011. www.tvangsekteskap.no

In the school context, IMDi's experience is that the control can take different forms: The young person may be kept home from school, or must go straight home from school, and is not allowed to participate in leisure activities or meet friends. She is not allowed to participate in events or trips organised by the school. Her mobile phone is controlled and her computer access is restricted in such a way that her school work suffers.

There are also many examples of strong social control in public places. Examples include how the young person behaves on the bus, underground or at the shopping centre, whether he or she is 'correctly' dressed and does not spend time with the 'wrong friends' etc. The individual is monitored on behalf of the family, and any failure to comply with the norms for 'honourable behaviour' – or rumours to that effect – is reported to the family. In these cases, the minority communities in Norway – and in the home country – often contribute to exercising control by 'everyone spying on everyone'. We have seen several examples of this. In one case, a girl who had walked together with a friend on her way home from school received a phone call from her aunt in Pakistan, who told her in no uncertain terms that this was completely unacceptable. The whole family had been informed, and she had to promise that it would not happen again.

Increased control can be a sign of an imminent forced marriage

A romantic relationship that comes to the family's knowledge, or rumours about a relationship, can trigger strong reactions in the family and result in the control suddenly becoming stricter. In many cases, romantic relationships or rumours to that effect have been the immediate cause of the family reacting with extreme control and violence. Sometimes, the family reacts by forcing the young person to marry. By marrying off their daughter, the shame caused by the romantic relationship can be repaired and the family's honour restored. The family's strategy could be a trip abroad to enter into a marriage.²⁹

The young person often feels that she/he does not have a choice. Objections against the marriage are rejected, and failure to conform to expectations or protests are met with psychological and/or physical violence. Increasing control from parents, brothers or others can thereby be signs of a forthcoming forced marriage.

It is important to identify the 'methods' used by the families to make young people conform. Strictness and clear boundaries are legitimate and legal. This is qualitatively different from extreme control, which is often exerted by means of violence or threats of violence, and is illegal. There is therefore an important distinction between the two terms. But the distinction is not a clear one, and it can be difficult to distinguish between a legal strict upbringing and illegal extreme control. The young person's perception of what is happening must be given great weight when assessing whether we have to do with violence and criminal acts. It is important to talk to the victim/person at risk to find this out.

Many ways – early detection is possible

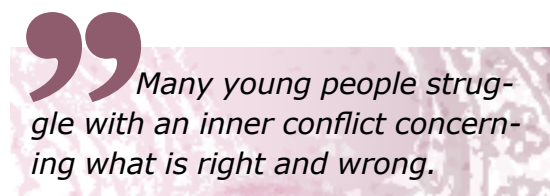
There are several examples of marriages being entered into unannounced in the parents' home country, or of a young person being informed about the marriage plans shortly before departure. In such cases, there is little time, great risk and little room for manoeuvre. These cases are

most often urgent, acute emergency cases, which the police or the child welfare service should have or take over responsibility for.

It is a clear goal to initiate a dialogue with young people at risk of forced marriage at an early stage, before the situation becomes acute and the young person has to be brought to safety immediately. The minority counselling service in schools has shown that it is possible to become involved in cases at an early stage and to prevent a conflict from developing in a negative direction. The minority counsellors have been in a position to prevent further violence. Many pupils have told their stories before the situation becomes desperate.

The minority counsellors' experience from schools is that most of the cases are discovered, and gradually come to light, via other problems. The initial enquiries and worries can be related to completely different factors, such as a high truancy rate, problems with school work, conflicts at school, behavioural changes, health-related problems, problems relating to housing, poor living conditions etc.

The young person may have taken many round-about ways and had several conversations with different representatives of the support agencies before talking about problems relating to control, violence and coercion at home. For young people to be noticed and helped, it is important to be aware of this reluctance and insecurity that is common among many victims/persons at risk.



Many young people struggle with an inner conflict concerning what is right and wrong.

Conflict of loyalty and ambivalence

One of the reasons why many young people are reluctant to ask for help is that they have been raised to keep the family's 'internal affairs' concealed. Telling someone about problems relating to social control or forced marriage can be perceived as telling on the family. For many, this is

²⁹ Read more about this in Part 3, *Across national borders*.

taboo and can be seen as disloyal because it involves criticising the parents' values, actions and way of life. Asking for advice/help because of a difficult family situation is in stark contrast to the respect and obedience most of these young people have been taught to show towards their mother, father and relatives.

Many young people struggle with an inner conflict about what is right and wrong. It can be difficult to reconcile their own needs and rights, on the one hand, with the family's honour, on the other, when these two things are in conflict with one another. Many value the collectivist values in which family and solidarity, honour and shame are important. They are a big part of the young people's own identity and their value system. At the same time, they are familiar with the liberal and individually-oriented values of society at large, and can feel a need to have more control over their own lives. In terms of values, many feel torn between the family's honour norms and the requirement to conform, on the one hand, – and the right to make their own choices, on the other. Asking for help and defying their family is extra difficult because there may be so much at stake. Many young people are reluctant to talk about their experiences, and wait as long as they can.

A typical enquiry often comes on a Friday afternoon. Someone in the family has either found out about a secret romantic relationship or heard rumours. The girl is unsure about what to do and is afraid to go home. At the same time, however, she can feel ambivalent, guilty and ashamed. Seeking help can feel like telling on her own family, and she may fear the consequences. She may be afraid of what will happen when her family finds out that she has gone to the authorities for help, and she may worry about what will happen to her younger siblings. Some envision a frightening situation where they might have to break contact with their family for ever.

■ ■ CASE

Aida had waited as long as possible. In her last year of upper secondary school, just before she turned 18, she finally contacted a social worker at school, who in turn contacted the minority counsellor to ask for help. She told them about her older brother, who beat and controlled her around the clock, and about her parents who allowed this to happen. The violence at home had gone on for many years. She said that the child welfare service had been involved a few years ago, but that they closed the case. Lately, the violence at home had become worse, and the situation had come to a head. Her family had discovered that she had a boyfriend and could not accept this. The day before, the police had been summoned after her father had assaulted her boyfriend in the street. Now, she does not want to go home. The school contacts the child welfare service, and she is offered an emergency place in an institution or an emergency foster home immediately, but she is reluctant. She ends up going home. The child welfare service starts an investigation. Meanwhile, Aida turns 18. The police and the women's shelter are contacted, and she is offered accommodation, but she is still reluctant to break contact with her family. ■ ■

Dealing with the ambivalence of victims/young people at risk is a challenge for the support agencies. In cases where the person involved is over 18 years old, is reluctant or refuses to accept the help offered, there is little the support agencies can do. It is nevertheless important that the helpers make it clear to the young person that he or she has rights, and that help is available.



A need for a low-threshold counselling service

In IMDi's experience, many pupils in the target group, both in lower and upper secondary school, need adults to talk to, and a low-threshold counselling service in connection with schools is needed. The minority counsellors supplement the ordinary counselling service at schools. Follow-up over time in the form of long and difficult conversations requires that resources are set aside for this and that the service is systematic. Many upper secondary schools have a separate department for services for pupils or a social/counsellor team that is responsible for these support functions. It is not uncommon for the school health service and other external partners, including the mental health service, to be linked to such departments/teams.

Many of the problems that young people in this target group struggle with, are related to factors that are outside the school's primary area of responsibility. In many cases, it is important to refer the pupil to agencies outside the school. It is important to be familiar with the available services and to refer the pupil to the agency that can best meet his/her needs. The problems are often complex and require multi-disciplinary and inter-agency cooperation in relation to the pupil. It is the school's responsibility to assess all cases in relation to the duty to report.³⁰

Teachers and counsellors are in a unique position to uncover extreme control and other forms of violence

Teachers are in a particularly good position to uncover honour-related violence. They can keep an eye on their pupils and notice changes that indicate increasing control and they can request a conversation to find out more about how a pupil is doing. Teachers can thereby identify pupils before the control becomes extreme and, if relevant, refer them to the counsellor for further counselling and follow-up.

During the project period, IMDi has stationed counsellors at several lower secondary schools.

Experience from these schools indicates that the service also meets a need among young people in this age group, and that uncovering control when the pupil is of lower secondary school age (between 12 and 15 years old) can make it possible to implement preventive measures. The fact that people are subjected to forced marriage while they are still children indicates that something must be done in relation to the target group and their parents at an early stage.

One of the challenges in connection with extreme control, honour-related violence and forced marriage is that some groups are harder to identify. These pupils often do well at school. They are conscientious, demand little from the adults around them, and are rarely referred to the counselling service. This makes the teachers' role even more important.

The conversation that the teachers are obliged to have with each pupil twice a year is an important way of reaching these pupils. Based on the minority counsellors' stories, it is important to be aware that these pupils are good at hiding things, and that it is therefore necessary to dare to ask more direct questions during conversations. If these conversations also focus on the situation at home and not only academic matters, there is a greater chance of being able to help pupils who do not speak up.

Like the minority counsellors, the schools' ordinary counsellors can create an opportunity for young people to tell their own stories. They are often very difficult to tell. The attitude and practice of waiting until the young people talk about their problems on their own initiative can often mean that the problems are allowed to develop, which could result in the situation becoming very serious. It is therefore important that the counsellor does not remain passive until the young people give voice to their problems, but actively creates arenas that give them an opportunity to communicate that they have a difficult home situation. In part, this is about asking relevant questions, but not least about giving them time and creating opportunities for them to come back.

³⁰ This is discussed in more detail in Part 5

READING TIPS

for how to talk to children and young people who are living under difficult conditions

Det magiske øyeblikket – Hvordan komme i kontakt med ungdom som sliter ('The magical moment – how to come into contact with struggling youth' – in Norwegian only), The Ministry of Children and Equality 2010

Barnesamtalen ('Conversations with children' – in Norwegian only) National library for child welfare and family counselling. Åse Langballe, Norwegian Centre for

Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS). Based on Åse Langballe's and Kari Trøften Gamst's research.

Veileder mot tvangsekteskap. ('Guide on the prevention of forced marriage' – in Norwegian only). The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) and IMDi.

'Se min kjole. Oda i dommeravhør' ('Look at my dress. Oda being questioned by a judge' – in Norwegian only), Kari Trøften Gamst and Åse Langballe, RVTS-East (Resource Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention – Region East) and the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), DVD and manual.

Kan vi snakke med barn om alt? ('Can we talk to children about everything?' – in Norwegian only) Magne Raundalen and Jon-Håkon Schultz, Pedagogisk Forum

How to uncover problems

In the minority counsellors' experience, young people subjected to honour-related violence can react in very different ways. Although most cases are uncovered via other problems, many are not identified in this way. The minority counsellors also report enquiries from pupils who are doing well at school, are conscientious and apparently well-functioning. They display no 'visible signs' that give rise to concern among the school staff. Unless young people raise their own problems, it is difficult for teachers, counsellors and others to realise that they need support, advice or help.

Psychological reactions, changes in behaviour and practical changes are common in persons who are about to marry against their will or who fear this. It is therefore important that school staff pay attention to their pupils. Below is a list of 'signs' that may indicate a possible forced marriage. It is important to emphasise that these signs can indicate completely different

challenges. We have distinguished between signs that children and young people may be struggling with a difficult situation at home and signs that may indicate extreme control and forced marriage. Staff members who observe such signs and signals should talk to the pupil in any case.

Signs of social control and extreme control

- ▶ the pupil is being monitored by older siblings, relatives or certain circles at school
- ▶ someone else in the family controls the pupil's use of money, mobile phone and the internet
- ▶ is not allowed to participate in after-school activities
- ▶ is not allowed to participate in physical education or swimming lessons with boys
- ▶ applications for extended holidays
- ▶ does not return from holiday when school starts
- ▶ is taken out of school by parents/a guardian
- ▶ is not allowed to take further education
- ▶ a romantic relationship (tries to hide a secret romantic relationship)
- ▶ sudden changes in the family
- ▶ siblings who are married off against their will
- ▶ siblings married at a young age.

Signs that children and young people are struggling with a difficult situation at home

- ▶ change in behaviour, e.g. lack of involvement and punctuality
- ▶ difficulties concentrating
- ▶ truancy
- ▶ isolation
- ▶ problems with trust
- ▶ lack of respect for limits
- ▶ has run away from home
- ▶ ambivalence
- ▶ sleep problems
- ▶ lies and manipulation
- ▶ changes in clothing/circle of friends
- ▶ depression
- ▶ anxiety
- ▶ the pupil expresses concerns/worries about upcoming days off
- ▶ pill abuse

- ▶ self-harm and suicide attempts (also among siblings)
- ▶ eating disorders
- ▶ headaches or stomach ache, muscular-skeletal complaints (applications for exemption from physical education lessons, high truancy rate or reports/displays an increase in such problems).

Specific advice and recommendations relating to the conversation with the young person

We would like to share the following advice on how an adult who is going to have a conversation with a young person can prepare and facilitate a good dialogue where the young person feels well looked after:

- ▶ Be prepared for a planned conversation about difficult issues! Find a separate room, find out as much as you can about the young person's situation, and be prepared for all contingencies.
- ▶ Be accessible to the young person, but set limits. Be clear about what you can and cannot do, what you are obliged to do with information in relation to the duty to report and prevent etc.
- ▶ Take notes.
- ▶ Take the time required to build trust and a sense of security.
- ▶ Find something concrete to start off the conversation, e.g. 'you seem so sad these days', or 'about what happened in class today...!'
- ▶ Dare to ask direct questions and dare to listen, but ask as open questions as possible.
- ▶ Be aware of how you word your questions, so that the young person has an opportunity to talk as spontaneously and freely as possible.
- ▶ Remember that the young person is the expert on his/her own situation.
- ▶ Do not change the subject, even if what is said can be painful to listen to.
- ▶ If the young person seems uncomfortable, do not pressure him/her into talking.
- ▶ Make sure that you end the conversation on a positive note.
- ▶ Is the situation acute? Know who to contact in the support agencies!

Tips for mapping the situation and talking to young people:

- What is the situation – why did the person concerned contact the support agencies?
- How old is he/she?
- Is he/she allowed to socialise with both boys and girls? Is he/she allowed to participate in leisure activities?
- What is his/her country of origin? Where in the world does he/she have family?
- How many siblings does he/she have? What are their age and gender?
- Are the young person's movements being monitored by a family member?
- Is there a real reason to be worried – has he/she been subjected to direct or indirect threats, violence or pressure?
- Have other family members been pressured into marrying?
- Who decides or is in a position to exercise power and make decisions in the family? Does this person live in Norway or abroad?
- Has he/she or other family members been subjected to violence? What type of violence? For how long?
- What is the state of health of the person in need of help? What symptoms does he/she display?
- What is his/her citizenship/ residence permit status?
- Is there any risk of a trip abroad?
- Are there other important factors?
- Take the whole family into account, even when you are only talking to one person.
 - Children carry the voices of their parents with them. For instance, ask: 'What would your sisters do in this situation?'
- You can use specially prepared material that can be useful in the conversation, such as
 - *Arbeid mot tvangsekteskap – en veileder* ('Work against forced marriage – a guide' – in Norwegian only)
- If the concern is about fear of forced marriage or of being left behind abroad, please see the recommendations in the article *Procedures and recommendations in connection with fear of travel abroad*.
- It can be a good idea to ask questions in several different ways and to repeat your own interpretation to ensure that you have understood the message of the person talking. One recommended conversation technique is to allow the person who contacted you to speak freely and to note down the points you want to hear more about while he/she is talking.





Flexible identity

– the challenges and possibilities of several cultures

'It is difficult to feel a connection to several places – there is a lot of longing. But there are many good things as well, because you get to experience new things and get to know a lot of different people!'

(FLEXid participant)

Dilemmas and resources in a multicultural upbringing

There are some recurring topics in conversations about and with multicultural youth. For example, it is often said that they have a foot in several different cultures, and therefore experience conflicting pressure and expectations. Parents and family may think that young people should act and make choices on the basis of the values of their culture of origin, while friends and teachers expect them to act on the basis of the norms of society at large. This can be about everything from codes of politeness and education to matters like careers and marriage. We therefore say that young people may experience a conflict of loyalty – and are not able or willing to choose one alternative over the other.

Many experts talk about multicultural youth leading a 'double life' as a result, in which – they wear one mask at home and another outside the home. Others say that young people are very ambivalent and change their views according to who they are with, change their minds and have problems making and committing to a choice. This is often stressed as a negative thing. However, adapting to situations and people is an instinctive coping strategy for those who have grown up with multiple frames of reference. By virtue of having roots in several cultures, these young people have experience, knowledge and skills that are not always accommodated in the Norwegian school system or at home. They often speak several languages, and are observant and have the ability to live comfortably with differences and contrasts. If competent adults guide and help them to become aware of and activate such resources, the challenges of being different can be reduced and the possibilities can be highlighted.

Certification of minority counsellors

Two minority counsellors became interested in how relevant this issue was to many pupils in their school, and became certified in the 'FLEXid' method – and held this course in a girls

group. In their experience, this method works well with young people searching for an identity. They believe that it is a good preventive measure in terms of strengthening young people's self-esteem and raising their awareness of external influences, inner programming and future choices concerning their lives.

What is FLEXid?

FLEXid is a course that targets children and young people who have grown up in a multicultural setting in Norway. The course focuses on identity, skills and challenges. It is an awareness-raising course that is intended to extend over a long period, preferably as long as two years. The method is based, among other things, on the use of a 'motivational conversation', – i.e. asking questions in a sensitive and open way in order to inspire the participants to start a reflection process. The method has a strong resource perspective and aims to encourage young people to see the possibilities rather than the limitations of their situation. The idea is that the topics will trigger processes in participants that need to mature, and that sometimes must be repeated. In addition to short teaching sessions in which the themes and discussion topics are presented, FLEXid uses many practical exercises, role playing, films and music to illustrate its points.



'It's good, it's like it's familiar to me. It's very educational, and I understand more about myself.'

(quote from a FLEXid participant)

Organisation and topics

FLEXid started as a pilot project in 2001. It has since developed into a course consisting of approximately twelve sessions (the course can be adapted to the context, so the number of sessions

can vary). The topics that FLEXid is based on are:

- ▶ Identity and belonging
- ▶ Multicultural resources and bridge-building competence
- ▶ The migration process
- ▶ Prejudice and racism
- ▶ Girls and boys – – roles and expectations
- ▶ Identity and the participant's own story
- ▶ Typically... (a chapter about what characterises societies, cultures, people and generalisations)
- ▶ Language and feelings
- ▶ Me in interaction with others
- ▶ Girls and boys – – ideas, choices and future
- ▶ Dilemmas and choices in a multicultural society.

The goal of the FLEXid project has several levels:

At the *societal level*, the courses aim to be a preventive measure:

- ▶ combating vulnerability to mental health problems
- ▶ combating conflicts at home and in society
- ▶ combating gang formation as a result of inadequate integration and a feeling of rootlessness and of not belonging

At the *individual level*, the courses aim to:

- ▶ raise the individual participant's awareness of his/her own identity, resources, opportunities and choices when facing challenges
- ▶ achieve greater subjectivity, well-being and pride in relation to the participants' origins and multicultural ties
- ▶ achieve individual change in the form of increased understanding and tolerance, both between different minority communities and between the minority communities and the majority, increased self-esteem and proficiency in conflict management
- ▶ make the participants feel secure in their multicultural identity

- ▶ raise awareness of the challenges of being multicultural and impart confidence to deal with them
- ▶ create an understanding of what happens when families move to another country
- ▶ contribute to increased understanding of the parents' situation
- ▶ raise awareness of the possibility of being 'bridge builders' and 'cultural translators'
- ▶ strengthen the participants' self-image and provide the tools and strategies needed to face and deal with everyday life.

Experience from a FLEXid course. Topic: the migration process

A group of eager young women are gathered around a kitchen table somewhere outside Oslo. They are at a FLEXid course, and this is the fourth time they have gathered to share experience and thoughts on growing up multicultural. This morning, the topic on the agenda is 'the migration process'.

Together, the young women represent at least ten nationalities, master more than 20 languages, are of all skin colours and have different religions and beliefs. They all have different mixed cultural backgrounds, and the stories of why and how they came to Norway vary. The atmosphere among the participants is good, and the conversation is characterised by mutual interest and tolerance. Throughout the day, they listen to each others' stories about what they and their parents miss the most from their country of origin. The list is long, and includes friends, family, places, smells, sounds, animals, the climate, food and TV in their mother tongue – – things we need to be happy and feel that we belong. They discuss the different social structures and school systems that they know about, and describe the different feast days their families celebrate. They also talk about their move to Norway and the reactions they and their families experienced when they left, and when establishing a new life.



'You have to jump in and learn how to swim, or you will drown. But once you learn to swim, you will be fine.'

(quote from a FLEXid participant)

Belonging and longing – across generations, across national borders

They also share stories of traditions, politeness practices and principles for communication that they master. Finally, they talk for a while about their thoughts on how they can best embrace their multicultural life and how an open attitude can increase their understanding and help them to put down roots in Norway. Some of them would rather move around and travel more. Some of the girls play music from their home country to the group from their iPhones, others dance. – One girl raps a self-written lyric about being on the outside, but still belonging. During the conversation, several girls exclaim: 'Oh, now I miss my home country!' There are many indications that culture is something that is embodied, and that they carry with them important experience, memories and world views that they have neither the words nor opportunity to reflect on or express in other arenas.

When asked what they think of the course, one participant answers: 'It's good, it's like it's familiar to me. It's very educational, and I understand more about myself.'

Others say that the course has helped them to understand their parents better. It is easier to see their longing and the sacrifice they made by leaving behind the people and places they loved, and to understand their reactions to coming to a country with unfamiliar norms and codes. Instead, they have to build a new life and find new things to take pleasure in – brick by brick. One girl in the group put it well: 'You have to jump in and learn how to swim, or you will drown. But once you learn to swim, you will be fine.' Through encouraging participants

to verbalise the feelings and thoughts that many struggle with, the topics also highlight the young people's dilemmas in relation to their parents. How can the feeling of being torn between expectations and values be described without seeming disrespectful or ungrateful? One participant said: 'I wish my mother could hear what we talked about here.'

Mobility, awareness and tolerance

The minority counsellors stress that the topics also help to raise awareness among people who have not migrated between countries. Those who have moved within Norway or within a city will also recognise the issues discussed. The migration process will also be a relevant topic for those who have changed schools, jobs, partners, lost loved ones or gone through other transitions in life. The issue concerns reactions to being mobile and changing contexts – physically or mentally. And it is about growing up in a home where migration is part of the shared history, whether the young people have migrated themselves, or whether they parents have. The course's main message is about understanding what adaptation requires, while at the same time learning about your own limits, and what aspects of life you do not wish to compromise on. Participants can also learn a lot about other societies and cultures in such group discussions –

- prejudices can be broken down and tolerance of differences can be improved.

READING TIPS

For further information about FLEXid, go to www.flexid.no (website under development) and the booklet *Ungdom med etnisk minoritetsbakgrunn – muligheter og utfordringer*. Erfaringer og refleksjoner fra kurset
FLEXid ('Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds – possibilities and challenges. Experience and reflections from the FLEXid course' – in Norwegian only)(2009). Oslo: Norwegian Centre for Minority Health Research (NAKMI).





Girls groups

'a lot more than just talking'

The minority counsellors' experience from the work with girls groups as a means of preventing forced marriage shows that they have been far more than just a place where the pupils can discuss freely and be given information about various topics. Several pupils have given feedback that the school environment has improved and that they feel more confident. And the minority counsellors are contacted by more pupils, who find it easier to ask for help. At the same time, the work is a two-way process, in which both the minority counsellors and the pupils engage in the mutual exchange of knowledge. The pupils have thereby also given the minority counsellors and school staff insight into young people's thoughts on topics such as generational conflicts, choosing a girlfriend/boyfriend, choice of education, discrimination and mental health.

Information, dialogue and awareness-raising

Girls groups are one of the preventive measures that the minority counsellors have used as part of their work against forced marriage in the upper secondary schools where they have been stationed. The Action Plan against Forced Marriage emphasises a broad-based approach to the topic. It focuses on freedom and independence through education as an important way of preparing children and young people for a life in society, and for resisting pressure or coercion from the family to marry. A common denominator in the work with the girls groups has therefore been to create an arena for dialogue and to contribute to reflection and knowledge about relevant topics, including freedom and coercion. The aim has been to raise awareness in relation to own choices and rights.

How can the target group be reached without stigmatisation?

Despite the fact that the girls groups have a common focus on prevention, they are nevertheless influenced by the different challenges facing the project schools in terms of pupils and the school environment. This concerns both the reason for establishing the groups and the composi-

tion of the groups. In some groups, the girls are recruited on the basis of nationality, while other groups had open recruitment processes. It has been particularly important to have a more open recruitment process at schools with a low proportion of pupils from minority backgrounds in order to not stigmatise entire groups of pupils. Experience also indicates that pupils at these schools are more concerned with being seen as part of the group of pupils in general, and not as part of a minority group. This is also highlighted in the IMDi report *Ungdom med innvandrerbakgrunn. Verdier, normdannelse og livsvalg – en kunnskapsstatus* ('Young people from immigrant backgrounds. Values, formation of norms and life choices – knowledge status' – in Norwegian only) (Aarset, Lidén, Seland 2008), which is based on focus group interviews with young people in upper secondary school.

In order to reach the target group, the minority counsellors have used various strategies, ranging from information meetings to recruitment campaigns in the form of information rounds in classrooms and marketing via posters and the school's intranet. During this process, most minority counsellors have consciously focused on more general topics than forced marriage, such as 'multicultural challenges, choices and rights'.

Cooperation with the schools and interdisciplinary cooperation

The deployment of the minority counsellors at the project schools and their cooperation with the school staff have been important on several levels, primarily in the form of planning work relating to the groups. Their experience indicates that time and place are important factors in creating a structure and framework for the work with the groups. At the same time, cooperation with the school has been important in relation to recruitment. In one of the project schools where the girls groups worked well and they managed to recruit girls from the target group, the minority counsellor recruited the girls via their contact teachers and other counsellors at the school on the basis of the girls having strict home environments and/or having been in contact with the counselling service because of fears

relating to forced marriage. Cooperation with other counsellors, school nurses and social workers has also been important with a view to ensuring that this knowledge is embedded in the schools, which is one of the goals for the project.

Empowerment as a methodical approach

Most of the minority counsellors have used a method inspired by empowerment work to create a good group dynamic and boost the girls' self-confidence. One of the sources of inspiration in this work has been the 'girl talk method', which is a practical educational tool that serves two purposes. As it is described in the handbook, the method is intended to make it easier to establish girls groups as a preventive measure. In addition, the method is intended as a guide to organising girl talk group meetings.³¹ The method most frequently used to inspire the girls to be active participants in the group was a combination of exercises in which the pupils participated either verbally or physically, and information and dialogue in a more or less structured framework. In some of the groups, they also alternate between topic-related activities and physical activity. The girls thereby learn something about their bodies and different ways of moving, which is part of the work of strengthening the girls' self-esteem and self-confidence.

'A forum where we can discuss things we normally don't talk to anyone about'

In the minority counsellors' experience, it is important to establish a feeling of trust and security in the group at an early stage in order to create a good group dynamic. To create an arena in which the girls can speak freely, warm-up exercises, energy charging exercises and introductory exercises were used before any sensitive topics were introduced³². Trips and activities such as spa evenings and make-up courses were also used to allow the girls to get to know each other and to create team spirit and a good environ-

ment in the groups. Lunch was also served in several groups to help to create an informal and pleasant atmosphere.

After the work was concluded, one of the minority counsellors received feedback from one participant who said that 'it is important to have discussion groups, since this was a forum where we can discuss things we normally don't talk to anyone about'. Considering the Action Plan's target group, it is important to create an arena in which these girls can discuss topics that are important to them, both for prevention purposes, and in order to contribute to reflection and dialogue about topics relating to forced marriage.



Forced feelings

We are a girls group at Ulsrud upper secondary school. The ten of us meet once a week to discuss various topics. We have talked a lot about forced marriage, which could happen to someone you know. Some girls and boys are obedient. They accept the person their parents choose for them, because it could damage the family's reputation if they didn't. However, some people love somebody, and would rather lose their parents than live their lives with a person they do not love. Some people can talk to their families. What can you do? First and foremost, you can talk to your parents – maybe they will change their minds. It is also important not to be afraid to contact someone to get help. You could talk to someone you trust – someone at school, an organisation, a friend, a member of your family, or the embassy in the country you are in. Or maybe you can get a summer job, so that you can say 'I can't go, actually, I have finally found a job and have to work many shifts. And I need money!' This might be a simple solution to a complicated problem, but there is help available for those who need it. We recommend that young people learn about forced marriage and what they can do if they or people they know are forced or at risk of being forced to marry.

The girls group at Ulsrud upper secondary school

Aftenposten, Wednesday 5 January 2011

31 For more information, see: <http://www.krad.no/nyhetsarkiv/45-ny-metodebok-om-jentegrupper>).

32 See the reading tips for work with girls groups for more information.

Resource-intensive and time-consuming work

The minority counsellors' experience of the work with girls groups as a preventive measure shows that establishing well-functioning groups is very demanding in terms of both time and resources. In the schools where the groups have worked best, the minority counsellors and their partners have spent a lot of time outside the groups organising the work as much as possible and ensuring continuity in the group by sending out reminders and messages prior to meetings. They have also been available to the girls as resource persons after the meetings. In one of the schools, they also visited the pupils' homes to

talk to the parents about what they were doing in the group. This has led to improved cooperation with parents at the school. Many of the girls in the groups want the girls groups to continue after the minority counsellors conclude their work at the project schools.

Reading tips, films and methods for working with girls groups

Below is a list of selected literature, guidance material, methods and exercises that the minority counsellors have used in their work with girls groups at the project schools.

READING TIPS

Djuliman, E. and Hjorth, L. (2007). *Bygg broer, ikke murer*. Oslo: Humanist Forlag: 97 øvelser i menneskerettigheter, flerkulturell forståelse og konflikthåndtering ('Build bridges, not walls'. Ninety-seven exercises in human rights, multicultural understanding and conflict management' – in Norwegian only). An educational technique based on participation is used throughout this book.

Börjesson, M. (2008). *Mästerverk och mirakel: om att arbeta med tjejgrupp* ('Masterpieces and miracles: working with girls groups' – in Swedish only). Varberg: Argument Förlag

This book adopts a health-promotion perspective, with the focus on the young people's strengths ('wellness factors') and on finding solutions. Tips on exercises and conversation topics.

Börjeson, M. (2010). *Motivation och medkänsla: att samtala med tonåringar* ('Motivation and empathy: talking to teenagers' – in Swedish only). Varberg: Argument Förlag

Frenning, S.M. (2010) *Sisterhood – en håndbok i jentegrupperarbeid* ('Sisterhood – a handbook in working with girls groups' – in Norwegian only). Oslo: The Alcohol and Drug Addiction Service Competence Centre. Sisterhood is a municipal initiative for girls from the Frogner district in Oslo. The method has been used in twelve or thirteen city districts in cooperation with the police, youth club workers, school nurses

and voluntary organisations. The manual contains practical tips, exercises and topics for theme evenings. For more information and to order the handbook: www.rusmiddeletaten.oslo.kommune.no

Fladstad, T. RVTS-South (Resource Centre for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention - Region South) in cooperation with Lyngset Home, I. (2011). *Jenter som stråler. Jentegruppa – om å bygge relasjoner*. ('Happy girls. The girls group – about building relationships' – in Norwegian only). Kristiansand: RVTS-South.

Henriksen, A., Sørensen, R., Thommessen, H. (2009). *Mer jentesnakk – Hvordan og hvorfor jobbe med jenter i gruppe?* ('More girl talk – how to work with girls in groups, and why?' – in Norwegian only). A handbook. 'Girl talk' is a practical educational tool that aims to make it easier to establish and organise girls groups as a preventive measure. The handbook also contains exercises and evaluation forms. Borgestadklinikken offers courses in this method. For more information: www.jentegrupper.no

Selvtillit, selvbylde og relasjoner ('Confidence, self-image and relationships' – in Norwegian only). A booklet for pupil mentors in charge of girls and boys groups. For more information: www.vfb.no



FILMS

'När mörkret faller' ('When darkness falls') (2006):

Film with several parallel stories that all concern individuals who are victims of abuse of power. One of the stories is about a successful politician who is abused by her husband, another story concerns the honour-killing of a 'fallen' daughter in an immigrant family, and a third story is about cynical criminals making death threats.

'Tabuenes andre ansikt' ('The other face of taboos') (2008):

A film about minority women and sexuality. The MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women.

'Valgets kvaler' ('Hard decisions')(2010)

Two short films that can be used to raise the subject of forced marriage, but also to focus on young people's possibility of making their own choices and on the role of parents. OMOD (Organisation against public discrimination).

SELECTED EXERCISES

Below is a selection of exercises that the minority counsellors have used in their work with girls groups. The exercises can be adapted to the topic and the group of pupils in question.

Introduction / warm-up exercise

The pupils interview each other in pairs and introduce each other to the group. They then repeat the exercise by asking questions about 'a place I like to be', 'a person who means a lot to me', 'what I hope will happen in five years', 'three things I'm good at', and 'what I want others to say about me'.

Topic-related exercise

The group leader sets a framework for the group in the form of an overall topic, and gives all the pupils post-it notes to write down a topic they wish to discuss. After a few minutes, the pupils take turns reading what they have written on their notes. The topics are summarised on the spot. A simple list of priorities is then prepared, and the topics are spread over the number of planned group meetings. If something is unclear, the pupils are asked to specify the topic they have chosen.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is used as the basis for discussions about topics such as 'how do we act in a conflict/argument?', 'what is respect to us?', 'choosing a boyfriend/girlfriend', 'girls, gossip and bullying'. The pupils write whether they agree or disagree with various statements in the questionnaire. Examples of statements are: 'It is easier to avoid than to back down from an argument even if I know I am right', 'being powerful is more important than being right', 'I want to decide for myself and be free to choose my own boyfriend'.

Crystal ball exercise

The pupils take turns pretending to look into a crystal ball. They describe how they see themselves and their lives in five or ten years. Everyone starts their story by saying 'in five years, I am...' Their stories should include information about education, family relationships, boyfriends, husbands, children, work, leisure activities etc. Exactly how they envision their lives in five years' time. This opens up for many discussions and questions, and reveals how they see their future selves.

Coat-of-arms exercise (future exercise)

Everyone is given a sheet of paper on which they draw a coat-of-arms split into three parts (the coat-of-arms is a symbol of something you will use to face the future). In one part of the coat-of-arms, the pupils write down at least two things that they are good at and want to face the future with (e.g. being good at taking care of their friends and being positive). In the second part, they write down two things they want to become better at in future (e.g. improving their school work and taking care of themselves). In the third part, they write down two things they think are bad habits they have now and that they want to get rid of (e.g. becoming easily stressed, doing things at the last minute, smoking etc.). This is also a form of awareness-raising and reflection on their values and what they want for themselves as a person in future. They can also be asked how they are going to improve the things they wish to improve, and how they are going to cut out bad habits. Afterwards, the pupils can have some time to think about what they have written before the result is presented or used in a group discussion.

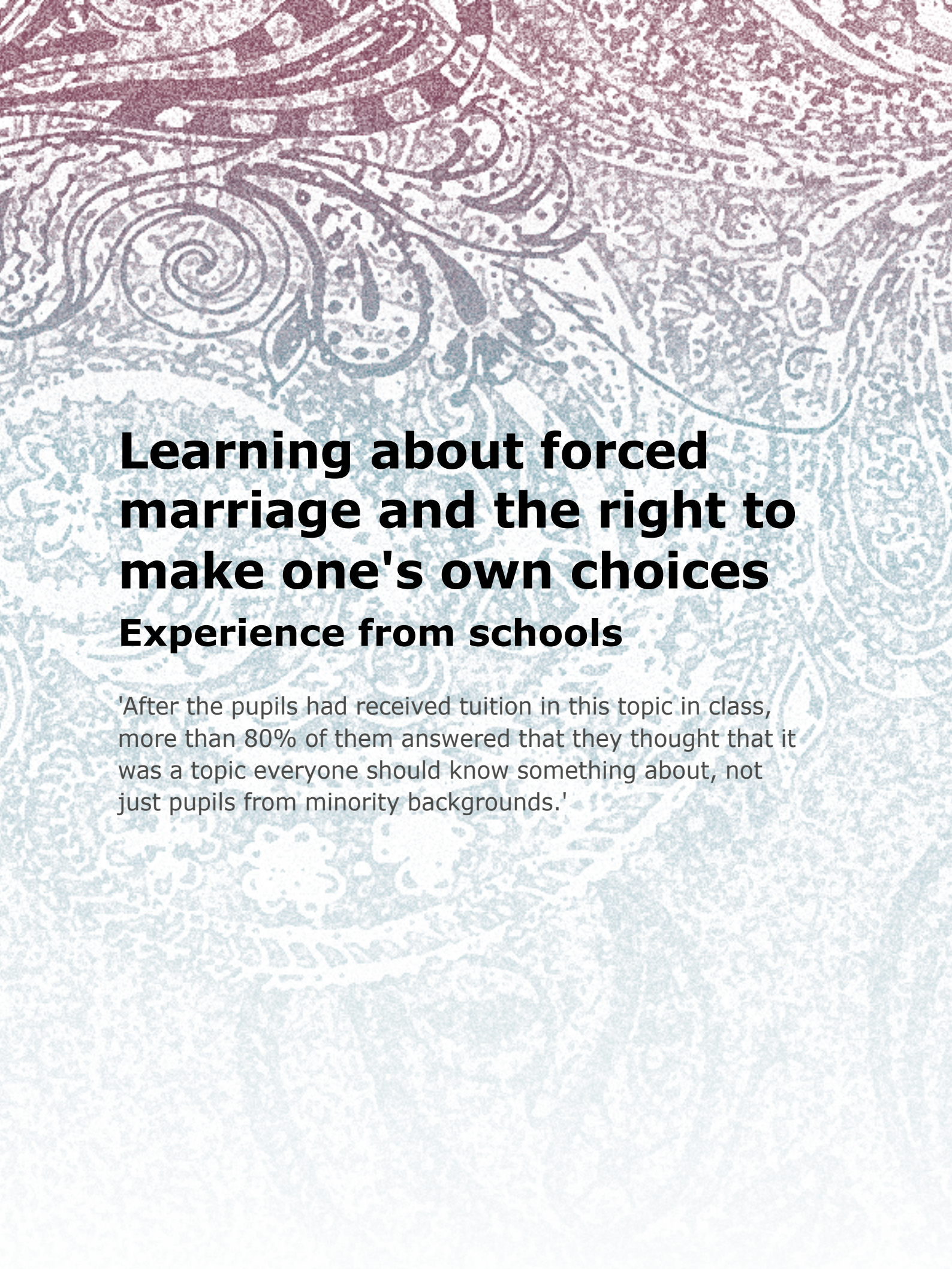
Concluding exercise - hope chest

All the girls have a sheet of paper in front of them with their name at the top. The sheets are passed around, and everyone writes something – at least two words – on everyone else's sheets, e.g. good and kind words, positive feedback, what they wish for the others etc. At the end, everyone gets their own sheet back with many nice things written about them by the others. They keep this sheet as a memory.

Quiz

Various quizzes on UngInfo's website about such topics as 'friendship', 'sex and life together', and 'marriage'. The quiz can be answered on paper or online. It is a good exercise to use as the basis for a group discussion about a specific topic. For more information: www.ung.no





Learning about forced marriage and the right to make one's own choices

Experience from schools

'After the pupils had received tuition in this topic in class, more than 80% of them answered that they thought that it was a topic everyone should know something about, not just pupils from minority backgrounds.'

The topic of forced marriage and the right to make one's own choices has been raised in class at several of the schools where minority counsellors have been stationed during the action plan period. The experience is positive. By imparting knowledge about forced marriage to upper secondary pupils, we are contributing to raising young people's awareness about their own rights and about the help that is available.

Experience from the schools has now been compiled in a separate guide for teachers entitled *Retten til å ta egne valg* ('The right to make one's own choices' – in Norwegian only).³³ This is a collaborative project between IMDi and Ulsrud upper secondary school in Oslo.

Making teaching more relevant

The main aim of raising the right to make one's own choices in classroom situations has been to prevent forced marriage. At the same time, we see that the topic is interesting for both teachers and pupils, because it can be linked to a lot of the subject matter that the students study in subjects such as social studies and Norwegian. Primary and secondary education is intended to prepare children and young people for a life in society based on freedom and independence. In this connection, it is important that the individual pupil acquires an understanding of fundamental human rights, democratic values and gender equality. The work against forced marriage in schools can be linked to this important goal. Experience from the schools that have endeavoured to integrate the issue of forced marriage in teaching indicates that the topic interests pupils and that it can help to make what they learn seem more relevant.

³³ The first edition of the teachers' guide *Retten til å ta egne valg* ('The right to make one's own choices' – in Norwegian only) was published in 2009. This project is a collaboration between Ulsrud upper secondary school, IMDi and Vox, the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning. The new edition, which will be published before the end of 2011, is a revised and expanded version of the first teachers' guide from 2009.

A practical tool

The right to make one's own choices is primarily addressed at upper secondary school teachers, but teachers in lower secondary school can also find inspiration in the guide. It is meant to be a practical tool for the teacher. It contains tips and ideas on how the topic can be integrated in teaching in relation to learning outcome goals at the different levels, in different subjects and different education programmes. It also describes a selection of specific exercises and includes proposals for resource material that minority counsellors and teachers at several schools have used during the period in question.

Forced marriage can be a sensitive topic for some pupils, and, for that reason, it should be approached with caution, so that all pupils have an opportunity to participate on their own terms. Some pupils may wish to talk about their own problems and ask for advice after the lesson. A separate paragraph has therefore been included in the teacher's guide about how teachers can deal with such situations and how the support agencies can help young people who feel pressured and threatened with forced marriage.

Some of the schools and teachers had previous experience, others had never dealt with the topic before. During the project period, the schools and minority counsellors have therefore shared their experience and used each other as resources. The minority counsellors at Ulsrud upper secondary school were the driving force behind this work.

Preventive work in schools – background and connection

Pursuant to the Norwegian Education Act Section 9a-1, all pupils attending primary and secondary schools are entitled to a good physical and psychosocial environment that is conducive to health, well-being and learning. In order to be able to engage in effective preventive work in schools and help pupils who are in a difficult situation, the school staff must be informed about problems that affect the pupils. Knowledge about

forced marriage and extreme control among the school management and other staff will therefore be important if they are to be capable of helping pupils who are victims of control and coercion and who fear being married off in future without their consent. The teacher knows his/her pupils best and notices when they are struggling. Good preventive work can therefore be done in schools by teachers identifying pupils with problems and referring them for help before the problem escalates, becomes acute and the pupils stop attending school.

Competence-raising in schools

An important part of the remit of IMDi's minority counsellors has been to work on preventive and competence-raising measures in schools. The work has been organised in different ways at the different schools where the minority counsellors have been stationed. Their activities have focused directly on pupils and on school staff. For example, many of the minority counsellors have organised girls groups and boys groups themselves or contributed in other ways to starting up various activities and initiatives for pupils. The goal of these measures has also been to raise awareness among different youth groups about forced marriage and related problems (see the description of these measures elsewhere in this report). What these measures targeting pupils have in common is that the activities have often taken place outside regular teaching hours and within the framework of the socio-educational counselling service. In many schools, the groups have been organised in collaboration with the school's counsellors, school nurse, social workers or others affiliated to the school's services for pupils/support system.



I have worked at a school with a high proportion of minority pupils and at a school with a small proportion of such pupils. I had to change my thinking and my methods.

(Minority counsellor)

The minority counsellors' activities targeting pupils were supplemented by competence-raising measures targeting teachers, counsellors and other employees working in and outside the school system. Several workshops and seminars have been held during the period in cooperation with the integration counsellors, the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, organisations and other resources active in this field. The target groups have consisted of school staff alone and school staff together with external local partners (the child welfare service, the school health service, the educational and psychological counselling service, the police etc.) The purpose of the measures has been to raise competence among school staff in relation to forced marriage. The focus has usually been on the school's role in the work of preventing, uncovering, assisting and dealing with individual cases in cooperation with the first-line service and other support agencies. In this work, the emphasis has been on establishing good cooperation procedures for handling concrete cases.

The issue of forced marriage as part of ordinary teaching

Some of the minority counsellors have worked in close cooperation with the teaching staff at the schools where they have been stationed. They have contributed to the teaching in various ways. On some occasions, the minority counsellor has participated in the lesson him/herself by giving a presentation, in the same way as the school nurses visit classes to provide information about their work or talk about the body and health. Other times, the minority counsellor has stayed more in the background and advised the teacher about relevant films, texts, legislation and other resources that can be useful to the teacher when planning lessons about this subject.

Some schools have worked systematically to integrate the topic of forced marriage in ordinary teaching. Ulsrud upper secondary school stands out in this context. Here, the topic of forced marriage was first integrated in teaching in several classes as a pilot project during the period 2010–2011. The topic is now linked to learning outcome goals in various subjects, and teaching about this issue has the support of the

school management. It has been decided that teachers who teach Norwegian, social studies, religion, and communication and interaction will teach this topic for at least two periods during the school year. The teachers are, of course, free to choose the method, but it has proven very useful to have a selection of texts, films and other resource material on hand when planning tuition.

It is important that everyone is familiar with the topic, not just a small group

The right to make one's own choices has been tried out in 22 classes at Ulsrud upper secondary school, and the feedback from both teachers and pupils has been good. In a survey carried out in November 2010, it emerged that more than 92% of the pupils who were asked (131 pupils responded to the survey) believe that it is important to discuss the right to make one's own choices and forced marriage at school. After the pupils had received tuition in this topic in class, more than 80% of them answered that they thought that it was a topic everyone should know something about, not just pupils from minority backgrounds. In their responses, many stated that it is important to know about this topic 'in order to help friends who may be at risk'. The experience from Ulsrud is that this topic is important and relevant to all pupils, both from a prevention perspective and because it is relevant to the subjects taught and to society. The following quotes from pupils illustrate this:

'This happens to more people than we think.'

'This is a very important issue that can be combined with the different topics taught in Norwegian classes for example.'

'It is good to know who to contact if this should happen.'

'There could be fewer forced marriages if this is taught in all classes.'

Learning outcome goals

Teachers who have experience from teaching the topic also emphasise that the pupils become very involved, and that the issue fits well with their subjects because it relates to the learning outcome goals. Here is a selection of the learning outcome goals that the topic has been linked to:

Social science, specialisation in general studies programme: 'Elaborate on changes in family forms and the way people cohabit', 'explain why gender roles vary from one community to the next and discuss why gender roles change over time'.

Norwegian, specialisation in general studies programme: 'Discuss and elaborate on fellowship and diversity, cultural encounters and cultural conflicts based on a broad selection of Norwegian and foreign contemporary texts in various genres.'

Communication and interaction, Health and Social Care programme: 'Explain how the childhood environment affects the possibilities of children and young people.'

More openness

By integrating the right to make one's own choices and forced marriage in teaching, both teachers and pupils will learn more. Knowledge is liberating and can contribute to lowering the threshold for seeking help. More openness about this problem, as a challenge to society on a par with other challenges, will make it easier for many victims/pupils at risk to cope with their situation and dare to ask for help. Many pupils want more openness about the problem. As one pupil said: 'At last, it is being openly talked about at school'.





Can educational pressure from parents be linked to extreme control and forced marriage?

'Pressure to achieve good grades and parental involvement in the choice of subjects and study programme in upper secondary schools can occur, either alone or in combination with other forms of pressure and control.'

Minority counsellors have functioned as a low-threshold service that has identified many aspects of honour-related violence. The service has consisted of being available to pupils, teachers, counsellors and other school personnel, but the main focus has been on the pupils. Through this work, the minority counsellors have also addressed other challenges that minority youth face. IMDi wanted to map the breadth of the minority counsellors' experience from the work in schools, and carried out interviews with all the 26 counsellors who were stationed in schools in spring 2011. This article is based on these interviews.

The minority counsellors have been in close contact with the pupils and developed a relationship based on trust. This has helped many young people to open up about their problems relating to extreme control and forced marriage. At the same time, the fact that the minority counsellors have been available has encouraged pupils to talk about other aspects of their lives. The minority counsellors have thus gained insight into a wider range of challenges.

The interviews with the minority counsellors show that many of the minority youth they have been in contact with experience high expectations in relation to education. Pressure to achieve good grades and parental involvement in the choice of subjects and study programme in upper secondary schools can occur, either alone or in combination with other forms of pressure and control.

In the following, the causes of this educational pressure are explained, as well as how such pressure can be linked to extreme control and/or forced marriage. Some of the ways in which schools can deal with these challenges are also described.

High educational expectations drive some pupils to work harder

Previous research shows that the performance of young people from immigrant backgrounds is poorer than that of young people from Norwegian backgrounds. At the same time, they do bet-

ter than what could be expected based on their class background.³⁴ Young people from immigrant backgrounds often have a more positive attitude to school, spend a lot of time on homework and have high educational ambitions. They often also want to study for a profession. Based on such findings, it is often said that they have more drive.³⁵ Explicitly, this drive is manifested in the tendency among young people from minority backgrounds who chose the specialisation in general studies programme in upper secondary school to go straight from upper secondary school to higher education. It is far more common for this group to go straight from upper secondary school to higher education than it is for Norwegians. A comparison between girls and boys from immigrant backgrounds shows that it is far more common for girls to start higher education than for boys.³⁶ This drive also manifests itself in the choice of education. Recruitment to, for example, medical, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary and civil engineering studies is stronger among many descendants of immigrants than among students from Norwegian backgrounds.³⁷

Important to live up to parents' expectations

One important explanation for this educational drive is that it is important to the young people to live up to their parents' expectations. The parents' wishes in relation to education and occupation are more important among many young people from immigrant backgrounds than among young people from Norwegian back-

34 See for example Bakken (2003) and Støren (2006).

35 See Leirvik (2010) and Lauglo (2010) for a review of the research in this field.

36 However, gender differences are more pronounced among young people from Norwegian backgrounds (Støren 2005).

37 Dæhlen (2000).

grounds.³⁸ This may be because they grow up with:

- 1) a collectivist view of life where individuals take account of their family's wishes
- 2) an ethnic network, where the spreading of rumours and social control lead their parents to become more concerned with their children choosing high-status occupations so that they can maintain or increase their standing³⁹
- 3) a practice of duty or gratitude, whereby young people express their gratitude to their parents by choosing a prestigious education that will give the parents recognition in their ethnic network
- 4) in-depth socialisation whereby young people internalise their parents' goals in relation to education.

One of the main findings from previous research is that such mechanisms can help to explain the fact that many immigrants and descendants of immigrants do well in life. This is positive in relation to integration in the educational system and labour market.

Educational pressure from parents can lead to wrong choices and dropping out

Minority counsellors note that this kind of educational drive can be a positive thing for people who have the abilities to live up to it and who want the same thing as their parents. For others, on the other hand, it can drive them in the wrong direction – away from the subjects they like and master, such as language subjects, social

science or vocational subjects. If pupils do not have the academic ability to choose a study programme in science subjects, or if they choose the programme to comply with their parents' wishes, it will affect their motivation, sense of achievement and self-esteem. The pupils may lack inner motivation, which is emphasised as an important success factor.⁴⁰

A feeling of defeat resulting from not living up to their parents' expectations can be an additional burden on top of not succeeding in school. Pupils who fail to pass science subjects and leave upper secondary school without higher education entrance qualifications and a complete certificate will be in a very weak position in the labour market. If they chose to resit subjects, they must spend time and money on finishing upper secondary school before moving on in the educational system. If parents' educational drive results in the wrong choice of education, or in many pupils dropping out or leaving without passing upper secondary education⁴², it can be concluded that the parents' educational drive leads the young people down the wrong path.



I don't want to become a doctor!

'My son is not going to play football, he's going to be a doctor.' That was what my mother told me. I am a Pakistani 13-year-old who loves to play football, but my parents are not as understanding as Norwegian parents are. Norwegian parents give you the freedom to do what you want, but not too much freedom. My parents expect me to marry my cousin in Pakistan, but all I want to do is to play football. I wonder why they cannot understand that. I'm quite good at football, and I have friends who support me. My parents don't, they're on my case 24 hours a day.

This is getting quite annoying! Boy (13)

Aftenposten, Wednesday 4 May 2011

38 In a study of young people in Oslo aged between 14 and 16 from a Vietnamese background, Fekjær and Leirvik(2011) show that more than half of the descendants of immigrants from Vietnam, Pakistan, Turkey and Sri Lanka consider their parents' wishes in relation to education and occupation to be very important. Among young people from Norwegian backgrounds, only 28% consider them to be important. Based on the same data, Øia(2007:41–42) make similar findings. He finds that there is a tendency for Norwegian youth to believe to a far lesser extent that they are influenced by their parents' opinions in relation to the choice of education and occupation.

39 See Leirvik (2010) for a more in-depth description of these factors and the research on such mechanisms.

40 Boggiano and Pittman (1992).

42 Lødding (2009).

Minority counsellors agree on the reason why parents' expectations in relation to education can have a negative effect on pupils' chances of succeeding. When young people cannot live up to their parents' wishes, this becomes a negative experience. Correspondingly, the minority counsellors have observed how young people struggle under the pressure to choose a path that goes against their own wishes. If educational drive explains why some do better than expected, it can also help to explain why others do worse than expected.

Can educational pressure be linked to extreme control and forced marriage?

Extreme control and forced marriage are related to maintaining the family's honour in relation to the family's network in Norway, but also at the transnational level. The family's standing or status in the network is also closely related to this. Higher education is a very important source of recognition.⁴³ In addition to a general wish for their children to have a good life in future, the emphasis on standing can lead to parents encouraging their children to take higher education. It may therefore be relevant to see parents' encouragement and pressure to take an education in relation to extreme control and forced marriage.

Many minority counsellors link parent's educational pressure with extreme control. The link has to do with how parents control many aspects of their children's lives, including the young people's choice of education, such as which upper secondary school they should choose, which study programme and what type of higher education. Just as parents can use psychological or physical violence to safeguard their children's virtue, these forms of violence can also be used if the children do not perform well enough at school.

Poor school performance can also be a reason why parents decide that a child should leave school. Marriage may then be an alternative. The

minority counsellors also say that the opposite is true: as long as you do well at school and get a good education, you may be allowed to postpone marriage.

It is too early to say what influence young people will have on the choice of a spouse after finishing their education in cases where education has been a means of postponing marriage.

Educational pressure may be part of a more extensive control regime

A prestigious education can be important in relation to a future marriage. The minority counsellors' experience is that some parents who encourage/pressure a daughter or son to become a doctor do so because they want their children to have better lives than they had themselves. Such a choice of education can also be favourable in relation to the family's standing, making it possible to choose among potential spouses with high status.⁴⁴ This can influence how far parents are willing to go – for example allowing the young person to move away from home to study medicine – because it will be expedient in the long run.

This means that upper secondary schools must open their eyes to this problem and be aware of the fact that educational pressure can be part of a more extensive control regime. However, educational expectations or pressure do not always entail control. Some pupils have high educational ambitions and have the same wishes as their parents without control being part of the picture.

How can the school handle educational pressure?

One strategy used by pupils who are subject to considerable pressure at home is to skip tests or exams. Repeated absence from tests can be a sign of undesirable educational pressure and should be seen in conjunction with the pupil's behaviour in other contexts. In one school, systematic

43 See for example Din (2006), Gibson (1988), Moldenhawer (2005), Østberg (2003) and Leirvik (under review).

44 See Leirvik (2010:30), Shaw (2000). This point was also mentioned by several minority counsellors.

failure to appear in assessment situations was seen as a warning sign in relation to dropping-out. Such pupils were followed up by the minority counsellors through conversations where the situation at home and the parents' role were also discussed. This was a way of both preventing pupils from dropping out and combating extreme control, based on an awareness that the pupils' problems could involve both these aspects.

In the minority counsellors' experience, it is also important to pay attention to non-verbal signs that something is wrong, such as truancy and difficulties concentrating. School staff pay particular attention to truancy and dropping-out. Being aware of more signals can make it possible to identify more pupils with such problems, however.

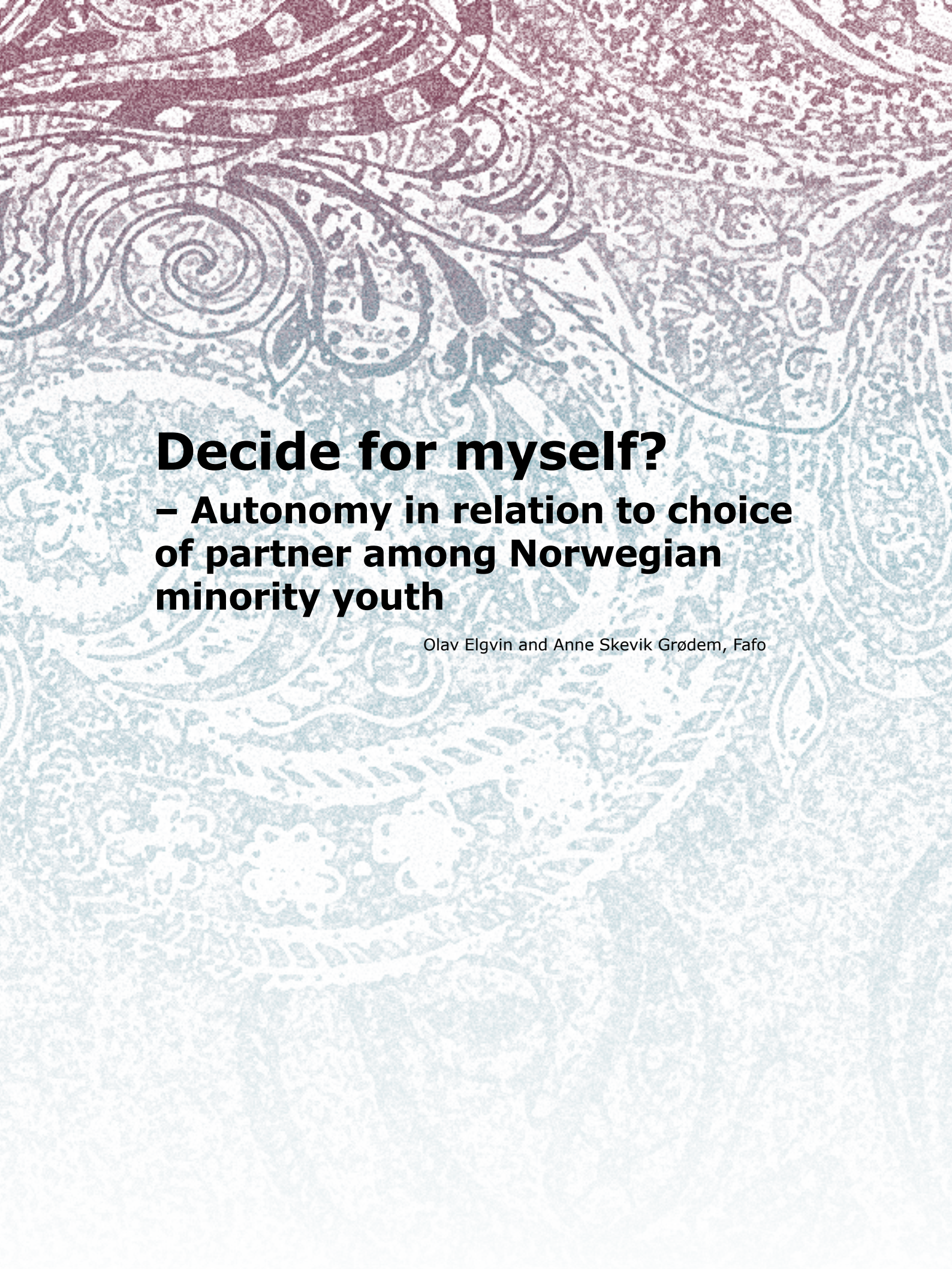
Counsellors and teachers in upper secondary school are very aware of the educational expectations and pressure some young people from immigrant backgrounds experience. In order to be able to give young people relevant guidance, it is important that they take into account how important their family is to the young people, and perhaps tone down individual-oriented career guidance. This does not mean that one should accept that parents control their children's choice of education, but that it must be taken into consideration that young people from this group make less of a distinction between their own wishes and those of their family than ethnic Norwegian pupils. By acknowledging how important the views of parents (and other family members) are to the young people, it will be easier to find arguments that they can use in relation to their parents if they want to make a different choice.

Choosing something you are interested in and that you are likely to succeed in often means that you are more motivated and have a greater chance of completing an education. This is pointed out to young people. It can also be important to motivate pupils who feel that they are struggling academically, and to explain that not getting a top grade is good enough for the moment. They can resit the subject later to improve their grades if necessary. It can be important, for example, to explain that very few are admitted to medical studies on the basis of their grades from upper secondary school alone, but that many need to resit subjects and that this should not be seen as a failure. If they really want to study medicine, it is important not to take away their hope, but they should also be prepared for the amount of work that is required.

It is also important to reach the parents and make them realise how important motivation and interest is in relation to completing an education. Wrong choices are deemed to be an important reason for people dropping out of upper secondary school. It is also important that parents with very specific wishes for their children's choice of education, and who subject their children to considerable pressure, realise that there is a real danger of their children dropping out or leaving school without passing all subjects. Lødding (2009) shows that a substantial proportion of minority-language-speaking pupils who have chosen the specialisation in general studies programme leave upper secondary school without passing. In other words, they leave without a certificate. It can therefore be assumed that the parents' educational expectations mean that these pupils are largely 'stayers', i.e. they stay in school. Because many make their choices on the basis of their parents' wishes and not their own (or if they cannot find out what their own wishes are), they struggle to pass certain subjects and they end up without a certificate. It is important that such outcomes be communicated to the parents.

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Decide for myself?

– Autonomy in relation to choice of partner among Norwegian minority youth

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To what extent do Norwegian minority youth decide for themselves who to marry? How representative are the media stories about forced marriage? And those who have had little influence on the choice of spouse – are their lives different from the lives of their peers who have had more freedom? These are some of the questions we will discuss in this article, which is based on a Fafo (Institute for Labour and Social Research) report commissioned by IMDi in connection with the *Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008-2011* (Elgvin and Grødem 2011).

The report is the first in Norway to use population surveys to attempt to describe the extent of parental involvement in young people's choice of partners. The research that has been conducted in Norway on this issue has mainly been of a qualitative nature, which means that it studies the experience of a few informants in depth (Prieur 2004, Bredal 2006, Bredal 2011). This research has given us valuable knowledge about the processes surrounding the choice of partner and how those involved understand these processes, but it says little about scope or differences between groups. We will attempt to expand on this knowledge by using quantitative data to answer two questions: (1) What characterises young people from immigrant backgrounds who experience high versus low degrees of self-determination in their choice of spouse, and (2) how is married life with respect to mental health, labour-market activity and division of labour in the home for those who have experienced high versus low degrees of self-determination?

The practice of parents choosing a spouse for their child or arranging marriages is common in what we can call collectivist cultures. Individualistic cultures, and today's Norwegian culture must be characterised as an individualistic culture, reject the notion that other parties than those who are actually going to marry have a say in the choice of partner. Collectivist traditions often require a relatively strict division of labour based on gender, whereas the individualistic mindset emphasises abilities and interests when work is divided, which means that it is likely that the individual's 'fundamental orientation' in relation to these dimensions will also influence their

married life. This dichotomy is not unproblematic, however. For example, Anja Bredal has problematised the notion that Asian cultures place 'the interests of the family above those of the individual', which is a common interpretation when cultures are considered from a Western point of view. She argues that this is misleading, because it places the individual outside of the family – 'it lacks an understanding of the *connection* between individuals, which is part of what *constitutes* a family' (Bredal 2006:9, italics in the original). The individuals are not outside the family, they are part of it, and they see themselves as part of a greater whole. In the same way, many people will feel that the family is part of them, and that it is natural and right that this inclusive group contributes when they are seeking a life partner. A high degree of parental involvement in the choice of partner is therefore not necessarily felt to be a problem in itself. Our task has not been to map a social problem, but rather to look into the differences between groups and say something about how young couples from different backgrounds live in Norway.

1. Sources of knowledge about young people's choice of spouse

The basis for the analyses consists of two surveys that, among other things, contain information about how young people from minority backgrounds found their spouses. One of the surveys is Statistics Norway's supplementary survey to *Levekårsundersøkelsen blant innvandrere 2005/2006* ('Survey on Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006' – in Norwegian only), which comprised young people from immigrant backgrounds under the age of 24. The survey targeted persons who had immigrated before the age of six, and Norwegian-born persons with two immigrant parents from minority groups of Turkish, Pakistani and Vietnamese origin (Gulløy 2008). The second is the Fafo survey *Familiepraksis og likestilling i innvandrede familier* ('Family practices and gender equality among immigrant families' – in Norwegian only). The target group for this survey consisted of persons between the ages of 20 and 55, with backgrounds from Vietnam, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Norway. There was also a separate sample consisting of young people born



in Norway to Pakistani parents (Kavli and Nadim 2009).

Both these surveys asked questions about the level of influence the respondents had on their choice of partner. In Statistics Norway's living conditions survey, the question was worded as follows: 'To what extent did you have an influence on a) the decision to get married? b) the choice of spouse?' The alternatives were 'to a very great extent', 'to a great extent', 'to a medium extent', 'to a small extent' and 'to a very small extent'. Fafo's survey worded the question as follows: 'Parents can contribute in various ways when their children are to find a spouse. When you got married, would you say that... (a) you made the decision about whom to marry on your own, (b) you made the decision on your own, but you listened to your parents' opinion, (c) your parents made the decision, (d) your parents made the decision, but listened to your opinion, (e) don't know, (f) none of the above, (g) I do not wish to answer'.

Many respondents in Statistics Norway's survey chose not to answer this question, and, of those who responded, the majority answered 'to a very great extent' as regards their degree of influence. The proportion of respondents who did not answer this question in the Fafo survey was very low, and the answers were distributed between all the alternatives. This could indicate that it seems less provocative to emphasise cooperation within the family than to emphasise individual 'influence'. In the analysis of Statistic Norway's question, we distinguish between the majority, who responded 'to a very great extent' as regards their degree of influence, and everyone else – included those who refused to answer. We believe that when so many choose the most individualistic response alternative, we can assume that those who gave other answers are more ambivalent and have actually had a smaller degree of influence. This does involve reading a lot into the data, however, and means that the findings must be interpreted with caution.

2. Who experiences less autonomy?

Our first question concerns what characterises young people who experience limited autonomy in their choice of spouse. In this discussion, we have been limited by the information available in

the data sets: We must assume that characteristics of the parents strongly influence whether or not they chose to get involved in their children's choice of spouse, but we have no information about the parents or families in which people grew up beyond what our respondents have provided. We are therefore limited to looking at correlations between what the respondents state and the information they provide about how their spouse was chosen. It has not been possible to study causal relationships.

Country of origin, immigration status and gender: One of the clearest effects is of *country of origin*. We see clear differences in the Fafo survey, which comprises respondents from Norwegian, Pakistani, Vietnamese, Iranian and Iraqi backgrounds. Among ethnic Norwegians, no one stated that they had little autonomy in the choice of spouse. In the group under 34 years, which is the most relevant group in the work against forced marriage, the Pakistanis clearly stand out. Among Pakistani immigrants under the age of 34, 67% state that it was largely their parents who made the decision. Among the Pakistani descendants, i.e. those born in Norway to Pakistani parents, 34% say the same. By comparison, 12% of Iraqis under the age of 34 say that their parents made the decision, 8% of Iranians, and 2% of Vietnamese in the same age group.

The Statistics Norway survey only comprised young people from Turkish, Pakistani and Vietnamese backgrounds. The Pakistani respondents also stood out in this survey: A significantly higher proportion (48%) state that their level of influence on their choice of spouse was less than 'a very great extent'. However, a high proportion of the Turkish respondents (39%) also experienced less autonomy.

It seems that immigrants from Pakistan have more of what we have called a collectivist approach to the contracting of marriage than other groups. At the same time, however, both surveys show that there are also young people in other groups who experience little autonomy in relation to the contracting of marriage. In addition, it should be emphasised that there are many immigrant groups in Norway that are not represented in these two surveys, and that we do not know the extent of parental involvement in these groups.

Women experience less autonomy than men in all groups of countries where this is an issue. Both men and women experience that their parents want to choose their spouse for them, but women consistently experience this more often.

The Fafo survey also includes data on persons older than 34 years. Comparisons between age groups clearly show that the proportion who choose their own spouse is higher among the younger age groups. The difference is particularly striking among the Pakistani group. In addition, there are differences between young immigrants from Pakistan and Norwegian-Pakistanis born in Norway. We thus see both a clear age effect and a 'descendant effect'. Young people have experienced more autonomy than those who are older, and young descendants experience more autonomy than immigrants of the same age. The proportion of Pakistani women who state that they have chosen their spouses themselves vary from 8% among older immigrants to 58% among young descendants. This is a marked change in practice in a relatively short period. It indicates that established traditions change quickly as new generations emerge.

Education and financial situation: Both surveys show a tendency for higher education, both among the young people themselves and among the parent generation, to be linked to more autonomy in choice of partner. Of those who have fathers with higher education, 53% state that they chose their own spouse, and the same applies to 31% of those whose fathers have a lower secondary education (Fafo survey). The mothers' education has a corresponding effect. The effects are nevertheless weak, and must be seen in light of the fact that we only have the young adults' information about their parents' education and that some respondents do not know what education their parents have.

The respondents' own education has a similar effect. Those with higher education experience more autonomy than those with lower-level education. This trend is particularly strong for young people born in Norway to Pakistani parents.

Causal relationships are hard to establish here. It seems reasonable to assume that parents with higher education have been more exposed to individualistic attitudes through the education

system, and are thereby open to their children having more autonomy in their choice of partners. As for the young people's own education, we do not know whether education enables them to demand self-determination in the choice of partners, or whether it is 'modern' or 'Norwegian-oriented' families who allow their children to both take an education and choose their own spouse.

Mothers' labour market participation: Having a mother who has worked full-time throughout their upbringing is uncommon among young people with backgrounds from Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, but, of the minority who have such mothers, very many have chosen their own spouse without interference from their parents. Since having a working mother is so uncommon, it is probable that those who do come from individualist-minded families to begin with, where both mothers and children can have a high degree of autonomy. At the same time, it cannot be ruled out that having a mother who participates in the labour market in itself can lead to the family developing more individualistic attitudes and allowing the children more autonomy.

Partner from abroad: Among those who state that they had great autonomy in the choice of spouse, many have married a partner born in Norway. Among those who state that they had less autonomy, more have married a partner from abroad. In addition, more of those who state that they have little autonomy have married a relative: 74% of those who state that they had a high degree of autonomy are married to a person they are not related to, compared with 55% of those who state that they had less influence. It must nevertheless be stressed that these percentages are based on a small number of observations.

Religion is not important: Participants in both surveys were asked how important religion was in their lives, and the Statistics Norway survey also asked about religious activity. Neither stating that religion is very important nor being very religiously active had a bearing on the degree of autonomy in choice of a partner. This was true for all countries and both surveys.

3. Finances, health and gender equality

The second question we discussed in the project is whether, and, if so, how, having chosen/not chosen a spouse oneself influences married life. Here, we will look briefly at four dimensions: health, division of labour in the home, the relationship to the extended family and the financial situation.

Health: Statistics Norway's survey contained questions about both physical and mental health. While around 30% of those who had chosen their own spouse stated that they had physical health problems (such as bodily pains, headaches, stomach problems), as many as 50% of those who had had less influence on their choice of partner stated that they had three or more such problems.

The survey also included five questions that constitute a frequently used scale for measuring mental health, the *Hopkins checklist*. In the sample as a whole, 15% had indications of mental health problems. The percentage was higher among married people, and it was highest among married people who had had less influence on their choice of spouse: 20% of those who had a high level of influence and 28% of those who had had less influence had symptoms of mental health problems. The tendency was the same for both Turkish people and Pakistanis. Marriage will usually protect people against mental health problems, so this finding is surprising. One possible explanation is that all the respondents in Statistics Norway's survey are under the age of 24, and only a few are married. This indicates that those who marry at a young age differ in some way from those who are not yet married – and that these differences can, among other things, explain why those who are married have more mental health problems.

The fact that a higher proportion of those who had a lower degree of influence on their choice of partner when they married have mental health problems, could also be related to the fact that more of the respondents in this group state that they often feel lonely. Previous research has found that there is often a connection between loneliness and mental health problems.

Division of labour in the home and attitudes to gender equality: The Fafu survey contains several questions relating to the division of labour in the home and attitudes to gender equality. These questions have only been analysed for married people in the age group 20–34 years from a Pakistani background. This is because it is the only group of young people in this survey where the proportion of respondents whose parents chose their spouse is large enough to form the basis for analysis. We find that the

women who chose their own spouse have far higher labour market participation than the women whose parents chose for them. There is no corresponding difference among men. Women who are married to a partner chosen by their parents state that they do all the housework far more often than other women, and a relatively large number of them state that they find this unfair. Both women and men who are married to a partner chosen by their parents are more sceptical of women working in different life phases. They also believe more often that it is the man's job to provide for the family, while it is the woman's responsibility to keep the home clean. Men who did not choose their own partner seem to have a particularly conservative view on these issues.

As for general questions relating to gender equality, such as whether boys and girls should be raised in the same way, and whether they think that work promoting gender equality in Norway should be continued, we find small or no differences between the groups. The differences that exist are related to specific questions about how the work in the family should be divided in different life phases.

The relationship to the extended family:

Women and men who did not choose their own spouse state more often than others that they always seek advice from their family in connection with important decisions, and that they always think about how their actions can affect how their surroundings perceive their family. When asked what they think would happen if their marriage broke down, those who did not choose their own spouse state far more often that they could not expect support from their close family. On these questions, the differences between those who chose their own spouse and those whose parents chose for them are consistently bigger than the differences between the genders.

Unclear findings relating to finances: In the above, we found that, more often than others, those who experience a high degree of parental involvement in their choice of spouse had little education, and we have also seen that the women are more seldom in work. However, we do not find any differences in the couples' financial situations. This could be because we have limited financial data, but it is also possible that, at present, i.e. a relatively short time after the marriages were entered into, there are no financial differences between couples who had a

high degree of self-determination and couples who had a lower degree of self-determination when they married.

4. Discussion

The findings in this study suggest that general value orientation is independent of other, more tangible variables: education, labour market participation, residence period etc. In the media, we sometimes read stories about families that seem integrated 'on the surface', but who actually control their daughters as strictly as ever. Such cases do exist, of course, but the figures from these surveys nevertheless show that the statistical tendency is the opposite: Education and labour market participation – both for parents and youth – lead to more autonomy for young people in their choice of partner, not less. Pakistanis who are born in Norway have more autonomy than Pakistani immigrants of the same age. This could mean that general work on integration – which often focuses on increasing labour market participation or providing education – will also have an effect on general value orientation. This can in turn influence how much freedom young people have in their choice of spouse. The trend for those who seem to be 'most integrated' to more often choose their own spouse can be seen in conjunction with already known trends in the integration field, such as the fact that young girls from immigrant backgrounds often take higher education (Statistics Norway 2011), and that the marriage age among young people from immigrant backgrounds is increasing in Norway (Henriksen 2010).

In the two sets of data we have reviewed, we find some connections between degree of autonomy in the choice of partner and other aspects of the respondents' lives. We must nevertheless stress that these are very uncertain findings and that more research on this topic is desirable. The data sets we have used were not designed to provide answers to the questions we ask. One important limitation is that we have few respondents. We have limited ourselves to those who are married or engaged, which very few of the respondents from Statistics Norway's survey of people under the age of 24 are. This makes it difficult to control for background factors and random variations. Secondly, as mentioned above, we have little information

about the young married couples' families of origin, so that we can say little about which characteristics of the parents influence whether young people are allowed much or little autonomy in the choice of partner. Thirdly, we are limited to the information provided by the young people themselves, often several years into their marriage. The informants may not remember correctly, or they may have consciously attempted to give a more positive or negative account of how their marriage came about. Generally speaking, we do not have enough information to say anything about cause and effect. Are there underlying causes – such as country of origin, general value orientation or education level – behind the connections we see, or is it really the case that those who marry a partner chosen by their parents more often have symptoms of mental health problems or choose a traditional division of labour in the home? We need more knowledge about the lives and life contexts of young people from immigrant backgrounds in Norway, and how different ways of forming partnerships are part of the broader context.

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Not just girls

'Boys are also forced into marriages with girls they do not want'

- Introduction: Not just girls
- How to see and help boys
- Boys groups – the answer to a need
- Between power and powerlessness. About young men, forced marriages, violence and control
- Queer World – for gay people who fear forced marriage
- People with mental disabilities – a particularly vulnerable group



Introduction:

Not just girls

'Like the girls, the boys describe leading a double life in which they live in one way at home, and in a different way at school and in relation to society at large.'

The efforts to combat forced marriage often focus on girls, because they top the support agencies' case statistics. This has to do with the role of girls in cultures and communities in which the concept of honour is important and forced marriages occur. Daughters must comply with norms of abstinence from premarital sex in order not to bring shame on their families. Controlling girls to ensure that they obey these norms, and forced marriage as an extreme variety of this kind of control, have made girls the most visible victims and at-risk group in these cases. The efforts have therefore primarily been focused on how to reach and help girls.

Boys are also affected

However, helpers working in this field report that boys also suffer under extreme control and patriarchal and hierarchic family structures. Boys are also forced into marriages with girls they do not want. Bokollektivet, a residential facility in Oslo,¹ now provides accommodation for young boys and men who flee from their partner or family. They can also be victims of violence on the part of their wives and their wives' families, or gay partners.

It has also become clear from the work in schools and foreign service missions that boys can be affected. When the project started, 15% of the cases concerned boys. This was more or less as expected based on the forced marriage figures from other agencies. However, the number of cases involving boys increased over time, peaking at 23% in the first half-year 2010. The average proportion of cases concerning boys during the project period has been 20%.

The increase in the percentage of cases involving boys confirms that boys who experience problems in their families need somebody to talk to and to have help. Minority counsellors in schools tell of boys who come to them to talk about both physical violence and family conflicts. Some of them have difficulties communicating

with parents who are 'too present', while others have problems with parents who are too distant. Some of them experience sanctions such as exclusion. They often have a high absence rate and their grades become poorer. The counsellors also come into contact with boys who are struggling at home and are described as troublemakers at school, but who are still not seen and heard by their parents, teachers and school staff. Like the girls, the boys describe leading a double life in which they live in one way at home, and in a different way at school and in relation to society at large. The counsellors describe the boys' feelings as frustration, anger, fear, shame and worry. They report symptoms such as sleeplessness, depression, anxiety, nightmares, suicidal thoughts and difficulties concentrating. They report that the boys who come to see them are afraid, angry and confused.

The integration counsellors at foreign service missions have worked on cases where boys have been abandoned abroad against their will. The Expert Team has received a large number of enquiries concerning cases of boys being left behind abroad, and the number is increasing. This is an area in which boys seem to be at risk in slightly different ways and to a greater extent than girls. While no two cases are alike, they show in different ways that boys can also be subject to strict discipline and control, for example by being sent to the country of origin to attend school. In some cases, this is because the parents feel that their child has become 'too Norwegian', and wish to strengthen the child's ties to family and their roots abroad. This can happen without elements of control being present. Perhaps the parents see that their son is struggling in many different areas, and see schooling abroad as being beneficial to his academic and social development. It could also be an attempt to discipline a rebellious youth. Many of the Expert Team's cases in which boys have been left behind abroad concern boys with substance abuse problems. Others may be sent out of Norway as a form of extreme control, the most extreme consequence of which could be forced marriage to a young woman abroad.

¹ For more information about Bokollektivet, see: www.bokollektivet.no

Boys can have different roles

A more detailed survey of the experience gained from the work with boys, both on individual cases and prevention measures such as discussion groups for boys, has uncovered that boys can have several different and sometimes conflicting roles at the same time. They can be victims or at risk of forced marriage themselves, and they can have been given responsibility for monitoring, controlling or 'protecting' their sisters. Some also describe that their own girlfriends are, in turn, watched over by their brothers, and that they find this frustrating. The minority counsellors also report that some boys control their girlfriends and, among other things, threaten them to have sex. If the girl does not give in, they will tell her family about the relationship.

Control and 'protection' of girls can take the form of boys keeping a close eye on what they do and who they are with. The control can also take on more extreme forms and result in abuse, i.e. physical and psychological violence, including threats and the spreading of rumours. Spreading rumours that a girl is 'loose' can be an effective control mechanism for stopping unwanted behaviour, since such rumours can have devastating effects. Sometimes, boys exercise control and carry out abuse on their own initiative, while, in other cases, the boys experience pressure from their family to fill the role of 'protector', keeper and/or abuser. Sometimes they are subject to pressure from all sides: while they are expected to look after their sisters, the boys themselves can be subject to extreme control and pressure to marry from their fathers or other family members. This can be the source of serious generational and cultural conflicts within the family, between the father, who is the bearer of values from his upbringing and country of origin, and the son, who may have grown up in Norway and has also absorbed Norwegian values. Family members outside Norway can also have considerable influence and exercise pressure on both young men and their fathers to comply with expectations of the man's role.

Many boys are given greater freedom than girls during their upbringing. They can have girlfriends, take part in leisure activities and meet

friends. At the same time, some boys report conditions as strict as for girls, where their parents do not permit participation in sports or social activities that hinder academic and religious development. The picture is complex and diverse. The fact that boys are often seen as freer can make it more difficult for teachers and others to see and help boys who are being controlled and coerced, and who want to escape the roles as keeper, spreader of rumours and abuser. The article *How to see and help boys* describes some approaches to reaching boys.

Discussion groups for boys

Several minority counsellors have worked with discussion groups for boys and have found this to be an effective way of establishing contact with them. Using this method, it has proven to be easier to make contact and communicate about difficult or taboo subjects. Several different discussion group methods were tried. For example, the number and age of the participants have varied between groups, as have their theoretical basis and form. However, it is a common characteristic of all groups that important topics have been raised and a process of reflection and maturation has started among the participants. Relations and trust have also been built, which has made it easier for the boys to open up to each other and the counsellors about their problems. The article *Boys groups – the answer to a need* describes some of the experience gained from these projects.

More knowledge needed

The work with boys uncovered a need for more knowledge. IMDi commissioned a research and development project (R&D) that studied in greater depth how boys can be affected. The assignment was given to the Institute for Social Research (ISF), and it resulted in the report *Mellom makt og avmakt. Om unge menn, tvangsekteskap, vold og kontroll* ('Between power and powerlessness. About young men, forced marriages, violence and control' – in Norwegian only) (Bredal 2011), which is based on interviews with 29 young men and two women between the ages of 17 and 30. Among other things, the report shows that the topic of forced marriage is particularly

unsuitable for highlighting boys' situation and establishing contact with boys. This is because the concept is already so strongly associated with girls' situation, and because being associated with a girl problem can feel threatening to boys. In order to reach boys and young men, Bredal recommends that, instead of talking about forced marriage, conflicts with parents and other family members should be put on the agenda. This is consistent with findings from preventive work with girls and parents – focusing on universal topics lowers the threshold for participating in discussions, and it could pave the way for discussing more specific topics such as forced marriage. Boys can be involved in many types of conflicts that they wish to talk about, for example relating to choice of education, strict upbringing, trust and authority, unwanted stays abroad, violence in the family, responsibility and financial matters. The article *Between power and powerlessness. About young men, forced marriages, violence and control* describes the findings from this study in more detail.

Particularly vulnerable groups

Our decision to devote part of this report to the topic 'not just girls' was not only because a significant number of boys are also affected. The work in schools and foreign service missions has also highlighted the fact that some groups are particularly vulnerable, for example lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender persons. Some people can feel particularly desperate, threatened and

harassed for cultural or religious reasons, and in many cases they are forced to deny sides of their nature. Problems particular to these young people are highlighted in the article *Queer World – for gay people who fear forced marriage*. The content of this article is based on Queer World's project work, which IMDi has supported during the period.

People with mental disabilities have proven to be another vulnerable group. Both minority counsellors and the Expert Team have reported cases in which the victim or person at risk has a mental disability. As in the case of homosexuality and forced marriage, it is too early to conclude that persons with disabilities are more at risk of being married off against their will than other groups. However, experience shows that some parents find solutions for their disabled child within their own network. The question of whether one should be extra cautious in relation to this issue must therefore be raised and studied further. This topic is presented in the article *People with mental disabilities – a particularly vulnerable group*.

References

Bredal, Anja. (2011:4) *Mellom makt og avmakt. Om unge menn, tvangsekteskap, vold og kontroll*. Oslo: Institute for Social Research (ISF).



How to see and help boys

'In order to establish contact with boys, schools and others must signal that it is possible to talk about the issues that are actually important to boys.'

Forced marriage was long discussed as a problem that affects girls and women. Like other agencies, IMDi has found that it can also affect boys. They can be victims of honour-related violence themselves, they may participate in subjecting others to such problems, or they can be under cross-pressure and experience both situations simultaneously.

Forced marriage is a term that boys do not identify much with. It is largely associated with girls and seems to be too narrow a term to cover the full range of the problems that boys experience. In order to establish contact with boys, schools and others must signal that it is possible to talk about the issues that are actually important to boys, such as pressure as regards choice of education, parents' anxiety in relation to substance abuse and crime, becoming 'too Norwegian', and taking responsibility in the family, including exercising control over sisters and other women.

In IMDi's experience, boys' home situation is something that teachers or others must ask actively about in connection with parent-teacher conferences, development discussions or similar, since the boys are reluctant to take the initiative to talk about these things themselves. Ideally, the school should have other arenas and activities where boys can express themselves, such as film projects, boys groups etc. Boys have responded positively to talking about and reflecting on issues such as gender equality, rumours and the spreading of rumours, the right to make one's own decisions etc. This often helps to give them greater self-knowledge and make them stronger when they want to do something about their relationship with their parents and family.

The number of cases involving boys and the experience from boys groups during the project period show that the minority counsellors' methods also meet a need in boys. We will present these work methods in the following. We will share our experience from individual cases involving boys, the problems these cases involve, how we can 'see' the boys, and how boys can be helped to become more aware of their own situation and come forward with their stories.

Boys ask for advice and help

In cases dealt with by the minority and integration counsellors, one in five victims or persons at risk is a boy. On average, boys and young men account for 20% of all cases. The Expert Team has had somewhat fewer cases involving boys, an average of 15% during the project period.

This is a considerable proportion of cases involving boys, and it shows that young men who experience problems in the family both need and want to talk about them. The fact that minority counsellors have received more cases involving boys than the Expert Team could have to do with the fact that they work in schools. Being visible and available where young people are means that the threshold for making contact can be seen as lower.

Boys wait longer

'If I start talking, I might lose control. Maybe the person I talk to will report my parents to the police. That will be going further than I want. Or they may not understand what I'm talking about and not react because they don't understand how we think in my family.' (A young boy's explanation of why he was reluctant to seek help.)

Although boys also make contact, the minority counsellors are concerned that they are often reached too late. The boys who are identified have often been victims of psychological and physical violence for many years. The fact that they wait before asking for help, may be because they have been raised to conceal family problems. If anybody else finds out what is going on, that could harm the family's standing. Many state that they feel disloyal and ashamed to talk about difficult family matters.

At the same time, boys are in a somewhat different situation from their sisters. As mentioned earlier, they may have several roles and experience conflicting pressures that could make them more reluctant to ask for help than girls are. Many postpone asking for help because they are unsure of what they want.



FAREN BRØT KONTAKTEN: Da «Mahmoud» (22) nektet å gifte seg med en kusine, brøt faren og hans familie all kontakt med ham.

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► i massevis, både for kusinen og familien. Lovnaden om bryllup snudde opp ned på alt. Alle som hadde vært sinte, ble glade igjen. Familien var stolte av ham. Faren ga ham en lang klem.

- Jeg kommer aldri til å glemme den klemmen. Lukten av trygghet, alt jeg hadde savnet. Det var så godt. Men prisen, det var mitt eget liv.

VÅGER IKKE STÅ FREM. A-magasinet har vært i kontakt med flere gutter og menn i Norge som er blitt forsøkt tvunget inn i ekteskap de ikke ønsker. Ingen av dem kan stå frem med fullt navn, men flere vil gjerne dele sin historie. 22 år gamle «Mahmoud» forteller at han har mistet all kontakt med farens side av familien etter at han nektet å gifte seg med en kusine. Til tross for at han jevnlig forsøker å ringe, er det tre og et halvt år siden han sist hadde kontakt med faren. I tillegg tvang faren Mahmouds mor-

Jeg kan ikke gifte meg med henne. Hva slags liv hadde det blitt?

«Mahmoud»

mor og tante til å flytte ut av huset de bodde i i hjemlandet. Faren ga klart inntrykk av at det ikke hadde skjedd hvis Mahmoud hadde gitt etter og giftet seg.

- I perioder har jeg ikke sovet i det hele tatt. Jeg savner faren min veldig. Og jeg skjønner at dette er en stor skam for ham. Men jeg kan ikke gå med på alternativet, jeg kan ikke gifte meg med henne. Hva slags liv hadde det blitt? Mahmoud ser oppgitt ut. Som så mange andre gutter ønsket han i utgangspunktet ikke kontakt med hjelpeapparatet.

- Nei, jeg ville helst ikke snakke med noen. Det er flaut, jeg skammer meg over å ha et sånt problem. Tvangsekteskap er en jenteting. Jeg er mann. Jeg vil helst løse problemet selv, forklarer han. I dag får han likevel støtte fra en minoritetsrådgiver på sin gamle skole, etter at en lærer slo alarm.

PSYKISK VOLD. - Gutter som presses inn i tvangsekteskap, kan være eldre, helt opp til 30 år. Likevel er mange sjanseløse mot det enorme psykiske presset de blir utsatt for, sier Anne Stifjeld, prosjektleder ved Røde Kors' hjelpetelefon om tvangsekteskap og kjønnslemlestelse. Hun har hjulpet flere norske gutter med å få oppløst eller annullert tvangsekteskap. Flere av dem har i ettertid måttet bo på krisesenter.

- Når en jente presses inn i et tvangsekteskap, skjer det ofte ved hjelp av trusler om fysisk og psykisk vold. I guttenes tilfelle handler det mer om psykisk vold. Om en mor sier at hun vil ta livet av seg om han ikke gifter seg, er det vanskelig å si nei. Hvis slektninger blir syke, skylder de på gutten. «Det er din skyld at jeg fikk hjerteinfarkt,» kan de si. Et slikt press er det umulig å stå imot, forklarer Stifjeld. I likhet med alle de andre ekspertene A-magasinet har vært i ►

Boys can have several roles

Several minority counsellors have told stories of girls with brothers who have been 'on their side' in conflicts with their parents over problems relating to control and honour. For example, brothers have played an active role in keeping things from their parents or acted as 'agents of change' in their own families.

In most of the cases IMDi's counsellors have been involved in where boyfriends or brothers have played a role, it has not been a supportive role, but rather a controlling role or even the role of abuser. They have guarded their sisters to ensure that they behave in accordance with the family's code of honour. In practice, this role has meant brothers keeping an eye on whether their sisters talk to boys or have boyfriends. They have a particular responsibility to protect and preserve the reputation of their sister, and thereby of the whole family, and must demonstrate that they have control over her. As controllers, the boys can be tasked with reporting back to the family, which can react by imposing various sanctions or punishments on the daughter. In some cases, it will also be the boys who carry out the punishment, which can vary from restrictions on using a phone or on leisure activities to physical and psychological violence such as hitting or kicking and/or threats of such violence.

Some boys will take on this role more or less voluntarily because they have been brought up to accept that this is the way it has to be. They may themselves wish to ensure that the family's honour is preserved. Others have this role imposed on them and are subject to pressure and reprisals if they do not carry out this task. At the same time, they can be under strong pressure to yield to their parents as regards the choice of a spouse. Both these aspects, themselves being pressured or forced into a marriage and being pressured or forced to control sisters and others, can be painful, harmful and very difficult for the boys in question to deal with.

Choosing to defy their parents has to do with their identity as young men and sons. They are

torn between the family's traditional ideal of the male role and the majority society's ideas of equality between men and women. Boys also often experience conflicting pressures between their parents' expectations that they conform, on the one hand, and the majority society's values, including the right to make one's own choices, on the other. Many young men who have contacted the minority counsellors experience their parents' expectations of them as sons to be a burden. They wish to live a life that is more in accordance with their own wishes and values. At the same time, many hesitate because the price can be high. The status quo is safe and gives them a privileged position in the family. If, on the other hand, they rebel against the expectation that they conform, they will lose all this.

Many do not know 'who they are or what they want'. They can become paralysed and lack the words to describe what they are experiencing. Going to a counsellor or a teacher to talk is not likely to be seen as an option in this situation. It is therefore important to identify these boys in other ways and see the signs that they are struggling.

Boys are at risk in other ways than girls, and can react in different ways from girls

The minority counsellors' conversations with boys have given us insight into what problems they are struggling with and how they can react, how we can see them and how we can help them.

Heavy responsibility and a great deal of pressure

In patriarchal and collectivist-minded families, a man's standing depends to a large extent on his ability to provide for his family and 'protect' his daughters' virtue. When a father gets old or otherwise incapable of performing these roles, he expects his oldest son to take over, either in full or in part, depending on the son's age and the possibilities open to him.

We have seen that, in families where the father is not working, a heavy responsibility is sometimes

placed on boys to contribute financially and in other ways take over tasks that the parents cannot master. Sometimes, a boy will also be expected to 'look after' his sisters. Financial responsibility and responsibility for the chastity of sisters can be interwoven. These boys can experience the pressure as a heavy burden. Many of them report that they fall short in all areas, because the total burden of responsibility placed on them is too great. They cannot cope with school because they work too much and have big responsibilities at home, which can include tasks that are in conflict with their own values and what they want.

Some of these boys want to move out of the family home, and they see the counsellor to find out what possibilities they have, whether they are eligible for any form of public support, what loans and grants they can get from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund etc. In such cases, several minority counsellors have asked boys about the reasons why they want to move out, and in some cases it has turned out that the boys have had problems relating to honour-related violence. Providing help in connection with practical aspects of finding a job has also proven to be a way of uncovering underlying problems that the boys are struggling with.

Pressure relating to grades and choice of education

In some cases, the fathers have had high-ranking positions and a good financial situation and standing in their country of origin before moving or fleeing to Norway. They may have experienced downward social mobility and gone from a financially and socially well-functioning life to a life of unemployment and poverty in Norway. Some of these fathers wish their sons and daughters to compensate for the family's loss of status. This makes it important that the children perform well in school and other arenas. Talking

about educational choices can be one way of accessing stories about pressure and control in other areas.

Violence and threats

The Expert Team and minority counsellors have noted that many boys are subjected to violence by their fathers, and that the family's overall situation can be very challenging, with poor finances, crowded housing conditions and a difficult life situation. Minority counsellors at several schools have cooperated with the school health service and taken part in measures within the framework of the Mental Health in Schools programme.² Mental disorders are often seen as shameful. It can be a relief to boys at risk to hear about this topic, as it can alleviate their feeling that it is their fault that their mum or dad is not happy. They are also given information about who to contact if they have further questions or need advice/help.

Some boys send signals by being noisy or disruptive in school

Like girls, boys can react to a difficult home situation by becoming quiet and introvert. Some of them become depressed. The minority counsellors' experience indicates that boys are more likely to have the opposite reaction, whereby they play truant a lot, behave disruptively and get into trouble at school. It is important that teachers and others are aware that this type of behaviour can be a 'hypervisible' manifestation of something essentially invisible, namely problems in the family. A difficult home situation can manifest itself in difficult behaviour at school. This could be the boys' way of letting us know.

² www.psykiskhelseiskolen.no

Left behind abroad

CASE

Brothers left behind against their will

A teacher contacts a minority counsellor to report that a pupil has failed to return after a leave of absence to travel abroad. The minority counsellor telephones the pupil's home, but there is no answer.

On the same day, the pupil's uncle contacts the counsellor to say that the boy and his brother have been left behind in the country of origin because their father felt that they had become too Norwegian. The minority counsellor is given a telephone number and calls the pupil, who confirms the story and that they have been left behind against their will. They both wish to return to Norway to take an education. Both of them are Norwegian citizens.

The minority counsellor contacts the counsellor at the brother's school, a primary/lower secondary school. Pursuant to the Norwegian Education Act, it is prohibited to keep a pupil of primary/lower secondary school age out of school. It is decided that both schools will report the father to the police.

The case is discussed with the child welfare service. Since both boys are minors, a notification of concern is sent. The child welfare service replies that there is little they can do as long as the children are abroad. They register the case, which will be activated if the boys return. The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service is informed so that the payment of child benefit is stopped.

The integration counsellor at the embassy in the country where the boys are staying is contacted. The counsellor wants the brothers to come to the embassy to tell their story. The boys get there with the help of relatives. The embassy wishes to help them to return to Norway, but cannot issue passports without the father's signature. The father is in Norway, and it is up to the local police to locate him. The Expert Team for the Prevention

of Forced Marriage is brought in to assist the embassy.

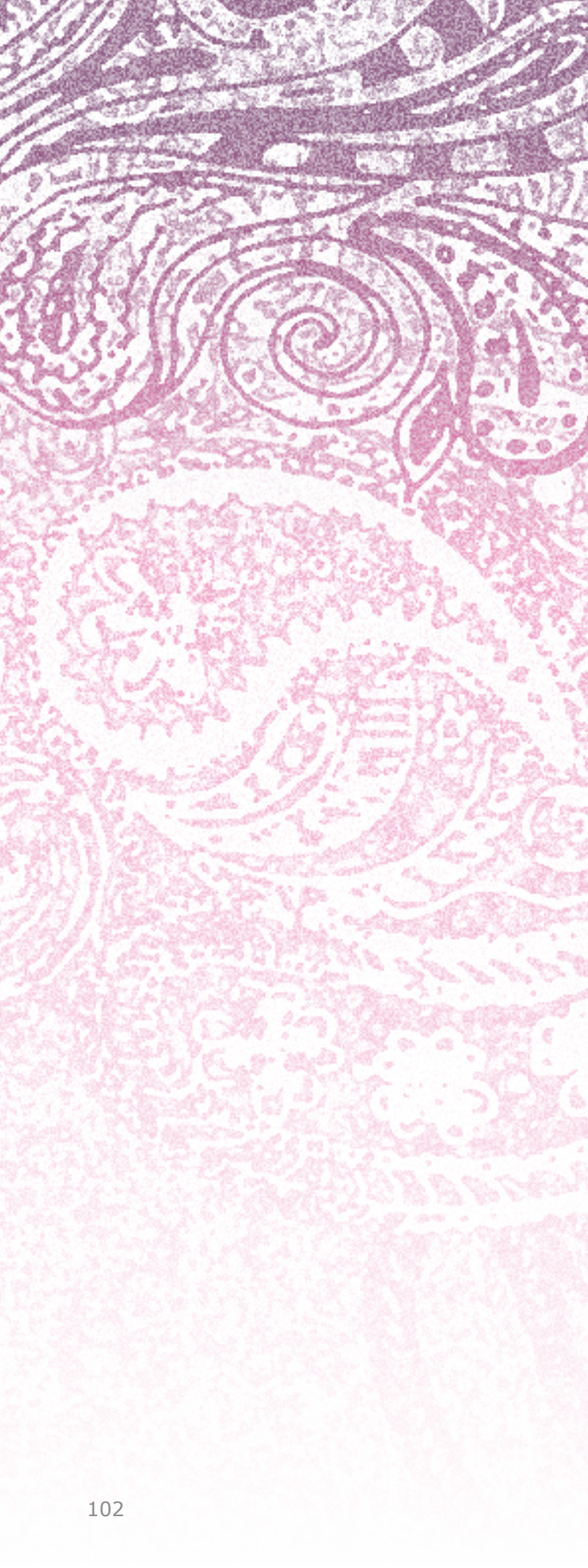
Time passes. Every day, concerned classmates visit the minority counsellor wondering why it is taking so long to help the boy and his brother to return. They are in contact with him by phone and the internet, and say that there is a risk of retaliation from relatives.

The father contacts the school to remove his son from the school roll because he has moved abroad. The school writes a letter to the father to explain that, since the boy is over the age of 15, the law requires that he remove himself from the school roll. The minority counsellor speaks to the boy and arranges for the place at school he wants.

The police finally succeed in contacting the father, but he fails to appear for their appointment. The police issue confirmation to the embassy that they have tried in vain to reach the father, and that passports can therefore be issued without the father's consent. The brothers return to Norway after five months abroad. They are taken care of by the child welfare service. Today, the boys attend two different upper secondary schools in Oslo.

In the wake of this case, the school introduced the following procedures in connection with applications for leave of absence:

- ▶ *Pupils must always speak to a counsellor before leave of absence is granted in order to try to uncover any worries the pupil may have about travelling.*
- ▶ *If the pupil is worried, but nevertheless decides to go, an agreement form for further follow-up is used. ■ ■*



Disruptive and undisciplined boys who are struggling at school and in other areas are sometimes sent abroad. The minority and integration counsellors have also dealt with cases in which parents have left their children with relatives abroad because of substance abuse problems, violence and crime. Several of the cases of boys being left behind abroad also involve parents who are unhappy with Norwegian schools and various aspects of Norwegian society. Many want their children to learn more about Islam and/or learn about the parents' culture and values. These can be perfectly legitimate reasons, and, as long as the children are under 15 years of age, it is up to the parents to decide in these matters. Sometimes, the stay abroad also include plans for a marriage that could be against the boy's wishes.

Travel abroad, particularly long stays that necessitate an application for leave of absence, should trigger a procedure at schools that includes talking with the pupil about the trip and his thoughts on the matter. In this way, those who do not wish to go and/or are worried about what will happen can be identified. The questions the pupil should be asked and the information that should be given are available in *Rutiner for skolens arbeid mot tvangsekteskap* ('Procedures for the school's work to combat forced marriages' – in Norwegian only).³ These procedures can help to identify young people at risk of being left behind abroad and/or forced into marriage before they leave, when it is still possible to help them. Once they are abroad, there is not much the Norwegian authorities can do. If there is a risk that a young person could be abandoned or forced into marriage, he should be warned against going.

The need for an arena in which boys can express themselves and be made more aware

The increasing number of cases involving boys shows that the minority counsellors have functioned as a low-threshold counselling service that boys have also made use of. Their presence in schools results in a physical proximity that makes them easy to talk to, not just when boys

3 www.imdi.no

come to their offices, but also at other times – in the school corridor, in the canteen, in the playground etc. It is possible for boys to get to know the minority counsellor before taking the step of talking about their situation at home.

The minority counsellors have made great efforts to be available and willing to talk about the issues that are important to the pupils, not just forced marriage. Many have taken a broad approach and encouraged pupils to contact them almost regardless of what they want to talk about. The same signals have been given to teachers and other members of staff. The minority counsellors have endeavoured to be open and available to both staff and pupils. This has contributed to pupils being referred to them or making contact themselves.

Experience shows that most of them do not talk about problems at home at the first meeting. Many first approach the counsellors with questions about practical matters, for example relating to choice of education, housing support, loans and grants. For some pupils, this is a round-about way of approaching their 'real' problems. Many feel ambivalent and need time to establish trust in the person they are going to open up to.

Time, availability and signals that the pupil is welcome to return for further conversations are regarded as important in a maturation process of this kind where boys are considering whether to talk about their problems, but have doubts. We have also seen that playing an active role in conversations with these young people can stimulate their ability and willingness to talk about problems at home. Questions and follow-up questions regarding what the boys say can be important in this context.

A practice that entails waiting until the boys talk about their problems on their own initiative can often mean that the problems are allowed to develop, which could result in the situation becoming very serious. It is therefore important that school staff and others do not remain passive until the boys articulate their problems, but actively create arenas that give them an opportunity to communicate that they are in a difficult situation. It is also our experience that discussion groups and other activities can have a positive effect in terms of making boys aware of their own situation and improving their knowledge. For many, participation in such activities has functioned as an important stepping stone in relation to asking for advice and help. In the next article, we will take a closer look at our experience of discussion groups for boys.





Boys groups – the answer to a need

'In addition to individual conversations, there is also a need for an arena where thoughts and feelings can be put into words, in a setting that is perceived as safe.'

It can be difficult for pupils to contact a minority counsellor or others to talk about their own parents and problems in their families.

This applies to boys to an even greater extent than girls.

Minority counsellors say that boys can be ambivalent, and many are not very aware of their own situation, what is difficult and how challenges can be dealt with. This can manifest itself in disruptive behaviour, trouble at school, playing truant and poor grades.

Forced marriage has proven to be a particularly unsuitable topic in relation to shedding light on boys' situation and establishing contact with boys. We believe that this is because the term is so strongly associated with the girls' situation and is seen as a 'girl problem'.

In order to reach boys and young men, it is important to find suitable approaches and create arenas where boys can feel comfortable talking about the challenges they face. In addition to individual conversations, there is also a need for an arena where thoughts and feelings can be put into words, in a setting that is perceived as safe. Discussion groups for boys is one answer to this need.

Target group and recruitment

Most of the minority counsellors have not used specific criteria to select participants for discussion groups. The rule has been that boys have signalled that they are struggling and have a need to talk, but need a suitable arena.

Some of the minority counsellors have told teachers, school counsellors and the school nurse that they were planning to establish a boys group, and they have suggested pupils they thought might benefit from taking part. Absenteeism and problems concentrating have often been the grounds for participation. In one school, the group recruited boys who had drawn attention to themselves because of bad behaviour and harassment of girls.

In some cases, the boys groups have been open to all boys at the school, and several recruitment channels have been used. Some have announced the boys groups on the school intranet, information monitors and noticeboards. Information has also been given by visiting classes and handing out flyers. Information stands and information meetings have been organised, and recruitment has also taken place through informal conversations with boys in school corridors and canteens.

Several minority counsellors have good experience of recruiting one or two boys themselves, and then letting the boys recruit more participants to the discussion group among their friends. The fact that a schoolmate of the same age has a positive view of the discussion group could motivate more people to participate than if a minority counsellor has to 'sell' the group himself. One minority counsellor put it as follows:

“ *Recruitment was not difficult. I already knew the boys well, and since they also recruited people, they helped to build motivation. Pupils can have their registered absence reduced by attending group meetings. Absence corresponding to two school periods is deleted for each meeting they attend.*

It is also emphasised as important for the boy's willingness to participate that the meetings have been held in the school's 'flexible period' in the middle of the day, and that food has been served, for example pizza. This means that they do not have to invest any of their free time in it, other lessons or subjects do not suffer, and they are also served good food. That they have a need to talk is something the boys can appear to be less concerned with, but that they become more aware of through participation in the group.

Some minority counsellors have been willing to accept new participants in established groups, and the boys would sometimes bring along guests. This worked well as long as the others were okay with it. It was clear that they had talked to friends about the boys group, which is a positive thing because it means that it is something they are proud of.

The boys groups usually comprised between five and ten boys aged 16–19 who met once a week. Most groups had boys from different national backgrounds. In one of the groups, all the boys were from Pakistani backgrounds.

“When raising sensitive, honour-related topics, it can be a good idea to use a person that you know that the group members will identify with. However, it is important to remember that the person you use in such a situation must be comfortable with this role...”

Delegate responsibility

Several minority counsellors who have run boys groups believe that it is crucial that the pupils are given responsibility and allowed to participate in decision-making in the discussion groups. There are examples of the boys being given responsibility for keeping minutes, chairing meetings, writing important points on the blackboard etc.

It is an advantage if the participants, the boys themselves, can be used as a resource by the group. One of the minority counsellors said the following:

Agree on topics

Several minority counsellors have good experience of letting the boys take part in deciding what topics were to be discussed in the group. This can contribute to topics being perceived as interesting and relevant to the participants, and it

can encourage greater involvement. Some believe that involving the boys in the choice of topics creates a sense of ownership in relation to the group, and that this could have a positive effect on participation.

Being open to the boys' own wishes has uncovered that they want to talk about politics in their home countries, about sexuality, and about conflicts they have been involved in or know somebody who has been involved in. One of the minority counsellors started each meeting by asking the boys if there was anything they wanted to talk about, something they had experienced. If they did not mention anything, she would present her topic.

Another way of identifying the boys' wishes was to hold a brainstorming session at the group's first meeting. The boys wrote their suggestions on pieces of paper, which were collected, and the suggestions were listed on a flip chart. This list was used as the basis for deciding which topics were to be discussed at subsequent meetings.

Several minority counsellors have actively steered clear of the term 'forced marriage' because it is a term that many people do not identify with and that could give rise to objections. Some have stated that 'this problem does not concern me'. Minority counsellors who have run boys groups have found that focusing on attitudes to gender, gender equality, diversity, respect and tolerance, the right to participate in decisions, generational and cultural conflicts etc. has made it easier to address the problem of forced marriage later.

The methods used

Group dynamics often result in some members of the group being dominant while others are quiet. This can give rise to tensions and inhibitions. There may be disagreement about the topics discussed, and arguments can become heated, particularly when the boys' values and feelings are touched on. Many of them will have a need to be seen in a certain light by the other members of the group when opinions are expressed about sensitive topics. The way in which the person who chairs the meeting deals with such things can be crucial to how well the discussion group functions.

It varies from one minority counsellor to another how they have chosen to run and chair their groups. The ability to handle disagreement between the boys during the discussions has been an important prerequisite for success. One of the minority counsellors believes that it is important for the boys to feel that it is possible to be open and show some of themselves without being evaluated or judged because of their views. Several of the counsellors have chosen an informal style with no one chairing the meeting and emphasised a free and relaxed atmosphere. Some have started with small talk and food before discussing the topic of the day. One of the minority counsellors ran the boys group more strictly, and had good experience of introducing 'ground rules' for the group in cooperation with the boys before starting up. This meant that everyone was clear about how to behave in order to ensure that everyone could feel heard and respected. They agreed on the following:

- ▶ not to be noisy
- ▶ that everybody had to be on time
- ▶ not to interrupt each other
- ▶ that there are rules for the group
- ▶ that participants must commit to taking part
- ▶ that participants can speak openly without being afraid of saying what they think in the group
- ▶ that participants must respect each other.

In some cases, minority counsellors have used specific methods to elicit opinions and ensure good discussions. Two books containing a num-

ber of methods and exercises have been particularly widely used. The books in question are *Bygg broer, ikke murer* (Djuliman and Hjort, 2007) and *I hederns skugga* (Baladiz, 2009). Many have been inspired by the Sharaf Hjältar⁴ project at Fryshuset in Sweden. The Sisterhood method⁵ can also be used for boys groups. Other methods used by the minority counsellors include the 'Jentesnakk' ('girl talk') method⁶ and a resilience methodology based on 'Styrk Sterke Sider' ('strengthen strong points').⁷ Talks by persons that the boys respect and look up to and persons with whom they can identify have also been used in the groups.

Kognitiv Atferdsmestring i Praksis ('Cognitive behavioural coping in practice', abbreviated KAMP) is a work method and programme developed and used by the organisation *Ungdom mot Vold* in connection with a project supported by IMDi that targets young boys from minority backgrounds in the counties of Oslo and Akershus. They have run boys groups on the basis of the programme's method, and they report good results.⁸

It was important for *Ungdom mot Vold* to find a language and a form that would appeal to the boys. They have good experience of dialogue in the form of reflection, role play, case studies and discussions. Stories, metaphors and familiar sayings have been used to achieve an understanding of the topics and create enthusiasm. Openness and trust within the group have been achieved by means of individual conversations before group sessions and by alternating between group discussions and individual conversations.

4 http://www.fryshuset.se/elektra/elektra/sharaf_hjalta.aspx

5 http://www.sisterhood.no/Sisterhood/SH___Startsiden/SH___Startsiden.html

6 <http://www.fnr.no/mer-jentesnakk.4451026-97894.html>

7 [http://www.r-bup.no/CMS/CMSpublish.nsf/\(\\$all\)/AE90E7042A731598C12574F9003DD6A6](http://www.r-bup.no/CMS/CMSpublish.nsf/($all)/AE90E7042A731598C12574F9003DD6A6)

8 The method is built around two components and a principle. SSS components, S³, comprise Self-understanding, Situational understanding and understanding of Society. III components, I³, comprise Inclusion, Involvement and Interaction. Both components, S³ and I³, are related to a principle, the LEI principle, comprising motivation, enthusiasm and interest.



It is embarrassing and shameful to admit that you are a victim of coercion.

Quote from a minority counsellor

Attitudes and opinions that have been expressed

In the discussions of the different topics, the pupils have often had different limits for what they could accept. One of the minority counsellors found that these limits varied with gender and how deeply religious participants were. Nonetheless, most of the pupils had relatively similar opinions about girls' chastity and what it means. Most of them are of the opinion that girls must behave better than boys because their behaviour influences how other people view their family.

It also emerged that the way boys talk about girls in general is very different from how they talk about their own sisters. Several of the boys were relatively liberal in their views when talking about girls in general, but felt that they needed to have a certain degree of control when it came to their own sisters. They stated that their sisters are not able to judge whether a potential boyfriend is okay or not themselves. This must be approved by their brother. In this group, it also emerged that the boys believe that girls need help to protect themselves against bad boys, and that the family knows what is best for the girls. When it comes to themselves, they want the right to make their own decisions.

Such attitudes can give rise to new and productive turns in discussions. In this example, the minority counsellor followed up by inviting the boys to reflect on the fact that they have one set of rules for themselves and another for their sisters. In this way, boys can become more aware of their own views, and that they sometimes mean several different things at the same time. Perhaps they are engaged in an internal discus-

sion with themselves that can be expressed in the boys group.

Forced marriage is a topic that can seem distant to some of these youths, even though most of them know or know of somebody when the group leader explains what is meant by the term. The minority counsellors have found that it is easier to talk about challenges relating to the concept of honour and attitudes to girls, since this is something that all the boys can relate to.

Participants in boys groups will usually not say anything about their personal experiences in connection with forced marriage. They can talk about forced marriage in connection with other people, for example based on a case. The participants in one of the boys groups stated that forced marriage is an extremely sensitive topic, and that few people are willing to speak out or tell their friends about it.

'... I think that we are helping to sow some seeds'

Those who have run boys groups believe that this measure has a good preventive effect. The discussion groups help to raise awareness and improve participants' self-understanding and their understanding of the situation and society as a whole. The fact that the boys discuss and listen to the opinions of others help them to reflect on attitudes that they have never questioned before. When they have discussed the same issue several times and can build on previous discussions, they can try out new opinions in a secure setting. One of the minority counsellors puts it as follows:

Another minority counsellor believes he has seen a development in his group whereby the boys have become more aware of various issues, more verbal and more comfortable talking about difficult topics. In the discussions, it has gradually become possible to confront the boys with their own attitudes, comparing what they say with what they would actually do in a given situation by using more personal examples. The boys have

shown positive development since the group started, both academically and socially. Several have developed friendships within the group.

Many of the minority counsellors have extensive contact with the participants outside group meetings. A close relationship has been established, and they come to talk about everyday matters or to ask for advice and help with various problems. This can include problems at home.

In one group, one of the boys had serious problems coping with school and other aspects of life. His participation in the group had a clear positive effect on him.

To sum up, we can conclude that boys respond positively when given an opportunity to talk about topics such as gender equality and control. Boys want and need to talk.

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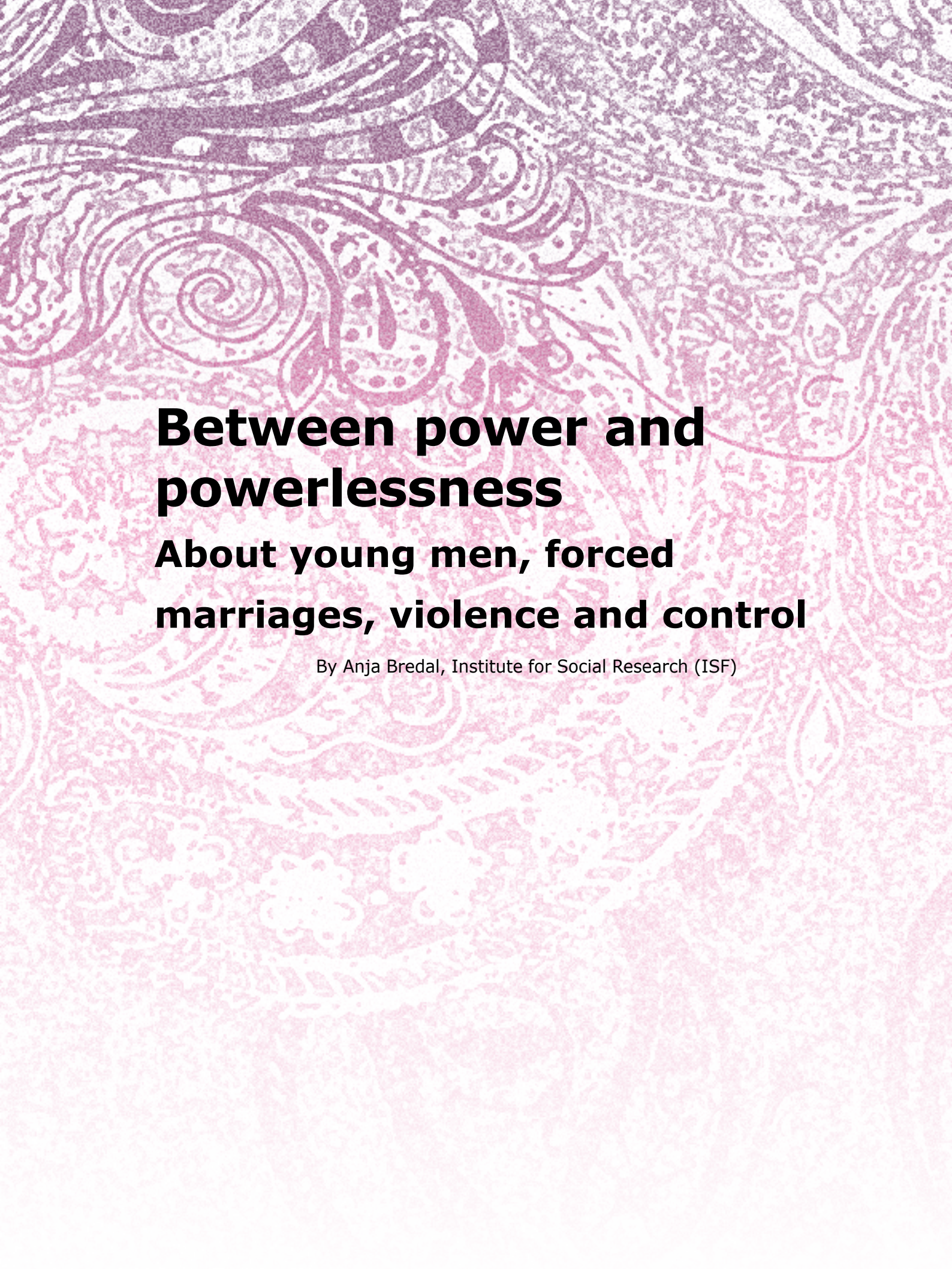
The discussions were always good, and there were often many participants who had something to say about a topic. Sometimes, we stayed longer because it was difficult to end a discussion. The boys also want to talk. As group leaders, we have contributed professional input, and many pupils have reflected on things in a new way thanks to the discussions... I think that we are helping to sow some seeds.

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**Between power and
powerlessness**
**About young men, forced
marriages, violence and control**

By Anja Bredal, Institute for Social Research (ISF)

” There are not many people in Norwegian society, maybe even in the world, who have heard many stories about boys. Most people have only heard about women.”

Imran, 19 years old

Imran is one of 29 young men who were interviewed in connection with an IMDi-funded research project on young men and honour-related domestic violence. This is the first time that this issue has been studied from boys and young men's perspective. This article presents some of the results.

An authoritarian and patriarchal upbringing

The study shows that some boys grow up with strict rules and strong restrictions on friendships and leisure activities. They can be about prioritising school work or religious activities and 'staying out of trouble', but also about a general fear on the part of the parents that their son will become 'Norwegianised'. The expectation that sons will take responsibility for the family's welfare and standing/honour and conform with the norms of the community has a central place. Some young men have been isolated and lonely during their childhood, either because they have not been allowed to develop relationships or because they feel that they do not fit in. Others spend a lot of time with their friends to escape from family problems.

Several of the young men who took part in the study have had an authoritarian, patriarchal upbringing in which obedience, conformity and respect for their elders have been emphasised. The parents do not expect open communication, and if their son tries to negotiate this is perceived as insolence and associated with 'Norwegianisation'. *Norwegianisation* thus becomes a generic

term used to describe children and young people's unwanted behaviour and attempts to expand their freedom of action in conflict with their parents' expectations.

Heavy responsibility

Boys and young men can be assigned, feel and take on a great responsibility for the family, particularly if they are an older brother or an only son. This responsibility can be particularly great in families in which one or both parents suffers from mental health or other health problems, or where the parents have divorced or the father has abdicated from the role as the family's provider and protector:

” *I want to have control over my whole family. (...) That means making sure that everything is okay.*

Quote from Kamran, 20 years old

The burden of responsibility can be of a practical, financial and emotional nature. Boys' mental health or school work can suffer under such pressure, which also reinforces their sense of isolation and loneliness.

Choice of education and lack of recognition

School performance and choice of education are a source of conflict in some boys' families. Several boys' parents insist that they choose the general subjects programme, while the boys themselves want to take a vocational education. Some adjust their educational plans in accordance with their family's wishes. Others stick to their choice and meet with resistance and a lack of recognition. Some are subjected to physical and psychological violence if the parents are unhappy with their school performance:

“ She says that you are stupid, that you are crazy. That, somehow... if you don't do well at school, it is better to die, to kill yourself, than to be at school and feel embarrassed because you are the worst pupil in the class.

Quote from Imran, 19 years old

Boys who struggle and do not get recognition at home, may react with frustration and protests at school. It seems that both the parents and school view such boys as disobedient and difficult, without asking how the boy himself sees the situation. If the school regards this as a discipline problem, it can be difficult to understand that such behaviour can actually be caused by *too much* discipline at home. A lack of respect and trust from the adults at school will only exacerbate the situation.

Pressure and coercion to marry

Some of the young men expand their freedom of action in secret, for example by having a secret girlfriend. This 'double life' is not necessarily perceived as a problem by the boy's family, but it can give rise to deep conflicts if the young man wants to marry the woman, who, in the eyes of his family and other people, has lost her honour – because she has been with him.

Young men can also be forced or pressured into marrying against their will. What is considered to be the appropriate age for a man to marry varies, but, for some, the pressure only starts in their late twenties or even later. If a son finds a woman himself who he wants to marry, but who is not accepted by the family, the pressure

could start at a young age. Some are pressured into breaking up with their girlfriend. Others enter into marriage voluntarily, but are then not allowed to divorce.

As part of the pressure to marry, parents can make derogatory remarks about the woman who their son has chosen, or, more generally, about women raised in Norway. These women are described as loose, domineering and deceitful, and the son is warned against trusting them:

“ Mother says: She has become Norwegian. She will leave you the next day or run away.

Quote from Amir, 20 years old

The parents' warnings apply to women raised in Norway in general, and to women who the son falls in love with in particular. The men are thus taught to look down on and fear women who share their background, while their confidence in their own judgement and ability to establish relationships on their own are weakened.

Discipline

While some parents use physical violence, ridicule and insults to make their sons conform, others appeal to their loyalty, respect for their elders and responsibility for the family's honour. Like young women, young men can find it difficult to resist the pressure from the family to be loyal. It can be particularly difficult to admit that you have little influence when the pressure to marry starts in adulthood:

“ I wouldn't have dared to say that a few years ago, but I do now. When I'm out, I'm the king, at home I'm a puppy.

Quote from Tahir, 30 years old

Some parents trick or force their sons to move to the country of origin against their will, as a

preventive measure or sanction against unwanted behaviour.

His sister's protector – and keeper

The project also sheds light on how some boys are taught to 'look after' their sisters to make sure that they do not become or get a reputation for being a 'loose' or 'bad' woman. This is an ambiguous role where control and care are interwoven. A controlling brother may perceive his actions as expressing love and care, since he is protecting his sister while also protecting his own and his family's reputation. Sisters might view their brother's control as well-intended, welcome and unwanted at one and the same time. In some families, the control takes the form of surveillance and outright oppression, and brothers sometimes actively initiate control, operate independently of their parents or are stricter than their parents. Other young men find their role as their sisters' keepers a tiresome burden:



I felt that I was under pressure. It was uncomfortable, because I couldn't stop thinking about it.

I could not imagine my sister being with someone and doing things with him.

17-year-old boy

Quote from a

Controlling their sisters is not just a role young men can be assigned by their parents, it can also be something their male friends expect. A man can insult another man's masculinity by casting doubt on his control over his sister. Correspondingly, there is an expectation in certain circles that a brother should react with violence or other sanctions against his sister's boyfriend because he has endangered her honour. Friends can help each other to control their sisters, but a brother can also cooperate with his sister to

keep the fact that she has a boyfriend a secret from his friends.

The young men we interviewed insist that their own sisters neither have nor want to have boyfriends. They thus portray their sisters as virtuous women and themselves as honourable men. They also avoid being specific about the ways in which they exercise control and limit their sisters' freedom of action.

Controlling boyfriends

Some young men behave in a very controlling manner in relation to their girlfriends. They seem to be anxious about being betrayed, isolate the girl and use violence, control and coercion to keep her. Among other things, they threaten to tell the girl's family that she has had sex. These girls have been brought up under strict norms of chastity, and the young man uses her fear of sanctions to have his way. This control of girlfriends has clear similarities with control of sisters and must be seen in connection with the socialisation practices that teach boys that love and control go hand in hand.

Gender and generation power: Two sources of conflicting pressure

Young men who grow up with classic patriarchal values in a migration context must relate to conflicting and ambiguous ideals about what it means to be a man. At home, they learn to be superior by virtue of their gender and subordinate by virtue of their age. Male dominance is based on conformity and subordination in the group, and boys have more freedom than girls as long as they conform to their family's expectations and a traditional gender role. The less they conform with these roles, the more they will feel the authority of their parents. Some young men make sure that they do not end up in a situation where they are in active opposition. As long as they do not rub the people with power the wrong way, they themselves have power. At the same time, however, they face more or less opposite ideals and socialisation from society at large: Children are supposed to gradually liberate themselves from their parents and kin and to realise their poten-



tial as individuals as part of a couple/nuclear family in which a degree of gender equality prevails.

The work on this study has highlighted two related contrasts: Firstly, there is a contrast between the accepted truth about the freedom, privileges and *power* of young men, on the one hand, and the vulnerability and *powerlessness* that also characterises their lives, on the other. Several of our informants confirm and reproduce the accepted truths at one level and undermine them at another, as other scientists have also pointed out. Secondly, there is a tension between *continuity* and *change*. The accepted truths paint a scenario characterised by continuity in which parents and sons continue to practice the same norms and roles that the parents brought with them from their country of origin. Several of the informants' stories appear to fit this picture. At the same time, however, it is clear that both the parents' authority and the traditional gender roles are under strong pressure both from within and from the outside.

To put it simply, we can describe the young men's situation as a *double dose of conflicting pressure*. Firstly, they have to navigate between a traditional masculinity that affords them certain privileges, on the one hand, and their parents' tradition-based authority that requires conformity and subordination, on the other. Secondly, these two forms of authority are in crisis. They are expected to submit to their parents, whose authority has been weakened, and to dominate women, whose position has been strengthened. The young men therefore face a challenge in adjusting the balance between a 'stronger' position as a son/child and a 'weaker' position as a man/brother/partner.

Control of women: Men's power *and* powerlessness?

Control over women's sexuality is a key aspect of classic patriarchal socialisation of boys. The boys are taught that their family's honour depends on it never being possible to call into question the women's chastity. The chastity norm for women is far more absolute and the sanctions much stricter than for the more ambiguous norms that apply to male sexuality. Any negative reactions boys may face over having girlfriends cannot compare with the branding of women as 'bad' and 'whores' and the punishment they are subject to. One important implication of this is that unmarried young men can live alone without being perceived as 'loose', which partly explains why young men break with their family more rarely than young women do. It is a general point that young men's conflicts with their families are not brought to a head to the same extent as they are for women. Women who experience oppression and pressure can face a much more absolute choice between staying or leaving their family. Because young men are not presented with an ultimatum to the same extent, some of them become stuck longer in a situation dominated by pressure and coercion, for example by moving away from home, but continuing to 'allow them-

selves' to be pressured. On the other hand, boys and young men are indirectly affected by the absolute chastity norm that applies to women: Among other things, they can be seen as bad men if their sister is branded a 'bad' woman, and they can be refused permission to marry the woman they love because she is 'bad'.

Thus, some men learn that women must be controlled, but that they are fundamentally uncontrollable and deceitful. At the same time, the *possibility* of exercising control is very limited in a society where men and women interact socially in many arenas, and where women are not financially dependent on men. When masculinity is based on control of women and it is no longer possible to control them, it becomes increasingly evident that this is a *dependent masculinity that is at the mercy of others*. It is not surprising that some of these men see the role of controller as a heavy burden.

The young men's conceptions of women must be seen in light of this dynamic between power and powerlessness. When some of them contemptuously portray women brought up in Norway as 'loose, demanding and domineering', they also ascribe to these women a position where they make demands of men. In this way, the boys' rejection of 'bad girls here' in favour of a 'pure girl from the home country' paints a picture of women with power and powerless men.





Queer World

– for gay people who fear forced marriage

'Forced marriage can be a strategy used by parents to prevent gay sons and daughters from bringing shame on the family.'

Coming out as gay is difficult, particularly during youth. For many young people with minority backgrounds, it is seen as impossible. Not only will it in many cases mean a total break with one's family, relations, community and friends – in many communities, homosexuality is associated with great sin and shame, and the life and health of the person concerned could be endangered.

“If I die now, at least somebody will know my true story.

Quote from a 19-year-old man

Forced marriage can be a strategy that parents choose to prevent gay sons and daughters from bringing shame on the family, or at least a consequence if gay people do not come out. Many gay people despair of their situation. They want to be open, but are afraid. They need support. They need to talk to other people in the same situation and to have somewhere to be where they do not have to fear reactions – or, at worst, fear for their lives.

IMDi has supported Queer World, which is both a meeting place, a network and an information and knowledge centre. Its more than 100 members make up a network and support each other. Since Queer World was established in 2004, they have been in contact with several hundred people. They also run outreach activities, and have established a separate Queer World youth branch at Bjørnholt, where the minority counsellor has been strongly involved. We have spoken to project manager Magne Richardsen, and in this article, we will share the experience that he and Queer World have gained during the project period.⁹

When gay immigrants marry, it is usually a case of forced marriage

An important message from Queer World is that gay people who have grown up in collectivist-minded families and who are married to a person of the opposite sex are in principle always in a forced marriage. This type of marriage is usually entered into because the gay person did not feel that it was a real option for him/her to remain unmarried without facing reprisals. Because of fear of reactions from their family, most gay people repress their sexual orientation and/or keep it a secret. Many quietly accept getting married because the alternative, to come out as gay, seems impossible and frightening.

Queer World believes that gay people are strongly overrepresented among victims of this kind of violence. In Queer World's experience, there is little understanding of the fact that this group is strongly affected. They complain of low awareness and sometimes little willingness to include the needs and perspectives of gay people in the ongoing work to combat forced marriage. Gay people are fighting for the right to remain unmarried without fear of reprisals, but this is overshadowed by the fight for the right to choose one's own spouse.

“Gay people are fighting for the right to remain unmarried without fear of reprisals, but this is overshadowed by the fight for the right to choose one's own spouse.

Quote from Magne Richardsen of Queer World

⁹ Queer World has submitted written reports to IMDi about measures and project implementation. They have also submitted applications for project funding. This article is based on applications with pertaining project descriptions, reports and a conversation with Magne Richardsen.

When homosexuality is seen as a sin, that makes it even more difficult

Many Muslim families regard homosexual practice and a life as unmarried as 'haraam' – 'that which is forbidden'.¹⁰ Many people find the idea that their parents may hold this opinion frightening. It affects the self-image and identity of many gay Muslims. Gay people from other religions such as Christianity and Judaism also experience these mechanisms. Salvation and damnation are important dogmas in these religions. Gay people from all these three religions are often objects of other people's contempt and hate, and may feel that they are the 'sin incarnate'.

In Queer World's experience, Muslims are an especially at-risk group among gay people. They nevertheless

wish to emphasise the importance of honour-oriented culture. In their opinion, the issue has something to do with interpretations of Islam, but mostly with tradition and culture.

Research supports this. The report *Lesbiske og homofile med innvandrerbakgrunn. En pilotundersøkelse* ('Lesbians and gays from immigrant backgrounds. A pilot study' – in Norwegian only) concludes that there is no basis for identifying especially at-risk groups among lesbian and gay immigrants based on religious affiliation. Although the study indicates that non-Western immigrants often have more negative attitudes towards homosexuality than men and women from Europe and North America, such negative attitudes are not necessarily based on religion.¹¹

'It is the family's responsibility to restore its honour'

According to Queer World, many cultures lack the vocabulary to describe homosexual orientation or practice without using terms of abuse. It is not an easy topic to raise, neither for the gay person nor for the family. If a person chooses to live out his or her homosexual orientation, this will bring shame, not only on the individual, but on the whole extended family, and it will be the family's responsibility to restore its honour by taking measures against the gay person or his/her family.

One of Queer World's members experienced this in a tragic way. When his family found out that he was gay, they took him to their country of origin to marry him off. Relatives in their home country had heard about his homosexuality, however. He was killed by his own people when one or more relatives repeatedly drove a car over him. In this way, they wanted to restore the family's honour.

Queer World mentioned that gay people can be victims of 'mercy killings'. A mother had said that it would be better if her son was killed. Then he would go to heaven before he could live out his sexual orientation and thus suffer eternal death.

Nyhetsklipp - Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet (...)

Uttak 01.11.2011 Kilde: Retriever

Aftenposten

Homofile innvandrere frykter å bli utestengt

Aftenposten Aften. Publisert på trykk 20.06.2005.
Kreklings David Vojislav. Seksjon: Nyheter.
Side: 6.
Del: 1.

Mange homofile innvandrere sliter med depresjoner. De frykter reaksjonene fra familie og nærmiljø om de står frem. Samtidig er homofientilthet i innvandremljøene nesten ikke omtalt i mediene.

DAVID VOJISLAV KREKLING Da Mansour Saberi vokste opp i Iran, ble homofile trakassert, forfulgt og i enkelte tilfeller henrettet på grunn av sin seksuelle legning.

Saberi, som visste han var homofil allerede fra seksårsalderen, trodde dragingen mot samme kjønn skyldtes en sykdom - en feil han ønsket å forandre.

Så kom han til Norge.

- Da ble mitt verdensbilde drastisk forandret, blant annet i forhold til min seksuelle identitet. Det fikk jeg av Norge. Etter å ha akseptert homofilien som en del av meg, gikk det raskt å stå frem som åpent homofil, sier Saberi.

Og da han først sto frem, valgte han å stå frem for hele verden. For moren og to søstre i Iran, for det iranske miljøet i Norge og for tre søstre og det han kaller en hærskare av onkler, tanter, kusiner og øvrig familie i England.

- Mor ville jeg skulle gifte meg, men så at jeg har det bra. Hun har akseptert det. Søstrene mine har godtatt det uten problemer. Jeg har holdt passe avstand for å leve det livet jeg lever, men uten å miste kontakt med familien eller det iranske miljøet. Jeg har aldri løyet om at jeg er homofil, og jeg har aldri gjort min seksuelle legning til et svakt punkt, sier Saberi.

Tør ikke. Saberi er blant de heldige. For mange homofile med innvandrerbakgrunn innebærer åpenhet at de må kutte bånd til familie og nærmiljø. Det fant sosiolog Randi Rørlien ut da hun skrev hovedoppgave om homofile innvandrere med muslimsk bakgrunn.

- De jeg intervjuet, skjuler sin legning. De mener de vil bli ansett som avvikere. De frykter også å bli utsatt for vold dersom de er åpne, sier Rørlien.

En av dem sosiologen snakket med, fortalte at det å snakke om homofilien innen egen etnisk gruppe var som å snakke til en mur. Det ble sett på som en sykdom.

Ingen kritikk. Norsk offentlighet reagerer skarpt når kristne kirkeledere markerer seg mot homofil. Ingen kritiserer homofientilthet i innvandremljøer.

Redaktør Knut Olav Amås i Samtiden stutte i en kronikk i Aftenposten tidligere denne måneden spørsmål om det skyldtes kunnskapsløshet eller kulturell relativisme.

Samtidig har Skeiv Verden, en forening for homofile, lesbiske og bifile med innvandrerbakgrunn, kommet på banen. I dag arrangerer de et debattmøte på Filmens Hus med spørsmål om norske medier og politikere glemmer seg bak flerkulturell toleranse for å slippe å konfrontere innvandremljøene. De ønsker at innvanderpolitikere bytter tåusheten.

- Disse politikerne må ta opp problemene i egne miljøer. Samtidig må de etnisk norske politikere kreve å få vite hvor deres partifeller med innvandrerbakgrunn står i dette spørsmålet, sier Mama Eide i Skeiv Verden.

For snille. Det støtter Saberi.

- Jeg tror mediene er litt for snille når de behandler slike temaer.

- Samtidig må innvandremljøene utfordres innenfra. Homofile med muslimsk bakgrunn må begynne å pirke i imamer og menigheter.

Kveldens debattmøte finner sted fra klokken 15 til 17 i Filmens Hus. Til stede i panelet er blant andre leder Aslam Ashan ved Ressursenter for pakistanske barn og leder Nadeem Butt fra Antirasistisk Senter.

david.kreklings@aftenposten.no

Bildetekst: Mansour Saberi ville bli heterofil da han ble stor. Da han kom fra Iran til Norge fikk han en helt ny forståelse av sin egen seksuelle identitet. FOTO: DAVID VOJISLAV KREKLING

© Aftenposten

Retriever
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¹⁰ The term 'haraam' is used to refer to everything that is 'forbidden' according to the word of Allah, the Koran and Hadith Qudsi.

¹¹ NOVA report 14/03, Bera Ulstein Moseng.

Parents who wish to cure their children of homosexuality

Magne Richardsen of Queer World states that many people from immigrant backgrounds do not see homosexuality as an orientation, but as something that some people choose, and that they can therefore also choose to refrain from. Young people have learned that this is how it is, and often think in the same way. Both young people and their parents often know little about homosexuality.

In its work, Queer World has seen examples of gay people being taken abroad and left with relatives to read the Koran for a period and attend school to get rid of their sinful thoughts and feelings. The expression 'to drink the Koran' refers to a notion among some Muslims that reading the Koran can act as a kind of medicine that can cure people.

A story Richardsen told about how a shop was washed with soap and water after a gay man had shopped there is an example of how gay people can be perceived as unclean. It shows what form such debasement and psychological violence can take.

Queer World has seen parents try to 'cure' gay sons and daughters through marriage: if they are married to a person of the opposite sex, they will also be attracted to the opposite sex. The thing that children find it impossible to choose to say 'no' to, namely marriage, is often perceived by the parents as being in their child's best interests. Parents may believe that the children will lose their homosexual orientation and, perhaps equally important, that the family will be perceived as respectable and virtuous.

Strategies and flexibility

According to Queer World, the way in which a son or daughter's homosexuality is dealt with has to a certain extent been related to the gay person's ability and willingness to be flexible and make compromises with his/her family, and vice versa. Some parents will be more tolerant if their son or daughter does not explicitly say that he/she is gay and demonstrates an apologetic attitude. For many families, it is their reputation and

façade that is the important thing, so if the gay person is 'discreet', the family can turn a blind eye to him or her leading a double life. But this requires that they marry.

This is not dissimilar to the way in which many heterosexual people manoeuvre when subjected to pressure and coercion about their choice of spouse. IMDi is aware that the family counselling services have used 'creative methods' in several cases to help families arrive at solutions that mean that they can save face and preserve their honour in relation to their extended family. Allowing oneself to be married off and leading a double life instead or repressing sides of oneself is also a known strategy among heterosexuals. There are many similarities, in other words.

Mental health problems and suicide attempts

Gay immigrants and descendants of immigrants often choose isolation rather than seeking support in the gay community, which is more common among 'Norwegian' gay people, according to Magne Richardsen. Many of them are very lonely. Nor can it be taken for granted that gay people from immigrant backgrounds will be welcomed in gay circles, which may be sceptical and want to avoid the problems that come with them.

Queer World meets young people who experience hopelessness and despair. Many are depressed and see no solution. Mental health problems and suicide attempts are more common in this group than in other sections of the population, including gay ethnic Norwegians. This leads to many of them not having the strength required to stand up to their families. Many need help and support

Social events are important, since many of them are alone and isolated. Members feel that it is important to meet other people in the same situation. Queer World endeavours to give people a fundamental sense of security and help them to acknowledge their homosexual orientation. This is easier if they spend time with other people in



the same situation and with the same orientation.

Small, slow steps and a high threshold

Coming to Queer World can be an important first step on the road to either a little or great openness about one's sexual orientation. For many, the other network members are the first people they confide in. Some then take the next step and tell a close friend or a sister or brother before perhaps telling their parents and family.

Coming out as gay can take time, and unpleasant reactions can reverse the process. And the reactions are often unpleasant. In Queer World's experience, there is always a high price to pay for full openness. According to Queer World, the degree of openness varies depending on who one is with and where one is. Few people are one hundred per cent open in all situations and with everyone. Members find it liberating to at least be able to be themselves while they are in the company of other Queer World members. For victims of violence, threats or exclusion from the family, Queer World can mean the start of a network they can fall back on and develop a network of friends around.

Role models and resource persons are important if more people are to come out of the closet

It is important to gay people to see that there are others out there who have succeeded in standing up to the pressure from their families. They can serve as inspiration and motivate others to take the same step, and they can support them in the process. This is why Queer World endeavours to foster individuals who can act as contact persons and bridge-builders and play a visible role in relation to society at large.

Today, several Queer World members from different cultural backgrounds are openly gay and have a role as resource persons in the organisation. They act as role models for others, and take part in external information activities targeting parents as well as young people.

While it is not unusual for these openly gay resource persons to be harassed by their own families, friends and networks, they may nevertheless feel that it is empowering to live out their true selves. Experience shows that being open is demanding, and that many of these resource persons need to take a break for a period before returning with renewed strength to again contribute to Queer World's activities.

Asylum seekers are often more openly gay, according to Magne Richardsen. They rarely have a family and a social network that will react negatively to their sexual orientation. Asylum seekers have therefore proven to be a valuable resource for Queer World.

First Ola, then Mohammed

Queer World describes a hierarchy and uncertainty and mutual scepticism between persons from the same national, ethnic and religious groups, particularly in the initial phase. Because of the fear of rumours, most of the people who contact Queer World want to first talk to a person from a Norwegian background. They may agree to meet in a café or somewhere similar. They often have several individual conversations before taking part in any Queer World activities, where they will be offered a mentor the first few times. Trust is built up gradually.

After a while, when they feel more secure, many choose to talk to a person from the same cultural background. They are easier to identify with, and they can learn from the strategies employed by the other person, for example when raising the topic in conversations with parents or others.

The Queer World network comprises people with backgrounds from many countries and cultures. Members can therefore identify with and receive recognition from people from the same cultural group. This diversity is a valuable asset.

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He makes it easier for them to breathe in the closet and demonstrates that it is possible to come out.

Quote from Magne Richardsen of Queer World

Imam opens up and shows that people don't have to choose between being homosexual or a Muslim

The imam Daayiee Abdullah visited Norway in 2008 and 2010 on Queer World's invitation. He is known as one of the few openly gay imams in the world. Among other things, he gave a lecture at the House of Literature and attracted wide-spread media attention. Many took the opportunity to have a private conversation with him.

Queer World's Magne Richardsen says that it is important to gay Muslims in Norway that Imam Abdullah is openly gay. He is open and demonstrates that it is not necessary to choose between being homosexual or being a Muslim. 'He makes it easier for them to breathe in the closet and shows them that it is possible to come out.' Working through religious leaders is an important part of the awareness-raising efforts.

Queer World has also invited other imams, one of whom was the world's second openly gay imam. It is said that many found it an intense and rare experience to have an opportunity to meet and pray together as openly gay Muslims.

Helping people to help themselves

The first self-help group was held in 2009, with eight participants meeting eight times. The target group consisted of gay Muslims, but Norwegians and other gay people from minority backgrounds also participated. The self-help group

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Until the group, I thought that I was alone in this world, and that nobody could understand me. For the first time, I met people like me.

Quote from a 23-year-old man

system is based on coping theory and a solution-oriented approach. It strongly emphasises creating a sense of security within the group from the first meeting. Issues that can come up include matters relating to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, family and social networks, different perspectives on religion, asylum, marriage, coercion, different kinds of losses, violence/abuse and living openly/secretly.

Several participants have become stronger and more secure in several ways. One of the participants told his parents that he would not get married, a message that was surprisingly well received. He had used the group to think through how he could talk about the issue. People who started out as completely covert gay Muslims have in a short space of time come to a point where they wish to take responsibility for both study trips to London and new self-help groups.

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The meetings have been tolerant, with a very supportive and confirming atmosphere, which has been important.

Quote from a 30-year-old woman

Weak due process protection

Every year, a number of gay individuals apply for asylum or residence on humanitarian grounds in Norway after having received death threats and experienced harassment, violence and abuse in other countries. In Queer World's experience, these applications are usually rejected, which Queer World sees as something of a paradox given that the UN selects resettlement refugees on the basis of persecution on grounds of sexual orientation, among others.

Discrimination on grounds of gender, skin colour, religion or sexual orientation is forbidden in Norway. While this helps to protect gay people, Queer World believes that the other groups covered by the Anti-Discrimination Act enjoy better

Tirsdag 20. november 2007

Homofile ungdommer redde for å bli drept

Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI) jobber nå med flere saker hvor homofile innvandrere frykter for livene sine etter at familien har oppdaget legningen deres.

I UDIs kompetanseteam mot tvangsekteskap har de så langt i år jobbet med 160 saker der gutter og jenter risikerer å bli eller er giftet bort mot egen vilje. En håndfull av sakene teamet arbeider med, dreier seg om homofile og lesbiske ungdommer. Til teamet forteller de homofile ungdommene om drapstruslene og om frykten for å bli utstøtt av familien.

– De frykter at de skal bli drept, sier rådgiver **Terje Bjørnanger** i kompetanseteamet til Dagsavisen.

(NTB)

protection, and that there is a hierarchy of groups in which gay people come low in the ranking. Society focuses strongly on discrimination on the basis of gender and ethnicity, while gay people receive less attention. In Queer World's experience, gay people from immigrant backgrounds can experience an unfortunate combination of being among the most vulnerable and at-risk groups, while the authorities and society pay little attention to them and do relatively little to improve their situation.

It is also Queer World's experience that many gay people from immigrant backgrounds are reluctant to report matters to the police because they have been met with prejudice. They are also afraid that, due to ignorance about honour-related violence and collectivist cultures, the child welfare service and the police will deal with the case in a way that makes the situation worse. It is important to note that this does not just apply to gay people, but also to people who, for some rea-

son or another, are assumed to be gay. Threats and violence against presumed gay people also affect heterosexuals who deviate from the gender norms or otherwise stand out.

Information and awareness-raising

Queer World organises extensive information activities. Some of those who have come out as openly gay have contributed by giving lectures at schools or manning information stands to inform about Queer World. School pupils are an important target group. A separate Queer World youth branch has been established at Bjørnholt school. It receives many enquiries from gays who are 'in the closet' and who want advice and guidance.

Queer World networks with other organisations (queer organisations and others) during the gay pride festival *Skeive dager*.¹² This is important because many Muslims experience double discrimination, both as gay people and as Muslims/immigrants. Many experience difficulties in being accepted into ordinary gay circles.

Queer World also works in relation to other organisations that are active in the field of forced marriage in order to highlight the special situation of gay people in that context. Queer World has experienced a reluctance or fear to become involved in the topic of homosexuality on the part of many of these organisations, including organisations that receive government funding to combat forced marriage.

A lot of information is available on Queer World's homepage at www.skeivverden.no. The website also contains links to other websites and a much-used Q&A service.

¹² <http://www.skeivedager.no/>

Several references to films and books about gay people from immigrant backgrounds are available on the following website: www.imdi.no

More arenas are needed

Based on what Queer World tells us, the organisation meets a need for an arena for gay people from immigrant backgrounds where they can support each other. The threshold for coming out as openly gay is higher than for gay ethnic Norwegians, because the parents and family's reactions will usually be even more negative and entail different kinds of sanctions and reprisals, such as being 'dumped' in the country of origin and forced marriage. There is a great need for someone to talk to, and Queer World can provide advice and recommendations.

Queer World achieves a lot within its own organisational limits, but it calls for better coordination with other organisations/public agen-

cies working to combat forced marriage. It is difficult for Queer World and gay people to do all the information work on their own. If other agencies or organisations could help to spread information about the link between homosexuality and forced marriage, more people could be reached, not least in immigrant communities, where parents are a target group that it is difficult for Queer World to reach. This is a matter of making better use of potential synergies in order to improve due process protection and awareness and knowledge about this particularly vulnerable group and ensure that their interests are safeguarded.

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Moseng, NOVA-rapport 14/03





People with mental disabilities

– a particularly vulnerable group

'As such, this is not forced marriage in the form we normally encounter it, but it is a violation of the rights of a person incapable of assessing his/her own situation.'

In their work to combat forced marriage, IMDi advisers and the Expert Team have been involved in several cases concerning people with mental disabilities. The integration counsellor in Islamabad in Pakistan in particular has focused on the situation of people with disabilities. Experience shows that, instead of seeking help from the ordinary support agencies, many families find a solution for their disabled child within their own network. One solution is to arrange for the person to be married, thereby ensuring that the disabled person is cared for and looked after in the long term. We have seen that this particularly vulnerable group can also be subject to forced marriage.

Breach of the conditions for marriage, and a violation of the rights of persons incapable of assessing their own situation

In IMDi's experience, a spouse is usually found in the parents' home country, has no disability him/herself, and in some cases is not aware of the partner's functional level. The disabled person can have limited or no ability to understand what marriage or parental responsibility entails, and will often express joy and expectations when a marriage is planned. As such, this is not forced marriage in the form we normally encounter it, but it is a violation of the rights of a person incapable of assessing his/her own situation. It is also in breach of the conditions for contracting a marriage in Norway. Pursuant to Chapter 2 Section 9 of the Norwegian Marriage Act, the spouses must have *'the ability to have a normal understanding of what contracting a marriage entails and the ability to be normally motivated to contract a marriage'*. In IMDi's experience, this condition is often not met, or there is reason to doubt whether it is met.

The police are also concerned about this and have stated that the current legislation does not give adequate protection to this particularly vulnerable group. It has emerged in conversations with the police that many of these cases result in extensive violence and abuse.

An 'internal matter'

In IMDi's experience, many families consider the situation of a family member with a mental disability to be an 'internal matter' for the family to deal with by deciding what is the best solution for the person and the family from a *collective* perspective. Development and training to help the mentally disabled person to achieve greater independence and cope with everyday life does not seem to be a priority in itself. In several of the cases, the families appear to primarily be concerned with 'normalising' the situation, so that the disabled person is seen to lead a normal life. The goal seems to be to make the disability as invisible to the surroundings as possible, regardless of whether the person is capable of living in the context of a marriage. The families therefore often want such persons to marry and have children like other people.

The collage features several newspaper articles from Aftenposten. The largest article is titled "Funksjonshemmede barn gjemmes bort" (Functionally disabled children hidden away), with a sub-headline "Holdes hjemme. Her kunne Madhuri (11) stått, men hun holdes skjult hjemme. Skammen og skyldfølelsen over å ha et funksjonshemmet barn er for stor for foreldrene hennes og mange innandrere." (Kept at home. Here Madhuri (11) could have stood, but she is kept hidden at home. The shame and guilt over having a functionally disabled child is too big for her parents and many others.)

Other visible headlines include "Sluk falt tyrannene" (The tyrants fell), "Foreldremøte" (Parent meeting), "Instruksen gjaldt likevel" (The instruction still applied), "TAPTE MED GADAFI" (Lost with Gadafi), "HVEM ER RIKEST I LANDET HER?" (Who is the richest in the country here?), and "Aktiv 10-åring" (Active 10-year-old).

Marriages of convenience and human trafficking

To marry off a son or daughter to a foreigner can be a migration strategy. There have been several examples of people with disabilities being used as an 'admission ticket' to Europe through marriage to a relative in the parents' country of origin. In some cases, this can take the form of serial marriages, whereby the person in question

is married and divorced several times. It is probable that some of these marriages are simply marriages of convenience, and that the families could also gain financially from exploiting people with disabilities in this manner – i.e. a form of human trafficking. It is important that the Foreign Service and the Norwegian immigration authorities are aware of this practice. School staff and others who come into contact with disabled persons should be aware that such abuse can occur.

How to bring cases like this to light

The police can bring to light cases where people living in Norway who apply for family reunification with a spouse from a different country do not understand what the application or marriage entails, and that the conditions for marriage are therefore not met.¹³ This can be brought to light during the interview or by means of a doctor's certificate confirming that the bride/groom lacks legal capacity. The submission of such a certificate can be required. The police will then notify the Directorate of Immigration, which will take this into account when considering the application.

Foreign service missions where IMDi has stationed integration counsellors are aware of this problem. Several cases have been reported to the Norwegian police and the Directorate of Immigration.

In schools, forced marriage cases can be identified by talking more to pupils about planned marriages or marriages that have taken place. It is important that staff who become aware of such cases do not drop the matter just because the pupil seems to be happy. As in other cases, it will be important to listen and ask questions in order to obtain as much information as possible and, if relevant, to discuss the matter with the Expert Team or with the child welfare service, the health service and/or the police. The legal aspects of the case will often be clarified through such contact, and it will be possible to discuss the

ethical dilemmas that are often involved in such cases.

If school staff feel that the follow-up from support services is inadequate in relation to the pupil's disability, this could constitute grounds for looking more closely into the matter, contacting the child welfare service or the pupil's GP to express general concern about the care of the child/young person, and take the initiative to a discussion about the marriage. If a responsibility group has been appointed for the young person, this group could form the framework for such a discussion.

Without ignoring the fact that there are sometimes genuine grounds for concern, it is of course important, when raising the matter with a disabled person and his/her family, to bear in mind that marriages in which one or both parties have a mental disability can be both desired and entered into in a lawful manner.

Research shows that families can be particularly reluctant to marry off daughters with mental disabilities because responsibility for her care will then pass to her husband's family, and she can risk a poorer quality of life than if she was to stay with her biological family.¹⁴ Sons, on the other hand, continue to be part of their biological family even after marriage. In many families, the eldest sister is often assigned great responsibility for following up younger siblings with disabilities. Gender and birth order seems to have a bearing on the way in which families deal with a disabled person's situation.

More knowledge and better adapted services needed

Minority counsellors who have been in contact with pupils with disabilities have the impression that the families do not make sufficient use of public services. Contact with the public support agencies is a challenge for many of them. The families often do not know how to make use of the support agencies, and the support agencies

¹³ It is standard procedure for the Police Immigration Service to interview persons living in Norway who apply for family reunification. In most family reunification cases, the Norwegian party must be interviewed by the police.

¹⁴ Sørheim, Torunn Arntsen: *Innvandrere med psykisk utviklingshemmede barn i møte med tjenesteapparatet*, Gyldendal 2000.

may know too little about how to help families with minority backgrounds. The challenges are often related to cultural and language barriers to good communication. In many cases, the support services fail to achieve a good dialogue and thereby provide good services for the disabled person and his/her family, who may be sceptical about the Norwegian system and wish to take care of their own children without the support agencies interfering.

Minority counsellor's experience from work in schools shows that the families often do not make use of the services and arrangements that Norwegian society offers. The result is that many do not receive the follow-up they need. This could be because their families are not aware of the services that are available, or because they have stopped using services that they found not to function satisfactorily. The personal support contact scheme is a service that several minority counsellors have seen families discontinue after a while. This could be because these public services are poorly adapted to the needs of people with immigrant backgrounds.

We have seen that these young and often vulnerable people can be subjected to several forms of discrimination that can be mutually reinforcing. They can experience indirect discrimination in the form of public services that are poorly adapted to their needs, and staff with a poor multicultural understanding. Immigrants with disabilities can also face direct discrimination and oppression from other people in general as well as within their own community and their own family.¹⁵

In the minority counsellors' experience, the habilitation service in many cases needs more information about this topic, and minority par-

ents need more, better and interpreted information about the available support services and how to apply for them. They also find that many parents need closer follow-up/guidance about how they can follow up their mentally disabled children.

It is also the Expert Team's experience that people with a mental impairment need special follow-up in relation to assistance and supervision. The team has received several enquiries concerning forced marriage or fear of forced marriage involving persons in this group. In some cases, it has been necessary to move them to a safe place away from their families. It has proven difficult to find suitable places for them, however. Emergency solutions have been found, but the Expert Team sees a need for permanent, secure systems and accommodation for people with special needs. A survey of the facilities that are actually available within the existing mental health service could help to establish whether solutions exist or whether new ones should be established.

Conclusion

IMDi's experience suggests that there is a need to further examine the situation of mentally disabled people from immigrant backgrounds, particularly as regards marriage. There also seems to be a need for competence-raising measures in the support agencies and in families, and for an evaluation of how public services function for mentally disabled people from immigrant backgrounds as regards their need for follow-up in general, and in relation to the prevention of forced marriages in particular.

It is an interesting finding in itself that it appears to be difficult to find anyone with much expertise in minority language-speaking persons with mental disabilities. The most important thing we have learnt is perhaps that this is an area that many people know too little about.

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Torunn Arntsen Sørheim (2000). *Innvandrere med funksjonshemmede barn i møte med tjenesteapparatet*, Gyldendal.

15 The Norwegian Anti-Discrimination Act states the following: "Direct discrimination" shall mean that the purpose or effect of an act or omission is such that persons or enterprises are treated less favourably than others are, have been or would have been treated in a corresponding situation on such grounds as are mentioned in the first paragraph. "Indirect discrimination" shall mean any apparently neutral provision, condition, practice, act or omission that would put persons at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons on such grounds as are mentioned in the first paragraph.'



Across national borders

'Cooperation across national borders is necessary both in order to prevent forced marriage and to provide assistance in individual cases where forced marriage is part of the problem.'

- Introduction: Across national borders
- Not just an engagement – religious/unregistered marriage of minors
- Children and young people left behind abroad
- Migration, aid and consular matters
- Norwegian-Iraqi cooperation against forced marriage
- Procedures and recommendations in connection with fear of travel abroad

Appendix: Form for follow-up agreement



Introduction:

Across national borders

If forced marriage and other forms of honour-related violence are to be combated, it is not enough to just work in Norway. The occurrence of forced marriage and other forms of honour-related violence is closely related to the situation and position of women in the country of origin.

One of the main findings from the action plan period is that it is necessary to adopt a transnational perspective in work against forced marriage. In this part of the report, we will go into more detail about what we mean by this, and focus on concrete experiences, challenges and recommendations in connection with 'working across national borders'.

Most forced marriages are contracted abroad

In IMDi's experience, cooperation across national borders is necessary both in order to prevent forced marriage and to provide assistance in individual cases where forced marriage is part of the problem. The action plan states that most forced marriages involving a Norwegian citizen or person with legal residence in Norway are entered into abroad. A survey from 2009 of all the integration counsellors and minority counsellors' cases in the category 'actual instances of forced marriage' supports this finding.

In the article *Not just an engagement* we focus on unlawful marriage agreements that involve minors and are often entered into in their countries of origin.

It is typical of forced marriages and other forms of honour-related violence that several family members can be involved in perpetrating violence and that the person who sets the agenda in the family can be a more remote family member physically located in another country. The extreme control, violence and monitoring exercised both within the family and in its Norwegian surroundings can be orchestrated from the country of origin. In such situations, events or agreements between relatives and in the extended family often have a decisive effect on an individual's situation. What an individual does in Norway can have consequences for the extended family in the country of origin, and actions of the extended family abroad can have a bearing on people in Norway. Sending young people to the country of origin and leaving them there to stop their 'Norwegianisation' can be part of such an extreme control regime. In the article *Children and young people left behind abroad*, we focus, among other things, on this problem. A considerable proportion of cases registered by IMDi concern children and young people left behind abroad, but we have also uncovered cases during the period where adult women have been left behind against their will in the country of origin, alone or together with their children. There can be many and complex reasons behind this. We see that forced marriage can be part of the problem in these cases too.

Stadig flere kvinner blir fratatt passet og sendt til landet de opprinnelig kom fra. Ektmennene deres i Norge fortsetter å heve kvinnenes trygd.

Dumpet i Pakistan - ektemannen giftet seg med ny kvinne

MINORITETER

KARNE OSTVEIT
 Disse kvinnene er helt glemt mye om barn og unge som er vokst opp i Norge.

Det sier Eva Torill Jacobsen, som jobber som integreringsrådgiver ved arene hos ambassaden registrert etterlatt mot sin vilje - bare til fire land i Midtøsten.

De tok alle erstatningsavgifter langt høyere, da bare et fåtall med store markertall.

Det er en oppfølging som deles også av de tre andre integreringsrådgivere som jobber ved ambassaden i Pakistan, Tyskland og Kenya, sier Jacobsen. Hun mener saken er svært trist.

Det handler om kvinner som blir fratatt myndigheten til å se sine egne barn, som må leve i fattigdom og skam - ofte i krigsoppløst land som ektemannen selv mener det er for.

Faren min orket ikke å se på meg en gang. Jeg var en enorm skam for ham, for hele familien.

Sara (27)

farlig å bo i. Mange blir også etterlatt av sine familier, der de fungerer som grannshjelp. Dette gjelder kvinner i alle aldre, sier Jacobsen. Kvinnene blir antatt til hjemlandet på ferie, eller for å delta i familiemøter.

«Og så blir kvinnen nærmest seg og de bokstavelig talt ontrent aldri på flyplassen, blir kvinnen fratatt alt. Ektemannen tar pass og reiseløp skal bli igjen alene, sier Jacobsen.

Flere blir dumpet
 Hun har de siste årene sett en klar økning i antall voksne kvinner som reises ut mot sin vilje i opprinnelseslandet. Derfor henviser flere økonomisk utvalg.

«Av historiene jeg ser, er det som om jeg har sett flere saker der barna og mennene følger registrert i Norge, men etterlates i opprinnelseslandet. Penger for kostnader, barn og sosialstøtte settes inn på mors konto i Norge», men den til. Dermed kan ektemannen i Norge leve godt av pensjon, folkeløst.

I Pakistan uten pass
 For en kvind ektemannen hennes en etter landet de i Pakistan. Da andro hun passet hennes og kjørte henne til foreldrene hennes. Et par dager senere ringte han henne Sara i tilbak til igjen alene - i lønns tilbake til Norge.

Foreldrene mine ville ikke ha visst at jeg var jenta som ektemannen hadde sendt tilbake. Faren min orket ikke å se på meg en gang. Jeg var en enorm skam for barna, for hele

Da papirene endelig var klare, og Sara ble hentet til Norge, viste det seg at ektemannen allerede hadde en kjæreste i Norge. Han hadde ingen interesse av sin unge kone.

Kvinnens hete tiden
 Jeg fikk ikke gå ut, ikke ta buss, ikke ringe til noen, ikke handle mat. Jeg var bare inne i leiligheten, hele tiden, sier Sara i dag.

Noen ganger ble hun hentet inn på sovnerom, slik at hun hadde på seg flere dager av gangen. Svogterfar kom innom med mat til henne i bladet.

«I tillegg ble jeg slått. Da jeg ble drept og fikk pankreatitt, og skulle søne litt om nettene, sier hun. Fortsatt alene er hun nå i Norge, forteller om tiden i Norge. Likevel er det som å gjelde etterpå som har prøvd å tenne alle med.

I Pakistan uten pass
 For en kvind ektemannen hennes en etter landet de i Pakistan. Da andro hun passet hennes og kjørte henne til foreldrene hennes. Et par dager senere ringte han henne Sara i tilbak til igjen alene - i lønns tilbake til Norge.

Foreldrene mine ville ikke ha visst at jeg var jenta som ektemannen hadde sendt tilbake. Faren min orket ikke å se på meg en gang. Jeg var en enorm skam for barna, for hele



familien, sier Sara. Hun var likevel en av de heldigste. Da ektemannen sendte passet hennes til LDI, sa at han ville skille seg. Hun lovet det ikke på påske, men hun lovet på kristenstenen for nye. Selv at hun kom tilbake til Norge for halvannen år siden.

«Så hva er fremtiden min? Finnes det hjelp for meg, etter å ha blitt etterlatt på den måten? Jeg vet ikke. Men jeg håper fortsatt».

Bor på kristensten
 Der hadde ektemannen allerede gift seg på nytt med kjæresten sin, selv om separasjonsstadiet med Sara ennå ikke var over.

The relationship between the country of origin and the diaspora community

In order to be able to uncover and deal with cases of forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence and control, both the support agencies in Norway and the Foreign Service must be aware of the dynamics and interaction between 'those who stayed behind' in the country of origin and 'those who left' and their descendants in Norway and other countries. This recognition is also important in preventive work against forced marriage. Efforts in Norway alone are not enough. We must work on several fronts simultaneously in order to contribute to change and development.

Complex cases require a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach

A forced marriage case is in itself a complex case. It usually involves far more than 'just a forced marriage'. Individual cases that the integration counsellors have dealt with (consular cases and visa cases/applications to form a family) have also

involved other migration problems, such as honour-related violence, violence against women and children, people left behind, child abduction, children used in conflicts between their parents, marriages of convenience and human trafficking. All the cases have required a comprehensive approach, and it has been necessary to work across the foreign service mission's different areas of responsibility: visa, consular matters, police matters and aid-related matters.

Similarities and differences

The integration counsellors have been stationed in and covered areas with great societal differences. At the same time, different conditions, such as the size and location of the foreign service mission, its previous experience of forced marriage cases and whether or not the foreign service mission in question was already following up aid projects, resulted in the work being organised in somewhat different ways.

The social, cultural, financial and political differences between countries such as Pakistan, Somalia, Iraq and Turkey have required and still require different approaches to the work to combat forced marriage. First and foremost, Somalia and Iraq are both countries marked in different ways by war and conflict, with many internally displaced persons and refugees all over the world. Most people from Somali and Iraqi backgrounds resident in Norway came as refugees, are descendants of refugees or came to Norway through family reunification with refugees or their descendants. This differs from the situation of people from Pakistani and Turkish backgrounds, who mostly came as labour immigrants or are descendants of labour immigrants, or who came as a result of family reunification with these groups.

The societal differences between the countries and the differences in their reason for migrating (voluntary or involuntary) form an important backdrop both to how individual cases (consular cases) are dealt with and to how preventive public information efforts to combat forced marriage (aid work) are organised.

The different foreign service missions tried out different approaches and methods during the action plan period. In future, more emphasis must be placed on systematic professional development and on linking the work of combating forced marriage to the following three areas that have clearly stood out during the project period: migration, aid/gender equality and consular matters. The case description with the same title exemplifies and clarifies the connection between these three areas.

Forced marriage cases at the foreign service missions

It has proven difficult to uncover coercion in the foreign service missions' processing of cases relating to family formation. A particularly big age difference, irregularities in marriage rituals, previous irregular marriage practices in the family etc. are possible indicators, but it is difficult to 'prove' coercion. It has also proven difficult to uncover forced marriages by interviewing visa applicants in the country of origin. It is not until the Directorate of Immigration compares the foreign service mission's interview with the police's interview with the sponsor in Norway that it is possible to uncover such cases. Only then is a complete picture of the situation achieved, and it is possible to see whether the information provided by the two parties tallies.

The reasons why it is difficult for foreign service missions to uncover forced marriage cases are complex. Some applicants' overall goal is to get to Norway. They will not report coercion in an interview situation, since that could mean that their family immigration application will be rejected. Other applicants may feel that it is impossible to object to a marriage their family has decided. Forced marriages must be seen as part of the general oppression of women and their lack of opportunities to influence their own situation and their own lives.

In IMDi's experience, it is easier to uncover forced marriages in Norway. It is in any case important that foreign service mission staff focus on forced marriage and know how to identify and deal with cases that arise. IMDi has made an active contribu-

tion to updating the Directorate of Immigration's (UDI) guidelines for foreign service missions. In cooperation with foreign service staff, IMDi also developed supplementary guidelines and procedures for uncovering and dealing with individual cases in foreign service mission. The procedures have been translated into English. The feedback from foreign service mission staff is that the procedures are an important tool in combating forced marriages.

A broad approach necessary

The occurrence of forced marriage and other forms of honour-related violence is closely related to the situation and position of women in the country of origin and in the diaspora community. Forced marriage is not linked to specific religions, nationalities or cultures. For example, most people of Pakistani origin in Norway do not force their children into marriage, but there are examples of Norwegian-Pakistanis who do. The same can be said of parents of Somali, Iraqi or Turkish origin, or from all the other countries represented in the cases registered by IMDi.

The cases that IMDi has been involved in seem to indicate that forced marriage is linked to certain families that live in societies with strong patriarchal family structures, societies where women are considered to be the property of men. These families also appear to be strongly bound by relationships and traditions in the country of origin, regardless of how long the family has lived in Norway or the family's level of education or social standing.

Societies in which the concept of honour is important are characterised by a patriarchal family structure. This family structure is common in many parts of the world, including the Middle East, North Africa and certain parts of Asia and Latin America. These areas also have several different ways of organising a family. How strictly patriarchal a family is in its organisation depends on social class, level of education and whether the family lives in a city or a village (*Arbeid mot tvangsekteskap – en veileder* (Work against forced marriage – a guide' – in Norwegian only), IMDi 2008).

Another additional factor is that forced marriage occurs more often in countries where there is war or internal conflicts, and where due process protection is weak and the level of violence in society is therefore high. The prevalence of human rights violations and discrimination against women in countries where forced marriages occur is another additional factor. Experience therefore indicates that a broad approach is necessary in the work to combat forced marriage.

This is foreign policy.

Quote from an ambassador

Connection to efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality in the countries of origin

At the foreign service missions, the handling of consular matters must be seen in conjunction with aid given to organisations that work to improve the situation of women and combat violence against women and children in the country in question. The assistance given to Norwegian citizens and others with legal residence in Norway who are left behind abroad against their will because they are victims of forced marriage or fear forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence, must be linked to the efforts for women's rights and gender equality in the countries of origin.

In IMDi and the foreign service missions' experience, work to promote women's rights and gender equality in the different countries of origin, and the support given to organisations that work to combat violence against women and children, have been important and have helped to see the work against forced marriage in a wider context. In this connection, we refer to the Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (2007–2009) and the Norwegian Government's Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. These efforts are important not only in relation to developments in the countries of origin, but also to developments in Norway. In the article *Norwegian-Iraqi cooperation against forced marriage*, we present a



practical example of how the embassy in Amman, Jordan has worked.

Increased awareness of and knowledge about the importance of the country of origin

In order to help victims of forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence, the Norwegian support agencies have to cross boundaries in more ways than one, and not only those between sectors, agencies and professions in Norway. The transnational nature of these cases means that it is necessary to look beyond Norway's borders. This means that counsellors and employees in the support agencies who meet young people at risk and their families must familiarise themselves with the social and cultural context of the problems, in the diaspora community as well as in the country of origin. This means:

- ▶ Having a basic knowledge of the political, social, financial and cultural conditions in the country of origin of the people you are tasked with helping, including the human rights situation, and with particular focus on gender equality and women's rights
- ▶ Being familiar with marriage patterns and traditions in the family in question
- ▶ Being aware that the family of the person you are trying to help in Norway may be under strong pressure from other relatives in the country of origin or another country
- ▶ Being aware that the Norwegian authorities only have limited possibilities to help Norwegian citizens or other persons with legal residence in Norway who are victims of coercion, violence and control abroad – particularly if the person in question is under 18 years of age.

Help to return home is difficult, but possible

When a person abroad asks for help, there are limits to what the Norwegian authorities can do, even if the person in question is a Norwegian citizen. Getting help to return home is difficult, but possible. The foreign service missions that have had integration counsellors have helped a total of 30 people to return to Norway during the project period. Young people who have been left behind abroad for reasons relating to forced marriage or

female genital mutilation can have their return travel expenses covered if they are unable to pay the expenses themselves. IMDi administers this refund scheme. The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage is responsible for expert assessments of enquiries concerning help to return to Norway. Five persons received financial support under this refund scheme in the period from January 2010 until and including the first six months of 2011.

In the article *Children and young people left behind abroad*, we focus on this problem, among others. The main message as regards cases where people fear forced marriage or other honour-related violence is that the support agencies (schools, child welfare service, police etc.) must endeavour to prevent them from leaving Norway. The article *Procedures and recommendations in connection with fear of travel abroad* contains a summary of the minority counsellors' experience of the use of follow-up agreements with young people as a preventive measure in this context.

Integration counsellors as a link between the diaspora community and the country of origin

In forced marriage cases, as in other family-related cases, there can be several parties and different interests involved in a case, both in Norway and in the country of origin. A great deal may be at stake for different family members in Norway as well as in the country of origin and elsewhere. The fact that the families are transnational, i.e. that they live in and have links with several countries etc., is a reality that the Norwegian support agencies as well as the Foreign Service must accept.

It has proven useful in relation to knowledge-building in this area to have a link between the diaspora community and the country of origin in the form of integration counsellors stationed at foreign service missions in countries and areas where forced marriage occurs.

Examples of concrete problems encountered in dealing with consular cases at foreign service missions include the following:

- ▶ The person in need of assistance has dual citizenship
- ▶ The boy or girl is a minor
- ▶ The person's travel documents and money have been taken away from him/her
- ▶ The person is being held capture or cannot get to the nearest foreign service mission because she cannot move freely without being accompanied by a male relative
- ▶ The person requesting assistance is located in a neighbouring country and/or must cross national borders or move through areas with major security challenges due to war and conflict.

In relation to the support agencies in Norway, the integration counsellors have provided information about the local conditions 'on the ground' in connection with work on individual cases, while at the same time also helped to increase knowledge about what freedom of action the foreign service missions have in cases of this kind.

Correspondingly, the integration counsellors have helped to increase foreign service mission staff's knowledge about migration matters and relations with the diaspora community. In connection with the handling of consular matters, the integration counsellors have for example contributed their experience of and expertise in social work, as well as knowledge about the support agencies and developments in Norway in the field of integration.



A special integration counsellor ensures that we have the appropriate expertise when the embassy comes into contact with forced marriage cases. These cases will always be complex consular matters. The integration counsellor ensures good case processing and effective cooperation with the support system in Norway.

Quote from an ambassador

As regards aid, the integration counsellors have contributed to the start-up and further development of several projects to combat violence against women and children, including forced marriage, in the countries of origin.

Projects and measures in the countries of origin

Most of the projects and measures receive support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' gender equality budget to combat violence against women and children, and some projects receive support from IMDi for preventive work and work to change people's attitudes to forced marriage. The projects and measures are mainly carried out in areas with a high level of migration to and from Norway.

In the following, we will mention the projects that have received support for preventive work and work aimed at changing attitudes to forced marriage in the different countries.

In addition, we will mention some of the projects in which the topic of forced marriage has been integrated into existing aid projects targeting women that have a link to the diaspora community in Norway:

Pakistan

The integration counsellor at the embassy in Islamabad has helped to ensure that measures to combat forced marriage are incorporated into existing projects targeting women. Via the embassy in Islamabad, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports several organisations that focus on women, children and human rights. The projects that receive support range from work to change people's attitudes and grassroots level training to legal help, the running of women's shelters, advocacy and lobbying of the authorities. Various health and educational measures intended to improve the situation of women in Pakistan also receive support.

At the political level, a family protocol has been signed between Norway and Pakistan. The Family Protocol is intended to strengthen bilateral cooperation on family-related matters and



migration-related challenges. The integration counsellor has played an active role in the further development of this cooperation.

The 'Promoting Gender Justice' project was started in 2011, and is organised by Norwegian Church Aid.

One of the sub-projects will look into marriage practices in Gujrat, which is the Pakistani district with the greatest migration to and from Norway. Better knowledge about marriage practices in this district is useful because it could also give us information about practices in the diaspora community. As a continuation of this project, a documentary about forced marriage will be produced in this district. The film will be translated into Norwegian.

'Institutional cooperation with the University of Gujrat'. This project has not been implemented, but is at the planning stage. The main element of the project is institutional cooperation between the University of Gujrat and one or more similar educational institutions in Norway. The project takes the migration between Pakistan and Norway as its point of departure. Among other things, it will look into the possibility of providing Norwegian language and social studies tuition to people in Gujrat who plan to move to Norway (in connection with forming a family). This project is intended to strengthen integration work and improve the situation of individuals in Norway.

'Minhaj-ul-Quran Reconciliation Council in Kharian' has received NOK 150,000 to support work promoting a change of attitude and preventive work against forced marriage in Kharian. The organisation is a branch of Minhaj Reconciliation Council, which runs similar activities in Oslo and has also received support for its work in Norway. Among other things, the Kharian branch provides advice and guidance to families and assistance in connection with family conflicts in which forced marriage is part of the problem.

The Horn of Africa

The integration counsellor at the embassy in Nairobi, Kenya has contributed to the inclusion of measures to combat forced marriage in an existing initiative under the auspices of the University of

Nairobi. The donors in this project are the UN organisations WHO and UNFPA. A collaboration has been established with the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS). The focus is on combating female genital mutilation, and the project includes field visits and seminars.

SCILO – Support Cooperation International Living Organization, Norway has received NOK 300,000 for the project 'Ikke tving meg – det gjelder mitt liv' (Don't force me – it's my life). The project is a study of Somali marriage traditions seen in light of transnational marriages between the diaspora communities in Kenya and Norway. The project will be completed in 2011.

Turkey

The integration counsellor at the embassy in Ankara, Turkey contributed to the establishment of a women's project in 2010. The project, which



Opening ceremony of a new project in Konya supported by Norway

Last updated: 22/05/2011 // On 12 May 2011, the ambassador, H. E. Cecilie Landmark, and the integration/social affairs attaché, Muhammad Shah, participated at the opening ceremony of a project in Konya.

The project is initiated by the Norwegian embassy in Ankara, with financial support from the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity. Konya province mufti, İzzet GÜBÜKÇÜ, director of the provincial directorate of social services for children and youth, Turgut KOC, director of the national education directorate Konya, Hazer GÖNÜLLÜ, Konya tourism director of culture and tourism, Dr. Mustafa ÇPAK, Doç Dr El Derağlı chairman, Mehmet NEDİC, were among those who attended the ceremony.

The overall goal of the project is to prevent forced and early marriages by raising awareness about the consequences of forced and early marriages on youth, their families and the society as a whole. The main implementing partner of the project is Doç Dr Derağlı, a Turkish humanitarian organization based in Konya. Doç Dr will implement the project in close cooperation with the county's education and religious affairs directorates, the directorate of social services and child protection, Konya Metropolitan Municipality, municipalities in Meram, Çarşamba, Kulu and Seysokak.

The main target group of the project is children and youth between age 12 – 18 and their families. With the help of teachers, village leaders and influential persons, information meetings and trainings will be conducted in certain districts. Brochures and poster will be published and distributed and a conference on forced and early marriage will be convened in Konya towards the end of this year.

Norway has a population of 4.9 m – among them around 16.000 have Turkish background. It is not a large figure, but they represent a valuable part of the Norwegian society. The Turkish community is expanding in terms of size and its impact on the Norwegian society. Immigration and integration are potential areas where Norway and Turkey can do more to deal with some challenges – challenges which sometimes disrupt integration process. Some of these challenges result in that some families find themselves in complicated life-situations – since immigration is a process involving different elements, it may sometimes be a hard, long and complicated process.

We see the value of expanding our cooperation with Konya district for several purposes. It will enable us to contribute to their good work to assist people in their own district, but also we benefit from the good cooperation by learning and gaining knowledge about this region, as one the main areas of origin for our Turkish-Norwegian citizens.

The organisation Dost Eli Dernegi received NOK 400,000 in 2011 for work promoting attitudes against forced marriage in Konya. Konya is another area in Turkey with considerable migration to and from Norway. Among other things, the organisation provides training for resource persons (teachers and imams) and for pupils and teachers in schools. Information material concerning the consequences of marriage at a young age/forced marriage is also being prepared. The material will also be spread among the Turkish diaspora community in Norway. A conference will be held in Konya in late 2011.

Iraq

The integration counsellor at the embassy in Amman, Jordan has contributed to the establishment of several projects to combat violence against women and children. The projects and measures in Iraq are mainly located in areas with a high level of migration to and from Norway. Representatives of several of the organisations involved have visited Norway as part of the exchange of experience and development of knowledge in the field. The embassy in Amman also supports the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq. The funds are used to teach local organisations and the authorities about the legal rights of women who are victims of violence, and for free legal aid in general.

Norwegian People's Aid received NOK 2,010,000 to run campaigns against forced marriages, educate women and hold dialogue meetings with religious leaders in the Kurdish areas of Iraq. In addition, a study has been carried out of the prevalence of forced marriage in the area. Information material aimed at different target groups has also been produced. The partner organisation in Iraq has visited Norway on several occasions. This has contributed to an exchange of experience between organisations that carry out work aimed at changing attitudes and preventive work among the minority populations in Norway and Iraq.

The transnational perspective

The work to combat forced marriage has helped to increase the support agencies' awareness of the fact that migration is not necessarily the same as immigration and permanent residence in Norway.

Den afrikanske union (AU) kaster landet ut av organisasjonen.

Men folk i Niger virker fornøyde med at presidenten er styrt ut. Utenrikssjef Catherine Ashton sa fredag at EU er «dypt bekymret» over situasjonen i Niger etter at en gruppe militære ledere torsdag gjennomførte et stats-

organisasjonen i går ville forpurre landet fra organisasjonen. Men fra internasjonalt hold har det vært en påslagslig mangel på sympati med Nigers styrtede president. Manas Tadjidj skriver nyhetsbyrået DPA. For-dømmelser av kuppet har vært mildnet av kommentarer om at den maktgrådige presidenten har seg selv å takke

en innbygger i Naamey. – Folk er generelt glade for kuppet. Presidenten har seg selv å takke, mener han.

Normalisert. Juntaen, som kaller seg Øverste råd for gjen-reinsing av demokratiet (CSRD) og leder av militæruffiseren Sion Djibo, holdt fredag sitt første møte med tidligere ministre og høystående tjenestemenn.

denen skal bli holdt fanget utenfor hovedstaden. Kuppene-satte også grunnloven i Ni-ger til side og opplyste alle stat-lige institusjoner.

Væpnede soldater patruljerte gatene i Nigers hovedstad Niamey i går. Men situasjonen så ut til å normalisere seg raskt etter militærkuppet, og banker og butikker åpnet igjen som normalt. (NTB-Reuters-DPA)

Ord mot æresdrap

■ 5000 kvinner blir drept av familien hvert år

Bli voldtatt. Ha ukjente numre på mobilen. Gå i for kort skjørt. Dette er eksempler på «vanære» som fører til at tusener av kvinner blir drept hvert år. Drapsmennene går ofte fri, eller får milde straffer.

Aftenpostens kolumnepoet JØRGEN LOHNE

– Viktige, positive endringer er kommet i Jordan, endringer vi foreløpig ikke har sett i noe annet arabisk land, sier kriminalreporter og forfatter Rana Hussein til Aftenposten. I 16 år har hun ført en savbrutt kamp mot denne type forbrytelser, først i sitt hjemland, nå også internasjonalt.

Hussein glir akkurat nå stor salgsuksess med sin bok *Mord i ørns navn* (Murder in the Name of Honour). Boken kom på engelsk i fjor høst og er nylig blitt tittelt også på arabisk. «Rana» arbeider et vitnesbyrd om at pennen er mektigere enn sverdet», skriver den amerikanske skuespillerinnen og kvinneaktivisten Jane Fonda i forordet.

Koen var lang i bokhandelen Readers vest i Amman da forfatteren for noen uker siden møtte leserne som ville sikre seg et signert eksemplar. De aller fleste kundene var kvinner.

Hvite FN blir hvert år cirka 5000 kvinner over hele verden drept av en gjerningsmann som påberoper seg familens ære som motiv. I Jordan blir mellom 25 og 30 døde, søstre eller mødre tatt livet av. Flest slike drap registreres i det muslimske folkeferietallet, men Hussein påpeker at også jenter og kvinner i den kristne minoriteten «dommes» til døden av sin familie.

Tabu. Rana Hussein brøt et tabu da hun i 1994 skrev i *The Jordan Times* om 16 år gamle Kifaya som måtte dø fordi hennes storebror Mohammad hadde voldtatt henne.

«Dommere» var moren, onkelen og broderne, og «shahada» var hennes bror Khalid. Han bandt henne til en stol og ba henne sitte venst fra Koranen før han hevet kniven.

Khalid gikk selv til politiet med det blodige drapsveipnet. Naboer og familie gratulerte ham.

Drapsmannen ble behandlet som en helt i angrepet og ble løslatt etter fem år, to år før tiden. Polit, påtalemyndighet og domstol hadde tatt besvart til at det dreide seg som et «æresdrap». Den gang var det en selvfølge at



Den jordanske journalisten Rana Hussein's bok om æresdrap på kvinner vekker stor interesse i hjemlandet. Her signerer hun bokene i Amman.

Rana Hussein
Jordansk journalist og forfatter, kjent for sin kamp mot æresdrap på kvinner.

Ånerkjent internasjonalt
neef Neelok Human Rights Award, MEDINVA-pris og Ida B. Wells-pris for modig journalistikk.

Åttimpolitt fakta

Fremgang. – De siste tre-tre månedene har domstolene gitt menn hardere straffer for å ha drept kvinnelige slektninger, 10 og 15 års fengsel. Det er økende bevissthet i påtalemyndigheten, politiet og blant dommere. Men det er først og fremst holdningene ute i samfunnet som nå endres. Hardere straffer kan ikke få

nens liv, uansett hva som måtte ligge bak, sier Lama Hadadin som står i kø for å møte forfatteren. Hun mener den ungdoms-generasjonen hun selv tilhører har lært mye av kampanjen som nå har pågått siden høsten 1994.

– Har noen da kjennet blitt utsatt for eller truet med drap for å ha vanæret familien?

– Og så den som begår æresdrap er ilbent et offer. Denne boken er svært viktig når det gjelder å få oppmerksomhet om miljøene dette skjer i, om rettsopp-gjør og om fortvilelse som vi ikke tilstrekkelig grad har klart å få endret, sier Jordans tidligere kulturminister Aasma Khader, også i behandelen for å sikre seg et eksemplar av den arabiske ut-gaven.

Kongens støtte. – Vi har langt igjen. Men kongefamilien, regje-ringens, det sivile samfunn, advoka-ter, dommere og medier – mange spiller nå på lag, fremhol-der Rana Hussein. Og alle er enige om at det var du som startet den hele

Immigrants maintain cultural, social, political and financial ties to their country of origin. It is said that many immigrants continue to be part of the community they have physically moved away from by sending money home, visiting and receiving visits from their country of origin and other countries where relatives live, political activities in exile, marriages etc. (Fuglerud, 2004). For many refugees who can neither visit nor return to their home country, it will be the dream and idea of what they have left behind, and the feelings of solidarity between those who had to move to different corners of the world, that is maintained, instead of regular contact between the country of origin and the country of residence.¹

1 The term 'transnationalism' was first introduced in the early 1980s by researchers who, while studying integration processes in the country where immigrants settled, realised that it was difficult to draw a distinct line between adaptation to the new and contact with the old, but who lacked an analytical perspective from which to discuss the phenomenon. The book *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration* (Glick Schiller et al. 1992) can be said to mark the beginning of transnational studies (Fuglerud, 2004).



These realities can be an obstacle as well as a resource in relation to their integration in Norway, for example when young immigrant women living in Norway are forced to marry a cousin from the family's country of origin, or the diaspora community is used as a network for recruitment to attractive jobs outside Norway. In other words, an understanding of the dynamics and the interaction between the country of origin and the diaspora community is important in all inclusion and integration work.

At the foreign service missions, information and case processing relating to cases involving forced marriage and other family-related matters have been strengthened during the action plan period. These efforts have also highlighted the need for greater awareness of how the authorities should address many of the social service, child welfare, police and legal challenges that arise when people migrate and lead transnational family lives.

The Norwegian support agencies have had access to up-to-date information about local conditions in the areas covered by the integration counsellors. This information is important, both in order to help people in need of urgent assistance to escape from or deal with an unwanted situation and in order to plan and carry out preventive measures in relation to individuals and their families in Norway.

In the same way, the integration counsellors have given foreign service mission staff and their partners in the countries of origin access to information about conditions in the diaspora community. These efforts have helped to increase awareness of how important the transnational perspective is in preventive work against forced marriage and other honour-related violence, both in Norway and in the different countries of origin.

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'Not just an engagement'

– Religious/unregistered marriage of minors

Most forced marriages involving a Norwegian citizen or person with legal residence in Norway are contracted abroad. Many of these marriages are entered into in a religious/unregistered ceremony before the person has reached the minimum age for marriage. In order to stop this practice, which is illegal both in Norway and in the countries of origin, it is necessary to work on several fronts at the same time.

The answers given by minority counsellors and integration counsellors in a survey of 23 actual instances of forced marriage show that most of the marriages were contracted in the country of origin. In more than half the cases, the marriage was entered into before the person had turned 18.

The Expert Team's experience from Norway is that religious/unregistered marriages are often called 'engagements' when the support agencies ask the family questions. In the minority counsellors' experience, some pupils get 'engaged' to people in the countries of origin while still of lower secondary school age.

Such 'engagements' can actually be illegal marriage agreements between the families.² It is important that employees in schools, the child welfare service, the police and the rest of the support agencies are aware that these so-called engagements can involve religious/unregistered (and thus unlawful) marriage and sexual abuse of minors. A marriage in which one or both parties are minors, or that has been entered into under pressure or coercion, is a form of serious neglect under the Child Welfare Act. The child welfare service therefore has a responsibility to prevent children from getting married and to provide the necessary help and follow-up for children who are victims or at risk (The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2010).

Although most of the religious/unregistered marriages involving minors are contracted in the countries of origin, there are also examples of them taking place in Norway. We have no statistics for the extent of this practice in Norway. We know little about who performs these illegal marriage ceremonies in Norway and in which communities they take place. The victim often does not know the name of the imam/religious figure who performed the 'marriage ceremony', and has no access to any documents concerning the illegally contracted agreement. So far, the Norwegian authorities have not been able to identify the people behind these illegal 'marriage ceremonies'. The Islamic Council of Norway and the religious

communities that receive grants from the Norwegian State and actually have the right to solemnize marriages dissociate themselves from this practice and claim that such ceremonies do not take place in their communities.

Forced to marry at the age of 13 in Norway

In 2010, charges were brought against several family members in connection with a very serious case in which a girl, who is now 16 years old, was forced to marry her cousin when she was 13 years old. The illegal wedding ceremony took place in Norway with an imam and witnesses present. The cousin, who was six years older, was found guilty of rape and coercion of his cousin over several years, and was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. The girl's father and aunt were sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment. Charges were also brought against the girl's uncle, who is described as the head of the family and the person who arranged for the marriage to take place, but he was not present during the trial. He is still wanted internationally and is believed to be staying in Iraq.

The sentences handed down in this case earlier this year are strict. They send a message to society that complicity in the forced marriage of such a young girl is not accepted in Norway.

■ ■ FACTS

Marriages entered into between persons under the age of 18 are illegal in Norway. The General Civil Penal Code's specific provision in Section 220 concerning child marriage came into force in September 2003 as one of several measures against forced marriage. The main point is that marriage to a person under the age of 16 is deemed to be a forced marriage, regardless of whether the child saw it as voluntary. Both the person who enters into the marriage and persons who aid and abet such a marriage can be punished by imprisonment for up to six years.

Ref. Konvensjoner og lover om tvangsekteskap, ('Conventions and acts relating to forced marriage' - in Norwegian only), The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2010

² Section 30a of the Children Act states that: 'An agreement about marriage made by the parents or others on behalf of the child is not binding.'

Such unregistered marriages are not valid or legal in the countries of origin either. In many countries, the problem is not so much the law, but the fact that the law is not enforced. The family in question was originally from Iraq, where both forced marriage and marriage at a young age – in the form of an unregistered/religious marriage – are forbidden. It is nevertheless a common and socially accepted practice throughout Iraq (People's Development Association, 2010).

■ ■ FACTS ■ ■

Pursuant to Iraqi law, the minimum age for marriage is 18 years. Persons as young as 15 can marry with the approval of the court and their guardian. Article 3 of the Personal Status Law of 1959, first paragraph, reads as follows: 'Marriage is a contract between a man and a woman who is lawfully permissible to him, the purpose of which is to establish bond for the mutual life and procreate children.' Article 9 reads as follows: 'No relative or non-relative has the right to force marriage on any person, whether male or female, without their consent. The contract of a forced marriage is considered void if the marriage is not yet consummated.'

All of the actual instances of forced marriages registered by the integration counsellor for the Middle East from the start of the project up to and including March 2011 were religious/unregistered marriages. Sixteen of the 19 forced marriages had taken place in a country in the Middle East, and three had taken place in Norway.

The challenge as regards these religious/unregistered marriages is that although the minors are not legally married, neither under the law of the country of origin nor under Norwegian law, they are married in practice, i.e. in their own eyes and those of their relatives in Norway and in the country of origin.

Criminal prosecution in both countries

Efforts in Norway alone are not sufficient to combat this practice. Religious/unregistered marriages entered into in the country of origin by minors who are Norwegian citizens or have legal residence in Norway should also be subject to crimi-

nal prosecution in the country of origin. So far, we have no examples of such parallel prosecutions. The Norwegian authorities, represented by the Foreign Service, can play an important role as a driving force in relation to the authorities in the different countries of origin. Experience from the action plan period indicates that these effort should be strengthened in the foreign service missions' future work. Closer cooperation and more exchange of experience are needed between the criminal justice authorities in Norway and in the country of origin. A criminal prosecution and subsequent judgment from, for example, an Iraqi court in addition to a Norwegian court would send a strong message to society that forced marriage/marriage at a young age is a form of abuse. Such a message is important from a preventive perspective and could contribute to change and development in the country of origin as well as in Norway.

Preventive work and efforts to change attitudes must take place in parallel

The work to end forced marriage/marriage at a young age is a long-term endeavour. It takes time to change attitudes, and it requires measures targeting the minority communities in Norway as well as local communities in the countries of origin. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign service missions' women's rights and gender equality efforts in different countries of origin and support for organisations that work to combat this practice have been and continues to be important in this context. In addition to working directly with victims of violence, the women's organisations that have received funding from the Norwegian authorities also act as important driving forces for change and development in relation to the position of women in the countries in question.

An end to unregistered marriages is one of the most important issues for women's rights organisations in Iraq. A marriage that has not been publicly registered with the authorities is invalid. If the man leaves the woman or dies, the woman and children will be left in a very difficult and exposed situation financially and socially, as well as in terms of their safety. (Landinfo memo, 2011.)



Foto: Runa Myrvoid

Vellykket møte med kurdiske mullaer – tok avstand fra tvangsekteskap

Sist oppdatert: 19.12.2010 // Norske representanter møtte 51 kurdiske mullaer i Sulaymaniyah 12. Desember. De fleste av mullane tok avstand fra tvangsekteskap, og beskrev praksisen som forbudt i følge islamsk lov.

Public statements against forced marriage

Religious communities and leaders in Norway as well as in the countries of origin have an important role to play in the work against religious/unregistered marriages involving minors. In IMDi's experience, the preventive work targeting different religious communities and minority communities in Norway must take place in parallel with corresponding efforts aimed at the areas where the diaspora communities in Norway come from. Dialogue meetings with religious leaders are one example of activities aimed at changing attitudes.

During the period, Norwegian People's Aid's partner organisation in Iraq, People's Development Association, has organised several dialogue meetings with religious leaders in Iraqi Kurdistan. In March 2011, 51 Kurdish religious leaders participated in a dialogue meeting in Sulaymaniyah in Iraq. In addition to the religious leaders, State Secretary Pål Lønseth of the Ministry of Justice and the Police, representatives of the Norwegian embassy in Amman and representatives of the ministry of religious affairs in Iraqi Kurdistan also participated in the meeting. The dialogue meeting resulted in the mullahs making a public statement against forced marriage and agreeing to announce during future Friday prayers that forced marriage is forbidden under sharia law.

No initiative has been taken during the project period to organise similar meetings with religious leaders in Norway.

Work targeting families in Norway

IMDi knows of cases where imams in Norway have dissolved unlawful binding marriage agreements. The Expert Team has been involved in some of these cases at different stages of the process. Through the Drammen project (Domestic violence – honour-related violence), some knowledge has been gained about how the support agencies (the police and child welfare service) can engage families in a dialogue to have unlawful binding agreements dissolved. The police and child welfare service have good experience of involving imams in this work in relation to families. In some cases, they have succeeded in 'dissolving' the agreement in a way that is believed to contribute to making a future reconciliation with the family easier for the victim.

The lesson to be drawn from cases of this kind is that the best solution is not always to prosecute the parents/family, but to dissolve the unlawful agreement between the families in a way that all parties can live with. The following case is an example of this method:

■ ■ CASE

A 16-year-old girl from the Middle East told her case officer in the child welfare service that she had gotten engaged, and that she found her fiancé very controlling and threatening. In this case, the child welfare service was already involved with the family. The case officer contacted a minority counsellor to ask for advice and guidance.

The minority counsellor suspected that they could be dealing with an illegally contracted religious marriage, not 'just an engagement'. In conversations with the girl, the minority counsellor asked her how the 'engagement' took place, where and who was present etc. The minority counsellor's suspicions were confirmed, and it emerged that the couple had been religiously married. There was a serious conflict between the girl and her parents because she wanted to break out of the marriage. The case became urgent when the girl overheard her father telling her husband on the phone that he could do what he wanted with her, even kill her if he wanted to. The girl contacted the child welfare service the following day, and an emergency decision was made to remove her from the home and place her in care pursuant to Section 4-12.

At the same time, the case was reported to the police, which started an investigation. In conversations with the child welfare service, the girl stated that she had felt under pressure to marry in order to restore her family's honour. Her parents said otherwise. Several agencies cooperated on this case. A responsibility group was established comprising representatives from the child welfare service, Bufetat (the Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, which was responsible for her being taken into care), the police and the minority counsellor (who represented the school). The police entered into a dialogue with her parents and told them that it was their responsibility to have the religious marriage dissolved.

The child welfare service carried out its investigation in accordance with its remit, and the minority counsellor was asked, via the child welfare service, to have conversations with the girl and her parents. The minority counsellor also advised the child welfare service's case officer and communicated with the police via the child welfare service. All the conversations that the minority counsellor had took place 'on assignment' for the child welfare service. The child welfare service and the police had responsibility for the case.

The police case was resolved when the religious marriage was dissolved with the help of an imam. This was done in the presence of the police, the child welfare service and the family. The criminal case against the parents and the 'fiancé' was later dropped due to insufficient evidence. The girl was placed outside the home and later returned.

The minority counsellor's thoughts:

The lesson to be learned from this case is that 'the best solution' is not necessarily criminal prosecution. In this case, we succeeded in helping the family to find a good solution where nobody lost face. The joint efforts of the police and the child welfare service to establish a dialogue with the family were successful. The authorities made the parents realise that they had done something wrong, and they then wanted to put it right. We see that most of the young people have no wish to break all contact with their families, and that many also return to their families, sometimes as the result of strong pressure. This is not necessarily a good solution after a break with the family involving a loss of honour. In this case, the religious marriage was successfully dissolved in a way that can help to make future reconciliation with the family easier. In serious cases like this one, however, it is crucial to attend to the safety of the victim before entering into a dialogue about agreements etc. The dialogue must always be organised by the police and child welfare service. ■ ■

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Irak. Spesifikke problemstillinger knyttet til tvangsekteskap og skilsmisse. Memo from the Country of Origin Information Centre, September 2011.





Children and young people left behind abroad

A considerable proportion of cases registered by IMDi concern children and young people left behind abroad. The enquiries come from schools etc. and concern children and young people who do not return from holidays abroad or fail to appear at the start of the school year.

Through their presence in schools and foreign service missions, minority and integration counsellors have helped to uncover cases where children and young people have been left behind abroad to be married off against their will and/or become victims of other types of abuse.

There are limits to what the Norwegian authorities can do for children and young people under the age of 18 once they have been removed from Norway against their will and the parents want them to stay abroad. It is important that the Norwegian support agencies primarily work to prevent people from leaving the country if they fear forced marriage, female genital mutilation or other forms of abuse before a journey abroad.

Enquiries about children and young people left behind

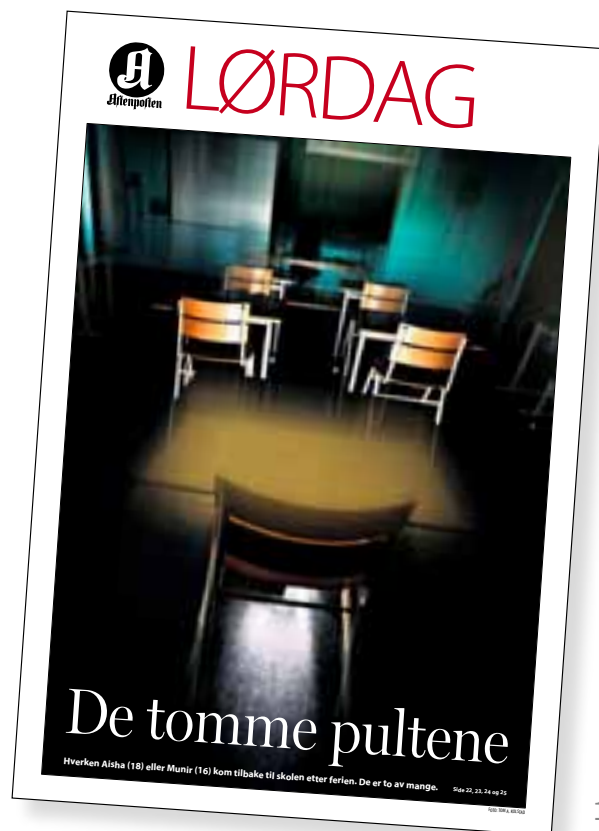
The number of cases involving young people left behind abroad dealt with by the Expert Team has more than doubled, from 17 cases in 2009 to 36 cases in 2010. The Expert Team has registered 32 such cases so far in 2011. There has also been an increase in the number of enquiries received by minority counsellors at schools and integration counsellors at foreign service missions concerning persons left behind during the same period. Minority and integration counsellors handled a total of 48 such cases in 2010, compared with 39 cases in 2009. So far in 2011, the counsellors have registered 28 cases concerning persons left behind abroad.

IMDi's registration of cases in different categories says nothing about how the cases develop, only what the main problem was at the time of registration. A report about a person being left behind abroad could therefore relate to widely differing matters. Narrative reports and interviews with

IMDi counsellors and the members of the Expert Team supplement these figures.

Who makes contact, and what do the cases concern?

Most of the enquiries received by the Expert Team come from schools and concern children and young people who do not return from holidays abroad or fail to appear at the start of the school year. Some enquiries come from the children's relatives or mothers, who have made contact and asked for help to bring children with Norwegian citizenship back to Norway. In these cases, the relatives or mothers were not Norwegian citizens, but the fathers and children were. In many of these cases, we see that the father has placed the children with the mother or other relatives abroad and, for various reasons, does not wish to take responsibility for them in Norway. Sometimes, the persons themselves report that they are being held abroad against their will and contact a Norwegian foreign service mission or the Norwegian support agencies to ask for help.



Violence and threats

Most of the abandonment cases that the Expert Team has been involved in involve elements of violence and threats against the individual. In some cases, being left behind abroad can be clearly linked to extreme control and forced marriage. To some families, placing their children in the country of origin in their early teens and having them engaged or married off before they turn 18 can be a way of getting around Norwegian law.

Young people often make contact via school friends

Young people left behind abroad often make contact via friends in Norway on Facebook or by email or phone. It is often the friends who then contact the minority counsellor or another member of the school staff who they trust. At this stage, it is not always clear what the case is really about or whether there are grounds for concern. Often, only fragments of information are received, particularly if the information has been passed on via many parties and the minority counsellor does not succeed in contacting the young person directly. The matter will in any case have to be investigated in more detail by the school, foreign service mission and, if relevant, the rest of the support agencies.

Are there grounds for concern or not?

In cases concerning children and young people left behind abroad, it is necessary to first investigate the different aspects of the case and determine whether the child's life and health are at risk. If the school's minority counsellor or other parts of the support agencies have managed to contact the child's parents, they often state that the child is to go to school in the parents' country of origin or another country in the region. Another reason often given by parents is that the children are to stay with family abroad to get to know the culture and language better.

In some cases, it has been possible to contact the child, or the school in the country in which the child is said to be a pupil, via the integration counsellor at the relevant foreign service mission and its network. Some of the children involved

have stated that they are fine and wish to remain where they are for a while.

Notifications of concern to the Expert Team or foreign service missions that cause the school, child welfare service or others to fear forced marriage or other forms of abuse may turn out to be unfounded. The opposite also happens. In some cases, it turns out that the child is not a pupil at the school stated or that it is impossible to find the child at any of the addresses given by the parents. This can reinforce the initial concern.



In some cases it can be difficult to distinguish between what constitutes a responsible and caring upbringing with strict rules and legitimate limits, and what exceeds this and can be characterised as extreme control.

Quote from an integration counsellor

Children and young people left behind because their parents say they fear Norwegianisation

The parents' motives for sending children to their country of origin can be many and complex. Experience from the minority counsellors' work in schools suggests that young people who suddenly, often without warning, disappear from school or fail to return to school after holidays in their parents' country of origin etc. have often been left behind because their parents and/or other family are worried that they will become 'too Norwegian' or because, in the family's opinion, they have 'already become too Norwegian'.

Sending children to the country of origin for a while can be an expression of the parent generation's wish to preserve their cultural values and traditions and a way of handling what they see as

unacceptable behaviour. It is important to stress that this could be completely legitimate. It is not illegal to take one's children out of the Norwegian school system to attend school abroad.

■ ■ CASE

The child welfare service in a small Norwegian municipality contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about a girl of 15, a Norwegian citizen, who had suddenly been removed from school. The case was forwarded to the integration counsellor at the relevant foreign service mission. The municipality was worried that she might become a victim of forced marriage. The child welfare service had little information, but had found out that the girl had supposedly moved to an uncle in a neighbouring country to go to school there. The parents had removed the girl from the school roll, but the child welfare service nonetheless had the impression that the parents did not want the girl to leave Norway, but were under pressure from her uncle. After a while, the integration counsellor succeeded in finding the girl at the school where she was a pupil. The integration counsellor went to the school and talked to both the girl and the principal. The girl stated that she had been bullied at school in Norway. After a talk with the girl's uncle, who confirmed her story, a report was sent to the Norwegian child welfare service. During her time at school abroad, the girl's academic performance had improved greatly due to a combination of strict schooling and private tutors in several subjects. The girl returned to Norway after a year at school abroad. ■ ■

Young people must be taken seriously

Our experience is that in, some cases, young people at risk have not been taken seriously when they have contacted the support agencies before a trip abroad. Minority and integration counsellors have many examples of situations where they believe that a young person at risk has not been believed or taken seriously by employees of the child welfare service or the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service. One of the people who returned from the country of origin with the assistance of Norwegian authorities after she

22 LØRDAG
Stemningen
Lørdag 11. oktober 2011



«Jeg har ikke det så bra i Pakistan. Jeg gråter hver natt. Jeg har det så vondt, jeg orker ikke mer.»

Aisha (18)

KARINE OTTHOFF
HELENE SKJELGESTAD
ANETTE KARLSEN (foto)

Den 14. november i 2009 fikk en e-post inn til «Trude»-mailboks. Hun skremer umiddelbart hvem det er fra. Venningen «Aisha» (18) har vært en bus sammen med i Pakistan siden før skolestart. Faren hennes har hele tiden hevd at bus snart skal komme hjem igjen. Men når e-poster og tekstmeldinger begynner å komme utpå høsten, frykter Trude at bus aldri skal få se venningen igjen.

Jeg har det så vondt, jeg orker ikke mer, det er ikke for jeg tar skammen. Jeg er utrolig redd. Du må virkelig hjelpe meg!
SMS sendt 16. november 2009

turned 18 later described her experience to the integration counsellor:

'I thought I was going to die down there. My parents told me that, if I didn't do as they told me to, I would never see the sun again. Just before I was taken abroad, I was in contact with the child welfare service. When I told them that I was afraid that I would be forced into marriage, they didn't believe me and called the situation a generation conflict and teenage rebellion. I tried to explain to them that it was not that, and that this is a cultural thing. They then told me that this was something I would have to live with.'



'I thought I was going to die down there. My parents told me that if I didn't do as they told me to, I would never see the sun again.'

Quote from an 18-year-old girl, returned home with the assistance of the Norwegian authorities

It is important to be aware that it is difficult to talk to an outsider about problems at home and conflicts with parents, siblings and other family members. A young person may have taken a roundabout path before finally contacting a school counsellor or another support agency. It can take time to build trust and reach a position where it is possible to talk to children and young people about their home situations.

Once a person opens up and tells of problems relating to honour-related violence, it is all the more important that they feel taken care of and well-received by the support agencies. Few young people want to break contact with their families. In some cases, breaking with the family is the only solution, at least for a period. In the long term, most of them will wish to re-establish contact with their family.

Most of the cases that have been received by foreign service missions and dealt with by the integration counsellors have their background in Norway. The school, the child welfare service and the police have often been involved in families for a long time without uncovering the forced marriage problem. In several cases, the child's family has had dealings with the child welfare service and/or other parts of the support agencies at some point during the child's upbringing, without the young person feeling that it has helped. Fundamental knowledge and understanding of the honour culture and the concept of honour is important in order to be able to understand the seriousness of a situation and intervene before the situation has come to a head and the young person is sent out of Norway.

Not honour alone

Cases of children and young people being left behind abroad and cases where it is feared that this could happen are not always about preserving or restoring honour. In IMDi's experience, cases in which honour is part of the problem also contain other elements. The cases are always complex, and conflicts in families can also be caused by integration challenges, migration processes, upbringing problems, teenage rebellion/substance abuse problems etc.

Communication between parents influenced by the culture of the country of origin and children and young people who grow up in and are influenced by Norway can be difficult. Escalating family conflicts because parents and children have divergent opinions about the importance of school performance, priorities and behavioural norms are therefore not unusual. Parents may have been brought up to expect children to show their gratitude for their parents' sacrifice by working hard, helping out at home and obeying authorities and adults. In many cases, the young people also feel a need to live out other sides of their identity than those permitted by their parents' norms and values. Social factors such as poverty, language problems and loss of status can exacerbate conflicts.

The school's role and the importance of intervening early

The presence of minority counsellors at upper secondary schools and some lower secondary schools during the project period has helped to draw more attention to the school's important role and responsibility in preventive work against forced marriage.

Teachers, counsellors and other members of school staff have a key role because they meet children and young people every day. In combination with their cooperation with parents, this put teachers and other school employees in a position to monitor developments over time, detect changes in behaviour and thereby identify children and young people who could be at risk.

During the project period, we have seen that it is particularly important that the dialogue with

minority families starts at an early stage. If the support agencies become involved at an early stage, there is a better chance of preventing conflicts in the family from becoming a deadlock, escalating and resulting in contact between parents and children being broken.

Pupils who do not return to school

Upper secondary school pupils who do not return after holidays, fail to come to class or suddenly disappear are both more difficult to detect and are detected later than primary and lower secondary school pupils. Due to the obligation to attend primary and lower secondary school there are clear guidelines for how municipalities and schools should follow up such things as undocumented absence and cases where pupils suddenly stop coming to school. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR) has prepared a guide for municipalities and schools on the systematic handling of situations where children fail to appear in primary and lower secondary school. There are no corresponding guidelines and procedures for upper secondary school.

Minority counsellors have found that the transition from lower secondary to upper secondary school is a particularly big challenge in this context. If an upper secondary school pupil fails to appear at the beginning of the school year, the pupil will lose his/her place. Experience shows that, once a pupil has lost his/her place, some time will pass before the pupil comes to the attention of the Follow-up Service. A pupil who has been taken out of Norway and left abroad against his/her will during the summer holidays between year 10 and upper secondary school will therefore not necessarily be detected unless there was prior concern while the pupil was still in lower secondary school.

Children left behind and the foreign service's freedom of action

Every year, the foreign service is contacted in cases where Norwegian children abroad need urgent help. Most of these cases concern a disagreement either between the parents and the child or between the parents in relation to the child. If the parents have joint parental responsibility and agree to leave the child behind abroad, the Norwegian authorities have no authority to pursue the matter unless the parents consent.

If the foreign service becomes aware of Norwegian children in a difficult situation abroad, it will normally follow up the case by contacting the parents. Unless the parents give their consent, further action will only be taken in cases where there is deemed to be an imminent risk to the child's life or health (Report No 12 to the Storting, *Bistand til nordmenn i utlandet* ('Assistance for Norwegians abroad' - in Norwegian only) page 26).

Help to return home is possible, but difficult

Since the project started, the foreign service missions where integration counsellors have served have helped a total of 30 persons to return home. The most important reason why these cases ended well was because they had 'good helpers' in the country of origin, both within and outside their families.

The integration counsellors have mapped relevant partners in the countries where they have served. These partners are local and international organisations, other countries' embassies and the local authorities. The integration counsellors have used this network to obtain information about local conditions, which is very important in order to be able to help individuals.

We see that, in the work to prevent children from being taken out of school, left in their parents' country of origin and married off against their will, greater focus on prevention is also necessary in primary schools.

” Each of the 'rescue operations' has been very risky, both to the person who is helped back to Norway and to the persons who helped them.

Quote from an integration counsellor

Each of the 'rescue operations' has been very risky, both to the person who is helped back to Norway and to the persons who helped them. The security situation is extremely difficult in several of the countries where integration counsellors have worked, and helping people out of the country is a particularly risky affair. Victims or persons at risk of forced marriage abroad are also under threat from their family, which also makes it difficult to get help to return.

FACTS

Young people who have been left behind abroad for reasons relating to forced marriage or female genital mutilation can be given financial support to return. IMDi administers this refund scheme. The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage is responsible for expert assessments of enquiries concerning help to return. If you have questions, contact the Expert Team by calling (+47) 478 09 050.

■ ■ CASE

A 17-year-old girl was taken to her father's home country together with the rest of her family. In the father's home country, she became engaged to a much older cousin, who is an influential person. She did not want to marry him and contacted a friend in Norway to tell her what had happened. The friend notified the school's minority counsellor, who called the girl back. The girl told the minority counsellor that she wanted to return to Norway, but that her father wouldn't let her. The minority counsellor then contacted the integration counsellor at the embassy. No one could help her to return to Norway because she was still under 18 and needed her father's consent to leave the home country. She did not get his consent.

A few months later the girl contacted the minority counsellor again. She had then turned 18. She said that she would soon be forced to live with her cousin, who abused her and threatened to rape her. She found herself in a desperate situation and asked for help to leave the country. At the time, she was staying in an inaccessible location, and although she had turned 18 at the time, she still needed her father's permission to leave the country and return to Norway. After a while, when the father understood the situation he had put his daughter in, he allowed her to go. She had to leave without her fiancé knowing about it. The embassy found somebody who could help her with transport to the airport. The journey from where she was staying to the airport was complicated, with many military checkpoints along the way. There were also several bomb attacks in the areas she had to travel through. Nobody knew whether the fiancé had discovered that she had escaped or, if he had, whether he had contacted any of the checkpoints or the airport. The girl had no passport, as her fiancé had taken it from her. She was therefore worried that she might not get out of the country. The embassy had an emergency passport issued for her and arranged for a plane ticket to Norway. The passport and ticket were given to her at the airport when she arrived together with the people who had helped her with transport. ■ ■

References

Special guidelines have been drawn up describing how the support agencies should deal with cases where children have been left behind abroad. See www.regjeringen.no

Veileder om hvordan kommuner og skoler systematisk kan håndtere situasjoner der barn ikke møter i grunnskolen.
www.udir.no

Report No 12 to the Storting (2010–2011). *Bistand til nordmenn i utlandet.*





The connection between migration, aid and consular matters

In the foreign service missions' work against forced marriage, more emphasis must be placed on systematic professional development and on linking the work of combating forced marriage to the following three areas that have clearly stood out during the project period: migration, aid and consular matters. The following case description exemplifies and clarifies the connection between these three areas.

■ ■ CASE

Migration

A family had to flee their home country because of persecution. They came to Norway in 1992 after two years on the run, first as internally displaced persons in their own country and then as refugees in a camp in a neighbouring country. The family has four children, two boys who were born in the camp and two girls who were born in Norway. The family settled in Norway and became Norwegian citizens. They keep in continuous touch with relatives in their home country by phone, text messages, the internet and Skype. The father and sons have visited family in their home country several times. They also have good contact with the mother's siblings in Canada. The family also has a clear idea that the daughters shall marry cousins from the home country. The older son is educated in Norway, but he got a good job in an international group in another country because he masters many languages. Because of the frequent news stories about the war in their home country, their thoughts are often more there than in Norway. The parents both hold good jobs in Norway, they speak Norwegian, and all the children are working or studying. To an external observer, all the signs are that the family is well integrated in Norwegian society.

Aid

The humanitarian situation in the home country has deteriorated as a result of acts of war. Women's situation has become significantly worse over the past years. The Norwegian foreign service mission administers aid funds intended for women's rights work. One of the organisations that receives financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' gender equality budget is an organisation that, among other things, provides free legal aid and psychosocial support for women who are victims of violence. It also carries out awareness-raising work to combat violence against women. The organisation's area of operations includes an area with considerable migration to and from Norway. The integration counsellor at the foreign service mission ensures that this organisation includes the target group 'Norwegian citizens who are victims of forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence while staying in the country of origin' in their project.

Consular cases

The family returns to their home country for a summer holiday. All the family members return to Norway at the end of the holidays, except for the oldest daughter, aged 19, who is left behind with relatives against her will. She fears that she will be forced to marry a cousin. She understands that there has been an agreement between her father and uncle because the uncle helped her father with money to flee the country more than 20 years ago. She is in regular contact with a friend on Facebook. She is afraid and says that she wants to return to Norway. Her Norwegian passport has been taken away from her, and she has no money. The friend's mother contacts the Norwegian police.

The police call the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' operations centre (UDOPS), which informs the Norwegian foreign service mission. The friend in Norway is given the foreign service mission's phone number, and forwards it to the girl who is being held against her will. The girl contacts the Norwegian foreign service mission and says that she fears forced marriage and has no passport or money. The Norwegian foreign service mission contacts one of the organisations in the area that receives support from the Norwegian authorities. Contact is established between the girl and the organisation. The girl is then picked up by the organisation and driven to the airport. The Norwegian foreign service mission issues a Norwegian emergency passport and pays for a plane ticket. ■ ■

FACTS

In April 2010, a special operations centre (UD-OPS) was established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo. Thirteen people are attached to the centre, which is open round the clock. One of the centre's primary tasks is to assist the public abroad, since all enquiries made to the foreign service missions outside office hours are redirected to UD-OPS. The embassies and consulates can also consult UD-OPS on complicated consular matters at any time.



Norwegian-Iraqi cooperation against forced marriage

The Norwegian authorities fund several projects targeting women in order to combat violence against women and children in Iraq. Earlier this year, about 30 representatives of different women's organisations met in Erbil in the Kurdish area of Iraq. They came from all over the country to network, work together, learn more about organisation work and about how to help women who are victims of forced marriage, honour-related violence and control.

The target group of the projects and measures supported by the Norwegian authorities includes Iraqi women living in Iraq as well as Norwegian citizens/persons with residence permits in Norway who are victims of threats, violence and coercion while staying in Iraq.

In addition to helping women who are victims of violence, these women's organisations are also driving forces for development and a change of attitudes in the local communities where they work. By means of dialogue with religious leaders and decision-makers at different levels, media campaigns and workshops, they help to raise awareness of forced marriage and other forms of honour-related violence in Iraqi society.

We must work on several fronts if we are to combat forced marriage

Most of the projects are supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the embassy in Amman, and one of the projects receives funding from IMDi via Norwegian People's Aid. The projects and measures are located in several places in Iraq, in the same areas where the Iraqi population in Norway originated. In this way, the efforts to combat forced marriage and the integration work in Norway are linked to aid work in Iraq in the fields of gender equality and women's rights.

'We must work on several fronts at the same time in order to combat forced marriage and contribute to change and development. The handling of individual/consular cases that involve Norwegian-Iraqi women and children must be seen in conjunction with the support given to organisations that work to improve the position and situation of women here in Iraq,' says Runa Myrvold, IMDi's integration counsellor at the embassy in Amman.

Increased violence as a result of war and conflict

The Norwegian aid primarily benefits Iraqi women. Domestic violence, so-called gender-based violence, which includes forced marriage, marriage at a young age and honour-related crime, is a major problem in Iraqi society. This is not only

because of patriarchal traditions and the subordinate position of women in society. As several of the organisations have pointed out, war, lawlessness, an increase in the general level of violence and the breakdown of social structures have also contributed to an increase in domestic violence. Moreover, factors such as poverty, families being displaced from their original homes and the security situation in many areas have led to many families marrying off their daughters at a younger age than before. Marriage is considered to be the only way to secure the girls' futures. What we would define as 'extreme control' in a Norwegian context would be regarded as 'protection of women and children' here.

Help for victims of violence

Since 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, via the embassy in Amman, has supported the work done by several women's rights organisations in Iraq to help women and children who are victims of violence. The organisations operate support centres that provide both psychosocial/medical help and legal assistance to women who are victims of abuse. In these centres, the women meet professionals who listen and give advice and guidance about how to deal with the situation. These are not women's shelters or residential facilities. In some places, the 'centre' is no more than a single room within the walls of a small women's rights organisation, simply furnished with two chairs and a table. To many, this room may nevertheless be their way out. Here, they can find understanding social workers, psychologists, lawyers and other women who help them to move on.

Driving forces for change and development

In addition to working directly with victims of violence, the organisations also act as important driving forces for the change and development of the position of women in the country. Despite the fact that both forced marriage and marriage at a young age – in the form of religious/unregistered marriages – are illegal under Iraqi law, they are nevertheless common and socially accepted practices. Putting an end to unregistered marriages is an important issue for women's organisations in





Arbeid mot tvangsekteskap og annen æresrelatert vold i Irak

Iraq. 'A marriage that has not been publicly registered with the authorities is invalid. If the man leaves the woman or dies, the woman and children will be left in a very difficult and exposed situation financially and socially, as well as in terms of their safety,' says the head of one of the women's rights organisations that the embassy supports.

Training the organisations' staff

During the meeting in Erbil, employees of several of the organisations were given different tasks that they had to solve together through role play and group work. One of the questions read as follows:

A Norwegian-Iraqi girl contacts your organisation and asks for help. She says that her passport has been taken away from her, and she is afraid that she will be left behind in Iraq and forced to marry.

What do you/your organisation do?

Before this session, the participants had been given some background information about conditions in Norway in relation to the position of women and the work to combat forced marriage. They had also been informed about the Norwegian embassy's responsibility and role in connection with individual/consular cases involving Norwegian-Iraqi persons.

The way in which the training was organised, through role play and various exercises, was very similar to some of the competence-raising measures carried out for the Norwegian support agencies. However, this is as far as the similarity goes. The situation and legal position of women and children in Iraq is not comparable to the situation in Norway, and nor are there any support agencies to 'refer people to'.

Few places to turn

The situation of women and children in Iraq who are victims of violence is very difficult. They have few places to turn. There are only a handful of women's shelters in all of Iraq, all of them located in the Kurdish areas. This means that women from other parts of the country who are threatened with death and suffer under violence have no access to the temporary protection a women's shelter can provide. In practice, most of them will have no choice but to accept their fate and return to their families.

Help to return home to Norway

Norwegian citizens and persons with legal residence in Norway who need help abroad because they have been forced to marry, have been left behind against their will or fear that this could happen can in some cases be helped to return by the Norwegian authorities. Since summer 2008, the foreign service stations where IMDi has integration counsellors have helped a total of 30 persons to return. However, it is important that the support agencies in Norway know that the Norwegian authorities can only do so much abroad, even if the person is a Norwegian citizen. Such 'rescue operations' are difficult and often highly risky, both for the victim of violence and coercion, and for her helpers in the country in question. In some countries, for example Iraq, the security situation will also be a great challenge. In addition to being threatened by their families, they will have to pass checkpoints, borders and areas of intense conflict. Young people who are worried before a

journey abroad should therefore be advised not to go.

The road ahead must follow parallel paths

The work to end forced marriage and other forms of honour-related violence and to improve the situation of Iraqi women is a long-term process. It is necessary to strengthen Iraq's formal institutions in parallel with the strengthening of civic society that is taking place, for example through aid targeting women channelled through the organisations. The Norwegian authorities contribute in cooperation with the authorities of other countries and the international community to capacity-building and

the training of judges, police officers and prosecuting authorities.

The importance of this was also highlighted by the strict judgment handed down by Borgarting Court of Appeal earlier this year. In the case in question, several members of the same Norwegian-Iraqi family were convicted of having forced a now 16-year-old girl to marry her considerably older cousin when she was 13 years old. This 'marriage ceremony' took place in Norway. In IMDi's experience, most of the forced marriages, including illegally contracted religious marriage agreements involving minors, are contracted in Iraq. In order to stop this practice, which is illegal both in Norway and in Iraq, it is important that such cases are reported to the police in both countries.





Procedures and recommendations in connection with fear of travel abroad

Most forced marriages are contracted abroad.

Many immigrants from Asian and African countries find a spouse from the same country that they come from and marry a person who lives abroad. Seventy-one per cent of all Norwegian-born persons with Pakistani parents who got married during the period from 2002 to 2007 married a person who did not live in Norway. This percentage was identical for men and women. The corresponding proportion for Norwegian-born persons with Turkish parents was 66%.³ In other words, it is quite common to marry abroad.

A review of IMDi's forced marriage cases shows that most forced marriages are entered into abroad. Many pupils have contacted minority counsellors before the summer holidays and other holidays because they fear forced marriage in connection with travel abroad. Their worries can be caused by parents or others telling them that there is a wedding planned for them, or because they have overheard conversations or similar that indicate this.

Their fears can vary in strength, and the journey can be imminent or planned for some time in the future. Such factors influence the choice of appropriate follow-up measures. Whether the person is over or under 18 years of age and whether the case triggers an obligation to report have a bearing on who does what and what recommendations are given.

IMDi has drafted proposals for procedures that recommend that, in the event of fear of forced marriage in connection with travel abroad, a follow-up agreement should be signed with the person who is to leave.⁴ In this article, we will present our experience of such agreements and share our advice about the conversation with the young people that should be held before they leave.

3 www.ssb.no/vis/magasinet

4 www.imdi.no This procedure is based on the Drammen project's self-declaration form, but is intended for schools.

” *At this school, the contact teacher now talks to all pupils who apply for extended holidays or leaves of absence.*

Quote from a minority counsellor

In cases of this type, it is important to cooperate with an integration counsellor. We describe what can be gained through such cooperation, and also a concrete case of a young girl who feared forced marriage in connection with a holiday stay abroad. This case is presented at the end of the article to illustrate how such a case can be followed up.

In the event of strong fear – – don't go!

There is very little that the Norwegian authorities can do in other countries. Flight and assistance to return home are extremely risky. It is possible, but very difficult, to get help. IMDi recommends that young people be advised not to go if they are very worried.⁵ It is easier to help people who are victims of control, coercion and violence in Norway than abroad, particularly people under the age of 18. At that age, the parents have complete authority over them, while in Norway, the child welfare service can take a child into care and set aside parental authority.

Some of the young people who fear forced marriage nevertheless choose to go. In such cases, several schools have offered some sort of follow-up during the summer as proposed in the procedures. Some have offered the possibility of staying in contact by phone, text message or e-mail during the stay abroad. A total of 45 young people have

5 If the person who talks to the young person believes that there may be a risk to life and/or health, the case must be reported to the child welfare service (under-18s) or the police (pupils over 18). It is recommended that the person who talks to the young person discusses the case with the child welfare service or the police without giving names. The above-mentioned procedure emphasises that the police shall always carry out a threat assessment in each case.

accepted this offer since summer 2008. In these cases, they have filled in a 'follow-up form for travel abroad' together with a minority counsellor in which they have entered information about where they are to go abroad, the names and addresses of people they are to visit, and where they are going to stay.⁶ The pupil is provided with information about the Norwegian foreign service mission and a phone number in case help is needed. An agreement is also made about what is to be done if the pupil does not return to Norway. The pupil, the counsellor and the school principal all sign the completed form.

Good experience of follow-up agreements in connection with travel abroad

In the vast majority of the cases where follow-up agreements were signed, the person in question has returned to Norway as expected and without being married off as he/she feared.

Young people who took advantage of the follow-up scheme before travelling abroad, and who gave feedback about their experience, say that they felt more secure and protected because they had a signed agreement. Several of them also said that they felt that the contact with a follow-up person during the journey was a source of additional support and security. Pupils have stated that it was good for them, that it made them feel less alone. In some cases, they have wanted the minority counsellor to advise them about how they could deal with situations that arose.

In several of the cases the minority counsellors have been involved in, the parents took a positive view of the use of a follow-up agreement and of the written information in their own first language that forced marriage is illegal and a criminal offence in Norway. These parents felt that the agreement, which was stamped by the police/child welfare service, could help them to argue against pressure from the community in their home country.⁷

It is important to be aware that a contact and follow-up agreement in connection with travel abroad is far from a guarantee that things will work out well. It is therefore important that the conversation with the young person about the forthcoming journey is carried out in such a way that the young person understands what could happen and is not given a false sense of security.

A conversation tool with a good preventive effect

The conversation about the journey abroad has proven to have an important preventive effect, and the follow-up form that the young person completes together with a counsellor has functioned as a good conversation tool. Filling in this form can be an awareness-raising experience for the young person. During the process, what started out as no more than an unclear fear can develop into a more concrete understanding of the risks involved and contribute to him/her choosing not to go.

Recommendations for young people who worry about what could happen when they go abroad

Before the summer holidays 2009, the minority counsellors at Ulsrud upper secondary school prepared a brochure based on the recommendations in IMDi's procedures. The brochure was distributed to the pupils and left in an easily accessible place so that those who were interested could help themselves. The brochure, whose title was *Er du bekymret for om du kan bli forlovet, giftet bort eller etterlatt mot din vilje?* ('Are you worried that you could be engaged, married off or left behind against your will?' – in Norwegian only) is in pocket format and contains recommendations for young people who are afraid of what could happen when they go abroad:

1. Contact an adult whom you trust at school before you leave.
2. Leave copies of your passport and ticket with the person you have agreed the follow-up with.
3. It is a good idea to agree on regular phone calls or internet contact with a person you trust in Norway, so that you can tell them how you are doing during your holiday.

6 See the appendix on page 167.

7 Drammen municipality's self-declaration form was used in these cases.

4. Pay-as-you-go mobile phone subscriptions do not work abroad. You must get a local subscription when you arrive at your destination.
5. Take extra money and a copy of your passport with you, and hide them well.
6. Get the phone number, address, e-mail address and, if relevant, fax number of the Norwegian embassy in the country where you are going on holiday. Learn them by heart! Slips of paper can be mislaid, and you could lose your phone, or it could be checked or taken away from you. You can find a list of all embassies and their phone numbers at <http://www.norway.info>
7. If you contact the embassy, whether in writing or verbally, do so in Norwegian. Then you can be sure that the information is not picked up by third parties. If you are certain that something will happen: Don't go! Seek help!

The brochure is one of several information and awareness-raising measures under the auspices of the minority counsellors. It has become a product that all minority counsellors can distribute in the schools where they work as part of their preventive efforts.⁸

⁸ If the person who talks to the young person believes that there may be a risk to life and/or health, the case must be reported to the child welfare service (under-18s) or the police (pupils over 18). It is recommended that the person who talks to the young person discusses the case with the child welfare service or the police without giving names. The above-mentioned procedure emphasises that the police shall always carry out a threat assessment in each case.

Cooperation with foreign service missions/integration counsellors

In IMDi's experience, follow-up of young people who fear forced marriage in connection with travel abroad is often better in cases where there is cooperation with the foreign service mission/integration counsellor. They can provide information about cultural conditions and marriage traditions in the young person's country of origin etc. that will be useful for minority counsellors and other parties in their follow-up of a case. Such information and knowledge inspire trust in the young person and help to improve the basis for providing advice and implementing suitable measures.

Cooperation with the integration counsellors has proven particularly useful in clarifying the local conditions in the country where the pupil is going on holiday, for example. If children or young people 'go missing', the minority counsellor or others can contact the integration counsellor, who can use his or her network and local knowledge to try to find out where the pupil is. In the case presented below, cooperation with the integration counsellor, the police and the support agencies in Norway was crucial.

Noen ambassader har integreringsrådgiver som jobber spesielt med tvangsekteskap: Råd ved reiser til utlandet

<p>JORDAN Den norske ambassaden i Amman (Midtøsten) 25 Damascus Street Abdoun, Amman Tlf: +962 6 593 1646 Faks: +962 6 593 1650 emb.amman@mfa.no (Irak har egen hjemmeside: www.norway-iraq.org)</p>	<p>KENYA Den norske ambassaden i Nairobi (dekker Somalia) Lion Place, Waiyaki Way, Tlf: +254 20 425 1000 +254 20 445 1510 Faks: +254 20 445 1517 Vakttlf: +90 532 366 0051 emb.nairobi@mfa.no</p>
<p>TYRKIA Den norske ambassaden i Ankara (dekker Iran) Kirkpinar Sokak no 18 06540 Cankaya, Ankara Tel: +90 312 405 8010 Mob: +90 534 706 7900 Vakttlf: +90 532 366 0051 emb.ankara@mfa.no</p>	<p>PAKISTAN Den norske ambassaden i Islamabad (dekker Afghanistan) House 25, Str. 19 F 6/2, Islamabad Tlf: +92 51 227 9720-4 Faks: +92 51 227 9729 emb.islamabad@mfa.no</p>





■ ■ CASE

In the following, a concrete case reported to a minority counsellor is described.

The case has been anonymised.

Background: *Girl, 20 years old, Norwegian citizen.*

Born in Norway, lives with her parents and siblings in a town in Norway.

At the turn of the month April/May 2009, the girl contacted the minority counsellor together with the social affairs coordinator from X upper secondary school. The girl stated that she had been living in a difficult situation for some time. An ex-boyfriend threatened to tell her brothers about their relationship, he was violent and was pressuring her. In addition, her parents had made an agreement when the girl was very young that she was to marry a cousin in their country of origin. The girl felt that they did not take her seriously when she stated that she did not want to marry. The parents had decided that they were to go abroad on holiday in summer 2009. The girl feared that she would be forced to marry.

A responsibility group was established, comprising representatives of all the natural parties. The responsibility group cooperated with the police, which took part in all relevant meetings about the girl.

The participants were as follows:

Function	Measures before departure	The girl's comments after returning:
The minority counsellor, case coordinator	She organised everything, had an overview of the case and convened the meetings. She advised the different agencies involved in the case, kept in touch with the girl throughout, and provided information about the rules regarding family reunification and divorce. The purpose of the work was: To prevent the girl from going abroad. If she did go, to obtain information about what concrete steps the girl could take if she was pressured into a forced marriage. To plan measures if the girl failed to return to Norway after the holidays.	'An important person. She made me feel safe enough to talk. Information about the duty of confidentiality made me feel safe, for example in conversations with the police. The coordinator helped me to open up and be honest. The coordinator got everybody involved, and everybody had to do their job. It is important to have a person who takes responsibility. In my case, the coordinator did everything she could. She gave me information about what would happen next all the time.'
The head of the 18–24 project (a social security office project for young clients). Responsible for the girl's financial situation.	This project provided follow-up and financial support in connection with a year of schooling to improve her grades so that she could be accepted for the educational programme she wanted to attend.	'I became part of the project in 2008. I could not have managed without them, for example with the extra money. It was important for me to have my own money (about NOK 7,000 a month). They kept an eye on me. That was great. In my situation, things could not have been done differently, the self-declaration (with the 18-24 project, the coordinator and myself) was good.'

Function	Measures before departure	The girl's comments after returning:
<p>The introduction centre, represented by a counsellor Responsible for her year at school and for her being accepted for the right school.</p>	<p>She became an introduction centre pupil in order to improve her grades from lower secondary school. When the girl could not attend her school due to a conflict with her ex-boyfriend, alternative teaching was provided.</p>	<p>'I didn't feel that they were part of the case. I only understood that when there was talk of me starting at a different school than the one my ex-boyfriend goes to. Then I understood what their role was. Their role and duties should have been made clearer.'</p>
<p>The educational welfare counsellor at the educational institution the girl attended</p>	<p>In this case, the educational welfare counsellor was responsible for the day-to-day follow-up of the girl, under the guidance of the minority counsellor/coordinator.</p>	<p>'They did a lot for me. They made sure that I had everything with me – contraceptives, the receipt from Cubus, a copy of my passport – and gave me advice and guidance. In a way, there were responsible for helping me to organise these things. They cooperated well with everybody and did their job.'</p>
<p>The child welfare service, represented by a case worker visited the home and filled in a self-declaration form for a younger sister</p>	<p>The girl has a younger sister in whose case the child welfare service had intervened, and she had recently turned 18. Further involvement from the child welfare service is voluntary, and a meeting with the girl and the parents was therefore necessary. The coordinator talked to the younger sister and recommended that she continue to receive assistance from the child welfare service. The sister consented to this. The coordinator talked to the case worker about the plans to go abroad with her older sister and her family. The child welfare service took the opportunity at the meeting with the parents and the girl to talk about the law on forced marriage, and they signed a self-declaration.</p>	<p>'At the meeting between the child welfare service and my parents about my younger sister, at which I was also present, the child welfare service produced the self-declaration form. I understood then that the coordinator was behind this, and I did nothing to clear up the misunderstanding. Dad believed that the self-declaration concerned both me and my sister.'</p>
<p>The police prevention unit, represented by the leader, was also involved, among other things because of the threats from the ex-boyfriend</p>	<p>The police did meet the parents. They offered to talk to the parents, but the girl rejected the offer, fearing that it could make her situation more difficult.</p>	<p>'Great! I felt a great sense of security because they were part of the team working with me. I felt that they knew what they were talking about, and that they had experience of this kind of problem. They took my concerns seriously and acted in the matter of my ex-boyfriend. I felt that they cooperated well in the working group. If girls are very uncertain about their family, and if they are "behaving like shits", the police should try harder to convince the girls not to go. Over there, they can do what they like. In my situation, it was okay that I went, because I was well prepared.'</p>
<p>The integration counsellor, responsible for following up the case when the girl was abroad</p>	<p>Conversation with the girl before the holiday. Get to know the girl and inform her about what she should say to prevent a marriage from taking place.</p>	<p>'She gave me advice and the right information. She told me what I could do, and what would happen if a problem arose. She gave me more, correct information. The best argument she gave me, was that I should use my education as an excuse. She also told me to say "no" for as long as I could. I used the school as a reason, and the family reunification rules – that helped me a lot.'</p>



The girl's reflections on her stay abroad

I had a great holiday abroad. There were a lot of things that were different and that I did not like, but it was also great to experience the country's culture and get to know my family and make new friends.

It was a positive surprise that, when the issue came up, my parents were very clear that it was my decision whether I wanted to get engaged. I think this had to do with the self-declaration and the information my parents had received about the law in Norway.

If I had needed help abroad, I would have called the integration counsellor and informed her about my situation. I would have asked her what I should do, — and when and where I could get help. I would have been more uncertain in an emergency. I would probably have called, but I'm not sure that it would have helped. I am uncertain about whether I would have received information about where to turn and what kind of help I could have been given. I am also unsure about whether any family members would have supported me, although I did get on well with an uncle. I don't think there would have been anybody else to turn to.

I didn't meet any other girls in the same situation as myself, but I know that they exist.

My brothers did not react to the fact that I didn't get married, and they have not talked about it or asked me about it.

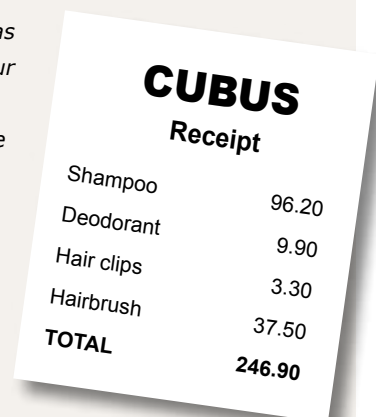
I did meet a cousin, the son of an uncle, who lived in x. I went out with him once and thought he was nice – I liked him. My uncle had asked my parents if we could become engaged. My parents answered that it was up to me, and that I could decide. I said that I want to complete my education before I would consider the matter. I didn't say yes or no.

I know nothing about what my parents have talked to other people about in relation to marriage. I felt that my mother was aware of the rules in Norway, and that she gave me arguments that I could use. She told me that I could not marry until I am 23 years old.

Girls should be better informed about the regulations concerning bringing a person here from abroad. The issue will arise anyway, and the girls need to know what the requirements are.

The girl's advice about what to do in case of concern:

- ▶ *Try to make us feel secure, so that we can open up (this could take a long time).*
- ▶ *Give us lots of information about the law and arguments we can use during our holiday stay.*
- ▶ *Be firm if you think that something could happen, have plenty of contact with us so that we feel secure and realise that someone is there for us, someone who understands and can help us.*
- ▶ *The use of self-declarations: Self-declarations are incredibly important. This has nothing to do with age, so always sign a contract and provide information in our first languages. It is important that our parents are informed about the consequences and what they can use as excuses down there. It is important that the parents really understand the consequences. My parents signing the contract made a difference, I felt safer.*
- ▶ *Be creative. The Cubus receipt was very clever. I was given a fake receipt from Cubus. If you take away all the zeros, you get the embassy's emergency phone number. The numbers in the total are not part of the phone number. Nobody but me knew that.*



APPENDIX

SKJEMA FOR OPPFØLGING ved reiser utenlands		
_____	_____	M K
Elevens navn	Fødselsdato(person nr)	Kjønn
_____	_____	
Statsborgerskap	Oppholdsgrunnlag I Norge	
FORELDRE / FORESATTE		
_____	_____	
Navn, person 1:	Fødselsdato(person nr)	
_____	_____	
Statsborgerskap	Oppholdsgrunnlag I Norge	
_____	_____	
Navn, person 2:	Fødselsdato(person nr)	
_____	_____	
Statsborgerskap	Oppholdsgrunnlag I Norge	
BAKGRUNN FOR ØNSKE OM OPPFØLGING		
Årsak til mitt behov for oppfølging:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Frykt for uønsket forlovelse eller ekteskap	<input type="checkbox"/> Frykt for manglende retur til Norge	
<input type="checkbox"/> Frykt for ufrivillig skolegang i besøkslandet	<input type="checkbox"/> Annet: _____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
JEG/VI SKAL OPPHOLDE OSS/BESØKE FØLGENDE PERSONER		
_____	_____	
Navn	Type relasjon	
_____	_____	
Navn	Type relasjon	
_____	_____	
Jeg/vi reiser til (land)	By/landsby	
_____	_____	
Gate adresse	Postnummer Poststed	Tlfnr.



REISERUTE

Avreise Norge (dato, sted)

Retur Norge (dato, sted)

FORMÅLET MED REISEN ER

Ferie

Sykdom i nær familie

Skolegang i besøkslandet

Avtale om fremtidig ekteskap/forlovelse

Ekteskap

Flytte/opphold i ferielandet ut over ferie

Annet:

(OPPFØLGINGSPUNKTER UNDERVEIS, for eksempel tidspunkt for telefonisk kontakt mens eleven er utenlands)

KONTAKTPERSON I NORGE

Navn

Type relasjon

Gate adresse

Postnummer Poststed

Tlfnr.

BISTAND FRA OFFENTLIG MYNDIGHET

V/manglende retur til Norge, og senest innen (dato):

Ønsker jeg kontakt med norske myndigheter for å avklare min situasjon

INFORMASJON GITT

Informasjon om lovverk relatert til tvangsekteskap, oversatt til:

Informasjon om lovverk relatert til omskjæring, oversatt til:

Annet:

OPPBEVARING

Dette skjemaet oppbevares ved skolen og kan bare trekkes tilbake ved hovedpersonens personlige fremmøte for gjennomføring av slutt samtale.

Rådgivers underskrift

Dato

ELEVENS SAMTYKKE

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Parents as a target group

'I care about my child!'

(A mother in answer to why she participated in a parents' dialogue meeting)

- Introduction: Parents as a target group
- Parenthood and young people's life choices in a migration context
- Dialogue in cases concerning collective honour-related violence against children and young people
- Work targeting parents via schools
- The preventive and awareness-raising work of voluntary organisations
- List of tips – methods for cooperating with parents





Introduction:

Parents as a target group

The Action Plan entails a broad-based approach to the prevention of forced marriage, in terms of both the type of measures implemented and target groups. The focus has been on both urgent assistance and long-term measures intended to prevent acute situations from arising.

The work has targeted three primary target groups: the victims, families/communities where forced marriage could take place, and the helpers/employees of the public support agencies, schools, foreign service missions and voluntary organisations. In this part, we will take a closer look at IMDi's experience of how to reach the parents, families and communities of victims and young people at risk as part of the preventive efforts. What challenges have we faced, and what methods have worked?

Gaps in our knowledge have been uncovered during the work. In line with the goal of increasing knowledge and research in this area, IMDi has ordered external reports about topics that represent 'white spots on the map' of our knowledge base; topics that have not been sufficiently elucidated, but that it is important that we know something about. In this part, we will also present the findings of two of these reports in the form of articles. The first article examines minority parents' perspectives on value conflicts relating to upbringing, views on life and life choices, and how to create good conditions for dialogue with schools about such issues. The other article deals with our experience of dialogue as a method in preventive work.

Why work targeting families?

The Action Plan states that forced marriage is not an individual problem that can be solved solely by measures targeting the victims and people at risk. It is a social problem that requires measures aimed at families and communities where forced marriage occurs. In this context, 'family' refers to family both in Norway and abroad.

The families and communities where forced marriages occur are often defined as carriers of collectivist family traditions where family considerations take precedence over considerations for the individual. Such a definition is not unproblematic. It can contribute to an inflexible and stigmatising perspective on what it means to be 'an immigrant family' and 'an immigrant family in conflict', with all the consequences this can have for how a school or child welfare service

employee or a police officer etc. will relate to parents from minority backgrounds who are in conflict with their children, or vice versa. Bredal highlights this when she writes:

'My main point is that the wording "the interests of the family over those of the individual" puts the individual outside the family. This way of defining collectivism is, if not wrong, then at least inadequate or skewed, in that it lacks an understanding of the connection between individuals, which is part of what constitutes a family.'

(Bredal 2006, p. 94)

A family with a collectivist view of life consists of individuals with relationships with each other (as in all families), but who feel to a *greater extent* that considerations for these relationships weigh heavily in important life choices, such as education and choice of spouse, than is the case in so-called individualistically oriented families. This is not an either-or matter involving diametrically opposite ways of being a family. Why is this important?

On the one hand, it is important to understand that the family's values and wishes for their children will probably deeply influence the children's choices in life, also as adolescents and young adults. Going against the family's wishes can create deep conflicts and involve many people in the extended family, both in Norway and abroad. This has consequences, for example for how a school counsellor deals with young people who are struggling to make choices, or how a child welfare service employee relates to a young boy who makes contact because he fears that he will be married off against his will. It is important to relate to the young person in a way that shows that you understand that it is not just about 'doing what is best for you, you have a right to choose for yourself.' To be met with the understanding that what is best for you is not an unambiguous feeling because there are many things to be taken into consideration, can be the decisive factor that makes a young person under pressure dare to open up and ask for help. IMDi has consistently experienced that victims and young people at risk often struggle with great ambivalence regarding what choices to make. They may find



Sommer er bryllupssesong

- Tvangsekteskap er et familieproblem der alle er tapere.
- Brudd med familien er ikke en løsning, men et sikkerhetstiltak.
- Å finne en god ektefelle for sitt barn regnes som god foreldreomsorg.

Ikke alle får velge hvem de vil gifte seg med. Mange opplever at foreldre og slekt avgjør hvem de skal dele resten av livet med, ha sex med og oppfostre barn med. Dette er et brudd på menneskerettighetene og straffbart ifølge norsk lov.

Hjelpeapparatet har fokusert på å hjelpe ungdommene til å romme og starte et liv uten kontakt med familien.

Erfaringer fra arbeid med tvangsekteskap viser at brudd med familien sjelden er en god og varig løsning. I en akutsituasjon der liv og helse står i fare er brudd helt nødvendig, men på sikt kan et forbyrterstempel på foreldrene skape store problemer for den unges selvforståelse. Tvangsekteskap bør ses på som et familieproblem der alle er tapende parter og hjelpen bør tilrettelegges deretter.

Et familieproblem

I 2007 startet Aker Familiekontor et prosjekt med mål om å utvikle gode metoder rettet mot denne gruppen. Prosjektet har samarbeidet med eksisterende tilbud for ungdom utsatt for tvangsekteskap. Problematikken er for kompleks til at en instans kan løse det alene. Prosjektet har tilbudt terapi til ca. 50 unge som enten er tvangsgiftet eller lever med trusler om ekteskap. De er heterofile og homofile ungdommer av begge kjønn, med foreldre fra elleve ulike opprinnelsesland. Mange har gått en lang vei for å bli møtt og trodd. Terapeutene har hele familien i fokus også der de unge møter alene.

Det å bli sett i sammenheng med familien medfører at den unge føler seg mer forstått. En annen fordel med å få hjelp på familiekontor er at det understrekes at det ikke er den unge som er «syk», det er familien som har et problem.

Familier som gjennomfører tvangsekteskap er ikke en enhet-

TVANGSEKTESKAP



Trine C. Eikrem, psykolog og leder ved Østnesjø familiekontor



Pia C. Aursand, psykologspesialist ved Aker familiekontor, Bulestat Region øst

lig gruppe. Ekteskap kan være et forsøk på å avverge tap av ære. Noen foreldre er også så voldelige at brudd er den eneste hjelpen å gå. I andre tilfeller er foreldre utsatt for like stort press som den unge, og de trenger hjelp til å stå imot dette presset. Det å finne en god ektefelle for sitt barn regnes også som god foreldreomsorg. Alle foreldre kan ikke bli møtt som forbyrtere, det skaper ingen grunn for endring.

Vanæret

Når utgangspunktet for tvangsekteskap er så forskjellig, må det utvikles flere metoder for å hjelpe. Tanken bak prosjektet har vært at et brudd med familien ikke er en løsning, men et sikkerhetstiltak. Det å være utekontakt med familien resten av livet er for mange unge ikke til å leve med. Mange har hatt en oppvekt som har gjort dem lite rustet til å gripe seg på egen hånd. De har alle med seg en opplevelse av å bli sviktet av sin nærmeste. I tillegg sliter mange med ensomhet og skyld- og skamfølelse over å ha vanæret familien. Mange jenter har fungert som omsorgspersoner for yngre søsken og savner dem sterkt. Tilbake sitter foreldre med sorg, ærestap og skam, noe som kan øke risikoen for økt bruk av tvang overfor de barna som fremdeles bør hjemme.

Det er begrenset hvor mange unge man kan skjule i et lite land som Norge. Det er ikke hensiktsmessig kun å tilby hjelp som innebærer at den unge må tilbringe resten av livet uten kontakt med familien. Omkostningene for alle partene er for store til at vi kun kan tilby kortsiktige løsninger.

I København er det gjort erfaringer med å konfrontere foreldre i samarbeid med politiet når en ung flykter til krisesenter på grunn av trusler om tvangsekteskap. Metoden går ut på å fronte den unges sak overfor foreldre og opplyse om lovverk, samtidig som man er lyttende til foreldrenes versjon av historien. Målet er en skriftlig kontrakt der foreldrene lover at de ikke vil utsette den unge for vold eller tvang. Kontraktene følges nøye opp i etterkant. I motene tilbys foreldrene hjelp til å motstå press fra andre som ønsker at ekteskapet skal gjennomføres. I de fleste tilfeller har man greid å inngå avtaler som gjør at de unge kan leve uten frykt med varierende grad av kontakt med familien.

Trenger foreldre

Foreldregenerasjonen er vanskeligere å nå enn de unge. Vi etterlyser foreldre som kan stå frem med eksempler på hvordan de har greid å løse problemer knyttet til ekteskap for sine barn, der de både bevarer sin ære og kan gå med på barnas ønsker. Ingen barn fortjener foreldre stemplet som forbyrtere.

Mange foreldre har en tendens til å redusere barnas motstand til et ungdomsopprør. Det er en for lettvinnet forklaring, som i liten grad tar hensyn til den unges dilemmaer. Tvangsekteskap må forstås som et familieproblem og brudd på kommunikasjonen innad i familien. Bare slik kan vi være i forkant og avverge en praksis både unge og foreldre taper på.



PRESS: Tvangsekteskap bør ses på som et familieproblem.

Illustrasjonsfoto: JANNE MOLLER-HANSEN

it difficult to ask for help if that would show their parents or members of their family in a bad light and put them in a difficult situation, because, despite their problems, the young people are also very strongly attached to their families. Understanding the importance of family and the family members' different roles is crucial to ensuring that the help provided to young people is relevant and does not produce the opposite of the desired effect. Fear of forced marriage is not an individual problem that can be solved without considering the family's potential reactions and sanctions. A solution should therefore involve the family as far as possible.

On the other hand, it is important to be aware that this is not necessarily a conflict between two opposing parties, in which the victim or person at risk is in opposition to the rest of the family. A family with a collectivist view of life is a complex entity:

'In my material, the family is far from having one single will. Rather, it appears to consist of individuals who act in different ways in the marriage process, and whose interests can be more or less in conflict with one another. Parents can disagree about who their daughter or son should marry, siblings can support or oppose each other, or the young person in question can join forces with other relatives to gain the parents' acceptance.'

(Bredal, p. 275).

This has a number of implications. A young person who seeks help does not necessarily stand alone. She may already have the support of one of her parents or one or more siblings, an uncle or an aunt. Or she can be helped to think through who in the family she could ally herself with. This also widens the helpers' point of view from 'who is/are the threat in the family' to 'who can you trust?'. It is important to identify both parties. Looking at both these questions can

help to nuance an often static perception of the family as 'the enemy'.

It will also make it possible to see that the conflict the young person is in cannot necessarily be reduced to a matter of 'child versus parents', but that there are different points of view and wills in play, and that there may be several complex lines of conflict. Awareness is also increasing that the parents may themselves be trapped in a situation of conflicting pressure between the wishes and needs of the nuclear family and the extended family. In several cases, it has come to light that those who make decisions about family matters are other family members, either in Norway or in the country of origin. Rumours of inappropriate behaviour spread with lightening speed via social media and by phone. Some parents feel that they don't really have a say, that they are also being strictly monitored and controlled and must comply with the family's demands that they live by a strict code of honour or push through engagements or marriages. Some are also not familiar with Norwegian laws and regulations.

The brochure *Informasjon til foreldre om ekteskap* ('Information to parents about marriage' – in Norwegian only) targets parents and encourages communication between parents and young people. It provides information about legislation and the health-related consequences of psychological pressure and coercion, and about where parents can turn for advice and guidance. The brochure has been translated into several languages.¹

Dialogue as a method

“ *This is abuse, but based not on the logic of an abuser, but that of a despairing parent.* ”

Trine Eikrem, psychologist employed by Brobyggerprosjektet ('Bridgebuilder project') to local newspaper Romerikes blad, 21 July 2011

¹ Published by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), IMDi, the Directorate of Health, the National Police Directorate and the Directorate of Immigration in 2011. The brochure has been translated into English, Urdu, Somali, Arabic, Sorani, Farsi/Persian, Pashto and Turkish. You can download it from www.tvangsekteskap.no or from the websites of the publishers.



When the support agencies are contacted, it is essential to establish the facts: where is the pressure coming from, who can provide support, what is the matter really about, what are the alternatives, how serious is the matter. Experience shows that forced marriage is the last step in a process where the young person has been subjected to extensive control, threats and violence over time. Prevention by means of dialogue with the parents has become a frequently used method in recent years in cases where the support agencies become involved in a case before the situation is acute. This method can also be used if the conflict has come to a head and in following up cases, for example when a young person who has chosen to break contact with his/her family wants to move back home. Using dialogue as a method in cases involving forced marriage and other forms of honour-related violence requires special expertise. For example, when a school counsellor is contacted about a case where it becomes clear that dialogue with the parents is required, the child welfare service

or the police must be contacted (depending on whether the victim/person at risk is over or under 18 years of age).²

The family counselling service, the Red Cross forced marriage and female genital mutilation helpline and some municipalities use dialogue as a method. The Expert Team also has experience of dialogue. It is an underlying assumption in this approach that all parents want what is best for their children, but that they struggle with the parent role in Norway. What many young people perceive as control may be intended by the parents as protection from undesired influence from society at large by strict continuation of the adults' own traditions and way of thinking. In part, parents from other countries have a different set of care and upbringing practices, and migration and the meeting with society at large can also lead to traditions from the former home culture and family becoming rigid and strict.



They (my family) are really traditional. My father's brain is like a tree trunk with no branches; there are no branches to hang new ideas on.

(Nadia, in Bjøranger 2011, p. 24).

Using dialogue can help to clear up misunderstandings and restore communication in the family. The parents' perspectives and intentions can be clarified.

It could be an indicator of forced marriage or fear of forced marriage that the parents are themselves victims of forced marriage. If so, this can be uncovered through conversation. Perhaps they need help themselves and require information about legislation, rights and what kind of assistance the support agencies can provide. The situation of siblings can also be an indication of the demands and expectations of the family of someone who makes contact because of a fear of being married off against


his/her will. In other words; if one person is subjected to pressure to marry, it is not improbable that the same is, has been or will be the case for other siblings. Dialogue can be an approach to uncovering more problematic circumstances in a family.

However, some cases are so serious that considerations of the life and health of the victim/person at risk can make it necessary to break with the family. This is a big and difficult step to take, and experience shows that young people often move back after a while. The reasons are complex: they miss their family, they may be under considerable pressure from various family members, and the support system around them once they have moved out may be inadequate. If the support agencies are in dialogue with the family before the young person moves back home, there is a good possibility that such a reunification may work out. If nobody talks to the family before the young person moves back home, the conflict can soon escalate to a level where the victim/person at risk has to break contact again.

A break can also lead to home conditions for the siblings of the person who breaks out becoming stricter in order to prevent the same from happening with them. Moreover, a family that has lost a member also needs support. For these reasons, breaking with the family can have major consequences for the parties involved. Preventing a break is important, and it is easier to achieve if one becomes involved in a case at an early stage, before the situation comes to a head. When the level of conflict is high, dialogue is more demanding, but also very important in order to arrive at a sustainable solution for the involved parties.

Dialogue is an important method in preventive work. At the same time, however, forced marriage and other forms of honour-related violence are crimes. Dialogue must therefore not be used as an alternative to reporting cases to the police, but as a *supplementary* solution. The dialogue must focus on the best interest of the child, and it is contingent on a willingness to change on the part of the parents and a wish on the part

² See also the article *Cooperation, competence and coordination in forced marriage cases* in Part 5.



as a buffer against this pressure. Starting a discussion in the communities where forced marriages occur helps to bring attitudes into the open and create arenas for exchanges of opinion and change.

IMDi's remit was to work on this issue through various measures in schools and in the circles where parents interact socially. One of the minority counsellors' focus areas in the schools where they were stationed has been cooperation with parents. The experience is summarised in the article *Work targeting parents through schools*. IMDi has also administered an allocation of NOK 10 million per year for work aimed at changing attitudes. The allocation was divided between immigrant organisations that carried out projects to combat forced marriage. Many projects have been realised, different methods have been used to reach both young people and their parents, and the experience is mixed. The article *The preventive and awareness-raising work of voluntary organisations* describes these efforts. Based on the overall experience from work targeting parents, we have developed a list of methods that we hope can inspire and help others: *List of tips – methods for cooperating with parents*.

Parents – a heterogeneous group

Parents from minority backgrounds are a very heterogeneous group, where personal history, education, values, religious affiliation, ideas about parenthood, cultural background, language skills, gender and age are only some of the many factors to be taken into consideration. No two families or situations are alike. Families from the same country of origin can have completely different traditions and views about the how marriages should be entered into, how to bring up children etc. If you try to use a standard approach, you risk stigmatising whole groups, which will only exclude and repel the very people you wish to start a dialogue with. And, not least, you can miss important information about what is unique about a particular family, and therefore fail to provide the help that is needed – if it is needed.

This stigmatisation is one of the issues raised by the parents who were interviewed by the Institute for Social Research (ISF), and the topic is presented in the article *Parenthood and young people's life choices*. The article is based on the report *Foreldreskap og ungdoms livsvalg i en migrasjonskontekst* ('Parenthood and young people's life choices in a migration context' – in Norwegian only) (Five Aarset and Sandbæk 2009). The report was based on interviews with focus groups comprising 28 parents from minority backgrounds and written on assignment for IMDi. It shows how some parents encounter prejudice about what attitudes and values they represent, and that contact with schools and the public authorities often focuses on problems. This makes such contact a negative experience overall. The voices of these parents are important because they are rarely heard in the public debate. We have therefore chosen to start with this article, so that the reader can have this perspective in mind when reading more about the experience of prevention and the use of dialogue.

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Parenthood and young people's life choices in a migration context

By Monica Five Aarset and Miriam Latif Sandbæk, Institute for Social Research

How much freedom of action adolescents with migration backgrounds have in the family is a subject of discussion and concern in research, the media and in the policy formulation context. At the same time, the voices of the parents are more or less absent from public debate, and the parents' situation in value conflicts in the family has not been sufficiently elucidated in the research literature. We therefore wish to focus this article on the perspectives of ethnic minority parents on young people's values and attitudes in relation to issues such as gender equality, love and the formation of families.

The article is based on five focus group interviews with a total of 28 parents who have immigrated to Norway carried out in January 2009. The parents' backgrounds were from Iraq (Kurdistan), Congo, Pakistan, Somalia and Turkey.³ Their backgrounds are thus from societies that have traditionally been characterised by different, often more hierarchically organised gender and generational relationships than Norwegian society. The majority of these parents had come to Norway as adults. Some had come as labour immigrants or via family reunification with labour immigrants as early as in the 1970s, while some had come as refugees as recently as during the past decade. In other words, there was great variety among the participants, and this has of course had a strong bearing on the challenges and problems they face as parents. Therefore, the material primarily provides a basis for raising important issues and illustrating a wide range of experiences and perspectives. In this article, we present some of the main findings from the group interviews, and we will conclude by giving some practical input on cooperation with parents.

³ This article is based on the report *Foreldreskap og ungdoms livsvalg i en migrasjonskontekst* ('Parenthood and young people's life choices in a migration context' – in Norwegian only) (Aarset and Sandbæk 2009), which was written on assignment for the Directorate of Integration and Diversity in connection with the establishment of a minority counselling scheme for upper secondary schools.



Balancing artist

'I had parents, aunts, grandparents, uncles – an extended family – who looked after me and took part in my upbringing. And now, it is just a mother and a father in a completely different culture. And even if the children are born here, they have a completely different skin colour. Now I am almost the only one who can advise and guide them, and I am tired when I come home from work. The only thing I can do is to ask them how their day has been. For this reason, we feel sorry for our children. In a way, they are between two cultures; we tell them that this and that is not how we do things [according to Somali culture], while they grow up with the culture here. They are neither in Europe nor in Africa.'

(Mother of Somali descent)

Not only do migrant parents encounter new ways of organising society, but also new ways of understanding and organising family life and the upbringing of children. Many social, cultural and structural circumstances in Norway, as well as in the country of origin, make up the context of parenthood. The interviews show how parents negotiate between different views of what it means to be a parent, and that they are striving to find a balance between a number of considerations, values, norms and ways of understand-

ing in their parenting. The dominant discourses of the majority population influence socialisation practices in minority families, but they are also adapted to internalised upbringing and family practices. Annick Prieur (2004) uses the term 'balancing artists' to describe how young people from immigrant backgrounds find themselves at the interface between different understandings of family, identity and the relationship between autonomy and dependence. The interviews with parents show how the term 'balancing artists' can also be used about the parents.

Distrust and loss of authority

'We never talk about these issues with Norwegian parents. There are many myths on both sides. We don't know enough about each other. We believe that Norwegian parents will allow anything, that anything goes. They [Pakistanis] know very little about the fact that you [Norwegians] also struggle and argue.'

(Mother of Pakistani descent)

The combination of what the parents perceived as Norwegian society's focus on teaching children their rights and the majority population's conception of immigrant parents as excessively controlling gave the parents a feeling of being stripped of authority in relation to their children. The resulting frustration is not really about the fact that the children are made aware of their rights, but about how the children understand and interpret them, and about how the rights discourse was conducted in the context of a negative focus on 'immigrant parents'. The interviews showed that the force/freedom discourse that dominates the understanding of minority families in the Norwegian debate, whereby minorities are associated with 'force' and the majority with 'freedom', and the toning down of dependence and limits, contributes to many parents perceiving Norwegian society as more or less indifferent and without limits in its view of how young people should be brought up. They found this frightening.

Guidance, intimacy and trust

'When my son was 16, he reached puberty, and then I had a talk with him and told him that if he had sex,

the girl could become pregnant. I asked him if he wanted me to have another child in the house, and he said no. And I said that then you mustn't have sex. I have had the same discussion with my 12-year-old daughter. And I will not force them to marry. Even if she is 40 years old and the others talk about her – she can decide for herself.'

(Mother of Somali descent)

The parents we talked to were deeply engaged in their children's lives and used the resources and strategies available to them to help, support and guide them. The parents described the ideal relationship between parents and children as one based on mutual trust, and they described the role of a parent as being that of advisor and guide. The parents set limits and believed that they gave their children freedom within these limits. They guided their children by talking to them about situations that could arise, and how they as parents might react in such situations, so that the children would understand for themselves where the limits were and want to stay within them. However, parents differed in their interpretation and performance of the guidance role, the limits they set and how they reacted to any infringements. These variations had to do with differences between parents, but also the gender of the children.

Gendered worries

Mother: There are many problems we don't have because we don't have girls. We have boys, and we have different problems. If you have girls, maybe there will be double standards in how you treat them. You treat the boy in one way and the girl in one way.

I: You think that you would also do that?

Mother: I cannot say yes or no. But sometimes I imagine myself in the situation of the mother of a girl, how worried she is – not because she has an old-fashioned way of thinking, but because she is worried that the girl can be abused in society. No, we [who have boys] have different problems. My main concern now is that my boy does not become addicted to cigarettes or alcohol and is treated well by his friends. This is different for the mother of a girl. ... I worry about my son and do not want him to be mistreated, but if I had a daughter,

I would also think about what others say.
(Mother of Kurdish descent)

The parents' main worries were related to fears that their children would get mixed up with the wrong crowd, not do well at school and develop alcohol and drug problems. Although these worries applied to both boys and girls, there was a tendency for parents to link this type of worries to boys. There was a tendency for parents to distinguish between two types of worries related to gender: worries about what could happen to their children (alcohol or drug addiction, bad friends, violence etc.) and worries about what others might say or think about them. The first type applies to sons, the latter to daughters. However, the worries about boys were those they talked most about. This could be because girls are kept under stricter control than boys, and that the boys are therefore more at risk of being exposed to alcohol, drugs, gang problems and crime. The worries about sons were particularly strong in relation to school. They concerned general discontent, bullying and poor academic performance and the fear of boys dropping out.

As regards gender and gendered upbringing, the majority of parents described themselves as stricter with their daughters than their sons, but the interviews with parents also illustrated processes of change. Many of the parents disagreed that boys and girls should be brought up according to different rules and norms. However, the parents' stories showed that change can be difficult, because gendered upbringing is to a large extent embodied. Moreover, it can be seen as difficult to make new and different choices in the upbringing of boys and girls due to social control by the networks around the family.

Marriage

'If my son comes home with a Norwegian girl – I cannot refuse him to do so. If he says that this is who I love, then welcome. But, to be honest, I want a Somali, who speaks the language and knows the culture. I believe this to be the same for Norwegians too.'
(Mother of Somali descent)

The majority of the parents we talked to believed it was part of their role as parents to guide and advise their children on the choice of a spouse. The parents had experience of life that they felt it was necessary to draw on in such an important decision. Many believed that it is not only the couple themselves who must be suited, but that their families must also be suited. But how they understood, interpreted and practised advising and guidance, and what criteria they felt had to be met for families and individuals to be 'well suited to each other' varied. Ethnic background, religion, culture, views on life and lifestyle, caste, language and financial considerations were among the elements mentioned as criteria that must be met in order for a potential son or daughter-in-law to be 'suitable'. It also varied to what extent the parents spoke based on what was 'suitable' for the family as a whole and what was 'suitable' for their son/daughter. At the same time, it was sometimes difficult to tell these two levels apart, since the best interests of the family and of the individual were often considered to overlap. The parents specified that there is a difference between arranged marriages and forced marriages, and they were all against forced marriage. However, several researchers have pointed out that the line between arranged and forced marriages can be unclear and difficult to draw. In *Arbeid mot tvangsekteskap – en veileder* ('Work against forced marriage – a guide' – in Norwegian only), forced marriage is defined as: a marriage organised in such a way that at least one of the spouses:

- ▶ has no real possibility of choosing to remain unmarried without being subject to reprisals,
- ▶ has no real possibility of choosing a different partner contrary to the family's wishes without being subject to reprisals,
- ▶ has consented to the marriage after undue pressure, threats or other physical or psychological violence.

Parents and young people can have different opinions about the extent to which the young people have real influence on their own situation. It is conceivable that what some parents consider advice and guidance, could be seen as undue pressure by young people.



School

'I have six children. The two eldest are students in Oslo. The others are not in higher education. One of my sons left at Easter in his final year at upper secondary school. Just two months before he would have graduated. The others are in upper secondary school. They shall go to university. They have to go to university.'

(Mother of Turkish descent)

The parents in the group interviews were actively engaged in their children's schooling. Several of the parents who we interviewed were active in the parents' council working committees (FAU), and some were also active in their children's leisure activities. The parents were concerned with their children completing school, and attached great importance to education. They stressed that school and education are crucial to their children's future and to successful integration.

The interviews with the parents showed that the main challenge in school-parent relations revolves around the combination of two factors. First, the strong focus on rights and self-determination in Norway's policy and discourse relating to children, and, second, the parents' experience of a negative focus on them as 'immigrant parents'. The parents appear to perceive school as a key promoter and producer of this children's rights discourse, in which schools, in their view, contribute to undermining parents' authority in relation to their children. Based on our qualitative study, it seems that more specific problems such as school camps, gender-divided swimming lessons, halal food etc. may arise as a result of the combination of the two above-mentioned factors. In our interviews it was difficult to get the parents to talk about their perceptions of the school's potential role as a negotiator between children and adults. The reason why this was difficult was not that the parents were unwilling to talk about it, but rather that they did not see the school as a relevant party in this type of situation and conflict. Many of the parents saw the school as 'the protector of children' against their parents and as a party that could be divisive in terms of the relationship between parents and children. For that reason, it is possibly not seen as a poten-

tial source of support to parents in some clashes of values and value conflicts.

School-parent cooperation – for whose sake?

It is a fundamental prerequisite if good cooperation is to be developed with parents to counteract the feeling many parents seem to have of being monitored and having suspicion thrown on them. Moreover, the cooperation with parents must be organised in such a way that their perspectives, experience, wishes and needs are taken into consideration and given weight. Schools, parents, minority counsellors and pupils can all have different wishes and needs in relation to the home-school collaboration, and they can have different ideas about what such cooperation should involve. The term home-school collaboration masks the fact that there are several parties in the home, and that children and parents can have conflicting wishes, needs and rights. The school thus faces a real challenge in striking a balance between the rights and wishes of the children and those of their parents. Cooperation between minority parents and upper secondary school should be seen in light of the general cooperation with parents at this stage. Cooperation between schools and children is primarily a primary and lower secondary school phenomenon, and is minimal at upper secondary school level. It should therefore be discussed what types of cooperation should be organised at primary and lower secondary levels and at upper secondary level, respectively, and what belongs in other arenas outside schools. Even though good communication between the parents and school is important and desirable, research and practitioners' experience both show that, for young people who experience extreme control at home, school could be the only place where they experience freedom growing up. In such situations, young people could see the absence of contact and cooperation between parents and school as a positive thing. Of course, this does not mean that schools should not strive for the best possible contact with parents – the main point must be that cooperation with parents at upper secondary level must be based on what is in the pupil's best interest in different situations.

Practical input on school-parent cooperation

'Things take time'

This may seem simple and banal, but is nonetheless a very important point. Recruiting parents to the interviews on which this article is based took time. Feedback from minority counsellors and other research also point out that establishing contact and cooperation with parents is a time-consuming and slow process. It seems to be an important strategy to contact parents directly rather than just communicating by written notes or messages sent via the children.

Establish contact with resource persons

Some of our recruitment took the form of chain recruitment, which means that some parents, often those parents who were active on the schools' parents' council working committees or voluntary organisations, brought other parents with them to the focus groups. It can therefore be a productive strategy to establish contact with resource persons in parent groups. Voluntary organisations that are in contact with the parent group and/or work on matters relating to value conflicts are also a possibility.

Language and interpreting

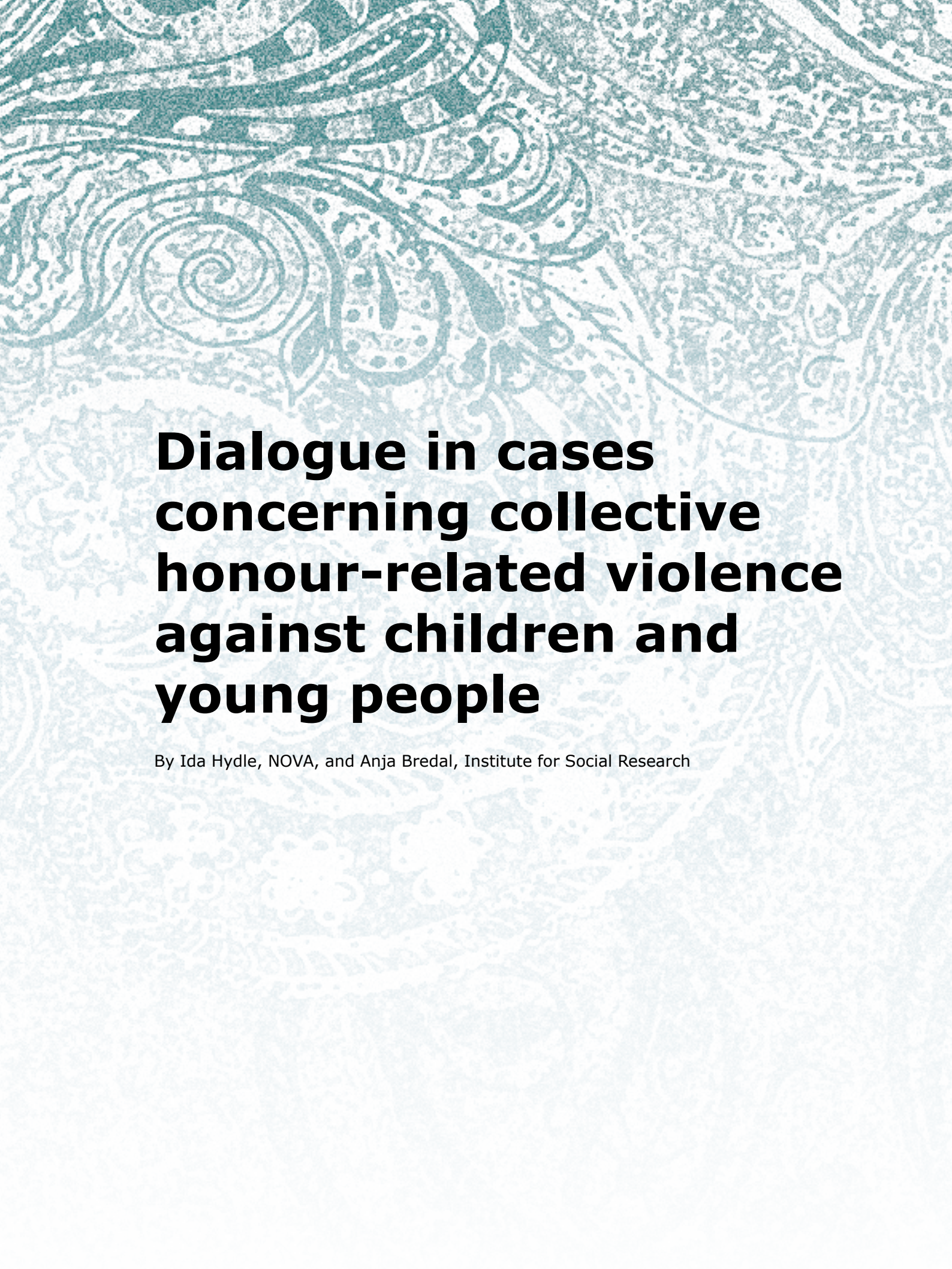
It was important to the parents we talked to to be dealt with as adults and competent parents, and in that connection, several of them emphasised the importance of being able to express themselves in a language they master. It is therefore important that interpreters are provided for

parents who need them in meetings with the school or public agencies. Some parents stated that they did not attend parents meetings at school because of language difficulties and a lack of interpreting services. At the same time, this cannot be generalised to apply to all minority-language parents/parents with immigrant backgrounds. Feedback from other research projects and minority counsellors is divided on this point. Some parents see it as a positive thing if separate parents meetings are held based on language background, while others feel that separate parents meetings and parents' groups are stigmatising.

Parents' contributions in group conversations

As we have mentioned, it may be important to take the parents' experience and perspectives as a point of departure to get parents to participate and contribute. We started each focus group by saying that we were interested in the parents' experience and perspectives, among other things because the 'voices' of the parents are to a large extent absent from the research literature and public debate. This was something they could all recognise, and they saw it as a positive thing that somebody was interested in their perspectives. In the focus groups we organised, it also proved to be a useful technique to use some more or less fictional stories about relevant situations between parents and young people, and then ask the parents to discuss these stories. Using such stories is one way of introducing topics that it may be difficult to ask direct questions about.





Dialogue in cases concerning collective honour-related violence against children and young people

By Ida Hyde, NOVA, and Anja Bredal, Institute for Social Research

More and more of those involved in the 'field of forced marriage' have called for methods that include the family in the range of solutions. And more and more are testing such methods. They primarily focus on the interests of the young person involved, but the family's need for and right to assistance are also part of their argumentation. In a short period of time, a debate and experimental activities have developed that show that dialogue as a method is both sought-after and practised on an ad hoc basis in many contexts. At the same time, there is great uncertainty, particularly in relation to risk assessment and safety, but also more generally in relation to what dialogue as a method is and can be in these cases.

This is why IMDi initiated a research project on 'dialogue as a method'. The goal has been to systematise and discuss experience from dialogue-based work in concrete cases on the basis of qualitative interviews with members of the staff of voluntary organisations, the police, the family counselling service, the Norwegian mediation service and other relevant agencies. This article outlines some main findings and recommendations from the study.

Background

In both the Norwegian and international context, 'dialogue as a method' has become popular under a variety of names, including mediation, conflict mediation, dialogue meetings, conferencing, family group conferencing and VOM (victim offender mediation). Restorative justice is used as a collective term for such out-of-court conflict management that aims to achieve reconciliation or a restoration of relationships between parties to a conflict. The goal does not have to be that ambitious, however.⁴ For the parties, it may be sufficient or important enough to agree to disagree. This does

⁴ *Forgiveness* is a concept that is sometimes used in and seen as a goal in some types of conflict management. It is particularly relevant in religious contexts. However, like *reconciliation*, *forgiveness* is not a condition for the parties to consider the meeting/mediation to be a success. Sometimes, to demand or aim to achieve forgiveness can even be seen as offensive and may be counter-productive. Some actions may be impossible to forgive, and, for many, forgiveness is something that only a divine power can grant.

not in any way rule out that they nonetheless ensure each other that the conflict is considered to be over, is called off and will not re-emerge. They can, for example, also enter into an agreement that neither of them will take revenge.

One characteristic that all dialogue methods have in common is that the facilitators usually endeavour to adopt a neutral role and position in relation to the parties. Also, their focus is on the *relations* between the parties, and not on the parties or on the conflict. They follow a certain ritual in which they ask all the parties the same questions: What happened? How did you feel then? How do you feel now? What do you want the future to be like? The emphasis is primarily on feelings, not 'objective facts'.

'Mediation' and 'dialogue' have also been a topic in the 'forced marriage field', but the debate was long superficial and dominated by polarised positions. The question of mediation was particularly highlighted as an alternative to breaking with the family, i.e. cases in which a young man or woman is helped to break with his/her family. To put it simply, arguments *in favour of* mediation have often been formulated or perceived as arguments *against* breaking with the family.

A shift in the debate

Today, this polarisation has been more or less abandoned in favour of more nuanced views. This is partly because more players/professional groups have become involved, and because the field has widened, and also due to the fact that there is increased focus on and knowledge of restorative justice as a conflict resolution method. The family counselling service has made a particularly big contribution to the increased focus on 'working with the family'. However, other professionals with experience in this field are also concerned that the needs and potential of parents and siblings were being ignored in an approach that had a one-sided focus on the individual young person. The one-sided approach did not necessarily contribute to a solution for either of the parties.



The parents were more or less forgotten. We had a case where two parents came here because their daughter had gone missing. One day, she had simply gone to school and not returned. They had called round, to the school, the police... but nobody had told them anything. In a situation like that, the parents might well believe that something had happened to the girl. Maybe they didn't understand, maybe they believed that the girl agreed to the marriage, because she had not dared to say no, and then they don't know.

The interest in dialogue is also related to a greater desire to become involved in cases at an early stage in order to prevent conflicts from escalating. But an important reason for the new shift in the debate could be that experience has shown that breaking with the family is not always a sufficient solution. In many cases, the young person moves back home without conditions in the home having improved, perhaps quite the opposite. This has frustrated helpers, but also prompted them to think differently about the relationship between a break with the family and dialogue.

Our study confirms that there is a great need and potential for family-related work in the form of information, help and support. It is an important finding that many parents feel ignored by the support agencies. There is agreement that this does not help the young people, but may have quite the opposite effect. We nevertheless find that our informants speak from their knowledge of and sympathy with young people's perspective. This is either because they become involved in the case as the young person's helper, or because, *once* they become involved in a case, they see that the young person needs a helper, or, at worst, when there is reason to suspect an illegal approach on the part of family members aimed at forcing the young person into a marriage. However, many have found that talking to

the parents gives them a different perspective on a case, a perspective which they may also have a certain understanding for, and that supplements their view of the young person's situation.

Clarification of terms

At present, 'dialogue' is used both in a broad and in a narrower sense. On the one hand, the term can denote almost any activity that involves the family as opposed to 'just the individual'. On the other hand, it is used to refer to very specific ways of facilitating dialogue between a young person and his/her family. The terms are in a state of flux and change, also in the agencies that use them in their day-to-day practice, such as the mediation service or the family counselling service. Nor are the different professional groups unambiguous as regards what they *feel* about dialogue. However, we do find widespread scepticism in relation to 'mediation' in the sense of negotiation and compromise. Instead, many envisage dialogue-based meetings between the parties as a way of determining whether there is room for cooperation on different terms than before, with the emphasis on improving the young persons' safety and security.

We propose a distinction between 'family work' in the broad sense and 'dialogue as a method' as a more specific term. 'Dialogue as a method' should be reserved for efforts to achieve better, more equal and safer communication between the young person and the parents/family. In addition to dialogue, we recommend consistently using 'facilitated conversation' and 'facilitator' instead of 'mediation' and 'mediator'. This is because the term 'mediator' seems to carry unfortunate connotations of 'symmetry between the parties' or 'negotiation'. We also recommend a clearer distinction between different goals for dialogue work: concrete conflict management in a short-term perspective or more long-term change. We emphasise that practice can change quickly, but it takes longer and could require other support measures to change attitudes. If the goal is to achieve fundamental changes at the emotional and attitude level, we believe that 'change work in the family' could be at least as good a term.

Breaks and phases

Dialogue can be used in different phases of a case, both at an early stage, while the conflict level is low, and when the conflict level is high and the young person fears forced marriage. Most speak of dialogue in connection with a break with the family. A typical scenario is where the young person is helped to break with his/her family, and the helper or another party contacts the parents to inform them about what has happened. The helper can help to settle unclarified practical matters, while conversation and information help to calm down the situation. The parents and other family members are offered a chance to talk about their despair without this necessarily resulting in dialogue with the young person who has left. This is a service offered to the family, but it could have important indirect effects for the person who has broken with his/her family. Knowing that someone is following up the family can help the young person to cope with the concern and responsibility she feels for causing her family pain. And it may ease the pressure exerted on the girl by the family – they know that she is okay, they are told that it is no use trying to bring her home, and that they are not allowed to put pressure on her. The helpers can advise on how to conceal the family crisis from outsiders by minimising publicity about the break or helping the family to construct a narrative that minimises its loss of honour.

We recommend that dialogue should not be defined as the opposite of a break with the family. On the contrary, breaking with the family can sometimes be a prerequisite for starting a realistic and adequate dialogue. Dialogue at an early stage *can* prevent a break, but that should not be the express goal of the dialogue.

Safety

All of our informants stress that dialogue work must not be at the expense of the young person's safety. In many cases, this means that the young person should move out of the family home before dialogue is attempted. Most of them have contact with the police in connection with threat assessments, but opinions differ about the police's role in dialogue, also within the police service itself. While some police officers believe

that the police should take part in dialogue work as part of preventive police work, others choose to wait until a case has escalated and dialogue is out of the question before getting involved. Some parties want the police to be more closely involved in their dialogue work, both for safety reasons and in order to signal what the framework for the dialogue is – Norwegian law. Others are more cautious about openly using the police. Their experience is that it pays to build trust first, in relation to both the young person and the parents. We think that it is important that the facilitator knows what he/she can expect from the police. It is a problem if voluntary organisations and public agencies are required to involve the police in cases if the police are unwilling to take part.

Some cases in which dialogue is used border on criminal cases. It is important that the police are involved in considering public prosecution. In this context, it is recommended to draw on the police's experience of other domestic violence, at the same time as certain specific characteristics of the forced marriage cases indicate that the police should be more strongly involved or make other assessments. Here, we are thinking about collective and transnational violence/control in particular.

Parents are often motivated for dialogue just after a break. In such case, their goal will be to get the young person to come back before the 'damage' becomes known. This motivation should be taken advantage of, but not misunderstood. The facilitator must clearly inform the parents that they cannot expect the young person to return, and that the dialogue can have other goals than they expect. It is a dilemma that the parents are most motivated when the young person is most vulnerable.

Shuttle dialogue or face-to-face meetings

In many cases, a facilitator acts as an intermediary between the young person and the parents. He or she contacts the parties alternately, on their or the facilitator's own initiative, and passes information between them. In some cases, this is used as preparation for a face-to-face meeting,



while, in other cases, shuttle dialogue is seen as an independent alternative. There is uncertainty about the role of the facilitator as regards editing or processing information. Is it wrong to hold things back, or is it a breach of the facilitator role to communicate painful accusations uncensored?

Face-to-face meetings can be very demanding and emotional for all participants. The meeting must be under strict direction in order to ensure predictability and safety for the party in need of protection, mentally and/or physically. It is decided in advance who will sit where, who will speak when and the time frame for the meeting. Participants sometimes enter and leave by separate entrances and in a certain order.

Even when safety has been attended to, careful consideration should be given to whether a face-to-face meeting is expedient and justifiable. Such meetings can be too hard for the young person. The parents may play to the gallery. On the other hand, a meeting can uncover facts about oppressive and harmful communication. As an alternative, it can be considered whether to hold a meeting between the parents and an advocate for the young person.

Power

Power is a topic that many interviewees are concerned about. They have seen young women who seem certain about their demands in advance 'crumble' when they meet their parents face to face. In some cases, this indicates that face-to-face meetings should be discouraged, while, in other cases, the rules for the meeting can be used to actively compensate for the parents' power over the young person. At the same time, many are concerned that the parents may experience powerlessness when facing the young person's helpers, the support agencies and 'the system'.

Our informants' ideal is to not take control, but to leave it to the involved parties to find their own solutions. However, it is a challenge to put such principles into practice, particularly when faced with young people who are not used to making decisions and taking responsibility for their own lives, but who, on the contrary, are

used to being controlled and having decisions made for them. At the same time, they are very ready to take responsibility for other people's welfare and bow to the demands of a hierarchical community. The parents, on the other hand, have been taught that controlling and making decisions for one's children is part of being a good parent. They have never learnt and do not teach their children how children and adults can talk about their disagreements, and they may see contradiction as disobedience and a lack of respect.

We recommend that methods to assess how a young person can cope with a dialogue process be developed in order to ensure that participation is really voluntary, particularly when using face-to-face meetings. Role play and consultation with more support persons are among the tools that can be used to clarify ambivalence and emotional vulnerability. The young person's ability to conform and see the other party's perspective could result in excessive adaptation to the wishes of the helpers as well as the parents. Such 'adaptability' must be compensated by ego strengthening and training in how to communicate one's own needs when faced with psychological pressure. In order to compensate for the asymmetry of power between the young person and the parents, the facilitator often has to be more active than in a traditional mediation service meeting. He or she should have expertise in the field of trauma and domestic abuse.

Admissions

Many say that they have never heard the parents admit that they have done anything wrong, and some describe parents who play down or are unwilling to talk about what has happened. Some use this as an argument against dialogue. Others claim that it is possible to break through this barrier, as happened in one case when the father finally 'cracked' and showed his true feelings. Yet others emphasise that it is not necessarily a matter of pretence versus truth, but that it may have to do with different communication traditions, and that dialogue work should take this into consideration. They describe parents 'beating about the bush' and communicating in more indirect ways.



I think it is a cultural thing, that it is a Western thing that we demand a verbal admission that someone has done something if we are to believe that a change has taken place. But they come from a culture where there is a lot of honour invested in not admitting. It is about looking ahead... not compromising oneself, not giving information that might reveal that they have done something wrong.

The same informant described a case in which a daughter has re-established contact with her mother after a dramatic break. The father still stays away, but he knows that they see each other, and does nothing to prevent it. The informant believes that the father's behaviour demonstrates tacit acceptance – an unspoken 'reconciliation under the table'. In her role as a family therapist, she sometimes has to help a young person to understand the action of the parents in this light; she has to act as a cultural interpreter.

More attention should be devoted to such cultural differences in the restorative justice work in Norway. This is particularly challenging in relation to the mediation service.

Results and agreements

Dialogue work can have different results. In several cases, dialogue has helped to uncover the seriousness of a case. In one case, for example, conferencing resulted in a break with the family, because the child welfare service had a chance to observe the father's anger and lack of insight into his son's situation. This strengthened the child welfare service's confidence in the boy's story, and it was decided to take him into care. At the same time, after the mediation service's facilitator had talked to the father outside the conference room, the meeting took a turn that formed the basis for a more positive approach between the boy and his parents. In another case, the conflict was not only made clear, but also intensified,

when the parents found out that the son had divorced his wife. The specially arranged meeting gave the son the possibility and courage to formulate his own point of view more clearly than if he had faced his parents alone. However, both parties refused to budge, and the dialogue thereby contributed to clarifying and consolidating the lines of conflict. In other cases, dialogue has resulted in rapprochement and clarification. For example, parents have accepted that their daughter wishes to live and study abroad, or at least accepted that she wants to be left alone for a while.

Many use written agreements, but their form and contents vary. In some cases, the participants have to sign rules for the meeting, while other agreements outline the result of the dialogue. In a case from the police, the facilitator sounded out the parties in advance via email and prepared a draft including the demands of both the girl and her parents. While the girl wanted her parents to accept quite fundamental changes, the parents' demand was contact with the girl. The agreement also contained a problem description of what the informant calls 'the facts of the case', using words such as 'pressure' and 'violence'. The parents would have to acknowledge that they had carried out the acts in questions, but their right to view them differently was also acknowledged. For example, the parents might have seen the strict control as justified and warranted by their care for their daughter and consideration for the family's reputation. The facilitator acknowledged that this was how the parents had perceived it, but also emphasised that such strict control over a young person is not *allowed* in Norway.

Written agreements can be a good way of focusing a dialogue, ensuring that it has concrete results and binding the involved parties. It may be expedient for the facilitator to sound out the involved parties beforehand and prepare a draft. At present, it seems to be more or less a matter of chance what is included in an agreement, and it varies who the parties to the agreement are. Agreements as a method should be further developed with a view to arriving at good templates for different types of agreements.

Conclusion

This study is a first attempt to collect and discuss experience from dialogue-oriented work. There is no doubt that experimental work is in full swing, and many have learnt a great deal in a short period of time. We recommend more systematic work to develop methodology, both for short-term conflict management and more long-term change work in families.





Work targeting parents via schools

This article describes minority counsellors' experience of work against forced marriage targeting parents

The Action Plan against Forced Marriage gave the minority counsellors in upper secondary schools a broad remit to target both pupils and parents in their work,⁵ and also to target the system by implementing competence-raising measures for school staff:

'Collaboration between parents and schools will help to increase awareness of the role of parents in relation to Norwegian schools, society and their children. Similarly, it is important that teachers be made aware of parents as a potential resource in enhancing their children's learning. Home-school collaboration is general quality development work that can include focus on topics such as forced marriage and honour-related violence. Minority counsellors with special expertise on the problem of forced marriage will be able to contribute to a broader dialogue on such topics.'

(Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008–2011, p. 15.)

Framework for school-home collaboration

The school is an obvious arena for reaching parents, and school-home collaboration is firmly established in primary and lower secondary schools. Primary and lower secondary schools with a high percentage of pupils from minority backgrounds, particularly in and around major cities, have for many years been aware of the diversity of their pupils. They have worked systematically to incorporate the minority perspective in the school-home collaboration. The National Parents' Committee for Primary and Lower Secondary Education (FUG) has been a driving force in this work, for example through the now completed project *Minoritetsforeldre – en ressurs for elevenes opplæring i skolen* ('Minority parents – a resource for the pupils' education in school') (FUG, 2007) and the continuation of

5 See the *Introduction* for a list of which schools were assigned minority counsellors.

this work via the organisation Minority Language Resource Network (MiR).⁶

Traditionally, cooperation with parents has not had the same strong position in upper secondary schools as in primary and lower secondary schools, but this is changing. From 1 January 2009, FUG's remit was extended to also include the first year of upper secondary school, and, from 1 August 2010, all schools, including upper secondary schools, now have a statutory obligation to cooperate with parents.

The county governors have appointed some of the schools with minority counsellors as 'focus schools'. This means that they have made great progress in their endeavours to be a multicultural school, that they are willing to spend time building competence in this field, and that they are willing to set a good example for others. Having a minority perspective in cooperation with parents is part of this work.

Challenges for cooperation with parents in upper secondary school

Although much good work is being done at several upper secondary schools, it became clear after the minority counsellors were deployed that there is still a long way to go before good school-home collaboration is achieved that reaches parents from immigrant backgrounds. The challenges lay both with the schools and the parents.

Parents meetings in upper secondary schools are different from those at lower levels. The pupils are approaching the age of majority, and follow-up of parents is therefore less close. The parents meetings are usually limited to large information meetings with one-way communication from the school to parents and guardians, with little room for dialogue and reflection. It has also proven difficult to motivate parents with minority back-

6 Minority Language Resource Network (MiR) is a voluntary organisation for multicultural parents. It is based on the idea of parents as a resource in pupils' education. Among other things, MiR works to help parents from minority backgrounds to feel secure in their role as parents, establish parent networks and raise parents' awareness of their role in relation to the Norwegian school system, society in general and their children. <http://www.mirnett.org/pub/>

grounds to participate in the various meetings and events organised by the school.

Some of the schools pointed to what they perceived as linguistic and cultural barriers to achieving good cooperation with the parents. Linguistic challenges can hinder good communication in general, and cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings about the role of the school and what is expected. This could result in dissatisfaction and low participation in parents meetings and other school initiatives aimed at parents. This was confirmed by several minority parents, who told the minority counsellors that they no longer wished to attend meetings where they are given an overwhelming amount of information without being invited to say anything themselves. The parents have also stated that, while they wish to have a dialogue with the school, they miss being met with openness, being listened to and feeling that they are seen as a resource when they make contact.

The minority counsellors' measures aimed at parents were to take these challenges as their point of departure, while they were also tasked with putting such topics as honour-related violence and forced marriage on the agenda. This immediately created a challenge, namely how to raise such difficult topics without the parents feeling that suspicion was thrown on them. This was also pointed out by the Institute for Social Research in the report *Foreldreskap og ungdoms livsvalg i en migrasjonskontekst* ('Parenthood and young people's life choices in a migration context' – in Norwegian only): 'Several parents told us that they were met with suspicion by the public authorities, a suspicion related to the perception of immigrant parents as being overly controlling and potentially harmful to their children.' (ISF 2009, p. 25).⁷


Testing of measures in schools: Who, what, how

On this basis, the minority counsellors took different initiatives. They have reported a lot of trial

and error, and attendance at the different events they have initiated has consistently been a challenge. A great deal of work has been done on the form, content and recruitment methods in order to motivate parents to participate. The events were partly held under the auspices of the school, and partly in cooperation with other public agencies and voluntary organisations. In several schools, the minority counsellors became involved in measures that the school had initiated.

Who – target groups for the measures

The framework for and contents of measures have been defined on the basis of the intended target group. Some have chosen to hold linguistically homogeneous meetings where they only invite parents from the same language background, while others have organised meetings for parents with different language backgrounds. At Sogn upper secondary school, for example, minority counsellors have organised linguistically homogeneous meetings, focusing on the parent role and school system in Norway and in the country of origin. The feedback from parents who participated was that it was easier to discuss things because they knew that the other parents understood what they meant. The parents also said that being a parent and coming from a country in a war-like situation is so different from being a Norwegian parent that they needed a separate forum to discuss the parent role. Minority counsellors at Ulsrud upper secondary school have tried both linguistically homogeneous and mixed meetings, and some parents attended both.



The Norwegian school system comes as a shock to many of us parents. We need to talk about how we experience this, not just listen to all the rules there are.

(Participant at a linguistically homogeneous parents meeting at Sogn school)

The feedback here was that linguistically mixed groups were preferable, because they could hear the experience of others and thus learn from

⁷ The report is based on five focus group interviews with a total of 28 parents from ethnic minority backgrounds. See also the article *Parenthood and young people's life choices in a migration context* by Monica Five Aarset and Miriam Latif Sandbæk, which is based on this report.

each other. These examples show that it is not given what works best – some will prefer one alternative, others the other one. It is reasonable to assume that the type of background the parents come from and how long they have lived in Norway could have a bearing on which method will work best.

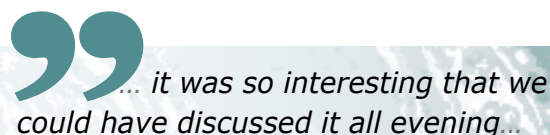
Several minority counsellors have emphasised inviting a broad group, so that invitations have been sent to parents in the community, some of whom have children attending the school in question, while others don't. Perhaps they have younger children who will be starting upper secondary school in future, or have children in other schools. The point has been to create an arena where parents can also develop a local network between themselves.

Other measures have primarily targeted the system, with the target group consisting of the school and school staff. Several minority counsellors have assisted schools in systematic reviews and restructuring of the schools' ordinary parents meetings in order to make them more inclusive. In cooperation with schools, minority counsellors have also worked to raise school staff's awareness in relation to the use of interpreters, and been a driving force in the work of ensuring that schools establish procedures for this. IMDi's counsellors have thus worked to promote the correct and adequate use of interpreters and made schools aware of the Norwegian National Register of Interpreters website at www.tolkeportalen.

What – type of measures tested

The goals for, contents and form of meetings have varied. Some have been called parent courses, others have chosen to invite parents to theme nights. Regardless of the type of meeting, the minority counsellors have usually chosen a school-related framework for the event, for example the challenges facing the parents of teenagers in Norway, and knowledge of the Norwegian educational system. This has been a way of raising other challenges relating to the relationship between children and parents, such as upbringing, independence and choice of spouse. The meetings have been organised as dia-

logue meetings rather than information meetings with one-way communication. Some have chosen to divide participants into groups to discuss a specific issue, and a spokesperson for each group has summarised the group discussions in a plenary session afterwards. This was followed by a plenary discussion in which the most important points that the groups arrived at ('gems') were summarised. This method made it easier for parents to participate in the discussion and provided a safe arena in which to raise difficult topics.

... *it was so interesting that we could have discussed it all evening...*

(Somali mother, participant in a dialogue meeting)

The minority counsellors also emphasise that parents meetings that address school-related topics are an important way of improving school-home collaboration in general. It improves both the schools and the parents' understanding of children's everyday life at school and at home. Employees at Sogn upper secondary school have stated that they gained a better understanding of where the pupils come from, and why certain things at school might be a challenge. The parents said that it was good to have a forum in which they could say something about what they expected from the school, and also hear about the possibilities in the Norwegian school system. Such mutual learning creates better conditions for children to complete and pass upper secondary education.

Several parents who participated in the meeting at Sogn upper secondary school also made appointments with teachers or counsellors who were present. In this way, a dialogue meeting can pave the way for closer communication in the long term as well.

Some minority counsellors considered whether to include young people in the meetings in order to promote better communication between them and their parents. Instead, they chose to interview some young people about what they expected from their parents before the meeting, and communicated the answers in the dialogue meetings. This gave the parents an

opportunity to compare their own expectations with those of their children, without this being personal and confrontational. The feedback from parents was that it was interesting to hear about the expectations of the young.

Sofienberg school has good experience of holding linguistically homogeneous parent courses to improve parents and guardians' knowledge of the Norwegian school system and public support agencies (such as the child welfare service and police). The project targeted parents and guardians who had only lived in Norway for a short time. Experience shows that not only did many of them have little information, but they also had completely wrong ideas about the school and other agencies. Their lack of knowledge also prevents them from making use of the available schemes and services. Feedback about the parent courses has been positive, from both the school and the parents.

How – recruitment and implementation

Nearly all the minority counsellors who have tested measures aimed at parents report that recruitment to different events is a challenge. In cases where recruitment seems to have worked well, this is because invitations have been translated into several languages, and a written invitation has been followed up by several phone calls encouraging parents to attend. Some have also received recruitment help from MiR. In these cases, a multilingual MiR representative has called parents who share his/her language background to invite them to the meeting. This has resulted in good attendance.



We want our children to be happy at school, and we want to make sure that the children get the help and support they need from the school.

(A parent explaining why they participate in a dialogue meeting for parents)

Several reports that establishing some sort of resource group consisting of parent representatives who wish to be involved has produced results. Such resource/parent groups have helped to motivate their own networks to participate, come up with topics and organise events. At Årstad upper secondary school in Bergen, a parent cooperation group was established in 2008 comprising representatives of the school staff, a minority counsellor (IMDi), MiR and parents. The work was funded by the National Centre for Multicultural Education's (NAFO) *La oss få prøve!* ('Let us try!') project. The parent cooperation group organised information evenings about topics such as education and occupations and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV), and produced a brochure about parent cooperation that was translated into eight languages. The project continues to work to find good ways of reaching the parents, but it is an example of how parents can be included in this type of work.

A dialogue meeting can also be the first step towards establishing a parent group. Ulsrud upper secondary school is one example of this. By holding three dialogue meetings with parents, the minority counsellors came into contact with committed parents who were interested in contributing to more dialogue meetings and close collaboration with the school. When the group was established, a remit was drawn up that clarifies its role in relation to the school, the minority counsellor and MiR.

Another strategy has been to actively spread information in the community via local agencies and organisations in the city districts. Examples include NAV, the introduction programme and labour market measures. Local and Oslo-based immigrant organisations have also been contacted to spread information about the measure via their networks.

Where cultural barriers have been identified as potential obstacles to good communication at these events, the minority counsellors have involved resource persons from MiR. They can act as bridge-builders and role models, since they have minority backgrounds themselves in addi-

tion to their competence in school-home collaboration. Some minority counsellors have also used ICDP advisors,⁸ who have special expertise in strengthening parents from minority backgrounds in their role as caregivers in the Norwegian context.

Conclusion – prevention must start early

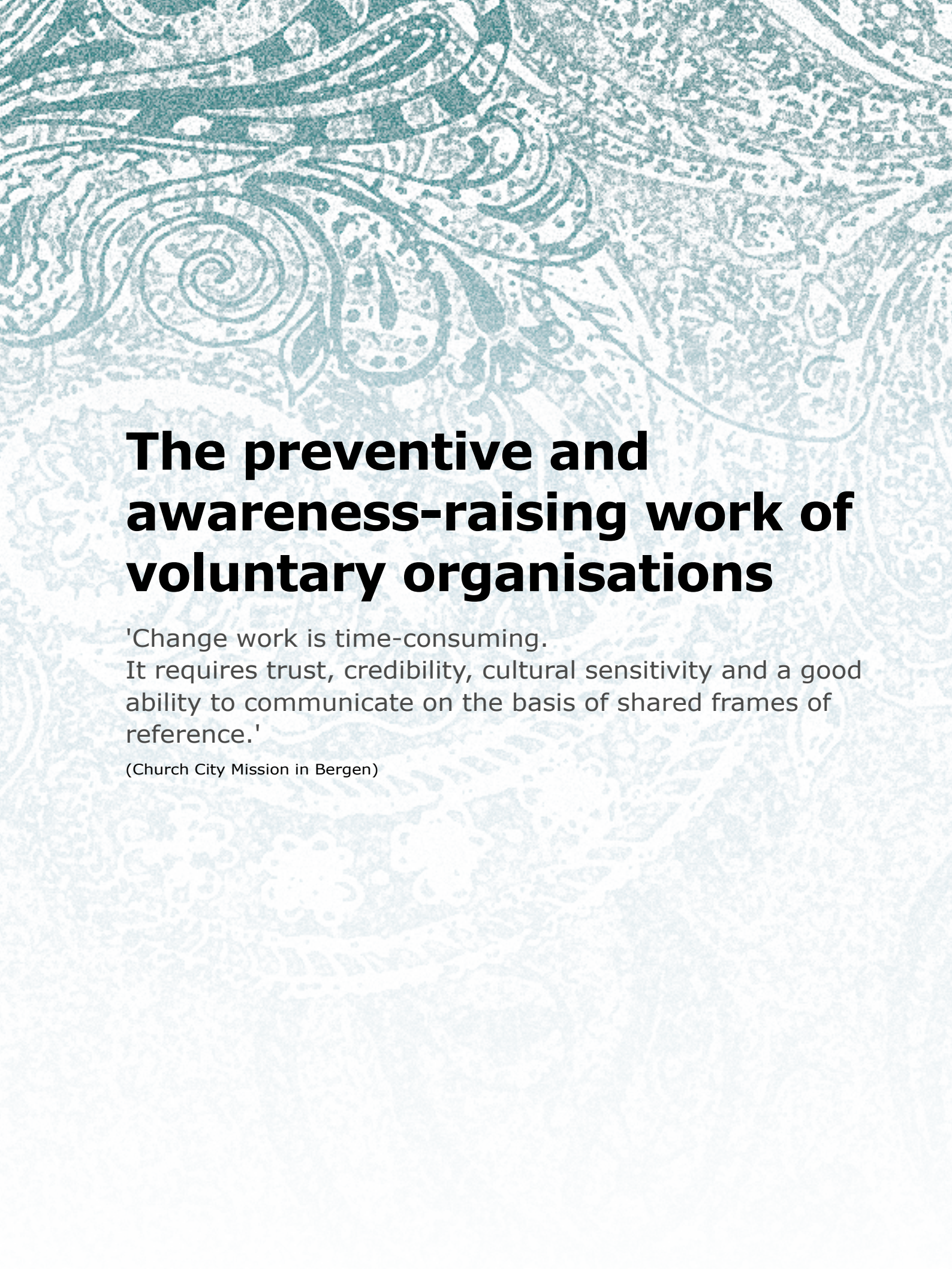
Minority-language parents are a very heterogeneous group, and local conditions will vary, depending on the school, city district and community. Many of the measures in schools have been implemented in cooperation with other public agencies and various immigrant organisations. The organisations also receive support for awareness-raising work in their communities and try out different methods, which are presented in the following article. On the basis of the overall experience gained, we have prepared a short list of tips for work targeting parents that is presented at the end of Part 4.

The measures described here are special measures intended to reach target groups that ordinary measures fail to reach. The long-term goal of this type of project is to pave the way for increased participation of parents from minority backgrounds in schools' ordinary arenas for cooperation with parents. If we succeed in motivating parents to participate in theme meetings and similar measures as outlined above, this could also have a positive effect on participation in ordinary parents meetings in the long term.

That said, it may be worth noting the frustration expressed by parents from minority backgrounds about big information meetings where communication is all one-way. This might be a frustration that many parents of pupils in upper secondary school can identify with, regardless of ethnic background. Maybe schools should take a closer look at whether such meetings meet the parents and schools' general need for dialogue and exchange of information.

A recurring finding in IMDi's work to combat forced marriage is that prevention must start early. The minority counsellors' arena has primarily been upper secondary schools, where the framework for cooperation with parents changes when the pupils reach the age of majority. As shown above, it is nevertheless possible to find good ways of cooperating with parents, ways that contribute to parents and school staff learning from each other. These forums will also be natural arenas in which to raise topics such as choice of spouse, as well as for providing information about the school system, educational choices, the public support agencies, Norwegian law etc. But a foundation for good cooperation with parents from minority backgrounds should be laid already in kindergarten and in primary and lower secondary school, while the children are young and there is a more structured framework for school-home collaboration. This can reduce the need for special measures in upper secondary school, and, most importantly, reduce the number of pupils in upper secondary schools who are subjected to pressure to marry.

⁸ ICDP stands for International Child Development Programme. Its goal is to improve the care and upbringing of children and young people by raising their caregivers' competence. www.icdp.no



The preventive and awareness-raising work of voluntary organisations

'Change work is time-consuming.

It requires trust, credibility, cultural sensitivity and a good ability to communicate on the basis of shared frames of reference.'

(Church City Mission in Bergen)

One of the four measures that IMDi is responsible for is to increase support for the voluntary organisations' work to combat forced marriage by promoting attitude changes. In 2008, IMDi therefore established a new grant scheme from which voluntary organisations can apply for project grants for work to promote attitude changes and preventive work against forced marriage. IMDi administered the allocation of NOK 10 million per year from 2008 to 2011. The new grant scheme supported 21 organisations in 2008, and in the following years, the scheme has supported an average of 25 organisations each year. In 2011, it supported 28 projects.⁹

The scheme is intended to help to prevent forced marriage by combating oppressive attitudes and practices in relevant communities, thus putting young people in a better position to make independent choices. It is also a goal to raise awareness of and increase knowledge about forced marriage and its consequences in relevant minority communities. The voluntary organisations will primarily target their own members and communities.

IMDi has supported projects that have developed and tested various methods in different ways. Most of the projects have been located in Norway, primarily in Oslo and Eastern Norway, but there have also been projects in Drammen, Kristiansand, Stavanger, Bergen and Trondheim. From 2009, the scheme opened up for the possibility of supporting projects outside Norway in areas covered by the integration counsellors. The projects that receive support must be relevant to and have a connection with diaspora communities in Norway. IMDi has supported a total of five projects, in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Turkey and Iraq.

IMDi has consistently given priority to continuing good projects, while ensuring that new projects can also obtain grants. Systematic reviews of the projects have been carried out during the

process. Measures and methods that reach the target group and contribute to change over time have been important criteria for grants.

Common features

Dialogue/conversation is at the centre of all these projects. Information is adapted to the target group's age, gender and national background. What the organisations have primarily done is to gather people in groups of varying sizes and inform them that forced marriage is illegal, a criminal offence and harmful to the victims, and that forced marriage is a violation of the human rights. This has been done through conferences and seminars with lectures and debates, workshops and discussion groups, films and theatre, writing courses and empowerment courses, online contact forums, information campaigns with posters and brochures etc.

There are many approaches to such change work. For example, it is not enough to use one single method in relation to the same target group over time. There is a limit to how many forced marriage conferences you can hold for the same target group. The conferences must be followed up and combined with other measures. At the same time, the organisations' work must be based on a recognition that change takes time, and that the same message must be repeated without losing its appeal.

Several of the organisations have used persons in influential positions as change agents, such as famous authors, researchers, political leaders and imams. People listen to them.

The project activity has followed two main lines. Work in relation to young people has mainly focused on awareness-raising, strengthening their self-confidence and enabling them to make their own choices and see the consequences of the choices they make. Work targeting adults has primarily focused on providing factual information and improving understanding and acceptance of young people's choice of spouses.

⁹ For a list of the organisations that receive grants, see <http://www.imdi.no/no/Tvangsekteskap/Stotte-til-frivillige-organisasjoner/>

Measures and methods for young people

We see that projects that target young people have used different activities to involve them. Young people's awareness is not raised or their attitudes changed by passively receiving information, but through activity in combination with information and conversations.

Film

Two organisations, Internasjonalt Hus in Stavanger and Internasjonal helse- og sosialgruppe (IHSG), have each received support for a film project about forced marriage. Young people have worked both behind and in front of the camera on these projects. Film production is an activity that both boys and girls find exciting. The films have also been used as introduction to debate and dialogue with parents and other adults, and they have contributed to increasing understanding between young people and adults. The films have also helped to communicate young people's points of view to society at large. Media attention has also improved the young people's status in their local communities.



Young people's awareness is not raised or their attitudes changed by passively receiving information, but through activity in combination with information and conversation.

Courses

The Internasjonalt Hus foundation has organised writing courses. Both boys and girls are interested in this activity. They have been given an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings by writing short stories about conflicts that young people in Norway from immigrant backgrounds experience, for example forced marriage. Several projects have made use of empowerment courses and FLEXid courses. The MiRA Centre has organised empowerment courses for girls and women for many years. The FLEXid course

concept is an awareness-raising method for multicultural young people.¹⁰ Internasjonalt Hus, Drammen Red Cross and Sisters of Lillesand have all used this method. The courses have helped to give the participants a positive identity. The organisations also report that the courses have helped to make it easier to establish a dialogue with the young and that they have given them an opportunity to discuss problematic issues with them.

Discussion groups

Many projects have organised discussion groups for young people – for both girls and boys. Small discussion groups that meet regularly give the young people a good arena for dialogue and discussion, while also raising their awareness as individuals and citizens. The organisations Ungdom mot Vold, Primærmedisinsk Verksted (PMV), the MiRA Centre, Red Cross in Drammen, Sisters of Lillesand, the Church City Mission in Bergen, Independent Democratic Kurdish Women's Association (SDKK), Queer World, and the Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH) in Trondheim have all used this method.

Sisters of Lillesand report that predictability and structure are important to participants. The fundamental idea behind all the activities is to strengthen communication, self-confidence and respect, while at the same time challenging prejudice. They have used Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) and Aggression Replacement Training (ART), both of which are well-documented methods for learning social competence and improving self-confidence.

Red Cross in Drammen reports that girls who are under strict control at home, many from Pakistani backgrounds, have been allowed to participate in their activities. This is because the parents have great trust in the Red Cross as an organisation. Several of the participants have joined the Norwegian Red Cross Youth as volunteers.

¹⁰ See also the separate article about the FLEXid method: *Flexible identity – the challenges and possibilities of several cultures*, in Part 1.

Ungdom mot Vold has used cognitive behavioural coping in practice (abbreviated KAMP) as a crime-prevention method. This project targeted boys in Oslo and Akershus counties. Conversation, in groups or individually, is the important element here. The project has cooperated with the minority counsellors at Manglerud and Holtet upper secondary schools in Oslo.

IMDi has also partly funded a project organised by the Church City Mission in Bergen. The project primarily targeted boys who face great challenges in adapting to Norwegian society and have a very limited understanding of the social codes. They participated in regular activity and discussion groups together with Norwegian girls and boys. The project reports that these discussion groups have resulted in the young people having to reflect on what they stand for and what their opinions are. This has helped to give them a stronger basis for making decisions.

Dialogue meetings

Minotenk has organised courses for young people from minority backgrounds in how to hold dialogue meetings about forced marriage, honour-related violence, authoritarian upbringing etc., so that they can hold dialogue meetings in upper secondary schools all over the country.

Internet forums

The multicultural newspaper *Utrop* has run an online contact and discussion forum for several years. This forum is a digital meeting place for girls and boys from minority backgrounds. *Utrop's* website reaches a large number of people in Norway as well as abroad (more than 20,000). Girls, who often live under strict control at home, are eager users of this contact and discussion forum, where they have an opportunity to discuss with other young people.

Young gays

Queer World in Oslo and the Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH) in Trondheim have run projects aimed at young people in particular, and at the immigrant population in general. They have organised social gatherings, trips, meetings, dis-

cussion groups etc. for young gay people of both genders. Most of the activities take place in secret. The organisations' main concern is to provide the support and strength that young gay people need to resist their families' pressure to marry a person of the opposite sex. Moreover, the organisations represent a community and a network for LGBT persons.¹¹

Measures and methods for adults

Conferences, seminars, dialogue meetings, workshops and discussion groups

Most of the projects have used conferences, seminars and various types of gatherings at which people have been informed about forced marriage. At these events, they have discussed topics related to forced marriage, such as bringing up children, gender equality, human rights, different traditions and religions, values and norms etc. These methods are suited to reaching the parent generation. Politicians and religious and intellectual figures are often used as speakers. Organisations that have used these methods include PMV, the MiRA Centre, the Norwegian Council for the Rights of the Kurdish People (RKR), SDKK, the African Health and Social Development Organization, Minotenk, Palestinaforeningen and the Church City Mission in Bergen.

Conferences and seminars alone are not enough to achieve change in the long term. Prejudices can be challenged and ideas planted in those arenas, but further work is then necessary. The Church City Mission in Bergen has run a project primarily aimed at women. It has used the methodology of the OK project, which trained immigrant women to be group leaders.¹² The group leaders then form their own groups under continuous guidance from professional experts. The project has organised experience seminars and theme days with workshops and discussions.

¹¹ See also the article *Queer World – for gay people who fear forced marriage* in Part 2.

¹² The OK project – Omsorg og kunnskap mot kvinnelig omskjæring ('Care and knowledge against female genital mutilation') – was established as a three-year project in 2001 as part of the Government's action plan against female genital mutilation.



Conferences and seminars alone are not enough to achieve change in the long term. Prejudices can be challenged and ideas planted in those arenas, but further work is then necessary.

The African Health and Social Development Organization in Oslo conducted a small project with a simple and interesting approach. First, the organisation carried out an extensive questionnaire survey of Africans in Oslo by interviewing them in the street, in cafés etc. The findings showed that men supported forced marriage to a greater extent than women. More than 90% of the respondents had not participated in seminars or received information about forced marriage, and nor had they been invited to participate in any events. On the basis of these findings, the organisation held seminars and workshops in combination with easy-to-understand written information. Active use was made of the network to get young people and adults to participate in the events.

Dialogue meetings

Minotenk, fronted by politician Abid Raja, has held large dialogue meetings about forced marriage in Oslo. The target group is primarily the parent generation, but also young people. These dialogue meetings have put the issue of forced marriage on the public agenda.

Cutting across gender and age

It can be difficult to work across gender and age boundaries in certain communities. PMV reports that it has been difficult to get men to participate in the different events, despite the fact that many women want them to. They find that there are few arenas where parents and children meet and spend time together. They see it as a key challenge in the communication between parents and children that both parties feel misinterpreted and misunderstood in relation to important val-

ue issues. In the experience of the Independent Democratic Kurdish Women's Association and the Norwegian Council for the Rights of the Kurdish People, on the other hand, both men and women have participated in conferences, seminars, dialogue cafés etc., and taken active part in discussions. Young people also often attend.



Communication problems between parents and children

In PMV's experience, parents and children often have different views of coercion. While Norwegian society often defines social pressure as coercion, this pressure (for example to enter into a marriage) is considered normal by some parents. To them, coercion involves the use of physical measures. Parents express frustration when their child suddenly accuses them of having forced him or her into an unwanted marriage. They have not seen their actions as coercion, and feel that the young person has not made it clear that he/she disagreed with the parents' choice. The young people, on the other hand, feel that they cannot be open about their wishes regarding choice of partner, and they sometimes perceive the overall social pressure as a form of psychological violence. This applies both in connection with the contracting of the marriage and in their subsequent relationship with their parents and extended family.

Theatre and role play

The Christian Intercultural Association (KIA) and PMV have used theatre and role play. PMV has worked with theatre for development (TfD), which is a method used to reach illiterate people and people who are not used to dealing with written information. This form of theatre is not based on a finished text. Instead, the participants develop the message together using mime, music, dance, performance and amateur theatre. Most of the participants have been women, but some young people have also taken part.

Conflict resolution

Minhaj Reconciliation Council in Oslo has trained its own mediators who work with families and mediate in family-related conflicts, such as forced marriage. They see the family as a whole and consider it important to arrive at solutions that address the interests of both the children and the parents. IMDi has also supported a project that Minhaj Reconciliation Council runs in Pakistan, see the description below.

Projects abroad

We see that the projects abroad have used some of the same methods as the projects in Norway. There are also significant differences, however, since they work under completely different conditions. Support for projects abroad is contingent on them being carried out in the areas that the Norwegian immigrant population comes from and having a connection to the minority communities in Norway.

For several years, IMDi has partly funded a project that Minhaj Reconciliation Council runs in Kharian in Pakistan. This is an area that many Norwegian-Pakistanis come from. The project is very similar to the mediation project that Minhaj Reconciliation Council runs in Oslo. The organisation has established an office in Kharian where people can come for advice and guidance in family-related matters. It has also trained mediators who visit families to mediate in conflicts. IMDi has supported the part of the project that deals with forced marriage.

Oslo Women's Shelter has received funding for a project involving cooperation and exchange of experience between Oslo Women's Shelter and the organisation Women in Need in Sri Lanka. Oslo Women's Shelter organised a study visit for both organisations to exchange experience between counsellors and managers. The goal was to raise competence and develop methods for work with women and young people subject to extreme control and violence and at risk of forced marriage.

Support Cooperation International Living Organization (Scilo) has run a project in Kenya

in which they have studied how young Somali women who live in Kenya marry Somali men from Norway, whether there is a clear pattern, and if so, whether this pattern has changed over time.

In Turkey, IMDi has supported a project in Konya run by the organisation Dost Eli Derneği. Many immigrants in Norway come from the Konya area. The project runs information campaigns targeting parents and their children. Local teams have been trained in information work. Influential persons in the local community, such as village leaders, religious leaders and teachers, are used as change agents.



Support for projects abroad is contingent on them being carried out in the areas that the Norwegian immigrant population comes from and having a connection to the minority communities in Norway.

The People's Development Association (PDA) in Northern Iraq runs a project for Norwegian People's Aid. This project differs from the Norwegian projects in that it involves change work at many levels of society, and in that it makes active use of TV and radio programmes to reach a wide audience. It has trained teams that carry out information campaigns in the countryside. It has also organised dialogue meetings with journalists, lawyers, activists, women's organisations and religious and political leaders. Religious leaders are an important target group, since it is often them who conduct unregistered marriage ceremonies for young people, despite the fact that this is illegal in Iraq. This project has clear relevance to and a connection with Kurds in Norway. Representatives from PDA have visited Norway every year and participated in seminars for Kurds living in Norway. Their message is clear: Laws have changed in Kurdistan, forced marriage is punished by long prison sentences back home, and it is important for Kurds in Norway to understand that they must respect the new laws, not the old ones.



Conclusions

Experience shows that there are several good methods for working to change attitudes and carrying out preventive work. The immigrant organisations are important points of access to the immigrant communities.

- ▶ We find that small discussion groups are a method suited for boys, girls and adults alike. They can be held in clubs and associations, at school, in youth clubs, sports clubs and other municipal or private contexts.
- ▶ We find that, in order to reach the young, information must be linked to activities that interest them. This applies to boys in particular.
- ▶ We find that, in order to reach the parent generation, methods such as seminars and gatherings with lectures by people that the adults have confidence in must be used, in combination with written information, dialogue and debate. In addition, supplementary measures and methods should be developed and tested.
- ▶ We find that projects abroad have an influence on the diaspora communities in Norway. The culture, traditions and values of the home country are very important to those who live in Norway. Many immigrants are in close contact with their families and other important persons in their home countries. The projects must be linked to the minority communities in Norway.





List of tips – methods for cooperating with parents

Based on the overall experience from work targeting parents, we have developed a list of methods that we hope can inspire and help others.

Experience shows that there is no single method or model that guarantees success in work aimed at minority language parents in general, and preventive work against forced marriage in particular. Nonetheless, we see that some principles can be emphasised as a list of tips with a view to ensuring that work targeting parents produces results. One or more of these tips may be useful when new measures are being developed, together with thorough consideration of

local conditions that can have a bearing on the outcome, and that must be taken into account.

The list of tips is relevant regardless of the target group, whether it is minority language parents or ethnic Norwegian parents. The point is to find ways to reach parents that allow for mutual dialogue, in which the resources and commitment of parents are used to create good learning and development conditions for the pupils.

Tips

- ▶ Consider re-using old methods, a lot of experience has been gained.
- ▶ Map the language groups you wish to reach, and use a certified interpreter if needed. See www.tolkeportalen.no for a list of qualified interpreters.
- ▶ Consider whether the target group can best be reached by means of linguistically homogeneous meetings or mixed language groups. It may be a good idea to ask some of the parents in advance.
- ▶ Consider whether it would be an advantage to include ethnic Norwegian participants in the event. Violence and coercion in families concern everybody.
- ▶ Is it an option to include the young people in the activity/meeting? Alternatively, consider how their perspective can be communicated by means of film, quotes, stories etc. without them being present.
- ▶ Focus on dialogue and mutual learning. Avoid information meetings where participants are reduced to passive recipients.
- ▶ Consider whether there is a need for help to reduce cultural barriers, for example by including MiR, an ICDP advisor or relevant voluntary organisations.
- ▶ Focus on cooperation. Are there other parties, such as voluntary organisations, that are doing similar work?
- ▶ Think about the terms you use: Putting forced marriage and violence on the agenda can repel people, while more general topics such as 'living difficult lives' or 'youth and love' are something that most people can relate to.
- ▶ Identify role models from the communities you wish to reach who can give talks or similar.
- ▶ Is there a resource group or parents group at the school or in the local community? If not, join forces with involved parents and establish a resource group. This eases the work of finding good topics, suitable activities and an expedient form for the activities, and of recruiting and practical implementation.
- ▶ Resource persons also need support and motivation. Consider whether to create separate arenas for the development of resource persons.
- ▶ Change is a process, and it takes time. Individual seminars and dialogue meetings are important and good, but they should be followed up by other methods and measures that support processes that have been triggered, while also continuing to involve and challenge participants.
- ▶ Map the participants' expectations before the meeting/activity (by means of a simple questionnaire, or orally) and request feedback afterwards. What was good, what was not so good, were their expectations met, are there special topics they want to raise in future etc.





Cooperation and coordinated efforts

'Interdisciplinary cooperation is necessary in cases of this kind. That is how we learn. We lift each other and become better together.'

- Introduction: Cooperation and coordinated efforts
- Cooperation, competence and coordination in forced marriage cases

A seamless public service



Introduction:

Cooperation and coordinated efforts

'It is rarely obvious what is the right thing to do. It is always necessary to use discretionary judgement, and each case must be assessed individually, particularly cases that concern extreme control. Because discretionary judgement and assessments are so important, it is necessary to discuss these cases with other people. You should not have to deal with a case on your own.'

Quote from a minority counsellor

A forced marriage case is a complex matter, and it usually also involves far more than 'just a forced marriage'. Throughout the action plan period we have found that the problems that young people struggle with are often complex.

Many roads to the goal

From the schools' point of view, the minority counsellors have found that there can be many ways to achieve the goal of uncovering problems related to violence, control and coercion. The initial enquiries and concerns about the pupil can be related to completely different factors, such as a high truancy rate, problems with school work, conflicts at school, behavioural changes, health-related problems, problems relating to housing, poor living conditions etc. Complex problems often require interdisciplinary and inter-agency cooperation in relation to the pupil.

Cooperation across areas of responsibility

From the foreign service missions' point of view, all the individual cases that the integration counsellors have been involved in have required a broad-based, comprehensive approach and cooperation across the foreign service missions' different areas of responsibility: visa, consular, police and aid-related matters.

The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage is a national expert team comprising representatives from several directorates (IMDi, the National Police Directorate, the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, and the Directorate of Immigration). The Expert Team provides advice and guidance to the first-line services about how specific cases should be dealt with and which bodies/agencies should cooperate. The team is also a driving force in the work of developing regional collaboration across agencies and disciplines.

Different roles

It is important that public agencies and voluntary organisations draw on each other's knowl-

edge, competence and roles. Most forced marriages take place in the country of origin. Efforts in Norway are therefore not enough to achieve change and development. The voluntary organisations are doing important preventive and awareness-raising work and they function as points of access to the minority communities in Norway. At the same time, we see that supporting projects and measures in the countries of origin that are connected to the minority communities in Norway has an impact. In our experience, it has also been necessary to cooperate with organisations in the countries of origin that work to combat violence against women and children in individual cases that involve Norwegian citizens or others with legal residence in Norway who need help while staying abroad.

Competence and coordination

Many support agencies are involved in the individual cases that IMDi's minority and integration counsellors have worked on. This field covers several overlapping sectors and disciplines. Services such as the police, the child welfare service, schools, the family counselling service, the health and social services and the foreign service all have a role to play.

The Action Plan against Forced Marriage has emphasised competence-raising measures and more inter-sectoral cooperation as important means of boosting public support for the work against forced marriage. This can be a demanding task, both because many agencies are involved in forced marriage cases and because these agencies have different kinds of expertise, administer different laws and use different work methods.

Experience gained by IMDi during the action plan period shows that better help could have been provided to many children and young people if the families had been given help at an earlier stage, and if the various support agencies' efforts had been coordinated better. In this part of the report, we will take a closer look at how inter-agency cooperation and early intervention can contribute to better handling of individual cases in which control, violence and coercion are part of the problem. The article 'Cooperation, competence and coordination in forced marriage cases' focuses on the experience of the minority counsellors in particular, while the article 'A seamless public service' discusses various municipal models for coordination and cooperation in the work against forced marriage.



Cooperation, competence and coordination in forced marriage cases

Better help could have been provided to many children and young people who are victims of or at risk of forced marriage, extreme control or other honour-related violence if the families had been given help at an earlier stage and if the various support agencies' efforts had been coordinated better.

Inadequate care and extreme control during childhood is a potential sign that forced marriage can also become a problem. By extreme control is meant the social control and violence that is exercised in some families and communities to ensure that family members behave in accordance with the norms of the family/community. The individual is monitored on behalf of the family, and any failure to comply with the norms for 'honourable behaviour' – or rumours to that effect – is reported to the family. Teachers and other school staff should be particularly aware of these mechanisms. Through early involvement in such cases, it is possible to initiate a dialogue with the families by contacting relevant support agencies and authorities.

Strengthening cooperation across support agencies

There are often many support agencies involved in the individual cases that IMDi's minority and integration counsellors work on. The Action Plan against Forced Marriage has emphasised competence-raising measures and more inter-sectoral cooperation as important means of boosting public support for the work against forced marriage. In its continuous evaluation, the Institute for Social Research pointed out that the task is a demanding one, both because many agencies are involved in forced marriage cases and because these agencies have different types of expertise, administer different laws and use different work methods.

In a survey conducted among minority counsellors and integration counsellors in 2010, we studied the work on individual cases in the categories 'actual instances of forced marriage', 'fear of forced marriage' and 'extreme control'. The focus was on cooperation, competence and coordination in the cases that the counsellors had been involved in since the project started in 2008. The purpose was to identify more good techniques and come up with recommendations for interdisciplinary cooperation.

Competence means knowing your limitations

When a young person contacts a contact teacher or school counsellor to ask for help, the school must make an initial assessment of whether it is necessary at the present time to involve external expertise, for example in the fields of medicine, child welfare, police work or social work. In cases concerning fear of forced marriage, actual instances of forced marriage, or if a person is subject to extreme control, it will often be necessary for the school to draw on external expertise.

Do not deal with cases alone

It is important that the school knows which laws apply to the various agencies and what they can do within their respective limits. The fundamental thing is to know what the duty to report, the duty to prevent and the duty of disclosure entail. But understanding the different roles is also important in this context. Where does the school's responsibility end? Many stress that the school must set limits for its follow-up in cases of this kind. The various agencies must know what support services are available to victims of this type of abuse, the roles that the various agencies can have or have, and, last but not least, the agencies must become better at making use of each other's expertise.

Anonymous discussions are important

IMDi's clear advice is that all cases that concern extreme control, fear of forced marriage, actual instances of forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence should be discussed anonymously with the child welfare service and/or the police. An anonymous discussion can give an indication of whether the case in question must be reported, and it is also an opportunity to obtain guidance, for example about how a notification of concern should be worded in order to trigger action on the part of the responsible authorities.





Knowing your limitations is most important. Competence in assessment is necessary.

You have to know when you should bring in other experts and/or refer a case to other agencies.

Quote from a minority counsellor

Who coordinates the case?

In individual cases that concern coercion, control and violence, the agencies whose work is based on legislation have formal coordination responsibility (i.e. the child welfare service, the police or the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV)). The school's responsibility is to refer the cases to these agencies. It has emerged that the minority counsellors have seen themselves as coordinators in many cases, although that is not their formal function. This is challenging, because it could potentially lead to other agencies relinquishing responsibility in some cases. Because the minority counsellors are often the first to establish contact with the pupils, and they have time to follow them up, the reality is that they often end up with responsibility for them. It is important that the minority counsellors / the school pull out and that the appropriate agencies take over. Many also point out that it is unclear who should have coordination responsibility in some less serious cases.

What information do the cooperating agencies need?

The Action Plan defines work against forced marriage as part of the efforts against domestic violence, thereby anchoring it in a wider phenomenal field that concerns both the majority and the minority population. Furthermore, forced marriage is regarded as part of honour-related violence, i.e. a phenomenon that originates in an honour culture and must be understood in the context of that culture.

Through its competence-raising work, IMDi has found that it is important not to focus too much on the special nature of forced marriage cases. At the same time, it is necessary for the support agencies to have a basic understanding of and knowledge about the concept of honour / honour cultures in order to be able to handle such cases in a good manner.

Knowledge about traditions and marriage practices in the countries of origin and among various diaspora minority groups is important, but over-emphasising 'abstract' cultural knowledge when dealing with individuals entails risks. It can lead to prejudice and to the agencies approaching young people on the basis of stereotypes about certain population groups.

Lack of competence can have serious consequences

Increased competence, in the form of basic knowledge and understanding of honour cultures / the honour concept, makes it easier to understand the seriousness of a situation and intervene at an early stage before the situation has come to a head. The minority and integration counsellors have described the competence of their most important partners as very variable, and they have given many examples of situations where they believe that a young person at risk has not been believed or taken seriously by the child welfare service or NAV staff. The consequences of a lack of competence in the field of forced marriage and other types of honour-related violence can be very serious.

Competence-raising takes place through interdisciplinary cooperation

Partners who initially do not have any knowledge of the field can learn through cooperation on a specific case. In IMDi's experience, competence is built through practical work and cooperation on specific cases. Such processes lead to mutual competence-raising. This has been most

evident where the minority counsellors have been part of a large, formalised local cooperation group or network, such as in Stavanger, Drammen or the Stovner district in Oslo.

Discussion group on forced marriage and honour-related violence

In the Stovner district, the minority counsellor works closely with the SaLTo¹ coordinator and participates in several formalised networks and inter-agency cooperation forums. A discussion group on forced marriage and honour-related violence has been established, among other measures. This is an internal group/network in the city district in which representatives from different agencies participate. The group was established because of variation in the handling of forced marriage cases (both within the district and in relation to external partners). Different external partners are invited to each meeting (the police, NAV, schools etc.). The discussion

group's goal is to raise competence. The result is that each agency has clarified its procedures for dealing with individual cases and that there is greater focus on preventive work.

The district emphasises multicultural competence in its public services. Among other things, this means being aware of and being good at using resource persons / immigrant organisations as bridgebuilders to reach the district's different population groups. This is part of the work of adapting the district's services. It is also emphasised that this is important in relation to the prevention of forced marriages and other forms of honour-related violence.

¹ SaLTo stands for 'Sammen lager vi et trygt Oslo' ('Together we create a safe Oslo'). It is the name of the SLT (Coordination of local crime prevention measures) cooperation model that applies to the cooperation between the City of Oslo and Oslo police district.



■ ■ CASE

A 16-year-old girl from the Middle East contacted the child welfare service herself. She told the child welfare service about a very controlling and violent father. The violence became more serious after her father discovered that she had a boyfriend. Her boyfriend had been assaulted by her father. The child welfare service opened an investigation. In conversations with the child welfare service, the girl was reluctant to talk about what was really going on at home. She was concerned about her mother, who was also struggling because of the father's mental health problems. The girl told the child welfare service that she did not want to move out of her home. The child welfare service decided to drop the case. In connection with the dropping of the case, they conducted a concluding interview with the family. The family were all present at this interview. When asked by the child welfare service whether she was OK with them dropping the case, the girl answered 'yes'.

A few months later, the child welfare service received a notification of concern from another agency in the municipality. The notification of concern was worded more like an 'assignment' for the child welfare service than as a notice of concern for a child, and it concerned financial support for a bigger home for the family.

After the child welfare service dropped the case (while the girl was in lower secondary school), the girl contacted the minority counsellor. She was then 16 years old. In her conversations with the minority counsellor, the girl described how she felt when she told the child welfare service that she wanted the service to end its involvement in the family and drop the case. 'I had to say "yes", but it felt as if a hundred doors were closing.' The girl also told the minority counsellor that her father was being followed up by a psychiatric nurse from the District Psychiatric Centre, but the child welfare service probably did not know this. The minority counsellor described the case as an extreme control case and deemed it to be a possible case of fear of forced marriage. The girl herself did not fear that she would be forced to marry.

The minority counsellor discussed the case with an integration counsellor in connection with the girl travelling to the country of origin in the summer. The integration counsellor was given the girl's name (with the girl's consent) in case she turned up at the embassy. No follow-up agreement was made, because the girl herself said that she was not worried and did not want such an agreement. The girl returned to Norway and is now attending another school. The minority counsellor has not been in contact with the girl since before the summer and does not know how she is doing.

I had to say 'yes', but it felt as if a hundred doors were closing.

Quote from a 16-year-old girl, said to a minority counsellor

The minority counsellor's thoughts:

In this case, the child welfare service dropped the case too quickly. Their investigations were not thorough enough. First of all, the girl was not given an opportunity to talk about what her situation was really like. In the minority counsellor's opinion, the child welfare service should have had more conversations with the girl and should have held the concluding interview with the girl alone. These cases are demanding for the child welfare service in terms of both time and resources. This is not just because an interpreter is required, with the extra expenses and time this involves, but also because young people are ambivalent. They do not want to break contact with their families, and they do not want to inform on their families. It takes time to uncover what is really going on. The child welfare service is responsible for making it possible for young people to tell their stories. A comprehensive approach is required in this type of case. Other public agencies were involved with this family, but they were not aware of each other's involvement, and no cooperation had been established with regard to the family. The psychiatric nurse only dealt with the father, but she should have provided advice and guidance to the whole family, and she should have talked to the girl alone. The father's increasingly controlling behaviour in relation to the girl, for example, may have been linked to his mental health problems.

The notification of concern from the other municipal agency was worded in a way that did not cause the child welfare service to react. It is a problem that many agencies do not know how to formulate a notification of concern so that it triggers action on the part of the child welfare service. Knowledge in this area is often inadequate, and training is required. This is a general problem that also affects the children and young people who are subjected to honour-related violence, control and coercion. ■ ■

A seamless public service

The experience from the action plan period can be briefly summarised as follows: The work against forced marriage requires the public services to cooperate, and a good and shared understanding of the phenomenon across traditional sector and discipline boundaries is necessary. A well-functioning chain of measures depends on all the relevant agencies pulling their weight.

It is a condition that both help for victims/persons at risk and preventive work shall, as far as possible, be attended to by the existing support agencies and public services in the municipalities. One of the Action Plan's measures (measure 23) was to develop municipal models to strengthen this work. Responsibility for following up this measure was transferred from the Ministry of Children and Equality to IMDi in summer 2010 in a separate enclosure with the allocation letter.

Drammen

In cooperation with Drammen police station, the municipality of Drammen applied for government funding to develop the municipality's work against honour-related violence as early as 2006, or before the current action plan period. The basis for the application was that the municipal public services were criticised for inadequate coordination in connection with the court proceedings in a criminal case concerning the forced marriage of a 17-year-old girl.

Identical copies of the application were sent to three ministries, and funding was granted on the basis of an interdepartmental collaboration. Responsibility for coordination was assigned to

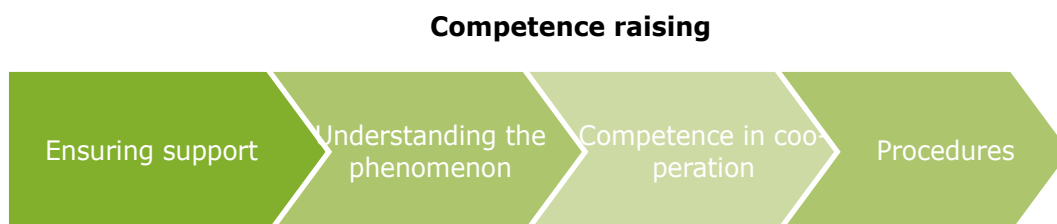


the Ministry of Children and Equality, and the work was linked to the Action Plan's measure 23. When the three-year project was nearing its conclusion in 2010, IMDi was tasked with developing a model for sharing the knowledge and experience gained.

There are three main factors that comprise the main message and the essence of what has clear transfer value for other municipalities.

1. Support from the management/leadership of all parties concerned
2. Thorough competence-raising measures
3. Development of procedures

This can be illustrated in four distinct steps:



Ensuring support

- ▶ In its judgment in the criminal case concerning forced marriage, the District Court strongly criticised the public services for inadequate procedures and coordination. The attention surrounding this case was used to formulate general challenges relating to cooperation.
- ▶ The municipality and police station were equal partners throughout the project, and the mayor and the head of the police station were jointly responsible for the project application.
- ▶ The city council produced a thematic report on the work against violence in general, in which domestic violence and honour-related violence in particular were emphasised as priority areas.
- ▶ The city council adopted a zero tolerance policy on violence in Drammen. Violence is a crime and must never be accepted, nor can it be excused or explained away on cultural grounds.
- ▶ It was made clear that forced marriage and honour-related violence are covered by the more general term 'domestic violence', and that it is not a specific integration phenomenon or a cultural phenomenon, but a general challenge for all public services irrespective of demography and ethnicity.
- ▶ The municipality's chief administrative officer and the police's operational leadership have been the project's steering group throughout the project period.
- ▶ Measurement parameters were developed for the work in the municipality's overall management system.

These elements meant that the project had the necessary support in Drammen. Local conditions in each municipality will determine how the work of ensuring support is organised, but cross-sector attention and clear guidelines in the line organisation are seen as essential.

It is also important to focus on the synergies created when good procedures in this field also benefit other areas where cooperation is important.

While individuals have been driving forces in Drammen, organisational use has also been made of SLT (Coordination of local crime prevention measures), a measure initiated by the Norwegian National Crime Prevention Council, as this was an existing cooperation platform. Experience indicates that it is expedient to use existing resources and established cooperation forums in the work of ensuring support for such projects. The municipalities that use the SLT model have such a system in place. Alternatively, most municipalities in Norway have established a police council where the municipal and police leaderships meet. This can also be a useful forum for ensuring support.

Understanding the phenomenon

The message from Drammen is that all parts of the public services aimed at children, young people and families must have a basic understanding of the phenomenon. The most important element is to have a shared understanding of the concept of violence, including the consequences of being exposed to violence, both as a direct victim and as a witness. Furthermore, the importance of honour and the difference between collectivist, patriarchal and individualistic family patterns are necessary cultural knowledge.

Signs and symptoms that could indicate that children and young people are being subjected to violence must be reviewed, and theoretical and targeted practical training must be given in how to talk to children and parents in order to be able to uncover violence and extreme control.

Competence in cooperation

Competence in cooperation is based on the opportunities and limitations inherent in the individual service's framework conditions and procedures, and the legislation that applies. Together with clarifying the duty to report and prevent in relation to the duty of confidentiality, this forms the basis for clarifying the individual service's responsibilities and limits. Having respect for each other's work and services has been an important message.

The police and the child welfare service 'own' the serious individual cases, and must have the expertise needed to guide other services. They therefore need more thorough training.

All training should be cross-sectoral, so that cooperation challenges can be highlighted through practical examples and solutions. Attitudes to and ideas about other service areas must be clarified. Overriding procedures based on cooperation competence must be thoroughly reviewed. They form the basis for the development of detailed internal procedures by the individual service.

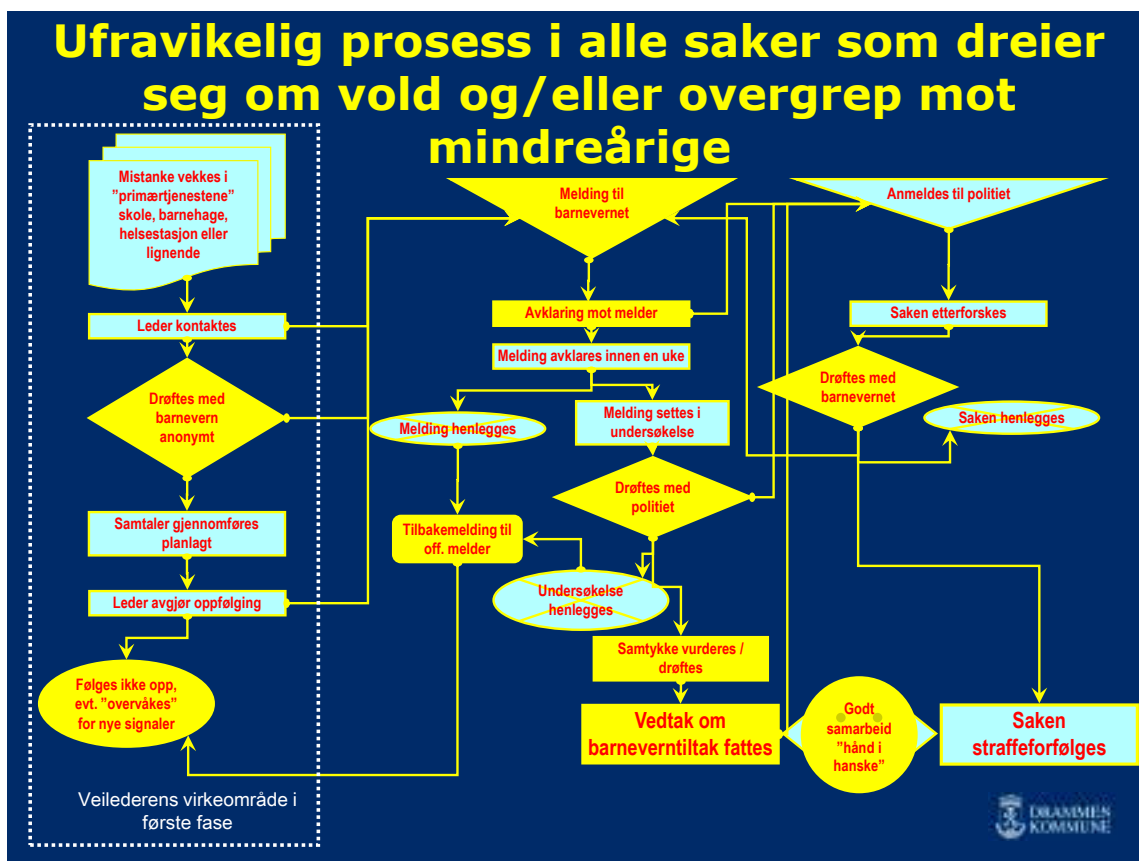
The development of procedures

The procedures in Drammen are visualised in a flowchart. It is based on a 'case' arising in one of three ways:

1. A public service employee suspects that a child or young person is being subjected to neglect, violence or abuse
2. Direct notification to the child welfare service
3. A report or enquiry to the police

On this basis, alternative case processing procedures and stop points are visualised and presented step-by-step in a PowerPoint presentation. This has proven to be a useful tool for highlighting all stop points, discussion points and cooperation arenas in the public services' handling of a case.

Mandatory process in all cases concerning violence against and/or abuse of minors



The main message is:

- ▶ No individual employee should be responsible for assessing the seriousness of a notification of concern on his/her own. Any suspicions of violence or abuse must be discussed with a superior immediately.
- ▶ If there is concern for a child or a young person under the age of 18, the child welfare service must be contacted for an anonymous discussion about the further handling of the matter. The child welfare service must give priority to such enquiries and be aware that how their partners are dealt with will influence the child welfare service's reputation.
- ▶ If the conclusion is that a notification of concern should be registered, the child welfare service 'owns' the case and decides when and how the parents/guardians should be contacted. The child welfare service will, as soon as possible, notify the agency that reported the concern about whether an investigation will be initiated or the notification of concern dropped. The decision to drop a notification of concern does not mean that there is no basis for concern, but that there is no basis for taking measures pursuant to the Child Welfare Act. This means that the agency that filed the notification of concern must consider what it can do within its own remit.
- ▶ The child welfare service decides whether to report the matter to the police, but it also has the option of discussing the matter anonymously with the police before the case is identified. As a rule, cases of this type should always be reported to the police, but the child welfare service decides when this should be done based on the best interests of the child. The provisions on unconditional public prosecution apply to these cases, which, consequently, do not depend on a formal report being filed.
- ▶ In cases where the victim is over the age of 18, the service that is concerned must contact the police directly. The possibilities for discussion are the same as for the child welfare

service, but victims who have reached the age of majority have more control over their own cases.

The final report 'Når det umulige er mulig' ('When the impossible is possible' – in Norwegian only) is available on Drammen municipality's website. The final part of the project focused strongly on measures and emphasised dialogue as an approach even in these complex and difficult cases.

Stavanger

The municipality of Stavanger applied for and was granted funding for a three-year cooperation project in 2009. This project is less extensive than the project in Drammen, but it is also based on the principles of cooperation, coordination and competence-raising.

The goal of the project is to prevent forced marriage through competence-raising measures and to ensure that everyone who needs advice, guidance and help in connection with forced marriage or threats of forced marriage is dealt with by competent and coordinated support agencies.

A broad-based network has been established to propose competence-raising measures for the support agencies. The members of this network must keep each other informed about the cases they work on or know of. The network also contributes to developing cooperation procedures between participants in the network and other relevant partners.

Several competence-raising measures have been implemented, both at the overriding level and at the individual service level.

The project has appointed a project manager in a 50% position and it has the support of the municipal chief administrative officer's management team.

Skien

The municipality of Skien has appointed a broad-based interdisciplinary working group that is working on a guide and a brochure about work against domestic violence. The following entities and agencies are represented in this group: the police, schools, kindergartens, the health service for refugees, the preventive health service for children, young people and pregnant women, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service, the child and adolescent psychiatric outpatient clinic, the women's shelter, the assault centre, the municipal psychosocial crisis team, SLT (Coordination of local crime prevention measures), and the child welfare service.

The guide is based on Drammen municipality's guide and brochure. It will be submitted for political consideration in November.

Political support for the project has been obtained from the Standing Committee on Education and by the project manager's position being funded by IMDi and municipal funds.

Implementation in municipal service entities is under planning and will start in early 2012. A big conference will be held in January 2012 on the topic of domestic violence. This conference will mark the start-up of implementation of the work.

Trondheim

The project is linked to the establishment of a multicultural information centre that will function as a hub for competence in and cooperation on integration challenges in the municipality. The centre is intended to supplement existing services and agencies that work on integration, and it will focus on preventive information work and efforts to change people's attitudes.

The goal is to raise the competence of public servants in the areas of forced marriage, extreme control and female genital mutilation. Staff must know what to do in relevant cases and how to discharge their responsibilities, and they must know who is responsible.

Dialogue meetings will be held between expert environments, religious communities and representatives of the groups that are 'at risk'. Various work methods will be used to create 'intimate spaces' and to ensure that information about how to escape from a forced marriage is well known among employees and groups at risk. Focus events will be held and steps taken to ensure media coverage of forced marriage, extreme control and female genital mutilation.

Kristiansand

The goal of the project is to reduce honour-related violence and the number of forced marriages involving children and young people in the municipality of Kristiansand. It is a sub-goal to develop a contingency plan for employees who come into contact with victims of domestic violence. The plan will be linked to existing support services, such as the child welfare service, the family counselling office, the women's shelter, the police, the health service and other support services. The plan will clarify the responsibilities of individual employees and the options available to them when faced with this problem.

The project is also intended to spread neutral information in all parts of the municipality in order to enable individual employees to identify and deal with individuals who are faced with this problem in a way that makes it possible to implement adequate measures. The target group consists of employees of Kristiansand municipality, with particular focus on employees who come into contact with children and young people in their day-to-day work.

The project is organised under the child welfare emergency unit in Kristiansand.





Concluding reflections and recommendations

The years from 2008 to 2011 have seen a formidable effort to mobilise against forced marriage in Norway, with particular focus on helping those affected, on prevention and on anchoring the work in the public support agencies. As the agency responsible for the most important measures in the Action Plan, IMDi has played a key role in this work.

In this collection of articles, we have presented the most important experience from our work. The topics have been exemplified and explored through in-depth descriptions of selected cases, methods, professional forums and projects from the period.

As specified in the introduction, the framework for this work has varied. Minority counsellors and integration counsellors have had to work in different ways to carry out their assignments. It is therefore impossible to give a complete account of the details of everybody's work in a report of this kind. Hopefully, we have nonetheless succeeded in describing the breadth of the field and the diversity of approaches taken, and in demonstrating the complexity of the cases and methods used.

Summary of experience

The goals of the work have been achieved.

- ▶ Schools and foreign service missions at which minority counsellors and integration counsellors have been stationed have improved their expertise, procedures and methods for preventing, uncovering and dealing with cases of forced marriage.
- ▶ Immigrant organisations have received funding for work to raise awareness of and increase knowledge about forced marriage and the relevant support systems, among both young people and their parents.
- ▶ Through the Expert Team's work, for example, the first line service has become more knowledgeable about forced marriage and about which agencies can provide assistance in individual cases.
- ▶ Information about new trial schemes and permanent measures based on documented experience has been communicated to the relevant authorities.

IMDi's counsellors have been in a position to focus on professional development and on uncovering gaps in our knowledge. As shown,



our remit has been to target the specific aspects of forced marriage and honour-related violence, but experience from this work has also provided insight into broader, related issues. In this way, we have seen synergies and connections that are important in preventive work.

The main conclusions from IMDi's work to combat forced marriage are as follows:

Low-threshold measures and preventive work. It is important to be present in arenas where young people and their parents are present. More young people have contacted the support agencies since minority counsellors were stationed in schools. This indicates a need for this type of service, and that it is important to become involved in cases before the conflict has become deadlocked. Preventive work should start early. It is therefore also necessary to implement measures in primary and lower secondary schools. Public health centres and kindergartens should be involved in order to reach parents.

The work to combat forced marriage requires a broad approach. Experience from the project period indicates that viewing forced marriage as an isolated phenomenon is an artificial approach. The work that has been done and the methods that have been tested show that actual instances of forced marriage are only classified as the main problem in a small number of cases. Most cases concern a combination of violence, difficult family relationships, living conditions, generational conflicts, children and young people being forced to move against their will, and migration and integration challenges.

Work and dialogue aimed at families. Dialogue-based work targeting families at an early stage of the process can uncover other problematic matters and clear up misunderstandings. If a young person breaks with his/her family, this could bring the conflict to a head. When the person then re-establishes contact with or moves back to the family without anybody having worked with the family, the situation could deteriorate. Work targeting the family continues to be important after young people have moved back home. In order to achieve sustainable solu-

tions for all parties to a conflict, it is important to implement measures that target families and communities where forced marriage and related problems occur, both in Norway and abroad.

Transnational perspectives. One of the main findings from the project period is that a transnational perspective is necessary to combat forced marriage and honour-related violence. Most forced marriages take place in the country of origin. In order to uncover and combat honour-related violence, the support agencies in Norway and the foreign service must be aware of the dynamics between people in the country of origin and family members who migrate to other countries. Obtaining information about the local traditions in a geographical area, such as norms, laws and regulations and belief systems, can contribute to a deeper understanding of a young person or family's situation.

Preventive work carried out by voluntary organisations. Experience shows that there are several good ways of working on prevention and on changing attitudes. The immigrant organisations represent important points of access to the immigrant communities. They work with both young people and adults. We also see that support for projects abroad that are linked to the minority communities in Norway have an effect.

Earmarked funds and resources are an important part of preventive work. The work is demanding in terms of both time and resources. It is therefore important to earmark resources in schools and foreign service missions until support has been secured for this work in the responsible sectors.

Complex challenges require complex solutions. The work to combat forced marriage requires cooperation across agencies. Nobody should work with a case like this on their own. Cases often change as they progress, and experience shows that they can become very complex and dramatic. The support work must be coordinated between public agencies such as the school, child welfare service, police and family counselling office. It is also important that the public support agencies and voluntary organisa-

tions draw on each other's knowledge and different roles. Cooperation results in mutual competence-raising. Help and support are better coordinated and adapted in areas with established cooperation systems.

Recommendations for future work

It is important to mention that many of our important experiences have been pointed out before, by agencies and organisations that worked on forced marriage cases prior to 2008. This is particularly the case for voluntary organisations – but others in the public support agencies have also been concerned with these issues and have identified important connections. In this action plan period, however, more extensive measures have been tested by public agencies on a larger scale and involving more players. This has resulted in the development of new knowledge.

Like the action plan, IMDi's work against forced marriage has now been concluded in its current form. As outlined in the introduction, significant changes have taken place during the action plan period, as regards both the understanding of the phenomenon and approaches to the work. The realisation that forced marriage must be understood as both an integration-related and a family violence-related challenge for society has been strengthened. It has become clear that the work to combat forced marriage must take account of transnational dimensions and family ties across national borders – and that forced marriage is thus also a migration-related challenge.

IMDi's experience is in line with developments in the field in general, which are largely a result of the synergies that have been achieved through closer cooperation and the exchange of experience between the agencies and organisations involved. Residential facilities, regional network conferences, the development of regional collaboration projects and systematic competence-raising are examples of this.

But change takes time. A lot remains to be done before the work is sufficiently anchored in the responsible public agencies, and before sufficient local and regional cooperation structures have

been established. A new action plan for 2012 will be launched in autumn 2011.

In the following, we point out areas that we feel should be addressed in future work.

1. PERMANENT MEASURES

We recommend that permanent measures be established. The principle of sector responsibility should apply, and responsibility and roles must be clarified in the different sectors.

We recommend that the minority counsellor system be incorporated into schools, both in primary and lower secondary and in upper secondary schools. It is expedient to link this topic to established subjects such as social studies and established procedures such as contact teachers' development discussions with pupils. The integration counsellor scheme should be anchored in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In our view, it would be expedient to link the work on forced marriage with the following areas: migration, aid targeting women, human rights and consular matters. We also recommend continuing and strengthening the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage. Funding for voluntary organisations' preventive work and work to change attitudes should also be continued.

Professional responsibility for this work should remain with IMDi, also after employer responsibility for counsellors has been transferred to the schools and foreign service missions, respectively.

2. A BROAD-BASED APPROACH

We recommend taking a broad-based approach to this work. The challenges facing young people are complex. There are many ways to uncover issues relating to forced marriage. It is therefore important to have several different perspectives when meeting young people and working on cases. Difficult family relationships, human rights, legislation, gender equality, control and violence, living condition-related problems, childhood and upbringing conditions and migration-related challenges are some of the aspects it is important to be aware of. Forced marriage should also be incorporated to a greater extent as a topic in work in the above-mentioned areas.

3. THINK TRANSNATIONALLY

We recommend working transnationally. What happens in Norway does not happen in isolation from events outside Norway. The work against forced marriage and related issues should also be seen in the context of the situation in other countries – it is not enough to look inwards, it is also necessary to look beyond Norway's borders. This means that integration and foreign policy considerations should be seen more in conjunction with each other.

4. MORE PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

We recommend that even greater emphasis be placed on prevention. Kindergarten, primary school and lower secondary school staff should be involved in this work in future. In order to ensure early intervention, there should also be a focus on health visitors at public health clinics, midwives, dentists, GPs, after-school programme employees and others who hold positions where they regularly come into contact with children and/or parents. Efforts must be made to avoid the 'emergency aid trap', in which help comes after a crisis has arisen, and the target group must be the whole family. Prevention is also important seen from the foreign service missions' point of view, where long-term efforts to promote women's rights and position in society are on the agenda. Voluntary organisations also play an important role in this work, since they help to spread knowledge and build networks for minority families.

5. STRENGTHEN PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

We recommend that people in professions that work with children and young people be given training that prepares them for dealing with these problems already as part of their basic training. General topics such as value clashes, conflicting loyalties and rights principles can be a way of raising the issue of forced marriage/honour-related violence. Drammen and Buskerud University College has set a good example with its study module on domestic violence and honour-related violence. These topics should also be dealt with in continuing education for school and first-line service staff.

6. INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

We recommend that inter-agency cooperation be strengthened. If the support agencies have an overview of relevant agencies/organisations and establish cooperation, this will help to resolve cases. Mutually binding agreements and procedures for the work to combat honour-related violence are developed through local networks and cooperation projects, cf. the Drammen project and other 'model municipalities' presented in the report. Existing collaborations should be continued and new collaborations established where none exist. This work should be seen in connection with the development of municipal and intermunicipal action plans to combat domestic violence.

7. REGIONAL WORK

We recommend that the regional work be further strengthened. Experience shows that regions differ – the problems facing the first-line services vary between different parts of the country. We therefore recommend more network meetings and arenas where professionals can share experience with each other at the regional and local level. This strengthening of the regional network work should be seen in connection with the roles of the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage and the existing regional networks.

8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

Further studies, research and analysis of related issues are important. On the basis of our experience, we recommend that the following areas be studied, among others:

- ▶ unregistered/religious marriages
- ▶ human trafficking/marriages of convenience and asylum applications
- ▶ homosexuality
- ▶ mental disabilities
- ▶ female genital mutilation
- ▶ enforcement of the law
- ▶ the parents' situation
- ▶ systematic methodology development in work aimed at families
- ▶ follow-up of young people who break with their families
- ▶ transnational family ties
- ▶ children and women left behind abroad

Not all these topics are dealt with in the report.

Concluding reflections

The work against forced marriage is a reminder of the challenges and possibilities inherent in a diverse society. Ensuring equal services requires a comprehensive approach, flexible solutions, more tools and methods, and a broad basis in order to be better equipped to provide support and assistance.

There is power in words. In the introduction, we mentioned how the media have contributed to polarising the debate by using generalisations

about 'us' and 'them' in their coverage of forced marriage cases. With regard to the young people who read such descriptions of the reality they live in, it is extremely important to highlight other aspects and possible outcomes.

We hope that this collection of articles has described different perspectives, and that we have contributed to a more nuanced understanding of these issues.

Thank you!

In conclusion, we would like to thank all our colleagues and partners for stimulating cooperation, and for their commitment and efforts. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Children and Equality for involving us in this important part of the work relating to descendants, first and second-generation Norwegians and their families.

Our special thanks go to each of the minority counsellors, integration counsellors and members of the Expert Team, and to the voluntary organisations and municipalities that have received support during the project period. They have all contributed to important knowledge and professional development. Not least, they have been important sources of support and conversation partners for many people in difficult circumstances during the past four years.

List of resources relating to forced marriage, honour-related violence and related topics

This is a list of resources that the minority counsellors have found useful in their work. The list consists of relevant films, documentaries, YouTube clips, novels, websites and specialist literature. The list is not exhaustive, but provides suggestions for further in-depth studies.

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
Films	<i>Bend it like Beckham</i> (2002, UK)	A young British Sikh girl has to fight her family's orthodox mindset in order to achieve her dream of playing professional soccer in the USA. Comedy – drama.
	<i>Brick Lane</i> (2007, UK) Based on the novel with the same title.	A young woman from Bangladesh leaves her home country to live in an arranged marriage with her 26 years older husband in England. Drama.
	<i>East is east</i> (1999, UK)	Family conflict and arranged marriage in a British-Pakistani family in Manchester. Comedy – drama.
	<i>Eksport – Import</i> (2005, Norway)	A Pakistani girl has a secret Norwegian boyfriend, but is engaged to a cousin at the same time. Comedy – romantic drama.
	<i>Fighter</i> (2005, Denmark)	Aicha loves kung fu. She is in her final year of upper secondary school in Copenhagen and lives with her Turkish family. Danish traditions dominate at school, Turkish traditions at home. In the middle is Aicha and her martial art. Youth drama.
	<i>Mississippi Masala</i> (1992, USA)	Forbidden love between an Indian-Ugandan immigrant to the USA and an African-American man. Comedy – romantic drama.
	<i>Head-On</i> (2006, Germany)	The film depicts the relationship between two Germans of Turkish descent who enter into a marriage of convenience to placate her parents' morals. Drama.
	<i>När mörkret faller</i> (2006, Sweden)	This film features different stories about the abuse of power and honour killings. Several elegantly interwoven stories. Thriller.
	<i>Spanglish</i> (2004, USA)	A woman and her daughter emigrate from Mexico to seek a better life in the USA. Drama.
	<i>Rabbit-Proof Fence</i> (2002, Australia)	The film is based on a true story. It is about three girls: Molly (14), Gracie (10) and Daisy (8). They are removed from their families as part of a racial hygiene programme and sent to a children's home for Aborigines. They are not allowed to see their families. Drama.
<i>Water</i> (2005, India)	A film about the fate of young widows in India. Drama.	
<i>Skylappjenta</i> (2009, Norway)	A film about extreme control and honour-related violence, based on the book by Iram Haq. Inspired by the fairy tale about Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf.	

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
	<i>Vinterland</i> (2006, Norway) Also contains the short films <i>Inn-bruddstyven</i> , <i>Broen</i> and <i>Bawke</i> .	The Kurdish refugee Renas lives in the far north of Norway. In many ways, he lives a settled life, but he lacks something important: a wife. That is arranged – in the home country. A good and beautiful girl from home, Fermesk. The only problem is that things don't turn out quite as expected, neither for Renas nor for Fermesk. Short feature.
Documentaries and YouTube clips	<i>Every good marriage begins with tears</i> (2006, UK)	About two sisters who live in London and are to be married off to two men in Bangladesh. Comedy – docu-drama. Can be downloaded from the internet.
	<i>Forced Marriage Unit</i> (UK)	Various clips produced in connection with a campaign against forced marriage. Search on YouTube.
	<i>Gender me</i> (2007, Norway)	<i>Gender Me</i> is about how gay Muslims see Islam, what they are concerned with and what challenges they encounter. Documentary.
	<i>I mine sko</i> (2010, Norway)	This film follows four young people from immigrant backgrounds. Through their everyday lives and society at large, these young people discuss value, culture and generational matters, each in their own way. Documentary. post@inthus.no . A guide to the film has been produced. It is called <i>Et ressurshefte til dokumentarfilmen «I mine sko»</i> .
	<i>Med egne ord – en film om tvangsekteskap</i> (2010, Norway)	In this film, young people talk about their own experience of pressure, violence and coercion, and professionals give their assessments. The film can be used as inspiration for debate among people who are affected by or work with these issues. The film was commissioned by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs and the Directorate of Immigration. Produced: 2010. Order from post@bufdir.no .
	<i>På Tvers av grenser</i> (Norway)	The film sheds light on experience of forced marriage in Norway and Denmark. The purpose of this film is to increase understanding of the field, and particularly to shed light on the situation and needs of minority youth and their parents. See www.tvangsekteskap.no
	<i>Quest for honor</i>	A film about murder, honour and justice that takes several unsolved murder cases in Iraqi Kurdistan as its point of departure. All the victims are women, and, judging by the motives, the cases appear to be honour killings. Director Mary Ann Smothers Bruni tries to map the scope of this practice and the prevalence of the view of women that makes it possible. Documentary. See the director's website.
	<i>Retten til å velge</i> (2010, Norway)	Short film about young girls' right to make their own decisions about education and marriage. See YouTube. See also the link http://www.inthus.no (video). To order the film, contact: Rogalandsprosjektet@inthus.no / (+47) 90620650
<i>Verre enn dyr</i> (Sämre än djur) (2010, Sweden)	Documentary about gay people in honour cultures. Shown as part of the TV documentary series <i>Brennpunkt</i> , www.nrk.no	

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
	Film study sheets: Film-related teaching aids.	Plans that can be used in teaching and in connection with school screenings. Sheets are prepared for different ages, including kindergarten and upper secondary school levels. http://www.filmweb.no/skolekino/
	<i>Tabuenes andre ansikt – en film om minoritetskvinner og seksualitet</i> (2008, Norway)	A documentary that gives immigrant women the floor and lets them talk about their own attitudes to sexuality and taboos.
	<i>Norske verdier sett med minoritetskvinneres øyne</i> (2007, Norwegian)	A documentary featuring interviews with girls who are hyphenated Norwegians. They reflect on important values and issues of identity.
	<i>Forced to Marry,</i> (2008, UK)	A BBC documentary that deals with how and why English girls are sent to Pakistan every year to be married off against their will. Much of the film is about the work of the Forced Marriage Unit.
	<i>Gift</i> (2010, Norway)	Made by Internasjonal helse- og sosialgruppe (IHSG) with the support of IMDi. The organisation calls the film project preventive 'infotainment'. The film, which was made by and for young people, raises important taboos that can be related to forced marriage – in an entertaining way.
Novels and documentary novels	Ahmed, Altan (2008). <i>Den lengste natten.</i> Gyldendal	Yelda has grown up as the youngest and only daughter in a conservative Turkish family. She has always felt inferior to her brothers, which has made her angry and strong. Her strength is tested when she finds out that her lover, history professor Selim, has been unfaithful. Yelda runs away to a small Kurdish village to take part in a research project about honour killings. This is a story about four generations of Palestinians and their fight for survival and for the right to their own land.
	Ali, Monica (2003). <i>Brick Lane.</i> Aschehoug.	A young woman from Bangladesh leaves her home country to live in an arranged marriage with her 26 years older husband in England.
	Ali, Nujood and Delphine Minoui (2010). <i>I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced.</i> Random House Inc.	Ten-year-old Nujood from Yemen is forced to marry a man three times her age. After a while, she cannot stand her mother-in-law's harassment and her husband's sexual violence, and she flees to the courthouse in the capital, where a lawyer takes an interest in her case. Biography.
	Al-Shayk, Hanan (2010). <i>The Locust and the Bird: My Mother's Story.</i> Gyldendal.	The dramatic story of a young Lebanese child bride who bears her much older husband two daughters, but has to leave them to pursue the love of her life. 'Should be read by everyone who cares about the more enduring, and universal, truths of the heart.' (Salman Rushdie)
	Asaad, Arkan (2011). <i>Stjärnløsa Netter.</i> Norstedts.	Arkan Asaad has written the story of Amàr, a boy from a Turkish village whose future is sealed when he goes with his family on what he thinks is an ordinary holiday to visit relatives in Iraq.
	Bjøranger, Terje (2010). <i>Den tredje søsteren.</i> Kagge.	Nadia should have been dead. Her sisters Samira and Nazma are brutally murdered, but Nadia manages to hide. Who is behind the murders? Why were her sisters killed? What will happen to Nadia? Solving this case takes us to closed communities in Oslo and remote villages in Pakistan. Crime novel.

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
	Berkan, Sandra (2006). <i>Når blod bliver tyndere end vand</i> . CDR-forlag.	When Sandra is six years old, she is raped by her brother. At the age of 13, she is forced to marry. Sandra tells of her Moroccan upbringing and about two years in a Moroccan marriage dominated by coercion, humiliation and degradation.
	Collett, Camilla (1855). <i>The District Governor's Daughters</i> . Vigmøstads og Bjørkes.	By the standards of the day, District Governor Ramm's daughters have all it takes to succeed. They are beautiful, have musical talent and have been raised in accordance with the recognised standards of feminine virtue. But does this make them happy?
	Joya, Malalai (2009). <i>A woman among warlords/ Raising my voice</i> . Spartacus.	Malalai Joya gained overnight worldwide fame after having spoken out in the Afghan parliament, condemning it for being full of warlords. Her microphone was soon disconnected, but Joya refused to withdraw her statements. In this book, she describes how she knew from that moment that she would have to live in hiding and in constant fear of being killed.
	Khadra, Yasmina (2008). <i>The Swallows of Kabul</i> . Gyldendal.	The story takes place under the terrible Taliban regime. We meet two married couples, the formerly wealthy, liberal and university-educated couple Zunaira and Mohsen, and prison officer Atiq and his sick wife Musarrat. They all suffer terribly, at the personal level, because they are poor and because the regime is without mercy. The best thing about this novel is how Khadra shows that oppression and evil seep in everywhere, even into people's hearts.
	Lindholm, Leila (2006). <i>Bortgift mot sin vilja</i> . Wahlström & Widstrand.	The French girl Leila is 21 years old when her parents force her to marry a man 15 years her senior. The marriage is a nightmare. Despite being abused, she is not allowed to divorce her husband, since the shame is too great.
	Norderhaug, Eva (2004). <i>Saynab – min historie</i> . Aschehoug.	This story was written in journalist Eva Norderhaug's living room, where Saynab lay on the sofa and told her story while the TV2 reporter took notes. The facts she shares about her life and the Somali immigrant community make tough reading. This book provides insight into one of the cultures that is most different from Norway's, and gives an idea of the background to the many conflicts that arise when Somalis try to find their place in Norwegian society.
	Sanghera, Jasvinder (2007). <i>Daughters of shame. Accolades</i> .	Jasvinder Sanghera knows what it means to have to flee from her family under threat of forced marriage, and to face the terrible consequences that ensue. That was just what she had to do when she was a young girl.
	Seth, Vikram (1994). <i>A suitable boy</i> . Gyldendal.	This novel is about a mother's search for a suitable boy for her 19-year-old daughter, Lata. The story develops into a comprehensive tale of four families in Northern India in the 1950s. Storylines and sub-plots are interwoven to paint a detailed portrait of India's diverse society, politics and culture. WH Smith Literary Award and Commonwealth Writers Prize in the Best Book category 1994.

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
	Shakib, Siba (2003). <i>Afghanistan, Where God Only Comes to Weep</i> . Ganesa.	In her book <i>Afghanistan, Where God Only Comes to Weep</i> , German-Iranian film maker Siba Shakib portrays a woman who is hard to forget. We don't know who the main character Shirin-Gol is. Siba Shakib has created the main character on the basis of conversations with a woman she met in a transit camp for refugees, but she has also incorporated the stories of other women she has met while travelling in Afghanistan. Documentary novel.
	Souad and Cuny, Marie-Therese (2006). <i>Burned alive</i> . Ganesa forlag.	It was the mid-1970s. Souad was 17 years old and in love. But in her Palestinian village, love before marriage meant death. Her dishonoured family gave her brother-in-law the job of killing her.
	Svingen, Arne (2004). <i>Frost-en kom tidlig</i> . Gyldendal.	Kyrre, Fatimah, Susanne, Rashid and Kid are a small group of friends who stick together through thick and thin. Almost, at least. But some rules must not be broken. You do not fall in love with your best friend's girlfriend. And you do not fall in love with your boyfriend's best friend. Everybody knows that - but it can't always be helped... For young people aged 13 and above.
	Rai, Bali (2003). <i>(un)arranged marriage</i> . Gyldendal.	Manjit lives with his Indian family in Leicester. They are Sikhs. The father keeps up tradition, while Manjit is fairly Westernised. Manjit travels to India to meet his fiancée, and he is forced to explore his own identity and mindset, which are part Western and part Eastern.
	Skram, Amalie (1885). <i>Constance Ring</i> . Pax.	A book about 17-year-old Constance, whose parents force her to marry a man twice her age.
	Van Geldermalsen, Marguerite (2007). <i>Married to a Bedouin</i> . Bra Böcker.	"Where you staying?" the Bedouin asked. "Why you not stay with me tonight—in my cave." He seemed enthusiastic. And we were looking for adventure.' Thus begins the story of how Marguerite van Geldermalsen — a New Zealand-born nurse — became the wife of Mohammad Abdallah Othman, a Bedouin souvenir-seller from the ancient city of Petra in Jordan.
	Østenstad, Inger and Salih Jaf (2006) <i>Reiser i krigens skygge</i> . Damm.	A book about the experiences and travels of a Norwegian-Kurdish family during a year in Iraq. With Hawdam's home town of Slemani in Kurdistan as their starting point, they describe their journey home to a new country behind occupied lines – the real Iraq beyond the reach of the television cameras. This is a story about the violent past and the suffering of the people, about a country characterised by inner conflict and religious differences, about chaos, hope for the future and life after the war.
Non-fiction: books and articles	Alghasi, Sharam, Katrine Fangen and Ivar Frønes (2010). <i>Mellom to kulturer</i> . Gyldendal Akademisk.	In this book, twelve immigrants describe their efforts to understand the codes and be included in Norwegian society. Their stories vary greatly: from those who were met with respect and understanding to those who are so tired of being overlooked that they doubt whether they want to stay in the country.
	Wikan, Unni (2008). <i>Om ære</i> . Pax Forlag.	Based on cases that are public knowledge in Norway, Unni Wikan attempts to outline what happens when honour cultures encounter the welfare society's understanding of fundamental human rights.

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
	Nøhr Larsen, Marianne (2004). <i>De små oprør. Tanker og metoder i arbejdet med minoritetspiger.</i> Aarhus Universitetsforlag.	This book is based on the anthropologist Nøhr Larsen's work with girls groups.
	Nielsen, Farwha (2011). <i>Tværkulturel konfliktmægling.</i> Hans Reitzels Forlag.	This book is based on Nielsen's method for intercultural conflict mediation. It summarises her experience and provides practical advice to such work.
	Baladiz, Dilek (2009). <i>I Hederns Skugga – de unga männens perspektiv.</i> Gothia forlag.	In this book, Dilek interviews ten young men between the ages of 15 and 23 who all have ties with other countries, but who were born and raised in Sweden. They talk about how they view honour, relationships, sexuality, gender roles and gender equality, among other things.
	Bredal, Anja (2006). <i>Vi er jo en familie.</i> Unipax.	The book is about how young Norwegian-Asian people experience the decision-making process in connection with marriages arranged by their families. The analysis is based on qualitative interviews with young men and women who grew up in Norway with parents from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
	Djuliman, Enver and Lillian Hjorth (2007). <i>Bygg broer, ikke murer.</i> Humanist forlag.	Ninety-seven exercises in human rights, multicultural understanding and conflict management.
	Eide, Kjetil, Naushad A. Qureshi, Marianne Rugkåsa and Halvard Vike, ed. (2007). <i>Over profesjonelle barrierer.</i> Gyldendal Akademisk.	A minority perspective on work with children and young people. The book focuses on the social and cultural contexts children and young people from minority backgrounds live in, and how the welfare state's professions deal with and understand this group.
	Eriksen, Thomas Hylland and Torunn Arntsen Sørheim (2006). <i>Kulturforskjeller i praksis.</i> Gyldendal.	What is ethnicity and nationalism? How can the authorities, schools and health service improve their communication with immigrants?
	Fuglerud, Øyvind and Thomas Hylland Eriksen, eds. (2007). <i>Grenser for kultur? Perspektiver fra norsk minoritetsforskning.</i> Pax.	In this book, thirteen Norwegian minority researchers examine the importance of the concept of culture and the idea of cultural differences in the integration debate, and the interface between the public and academic fields in which the concept has a central place.
	Hansson, Merike, ed. (2010). Gothia Forlag.	Today, many men live in double cultures, with one foot in a patriarchal honour-based tradition and the other in a society that demands gender equality. What effect does this kind of bicultural existence have on people, and how can the chances of men choosing equality and democratic values over oppression be improved?
	Husseini, Rana (2009). <i>Murder in the Name of Honour.</i> Oneworld publications.	'When a life is worth less than honour'. A book about honour killing written by a Jordanian human rights activist and journalist. A true story about women's struggle.
	Khader, Naser (2003). <i>Ære og Skam.</i> Borgen.	The concepts of honour and shame have played a decisive role in the Danish integration debate. Naser Khader gives a knowledgeable and personal account of the many aspects of Islam, the Muslim way of life and of the encounter between Danish and Muslim culture.

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
	Onal, Ayse (2008). <i>Honour Killing: Stories of Men Who Killed</i> . Samlaget.	The famous Turkish journalist Ayse Onal visited Turkish prisons and interviewed men serving sentences for killing their sisters, daughters or mothers – in their opinion, to save their families' honour. The book provides insight into what honour killings involve and why the involved parties see them as unavoidable.
	Pratt, Katherine Ewing (2008). <i>Stolen Honor</i> . Stanford University Press.	Covered-up Muslim women have become a common sight in Western media – victims of violent men, the oppressed wife or daughter. The result is a negative stereotyping of Muslim men, reinforced by the post-9/11 climate in which they are seen as potential terrorists. Katherine Pratt Ewing asks why and how these stereotypes live unnoticed, and she examines how Muslim men manage to preserve their masculine identity when faced with this discrimination.
	Raja, Abid Q (2010). <i>Dialog</i> . Cappelen Damm.	In this book, Raja sums up his experience from dialogue meetings, elaborates on his points of view and outlines a road ahead. The result is a book that takes the pulse of Norway in 2010 in terms of integration and minority policies. This book will revive renewed debate about these issues, and it could be an important tool for the authorities, organisations and private individuals working in these fields.
	Sareen, Manu (2003). <i>Når kærlighed bliver tvang</i> . Copenhagen: Peoples Press.	About generational conflicts and forced marriage in Denmark.
	Thorbjørnsrud, Berit S, ed. (2005). <i>Evig din</i> . Abstrakt Forlag.	This book presents different traditions regarding marriage and living together, and describes both the civil law and the teachings of the different religious and beliefs-based communities. It presents the views of Christians in the Lutheran and Catholic traditions, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs.
	Wikan, Unni (1999). <i>Culture: A new concept of race</i> . In: <i>Social Anthropology</i> (1999), 7, 1 pp. 57-64.	My purpose here is to alert you to how culture is loose on the streets of Norway – as indeed in much of the rest of the world. But can a concept that has gone awry function as a fitting frame for the encounter between immigrants and Norwegians? My own answer is no. And I shall propose an alternative that can better facilitate mutual respect and understanding.
	Wikan, Unni (2005). <i>In Honour of Fadime: Murder and Shame</i> . Universitetsforlaget.	Fadime was killed by her father in Sweden in 2002. She was 26 years old. Her fate moved the author to write this book. What is it that can cause several people to say that Fadime's father had no choice, that killing his daughter was the last resort open to him?
	Dullum, Jane & Mettenes, Kristin (2011). <i>Første dag var jeg redd – men glad også</i> .	Report about the work at Bokollektivet, a residential facility at Oslo Women's Shelter. Bokollektivet is a facility for young adult women from minority backgrounds who have fled from their families due to threats, violence, coercion and forced marriage.
	Bredal, Anja (2011). <i>Mellom makt og avmakt. Om unge menn, tvangsekteskap, vold og kontroll</i> . Institute for Social Research (ISF).	A research report commissioned by IMDi. This was the first systematic study of boys' experience of forced marriage/honour-related violence.

Resource	Title/Author	Topic
	Five Aarset, Monica & Latif Sandbæk, Miriam (2009). <i>Foreldreskap og ungdoms livsvalg i en migrasjons-kontekst</i> . Institute for Social Research (ISF).	Report commissioned by IMDi. The purpose of this project was to obtain more information about parents' perspectives on the values and attitudes of the young in relation to issues such as gender equality, love and forming a family.
	Tvangsekteskap og æresrelatert vold – en veileder til barn-everntjenesten (2011/2012). The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir).	A guide for the child welfare service about working with honour-related violence. This material deals with the practical aspects of the work. It was specially developed with the child welfare service's day-to-day work and procedures in mind.
	Fladstad, Torunn & Holme, Ingunn Lyngset (2011). <i>Jenter som stråler</i> , Resource Centre for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention - Region South.	A booklet based on experience from girls groups for minority girls. Participating in girls groups has given girls an opportunity to express themselves through conversation, activities and social interaction. This booklet summarises the experience gained and contains some tips for best practice.
	<i>Retten til egne valg</i> (2011). IMDi, VOX – Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning, Ulsrud upper secondary school.	This booklet was developed with everyday school life in mind. It deals with the practical aspects of the work. The new edition is a revised and expanded version of the first teachers' guide from 2009.
	<i>Informasjon til ungdom om tvangsekteskap</i> . The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), the National Police Directorate, IMDi, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate of Health.	A booklet containing information about forced marriage, rights and where help can be sought. Developed for young people. The booklet takes a practical approach and is suitable for distribution as information material.
	<i>Informasjon til foreldre om ekteskap</i> . The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), the National Police Directorate, IMDi, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate of Health.	Information booklet about marriage and the law, developed for parents.

Reference is also made to the following websites, where various in-depth study material/literature/guides/material are available.

www.imdi.no

www.tvangsekteskap.no

www.bufdir.no

www.samfunnsforskning.no

www.rvts.no (online magazine INNBLIKK)

www.kilden.forskningsradet.no (online exhibition about forced marriage – *Jeg har slåss hele livet* ('I have fought my whole life'))

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Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet

Postadresse: Postboks 8059 Dep, 0031 Oslo

Besøksadresse: Tollbugata 20, Oslo

Telefon sentralbord: 24 16 88 00

Telefaks: 24 16 88 01

E-post: post@imdi.no

Bestilling av rapporter: bestilling@imdi.no

Pressetelefon: 917 55 351, e-post: presse@imdi.no

www.imdi.no

IMDis regionale enheter:

IMDi Indre Øst

Storgata 16, 2. etg, Postboks 1133, 2806 Gjøvik

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Telefaks: 61 17 08 95

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IMDi Sør

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ISBN 978-82-8246-110-8



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