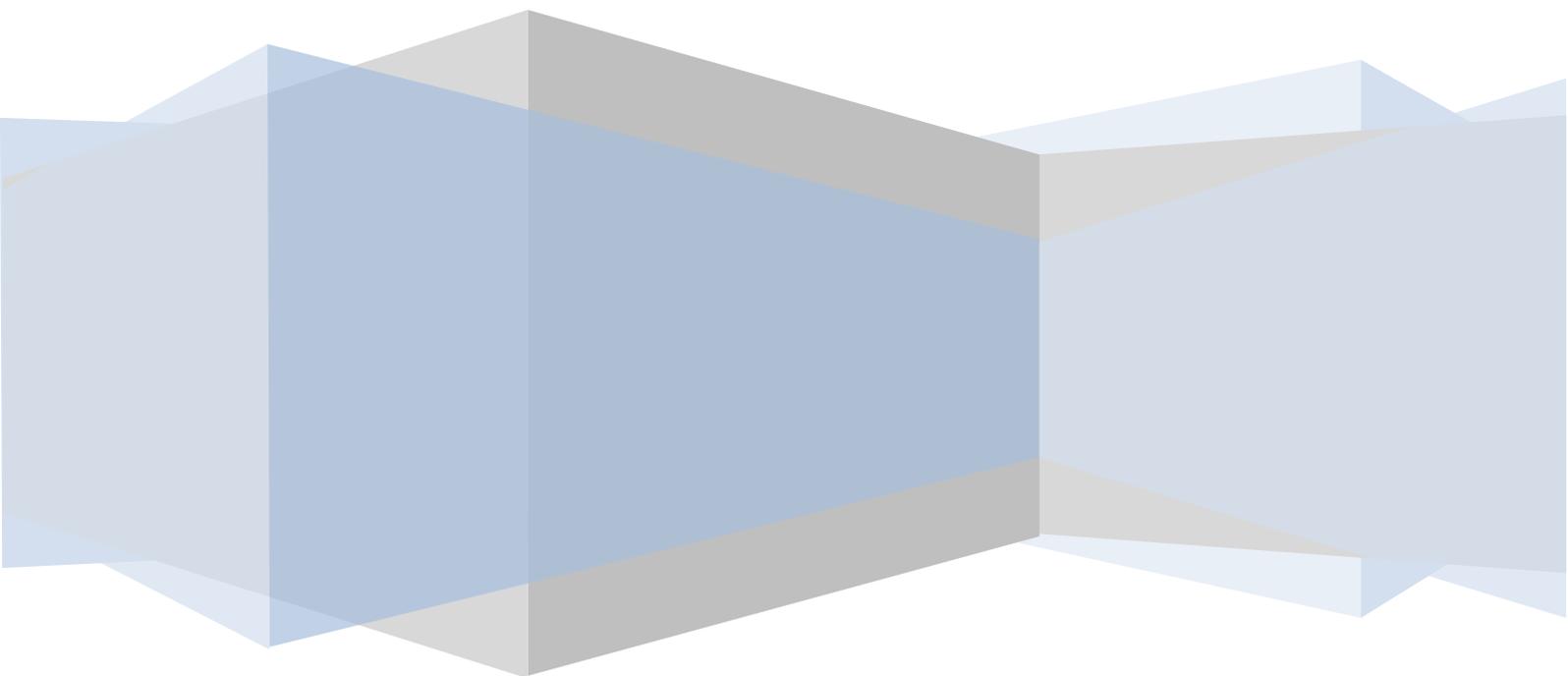




*Between Honour and
Shame*

**Nordic Approaches in
the Fight against
Honour Related
Violence**

A Comparative Analysis



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Introduction

The project **“Between Honour and Shame”**, financed by the Daphne program, is based on the collaboration between five Nordic NGOs, all working in the field of honour related violence in their respective countries. One of the project’s main objectives is the mapping of the Nordic approaches in the work against honour related violence and forced marriage. This analysis presents the Nordic initiatives based on the NGOs’ own perspective. Similar surveys and mappings have been done before, but none by the NGOs themselves. In this comparative analysis the NGOs’ own voice comes strongly through as their knowledge, competence and experience make them stand as central agents in the field of honour related violence.

Presentation of the participant NGOs

The NGOs participating in this project are **LOKK** from Denmark, **MONIKA-Multicultural Women’s Association** from Finland, **Somaya – women’s and girls’ shelter** from Sweden, **The Red Cross Helpline about Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation** in Norway and **Selvhjelp for Innvandrere og Flyktninger (SEIF)** from Norway.

LOKK calls attention to and strengthens the individual women’s shelters’ work through preventing and combating physical and psychological violence against women and children. LOKK was founded in 1987 and established its counseling service for ethnic minority youth in 2002. Focusing on ethnic minority youth (both men and women), their parents and professionals LOKK uses empowerment and mediation /family dialogue to help prevent honour related violence and assist help-seekers in escaping from situations of honour related violence. LOKK offers national, anonymous and free counseling. The organization also offers mediation, education, information material, campaigns and is a sparring partner for professionals/frontline workers in the field. LOKK frequently holds seminars at relevant work places and offers safe housing for both men and women. Further initiatives offered by the organization are psychological assistance, a 24h hotline, an anonymous web based agony column, hymn counseling, information material, training of municipality workers (jointly with the Ministry) and counseling for ethnic minority parents with teenagers.

LOKK employs five counselors (three of which are conflict mediators), one student worker and a communication worker. LOKK helps approximately 1100 persons a year, and their hotline received 976 calls in 2011. The organization is based in Copenhagen, with an office in Vejle exclusively offering counseling on honour related conflicts.

MONIKA- Multicultural Women’s Association in Finland was established in 1998 and is the umbrella organization for several organizations for women of ethnic minorities. MONIKA’s main target group is immigrant women and their children. MONIKA supports efforts to enhance cultural tolerance, and encourages migrant women to participate actively in social issues. MONIKA provides services and guidance to women subjected to domestic violence. MONIKA also lobbies

with decision makers, has a 24/7 hotline and provides training to social and health professionals. The organization has an expert role in addressing issues regarding multiculturalism, ethnic relations, empowerment, social integration and violence against migrant women. MONIKA offers sheltered housing in secret address, and each year the organization's services reaches about 1000 women and children. The organization is staffed by approximately 40 people, most of them immigrants or people with multicultural backgrounds, and holds 200 trained volunteers. Services are provided in about 20 different languages.

MONIKA has established a Multicultural Women's House, which is an easy access one-stop-shop with diverse activities and support for immigrant women. It offers a variety of group activities and networks to support the integration process of women and their families.

Somaya – women's and girls' shelter is the most experienced NGO in Sweden in the field of honour related violence and men's violence against women. It was established in 1998. The target group is women and girls who have succumbed to violence with an immigrant background and/or Muslim identity. Somaya can offer help in over 30 languages, and has a large support service that includes national helplines for help-seekers and for professionals, hidden shelters that accommodate 20 women and children and a re-build up unit. There is also an educational team that holds lectures and educates about violence in close relations and honour related violence to NGOs and to the public sectors. Over 12 employees work in Somaya with immediate and direct help in the shelters that involves all kinds of counseling, empowerment and guidance. In 2011 Somaya received 4000 calls from help-seeking women.

The Red Cross Helpline about Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation offers information and guidance on how to act in situations where forced marriage, FGM and honour related violence occur. The helpline is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 a.m. to 16:00, may be called anonymously and all personnel manning it have absolute confidentiality. The helpline offers information and guidance to persons subjected to honour related violence. The helpline covers information on Norwegian laws regarding honour related violence and forced marriage, offers help and support on the help-seekers' premises, assists in family conflicts and helps connect the help-seeker with the relevant support services both nationally and internationally. The helpline also works actively to provide information and guidance to other professionals and public authorities on the subject of honour related violence and forced marriage. The helpline was established in 2002, has three employees and receives about 500 calls a year.

Selvhjelp for Innvandrere og Flyktninger (SEIF) was established in 1986 and works to ensure the rights of immigrants and refugees. The organization focuses especially on migrant women, youngsters and members of the LGBT community, and has worked actively to combat honour related violence since the very beginning. The organization played a central role in putting the problem of honour related violence and forced marriages on the political agenda in Norway and still actively participates in debates and research on the field, as well as offering practical and direct assistance to persons subjected to honour related violence.

The organization consists of 17 employees manning 6 offices throughout the country, and received a total of 11 972 inquiries from 120 different nationalities in 2011.

Methodology

The empirical data presented in this comparative analysis was collected by each of the participating NGOs. One of the main purposes of the project *Between Honour and Shame* has been to highlight the **NGOs' own voice and perspectives** on the fight against honour related violence and forced marriages, something we feel has been missing in previous surveys and studies on this topic.

The NGOs were asked to collect data based on central questions related to the work against honour related violence and forced marriages. These questions were purely meant as guidelines, as the NGOs were encouraged to express themselves freely on any other topic they felt was necessary in order to portray the current situations and challenges in each of their countries.

The collected data was gathered and analyzed by the project coordinator from SEIF.

As reliable sources with long experience and vast knowledge in the field of honour related violence and from their own perspective, the NGOs were asked to elaborate on the following topics:

- The importance of a general framework/ a common definition on honour related violence.
- The organization of the work against honour related violence and forced marriage.
- Political actions and measures.
- Legislation
- Cooperation with public agencies and authorities (at local and national level)
- Cooperation with other NGOs

Definitions

Honour related violence (henceforth referred to as HRV) is often defined as physical violence that is inflicted on an individual by perpetrators who believe the person has brought dishonour upon the family, clan or community by engaging in any conduct that is perceived as immoral or unacceptable by religious or social/cultural standards. Individuals subjected to HRV are typically young people, and most often young women. HRV is usually carried out by family members. In many cases transnational relations and networks play a fundamental part in the execution of HRV.

Being NGOs working directly with persons subjected to HRV has allowed us to obtain first hand information on what HRV implies and how the help-seekers themselves define and conceptualize it. Our experience and knowledge have allowed us to broaden previous definitions of HRV and to reach the following definition:

HRV is defined as a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or wider community. Honour in this particular context is defined as collective, as honour related violence is committed with some degree of approval from family and/or community members. It is therefore depending on the collective's approval and is to a large extent connected to control over female sexuality.

HRV is not dependent on gender, class, age, ethnicity, nationality or religion, and individuals may be victims as well as perpetrators. HRV can include forced marriage, FMG and all forms of violence such as: physical, psychological (isolation, threats, lack of freedom and other acts of oppression), sexual, material (control of mobile phones, computers and other personal belongings) and economical (control of bank accounts, forced into debt).

Our definition highlights several aspects that are not always contemplated when working with persons subjected to HRV. It is important to have in mind the different forms of violence that a person may be inflicted with. Many individuals are confronted with a high degree of social control which limits their lives dramatically. Our direct contact with persons that have experienced some form of HRV has showed us the **heterogeneous** aspect of this group – help-seekers can be men as well as women, heterosexuals as well as homosexuals and well-integrated immigrants as well as newcomers.

Nordic approaches and actions in the fight against HRV and forced marriages

Norway

History

SEIF and Oslo Red Cross are two of the pioneer NGOs in the fight against forced marriage and honour related violence in Norway. In the late 1990's Gerd Fleischer from SEIF and Eva Kahn from Oslo Red Cross, along with Tove Smaadahl from the Association of Shelters for Battered Women, started travelling around the country presenting the issue to public instances in small conferences and seminars which focused mainly on the seriousness and urgency of the matter.

SEIF had already in 1997 been faced with their first case of forced marriage and FGM. It concerned a girl of African origin that had been infibulated and married during what was supposed to be a reunification trip to her family in her home country. Once back in Norway SEIF assisted this girl with all the help she needed, including the annulment of the forced marriage. The article of annulment of forced marriages had been reintroduced in the Norwegian marital law in 1994, allowing SEIF to apply it on this case.

The Norwegian media showed great interest in this particular case, and the case soon caught the attention of several politicians. Among these was the parliament member Erna Solberg that contacted SEIF for background information on forced marriages for an interpellation at the Norwegian Parliament. This interpellation resulted in the first Action Plan against forced marriages, which was launched in December 1998. SEIF, Oslo Red Cross and other NGOs participated in the elaboration of this action plan. One important measure in the action plan recommended setting up a forced marriage counseling service. This measure was implemented on April 2000 by setting up a nationwide information telephone system that dealt specifically with forced marriages, under the auspices of Oslo Red Cross (The Red Cross Helpline about Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation).

The plan also involved financial support for those NGOs working on the issue of forced marriages. SEIF and the Red Cross Helpline were granted financial support from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. In 1999 SEIF started a project to assist young people that had been subjected to forced marriage and other forms of honour related violence ("*Mellom barken og veden*"). From that year on, SEIF started working systematically on this issue.

That same year SEIF organized several information campaigns with the aim of making the action plan known and to distribute it to every public agency. SEIF also organized a series of school tours informing minority students about issues related to forced marriage and FGM.

The great effort done by SEIF and the Red Cross Helpline led to an increase in the number of young people taking contact with these organizations. The contacts reached their peak right after the murder of Fadime in Sweden in 2002. The Red Cross Helpline and SEIF grabbed the opportunity to let young people know they were there to help them. The number of contacts to both organizations rose dramatically, allowing them to acquire a unique knowledge on HRV and transforming them to central actors in this field.

Organizations like the Red Cross Helpline and SEIF have represented one of the main forces in the efforts that have been implemented during the last decade. Their continuous focus on youngsters subjected to HRV and their direct message of help to these youngsters have contributed in keeping the issue on the political agenda.

Political actions¹

A national effort: The Action Plan to Counteract Forced Marriage 1998-2001

The Norwegian government began work to create an action plan that could counteract forced marriage after a representative from Parliament brought the subject up in an interpellation to the Parliament in the fall of 1997. The reason for the interpellation was the dramatic media coverage of Norwegian girls who had been subjected to forced marriages, as well as information on this issue coming from a number of immigrant organizations.

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs began preparing the action plan together with the Ministry of Church Affairs, Education and Research, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate of Immigration. Input came also from a range of immigrant organizations, religious communities and resourceful citizens. The Government presented its action plan in December 1998, which was applicable until December 2001. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs had the main responsibility for the action plan that consisted of 40 different measures.

The action plan had two main objectives:

- To prevent young people from being forced into marriage
- To provide a better level of help and support for young people who are subjected to or who have already been subjected to forced marriage.

With this in mind the authorities intended to highlight the problems of forced marriage and send a clear signal to the world that the Norwegian society does not accept this form of matrimony. The action plan sketched out two main categories of pertinent measures: preventive measures and measures to deal with crises. The preventive measures dealt with projects that emphasized changing the attitudes of the community, spreading information and supporting projects that promoted dialogue between generations. The crisis measures dealt with creating networks of assistance and housing solutions for young people in

¹ *Handlingsplanen mot tvangsekteskap 1998-2001*, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion.

acute situations, provide advice and guidance to young people in conflict with their parents and help mediate between youngsters and their parents.

The role of voluntary organizations

Voluntary organizations played an important role in the elaboration of the first action plan, as well as being explicitly mentioned in three measures in the action plan. Oslo Red Cross was given the responsibility of developing a nation wide telephone system offering counseling services on issues related to forced marriages and other forms of HRV. Thus one NGO was given the responsibility of implementing one of the central measures in the plan.

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs was responsible for granting funds to NGOs and immigrant organizations. The Ministry decided to grant relatively small appropriations to a relatively large number of organizations so as to increase the overall activity and raise awareness on this subject in these organizations.

The Ministry followed up the action plan with a supplementary document entitled "Efforts to Combat Forced Marriages Spring 2000 (Innsats mot Tvangsekteskap Våren 2000)², which provided an overview of the measures that had been implemented during the first six months of 2000. This document revealed that the problem was actually much more extensive and serious than the authorities had expected. Reference was made to the media coverage concerning youngsters that had contacted the public services for help, and the Foreign Services' increase in the number of enquiries from Norwegian citizens abroad who had requested assistance in order to avoid to get married against their will. In this document the Ministry pointed out the importance of getting the public services to understand the seriousness of the situation so that those individuals who needed help would *not be rejected or be met with imprudence*. The document was also of great value to the NGOs, who referred to it when meeting public assistance agencies.

The renewed effort to counteract forced marriage 2002-2006³

The Government saw the need to continue trying to counteract forced marriage by presenting 30 new measures in 2002. This renewed effort was based on experiences from the first action plan in 1999. There were now certain areas where the Government saw the need for redoubled efforts.

One of these areas was housing solutions for young people in critical situations. The existing network of shelters along the country was only a short-term solution, and this was mainly an option for women and girls. Young men and couples had no alternative housing that could provide them with the protection and safety they needed. A nationwide system of crisis housing was set up that involved making at least 10 dwellings available and ready for use by young people in crisis at any given time. The five largest municipalities in Norway were involved in this measure. SEIF and The Red Cross Helpline collaborated in this project and acted as the point of contact for young people in crisis, providing housing and individual follow-up, as well as being the point of contact with the public services.

² *Innsats mot tvangsekteskap, Våren 2000*, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

³ *En fornyet innsats mot tvangsekteskap, Våren 2002*, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

The Norwegian State Housing Bank had the main responsibility for the administration of this scheme.

Establishing a national Expert Team that could provide advice and guidance in cases of forced marriage was another central measure that was introduced in this action plan. The Team of Experts to Combat Forced Marriage was formally established as a public agency in November 2004. A similar team had already existed since 2002 under the auspices of Oslo Red Cross, consisting of the Red Cross Helpline, the Directorate of Immigration and the Oslo Police. This team was decommissioned, but representatives from the Directorate of Immigration and the Oslo Police were transferred to the new team.

Legislation

A number of legal changes were made based on the new action plan:

- The Government amended the provisions of the Immigration Regulations where the requirements for economic support are concerned when applied to family reunifications based on marriage.
- Guidelines were prepared for how Norway's foreign missions should approach cases when they suspect a forced marriage had taken place (Circular: 2004-001 SODA). Another measure dealt with an interview scheme that involved interviewing the foreign partner of the person residing in Norway, and denying a residence permit until the spouse had returned to Norway and been interviewed by the immigration authorities. A provision was also introduced stating that a residence permit could be denied if it was likely a marriage was being entered into against the will by one or both parties.
- The Norwegian Marriage Act received a new provision that allows county governors to initiate legal proceedings to invalidate or annul a marriage if needed. This provision may be used if one suspects bigamy or forced marriage – or if a marriage entered into in a foreign country conflicts with Norwegian issues of justice, i.e. if one of the spouses was under age at the time of the marriage.
- The Norwegian Parliament adopted several changes to the Norwegian Marriage Act on December 2006, as well as changes to the Criminal Procedure Act and the Partnership Act to hinder or stop forced marriages. These included marriage between minors, cases where people try to circumvent Norwegian law by getting married abroad and help parties to break out of forced marriages.

The Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008-2011⁴

The Government presented a new four year plan in June 2007 containing 40 measures to combat forced marriage. The measures in this plan were directed at

⁴ *Handlingsplanen mot tvangsekteskap 2008-2011*, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

prevention and protection of persons subjected to forced marriage. More than EUR 9 millions were allocated to this action plan. This was the largest investment ever made to combat forced marriage in Norway.

The action plan had six main areas:

- Legislation to counteract forced marriage must be enforced effectively
- Forced marriages must be prevented
- Competence and cooperation must be strengthened
- Measures that intend to aid individuals must be good and available to those in need
- International efforts and cooperation in this area must be strengthened
- Knowledge and research must be strengthened

One of the main goals of this action plan was to strengthen public agencies in this area. In this new action plan public agencies were set to work in a more goal oriented manner in order to counteract forced marriage within their different fields of work. This meant that new agencies, along with those that were already involved in previous action plans, would receive new tasks and roles.

In this new action plan public agencies are taking over the tasks NGOs previously had. There is only one measure where the role of the NGOs is mentioned. This measure deals with funds that are available to NGOs and other voluntary organizations to work with attitude change and prevention.

More detailed information on the measures presented in this plan in the next section.

Continuation of the effort against forced marriage

The Government has announced a new action plan in 2013. The NGOs have sent their proposals to measures and political actions to the respective authorities, but have not yet received any response. In their proposals to the government the NGOs strongly urge the authorities to elaborate one specific action plan against HRV and to avoid the incorporation of HRV measures in a general action plan against violence in close relations. The NGOs fear the complexity of HRV and the specific measures and methods that have been developed will drown in a broader and more general action plan against violence in close relations.

Legislation related to forced marriages and HRV

Norway was the first country in the world that criminalized forced marriage with an own legal provision. In 1993 Norway abolished a law concerning forced marriage which was considered outdated for modern times. Yet during the following years forced marriage re-entered the political scene when some young girls and women told the media about their stories about involuntary marriages⁵.

⁵ Wikan, Unni 2008: *Om ære*, PAX forlag

This led to political activity as a number of legislative and regulatory measures were incorporated in the Action Plan against Forced Marriage (1998) and in the Renewed Efforts to counteract forced marriage (2002).

Changes to laws and regulations

To prevent and combat forced marriages, new requirements were introduced into laws and regulations. In 2003 new requirements were introduced. A minimum of economic self-sufficiency in order for a person under the age of 23 to be granted family reunification was introduced. Public prosecution in cases that dealt with forced marriage was now possible, and arranged marriages between minors were now prohibited. In 2004 the National Registry Office was now controlling and verifying the conditions for marriage. The rules concerning family allowance/child benefit when living in a foreign country were also bolstered with the idea of enhancing legislation so as to reach a positive effect on integration and prevent forced marriages between minors. The immigration authorities started implementing measures in an attempt to chart forced marriages among the immigrant population. If a person has not reached the age of 25 when entering a marriage, and this person requires a visa permit in order to enter Norway, an obligatory interview with the spouse residing in Norway (the reference person) is required. Based on the information gathered in the interview the immigration authorities are able to decide if a marriage was voluntary or not. The likelihood of a forced marriage leads to a denial of family reunification.

Central laws concerning forced marriage⁶:

The Children's Act:

- Any agreement that a parent (or anyone else) makes regarding a marriage on behalf of the child is not legally binding; cf. § 30a of the Children's Act.

The Norwegian Marriage Act:

- Women and men have the same rights regarding free choice of spouse/partner. A marriage must be entered into on own free will and own consent; cf. § 1b of the Marriage Act.
- A marriage that has taken place in a foreign country is not valid in Norway if:
 1. it was entered into without both parties being present at the ceremony
 2. one of the parties was under the age of 18 when the couple got married
 3. one of the parties was already married

Cf. § 18a section 2 of the Marriage Act.

- Either one of the spouses may initiate legal proceedings to invalidate a marriage if (s)he was forced to married by the unlawful behaviour of others. This applies regardless of who was responsible for the coercion; cf. § 16 section 3 of the Marriage Act.
(The parties will then be re-registered as unmarried, not divorced).

⁶ *Konvensjoner og lover om tvangsekteskap*, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

- Granted direct divorce without a required separation period; cf. § 23 section 3 of the Marriage Act.

The Norwegian Penal Code:

- *Any person who by force, deprivation of liberty, improper pressure or any other unlawful conduct or by threats of such conduct forces anyone to enter into a marriage shall be guilty of causing a forced marriage. The penalty for causing a forced marriage is imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years. Any person who aids and abets such an offence shall be liable to the same penalty; cf. § 222 section 2 of the Penal Code.*
- § 220 section 1 of the Penal Code also aims to combat forcing children to marry. This provision states that anyone marrying a person under the age of 16, or who aids others in such a marriage, can be punished with a jail sentence of up to four years. This rule applies regardless of whether any form of force, coercion or threats were perpetrated against a child.

All the provisions of the Penal Code that regulate physical and emotional violence can also apply to honour related violence.⁷

Problems related to the application of the laws

Despite the fact that Norway has a number of laws that prohibit forced marriage, there are very few cases that finally make it to court. One of the problems is that young people do not wish to press charges against their own parents. Because of this, public prosecution was introduced in cases of forced marriages. The reason for amending this law was to free the aggrieved person from the burden of taking one's own parents to court. Experience shows that some young people actually withdraw charges if they fear their parents might be prosecuted, and because any future reconciliation seems impossible. They are also afraid that the family conflict could escalate.

There has been some discussion in Norway as to whether it is actually beneficial to use public prosecution in cases of forced marriage. Does the police dare get involved and help in such cases, when they are consequently obligated to charge a person's family with a crime? Would young people dare contact the police if such is the case?⁸

Norway established a penal provision against forced marriage on 1 September 2003 as laid down in § 222 section 2 of the Penal Code (this penal provision was a measure in the Government's renewed efforts to combat forced marriage in 2002). When the law proposal was circulated for public comment, some of the consultative bodies stressed that creating a specific legal provision was the

⁷ IMDi's Report # 6 – 2008, Directorate of Integration and Diversity

⁸ www.tvangsektenskap.net

correct thing to do in educative terms. Others argued that this type of provision was unnecessary because such actions were already punishable by virtue of § 222 section 1 of the Penal Code. This provision raises some interesting questions according to Terje Bjøranger (www.tvangsekteskap.net). It requires that judges, prosecutors and defenders have to make a distinction between *arranged marriage* and *forced marriage*, among other problems. In addition to this, police and lawyers have to distinguish between the different rules for marriage found in the different cultures where these kinds of marriage occur; for example, what is the difference between *engagement* and *marriage*. With a more generalized legal provision that covers coercive acts, such as in section 1, these questions will not have to be dealt with⁹. § 222 section 1 of the Penal Code reads as follows:

Any person who by unlawful conduct or by any threat thereof compels another person to, submit to, or omit to do anything, or who aids and abets thereto, shall be liable to fines or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years. If there are especially aggravating circumstances, cf. § 232, third sentence, imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years may be imposed.

One of the most prominent cases regarding forced marriage that has reached the Norwegian courts illustrates the challenges faced by the legal system concerning forced marriage. One of the reasons for this is that the aggrieved person was under the age of 18 when the religious marriage was held. Consequently, the marriage was never registered officially neither in Norway nor in the country where the ceremony had taken place. According to Unni Wikan¹⁰, the Norwegian Penal Code assumes that marriages are always registered officially, but in many countries this is not necessarily true. One reason for this is due to the idea that authorities have nothing to do with a marriage – marriage is understood as a covenant between two parties in front of a religious leader and a witness. Unni Wikan also argues that the Norwegian law concerning forced marriage is per se not adapted to the conditions of the countries from which many of these families originate from.

Since § 222 section 2 of the Penal Code only applies to **formally registered** marriages – not **religious** marriages conducted by a mullah or imam – minors in particular and other young people in general who are “married” in this way fall outside this legal provision. That is the reason why other articles have been applied instead.

A marriage entered into outside of Norway will not be valid in Norway if one of the parties is under the age of 18 when (s)he gets married. To circumvent Norwegian law, some families choose to send their children to a foreign country for a forced (religious) marriage, and wait until the child reaches the age of 18 before officially registering the marriage. Some of these children are also forced into engagements. Even though the Children Act states that an agreement made by a parent on the marriage of a child is not legally binding, children and their parents are often unable to break such engagements because of the moral and

⁹ Bjøranger, Terje, "Om straffeloven", www.tvangsekteskap.net

¹⁰ Wikan, Unni 2008, *Om ære*, PAX forlag

religious aspects of the agreement. Parents also consider engagement and marriage as two sides of the same coin. Unfortunately, Norwegian authorities have not established good sanctions that could be applied to families that force their children into engagements. Greater awareness on this issue is also needed among immigrant populations in Norway as to understand that these actions are illegal.

§ 18a section 2 of the Marriage Act was changed in June 2007. The prime objective of the new provision was to hinder persons living in Norway from travelling to a foreign country to get married in order to circumvent the Marriage Act's requirements on minimum age and free will. There are many challenges related to this amendment. According to T. Frantzen the amendment can lead to less legal protection for the people the provision is intended for. A real marriage brings with it a number of rights for married people. Frantzen argues that many family issues can be further complicated if a person is considered married in one country, yet unmarried in another.¹¹

A person who wishes to file suit to have a marriage annulled because the marriage was coerced, must do so before six months have passed after that person is free of coercion. A suit cannot be filed later than five years after a marriage has been entered into – cf. §16 section four of the Marriage Act. Many young people do not know about the opportunity to annul a marriage, with the consequence that many approach the public services after one or both of these deadlines have expired.

Though Norwegian legislation allows direct divorce without time of separation as well as the invalidation/annulment of marriage, many girls and women have problems with getting a religious divorce from their husbands. Even though the girl gets a civil divorce in Norway, her country of origin and her religious community will refuse to acknowledge it. Should the forced marriage be annulled in Norway, she still may be considered *religiously* married, and her social environment and family will still consider her a married person. The girl will also continue to feel pressure from her family to remain married.

Cases before the court

The following two cases illustrate the challenges faced by the legal system concerning forced marriage.

Case in Drammen (2006)¹²

In this case of forced marriage a conviction was possible. A father and a brother were convicted of respectively 2 years and 6 months and 2 years in prison for physically threatening a girl into marriage when she was 17. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court. The girl testified in the district court. She then told the court that she was forced to get married, but withdrew her testimony at the Court of Appeals. She then asserted she was never forced into marriage. She

¹¹ Frantzen, Torstein 2007: "Tiltak mot tvangsekteskap" in "Rett og toleranse", Festskrift til Helge Thue, Bergen.

¹² Wikan, Unni 2008: *Om ære*, PAX forlag

was engaged, and she did this voluntarily. She chose the boy herself. She told the court it was the Child Welfare Service that had denounced her parents, not her.

The girl's marriage, if that was the case, was never registered by the authorities in Kurdistan (Iraq). This was a point of contention in court. The Supreme Court of Norway stressed that the marriage was not officially registered in Iraq, and therefore convicted the father and the brother of *attempted* coercion of marriage. Even though the Supreme Court concluded that an *attempted* forced marriage had taken place, and not a consummated violation of §222 section 2 of the Penal Code, the level of punishment in the three different instances was just as severe as if a consummate violation had taken place.

Case in Oslo (2011)¹³

In 2006 a 13 year old Norwegian-Iraqi girl was married to an older cousin in a religious ceremony in Oslo. Three years later the girl told a minority counselor about it. The girl's entire nuclear family in Norway was accused in this case – her cousin, father, mother, uncle and aunt. The uncle fled the country and was wanted by the police. Everyone pleaded not guilty when the case finally came to the district court in the winter of 2011.

At the district court the girl claimed she was married and an imam participated at the ceremony. Her cousin and aunt argued that the ceremony was an engagement ceremony and not a wedding ceremony. According to the cousin it was an engagement between him and the girl to avoid rumours and gossip in the Muslim community, and because the aggrieved person in this case was freer if she was engaged. He also argued that he and the girl actually did like each other. The reason the girl made these accusations was because she was jealous. The girl, on the other hand, explained to the court how the uncle controlled her family and her own father had no power to stop the marriage.

The court felt it could prove a religious ceremony had taken place. It also emphasized that the ceremony had been planned and conducted as a wedding. The court also believed it could prove the girl and her cousin were considered husband and wife after the wedding, and that they were expected to live and behave as a married couple.

At sentencing, significant emphasis was put on the fact that the aggrieved was forced to live in a marital relationship against her will with her cousin at his parents' home, and that she was also subject to physical abuse by her husband, her uncle and her aunt. The girl had also been raped by her cousin and was victim of death threats. All her attempts to get help were ignored by the members of the family. The parents said there was little they could do to help her since she now belonged to her husband.

¹³ Oslo District Court and Court of Appeals:
Oslo District Court, case # 10-18851MED-OTIR/03, February 21, 2011
Court of Appeals, case # 11-075341AST-BORG/03

The cousin was found guilty of rape and committing acts of coercion for several years against his younger cousin. He was sentenced to 5 ½ years in jail. The aunt, the father and the mother were sentenced to 3 ½ years in jail. The mother was sentenced to 2 ½ years of probation. They were also found guilty of contributory negligence to rape, use of violence and aiding in a forced marriage. The four were also sentenced to pay the girl EUR 33.000,-.

The case was appealed to the Court of Appeals by everyone except the aunt. The mother was acquitted, while the cousin had his punishment raised by 6 months and the father had his sentenced reduced by 2 months. They now had to pay the girl EUR 40.000,-.

The Court of Appeals noted that § 222 section 2 could not be applied in this case. The reason for that being that the girl, as well as the girl in the Drammen case, was a minor when the religious marriage took place and the marriage therefore could not be officially registered in Norway.

One of the main goals of the Government's Action Plan against Forced Marriage 2008-2011 is to enforce and uphold the law in such cases. It is emphasized that the legislation intends to have a preventive effect. This effect must be strengthened through effective enforcement of laws and regulations¹⁴. Yet there is still a giant gap between the extent of existing forced marriages in Norway and the extent to which the courts are used as a tool to safeguard the basic human rights of young people.

The organization of the work against HRV and forced marriage

The present organization of the work against HRV/forced marriages relies on the last Action Plan 2008-2011, in which several actions and measures on how the work should be carried out were outlined. The responsibility of organizing and implementing some of these measures was delegated to the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (BUFDi) and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). The measures in which the work is based on are the following:

- **Minority counselors at secondary schools**
- **Integration counselors at Norwegian embassies and consulates**
- **Team of Experts to Combat Forced Marriages (Kompetanseteamet mot tvangsekteskap)**
- **Establishment of a national housing and follow-up program for youths over and under the age of 18**
- **Extensive focus on preventive actions**

Minority counselors

The implementation of minority counselors at secondary schools was one of the first actions to be implemented. The counselors' role is to assist and advice

¹⁴ Handlingsplanen mot tvangsekteskap 2008-2011, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

minority students on issues related to honour related violence and to help youngsters get in contact with the right instances when in need of immediate help. Their other task is to prevent a growing number of minority students from leaving school at an early stage in their education. The counselors also play an important role in improving the schools' competence on the issue of forced marriage and other forms of HRV, such as extreme forms of parental control and authoritarian ways of raising children.

Integration counselors

The integration counselors are located at the Norwegian embassies in Amman, Ankara, Islamabad and Nairobi. Their main role is to increase the level of knowledge and the capacity of procedure at the embassies in cases related to forced marriages and other family related issues. They are also supposed to develop networks and cooperation with social agencies in the countries where they are located in the work against forced marriage. These counselors also have the responsibility of informing applicants for resident permits in Norway about the Norwegian marriage legislation.

The Team of Experts to Combat Forced Marriages

The Team of Experts is a central part in the organization of the work against forced marriages. The Team was created in 2004 and consists of representatives from four official agencies: the Directorate of Children, Youngsters and Family Affairs (Bufdir), The Directorate of Police (POD), the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). There are no representatives from the voluntary sector in the Team. The Team provides information and assistance to the public sector in cases of forced marriages and other forms of honour related violence. In 2009 the Team was delegated the coordinating and administrative responsibility for the National Housing Program for youths subjected to forced marriage and honour related violence. Until 2009 this task had been in the hands of SEIF and The Red Cross Helpline. The Team also administrates the system of repatriation for persons subjected to forced marriage or persons in danger of forced marriage taking place abroad.

Establishment of national housing program for youths over and under the age of 18

A service that offers a place to live for those under the age of 18 involves setting up a specialized housing program within the ordinary apparatus of the Child Protection Service. New and strengthened foster homes have been established for this purpose.

Housing for those persons over 18 years of age involves incorporating the places that SEIF and the Red Cross Helpline have had, as well as establishing new offers with a total of 25 placements. After a process of safety assessment and evaluation, the Team of Experts determines whether or not the young person is in need of immediate help. The apartments managed by the Team are located in

different municipalities in Norway. Once the Team decides that the young person needs help and protection, (s)he is placed in one of these apartments. The Team needs to take into consideration the safety of the young person, and has to place her/him in a municipality where (s)he is less likely to be found by the family. Once in the municipality, the youngster is followed up by the municipal program which coordinates all the public agencies needed in each case and provides him/her with the right assistance: financial assistance, judicial assistance, medical and/or psychological assistance. During the period of time the youngster is living at the apartment (s)he receives the assistance needed.

Preventive measures

Right after the last action plan was launched in 2008 a high number of NGOs and other institutions and agencies were given financial means to work with preventive actions in the field of honour related violence. This preventive work has consisted in organizing conferences and seminars around the country on issues related to forced marriages. Many of these conferences were aimed at professionals and public officials, while a limited number of them had the minorities themselves as target groups.

Other preventive measures include:

- Strengthening the counseling office for families
- The counseling program for parents ICDP (International Child Development Program)
- Conflict mediation
- Financial support to films and other information material
- Information campaigns to minority groups
- Establishment of new NGOs

Evaluation of the Norwegian effort to combat forced marriages

The National Housing and Follow-Up Program

SEIF has throughout its existence experienced a good cooperation with the public sector, a much needed condition in order to assist their target groups. When helping youth subjected to HRV and offering them a package solution to their critical situation, a smooth and effective cooperation with public agencies is fundamental. In each specific case SEIF calls on the necessary offices and makes sure that these collaborate together as to give the youngster the help (s)he needs. SEIF has a coordinating role and has to make sure that every agency fulfills its tasks.

The newly established housing program has confronted SEIF with a series of new challenges that has changed SEIF's main role as a coordinating actor. The relationship of cooperation is no longer as smooth and flexible as SEIF would like it to be, and SEIF fears the consequences this may have for the young people.

SEIF draws attention to the rigidity of the new established housing program and the limitations it presents. According to SEIF it fails to reach and assist the growing number of youngsters in need of help. The limited number of apartments

and their location in just a few municipalities present one fundamental problem. Should the Expert Team be contacted and there are no apartments available, or the young person cannot be placed because of the location of the apartment (due to schooling, work, or security matters), the Team is unable to provide the youngster with alternative housing and protection. The Team will in that case direct the youngster to the offer provided by the shelters, which is mainly a short-term alternative.

As mentioned in the previous section, the different municipalities where the apartments are located have their assistance programs, ready to assist those youngsters that have been relocated by the Team of Experts. However, if a young person in acute crisis decides to move to one of these municipalities on his/her own, (s)he cannot expect to receive any help from the municipal program. In that case (s)he has to contact the public system as any other regular citizen, risking her/his chances of being heard and believed. Only the youngsters that have been relocated by the Team of Experts can get assistance at municipality level. SEIF has had to help these young people who, for some reason or other, have “fallen out” of this new system of assistance. It has presented SEIF with a lot of work, especially when it comes to the relocation of youngsters.

SEIF also draws attention to the fact that the existing system lacks follow up – assistance after the period the youngsters can stay at the apartments. According to SEIF this is an aggravating flaw. SEIF focuses on the great importance of this work for the youngsters concerned. Many youngsters depend on this kind of follow-up, some for months, others for years. Individual needs and problems vary from youngster to youngster, and these have to be taken into consideration when helping the young person get through very traumatic experiences. Problems of this magnitude are not solved in a period of three to six months.

Coordination, routines and follow-up

Good coordination, competence and well-functioning routines are necessary when different public agencies get involved in cases related to forced marriages. The Red Cross Helpline’s experience is that the cooperative structures available within a municipality or across municipal borders have not been very good. Municipal assistance agencies and networks still need to focus on and strengthen their work during acute phases and in practical coordination to help young people, such as in areas like economy, schooling, daytime activities, legal representation, assessing security, etc. According to the Red Cross Helpline young people benefit most when one single agency or a few agencies are delegated the responsibility of a case.

Both the Red Cross Helpline and SEIF have experienced that the flow of information between their organizations and the authorities throughout the duration of the last action plan has not been optimal. They have lacked information when important measures in the action plan have been implemented. Both organizations would like to see the roles clarified in this field. The Red Cross Helpline states that the goal for private and public agencies should be to play on each others’ strengths so that young people can get the best possible

help that is available when difficult situations arise. This requires good cooperation and a good dialogue.

SEIF is still the place where young people in the most critical and dangerous situations come in order to receive help. Various public agencies contact SEIF as well in their eager to learn more about issues related to HRV. SEIF asserts that they will continue this work, in spite of changes that may come.

In the future SEIF hopes to achieve a fluent channel of information between its organization and the public system, here represented by the Team of Experts and the National Housing and Follow-Up Program. When a young person breaks all contact with the family and moves to another part of the country, it is very important that her/his voice gets heard. It is essential that the youngster does not feel that (s)he no longer has any influence over his/her life. They too have to take part in the decisions that are being made without having the feeling of being a “package” that is sent from one place to another. In order to assist the young person in a worthy manner, SEIF needs current information from the Expert Team on the availability of the apartments. After the youngster has been placed, it is essential that SEIF and the municipal assistance program achieve a high level of cooperation, especially having in mind the follow-up work SEIF often does after the young person has moved out of the apartment to a more permanent housing solution.

The follow-up work done by SEIF is of great importance, especially having in mind that the municipalities only provide follow-up during the time the youngster is living at the apartment, which varies from 3 to 6 months. SEIF would like to achieve formalized agreements of cooperation with the municipalities on the following-up of the youngsters. A systematic cooperation between the public sector and specialized NGOs is fundamental in order for the youngsters to move on with their lives after the break with the family.

Issues to be addressed

SEIF’s recommendations

- As a result of the newly established National Housing and Follow-Up Program, a draft of a model of cooperation between the NGOs and the public agencies has recently been launched for discussion. This model is intended to define roles and areas of responsibility. After a close evaluation of this model, SEIF has concluded that it opens up for random working and therefore demands a more formalized model where NGOs and public agencies, as **equal partners**, commit to each other for the best of the target group.
- It is of great importance that the NGOs’ knowledge and experience on the field of HRV is incorporated in the future development of new actions and measures. This unique competence should not be underestimated.
- Child Protection Service should extend the age of protection from 18 to 21. The majority of the youngsters that have experienced some kind of honour related violence usually need help and assistance until at least 21.

- Public and private agencies should implement concrete measures as to prevent any leak of information about the youngsters' new name and residence.
- Immediate health assistance should be accessible to youngsters, and these services should be free of charge until the acute crisis is over.
- Many of the youngsters that contact SEIF have not yet acquired the Norwegian nationality and have their own national passports. When they need to renew their passports, it is almost impossible for them to contact their national embassies after having changed their names, their residence and having a whole family out looking for them. They fear that confidential information they provide the embassies with can reach their family members. In some cases SEIF has worked on it has been impossible for the young person to get any help from the embassy without involving the parents. This applies mostly to girls. Such situations have forced many youngsters to accept having no passport, making it impossible for them to travel or to study in other countries. SEIF proposes that this group of young people should be given the Norwegian immigrant passport.
- Public agencies that receive information about persons subjected to HRV and/or threats should always notify the police or the Child Protection Services. This obligation to submit reports must be taken seriously by the public sector.
- According to the Norwegian law the current time limit to apply for the annulment of a forced marriage is 6 months after the person has been freed from the forced situation. SEIF thinks this time limit should be extended to a minimum of 12 months. This time will give the person time and the opportunity to learn about the annulment law (not necessarily known by everyone), get in touch with the right lawyer and receive assistance to manage the traumatic experiences.
- SEIF has expressed their concern about immigrant parents that leave their children in their home countries. SEIF sees that it is necessary that the Norwegian Child Protection Service establishes an international cooperation that secures the minors' fundamental rights.
- SEIF is at the moment experiencing great uncertainty when it comes to their future work with forced marriages and HRV. SEIF feels it is difficult to define how the public assistance to youngsters will be in the future and how the cooperation between NGOs and the public system will develop.

Issues the Red Cross Helpline recommends to be addressed

The Red Cross Helpline's experience and knowledge on issues related to forced marriage and HRV give them a high credibility when they say that some young people that have been subjected to HRV face challenges getting the help they need and are entitled to get. A lack of competence in such cases can lead to serious risks to the safety of these young people.

One important prerequisite for escaping from or breaking with a family is that the young person has the economic means to do so. The Red Cross Helpline sees

young people unable to pursue their plans because of strict formalities demanded by social services, like tax assessments and bank statements. Obtaining these kinds of documentation takes time and prolongs the decision making process by the public office. The Red Cross Helpline feels that there is a need for clearer guidelines from the authorities on how social services should deal with such cases.

The Red Cross Helpline has experienced how important it is that youngsters who live in families with strict honour codes need to be seen in an early stage so that preventive work can start earlier. The Red Cross Helpline sees that the schools have a unique opportunity to discover children who are subjected to HRV and strong control during their childhood. The Red Cross Helpline agrees with SEIF on the need for better routines in the public system, especially in schools, to prevent situations where children are left behind in foreign countries.

Family work is one of the issues the Red Cross Helpline feels needs more attention. They have experienced the importance of not only seeking solutions for the youngsters, but also for their families. Those who are breaking with their family struggle psychologically and might, after some time, re-establish contact with the family. If no work has been done with the family, no attitude change would have developed, and the conflict will soon blossom again. From the Red Cross Helpline's point of view, the family work cannot start until the youngster is placed in a safe location. When the young person wants to establish some kind of contact with the family, it is important that the family receives professional help so that they do not end up in a similar conflict situation.

The Red Cross Helpline's experience is that parents need "tools" in raising children without using social control and violence. In the action plan from 2008-2011 there are no measures that focus on how to change the attitudes in the parental generation concerning marriage and to provide them with new tools in order to raise their children in the Norwegian society. The Red Cross Helpline feels that NGOs can do a good job working to change the attitudes of parent generations and dealing with inter-family relationships.

Other issues the Red Cross Helpline feels need to be addressed:

- The latest action plan has no specific measures directed at the parents who are responsible for forcing their children to marry or who have tried to force them against their will. In addition there are no measures directed at young people who want to re-establish contact with their families. The Red Cross Helpline wants to set up a low threshold program for young people to regain contact with their families after breaking ties with them.
- The Red Cross Helpline thinks it is important that NGOs and the public sector use each other's competence and experience to make an all out effort to combat forced marriages in Norway. Financial support for NGOs that work with young people in crisis is important and should be strengthened. Where funding is concerned, it is important that those organizations that apply for funds for long-term projects get their funding over longer periods of time in order to assure continuity and predictability.

- ISF's report from 2010 recommends measures to deal with strengthening agencies at a regional level. The Red Cross Helpline thinks it is important to stop trends where knowledge and competence are moved higher up in the public system, while those who do the real field work are left with less money, fewer resources and limited opportunities for competence development.
- The Red Cross Helpline experiences that some young girls and women may have problems with getting a religious divorce from their husbands. Even if the girl gets a civil divorce in Norway, some countries and religious communities will refuse to acknowledge this. (Although the forced marriage may be annulled or dissolved, the girl may still be considered married religiously, and her social environment and family will still consider her a married woman). If the girl marries again without the religious divorce, in some countries she may be accused of bigamy. The Red Cross Helpline urges the authorities to put into place measures helping women experiencing this problem.

Studies/surveys

The Institute of Social Research (ISF) was assigned the responsibility of evaluating the action plan 2008-2011.

The first preliminary report from June 2009, "*Første delrapport – evaluering av handlingsplanen mot tvangsekteskap*", focuses on two main themes: 1) how the work against forced marriages is embedded within public services and 2) the preconditions that have been established for the implementation of the plan through measures, divisions of responsibility and arrangements for coordination and steering. The report concludes that the local and regional services have an expressed need for an enhancement of competence. It is also important to establish systems that ensure the documentation and exchange of knowledge, across localities and areas of competence.

The second report from June 2010, "*Andre delrapport – Evaluering av handlingsplanen mot tvangsekteskap*" evaluates seven central measures in the plan and discusses the effects of each of them. These measures are:

- Minority counselors in upper secondary schools and integration counselors at foreign service missions.
- Housing for young people above and under the age of 18.
- The Drammen-project and the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage.
- Support for the awareness raising efforts of voluntary organizations.

The report concludes that the Action Plan has led to a strengthening of help measures and prevention of forced marriages. The Drammen-project is presented as a successful model for local cooperation. Housing for young people has been strengthened through the establishment of new houses and the channels leading into getting help have been expanded. However, at the same time, a fissure has emerged between voluntary organizations and the public agencies, as it is not always clear who takes the responsibility in the first phase when a problem is uncovered. The report emphasizes questions of cooperation and coordination and concludes that there is a need to strengthen this aspect of

the work against forced marriage. The report also concludes that there is a need for stronger coordination across sectors at the regional level to prevent a decoupling between local level and regional level measures. The report also discusses the embeddedness of the action plan in different areas of policy and evaluates the conditions for **mainstreaming** the work against forced marriage. An argument is made that the sustained effort against forced marriage should be continued within the framework of an integrated action plan against domestic violence after 2011.

Other studies:

- *“Et trygt sted å bo. Og noe mer. Evaluering av botilbudet til unge som bryter med familien på grunn av tvangsekteskap”* by Anja Bredal and Julia Orupabo 2008. Institute of Social Research. This study evaluates the shelter and support services offered to young people who break away from their families because of forced marriage and HRV. The study concludes that all housing provision meet needs within the target group which should be seen as diverse. More housing alternatives and support services are needed and should be diversified and professionalized. The study concludes that local authorities have relied heavily on NGOs to provide support and argues that public agencies must take the responsibility. The issue of forced marriage and HRV should not be left to specialized agencies, but **mainstreamed** into the social services.
- *“Mellom makt og avmakt. Om unge menn, tvangsekteskap, vold og kontroll”* 2011. Institute of Social Research. This report investigates how boys and young men may be affected by a forced marriage, authoritarian parenting and HRV. The study shows that young men that grow up with classically patriarchal values in a migration setting are forced to relate to contradictory and ambiguous ideals of manhood. They find themselves in a double bind: traditional masculinities grant the certain privileges, while the tradition based authority is in a state of crisis: parental authority is eroding and the position of women has been strengthened.

Other surveys:

“Religion, juss og rettigheter: Om skilsmisse, polygamy og sharia-råd” 2008. Institute of Social Research.

“Tvangsekteskapssaker i hjelpeapparatet – Omfang og utfordringer” 2007. Centre for Women and Gender research. University of Oslo.

“Syn på ekteskap blant hinduer, buddhister, sikher, muslimer og kristne” 2001. Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

Sweden

History

The concept of honour related violence came to use in Sweden when the first crime was committed in Uppsala in 2002, the murder of Fadime Shahindal by her father. The murder of Fadime caused a huge medial interest that in turn sparked the government to take action. There had of course been honour related murders prior to that, but they had just been declared as family feuds. Prior to the government taking actions, the problem had been acknowledged by NGOs throughout the country. These organizations pleaded for the government's actions, but it was viewed as a problem amongst immigrants. They were also faced with the argument that a specific group cannot be pointed out in that order in society – that it was discriminatory.

During the period 2003-2007 the government invested SEK180 millions in different projects in the fight against HRV. From 2003-2005 the projects included mainly preventive actions like education programs to agents from the social services, schools and voluntary organizations. The establishment of protected housing has also been given a high priority. Today there are approximately 100 places that include different forms of housing like family homes, protected apartments, collective housing, just to mention a few.

According to SOMAYA the development of the work against HRV in Sweden has been stifled mostly due to fear of stigmatizing minority groups in the Swedish society. This fear has been bigger than the need to develop knowledge to make sure that all citizens have the same access to the same rights, support and protection when subjected to violence and oppression.

The organization of the work against HRV and forced marriage

The Swedish government has delegated the responsibility of the work against honour related violence to the County Administrative Boards. The Boards' task is to provide consultative assistance, especially to social services working on these issues, provide capital to causes that prevent and give support and protection to persons subjected to HRV. The Boards have been given particular capital to give aid to and coordinate the development of shelters for women and girls that have succumbed to HRV. The County Administrative Board in Ostergotland County has the task of working on a national level and to give support at a national and county overbridged level.

Sweden has several NGOs that addresses the issues with HRV in different ways. Everything from women's shelters to sports associations to religious associations have projects to work against HRV. Most women's shelters have programs that they offer to either their communities at large with authority personnel, as well as to the public, or internal projects offered to their own personnel and volunteers. This is done throughout the country and the knowledge about HRV is spreading. Not only that, but they also offer direct measures to girls/boys subjected to HRV. Other NGOs work mainly preventively with HRV. They offer education,

information, hold seminars, work directly with youngsters or directly with authorities, etc.

The work done with the help-seekers has been divided into three phases: preventive phase, immediate and direct sheltering phase and the re-build up phase (after moving out from the shelters).

SOMAYA offers immediate and direct help in the shelters that involves all kinds of supportive talks, empowerment and guidance, and also help after the period of living in the shelter, the re-build up phase. The work conducted is according to the empowerment method by which they strengthen the women enough so that they can take charge of their own lives and make decisions for themselves. Other methods that Somaya have incorporated into their work are *intersectionality* and *Sense of Coherence* (SOC). Somaya operates a national helpline and four protected housings with room for 20 women and children. The women's integration into the Swedish society and introduction to all instances that can offer them help is also an important part of Somaya's work. In 2011 only 2% of the women and girls that stayed at the shelters returned to the violent relationship and 70% filed a police complaint against their aggressors. Somaya puts a lot of effort into awareness raising, formation of opinion, lobbying and educating about the target group's situation. Two issues that Somaya is working hard to raise awareness on is the two-year law¹⁵ and the inclusion of HRV offences within the Swedish law.

Unga Kvinnors Värn (Young Women's Entrenchment, freely translated) work with immediate and direct help at shelters and also offer group therapy for women that have lived in shelters.

In 2008 the county administrative board of Östergötland, *Save the Children* and a group of police officers from the town of Norrköping started the local project "*It is about love*" ("*Det handlar om kärlek*") with a preventive purpose. The project's main aim is to reach out to children and youngsters and create a trusting relationship between them and the authorities. The project expanded and included every agency and instance the youngster might come in contact with, i.e. social services and the women's shelter. Participants in the project (police, *Save the Children*, social services, women's shelter, school/health personnel, etc.) are available at schools for a whole week ready to address any questions the pupils might have. The project has had enormous success since it addresses a universal question: everyone deserves to love and be loved and to freely choose whomever they want to love. "*It is about love*" is one of the first projects that has gone from a local level to now be spread on a national level as one of the measures in the government's action plan to prevent forced marriages.

Framtidståget, "The Train of the Future", bases its work on therapeutic talks to help both youngsters and/or families. Most of their youngsters are minors and

¹⁵ When a woman comes to Sweden after having married a Swedish citizen, she receives a temporary residence permit for a period of two years. If the marriage is terminated during these two years, she will be sent back to her country of origin. This law has devastating consequences for many women, as they are forced to stay in violent relationships of fear of being sent back to their countries and the fate that awaits them there, which can be everything from isolation to honour killings.

have been lawfully displaced. Their method of action is to primarily place the youngster in family homes with values similar to the youngster's and then work with reconciliation with both the youngster and the parents/families.

Framtidståget has experienced that the youngsters that break with their families more often than not develop severe depression. In order to be assured a more long-term solution for both parts, an evaluation of the possibility of reconciliation is done at the beginning of the placement of the youngster. They believe that the family also needs as much support and help as the youngster, as to ensure the best possible outcome. In this way one can be truly certain of the long-term effects as well as work preventively and ensure that siblings in the family also get the best help offered.

Protected housing

As mentioned in the introduction, housing for those in need of protection, has been given a high priority by the Swedish government. Both governmental and non-governmental protected housings were invested on. Women's shelters were indorsed with more funding so that they could either open new housing or reinforce their current shelters. The government also decided to open their own shelters such as Kruton and Gryning Vård.

Kruton in Stockholm is a support/counseling center and a protected housing for girls subjected to HRV. The housing project started in 2002 and the center in 2004. The protected housing consists of 8 places for girls in the ages 13-20 years. The average age is 17 years. The girls stay in average 1-2 months. The girls are allocated by the social services, which is also in charge of all the finances related to the placement.

Once the girl has been placed, focus is put on her need for protection. One then maps all possible threats and develops strategies of safety on how and where the girl can move outside the protected housing. The work in Kruton is divided in three phases. The first phase consists of listening to the girl and her story. In the second phase a dialogue is established with the girl so as to help her sort out her thoughts. The third phase deals with the future and the mapping of hopes, dreams and possibilities.

Kruton is also a support and counseling center for girls and young women of minority origin. Girls that have moved out of the protected housing can also come to the center for support. Professionals can also contact the center for information and counseling in specific cases.

Eldén and Jutterdal made a study on Kruton in 2005 (Eldén and Jutterdal 2005), which focuses on interviews with the girls based on their experiences at Kruton. The girls appreciated being believed and that their stories had not been questioned. They also appreciated the fact that they had not been pressured to meet their parents. They were not entirely satisfied with the social services who had questioned them and had made them wait a long time before they were given the much needed help. The young women drew special attention to the physical and psychological safety they had felt at Kruton. They were also positive to the staff being available at almost all the time.

Somaya focuses on the girls' perspective on these protective housings and how they are perceived as institutions. According to Somaya these forms of housing are a very foreign environment to the target group, since they most often come from a collectivistic environment characterized by close family ties. The girls also feel alienated, as the help offered is given by social workers, representatives of the authorities.

In 2004 Gryning Vård received specific financial resources by the government to implement measures in the fight against HRV. Gryning, owned by the councils in the county of Västra Götaland, was assigned the responsibility of establishing protected housing with a maximum of 10 apartments with one support person connected to each of the apartments. The assignment also included the establishment of a center of competence available for the social services in the whole region, providing them with support and counseling.

Gryning Vård was also subject to a study in 2005 (Olofsson 2005). One of the main conclusions in this study draws special attention to the psycho-social problems common to the girls staying at Gryning Vård. Due to the girls' specific problems and needs, the project was further developed as to include measures of psycho-social treatment as well.

Somaya draws attention to the limitations this form of protected housing services presents, in that it is offered in just one region and to a very high cost for the councils.

Plans of action

During the period of 2007-2010 the government has established two plans of actions:

“Action plan to combat men’s violence against women, honor related violence and oppression and violence in same sex relationships” (skr.2007/08:39) and *“Action plan to prevent young people from being forced into marriage”* (skr.2009/10:229).

The first action plan presented in 2007 contains 56 measures and entails 6 intervention areas that are important:

- Increased protection and support to the target group
- Greater emphasis on preventive work
- Higher standards and greater efficiency in the judicial system
- Better measures targeting violent offenders
- Increased cooperation and coordination between different authorities
- Enhanced knowledge and competence

Measure 54 was a task for the National Board for Youth Affairs to complete a survey on arranged marriages by force and a review of the authorities' knowledge on the matter. They were also given the task of suggesting preventive measures. This resulted in the report “Forced into Marriage”. This report became the foundation needed for the government to move forward with their measures

to combat forced marriages. Based on this report a specific investigation on the legislation to increase the protection against forced marriages and child marriages was appointed and resulted in the second action plan of action in 2009.

The second action plan from 2009 contains 15 measures entailing several topics such as creating guidelines, gathering more knowledge on the subject of forced marriages and method developments. Measure nr 2 addresses one of the remarks on the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå). They concluded that the methods of development established at the local level never reaches the national level. This measure encloses the dissemination of a local preventive project – *“It’s about love/ Love is free – a project on the rights of children and young people on a national level – to a national level.*

According to Somaya none of the action plans acknowledges the fact that the problems related to HRV are ageless and can affect anyone. Mothers can be subjected to HRV from their own grown up children, or parents can oppress their grown up children.

National law

There is no national law against forced marriage or honour related violence in Sweden. This makes it difficult to convict perpetrators for the “lighter” offences that also entail HRV, i.e. control of cell phones, isolation, starting rumors, forcing someone to take some pills that will result in them ending their life, etc. All of these “lighter” offenses can have devastating consequences. It is hard to convict anyone for the minor but large at scale offences with the existing laws. Most of these offences are tried under the harassments and threats laws, but these are offences that are very hard to prove, and most of the time it is word against word.

According to SOMAYA a specific law against HRV would make it easier to convict the perpetrators and also easier for the youngsters to press charges. This law would have a wider span that would also convict the minor offences. A law like this would also entail the harassment that homosexuals undergo.

One could argue that the existing laws of women’s integrity law, the social services law and the laws concerning children’s rights are sufficient enough to convict someone of HRV. However, as experiences have shown with the laws against child marriages and forced marriages is that these laws can be bypassed, and both of these strongly prohibited offences still occur. Hence, the new upcoming law against forced marriages, child marriages and certification marriages.

Cooperation with the public sector

SOMAYA focuses on how the cooperation with the public sector varies depending on the communes. With some communes the cooperation works very well, but with others not so well, or is completely non-existing. If neglect is seen in the commune’s responsibilities, SOMAYA reports it to the National Board of Health and Welfare. The best solution for the women and the young girls is when

all instances can work together and have an open dialogue, with discretion and regard to their welfare and best interest. The commune's main priority is the acute protection of the help-seeker, but the long-term support is lacking and difficult to include.

SOMAYA are experts in the field of HRV and are often asked about their opinions at governmental level when it comes to surveying the needs of the help-seekers. SOMAYA also participates on different governmental organizations' reference groups, such as the National Board of Youth Affairs and Stockholm's County Administrative Board, and is also involved in different investigations and surveys done by the government. However, the NGOs are considered to be too close to the help seekers, and that can be reason enough to exclude them from processes such as legislation.

Surveys

As mentioned earlier in the section on political measures and action plans, one of the main measures in the action plan from 2007 was the task assigned to the National Board for Youth Affairs to complete a survey on arranged marriages by force and review the authorities' knowledge on the matter. This resulted in the report *"Forced into marriage"*. This report led the government to fund a cohesive research background on forced marriages and child marriages. Two distinct studies were made.

The first one was done by the National Health and Welfare Board in 2007, *"Freedom and responsibility – about high school students expressed freedom to have control over their own lives"*. They did a national survey on 5200 second year high school students. The survey showed the youngsters worry about not being able to choose freely who to marry. 5,6% of the girls and 4% of the boys were limited in choosing their future spouse. The survey concludes that the youngsters worry about not being able to choose freely is a feasible indication to measure the extent of HRV and oppression.

The second study is the previously mentioned *"Forced into marriage"* from 2008. It is a survey on arranged marriages against a person's will and an overhaul of affected authorities' knowledge and competence on the subject. The first part of the study is based on a survey sent out to 6000 persons between the ages of 16 and 25. Of the responders 5% said they believed their parents, religion or culture are limiting them in their choice of spouse. That is equivalent to 70 000 youngsters in that age range. Among these 1% (equivalent to 8 500 youngsters) replied that they are worried about not being able to freely choose their spouse.

These studies have pointed out the lack of methods, routines and guidelines to working preventively on the matter. A reason for that might be that the issue had not previously been addressed in this way in Sweden.

In 2010 the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) presented an evaluation on the work done after the government's first action plan. The report tells about the operational development that has occurred because of the action

plan. However most of these method developments have occurred on a local level and not always reached a national level. The study also points out that this lack of coordination from a local level to a national level and the lack of proper evaluation of methods lead to a lack of knowledge about efficient methods.

Somaya is critical about the fact that there have not been any evaluations on the methods being used or the projects aimed against HRV.

Issues to be addressed

SOMAYA views the legislation and the difficulty of convicting someone of HRV as major challenges in the work against HRV. Very few cases get to court and even fewer are convicted. One argument against legislating against HRV is that it will create segregation, and that it will be a “black and white” law that will point out specific groups in society. SOMAYA’s response to this argument is that these types of offences can be found in several sub-cultures in society. The same structure can be found within gangs, the Romani community, sects, etc. The same type of victimization can occur to homosexual youngsters – being isolated, shunned, beaten, etc. A law that can grasp all of these areas would be of the most penetrative power.

Another problem is the fact that NGOs have to survive on project grants with strict time limitations.

HRV is still a very difficult subject to talk about, and it easily turns into a question about “us” and “them”.

SOMAYA focuses on the lack of long-sightedness in all instances that offer youngsters help. The authorities think that the fact that the youngsters are taken out of abusive homes, placed in their own apartments and left to start their new lives alone is enough. The reality is that most of these youngsters have never been alone in their lives, and that fending for themselves is not an option. Many of them feel lonely and have no social network and end up going back to their families. In order to change this system in a more long-sighted way SOMAYA thinks that one should work with the whole system. There is very little information about what happens with the family once the youngster leaves in such an abrupt way. More knowledge on how to work with the whole family is needed. That is the only way one can try to prevent the same thing from reoccurring again or preventing future threats.

Other issues SOMAYA feels should be addressed:

- Development of preventive work
- Evaluations of methods
- Work with the rebuild-up phase
- Education and information to new citizens

Denmark

History

Forced marriage was given special attention in 2002 due to important changes in the Danish immigration law. These changes concerned new rules for residence permit on the basis of family reunification. One of these rules extended to seven years (previously three years) the number of years a foreign person had to be married to a Danish citizen in order to be given the residence permit in Denmark. The much controversial 24-years-old-rule not only raised the age of marriage from 18 to 24, but also introduced a number of demands for the person living in Denmark, such as financial autonomy and connection ties to Denmark. This rule was also intended to assure that the marriages had taken place without any kind of force.

More on the consequences of these legislative changes in the section “**National legislation**”.

Plans of action – the role of the NGOs

The Danish government sees a specific connection between forced marriages and family reunification – hence the new demands for acquiring residence permit. Forced marriage is seen as a “problem area” that prevents a successful integration in the Danish society. The Danish government has also defined FGM and “corrective trips” to the countries of origin, where minority parents leave their children behind as a kind of punishment, as other problem areas. The action plan 2003-2005 intended to support initiatives in the fight against family related violence, such as forced marriages, corrective trips and FGM.

The action plan 2003-2005 defined the following working areas:

- Information and education material to those professionals in contact with the youngsters concerned
- Initiatives that emphasize dialogue and cooperation: conferences, establishment of networks, a more qualified mediation between parents and their children
- Personal and individual counseling to young people
- Strengthening the local authorities’ effort: elaboration of manuals and establishment of teams of experts
- Follow-up programs: networks and support to youngsters that have broken contact with their families
- Housing – placements at shelters
- Investigation and documentation

LOKK has played a central role in the Danish policy on honour related issues. LOKK’s counseling services for ethnic minority youths, ethnic minority parents and professionals is financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration (MSI).

LOKK's growing number of contacts on honour related conflicts, which was over 1000 in 2011, is one of the main reasons why the Danish government recently launched a new strategy in the fight against HRV (*National strategi mod æresrelaterede konflikter*). This new action plan focuses on six central areas:

1. **Public agencies** – establishment of a central counseling unit, revision of the law on social services (focus on early intervention and remaining siblings in the family), contingency plans for youngsters over the age of 18, guidelines for frontline professionals.
2. **Competence building for professionals and public agents.**
3. **“Corrective trips”** – informative material on the topic both to parents and professionals, specific support to children and youngsters that have returned from these trips, declaration form to youngsters and available hotline, financial means to adults for home transportation.
4. **Support to youngsters** – protected housing for young men, young people under 18 and placement in neighboring countries, special effort in women's shelters, protected name and address in the CPR-register, follow-up and empowerment, counselors at primary schools.
5. **Work on prevention, information and changing attitudes** – with focus on counseling, support and dialogue. Establishment of dialogue corps consisting of youngsters and parents.
6. **Research** – establishment of a network as to provide a channel of information and knowledge between researchers and practitioners. Focus on research projects to extend knowledge about the extent of HRV and how to implement existing research.

National legislation

A basis for prohibition of forced marriage is found in several places in the Danish legal framework including the marriage law, immigration law and the criminal law. The national legislative steps are based on regulations in immigration law. Danish legislation allows for the possibility to protect an individual against forced marriage by denying permission to family reunification based on marriage if it is assessed that one or both of the parties have entered the marriage under force. However, the legal focus here is only on whether one of the parties can be granted residence, and therefore forced marriages in these cases are only discovered when and if one of the parties actually applies for residence in Denmark.

There is no Danish legislation which uses the term “forced marriage”. However Danish criminal law offers possibilities for legal action in cases of forced marriage, cf. §260 in the criminal law. This article offers legal grounds for imprisonment for up to 2 years for exercising illegal force. This can for example entail the use of violence or threats in order to force a person to do something against his/her will. If a person is forced to enter marriage against her/his will the perpetrator can be sentenced to 4 years in jail.

In the case of family reunification based on marriage, Danish immigration law amongst other things requires that both parties are over 24 years of age, cf. §9 section 1. The purpose of this article is to prevent forced marriage. According to

the ministry this age limit was implemented in order to enable youths to oppose an unwanted marriage. According to the law, family reunification requires consent from both parties. This rule is supposed to prevent forced marriage regardless of the age of the involved parties. Furthermore marriage between cousins is automatically regarded as forced marriage and therefore always rejected.

§ 9 section 7 requires that a person in order to obtain a residence permit must have ties to Denmark. A residence permit can only be granted if the spouses' combined ties to Denmark are significantly larger than the spouses' ties to another country.

MSI has developed a guide on requirements by Danish law for family reunification by marriage, as a supplement to the mapping of the efforts against forced marriage. The guidelines state that if both parties express that the marriage was entered into with their consent, a rejection by the authorities cannot be made based on suspicion of forced marriage. According to LOKK, it is relevant to discuss whether this confirmation from both parties is a sufficient guarantee that no one is forced into marriage. If a person is forced into marriage, it is likely that the person is equally forced to guarantee that (s)he is not forced. A genuine assurance that the marriage is not forced does not exist.

What have the new regulations meant for patterns in partner selection by ethnic minorities in Denmark?

The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI) has investigated on the consequences of Danish law (especially the 24-year-old-requirement, the attachment requirement and the regulation of assumption of forced marriage) for ethnic minority youths in Denmark. The focus of the survey is young people aged 15-30 years originating from Turkey, Former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Somalia, Iran, Sri Lanka, Morocco and Afghanistan. In 2002 the aforementioned amendments were effectuated in an attempt to limit family reunifications and forced marriage. The age of the youths getting married had risen significantly after 2002 according to the report. This increase in age is associated with a decrease in the proportion of youths who have been reunified with a spouse from a non-Western country.

After 2002 there has been an increase in emigration rates among young couples with ethnic minority background, with a maximum age of 25. The emigration goes primarily to Sweden (SFI 2009:17).

The amendment regarding family reunification has provoked new patterns in ways of living as a married couple, for example as commuting marriage where one partner lives in Denmark and the other lives in the country of origin, or as a religious non-registered marriage. A pure religious marriage has no legal validity in Denmark and therefore is not recognized by the Danish marriage law.

Efficient registration is an important part of the effort against forced marriage. However forced marriage is a difficult phenomenon to define and no systematical registration exists in Denmark. However the SFI report shows a clear tendency:

public officials are mostly contacted by women born and raised in Denmark who fear forced marriage in their country of origin.

It is demanded in Danish legislation that marriage requires both partners' free and unconditional consent. The problem arises when it has to be established whether consent has been given or not. Danish legislation is very clear – marriage is either done voluntarily or under force. A grey zone exists regarding the amount of force from external parties and it is assessed in each case whether the partners have consented to marriage or not. It can be problematic to apply the narrow wording of the legislation to existing cases. An arranged marriage must be understood as taking place when a young man or woman, through her or his upbringing, is confronted with the immediate or distant family's expectations or standards. In this context the question at hand becomes much more complex than the two terms *consent* and *force*. Marriage can, for many young women, be related to the family's control of women's sexuality. The young women are expected to be virgins when entering marriage. Before marriage they are exposed to a high degree of control when it comes to dating boys or even having male friends. Seen in this light, forced marriage is not only a single violation, but a series of violations that can have lifelong consequences for the person in question. From the female perspective this shows the relationship between women's free choice as to whom and whether she wishes to marry and her right to control her own sexuality. It is clear that this notion of forced marriage creates quite a different approach to the interpretation of *consent*, as it is treated in the Danish immigration law.

How are Danish initiatives against HRV and forced marriage organized?

Denmark has tried to fight honour related conflict mainly through legislation – primarily against forced marriage (see section *Legislation*). The Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration (MSI) is the governmental agency in charge of the work against forced marriage. MSI's mapping of the efforts made to prevent forced marriage and similar oppression highlights that it is typically women who are subjected to the family's honour code and therefore also women who are subjected to the consequences of breaking the code. Gender equality is therefore a key element in the MSI's efforts to fight honour related conflict.

The statement of the MSI on forced marriage and similar oppression from February 2011 describes the measures which are being taken to fight honour related conflict as a three-part process consisting of prevention, assistance to the help-seekers and training of professionals (Folketingstidende 01/02/2011: p.1). In addition to this comes the regulatory system, as described in the section *Legislation*.

The MSI's preventive approach on how to address these issues consists of three main focus areas:

- Direct information to young people about their rights and raising awareness of opportunities for help and advice.
- Upgrading professionals, so that they are well equipped to provide the right guidance and help.

- Dialogue and attitude engineering.

Danish municipalities are, according to § 10 in the Law on Social Services, obliged to provide guidance to young people who find themselves in conflict with honour related issues. The municipalities must be able to refer to other relevant offers as well, such as mediation amongst other measures. The MSI refers to a range of counseling services for ethnic minority youths, including LOKK, Immigrant Service's counseling service, the Children's Council theme of reeducation abroad and the project "nymødom.dk" (which freely translated to English means "newhymen.dk"). Education and dialogue also play a role in the effort to inform young people about their rights, as does the dissemination of knowledge of possibilities for help. By launching initiatives in the country's primary schools, MSI seeks to reach out with information to young people who do not seek it. The ministry also considers dialogue, reflection and attitude change an important part of the project for the country's schools. Examples of efforts in primary schools are a school service in "Børns Vilkår" (NGO for the welfare of children) and a dialogue corps composed of young men and women with ethnic minority backgrounds. The dialogue corps uses the members' own experiences and engages in dialogue with young people about honour and gender equality. The corps seeks, among other things, to raise awareness among youths about the relationship they have with their families, make them aware that they have a choice and that they can say no to demands made by their families. The latest initiative is the campaign "Your life, Your choice" with the objective to reduce the level of honour related conflict and to support and enable a change of attitude among parents and adolescents over time.

In MSI's policies it is acute care to the target group, which is the dominant focus in the efforts taken to fight honour related conflict. References are made to the initiatives of municipalities, special care homes, police action, the Foreign Ministry and the Danish embassies. According to § 81 and 82 in the Law of Social Services, the municipalities are obliged to provide assistance to persons with social problems. § 109 provides temporary accommodation to women who have been subjected to violence, threats of violence or a similar crisis in relation to the family.

As part of the effort to prevent honour related violence and forced marriage, MSI launched a series of actions aimed at professionals, who in their daily work interact with young people that may be exposed to honour related conflict. These measures are taken to ensure that the various authorities and institutions can identify honour related issues and thus take appropriate action. The offers target teachers, educators, local social workers, health workers, the police and employees working in the field of crime prevention.

In 2007 the Danish National Police launched a strategy for police action against honour related crimes. The purpose of the strategy has been to establish an overall framework for police action. According to the National Police's strategy there has not been made a separate recording or reporting of matters relating to *"offenses, which relate to cultural or religious norms and codes of honour"* (National Police: 2007). Based on the reporting the National Police receives, NEC (National Police Investigation Centre) will in some cases be included. The

National Police's strategy highlights that it can be difficult to decipher the signals that indicate that a conflict can lead to a crime based on religious or cultural codes of honour. As a result of this the National Police is not unambiguous in their definition of the cases to be covered by the strategy. The National Police strategy aims, among other things, to monitor incoming cases and report back to NEC, which processes the police data and supplements with information from other sources. This may be LOKK, which for example can locate a missing woman, whom they fear has travelled for reeducation abroad or is abroad and in danger of a forced marriage. Each police district is required to develop a local action plan for honour related crimes. As part of the national strategy the creation of a national ad-file number has been developed. This has been done to ensure a timely and thorough compilation and analysis of all relevant cases. Moreover, the ad-file number makes it possible for the police to register a concrete suspicion of a person who could be in danger. In each police district in Denmark there is a contact person, who deals with honour related crimes. Likewise the police must ensure that they have good contacts in relevant organizations, such as LOKK in order to get necessary information passed on. The strategy states that there should be a social response in relation to the target group. This applies both to cases where there has been an honour related crime, as well as in cases where there are merely indications that such a crime might occur. Implementation of the necessary social measures will greatly influence the target group's motivation to go to the police and other agencies.

Surveys

In 2009 LOKK and the National Board on Social Services conducted a joint survey of contingency plans for youths affected by HRV. The survey concludes that just a fifth of the municipalities have a specific contingency plan. 90% of the municipalities do not have information material on HRV available to citizens. The survey also highlights the importance of this kind of information material. The survey furthermore shows that 44% of the municipalities have a formalized cooperation with external partners in specific cases of HRV. 47% of these municipalities cooperate with LOKK.

The qualitative part consisting of 6 case studies shows that help-seekers have received qualified help in the institutions where they have sought help. These institutions are women shelters, police and embassies. The case studies also show examples of professionals that do not react to clear indications of violence. Furthermore the survey shows that the majority of the help-seekers did not know where to find help. This means that coincidences often lead to the help-seekers receiving the needed help.

The survey shows that the existing structure of assistance consisting of women shelters, police, public officials, counseling services, emergency rooms, courts and embassies, are prepared to help the target group. However, there are examples of individuals receiving inadequate help. One example demonstrates this very well: when a family with honour related issues moves from one municipality to another, the plan of action made by the municipality of origin is not passed on to the new municipality. There are also examples of public officials not taking experts on HRV seriously or even neglecting to react to clear signs of violence. Further examples show the importance of speaking with the help-

seeker in private, without any family members present, in order to prevent her/him from omitting important information in fear of reprisals from the family. It is consistent throughout the cases that the help-seekers are in doubt on where to seek help and support. This indicates the need for improved information to youths in danger of becoming exposed to HRV. It also underlines the importance of information to professionals working with youths about warning signs which could indicate that a youth is subjected to an honour related conflict.

LOKK underlines the lack of statistics and overview on the number of persons subjected to HRV. There are many statistics with an ethnic perspective, i.e. in connection with women residing in shelters. However these statistics do not distinguish partner violence from honour related violence. Nothing can therefore be concluded about the total number of females subjected to HRV. In the police's register only cases where a formal complaint has been made are registered. The register does not give the full picture, as an unknown number of incidences are not reported. LOKK believes it is important to uncover how many incidences of HRV actually occur in order to be able to strengthen the efforts via information and prevention.

Cooperation with the public sector

LOKK enjoys a good cooperation with the different municipalities. Most professionals using LOKK's services are actually employed by municipalities and many of LOKK's presentations are given to municipal staff.

LOKK's counseling team for honour related conflicts keeps statistics of the contacts with various public agencies concerning honour related conflict. In the period January – September 2011 there were 488 contacts: 22,7% came from municipalities, 4,5% from the police, 8,8% from schools and the rest from youths, women shelters, etc. In 2011 a total of 33 presentations were held to different groups of professionals, e.g. teachers, social workers, municipality staff, etc.

Like mentioned earlier, LOKK plays a central role in the Danish policy on honour related issues. LOKK's counseling services are financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration (MSI), and 47% of the municipalities in Denmark cooperate with LOKK. This serves to show LOKK's central position in the Danish system in the fight against honour related violence.

What does LOKK see as main issues to be addressed?

LOKK identifies several challenges in the fight against HRV. One of them is that HRV and forced marriage are not problems that are easily solved or expected to be solved in the near future. The fact is that these issues are rooted in age old traditions which are very much alive and kicking today. It is LOKK's experience that youths in Denmark who grow up with these traditions are deeply affected by them, and as result maintain the traditions in their own families, even though they have lived in Denmark their entire lives. A change of attitude is therefore needed not only in the old generation, but also in the new and future generations to come. This is a long process.

The lack of knowledge on HRV and forced marriage amongst professionals and in society as a whole poses another challenge. This leads to stereotyping, condoning and accepting HRV by considering it part of a group's culture and/or religion. This is furthermore complicated by the fact that this kind of violence is still a taboo subject, as it is related to certain groups in society. Simultaneously there is a rather hostile debate on immigrants in general and muslims in particular in the Danish society.

Issues LOKK feels need to be addressed:

- Early identification and intervention. It is decisive that frontline professionals are trained to identify situations where HRV is present and not just regarded as "regular" violence. It is also important that professionals are trained to react and intervene quickly in order to prevent the conflict from escalating. In order to intervene it is LOKK's opinion that honour should not be seen as something the youth is entrapped by. LOKK's empowerment oriented approach is consistent with this.
- Lack of evaluation and documentation. The Danish framework of honour related issues still lacks evaluations and documentation on the different types of initiatives that have been developed.
- Effort towards young men. Overall the Danish efforts against HRV are directed towards women, just as the government's plan of action primarily highlights young women as being subjected to honour related conflicts. LOKK's experience is that increasingly more men are contacting LOKK's counseling services with the same problems. LOKK therefore emphasizes the importance of increasing the number of initiatives towards males subjected to honour related conflicts. Research on men's role in honour related conflicts might ensure more targeted help to this group.
- LGBT. The number of homosexual youths that are contacting LOKK's counseling service is increasing. The issue of homosexuals subjected to honour related conflicts is not contemplated in Denmark, and this should therefore be addressed in the future.
- Increased cooperation between NGOs. It is LOKK's opinion that a corporation between Danish NGOs would strengthen the overall effort to fight HRV. A joint description on how professionals should handle these issues would e.g. draw on a wide variation of experiences on the field. This would offer a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon and a more targeted effort to combat this type of violence nationwide.
- Post-intervention follow up. LOKK suggests that after a two year period a follow up should be established on cases where conflict mediation has been applied. This to evaluate the effect of the mediation performed by LOKK.
- Research/statistics. In Denmark there is no general overview on how many women and/or men who have been subjected to HRV. It would be beneficial to uncover how many incidences of HRV actually occur in order to be able to strengthen the efforts via information and prevention. Concrete, well documented knowledge will help target the efforts towards the youths and their families.

Finland

Organization of the work

Due to the novelty of the phenomenon in the Finnish society, it is at this time difficult to present a well established organization of the work against HRV, but we can start by mapping the first steps that have been taken so far as to address these issues.

The Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Culture (with the Finnish Board of Education), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and NGOs, form the committee responsible for the action plan titled *Safe life for everyone – a programme for internal security*.

In Finland it is generally understood that tackling the problems related to honour related violence and forced marriages require cross-sectoral collaboration between public and private actors. In the newly established national plan against domestic violence, in which HRV also is mentioned, attention is particularly drawn to the training of key authorities for the recognition of HRV and for its prevention. MONIKA as well as other NGOs are involved in the trainings by providing insight from the grassroots level about the recognition of persons subjected to HRV and methods of assisting them. The key authorities to be trained are: the police, youth workers, social and health workers, teachers, student welfare groups, the staff of the Centers for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (especially those working with immigrants, integration programmes and plans), the staff of the Employment and Economic Development offices, church workers, persons offering language training, prosecutors and judges.

MONIKA, as well as other actors dealing with HRV and forced marriages in Finland, emphasizes the importance of preventive measures. They believe preventive measures carried out within the ethnic communities have a wider possibility for changing attitudes, beliefs and views as a whole. For this purpose the Integration Act, which came into force in September 2011 plays a key role in the work to be carried out by the organizations in cooperation with the authorities.

Legislation

No specific legislation has been issued concerning specifically HRV, female genital mutilation and forced marriages in Finland, though they are considered illegal acts of violence. Legislators and the judicial system consider that the current criminal laws provide sufficient means to punish the perpetrators.

The Finnish Constitution's §7 condemns all acts of violence as a violation of human rights and as such punishable within the Finnish Criminal Code. It declares that *everyone has a right to life and personal freedom, physical integrity and safety*. Based on the Constitution, the laws covering main questions relevant to cases of HRV are:

- Criminal Code
- Marriage Act
- Criminal Investigations Act
- Police Law
- Aliens Act
- Child Welfare Act (enables the authorities to hear the child without the presence of the parents or their permission, and the concealment of the whereabouts of the minor, if estimated imperative for the protection of her/his safety.
- Integration Act
- Population Information Act: establishes in §12 how to correct and change the personal identification number, possible under the law in three scenarios: 1) it is absolutely imperative to protect the individual from a situation in which her/his health or safety has indubitably been permanently threatened, 2) somebody has repeatedly misused the personal identity number causing financial harm to the real holder of the number, 3) to confirm the gender of a transsexual individual.

The Finnish law considers clear evidence of a planned criminal act an aggravating factor towards the proportionality of the punishment. Acts of HRV mostly meet this criterion, though it is up to each court of law to rule on its applicability.

According to MONIKA the application of the available legislation to cases of HRV/forced marriages is sometimes complicated, as HRV is not always blatantly obvious to the police, and the officers may not be able to relate the situation (e.g. a report on domestic disturbance) to HRV unless they have been especially trained for it. The unavailability of a common language between the officers and especially the female members of an immigrant family also complicate further the recognition of HRV. Education material for professionals is under elaboration by Monika and other members of public sectors.

It is the understanding of MONIKA that the Criminal Code, the Police Law, the Child Welfare Act in particular have been applied to different cases of HRV/forced marriages. As for the Population Information Act, no official decisions have been filed yet for changing the personal identification number.

MONIKA emphasizes the importance of preventive measures in avoiding the crimes. Legislative measures that can only take place after the crime has been committed can at best help the victim and the perpetrator to overcome HRV, but preventive measures carried out within the ethnic communities have a wider possibility for changing attitudes, beliefs and views of the community as a whole.

National plan

The Finnish government established a committee to work on a national plan entitled *Safe life for everyone – a programme for internal security*, in which HRV is also mentioned in the section for training and development of knowhow:

Improve the capacity to identify the characteristics of honour related violence as well as to channel the victims to the appropriate assistance by training key authorities. The role of the school is central to detect early signs in order to make a timely intervention. Between the different actors co-operation and exchange of information must be secured in the prevention of the phenomenon.

Based on the recommendations of the programme, a workgroup drafted a plan in 2011 for the training of authorities for the recognition of honour related violence and for its prevention, which started in 2011 and will continue on with updates every three years.

MONIKA and other NGOs were invited to participate in the creation of the national plan and will be involved in the trainings by providing insights from the grassroots' level about the recognition of the target group and methods of assisting them.

Surveys

No wide studies or surveys have been carried out in Finland about the work carried out against HRV/forced marriages. The reason is the relative novelty of the phenomenon in the Finnish society.

Most material on the subject discusses the types of HRV and its consequences to the individual, or the cultural or traditional explanations behind it. At best the publications include a list of actors working with HRV without detailing the approach they take. The produced material includes investigate work by NGOs and researchers as well as well as theses from students viewing HRV/forced marriages from legal, police and social perspectives.

According to MONIKA there is a lack of statistical data. There are a few studies that have tried to quantify the phenomenon, but the fact that the police do not register the motive of a suspected crime (unless it is suspected to have racist motives) further complicates data collection. It is estimated by MONIKA that HRV affects hundreds of girls and women in Finland, but as many cases of HRV are not reported or filed under distinct types of violence, it is difficult to grasp the magnitude of the phenomenon. Verifiable data would help NGOs to quantify the existing need for their work with the help-seekers and also to nationally destine financial resources to preventive programmes.

Cooperation with the public sector

According to MONIKA, trying to get individual civil servants to comprehend the complexities of HRV/forced marriage is a constant challenge. The civil servants often choose to act once an offence has been committed, even if the warning signals have been presented beforehand.

Even though minors are not MONIKA's target group, they are often approached by school counselors, teachers and child protection agents. MONIKA tries to provide them with solutions through empowerment and support meetings.

Working at the local level presents MONIKA with a series of difficulties. One of these is that the municipalities do not have agreements on how to deal with help-seekers that need to be placed in a different municipality from that of their origin. There are no existing protocols on who takes the financial responsibility of the case, which makes it very difficult to offer a safe solution to the help-seeker subjected to HRV/forced marriage.

The same also applies to the lack of an existing network of safe houses, where the help-seeker could be placed anonymously anywhere in the country. MONIKA leads a project which is starting to build up such a network together with local authorities and safe houses around the country. This work requires removing the administrative barriers and enforcing the cooperation between different actors, which makes it a challenging task to undertake.

The Finnish NGOs that are specialized in working with women and girls, particularly those assisting migrant women, have been increasing their cooperation with the public sector (both nationally and locally) as the issue of HRV/forced marriage has become more prevalent. This can be contributed to the fact that NGOs have expertise in the area of HRV/forced marriage which the public administration lacks.

Issues to be addressed

MONIKA emphasizes on the complexity of HRV. Despite the public discourse on the issue, HRV does not take place only within ethnic minority communities – it can equally be present in multicultural families, even when one of the spouses is Finnish.

The tendency of the public administration to take action once an act of violence has already occurred places women and children under severe threat. Appearance of HRV/forced marriage is often prevailed by continued pressures, threats, limitations to personal freedom, etc. which make the situation often very volatile and needs to be taken seriously from the first moment of suspicion.

The number of HRV/forced marriages may not appear to be statistically high in Finland, but each case requires a large time and resource allocation on behalf of each party involved. This must also be taken into consideration when destining funding to HRV-work.

Conclusive analysis

General ideas

In this chapter we focus on those general aspects that characterize the Nordic initiatives in the fight against HRV and forced marriage. Even though each country presents specific political actions to address national problems and challenges, we see that there are some fundamental ideas that form the basis of the Nordic public sectors' approaches to HRV and forced marriages:

- **All initiatives are to be grounded in the public system.** It is the general idea that public agencies are responsible for the work against HRV and for the individuals subjected to this kind of violence.
- **Strengthened competence and knowledge.** All the approaches highlight the importance of competence building and education programs for public officials and other professionals.
- **Coordinated effort and cooperation** – a fundamental requisite in the fight against HRV and forced marriages. Cooperation and coordination form the basic framework in the Nordic action plans against HRV.
- **A multi-actor approach.** In order to assist the target group in the best possible way, several public agencies are needed. The complex situation the help-seekers find themselves in requires the coordinated involvement of different public services.
- **Strengthened preventive measures.** The different initiatives focus on the importance of preventive work in the fight against HRV and forced marriages. Arenas like schools and immigrant organizations and networks are given priority in this work.

From the NGOs' own perspective

In this conclusive chapter we also highlight those issues which we as NGOs feel need further and more specific work and development. As practitioners working in the field and with direct contact with our target groups, we have acquired first-hand information on which initiatives and actions should be developed and which should be changed. Our daily contact with persons subjected to HRV continuously gives us unique information from the help-seekers themselves, who ultimately are our key informants.

Is a general framework on HRV needed?

As NGOs working directly with persons subjected to HRV we strongly underline the importance of **a common definition of HRV** in order to address this kind of violence.

According to LOKK a joint conceptualization on HRV and forced marriage is fundamental when it comes to raising awareness, prevention and acute help to persons being exposed to this type of violence. With a common understanding on what this type of violence is, frontline workers will be better equipped to detect signs of a youth being subjected to HRV. Furthermore, a common framework will strengthen the cooperation between different NGOs and the public sector.

LOKK also argues that policy responses to a general framework will be more effective when HRV is understood within its social, cultural and political context. It is also important that this context is not perceived as foreign, but rather as a part of the new social framework that now characterizes the Danish society. Hence LOKK suggests that HRV needs to be understood not as a “cultural” or “religious” problem within a particular immigrant community, but as a specific manifestation of a larger problem that includes both human rights and violence against women. This is why LOKK always focuses on the context in which the conflict evolves. By doing this LOKK ensures the situation is understood from the perspective of the youth.

According to SOMAYA there is not a common definition for the term of HRV in Sweden. Many of the public instances took it upon themselves to establish a definition, and that led to every administrative authority having their own definition. However many of them refer to the UN’s definition and there is not a big difference between the instances’ explanations.

SOMAYA underlines the importance of a central political frame since that is what solutions are conformed upon. The lack of a clear political framework will only allow the media and the public to freely develop their own theories which in turn can create prejudice, discrimination and/or misinterpretations. SOMAYA underlines the importance of looking at HRV from an intersectional perspective where gender, class, ethnicity, religion, socio-economical standards are included.

There is no single definition on HRV and forced marriages in Finland. In Finland, like in other Nordic countries, HRV has been connected to immigrant groups that originate from Muslim countries. In the Finnish media HRV is seen as a foreign phenomenon that did not exist before the arrival of certain immigrant groups. According to MONIKA, this influences greatly the general opinion, making it a problem of “the others” rather than of the Finnish society as a whole.

A rising number of public and private actors perceive HRV no different from other types of violence. And as stated in a publication by the Finnish Ministry of Interior “*violence is always a violation of human rights*”. MONIKA also advocates this interpretation and thus agrees with LOKK on the importance of understanding HRV as a manifestation of violation of human rights and violence against women.

MONIKA understands that not having a shared and clear definition of HRV complicates the recognition of the problem by public agencies, which cannot recognize the phenomenon without a clear understanding of its manifestations and complexities. That is why the capacity building tasks MONIKA and other NGOs carry out are so important.

The complexity of HRV

In order to work efficiently in the field of HRV it is important to acknowledge the complexity of this kind of violence, which sets it apart from other types of domestic violence. As described previously in this analysis the concept of collective honour strongly defines HRV. The implications and consequences of HRV require specific working methods. It also requires specific political actions which should be set apart from actions related to domestic violence in general. SEIF is one of the NGOs that strongly speaks for the elaboration of **specific action plans against HRV**, and is reluctant to the incorporation of actions against HRV in general action plans against domestic violence. In SEIF's view cases of HRV will not be dealt with the necessary insight and competence.

Finland has chosen to incorporate measures against HRV in their action plan against domestic violence, *Safe life for everyone – a program for internal security*. It remains to be seen if this approach manages to address HRV in an efficient manner. MONIKA will through their work with their help-seekers see if this approach will end up having the expected results.

NGOs' role and participation in the elaboration of political actions

NGOs have acquired **a unique competence** in the field of HRV that should not be underestimated. That is why we feel it is crucial for the NGOs to participate in the elaboration of actions and measures. Not only can they provide the authorities with their unique experience, but also communicate the feed-back directly from the help-seekers themselves.

We have seen how some countries, like Denmark, listen to what the NGOs have to say. LOKK enjoys great confidence among local and national authorities and their voice is always listened to. One example of this is how their more than 1 000 HRV related cases in 2011 made the Danish government acknowledge the urgent need for a new national strategy against HRV. On the other side, we can see how Norwegian authorities barely consulted with the Red Cross Helpline and SEIF when elaborating the latest action plan against forced marriage 2008-2011.

As more and more knowledge in the field of HRV is developed, we believe it is important to avoid trends where knowledge and competence are moved higher up in the public system, leaving NGOs with fewer resources and limited opportunities for competence development. Hence we applaud the latest Danish initiative on the establishment of a network between researchers and practitioners. A fluent channel of information and knowledge between these actors will prevent the concentration of knowledge in a bureaucratic elite and allow NGOs and practitioners to act and comment on proposals to political actions.

NGOs' coordinating role

Even though public agencies are supposed to provide help-seekers with an efficient and well coordinated assistance, this analysis shows that the NGOs

services to youngsters in crisis are still very much needed. NGOs' flexibility and their ability to act freely and quickly are two important capacities that public professionals hardly can match. Our long experience has given us knowledge on how the system works and which buttons we have to push in order to get the system to act. With an overview of the different public agencies involved in each case, we manage to coordinate these so as to give the help-seeker the help (s)he needs. Regardless of the assistance provided by the public system, we see that the NGOs' coordinating role hardly will become redundant.

The importance of early identification and intervention

All the participating NGOs agree on the importance of identifying early signs of HRV, and they all point to the poor capacity of most front-line professionals to identify and intervene quickly and effectively. Further escalation of the conflict can be avoided if one intervenes in an early stage. The NGOs agree on the importance of training front-line professionals and support measures of this sort. They all provide training and competence building as part of their services to public officials and other professionals, either as training courses or conferences and seminars.

Family work

Somaya and the Red Cross Helpline are among the NGOs that focus on the importance of incorporating **a family perspective** in the work against HRV and forced marriages. The Red Cross Helpline focuses on solutions that involve the whole family, like supportive programs to parents whose children have decided to break with them. They also demand specific measures that focus on attitude changes in the parental generation. In their opinion it is of great importance to give these parents the right "tools" on how to raise children in a Norwegian context.

Somaya feels more work should be invested in what happens to the family once the youngster breaks with them. By working with the whole family one can be assured of preventing the same conflict from reoccurring again. Hence this kind of work would have a valuable preventive effect.

Follow up and rebuilding

Common to the Nordic official initiatives against HRV and forced marriage is their lack of systematic programs of follow-up assistance to youngsters. This work is mainly done by NGOs, which put a lot of resources and time in assisting youngsters that no longer live in protective housing alternatives. NGOs have seen the rising need for this kind of assistance, a need that is not yet contemplated by the public system. We believe funding should be given to experienced NGOs to do this work, as public instances will fail to address the amount and complexity of this work with their standard "nine-to-five" working hours.

SEIF is one of the NGOs that have developed methods to work with follow-up assistance. In 2011 SEIF followed up 88 youths with a total of 1 231 inquiries (conversations and/or visits). This work is of great importance, as we are dealing with youths who find themselves in vulnerable situations and in need of continuous support and guidance for shorter or longer periods of time.

SEIF draws attention to the importance of this work in order to prevent youths from returning to the violent environment they initially escaped from. The right assistance, support and guidance will provide the youngsters with the security they need in order to re-build their lives.

Prevention through empowerment

Empowerment is an integral part of the NGOs counseling methods and ethics. Our target groups are youngsters that have not been allowed to control their lives as responsible individuals, but have been controlled by their families. Strengthening the youths enough so that they can take charge of their own lives is the common working method among the NGOs here presented.

LOKK's counseling recognizes that the youths that contact LOKK live in collectivistic family structures, yet always focuses on the youth as an individual with individual needs. The individual and her/his own wishes, the consequences of one's actions, understanding that one always has a choice and acknowledging the individual's basic rights are key elements in LOKK's counseling.

Efforts towards young men and LGBT

As mentioned earlier, most political actions highlight young women as the main target group, without having in mind that we are dealing with a heterogeneous group of help-seekers. SEIF and LOKK are two of the NGOs that are contacted by young men and homosexuals subjected to HRV. Denmark and Norway are starting to acknowledge the problems faced by young men and members of the LGBT-community, and measures towards these groups are being implemented. Norway disposes of protected housing and shelters for men. In relation to the latest strategy against honour related conflicts, the Danish government focuses strongly on the establishment of protected housing for young men.

Funding and long-term projects

All the NGOs agree that it is important that organizations that apply for funds for long-term projects get their funding over longer periods of time in order to assure continuity and predictability. It is very difficult to survive on project grants with strict time limitations. Also the inherent **long-sightedness** in the work against HRV requires long-term projects, as rooted traditions and attitudes are not changed over night.

Evaluation of methods and initiatives/actions

In order to go forward in the work against HRV and to find out which methods and approaches give the best results, it is important that the different initiatives are evaluated. All the NGOs call for the evaluation and documentation about the effects of the various types of initiatives. MONIKA in particular points to the lack of reliable statistical data and stresses how verifiable data would help the NGOs to quantify the existing need for their work with the help-seekers.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached in this analysis, we would make the following recommendations to authorities combating HRV and forced marriages:

- Effective cooperation between the NGOs and the authorities is crucial. Each other's Avoid mainstreaming measures – a problem as specific as HRV needs very specific measures. It requires special knowledge and specific political actions.
- Long term funding is paramount if help-seekers are to be properly cared for.
- Effective cooperation between the NGOs and the authorities is crucial. Each other's roles and tasks need to be clearly defined.
- A secrecy system should be a part of the package offered to persons that have escaped from HRV, and it has to be absolutely secure. The private system needs to be aware of this system and the importance of it and establish routines to handle it correctly. The public system also needs routines to handle secrecy and make their employees properly aware of the importance of this.
- A commission should be established in each country to investigate and handle domestic violence and HRV crimes.
- There is still much research needed in this field. This should be carried out in cooperation with frontline NGOs.
- In all the Nordic countries there is a need to reinforce political actions targeted at helping minors who are left abroad by their parents.
- Each country needs legislation against HRV which specifically and explicitly includes everything that is honour related, including pushing someone to committing suicide.
- Each country needs a law against forced marriage and also a law against forcing someone *to stay married*. This has to be regarded as an offence alongside forcing someone to marry against her/his will.
- The network we have successfully established through this project should be recognized by the Nordic authorities as a network of competence in the field of HRV and be consulted and used in the future when elaborating practices, action plans and policies both nationally and internationally.
- More information material and more awareness raising campaigns are needed. This problem is difficult to recognize – more people need to be made aware of it, recognize it as a problem and actively act on it.

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