



The Ministry of Education and Research

Strategy

Integration through knowledge

The Government's integration strategy for 2019-2022



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Foreword

One of the Government's main projects is to reinforce the integration effort. The aim is to increase immigrants' participation in working life and in society in general. Those who are going to start a new life in Norway must be a part of large and small communities in our society.

The most important goal of the integration strategy is that more immigrants should work, so that they are able to provide for themselves and their families. Work also brings people together and ensures their economic freedom and independence. Through their work efforts, immigrants must contribute to development and value creation, and an economically sustainable welfare society.

The Norwegian welfare society is built on trust, cohesion, minor disparities and opportunities for all. To protect this, we must make sure we have a community with room for diversity, and respect for the basic values and norms on which our society is built. We must prevent segregation and promote a community spirit. This is important for securing the sustainability of society. A restrictive and legally sound immigration policy is also necessary for successful integration.

The Government's integration strategy sets the course we need to take to reach our goal of higher labour participation among immigrants and participation in society in general. The strategy specifies the main steps and the most important measures.

We should be neither too optimistic nor too

negative about the integration situation.

Integration presents us with clear challenges, but much is also moving in the right direction. The main challenge is that the employment rate is too low, which also leads to exclusion and children living in poverty. An important explanation for this is that many people, refugees in particular, lack the skills that the Norwegian labor market demands.

At the same time, we see that education is a source of strong social mobility, especially among those born in Norway with immigrant parents. Many children and young people with an immigrant background are making an impressive social journey, and they are powerfully driven towards education. Therefore, a strong and clear investment in education, qualification and skills is a priority in our strategy. This will help many immigrants acquire the skills both they and society need, and enable them to find work and contribute to value creation and welfare.

The strategy also involves strengthening the effort to prevent segregation and exclusion. We will promote participation and togetherness. It is the small and close communities that play the greatest part in ensuring a good life. It is especially important for children and young people with an immigrant background to be able to participate in activities and on social arenas on equal terms as other children. Voluntary organisations, sports and cultural life are key areas where we will cooperate, to make everyday integration a success.



A good integration process and a well functioning society require a common understanding of Norwegian society and culture. The Government will also strengthen support for the basic values and norms on which the Norwegian society is built. Everyone living in Norway should be able to live a free life and pursue their own dreams without coercion or negative social control.

Integration is a two-way process, requiring the authorities to provide good opportunities, and individual immigrants to make their own contribution. To reinforce the integration effort demands input from many players in public services, in working life and in civil society. But, first and foremost, it requires an effort from individuals themselves. Immigrants come to our

country with different backgrounds, resources, challenges and opportunities. Some seek protection from war and conflict, others come to work or to be united with their spouse or family members.

We require everyone to make a real effort to learn Norwegian, understand Norwegian society, participate in the community and contribute. As a society, we will provide good education and qualification measures, and increase participation. Our goal is opportunities for all, regardless of background.

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Introduction

The aims of the integration strategy

The reinforced integration effort is one of the Government's six main areas of commitment. The main challenges are low employment rates among immigrants, a skills gap, and exclusion along economic, social and cultural dividing lines. The goal of the strategy is, through a coordinated and comprehensive effort, to increase labour participation and participation in society in general,. The reinforced integration effort and the strategy are important in order to ensure economic and social sustainability, opportunities for all and a welfare society with trust, cohesion and only minor disparities.

The integration policy must be seen in the context of the immigration policy. The Government is pursuing a restrictive, responsible and legally sound immigration policy. This provides the basis for good integration. The Government's objective is a sustainable immigration and integration policy.

The main challenges

The knowledge on which the integration policy is based is solid. It includes important statistical indicators that are monitored over time, , committee work in recent years, and a number of studies on selected topics. The Government's analysis of the main challenges is presented below.

Low rate of employment and skills gap.

The main challenge for the integration policy is that too many immigrants, particularly refugees and women, remain outside the labor market. In comparison with the population as a whole, immigrants have lower employment rate, less job security, more part-time work and short-term contracts, a higher unemployment rate and more people who are without work or education. Immigrants also face discrimination at work, they are often over-qualified for the positions they hold, and more stop working before retirement age. There are large variations in employment and self-sufficiency between different groups of immigrants. Among refugees in particular, a significantly lower proportion are employed and self-sufficient compared to the population as a whole. The employment rate increases with years of residence, but decreases among certain groups after some years.

One of the main reasons for low employment, especially among refugees, is that they lack the formal skills required by Norwegian employers. Around 70 per cent of the refugees who came to Norway in 2015 and 2016 had no education, or only a primary school education. As shown in both the NOU (Norwegian Official Report) 2017:2 *Integration and Trust* (Brochmann 2 Committee) and the evaluation *Introductory Programme and Norwegian Language Teaching. What works - for whom?* (FAFO report 2017:31), we are not succeeding in closing this skills gap through the current system. The variations in the results of the introductory programme between the municipalities are too great. In some

municipalities, 8 out of 10 participants enter education or work after completing the introductory programme, while in other municipalities only 3 out of 10 do so. There are large variations between the results for women and men. There are also large variations in the the qualifications that are offered, and few municipalities offer formal qualification as part of the introductory programme.

Norwegian language courses are of of varying quality, and the results of tests in Norwegian fall below national targets in many municipalities, although the target is being reached on a country-wide basis. Many live in Norway for a long time without a satisfactory command of Norwegian, and are therefore left outside the educational arena, work life and other sectors of society. Without knowledge of Norwegian, they are also vulnerable and dependent on others.

The requirements for formal skills will increase in the future as a result of the digitisation and modernisation of society. At the same time, there is a need for more skilled professionals. Projections show that we will be lacking around 70,000 skilled workers by 2030. If we succeed in giving more immigrants the skills required by Norwegian employers, they will be able to both help meet important needs in society, and become self-sufficient.

We see a significantly higher employment rate among persons born in Norway with immigrant parents compared to those who have immigrated themselves. Persons born in Norway with immigrant parents also have a higher level of education and income than their parents, and are, generally speaking, well integrated in Norwegian society.

There are challenges, however. A number of minority language children do not speak Norwegian well enough when they start school. More children attend kindergarten, but the the percentage is still lower for minority language children than for other children. This is particularly the case for very young children. Pupils who have immigrated have lower primary school marks than children born in Norway with immigrant parents and other pupils, and this applies in particular to those with only a short period of residence. Many who have immigrated at a late stage in their

schooling are poorly equipped to complete their secondary education, and they have a worryingly high drop-out rate, especially boys.

Exclusion

Statistics Norway's survey of living conditions in 2016 shows that, on the whole, immigrants have poorer living conditions and lower social and democratic participation than the population in general. Children with an immigrant background, i.e. both children who have immigrated and children born in Norway with immigrant parents, are strongly overrepresented in households with continually low income. In 2016 almost 37 per cent of children with an immigrant background belonged to households with continually low income, against just over 5 per cent of children without an immigrant background. One in four women and one in five men have complex problems to do with living conditions. Immigrants, large families with children and single parents are more vulnerable on the housing market than other groups. Living conditions, and social and democratic participation among immigrants improve with years of residence, however, and from one generation to the next.

Negative social control

There are girls and boys, women and men living in Norwegian society today who do not have the freedom to make their own choices in life. They are subjected to what we call negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Negative social control refers to different kinds of supervision, pressure, threats and force that is exercised systematically to ensure that individuals live in accordance with family or group norms. This may be a matter of serious abuse in contravention of Norwegian law and international human rights conventions. It may also involve more concealed forms of control that are not subject to the law, but which all the same constitute serious restrictions for the individual's life and freedom. Negative social control appears in communities where honour and shame play a central role. A new generation of immigrants and their descendants have come to grips with and distanced themselves from negative social control, coercion and abuse. The public authorities and civil society alike must do all they can to support their struggle, and ensure everyone is able to live a free life.



The strategy

The main goal of the strategy is: **Greater participation in working life and in society in general.**

The integration strategy has four priority areas:

1. Education and Qualification

2. Work

3. Everyday Integration

4. The Right to Live a Free Life

The social journey that children and young people with an immigrant background undertake through the education system, shows how powerful a tool education is for social mobility. Knowledge, education and proficiency in the Norwegian language form the most important basis for finding work and building a good life. Knowledge provides insight and understanding of society. Knowledge and good Norwegian language skills are prerequisites for familiarisation with Norwegian society, mastering everyday life, becoming

independent and establishing trust and a sense of belonging.

Knowledge and a highly skilled population are also crucial for successful societal change and value creation in the future, and for the sustainability of the welfare society. The investment in knowledge, skills and qualification is therefore the most important step in the Government's integration strategy. This will help immigrants and their descendants gain the skills they and society need, to enable them to find work and become independent and active participants in society.

Through early intervention, the Government seeks to ensure that children and young people with an immigrant background receive a high-quality education on a par with that of children in general, giving them good opportunities for work, independence and participation in society. Attending kindergarten and receiving good follow-up the first years of schooling are crucial. Important reforms are proposed in order to ensure that young people who have lived in Norway only a few years, receive a better primary education

and are able to complete their secondary education.

Everyone who lives in Norway must be able to speak and understand Norwegian. Language is the key to access large and small communities in Norwegian society. Lack of Norwegian proficiency leads to exclusion, vulnerability, and dependence on others. It is difficult to find work, participate in society and provide good support for your children if you cannot speak Norwegian. The Government will renew and improve Norwegian language education, with clearer requirements both for the municipalities and for each person's participation in learning. This will help many find a job and integrate in society, making them more independent and active participants and contributors in society.

In order to ensure a smoother transition to work or education for newly arrived immigrants, it is vital that there is coherence between the mapping of the individual's skills, settlement in municipalities, qualification and regional labour force needs. Main steps and actions within several priority areas in this strategy will help to strengthen this coherence.

The calculations of the Brochmann 2 Committee show that, with given conditions, it is socio-economically profitable to invest in education for refugees, as it gives considerable returns in the form of increased employment. For example, five years of schooling in order to provide secondary education to a refugee with a primary school education or lower will produce up to four times as much yield as the investment costs. In addition, there is the social impact in terms of self-sufficiency, independence and participation. Both the introductory programme and other qualification measures will to an increasing degree be designed to provide formal qualifications and education, so that immigrants who will be living in Norway can be part of our labour force and help meet important social needs in the future. Better education and increased employment are the most important tools for increasing participation, improving living conditions and reducing exclusion among immigrants.

It is important for the Government to promote the positive effects of diversity in the working life, in order to contribute to innovation, development

and growth.

Everyday integration concerns how we all contribute to integration through day-to-day contact in formal and informal meeting places in society. Immigrants with Norwegian friends have better prospects for finding work and participating in other formal and informal social arenas. The Government will place greater emphasis on measures that promote participation and togetherness and prevent segregation. This is followed up with, among other things, measures to increase children's and young people's participation in activities, through settlement policy, housing policy and cooperation with voluntary services and civil society.

Most people in Norway own their own home. There is also a high proportion of home owners among immigrants, although it is lower than in the population as a whole. The Government believes home ownership contributes to stability, belonging and good living environments, and will therefore prioritise actions that can help more people to move from rental to ownership.

The Government will strengthen the work to increase the understanding of and support for the shared basic norms and values on which Norwegian society is built. This is important for maintaining a society with trust, cohesion and minor disparities. The inclusion of compulsory parental guidance in the introductory programme and a requirement for participation in Norwegian language learning and courses in social knowledge, are some specific measures in this regard.

To ensure that everyone is able to live a free life, the Government will strengthen efforts to prevent negative social control, forced marriages and FGM. Measures are directed at changing the attitudes and practices in the communities concerned, ensuring better help and legal protection for the vulnerable, and contributing to more knowledge among support services and others.

The strategy will run from 2019 until 2022. The efforts will therefore take place over several years. The following chapters present the most important measures for achieving the objectives in each priority area, and the main goal of the strategy.

Some of the measures are included in the proposed budget for 2019. In addition, other measures will be evaluated in the strategy period and included in the reinforced integration effort. Measures will be evaluated in connection with ongoing and new processes in the Government, for example, reports to the Norwegian Parliament, budget proposals and legislative work. The various measures will be implemented at different times throughout the strategy period. Some may be implemented as early as in 2019, others can only be implemented after further studies. For some, implementation will depend on budget proposals in the coming years.

The strategy is divided into four priority areas, but these are areas that are mutually connected in an

individual's everyday life. The various priority areas are closely linked, and some of the measures in the strategy are mentioned in several places because they contribute to the achievement of goals in several priority areas.

There are close links between equality, participation in the labour market and good living conditions for the family's children. There are also close links between everyday integration, trust in public support services, safe local communities and school results. Basic Norwegian proficiency and knowledge of Norwegian society is crucial for participation in the working life and in society in general, for both children and adults.

The goals of the strategy

MAIN GOAL: GREATER PARTICIPATION IN WORKING LIFE AND SOCIETY

1. Education and Qualification

To give children and young people with an immigrant background good Norwegian language proficiency, basic competences and professional skills, through equal schooling from kindergarten to secondary education to that of children in general.

To increase immigrants' labour participation through better qualification and education

2. Work

More immigrants with a strong and stable foothold in working life

3. Everyday Integration

Increased sense of belonging and participation in society among immigrants

4. The Right to Live a Free Life

To prevent negative social control and break down barriers to the freedom of the individual

MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF GRANT FUNDING FOR BETTER ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS

This includes simplifying the grants and assessing increased use of financial incentives in the municipalities' settlement and integration work