

GOOD PRACTICES IN THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, WITH A FOCUS ON THE ROMA SOCIETY

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Bulgaria: Capacity building and awareness on domestic and gender-based violence in the South-Central region (BGJUSTICE-4.002-0016)

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1. Introduction

As a partner in this project, our main task is, in general, to comment upon and share views on the relevant situation and experiences in Norway, as they pertain to this particular project. We do this partly in the course of regular communication (mostly via email), as and when required. More specifically, we do this through preparing written contributions. One such contribution is the present report. The brief guidance, or Terms of reference, provided for this report is as follows:^{2/}

“Research and analysis of good practices from the Kingdom of Norway for the prevention and combating of gender-based violence with a focus on the Roma community applicable to Bulgaria”.

This report aims to provide answers to the issues raised in this brief guidance. In the course of this, comments on the guidance will also be provided.

The report contains the following parts: Background, Norway, Bulgaria, Analysis and Implications, Conclusions, and Recommendations. There is, additionally, a list of Resources and an Appendix.

2. Background

Domestic and gender-based violence is a significant social issue that has existed throughout history in Norway, as in many other countries. It is not within the scope of this report to provide a comprehensive account of this entire history. However, an overview of the key developments and efforts to address it in Norway is included.

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^{2/} Source: Project proposal.

Historically, Norwegian society was characterized by a patriarchal structure where women had limited rights and were subject to male authority within the family. Women's subordinate status often left them vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse. The early legal system in Norway reflected these societal norms and provided limited protection for victims of domestic violence.

However, over time, there have been significant changes in the social, legal, and institutional responses to domestic and gender-based violence. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women's rights movements emerged, advocating for equality and improved protection for women. These movements played a crucial role in raising awareness about domestic violence and pushing for legal reforms. They were instrumental in the 1913 decision to grant the right to vote for women, as one of the first countries in the world.

In the 1970s, the issue of domestic violence gained increased attention globally, and Norway started to address it more seriously. The Women's Crisis Center (Krisetelefonen) was established in 1977, providing helpline services and support for women experiencing domestic violence. It was followed by the establishment of shelters and support services for victims of domestic violence across the country.

Legal reforms have also played a significant role in addressing domestic violence in Norway. The Norwegian Penal Code was amended in 1992, recognizing domestic violence as a criminal offense. This change made it easier for victims to report incidents and seek legal protection. Additionally, the Act on Prevention of Domestic Violence was passed in 2002, aimed to prevent domestic violence, protect victims, and hold perpetrators accountable.

Norwegian authorities have also taken steps to raise awareness and change societal attitudes toward domestic violence. Campaigns have been launched to educate the public, challenge gender stereotypes, and encourage reporting. Schools and educational institutions have implemented programs to promote healthy relationships, consent, and gender equality.

In recent years, Norway has continued to strengthen its response to domestic and gender-based violence. The focus has shifted toward a more comprehensive approach that includes prevention, early intervention, support services, and legal measures. There is an emphasis on collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and the police, to provide a coordinated response and support system for victims.

While significant progress has been made, challenges persist in addressing domestic and gender-based violence. Ongoing efforts are required to combat social norms that perpetuate violence, ensure adequate support for victims, and hold perpetrators accountable. The Norwegian government remains committed to improving the response to domestic violence and creating a society free from gender-based violence.

3. Norway

Background

Starting with what is perhaps obvious (as it applies to all societies and countries), the Norwegian society, as it appears today, is a result of changes and an evolution that has been going on since hundreds – if not thousands – of years. In a very concrete way, we who live in Norway today are a product of what the generations that has gone before us have thought and done.

There are essentially four variables that jointly can be used to describe, analyse, and understand Norwegian culture and society today:

1. *Time*. As already argued, Norwegian culture and society is to a large extent a product of what has already taken place. There is a continuum of what our descendants thought, said, and did.
2. *Space*. The urban-rural dichotomy was not, up until after World War II, very pronounced. This means that values were pretty much the same throughout the country.
3. *Horizontal Relations*. In small-scale societies like Norway, the connections between likeminded people, families, and groups are very common and important. Decision-making is to a large extent based on consensus, and not on conflict, and this is so also at the national level. This variable is connected to the vertical variable.
4. *Vertical Relations*. The distance between the micro- and macro-levels, and between rulers and ruled, are typically short, with few links in between. Decision-making typically has the character of bottom-up processes, as opposed to top-down processes. Also, those appointed to or elected to high offices are oftentimes recruited from lower levels of society, including from rural areas. There is a little developed urban elite that traditionally would provide the rulers. Two further relevant facts: There was never a nobility class, and farmers have always owned the land they tilled. This variable is connected to the horizontal variable.

Taken together, these four variables to a large extent go to explain, and provide the overall context for, the terms that are commonly used to characterize Norwegian society, including: egalitarianism, equity, governance, inclusion, participation, transparency, and trust.

Admittedly, the Norwegian society is changing, a process that took off in earnest after World War II. Among the reasons for this, as well as the consequences, are the increasing number of immigrants, not from like-minded neighbouring countries, but from countries and cultures far away.

Research

There are copious amounts of research done on the integration or inclusion of persons and groups with different cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds. This research is in the form

of both basic and applied research, where the latter study ongoing integration efforts. The research is done by external research organizations and by academic institutions. The focus is predominantly on education, psychology, and the social sciences, and it in general aims to arrive at ways and means for how to address specific cultural and value issues that work against increased inclusion and integration.

While interesting conclusions are arrived at, they oftentimes focus on a specific group or ethnic culture, and are accordingly not necessarily easily transferrable to other cultures and social situations. This is specifically the case with efforts to apply such conclusions and recommendations to cultures outside of Norway.

Ethnic-Cultural Composition

The stereotypical characteristic of Norwegians is to be tall, light-skinned, have blue eyes and blond hair, etc. The fact that this is not correct – and likely never were correct – aside, the situation today is fast changing. People from countries in Northern Europe and North America who have lived in Norway since a long time, look Norwegian and come from cultures that in many respects are identical with Norwegian culture. Many of the people who migrate to Norway today, oftentimes for economic and political reasons, beginning since around 50 years back, come from countries in the global south. Appearances aside, many of these new citizens come from cultures with often substantially different value systems, beliefs, and forms of social organization, economies, and political cultures. Integrating these new citizens represents large and growing challenges.

Norway, like many countries, has a diverse population that includes a number of different minority groups. Sámi is officially recognized as an indigenous people. A number of groups, including Forest Finns, Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Rom, Romani, and Jews, are recognized as national minorities.^{3/}

Groups that have arrived more recently, and which are not recognized as national minorities, include immigrants from countries in Europe and countries in the global south, Muslims, and LGBTQ+.^{4/}

Gender-Based Violence, General

Gender-based violence refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against an individual based on their gender. As gender-based violence for the most takes place within the confines of the family, it is also referred to as “domestic violence”. It encompasses various forms of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, inflicted on individuals due to societal norms, power imbalances, and discrimination rooted in gender inequality. Gender-based domestic violence as a rule affect all children in a family, although

^{3/} This followed from the government’s ratification of the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention of 1 February 1995 concerning protection of national minorities. The Convention came about because of the discrimination of these groups.

^{4/} For further details about Sami, the national minorities, and the recent arrival, see Appendix no. 1.

to different degrees. It predominantly affects women and girls, but it can also impact men and individuals who identify as LGBTQ+.

Common forms of gender-based violence include:

1. *Intimate Partner Violence*. This refers to violence within intimate relationships, including physical assault, sexual coercion, emotional abuse, and controlling behaviours. Also referred to as domestic violence.
2. *Sexual Violence*. It involves any non-consensual sexual act or behaviour, such as rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and forced marriage.
3. *Female Genital Mutilation*. This harmful traditional practice involves the partial or total removal of female genitalia, resulting in severe physical and psychological consequences.
4. *Human Trafficking*. It involves the recruitment, transportation, and exploitation of individuals through force, fraud, or coercion for various purposes, such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, or organ trafficking.
5. *Child Marriage*. It refers to the marriage of children, usually girls, before the age of 18, often against their will. Child marriage perpetuates cycles of poverty and denies children their rights to education, health, and safety.
6. *Honor Killings*. These are murders committed against individuals, primarily women, who are perceived to have brought shame or dishonour to their families or communities.
7. *Cyber Harassment*. It involves the use of technology, such as social media, in order to intimidate, threaten, or humiliate individuals, often targeting their gender or sexuality.

Gender-based violence has severe and long-lasting consequences, both at the individual and the societal levels. It undermines the fundamental human rights of individuals, including their right to safety, dignity, and equality. It can lead to physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, mental health issues, and even death. It further perpetuates cycles of violence and reinforces harmful gender stereotypes.

Efforts to address gender-based violence involve raising awareness, challenging societal norms that perpetuate violence, empowering survivors, providing support services, strengthening legal frameworks, and promoting gender equality and women's rights. Governments, civil society organizations, and international entities work together to combat gender-based violence through policies, education, advocacy, and provision of support and protection for survivors.

It is important for everyone to recognize and actively oppose gender-based violence, promoting a society that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their gender.

Some among these immigrants, often those with a very different cultural background, are more prone to gender-based violence. In general, this applies to people from: Muslim and Arabic countries and some countries in Africa.

A key problem in Norway, as in all countries, is that gender-based violence as a rule takes place within the domestic sphere. This makes it harder to become aware of, as well as to intervene. This problem is exacerbated in the case of immigrants, dependent upon how different their culture is compared with the Norwegian culture.

The relevant public sector staff will, as a rule, be knowledgeable about the specific cultures and their underlying values. This guides them in how they approach and address specific cases of gender-based violence, and how they go about dealing with domestic conflicts and how to address them.

Almost all work that address gender-based violence is done by dedicated staff and organizations in the public sector. Civil society organizations are also involved, although to a lesser extent. It follows that this work is organized and institutionalized. Below this work is addressed as cases of “best practice”.

Gender-Based Violence, Institutional Set-Up

Norway has a well-established institutional setup to address gender-based violence and provide support to survivors. The Norwegian government recognizes this as a serious social issue and has implemented various policies and initiatives to prevent and respond to such violence.

At the public sector levels of the commune and the state there are specialists assigned to address gender-based violence. Specialists hired by the state are often located at the county level and in larger administrative centres. These specialists include, among others, psychologists, and social workers. They as a rule deal with a host of cultural, social, and inter-personal issues that occur at the level of the nuclear family, among Norwegian as well as among immigrant families, and not only with gender-based violence. They oftentimes work in teams composed of persons with different specializations. They include men and women and, depending upon the specific situation, both may be involved in addressing cases.

Here are some key aspects of the institutional setup in Norway:

1. *Legislation.* Norway has comprehensive legislation in place to address gender-based violence. The Norwegian Penal Code criminalizes various forms of violence, including domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, stalking, and harassment. These offenses are taken seriously, and offenders can face significant penalties, including imprisonment.
2. *Government Agencies.* Several government agencies play a vital role in addressing gender-based violence. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security is responsible for overall policy formulation and coordination. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) works to prevent and combat violence against women

and children. Bufdir provides funding, guidance, and support to organizations working in this field.

3. *Helpline and Support Services.*⁵ The Norwegian government, in collaboration with civil society organizations, operate several national helplines for victims of gender-based violence: "Violence and Sexual Assault Helpline" (+47 116 006), "Alarm Telephone for Children and Young Persons" (+47 116 111), and "National Domestic Violence Helpline" (+47 800 57 000). The latter focuses on incest and sexual abuse. Trained professionals offer support, information, and guidance to survivors, including referrals to relevant services. Local crisis centres and women's shelters provide safe accommodation and support to those fleeing violence.
4. *Coordination and Collaboration.* The Norwegian government emphasizes multi-agency cooperation and collaboration to address gender-based violence effectively. The Coordination Unit for Victims of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking (KOM) brings together relevant stakeholders, including police, health services, social services, and NGOs, to ensure coordinated responses and assistance for survivors.
5. *Awareness and Prevention Campaigns.* The Norwegian government conducts public awareness campaigns to educate the public about gender-based violence, its consequences, and available support services. These campaigns aim to change societal attitudes, challenge gender stereotypes, and promote gender equality.
6. *Research and Data Collection.* Research and data collection on gender-based violence are important aspects of the institutional setup in Norway. The Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) conducts research, collects data, and provides evidence-based recommendations to inform policies and interventions.
7. *Education and Training.* Norway emphasizes the importance of education and training on gender-based violence for professionals working in relevant fields, such as health-care, social services, and law enforcement. Training programs aim to enhance understanding, improve response mechanisms, and ensure survivor-centred approaches.

Gender-Based Violence, Implementation Process

Norway is a very transparent society. People as a rule get to know what their neighbours do. It follows that cases of gender-based violence will sooner or later come to light. Depending upon the situation, the first thing that happens is usually that a relevant commune-level office will issue a "bekymringsmelding" (message of concern) in order to follow the situation more closely.

^{5/} There are several other helplines available in addition to the two helplines listed here, many of which are operated by civil society organizations.

After some time, a social worker from the commune may come visiting to learn first-hand what is going on, and what the situation is. A report is prepared that can conclude that the issue is not important and that the “bekymringsmelding” can be cancelled, or else that continued follow-up is necessary. What happens next depends upon the specific situation, including how serious it is. The basic approach is to continue with home-meetings and discussions with the involved family members, treating it as a case of a conflict that needs to be understood in its cultural context, addressed, and hopefully resolved.

If these efforts do not succeed, more serious or involved approaches will gradually be considered. As a first step, all members of the family in question – including the person or persons who seem to be the cause of the violence, together with the person or persons who seem to be the recipient of the violence, and any young children (who are likely neutral to the conflict) – will be invited to meet at commune or municipality offices for conversations or interviews. Family members who decline to meet can be ordered to do so. Conversations or interviews can be held separately for each family member or with the whole family. During these interviews the main focus is on understanding the specific cultural basis for the violence and conflict.

If the violence and conflict does not end, further escalations are likely to occur. This will focus on the person or persons who cause the conflict. This person or persons are invariably male members of the family. Two things are likely to happen. The male members can be ordered to move out of the household for a specific time, and oftentimes be prohibited from returning during this period.

A second thing that can happen is that the aggrieved family member or member – invariably the female members of the family (including daughters) – are moved to a safe house, often at a secret address. This is done under the auspices of the Barnevernet (Child Protection Agency), a state institution with offices throughout the country. If the situation between family members does not improve, they will be resettled permanently at new addresses and, if necessary, with new identities. The family member or members who is the cause of the violence may be prosecuted and face jail time, be prohibited from contacting the other family members, and/or be served with electronic devices that monitor movements. This is as far as the system in Norway can go.

Throughout this process and afterwards, for as long as it takes, social workers will work with the aggrieved persons in the family (including children), to give what health, medical, mental, and social support may be needed.

4. Bulgaria

As will be obvious, there are many differences between Norway and Bulgaria. There are basic differences, relating to history and value systems, and there are more specific differences relating to how, for example, how gender-based violence is assessed and addressed. The

understanding of the seriousness of gender-based violence – or, put differently, when gender-based violence needs to be addressed – likely differ between Bulgaria and Norway.

The key terms listed above, viz. egalitarianism, equity, governance, inclusion, participation, transparency, and trust, may have a more or less different meaning in the two countries. For comparative purposes, the international human rights legal norms set forth under the aegis of the United Nations are assumed to represent the goal and standard for analysis and assessment of gender-based violence in both countries.

Bulgaria is lagging behind in following and adopting these United Nations human rights legal norms. There are several areas in which this is apparent, including: the general views on this issue in the Bulgarian society, the importance with which national laws address it, how the public sector deals with it in terms of organization and staffing, and how cases of domestic violence are evaluated, assessed, and addressed.

Bulgaria's low scores on egalitarianism, equity, governance, inclusion, participation, transparency, and trust result in external or international efforts to support the country's own and often meagre effort to address its abysmal record on domestic violence. While domestic violence to a large extent occurs among Roma, it is pervasive throughout the society, among all population groups, and in rural as well as urban settings.

From the point of view of Bulgaria, this situation leaves ground for considering how to address and change identified social ills as, for example, domestic violence. There seems to be two major ways of going about this. The first approach would be to revise the own way of dealing with the identified situation. The second approach would be to identify solutions that have worked elsewhere, that is, outside of Bulgaria, and apply them in Bulgaria, in the latter case this will for the most be done without applying any modifications.^{6/}

In terms of ethnic composition, the two countries differ. There are several more ethnic, language, religious, and culture-based groups in Bulgaria than in Norway, some of which are quite large in terms of membership. One such group is the Roma, which this project targets specifically. While, as mentioned above, there are no Roma in Norway to speak of, there are other groups, all of them fairly recent immigrants, with a characteristic culture and values that oftentimes set them apart from the Norwegian society at large. This includes persons who follow Islam, and/or come from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and certain regions in Africa.

5. Analysis and Implications

General Considerations and Communication

In analysing projects that aim to contribute to changing Bulgarian society there is an important issue that merits more attention than it is normally given. This concerns the role of an

^{6/} Regarding the second approach, see section "On the term 'Good practice'" below.

external development project in relation to the organizations and the structures that it aims to contribute to reform or change. Such development projects in effect establishes, to a smaller or larger extent, a management and operational structure that exists outside of the official structure. This may, in the extreme case, result in two parallel structures, albeit with more or less developed crosscutting horizontal linkages.^{7/} There are modifications of this scheme, to be sure. One modification would be to place external development project staff in the relevant local/national organization, and for them to work alongside with the existing staff.

The present development project has adopted an approach that is akin to an effort to integrate the project at least partly with – or else into – the existing local structure, and from the beginning of project implementation.

Whichever model is followed and implemented, issues of communication (often cross-cultural) and sharing arises. The issue is essentially, generally speaking, how to work with whomever represent the official structure, and more specifically how to share and transfer knowledge between the staff in the existing structure and the staff who represents the project. This may not be as easy or straightforward as it sounds. It will, in turn, be related to how administrative levels of responsibility function. The official staff will formally be responsible for decision-making, and it is an open question to what extent they may accept whatever conclusions, assessments, or decisions that the project's external staff may have.

On the Term “Good Practice”

Identifying, supporting, developing, using, monitoring, and evaluating good practices have become something of a holy grail in developing cooperation. Development projects as a rule aim to identify useful external approaches and solutions, that is, as available in other countries. In the case of a country that provides funding the focus will be on this country, and when this donor country happens to be more advanced (whatever that may mean) it invariably becomes the place to look for practical solutions to address the social ills or problems that the project is charged with addressing. The basic rationale for this approach is, it seems, that solutions to any local problem of necessity is not available domestically, and accordingly have to be found externally. This approach, to the extent that it is applicable to Bulgaria, is of course not correct, for reasons that will be spelled out below.

What exactly is a good practice? It seems for the most to be a limited and circumscribed activity that, in the views of the outsider, can more-or-less easily be removed from its institutional and otherwise context to be applied in another country and context. Referring to how domestic violence is addressed in Norway, the approaches that are outlined above do not, in and off themselves, seem to represent good practices. They are, simply put, the institutionalized way in why and how Norway goes about addressing the issue of gender-based

^{7/} This is not specific for work on gender-based violence, nor is it specific for Bulgaria. It is actually how many development projects internationally are set up.

violence. Only an external agency or person who look at these ways of working or these approaches, can come to identify them as practices that are useful or good, that is, good practices.

The term good practice, then, refers to a characterization of behaviour and processes of working that are considered or planned to be implemented in the country of the person or organization who label them as being good. The idea is to import and utilize these perceived good practices in the own country. This utilization is usually done in a couple of ways: either through replacing the existing practices more or less completely, or else through combining imported good practices with the existing practices and implementing them jointly.

Neither of these two approaches are likely to be successful. The correct approach would be to *begin* with the existing practices, take them as a point of departure, and try to determine how they could be revised or changed, using the external good practises as inspiration. This process should of necessity be done jointly by local and external experts, and in the recipient country.

6. Conclusions

People in donor countries that are involved in development cooperation for the most part understand that it is not necessarily a good idea – or even a possible one – to export specific cultural practices or traits wholesale. People in beneficiary countries that are recipients of external development cooperation assistance oftentimes do not understand that it is not necessarily a good idea – or even a possible one – to import specific cultural practices or traits wholesale into their projects.^{8/} These practices, in both beneficiary and donor countries, have evolved over a very long time, and are the consequence of the operation of myriad variables, including values, complex relationships between public sector and civil society, and antagonistic relationships between population groups. Some of these practices function well, some less well, and some do not function at all according to the official or original purpose.

The latter is to a large extent a characterization of how Bulgaria deals with cases of gender-based violence throughout society, and specifically when it comes to Roma.

General conclusions on good practices for the protection from gender-based violence, and domestic violence more generally:

1. *How to Analyse Good Practices.* Good practices exist and can be analysed only within the context of a specific culture.
2. *Understanding the Other Culture.* It may or if may not help to understand the other culture. It is in any case only a first step.
3. *Cultures Versus Their Members.* Cultures and their members are idiosyncratic. There is a difference between a culture and its individual members. Some persons, those causing

^{8/} I am here speaking of personal experience through working with many specifically civil society organizations in countries in Eastern Europe that, over the past 15 years, have received funding from the EEA and Norway Grants.

domestic violence, may be so different from the norm in the culture that the emphasis on understanding the culture is not enough or does not help.

4. *Aligning Cultures and Time.* These processes take time, often a long time.
5. *How Not to Deal with Offenders.* Putting offenders in jail, specifically Roma, which appears to be the preferred approach in Bulgaria, does not help, neither the inmates nor the society.^{9/} It should be used only as a last resort.
6. *Understanding the Foreign Culture.* The foreign culture is always a context to be understood. The specific behaviour, for example, domestic violence, must be sought understood in the context of the relevant culture. However, such behaviour is never to be excused or accepted with reference to the culture, society, and value system of the person or persons involved.

Specific conclusions on good practices for the protection from gender-based violence, and domestic violence more generally, as implemented in Norway:

1. *Legal Framework.* Norway has comprehensive legislation that addresses domestic violence, including the Domestic Violence Act and the Criminal Code. These laws provide protection and support for victims and impose penalties on perpetrators.
2. *Support Services.* Norway has established a strong network of support services for victims of domestic violence. This includes helplines, crisis centres, shelters, and counselling services. These services aim to provide immediate assistance, safe accommodation, and long-term support for victims.
3. *Coordination and Collaboration.* Norway promotes multi-agency collaboration to combat domestic violence. Different organizations, including police, social services, health professionals, and NGOs work together to ensure a coordinated response to cases of domestic violence.
4. *Prevention and Education.* Norway emphasizes prevention and public awareness campaigns to address domestic violence. These campaigns aim to change attitudes, challenge societal norms, and educate individuals about their rights and available resources.
5. *Training for Professionals.* Professionals dealing with domestic violence, such as police officers, healthcare providers, and social workers, receive specialized training on recognizing, responding to, and supporting victims of domestic violence. This helps ensure a more effective and empathetic response to cases.
6. *Protection Orders.* Norway provides protection orders for victims of domestic violence. These legal measures can restrict the contact and activities of perpetrators, providing a legal mechanism to ensure the safety of victims.

^{9/} Maybe more than 2/3 of all inmates in Bulgarian jails are Roma. The threshold for being incarcerated is much lower for Roma. Chances are high that several inmates are there for reasons connected with domestic violence.

7. *Integrated Services.* Norway promotes an integrated approach to supporting victims of domestic violence. This includes providing comprehensive services that address the physical, emotional, and financial needs of victims, such as access to medical care, legal aid, and financial assistance.
8. *Rehabilitation Programs for Perpetrators.* In addition to supporting victims, Norway also focuses on rehabilitating perpetrators. Programs are in place to address the underlying causes of violence and promote behavioural change, reducing the risk of reoffending.

It is important to note that while Norway has made significant efforts, and concomitant strides, in combating domestic violence, challenges still exist. Ongoing evaluation, improvement, and allocation of resources are necessary to ensure the continued effectiveness of these practices.

7. Recommendations

In this project the recommended approach is *not to not* use good practices as identified in Norway, but also *not to* use such good practices. The approach suggested lies somewhere in between these two positions, as outlined below:

1. *The Local Situation.* The starting point should be the local situation or situations in the project area. This situation has to be analysed in order to understand *what* does not work, and *why* it does not work. For this analysis an outside point of view may be useful, and the project's Norwegian partner, Supras Limited, is well placed to contribute to such analyses.
2. *Fixing What is Not Working.* The focus should be on figuring out *how* to fix or remedy what is not working optimally or else not working at all.
3. *Aligning External and Local Practices.* Finally, can *elements* of the identified and selected relevant good practices in Norway be utilized or incorporated into the local practices? Alternatively, can elements of the perceived Norwegian good practices be used to provide inspiration for how to change, adapt, or reform the local practices in question?

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to an unknown reviewer who provided extensive and useful comments on an earlier version of this report, in particular the part that addresses the situation in Norway.

Resources

Here is a select list of relevant websites and documents.

Websites

Barnevernvakten (Child Welfare Guardian).

<http://www.barnevernvakten.no/>

HelseNorge. nd. Violence and abuse.

www.helsenorge.no/en/psykisk-helse/violence-and-abuse/

Norway Government. nd. Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/jd/id463/

Norway Government. 2021. Seek help if you experience domestic violence.

www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/koronavirus-covid-19/seek-help-if-you-experience-violence/id2696812/

Norway Police Directorate. nd. Coordination Unit for Victims of Human Trafficking.

<https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/es/countries/europe/norway/2009/coordination-unit-for-victims-of-human-trafficking-kom-project>

Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies. nd.

<https://www.nkvts.no/english/>

Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies. nd. Violence and abuse.

www.nkvts.no/english/topic/violence-and-abuse/

Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir). nd.

www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/bfd/organisation/Offices-and-agencies-associated-with-the-Ministry-of-Children-and-Equality/Norwegian-Directorate-for-Children-Youth/id418035/

Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir). nd. The Norwegian Child Welfare Services (barnevernet).

<https://www.bufdir.no/en/child-welfare-services/>

UK Government. nd. Information for victims of rape and sexual assault in Norway.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-for-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-assault-in-norway/information-for-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-assault-in-norway

Documents

Norway Government. 2012. Action plan for improvement of the living conditions of Roma in Oslo.

www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/action-plan-for-improvement-of-the-livin/id594315/

Norway Government. 2012. Action plan against domestic violence.

www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/a48f0a1fb807453cb4469373342374c5/actionplan_domestic_violence.pdf

Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies. 2011. Ethnic minority children with experience of domestic violence: challenges and possibilities.

www.nkvts.no/english/report/ethnic-minority-children-with-experience-of-domestic-violence-challenges-and-possibilities/

Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies. 2023. Prevalence of violence and sexual abuse in Norway.

www.nkvts.no/english/report/prevalence-of-violence-and-abuse-in-norway/

Appendix 1: Minorities in Norway

Norway, like many countries, has a diverse population that includes various minority groups. The largest minority group consists of immigrants from Europe and some of the countries in the global south, together with their descendants. These are some of the significant minority groups:

1. *Sámi*. The Sámi live in northern Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia's Kola Peninsula. They were originally reindeer herders, and this is still practiced today by some. They have their own distinct languages, cultures, and traditions. Sámi in Norway is recognized as an indigenous people.
2. *Forest Finns*. The Forest Finns are descendants of people that immigrated from Finland to the south-eastern part of Norway. They traditionally made a living through swidden farming. Forest Finns is recognized as a national minority.
3. *Kvens / Norwegian Finns*. The Kven / Norwegian Finns live in northern Norway, particularly in the Finnmark region. They are descendants of Finnish immigrants and have their own distinct language, culture, and traditions. Kvens / Norwegian Finns is recognized as a national minority.
4. *Rom*. The Rom are also known as Romani or Gypsies. They have a nomadic history and have lived in Norway for a long time. Rom who arrive on tourist visas in order to beg, for the most from Romania, is a recent phenomenon, and have no common history with the Norwegian Rom. Rom is recognized as a national minority.
5. *Romani*. The Romani are also known as “travellers” and “tater” (English translation of the latter term not known). Their origin is not clear. One theory connects them to Rom (see above), that is, to immigration. The other model argues that there was no immigration, and that the group came about as Norwegian individuals decided on a way or living that involved travelling. The verdict today falls increasingly towards the former theory. Romani is recognized as a national minority.
6. *Jews*. The Jewish community in Norway is relatively small. Jews are recognized as belonging to a national minority.
7. *Immigrants*. Norway has a substantial immigrant population, with individuals from various countries and ethnic backgrounds. They constitute the largest of these groups. The largest immigrant groups come from Poland, Sweden, Lithuania, Somalia, Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan.
8. *Muslims*. Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in Norway, primarily due to immigration from countries with Muslim-majority populations. The Muslim community is diverse, representing various ethnic backgrounds and nationalities, and is formally a part of the immigrant group listed above.

9. *LGBTQ+ Community*. Norway has made significant strides in LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance. Same-sex marriage was legalized in 2009 and the group has robust legal protection against discrimination. The LGBTQ+ community is diverse and includes individuals from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including Norwegians.

This list is not exhaustive, and that there are other minority groups and communities in Norway. The Norwegian government and society, in general, aim to promote equality, inclusion, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their background or ethnicity.