

HOW DO YOU FIND A SENSE OF **BELONGING** WITHOUT LOSING YOURSELF?

On identity among children growing up in different cultures.



ABOUT VOKSNE FOR BARN

Children in Norway need adults. Voksne for Barn (Adults for Children) is a non-profit membership organisation that has been striving for over 50 years to promote positive mental health and safe conditions for all children. We see, listen to and learn from children, and we won't give up until they're taken seriously. This is how we promote children's strength and resilience. As a member of Voksne for Barn, you help many children get a better upbringing. And you help share the experiences and opinions of children to both authorities and expert communities.

Join Voksne for Barn and take part in our important efforts.

Voksne for Barn has been dealing with efforts to prevent radicalisation for several years, such as the EXIT program. We have also developed a quiz for parents on the topic. Read more about us and our efforts at vfb.no.

The contents of these instructional materials are based on experiences from work on the EXIT program, the FLEXid course and the book *Krysskulturelle barn og unge. Om tilhørighet, dilemmaer, anerkjennelse og ressurser* (Cross Cultural Kids. On belonging, dilemmas, recognition and resources) published by Gyldendal Akademisk Forlag (Salole, 2013). Illustrations were drawn by Marie Laland Ekeli, and were taken from the book Cross Cultural Kids.

This booklet has been translated from Norwegian.



This booklet was developed by cand.polit. and author Lill Salole for Voksne for Barn © 2017. The instructional material was financed using means from the National Police Directorate.

- External contributors:
- Kjell Østby. Co-founder of FLEXid

Nana Mensah. SaLTø coordinator for the Municipal Outreach Service of central Oslo

Elisabeth Harnes. Special consultant and family therapist, RVTS, Western Norway

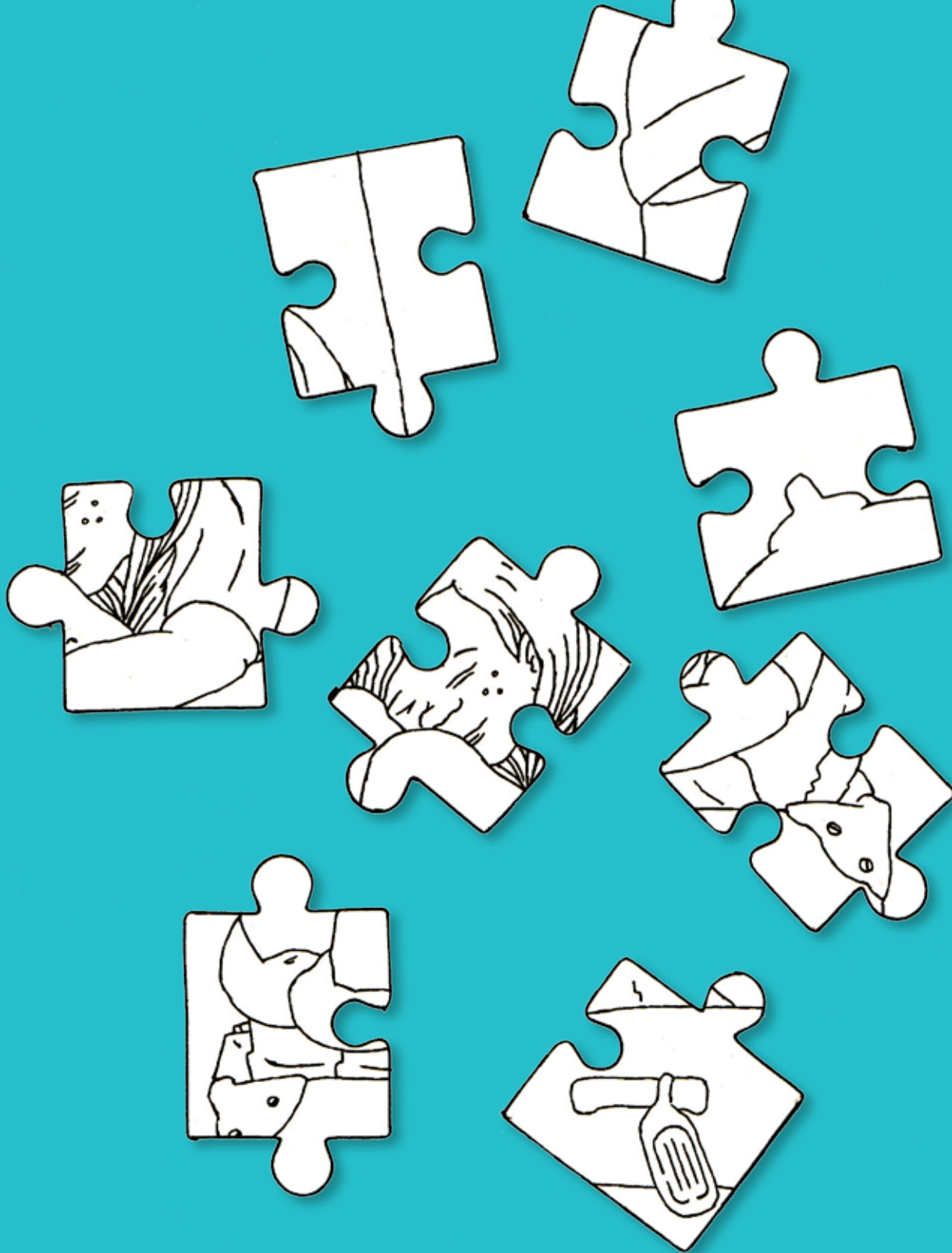
Leoul Mekonen. Study leader at RBUP, Eastern and Southern Norway
- Design and production:
- Grafisk Form as
- Illustration:
- Marie Laland Ekeli
- Print:
- Møklegaards Trykkeri AS

ISBN 978-82-92488-59-1 (print)
ISBN 978-82-92488-60-7 (PDF)

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is about how belonging is experienced among children who have moved between countries or who have grown up with different cultures. Here you can find some information that may be essential to you as a parent, relevant topics that may be useful to discuss with others, and suggestions for how you, as a parent and as an adult, can speak to children and youth about their identity.

Growing up with several cultures and belonging to many places can provide you with many good and important resources. It's great to learn about, think about, and maintain the good things about a multi-cultural upbringing. This way you can make it easier for your child to experience belonging where you live, while still feeling the value of their background.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BELONG

Experiencing acceptance and belonging is essential for all humans. To be happy, children and teenagers need to be part of a community. They need to feel that they belong to one or several places.

To belong means:

- › being respected for who you are
- › experiencing that what you say and do holds meaning and value
- › having someone around who cares about how you're doing
- › having something and someone around to validate your experiences, thoughts and feelings
- › having someone around who understands you

A positive sense of belonging is key to protecting children and their health. Children and youth who struggle with their identity, and who stand outside the community may have a hard time. They are also particularly vulnerable to harmful influences from people and environments that may exploit their need to belong.

CROSS CULTURAL KIDS

Barn som vokser opp med flere kulturer kan kalles krysskulturelle barn.

Children growing up with different cultures may be termed *cross-cultural children*.

These are children who have lived or who live with regular influences from two or more cultures in

parts of their upbringing or throughout their lives.

Some examples of cross-cultural children:

- › Children of immigrants
- › Children of refugees
- › Children with one Norwegian parent and one parent from another country
- › Children adopted from other countries
- › Children of Norwegian missionaries, diplomats, military employees and aid workers

Cross Cultural Kids may be struggling in particular with their sense of belonging.

Moving during childhood means that the children must break their safe connections to places and people. They are influenced by different customs, rules and conceptions of what constitutes proper behaviour and lifestyle. This affects them, and influences their thoughts and feelings.

TALKING TO CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

It is difficult to be a parent and caretaker. Especially in a new country. We want the best for our children, and we want to be as good a parent as possible. Children have different needs and wishes. Siblings are different too. It may be difficult to know the right thing to say, or how to help as a parent and support your children as best you can.

It may not always be easy to tell if your child is doing fine or not, or to know if something is wrong when they change. Sometimes they look happy,

but are sad on the inside. Other times they may seem angry, exhausted and unhappy, but still be doing fine.

If you are worried for your child, it may be a good idea to hold off on discussing your concerns until you are both calm and have some time, or until you notice your child wishes to speak with you. It may also be a good idea to have this conversation when you've done something fun, or while you're doing something together. For the very youngest children, one idea may be to use a drawing or a book as a place to start the conversation.

Not all families find it natural to talk and ask about things. Our cultures also teach us different ways of thinking about discussing our bad feelings and experiences. There are many ways to show love and consideration.

In keeping a good relationship with our kids, it helps a lot to spend time with them, show an interest in what they think about and what they feel. That lets us show that we care, and that we take them seriously. By giving them attention, we give children an opportunity to put words to, or to express their feelings and thoughts when they want to.

“IT’S LIKE LOOKING AT YOUR-
SELF IN THE MIRROR AND NOT
RECOGNISING WHO YOU SEE.”

Boy, 14 years old

ABOUT COMING AND GOING

There are many different reasons people move from their homes to start a new life in another country. Some people move of their own free will, for job opportunities, studies or plain wanderlust. Others are forced to move due to war, poverty and natural disasters.

Both children and adults experience “moving stress”. It’s tough to say goodbye to what you know and start again somewhere else. Everything is different from what you’re familiar with. You have to learn a new language, new rules and customs, new food, new surroundings and a new climate. People in the new country behave and dress differently from what you’re used to. Both adults and children may feel especially exhausted in this period. They might get more head and stomach aches than usual. Getting used to a new country takes time. It is common that some family members may struggle with moving more than the others.

You often miss the place and the people you moved from. You may have seen and experienced painful things before leaving, or during your voyage. Many

worry for their family and friends, or are scarred by memories, making it harder to have a good life in the place you have reached. It is natural to grieve. Many feel guilty for the ones they moved from. Maybe they never got to say goodbye properly to people and places. You often have to move away from things that mean a lot to you. Sometimes children may feel their stress isn’t being taken seriously. Many didn’t understand what it meant to move far away for a long time, possibly forever.

A great number of people who escaped their homelands long to move back as soon as the opportunity presents itself. For some, this dream of returning means they never settle down in Norway, because to them, Norway is just a transit country. This also affects the children’s experience of staying and living in Norway.

“Every year, my parents say that next summer, we’re moving back. They’ve been saying that every year for 12 years now... Because they said that, I didn’t do much to make friends or play football or anything, because the pain and grief would only be bigger when we left.. Now I don’t think they’re going back ...”

Even children who didn’t experience moving can still feel their parents’ worries and longing. Those who come from war zones that remain unsafe live in “two realities”, through TV and social media. This affects the family atmosphere.

Signs of children and young people having a hard time:

Young people may express that they’re having a hard time or that they’re feeling excluded in many different ways. Here are some examples of signs of your child having a difficult time:

- › They are often aggravated and angry
- › They are sad and upset a lot
- › They seem exhausted and drained of energy
- › They change the way they behave, dress or speak
- › They become very quiet and only want to spend time alone
- › They stop eating, or eat a lot more
- › They have a difficult time getting to school, or skip class
- › They spend all their spare time out of the house, in front of the computer or on their phone

Some may also feel that the adults' attention is too focused on the old homeland, and on their friends and family there. Others may feel their parents are too occupied with practical tasks and getting settled in Norway. Children may have a need for more consolation, help and support in their lives and in their new daily life in Norway.

Some advice for families that have moved:

1. Keep the old life "alive" for the children. Don't forget their background and their other home country. Help the children improve at and keep their first language. Share stories, language and memories. Show pictures or describe people and places. If possible, stay in touch with family and friends.
2. Help your child "put down roots" in Norway. Let it be their home, and not just a "transit country". Maybe you could go for a "voyage of discovery" and learn about Norwegian culture together.
3. Support your children through the grief by travelling from what they know to understanding the new culture. It may help for them to hear that it's natural to struggle a little, and that it gets better. Feel free to use humour! Tell funny stories about your experiences and misunderstandings in the new language and culture. The children may feel less alone then.

4. Be patient, whether things are looking up or down. Adapting to a new country can take a long time, for many, it takes several years.

Some things to discuss and consider:

- › How do you think your moving history affects your life and daily existence in Norway?
- › How do you think moving affects your child?
- › Feel free to talk with your child about what she/he misses from your home country.
- › Feel free to talk with your child about what she/he thinks is good and what is different about Norway. Maybe you could share some of your thoughts and experiences?
- › Talk to your children about how it was for you to move and get to Norway. Let them become more familiar with their/your feelings and experiences.
- › How do you understand and support your child more? Maybe your child has some suggestions and wishes of their own.

"WHEN I'M IN MY HOME COUNTRY, THEY CALL ME A NORWEGIAN OR A FOREIGNER, AND I'M DIFFERENT. WHEN I'M IN NORWAY, I'M ALSO CALLED A FOREIGNER WHO AM I REALLY, AND WHERE DO I BELONG?"

Girl, 10 years old



BELONGING MANY PLACES AND NO PLACES

Moving or growing up in Norway with parents who come from other countries make children feel attached to several places. Even though they may not have been to their parents' homeland themselves, they will often feel a bond with it.

At home, children are raised with the language, values and traditions of their parents' birthplace. At school, they encounter Norwegian expressions, norms and customs. For example, what is polite and proper in Norway may be impolite and improper in mum and dad's culture.

Young people can feel at home in both Norway and in their parents' original culture, or in other places they have lived and have family. At the same time, they can feel like strangers in both places.

"PARENTS ADAPT, CHILDREN ABSORB."

Mathew Neigh

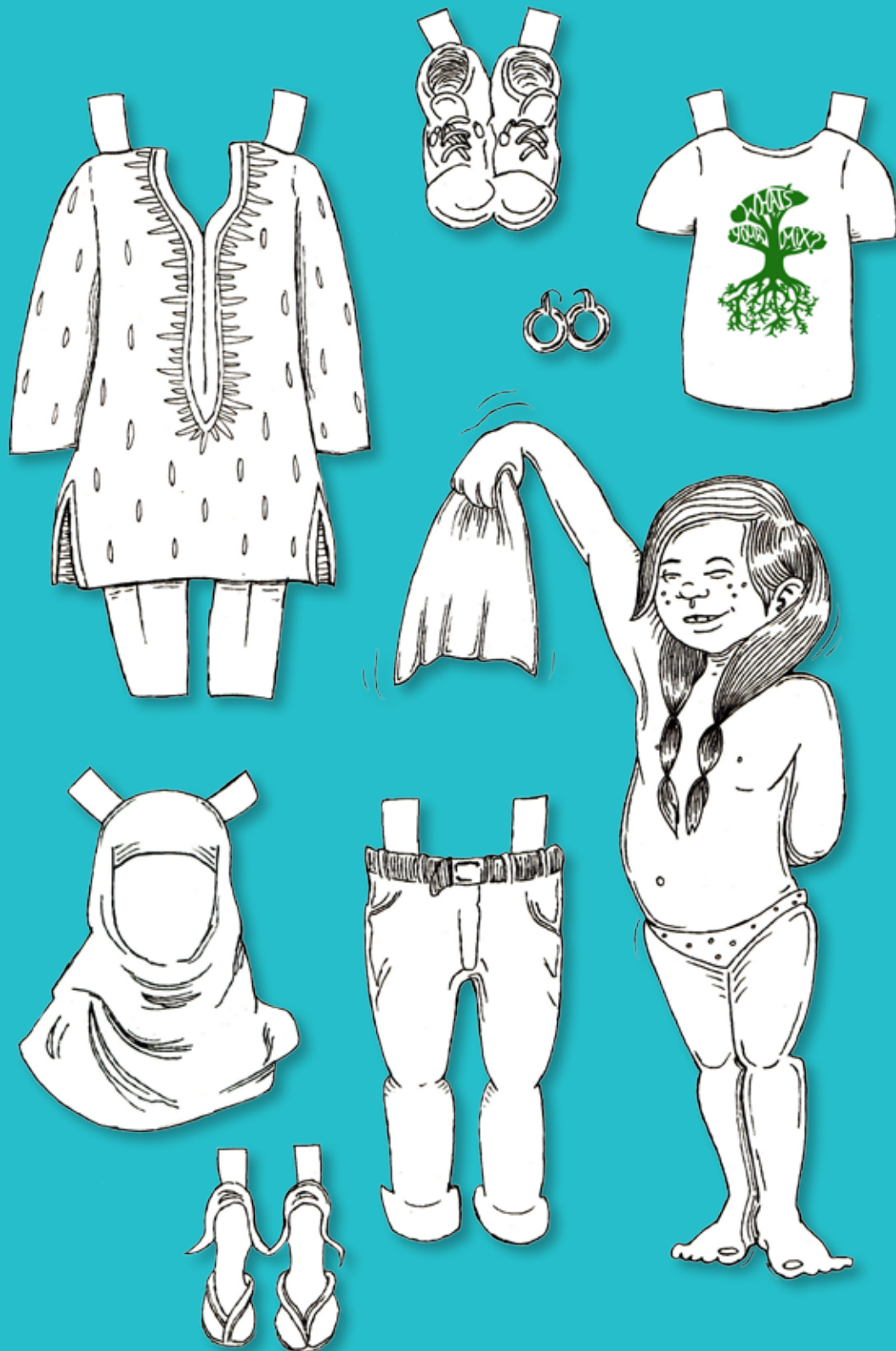
DIFFERING EXPECTATIONS FROM PEOPLE AND SURROUNDINGS

"IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE GETTING PULLED IN SEVERAL DIRECTIONS AT ONCE. I'M USED TO BEING SOMALIAN AT HOME AND NORWEGIAN OUTSIDE. BUT AT HOME THEY WANT ME TO BE SOMALIAN OUTSIDE AND OUTSIDE THEY WANT ME TO BE NORWEGIAN AT HOME, YOU KNOW."

Bboy, 15 years old

Maybe the children sense an expectation for them to not get "too Norwegian" at home. Meanwhile they may hear that they "aren't Norwegian enough" when they're with friends and at school. This may make them feel the "pressure of expectations" or "cross-pressure".

For parents, systems in Norwegian society may be challenging. The demands of school work, visits from friends and activities may seem alien or hard to get used to. You have different habits and routines from previous places you've lived.



For children who grow up with different cultures, it's often natural to be "both", not "one or the other". That's why it can be confusing and exhausting for them when someone demands they show their loyalty and pick a side.

It can also be disturbing when others define them as either foreigners or Norwegians, without considering what the children think themselves. If somebody asks them where they're from or where they feel most at home, but don't accept their answer, it may make them feel even less like they fit in.

"“WHERE ARE YOU REALLY FROM?” IS THE WORST QUESTION I CAN GET.”

Boy, 15 years old

Communicating well within the family isn't always just as easy. Youth often have their "own" language, and they may understand their surroundings differently from their parents. It may be particularly challenging if the children are better at Norwegian than their parents. Parents may have a hard time understanding what it means to be a child or young person in Norway, while young people don't understand how demanding it can be to be a parent in a country other than the one you grew up in yourself.

Some parents have strong opinions on what the young person should work with and spend their time on. They want to make sure their children get the best possible future. The children may then feel their parents are very strict. Sometimes this leads to misunderstandings, where children think their parents have laid plans for them when they actually haven't. Both parents and children may feel they aren't good enough, or that they can't live up to each other's expectations.

Some advice about children who grow up cross-culturally:

1. When children live in Norway, they also become Norwegian. Allow them to be part of their community, have friends and participate in activities where they live, while still letting them take part in the culture of the family's birthplace.
2. Let the young people have their own identities. Try to accept that it will be different from your own. It is natural that children who grow up with multiple home countries experience belonging differently than their parents.
3. Take an interest in your child's daily life. Maybe you can compare the similarities and differences in how you grew up? This way you can teach each other new and important things.

Some things to discuss and consider:

- › What is positive about staying in touch with your country of origin? Could there be anything problematic in being highly engaged with what is going on there?
- › Is it important for you that your child/teenager keeps your culture?
- › What do you think about your child/teenager becoming “Norwegian”? What do you think parents mean when they say their kids have “become Norwegian”?
- › How do you think you can help your child be comfortable about being both Norwegian and religious?
- › Do you think there’s a contradiction in being both Norwegian and religious?
- › Do you have expectations that the child could experience as pressure? (Does she/he seem frustrated that your rules at home are different from at school and at their friends’ houses?)
- › How do you show that you’re interested in the children’s hobbies, thoughts and feelings?
- › What can you do to help your child feel a positive sense of belonging to Norway?

ABOUT FEELING DIFFERENT

Cross-cultural children may feel different. That may be because of their experiences from other countries. It can also stem from how they look, or how they talk and behave. Children of immigrants with Nordic features or ethnic Norwegian expatri-

“THEY ASK ME WHERE I’M FROM. WHAT THEY’RE REALLY ASKING IS WHY MY SKIN COLOUR IS DIFFERENT FROM THEIRS. WHAT THEY’RE REALLY SAYING IS THAT I LOOK LIKE I SHOULDN’T BE HERE, BUT THAT I SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE ELSE.”

Girl, 12 years old

ates don’t stand out so much in terms of looks. They may still feel like strangers in their thinking and behaviour.

They may stand out because they are interested in different things than the other children. They’re often used to other TV shows, and different types of music and clothing styles. Some may get hurtful comments about things such as their parents’ rules, the way their home is decorated, the food they eat, or them praying at school.

It can be humiliating to be called “foreigner” and “immigrant” if they identify as Norwegian (many who are exposed to this are born in Norway, or have spent large parts of their life here). This feeling can be exacerbated if they visit their parents’ home country and are treated like strangers there as well.

Furthermore, some children may know some aspects of cultures in many countries, while not knowing the entire culture anywhere. Either because they moved away or because they never lived there.

Some feel “stupid” because they don’t know the same things as children who always lived in the country, or the ones who have parents from the same culture. They have learned different things, but may be unable to show what they know, because nobody seems interested. They “don’t fit in” here.

Children are good at adapting to different situations, but it can hurt to not be able to use every side of yourself.

A lot of children spend a lot of energy defending themselves and what they do differently. Some face insults or degrading language aimed at their parents. They might have to explain their parents’ clothes, lifestyle, choices or the way they speak. Meanwhile, some have to explain and defend themselves to their parents, who feel they are acting “too Norwegian”.



ON BEING “US” AND “THE OTHERS”

The media has a lot of power and influence. People with a cross-cultural background are less visible in the press. When they are in the media, it’s often to comment on topics like immigration, integration, hijabs or violence. Muslims are constantly called to distance themselves from terrorist acts (even though the same is not demanded of people from other faiths). In comments sections online, negative descriptions and language are often used about people with an immigrant background.

This is how prejudice, ignorance and fear spreads. It can also make young people feel that they aren't understood or wanted by society.

When cross-cultural teenagers do well, they are often referred to as Norwegian. Then they become part of the Norwegian "us". "Norwegian Tarik scores a goal", "Norwegian Stella in Hollywood film" are examples of headlines used in this case. When they do poorly, they are described as "the others". Then they are "teenagers with a foreign background".

There is still a lack of visible minorities in cultural life, and in important roles in society. The curriculum in subjects such as social science and history is still dominated by perspectives from western countries such as Norway and from Northern Europe. Young people may feel erased and insignificant.

It's important for all children to have positive role models. That includes children with cross-cultural backgrounds. They try to see and learn that people they can identify with have done well, and have succeeded in achieving their goals. This way they can validate that a multicultural upbringing is more common than they think, and that world history can be interpreted and told in many different ways. They can also see that having a background from multiple cultures can be reconciled with being recognised as a Norwegian. They may then also be more proud of their past, instead of associ-

ating it with something that is only problematic and difficult.

Some advice for people with children who feel different:

1. Help the child be proud of their heritage.
Gather facts from the family history, country and society she/he is related to (history, philosophy, art, literature, architecture).
2. Think about what you can do, so that the child can see the strengths in belonging to Norway and to other places.
3. Feel free to make the kindergarten and school more attentive, so that teachers can spend time on including the children's language, thoughts and experiences better in their daily school life or when doing homework.

Some things to discuss and consider:

- › Have you felt different? How?
- › Talk to the child about whether she/he has felt different. Do you have similar experiences?
- › Does your child relate to issues in the media or things they learn about in school?
- › Can advantages be found in being/feeling different?
- › Talk about people in your group of friends or in society who use their multicultural background as a resource.



RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

“THEY BULLY ME, THEY CALL ME A MUSLIM. THEY CALL ME BAD NAMES, SAY I’M A TERRORIST AND THAT I FORCE GIRLS TO WEAR VEILS. I’M NOT A MUSLIM, I’M HINDU. REGARDLESS, I THINK IT’S WRONG TO JUDGE PEOPLE BY THEIR RELIGION OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND.”

Boy, 13 years old

Unfortunately, a number of cross-cultural children and young people experience racism and discrimination. Discrimination means treating people differently on the basis of ethnicity, religion or gender. Racism is a serious form of bullying. The bullying may be based on things like names, language, clothing style, skin colour, religion or ethnic background. It can take place both between the majority and minority and between different minority groups. Racism occurs in the form of hateful and degrading speech, violent actions, or as comments and threats online. Some young people also experience systemic racism in the form of exclusion. Examples

include being denied access to nightspots or not being called for job interviews. There are also many who experience their parents facing racism and discrimination.

Being exposed to this type of bullying and unfair treatment is highly humiliating. It can also be harmful to experience racism over time. It leads to bad self-esteem, loneliness, sadness, anger and rage.

Some advice for people with children who suffer racism and discrimination:

1. Pay attention to if your child changes behaviour, and talk to your child about what you have noticed.
2. Pay attention to their use of mobile phones and PCs. Take an interest in the contents of messages, chats and shared images. But also respect the child’s right to privacy.
3. Be attentive to whether the child or teenager has friends, and if she/he is being invited to birthdays and other social events. Get to know who your child spends time with, and how they talk to and about each other.
4. Ask the kindergarten and school to pay attention to bullying and racism. Feel free to recommend that the topic be brought up at parent-teacher meetings and at the kinder-

garten group/class several times (see the end of the booklet for some useful places to contact).

5. Console them and listen to what they say. Ensure them that there’s nothing wrong with them. Explain how fear, bad experiences and ignorance can make people speak and act badly. Report to the kindergarten or school. Look for help in other places as well (see the end of the booklet for some useful places to contact).

Some things to discuss and consider:

- › Regularly speak to your child about bullying, racism and discrimination.
- › How can you help your child talk about their own thoughts and feelings?
- › Have you experienced racism yourself? Can you remember how you felt and how you reacted?
- › Can you share your own thoughts about good ways to respond and react if your child experiences bullying?
- › How can you get help to make it stop?
- › What can you do to keep your child from having bad thoughts and feelings about themselves?

SEEING THE WORLD FROM MANY SIDES

“WHAT HAPPENS IN MY HOME COUNTRY IS JUST AS CLOSE TO ME AS WHAT HAPPENS IN NORWAY. SOMETIMES IT CONCERNS ME EVEN MORE.”

Girl, 16 years old

Children who grow up with different cultures or who grow up in several countries experience different ways of interpreting and understanding the world. They have experience with things being done differently in other places, and that the way people live in Norway isn’t the only way to live. They may be highly knowledgeable about politics, history, geography and society in other countries.

Young people are often very involved and idealistic. They are concerned with how other people are doing. They often want to help and make the world a better and safer place for the people they care about and feel close to. Often in places where they identify with the population emotionally, culturally or religiously. For many, it feels like a natural duty that comes with their cross-cultural upbringing.

Cross-cultural children and young people have often had access to more news sources, arguments and stories in their lives that stand out from the



Norwegian ones. Many have experienced for themselves what oppression, war and poverty can do. What happens elsewhere in the world is also personal.

For teenagers with cross-cultural experiences, it can be painful and devastating if difficult things happen in countries where they have friends and loved ones. They may react strongly to Norwegian and international aid and foreign policy failing to protect people and kin in other places.

It may also be a frustrating experience for young people if they feel the media is doing a poor job of

reporting what is happening in their other homes, or that the media is too one-sided.

INTERNET AS FRIEND AND FOE

The internet can be a good friend. It lets you stay in touch with family and friends in other parts of the world. The internet also makes it easier for young people to strengthen other aspects of their identity and improve their knowledge of their other home countries by seeking information.

Unfortunately, children and young people may also be exposed to propaganda, conspiracy theories and graphic images on the internet. This may lead those who at first have a rich, inclusive world view into a way of thinking that instead is “narrower” and less tolerant. They can become more receptive to people who want to abuse their zeal and need to belong. This applies particularly if the young people also feel that they and the people they identify with are misunderstood, discriminated against and mistreated by their society and their parents.

Some advice on the children’s view of the world:

1. Show an interest in their friends and who they spend time with in their spare time. Be conscious and curious about what they look at and who they communicate with by PC and mobile phone.

2. You should frequently ask about their experiences, thoughts and understanding of what is true and what is happening in the world. Listen to what they have to say. Ask open questions (for example, “what do you think about...”). Give them other facts and arguments that challenge their beliefs, or that can make them see things from another perspective.
3. Does the child seem angry or isolated? Be particularly attentive if they begin discussing other people or groups as worse or less valuable, if they become extremely fixated on certain topics or routines, or they begin behaving differently than before.

Some things to discuss and consider:

- › What do you think is a positive way to use their passion?
- › Some children distance themselves from aspects of their identity, Norwegian culture or their parents’ culture. What do you think the reason could be?
- › What does your teenager think about western media coverage, warfare, UN strategy and aid policy? What does she/he think should be done differently?
- › What can you do so that your child will feel that they are contributing, that it helps and that their opinions are heard?

STRENGTHS AND SKILLS

“I IMAGINE THAT I HAVE A KIND OF INVISIBLE SUPER-POWER – I SPEAK SEVERAL LANGUAGES, I KNOW MANY CULTURES, I’M USED TO MANY KINDS OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS, I’M GOOD AT ADAPTING, SEEING AND TAKING CARE OF OTHER NEW PEOPLE.”

Girl, 14 years old

There are many important resources tied to having a cross-cultural upbringing. These skills are needed in Norwegian society. This knowledge is also needed to solve the challenges we face globally. On the job market and in job listings, qualities such as “adaptability”, “flexibility” and “solution-oriented” are in demand.

Cross-cultural youth also have skills in language and culture. They can handle different people, expectations and contexts. They are often good at observation. They can be good at interpreting and translating meanings. They are used to handling contradictions.

Often, they aren’t aware of how these can be good and useful abilities. This is something they need to be made aware of while growing up. They must be

allowed to practice using them “like a muscle”, just like cycling or playing an instrument. They must be allowed to hear that what they can contribute is just as valuable as the contributions of those who grew up in one culture. Here we, the parents, and other adults who meet with the child have an important task.

Some examples of cross-cultural skills and resources:

- › Language skills
- › Experience with cultural differences
- › Knowledge regarding differences in communication
- › Highly adaptable
- › Tolerant of contradictions
- › Having an easy time getting to know new people
- › Seeing solutions and solving conflicts
- › Good at observing
- › Seeing a matter from multiple perspectives
- › Understanding that others have different points of view
- › An international network

- Some advice for promoting their awareness of strengths and skills:**
1. Make it natural for the children to share/show both the challenges and the advantages of growing up with different cultures.
 2. Help the children “translate” challenges to

resources. Maybe they never thought about how their experiences being new at school and learning in a new way may help others in the same situation. This experience may be useful when they move on to the job market or into a new phase of life. It’s possible they don’t see how being able to understand several languages or knowing some words in many languages is a strength.

3. Involve the kindergarten or school in promoting and using these abilities in the child’s daily life. Perhaps they can talk about or write about things including customs, traditions, fairy tales, types of weather or food.

Some things to discuss and consider:

- › What do you think is something positive you’ve learned by moving and getting to know more cultures?
- › How can you help the child see how something challenging can also be something good?
- › What resources do you see in your child?
- › How can you help your child see and use their strong suit?

“CROSS CULTURAL KIDS HAVE ALL THE RIGHT ANSWERS, BUT NOBODY’S ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.”

David C. Pollock

HERE ARE SOME OF THE PLACES YOU CAN GET HELP AND GOOD ADVICE!

The emergency help line for children, youth and parents: 116 111. Children and youth in a difficult situation can call the help line. Adults or friends worried for children can also get in touch.

The kindergarten department manager, or the school home room teacher: The kindergarten or school can be contacted if you need to discuss something about your child or require cooperation with topics brought up in this booklet.

Child Welfare Services provide children, youth and families with help and support when things are difficult at home. Information available on the municipality’s website.

Family Counselling Service: provides treatment and counselling to everyone experiencing difficulties, conflicts or crises in the family. The Family Counselling Service accepts individuals, couples and families. Information at bufdir.no.

Public healthcare nurse: can be found at the Health stations for infants and small children and at Health stations for youth. They are also linked to the schools, and can aid you and your child with health questions. See the municipality website.

Minority counsellor: can be found at some upper secondary schools. They are skilled at cross-cultural communication and minority issues. Check with your school.

Pedagogical-psychological service: a counselling service for children and youths with special needs or who are struggling with development. See udir.no

The Police: Call 112 in emergency situations.

Counsellor: A social-pedagogical counsellor can be found at school. Their role is to help teenagers get comfortable at school – in both education and social life. Information available on the school’s website.

Voksne for Barn: has experts who provide guidance and advice for adults worried for children or youth. You can remain anonymous, and we have a duty of confidentiality. We answer by phone, online, and by chat. Tel. 810 03 940 . You can also get in touch with us to learn more about our classes and services targeting bullying and protecting children’s mental health.

SalTo coordinator / SLT coordinators: work to reduce child and youth crime as well as drug abuse among children and youth. Information available on the municipality’s website.

Utekontakten: operates preventative efforts and outreach for youth aged 10–23. You can get in touch with them if you’re worried for children or youth. Information available on the municipality’s website.

Some organisations with an emphasis on minority issues, racism and discrimination:

The Norwegian Centre against Racism: organisation that fights to defeat racism. See antirasistisk-senter.no

strives to promote equality and prevent discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. See omod.no

The Institution against Public Discrimination (OMOD): a rights and competence centre that

Minotenk: a think-tank that primarily works with defining issues and challenges relating to the multicultural Norway. See minotenk.no

Some organisations focusing on bullying, trauma, suicide prevention and immigrant health:

The Norwegian Centre for Minority Health Research (NAKMI): Works to promote knowledge on health and care for immigrants and their descendants in Norway through research and education. See nakmi.no

support, education and awareness efforts. See r-bup.no, uni.no, uit.no and ntnu.no/rkbu

Regional Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS):

The centres' purpose is to provide relevant knowledge for those working to prevent traumatic disorders and suicide. They counsel, instruct and guide experts. See rvts.no

Save the Children: fights for children's rights around the world. Also offers courses and services on online bullying and youth who feel excluded. See reddbarna.no

Regional centre for the mental health of children and youths: Knowledge centres for the mental health and protection of children and young people. Conducts research, development, service

The Red Cross: helps people in need in both Norway and in other countries. The Red Cross organises many activities for cross-cultural youth, such as homework assistance and a café. See rodekors.no

Unicef: The program "You can be The One" offers lectures on efforts against bullying for students, employees and parents at schools. See unicef.no

Online portals on family counselling and preventing social exclusion

- › Foreldrehverdag.no
- › Utveier.no
- › Radikalisering.no



“CROSS CULTURAL KIDS
HAVE ALL THE RIGHT ANSWERS,
**BUT NOBODY’S ASKING THE
RIGHT QUESTIONS.**”

David C. Pollock



VOKSNE FOR BARN

Stortorvet 10 > 0155 Oslo > Tlf: 48 89 62 15 > vfb@vfb.no > vfb.no