

Innhold

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Introduction

This qualitative part of the project aims to collect data on experiences with honor-related abuse and -violence on the individual level. The aim of this report is to showcase a selection of examples of good practice in Norway, focusing more specifically on civil society. There are several actors working against honor-related abuse and negative social control in Norway. This section is based on qualitative interviews with seven people who daily work actively with preventing honor-related abuse or negative social control. With our small selection of interviews, we do not aim to show a representative picture of all the good work being done, but rather to highlight some examples, in order to illustrate different approaches, positions and work areas in this diverse work field. We would like to extend a big thank you to our respondents, who have been kind enough to share their knowledge and experience with us!

Selection, recruiting and method

Interviewees were selected with the aim of showcasing a wide range of examples. All seven have a strong commitment to preventing honor-related abuse or negative social control, and six of them represent non-governmental organizations working with topics like female genital mutilation, closed religious communities, LGBT rights, counselling services for immigrants and networks for women with immigrant background. One of our interviewees is from Norway, the six others are from families originating in Eastern Africa or the Middle East. All respondents live and work in different parts of Norway. We have interviewed six women and one man.

The project is registered and approved by NSD, the Norwegian center for research data. The interviewees were e-mailed with a request to participate, and upon replying that they wished to contribute, they were interviewed by telephone. The interview guide

consisted of four open-ended questions, allowing for following up interesting topics as they surfaced.

The names of the interviewees are aliases. The names and descriptions of the organizations have also been changed, to maintain anonymity. We will present the interviews as seven case stories before we summarize our content analysis in a concluding discussion.

Cases

1: Negative social control in closed religious communities – prejudice as a hinder for knowledge and help

Anne is Norwegian, and she is the leader of an organization helping people who are in a problematic process of leaving closed religious groups. After experiencing first-hand the struggle of a relative who dealt with negative side effects after leaving a closed religious community, she started to read up on the subject and to mobilize volunteers, and eventually, she started an organization focusing on those leaving closed religious societies. The organization is growing, and there is an increase in people contacting them, either to seek help or counseling or to volunteer as peer support. She says that many people are not aware that negative social control also exists in Christian communities, nor how detrimental social exclusion can be to members who choose to leave these closed communities. Some of the inquiries the organization gets are from representatives from child welfare services and schools, who seek advice on how to help young people who are struggling with negative social control from their religious community.

There is a lack of knowledge about closed, Christian communities. All the examples you see in media are a subjugated Muslim woman in a hijab. The examples contribute to

stereotypical attitudes and make it difficult for those who are exposed to it to understand that it is negative social control they are experiencing, Anne says.

She calls for a broader understanding of the mechanisms characterizing social control in closed religious communities, one that neither stigmatizes certain groups nor assumes that it is common only in extreme or radical communities. She indicates that while there is a political will to focus on these mechanisms in immigrant groups, there is still some way to go to fully recognize that negative social control is an issue also in Norwegian religious groups, and needs to be dealt with.

People who contact us are coming from extreme environments, but also simple religious meeting house communities. They have in common that they experience that the situation after breaking with the community has been difficult.

She also calls for research on the detrimental long-term effects of social exclusion and problematic breaks. To her surprise, she has found that a quite high percentage of the people contacting her organization are unable to work, often a long time after a problematic break, and that many receive a disability pension. The costs to the individual, and society, are huge. There is a lot to be saved by enabling the helping structures to prevent negative long-term effects and by spreading information to young people about what negative social control is, what their rights are, and that there are people who can help if they struggle. Further, she underlines that it is important not to brand the communities in themselves as unhealthy. Even though one person has experienced the process of breaking away as tough, other people in the same environment may not have the same experience.

Though she sees it as unlikely that you can change harmful practices connected to the worldview in closed religious groups from the outside, she is more optimistic about future generations and the long-term effect of working systematically with information

and help structures for people experiencing negative social control in closed religious communities:

Maybe in the next generation, in 10-20 years, one can see that parents who have experienced negative social control can make other choices for their children.

2: Trust and dialogue the key to prevent female genital mutilation

Through educating women as trainers, who in turn arrange information their meetings in their networks, the International women's health organization works to spread cross-cultural health information to women about female genital mutilation. Judith, who has a health-related master's degree and is herself from Eastern Africa, is the founder and CEO of this organization. The goal of the organization is to spread information and to encourage more women to speak openly about female genital mutilation. Their basic principle is involving women in the target groups, and building a platform of communication, based on trust and dialogue. Women from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan are recruited to attend a two-day supervisor training course, where the participants get updated information. A female doctor, who is also from East Africa, is responsible for the content of the course. After the course, the newly trained supervisors recruit women from their network to attend information meetings. Each supervisor recruits five new participants. Their training includes the health content and practical information about how to organize meetings. It is an open and flexible model, where the supervisors can adjust the meetings to the perceived needs. They can choose between hosting meetings in their own home, at a cafe or a library, or several supervisors can collaborate and rent premises together. The information does not need to be presented with PowerPoints or in a technically complicated way.

After the course is finished, both the supervisor and the participants she recruited receive a diploma which can be used on their CVs. Participants often end up wanting to take the supervisor course themselves, in the next round. Judith explains the organization's success with the good report between course leaders, supervisors, and participants:

The most important factor is trust. That the participants trust the course leaders, and that the course leaders trust the organization.

The supervisors write simple reports, documenting the number of participants, and what topics they are interested in knowing more about. As a result of wishes from the participants to learn more about FGM and sexual practice, the organization has initiated a collaboration with a sexologist, and now offers online consultations with her. Judith is clear that this would not have been possible and doubts that these services would have been used much if they were not there as a direct result of requests from the women themselves. She continues:

It is important to involve women who are affected. It is wrong if the experts make the information material without involving the target group. What they are concerned about and what they wish to know more about.

Judith is optimistic about the future. Statistics show that the number of women who are the victim of female genital mutilation in Norway is falling. Still, there is a need for a continued focus on the topic, to give information, and to fight taboos:

Many stress that it has been important to hear that FGM is the cause of their health complaints. We often hear women say that 'I have had pains for many years but did not know that it was because of the mutilation'.

Judith concludes by emphasizing the great impact of involving and collaborating with the women themselves.

When given the opportunity to learn more, and to talk openly, many women feel empowered, and they want to share their knowledge in their network. Many women even tell us that they have been in their country of origin and discussed the topic with others there.

3: A language for young people to deal with negative social control

Julia is an active social commentator who has given a voice to young people of her generation experiencing negative social control. After publishing her own story in the newspaper, Julia has become an active and visible actor and a spokesperson for young people with immigrant backgrounds who will neither be defined by their controlling families nor by prejudice and victimization from the majority population. Instead, they want to be heard and acknowledged for their diverse experience, and to be taken into account by politicians and policymakers when deciding policies to prevent negative social control.

She says this about her own process of coming to terms with her own experiences:

Myself, I did not know what negative social control was, to begin with. Putting it into words helped me legitimize my own experiences. After writing about it in the newspaper, I got many responses from others who experienced the same, and I started reading more about the topic.

She emphasizes how important it is to have a language with which to talk about negative social control, more specifically, a language that mirrors the complexity of the phenomenon. She is especially concerned that young people should not feel forced to choose either between their family and cultural background or living in freedom. She is

clear that it is necessary to take negative social control and honor-based violence seriously without estranging and stigmatizing the people it concerns:

[The] stigma can be minimized if you have a language that does not require you to opt-out of your culture, a language that allows you to know that the social control has been inflicted on you, that it is not your fault. Too many times, it is explained and experienced as either/or.

In cases where there is a conflict between young people and their family, she stresses how important it is to know about the possibilities for working together with the family to solve the problems, and that this should be a well-known option in the help structures, as well as among the youth themselves.

Julia also emphasizes how the hearing about experience of other youths in similar situations is very important for young people, and that both real-life role models and characters from literature and movies can help create a reference frame which strengthens their ability to identify harmful practices of social control.

For many young people, I think that if they had tried to discuss it with their parents, they would not necessarily agree with them. They would probably say that 'we have given you all the opportunities you have wanted'. For this reason, it is important to have a conceptual framework from outside. To know that there are objective indicators, to a certain extent.

She continues:

There must exist a line between bringing up your child and inflicting negative social control on them. I usually say that it is a strong indicator if the rules become stricter exponentially as you grow older.

Agreeing with several other of the people we have interviewed, she says that there is not enough knowledge about knowledge about negative social control in the help structures. The indicators pointing to harmful practices of negative social control should be known to teachers, child welfare services and the police, and they should also be prepared for what to do when encountering them. After talking to young people across the country, Julia says her impression is that there is a general lack of competence on diversity. Youth who ask teachers for help with controlling parents can risk that the teacher's reaction is to consult their parents about it, something which is at best a breach of the young person's trust, and at worst potentially dangerous.

Finally, Julia calls for long-term political solutions that take into account the embeddedness of negative social control in structural factors like discrimination and social exclusion. She points to that openness about experiencing negative social control from your family is made possible only through a feeling of trust and belonging in society.

For the future, Julia calls for a nuanced and fact-based approach to preventing negative social control

What I would like is a mapping of the scope of honor-related abuse and negative social control, and who is affected. A lot is unrecorded. It is important to fight negative social control in a factual manner, in a language that avoids stigmatizing. I would like a better understanding of the nuances, and that more people took the problem seriously. It is important to acknowledge that negative social control is also connected to racism and discrimination, and to not ignore one side of young people's lives. It is possible to show the nuances. People are a combination of experiences and identities; you cannot design an either/or-solution for lives that are not either/or.

4: Empowering women to support each other

Claudia is originally from an African country, and she immigrated to Norway when she was little, as part of a family reunion. She describes herself as the kind of person who has always stood up against injustice. If something is unfair, one must do something about it.

She connects her involvement in the women's group to a personal mindset of fighting against injustice in the society, and with a wish to empower women. For her it is crucial to ask questions about what is unfair, and to strengthen women's rights. She continues that as a real social problem with serious life-threatening consequences, honor-related violence goes beyond women's rights.

Wanting to make a difference, she first became a member in a local women's network, later a board member, before she eventually became leader. She says this about how the organization aims to make change for women with an immigrant background:

How to create change? It is a complex phenomenon. If women do not stand up for themselves, they often return as victims back to these environments. What my organization does in the field of negative social control is to strengthen the woman so that she finds self-confidence.

Claudia sees the complex nature of the phenomenon as the biggest challenge, and says it is difficult to deal with, since it is such an ingrained concept in the lives of many. She is concerned that women who leave abusive marriages also have to break with their social networks, and that they are left alone with few help structures around them:

When you need help to cut the ties with your environment, you end up alone. Although in the beginning you are surrounded by social services, afterward it becomes difficult. No contact with anyone you had contact with before. Most of the network you had, the public

network as well, gets lost with time. You must take care of yourself. It is always the victims who have to change their whole life, move to another place, cut their connection with their network. While the abuser still stays in that environment. We have to find a different way.

She explains that organizations like her women's network play an important role to support women who experience honor-related abuse, and that it is important that the organizations are there for them over time. It is an important supplement, as they need more support than is provided by public services, especially when they have had to break with their whole social network.

Claudia sees harder legal punishment as the most efficient way for the society to signal that honor-related violence is unacceptable. She also wants to make a clear distinction between honor and honor-related abuse, and to avoid exclusively portraying it as an immigrant problem:

Honor itself is not something negative, but it is something positive. For me, it means self-confidence, self-respect. And it is not only a social problem in the immigrant communities. On the contrary, it is also found Norwegian communities, and to varying degrees in all societies.

She is also concerned that an over-simplified focus on honor-related abuse as something which happens exclusively in immigrant communities, can contribute to a feeling of stigma and alienation among youth. She cautions that if children of immigrants are seen as too Norwegian by their family on the one hand, while on the other hand not being accepted and included in Norwegian society, this too can contribute to fueling radicalization and crime as the youth feel marginalized and not really accepted anywhere.

At the same time, she sees hope, and like Anne, who works with negative social control in closed religious communities, she suggests that the next generation may also hold the solution to ending harmful honor-related practices:

Let new generations choose the positive components both in Norwegian society and in their culture of origin. Dare to say that I do not want that culture of honor, do not want my children to experience it. Culture is somewhat changing over time. My parents raised us in a different way than they would do now, and now they have a completely different understanding of child-rearing.

5: Working with imams to strengthen Muslim women's rights

Jamila has worked both as a project leader and as a volunteer, in addition to being a social commentator in Norwegian media. She has an active role in fronting women's rights in mosques, in particular, to include routines for securing women the right to a religious divorce. She is also engaged in supporting female leadership in mosques, as a way to highlight women's perspectives in Islam. Her engagement for the topic started with her own experience of being forced to remain in an abusive marriage, fighting for several years before she succeeded in being granted a religious divorce. After going to the media with her experience, she discovered that she was not alone, and that many Muslim women stay in abusive marriages since they cannot get a religious divorce. What felt like the biggest betrayal to Jamila was the lack of support from her imam.

In my experience, there is a lack of engagement from imams. They do not dare to approach the subject. Many hide behind excuses, saying it is not my role. Many women approach imams with a wish to be granted a religious divorce but are advised to go back to abusive relationships.

Being in an abusive marriage, she struggled to get a divorce and to be recognized as single in the Muslim community because her then husband did not want to grant her a religious divorce.

When I first confronted the mosque, I felt like I'd run into a wall head on. After a while, I started thinking that the greater society should know that many women live in abusive relationships even though they want to break out. As for myself, I had the resources to carry on with my life regardless of the support from the mosque. Many others are not so lucky.

Angry and deeply frustrated, she decided on going to the media and highlight a situation she realized she was not alone to suffer. They wrote about her story, and the imam who had not wanted to help her was also named and interviewed. She says at first it seemed like he was a bit shaken from all the media attention.

He felt that his status was threatened, especially by the fact that the critique against him came from a woman.

Both he and others called her parents and asked them to "take charge of" their daughter. Her family supported her, but it was still unpleasant for her that the whole family was held responsible for her actions.

In the aftermath of the media attention, although she is no longer in contact with this imam, she has heard that he has started women's groups in his mosque, discussing divorce rights and that women should not get married without a marriage contract. It also seems he now brings this point up in wedding ceremonies.

Jamila explains a lot of the success of the work against honor-related abuse in Norway as a result of women's activism, both locally and nationally.

My impression is that media write more about this topic now and that an increasing number of women tell the world openly about their experiences. The women's perspective in Islam has been more normalized.

From the stories of women who have contacted her, Jamila has concluded that more knowledge about honor-related abuse and awareness of its consequences are needed, not only among imams, but also in the police. It is important to be aware of the consequences for health and quality of life, and to stop practices that are discriminating and dangerous. Increasing knowledge about religious divorce is an important step to Muslim women's freedom from honor-related abuse, according to Jamila:

Religious divorce is a complicated subject. I knew little about it before it landed in my lap, so to speak. It is important to know that the right to divorce does not violate the freedom of faith, as many claims. It should be seen as discrimination of women, and the women's convention should be the frame of reference.

6: Being queer and religious: Let those who know where the shoe pinches speak for themselves.

Radi is a member of an activist group for LGBT persons.

It all started with love and with who I was. Inside, I knew that there was something 'wrong' with me, that it was something forbidden. I had a need to live the same life that I saw other queer people live.

After coming out as gay, Radi decided to be a queer activist and to make his voice heard. His organization aims to create safe spaces where the members can feel safe and be themselves. In addition, the organization aims to be visible in public arenas and to contribute to public discourse. Radi sees a strong need to nuance the debate:

Traditionally, our cause has not been propagated by ourselves, it has been fronted by others, many of them very secular Muslims or other actors with ulterior and racist motives. LGBT rights have been used as a straw man argument to argue against immigrants by social actors on the right wing. Sadly, there are many who engage themselves in this field who do not have a genuine wish to solve the problem. The debate is so polarized, and the nuanced voices are not heard.

With the debate climate being heated and polarized, Radi finds it difficult to be heard, especially when he does not wish to contribute to stereotypes of homophobia in religious communities.

I feel that I am screaming at the top of my lungs without being heard. There is so much noise around us. There is a lot of 'I know better than you'. I am often told that I trivialize and downplay the problematic sides. Because I insist that what my family did was out of love for me, even though what they did still hurts me. I do not think you will get anywhere by further marginalizing an already marginalized group. Reaching out and embracing them is better.

Like our other interviewees, Radi is also optimistic about the possibilities of fighting honor-related abuse:

The last years you see more and more activists with minority backgrounds who take the microphone themselves. This is the key to fighting honor-related abuse in an anti-racist manner. Let those who know where the shoe pinches speak for themselves. We must draw a truthful picture of what is going on and involve those who are exposed to honor-related abuse. Otherwise, we will never make it.

7: In a country where you learn that your body is free, this happens

When she came to Norway as a child, Nora was already circumcised. In the late nineties, when Nora's friend was sent away and was also circumcised when she came back, Nora realized that even though you learn that your body is free in Norway, there was nobody stopping her friend's parents from forcing their daughter to undergo this harmful practice.

Nora remembers how she and her friend revolted against restricting norms in their community:

My friend was sent to [our parents' home country] because she had become a little too Norwegian. We were a bit too rebellious. At that time, we were not so many from our country in Norway, and we were hyper-visible. We were fed up with the negative social control in our community. The girls were not supposed to be seen or heard or to be outside. We were supposed to speak softly and to stay at home or inside. It was difficult to look at our Norwegian peers and the freedom they were born with. So, my friend and I did all we could, we signed up for talent shows and dancing contests, even though we were not allowed to by our parents. There was a rumor in our community that we were bad girls. Also, rumors that were not true. It ended up as a self-fulfilling prophecy – we thought that if they were saying all these untrue things about us anyway, why don't we just prove them right? So, the rumors made us even more rebellious.

When her friend was sent out of the country, Nora and her friends contacted the child welfare services several times but were not taken seriously. The school did not react to her friend being away for months either – her mother told them that the girl was with her father and the school accepted it. The indifference from the Norwegian community around them fueled Nora's anger.

She started to notice that several girls in her community were sent abroad only to return after a while and be engaged or circumcised. After seeing a television program about forced marriage, she got in touch with the leader of the organization for self-help for immigrants in which she is still working. She told the leader her story and was offered a job and asked to suggest measures to combat negative social control and honor-related abuse, based on her experience. She spent a lot of time writing a list with 40 points, and at least 20 of them were included in the first action plan against forced marriage in 1998. She also spent a lot of time traveling to different schools and talking to the pupils about their rights.

More than 20 years later, Nora is still working for the same organization, only interrupted by some breaks in between when she has had other jobs. While a lot has happened during the last decade, she states that there is still a need for increased knowledge and expertise:

The help structures need to become even better. The schools, for instance. How early do they need to let the police know when pupils do not show up for school? Too many times it is too little, too late. Several young people tell me that they have been dumped in the parents' country of origin. Childcare services, schools and the health care system should know what to look for, and when to alert the police. Things are better now than in the 90s, but there is still a need for change.

She points to educating newly arrived immigrants as an important measure to prevent negative social control and honor-related abuse. The introduction course for immigrants is an arena where you meet many of the newly arrived. Nora says that even though the pupils here are grown up, there is every reason to take negative social control seriously and discuss this with them.

You need a trained eye to be able to spot negative social control. An example – a woman wears a wedding ring to school, even though she is unmarried. When you ask her why, it turns out otherwise the men in her class harass her and make advances. But what is their teacher’s reaction? ‘Boys will be boys’! Even though the pupils are grown-up people, we found that they needed to have a teacher present during their breaks to prevent them from harassing each other.

Nora has stayed at this school and arranged weekly discussion groups with the pupils, separate groups for men and for women. She says the groups have been a success, that many people have opened up about their problems and asked for help during these sessions, and that it is now easier for both pupils and teachers to approach the subject. Being careful with how you choose interpreters is also important in order to make the pupils feel safe and free to talk. Nora stresses that it is important to make sure that you use interpreters of the same sex, and preferably someone who is not familiar with the pupils or their network. Phone interpretation is a good alternative to avoid risking that the interpreter is familiar with the network of the persons she interprets for.

Having worked with the same organization for decades, Nora has met and helped many young people find their way in society. She says it is an honor to be given all this trust, and that it comes with great responsibility.

For us who work with these young people – they place their lives in your hands. You become their mother, psychologist, and best friend. So, it is imperative that we who are in this position have the competence to handle the responsibility.

Connecting the narratives – discussion, limitations and suggestions

These cases contribute to broadening our understanding. Firstly, of how individuals with immigrant backgrounds experiencing different types of honor-related abuse not only can overcome the situation, but also use their own experience to contribute to social change. Secondly, how they have played a crucial role in altering destructive norms, values, and attitudes, on the individual level as well as in society. And thirdly, how they have contributed to social change in Norway by participating actively in public debate, raising awareness and getting attention on the topic from policymakers and the helping structures.

The cases give us insight into diverse personal experiences and work methods. Our respondents are from different generations, with different cultural backgrounds and different religious views. What unites them is that they have a public voice and use it to make positive change. While many topics and positionings have been covered by presenting these cases, we are also aware of some voices that are not well represented in our interviews. With only one of our interviewees being male, the perspective of boys and men who are exposed to honor-related abuse is underrepresented. The view from a parent standpoint is also missing, although we know several of our interviewees are parents themselves.

Still, with these limitations in mind, we feel that the cases represent a varied collection of positions and perspectives, all highlighting the necessity of the target groups being

given a voice to speak for themselves, to have the power to define their challenges and to be a part of the solution. We asked all our interviewees the same questions about what they think are the important breakthroughs in the work against honor-related abuse and negative social control in Norway so far, what the challenges are, and what is needed in future work, and we will conclude the report with a brief summary of their replies to these questions.

Breakthrough moments

All seven informants have had experiences with honor-related abuse in some form, either as a victim or as a bystander. What we consider as unique is how the individuals use their own experience with honor-related abuse as a strength and eventually as a resource that allows making positive social change. This appears as the power of the voluntary sector, of working at the grassroots level. The informants have used various strategies such as participating in voluntary work, establishing a civil organization to combat different types of honor-related violence, or assisting and helping others, contributing to empowerment.

When talking about breakthroughs in the work to combat honor-related abuse on a national level in Norway so far, several of our interviewees refer to the structures that have been built, the action plans and the competence team. With expanding knowledge, the scopes of the action plans change, and several of the informants applaud how the current action plan includes chapters on Norwegian closed religious communities, as well as work with the family of victims of honor-related abuse. The knowledge structures that are built are available to service providers. Several say that they experience a demand both from municipalities and representatives from help structures to collaborate on how to implement the existing knowledge in their work, showing both an awareness of the problem and a willingness to work with it.

A lot of the success of the work is due to activism, both locally and nationally. They point to more and more people having chosen to be open about their experience by joining the public debate, and how this has to lead to nuancing the understanding of the phenomenon, showcasing a pluralism of perspectives. The media attention given to honor-related abuse is also something that many refer to as pivotal. Several refer to specific cases that have been covered in the news which have become references for building a language and a way of understanding honor-related abuse and negative social control.

Challenges

The challenge expressed most often by the informants is the complex nature of what is coined honor-related abuse, and that finding solutions to combat it requires broad experienced-based knowledge and expertise. Our findings indicate that you can find a lack of knowledge and expertise in authorities and the police which makes itself visible as weakness in the work with identification, detection, and prevention. This prevents victims of honor-related abuse from being provided with the required assistance, something which might in the worst-case lead to serious and even fatal consequences.

It is a necessity that the support services such as schools, childcare, and health care services provide better services, act earlier, and that they know how to warn the police in the early phase, if there is anything suspicious like pupils who do not show up at schools for several days, and whose parents are not involved. The interviews give several examples of women in grave and dangerous situations who did not get the help they needed from the police or other public help structures. These stories also indicate that the competence on the topic needs to be increased, and that the police and child welfare services need to develop better routines for receiving and handling inquiries from

people in need of assistance. One of the respondents points to the vulnerable position of young people who break with their families, and that the system tends to label them as emotionally unstable or even diagnose them with mental illness. There needs to be awareness of the grave consequences for young people who break out, and a careful consideration of how best to help young people in this situation without adding to burden and stigma. Therefore, a well-established and well-equipped competence team is important, and their contact with and role in counseling local police and service providers appears as an important area to develop.

Many express that it is important to provide a space for people to speak up with their experience without fear of being stigmatized because of their country of origin, ethnicity, religion, and other social categories they have ties to. As it appears, unfortunately, honor-related violence and especially negative social control is portrayed as an immigrant problem, without giving any attention to whether it contributes to more stigmatization, discrimination, racism or social exclusion of immigrants. Many emphasize how crucial it is not to categorize and restrict it to specific cultures and ethnicities, but rather show the diversity of experiences and focus on the basic underlying mechanisms.

Preventive work

We find that several express a need for an increased focus on prevention, as it is better to put more effort into preventing the fire from starting instead of running from crisis to crisis, trying to avoid serious criminal acts. Prevention work has to include the parents and take into account how family networks and ties are both local and transnational. This is because transnational networks emerge as having an impact on family norms and values, by pressuring and controlling families to live according to the same honor-related values as in the country of their origin. One has to take into account which powers are working, and which actors need to be involved to reach a

mutual understanding. As an example, a case from the Norwegian Mediation Service (*Konfliktrådet*) is mentioned, where it turned out that the parents living in Norway were pressured by their family abroad. To help the parents, the Norwegian penal code was translated to Urdu and sent to their family abroad to strengthen the parents leverage with their extended family.

Our findings support the idea that these problems not only affect girls and women, but also boys and men, as they also suffer from negative social control and honor-related abuse. Therefore, it is necessary also to include the perspectives of boys and men in the work with identifying, detecting, and preventing.

Last words

These findings provide some tips and general principles for how to enable processes to contribute to change in society, both on the individual and societal level. The findings give us insight into how individuals get strength from their own experiences with honor-related abuse, create synergy and a movement which contributes to social change. We have seen examples of how grassroots movements impact policymakers to take action, introducing new action plans, new laws and regulations, and improving standards of social services to provide required assistance to victims such as protection, and other kinds of socio-economic assistance.

Finally, while it is important to continue building competence in this area, many of the respondents emphasize that good work with building an inclusive society in general, to continue to develop equal services for different groups and to strive for a common feeling of belonging, is the most important foundation for preventing harmful practices. We conclude our report with a quote from one of our respondents:

Проектът "Противодействие на злоупотребите в името на честта в социален и правен аспект" се изпълнява с финансова подкрепа, предоставена от Исландия, Лихтенщайн и Норвегия по линия на Финансовия механизъм на ЕИП.
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I think that solutions are not about designing specific action plans and laws but to strengthen the welfare state. You need to focus on getting the parents to work, to get mothers to work, to make the Somalian single mother feel safe and included at the parent meeting. To integrate, not assimilate, the parent generation. Create a greater and more inclusive definition of 'us'.



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