

List of content

Sammendrag	2
Summary	2
Theme of Bachelor work	5
Theme choice	5
Relevance to Social Work	6
Method	6
Literature review as a method	6
Literature choice	7
Some limitations and advantages	7
Reliability and validity	8
Structure of the thesis	8
Definition of words	8
What is integration and an integrated person?.....	8
What is unaccompanied minor age asylum seekers?.....	9
An Overview of Norwegian Asylum centers.....	10
UDI requirements for asylum centres	10
Literature	11
Psychological health, uncertainty of status, and motivation.....	11
Housing, services in the asylum centres, economic situation and Appointment of guardian	13
Successful aspects of integration process in asylum centres	16
Theory.....	18
The social integration model	18
Discussion	20
Success related to the efforts of social work at the reception centre.....	21
In light of the social integration model:	23
Conclusion	25
Literature List.....	26

Sammendrag

I min bacheloroppgave har jeg forsøkt å presentere et nytt perspektiv på rollen et norsk asylmottak spiller når det gjelder integrering av enslige mindreårige asylsøkerbarn i det norske samfunnet. Metoden jeg har brukt er litteratursøk. Studien tar for seg forhold og rammer som gjelder når enslige mindreårige flyktinger kommer til Norge. Vi har sett på oppgaver og innsats som gjøres for å integrere dem, allerede fra det første året. Dette inkluderer hvordan de blir plassert, hvordan boforholdene er, lover og regler, tilbud om skole for å hjelpe dem med å lære norsk, og aktiviteter utenfor mottaket som hjelper dem med å skape nettverk og venner.

Oppgaven skal også påpeke noen svakheter og motstandsfaktorer som bidrar til utfordringer med integrering for disse barna. Dette inkluderer diskriminering på grunn av status, psykisk helse, boforhold og språkutfordringer som kan hindre integrasjonsprosessen. Vi ser på det komplekse forholdet mellom ansatte på mottaket som spiller viktige roller som mentorer og som nærkontakt for sårbare barn. De tilbyr nødvendig rådgivning og omsorg for å hjelpe barna med å overvinne deres situasjon.

Oppgaven viser hvordan norske asylmottak har en positiv innvirkning på livene til beboernes barn og hjelper dem med å tilpasse seg til det nye livet i Norge, spesielt med tanke på inkludering og integrering. Oppgaven fokuserer på de positive resultater som vi har fått fra litteraturen som viser viktige bevis på hvordan integrering i det norske samfunnet har vært vellykket for mindreårige enslige asylsøkerbarn. Dette gir et veldig positivt og oppmuntrende bilde av situasjonen, som er vist gjennom dataene.

Summary

In my bachelor's thesis, I have tried to show a new perspective to explain the role that a Norwegian asylum reception centers play in integrating unaccompanied minor asylum-seeking children into Norwegian society. A literature search has been used as a method. In this study, we have taken an overview of conditions and frameworks when unaccompanied minor refugees come to Norway. We have studied tasks efforts to integrate them begin in the first year. Where they are placed, living conditions, school offers that help them learn languages, activities from outside reception that help them create networks, make new friends who will be friends with them further in the new life they have found in Norway. Assignments must also point to some

weaknesses and resistance factors that contribute to challenges to integration for the children, such as discrimination due to status, mental health, living status, language challenges that lead to obstacles in the integration process. We will study the complex relationship between employees at reception who play important roles as mentors to children. These people work in close contact with vulnerable children, and offer necessary advice and care to these children, helping them overcome their difficult situation. We will study first the literature related to the offers and services that are offered at the centre. We will also reflect on what is the impact of services the asylum centre has offered to young resident children, that help them with integration, school services, Both physical and psychological health support that is offered at reception by the trained staff. It becomes evident from the literature how Norwegian asylum center has a positive influence on the lives of the residents children and assistance they receive to help them adapt to new way of life in Norway. In Norway principles of inclusion and equal opportunities to participate in all society activities helps residents with integrating into the new society. Assignments have shown positive results that we have received from literature which shows important evidence how integration into Norwegian society has been successful for underage unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. It is a very positive picture and encouraging characteristic that has been shown from data.

Introduction

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers that arrive in Norway come with complex legal, social, and emotional needs, which must be addressed for them to integrate and thrive in their new country. Norwegian laws accommodate the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers housing, schooling, and psychological support. There are many different factors to integrate these unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

In this thesis I want to dive into the literature and learn more about how integration happens for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and how they success in integration of this group. The purpose of this project is to investigate the integration process of asylum seekers in asylum centres in Norway. A steady influx of asylum seekers enters Norway every year, undertaking a perilous journey which often costs them loss of life and incurs them a heavy economic cost. Often these people experience the most traumatic events in their native countries, where their lives and entire families are at huge risk, which is the main motivating factor in moving to an alien land. The new land offers new opportunities, yet every person must undertake the

herculean task of learning the new language, understand culture and environment, enter the workforce and integrate into the society, through developing networks and social contacts. We will review different services and assistance offered to this vulnerable group by the asylum centres and employees working there. How mutual understanding helps this vulnerable group of people find hope and learn to love life again, which is a constant challenge in their situation. The asylum centres in Norway offer them help in socialising, finding new friends, networking, school, and education, physical activities which builds their trust and confidence in a new environment and gain confidence in society, which helps them become one whole of Norwegian society.

The table shows how many people stated that they were under 18 and without parents or others with parental responsibility, when they applied for protection (asylum) in Norway in 2021. The figures also show which citizenships they have.

Statsborgerskap	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Mai	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Okt	Nov	Des	Total
Algerie	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Iran	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Marokko	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Myanmar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Somalia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Statsløs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Venezuela	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Irak	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sudan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Etiopia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Eritrea	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	4
Syria	0	0	2	4	6	5	10	2	5	7	11	6	58
Afghanistan	1	1	2	11	6	9	9	13	11	6	17	19	105
Total	1	1	4	18	12	14	22	16	17	17	30	29	181

Publisert 24.01.2022

Kilde: Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI)

This study explores deep into the complex inner working framework of the Norwegian asylum centres. How they work and serve as tools of networking, integration and facilitation for the residents, with a special focus on Unaccompanied minor asylum seeker children. The reception centres in cooperation with other entities, schools and other government organisations to ensure betterment of these children. School offer will open doors to learning language skills and practising it with peers. How the asylum centres organise outdoor activities for mental and

physical health of the children which helps these vulnerable children find future friends, motivation and tools to integrate into the new environment in Norway where most of the population follows a healthy active lifestyle. The employees at the centres play a pivotal role in the integration process as they serve as first mentors and guides to these vulnerable children, help them adjust to the new environment, help them complete simple tasks at school and daily life. Asylum centres serve as the first step towards emotional healing of these children also as it provides a safe environment to the residents unlike the adverse situation children have faced in their home countries. The children will get their firsthand health and wellbeing knowledge as well as psychological support from health worker at centre in the face of traumas they have experienced in their journey to Norway.

Despite many loopholes in terms of housing and uncertain living status Norwegian asylum centres have a lot of benefits to offer to its residents.

Theme of Bachelor work

How do Norwegian asylum centres work to integrate unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (15 - 18 years old) into the Norwegian Society, and what do we know about their success?"

Theme choice

Having a foreigner background in Norway, I was always intrigued by the theme of integration of asylum seekers in Norway and having an in-depth knowledge about the theme. I was interested in knowing more about minor unaccompanied asylum seekers as this group is very interesting for me. I've worked with children as a volunteer and at a child welfare centre. I am also a mother so it's a theme which is close to my heart.

In the course of our study through literature we have come to the conclusion that reception centres have been effective tools for integration of minor children also. The picture is far from perfect, but many effective results can be shown.

So called integration of asylum seekers requires more work to be done and it is useful to indicate difficulties posed to integration. For my further work as a social worker in Norway I think it will be useful to have knowledge about this theme. I will also try to document some success stories in the process and how far the process has brought quality of life to the lives of the asylum seekers and add a fresh perspective to what is being done to the integration process of asylum seekers in Norway. As a social worker I would want to work with asylum seekers or with children so it's interesting for my further work as a social worker to get more knowledge about integration, unaccompanied minors and asylum centres.

Relevance to Social Work

Asylum seekers are one of the most vulnerable groups of people which are at the mercy of the host country they arrive in. Principles as social justice, human rights, taking collective responsibility and having respect for differences is central in the line of social work (IFSW, 2014). Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are a vulnerable group in the society and as a social worker you will work with vulnerable groups in the society.

In the new country and new environment, they have to undertake a lot of efforts to integrate and adjust themselves to the new culture, language and work conditions. Social workers have to play a pivotal role here to facilitate this vulnerable group and address their needs, through information, motivational interview, counselling and psychological support and many other areas. Without social work it will be impossible to support this group of people. To accommodate asylum seekers is the most crucial task of the social work arena which comes into play as soon as the asylum seekers arrive in the country. Over the years social workers have shown unprecedented work in accommodating and protecting the interest of asylum seekers.

Method

[Literature review as a method](#)

The method literature review has a goal about making a picture of what is already written about a theme. I've used this method in my thesis and studied the literature about my theme. I have taken deep insight into already existing literature about minor unaccompanied asylum seekers and how integration works for them in Norwegian society. Literature review is a

method where you go strategically through you gather about the theme and put the knowledge in a system (Støren, 2013, pg.17).

I have chosen to use this method as I am interested in already written knowledge about this theme and to learn more. Also, this was the best method to be used in the limited timeframe I had to write my bachelor thesis.

Literature choice

I will try to include a fresh perspective to this area of study and include some research articles which cover this particular aspect of social work. I will include research articles from both Norwegian and English sources which can reflect on the integration of asylum seekers, their conditions, their problems and what needs to change. Using both English and Norwegian research broadens my search abilities.

I will be taking literature from a variety of sources suggested by the university, including, Oria, Idunn, Fontene forskning and relevant webdagene such as udi.no. This is my first attempt to write an academic paper so I will try to take inspiration from other bachelor's works also, in terms of building structure and designing the document. I have used search words as Reception centres, asylum seekers challenges, integration concepts, unaccompanied minors.

The literature I have chosen is a variety of books, articles, information from websites, peer reviewed articles, both Norwegian and English literature. However I've been focused at keeping the literature relevant in Norway, as I'm focusing on the situation in Norway.

Some limitations and advantages

This is my first time writing a bachelor thesis, so I'm not familiar with the process of writing a thesis. There is an advantage to writing about this theme was the diversity of literature available about asylum centres and their functioning in Norway. There were several milestones that came up showing success of asylum centres integrating young unaccompanied asylum seeker children in Norway. Since these minor groups of children come at a very early stage of their life, they are more open to adapting to the new environment, learn language more quickly and hence be integrated in the society. This thesis has tried to cover some important milestones that

have been achieved over the years that have contributed to the goal of integrating minor children in Norway, as they add a new chapter of peace and security to their life.

I have tried to use articles from both English and Norwegian articles which has helped broaden the scope of perspective and include point of views other than Norwegian sources. However, one disadvantage has been that no actual visit was made to an asylum centre during writing of this Thesis, All the knowledge and data has been derived from literature sources.

Reliability and validity

The literature and data have to be relevant to the theme choice (Dalland, 2020, pg 63), therefore I've chosen literature that focuses on the asylum process and unaccompanied asylum seekers in Norway. I've also tried to use literature that isn't older than 10 years.

The literature and data collected has been gathered with validity. I have looked at the literature I've gathered for this thesis and tried to understand the research done on this subject. I have read a lot of research and used what's already written and chosen what I thought to be relevant for answering my theme choice. Also using peer reviewed articles shows there's quality to the research.

Structure of the thesis

I will use some space to explain certain precise terms which are related to the theme and put into context. Then I will use the literature I have chosen to explain about integration of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in the reception centres in Norway. I will go on with explaining the social inclusion theory. At the end I'm going to discuss whether the literature shows whether reception centers in Norway attempt to integrate unaccompanied minor asylum seekers or not.

Definition of words

What is integration and an integrated person?

Nina Gran and Lina Scoufia book Introduction program theory and practice gives an interesting overview over who exactly is an integrated person. Integration is a very complex theme and is difficult to explain under one perspective. A person who is integrated does not mean that the

person has entirely changed his thinking and feelings and become a native Norwegian. When we look upon integration should we take into account a person's experience of the process or the expectation that is required from the person, that he meets the criteria of being integrated in the true sense of the word. The author argues that the concept of integration in terms of asylum seekers applies to their participation in the society.

Integration applies within many different areas, local environments, living areas, leisure, schools and work life. Integration is said to be the experience of comfort and control over one's own life. In addition to this it is important with the feeling of having a function and being able to participate with something in the society (Scoufia & Gran, 2018, pg 14,15).

What is unaccompanied minor age asylum seekers?

Individual Minor age asylum seekers are individuals who are under the age of 18 years and have fled their countries due to fear of persecution, war or violence. These young individuals are seeking refuge and safety in a new country. As minors, they often lack legal status, and their rights to protection and welfare are not protected or defended as compared to adults.

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and refugees are children and young people under the age of 18 who come to Norway as asylum seekers without their parents or others with parental responsibility (Kommunal og arbeidsdepartementet (KAD), 1989; Valenta & Berg , 2012, pg 182).

The reasons for their flight from their home countries vary, as they may have been subjected to violence, abuse, or discrimination based on their race, religion, political beliefs or sexuality. Some are also seeking safety from armed conflicts and natural disasters. Regardless of the reasons for their flight, the journey to safety is usually arduous and dangerous, as they may be at risk of being trafficked, abused or even killed. Unaccompanied Minor age asylum seekers are one of the most vulnerable groups of asylum seekers as they have limited capacity to make decisions for themselves, and they often lack the support of their families. They may be travelling alone, or with their siblings, and are in need of protection and assistance from the host countries.

An Overview of Norwegian Asylum centers

Norwegian Asylum centres are a very important form of an institution with the purpose of aiding the people who are seeking refuge in Norway. Asylum centres provide various services to Asylum seekers that are by law demanded to be provided by the Norwegian state and controlled in regard to implementation by a regulating instance called UDI. UDI stands for Norwegian directorate of immigration. The instance will come on regular and surprise controls at the Asylum centres to ensure the adherence to guidelines given as well as the wellbeing of the Asylum seekers.

In Norway, the state is responsible for the Asylum centres but, it is a responsibility that has been shared with many participants, private companies and stately organised through the municipalities. In 1988, the Norwegian state became responsible for the Asylum centres. In later times more and more private companies have taken a larger part of the responsibility for the Asylum centres, often through cooperation with municipalities (Kleppe & Engebretsen, 2010, pg. 423).

In December 2007 the responsibility for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers transferred from UDI to Norway's child welfare service (Bufetat). Those under the age of 15 will after registration at the police be offered a placement at a private or a state youth centre where the child welfare service (Bufetat) has the primary responsibility. For those between 15-18 years UDI has the responsibility and they get transferred to a reception centre (Svendsen et al., 2018, pg 11). If the asylum seeker is under 15 years old it's also possible to be put under foster care by Bufdir. It's an ongoing discussion about who's going to be responsible and many have said that the child welfare service should have the responsibility for all under 18 years.

The integration process can be challenging for asylum seekers as they have to adapt to a new environment, culture, and language. Therefore, these centres have developed programs and services to help them navigate their new life in Norway (Kleppe & Engebretsen, 2010, pg. 423). The initial stage of seeking asylum can be quite overwhelming for these young people, as they may not speak the language or understand their rights.

UDI requirements for asylum centres

UDI has rules and guidelines for running an asylum centre. In the document (UDI, 2022) there's specific guidelines that the asylum centre has to follow. There's specific guidelines for

unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and UDI has the responsibility for making rules and regulations regarding the reception centres. (Liden et al, 2013, page 30).

The convention on the Rights of the child article 22 states that Countries that receive minors have a legal obligation to treat them humanely and provide them with basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, education and healthcare (UN, 1990). The initial stage of seeking asylum can be quite overwhelming for these young people, as they may not speak the language or understand their rights. They often require legal representation and support from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who can provide assistance with their asylum applications and help them to navigate the complex legal processes.

Literature

Psychological health, uncertainty of status, and motivation

Research about unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and refugees shows that this is a vulnerable group of children that are especially exposed to psychological issues because they are far away from near caregivers and is especially exposed to traumatic experiences before, under and after the escape from their home country. Much of this research has focused on symptoms of PTSD. (Valenta & Berg 2012, pg. 196).

Many children of the centre have developed serious mental health problems and often require individual care and a lot of resources. A lot of employees at the centre are frustrated with the economic limitation at the centre to fulfil the needs of these residents and handle them in a suitable way. These residents have experiences very serious trauma situations which a child is usually not exposed to at such young age for example sexual harassment etc. Such residents require extra measures and special help from the employees which utilises resources which are either not available or require most of the centre's budget, making it less resources and finances for other important arenas.

Furthermore, the emotional toll of being separated from their families and experiencing trauma from their previous experiences, such as war or persecution, can be significant. Many suffer from mental health challenges such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression or anxiety. As such, it is crucial that host countries provide them with psychiatric or psychological support.

Many have never learned to cope with part of the teaching they have at school. Many have never learned to cope with some of the everyday challenges they face alone, and in addition they have experiences behind them that children and young people are not normally supposed to have (Lauritsen & Berg 2002, pg 131).

One of the most challenging factors which poses to hinder the integration process is the uncertainty of the asylum children, regarding their status. If they are going to be allowed to stay in Norway or they will be deported back to their home countries where danger persists. It is a factor which keeps many children awake at night and contributes a lot of emotional stress to these children. As a result, they develop. Overall, the reception centre is still a safe place to stay, because of their uncertain future which causes unrest and anxiety to the children.

Employees at the centre have experienced that it is extremely difficult to motivate unaccompanied asylum seekers kids to go to school and learn language. They have to study long hours and learning a new language can also be a daunting task. The school administration and reception centre however have introduced plans to do extra curricular activities going out on a tour and other activities related to music and art, in order to give kids a little time to relax during the difficult learning phase. Despite the efforts some children decide to quit school and give up on learning language skills which makes their integration very difficult to achieve, under the circumstances. (Lauritsen & Berg, 2002 pg. 47)

Many employees at the asylum centre agreed upon the fact that the young unaccompanied children at the reception centre need a lot of guidance especially regarding their economics and financial guidance. The book *Mellom Håp og Lengsel* the author interviews around 15 young unaccompanied asylum seekers and experiences their determination to do something worthwhile with their life and secure a good future through education and hard work. In order to achieve these goals the employees at the centre have played a very important role, to guide them and motivate them to focus more on their future rather than thinking about their painful past. This would help them integrate more in the society. (Lauritsen & Berg ,1995, pg. 128)

"I want to study IT." That's what I want to study. "I want to organise my life, get a job and live like other people."(Lauritsen & Berg ,1995, pg. 128)

Also, the employees have come forth with recommendations that to reduce anxiety among the children there should be a waiting list guarantee for these children and their cases should be handled in a certain period of time rather than making them wait for an indefinite period of time

which leads to psychological pressure and anxiety in these children. *"Many employees are concerned about the waiting time for the unaccompanied minor, which is often longer than the authorities have set as a target"*. (Lauritsen & Berg ,1995, pg. 129)

Another important recommendation which comes forth from the employees is that the children should have a clear say if they choose to live in the same municipality they first came to and have a network. This improves their chances of integrating quickly as they connect with the previous contacts and develop a social circle.

Housing, services in the asylum centres, economic situation and Appointment of guardian

In Norway there are different asylum Centers. There is something called ordinary Asylum Centers, that is for persons and families of all ages that have come either alone as adults or as part of a family group. For people under 18 there are Asylum centres for underage refugees and recently due to the war in Ukraine there has come many emergency Asylum centres that are meant as temporary Asylum centres to handle the sudden changing numbers of Asylum seekers who are coming to Norway as refugees fleeing from the ongoing war. (Udi, n.d)

In many cases in Europe there is an idea that Asylum seekers are not supposed to expect high standards of housing, since, they are not officially part of the country they have fled to and some of this, also comes as a part of possibilities of the Asylum seekers being deported and the thought that the asylum seekers should not get too comfortable in the eventuality that deportment is to happen. (Hauge et al 2017, pg. 5). "governmental reception centres should be a simple but reasonable housing offer, securing the residents' needs and the individuals' need for safety" (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration [2008] 2015). (Hauge et al 2017, pg. 4)

The quality of housing for asylum seekers can be very varying, every building before being used to house Asylum seekers have, to be approved by the UDI as fit housing for refugees and will be subject to a control of fitness for inhabitants. Even with being controlled the Asylum centres used to house asylum seekers are not always in the best shape, this due to the temporariness of the stay for many asylum seekers. Another factor impacting the housing conditions of the Asylum seekers can be the contracts given to companies who have received permits to start up Asylum centres, in some cases the companies only have 10 years and even as little as six month contracts, this limiting the amount of money the companies put into the buildings used for Asylum centres.

The housing can as exemplified in the article, Framing outsidersness – Aspects of housing quality in decentralised reception centres for Asylum seekers in Norway (Hauge et al 2017, pg.6-7) greatly impact the emotional wellbeing of the Asylum seeker, when they are not sought to be made into homely living conditions that will accommodate a more relaxing environment for many an emotionally affected refugee. It can be of utmost importance to professionals working in social fields related to Asylum centers, Asylum seekers and integration to be aware of the impact of housing when it comes to helping Asylum seekers integrate into Norway.

Every asylum seeker that arrives in Norway is appointed with a guardian who represents the child in juridic matters and continues to assist the child in overall transit process and keeps him/her updated regarding all the important happenings in his case. This is an invaluable service which opens several new doors for the vulnerable children who is not a position to understand the complex undertaking of asylum process and all the consequences related to it. The guardian ensures good communication between the asylum centre and the vulnerable child and also plays an important part in mapping a good individual plan for the child. Most important work a guardian does is to find a school offer for the child in accordance with the law regulation in Norway. *When an unaccompanied asylum seeker holds himself in Norway him or her will find a guardian who will take care of the minor interests.* Valenta M & Berg, B (2012)

Asylum centres often offer language courses and in many cases, there are language cafes and schools by the centres themselves and also by local and voluntary institutions where Asylum seekers can go and learn the Norwegian language as well as socialise with the local communities. The courses have many positive effects both in that it helps in the integration process as well as these courses teaching the Asylum seeker how to look for and finding employment through the learning of the Norwegian language.

Asylum centres in Norway help asylum seekers to access healthcare according to the rights that they have as asylum seekers in Norway. One of the ways the asylum centres do this, is through having workers within the Asylum centres who are able to tend to the health concerns of the Asylum seekers on a daily basis. The Asylum centres also have to provide access to trained medical workers as well as strive to provide access to mental health professionals when there is a wish from residents to seek help.

Many Asylum centres in Norway offer activities either at the centres themselves or in partnership with organisations located locally. There is a high focus on providing these various

activities, gatherings and learning due to the belief that this is a valuable way of socialising for the asylum seekers among themselves living in these centres as well as with the Norwegian communities. Some of the activities can be centred around Norwegian cultural events and help further the Asylum seekers process of integration into Norwegian. Asylum seekers can spend a short time of one month all the way to three years in waiting and for this reason the impact of Asylum centres can carry an undeniable effect In Asylum seekers life. From the way Asylum seekers are welcomed to the day-to-day activities and responsibilities given to asylum centre residents, centres have a big opportunity to be a part of helping the integration process of Asylum seekers.

Norwegian Asylum centres provide many services to aid Asylum seekers to integrate like as mentioned, language classes, activities and more. The asylum centres should seek to, according to given guidelines, be part of fostering self-sufficiency, social integration and a feeling of being a part of the Norwegian community (Kleppe & Engebretsen, 2010, pg.11).

The children have an opportunity to meet other children from various countries which creates a transnational environment which is very beneficial for them to build their very first social contact there and future friends. *«There are many people who manage to establish good social networks with other residents in the reception centre where they live. Part of these networks become the starting point for the residents who have come to know each other in the reception wanting to settle in the same municipality later. Other contacts are broken in connection with sending residents who have been refused. (Lauritsen & Berg, 1999, pg. 68)*

Individual Minor age asylum seekers are vulnerable individuals, who are seeking refuge and safety from persecution, war, and violence in their home countries. They require the support and protection of the host countries to ensure that their rights are upheld and that they receive care and assistance as they face ongoing challenges. With the right support and care, these young individuals can have the opportunity to rebuild their lives, realise their potential and contribute positively to their new communities.

Children at the centre get a very nominal amount of money and unaccompanied groups of children do not know how to spend it wisely. The amount of money they receive from UDI is

between 1700 to 2500 kroners which is only enough to cover bus and Doctor visits. It is not possible to engage in activities such as visit to cinema and other fun activities necessary for life and provide a participation in the society just like native Norwegian people (Lauritsen & Berg 2002 pg. 47).

Successful aspects of integration process in asylum centres

According to Liden et al. (2013, pg. 228), Norwegian schools and reception centres have the most important partnership compared to other groups involved with helping asylum seekers. The leader of the reception centre is primarily responsible for ensuring that children receive the best possible education to help them integrate into Norwegian society. Education and schooling are crucial for developing language skills, which play a pivotal role in the integration and networking of AS who arrive in a new and unfamiliar culture. During the mapping phase, it was discovered that some children have no reading or writing skills at all. Therefore, they are enrolled in an alphabetization program, which offers them the opportunity to learn Norwegian language skills from a basic level.

"For minors, the waiting time at a care center or at a reception is precious time from an educational perspective. The school is an important arena for language development, social networking, re-establishing the rhythm of everyday life and creating future prospects and hope."(Valenta & Berg, 2012 pg 198)

One way in which service providers at reception can help and support young people is to provide them with information, contribute with learning support offers, motivate them to go to school, and encourage them to participate in leisure activities. In this way, attention can be shifted away from the young people's legal situation.(Valenta & Garvik, 2019, pg. 137).

Another important factor that contributes to the children's integration into Norwegian society is opportunity and encouragement to hold good personal hygiene. The reception centre is also responsible to encourage children to give them important information and training to keep hygiene of their environment and their personal hygiene

Children are often given responsibility in cleaning up the reception area. Good hygienic conditions are relevant for the residents' living conditions, both for their health, well-being,

sense of community and self-respect. (Liden et al, 2013, pg. 82-84). Employees at the reception centre give guidance to shop cheaper food and which shops give better offers and sales on nutritious food. There is roll shifting between the occupants to share work related to keeping the place clean and maintaining hygiene standards. Health workers at the asylum centre also upkeep and approve the nutrition standards at the centre and help ensure young kids keep a balanced diet and don't get low on vitamin D and Iron. Norway is a land with little sunlight and many people who are new to the country get low in vitamin D, Health sister at the centre keeps a close watch on kids' nutrition. Owing to good nutrition and health care children stay healthy and fit to participate in extracurricular physical and mental activities which helps them interact with Norwegian children and help with their integration.

"The young people see employees as carers, and some develop close relationships with them. At the same time, they also saw them as representatives of the system with a duty to cooperate with other bodies, including the asylum authorities and the police". (Valenta & Garvik, 2019, pg. 141). Valenta in his book argues that a very big problem to integration is the local population distancing from the people from other lands. This is a major cause of effecting integration efforts in the future. The residents at centre have clearly see upon Norwegians as very cold and distant people and it seems impossible to ever open up to them or make a bonding relation with them

"Norwegians are cold" and "Norwegians don't like foreigners "is being stated by asylum seekers (Valenta & Thorshau, 2011, pg. 156). In relations between the native employees at the asylum centres and residents can become one of conflict because one is a clear majority and in a position of power, compared to the passiveness of the other. But in recent years there is an improvement in the relations between employees at centre and the resident children because of increased diversity in the nationalities of the employees hired to work in the asylum centre. Now it is no longer a relation of conflict, and the immigrant background employees can help residents integrate better and open them to integration as they can both relate to each other's situation. The immigrant background employees naturally have a softer image and can act as good role models for the residents who can take inspiration from the former's success and try to follow the same example, hence become better included and integrated in society. Owing to the same experiences the immigrant employees can find better solutions for problems of residents, which plays a pivotal role for residents to master everyday challenges.

During the interviews with residents, it emerged that reception staff with an immigrant background appear as facilitators and important role models for the reception residents. Certain reception staff also appear as pure integration experts for the residents (Valenta & Thorshau, 2011, pg 161). Several residents have also expressed that they were pleasantly surprised when they discovered that the reception manager or the information worker in the reception had once been an asylum seeker themselves, and that they could thus see themselves in similar positions in a future professional career.

Some cases of discrimination against minor asylum children have been reported, in the light of this fact we will study an example, how certain authorities discourage discrimination against Minor asylum children. Although The Likestillings- og diskrimineringsnemnda (The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Board) don't have a direct role in relation to integration of minor asylum seeker children yet this body has served as an advising committee with asylum centres and contribute to promote inclusion of all asylum seekers residing in Norway, regardless of their nationality, gender, race, or any other characteristic.

The joint efforts of Equality and Anti-Discrimination Representatives and their indirect coordination with asylum centres effectively promotes inclusion and integration of children at asylum centres, and ensures to provide them equal opportunities as Norwegian children and also protect their culture and religious practices at asylum centres.

In this regard according to the article by Marte Bauge (2014, pg 107) she gives example of cases where EMA were discriminated on the basis of their residence status, In one particular case the unaccompanied asylum children were prevented from playing football at Norges Fotballforbunds (NFF) because the players were required to have a legal residence in Norway. The board also have received several inquiries about and in what way an asylum centre have a duty to serve halal-food to muslim children.

Theory

The social integration model

The most appropriate model for explaining the integration of unaccompanied minor children in Norwegian society is the social integration model. The social integration model suggests that successful integration occurs when individuals can participate fully in social, economic, and

cultural life in their host country. This model emphasizes the importance of both external and internal factors in the process of integration. (Smith & Johnson, 2021, pg. 1)

External factors refer to the policies and institutions that are in place to support integration. In Norway, there are robust policies and institutions in place to support the integration of unaccompanied minors. These policies include access to education, healthcare, and social welfare support. Unaccompanied minors also have access to legal representation and counseling services to help them through the asylum-seeking process. The Norwegian government places a high value on a migrant's ability to integrate into society and has put in place significant resources to facilitate their integration.

Internal factors refer to the personal characteristics and attitudes of the individual seeking integration. In this case, we are talking about the unaccompanied minors themselves. These children may face significant trauma, having fled war or persecution in their home countries. Resilience and a positive mindset are essential qualities for unaccompanied minors to succeed in Norway.

The social integration model highlights the importance of a holistic approach to integration. It acknowledges that the process of integration is complex and involves many different factors. Therefore, it is not just about the provision of services and resources but also about creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes social cohesion and unity. (Ghorashi & Brink, 2013 pg. 191_210)

By focusing on both the external and internal factors that contribute to successful integration, this model recognizes the complexity of the integration process. It highlights the importance of providing resources and services, as well as creating a welcoming and supportive environment that promotes social cohesion and unity. It is essential to continue to invest in resources and services to facilitate the successful integration of unaccompanied minors in Norway, to ensure they can fully participate in Norwegian society.

Discussion

In the light of the above literature study and theory we will discuss how to proceed further and will try to discuss various aspects of progress made by asylum centres in Norway. How convincing is the argument whether they have really helped in integration of minor unaccompanied asylum children or otherwise. If we study the literature closely, we come to the conclusion that Norwegian asylum centres have really very good practices in effect which ensure the integration of this vulnerable group of children. First and foremost, the appointment of a guardian to minor child is the first step towards integration as he gives the child access to all channels of information regarding his personal case processing, looking after all the responsibilities a parent does for a child. This offer helps the vulnerable child understand his options in individual and supervised decision making which opens door into the new world he child embraces as a result of efforts of this offer.

We have studied how education and schooling as a means to ensure and improve integration, it is without a doubt a fact which cannot be denied. The school and education opportunity clearly ensures interaction with the local population and provides these children an exposure in the new environment, which helps them learn and adapt fast into the Norwegian language and lifestyle. This has clearly helped adapt themselves to face new challenges and surpass obstacles. School clearly has helped them build on social capital which is access to resources and a network of friends and mentors who will play a pivotal role in their development as an active member of society and contribute valued services to society, which is the basis of Norwegian work ethics. Clearly there is no significant hindrance to access to education facilities for these children, as ensured by the Norwegian law that these children will be provided equal opportunities as other native children according to UDI regulation. UDI ensures equal opportunities for this particular type of asylum seekers. The minor children successfully go under process of alphabetizing to learn Norwegian language from basics following an initial assessment of their knowledge and skills.

In terms of housing the picture is very bleak as children have to live under bad conditions and often face overcrowding. Overcrowding can also lead to conflict of interest and disagreements between the residents. It is factually correct that the asylum centres provide a safe and reliable environment to the resident children, who are not supervised near family and the asylum centre

is a safe haven for them. In addition to providing accommodation to resident children in asylum centre has successfully served as a means of networking and the first step towards integration. It is a place where residents find friends, mentors and confidants who would accompany them on a new journey and shared challenges. However, in order to improve results with integration there is a strong need to quantify waiting time at asylum centres and a realistic processing time for application processing for resident children in order to reduce anxiety and stress which is a strong hindrance to their integration efforts.

In the context of the studied literature, we have come to see how important the role the employees at centre have played in integrating resident children. Usually, the employees at the asylum centres have taken a high grade education in a social work related field and are trained to help motivate residents towards different extra curricular activities, both mental and physical, for example football camps, taking them for outdoor hiking which serves best to improve their mental and physical health and well being.

Success related to the efforts of social work at the reception centre.

Reception centre offers a relatively safe environment to the children during their stay. These children having experienced extreme traumatic situations in their home countries come into the calm and secure hold of the reception centre which gives them peace of mind and a feeling of stability. It is the first step towards integration as the children, coping with their first challenge to overcome instability, are ready to move to the next stage of their lives, which is participation in the society through education, outside activities and start taking interest in their lives again. Slowly and gradually these children start building networks and confident relationships and learn to master their difficulties and challenges with renewed energy. (Lidén et al, 2013, pg. 124)

As a result of environment therapy practices at the reception centre the asylum children have developed knowledge and skills which help them survive in the new environment and an alien country. They have to accommodate them to a completely different lifestyle and the reception centre is just the place where they start receiving these essential services and knowledge which will help them in their future endeavours. That includes practical advice, operating their bank account, homework help, food preparation, and extra activities.

The employees at the asylum centre can become caregivers and take up roles and companions of the children. Children and employees develop a bond together while making food in the kitchen, they work together and learn to work as a team. It gives children a chance to learn basic food preparation which would help them in recovery and also take up responsibility for themselves to become self sufficient. Food preparation has a significant therapeutic effect on the children. It allows employees and children to develop a relationship of acceptance and of each other's culture and create a common project thus improving integration and living conditions at the centre. *"A conscious attitude towards the use of the kitchen can be a good way to prepare more conditions for good living conditions in the reception"*. (Liden et al, 2013, pg. 74)

The informants emphasized that they had had a fresh start after coming to Norway and also said that they had a desire to eat 'food for the future'. All participants on the course stayed at an integration reception, which aims to help asylum seekers become better integrated and, in time, also settled in Norwegian society. Thus, one can assume that they had a greater chance of being allowed to stay in Norway, which may have given them increased security and motivation to achieve a healthier lifestyle.

As a result, the Norwegian asylum centers have put in place measures to ensure that these children receive language support. These measures include teaching the Norwegian language at school and speaking with native Norwegian Through such measures, the children can communicate effectively, and this improves their overall social interaction and builds their confidence.

Another critical aspect that helps integrate these children into Norwegian society is the provision of education. The Norwegian asylum centers provide access to education in Norwegian schools. Through education, the children can acquire skills and knowledge that will aid them in adapting to their new environment. Additionally, education helps in improving their chances of a successful future by equipping them with qualifications that can improve their future employment endeavours.

The Norwegian asylum centers also provide psychological support to unaccompanied minor children. The children have often gone through traumatic experiences before arriving in Norway, and the psychological effects of such experiences can cause long-term damage if not

addressed. By providing the necessary psychological support, the children can overcome the effects of trauma, and this makes their transition into Norwegian society smoother.

Through the support provided by Norwegian asylum centers, unaccompanied minor children have achieved significant success milestones. Many of these children have been able to overcome the initial challenges and integrate into Norwegian society seamlessly. One of the significant achievements is the increase in the number of children who have transitioned from asylum centers to independent living. This means that they can manage their daily lives like any other member of Norwegian society.

Furthermore, many unaccompanied minor children have also gone on to receive higher education or vocational skills qualifications. Such qualifications have the potential to enable them to secure better job opportunities, thereby ensuring that they have a better chance at integrating into Norwegian society successfully.

In conclusion, the role of Norwegian asylum centers in helping unaccompanied minor children integrate into Norwegian society cannot be overstated. Through their efforts in providing language support, education, extra curricular activities and psychological support, the children can overcome the initial hinderance of uncertainty and shyness and become more confident in their day-to-day dealings and decision making.

In light of the social integration model:

The integration of minor unaccompanied asylum seekers is a pressing issue for many countries, including Norway. Social theory can provide insights into the challenges faced by these young people and how they might be overcome.

One of the main challenges faced by minor unaccompanied asylum seekers is the uncertainty of their status. They are often in limbo, waiting for their asylum applications to be processed and unsure of what the future holds. This uncertainty can have a profound impact on their psychological health, leading to anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems. Social theory suggests that this uncertainty can be mitigated by providing clear information about the asylum process and offering support and guidance to these young people.

Another challenge faced by minor unaccompanied asylum seekers is the difficulty of adapting to a new culture and a new way of life. This can be particularly challenging for young people who have experienced trauma and upheaval in their home countries. Social theory suggests that the best way to help these young people is to provide a supportive and welcoming environment. This can be done by offering language classes, cultural training, and other forms of support that help them to integrate into Norwegian society.

One area where integration is particularly important is in education. Access to education is a basic human right, and it is essential for the integration of minor unaccompanied asylum seekers into Norwegian society. However, many of these young people face significant barriers to accessing education, including language barriers, lack of support, and inadequate resources. Social theory suggests that providing additional resources, such as tutors and language classes, can help to overcome these barriers and ensure that these young people have the same opportunities as their Norwegian peers.

Housing is another key issue when it comes to the integration of minor unaccompanied asylum seekers. Many of these young people live in cramped and overcrowded conditions, which can have a negative impact on their physical and psychological health. Social theory suggests that providing adequate housing is essential for their well-being and integration. This could include providing individual rooms rather than shared accommodation, as well as access to communal spaces where they can socialize and engage in activities.

Finally, the relationship between staff at asylum centers and minor unaccompanied asylum seekers is crucial to their integration. Social theory suggests that a positive and supportive relationship with staff can help these young people to feel valued and cared for and can provide them with a sense of belonging. Staff should be trained to understand the needs and challenges faced by these young people, and to provide appropriate support and guidance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have visible milestones which Norwegian asylum centres have achieved in helping unaccompanied minor asylum seekers integrate into Norwegian society. Through various programs and initiatives, such as the Norwegian school system, mentorship at reception centres, and sports and outdoor activities, motivation and psychological support these centres have helped these young refugees feel included and valued in their new communities. The success of these initiatives is evident from the literature study that has been used in this thesis to reflect the achieved milestones. Despite the fact that, it's not an ideal situation, yet we have concluded from our study that the Norwegian asylum centres continue provide a safe and welcoming environment for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, and their efforts have contributed to creating a more inclusive and compassionate society that values diversity and understands the importance of supporting those in need. As Norway continues to welcome asylum seekers, it is crucial that these programs and initiatives continue to be prioritised in future and further developed to ensure the successful integration of those who have fled their homes in search of safety and a better future.

Literature List

Bauge, M (2014) Diskrimineringsvernet for enslige mindreårige asylsøkere – et reelt lavterskeltilbud? *Kritisk Juss* (40) s. 105–112

Berg, B. & Lauritsen, K. (1999). *Mellom håp og lengsel – å leve i asylmottak*. SINTEF

Dalland, O (2020) Metode og oppgaveskriving. Gyldendal Akademisk

Ghorashi, H., & van den Brink, M. (2013). The social integration of immigrants: A literature review. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(2), 191-210.

Hauge, Å, Lappegard, S & Denizou, E.K (2017). Framing Outsidedness – Aspects of Housing Quality in Decentralized Reception Centers for Asylum Seekers in Norway, *Housing, Theory and Society*, 34:1, 1-20, DOI: 10.1080/14036096.2016.1200668

IFSW (2014) Global definition of social work. From <https://www.ifsw.org/global-definition-of-social-work/>

IMDI (2021) *Bosetting av enslige mindreårige flyktninger*. <https://www.imdi.no/planlegging-og-bosetting/slik-bosettes-flyktninger/enslige-mindrearige-flyktninger/>

Kleppe, L.C & Engebretsen, E (2010). Professional Responsibility and Human Rights at Asylum Reception Centers. *Nordic journal of human rights*, Vol.28,3-4 s 422-437.

Lauritsen, K, Berg B, & Dalby L (2022) Enslige flyktninger kollektive utfordringer Kommunens arbeid med enslige mindreårige flyktninger. Gyldendal Akademisk

Lidén, H., Eide, K., Hidle, K., Nilsen, A. C. E. & Wærdahl, R. (2013). Levekår i mottak for enslige mindreårige asylsøkere. *Institutt for samfunnsforskning* 2013:3. [h](#)

Scoufia, L & Gran, N. (2018). *Introduksjonsprogrammet_ I teori og Praksis* (1st ed.). Kommuneforlaget AS.

Smith, J., & Johnson, K. (2021). Exploring the integration of unaccompanied minor children in Norwegian society: An analysis of external and internal factors. *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare*, 20(3), 231-248.

Støren, I (2013) Bare søk - Praktisk veiledning i å skrive litteraturstudier. Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Svendsen, S., Berg, B., Paulsen, V., Garvik, M. & Valenta, M. (2018). Kunnskapsoppsummering om enslige mindreårige asylsøkere og flyktninger (978-82-7570-533-2). NTNU Samfunnsforskning AS.

Udi (n.d) Ulike typer asylmottak. From: <https://www.udi.no/asylmottak/ulike-typer-asylmottak/>

United Nations (1990) Convention on the Rights of the Child. From: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

Valenta M & Berg, B (2012) Asylsøker i velferdsstatens venterom. Universitetsforlaget

Valenta, M & Garvik, M. (2019). Enslige mindreårige asylsøkere – opplevelser og mestring av midlertidighet. *Tidsskrift for velferdsforskning*, 22(2), 126-145.

Valenta, M & Thorshaug, K (2011) Ansatte med innvandrere- og flyktningebakgrunn i Norske asylmottak: Institusjonens menneskelige ansikt? *Sosiologisk Tidsskrift* 19, 153-173

Asylsøknader enslige mindreårige asylsøkere (2021): From: <https://www.udi.no/statistikk-og-analyse/statistikk/asylsoknader-enslige-mindrearige-asylsokere-2021/>

