



Diversity and integration

– strategic plan

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Preamble

Migration impacts the education system and the labour market. Union of Education Norway should be a driving force in safeguarding the rights of newly arrived migrant children, young people and adults in the education system. It is also important to society that teachers with qualifications from their home country are able to practise their profession in Norway. Teachers with a multicultural background have experiences that are useful to the union in terms of developing both organisational policy and education policy.

The union's Executive Board has adopted a strategy for how the entire organisation – from workplace level to municipal, county and central level – should take an holistic approach to diversity and integration. This approach centres around four key areas:

Part I: Initiatives for organisational development

1. Inclusion of newly arrived refugees with teaching qualifications and teachers with a multicultural background in Union of Education Norway
2. Step up the effort to recruit and include teachers with a multicultural background to positions within the union

Part II: Initiatives for improving integration in the education system

3. Fast track – accreditation of teachers with an immigrant and refugee background
4. Education as an independent right and a contribution towards integration – the role of the profession

When we use the term *teacher* we are referring to teachers across the education system – from early childhood education institutions to university.



Part I Organisational development – initiatives

In November 2018 Union of Education's Executive Board determined that two of the key areas were to concern organisational development (SST 182/18: "Diversity and integration in the education system and within the organisation"):

- » **Inclusion of newly arrived refugees with teaching qualifications and teachers with a multicultural background in the union**
- » **Step up the effort to recruit and include teachers with a multicultural background to positions within the union**

There is no quantitative data on union membership rates amongst the above-mentioned groups. Neither does the union want to nor is it able to produce union density statistics on newly arrived refugees, immigrants or others with a multicultural background.

There is research¹ which suggests that level of education, private/public sector, country background and time spent living in Norway all have an impact on union membership rates. For that reason we can assume that membership rates amongst first and second generation immigrants working as teachers are not particularly low. The degree to which membership activity and participation in the union are seen as inclusive and conducive to diversity is a different matter.

There are indications that the number of elected representatives with an immigrant background is relatively low and that their numbers begin to dwindle when we look at the central decision-making levels². It is therefore important to focus our attention on this issue.

The initiatives outlined in this plan are based on a democratic process within Union of Education Norway on the union's strategic plan for membership growth³. Some of the initiatives are repeated in both key areas in order to highlight the holistic nature of the work ahead.

1. Inclusion of newly arrived refugees with teaching qualifications and teachers with a multicultural background in Union of Education Norway

• The objectives of the initiative

Newly arrived refugees who are qualified teachers from their home country and teachers with a multicultural background shall feel welcome and want to be a member of the union community. It is a goal to achieve the same union density amongst all teachers and everyone should consider their membership to be meaningful and inclusive.

• Target group

Newly arrived refugees with teacher qualifications from their home countries and teachers with a multicultural background, including immigrants⁴ and Norwegian-born people with a multicultural background. Both elected and non-elected representatives of the union on all levels are responsible for implementing the initiatives.

Initiatives to improve efforts in this area:

Recruiting students

- ▶ A partnership should be established with the Pedagog-studentene association (teacher students' organisation within Union of Education Norway) on initiatives or campaigns to promote diversity and inclusion amongst its student members.
- ▶ Potential members who have completed or will be completing the fast track scheme (cf. part II chapter 3) must be identified.
- ▶ The work to recruit potential members who are on work placements must be stepped up – and the work for diversity and inclusion must be included.

Communication

- » **The Union of Education Norway must strive to use clear and inclusive language.**
 - ▶ Readily available materials, possibly in multiple languages.
 - ▶ Consciously use of inclusive language, e.g. "those of us who" instead of "those who".
 - ▶ The Union of Education Norway should seek to establish a common understanding of how the trade union movement's role and function in Norway is portrayed and how the social partnership works. New-comers are not necessarily familiar with the Nordic model. Many people might have negative experiences of trade union membership in their home country.
- » **A uniform portrayal of the trade union movement's role and function could be developed across the confederations.**

Training of union representatives

» Courses and/or training

- ▶ Diversity and inclusion as topics
 - ◆ for elected union representatives
 - ◆ for co-ordinators of membership growth
 - ◆ for local student branches or central seminars
- ▶ Union representatives involved in recruitment in the workplace
- ▶ Consider setting up advisory panel
- ▶ Consider holding dialogue conference

» The Union of Education Norway currently runs several programmes for people who are new to the working life. These programmes can be further geared towards the ambition of increased diversity and inclusion. For example:

- ▶ job application course
- ▶ involvement in career days at universities and university colleges
- ▶ work with the Pedagogstudentene association on the transition to professional membership
- ▶ recruit students on work placements
- ▶ support newly recruited staff in the workplace

External co-operation and dialogue

» Establish contact and dialogue with other unions and associations in order to exchange knowledge and make a joint effort to include people and groups with a multi-cultural background. Relevant organisations are:

- ▶ Unio⁵ and its affiliates
- ▶ Other confederations and their affiliates
- ▶ ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education)
- ▶ Other relevant organisations within the trade union movement / voluntary sectors



2. Step up the effort to recruit and include teachers with a multi-cultural background to positions within the union

- **The objectives of the initiative**

The aim is to increase diversity amongst elected union representatives so that they reflect the multicultural diversity that exists amongst the union's members. This is important in order to ensure up-to-date and relevant policy in all areas in which Union of Education Norway is involved.

- **Target group**

Members with a multicultural background.

Union representatives in the various parts of the organisation are responsible for implementing the initiatives. Election committees, membership growth co-ordinators, work- place co-ordinators and all workplace representatives have a particular responsibility.

Initiatives to improve efforts in this area:

Recruiting union representatives

- ▶ To generate interest in becoming a union representative, it is important to form good relationships between elected representatives and members at all levels.
- ▶ There must be close co-operation with the Pedagog-studentene association in order to reach the goal of greater diversity amongst union representatives.
- ▶ Working to create an inclusive workplace and union will help boost diversity at the union branches. Engaged and inclusive branches are a recruitment tool in themselves:

"Those that succeeded in recruiting immigrants [as union representatives] were branches that acted as a community and where more than one person was involved in running the branch"⁶.

Communication

- ▶ Union of Education Norway needs more representatives with an immigrant or multi- cultural background to serve as role models in the organisation and as union representatives. Union representatives should be activists and good role models, and the goal of increased diversity should permeate everything they do.
 - ◆ We need to create a culture where showing one's unique characteristics is seen as something positive rather than striving to "fit in".
 - ◆ Union representatives must be conscious of the language and words they use in order to avoid unnecessary barriers and alienation.
 - ◆ We must be especially aware of how language and culture in the trade union movement can alienate people.

Training of union representatives

- ▶ A plan should be drawn up for how elections should be held and how the election committees should work.
 - ◆ A guide⁷ for election committees has been produced which points out that members with a minority background should be encouraged to stand for election.
- ▶ The organisation should obtain information about how it is perceived in terms of diversity and inclusion both locally and centrally. If possible, obtain knowledge of how Union of Education Norway can attract potential representatives with an immigrant background.
 - ◆ Dialogue with relevant representatives and members
- ▶ Consider diversity in the organisation as a topic for the next member survey.
- ▶ Dedicated element in union representatives training courses on diversity and inclusion.
- ▶ The importance of diversity in the organisation must be addressed during seminars for young members and at any other courses and seminars where trade union awareness is being discussed. Workplace co-ordinators in the various county branches must be conscious of the need for diversity amongst union representatives. Diversity must be the standard to aim for in the drive to recruit union representatives in all workplaces.

External co-operation and dialogue

- ▶ Establish contact and dialogue with other unions and associations in order to exchange knowledge and make a joint effort to boost multicultural diversity amongst union representatives. Relevant organisations are:
 - ◆ Unio and its affiliates
 - ◆ Other confederations and their affiliates
 - ◆ ETUCE
 - ◆ Other relevant organisations within the trade union movement / voluntary sectors



Part II Initiatives for improving integration in the education system

Union of Education Norway should work to ensure that newly arrived migrants – children, young people and adults – are given a good and adapted education when they arrive in Norway. We should also seek to ensure that newcomers with teaching qualifications from their home country (outside the EU/EEA) are able to obtain the additional qualifications they need to work as teachers in Norway. Both these initiatives will help ensure that early childhood education institutions, schools and the higher education sector reflect Norway’s multicultural society.

3. Fast track – accreditation of teachers with an immigrant and refugee background

In 2016 the government and confederations signed a declaration of co-operation⁸ in order to get more newcomers into work – the so-called fast track programme. The aim of the programme was to create a pathway to work for those refugees with the greatest chance of finding employment. The authorities are putting the necessary measures in place, and both parties are working actively to create jobs. The authorities’ responsibilities in relation to the fast track programme include:

- » **Identify each person’s qualifications at the reception stage.**
- » **Create individual programmes for participants in the induction scheme straight after being housed.**
- » **Ensure immediate support for participants and employers on the fast track programme.**

The social partners will:

- » **Actively help create more and varied jobs and help ensure that refugees are given relevant work training and employment.**
- » **Disseminate information about the fast track programme and associated measures and what helps speed up the transition to employment.**

A major drive is underway involving a number of professions, including teachers, to develop the necessary supplementary training.

Accreditation of teachers with an immigrant and refugee background

As far back as 2016 the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and Oslo Metropolitan University were tasked with developing a fast track programme for teachers: “Complementary teacher training”. A continuing education programme has been created for those with teaching qualifications from outside the EU/EEA who lack the credentials to work as teachers in Norwegian schools. Applicants with a refugee background will be given priority. In addition to holding a teaching qualification from their home country, they also need to be proficient in Norwegian to at least level B1, NOKUT must have recognised the academic content of their training, and the Directorate for Education and Training must have declined to recognise their

existing qualifications. They must also have a residence permit and a criminal record certificate. The programme is currently offered to teachers in Years 5–10, but other year groups are also being considered. The number of applicants has risen as the programme has become better known. The biggest challenge to date has been poor Norwegian language skills.

- **The objectives of the initiative**

As Norway's largest teachers' union, it would be appropriate for Union of Education Norway to assume particular responsibility for closely monitoring the fast track programme, e.g. complementary teacher training, for teachers across the education system. The objectives of the initiative are to help ensure that newcomers with teaching qualifications can be accredited as teachers in early childhood education institutions and schools, that their training is appropriately organised and that they are welcomed into an inclusive professional learning community while studying and after gaining employment. Union of Education Norway should be a driving force for producing information for refugees in their own language about how they can qualify as teachers in Norway.

- **Target group**

This initiative is especially aimed at newcomers with teaching qualifications and/or relevant practical experience from their home country.

Within Union of Education Norway the target group is members and representatives at a local and national level. A national initiative with local adaptation is required.

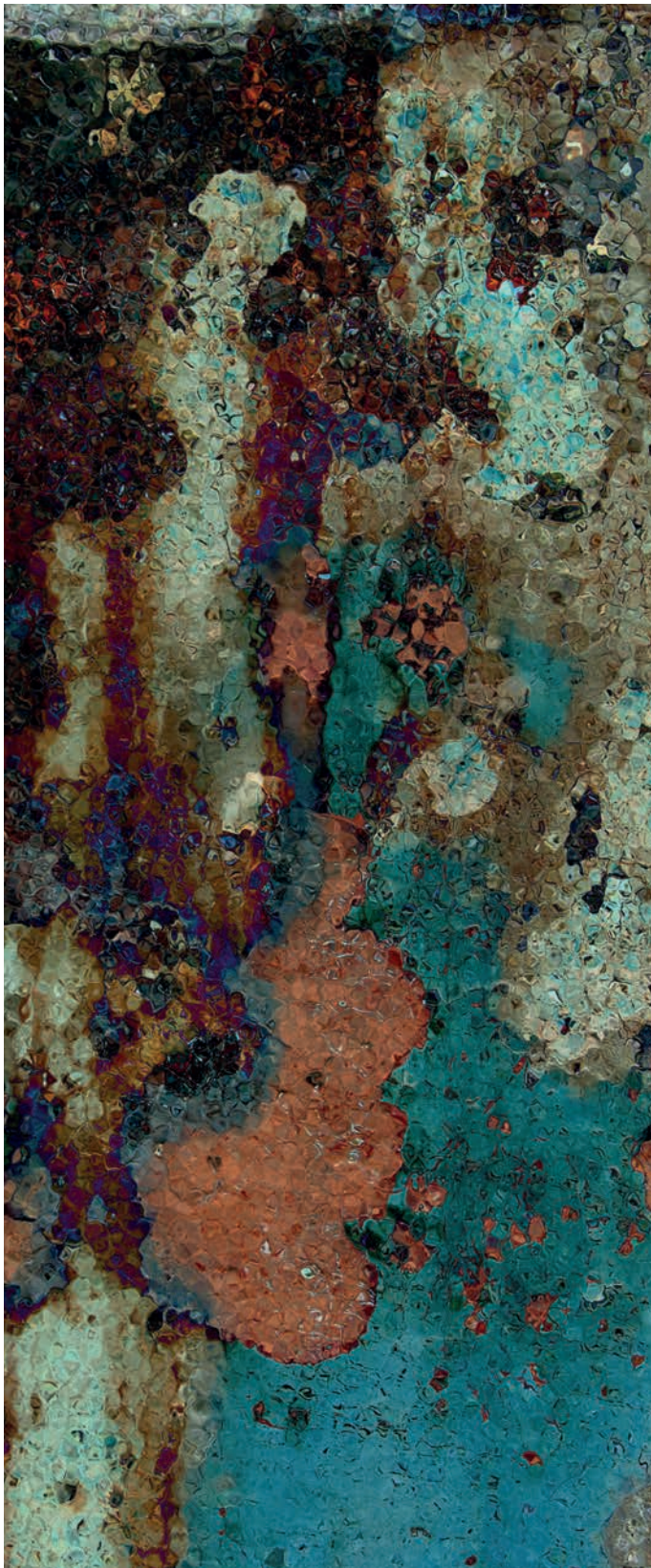
The importance of diversity and integration in the education sector

This initiative is important in a number of ways. It is important to each individual and to society that newcomers can use the qualifications they have obtained in their home country. Everyone who resides in Norway should feel that they are being looked after as individuals and seen as a resource in the workplace. Participation in the labour force contributes to integration, inclusion and diversity. At the same time it is important that the education sector as a whole, local communities and individual schools reflect the demographic changes that are taking place and ensure diversity amongst teaching staff. The experiences of this group of immigrants and newcomers should benefit the education system and trade union movement.

Initiatives to improve efforts in this area:

1. Better and more systematic knowledge of newcomers with teaching qualifications from their home country

- ▶ Help identify any practical, organisational and/or academic challenges that teachers may face when applying for recognition of their teaching credentials / teacher education.
- ▶ Initiate and request more research/inquiries into teaching qualifications from countries outside Europe.
- ▶ Instigate accompanying research on admissions and completion of complementary teacher training.
- ▶ Obtain more information about how other Nordic countries and teacher unions are working to give newcomers complementary qualifications or similar, possibly through a partnership with the Nordic Teachers' Council (NLS).



2. Issues to be addressed further by Union of Education Norway

- ▶ Follow up on the declaration of co-operation together with Unio and its affiliates.⁹
- ▶ Initiate a partnership with KS¹⁰ to ensure that newly arrived teachers are welcomed and make arrangements with tutors to provide adequate language tuition while they are studying.
- ▶ Consider other teaching training programmes along similar lines when working with the authorities, cf. the government's strategy, which proposes bilingual training.¹¹
- ▶ Consider scheme(s) for Union of Education Norway membership for teachers involved in continuing education in the form of complementary teacher training.
- ▶ Information about complementary teacher training should form part of Union of Education Norway's planned online resource for integration and inclusion.
- ▶ Develop information materials tailored to local circumstances and local organisation.
- ▶ Boost knowledge and awareness amongst union representatives at all levels of the organisation regarding recruitment of teachers who have completed complementary teacher training.

4. Education as an independent right and a contribution towards integration – the role of the profession

United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals emphasise that a good education is a prerequisite for improving quality of life, that girls and boys should have equitable access to high-quality education, and that it should be free. This right is enshrined in Norwegian laws and regulations. Newcomers have different backgrounds and qualifications. The Norwegian authorities have a responsibility to ensure newcomers access to education and training in the best possible way. Together with the authorities, the profession has a responsibility for reaching the goals.

• The objectives of the initiative

Teachers and leaders in schools and in early childhood education institutions should strengthen and further develop their role as professional practitioners vis-à-vis newly arrived immigrant children, young people and adults. One key issue for all newcomers is to ensure adequate tuition both in Norwegian and in their mother tongue as well as an equal opportunity to complete an education.

• Target group

Union of Education Norway members and representatives.

The process of ensuring diversity, inclusion and a good education for all must be at the heart of teacher training, professional practice and the professional learning community.

The significance of this initiative

Teachers and leaders play a key role in the organisation and the content of education and integration in early childhood education institutions, classrooms and schools. Early childhood education institutions and schools are often where newcomers first get a chance to familiarise themselves with Norwegian society, and the teaching profession therefore plays a crucial role for the children, pupils and their parents.

Initiatives to increase efforts in this area:

1. Union of Education Norway should be a driving force for ensuring good national framework conditions for supporting newcomers in education and training by:

- ▶ Being a constructive and critical partner to the authorities at all levels of the education system.
- ▶ Taking particular responsibility by being represented on expert panels, national councils and committees in order to ensure good solutions for integrating and including newcomers.
- ▶ Following up on the government’s integration strategy for 2019–2022, “Integration through knowledge”, through dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Directorate for Education and Training and NOKUT.
- ▶ Working to monitor and practise the legislation in early childhood education institutions and schools.
- ▶ Strengthening the legislation so it falls into line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Norway’s obligations.

2. Union of Education Norway should emphasize the needs of newcomers and secure resources for:

- ▶ Norwegian language and mother tongue training
- ▶ Appropriate and inclusive organisation of welcome classes / reception classes
- ▶ Special needs education
- ▶ Improved counselling

3. Take the initiative to investigate particular challenges regarding facilitation for newcomers in respect of:

- ▶ vocational training / upper secondary education
- ▶ compulsory education
- ▶ adult education
- ▶ early childhood education institutions
- ▶ teacher training programmes

4. Produce resource guides / online resources for newcomers and for union representatives and members working in early childhood education institutions, schools and adult education.

Sources and references

- ¹ Inter alios Nergaard et al. 2015 cited in Hagen & Steen Jensen (2016): Can you represent me? Recruiting union representatives amongst immigrants in Norway. (Article in the periodical *Søkelys på arbeidslivet* 03/2016)
- ² Hagen & Steen Jensen (2016)
- ³ Union of Education Norway's strategic plan for membership growth: www.utdanningsforbundet.no/tillitsvalgt/tillitsvalgt-pluss/rutiner-for-tillitsvalgte/medlemsvekst/strategiplan-for-medlemsvekst2/strategiplan-for-medlemsvekst/
- ⁴ Cf. Statistics Norway's definition: www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/slik-definerer-ssb-innvandrere
- ⁵ Unio is the the confederation that mainly organize public employees with three or more years of higher education. Among those are nurses, police and Union of Education Norway
- ⁶ Svensen & Svensson 2002:63 cited in Hagen & Steen Jensen 2016
- ⁷ Union of Education Norway (2018): Electing union representatives at the UEN – a guide for council and election committee members: www.utdanningsforbundet.no/globalassets/organisasjonen/veiledere/veileder_valg_av_tillitsvalgte_i_utdanningsforbundet_2.pdf
- ⁸ Declaration of co-operation (2016): "Declaration of co-operation over faster integration of immigrants with a refugee background in the labour market": www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/3950cf3809a94680b6d2d3e1920f1c06/samarbeidserklaring_integrering_arbeidslivet.pdf
- ⁹ KS is the public employers' organisation on municipality and county level
- ¹⁰ Declaration of co-operation (2016)
- ¹¹ See page 20, item 9 and page 22, item 15 in Ministry of Education and Research (2019): Integration through knowledge. The government's integration strategy 2019–2022: www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/b98e1d0bbe9248cb94e00d1e935f2137/regjeringens-integreringsstrategi-20192022.pdf

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