
Setting up a resource centre for men

Ideology and best practice from
Reform – resource centre for men, Norway

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The four basic rules of masculinity

- “No sissy stuff”
 - Masculinity is based on the relentless repudiation of the feminine. Masculinity is never being a sissy.
- “Be a big wheel”
 - Masculinity is measured by the size of your pay-check.
- “Be a sturdy oak”
 - What makes a man a man is that he is reliable in crisis. He is a rock, a pillar, a tree.
- “Give ‘em hell”
 - Take risks, live life on the edge, go for it!

(M. Kimmel)



reform

RESOURCE CENTRE FOR MEN www.reform.no

Reform – resource centre for men

- A non-profit NGO
- National centre for knowledge on men
- Promotes male perspectives in the media and in the general public – related to gender equality
- Initiates and participates in national projects focusing on men and boys
- Participates in international projects
- Helps men on the local level through several services
- Funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Gender
- Additional project funding

Our vision is

a society based on
diversity and equality
where power and
care are shared
irrespective of gender

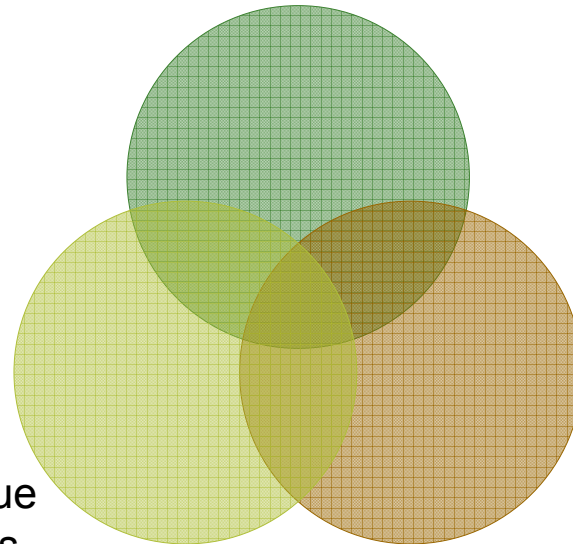


Reform aims to

- Improve men's and boys' life quality in a gender equality perspective
- Develop, collect and disseminate knowledge on men and boys
- Support men and boys on the local level with relevant services

Reform has a unique position as a resource centre for men

Provide male perspectives
on structural levels



Contact and dialogue
with men and boys

Knowledge on men
and boys

Employees and associates

■ Staff

- ❑ Director (1)
- ❑ Advisors (5), clinical and academic competence (psychotherapy, health, gender and sociology)
- ❑ Accountant and administration (1)

■ Volunteers

- ❑ Men's helpline (15-20)
- ❑ Lawyers (3)
- ❑ Associated therapists and men's group leaders (4)

Gender equality as a win-win situation

- What can men gain from gender equality and decreased patriarchal structures
- Gender equality as a method for improved life quality for men, women and children
- Identification and recognition of specific male issues in a gender equality perspective

Common issues among men – when discussing gender equality

- Men and women should be evaluated equally as caregivers – in work life and family life.
- Work life should evolve practices whereby men can give priority to their families and private lives.
- Equal-status policies should be created with regard to both men and women – combine measures for men with measures for women.
- Equal status should be connected to common values like care, humanism and democracy.
- Equal status does not mean being or becoming identical.
- Dismantling the stereotypes of men.

Core areas identified by Reform

- Prevention of domestic violence
- Men's health
- Marginalized boys in education
- Men and care
- Ethnic minority men
- Men's sexuality in the context of prostitution and trafficking

Reform runs the following services for men (2007)

- Website www.reform.no
- Individual counselling service (361)
- Anger management groups (48 men in 6 groups)
- Legal advisory service (46)
- Men's helpline (610)
- Seminars and workshops

Reasons for contacting Reform

- Family related counselling (21%)
- Divorce or separation (20%)
- Domestic violence matters (19%)
- Child custody arrangements and conflicts (15%)
- Lifestyle related matters (10%)
- Other (15%)

Why focus on domestic violence?

- Men are concerned about domestic violence: 4/10 consider domestic violence as a serious social problem of public matter, only 1/10 consider it as a strictly private matter
- Men wish to put an end to all domestic violence: 3/4 report some kind of action taken, 3/4 consider violence against women never acceptable
- Young men and boys seem to be in lack of basic knowledge about domestic violence (volume, definitions etc)
- Perpetrators seek help when programmes are available
(Amnesty/Reform report 2007)

Reform recommends measures on structural levels for preventing domestic violence

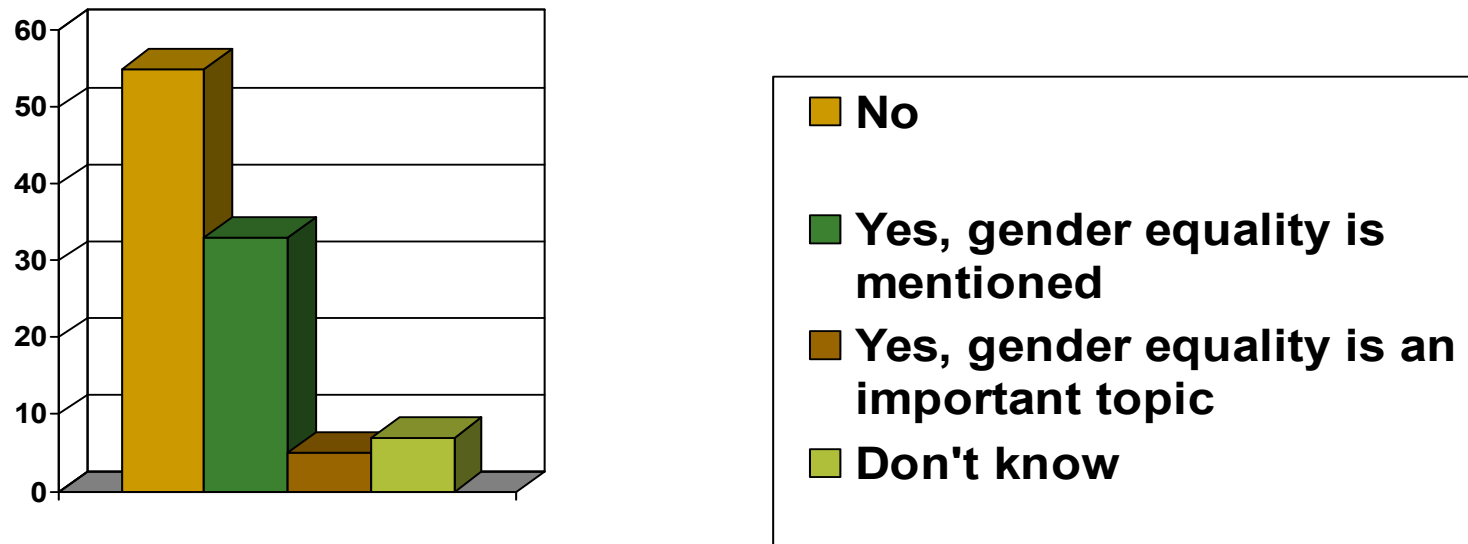
- Increase the availability and the quality of pointed treatment programs for perpetrators
- Create and implement pointed and focused educational programs for young men and boys on domestic violence and stereotypes in masculinity
- More research on domestic violence – volume, gender patterns, effect of treatment programs etc

Why is a gender perspective on men's health crucial?

- Men's health situation is polarized
- Divorce is harmful to men's health
- Women are afflicted when their male partner becomes ill
- Women suffer from the early loss of their partner
- Men commit suicide three times as often as women
- Health issues and illness that afflict men
 - Death from accidents
 - Cardiovascular diseases
 - Prostate related diseases
 - Testicular cancer
 - Alcohol and substance abuse
 - Depression
- Life expectancy for men 77 and for women 82 (N)

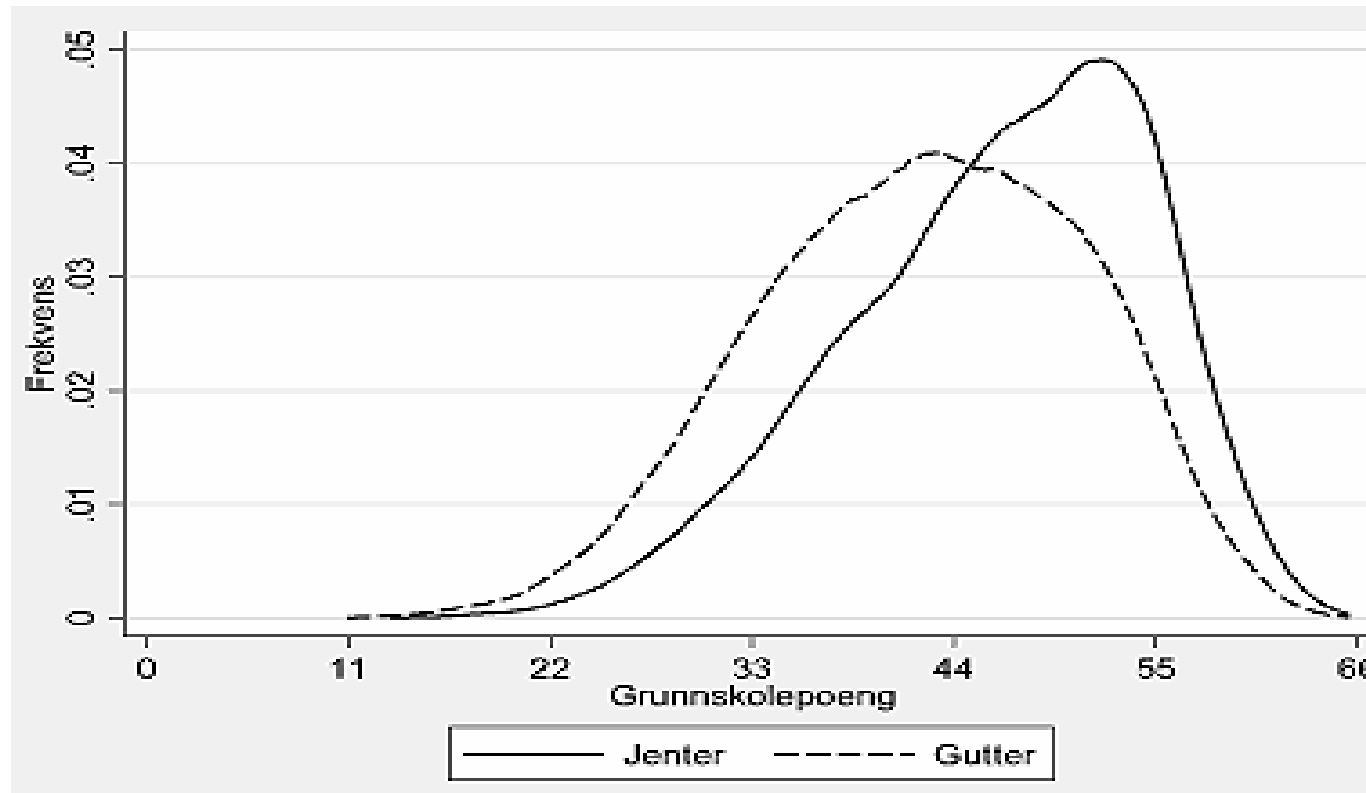
Why focus on boys in education?

Is gender equality a topic in the annual curriculum in your ECEI?



Panel: persons organised in
Union of Education Norway,
n = 155 ECEI teachers,
March 2007

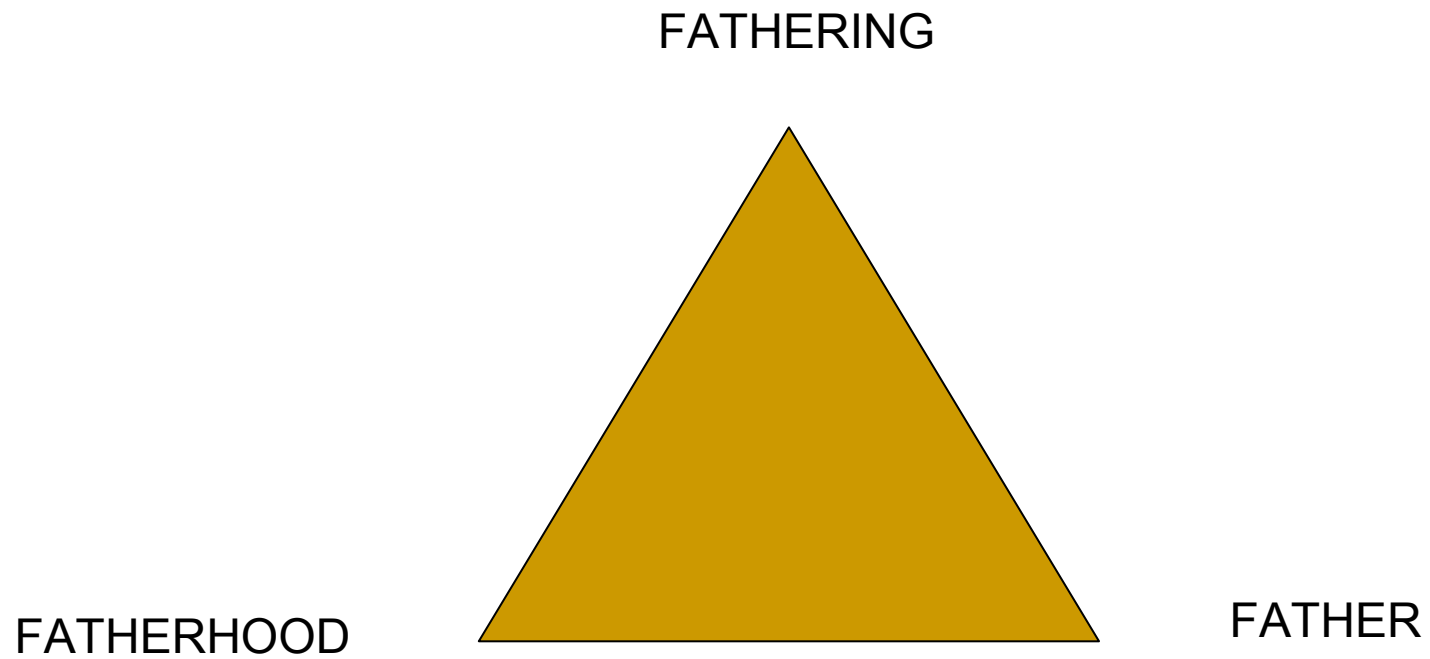
Marginalized boys in education



Men and care

- Professional care
 - Gender segregated labour market
 - Men are rare in the care- and education sectors like pre-school, schools, hospitals, institutions for the elderly
- Private care
 - 90% fathers take advantage of the fathers quota of 6 weeks, 17% use more than 7 weeks
 - Women keep the custody for children after more than 80% of all family break ups

Fathers role



David Morgan, 2002

Father – relates to the individual rights and duties of being a father, stories from fathers

Fatherhood – relates to the cultural codes of being a father, bad or good fatherhood

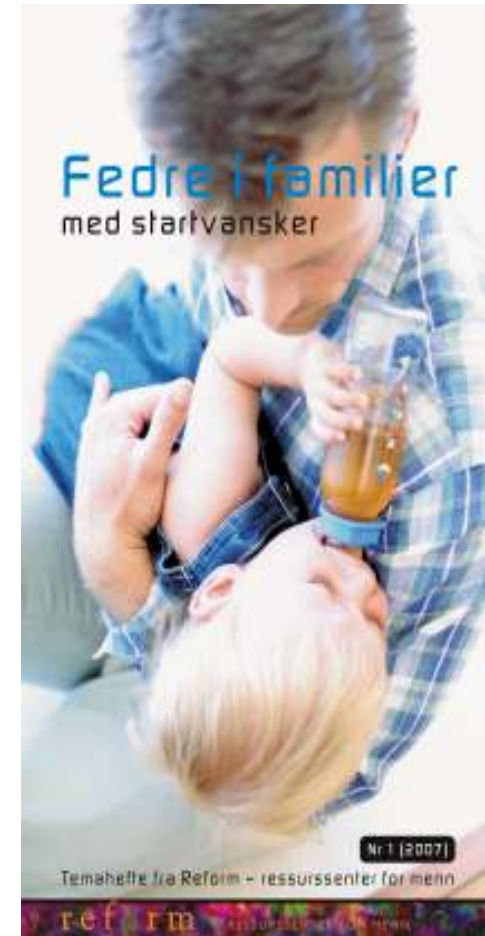
Fathering – relates to the doing and being of fathers, identities and practices, male activities related to the well-being of the child

Fathering is

- Time – quantity and continuity
 - Activities – related to care
 - Stories – narratives on men and children
 - Everyday life – routines related to care
 - Diversity – variation
 - Pain – absence and lack of competence
 - Work life balance – negotiations with employers and partners
 - Context – legislation, welfare arrangements etc
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Activities from Reform - resource centre for men

- Project on fathers in families experiencing pre- or post natal depressions
- Documentation - through two fathers groups (20 fathers) lasting 6 months each – of expressed needs, experiences, efforts, practice, WLB etc
- Creation of a tool-kit addressed to health care workers



Father does - A new publication on caring masculinities in a lifetime perspective (April 2008)

- preparedness
- start phase
- work and family life balance
- caring activities
- various practices
- break ups/downs
- risks
- late phase



Project on ethnic diversity in fathering

Project focusing on the primary health clinics' meetings with ethnic minority fathers. Aims at analyzing the efforts made by primary health clinics to address e.m. fathers in specific, and the evaluation by the fathers and clinic staff of their encounters and interaction.

Project phases:

1. Map current knowledge about e.m. fathering in Norway
2. Interviews (16 in total) with e.m. fathers and professional health care workers in Oslo and Trondheim
3. Make recommendations and create a tool kit
4. Reporting and dissemination of the project results early 2009

Project on male buyers of sexual services

www.sexhandel.no

- project funded by the governmental Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children
- website operated by Reform
- the purpose of the website is to curtail the demand that creates a market for human trafficking in prostitution. The website is meant to encourage a debate and to draw attention to the link between prostitution and trafficking.
- contains information and facts about prostitution and trafficking, and offers the opportunity to participate in discussions on the web forum, as well as counselling by phone.



More activities...

- Member of  The European Mens' Health Forum

- Men's health week conference 2007: Man – body and soul



Thank you for your attention!