

# From a Mono-cultural to Multicultural Region in Less Than a Generation



**HORDALAND  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Hordaland** – The Central County of Western Norway

## New challenges require new knowledge – whose responsibility?

In less than a generation Norway has developed from a relatively homogeneous society to a society characterised by ethnic diversity. Hordaland County – situated on the west coast of Norway – has 462 000 inhabitants and is the third largest immigrant county in the country. In 2008 immigrants from more than 200 nations made up approx. 10 % of the county's population. The largest groups outside of the EU originate from Iraq, Somalia, Russia and the former Yugoslavia.

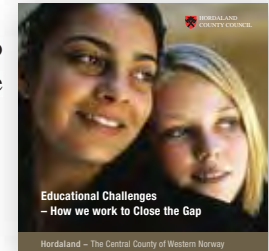
Global migration has an impact on our traditional way of life and places new demands on us, especially the public administration. It challenges our attitudes regarding similarities and differences, while, at the same time, we meet the positive aspects of a diverse society through new impulses.

Hordaland County Council is responsible for county policies within the following fields:

- Secondary education
- Cultural affairs
- Communications
- Dental health
- Economic development
- Regional planning (including the road system)

The county has a great deal of expertise regarding migration and has ambitious goals for the integration of refugees and immigrants. Our aim is to be a leading force within this field and pave the way for others. In this brochure we give a brief description of one of our pioneer projects: the Hordaland Model.

Also see the brochure on how we work to meet the educational challenges (picture on the right).





## Hordaland Model – a Tool for Cross-Cultural Understanding

Successful integration requires knowledge and good tools. Only a few of those active in the work force today have been given any kind of cross-cultural competence as part of their education or training. As an employer, Hordaland County Council has a responsibility towards its employees who work with minority groups.

To meet these new challenges in a multi-cultural society the County Council has developed the *Hordaland Model – courses in cross-cultural skills*. This is a method to build and align cross-cultural competence in the public sector. The model is suitable for all types of enterprises where employees work with minorities.

– If we are to be employers in a multi-cultural society we must do something about the knee-jerk reactions of people who have grown up in a mono-cultural society, says

*Human Resources Manager  
Geir Davidesen*

## Basic course adaptable to many uses


The core of the Hordaland Model is a basic course which can be adapted to the needs of all service activities and focuses on:

- Spreading cross-cultural competence at work
- Establishing network
- Stimulating staff to undertake further training and education

The course itself is designed as an interactive model. Emphasis is placed on the participants' experience and learning as well as creating space for reflection and awareness.

## Custom-made is the key

The work related to the course is also vital, such as initiating different processes which will enhance cross-cultural competence. An important point has been to document the needs of staff and user groups, as well as identifying the special needs of specialist professions. Custom-made is a key word here. Other important tools are to align this work with management, motivate managers and middle managers, recruitment and staff motivation.



– Before I only saw the veil,  
now I see the woman behind it.  
*A woman attending a course.*

## "We" just as much as "the others"

An important approach is to focus on ourselves, and not only "the others". Therefore the topics shown below are included:

- Human rights and Norway's international commitments
- Exile and migration process – how does this affect us?
- Majority and minority – who has the power of definition?
- Language and communication – managing a good conversation
- Interaction, conflict and occupational identity – or "am I a racist?"

## The work of integration is spreading

– From a very early age it was drummed into me by my father to watch out for "them there".

*Ethnic Norwegian pupil.*

Hordaland aims to be an example county within the area of integration. More than 2000 civil servants have attended the Hordaland Model course regionally and nationally from 2000 to 2008. More than 40 basic courses have been given in addition to 11 conferences on both regional and national level.

## Paving the way

The *Hordaland Model handbook – providing courses for cross-cultural skill* contains the lessons learned from the Hordaland Model. The handbook shows how focusing on closing the gap within skill-training can have secondary effects in the form of improved services and a better working environment for staff.

## Migration as a university course

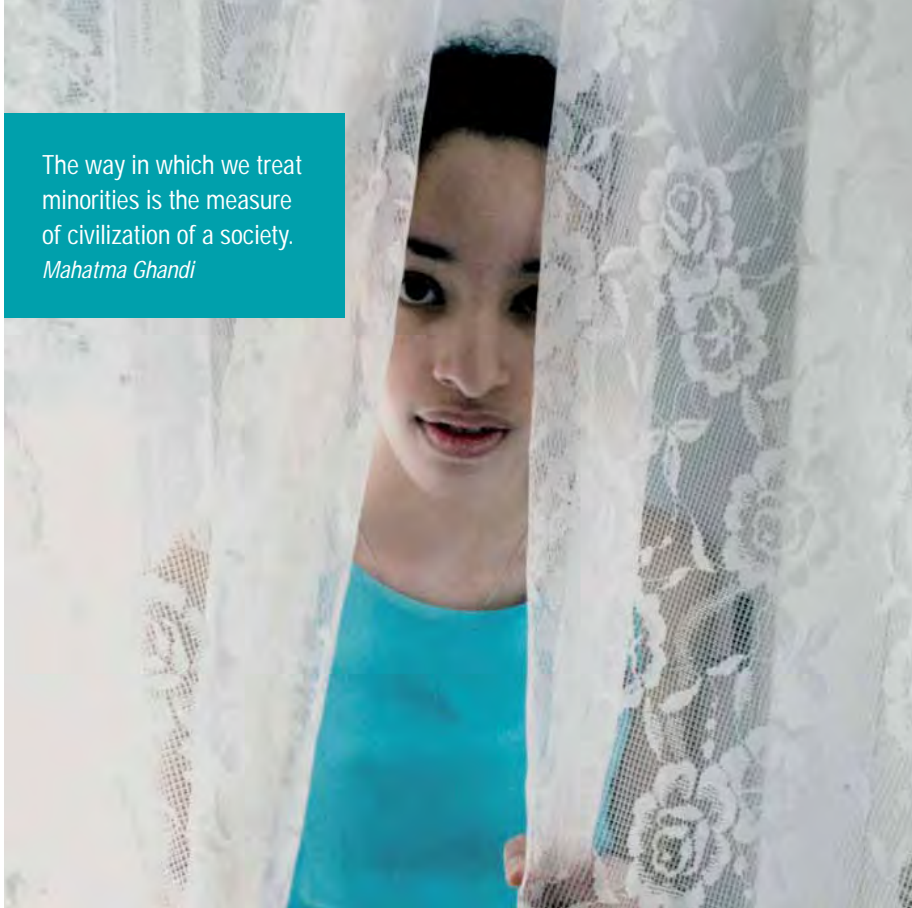
In cooperation with the University of Bergen a new course has been developed within the field of migration. The study *Norway – a country for immigration?* focuses on cultural boundaries, ethnicity, gender and intercultural communication. This is a pilot course aimed at employees seeking extension and post-graduation with programmes of study equivalent to ECTS 15 + ECTS 15.

For more information: [www.innvandring.uib.no](http://www.innvandring.uib.no)

## Hordaland Model – A National Pilot

Diversity through integration and participation is a national priority area and the Hordalandsmodell has been developed in close cooperation with:

- The Norwegian Directorate of Immigrants (UDI)
- The City of Bergen
- Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)
- Regional Union of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions in Hordaland
- The Norwegian Institute of Adult Learning (VOX)

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a bright blue top, looking through white lace curtains. The curtains have a floral pattern. A teal rectangular box is overlaid on the top left of the image, containing a quote.

The way in which we treat minorities is the measure of civilization of a society.

*Mahatma Gandhi*



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[www.hordaland.no/hordalandsmodellen](http://www.hordaland.no/hordalandsmodellen)

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