

women in movement



THE
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RESOURCE CENTRE



The MiRA Resource Ce

The aim of The MiRA Centre is to promote equality for the black, immigrant and refugee women in Norway.

We try to increase awareness about the specific conditions that often determine the life quality of minority women. Through well established legal and social services, information and networking, The MiRA Centre tries to strengthen minority women's position in Norwegian Society. MiRA is a place for self organisation. Through the active participation of minority women themselves the centre has created a space where we can define our own realities and name our own problems and strengths.

The MiRA Centre offers:

- Legal assistance and help in various crisis situations.
- Networking.
- Youth activities.
- Self- development courses.
- Counselling for psychological and emotional distress.
- Information.
- Publications.
- Audiovisual productions.

Legal assistance and crisis help

The MiRA Centre gives assistance on legal and social matters to immigrant and refugee women as well as young girls with minority background. These matters may include economical or marital problems, questions of immigration, family reunification and deportations or conflict within the family. MiRA has a close cooperation with the crisis centres in Norway and other institutions to protect minority women's human rights.

Abolish the three years rule!

The spouses who come to join their families from abroad are usually given a dependent legal status for a period of three years. They have to satisfy the immigration officials that they intend to stay together permanently, that they did not get married primarily in order to live in Norway and that they will be economically supported and accommo-

dated by their partners who are Norwegian residents. After the immigration ban in 1979 it has been women from the Asian and African continents especially who have been harshly affected by the three years rule. Domestic violence is a widespread problem within the Norwegian society. However, for the migrant woman, leaving a violent marriage can have severe consequences; she can lose her residence permit. Many women and children are afraid of returning to their countries of origin where they may face discrimination and even persecution from their families and communities. In many cases poverty within their families, or traditional values and beliefs about marriage and divorce means that most women have nowhere to return.

The MiRA Centre believes that there is a fundamental principle of human rights issues at stake in the way in which the three years rule operates. The immigration laws attack the right of all people to have secure family life and to determine the kind of lifestyle they want to lead. The Centre provides legal assistance to women who are the victims of immigration legislation.

Networking

The MiRA Resource Centre is the only networking organisation for minority women on national and Nordic level. The Centre frequently arranges seminars and conferences for minority women and young girls where they can discuss the issues related to their socio-economic, political and cultural situation. The members of the network regularly receive information about various activities at the centre and the women from the network actively participate in the development and formation of these activities. The network is the driving force behind all policy-making and political intervention in the public debate by The MiRA Centre.

If you want to be a part of MiRA's network or participate in any of the various activities organised by The Centre, please do not hesitate in contacting us.

Youth activities

The MiRA Centre is a meeting place for young girls with minority background. The young girls have their own activity groups and a debate and chat room on the Internet.

and Refugee Women

The MiRA Centre also has a broader network within the schools and its school campaign is very successful. The advisers from The MiRA Centre give assistance to the school authorities as well as the young girls and their parents on various matters of generation conflicts and intercultural communication. We provide a special course-package for teachers in order to increase their competence in multicultural and multilingual education.

I want to be myself

«I have never looked at myself as Norwegian, but also not as Iranian. I feel I'm both and more. We as young girls also have our rights and if our parents or the society around us do not respect who we are, we must try to convince them. We cannot give up after trying only a few times. We must demand respect for our own choices and give them the chance to understand us on our own premises».



Self-development courses

The MiRA Centre arranges courses for minority women in order to improve their self-image as well as to empower them to resolve their own problems. During these courses the women learn to mobilise their own inner resources in order to improve their life conditions. For more information please contact the centre.

Counselling for psychological and emotional distress

Migration to a new country involves many new adjustments. Leaving the family and friends and coming to a new environment where you might not know many people can create a feeling of loneliness. Until you learn the new language to communicate with the people around you, you might also feel isolation. The difficult life situations could be the breeding ground for many psychological and emotional problems. It is important to seek help in such situations. The MiRA Centre provides professional counselling for minority women in such life crisis. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need help. We are bound by an oath of confidentiality and it is strictly practised.

The MiRA Resource Centre for Black

Information and publications

Information is essential to create a solid two-way communication and to create mutual understanding of cultures and society. Information is also important to develop an insight into what it means to live in a multicultural society and to learn to respect the differences that exist or arise. The MiRA Resource Centre offers numerous activities and has a large information network, both for minority women and for the Norwegians who work with the issues of integration and minorities.

The centre publishes a magazine and various independent publications, which highlight the situation of minority women and young girls. We aim to build a library with documentation of audiovisual and written material for research and information purposes.

In addition to that, the women from the MiRA Centre hold lectures and offer courses to interested institutions, organisations and others on various issues such as arranged and forced marriages, female genital mutilation, minority women and immigration legislation, minority women in the media, violence against women, minority women at the labour market etc.

You can order our publications and video material by e-mail, fax, and telephone or by directly visiting The MiRA Centre.

Odin's Women Colouring the North

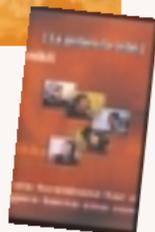
The series of five documentary films *Odin's Women Colouring the North* is a meeting with black, immigrants and refugee women from the Nordic countries who challenge the stereotypes about minority women.

They are determined to change the course of traditions in order to create a diversity of roles and the new forms of social interactions.



The young girls speak out

This is a documentary where young girls from various background speak about their experiences and what they think about arranged and forced marriages.



ck, Immigrant and Refugee Women

The background for The MiRA Resource Centre is, thus, to empower minority women and to provide a forum for opportunities for their own growth. We believe that a meeting place such as The MiRA Centre contributes to strengthening minority women's participation within society at various levels and making their resources visible to the society at large.

Despite the limited economic resources The MiRA Centre is dedicated to building bridges between individuals, groups and institutions in the Norwegian society. If you want more information or wish to participate in any of our activities, or if you wish to subscribe to the MiRA magazine, please contact us.

Also visit our website:
www.mirasenteret.no



Contact information

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