

Global Knowledge Project

Child protection institutions in Norway and how they operate.

Norwegian policy on Child protection care and child protection workers

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ABSTRACT

This research covers the period from February 2016 to May 2016. The topic under study was based on the Child protection care Institution in Norway and how they operate.

The research was mainly for academic purpose of which the researcher came up with four objectives which included 1) To find out what integration services are offered to the children living at the protection centre. 2) Have an overview of how these homes are managed. 3) To find out what challenges the management is facing in caring for the children. 4) To ascertain the successful stories of children who have graduated or passed through these homes. The study relied on both primary and secondary methods of data collection. Primary data was collected through interviews and observations while secondary data was collected from various books, internet and articles written by different authors on related subject matter.

Research findings reviewed that Child Protection Care home in Sogndal, has a good number of activities for the youths that make them interact with each other. The institution ensures that the youths in their custody attend school as per school calendar of the year. Youths are provided with all education requirements to enable them attend school and mingle with fellow youths from around the society of Sogn og Fjordane. It was also reviewed that when youths attain the age of 18 years, they have to move out of the Child Protection Care Residential home. At this point the institutions hands over the youth to the Kommune for continued support as they settle in society on their own. According to our findings institutions are actually public and government owned. They fall under the department of Bufitet while Fylkesmannen oversees and supervises the work at Child Protection Care institution. Furthermore, when these youth finish their education, living in their own apartment, thereafter find a job and settle in society some who make it usually come back to the institution and thank the staff for their work in trying to shape the youth's future. They usually come with their family and show their spouse and children were they passed through in their journey of life.

The data collected has been analyzed qualitatively as this gave room for the researchers to discuss findings in details.

The researchers faced a few challenges especially when they were collecting secondary data because most of the literature was in Norwegian content which became very difficult to understand. All in all, our key informants have been so good such that we carried the interviews very well.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Child Protection Care in Norway covers a wide range of services meant for the children. These ranges from kindergartens, foster care and child care institutions. In particular this report focuses on the youth protection (care) homes which are not a common phenomenon in most countries around the world. The researchers having not known this service before from their country of origin Zambia thought of writing on this topic to learn more on how Norway is managing this service and how it could help other countries if they are to embark on it.

There are various kinds of residential child care institutions in Norway, most of them catering for young people. As a rule, children under the age of 12 are placed in foster care. Emergency placement and assessment institutions are designed for children and young people who need help and assistance at short notice. Placements results from a variety of crisis situations. Emergency placement and assessment institutions offer a short term solution while efforts are made to determine what would be in the youngster's best long term interest. Youth care homes accept youngsters aged 12 – 18. Some offer short term placements while others are designed for long term residence. The latter often have separate bedsits or houses where youngsters live for the last phase of their stay. Residential child care institutions continue to provide follow-up support to young people once they have left the care system. Bufetat offers places at residential child care institutions. They also approve private and local authority residential child care homes. There are 49 child welfare institutions in Norway (bufdir.no).

This report will start by looking at the brief history of the child protection care in Norway and the world over. This will give an insight to the researchers of the subject matter from the literature to be reviewed in as far as the history of Child Protection is concerned. There after the research will concentrate to look at the background information of Child Protection in Norway in reference to the UNICEF guidelines. The report will proceed to present and discuss the findings according to the objectives of the research. Strengths and weaknesses of the research will also be discussed to outline the challenges and strengths the researchers encountered during their research. At the end of the report, the researchers will outline some recommendations to the relevant authorities based on the findings.

1.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF CHILD PROTECTION CARE WORLD OVER AND IN NORWAY

No ancient civilization considered child protection to be a governmental function. In ancient Rome, for instance, fathers were vested with an almost unlimited natural right to determine the welfare of their children. The welfare of minors was a family matter, not a governmental interest or obligation. Most other governments of the ancient world provided no limits to a father's right to inflict corporal punishment, including infanticide. While the practice of child abuse goes back to the roots of human history, it is only in the last century or so that it has been recognized as a distinct phenomenon, something that children have a right to be protected from (stateuniversity.com).

The first manifestations of child protection services with a legal mandate to intervene to protect children from abuse and neglect emerged in the late 19th century, initially in the form of charitable and philanthropic endeavours (Jeffreys & Stevenson, 1996). Often referred to as the first wave of the child rescue movement, developments in the United States and the United Kingdom helped to pave the way for change in Australia. In the United States, the much-publicised case of Mary Ellen McCormack in the 1870s is widely accepted as the catalyst for the creation of laws to protect children from maltreatment by caregivers. Mary Ellen McCormack was a 10-year-old girl who experienced ongoing physical abuse by her adoptive mother in New York. As there were no laws to protect children from cruelty, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was approached to assist. It took the case to court on the basis that Mary Ellen was a "human animal" and therefore entitled to protection comparable to that given to animals. The case saw Mary Ellen placed in an orphanage and her caregiver imprisoned. This soon led to the establishment of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC). Founded in December 1874, the society was the first child protection agency in the world. The establishment of the NYSPCC also led to child protection legislation and the establishment of juvenile courts in the United States (Fogarty, 2008).

In the United Kingdom there was considerable resistance towards protection of children from their parents as this was seen as "interfering" in the private sphere of the family. Specific child protection legislation was viewed as an invasion of the family (Fogarty, 2008). Nevertheless, child protection did emerge in the United Kingdom after Thomas Agnew, a banker from Liverpool, England, visited America in 1881 where he observed the work of the NYSPCC. Agnew returned to England in 1882 where, inspired by the

NYSPCC, he went about establishing the first child protection service in the United Kingdom, the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, founded in 1883. This paved the way for the establishment of the London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1884. The society changed its name to the British National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in 1889 and expanded its charter to include all children living in the United Kingdom. In the same year, the lobbying efforts of NSPCC were rewarded with the passing of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, commonly known as the "Children's Charter". The Act enabled society to intervene for the first time to protect children from cruelty or neglect perpetrated by their parents, where previously a parent's ownership of a child gave parents the right to treat their child in any way they saw fit, barring murder (gov.au).

The Norwegian welfare state is universal, which means that all inhabitants have the right to enjoy social benefits. The situation was quite different hundred years ago. Only the weakest and poorest in society could receive government assistance and there were significant local differences in the help received. Many of the social benefits have been introduced gradually. Some began just before World War II (1940-1945), while most have been built up gradually after the war. Over the past 60-70 years, there has been relatively broad political agreement on the responsibility of the government for guaranteeing the welfare of its citizens. The welfare state is mainly financed by taxes and duties paid by inhabitants. The government also uses export income from, for example, the sale of oil and gas, to finance social benefits. Even though government has the primary responsibility for social benefits, volunteer organisations and private individuals also make a substantial contribution. Child welfare and child protection are supposed to be integral aspects of the welfare systems of all societies the ways in which the needs and risks of children are met varies considerably, even between countries with similar structures. The majority of families in Norway are nuclear and although the main responsibility of the children is that of the parents, the state actively takes care of the need, care and protection of the child. The responsibility and authority over the children is shared among the parents. The child welfare system in Norway underwent a transition with the introduction of the Child Welfare Act of 1992. This law initiated the integration of child welfare into general welfare. The Act focused more into preventive measures (Steen, June 2015).

The 1952 child welfare services Act requires local authorities to protect children at risk of negligence or abuse, to intervene and help families with children with behavioural difficulties. The municipal child welfare authorities primarily helps families that are

unable to give their children a good upbringing. They are obliged to investigate all reports of neglect. In 2004, 21,300 inspections took place, but only half of them warranted further response. Each country has a specialist committee whose authority is needed to remove a child from the custody of its family. Adoption is one route though placement in a foster home are the more typical response (Halvorsen and Stjernø, 2008).

In 2014, 9982 children aged 0-17 years old were under the care of child welfare services. These represented 19 % of children in receipt of assistance from child welfare services in this age category. They were placed in either foster homes or institutions. This is the total number of children that child welfare services have care responsibility for, regardless of when a care order was issued. In relation to the general population in the age category 0-17 years old, there is an equivalent of 7.9 children per 1000 people who are under the care of the child welfare services. At the end of 2014, the number of children under the care of child welfare services was somewhat lower, comprising 8569 people in the age category 0-17 years old. This group represented 74 % of all children aged 0–17 years old who were placed by the child welfare services as of the end of 2014 (bufdir.no). In Norway Children and young people shall be guaranteed satisfactory living conditions and a safe environment in which to grow up. Norway has several laws designed to ensure that official powers are used in the best interests of children. In everyday matters, the local municipality is responsible for ensuring compliance with these obligations. However there are also a number of central government agencies with responsibilities in the area of parent-child relations.

1.1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON NORWEGIAN CHILD WELFARE

Child protection systems are a set of usually government-run services designed to protect children and young people who are under age and to encourage family stability. While there is no universally agreed upon definition, UNICEF defines a ‘child protection system’ as, “the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice to support prevention and response to protection-related risks”. These systems are part of social protection, and extend beyond it. At the level of prevention, their aim includes supporting and strengthening families to reduce social exclusion, and to lower the risk of separation, violence and exploitation (United Nation, 2008). Further UNICEF uses the term ‘child protection’ to refer to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage. UNICEF’s child protection programmes also

target children who are uniquely vulnerable to these abuses, such as when living without parental care, in conflict with the law and in armed conflict (UNICEF.org).

Responsibilities to look after these children are often spread across government agencies, with services delivered by local authorities in most European countries, non-state providers, and community groups making coordination between sectors and levels including routine referral systems, a necessary component of effective child protection systems. Different agencies compliment each others' services in providing child care as they all work for a common goal. "Child Welfare Services in Norway exists primarily to provide help and support to allow parents to fulfil their responsibilities as caregivers. 53,088 children and young people aged 0-22 years old received help from Child Welfare Services in 2014. During the course of 2014, a total of 9982 children aged 0-17 years old were under the care of child welfare services. These represented 19 % of children in receipt of help from Child Welfare Services in this age category. The majority of these children were taken into care at an earlier date (bufdir.no)".

In the child welfare act of 17 July 1992 number 100 relating to Child Welfare Services under chapter 5 section 5.1 the act says "The Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs is responsible for the establishment and operation of institutions, and any associated specialised services for the care and treatment of children. This responsibility applies to institutions falling within the scope of this Act". In Norway child protection institutions have the responsibility to look after youths whose parents are unable to provide for them financially and generally parents failing to look after these youths in an acceptable manner. These youths are usually between the ages of 12 – 18 years old. The Kommune identifies these youths in societies around and hand them over to these institutions for care up to the age of eighteen. Further in section 5.4 of the child welfare act, "The Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs shall make rules for the procedure for deciding admissions and discharges. If it has been decided that a child shall be placed in an institution, the institution may not refuse to admit the child. Children may not be discharged before the due date without the consent of the child welfare service. It may be demanded that a disagreement regarding admission or discharge be decided by the county governor in the county in which the institution is located (regjeringen.no)". At these institutions youths are provided with nearly everything they need for their wellbeing for the whole period they are at this centre. The institutions ensure that the youths attend school in every school calendar. Each

youth has their own room at the residential institutional home. The house in Sogndal town is currently host to four (4) youths.

Generally, parents world over are expected and responsible for providing care, support and protection for their children. However, if the parents are unable to do so in Norway, the Child Welfare Services is obliged to provide whatever help necessary to ensure that children and adolescents receive the care they need. This is so to ensure that children and adolescents who are living under conditions that represent a risk to their health or development receive the help they need when they need it, and to contribute to children and adolescents growing up in safe, secure and caring conditions. The youths are taken away from their parents if the authorities see any danger to the children that will hinder their proper upbringing and put in these youth residential care homes.

Violations of the child's right to protection and proper upbringing take place in every country world over and some of these cases of abuse are not recognized or reported in many countries. As such you find that children are denied the right to proper upbringing hence limiting their development. Scientific research continue to show that children subjected to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect are at risk of death, poor physical and mental health, HIV/AIDS infection, educational problems, displacement, homelessness, vagrancy and poor parenting skills later in life. It is against this background that the Norwegian government through the child welfare services strives to improve the wellbeing of these youths by placing victims of the above abuse in special institutions. "The Child Welfare Services provides help and support to children, adolescents and parents who are experiencing challenges or difficulties within the family. The Child Welfare Services may also get involved if a child is in need of help for other reasons, such as behavioural issues connected to drugs or alcohol(regjering.no)".

The Child Welfare Services must base its actions on the best interests of the child. Sometimes the child's best interests conflicts with those of the parents. The Child Welfare Services' first duty is to provide help and support to the parents so that they can be good carers for their children. If such measures and initiatives fail to produce the desired result, or if the problems experienced by the parents for whatever reason are insurmountable, an alternative may be to relocate the child or children outside the home

for a shorter or longer period (regjering.no). Children and young people are entitled to a full course of good quality education from the time they start kindergarten until the completion of three years of upper-secondary school. Therefore, each municipality is obliged to offer kindergarten places to pre-school children living within the municipality. A child may be allocated a place in either a public or a private kindergarten. From the age of six, children and young people are entitled to, and obliged to undertake, 10 years' primary and lower-secondary education. They are also entitled to have this education funded by the Norwegian state. Responsibility for the provision of primary and lower-secondary education lies with the municipalities. Young people aged 16-19 are entitled to a state-funded upper-secondary education. Responsibility for the provision of upper-secondary education lies with the county councils (Norwegian embassy). So every child has the right to proper education and parents have to ensure that their children attend school at all ages as they grow. Now in a risk home a child may not enjoy this right fully if parents are unable to take good care of them. So for continuity purposes in as far as attending school is concerned, child welfare authorities may take children from their abusive or irresponsible parents and place them in foster homes or residential youth care homes. This is to ensure that children continue with their school and receive proper care and protection.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rationale of this study is to have an insight of the operations and services offered by the child protection institutions in Norway in particular the home protection centre (house) in Sogndal Kommune. The researchers observed that these child protection homes are not found in every country across the world hence the interest to find out how the Norwegian government is managing these homes through the various institutions and agencies tasked with this job. Norway is one of the few countries with child protection homes where children whose parents face various challenges such that they cannot effectively provide for their children are placed in these institutions for care up to the age of 18. This is not a common phenomenon in most countries hence the interest to have an insight of this programme.

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- To ascertain how successful children that have reformed or passed through these child protection centres are fairing in day to day life.
- To contribute to the board of knowledge for future researchers on how the Norwegian welfare state looks into child welfare homes in Norway
- To have an insight of how child protection homes (centres) are managed in Norway
- The study will be a part fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a one year study (2015 to 2016) of about Norway in Norway and Global Knowledge as sanction by Sogn og Fjordane University College.

2.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To find out what integration services are offered to the children living at the child protection centres
- Have an overview of how these homes are managed
- To find out what challenges the management is facing in caring for the children
- To ascertain the successful stories of children who have graduated or passed through these homes

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature review the report will look at child care and protections workers with an emphasis on the work that they do in residential child care institutions. Further on in the literature review, the report will discuss the Norwegian policy on child protection in trying to understand what the law provides in regard to the subject matter. And in conclusion in literature review the report will look at the various challenges child care institutions faces in trying to carry out their work.

3.1 CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION WORKERS

According to Brigid, Sally and Robbie (1998) each child is born with potential and successful childhood that can be seen in terms of achieving that potential. Thus each child, whatever their physical or intellectual capacity, has a potential which can be promoted. Social workers often encounter children who, despite abuse or neglect by their parent or main carer, nevertheless demonstrate strong attachments to them. It is often difficult to fully accept the extent of such loyalty and attachment especially in cases where the impulse is to 'rescue' them. However, appreciation of the instinctual and biological basis for making attachments can help with understanding how deep the ties go. Each day, practitioner or social workers are faced with children whose constellation of problems can be overwhelming. The practitioner is then faced with the task of intervening in life of an individual child, with a distinct life history, within a unique set of current circumstances, while avoiding making the situation worse, and attempting to make it better.

It is important that social workers or rather protective workers show love to the clients at their care all the times in order to create a good relationship with the clients. Protective workers should ensure at all times not to be emotional when dealing with the client no matter how provocative the case or situation may be. Being emotional would compromise the professional and clients would lose trust in the workers. So as stated above, each child should be viewed as someone who has potential to grow and be responsible in life despite their background. Hence it is the duty of protective workers to help the youths under their care realize their potential in life despite what they have gone through and their challenges they have faced in their childhood prior to be placed

in these youth homes managed by the protective workers. Protective workers should show these children all the love they deserve and try to live with them as normal as in any ordinary home. This way the youths will feel at home and try to live a normal life.

Steve Rogowski (2013) says critical social work in child protection and with looked after children and young people has always been difficult and demanding, and this is even more so in 'managerialist times'. The need for effectiveness, efficiency and economy, alongside resulting bureaucratization and proceduralisation, means relational work is grossly undervalued. Nevertheless, despite all the constraints the critical social work remains possible. Child protection is the most high profile aspect of social work, certainly as far as the media, politicians and general public are concerned.

3.2 NORWEGIAN POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION

In Norway, the Norwegian Directorate for children, youth and family affairs is responsible for all aspects of these services, including child welfare institutions, foster care and other help measures. This entails the development of child welfare legislation, policy design, and the overall administration and coordination of the services. The department works to implement the same level of services throughout the country, and to ensure that adequate consideration is given to legal protection, legitimacy, equality in treatment, diversity issues and the use of high-quality administrative procedures within these services (government.no). According to Halvorsen and Stjernø (2008), "Norway along with its Nordic neighbours enjoy in a rare combination an extensive welfare state, a relatively egalitarian income distribution, and a competitive economy with strong growth. In literature and research the welfare state in Norway is categorised as a social democratic welfare regime and member of the family of the Scandinavian welfare state. This welfare state differs from the two other main families of welfare state regimes which exist in Europe which are the conservative welfare regime found in Germany and the liberal welfare regime found in United Kingdom". So as outlined in the literature above, welfare states differ from country to country mainly in the components of services that are offered. Some services offered in Norwegian welfare state may not be offered in a German welfare state. However, the Norwegian welfare state is one of the most developed welfare states in the world and is in some way unique even among Nordic countries.

The Child Welfare Services provides help and support to children, adolescents and parents who are experiencing challenges or difficulties within the family. The Child Welfare Services may also get involved if a child is in need of help for other reasons, such as behavioural issues connected to drugs or alcohol. Parents are responsible for providing care and protection for their children. However, if the parents are unable to do so, the Child Welfare Services is obliged to provide whatever help necessary to ensure that children and adolescents receive the care they need. The main goal is to ensure that children and adolescents who are living under conditions that represent a risk to their health and/or development receive the help they need when they need it, and to contribute to children and adolescents growing up in safe, secure and caring conditions (bufdir.no).

Vulnerable children and young people need care and protection in order to cope constructively with their daily lives and develop their abilities. The department works to enhance the quality of the child welfare services and the knowledge based framework underlying the measures provided, and to promote wide ranging availability of services, user participation and the provision of equal services in all regions. “The objective is to achieve child and youth services that provide knowledge-based care and treatment programmes employing high-quality, differentiated child welfare measures adapted to the needs of the individual child (government.no)”. Chapter 4 section 4.1 under the Child welfare Act of 1992 requires that when applying the provisions of this chapter, decisive importance shall be attached to finding measures which are in the child’s best interests. This includes attaching importance to giving the child stable and good contact with adults and continuity in the care provided. The child shall be given the opportunity to participate and steps shall be taken to facilitate interviews with the child. Children who have been taken into care by the child welfare service may be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a person whom the child particularly trusts. The Ministry may make further regulations regarding participation and regarding the duties and function of persons of trust.

Section 4.4 further states that ”The child welfare service shall contribute to provide the individual child with sound living conditions and opportunities for development by providing advice, guidance and assistance. The purpose of such assistance shall be to promote positive change with regard to the child or in the family. The child welfare

service shall, when the child due to conditions at home or for other reasons is in particular need of assistance, initiate measures to assist the child and the family”.

3.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY AUTHORITIES IN CHILD PROTECTION

The child welfare system faces multiple challenges in serving and supporting the families and children in its charge. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, child welfare caseloads grew substantially. Increasingly, the families and children who come to the attention of child welfare agencies present complex needs requiring the provision of multiple services. However, child welfare agencies do not have control over all the services needed, thus they must develop inter organizational relations with private for profit agencies, private non profit agencies, and other service systems to ensure access for their clients. Families who come to the attention of the child welfare system are vulnerable families with complex needs. The parents experience multiple stressors that weaken their ability to appropriately parent. Securing the appropriate kind and level of resources for children and families is an ongoing challenge for child welfare agencies for several reasons, however. Often, there is a mismatch between services offered and what families actually need to resolve their difficulties (Sandra Stukes Chipungu and Tricia Bent-Goodley (2004).

The issue of asylum seekers from war torn areas is another problem causing a big challenge to the child protection care institutions. Most children coming through need the services of the child protection care institutions thereby stretching the resources of these institutions. This issue of ashylum seekers is usually unplanned or unforeseen hence posing a big challenge as care as to be provided to the vulnerable children. In some cases children are coming in the country without parent to take care of them thereby leaving the instituitons without choice but to take care of these children as stipulated in the law.

Norway’s state child welfare agency Barnevernet recently was a target of international protests, over its attempts to enforce national laws aimed at protecting children. Both the Norwegian agency and top politicians claim they are listening to the new wave of protests, but are largely fending them off in what they claim are the best interests of the children involved. The protesters claimed that five children in a Norweian-Romanian

family in Norway were abducted from their parents who are a member of an international christian organization themselves. The protests were seem to be aimed at drumming up publicity for the demonstrations and support for the children's parents. Barnevernet which operates under strict confidentiality laws is unable to comment specifically on the case in question. The parents were charged under a law covering physical abuse in close relationships but claimed their punishment were no worse than what is allowed in many countries other than Norway (newsinenglish.no). So like in this case child welfare authorities in Norway generally have challenges when it comes to children coming from other nations to effecttively apply the laws. What is applicable in Norway may not be applicable elsewhere like in the case above parents might resist having their children taken away from them.

In 2014, 53,088 children or 3.6 % of the population aged 0-22 years old received help from Child Welfare Services. The corresponding figures for immigrants and those born in Norway to immigrant parents from a selection of countries was, 7.0 % of children from Russia (414 children), 2.0 % of children from Lithuania (195 children), 3.8 % of children from Estonia (40 children), and 2.3 % of children from Romania (65 children) (bufdir.no). So looking at these figures it is clear that the Child welfare protection has kept on increasing in Norway recently due to the high number of asylum seekers from other nations. The Child Welfare authorities in Norway are obliged by law to take care of these Children coming in the country that need help in as far as child protection is concerned. The issue of immigrants is a hot issue now and most European countries has no option but to give refugee to these asylum seekers coming from war torn areas. This has subsequetly increased the demand for child welfare protection in Norway.

4.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The data used in this research was collected using an interview guide, books and articles on the same subject matter. The researchers conducted an in-depth interview at the child protection institution to get wide range of information relevant to the topic. After the information was collected, it was carefully analysed using qualitative method. "The information collected through qualitaive method is rich in content, summarised and categorised into similar answers that constitute a step in any project (Flick, 2011)".

According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2009), an interview guide can be an overview of the themes that should be covered or it can be detailed specific questions. It is for this reason that we came up with questions aimed at collecting the data necessary for the subject matter or topic we are writing on.

4.1 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

4.1.1 PRIMARY DATA

Primary data was collected through interviews with workers and management at the child protection institution in Sogndal. The researchers had made two appointments with the institution for the interviews which were both successful. Vital information was collected through the two interviews conducted by the researchers.

4.1.2 SECONDARY DATA

The books used in literature review were the source of secondary data used in this paper. The researchers also used some articles on the internet which are related to the subject matter.

4.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

4.2.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guides help researchers to know what to ask about, in what sequence, how to pose questions, and how to pose follow-up questions. They provide guidance about what to ask the interviewee in the most logical manner. According to Flick (2011), in an interview guide the interviewers can deviate from the sequence of questions. They also do not necessarily stick to the exact formulation of questions when asking them. The aim of the interview is to obtain the individual views of the interviewees on an issue. Thus, questions should initiate a dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee.

4.3 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

The target population for the research were child protection workers working at the youth protection home in Sogndal municipality. The sample size was 3 workers consisting of 1 female worker and 2 male workers.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analysed qualitatively and a discussion was made in comparison with the literature reviewed.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the fact that certain rules have to be followed when conducting a research, the researchers applied the following measures to conform to the ethical considerations;

- Before the interview, respondents consented to participating in the interview by signing the consent form as a way of agreeing to participate in the interview.
- The information collected was presented as it was gathered from the respondents as no alterations were made.
- Confidentiality was maintained as the data collected was strictly used for academic purposes only.

4.6 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

4.6.1 STRENGTHS

The atmosphere for the interview was very conducive as the workers at the child protection institution were very free when responding to questions and very helpful to the researchers. This was necessitated by the use of an in-depth interview. The in-depth interview made it easy for the researchers to gather a wide range of data on the subject matter as follow-up questions were also used. This in turn enable researchers to have a clear picture

in the operations of these youth protection homes in Norway and in particular Sogn og Fjordane county. Workers were also able to communicate nicely in English language and also understood the questions and what exactly was required in their response. This made it easier for the researchers as there was no language barrier.

4.6.2 **WEAKNESSES**

The major challenges researchers encountered were on literature review as most literature on child protection was in Norwegian hence making it difficult to quote various literatures. The research was not very representative as a few respondents were interviewed. Youths were not allowed to be interviewed to get their side of the research topic as it is not allowed by law to interview them. Also the researchers had limited time to be at the residential youth care home as the law does not allow students rather outsiders to be at the institution for a long time. So this in some way made it difficult for the researchers to fully familiarise themselves at the institution with regard to its day to day operations.

5.0 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The information presented in this section are the responses that the researchers got from the workers at a Residential Child Care and Protection home in Sogndal. This was through the interviews researchers had with the workers at the centre. The respondents comprised of 2 male and 1 female workers.

5.1 INTEGRATION SERVICES OFFERED TO YOUTHS LIVING AT THE INSTITUTION

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
What social activities do you have for the youths that make them interact with other youths in society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ School programmes ✓ Sports training ✓ Skiing, horse riding, mountain climbing among other social activities
Are these youths attending school?	✓ Yes all the youths are attending school
Do you have any programme for these youths after they attain the age of 18 or when they complete their school while still under your custody?	✓ No after the age of 18 they are handed over to the Kommunal for support as they will be expected to find their own apartment.
How do you maintain and develop family connections with the youths at the centre?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Every third week of the month the institution have a meeting with the parents and parents are given an apartment within the institution whenever they visit their children. ✓ Youths at the centre are allowed to visit their parents or relatives registered with the institution

5.2 AN OVERVIEW OF HOW THESE RESIDENTIAL HOMES ARE MANAGED

INTERVIEW QUESTION	RESPONSES
Is this institution private or government managed?	✓ It is a public (government) institution.
Who fund the institution for its	✓ The institution is state funded

day-to-day running?	
Which authority monitors and regulates this institution to ensure that it operates in accordance with the law?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fylkesmannen oversees the activities of the institutions. ✓ The institution is inspected twice every year and interviews the youths living at the residential homes.
What kind of youths qualifies to be at this institution and the maximum bed space at this institution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youths from violent families. ✓ Youths who request to be at the institution. ✓ Those youths waiting to be placed in foster homes. ✓ Youths whose parents can not provide for them due to financial constraints.
What is the age range of youths admitted at this centre and the maximum age one can be at this centre?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The age range is from 13 – 18 years. ✓ The maximum age at the centre is 18 years.
What happens to the youths at this institution when they reach the maximum age of 18 years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youths are handed over to the Kommuna

5.3 FIND OUT WHAT CHALLENGES THE MANAGEMENT IS FACING IN CARING FOR THE CHILDREN

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
How is the relationship of these youths amongst themselves in the house?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The behaviour can be positive or negative towards each other e.g going to school together and helping one another in their work or the opposite. ✓ Sometimes youths helps each other to prepare meals. ✓ Sometimes they talk and play games together.
Are funds provided to this institution enough for effective running of the institution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Funds are enough and well provided

Is management facing any challenges in the running of this institution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Its challenging working with different youths as every worker has to know the goal for each youth at the centre. ✓ Generally they don't have so much challenges
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5.4 ASCERTAIN SUCCESSFUL STORIES OF YOUTHS WHO HAVE GRADUATED OR PASSED THROUGH THE INSTITUTION

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
Are youths from this institution able to settle and manage their own life on their own when they leave this home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Not everyone but the majority make it by even getting a job though others struggle and find themselves back at the parents' home.
Do you have any successful stories from the youths that have been at this institution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Yes those who make it in life afterward to back to appreciate to the staff for being there for them.
What social sciences methods does the institution use to work with the youths?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mostly the use social work methods as most of the workers at the institution are social workers and teachers. ✓ Use psychology with traumatised youths.

6.0 DISCUSSION

As outlined in the main topic of this research report, the purpose for this research was aimed at finding out how Child Protection Institutions in particular those running youth residential care homes operate in Norway. Therefore in this discussion the report look at the integrations services that these institutions have for the youths they are looking after and a general overview of how these institutions are managed. Further on the report will discuss the challenges management of these institutions faces in caring for these youths and finally to ascertain if there are any successful stories from the youths who have passed through these institutions.

6.1 INTEGRATION SERVICES OFFERED TO YOUTHS LIVING AT THE INSTITUTION

According to the responses gotten from the respondents at the Child Protection care home in Sogndal, there are a number of activities that the institutions have for the youths that make them interact with other youths in society. These are activities that children in every normal home would be involved in. The centre ensures that the youths in their custody attend school as per school calendar of the year. Youths are provided with all education requirements to enable them attend school and mingle with fellow youths from around the society of Sogn og Fjordane. So every youth at the centre is expected to attend school. If need be the institution even drives these youths to and from school. To keep the youths active and fit physically, the institution arranges sports training for the youths in various sports training centres around Sogndal. This way again youths interact with other friends and keep themselves fit through these exercises that they do. As seen around the city of Sogndal, exercising is more like a culture hence the need for these youths to get involved in exercising in one way or the other. Besides that the youths are involved in most out-door activities that happen around Sogndal and that other youths do with their parents. These include skiing, horse riding, mountain climbing and partying in some cases. The institution provides everything needed for these youths to take part in all these activities. The youths enjoy all these services for as long as they remain at the residential at no cost.

However, once they attain the age of 18 years, the youths have to move out of the Child Protection care residential home. At this point the institutions hands over the youth to the Kommune for continued support as they settle in society on their own. The youths then finds their own apartment and start to manage their life own their own. If need be, the Kommune now helps these youths financial for their bills and up-keep upto the age of 23 years. Having being taught at the residential home of how to live in society as a family or an individual, the youths at this stage are expected to take full responsibility of their life. It is at this stage now that they apply the skills and whatever knowledge the Child Protection workers have been sharing with them while at the youth

residential home. Those youths who wish to continue with higher education continue to receive help at this stage from the Kommune while living in their own apartment. Others having graduated from the youth care homes go back to stay with their parents.

6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF HOW RESIDENTIAL YOUTH CARE HOMES ARE MANAGED.

These institutions are actually public institutions and government owned. They fall under the department of Bufitet. Fylkesmannen oversees and supervises the work that these Child Protection care institutions do. The Fylkesmannen monitors the residential care homes twice every year to ensure the institutions comply with the law in the management of these home. Usually the Fylkesmannen informs the management of their visit in the first monitoring routine of their coming and management prepares themselves accordingly in readiness for the check-ups. However, for the second visit the management is not informed of the actual day that the Fylkesmannen visits them for the check-ups as this is done abruptly. As such the institutions ensures that it operates according to law and the requirements of the Fylkesmannen to avoid being caught napping. During these visits the Fylkesmannen do also have an interview with the youths living at the centre to get their views on the management of the care home and if the management is treating them well. The youths are free to give their views and report management at the residential home if they is something that they are not doing well. The youths are made known of their rights when admitted to the centre and are given the contact number for the Fylkesmannen whom they are free to call any time and air their grievances if they have any.

The residential child care institutions get their funding through the Kommune which is actually the authority that place these youths in the residential youth care homes. Youths eligible to stay in these institutions are identified by the Kommune who later places them in these youth care homes. Therefore, the Kommune pays the residential care home management for the youths they place in these institutions and these are quite huge sums of money. The Kommune identifies these youths from violent families or where parents are in drugs to an

extent that there can not take good care of their children. In such a family, children and parents do not live happily as they might be conflicts between the two. Further on in homes where parents are on drugs children are at risk of violence and indeed their wellbeing as they grow up. As such it is the responsibility of the Kummune to take up responsibility of looking after children from such homes by placing them in residential youths care homes and foster homes as stipulated in the law. In some cases the youths themselves requests to be placed in these youth care homes if they see that the condition at home is not conducive for them. This is done through the volunteer law and the youth, parents and the Kommune have to come up with an agreement for such placements.

Ideally, the recommended age group to be at the residential youth care homes is between 13 – 18 years. However going by the records at the institutions, the most prominent age usually found at these homes is 15, 16, and 17 years. So when the youths at the institution reaches the age of 17 years 6 months, the Kommune and the parents of the youth start to come up with an exit plan for the youth bearing in mind that the youth has to be only kept at the institution up to the age of 18 years. This plan will spell out what happens to the youths when they leave the residential youth care home. If the youth is still willing to receive help especially if they are continueing with their education and ready to live alone, then the youth will have to find their own apartment. The Kommune then will continue to support such a one financially for all their bills up to the age of 23 years. For those of the youths who don't want further help and not ready to stay on their own, then they are either found foster homes or go back to stay with the parents for those whose parents are not drug addicts or violent. Those who are not ready to live on thier own and their parents are into drugs or violent, the Kommune then has to find foster homes for such youths.

6.3 CHALLENGES MANAGEMENT IS FACING IN CARING FOR THESE YOUTHS

With regard to the youths under their care, management in this area do not have serious challenges in as far as the relationship between the youths themselves and the staff in the house is concerned. The interaction among them most of the

time is very health except in some very few cases. Indeed the behaviour towards one another at times can be positive or negative but overall they get along well. This is seen by having meals together, helping each other in the work around the house, and indeed going to school together. The major challenge though not severe that the workers at the residential youth care home is that of having to work with different youths with different characteristics. So the worker are to make sure they cooperate and live in harmony with these youths no matter how stubborn and arrogant the youth might be to them. They have to apply their professional skills and bring such youths to reality. The workers have to make sure that they don't get emotion in their work no matter how provocative the situation may be as they work with the youths in the house. They always have to remain professional and ensure that there is behaviour change in the youths at the institution by the time they leave the house at the age of 18 years.

Another challenging factor for the workers is having to work with these different youths and knowing the goal for each particular youth. As they execute their work they have to bear in mind the goal for each youth in the house and work towards attaining that goal. So as a worker at the institution one has to be very sharp and know the goal for each youth and never get mixed up. Any work done should be directed towards that goal. The calls for dedication and full commitment towards their work as they are expected to deliver on those goals.

6.4 SUCCESSFUL STORIES OF YOUTHS WHO HAVE PASSED THROUGH THESE INSTITUTIONS

Not everyone has made it in life after being at the residential youth care home but the majority representing about 90% make it by being able to manage their own life even after school. Some proceed to do higher education while in foster homes or living in their own apartment and thereafter find a job and settle in society. Some of those who make it usually come back to the institution and thank the staff for their work in trying to shape the youth's future. They usually come with their family and show their spouse and children were they passed through in their journey of life.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Child protection in Norway is one of the major welfare services offered in the country being a welfare state. Norway attaches great importance in the upbringing of the children by way of ensuring that children are brought up in a conducive manner. This is evidence in the strict laws for children in Norway which seems to differ from most nations around the world. Child protection laws are very stiff in Norway to the extent that perpetrators of this law receive severe punishment which might be take them to the courts of law or have their children taken away from them. The research has also noted that it is not only youths from violent homes that are kept at residential youth care homes but also youths can voluntarily request to be placed in these child protection institutions. Then the youth, parents and the Kommune has to sign an agreement for such a placement. Besides that the Kummune is the one responsible for placing these youths taken from parents who are unable to provide for them financially or when parents are on drugs.

The research discovered that these child protection institutions are public institutions which are runned by the state. This child welfare system is however different from the other child welfare systems found in other welfare states found in Europe such as the conservative welfare found in Germany and the liberal welfare system found in United Kingdom and Ireland. Child Protection Institutions are mainly found in the Nordic welfare system and in particular in Norway. The state through the Kommune provides funds to these institutions for their day to day running. These funds are allocated according to the number of children residing at the residential youth care home. Youths at the centre are provided with almost everything they need for their various activities which include education requirements and other necessities. The workers at the institution work on a 24 hours basis to ensure that they are always there for the youths in their custody. They try as much as possible to live as a normal family with the youths. This is done by way of having meals together, watching television or simply doing the cooking and some house chores together. It is the responsibility of management at the institution to ensure that these youths attend school and do their school work as required. Each youth at the centre has to attend school for the period that they are at the residential home. These residential youth care homes only admit youths between the age of 13 – 18 years. Children before the age of 13 years are

usually placed in foster homes. After the age of 18 years, the youth leaves the house to find their own apartment in case where they don't go back to their parents. At this point, the Kommune helps the youth financially for their various expenses which might include rentals, school support, and general upkeep. At this point the youth would have been taught while at the centre of how to manage their own life.

So as it can be noted from the discussion above, the state has a huge task for caring for the children in Norway. Huge sums of money from the country's revenues are spent to ensure proper upbringing of these children. The Norwegian state in some way takes up the parental responsibility of caring for the children. This is a big responsibility which requires huge sums of money to be effectively carried out.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The research would like to make the following recommendations;

- a) The state should only place youths in these residential youth care homes who are extremely stranded and at high risk of violence or abuse from their parents to reduce on the burden of spending huge sums of tax payers money in caring for these youths.
- b) As opposed to keeping these youths at these institutions, the state should place these youths in foster homes for them to feel completely at home in the presence of both parents.
- c) The state should increase on the awareness meetings with families on how they should take good care of these children to avoid having children taken away from their parents and placed in these institutions. This will reduce on the state expenditure.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Objective 1:

To find out what integration services are offered to the children living at the child protection centre.

- What social activities do you have for these youths that make them interact with other youths in society?
- Are these youths attending school?
- Do you have any programme for these youths after they attain the age of 18 or when they complete their school while they are still under your custody?
- How do you maintain and develop family connections with the youths at this centre?

Objective 2:

Have an overview of how these homes are managed.

- Is this institution a private or a public institution?
- Who funds this institution for its day to day running?
- Which authority monitors and regulates this institution to ensure that the institution is operating according to the stipulated laws?
- What kind of youths qualify to be at this institution and what is the maximum capacity of youths do you look after at this institution?
- What is the age range of youths you admit at this institution and the maximum age one can be at this institution?
- What happens to the youths at this institution when they reach the maximum age to be at this centre?

Objective 3:

To find out what challenges the management is facing in caring for the children.

- How is the relationship of these youths amongst themselves in the house?
- Are funds provided to this institution enough for the effective running of this institution?

- Is management facing any challenges in the running of this institution?

Objective 4:

To ascertain the successful stories of children who have graduated or passed through these homes.

- Are the youths from this institution able to settle and manage their own life on their own when they leave this place?
- Do you have any successful stories from the youths that have been in this centre?
- What social science methods does the institution use to work with the youths?

APPENDEX II

LETTER OF CONSENT

Our names are Edwin Hamalube and Raphael K.Muleya. We are students at Sogn og Fjordane University College studying Global Knowledge. Currently we are in our final semester of our study and as per standard we are required to write a project paper as part fulfillment of the course. Our project looks at child protection institutions in Norway.

This being the case we would like to interview some of your staff to get an insight of how your institution operates. We therefore seek your consent to interview three (3) members of your staff to help us with information related to the subject matter.

Be assured that the information to be collected is strictly confidential and only for academic purposes. For any clarification please contact us on the following numbers, **Edwin 40575158** and **Raphael 40573216**

Regards,

Raphael K. Muleya &

Edwin Hamalube

Gunnar Onarheim
Assistant Professor/ Project Supervisor
Contact: 57676255

Please if you consent, sign below

I (Consent/ do not consent) to be interviewed.

Sign:.....

Date:.....