

NEWSLETTER

September 2010

New semester – new case workers

With the new semester we have had another change of faces in our organisation. We have had two full weeks of training and fun activities while getting to know each other. We have had lectures and visits to relevant offices, to learn more about the work that our group does, as well as a common dinner and a visit to an amusement park. Now we have rolled up our sleeves and started the new semester with a growing number of clients.

JURK's Women's Right Tour 2010

In December 2009 JURK were lucky to receive an award for our work. As mentioned earlier JURK decided to spend the money on a concrete case, and we decided to plan for a tour around the country. We wanted to lecture women about their rights.

In May this year all of our caseworkers went out on tour. It was a great success! We were warmly welcomed nearly all the places we visited, and it looks like we want to do it all over again next year. As long as we manage to apply for the money necessary, we definitively will. Many of the places we visited, has already invited us to come back.

Like told before, we managed to cover nearly all of our country, from south and all the way up north. The lectures we held varied. We lectured minority women about basic human rights, discrimination and children's rights.



Eva Kristine Sogn on Women's Right Tour

We also let the men enter some of our lectures, but kept the men separated from the women, because we experienced that the minority women did not ask as many questions when the men were present. We acknowledge the importance of including men in our lectures, especially on minority women's rights. It is difficult to improve women's rights without the men being aware of these rights existing.

All of our caseworkers learned a lot from our tour, and none of them regret the long hours of hard work planning and completing the tour.



Ida Strøm, Eva Kristine Sogn and Helene Stake on Women's Right Tour by Geiranger Fjord, Western Norway.

Democratic processes?

Norway is known to be a well run democracy, but not all processes are as democratic as we would like them to be. This spring JURK wrote a hearing to the Ministry of Children and Equality for Norway's 8th report to the UN Women's Discrimination Committee. In the middle of the public summer holiday we received a request for comments on a second draft. This is very disconcerting as many organisations probably did not notice the request in time to reply.

In our reply to the Ministry of Children and Equality it was emphasized that we felt the procedure was disturbing and regrettable.

JURK raised several important issues in the first hearing and repeated a couple of them in the hearing to the second draft. There was no mention of the areas where Norway struggles to fulfil the targets of the convention, and what effect different measures have had. Particularly measures such as the family violence coordinators and the change of laws for unmarried couples. JURK also feels that there is a lack of female focus in certain areas.

A visit from the Paliament's Legal Committee

Tuesday 24th of august Stine Haaheim from the Norwegian legal committee visited JURK's offices in the heart of Oslo. We spent a few hours with Stine, and told her all about JURK as an organization, our cases and future plans. She seemed truly interested in our work, and wanted

to hear more about us. We discussed different women's issues and problems, and talked about what Norway can do to improve women's positions in our society. Among other subjects we talked about unmarried couples, domestic violence, immigration law and norwegian language classes for minority women.

Stine Haaheim also gave us tips on how to influence politicians in our country. We wanted to know how JURK can approach the politicians when we feel the need to highlight a case or a specific problem. Her advice was to make personal contact between our organisation and the politicians, and to put forward concrete suggestions.

We are now planning to invite the Parliament's Legal Committee to discuss compensation given to women who has suffered physical injuries and psychological setback caused by violence. We want to talk about the extremely long handling process of these applications.

FOKUS on women's reproductive rights and abortion

The 3rd of September FOKUS invited all of their 71 women's-organisations to discuss women's reproductive rights and abortion.

JURK's international group was also present. Since FOKUS work with international questions, it has been an increasing demand that FOKUS should make a public statement on the organisation's view in the case of abortion. The members discussed if this is something we want FOKUS to be more clear about, or not. It seems as if the different organisations are divided in their view, and FOKUS have not come to a conclusion yet.

