



Nordic Council
of Ministers

Unlocking potential

Effective strategies for supporting immigrant children

7 December 2023
Gamla bíó, Reykjavík

Nordic Network for Newly Arrived Children



Government of Iceland
Ministry of Education
and Children

Conference host: Vilhelm Neto

9:00 Welcome

Nordic Network of Newly Arrived Children

9:10 Newly arrived youth – The human capital of the future

Address by Erna Kristín Blöndal, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Children – Iceland

9:20 The three pillars of trauma-informed care

Elisabet Nord from Save the Children – Sweden

Trauma-informed care is a research-based approach that provides adults that are important in a child's life with basic knowledge of trauma and how they can understand and respond to needs of vulnerable children, based on Howard Bath's (PhD) extensive review of research on children and trauma. The three pillars guide these adults in how they can help children to experience safety, positive relationships and good coping strategies. This leads to an everyday environment that promotes healing and recovery for children with experiences of trauma.

10:05 Training models for newly arrived pupils on language acquisition, development in the subjects, social inclusion and wellbeing

Berit Lødding from The Nordic Institute for Studies of Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) – Norway

Newly arrived immigrant children and youth face several challenges: They must acquire new language skills, keep up with academic progress, make new friends, and sometimes also cope with trauma. We study several introductory arrangements in Norway that can be seen to balance these needs in different ways. At the school level, a well-thought-out plan and teacher competence seem to be the most important factors for making newly arrived pupils succeed.

10:35 Coffee break

10:50 Back to basics: Understanding and supporting newly arrived families

Mohammad Omar – Youth Worker & Inclusion Expert

How do we create an enabling and supportive environment for children that are new to the Nordic countries? This presentation draws on practical experience of working with youth and immigrant families as well as the presenter's own experience of being a newly arrived young person in Sweden.

11:20 Language policies and practices of diverse immigrant families in Iceland: Opportunities and challenges

Renata Emilsson Pesková, Anna Katrín Eiríksdóttir & Kriselle Lou Suson Jónsdóttir – Iceland

This research presentation explores language policies and practices of diverse immigrant families, how these affect their children's education and the relationships and interactions between these families, their heritage language communities, and their teachers. The findings indicate that the families have diverse language policies, demonstrated in diverse language practices at home and in their engagement with school. Sometimes, there are tensions between families' and schools' language policies.

11:40 Newly arrived youth in Denmark – Experiences from recent research

Mette Vedsgaard Christensen, Line Møller Daugaard – Denmark

Drawing on a series of recent research, this presentation sheds light on the experience of newly arrived youth entering the Danish educational system after the age of 14 years and the transitions they experience, especially between reception class in lower secondary school and vocational upper secondary education.

12:20 Lunch

13:10 Enhancing education for newly arrived students through online bilingual teaching and competence building

Marit Lunde, The National Centre for Multicultural Education – Norway

Giving insight into Norway's national measures to improve the education of immigrant youth, Flexible Education provides online bilingual education for pupils across Norway in Ukrainian, Arabic, Tigrinya, and Somali. For quality education, we need teachers who are competent in second language instruction and multicultural education. Teacher competence can be increased through national networks, digital resources and guidelines.

13:30 Linguistically and culturally responsive education as a support for multilingual learners

Jenni Alisaari – Finland

The presentation will describe linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogy and how it can support multilingual learners. Recent research results from Finland on this perspective will also be reviewed.

14:10 Introduction to a new review into research findings on language teaching in Nordic countries

Nordic Welfare Centre

14:25 Pathways to inclusion: A panel of researchers

14:55 Coffee break

15:15 What does youth with migrant background want Nordic policy makers to know? Findings from Nordic Youth Month

Youth representatives from Iceland

15:35 From arriving to belonging: A panel of youth and practitioners

16:05 Group discussion on the reception of new students in the Nordic countries

16:55–17:00 Closing