

Vestlandsforskning report nr. 3/2015

Mapping digital paths to integration in local municipalities in Sogn og Fjordane: The case of Stryn municipality

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Vestlandsforskning report

Title Mapping digital paths to integration in local municipalities in Sogn og Fjordane: The case of Stryn municipality	Report number 3/2015 Date Mars 2015 Gradering Open
Project title Integreringsarbeid gjennom digital kommunikasjon og tenester i Stryn kommune	Pages : 70 Project no. : 6304
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Financed by Medietilsynet, RAM-programmet	Keywords immigrasjon integrering brukartesting kommunar
Summary	
ISBN: 978-82-428-0354-2	Price:

Foreword

This research project: *'Mapping digital paths to integration in local municipalities in Sogn og Fjordane county: The case of Stryn Municipality'* (started!?!) looked at how the municipality of Stryn is integrating its immigrant populations through the use of its digital public services. The project not only examines the digital public services and the processes through which information is developed and served to the users but also what the users (immigrants) perceive of these services. What works, what does not work and most importantly how can it be improved.

Our gratitude goes to the Norwegian Media Authority (Medietilsynet) and Rådet for Anvendt Medieforskning (RAM) who through financial support made this investigation possible. We also wish to thank the immigrants from Stryn who participated in the investigations by engaging in the focus group discussions and the usability testing as well as the staff working at the municipality and the voluntary organization.

As researchers, being able to access the realms of digital public service delivery and the users insights has provided us with better understanding of how service providers work towards integrating immigrants in a small community such as Stryn. It has also given valuable insight in how the immigrants or end users of these services respond to these services and how they negotiate issues of being 'new' in Norway, settling in 'rural' community, integration, belonging, community and identity. For us, it has been rewarding to see how this interaction (i.e. service provision and service reception) generates positive, negative and sometimes contradictory responses, which is indicative of the enigmatic and divergent nature of the personal struggles of integration in Norway.

Sogndal, Vestlandsforskning, april 2015

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Summary

The overall goal of this project was to develop a better insight into how Stryn municipality meets the informational needs of immigrants through digital channels and services. The project provides an understanding of the status quo, the success factors, and challenges regarding integration, with specific insight into how access to digital information and nature of information flows influences possibilities of achieving a holistic integration in local communities. The report is based on a qualitative study. The empirical data was obtained through focus group discussions and usability tests with immigrants and individual interviews with public representatives/personnel. Document studies (i.e. review of web pages and physical documents) were also part of the methodological tools.

Main findings: Although the municipality website stryn.kommune.no, has many positive integrative information/services aimed at meeting the needs of the immigrants, a lot was lacking especially in regard to meeting general principles for good public website usability. For instance, much of the information in question was out-dated and was sender-oriented (as the users were not initially involved in the development of immigrant-related information) and few interactive services were available. In addition, there was limited digital information 'tailored' for immigrants and refugees at stryn.kommune.no. Also, the primary information is predominantly in Norwegian (nynorsk).

Although the services on the municipality's web pages were perceived as available and understandable among some of the informants in the focus group, the usability tests indicated that the services, information and webpages were difficult to access and to navigate. This was attributed to several factors including poor language proficiency, congested webpages, poor digital competence and preference for face-to-face or/and telephone communication with personnel at the municipal offices.

Recommendations: Several recommendations have been suggested to improve practice, some of which include:

- Closer collaboration with end-users as a resource for generating more relevant and effective web content.
- The need for systematic training in using digital tools and services. Such training ought to be integrated as a part of the introduction programme.
- Supplementing or redesigning 'Ny I Stryn' on the front page to integrate visuals that provide information in a very clear-cut and simple way, where maps, images, illustrations and icons support the text. The information ought to be relevant and accessible for someone who has limited Norwegian language proficiency and or limited social network. This box must be developed in close interaction with target users.
- Inter-cultural training for public service personnel

The study acknowledges that Stryn municipality in Sogn og Fjordane is an exemplary municipality in spearheading the integration of immigrants within their communities. This, they are doing through a well formulated municipal apparatus that, in collaboration with other entities such as NAV, local businesses, voluntary organization and others, are locally

implementing the nationwide 'Introductions program' targeted mainly at refugees and asylum seekers but also serves labour immigrants. However, despite the protracted and bright efforts so far, a lot remains to be done to meet the needs of minorities/immigrants in the local municipality. Public information service delivery especially digital service delivery is one such area that requires multi-dimensional and concerted efforts particularly because we cannot ignore the fact that we live in and heavily operate in an information society/digital age – and no one should be excluded.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context - Sogn og Fjordane county

Sogn og Fjordane county is located in the western part of the country. It is divided up into three regions (Sogn in the south; Sunnfjord in the middle and Nordfjord in the north). Altogether, it has 26 municipalities of which Stryn is one of them. The population is 109.172 people (SSB, 2015) .

The county has over a period been a net out migration region with regard to national population mobility (SSB 2012). During the last few years, however, the population has been rather stable, a factor attributed to an increased number immigrants (both foreign and domestic). However, in regards to foreign immigrants, a project by NRK Sogn og Fjordane, revealed that more than 50% of them leave the county after just a short period of stay (NRK S&Fj 2010) and according to this and other reports, when they leave Sogn og Fjordane, they most frequently also leave the Western Norway region (SSB 2010, Hanche-Dalseth et al. 2009).

The ongoing departure of immigrants from the region represents a great challenge to the many small and scattered regional communities in Sogn og Fjordane with a net out movement and a weak industrial base (Næringsbarometeret for Sogn og Fjordane 2011&2012; NIBR rapport 2012). In fact this kind of depopulation has become a problem also to enterprises in Western Norway which lack a stabile workforce (both vocational and highly educated) (Ibid 2011; SSB 2010; NHOSFj document 2009). This scenario demands all concerned to revisit the regional/local strategies and interventions aimed at integrating immigrants, socially, politically, culturally and economically. This task illuminates the centrality of access to, use of, and the availability of interactive and relevant information and communication channels, which can be seen as an interface between locals and newcomers to speed up or consolidate the integration processes.



The centrality of digital informational services and eInclusion for all is not just a regional issue, St.meld.nr 17 (2007-2008) '*Eit informasjonssamfunn for alle*' emphasizes that public information and electronic public service efforts should be for all: "... ingen skal måtte stå utanfor på grunn av faktorar som alder, geografi og økonomi når det gjeld høve til å utnytte og forstå det elektroniske tenestetilbud" (Ibid 57).

An assessment of available literature indicates that the public sector services in general, and public sector digital services in specific, are not well tailored or representative of immigrants needs (Dralega & Netteland 2012; Statskonsult 2007). This represents a new challenge especially when the Government digitalization program "*På nett med innbyggerne*" (2012) underscores that "... I fremtiden skal digital kommunikasjon være hovedregelen" (Ibid:3) and the legal frame against discrimination i.e. 'Lov om forbud mot diskriminering på grunn av etnisitet, religion mv §3a (2005)' mandates that the public sector authorities should actively develop, goal and needs-centered and conscious efforts to ensure equal opportunities and rights for all.

An initial survey of online information, based on the experience of a small selected group of immigrants, reveals that it is not easy to find targeted information about integration in the region. There is both a language barrier and a lack of appropriate information; furthermore, the information is scattered between different public sector organizations, and in particular between local and regional information portals (Dralega & Netteland 2012).

In 2010, NRK Sogn og Fjordane broadcasted a series of features on regional integration barriers seen from the immigrants' perspective – this was followed by debates by local administrators and politicians. These debates firstly acknowledged that little is known of the problems and challenges immigrant in western Norway face as they are largely invisible in mediated public sphere rhetoric, discourses and consequently, little has been done to alleviate the problem. As an explanation to the high levels of outward migration among immigrants from SFj, the 2010 NRK S&Fj report points to four important barriers the immigrants face: a) lack of job (seen as the biggest barrier), b) language illiteracy, c) lack of family and social networks, and finally, d) distance exhibited by the local population in Sogn og Fjordane that was described as somewhat "frightened of immigrants" . Also the report: '*Derfor blir vi her*' a (Søholt et al 2012) funded by Distriktssenteret explains, from immigrants' standpoint, a cause and

effect of current migration patterns especially the rural-urban migration patterns that are in-line with the NRK S&Fj report two years ago.

The conclusion in all this is: people in Sogn og Fjordane are not aware of the problems that the immigrants have to deal with and have therefore “done little” to address the integration challenges. In addition to immigrants in the region being reported as voiceless and invisible (e.g., in the public sphere politics and in broadcast), they lack role models and organized opportunities to become involved and engaged in customized service development socio-culturally, politically and most importantly economically – in meaningful ways that encourages them to stay. This includes their contributions and participation in needs-based digital service development.

1.2 Stryn municipality

1.2.1 Brief about the municipality



Stryn municipality lies innermost in Nordfjord where the mountains ascend to the Jostedalsglacier. It has a population of 7134, whereof 14,2% are immigrants (SSB 01.01.2014, latest statistics). Roughly 3.000 of the population in Stryn, live in the town centre¹. Statistics show that from 2013 to 2014 there was an increase in the population with 29 people. *Without immigrants* however, there is a decrease of population in Stryn with *minus 15* (see more under 1.2.2).

Agriculture and fishing, small-scale industry and tourism are the most important means of making a living in Stryn². The municipality comprises several separate communities. At the far end of the fjord lies Loen and Olden with valleys leading towards the Jostedalsglacier. If you travel further out along the fjord you come to Innvik and Utvik. Straight across the fjord from here lies Nordsida and Markane.

¹ More detail on population growth can be found here:

<https://stryn.kommune.no/Filnedlasting.aspx?MId1=798&Filld=1093>. Accessed: 20.05.2014

² See here for employment information: <https://stryn.kommune.no/Filnedlasting.aspx?MId1=798&Filld=161>
Accessed: 20.05.2014

1.2.2 Immigrants in Stryn

Stryn municipality started settling refugees in 1987 with mainly Tamil as the largest group then. In 1989, Chileans started arriving in the municipality through the Red Cross arrangement in Hjelledalen. By 1994-96 more immigrants from Bosnia started arriving and in 2000, Iranian Kurds joined the group of asylum seekers in the municipality. Since then, the municipality has continuously received a broad spectrum of refugees for the last 20 years (for more details, see Handlingsplan for flyktning- og innvandringsarbeid i Stryn kommune 2007-11 and Handlingsplan for besetting av flyktningar og innvandringsarbeid i Stryn Kommune 2014-2017).

From 2013 to 2014, 44 new immigrants were settled in Stryn. The number of immigrants in Stryn as of 01.01.2014 was 1010 people. Of these, 811 come from Europe (except from Turkey), 63 from Africa, 107 from Asia including Turkey, 7 from North America, 19 from South- and Middle America and 3 from Oceania. The municipality has owned, rented and built houses for refugees. This, has, to a large extent been driven by the high demand of accommodation for the increasing numbers of refugees the municipality has taken and continues to take in. Tønning School, the municipal library, the cultural house and language training centre are among the main meeting places for immigrants.

The primary school has witnessed a big increase in minority language pupils from 7,6 % in 2007 to 12,8 in 2013, most of whom are concentrated in Tønning school. Pupils at this school represent up to 25 different languages. The kindergarten has about 18 % from minority background and Tønning Kindergarten has 25 % of these (Ibid.). Several reasons explain this growth, including:

- Long tradition for recruiting an international labour force for the tourist industry
- Stryn has a comprehensive arrangement for labour immigrants in agriculture and industry from Eastern Europe.
- The families of the labour immigrants also often settle in the municipality

The most important factor for this population increase is associated with international migration which is important for the economy. The municipality services for both labour immigrants and refugees revolve around the introduction program, a state sponsored apparatus for integration services (describe below) that links settlement, language training, societal studies and work training. However, this program's main target is asylum seekers/refugees while the other immigrants have to pay for these

services (especially language training) which is often expensive. NAV Stryn has since 2012 registered an increase in unemployment among East-Europeans, and one of the biggest challenges to employment is the language deficiency (Ibid.).

1.2.3 Administrative services for immigrants

Two municipality services are steered towards integrating immigrants (refugees): - the refugee services and the Stryn Centre for adult education.

A refugee consultant manages the refugee services in the municipality. The services are organized under the health and social service mandates. However, other general services also offer the same services to all residents including immigrants and refugees. The refugee services have particular responsibility for settling refugees, introduction program in collaboration with the adult education center where language and apprenticeships are undertaken and steered respectively. NAV also synergises with the municipality apparatus in job/language apprenticeship and later employment.

Stryn municipality has since 1987 settled around 20 refugees every year (34 refugees in 2015). These have primarily been entitled to at least 2 years of the introduction program since 2004 (note that there has been changes in the timeframes from 300 to 600 hours). With the goal to strengthen participation in labour market and society and economic independence, the introduction program involves a full time language education, society education, and apprenticeship. The municipality also arranges for interpreting services in selected languages.

1.2.4 The Introduction program in Stryn municipality

The introduction program is a national program aimed at the implementation of the Introduction act³ whose purpose is to increase the possibility of newly arrived immigrants participating in working and social life and to increase their financial independence. The right and obligation to participate in an introduction programme applies to newly arrived foreign nationals between 18 and 55 years of age who need to obtain basic qualifications and who have been granted: a) asylum⁴; b) a residence or

³ Act of 11 March 2005 No. 13 (in force from 1 September 2005 pursuant to the Decree of 11 March 2005 No. 228).

⁴ cf. sections 17 and 18 of the Immigration Act.

work permit after being given leave to enter the country as a resettlement refugee⁵, c) a renewable residence or work permit⁶, or d) a residence or work permit as members of the family of such persons as are mentioned above⁷. Nordic citizens and foreign nationals covered by the Agreement on the European Economic Area (the EEA Agreement) are not covered by this section and thus have to pay for services (in particular language training) by themselves.

This, as explained below involve three main components: language training; societal studies and apprenticeship. In this section, we will explore experiences from the municipality implementation of these services as an overarching frame for understanding the digital related service delivery in the municipality.

1.2.5 The program's three components

This study is based on informants that had undertaken 300 hours of Norwegian language and societal subjects, whereof 250 hours are earmarked Norwegian language. According to the legislation: 'Lov om introduksjonsordning for nykomne innvandrere (01.09. 2004)', the aim of this training is to: a) facilitate the passage to the ordinary education-system and or the working life and to b) access knowledge, gain insight and develop skills that promote the individual's orientation of values and personal development. This knowledge is aimed at strengthening the basis for independent contribution and cooperation with others in work and society.

Societal course: Through a 50 hours course in societal subjects, the immigrants and refugees obtain training in the following subjects: Innvandrere i Norge, Demokrati og velferd, Skule, utdanning og kvalifisering, Arbeid, arbeidsliv og arbeidsmarknad, Barn og familie, Befolkningsstruktur og naturforhold og Informasjonssøk.

Apprenticeship: As a part of the training, the municipality is expected to provide the students with practical experience through language and work-apprenticeship (praksisplass). Studies in this field (Dralega and Netteland 2012, 2013) show that the municipalities across the county interpret and carry out this component in different ways. Most municipalities placed their 'students' in language training during the first year, whereas the work training is placed in the second year. Others chose to place

⁵ cf. section 22, fourth paragraph, of the Immigration Act.

⁶ pursuant to section 8, second paragraph, of the Immigration Act based on an application for asylum, or collective protection in a situation of mass outflow, cf. section 8 a of the Immigration Act.

⁷ cf. sections 9 and 8, second paragraph, of the Immigration Act.

students in both types of placements the second year. This is partly a result of the person in charge's interpretation of the placements and/or lack of work placements.

1.2.6 Collaboration with other entities

Faglig forum for kommunalt flyktningarbeid (FFKF) is a consultative body for matters concerning refugees. A membership in FFKF insures that each municipal can contribute to influence governmental guidelines and policy in the field.

The informants (from the municipality) in this study found FFKF useful for exchanging ideas, but also to receive guidance and support in the daily work. The network also arranges study tours: They have been in UK, the Netherlands and Palestine, and in 2004, 70 participants travelled to Iran in order to learn more about life in a strict Muslim country and for better cultural understanding. In 2008, the study tours were undertaken in voluntary organisations (religious communities, Røde Kors, sports etc) which are important supplements to the municipal's work on integration. In 2012, FFKF arranged study tours to Ethiopia with 50 participants. In 2014 they organised tours to Turkey in order to obtain insight into the situation of refugees from Syria. The results from these activities vary. Some municipalities obtain good results, whereas others report on limited impact and efficacy.

In addition, regarding integration actions, Stryn Kommune collaborates with other voluntary organizations such as Frivilligsentralen, the refugee council service at Røde Kors, with Internasjonalt Forum and others. Cooperation with NAV is mandatory.

1.2.7 Communication

Apart from the digital information and communication that we will present and discuss under chapter 4, municipality employees in Stryn meet informational needs of immigrants through face-to-face interactions when immigrants come to the head office, through telephone and sometimes through local Newspapers communication.

1.3 Project goal

The integration of immigrants and minority populations within any society, demands a multidimensional and integrated approach that brings together several sectors/actors (including service providers and users) to develop, implement and evaluate "public service type" interventions. These must genuinely reflect the

input, capacities and needs of the users/immigrants as well as the understanding and anchorage within the receiving communities.

1.3.1 Overall goal

In light of the specific challenges mentioned above, the overall goal of the project is to, through research, develop a better understanding of how municipalities in Sogn og Fjordane are addressing the challenges/realities of integrating immigrant and minorities through digital information channels and services. More specifically, the project will focus on web based services and activities of *Stryn Kommune with regard to integrating immigrants*.

The project will explore:

- a. the web-based content – looking at accessibility, interactivity, user-friendliness and relevance to the target group’s needs and challenges and
- b. municipality policy/implemetation – by looking at how inclusion of immigrants’ in general and specifically through informational service delivery is achieved. Further examine the municipality strategic plans, priorities and processes of integration.
- c. What immigrants perceive of the municipal digital information meant for their use.

The study examines good practices and the challenges confronted with the aim to provide new perspectives and deeper understanding of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion considered to have direct implications to the economic, social and normative policy and status of integration in the region. The aim at the end of the day is to generate practical recommendations that help solve the challenges faced. In summary, this project aims to: *Document what and how these public entities are promoting integration through digital service delivery*.

1.3.2 Outcome

This knowledge will provide a better understanding of the status quo, the success factors, and challenges regarding integration, with specific insight into how access to and nature of information flows and targets influences possibilities of achieving holistic integration in local communities.

In addition, this empirical study contributes to theoretical debates surrounding public efforts towards integration of marginalized communities especially when these are a fragmented user-group.

Based on the challenges encountered, the study makes recommendations in collaboration with practitioners' input aimed at better praxis.

It is also the aim of the study to deliver/disseminate results to various target groups (including municipality practitioners, scientific report and general publics).

1.4 Research questions

We seek answers to the following research questions:

- RQ 1 What type of online information services/programs/content is specifically prepared for immigrants by the municipality?**
- RQ2 To what extent is it accessible and relevant to the target user's needs?**
- RQ3 What are the successes and challenges encountered; and what preconditions ensure and what challenges inhibit this work?**
- RQ4 How can the digital programs/services/content be strengthened, improved or overhauled to generate more positive outcomes of integration?**

2 Theoretical and conceptual framework

The project intersects two issues relevant for contemporary Norwegian society today, namely: the current migration flows and the settlement of immigrants into an increasingly multicultural society on the one hand; and the proliferation and increasingly central role of digital and online information and communication services in all sectors of today's societies.

Globalization, on the one hand, has been attributed to the developments in information and communication technologies now regarded as one of the driving forces for change in social structures and political governance (Fluck et al 2004). On the other hand, globalization also involves processes and the increasing transnational movement of people (Thussu 2007). This has meant that originally homogenous societies have to now tackle the pros and cons of this influx – i.e. take advantages of immigration at the same time address the social, political, cultural, religious, economic implications and pressures it causes. This inherent dilemma forms the conceptual lens for this project that constitutes two main areas of contemporary cultural and socioeconomic studies: Rhetoric on the Information Society and the role of ICT in socio-cultural integration. Both fields are relatively established areas of research in European and North American contexts and in Scandinavia it is a growing research field. In Scandinavia, research on the socio-cultural and economic integration of migrants has focused on two main areas: the representation and empowerment of ethnic minorities within the public sphere. Issues of how immigrants fare in the host country especially in terms of their labor force participation and remuneration and within their local communities occupies the minds of social scientists, politicians and the general public. Using natives as the gold standard, studies have often compared immigrants to natives (See for instance: Hagtvet 2005; Kvinge & Djuve 2006; Hayfron 2001 for Norway; Roshholm, Scott and Husted 2006; Calsson & Rooth 2006 for Denmark and Sweden).

In relation to ICTs, for years, the rhetoric around ICTs, policy and practice has been saturated with universalistic generalizations about how they will contribute to growth, welfare, education and democratic societies as a whole (Storsul and Syvertsen 2006, Chiumbu 2008; Skogerbø & Enli 2008; Skogerbø 1996) and universal and inclusive of marginalized groups as well (Dralega & Netteland 2012; Dralega 2010, 2009, 2008; Dralega & Mainsah 2011; Mainsah 2009). This is attributed to the democratic nature of

ICTs, their flexibility, interactivity, time and space tenets and ability to generate networks and the possibilities for the personalization of these media technologies for fragmented audience needs (Wester 2002; Castells 2000; Storsul 2007).

In specific relation to marginalized communities in his book "*Empowering marginal communities with information networking*", Hakikur (2006) argues that the Internet is supposed to be a deductive tool to promote awareness, provide content, raise skills and act as a catalytic agent of empowerment. In fact, Parkinson (2005) argues that effective use of information technology can play an important role in learning processes for marginalized, adding that the Internet can act as a learning tool for providing appropriate content with easier access at lesser effort. In addition, she argues that through any effective means of communication, communities can gain access to relevant information, raise their knowledge, develop their capacities, mobilize resources, establish knowledge networks and empower themselves.

Dillenbourg (2000) however, warns that, the information-driven learning systems require more than just the above before information becomes truly a value-added product for marginal communities. Dillenbourg warns that while groups of users of online services can lead to progressive community and identity building, community feelings do not automatically emerge just because groups use electronic communication – *it takes a lot of time, conscious effort and a lot of interaction* – an idea, as this report will show (Chapter 4), to a large degree is supported through the interviews of target users. To go back to the regional research challenges on the subject, research in Norway goes beyond the hyperbolic expectations to examine issues of efficacy of ICTs in promoting change (for instance see: Storsul and Syvertsen 2006, Skogerbø 1996, Due 2009), very few studies have focused on the regional and local. Studies on local Norwegian municipalities' uses of ICT/digital services (e.g. Stavanger and Tromsø) confirm that while local administrative visions and expectations to ICT and development are ambitious and sometimes hyperbolic, local implementation, usage and engagement fall short of effective results (Dralega, Due & Skogerbø 2010; Due, 2009). Skogerbø (2006) has argued that the implementation and use of ICTs at local levels in Norway is dependent on socio-economic, political and cultural conditions, but also on factors such as clarity of goals, motivation and dedication among users, developers and implementers of ICT services.

In a more recent investigation, Dralega and Nettelund (2012) examine how the public sector in Sogn og Fjordane (four case municipalities⁸ and four state institutions⁹) are using digital service delivery to promote integration at local and regional levels. The findings indicate, not only 'sender oriented' service delivery; poor visibility, limited context based-content and language problems are some of the loopholes of the initiatives examined. Another project by Dralega and Nettelund (2013) entitled: 'Digital dialog for en multikulturel kommune' however shows positive strides taken by local municipalities to bridge these gaps. However, issues of resources and capacity still remain a challenge.

The focus in this project is not just to gain current insights into how ICTs are accessed, used and engaged in the processes of integration by the local municipalities in Sogn og Fjordane - underlying this is also how and if the ICTs initiatives contribute to *shaping the local identity of immigrants and creating a sense of belonging*. It has often been argued that, local democracy is justified by the significance of "the local" – that territorial closeness between citizens enable communication, solidarity and a common identity. Small self-governing entities (municipalities) are also assumed to ensure a high level of communication between citizens and elected politicians (something we will discuss further under 4.2) (Dahl & Tuft 1973), providing the politicians information that enables them to base policies on local preferences and solve societal problems and challenges such as how to effectively integrate minorities in all spheres of local life (Lowndes et al. 2006, Coleman 2005) and enabling the citizens a high level of influence on policy agendas and policy outcomes (Irvin & Stansbury 2004). In the literature ICTs (especially Internet) are often considered to reduce the significance of space, locality and territoriality (Baldersheim et al 2008).

However, it can also be argued that ICTs have an inherent potential to increase the significance of "the local identity" – because these technologies improve the possibilities for communication and participation, thereby consolidating local democracy (Hanssen 2007, 2008, Winsvold 2007). Thus, the effect of ICTs (access, content and usefulness towards integration) is an empirical question, and a focus in this study.

In studying the perspectives above, we will try to understand and explain the underlying dynamics influencing the outcomes with a special focus on the nature of digital divides

⁸ Sogndal, Flora, Hyllestad and Bremanger municipalities.

⁹ NAV; the directorate for diversity and integration (IMDI), Sogn og Fjordane Fylkeskommune and Fylkesmanen i Sogn og Fjordane).

among our respondents and how the municipalities respond to these through their digital (and/or alternative non digital) communication channels. In the same light we are interested in the impact or influences from “soft” factors such as attitudes and perceptions of natives; self-confidence of immigrants, language (d)efficiency, religious and cultural differences and so on. This indicates the importance of local anchorage into local communities and how access to and nature of information flows and targets play a pivotal role in achieving holistic integration in local communities.

The aim is therefore to generate a better understanding of the status quo, the success factors, and challenges and also make recommendations concerning how the public service (municipalities are the chosen public service entity because of their role as local administrative hosts to all residents including immigrants) can better utilize digital communication technologies in integration work. Our approach is both top-down and bottom-up as we will focus on municipality digital service provision, immigrants and members of the local communities exposed to these activities and services as our informants in addition to other research approaches (see methodology). The reason for this bottom-up activity is to generate experience-based insights and recommendations that might be overlooked by the “top down” administrative or ‘service provider – centered’ approaches.

Overall, a theoretically informed analysis was carried out, and this also served as a background to the interviews with the participants who were invited to produce a more in-depth description of the processes, experiences and reflections on their digital efforts towards integration. Grounded theory is employed as an analytical tool in addition to make sense of the findings.

3 Methodology

Given the exploratory, descriptive and analytical aims of the research, we will employ an inductive and interpretative case study based research design using both qualitative (primary) and quantitative (secondary) methods. The research design involves the use of three main research methods: in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis (website review) to collect data while normative theories of integration, information society; digital divide and grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990) will form the analytical frames for the study.

3.1 Case study design

Through case study research design that aims at fostering learning of contemporary phenomenon in its real life contexts (Yin 1981) - we will examine effectiveness of electronic communication efforts and activities in **Stryn** municipality aimed at local community integration. Stryn municipality has been selected firstly, for its long experience with immigrants (since 1973). Secondly, the municipality has been selected as an interesting case study (and research questions generated) based on the knowledge gaps (refer particularly to the latest related research from Sogn og Fjordane by Dralega & Netteland 2012)¹⁰ and potential added value this proposed research findings with contribute to the development of area. We envision that the single municipality choice will provide us with pointed and indepth focus that a single case study gives, but also the sufficient data required and a solid foundation for generalization (the analysis will include a synergy with other research output that the research team bring to the table). Research methods and instruments are selected for their promise to deliver the answers to the research questions of the project. These questions include aspects of geographic digital divides related to small towns in addition to other social divides that may influence the mobility and integration – like gender and ethnicity dynamics; access to physical and digital information, networks and infrastructure and so on. We will study one municipality for a more in-depth analysis and use this as a basis for generalization.

¹⁰ In this research, we also critique Svein Ølnes' research projects such as: 'Evaluation of Difi's LOS web infrastructure' - which is the web infrastructure used by most of the municipalities in SFJ including Stryn. Our main criticism here is that from an infrastructural point of view, LOS has a very limited incorporation of the immigrant topic. Ølnes' other reviewed publications include; 'Evaluation and development of best practice indicators for public web sites (from 2001 to date)' and ' User evaluations of Norge.no (2004 and 2007)'. We believe Ølnes' participation in this project is of great value.

We will undertake interviews and in detail study of the www.stryn.kommune.no web page as our main data collection approaches as explained below.

3.2 The informants

Altogether we interviewed 15 informants from Stryn municipality. We located and interviewed 10 immigrants (users and non users of the services). In addition, we interviewed one municipality employee representing the policy, administration and implementation; one personnel in charge of the web content; one personnel in charge of migration and integration and one personnel at the language center (the norskopplæringskontor).

Questions on web content development and processes are preoccupied with user-contributions, use, interactivity and participation. In addition, we included 1 person working in voluntary organization, with expertise on immigrants and refugees.

Informant	Representing
5 family reunification (2 Philippines, w; 1 Sri Lanka, w; 1 Slovakia, w; 1 Serbia - w) 1 political asylum (1 Serbia, w) 4 with refugee background (1 Ethiopia, m; 1 Eritrea, m; 1 Sudan, m)	Target users. Focus-group discussions
1 Chief administrative officer	Representing the policy, administration and implementation, Individual in-depth interview
1 IT-personell	In charge of the web content, Individual in-depth interview
1 Refugee coordinator	In charge of migration and integration, Individual in-depth interview

1 Apprenticeship training office	In charge of language course, Individual in-depth interview
1 Coordinator, Voluntary organization	In charge at Volunteering Center, Individual in-depth interview

Through in-depth interviews, our intentions were to obtain perceptions on the initiatives and reflections around the prospects of such interventions (Rubin & Rubin 1995). The interviews provided us with a more in-depth indication of community anchorage – or lack of such - and particularly how integration is connected to issues such as background, gender, class, or centre/periphery distinctions, wellbeing, cross regional mobility and so on. The interviews also formed the basis of evaluating the potential for improving these efforts in way of recommendations.

As a part of the in-depth interviews, we included a user-test (Nielsen 1993, Toftøy Andersen & Wold 2011) of the focus group with Stryn Kommune’s website as point of departure. The aim of the user testing was to obtain the insight needed in order to make products such as IT systems and net-pages more user friendly (Toftøy Andersen & Wold 2011:20). The test was to simulate a real situation, comprising concrete exercises where the researcher observes the user. The test was used to evaluate the usability of the website. The test took 20 minutes and was included as a part of the focus group interview.

3.3 Document analysis

Prior to the interviews described above, relevant documents were collected and analyzed. These included among other municipality strategy or plan-documents. Also, analyses of stryn.kommune.no is undertaken in order to obtain insights into the nature, scope and digital tools that exists (Bowen 2009). From navigating and examining the website, interviewing users (and non-users), and testing the focus group, we got an indication of level of/ease of use, accessibility, relevance of the content/information.

3.4 Reflections on situated knowledge

Following are some reflections from the field work. In the focus group with immigrants, we encountered discrepancies between ‘website user friendliness’ and the ‘practical use’. During the focus group discussion in which all participants where

asked to comment on whether they had used the municipality websites and what impressions they had of it – in terms of user-friendliness, relevance, accessibility of relevant information, and so on, they overwhelmingly expressed very high satisfaction with the municipality’s webpages. No one volunteered any negative comment. In a bid to just cross-check on this impeccable satisfaction two immigrants, randomly selected, were asked to undertake a ‘usability test’ (Ivory 2003).¹¹ The exercise involved the subject to navigate www.strynkommune.no following questions the researcher posed. Simple search questions included: “Pretend that it is Sunday and your child gets sick. How would you navigate in order to find a doctor, or where to go?”. This test showed that while one of the two informants eventually found out the useful information, it took him very long time to arrive at it. The second informant had no prior computer navigational competence. So no navigation was pursued. Instead a confession of computer illiteracy (lack of competence in using a computer) was acknowledged. This scenario led us to two main questions, for which we have no answers yet: first, could the overly positive responses be because the immigrants did not want to portray their host municipality efforts as negative thereby showing ingratitude? Or where some of them simply shy (or ashamed) to say/or admit that they could not use a computer? Or was it simply a ‘trust’ issue in which the senior researcher’s intentions or role and impact of such research were not adequately understood? The ‘immigrants’ coordinator put together the group of 10 immigrants involved in the focused group discussions. These (7 women and 3 men) came from different parts of the world. They were either asylum seekers/refugees, work immigrants or on family unification to both categories above. These immigrants obviously represent a broad scope/different life-biographies, experiences and backgrounds. The focus group thus represents quite a synthetic group-setting that somewhat ought to be taken into account when synthesizing or reading these findings.

There is a clear imbalance regarding power structure. Being a senior researcher in Norway, one is associated with high education, steady economy, high social and cultural capital and academic prestige. The immigrants and refugees on the other

¹¹ Ivory, M.Y. 2003. *Automated Web Site Evaluation, Researchers’ and Practitioners’ Perspectives*, Human Computer Interaction Series, Springer

hand, some of whom had newly arrived (10 months), were financially supported by the Norwegian Government. Some had high education from their home countries whereas others had no education on their time of arrival. Some had permanent positions, others were in apprenticeships. This means that there is huge socio-economic diversity – not necessarily compared to the natives, but *within* the group itself.

All the informants in the focus group spoke Norwegian at the time of the focus group, yet to *very different degrees*. One woman had lived in Stryn for 20 years and spoke fluent Stryn-dialect, whereas others struggled.

4 Findings and discussion

Results of the user tests were based on methods inspired by Nielsen's 'Usability Engineering' (1993), whereas analyses of the interviews and focus groups were carried out by qualitative techniques from Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990), primarily open coding. Codes were sampled and sorted in categories and then presented as analytical subjects. The triangulation of these methods and material, including plan document, statistic data, and analyses of web pages – reflects patterns that are found in the empirical material – and is presented in this chapter. All coding was manually conducted.

4.1 Immigrants speak out

As previous mentioned, this study is based on informants that had undertaken 300 hours of Norwegian language and societal subjects, whereof 250 hours are earmarked Norwegian language.

Status	Country	Gender
5 Family reunification	Philippines	All women
	Philippines	
	Sri Lanka	
	Slovakia	
	Serbia	
1 Political Asylum	Serbia	woman
4 Refugee	Ethiopia	All men
	Eritrea	
	Sudan	

4.1.2 Immigrants' needs

According to research on hinderances for digital inclusion (Findahl 2013; Guthu and Gravdahl 2008; Guthu and Holm 2010; Netteland and Dralegas 2012; Slettemeås 2014) immigrant's information needs often relates to the immigrant life-biographies, age, gender, class, the category immigrant one belong to (asylum seeker, refugee, work-immigrant), time since arrival, language skills and education, what life-situation one has, if one has children, family or other social network nearby, if one is employed and what kind of interests one has as well as which country one comes from.

Since the focus group is limited to 10 immigrants with highly different life situations, nationality, residence time etc, we are not able to break down the findings to different immigrant categories. Thus, the findings presented here, must be seen as more general themes of information and perceptions across the 10 interviewed. Some of the findings are specific for newly arrived refugees, whereas others are more important for family reunifications. We will nevertheless present some of the findings from the a) focus group interviews and from the b) user testing.

4.1.3 Findings from focus groups

Stryn municipality and integration

High satisfaction among the 10 immigrants was expressed about the Stryn municipality in general and immigrant services (Flyktningtjenesten) in particular. Several of the immigrants experienced that the municipality and Flyktningtjenesten were very supportive, pragmatic and hands on. All expressed gratitude towards the ways in which they had been settled, with respect and dignity. The individual effort given with love and care by the refugee coordinator was particularly underlined as a priceless contribution.

Language training and integration

According to several of our informants from the different in-depth interviews, the variety/differences within the groups of immigrants was stressed as technically challenging: In the Norwegian classes, there are students who are totally illiterate next to someone with university education; some of the elderly learn slower than the young ones; or there might be other challenges that are difficult to map out. For others, the rather flat hierarchical structure that the Norwegian adult education is based upon, might be a structure that for some becomes an excuse for doing nothing, one of the municipal informants assumed. Another discovery was that people with university

degrees were not necessarily the fastest learners. There were cases where people *without any education* learned Norwegian faster than people with education. One explanation to this was being English literate in Norway – where everybody speaks English very well – means for some that learning Norwegian becomes less urgent. The participants in the focus group all shared the opinion of having teachers with high pedagogic and didactic skills.¹² The immigrants emphasised however that in order to become fluent, language training at school is far from sufficient. *Individual effort in one's leisure time* is needed:

“If you just attend the education at school, go home, make dinner and eat, and watch TV, then you don't learn anything /.../Being in Norway ... the language is very important”.
(woman, family reunification)

All focus group discussants agreed that after being proficient in Norwegian, one could easily small talk with people and in that way, one not only learns the language better, but has potential for more multifaceted socialisation in the local community.¹³ Although several of the focus group experienced that Norwegians were quite good at initiating conversations with them, one of the informants utters, “yet in social gatherings where immigrants and Norwegians are present, some Norwegians sit with the immigrants, yet most Norwegians tend to cluster.” Speaking Norwegian is one vital skill that most of the informants, both in the focus group and the in depth interviews, were perceived as *the* most vital key to bridge social gaps.

The informant from the Voluntary organization (Frivillighetstjenesten), did have some examples of activities and meetings where ties between immigrants and natives were strengthened, even when immigrants had limited language skills. In the women's group for instance, there were cases where elderly volunteer women and single mother immigrants became close, where the elderly volunteers, sometimes stepped in as 'grand-parent substitutes'; a highly welcoming relation for both parts. This enabled both parts to learn from each other and eventually become friends across the Frivillighetstjenesten's services. The arrangements also contributed to establish new

¹² See also Eugene Guribye's work on integration and immigrant's confidence in teachers <http://www.ordnett.no/search?search=tillit&lang=en>

¹³ In Stryn, the immigrants are predominantly taught in Nynorsk, yet one teacher teaches in Bokmål. No one finds this difficult. One woman was originally taught in Bokmål, yet started to speak Nynorsk when she started to work as a health worker. She now sounds fluently Stryning – a dialect several finds beautiful.

networks *across* conventional dividing lines, relations that are found to decrease notions of 'us' and 'them'.

We found that the two women who spoke Norwegian fluently and had family and children in Stryn with ease circulated in various different social groupings, across other immigrants and natives. Apart from these two however, none of the others in the focus group had *close* Norwegian friends. Except for – or in addition to being fluent, having small children contributes to speed up the integration.

Children – bridging what gap?

Several informants highlighted that children often become fluent in no time and with ease make friends in their neighbourhood, at nursery school or at school. Rather than difficulties with integration, the informants emphasise other challenges:

By not being able to speak *the informants' own mother tongue* causes problems. In order for the children to understand their family and grandparents when being in their parents' homeland the informants say it is ideal that their children learn and maintain their mother tongue. In practice however this is not necessarily the case. Two informants express this in the following ways:

"I have three kids, whereof none speak Serbian. They speak only Norwegian. I talk to them in Serbian, but they reply in Norwegian." (Serbian, family reunification)

"I ask them: what are you to do when we go to the homeland? They just reply: then *you* are to translate. The kids, they are *totally* Norwegian" (woman, family reunification)

The women say these words with acknowledgement and proudness, yet a melancholy is indeed traced in their voices. While the children are integrated with few obstacles in the local community, learning to speak Norwegian/ or having Norwegian as their native tongue; obtaining Norwegian friends; being socialised into the Stryn culture and community through school and activities, a strong sense of belonging and identification as Stryning and to Stryn is being formed. The future for these children looks quite the same as for whichever "stryning". Although, as the refugee coordinator express, there are immigrants who "make tight ties around their children, refusing them to participate in gym-classes, swimming and birthday parties, predominantly, the grounds for integration are in many ways established for the immigrants' children in Stryn.

Some of the parents however have met obstacles when it comes to language, challenges in understanding the Norwegian society and culture as well as becoming integrated within social circles among natives. Although the introduction programme meet some of

these challenges, it cannot be compared to the ways in which children are being integrated – or the way Stryn becomes theirs. The immigrants in this study consequently speak about the homeland as Home. While the parents' homeland represent Home for the informants, Stryn represents Home for their children. The melancholia noted in this field-work, may be attached to a sense of loss as their children never will achieve the same sense of anchor, mother tongue, cultural and national identity as their immigrant parents - in which can (*yet not necessarily*) produce a different gap – not between the immigrant and the native stryning, yet between the immigrant parent and the ways in which their children's identity, culture and preferences are being shaped (Snekkevåg 2010).¹⁴

Leisure

When touching subjects regarding leisure time, some examples of *differences* were given. Many learned that they ended up doing quite different things on their leisure time than what they used to do in their home countries. As recreation, many spent time to *walk tours* (gå tur) or cross country skiing. The nature itself was emphasised as an important part of the everyday life in Stryn. Many expressed that this was an interest they did not use to have before they settled in Stryn. Now several walked tours in the afternoon and hiked the mountains in weekends. Some of the men played football. The nature, football and skiing are grounds with high potentials for immigrants and natives to meet, although one challenge was raised:

“If you do not play football, or like cross country, or like hiking, it is hard to find social arenas where immigrants and the local community meets” (Serbian woman).

It was underlined that while natives and immigrants *met* in sports or leisure, significantly more explicit initiatives and investment *over time* was needed from both parts in order to strengthen social ties. Giving priority to Norwegian language practice, was emphasised as central.

¹⁴ Mari Hellerud Snekkevåg 2010, Flerkulturell og tospråklig – problem eller ressurs? Om kunnskapspolitikken tilnærming for språklig og kulturelt mangfold i skolen, Masteroppgave i flerkulturell og internasjonal utdanning, Avdeling for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier, Høgskolen i Oslo

4.2 General informational services and communication – individual in-depth interviews*

1 Chief administrative officer	Representing the policy, administration and implementation
1 IT-personell	In charge of the web content
1 Refugee coordinator	In charge of migration and integration
1 Apprenticeship training office	In charge of Norskopplæring
1 Volunteer	Volunteer Center

*when making reference to all 5 informants from these individual interviews, they will be mentioned as ‘the **isc-informants**’ (informational services and communication-informants)

4.2.1 The Refugee Service and services for refugees in Stryn

After Black July (1983) and the following Civil war (1983-2009) in Sri Lanka, many Tamils fled to other countries, among them Norway. In 1987, the municipality of Stryn established a position for a refugee consultant, initiating settling Tamil refugees. Today, there are 210% positions in the Flyktningtjenesten in Stryn Kommune, divided on three people. In addition, there are several teachers affiliated with the Introduksjonsprogram and Norskopplæring.

With more than 20 years of experience with working with refugees, the informant from the Refugee Service in this study expressed that the biggest difference from the initiate period and today the time from arrival to employment was significantly shorter earlier. In the late eighties and nineties, the refugee consultant operated in close teamwork with Aetat, with clear emphasis on today often called *place-train* model (Spjelkavik 2012). This means that the main focus was to provide people a permanent position, and then, *from- and within their workplace*, language training and social networking were seen as natural trajectories. *Get people going* was the mutual slogan within the teamwork, as this was perceived as a key to success. Rather than start with language training and teaching societal subjects, which is the case today, apprenticeship and jobs were the primarily aim:

”People got jobs. They became economically independent. They could support their family. They straightened their backs. Before and after, you could actually see a physical metamorphosis.” [Informant from the Refugee Service]

There were Norwegian language courses, but not as many hours - and far from being as systemised as it is today. One aspects that is underlined by our informants, about what distorts the old pragmatic way of integrating refugees, is that the bureaucracy and *multiple and fragmented assignments* that a NAV employee is to fulfil during his or her working day today, implies that one more easily drops focus.

Nevertheless, apart from the changes noted, overall, the five isc-informants representing different informational services and communication, not only expressed positive perspectives on immigration, yet also a strong appreciation as the immigrants play a big role in sustaining the Stryn economy. The success, as they name the settlement of refugees in Stryn, is a result of strong collaborative ties between NAV; Stryn municipality, Frivillighetssentralen, Refugee service, Voksenopplæringen and enterprises in Stryn.

”It is not the Refugee Service alone who settles, it is the *whole* municipality” (Refugee coordinator).

The interdisciplinarity approach comprising common and mutual responsibility for the arriving refugees and immigrants was indeed a perception that was supported across the informants from the different in-depth interviews. Being co-located with NAV, the barriers to contact each other were lower. Many challenges and problems were solved through the ways in which people informally met during their working hours: ”we just walk into each other’s offices and unravel situations there and then”. This may be one finding that explains the immigrants’ positive experiences with the municipality’s services. Nevertheless, the isc-informants individually pointed to some key challenges and some steps one could take in order to integrate better.

Employment

There were some challenges regarding employment, some of which were related to attitudes and or distance between immigrants and natives. ”One has not touched goal just because people have jobs”, the coordinator says, pointing to experiences where immigrants have achieved jobs, but then after a while, lost it. It is suggested, as is also in line with Guribye and Hidle’s (2013) study, that *local contact persons, teachers, mentors and ‘godparent’-functions* from people in the local community can play a pivotal role.

Another central aspect regarding employment, is that small enterprises and cornerstone companies in Stryn, such as Nordfjord Kjøtt, Kvamme Konfeksjon, Sunde Konfeksjon and the bus-assembling factory Vidre AS among others, that used to be in high demand of workforce, no longer exist or has moved the manufacturing abroad. The tougher competition is noted when the Refugee Service today makes an effort to give refugees apprenticeship or positions in enterprises.

One novel challenge is that refugees and work-immigrants fight for the same jobs. When a refugee with two years language practice competes with a work-immigrant with *no Norwegian skills at all*, the Refugee coordinator says, “funny enough, the work-immigrants often are the triumphant”. According to Horverak’s (2012) work on employment and immigrants, Norwegian leaders tend to employ people who resemble themselves, culturally and socially.¹⁵ Immigrants who have maintained strong ties to their country of origin in their leisure time, achieves less advantageous evaluations and are perceived as less similar to the leader, his/her organisation and co-workers compared with a Norwegian candidate *or* an immigrant that underlines identity to his/her own culture *and* the Norwegian society.¹⁶ The work immigrants in Stryn are often white European men, with customs and norms, cultural practices or religious identity not too different from Norwegians. Although more research is needed in order to take appropriate actions, we suggest that Horverak’s findings are relevant in order to understand why sometimes work-immigrants are preferred in front of refugees from non-European countries.

Immigrant Women

Women are, as the coordinator stresses, particularly vulnerable as some of the women becomes pregnant often, quits their jobs or drops out of the introduction program, and thus loses the integration-progression. Women more often resides in the private sphere, and therefore more easily become isolated from the local community.

Frivillighetssentralen’s Women’s group plays a key role to this.¹⁷ This group, being

¹⁵ http://www.uib.no/info/dr_grad/2012/Horverak,%20Jori.htm

¹⁶ Horverak also finds that prejudiced leaders, who finds inter-cultural relation threatening, prefers to employ a Norwegian, less skilled candidate, in preference of an immigrant candidate.

¹⁷ Stryn Frivillighetssentral, founded in 1999, function as a pillar and ‘source to stimulate and increase participation and engagement especially from groups that today, fall outside its work’ (Stortingsmelding nr.39, 2006-2007, “Frivillighet for alle”). This means that the organization supplements public sector activities and services offered especially to its marginalized communities as a meeting point between people, other

integrated as a part of the Introduksjonsprogram for women, represents an important meeting place for building networks between Norwegian and immigrant women. The informant from Frivillighetssentralen expresses the importance of this group in this manner:

“The volunteer women are important resources in the local community. They are often resourceful; hence they drag the refugees onto other social arenas. And if you have a job, and is a part of a social network, its incredible important, where one often gets one’s social needs covered”.

Eight voluntary women manage the group in collaboration between Frivillighetssentralen and Flyktningtjenesten in the Stryn municipality. The group meets weekly, and has specific themes where represents from different divisions are invited to present information, such as health-personnell (midwife, medical doctors, dentists, public health nurse); banking; electricity, insurances and so on. The participants and the volunteers also visit each other’s homes. The grandparent substitute is as we mentioned a unique arrangement for both parts.

Apart from the women’s group, Frivillighetssentralen arranges the annual cultural night. Here food from 150 different countries is served and stories from the different countries are told. This is an event open for all citizens of Stryn, in which aims to bridge gaps between immigrants, refugees and Norwegians. Frivillighetssentralen also has arranged food classes and Stryn Turlag, offers hiking tours. The municipality finances the tours, yet it is worth mentioning that many of the volunteers offer their private cars. According to Guribye and Hidle’s (2013), research on refugees and integration, one important part to success, concerns volunteer engagement, from teachers to individuals in the local community, and among the immigrants themselves. Frivillighetssentralen’s many activities thus represents grounds where Norwegians and immigrants can meet, where all parts can obtain responsibility and ownership to the activities, and where all parts get considerably insight into each other’s cultures and customs, which in the longer term reduce fear and prejudices – as well as founding new networks.

organizations and the public sector. Through a locally prepared brochure, the organization offers information about the services it offers to 5 different groups: youth, elderly, adults, handicapped, and asylumseekers. Services for asylumseekers include Stryn International forum which is a forum with different actors working with refugees in Stryn municipality. These meet to coordinate and discuss the different assignments and challenges refugees meet and to find ways to solve them.

Elementary school

Regarding experiences with elementary school, predominantly there was a perception that the elementary schools were inclusive and that young children regardless of background were easily integrated. There were some experiences that some immigrant Muslim parent declined their children to participate in gymnastics and swimming, as well as birthday parties – which are important arenas for integration - yet in most cases, across the isc-informants there were positive experiences.

People leaving the municipality

“What if 11% of the population in Stryn Kommune disappear from the municipality? What do Stryn do then?” (Refugee coordinator).¹⁸

Stryn is a part of a county where the ongoing departure of immigrants from the region represents a huge challenge. Today, more than 14% of the population in Stryn are immigrants. The isc-informants all agree that Stryn would suffer massively without the immigrants and refugees. However, there are still more work to do in order to integrate and utilise the resources better. One suggestion is that rather than spend resources and money on trying to get young people to move back home, one should have a look at the resources that already exist in Stryn, and that Stryn already has become dependent on. Stryn cannot afford to lose people, and among these informants, there is no doubt that the refugees and immigrants are seen as a highly welcoming enrichment to the society. It is therefore central, according to one of the isc-informants, who say investing in immigrants’ well-being is a very good long-term investment for the Stryn society: “It is a challenge to have people pay for something in the beginning, but I don’t believe that we can afford not to, if we are to continue to settle refugees. The whole county needs to see a more holistic perspective on this, both the challenges, yet also the resources.”

Translating and providing digital information customised for this study’s target group, is one example of such cost-challenges. This will be discussed further in the following sections.

¹⁸ Today, 14,2% of the population in Stryn is immigrants.

4.3 Findings from User testing

Background: Access to- and use of digital media

All the informants have mobile telephones, and access to a computer, either at the Norwegian classes, through the municipal, at home or other. All characterise themselves as having pretty good computer skills. When synthesising everyday practices online across the focus group, the following activities were mentioned as recurrent: browsing fjordingen.no (the local newspaper in electronic edition); browsing news from one's home country; nrk.no; emailing; paying bills online; some use Fronter to hand in home work; and the use of social media. Facebook and Skype were frequently used in order to socialise with friends and family from their home countries.

When they needed further public information, NAV.no and HELFO was mentioned. One achieved his job through NAV.no with assistance from the NAV personell in Stryn. Others say they use NAV.no to manage and search for *fastlege*. In need of public information about Norway, Stryn or taxes and so on, 7 people express that they use stryn.kommune.no. Among those seven, the satisfaction with the stryn.kommune.no was overwhelmingly positive. One said that the website 'has everything':

“/.../Opening hours and when they close and all kinds of information is under stryn.kommune.no, you can find whatever” (woman).

Three replied that they were not frequent users of the municipal's webpage. One said she didn't use the page as much, instead she asked her colleague for help; one asked his family; whereas the third said she received her needed information from her partner, and not from the municipal.

Usability testing

In order to investigate in which ways stryn.kommune.no webpage is customized for this study's target group, we randomly selected two immigrants (out of the 7 who expressed that they used stryn.kommune.no) from the focus group. We aimed at giving exercises that often occur in conditions as close as possible to those that might occur in real everyday life situations. As people that attended the usability test were limited to one woman and one man, the test is to provide *hints* about strengths and weakness of the webpage. These findings can *indicate* some ideas that can help future web designers of stryn.kommun.no to make decisions more effectively for our target group, yet overall, this method is used as scaffolding the other research methods.

Through usability testing, asking simple search questions, the woman managed to find the information needed, whereas the man took very long time to find his way around. In some of the exercises, the woman assisted the man. It became clear that the man had no prior computer navigational competence, while the woman was very very experienced with surfing the web. The two excerpts from the conversations that follow illustrate this.

Example 1 – Find a job

Researcher: When you are new in a municipality, what is the most important information you need? What do you need as a father and a husband?

Man: A job.

Researcher: Would you try to find a permanent position in Stryn, via stryn.kommune, so we can have a look how you would navigate?

Man: I'm not really sure if I understand...?

The woman helps him and says:

Woman: Look, you just go to Ledige stillingar then enter here. [she points on the screen]

Researcher: Is there anything you find interesting?

The woman assists by reading out loud.

Woman: Vaktmester [Janitor]

Researcher: The language. What do you think about the language on the webpage, do you understand it?

Woman/Man: Yes, I understand.

Researcher: Next step, then what do you do?

Man: No, I do not use stryn.kommune, I use NAV.

The woman helps.

Woman: You go down, and then you open a form here. You have to approve this first, then you move on. Then you write your name and all you need, and then it works. Then you write your name and education and all, then you go directly to stryn.kommune.no, and you will get feedback. It's *really* simple!

Man: It is not easy for us.

Woman: But stryn.kommune.no, it's really simple. Application form and all. You can send electronically. It is really easy to fill out the form and after two, three days, you receive feedback.

Example 2 – Find information about Norskopplæring

Researcher: Can you try to find Norskopplæring?

Man: I don't think .. I am not so good with computers.

Researcher: Do you receive training in using computers at the Norskopplæring?

Man: No I don't know that page.

Researcher: So not all of you know stryn.kommune.no?

Man: No .. I just ask the refugee consultant. *She* helps me.

Summarized reflections

The usability test illustrates that it can be difficult particularly for newly arrived refugees and immigrants to make use of the information the municipality offers online, either because it is written in Norwegian, due to the structure of the information, but also because some may have little or no experience of using computers and internet. A common reply several of the informants had received when asking the municipality personnel for information-assistance, was that *one has to find the information one search for on the webpage oneself*. This is a paradox, as what we have illustrated in the interview excerpt: finding the information one needs online is *exactly* the problem for many of the immigrants who out of different reasons find this information-seeking difficult. We also find that admitting to the municipal personnel that one does not have the skills required in order to use a computer or make use of Internet to find information, can for some be humiliating. Rather than explain the reason for why one finds this service difficult, several of our focus group informants found it easier to contact the refugee coordinator and ask her face to face or telephonic.

Recommendation: practice and exercises with computers, as well as searching for often needed information online, ought to be an integrated part of Norskundervisningen *and* students from the Norwegian classes, ought to be representatives in future user-testing.

4.4 strynkommune.no – analyses and discussion of webpage and content

4.4.1 Background information

One woman at Stryn kommune has the main responsibility for maintaining stryn.kommune.no, but it is also based on an intra-municipal collaboration where transfer of knowledge is vital. Across the neighbour municipalities in Nordfjord, the personnel responsible for IT and web-technical issues, shares experience in

which makes each municipal less vulnerable. The disadvantage is however, that the people with deeper knowledge are situated far away from each other, and hence the capacity to assist each other is influenced by this.¹⁹

It is worth noting that *the person who is responsible for maintenance and updates of the stryn.kommune.no webpage has no expertise in webdesign*. As is the case for most municipalities in Sogn og Fjordane: being responsible for the webpage is an additional task on top of the ordinary job. One may take this into consideration when reading the analyses.

4.4.2 Presenting stryn.kommune.no

The *front page* stryn.kommune.no is divided in three horizontal sections. The head banner of the stryn.kommune.no main page is put together by a) the municipality coat of arms in the upper left corner (a twig of linden with four golden leaves, on a green base), b) the municipality's name in large black letters in the middle, and a picture of Stryn from a birds eye's view on the right side.



(screen shot 25.03.2015)

The middle and main row is divided in three columns. Above the columns, there are 6 tabs showing different levels of the page: 1. Framside, 2. Kunngjeringar, 3.

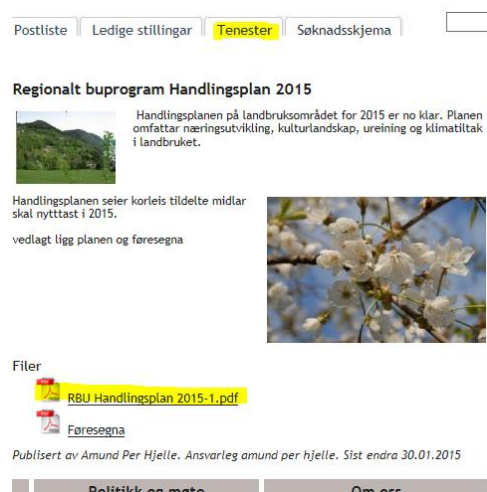
¹⁹ At the time of the second interview, March 2015, the web-responsible told us that they were expecting new pages, perhaps in 2016. The current webpage has been the same since 2011.

Postliste, 4. Ledige stillingar, 5. Tenester and 6. Søknadsskjema. One can jump directly to another level by clicking on these tabs.



On the left side, you have links to different departements of Stryn kommune such as for example barnehage, social welfare services, and culture and leisure. In the mid column, there are upcoming events, information and news from Stryn kommune.

On the right hand side, the municipality's address and telephone number is provided, and icons for important phone numbers, address, opening hours and search-function follows underneath. The bottom horizontal section is divided in four columns: a) Etterspurd informasjon, b) Politikk og møte, c) Om oss and d) Om Stryn. The whole web page is written in Norwegian. Although one can access



Handlingsplaner (Action plans), download correspondence to and from the municipality (postliste), there is no *dialogue* possible between the municipal and the citizens

4.4.3 Anlyses and discussion of stryn.kommune.no

Available and accessible

According to research on web design and web architecture, there are some specific principles of good website usability.²⁰ First of all it needs to be *available* and *accessible*, meaning that one has to make sure that the visitor will not experience any errors through dead urls or unstable hosting.

²⁰ See for example Sabina Idler 2013; Christensen 2011; Barahmand and Shahram Ghandeharizadeh 2013; Mikowski and Powell 2013; O'Reilly 2007.

While the page layout and design of stryn.kommune.no looks quite outdated, not even filling the width or the height of a 20 inches pc-screen²¹, we have not encountered any errors, dead urls or unstable hosting the many times we have visted the page. We have however, found URLs that link you to the same page (for example 'Flyktingar og innvandrara' under the heading 'Tenester' under the top-tab, and 'Flykningteneste' under 'Sosiale tenester' at the left column). Stryn.kommune.no could benefit from cleaning up and systemise the urls, rename the url as to fit more precisely what it points to.

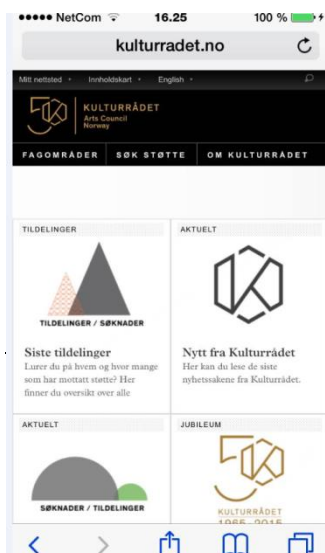
Url

In general URLs are what bridge web pages or web sites together. Apart from using different URLs pointing to the same texts as mentioned above, there is an unclear use of the URL-typography at stryn.kommune.no. Normal text, underlined text- and bold URLs are all used in a mixed and unclear manner. It is worth noting that underlined URL's looks highly outdated.

Overall, the URL points you to more information that can be adequate and relevant for immigrants and refugees - *if you speak Norwegian*.

One link, 'Flykningteneste' (Services for refugees) - that can also be accessed through the left column on the middle row under 'Sosiale tenester' - a link to more information about the Stryn Municipality's assignments regarding receptions of refugees and asylum seekers. This concerns the reception center for refugees, the introduction program for newly arrived refugees, Norwegian language teaching as well as information about the volunteer centre. *The page is written in Norwegian, and is thus not available for newly arrived refugees and immigrants who do not speak Norwegian.*

Responsive design

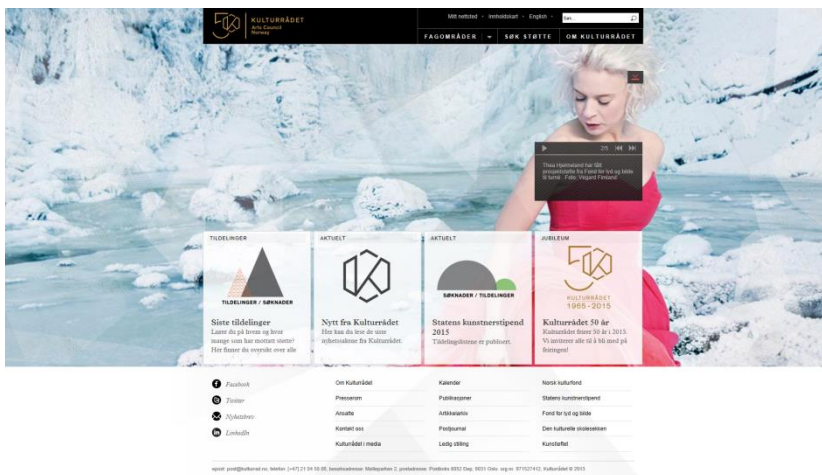


As accessing websites from different devices like tablets, mobile phones, mac/ pc is perceived as a 'must' today and one therefore has to make sure the site can handle different screen sizes. This is called responsive design and means that the web page layout changes to adapt to different screen sizes. The

with poorer dissolution simplified the processes when Internet used to be stryng.kommune.no has an old grid system using 910.gs, while today one uses at least

designer has to set “break points” at certain predefined pixel widths and whenever the screen size falls below these break points, the layout changes from e.g. three columns to two columns (or from two to one).

The webpage has no responsive design which one would expect of public webpages today; see for example kulturradet.no accessed via a smart-phone and via a pc:



While comparing stryn.kommune.no on a 20 inches computer-screen, and a smart-phone screen (here: Iphone is used), the page looks exactly the same. When accessing the webpage using a smart-phone, the whole page looks very small with tiny typography. In order to navigate or read the information on smaller hand-held devices, one has to pinch and zoom in order to be able to read. (Mobile screen-shot 25.03.2015)

Clarity

A clear and usable design can be achieved through simplicity, meaning that one has to prioritize what is important and what is not. This means to clean up the page after the keywords dominance, focal points and hierarchy.

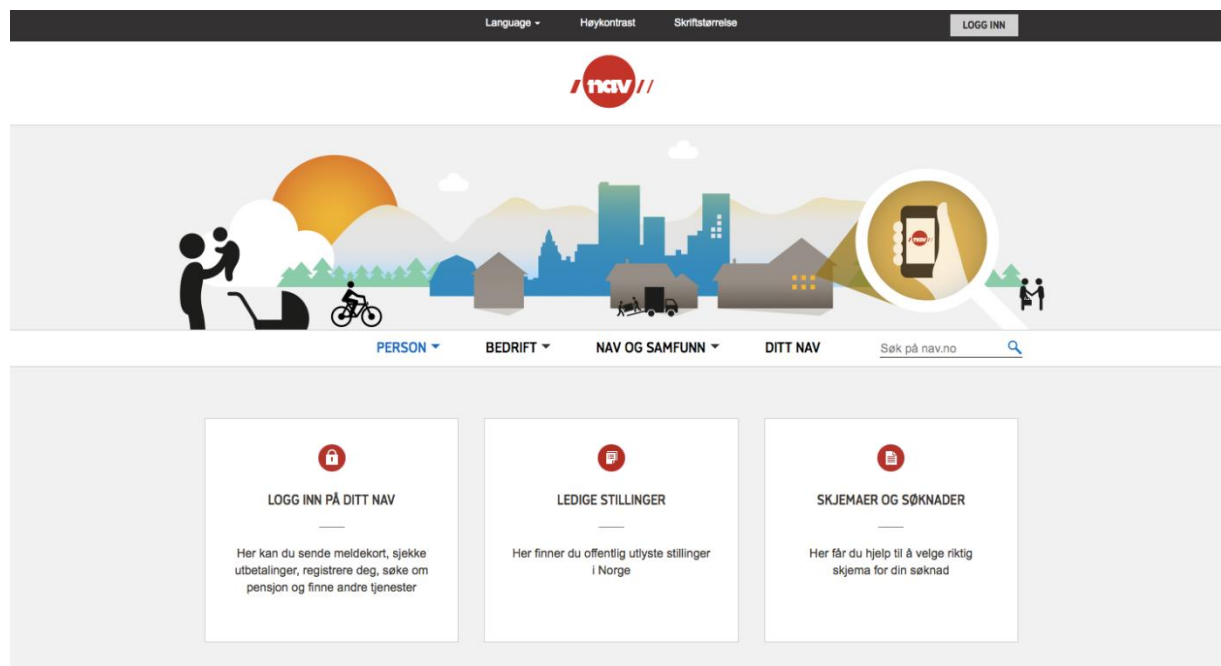
Entering the web page, the eyes jump from the coat of arms and the name Stryn kommune, to the picture of Stryn, then one scans the mid row and mid column, to the information and news notification that are written in black bold letters, and then the

eyes jump to the text corridor on the left side, before jumping back to the coat of arms and the name again.

When looking at the text-dense front-page stryn.kommune.no, almost everything is emphasized with underlined text, bold text or bold and underlined text. In order for a page to look clean and simple, emphasizing everything defeats the point. In this manner, all of one's design elements compete for attention and nothing really stands out. As the webdesigner Stephen Bradley says in his blogpost (27.02.2015) on webdesign:

“They're all yelling at the same time. Everything is louder, but still nothing is heard.”²²

For the visitor at stryn.kommune.no, it is difficult to separate what is important and what is not. A webpage can consist of lots of different forms of information, but it is worth to reflect upon what the municipality wants to highlight. When looking at NAV.no, the clean, hierarchical structure makes it easy to navigate and find information:



We ask: what is the most important information Stryn kommune wants the users to catch sight of- and what kind of services is it that Stryn kommune wants to promote as important to the citizens and businesses? Is the archive as important as the information about the services? Some of the webpage's information has to dominate others in order for the design to display visual hierarchy and look clean and clear:

“Dominance through emphasis of one or more particular elements creates a focal point in your design. It's where most people will instinctively go when first looking at your

²² <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2015/02/27/design-principles-dominance-focal-points-hierarchy/>

work. Dominance will create an entry point on the page from which you can lead the viewer to other parts of the page.” (ibid).

Designing a stryn.kommune.no webpage after these principles, one helps the user to find her way around simultaneously as the municipality showcases what kind of services or information they understand as the most needed among the diverse Stryn population. By the use of visual hierarchy, the users will more likely find what they serach for.

Familiarity

Familiarity is also an important keyword, as one tends to like what one already knows.

• **Sosiale tenester** • **Flyktningteneste**

Flyktninger og innvandrere

Del to kommunale instansene som har særskilte oppgaver i hove kommunalt mottak av flyktninger og asylsøkjere er:

- Flyktningteneste
- Stryn voksenopplæringsenter

Flyktningteneste.
Samordningsansvar for det kommunale mottaket av flyktninger og asylsøkjere ligg til flyktningsteneste i Stryn kommune som er ledet av flyktningkonulent Heidi Hoggdøl. Flyktningsteneste held til i kommunesenteret og er organisert til helse- og sosialtjenest.

Del ulike etatsene og faginstansene har same ansvar for flyktninger som for andre innbyggjarer, men flyktningsteneste har ansvar for buetting, for introduksjonsordning i lag med Stryn voksenopplæringsenter og for koordinering av det kommunale tilbødet.

Flyktningstenestet i kommunen har overordna samordningsansvar for kommunalt flyktningmottak. Rådsmannen er leder og det er stilt med representantar frå ulike kommunale faginstansar og frå østet.

Stryn kommune har søkt i mot flyktningar sidan 1987 og buett no mellom 15-20 personar kvar år.

Frå september 2004 har alle vakne flyktningar som vert buett i kommunalt mottak rett på 2-årig introduksjonsordning. Formålet er å styrke ferdighetene for deltaking i arbeids- og samfunnsliv og for økonomisk sjølvstende. Introduksjonsordninga inneber fulltids program i kombinasjon mellom undervisning i norsk og samfunnskunnskap, deltidsopplering, språkstrening og arbeidstrening. Deltaking er forpliktande og bygger på arbeidslivet sitt regelverk. Deltaking medfører utbetaling av introduksjonsstønad ut frå statleg regelverk.

Oppgaver for flyktningsteneste:
Buetting av flyktninger og asylsøkjere.
Oppfølging og rettleiing av flyktningar første tida etter buetting.

Syke for kontakt med andre kommunale faginstansar (helsesteneste, undervisning m.m.)

Lage individuelt opplegg for introduksjonsordning for vakne i lag med Stryn voksenopplæringsenter og NAV.

Administrative introduksjonsordninga (felle vedtak om deltaking, følge opp ein del tilstilt syke for utbetaling av introduksjonsstønad)

Organisere tolketeneste


Samarbeide med Frivilligsentralen, med Røde Kors si flyktningoppløstjeneste, med Internasjonalt Forum m.fl. om integreringstilrette

Informasjonsarbeid

Sjå informasjonsbrosjyrene under om

- Flyktningsteneste
- Norskundervisninga for flyktningar og innvandrere
- Stryn Frivilligsentral

Desse brosjyrene er utforma av Qvassm Å. Åli, med illustrasjon av Hagne V. Kristiansen



Avdeling	Telefon	Telefax	Adresse
Flyktningsteneste	57 57 47 00	57 57 47 59	Tønninggata 4, 6783 Stryn
Stryn Voksenopplæringsenter	57 57 47 77		Tingseta 15, 6783 Stryn
Stryn Frivilligsentral	971 54 722		Tønninggata 15, 6783 Stryn

This means that the designers have to pay attention to basic trends. If visitors are used to navigate by symbols, images and icons, text dense pages will be perceived as distraction. One should therefore strive for consistency across the entire website, meaning that one cannot design a beautiful front page and become sloppy on the other levels. While we find the stryn.kommune.no front page to be quite text-dense, entering the secondary level about ‘Flykningar og innvandrere’, where more detailed information is given, none of the principles mentioned are present. The municipalities also must bear in mind that visitors not necessarily enters the website through the home page. Because of extensive use of search engines a lot of users enters deeper in the hierarchical structure.

(screen shot above from 25.03.2015)

On this level, in which is extreme text-dense with no hierarchical divides, having lots of very different information with no space, we suggest that this page could benefit massively from a better structure, following the principles and aesthetics in line with the outlined recommendations in this report. Emphasising consistent experiences across the entire website is important for user-experience and usability.

Typography, reading patterns and language

Typography plays a role when analysing clarity. As web pages are becoming more responsive, there is a need to focus on line length in relation to how people read. The well-known “web guru” Jakob Nielsen (1997) pointed out in the late nineties:

“How do people read when being online? They don’t. Online, one *scans* a text, one does not read it”

This is largely still the perception, although there are some modifications whether one



enters a webpage in order to find information one search for; to discover new ideas or one just wants to browse around.

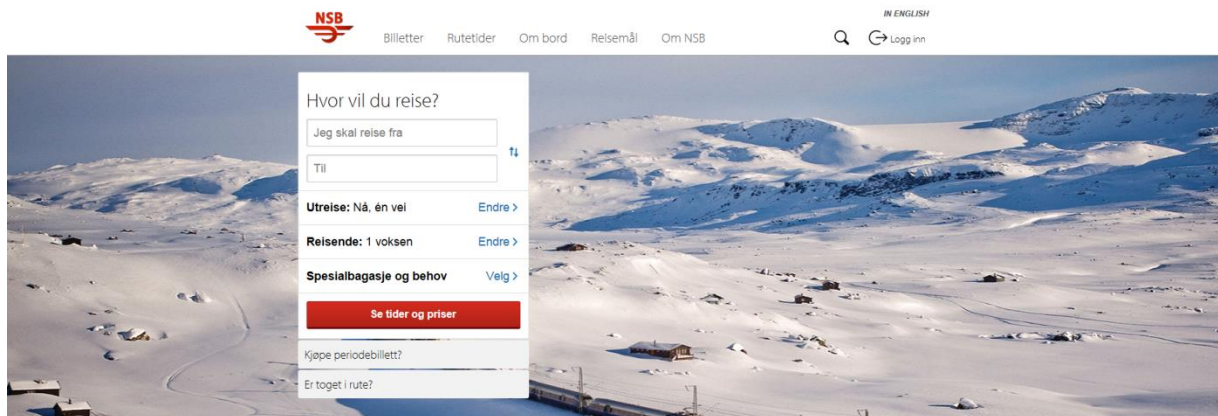
According to Nielsen Norman Group’s (2006) eye tracking study, we read *casually*: skimming the text here and there; *with purpose*: jumping from section to section; or in an *engaged manner*: slowing down and read whole parts of a text.²³ In all three manners though, the Nielsen Norman Group found that with slight variations, people read in an F-shaped pattern (red as most viewed, yellow as fewer looks and blue least viewed areas) (ibid).

The Nielsen Norman Group explored the F-shaped pattern for casual reading in 2006

Knowing that people read randomly, not whole sentences and that we tend to scan images, text and information on the left side of a webpage, one has to take this into consideration when designing the webpage. It is important that the length of the line is not too long, as readers get tired of reading long horizontal lines (ibid)²⁴ – or, as seen more often among public services, the use of large images, icons and symbols:

²³ <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2014/09/29/balancing-line-length-font-size-responsive-web-design/>

²⁴ For more details on typography, see Mark Boulton’s (2005) text <http://www.markboulton.co.uk/journal/five-simple-steps-to-better-typography>

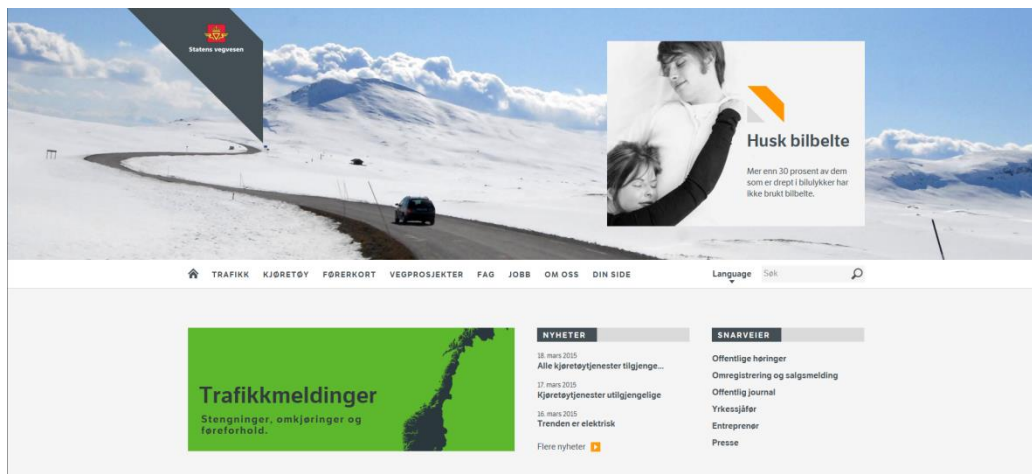


(Nsb.no, screen shot 25.03.2015)

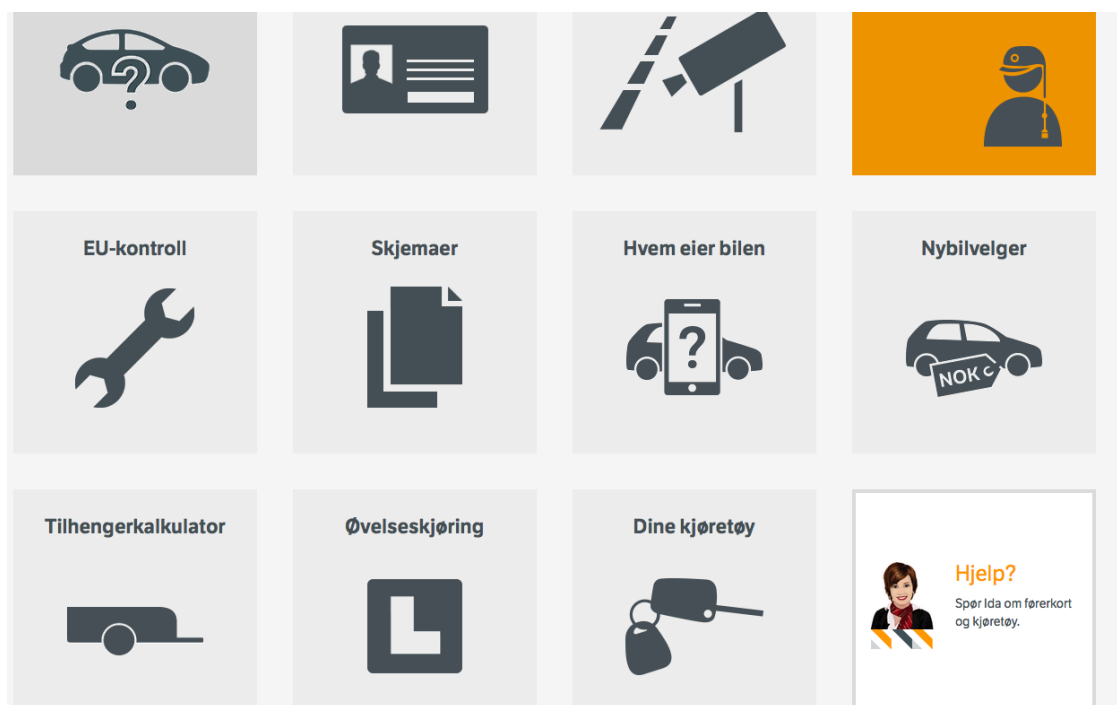
Visual

Photos, images and icons can communicate information faster than text because they are easier to 'read'. The real strength of photos, images and icons though, is that they can communicate across languages, nationalities, ethnicities, gender, socio-economic backgrounds, culture and so on.

Statens vegvesen for example, uses large pictures to communicate with their users, strengthening the relevance of what the services of this sector concerns.



For immigrants and refugees that is this study's focus, usages of images would be highly beneficial if one do not have strong Norwegian skills. Although vegvesen.no not necessarily is tailored for this target group, the images used, leaving lots of space around, structured in square grey boxes, communicates across mentioned boundaries.



Photographs, images and icons can give depth and context to a story, and they are usable when one wants to inspire, provoke, entertain or *inform*, among other things. Images and visual stimuli can also help one to better *remember*. Rather than making use of dense text-lists, the stryn.kommune.no could benefit from using far more images (for example photos from the local community or local activities?).



Stryn.kommune.no do make use of some graphic design and images, although very limited. There are two issues here. The contact icons on the right hand side, is similar to Microsoft's icons which were used years back, as well as the puzzle pieces beside the

'Kommunereforma' at the left column. Also, it is worth noting that on websites in general, the magnifier-icon is used either as an icon for search or as an icon for enlarging things or letters. At stryn.kommune.no, the magnifier applies only for search of the municipality's personnel. This is a bit confusing.

Apart from this, the icons and the picture of Stryn are *extremely comprimated*, giving a sense that the elements almost dissolve. As there are great possibilities for making use



of large images and other visual elements in webdesign today, particularly to communicate across a diverse population, we anticipate that there will be major improvements here.

Guidance and chat function

As for physical public spaces, one needs *guidance* in order to find one's way around. For good website usability, one is to guide the visitor through the site and show what the page has to offer. To this, one needs a *direct feedback*, as this is valuable information in which indicates success or failures of the visitor's actions. Being a channel for public services, as Stryn kommune's website is, the people responsible for the website have to understand what kind of needs and expectations the population of Stryn has in general and *what kind of needs refugees and immigrants have in particular*. This insight will enable to structure the content in a targeted and simple manner.

It is a clear weakness of the stryn.kommune.no that there is no dialogue or chat function. Although the population has reading-access to a range of the municipal's documents and mail, a chat-function (also mentioned as a need from the IT-responsible) would be apt. Many inquiries from the Stryn inhabitants are often short questions. Rather than having tons of phone-calls from the users in which increasingly interrupts the municipal's other tasks, establishing a chat-function, making the dialogue between the population and the municipal far more effective, would reduce telephonic inquiries and physical attendance.

Learnability

The next keyword is *learnability* – a keyword that we see as *sincerely* important for a public sector aiming for a digital independent and self-operating population. In order for the public to become self-operating, one has to design for *intuitive interfaces*. This means that being new to a website, one should not need any instructions to find information or use the website. One key to intuitive design is to make use of what people already know, or create something new that is easy to learn. One has to keep in mind that people tend to like patterns and *recognisable* objects, design and structures. Hence, if using new concepts and design, it is important to design clean, simple, intuitive and visual websites.

Credible means being precise

In general – and public websites in particular, a website needs to be *credible*. If a visitor finds the information he or she searches for, but do not trust you, the content is

worthless. For the stryn.kommune.no, people would perhaps not doubt that the municipal really exists (as sometimes is the case for business websites that one finds sketchy), yet for the public services trustworthiness, there is a need to offer a precise “About us” page, with clear contact details and physical address. One should be aware of misspellings and incorrect grammar.

Creating relevance by involving target group

Having a website that is simple, clear and with all principle listed, but not having relevant content, the visitors will most likely find the webpage poor. Apart from understanding one’s users, making a good website usability requires *involving the webpage users*. Stryn kommune has to find out what immigrants and refugees *need* (note: what people *ask for*, is not necessarily the need); how they experience that stryn.kommune.no meets this and what kind of content and information they actually gain from the page. For non-users or weaker ict-users, who in surveys reply that their non-use or infrequent use is adhesive to lack of time, interests, relevance or lack of knowledge and skills, there is a specific need to find out what their needs are, and how public services can design webpages that meet some of these needs (Guthu and Holm’s 2010; Slettemeås 2014).



At the lower text in the left column, stryn.kommune.no has a ‘corner’ showing information that people frequent ask for. The first line lists the most frequent questions as betalingssatsar, avgifter and gebyr. This is a clear demand from some of the audience’s needs. Targeted statistics and direct feedback would

optimise this, yet for refugees and immigrants, some who do not use- or are weak users of Internet, these statistics will not capture their needs. As seen in the usability test we ran, defining some scenarios that demonstrate in which situation that immigrants visit the webpage, will give further indications on what works and what does not, what are frequent needs, and why the page perhaps do not seem relevant for some. Usability means several cycles of testing and retesting *involving target users* and identifying their needs.²⁵ For many refugees and immigrants, the little English flag, in the top right corner, is most likely what they would be looking for.

²⁵ For inspiration, see <https://www.gov.uk/design-principles>



4.5 To what extent is stryn.kommune.no accessible and relevant to target users' needs?

Information for target users

There is no narrative available for immigrants on the front page. When we search for words such as Innvandrara, the search service yields relevant information in Norwegian including the following information on the services offered at the municipality related to the introduction program. This includes: description of services, conditions for participation, required documentation, and contact information.

Search in nynorsk and bokmål: In order to obtain results, one has to search with nynorsk words, for example 'innvandrara' as opposed to 'innvandrere' (bm). A search for 'immigrant', 'immigration' or 'refugee' in English, yields nothing, neither does 'Norwegian language training'. Norskopplæring on the other hand, yields a detailed narrative on the courses, the processes and important contact information. This information is given in Norwegian.

There is no possibility to make search queries by using bokmål, English or other languages. All search queries must be done in nynorsk. This means that in order to make use of the information in this page, one needs to know what one is searching for in nynorsk. Norskopplæringa in Stryn is given in nynorsk, so this is in harmony with the local language teaching given. Immigrants or refugees that come from other parts of the country have most likely learned Norwegian in bokmål. As a newcomer to the municipality these disparities may not be known.

When we search for words like integrering, we get six search results concerning 1. Barneskoler, 2. Statlig tilskudd mot barnefattigdom, 3. Helse og sosialetaten, 4. Flykningstjenesten, 5. Rådmannen informerer and 6. Flykningar og innvandrere.

Using the word 'flyktning', we receive 11 results in Norwegian. There are links to information on housing and mortgage, public health centre among others as well as one pdf-booklet in respectively Lithuanian and Slovenian in which presents information about Stryn.

Can Google-translate meet immigrants' needs?

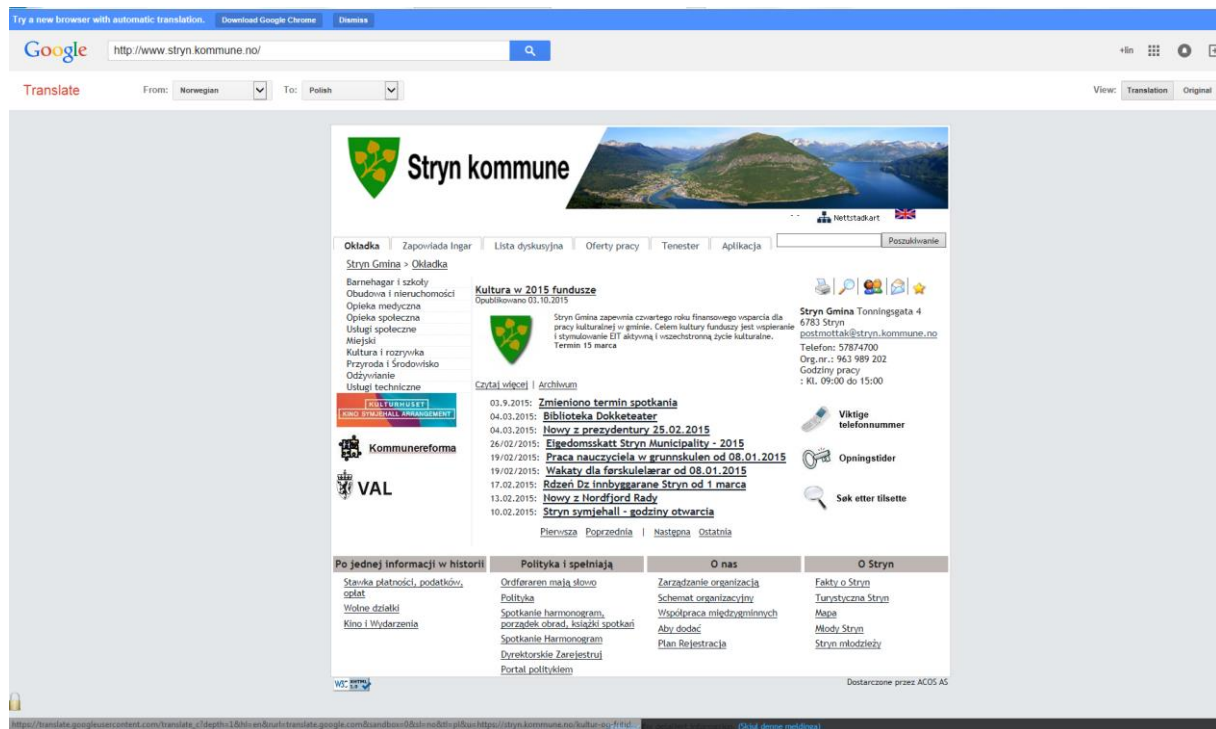
As pointed out, there is a Norwegian flag in the top right corner under the picture of Stryn. If you click the flag, the page's midsection and mid column is in English, informing that the webpage is available in 10 different languages through google translate in which translates the whole web-page into the selected language.

The screenshot shows the Stryn kommune website with a Google Translate overlay. The overlay is in English and provides the following information:

- Information in other languages - Google translate**
- From these pages, a basic translation from other languages can be obtained. This is a service delivered by Google Translate, and it is not perfect. However - we hope this will help you understand basic services from Stryn municipality. The translation covers the whole website, and links. If you see that the translation is clearly wrong, you can improve the service by giving Google an alternative translation.
- Google Translate will also translate to other languages. Choose from the top menu after having used one of these links. Stryn municipality is not responsible for the translation done by Google translate.
- Language list:**
 - Dutch
 - English
 - French
 - German
 - Italian
 - Lithuanian
 - Polish
 - Serbian
 - Spanish
 - Russian
- Stryn kommune contact info:**
 - Tonningsgata 4
 - 6783 Stryn
 - postmottak@stryn.kommune.no
 - Telefon: 57874700
 - Org.nr.: 963 989 202
 - Opningstid: Kl. 09.00 - 15.00
- Other links:**
 - Viktige telefonnummer
 - Opningstider
 - Søk etter tilsette

The website navigation menu includes: Framside, Kunngjeringar, Postliste, Ledige stillingar, Tenester, Søknadsskjema. The main content area has a search bar and a 'Søk' button. The footer contains a grid of links under categories: Etterspurd informasjon, Politikk og møte, Om oss, and Om Stryn.

If you for example choose *Polish*, the page design looks exactly the same, yet with Polish text. From this page, you can navigate through different links, and the web pages will open within the Stryn municipality's web-design, yet with google-translated polish text. The text has not proper polish grammar, but the information gives a hint of what the page concerns.



The ten language-options are, apart from Russian; Western-European-languages and languages from some of EU's new member states in Eastern Europe. There are many work-immigrants from these countries, but *less* people from these countries are refugees or asylum seekers. At first sight, it looks like refugees and asylum seekers with different languages than the ten listed, will not be able to navigate or make sense of the information about refugees on the municipal's web pages. In practice however, having the web-page within the templates of google-translator, gives you access to translations across a range of different languages; from Arabic to Somali to name just a few.

However, we strongly stress that this is not a solution that meets the aim of 'digital participation for all'²⁶ nor does it represent good practice for bridging the gap between immigrants and natives access to digital information. To answer the question posed at the beginning of the section: We do not see Google Translate as an answer to policies or practices for better integration.

As supported from the findings in the focus group and in the usability test, these arguments are exceedingly supported. For proper and more detailed information, it is clear that the pages are far from sufficient; meaning *the information given is*

²⁶ Stortingsmelding 23 (2012-2013) Digital Agenda for Norge, kapittel 2

not equal and accessible for all. In cases where one needs more information in order to find the municipality's services in particular, for example finding a medical doctor on a Sunday or look for a job, *and is not skilled in Norwegian*, one has to check the opening hours and telephones listed for further queries and communication.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

In Stortingsmelding 23 (2012-2013) *Digital Agenda for Norge*, the overall goal is that 'all who wants is to be given the opportunity to use digital tools and services, arranging for course provisions and that one are to bisect the number of citizen who is not online within five years. About 7% of the Norwegian population is not online.

Why do people not use internet, and who are they?

According to the American *Pew Research Center's* survey, "Who's not online and why"²⁷, (Zickuhr 2013) there are four main reasons for why some (15% of the American population over 18 years)²⁸ do not participate online. One third say they do not find the Internet relevant; one third says that the user-friendliness is a problem, and 19% reply that it is expensive whereas 7% say that they lack access to equipment. Relevance, user-friendliness, costs, and lack of equipment is also supported by a similar Swedish work (Findahl 2013, *En miljon svenskar vill inte använda internet*), although among the 10% non-users in Sweden, 71% replied that they were not interested in internet as the main reason.

Although there are huge diversity among immigrants and ethnic minorities, they are often mentioned when reporting potential digital divides (particularly from non-western countries). As people from these groups can be vulnerable for additional excluding mechanisms in the society (Guthu og Holm 2010), experiencing double or triple layers of marginalization – as we also found in the user-test (through language barriers and lack of digital experiences and skills), Slettemeås (2014) suggests that raising the competence for all immigrants and refugees, will counteract that newly arrived immigrants and refugees (with low digital competence) pulls this level down. We find these suggestions valuable.

Recommendations

The web of 2015 is complex and ever-growing. Not only the number of websites has skyrocketed, they have also become a lot more multifaceted. New technologies allow for new trends. New trends result in new standards. New standards create rising expectations among users. At the same time, with all the new possibilities and

²⁷ Pew Research Centre, From The Internet & American Life Project. The survey was conducted in 2013 and is based on telephone interviews of 2252 adult Americans

²⁸ The number in Norway according to is 10% (Slettemeås 2014: 65)

requirements that come with advanced technology, how can public services set the priorities right? How can public services design websites that meets the needs of an increasingly diverse population in general and immigrants' needs in particular?

User testing once again

First, there is a strong need to focus on the users in the target group immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Making use of the principle listed in chapter 4, focusing on the target group, we suggest that the website ought to be developed and designed in *close interaction with a test-panel* consisting of participants from the introduction-program and or Norwegian language courses in Stryn. The participants should 'think aloud' when navigating and under performing relevant tasks, for example "Find the application form for child-care". The researcher and or website developer ought to record or log the activities. By testing, adjusting, improving and re-testing usability and content from the start until the final result is available, one may improve the website's user-friendliness among the target group substantially.

Integrating excercises using digital tools and services

Not only user-testing, but systematic training in using digital tools and services, making use of public services' webpages and so on, ought to be integrated in the introduction programme. The Norwegian language courses can also be used as an arena to map new needs, gaps and hindrances.

How much does it cost not to meet immigrants' needs?

In accordance with a 2011-difi survey, in general Norwegians prefer to send applications to the municipal or the government *electronically*. A user-friendly and applicable website implies that information and overview over the administration, the organization as well as the civic services ought to be easy to locate. User-friendly webpages contribute to simplify the inhabitant's everyday lives (Sørensen and Munoz 2011:82). As previously mentioned, there are challenges in designing a webpage with access to plural languages. Properly translations of the web-pages and application forms in ways that provides *real and equal* access to the municipal's on- and offline services among *all* inhabitants of Stryn, is *expensive*.

Nevertheless, in order for immigrants to become less subordinated to telephonic or physical contact with the municipal employees, and hence of opening hours and physical

attendance, one needs to design the web-pages accordingly. We argue that in order to design for digital equality, providing *relevant information in plural languages*, for example arranged in a *New in Stryn toolbox*, is one central aspect to this. In a long term perspective, reducing telephonic contacts and physical attendance represent cost saving actions.

New in Stryn toolbox

Based on in-depth interviews, usability test and focus-group, we recommend that stryn.kommune.no design a simple, clear and efficient 'Ny i Stryn/New in Stryn toolbox' on the front page, preferable visualised with an image. This ought to provide information in a very clear-cut and simple way, where maps, images and icons support the text. The information ought to be relevant for someone who has limited Norwegian language proficiency and or limited social network. This box must be developed in close interaction with target users.

Anchorage and belonging

The 50 hours societal subjects are too short in order to develop understandings and achieve insight into Norwegian norms and beings. These issues have vital consequences for the wellbeing at the workplace as well as for social navigation in the everyday life (Dralega & Nettelund 13/2012, p. 86). The activity provision that Frivillighetsentralen offers represents an important supplement and alternative in which contribute to integration and to increase senses of belonging to Stryn. However, although the informants replied that the local community seems open minded and positive towards immigrants, few of the interviewed immigrants had Norwegian friends, hence there is a factual gap between the local community and the immigrants.

As mention in the theoretical framework in this report, although community feelings *do not automatically emerge* just because groups use electronic communication, we argue that having public online services that are *not* accessible, understandable or are not perceived as relevant for the many of the 14% immigrants in Stryn, may lead to double or triple marginalisation for already vulnerable groups. Hence, in order to not only provide equal access to digital information and services, we suggest developing inclusive web-design combined with training and ICT-courses, immigrants will to a larger degree be able to actively participate and have a saying in the Norwegian public.

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