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- Interaction between the sexes and between managers and employees
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- Unwritten rules of social interaction – topics of conversation
Participation in working life
Norway is a welfare state
The welfare state is financed by taxation

- Duty to support oneself
- Everyone – private citizens as well as corporations – contributes to the welfare state by paying taxes.

- How are taxes calculated?
- Tax revenues paid to central and local government
Welfare benefits

• Taxes finance services that benefit the whole of society.
• Examples of welfare benefits:
  - Health services, for example medical treatment, health centres and treatment in publicly-owned hospitals
  - Benefits paid out by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service or Nav, for example sick pay, unemployment benefit, child benefit and old-age pensions
  - Education, for example free schooling for children and young people, free higher education at universities and university colleges and subsidised kindergartens
Does an unemployed person have the right to turn down a job?

Case:

- Anna is a hairdresser, but has been out of work for some months and is receiving unemployment benefit from NAV. She hasn't been able to find work as a hairdresser, but has been offered a job in a shop. Since she is receiving unemployment benefit from NAV she has to accept the offer of shop work. What are your thoughts on that?
What is illicit work?

- «Illicit work» is work that is not registered by the tax authorities and on which no employer’s national insurance or income tax is paid.
- Illicit work is illegal.
- A person who does illicit work forfeits rights enjoyed by other workers, such as the right to pay during illness, the right to unemployment benefit and the accumulation of pension points.
What is illicit work?

**Case:**
Sara and her children came to Norway last year as resettlement refugees. Sara is offered a job working as a cleaner off-the-books. Sara wants to earn a lot of money quickly and thinks that accepting this offer of a job is a good idea. What do you think?
The consequences for society of illicit work

• Less money for the health service, social security benefits and education, for example
• Higher taxes and duties (taxes on income, VAT and special taxes)
• Unfair competitive advantages over companies that operate within the law
High employment – a prerequisite for the welfare state

- In comparison with other countries, a high proportion of the inhabitants of Norway are in employment.
  - There is a high percentage of women in working life.
  - Overall, the level of unemployment is low.
- There is an expectation that women should participate in working life on an equal footing with men.
High employment – a prerequisite for the welfare state

**Discussion:**

- Over the course of the last 40 years the number of women employed in the Norwegian economy has increased from approximately 45 to 75 per cent. What significance do you think that this has had for families and society in general and women in particular?
Who looks after the children while their parents are at work?

• Since the 1970s, a deliberate policy of promoting equality between the sexes has been pursued, which has played a part in increasing the participation of women in working life.

• Family policy reforms over the past 10–15 years:
  - Kindergarten for all
  - Ceiling on the fee payable for kindergarten
  - Expansion of parental leave
  - Daddy quota (paternal leave)
Who looks after the children, cont.

- Kindergarten places enable parents to participate in working life. The kindergarten is an educational programme.
- After school activities (the SFO scheme / the AKS scheme in Oslo) are open to schoolchildren in grades 1 to 4.
Equal roles in parenting

Case:
Mother: I have a late meeting at work today. Can you pick up Selma from kindergarten?
Father: I have a number of things to finish off at work before I can go home, so I don’t think I have the time.
Mother: I have to go to that meeting. Couldn’t you take your work home with you and finish it here at home? We also need to get something for dinner. Could you stop by the shop on your way home?
Father: Ok, I will collect Selma and make dinner.

Discussion:
- Talk about this situation.
- What are the issues that are described?
DAY-TO-DAY LIFE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

«Dugnad»
«Dugnad»

- A Norwegian word that means voluntary, unpaid work, performed in collaboration with others.
- There is an expectation that everyone will take part, especially in the local community.
- Typically Norwegian?
«Dugnad» in the local community

Discussion:
• What thoughts come to mind when you hear the Norwegian word «dugnad»?
Expected involvement

Case:
Adrian and Bora are the parents of two children aged eight and ten. Both children are actively involved in their local sports club. The time has now come for the annual dugnad. Ground has to be cleared for a new football pitch, and everyone is invited to take part and to bring coffee and cake. Adrian and Bora are discussing this.

Adrian: Dugnad on Saturday? I was looking forward to relaxing, watching a bit of tv and just taking things easy.

Bora: Me too. But I suppose we really should take part? What would the other parents think if we didn’t show up? And it might turn out to be good fun.

Adrian: Of course we must go. Perhaps you could bake a cake?

Discussion:
- Does this sound like a situation that you recognize?
- Do you thing that Adrian and Bora should have a choice in whether or not to take part?
«Dugnad» at the national level

- To win the support of the population for a good cause, for example a fundraising collection
Time
The clock rules our lives

- Norwegians are generally concerned with punctuality.
- Many families use calendars to organise their everyday lives.
- Difference between arriving punctually for appointments and for more informal meetings
Formal and informal appointments

**Discussion:**
- How do you interpret the times stated in the above messages?
- For which of these appointments should you arrive precisely on time?
Case:
Amir has applied for a job in a kindergarten and has a job interview at 11 o’clock. The time is now 10:35. Amir is waiting at the bus stop and wondering which bus he needs to catch to get to the kindergarten. He is also uncertain about how far it is to the kindergarten. He is starting to get a little bit stressed.

Discussion:
- Should Amir have done anything differently?
- What consequences could arriving late for the job interview have?
Deadlines

Deadlines are absolute.

- Due dates of bills
- Closing dates for applications
- Time limit for appeals
- Reply times in letters from public authorities

Discussion:

- What kind of absolute deadlines are you familiar with?
Leisure time
Leisure time is valued highly

- A distinction is normally made between work and leisure time, and between weekdays and weekends
Organised leisure activities

- Many children and adults take part in organised activities in their leisure time.
- Some examples of organised activities:
  - Sports, for example football, handball and skiing
  - Brass bands
  - Choral singing
  - Scouting
- Organized activities also provide meeting places for adults as well as children.
Case:
Ola: Hi! Are you Amir’s dad? He is so skilled with the ball and got to know the other boys on the team in no time at all. Good to meet you.
Abel: Good to meet you, too. Who’s dad are you?

Discussion:
• Does this situation sound familiar to you?
• What do you think it would take for Ola and Abel to get to know each other better and perhaps meet outside football practice?
Expected involvement

• In organised activities for children that are based on voluntary involvement, there is an expectation that parents will contribute by performing some of the work involved.
• There may also be an expectation of voluntary involvement in activities for adults.
The role of the voluntary sector
Voluntariness and voluntary work

• Voluntary organisations contribute to many areas of society.
• Voluntary organisations are dependent on the voluntary efforts of their members.
• Voluntary organisations work at local, national and international level.
• Most voluntary organisations receive financial support from central and/or local government.

Discussion:
• Are you familiar with any of these organisations?
• Are you familiar with other voluntary organisations?
Case:
Ahmed har just moved into the municipality. He lives alone and has just started on a Norwegian course, where he has got to know a number of people. However, like him, all of them are new to Norway. Ahmed would like some Norwegian friends, both to practice his Norwegian and to learn more about Norway. But how can he get to know Norwegians? People don’t talk to each other on the bus or in the street, in shops you just pay for the goods and then leave, and at the café the customers talk to people they already know.

Discussion:
- What can Ahmed do to get to know Norwegians better?
Standards of politeness
The concept of «politeness»

- The term «politeness» refers to social norms that say something about customs and behaviour in a society.
- Social norms are seen as general, but are constantly changing and vary within a society.
- What is viewed as courtesy will vary from country to country, from culture to culture and from one generation to the next.

Discussion:
- Discuss different ways of expressing politeness. Use examples from cultures with which you are familiar and talk about how politeness can be expressed in Norway.
Ways of greeting people

- Types of greeting vary depending on age, gender and context.
- There has been a shift away from more formal greetings to less formal types of greeting.
- Eye contact is common.

Discussion:
- How do you normally greet people that you already know and people you have not met before?
- What types of greeting have you observed in Norway?
Case:
Fatima goes for a job interview. She meets the boss for the first time. He extends his hand and introduces himself. Fatima becomes unsure of what to do. She is not used to shaking hands with men. “What should I do now?” she wonders.

Discussion:
- Do you understand why Fatima is hesitating?
- What impression will the boss get if Fatima does not shake his hand?
Unwritten rules when visiting other people

- There are regional and local variations in the unwritten rules that apply.
- Visits are often arranged beforehand.

**Discussion:**
- What is polite behaviour when visiting someone?
Discussion:
- What do you regard as polite and rude behaviour when you are waiting in a queue?
Unwritten rules when using public transport

- Getting on and off
- Seats
- Talking loudly, especially on a mobile phone

Discussion:
- Have you ever been irritated by other people’s use of their mobile phones on the bus?
Neighbourhood and the local community
Contact between neighbours

**Discussion:**
Talk about the images. What do you think might bring about more or less social interaction between neighbours?
Different forms of home ownership

- Rights and duties with respect to neighbours depend on the type of ownership.
  - Owner-occupier apartments, housing cooperatives and detached houses
Rules for residents

- Housing cooperatives and owner-occupier apartment buildings usually have rules for residents.
- The rules for residents apply to everyone, owners and tenants alike.
Example of a set of rules for residents

**Husordensregler:**
- Det skal være ro i leilighetene mellom kl. 22.00 og 08.00 på hverdager. Natt til lørdag, søndag og helligdager skal det være ro mellom kl. 23.00 og 10.00.
- Støyende oppussingsarbeid, som for eksempel hamring og boring, skal ikke foregå etter lørdag kl. 18.00 og fram til mandag kl. 08.00. Det er ikke tillatt å bore i betongvegger på søndager og helligdager.
- Skal det arrangeres fest, bør naboene varsles med nabovarsel på forhånd.
- Det er ikke tillatt å sette fra seg private eiendeler i inngangspartiet, trappeoppganger eller i andre fellesområder.
- Det er forbudt å røyke i oppgangen, kjelleren og garasjen.
- Ballspill er ikke tillatt i gårdsrommet.
- Avfallet skal være forsvarlig pakket. Avfall skal ikke settes på golvet i søppelrommet.

**Discussion:**
- Which rules for residents were you already familiar with?
- Which breaches of the rules do you think could cause friction between neighbours?
Marie is having a party

Case:
Marie has just moved into an apartment on the 4th floor of an apartment building. She has many friends and she is looking forward to showing them her new apartment. She is having a party on Saturday evening. “If everyone comes there will be about 25 of us,” she thinks. “What kind of food should I prepare?”

Discussion:
- What else should Marie be thinking about?
Refuse sorting

- Refuse sorting means separating waste into various categories, for example into paper, glass and electrical items.
- What refuse do we sort and why do we do it?
  - Paper, glass, metal, plastic and food waste are sorted to enable some of the waste to be reused.
  - Clothes and garden waste are sorted to enable materials to be recycled.
  - A deposit system applies to bottles and cans, allowing them to be reused instead of just being dumped in nature.
  - Chemicals such as paint and varnish, batteries, electrical equipment and light bulbs are sorted in order to remove environmentally-harmful and hazardous waste.
  - A deposit is repaid on vehicles that have come to the end of their useful lives when they are delivered for scrapping.
Discussion:
- How is refuse sorted at the asylum reception centre?
Nature and outdoor life
Nature is there for everyone to enjoy

- Experiencing nature is important for many Norwegians.
- Everyone has the right to wander freely in the fields and forests. This is known as the right to roam.
- Everyone has a responsibility to look after our natural surroundings.
«Going for a walk»

- «Going for a walk» is often described as a «typically Norwegian» thing to do.
- The great outdoors is used every day, whatever the weather.
Norway – a nation of skiers
Taking part in outdoor activities

- Vært på kortere spasertur
- Vært på kortere fottur i skogen eller på fjellet
- Vært på lengre fottur i skogen eller på fjellet
- Vært på fisketur
- Vært på kortere skitur i skogen eller på fjellet
- Vært på bær- eller sopptur
- Vært på lengre skitur i skogen eller på fjellet
- Stått alpint, snowboard eller telemark
- Vært på jaktur

- Kvinner
- Menn
Personal finances
The right to decide how your own money should be used

- In a marriage/cohabitation, women and men both have the right to decide how their money should be used.
  - Spouses/cohabitants have a joint duty to provide for the children of the family.
  - Spouses have a duty to provide for each other.
Case:
Maryana and Hassan are married. Both are in work. Maryana is an assistant at a school and Hassan is a taxi driver. They have two children of junior-school age.

Maryana finds her job tiring and would like to stay at home and look after the children and their home. Hassan says that they cannot afford to live on his income alone. “We need two incomes coming in every month in order to be able to pay for our house, electricity, food and all our other needs,” he says. Maryana thinks of her sister in their home country. She does not need to go out to work.

Discussion:
- Discuss Maryana and Hassan’s situation.
- Which of them do you think should be the family’s main breadwinner?
Bank accounts

- Anyone who is able to present a valid ID has the right to open a bank account.
  - The bank will conduct an individual assessment based on the documentation of identity.
- There are various types of bank account, for example current accounts and savings accounts.
- A bank account is personal.
Bank cards

- Card payment is widely used in Norway.
- There are two types of bank card: debit cards and credit cards.
Debit cards (standard bank cards)

- Debit cards are linked to a salary account/current account.
- Money is deducted directly from the account when the user pays in a store or online using the debit card or when money is withdrawn from an ATM.
  - This means that there must be sufficient funds in the account when the card is used.
- Norwegian debit cards are linked into the bank axept payment system.
Credit cards

- Credit cards are a type of card where the amount charged to the account is a loan from the bank.
- The amount of credit available will depend on the creditworthiness of the customer.
- It is customary for customers to be granted an interest-free payment deferment period of 30 days, for example, from the day on which the goods are purchased and until repayment is required.
  - Credit card debt may be repaid in instalments.
- If the full amount is not repaid when the debt comes due, high interest charges will accumulate on the amount owed.
**Case:**

Petter: Oh dear, bills, bills, bills! I just can’t see how I will be able to pay them all!

Kari: Yes, it has really mounted up. But of course you have just bought yourself new skis and boots, and that was quite expensive.

Petter: Yes, but I really did need new equipment. The ones I had were really old. And I do appreciate quality.

Kari: Well yes, but you knew that we had a lot of bills to pay this month. Surely it’s more important to pay your bills than to look good on the ski track? Not that you seem to do much skiing anyway.

Petter: You’re right of course. But I couldn’t resist the temptation and used the credit card. What do we do now???

**Discussion:**

- Discuss Petter and Kari’s situation.
- What can they do to prevent themselves from getting into a situation like this again?
An example of a budget

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<th>INCOME:</th>
<th>EXPENSES:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Salary Petter:</td>
<td>Rent:</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 500</td>
<td>9 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salary Kari:</td>
<td>Electricity:</td>
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<td>24 000</td>
<td>2 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child welfare payment:</td>
<td>Season ticket:</td>
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<td>1 940</td>
<td>2 000</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 500</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kindergarten:</td>
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<td>After school club:</td>
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<td>Food:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clothes:</td>
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<td>2 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unexpected expenses:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

|                          | Savings:            |
|                          | 5 000               |

TOTAL 48 440

TOTAL 37 500

Discussion:

- Have you ever drawn up a budget?
- Discuss the advantages of making a budget.
Interaction between the sexes and between managers and employees
Women and men – equal partners in both private life and at work

- In their daily lives, women and men, both married and unmarried, interact as friends and colleagues.
- Norwegian girls and women are brought up to expect to have the same degree of freedom as boys and men.
Discussion:

- Do you have any thoughts about the ways in which girls and boys and women and men interact in Norway?
Interaction between managers and employees

- From the outside, the relationship between managers and employees often appears to be informal.
- Nevertheless, the manager has authority and is the superior of the employees.

**Discussion:**
- How do you think a manager should behave?
Road traffic safety
Driving a car in Norway

• To drive a car in Norway you must have a valid driving licence.
  – Driving licences from some countries outside the European Union/European Economic Area can be exchanged for a Norwegian licence, but most people will need to retake their driving test.
Driving a car, cont.

- Driving a car while under the influence of intoxicants is against the law. Intoxicants are
  - alcohol
  - certain medicines
  - narcotic substances
- The driver is responsible for ensuring that the car is in a roadworthy condition in accordance with the applicable regulations.
The use of seat belts

- The use of seat belts while the car is moving is required by law.
- It is the responsibility of passengers to ensure that they are wearing seat belts. This also includes passengers in taxis and on buses.
- The driver is responsible for making sure that passengers under the age of 15 are properly secured.
Securing children in cars

- The law requires children to be securely seated in an approved child car seat until they are at least 135 cm tall or weigh 36 kg.
  - It is recommended that small children sit in a rear-facing child seat for as long as possible, preferably until they are four years old.

Discussion:
- What will happen if the driver brakes sharply?
- What do you believe is required in order to secure a child properly in a car?
Various breaches of the Road Traffic Act
Showing consideration towards other road users

- Car drivers have a particular duty to show consideration towards non-motorised road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists.
- The driver must pay particular attention towards children on and near the road.
- Pedestrians and cyclists must also show consideration towards other road users.
  - The use of safety reflectors
  - Bicycles must be equipped with lights and rear reflectors
Unwritten rules of social interaction – topics of conversation
Topics of conversation

• Before they get to know someone well, Norwegians generally confine their topics of conversation to relatively neutral subjects.
• Opinions on what are regarded as neutral topics of conversation will vary from person to person, and will also depend on gender and age.

Discussion:
• What do you regard as a neutral topic of conversation?
• Whom do you discuss politics or religion with?