What is Good Integration?

SEMINAR REPORT

Kvindernes U-landsudvalg

KULU-Women and Development
KOLOFON

MIGRANT WOMEN’S VOICES:
“What is Good Integration?” Seminar report

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THE PROJECT “MIGRANT WOMEN’S VOICES” implemented by KULU-Women and Development and member organization Babaylan–Denmark is part of a larger European project “Strengthening Innovative Solutions to Protect Female Migrant and Refugee Rights” in cooperation with KULU’s European network WIDE+. It is an opportunity to share migrant women’s realities and strategies in order to build stronger networks and create new knowledge and contributes to a European collection of organizational strategies, network creation for better integration, and the achievement of rights and belonging to the community.

The project is supported by a grant from the Foundation Open Society Institute in cooperation with the Human Rights Initiative of the Open Society Foundations via WIDE+ and the Danish Adult Education Association.

ABOUT KVINDERNES U-LANDSUDVALG (KULU-Women and Development) www.kulu.dk
Kvindernes U-landsudvalg is a non-partisan development organization established by Danish women’ organizations in 1976 after the 1st UN International Women’s Conference in Mexico. KULU is an umbrella organization for 20 women’s organizations, equality councils and other organizations in Denmark and 300 individual members. For more than 43 years KULU has been working to promote women’s and girls’ rights and empowerment in the Global South and internationally through information, advocacy, lobby and project cooperation in close dialogue and partnerships with women’s organizations and networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America. KULU is partner with the women’s organization MUSONET in Mali and femmes pour la Paix et les Droits Humains (FPDH) in DR Congo

ABOUT BABAYLAN: WWW.BABAYLAN.DK
Babaylan-Denmark (established in 1997) is a member of Babaylan-Europe (established in 1992). It is a network of Filipino women. The word babaylan comes from pre-colonial Philippines and refers to empowered, wise and just women who were natural leaders in the community. Babaylan-Denmark works on several fronts: political, cultural-educational, and social to improve the situation of Filipinas in the Danish society and in the Philippines.

ABOUT WIDE+: WWW.WIDEPLUS.ORG
Women in Development Europe+ (WIDE+) is a European-based network of feminist activists, including development professionals, researchers, and women’s rights and development organizations. It is an international non-profit association registered under Belgium law. The transformation towards more equal and socially just societies with feminism is the key objective. WIDE+’s main activities are: Feminist analysis and Advocacy of European policies, especially in trade and development, and Feminist movement building in Europe. KULU is platform for WIDE+ in Denmark.
1.0 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The year 2015 saw a high rise in refugee- and migration movements to Europe and to Denmark. Following popular and political pressure more and more countries introduced stricter border control, a trend followed by Denmark that introduced general border control at the beginning of 2016, on principle temporarily, although the strict control is still a fact up to this day (2019).

The rhetoric regarding refugees and migrants has changed with the numbers of refugees arriving in Europe. Negative stories dominate popular media and present refugees and migrants as a harmful, even destructive presence. This has supported a rise in politically right-wing agendas and extreme nationalist parties and politics in the EU as well as in Denmark. There is a need to propagate knowledge about the background and motivation for the growing numbers of people who migrate and how they interact with the receiving country to reach an unbiased assessment of the short- and long-term consequences for both parties. In this report the term migrant women is used for both migrating women and female refugees.

It is a well-documented fact that people on the move run many risks, and women who choose to migrate or have to flee are especially exposed to danger on their way to a better life in Europe, and there are also many indications that after settling in their new country they remain marginalised in the general community life and have little knowledge of their rights.

1.2 KULU AND MIGRANT WOMEN HERE AND AT HOME

From 2013 to 2015 KULU-Women and Development (KULU) engaged in pursuing information and a better understanding of migrant women`s life in Denmark and the consequences of migration in their home countries by the project “Women as Migrant Labour”.

The cooperation between Women in Development Europe+ (WIDE+) and KULU provided the opportunity for KULU to continue to work on the issue of migrating women through the project “Migrant Women`s Voices”. The purpose is to relate migrant women`s conditions in Denmark and Europe with global movements to strengthen female migrant voices and to promote a well-informed debate about the consequences of migration in Europe and in the homelands. With funding from Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd (Danish Adult Education Association) and financial contribution from Women in Development Europe+ (WIDE+) a number of activities have been planned to promote knowledge of migrant women`s way of organizing and to look into the possibility of developing networks between KULU and migrant women groups as a means of information and a forum for topical debates and in this way give all parties and feminist perspectives a stronger voice and visibility. As an extra aspect KULU wanted to get knowledge about migrant women`s relations to their homelands after they have migrated and to spread this knowledge to a wider public in order to discuss how women’s migration can contribute to a positive development in the home countries. It was a must that all activities should give migrant women a voice, and that their voices should be respected.
KULU joined the WIDE+ learning project “Migrant Women´s Voices. Strengthening Innovative Solutions to Protect Female Migrant and Refugees´ Rights” in collaboration with migrant women´s associations in Europe. The main object was to contribute to improve migrant women´s rights and their visibility in European policies by addressing both policymakers and the wider public. The project should also contribute to a strong feminist movement as it included migrant women in an equal partnership and had a European outlook and a cross national learning perspective. KULU has been the national coordinator and responsible for the project activities in Denmark.

1.3 THE PROJECT “MIGRANT WOMEN´S VOICES”

KULUs project “Migrant Women´s Voices” covered 2 years. It was planned and carried out in cooperation with KULUs member organization Babaylan – Denmark – The Philippine Women’s Network, and included a number of activities: Mapping of migrant women´s groups in Denmark, two dialogue meetings with migrant women networks, (Babaylan Care4Needy, Kurdish Women´s Association, and DAWIDA), a debate meeting on “Gender, Violence and Mobility in an International Perspective” in cooperation with Global Refugee Studies, University of Aalborg, a debate meeting on “Migrant Women´s Way to the Labour Market”, a coordination meeting “A Gender Perspective on UNs´ Global Compact”, and on the 19th January 2019 in Copenhagen a final seminar “What is Good Integration?”, which is in focus in this report.

On behalf of:
KULU-Women and Development
Janice G. Førde – chairwoman
Freja Stagsted Sørensen – project coordinator

On behalf of:
Babaylan – Denmark – The Philippine Women’s Network
Ana Lindenhann – steering committee member
KULU realized that there was a lack of knowledge and focus in Denmark when it comes to migrant and refugee women’s rights and living conditions. To balance the large number of negative stories KULU wanted to highlight the good life stories and examples of good practice, told by the women themselves. The positive approach is a useful step to promote and support migrant women’s participation in the Danish society. At the same time there was a focus on generating new knowledge of the relations to the homeland, the consequences of migration for the homelands, and the way new knowledge is transferred there.

Finally the project aimed at throwing light on migrant women’s organizations and community strategies and at bringing migrant women’s organizations/groups together in a network to strengthen their voice and give them a common voice in debates in society, as indicated in the project title “Migrant Women’s Voices.”

**KEY QUESTIONS ASKED WERE:**

- How do migrant women tackle the challenges and the obstacles they meet in Denmark?
- How is their relation to the labour market or the educational system?
- How does their inclusion as citizens progress?
- What strategies and kinds of organizations are they using?
- What are their relations to the homeland?

The wish to share experiences and good examples across background, history, and culture defined the expected audience as well as the speakers.

The target group was broadly defined as everyone interested or involved in migration, its causes, consequences, and policies from a women’s rights perspective, and the seminar had hopes of bringing together and promoting exchanges among NGOs, professionals working with various issues within integration, local and regional decision makers, and migrants’ organizations and networks.
To reflect the diversity of the migration field the speakers were invited to represent different migration experiences and angles of approach and therefore included academics, public and private professionals, and migrant women involved in organizations, networks or grassroots activities.

2.1 INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS GOOD INTEGRATION?

Khaterah Parwani was the moderator during the day. She came to Denmark in the 1980s as a quota refugee from Afghanistan. Already as a young teenager, Khaterah Parwani was engaged in voluntary work. She has a background in law, and through voluntary work she was faced with issues regarding other minority groups in the Danish society. She experienced that minorities were badly represented and came to the conclusion that minorities should represent themselves in order to stand stronger.

She is a strong believer in sister solidarity and believes that through sharing experiences across cultures and generations women can come far.

“We have come a long way,” Parwani states, but at the same time she says that women are to look at themselves and be willing to pass on the microphone for others to get the chance to speak their case. “We must become better at not speaking others’ cause”, she says, thereby calling for more activism in Denmark: “We should act on our words”.

And as said, so done! Khaterah Parwani managed the day well, and she passed on the microphone to other migrant speakers.
3.0 My life as a Migrant Woman in Denmark

To pass on the microphone to the women themselves is important, as Parwani states, so the two next presentations are contributed by migrant women. In the following presentations migrant women have the word and will share their story of their meeting with Denmark, how they have succeeded in reaching their goals, and what they find important in women’s fight for equality for migrant women.

3.1 SAHRA JAMA, SELF-EMPLOYED

Sahra Jama was born in Somalia. At the age of five, she was separated from her family, when the war broke out while she was visiting her aunt. She was given the choice of staying with her aunt or trying to get smuggled back to her family. She chose to stay with her aunt.

In 1992 she arrives in Denmark as a refugee, and after three months in Sandholm refugee camp, she is granted asylum and is relocated to Brejning in Jutland. Denmark is very far from anything she has known so far, and also very different from what she has grown up with in Somalia. She had never seen white people before nor had she seen snow. Now she is also experiencing what it is like to live in a peaceful country.

Right from the beginning she is challenged. She started in primary school without being able to speak one word of Danish. At the beginning it was difficult, because when you do not know the language you are not able to keep up with the teaching, and at the same time you have been drawn
away from everything you knew, "so you are labelled a troubled child". However, she emphasizes that she had good teachers who were good at relating to her and not least help her move on.

Sahra Jama kept fighting, and after primary school she continued to business school, where she studied IT and got a job with the TDC (Tele Denmark Communications). Not only was it difficult for her to find an intern position, but the TDC costumers also met her with prejudice as a woman, coloured, and a Muslim. In fact, she was one out of only four women hired as technicians in the TDC at that time. All this resistance did not prevent her from continuing working for the TDC.

After several years for the TDC she moves to Copenhagen, where she again encounters new opposition and prejudice, this time from other Somalis. In Jutland she experienced opposition particularly from old Danish people, who had many prejudices about black people and Muslims. In Copenhagen though, she experiences being met with opposition from other Somalis questioning her life choices: “Why are you working? You are a woman, why don’t you wear a hijab?” The many confrontations and questions to her life choices became too much, and eventually she chose to change career to work as a social and health care assistant.

“

If you let yourself be limited by the challenges you meet, then you will not get far.

Sahra Jama

If you let yourself be limited by the challenges you meet, then you will not get far.

Sahra Jama
Again she encounters prejudice, this time especially from an elderly man at a nursery home: “I do not need help from black Sahra”. Here Sahra Jama is met with help and support from her leader who tells the elderly man that it is Sahra’s help or no help at all. After she has taken care of the elderly man for eight weeks, he accepts her help, he has changed his mind about her, and now wishes to be helped only by Sahra Jama.

After some time in Copenhagen Sahra Jama opened a hairdressing salon, which now employs three people.

With willpower and strength you can come a long way, and you should never let your abilities or possibilities be defined by others: “Many of us (migrant/refugee) women have been through a lot. But as I say: “Someone will always be worse off than you. If you let yourself be limited by the challenges you meet, then you will not get far”.

3.2 SAIME BILEN, KURDISH WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION

Saime Bilen was born and raised in the Kurdish part of Turkey. As a young woman, she wanted to go to university to study law. Already as a young woman, she was interested in politics and was an activist against the Turkish patriarchy. It was not a role girls usually assumed at that time, so she was threatened with either prison or having to live in exile in the mountains. The family did not
approve of her activism and her commitment to the freedom movement, and in order to stop her activist actions they chose to arrange a marriage to her second cousin who was living in Denmark.

On September 8, 1991, Saime arrives in Denmark to marry her second cousin. She had great hopes for her life in Europe and for the rights women had there. In her childhood as a little sister to five brothers, she constantly had to fight for her position.

The first years in Denmark were turbulent for Saime Bilen in many ways, she became pregnant without wanting the child, and she was not informed of her rights. After child number two something changes within her, she wants to do something for herself and provide a better role model for her children than their father was.

In the same way as Sahra Jama was supported by people around her, it was one of Saime Bilen’s friends that pushed her to start following her own dreams. At the same time legislation in Denmark was changing to ensure that all foreigners under 25 years participate in an educational programme focusing on learning Danish. In 1999 after daughter number three she enters for the entrance exam to preschool college, and she is successful and gets in. After her graduation she divorces her husband, with the result that she has not been on speaking terms with her family for four years.

Afterwards she gets a job in an institution in Gentofte as the first migrant woman in the municipality of Gentofte. Here she is also met with resistance from the parents of the children in the institution. Being a strong woman, she chose to fight and sued a parent for a racist remark. Saime Bilen ended up winning the case, and the parent gave her a written apology, which was to be posted on the front door of the institution.

To Saime Bilen this was not only a personal victory, but it was also a victory for bilingual children, their parents, and the employees, but of course most of all for her own identity.

Today she is a politically active woman in the Kurdish Women’s Association, where she focuses especially on women’s issues. She is proud of being the person she is today.

### 3.3 SUMMING UP

Sahra Jama and Saime Bilen are good examples that show you can go a long way with willpower. Sahra Jama mentions that you have to remember to focus on your possibilities rather than on the challenges. The traumas she experienced as a child in Somalia have made her grateful for the life she lives today, where she is trying to turn negative experiences into something positive and useful. She emphasizes that you must not forget where you come from.

In both women’s stories good, supportive persons have pushed and encouraged them to do something about their lives and to pursue their dreams. Sahra Jama, in particular, emphasizes that you have to think about who you are, and how you can contribute to the society in which you are living. Having the right attitude is the Alpha and Omega to success. It does not do to give up and just keep sitting at home waiting for something to happen. On the other hand, society should support them by giving a warmer welcome to migrants who want to contribute with their work, she declares.

For both women, getting to where they are today has been a long and hard journey, but they conclude that with strength, determination, and the right attitude you can get a long way.
Behind Unwritten Rules at the Workplace — from a Migrant Woman’s Perspective

Alma Bekturganova Andersen represents women who came to Denmark to pursue love. She was born and raised in Kazakhstan and was 45 years old when she chose to leave her home country in 2004 in favour of Copenhagen. During the past 11 years Alma has worked as an associate consultant and project coordinator for ethnic minority associations in the Union, a cultural meeting place in Copenhagen. It took Alma three years to succeed in getting access to the Danish labour market. Her time working for the Union and her experience of trying to enter the labour market have left her with important experience and perspectives on how big the cultural differences are between the labour markets for migrant women here and what they are used to in their home country.

Alma draws on her personal experiences and focuses on migrant women who arrived in Denmark like her as adults.

It took Alma three years at a language school to learn the Danish language which she says she will probably never fully master. Through meetings with caseworkers Alma has drawn three important rules which she has learned from her personal meeting with Denmark and the Danish labour market:

- You are responsible for your own life
- Everything should be cosy (“hyggelig”)
- Trust is a basic principle

With these three rules she tries to guide other migrant women and help them in their meeting with the Danish labour market which can be very difficult for some of them.
Especially the first rule is important for her – she learned it the hard way. When she was trying to find her first internship in Denmark, she expected the caseworker to find one for her. That was not the case, and Alma had to look for it herself. In this situation her husband was a good support who was good at explaining to her how the Danish system works – here nothing is a matter of course, and you must be proactive if you want to get on in life.

After taking the matter into her own hand Alma got her first interview and is again confronted with cultural differences. In order to find out how to approach the interview Alma contacted one of her friends who was also a migrant woman and who had experience with meeting the Danish labour market.

Here Alma addresses the whole audience: “In order to learn how to go about such a meeting, you have to contact people who have been in the same situation. Only they will know how big the differences are from your home country and how you tackle these differences.”

Here Alma’s second rule is applied – everything must be “hyggelig”. So her friend advises her to accept coffee during the interview, even though she might not feel like having coffee, because it is “hygge”. If you say no to coffee, you have already created a barrier between yourself and the employer, her friend says. The concept of “hygge” finds concrete expression in a Danish workplace.

Alma herself comes from a culture, where the result is the only thing that matters, not the process of getting there. But in Denmark, she found, the process could be just as important as the result. The work situation should be “hyggelig”, as a way of maintaining the good atmosphere in the workplace.

The last rule is that trust is a key word. During her internship she was not met with a list of tasks she had to perform as she was used to in her home country. In Denmark she learned that she had to be proactive and take responsibility for her working life.

Today Alma is chairwoman for the association “The World’s Women in Denmark” whose goals are to promote equal rights and contact among women in the world, to encourage the integration of women in Denmark, and to create and advance a positive image of migrant women. This is obtained through counselling and group discussions, where current topics are discussed. The association also organizes various events to spread information to a larger public.

### 4.1 SUMMING UP

Alma is the image of a strong migrant woman who is aware that in Denmark you have to be proactive to create a life for yourself. With a good husband at home and a good friend to help her navigate in the Danish culture at the workplace, it is now Alma who shares her knowledge with other migrant women and stakeholders. In that way she gives back to society. By making her speeches about the unwritten rules at the workplace she contributes to strengthening good integration, thereby making the road to the Danish labour market easier for other migrant women.
5.0 WORKSHOP — Social and Economic Remittances

Babaylan - Denmark, represented by Ana Lindenhann and Anabelle Jensen at the seminar, is part of the European network Babaylan, and KULU´s partner in the project “Migrant Women´s Voices”. The Danish branch of the organisation has existed for 21 years. The network was started as a way for Philippine women to support each other in migration to work outside the Philippines. 80% of the Philippines who choose to migrate are women.

In 2002 Babaylan chose to focus their work on Philippine au pairs. As an organization they have taken several initiatives aimed at informing the migrating women of their rights through organizing workshops and seminars:

- Awareness of sexual rights (about sex and protection) in cooperation with the Danish Family Planning Association. The subject is much taboo in the Philippines, so many women do not know of their rights and lack general knowledge of the subject.

- Economic education, focusing on teaching migrating women how to manage their pay. In particular, focus has been on informing the women that it is okay to keep some of the money for themselves, so when they return to the Philippines they stand stronger.

- It is especially this initiative that occupies Babaylan. With money you can help your family here and now, but by keeping some of it for yourself and building a certain kind of economic capacity you stand stronger, and in the long term you can change your own life and that of your family. It thus becomes a kind of economic education which may have a long-term perspective, as it will increase the woman’s opportunities on her return to her home country.

- Cultural awareness courses.
Besides these initiatives Babaylan lobbies for better conditions for au pairs in Denmark, and the organization functions as a bridge between the Danish and the Philippine governments. Babaylan also participates in the Danish women’s fight for equal rights and tries to boost the rights, e.g. through their membership of KULU.

At the workshop Babaylan’s presentation focused on social and economic remittances and how these affect the Philippines. Both advantages and disadvantages of women’s migration from the Philippines were discussed.

5.1 REMITTANCES

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The growing number of people moving across countries and continents has given rise to an interest in the changes brought about by these movements. The term remittances have been coined to describe the positive changes that may occur in their homeland when people from poor countries migrate to richer countries and transfer their returns to the old country.

Remittances fall into two main groups: economic and social. After a focus on studies in economic remittances, the money or other economic assets sent home, the last decade has seen an increasing interest in the non-economic, non-material assets: the social remittances. It is being discussed how they are transferred, by whom to whom, the relations and consequences for the sender and the receiver, and, of course, the contents; what do social remittances consist of?

It is pointed out that social remittances in the shape of new values and orientations are mostly transferred as an individual influence from person to person or to one’s family and often takes place within a local setting. Social remittances are transferred through personal meetings, communication through mobiles and electronic media, letters, but also through cultural media, films, and TV.

The most important non-economic assets are individual: personal empowerment in the shape of new knowledge and awareness of rights, and improved wage-earning skills and self-confidence, but also a stronger sense of community spirit: joint actions to improve local institutions, influence decision-makers and hold them accountable, ultimately leading to greater political awareness and participation in democratic processes.

After this general introduction the audience were divided into two groups. Both groups shared experiences, challenges, and success stories in different ethnic groups and with different perspectives. There was a lively debate in both groups with different angles and views on economic and social remittances.

Three points of discussion were introduced:

- The individual experience
- Reflections on positive and negative aspects of remittances
- How to turn negative experiences into positive ones?

5.2 ECONOMIC REMITTANCES — COMMENTS FROM THE GROUP

Remittances are traditionally referred to as economic support that migrants send home to their homelands as a financial support to the family left behind. In Denmark we talk of economic remittances when au-pairs send money to their families in the Philippines.

In one of the workshop groups it turns out that several women send home economic remittances to their families. The discussion shows that there is a great cultural variety when it comes to the obligation to support the parents in different countries. In Denmark, it is typically the parents who...
Social remittance is a term that extends and adds to the traditional focus on migrants’ economic transfers. It stresses the recognition that migration also can mean a flow of ideas, practices, skills, ideologies, and social capital that the migrant transfers to her home country. It is the notion that migrants can influence their home country from their experience learned in their “new” country, and, in some cases, even more important ways than through money transfers.

So to Babaylan the social remittances sent to the Philippines are just as important as the economic, as they can help inform the Philippine population of women’s rights and how they can be used to empower women. For many of the participants this discussion was particularly interesting as they had never heard the term before. There is obviously a need to introduce the conception and show how it throws light on important positive consequences of migration. For Alma Bekturganova Andersen the debate was interesting. She has her focus on helping migrant women in Denmark, but from now on she will also think about what she can give back to her home country, Kazakhstan. But she admits that it is going to be difficult, as in Russia and Kazakhstan you usually give and obey orders. For a woman in a patriarchal society it will be difficult to pass on to the home country the knowledge she has got in Denmark about women’s rights. But even the awareness that you can give back something must be a positive thing.

Another woman in the audience follows up, saying that it is important to stand together to tell about the rights migrant women have in Denmark in their home countries. She herself tries to give back, and she often goes back to her home country to support women’s rights there.

Another woman stresses the importance of knowing the conception of social remittances, as until now she had never heard about it, and it throws a new light on the discussion about au-pairs and their habit of sending back money. It opens a new perspective on the debate.

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5.4 SUMMING UP

All in all the participants agreed that it is important to stand together when it is a question of informing migrant women of the rights they have according to Danish and international laws and conventions. Knowledge of women’s rights is extremely important information to take back to their home country.

In general the groups agree that it is important to use this day, when so many people from so many different cultures and organisations are gathered, to create networks, so we can support, inform and work together to spread migrant women’s knowledge of their rights in their respective home countries and give it a development perspective by making it a global effort.
Female Migrants’ Participation in Associations in Gothenburg

Ulla Björnberg, professor emerita, Gothenburg University, Sweden, was invited to speak at the seminar to share her experience of migrant women’s participation in associations in Gothenburg. Gothenburg has experienced an increase in the number of migrant women since the 1970s. Like elsewhere this group of migrants do not get much attention, so many of these women have chosen to organize themselves in order to help other migrant women, but also to promote their political, economic, and social rights in society.

Through her research Ulla Björnberg has found that women prefer to meet in their own surroundings, so they can speak freely without control from men. The groups vary a lot in size, and they have various objectives. In some the women can get education and acquire a better understanding of Swedish society, in others the focus is on coming psychologically to terms with traumatic experiences in the home country. The focus can also be on counselling, while others focus on preserving their homeland culture.

Ulla Björnberg finds that it is important that the local communities support these groups as it takes many human and financial resources to keep them running. Furthermore it is important to acknowledge them for their positive effect on the integration process. Most importantly, the groups share valuable knowledge with each other and form networks across ethnic barriers to create a stronger voice for all migrant women.
Migrant Women’s Participation in Sports: Social Inclusion or Segregation?

Gender-segregated sports entered the political agenda when the news reached the media that the Capital’s Swimming Club which receives public funding, offers gender-segregated swimming lessons in Tingbjerg, Copenhagen. Subsequently a debate surrounding the issue arose, and as the first municipality in the country the Municipality of Aarhus ended up banning gender-segregated swimming in their halls. The initiative comes from the liberal party of Denmark, Venstre, who claims that gender segregation in sports out of consideration for minority women is a misconception. In the end an amendment to the proposal was passed to the effect that gender-segregated swimming is currently prohibited during the ordinary opening hours of the swimming arenas. The consequence is that these sports initiatives now only take place outside normal opening hours. Politically the debate has switched from the positive viewpoint that minority women’s participation in sports is promoting health and helping integrate migrating women, to a negative one: gender-segregated swimming is now suspected of being a possibly parallel social activity, and it is seen rather as social segregation than as integration.

To discuss this topic KULU- Women and Development and Babaylan had invited Lars Kruse, Get2Sport (DIF – The National Olympic Committee & Sports Confederation of Denmark), Camilla Hermmani Clausen, SheZone, and professor and writer, Sine Agergaard, (University of Aalborg). Lars Kruse and Camilla Hermmani Clausen both represent associations that offer sports to minority women, girls, and boys, while Sine Agergaard represents the academic angle of the debate which, among other things, deals with the role that such initiatives as gender-segregated swimming may play in the lives of migrant women and their descendants.

Lars Kruse, Camilla Hermmani Clausen, and Sine Agergaard facilitated an interesting debate about sports activities for migrant women. The focus of the discussion was the question whether such activities are a means of integration or rather a way of segregating the target group.
7.1 GET2SPORT

Lars Kruse, consultant with Get2sport, opened the debate. Get2Sport is a sports association which is present in vulnerable neighbourhoods; Get2Sport invests in existing associations whose associative lives are challenged. It can be, e.g. by giving financial aid to pay a receptionist to welcome and take care of new members and their parents.

By getting migrant- and refugee children to participate in associative life, Lars believes that integration is strengthened. We should be willing to invest in projects that promote the integration of minority children in sports: “Sports can be broad and inclusive if we are willing to invest in the associations. But it can also be excluding, if we are not willing to count on it. Sports are a naturally integrating activity. ”

7.2 SHEZONE

Camilla Hermmani Clausen works for SheZone which is an association only for girls and women. They want to attract this specific target group, as girls and women in general are lacking behind boys and men when it comes to practising sports. By creating a safe space for women SheZone believes they will attract women who are not used to being active in associations. At the same time, they strive to keep the membership fee low, so everyone has a chance to participate.

The association is diverse, and everyone can participate, if only they are female. Also ethnic Danes are welcome, which allows the participating members to exchange cultural experiences.

In addition to getting more girls and women to exercise it is also very much about activating the participants to invest in the association as volunteers, as it can be very rewarding for the girls and women. By volunteering in an association girls and women get a concrete insight into democracy, and they experience being listened to and taking part in decision-making processes.

Association life is therefore about social life, community, inclusion, democratic empowerment, physical exercise, etc. And this is how it is strengthening integration.
7.3. INTEGRATION OR SEGREGATION

Sine Agergaard, professor at the University of Aalborg, and a writer, has researched and is still researching in migrant women’s participation in sports. She focuses specifically on the need for knowledge-based efforts showing how sports associations work with integration. Many involved in the associations are trying to meet the migrant women at their own starting-point, but should the transformative aspect be emphasized so much that the women themselves take responsibility for their own leisure time in the associations?

She points, e.g. to the issue of gender-segregated swimming which is not only about integration or segregation, but also about health as such – physical activity is a fundamental right. Furthermore it is about what you learn by joining an association, and quite concretely, it is about being able to swim. Therefore she argues that the debate should be more differentiated and contain more aspects than it has done so far, and it should be based on knowledge.

Finally Sine Agergaard advocates for a larger representation of migrant women. More women with a refugee or migrant background must be represented on boards and as volunteers in associations: “We have to involve them more!”

7.4. SUMMING UP

The debate concluded that stronger and more inclusive associations should be built, in which women and girls with a refugee background are more involved. We must create generations for whom participation in sports and associations makes a natural part of family life. Furthermore, we should not see or discuss migrant women’s participation as a problem, because if we do, then it will be a problem. Look at sports activities as an opportunity for women, use their strengths, and involve them.
Conclusion

The seminar brought together women from diverse backgrounds and all wakes of life for a fruitful exchange of experiences and views. It offered many important presentations, and many good suggestions for various kinds of strategies and forms of organizing derived from them. No doubt the most important point was that the microphone should be passed on to the migrant women themselves, so they can share their experiences and knowledge both among themselves and with others. When you can relate to the person speaking, you are motivated to do something yourself. Therefore the representation of women in the public debate should be larger, so that more migrant women are mobilized. It is especially important to reach the young women.

Many participants expressed enthusiasm at getting new knowledge from the introduction of the conception of social remittances. Some pointed out that it would be useful in their advocacy for migrant women’s rights, also in their home country, and they would apply the concept in future debates about migration to Denmark.

Various bids for the good story were presented, and it is exactly these stories that the media should tell. More positive stories would contribute to changing the right-wing turn in the refugee debate that some media have made in the last couple of years, and which has been encouraged and supported by the rhetoric of certain political parties. At the seminar we listened to women who take responsibility for their own lives and have been able to see the possibilities rather than the limits, so no matter how the debate and rhetoric about them may go on, these women make active decisions about what they want their lives to look like. They have taken up the fight, it has not been easy for them, but they have done it, and now they want to show other women that it is possible for them as well. Several of these women are also engaged in organizations for migrant or refugee women to help other women on their way, and at the same time they help strengthen these women’s rights in Denmark and in their home country.

There are many organizations fighting for migrant women’s rights both in Denmark and abroad. They have been started by the women themselves, such as Babaylan, and the World’s Women in Denmark that participated in the seminar. Especially Babaylan has achieved helping many women from the Philippines to have not only their rights as women, but also their rights as au pairs in Denmark.

During the seminar the importance of knowledge-sharing among organizations was specifically emphasized. As shown in the debate organizations can learn from each other and thereby become stronger. At the same time, the Danish society must support these organizations, as they are doing a great job to promote the integration of migrant women in Danish society.

The day can briefly be summed up in the following key words that can serve as guiding lines for migrant women, their organizations, as well as Danish NGOs: take action, pass the word to the women, spread the good stories, and get a better representation of minority women on all levels of decision-making processes.

Migrating women should not be considered a problem, but instead be met with a positive attitude and a better inclusion in society. The women can and want to be an important part of Danish society.
MIGRANT WOMEN’S VOICES

ACTIVITIES

MAPPING OF
Migrant Women’s Groups in Denmark – 2017 and 2018

DIALOGUE MEETING 1
11th June 2018 with Babaylan (Philippine Women)
Care4Needy (Gambian Women) and DAWIDA (Diaspora African women and youth).

DIALOGUE MEETING 2
25th October 2018 with Kurdish Women’s Organisation

DEBATE MEETING “UN2030 GOALS:
Gender Based Violence:
Gender, Violence and Mobility in an International Perspective”,
30th October 2018, arranged together with and at Global Refugee Studies,
University of Aalborg

DEBATE MEETING
“Migrant Women’s Way to the Danish Labour market”,
15th November 2018

MEETING
“A Gender Perspective on UN’s Global Compact on Migration”
21th November 2018

SEMINAR
“What is good Integration?”
19th January 2019

Arranged by KULU-Women and Development and Babaylan-Denmark.
Migrantkvindestemmer

Konferencier: Khaterah Parwani, Leder for LifehackDK, exit circle og debatterer

09:30 – 10:00 Registreringen og croissant
10:00 – 10:15 Introduktion og velkomst ved Janice G. Førde, Forkvinde, KULU
10:15 – 10:45 Introduktion til Hvad er god integration?
Khaterah Parwani, Leder for LifehackDK, exit circle og debatterer
10:45 – 11:30 Mit liv som kvinde i Danmark
Sahra Jama, selvstændig samt en repræsentant fra Kurdish Kvindeforening (tbc)
11:30 – 12:00 Bag om de uskrive regler på arbejdspladsen
Alma Bekturganova Andersen, Forkvinde, Verdens Kvinder i Danmark
12:00 – 12:45 Frokost
12:45 – 13:45 Workshop – Migrantkvinde og økonomiske- og sociale remitter: demokrati og kvinders rettigheder i forhold til hjemlandet
Ana Lindenhann i Anabelle Jensen, Babaylan
13:45 – 14:30 Kvindelige migranters deltagelse i foreningsliv i Göteborg
Ulla Björnberg, professor emerita, Göteborg Universitet
14:30 – 14:45 Kaffepause
14:45 – 15:45 Migrantkvinders stræbde for social inclusion eller segregation?
Lars Kruse, Konsulent, Get2Sport, Danmarks Idrætsforbund.
Camilla Hermanni Clausen, Projektkoordinator, ShuZone.
Sine Agergaard, Professor, Aalborg Universitet.
15:45 – 16:00 Opsamling og afrunding
Arrangeret af Kvindernes U-Landsudvalg og Babaylan

English:
Moderator: Khaterah Parwani, Head of LifehackDK, the exit circle and debatter
09:30 – 10:00 Registration and Croissant
10:00 – 10:15 Introduction to the Project and Welcome,
Janice G. Førde, chairwoman, K.U.L.U.- Women and Development
10:15 – 11:00 Introduction to What is Good Integration?
Khaterah Parwani, The head of LifehackDK, the Exit Circle and debatterer
11:00 – 11:30 My life as a Migrant Woman in Denmark
Sahra Jama, self employed, and a representative from Kurdish Women’s Association (tbc)
11:30 – 12:00 Behind the Unwritten Rules at the workplace – from a migrant woman’s perspective
Alma Bekturganova Andersen, chairwoman The World’s Women in Denmark
12:00 – 12:45 Lunch
Ana Lindenhann & Anabelle Jensen, Babaylan
13:45 – 14:30 Migrant Women’s Participation in Association Life in Gothenburg
Ulla Björnberg, professor emerita, University of Gothenburg
14:30 – 14:45 Coffee break
14:45 – 15:45 Migrant Women’s Participation in Sports: Social Inclusion or Segregation?
Lars Kruse, Consultant, Get2Sport, Sports Confederation of Denmark.
Camilla Hermanni Clausen, project coordinator, ShuZone.
Sine Agergaard, Professor, Aalborg University
15:45 – 16:00 Recapitulation
Hosted by K.U.L.U.- Women and Development and Babaylan