

Intro to 2 reports on Women Events

Women Encounter Women Report

(Kvinder møder kvinder)

Simon Peters Hus, Islandsvej 4, 6000 Kolding, Denmark

January 25 & February 22, 2025

**Organization: Cross- Cultural Ministry of Kolding Deanery
and Migrant Cooperation and Encounter with other
Religions of Haderslev Diocese**

Background Information:

A. Description of the Program: Women Encounter Women

1. **Women Encounter Women (KMK or Kvinder møder Kvinder)** is an activity every last Saturday every month, gathering women around issues and subjects for common learning, or around some creative activities to work on together- sharing and thereby enriching each other's cultures. Women get the chance to learn from others, but there is also time that they themselves share from their own culture, knowledge and experience.

2. The Workforce

Women Encounter Women Committee (WEW) in Danish Kvinder: *Kvinder møder kvinde udvalgt*). The program has its committee with the chairmanship of Lone Møller Krogh, the coordinator of the Cross- Cultural Ministry of Kolding Deanery, a church entity which consists of 31 local churches within the Danish Lutheran Evangelical Churches (Folkekirken) in town.

The committee meets to prepare the program and contacts women who may be given or invited to do some tasks related to the execution of planned activities.

There are four women who are in the WEW/KMK Committee, representing 4 countries: Denmark, Syria, Philippines and Lithuania. And 9 other volunteers are related to the women's program carried out once a month.

B. Planned and Carried-out Activities between January and February 2025

Two Women Encounter activities in January and February 2025 fall under World Interfaith Harmony Week criteria. The two women events were done on January 25, and on February 22 at 1 to 5 pm held in Simon Peters House: that was cooking together food using menus/recipes from Ukraine and Syria, and in February women in small groups, did group conversations on the cultural norms and expectations and how to build bridges of understanding.

Preparing food, eating together what 's being cooked or prepared, and talking about cultural norms and differences for better understanding are some events upon which love, and harmony of different cultures can also be built.

Two posters on these 2 events to invite and inform women made by Lone Krogh Møller, the new coordinator of the Cross-cultural Ministry of Kolding Deanery.

Kvinder møder Kvinder lørdag d. 25. januar kl. 14.00



Nu er det heldigvis snart tid til at vi kvinder skal mødes igen.

Vi skal lave skøn ukrainsk Borscht og Tabbouleh sammen.

Vi glæder os til at være sammen med jer igen i Simon Peters Hus.



Kvinder møder Kvinder

VI SKAL TALE OM ALT DET
DER KAN VÆRE SVÆRT AT
FORSTÅ I DANMARK

Vi glæder os til at se dig d. 22.
februar kl. 14.00 i Simon Peters
Hus.

Tag gerne dine døtre med



Report 1: Cooking Food Together and Dining Together

Women's Activity on January 25 from 1-5 p.m.

1. Women Encounter Women (WEW) Committee and volunteers met together at Simon Peters Hus, before the start of the program and arranged the venue, prepared the needed materials, arranged the tables for tea and coffee with some delicacies, and made a check on the sequence of the program of this women's event as it should officially run from 2 to 5 pm.
2. Two groups were made to prepare the two kinds of food with corresponding recipes. Every participant was given the freedom to choose which group they would like to be with in preparing and cooking the food.

Group 1 was led by Ukrainian women, preparing their food called **Borscht**. Group 2 made a vegetable salad called **Tabbouleh** from the Middle East, led by women from Syria.

3. The office of the coordinator provides monetary support for the purchase of the materials/items for the planned food preparations. The women who accept the task of showing a menu or food from their country submits the receipts of purchased materials or asked the office for help in the purchase of necessary food items/ ingredients.
4. The goal was to learn from each other, to do an activity like cooking, and in the process, they could value each other's talents and ways of cooking, It was also knowing the way of doing things in the kitchen, knowing new elements or ingredients in food preparation that mattered in two cultures.
5. Before the actual food making, the women started with coffee and tea with served cakes and fruits. And there was also time to sing short songs together that gave them a chance to move and enjoy their fellowship around tables.

6. Children joined with their mothers in preparing food.
7. The WEW/KMK Women Committee were women coming from four countries: Denmark, Syria, Philippines and Lithuania.

C. Impact of the Program:

1. There was joy in the air among women There was freedom to exchange personal talks while drinking coffee and tea. There was openness and natural way of singing together small songs which allow them to have bodily actions/ or movements while singing. And there was time to talk with each other while doing the actual work of preparing the food.
2. There was demonstrated dedication of the two groups- The Ukrainians and Syrians- felt good showing their food and serving women while encouraging those in their group to learn about it as they demonstrated the items for cooking, the recipes and where they could be obtained, which shop they could be purchased should they decide to try the recipes at their own homes.
3. Involving women in a group to prepare a dish together, which everyone in the room could have the chance to taste, gave a push to come out with a good result. There was interest in learning something new. Everyone had something to do: cutting, washing, opening the oven or the fire, mixing, writing or taking down notes, asking, finding plates, serving, waiting and cleaning up...
4. It is a simple thing to cook or to cook with others. It is the usual task of most women in the group anyway, but eating together what women prepared gave another dimension, that they were doing something to be of service to all who came. This time the program was not only one or two persons to speak on a certain subject, but this time, everyone was involved in the task of cooking for all who came. And the children also helped in the task.

5. It was a happy afternoon for all the 50 women and children who came.

Enclosed: Photos of the event in reel video. (prepared by Elizabeth P. Olesen)

Reel video, Women Encounter Women, January 25

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1187111036335628>

Report 2: Group Discussion on Cultural Norms and Expectations and Bridging Understanding

Simon Peters Hus, Islandsvej 4, 6000 Kolding

Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 1-5 pm

1. Members of the committee and volunteers came earlier to prepare the venue and to talk on what needs to be followed up on the program. The tables were arranged in such a way that women met as groups in their discussion.
2. The coffee table received cakes brought in by some women: from Eritrea, Lithuania, Philippines and Denmark. Fruits were sliced, cups and plates and napkins were made ready for women as they came to the tables already in the arranged groupings: the English-speaking group, the Eritrean group, the Danish speaking group, the Kurdish women group - with an assigned facilitator for each group.
3. After coffee, there was time to sing small songs. Elizabeth P. Olesen was asked to lead and accompany the singing by guitar. And there was also singing of small local songs of joy from other countries with bodily actions or movements. One of the songs in English was this:

*“The time to be happy is now,
and the place to be happy is here,
and the way to be happy
is to make others happy,
and to make a little heaven down here. “*
4. There was time for reflection on forgiveness, using a biblical text on the story of the **Unforgiving servant**: This was dramatized by three women. To avoid wars and conflicts, and to build bridges of love and harmony, how necessary it is that we can learn to forgive.

Lone Krogh Møller, Anne Grønne and Jessica Reinert respectively, played the roles as the rich man, the servant who was asking favor for mercy on his debt, and the other servant whose debt was never forgiven by the one who had just received mercy. It was nice re-enactment of a story in Danish language which most could understand. There were 2 who needed translations into English. It was a very creative way of coming forth a necessary reflection on the way we relate with others, either with kindness and forgiveness or with iron-hand and No-forgiveness at all.

5. Women's children had their separate creative activity with Lone Krogh Møller: painting and drawing with results of their art were brought home to their own families.
6. Elsebeth Fischer Nielsen oriented us to the task in our discussion in small groups. Each group had an assigned facilitator among us. Each group received a paper with specific case study to be read by everyone in the group, for example, on how we respond to invitations. Some will find it easy to say, "Yes" but never coming anyway. How do Danes react to this? How do we do it in our own country. If it's only your name invited on the invitation letter, is it ok to come to the host, bringing a friend or the whole family? How do Danes take this?
What about coming late to appointments? How is it for you to come late to the agreed time? What are ways of evading the deep frustration of the host.
7. It was an exercise of looking at one's own culture and others' ways of doing by the people in their new country, like Denmark for example. There was more sharing that made everyone giggle. Women were getting more honest with things they liked or did not like.
8. There was an hour to talk in small groups and there was time to share insights and suggestions on how to build bridges of understanding in the big group which Elsebeth Fischer Nielsen facilitated and noted on the blackboard some of the important points on what the women openly shared.

Observation and Impact

1. Women were very much relaxed to express their frustrations and more open to make critique on their own or other's way of doing things in response to the questions related to norms in Denmark, and the norms in one's own country of origin.
2. To the question on Yes or No response to invitations. A question was raised, why do some people find it easy to say Yes, and difficult to say No. Some said that to say Yes is easier because saying No means one loses face.
3. On the question on Truth and Lies or Integrity or Shame. If one comes late to the appointment, it is necessary to make a call to the host to inform that one comes late.
Why do people say falsehood to cover the truth to save face or to be saved from shame? One group had a discussion around shame.
4. Simple example: It may be much easier to say Yes to an invitation and not coming anyway. It is something the Danes do not like. So, what often happens is: this person who has invited you will not anymore invite you. Simple Yes or No response can also show a person's integrity. But the trust that is cut off can be regained by being honest and frank.

Some practical tips as suggestions:

1. Do not be afraid to say No.
2. Say Yes, if you can make it. But if you cannot, inform and say you cannot.
3. Do not be late for any appointment.
4. Ring or call if you come late.
5. Ask the host if you would like to take somebody with you. Some Asian cultures, it is not a problem if the guest invited, would take his/her own family even without informing before coming. (*This made the groups laugh convulsively*)
6. There was discussion on integrity and promise.
7. Groups were having big laughs as they began to be self-critical to the

- Danish ways of doing and to their own or own folks' way of doing.
8. Other cultural differences were also discussed and shared in the big group.
 9. There are certain cultural norms or ways of doing things which are not written at all, but one must just be guided by the core principles on whatever one does:
 - Is it loving?
 - Is it kind?
 - Is it merciful?
 - It is compassionate?
 10. The event was concluded with a Danish song, affirming that God will always be with us wherever we go in God's world. Anna Grønne played piano to accompany the women singing.

Affirmation:

The two Women Encounter Events in January and February solemnly support the intentions of FN World Interfaith Harmony Week. In coming together and doing things together, the women affirm the presence of love when people meet as friends despite differences in culture and religion. Countries represented: Iraq, Syria, Nepal, Korea, Philippines, Denmark, Lithuania, Ukraine, Iran, Eritrea. They are Christians, Muslims and Hindus...and having no problem coming together every Saturday of the month to encounter women of other faiths and cultures but having the openness to learn from each other and respect each other- singing together, talking, listening, acting, cooking, eating and planning...

Enclosures:

Women Encounter Women, February 22
Some photos

