

kisam-

The project Mothers of the world

- from an art project to a women's movement for democracy

Birgitta Larsson



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"My dream for Mothers of the world is that we may be present all over the world so that we together may influence the development of society so that ALL women, mothers and our children will have the best possible future".

Sira Jokinen Lisse





Preface

The project *Konsten i samhället (KISAM, Art in society)* – *Världens mammor (Mothers of the world)* began in Östergötland in 2016 and has received a great deal of attention in the media for its new way of working with art and creative activities, and in this way breaking the isolation of many mothers and children. Project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse has also received several fine prizes for her efforts in the county. My great interest in social issues made me contact Sira Jokinen Lisse in August 2019 in order to find out more about this project. Our contact resulted in both cooperation with emphasis on the leadership course of the project and participation in different activities.

In the spring of 2020, I was asked if I could write a report about Mothers of the world, and I gladly undertook this task. I would like to express my gratitude to Sira Jokinen Lisse and everyone else in Mothers of the world who gave me the opportunity to conduct the study and compile the results of the project during those four years that this work has been going on. I hope that in the report, I have described the emergence and approach of Mothers of the world clearly and also contributed to realising Sira Jokinen Lisse's dream of improving the living conditions of all women and mothers of the world.¹

"My dream for Mothers of the world is that we may be present all over the world so that we together may influence the development of society so that all women, mothers and our children will have the best possible future."

Linköping, June 2020
Birgitta Larsson

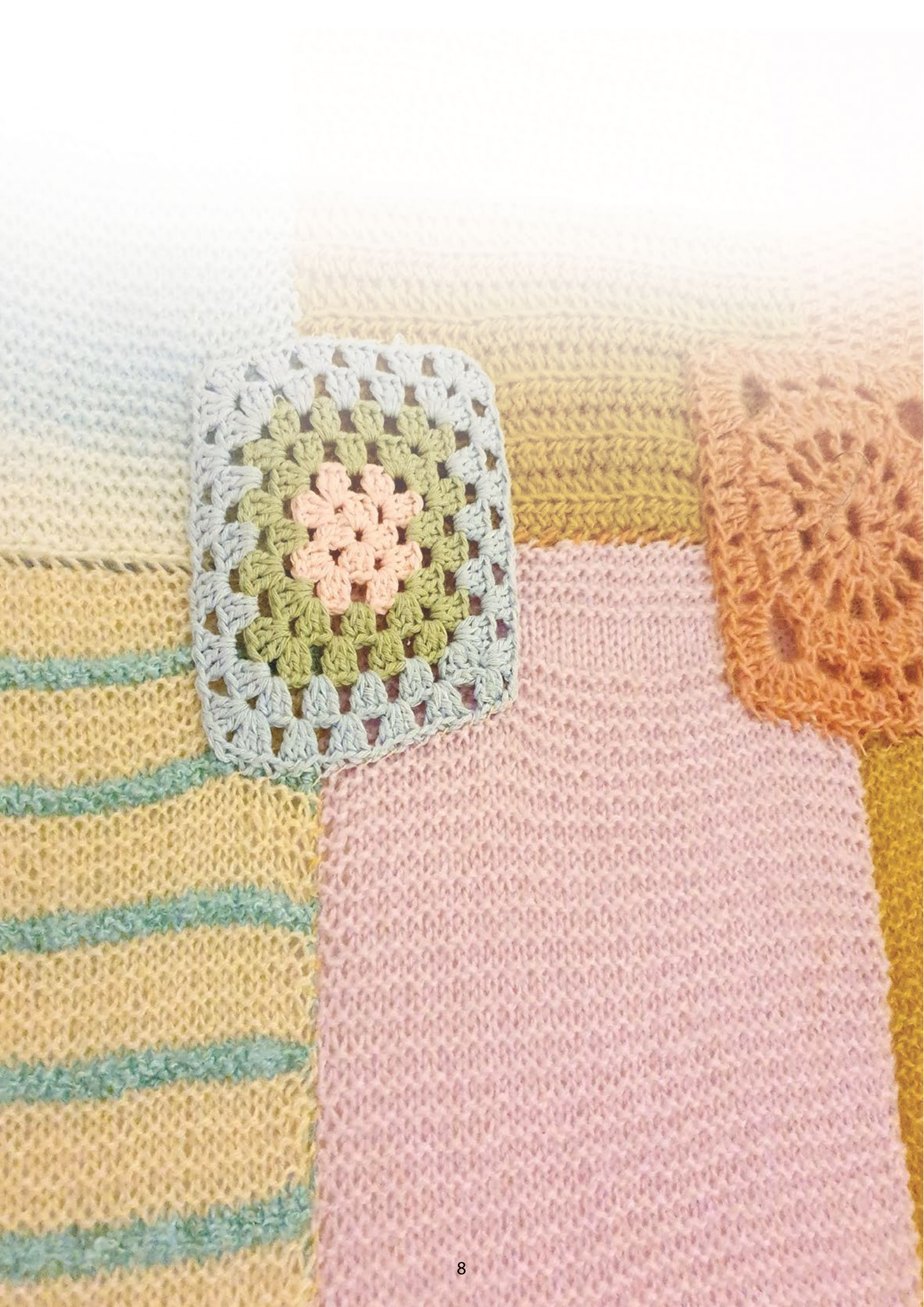


¹ Birgitta Larsson is a graduate from a School of Social Studies and has a degree of Master of Arts in social work. She has also taken courses in research methodology. Her competence of working life is above all based on her experiences as an employee of Region Östergötland (formerly Landstinget i Östergötland) from 1981 to 2018 with responsibilities as a project manager in gender equality, public health issues and integration. She has also been a research supervisor for ten years.



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Abstract

The project KISAM - Mothers of the world (called Mothers of the world below) is a project which has developed from being an art project to becoming a women's movement for democracy, a project of social progress based on culture. The project has values that are based on the principle of the equal worth of all human beings and an approach based on the principles of equality and gender equality. It consists of building blocks of creative workshops, knowledge excursions and externally directed activities. The development of women and thereby, of society, is made possible by artistic creation. The participants of Mothers of the world are women from different parts of the world, from different cultures, languages and religions who would like to work together in order to create a better future both for themselves and for their children and their families. The process-oriented approach of Mothers of the world has been developed by project manager and artist Sira Jokinen Lisse and is implemented in the county of Östergötland in cooperation with the board of KISAM.

Mothers of the world was founded in Motala in 2016 when the children's clinic warned that a lot of mothers and their children were isolated in their homes. The project has, since it started with five mothers and their children, developed into involving more than 500 mothers and about 2,500 children in 2020. In addition to Motala, the project has now also started in Norrköping, Vadstena and Linköping. The goal of the project is that Mothers of the world should grow, develop and spread to more places in the county, in Sweden and also abroad. The one-year leadership course of the project for 20 women who have been active in Mothers of the world for a long time is seen as the main guarantee that the project will develop and continue.

On an overall level, Mothers of the world is about integrating women from segregated housing areas into society, increasing the health of women and families and decreasing the consequences of ill health. This is made possible by using the building blocks of the project, and creating tools for a good and healthy life, working with health risks in different living environments and developing healthy choices. The aim of the project is to make life meaningful, understandable and manageable, and to give the participants a sense of empowerment. Culture and creative activities are the basis of the methodology of Mothers of the world, and they contribute to giving the women strength and energy to influence their existence.

The method and approach of Mothers of the world is in line with what affects and strengthens the health of individuals and groups, as described in the report entitled *Closing the gap in a generation* (2008) from the World Health Organization, prepared by professor Sir Michael Marmot, *The Spirit Level* (2010) by the author Richard Wilkinson, *Folkhälsans utveckling, årsrapport 2020* and by professor Aaron Antonovsky in *Hälsans mysterium* (2005) (Unraveling the Mystery of Health). The conclusions and recommendations about culture and health which are stated by Kommissionen för jämlik hälsa (2017) on the national level and by *Östergötlands kommission för jämlik hälsa* (2014) are also in accordance with the work that has been done in Mothers of the world.

The conclusion is that Mothers of the world, with art and culture as its basis and a public health strategical approach, is a successful method to reach newly arrived women and immigrant women in segregated housing areas and in other locations. Through the project, women have gained improved health, an increased sense of coherence and the power to influence and shape their own lives. Mothers of the world has made it clear that it is possible to achieve integration between individuals and groups in society through process-oriented methods, strong project leadership, a strong commitment and long-term thinking.



1 Introduction

1. 1 Introductory remarks

The project Mothers of the world is a project which has developed from being an art project to becoming a women's movement for democracy, a project of social progress based on culture. The project Mothers of the world began in Motala in Östergötland in 2016 with five mothers and their children and has since then developed into involving four cities with more than 500 mothers and about 2,500 children in 2020. Birgitta Larsson has during the spring of 2020 compiled a report about the project Mothers of the world, at the request of project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse.

1. 2 Aim

The aim of this report is to give an account of the emergence, implementation and results of Mothers of the world. This report describes the project from its beginning in 2016 until the spring of 2020 and also contains an account of the leadership course of the project in 2019-2020. The goal is that this document might constitute a basis of knowledge which on an overall level contributes to the values of the project, according to which every human being has equal value. I also hope that the document will give inspiration to create projects and approaches with a similar emphasis and will add reflections and discussions on a sustainable development of society.

1. 3 Outline

This report consists of five sections. Section 1 concerns the aim of the report. In Section 2, Theoretical basis, the terms and theoretical frames of reference which are considered essential for the report are described and defined. Background, choice of method and approach are described in Section 3. Section 4 deals with the implementation of the leadership course of the project. The results of the project are described in Section 5, which also contains an analysis of parts of the theoretical frames of reference. Furthermore, the results are placed in the context of a broader social debate.



Sira Jokinen Lisse
bildtext: Sira Jokinen Lisse, initiator and project manager

2 Theoretical basis

People's health is a starting point for discussing issues of future, development and sustainability. Essentially, health concerns human rights and health is a prerequisite of the realisation of other rights. Health is in many ways essential in people's lives and has a value on its own. Good health is also one of the most important factors that affect growth and welfare. However, health is unequally distributed, and there are big health gaps within and between different sections of the population, municipalities and cities. In the county of Östergötland, health gaps and segregation are especially prominent in some housing areas in the cities of Linköping and Norrköping. (These housing areas emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as part of a programme to build a million flats in ten years.)

2.1 Central terms

Health can be described in different ways. One way to define health is to regard it as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases" (WHO 1948). Health may also be defined as feeling well and having enough resources to meet everyday requirements and to realise one's personal goals (Nordenfelt 1991). In *Öppna jämförelser folkhälsa* (2019), health is also described as a state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not just an absence of illness or injury. Health includes four positive values: a long life, a healthy life, a rich life and an equal life. In the definition, it is emphasised that good health should be regarded as a resource for society and its individuals and not just as an end in itself. *Health inequality* may be defined as systematic differences in health, which are considered avoidable, between different groups in society on the basis of for example gender, socioeconomics and age.

Equality can be described as a situation in which all people have the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities in all essential areas of life. The International Society for Equity in Health defines equal health as "the absence of systematic or potentially avoidable differences in one or several aspects of health between groups of the population defined socially, economically, geographically or based on gender".

Gender equality and gender system. Gender is a term in research and theorisation in the humanities and social sciences which is used to understand and distinguish conceptions, ideas and acts which, taken together, shape the social gender of people. Different tasks, roles and positions are attributed to men and women. This is called a gender system and it is based on two principles, the separation of the sexes and male supremacy. In order to overcome these systematic differences in power between men and women in society, increased gender equality is required.

The goal of the government's gender equality policy is that women and men are to have the same power to shape society and their own lives. This goal was passed by broad political agreement in 2006. There are also six sub-goals in gender equality:

- o Gender equal division of power and influence. Women and men are to have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making in all sectors of society.
- o Economic gender equality. Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions as regards paid work, which give economic independence throughout life.
- o Gender equal education. Women and men, girls and boys must have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education, study options and personal development.
- o Gender equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care. Women and men must have the same responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms.
- o Gender equal health. Women and men, girls and boys must have the same conditions for a good health and be offered care on equal terms.
- o Men's violence against women must stop. Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right and access to physical integrity.

In an official communication from the government entitled *Makt, mål och myndighet – en feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid* (Skr. 2016/17:10), the present emphasis of gender equality policy is described. This policy contains an organisation for implementation, a system for follow-up and a national ten-year strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women.

Nature experiences and cultural experiences affect health and quality of life at all ages. Research in medicine, sociology, social psychology and social medicine shows that nature experiences and cultural experiences are important ingredients of a person's well-being, which lead to increased social capital, health and well-being. Culture contributes to a meaningful life for individuals and can give people the strength to influence their own lives, which is crucial for health. Studies show that Swedish women are more culturally active than men and that highly educated people are more active than lowly educated people (Östgöta-kommissionen för jämlik hälsa 2014).

Sustainable development is development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission 1987). In September 2015, the world's heads of state and government passed a new agenda for development and global goals for sustainable development. *Agenda 2030* (FN 2015) consists of 17 global goals for sustainable development which aim to eradicate poverty, stop climate change and create peaceful and safe societies.

Public health is a term to describe the health state of the population which takes into account both level and distribution of health. Good *public health* means that as many individuals as possible in the population have a good physical and mental health and that health is evenly distributed between different sections of society. Health is important to the individual and it also contributes to strengthening the development of society. Good and evenly distributed public health is central to sustainable development (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2020). A *public health strategic approach* means that you start from and work with factors that decide the health of people. A *health-enhancing measure* is a measure to strengthen or preserve the physical, mental or social well-being of people. A *preventive measure* is a measure to prevent the emergence of or influence the course of illnesses, injuries, physical, mental or social problems.

A term that was launched in the 1970s by Aaron Antonovsky, a professor of medical sociology, is "*a sense of coherence*" (SOC). In his book *Hälsans mysterium* (2005), Antonovsky launched this term as an important cause of health. A high SOC predisposes people to good health. People with good self-esteem keep healthy. They see existence as understandable, manageable and meaningful. At best, the strains of life are perceived as stimulating challenges. Well-balanced people have a wide circle of contacts and friends who are helpful and supportive. People with good self-esteem direct their lives themselves, easily contact other people, are active and keep healthy more easily. People with a low SOC are, on the other hand, described as passive. They easily become ill and regard life as difficult to understand. Antonovsky's *Orientation to Life Questionnaire – Sense of coherence* has been developed and is used to obtain evidence-based results about the health of individuals and groups.

Coping is a term that refers to the confidence of the individual in their own ability. The ability to cope means the general ability of the individual to meet challenges. Coping strategies are different strategies that you use when you meet a new challenge. These strategies are problem-based or emotion-based (Hertting & Kristenson 2012). *Empowerment* means to give strength and power to the individual and offer knowledge as required.

Health determinants. The term determinant is used to describe factors that affect health. There are several factors that work together on different levels in society, for example where and how we live, which environment we live in, childhood and adolescence, our education and our work. These determinants can both increase and decrease the risk of ill health. Most determinants can be changed, especially through political decisions in for example employment policy and education policy, while others have to do with changes of habits of life, for example smoking or exercise habits.

Even though the choices of an individual greatly influence health, determinants on society level and structure level can create favourable conditions and supportive environments in order to facilitate health-enhancing choices. Factors such as inheritance, gender and age also affect people's health, but these usually cannot be influenced. Health determinants are illustrated in Figure 1 (Dahlgren G, Whitehead M 2007, Folkhälsomyndigheten 2019, Östgöta-kommissionen 2014).

Development of society: national economy, environment, social sustainability

Social arenas: housing, local environment/spare time, culture, work of a society/school, education/work, means of support/healthcare, care, social work

Socioeconomic situation: education, profession, income, employment

Lifestyle: living habits and behaviour

Social context: social support and community

Confidence, trust, hope, hope for the future

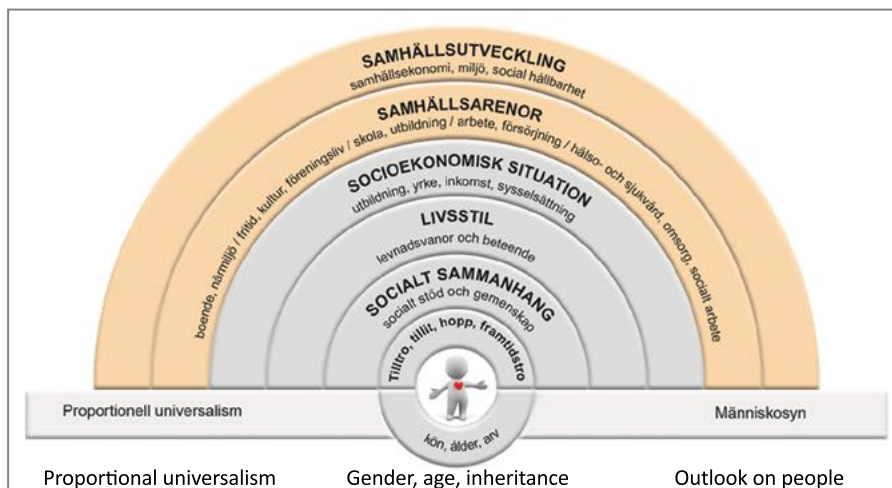


Figure 1. Health determinants according to Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991), as modified in 2014 by Jolanda van Vliet and Margareta Kristenson, Östgöta-kommissionen.

2. 2 Health is a social right

To work for gender-equal health is a way to guarantee the human needs that are expressed in the *United Nations' universal declaration of human rights* from 1948. It is also a way to contribute to a safer society, increased participation and strengthened social cohesion. Other long-term effects concern a better environment and climate and decreased social costs. The public health strategy of the *World Health Organization*, called *Health 2020*, is based on those values where health is regarded as a human right.

In the WHO report called *Closing the gap in a generation* (2008), the work of the commission on social determinants of health is described. The commission was headed by professor Sir Michael Marmot. The commission established the connection between those determinants in society which cause ill health and the unequal distribution of health in the population. The WHO report establishes that an unequal distribution of social determinants of health causes unequal health. The authors of the report especially pointed out the importance of a more equal distribution of income, decreased segregation and social exclusion and increased civic political influence.

In Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's book called *Jämlikhetsanden* (The Spirit Level), statistics from 21 industrialised countries have been compared. The conclusion of the authors is that the higher the level of economic equality that a country has, the better its inhabitants feel. The rich would also gain by more equality (Wilkinson & Pickett 2010).

The *overall national goal* of public health policy is to create social conditions for a good and equal health in the whole population and close the avoidable health gaps within a generation. The sector comprehensive goal and follow-up structure of public health policy includes eight goal areas (prop 2017/18:249). In order to achieve good and equal health, the authorities have to concentrate on all goal areas through broad sector comprehensive work in all sectors which influence the development of public health. This sector comprehensive effort is in line with Agenda 2030 for sustainable development with the general principle that no-one should be excluded (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2020).

Östgöta kommissionen för jämlik hälsa slutrapport (2014) describes the results of analyses and recommendations for efforts for equal health. The commission's analysis of causes of identifiable differences in health has focused on the causes of the causes, that is to say, structural factors in society which influence people's health.

The recommendations aim at contributing to a society which gives people confidence in their own abilities, confidence in other people, hope and hope for the future. Both the overall recommendations and recommendations for different social sectors focus on the structural level and on the politically directed levels. (See Health determinants, Figure 1.)

2.3 Consequences of inequality in health

From a global perspective, public health in Sweden is good and in some respects, health is developing positively. Life expectancy at birth is increasing, more people consider their general health as good and premature mortality is decreasing. However, studies show continued inequality in health, where no improvement can be seen from 2006. In several areas, the differences between different sectors of society are still great and sometimes even growing. One example is that children whose parents have pre-upper secondary school education and/or were born outside Europe are much more often financially vulnerable than other groups (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2020).

In Östergötland, living conditions are good in general. The inhabitants of Östergötland live longer and feel better and better. However, there are big differences between groups with different socioeconomics and countries of birth. Differences in health have increased over time regarding among other factors remaining life expectancy and self-estimated health. Socioeconomic differences are clearly visible regarding almost all health issues, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, mental and physical well-being, food patterns and physical activity, and regarding increasing income inequality. Confidence in other people is significant for both health and social progress. In Östergötland, confidence is at its lowest among people living in socioeconomically vulnerable housing areas (Region Östergötland 2019).

Kommissionen för jämlik hälsa in its final report (SOU 2017:47) argue that inequality in health is made up of systematic differences in health between social groups, and that these differences manifest themselves in two ways – partly as a gradient that goes through all society, partly as health problems in groups in especially vulnerable situations or positions. Moreover, inequality in health generally occurs as a result of inequality regarding access to resources – circumstances, prerequisites and opportunities between different social groups. The commission also think that more can and should be done to tackle inequality in health in order to partly strengthen the opportunities of the individual to act and generate resources, partly increase the ability of the community to contribute with resources to individuals and families during certain periods in life or in situations where their own pool of resources or their own room for manoeuvre is not enough. More equal living conditions and chances of benefits, such as a good upbringing, a good education, a good job and good means of support, will lead to more equal health (SOU 2017:47). Folkhälsomyndigheten (The Public Health Agency of Sweden) shows in different reports that socioeconomic inequality causes significant costs for society in terms of loss of output.

3 Background and method

3.1 Methodological considerations

In this section, the emergence and development of the project Mothers of the world is described since the project started in 2016. The author of the report has participated in the project Mothers of the world since August 2019. After the author was commissioned to compile a report about Mothers of the world in the spring of 2020, she has tried to stand aside and observe what is happening and in this way, to regard the project objectively. The report has been compiled by using a qualitative approach and the goal was to describe the project as a whole, analyse the results and find coherence in line with social work. The methodological approach of the study is inductive, that is, conclusions are based on earlier experiences and observations. It is not possible to be wholly unbiased in interaction with other people, which means that pre-understanding must be taken into account when it comes to a discussion and analysis of method and results. Through the author's pre-understanding, in the form of university studies, working life and experience of life, there is a preconception about different social issues. This should be taken into account, but should at the same time also be regarded as a resource which contributes to seeing connections and creating an understanding of the project as a whole, its implementation and its results.

Material for the report has been collected from the following sources:

- o Project application for KISAM - Mothers of the world to Postkodstiftelsen (2019)
- o Report about part of Mothers of the world to Postkodstiftelsen (February 2020)
- o Brochure about Mothers of the world (2019)
- o Powerpoint material for the leadership course in 2019-2020
- o Questionnaire: Sense of coherence, Antonovsky's Orientation to Life Questionnaire (short form)
- o Self-assessment questionnaire prepared by project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse

The report was compiled from March to June 2020. The figures described in Sections 3 and 4 have been taken from the material mentioned above.

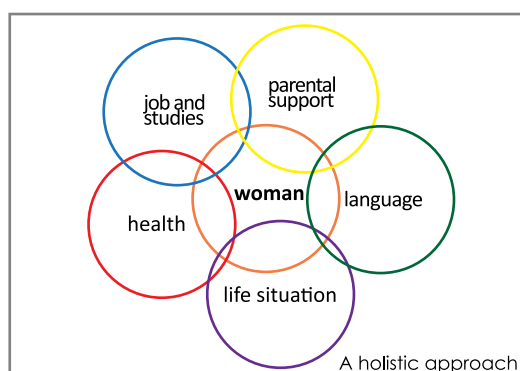
3.2 Background and emergence

The non-profit association KISAM was founded in Östergötland in 2015 by professional artists. The association is working with sector comprehensive intersectoral cooperation through art and culture and for sustainable social progress. The association also works with creating platforms and meeting places for knowledge and offering further training when it comes to culture. Therefore, KISAM should be regarded as work for social progress of which culture is an important element.

After a preliminary study by KISAM about the opportunities of art and culture in the development of municipalities, it became obvious that all participating municipalities had challenges when it comes to segregation. In the preliminary study, it was highlighted that it is in general very difficult to reach newly arrived women and make them participate in activities because there are no networks and communication channels to these women. As a result of the study, the project Mothers of the world emerged with art and culture as a method to reach the target group of women in segregated housing areas.

Mothers of the world was founded in Motala in 2016 when the children's clinic warned that a lot of mothers and their children were isolated in their homes. Mothers of the world has since it started grown from five mothers with their children to including more than 500 mothers and about 2,500 children in 2020. Besides Motala, the project has also spread to Norrköping, Vadstena and Linköping, above all to housing areas built in the 1960s and 1970s (as explained in Section 2 above).

Mothers from different parts of the world, from different cultures, languages and religions participate in the project in order to work together and create a better future both for themselves and for their children and their families. The implementation of the project is based on a holistic approach and actions (woman in the centre, tools: parental support, language, life situation, health, work, studies based on art). Among our cooperation partners are Hyresgästföreningen (Tenants' Association), educational associations, housing companies, children's clinics, nursery schools, the Swedish Church, job centres, volunteer organisations, culture operators, libraries, municipalities and regions. The process-oriented approach that is used by Mothers of the world is regarded as a new method that had not been tried previously.



The project Mothers of the world is connected to several of the United Nations' global goals for sustainable development (FN 2015), especially the goal of gender equality and the efforts to decrease gender inequality. Health as a human right and everybody's equal value is an important basis of the approach of Mothers of the world.

In Section 3, it was mentioned that segregation has been increasing in more than 200 of Sweden's 290 municipalities and that cities more and more look like segregated cities. The municipalities of Linköping, Motala and Norrköping in Östergötland are among the 20 most segregated places in Sweden (Dagens Samhälle 12 May 2016). Socioeconomic factors, the educational level of parents and the fact that the image of certain housing areas is characterised by prejudice were mentioned as reasons for segregation. The police have said that the housing area of Skäggetorp in the municipality of Linköping is one of the 23 most vulnerable areas in the country.

SÅ SEGREGERADE ÄR KOMMUNERNA – DAGENS SAMHÄLLE GRANSKAR

■ Tabellen visar dissimilaritetsindex för 2005 och 2015. Ju högre tal, desto mer segregerad är kommunen.
Rankning efter största indexåret 2015.
KÄLLA: SCB

#	Kommun	Index 2005	Index 2015	Förändring 2005–2015	Befolkning
1	BOTKYRKA	48	51	3	89 422
2	TROLLHÄTTAN	46	50	4	57 095
3	BORLÄNGE	33	50	17	50 989
4	KRISTIANSTAD	44	45	1	82 513
5	LANDSKRONA	43	45	2	43 966
6	GÖTEBORG	43	44	1	548 197
7	ÖREBRO	42	44	2	144 192
8	HUDDINGE	42	44	2	105 314
9	SÖDERTÄLJE	40	43	3	93 200
10	KARLSKRONA	39	42	2	65 380
11	LINKÖPING	37	41	4	152 970
12	VÄXJÖ	40	41	1	88 116
13	BORÅS	39	40	0	108 491
14	HALMSTAD	39	39	1	96 948
15	HANINGE	35	39	4	83 864
16	MOTALA	34	39	5	42 906
17	UDDEVALLA	36	39	3	54 180
18	MALMÖ	40	39	-1	322 570
19	NORRKÖPING	35	39	4	137 033
20	SANDVIKEN	23	39	15	38 304

The women's lobby of Sweden wrote in an argumentative article on 6th of April 2017 that the establishment efforts of the government put newly arrived women at a disadvantage. "Newly arrived women receive less and worse support and at a later stage than men. At the same time, large-scale and costly efforts are directed to male-dominated trades and professions. This is shown by an examination of establishment efforts in the national budget for 2017. If this development is not reversed, there is a risk that a large group of women will never become financially independent. In order to rectify this imbalance, efforts which are directed to newly arrived women are needed in the spring budget of the government and more stringent rules need to be imposed on the Swedish Public Employment Service."

3. 3 Target group, vision, main value and goal

The primary target group of Mothers of the world consists of women from different backgrounds, from socioeconomically vulnerable areas and the children of the women who participate. The secondary target group of the project consists of professional artists, decision-makers, potential financiers and different kinds of cooperation partners.

The vision of the project is as follows:

- o The voices of more women should be heard and their knowledge should be better used.
- o Women should be given tools so that they can be an active part of society, feel empowerment and be able to influence their own present and future and their families' present and future. Confident mothers raise confident and strong children.
- o More women should have their own means of support and have a meaningful spare time.

The main value of the project is everybody's equal value regardless of religion, political affiliation, culture, tradition, language, level of education, disability and status.

Målsättningen är att Världens mammor ska växa, utvecklas och spridas till fler platser i länet, inom Sverige och även internationellt.

3. 4 Implementation and approach

Within the framework of Mothers of the world, women from segregated areas are given knowledge and tools which facilitate gender equality and create influence and empowerment. This includes for example issues of female genital mutilation, violence in close relationships and discrimination. The women are also educated in leadership and learn how to work with role models. The idea is that women through creative processes and practical and theoretical knowledge should receive tools so that they can participate and exert influence and make their voices heard. Basically, this is about democracy and about being able to exercise one's democratic rights.

Mothers of the world is intended for newly arrived women, immigrant women and women and mothers who feel outside society. The goal of the project is that women should feel better, develop their language, feel a sense of cohesion, see that their life is meaningful and feel empowerment. Furthermore, women will be given knowledge about how Swedish society works and democratic tools so that they can influence their present and future. Art and culture are a part of all the development work.

"We work from a holistic approach with commitment through active participation and with learning through doing and experiences. Through empowerment we encourage each other to dare. We work through sisterhood and try to create a hope for the future, where each of us has an important task to do." (Quote by project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse, brochure Världens mammor [Mothers of the world] 2019)

The work of Mothers of the world consists of four building blocks:

- o *Creative workshops* about twice a week and place. The workshops are the basis of the work and contain learning about different artistic expressions and language learning. Social issues and gender equality issues are a natural part of the conversations about personal events and situations which occur for example in contact with the authorities. Possible solutions and active responses are discussed.



Creative activities at Mothers of the world in Motala

- o *Knowledge excursions* in order to learn by experiencing events in the municipality and the county, in nature environments and cultural environments. A perspective of gender equality and women's history is often included at guided tours and at sights. Several of the excursions are organised in the summer.



Knowledge excursions with trips to favourite places of Swedish nature and culture

- o *Externally directed activities.* Women make Mothers of the world visible and tell others about the project and about their own experiences at exhibitions and through participation at conferences and different kinds of meetings.



Externally directed activities. One hundred mothers from Mothers of the world opened the conference of Folkbildarforum at Konsert och Kongress in Linköping in 2018.

- o *Media* the women work actively with the media by inviting them. The women would like their stories and experiences to reach more people, and they practise talking to the media and talking in front of different groups of people.



Countless media opportunities mean that the participants can get their message across.

The creative workshops of Mothers of the world are based on the creative process of the group and of the individual so that the women might feel solidarity and have hope and a belief in the future. The fellowship of the women and their confidence in their own abilities is the basis of the next step, which might involve studies and employment. This is an important difference compared to other integration efforts, which usually start with language learning and employment efforts without having built a solid foundation first.

Another building block of the project is about spreading information about the project to the media through invitations to the project's own externally directed activities and exhibitions and also through participation at national conferences, such as Folkbildarforum and Folk och kultur. The women who participate in the project share their own experiences at these events. Because of its approach, Mothers of the world has received a great deal of media attention from television, radio and newspapers during the four years that the project has been going on. By the invitation of the non-governmental organisation Läkarmissionen, project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse visited Uganda in February 2020 in order to exchange lessons about project for women which lead to education and a chance to make a living. After her trip, both Mothers of the world and local representatives of Läkarmissionen in Uganda have said that they would like to continue to cooperate. Several actors have expressed an interest in exchange, from Helsinki, Birmingham, Kenya and Tanzania. Moreover, the project manager has received several prizes, among them Stora mammapriset (Big mothers' prize) from Läkarmissionen and the evening newspaper Expressen. Sira Jokinen Lisse is often asked to tell people about the project and is also contacted as a consultant on social issues. The partners of the project, such as Hyresgästföreningen, housing companies and educational associations, are also asked to share information about the project. Several municipalities in Sweden have expressed great interest in finding out more about the approach of Mothers of the world. The project is presented in text and photos at the website <https://www.kisam.se/varldens-mammor>

The activities of Mothers of the world are based on the fact that there is confidence between the participants and a space for dialogue and the participants' own ideas. The activities are continuously followed up through a dialogue between the participants and members of the board of KISAM and can quickly be adjusted when necessary. In this way, following up the work becomes a natural part of the working process.

Some activities of Mothers of the world have been videotaped and the life stories of some of the women have been recorded. Furthermore, the women have created and painted portraits and their life stories and these have been put together into exhibitions and openings of exhibitions to which decision-makers and others were invited. The exhibition *Världens mammor – från konstprojekt till kvinnorörelse för demokrati* (Mothers of the world – from an art project to a women's movement for democracy) at Norrköping City Museum was nominated as exhibition of the year in 2019. In connection with applications for grants for the continuation of the project, many parts of the project are also followed up.

3. 5 Financing and cooperation

The financing structure looks different in the municipalities where Mothers of the world has been established. KISAM is continuously applying for funding of the work and the activities that are organised. The project cooperates with actors on the national, regional and local level, of which the local level is the most important. Many partners can be found on this level. The project cooperates with and receives funding from among others, the following actors: Hyresgästföreningen, Länsstyrelsen i Östergötland (County board of Östergötland), Region Östergötland, the municipalities of Linköping and Norrköping, four housing companies, the educational association Folkuniversitetet, Postkodstiftelsen and Läkarmissionen.

During 2019-2020, the project funding of Postkodstiftelsen of the leadership course of Mothers of the world has been significant. The project received funding from Postkodstiftelsen through the efforts of the foundation to promote the focus area of democracy and freedom of speech: "A meaningful spare time can break isolation. A meeting place and a common language are also the basis for democratic development."

See <https://postkodstiftelsen.se/blog/projekt/varldens-mammor/>

3. 6 Continuation of the project

The board of KISAM and the participants of Mothers of the world are constantly discussing how the project could go on and develop. In Mothers of the world, 20 of the women who have been participating in the activities of the project for a long time are offered a one-year *leadership course*. The aim of the course is that after the course, these women should be able to lead existing groups in Mothers of the world and also groups in new locations. Further training for seven professional artists is also a part of the leadership course. The leadership course of the project is regarded as the main guarantee of the continuation of the project. (See Section 4.)

The women from Linköping who participate in Mothers of the world live mainly in the district of Skäggetorp. The district is regarded by the police as one of the most vulnerable places in Sweden, and it has problems with gang crime, violence and drugs. Mothers of the world started the so called *Skäggetorpslyftet*, which is a need-based activity aimed at making the district safer for its inhabitants by creating beautiful environments and in different ways decrease gang crime, violence and drugs. The work is based on the perspective of the women and is carried out together with invited decision-makers, housing companies, Hyresgästföreningen and others. It is hoped that this approach will spread to several locations in Sweden and abroad.

Furthermore, since the spring of 2020, there are plans of starting additional sub-projects provided that these receive funding from foundations or organisations. The plans include the following:

- o A leadership course for 15-20 young people from Mothers of the world
- o The development of inspirational and motivational excursions
- o Creative workshops for children and young people with special needs
- o Parental support for mothers

In connection with discussions about the development of the project, the risks of Mothers of the world are also analysed. The following risks have been highlighted during the project:

- o Too many new participants mean that the groups become too big to have enough space in existing locations, which may cause disappointment, worry and dissatisfaction.
- o The work grows too fast because too many actors would like to cooperate with Mothers of the world.
- o Big partners would like to take over or own Mothers of the world.
- o The control of KISAM over the project decreases and other actors take over the method of the project and use it in order to promote their own agenda.
- o The workload of the project managers and the board of KISAM becomes too heavy, so that they cannot continue to run the work.
- o The participants of the leadership course cannot take on the role of leaders and the activities therefore cannot continue or be spread.

4 Leadership course 2019-2020



Participants and leaders from the leadership programme of Mothers of the world which started in 2019

4.1 Aim

The aim of the leadership course of Mothers of the world is that 20 women who participate in the project should acquire the competence to lead existing groups and start groups in new locations according to the values and methodology of the project. The course participants will receive tools to influence their own situation and the situation of others and in this way, serve as role models to other women and mothers. The aim is also to give further training to seven professional artists using the same method. The leadership course is also given in order to try out a course that can be used for the target group on several occasions.

4.2 Participants

Participants in the leadership course are women who have actively taken part in Mothers of the world for a long time and shown willingness to take responsibility for the implementation of activities. In order to participate, women must fulfil three criteria. They should have enough knowledge of the Swedish language, suitability as a leader and willingness to devote time to the course. Women for the leadership course were selected through interviews by project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse in the autumn of 2019. These women have also written a declaration of intent, where they have described their interest in participation in the course. A contract that contains rules agreed was subsequently signed by both parties.

4.3 Implementation

The leadership course, which is given during a year, consists of the same building blocks as the project Mothers of the world, that is, creative workshops, knowledge excursions, externally directed activities and media. (See section 3.4.) The programme also includes theoretical training in among other things project management, leadership, team work, self-knowledge and art as a method, with practical exercises in the form of role play and group discussions. The group of participants functions as a catalyst for learning and personal development.

Before the first day of leadership training, a two days' study trip to Stockholm was organised including an overnight stay, so that the participants would be able to get to know each other and find out more about the Swedish parliament (riksdagen), Hyresgästföreningen, Läkarmissionen and Fotografiska museet and Etnografiska museet. Subsequently, four whole days of theoretical training including practical moments were organised.

It was emphasised that it is important to treat people, both other participants and guests, with respect, to learn how to act professionally, to gain self-knowledge and to lead with the heart, which means to trust other people, to see opportunities and potential in everyone, to show humility because we do not have answers to every question, to listen and to show empathy. During the course, the participants have also discussed potentially dangerous situations in connection with activities and learnt how these situations can be handled. Some examples are looking after a great number of children while their mothers take part in training or creative activities, boarding and exiting the bus, as well as providing tea and meals for both children and adults.

In order to deepen and actively use their knowledge, the participants were given homework for every course day. They have written their life stories and discussed how one may acquire new habits. Between course days, the participants have also taken part in creative workshops and other activities. Moreover, the women are encouraged to watch and read selected films and literature. In total, the women will receive six whole days of training.

During the leadership training, individual supervision is offered on three occasions in order to give the participants personalised support as leaders and help them in their personal development. What was asked for at these consultations was more learning about practical support for working with large groups and externally directed activities, the Swedish language, treatment of people, communication and media.

Until April 2020, several externally directed activities have been organised as part of the leadership course and the dissemination of information about Mothers of the world. The activities consisted of the opening of the exhibition *Världens mammor – från konstprojekt till kvinnorörelse för demokrati*, participation in the conferences *Folkbildarforum* in Linköping, *Folk och kultur* in Eskilstuna and other fairs. There were also knowledge excursions during the ski holiday in February and an opening of an exhibition on the 8th of March. The final examination of the leadership course will involve the participants in leading creative workshops and knowledge excursions themselves.

Seven established artists were selected as participants in the leadership course. These artists have taken part in an information meeting and in some of the leadership days in order to start team work with the women and better understand what their role is.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, certain changes had to be made in the leadership programme in 2020. From mid-March until the summer, all creative workshops, knowledge excursions and externally directed activities were cancelled. The physical meetings of the training days during whole days were substituted by shorter and more frequent digital meetings via the tool Zoom. Utbildningsdagarnas fysiska möten under heldagar har ersattas av kortare och tätare digitala träffar via verktyget ZOOM.



Great joy on graduation day of the one-year leadership course in 2020

4. 4 Evaluation and documentation

In order to find out how the women see their existence and to be able to follow their development during the leadership course, Antonovsky's *Orientation to Life Questionnaire* – Sense of coherence was used (Antonovsky 2005). The idea is to compare the answers to the questionnaire at the beginning of the programme to the answers at the end of the course and in this way, to receive an evidence-based result of the development of the women. In the same way, in order to be able to follow the development of the women even more closely, a self-assessment questionnaire is also used. This questionnaire deals with self-esteem, hope for the future and gifts as a leader and was prepared by project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse.

The leadership course and some activities are videotaped. The participants have been interviewed about their experiences of what happens during the programme, and these video films will be edited to make a film. There is also a plan to compile the written life stories of the women in the form of a book according to the concept of Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls, a collection of stories about outstanding women.

5 Results and discussion

In this section, the results of the project are presented and analysed within the theoretical framework described in Section 2. In the final discussion, the results are examined in the light of a broader social debate.

The aim of this report is to describe the emergence, implementation and results of Mothers of the world during the four years that the project has been going on, from 2016 until 2020, from a qualitative point of view. The author of the report has noticed the results of the project by using a theoretical framework, reading project documentation and participating in activities, mainly as an observer. The results reflect the ambitious aims of the project and also highlight the motive behind the project.

The following results of the project Mothers of the world may be pointed out:

- o Mothers of the world has, since it began in Motala, grown and is today present in five locations in Östergötland: in Motala (2), Norrköping (1), Linköping (1) and Vadstena (1).
- o The project has developed from involving five mothers and their children and grown to include over 500 mothers and about 2,500 children.
- o The number of participants of the creative workshops and the externally directed activities is steadily increasing.
- o More women take an active part in the work and activities of societies and their boards.
- o Culture and creative activities contribute to giving women the strength to influence their lives, which is crucial to health.
- o Several women have found a job, which means that they can support themselves.
- o Women from different parts of the world, from different cultures, languages and religions work together in order to create a better future for themselves and for their children and their families.
- o In the district of Skäggetorp, there is a developmental project which aims at creating a safer and more beautiful area (Skäggetorpslyftet).
- o Contacts have been established with many partners on the local, regional and national level, and these partners have started to cooperate with Mothers of the world.
- o The project has received a great deal of media attention, from newspapers, radio and television, as well as attention from abroad.

The leadership course contributes to the following:

- o Women from socioeconomically and socially vulnerable areas are trained to become leaders who can lead existing and new activities in Mothers of the world and also lead meetings in other situations.
- o Women enrolled in the programme develop into role models to other women.
- o Follow-up results suggest that the women now have a greater sense of coherence, a feeling that life is understandable, manageable and meaningful, and that it is possible to have hope, also for the future (empowerment).
- o The course can probably be used for other target groups in Mothers of the world and in other situations where women are educated.

On an overall level, the project contributes to the following:

- o More newly arrived women, immigrant women and their children and families are integrated into Swedish society.
- o Women's participation in the democratic process increases.
- o Ill health among socioeconomically vulnerable groups decreases.
- o Culture is made visible as an important basis of women's health and well-being.
- o Art and culture are included in social progress in a natural way.
- o The approach of Mothers of the world is spread in the world through interest shown by both organisations and municipalities in Sweden and in other countries.

The project Mothers of the world has values that are based on the principle of the equal worth of all human beings and an approach based on the principles of equality and gender equality. Culture and creative activities are the basis of the methodology of Mothers of the world, and they contribute to giving the women strength and energy to influence their existence. The one-year leadership course of the project is seen as the main guarantee that the project will continue. On an overall level, Mothers of the world is about integrating women from segregated housing areas into society, increasing the health of women and families and decreasing the consequences of ill health. This is made possible by using the building blocks of the project and creating tools for a good and healthy life, working with health risks in different living environments and developing healthy choices. The aim of the project is to make life meaningful, understandable and manageable, create hope and hope for the future, and through this, to give the participants a sense of empowerment. The method and approach of the project is consequently in line with what affects and strengthens the health of individuals and groups, as described in the report entitled *Closing the gap in a generation* (2008) from the World Health Organization, prepared by professor Sir Michael Marmot, *The Spirit Level* (2010) by the author Richard Wilkinson, *Folkhälsans utveckling, årsrapport 2020* and by professor Aaron Antonovsky in *Hälsans mysterium* (2005). The conclusions and recommendations about culture and health which are stated by *Kommissionen för jämlik hälsa* (2017) on the national level and by *Östergötlands kommission för jämlik hälsa* (2014) are also in accordance with the work that has been done in Mothers of the world.

The conclusion is that Mothers of the world, with art and culture as its basis and a public health strategical approach is a successful method to reach newly arrived women and immigrant women in segregated housing areas and in other locations. Through the project, women have gained improved health, an increased sense of coherence and the power to influence and shape their own lives. Mothers of the world has made it clear that it is possible to achieve integration between individuals and groups in society through process-oriented methods, strong project leadership, a strong commitment and long-term thinking.

Hopefully, this report can contribute to the spreading of the project Mothers of the world to such an extent that the situation of women will be improved, integration in Sweden will be strengthened and that countries and societies in the world will develop democratically, according to the dream of project manager Sira Jokinen Lisse for Mothers of the world.

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Världens mammor

KISAM - The project Mothers of the world
- from an art project to a women's movement for democracy

Editor: Birgitta Larsson | mobile: +46 731 535153 | birgitta.larsson55@gmail.com
Initiator and project manager: Sira Jokinen Lisse | mobile: +46 706 235739 | sira@zagawebb.se
Kisam-Världens mammor | www.varldensmammor.se | www.kisam.se



Världens mammor

