

KISAM Mothers and Youth in the World – Statement on Human Rights and Discrimination

Our association KISAM Mothers and Youth in the World has been active in vulnerable and particularly vulnerable places in Östergötland for ten years and over the years we have met thousands of non-European born women, children and young people.

We are very concerned, because we have seen a gradual deterioration that has accelerated in recent years, when it comes to the fundamental human rights of women born outside Europe. There are many new laws that discriminate and we have party leaders who publicly speak about a major clean-up!

We are a voice for those who are otherwise rarely heard. We can tell you about the situation that few even in Sweden know about in an increasingly polarized country. About the discrimination that our women and their children encounter in their everyday contacts with schools, authorities and working life. How they are discriminated against because of their origin and status as a refugee or immigrant. Our target group is in a position of dependence on the state and authorities and the effect is that they dare not or can not report discrimination.

In the ethnically segregated area of Skäggetorp, there is widespread poverty and vulnerability to new repressive laws. Local government decisions affect women and families in the most basic and undignified ways, with money being taken away for food and rent if mothers miss a form requested by the authorities. There are shootings and explosions in the residential areas where the families live and children go to school. Underfunded schools mean that few children reach educational goals — in Skäggetorp, only one in three students met the standards in grade 9, the last year qualifying children for high school. Mothers are constantly stressed and worried that their children will be recruited into criminal gangs.

Human rights to security, and life and health are not protected in efficient and positive ways. Instead of focusing on preventive measures, it is now legal to evict families with children, if a family member has committed a crime, and the government is proposing that children can be imprisoned

from the age of 13. Children are also being forcibly taken from families of non-European origin on unclear grounds.

Low-educated women in particular are discriminated against in their education in the Swedish language, as they often have a lower previous level of education than men, in parallel with greater responsibility for the children. Swedish For Immigrant students who do not pass the exam to the next level are suspended for 6 months. This repressive measure is completely unique in the Swedish education system and also counterproductive because when the women are at home for 6 months they have forgotten what they have learned. Of 100 low-educated women who study at SFI in Linköping, only 8 pass the 3rd level out of a total of 4. Good knowledge of Swedish language is a prerequisite for employment. Sweden has the highest unemployment rate in Europe and foreign-born women are those who have the most difficulty getting a job.

We hope to contribute to increased insight and greater understanding that positive and inclusive support is needed for everyone's common future. Young people should be able to feel safe and should be able to get help to cope with school. We need an education system that can provide women with support that is tailored to their needs instead of punishing them for not having the conditions to advance quickly in the educational levels.

Women who have come from other parts of the world lack legal representation before authorities because they cannot afford to hire a lawyer and do not understand on their own how to assert their rights.

There is a need for better legal certainty in decisions by authorities and greater knowledge of human rights and children's rights among State and communal employees who decide on the exercise of authority with far-reaching consequences for people's lives.

Sweden's growing discrimination against these women and families has devastating consequences for their lives and for our shared

future. Our young people often express that they do not feel wanted in the country they live in.

“I’m the one who people move away from on the bus. I’m the one who’s denied housing. I speak three languages but I am treated as stupid. I’m the one you don’t want here — but I’m here. And I’m staying.” — Mostafa, son of Nemat.