



Annual report THREAD 1 February 2018 to 31 December 2018

Vision

THREAD aims to build a dynamic hub of organisations and individuals from the public and private sectors offering creative opportunities for personal development, skills acquisition and self-employment to women refugees. THREAD tests how textile creativity, design and production can be used as a powerful means of integration through a range of practical activities directed at three main aims: **Empowerment**, **Employment**, and **Entrepreneurship**. This report reviews the progress in 2018 and summarises the findings and activities. Based on our experiences and results in 2017, three more 3s, **Enlightenment**, **Education** and **Evaluation** were added the core ideas of THREAD.

Project leader: Marie-Louise Nosch

Head of steering committee: Else Skjold, DSKD

Project managers THREAD/CTR: Egzona Haxha (collaborations between partners and Danish stakeholders, Empowerment, Employment)

Jane Malcolm-Davies (international collaborations and academic content, Education, Entrepreneurship)

Partners:



CTR: Centre for Textile Research, Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen. A centre of excellent in textile research, crafts, terminology, fashion history.



DSKD: Designskolen Kolding. School of Design with faculty and research department.



Tekstilformidleruddannelsen KP/Københavns Professionshøjskole, teachers' education and textile communication.



Vikingelandsbyen Albertslund. Municipal open-air museum and experience park.

HENRIK VIBSKOV International fashion brand based and designed in DK with a social profile.



Forening for flygtninge – og indvandrerkvinder i Bispebjerg, Copenhagen. Association of female refugees and migrants, with Danish classes and social activities including textile crafts.



TermPlus: Private company specialising in terminology.

DesignVanilje/Igne:Oya: Private design company conducting social and artistic work in Tingbjerg and Husum with refugee and migrant women.

Progress in 2018:

In 2018, THREAD welcomed two new partners, TermPlus and DesignVanilje/Igne:Oya, in order to enhance WP1 (recruitment in Tingbjerg/Husum) and WP3 (terminological research). The focus in 2018 was to accelerate the involvement with the fashion industry and therefore it was decided to make Else Skjold from the Design School Kolding (DSKD) the new head of the steering group, to lead this initiative. Kolding has become a strong hub for THREAD with the launch of the workshop programme *Fenuun* and the pop-up shop *Vielgut*, collaboration with design companies, and reinforced cooperation with the local municipality. All work packages (WPs) were running in 2018 and internships were established and undertaken (at Vikingelandsbyen, DSKD, KP, CTR). A total of 15 Learning Outcomes from THREAD are summarized in Appendix 1.

WP1 – Recruitment

Activities and results:

The aim is to recruit refugee women to participate in THREAD. This is done by a series of visits to relevant stakeholders and by events hosted at a range of venues. Special focus in 2018 was the Køge area, especially the language school in Ølby, where Pernelle Fagerlund and Manhal Al-Barazie hosted many workshops; these activities are continuing led by a Danish volunteer. Appendix 2 illustrates how much energy and resources it takes to build a new event. In FAKTI and at Tingbjerg/Husum, weekly textile workshops took place during 2018.

THREAD experiences positive feedback and interest from the public and from stakeholders. Volunteers, scholars, and students have joined THREAD as interns and contributors in 2018 (Christian Gaubert, Birgitte Meier, Milena Brzozowska, Giuditta Presentati and Julia Veres).

A special opportunity in 2018 was to engage more closely in collaboration with Gitte Engholm/CULINN, also funded by the Innovation Fund Denmark and located in the National Museum of Denmark and other museums. Both the THREAD participants and THREAD partners benefited from this collaboration.

Design School Kolding expanded its activities with the weekly textile workshop *Fenoun* (meaning textile handicraft in Arabic), with competence building and sales of items produced and designed at the Design School Kolding Christmas Bazaar (6,000 visitors on 7 & 8 December), and at the socio-economic pop-up shop VielGut Studio (open throughout December in central Kolding).

All partners have been involved in a range of on-going open-door recruitment activities, held at partner and contributor venues:

- Textile afternoon activities in FAKTI
- Two *Textile Talks* - Vikingelandsbyen Albertslund (11 April & 12 September)
- Social events in museums where Danish and refugee participants together visited textile collections (e.g. Christiansborg tapestries) in collaboration with CULINN (23 June).
- Three textiles workshops using museum spaces as social spaces for knitting and embroidery, with guided tours of knitting and embroidery exhibited in the museums, at the National Museum and Arbejdermuseet in collaboration with CULINN (funded by Innovationfund Denmark) and Design:Vanille.

- Twice a week at Tingbjerg/Husum textile workshops with refugee and migrant women (250 women are regular users of the workshops).
- Two Textile Tours in Mandehoved, a settlement for refugee families in Stevns Kommune (3 and 31 July, c. 15 participants)
- Intensive textile craft workshops in Center for Dansk og Integration, Ølby, where Pernelle Fagerlund and Manhal Al-Barazie hosted 13 workshops, after which refugees were awarded diplomas for participation (20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30 August and 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27 September). The activities are planned to continue hosted by a Danish volunteer. On average, 25 refugee women joined the activities (Appendix 2).
- Three-hour weekly textile workshops (FENUUN) consisting of a range of activities targeted at user-inclusive competence building and development through technique workshops (leather and fur, embroidery, pattern construction, Swarovski, crochet- and knitting, shashiko, patchwork etc.). Refugees developed personal portfolios based on individual SoMe documentation of previous work and products developed in the workshops, with individual planning and guidance for each woman's own specific design project, facilitation through 'how-to' YouTube videos on techniques for self-directed learning, supported by communication on SoMe (primarily WhatsApp, SMS and Facebook Messenger). A total of 25 women with 10 nationalities participated. All activities were coordinated through the FENUUN Facebook group, and with local municipality workers working with integration in Kolding. All FENUUN participants have upgraded their textile skills through three categories as A) creator, B) maker, and C) beginner, and now have their own design portfolios to use for job applications in the textile and fashion sector.
- Design:Vanille & Igne:Oya produced knitted styles for the Fashion and Lifestyle shop Fair Nomad Society at Store Kongensgade 74, Cph, Show Style for BLANCHE (DK fashion brand) which were later displayed on a fashion blog with 440,000 Likes.
- *Textile Talk* and Exhibition at Husum Library with 70 participants.
- Technique workshops by Monique Strik on knitting, and Tine Lisby on leather, pelt and skin (11 September).
- IGNE:OYA fashion show Sultanas Modeshow at Tingbjerg bibliotek og kulturhus on 12 October with 190 guests attending the show.
- *Textile talk* (DSKD) and textile workshop at the International Week at KP, 6 November
- User-, Researcher- and Stakeholder workshop for increased knowledge-sharing at Design School Kolding 22 November; 25 participants from THREAD (including Huda Salka), Kolding Municipality, DSKD.

Number of recruitment activities: 19 in 2017 and 51 in 2018; making a total of 70.

Stated deliverable target after 33 months: 30 recruitment activities.



Figures 1-2: Awarding diplomas after textile workshops in Center for Dansk og Integration, Ølby.



Figures 3-4: Internships and fashion show at KP

WP2 – Networking and internships

Activities and results:

These offer work experience in short or long internships or mini-jobs. The aim is to integrate women refugees, recruited through WP1, into formalized work opportunities centered on textiles and fashion but with transferable skills for other sectors. This will accelerate their acquisition of social and professional networks and integration into the workforce and society.

The following THREAD internships/jobs have taken place:

- CTR hired Manhal Al-Barazie (archaeologist from Syria) as a research assistant for 7 months.
- CTR hired Farzaneh Khosrawi (archaeologist from Iran) as an intern for 24 months through the IGU scheme
- KP/Textile Communication hosted three women as interns in September to October affiliated with the *Kulturnat* project during the third semester of the academic year. They were recruited from Design:Vanille & Igne:Oya
- The Viking Village hosted an intern in May and June (Dorothy fraom Ghana).
- DSKD hosted six interns in a series of textile workshops, converted into mini-jobs, from April to May.

Results of internships so far and how they have had a positive impact: After her internship in 2017 at CTR, Manhal Al-Barazie was formally employed at the University of Copenhagen as a research assistant, thus giving more than 1.5 year's work experience in a university environment. Farzaneh Khosrawi came to CTR as part of University of Copenhagen's strategy to facilitate the integration of refugees with a higher education. She is now becoming integrated in the new EU project at CTR, *The Fabric of My Life*, where she will gain experience in an international cultural project. All six participants in the mini-job workshop series at DSKD from April to May later took active part in the FENUUN activities, including the DSKD Christmas Bazaar and VielGut Studio. One intern is now part of the selected group taking part in a self-employment course externally funded by Kolding municipality. She and another participant in FENUUN were offered part-time jobs as lecturers for evening classes (through Kolding FOF) in textile skills. An informal survey completed anonymously showed that the women felt their social network and self-esteem had grown almost 90% during these activities. The exchange of interns between KP and Design:Vanille & Igne:Oya has provided mutual positive benefits and knowledge-sharing.

Deliverables in 2018:

Number of internship activities: 9 internships in 2017; 12 in 2018 making a total of **21**

Stated deliverable target after 33 months: 22 internships

Creative outputs resulting from cooperation between textile designers and refugee women is a core idea of THREAD. Various modes of cooperation have been tested - from the KP internships in the fall, training workshops in knitting and sewing, to the more structured training sessions and internships.

Deliverables of creative outputs resulting from cooperation between textile designers and refugees in 2018:

- The three interns at KP produced one dress style which was presented at the *Kulturnat* fashion show on 12 October at Campus Carlsberg.
- The six interns/mini-job holders at DSKD continued their activities in the FENUUN workshopS, which attracted more women (19). Together, they produced a variety of products that were documented in their individual portfolios and sold at VielGut Studio or DSKD Christmas Bazaar.



Figure 5: New textile design products made in FENUUN and sold in VielGut Studio



Figure 6: Leather, pelt and skin workshop in Tingbjerg with IGNE:OYA

WP3 – Research and education

Activities and results:

The aim is to foster research collaborations between women refugees and academic environments; to develop new knowledge and methodologies in the areas of cultural textiles and wardrobe studies, and also build on the participants' existing capabilities and expand their social integration. The THREAD team has now taken the project into an international arena by applying for an EU project under the Creative Europe programme with other European colleagues. *The Fabric of My Life* was successfully funded and launched in the fall of 2018. It builds on the narrative aspects of memory and clothing in an international collaboration and exhibition project.

This WP contains following academic initiatives:

- CTR summer school on Textile and Fashion (15 ECTS points). Farzaneh Khowrawi participated in the summer school in July 2018.
- Collaborative projects on textile and clothing terminology (Arabic, Kurdish, Tigrinya) conducted at CTR by Susanne Lervad and Christian Gaubert and two refugee women from Eritrea and two refugee women from Syria. Validation of textile vocabulary took place through surveys and qualitative interviews in Danish and Tigrinya at Skt. Lucas Stiftelsen and Netværkshuset in Copenhagen.
- Research project on wardrobe studies in DSDK by Solveig Søndergaard, Else Skjold and Anne-Louise Bang. Eight individual wardrobe studies were conducted with refugee or migrant women from Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria. The results are published in scientific journals (see Appendix 3 Communication Plan).
- Seven academic seminars and a training programme focused on the key concepts relevant to refugee integration, such as empowerment, entrepreneurship was hosted by Malcolm-Davies in collaboration with the Advanced Migration Studies (AMIS) program, UCPH, from March to June 2018. The training programme was open to all THREAD partners and other collaborating organisations and university students.

Deliverables in 2018:

- One summer school diploma with 15 ECTS points from University of Copenhagen to Farzaneh Khosrawi
- Poster presentation at the terminology conference of the European Association of Terminology in San Sebastian, Spain, 22-24 November: *Establishing relationship with Eritrean refugees by exchanging ...* by Susanne Lervad and Christian Gaubert (Appendix 4)
- One article about THREAD published by Malcolm-Davies and Nosch in *Archaeological Textiles Review*, a peer-reviewed international journal for textile scholars (Appendix 6)
- One conference paper presented by Malcolm-Davies and Skjold at the Global Fashion Conference 'What's Going On?' 31 October - 1 November 2018 at London College of Fashion, London, UK; to be published in the academic journal *Fashion Practice* 2019.
- One successful application by Nosch for a research and culture application to Creative Europe (total budget ca €400,000, funding of €187,000) with museums and associations in DK, DE and GR. The grant agreement was agreed in October 2018 for the project running 2018-2021.

<https://ctr.hum.ku.dk/research-programmes-and-projects/the-fabric-of-my-life/>



Figure 7: Farzana (left) in summer school course



Creative
Europe

WP4 – Entrepreneurship

Activities and results:

This WP focuses on fostering entrepreneurship and disseminating knowledge on start-ups and business models to the participants. The aim is to provide the participating refugees with a set of specific tools needed to create new businesses. This WP is directed by Egzona Haxha and Jane Malcolm-Davies. A new focus in the WP was the collaboration with the social entrepreneur company Hack Your future, which trains refugees with software and programming skills (<http://hackyourfuture.net/>). Together with them, THREAD designed and built a digital platform for refugees seeking opportunities in Denmark, organisations offering internships, employers seeking staff, and other volunteers with support to offer (such as mentoring). It also enables social community building around crafts. Egzona Haxha directed this initiative.

In parallel with this, a series of self-employment workshops were held for selected women taking part in FENUUN at DSKD, and all participants also had competence building with regards to market segmentation and product development, training in sales and pricing (Christmas Bazaar and VielGut Studio), and building personal portfolios.

Deliverables 2018:

- One female entrepreneurship/self-employment workshop held in Tingbjerg (20 November) with 30 participants (Appendix 5)
- One female entrepreneurship workshop held in Kolding (13 December) with 25 participants
- A series of three workshops 'Min Virksomhedsplan' for a selected group of five women in Kolding (early January 2019)
- Digital platform on which refugees can offer skills and seek mentors, work experience and job opportunities (launch 17 January 2019)
- Visit and presentation at FENUUN from Iranian female immigrant entrepreneur who runs her own bakery in Esbjerg
- Financing and hiring of Syrian female immigrant (Huda Salka) as entrepreneurial role model, translator, shop leader and coordinator for Christmas Bazaar and VielGut Studio
- Establishment, together with social-economic enterprise 'Venture', of DK's first social-economic pop-up shop VielGut Studio together with eight social-economic enterprises in Kolding which ran throughout December in central Kolding. The project was co-financed by Kolding Municipality (80.000 DKK).
- Negotiating with companies about FENUUN collaborations in 2019: Mark Tan, Kopenhagen Fur, Malene Redder Ruby, Georg Jensen Damask.
- VielGut Studio has been nominated for the *Fynske Bank Initiativpris* of 100.000 DKK, with the potential of prolonging the concept for further development and testing.
- Sales of design products made in FENUUN for 15,000 DKK at Design School Kolding Christmas Bazaar and VielGut Studio.

Number of entrepreneur activities: Six workshops in 2018 with 55 participants.

Stated deliverable target after 33 months: Four workshops with 16 participants having attended and considered business ideas; with potential for mentoring opportunities for women refugees to visit and shadow successful entrepreneurs in their work.

WP5 – Evaluation**Activities and results:**

The aim is to evaluate the activities in WP1-4 in terms of network creation and its potential for refugee support. The AAU group has conducted a longitudinal study, which will collect key quantitative and qualitative data on the performance of each WP and the opportunities provided to each participating woman. The mid-term evaluation is a stop-go criterion; the full evaluation is used to adjust and measure the outcomes in order to gain solid evidence of best practice and socio-economic impact. The AAU team conducted interviews with partners and other participants in 2018 and followed the THREAD activities.

Deliverables in 2018:

- Mid-term evaluation (Appendix 9)
- Hosting at AAU, 16 April 2018, the fourth steering committee meeting paired with one day's training in theories and methods of social entrepreneurship.
- Preparing presentation for the 'Women Deliver' conference in Vancouver, 2019
- Presenting paper: Vibeke Andersson & Helene Balslev Clausen, Aalborg University. Denmark: "Competency building among refugee and immigrant women. An alternative model (THREAD)", NIC conference (see abstract, Appendix 10)

Deliverables at the end of the project: final evaluation report, scholarly papers, and lectures.

WP6 – Project management

Activities and results:

Manage, coordinate and steer THREAD throughout its lifecycle and monitor progress. Key administrative activities include: team training, participant recruitment and partner-network consolidation, mentoring, running management team meetings, calling steering group meetings, overseeing partners' progress, calling advisory board meetings (drawing up the agendas and taking minutes), and liaising with evaluation team. Monitor and review the project's progress to mitigate potential risks and optimize the collaboration. Write reports and attend the Annual Investment Review with the board of the Innovation Fund Denmark.

Main management activities in 2018:

- The chair of the steering committee was in June 2018 transferred to Else Skjold after a vote in the steering committee and in order to increase focus on the collaboration with fashion brands and companies.
- Keeping track of communication and outreach (see Appendix 4, Communication Plan)
- Else Skjold and Marie-Louise Nosch attended the Annual Investment Review with the board of the Innovation Fund Denmark and presented the THREAD investment and outcomes (28 November).
- Third (17 January 2018), fourth (16 April 2018) and fifth (11 June 2018) steering group meetings were held. The agendas and minutes were prepared by the THREAD management team, and the steering group meetings were paired with workshops and lectures by partners and invited experts to facilitate learning in the extended THREAD team.
- One article published by Nosch in Danish about THREAD in *Håndarbejdes Fremmes* blad for Danish craft experts (Appendix 7)
- Communication: leaflets about THREAD events were published in 2017 in Danish, English, Arabic, Tigrinya, and in 2018 Farsi was added.
- Training event with FAKTI to learn about the FAKTI experience and how to work with vulnerable people and presentation by Liselotte Duch (22 Feb 2018)
- Nosch worked with Gitte Engholm on joint activities with other IFD project CULINN in the National Museum of Denmark (museum visits with refugees, joint application).
- THREAD has an active Facebook page <https://da-dk.facebook.com/threadcopenhagen/>
- and a blog page (less active) <https://denrodetrad.wordpress.com/>
- Policy event at Folkemødet hosted by DSKD with MP Morten Østergård and THREAD people, including Egzona Haxha and Manhal Al-Barazie (17 June)



PROJEKTLEDERENS og STYREGRUPPEFORMANDENS STATUS - summary

The overall aim is that the participating refugees experience improved quality of life and build local relationships, which accelerates their integration into society. THREAD has in 2018 offered work experience to 12 female refugees in short or long-term internships, which have contributed to their social and professional networks and further integration in DK. A total of 390 women have so far participated in THREAD workshops and social events. These outcomes outstrip the anticipated deliverables in the initial application to IFD.

Partners have initiated their THREAD projects in different timescales, which provided good opportunities for learning from each other's experiences. CTR, AAU, and Vibskov were the most active partners in the first 6 months; then from fall 2017, UCC, FAKTI and DSDK launched activities. In 2018, it was mainly the activities in Vikingelandsbyen and DSKD which took off. The two new partners, TermPlus and DesignVanilje were very active in the fall of 2018. Vibskov has not participated in 2018 owing to a change of premises.

THREAD has to some degree consolidated its activities in 2018. The aim in 2018 was also to accelerate learning: both learning from each other, and learning from the challenges experienced in 2017. The learning outcomes are summarized in Appendix 1. Among the partners, there is still a great deal of enthusiasm for the THREAD project and deeply personal engagement. Most partners experience difficulties in identifying the best conditions for stakeholders and participants to create stable relationships in an ever-changing integration policy landscape.

The new formats tested in 2018 are (1) *FENUUN*, a regular textile workshop at Design School Kolding, for migrant and refugee women and with the aim of producing textile and design pieces and documenting the participants' technical skills in portfolios; (2) textile workshops in Tingbjerg/Husum with Henriette Rolf, with routes to internships at KP and CTR, has become a solid track between textile workshops and internships, (3) *Vielgut*, a socio-economic pop-up shop in Kolding where refugees can sell their products, (4) social events in museums where Danish and refugee participants together visit textile collections (e.g. Christiansborg tapestries) in collaboration with CULINN (funded by Innovationfund Denmark), (5) using museum spaces as social spaces for knitting and embroidery, and taking guided tours of knitting and embroidery exhibited in the museums, in the National Museum and Arbejdermuseet in collaboration with CULINN (funded by Innovationfund Denmark).

Several Danish newspapers reported in 2018 that women migrants and refugees are less integrated into the labor market than the men are. As many as 20% of these women are in vulnerable situations, with few professional skills, and have difficulty learning Danish. They remain distanced from the labor market, resulting in a lack of income, and often live in isolation and poverty. This has been a constant challenge for all refugee agencies and municipalities for two generations, and the current crisis has not offered any radically new solutions. THREAD cannot solve these fundamental problems but does offer some innovative approaches which tackle them in a new way.

Among most refugee women, THREAD identified problems with learning Danish, with transportation and mobility, financial worries, and deep concerns about how their children and grandchildren will flourish; but also a great deal of interest in Danish life, strong social bonds and networks, and a practical and problem-solving attitude.

Else Skjold & Marie-Louise Nosch

Copenhagen, 10 January 2019

Appendices:

1. 15 Learning Outcomes from THREAD
2. Table illustrating the Ølby activities by THREAD.
3. Communication chart
4. Poster presentation on linguistic fieldwork with refugee women and Tigrinya textile terminology for the European Association for Terminology
5. Poster announcing workshop for female entrepreneurs
6. Article about THREAD published by Malcolm-Davies & Nosch in *Archaeological Textiles Review*, a peer-reviewed international journal for textile scholars.
7. Article published by Nosch in Danish about THREAD in *Håndarbejdes Fremmes blad*, for craft experts
8. Research paper - A key concept for building the THREAD network's transferable model: Empowerment (Jane Malcolm-Davies)
9. Mid-term report by AAU

THREAD's 15 most important learning outcomes, challenges and results in the 2nd year and what others can learn from them



- 1.** The most significant learning outcome is the **complexity and multiple regulations** in the area of integration work in Denmark. THREAD partners all report difficulties in navigating among stakeholders with very different agendas; the lack of transparency in the field because of the very many stakeholders; the difficulties in entering networks and accessing the necessary information; the differences between municipalities in the implementation and interpretation of regulations and the implementation of benefit systems. THREAD solutions to this challenge have been (1) to plan more time and resources for management, communication, data collection, and networking, (2) to appoint two project managers with different portfolios at CTR. (3) Targeting 'model municipalities' where THREAD is engaged in various activities (Køge and Kolding).
- 2.** We have revised the initial idea of a fairly equal distribution of skills and capacities in the participant group. **The majority of our participants are without much formal education.** Thus, shorter internships, shared information about education opportunities in DK, and social activities seem so far to meet their needs in the best way. This includes activities such as *Textile Techniques/Tekstile Teknikker*, *Textile Tours*).
- 3.** Logistics of transportation (most refugees are housed far from Copenhagen), childcare, Danish classes, lack of access to telephone, e-mail and Facebook, and difficulties in navigating in the greater Copenhagen area are among the **many practical obstacles** to THREAD activities and to maintain contact with the interested participants. We, therefore, chose to leave the university campus and relocate THREAD activities to the areas where participants live (Mandehoved in Stevns municipality, FAKTI in NW Copenhagen, Velkomsthuset in Valby, Venligboerne in Vesterbro, Design Vanilje in Tingbjerg/Husum).
- 4.** Internships must be **tailor-made and 'hand-held'**, and ideally each intern must have a supervisor (who helps with the paperwork and rules) and one or two mentors (who engage in work with the intern, plan activities and help solve social and logistical problems). This worked well with one intern for three months hosted by designer Vibskov (mentored by Marie Nørgård), with one Syrian and one Iranian refugee at CTR (Nosch was supervisor/mentor), and with two interns from Eritrea (Nosch supervisor with other staff mentoring them). This method is clearly very demanding in terms of resources and time, yet necessary in our experience, since the internships in THREAD are also about providing comfort, wellness, confidence, sharing life-stories (leading to empowerment) as well as introduction to workplace cultures and rules on the labor market (leading to employment).
- 5.** The **language barriers are there, but different to what we anticipated.** Our experience so far is that most participants help each other translate, and the assistance of intern Manhal Al-Barazi facilitated communication greatly. She provided the translations into Arabic for *Textile Talks*; in the internships, body language, humour,

drawings, craftwork, and pictures worked well to a large degree, and the intensive Danish classes taken by the participants facilitated communication in Danish, as we could hear the progress week by week in their language proficiency. In the terminological research project, Lervad and Gaubert developed new methods of communication by (1) sharing images of textile implements, textile techniques and garments, (2) joining textile craft workshops with the participants, and (3) recording digitally the pronunciation of words.

6. We anticipated gathering larger groups of participants and from them to select candidates for internships and participants for the research projects. These larger groups may have existed in Copenhagen in 2015, but in 2017, refugees are spread over the entire country. Moreover, all refugees in DK are engaged in time-consuming work-focused programmes (school, courses, internships), and have only a little time for new activities during the week. It is, therefore, necessary to ***seek contact in multiple places and to cater to the individual needs of each interested participant.***

7. In the field of social work and creative businesses, ***a flexible model of collaboration*** is necessary and perhaps we should search for more adequate and flexible contractual associations. Stakeholders and experts in the field of integration are extremely diverse: from huge international NGOs (Red Cross), networks of volunteers (Venligboerne), municipalities, private companies undertaking integration work (“private aktører”), and in THREAD we also have two universities, two professional education institutions and private companies. The challenges of a coherent and joint action that we experience in THREAD is probably partly due to structural differences and scope; partners have very different commitments and shares of the budget. It would be interesting to explore further good practice and well-functioning models of innovative cooperation in other projects and fields of social work.

8. A special group of vulnerable women with refugee or migrant backgrounds is very far from the labour market and needs special opportunities, which are different from what the municipalities offer. This group represents ca. 20 % of the participants. These women suffer from several problems and the existing rules and opportunities do not match their needs and capacities. The work in FAKTI is valuable - offering comfort, kindness and acceptance are core values. THREAD's focus on empowerment can contribute to this part of the integration, and especially when freed from formal expectations, obligations or penalties. For this group of women, ***other expectations and success criteria than the labor market can be put in place:*** better functioning family life, to become a resource and support for children and grandchildren, lesser medication, lower mortality, a living memory of the lost homeland, family histories and ancient traditions. This group needs hand-held activities, trust and special care, and regularity in meetings and activities, and Fakti can offer exactly this, as well as DesignVanilje in Husum and Tingbjerg. For this groups of participants, THREAD also offers handicraft activities in the Copenhagen Area (see appendices).

9. The THREAD research projects with ***two-way learning between scholars and refugee women*** have clearly demonstrated their potential and yield ***very interesting academic results.*** This model for cooperation is indeed promising and also generates very much interest from the scholarly community. It deserves much more focus and has ***a clear explorative and innovative quality.*** It also has the potential to be included in new university teaching programs. The innovation is both in terms of new empirical data and methodologies.

Wardrobe studies has a well-founded methodology: scholars conduct interviews about a person's wardrobe, combinations, histories, contexts, and gains insights into private histories, biographies, processes over time, and also consumer behavior and patterns of consumption. When wardrobe studies are conducted with refugees, a new body of data is developed; THREAD also demonstrates the need to adjust and refine the methods (language, knowledge of other consumer markets).

Textile and dress terminology research is currently an expanding international, interdisciplinary research field. However, focus has been on languages of the industrial countries, and on languages with established terminological research. In THREAD, we gain access to other languages and dialects, which are otherwise difficult to study because there are few dictionaries or studies of specialized vocabularies; thus we gain access

to vast new bodies of data; the methodologies, too, must be re-designed, since the participants may have specialized textile vocabulary but little technical knowledge or conceptual framework for terminological work. The team of linguists thus develop new tools and methods to access and gather textile and dress terms with refugee women, especially in Tigrinya and Arabic.

Learning outcomes: these activities have the potential to rethink engagement with citizens, university teaching programs and new explorations. We **gain new and previously inaccessible bodies of data**; we are able to **adjust and refine methodologies** in order to incorporate the new data. Finally, THREAD offers the potential to rethink the theoretical ground of wardrobe studies and of specialized terminological work. **This two-way learning between academics and refugees is so far one of the most promising and exciting aspect of THREAD.**

10. International applications and fundraising: THREAD was invited as a partner to a German research consortium under Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft by Textilmuseum Krefelt in 2017; moreover Nosch won a research and culture grant for Creative Europe (award €187,000) with museums and associations in DE, DK and GR on the topic of female refugees, memories and museums. This application will expand THREAD until 2021 and entails a considerable financial gearing. Creative Europe made refugees a target area in 2019, as did three large private foundations (Carlsberg, Volkswagen and Compagnia di San Paolo). **There are currently many international, especially European, opportunities for scaling up THREAD or funding similar initiations in Europe.**

11. The **bi-national second generation migrants, and hyphenated identities** (e.g., Danish-Turkish), such as Egzona Haxha (who came to Denmark as a refugee baby from Kosovo) or the bydelsmødre (funded by Fonden for Socialt Ansvar) are crucial in collaboration with migrants and refugees, and should be given prominence and prestige in integration projects.

12. Social work and integration work is exhausting. Physically, because it requires constant mobility, agility, and work in inadequate spaces, often of low quality, and without the comfort of other work places; mentally, because many participants are in difficult and frustrating situations. It is often driven by individual 'ildsjæle', with the inherent risk of burning out. Supervision and support is necessary for social workers and caretakers. FAKTI has extensive experience in how to maintain balance and resilience.

13. The area of social work and integration is marked by a **high degree of change and unpredictable decisions** in terms of staff, spaces, funding, and planning. The diversity of stakeholders, public, private, organizational, governmental and individual, increases the complexity. The area is a moving target and should in terms of investment be compared to start-ups or high-risk areas.

14. In a welfare state with benefits, **the financial gains of effective social and integration works are significant.** A lifetime on state benefits versus being self-employed or employed represents a key saving to the state.

15. The intensive textile craft workshops in the Center for Dansk og Integration in Ølby, with textile activities in-between classes several times a week conducted by Pernelle Fagerlund and Manhal Al-Barazie gave a surprising outcome: **the Danish teachers reported increased learning and increased concentration and focus for those students who participated in the textile craft workshops.** This is worth pursuing in future initiatives.

THREAD 2018

sted: CDI=Center for Dansk og Integration, Ølby

PF=Pernelle Fagerlund; MA=Manhal al-Barazie;
BM=Birgitte Meier - frivillig håndarbejds lærer,

Dato	Mødepart/formål	Deltagere
03.07.18	Planlægningsmøde for kommende projekter med CDI i Ølby - kl. 13-15	MA og PF
03.07.18	Mandehoved Textile Tour kl.16-19	MA og PF, ca 15 refugees, women and children
31.07.18	Evaluringsmøde af Textile Tour workshops og videre planlægning af samarbejdet med Center for Dansk og Integration - CDI	MA og PF
31.07.18	Textile Tour i Mandehoved	MA og PF, ca 15 refugees, women and children
01.08.18	Ideudvikling og programlægning for kommende forløb i Ølby/CDI - program sendt til CDI	PF
02.08.18	Telefonmøde om workshops med Køge Helhedsplan. Karlemosen og Hastrupparken.	PF og Rikke Willesen
06.08.18	Møde om kommende Workshops i Ølby/CDI og i Køge Helhedsplan i Ølby.	MA;PF, Nihal Ocak og Rikke Willesen
07.08.18	Udarbejdelse af Poster til Workshops/projekt på CDI -	MA og PF
08.08.18	Poster færdig,	PF
09.08.18	Møde om opstart, materialeindsamling, program, praktiske ting i	MA, PF, Nihal Ocak og Rikke Willesen
14.08.18	Indkøb af diverse materialer til workshops	PF
16:08:18	Arbejde med inspirationshæfte til workshops, plus færdiggørelse	PF.
20.08.18	Opstart af workshops på CDI i Ølby kl.12-14	5-6 flygtningkvinder, 2 lærere fra CDI, og en håndarbejdsgruppe af 6 danske kvinder fra Køge Helhedsplan - MA og PF
21.08.18	Workshop på CDI kl. 12-15	MA, PF, Sevgün(lærer på CDI) - BM fra Håndarbejdsgruppen, 8 flygtningkvinder
22.08.18	workshop CDI kl. 10-13.00	MA og PF, lærere fra CDI - Erna og Anja og 8-10 flygtningkvinder
23.08.18	workshop CDI kl. 12-15.00	MA og PF og 10-12 flygtningkvinder , BM
29.08.18	workshop CDI kl. 10-14.00	AB og PF, BM, 10 flygtningkvinder, Sevgün (lærer)
29.08.18	Strikkeevent hos Henriette Rolf, T-Huset Tingbjerg. Kl.16-19	PF, Jane Malcom-Davis m.fl
30.08.18	THREAD- møde CDI, Ølby kl. 9-13	Marie Louise Nosch, Jane Malcom-Davis, Egzona Haxha, MA og PF
30.08.18	workshop CDI kl. 12-15.00	MA og PF, BM, 10 flygtningkvinder, 2 lærere fra CDI
05.09.18	workshop CDI kl. 10-14.00	MA og PF, BM, 10 flygtningkvinder
05.09.18	Åbent arrangement hos "I tråd med Verden" Gladsaxe, kl. 16-19	PF
06.09.18	workshop CDI kl. 12-15.00	MA og PF, BM, 10- 12 flygtningkvinder
12.09.18	workshop CDI kl. 10-14.00	MA og PF, BM, 8 flygtningkvinder
13.09.18	workshop CDI kl. 12-15.00	MA og PF, BM, 10 flygtningkvinder
19.09.18	workshop CDI kl. 10-14.00	MA, PF, Sevgün(lærer på CDI), BM, 8 flygtningkvinder
20.09.18	workshop CDI kl. 12-15.00	MA og PF, BM, 10 flygtningkvinder
26.09.18	workshop CDI kl. 10-14.00. Forberedelser til fernisering og afslutning på projektet i Ølby kl.14-16	MA og PF, BM, 10 flygtningkvinder
27.09.18	afslutning, fernisering og festivas i forbindelse med det - 9-16	kl. MA,PF, BM, 20 flygtningkvinder, lærere, sprogelever, medarbejdere fra CDI= i alt ca. 50 mennesker

KONKLUSION

13 workshops in August and September, each time ca 10 refugee women participated, and in total 25 were involved. It also involved Danish craft volunteers and the CDI teachers.

Mål-gruppe	Hvordan, hvad	Hvem	Hvor	dato	læsere/øret agere (estimate)	digital footprint	
Flygtningkvinder i DK	THREAD Facebook	Egzona, Manhal, Farzaneh	information til danske og flygtningkvinder		190	https://da-dk.facebook.com/threadopenhagen/	
	Brochure	Manhal, Pernelle, Egzona	på dansk, engelsk, arabisk, tigrina	2017-2018	500		
	Textile Tour	Manhal	Mandehoved beboelser for flygtninge, Stevns	2017-2018	30		
	textile activities	Liselotte	FAKTI	2017-2018	60		
	13 textile workshops	Manhal, Pernelle, Egzona	Center for Dansk og Integration	august, september 2018	25		
	Fenoun og VielGut	Solvejg	Øby Kolding	2018	25	https://www.designskolenkolding.dk/node/2542	
	Besøg, workshops, talks	Manhal, Pernelle, Solvejg, Lena	København, Kolding, Kåge	2017	60		
	32 textile workshops	Henriette	Husum, Tingbjerg	august-december 2018	390		
	Dansk offentlighed	Omtale, pressemeddelelse	Innovationsfonde omtale af THREAD		feb-17		https://innovationsfonden.dk/da/presse/mode-og-tekstilhaandvaerk-skal-integrere-flygtningkvinder
		Modeshow kulturmat	Manhal, Pernelle, UCC		okt-17	100	https://www.facebook.com/192938927390718/photos/a.194017627282848.46837.192938927390718/1906146099403317/?type=3&theater
Design og Håndværksdag		Manhal, deltagere CTR/UCC		nov-17	75	https://www.facebook.com/192938927390718/photos/pcb.1935036196514307/1935033858847874/?type=3&theater	
Textile Talks		alle	11+ foredrag i Københavnsområdet	2017-2018	100		
facebook THREAD		Egzona	facebook med tekster på dansk	2017-2019	190 followers	https://da-dk.facebook.com/threadopenhagen/	
CTR facebook		Egzona	opslag om THREAD	2017-2019	4000 followers	https://www.facebook.com/Centre-for-Textile-Research-192938927390718/	
Håndarbejdes Femmes blad		ML	artikel om THREAD	jun-18	1000		
Klumme, Weekendavisen		Else, Annelouise	"Migration og Mode, Weekendavisen	16-feb-18	100.000	http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/people/staff-list/?pure=en%2Fpublications%2Fmigration-og-mode/712057ce-e238-4f00-a187-44c7ae67cfdb.html	
artikel i Jyske Vestkysten		ML, Egzona	facebook	25-mar-18	100.000	https://www.tv.dk/kolding/Muslimsk-mode-hitter-Designskolen-ansætter-seks-indvandrerkvinder/artikel/2596940	
Presentation af THREAD på hjer		ML, Egzona	Beskrivelse af THREAD projektet	2017-2019		http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/research-programmes-and-projects/thread/	
blog debatindlæg	ML, Else	planlagt til august 2018/modeugen	2017-2019	100	Blogindlæg om individuelle deltagere		
Politik	TV2 Lorry	ML, Eva	Interview med Else	jun-18	300.000	https://www.tv2lorry.dk/artikel/perspektiv-bleede-tekstiler-var-fortidens-haarde-valuta	
	Kulturmat modeshow	Joy, Birgitte	UCC	12-okt-17	150		
	artikel, interview	Else, Annelouise	Endnu en artikel er planlagt i Jyske vestkysten, med Casper Vagner	2018			
	Radio 24/7	Else, Annelouise	interview i time, Else Skjold, videns	maj-18	100000	https://www.24syv.dk/prgrammer/24-spoergsmaal-til-professoren/27718295/hojdet-den-kulturelle-hud	
	UCC blad, kommunikationsafdelingen	Birgitte, Joy	interview/omtale ifb med interstio	nov-18			
	artikel, interview	ML, Egzona	Beskrivelse af THREAD projektet, journalist Marie Barie	jun-18		https://innovationsfonden.dk/da/presse	
	artikel om THREAD	ML, Egzona	Gavstriks blad	2018	1300	https://www.gavstriks.dk/medlemsblad/	
	Film om Igne-Oya besøg på Arbejdermuseet + Nationalmuseet	Henriette Rolf	youtube	2018		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5SpQOzPTw	
	TV Syd Nyheder	Else, Alexandra, Solvejg	Indslag om VielGut Studio	dec-18		https://www.bsytv.dk/nyheder/16-12-2018/1930/danmarks-forste-socialokonomiske-butik-holder-julebent?autoplay=1&fbclid=IwAR1Mw_jcMrE_LPdglDGs1WKjFK5u2yLavinR0p2A6Z0Pef5ADvUW00#player	
	Ugeavisen	Huda Salka	VielGut Studio og Hudas rolle som rollemode/butiksmedarbejder/olk	nov-18		https://www.ugeavisen-kolding.dk/kolding/Ny-butik-fortaeler-historien-bag-varerne/artikel/375236	
Opslag om VielGut Studio	DF, DSKD komm.	Facebookside	dec-18	9000	https://www.facebook.com/DesignskolenKolding/		
Forskrap om VielGut Studio	DF, Kolding Kommune/THRE	Jyske Vestkysten	nov-18		https://www.tv.dk/kolding/Pop-up-butik-sælger-socialokonomiske-varer-frem-til-jul/artikel/2666442		
Opslag om VielGut Studio	AD+ Venture	Kolding Kommunes Hjemmeside	dec-18		https://www.kolding.dk/nyheder-aktuelt/nyheder-forside/socialokonomi-er-blevet-til-totalokonomi		
Internationale tilhørere	foredrag, international konference	Vibeke, Helene	25th Nordic Intercultural Communic	nov-18	60	NIC 2018 (på AAU-qbh denne gang): https://www.seal.learning.aau.dk/NIC-konference-2018/	
	foredrag ved international konference i USA	Jane	Anherst College, hosted by The Five Colleges of Massachusetts, USA	2017	150		
	foredrag ved international konference	Vibeke, Helene	Women Deliver 2019 conference impact of THREAD on Danish education, presented at international University College	jun-19	7000 present and 100.000 virtual followers	Vancouver, Canada: https://wd2019.org/	
	foredrag ved international konference	Joy, Birgitte, Else, Marie-Louise,	Education conference, UCC	5-8 november			
	foredrag ved international konference, Polen	Else, Anne-Louise Bang	Women's History Conference 2020, Poznan	2020			
	Internationale læsere	artikel in scientific journal on textile research	Jane, Marie-Louise	Archaeological Textiles Review	2018		https://www.atnfriends.com/index.htm
poster		Lervad, Gaubert	European Association for Terminology	nov-18			
paper		Lervad, Gaubert	NordTerm congress in Copenhagen in 2019	2019			
kort omtale af Thread		ML, Jane	AEGIS newsletter	2018	500	https://mailchi.mp/aesinet/aesis-aug18-newsletter-10231437e-860753b9b7	
Conference paper		Else, Jane	ADIM (Academy for Design Innovation Management) 2019 at Loughborough University London	June 2019 April 2019	500		
Journal Paper on THREAD wardrobe studies		Else	International Journal of Fashion Studies	(to be published May 2020)	2000		
Conference Paper/Journal paper	Jane, Else	What's Going On?, Global Fashion Conference at Centre for Sustainable Fashion/ICF, London UK. To be published in the Journal 'Fashion Practice' (Sandy Black + Emily DeLong, eds.) 2019	October 2018	2000			
Innovationsfonden	annual report 2017	ML, Egzona, Jane		forår 2018			
	Midtvejsvurdering	Vibeke og Helene		Forår 2018			
	annual report 2018	ML, Else		jan-19			
	annual report 2019	ML, Else		dec-19			
	final report			january 2020			
total					661750		



TEXTILE AND CLOTHING: TIGRINIAN VOCABULARY

ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH ERITREAN REFUGEES BY EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE ON TEXTILE HISTORY

THE THREAD PROJECT

By Christian Gaubert and Susanne Lervad

A three year Innovation Fund project to create a network for refugee women in Denmark in the field of Textile and Design includes textile terminology work with a multilingual approach in the THREAD project. Report on the terminology work of the internship of three refugee women from Eritrea and Turkey at CTR: multilingual sessions on textile vocabulary in various languages as Arabic, Danish, English and Tigrinya with Mlete, Alem and Zahra. They did not speak much Danish except for Zahra.

The first sessions ran with discussion on the tools and materials such as wool and silk in their own languages and processes such as spinning and weaving. We added practical sessions on knitting and described the construction of a shawl. We came to storytelling about their lives by using the most simple technique - plain knitting, (hand knitting and hand-writing) and we came to know each others personal stories and backgrounds better. Afterwards we added digitized files to our terminology for instance on www.traditionaltextilecraft.dk.

LITERATURE

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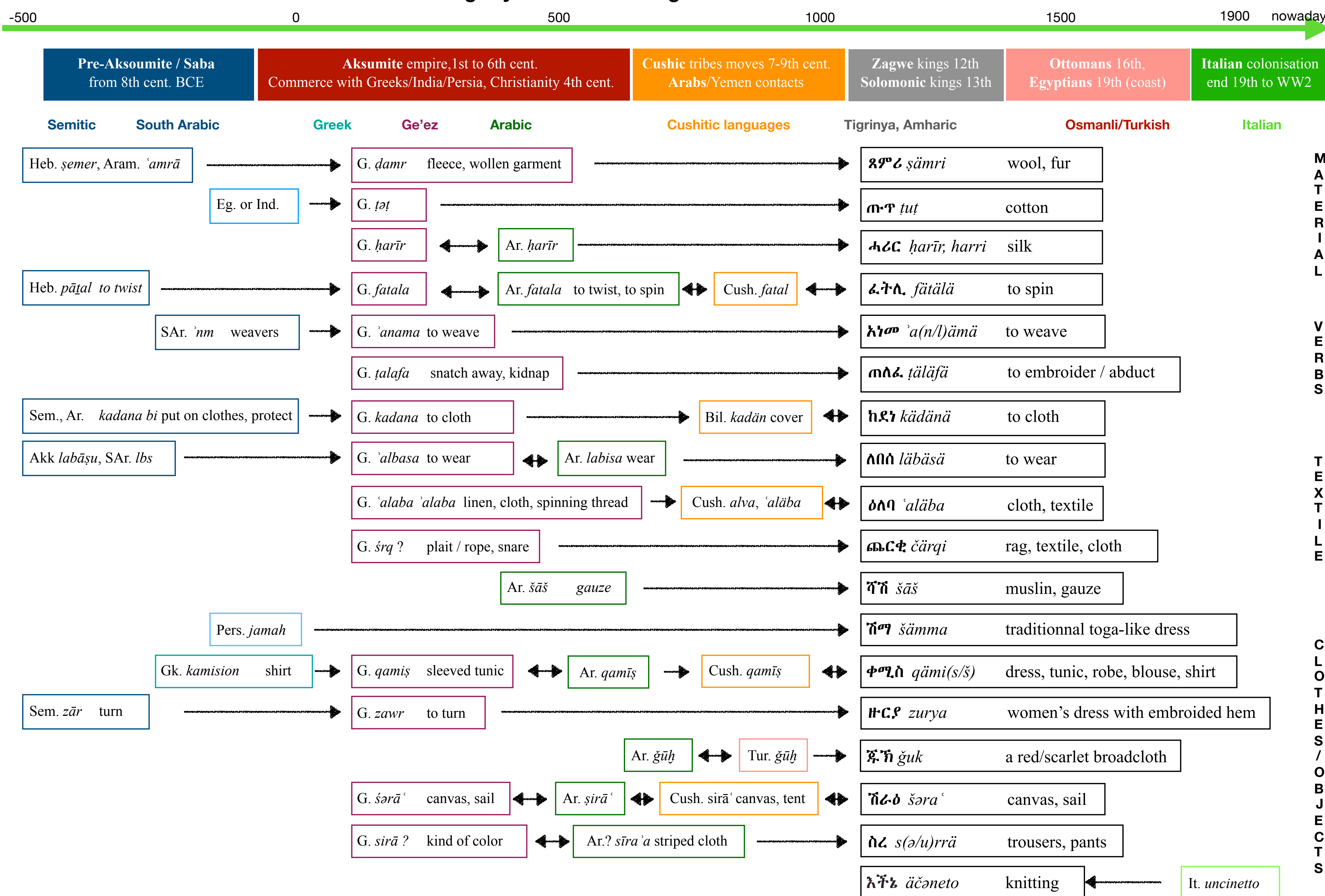
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Some Tigrinya textile/clothing words and their influences



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REFUGEES IN DENMARK

In 2018, the top three nationalities of refugees in Denmark were: Eritrean, Syrian and Georgian, with Eritreans at number one with around 4000 persons due to the spouses who have been granted family reunification and apply for asylum afterwards.

CTR.HUM.KU.DK/RE-
SEARCH- PROGRAM-
MES-AND-PROJECTS/
THREAD/



Start en virksomhed og bliv din egen chef



Tirsdag 20 November kl. 16-19
T-huset
Langhusvej 89, 2700 Brønshøj

Kom og vær med til en aften hvor du kan lære mere om hvordan du kan starte en virksomhed og blive din egen chef.

Mød andre kvinder, som selv har startet egen virksomhed.

Har du en ide, som du gerne vil arbejde videre på?

Du kan få hjælp fra eksperter.



CENTRE FOR TEXTILE RESEARCH

PROGRAM

16.00-16.20 - Velkomst og forfriskninger

16.20-16.40 - Introduktion

THREAD projekt og kursus

16.40-17.00 – Rollemodel 1

17.00-17.20 – Rollemodel 2

17.20-18.00 – Har du en ide?

Brainstorm og feedback

18.00-18.20 – Júlia Veres

Start-up support undersøgelse

18.20-18.40 – Zikoh Mikhail Kouassi-Zessia

Konsulent fra Erhvervshuset København



Salma modtog et THREAD diplom efter et praktikforløb hos Henrik Vibskov, hvor hun lærte om designprocesser, tekstilproduktion og -udstilling.

Informationer og repræsentanter fra andre start-up støtte organisationer vil være tilstede og stå klar til at tale om dine ideer og hvordan du kan starte en virksomhed op.

Kontakt:
Egzona Haxha
60 86 32 17
egzona@hum.ku.dk



CENTRE FOR TEXTILE RESEARCH

N°
60

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEXTILES REVIEW



2018 issue

Archaeological Textiles Review

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This will also provide membership of the Friends of ATN.

Visit www.atnfriends.com to learn more about the organisation.

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Resources: New Books and News



Editorial

Welcome to the diamond issue of the *Archaeological Textiles Review* 2018. It is an achievement worthy of celebration to have kept an independently-funded peer-reviewed journal up and running for 60 issues. We endeavour to strike a tone which embraces both scholarly articles and current in textile-related ers. We are pleased to report that we are still going strong thanks to the staunch support of the Friends of ATR, which we very much value. Many thanks to you all!

For the ATR team, 2018 has been a turbulent year. Ulla Mannering has been on a long-term sick leave, but is now fully recovered and back on track. This is also why there has been no Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Archaeological Textiles this year. We will provide more information about the next AGM on our homepage www.atnfriends.com at the beginning of 2019. Further, Ursula Rothe has left the editorial board and suggestions for a new, preferably native English speaking, editor are welcomed, and can be emailed to evaandersson@hum.ku.dk.

This year's issue is primarily dedicated to the study of knitwork with articles on protocol and terminology, and evidence for the craft's origins and development. The nine joint articles by Jane Malcolm-Davies, Ruth Gilbert, Susanne Lervad, Helena Lundin, Lesley O'Connell Edwards, Annemarieke Willemsen, Maj Ringgaard, Sylvie Odstrčilová and Rosalind Mearns

are important contributions to the formation of a more standardised way of addressing and describing items in an archaeological and historical context. We hope that readers will appreciate this initiative and continue the scholarly development of our languages, which are imperative for modern textile research.

While this issue concentrates on knitwork, the editors would like to bring needle binding into focus. We encourage our readers to submit articles about this technique for future issues. This issue presents e project descriptions about on-going and up-coming textile research projects. It is inspirational to see how textile research and the many excellent researchers working within this are capable of creating new and innovative projects that successfully generate large sums of external funding.

We welcome new contributions to forthcoming issues and encourage you to send them to us as they are ready, so that we may spread the editing work over the year and have time for the peer review process. The deadline for contributions is **1 May** each year. Please also remember to send us news of projects, PhDs, publications and conferences, so that we can continue to be a hub for the archaeological textile community.

The Editors

Klaus Tidow celebrates his 80th birthday

Beautiful summer weather provided a wonderful backdrop for the handing over of a photo album to celebrate Klaus Tidow's 80th birthday on 15 July 2018 in Neumünster. Fit and joyful, Klaus and his wife Dörte arrived by bike. It was a great pleasure to see



Klaus at all the symposia, meetings and workshops that have been documented in this photo album that also impressively demonstrates Klaus' long working life.

It is clear that NESAT would take up a lot of space in the photo album. After Susan Möller Wiering had recited a multi-verse poem about Klaus, an ice cream was needed to cool the emotions. Thanks to Siegmüller and Christina Peek from the The Lower Saxony Institute for Coastal Research in Wilhelmshaven, who all helped with the compilation of the photo album and to all colleagues who contributed photographs. Klaus is still actively involved in textile archeology. Nevertheless, it is good to know that he has deposited his most important works and records in digital format with me for safe keeping. We all hope that on his 90th birthday we will be invited back for more ice cream!

Johanna Banck-Burgess

Jane Malcolm-Davies and Marie-Louise Nosch

THREAD: a meeting place for scholars and refugees in textile and dress research

Introduction

One day, long ago in the 1980s, a young Kurdish immigrant girl visited Lejre, the centre for experimental archaeology outside Copenhagen in Denmark. She watched a weaving demonstration as the textile team reconstructed the Huldremose woman's dress on a loom 1.85 m wide. Four adults were weaving together to reproduce the "three weft-crosses of each weft-pick in the original Iron-Age textile" (Stærmosse Nielsen 1987, 207). They were cramped for space and struggling to work comfortably. The Kurdish girl unexpectedly opened the weavers' eyes to a new interpretation of how to work. She explained that in her home region, where she had seen the same system in operation, the two middle weavers were children, which not only solved the space problem, it also helped them learn to weave while the more complicated and time-consuming edges were handled by the experienced adults (Stærmosse Nielsen 1987, 207).

This story was, in part, the inspiration for THREAD (Textile Hub for Refugee Empowerment, Employment and Entrepreneurship Advancement in Denmark), a 33-month, 4.8m kroner (€645,000; £575,000) project led by the Centre for Textile Research (CTR), University of Copenhagen, which aims to tackle the challenge of refugee integration (Nosch 2017). The so-called "Grand Solution" financed by the government-backed Innovation Fund Denmark takes the view that refugee and immigrant women are a valuable resource rather than a problem group – as demonstrated by the Kurdish girl who shared valuable knowledge about weaving from her memories.

When the European refugee crisis grew increasingly acute in 2015, citizens in universities, education, the creative sectors and museums began multiple

initiatives to help create new lives for the new arrivals. Pop-up schools appeared to offer training in software design among many other projects such as the HackYourFuture coding training which started in The Netherlands. German universities opened their auditoria and libraries (for example, Universität Trier, Universität Koblenz and Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen). The international network Scholars at Risk arranged temporary academic positions for asylum-seeking academics and the Philipp Schwartz Initiative sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung funds such hosting arrangements.

In the field of textile research, scholars saw an opportunity for closer societal engagement, a way of helping to solve a serious problem, and to open new routes to new knowledge. The Natural History Museum in Vienna helped asylum seekers (who were archaeology students) to arrange training and internships. In particular, in 2016 an archaeologist from Aleppo (Syria), Nver Simon, participated in analysing an historical Syrian textile (Grömer et al. 2016). The THREAD project set out to explore whether textile culture and craft could be catalysts for improved refugee integration. At the heart of THREAD is the concept of a themed network of contacts who can help facilitate social and professional advancement for women forging new lives in Denmark.

Craft knowledge and expertise drawn from practitioners has long been closely integrated along empirical and theoretical studies of textiles. CTR scholars have actively collaborated with hand-weavers and spinners in Denmark, Sweden and Greece as informants and participants in experiments and research (Andersson Strand & Nosch 2015; Andersson Strand et al. 2016). In 2013, textile scholars launched a

research project and international network *Traditional Textile Craft*, in collaboration with weavers and textile craft organisations in Jordan, India, Sweden and Turkey, as well as Danish textile design company Kurage (Ebert et al. 2014). This initiative was rooted in UNESCO's strategic focus on intangible craft and cultural heritage. Knitters were crowd-sourced to explore Early Modern knitting technology (Malcolm-Davies 2018) and collaboration with a weaving cooperative in Peru to conduct experiments with bone textile tools provided a deeper understanding of Neolithic examples from Greece, the Balkans and Turkey (Sarri 2017).

Partners in this imaginative initiative represent a wide cross-section of organisations including the Danish fashion brand Vibskov, an open-air Viking Age Village heritage attraction, the Copenhagen teacher training college (UCC), the School of Design in Kolding (DSK), a private company specialising in terminology (TermPlus), a design company involved in social work (Design Vanilie) and an association of female refugees and migrants (FAKTI).

The CTR's contacts share a passion for textiles, dress and fashion from prehistoric archaeology to cutting-edge design, which is not only the focus of academic endeavour but also represents real market opportunities for economic growth – especially in the context of “modest fashion” which is relevant to many of the refugees extending beyond those who are Muslim (Lewis 2013). This worldwide market was worth US\$254 billion in 2016, increasing by four per cent from 2015 and expected to grow by seven per cent per year to reach US\$373 billion by 2020 (Thomson Reuters 2018, 103).

THREAD activities

THREAD offers a series of targets built around the partners' shared passion for textiles:

Enhancing empowerment

Refugees need to feel they can take charge of their new lives if they are to take advantage of opportunities presented to them. Empowerment has been characterised as interventions, which “enhance wellness while they also aim to ameliorate problems, provide opportunities for participants to develop knowledge and skills, and engage professionals as collaborators instead of authoritative experts” (Perkins & Zimmerman 1995, 570). The proven therapeutic effects of craft activity for women include a sense of achievement, possibilities for personal growth and the development of cognitive and physical skills (Pöllänen 2015, 58). Art therapy has also been used in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

with specific examples of traumatised refugee women from Bosnia who undertook embroidery, needlepoint, crochet, knitting, needle-lace, and quilting reporting an increase in social interactions (Ramirez 2016).

Embroidery, knitting and weaving “Textile Techniques” workshops with Danes offer opportunities to share craft skills and socialise. Pop-up “Textile Talks”, where artists, refugees and scholars share experiences of textiles such as wedding clothes, the memories sparked by fabric textures, and how garments can narrate a life story. There have been more than 50 of these sessions held at different venues and hosted by THREAD project team members and guest facilitators. Weekly activities and workshops now run several places in Denmark. Participants at the textile workshops in Køge received a certificate of attendance to help overcome their lack of conventional qualifications. Design Vanilie in Tingberg and Husum is helping participating women find internships with Copenhagen businesses and at UCC. At DSK, participants are building portfolios of textile handicraft work to help showcase their skills in the jobs market. This has resulted in job offers, both in private companies by designers and as teachers in Danish evening schools where adults of all ages go to increase their knowledge and skills and enjoy craft.

Facilitating employment and education

Denmark has historically had few refugees and migrants coming to the country, and currently the proportion of the population share with non-western backgrounds is circa 350,000 people in a total population of 5.7 million (Statistics Denmark). During the 2015 peak influx, the country had few facilities for integration, and the municipalities faced major challenges which needed to be overcome swiftly. Traditionally, learning Danish has been a key way of accessing the labour market, and language schools were seen as core facilities for integration. However, during the refugee crisis, integration policy shifted focus from language skills towards labour market experiences as the successful keys to integration. This is supported by experience from other western countries. The Canadian Council for Refugees identified access to employment as the top priority for successful integration in 2011. Recent studies demonstrate that women face different challenges from men as they integrate – in particular in finding appropriate work (Premji et al. 2014). Recent research on senior Turkish settlers in Denmark (Liversage & Jakobsen 2016) shows that a lack of access to appropriate employment opportunities results in considerable inequalities in old age, and this observation is particularly relevant to women. While only 1% of elderly Danes live below

OECD poverty levels, 29% of elderly migrants do so. This financial disadvantage results partly from the accumulation of a lifetime of disadvantages, especially in the labour market, and continuing into pension age. The percentage of the population which is in the labour force (aged 15 to 64 years) is known as the professional activity rate. Danish women have a professional activity rate of 74%, while non-western women in Denmark have a lower professional activity average of 47% (Ritzau 2018).

Since 2015, most refugees in Denmark come from Syria and, although there are fewer women than men seeking asylum, their numbers are significant (just over 3,000 in 2015). The highest proportion of women refugees from Syria are aged 20 to 29 years. Nearly 1,000 individuals in this age group came to Denmark in 2015, and many of these women seek to enter the labour market for the first time. Other women from Syria are older (circa 500 women refugees aged 40 to 50 years settled in Denmark in 2015), and these are likely to have transferable skills (Udlaendingestyrelsen 2016).

THREAD brokers relationships between organisations and refugee women to arrange internships to help them familiarise themselves with the Danish workplace and aspects of Danish life. Several of these internships have been at educational institutions (CTR, DSK, UCC) giving them the confidence to take a first step into the Danish educational system. Research has shown that female non-western citizens in Denmark succeed particularly well in the Danish education system. Among the non-western female migrants and refugees, 13% come to Denmark with a vocational education, and 14% come with a professional bachelor education. In contrast, among non-western girls and young women who embark on their education in Denmark, 36% accomplish a vocational education and 22% a professional bachelor's education. Thus, more than 50% more non-western women complete these educational opportunities than non-western men (Rockwoolfonden 2016, 17-19). In order to facilitate this positive trend, THREAD offers enrolment for refugees in the annual CTR summer school with the theme of "3,000 years of textiles and dress", which is part of the curriculum of the University of Copenhagen. Here, refugee students can widen their professional and social networks, practice their academic English and Danish, and gain a first Danish university diploma. So far, two women archaeologists with bachelor's degrees from Aleppo University (Syria) and Kurdistan University (Iraq) have attended the summer school. They can use the



Fig. 1: A THREAD workshop programme at the community college in Køge culminated in a "show and tell" event with participants bringing their handiwork to display. Each participant received a diploma certifying their handicraft skills, which will go some way to demonstrating their capacity for work in the absence of more conventional certification (Image: Pernelle Fagerland)

diverse academic, business, social and educational environments as a stepping stone for new career choices.

Encouraging entrepreneurship

The THREAD project includes an initiative to explore self-employment as an option for refugee women. Immigrants are often successful entrepreneurs since they are risk-taking, resourceful and innovative (Halkias et al. 2010). There is a combination of factors which stimulate entrepreneurial activity usually categorised as push and pull factors. One of the latter is presented by the 'enclave effect' whereby members of a cultural group live and work in close proximity and are able to provide each other with same-language networks beneficial for marketing (Fong et al. 2007, 129-130). The shared perception of gaps in the availability of stylish modest clothing (see below) shows there are opportunities for women refugees to set up enclave businesses tackling these. A workshop on the benefits of self-employment, the

support offered by state agencies, and case studies from successful immigrant entrepreneurs will provide inspiration for those refugee participants who wish to explore this possibility.

Academic outcomes

All these activities are helping to build good practice for a themed model of integration, which is the ultimate aim of the THREAD project. The hypothesis is that the themed network integration model is transferable from textiles to other themes such as food, sport, gardening, or personal grooming – all activities in which people undertake social activities, share with friends and/or with which they have a professional or economic concern. The current phase of the project is working on capturing the essential characteristics of the THREAD network in order to provide a blueprint for future networks based around other themes. THREAD is a work in progress and this transfer of the themed model is yet to be tested.

In addition to this, the project includes two main academic lines of enquiry: wardrobe studies and terminology development.

Wardrobe studies

These have a well established methodology (Klepp & Bjerck 2012) in which scholars conduct interviews about a person's wardrobe, clothing combinations, histories, contexts, and gain insights into private histories, biographies, processes over time, and also consumer behaviour and patterns of consumption.

Wardrobe studies were undertaken with refugee participants during the period August 2017 to June 2018 by design historian Else Skjold and designer Solveig Berg Søndergaard of DSK. They documented the personal collections of dress objects stored by eight immigrant women. The study showcases how incomers try to manage their own integration process through what they wear and do not wear. It demonstrates the literal integration of dress as they negotiate relationships between clothing and values they brought from their countries of origin with the clothing and values they encounter after arrival in Denmark. The wardrobe biographies of these women become key to understanding journeys of immigration in which dress objects connect past, present and future, and express memories, dreams and aspirations for individual people (Bang 2013). The wardrobe enquiries work as explorative, deep insights into a limited sample of individuals (eight women). The research results cast light on the way in which modest fashion is played out and practiced in local Danish contexts such as the city of Kolding

(Malcolm-Davies & Skjold forthcoming).

Most of the dress objects worn for social events with fellow countrypeople – particularly other women - are not purchased in Denmark, as the interviewees find it impossible to source appropriate garments. This means that they often depend on family and friends who travel abroad and bring garments home, sales platforms such as Turkish We-Chat, ethnic bazaars (such as Bazar Vest, a mall of primarily ethnic shops in the vicinity of the large settlement of flats and social housing Gelluparken near Aarhus), or self-made garments fabricated in their homes with materials from abroad. There were many attempts to bridge these two main categories in their wardrobes by 'sparkling up' the Danish wardrobe through accessories, constructing three-piece ensembles through combining objects that colour matched, or finding dress objects in Danish shops that provided the right silhouette and then styling them in their own way.

Textile and dress terminology research

This is currently an expanding international, interdisciplinary research field. However, in the area of clothing and textiles, focus has been on technical/ industrial vocabularies and on ancient languages and scripts (Lervad et al. 2016; Michel & Nosch 2010; Gaspa



Fig. 2: A *Hijab Me!* participant, who spent a week working with a Henrik Vibskov designer following the process of designing and then creating an original design for a hijab. There were four participants in the programme, which was a pilot project for an academic/commercial collaboration offering refugees the opportunity to learn about work in the fashion industry (Image: Jes Saatterup)

et al. 2017). Collaboration with refugees provides access to other languages and dialects, which are otherwise difficult to study because few dictionaries focus on clothing and textiles, and studies of specialised vocabularies rarely encompass craft, fashion, clothing, textile tools or patterns. Earlier studies have shown that mistranslation occurs in this area, due to the translators' and philologists' lack of knowledge of the field and modern alienation from textile production generated by industrialisation. In addition, the errors introduced by gender bias are numerous because terminology and philology were driven mainly by male scholars, while textile and clothing knowledge was largely a female domain (Michel & Nosch 2010, xiii-xiv). Examples of mistranslations are distaff instead of spindle whorl, or embroidery as translation for in-woven patterns on the loom, or linen instead of hemp (Barber 1991, 263-264; Nosch 2014, 35 note 101).

However, in order to conduct terminological research in the THREAD project, the methodologies had to be redesigned because the participants may have specialised textile vocabulary but little technical knowledge and no conceptual framework for terminological work. The new methodology for textile terminological fieldwork includes using images of looms and types of clothing in order to grasp the dialectal, regional and semantic differences. The international team who interviews refugees is composed of terminologist Susanne Lervad (director of TermPlus), linguist Christian Gaubert (Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo) who works with Arabic, Tigrinya, and Gez, and classical philologist Egzona Haxha works with Albanian clothing and textile terms. Results will be presented at international conferences on linguistics and terminology in 2019.

The CTR's first recruit from the refugee community was Manhal al-Barazi, an archaeologist from Syria, who undertook a comprehensive translation of a scholarly paper about CTR's textile research into Arabic, thereby disseminating the research to a much wider range of scholars (Andersson Strand et al. 2015). Farzana Khosrawi is an Iranian Kurd from Iraq with a bachelor's degree in Near Eastern archaeology from Kurdistan University who has joined CTR for a two-year integration contract from 2018 to 2019. Both colleagues received specialised training in textile archaeology and joined the annual international summer school on textile history and archaeology, thereby facilitating their re-entry into the academic community. Their contribution to CTR in terms of translations, networking with refugee communities,

their international outlook, and artistic work illustrates the two-ways benefits of this collaboration process.

Thus far, THREAD has approached the challenge of integration by focusing on the rich array of resources women refugees bring with them to Denmark. These include multiple and varied domestic skills, social skills, knowledge of and skills in ancient textile crafts such as special embroidery techniques, sewing, tailoring, crochet and knitting. It also includes an interest in modern and modest fashion, knowledge of consumer behaviour in Middle Eastern countries, and knowledge and experience with styling and accessorising in the burgeoning market for covering rather than exposing the body. Initial investigations into the size and growth of the modest fashion market has not only revealed what a vast opportunity for creativity and profit it offers but thrown into stark focus how narrow-minded it is to consider modest fashion as niche, alternative, embryonic or "other". Modest fashion is here, now and is the mainstream market for much of the world.

Fashion brands and companies play a significant part in the Danish economy, with a €6 billion turnover and exports of €3.7 billion with 4 per cent annual growth in 2015. However, exports are low to Muslim and Arabic countries, and Danish companies are actively seeking to enter this consumer market for clothing. The involvement of refugee women could constitute an important key to gaining market share.

Conclusion

THREAD taps into the central discussion of the role of universities in the 21st century. The prevailing model of the "Triple Helix" forms a scaffolding of interactions between universities, public and private sectors where excellence is fostered through the transfer of knowledge (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000). The model was expanded into the "Quadruple Helix" by including civic society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), cultural and non-profit institutions. This model embraces social and cultural innovation by reaching beyond traditional technology transfer in the shape of formalised collaboration and patents (Johansson et al. 2018). In its structure, THREAD encompasses all forms of the "Quadruple Helix" with interaction between national and municipal institutions as well as private companies and not-for-profit organisations participating. Its aim is social innovation but there is significant potential for participants to feed into research in highly specialised fields. The collaborative scope extends to refugee populations and unconventional partnerships

between diverse institutions. These have required the creation, development and testing of new collaborative methods.

THREAD has taken a few innovative first steps towards a new way of working with refugees to access the capacity they bring to the Danish knowledge and market economies. It has attempted to forge a collaborative approach between refugee women and textile scholars, which has generated new data about the process of integration (through wardrobe studies) and given rise to new methodologies (in terminology research). The extended network of contacts identified by the partner organisations has demonstrated the potential for a wide range of supportive activities for refugees – from craft workshops to internships – based around the theme of textiles. More work is required to refine the methods by which the enormous goodwill the project has harnessed can be converted into measureable benefits for refugee participants. But the potential for two-way learning between academics and refugees is also a very promising and exciting aspect of THREAD. How many more immigrants and refugees are there in Denmark (and beyond) who are just waiting for the opportunity to share their specialist knowledge with their new neighbours?

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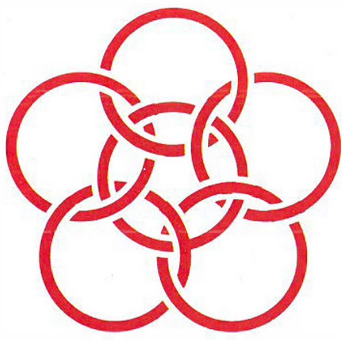
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Den Røde Tråd – om tekstil, mode og flygtningekvinder



Af Marie-Louise Nosch

Ved Center for Tekstilforskning (CTR) arbejder vi til daglig med oldtidens dragt, op til 3500 år gamle indskrifter, og moselig der afgik ved døden for 2000 år siden. Men da flygtningekrisen i 2015 blev akut, begyndte mange uddannelsesinstitutioner i Danmark at overveje, hvad man kunne gøre for at hjælpe med at løse opgaven. På CTR så vi en mulighed for at knytte an til

vores fælles kulturarv og interesse – håndarbejde og mode – for at komme i kontakt med flygtningekvinder og bidrage til deres integration. Vi har længe talt om at bygge bro mellem den akademiske disciplin og "foreningsdanmark" med vores store faglige viden og brede netværk. Vi allierede os derfor med tekstil- og modeinteresserede kolleger fra Designskolen i Kolding, Tekstilformidleruddannelsen på UCC, Vikingelandsbyen i Albertslund, designer

Henrik Vibskov, og Foreningen for Kvindelige Flygtninge i København. Alle med samme interesser som os og en fælles forståelse af at tekstil, mode og håndarbejde kan bygge bro over kulturer og skabe meningsfulde fællesskaber – i arbejde og fritid – mellem flygtninge, nydanskere og os andre etablerede danskere.

Vi kalder projektet THREAD, som på dansk er det oversat til Den Røde Tråd, for at hentyde til at flygtningekvinder tager en håndarbejds-mæssig, og emotionel tråd med sig fra deres tidligere liv og barndom; den tråd kan fortsættes i det nye liv ved at knytte nye venskaber. Det kan være ved at komme i praktik i en modevirksomhed eller en uddannelse som arbejder med tekstil; eller det kan være bare at slappe af med håndarbejde og samvær med danske og ny-danske kvinder.

Konkret bygger vi aktiviteter op om at lave håndarbejde sammen, holde oplæg om tøj og dragttraditioner fra vores forskellige kulturer, tage praktikanter, gå på udstillinger om tekstil, broderi, gobeliner etc. sammen.

I THREAD er flere designer med interesse for teknikker og æstetisk tradition fra Mellemøsten, som kan bruges til at udvikle nye designs, som hos designeren Henrik Vibskov der har fået hjælp fra immigrantkvinder til at brodere udstillingsobjekter.

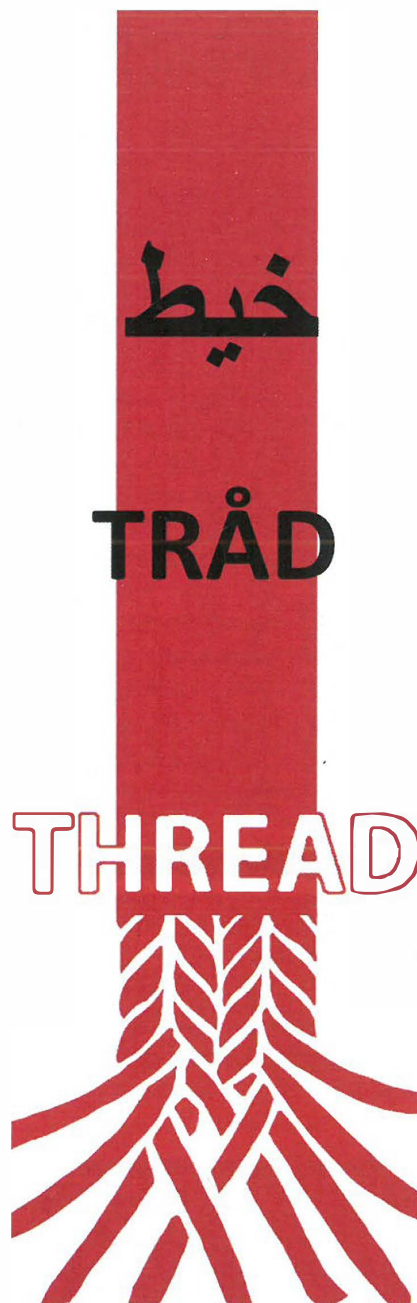
Vi har gennem det sidste år arrangeret mange workshops med flygtningekvinder, hvor den grundlæggende idé har været, at kvinderne skulle medbringe et håndarbejde, der er særligt for deres hjemlande og familier, og vi tog ligeledes håndarbejder

med fra vores egne gemmer og egne igangværende håndarbejdsprojekter.

Konceptet har været hyggelige stunder, at udbygge det sociale netværk, og tid hvor vi kunne lære af hinanden og udveksle teknikker og historier.

Vi har haft sådanne arrangementer på CTR, på Fakti hos Lise-Lotte Duch, Welcome House i Valby og Mandehoved på Stevns sammen med Venligboerne.

Vi har desuden på CTR haft 3 kvinder fra Eritrea i praktik i 13 uger. Alem og Mlete havde blot været i Danmark i 3 måneder, da de startede praktik på CTR, og noget af det første, de lærte, var at strikke sammen med terminolog Susanne Ler vad. Hun talte samtidig med dem om tekstile ord på dansk, arabisk og tigrinia, og sammen undersøgte de ord for tøj ordbøger og i dokumentarfilm. Derudover deltog Alem og Mlete i vores tekstile workshops på universitetet, og her kunne de møde danske universitetsstuderende og lære om teknikker fra Danmarks oldtid, blandt andet spinding. De blev introduceret til mange forskellige aspekter af livet i Danmark, og en af de ting, de var meget interesserede i, var museumsbesøg. De bar begejstrede for Designmuseum Danmark, Greve Museum og KØS.



THREAD aktiviteterne som er beskrevet her er drevet af fagfolk og ildsjæle i THREAD, så som Manhal Albarazi fra Aleppo i Syrien som har en bachelor i Arkæologi og Pernelle Fagerlund, Tekstildesigner fra Danmarks Designskole. Dette team har de sidste måneder arbejdet sammen om flere projekter i Køgeområdet. Manhal taler arabisk og kurdisk, hvilket er en stor styrke i vores projekter. Af andre aktuelle projekter i øjeblikket kan nævnes vores workshops "Textile Tour" med tryk og broderi. Her er vores koncept at arbejde med udtryk og historier gennem at trykke med stempler som Manhal har samlet de seneste år og derefter arbejde videre med broderi. Vores plan er at udstille projekterne i Køge området.

Vi har også et kommende samarbejde med CDI – Center for Dansk og Integration i Ølby med kvinder fra Syrien, Tyrkiet, Afghanistan m.fl., som vi glæder os meget til at folde ud i 2018 og 2019 ■

Vil du hjælpe?

Vi vil meget gerne i kontakt med flere frivillige danske kvinder med tekstile kompetencer, der kunne være interesserede i at deltage i og eller arrangere workshops for flygtningekvinder. Der er så utrolig mange uudnyttede ressourcer og kompetencer inden for integration og det tekstile felt. Endnu flere og kontinuerlige workshops med flygtningekvinder deres historier og tilgang til håndarbejde vil åbne op for et stort tekstilt univers, som alle kan være med i.

Kontakt:

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Mid-term Evaluation THREAD

March 9th 2018

Evaluators:

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Introduction

This Midterm evaluation forms part of the Research Project THREAD. The timeframe for the project is February 1st 2017 to October 31st 2019. The project is located at Centre for Textile Research (CTR) at University of Copenhagen and is including partners from research institutions, textile businesses, state and municipal institutions and NGOs

Method and Aim of Evaluation

This evaluation is an in-process evaluation, or ‘real time evaluation’. The research project was designed with the purpose that the evaluators follow the project closely and participate in many of its activities. The evaluation team evaluates the activities in work packages 1-4 with the specific aim to assess *social networks, job opportunities and integration* for participants (Basic project information document p. 10).

The evaluation team from Aalborg University, Global Refugee studies, consists of two researchers and one student assistant, who speaks Arabic.

The two main evaluators have designed an interview guide as basis for interviews with partners and participants in the project. We have been able to interview most of the partners during the first phase of the project. This has been crucial for our evaluation and the information obtained in this first round of interviews will lay the ground for next round of interviews, which will show the progress of the THREAD project in various fields.

Since we use the method of ‘real time evaluation’ we have addressed matters during the first phase of the project, when we found that we needed to comment on problems related to the THREAD project. We have participated in steering group meetings and commented on topics raised there. We made a ‘mini-evaluation’ of the Hijab Week in August 2017. This event we regard as a ‘pilot project’ for activities within the project, and important experiences were drawn from the mini-evaluation the evaluation team made after the ‘Hijab Week’. We find that this first, rather thorough, evaluation of the event prepared the ground for changes in future events. Later we held a meeting with the head of the THREAD-project, Marie Louise Nosch on December 8th 2017, where we gave feedback on issues we found necessary to address in the project. The feedback worked according to the purpose and the THREAD/CTR project team thus had opportunity to address the critical issues that were raised during the first year of the project period.

List of interviews and participation in events by evaluation team (In Danish)

Interviews med deltagere:

- Deltager 1, d.07.07.17: interview indsamlet sidste under første sidste dag af Hijaab Week workshoppen på papirøen
- Deltager 2, d.03.07.17:interview indsamlet under første dag af Hijaab Week workshoppen i KEA, på Nørrebro
- Deltager 3, d.03.07.17:interview indsamlet under første dag af Hijaab Week workshoppen i KEA, på Nørrebro
- Deltager 4, d.03.07.17:interview indsamlet første dag af Hijaab Week workshoppen i KEA, på Nørrebro

Interview med (samarbejds)partnere:

- Maria fra Henrik Vibsskov, 03.07.17: interview den første dag af Hijaab Week workshoppen i KEA, på Nørrebro
- Susanne fra KEA, d.07.07.17:interview den sidste dag af Hijaab Week workshoppen på Papirøen
- Lise Lotte fra FAKTI, d.29.08.17: interview hos FAKTI på Nørrebro
- Birgitte og Joy fra UCC, d. 12.09.17: interview på UCC
- Birgitte fra UCC, d.19.12.17: opfølgning interview med Birgitte fortaget over telefon.
- Munderingskompagniet, d. 10.10.17: interview på Østerbro (deres kontor)
- Diana fra Woolspire, d d.21.09.17: interview på café, Nørreport

Interview med THREAD

- Jane Malcolm-Davies og Egzona Haxha, d. 14.11.17: interview på KU

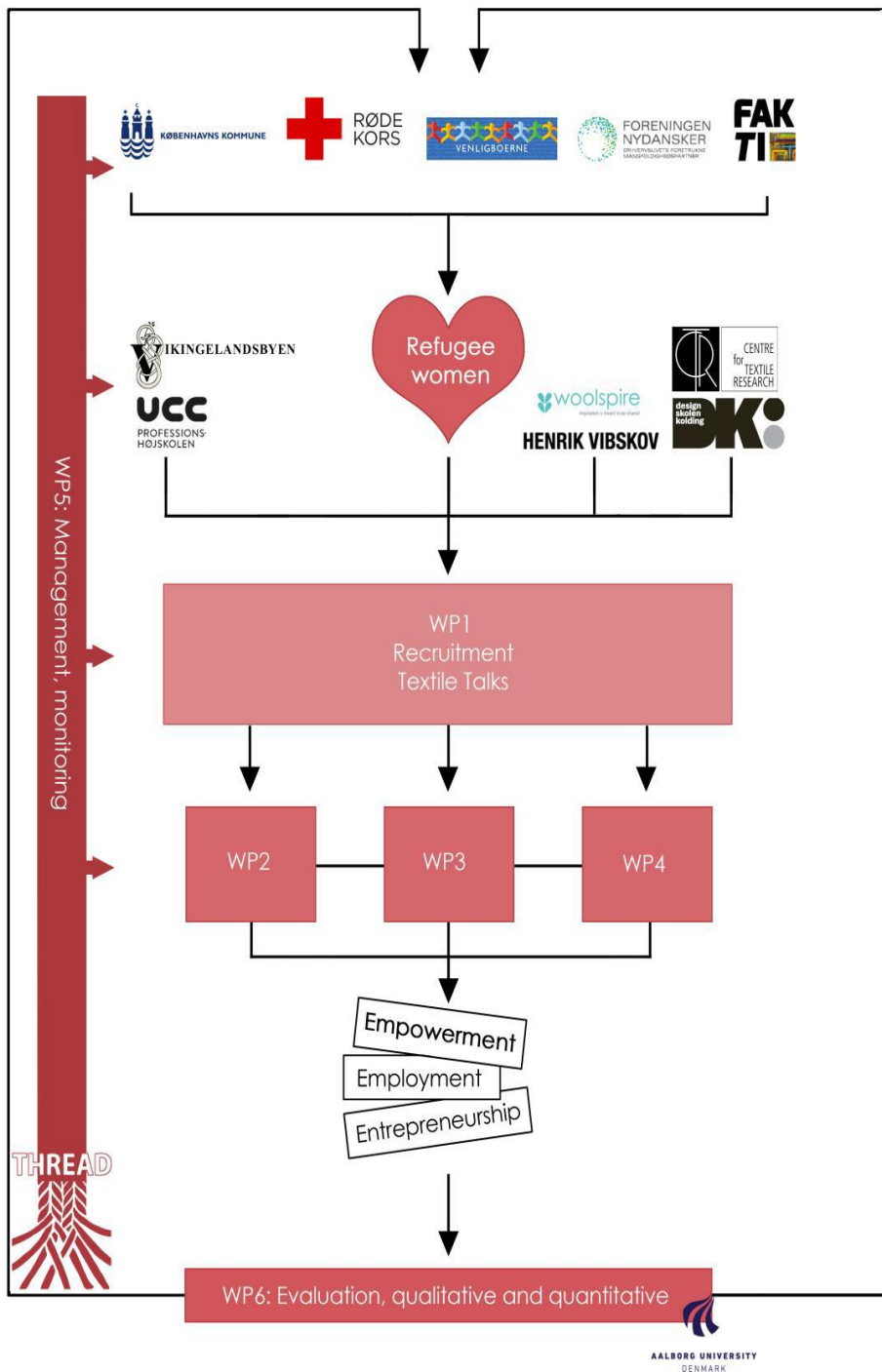
Vi har kontaktet et antal projekt- og samarbejdspartnere, som ikke har svaret tilbage på henvendelse. Vi vil kontakte dem igen.

Events:

- Textile talks, CTR, Københavns Universitet
- Textile techniques, CTR, Københavns Universitet/Fakti
- Hijab Week, KEA/Vibskov
- Besøg på Designskolen, Kolding
- Besøg hos Fakti, København

Deltagelse i Styregruppemøder og Advisory Board møde

THREAD's Project Model:



Virksomheder, foreninger og offentlige institutioner

Samarbejdspartnere og deltagere

Formidling og netværk

Iværksætter og virksomhedspraktik

Målet

Forskning og evaluering

Time frame

The project started earlier than first planned due to administrative issues. Due to this, the project leader, Jane Malcolm-Davies, was substituted by Egzona Haxha during the first months of the project. This meant, that the project had challenges in the first 6 months due to alterations in the time frame, which meant that some of the partners were unable to fulfil the aims according to the Gant chart. Matters were delayed because not all positions were filled in time. However, all working packages are running now and the early start (and subsequent delay of activities) is not considered to have had major influence on the project as such. In order to get activities started, during this first period, it was decided to host an event, the ‘Hijab Week’, which was arranged in collaboration with University College Copenhagen (UCC) and Vibskov (both partners in the project).

The project management team (and the steering group) are aware of startup difficulties and is adjusting the project plan accordingly. The evaluation team does not regard it as a problem that not all working packages are running to schedule, since there is a plan for them to deal with small delays.

Aim

“THREAD aims to build a dynamic hub of organizations and individuals from the public and private sectors offering creative opportunities for personal development, skills acquisition and self-employment to women refugees. THREAD tests how textile creativity, design and production can be used as a powerful means of integration through a range of practical activities directed at three main aims: Empowerment, Employment and Entrepreneurship.” (Project description p.10)

The THREAD project aims as creating a new integration model for refugee women. The project strive for a more ‘hand-held’ (Da: ‘håndholdt’) contribution to integration initiatives in Denmark. The special nexus of textile/women/empowerment, employment and entrepreneurship is aimed at directing integration efforts towards a specific group using specific methods: “THREAD'S main hypothesis is that a themed model of integration, which recognizes women refugees’ potential and engages stakeholders in a progressive partnership” (project description p.10) Refugee women are treated as active partners in the integration process, at the project aim at creating a new integration model as a ‘laboratory process’ where findings are included in new initiatives, thus creating a

dynamic process. There have been different challenges in order to reach this aim, which are unfolded in the paragraphs below.

'Refugee women': The evaluation team finds that the project tends to essentialize 'the refugee woman'. A more nuanced understanding of who the refugee women coming to Denmark from the world's conflict areas are, might have helped the overall understanding, and might also have prevented some of the start-up difficulties. The project description states in the description of the project: "Introductory events recruit participants and lead them to inspirational craft workshops and commercial internships, more demanding paid placements at businesses and universities/colleges, and an invitation to an entrepreneur program to aim at self-employment" (p.6). However, few refugee women arrive with the skills and are in a physical and mental state, where they can participate craft workshops and commercial internships or in demanding placements in business and universities. The knowledge and experience of partner organization Fakti, could have been a more central contribution to the project in the start-up phase, since this organization has extensive knowledge and experience with refugee women.

Assumptions about skills: The project description says that: "There are older women too (for example, approximately 500 individuals aged 40-50 years settled in 2015) who are likely to have relevant transferable skills. Refugees rarely arrive with documents proving their competences but nevertheless have knowledge and skills which are relevant for Danish design, research and business" (p.5). This assumption of refugee women having special skills in textile techniques is not well documented. In fact interviews with refugee participants reveal, that they feel that they do not have adequate skills for the specific activities, which they are supposed to participate in (Hijab week, internships). There has been slightly normative assumptions in the project that all refugee women come with textile technique skills, which they can use for entrepreneurship and employment. This assumption has a blind spot for men's engagement in textile production, which is relevant for some of the areas, where refugee women come from. In the Middle East men are involved in working with textile for example as tailors. This has, however, been dealt with as working with refugee during the project time has progressed, and the project is taking these experiences into consideration by expanding the field to include other areas than textile, but keeping the three E's (Employment, Empowerment and Entrepreneurship) central.

Practical challenges: THREAD's first activities were the Textile Talks series held at CTR at the University of Copenhagen. These talks are open to all, and the initial idea was, that refugee women should be integrated in the talks as participants. However, it has been difficult to attract the women

due to numerous practical challenges. The distance to university of Copenhagen, the costs of getting there, the other duties women had: language school, child care etc. This has led to THREAD/ the project management team changing their practices and starting reaching out where women are.

Reaching the target group: During the first year of the project it has become clear that it is difficult to ‘find’ refugee women who can participate in the project. There are several reasons for this, and a more comprehensive ‘mapping’ of the field before the project started could have helped solving this problem. However, the project management team and THREAD partners have gone through great efforts to reaching out to refugee women by including employees in targeted municipalities as ‘brookers’ in contacting the women. The evaluation team sees the new partner ‘Novaheim’, as a valuable partner for the project, since Novaheim bring in their contacts to refugee women, with whom they have an extensive collaboration at Avnstrup Asylum Center. Including Novaheim can be a very important asset to the THREAD project.

All of the challenges mentioned above are not foreign to the THREAD team. They have all been presented in the project plan (project description p.9) as risks:

Risk 1: Recruiting sufficient women refugees who wish to join the project

Risk 2: Finding women refugees with sufficient confidence

Risk 3: Logistical difficulties such as time/transport constraints for participants

The fact that the THREAD team have been able to foresee the challenges gives reason to believe, that solutions will be produced during the second half of the project.

Target Groups

The project has an optimistic plan for the number of participants recruited to the project. Reality has shown that it is difficult to recruit refugee women to the activities. There are several reasons for this: In the beginning the ‘textile talks’, which take place at university of Copenhagen were intended as a ‘meeting place’ for partners, researchers and refugee women. However, it turned out to be difficult to attract refugee women to these events, as described above. The project management team has instead tried to reach out to refugee women ‘where they are’ and has collaborated with municipalities and organizations in arranging events ‘here the refugee women are. This has been more successful than trying to attract refugee women to university and other institutions.

Another important point regarding the target group (the refugee women) is that the expectations of resources of the individual has been mismatched with the realities. The THREAD project management team is now aware of the complexity within the integration field. There are many, and different, actors involved and in order to reach the refugee women one has to get permission from a variety of municipal and other stakeholders. This has taken more time, than expected. Furthermore, the refugee women are more vulnerable, than expected, and therefore not always able to participate in the activities presented in the THREAD project. We see, that the project management and partners are becoming aware of this, and are adjusting activities accordingly.

Project Initiatives

According to the THREAD presentation material (power point presentation summer 2017) the E's (Empowerment, Employment and Entrepreneurship) has different prospects for integration of refugee women in Denmark. The aim of the first; Empowerment is to help 60 participants to form part of a network and share their knowledge about textile, design and handicraft. The prospect for Employment covers internships at THREAD partners and the aim is to support 25 internships in total. Regarding Entrepreneurship the aim is to initiate a workshop- and training program to inspire and support 16 participants in creating business ideas and help them through start up challenges. These are ambitious goals, and there have been some difficulties in getting started on these components.

The network formation has been initiated by the CTR/THREAD team by inviting to Textile Talks, textile Techniques and reaching out to refugee women, where they are.

Internships have been offered at Vibskov, at UCC and at CTR at University of Copenhagen. It is too early to assess how these initiatives have helped the refugee women who participated to get access to the Danish labour market, and the evaluation of these initiatives will be dealt with more thoroughly in the final evaluation (fall 2019)

Other initiatives: CTR researchers have written articles and comments in Danish newspapers, which shows that dissemination of THREAD results is important for THREAD members.

Project Organization

The project is managed on a daily basis by the project management team at CTR (Marie Louise Nosch, Egzona Haxha and Jane Malcolm Davies (project leader)). The project has a Steering Group

consisting of all partners. Marie Louise Nosch is chair person, Else Skjold (Design School Kolding) is substitute chair person. Both project management team and steering group work satisfactory and are characterized by an openness and willingness to collaborate with the partners. Because the steering group includes all partners, there is a high level of information sharing, and partners can learn from experiences from each other – both when they meet at steering group meetings, and at the more informal activities and events, where partners join in, when possible. The project organization works well, and the level of information sharing seems appropriate.

Project Activities

The partners are running different activities. A short summary for each partner is listed below:

UCC (University College Copenhagen) has received a smaller number of refugee women (4) on Mondays during fall 2017. The women were supposed to follow classes and students while they were there. This proved to be somewhat difficult, since most of the women had limited Danish language skills. As a solution to this UCC developed special activities for the women. One of UCC's motivations for being part of the THREAD project has been to contribute to empowerment of refugee women and a hope that some of them eventually would be able to start studying at UCC or other places.

Design School Kolding has completed 4 wardrobe studies and is planning 4 more. They are running to schedule now and one of the experiences of this work is, that it is very difficult to get in contact with people. They have succeeded, nonetheless, and are getting a network for further contact initiatives through the Kolding municipality, integration department and job-center. Furthermore they are reaching out through talks at both places. During spring 2018 Design School Kolding will offer a smaller internship for 6 refugee women for 6 weeks. This will be repeated in spring 2019, based on the experiences from spring 2018.

Viking Village, Albertslund, is in the process of identifying possible participants for internships in collaboration with neighborhood coordinators in Albertslund and Høje Taastrup. They have two different options for internship: 1) textile manufacturing in the sewing workshop or 2) teaching children textile methods. One of the experiences of the first year of the THREAD project is, that it is difficult to attract participants who are in a situation, where they can take up independent tasks as many refugee women are vulnerable for different reasons. This is the case for the Viking Village as well. As a consequence of this the Viking Village is preferring option one. And because results

from other partners show that it is easier to reach refugee women where they live, Viking Village is considering moving the sewing workshops to the neighborhoods where the refugee women are. The evaluation team supports this decision, since the possibilities of reaching out to the target group are better this way. Viking Village will also be hosting textile talks twice in the coming six months, and hope to reach participants through these activities.

Fakti hosts Textile techniques workshop run by THREAD once a week.

CTR hosts different activities, among these textile talks and techniques, seminars and workshops. The project management team is located here. This team assists partners in various ways by helping to form contact to external partners (municipalities) for getting participants for internships or activities.

Woolspire decided to withdraw from the project as partner (in the fall of 2017). Novaheim and Ganni have replaced Woolspire from January 2018. Novaheim and Ganni are new partners, and will therefore not be part of the midterm evaluation, since they have not yet had any activities within THREAD.

All partners have experienced difficulties in the start-up phase. The THREAD management team underscores, that there have been some start-up difficulties, which were not foreseen in the project application and planning. There are many reasons for this. Mapping out this complex field of refugees and integration is complex. However, CTR is located at the same department as Advanced Migration Studies, and maybe could have gotten expertise from one or more of the researchers in this center during the planning phase of the project. We acknowledge that THREAD is now organizing discussion workshops with AMIS students, so some form of collaboration between the two centers has been initiated.

Assessment of Project Organization and Activities

The project is organized with a project management team located at CTR, University of Copenhagen and several rather independent partners, who do independent work in relation the project. The strength of this kind of organization is that the project management team at CTR is responsible for a number of activities which include partners, if they want. Textile talks is a good example of this. Here everybody is welcome to participate and anyone, who wants, can present at the talks. Information and experience is shared at steering group meetings and events, and this form of organization seems to work well for partners. In relation to partners' activities, these are shared at

steering group meetings, where there is a high representation of partners present. This is a sign of dedicated partners, who want to participate in the project. The project management team, despite from being located in Copenhagen, initiates many activities and initiatives in order to include partners, who are outside the Copenhagen area. The decision to include Else Skjold from Design School Kolding as co-chair in the Steering Group opens up for knowledge- and decision sharing across geographical localities.

Collaboration between Research Partners

The first year of the project has been focused on establishing good practices for the collaboration between research partners. Meetings have been held at University of Copenhagen and Design School Kolding. Future meetings will be held at Aalborg University (April) and UCC (June). Until now research collaboration has concentrated on getting to know each other's fields. At the steering group meeting in Kolding in January the different research partners identified possible collaboration in terms of writing papers and participating in international conferences. The opportunity to work cross-disciplinary is there and researchers in the project are interested in using this possibility in their research and research dissemination. The possibilities for research between partners look assuring, and the THREAD project will gain from convening different academic knowledge within textile and refugee issues. The Advisory Board meetings form another possibility to establish academic collaboration. Another initiative used by the management team has been giving the possibility for students to intern at CTR. This contributes to broadening the academic collaboration between institutions and centers.

Collaboration with Organizations/Partners

All partners are reaching out to external partners as well. The municipality of Kolding has been an important actor for Design School Kolding. The THREAD/CTR team has reached out to several municipalities in the Zealand area and is also contacting organizations, where refugees are participating (Fakti, Velkomsthuset i Valby, Venligboerne Vesterbro). The evaluation team value the importance to reach out to these external partners to include other types of activities for refugee women. However, it seems like there has been a slight mismatch between expectations from partners/collaborating firms about who are in charge of finding refugee women for internships. Some report that they got the impression that the THREAD team at CTR would be in charge of finding and sending interns, since the organizations/firms do not necessarily have the contacts and

expertise to find interns among the target group. The mismatch described above has led the THREAD management team to focus less on including additional NGOs and firms and more on working with municipalities and other partners, because the target group is more vulnerable than expected in the project description for the THREAD project. We suggest that the project team establish clearer communication and balance of expectations between different partners and THREAD.

Competence Development

Because the project started early, the interim project leader, Egzona Haxha, was participating in a project leader management course at Harvard Business School. Participating in the course, Egzona had opportunity to network with other Innovation-Foundation project leaders, and developed contacts with people in other sectors than textile/fashion. The THREAD team has discussed using these contacts for additional internship placement for refugee women, if a match could be found. The evaluation team supports this effort. Participating in the Harvard course has helped to secure a competent leadership on a daily basis until Jane Malcolm-Davies took over the project leader position.

The THREAD project states, that it is an important factor, that textile researchers and partners not only disseminate their knowledge, but also learn from participants. Since the project aims at developing an integration model, which should be applicable in other areas than textile/fashion, this learning from participants seems an important factor in competence building. The project thus operates with both refugee women's *and* partners/researchers' competence building.

Project Resources

Use of resources are running to schedule. At the steering group meeting in January the project leader, Marie Louise Nosch, emphasized the importance of reporting consumption of funds. The overall responsibility of budget control lies within the project management at CTR, and all partners seem to be attentive to the importance of meeting the demands. Because activities have started later, the consumption of funds is low. It is important that all activities are implemented, and the second half of the project period might be slightly more packed with activities. We consider this as a minor problem, since all partners seem to be aware of the fact, that the activity level will increase, and they are planning accordingly.

Implementation

The Textile Talks series were some of the first events in the project. The weakness in the organization of Textile Talks is, that it is driven by a research group and takes place at the university. This allows only few people to participate as many partners are very busy in their daily life and cannot find time to participate. For the target group, the refugee women, it is not easy to get to the university. Different solutions have been tried – for example organizing busses for participants from Allerød municipality. However, THREAD activities are in increasing numbers taking place where the refugee women are already present: at Fakti (textile techniques), at asylum center Avnstrup (Novaheim), and at Design School Kolding and UCC, when they arrange classes for (bigger and smaller) groups of refugee women.

Another activity, the hijab week, took place at KEA (Københavns Erhvervs Akademi) in July 2017.

There were three contributors to this event: THREAD, KEA and Vibskov. The event included students from KEA, one teacher from there and a designer from Vibskov. It turned out to be difficult to find refugee women to participate, and only four women took part in the preparation of Hijabs, which were later displayed at Vibskov's Outlet at Papirøen. The event was evaluated by the evaluation team and interviews with participating refugee women showed that the effects of this event for the women were limited. However, the event gave good information about how to arrange events in the future and which issues to avoid (or enhance) in the creation of coming events.

As a result of the feedback from the in-process evaluation, the project management team at CTR has started more activities. More activities are taken to the places where refugees already are present (example: Fakti and Avnstrup), there is an increasing insight into the importance of defining the core concepts of 'Empowerment. Entrepreneurship and Employment'. Interviews with partners and participants in events during the first 6 months of the project showed, that there was no coherent understanding among the different partners on what these important concepts entailed. The evaluation team has encouraged that we find a common ground on which to build on concerning the three concepts. As a result, a new series of 'Discussion Workshops' at CTR has been initiated by the project leader, and we will, at the next steering group, continue the discussion about the concepts over a two-day workshop at Aalborg University where all partners are invited to participate.

Mile Stones

The project has a number of mile stones included in the different work packages.

Milestones Work package 1: Recruitment.

A number of women have been recruited in the initial phase through the activities mentioned in this work package. However, the number continue to be quite limited. The reason for this could be that one of the partners has withdrawn from the THREAD project. Including Novaheim and Ganni as new partners seem to be appropriate measure to obtain recruitment in a longer perspective.

Milestones Work package 2: Networking and internships.

A number of internships have been concluded with different partners. There seem to be obstacles to a successful internship: Refugee women are normally not able to participate full time during the week, which could weaken the results of internship in achieving network and empowerment.

Project management team and partners in THREAD are aware of this problem, and are working on solutions to solve it, maybe by redefining the content of internships.

Milestones Work package 3: Research and Education.

At the time of the mid-term evaluation collaboration between research institutions has been initiated. Work with Tigrinya glossary is started by two researchers and two interns with Ethiopian background. A summer-school course is offered at CTR, where two refugee women can participate. Design School Kolding will initiate a process including 6 women at the school's programs, where refugee women meet students and teachers. Several conference papers have been/are being prepared for international conferences, so this work package appears to be working according to schedule.

Milestones Work package 4: Entrepreneurship.

This work package is lacking behind. That might be due to early start (not enough preparation) and the withdrawal of one of the partners (Woolspire), who was an important partner in creating entrepreneurship opportunities and new businesses. The difficulties in reaching qualified refugee women for entrepreneurship is another reason for this work package not being up to date. The difficulties in reaching qualified refugee women is described elsewhere. One way of mitigating this has been to look for participants among asylum seekers as well. Novaheim is important as facilitator of contacts. However, we suggest lowering the expectation of the resulting amount of independent entrepreneurs, for example from 16 to 10.

Work package 5 is Evaluation. There are no specific milestones here.

Milestones Work package 6. Project management:

The milestone in this work package is ‘all work packages running to schedule’. In general the work packages are up and running satisfactorily, even though they are not all running to schedule. Solutions are being implemented and the project management is working professionally and efficient in managing the THREAD project.

Concluding Comments

CTR researchers are giving a talk at the center for Advanced Migration Studies at Saxo department, University of Copenhagen. We suggest that THREAD establish a closer collaboration with migration and refugee experts from this center (which belongs to the same department as CTR) during the second half of the THREAD research project. This could spark a fruitful knowledge-sharing across the centers.

Language barriers seem to be a bigger problem, than expected. Some of the partners are challenged by this when refugee women come to do internships. If Manhal, who is Syrian refugee and employed at THREAD, is not around, it is difficult to do the activities planned. Since the project is directed towards refugee women, who have not obtained language skills, this could be mitigated by employing translators. This seems to be necessary sometimes, even though one partner points out, that teaching and learning within textile techniques does not necessarily include spoken language, since it is a learning process of imitating and learning from something others *do*. Generally there was an expectation of participating refugee women coming with skills and motivation to participate in THREAD activities. Reality has shown that this is difficult to achieve. There is awareness among the management team and THREAD partners, that the target group is more vulnerable and more difficult to work with, than expected. We are aware of and appreciate that THREAD is redirecting activities to be able to include the more vulnerable group of women and rescaling expectations to the outcome.

The work package 5 (evaluation) does not have milestones as such. Expected deliverables are mid-term report (concluded), final report and scholarly papers and lectures. The evaluation team will present mini-lectures at a steering group meeting and workshop in April 2018, to share knowledge from the field of refugee studies. We have also suggested that we discuss the three E’s (Empowerment, Employment and Entrepreneurship) at the workshop in order to have a common

understanding of these concepts among partners. This will help to get coherent results when the THREAD project is finished.

In process/real time evaluation is used here. There are pros and cons in using this method. Members of the evaluation team are close to activities in the research project and must at the same time keep some form of distance in order to be able to evaluate professionally. The opportunity to follow the project closely and the possibility to address certain issues during the process have been valuable contributions to the THREAD project. Members of the evaluation team have benefitted from the in-process evaluation by obtaining knowledge and provide insights to the project management team as the project is developing. And the project management team has benefitted from getting feedback during the first part of the project in order to address the issues raised by the evaluation team.

Conceptualising empowerment in the context of an action research project

Jane Malcolm-Davies, Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen

Abstract

Empowerment is a fashionable term employed in many policy documents concerned with support for women and refugees in Europe and the United States. THREAD, a Danish integration initiative, has identified empowerment as an aim for its women refugee participants. This paper sets out the key issues in developing a working definition of empowerment for the project. It discusses the conceptual complexity of the term in operation and how it has different meanings depending on who is using it. Refugee support workers readily align empowerment with employment whereas refugee women themselves see it in much broader terms. A simple method of measuring empowerment is proposed although it is acknowledged to be an approximation given the complexity of empowerment both as a concept and a practical process.

Keywords: Empowerment, women, refugees, self-esteem, textiles, craft

This paper discusses the notion of empowerment as a key goal of THREAD, a project led by the University of Copenhagen's Centre for Textile Research funded by the Innovation Fund Denmark. THREAD (the Textile Hub for Empowerment, Employment and Entrepreneurship Advancement in Denmark) set out to explore whether textile culture and craft can be catalysts for improved integration for refugee women. Its main premise is that refugees are a welcome resource for Denmark's future and not an inevitable burden on its economy. In particular, THREAD acknowledges that refugee women have competences and capacities in textile crafts which are not currently recognised by the official labour market.

The three key aims for the THREAD project were identified as empowerment, employment and entrepreneurship. These were to be achieved via the recruitment of a network based on shared interests in textile crafts and culture. The central idea was that this new network would provide useful contacts for refugee women who had left their own network of supportive family, friends, neighbours and colleagues behind in their countries of origin. The intention was not that contact with the network alone would empower women, provide employment or turn them into entrepreneurs. More modestly, it was hoped that these contacts would help stimulate empowerment, open doors to employment, and introduce the idea of entrepreneurship as a career option.

Ultimately, the project was intended to investigate the feasibility of a transferable model of support for refugees based on networks formed around shared interests. The Innovation Fund Denmark in 2016 awarded THREAD a budget of 4.8m Danish kroner (645,000 Euros or £575,000) over 33 months beginning in February 2017. The model will define and develop a number of key concepts which have emerged during the project, including action research, network formation, empowerment, employment, entrepreneurship and refugees, and suggest how other similar networks could aid refugee integration.

One of the crucial aspects of THREAD was that all the main players were dress and textile specialists drawn from a wide range of organisations and individuals in fashion, design, art, archaeology, history, philology and terminology, and teacher training. None had expertise in women's empowerment and only one was a support agency with experience of working with immigrants to Denmark. The management team was largely made up of

academics with high hopes of “making a difference” but with little practical experience of doing so. It was a conscious decision not to define each of the three main goals at the outset of the project but to explore what they could be given the resources and context in which the project was to operate.

The potential for stimulating empowerment among women refugees in Denmark sits well with the current political environment for refugees, exiles and displaced people. Empowerment has been recognised as one of the “three pillars of poverty reduction” by the World Bank since 2000 (Alsop and Heinsohn 2005, 5; World Bank 2000). In 2015, the United Nations identified achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls as the fifth of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations General Assembly 2015; Richardson 2018, 540). Women’s empowerment is therefore a human rights goal (Richardson 2018, 540).

THREAD’s goals also aligned with recent recommendations for refugee resettlement programmes as promoted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which has adopted community and participatory approaches. These see refugees as “agents rather than subjects” (Muggah 2005, 153). Similarly, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles argues that “refugee empowerment is critical in refugee integration” (2002, 16; Steimel 2017, 90) and the mission of the United States Office of Refugee Resettlement states it is “founded on the belief that newly arriving populations have inherent capabilities when given opportunities” (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2012; Steimel 2017, 90). Empowering refugees to direct their own lives is now enshrined in refugee resettlement policy (Tomlinson and Egan, 2002; Steimel 2017, 91).

“Women’s empowerment refers to their acquisition of enabling resources, which in turn, may enhance their agency, or capacity to make strategic life choices to improve their own welfare, in contexts of evolving constraints” (Yount et al 2014, 185). This has been further described as “an expansion in the range of potential choices available to women so that actual outcomes reflect the particular set of choices which the women value” (Kabeer 2001, 81; Mahmud et al 2012, 611). Empowerment is characterised as desirable for those in straightened circumstances and as contributing to improvements women themselves want rather than what others think they need. Refugee women find themselves in challenging situations and have ideas about what they believe will make their lives better, although research on what they identify for each is limited (Dykstra-DeVette 2018; Erden 2017; Ruottinen 2014; Steimel 2017).

The term empowerment is commonly used for an outcome for a person or group which becomes empowered (Alsop and Heinsohn 2005, 5), a process (of empowering groups or individuals), and a perception (Chiles and Zorn 1995; Steimel 2017). However, “an adequate and comprehensive definition remains elusive” (Mahmud et al 2012, 610).

Empowerment as an outcome is the attainment of power. An empowered person has increased their life options and choices, gained greater control over their life, and achieved the ability to live as they wish to live (Mahmud et al 2012, 611). Empowerment is also a process by which the powerless gain greater control over their own lives to achieve specific goals and ends (Kishor and Gupta, 2004, 694). It is “the practice of liberation” (Freire 1990, 66; Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 183). In this definition, emphasis lies on empowerment as “a continuing process strengthening the capacity of the individuals to act for a change” (Sadan 2004; Ruottinen 2014, 21). Both the process and outcome are necessarily affected by the disempowered person’s environment. It is therefore necessary to consider the effects of local resources in the process of empowerment (Järvinen 2007).

There is increasing emphasis on the role of communication (Papa et al 2000) and community in the context of empowerment. It is now argued that empowerment *exists* in negotiation, coordination, and codetermination (Steimel 2017, 92). This characterisation acknowledges the crucial role of relationships between people in the process of empowerment (Hill-Collins 1990; Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 180). One significant aspect of empowerment (McPherson 2015, 145) is having “capabilities for freedom” (Olssen 2005). These capabilities are “critical reason, cognitive and cultural capital and resources, emotional and social capital” (Olssen 2005, 379), and, importantly, these exist within a community framework that values the defence and protection of certain rights, particularly freedom, security, equality and inclusion (Olssen 2005, 374).

Empowerment may also be viewed as a collectively-defined concept (Hill-Collins 1990). It includes a person’s perception that they have the opportunity and ability to act effectively to control their environment (Chiles and Zorn 1995; Steimel 2017, 91-92). Empowerment cannot be observed; it must be experienced. Individuals perceive and enact control over their own lives through interaction with others (Steimel 2017, 92). Crucial to the experience of empowerment is “finding a voice”, that is, the ability to make oneself heard (and visible) and to have confidence in “talking back” (hooks 1989; McPherson 2015, 136).

There are some issues specific to women’s empowerment which are different from that of other groups: the dynamics of the household and family, and the power relations between men and women. Time is also a crucial variable since some circumstances which improve opportunities for empowerment happen quickly - for example, access to education - whereas other may take decades - for example, transformations in women’s roles in society (Richardson 2018, 541).

Empowerment has been described as a dynamic process with three defining elements:

- 1) Agency (or autonomy), which is the “ability to define one’s goals and act upon them” (Kabeer 1999, 438);
- 2) Access to and control over material, human, and social resources (Mahmud et al 2012, 611); and
- 3) Context, which covers a multitude of variables from socio-economic circumstances such as household wealth, age, attitudes to gender equality, trust and ethics (Mahmud et al 2012, 611).

However, to properly represent empowerment, two more elements must be added in order to acknowledge its interrelational and subjective characteristics:

- 4) Community – a recognition that the resources for empowerment are acquired through relationships in the family, market and locality (Mahmud et al 2012, 611) and it is expressed through dialogue with others; and
- 5) Perception – the person or group which is empowered must recognise and enact it by becoming visible and having a voice.

Despite the complexity of empowerment detailed above, critiques of refugee support programmes based on research into their operation and effectiveness note that “self-sufficiency” is employed as a common synonym for empowerment. Self-sufficiency is most

often interpreted to mean financial independence (Steimel 2017, 97-98) and that, in turn, translates to employment (Steimel 2017, 97). For example, in the United States, employment is considered the primary indicator of refugee empowerment, integration, and self-sufficiency (Brick et al, 2010; Steimel 2017, 91). Participants in one typical study saw empowerment as entirely employment-centred: being employed is “unquestionably the primary value that guides empowerment practices in refugee resettlement” (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 183).

This pressure results in many highly trained people “with degrees, certifications, and professional experience [who] are unable to obtain documentation that was lost or destroyed, or have those certifications honoured” being forced into low-skilled, entry-level positions (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 186). In these circumstances, resettlement with promises of empowerment may suggest positive change is attainable but, in practice, according to the participants, it feels more like a chore than a “dream” (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 186). This narrow model of success in resettlement rhetoric limits the scope of potential empowerment (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 180).

When refugees themselves are questioned as to their understanding of empowerment, it is not limited to economic self-sufficiency. They resist a singular definition and instead see it in educational, personal, and family terms too: “Finding meaningful work, going to school and spending quality time with family “were all identified as empowerments (Steimel 2017, 102). “As a result, the refugees often felt that the organisations’ primary focus on economic empowerment was disempowering (Steimel 2017, 99). They also felt disempowered by being pushed to “work down” - in pay or prestige - from their previously held jobs. This left one interviewee “feeling degraded and stressed rather than empowered or self-determined” (Steimel 2017, 99). Another interviewee felt that refugees will only “feel involved and at home” if they find work that is meaningful to them, rather than having to take any job which is offered (Steimel 2017, 99).

Women participating in microcredit schemes in developing countries identify “getting out of the house” as more important than improved finances in their process of empowerment. In one study, all the women stated that given the choice, they would choose to do activities and undertake training that support their agency rather than receive loans to set up their own enterprises (Bragée 2006, 76). They identified the need for building “power from within” (the confidence to override discrimination) and “power with” (communal support from other women) as most important to them (Bragée 2006, 76).

Research has shown that workers in support agencies and other organisations have different understandings of empowerment from those who are intended to experience it (Bragée 2006, 77). Refugees’ perceptions of themselves may not square with predefined western notions of “refugeeness” which centralise race, gender, sexuality, and ability (Aberman 2014; Loftsdottir 2011; Erden 2017, 253). In some cases, the experience of flight has empowered refugees but they find themselves “hijacked” by the rhetoric of gender equality, female vulnerability, and protection from danger (Erden 2017, 253).

Women who choose not to work may feel empowered to make decisions for their family and themselves in ways which do not fit with the expectations of their new country which sees her as newly “free to participate in the economy by working, earning, and spending” (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 187). A refugee support worker acknowledged the ambiguity of this situation: “If a woman in any culture says, ‘I do want [sic] to stay home and cook and take care of my children and clean, and I’m happy with that, and I feel like that’s fulfilling me,’ I think that that’s okay. And I don’t think there should be any shame associated with

that lifestyle regardless of who you are. BUT is that your choice, or is that something you're used to and that's just a cultural thing, or is it that you feel forced into making that decision, or do you just not – have you never experienced anything outside of it?" (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 187).

Discussion

This brief overview endorses the view that "there is a need for normative interpretations of empowerment to be challenged in order to highlight the importance of choice and agency involved in one's self representations" (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 182). THREAD needs good working relationships with the local government organisations which are the official gatekeepers to contact with refugees in Denmark and through whom government policy on refugee support is enacted. It has been acknowledged that there may be few opportunities for dialogue in the development and implementation of top-down defined empowerment programmes" (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 180). It is therefore necessary for the THREAD project to be realistic about its potential influence over local interpretations of national policy and focus on where and how it can effect change while guarding against "normative interpretations of empowerment".

"So then how might a community-centred, dialogic approach to empowerment offer transformative possibilities?" (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 189). In answering this question, THREAD aims to avoid the risk of empowerment becoming simply a "buzzword" lacking any real meaning, as it has in many official documents setting out policies for refugee support across Europe and beyond (Järvinen 2007; Swai 2010; Ruottinen 2014, 20).

Research has shown that activities and training and communal support are valued by participants in empowerment programmes and that it "demands long-term commitment, and is built on dialogue, trust, and a supportive, encouraging atmosphere ... Factors inhibiting empowerment include ... a sense of outward control; poor communication and distrust; unrealistic plans and inadequate participation" (Ruottinen 2014, 21). THREAD's notion of empowerment rejects the emerging convention that it is achieved through economic self-sufficiency alone. Empowerment is also possible through community building and mutual dependency (Steimel 2018, 184). Responding to the suggestion that "western humanitarian organisations should look to community-centred interpretations of empowerment as a way of disseminating and supporting refugee voices and initiatives" (Dykstra-DeVette 2018, 189), the THREAD network is developing around a series of talks and workshops which offer opportunities for Danes, immigrants and refugees to come together in shared experiences with textile craft and culture.

One much-quoted model of empowerment acknowledges the determinants of empowerment (demographic status, economic status, social status and media exposure) and its dimensions, which include control of resources, mobility, decision-making and self-esteem (Jejeebhoy 200; Mahmud et al 2012, 612). The THREAD project has no control over the resources made available to refugees and has encountered considerable challenges in engaging participants owing to mobility issues. Decision-making likewise is not a practical dimension for the THREAD network to influence. Self-esteem was identified as the key variable which THREAD could address. THREAD's central focus on textile craft and culture offers specific benefits in this regard. Empowerment may be achieved through interventions which "enhance wellness while they also aim to ameliorate problems, provide opportunities for participants to develop knowledge and skills, and engage professionals as collaborators instead of authoritative experts" (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995, 570). The proven therapeutic effects of craft activity for women include a sense of achievement,

possibilities for personal growth and the development of cognitive and physical skills (Pöllänen 2015, 58). Such therapy has also been used in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with specific examples of traumatised refugee women from Bosnia who undertook embroidery, needlepoint, crochet, knitting, needle-lace, and quilting reporting an increase in social interactions (Ramirez 2016).

Fig. 1: Determinants and dimensions of a married woman's empowerment (Jejeebhoy 2002; from Mahmud et al 2012, 612)

A network built around a shared interest (or passion) for textile craft and culture has the capacity to facilitate the demonstration of existing skills and the acquisition of new ones. These competences need not be narrowly directed at the labour market but more generally at personal expression, products for family consumption, and pride in accomplishment. Evidence of these outcomes may also serve to open opportunities for enhanced employment rather than the low-skilled, entry-level positions into which refugees are often pushed. Women's craftwork is also a way of "finding a voice" (see fig. 2). Other activities undertaken as part of THREAD include wardrobe studies through which women narrate their life histories and integration strategies through garments and accessories they have brought from their countries of origin or acquired in Denmark (Malcolm-Davies and Skjold, forthcoming). A terminology project has also seen the development of specialist textile glossary in Tigrinya, the language spoken by Eritrean refugees, which will facilitate new research into the history of dress in Africa (Lervad and Gaubert 2017).

Fig. 2: *Jeg er stærk* [I am strong], embroidery and appliqué narrating the experience of marriage, forced displacement, life in a refugee camp, and resettlement, and demonstrating competence in a new language (photo: Pernelle Fagerland)

One problem is that empowerment is a "latent phenomenon"; it is not directly observable, although its effects may be visible (Mahmud et al 2012, 610). The outcomes of textile-based craftwork can serve as proxies for empowerment by demonstrating creativity and competence. Participants at THREAD craft workshops at the community college in Køge received certificates of attendance to help overcome their lack of conventional qualifications. At Design School Kolding, participants at the Fenuun (Arab for craftsmanship) textile workshops are building portfolios of work to build their confidence and showcase their skills (Malcolm-Davies and Nosch 2017, 119).

In addition to these craft-based proxies for empowerment, it is desirable to have a simple measure which collects data on whether the refugee women regard themselves as empowered. THREAD lacked the resources to take baseline measurements from refugees during the recruitment and development stage of the project. However, it has now developed a tool to take soundings from refugee participants through a simple questionnaire (Table 1), which aggregates an empowerment score across three dimensions of autonomy, participation, and responsibility (Roller 1998). Participation (with its emphasis on relationships) is weighted more heavily than the others in line with recommendations for good practice in measuring empowerment (Richardson 2018, 548). As THREAD enters its final year, there is scope for benchmarking empowerment among the refugee participants of the various activities and further investigation into how a themed network can contribute to its growth.

Conclusion

In the last three decades, there has been a shift in focus in the assistance provided to refugees from a narrow socioeconomic one to a broader aim of refugee empowerment (Mitchell and Correa-Velez 2010; Steimel 2017, 90). However, the reality is that empowerment is frequently identified with neoliberal notions of economic self-sufficiency through employment, irrespective of the wider benefits a job may provide such as self-actualisation, creativity or sociability.

A crucial component of a new model for building a refugee integration network is an agreed notion of empowerment, which will function for the community initiating it. It is helpful to see empowerment as a dynamic process rather than simply an outcome and to recognise the importance of relationships and communal support in fostering it through shared activities which build self-esteem. It is desirable that empowerment should be measurable, and preferably according to best practice (Richardson 2018). Since the concept of a network as a catalyst for refugee integration is a bottom-up rather than a top-down initiative, it is also desirable that the process of network construction and maintenance promotes empowerment which is, as far as possible, not determined or constrained by hegemonic or neoliberal notions. Ideally, how empowerment is to be demonstrated should be agreed in dialogue with the refugee community.

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Figures

Fig. 1: Determinants and dimensions of a married woman's empowerment (Jejeebhoy 2002; from Mahmud et al 2012, 612)

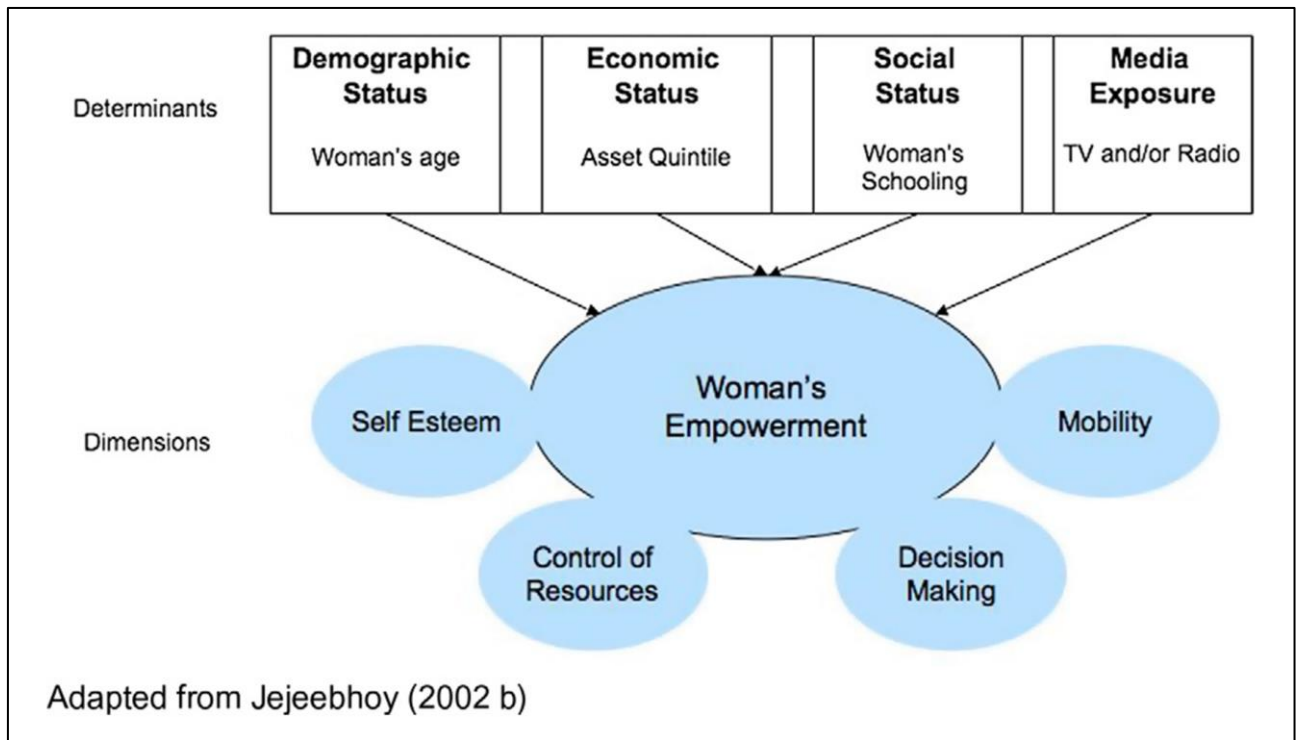


Table 1: THREAD Empowerment Survey provided in a variety of languages (after Roller 1998)

THREAD Empowerment Survey

This is a confidential survey. You do not need to give your name or any other personal details to complete it. The information you provide will help us understand your situation and plan future activities and workshops for you to attend.

Please provide your reactions to the following statements using the scale below.

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

ITEM #	ITEM	RESPONSE (write the appropriate number here)
1	I have the freedom to decide how to do live my life.	
2	I am often involved when household changes are planned.	
3	I can be creative in finding solutions to problems.	
4	I am involved in deciding family goals.	
5	I am responsible for the outcomes of my decisions.	
6	My input is never solicited in planning family changes.	
7	I take responsibility for what I do.	
8	I am responsible for the outcomes of my actions.	
9	I have a lot of freedom in my life.	
10	I am personally responsible for the things I do.	
11	I am involved in decisions that affect me.	
12	I make my own decisions about how to run my household.	
13	I am my own boss most of the time.	
14	I am involved in creating our vision of the future.	
15	My ideas and inputs are valued.	

Please return this form to: jmalcolm-davies@hum.ku.dk

Dr Jane Malcolm-Davies
 Centre for Textile Research
 University of Copenhagen
 Karen Blixens Plads 8
 Copenhagen 2300

To return the form:

- 1) Take a photograph of it and send it to the above email address OR
- 2) Give it to your group leader to send to the above email address OR
- 3) Post it to the above address

Thank you for taking part in this survey!

Competency building among refugee and immigrant women. An alternative model (THREAD)

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Conference theme: Critical perspectives on theories and practice related to the field of intercultural communication, competency development in education and workplace contexts

Abstract

This paper will discuss models for integrating refugee and immigrant women to the Danish labour market. Our presentation builds on our participation in an interdisciplinary research project THREAD, funded by the Danish Innovation Foundation. The aim of the research project is to create a model for integration through a common interest in textile and fashion. Danish researchers, practitioners and firms provide a new platform for the Refugee and immigrant women to meet. Through this platform, the women will strengthen their social network, gain economic independence and improve chances of entering the labour market. Additionally the model will inspire and support social entrepreneurship (Bornstein 2007) among the women. Keywords for the project is empowerment, employment and entrepreneurship.

The paper will discuss and challenge the ideas behind the research project and the results around the midterm evaluation. Empowerment (Friedmann 1992) is a key word when working with disadvantaged groups. It suggests creating competence, based on, among other things, intercultural communication. Including social entrepreneurship in the integration model points to a form of agency, which more mainstream integration models lack (Ager & Strang 2008). Through empowerment refugee and immigrant women gain agency to become social entrepreneurs. Ideally, social entrepreneurship will aid women to start their own businesses, thus avoiding stigmatization and negative discourse of oppressed and passive victims of a male dominated 'foreign culture, which is currently expressed, both among members of the press and among Danish politicians. The paper will focus on practice. We will discuss the different initiatives created within the research project, such as workshops, meeting activities, formulation of vision and mission and outreach to involve refugee and immigrant women. The core questions in the paper are:

How will the THREAD initiatives mobilize resources among participants (refugee and immigrant women, researchers and firms/organizations)? Is creativity a vector for integration and how can creativity empower?