



NEIGHBOURHOOD MOTHERS MANUAL FOR START UP





Story from a Neighbourhood Mother



“I have helped a woman, who was a widow. It was an old Danish couple, who told me about her. She rarely went outside ever since the death of her husband two years ago. I knocked on the door and told her: “I am a Neighbourhood Mother and I am a volunteer, I’m not from the municipality”. She started crying and asked: “Where have you been? I need your help”. For a year and a half she had not been to the doctor because she had lost her health insurance card. She had just been sitting at home for all this time.

So I took her to the Citizen Service and ordered a new health insurance card for her. It took 5 minutes. Then I took her to a café for women and signed her up - so she could find company. Because she had no family, she had no one to talk to. When you do not have anyone to turn to, it can make you feel ill.

The women she had met in the café became her friends. I call her once in a while to check up on her. She is doing well! And now she is very proud of herself. She walks all the way to the café even though it is far away from where she lives. Before she would never leave her flat! I am actually very proud of this case. A little help was needed but it made a big difference.

People need to feel good. Women need freedom. We just have to catch an eye on those who are in need for help. They only need a little push. All, the woman needed was a little push to go out and explore the world on her own – realise that life did not end after the death of her husband. She can enjoy life now. A little push makes a big difference.”

Zainab All Haiby, Neighbourhood Mother in Amager, Copenhagen, Denmark



Introduction

The Neighbourhood Mothers give hope and change the life of other women

The Neighbourhood Mothers are primarily women with an ethnic minority background, who do voluntary work in their local area by supporting isolated and vulnerable women. The Neighbourhood Mothers listen, convey important information, and build bridges between the woman and the place, which can help the woman further on. The help gives the women strength, so they can help themselves, their children and their family.

The Neighbourhood Mothers are able to:

The idea of the Neighbourhood Mothers is quite unique and is a concept that society needs. The Neighbourhood Mothers remove a missing link between the isolated, vulnerable women and their local area. They create contact to a group of isolated women, who do not know much about the society they live in and who face challenges with the Danish language. Furthermore, these women often have a lack of trust to the municipal system. The Neighbourhood Mothers can establish trusting and equal conversations with vulnerable women, because they live in the same local area and can talk in their native language. The Neighbourhood Mothers also have an experience with “being new” in Denmark.

“A lot of people associate the municipality with something terrible – something that is dangerous. That is how they grew up with the government. But if the Neighbourhood Mothers join them to the Citizen Service, the women feel secure and believe that the place is not that bad after all.”

Professional operator, 2012



What the Neighbourhood Mothers are about

The Neighbourhood Mothers are passionate about making a change. A lot of them have immigrated to Denmark as adults and have felt lost.

They have fought through unknown systems, learned a new language, and yet found their foothold in a new country.

The Neighbourhood Mothers' wish is to help other women in understanding the society and the opportunities in Denmark, so the women are able to take control over their own lives and find their own place in Denmark.

The Knowledge of the Neighbourhood Mothers

The Neighbourhood Mothers know what it means to be a woman, a mother and arriving in a new country. The personal knowledge is combined with factual knowledge in the basic education of the Neighbourhood Mothers. The Neighbourhood Mothers are taught in 14 different subjects about e.g. family life and the offers from the municipality. They pass on the knowledge to the vulnerable women. Then the women can make choices based on the knowledge from the Neighbourhood Mothers.

The Neighbourhood Mothers' role in the local area

The Neighbourhood Mothers should be seen as *a part of* a larger initiative in a local area, *not* as an initiative *next to* or in *competition* with other existing initiatives. The Neighbourhood Mothers become a part of the existing initiatives in the local area through cooperation in establishing e.g. a summer party or a café for women. Furthermore, other people refer the vulnerable women to the Neighbourhood Mothers.



“When I arrived in Denmark, I did not talk Danish and everything was so new and unknown. I had a lot of plans because I had heard about the opportunities in Denmark. One can do a lot of things, but the real question is how? I did not know anyone and I stood there all by myself and had to figure out how to do everything on my own. It was not easy and it was definitely not fun. So basically, it was not as how I had imagined it would be. It did not take a day or a couple of months; instead, it took several years to learn everything. On top of that, I got children. I will not let this happen to others. I work hard so that other women do not get delayed with their plans. I will tell them about the opportunities they are offered from the society. It is my dream as a Neighbourhood Mother. It is that dream that I work to fulfil.”

Shazia Mughal, Coordinator and a Neighbourhood Mother in Frederiksberg, Denmark

“They can look at me. They can look at how I arrived to Denmark and how I handle everything now. When I tell them my story, I can feel, that it helps knowing that I have been in the same situation as them”

Neighbourhood Mother, 2009

Examples of the Neighbourhood Mothers' role and activities around the country

- A nurse visits a Turkish family, who needs a different kind of help than what she can offer so she refers the woman to the Neighbourhood Mothers.
- The Neighbourhood Mothers guide women to the family counselling, the citizen service, gymnastics, women café, the nurse and the jobcentre etc.
- The Neighbourhood Mothers have become co-organizer of an already existing café for women **in a social development plan in challenged housing areas.**¹

¹ A social development plan in challenged housing areas is a temporary social initiative in exposed local areas



- The Neighbourhood Mothers have arranged an event about communication with teenagers in cooperation with the local library.
- The Neighbourhood Mothers cooperate with a school about getting the parents with an ethnic minority background to attend parent-teacher meetings.
- The Neighbourhood Mothers arrange presentations with the local police and with the local mosque.

Understanding the Neighbourhood Mothers as a part of a bigger local association is, in this case, called the patchwork-model

The Patchwork-model



The Patchwork-model illustrates how the Neighbourhood Mothers group interact in the local area in close cooperation with other local operators. The operators are different depending on what makes sense and what is needed in the specific local area. The pros about thinking the Neighbourhood Mothers as a part of other initiatives in the local area is to avoid “competition” and gathering the forces to an even better support for the women and families in the local area. One of the pros is also to ensure anchoring and involvement of the Neighbourhood Mothers in the local area.



“The Neighbourhood Mothers are the key contact to a lot of people. In connection to our project (Master plan, red), we have established a network with approximately a 100 people and I dare to say, that this network is created by the Neighbourhood Mothers. Meaning, that we could not have done this without the help from Neighbourhood Mothers. They have been the foundation and the reason for the success of our activities.”

Professional operator, 2012

The Neighbourhood Mothers’ outreach

The Neighbourhood Mothers’ have a fairly unique way of getting in contact with women, who others have difficulties of reaching. Therefore, proactive activities are a central part of the Neighbourhood Mothers concept.

They are taught methods through their basic education which they can use for contacting women, talking to them, building bridges and create a network for them. The Neighbourhood Mothers are flexible and ultra-local. I.e. they help in their local area, they attend different local activities and events. Furthermore, they can also be met on the playground or in the local laundry rooms.

The methods of the Neighbourhood Mothers

Conversation - The Neighbourhood Mothers talk to women about subjects, which are relevant for the specific woman.

Building bridges - The Neighbourhood Mothers build bridges between the women and the local area, e.g. informing the women about the offers from the municipality and other associations.

Network - The Neighbourhood Mothers support women in meeting other women and attending different events.



The principles of the Neighbourhood Mothers

Self-help

The Neighbourhood Mothers are educated in supporting other women so the women can take control of their own lives. The Neighbourhood Mothers are not giving advice, but instead, they listen, show different opportunities and help the women in making the right decisions.

The Neighbourhood Mother meets the woman with respect and often in her own native language, which strengthens the belief of the woman in taking control of her own life because she can identify herself with the Neighbourhood Mother.

Spreading knowledge through the network

The Neighbourhood Mothers' concept is based on what others already do. They share their knowledge and therefore their experiences are shared and used by others.

This is the method used by the Neighbourhood Mothers: Giving a group of women information and factual knowledge about the society and sharing this particular knowledge with other women. The strength lies in the knowledge from personal experiences but also the factual knowledge about the local society and professional topics.

“I always tell the woman that I will go with her the first time. The second time I will stand next to her and help her, but the time after that, she will do it on her own. I always tell the woman: A woman should be able to stand on her own feet.”

Serife Seven, Neighbourhood Mother



“We know, that you do not share knowledge through the local paper in the local area. Instead, everything is transferred by word of mouth. This is what we use in cooperation with the Neighbourhood Mothers because they tell other people, what we tell them.”

Professional operator, 2012

3 examples of work done by the Neighbourhood Mothers

The woman and the Neighbourhood Mother (Conversation)

Somewhere in Denmark, a Neighbourhood Mother was contacted by a person, who was worried about her neighbour. The Neighbourhood Mother rang the doorbell and saw a woman with her two children. Her husband had left her. She did not have any money or food and she did not know anyone besides her husband and his family. She could not speak Danish and she did not know what the municipality was or how she could get help. The Neighbourhood Mother began contacting the municipality, assigned the children for kindergarten, she got the woman registered at the jobcentre and even enrolled her in a Danish Course. After a short while, the woman and her two children were now secured and on the right track. The woman is now dreaming of beginning an education.

The school and the Neighbourhood Mothers (Building bridges)

Somewhere else in Denmark a school was fighting to get parents with ethnic minority backgrounds to attend parent-teacher meetings and other events at the school. They felt like they had tried everything but nothing had worked. They asked the local Neighbourhood Mothers for help, who stepped up and called the parents right before an event to encourage them to join. The cooperation has been a success and basically, all the parents are now attending the parent-teacher meetings.



A women café and the Neighbourhood Mother (Creating network)

A third place in Denmark three Neighbourhood Mothers had made a café for women in cooperation with a social worker. The Neighbourhood Mothers made sure to invite different people, who would do sessions for the women. There was a doctor telling about diseases and a psychologist telling about teenagers.

A Neighbourhood Mother had been helping her neighbour in understanding the Danish system. Helping with the children, going to meetings etc. The woman was alone, she had no husband, nor friends or family and she spoke Danish poorly.

The Neighbourhood Mother invited the woman to the café every Friday. In the beginning the woman refused to attend because she was shy and afraid of the outcome. After a lot of invitations, she ended up joining the Neighbourhood Mother and became part of a network.

Even though the woman still faces a lot of issues, she now has a network, which can support her. She also has a place where she can talk about her problems.

The National Organisation

All the local Neighbourhood Mother groups are attached the National Organisation. The National Organisation has a small secretariat, which supports the group with professional and organisational coaching. Furthermore, the groups are offered on-going national courses, a yearly national meeting and on-going relevant knowledge. The National Organisation is therefore a solid anchor for each Neighbourhood Mother group.

Organising the local organisation

First of all, there is a coordinator on the local plan, who has the main responsibility for the initiative and who spends approximately a day a week in at least a year on this task. Second of all, means are needed to plan and complete a basic education as a minimum for the later activities. They receive this manual, scripts, and materials for the basic education, advice and guidance with more free means from the National Organisation.



The initiators sign a contract or a cooperation agreement with the National Organisation at the start up of a Neighbourhood Mother group. The contract secures a consistent concept and recognisability through out the country. The National Organisation assures the experiences and knowledge being shared and used.

Use: Contract with the National Organisation, bydelsmor@socialtansvar.dk

Use: Budget frame for the start up of the Neighbourhood Mothers, bydelsmor@socialtansvar.dk

The manual for start up

The manual shows how to get a good start with a local Neighbourhood Mother initiative and how to ensure anchoring and progress.

The goal for the Neighbourhood Mother group is to become a voluntary social association with local support and the support from an organisational volunteer. But before this can happen, several aspects need to be in place.

This manual will be a guide through four phases, who are crucial steps on the way of having success with the local Neighbourhood Mother initiative.

There will be referred to worksheets and other materials illustrated with this icon.

All the materials can be found on www.bydelsmor.dk. This can be used as inspiration or for templates. These are guiding materials and can be adjusted to local circumstances. These materials are only available in Danish.

Phase 1: Recruitment and establishment of network

The first phase is about establishing a dedicated professional network, which supports an upcoming Neighbourhood Mother initiative.

The operators - who want to cooperate with the Neighbourhood Mothers on a long term - are gathered. Furthermore, the qualified and suitable



women are recruited for the education.

Phase 2: The basic education of the Neighbourhood Mothers

A basic education is needed in order to become a Neighbourhood Mother. The National Organisation offers 14 classes for the basic education. Through the education, the Neighbourhood Mothers gain professional knowledge, build a network, and receive information about the work as a Neighbourhood Mother. They also get an understanding and practical experiences about the work.

Phase 3: Getting started

When the basic education is completed and the Neighbourhood Mothers have received their diplomas, the new Neighbourhood Mothers need to begin their work as volunteers. In this phase, it is all about making the Neighbourhood Mothers confident in the new methods and making them take ownership of the Neighbourhood Mother initiative.

At the same time, there is a focus on creating awareness about the Neighbourhood Mothers in the neighbourhood and also between operators in the local area. There has to be found one volunteer, who will support the group and in cooperation with the Neighbourhood Mothers take over and manage the coordinator's task.

Phase 4: Working as an association

In the fourth and last phase the ownership is passed on from the paid coordinator to the Neighbourhood Mothers and an organisational volunteer as mentioned above. The volunteer coordinator supports the Neighbourhood Mothers with founding an association and help securing the organisational frame around the initiative. The volunteer coordinator also examines the possibilities for seeking means for the activities. The National Organisation has created a guide on how to organise an organisation which step by step guides the people with no experience in how to form an organisation and how to later work as one.



Story from a Neighbourhood Mother

"I have helped women through 23 years. The education as a Neighbourhood Mother proofs that I have something to offer. I have a lot of personal experience and knowledge, which I would like to pass on. As a Neighbourhood Mother I help abused women moving on in life. For I nstance with getting out of the shelter and get a flat. I also help abused women with how they can help their children. I want women to be strong. We have to educate and stand our own feet. I want to be a role model of a strong woman."

Tiahes Thiaharaja, Neighbourhood Mother in Holstebro, Denmark



START UP

When it is decided to establish a Neighbourhood Mother group, the first step is to find a dedicated coordinator, who over the next year will spend approximately 8 hours per week to start up and anchor the concept of the Neighbourhood Mothers on a local level.

It will be her job to recruit Neighbourhood Mothers, secure local support, coordinate the basic education, support the Neighbourhood Mothers and make sure, that the transition from basic education to volunteer work succeeds.

A coordinator's job is as following:

- Motivating volunteer workers and professionals
- Have a proper local network
- Educate dialogically
- Manage volunteers
- Work targeted for anchoring

To get started the coordinator has to secure local support for the Neighbourhood Mothers, which is done by gathering a resource group with local operators. The resource group has to make sure that the Neighbourhood Mothers are not just a project but, in fact, a permanent local initiative with support in the local area. Furthermore, in cooperation with the resource group, the right women need to be recruited and the basic education has to be planned with local instructors.



Goals

The goals for the next 3 months are as following:

A solid and obligating network is established around the Neighbourhood Mothers

Qualified Neighbourhood Mothers are recruited

The basic education is planned

"The Neighbourhood Mothers are very important for foreign women because a lot of them are just sitting at home. I would like to help by telling how everything is in Denmark. It is important because our children are growing up in this country"

Neighbourhood Mother, 2012

The coordinator's tasks – Step by step

Cooperation with a local resource group for the start up

Begin by gathering a resource group, who will split the responsibility for the start up of the Neighbourhood Mothers and the anchoring with the coordinator.

The resource group can be representatives from the library, Social development plans in challenged housing areas, health care, municipal administrations, job centres, language centre, voluntary centres, and key persons with a large network in the target group.

The point is, that it is professionals, who work in the local area and are interested in cooperation with the upcoming Neighbourhood Mothers.

As illustrated in the Patchwork- Model (page 6) the Neighbourhood Mothers should not be a new initiative *next to* or in *competition* with other initiatives, but instead be seen as a part of the other initiatives and activities of the local area. The resource group will function as a "bank of



knowledge”, which can help finding local instructors and help finding women in the local area who are suitable for being Neighbourhood Mothers.

Conduct 1-3 meetings with the resource group, where the content will be:

- The group gets an understanding of what the Neighbourhood Mothers are and are able to on a local level as well as on a national level
- The group gets an understanding of the process from start up to anchoring, e.g. the 4 phases and the patchwork model
- The group knows the criteria of who can become good Neighbourhood Mothers
- The group tells what each individual can contribute with for the success of Neighbourhood Mothers, e.g. booking rooms, economics, time, print and professional coaching
- The group agrees on time and place for the basic education
- The group makes a plan for finding and recruiting the women, who can become Neighbourhood Mothers
- The group suggests relevant local educators for the basic education

“We invited both of the local social housing master plans and Miljøpunkt-Amager (Red. Centre of Environment-Amager) in the resource group at the start up of a Neighbourhood Mother group in Sundby Bibliotek, (Red. Sundby Library). This means, that the Neighbourhood Mothers were already a part of the local network and activities from the very beginning.”

Helene Filskov Bjerre Jensen, Coordinator for the Neighbourhood Mothers in Amager, Denmark

Use the folder ”Become a Neighbourhood Mother”, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use the ”Poster” as an invitation, www.bydelsmor.dk



Use the "Tasks of the resource group", worksheet 1.1

Use the "Education plan for the Neighbourhood Mothers", worksheet 1.2

Recommendations

Show the resource group videos and pictures from the website www.bydelsmor.dk or the National Organisation's Facebook profile to give them an insight and understanding of who and what the Neighbourhood Mothers are about.

Invite a consultant from the National Organisation and an experienced Neighbourhood Mother to tell about the Neighbourhood Mother concept.

Recruit upcoming Neighbourhood Mothers

Subsequently; it is crucial to recruit the right women. It takes time. It is not all women, who can become well functioning Neighbourhood Mothers. This is why it is important to be aware of the criteria in the selection of the Neighbourhood Mothers. For instance, it is important to point out that the basic education is not the goal itself but the mean to perform the voluntary work as a Neighbourhood Mother. The motivation should primarily lie in becoming better at helping other women. Even though it is difficult to tell a woman, that she cannot attend, the focus should be on the competences needed for the job. It can ruin a group if there are more people, who do not have the right skills or competences. Have in mind, that if a woman is rejected for attending the education as a Neighbourhood Mother, she can still help the Neighbourhood Mothers in activities and participate in that way.

Conduct one or two information meetings, where interested women can attend and hear about the Neighbourhood Mothers. Inform thoroughly that their motivation must primarily be based on the voluntary work after the education.



Conduct interviews with the women who have signed up. Spend approximately 15 min with each woman and make sure, that she is the one talking the most and not you.

Experiences show a dropout of 2-3 women each educational course.

Criteria for upcoming Neighbourhood Mothers:

- Has the will and lust to help other women with moving on in their lives
- Has the energy and resources to help others
- Is open, extrovert and find it easy to get in contact with others
- Has a large network
- Has good language skills in the language spoken in the specific country for building bridges between the isolated women and the society
- Is passionate about the volunteer work as a Neighbourhood Mother after the education

The Neighbourhood Mother group must:

- Represent the different groups that the local area consists of
- Represent the diverse and different social backgrounds in the local area
- A solid Neighbourhood Mother group consist of 12-15 women

"During the recruitment, I pay attention to if the women have open, welcoming and friendly faces. It is important that they can get in contact with others when they are Neighbourhood Mothers and a friendly face is an invitation for a conversation."

Bodil Bahnsen, Leader of the Health Service, Slagelse, Denmark and the Coordinator for the Neighbourhood Mother in Slagelse



Use: "Checklist to interviews" worksheet 1.3

Use: "Noteschedule for interviews", worksheet 1.4

Recommendations

Invite an experienced Neighbourhood Mother to the information meeting, who can tell about her experiences as a Neighbourhood Mother.

This gives a proper understanding of what it entails to be a Neighbourhood Mother. If not familiar with a Neighbourhood Mother, contact the National Organisation.

Be at least two people at the interviews. This will later help you to evaluate the women jointly.

Make time to select the best suitable women for Neighbourhood Mothers.

Recruit a couple of Neighbourhood Mothers with an ethnic background as people from the specific country.

"A rule of thumb for finding suitable Neighbourhood Mothers is to ask oneself if this woman needs a Neighbourhood Mother or if she can become a good Neighbourhood Mother? By sticking to this distinction one has already come far in choosing the most suitable women"

Maja Langhorn, Consultant at the National Organization

Read through the material about the basic education to get an overview over the content of the classes. Get in contact with local professionals and instructors, who can deliver and conduct the classes. Most professionals educate others as a part of their work and do not have to get paid.



Ask the professionals if there is a possibility that the education can take place in the institution the professional represents. Then the Neighbourhood Mothers will get familiar with the place, they will later refer the women to.

Use the “Basic education package” www.bydelsmor.dk

”By visiting the places, the Neighbourhood Mothers need knowledge about, makes it easier for the Neighbourhood Mothers to create an image of the place. E.g. we attended an integrated day care centre/kindergarten and saw children and kindergarten teachers in their familiar surroundings and listened to the development of children. It makes sense regarding knowledge from the bilingual supervisor.”

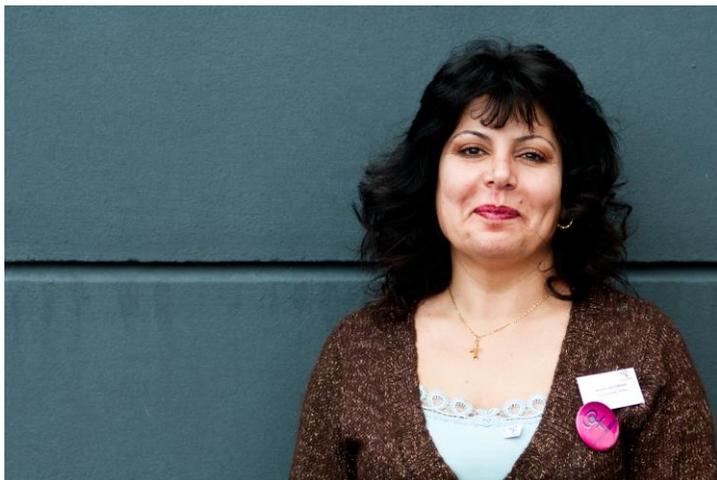
Kirsten Birk, Nurse, MSP and mediator for the Neighbourhood Mothers, Skanderborg Kommune, Denmark

”It makes a lot of sense to be educated at the place where we will refer the women to someday. When you have been to the place yourself, you understand a lot more. You know, how to get there and meet some of the people, who you might refer to later. It is very comforting for all the women that you know all of this beforehand. We visited the Health Care Centre and heard about health and psychiatry where there was a session about mental diseases. As Neighbourhood Mothers it will be a lot easier to use the places we have visited rather than those we only have heard about. I wish we had visited more places.

Laila Hammouti, Neighbourhood Mother in Ydre Nørrebro, Denmark



Story from a Neighbourhood Mother



”I am very happy to be a Neighbourhood Mother. I have learned, that when you are in trouble, you should not hide or just talk to the closest relatives. You should not be embarrassed of asking for help from people you do not know, for instance a psychologist or other experts. They can give you help with an open heart and knowledge so you can move on.

As a Neighbourhood Mother, I also learned that it is good to talk open about everything in life, even about sexuality etc. For instance, I have started talking to my daughter about menstruation so she does not get afraid, when she starts bleeding. There are a lot of foreign mothers, who are afraid to have those kinds of conversations with their children. Poor girls. They stand with blood in their panties and do not understand what is going on. That was my experience, when I was a young girl.

Now, I have become more open. I talk about subjects that I was not able to before. I wish that more foreign women would do the same.

I know how important it is to find someone, who gives you a feeling of safety and knowing that they will keep your secrets.

This is why it is very important, that I, as a Neighbourhood Mother, do not tell others secrets, when I help women.

As a Neighbourhood Mother, I have also learned, that all the strength I have and everything I have learned should not be kept to myself. I have to pass it on. I find happiness in sharing my experiences with others. I have helped women with vast issues, which made them very happy and so am I, because I remember, what it was like to be in their situation. “

Manilla Kariakous, Neighbourhood Mother in Viby, Jylland, Denmark.



THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MOTHERS' BASIC EDUCATION

The mandatory basic education, which is one of the key pillars in the Neighbourhood Mother concept, begins when the upcoming Neighbourhood Mothers are recruited. Many women who become Neighbourhood Mothers already help other women in their network by sharing knowledge and experiences. Through the basic education, the Neighbourhood Mothers become even more qualified to help women on a local level. In the basic education, they build up the professional and methodological foundation for the voluntary work they are about to begin.

The Neighbourhood Mothers are presented to four different themes in the 14 lectures of the basic education:

- Knowledge about family matters
- Knowledge about health
- Knowledge about their local community and society in general
- Practical experience with the methods of the Neighbourhood Mothers

"I am usually a very shy person, but during the basic education, I learned how important it is to approach a woman in need. And I learned how to do it. Then one day, I saw a woman on a bench who looked sad. I thought to myself: "Come on, Taghreed - go and talk to her". And I did it! We talked for a while and she needed a lot of help in her life. I am helping her with these things now and she is very happy."

Taghreed Ahmad, Neighbourhood Mother, Ydre Nørrebro, København



Goals:

The goals for the next 3½-months:

The Neighbourhood Mothers have completed the basic education, received a diploma and can begin their work as Neighbourhood Mothers.

The Neighbourhood Mothers have been presented to the important operators in the local area and have learned how to use them.

The Neighbourhood Mothers have built a strong community, a Neighbourhood Mother identity and have also gained strong and professional Neighbourhood Mother skills.

The basic education is also an empowerment process for each upcoming Neighbourhood Mother. During the education they learn how to understand themselves in a new way by reflecting upon it with the others. It often triggers an identity process, and a new personal story is created within each Neighbourhood Mother. The story focuses on the skills of the Neighbourhood Mothers, e.g. language, experience with being new in Denmark, energy to help others, as well as the ability to create reliable relations with isolated women and make a special effort in the local area. It is the coordinator's task to support the professional aspects as well as the personal learning process the Neighbourhood Mothers are going through.



The coordinator's tasks: Step by step

Coordinate the basic education of the Neighbourhood Mothers

The coordinator is in charge of coordinating and completing the basic education. Furthermore the coordinator has the responsibility of the practicalities. E.g. meals, materials, gifts for the educators and for organising a joyous event where the Neighbourhood Mothers receives their diplomas.

The National Organisation offers a free educational package. The package contains four parts:

- **Part 1: Introduction** – To the principles behind the education and a formula of how to plan an interactive education.
- **Part 2: Plan for the basic education** – An overview of the lectures for the Neighbourhood Mothers and what subjects they need to be educated in.
- **Part 3: List of materials** – Inspiration for learning materials.
- **Part 4: Activities for the education** – Concrete examples of exercises that can be used in the education.

Use: “Educational-package”, www.bydelsmor.dk

The coordinator has the responsibility of making sure the professional lectures are combined with the Neighbourhood Mothers own experiences and the reality they live in. Therefore, it is important to instruct the local educators in the interactive educational form.



"I always say: I used to be the woman who needed help. After I became a Neighbourhood Mother, I am the woman helping others."

Amina, Neighbourhood Mother

Use: "The structure of the education" in the Educational-Package, www.bydelsmor.dk

Each Neighbourhood Mother receives a diploma when the education is completed. The National Organisation issues the diploma. It is handed over by the local Mayor, Social Committee Chairman, or some other public person. Usually at the City Hall or another official place.

Create a link between the basic education and the future Neighbourhood Mother initiative

During the education the Neighbourhood Mothers can get carried away by their own reflections and learning in relation to their own life. It is an important process and there must be time for it. At the same time, it becomes an on-going task for the coordinator to remind the Neighbourhood Mothers that the education is not the goal itself, but a tool to help other women afterwards. The coordinator can do the above by using the Neighbourhood Mothers' new knowledge and reflections in relation to different cases and by facilitating the recommended home-tasks.

To help the Neighbourhood Mothers remember the new knowledge and keep track of the professional network which is built during the education, the coordinator can after each lecture make a slide with the educators contact information and picture, three key points from the lecture and contact information to the institutions, that are relevant for the Neighbourhood Mothers.



Use “Contact list”, working sheet 2.1, www.bydelsmor.dk

For the last lecture invite an experienced Neighbourhood Mother to tell about her own work as a Neighbourhood Mother. It gives a better image of what a Neighbourhood Mother does. Furthermore, it gives inspiration and generates ideas to what the Neighbourhood Mothers want to do first as Neighbourhood Mothers.

Recommendations:

Use the Neighbourhood Mothers own stories or experiences as stories. It makes the lectures more personal and motivating.

Make sure that the upcoming Neighbourhood Mothers participate in the annual National Meeting in October even though they are not fully educated. It is a day, which makes them understand that they are part of something bigger.

“For the last lecture we had a visit by a very skilled Pakistani Neighbourhood Mother from Frederiksberg. She told us how they are working as Neighbourhood Mothers. We were very impressed by how confident, calm, and brave she was to stand in front of strangers without being nervous.”

Aziza Ahmad, Neighbourhood Mother, Amager, København



Story from a Neighbourhood Mother

“Being a Neighbourhood Mother makes me happy. There is a meaning with my life when I can help others. I try to help lonely women, so they can have a better life in Denmark. It has given me confidence to help others and I also believe more in myself. I have become strong. I want the women I meet to believe in themselves.

I know what it is like being new in Denmark. For me, coming to Denmark was a relieving feeling.

I am a refugee from Afghanistan and came to Denmark with my family in 1999. We had no idea of what kind of society it was. But my life began when I arrived in Denmark. Somehow we could breathe again, but it was tough starting from scratch. I realised that a fresh start was needed in order to begin a new life and a new existence. Whoa, what a challenge! And now I am the one helping women, who are in the same situation as I was when I first came to Denmark.

Even though the concept of the Neighbourhood Mothers is to help others, it has also helped me. I have developed a lot through my work as a Neighbourhood Mother. I got a new network, new knowledge about health and parenting, as well as knowledge about cultural differences. The knowledge I have gained has given me new opportunities for being a citizen in society and a mother at home. For instance, I know how to help my children with homework and I have a much better understanding of Danish culture than I used to have. I would like to pass on this knowledge!

It makes me happy to think about all of the things that have happened after I became a Neighbourhood Mother.”

Saleha Amiri, Neighbourhood Mother, Sønderborg





THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MOTHERS GET STARTET

When the Neighbourhood Mothers' basic education has come to an end, they have to practice on how to be Neighbourhood Mothers in real life. It is crucial that they are comfortable with the key task – approaching women, they do not necessarily know and guide them further on to specialists with relevant expertise. In order for this to happen, the group has to practice in sharing experiences with the coordinator and each other. There is still focus on learning and development in this phase.

Moreover, it is important that the group establishes unity, a common identity and professionalism as Neighbourhood Mothers. It is the feeling of a common goal, a common energy and taking ownership for the group activities and progress, which will carry the work further on when they become a volunteer social association. The time has come for the organisational volunteer to become a part of the community. All of this is the foundation for the development from being a group with a paid coordinator to becoming an association who cooperates with local operators.

At the same time, it is central to the work, that the Neighbourhood Mothers' target group, residents and different professionals in the local area get to know who the Neighbourhood Mothers are, what they are able to do and how to contact them. The visibility and being used as a Neighbourhood Mother keeps the initiative going. This is also creating a strong feeling of identity within the Neighbourhood Mothers.



The coordinator's tasks – Step by step

Focus on the core task (of the Neighbourhood Mothers)

The Neighbourhood Mothers met once a week during the education. In this phase meetings are held every second week in order to create a learning process, where the Neighbourhood Mothers get as much coaching on their Neighbourhood Mother tasks as possible. It is also a transition to a phase where the meeting frequency will be reduced. Within the next 3-4 months they will only meet once pr. month in order to have time for their core task.

Some Neighbourhood Mothers are ready for big tasks right away, while others are more insecure about how to get started with all they have learned. Therefore, the coordinator must support each Neighbourhood Mother differently.

Goals:

The goals for the following 3 months are:

The Neighbourhood Mothers are more comfortable with solving the core task.

The Neighbourhood Mothers feel united and have started to feel ownership over the work and goals.

The Neighbourhood Mothers are known in the local area.

An organisational volunteer is introduced to the group.



“A coordinator should always be capable of believing in and visualizing four essential understandings towards the Neighbourhood Mothers: You do know something, You are able to do something, You want something and you are doing something”.

Zeljka Secerbegovic, Senior Consultant in the National Organisation

ALWAYS begin the meetings with experience-sharing so each Neighbourhood Mother will get coaching on the way she helps women. Through feedback and experience-sharing, the Neighbourhood Mothers become better equipped to deal with the situations they face. Through the coaching-process the Neighbourhood Mothers get a feeling of BEING an actual Neighbourhood Mother and that they DO make a difference. It motivates them to do more.

Subsequently, use the following time to fulfil interview-schedules so everyone is familiar with the schedule and is able to see their impact.

Give the Neighbourhood Mothers a simple overview of the next three months so they all know the framework and goals. Do not make the agenda for the meetings too long and remember there should be room for small talk in order to maintain the social relations.

“It is important that we share stories and learn from each other in the group; that we are open and show each other trust, and that we are there for one another. Together, we learn that you can take care of yourself in different ways, because if you cannot take care of yourself, it is difficult to take care of others. When we share experiences, we get to talk about ethics and personal boundaries, as well as when to guide the women to outside assistance”

Jytte Tanggaard Lorenzen, Coordinator for the Neighbourhood Mothers on Ydre Nørrebro, Copenhagen



Recommendations:

Involve the Neighbourhood Mothers in the practical framework for the meeting:

What will we eat?

Should the phones be switched off?

When will there be time for small talk?

Based on experiences, the Neighbourhood Mother groups who are doing well internally and know each other within the group are better at coaching, supporting and helping each other with the Neighbourhood Mother work. The community makes the Neighbourhood Mothers join the important monthly meetings, which will be the core of the initiative in 3-4 months.

Use “Inspiration for the meetings in phase 3”, worksheet 3.1

Use “Agenda for Monthly Meetings” see the Association Guide part 1, p. 21

Use “Experience Exchanging”, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use “Interview-schedule”, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use “Goal for the next 3 months”, worksheet 3.2

Documentation of the Neighbourhood Mother concept

The National Organisation has developed a simple way of documenting the local work by using a standard chart. On www.bydelsmor.dk you can read more about how to use the chart to register the voluntary work of the Neighbourhood Mothers. The results can be used externally to show others how many women you reach out to and thereby ensure the support to the Neighbourhood Mothers. The registration can be used



internally to celebrate how many women the Neighbourhood Mothers have helped.

Recommendations:

Make sure to celebrate the good stories about the women, who have been helped by the Neighbourhood Mothers.

Give each other a hand and praise each other.

Agree on celebrating, for instance, when you have collected 30 charts.

Create unity and ownership

The positive social community is a very important element for motivation of the Neighbourhood Mothers. Therefore, the coordinator must be aware of the social community and that it develops in good terms. For instance, making time to get to know each other better at the meetings, on trips only for the Neighbourhood Mothers or through acknowledging exercises.

This is also the first step for the Neighbourhood Mothers to take ownership of the goals and the work.

The coordinator can mark this by stepping back; by saying it with words, and showing it with actions. For instance, that the coordinator places herself somewhere random in between the Neighbourhood Mothers during the meetings and ask them to talk to each other. She can make one Neighbourhood Mother in charge of the conversation flow, another in charge of taking notes and a third person in charge of collecting interview-schedules. By passing the tasks on with the necessary support, a feeling of responsibility is created, which results in a feeling of ownership among the Neighbourhood Mothers. Supporting this community and ownership is important to ensure that the Neighbourhood Mothers want to continue participating in the initiative. Also that the Neighbourhood Mother work goes in the direction which is in their own interest.

Use: Leadership Course for Neighbourhood Mothers, www.bydelsmor.dk



“My focus as a coordinator at Frederiksberg was that the ownership of the initiative had to be with the Neighbourhood Mothers and not with me as the coordinator. After the basic education we quickly handed over the responsibility of the group to one of the Neighbourhood Mothers. The most important thing in this process is choosing the right Neighbourhood Mother to be in charge of the group. Later on making sure that she gets the right support in terms of the knowledge and resources needed in order to fulfil the task. It is not easy, and it requires resources and an understanding of equal cooperation, but it is a huge advantage if they can do it by themselves.”

Dorthe Qwist Greve, Integration Coordinator, Frederiksberg Municipality

Recommendations:

Organise the meeting in a way, that makes time for a social exercise, where the coordinator is in charge of Neighbourhood Mothers talking two and two about something positive that has happened in their life since the last time they met.

Organise it in a way so they do not talk to the person next to them. In that way, the coordinator can support the women in getting to know each other within the group.

Purchase a bell for the conductor of the meeting. It can make it a bit fun to control the meeting. Write the agenda and make it visible for everyone to see it; this way everyone can be responsible for the points.

Purchase a briefcase where you can collect the interview-schedules and another briefcase where contact information and referrals can be collected.



Use “Energizers”, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use “Good tips for creating Ownership”, worksheet. 3.3

Inform the local area about the Neighbourhood Mothers

In order to get the Neighbourhood Mothers started and get acknowledged as Neighbourhood Mothers, the local area must be informed about them, what they do and how to get in contact with them. It can be done in the following ways:

- Send information to the professionals, who have instructed the Neighbourhood Mothers and to all institutions the Neighbourhood Mothers have heard about
- Make agreements on the Neighbourhood Mothers going out and telling about what they are capable of to relevant collaborators and at places where women meet. It gives both the women and professionals more will to contact a Neighbourhood Mother when they have met one.
- Support the Neighbourhood Mothers who want to talk about the Neighbourhood Mothers in more formal contexts.
- Make sure that the Neighbourhood Mothers always have folders with contact information and possibly a business card they can hand out
- The local newspaper or the local media are good information sources to tell about the Neighbourhood Mothers
- Pay attention to the opportunities being included in cooperation's, which the Neighbourhood Mothers find interesting. For instance being a co-organiser of events in the local area. The Neighbourhood Mothers at Indre Nørrebro cooperate with a Social development plan in challenged housing areas about a professional café for women, where a social counsellor and other professionals are present with the women. Help the Neighbourhood Mothers with sorting out in the offers they get about cooperation so that they have time to focus on the core task as well as time to take care of themselves.



- Have a meeting with the resource group to get the patchwork-model to make sense. Use the worksheet you filled out in the start-up phase and assess whether or not the allocation of responsibilities fit the new reality.
- Consider continuously if other operators should be invited to the resource group to ensure the overall anchoring on a local level.

“Mood-check” has been a good way of starting our meetings. It is a quick round, before the meeting starts, where everyone can share an experience with the others, explaining why they are in a good or bad mood or just in between. When you have had the chance to share a bit about your day, it becomes easier to focus on the meeting. I think that the group has gained a better understanding and empathy for each other and has gotten to know each other better by starting every single meeting with this small exercise.”

Hildur Thorisdottir, Social worker, Kvarterhuset Søndermarken

Use “Information letter about contact to the Neighbourhood Mothers” worksheet 3.4

Use “Make a presentation about Neighbourhood Mothers” in the educational package, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use the folders “Meet a Neighbourhood Mother” and “Folder for collaborators”, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use “The tasks of the resource group”, worksheet 1.1

Use: “The guide for the official Neighbourhood Mothers business cards” on www.bydelsmor.dk



“It worked very well that it was the Neighbourhood Mothers that told about their personal stories instead of a co-worker. It became very clear to us that the Neighbourhood Mothers can help many women and that they have a passion for it. It also became clear that we, as professionals, can cooperate with the Neighbourhood Mothers about some particular cases, for instance getting people to understand the system and newly arrived families. The Neighbourhood Mothers can teach us the ground rules within cultures. At the same time we realised that the Neighbourhood Mothers know many women and many families. They have a big network that we, as professionals, can use.”

Birte Brøndum-Nielsen, Department of Children and Families i Herning Kommune

Recommendations:

BE AWARE, that the Neighbourhood Mothers are not used by other initiatives for recruitment and cooking, but are seen as equal partners.

Recommendations:

Make individual business cards for the Neighbourhood Mothers. To have a business card underlines the professionalism and creates a feeling of pride. Business cards make it easy for the Neighbourhood Mothers to choose for themselves, which women they would like to give their personal contact information to. Make the women carefully consider if they want a picture on the business card.

“To go out and tell about the Neighbourhood Mothers and my experiences to professionals gives me more confidence. I get better at communicating in Danish. I look forward to each time we will tell about the Neighbourhood Mothers and share our experiences.”

Ümmühan Sûzme, Neighbourhood Mother in Herning



Introducing the Organisational Volunteer

Find an organisational volunteer who can take over when the paid coordinator steps back within approximately half a year. It is the trustful relation between the organisational volunteer and the Neighbourhood Mothers that is one of the decisive factors for the cooperation to be functioning well. They need to get to know each other and the organisational volunteer has to be familiar with the Neighbourhood Mother concept before she takes over.

First of all the organisational volunteer must find the fellowship with the Neighbourhood Mothers interesting and be able to work with the Neighbourhood Mothers as equal partners. It has to be a woman who has a sense for empowerment and knows how to look for competences in people. She has to be able to create an organisational overview and a local network. Furthermore, she needs to have the will to work with motivation and how to create unity in the voluntary work.

Send the organisational volunteer on a visit to the National Organisation so she gets an insight of the general organisation and how she can use the National Organisation.

Use: “Job-add – Organisational Volunteer”, worksheet 3.5”

Use: “Tips on how to recruit an Organisational Volunteer”, worksheet 3.6

“The most important aspect for a productive cooperation is to know each other well from the start so that you are not “Neighbourhood Mothers” vs. “Voluntary Students” but all the other: women, enthusiasts, mothers and so on. That has been the core to us and the fundament to a good cooperation at eye level.”

Laure Yde, Organisational Volunteer, Neighbourhood Mothers, Amager



“I helped starting the Neighbourhood Mothers in Lyngby-Taarbæk. After the first year I did not have more hours left for the Neighbourhood Mothers. I was a bit worried of what would happen since the group was not quite settled. Luckily, the Neighbourhood Mothers found a voluntary coordinator who could support them in their work. We are still in touch. I refer women to the Neighbourhood Mothers and they can always contact me if they need help. It is absolutely amazing that the voluntary forces now are in control.”

Bente M. Vinten, Health Visitor, Public Health Service, Lyngby-Taarbæk Municipality



Story from a Neighbourhood Mother



“I am already used to helping others so the Neighbourhood Mothers basic education fits perfectly to my skills. I have had problems, which I had to deal with all by myself. Therefore, I am thinking that there must be women who are feeling like I did, and I would like to help them. I have for instance helped a woman with filling out her tax-card. I have also helped a woman with getting a discount on the medicine she needed. I went with her to the pharmacy and told her what she should tell her own doctor to get a discount.”

Virginia Alipour, Neighbourhood Mother at Indre Nørrebro, Copenhagen



WORKING AS AN ASSOCIATION

When the Neighbourhood Mothers are all set and are doing their voluntary work as Neighbourhood Mothers, the next step is to organise the group as a voluntary social association with an organisational volunteer.

There are several benefits with becoming an association

- The Neighbourhood Mothers get the possibility to apply for economical support on a local level
- It strengthens the Neighbourhood Mothers' leadership and independence
- It creates a solid organisation, which supports the Neighbourhood Mothers' anchoring and make them less vulnerable towards changes as for instance replacement of a coordinator



The Association Guide

As many Neighbourhood Mothers are not familiar with how an association work, The National Organisation has developed an association guide. The guide explains step by step how to found a voluntary social association and how to later work as an association. The association guide is a useful tool for anchoring as an association, because it secures that even though executive board members are replaced, new members will easily get an introduction to what it is like to be in the executive board.

The association guide consists of 5 parts:

- The General Assembly
- The Executive Board work
- Economy
- Fundraising
- PR

Each part consists of guides and worksheets for the association task.

The association guide is for free and is available in a printed edition. It can be obtained by contacting the National Organisation at bydelsmor@socialtansvar.dk. It is also available on www.bydelsmor.dk.

Besides founding an association, this phase is also about creating an overview of the resources and competences in the Neighbourhood Mother group. When everyone has an eye for the competences in each Neighbourhood Mother, it becomes easier to allocate the organisational tasks to strengthen their ownership of the work.



There is still a focus on making the Neighbourhood Mothers stay in the association.

Being a Neighbourhood Mother is voluntary and therefore it is important that there is coherence between what motivates the Neighbourhood Mothers and what they do together in the group.

Goals:

The goals for the next 3 months are:

The Neighbourhood Mothers have founded an association.

The organisational tasks are distributed between the executive board and the organisational volunteer.

The Neighbourhood Mothers' professionalism and motivation for being Neighbourhood Mothers are maintained.

“The formation of the association might have happened a bit too early in the process as some of the Neighbourhood Mothers did not feel ready to take the step. Today, the atmosphere has changed, and we have a committed executive board and a committed association, which stand strong in relation to municipal cooperation and fundraising.”

Maria Hertz Kristensen, project manager and coordinator for the Neighbourhood Mothers in Gadehavegård, Taastrup.

“When I told another Neighbourhood Mother that we would establish an association she got jealous. She said: Wow, you are so cool. We want to be an association too. I thought that was fun”

Rana El Hajj, Neighbourhood Mother in Gladsaxe



The Coordinator's tasks – Step by step

Create an overview over the resources in the Neighbourhood Mother group

It is time to prepare the Neighbourhood Mothers for soon being organised as an association with an organisational volunteer connected.

Identify the possibilities of learning new organisational skills, which can be used at the labour market or in other voluntary contexts.

Create an overview of the existing tasks in order to become an association, as well as an overview of the tasks required in order to maintain the motivation and the community.

Also create an overview of the resources and competences in the group. Meaning, try to assess the Neighbourhood Mothers' individual skills, interest, will, and time in relation to the tasks.

Reflect upon:

- Which skills and motivations are among the Neighbourhood Mothers?
- Who is able to and has the will and time to solve specific tasks?
- What kind of support is needed for handing over the tasks to the Neighbourhood Mothers?
- Who can provide this support? (E.g. the organisational volunteer, other volunteers, or the resource group)
- Which tasks are to be done by others than the Neighbourhood Mothers and the organisational volunteer? (E.g. the resource group or other volunteers)

Individual interviews and conversations are good tools for the coordinator and the Neighbourhood Mother to create a clear overview over skills, energy and will to get involved. The conversation can be based upon an agreement between the Neighbourhood Mother and the association. In



this way, you are able to clarify and align your expectations towards each other. For some Neighbourhood Mothers it will be acknowledging and motivating to be in charge of organisational tasks, but for others it might become a burden. Verbalize this difference in the group so it becomes legitimate that not all Neighbourhood Mothers have the power or wish for the same tasks, but that all contributions are significant.

“Our experience tells us that it is better to have individual interviews with each Neighbourhood Mother to figure out what they are good at, and what they would like to do. If it becomes a conversation in plenum, there might be a risk of someone agreeing to something because they feel pressured, and do not get to say what they want because others sign up for the task”

Siliane Bjerre, Organisational Volunteer, Neighbourhood Mothers, Amager

“There is a lot to keep a track of when you are an association. We have to fundraise, make financial accounting, and a general assembly. Luckily, we have some voluntary women who help us with keeping track of everything and I can see that we are getting better and better”.

Jowaira Hussein, Neighbourhood Mother and chairwoman at Indre Nørrebro

Use “The Association Guide”, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use “Agreement between the Neighbourhood Mother and the group”, worksheet 4.1

Recommendations:

Make time in the group for acknowledging the unique skills and characteristics in each Neighbourhood Mother. This can make you get to know each other better. It can also make each Neighbourhood Mother realise which tasks she finds most interesting.



Establish an association and distribute the tasks

Use the Association Guide to establish and start the work as an association and use it as support in the later work.

When the association is founded and the executive board is elected, the roles and tasks have to be distributed between the executive board and the organisational volunteer. This is done officially at the initial board meeting. Do not distribute all the tasks at once. You can pick the most important tasks and start by distributing them. Remember, that the other Neighbourhood Mothers in the group can handle some the tasks as well.

Remember that the motivation for voluntary work is based on lust and will. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Mother cannot be pushed to do tasks. The coordinator has an on-going task to assess in which pace and what kind of tasks should be given to whom. Have in mind, that the Neighbourhood Mothers also need to have the energy for their primary task: to help other women. Make time for introducing the executive board thoroughly to the tasks they choose in order for them to have the necessary knowledge to carry out the task.

If the Neighbourhood Mother group is relatively small, chances are that most of the Neighbourhood Mothers are in the executive board. It would then make sense to have executive board meetings and monthly meetings combined. The goal is to keep the organisational work at a minimum so the focus is kept on the Neighbourhood Mother work.

“We have experienced that it is very important to have the allocation of tasks settled from the beginning – so everyone knows who is doing what and has a feeling of being an important and irreplaceable part of the group”.

Marianne Ahle Møller, Organisational Volunteer, Neighbourhood Mothers, Indre Nørrebro



The Neighbourhood Mother associations all use the same statutes: The Neighbourhood Mothers' standard statutes are available on www.bydelsmor.dk

Use "Assignment cards", worksheet 4.2

Use "Tips on managing volunteers", worksheet 4.3

Recommendations:

Contact your local voluntary centre to hear about the possibilities for relevant courses for the Neighbourhood Mothers in the executive board. Also look on www.frivillighed.dk to find relevant knowledge or courses here.

Recommendations:

Have only 4 executive board meetings a year.

Long term motivation

The Neighbourhood Mother group has now a new organisational structure. It consists of the chairwoman, the executive board, and the organisational volunteer, who all have management responsibilities. It is important that they know their role. They have to ensure progress in the group work in an acknowledging way and are also responsible for maintaining the motivation among the Neighbourhood Mothers.

It is the (paid) coordinator's task that the organisational volunteer and chairwoman are prepared for this, and that the cooperation works well before she steps back.



The Neighbourhood Mother group has a meeting once a month. Continue starting all monthly meetings with experience-sharing. The coaching ensures that the Neighbourhood Mothers are not alone with their support for women. It is also this coaching which makes the Neighbourhood Mothers better at being Neighbourhood Mothers and takes care of them at the same time. Other than that, the exercise creates motivation because it visualises the important task the Neighbourhood Mothers are solving and the changes they make.

Recommendations:

Remember: To praise each other and the work that has been done at every monthly meeting.

“I give tasks to each Neighbourhood Mother with my support when we make activities. When they get the tasks in their hand with support, they learn how to take responsibility and then they develop and gain confidence”.

Tiaheswery Thiaharaja, Neighbourhood Mother and Chairwoman, Holstebro

Give the Neighbourhood Mothers an overview of group’s tasks over the next year. It gives them an understanding of your work together and separately, and it gives them a common direction and common goal.

Furthermore, it is the organisational volunteer and chairwoman’s finest task to have an eye on what motivates each Neighbourhood Mother in the group to continue being a Neighbourhood Mother. It can be the social relations, new knowledge, professional coaching and development, humour or the common identity and acknowledgement from others. The content of the monthly meetings must meet the Neighbourhood Mothers’ needs.



Use “Experience sharing”, www.bydelsmor.dk

Use “The yearly goal”, worksheet 4.4

Recommendations:

If the organisational volunteer or the Neighbourhood Mother group does not have the necessary professional skills or knowledge of how to properly support the Neighbourhood Mothers, it is possible to find a professional who can participate in this part of the meeting.

“I experience that it motivates the Neighbourhood Mothers to get something in return for the huge work they do, besides acknowledgment. I make sure that they gain new knowledge at almost every meeting. That I invite a guest speaker or we go visit a local offer. Furthermore, we also have 2 social annual events only for Neighbourhood Mothers. I have noticed that it is very important for them to have time for small-talking and not just talking about families “with problems”. Besides this, they can always come to me and talk about how they can help a woman before they find their own way. I think it gives them comfort and motivation to continue with their help.”

Sana Ebdah, Coordinator for the Neighbourhood Mothers at Bispebjerg

Recommendations:

Refresh the knowledge of the Neighbourhood Mothers by having one Neighbourhood Mother preparing a small presentation at a maximum of 10 minutes about a subject, which she finds relevant for the Neighbourhood Mothers. This can be done once in a while.

Use: “How to make a presentation”, www.bydelsmor.dk



Story from a Neighbourhood Mother

“I have always been helping people, ever since I was a child. I helped my mother with going to the doctor and other things. As a Neighbourhood Mother I would like to help families so the children do not have to help their parents. I have helped women with explaining which rights they have. When I see the women I have helped, they give me a clap on the shoulder. Some even cry, because they cannot believe that someone would help them from the bottom of their heart - and for free. It gives me peace and it makes me happy when I have done something good for others.”

Bouchra Chakiri, Neighbourhood Mother at Bispebjerg, Copenhagen



The story behind the Neighbourhood Mothers in Denmark

The story behind the Neighbourhood Mothers started in Berlin, Germany, in 2006, when the former Minister of Integration, Rikke Hvilshøj, was on a study trip. She visited the German Neighbourhood Mothers also known as “Stadteilmütter”. The Minister was inspired and started the Neighbourhood Mother concept in Denmark as a part of the programme for women made by the Ministry of Integration. The first Neighbourhood Mothers were educated in 2008.

The approximately 20 Neighbourhood Mother groups were gathered on the 23rd of March 2011 to ensure the anchoring and development of the Neighbourhood Mothers on a national level. A national secretariat was established primarily to develop a consistent concept out of the many experiences made in whole country and secondly to ensure future anchoring. The tasks for the secretariat are, besides on-going consultancy and support of the Neighbourhood Mothers, to create a larger knowledge of the Neighbourhood Mothers and reinforce the concept of the Neighbourhood Mothers while documenting their effort.

The Neighbourhood Mothers is now a well-tested concept.

The concept, experiences, materials and so on, are available for free for those who have the will to establish a Neighbourhood Mother group in their local area.



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Maja Langhorn

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THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MOTHERS BRING HOPE AND CHANGE INTO THE LIVES OF OTHER WOMEN

Bydelsmødrenes Landsorganisation

Olivia Hansens Gade 2 st. tv.

1799 København V

bydelsmor@socialtansvar.dk

www.bydelsmor.dk

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Read more on: www.socialtansvar.dk