



Webinar: Women's Leadership in ECBOs

Led by: Nao Kabashima, Executive Director, Karen Organization of San Diego

Guest speakers: Drocella Mugorewera, Founder, Diversity in Action Global Movement; Amina Sheik Mohamed, Founding Director, Refugee Health Unit of the UCSD Center for Community Health; Rama Deen, Executive Director, Tanta; Dr. Selin Nielsen, Executive Director, Human Migration Institute

March 7, 2024

Transcript

Introduction

Nao Kabashima: Thank you so much, everyone. Thank you so much for joining today's training on Women's Leadership in ECBOs, Perspectives from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds. This training is presented to you by Switchboard. Switchboard is a one-stop resource hub for refugee service providers in the United States.

Zoom Orientation

NK: Here is a quick overview of your setting in Zoom. This is a Zoom webinar, so you are joining on listen-only mode. Due to the large number of learners on today's webinar, we are disabled the chat box. However, you do have the option to send message to the speakers via the Q&A, and then also you can send us any questions you have throughout this webinar, and keep eye on the chat for the message from the Switchboard team and the links to the various resources we will mention throughout this webinar.

Today's webinar will run 60 minutes, and it's going to be recorded. You will receive an email with the recording, slides, and recommended resources within 24 hours. The webinar transcript, along with the recording, will also be posted on the Switchboard website within the following days. Thus, we ask that you will kindly complete our survey at the end of this session. This session, the survey is going to really help us at the Switchboard to improve our training and technical assistance offerings to you all.

Today's Speakers

NK: Again, thank you so much for joining today's webinar. I'm really excited to introduce our speakers. My name is Nao Kabashima. I am executive director of the Karen Organization of San Diego, and I'm moderating today's webinar with these amazing speakers.

We have Drocella Mugorewera. She is a founder of the Diversity in Action Global Movement. We have Amina Sheik Mohamed. She is a founding director of the Refugee Health Unit, UCSD Center for Community Health. Then we have Rama Deen. She is a founder and executive director of Tanta, Inc. Dr. Selin Nielsen. She is a founder and executive director of Human Migration Institute. Thank you so much for being here today.

Learning Objectives

NK: By the end of this session, you'll be able to identify challenges women leaders face in the resettlement community and in ECBO space, explain strategy women leaders use to overcome those challenges, and identify new resources and tools to keep you motivated in your work, practice better self-care, and grow professionally.



Poll Question

NK: First of all, I want to start with the Slido questions because this is a webinar and listen only more, but we really wanted to hear. I want to know who you are. If you can use this QR code, you just scan with your cell phone and answer to the question, or you can go to the slido.com and enter this number and then go to these questions.

I really appreciate it if you can answer to these questions. Seems like a lot of people are from the ethnic community-based organizations. Thank you. We have a resettlement agency. We have people from the other service providers. I see some state refugee office people. Yes, seems like the most people are the resettlement agency, but also we have a lot of people from the ECBO. Thank you so much for joining today. I will go to the next one.

Okay. Before we get started, let's pause to acknowledge that tomorrow, March 8, is International Women's Day and celebrated in many countries around the world. Happy International Women's Day, everyone. This is the day to celebrate the contributions of women to the global economy, to stand in solidarity with all women in the world suffering from all kinds of injustice and oppressions, and to strategize on priority areas of growth and impact.

What are some challenges women face in the ECBO space?

NK: Now, let's talk about challenges that women leaders face in the resettlement and ECBO space. ECBO stands for Ethnic Community-Based Organizations, and I see many people are from the ECBOs today. Thank you so much for joining. Let's go to the next slide. Before taking a look at ECBO women leaders' challenges, let's touch on some data points related to widespread gender inequality. Women globally have 77% of the legal rights of men. Women globally earn around 37% less than men in similar roles. Fifty percent of countries lack laws that explicitly prohibit direct and indirect discrimination against women.

These are the unique challenges women leaders recognize. Some of them include gender bias and stereotypes in different cultures and lack of confidence. Other people, especially in male-dominated cultures, often lack confidence in women's leadership. That gives us, as women, self-doubt. We do have confidence, but the culture gives us self-doubt sometimes. Limited opportunities, lack of legal protections. That slide, one slide before, that data actually supports this. Compassion fatigue. We often give so much to others and then we oftentimes forget about ourselves and then are not caring for ourselves. These are some unique challenges that we recognize.

Who is joining us today?

NK: Now we wanted to talk about strategy. How women leaders overcome those challenges is so unique to the women, but how we've been overcoming those involves strategies. We do that by learning from the full stories of amazing women leaders. They are on the panel. I'm going to share in this talk, and they will tell more about themselves later.

I'm so happy to share the story of these amazing women. First, Drocella. Drocella is founder of the Diversity in Action Global Movement. She is a diversity leadership consultant. She is a former Member of Parliament and Government in Rwanda, escaped oppression and persecution in 2008.

You see this beautiful picture of Drocella and her daughter. Drocella told me when she escaped the country her daughter was just 12 years old. Then, after she got resettled in the United States, she served the refugee resettlement agency. Then she created the first reserve fund for that agency after 34 years in operations. She is recognized as a changemaker and ambassador for refugees and immigrants. Go to the next.

Rama Deen. She is a founder and executive director of Tanta Inc. She founded Tanta. Tanta means aunty in her culture and inspired by and in honor of all the women who raised and nurtured the next generations of empowered women. She gave birth to two beautiful children and helped to bring together an intergenerational network of women and girls who define and champion their own empowerment.



When we get to the panel discussion a little later, we will be able to hear directly from Drocella and Rama about their unique challenges that they face and then also how they overcome those challenges. Some of the challenges that they overcome, including healing from trauma, triggers from war, overcoming bullying, balancing work-life integrations.

Poll Question

NK: Before we hear from them, we wanted to hear from you using this slide or exercise. If you have faced similar challenges in your leadership journey related to healing from trauma or overcoming bullying or balancing work-life integrations, what strategy have you used to overcome these challenges?

Yes, you can use this Slido QR code again to share some strategies or tools you can think of. Have you ever used or if you are in a similar situation, what strategy do you want to use to overcome that? I would take some time because I know this is a little difficult question. Okay, somebody. Okay, great. People, thank you so much. Starting to share your ideas and strategies, faith, therapy. Oh, good. It keeps coming. I'm missing. Spending time with family, self-care, look for community resources, finding safe people for support. Many people say about self-care, group program. Oh, I love that.

Well, keep coming. Support from community and family, and therapy. Take time alone. Let them vent. Breathing. I love that. Identify circles of women to support each other. Surround yourself with those that will challenge you to grow, breaks, friends, me time, medications, no shame. Yes, I agree. Exercise and sleep. Thank you so much, everyone. Many people share about healthcare and then also support. Help with your supervisors. Amazing. Thank you so much, everyone. Let's go to the next one.

Who is joining us today? [cont'd]

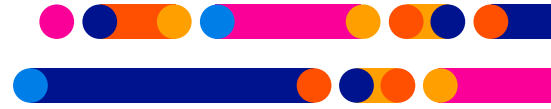
NK: Here is Amina Sheik Mohamed, she is a founding director of the Refugee Health Unit at the Center for Community Health, University of California, San Diego. She's a refugee from Somalia. She's a proud mama. She's a public health practitioner, community organizer, and changemaker. She's a visionary, connector, strategic thinker, active listener. She founded the Refugee Health Unit at the UC San Diego, and then also co-established San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition, working with other ECBO, serving refugees and newcomers in San Diego. Let's go to the next slide.

Next is Dr. Selin Nielsen. She's a founder and executive director of Human Migration Institute. She came to the United States after she finished high school. She has an immigrant background. She started to work with a refugee in Iowa after finishing her study at the UC Berkeley and caught in the middle of the refugee crisis near the Syrian border. That inspired her to create a nonprofit organization for refugees in the community not known for embracing refugees. She created a classroom in a refugee settlement with no financial or logical support from government or other nonprofits.

Again, at the Q&A panel, we will be able to hear directly from Amina and Dr. Selin. What kind of challenges do they face, and then how do they overcome those? Those challenges including maintaining cultural relevance in interventions that seek to address challenges across diverse ethnic communities, finding sustainable funding that is focused on refugees, navigating emerging community needs, and lacking support from local government, nonprofit partners, and community members. Then we definitely can hear from them directly, but again, we wanted to hear from you first.

Poll Question

NK: If you have faced similar challenges around growing and scaling your organizations and your network, what strategies have you used? Or if you are in that similar situations as a leader in this work, what strategies you're going to use to overcome these challenges? Again, I'm going to take some time because you have amazing ideas, and I really wanted to hear from everybody. Not to be afraid. I like that. Leveraging your network. You can use this QR code, or you can go to slido.com and put this number. Dare to dare. Work with other



established community partners. Speaking up for those that can't. I like that. Expand your network, community outreach, connect with others with similar causes.

Don't be afraid to communicate. Follow the other successful women's example. I like that. That's why we are here today to learn from amazing women leaders on the panel and ask for help if needed. I like that.

Community resources. Map up plan with leaders within your organizations, and seek collaboration opportunity. Educate yourself, and then stop overthinking. That's a good one. Plan, plan, plan. I like that too. Wow, everyone, thank you so much for contributing to this conversations. Training and education. Balance home and work. Thank you so much, everyone, for joining the Slido conversations. Thank you, everyone.

Then these are some of the strategies for overcoming common challenges faced by human leaders. In our panel speakers, we'll talk about these very, very soon, and I'm getting very, very excited. Some of them include building peer support and peer mentorship systems, advocating for change in organizational culture and policy, exploring additional budget for administrative and fundraising support, and being your authentic self and leverage strengths, empathy, resilience, effective communication skills, collaborations, and inspirations. Actually, we can see many of your comments on the Slido. Your ideas on the Slido actually reflect these.

Then many people are talking about planning, asking help, collaborating with other organizations, or talking to the leadership in your organizations or in your community. These are all great strategies for overcoming common challenges faced by human leaders. Hey. Okay. Here we come. Are you ready? I'm really excited. I'm really excited and honored to welcome today's panel speakers, Drocella, Amina, Rama, and Dr. Selin. Thank you so much for being here today. I'm going to, yes, yay. Good to see your faces. I feel very supported in this space because I really respect you as a leader. Just a second, I do have battery issue. Just a second.

Sorry. You know what? My computer battery is dying. I don't know what's happening, but if you can start sharing about yourself and then talk about what kind of leader you are, if you can popcorn to each other's while I'm figuring out this my battery issue, that'd be really great. Thank you. Can I ask Drocella to start up?

What kind of leader are you?

Drocella Mugorewera: Thank you, Nao, and thank everyone for joining this amazing webinar. I'm grateful for Switchboard and Karen Organization of San Diego to give us the flow. When we share, we learn and we grow. My name is Drocella, as they say. I am known as the diversity leadership queen because when I came to America as a transplant refugee from Africa, from Rwanda to America, I had to learn how to fit in and how to be different. That was a great asset for companies.

This is why I created this Diversity in Action System to help companies to deal with the nightmare of employee turnover. I would say that my leadership style is I'm collaborative, I empower other people, I'm a listener, and I'm strategic and visionary. Back to you, Rama.

Rama Deen: Thank you so much, Drocella. My name is Rama. I was born and raised in the country of The Gambia in West Africa. It's the smallest mainland country in West Africa and slightly twice the size of Delaware. I come from a very, very small nation. I'm a mother of two, wife of one, and a friend and sister to many. I've lived in the US for about 24 years now. When I first came here, I came as an immigrant actually to further my studies in college. Found a lot of beautiful things in this country, a lot of wonderful, wonderful people that I've met along the way.

I've been inspired by so many women in this line of work and so many individuals who have paved the way for a lot of people that I know. I'm very grateful to be here and to be among your wonderful ladies. I'll send it to Dr. Selin, please.

Dr. Selin Nielsen: Okay. Can you guys hear me? Hello and welcome, everybody. My name is Selin Yildiz Nielsen. I'm originally from Turkey, and I'm an immigrant as well. I'm the founder and president of Human Migration Institute. It's a non-profit organization that promotes community building while supporting refugees.



It's hmir.org. We give services, we advocate, we connect the refugees to their communities. I'm really happy to be here.

Now you asked about, like, what kind of a leader are you? I thought about this and then I was just thinking that embracing my gender, my sexuality, my identity, my culture as I see it, and being confident and comfortable in my own skin rather than fitting in a role or, like just being what people expect me to be, I think made me a better leader. Because I'm not this way or that way, but I'm just me and I take pride in what I do. That's the way I see it. Thank you so much and I'll send it to Amina.

Amina Sheik Mohamed: Thank you so much. Good morning for us in California. I'm so excited to be in this space and thank you for Switchboard and the Karen Organization of San Diego, Nao's leadership. We're so happy to be here with amazing leaders. My name is Amina Sheik Mohamed. I'm with UC San Diego Refugee Health Unit Director and also co-established the San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition. I am from Somalia. I'm a mom of two.

My leadership is more of a strategic collaborator and connector. Those are what really makes, I don't feel like, I feel the more we are together, the more we coordinate, the more, the better. Really it takes a village to build anything. This is our village and so happy to be here with all of you. Thank you.

What is the biggest challenge that you have faced and how have you addressed that challenge as women leaders?

NK: Okay. Thank you everyone. I was panicked when my computer died, but I'm back. Then thank you so much for coordinating this part. I missed some of your comments, but I'm really happy to be with you. I hear about you and about your learning from your leadership style and what kind of leader you are. First, I want to start the panel discussions with the one question around the challenges. What is the biggest challenge that you have faced and how have you addressed that challenge as women leaders? Maybe I'm going to go from Drocella again. Thank you, Drocella.

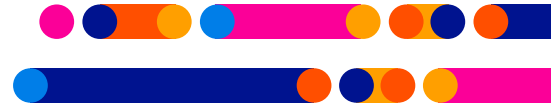
DM: Thank you for the question, Nao. Being separated from your children for two years and not seeing them is hard. It was very a hard journey. As you said, my youngest daughter was 12 years old. The trauma attached to that and hiding for nine months, just talking to God was very difficult, but I had hoped to see them. How I healed from that trauma and also I had some bullying, people asking why I'm here in America. I had always to explain why I am here and why refugees are here and the reason.

I was seeing people who were supposed to explain why we are here and not, and I took an opportunity to share my stories and the stories of refugees to make people understand who we are and how they can support us better. The healing journey was the first step was to forgive. Many of us escaped wars and violence. We escaped political oppression. I escaped people I know. For letting them go and letting those circumstances that let me free was the first step.

What I did was to take like a book note and list all the people I know who are involved in the process. I was saying, you, let us say now, I forgive you because you betrayed me, for example. I forgive you because you let me be separated from my children without no reason. At the end of that, I just closed the box. Then one of the things I did also because I cannot go back now and I cannot talk to those people, I did a public forgiveness so they know. Those ones who are alive or who are deceased, they knew that I publicly forgive them.

Some of you say about having therapy. Doing therapy is not being crazy. In some cultures, we talk about being crazy if you want to get help from a professional or for mental health. I worked in a clinic where mental health and behavior health was integrated. That was the foundation of, for me, as a leader of the resettlement agency, also that experience helps me to empower the case managers and to find a training they should go to so they can have easy conversation with the new refugees which are coming.

The two things I can say was forgiveness and then going to the therapy and help my team also to navigate. Because one of the things refugees, when they come and you talk about having therapy, they say, "Oh, no, I'm



good. I'm not crazy. I don't have any problem," but we know what we went through and how it affects us and our families. Back to you, Nao. Those are the strategies I did use to overcome those challenges.

NK: Amazing, Drocella. Yes, we saw the beautiful picture of you and then daughter. Thank you so much for sharing the story. I'm going to pass to Amina if you can share about your challenges and then how as a leader you overcome those challenges.

AM: Thank you so much, Nao. One of the challenges that I have seen growing into this woman leadership style is not having a role models, right? Not having women who look like me or have the same background, culture, religion, and just the same experience coming here in this country, the navigation, and so on. One of the ways that we or I overcame with or we overcame with is establishing the San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition. Our coalition is mostly, ethnic community-based organization, largely women and we see that connection is really building up, helping us together right now, and Nao is part of it.

Also, it's helping other younger women to see a role model, right? Yes, I didn't see that role model when I was getting into the leadership, but we're hoping the next generation is going to see what we're doing right now and learn from us. Right now, a lot of the organizations, there are a lot of young women that are working in these organizations, seeing the leadership of the executive director, who is ethnic community-based, part of that, who came here as a refugee, who's leading the way. We also established a table on our own, so funders and other organizations are coming to us as a leaders. Really that has been something that built it up.

Other than that, my challenges that I oversee as a woman is finding other role models. Even though we don't have it within our community, like maybe find a mother who's doing, like navigating that system or someone, it doesn't have to be always like someone that have all the experience with you. This coalition, we're hoping to, this coalition that the group of women, we're hoping that we will be more helping for the next generation, which is what we're doing. Thank you so much.

NK: Thank you so much, Amina. Can I pass to Dr. Selin?

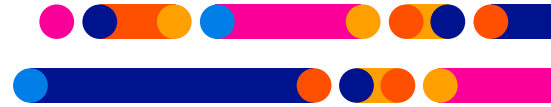
SN: Sure. Thank you so much. Amina is right on the nose on having role models is really important, especially the intersectionality of, like being a woman, being an immigrant woman, being a colored woman, the old saying, like you have to work twice as hard to be half as recognized. I think every one of us in this room have gone through it. People think I can't change the environment, right? I just have to adopt myself. We absolutely can. I think it's not happening right all at once, but we just have to start. I can share a story of my background that I was working as a teacher. I was very happy and working with immigrants and international people, teaching them language skills.

Then when 9/11 happened, and I lost my job, my boss called me one day and said that, "Are you Muslim?" Then I grew up in Turkey and I grew up Muslim. Maybe I'm not that religious, but I'm not going to deny that. Then I got laid off. I was really, really upset. I knew I was a good teacher. I knew that, maybe it was the lack of enrollment, maybe it was something else, but I felt powerless. I, at that moment, wanted to be in a position of leadership, so that I will prevent things like this happening. At that moment inspired me to go get a PhD, so that I can just be an administrator and then have the support system or be a role model that I wanted to see.

NK: Thank you so much, Selin, for sharing your stories. I'm going to go to Rama.

RD: Thank you, Nao. Just piggybacking off of Dr. Selin's comment about the model minority having to work twice as hard for maybe half as much, that's a reality. I think that's something that, as she said, we all have faced and we've all had to contend with. It's something that's definitely very much part of our reality as women leaders in any field. I think part of what has helped me over the years, and again, I echo everything that these wonderful ladies have said, and I think one of the things that has helped me over the years, and I think this is part of what I've learned also as a clinical social worker, is just to engage and make sure that self-compassion is part of what I do.

Self-compassion is part of what my reality is. That doesn't mean self-pity. We know that as leaders, the best thing that we can give those people who we lead is a safe and compassionate support system, right? You cannot give what you don't have. Making sure that we are engaging in self-compassion, whether it's in the form



of self-kindness, right? It's okay to not succeed 100% all the time. I think there's a lot of stress and a lot of pressure that sometimes we feel as we experience as women leaders, especially for those of us in ethnic communities of being more than what's humanly possible most of the time.

It's okay to exercise self-kindness, be caring towards ourselves as much as we are caring towards other people, because we all wear multiple hats, and we are so compassionate towards others and to the detriment of ourselves sometimes, I think. The other one I think is, I think some of the ladies have also said it, and I would echo it, is recognizing your community. Find other women leaders. Find other people. As humans, we are not meant to function at optimum when we are alone. We are social beings, right? We need to be able to feed off of the energy of others as well. Find your community. Find women that are doing similar things and that you can inspire and can be inspired by.

I think that's extremely, extremely, extremely important in this line of work. The other thing too is mindfulness. Just making sure that we recognize when we're tired, we recognize when we cannot, and it's okay to not be able to. It's okay to feel inadequate sometimes, right? It's okay to feel like we're not at our best sometimes, and that's okay. That's human. That makes us human. I would say definitely being mindful and being open to the reality of the present moment.

What do we have around us? What are the circumstances that we're dealing with right now? What are the resources around us that we can leverage to be able to be the best that we can be, but most importantly, take care of ourselves in the moment as well. Thank you.

NK: Thank you so much, everyone. You're amazing. Drocella was talking about forgiveness, right? Then getting help, and somebody was during the Slido exercise talking about that, the therapy or asking help from others, and that's a very important strategies. Amina and Rama was also mentioning about not having a role model, but also finding role models. There are other leaders who are doing similar work, and then also we're going to be a role model for the next generations. I love that. Amina also mentions about peer network, to have a support system around you, and to rely on other women leaders around in your community.

Dr. Selin, you mentioned that, yes, it is hard for women leaders, and there's a lot of challenges as women leaders, but we can contribute to the change and cultural change around this, and then education might be one of the key. I love that Rama's comment about self-compassion and self-kindness, and then also mindfulness, and then acknowledging it's okay to say, "I'm not okay today. I cannot do this. I'm tired." That's the way to find other help, and then the peer network. I really love what everybody said. Thank you so much for that.

Women wear different hats—how do you balance that?

NK: Rama actually said about that women oftentimes wear many different hats, and then I think that can lead to the next questions. I want to ask to maybe Selin and then Amina. Yes, women wear different hats, many different hats, but how do you balance that? Can I start with Selin?

SN: Thank you. I think the short question is, I don't. We can't, and it's an illusion that we can do everything. People have asked me, "How do you do it all?" I don't. If I'm preparing a presentation, I'm missing out on other things. I'm not cleaning my toilet, or I'm not making dinner, or I'm not spending time with my loved ones. We have 24 hours in a day, and that's why support systems are important. That's why it's really important to have family, friends, and others. For example, if you're from a collectivist culture, where people are interdependent and helping each other, that would be an advantage. If you're from an individualistic culture, you rely on the system.

For example, like collectivistic cultures, like from the Middle East, many countries, individualistic cultures could be like Scandinavian countries, but they rely on the system. They have such a system set up that all of those things where you feel like you're lacking is supported by the system. In the United States, we're neither a collectivistic culture, nor we have a system. It is extremely difficult for women here to be able to do everything because we don't have the system to support us. I think that generating that in our communities would be a big help.



NK: Thank you so much, Selin. Can I go to Amina?

AM: Sure. Yes. Dr. Selin, what you just said, really, it's the system, that supports, and we don't have that system here. Navigating through that system in the US without family, it's really difficult, right? Working, and I relate to what you just said in terms of like, if you're doing good in the family, or you're connecting to the community, work is not being done. There's no 100% show up in anything, right? What matters, or what I've done in my experience is taking a deep breath and really taking it, yes, acknowledging that, right? Acknowledging that the house might not be clean, but work is being done.

I'm spending more family, pick up the kids on time, everything is great, do the homework, but then like, work is not going to, so it's always different. One thing that I want to mention is that helped me is really communicating that, right? If I'm traveling or, like my family, letting them know, and also work, let them know what's going on too. Just not too detailed, but like, this is coming up. One thing that's coming up right now for Muslims is Ramadan is coming up next week. Thinking about my schedule, modifying my schedule and maybe working starting the early mornings and not doing meetings late in the afternoon. It's something that I'm willing to share with people who work with me.

Also, not being involved in travel, for conferences and things like that, just blocking that month, and maybe even taking a little bit of time if needed, to focus more on the end of the Ramadan time. That has been the culture of my work. I let them know ahead of time, people know about it. I think the more people know, the support that I can get. The same thing with family to let them know what's going on at work. This week is, tough week, there's presentations, there's conferences, there's things that are going to be so your family and the connections you have will support you with that. I think communication is the ideal thing.

NK: Thank you for that Dr. Selin and Amina. I can relate to what you say and yes acknowledging that it's okay that I cannot finish everything 100%, but it's important to communicate and let everybody know so that we can support each other. I love that, thank you so much.

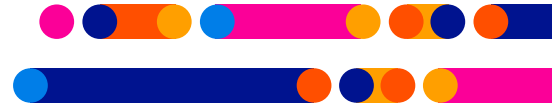
How can you be confident in taking on a leadership role when your own culture's not necessarily promoting women's leadership?

NK: Around that, actually like wearing the hat, women wearing many hats is related to the cultures, to culture expectations around the women's. I have one question: how can you be confident in taking on a leadership role when your own culture's not necessarily promoting women's leadership? Then I want to ask this to Drocella and Rama.

DM: That is a good question. Cultural shock and transition integration is huge, but what I have seen working is dialogue so you put things on the table. Even with our children, I had five teenagers. facilitated the family unification and all my children came. When I consider how I was raised in Africa and how my children are coming in and growing in a new culture, we have to be open to discussions to see what conflicts of cultures can happen.

I can give an example of one family friend. They wanted the child to go into the university the parents wanted, but the child wanted to go to another university. I bring them together and I said, "The child wants to go to college which is a good thing you could encourage," but the parents were so skeptical. After we had that conversation, they let her go and it was peaceful. I think learning and educating and hearing those different opinions and not just push them away. You have to be receptive and try to find the middle ground and this is how I have been seeing working.

Then also, sometimes we are talking about Women's Day. I ask Burundian men, "Who cook at the house?" They say, "Oh, our wives and the girls, the daughters are there." I say, "If you do not adapt to the new culture things happen." Sometimes some families also suddenly are disrupted because they can't align with the new guidelines and laws in America. I think, when you get to America you have to say, "Hey, what can I do as a spouse? What can you do as the husband and what the children can do?" Then when you work together you have a sustainable family, but if you don't align and work together these are how the family are getting



disrupted. Dialogue, having open dialogue and also learning from new rules and cultures of the place is very important.

NK: Thank you Drocella. Can I ask Rama the same questions?

RD: Thank you Drocella. I love what you said about the realities of the shift that happens when families immigrate to the United States. There is a lot more expected. All of a sudden there's just a huge paradigm shift in family dynamics where before maybe it was a one-income household. Now you need two incomes to sustain a family. You have kids that are so opinionated which is lovely.

My kids were all born here, to this day they would ask me questions and I'm like, "Oh, my God. I cannot even imagine asking my mother this." I don't have answers because I don't necessarily know what those answers are because I never asked those questions to my mom. I've learned along the way to say, "Okay, hold on one second," and go find out answers before I start speaking. We learn how to adjust and how to adapt to the new realities of what the culture and what our new rules as career women means in our cultures of origin.

Culture is not something you leave behind. It's something that you carry with you no matter where you go. The expectations are very similar. There might be certain shifts and adaptations, but they are very similar. I think often when we talk about women leaders in collectivist cultures, for instance, I think some of the assumptions that we make is we think about patriarchy, we talk about oppression we think about women not having a voice. There's a lot of accuracy in that assumption, but it's not the whole story. We need to be very mindful about some of those preconceived notions and the stereotypes that we see and also just strive to understand cultures and ethnic groups.

I was very fortunate to be born into a family that did not expect any less of me than my male counterparts. I was expected to go to school. I was expected to do well. I was expected to go to college and be very career-oriented but that did not stop me from learning how to cook, clean and take care of things at home as well. It's just these things that don't have to be mutually exclusive. It's things that with time and self-compassion and understanding and support that we a lot of times are able to integrate those things.

Work-life balance is a myth. I think it's more about work-life integration and it's okay not to be able to do everything 100% all the time. I think that's just part of the strength that we come with as women leaders recognizing that and being able to work within that system.

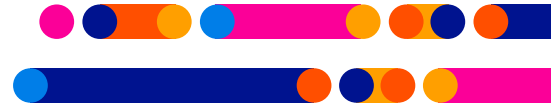
NK: Thank you so much Drocella and Rama. Rama, I loved the way you said that it's not about work-life balance but integrations because it's impossible to have the perfect balance around that. Thank you for that.

How can women leaders network?

NK: One question came from our audience, it's about if you are an introvert how do you move from wanting to move into the leadership role? How can I start networking as a women's leader, if your culture doesn't support you to do that or yourself doesn't feel comfortable starting networking to be a leader? Maybe I think somebody has good answers around that. Maybe Drocella, I don't know. Can I ask you about networking as women leaders?

DM: Networking, they say that your network is your net worth. In my culture, they say if a bird doesn't fly they would not know where the nectar is. Seeking other people's support and exchanging ideas is normal, but we have to be open for change. We have to be open for change, which is difficult for us when we get here and this is why I negotiate now with my children. Back in Africa I would tell them, "Just do this, as Drocella said."

Now I say, "Hey, I want to go to see my friend because of this." Then show the interest. Show the benefits that you will bring to the family if you want to win their hearts. You have to show what is in there for them. Why do you go to network? What impact it will make to the family? It's non-negotiable if I can say networking is crucial and every woman can go to network.



You were talking about having many hats. We have to volunteer. We have to participate to other boards so people can also be ambassadors of our mission so we don't carry everything and that also happens through networking. If you don't go out to share the mission, nobody will support you and nobody will support your organization.

Who inspired you?

NK: Thank you so much. I know we have 10 more minutes and then I have a couple more questions. I know that some questions come from the audience and they're actually the same as what I have. I'm going to start with one question. Who has inspired you to be who you are? You are amazing woman leaders and I'm really happy for you to be here today, but who inspired you to be who you are? Can I ask maybe Dr. Selin to start?

SN: There are many women leaders. We are living in a good era to cite historical leaders, but I have to say my mom. In an era of misogyny and patriarchy and in a country of misogyny and patriarchy, she has proved that women can make sound decisions. She usually jokes with me. She worked for the State Department and she raised us and she took care of the house. She pretty much did everything and she was just joking.

In my mother's time, she said, "Women were not allowed to be doing outside work, and in your time the husbands help with taking care of the children, but in our time I had to do everything." It's a good reminder for me whose shoulders we're standing on.

NK: Thank you. I'm going to pass to Amina the same question, who inspires you?

AM: Yes, thank you so much. It's also my mom. I was going to say that, my mom has really provided me the space to think strategically to be confident. I didn't know that what confidence meant or anything like that until now. I see that a lot of people are like, "Oh, you're confident, you're this, you're that." Thinking about it, where did I get that from? It's really making decisions, listening to my ideas and supporting me in those decisions.

It was never like, "No, you cannot do this." It was more like, "Let's try it out and what can you do?" I feel like she always been there to listen to support, and now that I have a daughter who is like 12 years old, I'm like, "Okay, what can I do?" Really making, following what my mom have done for me because I know that's--

The other thing is in terms of inspiration, I see sometimes other women grabbing whether it's a religious leader or someone even through work. I don't think it's one person alone but just seeing different people and getting what they're doing. I'm always asking what are you doing difference and what made you that one? It could be parenting, it could be someone being in a leadership position. How did you get here? Asking and networking is really the other thing that inspires and keep me going.

NK: Same question to Rama: who inspires you?

RD: I come from a community where the concept of family is very broad. I still have aunties and uncles and cousins that I have no idea what the blow tie is. They're still my family in every way, shape and form. I was raised in a community where neighbors became parents, where neighbors became your brothers and sisters. There was always an elder, especially among women. Women were at a socioeconomic disadvantage in a way. We really relied- I grew up seeing women rely on each other. I grew up seeing--

I would have to say my greatest influences were the women that I grew up around. These were strong, very and I don't like using the word strong because I think it's very overrated. It makes us think that we're supposed to be more than what's humanly possible but they're very resilient, reliable, and capable women who I think I saw model femininity in the most desirable way.

It was never a response to feminism or patriarchy or any gender-based social construct. It was more about women showing up in ways that demanded recognition and earned them respect. Women had a huge role to play in families, in communities, in workspaces. I would have to say the person that inspired, like the nonprofit organization that I started Tanta was actually my paternal grandmother. She raised my dad. She had only one



child, raised my dad as a single parent for the most part, and I just saw her— This is a one that had no formal education whatsoever, and she ran a business.

She always carried herself in such a dignified way, and was always present and ready to help other women around her. Those are things that inspire me. Those are the people that I look up to. Even today wherever you go I love that everybody in this panel has mentioned that you look for other women who inspire you, even if it's not women but it's always very important to find inspiration around you at all times. Pay forward by inspiring others as well.

NK: Thank you so much. Same question to Drocella.

DM: My dad. My dad wanted me to go to school, actually, we had nine children, one brother only. He was very progressive, even in terms of giving us a piece of land. Other people in the community were saying, "Oh, you will go to another family, you'll get married and leave our family." He didn't consider those community opinion. He would say, "My children are equal girls and boys." That gave me an inspiration to treat people the way they should be treated and what I do today.

I want to say also that he liked soccer and I'm a soccer woman. He inspired me if he wanted to pursue something, and he was going to me when I went to college, when I went to high school, he was always there for me. He instilled me the impact of education. He'll leave everything but with him, I know how to value people.

Any advice?

NK: That's great. Thank you so much. You all are amazing inspiration for me personally. Then I want to finish with one question, one advice. What advice would you give to the women who like to take more leadership role but are unsure? Everybody maybe one sentence because I know it's time is ticking. I appreciate you, everyone. Anybody want to start? One advice.

AM: I can go, I can start. The advice that I have is keep going. Trust yourself, be confident in what you're doing. It may not seem the best or leadership and whatever but just keep going and you will see that it will turn into something. Just be confident in what you're doing, the positions you have and seeking for more.

SN: I can second that and I can just say, take it. You don't need anybody's permission to be a leader. Remember why you do what you do and do it.

DM: I would to say the same. Go for it. It's your time to shine, to make influence, to take decisions, to be the change maker, the world class change maker, buffer it.

RD: I would say, know that you are enough, that you are enough. You have everything in you to make an impact in this world. Embrace your inner critic as opposed to thinking of it as an hindrance to your personal development. Embrace it as constructive. Embrace it as a guide to change the things that you can change. You are enough. That's what I would say. You are more than enough.

NK: Oh my God, amazing. Thank you. Thank you so much everyone. I'm going to go back to the slides and then I do have maybe three, two minutes more. I'm going to rush into this.

Conclusion

NK: Thank you so much again, everyone. After this we are going to share, yes somebody asked about recording but yes, we are going to share the recording. Then also the resource and tools about motivation, self-care, and then professional growth.

We combined some recommended resource lists from our speakers, including about training, written resources, fellowship opportunity, some articles on the switchboard and some books. I hope that you can use



this and then maybe share with your staff, coworkers, or your family to inspire everybody around you. This going to be on the website as well.

Again, we hope you are now able to identify challenges women leader face in the rest of the resettlement community ECBO space. Explain strategies women leaders use to overcome challenges, our panelists share a lot of different type of strategies. Then you also contributed to some of the strategy. Identify new resources and tools to keep you motivated, work and practice better self-care and grow professionally. Go to the next slide.

Feedback Survey

NK: Then please help us to help you. You can use this QR code to get to the survey. Also it's on the thread link to the chat. It's very quick, not even 60 seconds, it can be very quick. Only five questions. In your comments and your idea how to improve our self really help us. Please help us to response to this surveys.

I know I have to go soon. I know you have to go soon but let's go to the next one. I wanted to close our webinar with this quote from Drocella. Drocella today is one of our speakers. "Our voices, ideas, perspectives, backgrounds, skills, talents, experiences and cultures matter. Inclusion practices are not negotiable." Thank you Drocella for sharing this.

Then also a lot of advice that we get today. Go for it. You don't need to get any permissions. I love everybody says, but you are enough. You have everything in you and then keep going, keep moving forward. Those are advice from our speakers, really inspired me to keep going.

Stay Connected

NK: I really hope that we can connect someday. We just share our email address from our speakers. We are happy to be connected with anybody. Then the networking is really key for this work. Please connect with us after this webinar.

Again, thank you so much for joining today's webinar and then please stay connected with Switchboard through the emails, through the website. We also have social media accounts.

Again, thank you so much, everybody. Then thank you, Drocella, Dr. Selin, Rama and Amina for the amazing speakers today. Thank you everyone for joining. Bye, and a happy International Women's Day tomorrow. Bye, thank you.

The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0052 and Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.