

"Three years ago, when I came with my two sons to Sweden to start my company, I believed that I chose the best country in the world, for my kids and for myself as an entrepreneur and as a woman.

I still believe in this BUT there is a BIG difference between what Sweden wants and what Sweden does when it comes to foreign born entrepreneurs.

Sadly I say that, as a foreign born entrepreneur, my interaction with the system, the structure, policies and regulations, made me think that Sweden doesn't give a damn about us!

And I think it's about time to ask ourselves: Do we really want to attract talents from all over the world to Sweden?

Do we really know those entrepreneurs who already came here? Do we really want to keep them? Do we really think we NEED foreign born entrepreneurs? Do we really look at them as equals? Are we honest? Are we curious?

The policies are snobbish, the processes are almost insulting, and the regulations are ignorant. But the people behind them are humble, respectful and warm hearted. That is the gap between what Sweden wants to do and what Sweden IS doing!

We need to be honestly curious about foreign born entrepreneurs,  
We need to truly believe they are equal. Listen to them and invite them to contribute to building a new inclusive system.  
We need to believe that diversity is profitable, not only beautiful.

Under the cold shell of the system, I can see the warm heart of Sweden, and I will definitely do my best to make other foreign born entrepreneurs, other immigrant women, have a better experience than mine.

This recognition means a lot to me, but it means even more to so many immigrants, especially newcomers, especially women, especially those coming from outside the EU.

For that, I can't think of an organization to receive my first entrepreneurial award from, better than Herbert Felix Institute. Thanks Herbert Felix Institute. Thanks Göran Tunhammar."

- *Fairooz Tamimi*