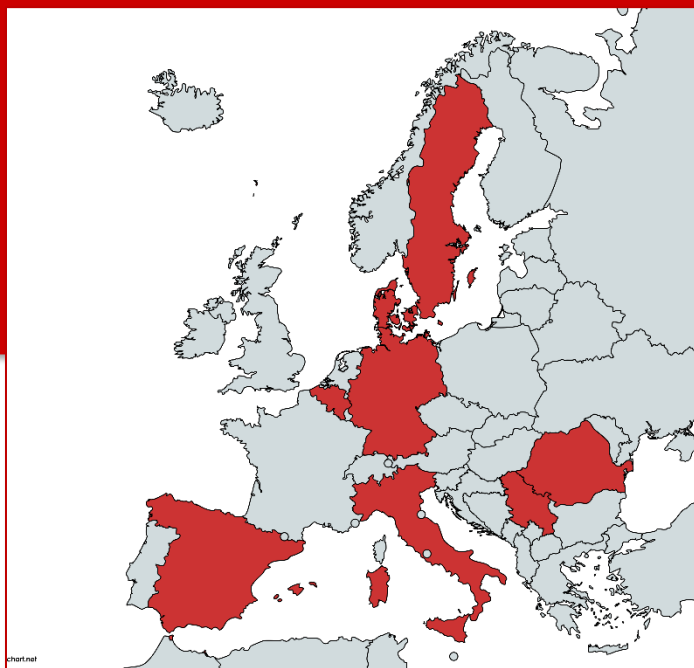




TOOLKIT

Enhancing Democratic Participation of Migrant Women in Europe through Community Building and Strategic Communication

2025



Co-funded by
the European Union

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Toolkit Authors: the first two chapters have been written by Gea Meijers, the section on strategic communication has been written by Paula Morais Montes. Allis Millegård contributed to the editing and proofreading, Emma Rainey contributed to drafting boxes. For the summary on the baseline studies, we would like to thank all authors of the different studies that can be found at: <https://wideplus.org/we-empower-project/>.

The third chapter has been written by Julissa Jauregui for the section on Alianza por la Solidaridad, by Silvia Dumitrache and Laura Albu for the section on RoWL and A.D.R.I., by Ruth Ejdrup Olsen for the section of KULU and by Catherine Abon for the section on GABRIELA Germany. Several of the boxes in this chapter has been drafted by Emma Rainey. The editing has been done by Gea Meijers, with proofreading and review by Allis Millegård.

The fourth chapter has been written by Jelena Hrnjak and Marija Pantelić for the section on NGO Atina, by Nancy Contreras, Sara Erlandsson and Allis Millegård for the section of GADIP, and by Emma Rainey with contributions from Silvina Monteros Obelar and Gea Meijers for the section about Red Latinas. The boxes in this chapter have been written by Emma Rainey. The editing has been done by Allis Millegård and Gea Meijers.

Acknowledgement: This toolkit has been created within the project, "Expanding Tools in Addressing Barriers for Migrant Women to Participate in Democratic Life" or WE-EMPOWER for short. We would like to thank all members and partners of the WE-EMPOWER project and WIDE+ migration and gender working group, migrant women activists, experts and decision makers who contributed knowledge and expertise during one of the meetings, online events, or for one of the materials, videos, and other formats.

Pictures: The illustrations are developed as part of the project and the copyright lies with the association that has published it as part of their dissemination of the project. The associations have given consent to republish them. Photos of people that are recognizable are taken with explicit consent by the participants including speakers during events organized in the context of the WE-EMPOWER project. Consent has been given before or at the beginning of the event that is pictured.

© **Copyright:** Sections in this toolkit might be redistributed for non-commercial purposes with a clearly referenced copyright notice. Images and illustrations in another context might only be used with approval of the copyright holder.

DISCLAIMER: This project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the writers and participants and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Index

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Introduction: How to use this Toolkit..... | 4 |
| 1.1 Unpacking Concepts of Migrant Women and Democratic Life..... | 6 |
| 1.2 The WE-EMPOWER Project in a Bird’s Eye View..... | 7 |
| 1.3 Structure of the Toolkit | 9 |
| 2. Theory Chapter | 14 |
| 2.1 Methodologies and Steps of Strategic Communication | 14 |
| 2.2 Feminist Community Building | 19 |
| 3. Strategic Communication: About migrant women should be from migrant women | 23 |
| 3.1 Alianza por la Solidaridad in Spain: designing communication to change society..... | 24 |
| 3.2 A.D.R.I in Italy: Maximising Research Impact Through Media & Events | 32 |
| 3.3 KULU: Webinars as a Platform for Migrant Women and Advocates | 37 |
| 3.4 GABRIELA Germany: Digital Tools Community Empowerment | 45 |
| 4. Fostering Feminist Community Building for Empowerment | 51 |
| 4.1 Atina: Co-Creating Advocacy Efforts with Refugee Women..... | 52 |
| 4.2 GADIP: Study Circles as A Collaborative Approach | 59 |
| 4.3 Red Latinas: The Role of Political Schools | 66 |

1. Introduction: How to use this Toolkit

There are many toolkits out there that teach a person how to set up a strategic communication plan, how to manage a project, how to communicate with teams, and so on. This toolkit does not offer these kinds of learning. To set the context, we do provide some theoretical overview into communication and community building in our second chapter. The bulk of **the toolkit is focused on highlighting practices from the collective work of migrant women collaborating together or with other feminists** towards more democratic participation for migrant women.

This toolkit is one of the key transnational learning products from the project: "**Expanding tools in Addressing Barriers for Migrant Women to Participate in Democratic Life**", in short, **WE-EMPOWER**. It unites seven organisations and networks and several associate partners, all committed to safeguarding and advancing the rights of migrant women in Europe and is financed by the European Union's (EU) ERASMUS+ programme. The associations almost all work in different countries, with the exception of two associations in Spain, and further include Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy and Serbia. WIDE+ as coordinating network is a European network and provided the introduction and theoretical framework for this toolkit.

We hold the concept 'Nothing about us, without us' at its core as organisations in our city, region, country, or across Europe. This is the reason for this WE-EMPOWER project. This has also informed the knowledge we present in this toolkit. Second wave feminism popularised the slogan: "the personal is political". If we want to create a more equal and socially just world, **we need to start by reflecting on our own behaviour, and when it comes to groups and associations on our own practices**. "Is our association very diverse and do the people that make the decisions reflect the diversity in the rest of the association?", "Which perspectives and behaviours are we including and excluding, and why?", these are some of the questions from a feminist perspective that people in organisations need to keep asking themselves. There is a lot of unrecognised learning potential in presenting combined theory with practice. We believe that the starting point for transformative change is reflecting on current practices with an alternative framework.

"Walking the talk", is what we aim for as women's rights advocates, migrant women leaders, feminist activists or any other related concept that we use to identify ourselves with. That is why

this toolkit focuses on lived practices to strategically communicate and sustain communities or groups. We believe that sharing these examples holds knowledge that is equally needed compared to ‘technical’ knowledge on how to make a strategic communication plan for example, when promoting migrant women’s rights. What works currently or hasn’t worked with previous projects is valuable for new creations of projects, plans and spaces.



An image used during the dissemination campaign around the WE-EMPOWER factsheets & baseline studies.

Our feminist methodology is based on the principles of Freire’s Popular Education and the processes of Feminist and Reflective Participatory Action Research. It assumes that we are all learners and teachers at once. The outcome of such education is meant to show **how to use collective reflection in which we break down possible walls of student versus expert, as a tool of transforming societies** in pursuit of justice and equity. Just as existing power relations between people are not taken for granted, the methodology aims for changing power relations in society towards more socially just ones.

The toolkit is designed to build the capacity of people that provide adult education and those that are part of civil society or political and policy processes to encourage migrant women to take part in ‘democratic life’ in Europe. This is a diverse group, including educators, trainers, adult education organisations, civil society groups, individual activists, migrant feminist or migrant women leaders, civil servants involved in public policy, politicians, journalists, students and other people interested in improving migrant women’s engagement in democratic processes across Europe.

1.1 Unpacking Concepts of Migrant Women and Democratic Life

In this brief introduction several words have been used that are contested in our political climate. We will therefore briefly explain the definitions that we use in this project according to our understanding.

Women in this toolkit and project are considered to span multiple gender identities. The organisations involved in this project are (migrant) women-led associations. This means, **the organisations are led by women, transwomen, non-binary persons, queer and other genders outside of the dichotomy of women versus men** that is promoted by political (ultra-)conservatist forces around the world. There might be a stereotype among certain sections in civil society or those providing adult education towards feminist organisation assuming that they categorically exclude other genders, that they are anti-men. This is not the case, and in many events held as part of the WE-EMPOWER project men could participate if they choose to do so. Women's rights advocates or feminists object to discriminative patterns around gender that intersect with other patterns of discrimination such as racism. We seek to create spaces in which people with similar experiences and/or perspectives can share among each other safely and freely.



WE-EMPOWER representatives during the first transnational training, meeting MEP Ramona Strugariu in the European Parliament on 22 March 2023.

Secondly, the WE-EMPOWER project adopts an inclusive definition of “**migrant**” women. For our purposes, migrant women refer to all women, **who have been displaced between countries, trafficked, moved from a third or European country to a destination in Europe, or are second-generation migrants.** This definition includes third-country nationals, asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented migrant women, women with migrant parents, and mobile EU citizens. While our approach to defining migrants is broad, we acknowledge that migrant women experience varying degrees of resources and vulnerabilities. In some projects or contexts, it will be very relevant to focus on a specific group of migrant women, like trafficked women or refugee women. We oppose political concepts in which different groups of migrants are pitted against each other or used for other kinds of xenophobic narratives towards migrants.

Within the framework of the WE-EMPOWER project, **participation in democratic life refers to political participation in its broadest implication:** the right to vote, stand as candidates, join political parties, and having the right, opportunity, and space to influence public decision-making processes that contribute to the development of a society. Democratic life also involves being actively engaged in community and social life, expressing active citizenship, such as participating in non-governmental associations and organisations that are concerned with the public and political life of the country. A healthy democratic life, a term we discovered through the EU Erasmus+ programme, starts with enabling active citizenship in its broadest sense.

1.2 The WE-EMPOWER Project in a Bird’s Eye View

In the past 2.5 years, the partners organised a deep and collective reflection through research, many online meetings, three face-to-face transnational trainings, and many exchanges with other civil society actors, policy makers, politicians and adult education providers. The civil society organisations involved have a reach to many more associations and activists. They made use of their networks to enable this collective reflection.

- **Red de Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe (Red Latinas, Spain):** This national network of migrant women’s associations in Spain is dedicated to advocating for the rights and interests of Latin American and Caribbean women, fostering solidarity and collaboration at the national level.
- **KULU Women and Development (KULU, Denmark) & Gender And Development In Practice (GADIP, Sweden):** These two feminist associations bring together a diverse range of member organisations and individuals, including migrant women’s groups and adult

TOOLKIT Enhancing Democratic Participation of Migrant Women in Europe through Community Building and Strategic Communication

education associations. They work collaboratively to promote gender equality and empower women from various backgrounds.

- **NGO Atina (Atina, Serbia):** This feminist organisation provides essential services to migrant and refugee women, empowering them through self-representation and advocacy. Atina is committed to enhancing the voices of migrant women and ensuring their rights are upheld.
- **Romanian Women’s Lobby (RoWL, Romania) & Associazione Donne Romene (A.D.R.I, Italia):** This collaboration between a national women’s network and grassroots associations of Romanian women living in Italy strengthens advocacy efforts and community support, ensuring that the voices of migrant women are heard and valued.
- **Alianza por la Solidaridad (Alianza, Spain):** As a dynamic civil society association, Alianza por la Solidaridad channels the collective efforts of over 50,000 members, volunteers, and workers globally. They are dedicated to promoting social justice and supporting marginalised communities worldwide.
- **Women In Development Europe+ (WIDE+, Belgium):** This European feminist network operates in over 14 EU member countries, creating a collaborative space for migrant women’s associations and feminist organisations. WIDE+ enables migrant women activists to unite and amplify their efforts for gender equality and social change across Europe.
- **GABRIELA Germany:** This grassroots association is part of a broader movement advocating for the rights and welfare of migrant women. GABRIELA Germany actively participates in initiatives and collaborations aimed at empowering women and promoting social justice within migrant communities.

This toolkit is one of four key learning products developed through this project. The other three are:

- **Baseline Research:** The baseline studies examine the participation of migrant women in democratic life across the EU, Serbia, Denmark, Germany, and Italy, accompanied by informative fact sheets and available in English and the language of the country (link in the box below).
- **Survey:** [‘Expanding Tools in Addressing Barriers for Migrant Women to Participate in Democratic and Political Life: case study in Spain’](#). Conducted in Spain, this survey

captures the experiences of migrant women regarding their participation in democratic life, gathering insights from over 1,300 respondents. It is also available in Spanish.

- **Online Treasure Box:** This website with a databank features close to 30 non-formal educational materials, such as presentations, video's, podcasts, etc., designed to promote the engagement of migrant women in democratic life.

Learn about the barriers, solutions, and examples of migrant women participating in democratic life in Europe

CHECK OUT our studies, briefing papers, training reports and communication Treasures:

www.wideplus.org/we-empower-project

<https://we-empower-treasurebox.org/>



1.3 Structure of the Toolkit

The baseline studies into the state of affairs of democratic participation of migrant women in Italy, Germany, Denmark, Serbia and the EU as well as the in-depth study in Spain conducted as part of this project have documented the legal barriers that many migrant women face in participating in political processes, particularly the significant number who lack access to voting rights. Given this huge restriction, the toolkit focuses on forms of democratic participation that are legally available to all migrant women.

The selected areas for capacity building centres around strategic communication and (feminist) community building.

Why focus on Communication?

Strategic communication as an area for further training was selected **as the WE-EMPOWER baseline studies concluded that migrant women were overlooked in mainstream media, especially migrant women's agency was underrepresented.** At the same time, communication work is very important for migrant women's activism to raise awareness and to reach out to relevant people outside the immediate group of volunteers or members.

Many migrant women and feminist associations and groups carry out some form of communication to audiences outside their network. **Project partners concluded in the beginning of WE-EMPOWER that often the full potential of this work is not achieved,** as not all key strategic questions in designing a communication plan are developed in advance with enough time. Therefore, further capacity building on strategic communication can help redress in minor ways the marginalisation and stereotyping of migrant women in traditional and new media.

Why Feminist Community Building?

Feminist community building was chosen as the other topic for this toolkit, as there is a huge amount of experience among project partners. Earlier in this chapter, we briefly spoke about the importance of feminist adult education principles as a distinct approach towards promoting active citizenship. As stated, it starts with key reflections on one's own behaviour (as association, team or individual) and power-relations. The case studies presented focus on how these methodologies are used within groups over a longer period of time (project of a year for example).



Image developed for the dissemination campaign of the WE-EMPOWER baseline studies & factsheets.

It is not uncommon within sections of civil society to conclude that more marginalised groups in society cannot be reached for services. **Feminist methodologies can help to spark reflection to examine these social barriers that people experience when working with other people, in**

particular not very similar to them. For example, civil servants in a local municipality might plan an event for input on a time or location that migrant women in that region cannot join, not realising that the chosen time clashes with paid and unpaid responsibilities of migrant women. They might erroneously conclude migrant women are not interested in participating. To improve effectiveness of initiatives engaging citizens, further training and reflection on community building remains important.

The toolkit is structured into four chapters:

1. **Introduction:** This first chapter explains the context, key concepts and its structure.
2. **Communication and Community Building in Theory:** The second chapter briefly outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the case studies presented around strategic communication and community building.
3. **Strategic Communications & Case Studies:** The third chapter focuses on four case studies around communication strategies and using (online) multi-channel approaches to advocate for the rights of migrant women. It explores how groups use various media platforms to amplify voices, shape public opinion, and drive advocacy efforts.
4. **Community Building & Case Studies:** The final part dives into building and sustaining community engagement with three case studies. It covers strategies for creating meaningful dialogue, facilitating community participation, and using technology to support advocacy efforts.

Obviously one can choose which chapter one wants to read or read them all. By sharing our theory in practice, the toolkit aims to serve also as a source of support and inspiration for others working to advance the rights of migrant women. In line with this approach, we have chosen to narrate the practices in the ‘we’-form, though each time it is a different association presenting their work. Ultimately, the toolkit aspires, through these shared experiences, to encourage a collaborative approach to creating meaningful change and ensuring that the voices of migrant women are heard and valued.

Box 1. Conclusions from WE EMPOWER Studies into Migrant Women's Participation in Political and Democratic Life

It is a human right to be able to politically participate in the place a person lives. Effective and meaningful participation in democratic processes, including political processes, allows migrant women to contribute their expertise and resources to make societies more resilient, equal and socially just. The WE EMPOWER studies found that these possibilities and rights are often limited across Europe.

This is what the studies concluded:

- **There is a lack of research and data** around the political participation of migrant women in the EU and across European states.
- The limited information available, confirmed by each study, points to **migrant women being marginalised in political processes.**
- **Migrant women are not the only one 'missing':** there is a severe lack of participation of women in political and public decision-making from under-represented groups that include migrant women, Roma women, LGBTQI women, and women of colour ([Council of Europe in 2020](#)).



Migrants represent a significant proportion of the European population and women are more or less equally represented. According to Eurostat data from 2021, there are 447.2 million people living in the EU. Of these, **third-country nationals, or non-EU citizens, make up approximately 5% of the population**, or 23.7 million people. **If we add on mobile EU citizens, this figure increases to nearly 10%.**

No Voting Rights

Often forgotten in elections, there is in many countries a lack of electoral rights if the migrants do not have an EU passport. Migrant women who are mobile EU citizens can vote either in their home country or in their host country. They are also eligible to vote in municipal elections, and in some Member States, they can stand as candidates in the host country.

In contrast, migrant women from non-EU countries are generally excluded from voting in municipal, national, or European elections, with exceptions. For example, in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, they can vote in municipal and regional elections after a certain number of years of residency. Spain has bilateral agreements with specific countries that grant access to the residents from these countries voting rights under certain conditions. And this landscape is not fixed, as political debates regarding

constitutional changes to extend voting rights have taken place in France, Austria, Germany, and Italy ([ECIT Foundation](#)).

Main Barriers to Migrant Women's Participation:

- **A major challenge is the language barrier**, which often isolates people from political institutions and wider public life.
- Many studies find that **marginalisation in democratic life is compounded by multiple sources of discrimination with many migrant women encountering sexism, racism, and xenophobia**. For example, in Denmark, migrant women are stigmatised by political rhetoric, while many lack full electoral rights, as only Danish citizens can vote in Parliamentary elections, and the citizenship process is notoriously difficult.
- Economic vulnerability also plays a critical role, as they are often either unemployed or confined to low-wage jobs, making them vulnerable to exploitation and poor working conditions. **Italy's restrictive immigration laws and unequal labour market opportunities prevent many migrant women from securing residence permits or voting rights**, while the media often portrays them through a cultural lens as 'the Other,' further alienating them from political processes.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Obviously, political processes should be redesigned as inclusive, giving migrant women access to decision-making positions and voting at both local, regional and national levels. A key entry point, also for improving access to other rights, is **simplifying the process for acquiring citizenship and reducing other bureaucratic challenges**. It can be extremely tedious to register as a formal association, for example, if migrant women want to further organise themselves. Public institutions can and should also **improve their participatory mechanisms; migrant-led advisory councils are recommended**, which can be implemented at each level from the local to the transnational.

And concrete strategies are to ensure **easy access to language programmes and translation services, but also education about the political system, migrant women's rights, and opportunities for engagement**. Economic empowerment initiatives are needed, and this is also about recognising education completed outside a country on equal footing for education completed in the country of residence.

Mentorship from (migrant) women leaders and other peer support from civil society organisations as well as training are also effective. This means that **financial and political support is necessary for migrant women's organisations to thrive** and enable them to influence decision-making and share their expertise, **and self-organisation should be encouraged**. Affirmative action, including quotas for board and committee memberships, can help create role models and ensure more diverse representation.

2. Theory Chapter

In this chapter we give a brief theoretical introduction into strategic communication and feminist movement building. Strategic communications and media outreach are essential in advocating for the rights of migrant women. In the WE-EMPOWER project, partners ensured that dissemination tactics aligned with research development and other milestones or deliverables of the project. By utilising a range of communication channels—such as social media, traditional media outlets, webinars, and in-person events—advocates can share crucial information, raise public awareness, and mobilise support in a coordinated and impactful way. Through a multi-channel and multi-format strategy, advocacy efforts reach wider audiences, amplifying the visibility and influence of the movement. Ultimately, this comprehensive communication framework strengthens campaigns that promote the rights, dignity, and well-being of migrant women, making their voices heard on a global scale.

2.1 Methodologies and Steps of Strategic Communication

Strategic communication refers to the purposeful use of communication by an organisation or individual to fulfil specific goals or objectives. It is more than just sending out messages as some of us might do often, on one or more social media channels. The difference is that the communication aims to contribute to certain goals with some overarching plan, in which several steps are outlined. Such steps involve developing a comprehensive understanding of the context, audience, and objectives. It involves thinking and planning ahead, carefully crafting messages and choosing the right platforms or channels to influence and engage target audiences effectively. **The process is deliberate, aligning communication efforts with broader organisational strategies.**

Strategic communication differs from other forms of communication because of its focus on long-term and its alignment with an organisation's mission. It is designed to create specific outcomes, such as raising awareness of a topic or increasing public support.

Box 2. The key elements of strategic communication

Goal-Oriented Approach

The foundation of strategic communication lies in its clear, measurable goals. The communication is designed so that every message and action is aligned with a specific objective. **The SMART model, which helps establish goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound can help you increase effectiveness of what you are communicating.**

Audience Analysis

A critical component is understanding the target audience. Different audiences have different values, preferences, and communication styles; they will understand messages differently and can be reached in different ways.

Inside of a target audience there can be **various sub-target groups**. For example, **in a target audience of migrant women there can be different groups** according to age, employment, income, etc. Understanding audience demographics, behaviours, and attitudes helps tailor messages that resonate and engage with each group, as well as select the most promising channels and formats. This level of personalisation ensures that communication is relevant and impactful.

Consistent and Cohesive Messaging

Strategic communication ensures that messages are coherent across all platforms and align with the overall mission of the organisation. Consistency in messaging is crucial for building trust and credibility. A fragmented communication strategy can confuse or alienate audiences. Therefore, organisations must ensure that their messaging aligns with their values, mission, and overall identity across all platforms.

Branding is key in this process. **Branding refers to the visual identity such as logos and design, but also the tone of communication.** The messages should be coherent with the organisation's identity.

Multichannel Integration

Strategic communication often involves using different channels in a coordinated way. Multichannel strategies increase the reach and effectiveness of communication efforts. In the digital age, communication takes place across multiple channels such as social media, websites, press releases, email campaigns, and more. Strategic communication requires an integrated approach where messages are adapted to fit each platform but remain consistent in content and tone.

Evaluation and Adaptation

Successful strategic communication involves ongoing monitoring and evaluation. By measuring the impact and audience feedback of communication strategies, organisations can assess whether they are meeting their objectives and adjust as necessary. This feedback loop ensures that communication efforts remain dynamic and responsive to changing circumstances.

The rise of digital media has changed the way organisations interact with their audiences, making communication faster and more direct. Social media gives audiences a platform to express their opinions and engage with organisations in real-time. In this context, planning becomes crucial in order to create strong relationships with the audience.

Steps in designing a Strategic Communication Plan

If you want to reach a certain goal, for example contribute to changing the attitudes on a certain issue, it is advised to develop a plan or something else that you write down in which you cover a set of elements. Strategic communication has returning steps that if you follow them, lead to a roadmap that will greatly increase your chances of being heard and people interacting with you.

An effective communication campaign can be developed with very little resources if it is well prepared. The first step is the most important: setting realistic goals is key for the rest of the process to work.

The Steps for Strategic Communication:

- 1. First step: Goal Setting.** Set clear goals with measurable outcomes or objectives that align with the group or organisation's overall goals and its identity.

You probably have a general goal (or goals), like encouraging the democratic participation of migrant women. Measurable outcomes or objectives means that you add a concrete point of time to this goal(s) on which you want to have your contribution to this goal achieved, for example having encouraged political parties to engage with migrant women groups in your region. Measurable means that you design it by being aware of the available resources of the organisation and its current situation, which will determine the decision-making in the other steps.

- 2. Second Step: Selecting Target Audience(s) through Research and Analysis.** This process involves gathering information about the context and the audience (or sub-audiences).

Understanding the environment in which the communication will take place is crucial for creating effective messages. Different groups of audiences use different communication channels and have different backgrounds that will affect how they receive the message.

- 3. Third Step: Channel Selection.** Selecting the right communication channels, where the audience is most active and that you can effectively communicate to, is critical to reaching the target audience.

- 4. Fourth Step: Message Development.** This will be the moment for organisations to begin crafting specific messages that align with their goals. These messages should be clear, compelling, and tailored to the audience groups.



Steps During Implementation of the Communication Plan:

- 5. Fifth Step: Implementation.** After creating the messages, organisations begin delivering their communication strategy. This stage involves ensuring that the right messages are distributed at the right time to the right people. And it is also about creating a coherent design.

6. **Sixth Step: Evaluation and Monitoring.** Metrics such as audience engagement, message retention, and impact on goals help determine whether the strategy needs adjustments. Evaluation *after* an implementation of a plan is common, but it helps also to evaluate *during* the implementation and decide whether adjustments are needed or helpful.

The Communication Tools

To facilitate an effective communication strategy, organisations can develop or use a variety of tools. The following are recommended, depending on resources available:

- **Media contact database:** A list with information and contact details of relevant media outlets, influencers or bloggers.
- **Branding manual or brand guidelines:** A set of brand guidelines ensures that all communication elements (logos, fonts, colours, tone of voice) align with the organisation's identity.
- **Communication style guide:** A document focused specifically on the organisation's writing standards and preferences, such as grammar, punctuation, and language usage, ensuring all communications are clear and aligned.
- **Media Kit (or Press Kit):** A package of information provided to journalists or the media, including press releases, information about the organisation and high-resolution images.
- **Target audience and context information:** After each research process, making the information available for further use can save time and effort in the future.

In the context of feminism, strategic communication focuses on inclusion and representation. The voice delivering the message becomes crucial, even more so when working with migrant women's issues. Research on the context and audience is key. The strategy will vary depending on the targeted audience group: a more informative and data-based approach for institutions, a call for action for potential collaborators, or a social media campaign to raise awareness in the general public.

It is fundamental to be aware of the resources and capacities of the organisation when designing a communication strategy.

2.2 Feminist Community Building

The WE-EMPOWER studies (see box 1) laid bare several key structural barriers that greatly limit the possibilities for migrant women participating in political and other forms of democratic processes. It also points to cultural barriers, such as negative stereotyping in media and by political parties. The commonly shared values and perspectives, especially those shared by the people in the centre of power, inform structural barriers and (lack of) changes made to them. Such patterns of interaction also manifest in much more subtle ways of marginalizing migrant women.

Part of a feminist approach is analysing power relations at different levels, from unpacking power structures at the macro level and their impact on all people in the world and our planet to power dynamics in groups and associations impacting other people. When we apply this analysis to gendered migration patterns, questions arise as: ‘Who decides what the major problems are around migration patterns?’, ‘Which narratives around the causes of gender-based violence against migrant women get more attention in the media for example, and why?’, ‘Are organisations promoting women’s rights open to migrant women’s leadership and if so or not so, how is this expressed?’. A power analysis shows that what is normalised and what is marginalised, or completely excluded, is the result of uneven capacity between people and groups to influence their surroundings.

Attitudes at institutional level, group, or individual level can lead to discriminations and exclusions. Experiences of discrimination are common experiences for women in all their diversity and genders, especially migrant women, women with a disability, women that are a minority or otherwise face multiple discriminations. The impacts range from not being able to access decent jobs, underfunded self-organised migrant women associations, being a survivor to gender-based violence, up to recurring micro-aggressions or stereotyping in interactions (for example a migrant women speaking up being quicker disbelieved). This is about institutional discrimination, legal exclusion, and individual behaviours.

In our WE-EMPOWER project many examples and instances of discrimination were shared. During the public event on 19 October 2023 in Serbia, there was an interaction between refugee women experts reflecting on arriving to Serbia and representatives of the various institutions receiving them. The two members of the refugee women advocacy group facilitated by Atina shared different moments of uncertainties in their arrival being received by agencies and placement in the asylum process. They shared different moments where institutional information remained inadequate, and they did not know what would happen with them. In response to their experience, the representatives of different government supported agencies, expressed appreciation for their

stories that prompted a realisation that the perspectives and experiences from agencies and female asylum seekers differ. The event enabled an open and respectful exchange between both that could lead to positive changes.

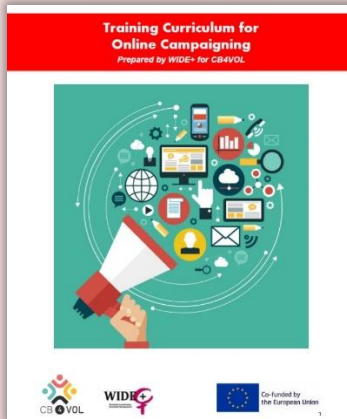


Christa Maniratunga and Ingabire Lola Brigitte spoke about the work of the Advocacy Group and its goals. The significance of the Advocacy Group lies in advocating for improving the position of other migrant women and their easier "passage" through the asylum procedure. Ingabire Lola Brigitte: *"There is no specific system of support and assistance for people who apply for asylum; I had to do everything myself. This is incredibly challenging for the persons who do not know Serbian or English."*

Part of a feminist community approach is building shared leadership, and delegating responsibility, for example building mechanisms in which relevant decisions can only be made by a group of people, or mechanisms in which decisions are taken by multiple groups in a network, space or association. Other element of this approach could cover principles around representation of the organisation or project, how decisions are taken and under which level of transparency, how easy or difficult it is to join a space or group and who decides this.

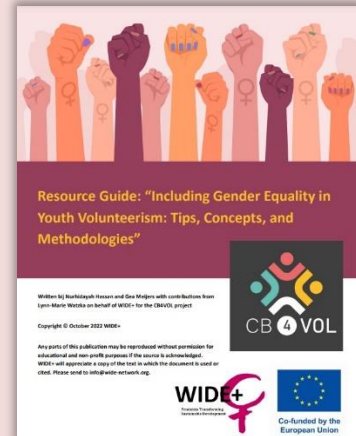
In the remaining of this chapter, the feminist community building is explained with the Feminist Popular Education, which also resembles Participatory Action Research.

Box 3. Feminist Resources: Campaigning & Promoting Citizenship



WIDE+ Resource Guide
“Including Gender Equality in Youth Volunteerism: Tips, Concepts, and Methodologies”

WIDE+ Training Curriculum on Online Campaigning



What is Feminist Popular Education?

Feminist popular education is already in existence for over 40 years, developed as a critique of the male-biased popular education that was dominant in social movements in different parts of the world. Feminists started developing approaches on how people can learn and be able to affect change in society that maximise participation in defining and carrying out activities aimed at change.

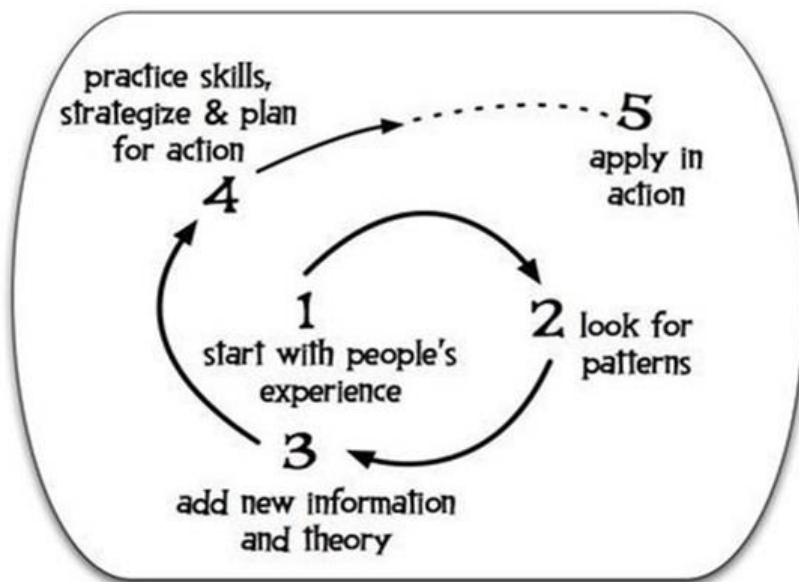
Feminist popular education starts with the struggle against gender oppression and the intersection of other aspects of power inequalities that are structured along with social identities. It's about the principle of starting from where people are situated and working to develop a broader understanding of structures and how these can transform.

It strives to foster both personal and social empowerment, by conscious reflecting on existing hierarchies and the power dynamics between them. In this context, it also examines hierarchies between methods of learning and what is most valued knowledge. This sounds quite abstract. To give practical examples, in popular education using dance or a theatre can be equally as valuable as learning from studying a text. Thus, in some forms of feminist education creative arts, theatre or movement is used. Similarly, it positions migrant women as experts about experiences and situations about themselves, next to experts that have done academic research or for another reason are professionally placed as experts. And finally, promoting more horizontal group

dynamics in which more people open up and share their views requires reflection on how to create and maintain safe spaces in which all people feel valued.

Feminist Popular Education is a participatory, democratic, non-hierarchical pedagogy that encourages creative thinking that breaks through embedded formats of learning. It values local knowledge and works collectively to produce knowledge.

Spiral Model



The feminist popular education can be summarised through the spiral model. This model outlines that learning begins with the experience and knowledge of the participants. To this, one can connect other knowledges or methodologies for analysing those experiences into a commonly shared pattern. The end goal is not about gaining more knowledge, but to change behaviours, in particular through applying the learned in collective action. The learning also includes planning and learning skills. This model values the

knowledge of the 'outsider' and that of the participants. Everybody learns and teaches in a collaborative way of creating new knowledge unlike the traditional expert model where the teachers teach, and the student learns.

3. Strategic Communication *about* Migrant Women should be *from* Migrant Women

In this chapter, four practices are presented that from very different organisational context come to a same process whereby migrant women collectively with allies, design and implement a communication strategy towards change. The case studies also exemplify the importance of uncovering migrant women's conditions and experience as an instrument for the communication outreach. Another commonality is that each organisation or group has followed a strategy to fits with their resources and skills or capacity, making the most of limitations. And all of them rely on online spaces or platforms and their network.

The four practices vary in the chosen tactics that vary from accessing media, organising webinars and online hubs, participating in events, providing online mental health training, with some being able to access all pathways for communication.

Probably a greater variation is around the starting point of each association or group. The organisation with the most capacity, Alianza, is a large international network with projects around the world and in Spain. KULU is a national network that also supports partners elsewhere, but at a much smaller scale in one country. Both have connected development work to activism in their country, in which they continuously partner and collaborate with migrant women groups, associations, and individuals. A.D.R.I and GABRIELA Germany are both grassroots diaspora groups -A.D.R.I is registered, and Gabriela Germany is in the process of registration to become an association- that collaborate with women in their country of origin to promote change. Compared to the two networks their resources are less institutional; all four organisations or groups rely on community work to contribute to the objectives they communicate around.

3.1 Alianza por la Solidaridad in Spain: Designing Communication to Change Society

Alianza por la Solidaridad aims to create a better and more sustainable world in which the human rights are protected for everyone, irrespective of their origin or residence. For more than 30 years we have been fighting against inequality, working across all the continents. Our priorities are promoting women's rights and migrants' rights, climate justice and environmental sustainability, as well as stimulating a global active citizenship. Since September 2018, we have been a member of Action Aid International Federation, extending our influence to more than 50 countries.

Our Campaign Strategy in a Nutshell

Working with migrant women has been part of our goals for years now. Feminism is for us intersectional, which sounds academic, but it is basically about fostering an approach to analysis and activism that acknowledges that the obstacles and experiences of migrant women cannot be considered equal to migrant men or to non-migrant women. In our approach we identify the specific oppressions for people and groups that face multiple forms of discrimination. And we recognise their agency.

Our campaigns are designed according to common campaign elements, which we briefly outline here with examples defining the objectives, target groups, messages, tactics and how they are interlinked.

Alianza has a **track record of campaigns about and with migrant women**; this is what an intersectional feminist communication strategy is about. External communication is not only about sending of information in our view. It starts with creating participatory processes in which we aim to grasp each other's context and build understanding. With the rise of new communication technologies, it is also becoming easier for migrant women to engage in communication outreach, and this has informed our approach for close collaboration throughout the communication (preparation) process.

The "digital divide" is shrinking day by day, which offers enormous possibilities in terms of empowerment, activism and vindication of people, especially women, young people and migrant populations, so that they are not only consumers of media but also communicators and agents of change.

Box 4. Successful Campaign for Domestic Workers' Rights During the Pandemic



In partnership with the SEDOAC association, Alianza worked to defend the rights of domestic workers amidst the pandemic. Supported by an external communications agency, the campaign effectively highlighted urgent worker demands and sustained its impact over time. Key achievements included 72 mentions in print media, over 12 audiovisual appearances, direct questioning of the Labour Minister, and significant press coverage through 6 press releases and 2 opinion articles. The campaign reached more than 250,000 people via digital platforms and played a pivotal role in advocating for unemployment rights, the ratification of ILO Convention 189, and monitoring the implementation of related measures.

Objectives

In this case study we share various campaigns with migrant women's organisations defending their political, social and economic rights and raising awareness about the situations of precariousness and vulnerability that affect them. **We have carried out different campaigns that have made**

visible and demanded access to rights and at the same time denounced the situation of inequality they live in. In line with an intersectional approach, we zoom in also on the different circumstances of migrant women. The contexts are different depending on the origin of the women, whether they live in rural or urban areas, whether they are in an irregular situation, etc.

At Alianza we understand that transformative communication is not limited to the provision of information but a process of working together with migrant women to uncover and promote their rights.

Target Groups

Communications are tailored to the following audiences, depending on the campaign:

- **General Public:** Individuals aged 20 to 50, predominantly female (60% - 40%), who are engaged with social issues and sensitive to human rights matters.
- **Social Organisations:** Partners, platforms, citizen movements, and local organisations with shared objectives.
- **Public Institutions and Policymakers:** Entities involved in policy formation, including public bodies, funders, and political leaders.

Messages

When we develop a campaign or communication plan, we develop for each target group tailored message(s). For example, addressing young people is not the same as addressing adults in terms of (complexity or tone of) language and communicative materials, as well as which communication channels are most effective. This means that each communication plan has its own tactics.

There are a **five red threads throughout our campaigns that mark our intersectional feminist approach:**

- **Empowering migrant women is essential for driving change** and addressing inequalities. Struggles become stronger when we link them through solidarity, formulating and communicating common causes between communities, organisations, social movements and other allies to influence institutions and public policies from the local to the global.
- **We focus on the testimonies of migrant women or do research with them.** We make visible their capacity for organisation and action and their potential for change, as they are

the protagonists. This is also to express their diversity. We promote campaigns, encourage interviews and press releases, for example, which are managed by the women themselves.

- **We consider the global context, also if we are focusing on something locally,** and we seek to connect to other topics that influence the rights of migrant women. Migrant women are hugely impacted by racism intersecting with gender inequality and the (neo-)colonial power imbalances still at play between Western states and the Global South (or the Majority World as most people live in these regions). We promote a critical interculturality that questions gender roles and stereotypes.
- Our communication in content and images **serves to amplify the voices of those who are the protagonists of their empowerment and development.**
- **We also communicate in a positive way,** which generates participation, the motivation to join in to support a goal. Part of this is about using direct, simple images that reflect what we want to communicate with coherence and creativity.

Tactics

Communication strategies are tailored to achieve specific goals, and this informs the tactics. Tactics are the tools and strategies one uses to achieve the objectives of the communication strategy. With tools we mean the channels or a pathway for the communication, such as choosing email, or an online platform like Instagram or LinkedIn, or reaching to a media outlet. The pathway you choose, informs the communication message(s). Tactics is also about the formats for the messages, like video, infographic, text message, among others. If one has decided that a video works best for the target group, using a social platform for posting it would be more likely than for example sending an email. The format also informs the message(s)

We try to design communication strategies in which the messages, processes, formats and channels are aligned with each other. For example, if it is a video we will use social networks, if it is a research we will publish it on social networks, but also by mailing, and our website. And in terms of processes, collaborations with associations led by migrant women enhance the effectiveness of communication efforts. Our communication strategies are closely interlinked with their agency and thus we decide the tactics for the messages together, in support to their work.

Range of Tactics:

- Collect information, testimonies, hold interviews with the protagonists that make their situation, their concerns, and proposed solutions visible.
- Doing research and producing reports, such as the [WE-EMPOWER Spain Case Study together with Red Latinas](#). And in line with our communication strategy, the production of the report is connected to creating a dissemination plan that also informs advocacy work.
- Communicate on specific international days such as International Migrants' Day, International Women's Day, International Domestic Workers' Day, and project milestones.
- We also carry out webinars and events that lead to communication products (infographics, videos, reports, etc.) for dissemination.

Channels and Dissemination Tools

The channels used depend on the audience we are targeting, for example if we are targeting the younger population, we will use social networks such as Instagram. The socio-demographic characteristics of a target audience are not the only factors that informs our choices for channels as well as tactics. To choose the channels, we also first study the target audience. 'What do they in general know about the issue?' and 'What would be their attitude?', etc. Such study helps us to classify our audience into receptive, interested, specialised, social organisations, institutions and policy makers:

- For **receptive audiences** we use the media, blogs and social networks. We transmit more generic information, we do not use communication channels specialised in migration for example, as we want it to reach an audience that is not aware of or informed about the subject.
- For **interested audiences**, we use social networks, websites, media and specialised blogs. Here we do transmit more specialised information on migration and human rights, as this is an audience that is familiar with the subject.
- For **specialists** who have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and require more information, we use website information, mailings, mobile messaging, etc. and encourage them to act as potential multipliers of the messages.
- For **social organisations, institutions, and policy makers** we use mailing, social networks, joint events and publications.

Box 5. Disseminating & Promoting Training of Migrant Women

In the context of the WE-EMPOWER project, successful training sessions on access to rights and participation were conducted with migrant women's associations from urban and rural areas in Andalusia and Extremadura.

Dissemination was achieved through a comprehensive plan, featuring posters with workshop details and relevant logos, distributed via WhatsApp groups (as many migrant women lack email access), social networks (Instagram,

Twitter, Facebook, and regional channels), and the Alianza website.

Post-training, the activities were highlighted on social media to showcase participant involvement and the work of their associations. Additionally, participation in a Red Latinas campaign further amplified the visibility of a report on migrant women's access to rights and political participation.



Lessons Learned

The key to the success of our campaigns is to involve migrant women and their associations from the beginning of the process, to think together about the campaign, and to design the campaign using participatory methodologies where they feel free to propose and act. The entire campaign and its phases are designed together with them; they have access to all the materials and are key to its dissemination. This is very important as it facilitates ownership of the campaign by the migrant women.

When we start implementing a campaign, **we have a collaborative document, a pad, where we publicise the campaign on social networks. This document contains information about the campaign**, the hashtag that will be used, the date and time of the launch, examples of messages to disseminate the campaign, these example messages will be divided according to the social network used. There will also be an identification of strategically chosen accounts to mention in messages and publications. It is essential to have this document at least one week before the launch in order to send it to allied organisations, policy makers, etc. with whom we work so that they can echo the campaign and so that the reach to the public is greater, as there is a diversity of audiences due to the variety of organisations that participate in the dissemination. When launching campaigns, we have also received support from influencers, and we have promoted them by paying them on social networks.

Box 6. Tips to improve Communication Strategy

- **Make a media directory with a specific section where journalists, media and blogs specialised in migration and human rights are identified.** When we want to disseminate a news item, press release or campaign, we resort to it, which facilitates our work in terms of reach and impact.
- Consider **collaboration with influencers** who are references in the field, such as migrant and anti-racist influencers who reach a large audience.
- At times, **pay for advertising** on social media platforms such as Meta of communicative materials such as videos or events in which we want there to be greater citizen participation. This has led to a greater impact on different occasions.
- **Arrange the support of a communications agency.** This has been important to decide more easily the objective of the campaign, messages, audience, as well as to create the communicative materials (videos, infographics, fanzines, etc.). We recommend being able to budget adequately for this service in the projects that are designed to have experts in campaigns and thus achieve a greater impact.

Part of planning and implementation is re-adjusting based on feedback or changes in context.

For example, when we launched a campaign on domestic workers' rights, the coronavirus posed as a challenge in terms of communication but it became an opportunity to advocate to the government to pay attention to the needs of groups whose precariousness was not yet visible in the public debate. We managed to put the issue on the political agenda and there were specific measures for the sector as response.

A key lesson learned when launching a campaign is to think about its design in advance. On some occasions we have not had enough time and in the last weeks before its launch and following we have suffered a lot of stress to have the campaign and all the materials. It is important to plan to have time to review the contents, modifications, etc. The impact and reach of the campaign are also negatively influenced by this, as in campaigns where we have had more time, we have had better results.

CONCLUSION

We think it is necessary for each strategic communication effort to have a plan that reflects the spirit of the organisation(s) and/or group(s), and the goal(s) and objectives. Such plan should come about through a collaborate effort, incorporate the visions and realities of those involved.

There should be active participation in the design, launch and evaluation of campaigns. This means also that a communication component belongs to the design of civil society projects aimed to bring about change.

Campaigning and strategic communication is a process, and not a one-off or random action, that is planned to generate societal change

3.2 A.D.R.I in Italy: Maximising Research Impact Through Media & Events

The Romanian Women's Lobby (RoWL) is a national coordinating body for the European Women's Lobby in Romania. We serve as an umbrella association encompassing Romanian NGOs committed to advancing women's rights. Our mission is to promote real and effective equality between women and men in all spheres of public and private life, throughout Romania and Europe, and our main objective is to foster a friendly environment for gender equality in Romania.

This section zooms in on the work of The Romanian Women's Association in Italy (A.D.R.I.). As a member of RoWL and as self-organised migrant women association, that is located outside Romania, we promote Romanian women's rights in Italy and raise awareness about their important role to the economy and society. We also carry out advocacy at the EU level by providing the European parliament with written questions regarding the problems faced by migrant women and transnational families, and data collection on the children left behind. Both RoWL and A.D.R.I. hold formation sessions, training and empowerment activities regarding involvement and representation in politics.

Communication Strategy with Tactics of Media & Events

A.D.R.I. has a track record in reaching media channels, such as radio and television, to showcase precarious and abusive circumstances and their impact on Romanian women in Italy and their families, many who work as domestic workers. Another key strategy we have developed is speaking at events organised by others, such as Universities, other organisations, etc. These tactics enable us to maximise attention to the rights and situations of Romanian women in Italy and are for us an effective strategy to promote change.

As part of the WE-EMPOWER project, A.D.R.I. and RoWL carried out the study: *"Participation of Migrant Women in Political and Democratic Life in Italy"*. We developed a dissemination strategy of the research findings, in which we capitalised on our previous communication work. We designed our strategies around participating in external events and media outreach to pursue advocacy and awareness raising objectives.

Box 7. Romanian Television Spotlights Study on Migrant Women's Political Underrepresentation

In November 2023, Romanian Television of Iasi highlighted the study on migrant women's political participation in a programme focused on Romanian migration.

The segment examined the study's findings on the underrepresentation of migrant women in politics, despite their economic contributions in Italy. It provided key insights and discussed the implications for policy and social change, raising awareness among policymakers, academics, and the public about the challenges faced by migrant women and the need for targeted interventions.

[Facebook Live @TVR Iasi](#)



Assessing Goals, Targets & Resources for Communication

Our communications strategy around the study was informed by deciding on target groups that we considered as those that can bring about change. We also considered our available resources, our network, and skills in designing our communication strategy. With the study we could attract interest to be invited to face-to-face events organised by different stakeholders and mainstream media.

We decided on the following target audiences:

- **The General Public** with tactics of outreach through mainstream media, such as TV and Radio. There is little awareness about the barriers of migrant women in democratic life.
- **Policy makers**, including the Romanian Embassy in Italy, with whom we exchanged before.
- **Research Institutions**, including Universities. Despite the relevance of female migrations in Italy, the political commitment and agency of migrant women has rarely been at the centre of scientific literature.
- **Our network of migrant women other active women's rights advocates and allies.** This included their communication channels, like being included in a publication of which we received 50 copies from one of the events we spoke at.

Communication Strategy in Action

The study was communicated to Italian and Romanian media and Romanian diplomatic offices in Italy, securing media coverage. This included featured segments on the Romanian television of Iasi, Redattore Sociale, and Radio România International (The age of Romanian migration/presenting the study @[Radio Romania International](#), 3.12.2023).

The study was also shared with NGOs within RoWL and A.D.R.I.'s contact database, facilitating outreach to organisations directly involved in relevant issues. Online efforts included publishing the study on social media platforms and the association's website, as well as posting in migrant-focused Facebook groups, thereby engaging the migrant community directly. Through the publications we usually collaborate with, and by posting on social media, so that the posts can be seen immediately and in time.

Box 8. Migrant Women: An Invisible Economic Engine

We concluded that to promote migrant women's participation in democratic life, it is imperative to influence public opinion. Our study found some lesser-known aspects regarding the lack of representation and participation in political and decision-making life in Italy. We found these aspects in the context in which the huge contribution by migrants to Italy's gross domestic product (GDP) is overseen.

The Statistical Migration report for 2022 from the research centre IDOS reveals that migrants in Italy produce wealth for the country, while they keep getting poorer. Many migrants are over-skilled in terms of their education and underemployed, although they contribute significantly to Italy's economy, offering a positive balance of €1.3 billion to Italy's state coffers. Yet, the report noted migrants remain largely excluded from social services, although their poverty rate is four times higher than that of Italian citizens ([InfoMigrants](#), 2022).

Communication Outreach through Events

Key presentations of the study were made at several notable academic events and featured on televised programming, significantly broadening its academic reach. One of the highlights was the study's inclusion in a published volume following an international conference in Paris. In addition to these in-person events, video recordings of public appearances promoting the research have been compiled on the YouTube channels of A.D.R.I. and shared on LinkedIn.

Box 9. The GLORIA Project

The project '[GLORIA](#) - feminism and strategic approach of gender equality' aimed to support 21 member NGOs in the Romanian Women's Lobby (ROWL) through organisational development, strengthening the role of monitoring and advocacy on women's rights, gender equality, and combating gender-based violence in order to achieve a strategic approach, strengthen financial resources and increase the capacity to raise public awareness of the problems faced by women and migrant women beneficiaries of NGO services ([full video](#)).



Presentation of the study at the conference "Romanians between migration and circulation in the European space in communism and post-communism".

The study was presented and discussed at:

- Feminist Solidarity Forum: ["Europe at the crossroads - Equal participation of women at all levels: Precondition for peace, prosperity and societal change"](#) (Romania, October 2023): The study was presented as part of a panel discussion organised within the framework of the GLORIA project (see box).
- The study was showcased at an event organised by [Faculty of Political, Economic and Social Sciences - University of Milan](#) (Italy, November 2023) with additional details published on the university's website.
- Conference: ["Romanians between migration and circulation in the European space in communism and post-communism"](#) (Paris, France, November 2023). The study was featured in a post-conference volume alongside other significant research.

- Film projection “[Careseekers looking for cure](#)” & debate on public policies, (Milan, Italy, December 2023): Co-hosted with the Italian Green Party, this event offered a platform to present the study on International Migrant’s Day.

Box 10. Presentation at the University of Milan, Italy

On November 8, 2023, the study “Participation of Migrant Women in Political and Democratic Life in Italy” was presented at the University of Milan’s Faculty of Political, Economic and Social Sciences. The presentation explored the research’s findings on the barriers and underrepresentation of migrant women in Italy’s political landscape. It provided insights into the challenges these women face despite their significant economic contributions. The event included an overview of the study’s methodology, key findings, and policy recommendations, followed by a Q&A session. This engagement not only bridged the academic and civil society gap on the topic matter, but it led to the study being posted to the university’s website.



Lessons Learned

By combining in-person presentations with media outreach each supported by digital dissemination, the study has achieved a wide reach, engaging diverse audiences across academic, political, and public spheres. Our experience suggests that participating in external events is a highly effective strategy for raising awareness towards stakeholders that could promote the participation of migrant women: people involved in policy and institutions, academics, media professionals, and community leaders. Furthermore, direct engagement at these events allows for face-to-face interactions that can create new insights, as well as lead to new connections for valuable partnerships. And these connections support further dissemination efforts and enhance the impact of the research through collaborative initiatives. This can be seen in the example

whereby our WE-EMPOWER study was subsequently published in a research volume of the hosting University after our participation in the international conference in Paris in 2023.

We also made sure that we highlighted and reposted any media exposure or engagement at an event. **Posting about upcoming events beforehand and/or sharing event recordings afterwards creates ongoing opportunities** to promote the research. This approach fosters further engagement with audiences and could open the door for future media and event participation.

CONCLUSION

The WE-EMPOWER project helped us to get a clearer picture of the extent to which migrant women are (not) represented in decision-making at different levels and developed strategies to overcome some of the challenges to participation. Thanks to the transnational collaboration we got to know the realities faced by migrant women from other countries as well and expand our knowledge about methods by which we can better contribute, encourage and empower migrant women to participate in civic and democratic action in Italy, Romania and, generally, in Europe.

Through the communication strategy we were able to share this newly acquired knowledge with a wider audience and involved stakeholders, expanding the networking already created, and moreover, contribute to the ultimate goal of enhancing migrant women's democratic participation. We aim to introduce more NGO-run projects that push for greater migrant participation, and the involvement of migrants as direct actors of change through processes of participation and active citizenship.

3.3 KULU: Webinars as a Platform for Migrant Women and Advocates

As a non-partisan platform, KULU-Women and Development (KULU) houses 16 member organisations, equality councils, development NGO's, migrant women associations, and other CSO's and 300 individual members. Our mission is to promote women's and girl's rights in the Global South in close dialogue and partnership with women's organisations and networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This mission includes migrant women from these regions in Denmark. Our strategies are development education, advocacy and lobby and obviously strategic communication. KULU is approaching its 50th birthday and was established in 1976, after the 1st

United Nations International Women's Conference in Mexico. The UN conventions and agenda against the discrimination of women remain very relevant for our platform.

Babaylan Denmark is a member of KULU and part of the European network Babaylan – a network for Philippine diaspora women. Babaylan Denmark has worked around the precarity faced by au pairs as it is an arrangement that differs from regular working relations in Denmark. The organisation offers education and community support to migrant women and raise awareness about their situation. KULU and Babaylan have cooperated for many years to increase migrant women's voices and visibility in public debate in relation to their living conditions and rights and impacts that migration causes in countries of origin.

KULU's Communication Strategy in a Nutshell

The three main objectives of the communications strategy of KULU are to (1) create awareness and debate about women's rights on a global scale in Denmark, (2) to increase awareness of KULU and our work, and (3) to strengthen the basis for collecting funds and drawing new membership.

Main channels of communication:

- **Several Websites** are the platform's face and act as the primary channel of information. KULU.dk contains news and relevant information about the organisation; there are also project or campaign websites such as givenpigeret.dk.
- **E- Newsletters** update on the progress of the work and encourages engagement with the members and subscribers.
- **Printed materials** that we keep up to date and simple. We also use it during public events to



**POLITIK ER FOR ALLE:
Også for kvinder med
minoritetsbaggrund?**

Vært:
Khaterah Parwani

KOM TIL DEBATCAFÉ D. 14 JUNI:
**Politik er for alle: Også
for kvinder med
minoritetsbaggrund?**

example of announcement
for the face to face WE-
EMPOWER event.

raise awareness. It creates a sense of professionalism but can be expensive.

- **Posting on social media with some regularity.** KULU is primarily on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Social media allows an association to reach a target audience with limited effort and low cost, which benefits in particular smaller NGO's (before using money on other channels). We at times also take part in the comment section of relevant articles – or post in relevant groups.
- **Advertising in the mainstream or local media about campaigns or events.** We have used this but have become hesitant to use this often. It has given questionable results especially when we fundraise for the projects of our partner in the Global South, we are barely breaking even. Traditional advertising is expensive; therefore, we have tried online advertising.

We would like to raise awareness through mainstream press. In our experience however it has proven difficult to frame international stories in a way that is interesting for media with a national focus. The story often has to fit a wider current agenda or debate – or be framed so spectacularly that the story is agenda setting in itself. It is often easier to get involved with the debate section of outlets – as mentioned – especially with a current subject.

Our experience from posting on social media channels is that relatable content with faces works well. And it is important to post according to some schedule that is suited to your resources. Content doesn't have to be directly linked to the organisation but could be news or developments on the subject.

WE-EMPOWER Communication Strategy: Three Webinars with Online Resource Hub

To further disseminate the barriers we uncovered in the study [“A Baseline Study on the Participation of Migrant Women in Political and Democratic Life in Denmark”](#) but also strategies for migrant women to participate, we decided on organising three webinars and attach an online hub of resources to each. For each webinar topic the online hub provided its own microsite that can be accessed directly and remains available after the project.



Box 11. KULU's WE-EMPOWER Resource Hub

KULU's WE-EMPOWER Resource Hub acts as a comprehensive repository of information and tools aimed at supporting migrant women and enhancing their engagement with the topics covered in the webinars. It includes the webinars and additional resources such as podcasts, books, films, and online courses. The webinar recordings and most of the resources are in Danish. There are also resources available in English. For the main page, click [here](#) (where you can also find the three thematic sites)

Webinar and Online Hub: [Tips for strengthening your personal economy](#), 17 August 2023

This topic was chosen due to Babaylan's expertise in financial literacy and economic empowerment for au-pairs in Denmark. Economic empowerment builds resilience for migrant women, enabling them to manage their finances and achieve the freedom to shape their own lives.

Webinar and Online Hub: [From arrival to participation: your democratic rights](#), 24 August 2023

This webinar included knowledge exchange navigating citizenship and political engagement, voting rights and eligibility, and a discussion on the challenges migrant women face in politics.

Webinar and Online Hub: [From storytelling to change: the voices of migrant women](#), 31 August 2023

This webinar focused on exploring different storytelling techniques, building connections and finding common ground through stories, as well as challenging political narratives and creating impactful political content.

The launch of the hub was combined with the announcement of the webinars to encourage people to take part in the online events. The free webinars addressed the needs that emerged from the study with the topics #1: Economic empowerment #2 Migrant's rights #3 Storytelling. Our target audience were migrant women proficient in Danish, in particular aiming towards migrant women residing in Denmark for several years, alongside key stakeholders in the migration field.

The main goal of the communication strategy is to provide tools and resources for migrant women to participate in society as citizens and in political processes. In support of this goal, we wanted to establish relations with migrant women not yet engaged with KULU as well as relevant stakeholders.

The objectives of the webinars:

- **Establish connections with migrant women:** Build relationships and engage directly with migrant women to understand their needs and challenges.
- **Raise awareness of capacity-building methods:** Inform migrant women about various methods and resources available for their personal and professional development.
- **Collaborate with experts in the migration field:** Work with specialists to receive feedback on methodologies and improve the effectiveness of the programme.
- **Create a sustainable portfolio of resources and tools:** Develop a set of resources and tools based on expert feedback to ensure long-term accessibility and utility for future use.

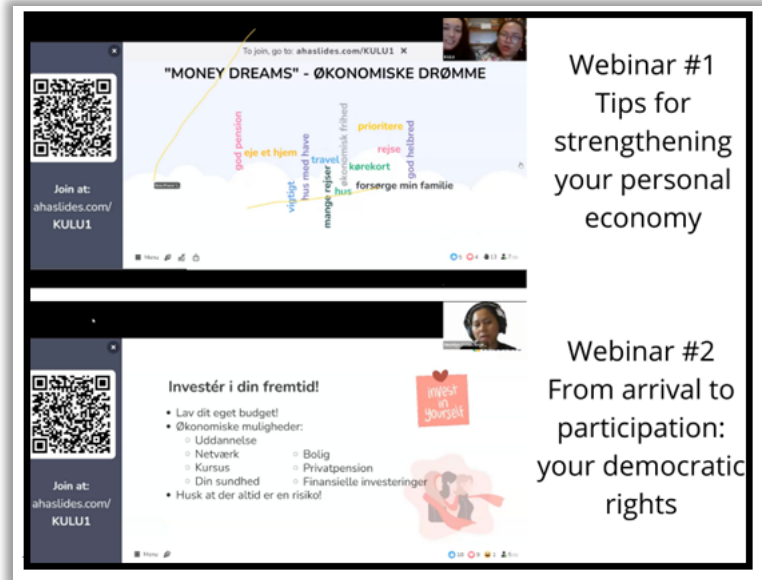
A Strategy to develop Online Resources between Migrant Women and Allies

A red thread through the preparation, execution of the webinars and online hub, up to their final launch, is the a) enabling migrant women's agency to shape the agenda and strategy, and b) fostering of collaboration and exchange between migrant women and stakeholders. This project builds on a strategy that KULU has implemented in other project promoting the migrant women rights. Thus, it was arranged that the three webinars were jointly hosted by members of Babaylan and Integrationshuset Kringlebakken.

The following steps were taken to ensure a collaborative process with migrant women in the lead:

1. Co-hosting webinars with a migrant women association and relevant groups or spaces.
2. The webinars in themselves were designed to promote feedback and exchange. They featured interactive slides, interactive elements, and concluded with a Q&A session. A particular software tool was used to engage audiences with live quizzes, polls and brainstorming tools.

3. There were feedback evaluation surveys designed at the end of each webinar. These provided valuable insights on how useful the format as well as the information provided was.
4. In the design and preparation of each webinar there was also active feedback sought. This addressed the webinar format, its agenda and towards the online hubs in the form of feedback. In sum, the topics chosen, the content and format were validated and evaluated by migrant women, allies such as external experts not once, but at different intervals.



The webinar on migrants' democratic rights provided encouragement and newfound knowledge. Migrant women shared afterwards that they realised that the journey from local activism to municipal politics is attainable. Many expressed feeling motivated to contact politicians for important causes, signalling a heightened sense of civic responsibility.

Communication Strategy through Collaboration

The approach of collaboration and building of networks, or connections was also part of the design for the communication strategy. KULU sent a direct email to around 50 migrant groups and some of the most central actors in Denmark working with the target group. We also made announcements and advertising for the event on our own and our partner organisation's social media channels; Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, in our newsletter and via event calendars on platforms hosted by other NGO's. KULU created a dedicated plan for social media dissemination with a timetable for each of the webinars to ensure that the right posts were shared on the right

channels. Dates, platform, pictures, and text were included to make this plan easy to use. Babaylan primarily used Facebook, reaching out to numerous Facebook groups, and their own space where they have more than 2000 followers, mostly migrant women.

The webinars also encouraged the participants to stay in touch and reach out to others. Attendants from the webinars have kept following KULU's social media platforms and engage with content which bears witness that the webinars have sparked an interest and enlarged the loose network of potential allies to improve the democratic rights of migrant women. For example, Lisbeth Vibe Utzon, Head of Integrationshuset Kringlebakken, has proposed to adjust some of the webinars as educational resource specifically for immigrant women enrolled in their Danish classes.

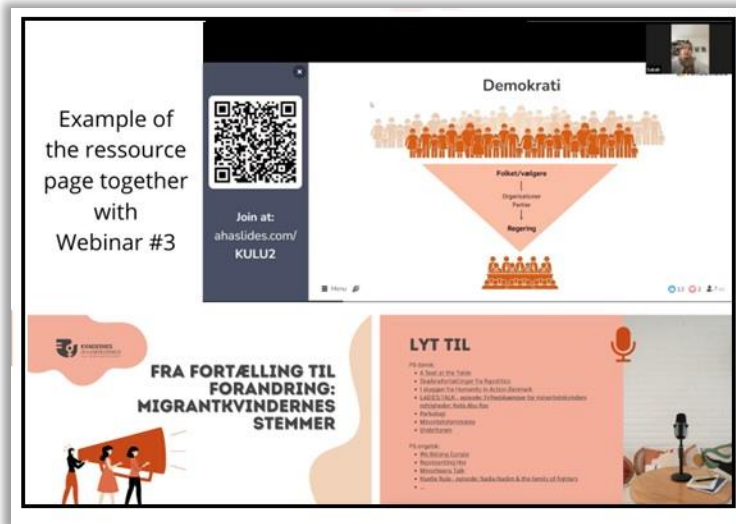
This shows how organising of events, also online, together with a communication outreach led to a communication strategy in which both reinforce each other to contribute to the final aim of promoting migrant women's democratic participation.

CONCLUSION

Our conclusion overlaps with our lessons learned, in which we met our expectation of engaging and interactive webinars as a tool for adult learning by migrant women was encouraged. The webinars also encouraged migrants to take more civic action and for stakeholders to be more aware of the barriers and agency of migrant women. And the online resources that are with the recording accessible, offer learning after the event and WE-EMPOWER project.

The webinars are in many ways an accessible format. One key advantage is that they allow attendance from anywhere in the country without the need for travel, including bearing costs for travelling. It can also be an advantage for women who have a busy everyday life to attend a webinar. **The downside is that meeting face to face has a different dimension to it that cannot be completely replaced by online meetings.** Face-to-face meetings in general allow for making better connections and having more exchange, including informal exchange, having lunch together, etc.

What we took away from the webinars and want to continue working on, is the creation of interactive elements into webinars. **We had the experience, together with the feedback of participants, that it can be possible to design interactive webinars that address some of the downsides of meeting online compared to face-to-face learning.**



We conclude that the benefits of interactive webinars are numerous. Participants feel more engaged, attentive and motivated to actively participate and it leads to better comprehension of the information, as they feel more involved. They also have the opportunity to personally have questions answered and gain a deeper understanding of the topic. At the same time, the interaction elements allow you as a host to adapt the webinar in real-time based on the

reactions and needs of the audience. By creating an inclusive and engaging environment, a more meaningful experience for participants is achieved, resulting in greater value and relevance of the webinar.

The evaluation of the webinar serves as a starting point for further adjusting the webinar formats with accessibility and level of attendance in mind. At the core of this task is a continuous consideration of what it means to work with the target group of migrant women, what participation in society looks like, and what topics and hard skills are actually needed.

In terms of communication strategy, organising a webinar can be a way to reach audiences, in order to contribute to the organisation's or group's goals for changing our societies for the better. It requires time and skills but can require fewer financial resources compared to a face-to-face meeting as organisers and for the participants.

The process of organising webinars, an online hub, in connection with a communication strategy confirmed a connected thread in KULU's many years of experience with partnerships that are continuously in flux. It underscores the importance of working with partners who have in-depth knowledge about the needs of the target group, and foremost stresses that events and communication strategies need to be planned and implemented with migrant women themselves.

3.4 GABRIELA Germany: Digital Tools and Community Empowerment

GABRIELA Germany is an international chapter of GABRIELA Philippines. Our main goals focus on advocating for social, economic and democratic rights of Filipino migrants, particularly women. Our objectives focus on raising awareness about the challenges faced by Filipino migrants, empowering them through community organizing and capacity-building activities. Ultimately, we seek to create a supportive and just environment for Filipinos as well as other migrants, thus enhancing their well-being in German society. GABRIELA Germany was founded in 2018.

In Germany, we have been active in providing various forms of support to migrant women subjected to domestic violence and discrimination. We provide community events that feature the historical roles of women in advancing the struggles against repression and discrimination, in the Philippines and in other parts of the world. These events are spaces where multigenerational members of the Filipino diaspora come together and collectively celebrate our multifaceted identities, revolutionary history and rich culture. We have also conducted symposia and workshops, and we have optimised the benefit of using social media platforms to reach out to the widest migrant population possible. GABRIELA Germany can join the calls of GABRIELA Philippines, and we initiate our own campaigns and activities according to our own conditions and circumstances at the local level.

Another important aspect of our work is to engage in forging solidarity relations and alliances with other organisations and stakeholders in campaigns and advocacy such as the campaign for citizenship rights of migrants and refugees, lower housing rents, and better working conditions for health workers. Our joint advocacy has promoted policy changes to increase the welfare and protection of migrant workers in Germany. Recently, we have started to expand our membership

Presentation and exchange during the third WE-EMPOWER transnational training.



in other key cities in Germany, invested in educating, serving and advocating for the social, political and democratic rights of migrant women.

Digital Tools to promote Societal Change

Digital tools and platforms or spaces offer possibilities to build networks, find connections, start collaborations and even learn from each other. For a grassroots organisation like GABRIELA Germany, we see that the digital space has rich potential in advancing our goals and objectives. **The crux is how to optimise these platforms and transform them into tools to serve our aspirations and purpose.** We believe we have found ways to make use of this potential. And we have been finding more ways to use these tools.

Our experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic, when most of our operations were moved to exclusively online and digital platforms, have further enriched the practices we have been doing. Our engagement and participation in the WE-EMPOWER project has allowed us to systematically apply these digital tools to further expand our reach to migrant women and impact. Such transnational project has effect. We were able to deepen our knowledge about the needs and issues of the members of our community, deliver the services they needed, and develop the various skills of those who are already members of our organisation.

WE-EMPOWER as practice of Community Research connecting to Strategic Communication

Through the WE-EMPOWER project we were able to conduct the baseline study [‘Political and Democratic Participation of Migrant Women in Germany’](#). **Our principle of empowerment is to first and foremost investigate the situation and conditions in which the people we want to empower can be found.** In this way, we will be able to understand their objective conditions, limitations, potentials, and their subjective aspirations.

Part of this research is meeting the community members whose rights and/or conditions we aim to improve. This starts with finding them. We identified where the target community gathers, such as in churches or community centres, and engaged with them directly in these settings. This method provides intimate, face-to-face encounters that can yield deep insights. However, it is geographically limited, primarily reaching those who reside within the city or specific locales. Here the digital spaces come in. Social media groups, while limited to online exchanges, offer a broader reach in which a wide range of information can be gathered. This can also be indirectly, on what people share, inquire about, and comment on in posts. **This dual approach of face-to-face**

interaction and online engagement allows for a comprehensive understanding of the community's needs and aspirations, ensuring that the empowerment strategies are well-informed and inclusive.

Providing Services and Empowerment based on the Peoples' Needs

Through community research, we recognised an immediate need for mental health workshops and training. In response to this need, through the WE-EMPOWER Project, we successfully organised two sessions of an online mental health training, led by two invited experts. It was not just a mental health training. It was designed to tailor to the needs of women of the BIPOC community and their circumstances (BIPOC is a term used in Germany and other countries representing Black, Indigenous, and people of colour). And it was designed as an action of solidarity, aimed to empower migrant women. It recognises that the mental health of BIPOC women is also a common problem, given their specific circumstances as migrant women in Germany, their migration journey and for many precarity, issues with access to rights, services and language.



Announcement picture for the online training.

The training was a success because of the very positive feedback from the participants. This success underscores the importance of continuing to provide accessible and relevant mental health resources as part of our broader empowerment initiatives.

The key outcomes of the training-workshops included:

1. **Increased Awareness:** Participants gained a better understanding of mental health issues and the importance of mental well-being.
2. **Practical Strategies:** The workshops equipped participants with practical tools and techniques to manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health concerns.
3. **Community Support:** The sessions fostered a sense of community and support among the participants, helping them feel less isolated in their struggles.

4. **Empowerment:** The knowledge and skills gained from the workshops empowered participants to take proactive steps in managing their mental health and supporting others in their community.

The online approach was chosen due to the personal circumstances and limitations of both the participants and the experts, making it the most suitable option. The online aspect was also positively evaluated for the accessibility and convenience of the online format, which allowed them to participate without the barriers of physical attendance. The sessions provided valuable insights and coping strategies, addressing mental health challenges specific to their experiences as migrant women. It proved a safe space, and this was also a new use of an online space for GABRIELA Germany.

To complete the circle, a report was created about the training that was communicated according to our target groups, again contributing to the strategic communication, making a case for mental health support for migrant women to support them balancing their responsibilities and aspirations, including for democratic participation.

A Multi-faceted Empowerment Strategy

As shown above, our empowerment strategy is multifaceted, addressing immediate needs while also fostering long-term, systemic change. By combining service provision with education, advocacy, and community building, we aim to create a robust movement that can effectively champion the rights and interests of migrant women and their communities. This will in the end contribute to our goal, which is to elevate the political and social consciousness of each individual, enabling them to participate actively in the broader struggle for systemic change.

We always invite those we reach out to join our organisation. By doing so, we aim to forge unities, launch campaigns, and build stronger solidarity with other organisations, individuals, and institutions. Our efforts emphasise the importance of having a structured organisation to advance the struggle for equality and justice.

Our approach includes:

1. **Educational Trainings and Workshops:** These are tailored to build critical skills such as leadership, advocacy, and community organizing. Workshops on political education help raise awareness about the broader socio-political landscape and the role individuals can play in influencing it.

2. **Immediate Services:** Providing assistance in searching for legal aid, employment/labor rights discussions, and other essential services addresses the immediate needs of the community. These services not only facilitate smoother integration but also empower individuals to become self-sufficient and confident in participating in community and political activities.
3. **Building Solidarity and Alliances:** We actively seek to form alliances with other organisations, individuals, and institutions that share our vision of equality and justice. By building a network of support, we can amplify our efforts and create a more formidable force for change.
4. **Launching Campaigns:** Our campaigns are designed to tackle systemic issues that affect the migrant community. By mobilizing our members and partners, we advocate for policies and practices that promote fairness, justice, and equality.
5. **Encouraging Active Participation:** We encourage members of our community to not only benefit from our services and programs, but to also take an active role in our organisation. This involvement helps foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, empowering individuals to be part of the decision-making process and the implementation of initiatives.



Social Media post around study

6. **Raising Political and Social Consciousness:** Through continuous education and engagement, we aim to raise awareness about the interconnectedness of individual struggles with broader societal issues. This heightened consciousness is crucial for building a motivated and informed community ready to participate in collective action for systemic change.

Lessons Learned

By combining researching digital resources with face-to-face interactions, we have gathered a comprehensive understanding around the political and democratic participation of migrant women in Germany. This dual approach has enriched our research, providing both

quantitative data and qualitative insights and has led us to identify the key topic for our training. The WE-EMPOWER research confirmed the importance of engagement with the community, and doing this face-to-face and through online spaces.

It might not be the first thing that comes to mind, but being a collaborative partner in such transnational project had led to capacity building of organisational members as well. It prompted and encouraged teamwork to manage the activities over a few years, which in addition to building skills and knowledge, also led to learning about teamwork and task management. Effective collaboration inside and outside the organisation is also a key achievement and lesson. We have efficiently divided responsibilities, ensuring that each member contributes effectively to the project's success.

The project has also highlighted the importance of continuous advocacy and outreach. By staying connected with the community and relevant stakeholders, we can better advocate for systemic changes and support our community's political and social empowerment. The WE-EMPOWER project has also strengthened our organisational capabilities, paving the way for more effective and impactful advocacy in the future.

CONCLUSION

Through participating in the WE-EMPOWER project, we have successfully implemented key aspects of empowering migrant women, particularly those from the Filipino community. This engagement has enabled us to establish our reputation as an organisation that genuinely seeks to provide essential services and advance the struggles to protect the democratic, social, and economic rights of migrant women.

Working closely with partner organisations, through discussions, meetings and joint training, has helped us develop stronger ties. These relationships are built on shared objectives and mutual respect, fostering a collaborative environment conducive to achieving our common goals. We have been able to share knowledge, resources, and best practices. This exchange has enriched our understanding and improved our capabilities in addressing the challenges faced by migrant women. Moreover, participation in the project has expanded our network not only in Germany but also in other parts of Europe, connecting us with a diverse range of stakeholders.

Overall, the partnerships formed and strengthened through the WE-EMPOWER project have been instrumental in enhancing our work and expanding our reach. It has been a transformative experience. It has allowed us to implement effective strategies for empowering migrant women, establish our organisation as a credible advocate for their rights, and build a foundation for continued support and advocacy within the community.

4. Fostering Feminist Community Building for Empowerment

Individuals can become immensely powerful when they unite in alliances or groups. Effective community building, especially among migrant women, can be significantly enhanced by thoughtfully applying governance principles tailored to specific contexts. This approach ensures that sufficient resources and space are available for co-creative agency to flourish.

Feminist community building often seeks to move away from traditional leadership models characterised by a dominant leader or a select group exercising control - a more top-down approach that relies on hierarchical mechanisms. Instead, feminist leadership promotes a horizontal and inclusive model, intentionally sharing decision-making power.

This inclusive approach is essential for migrant women, as it promotes skills and knowledge transfer while providing crucial support and creating spaces for advocacy. The WE-EMPOWER project partners effectively employed various methodologies to achieve this. By cultivating a collaborative environment, these communities of migrant women not only learn specific knowledges or skills, but they also empower each other by sharing their experiences, advocating for their rights, and developing the confidence necessary to engage actively in societal and political life. Through this collective endeavour, the community not only flourishes but also amplifies the voices and aspirations of its members, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment that is transformative for all involved.

In this chapter three practices of feminist community building are presented that could be used in an organisation's programme. They include a refugee women advocacy group through Atina, Study Circles through GADIP and a political school through Red Latinas. These practices include a (limited) number of meetings that can be repeated with other topics or extended. Through this perspective the approach can be part of a sustainable community development across years.

4.1 Atina: Co-creating Advocacy Efforts with Refugee Women

For over twenty years, the NGO Atina has been helping migrant women - including refugee women and women being trafficked - live outside enclaves and breathe freely, feel safe, and be dignified. We envision a world where the rights of women and girls are inherently respected and safeguarded from violence and exploitation. Atina's mission navigates through providing holistic, compassionate support to survivors while emphasising enduring empowerment and societal inclusion. Atina aspires for a societal metamorphosis, breaking down systemic obstructions and nurturing an environment of equality, dignity, and steadfast support for migrant women and girls, propelling towards a future prosperous in freedom and equity.

Atina arose from a formidable women's movement in 2003 that set out to counter gender-based violence and trafficking in Serbia through a lens of gender justice and intersectionality. Migrant women exploited in prostitution were punished and arrested during these years, mainly for illegal crossing of the border. In response to more migrants coming to Serbia, we established our most extensive support programme for migrant women and girls in 2015. The programme focuses on their basic needs and provides safe housing, legal support, and educational and economic empowerment.

In 2018, we facilitated the work of a peer-support group, which led to the establishment of an Advocacy leaders' group of migrant women residing in Serbia. Within its mandate, the group's long-term goal is to become a mandatory and unavoidable (f)actor influencing decision-making processes in the asylum and social protection system. This practice digs deeper into the methodology developed by Atina to sustain the group.

Oyewole Oluwakemi Abiodun, a migrant woman from Nigeria involved in Atina's Advocacy Group: *"We need to include migrant women and girls in deciding and designing assistance and protection services. The journeys we are passing are far too dangerous in many ways. Migrant women, whether with families or single, need empowerment to know that they can have a say and start to decide for themselves – at least on the little things, for a start."*

Building the Refugee Women Advocacy Group

Currently the Refugee Women Advocacy Group is recognised in Serbia by policy makers as a go-to resource to help improve the security and socio-economic position of refugee and migrant women and their political and democratic participation. Atina is using a strategy of mentorship, strategic communication and building relationships with stakeholders.

First Key Step: Senior Experienced Members mentor New Members

A structured process of mentorship has worked very well. We establish and ensure the connection between senior and junior experienced members. The aim is to share experiences and expertise to increase the inner cohesion of the group and become sustainable. Some members of the Advocacy Group have left Serbia; however, most of them are now working or studying in the country upon being granted asylum. In the recent period, the war Russia had led against Ukraine has caused a high influx of Ukrainian women to Serbia, some of whom are also expressing interest in joining the Advocacy Group.

Fostering the relationship between the senior and junior experienced members is vital for preserving the knowledge and results. As a group with mixed and diverse experience, they will together define their further engagement through creating and implementing a plan that sets the agenda for their work and advocacy goals.

To make sure the mentorship works, we start by **mapping senior experienced members of the Refugee Women Advocacy Group** and defining their engagement when new members join, **followed by consultative meetings between senior and junior experienced members**. The purpose of these meetings is to introduce the lessons learned and determine the areas and methodology in which the senior experienced members could provide support in order to help develop and achieve the plan they will design together.

After consultative meetings, mentorship will be provided. Mentorship involves joint planning of group meetings with decisionmakers, standard preparation for public appearances at conferences and roundtables, and collaborative planning of other actions that the Advocacy Group will realize. Mentorship is based on clarity, communication, and commitment as crucial aspects of the process. The senior members serve as a sounding board, enabling reflection for newcomers, help recognizing their strengths and opportunities for growth, and thoroughly preparing them for their role, as well as making it easier to avoid any obstacles they may encounter.

Box 12. Trailblazing Advocates: Women on the Move Chronicles

The "Women on the Move" campaign highlights the powerful documentary film now available on [Atina's YouTube](#) channel. This film captures the struggles and successes of refugee women in Serbia, focusing on the transformative work of the Advocacy Group. Through personal stories from diverse backgrounds, it showcases their resilience and the empowerment they gain through advocacy.

“

When I was introduced to this group, I got to know other girls, we shared our experiences, spent time together. Before that, I didn't have friends, I didn't have anyone to talk to. So meeting the girls, conversations, workshops, that truly revived me.

OYEWOLE OLUWAKEMI
ABIODUN, NIGERIA



The film not only addresses the ongoing refugee crisis but also emphasises the vital role of advocacy in shaping Serbian policy and ensuring that these women become a crucial influence in decision-making processes within Serbia's protection systems.

Second Key Step: Promoting improved Cooperation between Advocacy Group Members and Local Stakeholders

After successfully establishing meetings between the Refugee Women Advocacy Group and decisionmakers, we have expanded the cooperation, above all to the local level. Our aim is to sustain this. For the group, the Local Anti-Trafficking Teams are logical partners at this level. The teams exist in 19 local self-governments in Serbia and bring together professionals and local decision-makers from various sectors (judiciary, police, local government, social protection, health care, and others). They implement targeted local actions and propose measures to prevent and suppress human trafficking & different types of exploitation of the refugee/migrant population.

The Advocacy Group has in the past years had meetings with at least three Local Teams in areas with the most refugees and migrants in Serbia. For us, it promotes the very concept of the Advocacy Group. It has led to a more permanent cooperation between the group and the local teams to further the rights of the refugee-migrant population in local environments.

Community engagement isn't just about enabling a token gesture but a fundamental practice. Thus, collaboration with stakeholders, in particular decision makers should happen at all levels, at the country, national, and local levels as well as across borders.

Third Key Step: Strategic Communication

Advocacy is not complete without aiming to increase visibility to achieve change. We designed strategic communication to support the advocacy work and to improve the cooperation between the Advocacy Group and Local Teams. The communication was geared to promote the concept of the group. Methodologies for the concrete visibility actions include street activities, school tribunes, or other public places and institutions.



Representatives of the Advocacy Group, GADIP, KULU and NGO Atina

The communication happens partially online. To promote the Advocacy Group's work, five analytical articles have been published on Atina's website and social media. Members received support to share their experiences through blogs, vlogs, or illustrations. These articles offered deeper insights into the lives of refugee women in Serbia and challenged prevailing stereotypes.

Ingredients for a Feminist Community Building

The belief that every woman's voice matters is at the heart of the women's movement in Serbia. It recognises the untapped potential of migrant women who carried a wealth of experiences, wisdom, and resilience. For us, migrant women are leaders, planners, and decision-makers. Recognizing unity as strength, the Advocacy Group has brought together diverse women and groups. Activities with the group are not just inclusive; they are about **celebrations of diversity**. Successes are celebrated, challenges analysed, and strategies continuously evolve. This is a journey of growth, not just for the migrant women but for Atina and the different communities where Atina is working with as well.

The stories and insights of the Advocacy Group shapes the very fabric of the initiatives designed to uplift them. The Advocacy Group understood *that true empowerment comes from within.*

The Group is built on the principle of learning. The knowledge will give them the power to participate in and influence the political landscape actively. Empowerment is for us, increasing the possibilities for Advocacy Group members in Serbia who do not have the same possibilities as others while supporting them in acquiring leadership, advocacy, and political participation skills. In a world where the voices of migrant women often go unheard, it is of utmost importance to foster a sense of ownership and relevance within the work of the Refugee Women Advocacy Group. This is core to our approach.

Lessons Learned

The greatest challenge was **managing expectations to keep up motivation of the group members.** We made sure the women understand that advocacy is often a complex and long process that does not immediately result in visible changes they wish to achieve. In this way the members of the Advocacy Group are not discouraged after initial efforts. Therefore, each activity, event, and public speech was followed by consultations with the Group to monitor further and map the points that may not have fully met the goals but represented individual positive outcomes of such activities. Members in the group also invested time to find out regularly how satisfied each was with their participation, and why someone was (dis)satisfied.

Special attention was directed to the personal progress of each member. Individual consultations were used to discuss the new skills acquired, the degree of self-confidence in public actions, and the increase in knowledge of the topic.

A particular challenge for the work of the Advocacy Group was combining their active membership of the group with their living conditions, including work engagements and uncertain future prospects. The freedom to express views at public events depended on their status in Serbia, in the sense that women still in the asylum process are more hesitant to make themselves heard in public actions and expressing their opinions. This was quite evident during the protest in Belgrade about the treatment of women in Iran. One of the members was from Iran and afraid of being monitored by the Iranian government, who was especially monitoring those who resisted the regime within the Women, Life, and Freedom movement.

Box 13. WE-EMPOWER Event: Democracy Embraces Diversity

Christa Maniratunga and Ingabire Lola Brigitte, Advocacy group members, speaking at the WE-EMPOWER Event "[Democracy Embraces Diversity: Celebrating and Empowering Migrant Women's Participation](#)" on Friday, October 20, 2023. The event was organised by Atina, WIDE+ and Oxfam Italia Intercultura in the framework of the WE-EMPOWER project.



Christa Maniratunga shared how her involvement in the Advocacy Group provided essential support during her asylum process, highlighting its role in advocating for better conditions for migrant women. Ingabire Lola Brigitte, who arrived in Serbia in 2022, spoke about the challenges of navigating the asylum procedure without adequate support, especially for those who do not speak Serbian or

English. The panellists emphasized the need for migrant input in shaping solutions to the issues they face and called for improved integration support.

It was challenging for each activity and public event to maintain a consistent level of motivation in all group members and a positive and constructive team spirit. Various team-building techniques and specially designed consultations within the group were used in this regard. In a parallel narrative, the Advocacy Group faced formidable challenges. But with every barrier, they found a way to rise above them. Training and resources were available to group members, and access to technology ensured that no woman was left behind in the digital age.

Many women juggled multiple roles. **Flexibility in scheduling, providing childcare and mobilising resources catering to women's needs was necessary. Language was always foreseen as a bridge, not a barrier.** Language differences could have been dividers, but the group turned them

into bridges. Multilingual support became the norm, ensuring every woman could participate, learn, and lead. Cultural mediators and translators were involved in every step of the action and materials in multiple languages. Also, the cultural barriers were acknowledged and addressed with sensitivity and respect. The Group educated Atina's activists, who learned so much, adapting its strategies to be culturally inclusive and respectful. Sometimes, cultural barriers might affect participation and understanding of democratic processes. Legal and systemic barriers were perhaps the toughest foes. But the movement, fuelled by stories of resilience and hope, took on these challenges. **Engaged women advocated for policy changes, fought for the rights of migrant women, and slowly but surely began to dismantle the systemic barriers that stood in their way.**

CONCLUSION

Members join and stay in the Advocacy Group with similar reasons, in general a desire to feel and be helpful, search for personal empowerment, and contribution to social change. It has often been more than one motive that drives members. Advocacy Group members are particularly **motivated to contribute to legislative or social changes in areas that directly affect them now or that affected them at a time when they felt vulnerable. They also have a high degree of responsibility** in ensuring that other women do not have to go through the same challenges they did. Most members want to feel useful by supporting others, especially women and girls or members of highly marginalised communities. For some, helping people represents an essential value in their lives, and they see Advocacy Groups as an opportunity to continue to be helpful to others and be politically and socially engaged.

Members often also see their participation in advocacy activities as beneficial to their professional development, providing them with skills, experience, and contacts for further career advancement. *"There are some hidden talents I didn't even know I had. I spoke publicly at events for the first time. So it was essential for me to know that I could do this without being afraid of facing an audience."* There is networking with actors outside Atina, and the process is building the members' sense of value through the impact they have. It can be a path to various forms of political activism, employment, and broader social action. Feelings of personal empowerment are most often associated with advocacy activities that encourage Advocacy Group members to speak in public and interact with decision-makers and policymakers, as they are involved in entirely new activities.

Many members emphasise that the activities give them a sense of personal satisfaction. They are especially aware that they contribute to social and political changes regarding the position and rights of refugee women. They also know that they are role models for many women and girls.

"I know I am doing something good, useful, and helpful. It is fulfilling when you help someone and set a personal example. I was where they are, and I went through the same thing, and now I am working, speaking in front of professors, police officers, and prosecutors. I give voice to refugee women; I have a clear goal. I want us to live with dignity, not to feel bad about the experiences we have had. We did not choose that. We opened a space for our voices to be heard."

4.2 GADIP: Study Circles as A Collaborative Approach

GADIP is a dynamic network that unites feminists from academia and civil society. We were founded in 2007 and established as a nonprofit organisation in 2012. As an independent organisation, we foster dialogue and knowledge exchange on gender and development issues both within Sweden and globally. Our organisation unites academics, practitioners and feminist activists to address critical global challenges from a gender perspective.

At GADIP, we host online events, other face-to-face events and provide non-formal adult education. We also organise international feminist conferences that address urgent global issues through a gender lens. For example, we organised the "Gender Backlash 3" conference, which examined the impact of the anti-gender movement in Sweden, strategies for trans-inclusive feminism, and the successful mobilisation for abortion rights in Argentina and Ireland, among other themes.

In our practice, we focus on Study Circles. GADIP has collaborated with ABF Gothenburg for many years, conducting Study Circles and lectures on various topics related to gender, economic sustainability, and development. ABF (Workers' Educational Association) is an adult education association founded by workers, unions, and cooperatives, where Study Circles and *Folkbildning* (Popular Adult Education) form the core of teaching. The Study Circles examined here were held as part of the WE-EMPOWER project.



Box 14. WE-EMPOWER Event: Women's Voices for Increased Democracy

As part of the series "Women's Voices", focusing on promoting women's participation in democracy, the lecture and webinar "Kvinnors röster för ökad demokrati" (Women's Voices for Increased Democracy) took place in April 2023 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The featured speakers included:

- Maria Nordberg, Project Manager from Lilla Edet's Municipality
- Nancy Contreras, Project Manager from GADIP
- Delmi Galeano, Activist from the Latin American Women's Network SEDOAC, Spain.

Bringing Popular Education to the Community

Study circles are democratic workshops where participants learn about a specific topic over several meetings, developing skills to engage in group discussions. This learning process is based on **horizontal participation, free from hierarchy.** The aim of Study Circles is to ensure free access to education, culture, and literature as part of a democratic and inclusive process. Study circles are a longstanding tradition in Swedish education, rooted in a concept of learning "for and by the people." This approach originated in the late 1800s, initiated by the working class, the LO union, and the COOP cooperative. By the early 1900s, Study Circles had become a key method for mobilising communities to improve living conditions.

With the WE-EMPOWER Study Circles, we aimed to raise awareness on women's and democratic rights and enhance the participation of migrant and refugee women in Swedish society. We focused mostly on women with little to no education, who are distant from the labour market, to enhance their economic opportunities.

Study Circles in Action with Migrant Women

We organised two different Study Circles in the municipalities of Trollhättan and Lilla Edet. The Study Circle in Trollhättan was conducted in the autumn of 2022 through a collaboration between GADIP and ABF. It was organised to meet a request from a group of Somali women in the municipality. In the implementation we also involved others; we formed a working group with local politicians from S-Kvinnor (the women's wing of the Swedish Social Democratic Party). The project effectively involved local politicians and a schoolteacher, which enriched the learning experience and provided practical insights into the functioning of local institutions.

The participants - Somali women from the organisations Starka kvinnor (Strong Women) and Shabelle - sought to learn more about the functioning of schools and social services, particularly after negative experiences with institutions from the municipality, where some community members felt they had lost authority over their children. We decided to broaden the Study Circle with other topics. Participants engaged with **a range of topics including international conventions, children's needs, the Swedish school system, sex and cohabitation, and issues of violence and oppression**, thereby deepening their understanding of democratic values and their rights. The key titles of the topics were Family Structures, Children's Needs, and Children's Rights; International Conventions: Women's Rights; Healthcare: The Right to Make Decisions About One's Body; How Social Services Operate Within the Municipality.



Somalian women in Trollhättan.

The main goals were empowering the migrant women and increasing their involvement in society, as well as enabling them to make informed, democratic choices. A key tactic for this aim is providing crucial information about their rights and enhancing their understanding of women's participation in society. For many participants, this initiative marked a new beginning in their journey towards empowerment.

The main outcomes in Trollhättan: 30 women gained crucial knowledge on democratic principles and practices. As a result, the participants from the NGO Starka Kvinnor (Strong Women) took own initiatives for Study Circles and continued working on the Swedish language and social issues within the community.

Box 15. Study Circles in Action in Lilla Edet, Sweden

The sessions captured in the image to the right highlight the initiative organised by ABF in collaboration with the integration group in Lilla Edet. Titled "Together with Baby", the sessions aimed at supporting migrant women by combining Swedish language learning with interactive music activities. These gatherings involved mothers, and in some cases fathers, learning Swedish through songs, using instruments and music to engage both adults and their children. GADIP contributed by offering Study Circles centred on women's rights. These discussions provided essential information for refugee mothers and fathers, helping them better understand their rights and adjust to their new lives in Sweden.



The other Study Circle was conducted in Lilla Edet, where the municipality launched **a project to introduce refugee women who were on maternity leave to Swedish society**. The group of women participating had little to no formal education and faced language barriers, to which we tailored the circle. We conducted it in Swedish with translations into Somali, which was time consuming but necessary. The project required collaboration with various organisations and an important factor was finding an appropriate venue for the introduction sessions. GADIP, ABF, and an integration group from Lilla Edet's municipality choose the Study Circles as a structured method to encourage engagement, thus active learning, in a calm and supportive environment, fostering integration.

The Study Circle was introductory and called: "Together with Baby". The sessions included Swedish language classes, complemented by music and instruments to sing with the children and babies, **helping the women learn Swedish through music. GADIP also contributed to the project by conducting Study Circles focused on women's rights.** The discussions within these circles provided valuable information to the refugee mothers and some fathers who had recently arrived in Sweden, helping them navigate their new environment.

The main outcome in Lilla Edet: 20 women were better integrated into Swedish society. The project's collaboration with the municipality led to enhanced access to essential services, including health clinics and schools, benefiting both the participants and their families.

Box 16. Key Strategies to ensure Productive, Inclusive, and Engaging Discussions

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Create a Welcoming Environment | A welcoming environment where all participants feel valued and respected fosters inclusivity. We recommend communicating ground rules for respectful communication and active listening to ensure constructive dialogue. |
| Prepare Thoroughly | Clear objectives for the Study Circle and what participants should expect from sessions contributed to effective learning. Therefore, we prepare relevant materials for sessions in advance. Part of planning in advance is outlining the structure, including discussion topics, activities and time management. We also use various facilitation techniques such as small group discussions, role playing, and case studies to keep participants engaged. |
| Facilitate Open Dialogue | There are many ways to facilitate open dialogue, such as encouraging participation by using open-ended questions to stimulate discussion. We also try to balance contributions to ensure that all voices are heard by actively involving quieter members and managing dominant voices. |
| Promote Critical Thinking | We encourage participants to question and critically analyse the material and each other's viewpoints. Deep exploration of topics requires time which is recommended to design in advance. We also suggest providing opportunities for participants to reflect on their learning. |
| Foster Group Dynamics | The building of trust is essential. We develop a sense of community by being supportive and approachable and promote collaboration through teamwork and peer-learning. |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Be Adaptable | Flexibility and responsiveness to the needs and interests of the participants is always the starting point, adjusting the facilitation approach as necessary. We aim to address conflicts or difficulties in a constructive manner, maintaining a focus on the group's objectives. |
| Evaluate and Reflect | We recommend to regularly solicit feedback from participants on the effectiveness of the sessions and areas for improvement. Continuously assess and refine your facilitation techniques based on feedback and personal reflection. |
| Encourage Action | We facilitate discussions on how participants can apply what they've learned in their own lives or communities. It is also important to provide resources and support for continued learning and action beyond the Study Circle. |

Lessons Learned

Through the process of implementing Study Circles, we have learned several lessons to empower migrant women to participate in democratic life. A first, maybe obvious but very important, point is that language barriers should be part of the design of a programme. Also, there needs to be resources to help migrant women improve their proficiency in the language spoken in the host society (Swedish in our case). This will greatly enhance their access, making it easier for them to make use of essential services and participate fully in society.

In addition to a tailoring to language gap, in any programme or project the gaps in information should be assessed and addressed. Empowering migrant women to take on more economic control, for example, requires comprehensive information on the Swedish economy, financial management, and societal rights. In some Study Circles, we also included education on women's rights. And part of addressing information gaps, is providing information on civil society organisations, and how they can empower migrant women by providing platforms for voicing concerns and advocating for their needs. We must also consider how to help with integration into the host society and foster a sense of belonging.

Projects or programmes for migrants should be designed with consideration of the different backgrounds of migrants, in particular gender differences. For example, programmes aiming to meet family needs should be inclusive programmes that address the unique challenges faced by migrant mothers, for example permitting them to bring their children to learning activities. The

responsibilities of migrant women, such as being a carer for children, might hinder the person from taking part, therefore something like childcare can break down a barrier to participation.

Community building is about creating spaces where migrant women can connect and share their experiences. These environments should focus on educating them about their rights, democratic processes, and available services, thereby cultivating a supportive network that strengthens social cohesion. They should also provide a lot of room for interaction and personal reflection.

CONCLUSION

Study circles offer a democratic and inclusive learning environment, empowering migrant women by educating them on their rights and societal functions, which aids in their integration and active participation. Study circles create a safe, community-focused space for discussing sensitive issues, fostering trust and open dialogue, which enhances the learning experience and supports integration.

The circles can be a method for any group of people, including people with little education or limited proficiency in Swedish (or other host society languages). It can be designed for people that do not have childcare at home during the meeting. Language proficiency is a major hurdle for migrant women. **Initiatives like "Together with Baby," which combine language learning with childcare, effectively make education more accessible and facilitate integration.**

We recommend that empowering civic participation should address how migrant women can manage socio-economic challenges: Study circles that cover practical topics like financial management and local economic systems help migrant women tackle financial and employment challenges, improving their economic stability and job prospects.

Study circles also benefit from local collaborations. Collaborating with local organisations and stakeholders like teachers or political leaders as well as other migrant women enriches Study Circles, ensuring that they address relevant issues and provide practical insights into local systems, thus improving participants' integration and empowerment.

4.3 Red Latinas: The Role of Political Schools

The Red de Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe (Red Latinas), was created to ensure that migrant women have a powerful voice in Spain, making their own narratives and activism visible and building capacity to strengthen the movement. Uniting 13 associations and individual feminists of Latin American origin in Spain, we transform the role of migrant women from objects of study to active political subjects with agency. Our network fosters empowerment, mutual support, and respectful dialogue, promoting the rights of migrant women and recognising their vital contributions to social, political, and cultural development. By highlighting resilience and diverse experiences, we are committed to building collective thought and advancing active citizenship.

Red Latina has existed for over ten years. Some of the many activities we have carried out so far include: analysis including research of the situation of migrant women; promoting social awareness about the situation of migrant women, fighting for the rights of migrant women, the political training of migrant women and their empowerment to dialogue with public powers. This political training is shaped through the methodology Political Schools, which is the practice in focus for this section.

Political Schools as a Tool of Community Empowerment

The Political School is a developed methodology of popular education that aims not only to increase knowledge about a topic but also encourages awareness and agency for change. The Political School also relied on Participatory Action Research, in particular developed feminist methodologies. This is also the approach for learning and empowering of activists and communities of the whole WE-EMPOWER approach, which is further explained on page 21. In sum, it offers an interactive, participatory approach that encourages sharing of personal experiences and insights and creates a collaborative environment. Participants take part in discussions and activities that allow them to connect with each other. The schools encourage group building, learning about topics in the context of the rights of migrant women, and personal reflection to deepen political awareness.

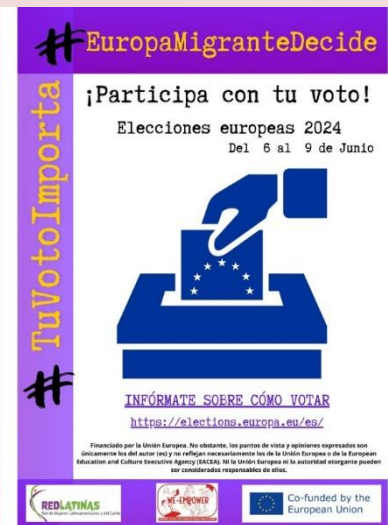
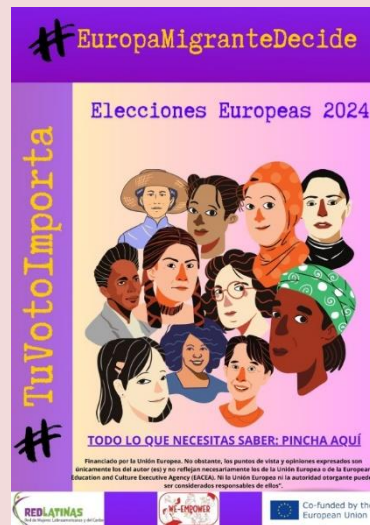
As a methodological approach, political schools play a crucial role in promoting democratic participation and social justice, empowering individuals to become active and informed citizens. This means in connection with others, thus promoting community building. Many political schools also inform and encourage connection with broader social movements, providing participants with the skills needed for effective advocacy. This includes training on how to interact with policymakers and influence public opinion.

Box 17. WE-EMPOWER Resource Hub in Spanish

While this section focuses on one of the community building methodologies within Red Latinas, the network did a lot of online communication for WE-EMPOWER, culminating in a final website with a lot of resources in Spanish: <https://weempower.my.canva.site/>

Some highlights from this website include:

- Six podcast episodes, based on interviews with "Lideresas" - migrant women who are members of political parties and representative position.
- Two campaigns that promote the migrant vote.
- A webinar on the political participation of migrant women.
- A training session on digital participation tools, divided into two sessions, including a report on these.



In the context of the WE-EMPOWER project a political school called "Migration, Citizenship and Participation" was held. It aimed at empowering migrant women by providing them with knowledge and skills related to citizenship and political engagement. It also presented the WE-EMPOWER case study: '[Expanding Tools in Addressing Barriers for Migrant Women to Participate in Democratic and Political Life: Case study in Spain](#)', which in addition to a quantitative survey, also provided outcomes from a qualitative study and an analysis of the political rights for a diversity of migrant women according to the laws.

The training was given through a mix of face-to-face and online workshops, making it flexible and accessible for all participants. Attendees received a range of written and audiovisual materials to prepare them for the sessions and maximise their engagement.

The Political School offers significant benefits for migrant women:

- **Empowerment through Knowledge:** The school strengthens migrant women's understanding of their rights and the political processes that affect their lives. It empowers them to claim their rights as citizens and engage more actively in political discussions.
- **Addressing Specific Challenges:** Training modules tackle the unique obstacles faced by migrant women, such as bureaucratic barriers to citizenship, limitation to voting and other formal possibilities to take part in the political processes, and experiences of violence. The migrant women are encouraged to come up with ways to effectively tackle specific challenges.
- **Building Political Agency:** The methodology encourages participants to turn their personal experiences into political agency. Through collective reflection and activism, migrant women can redefine their experiences and advocate for their needs and rights. It motivates them to stand up for their rights and actively engage in political processes.
- **Creating a Supportive Network:** The school fosters a sense of community among participants, allowing them to share experiences, build solidarity, and work together on advocacy efforts. This starts with the fact that members and other interested people come together in the context of Red Latina's network, in which network member also take other action to promote democratic and political participation of migrant women.
- **Promoting Feminist Principle of Community Care:** Focusing on the idea of "care-citizenship," the training highlights the importance of care in democratic participation. This is not about an individual concept of care, but concepts of community care developed in feminist spaces. The School also puts principles of community care into practice as part of the education methodology.

Box 17. "Red Latinas" #MigradasParticipando Campaign

For their #MigradasParticipando campaign, Red Latinas produced 15 graphics and infographics to encourage political participation and awareness among migrant women in Spain before the national election in 2023. The information came from the WE-EMPOWER case study. One graphic highlights the varying interest in Spanish news across different migrant groups: 44.2% of naturalised citizens read Spanish news daily, 36.4% of those with voting rights show interest, while only 23.8% of those without voting rights do so. The message at the bottom calls for the creation of inclusive policies that cater to everyone, regardless of citizenship status or voting rights.



Adapting the Political School for Online Learning

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Political School has also been provided through a completely online format. This was the only way to continue having such spaces. We found that it also reached a wider audience. In follow up to these Political schools, Red Latinas has opted to use Moodle, an

open-source learning management system that replicates in-person learning. This allows participants to engage with the curriculum, interact with instructors, and collaborate with peers despite physical distances. Training in Moodle has been part of the WE-EMPOWER project.

Maximising the benefits of Moodle for online learning:

- **Course Structure and Design:** We suggest developing a clear and coherent curriculum on Moodle by organising topics and themes into modules that provides up to date information. This ideally incorporates a variety of formats, including text, videos, and interactive media, to cater to different learning styles and improve overall engagement. And it should be accessible through an easy to navigate structure.
- **Interactive Learning Activities:** We suggest engaging participants through fun activities such as discussion forums, quizzes, and group projects. Moodle has live tools to enable direct interactions with instructors and peers.
- **Facilitator Training:** We suggest ensuring that facilitators know or else are trained on how to manage courses effectively, engage students, and use Moodle's features. This is also about making sure that facilitators work from an approach that promotes discussion and allows students to share their ideas, creating a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.

Box 19. Showcasing Migrant Women's Political Participation in Spain

A Red Latinas social media post promoting an upcoming webinar titled "Expanding Tools to Address Barriers and Enable Migrant Women to Participate in Democratic Life", that took place in September 2023. As part of the #MigradasParticipando campaign, the webinar featured the participation of migrant women who have made significant contributions to political spaces in Spain.



- **Community Building:** Of course, we also suggest creating spaces for informal interactions, such as social forums or thematic groups within Moodle, to help build a sense of community among the participants. Virtual events can be organised like guest lectures or panel discussions, thereby enriching the educational experience and creating a deeper understanding of the subject.

Lessons Learned

There are some challenges to address in the approach to effectively engage and empower migrant women in the Political Schools. Firstly, we reflect in the design of the School **module schedules that fit the irregular working hours** often experienced by migrant women. This includes offering multiple time slots for sessions and providing recorded content so participants can study the materials when it suits them, ensuring they do not miss out on critical learning opportunities.

Secondly, migrant women will more often face economic difficult circumstance while taking on multiple roles as women. **Support services and (travel) reimbursement**, to enable participation are important. Concretely providing childcare and transportation assistance, during in-person sessions can remove barriers to participation. Offering a lunch can also be part of these services as it can enable migrant women to stay longer and encourage informal exchange.

Thirdly, **lack of access to digital spaces, including digital skills**, is important to consider and address when providing a programme with (also) online tools. Migrant women face more often gaps in accessing digital spaces. Providing necessary tools, such as loaner devices or subsidised internet plans, can make sure that everyone has access the School equally. This is also about ensuring the participants' digital literacy and skills are to a level that they can easily navigate and use online platforms.

Finally, monitoring and evaluating the education offered with its approach is necessary. **The Political School builds trust and open dialogue** and is therefore an excellent approach to deal with disengagement and cynicism towards political processes that could be the results of barriers experienced in participation. **Incorporate success stories and real-life case studies** within the curriculum to inspire and motivate participants. Highlighting the achievements of others who have successfully engaged in political processes can help build participants' confidence and sense of agency, reinforcing the idea that their involvement can lead to real change.

CONCLUSION

Political citizenship is a concept that is a utopia towards which many migrant women that has come from outside the European Union are moving. We believe that as we are moving towards this utopia, we must establish ourselves as democratic subjects in changing the status quo. In the cracks of the system there are opportunities for migrant women to participate, influence and make decisions, constituting new transnational forms of citizenship, and acting locally with a global perspective.

When thinking about citizenship, we must place care at the centre, as both a means and an end – “care-citizenship”. With “care-citizenship” as the goal, the present time must be seen as a starting point and the obstacles and discrimination experienced by migrant women are part of the experience of fighting inequalities and rising to power.

As migrant women cross many borders and inhabit many spaces, they do not have one, but many political “Agoras”, the main one being their own bodies, which have become “territories of struggle”. All the relationships they have with other people, their home, their community and the land they inhabit are formed through and within the body.

Beyond a gender equality approach it is equally important to address the inherent racism and white supremacy of patriarchal and capitalist institutions, the neoliberal market and Foreigners’ Law that bars migrants from voting in Spain, since these are all structures that create and perpetuate different forms of violence that affect migrant women.
