

# Input by civil society organisations to the Asylum Report 2026

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

Dear Colleagues,

The production of the Asylum Report 2026 is currently underway. The annual [Asylum Report](#) presents an overview of developments in the field of international protection in Europe.

The report includes information and perspectives from various stakeholders, including experts from EU+ countries, civil society organisations, researchers and UNHCR. To this end, we invite you, our partners from civil society, academia and research institutions, to share your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2025 by topic as presented in the online survey (**Part A of the form**).

We also invite you to share with us any publications your organisation has produced throughout 2025 on issues related to asylum in EU+ countries (**Part B of the form**). These may be reports, articles, recommendations to national authorities or EU institutions, open letters and analytical outputs. Your input can cover information for a specific EU+ country or the EU as a whole. You can complete all or only some of the sections.

Please note that the Asylum Report does not seek to describe national systems in detail but rather to present key developments of the past year, including improvements and challenges which remain.

All submissions are publicly accessible. For transparency, contributions will be published on the EUAA webpage and contributing organisations will be listed under the [Acknowledgements](#) of the report.

All contributions should be appropriately referenced. You may include links to supporting material, such as analytical studies, articles, reports, websites, press releases, position papers. Some sources of information may be in a language other than English. In this case, please cite the original language and, if possible, provide one to two sentences describing the key messages in English.

The content of the Asylum Report is subject to terms of reference and volume limitations. Contributions from civil society organisations feed into EUAA's work in multiple ways and inform reports and analyses beyond the Asylum Report.

**NB: Similarly to last year, this year's edition of the Asylum Report will be leaner and more analytical, with streamlined thematic sections. The focus will be on key trends in the field of asylum rather than on individual developments. For this reason, information shared by respondents to this call may be incorporated in the Asylum Report in a format different than in the past years. It will also feature prominently as info boxes in the [country overviews](#).**

Your input matters to us and will be much appreciated!

**\*Please submit your contribution to the Asylum Report 2026 by Friday, 9 January 2026.\***

## Contact details

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\* Name of organisation

Women's Initiatives Network

Name and title of contact person

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I accept the provisions of the EUAA [Legal and Privacy Statements](#)

## General observations

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**Before sharing information by thematic area, please provide your general observations on asylum developments as indicated in the following three fields:**

What areas would you highlight where important developments took place in the country/countries you cover?

Key developments in 2025

In 2025, asylum and integration policies in the Netherlands continued to emphasise participation, inclusion, and self-reliance of applicants for international protection, including specific attention to women and gender-sensitive approaches. These priorities are echoed at EU level, particularly in discussions related to the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum.

At the same time, there has been an increasing reliance on civil society and community-based actors to compensate for structural gaps in reception, integration support, psychosocial well-being, and access to information. Refugee- and migrant-led organisations play a significant role in facilitating trust, informal support, and social cohesion.

What are the areas, where only few or no developments took place?

Despite these policy intentions, meaningful participation of refugee- and migrant-led organisations remains limited. Participation is often framed in procedural terms rather than as shared decision-making or co-creation. The lived experience of migrant and refugee women is rarely recognised as a form of expertise. These challenges are not unique to the Netherlands but reflect broader patterns observed across EU Member States, where funding and accountability mechanisms prioritise formal outputs over long-term sustainability, well-being, and community trust.

Would you have any observations to share specifically about the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in the national context of the country/ countries you cover?

Discussions on the implementation of the Pact have largely remained technical and institutional. Limited attention has been given to how asylum and reception systems are experienced in daily life, particularly by women with intersecting vulnerabilities. There is a risk that participation becomes formalistic rather than meaningful.

## **PART A: Contributions by topic**

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**Please share your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2025 by topic. Kindly make sure that you provide information on:**

- New developments and improvements in 2025 and new or remaining challenges;
- Changes in legislation, policies or practices, or institutional changes during 2025.

**1. Access to territory and access to the asylum procedure (Including first arrival to territory and registration, arrival at the border, application of the non-refoulement principle, the right to first response (shelter, food, medical treatment) and issues regarding border guards)**

**2. Access to information and legal assistance (Including counselling and representation)**

In the Netherlands, access to information for applicants for international protection remains uneven, particularly for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Information is frequently provided in formats or languages that are difficult to understand, leading to reliance on informal community networks for interpretation and explanation. Comparative reflections across EU contexts indicate similar patterns, where informal peer support compensates for gaps in official information provision. While community mediation can enhance understanding, it also shifts responsibility onto individuals and organisations without formal recognition or support.

**3. Provision of interpretation services (e.g. introduction of innovative methods for interpretation, increase/decrease in the number of languages available, change in qualifications required for interpreters)**

Persistent shortcomings in interpretation services were observed in 2025. Limited availability, quality issues, and lack of continuity affect women disproportionately, particularly in relation to healthcare, psychosocial support, and administrative procedures. Community-based multilingual practices often fill these gaps, but this informal substitution raises concerns regarding accuracy, emotional burden, and sustainability. Similar challenges have been reported across several EU Member States.

**4. Dublin procedures (including the organisational framework, practical developments, suspension of transfers to selected countries, detention in the framework of Dublin procedures)**

**5. Special procedures (including border procedures, procedures in transit zones, accelerated procedures, admissibility procedures, prioritised procedures or any special procedure for selected caseloads)**

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**6. Reception of applicants for international protection (including information on reception capacities – increase/decrease/stable, material reception conditions - housing, food, clothing and financial support, contingency planning in reception, access to the labour market and vocational training, medical care, schooling and education, residence and freedom of movement)**

Reception systems in the Netherlands continue to focus primarily on material conditions, while psychosocial safety, emotional well-being, and opportunities for meaningful participation receive less systematic attention. For many migrant and refugee women, feelings of safety and belonging are more strongly associated with community-based spaces than with formal reception structures. Comparative reflections suggest that this gap between formal reception and lived experience is a recurring issue across EU contexts.

**7. Detention of applicants for international protection (including detention capacity – increase /decrease/stable, practices regarding detention, grounds for detention, alternatives to detention, time limit for detention)**

While vulnerability frameworks exist, they often rely on narrow categorizations. Women with care responsibilities, trauma histories, or prolonged uncertainty frequently fall outside formal definitions of “special needs,” despite facing compounded challenges.

This pattern reflects a broader EU-wide limitation in how vulnerability and well-being are identified and addressed within asylum systems.

**8. Procedures at first instance (including relevant changes in: the authority in charge, organisation of the process, interviews, evidence assessment, determination of international protection status, decisionmaking, timeframes, case management - including backlog management)**

**9. Procedures at second instance (including organisation of the process, hearings, written procedures, timeframes, case management -including backlog management)**

**10. Issues of statelessness in the context of asylum (including identification and registration)**

**11. Children and applicants with special needs (special reception facilities, identification mechanisms/referrals, procedural standards, provision of information, age assessment, legal guardianship and foster care for unaccompanied and separated children)**

While vulnerability frameworks exist, they often rely on narrow categorizations. Women with care responsibilities, trauma histories, or prolonged uncertainty frequently fall outside formal definitions of “special needs,” despite facing compounded challenges.

This pattern reflects a broader EU-wide limitation in how vulnerability and well-being are identified and addressed within asylum systems.

**12. Content of protection (including access to social security, social assistance, healthcare, housing and other basic services; integration into the labour market; measures to enhance language skills; measures to improve attainment in schooling and/or the education system and/or vocational training)**

Integration in the Netherlands is often measured through participation in language courses, employment, or formal programmes. However, social belonging, safety, mental well-being, and sustainability of engagement receive less attention.

Migrant and refugee women frequently carry significant unpaid emotional and social labour in supporting families and communities. Similar observations have been made in other Member States, indicating a structural gap between integration policy objectives and lived realities.

**13. Return of former applicants for international protection**

**14. Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes (including EU Joint Resettlement Programme, national resettlement programme (UNHCR), National Humanitarian Admission Programme, private sponsorship programmes/schemes and ad hoc special programmes)**

**15. National jurisprudence on international protection in 2025 (please include a link to the relevant case law and/or submit cases to the [EUAA Case Law Database](#))**

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**16. Other important developments in 2025**

In 2025, our organisation applied a community-based reflective framework (“24 Steps”) to assess how asylum, reception, and integration policies are experienced in daily life by migrant and refugee women. This qualitative approach generated insights into participation, safety, access to information, sustainability of engagement, and psychosocial well-being.

Such community-based monitoring approaches can complement formal evaluation mechanisms, particularly in the context of the final phase of NAP 1325 and the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum.

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## PART B: Publications

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**1. If available online, please provide links to relevant publications produced by your organisation in 2025.**

**2. If not available online, please share your publications with us at: [Asylum.Report@euaa.europa.eu](mailto:Asylum.Report@euaa.europa.eu) or upload your file using the functionality below (max. file size 1MB).**

Please upload your file

The maximum file size is 1 MB

**e9a96fb2-dd93-465c-b968-9c4887e59078**

**/From\_Policy\_Commitment\_to\_Community\_Practice\_English\_Dec\_2025\_WIN\_KWETU.pdf**

**9779fca6-62b6-402a-8b6a-0a4378ea6053/Reflection\_And\_Policy\_Note\_\_Nap\_1325\_\_2021\_2027\_\_1\_.pdf**

**3. For publications that due to copyright issues cannot be easily shared, please provide references using the table below.**

	<b>Title of publication</b>	<b>Name of author</b>	<b>Publisher/Organisation</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Reflection on NAP 1325 and Community-Based Participation	Antoinette Mutesa	Women;s Initiatives Network	December 2025
2				
3				
4				
5				

## **Useful links**

[EUAA Asylum Report 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025)

[Executive Summary -Asylum Report 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025-executive-summary\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025-executive-summary)

[Sources on Asylum 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2025\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2025)

[National asylum developments database \(https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database)

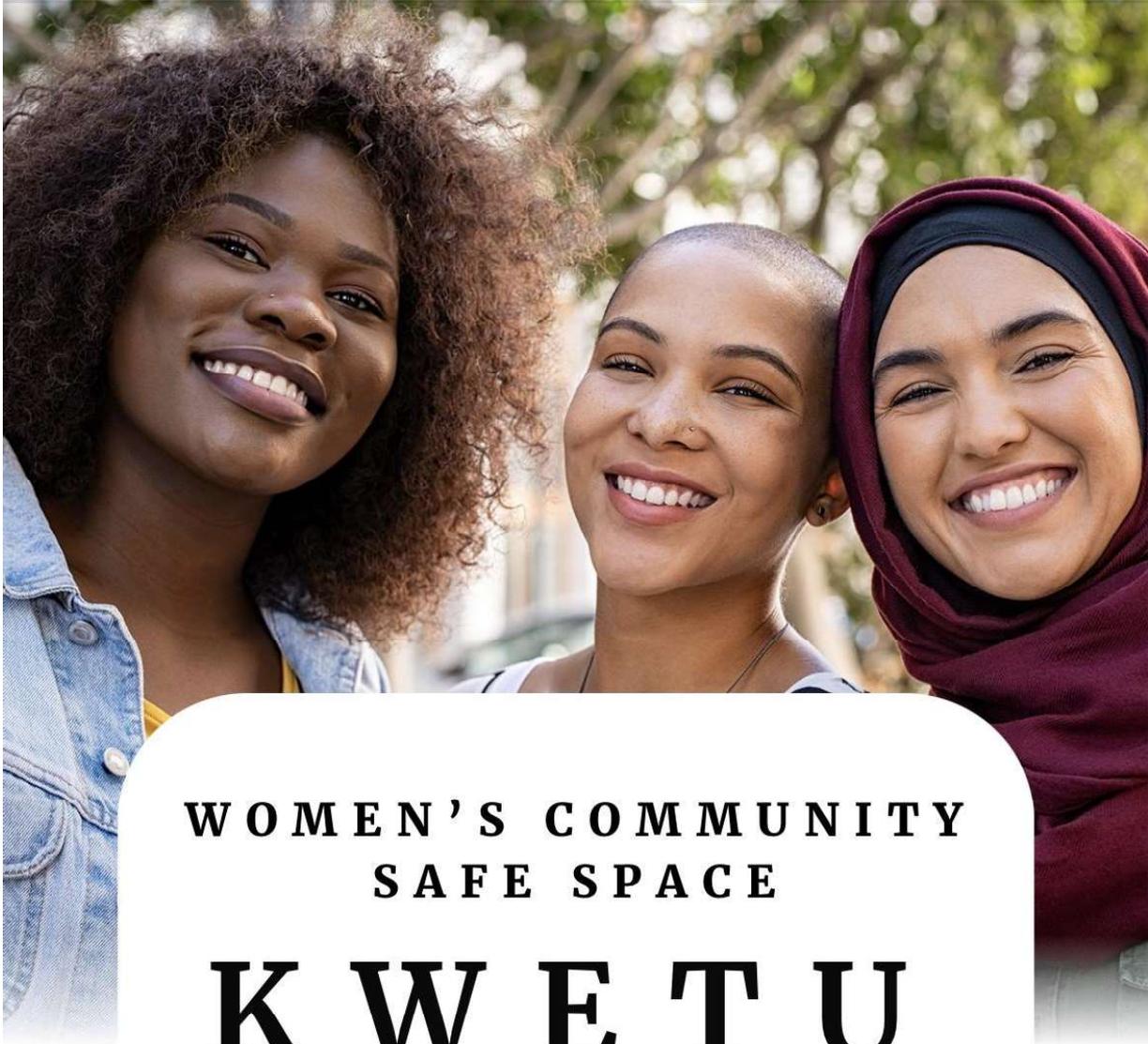
[International Protection in Europe: a Year in Review \(https://euaa.europa.eu/international-protection-europe-year-review\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/international-protection-europe-year-review)

## **Background Documents**

[Word template to submit input to the 2026 Asylum Report.docx](#)

## **Contact**

[Contact Form](#)



**WOMEN'S COMMUNITY  
SAFE SPACE**

**K W E T U**

**From Policy Commitment to Community Practice**

**A Reflection Journey on the Dutch National Action Plan 1325 (2021–2027)**

**Women's Initiatives Network (WIN)**

*December 2025*



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## 1. Preface — Why This Reflection Matters

This reflection emerges from sustained engagement with the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in the Netherlands. It is written not as an evaluation of others, nor as an external critique, but as a moment of collective pause — a pause to reflect on how commitments made within the Dutch National Action Plan 1325 (NAP 1325) are experienced, inhabited, and translated into everyday practice by those who are both signatories to the agenda and directly shaped by its promises.

Rooted in long-term participation across successive NAP cycles, this report brings together policy engagement, community practice, and lived experience. Its purpose is to contribute to dialogue among signatories, coordination bodies, and oversight mechanisms, and to explore how meaningful participation can be strengthened during the remaining years of NAP 1325 (2021–2027).

## 2. Reading NAP 1325 from the Ground

The Dutch National Action Plan 1325 (2021–2027) represents the fourth generation of Women, Peace and Security implementation in the Netherlands. Earlier NAPs were primarily focused on international engagement, positioning WPS as an external policy framework addressing conflict-affected contexts abroad.

Women's Initiatives Network (WIN) has been engaged across these successive cycles. Under the third NAP, WIN implemented a Women, Peace and Security project in Mali, contributing to international WPS objectives in line with the framework at the time. This long-term engagement informs the perspective of this reflection and situates it within the evolving history of the Dutch WPS agenda.

NAP 1325 (2021–2027) marked a significant turning point. For the first time, the agenda explicitly distinguishes between international WPS action and a national WPS agenda. As stated in the NAP, *“new to the NAP 1325 community is the focus on WPS mainstreaming in all relevant sectors and the national WPS agenda, i.e. the better protection and meaningful engagement of women and girls from conflict contexts in the Netherlands.”*

This shift carried important meaning. It acknowledged that conflict, displacement, and insecurity do not end at borders, and that women and girls from conflict contexts living in the Netherlands are also part of the WPS mandate. For migrant and refugee women-led organisations, this recognition raised expectations of increased visibility, inclusion, and relevance within national policy processes.

### 3. New Expectations, Persistent Gaps

The introduction of a national WPS agenda created new expectations among signatories operating within the Netherlands. It suggested that Women, Peace and Security principles would be mainstreamed across relevant sectors, and that meaningful engagement would extend beyond international programming into domestic policy spaces.

In practice, however, this national framing has proven difficult to translate into lived reality. While commitments are articulated at the national level, they rarely reach the municipal and community spaces where women and girls from conflict contexts actually live, seek protection, and attempt to rebuild their lives. This gap is reinforced by the Dutch governance system, which grants municipalities significant autonomy to define their own priorities and policies. As a result, knowledge of migration, displacement, and WPS principles is often limited or absent at the municipal and decentralised levels.

This is particularly striking given that refugee women are primarily received, housed, and expected to integrate within municipalities — often through asylum seeker centres and local services that are not structurally connected to the national WPS agenda.

*“If the national Women, Peace and Security agenda is to be meaningful within the Netherlands, it must be translated into the municipal spaces where refugee women actually live, seek protection, and rebuild their lives.”*

This misalignment highlights a critical policy implication for the remainder of NAP 1325 (2021–2027). If the national WPS agenda is to be meaningful within the Netherlands, stronger vertical coherence is required between national commitments and municipal implementation. This includes deliberate investment in awareness, capacity-building, and practical guidance for municipalities, where responsibility for reception, housing, and integration of refugee women primarily lies. Without such alignment, the national WPS agenda risks remaining aspirational, while local authorities — often operating under different priorities and limited knowledge of WPS frameworks — are left without the tools or incentives to translate these commitments into everyday practice.

At the same time, the broader political landscape has shifted. More restrictive asylum and migration policies, increasing polarisation, and shrinking space for nuanced dialogue have directly affected migrant and refugee communities. The arrival of new refugee populations, including from Ukraine, further reshaped priorities within an already limited agenda, often without a corresponding expansion of resources or inclusive participation mechanisms.

As a result, the promise of meaningful engagement within a nationally grounded WPS agenda remains only partially realised. This gap between recognition and practice forms a central backdrop to the reflections in this report.

### ***Key Insight***

*“The introduction of a national Women, Peace and Security agenda under NAP 1325 (2021–2027) created new expectations for protection and participation within the Netherlands. However, without stronger alignment between national commitments and municipal responsibilities — where refugee women are primarily received, housed, and integrated — these commitments struggle to translate into lived realities. Bridging this gap requires intentional investment in municipal-level awareness, capacity, and connection to the WPS framework.”*

## **4. Participation as Signatories: Commitment Without Infrastructure**

As signatories to NAP 1325, organisations are invited to contribute to strategic outcomes, participate in thematic groups, and align their work with the agenda’s objectives. In principle, this signals shared ownership and collective responsibility.

In practice, however, participation often relies on unpaid labour, voluntary engagement, and significant emotional and organisational investment. For small, migrant and refugee-led organisations, the absence of structural support makes sustained participation difficult. Engagement becomes conditional on personal capacity rather than institutional backing.

This dynamic is particularly visible in relation to reporting requirements, representation in meetings, and expectations of availability. While larger organisations can invest in communication tools, staffing, and visibility, smaller community-based organisations struggle to remain present and relevant within formal spaces — despite being directly connected to the communities the agenda seeks to reach.

## **5. The KVO Fonds in Practice**

The Kleine Vrijwilligers Organisaties Fonds (KVO Fonds) was introduced to support the participation of small and volunteer-led organisations within NAP 1325. While the intention of the fund is acknowledged, its practical design limits its relevance for community-based work.

Eligible costs are narrowly defined and primarily linked to attendance at formal meetings and events. Community reflection, mentoring, safe-space facilitation, communication

tools, and relational work — all central to meaningful WPS engagement — remain largely invisible within the reimbursement framework.

As a result, the fund reinforces a narrow understanding of participation, where presence in institutional settings is valued over sustained community practice. This creates a disconnect between the stated ambition of meaningful engagement and the mechanisms designed to support it.

## **6. NAP IV Governance and the Oversight Board**

Another structural innovation introduced in NAP 1325 (2021–2027) was the creation of a formal Oversight Board. This represented a significant step towards accountability and shared governance.

Within this context, WIN became the first small, refugee-led organisation to be included in the Oversight Board. This inclusion signalled recognition of the value of lived experience and community-based perspectives within governance structures.

At the same time, it raised expectations of reciprocal learning, structural inclusion, and sustained support. These expectations form an important part of the reflection shared here — not as critique, but as an assessment of how governance innovations translate into meaningful participation over time.

## **7. Community Practice as WPS Implementation**

In response to the gaps between policy commitment and lived reality, WIN and its partner cooperative *Arbre à Palabre* (Kwetu) have focused on building women-led community safe spaces. These spaces are not designed as service-delivery projects, but as living environments for dialogue, reflection, mutual support, and collective learning.

Within these spaces, women engage with WPS principles through everyday life: safety, belonging, voice, care, and participation. Reflection becomes a form of implementation. Mentoring and monitoring are practiced in ways that honour dignity without extracting stories or centering trauma.

This community-based approach demonstrates that the Women, Peace and Security framework is not only a policy instrument, but a lived process that requires time, trust, and relational infrastructure.

## **8. Looking Forward: The Remaining Years of NAP 1325**

As NAP 1325 (2021–2027) enters its remaining years, there is an opportunity to pause and recalibrate. The national WPS agenda offers a meaningful framework, but its potential will remain limited without stronger bridges between national commitments and local realities.

Community-based organisations — particularly migrant and refugee women-led initiatives — are not peripheral actors in this agenda. They are essential partners in translating WPS principles into practice. Recognising this requires not only inclusion in name, but sustained investment in the infrastructures that make participation possible.

## **9. Closing Reflection — Calling Home the Place Away from Home**

This reflection began with questions about policy, participation, and accountability. It ends with a quieter truth: meaningful inclusion is not created through frameworks alone, but through relationships, trust, and time.

KWETU — meaning *home* — exists as a reminder that Women, Peace and Security becomes real where people feel safe enough to belong, reflect, and contribute. This report is offered as an invitation: to listen more closely, to value community knowledge, and to recognise that ownership of the WPS agenda is not something granted, but something practiced — together.

**Women's Initiatives Network (WIN)**

2025

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## 10. About the Founder - Antoinette Mutesa

Antoinette Mutesa is the Founder of Women's Initiatives Network (WIN). Her work is deeply shaped by lived experience as an African woman affected by conflict, displacement, and the long process of rebuilding life across borders. Navigating between African and Western societies, she has witnessed first-hand how cultural misunderstanding, economic exclusion, and structural inequality impact migrant and refugee women — not only materially, but emotionally and socially.

Her journey has been guided by a belief that dignity is not granted through assistance alone but built through trust, recognition, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to one's community. This belief led her to focus on creating spaces where women can regain confidence, share knowledge safely, support one another, and develop initiatives rooted in their own realities and aspirations.

Women's Initiatives Network (WIN), and later KWETU — a women's community safe space — emerged from this path. These initiatives were not designed as service-delivery projects, but as living spaces for dialogue, mutual support, reflection, and collective growth. They reflect a commitment to ensuring that migrant and refugee women are not only beneficiaries of policy agendas, but active contributors to shaping them — without being asked to relive trauma, justify their worth, or translate their experiences into institutional language to be heard.

Submitted by:

Antoinette Mutesa

on behalf of WIN & Kwetu

December 29th 2025

