

NEW WOMEN CONNECTORS



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

TODAY'S VOICE - TOMORROW'S LEADERS



@BLANCHE ILLUSTRATES

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## Foreword

# MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD

In 2022 we began to see ourselves and our communities heal from the social, psychological, and health impacts that the COVID19 pandemic brought. We have started to finally move back into more in-person events and reconnect with each other and our work more entirely. This year has been an opportunity for us, an opportunity to reconnect with each other, with stakeholders, with partners, and most importantly, with the migrant and refugee communities on the ground.

We did not only maintain our presence but grew it. We have had the honour of opening our first office in conjunction with Oxfam Novib in the Hague, giving us a home base for our operations, and making us a more sustainable organization. Additionally, we have brought on two new team members, a communications coordinator and finance administrator. We are grateful for their dedication to our values, and all their efforts to make New Women Connectors (NWC) work better for the communities we serve. These steps have been instrumental in our growth, and we hope to continue to be able to work efficiently and meaningfully for the communities we represent.

Another key growth of ours in the past year was our vital role in the creation of the Netherlands Refugee-Led Network, a demonstration of NWC dedication to bringing together refugee-led organizations in the Netherlands as well as individuals passionate about creating systematic policy change surrounding migrant and refugee rights.

A special thanks to all who have supported this endeavour thus far and thank you to all of our volunteers and participants of this year's events, which will be summed up later in this report.

If 2022 has taught us anything, it would be the importance of frameworks and infrastructure and the importance of an open and flexible base of volunteers. We have seen an influx of people reaching out from all across Europe wanting to intern or volunteer with us, and this warms our hearts as we can see that we are gaining more recognition and getting our message across borders. Thank you, to all of our volunteers, partners, and team, for without your tireless efforts and support we could not have achieved what we have today. And thank you all for believing in our vision. We will continue to do our best to continue listening to, and amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups in policy, and advocate for a more inclusive and equitable Europe.



**Lily Adhiambo**

Chair of the Board  
New Women Connectors

## NEW WOMEN CONNECTORS

# NWC 2022

### for inclusion and social justice

New Women Connectors (NWC) is a social change movement that advocates for feminist ideals. It was founded in March 2019 and is led by migrant and refugee women from diverse backgrounds, who share common experiences and strengths.

## OUR MISSION

We enable refugees and migrants to connect to each other and decision makers to challenge, shape and transform policies and processes that affect them. We do this by facilitating inclusive learning spaces to co-create solutions towards the meaningful participation and representation of migrants and refugees in decision making processes.

Our will to change comes from the fact that policies made at the highest levels greatly affect the lives of those categorized as migrants, stateless, and refugees, particularly women, while we have no impact on how they are formed or designed. Thus, we fight for recognition as relevant change agents of change and policy and decision makers.

NWC is built on three pillars:

When we speak about **“new”**, we focus on people who are newcomers in Europe, categorized as refugees, migrants, undocumented and stateless persons and their diaspora.

We also specify **“women”** to visibilize the specific problems that are affecting them, including limited access to resources or opportunities.

As **“connectors”**, we point out the active and genuine involvement in decision-making processes, to ensure that our voices are heard and our needs are considered.

## OUR VISION

At NWC, we imagine a society where the expertise and contributions of refugees and migrants are valued, and in which they have equal access to power. Moreover, we believe in the ability to shape society through our unique perspectives and experiences, and through our meaningful participation.

With our organization, we also aim to advocate for refugee and migrant rights and needs. Our ultimate goal is to create a more inclusive and equitable society that supports integration and empowerment. We are committed to creating a world in which refugees and migrants are seen as assets rather than liabilities. We strive to break down barriers and build bridges, shaping a community in which everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

## NEW WOMEN CONNECTORS

# NWC 2022

for inclusion and social justice

## OUR VALUES

At NWC, we envision a society with equal access to decision-making and to power.

### INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

we take a feminist approach that includes women's rights but is not limited to women alone.

### ANTI-RACISM

we always stand in solidarity with racialized groups which face parallel exclusions, discrimination and barriers inside of Europe.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

we highlight the discussion of human rights from the lived experience of people who've migrated.

### DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

we promote civic participation, representation and self-led advocacy by people with lived experiences of migration

### MIGRATION

we promote the inclusion and recognition of these diverse life experiences in policymaking and provide analysis of the structures and cultures of working that disempower us

“Fundamentally speaking, feminism cannot support racism, supremacy and oppressive domination in any form.”

—Mariam Barghouti

## New Women Connectors

## Our Team



**ANILA NOOR**

Founder/Managing director



**RAZAN ISMAIL**

Chief Operating Officer/  
Head of training



**MARIE-JOSE VAN SCHAIK**

Project Manager / Trainer



**SEYRAN KHALILI**

Project Manager /  
Youth Connectors



**ANGELINE GREEN**

Administrative /Project Assistant

# STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

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## **Infrastructure**

In the year 2022 we have worked on our internal infrastructure, creating a code of conduct, as well as comprehensive safeguarding measures and a privacy statement, both of which can be found clearly on our website under “Transparency”. Finally, and a great source of pride for all of us at the NWC team, we have established an presence within the Oxfam Novib headquarters in the Hague allowing us to have a physical address and the capacity to see each other within the team as well as volunteers on a more regular basis. This is a monumental step for New Women Connectors, and we are all incredibly grateful for the opportunity to connect more on a local level, as well as use this as a headquarters for our Europe-wide activities.

## **COVID aftermath**

After the COVID-19 pandemic was felt deeply in our work and reduced the amount of in-person meetings. We were able to start bouncing back and reconnecting with the migrant and refugee community by easing back into the new normal. We continue to provide online events and training, but have had the opportunity to begin healing and moving forward, even meeting with partners we have been speaking with remotely for months, for the first time. We are incredibly grateful for the support from both individual participants in our events as well as partnering organizations in our growth over the past year, and look forward to even more connections in the coming year.

## Community involvement:

# INTERVIEW WITH A VOLUNTEER



**Rupsha Paul**

**Researcher, MA Development studies in the Netherlands, Rotterdam**

### **Could you tell me a bit about your background and how you became involved with New Women Connectors?**

As a researcher in 2020, I discovered Anila Noor's volunteering post on LinkedIn, expressing her goal of connecting migrant women. Intrigued, I reached out, and we developed a research project on migrant policy spaces in Europe, focusing on meaningful participation and the impact of refugee and migrant leaders' voices on belonging. My role as a researcher involved facilitating training designed by NWC, based on our groundbreaking research on meaningful participation in refugee spaces. I also provided support on grant proposals, coordinated research activities, and contributed to report development.

### **What impact do you think New Women Connectors has had?**

New Women Connectors has had a significant impact by providing a space for migrant women in society. As a migrant woman myself, I faced challenges integrating into the Dutch labour market, despite having work experience and higher education qualifications. However, NWC has created a welcoming and comforting environment where I can connect with other women who have experienced similar journeys as refugees or migrants. This sense of belonging and inspiration from fellow women has been invaluable. NWC has empowered me to claim my space and has given me the confidence to navigate the complex Dutch work system, despite the difficulties I faced as a migrant.

### **How has your volunteering experience with New Women Connectors influenced your personal and professional trajectory?**

Their inclusive and supportive approach provides migrant and refugee leaders navigating the job market with a boost of confidence and a sense of belonging. The dedicated volunteers and staff at NWC wholeheartedly contribute and offer help whenever needed, creating a unique environment. During a challenging period of job searching, NWC provided me with a much-needed sense of community, offering friendship and support. They went beyond expectations by sharing job openings and demonstrating genuine support. Overall, my involvement with NWC has contributed to my academic journey and fostered significant personal growth.

### **What do you hope for the future of New Women Connectors and its impact on the world?**

My hope is to see its growth and increased visibility, as well as the amplification of marginalized voices, particularly refugee and migrant women, in European policy spaces. I envision NWC expanding its impact globally and inspiring more refugee communities to claim their space. It is important to provide support, foster networks, and keep fighting for rights. NWC should continue to reach marginalized women and grassroots groups while maintaining its original spirit and addressing hierarchical challenges. The ultimate goal is to make a lasting impact and ensure leaders hear the voices of those who have been marginalized.



# OUR APPROACH

We realize that our inclusive participatory approach also means that New Women Connectors itself has to ensure that our focus population has the possibility to determine our planning, decision making and the design, implementation and evaluation of our activities. New Women Connectors's core team is composed almost exclusively of individuals from our focus population. This is also reflected in the Board and the Advisory Board, where many positions are occupied by refugee and migrant women. In this way, the meaningful participation of refugee and migrant women is at the heart of our work. Being migrant and refugee women ourselves, while having a wide network of migrant and refugee led organization, and community leadership connections all over Europe and beyond, we are able to bring the voices of migrants and refugees to the policy level when strategic decisions are made about diversity, inclusion, gender and so on. We believe that feminism goes beyond just representation, but is also a part of our methodology.



The creation of spaces which are sensitive to lived experiences, and storytelling as a method of sharing expertise are central to our feminist approach. Women are given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and recognize the validity of their knowledge as relevant expertise. Furthermore, by incorporating such expertise in events and discussions showcasing speakers who are migrant and refugee women, participants are motivated to perceive themselves as agents, catalysts for change, and independent decision-makers. This can help counteract the internalized victimization which can often cause a lack of self confidence both on the individual level and the organizational level in the case of Refugee Led Organizations. Concurrently, the events serve not only to empower the participants on a personal level, but also to connect them with those with similar experiences, to create a network of people and experiences through which meaningful connections and partnerships, even friendships, can be created.



# CHALLENGES



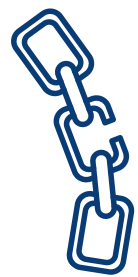
## Access to Funds

Lack of recognition and flexible funding criteria are vital to inclusively support and empower refugee and migrant-led organizations to advance their work and grow as organizations.



## Internalized victimization

Negative stereotypes of migrant and refugee women contribute to their internalized victimization, further excluding them from society and policy. Safe spaces for communication with other migrants are crucial to address the inability to freely express oneself and reflect on one's own culture and experiences.



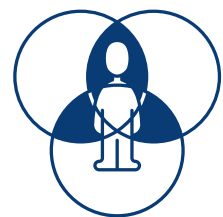
## Institutionalized discrimination

Excluding those affected by decisions from the decision-making process perpetuates neo-colonial exclusion. Our dedicated efforts focus on advocating for meaningful and active participation of disadvantaged groups to counteract this phenomenon.



## Importance of intersectionality

Difficulties in addressing the interconnected and diverse needs of individuals facing multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization.



# PROJECTS



This year, New Women Connectors took part in several European funded projects, along with amazing partners such as UNITEE, Eurocities, Unire, UNHCR, and many more. We worked with several cities and municipalities including Birmingham, Prague, Amsterdam, Mechelen, Zaragoza, Athens, Riga, Oulo and Dusseldorf, among others.

With these projects we did not only expand our network, but we also built our capacity for European Funded project management, meaningful training delivery and provision of specialised support for migrant and refugee engagement on municipality level.

Through our trainings and accompaniment, we were able to support and guide local level authorities into creating meaningful participation mechanisms where they engage migrant and refugee communities in codesigning and cocreating integration policies.

We also provided support for EU and global institutions: we were involved as consulting experts in the EU Commission on the EU Migration Forum and with UN Agencies on the Global Refugee Forum, both events happening in December 2023.

# ERIFO Rome

We started 2022 by taking the course "Working in a multicultural context: Integrating migrants through self-empowerment" provided by Erifo in ROME and funded by Erasmus +.

We were happy to reconnect with much of our core team during a trip to Rome in February. We delved into the methodology behind our work, and how we can set more sustainable goals and ensure their deliverable outcomes. We also gained skills on how to be better communicators and facilitators when dealing with sensitive topics such as people's experiences with displacement or forced migration.



Funded by  
the European Union



# UNITES

Led by [Eurocities](#), UNITES (UrbaN InTEgration Strategies through co-design) trains and accompanies local authorities to co-design integration strategies with other stakeholders and migrants. The training serves to prepare the city practitioners to design effective stakeholder coordination mechanisms and citizen engagement to develop integration strategies, which is being translated into online training and a comprehensive multi-media How-to-Guide on co-design in a more compact and accessible format.

NWC will then help apply the knowledge provided by the training to specific actions and local contexts, through the creation of a supportive community of practice during online-workshops and field visits to each city.

## Objectives

- improve integration outcomes by co-designing integration strategies with stakeholders, citizens and vulnerable migrants
- train integration practitioners in managing co-design processes through different forms of learning and exchange of good practices
- foster the participation of citizens, including migrants but also vulnerable migrants in the co-design of integration strategy
- raise awareness on the advantages of a “whole of society approach” to integration



# MILE

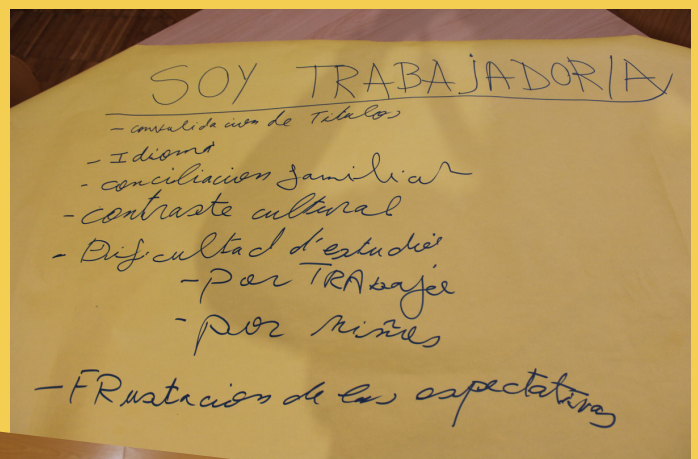
The objective of the MILE project (Migrant Integration through Locally Designed Experiences) is to increase the presence of migrants and refugee representatives in the policy-making process in the municipalities involved in the project and to train both to enhance their capacity for collaboration. The training which we provided for the migrant communities focused on developing their advocacy and leadership skills while municipality staff were trained in diversity management. MILE's main outputs - the training for municipalities and migrants groups, the consultative bodies in each municipality, and the exchange platforms - are supported by a science-for-policy approach, that takes into account the local context and uses an intersectional lens to better understand needs and priorities of local migrant and refugee groups. Local and European campaigns will raise awareness around the issues and the project's activities.



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Migrant  
Integration through  
Locally designed  
Experiences



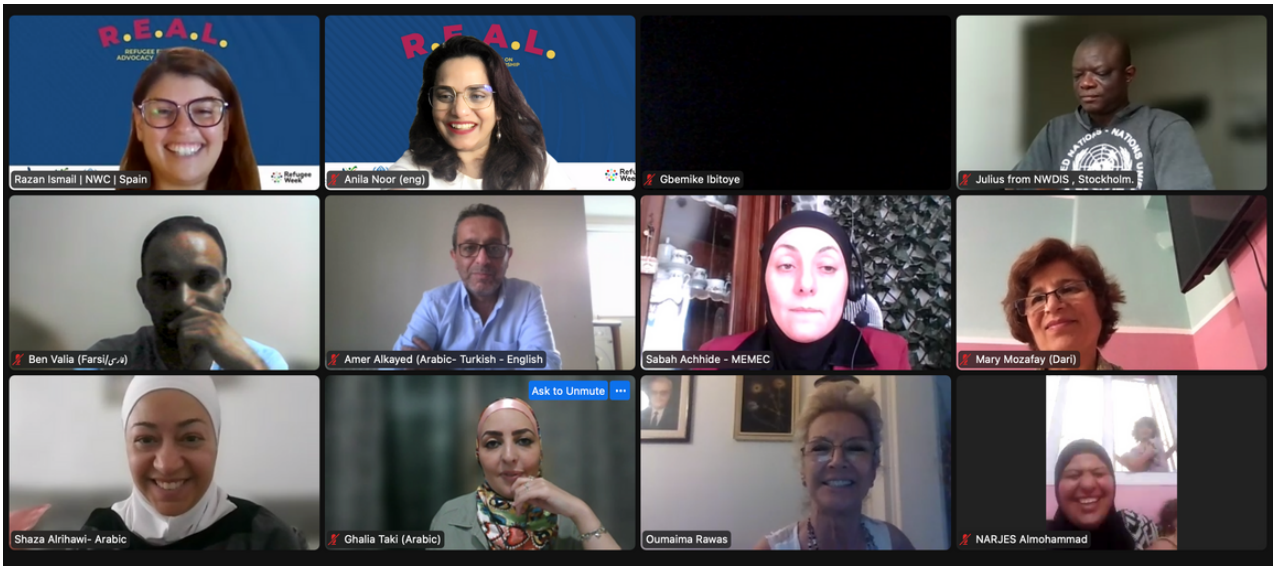


# REAL

REAL - The Refugee Exchange, Advocacy, and Leadership project aimed to virtually convene refugee and diaspora community leaders with the aim of exchanging knowledge and experiences.

The first meeting was focused on community leadership. A reflection activity unpacked the different characteristics of a good leader and uncovered the needs of a community. The second session was aimed to debate funding and fundraising journeys of the migrant and refugee communities. The last two meetings were focused on delivering a self-advocacy toolkit on how one can become an agent of change in their community, and what full and meaningful participation entails.

We were able to accrue around 300 participants in total for these sessions from all over Europe. In evaluating the project, participants delivered messages such as “I have more self-belief, we just need to be more concentrated on our aims” or “today I became a little hopeful again”. Other statements pointed out the fact that thanks to the sessions, “I had the chance to meet people who fight for humanity and equal citizenship rights”.





# ADVOC-ACT

Enabling newcomers citizens of Europe for direct participation was an Erasmus+ funded project in partnership between New Women Connectors and Unire in Italy. ADVOC-ACT was formed as a project aiming to improve the advocacy and leadership skills and competencies of migrant and refugee activists in Europe. This was done in order to unlock the enormous potential of migrants and refugees to act as self-advocates and agents of change.

In the project, we achieved the following:

- More than 25 migrant and refugee activists from across Europe took part in the online learning spaces (Imago Labs), deepening their understanding of the following topics: 1. Narratives on migration, 2. Inclusion, intersectionality and gender equality, 3. Advocacy and leadership and 4. Meaningful participation in policy processes. Besides, they learned educational tools and practices to address these topics in their local communities;
- 15 migrant and refugee activists that took part in the 2 physical trainings in Italy and the Netherlands (Exchange Labs) were empowered in their leadership skills, with an increased understanding of self-advocacy strategies and the ability to lead policy and awareness raising activities;
- The project was closed with an Exposure Visit in Brussels, which brought an empowering insight into the Brussels decision-making realm and opened doors for the democratic engagement and political participation of the participants.



Funded by  
the European Union

# FAITH & VALUE CREATION

We are also happy to announce that our policy report on the micro-project in collaboration with GERIS-net (Global Exchange on Religion in Society) "Faith & Value Creation: What is the Future of Faith and Gender" has been selected to be published on Capacity4Dev, an online knowledge-sharing platform of the European Commission.



## MINOSIA LABYRINTH



Minosia Labyrinth is a unique new educational approach on migration in Europe. Through 'embodied learning' it aims to give insights into the complexity of the migration system in Europe and to create awareness of the difficulties migrants and refugees face. In the game players move within a kind of labyrinth of institutions and interactions take place with other players. In partnership with Solar eV we applied this method with a new learners group in Berlin and are working towards qualifying more trainers to use this method in our work.



# BEYOND CONSULTATIONS

Beyond consultation: Unpacking the most essential components of meaningful participation by refugee leaders

This year our research department also worked in collaboration with GRN (the Global Refugee-led Network) and EU-COMAR (European Coalition of Migrants and Refugees) on the research report "Beyond Consultation: Unpacking the most essential components of meaningful participation by refugee leaders", which can be found on the Oxfam website. In this paper, we highlight the implementation gap of policy processes on refugee and migrant communities and propose concrete recommendations on how to operationalize meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

Additionally, the often tokenistic practices that are hailed as inclusive must be cast aside in favour of the genuine empowerment of refugees, and their need to have influence over the design, implementation and evaluation of refugee-focused programmes.



# COMMUNITY & OUTREACH



Advocacy and working towards bringing social change is a tiring activity...

In New Women Connectors, we strongly value the possibility to collaborate with like-minded people, and learn from their engagement. Meeting other rights advocates that share common goals helps us feel strong and remind us that we're not alone!

This year, we had the amazing opportunity to support and participate in the launch [Refugee Led Network of the Netherlands](#). The RLN is a refugee-led network consisting of a diverse group of individuals and organizations with different refugee backgrounds and experiences who are advocating and being active on the ground, working with and for the refugee community. We at New Women Connectors are hoping to join and support individuals and refugee-led initiatives in the Netherlands to come together to better navigate structures that provide limited visibility and resources, which, in turn, promotes competition rather than collaboration. Like all our work, we hope to shift the image of this group from passive victims to active changemakers with ambitions to better the society around them.

The intention is not to duplicate existing organizations; rather, bring them together to facilitate collective action that highlights the individual talents and capabilities of the refugee community, while also shifting the policy lens towards greater inclusivity. Our objective is to empower the refugee community through upskilling sessions, foster stronger inter-community bonds, and build relationships with relevant stakeholders. These efforts are aimed at enhancing collaboration and making policies surrounding refugees and their lives in the Netherlands more reflective of lived experiences.



# SPEAKER SESSIONS AND PANELS

## JOINED BY NWC:

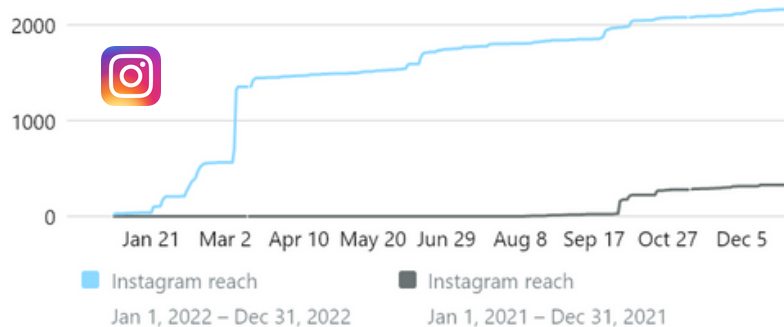
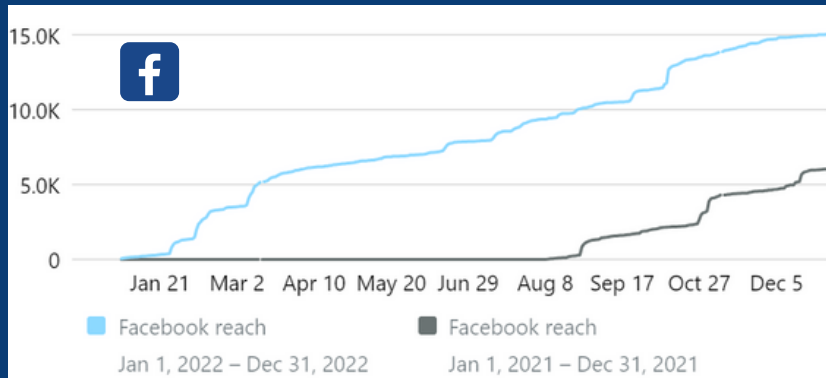
- **Refugee Advisor Programme for Community Sponsorship Workshop** hosted by SHARE network
- **"Ties that bind: opportunities & pitfalls of migrants' international networks"**, hosted by the TRAFIG project
- **#BreaktheBias** Women's day event
- **Building a New Feminist Social Contract for Climate Justice**
- **"Nothing is more permanent than the temporary? Understanding protracted displacement and people's own responses"** hosted by the TRAFIG project
- **Active Citizenship: belonging and identity** exchange trip hosted by GERIS
- **"What impact does localized and inclusive research have on policy and practice relating to forced migration?"** hosted by GAIN
- **"Humanitarian Energy Conference"** hosted by the Global Platform for Action
- **"Cities managing migration"** w/ German Marshall Funds
- **"Is a cohesive European migration narrative possible? Breaking down the different multi-level roles and responsibilities"** hosted by EPIC
- **"#RebuildingWelcome:** a panel discussion on lessons learned from Ukraine for more inclusive and effective refugee response systems" hosted by GRN
- **European Migration Forum**
- **"Feminist Leadership in Displacement: Transformation through Participation."** hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
- **"Local democracy for all: Making migrants' voices heard"** hosted by the European Commission under MILE
- **4th Conference of the German Network for Forced Migration**
- **European Policy Dialogue Forum by Kaiiciid and Dialouge4Network**
- **Integrating Cities Conference**
- **COP27**
- **"World Trade Congress on Gender"** hosted by the WTO
- **"Promoting Inclusion forced displacement context"** hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

and more...

# SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

In 2022, we not only solidified our presence on social media but also experienced remarkable growth in engagement, demonstrating the strong resonance of our message with a wider audience. Our efforts yielded results, with our Facebook reach by 120% increase, while our Instagram following surged by a substantial 50%. These increases reflect the ever-increasing interest and appreciation for our work.

Moreover, we have strategically established our presence across multiple platforms to ensure accessibility and engagement with our audience. Beyond Facebook and Instagram, we have also established an impactful presence on Twitter and LinkedIn, in addition to our monthly newsletter and website blogs harnessing the power of these platforms to connect and be available to diverse communities in the sector.



# LOOKING AHEAD

As we reflect upon the remarkable growth we have experienced over the past year, we are filled with a sense of awe and gratitude. The progress we have made has surpassed our own expectations, and it has solidified our commitment to continue pushing the boundaries of success in the months to come.

Building upon our achievements, we are excited to embark on a path of expansion and renewal. Our focus will be twofold: strengthening our existing projects and venturing into new horizons.

By revisiting and revitalizing past initiatives, we aim to maximize their potential and deliver even greater value to our stakeholders. At the local level, we will place a special emphasis on nurturing and deepening our engagement with local authorities and municipalities to support them in creating meaningful participation mechanisms and meaningfully engaging their migrant and refugee communities. We recognize the power of community, and we will leverage the collective expertise and passion within our network to address local challenges, foster innovation, and create sustainable solutions.

Simultaneously, we are thrilled to announce our intention to extend our reach to a pan-European level. We aim to foster a diverse and dynamic environment where young talents from different cultures and backgrounds can collaborate, learn, and contribute to our collective growth. At the same time, we are committed to starting and participating in new global conversations such as Feminist Leadership, Artificial Intelligence and Climate Change. Bringing our intersectional lens to these conversations will bring fresh perspectives, enhance our global outlook, and further strengthen our position as a leading organization in our field.

In the months ahead, we will continue to prioritize innovation, excellence, and strategic partnerships. We remain committed to staying at the forefront of our communities needs, embracing emerging opportunities, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. While we acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead, we are confident in our ability to overcome them through our unwavering dedication, adaptability, and the support of our exceptional team members. Together, we will forge a path towards sustainable success and create a lasting positive impact in the communities we serve.

We extend our sincerest appreciation to our stakeholders for their unwavering support and trust. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey as we build upon our past achievements and strive for even greater accomplishments in the future.



**Anila Noor**  
Founder / CEO  
New Women Connectors



# PARTNERS & ALLIANCES

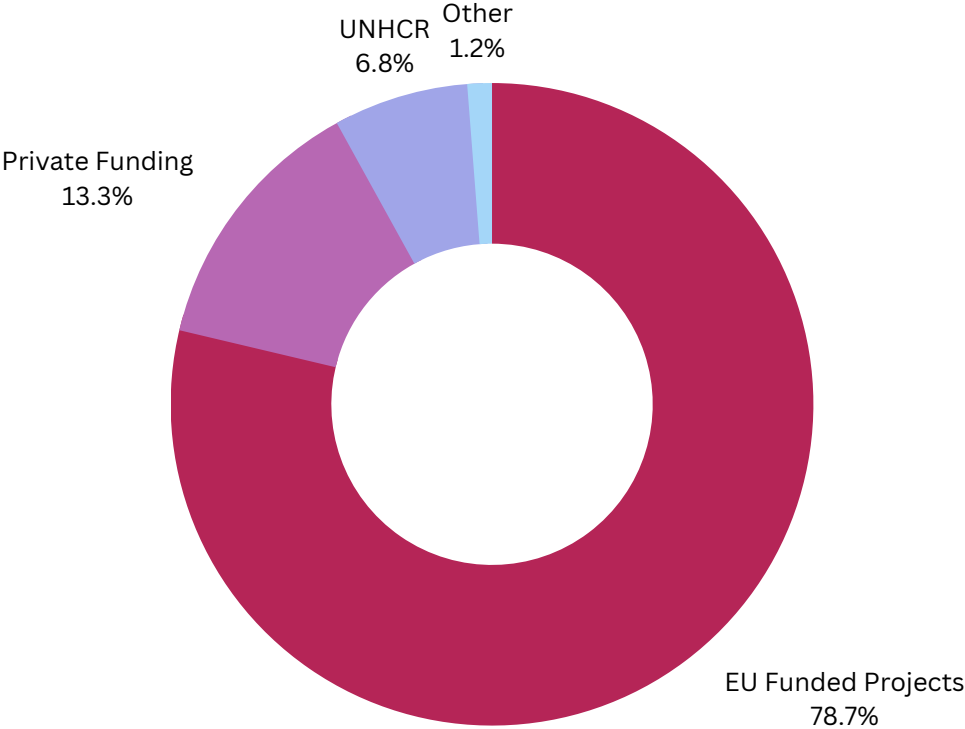
To date, 29 partners and alliances have been co-creating and contributed to the NWC budget.



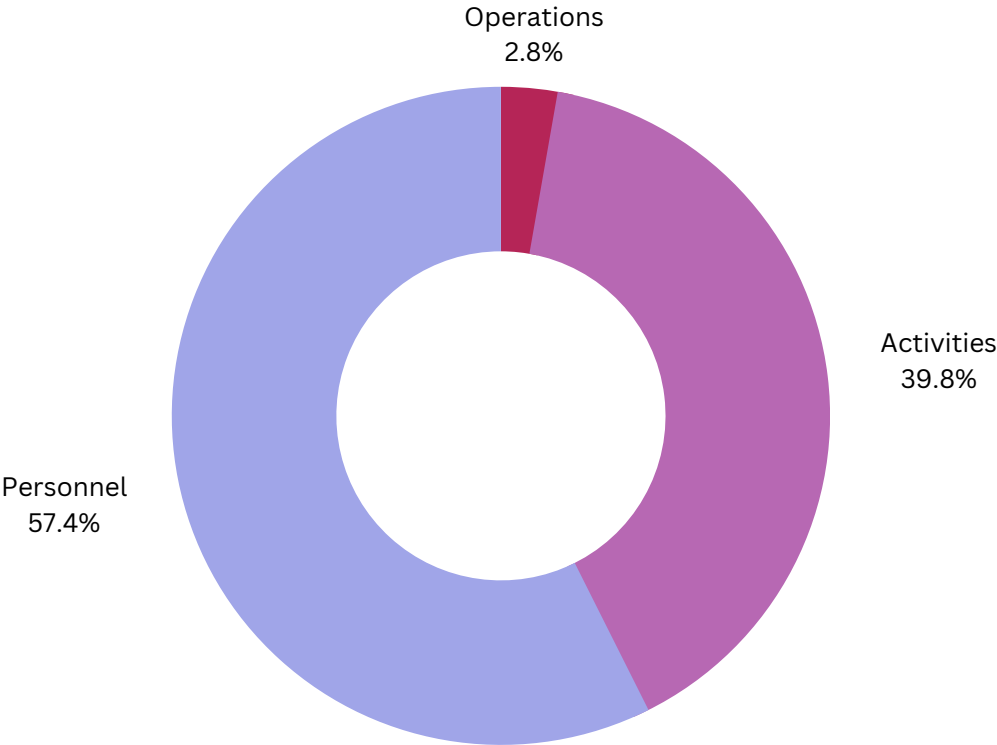
# FINANCIAL YEAR IN REVIEW



## FUNDING SOURCES



## EXPENDITURES



# We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to New Women Connectors



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# NEW WOMEN CONNECTORS



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