



D5.2. TOOLKIT OF GOOD PRACTICES

RETHINKING INCLUSION AND GENDER EMPOWERMENT: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research & Innovative Action under Grant Agreement No. 101093987

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EMPOWERMENT: A PARTICIPATORY
ACTION RESEARCH**

SHORT

SUMMARY

The Toolkit of Good Practices provides a set of 'wisdom bites' on the Quwa platform developed within the project. They are shared by the CSO project partners to reinforce good practices, facilitate growth and networking among similar CSOs. It offers tools to foster gender empowerment and inclusion via recommendations based on the contributors' experience and observations.

The ReIncluGen Project

Acronym	ReIncluGen
Title	REthinking INCLUtion and GENder empowerment: a participatory action research
Coordinator	UANTWERPEN
Reference	101093987
Type	RIA (Research and Innovation Action)
Programme	Horizon Europe
Topic	Horizon-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-05 Gender and social, economic and cultural empowerment
Start	01 01 2023
Duration	36 months
Website	www.reinclugen.eu
Consortium	UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN (UANTWERPEN), Belgium UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE BARCELONA (UAB), Spain UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI TRENTO (UNITN), Italy EMPACT VZW (EMPACT vzw), Belgium KUNLABORA (Kunlabora), Belgium SYNYO GmbH (SYNYO), Austria UNIWERSYTET WARSZAWSKI (UNIWARSAW), Poland FUNDACJA FEMINOTEKA (Feminoteka), Poland FUNDACION INTERED (INTERED), Spain LA STRADA - DER WEG (La Strada - Der Weg) , Italy ORIENT EXPRESS (Orient Express), Austria ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM (EUR), The Netherlands

Acknowledgement: This project has received funding from the Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101093987

Disclaimer: The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors, and in no way represents the view of the European Commission or its services.

Deliverable D5.2.

Number	D5.2
Title	Toolkit of Good Practices (included in the digital platform Quwa)
Lead beneficiary	Fundacja Feminoteka
Work package	WP5
Dissemination level	DEM
Nature deliverable	PUB
Due date	31-07-2025
Submission date	M31
Authors	Katarzyna Szczepaniak, Fundacja Feminoteka
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Executive summary

The report presents the outcome of our project work on the Toolkit of Good Practices for civil society organisations (CSOs) from different countries focused on gender empowerment and inclusion. The Toolkit is an inherent part of the online platform, Quwa, designed and launched within ReIncluGen to create space for sharing knowledge and experience as well as networking for the sake of both domestic and international collaboration, including joint projects aimed at addressing persistent gender inequalities across Europe. Our Toolkit is to help CSOs as actors of social change become more empowered and better equipped in their daily activities. This deliverable is the report on the making of the toolkit, but the toolkit itself is part of the Quwa platform.

The Toolkit is a collection of ‘wisdom bites’ posted by the registered users of the Quwa platform to share the lessons learnt, practices, observations as well as challenges faced and the ways of overcoming them by the organisations. The document shows the links to the proposal assumptions and includes a set of 30 examples from the CSO project partners out of 106 in total that have been contributed by both project partners and external registered users. In its current form, the collection of ‘wisdom bites’ should be seen primarily as a starting point rather than a comprehensive overview, which aligns with the purpose of the Toolkit designed to be an evolving shared resource. Over the course of the further development of the Quwa digital platform, the aim is to further expand the toolkit.

Contents

Introduction and aims..... 7

The Quwa platform 8

Wisdom bites as a Toolkit 10

Conclusions and reflections 17

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

In the ReIncluGen project, to achieve our research objectives, we proposed the use of a participatory action research and evaluation approach in collaboration with CSOs and their members. This approach enables us to go beyond the current state of the art and to rethink existing policies and practices (WP3), while this methodology acknowledges the crucial role of civil society organisations as agents of change in addressing persistent gender inequalities across Europe. By actively involving CSOs in both research and evaluation, we aim to foster ownership, relevance, and long-term impact. An essential step in this process was the co-design of a digital knowledge and networking platform that enables CSOs to learn from one another, build networks and critically assess practices that promote gender empowerment across European societies (WP5). This process and its components are illustrated in the figure below.

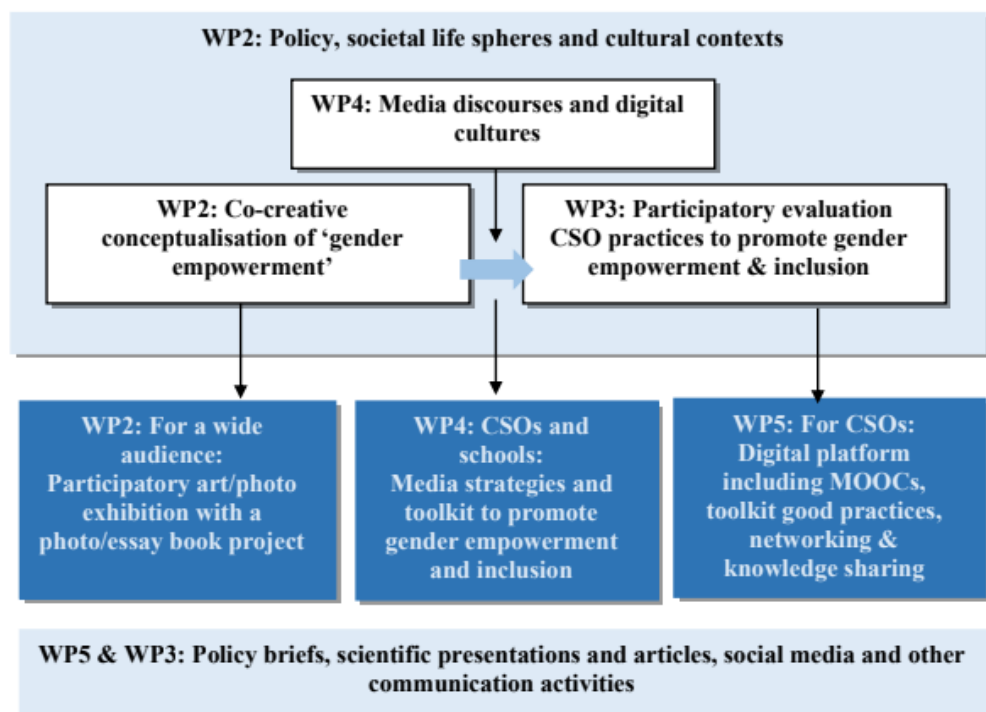


FIGURE 1: REINCLUGEN RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND INNOVATIVE ACTION

One of the building blocks, i.e. “Knowledge sharing”, involves facilitating the exchange of knowledge both between and within CSOs across European countries. The Toolkit of Good Practices is one of the major outcomes of our project and is embraced within the online platform developed by our colleagues from Kunlabora.

The Quwa platform was created to provide a digital self-service to strengthen CSOs during the development of tools to facilitate gender empowerment and inclusion. The objective of the platform is to:

- inform users with clear guidelines, building blocks, related resources, etc.;
- support organisations along their own development trajectories, for example, through standard questionnaires, checklists, and other practical instruments;

- reinforce and showcase good practices and offer them an inspirational podium, e.g. with storytelling;
- offer tools to foster gender empowerment and inclusion;
- provide smart support, including tailored recommendations (e.g. relevant organisations and best practices) and insightful analyses.

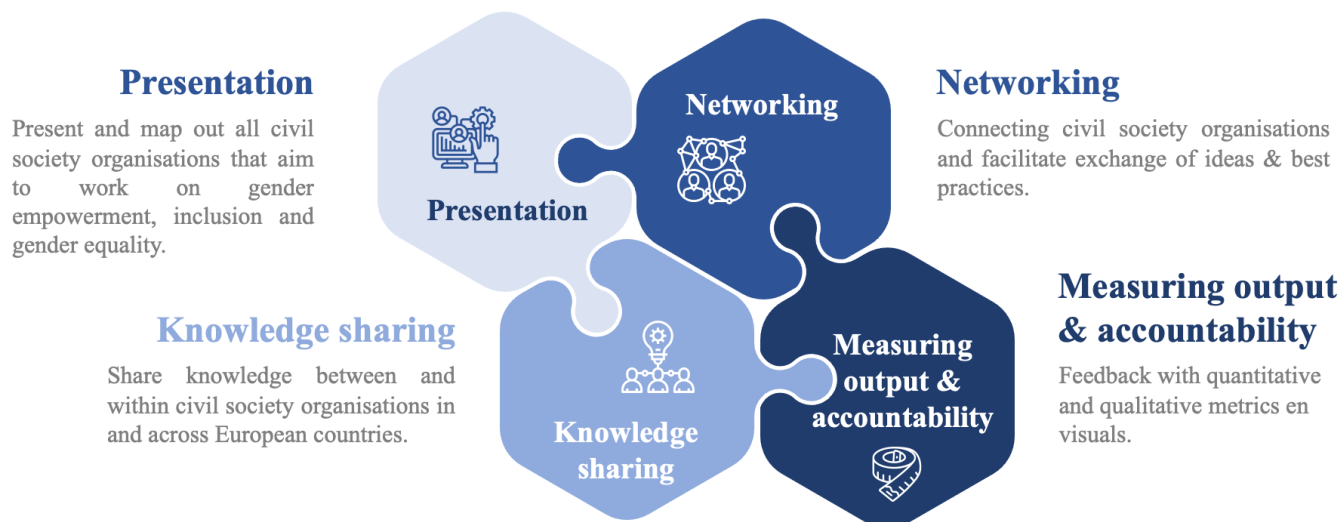


FIGURE 2: THE REINCLUGEN PROJECT FROM THE SOFTWARE PERSPECTIVE. (IMAGE BY KRIS AERTS, KUNLABORA)

THE QUWA PLATFORM

The Quwa platform available at <https://quwaconnect.eu/> meets our proposal assumption that “through the identification and exposure of practices, as well as the evaluation thereof, in the digital platform, a library and overview of developed and ongoing practices will be available and grow, that relate to gender empowerment and inclusion.” The word *quwa* itself was chosen collectively by our project team to emphasise our key values, as in Arabic it means ‘power’, ‘strength’ and is used as both a female and male name.

From a software perspective, Quwa offers CSOs, who decide to join the platform, profiling for the sake of networking, sharing knowledge and experience as well as measuring their own activities. It is illustrated below and the updated image refers directly to the one above from our proposal; it comes from the MOOC presentation *QUWA. A guided tour of our platform for inclusion and gender empowerment* by our project colleague Kris Aerts from Kunlabora. The presentation, in turn, was prepared for the recording of the project MOOC series (D5.3) that constitutes the other part of the ReIncluGen ‘Knowledge sharing’ block.

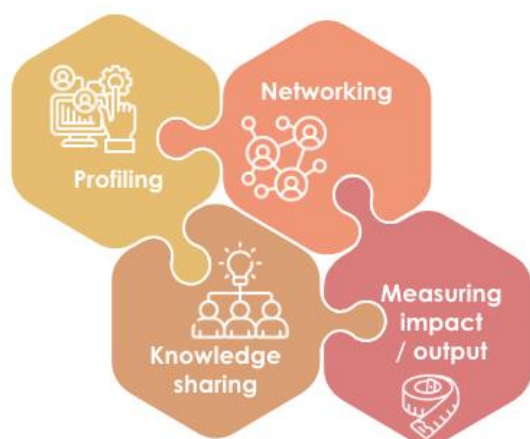


FIGURE 3: FUNCTIONS OF QUWA (IMAGE BY KRIS AERTS, KUNLABORA)

Within the ReIncluGen project, the Quwa platform serves as a multifaceted tool designed to support organisations working on inclusion and gender empowerment. It functions as a comprehensive inventory of such organisations, a repository of their accumulated experiences and knowledge, and a detailed record of their activities. These core functions are embodied in three distinct sections of the user profile: 1) **About**, which provides organisational background; 2) **Wisdom Bites**, which captures shared insights and knowledge; and 3) **Activities**, which documents the specific actions and initiatives undertaken by the organisation.

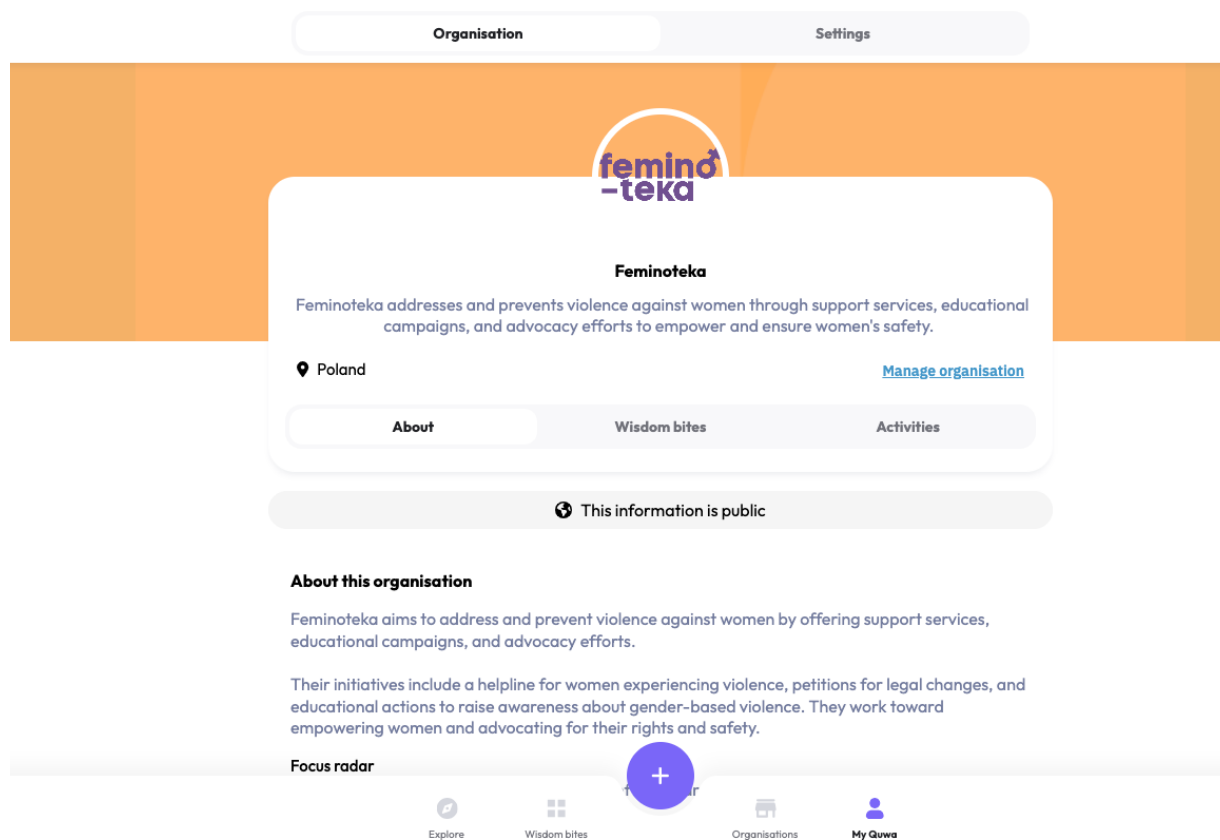


FIGURE 4: FEMINOTEKA'S PROFILE ON THE QUWA PLATFORM WITH THE THREE SECTIONS OF A USER'S PROFILE.

WISDOM BITES AS A TOOLKIT

This deliverable focuses specifically on the Quwa platform's **Wisdom Bites** feature, which constitutes a central component of our Toolkit of Good Practices. The primary purpose of this function is to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of practical knowledge and resources among CSOs working on gender empowerment and inclusion across Europe. By enabling organisations to contribute a diverse range of materials (such as tools, practices, training content, research findings, methodologies, and more) Wisdom Bites fosters a dynamic and collaborative knowledge exchange. Contributors can upload their content in various formats, including text, attachments, and links, thereby accommodating different types of knowledge and learning styles. To ensure organisation and ease of access, each submission can be categorised under specific labels such as Challenge, Game, Practice, Research, Template, Tool, Training, MOOC, or Other. This categorisation broadens the scope of shared knowledge and supports targeted searches and tailored learning experiences. Within the broader ReIncluGen project, the Wisdom Bites feature plays a vital role in advancing our aim to empower CSOs through collective learning and mutual support. It not only enriches the digital platform's content but also strengthens the participatory action research approach by incorporating frontline experiences and evidence-based practices into policy reflection and development.

At the time of writing this report, 106 Wisdom Bites have been posted by both project partners and invited organisations, while the total number of registered users is 138. This growing repository reflects the active engagement of the network and the value of shared knowledge in promoting effective gender empowerment strategies. The sharing process itself is easy and user-friendly. Moreover, the posts can be uploaded in the English or in the languages of project partners, e.g. in Polish, and are automatically translated into English. The steps are illustrated below (Figure 5) and followed by the example of the final outcome (Figure 6).

The image shows a mobile application interface for 'Feminoteka' and a 'Add a new wisdom bite' form. The background is a screenshot of the 'Feminoteka' profile page, which includes a header with the logo, a description, a location (Poland), and navigation tabs (About, Wisdom bites, Activities). Below the tabs are buttons for 'Add a wisdom bite', 'Add an organisation', and 'Add an activity'. The foreground is a form titled 'Add a new wisdom bite' with the following fields and options:

- Title *
- Type (Challenge, Game, Practice, Research, Template)
- Written in * (Polish)
- Buttons: Add a video, Add a document

FIGURE 5: ADDING A WISDOM BITE AND CHOOSING ITS CATEGORY ON QUWA.

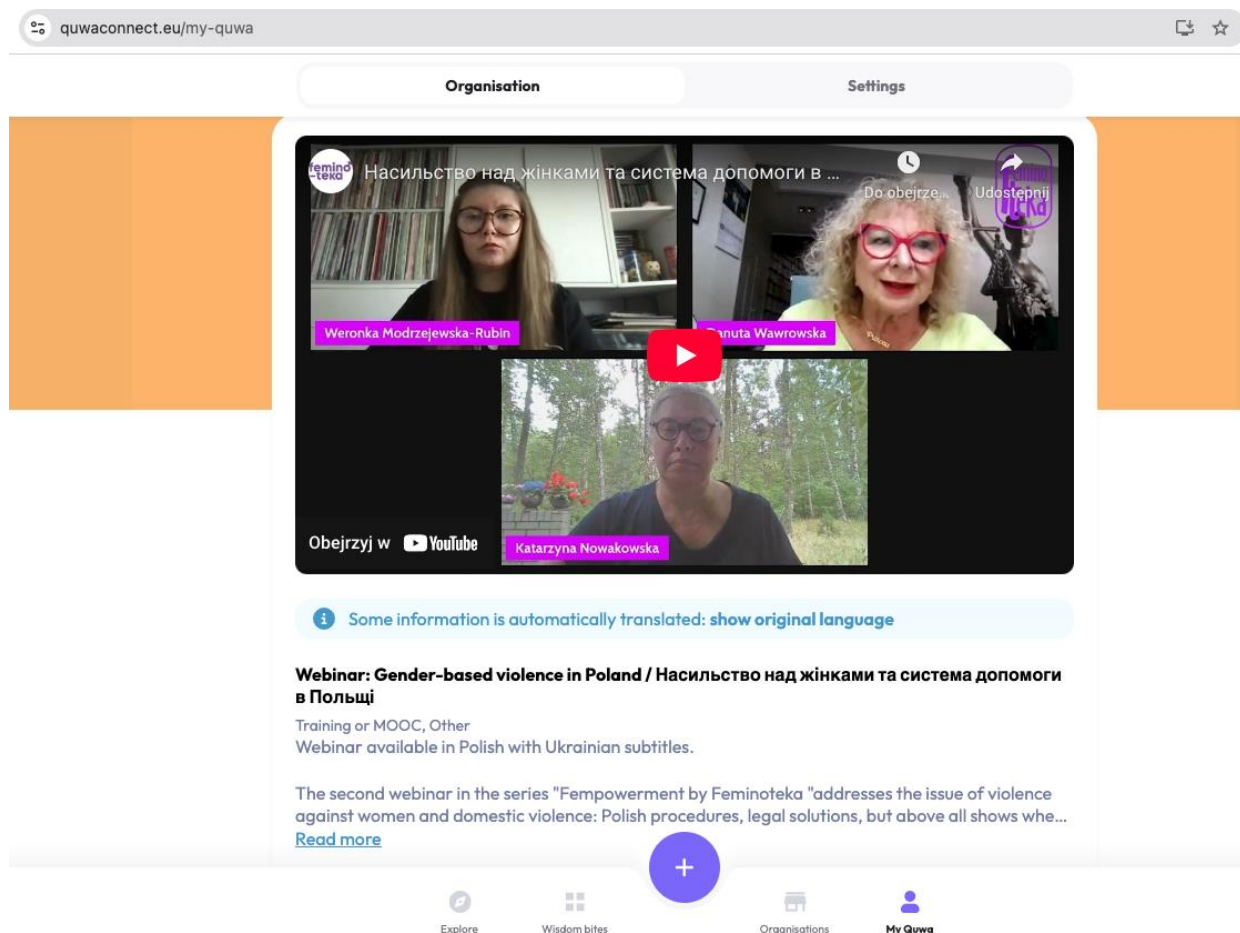


FIGURE 6: FEMINOTEKA'S POST AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE WISDOM BITE WITH A LINK TO A YOUTUBE VIDEO.

More examples from our project CSO partners are presented in the table below that also includes links to the platform content which is available for non-registered viewers as well. The 'wisdom bites' are direct copies of the Quwa posts, either posted in English or automatically translated into English, to show the actual Toolkit items, as their authors intended.

Organisation	Wisdom bite / Good practice	Link in the QUWA app
Austria – practices selected and developed by Orient Express		
LAUT podcast to promote diverse (hi)stories	"LAUT" is a podcast for everyone: for everyone who is interested in diverse history and stories, for everyone who likes to learn by listening. In each episode, they talk about a topic with history that is still important today. This podcast is developed and produced by the NGO Orient Express in Vienna, Austria, and the Institute for History at Cologne University in Germany. It is supposed to be useful in courses for German as a second language as well as interesting for everyone who likes podcasts. The topics for the episodes were chosen following focus groups in Vienna with learners of basic education and German courses. In these focus groups, women learners openly shared their personal (hi-)stories and expressed their interests in history. The topics selected are closely connected to these focus group talks and the learners' daily lives. The purpose of this collaborative process is clear: to ensure that learners enjoy listening to the podcast and relate to its topics. Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or OeAD-GmbH. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.	https://quwaconnect.eu/wisdom-bite/7c78aa97-3077-4f8e-a71b-e328fb9ec812
Project 'IMPAKT' to prevent forced marriages and domestic violence	The project 'IMPAKT - Interdisciplinary Measures to Combat Harmful PrACTices' is a joint effort between three Austrian organisations that work to prevent forced marriage and domestic violence. These organisations are 'Orient Express' in Vienna, 'DIVAN-Caritas' in Styria, and the 'Forced Marriage Centre of the Association Women from All Countries' in western Austria. In this project, online webinars and short videos are developed for professionals and interested parties. The first three webinars looked at the basics of kinship violence and forced marriage, both in theory and practice. In the upcoming sessions, experts from different fields will discuss important topics that cross over into other areas. You can sign up for the webinars here: https://www.orientexpress-wien.com/veranstaltungen This project is funded by the Austrian Federal Chancellery.	https://quwaconnect.eu/wisdom-bite/69e022a0-8090-453a-a568-45595159e83b
Learning materials for basic education and second language courses	Orient Express created a book with learning materials together with partners from Cap Ulysse in Bordeaux, in a project funded by the European Commission. The goal was to create learning materials based on the real life experiences of participants in our basic education and second language courses. The book comprises 10 chapters with 60 exercises to strengthen the basic language learning competences speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is available in German, English and French and freely accessible online. You can download it as PDF or the single chapters as WORD files. You can also check out the corresponding YouTube channel, on which the audio files for the listening comprehension exercises are saved. In fall 2025, a follow up project will be developed in which videos are produced based on the ten stories by women with a migration history. The	https://quwaconnect.eu/wisdom-bite/77c12845-a772-4b70-9279-ae860a28bbe7

	videos will be accompanied by didactic recommendations and will be published in the fall of 2025. For further information, stay tuned via the following website and instagram channel .	
Belgium – practices selected and developed by EMPACT vzw		
Accessible language and communication : practices from the Theater project UnBreakable with migrantised women to discuss trauma	EMPACT vzw developed a Theaterproject titled UnBreakable, with migrantised women to discuss trauma. During this project, some practices were distinguished and evaluated. One practice that was mentioned by organisers and participants to be important was: accessible language and communication, that was implemented in the following ways: 1) Using accessible, low-threshold language and communication strategies helps ensure everyone can engage meaningfully. 2) Use of clear language in all outreach and communication materials. For example, replacing terms like “theatre” with “story sharing” or “creative expression” reduces anxiety and opens space for curiosity. 3) DIXIT visual cards as tools during workshops or group discussions can help participants who are shy, struggle with verbal expression, or are still learning the language to share thoughts and feelings non-verbally. 4) Theatre-based activities are intentionally chosen because they require less written or formal language and allow space for bodily expression and storytelling through movement, gesture, and image. 5) Visual and sensory supports (e.g., using posters, images, or objects) can be integrated into workshops and group sessions to reduce cognitive load and enhance understanding. 6) Homogeneous language groups can be used strategically in some contexts to ensure safety and reduce the pressure to perform linguistically. Once confidence is built, participants may gradually move into more mixed settings.	https://quwacnect.eu/wisdom-bite/good-practices-from-our-theaterproject-unbreakable-accessible-language-and-communication
Promoting Agency through participation and peer structures – insights from the Theater project UnBreakable	EMPACT vzw developed a Theaterproject titled UnBreakable, with migrantised women to discuss trauma. During this project, some practices were distinguished and evaluated. One practice that was mentioned by organisers and participants to be important was: promoting agency through participation and peer structures, implemented in the following ways: 1) Agency in this good practice means giving participants real influence over the form, content, and pace of activities. This practice shifts the dynamic from “service delivery” to co-creation, where participants are actors, not just recipients. 2) Theatre groups designed from the bottom up, where women determine the theme, structure, and tone. This ownership allows them to reclaim narratives, reflect on personal experiences, and build resilience through creativity. 3) "Bring a friend" principle, which invites participants to bring someone from their network to join the activity. This reduces anxiety about entering a new space, builds trust, and broadens the reach of programs through informal peer-to-peer mobilization. 4) Pathways toward volunteering, with space for personal needs and flexible roles, recognize and build on women's strengths. Many participants grow into roles where they support newcomers, lead sessions, or co-facilitate, strengthening both their confidence and the organisation's impact. 5) Flexible participation, where input and feedback from participants actively shapes program content, timing, and structure.	https://quwacnect.eu/wisdom-bite/good-practices-from-our-theaterproject-unbreakable-promoting-agency-through-participation-and-peer-structures

Informal moments as core to inclusion – insights from the Theater project UnBreakable	EMPACT vzw developed a Theaterproject titled UnBreakable, with migrantised women to discuss trauma. During this project, some practices were distinguished and evaluated. One practice that was mentioned by organisers and participants to be important was: informal moments as core to inclusion. Inclusion doesn't only happen during formal activities but it is often during the informal, social moments that determine whether someone feels safe, seen, and ready to return. 1) Shared meals and informal breaks during sessions foster spontaneous conversation, peer bonding, and a sense of belonging. Meals are often provided by the organisation and served in the same space, reinforcing a feeling of home. 2) A relaxed approach to time, acknowledging that punctuality or rigid scheduling can create stress for people navigating multiple responsibilities. By allowing flexible arrivals or soft starts, participation becomes more realistic. 3) Creating safe, predictable entry points, especially for neurodivergent youth, ensures a warm welcome and continuity in engagement. 4) Childcare provision in the same building reduces logistical stress for mothers and normalizes the presence of families in public space. 5) Morning and evening groups enable women with different life rhythms (e.g. workers, caregivers) to choose what fits them best, signalling respect for different routines	https://quwaconnect.eu/wisdom-bite/good-practices-from-our-theaterproject-unbreakable-informal-moments-as-core-to-inclusion
Italy – practices selected and developed by La Strada – Der Weg		
'Own health and well-being': Network of female health professionals	'Own health and well-being': Network of female health professionals Health and well-being: Women's empowerment requires that women have full control over their own health and well-being, both physical and mental. This includes access to health services, the ability to make informed decisions about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health, and access to resources and support for mental health care. The establishment of a network of female health professionals willing to give an hour a week to answer questions about women's health has enabled many women, especially migrant women (and therefore without health insurance), to solve minor health problems by seeking expert advice rather than by self-medication.	https://quwaconnect.eu/wisdom-bite/own-health-and-wellbeing
Participation to achieve women's empowerment	Participation and leadership to achieve women's empowerment when making important decisions affecting their lives. To fully achieve women's empowerment, women must be able to participate fully in the political, economic and social life of their country. This means having a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect their lives, from local communities to national and international governments. This is why we are in the process of setting up a group of employees to learn more about these issues and then create a network to share and disseminate knowledge.	https://quwaconnect.eu/wisdom-bite/participation-to-achieve-womens-empowerment
Creating a physical space to meet	A physical space to meet was set up by La Strada – Der Weg, to support empowering processes. The creation of a physical space where women could meet was absolutely crucial in moving empowerment from a theoretical space to a practical space, in the everyday lives of people, of women. A physical Space is needed, where free interventions and initiatives are organised to promote women's self-esteem, planning and autonomy through work on the different dimensions of empowerment. It is precisely the work on empowerment that triggers processes of awareness that in many cases bring situations of domestic violence to light. The women's spaces are, in fact, a place of emergence,	https://quwaconnect.eu/wisdom-bite/a-physical-space-to-meet-for-empowerment

	a place where alarm bells can be heard in the stories that women tell. We realised the need to expand this practice to give “save space” and to network for it.	
Poland – practices selected by Feminoteka		
Post-rape help desk “Femka”	<i>“You see a world without violence, because such a world is possible.”</i> Feminoteka, Pigeon Studio and Feeders Agency have joined forces for a new campaign that promotes the “Femka” post-rape help desk. The campaign talks about violence in a way, but doesn’t show it. • <i>“Instead of showing violence, we focus on what the reality of rape victims can look like when they receive proper support. Images of violence can cause secondary traumatization in those who have experienced it. Feminoteka supports women in their recovery from trauma and helps them reclaim their lives after experiencing violence”</i> explains the concept of the campaign, Karolina Domagalska of Feminoteka. <i>“In our artistic approach, we focused on creating images based on positive emotions,”</i> say Kasia Pieróg and Romka Kapusta, art directors of Pigeon Studio. <i>“We had the pleasure of collaborating on this with talented, committed artists who, like us, believe that the Feminotheque campaign is a breakthrough in the public discourse on rape. Sensitivity, tenderness and the idea of sisterhood stand here in opposition to the secondary traumatization and victimization of women after experiencing rape. Thus, they allude to the idea of a “Femka” point that helps, supports and cares unconditionally.”</i> <i>“The world can be a beautiful place where we feel safe. For women after experiencing rape, this sense of security and stability has been brutally taken away. [...] We are very happy about the establishment of the “Femka” Women’s Help Point after rape, because we know that it will bring real help and support, not only psychological, but also legal and social ones,”</i> adds Adam Sierocinski, Feeders Agency. “Femka” is a special, safe place where any woman after experiencing rape can receive professional and free help: legal, psychological, therapeutic, medical, social or assistance, for example, in reporting a crime to the police. Feminoteka conducts its activities without financial support from the state. Support life after violence with the “Femka” post-rape help point for women: https://feminoteka.eu/support (Film authors: Karolina Uplawa, Anna Bialek (Ruchy Kluchy) Music: Anna Pašić)	https://quwawonnect.eu/wisdom-bite/c42d7933-325f-44e2-8f65-bdbb8759de58
Safe You Assistance application	One-third of women in the European Union have experienced violence at home, at work or in public*. One in six women in the EU has experienced sexual violence, including rape*, in her adult life. The Safe YOU mobile app, which the Feminoteka Foundation is launching in Poland, was created in response to this problem. Functionality of the app: • set up trusted contacts to whom a threat alert will be sent along with geolocation data, if the person holds down the SOS button • recording of sound when the SOS button is pressed (for evidence) • map of help sites • discussion forums under help/education articles • possibility to communicate with a Feminoteka consultant • discussions in the forums with other participants • availability in Polish, English and Ukrainian •	https://quwawonnect.eu/wisdom-bite/bb8442b3-6c33-4df5-9276-62cb734f01ac

	The free Safe YOU application is already in place in Armenia, Georgia, among other countries. The project has been supported by international organizations like UNFPA, UNICEF, the U.S. State Department and the European Union. Link to the application: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=fambox.pro&pli=1 Link to the article: https://feminoteka.pl/nasze-dzialania/aplikacja-safe-you	
Samo Dobro – to support social economy	The Samo Dobro foundation is a brand of Feminoteka Foundation that sells natural cosmetics and other products, which are made in our own workshop. This kind of social economy is another way to raise funds, which we use to support women experiencing violence. The profits of Samo Dobro go to the support of female violence survivors, by providing them free legal and psychological advice, therapy and financial support. https://samodobro.pl/	https://quwacnect.eu/wisdom-bite/d8a51576-b110-4e50-9cac-d095b9400172
Spain – selected and developed by Interred		
Mina's story - POTOPOTO	"Mina" is a story created by "POTOPOTO. Platform for education in diversity and Afro empowerment" with the support and coordination of Interred. Mina tells us the story of an Afrodescendant girl in Spain, encouraging critical thinking and connecting diverse worlds through anti-racism. It is edited in A3 <i>kamishibai</i> format so that it can be told and enjoyed in a group. Designed for ages 4 to 8 years, the text is available in Spanish, Basque, Catalan, Galician and English. It can be told with the original text and can also serve as a starting point to expand and invent new stories that promote critical intercultural education.	https://quwacnect.eu/wisdom-bite/8a20e62e-e3db-4b22-b0f5-964a9424163d
Digital guide on comprehensive sex education LOVE ACT	The digital guide LOVE ACT is part of educational materials for adolescents on comprehensive sexuality education, from a gender, transfeminist, intersectional and rights-based, and oriented to address trauma approach. It has been designed collaboratively by educational organizations gathering the experiences, needs and narratives of adolescents, their families, and the educational community. Adolescents can navigate through the guides, reading contents, watching videos and listening to audios which will provide them knowledge on comprehensive sexuality education.	https://quwacnect.eu/wisdom-bite/302830e4-1a3a-424b-8f5e-85475e864a0b
Forum play "The game of your life"	Forum play "The game of your life" Forum theater play that addresses the structural racism and machismo experienced by Milei Quispe, a migrant woman in Spain. The play is recorded on video and comes with a didactic guide to be able to work with teenagers and young people.	https://quwacnect.eu/wisdom-bite/1b0f0b93-53d7-47ac-84f8-a8bcc14b82dd

TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF WISDOM BITES (WITH LINKS TO THE QUWA PLATFORM) BY THE PROJECT CSO PARTNERS.

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Similarly to the Travelling Exhibition (D2.4), the beauty of the Toolkit is that its life has only started thanks to our project and more and more users are going to benefit from the input shared via Quwa in the form of Wisdom bites. As the exhibition is still travelling within our project countries to show the inspiring empowerment of migrantised women, Quwa is developing and growing stronger, giving an opportunity not only to network but also to reflect on our own actions as CSOs and activists. Collecting wisdom bites for the platform helped us realise how much our organisations are doing, and thanks to Quwa we can share various internal activities or materials, even from the past, to a wider audience for their benefit and as an inspiration. In the same way, it is interesting to see the new content appearing that brings a lot of ideas from other organisations. The platform also shows our consortium's activities as a whole, helping to spread the word of our actions and achievements.

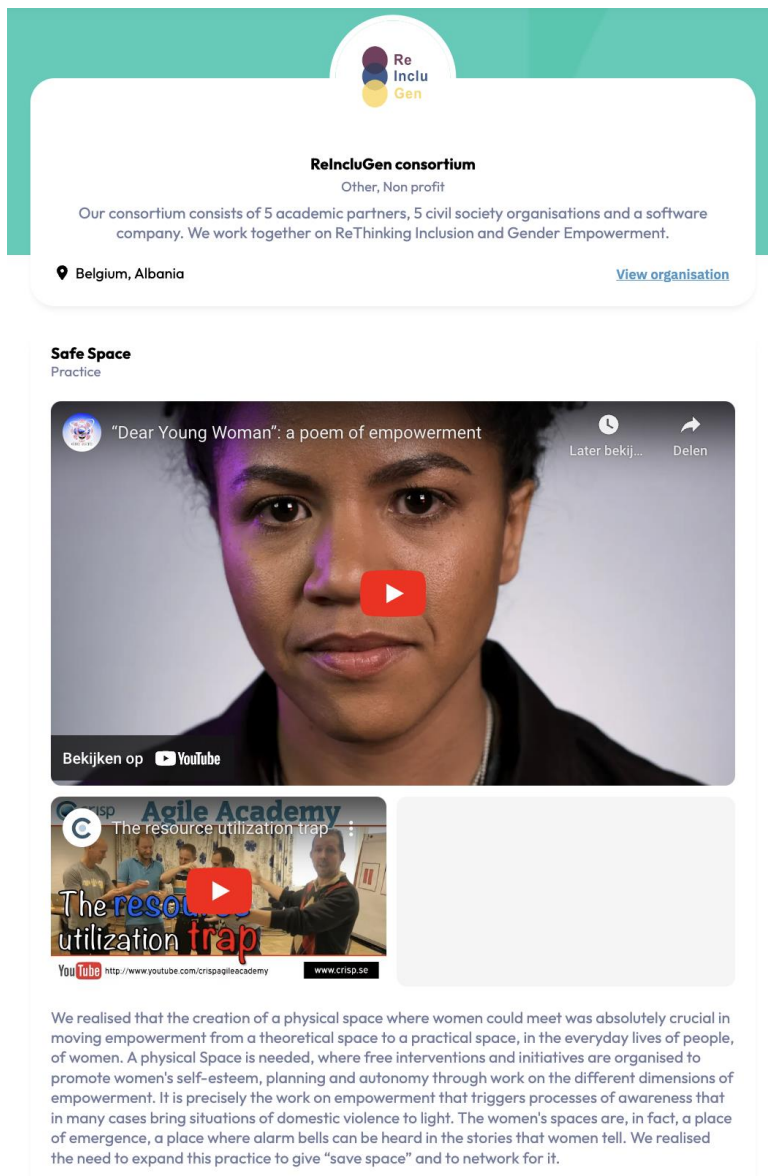


FIGURE 7: THE WISDOM BITE OF THE REINCLUGEN CONSORTIUM AS A QUWA USER.

The work on the Toolkit and this report also helped us, as CSOs, realise that introduction of a new tool may pose a challenge in the busy life of an organisation from a social sector and each CSO partner approached the creation of Wisdom Bites differently, depending on staff and time availability as well as appropriate skills. The selection of Toolkit items presented in Table 1 illustrates that outcome well. Also, it is important to emphasise that the Toolkit does not cover the full range of good practices identified throughout the ReIncluGen project. Rather, they are a curated sample intended to provide users with tangible examples and guidance early on. As the project progresses and the platform attracts more participants, this repository will grow, becoming richer and more diverse, since the Toolkit is designed as a dynamic tool, encouraging continuous input and updates from the community.

To conclude, the Toolkit of Good Practices is available on our Quwa platform in the form of Wisdom Bites. The experience shared there in this format helps us, as CSOs, grow, connect within the project and by introducing our other partners to sharing their stories, projects, observations, etc. that may support and inspire other agents. Thanks to the increasing reach of the platform, the Toolkit is still in the process of growth and we hope this process will continue as long as possible for the sake of its users, current and future, and, ultimately, through the work of CSOs, for the sake of the organisations' beneficiaries to improve the quality of their lives, especially in terms of gender empowerment and social inclusion.