

European Network of Migrant Women,  
RadicalGirlsss and Sciences Po Master's Students

# Young Migrant Women's **Political** Participation - *Toolkit*

2021

European Network of Migrant Women,  
RadicalGirlsss and Sciences Po Master's Students

# **Young Migrant Women's Political Participation *Toolkit***

2021

This toolkit was written by Alyssa Ahrabare and Jillian Montilla.

## **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to Gabrielle Majko and Carolina Medina.

# Table of contents

01	<h2>I. Key Info</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Foreword by European Network of Migrant Women</li><li>B. What is this toolkit? Who is it meant for?</li><li>C. If not now, when? 40th anniversary of CEDAW and 25th anniversary of Beijing Platform for Action</li></ul>
05	<h2>II. Building a Feminist Foundation</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Definitions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Political Participation</li><li>b. Safe Space</li><li>c. Gender Mainstreaming</li></ul></li><li>B. Join the Sisterhood of Radical Girlsss</li><li>C. Demystifying CEDAW<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Principles of Non-Discrimination, Substantive Equality and State Obligation</li><li>b. Understanding CEDAW's definition of discrimination against women</li><li>c. How can NGOs concretely interact with CEDAW?</li></ul></li></ul>
13	<h2>III. Young Migrant Women Leaders</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. In-Person Facilitation Techniques for Capacity-Building<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. General Advice</li><li>b. Understanding yourself and the way you think</li><li>c. Interactive lectures through debates</li><li>d. Concrete application through artistic expression</li></ul></li><li>B. Opportunities in Online Engagement<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Amplifying the Voices of Young Migrant Women in a COVID-19 World</li><li>b. Example Program: <i>Online Workshop on CEDAW: Forging a Sisterhood of Radical Girlsss</i></li></ul></li></ul>
29	<h2>IV. Conclusion</h2>



# I. Key Info

## A. Foreword by European Network of Migrant Women

*“Yes, I would describe myself as a migrant woman and I’m proud of that... It takes time to be proud of that.” L.B.*

The COVID-19 global crisis endangered the lives of many migrants and refugees, with a particularly harmful impact on women and girls. In the longer term, the economic and social consequences of this crisis will imperil migrant and refugee women and girls’ access to rights, dignity, integration and social cohesion if we do not take serious actions.

**Could this global crisis provide an opportunity for addressing systemic flaws and barriers and creating a more equal society?** The answer to this question lies in part in the participation of migrant and refugee women in regional and international decision-making processes.

Until today, migrant and refugee women have been distanced from international frameworks and processes such as the CEDAW convention, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). Their low participation is determined by many factors, from legal and financial barriers to the lack of awareness about the existing mechanisms. As a result, their interests are often poorly or not at all represented at the international level.

For young migrant women this gap becomes even bigger as they face specific challenges and many of them grew up without knowledge about the women’s rights frameworks that feminist advocates created in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. It is crucial to bridge this representation gap before we lose the values, principles and legal obligations entrenched in these documents.



**Migrant women are here and they have things to say.** However, the failure to include their voices to the political agenda in a meaningful way leads to the overlooking of the subjects that concern them the most. This is why they need to be able to become active political citizens, take part in and really influence international decision-making processes. Without such participation, especially from the grassroots level, political processes risk to becoming more and more detached from the reality of women's lives. Furthermore, through their experiences of intersecting discriminations, migrant and refugee women could bring to the table a cross-cutting and holistic view of systemic change that is much needed.

So, what factors hinder migrant and refugee women's participation in international decision-making processes? What changes are required to address the causes of their disconnection from international decision-making bodies' activities and to foster their participation? How do migrant women themselves view such gap?

To answer these questions, the **European Network of Migrant Women** and its young women's group **Radical Girlss** designed a feminist participatory action project research with **Sciences Po** research program on gender (**PRESAGE**). This project, funded by **Women Forward International**, aimed to identify, define, and analyse the major barriers and gaps impeding migrant and refugee women's participation in European decision-making processes, with a specific focus on young women (16 to 25 years old), and come up with recommendations and a methodology on how to bridge them.

To do so, we brought together academic research and grassroot action in order to build bridges, get a comprehensive view of the subject and therefore truly assess how to have a positive impact on young migrant women capacity and agency to engage in political participation. We organised a series of workshops with young migrant women with the objectives of cultivating their self-esteem, increasing their ability to express themselves and being more equipped and informed. Most of the participants from these workshops are now actively involved within the European Network of Migrant Women and Radical Girlss.

**This report aims at enabling us to disseminate this approach and reproduce our method across Europe.**

## B. What is this toolkit? Who is it meant for?

*“It really felt like a safe space to build confidence as individuals and also, as a group. It was really, really motivating and inspiring.” A.B.*

Based on the voices of young migrant women, the research of various stakeholders and the experience of seasoned feminist advocates, this toolkit was made for **practioners in the field of migration who are motivated to locate and promote the voices of young migrant women within their own organization.**

Even in a COVID-19 world, **NGOs and grassroots associations remain as some of the most accessible entry points of political participation for young migrant women.** When trying to include and promote the voices of young migrant women in your operations, we encourage you to:

1. **RECOGNIZE** the variety of experiences, desires, comfort-levels and skill sets of the young migrant women you work with in order to avoid over-generalized brushstrokes in service design and delivery;
2. **REMEMBER** that meaningful inclusion in decision-making is more than “add women and stir”. Women’s inclusion is marked by concerted recruitment, continued support and active promotion of *their* perspectives on *their* terms;
3. **REIMAGINE** your operations in a way that considers the way women’s rights will be impacted by your decisions at every step of project design and implementation.

In engaging with this toolkit, practitioners will walk away with:

- Concrete facilitation methods and workshop ideas to elevate the perspectives of young migrant women
- New perspective on young migrant women’s invaluable role in bringing us closer to our shared vision of gender equality!

## C. If not now, when? 40th Anniversary of CEDAW and 25th Anniversary of Beijing Platform for Action

*“I have this impression that maybe **governments** aren't doing as much as they could.” A.B.*

*“I want to be a diplomat, that's my dream, and I am going to fight for it. Actually, it is not a dream, it is **my future.**” B.P.*

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was codified in international law in 1981. In adopting this herstorical bill of rights, the international community agreed that it is the responsibility of States “to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country”. More than 189 governments have since ratified CEDAW and yet, **the lack of leadership at all levels is sorely felt - especially by young migrant women.** To accelerate progress on women's rights, UN Women, NGO Committee on the Status of Women and other entities have **prioritized the advancement of women's political participation in achieving gender equality.**

Over four decades later, CEDAW remains a powerful legal instrument for achieving gender equality at the international and national level. However, for many, the rights and procedures enumerated seem far removed from everyday life. **We have decided to anchor our research, the workshops and this present toolkit using CEDAW in order to close this gap between CEDAW's vision of a gender equal world and the world around us.**

25 years ago, over 8,000 reps of civil society and 193 governments convened in Beijing for the 4th World Conference on Women's Rights. The Beijing Platform for Action continues to serve as a powerful international benchmark for gender equality. Though not legally-binding like CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action is a source of guidance and inspiration for furthering women's rights.

## II. Building Feminist Foundations

### A. Definitions

#### *Political participation*

*“I’d really like to work at the international level.” M.B.*

For the purpose of this toolkit and its application, it’s critical to understand political participation beyond conventional electoral rights (eg. voting, standing for election, etc.). Undoubtedly crucial in realizing full effective citizenship for all, limiting our understanding of political participation to traditional means neglects the wider dimensions of young migrant women’s life in the public sphere. Focusing on expanding young migrant women’s ability to participate in informal political spaces offers an entry point for practitioners to holistically, comprehensively and inclusively address gender inequality. When designing your projects and workshops, **we invite you to consider readjusting objectives to create opportunities where women can exercise their right to speak out, share personal experiences, build networks, raise awareness, influence decisions, access information and develop leadership skills.**

#### *Safe space*

*“We had a safe space where we could all speak about our situations and our experiences and it was really nice to see other women who’ve experienced the same thing or felt the same way as us and at the end, it was so powerful and so inspiring...” M.B.*

A safe space is a setting where a group of people can feel secure knowing confidently that they will be free from discrimination, judgement, harrassment and violence of any kind.





What does this look like in practice? It looks like a place where young migrant women can show up as themselves and feel legitimate and safe sharing their stories. Here, it looks like the building of a shared consciousness founded upon trans-national sisterhood.

**We insist on the importance of women-only or non-mixed settings** in cultivating safe spaces. The strongest opposition to non-mixed settings is that they are a form of reverse discrimination and encourage separatism. But as insisted by Article 4 of CEDAW, temporary special measures like non-mixed settings are **essential** to -- not at odds with -- achieving gender equality. Free from having to accommodate those from historically dominant populations, in this case men, women and girls in non-mixed settings are less likely to autocensure their telling of the discrimination or violence they have experienced as women. Coming together as women in safe spaces frees their voices. It allows for a vast shift in the way women relate to themselves, other women and the world they live in. Through this self-emancipation, participants can gain self confidence and feel legitimate in collectively defining their oppression and thus, their liberation. Non-mixed meeting places remain an indispensable tool in achieving gender equality.

## Gender Mainstreaming

*"I don't need to blend in." A.B.*

Even when policies, programs and projects are made without explicit sex discriminative language or intentions, disparities in access and outcomes can still reflect wider social inequalities between women and men. Gender mainstreaming entails a *continued process* of revision, reorganization, improvement, development and evaluation of all dimensions of operations. To gender mainstream is to take into account women's differing needs throughout all phases of development of your organization's policies, programs and projects.

*To the European Network of Migrant Women, this implies addressing structural inequalities between women and men in the areas of asylum, migration and integration - from policy design to action and evaluation - **with the aim of discovering and correcting the root causes of sex-based discrimination against women and girls**, at the intersections with other structural inequalities such as economic and labour discrimination, legal status discrimination, racial or ethnic discrimination which lie in social structures, institutions, values and beliefs. To correct such deep rooted mechanisms, gender mainstreaming on its own is never enough: specific and positive actions targeted towards women and girls should be implemented side-by-side with gender mainstreaming.*

## B. Join the sisterhood of Radical Girlss!

Maybe your organization specializes in health services or in academic insertion and you meet a young migrant woman who's interested in deepening her understanding of feminism. As much as we all wish we could, we can't do everything. So, if you have young migrant women within your network interested in feminist activism, you are welcome to encourage them to join the sisterhood of Radical Girlss, the youth movement of European Network of Migrant Women. Radical Girlss is led by a feminist, secular, abolitionist and inter-generational [manifesto](#).

Fundamentally, Radical Girlss from its organization to its leadership embodies the spirit of this toolkit: when given the space and the resources, young migrant women enrich the operations of their organization. Radical Girlss are themselves young migrant women who exercise political participation through feminist activism and representation in high-level international events organised with European Institutions. Radical Girlss actively supports young migrant women's inclusion within the European Network of Migrant Women. They do so by:

- **Cultivating** young migrant women's personal development through bi-annual capacity-building workshops and building a pan-European sisterhood;
- **Giving platform** for young migrant women to share voice on their terms through social media, coalition-building, and leading conferences;
- **Holding space** for young migrant women to take leadership roles and access decision making spaces within the European Network of Migrant Women (ie. Funding and treasury working groups).

Follow them on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram [@RadicalGirlss!](#)

## C. Demystifying CEDAW

### *Principles of Non-Discrimination, Substantive Equality and State Obligation*

CEDAW is the only international human rights treaty that addresses both the legal and cultural rights of women and is presently the second most ratified international human rights treaty. **Ratifying CEDAW means States accept the legal responsibility to combat discrimination against women in the public, private and cultural sphere.**

CEDAW's three main principles of **non-discrimination, substantive equality, and state obligation** enlarge both our understanding of discrimination against women as well as States' responsibility to combat it.

- **Non-discrimination:** Measures that are not explicitly (or directly) discriminative against women can still produce discriminative outcomes (indirect discrimination). Though the principle of non-discrimination applies to both State and non-State actors, it is the responsibility of States to ensure its practice. *See the next section for an indepth look into CEDAW's definition of discrimination against women.*
- **Substantive equality:** The principle of substantive equality is the guarantee of equality of opportunity, access and results irrespective of sex. In practice, it represents the *difference between avoiding discrimination and promoting gender equality*. In pursuit of substantive equality, States may have to enact "**temporary special measures**". This is to say that in order to create a society where women can enjoy the same opportunities as men, the State may have to temporarily treat them differently.
- **State obligation:** Once States ratify CEDAW, they are legally obligated to ensure gender equality both through their legislation as well as in everyday life.

### *Understanding CEDAW's definition of discrimination against women*

It is very common that even in countries where equality between women and men exists on paper, the Law is not always being fully or properly applied. This results from a lack of will rooted in culture.

Article I of CEDAW defines discrimination against women as follows:

Ex. You launch a workshop for political and community organizing. The call for applicants is not explicitly advertised for only men and yet, men are overrepresented in the applicants. The call for applicants **was not discriminative in and of itself, but the outcome still excluded women** from accessing this capacity-building opportunity. For certain communities, politics is the external space and therefore, it is, in a way, reserved for men. Consider:

- **Design:** employ non-mixed settings
- **Recruitment:** use inclusive language and imagery that actively invites women to activities in which they are historically underrepresented
- **Selection:** when met with two equally qualified applicants, one man and one woman, and one available spot, reflect on how your selection contributes to addressing inequalities

Restrictive immigration law that derives the residency status of migrant women from their husband or father can leave migrant women in precarious situations. Under threat of losing their status and perhaps that of their children, migrant **women may hesitate to report domestic violence or file for divorce.**

any **distinction, exclusion or restriction** made on the basis of sex which has the **effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying** the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Migrant women face gender-based discrimination in the labor market. The informal labor market is marked by coercive characteristics that exploit migrant women's sometimes precarious situation created by their residency status, language, limitation, etc.

In 2000, France institutionalized the principle of political parity. Political parties that fail to back an equal number of men and women candidates face penalties like financial sanctions. **In theory this should produce gender parity in politics, but in practice it's a different story.** Large parties have been shown to choose to pay fines rather than "sacrifice" incumbents and back women candidates.

## How can NGOs concretely interact with CEDAW?

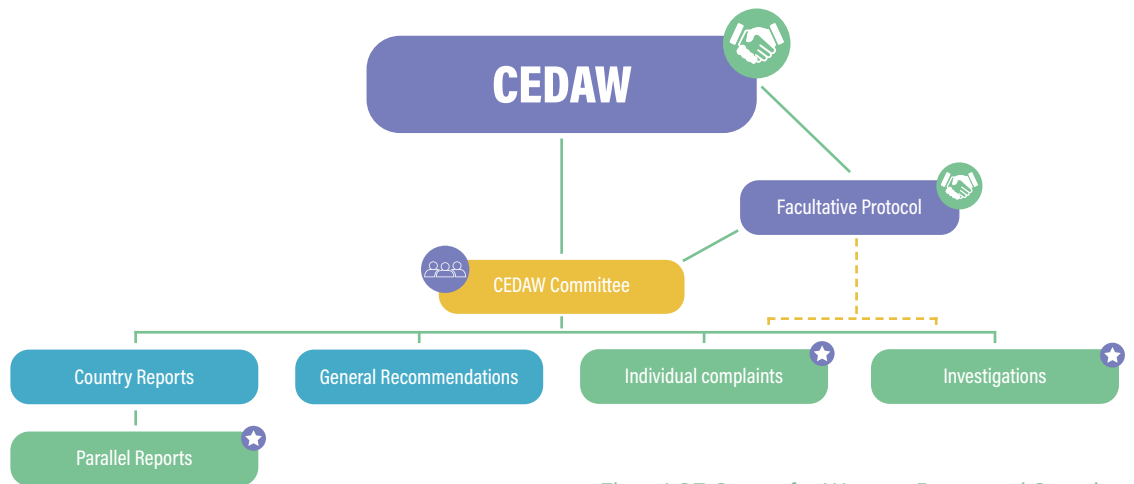


Fig. 1: LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security

During the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (the Committee), its 23 independent experts monitor the implementation of CEDAW. The Committee recognizes the importance of knowledge from the grassroots and welcomes collaboration with NGOs in its session and pre-session periods.

### Shadow Reports

*Shadow reports are a powerful tool in ensuring women's political participation and rights. Written and submitted by a coalition of NGOs and other stakeholders, shadow reports are formal reviews of the mandatory reports submitted by State parties on their implementation of CEDAW. The shadow report system creates a powerful platform for civil society to hold governments accountable, build coalitions across sectors and actively participate in the implementation of CEDAW.*

*Below are links to handbooks and resources on how to write a compelling shadow report:*

- International Women's Rights Action Watch, ["Producing Shadow Reports to the CEDAW Committee: A Procedural Guide"](#)
- The Advocates for Human Rights, ["10 Steps to Writing a Shadow Report"](#)
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, ["How to Structure a Shadow Report"](#)

## **CEDAW Optional Protocol**

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999, the [Optional Protocol \(OP\) to CEDAW](#) established (1) a communications procedure and (2) an inquiry procedure which strengthened the enforcement of CEDAW. The OP provides an avenue for individual women or groups of women to file complaints and request investigations regarding substantial abuses of women's human rights committed States. It offers the possibility of remedies such as compensation for the complainant or interim steps to end violations.

The OP is an underused instrument of CEDAW. Time and resource-intensive, complaints can only be filed if the State has ratified the OP and after all remedies available through the law in that country have been exhausted. The Committee continues to encourage its use emphasizing the importance of OP as a "backup" for domestic law and policies.

Complaints can be directed to the Committee at:

[petitions@ohchr.org](mailto:petitions@ohchr.org) | +41 22 917 90 22

Petitions and Inquiries Section

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

United Nations Office at Geneva

1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Below are links to handbooks and resources on how to approach the CEDAW OP's communications and inquiry procedures:

OHCHR, ["Procedure under the Optional Protocol to CEDAW"](#)

Equality and Human Rights Commission, ["A Lever for Change: Using the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women"](#)

### ***NGO attendance at the Committee's session or pre-session working group***

*Attendance and presentation at the Committee's session or its pre-session working group (PSWG) meetings in Geneva provides another opportunity for NGO engagement with CEDAW. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee held its last meetings online allowing NGO coalitions to submit written submissions of around 3,300 words.*

*But as borders are previewed to reopen, the sessions will once again recommence onsite. Attendance at Committee meetings has two significant limitations. First, the OHCHR does not provide letters of invitation, sponsor visas or assist with travel or accommodation costs. Secondly, NGOs hoping to report on the same country only have 10 minutes in total to present.*

*If you wish to address the Committee or its PSWG, you're invited to submit the full title of your NGO, the names of your representatives, and the proposed dates of attendance to the OHCHR to [cedaw@ohchr.org](mailto:cedaw@ohchr.org) no later than two weeks prior to the meeting.*

### ***NGO side events***

*NGOs can organize side events during the Committee's session by emailing the focus of your proposed side event to [cedaw@ohchr.org](mailto:cedaw@ohchr.org) at least four weeks in advance of the session.*

# III. A Generation of Migrant Women Leaders

## A. In-Person Facilitation Techniques for Capacity-Building

This section contains facilitation techniques to help you organise your own capacity building workshop for young migrant women!

### *General advice*

**1) Sense of group and belonging:** creating a feeling of safety for the participants is of the utmost importance from the early stages of any capacity building event! It is even more crucial when it comes to young migrant women. This target group, particularly excluded, suffers from prejudices and internalised stereotypes that can prevent them from feeling free to express themselves openly. Therefore, no extra effort to encourage them to open up is wasted! Here are a few tools to help you build such an atmosphere.

#### **Activity: Speed Speaking**

*This activity consists of enabling the participants to speak 1-1 to each other about a predetermined topic that is picked to enable them to find common points. At the beginning of the workshop, such activity can help break barriers so everyone can speak to each other. In a big group, it can prevent the formation of "clans" at an early stage and therefore create the ground for more fruitful cooperation and reflection.*

**Advised number of participants:** from 6 to 20

**Advised duration of the activity:** depending on the number of participants from 15 to 40mn

**Material:** no material needed!



### **Activity: Breathe and Bound**

*Breaks are important to give the participants time to process. It is possible to use these breathing times as an opportunity to create more bound within the group.*

*To do so, you can ask each participant to bring a picture or small object representing them. Then, you can pin all of these objects on a cork board.*

*During the breaks, the participants are invited to talk to each other. Every time two of them find a connection or common point, they put a piece of coloured yarn between the objects or pictures representing them.*

*This activity is a beautiful way to visually materialise the building of a safe space.*

**Advised number of participants:** *this is an activity for your whole group!*

**Advised duration of the activity:** *throughout the entire workshop*

**Material:** *coloured yarn, pins, cork board, scissors*

### **Activity: Circle of speech**

*At the end of every activity, debriefing sessions are very important as they allow everyone to explore their feelings without being interrupted, share their experiences and see whether they relate to others. They are also key for the participants to fully integrate the notions and skills that the facilitators want to share with them.*

*Ending every session of your workshop with a group discussion, in a circle, will enable everyone to process the emotions and thoughts experienced throughout the day.*

*This conversation should remain calm and focused. This is the occasion for everyone to develop listening skills and to be careful not to interrupt anyone. Even the shyest participant should be encouraged to share. The facilitators can help them by guiding the feedback through questions or specific topics. For instance "say key words to describe your experience from today", "say something you learned, something that felt good and something you wish had been different", etc. On the contrary, the expression can also be free. This technique is very useful to create a sense of group and for each participant to leave the session feeling at ease, connected to the others and having expressed every question, doubt or anxiety that might have risen during the day.*

*It is also a good tool for the facilitators who can adapt the following sessions according to the feedback they get.*

**Advised number of participants:** *the whole group (it is important that everyone is included in these moments)*

**Advised duration of the activity:** *as long as participants want to express themselves, it is better not to rush these times of sharing*

**Material:** *no material needed! It is possible to bring post-it, papers and pens or paint to allow participants to express their feelings through writing or drawing if they don't feel comfortable speaking*

**2) Adaptability:** adaptability is key when it comes to the facilitation of a capacity building event. Pushing participants to achieve goals we set ourselves without acknowledging what they are going through is counterproductive. As mentioned before, young migrant women can be particularly inclined to limit themselves due to the discrimination they face in their everyday lives. To guide them towards political participation, the key focus should always be liberating them from these limitations : the freer they feel to speak up, the more agency they can seize for themselves. Practicing in a safe environment is one of the best ways to start breaking barriers.



**3) Rhythm of the day:** an important focus should be given to the sequencing of the different activities. Remaining seated and asked to listen to lectures all day won't enable the participants to effectively integrate the concepts that are being transmitted to them. In order for them to be fully actresses of the capacity building session, the best is to alternate between short interactive lectures and concrete application activities (see examples below). In between these activities, movement sessions to mobilise the body are a welcome addition!

#### **Activity: Movement session**

*The aim of these sessions is to allow the participants to stay awake, sharp and focused. In addition, body and mind are directly intertwined, therefore focusing on the body can help challenge limitations and facilitate our journey through self-discovery.*

*It is interesting to call these activities "movement sessions" instead of "dancing" in order not to bring forward inhibition some women can feel regarding their capacities and skills in this particular area. Relationships between women and their bodies within patriarchal society are often tricky: beauty standards, pressures to dress or move a certain way can put a lot of weight on young women's shoulders. The aim here is to help crack these walls and to enable young women to connect with their bodies in a peaceful and joyful way.*

*No mirrors, no specific requirements in terms of objective to achieve but rather physical exercises around the ideas of listening, leading and following are encouraged.*

*For example, it is possible to bring the young women in pairs. One is supposed to guide the other's motion. They don't have to touch (some women can have difficulties being touched due to past trauma). The participants follow the hand of their partner like if strings were attached to them. The one who is following will get a sense of trust and relaxation while the one who is leading will experience deep consciousness of her surroundings. Of course, afterwards, the roles are switched.*

*During this kind of session, it can also be nice to play with music - uplifting rhythms, sweeter tones... - collective exploration of what helps us let go and feel free brings up interesting discussion.*

*As for each activity, a time of collective debriefing while sitting in a circle is recommended.*

**Advised number of participants:** the whole group

**Advised duration of the activity:** between 15 and 30 mn, possibly after lunch or long theoretical sessions

**Material:** speakers and phone or computer to play music

## **Understanding yourself and the way you think**

For facilitators and participants alike, understanding where we come from in any given debate allows for better open-mindedness and helps achieve better results. There are many activities that can facilitate this self-discovery.

### **Activity: Identity map**

*The participants are invited to reflect on 2 to 5 key aspects of their identity that have an important impact on their lives. They are encouraged to represent these aspects of their identity visually, using colors, space and music in order to materialise how intertwined, hierarchised, or conflicted and divided these different aspects of their personality are.*

*In order to facilitate such introspection, the facilitators can lead a meditation session meant to help the participants relax and focus on themselves, losing inhibition.*

*The point of such reflection is for the participants to get a sense of who they are, how the world perceives them and how all of these aspects of their identity shape their perception of the world. In order to be able to engage in debates and discussions about political participation, inclusion, women's rights, migration and other heavy topics, it is essential to be able to get a notion of our own perspectives and limitations, our own internalised stereotypes.*

**What is limiting us ? What gives us strength ? What are we proud of ? What do we wish to show the world? How do we think we are being perceived?**

*During the group restitution, all of these questions and more can be addressed with the aim of going in-depth within ourselves and, from this knowledge, gain self-confidence as well as trust in the rest of the group. Sharing such profound reflection from an early stage in the workshop can also help create easiness for future debates.*

**Advised number of participants:** *to allow for meaningful exchanges during the presentation of the participants' identity maps, it is better not to exceed 10 participants. If your group is bigger than that, you can divide the participants into subgroups!*

**Advised duration of the activity:** *10mn for the meditation session, 15mn for each participant to prepare her identity map individually, between 15 and 30mn of presentation and discussion according to the number of participants. This could be adapted according to the total duration of your workshop and/or the time you want to allocate to this specific activity.*

**Material:** *(coloured) paper, paint, pens, scissors, glue, etc.*



**Activity: A letter to myself**

*Every participant is invited to write a letter to herself; either to her past self to give herself advice or to her future self to celebrate her achievements. Afterwards, the women who want to can share what they produced with the whole group. This exercise can help them reconcile with some aspects of their past and realise that they are on a path to build their own future.*

**Advised number of participants:** no maximum

**Advised duration of the activity:** 20mn for writing the letter

**Material:** pens and paper



## **Activity: The 5 thinking hats**

The objective of this activity is to make each participant understand her own way of addressing a problem, how to compose with a variety of points of views, how to address an issue holistically and how to see things from another perspective in order to achieve a better result.

The premise of the method is that the human brain thinks in a number of distinct ways which can be deliberately challenged, and hence planned for use in a structured way allowing one to develop tactics for thinking about particular issues.

Through this method, 5 main tendencies for the way we think can be identified. (e.g. gut instinct, pessimistic judgement, neutral facts). This is the first step. The facilitator draws five hats on the board and, collectively, the participants try to come up with what they represent. Schematically, the white hat represents a concrete way of addressing a problem (based on facts, data, information), the red hat symbolises an emotional way of addressing the issue (empathy, gut feelings), the yellow hat is optimistic, the black one is pragmatic or negative and the green one is innovative and creative.

Together, with the participants, you can spend some time figuring out clearly what all of these ways of thinking entail: **is the black hat just for pessimists or does it allow us to see the flaws in a plan in order to avoid them ?** Acknowledging that an idea has downsides and risks is as relevant as any other way of solving a problem.

After this talk, a concrete subject of reflection is given to the participants, for example: **how to better include young migrant women specificities into the CEDAW framework?**

Individually, the young women have to think about how to resolve this issue from the perspective of each hat.

They can write their thoughts in several sheets of paper, each representing one of the hats (with guidance from the facilitators who can provide them with concrete information and data they need). Afterwards, the participants can share their ideas with the group.

After the presentation, facilitators lead a new collective discussion: **now that we went through all of the hats, is there anything you'd like to say regarding the exercise? Did you gather information on what each hat is about and what it brings to the table? If we take the red hat off, let's say, what would be lacking from our collective thinking?**

Through this discussion, the participants can realise that every aspect is essential to solving a problem. None of these directions is a completely natural way of thinking, but they are all needed to achieve a good result.

Having to use certain hats can feel unnatural, uncomfortable or even counterproductive and against their better judgement. However, going outside of our comfort zone and our usual way of addressing an issue can amount to better solutions!

In the end, the facilitators can introduce a new hat... The sixth hat ! The blue one. The blue hat is the hat for seeing the big picture. Once we've understood the benefits that each hat can bring to the table, we can organise them and use them all to resolve any concrete issue.

**Advised number of participants:** up to 10, if the group is bigger the participants can be divided into subgroup

**Advised duration of the activity:** 2h; 25mn for the explanation of the activity and the first discussion, 45mn of brainstorming and writing individually so each participant can address the given problem from all the proposed perspectives, 35mn of restitution and debate, 15mn of conclusion

**Material:** board, big sheets of paper, pens



## Interactive lectures through debates

If we provide the participants with tools and information in a descending way, the long term impact will probably not be very strong. On the other hand, empowering them to use the knowledge we've generated through debate will help them engage in a meaningful way and, therefore, integrate the concepts better!

### **Activity: Simulation**

*After receiving a briefing and having time to prepare, the young women are invited to enter a simulation of a situation where they need to use their debating skills. For instance, they can be invited to a debate in the 70's (before the writing of the CEDAW Convention) amongst a group of diplomats in order to convince them of the need for a specific Convention for the protection of women and girls. The facilitators can play the role of the opposition, challenging them in order to see how they react.*

**Advised number of participants:** *for everyone to be able to have time to express themselves, it's better to do this activity in groups of 6. If the groups are bigger, it can be interesting to have the participants team up*

**Advised duration of the activity:** *2h; 30mn of briefing to give content to the participants, 30mn of preparation, 40mn of debate and 20mn of discussion about the activity*

**Material:** *pens and paper*

### **Activity: Moving debate**

*The moving debate is a useful and fun strategy to develop the participants' communication and critical thinking skills and consider all aspects of a question.*

*The facilitator proposes a statement (eg; "equality between women and men is already achieved in Belgium" or "each voice can make a difference"). The participants who agree with the statement must move to one side of the room, the ones who disagree should go to the opposite side and the ones who aren't sure can stay in the middle.*

*Then, participants are called to explain/justify their position.*

*While others are explaining their views, it is possible for everyone to change places as they get convinced and change their minds. In some moving debates you will see a lot of movement as participants' minds are changed by powerful arguments made by their peers. If the participants are struggling, it is possible to build some thinking time into the exercise or allow time for them to discuss their opinions in pairs or threes before sharing with the group.*

**Advised number of participants:** *from 6 to 20*

**Advised duration of the activity:** *depending on the number of participants from 15 to 40mn*

**Material:** *no material needed!*



## Concrete application through artistic expression

Artistic expression is a vector of emotion and emotion can often be a necessary step to acknowledgement and full understanding. In addition, being put through an artistic process allows the participants to think about the issue at hand from another perspective and to really go to the root of the issue.

### **Activity: Story-telling**

*This activity starts with a presentation of the different possible visual approaches and techniques to story-telling. Together with the participants, with the support of trailers from different documentaries, the facilitators explain the process that a film-maker needs to go through in order to make the right artistic and technical choices.*

*With this new knowledge, the participants (in collaboration with the facilitators) have to come up with a pitch for a short movie about the migrant woman leader of their choice (or any other theme relevant to the aim of the capacity building event).*

*In filmmaking, a pitch is a concise verbal presentation of an idea made in the hope of attracting fundings for the writing of a screenplay.*

*The participants have to come up with a concrete and interesting idea and organise it in a short speech (4 to 5 minutes) in order for all the main ideas to be highlighted in the best way possible. Then, they give their pitch in front of an audience.*

*This exercise can be done after activities meant to build self-esteem and trust building to assess how far the participants have come since the beginning of the process.*

*The objectives behind this story-telling exercise are multiple : get inspired, be able to understand your own motivations behind a project, express them, come up with concrete ideas and organise them, develop writing and public speaking skills.*

*In addition, the spectators can be asked to challenge every participant with questions after they present their concept. This enables the participants to learn how to react to criticism and pushes them to go further into their ideas.*

**Advised number of participants:** *for everyone to be able to have the to give their pitch and receive feedback, the number of participants shouldn't exceed 6*

**Advised duration of the activity:** *2h; 20mn presentation, 40mn preparation, 30 to 40mn of presentation and feedback and 20mn of discussion about the activity*

## **Activity: Forum theatre**

Forum theatre is one of the techniques under the umbrella term of "Theatre of the Oppressed": It relates to the engagement of spectators influencing and engaging with the performance as both spectators and actors, termed "spect-actors", with the power to stop and change the performance. As part of theatre of the oppressed, the issues dealt with in forum theatre are often related to areas of social justice with aims to explore solutions to oppression featured in the performance. The objective of this activity is mainly to materialise concrete ways to be an actress of change in our everyday life.

Forum theatre begins with a short performance, either rehearsed or improvised, which contains demonstrations of social or political problems. At the conclusion, the scene begins again with the audience being able to replace or add to the characters on stage to present their interventions; alternate solutions to the problems faced.

### **Examples of scenario:**

**Scenario 1:** Being a young woman in spaces that are not designed to accommodate you, you have to negotiate with people from the majority group and deal with microaggressions. How to navigate?

**Scenario 2:** How to have a discussion with your family that is attached to the culture, religious beliefs and tradition of the home country, how to find a balance between your own beliefs and your origins?

**Scenario 3:** You are going to a social service and you are discriminated against because you don't have the right knowledge or you don't speak the language.

**Scenario 4:** You started volunteering in an NGO or local association, a woman is coming for help, she doesn't speak the same language you do, how can you help her?



Each team of participants can pick the scenario they most relate to. After a time of preparation during which they come up with a story and rehearse it, the teams can perform in front of the others.

After the first performance, the spect-actors can interact by freezing the scene and entering it. They can either replace a character or add another one in order to change the outcome of the scene. The aim is to find different realistic ways to improve the situation. These ideas are concrete and can be reproduced in everyday life!

Finally, the facilitators ask the participants to evaluate what happened. This can lead to a very heartfelt and deep conversation where the participants are able to share their own experiences of facing discrimination.

**Advised number of participants:** up to 20

**Advised duration of the activity:** 2h30; 20mn of explanation and presentation of the scenarios, 40mn for the teams to prepare their scenes, 1h of performing and changing the scenes (to be adapted according to the number of scenes), 30mn of discussion

**Material:** no material needed!





## B. Opportunities in Online Engagement

*“It was really meaningful to be able to see that other women have, for example, some trouble doing public speaking, and at the start they were feeling vulnerable and afraid, but then we started building this safe space... you could really see their progress. It was just awesome to watch honestly, and to be a part of.” B.P.*

This section contains an example program along with links to free tools that helped **cultivate a safe online space made by and for young migrant women** around a personal engagement with CEDAW.

### ***Amplifying the Voices of Young Migrant Women in a COVID-19 World***

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted all of our operations as practitioners in the migration field. But travel for migrant women and girls was complicated long before the pandemic: limitations to funding, limitations imposed by residency status, limited access to childcare and more. Now, with uncertain border restrictions and unpredictable closings of public spaces, we have also been obliged to adapt and to imagine a more democratic approach to service delivery. One way has been to take to the Internet as our meeting place! Online workshops are increasingly relevant in creating safe spaces, making connections and galvanizing a generation of young migrant women.

Of course, online formats have their limitations principally access to the internet. Practitioners designing and facilitating online workshops with young migrant women must therefore be cautious and:

**(1) Understand the limitations of the support** you can offer especially when engaging triggering or emotionally sensitive topics. Facilitators should use the **utmost care in cultivating a safe space** for young migrant women to share their experience at their own pace and in their own way

(2) **Acknowledge and plan according to limitations of private space** for young migrant women. They might share a room with a sibling or have guardians coming in and out of their bedroom.

For this reason, plan online workshops with themes and content that can be safely brought into this context. In addition, though it's important to encourage participants to share their face and their voice, **always prioritize participants' boundaries when it comes to turning on their cameras or microphones.**

## **Workshop on CEDAW: Forging a Sisterhood of Radical Girlsss**

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, we managed to connect with 23 young migrant and refugee women from Brazil, the Philippines, the Caucasus, and more all settled throughout Europe. **The Zoom workshop lasted 3 hours focusing on CEDAW and how this historical bill of rights for women can be used by young women at grassroots level to enhance their codified rights.** Composed of 2 parts, the first part of the workshop was dedicated to cultivating a safe space for the women and the second part encouraged skills-based engagement with CEDAW.

### **What you'll need:**

- [Zoom](#) (breakout rooms, share screen, record, etc.) or Google Meet
- [Google Workspace](#) (Slides, Docs, Forms)
- Alternatively: One can use Microsoft Powerpoint and Word
- [WooClap](#)
- Live Interpreters
  - During the online session, we provided live translation in Polish, French and Portuguese to women who needed*
- A creative and solutions-based mindset!

## *Pre-Workshop Design*

Instead of guessing what parts of CEDAW would be important to the women, we just asked them! To help design this online Zoom workshop made for and co-designed by migrant women, we sent them a Google Forms survey to gather their thematic and competence-based interests. Based on the women's survey responses, we designed three skills-based breakout sessions: one on **online campaigning**, another on **public speaking** and the last one on the use of **arts for activism** around Article 5 of CEDAW on sex roles and stereotyping.

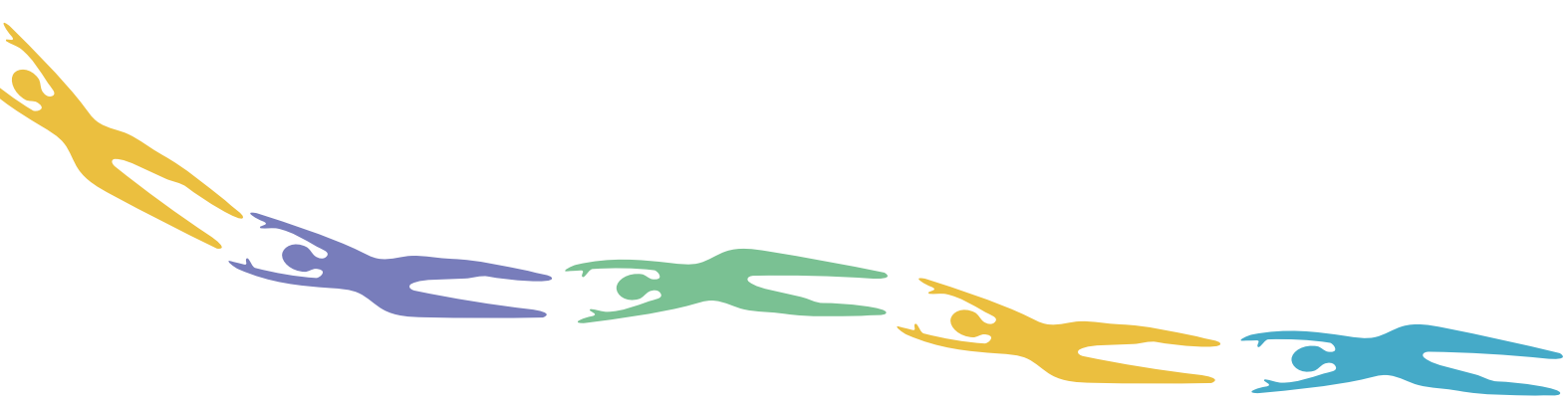
## *Part I: Establishing a safe space and a foundation of CEDAW*

Remembering that feeling empowered is the first step in political participation, Part I was focused on **establishing a safe space and a foundational understanding of CEDAW**. Lasting about 1 hour and 30 minutes, Part I was dedicated to building trust among the women and getting them engaged. Using Zoom's Share Screen function, we presented a powerpoint with each woman's photo and a quote that was dear to them. We held space for each of them to introduce themselves to the group. Though we allotted about 2 minutes for each self-presentation, **it's important to be flexible if someone wants to share more. This signals to other women that they are welcome to share their own formative experiences.**

Once this climate was established, we gave a short lecture on CEDAW, highlighting its comprehensiveness, its innovative life cycle approach as well as the monitoring processes highlighted in the additional protocols that can create the space for political participation. Here, we wanted to, of course, present the importance of CEDAW. But in doing so, we wanted to help the women to begin to see themselves, their struggles and a path forward through engagement with CEDAW.

## *Part II: Putting CEDAW into practice through skills-based engagement*

After a short break, where the women were invited to relax, turn their cameras off, grab a snack or just chat idly with us, we jumped into Part II of the workshop which focused on skills-based engagement with CEDAW. Based on their survey responses, we pre-assigned the participants to 3 breakout sessions: one on **online campaigning**, another on **public speaking** and the last one on the use of **arts for activism**. Each breakout room reflected on **Article 5 of CEDAW on sex roles and stereotyping**. Through these exercises, we wanted to **broaden their own understanding of political participation, build skills crucial for political engagement and give a platform for them to share their own expertise and experiences.**



The group that worked on Arts and Activism began by a short presentation on the **necessity of reappropriating artistic expression and emotion to breathe life and longevity into the women's liberation movement.** We talked about great women like Black feminist poet Audre Lorde and Native American Nobel Poet Laureate Joy Harjo who challenged the status quo by sharing their voices through their art. **In reflecting how they themselves have experienced stereotyping as migrant women, they practiced creative collaboration, writing and public speaking.** Together, the group wrote and performed a collaborative poem called "Mirror, Mirror" which at the core is a **reclamation of their representation in the public sphere along with their narratives.**

We ended the online workshop with two exercises. First, we used [WooClap's Word Cloud](#). Interactive tools like WooClap allow online workshops to be more engaging, relaxed and personal. Here, we asked the young women "How would we define the experience we just had?" As they added their words, they appeared on the shared screen - shifting, reshuffling and the more women who also submitted that word, it grew in size. This is what we created together: **SISTERHOOD.** After so many tears shed, laughs shared and connections made, we wanted to seal off the experience together. We did a short series of seated yoga exercises meant to allow everyone to relax and process the emotions and information before departure.

We each said a few words before leaving. The ideas of strength, sisterhood and safety came back, as well as the notion that this experience had superseded expectations and had left the participants eager to learn more. **Through a feeling of belonging, these young women felt empowered which is the starting point of political participation.** The connection that was experienced by the participants was made possible through the **creation of a safe space** that allowed them to be open, truthful and trust each other.



## IV. Conclusions

Young migrant women's full and equal participation in politics and decision-making is a prerequisite to equality between women and men. This toolkit sought to bridge the gap between young migrant women and CEDAW in order to give them the confidence and capacity to engage politically. This work of empowering young migrant women is an instrumental step towards equality in policy making. A real political transformation cannot arise without a systematic integration of ALL women and girls to the decision making processes.

Diversity in decision-making bodies brings the innovation and effectiveness we need to tackle the challenges that we are facing worldwide. This is why locating, cultivating and supporting young migrant women into the leaders we need should be a priority at all levels of governance. NGOs are one of the most relevant and accessible entry points to political participation.

**We hope that this toolkit helps many of them move towards a richer inclusiveness of young migrant women!**



# Mirror, mirror

## Spoken word poem

Written by participants of online session

Jill:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me  
fantasies created, smokescreens obscuring reality  
what you see is a mirror of you, not me  
your fears, dreams, insecurities

Everyone:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me

Faty:

Hi my name is "Faty"  
You may know me by my other name,  
"Ms. Where-are-you-really-from?"  
"Ms. Yes-I'm-from-here"  
Say my name, learn my name  
Name given from my mother  
Forged from flesh and soul,  
strength and creation.  
Hi, my name is "Faty"

Everyone:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me

Alyssa:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me  
You see this stereotyped idea of what you want me to be  
you see the exotism,  
you see the sexual object,  
you see something that you want to crush because  
otherwise  
you might fear it.

Everyone:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me

Alyssa:

You see a friend,  
maybe, someone that you relate to,  
you actively erase everything about me that feels foreign.  
You shape me to your image.  
To what you want me to be.

Beatriz:

I was born with a flame in my chest and  
a voice too loud and a passion too intense, too scary.  
I was born with a vagina and was carved into a woman.  
They tried to mold me as they thought I should be,  
but I scream I'm proud to wear my skin as I untie the knots  
on my throat and my guts.  
To become a mirror of me.

Everyone:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me

Azura

Being a black woman - if you're strongly opinionated and  
you have certain views you're aggressive. They see me  
when I do things wrong but if I do things right, it doesn't  
exist. They don't see us. They don't see us, they just see our  
colours. That's how I feel.

Everyone:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me

Wilma:

What does reclamation look like in a body like mine ?  
What does it sound like in a head like mine?  
How do we find neutrality when my body is political?  
Why don't you hear me?  
Why don't you see me?  
I search within and the problem itself  
is that I'm afraid to express myself.  
Fears learned, paralysis perpetuated  
Hatred observed, freedom found

Everyone:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me

Jill:

You are not my savior, I am not your victim  
I am not your fantasy, you are not my dream

Everyone:

When you look at me, what you see is a mirror of you, not me

Faty:

I am woman awakening

Alyssa:

I am woman free

Beatriz:

I am woman existing

Wilma:

I am woman heard

Azura:

I am woman becoming

Everyone:

I am woman.

