



# Good Practice - Melissa

## WP 2

### Activity 1 (Good Practice)

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## Good Practice Card

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<b>Name/ title of practice:</b>	Melissa Network – Empowering Migrant Women in Athens
<b>Location:</b>	Greece / Athens, centred around Viktoria Square and surrounding neighbourhoods
<b>Size and scale of organization:</b>	A small but highly active NGO, <b>founded in 2014</b> , consisting of a <b>core team of staff and volunteers</b> who support a <b>network of migrant women from more than 45 different countries</b> living in Athens. Although the number of paid staff is limited, Melissa Network reaches <b>hundreds of women annually</b> through workshops, training, and community programs, making it a compact organization with broad multicultural representation. Over time, Melissa has expanded its community reach — from a few dozen participants in 2014 to a sustained membership network of migrant women from over 45 countries — while maintaining a relatively small operational structure.
<b>Industry/Sector:</b>	Social inclusion and women’s empowerment; domestic work and informal employment
<b>Contact info (for follow up, if available):</b>	<a href="https://melissanetwork.org/">https://melissanetwork.org/</a> <a href="mailto:info@melissanetwork.org">info@melissanetwork.org</a>
<b>Additional details:</b>	Melissa Network operates in central Athens, serving <b>migrant and refugee women from more than 45 national backgrounds</b> , including large communities from the <b>Philippines, Georgia, Ukraine, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Albania, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh</b> . Most participants live in <b>Viktoria Square and neighboring districts</b> , areas that have long been arrival points for migrants in Greece.  The organization focuses on women who often work in <b>domestic care, hospitality, or informal employment</b> , and who face intersecting barriers related to migration status, gender, and economic vulnerability. Through its community center, Melissa provides a <b>safe and multilingual space</b> offering education, psychosocial support, vocational upskilling, and creative expression.



	<p>Understanding this context helps readers evaluate transferability: while Melissa’s model is rooted in the Athenian urban migrant experience, its inclusive, peer-led approach can be adapted to other cities hosting diverse migrant populations.</p> <p>References: Retrieved October 2025, from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://melissanetwork.org/">https://melissanetwork.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.dw.com/en/melissa-network-a-hive-built-by-migrant-women/a-41222240">https://www.dw.com/en/melissa-network-a-hive-built-by-migrant-women/a-41222240</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.sigrid-rausing-trust.org/grantee/melissa-network/">https://www.sigrid-rausing-trust.org/grantee/melissa-network/</a></p>
<p><b>Sources of information/References:</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.dw.com/en/melissa-network-a-hive-built-by-migrant-women/a-41222240">https://www.dw.com/en/melissa-network-a-hive-built-by-migrant-women/a-41222240</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.sigrid-rausing-trust.org/grantee/melissa-network/">https://www.sigrid-rausing-trust.org/grantee/melissa-network/</a></p> <p><a href="https://tcleadership.org/the-melissa-network/">https://tcleadership.org/the-melissa-network/</a></p>

## Good Practice/Content

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<b>Key focus/bias observed:</b>	This practice addresses intersectional bias—specifically gender bias and migrant status discrimination—affecting migrant women working in informal labour sectors such as domestic work.
<b>Description of the <i>Practice</i>:</b>	Melissa Network serves as a pioneering grassroots initiative led by migrant women themselves, working to combat bias and precarity faced by migrant domestic workers in Athens. The Network creates safe spaces and empowerment opportunities through life skills education, art classes, language training, legal rights workshops, and peer support. Their philosophy is grounded in dignity and mutual respect rather than charity; everyone participates in the communal effort to build a supportive environment where women of diverse backgrounds can become autonomous and recognized contributors to society.
<b>Implementation strategy:</b>	Melissa Network functions through a peer-to-peer model where migrant women are not passive beneficiaries but active contributors. Each member is encouraged to share skills or experiences — for example, teaching language, art, or digital literacy, or facilitating discussions on workers’ rights. In this way, everyone participates in both learning and teaching, creating a circular exchange of knowledge and support. This participatory model builds trust, self-confidence, and collective agency among women who might otherwise remain isolated or invisible in urban life.
<b>Key actors involved:</b>	Established in 2014, the Network grew through collaborative leadership among its founding members, offering free programs in central Athens. Emphasis is placed on participatory design: migrant women deliver workshops themselves or co-facilitate sessions on cultural expression, workers’ rights, and digital literacy.
<b>Outcomes and metrics of impact:</b>	Social events and community activities reinforce solidarity and visibility. By anchoring their presence in a public square with high anti-migrant sentiment, the Network intentionally disrupts stereotypes and encourages belonging.
<b>Potential challenges and barriers for implementation:</b>	Primary stakeholders are migrant women participants, volunteer educators, and Network founders. Additional collaborators include diaspora associations, legal aid organizations, feminist collectives, and advocacy groups working on migrant rights.
<b>Blueprint for success - recommendations for replication or adaptation of the Practice:</b>	Over time, the Melissa Network has attracted women from more than 45 countries, fostering peer-led trainings and community outreach.



<b>Key lessons learned:</b>	Its inclusive model has enhanced participants' confidence, improved their access to know-your-rights information, and enabled many to connect with formal employment or legal support services.
<b>Other info/notes:</b>	Though quantitative metrics are limited, the growing attendance and regular public presence illustrate its reach and impact.



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