

Connected Student Leadership Strategy 17: Melissa - Empowerment means you build your own networks

Investigating the many roles needed to truly collaborate & create change
Connection to Belonging: **Connection** 🔗 , **Support** ❤️ , **Pride** 😎 , **Unique contribution** 🦄

Inspiration: When the Melissa Network of Migrant Women in Greece opened in 2015, the founders saw Melissa as a bridge. They wanted to go beyond humanitarian aid to help empowered women be successfully integrated into Greece. As Melissa expands their reach, they continue to focus on helping women acquire the tools of integration so they can use them wherever they go.

Map Support Network Strategy: The Melissa Network collaborated with other European organizations on the Integra-train project, funded by the European Commission, Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs. Their work in this project demonstrates how they empower women to create their own networks:

- “Promote migrant and refugee women’s empowerment and make their voices heard.
- Facilitate networking among groups of diverse ethnic origins, creating an effective structure to enable their networking capacity and their inclusive attitudes promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, and solidarity.
- Create a bridge of communication.
- Create a space where migrant and refugee women can express their own aspirations and concerns.
- Support and encourage their initiatives.
- Empower migrant and refugee women to find the means to support themselves.
- Record and encourage their ‘informal strategies’ as practiced, in a process of creating rights from below..
- Widen the advocacy pool and the participation in the public sphere by developing media and communication skills.
- Promote positive role models.”

[Full details on the initiative can be found here](#)

Consider asking students to map these strategies. How are they linked?
Ask students to map the ways they are supported in their education.

Competencies: Critical Thinking, Curiosity, Confidence