

Strategic Framework and Theory of Change

Refugees International Women Empowerment Foundation (R.I.W.E.)

2026–2030

Varna, Bulgaria

1. Organisational Vision

Refugees International Women Empowerment Foundation (R.I.W.E.) envisions a Europe where displaced women and girls are safe, empowered, and able to participate fully in social, economic and civic life.

The organisation works to strengthen protection systems, improve policy responses, and support the empowerment of women affected by displacement, conflict and migration.

2. Mission

The mission of R.I.W.E. is to promote protection, empowerment and meaningful participation of refugee and migrant women through research, advocacy, community-based initiatives and international cooperation.

The organisation focuses particularly on addressing risks related to:

- gender-based violence (GBV)
- trafficking in human beings (THB)
- social exclusion and economic vulnerability
- barriers to participation in decision-making processes

3. Strategic Context

The war in Ukraine and other global crises have led to large-scale displacement across Europe. Women and children represent the majority of displaced populations.

While European protection frameworks provide important legal mechanisms, significant gaps remain in practice, including:

- insufficient identification of trafficking risks
- underreporting of gender-based violence
- lack of trust between refugee communities and institutions
- limited economic empowerment opportunities for displaced women
- insufficient integration of gender perspectives in migration governance

Addressing these gaps requires cooperation between civil society, international organisations, governments and local communities.

4. Strategic Pillars (2026–2030)

R.I.W.E. will focus on four interconnected strategic pillars.

Pillar 1: Research and Evidence

R.I.W.E. conducts analytical research to better understand the experiences and vulnerabilities of displaced women.

Key actions include:

- community-based research and surveys
- analysis of protection gaps in migration systems
- production of policy reports and analytical briefs
- collaboration with academic and international partners

Evidence-based research is used to inform policy dialogue and programme development.

Pillar 2: Policy and Advocacy

R.I.W.E. contributes to policy discussions at national, European and international levels.

Key activities include:

- participation in policy consultations
- engagement with European institutions and international organisations
- contribution to discussions on migration governance and gender equality
- advocacy for gender-responsive protection systems

The organisation promotes policies that strengthen the protection and participation of displaced women.

Pillar 3: Empowerment and Participation

R.I.W.E. supports initiatives that strengthen the agency and leadership of displaced women.

Activities may include:

- mentorship and leadership initiatives
- peer-to-peer community support models
- capacity-building programmes
- platforms for refugee women's voices in public dialogue

Empowerment initiatives aim to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience.

Pillar 4: Cultural and Social Dialogue

R.I.W.E. recognises the role of culture and storytelling in shaping public understanding of displacement and migration.

Activities may include:

- artistic and cultural initiatives addressing migration and freedom
- public discussions and exhibitions
- collaboration with artists and cultural institutions
- communication initiatives that promote empathy and awareness

Cultural engagement helps bridge social divides and challenge stereotypes.

5. Theory of Change

R.I.W.E.'s work is based on the following theory of change:

If research identifies the real experiences and vulnerabilities of displaced women, and if this evidence is combined with policy dialogue, community empowerment and cultural engagement,

then institutions, communities and decision-makers will better understand protection risks and the needs of displaced women,

which will contribute to more inclusive policies, stronger protection systems, and greater participation of refugee women in society.

6. Cross-Cutting Principles

All R.I.W.E. activities are guided by several cross-cutting principles.

Gender equality

Gender perspectives are integrated into research, programmes and advocacy.

Human rights-based approach

Activities are grounded in international human rights standards.

Participation

Affected communities are involved in research and programme development.

Safeguarding and protection

The organisation prioritises the safety and dignity of participants.

Partnership and cooperation

Collaboration with local and international partners is essential to achieving sustainable impact.

7. Partnerships

R.I.W.E. seeks to collaborate with:

- civil society organisations
- international organisations
- academic institutions
- cultural actors and artists
- European and national policy stakeholders

Partnerships strengthen knowledge exchange, expand impact, and contribute to collective solutions.

8. Organisational Development

As a developing organisation, R.I.W.E. aims to strengthen its institutional capacity through:

- strategic partnerships
- participation in international networks
- development of analytical and policy expertise
- engagement in European funding programmes

Institutional growth will support the sustainability and impact of the organisation.

9. Monitoring and Learning

R.I.W.E. is committed to continuous learning and reflection.

Progress will be monitored through:

- project evaluations
- feedback from participants and partners
- analysis of policy engagement outcomes
- review of research outputs and advocacy impact

Lessons learned will inform future strategies and programmes.

10. Conclusion

Through research, advocacy, empowerment initiatives and cultural dialogue, R.I.W.E. aims to contribute to a Europe where displaced women and girls are protected, heard and empowered.

The Strategic Framework 2026–2030 provides the foundation for the organisation's long-term development and engagement with partners and institutions.

Approved by:

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Founder

Refugees International Women Empowerment Foundation (R.I.W.E.)

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