REDESIGN BELONGING

D10.1

Workshops Analysis

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Abstract	This deliverable presents the findings of the research conducted under Work Package 10 (WP10) of the ReBel project, which investigates the concept of belonging among migrant women residing in Finland, Spain, and the Netherlands for over five years. The study employs co-creation methodologies and intersectional approaches to explore integration challenges, resilience strategies, and the emotional and material dimensions of belonging and non-belonging. This research incorporates the analysis of several small workshops carried out in order to gain feedback on the winning project´s outlined in the Rebel project. All the workshops were conducted face to face using the guidelines given by the participants of the winning projects.

Document revision history

Version	Date	Description	Contributors
1	02.05.2025	First draft of deliverable including the methodology	Dr Karen Latricia Hough
2	20.05.2025	Second draft of the deliverable with all the data analysis completed	Dr Karen Latricia Hough and Juan Carlos Benitez
4	27.05.2025	Final review of deliverable and submission	Dr Karen Latricia Hough and Juan Carlos Benitez

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1. Executive summary

The REBEL project is focused on exploring the concept of belonging for migrant women from diverse backgrounds who have resided in three European states, Finland, Spain and the Netherlands for more than five years. The project employs co-creation service design and innovation to empower the participants to create new innovative solutions. It is focused on unpacking concepts like integration and belonging to see how these women manage their migration trajectories in their everyday lives. In this vein it examines the barriers and the resilience strategies that they adopted. Thus, it explores concepts of nonbelonging and marginalization eliciting both the material and emotional factors that these women experience when living in the host community. In turn, it seeks to investigate the prerequisites that are essential for creating communities.

This deliverable is divided into different sections. The first part presents an introduction related to the importance of using co-creative methods in migration studies. The second part presents the methodology used. This is then followed by the results of the analysis from the different workshops that were conducted in Spain in section 4. All the workshops were conducted face to face using the guidelines given by the participants of the winning projects. An iterative approach was taken in order to get the maximum feedback, thus ensuring the success of the co-creation sessions. Section 5 then presents some additional research insights that emerged from the sessions, leading to policy recommendations and section 6 presents the conclusions.

2. Introduction

Co-creation has emerged as a transformative approach in migration studies, emphasizing collaborative knowledge production between researchers and migrant communities. This participatory methodology seeks to democratize research processes, ensuring that migrants are not merely subjects but active contributors to the creation of knowledge that affects their lives.

Co-creation in migration studies builds upon participatory action research (PAR) and community-based research (CBR), frameworks that prioritize the involvement of participants in all stages of the research process. According to Van Praag (2021), co-creation involves participants as protagonists in identifying and resolving specific challenges, rather than passive subjects. This approach aligns with Appadurai's (2006) call for the democratization of

research processes, making results and methodologies accessible to both academic and non-academic audiences. (Chiara Gunella, Javier Rodrigo, 2022)

Co-creative methods in migration studies encompass a range of participatory techniques:

- **Participatory Video and Digital Storytelling**: These methods empower migrants to share their narratives, providing insights into their experiences and fostering a sense of agency. These are particularly suited for vulnerable populations like unaccompanied asylum seekers
- **Co-Design Workshops**: Collaborative sessions where migrants and researchers jointly develop solutions to integration challenges, such as language learning tools or housing policies or in the case of the MIICT[1] EU funded project a whole interactive platform to access vital services, which included a job matching tool
- **Peer Research Models**: Training migrants as co-researchers enables them to collect and analyze data, ensuring that research reflects their perspectives and needs. This means the whole process is democratic and also empowering for migrants. This model is also particularly suited to survivors of trafficking.

There are several examples of good practices int his area. For instance, the MICADO project in Antwerp utilized co-creation to develop local policy implementations with migrant newcomers, highlighting the practical applications of co-creative methodologies in academic research (Apers & Van Praag, 2021)

Engaging migrants as co-creators offers several advantages:

- **Enhanced Relevance and Impact**: Research outcomes are more closely aligned with the actual needs and experiences of migrant communities. The whole process is democratic and adheres to human rights principles.
- **Empowerment and Capacity Building**: Participants gain skills and confidence, contributing to their personal and professional development. They feel listened to and gain more faith in community initiatives. Via the peer to peer method these capacity building can increase and expand through the community via the peer leaders.
- **Improved Trust and Collaboration**: Building relationships between researchers and migrants fosters mutual respect and understanding.

[1] See www.miict.eu

A study by Turin et al. (2021) demonstrated that involving migrant community members in knowledge co-creation led to more effective and sustainable solutions to complex societal problems.
Despite its potential, co-creation is not without challenges:

- **Power Dynamics**: Even in co-creative settings, underlying power imbalances can persist, influencing the direction and outcomes of research (Oliveira & Vearey, 2022).
- **Resource Intensiveness**: Co-creation requires significant time and resources, which may not always be available in research projects.
- **Ethical Considerations**: Ensuring informed consent and protecting the rights of participants are critical, particularly when dealing with vulnerable populations.

However, despite the barriers we can see that the methodology has been used in Spain for great success, including the So-Close project, which applied participatory methodologies to investigate the role of cultural heritage in forced migration, highlighting the complexities and ethical considerations inherent in co-creative research (Gunella & Rodrigo, 2022). Similarly, in Andalusia, the MIICT project exemplified the application of co-design and co-creation for migrant integration. This initiative involved migrants and stakeholders in collaborative processes to address societal and safety concerns related to migration, emphasizing the importance of inclusive decision-making (Van Praag, 2021 and Akhgar, et al, 2021).

Co-creation represents a paradigm shift in migration studies, promoting inclusive, ethical, and impactful research practices. While challenges remain, the benefits of co-creation—enhanced relevance, empowerment, and trust—underscore its value in understanding and addressing the complexities of migration. Future research should continue to explore and refine co-creative methodologies, ensuring that migrant voices are integral to the knowledge production process.

More importantly, in the REBEL project, this methodology enabled the migrant women and other stakeholders to define the concepts to use in the first place and discuss difficult topics for them, including concepts like non-belonging, which was often viewed as a positive element. This meant that through the workshops the participants felt empowered to shape the discourse and reclaim their spaces in the host society as active participants, regardless of whether they felt they had integrated or not.

3. Methodology

The workshops were conducted in an open manner to ensure that the participants could give answers to the questions that were not asked. That saying, some general structural questions were given at the beginning to ensure that the project winners could get some vital information to improve their designs and topics. Thus, the following questions were asked: What do you think? What is your first impression? Do you have any comments or suggestions? Would migrants and people you know take part in this activity? What would improve the activity? Do you know of any existing similar activities. What do you like about the project? Do you know of anything similar? What are the negative aspects the project and how can these be improved?

The sessions were informal and conversational in nature. Participants were invited to sit around a table, where the facilitator introduced the project's core ideas using simple visual and verbal cues. Rather than using structured exercises, the co-creative methodology relied on open dialogue and spontaneous reactions to the winnng projects´concept. The emphasis was placed on listening. The participants shared stories, personal experiences of migration, and offered feedback on the concept itself. In particular the facilitator probed as to whether the concept resonated with migrant and multicultural youth in Spain in order to gather open, honest reactions from participants. Thus, they asked them what excited them about the project and what was not working. In addition, researchers tried to explore whether the project could be meaningful or usable by migrant communities, and how it could be improved to better reflect their stories.

This feedback was then fed back to the participants of the winning projects, who were then given the opportunity to ask further questions and probe deeper. This iterative co-creative approach proved exceptionally successful. Overall four of the winning projects were addressed in the workshops. These were Homelore, Unwritten receipies, winadill and home, belonging short stories.

A total of three workshops were undertaken in total. Two workshops were undertaken in the language café in Granada, Spain. The participants came from a variety of countries including, Syria, the United Kingdom, Denmark, China, USA, Libya, Turkey, Italy, Morocco, Senegal, Romania, Egypt, India, Germany, Cyprus, France, Portugal, South America and Spain. The sample consisted of local migrants, creatives and cultural workers. All were resident in Spain for motives of work or study, thus they were included in the study due to their residency status and not due to their nationalities. In terms of ages, they were predominantly young adults from the ages of 20-35 years,

with one exception as one participant was over 60 years old. The sample consisted of a good mix of males and females to ensure representative sample. Some were first-generation migrants, others second-generation or locals interested in migration-related topics. Their motivations ranged from artistic curiosity to personal connection with migration, identity, and belonging. The *language café* in Granada is a key hangout place where migrants from different countries meet and mix with locals to learn the Spanish language and gain information about jobs and housing. This space is a very relaxed, informal space so it enabled researchers to interact and gain feedback on all the winning projects. Drinks and some light tapas were provided in order to enhance the environment.

The last workshop was carried out in a school, which held afternoon sessions for migrant children who were all legally resident in Spain in order to complete their secondary education. The participants were aged between 18-24 and also some teachers and educational authorities were present who ages were between 48-65. The classes were also attended by children from Spain, who were attending the conservatory in the morning or who were in sport clubs. This meant that lively discussions could be undertaken between those who had experienced migration and those who had not.

Thus, all workshops were conducted in informal settings, but still the focus was on empowering the participants to give honest, credible feedback to the winning participants, in order to enhance the process of co-creation. A total of 56 participants took part overall in the three sessions. There were 26 females and 30 males. Individuals who were diverse able also took part to ensure an inclusive sample. These were accompanied by their teachers and carers. All sessions were conducted in multiple languages to ensure the participants understood everything, including Italian, English. Arabic and the Spanish language.

Researchers ensured that strict ethical guidelines were followed in order to prioritise the rights, dignity, and well being of participants at all times. All the activities that were carried out were focused on minimising harm and maximising benefit for the participants, being sensitive to the unique challenges that migrants face due to their legal status, displacement trauma and discrimination. Thus the following principles were adopted.

1. **Informed and Ongoing Consent**
   Participants were provided with clear, comprehensive information about the purpose, methods, risks, and benefits of the research.

Consent was freely given, without coercion, and communicated in the participant's preferred language.

2. **Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**
   Researchers took all reasonable steps to safeguard the identity and personal information of participants. This includes secure data storage, anonymization where appropriate, and clear communication about who will have access to the data and how it will be used.
3. **Do No Harm**
   Academic research must avoid causing physical, psychological, legal, or social harm. Thus, all researchers were trained to avoid re-traumatization through sensitive questioning and avoiding actions that could jeopardize a participant's immigration status or personal safety.
4. **Respect for Autonomy and Dignity**
   Migrants were always treated as competent individuals with the right to make decisions about their participation.
5. **Cultural Competence and Sensitivity**
   Researchers were continually aware of cultural norms, values, and historical contexts that may shape participants' experiences and responses. Culturally appropriate methodologies and respectful communication were adopted in order to ensure ethical engagement.
6. **Equity and Inclusion**
   Researchers took appropriate steps when recruiting to include diverse voices and ensure that marginalized subgroups within migrant populations were represented fairly and ethically.
7. **Reciprocity and Benefit**
   Researchers always considered how the research for the REBEL project could benefit the communities involved, and made efforts to share findings with participants, whilst at the same time supporting community initiatives, and advocating for policy changes informed by the research.
8. **Ethics Approval and Oversight**
   All research was given approval by the ethics committee at the Euro-Arab Institute.

An outline of the main findings is provided in the next section.

4. Results from the workshops

4.1. Project 1 Homelore

Homelore co-creates with immigrant women who come as dependants, and make up 24.7% of Portuguese immigrants. Through weekly embroidery workshops, we create a safe, inclusive space where we share our stories, challenges, and aspirations. These craft sessions are not just activities but dialogue-driven platforms where we collaboratively identify needs to structure our organization. By actively involving them in decision-making, we ensure our intervention is deeply rooted and catering to their barriers. This iterative, community-led approach empowers them as co-creators, transforming passive beneficiaries into active drivers of change.

What began as a simple exchange of embroidery equipment among strangers has blossomed into a vibrant collective. A sanctuary where women, new to both each other and the land they now call home, find connection, creativity, and community.

Born from the question, “Where are the women?” Homelore seeks to address the invisibility of immigrant women in a context that discusses immigration but rarely centers their voices.

What started as an experimental workshop has become a thriving collective. Together, we produce art that reflects immigrant experience; blending personal narratives with cultural heritage. Over the past year, we’ve created a space where women explore identity, resilience, and community through embroidery.

Homelore’s process is an evolving experiment in co-creation, questioning what it really means to include and build belonging.

This is a space where immigrant women are seen, heard, and valued. Homelore is not just a project, it’s a movement.

General feedback:

Overall this project was received well by the participants in the workshops. In particular, the participants appreciated the idea of combining crafting with cultural connection. They suggested that conducting the sessions with migrant women alone, might not be the best way forward, and some suggested enhancing interaction with local communities to foster better integration.

One important thing outlined was that these sessions should be **women only** sessions which was quite an interesting finding. The reasons expressed for this was due to the need to respect all cultures. For example, in Spain some Moroccan women who took part in the workshops, said their families would not let them attend the workshops if men were present. Another thing that was stressed was the importance of mixing ages in the workshops. Some of the younger participants said it would be nice for them to have mentorship in the sessions by older women.

However, overall the feedback was positive with the majority of participants suggesting that crafting was well adapted as a topic for community-building activities for migrant women, due to its perceived therapeutic qualities. Many of the participants had older grandparents who engaged in the practice already and so it really was not a new activity for them.

Improvement suggestions:

One of the ways that participants suggesting improving the initiative was via the forging of local partnerships, thus integrating the workshops to the very fabric of the community. This included forging partnerships with local craft stores for materials and collaboration to ensure a greater connection to the community as well as contributing to the local economy. One of the fears was that such sessions could be expensive as the materials are not cheap and participants were not sure who would fund the materials. Many suggested that the local council should pay, or that the organizers could maybe find sponsorship from local shops and businesses.

Another suggestion was to incorporate storytelling or music to make sessions more attractive and fun. Lastly, other options could include weekly cultural sharing by migrants, inspired by examples from Nepal. Once more the sharing's would be focused on positive elements. These sessions were not envisaged as being "work", in which migrant women were made to talk about their problems, but were rather seen to be very light, life enhancing sessions focused on enjoyment.

Some participants suggested that also online and/or hybrid sessions could be created so that if someone was sick they could also attend the sessions and continue with the activity to get a sense of continuity. They also suggested that the designs and outputs could be sold and the money could be given to charities. There could be some competitions introduced too. One participant suggested the "super sewers" activity could be introduced where people could win prizes.

Migrants' involvement outlook:

It is important to note that overall the participants suggested that migrants would adhere to this project as long as the atmosphere was kept very casual and informal. Another important point was to focus on positive elements, and not just the sad things that migrants face. Participants suggested that it was important to address the problems in other places, like lawyers' offices or with professionals or in their individual homes. Rather these workshops were viewed as vital spaces where migrant women can relax

and forget their worries. Hence, participants suggested that they would be successful if these spaces were dedicated solely to enjoyment and leisure. Dance and music and art could also be introduced to enhance the empowerment of the migrant women and to show them that life was not just about work and family obligations.

One negative element that was expressed by the participants concerned the fact that this topic could be seen to be a niche activity that may only appeal to those already interested in crafting or cultural sharing. It could also be unpopular as some women might not be skilled in the area, and may be put off attending. Another concern, related to money as some women may have to take their children as they may not be able to pay for childcare and so if needles were used it may not be a safe place for small children. Other sessions that involved topics like dance and painting could be better suited then to women with smaller children.

Figure 1. Main ideas elicited from the workshop for project 1

HOMELORE – key voices

Isak (Turkey): *Options 1 and 2 feel quite similar, so I'd suggest tweaking them a bit and involving more local people. It's important for participants to interact with locals and practice the language—this helps them adapt to the local culture. Otherwise, there's a risk they'll stay in their comfort zone and miss out on fully integrating into their new environment.*

Salem (Libya): *Personally, this project seems like an excellent way to help migrant women build a circle of connections, while engaging themselves in a creative activity. Crafting also can be can be therapeutical. So sharing this experience with others can build a sense of community. Yes for sure, from my perspective, this type of event could be an effective way to migrant women seeking social connections and a sense of community. Also could be a creative opportunity to share their cultural traditions.*

Christina (USA): Project 1: *I like this! Feels good because they can share about their culture. Craft could be connected to migrant background each week someone can share/teach. I saw this in Nepal where women would show us how to make bags and stuff it was cool*

Yue (China): *Honestly, I'm not sure how many people would want to do crafting unless they're¡ already interested in it. Maybe they could combine it with something else, like storytelling or music, to attract more people? I think it could work, but they'd need to promote it really well.*

Morgan (UK): *Sounds super cute, honestly. I love anything crafty. Maybe add some music or a chill playlist while crafting to make it less awkward for first-timers? Yeah, migrants would defs join if it feels casual and not too formal.*

Vanessa (China)*: I believe it makes a lot of sense — both to help improve skills and to support building friendships. The crafting activities keep participants closely connected to the culture of their hometown, easing feelings of nostalgia while also helping them adapt better to their new environment. As a possible improvement, it could be beneficial to organize sales through this event, which might generate some economic benefits.*

Overall, I think this is a natural and socially acceptable way to form connections, and it's likely that immigrant women would actively participate.

Ina :Spain: *I love this, and I think it could even work well in refugee camps. People always give emergency packs. I volunteer in the camps and I would love to see a sewing pack like this be given along with an online session in their language. Feeling part of an instant community is crucial and this activity can form as escapism and help foster integration.*

Jose:Spain: *I think this activity could be done well and it would be easy to get people to come as it is not so labour intensive.*

Oleg:Ukraine: *Yes, my grandma did this thing and she is not with me, but I think the other women that come from Ukraine to Spain would love this. They would be really good at it and I think when you a refugee and you are at least good at something, and it is familiar to you…..it makes your life easier. You feel good about yourself when everything else is breaking down.*

Pat:Spain: *this is wonderful…love it*

4.2. Project 2 Unwritten Recipes

Unwritten Recipes is a participatory research project led by Meriç (Turkey) and Scienthya (Indonesia) that explores the emotional landscapes of migration through food. By engaging Turkish and Indonesian migrant women in Tilburg, this project captures how adapting traditional recipes becomes a way to navigate belonging. Through storytelling and visual documentation, Unwritten Recipes unfolds as a collaborative zine, a cookbook of unwritten recipes that reflects the subtle transformations of identity and memory.

In Unwritten Recipes, we invite Turkish and Indonesian migrant women to share their migration stories through food memories, sensory mapping, and embodied cooking rituals, reflecting on adaptation and belonging *(image 1.1, image 1.2, image 1.3)*. As they demonstrate their adapted recipes, we will gently uncover the emotional layers behind these culinary transformations through visually mapping (Image 2). These moments will

be translated into a collective zine that serves as a cookbook and an archive of untold experiences.

This zine will document recipes of holding the memories, struggles, and creativity embedded within them. Through illustrations, photographs, and text, we aim to make visible the invisible labor of cultural adaptation and the quiet search for belonging that unfolds in the kitchen.

This project falls under Communications Design, encompassing graphic design to create a collective narrative through visual storytelling and artistic documentation.

General feedback:

There was strong support for this project, due to the fact that food was envisaged as a universal connector amongst communities of diverse origin. Participants found it feasible, accessible, and engaging for migrant women. However, it was not a new topic, thus some participants did suggest combining it with other things like holding food competitions and cooking for local festivals etc.. which could be sponsored by the local councils or even be held at community centers or schools or religious institutions.

Another thing that was raised was the potential to commercialize the activity and make a cook book that could be sold with donations given to charity etc.. In addition the participants felt that this activity could be something that could be offered to migrants of any age and could become a family event. It could help families who had been affected by war and migration unite again. Also, some participants suggested that information on nutrition could be given too, as sometimes it is very difficult to eat well on a small budget, so some tips could be given.

Improvement suggestions:

Participants had lots of positive feedback and suggested that organisers could perhaps combine traditional recipes from both migrants' homelands and host country to promote integration. Hence, they suggested organizing collaborative cooking sessions and exchanges with local communities and maybe even cooking competitions. Another thing that was suggested was the need to include a mapping exercise where the women could tell the attendees of workshops the list of the shops they go to buy local produce. This could be something beneficial as not all local produce from diverse country of origins are sold in big supermarkets in Spain. Some participants were very creative and also suggested the need to introduce "fusion" recipes and food-related cultural activities (e.g., dance, games) to make the sessions more entertaining and popular.

However, one reservation made related to privacy as some participants suggested that maybe women do not want to share their secret recipes because they are considered to be heirlooms, as important as jewelry, that are to be passed down to different generations.

Migrants' involvement outlook:

This project was deemed to be highly promising, by the participants. It was visualized as having success, especially among those migrants and local people who enjoy cooking or social gatherings. However, some participants suggested that it may be limited as it could maybe only particularly appeal to migrants already comfortable in social settings who also had the money to spend on cooking. This would exclude newcomers and also people who were from communities that were perhaps not widely represented in the host county. Also, the issue of privacy was considered to be a barrier. However, this could be overcome by authenticating the recipes with the migrant women´s name to give them ownership of the recipe.

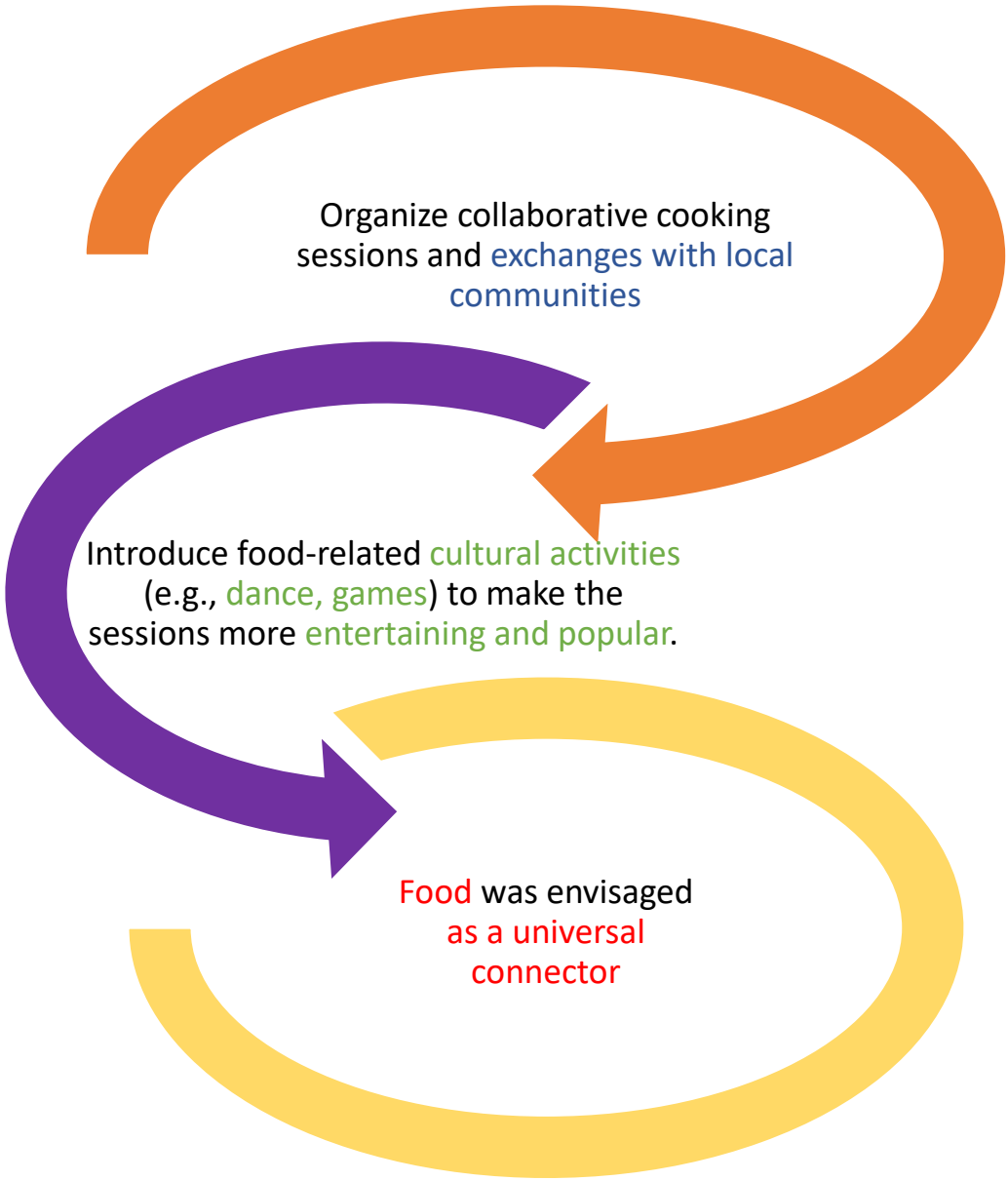

Figure 2. Main ideas elicited from the workshop for project 2

UNWRITTEN RECEIPES – key voices

Francisco (Spain): *I would propose organizing an event with local people where they could exchange recipes, traditional games, or dances.*

Mehmet (Turkey): *Good idea, but i believe it would be even better if it were a combination of recipes from their country and the host country, done collaboratively.*

Mohammed (Spain-Morocco): *I like the idea. I think people would participate because people like eating, and many would be interested in trying new things. I suggest doing common activities like making bread, which could help create more bonding and they should also make host country recipes to integrate better. I would participate and I believe it should be open to locals too.*

Emma (Denmark): *it's a good idea because I worked with migrant women organizing cooking parties where locals and migrants cooked and learned together. I suggest combining projects like this with crafting or the Winadill project because they all aim to share the best of each person and could make it more dynamic.*

Yusuf (Senegal): *This project is my favorite. Food is a good way to connect with people even if you don't speak the same language. Yes I think most migrant women cook in their countries so it would not be hard for them to participate.*

Huang (China): *I like the idea, but it sounds a bit repetitive if it's always about cooking traditional food. Maybe they could add "fusion" sessions where they cook recipes mixing their homeland and host country ingredients? I believe some migrants would join, but it might mostly attract people who already feel comfortable enough to socialize, not newcomers.*

Carmen (Spain): *To enhance it, perhaps they could occasionally invite local chefs to show their interest in the migrants' cultures too.*

Vanessa, (China): *I think food is an essential part of culture and a fundamental part of everyday life. Sharing recipes and cooking together offers a more intuitive way for immigrant women to express and share their heritage. I don't have many suggestions for improvement, but it feels meaningful to organize these events regularly, perhaps aligning them with festivals where women can present signature dishes from their hometowns. I believe this project might attract even more participation than the first one, as cooking is a more familiar and comfortable daily activity for many women.*

Alegria (China) *I think this is a very warm and culturally significant program. By cooking and sharing food it not only evokes a sense of belonging, but also breaks down language barriers and promotes natural communication between people. It can be improved by being expanded into a "Cultural Food day", where each activity is led by participants from different countries and*

small introductory sessions are added, such as telling a childhood story or holiday tradition related to the dis. Locals could als be invited to participate to promote cultural integration.
Marium: *Spain. Yes it think some advice about nutrition could be given to ensure that migrants´ health is protected because sometimes they come to new countries and they do not know which is the best food.*

4.3. Project 3 Winadill (skill exchange)

In a new country you have to rebuild yourself. Losing community and network makes you feel lonely. To feel like you belong you need to contribute. Losing your job makes you feel useless
There is also a record unemployment rate in Finland (9,4%) (February 2025) with 44,000 unemployed foreign job seekers (2024). The highest number in the history of measurement.
There are 8–12% more unemployed women with foreign background than those with Finnish background.
This project proposes a platform for promoting skills and micro-services
● Use Cases: bakers, hairstylists, baby and pet sitters, photographers, personal trainers, musicians and more
● Possibility to scale up to students, mothers on maternity leave, retirees or isolated individuals
● Place both immigrants and locals can benefit from
● Foster connections and sense of belonging

General feedback:

Overall this Project was extremely well received by the participants with some even indicating that it should be a standard activity to do to ensure that migrant women learned the local language. It was seen to be a dignifying and empowering opportunity for migrant women to gain value and a position in the host society. It was fully supported by all and recognized for encouraging meaningful exchanges even when official work is not permitted. The project was valued highly due to the fact that it meant the upskilling of migrant women. It was also perceived to be a useful tool to counteract depression and loneliness as it was giving migrant women things to do while they were waiting for their documentation. This activity was also deemed suitable to be rolled out transnationally, to be supported on an EU level. In fact, one participant suggested that an EU platform should be made so that women could even move to other countries once their documentation was obtained. Thus, the participants really related to the Winadill´s objectives and envisaged the long-term success of this project.

Improvement suggestions:

In terms of improvement participants suggested the need to establish a system to manage the skill exchanges between the women in a clear and transparent way so as to avoid favoritism e.g., through a WhatsApp group or

simple online platform. They also suggested that privacy and protection measures were needed to be put in place to ensure that women were not being exploited. This is because people with bad intentions could maybe infiltrate such a platform and ask for women to go to their homes to clean and then attack them. Other issues concerned cybersecurity attacks or the fact that personal details like addresses could be leaked, so one suggestion was to run this through a local council or community centre to ensure that protection measures were put in place for migrant women.

Others suggested perhaps the need to formalize agreements to ensure clarity and respect in exchanges. One important element that was suggested was the need to carry out training sessions on rights and protection and labour laws, to ensure the women knew what could be expected of them. Another positive element concerned the need to incorporate basic local language learning into the exchange process.

Migrants' involvement outlook:

The majority of the participants thought that this project would have great success and that migrants would certainly adhere to it due to its positive nature. In particular it was deemed to be very positive, especially for migrant women motivated to build networks, learn the local language, and showcase their skills. However, there were some reservations concerning protection measures. In addition, some participants stated that migrant women may not be able to be paid if they are on benefits etc. or receiving housing support, so in this case they could maybe receive vouchers etc. or free possibilities to engage in training sessions like computer courses etc. In addition some participants suggested that extra efforts could be made to include migrant women with children and/or dependents. These women could offer babysitter or abuela sitting (grandma sitting) so that they could carry on their duties, whilst still engaging in the programme.

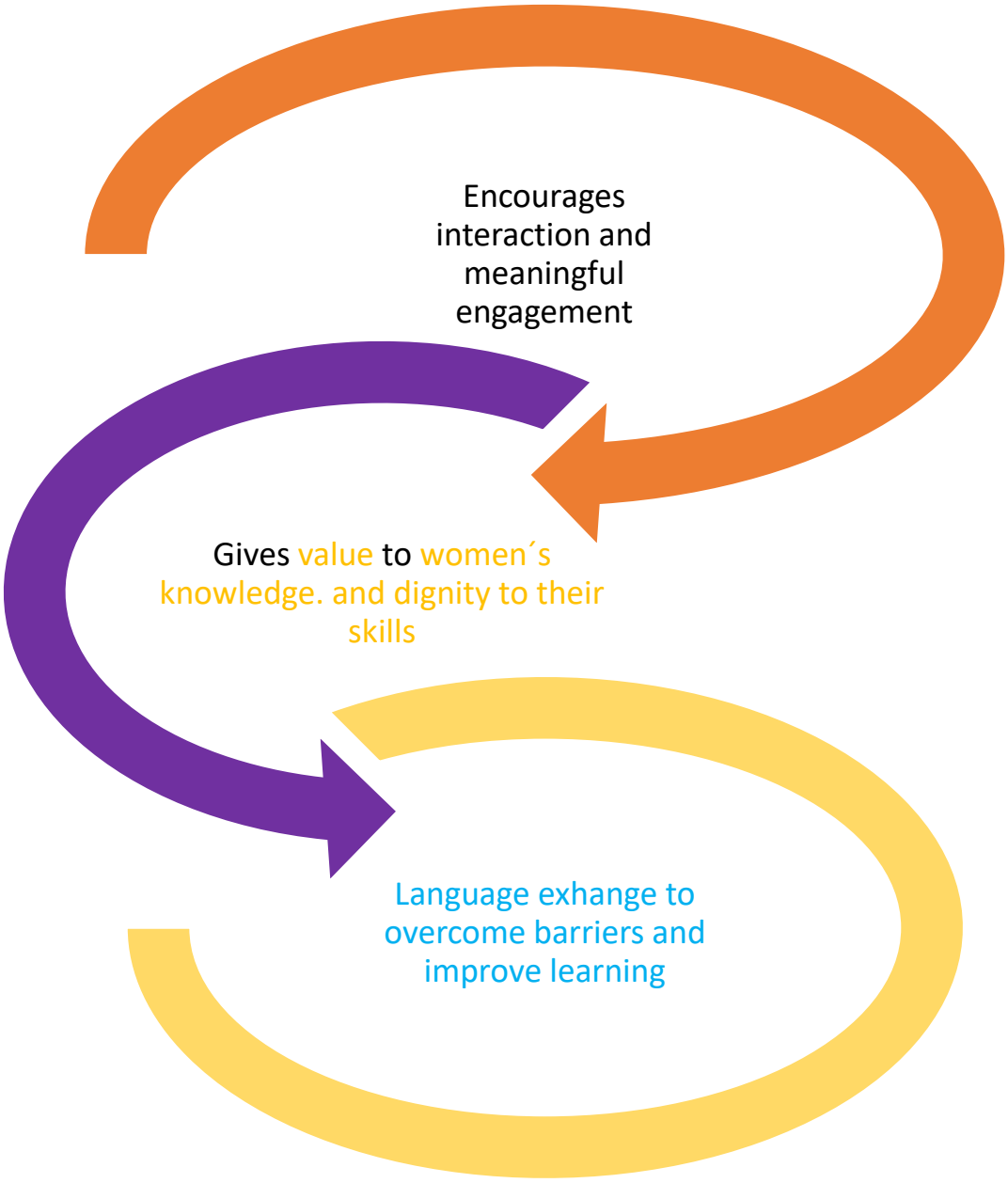

Figure 3. Main ideas elicited from the workshop for project 3

WINADILL key voices

Omar (Egypt): *I think it's a good idea, but they need to learn Spanish first, even basic things. It could also be a free knowledge exchange: the other person helps you with the local language while you help them with your native language if they're studying it, or with small skills like embroidery, etc.*

Dani (UK-Cyprus): *I think the last one is the best option because it encourages interaction, sharing, and teaching. Participants can learn a new skill while helping someone else develop theirs. It's already quite strong, so I'm not sure how much I'd change—if anything, I'd make it compulsory if possible. I believe it would really engage them, especially as a way to improve their language skills in the country they're living in.*

Catarina (Portugal): *This project is good!! people love to share what they know and what they are good at* ☺

Tamina (France): *I love this. It gives value to women's knowledge even when they're not allowed to work. To make it better, maybe organise an online platform where people can offer/request exchanges more easily.*

Begoña (Spain): *It's clever, but they must have a clear system to track offers and requests, or it'll get messy. I'd recommend an app or a simple WhatsApp group to manage it.*

Concepción (Spain): *It's a highly commendable initiative, giving dignity to women's skills. To strengthen it, I would suggest formalising the exchanges with small written agreements to ensure mutual respect and clarity. Migrant women would likely appreciate this opportunity to contribute meaningfully to society, even without official employment rights.*

Vanessa (China): *I think it offers a valuable platform for women who are not legally allowed to work to share their knowledge and skills in return for something meaningful. It would also support their personal growth and integration into local society. However, in my opinion, actual implementation could be quite complex and may face some difficulties. A more standardized platform would be needed — including clear definitions of content, methods, and rules for the exchange. Ensuring fairness and effectiveness, developing detailed curricula and evaluation criteria, and offering proper compensation to those who share their knowledge would all be essential. Still, I believe this project could be a fantastic opportunity for knowledgeable, skilled women who want to contribute and connect, as well as for immigrant women eager to learn the local language or other practical abilities.*

Alegria (China) *I think it is a very practical and meaningful project and I think it will be interesting. Through skills exchange, it can improve communication between migrants with different cultural backgrounds, and it is also very beneficial to learn new language skills.*

A more formalized platform could be created, such as a website or applet that lists "what I have to offer" and "what I need". This could be accompanied by guidelines to ensure that exchanges are fair, safe, and respectful of both parties' wishes. In addition, regular "support days" can be organized for face-to-face exchanges.
I think migrants will participate as long as they feel trusted and safe. This format is also suitable for women who want to maintain an active and fulfilling life, especially those who are accustomed to helping others on their own initiative, and who have some kind of skill or knowledge.

4.4. Project 4: Home? Belonging Short Stories (Deep Talks Game)

Migrant youth in Bolzano face persistent challenges of belonging, including stereotyping, discrimination, and systemic exclusion. Media narratives frequently portray them negatively – as academically deficient or societal threats – while overlooking their humanity, aspirations, and contributions. These reductive narratives reinforce harmful stereotypes and create significant barriers to inclusion.
My project addresses these issues by creating tools for authentic dialogue and challenging categorical thinking.

The ethnographic diary presents direct observations of youth experiences, preserving their voices and perspectives. ***Real Talk*** creates a structured environment for migrant youth to express their experiences and develop awareness of their position in society, fostering self-efficacy. During implementation, participants began articulating their experiences with discrimination more clearly, creating solidarity through shared vulnerability. The game successfully opened crucial educational conversations, as demonstrated by social workers using dialogue opportunities during the game to address topics that typically remain unspoken. Youth responses revealed growing self-awareness, with participants expressing how they felt treated differently especially in school environments.

The poster series extends this impact by challenging public perceptions, highlighting how unconscious biases shape our views of young migrants. Together, these components create pathways for migrant youth to develop

vocabulary to articulate experiences of injustice while challenging broader societal narratives.

General feedback:

This project was indeed received well by the participants, however unlike the other projects the participants did stress that there could be concerns regarding cultural sensitivity, language barriers, and willingness to share personal feelings. Participants also highlighted that in some cultures, opening up is uncommon and could be uncomfortable.

One positive element reported concerned the fact that this project focused on tackling hate crime and could have real world solutions at improving the integration of migrants in Italy.

The notion of justice was deemed particularly value, as it was giving rights to the youth and empowering them, to let them know that their experiences mattered. In addition, the gaming aspect was deemed to be particularly positive.

Improvement suggestions:

Participants suggested that organizers should carefully adapt content to cater for the linguistic abilities and cultural differences of the migrants taking part. They also suggested conducting these sessions in safe spaces that foster a welcoming atmosphere to encourage sharing. In order to enhance the sessions, the suggestion was raised to create concrete guidelines, in order to prepare the participants in advance. This could include the possible creation of a reflective booklet or journal in order to document participants' thoughts. The content of these journals could then be shared, depending on the willingness of those engaged.

Some also suggested that transnational events could be organized so that youth could play games produced from other migrant youth in other countries so as to share the different experiences in different countries. These could be done in person or even online. This would sensitize people to how certain regions and countries could be worse than others for migrants and it could also help policy makers and local officials plan better interventions.

Migrants' involvement outlook:

This project was deemed more problematic in terms of success. Individuals thought that migrants´ participation would depend heavily on the environment's inclusivity and the facilitation approach. They also suggested that locals and policy makers and also school children should attend in order to learn more about the problems faced by young migrants in Italy.

Thus, collaborative sessions with local youth from the host community were deemed to be more fruitful than individual sessions. However, that said participants who suggested that also saw that this could influence the safe spaces created in individual sessions, and migrants may be reluctant to discuss their problems if youth from the host society are present in the same sessions.

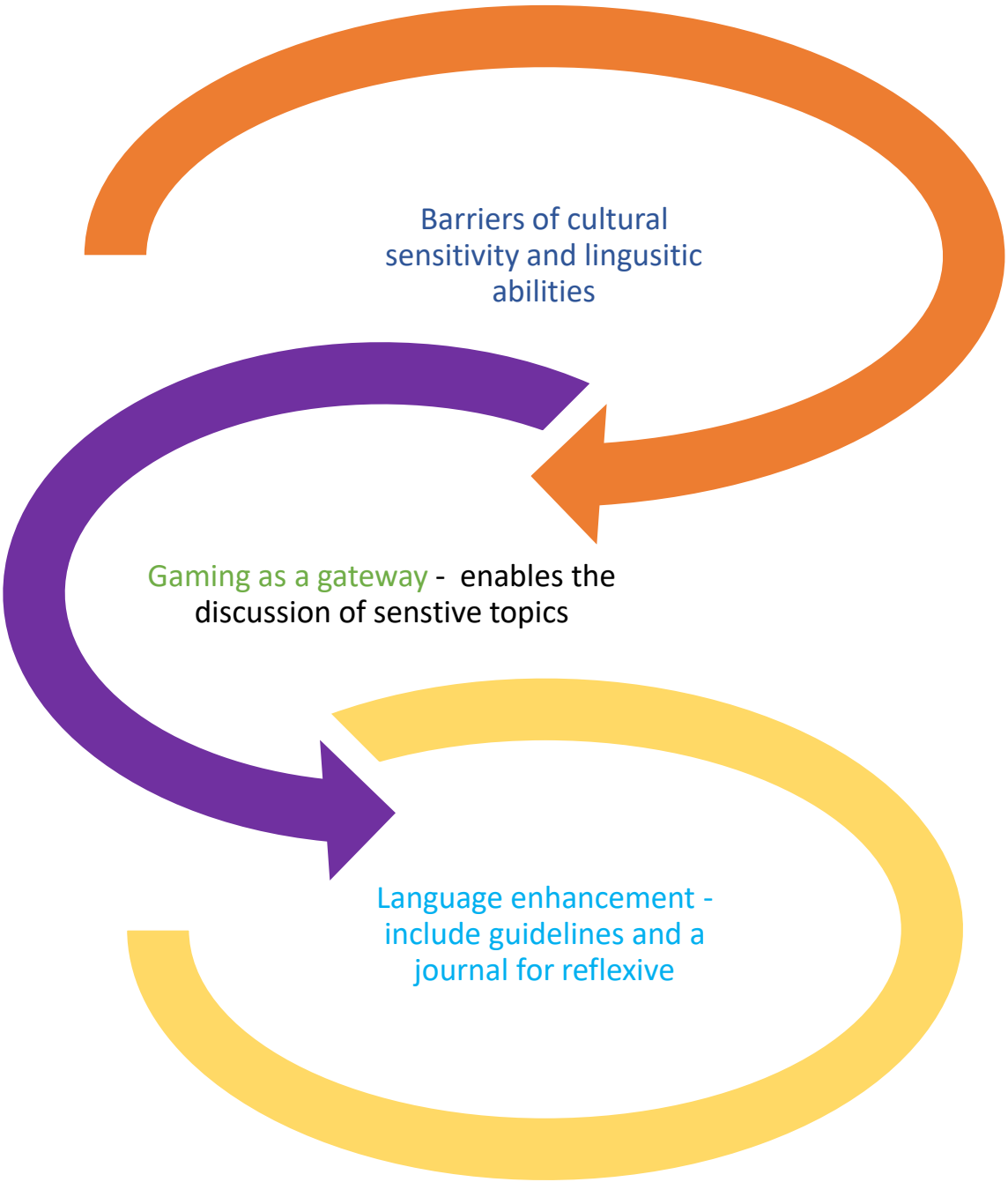

Figure 1. Main ideas elicited from the workshop for project 4

HOME? BELONGING SHORT STORIES key voices

Laura (Spain): *I think it's difficult for people to open up suddenly; it could even be uncomfortable. In the other projects, these topics are more likely to emerge naturally and kindly.*
Tarek (Syria): *In my culture, many women are conservative and religious and might not want to participate—or the opposite, they might be very open and willing to join. I think this must be considered. The game idea sounds good, but in my culture, people might view it suspiciously, which could be a problem. I don´t know how these projects will reach the people who really need them. Some might not have time for these activities because they have to work.*
Tim (Germany): *Depending on their language skill I feel like this one could get lost in translation or be hard to get people to share as in some cultures it's not common to share feelings. It would be a good challenge but I think it would be fun for them*
Kamakshi (India): *Good idea! Fun but also deep-smart. Improvement: Maybe make sure it's adapted to people who don't speak the local language perfectly. I think it could work but would depend on how welcoming the vibe is.*
Carla (Spain): *Games break walls like nothing else. Maybe they could create a little booklet where people can write their reflections after playing, like a memory journal.*
Carmen: Spain: *Yes, I really see this taking off all over really…because it is different.*

4.5. Common themes elicited in the projects

It is important to note that despite having different focuses some common themes emerged for multiple winning projects. These are illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 5. Intersecting ideas from all of the winning projects

5. Research insights

It is important to note that whilst doing these workshops, participants continued to report on their lived experiences of migration or those of their compatriots, including family members and/or friends. Researchers have decided to include these background conversations in the deliverable as they are really important for WP15 for the policy roundtables and also to the future design of any projects, wishing to foster belonging, whether they be online and offline. Spain has experienced a significant transformation over recent decades, evolving from a country of emigration to one of immigration. This demographic shift has brought about cultural diversity and economic contributions but has also highlighted a range of structural challenges that migrants reported in the research. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing legal, economic, social, and institutional dimensions.

Thus, a summary of the themes are presented below.

Cultural Barriers

Participants stressed that it was essential that integration was undertaken from the "bottom-up" and that "*it was ok to not belong*" and to opt out and that they "*should not be made to feel bad for that*". Thus, active non-integration should always be given as an option. Some participants from Morocco stressed that it was vital they were allowed to continue their traditions and celebrate their festivals and wear religious clothing at schools and not be discriminated against. They stated that they should not be criticised for not wanting to integrate fully. Thus, participants used terms like the need for authenticity, which including retaining the right for non-integration, which was an interesting finding. All of these discussions happened naturally, whilst co-creating the winning project´s ideas. One issue raised by participants from China, resident in Spain concerned the changing of their names to a Spanish version, to make it easier for people to pronounce them. This was experienced negatively by them, affecting their sense of identity.

System challenges

This was one of the most important factors reported and indeed many participants talked about the difficulties they had getting residence permits or national identity numbers to enable them to work. Others talked about the impossibility of getting appointments online to get permits to move house or a NIE card and this left them feeling empty and hopeless. Other failures concerned the low wages and lack of opportunities for migrant workers – particularly women who were often reduced to cleaning jobs. Thus, whilst the events like crafting and cooking were deemed to be crucial, participants also suggested that "*real word*" changes and *"a shake up in the system*" needed to be undertaken in order to enact real change. Thus, participants suggested that these workshops should not be treated as diversionary events, preventing migrant women from reclaiming their real rights in society.

A primary concern raised by the migrants in the workshops concerned the complexity and precariousness of legal status.They reported that the process of regularization is often slow and inconsistent, with significant delays in granting asylum or residency status. They also reported frequently facing labor market segmentation and occupational downgrading. Despite possessing qualifications. This meant that many who took part in the sessions reported that they or their parents and co-patriots were employed in low-paid, temporary, or informal jobs, particularly in sectors like agriculture,

domestic work, and hospitality. These positions often lack labor protections, exposing workers to poor conditions and wage theft.

Social Exclusion and Discrimination

Social integration remains a complex and uneven process for migrants in Spain. Participants reported language barriers, limited cultural orientation programs, and insufficient institutional support inhibit effective participation in social, civic, and political life. Discrimination and xenophobia were also reported to be persistent problems, thus the participants raised the importance of tackling hate crime and discrimination, which many reported as being underreported. Overall, the participants suggested that there are negative perceptions of migrants throughout Europe and that these problems cannot be tackled by only the winning project´s ideas of cooking programmes and crafting programmes. Rather for some it was more important to unite and protest and also organised pollical groups and associations that could fight for migrant women´s rights.

6. Conclusion

The REBEL project has illustrated the transformative potential of co-creation within a participatory action research (PAR) framework to address the complexities of migration in a more inclusive, ethical, and grounded manner. Traditional migration research often maintains a distance between researchers and the communities they study, reinforcing power imbalances and limiting the relevance of the findings to those most affected. In contrast, the REBEL project positions migrants not as subjects of research, but as co-researchers and co-creators of knowledge. This shift fundamentally altered the research process, creating a collaborative space where diverse forms of knowledge—experiential, cultural, institutional, and academic—could interact meaningfully.

Co-creation in this context involved shared decision making to give feedback on four of the five winning designs in the REBEL project. Migrant participants played a crucial role in these workshops, which not only deepened the trust between participants and researchers but also enabled the research to generate insights that were both academically rigorous and practically actionable.

Moreover, co-creation fostered capacity building and empowerment. Many of the participants in these workshops in Spain were themselves

migrants, and thus they gained research skills, critical reflection tools, during the research. At the same time, the winners of the projects gained a deeper understanding of the nuanced, structural barriers, and benefits of their projects, that could have otherwise remained hidden.

Findings from these sessions will not be simply documented for academic dissemination but rather will be used to inform community initiatives, support advocacy efforts, and engagement with policymakers in other work packages of 13 and 15. Thus, the outcomes are not only meaningful to the winning participants but rather they contribute to broader systemic conversations about migration, inclusion, and social justice.

In addition, researchers have reported all the themes discussed during the sessions because some migrants and individuals used the workshop also as a place where they could discuss pertinent themes regarding integration too, which are often shaped by a constellation of structural barriers that intersect to create enduring patterns of inequality. Legal precarity, economic exploitation, inadequate housing, social discrimination, and limited access to services are interconnected phenomena that demand a comprehensive policy response. Addressing these challenges requires not only legal reform and improved service provision but also a cultural shift toward a more inclusive and rights-based understanding of migration and diversity in Spanish society.

In conclusion, the REBEL project affirms that co-creation within participatory action research is not only methodologically robust but also ethically imperative in the context of migration research. It challenges extractive practices, redistributes power, and builds research that is by and for the communities it seeks to understand. It provides a more equitable, responsive, and impactful research and action.

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