



REDESIGN BELONGING

D12.1

Pitching to Policymakers Report



Co-funded by
the European Union

Project No.: 101146813
Topic: CERV-2023-CITIZENS-CIV
Type of Action: CERV Lump Sum Grants

Deliverable name

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Organisation	Visio Education Centre
Deliverable number	D12.1
Deliverable type	Document report
Dissemination level	Public

Abstract	In WP12 of the Redesign Belonging project, the objective was for the Creative Collective Members, winners of the design challenge, to pitch and showcase their projects to policymakers in each partner country. In this report, the key results and insights from each session have been gathered and analysed.
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Keywords design challenge, policymaking, service design, migrant women

Document revision history

Version	Date	Description	Contributors
1.0	7/10/2025	Initial version	Magdalena Kosová, Karen Hough, Rosa Kieft, Suvi Valsta (ed.)

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1. Event in Spain

1.1. Event time and date

Date & Time:

18 June 2025, 17:00–20:00

Location:

Enebro in Granada, Spain

1.2. Participant Overview

- **Total number of participants:** 15
- **Target audience(s):** Young adults with a migrant background and representatives from the local council and region and NGOs working in policy
- **Brief profile of attendees:** Generally, they are young people between 19 and 35 years old, mostly educated. Some were activists working on fighting for migrant rights in NGOs in the area of policy, or in educational establishments. As elected policy makers did not attend the event, despite being invited, the policy briefs were shared via email, with members of the local council and other policy makers and experts too to ensure the maximum reach and get feedback. All input was integrated into the policy brief.

1.3. Event Themes and Objectives

The main theme of the event was to present and pitch the policy brief focused on migrants and their barriers to integration. The primary objectives were to raise awareness about the policy proposals and to build networks by reaching out to professionals working in relevant fields, encouraging them to review and comment on the brief. Additionally, gathering contact information and ensuring the brief was distributed to the right audience was important for follow-up and documentation purposes.

1.4. Event Choreography

- **Introduction:** Welcomed participants and explained the purpose of the workshop, outlining the main themes related to migrants and asylum and immigration policy.
- **Presentation:** Delivered a detailed pitch of the policy brief, highlighting key recommendations and the importance of the topic.
- **Q&A Session:** Opened the floor for questions and clarifications from participants to ensure understanding and engagement.
- **Discussion:** Facilitated a round-table or panel discussion with attendees to gather initial feedback and encourage exchange of ideas.

1.5. Participant Feedback

The people who joined the workshop seemed really interested in the policy brief and the issues it covered. Most of them said they already knew some of the problems migrants face, like legal uncertainty and bad working conditions, but they appreciated having it all laid out clearly, especially the parts about how women migrants are affected differently. That was something new for a few of them.

During the discussion, a lot of questions came up about how to make it easier for migrants to get papers faster, and how local services could do a better job helping out. Some suggested more community support groups or peer networks to share info and support each other.

Overall, the session went pretty well. Because it was a small group, everyone felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and personal experiences. The brief's clear recommendations helped keep the conversation focused and productive.

One thing that worked well was how practical the suggestions were, like improving housing options and making public services more accessible in different languages. People seemed to connect with those ideas easily.

There were some doubts too, a few people said it might be hard to change the government bureaucracy quickly or get enough funding. Some also felt that politics could get in the way of making real improvements.

One surprise was when a few participants talked about how mental health support for migrants is really needed, which was not a big focus in the brief but is definitely something to think about.

1.6. Documentation & Materials

Person 1 – Colombian, Spanish resident

I really like how the brief talks about the problems migrant women face. As a young woman here, I've seen how hard it is dealing with money issues and sometimes even harassment. It's good they're pointing out we need special protection. My friends often feel pretty unsafe, especially migrant women alone at night, so this kind of support would help a lot. It's nice to see someone actually talking about it.

Person 2 – Moroccan, Spanish resident

The asylum process is just way too slow. I know people waiting for years without knowing what's gonna happen, and it's super stressful. It makes it hard to plan anything, like studying or working properly. If they could speed things up and make it easier, we'd feel a lot better. Right now, it's just a big source of stress.

Person 3 – Cuban, Spanish resident

It's annoying that even when we're qualified, a lot of us end up in low-paid jobs. I have a degree but had to take a part-time job waiting tables because it's tough to get something better. Lots of migrants get stuck doing jobs with no rights or protections. It's like our skills don't count here. We really need better ways to get our qualifications recognised.

Person 4 – Spanish/Moroccan,

Finding a place to live is so hard. I've been turned down by landlords just because I'm from another country, even when I could pay rent. Most of us have to settle for cramped, expensive flats or share with strangers. It's stressful and makes it tough to focus on studying or work. Affordable housing for migrants would make a huge difference.

Person 5 – Peruvian – Spanish resident

A lot of migrant workers put up with bad conditions because they're scared of losing their jobs. Some girls I know have faced bad treatment or worse but didn't say anything because of fear. We need stronger laws and info so people know their rights and feel safe to speak up. Without that, exploitation will just keep happening. Workplaces need to be safe for everyone.

Person 6 – Spanish, Social Activist in policy

I think having migrant-led groups to report hate crimes is a great idea. People would feel more comfortable talking to others who get what they're going through. Racism happens a lot, but many don't report it because they don't trust the system. This could change that and make sure the police actually listen. Plus, having that kind of support would help with the stress and anxiety people feel after facing discrimination. It would make a real difference.

Person 7 – Senegalese, Spanish resident

Language classes are cool, but we also need job training and digital skills. When I'm close to finishing school, I see lots of migrants struggling to find good jobs because they don't have these extra skills. Training that fits with our work and study schedules would be amazing. It's about more than just learning Spanish; it's about being ready for real jobs here.

Person 8 – Colombian, Spanish resident

Getting my qualifications recognised took way too long, and that's so frustrating. Lots of young migrants get stuck working in jobs below their skill level because of this. It feels like

a waste of time and talent. Faster recognition would open up way better opportunities for us. It's really important for those of us wanting to build a career.

Person 9 – Senegalese, Spanish resident

The government services are all over the place depending on where you live. In Andalusia, for example, some services aren't well funded or easy to access. Many migrants miss out on support they need for school or work. It'd be way better if all levels of government worked together more smoothly. We need easier access to help no matter where we are.

Person 10 – Chinese, Spanish resident

Registering for empadronamiento is such a hassle, especially if you don't have stable housing. I know people who can't get healthcare or school access because of this. If that process was easier, a lot more migrants could get the services they need. It'd make life a lot less complicated for us.

Person 11 – Argentinian, Spanish resident

Discrimination isn't just unfair, it actually costs the economy a lot. When migrants get left out of jobs or school, Spain misses out on their talents. The brief says it's billions lost every year because of this, which is huge. Fixing discrimination isn't just the right thing, it makes economic sense too. Young migrants want to contribute but need a fair chance.

Person 12 – Mexican, Spanish resident

We need better stories about migrants in the media and public life. Too often, people see us in a negative way, which makes us feel like outsiders. If schools and media promoted more positive and inclusive messages, it would help a lot. It'd reduce racism and help us feel like we belong. Feeling accepted is super important.

Person 13 – Moroccan, Spanish resident

A lot of migrants don't report workplace abuses because they don't know their rights or are scared. This is especially true for young people new to working here. We need more info campaigns and easy legal help so people can stand up for themselves. Otherwise, bad bosses just keep taking advantage. Knowing your rights should be part of what we learn.

Person 14 – Pakistani, Spanish resident

Special police units to deal with violence and exploitation would be great. Many of us don't trust the police or don't know where to go when something happens. If there was a safe, welcoming place to report problems, more people would come forward. That would make everyone feel safer. It shows the system actually cares about protecting migrants.

Person 15 – German, Spanish resident

Public-private partnerships for internships and apprenticeships would help a lot. Young migrants need real work experience to get better jobs later. Without chances like that, it's hard to break into the job market. These programs would help us get our foot in the door. It's a practical way to help us succeed.

1.7. Next Steps

The feedback from the workshop highlighted the importance of focusing on practical, community-driven solutions alongside policy recommendations. We will use this input to revise the policy brief by adding more emphasis on peer support networks and mental health services, which came up as key concerns. Also, we will explore ways to simplify information for migrants so they can better understand their rights and available services. The feedback about bureaucracy and funding challenges will push us to include more realistic, step-by-step approaches for implementation, making the proposals more actionable for local groups and NGOs.

1.8. Additional Notes

It was clear that participants value a sense of belonging and community as much as legal or economic support. Future events should create more space for personal stories and peer exchanges to complement the policy discussions. Also, gathering contacts from local organizations during the event could be useful for follow-up, so continuing to build this network will be important. Finally, language accessibility and clear communication remain priorities to ensure everyone can participate fully.

2. Event in Finland

2.1. Redesign Belonging at SuomiAreena

We held two very distinct sessions at the SuomiAreena festival in Pori: a pop-up workshop for the members of public to participate in an ideation activity and give feedback to the desing challenge projects, and a 45min panel discussion reflecting on the themes of the ReBel winner ideas.

SuomiAreena is the largest societal discussion festival in Finland, and a part of European-wide network of democracy festivals, Democracy Festivals Association. The main concept of the event is to give the opportunity for every Finn to participate in the debate on social, economic and political topics that concern the whole Finnish society. The festival is also frequented by politicians from local, regional and national levels of decision-making and other policy makers¹.

Date & Time:

24–25 June 2025

Location:

Pori, Finland: Puuvilla Stage (Siltapuistokatu 14, 28100 Pori) & Citizen Arena (Pohjoiskauppatori, 28100 Pori)

Organizing Partner(s):

Laurea, Visio

Facilitators/Hosts:

Guest facilitator for the panel discussion event (*"A society where everyone truly feels they belong?"*):

- **Fatim Diarra**, Member of the Finnish Parliament, member of the City Council of Helsinki

Discussion panelists:

- **Maija Aalto**, Multicultural Associations of Satakunta
- **Jutta-Riina Karhunen**, Itäkeskus Comprehensive School
- **Montasir Mohamed**, Consultant and Entrepreneur

Facilitators at Citizen Arena: Magdalena Kosova, Katja Alvoittu, Kaisu Österinen, Suvi Valsta

¹ Source: SuomiAreena.fi. Accessed 26.8.2025.

Programme page print-out from SuomiAreena website can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

2.2. Participant Overview

- **Total number of participants: 95**

In total, the two types of events at the SuomiAreena had a total of 95 participants, from two countries: Finland (93) and Sweden (2). Gender distribution was skewed towards female participants (76) with male participants (19) consisting of a minority, while no participants reported identifying as non-binary. It is possible that the events happened attract more female participants because of the overall project focus being on migrant women. The participant numbers were totaled based on asking participants to fill in information cards at the events. However, some of the filled cards and, respectively, participants had to be excluded from the total as they did not contain the necessary details to be counted towards the totals.

2.2.1. Brief profile of attendees:

Festival attendees consist of primarily but not exclusively members of the local and regional community, including representatives of various organizations and other bodies as well as local, regional and national politicians. Many attendees were also from the festival's other participating organizations. Participants represented virtually all age groups (with children attending alongside their guardians but not targeted in the event activities).

The panel discussion took place on one of the SuomiAreena stages hosted at a local shopping mall and was streamed online and on a nationwide TV channel (MTV) (link to recording available in deliverable D12.2).

2.2.2. Event themes and objectives

The main theme of the event was to present the ReBel project, its main themes and (the themes of) the winning ideas through active participation, and to encourage discussions on the topics of belonging (or "being new somewhere"), helping to create a more open society or barriers immigrants face in their new home countries. As a secondary aim, we aimed to gather the attendees' ideas on removing barriers to belonging; although this was not a direct WP objective, we decided to use the attendees' input for gaining better understanding of the general population's opinions on belonging (to be communicated to the winner teams) and for compiling a blog post.

By participating in *SuomiAreena*, the project communicated its main values: the importance of cooperation, co-creation and dialogue for policy making, and presenting innovative solutions to societal problems (ie., feeling of not-belonging among the migrant population).

2.2.3. Event Choreography

2.2.3.1. Pop-up workshop at Citizen Arena

- At our pop-up workshop, located in a tent on the main street, we invited passers-by to stop for a discussion about topics related to belonging. After a short introduction to the ReBel project, we asked them whether they would like to discuss their ideas on removing obstacles from belonging. They could, if they wished, fill in their ideas on Idea Cards we then displayed on the wall.
- The cards had the following question to get the participants thinking: **"If you had a magic wand and could change anything — big or small — to help people feel a greater sense of belonging, what would you change?"**
- Every completed card was hung up on a large display sheet, idea-side facing outwards, so that visitors could wander through a growing wall of imagination and inspiration.
- Alongside the cards, the stand featured posters about Creative Cohort projects of the ReBel project and an announcement of the upcoming presentation of the winning ideas. These were the same posters we had already used in WP11.
- Attendees were also welcome to give feedback on the projects displayed (yet, to our knowledge, no one took this opportunity).

2.2.3.2. Panel discussion

The **project team** selected and invited three representatives of organizations working with immigrants in different sectors to join the panel discussion. In addition, **Fatim Diarra (Member of the Finnish Parliament)** was invited to facilitate the discussion.

- **Objectives of the panel:**
 - To present the winning ideas (a 3-minute video shown at the beginning of the event).
 - To offer the audience an interesting and engaging discussion with the panelists.
 - To actively involve the audience (participants will write down their own ideas on cards distributed to them).

- **Opening and introductions:**

Facilitator Fatim Diarra introduces herself, the panelists, and the project.

Panelists:

- Maija Aalto, Multicultural Associations of Satakunta
- Jutta-Riina Karhunen, Itäkeskus Comprehensive School

- Montasir Mohamed, Consultant and Entrepreneur

- **Presentation of winning Creative Collective projects:**

A 3-minute video presenting each project compiled by Laurea ([link to the presentation video](#))

- **Panel discussion:**

Guiding themes and questions:

- Did any of the presented projects or themes resonate with you, and if so, why?
- This project revolves around belonging: what is needed for someone to feel part of a community?
- How have you worked to support a sense of belonging in your own work?
- What prevents people from feeling that they belong?
- How important is the sense of belonging for integration?
If you had a magic wand and could wish for just one thing to make integration and belonging easier — what would it be?

- **Audience participation:**

If anyone in the audience would like to share their own idea, this will be possible at the end of the discussion.

Panel discussion can be viewed online: [Finnish broadcaster MTV's streaming service: A society where everyone truly feels they belong?](#)

- **Prize draw**

The following week, from all cards, we drew two winners of 50€ gift card to a nationwide bookshop chain.

2.3. Participant Feedback

2.3.1. General response of the participants

From both the organizer team's accounts of the event and from the participant count we can conclude that the event was successful. Naturally, we cannot establish exact participatory motives in a session like this – this is almost always a risk in rewarded participative activities in larger events – but from the eagerness among many participants to share their story, we felt that this was a fruitful session in which the vast majority of participants truly and actively wish to contribute.

People were generally happy to learn about the project and to engage in the activity. The sentiment was similar to the one at the World Village festival (WP11), where many people shared their experience of active inclusion, rootlessness, loneliness in different contexts. These contexts varied according to the persons experience and situation; we

were very happy to see that many young people also were thinking about the topics of inclusions and belonging, for example, how to include a new student at school or in the neighbourhood to make them feel like they belong to the group. We did not meet any direct resistance or expressions of hate, just lack of interest in the topic of some non-participants.

From the perspective of passers-by unfamiliar with the project, it was difficult to at the first sight understand what ReBel stands for; this put a certain pressure on the project to actively approach the visitors and invite them to get acquainted with the project, and answer to the visitors' questions. The initial contact was typically done by trying to ask the visitors about the concept of belonging from their perspective. The project teams' task to take active contact with the visitors or passers-by and invite them to become familiar with the project and to take part in the activity was even more so important since all posters and information materials were in English, which would otherwise pose a barrier for participation for many. Similarly, the idea cards with instructions were both in English and Finnish, which proved to be rather helpful, as a share of attendees spoke or preferred to speak English or another language with the project team (we received several ideas in English and Swedish).

Participants often shared personal stories about moving to Pori, engaging with the immigrant community, and views on the broader geopolitical situation. In casual discussions, community members reflected on belonging, inclusion, and integration from diverse perspectives. Migrant participants, generally content with their lives, frequently expressed the desire for permanent work contracts—echoing earlier workshop results (WP3), where permanent contract and stable employment was seen as central to belonging, wellbeing, and security. A parish representative highlighted exposure to different cultures as key to fostering respect and tolerance, while city locals brainstormed ways to welcome newcomers. These conversations showed that the experience of *wanting to belong* extends beyond migrants to wider society, linking experiences of “being new” with normalizing immigrants' situation.

2.3.2. Ideas facilitating the feeling of belonging: analysis of the idea cards

The idea cards were used for engaging the visitors and audience in brainstorming ideas that could increase social cohesion and the feeling of belonging; the question to be answered was: **If you had a magic wand and could change anything in the world, what would you change in order to improve social cohesion and foster the feeling of belonging?** We decided to use a very broad question; purposefully, we did not specify what the societal context or the context of the feeling of belonging stand for. Furthermore, we were looking for bold ideas that would not be confined by other factors, such as the political situation, financing, etc., and thus could reflect the participants' perspectives better. Therefore, we prompted a magic wand question, which motivates one for looking for answers that may better be aligned with one's beliefs and values, and that can in turn lead to an increased understanding of factors contributing to enhanced feeling of belonging.



Overall, the participants' ideas reflected a strong desire for a more equal, inclusive, and peaceful society, free from racism, discrimination, and polarization. Many emphasized the importance of belonging, everyday acts of kindness, and fair opportunities for all—particularly children and newcomers. Alongside these, local perspectives, economic stability, environmental concerns, and the role of community institutions like schools and the church also emerged as important themes.

The strongest theme concerned eradicating racism, discrimination, and bullying, alongside promoting tolerance, diversity, and safe environments for all, especially children.

"Why don't people learn anything... We could all live in harmony in this world. I would like to change the world so that no one would be oppressed or hurt. Make peace."

Closely linked to this were wishes for greater positive representation of diversity in society: increased tolerance, curiosity about *“the others”*, minorities in decision-making, or spaces where multiculturalism is presented positively.

“If I had a magic wand I would like to have a camouflaging power and camouflage to different countries.”

A smaller group of ideas emphasized the need for better information channels and countering misinformation and false news. Others focused specifically on children, calling for a safe childhood for all and more safe spaces for young people.

2.3.2.2. Togetherness and focus on what we have in common

This cluster highlighted the importance of common goals, belonging, and everyday actions to build inclusion, from schools to workplaces and political life.

Many ideas were centered on strengthening what unites us rather than what separates us. Participants stressed that everyone is needed to build a society where all feel they belong:

“... remember it's a 2-way street, it's a human issue and we need everyone onboard”

Ideas ranged from small acts like *“everybody saying Hi to their neighbour”* to workplace inclusion practices and combating loneliness. Several called for attitude shifts—fostering self-reflection, breaking cultural barriers to interaction, and respecting human dignity.

Schools were a recurring focus. Cards described how pupils could welcome newcomers and create inclusive environments:

“One could talk to him and get to know him, also be there for him if something happened. One could also support him.”

Others stressed the value of teaching practical skills for community life and encouraging bravery in collective action:

“I wish people were braver, so that society and its systems would develop further, continually requiring teamwork and a sense of community.”

Some called for political compromise as a way forward:

“Compromises that gain sufficient support from everyone – without them, it is impossible to move forward into the future.”

Language was seen as a key tool or enabler, whether through better learning tools for immigrants or simply finding ways to understand each other better.

2.3.2.3. Peace and politics

Ideas in this theme linked peace to justice, equality, and fair access to resources—while also reflecting frustrations with political polarization and global inequalities.

Many participants connected peace not only with politics but also with access to food, safety, health, and wellbeing. Calls for removing xenophobic politicians and addressing international conflicts reflected a concern that divisive politics fuel societal polarization.

"I would remove the tendency of people to pursue financial gain at the expense of justice and the rights of others."

Several ideas focused on equality in opportunities and resources, calling for education, safety, healthcare, and meaningful activities for all:

"I would address inequality in society: everyone should have the opportunity to get an education, find employment, live in safety, access healthcare, and have meaningful activities in life."

2.3.2.4. Local and personal contexts

These ideas reflected both pride and frustration in relation to life in Pori, as well as the personal experiences of newcomers trying to build a future there.

Some cards described Pori as the best place in Finland, inviting others to move there, while others lamented its decline and called for more community activities, events, or tailored spaces.

Several contributions came from immigrants, expressing the difficulties of building a new life and finding opportunities:

"I don't wish that I'm going to regret leaving everything I had in Sweden to start a new life in Finland. But without any opportunities, regret is imminent."

2.3.2.5. Specific societal themes

This cluster gathered ideas on economy, environment, and religion—three areas participants linked directly to wellbeing and belonging.

Employment and economic stability were recurring concerns, especially among immigrants who wished for opportunities to contribute meaningfully:

"I [would] open new factories to give job opportunities to newcomers and residents in Pori."

"Give me a chance to know how can I find a job for caregiver."

Other participants linked protecting the planet with fostering tolerance and respect, while some emphasized the church as a place of community and belonging.

2.4. Documentation & Materials



Figure 2: Photos from the Citizen Arena (permission to publish the picture obtained)

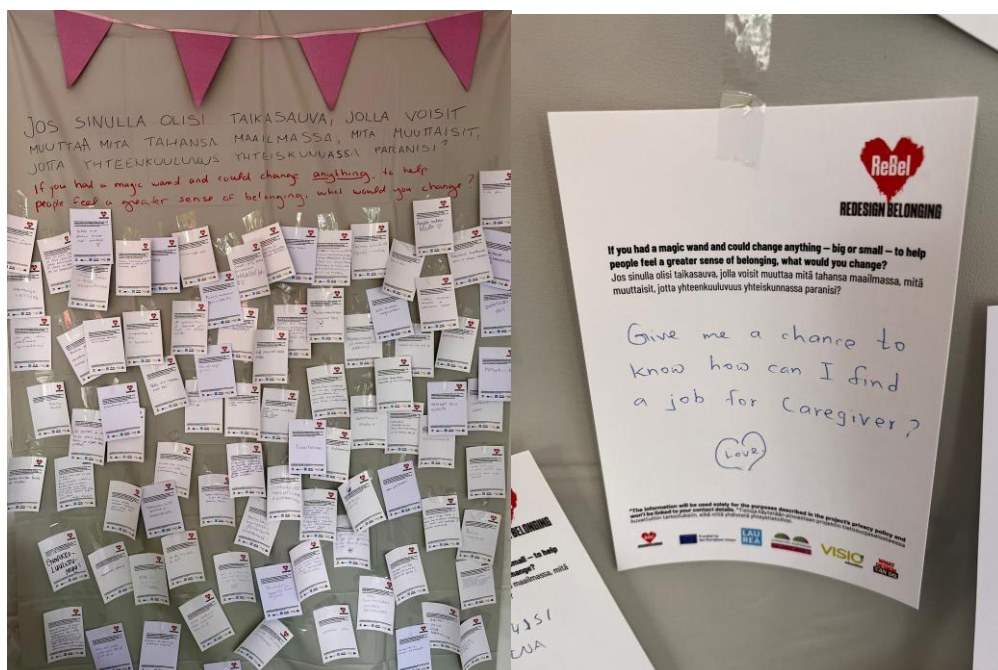


Figure 3: Photos from the idea card tree installation



Figure 4: Photos from the panel discussion (permission to publish the picture obtained)



REDESIGN BELONGING

If you had a magic wand and could change anything – big or small – to help people feel a greater sense of belonging, what would you change?
 Jos sinulla olisi taikasauva, jolla voisit muuttaa mitä tahansa maailmassa, mitä muuttaisit, jotta yhteenkuuluvuus yhteiskunnassa paranisi?

Name/Initials* Nimi/nimimerkki*:

Gender Sukupuoli:
☐ male mies ☐ female nainen ☐ other muu

Country of Residence Asuinmaa:
☐ Finland Suomi ☐ Other - please specify: muu, mikä?:

To enter the prize draw for a chance to win a 50€ gift card to Suomalainen Kirjakauppa, please leave your email or phone number:
 Osallistu arvontaan ja voita 50 € lahjakortti Suomalaisen Kirjakauppaan jättämällä sähköpostiosoitteesi tai puhelinnumerosi:

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Figure 5: •Cards used in participant engagement and to collect participant information

2.5. Next Steps

The feedback received through public engagement at the stand will be used as a base for the policy brief and for the discussion with the policy makers in the later stages of the project. The outcome was further disseminated through active engagement between Visio and the Green Women League. The League was interested in the results of the engagement with the public and the target group's integration-related challenges.

3. Event in the Netherlands

Redesign Belonging Showcase during What Design Can Do Live 2025 at Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. This was a breakout session part of the WDCD Live programme. During this session the audience had the opportunity to hear about the Redesign Belonging projects for the first time and connect with them as they were physically present at the event in Amsterdam.

Date & Time:

Friday 6 June, 2025. 17.00–18.00

Location:

Pakhuis de Zwijger, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Organizing Partner:

What Design Can Do

Facilitators/Hosts:

- Rosa Kieft: moderator
- Shay Raviv: panelist
- Thami Schweichler: panelist

3.1. Participant Overview

- **Total number of participants:** 27 (4 men, 23 women)
- **Target audience(s):** Designers, campaigners, governmental institutions
- **Brief profile of attendees:**

The attendees were a mix of designers interested in the topic of belonging and working with co-creation. Next to that there were attendees working for governmental institutions or working for organisations that work with policy makers.

3.2. Event Themes and Objectives

The event was organized to provide a platform for the five winning projects of the Redesign Belonging Challenge, offering them the opportunity to present their work and the progress they had made since being selected as a winner. Taking place in Amsterdam during What Design Can Do, it created the right moment for project owners to share their visions directly with an audience of peers, designers, and policy makers or those working for governmental institutions. By giving the stage to the winners, the event highlighted how design can play a vital role in addressing issues of belonging, inclusion, and migration.

Alongside the presentations, the programme featured a panel discussion with experts who brought different perspectives to the conversation. Thami Schweichler, founder of United Repair Centre, shared insights from his work with refugees and immigrants

while also contributing his perspective as a designer. Panelist Shay Raviv is a design researcher and member of the jury and the research phase of the challenge, and curator of the Embassy of Inclusion at Dutch Design Week. The event was moderated by Rosa Kieft, head of innovation programmes at What Design Can Do and project lead for the challenge, the panel emphasized both the practical and conceptual dimensions of designing for belonging.

The event also invited the audience to play an active role, encouraging them to connect with the projects and support their growth in concrete ways. This ranged from sharing projects on social media to exploring possible collaborations and partnerships that could expand their reach. By fostering dialogue between designers, experts, and participants, the event not only showcased innovative solutions but also sought to build a wider network of engagement around the challenge, strengthening the capacity of design to address pressing social issues.

3.3. Event Choreography

The event started with a personal exercise for all audience members. They were asked to think about something that makes them feel like they belong in the form of senses, which could be a smell, a sound, a taste or a feeling. Next the Redesign Belonging project was explained to attendees who have not heard about the project before. After introducing the panelists it was time for the project owners to present their work. They each had 5 minutes to present and after 5 minutes to answer questions of the panelists or audience members. The room was asked to keep an open mind and support with constructive feedback as in some cases the project owners are just getting started. Overall, the atmosphere was friendly, open and with personal reflections.

The event opened with an intimate exercise that set a reflective tone for the afternoon. Audience members were invited to pause and think about something that evokes a sense of belonging in their own lives, expressed through the senses: whether a familiar smell, a comforting sound, a particular taste, or a feeling tied to a moment or place. This simple yet personal activity created a shared starting point, grounding everyone in the theme of belonging before moving into the presentations.

For those unfamiliar with the initiative, the Redesign Belonging project was introduced, outlining its purpose and the journey that had led to this moment. The panelists were then presented, each bringing their own expertise and experience in design, inclusion, and community building. With the stage set, it was time for the project owners to take the spotlight. Each had five minutes to present their work, followed by another five minutes to engage with questions from the panel and the audience.

3.4. Participant Feedback

Attendees were invited to engage with openness and to provide feedback in a constructive manner, with the understanding that for several project owners this marked the early stages of their development. This framing proved effective in setting the tone for the exchange, ensuring that the feedback remained supportive and reflective rather than overly practical or critical. The atmosphere throughout the event

was consistently warm and welcoming, fostered by a spirit of personal connection and a shared commitment to examining the meaning of belonging in diverse contexts.

A positive outcome was the generosity of participants in offering feedback that went beyond surface-level commentary. Many attendees actively reflected on their own networks and relationships, considering ways in which they could help create meaningful connections for the projects. This demonstrated a strong sense of collective responsibility and investment in the success of the initiatives presented.

As the event concluded, there was a sense of excitement and optimism in the room. Attendees expressed not only interest in following the projects as they continue to develop but also hope for their potential impact. The combination of thoughtful engagement, constructive feedback, and genuine enthusiasm highlighted the event's ability to inspire both immediate dialogue and longer-term commitment to the themes of belonging and inclusion.

3.5. Documentation & Materials



Figure 6: Photos from the pitching session (permission to publish the pictures has been obtained)

3.6. Next Steps

All presenters received direct feedback from the panelists. There has been encouragement to continue to work on certain parts of the projects, as well as suggestions for other locations to present. There have also been some connections

made, for example between Meriç Çukurova and Dutch design and co-creation cultural centre The Beach, where they will explore a further collaboration.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: SuomiAreena website programme page print-out

A society where everyone truly feels they belong?

📅 24.06.2025 klo 14:00-14:45 📍 Puuvillan Iäva, Siitapuistokatu 14

[LISÄÄ OMAAN KALENTERIIN](#)

Järjestäjänä

Opintokeskus Visio, Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu

How can we build a society where everyone truly feels they belong? The Redesign Belonging (ReBel) project supports the development of grassroots solutions to the everyday challenges faced by immigrant women across Europe—challenges that are often overlooked by conventional integration policies. At the heart of the project was an open design challenge, inviting anyone with a good idea to contribute practical, creative ways to strengthen the sense of belonging amongst immigrant women in local communities.

In this interactive session, we will showcase the five winning concepts chosen from dozens of submissions. These ideas aim to create more inclusive environments for migrant women and reflect the power of co-creation across sectors, cultures, and lived experiences. After short presentations of each concept, local and regional policymakers will share their reactions, followed by real-time input from the audience using an interactive feedback tool. The feedback will be shared with the winning teams to further develop their ideas.

We invite everyone interested in community-building, inclusion, and participatory approaches to join the session. Together, we'll explore inclusive participation and co-creation as tools for increasing societal coherence and re-producing democracy.

Mikä saa sinut tuntemaan, että olet osa yhteiskuntaa? Tervetuloa interaktiiviseen sessioomme pohtimaan osallisuuden ja yhteenkuuluvuuden tunnetta yhteiskunnassa!

Redesign Belonging -hankkeessa maahanmuuttajanaiset, palvelumuotoilijat ja ruohonjuuritason aktivistit kehittävät yhdessä uusia, innovatiivisia tapoja lisätä meidän kaikkien yhteenkuuluvuuden ja osallisuuden tunnetta Suomessa ja Euroopassa.

Sessio on englanninkielinen, mutta voit kommentoida ja kysyä kysymyksiä sen aikana myös suomeksi.

Puhujina



Maija Aalto
CEO
Multicultural Associations of Satakunta



Fatim Diarra
Member of Parliament
Finnish Parliament/The Greens



Jutta-Riina Karhunen
Principal
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Opintokeskus Visio



Salla Kuuluvainen
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Montasir Mohamed
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