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SOUL Food pathways

Skills, Opportunity, Upliftment, and Learning for Migrant Women through Food

Project Number:

2024-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000245151

Title: Comprehensive Analysis Report on best practices focusing on....

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Document

This document outlines the framework, objectives, and methodologies of the SOUL Food project, which aims to support the social and professional integration of migrant women. By enhancing their professional, citizenship, and digital skills through culinary education, cultural exchange, and active citizenship, the project strives to foster cohesive, diverse communities. The guidelines also examine 10 case studies, providing a strong foundation for developing a modular curriculum in culinary education.

1.2 Scope of the Guidelines

The guidelines focus on the integration of migrant women through culinary education, digital tools, and cultural engagement. They provide practical resources to support the implementation of educational pathways and community events. This approach promotes intercultural understanding, addresses skill shortages, and encourages community involvement, ultimately empowering migrant women and advancing inclusion through culinary arts.

1.3 Intended Audience and Usage

These guidelines are intended for educators, NGOs, policymakers, and practitioners working in adult education, migrant integration, and community development. They provide strategies for developing inclusive programs that empower migrant women through culinary education, cultural exchange, and digital learning, promoting society cohesion.

1.4 Overview of Key Themes: Culinary Arts, Community, Social Inclusion and Culture

As SOUL Food views Culinary Arts as a tool for education and integration, it mixes skill-building with cultural exchange. **The initiative promotes active citizenship, empowering women to overcome societal gaps while**



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celebrating diversity. Through innovative educational pathways and digital tools, it addresses labor market needs and supports lifelong learning.

By fostering Community engagement and Intercultural events, SOUL Food strengthens social ties, encourages acceptance, and builds inclusive spaces where Culture and Diversity thrive. This guideline explores migration backgrounds through case studies in Austria, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, showcasing the impact of Community-Based Food Initiatives.

2. Background on Migration and Cultural Contexts

Austria

2.1 Historical Overview of Immigration Patterns

In the last 60 years, Vienna witnessed demographic changes going from stagnation, to shrinking to a rapid population growth due to migration and positive birth rates (City of Vienna, 2024). This made the city stand out in comparison to other European capitals, becoming a youth metropolis. Vienna is the fifth largest EU city demographically. The historical changes that were mainly influencing these migration flows range from the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1990, to the access of Austria to the EU in 1995; the refugee flow from Afghanistan and Syria in 2015 and finally the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

2.2 Contemporary Demographics and Cultural Diversity

2.2.1 Key Statistics and Trends

As of 2024, Vienna's population reached 2.005.760 (City of Vienna, 2024).

Composition of Vienna's population by nationality and country of birth at the beginning of 2024

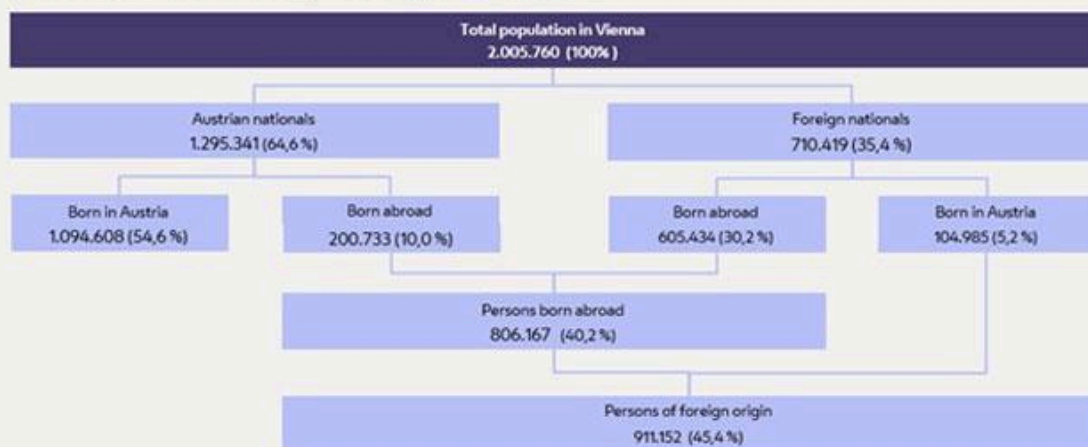


Chart & Calculations: City of Vienna- Integration and Diversity, Data: City of Vienna- Economic Affairs, Labour and Statistics

In Vienna, persons with foreign citizenship or Austrian nationals born abroad represent 45.4 per cent of the total population in 2024. If we look at the statistics from the municipal level, more than half the population of 5 out of 23 districts are of foreign origins. One of these districts is Favoriten, where the office of Caritas Stadtteilarbeit is situated.

2.2.2 Impacts of Migration

Migration has significantly altered Vienna's population structure. The city has one of the highest percentages of foreign-born residents in Europe, with migrants and their descendants making up a large portion of the workforce and student population. Many immigrants come from neighboring countries such as

Germany, Hungary, and Serbia, as well as from Turkey and more recently, Syria and Afghanistan. This diversity has contributed to population growth and has helped counteract Austria's aging population by increasing the proportion of younger, working-age residents.

Migrants have played a crucial role in Vienna's economy. They contribute to various sectors, particularly in healthcare, construction, hospitality, and public services (Poledna et al., 2024). Many businesses in Vienna rely on migrant labor,

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and some migrants have become entrepreneurs, adding to the city's economic dynamism. Additionally, migration has helped sustain Austria's social security system by expanding the tax base. However, migration also presents economic challenges. Some migrants, especially refugees, face difficulties integrating into the labor market due to language barriers, skill mismatches, or bureaucratic hurdles¹. This can lead to unemployment or underemployment, increasing dependence on social welfare programs. Policies promoting language acquisition and vocational training are crucial in addressing these challenges.

Cultural and Social Integration

Vienna's cultural landscape has been enriched by migration. The city boasts a vibrant mix of cuisines, music, and traditions influenced by various migrant communities. Neighborhoods such as Favoriten and Ottakring are known for their diverse populations and multicultural environments, where Turkish markets, Balkan cafés, and Middle Eastern restaurants thrive. Events celebrating different cultural backgrounds, such as the Vienna International Festival, reflect this diversity.

Greece

2.1 Historical Overview of Immigration Patterns

Across Europe, migrants, especially women, are mainly employed in precarious, low-status, low-paying jobs. Social norms push them into insecure fields, limiting opportunities. In Greece, lack of insurance and work rights further restricts their access to healthcare and overall well-being. Migrant women face significant barriers in the labor market, including language and cultural challenges. Harsh work conditions take a physical toll and reduce healthcare access. Social networks play a crucial role in employment and healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened these difficulties, amplifying fear, uncertainty, and bureaucratic obstacles. Research highlights the importance of amplifying marginalized voices to design effective migration support measures, promote cultural exchange, and combat discrimination.

¹ OECD (2018), Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Vienna, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304147-en>

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2.2 Contemporary Demographics and Cultural Diversity

2.2.1 Key Statistics and Trends

Greek migration history has been shaped by both emigration and immigration. Before World War II, economic hardship and political unrest drove many Greeks abroad, particularly to the U.S., Canada, and Australia. After World War II, Greek emigration peaked in the 1950s–60s due to economic and political instability. By the 1990s, Greece transitioned into a migrant-receiving country, with significant inflows from Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. The 2010s refugee crisis brought thousands from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, with Greece becoming a key transit point. As of 2024, Greece recorded 45,000 asylum applications, with 10,000 residence permits granted (Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2024)². Migration has shaped Greece's demographic and cultural landscape, though its impact on food culture remains limited to niche ethnic eateries.

This historical context provides a clear view of Greece's migration dynamics, highlighting both the waves of emigration and the increasing trend of immigration. Over time, migration has greatly shaped the demographic and socio-cultural landscape of Greece, fostering a diverse society where food plays a key role in intercultural engagement and social integration. Culinary practices brought by migrant communities have not yet impacted on Greece's food culture, but only through the supply of nationally specific food offering places, contributing but marginally to multiculturalism.

2.2.2 Impacts of Migration

As food plays a significant role in the lives of different communities, the migration from various parts of the world has historically contributed to the diversification of culinary traditions in Greece. Over the years in the previous (20th) century, especially in major cities like Athens and Thessaloniki, the increasing presence of migrants from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Albania has led to the gradual emergence of a more diverse

culinary landscape. This diversity is particularly noticeable in restaurants and eateries offering flavors from the Middle East, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt, alongside traditional Greek cuisine. For example, the rise of Middle Eastern and Asian restaurants, particularly in the urban centers, has been a testament to this culinary transformation.

² Eurostat. "Asylum Applicants by Type - Monthly Data." European Commission, 2025.

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Today, it's easy to find a variety of restaurants representing different communities in Greece. In Athens, the once limited presence of ethnic restaurants has expanded rapidly. From traditional Albanian dishes to Syrian mezze, Lebanese kebabs, and Turkish baklava, the food scene has become much more multicultural. Furthermore, food has become an important resource for building communities from within, particularly for migrant groups. Cultural festivals centered around food, like the annual "Taste of the Middle East" festival in Athens, reflect how food serves as a medium for connection, fostering intercultural dialogue and inclusion.

Italy³

2.1 Historical Overview of Immigration Patterns

Since the 1990s, Italy has experienced a steady increase in immigration, transitioning from an emigration country to a significant immigration destination, becoming a key entry point for migrants into Europe, leveraging its Mediterranean location and proximity to North Africa. Maritime arrivals are significant, with peaks like the 181,000 migrants who arrived by sea in 2016. Additionally, the Balkan route has played a crucial role in migration to Italy, serving as a land corridor for those coming from the Middle East and Asia through southeastern Europe. The influx included workers, often underqualified, filling essential roles in agriculture, domestic work, and manufacturing. Migrant workers earned, on average, 30% less than their Italian counterparts, with many facing precarious conditions and exploitation, particularly without legal residence permits. Despite the economic integration of migrants into various sectors, demographic challenges persist, as Italy's aging population increasingly relies on migrant labor to support its workforce and economy. Cultural

³ [Una panoramica delle migrazioni per lavoro in Italia. Roma, Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro, 2022.](#)
<https://www.istat.it/comunicato-stampa/cittadini-non-comunitari-in-italia-anno-2023/>
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/international-migration-outlook-2024_50b0353e-en/full-report/italy_420e5ba4.html
[ACCEPT PLUARLISM Tolerance and Cultural Diversity Discourses in Italy, Maurizio Ambrosini and Elena Caneva University of Milan \(2010\)](#)



integration, however, remains underdeveloped, with migrants often limited to subordinate roles in the labor market.

2.2 Contemporary Demographics and Cultural Diversity

2.2.1 Key Statistics and Trends

In 2023, over 3.6 million non-EU citizens held regular residence permits in Italy, with Ukrainians becoming the largest group, surpassing Albanians and Moroccans. Migration flows declined, with 330,730 permits issued, primarily for family reunification and study purposes. Female migrants accounted for 52% of the immigrant population, with many employed in care and domestic sectors, particularly addressing gaps in elderly care. A significant number come from Romania, Ukraine, the Philippines, and Moldova, often facing precarious conditions and vulnerabilities like labor exploitation and limited social integration. This workforce is essential to the Italian economy, especially given its aging population and declining birth rates.

2.2.2 Impacts of Migration

Migration plays a crucial role in mitigating Italy's demographic decline and supporting its economy. Migrants make up 8.5% of Italy's population, with women constituting 52%. They are vital in sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and personal care. Recent migration has contributed significantly to alleviating labor shortages, with migrants actively participating in domestic, care, and industrial sectors. Female migrants face challenges such as labor exploitation and integration difficulties, but their economic contributions are indispensable. Integration barriers persist, especially for cultural and linguistic inclusion. Immigration is essential for Italy's demographic sustainability, yet requires coordinated strategies to ensure migrants' rights and contributions are valued while addressing public concerns on cultural integration.



Spain

2.1 Historical Overview of Immigration Patterns

Historically a country of emigration, primarily to the Americas and Northern Europe, Spain has in recent decades become a major immigrant destination, with the foreign-born comprising a larger share of the population than in the United Kingdom, the United States, or other major destination countries (Finotelli & Rincken, 2023). Spain is now the second country in the world with large-scale immigration. Its strategic location, a relatively permissive immigration policy, and economic opportunities derived from Spain's entry into the European Community have positioned this country as a major destination for immigrants (Hierro, 2013).

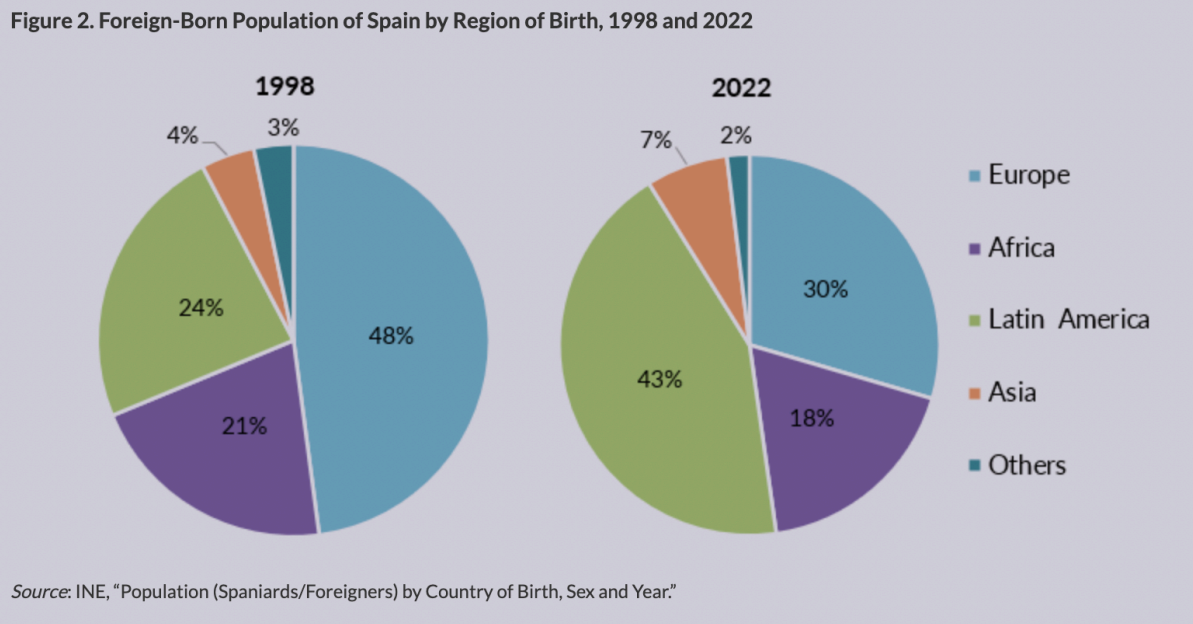
Despite the common perception of Africa as the most important source of immigration, some Latin American countries, in a very short time, have become major sources of immigration to Spain; indeed, the term "Latin-Americanization" has been coined to describe this process (Hierro, 2013). This shift brought significant numbers of Latin Americans, North Africans, and Eastern Europeans, reflecting Spain's integration into the EU and its growing economy.

2.2 Contemporary Demographics and Cultural Diversity

2.2.1 Key Statistics and Trends

Using data from Spain, a society that underwent one of the fastest modernization processes in the second half of the 20th century (Rodríguez Menés, 2021), Spain's overall population experienced an astonishing 19 percent growth between 1998 and 2022, rising from 40 million to 47.5 million, due almost entirely to international immigration. In this context, the composition of the immigrant population has changed significantly. While the proportion of people from Africa remained rather stable, the shares of Latin Americans and Asians have nearly doubled, whereas Europeans now account for a much smaller share than 25 years ago. Presently, about 43 percent of Spain's foreign-born residents come from Central or South America, 30 percent from

other European countries (mostly those in the European Union), 18 percent from (mostly North) Africa, and 7 percent from Asia (see Figure 2).



2.2.2 Impacts of Migration

Immigration has profoundly influenced Spain's economy, society, and culture. Economically, migrants have filled labor shortages in agriculture, construction, and domestic work, contributing to GDP growth and offsetting an aging population. "Currently, due to the incipient economic recovery, the five FUAs are attracting internal and international foreign-born immigrants once again, so their foreign-born population stocks are increasing in both cores and peripheries" (Gil-Alonso & Thiers-Quintana, 2020). Socially, migration has brought challenges related to integration, particularly in urban centers like Madrid and Barcelona, where demands for housing, education, and healthcare have increased. Culturally, immigrants have enriched Spain's culinary, artistic, and linguistic landscape, fostering multicultural neighborhoods and festivals.



Sweden



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2.1 Historical Overview of Immigration Patterns

Swedish migration history shifted from an emphasis in emigration to immigration since the end of World War II. After the war, Sweden experienced its first significant immigration wave, with many people from Germany, as well as Nordic and Baltic countries. Many Baltic citizens chose to stay, while others returned to their home countries. In the 1960s, Sweden's expanding economy and job opportunities attracted migrants from Finland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and the Balkans. The migration trend continued into the 1990s, especially following the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars, with people fleeing conflict zones such as Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and Lebanon.

Sweden's entry into the Schengen Area in the late 1990s further opened up immigration from other EU countries. A notable peak occurred in 2015 when Sweden received over 150,000 asylum applications, primarily from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, driven by the Syrian civil war and other crises worldwide.⁴

2.2 Contemporary Demographics and Cultural Diversity

2.2.1 Key Statistics and Trends

In 2024, Sweden received 8,146 asylum applications (including 245 from unaccompanied children). 3,003 cases were accepted⁵, while 80,336 residence permits were granted⁶. This reflects the ongoing flows of migrants, particularly those seeking asylum from conflict zones. Sweden's demographics continue to diversify with increasing numbers of people from the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe. The migration trends suggest that both humanitarian crises and employment prospects continue to drive migration to Sweden, further shaping the cultural landscape.

2.2.2 Impacts of Migration

Migration has profoundly influenced Sweden's current socio-cultural and demographic design. Immigrants have contributed to the economy, particularly

⁴ <https://sweden.se/culture/history/sweden-and-migration>

⁵ <https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Statistics/Asylum.html>

⁶

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Statistics/Granted-permits-overviews.html>

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in labor-intensive industries and the service sector. The rise in cultural diversity has enriched Sweden's cultural scene, introducing new foods, traditions, and languages. Moreover, the migrants that have stayed in Sweden, have built vibrant communities. The growth of multicultural communities has led to increased intercultural exchanges but has also sparked discussions on identity, inclusion, and the welfare system. Understanding these dynamics is essential to address the complexities of migration and its impact on Swedish society, where food plays a key role as it portrays intercultural engagement in Sweden.

3. The Role of Food in Cultural Identity and Intercultural Engagement

3.1 Food as a Cultural Symbol

3.1.1 Austria

Vienna's food diversity is present in its numerous district markets all around the city. In order to preserve these traditional markets the city has spent some efforts to make them not only shopping hubs but also meeting points for eating and drinking. Markets like Naschmarkt or Brunnenmarkt are not only serving the local communities, but also a lot of visitors to the city. "What you do not find at Naschmarkt, you do not need" is a saying to sum up the diversity of produce in Vienna's markets. Additionally, street food in Vienna is famous under various "Würstelstand" sausage Stands that serve also during night time. With the migration flow, some alternatives to the Würstelstands have been emerging like ćevapčići from the Balkan region or Kebap stands from middle eastern and Turkish migrants.

It is also worth mentioning that in 2024, our colleagues at Caritas Stadtteilarbeit conducted workshops and research with residents with migrant and refugee backgrounds, so called FOODCITIZENS about food provision in Vienna. This initiative, despite giving eye opening information about Vienna's consideration of

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food diversity, showed that there is still some work to be done in terms of accessibility and consideration of the different needs of people from different backgrounds.

3.1.2 Greece

The role of food in Greek communities has traditionally been emerging from the Mediterranean diet, which places a strong emphasis on fresh agriculture products, olive oil, fish and meat, like sheep and goat, typically consumed in family-centered, social settings. For Greeks, meals are often a social occasion, with families and friends coming together to share dishes like moussaka, souvlaki, of an Eastern (Turkish) origin and various vegetable stews. Traditional Greek meals are typically served in large portions, meant to be shared, reflecting the value placed on family and communal life.

It is without saying that for immigrant communities in Greece as well, food serves a central role in maintaining cultural identity and providing comfort in a new environment. For example, Middle Eastern migrants (from countries like Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon) often prepare and share food as a means of preserving their cultural heritage and forging bonds with fellow community members. In these communities, the act of cooking and sharing meals becomes deeply tied to socialization and family gatherings. Larger communal plates and dishes are a common feature, emphasizing the importance of sharing meals and fostering a sense of unity. Furthermore, food in these communities is not only about sustenance but also about conveying stories, traditions, and emotions. In certain migrant clusters families continue cooking dishes they learned from their homeland, strengthening the emotional bond between the cook and the eater.

3.1.3 Italy



Italian cuisine is officially a candidate for inclusion in UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage as a product of thousands of social acts, cultural gestures, and regional traditions.⁷

Food plays an essential role in shaping cultural identity in Italy. It serves as a powerful symbol that reflects regional diversity, fosters social connections, and communicates values across generations. As Italy navigates contemporary challenges related to culinary authenticity and integration, the significance of its culinary tradition is conceived as a landmark of national pride and cultural expression.

In this sense, culinary tradition in Italy became a political construct as a symbol of ideology and indication of a patriotic national essence. The country must face a challenge to relate "gastronativism"⁸ to intercultural engagement.

3.1.4 Spain

In Spain, food plays a vital role in cultural identity and intercultural engagement, blending traditional dishes like paella and tapas with global influences, fostering connections and celebrating diversity. Generally, food consumption habits are "stable and predictable but, at the same time, paradoxically, are in continuous change" (Fieldhouse, 199; Cleveland, Laroche, Pons, & Kastoun, 2009). Thanks to globalization and immigration, food increasingly serves as a means to celebrate the country's cultural richness, showcasing a fusion of flavors and culinary traditions from various cultures and highlighting Spain's evolving identity as a multicultural society

3.1.5 Sweden

In Sweden, culinary culture seamlessly blends traditional dishes like meatballs and gravlax with global influences such as falafel and pho. Iconic traditions like *fika* remain central to Swedish culture, emphasizing the joy of sharing through coffee and pastries. Meanwhile, immigration has enriched the cuisine with new flavors and ingredients, such as the growing use of garlic, fostering connections and celebrating diversity.

⁷ The application was launched on March 23, 2023. Cf. press release nr. 24360/ 2023-03-23 <https://cultura.gov.it/comunicato/24360>

⁸ F. Parasecoli, *Gastronativism. Food, Identity, Politics*, Columbia University Press, New York 2022
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3.2 Culinary Arts as a Tool for Community Building

Food brings people together, whether in times of grief, celebration or simply in everyday life. Throughout the years, there have been examples of community kitchens created as a support and solidarity mechanism in times of wars or natural disasters. These spaces represented, additionally, a refuge for marginalized groups like women and children. In different examples of community kitchens, these spaces are not solely spaces for cooking and eating, rather spaces for community engagement, political discussions and grassroots movements oftentimes related to equal distribution of resources and the reclamation of justice⁹. Moreover, food and cooking have strong bonds to cultural heritage, whether in direct contact with the land produce: Fruits, vegetables, spices, meat, fish etc., or to historical trades and colonial past. These aspects add a cultural dimension to cooking that enriches the bringing together of people by exchanging stories, recipes and culinary knowledge from different backgrounds, an aspect that we deem very important within our project.

4. Community-Based Food Initiatives - A collection of examples

Austria

4.1 Urban Kitchens

Background and mission	Key programs
Urban Kitchens The kitchen: from a domestic space that reproduces conventional gender roles to a space of political engagement for women	Lima, Peru in the 1970s national teachers union SUTEP organized solidarity kitchens where discussions about inequalities, work wages, communities and housing conditions

⁹ <https://triennale.org/en/magazine/maio-anna-puigjaner>

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4.2. Küfa – Küche für alle / Kitchen for everyone

Background and mission	Key programs
Kufas Believe that communal kitchens provide an alternative approach to food consumption than the alienated individual domestic consumption	Self organized as solidarity kitchens where food is provided for little or no money

4.3. Obdach Wien

Background and mission	Key programs
A space for fighting loneliness, economic difficulties and to exchange tips. "There is something for everyone. The same thing counts for everyone: the community."	A space for people who were previously homeless to come together to cook and eat healthier food. An outcome of peer support training and education provided by 'neunerhaus'

4.4. Community Cooking

Background and mission	Key programs
Empowering migrant women not only as participants but also stakeholders and employees. 10 years of an open kitchen that enables people to connect through cooking and eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly open cooking sessions Workshops on food sustainability & health Team cooking Acting as multipliers for healthy cooking Caterings Public and private events



Greece



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4.1. REFUGEE Women Academy: cooking - Odyssea ¹⁰(Athens, Greece)

Background and mission	Key programs
Odyssea organises a series of events and activities that support vulnerable people and birth opportunities for personal and social impact. They identify these activities as a core representation of their identity and their vision for a more inclusive, more humane society.	Professionally designed kitchen of the non-profit organization “Odyssea”, while the “Cooking Course”, professional (chef) as tutor delves into the techniques, secrets and philosophy of the professional kitchen.

4.2. COOKING LESSONS for MIGRANTS & REFUGEES - Kycklos ¹¹ (Athens, Greece)

Background and mission	Key programs
KYCLOS is a grass-root day-center, founded in 2017, out of a vision of an anthropologist, an engineer and a group of young refugees who wanted to make roots in Greece. Its daily activities foster education, empowerment, community building and income creation.	offered in languages Greek, Farsi, Dari, Arabi, Kurmanji, English & French “Cooking Lessons/Classes”, by KYKLOS, while the request for this workshop coming originally from a group of unaccompanied minors and young adult refugee boys, living far from their families and not knowing how to cook, therefore gaining that knowledge was essential for their survival and better quality of life, while through the cooking lessons the participants remember their past,

¹⁰ <https://odyssea.com/>

¹¹ <https://www.kyclos.org/>

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	<p>connect with their new present and shape their future. Thus, the basic essence of integration is achieved, then Cooking Classes take place once per week, are open to all beneficiaries of KYCLOS regardless of age, country of origin and gender, and professionals that know how to cook and they want, can enter the cooks/teachers team.</p>
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4.3 Saffron Kitchen Project ¹².- Eat-Cook-Learn-Belong: Your Culinary Community (Athens, Greece)

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>Saffron Kitchen Project is about people, food, building community and creating lasting opportunities for vulnerable people in Athens</p>	<p>Offer free culinary education and vocational training in partnership with IEK Delta. cook meals together, provide specialised training and create opportunities for people with refugee backgrounds to support themselves and grow their own skill sets.</p>

Italy

4.1 M'ama Food ¹³(Lombardy, Italy)

Background and mission	Key programs

¹² <https://www.saffronkitchenproject.org/>

¹³ <https://www.mamafood.it/>



<p>M'ama Food is a catering service offering meals for business and private events, such as coffee breaks, weddings, and banquets, as well as a collective catering, blending global recipes with Italian culinary traditions. Founded in 2010 by Coop. Farsi Prossimo in Milan, M'ama Food empowers migrant and refugee women through culinary training and job. Its mission is to foster social inclusion and economic independence for women from war-torn or persecuted regions, providing them dignity and purpose.</p>	<p>M'ama Food offers professional training, internships, and job placement in the food sector. Its catering service combines international flavors with Mediterranean styles, promoting cross-cultural dialogue. Training includes civic education, skill enhancement, and partnerships with businesses for sustainability.</p>
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4.2 Roots¹⁴ (Modena, Italy)

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>Roots operates as a restaurant and training hub where migrant women learn professional cooking skills and gain experience, serving as a bridge to job opportunities in the food and beverage industry. Founded in Modena by AIW and Roots Cooperative, its mission is to empower women by equipping them with technical and soft skills for the</p>	<p>Roots provides training in kitchen operations, baking, and customer interaction while emphasizing Italian language skills. It partners with public and private sponsors and offers tailored courses, paid training, and mentorship, leading to job placement in innovative culinary settings.</p>

¹⁴ <https://www.rootsmodena.com/>

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food sector, fostering their independence and integration.	
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4.3 Food revolution¹⁵ (Milan, Italy)

Background and mission	Key programs
Food Revolution is a multistakeholder training initiative that collaborates with restaurants and catering companies, equipping participants with professional and sustainability-oriented skills to enter the food and beverage sector. Food Revolution, lead by Fondazione S. Carlo ONLUS in Milan, aims to empower marginalized individuals through innovative and green catering skills. It targets vulnerable adults with a focus on sustainable practices and integration into modern, environmentally conscious food companies.	This program delivers training in catering, sustainability, financial literacy and soft skills. With personalized guidance and internships, Food Revolution connects participants with employers, creating pathways for sustainable employment in the food sector.

4.4 Altre Terre Food Truck¹⁶ (Bologna, Italy)

Background and mission	Key programs
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¹⁵ https://thegoodintownlab.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Food-Revolution_compressed.pdf
<https://www.fondazionecarlo.it/formazione-e-lavoro/>

¹⁶ www.altreterrefood.it

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<p>Altre Terre Food Truck is a development of the project Cook&Go, a training course in cooking for migrant women. From 2021, the project foresees the employment of some women participating in the training through the experimentation of a street food production with a traveling food truck.</p>	<p>Altre Terre Food Truck offers informal training and job employment in the food sector for migrant women. The food truck promotes cross-cultural dialogue proposing a multiethnic menu that combines food of migrants' country of origin with Italian cuisine. Training includes civic education, Italian language and skills enhancement</p>
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Spain

4.1 MAS QUE COCINA (Madrid, Spain)

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>Young migrants play a crucial role in the restaurant industry, yet their contributions are often undervalued. Cesal launched "Más que cocina" to combat prejudices and highlight their impact. Cesal's mission is to promote social cohesion and inclusion for vulnerable groups within the gastronomic sector.</p>	<p>Cesal Gastronomía focuses on training, access to employment, and corporate engagement. Through the "Más que cocina" project, it tells stories of integration and redemption, creating opportunities for young migrants in Spain and transforming cooking into a vehicle for personal and professional development.</p>

4.2. GAMBARU (Zaragoza, Spain)

Background and mission	Key programs



<p>Gambaru is an initiative currently collaborating with the Zaragoza City Council on the "Plan de Primera Oportunidad." The name "Gambaru" comes from Japanese, meaning "give your best in the face of a new challenge," embodying the association's commitment to social improvement and transformation for homeless individuals.</p>	<p>Gambaru's members, who have faced risk and social exclusion, regain self-confidence and skills with institutional support. The association aims to create pathways to inclusion through guidance, advisory services, and life skills workshops. One key project is the cooking workshop at the Joaquín Roncal Center, supported by Fundación CAI, where participants learn culinary skills and reconnect with their roots. Gambaru serves as a space for exchange and comfort, providing hope and dignity to the most vulnerable, giving them an opportunity for redemption.</p>
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4.3 COCINAS DEL MUNDO CRUZ ROJA RIBERA ALTA DEL EBRO (Zaragoza, Spain)

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>Cruz Roja Ribera Alta del Ebro aims to promote cultural integration and communication among migrants through culinary traditions. The initiative fosters understanding and friendship between diverse cultures, addressing language barriers and enhancing social inclusion for migrant women in the community.</p>	<p>Key programs include cooking workshops where participants share traditional recipes, enhancing their culinary skills while reflecting on their cultural heritage. The project also provides Spanish language and literacy classes to support migrants' integration, culminating in the publication "Cocinas del mundo" featuring multi-language recipes.</p>

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4.4 COCINAS DEL MUNDO [ACISJF IN VÍA](#) (Zaragoza, Spain)

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>The Cocinas del Mundo project is implemented by ACISJF IN VÍA, established in 1953 in Zaragoza, Spain. Its mission is to support vulnerable women through reception, employment, and training programs, empowering them for full social and labor inclusion. The initiative promotes equality, mutual aid, and interculturality.</p>	<p>Key programs include Cocinas del Mundo, which fosters cultural exchange by having participants share traditional recipes from their countries. This initiative not only enhances social cohesion among women, particularly those facing gender-based violence, but also provides essential skills for integration into Spanish society.</p>

Sweden

4.1 Yalla Trappan (Rosengård, Malmö)

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>Yalla Trappan, founded in 2010 in Malmö's Rosengård, is a non-profit women's cooperative and work-integrated social enterprise. Its mission is to create job opportunities and promote economic independence for immigrant women with limited work experience, empowering them through confidence-building and skill development.</p>	<p>Yalla Trappan offers several key programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restaurants & Catering: Serving Middle Eastern-inspired dishes with vegetarian, vegan, and animal options, including catering services for companies and individuals. - Yalla Pilots: Support for immigrant mothers in Malmö, helping them navigate social functions and strengthening their role as parents.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yalla Goes East: A project expanding Yalla Trappan's methods to Eastern Europe, focusing on Latvia and Ukraine. - Y-alla's Way to Work: A program helping foreign-born women gain employment through a combination of practical training in catering, housekeeping, and sewing.
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4.2 Botildenborg (Malmö)¹⁷

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>Social Farm and Community Kitchen</p> <p>Botildenborg, located in Malmö, is a non-profit organization integrating urban farming, sustainability, and community building. It operates as a social farm and kitchen, hosting events, teambuilding, and workshops. Its mission is to foster social inclusion, environmental awareness, and economic empowerment.</p>	<p>Botildenborg offers key programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Växtplats Botildenborg: A training initiative with Malmö city, enhancing employability through gardening and cooking, fostering motivation and language skills. - Odling Tillsammans: A project connecting seniors and children to cultivate gardens and cook, promoting intergenerational bonding and health.

4.3. Stadsmission skåne¹⁸

Background and mission	Key programs
<p>Skåne Stadsmission is a non-profit organization in Skåne dedicated to</p>	<p>Skåne Stadsmission's key programs include:</p>

¹⁷ <https://www.botildenborg.se/>

¹⁸ <https://www.skanestadsmission.se/>

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supporting vulnerable individuals, including immigrants and low-income families. Its mission is to prevent exclusion and empower individuals by providing both immediate aid and long-term support, fostering independence and stability.

- **Matmissionen:** A social food store reducing food waste while offering low-cost groceries to members. It also provides job training for individuals far from the labor market.
 - **Café David:** Serves affordable, well-prepared meals to participants in Malmö and Kristianstad, supported by community donations.
 - **Second-hand Shops:** Operates thrift stores that promote sustainability and generate income for the organization’s programs.
- Training Initiatives:** Offers hands-on training in hospitality, customer service, and culinary arts to enhance employability.

5. Criteria for the Selection of Best Practices

The selection of best practices will focus on three main categories: **community engagement, training, and integration into the labor market and social inclusion.** These criteria aim to identify practices that effectively empower and socially integrate migrant women, particularly those from vulnerable groups, while fostering innovation, scalability, and skill development.

5.1 Community Engagement

Practices will be evaluated based on their ability to involve migrant women and local communities meaningfully. Priority will be given to initiatives fostering empowerment through food, cultural exchange, and inclusivity. The degree to which the practice involves community actors, promotes inclusivity, and

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provides opportunities for intercultural dialogue will be key factors in the evaluation. Feedback mechanisms and active participation of migrant women in shaping the practice will also be considered critical indicators of successful engagement.

5.2 Training

The training component will focus on the quality, relevance, and outcomes of skill development programs offered within the practice. Priority will be given to practices that deliver comprehensive training paths tailored to the needs of migrant women, including the development of:

- **Employability skills:** Preparing participants for access to and retention in the labor market.
- **Digital skills:** Bridging the digital divide by equipping women with essential technology competencies.
- **Soft skills:** Enhancing communication, teamwork, and adaptability for professional and social settings.
- **Citizenship skills:** Supporting migrant women in navigating societal systems and engaging as active community members.

Practices that include ready-to-use materials for trainers, personalized follow-up mechanisms, and approaches to address barriers such as language or cultural unfamiliarity will be prioritized.

5.3 Integration into the Labor Market and Social Inclusion

A critical selection criterion will be the practice's success in facilitating the integration of migrant women into the labor market and their social inclusion. This includes opportunities for entrepreneurship, social enterprise development, and alignment with local economic needs. Practices demonstrating a clear pathway from training to employment or self-employment, as well as those that foster collaborations with businesses or other labor market stakeholders, will stand out.

5.4 Cross-Cutting Considerations

The following factors will be evaluated across all three categories to ensure a holistic approach to selection:



- **Empowerment and social integration:** The extent to which the practice empowers migrant women and supports their social integration into the community.
- **Vulnerability focus:** The ability to effectively reach and engage vulnerable subgroups among the target population.
- **Scalability:** The potential for the practice to be adapted and scaled to other contexts, regions, or target groups.
- **Innovation:** The use of creative or effective methods to address challenges or improve outcomes.

The above criteria will ensure the selection of impactful, sustainable, and replicable practices for migrant women’s empowerment and integration, leveraging culinary arts as a means to foster cultural exchange, skill development, and community connection.

6. Guidelines for Data Collection and Initiative Mapping

6.1 Criteria of analysis

1	2	3
Implementing Actors: Who are the main implementing actors in this practice? (e.g. organizations, institutions, or individuals)?	Territory: Where is this practice implemented, and what are the defining geographical or social characteristics (e.g., urban/rural, regional traits)?	Institutionalization: Is the practice formally endorsed by institutions through policies, certifications, or official recognition? Is it informally organized instead? For example, does it have legal approval or professional accreditation?

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<p>4 Bottom-up approach:</p> <p>What bottom-up initiatives are used to engage the target groups in food practices (e.g., contests, festivals, parties, celebrations)?</p> <p>How do these participatory approaches ensure community involvement?</p> <p>What role do participants play in decision-making and implementation?</p>	<p>5 Expected Outcomes and Success:</p> <p>What outcomes does the practice aim to achieve in the short, medium, and long term?</p> <p>What methods are used to evaluate the success of the practice (e.g., surveys, interviews, data analysis)?</p> <p>Are there case studies or documented examples of success that could inspire similar initiatives?</p>	<p>6 Target Group and Specific Sub-groups</p> <p>How does the practice address the unique needs of foreign-born women (e.g. language skills, employment opportunities, social inclusion)?</p> <p>How are participants identified and selected to join the practice?</p>
<p>7 Training Path</p> <p>What skills or competencies does the training focus on (e.g., employability, digital, soft, or citizenship skills)?</p> <p>How is the training designed to meet the</p>	<p>8 Ongoing Practice</p> <p>Is this practice a one-time project or part of ongoing operations? If ongoing, how is it sustained?</p>	<p>9 Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement</p> <p>How are local actors (e.g., community leaders, and organizations) engaged in the design and delivery of the practice?</p>



<p>specific needs of foreign-born women?</p> <p>Are there follow-up mechanisms to monitor participants' progress or provide ongoing support?</p> <p>From the perspective of educators, what challenges arise in delivering this training, and how are they addressed?</p>		
<p>10 Onboarding Strategies:</p> <p>How does the onboarding process address barriers like language or unfamiliar cultural norms?</p>	<p>11 Distinctive Elements as Best Practice</p> <p>What makes this practice stand out as innovative or particularly effective?</p>	<p>12 Language and Communication Support:</p> <p>How is communication tailored to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all participants?</p>
<p>13 Sustainability</p> <p>How sustainable is this practice in terms of financial, environmental, and social factors?</p>		



What measures are in place to ensure its longevity?		
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6.2 Methodologies for Data Collection

This guideline conducts research based on case studies, identifying best practices through qualitative methods, including desk research and interviews. At the same time, the tool used include case studies and interviews (with GDPR consent). Moreover, interview guides are developed with questions based on specific criteria to gather insights from beneficiaries.

7. Documenting Outcomes of the criteria and Impact.

CASE STUDY 1: Community Cooking Vienna - Caritas

Implementing Actors:

This practice is led by the Community Cooking team that is part of Caritas Stadtteilarbeit (Community and Neighborhood work) in Vienna. These groups are part of the mother organization Caritas Vienna.

Territory:

It is an urban social project situated at the 10th district of Vienna. One of the most populated districts. It is known for its high number of working class and migrant inhabitants. It is part of the cultural center Brotfabrik, where efforts are made to build a diverse community from the neighborhood's residents and residents from other districts that commute to the various social and cultural events by Brotfabrik.

Institutionalization:

Caritas Vienna is a well-known NGO that is active in many social areas, involving approximately. 5,000 employees and 12,000 volunteers in Vienna as well as in



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the eastern region of Lower Austria. The array of activities embraces programs in such diversified fields as poverty and homelessness, asylum, migration and integration, family strengthening, community projects, work with disabled people, day care services, home and hospice care. In the global network Caritas Vienna also engages in foreign countries in emergency aid as well as in long-term partnerships.

Bottom-up approach:

The bottom up approach endorsed by the community Kitchen is the invitation for people to bring their own recipes, or recipes that they would like to share with the community in order to exchange cultural values. This is mainly dedicated to the residents of the large social housing complex next to Kulturhaus Brotfabrik

The weekly open cooking sessions are free of charge and are open to everyone regardless of age, gender, political leaning or religion. They encourage people from different backgrounds to integrate within the local community by facilitating their communication and support them with translation to mother languages, English or German.

Participants are welcome to discuss anything related to the organizational part of the open cooking sessions. They are also welcomed to propose suggestions in relation to the content of the sessions, recipe planning, types of dishes to be cooked as well as celebrating cultural events (e.g. Nowruz). The organization encourages feedback rounds at every end of session and tries to listen and implement new ideas and suggestions by the participants.

Expected Outcomes and Success:

The practice is aiming to facilitate a long-lasting community that brings people together and that aims to provide social cohesion and a solidarity network for the neighborhood residents. It also aims to bring people together through food and cultural exchange. On the long run the practice aims to create a rich repository of recipes from as many places and cultures as possible and provide them in different languages and with an accessible recipe format.

Feedback rounds are encouraged within the scope of the project whether through filling existing surveys or by asking the participants after each session about what ideas and suggestions they have. Lately the organization has created feedback surveys in four languages and is willing to reach eight.

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The collaboration of Community Cooking with different external projects like EU funded projects or other Viennese initiatives has helped reach a larger number of participants. In these collaborations, certain documentations like videos or pictures were shared on social media or on the website of the organization (Please refer to the Facebook page

https://www.facebook.com/communitycooking.brotfabrik/?locale=de_DE)

With the help of volunteers at the Community Kitchen, a beautiful repository of professional pictures and videos exists, as well as an enormous recipe archive of few hundreds of recipes from different countries. The existing Mobile Kitchen is also a great vehicle to promote healthy food throughout the city and raise awareness of the existence of Community Kitchen in public space.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups

The project reaches out to migrant women through multiple solutions. The diversity of the staff working at Caritas Stadtteilarbeit helps reaching out to a network of people from migrant backgrounds. The staff and volunteers at the organization cover more than 15 languages, which is crucial to reach out to migrants who do not speak English or German. The organization follows a non-discriminatory and an inclusive path regarding employing staff. The existing network with other social organizations (e.g. Peregrina: free counselling center for migrant women) facilitates reaching out to a larger number of participants as well.

With the support of multipliers and community peers, Caritas Stadtteilarbeit tries to invite participants from the neighborhood as well as other social cooperations (schools, youth centers, food banks, centers for elderly people, NGOs, etc.)

Community Cooking is an accessible and barrier-free space that is open to everyone, who are sharing community values like respect and solidarity and are willing to come together through food

Training Path:

The organization does not necessarily follow a training path but it provides different opportunities: The possibility to network within the local community, the development of soft skills like organizing events, leading workshops, participating in the planning process, or the recipe archive etc.

The organization aims to provide a safer space to women and encourages their participation despite language barriers. This is met by providing language support through the staff and different volunteers.

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The Community Kitchen is a space where participants are welcome to share their needs or struggles and the team tries to support them by recommending other services provided by the organization (e.g. Social counselling for Ukrainian refugees, Open Café etc.)

Ongoing Practice:

The open cooking session has existed for 10 years, it takes place every Tuesday from 17:00 to 20:00. One third of the budget is covered through social business formats such as Social Team days and Team cooking, one third is covered by Caritas Vienna and one third is through local and European funding. There are participants and volunteers who have been participating regularly for years. Moreover, there are people who are very new to the community. Depending on emerging political situations, Community Cooking has always provided a welcoming space for refugees. Some of them became regular participants until today.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

The space is provided by Caritas Vienna, and it is part of a cultural complex called Kulturhaus Brotfabrik. This complex involves different organizations and bodies that are mainly involved in community art projects. They also have a cultural dimension to them. It ranges from dance, to music, art, repair cafes, language cafes, counselling, social support etc. The existence of such an active and dynamic hub makes it a very lively space that includes all ages and backgrounds. For instance, parents who drop their kids at the music school SUPERAR, would spend their evening at the community kitchen.

Onboarding Strategies:

The onboarding process is a very barrier free process. The Community Cooking team tries to meet the participants at eye level, providing all kind of support especially when it comes to language barriers. The team also shares with the participants a WhatsApp group, and a Facebook page for easier access to the upcoming events and announcements.

When it comes to cultural norms, the Community Cooking team decided to opt for vegetarian menus. This avoids controversies concerning meat products but also promotes a more sustainable and biological nutrition. So far, this solution has shown successful outcomes.

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

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The fact that the majority of the recipes are Vegetarian and give an importance to seasonal and regional vegetables and fruits makes the practice stand out in terms of ecological sustainability. Additionally, the open cooking session is free of charge and has a weekly regularity, therefore is a socially sustainable format. Finally, the familiarity and the sense of community shared between the participants makes it a very inclusive hub.

Language and Communication Support:

As mentioned above, the Caritas Stadtteilarbeit team from employees to volunteers speak over 15 languages. This language diversity is not only present at the direct support and communication with participants, but also when providing the written recipes.

Sustainability:

Ecological sustainability is met through the use of organic, seasonal and regional products. The Community Kitchen is a certified host for Green Events.

The project is socially sustainable because it is free of charge, open for everyone and has a weekly regularity. It also provides a multifunctional space that the diverse members of different communities could benefit from.

The financial sustainability of the project is met by the regular provision of donations by Caritas Vienna. Additionally, the team is continuously taking part in partnerships funded locally and on the EU level.

The project cherishes the existence of different multipliers that are helping with the promotion of the project to reach more participants and interested parties. Moreover, peer contributions are essential to the spreading and promotion of the project. This has been evident within the volunteering community as well as old and new participants. In an attempt to introduce new measures, the Community Cooking project started a collaboration with the Central European University to develop research questions on how to grant a longer-term sustainability of the project. This collaboration includes interviews and feedback sessions with the participants as well as team members. Additionally, other collaborations with different organizations and EU funded partnerships are giving the project new prospects, ideas and contributions that are of great value to its longevity.

CASE STUDY 2: Community Kitchen Project

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Implementing Actors:

The main implementing actors of the Community Kitchen Project at Forum Obdach Wien are formerly homeless individuals who take an active role in cooking, organizing, and participating in social activities. They are supported by Forum Obdach Wien, an organization dedicated to providing housing and social support as well as community-building initiatives for individuals who have experienced homelessness. Additionally, local volunteers and community members contribute by assisting in food preparation, organization, and engagement activities. What is worth mentioning is that some of the group of organizers took part in a Peer support educational program provided by "neunerhaus"¹⁹ peer Campus. This Program offers an educational peer support package so that previously homeless people can support and assist currently homeless people.

Territory:

The practice is implemented in Vienna, Austria, within an urban setting that has a diverse social landscape. Vienna is a multicultural city with a mix of local and foreign-born populations, and it has a strong focus on social welfare and community support initiatives. The project is particularly relevant in Vienna because of the city's efforts to address homelessness and social exclusion through community-driven initiatives by providing funds and spaces.

Institutionalization:

The practice is not formally endorsed through official policies, government regulations, or professional certifications. Instead, it operates as a community-driven initiative under the guidance of Forum Obdach Wien, which provides structural support, financial funding, a room and a platform for engagement. While it does not have legal accreditation or official policies, it aligns with the broader mission of social inclusion, empowerment, and reintegration of homeless individuals into society.

Bottom-up Approach:

¹⁹ <https://www.neunerhaus.at/allgemein/hilfe-auf-augenhoehe-peer-arbeit-bei-neunerhaus/>
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The project engages participants through personal connections and the assistance of existing social organizations that work with homeless people. These engagements are done through cultural exchange events, and community cooking. It also includes art, music, and crafting workshops to foster creativity and interaction (e.g. DIY kitchen workshop)

By allowing participants to contribute their own cooking styles, traditions, and skills, the initiative promotes active participation and shared decision-making. The open and informal setting helps individuals connect with each other in a way that is natural and welcoming, building trust and mutual support.

Participants are not just passive recipients but are actively involved in planning, organizing, and running the sessions. They decide what meals to cook, share responsibilities in meal preparation, and engage in discussions on improving the initiative. Their input shapes how activities are structured, giving them ownership over the project. For instance, they can suggest additional events, or play music. They can also share expertise and participate in storytelling.

Expected Outcomes and Success:

Short-term: Build confidence and provide a safe space for social interaction and tips&tricks exchange.

Medium-term: Help participants develop cooking and teamwork skills, increase self-esteem, and strengthen social bonds.

Long-term: Foster community reintegration, reduce isolation, provide support for living initiation in a flat and finally aims toward employment or further opportunities in society.

Success is evaluated through participant feedback, observation of engagement levels, continuity of group activities, and qualitative feedback. Informal discussions, reflections from social workers, and monitoring of long-term involvement provide insight into the project's impact.

While formal case studies are limited, several individual success stories highlight the project's impact. Some participants have reported improved self-confidence, better social connections, and even reintegration into the workforce. Similar

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community-driven kitchen projects in Vienna and other European cities, such as Berlin's "Über den Tellerrand" (Beyond the Plate) initiative, serve as an inspiration for scaling and adapting this model to different social contexts. This group also collaborates in food waste prevention workshops with Community Cooking at Caritas Vienna, which is a great opportunity for enlarging the social network of participants.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups:

The project offers a safe and inclusive environment where foreign-born women can practice language skills, engage in cultural exchange, and gain practical experience in cooking and teamwork. It is not exclusively dedicated to migrant women, rather adopting an accessible and inclusive policy. The communal setting fosters friendships and social networks, which are crucial for building confidence and integrating into society.

Participants are often referred by social workers, homeless shelters, and support organizations or self-select by showing interest. There are no strict eligibility criteria, making the project accessible to anyone who wants to engage. This ensures inclusivity and encourages organic community participation.

Training Path:

The project focuses on soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem-solving), culinary skills, and cultural exchange. It also promotes basic financial literacy (budgeting for meals), time management, and personal development.

By incorporating multilingual support and culturally inclusive activities, the training is adaptable to various backgrounds. Cooking becomes a bridge for integration, allowing women to connect through shared experiences while improving their language skills and professional capabilities.

The program offers continuous participation, meaning individuals can return at any time. Social workers track personal growth informally, and networking opportunities help participants transition into other programs or employment.

This segment is from the perspective of the organization "neunerhaus" :

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Challenges include language barriers, diverse learning paces, and emotional trauma among participants. These are addressed by using visual aids, flexible teaching styles, and trauma-informed approaches to create a supportive environment.

Ongoing Practice:

This is an ongoing initiative sustained through community involvement, donations, and partnerships with social support organizations as well as the city of Vienna. The continuous participation of former and new members keeps the project alive and evolving.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

Local organizations, volunteers, and social workers provide resources, funding, and logistical support. The collaboration with city initiatives ensures the sustainability of the project. Lately, the group has collaborated with designers to create a very cheap DIY kitchen deck (costs maximum 212 Euros) where the material can be bought from over the counter shops.

Onboarding Strategies:

New participants are welcomed through peer mentorship, visual aids, and a relaxed introduction process. The informal setting reduces intimidation and allows gradual adaptation.

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

No information

Language and Communication Support:

No information

Sustainability:

No information

CASE STUDY 3: ODYSSEA / REFUGEE Women Academy: Kitchen Assistant Course

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Implementing Actors:

The “**Kitchen Assistant Course**” is offered by the **ODYSSEA NGO** (see at <https://odyssea.com/course/kitchen-assistant-rwa-2/>) in the form of a training program for refugee women, within the *Refugee Women (HORECA) Academy* and the financial support of the *Programme Equall of the PIRAEUS Bank (GR)*, and as stated “in close cooperation” with the *UNHCR*. The *training program* is led by the *Odyssea (Development) team* and offered occasionally on a fortnight or even weekly basis.

Territory:

The training program is offered in an urban and a rather deprived region in the Athens metropolitan area, in a fairly populated district. The ODEYSSEA “Workshop” premises there serve the purpose of positioning such activities in a community friendly context. It is surrounded by a number of used to be buildings to host industrial and logistics business activity.

Institutionalization:

The activity is run as an open professional development program (“course”), free of charge, to the specific target group, under a sponsoring (financial support) programme and the auspices of the *UNHCR*, which is guiding the targeted population of the refugee women. The training course has been brought up, designed and being offered by the *ODYSSEA* non-profit outfit, led by a group of volunteers and social entrepreneurs.

Bottom-up approach:

The “*Kitchen Assistant*” training activity is adopting a de-facto bottom-up approach as long as it has been addressed to the refugee population being stuck in the Athens metropolitan region and asking these people to bring their own recipes or recipes that they would like to share, eventually facilitating the exchange of cultural traits.

The weekly – or bi-weekly or monthly - open cooking training sessions are free of charge and are open to everyone regardless of age, gender or religion or other cultural background. They encourage people from different backgrounds to integrate within the refugee community, by bringing them together in a culture sharing exercise, to be joined through the “lingua franca” communication means, i.e. in English, sometimes offering on-site translation or communicating in Arabic or German. It has to be clarified that such an initiative does not aim at the community engagement to facilitate the migrants’ engagement in the locality.

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Participants to the training program are being introduced to the content and the “learning objectives” of the fast-track “Course” and are usually invited to discuss options as it regards the recipe planning, types of dishes to be worked upon as well as the related religious and cultural ethos of the relevant cooking. The ODYSSEA team encourages feedback at the end of the session and with the aim to incorporate and test new ideas and suggestions to ameliorate the potential of the activity in terms of impact on the professional and community lives of the participants.

Expected outcomes and success:

The activity aims at facilitating the targeted group of the refugee women to become more aware of their potential of their cultural background and their professional capacity in their continuous effort to get engaged with the community in a developed economy context. By bringing the members of the refugee population and especially the women together through culture sharing practice, the prospective of the solidarity networking and eventually that of the social cohesion is effectively enhanced both among the refugee communities and in the community level. And in fact, such a practice to bring people together through food as a means of cultural exchange, contributing to the building of a rich repository of recipes, from many places and different cultural backgrounds, expresses in different languages, but via an accessible format, could effectively serve the long-term engagement prospects.

As it has been already mentioned the established practice for the delivery of the “Course” asks for encouraging for receiving feedback from the participating women refugees, through a structured process by filling existing surveys, including invitation to the participants for recommendations regarding the logistics and even the objectives in terms of vocational skills to be developed by joining the training activity. The feedback contributing forms are usually in either English, Arabic, French and German.

The emergence of the Food Preparation training as a highly rated field of skills development among the migrant/refugee communities in the Athens region has been pointed to in both the available Annual Reports of the ODYSSEA NGO for the previous years of 2022 and 2023. In this respect, cooking training came up as a priority in the frame of the Women Refugee Academy, which has been financially supported by the Piraeus Bank Equal Grants. The participation in the year 2024 has been encouraging and the training program of the Kitchen Assistant Course can prove to be of significant potential in order to become a

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practice to be adopted in other community engagement and especially migrant inclusion contexts across the country (Greece).

Target group and specific sub-groups:

The specific training activity reaches out to the refugee women through the ODYSSEA NGO network and the donors' networks as well. Evidently, refugee and migrant women are in need of building their self-fulfilling capacity by sharing cultural experiences from their countries of origin and specific localities, where they come from. They are also in need of building on their existing competences and enhance whichever professional skills they could come up with. In this respect, the "Horeca" jobs usually prove to offer certain opportunities for employment to the refugee women, thus the "kitchen assistant" program is being provided with good chances for entering the labour market and further facilitating their social engagement.

There is an open rolling call to join the Kitchen Assistant Course in the Refugee Women Academy, and the organizers try to usually come up with multicultural groups. Training on cooking is being offered in a barrier-free space, open to those interested, who wish to share through the culinary experiences from their cultural backgrounds, in a migrant community context, promoting mutual understanding and solidarity.

Training path:

Training is being offered to advance cooking support skills and prepare the participating women with refugee origin to deliver upon the kitchen support jobs. While it is by its nature a culture sharing experience it is also serving the necessary networking so that the participants could further reach out to job opportunities in the Horeca industry sector. Evidently, by providing migrant and refugee populations with such up-skilling opportunities at the community level there is a significant chance of facilitating their community engagement through helping them to enter the labour market.

The training program is being run in such a way to provide the women refugee with the feeling of a safer space, by encouraging their participation while overcoming any language barriers. Occasionally, language support is being provided either through printed guidelines and paper or even video materials and or by volunteering staff offering translations.

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As the *Kitchen Assistant Course* is being offered in close cooperation with a number of local food-offering places – like restaurants and ethnic food spots – in the Athens metropolitan area, the participating women refugees that find their way to employment, often as part-time kitchen support staff, are keeping contact with the Horeca Women Refugee Academy and reflecting on the experience of re- or up-skilling exercise which the program is providing them with.

Not enough reflection information has been gathered as it regards the experience of the trainers. It is certainly widely accepted among the organizers and trainers that such a multi-cultural activity provides with a number of challenges most of them related to the communication and common understanding among the participants and their sufficiency to reach the necessary skills' level in order to get into the labour market for the Horeca sector jobs.

Ongoing Practice:

The Kitchen Assistant Course consists in an open program periodically offered free of charge during the period of the last two years. Often, the cost is covered by sponsoring from private social welfare foundations and also by subsidization funding of the Migration or Refugee Support Funds. The organizers look into systematic networking in order to make best use of their facilities for training on cooking and food preparation programs.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

While the facilities for the delivery of the Kitchen Assistant Course are being provided by ODYSSEA NGO, and it is part of a broader space offered for serving the refugee community in the Athens metropolitan area, there is a limited involvement of the local community in the running of the specific fast-track training programs. During this year (2025), it seems that in order to support the expansion of the area covered, where the program is being offered, more than often local community actors will start to get involved basically to liaise with potential source of reliable staff recruiting.

Onboarding Strategies:

Through the onboarding process of those refugee women interested into training on cooking and kitchen support tasks there is a consistent effort to overcome all sorts of barriers, including non-familiar cultural traits and other

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communications restricting factors like language barriers. A number of social networking channels are being deployed, coupled with video footage and migrant community emerging practice like the often culture sharing gatherings and reflections.

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

The practice of sharing culinary experiences and cooking recipes in a structured skills development perspective proves sustainable. Additionally, the Kitchen Assistant sessions are offered through a collaborative training process which proves effective in terms of up-skilling for the participating refugee women.

Language and communication Support:

Already referred to above, with the training sessions to be offered in English, Arabic, French and German.

Sustainability:

The (training) activity proves socially and at the same time financially sustainable because it is free of charge, open to all refugee women interested in and it also offered on a monthly/weekly basis. Additionally to that, the ODYSSEA NGO consistently works for the necessary networking and for joining partnerships at the European level in order to keep up with the innovative aspects of the Kitchen Assistant program, coupled with strong multi-cultural elements and funded under a number of European Programmes.

The training activity and related practice builds on a number of factors enhancing the visibility of the course to enlarged migrant and refugee communities, namely the network of cooperating employers, running food offering places in the region, the collaborative approach to up-skilling and the flexible learning process and the reliability of the effort ensuring the overcoming of language and other communication barriers. This has been especially served by the contribution of the volunteering community.

The ODYSSEA NGO are pursuing with networking and collaboration with communities of migrants and refugees and through peer review engaging both participants and the organizing team members, are aiming at introducing a multifaceted approach to sustainable partnerships.

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CASE STUDY 4: KYKLOS / Municipality of Athens (ACCMR)

Implementing Actors:

The activity is not offered any more, still it corresponds to a practice that could be rendered relevant for the prevailing state-of-play in Greece as it regards the social and institutional context. The specific cooking training activity had been offered by the Athens (Municipality) Coordination Centre of Migrants & Refugees under the auspices of the UNHCR.

Territory:

The activity had been implemented in the Athens metropolitan area, where large numbers of migrants and refugees are being present and hosted in various accommodation facilities.

Institutionalization:

The activity when being run had not been endorsed by an institutional actor, something that has not ensured its sustainability.

Bottom-up approach:

The activity has been undertaken by group of unaccompanied minors and young adult refugees and in this respect it had been considered as a bottom-up initiative.

Expected Outcomes and Success:

The up-skilling sessions were offered in Greek, Farsi, Dari, Arabi, Kurmanji, English and French. Cooking lessons or “classes” by the KYKLOS entity, while the request for this workshop coming originally from a group of unaccompanied minors and young adult refugee boys, living far from their families, therefore developing specific skills essential for their survival and better quality of life, while through the practice the participants were reflecting upon their cultural background and get connected with their present social context for their future. Thus, the basic essence of integration is achieved, then Cooking Classes take place once per week, are open to all beneficiaries of KYCLOS regardless of age, country of origin and gender, and professionals that know how to cook and they want, can enter the cooks/teachers team.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups:

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For the young refugees, living far from their families and not knowing how to prepare their food, the activity corresponds to a much needed support for building those competences and skills essential for their survival and better quality of life. While through the cooking lessons the participants remember their past, connect with their new present and shape their future

Training Path:

No information

Ongoing Practice:

The activity is not available any more, still it serves relevant planning from the side of the ACCMR of the Athens Municipality for imminent initiatives to be undertaken by partner NGOs.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

No information

Onboarding Strategies:

No information

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice

No information

Language and Communication Support:

No information

Sustainability:

No information

CASE STUDY 5: M'ama Food (Lombardy, Italy)

Implementing Actors:

M'ama Food is a project born within the Farsi Prossimo cooperative, which is promoted by Caritas Ambrosiana and which works to provide concrete responses to situations of fragility within the diocese of Milan (Italy). In particular, the idea was born within a refugees' center that hosted women seeking asylum.

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Territory:

MF provides its services throughout the Lombardy region but primarily operates in Milan due to the high demand from companies for catering and banqueting services. The project initially gained momentum from opportunities created by the Universal Exhibition focused on food, hosted in Milan in 2015.

Institutionalization:

The service operates within a cooperative that adheres to specific certifications (e.g., ISO certification, gender equality, registration in the Regional Register of Social Cooperatives). It complies with all catering sector regulations, including SCIE and HACCP. MF has also received various awards, such as a special mention in the 2012 Sodalitas Social Innovation Award, recognizing its innovative social impact.

Bottom-up approach:

At the start of the project, MF collaborated with various organizations promoting the social value and professional development of foreign women. It also engaged local communities, such as Eritrean women, to foster inclusion and empowerment.

MF has received widespread appreciation from companies, private individuals, institutions, and third-sector entities seeking catering services. Notable clients include Italian broadcasting corporations, banks, and prominent newspapers like *Il Sole 24 Ore*, a leading national financial publication. Through these collaborations, MF fosters awareness and promotes community engagement by highlighting the social value of its mission and the importance of supporting the empowerment of migrant women.

At the start of the project, significant emphasis was placed on participation, with dedicated moments for women to propose activities and dishes, fostering engagement beyond production. MF is not merely ethnic catering but a global culinary journey, reflecting diverse experiences and promoting integration. Over time, the focus has shifted towards work and economic sustainability, aiming to ensure the project's longevity and enable its ultimate goal: to transfer full ownership and management to the women themselves. Achieving complete economic independence is essential to realize this vision.

Expected Outcomes and Success:

The primary goals of MF are deeply rooted in its social mission: to empower and involve women in meaningful ways, creating opportunities for growth and

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integration. Central to this is reclaiming the project's original spirit, where active participation and the sense of community among women are prioritized. Expanding production and training capacity is not merely an economic ambition but a means to create more inclusive opportunities. The long-term vision is for the women themselves to take full ownership of the project, fostering independence and self-sustainability. Economic sustainability is seen as a consequence of achieving these social goals, ensuring the project's ability to continue transforming lives.

MF adopts a dual approach to assess its impact, with a strong emphasis on its social mission. Periodic interviews, listening sessions, and dedicated moments of engagement ensure that the voices of all members are heard, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Satisfaction questionnaires after training sessions cover topics like content, trainers, and spaces, prioritizing the human and relational aspects of the project. The involvement of 30 women from 15 nationalities in 2022 highlights its commitment to inclusivity and empowerment. The production of approximately 250,000 meals annually supports the project's social goals by providing real-world opportunities for growth and integration. Economic sustainability is a natural outcome of achieving these social objectives, ensuring MF can continue to transform lives through its mission.

In its early years, particularly until 2016-2017, M'ama Food attracted significant attention from studies and research initiatives. During this time, its innovative model inspired the development of similar projects, often reflecting shared names or ethnic identities. Examples of these initiatives emerged in cities like Milan and Verona, demonstrating how M'ama Food's approach influenced others. Although these links are not formally documented, they highlight the broader social impact of M'ama Food, advancing discussions on cultural and social integration through the universal language of food. This ripple effect underscores the project's role as a catalyst for change, extending its mission beyond direct beneficiaries to inspire systemic shifts in community engagement.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups:

M'ama Food operates within the Coop., which provides additional integration and stabilization services, such as Italian language courses, legal support, and general assistance. Women participating in M'ama Food benefit from preferential access to these resources, enhancing their social and professional development. Training includes HACCP, safety, and soft skills, such as teamwork and navigating interactions with women from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, even those from historically conflicting countries. Educators focus on fostering dialogue, active listening, and storytelling, emphasizing how cooking

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together transcends language barriers. Shared culinary practices reveal commonalities across cultures, with many recipes bearing similarities despite originating from distant cultural traditions, highlighting food's unifying power. This approach not only builds technical skills but also strengthens interpersonal bonds and cultural understanding.

M'ama Food initially began with a training purpose, targeting women from refugee centers to provide them with a pathway to skills development and empowerment. The project was introduced in the centers, and women applied to join. If deemed suitable by the team, they were included in the initiative. As the project evolved to include a productive purpose, hiring individuals still residing in reception centers became legally prohibited. Today, MF employs around 15 people on a permanent basis and hosts internships for individuals who have left reception centers. The project has expanded its scope, now including both men and women, Italians and foreigners, young and older participants. This evolution, driven by the project's growth, has become a vital step toward greater integration, fostering collaboration between the local population and migrants while maintaining its commitment to social impact.

Training Path:

M'ama Food offers comprehensive training beyond kitchen skills, provided by the cooperative. These courses include citizenship education and workplace readiness, emphasizing soft skills analysis and preparing participants to present themselves professionally. Specific to catering, participants complete HACCP certification and safety at work courses, ensuring compliance with industry standards. While MF focuses on skills directly related to the food sector, it does not provide IT or digitalization courses, as they fall outside the scope of catering. This tailored approach ensures participants gain the relevant expertise needed for integration into the hospitality and catering industries.

M'ama Food strengthens its mission by addressing the unique needs of migrant women. While there is no formalized training program exclusively for women born abroad, cultural mediators play a vital role in overcoming language and cultural barriers. Another significant support is the organization of training sessions during the day, accommodating mothers who must balance training with childcare responsibilities. This scheduling enhances flexibility and accessibility, empowering more women to participate. Women in reception centers often exhibit remarkable resilience and community spirit, organizing themselves and supporting one another to attend sessions effectively. These attentions underscore M'ama Food's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for migrant women.

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M'ama Food provides continuous and consistent support, reinforced by specific moments dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. These activities ensure the project remains aligned with its objectives and progresses effectively. Regular feedback sessions and structured meetings foster dialogue and alignment, enabling participants and stakeholders to share insights and address challenges collaboratively. To uphold rigorous quality standards, ISO certifications are employed, serving as a vital tool for maintaining and controlling processes over time. This combination of ongoing support, structured evaluation, and adherence to international standards ensures reliability and efficiency while reinforcing trust and accountability among all stakeholders involved.

Beyond individual cases like delays or specific problems, the broader internal challenge was helping women transition their cooking skills from a domestic activity to a professional, sales-driven role, emphasizing the value of their work. Externally, the challenge lay in convincing customers of the high-quality of the product, despite the project's non-profit nature. This was achieved by highlighting the expertise of staff, some of whom come from large companies, and showcasing their dedication to this mission-driven initiative. These dual efforts have been critical in building trust and credibility both internally and externally.

Ongoing Practice:

The project remains ongoing and self-sustaining, driven by its ability to sell products through various catering services, including weddings, corporate events, and large-scale gatherings like conferences at the State University of Milan. Additionally, M'ama Food manages collective catering, distributing approximately 700-800 meals daily. This collective catering segment was introduced later in the project to enhance its financial sustainability, ensuring the initiative can continue to support its social mission while maintaining operational independence. This dual approach blends purpose with practicality, securing a stable foundation for long-term impact.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

Local actors—including companies, citizens, private individuals, and third-sector entities—play a crucial role in the delivery and sustainability of M'ama Food. Their constant requests, support, and collaboration enable the project to thrive and sustain itself over time. By actively engaging with M'ama Food, these stakeholders contribute to its growth, ensuring its impact and long-term success. This continuous interaction fosters a strong community connection, reinforcing the project's mission and expanding its reach within the local context.

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Onboarding Strategies:

Language barriers and cultural differences are significant challenges often difficult to overcome. M'ama Food tackles these issues through strategic interventions, such as Italian language courses to enhance communication skills and continuous monitoring by its operators. However, the most effective solutions often emerge organically during the practical activity of "doing" together, especially in the kitchen. Within work groups, shared tasks foster collaboration and mutual understanding, allowing many obstacles to be naturally addressed. This hands-on approach not only builds essential skills but also promotes integration and cohesion, making the workplace a space for connection and growth.

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

M'ama Food has been a particularly innovative and disruptive project, gaining significant attention for its unique approach. At one point, communication about the project had to be limited due to overwhelming interest, with dozens of magazine articles highlighting its originality. Unlike other ethnic catering services in the Milan area, M'ama Food stood out as a true pathway to integration, using food not as the primary goal but as a tool and occasion to foster connection, empowerment, and social inclusion. This distinction positioned the project as a pioneering model in its field.

Language and Communication Support:

As previously mentioned, inclusiveness for all participants is supported by the wide range of services provided by Coop. Farsi Prossimo, including citizenship assistance, language courses, and professional training programs. Being part of the Cooperative facilitates access to these resources, empowering participants to overcome barriers to integration. Moreover, through shared tasks and collaboration, individuals find common ground, build mutual understanding, and foster a sense of community that transcends cultural and linguistic differences. This holistic approach strengthens both individual growth and collective cohesion.

Sustainability:

From an environmental perspective, M'ama Food implements practices such as minimizing food waste and collaborating with Caritas on recycling projects. Future plans include a new headquarters, designed to integrate an energy community and adopt actions aimed at enhancing sustainability. From a social perspective, the initiative generates profound value by offering structured training programs and employment opportunities in high-demand sectors for

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individuals facing challenges. These efforts facilitate social reintegration and create a significant social impact, empowering participants and strengthening community ties.

MF provides meals through hot and cold regimes, supported by diverse production lines designed to meet the varying needs and requests of customers. Looking ahead, the project aims to explore social bar management and other innovative solutions to complete the food supply chain. These initiatives aim to expand job opportunities, increase brand recognition, and offer this transformative experience to a growing number of participants, further reinforcing MF's mission of empowerment and integration.

CASE STUDY 6: Altre Terre Food Truck

Implementing Actors:

The practice is led by MondoDonna Cooperativa Sociale Onlus. It is financed by Monte di Bologna e Ravenna Foundation and realized in collaboration with Fomal, Cohousing Porto 15, Association Yadin Wahida, City of Bologna, District Pianura Est – Union Reno Galliera, District Pianura Ovest – Union Terre d'Acqua, Union of Municipalities of the Bologna Apennines.

Territory:

The practice is implemented in the City of Bologna, Emilia Romagna, North-Eastern Italy, a rich territory with high quality social services and a strong presence and tradition of cooperative and social economy.

Institutionalization:

The institutions already mentioned support the project with funding, but the practice has not any certification, legal approval or professional accreditation and could be considered informally organized.

Bottom-up approach:

The food truck usually takes part in festivals and public and private events to engage targets and disseminate information.

The community is involved through activity of outreaching during itinerant meetings. In the first phase, the practice included activities for children in Bologna public libraries and workshops in schools for dissemination combining the themes of food and creativity.

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Participants are involved in the process with creation of contents. Migrant women have an active role in creating recipes that combine the food of their country of origin with Italian cuisine. They also suggest which kind of recipe to propose in relation to the specific target of a specific event.

Expected Outcomes and Success:

The first aim achieved in the short term is the employment of migrant women on the activity of the food truck. In the medium term the aim is to maintain continuity of work giving autonomy for the participant women, while in the long term the practice is expecting to increase the flow of work, training and employing an ever-increasing number of women.

Surveys were distributed at the beginning of the training to the participants in order to individualize their expectations (time working in relation to childcare, salary, integration). The evaluation is continuing with the method of interviews while the food truck practice is ongoing. A survey has been distributed also to a sample of customers about proposed recipes in the food truck menu.

The initiative takes inspiration from the USA tv series, in particular *Street Food USA*, as mentioned by Irina Biafiore during our interview. *Street Food* is an American [documentary](#) that premiered on [Netflix](#) in 2019, exploring [street food](#) around the world. Archival footage is combined with face-to-face interviews and follows street food chefs and their history, which is intertwined with the big picture of how influential street food is in their native country. In fact, each chef focuses on a selected recipe from his country telling to the public the most beloved bites on American streets and, along the way, discover the heart, soul and wildly diverse real people behind the food.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups:

The practice addresses the needs of foreign-born women with tailored actions. It is based upon cooking training for participants combined with acquisition of language skills, social inclusion and employment opportunities.

Language skills are provided with Italian language courses. Social inclusion is afforded with citizenship training offered by the mediators of the MondoDonna. The cooking training is finalized to an employment of the participants on the food truck that promotes working and social inclusion.

Participants women are identified and selected among the reception shelters managed by the organization. In fact, MondoDonna leads social actions for migrants with 3 focus of intervention: women with children, emergency landings

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and asylum seekers. Criteria of primary selection are interest in cooking and basic Italian language skills.

Training Path:

The training focuses on culinary competences to foster employability. The cooking workshop was supervised by professional chef Alberto Di Pasqua. The participants also receive basic training on the fundamental rules for managing a food-related business. For example, there were lessons on food packaging and preservation. The participants are also trained to adapt for professional and social settings to achieve skills about correct behavior and relationship to the public during work activities.

The training is developed in Italian combined with language lessons with the aim of improving knowledge through daily practice. Mediators are always engaged in the path. The meetings are scheduled with a frequency of three times a week and during the morning (9-12). Since these women carry most of the responsibility for running the home and childcare, they can then reconcile these activities with training ensuring participation.

The mediators monitored the initial expectations and the satisfaction levels halfway through and at the end of the training with questionnaires. Oral and written tests were carried out on the drafting of recipes to evaluate the acquisition of skills. Role-playing games were carried out to evaluate the relational attitude by simulating the relationship with the customers of the food truck.

The mediators continue to monitor participants' progress providing ongoing support on the food truck during the activities. Interviews identify any need for improvement (for example working hours and proposal of new recipes).

The challenges arose in delivering training are mainly connected to relational aspects. Some participants have a lack of adaptability to new contexts and difficulty to respect pre-established schedules (e.g. training and working hours).

Some of them suffer from "traumatic migration and distress implication" and therefore have unrealistic expectations at a relational or work level.

These aspects are addressed through citizenship training to foster integration and psychological support to participants migrant women.



Ongoing Practice:

The practice is ongoing. The food truck moves throughout the Bologna area, offering a multi-ethnic menu with prices ranging from 2 to 5 euros. The truck also is involved in several public and private events providing catering services for festivals, team building meetings for companies, and weddings ensuring its sustainability.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

The practice doesn't foresee the engagement of local actors as community leaders and organizations except MondoDonna which is totally in charge of the project. The participants migrant women are involved in implementing design and delivery indeed. They are asked to be active in creating contents like new recipes and reporting needs of customers to tailor the food truck activity.

Onboarding Strategies:

The onboarding process addresses barriers with tailored actions. Language skills are provided with Italian language courses. Social inclusion is afforded with citizenship training offered by the mediators of the MondoDonna which are always present to intercept needs or expectations of participants. The offered citizenship training path allows to afford unfamiliar cultural norms.

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

The engagement of migrant women in creating contents like recipes combining food of their country of origin with Italian cuisine makes this practice innovative. The working employment after cooking training makes it particularly effective.

Language and Communication Support:

The constant presence of mediators ensures the accessibility of communication during the training. The participants are also provided with an Italian language course during their involvement in the first phase of the project like training and, if necessary, during their work on the food truck where there is always a professional of the organization.

Sustainability:

Beside the first support of several public funders, the practice is sustainable in terms of financial factors through the commercial activity of the food truck. It is sustainable in terms of social impact by inclusiveness of fragile targets while providing for them a fair salary. Sourcing local and sustainable ingredients,



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implementing efficient menu designs, and managing waste effectively, the food truck addresses on the path to reducing environmental impact.

The project ensures longevity through several key strategies and integrated approaches. Social Integration and empowerment: the food truck provides a platform for women from different countries to gain professional work experience, share their culinary traditions, and create economic opportunities for migrant women.

Sustainable Business Model: the food truck operates with affordable pricing, diverse menu offering multiple cuisines, mobility across different city locations, catering services.

CASE STUDY 7: Más que cocina/Gambaru

Implementing actors:

The main implementing actors are the Gambaru Association, the Zaragoza City Council, and the CAI Foundation, all collaborating to support the social integration of homeless individuals.

Territory:

The practice is implemented in Zaragoza, Spain, which is an urban area characterized by diverse cultural influences and a significant presence of vulnerable populations including the homeless.

Institutionalization:

Gambaru is formally endorsed by the Zaragoza City Council through the "Plan de Primera Oportunidad". It operates with institutional support, ensuring it has legal recognition and aligns with local social policies for the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Bottom-up approach:

Initiatives to engage target groups include cooking workshops and community meals. These participatory approaches involve community feedback in planning sessions and allow members to share culinary traditions. Participants contribute ideas for workshop topics and are involved in the organization of events, ensuring their voices shape the program's direction.

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Expected Outcomes and Success:

The practice aims for short-term outcomes of skill acquisition, medium-term social reintegration, and long-term sustainable employment. Success is evaluated through participant surveys, interviews, and progress tracking. Documented success stories, such as individual transformations through culinary skills, showcase effective integration and can inspire similar initiatives across other regions.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups:

Gambaru addresses the needs of foreign-born women by providing language support, vocational training, and opportunities for social inclusion through culinary activities. Participants are identified through local outreach programs and partnerships with social services that connect those in need directly to Gambaru's initiatives.

Training Path:

The training focuses on culinary skills, life skills, and employability, emphasizing practical knowledge and personal growth. It is tailored to foreign-born women's challenges by incorporating cultural relevance and language assistance. Follow-up mechanisms include mentorship and regular check-ins after training completion to monitor progress and provide ongoing support. Educators face challenges such as varying skill levels and cultural differences, which they address through adaptive teaching methods and flexible learning plans.

Ongoing Practice:

Gambaru is part of ongoing operations rather than a one-off project. It is sustained through continuous partnerships, community fundraising, and institutional support that ensure stable resources for future activities.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

Local actors, including community leaders and organizations, engage in the design and delivery by participating in planning meetings, contributing resources, and facilitating workshops, ensuring the program is community-driven and contextually relevant.

Onboarding Strategies:

The onboarding process includes language assistance and cultural sensitivity training to help participants navigate unfamiliar environments. Orientation

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sessions familiarize participants with program expectations and local cultural norms, easing their transition.

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

What makes Gambaru stand out is its holistic approach that combines skill acquisition with emotional support and community building through culinary experiences that resonate with participants' own cultural backgrounds.

Language and Communication Support:

Communication is tailored through the use of interpreters and bilingual materials, ensuring accessibility for all participants. Inclusive practices encourage open dialogue, making participants feel valued and understood.

Sustainability:

Gambaru's sustainability is supported by strong community ties, diverse funding sources, and a focus on social empowerment, which fosters long-term commitment from partners. Measures for longevity include regular evaluations and adaptive strategies to align with emerging community needs.

CASE STUDY 8: Cocinas del Mundo [ACISJF IN VÍA](#)

Implementing actors:

The main implementing actors in this practice are ACISJF IN VÍA Asociación, a nonprofit organization focused on supporting vulnerable women, partnering with engaged participants from various backgrounds.

Territory:

This practice operates in Zaragoza, Spain, specifically within reception facilities for women. The area boasts a multicultural urban atmosphere, showcasing a diverse immigrant population and unique socio-economic challenges.

Institutionalization:

The practice is informally organized under the recognized framework of ACISJF IN VÍA. It does not possess formal accreditation but aligns with established empowerment and integration policies aimed at supporting women. Legal endorsement helps legitimize its outreach within the community.

Bottom-up approach:

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Participatory initiatives include cooking activities for recipe sharing, fostering cultural exchange among participants. These events enhance community ties through dialogue and mutual respect.

Active participant engagement in cooking activities fosters dialogue and mutual respect, ensuring broad community involvement. This participatory approach allows women from various backgrounds to connect, share their culinary heritage, and collectively build a supportive network within the community.

Participants influence decision-making by choosing recipes and shaping event organization. This involvement cultivates a sense of ownership and empowerment within the collaborative process, allowing their voices to be heard and valued while facilitating a stronger connection to the initiative.

Expected Outcomes and Success:

In the short term, the practice aims for increased cultural exchange and community bonding among participants. Medium-term outcomes include improved social skills and deeper local integration; long-term, it plans to empower women toward employment opportunities and enhanced quality of life, fostering independence in their personal and professional lives.

Success is evaluated using surveys and participant feedback to gauge integration and satisfaction levels. These evaluations help assess the effectiveness of the practice and allow for continuous improvement based on participants' experiences, ensuring responsiveness to their needs and priorities in future initiatives.

Documented successes include participant testimonials detailing job acquisition and network building as a result of the initiative, showcasing positive integration experiences. These stories serve as powerful inspirations for similar practices in different communities, highlighting the potential for culinary exchange to foster empowerment, promote social cohesion, and address the unique challenges faced by marginalized women. Such case studies demonstrate the transformative impact of the program and encourage replication in diverse contexts.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups:

This practice specifically addresses the needs of foreign-born women by providing opportunities for social inclusion, improving language skills, and promoting equal employment access. By focusing on cultural exchange through culinary experiences, it enhances social networks, fosters self-esteem, and

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empowers women to navigate their new environment effectively, ultimately contributing to their integration into Spanish society while nurturing their identities and supporting their resilience, especially for those facing gender-based violence challenges.

Participants are identified through referrals from local support services and community partners that work with vulnerable women. Additionally, self-selection is encouraged based on interest in the program, allowing participants to voluntarily join activities where they feel most comfortable contributing and learning, ensuring that the initiative attracts those genuinely invested in engaging with the practice and deriving benefits from it.

Training Path:

Training focuses on essential skills like intercultural competencies, cooking skills, and social communication tailored to foreign-born women. The program emphasizes practical applications, enhancing participants' confidence and self-expression to adapt to their new environment. By integrating cultural elements, training fosters connections among women, enabling them to share their culinary heritage and build community ties, while also developing vital competencies for everyday interactions and potential employment opportunities within their new societal context.

Designed to meet the unique needs of foreign-born women, the training incorporates culturally relevant content that fosters shared experiences. Activities are crafted to be relatable, encouraging participants to connect through their traditional cuisines while enhancing integration. The program also addresses potential language barriers and varying skill levels by providing personalized support and resources tailored to individual learning needs. This ensures inclusivity and a welcoming atmosphere, empowering all participants to engage with confidence and gain valuable skills.

Follow-up mechanisms include regular check-ins and support sessions involving one-on-one meetings with participants. These checkpoints allow educators to monitor progress, address any challenges, and provide tailored assistance based on individual needs. Additionally, the program offers ongoing access to resources, networking opportunities, and community events to facilitate continuous engagement. This structure ensures participants feel supported throughout their journey, fostering a sense of belonging while helping them achieve their personal and professional goals in the long run.

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Educators face challenges such as language barriers, differing educational backgrounds, and varying skill levels among participants. A significant issue is the difficulty in fostering unity among participants, especially when they speak different languages. To address these challenges, tailored support mechanisms are implemented, including the use of visual aids, simplified language, and peer mentoring approaches. Additionally, educators receive training on cultural sensitivity to enhance their interaction with participants from diverse backgrounds. Continuous feedback loops help identify challenges early, allowing for timely interventions and adjustments in teaching strategies to create a more effective and inclusive learning environment.

Ongoing Practice:

This practice operates as part of the ongoing efforts of ACISJF IN VÍA. It is sustained through community partnerships, local government funding, and continuous engagement with participants and stakeholders. Regular evaluations of program effectiveness and adaptability to changing community needs are essential for its longevity. The organization emphasizes collaboration with local actors to secure resources and ensure that the program remains relevant and responsive to the needs of vulnerable women.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

Local actors, including community leaders and organizations, are engaged through collaborative planning and resource sharing. They actively participate in designing the program by providing insights about community needs and helping to shape activities that reflect local cultural values. Their involvement in delivering the practice ensures that resources are effectively allocated and that the initiative aligns with broader community goals. This collaborative approach enhances trust, fosters local ownership, and is critical for the program's sustainability and impact.

Onboarding Strategies:

The onboarding process addresses language barriers and unfamiliar cultural norms by implementing language support services and using visuals in training materials. Cultural sensitivity training is provided to facilitators to better understand participants' backgrounds. This approach creates an inclusive environment where individuals feel welcomed and valued. Additionally, ice-breaking activities and peer mentorship facilitate relationships among participants, making the transition smoother and enhancing engagement from the start of their involvement.

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Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

This practice stands out due to its innovative focus on cultural exchange through culinary experiences, which fosters empowerment among women, especially those affected by gender-based violence. By combining cooking skills with community building, it enhances social cohesion and provides a unique platform for sharing diverse traditions while promoting integration in a supportive environment.

Language and Communication Support:

Communication is tailored for accessibility and inclusivity by employing translation services, using plain language, and providing materials in multiple languages. Visual aids complement verbal instructions, enhancing comprehension among participants from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, facilitators undergo training in cultural sensitivity to ensure they communicate respectfully and effectively, fostering an open atmosphere for dialogue and encouraging active participation and engagement within the program.

Sustainability:

The practice is financially sustainable through partnerships with local government, grants, and community support. Environmentally, it promotes responsible consumption and waste reduction by incorporating local ingredients and traditional cooking methods, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of the initiative. Socially, it fosters community ties, networks, and support systems that empower women and enhance their societal participation, creating a sense of belonging that contributes to the overall social fabric of the community.

To ensure longevity, the program conducts regular evaluations to assess its effectiveness and adapt to participant needs. Feedback from participants guides the evolution of training and activities, ensuring they remain relevant. Ongoing community engagement efforts, including collaborations with local organizations and stakeholders, strengthen support networks. Additionally, capacity-building initiatives empower participants, encouraging them to take leadership roles within the program, thereby securing its future and fostering a sustainable community-oriented approach.

CASE STUDY 9: Yalla Trappa

Implementing actors:

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Yalla Trappan is run as a women's cooperative and social enterprise, often collaborating with public sector organizations, private businesses, and local non-profits to create and sustain opportunities for immigrant women.

Territory:

The organization operates in Rosengård, Malmö, Sweden, a culturally diverse area with a high immigrant population. This choice of location is strategic, as it places the enterprise close to its target group, allowing Yalla Trappan to directly serve immigrant women in the community.

Institutionalization:

Yalla Trappan is a formalized organization registered as a non-profit association. This gives it a structured framework, allowing for consistent management and collaboration with official entities across sectors.

Bottom-up approach:

Yalla Trappan operates as a bottom-up initiative. It was founded to address the needs of immigrant women within the local community, and its development has been largely driven by the involvement of women from this community.

Yalla Trappan engages immigrant women through hands-on training, workshops, and communal cooking events. These initiatives foster cultural exchange, skill-building, and social integration within the community.

Yalla Trappan's participatory approach includes mentorship programs, collaborative cooking sessions, and storytelling events. Women shape activities, ensuring relevance to their cultural backgrounds. Continuous feedback loops and peer networks foster engagement, creating a sense of belonging and ownership. Women lead initiatives, ensuring cultural relevance and empowerment.

Expected Outcomes and Success:

The organization aims to enhance employment and economic independence and social integration among immigrant women, alongside boosting confidence and integration. Short-term goals include skills training and networking. Medium-term outcomes focus on securing stable jobs and fostering entrepreneurship. Long-term, the initiative seeks systemic change by influencing policies, creating sustainable employment models, and inspiring similar community-driven social enterprises.

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It has been successful in creating multiple employment opportunities in catering, cleaning, and community guiding, achieving these core goals. It has developed close partnerships with municipalities and other public bodies, as well as with private sector companies like IKEA, H&M, and Skanska, to assess and enhance their impact. For example, Yalla Trappan's collaboration with IKEA includes providing in-house sewing services at the Malmö store, offering job placements for immigrant women. The organization has inspired similar initiatives across Sweden, with local independent Yalla projects emerging nationwide.

Target Group and Specific Sub-groups:

Yalla Trappan's focus is broad, supporting immigrant women of all ages and backgrounds. However, the emphasis is on women with limited employment history, providing tailored support to those with higher barriers to economic independence. Yalla Trappan offers tailored support to immigrant women by providing skills training in areas such as cooking, sewing, and cleaning. These programs are designed to develop existing skills to professional standards, thereby enhancing employment opportunities. The organization also fosters social inclusion by creating a supportive community environment, helping participants build confidence and integrate into Swedish society.

Participants are identified and selected based on their alignment with Yalla Trappan's mission to support immigrant women facing difficulties entering the labor market. The organization emphasizes democratic values such as participation, co-determination, and solidarity, ensuring that those who join are committed to these principles.

Training Path:

The organization incorporates training as a fundamental part of its model. Yalla Trappan's training focuses on employability skills, digital literacy, soft skills, and entrepreneurship. The program empowers foreign-born women by providing hands-on experience in areas such as food production, cleaning, and customer service. It emphasizes digital competencies to enhance workplace readiness and fosters soft skills like communication, teamwork, and leadership. The entrepreneurship track helps participants develop the skills necessary for starting and running small businesses, fostering economic independence.

The program empowers foreign-born women by providing hands-on experience in areas such as food production, cleaning, and customer service. It emphasizes digital competencies to enhance workplace readiness and fosters soft skills like



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communication, teamwork, and leadership. The entrepreneurship track helps participants develop the skills necessary for starting and running small businesses, fostering economic independence. The organization addresses the mismatch between the skills of foreign-born women and the demands of the Swedish labor market, aiming to reduce unemployment rates among this group.

Yalla Trappan provides ongoing support through mentorship and a licensing scheme to spread its model across Sweden and beyond, ensuring participants receive continuous guidance and opportunities for professional development. Additionally, participants are encouraged to stay involved in the Yalla Trappan community for ongoing networking, guidance, and professional growth. To address challenges, Yalla Trappan integrates language education with professional training and familiarization with Swedish work culture, providing a supportive environment for skill development and integration.

Ongoing practice:

Yalla Trappan continues to operate and expand, maintaining its role in the community and continuing to empower immigrant women through its various projects.

Yalla Trappan sustains its operations through a combination of commercial revenue and financial support from public entities. This co-financing model enables the organization to offer services such as catering, atelier, and cleaning, generating income that supports its mission. Additionally, partnerships with municipalities and collaborations with private companies like IKEA, H&M, and Skanska provide further financial backing and opportunities for participants

Community Engagement and local actor involvement:

Yalla Trappan actively involves a variety of community actors, including local businesses, citizens, public agencies, and neighborhood associations. This engagement strengthens its community ties and allows for collaborative projects, such as catering services for events and guided tours. The organization has established partnerships with companies such as IKEA, H&M, and Skanska, as well as collaborations with municipalities and other public bodies. These partnerships facilitate various initiatives, including catering services, sewing workshops, and guided tours, fostering community integration and empowerment.

Onboarding Strategies:

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The organization appears to use a networking system and community outreach for onboarding. Many of its participants are likely introduced through local networks, word of mouth, or referrals from community organizations. Yalla Trappan addresses language and cultural barriers during onboarding by integrating work-based Swedish language learning and cultural orientation into its programs.

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

Yalla Trappan's success stems from its holistic approach to empowerment. Its unique combination of skill development, employment, cultural exchange, and community integration makes it a standout model for social enterprises focused on women's empowerment. Its innovative approach combines hands-on training with immediate employment opportunities, facilitating language acquisition and cultural adaptation through practical work experience. Partnerships with companies like IKEA further enhance job prospects and community integration

Language and Communication Support:

To address language barriers, Yalla Trappan likely incorporates some level of language support or hands-on training, though further detail would be needed on formal translation or interpretation services. His approach allows participants to acquire language skills and adapt to Swedish society through practical work experience, fostering both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding

Sustainability:

Yalla Trappan maintains its sustainability through a mix of financial stability, social impact, and environmental awareness. Financially, it relies on public grants, private partnerships, and income from its services like catering and cleaning. Socially, it supports long-term employment and integration by providing stable jobs and training for immigrant women. Environmentally, it encourages sustainable practices in its operations, such as reducing waste and sourcing locally. By adapting to community needs and market opportunities, the organization ensures its continued relevance and impact. To stay viable, Yalla Trappan diversifies its funding sources, combining public support with income-generating services. It also invests in training to help women develop long-term skills. Strong ties with local businesses, organizations, and the community provide ongoing support, while its flexible model allows it to adjust to changes and explore new opportunities for growth.



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CASE STUDY 10: Botildenborg

Implementing Actors:

Botildenborg operates as a non-profit organization in Malmö, Sweden. It collaborates with local government, non-profits, private businesses, and community members to develop programs that promote sustainable food practices, social inclusion, and skill development.

Territory:

Located in Malmö, Botildenborg serves the local community, particularly the immigrant population and residents in urban areas where social integration and sustainability are prioritized.

Institutionalization:

Botildenborg is an established non-profit with formal structures for community engagement and partnerships. Botildenborg is formally recognized through partnerships with local institutions, such as Malmö and Lund universities, Region Skåne, and the city of Malmö. It participates in initiatives like the Botildenborg Social Innovation Living Lab and the Stadsbruk urban farming program. These collaborations reflect its institutionalization, providing formal structures for program development. Additionally, Botildenborg has earned formal recognition, including the Skåne Gastronomy Prize, which highlights its significant role in promoting sustainability and social inclusion.

Bottom-up approach:

The organization primarily follows a bottom-up approach, focusing on community-driven initiatives and responding to the needs of residents, especially those from marginalized or immigrant backgrounds.

Botildenborg uses various bottom-up initiatives to engage the local community, such as workshops, urban gardening projects, and cultural events. These initiatives focus on fostering sustainable food practices, social inclusion, and skills development. These participatory approaches ensure community involvement by encouraging residents, especially from marginalized and immigrant backgrounds, to actively engage in food production, skill-building, and shared experiences. Participants play an integral role in decision-making and implementation by contributing to project development, selecting activities, and providing feedback.

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Expected Outcomes and Success:

Botildenborg aims to improve social cohesion, increase awareness of sustainable food practices, and provide job skills and training. The organization's urban farm, culinary programs, and educational workshops have made significant progress in promoting environmental awareness and integration among local residents.

In the short term, it focuses on fostering community engagement and participation in food-related activities. In the medium term, the organization works towards creating sustainable local food systems and promoting environmental awareness. In the long term, Botildenborg aims to enhance social integration, support economic development, and create lasting impacts on the local community's resilience.

Case studies, such as Botildenborg's collaborations with SLU Urban Futures and the Stadsbruk urban farming program, highlight the success of integrating sustainable practices and social inclusion. These examples showcase how similar urban farming initiatives can lead to positive outcomes, inspiring other communities to adopt similar practices. Additionally, Botildenborg's recognition through awards, like the Skåne Gastronomy Prize, further exemplifies its success and impact.

Target Group:

Botildenborg focuses on engaging marginalized communities in Malmö, including immigrants, youth, and foreign-born individuals. The organization provides programs that address social inclusion, sustainable food practices, and job skills training. Through urban farming and culinary activities, Botildenborg aims to foster community integration and provide practical skills for better employment opportunities.

The selection process for participants is based on community outreach and engagement, ensuring that individuals from vulnerable and marginalized backgrounds are connected to the programs through local networks and partnerships.

Training Path:

Botildenborg offers various forms of training, primarily focusing on sustainable farming, culinary arts, and hospitality. These programs provide practical skills and knowledge to participants, enhancing their employability in food-related sectors such as agriculture, cooking, and catering. The organization also

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emphasizes social inclusion and skill development for marginalized groups, including foreign-born residents.

Botildenborg specifically aims to support the integration of foreign-born individuals by providing inclusive programs that foster social participation and job skills. The hands-on training in farming and culinary arts helps foreign-born participants build skills that are immediately applicable in the job market.

Botildenborg ensures continued community support through collaborations with local organizations and other networks, offering opportunities for further development. This collaborative approach allows participants to gain access to employment opportunities or additional training programs.

Ongoing Practice:

Botildenborg is an ongoing practice that continues to provide services and support to the local community in Malmö. The organization's programs, such as urban farming and culinary arts training, are continually adapted and sustained through partnerships with local authorities, community organizations, and businesses, ensuring long-term impact and sustainability.

Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

Botildenborg actively involves a wide range of local actors in the design and delivery of its programs. These include community leaders, local citizens, educational institutions, businesses, and governmental bodies. For example, Botildenborg collaborates with local schools and universities in Malmö, such as Malmö University, to offer training and educational programs in sustainable food practices and urban farming. The organization also partners with local businesses, like restaurants and food producers, to promote sustainability and provide employment opportunities. Additionally, governmental bodies, such as the City of Malmö, play a key role in supporting Botildenborg's projects related to social inclusion, sustainability, and community development. This broad engagement ensures that Botildenborg's initiatives are aligned with the needs of the community, fosters mutual support, and promotes shared responsibility for achieving long-term social and environmental outcomes

Onboarding Strategies:

The organization likely uses community outreach, partnerships, and networking to onboard participants. It engages with local associations, schools, and public services to attract a diverse range of participants. This approach is designed to

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address barriers like language and unfamiliar cultural norms by working with local community organizations and institution

Distinctive Elements as Best Practice:

Botildenborg stands out for its unique combination of urban farming focused on sustainability, cultural exchange through food, and community-building events. The organization's integration of ecological and social goals through hands-on learning fosters inclusivity and community empowerment, providing a model for urban integration, community empowerment and sustainability.

Language and Communication Support:

Botildenborg likely addresses language barriers through multilingual staff and accessible program designs. The organization's focus on social integration and community-building suggests that communication is designed to be welcoming and accessible to diverse groups, though specific language support services are not publicly detailed.

Sustainability:

Botildenborg's practice is sustainable in several key areas. Environmentally, the organization promotes urban farming, sustainable food practices, and local food production, contributing to ecological sustainability. Socially, it fosters inclusion and community-building by engaging marginalized groups and providing job training. Financially, Botildenborg relies on collaborations with local businesses, government bodies, and other partners to maintain its operations. To ensure its longevity, Botildenborg maintains strong partnerships with local organizations, schools, and government bodies. These collaborations, combined with its diverse programs, help secure ongoing funding and support, ensuring continued community impact and sustainability.

8. Comparative Analysis and Main Findings Suggested Analysis Framework for Findings

8.1 Analysis

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The success of these 10 case studies relies heavily on collaboration with nonprofits and social organizations, such as ACISJF IN VÍA and ODYSSEA NGO, which provide support for vulnerable groups like women, refugees, and the homeless. Partnerships with local authorities, including city councils in Zaragoza, Bologna, and Athens, help ensure infrastructure, funding, and community engagement. Community involvement and volunteers play a crucial role in executing programs like the Community Kitchen Project, supporting activities such as food preparation and organization. Training and skill development initiatives, such as ODYSSEA's "Kitchen Assistant Course," empower individuals to gain independence. These efforts prioritize social inclusion and empowerment, fostering education, skills, and integration for marginalized communities.

Many initiatives take place in urban areas with diverse populations, such as Malmö, Vienna, Zaragoza, and Athens, where cultural diversity and a high presence of vulnerable groups drive the need for social integration efforts. These territories are home to immigrants, refugees, and homeless individuals, making them strategic locations for programs focused on inclusion, skill development, and community-building. Due to social and economic challenges like poverty and exclusion, community-driven solutions are essential. A community-centric approach is emphasized, with spaces like Brotfabrik in Vienna and reception centers in Zaragoza fostering engagement. These initiatives aim to empower marginalized groups, addressing urban socio-economic challenges through support systems and skill-building.

Many initiatives benefit from the support of institutional actors, such as local governments, NGOs, and international organizations like UNHCR, ensuring funding, recognition, and alignment with social policies. While some programs lack formal accreditation, they still adhere to social inclusion and empowerment goals. Several initiatives align with local social policies, reinforcing their role in community development. Many projects follow a community-driven approach within an institutional framework, leveraging nonprofit status and partnerships for sustainability. Additionally, volunteers and social entrepreneurs play a key role in the implementation. Even in cases where formal certification is not



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provided, these initiatives gain legitimacy through institutional backing and policy alignment.

These initiatives prioritize active participant engagement, allowing individuals to shape activities, from organizing events to selecting content. Cultural exchange and empowerment are central, as participants share traditions and experiences, fostering mutual understanding. A strong focus on community building ensures participants feel a sense of belonging and support. Through decision-making influence, individuals have a direct say in shaping workshops and events, enhancing ownership. Feedback loops help refine initiatives based on participant input, ensuring continuous improvement. Lastly, inclusivity and diversity create an open, non-discriminatory space for all. This approach ultimately empowers participants, strengthening community ties and ensuring meaningful impact.

In the short term, these initiatives promote cultural exchange and social interaction, fostering connections among diverse participants. They also emphasize skill development, particularly in vocational areas like cooking, to support professional growth. In the medium term, the focus shifts to social integration and empowerment, helping individuals build confidence and navigate social and professional environments. Community engagement is also encouraged, giving participants ownership in shaping activities. The long-term goals include sustainable employment and economic independence, equipping individuals for stable jobs or entrepreneurship, and fostering social cohesion by strengthening ties within communities.

Success is measured through feedback mechanisms, participant testimonials, and documented impact, such as job placements and social improvements. Additionally, replication and expansion demonstrate scalability, ensuring that effective models can be adapted to other communities. These initiatives collectively prioritize empowerment, inclusion, and sustainable social development through a community-driven approach.

These initiatives primarily focus on foreign-born, migrant, and refugee women, acknowledging their unique challenges in social integration, language barriers,

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and employment access. Programs like Yalla Trappan and M'ama Food provide culinary training, language courses, and social support to empower them. Specific attention is given to socially vulnerable women, including those facing gender-based violence or caring for children, offering safe spaces and supportive networks.

Additionally, initiatives target women with limited employment history, helping them gain skills and confidence for stable work. Programs such as KYKLOS and ODYSSEA NGO also support youth and unaccompanied minors, focusing on essential life skills and social integration. Many initiatives emphasize community building and cultural exchange, using shared culinary experiences to foster social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Finally, several programs provide access to supportive services, including legal aid, language courses, and mentorship, helping participants overcome employment barriers and build sustainable futures. The overarching goal is social inclusion and empowerment through vocational training, language support, and tailored community-driven initiatives.

Additionally, these initiatives focus on culinary skills as a foundation for both professional development and cultural exchange, enabling participants to share their heritage while gaining industry-relevant competencies. Soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, and customer service, are integrated to prepare participants for work environments and enhance their employability, particularly in hospitality and catering.

A strong emphasis is placed on cultural relevance and integration, addressing language barriers and fostering intercultural understanding. Training is personalized and flexible, using visual aids, peer mentoring, and adaptable teaching methods to accommodate diverse backgrounds. Continuous monitoring and follow-up, including mentorship and check-ins, ensure long-term growth.

Programs align with industry standards (e.g., HACCP food safety certification) and include practical business knowledge such as food preservation and workplace behavior. More than just skill-building, these initiatives prioritize



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empowerment, creating supportive, inclusive environments that foster confidence, independence, and resilience.

A holistic approach—blending technical training with community-building, personal development, and ongoing support—ensures that foreign-born women not only gain employable skills but also the confidence and networks needed for long-term social and economic success.

Most initiatives sustain their operations through a combination of commercial revenue and financial support from public and private sources. Programs like Yalla Trappan, M'ama Food, and Altre Terre Food Truck generate income through catering and event services, while others rely on donations and community fundraising.

Continuous participant involvement is crucial for long-term impact. Programs engage participants in cooking, catering, and community activities, encouraging mentorship and networking, which fosters lasting connections. Partnerships with local businesses, authorities, and community organizations help ensure the programs' success and sustainability.

Evaluation mechanisms are used to assess and adapt initiatives based on participant feedback, ensuring programs remain relevant. These initiatives prioritize social inclusion, creating safe, welcoming spaces for marginalized groups, especially migrants and refugees.

Some initiatives, like Kyklos and Botildenborg, lack formalized funding and structured follow-up mechanisms, which may limit their scalability. Additionally, certain programs focus more on cultural exchange and social interaction rather than offering clear employment pathways, unlike others such as M'ama Food and Yalla Trappan, which provide job training and entrepreneurship support. However, these practices thrive through a mix of community involvement, sustainable funding, and partnerships, but there are areas for improvement, especially in formal follow-up and creating direct employability pathways for participants



Many initiatives prioritize collaboration with local organizations, community leaders, and businesses to enhance the relevance and sustainability of their programs. For instance, Yalla Trappan partners with businesses like IKEA and H&M, while Botildenborg works closely with Malmö University and local governmental bodies to align programs with community needs. M'ama Food and Gambaru also rely on local stakeholders for financial support, resources, and logistical assistance, ensuring their ongoing success.

Local actors are crucial for resource sharing and logistical support. For example, Yalla Trappan receives support from private companies and municipalities, while Botildenborg collaborates with local businesses to promote sustainability. Similarly, M'ama Food and Gambaru depend on continuous partnerships to sustain their operations and expand their reach.

Many initiatives also emphasize shared responsibility for sustainability. Yalla Trappan and Gambaru rely on strong partnerships for long-term growth, while Botildenborg integrates local businesses into its efforts, promoting long-term community development. However, some programs, like Altre Terre Food Truck and Kyklos, show limited community involvement, with minimal local actor engagement or integration into the program's design and delivery. Similarly, while M'ama Food depends on local actors for sustainability, it doesn't fully integrate broader community goals into its daily operations.. Most initiatives thrive through collaboration with local actors, but the level of engagement varies. Some programs have strong local involvement, ensuring sustainability and community empowerment, while others have limited community engagement and integration with local needs.

Many initiatives focus on overcoming language barriers by providing language support. For example, Yalla Trappan, M'ama Food, and Altre Terre Food Truck offer language courses, while Cocinas del Mundo and Gambaru provide additional cultural sensitivity training. Peer mentorship is also common, with programs like Community Cooking Caritas and Cocinas del Mundo facilitating relationship-building. Visual aids and informal settings are used by programs such as Community Kitchen Project and Odyssey to make the onboarding process smoother.



Integration is often encouraged through practical activities like collaborative cooking in M'ama Food and Community Cooking Caritas, allowing participants to learn by doing. However, some initiatives like Kyklos and Botildenborg lack detailed onboarding strategies, with Botildenborg relying on community outreach and partnerships to onboard participants.

Many programs integrate cultural exchange through food to promote social inclusion and empowerment. For example, Cocinas del Mundo and M'ama Food use culinary experiences to foster connections and integration. Empowerment through skill development is a common theme, with Yalla Trappan and Botildenborg providing opportunities for participants to gain work experience while developing skills. Sustainability is also emphasized in programs like Community Cooking Caritas and Botildenborg, which promote ecological and social sustainability through local food production and sustainable practices.

Inclusive environments are created by addressing language barriers and fostering a sense of community, as seen in Gambaru and Yalla Trappan. Many initiatives also collaborate with local businesses and municipalities to ensure program sustainability and expand their impact. However, some programs, like Kyklos, lack structured onboarding mechanisms and may benefit from stronger community involvement.

Many initiatives prioritize language support to bridge communication barriers and promote integration. Programs like Yalla Trappan and M'ama Food offer language courses (Swedish and Italian), while Altre Terre Food Truck provides Italian language training during work. Other initiatives, such as Gambaru and Botildenborg, use multilingual staff or community mediators to ensure effective communication. Caritas Community Cooking and Odyssea also provide multilingual training to support diverse participants.

Cultural sensitivity is another key element. Programs like Cocinas del Mundo train facilitators to communicate with respect, and M'ama Food and Gambaru foster cultural understanding through shared tasks and collaborative work. These practices enhance both language and cultural integration.

To further support communication, visual aids and simplified language are used in programs like Cocinas del Mundo and the Community Kitchen Project.



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Bilingual or multilingual materials, such as training documents and recipes, are common in initiatives like Gambaru and Caritas Community Cooking, ensuring accessibility for everyone.

While some programs, like Botildenborg, don't mention formal translation services, they rely on community engagement and multilingual staff. In conclusion, these initiatives successfully use language support, cultural sensitivity, and accessible communication methods to foster inclusivity and engagement, though some may benefit from more formal translation services.

Many projects ensure sustainability through diverse funding sources like public grants, private partnerships, and service income. For instance, Yalla Trappan relies on catering and cleaning services, while Altre Terre Food Truck depends on its operations. Partnerships with local businesses and governments, as seen in Botildenborg and Gambaru, further support sustainability.

Social sustainability is fostered through job training and empowerment. M'ama Food and Gambaru focus on providing opportunities for marginalized immigrant women, promoting social integration. Active community engagement, such as that in M'ama Food and Botildenborg, ensures long-term impact, while Caritas Community Cooking thrives on volunteer and peer support.

Environmental sustainability is a priority for several projects, including Botildenborg, Community Cooking Caritas, and M'ama Food, which use local, seasonal, and organic ingredients to reduce environmental impact. Altre Terre Food Truck also emphasizes sustainable ingredient sourcing and waste management.

Long-term sustainability is ensured through adapting to community needs, with projects like Gambaru and M'ama Food adjusting their offerings based on feedback. Regular evaluations help refine these programs, as seen with M'ama Food, Cocinas del Mundo, and Odyssea.

However, some projects, such as Cocinas del Mundo and Gambaru, do not focus as much on environmental sustainability, and others like Kyklos lack clear partnerships or reliance on peer support. While sustainability practices are widely implemented, certain areas could be further developed in specific initiatives.

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8.2 Overall Conclusion

The various initiatives explored in this analysis provide valuable insights into creating inclusive, sustainable, and empowering programs for migrant women. A key takeaway from these practices is the emphasis on integrating language support, cultural sensitivity, and community engagement to address the multifaceted challenges faced by migrant women. These initiatives have effectively used food-related programs as a tool to foster social inclusion, empowerment, and community cohesion. Additionally, their success hinges on a combination of financial sustainability through diverse funding sources, community partnerships, and environmental sustainability efforts.

However, there are gaps in some areas, such as limited emphasis on environmental sustainability in certain programs, as well as the need for more structured onboarding processes in others. Some projects lack clear strategies for integrating local community actors, while others may benefit from stronger, more formalized approaches to cultural sensitivity and language support. Despite these challenges, the overall picture is one of success in leveraging community-driven approaches and collaboration to foster social integration.

Find available the collected information:

EXCEL:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QJSfRvtHwbQhsgmXTM0Os-Nsk9f8WpNt/edit?gid=485063492#gid=485063492>

Find the analytical analysis in [The Appendices](#).

8.3. Suggested Framework



The following framework drafted out of the comprehensive analysis of the cases combines core elements that are essential for creating an effective training program. The approach includes language and communication support, cultural integration, empowerment, financial sustainability, environmental responsibility, and strong community engagement. The focus on practical skills and social inclusion ensures that the program not only empowers migrant women but also helps them build long-term, sustainable futures in their new communities. By ensuring feedback loops, adaptation, and ongoing integration, this framework provides a solid foundation for developing comprehensive and impactful training initiatives that can be tailored to the specific needs and context of migrant women in any location

<i>Language and Communication Support</i>	<i>Cultural Integration and Empowerment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Language Training: Offer accessible language support tailored to the participants' needs (e.g., language courses, work-based language learning, or peer learning opportunities).● Multilingual Support: Use multilingual staff, community translators, or volunteers to ensure effective communication in a diverse environment.● Cultural Sensitivity: Provide training for staff and facilitators to foster culturally sensitive communication, creating an inclusive environment for all participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Cultural Orientation: Integrate cultural orientation and sensitivity training into the program to help migrant women understand local customs and norms while preserving their cultural identity.● Peer Mentorship and Support Networks: Establish mentorship programs where experienced participants can guide newcomers, easing their integration and building a strong community of support.● Cultural Exchange through activities: Use culinary and other hands-on activities (such as crafts, or arts) to promote cultural exchange and help

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visual and Simplified Communication: UEmploy visual aids (e.g., infographics, illustrated instructions) and ensure materials are available in multiple languages to overcome literacy and language barriers. 	<p>migrant women feel valued and included in their new environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skill Development and empowerment: Focus on equipping participants with both hard and soft skills that are marketable (e.g., job training, language skills, social skills) to boost confidence and social mobility.
<p><i>Social Empowerment and Community Engagement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community Building: Actively involve local communities, volunteers, and organizations in the program to foster a sense of belonging and encourage social cohesion. ● Collaborations with Local Organizations: Partner with local businesses, schools, NGOs, and community leaders to provide resources, training, and networking opportunities. ● Long-Term Social Integration: Encourage participation in community events, local meetings, or other activities to ensure migrant women are integrated into the social fabric of their new environment. 	<p><i>Financial and Resource Sustainability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversified Funding: Secure funding from a variety of sources (e.g., public grants, private donations, income from program activities such as catering or services) to ensure the long-term viability of the program. ● Income-Generating Activities: Include opportunities for participants to earn income, whether through product sales, catering services, or community-based projects, helping them gain economic independence. ● Resource Sharing: Establish collaborative partnerships with local businesses or organizations that can offer in-kind resources, such as food, training materials, or



	<p>professional support.</p>
<p><i>Environmental Sustainability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustainable Practices: Promote environmentally friendly practices like using organic or locally sourced ingredients, minimizing waste, and creating eco-friendly workspaces or training areas. ● Local Sourcing and Waste Reduction: Encourage sourcing materials locally to reduce carbon footprints and support the local economy, while ensuring waste is minimized through recycling or upcycling initiatives. 	<p><i>Program Evaluation and Adaptation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular Feedback and Assessments: Collect regular feedback from participants to gauge program effectiveness, and conduct evaluations to measure both short-term and long-term outcomes. ● Adaptability: Adjust training content and delivery based on participant needs, feedback, and emerging trends or challenges in the community. ● Data-Driven Decision-Making: Use data (e.g., surveys, interviews, attendance records) to track progress and identify areas for improvement.
<p><i>Onboarding and Integration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcoming Environment: Create a safe and welcoming environment for new participants to help them feel comfortable and valued from the beginning. ● Practical and Collaborative Learning: Encourage integration through hands-on activities, such as cooking or group projects, that allow participants 	<p><i>Legitimacy and Recognition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal and Informal Recognition: Ensure that participants gain recognition for their skills, whether through formal certifications or informal recognition within the community (e.g., community acknowledgment, skill endorsements). ● Institutional Partnerships: Collaborate with local



<p>to learn by doing while interacting with peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ongoing Orientation: Provide regular orientation sessions, where newcomers can get acquainted with the program, its resources, and the community.	<p>authorities, businesses, and educational institutions to lend credibility to the program and ensure it meets local needs and regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Public Engagement and Awareness: Raise public awareness about the program's impact, whether through social media, events, or community outreach, to build legitimacy and garner further support.
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9. Conclusion

9.1 Summary of Key Insights

The first part of this document explores the relationship between food, migration, and cultural identity, offering a landscape of the culinary arts and their development. This context provides insight into how immigration shapes cultural expression, particularly for foreign-born women, for whom food remains a vital link to their heritage and identity.

In the second part, we present an analysis of 10 case studies evaluated against 13 criteria. These cases highlight key strategies for creating inclusive and sustainable programs for migrant women. Successful initiatives emphasize language support, cultural sensitivity, and community engagement, often leveraging food-related activities to foster social inclusion and empowerment. Additionally, financial sustainability, strategic partnerships, and environmental responsibility play crucial roles, though some programs face challenges such as gaps in structured onboarding and environmental efforts.



Based on these findings, a suggested framework outlines essential components for effective training programs:

- **Language & Communication Support:** Accessible language training, multilingual resources, and culturally sensitive communication.
- **Cultural Integration & Empowerment:** Orientation, peer mentorship, and skill development.
- **Social Empowerment & Community Engagement:** Local collaborations and long-term integration efforts.
- **Financial & Resource Sustainability:** Diversified funding and income-generating activities.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Waste reduction and eco-friendly practices.
- **Program Evaluation & Adaptation:** Regular feedback, adaptability, and data-driven improvements.
- **Onboarding & Integration:** Welcoming environments and practical learning.
- **Legitimacy & Recognition:** Certification, institutional partnerships, and public awareness.



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11. Appendices

11.1 Analytical analysis

1. Implementing Actors

Collaboration with Nonprofits and Social Organizations:

Many of the practices involve nonprofit organizations, such as ACISJF IN VÍA Asociación, M'ama Food, and ODYSSEA NGO, which focus on social support, empowerment, and integration of vulnerable groups like women, refugees, and homeless individuals.

Partnership with Local Authorities:

Several projects work with local governments or municipal entities, like the Zaragoza City Council, the City of Bologna, and the Athens Municipality, which help provide infrastructure, financial support, and local engagement.

Community Involvement and Volunteers:

Many initiatives, including the Community Kitchen Project and the Gambaru Association, emphasize the role of community members and volunteers in the execution of the programs, often helping in organizing, food preparation, and support activities.

Training and Skill Development:

Several programs, such as the "Kitchen Assistant Course" by ODYSSEA, involve training and skill development as a means to help individuals gain independence and integrate into society.

Focus on Social Inclusion and Empowerment:

The common thread across all these cases is the focus on the social inclusion and empowerment of marginalized individuals, especially women, refugees, and the homeless, through education, training, and community-building activities.



2. Territory

Urban Settings with Diverse Populations:

Many of the practices are implemented in urban areas known for their cultural diversity, such as Malmö, Vienna, Zaragoza, and Athens. These cities have significant immigrant and vulnerable populations, which is a key reason why these practices focus on social integration and support.

Focus on Vulnerable Groups:

All the territories mentioned are home to vulnerable populations—immigrants, refugees, and homeless individuals—making these areas strategic for initiatives aimed at social inclusion, skill development, and community-building.

Social and Economic Challenges:

The territories are characterized by socio-economic challenges, such as poverty, social exclusion, and high immigrant populations, creating a need for community-driven initiatives to address these issues.

Community-Centric Approach:

The practices are often situated in areas where community and cultural integration are prioritized. For example, community spaces like Brotfabrik in Vienna or reception facilities for women in Zaragoza play an essential role in fostering local participation and support.

These territories share a common focus on addressing the social integration of marginalized groups within urban areas with diverse, vulnerable populations and socio-economic challenges. The practices in these areas aim to empower local communities through support systems, skill-building, and collaborative initiatives.

3. Institutionalization

Support from Institutional Actors:



Many practices are supported by formal institutions, such as local governments (e.g., Zaragoza City Council, City of Bologna), NGOs (e.g., Caritas Vienna), and international bodies like UNHCR. This institutional support ensures recognition, funding, and alignment with broader social policies.

Lack of Formal Accreditation:

Some practices, like those under ACISJF IN VÍA and Forum Obdach Wien, operate informally without formal certifications or legal accreditation. However, they still align with established social inclusion and empowerment policies.

Alignment with Local Social Policies:

Several initiatives, like Gambaru and Botildenborg, align with local social policies aimed at inclusion, empowerment, and integration of vulnerable groups. These alignments help solidify their role within the community.

Community-Driven with Institutional Framework:

Many projects, such as those under ODYSSEA and Yalla Trappan, are community-driven but operate within a formalized framework (non-profit status, partnership with institutions) that provides structural support, legitimacy, and sustainability.

Volunteer and Social Entrepreneur Involvement:

Some institutions, like ODYSSEA and ACISJF IN VÍA, rely on volunteers and social entrepreneurs to guide and implement their programs, ensuring community engagement while working within a recognized framework.

In conclusion, while many of these practices lack formal certifications, they are either formally recognized through partnerships with institutions or align with policies that ensure their sustainability and legitimacy within their communities.

4. Bottom-up approach

Active Participant Engagement:

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In all cases, participants are actively involved in the planning and execution of activities, such as choosing recipes, organizing events, and contributing ideas. This ensures that the initiative reflects their needs and interests.

Cultural Exchange and Empowerment:

The activities encourage cultural exchange by allowing participants to share their culinary traditions and personal experiences. This promotes mutual respect, understanding, and empowerment, especially for marginalized or immigrant groups.

Community Building:

All initiatives focus on building a supportive community where participants feel a sense of belonging. The activities foster relationships and trust among participants, helping to strengthen community ties.

Decision-Making Influence:

Participants have a direct influence on the decision-making process, whether it's choosing the content of workshops, the types of dishes to be prepared, or the organization of events. This involvement empowers participants and gives them ownership over the initiative.

Feedback Loops:

Many initiatives include feedback sessions where participants can share their thoughts, suggestions, and improvements. This ensures the program evolves based on participant input, making it more relevant and impactful.

Inclusivity and Diversity:

The bottom-up approach emphasizes inclusivity, welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds and creating an open, non-discriminatory space for everyone to engage, regardless of gender, age, religion, or cultural background. The bottom-up approach in these initiatives focuses on empowering participants by giving them a voice in decision-making, fostering cultural exchange, building community, and continuously improving the initiative based on their feedback.



5 Expected Outcomes and Success:

Short-term Goals:

Cultural Exchange & Social Interaction:

Many of the initiatives focus on fostering cultural exchange and social bonds among participants, particularly from diverse backgrounds (e.g., immigrant or refugee communities).

Skill Development:

Skill-building is emphasized, particularly in cooking and related vocational areas, as a foundation for social and professional growth.

Medium-term Goals:

Social Integration & Empowerment:

The initiatives aim to help participants integrate into the local community, build self-confidence, and improve their social skills, enhancing their ability to navigate social and professional environments.

Community Engagement:

Initiatives often encourage participants to take an active role in shaping and organizing activities, fostering a sense of ownership and agency.

Long-term Goals:

Sustainable Employment & Economic Independence:

Several practices emphasize the goal of helping participants achieve long-term employment or entrepreneurship, empowering them to be financially independent and contribute meaningfully to society.

Social Cohesion:

A key long-term outcome is fostering stronger social ties within both marginalized communities and the broader society, contributing to greater social cohesion and inclusivity.

Evaluation of Success:



Feedback Mechanisms:

Success is often measured through participant feedback, including surveys, interviews, and informal discussions, ensuring that the needs and priorities of the community are addressed.

Documented Impact:

Many initiatives highlight individual success stories or transformations, such as job acquisition or improved social connections, which are used to measure the program's effectiveness and inspire similar initiatives.

Replication & Expansion:

Success is also gauged by the potential for the model to be replicated in other communities, demonstrating its scalability and positive impact.

These common elements reflect a shared focus on empowerment, social integration, and sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on feedback and community-driven participation to ensure the effectiveness of the initiatives.

6. Target Group and Specific Sub-groups

Foreign-born Women:

Many initiatives (e.g., Yalla Trappan, Botildenborg, Altre Terre Food Truck, M'ama Food, Community Kitchen, and Gambaru) primarily focus on foreign-born women, acknowledging their unique challenges in terms of social integration, language barriers, and access to employment. These programs aim to empower immigrant women through culinary training, language courses, and social inclusion activities.

Migrant and Refugee Women:

Several practices specifically target migrant and refugee women, such as Gambaru, ODYSSEA NGO's Kitchen Assistant Program, Community Cooking Caritas, and Cocinas del Mundo. These women often face additional challenges, including lack of family support, trauma from displacement, and uncertain legal status, making programs offering



vocational training and social networks essential for their integration and well-being.

Women with Limited Employment History:

Some initiatives, like Yalla Trappan, focus on women with limited employment history or those who face higher barriers to economic independence. These programs aim to provide tailored support to help women overcome challenges in accessing stable work, offering skills training, and creating community networks that provide confidence and long-term job opportunities.

Socially Vulnerable Women:

Various initiatives focus on women from socially vulnerable groups, such as those facing gender-based violence (e.g., Cocinas del Mundo) or those with children (e.g., Altre Terre Food Truck). These women may be particularly isolated, and programs are designed to address their unique needs, often through the creation of supportive environments that promote empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Youth and Unaccompanied Minors:

Some programs, such as KYKLOS and ODYSSEA NGO's Kitchen Assistant Program, specifically focus on young refugees, including unaccompanied minors. These programs help them develop essential life skills, including cooking, language acquisition, and social integration, crucial for their survival and future stability.

Community Building and Cultural Exchange:

Many initiatives (e.g., Botildenborg, Cocinas del Mundo, M'ama Food) emphasize cultural exchange and building social networks within diverse communities. By sharing culinary experiences, these practices foster mutual understanding, social cohesion, and strengthen both personal and professional networks, which is crucial for overcoming social isolation.

Access to Supportive Services:



Programs like M'ama Food and Gambaru integrate social services such as language courses, legal support, and community-building activities. These services are essential for the social inclusion and personal development of foreign-born women, helping them overcome barriers to employment and social participation.

Summary of Common Target Group Elements:

Foreign-born, migrant, and refugee women are the central focus, with additional attention to those from vulnerable, marginalized groups (e.g., women with children, unaccompanied minors, and survivors of gender-based violence).

Social inclusion and empowerment are core components of these initiatives, achieved through vocational training, language support, community building, and cultural exchange.

Tailored programs often address specific barriers to employment, such as limited professional experience or language difficulties, while providing opportunities for social integration and personal development.

7. Training Path

Focus on Culinary Skills:

All the organizations emphasize culinary skills as a core component of their training programs. These skills are often paired with cultural exchange, allowing participants to share their culinary heritage while developing professional competencies.

Employability and Soft Skills:

Many organizations integrate employability skills into their training, such as teamwork, communication, leadership, and customer service. Soft skills are a key part of preparing participants for work environments, particularly in the hospitality and catering sectors.

Cultural Relevance and Integration:

Cultural competence is a recurring theme, with most programs incorporating elements that encourage the integration of foreign-born



women into their new societal context. This includes addressing language barriers, encouraging the sharing of cultural experiences, and adapting training to reflect the diverse backgrounds of participants.

Personalized Support and Flexibility:

Tailored support mechanisms are used across the programs to address varying skill levels and language barriers. Educators often employ flexible teaching methods, visual aids, and peer mentoring to ensure inclusivity and maximize learning outcomes.

Continuous Monitoring and Follow-Up:

Several organizations have mechanisms for ongoing support, such as mentorship, regular check-ins, or feedback sessions. This ensures that participants continue to progress after the completion of the training and are guided in their professional and personal growth.

Incorporation of Local and Industry Standards:

In many cases, training includes compliance with industry standards like HACCP certification (in food safety), and practical aspects of running a food-related business, such as food preservation, packaging, and workplace behavior.

Focus on Empowerment:

Across the board, the training programs are designed not just to provide skills, but to empower women by fostering a sense of community, confidence, and independence. This approach enables participants to develop self-esteem and resilience, which aids in their social and professional integration.

Patterns Identified:

Hands-On Learning:

Practical, real-world skills are emphasized, especially those applicable to immediate employment opportunities in food-related sectors like the Horeca (hotel, restaurant, catering) industry.



Supportive Environment:

Most programs highlight the creation of a safe, inclusive space where participants can engage without fear of discrimination. This often includes specific efforts to overcome language barriers and provide flexible learning schedules.

Multicultural Approach:

Most organizations incorporate cultural exchange, not just as a supplementary element but as a core part of the program, emphasizing intercultural dialogue and mutual respect.

Ongoing Guidance:

Continuous support, whether through mentorship or structured follow-ups, is common to ensure that participants remain engaged and continue to develop their skills and confidence.

Summary:

The training paths followed by these organizations share a common goal: to empower foreign-born women by providing them with essential culinary and life skills while fostering their integration into local communities. The combination of practical, hands-on training with soft skills development and cultural exchange ensures that participants not only gain employable skills but also the confidence and social networks necessary for long-term success.

Key to their success is the holistic approach to training that goes beyond technical skills to include personal development, community building, and ongoing support. By addressing both the professional and personal needs of participants, these organizations are helping women navigate challenges in their new environment, empowering them to thrive socially and economically.

8. Ongoing Practice:

Sustainability through Diverse Funding Sources:

Most of the organizations sustain their operations through a mix of commercial revenue and financial support from public and private



entities. For instance: Yalla Trappan combines commercial activities (catering, cleaning, etc.) with financial backing from municipalities and companies like IKEA and H&M. M'ama Food also generates income through its catering services and collective meal distribution, ensuring financial independence while fulfilling its social mission. The Altre Terre Food Truck generates sustainability through its catering for events and its affordable menu, moving between public and private events in Bologna. The Community Kitchen Project is sustained by donations, partnerships with local organizations, and the city of Vienna, ensuring community involvement. Gambaru thrives on continuous partnerships, community fundraising, and institutional support.

Continuous Participant Involvement:

Regular participation and community involvement are key elements in maintaining the long-term impact of these initiatives: M'ama Food engages participants not only in cooking but also in community activities like catering events, ensuring their active participation. The Community Kitchen Project has long-term volunteers and participants who remain involved, with some refugees becoming regular members. Yalla Trappan emphasizes a mentorship model and continuous engagement through its activities like catering and entrepreneurship, enabling lasting connections within the community. Gambaru benefits from ongoing engagement, where immigrant women continue to be supported through its partnerships. The Kitchen Assistant Course encourages continuous networking to ensure long-term training and support.

Partnerships and Collaborations:

Collaborations with local actors, businesses, and public authorities are critical for the continuity of the initiatives: Botildenborg is continuously sustained through partnerships with local authorities and businesses like community organizations and companies. ACISJF IN VÍA collaborates with local actors to secure resources and ensure that the program meets the needs of vulnerable women. Yalla Trappan works closely with municipalities, companies, and local businesses to ensure the success of its programs.



Program Evaluation and Adaptation:

Evaluation mechanisms are important to ensure that these practices remain effective and adaptable to changing needs: M'ama Food has regular monitoring and feedback sessions to assess the program's effectiveness and adjust it based on participant needs. ACISJF IN VÍA uses regular evaluations to measure the effectiveness of its programs, ensuring they are adaptable to community needs.

Community and Social Inclusion:

These initiatives focus heavily on social inclusion, ensuring that all participants, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, feel welcomed and supported: The Community Kitchen Project emphasizes creating a safe, inclusive space for women, especially migrants, and encourages them to connect with others in the community. The Altre Terre Food Truck provides an affordable multi-ethnic menu and supports social inclusion through its operation. Gambaru also focuses on empowering foreign-born women, offering them a space to build both employability and social integration.

Lack of Formalized Funding Structures:

- Kyklos and Botildenborg do not mention specific co-financing models or substantial funding mechanisms outside of local support. They rely on existing community-based initiatives and informal support, which may limit scalability or sustainability.
- The Kyklos project does not currently exist but is cited as a future reference for partner NGOs. There is no ongoing practice information available for analysis.

Inconsistent Participant Follow-up:

- Botildenborg does not mention a structured follow-up mechanism for individual participants or detailed progress tracking, which contrasts with



organizations like M'ama Food and Yalla Trappan that actively monitor the impact of their programs through regular evaluations and mentor-mentee relationships.

Focus on Cultural Sharing Without Employment Pathways:

- Caritas' Community Cooking initiative and Cocinas del Mundo focus more on social interaction and cultural exchange, without directly emphasizing employability skills or clear pathways to work, unlike organizations such as M'ama Food or Yalla Trappan, which provide specific job-related training or entrepreneurship support.

Conclusion

The common elements across the ongoing practices highlight the importance of diverse funding models, community involvement, and collaborations to sustain and scale these initiatives. The focus on social inclusion and community empowerment remains a central theme, with continuous engagement and adaptation to local needs being key to the longevity of these practices.

On the other hand, there are some gaps in the presence of formal follow-up mechanisms and the employment orientation of certain initiatives. Some programs focus primarily on social inclusion and cultural exchange, which may limit the direct employability impact seen in other initiatives.

9. Community Engagement and Local Actor Involvement:

Collaboration with Local Organizations and Community Leaders:

Many of the initiatives involve local actors, including community leaders, organizations, and businesses. These collaborations enhance the relevance and sustainability of the programs. For example: Yalla Trappan engages local businesses, citizens, and public agencies, establishing partnerships with major companies such as IKEA, H&M, and Skanska to support various initiatives, including catering services and sewing workshops. Botildenborg collaborates with local schools, universities (e.g., Malmö University), businesses, and governmental bodies in Malmö, ensuring the programs are aligned with community needs, particularly in



sustainability and urban farming. M'ama Food relies heavily on local actors such as citizens, businesses, and third-sector entities to sustain and expand its catering services, which supports its long-term success. Gambaru involves local community leaders and organizations in the planning and delivery of its programs, ensuring they are community-driven and contextually relevant. Cocinas del Mundo engages local actors in the planning process, allowing community leaders and organizations to contribute insights into cultural needs and ensuring the program is culturally relevant.

Resource Sharing and Logistical Support:

In many cases, local actors are instrumental in providing the resources, both financial and logistical, needed to run the programs: Yalla Trappan benefits from partnerships with private companies and municipalities that provide financial support and offer professional development opportunities. Community Kitchen receives resources from local organizations and volunteers, and has recently collaborated with designers to create low-cost DIY kitchen decks for the project. Botildenborg engages local businesses for resources, such as promoting sustainability and providing employment opportunities through partnerships with food producers and local restaurants. M'ama Food relies on continuous collaboration with local stakeholders for sourcing materials, funding, and catering opportunities, which ensures financial stability.

Shared Responsibility for Sustainability:

Many initiatives involve local actors not just in the initial delivery of the programs, but in the ongoing support and sustainability efforts. This is particularly evident in: Yalla Trappan with its focus on partnerships and collaborations to ensure long-term sustainability. Botildenborg with its partnerships to ensure the programs remain adaptive to community needs, while focusing on sustainability and long-term community development. Gambaru thrives through continuous partnerships with local actors that provide ongoing resources and help expand its reach. Cocinas del Mundo enhances trust and sustainability by fostering local



ownership, ensuring that the program aligns with broader community goals.

Limited Community Involvement in Some Cases:

Not all practices have as deep community engagement or the same level of local actor involvement: Altre Terre Food Truck involves little engagement with community actors, aside from the operation of the food truck at events and festivals. While there is some community connection through the affordable pricing and catering for events, there is minimal involvement in the program's design and delivery. Kyklos has no substantial community involvement at this time, as the project is no longer operational. It is expected that local actors may be more engaged in future projects, but this hasn't been established yet. Kitchen Assistant Course (Athens) doesn't seem to have a significant involvement from local actors in the program delivery aside from providing facilities and recruiting staff. Local community engagement is expected to increase in the future, but it is currently not central to the program's operation.

Limited Integration with Broader Community Goals:

Some programs are less integrated with local community needs: M'ama Food primarily relies on local actors for the sustainability of the program but doesn't seem to have an extensive integration with broader community goals in its day-to-day operations, focusing more on maintaining the sustainability of the catering service.

Conclusion:

Overall, a strong pattern of local actor involvement exists across many of the cases, with community organizations, businesses, and local governments playing key roles in sustaining and enhancing the impact of these initiatives. The extent of involvement varies, however, with some programs (like Altre Terre Food Truck and Kyklos) having minimal community engagement, while others (Yalla Trappan, Botildenborg, and Gambaru) actively foster partnerships that ensure sustainability and community empowerment.

10. Onboarding Strategies:

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Language Support:

Many of the practices offer language assistance to overcome communication barriers. Yalla Trappan provides work-based Swedish language learning. M'ama Food and Altre Terre Food Truck provide Italian language courses. Cocinas del Mundo offers language support services. Gambaru includes language assistance and cultural sensitivity training. Odyssea offers tailored support to overcome language and cultural barriers through social networks and migrant community practices.

Cultural Sensitivity Training:

Several practices incorporate cultural orientation and training to ensure a smoother adaptation to local norms and values. Yalla Trappan integrates cultural orientation into its programs. M'ama Food provides citizenship training to address unfamiliar cultural norms. Altre Terre Food Truck offers citizenship training. Cocinas del Mundo includes cultural sensitivity training for facilitators. Odyssea and Gambaru offer cultural sensitivity training as part of their onboarding.

Peer Mentorship:

Peer mentorship plays a role in easing the onboarding process by creating a supportive environment for newcomers. Community Cooking Caritas uses peer mentorship to assist new participants. Cocinas del Mundo includes peer mentorship to facilitate relationship-building. M'ama Food encourages peer support through shared kitchen tasks, fostering collaboration.

Visual Aids and Informal Setting:

Community Kitchen Project and Odyssea use visual aids to make the onboarding process easier. Community Cooking and Odyssea also adopt informal settings to make participants feel comfortable and reduce intimidation. Gambaru also uses visuals and orientation sessions to familiarize participants.

Integration Through Practical Activities:

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Onboarding often includes practical activities to encourage learning by doing, which helps integrate participants into the community. M'ama Food encourages integration through collaborative cooking in the kitchen, which naturally addresses communication barriers. Community Cooking emphasizes the "doing" aspect, allowing participants to integrate through shared tasks in cooking. Odyssey uses culture-sharing gatherings and reflective activities to enhance integration.

Lack of ongoing strategies:

- Kyklos: No information has been provided about onboarding strategies.
- Botildenborg: No detailed information about onboarding strategies, but it is implied that community outreach and partnerships help onboard participants.
- Altre Terre Food Truck: The Onboarding strategy mainly focuses on the practical and collaborative nature of the food truck operation, but specific details about language or cultural integration support are limited.

11. Distinctive Elements as Best Practice

Cultural Integration Through Culinary Experiences:

Many of the practices emphasize the use of cooking and food to facilitate cultural exchange and integration. For example, Cocinas del Mundo integrates cultural exchange through food, promoting social cohesion while empowering women. Similarly, M'ama Food uses food not as the end goal but as a tool to foster connection, inclusion, and empowerment, making it a model for integration. Altre Terre Food Truck uses migrant women's traditional recipes in combination with Italian cuisine to create a space for cultural blending, while Gambaru uses culinary experiences to strengthen ties to participants' cultural backgrounds, building community through food.

Empowerment and Skill Development:

A strong theme across the practices is the emphasis on skill-building and empowerment. Yalla Trappan, for instance, blends skill development with immediate employment opportunities, providing practical work



experience that fosters language acquisition and cultural adaptation. Similarly, Botildenborg integrates urban farming and culinary arts, promoting both ecological sustainability and community empowerment. M'ama Food is particularly noted for its combination of catering services with pathways to employment, empowering women while promoting social inclusion. The Kitchen Assistant Course also focuses on practical skill development in the kitchen, which leads to employment, while Altre Terre Food Truck provides direct employment opportunities for participants post-training.

Sustainability (Ecological and Social):

Community Cooking Caritas and Botildenborg emphasize sustainability. Community Cooking's focus on vegetarian menus using seasonal and local ingredients promotes ecological sustainability, while Botildenborg's urban farming model highlights sustainability in the food system, benefiting both social and environmental needs. Community Kitchen Project also shows a focus on sustainability through community-driven efforts and low-cost solutions, such as the DIY kitchen deck, which reduces environmental impact.

Inclusive and Supportive Environment:

Several practices create inclusive spaces for participants by addressing language and cultural barriers and fostering a sense of community. For example, Gambaru stands out for combining skill acquisition with emotional support and community building, while Yalla Trappan works directly to integrate migrant women into the workforce through support systems that offer language and cultural learning. Similarly, Community Cooking Caritas provides a welcoming space for refugees, fostering inclusivity through regular participation and a sense of belonging, enhanced by social media platforms for communication.

Collaborations and Partnerships:

Many of these practices leverage partnerships with local businesses, municipalities, or other NGOs to provide resources, training, and employment opportunities. For example, Yalla Trappan collaborates with



companies like IKEA and H&M, while Botildenborg works with local schools and universities to offer sustainability-focused training. The Kitchen Assistant Course partners with local organizations to secure funding and offer employment opportunities, reflecting how partnerships can enable program sustainability and reach.

Lack of Structured Onboarding Mechanisms in Some Practices:

Some practices, such as Kyklos, did not mention any onboarding process, which could indicate that onboarding strategies are not as developed or prioritized in these settings. This may suggest a lack of formal introduction or support systems for participants, potentially leading to challenges in integrating into the program, especially for newcomers.

Limited Focus on Language and Cultural Adaptation:

While most practices have strong provisions for addressing language barriers and cultural adaptation, Botildenborg does not explicitly highlight specific strategies for overcoming language or cultural barriers during onboarding or ongoing participation. This may indicate a more universal approach to engagement or a reliance on participants' existing language skills, which could limit accessibility for non-local participants.

Variation in the Level of Local Community Involvement:

While some practices such as Botildenborg, M'ama Food, and Yalla Trappan place significant emphasis on community engagement through partnerships and networking, others like Kyklos and The Kitchen Assistant Course seem to have less structured involvement from the local community. This could limit the program's ability to achieve long-term sustainability or align more closely with local community needs.

Varied Focus on Social Inclusion and Integration:

While most practices focus on integration and inclusion through culinary training or employment, some, such as Kyklos, did not offer information regarding specific inclusion strategies. This absence may suggest that Kyklos is either still developing such strategies or operates under a



different model where integration is not the primary focus, which could impact its effectiveness in promoting social cohesion.

Conclusion:

The common elements across these best practices include cultural integration through food, empowerment through skill-building, sustainability, inclusivity, and community partnerships. However, certain programs may benefit from enhanced onboarding strategies, more structured community involvement, or a stronger emphasis on language and cultural adaptation to further strengthen their impact and reach. The absence of these elements in certain practices suggests areas for improvement, as they are key to the long-term success and scalability of social integration programs

12. Language and Communication Support:

Language Support Services:

Many of the practices integrate language support into their programs to bridge communication barriers. For example, Yalla Trappan and M'ama Food both offer language assistance through courses to help participants develop language skills, promoting both linguistic and cultural integration. Similarly, Botildenborg and Gambaru utilize multilingual staff or community mediators to ensure effective communication. Altre Terre Food Truck also offers Italian language courses during training, ensuring smooth communication during work. This support aids in overcoming the language barrier while fostering community engagement.

Multilingual Support:

Yalla Trappan uses work-based Swedish language learning to support participants in adapting to Swedish society. Botildenborg likely utilizes multilingual staff and program designs that are welcoming to diverse groups. M'ama Food provides language support through Italian language courses, helping participants overcome communication barriers. Altre Terre Food Truck offers Italian language courses to participants during training and work phases, along with continuous support from professional staff. Caritas Community Cooking has a team that speaks over 15 languages, ensuring accessibility for all participants. Odyssey



Kitchen Assistant Course offers training in English, Arabic, French, and German to support linguistic diversity.

Cultural Sensitivity and Communication Adaptation:

Several initiatives emphasize culturally sensitive communication to promote inclusivity. For instance, Cocinas del Mundo focuses on providing culturally sensitive facilitators trained to communicate with respect and understanding. Similarly, M'ama Food and Gambaru use culturally resonant strategies like shared tasks and kitchen collaboration to promote mutual understanding, which helps overcome language and cultural barriers organically through work.

Visual Aids and Simplified Communication:

Many projects use visual aids or simple language to ensure that the communication is accessible. Cocinas del Mundo and Community Kitchen Project specifically highlight the use of visual tools to enhance understanding. Caritas Community Cooking also provides recipes in over 15 languages, ensuring the accessibility of materials for participants from diverse backgrounds. This practice is useful for those with varying literacy levels and language proficiency.

Bilingual Materials:

Bilingual or multilingual materials are an essential feature in several initiatives. For example, Gambaru and Cocinas del Mundo both ensure that materials (like recipes and training documents) are available in different languages, helping participants access relevant content. Caritas also uses written materials in multiple languages to ensure that all participants can engage fully.

Formal Translation Services:

Some projects do not explicitly mention the use of professional translation services. For example, Botildenborg have not detailed the use of such services, although they do emphasize community engagement and local language understanding through multilingual staff and informal



networks. This could suggest a less formal approach to translation and communication.

Cultural Sensitivity Training:

M'ama Food and Cocinas del Mundo emphasize cultural sensitivity training for facilitators to help bridge cultural gaps, but this is not mentioned in some other practices like Botildenborg, where it's not clear if the staff receive formal training in cultural sensitivity despite potentially working in diverse cultural environments. This difference could mean a less structured or implicit approach to cultural understanding in communication.

Conclusion:

The common thread among these practices is the use of multilingual support, including language courses and professional mediators or interpreters, to ensure that communication is accessible. Cultural sensitivity and inclusive communication are also key elements. However, some practices lack specific details on their communication strategies, indicating either limited documentation or reliance on general community support without structured language programs.

13. Sustainability

Financial Sustainability:

Diversified Funding Sources:

Many projects maintain sustainability through diverse funding sources, including public grants, private partnerships, and community donations. For example, Yalla Trappan relies on public grants and income from services like catering and cleaning, while Altre Terre Food Truck uses income from the food truck to ensure financial sustainability.

Community and Government Partnerships:

Multiple projects build long-term sustainability through partnerships with local governments, businesses, and other organizations. Botildenborg



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partners with local businesses, schools, and government bodies to maintain its operations, while Gambaru relies on community ties and strong partner relationships.

Social Sustainability:

Social Empowerment:

Projects like M'ama Food and Gambaru focus on providing job training and long-term employment, which contributes to social integration and empowerment. Both initiatives prioritize marginalized groups, particularly immigrant women, by creating opportunities for social mobility and empowerment.

Community Engagement:

Social sustainability is fostered through community building and collaboration. M'ama Food and Botildenborg actively involve local communities in their activities, ensuring that their impact remains long-term. Caritas Community Cooking also thrives on community participation and peer contributions, ensuring that new participants are consistently brought in.

Environmental Sustainability:

Sustainable Practices:

Initiatives such as Botildenborg, Community Cooking Caritas, and M'ama Food engage in environmentally sustainable practices, such as using organic, local, and seasonal ingredients, reducing waste, and minimizing the environmental impact of their operations. Altre Terre Food Truck also prioritizes sourcing sustainable ingredients and effective waste management.

Local Sourcing:

Many initiatives emphasize the importance of sourcing ingredients locally to support sustainability, seen in M'ama Food, Altre Terre Food Truck, and Community Cooking Caritas, which all use local, seasonal produce to reduce their carbon footprint.

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Long-Term Sustainability:

Adaptation to Emerging Needs:

Projects often adapt their strategies based on participant feedback and emerging community needs. For example, Gambaru and M'ama Food adapt their models and offerings based on evaluations and participant insights, ensuring that their programs stay relevant and impactful.

Regular Evaluations:

Projects like M'ama Food and Cocinas del Mundo conduct regular evaluations to assess effectiveness and adapt to changes in the needs of participants. Odyssea's Kitchen Assistant course also uses ongoing feedback to improve the program's approach.

Lack of sustainability elements:

Environmental Impact Focus:

Not all projects place an emphasis on environmental sustainability. For instance, Cocinas del Mundo and Gambaru don't seem to focus explicitly on environmental impact, whereas Botildenborg, M'ama Food, and Community Cooking Caritas have more defined sustainability measures in place regarding environmental factors.

Explicit Integration of Partners:

While some projects actively engage with local partners or businesses to support sustainability (such as Gambaru, Yalla Trappan, and Botildenborg), others, like Kyklos, have no clear mention of how external partnerships are integrated into the project, leaving the sustainability aspect somewhat unclear.

Focus on Peer-to-Peer Support and Volunteerism:

While Community Cooking Caritas, Cocinas del Mundo, and Botildenborg make use of peer mentorship and volunteer networks to drive engagement and support, this element is not as prominent in some other projects, such as M'ama Food, where community-driven involvement is not as heavily emphasized.



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In summary, the common elements of sustainability across these projects include diverse financial funding, social empowerment through skill development and job training, and a focus on community engagement. However, some projects, like Kyklos and Gambaru, may lack detailed sustainability practices related to environmental factors, external partnerships, or volunteer-driven efforts. These variances indicate that while certain sustainability practices are widespread, each initiative may have specific areas where they are still evolving or are less focused.



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SOUL Food pathways

Skills, Opportunity, Upliftment, and Learning for Migrant Women through Food

Project Number:

2024-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000245151

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