



MIGRANT INCLUSION

*Execution Methodologies and
Recommendations for Public Institution*



Co-funded by
the European Union





Casa d'Abóbora – Associação Juvenil
Rua da Aldeia 127, Aldeia, Ferreiros de Tendais, Cinfães, Portugal
Fono: +351 915814790
Email: geral@casadabobora.pt
www.casadabobora.pt

Cover Photo: Vasco Barbedo
Editing, Design and Layout: Nali Sáenz

Number of the project: 2023-1-PT01-KA210-ADU-C478210
Name of the project: DIVERURAL
Start: 01-09-2023 – End: 31-08-2024

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

INDEX

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	4
II.	Project Execution & Methodology	6
1.	Methodology for collecting migrant information	6
1.1.	Context	6
1.2.	Survey Design.....	6
1.3.	Sampling and Participant Recruitment	7
1.4.	Data Collection Procedure.....	7
1.5.	Data Analysis Methodology	7
1.6.	Interpretation and Reporting of Results	8
2.	Methodology and learning experience for the host language (Spanish).....	9
2.1.	Context	9
2.2.	Characteristics of the Spanish language course group	9
2.3.	Key learning objectives	10
2.4.	Spanish non-formal learning methodologies used in the classes	10
2.5.	Spanish learning curriculum overview for the host language classes of DIVERURAL	13
2.6.	Main Conclusions.....	15
3.	Methodology for the intercultural nights and multiethnic dinners	18
3.1.	Context	18
3.2.	Events structure	18
3.3.	Community building	19
3.4.	Outcomes	19
III.	Reflections and key learnings for public institutions.....	21
	Observations	21
	Recommendations.....	21



I. INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the needs and challenges faced by the rural sector, it is possible to identify a pervasive difficulty: rural desertification. In this regard, the exodus of the rural population to cities not only results in fewer people living in these areas but also in difficulties in the development of these regions due to the continued abandonment by public institutions.

In this context, the high and growing migration rate in the countries involved in this project presents not only a challenge but also an opportunity to revitalize these territories, helping to address some of the aforementioned problems. However, given that rural areas have a lower level of development, this is also reflected in their lack of preparedness to face such changes and to adequately receive these new inhabitants.

It is important to highlight that, although public institutions have more resources and, therefore, greater capacity to address the challenges and opportunities brought by migration processes, these institutions also have greater bureaucratic complexity, which delays their ability to respond promptly. Therefore, the joint work of civil institutions with public institutions is of utmost importance, as the former possess greater agility to mobilize resources and intervene in the territories.

As a result of the above, the DIVERURAL project was conceived, aiming to address the issue swiftly, understanding that the resources of civil institutions are scarce and their capacity for intervention is limited. Thus, the project had the general objective of "promoting and strengthening the inclusion and participation of migrant individuals in the local community." To achieve this goal, the following specific objectives were defined:

1. Identify migrant individuals within the community.
2. Train migrant individuals in Portuguese as a Welcoming Language
3. Encourage diversity through multicultural exchange.
4. Raise awareness among institutions, entities, and local organizations about the situation of the migrant community in the region.

Accordingly, the following activities were carried out during the project:



1. Collection of information on the migrant community
2. Portuguese language classes
3. Organization of 2 Intercultural Afternoons (Colombia and Peru)
4. Organization of a multiethnic dinner
5. Preparation of the document "Migrant Inclusion."



II. Project Execution & Methodology

1. Methodology for collecting migrant information

1.1. Context

This methodology outlines the approach used by ON&OFF to collect and analyze data from migrant populations in small, rural towns of La Rioja, specifically in the Nájera Valley. The targeted towns included Camprovín, Baños de Río Tobía, Bobadilla, Alesanco, Viniegra de Abajo, and Nájera. The sample consisted of 28 participants, primarily women from Morocco and Portugal, with varying levels of literacy and Spanish proficiency. The aim was to gather insights into their demographic profiles, migration experiences, language abilities, and integration challenges.

1.2. Survey Design

The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to accommodate the diverse characteristics of the migrant population, based on the guidelines provided by DIVERURAL project coordinator Casa d'Abobora, which consisted of:

- Sociodemographic Characteristics (Casa d'Abobora, 2022)
- Brief Sense of Community Scale (Peterson et al., 2008)
- Social Exclusion Feelings Scale (Moscato et al., 2014)
- Experiences of Discrimination Scale (Krieger et al., 2005)
- Social Support Questionnaire (Frequency and Satisfaction) (Casa d'Abobora, 2023)

The questionnaire covered various aspects, including personal demographics, reasons for migration, language proficiency, employment status, and experiences with integration and access to local services.

Initially, the survey was intended to be conducted online to facilitate broad and easy access, accommodating different literacy and language levels. However, ON&OFF opted for a flexible approach, considering potential limitations such as access to technology and literacy, which required in-person data collection to ensure inclusivity, as further explained.



1.3. Sampling and Participant Recruitment

Given the rural setting and the relatively small migrant population, ON&OFF used a non-probability sampling method was employed:

- **Social worker outreach:** Social workers from Baños de Río Tobía and Bobadilla were crucial in identifying and recruiting participants. Their existing relationships with the migrant community ensured that the sample included individuals who were engaged with local services.
- **Word of mouth:** The close-knit nature of rural communities allowed the sample to expand through referrals from initial participants. This method helped reach individuals who might not have been in contact with social services.

1.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted using a mixed-methods approach:

- **Digital distribution:** The online version of the questionnaire (through Google Forms) was distributed via digital platforms, targeting participants with sufficient literacy and digital skills. Social workers facilitated the dissemination of the survey link, ensuring accessibility for those equipped to complete it online.
- **Paper-based administration:** For those unable to access the digital version, face-to-face administration of the paper-based survey was carried out. Social workers and a volunteer translator supported these interactions, ensuring that participants fully understood the questions. Completed paper surveys were subsequently digitized to create a unified dataset.

1.5. Data Analysis Methodology

The data analysis aimed to assess the demographic, linguistic, and integration experiences of the migrant population, focusing on their needs and challenges. For this analysis, ON&OFF used a mix of qualitative and quantitative data analysis approaches:

- **Data cleaning and integration:** The first step of data cleaning of the raw data set and data verification was taken to maintain data accuracy and consistency. Data collected through the paper participant responses were efficiently and accurately digitized, and distortion in the information was avoided. Where there were observed questions with incomplete information or ambiguity, attempts were made to rectify.



- **Descriptive analysis:** Demographic features including age, sex, country of origin, education, and Spanish language ability were presented in terms of simple descriptive measures. And frequency distributions of variables where applicable were determined to analyze the trend patterns in the data, in this case, common reasons for migration and levels of satisfaction for local services.
- **Cross-tabulation:** Cross-tabulation analysis was carried out in order to find interrelationships between certain quantitative variables revealing, for example, how literacy relates to the level of Spanish speaking or how the para what migrants can find resources in order to integrate. This proved beneficial in understanding the main trends, and that facts and opinions from different subgroups in the sample supported the objectives of the study.
- **Thematic analysis:** Emergent themes and narratives were also extracted from the challenges posed by open-ended questions through thematic analysis. It increased understanding of the survey participants 'experiences, problems, and proposals on the improvement of the functional structure of the local service and support.

1.6. Interpretation and Reporting of Results

The last step in the methodology involved interpreting the findings to draw meaningful conclusions and recommendations:

- **Summary of key findings:** The analysis results were summarized, highlighting key demographic trends, common challenges faced by the migrant population, and areas of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with local services.
- **Identification of gaps and needs:** The analysis helped identify specific needs within the migrant population, such as language support, access to services, and opportunities for economic integration. These insights were used to inform recommendations for future interventions combined with the qualitative conclusions drawn as well from the Spanish Language Classes.
- **Conclusions generation:** Strategic conclusions were generated, detailing the methodology, analysis, and key findings. These conclusions were structured to provide clear, actionable insights for stakeholders, including local authorities, social workers, and community organizations working with migrant populations in rural areas.



By following this methodology, ON&OFF successfully gathered and analyzed data from a diverse migrant population, providing valuable insights into their integration experiences and informing future efforts to support their inclusion in the rural communities of La Rioja.

2. Methodology and learning experience for the host language (Spanish)

2.1. Context

This methodology outlines the approaches taken for the Spanish language course part of this project given to the migrant community in Baños de Río Tobía, La Rioja. The course accommodated different levels of literacy and Spanish proficiency, focusing on practical daily communication and basic literacy, the course employed visual aids, gamification, and teaching methods from the Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR). This approach aimed to enhance integration, independence, and real-life communication skills while fostering cultural exchange and digital literacy.

2.2. Characteristics of the Spanish language course group

Between 7th February 2024 and 30th May 2024, ON&OFF worked with a consistent group of 9 to 11 migrant women from Morocco and Portugal, who had emigrated and settled in Baños de Río Tobía, a rural community in La Rioja with an estimated population of 1,590.

This group exhibited two primary characteristics. On the one hand, the Moroccan women were illiterate and had no knowledge of basic Spanish. On the other hand, the Portuguese women, although also illiterate, were able to hold conversations in Spanish. The significant disparity in language proficiency within the group necessitated a tailored approach to the course methodology.

To address these differences, the course was structured into two distinct learning pathways, each designed to meet the specific needs of the subgroups. From the outset, this diversity within the group shaped the learning experience, requiring careful planning to unify the class structure while accommodating the varying levels of language ability.

However, as the majority of the participants were illiterate and unable to speak Spanish, the course placed greater emphasis on practical Spanish learning for daily life rather than on literacy. This focus aimed to help the women integrate into society more effectively and avoid marginalization.



2.3. Key learning objectives

Given the unique conditions of the group, two core learning objectives were established to address their immediate needs and long-term integration: **basic oral expression training for daily life in Spain and alphabetization**. The primary focus was on equipping participants with practical language skills that would enable them to navigate everyday situations, such as shopping, attending medical appointments, or interacting with local authorities. This emphasis on basic oral expression was crucial for fostering their ability to communicate in real-life contexts, thereby enhancing their independence and reducing their risk of marginalization within the community.

Simultaneously, the course also aimed to initiate alphabetization to lay the groundwork for more comprehensive language acquisition in the future. Although this objective was secondary to oral expression, it was deemed essential for empowering participants with the ability to engage with written Spanish, thereby opening up further opportunities for learning and integration. By balancing these two objectives, the course sought to provide a holistic foundation that addressed both the immediate practical needs of the women and their long-term educational development.

2.4. Spanish non-formal learning methodologies used in the classes

Para To achieve the established objectives, ON&OFF implemented a comprehensive learning methodology led by a **philology teacher**. The approach was heavily grounded in **visual learning and gamification**, incorporating a variety of interactive techniques such as **icebreakers, theatre exercises, and language games**. This strategy was designed to engage the participants actively, making the learning process both enjoyable and effective for acquiring practical Spanish language skills.

Additionally, ON&OFF integrated the teaching methodology developed by the [Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado \(CEAR\)](#), specifically following the **"Manual de español oral CONECTA(R)"** and **"Manual de lectoescritura CONECTA(R)"** for migrants and refugees. While the oral expression component was primarily enhanced through gamification, these manuals provided a structured framework for teaching literacy, including reading and writing. The combination of these resources ensured a balanced focus on both immediate conversational needs and foundational literacy skills.



2.4.1. Gamification in practice

The use of gamification was central to the teaching approach, with a variety of games specifically selected to target different learning outcomes:

Game teaching category	Game	Teaching outcomes and benefits
Oral Expression	Broken Telephone	Improves listening and speaking skills by passing a message through a chain, emphasizing pronunciation and clarity.
Oral Expression	Spatial Commands	Enhances understanding of spatial vocabulary and following directions, aiding in practical communication.
Oral Expression	Role Play	Develops conversational skills in various scenarios, boosting confidence in real-life interactions.
Vocabulary	UNO	Strengthens color, number, and action word vocabulary in a fun, competitive setting.
Vocabulary	Dobble Body Parts	Helps in recognizing and naming body parts quickly, enhancing memory and vocabulary recall.
Vocabulary	Simon Says	Teaches listening skills and action-related vocabulary, reinforcing comprehension and quick response.
Icebreakers	My Secret Friend Is...	Fosters interpersonal communication and descriptive language skills, encouraging social interaction.
Icebreakers	The line	Promotes cooperation and teamwork, helping students learn to follow instructions and work together.
Icebreakers	I Have a Question for You!	Enhances questioning and answering skills, encouraging curiosity and active participation in conversations.
Icebreakers	Count to Ten	Reinforces number recognition and counting skills, providing a foundation for basic numeracy.



Furthermore, during the Spanish classes also memory games were approached. Memory games were effectively used to enhance letter and syllable learning in Spanish teaching classes for illiterate migrants. For example, Letter Matching paired uppercase and lowercase letters, boosting letter recognition and reinforcing alphabet familiarity. Syllable Pairs involved matching common syllable pairs, which strengthened learners' syllable recognition and reading readiness. In Word and Picture Match, students connected words with images, helping to develop vocabulary and reading skills. Alphabet Bingo made learning fun, improving letter recognition and phonetic skills as students quickly identified called-out letters. Syllable Sorting further aided in grouping syllables to form words, promoting phonetic awareness and making reading more accessible. These interactive and enjoyable games were crucial in maintaining engagement and fostering retention in early literacy education. These games are particularly beneficial in Spanish teaching classes for illiterate migrants as they focus on building essential language skills through interactive, engaging activities. The emphasis on oral expression, vocabulary acquisition, and social interaction helps learners gain confidence and improve their practical communication abilities in real-world contexts.

2.4.2. Visual Learning

To further reinforce learning, ON&OFF utilized a **visual teaching approach** with resources such as icon vocabulary flashcards. These were sourced from online platforms like [El Arca de ELE](#) or [Super Lápiz](#), two websites developed by Spanish teachers to teaching Spanish to Foreigners. This approach ensured that complex concepts were more easily grasped by the participants by making abstract ideas more concrete and accessible. For illiterate learners, visual aids such as icon vocabulary flashcards, images, and symbols serve as powerful tools to bridge the gap between spoken language and meaning. These visual representations help learners to associate words with images, enabling them to understand and remember new vocabulary without relying on written text. This not only makes the learning process less intimidating but also supports memory retention and recall. As a result, visual learning significantly enhances the overall effectiveness of the course by catering to the unique needs of illiterate learners, allowing them to build a strong foundation in the language through intuitive and engaging methods.



2.4.3. Spanish learning through digital skills acquisition

As for alphabetization, is very important letter and words recognition, digital tools were also used to facilitate and speed the learning process. ON&OFF identified a significant gap in digital literacy among the women in the program, recognizing that acquiring digital skills is crucial for their integration into society. To bridge this gap and introduce new technologies in a dynamic and accessible manner, we integrated various apps into the Spanish learning process. One such app was Silabeando, which played a pivotal role in helping the group grasp syllables and word formation, laying a strong foundation for reading and writing. Another essential tool was Aprender Español Principiantes, an app that was highly effective in improving vocabulary comprehension, enabling the women to expand.

Beyond language acquisition, these digital tools also served as an introduction to essential technology skills, empowering the women to navigate digital platforms with greater confidence. As digital literacy becomes increasingly important in everyday life—whether for accessing services, communicating, or pursuing employment opportunities—equipping these women with the ability to use digital tools is not just about learning Spanish; it is about fostering their overall integration and independence in a technology-driven world. By combining language learning with digital skill development, the program took a holistic approach to supporting these women, ensuring they were better prepared to participate fully in their new communities.

2.5. Spanish learning curriculum overview for the host language classes of DIVERURAL

The Spanish learning curriculum was designed in modules of 1,5 hours in a total of 13 sessions (an estimated total of 20 hours):

Session	Key learning objectives
Session 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the group • Icebreakers for trust-building • Complete the initial questionnaire • Name learning games
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the names of fellow participants • Assess language levels



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover basic conversation skills such as greetings, farewells, courtesy phrases, introductions, and expressing emotions. • Creation of a classroom mural
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy introduction: the alphabet and the vowels • Emotional vocabulary introduction • Create personal infographics including basic information
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy introduction: the alphabet and the vowels • Time vocabulary introduction (days of the week, months, numbers, etc.) • Finish personal infographic projects • Verb introduction of “ser”, “estar” and “llamarse” • Basic sentence construction for self-introduction
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy continuity: the alphabet and the vowels • Vocabulary review • Oral expression through question cards • Verb classification and conjugation introduction “-AR”, “-ER”, “-IR” • Vowels exercises
Session 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic verb vocabulary • Daily routines vocabularies • Literacy focus on vowels • Cultural topics
Session 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary focus on “M” and “S” letters • Word labelling and recognition • Classroom vocabulary



Session 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary focus on “M” and “S” letters • Kitchen vocabulary • Vowel recognition
Session 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place prepositions • Literary focus on the “S” letter
Session 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place prepositions review • Moroccan tea recipe for kitchen vocabulary review • Mimicry games for vocabulary review
Session 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Days, week, and months vocabulary • Rishbum recipe for kitchen vocabulary review • Food and ingredients vocabulary
Session 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family vocabulary • Question-based games with name tags for course review
Session 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final review • Next steps: Free resources for Spanish learning • Notebooks and diploma ceremony

2.6. Main Conclusions

The initial delivery of the host language course has provided several valuable insights that are essential for enhancing future sessions:

- **Differentiated learning levels:** One of the most significant takeaways from the course was the necessity for establishing distinct learning tiers to accommodate varying levels of Spanish proficiency. The group consisted of women from Morocco and Portugal, with substantial differences in their ability to communicate in Spanish. Some were completely illiterate and unfamiliar with the language, while others could



hold basic conversations. This disparity made it clear that a one-size-fits-all approach was insufficient. By creating differentiated learning pathways, future courses can ensure that instruction is tailored to the specific needs of each subgroup, making the learning process more efficient, engaging, and beneficial for all participants.

- **Integration with daily routines:** The course also highlighted the importance of integrating Spanish learning more seamlessly into the participants' everyday lives. Many women faced challenges in regularly attending classes due to cultural practices and routine commitments. To address this, the course methodology should incorporate flexible scheduling and practical, real-life applications of the language. In-situ learning experiences, such as field trips to supermarkets or pharmacies, could significantly enhance language acquisition by providing participants with the opportunity to practice Spanish in relevant, everyday contexts. This approach not only facilitates practical language use but also helps participants better understand Spanish culture, routines, and ways of thinking.
- **Extended course duration:** To provide a more comprehensive language education, it is recommended to extend the duration of the course. A longer program would allow for deeper exploration of the language, giving participants more time to practice, internalize, and apply what they have learned. This extended timeframe is particularly important for illiterate learners, who require more time to build a foundation in both oral and written Spanish.
- **Incorporating visual and gamified learning:** The methodology employed in the course successfully utilized visual learning and gamification to engage participants, particularly those who were illiterate. Visual aids, such as icon vocabulary flashcards and memory games, were crucial in making complex concepts more accessible and reducing the intimidation factor associated with learning a new language. Gamified activities, including icebreakers, role plays, and memory exercises, effectively reinforced language skills while maintaining high levels of engagement and motivation among the learners. The use of the CEAR's manuals also provided a structured framework for both oral expression and literacy development, striking a balance between practical language use and foundational literacy skills.



- **Cultural and intercultural learning:** One of the program's key strengths was the intercultural richness within the classroom. The diversity of the participants' backgrounds, cultures, and countries of origin created a dynamic learning environment that went beyond language acquisition. The informal exchanges about each woman's cultural identity not only enriched the learning experience but also fostered intercultural communication in Spanish. This cultural exchange was invaluable, allowing the women to learn not only the language but also about each other's customs and traditions.
- **Challenges, attendance issues, and future directions:** Despite these benefits, the course faced several challenges that impacted attendance, which saw a notable decline over time. This slump in attendance can be attributed to several factors, including the significant differences in language proficiency, varying learning speeds, and difficulties participants faced in integrating the course into their daily routines. The diverse range of abilities made it challenging to design a unified program that could engage everyone equally, leading some participants to feel overwhelmed or disconnected. Additionally, the struggle to balance cultural practices and existing commitments with the course schedule further compounded attendance issues.

These insights highlight opportunities for enhancing the course to better serve the diverse needs of the participants while respecting their daily routines. Despite the challenges, the feedback from the women was overwhelmingly positive, with many reporting a noticeable boost in confidence and an increased ability to use Spanish in their everyday lives. They felt more equipped to navigate daily tasks, from shopping to basic communication with locals, and this empowerment was a key success of the course.

Another key asset of this program is the provision of free access to learning opportunities for migrants in rural areas. Offering a course that is not only tailored to the specific needs of each group but also conducted in small, supportive class sizes is invaluable. This approach ensures that every participant receives the attention and resources they need to thrive, making the learning experience more personalized and impactful.

Looking ahead, the implementation of differentiated learning levels, an extended course duration, and the integration of in-situ learning experiences, combined with the continued use of visual and gamified teaching methods, will further enrich the course. These improvements will make future sessions even



more effective and engaging, ensuring that each participant can fully benefit from the program. By refining these aspects, the course will continue to foster a deep connection to the Spanish language and culture, enabling the participants to integrate more smoothly into their new environment with greater confidence and ease. Overall, the combination of tailored instruction, free access, and small class sizes makes this course a powerful tool for empowering migrant women in rural areas, significantly enhancing their ability to connect with their communities and improve their quality of life.

3. Methodology for the intercultural nights and multiethnic dinners

3.1. Context

ON&OFF organized a series of intercultural nights and a multiethnic dinner in the rural towns of La Rioja of Baños de Río Tobía and Camprovín, aiming to foster cultural exchange, community interaction, and social integration among locals and migrant populations. These events featured cooking workshops, food tastings, and music, promoting both the sharing and learning of diverse cultural traditions.

The events were themed around the cultural backgrounds of migrant participants. The first event featured Moroccan cuisine, the second was a multiethnic dinner with multiple nationalities, and the third focused on Azerbaijani dishes. Each event highlighted traditional cooking and cultural practices.

Prior to each event, ON&OFF used Spanish language classes to teach participants relevant cooking vocabulary. This preparation enabled them to explain their recipes and interact confidently with local community members during the events.

The events were scheduled in accessible locations like town squares and community centers to encourage participation. Necessary cooking equipment and ingredients were sourced in advance, with local social workers and volunteers assisting with the setup.

3.2. Events structure

- **Intercultural cooking workshops:** The first and third intercultural nights adopted a hands-on cooking workshop format. Participants, primarily



migrant women, demonstrated how to prepare traditional dishes, such as Moroccan pastries and tea, or Azerbaijani Baklava. Local attendees were encouraged to participate, promoting direct interaction and cultural exchange from first Morocco, and then Azerbaijan.

- **Multiethnic dinner:** This event featured a self-service buffet with food stations representing various countries. Prepared dishes were displayed, and individuals stationed at each table explained the significance of the dishes. The emphasis was on tasting different cuisines, rather than active cooking, allowing attendees to experience a variety of cultural foods. The participants who cooked were from France, Egypt, Spain, and Latvia. Local community members contributed to the event by bringing national dishes to share as well traditional Spanish cuisine with the migrant community.
- **Cultural activities:** Each event concluded with cultural activities, such as traditional dances or an international music disco, to further engage participants and highlight the cultural diversity represented.

3.3. Community building

By encouraging migrant participants to lead cooking demonstrations and food explanations, ON&OFF facilitated direct interaction between migrants and locals. This approach boosted the confidence of migrant participants and helped build initial bonds with the local community. The events were open to all community members. Invitations were distributed through local networks, billboards, social media, and public notices, ensuring wide community involvement. The cultural nights attracted between 39 and 46 participants each, reflecting a strong interest in cultural exchange and communal dining experiences. Whereas the multiethnic dinner gathered 42 people over 11 different nationalities (Spanish, Turkish, Portuguese, Polish, Serbian, Azerbaijani, French, Italian, Argentinian, Egyptian, and Latvian).

3.4. Outcomes

These events provided an opportunity for migrants to share their cultural heritage, enhancing mutual understanding and respect. The direct interaction fostered by cooking together and sharing meals helped reduce social barriers and encouraged the integration of migrants into local society. The events not only highlighted culinary skills but also improved language proficiency and cultural competence among participants. Migrant women gained valuable public



speaking and interpersonal communication experience, enhancing their social skills and self-confidence.



III. Reflections and key learnings for public institutions

Based on the DIVERURAL project execution in Spain, several key recommendations can be drawn to enhance the integration and support of migrant populations in rural areas of La Rioja. ON&OFF finds particularly beneficiary to share these good practices with local social governments and local municipality authorities, as the focus of this improvements is on small communities.

Observations

- **Mutual collaborations between NGOs and local social workers proven resourceful:** The involvement of social workers for the implementation of the DIVERURAL project in Spain was an effective method to bridge the gap between migrants and local NGOs initiatives, which sometimes may not reach their target audience. This type of collaboration can foster trust and increasing participation of marginalized, vulnerable or migrant collectives in civil integration programs.
- **Diversification of non-formal Spanish learning:** To generate a meaningful improvement in both literacy and Spanish skills of the migrant community teaching initiatives should be preserved longer in time as well with multiple options for schedule, so the Spanish classes integrate more organically into the needs of the migrant population.
- **Women at higher risks of social exclusion:** ON&OFF learnt that traditional household models from other countries are exported while people migrate to Spain. Thus, women acquire more traditional gender roles with limited interaction opportunities, hardening their integration in society. A special focus should be placed on women to avoid a double-marginalization effect.

Recommendations

- **Further support of non-formal and education initiatives to combat illiteracy:** The first recommendation is to encourage and fund non-formal educational methods that use visual strategies, gamification, and digital tools to help migrants improve their literacy rate. These methods, as demonstrated in the DIVERURAL project, are effective in enhancing language acquisition and overall integration. Fighting illiteracy should



be the number one priority in the integration agenda, as migrants without alphabetization knowledge face bigger inclusion barriers and fewer employment opportunities, leading thus to extreme marginalization. Additionally, migrants who are literate tend to have a more successful experience learning Spanish.

- **Promote free culinary activities as a conductive vector for integration:**

The promotion of intercultural dinners and similar events encourage community building, as people are often drawn to food, especially in rural Spain with its core “bar” culture as the center of leisure and communal life. By generating these common spaces that may not exist otherwise, it is possible to break down stereotypes, improve mutual understanding, and create a sense of belonging among both migrants and local populations. Policies should facilitate funding and logistical support for such initiatives.

- **Foster digital literacy in language programs:** Given the increasing importance of digital skills, language programs should include components that enhance digital literacy. This dual focus not only helps migrants learn the language but also equips them with necessary technological skills, improving their chances of employment and social integration.