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Integrating Gender Perspectives in Migrant Support Organizations:  
Project-Based Insights from  
Lisbon, Portugal

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Master in Development Studies

Supervisor:  
Professor Doctor Ana Luísa Silva, Visiting Professor,  
ISCTE - School of Social Sciences and Humanities

October, 2025



CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS  
E HUMANAS

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Department of Political Economy

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Concluding this project has been an intrinsic part of my own migratory journey. I do not see it as something separate from who I am, but rather as deeply connected to my experience as a migrant. Researching and understanding the broader structures that shape individual experiences has allowed me to grow both personally and academically. It has also strengthened my desire to continue engaging in social struggles, for human dignity and for human rights, which give meaning to my path.

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## Resumo

Este projeto, desenvolvido no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos de Desenvolvimento, explorou a integração de perspetivas de género em organizações do terceiro setor de apoio a migrantes em Portugal. Centrando-se numa associação de base comunitária em Lisboa, o projeto realizou uma avaliação de género com o objetivo de identificar boas práticas e desafios relacionados com a integração da perspetiva de género, implementou atividades piloto e produziu recomendações para reforçar o funcionamento da organização e melhorar a integração das suas beneficiárias.

Metodologicamente, o projeto adotou uma abordagem qualitativa, participativa e inserida no contexto organizacional. Combinou a análise de documentos institucionais, entrevistas semiestruturadas e atividades de recolha de feedback junto de colaboradores e beneficiários, com o desenho e a testagem de intervenções piloto. Estes passos proporcionaram simultaneamente uma linha de base diagnóstica e um roteiro com recomendações de curto, médio e longo prazo.

Os resultados da avaliação de género revelaram que, embora a organização já demonstrasse abertura a iniciativas sensíveis ao género, estas práticas permaneciam muitas vezes informais e não estavam sistematicamente integradas nos instrumentos de planeamento, monitorização e avaliação. A elevada rotatividade de colaboradores e voluntários evidenciou ainda mais a necessidade de mecanismos institucionais, como indicadores de género, desagregação de dados, formações regulares em género e políticas internas. Ao mesmo tempo, os resultados das atividades piloto sublinharam a importância de métodos participativos, da interseccionalidade e de abordagens sensíveis ao contexto, para garantir que a integração da perspetiva de género não seja reduzida a meros ajustes técnicos, mas assente no diálogo e nas experiências vividas.

De forma geral, este projeto demonstra que mesmo pequenas organizações do terceiro setor, apesar dos recursos limitados, podem começar a integrar práticas sensíveis ao género de forma significativa, desde que esses esforços sejam graduais, realistas, adaptados às suas realidades e possibilidades, e sustentados por um compromisso contínuo.

*Palavras-chave: Gender mainstreaming; Migração; Organizações do terceiro setor; Métodos participativos; Interseccionalidade.*



## **Abstract**

This project, developed within the framework of the Master's in Development Studies, explored the integration of gender perspectives in migrant support third sector organizations in Portugal. Focusing on a grassroots association in Lisbon, the project carried out a gender assessment to identify good practices and challenges related to gender mainstreaming, implemented pilot activities, and generated recommendations to strengthen the organization's operations and better integrate its female beneficiaries.

Methodologically, the project adopted a qualitative, participatory, and organizationally embedded approach. It combined the analysis of institutional documents, semi-structured interviews, and feedback activities with staff and beneficiaries, alongside the design and testing of pilot interventions. These steps provided both a diagnostic baseline and a roadmap with short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations.

The gender assessment findings revealed that, while the organization had already demonstrated openness to gender-sensitive initiatives, these practices often remained informal and were not systematically integrated into planning, monitoring, and evaluation tools. High staff and volunteer turnover further highlighted the need for institutional mechanisms such as gender indicators, data disaggregation, regular gender trainings and internal policies. At the same time, the pilot activities results underscored the importance of participatory methods, intersectionality, and context-sensitive approaches to ensure that gender mainstreaming is not reduced to technical adjustments but rooted in dialogue and lived experiences.

Overall, this project demonstrates that even small third sector organizations, despite limited resources, can begin to integrate gender-sensitive practices in meaningful ways, provided these efforts are gradual, realistic, adapted to their realities and possibilities, and supported by sustained commitment.

*Keywords: Gender mainstreaming; Migration; Third sector organizations; Participatory methods; Intersectionality.*

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## **List of Acronyms**

**ACIDI** – High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue

**ACIME** – High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities

**ACM** – High Commissioner for Migration

**CSO** – Civil Society Organisation

**CPR** – Portuguese Refugee Council

**EIGE** – European Institute for Gender Equality

**EU** – European Union

**FRA** - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

**HR** – Human Resources

**IOM** – International Organization for Migration

**LP** – Lisbon Project

**M&E** – Monitoring and Evaluation

**MIPEX** – Migrant Integration Policy Index

**NGO** – Non-Governmental Organisation

**NGDO** – Non-Governmental Development Organisation

**OECD** – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**OKRs** – Objectives and Key Results

**PALOP** – Portuguese-Speaking African Countries

**PAR** – Participatory Action Research

**PM&E** – Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

**SPRAR** – Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

**TSO / TSOs** – Third-Sector Organisation(s)

**UN** – United Nations

**UNFPA** – United Nations Population Fund

**UNICEF** – United Nations Children’s Fund

**UNIDO** – United Nations Industrial Development Organization

**UNPRPD** – United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## Introduction

International migration continues to shape contemporary societies, with profound implications for receiving and sending countries. According to the International Organisation for Migration (2024), women and girls represented 48% of the 281 million international migrants worldwide in 2020. This figure challenges the often male-dominated perception of migration and highlights that migration is deeply gendered. In Europe, migrant women are disproportionately concentrated in low-paid and precarious sectors such as domestic work, caregiving, hospitality, and cleaning services (EIGE, 2016). These forms of employment, while essential to the functioning of European economies, are frequently undervalued, informal, and exposed to exploitation. Moreover, migrant women often face barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and social protection, while simultaneously carrying the burden of care responsibilities within their households (Østbakken, Orupabo, & Nadim, 2023).

In Portugal, international migration has grown significantly in recent years. Long-term immigration reached 121,000 people in 2022, marking a 29% increase from the previous year (OECD, 2024). Women represent nearly half of this movement, yet their experiences are not homogeneous: gender intersects with migration status, race, class, and age to create layered vulnerabilities. Migrant women are at greater risk of unemployment and underemployment compared to migrant men and native women, and they often encounter linguistic and cultural barriers that hinder access to services. The European Institute for Gender Equality (2020) has stressed that these challenges are compounded by the absence of gender-sensitive integration policies at both regional and national levels.

It is against this background that third-sector organisations (TSOs) have emerged as key actors in supporting migrant and refugee communities. In Portugal, as in many European contexts, civil society organisations often act as the first point of contact for newcomers, providing essential services ranging from language courses and bureaucratic support to employability training and social integration activities (OECD, 2018). They also play a crucial advocacy role, amplifying migrant voices and addressing systemic inequalities that may otherwise be overlooked by state institutions.

Third-sector organisations can be deeply embedded in community-based spaces, which enables them to identify the most immediate needs of migrant populations. However, they often lack the human or financial capacity required to adequately respond to these needs (Lang & Badenhoop, 2025). This limitation is particularly evident in relation to gender, as many initiatives adopt a more generalist approach in order to reach a broader public. As a result, gender-specific challenges may remain under-addressed, despite their central importance for the integration and well-being of migrant communities.

It is within this context that the present project gains its relevance. Centering on the Lisbon Project, a community-based association that since 2017 has worked closely with migrants and refugees in Lisbon through multiple programmes, the project explored how gender can be systematically integrated into its work. While the organisation has already taken important steps in supporting women, the incorporation of a comprehensive gender perspective across its structures and programmes remains a challenge.

In the first semester of 2024, I began my internship with the Lisbon Project as a project manager, which allowed me to become familiar with the organisation's dynamics, to take part in its planning cycles, and to engage directly with the beneficiaries. That same year, in mid-2024, the organisation held its first mid-year retreat to evaluate ongoing operations, an innovation considered positive, as it allowed for adjustments to be made earlier instead of waiting until the annual planning cycle.

During this retreat, the reduction in female participation across programmes was discussed for the first time. This observation emerged more from informal impressions than from concrete evidence, since the data collected was not disaggregated by sex. Nevertheless, several programmes acknowledged the issue, and managers were tasked with considering it carefully and identifying possible solutions to improve participation.

Based on the identification of this barrier in the Lisbon Project's practice, I decided to develop my final Master's project within the scope of the Master's in Development Studies. The project therefore emerged as a response to the observed gap in systematically integrating gender considerations into the Lisbon Project's programmes and structures. This experience revealed the relevance of strengthening gender-sensitive approaches within organisations that operate in this field. Although the Lisbon Project had already demonstrated openness to addressing gender-related issues, it had not yet developed systematic mechanisms to integrate gender considerations into its internal structures and programmatic practices.

The general objective of this project was to conduct a gender assessment of the organisation in order to identify good practices and challenges in its work related to gender mainstreaming tools, to implement pilot solutions, and to develop recommendations to improve its operations and better integrate its female beneficiaries. To operationalize this purpose, the following specific objectives were defined: (1) Analyze the organisation's current documents and policies related to gender issues, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and gaps, (2) Develop an intervention proposal (pilot activities) designed to enhance integration and equitable participation, (3) Test the pilot in a controlled environment, adjusting the design based on initial results and participant feedback and (4) Evaluate

the pilot activities, documenting lessons learned and generating recommendations for the organisation.

To achieve these objectives, the project thus combined an academic inquiry with an applied intervention, bridging theoretical debates with concrete institutional practices. Activities unfolded across several stages. First, a gender diagnostic was conducted, mapping the organisation's strengths and weaknesses with respect to gender mainstreaming. Second, pilot interventions were designed and implemented, including a Gender Training workshop tailored to staff, coordinators, and volunteers, and the introduction of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) tools, such as feedback activities with beneficiaries. Third, the insights generated were synthesized into a set of recommendations, structured by short-, medium-, and long-term horizons, to guide the Lisbon Project toward institutionalizing gender sensitivity.

From a methodological perspective, the project adopted a qualitative, participatory, and organisationally embedded approach. Data collection included document analysis, semi-structured interviews with staff, feedback surveys, participatory exercises with beneficiaries, and observation of team activities. This methodological design reflected the recognition that effective gender mainstreaming requires not only technical knowledge but also trust-building, dialogue, and sensitivity to the organisational culture (Williams, Seed, & Mwau, 1994).

Importantly, my prior internship experience within the Lisbon Project facilitated access to the field and created a level of familiarity that encouraged openness during interviews and activities. Having already worked as a project manager, I was able to build relationships of trust with both staff and beneficiaries, which proved essential for conducting a participatory and reflective process. This familiarity reduced potential barriers between me and participants, allowing for more candid discussions, richer insights, and a more accurate understanding of organisational dynamics. At the same time, my insider position also required maintaining reflexivity, to ensure that the analysis was not limited by personal involvement but remained critical and analytically rigorous.

This report is structured to accompany the trajectory of the project itself. It begins in Chapter 1 with a review of the literature, situating the discussion of gender and migration in Portugal within broader debates on intersectionality and exploring the role and challenges of third sector organisations in promoting inclusion. Chapter 2 then turns to the methodology and project plan, explaining the rationale for adopting a participatory approach and presenting the analytical framework that guided the project. The following chapter, Chapter 3, presents the activities that were carried out and

examines the results of the pilot interventions, connecting these to the logframe that was established at the outset of the project.

Chapter 4 reflects on the lessons learned throughout the process, and the recognition that change in this field requires continuity and long-term commitment rather than one-off activities. Building on this analysis, it sets out the general recommendations and future perspectives, outlining a roadmap for the Lisbon Project to consolidate and institutionalize gender mainstreaming in its structures and practices. The chapter also includes my personal reflections, focusing on the knowledge and skills I gained through this project, as well as the ways in which it has contributed to my academic development and professional trajectory. Finally, the Conclusion offers a synthesis of the project, revisiting its objectives, main findings, and contributions.

Rather than presenting a definitive model, this project aims to be one of the first steps for the Lisbon Project towards an organisational transformation that enables it to adopt gender mainstreaming tools through a cross-cutting approach. It underlines the importance of third-sector organisations taking responsibility for adapting their practices to be gender-sensitive, since as first points of contact they hold great potential to facilitate the integration process of migrant women and make it smoother by tailoring interventions to their specific needs.

While acknowledging the financial and human resource constraints that such organisations often face, the project demonstrates that even small organisations with limited means can integrate gender-sensitive practices in meaningful ways, provided these are adapted through realistic and gradual steps. In this sense, the project represents a starting point for the Lisbon Project and a contribution to the broader discussion on how civil society organisations can operationalize gender mainstreaming in practice.

## **Chapter 1 – Gender and Migration: Context, Intersectionality, and the Role of Third Sector Organisations**

Migration processes and the integration of migrants have become some of the most relevant and debated issues in recent years in Europe, as well as in other regions of the world, shaping political agendas, public discourse, and generating intense debates within civil society. In the field of Development Studies, these issues are particularly pertinent because they relate to central debates on, among other topics, social inequalities, inclusion, human rights, and human development. This perspective helps to understand migration and integration not only as local phenomena but also as processes connected to global inequalities and transformations.

The purpose of this literature review is to examine how gender mainstreaming and intersectional perspectives are articulated in the field of migration governance in the European Union, with special attention to the Portuguese case and the role of third sector organisations. By bringing together contributions from migration studies, academic literature, and policy evaluations, the review seeks to identify the gaps that persist in policy frameworks as well as the strategies and good practices that emerge to address them.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, it presents a brief overview of Migration Dynamics in Portugal that exemplifies both progress and persistent barriers. Second, it addresses the literature on gender and migration, highlighting the shift from gender-blind frameworks, and examines the limitations of gender mainstreaming in EU migration policy, also reflecting on the Portuguese experience. Third, it analyzes the role of the third sector, mapping its contributions to migrant integration in Portugal and in Europe, as well as the challenges faced in sustaining gender-sensitive initiatives. Finally, it reviews good practices and resources created to promote gender mainstreaming in social organisations.

### **1.1 Contextualizing Migration Dynamics in Portugal**

Portugal's recent migration history is marked by a profound shift: from being predominantly a country of emigration, it gradually became a country of immigration in the late twentieth century, following the democratic transition of 1974 and its accession to the European Economic Community in 1986 (Lopes, 2014). Early flows were strongly shaped by Portugal's colonial history and linguistic ties, with significant arrivals from Cape Verde, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Brazil (Marques *et al.*, 2019). By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the migration panorama diversified, with rising inflows from Eastern

Europe, particularly Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania, alongside growing Brazilian communities (Juzwiak, 2014).

In recent years, the migrant population in Portugal has undergone a significant shift. In 2021, there were 698,887 foreign citizens holding a valid residence permit, representing 6.8% of the total population (Oliveira, 2022). By 2024, this figure had risen to 1,543,697 foreign citizens (AIMA, 2025) reflecting an increasingly diverse composition (see Figure 1)<sup>1</sup>. In addition to the traditionally predominant nationalities from Portuguese-speaking countries, there has been a growing presence of Italian, British, Romanian, French, and Chinese citizens. Particularly noteworthy is the case of Indian nationals, who entered in 2020 the group of the ten most represented foreign nationalities in the country.

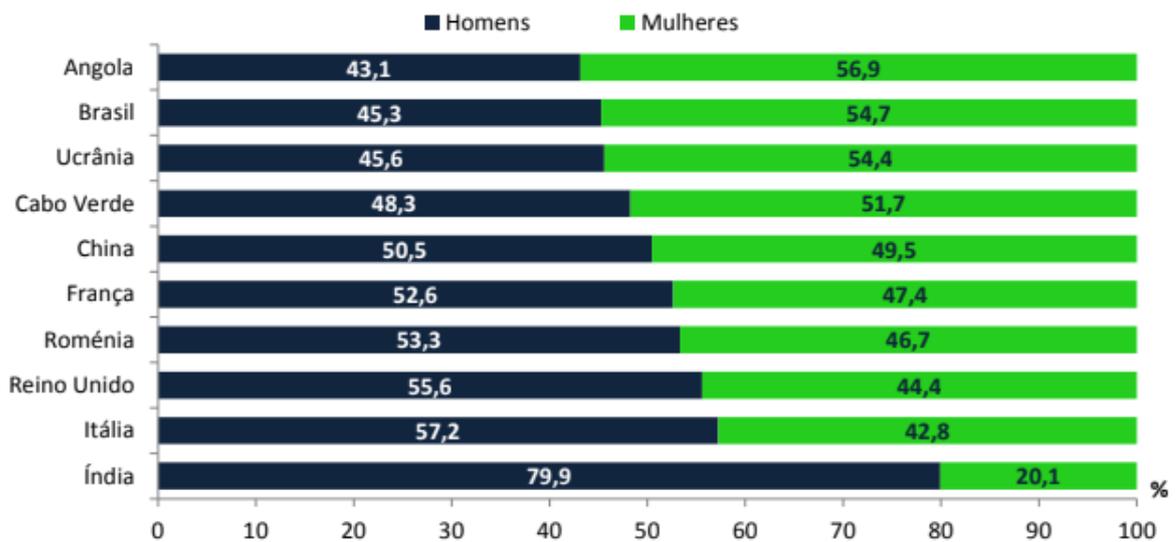


Figure 1 Distribution by sex of the ten main foreign nationalities residing in Portugal, 2021 (%)  
 Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF), systematization and calculations by Oliveira (2022)

In terms of gender, slight variations can be observed: in some nationalities, mainly from Portuguese-speaking countries, there is a higher female representation, while in others the male presence predominates. However, the case of India presents a striking contrast, as in 2021 79.9% of its resident population in Portugal were men.

The reasons driving migrants to enter Portugal vary across different national groups (see Figure 2)<sup>2</sup>. For citizens from Portuguese-speaking countries, the pursuit of academic training emerges as the

<sup>1</sup> Original in Portuguese. Translation of key terms by the author: “Homens = Men” and “Mulheres = Women”.

<sup>2</sup> Original in Portuguese. Translation of legend by the author (in order): (1) Residence visas for retirees, religious workers, or persons with income; (2) family reunification; (3) higher education student mobility; (4) study,

predominant reason for the granting of residence visas. In contrast, for nationals of India, Pakistan, and Nepal, the main motivation is linked to family reunification. Meanwhile, the arrival of foreign retirees has been most closely associated with citizens of the European Union, although in recent years this trend has also become more evident among nationals of countries such as Brazil and the United States (Oliveira, 2022).

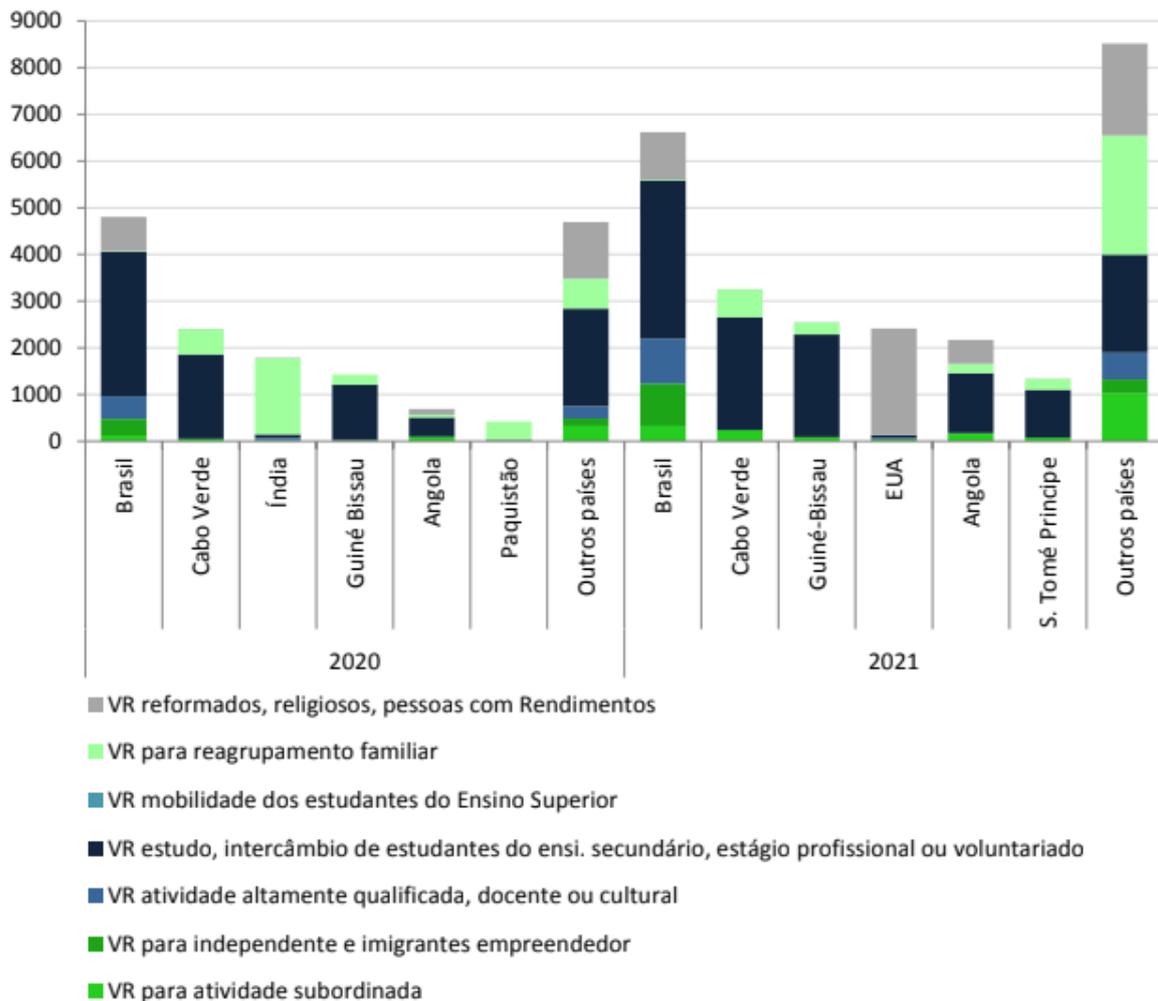


Figure 2 Residence visas (VR) granted at consular posts, by reason of entry and main nationalities, 2020 and 2021. Source: Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, systematization and elaboration by Oliveira (2022)

This more recent migratory scenario brings greater complexity to the Portuguese context, which had traditionally been accustomed to receiving populations from Lusophone countries, with whom there existed, to a greater or lesser extent, commonalities in linguistic, religious, and in some cases cultural dimensions. However, the increase in arrivals from non-Western contexts introduces new dynamics that challenge the existing models of reception. These communities bring with them cultural,

exchange, secondary-level students, professional internship, or voluntary work; (5) highly qualified activity, teaching, or cultural; (6) independent or entrepreneurial migrants; (7) subordinate activity.

religious, and linguistic backgrounds that differ significantly, creating additional challenges for social integration processes. As will be discussed in section 1.3, both the Portuguese state and social organizations lacked prior experience in integrating migrants and refugees with this profile, which has contributed to an institutional response still in construction and continuous adaptation.

As immigration flows diversified, the Portuguese state progressively established specific institutional and legal frameworks to address integration. The first dedicated body, the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (ACIME), was created in 1996 and later transformed into the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI) in 2007, before becoming the High Commission for Migration (ACM) in 2014 (Juzwiak, 2014). These institutional changes were accompanied by policy frameworks such as the National Plans for the Integration of Immigrants (2007–2010; 2010–2013) and the Strategic Plan for Migration (2015–2020), which sought to expand migrants' opportunities to access health care, housing, education, and the labor market (Mazzilli & Lowe, 2023). International evaluations have recognized these efforts: in the 2025 Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), ranked Portugal third overall, a position it has consistently held over the past five years (MIPEX, 2025). However, the report also warns of potential legislative setbacks that could undermine inclusion and social cohesion.

While international evaluations have highlighted Portugal's achievements in migrant integration, the literature also points to several persisting challenges. Oliveira & Gomes (2019) highlight that around 50% of foreign workers in Portugal remain overrepresented in the lowest tiers of the labour market (groups corresponding to skilled manual work, machine operation, and unskilled labour). In addition, communities from Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP), despite linguistic and cultural proximity, tend to experience comparatively less favorable outcomes in employment, education, and housing than Portuguese nationals (Juzwiak, 2016). Recent migration flows from South Asian and other non-Lusophone groups have added complexity to Portugal's integration landscape. Studies on Bangladeshi households highlight that, parents face obstacles in assisting their children because of linguistic limitations, demanding employment conditions, and unfamiliarity with the Portuguese educational context (Hassan, 2020).

At the same time, research on Chinese second-generation youth in Lisbon shows that, although they often achieve higher educational outcomes than their parents, integration is not free of difficulties. Many continue to experience challenges of social belonging and identity, which demonstrates that successful academic performance does not necessarily translate into full social inclusion (Yixin, 2021). Taken together, these findings suggest that Portugal presents a dual reality: while it has been internationally recognized for its inclusive policies, persistent structural inequalities

continue to affect migrant communities. The growing heterogeneity of migrant communities calls for more flexible and responsive strategies.

## **1.2 Gender and Migration in the European Context**

Migration is far from a neutral process, as it is profoundly shaped by gendered dynamics. Nevertheless, European policies have long been formulated under the guise of “gender neutrality”. This approach, however, has tended to obscure the differentiated experiences of migrant women and men, and particularly the structural inequalities that affect women throughout the migratory cycle (Christou & Kofman, 2022).

The relationship between gender and international migration has become an increasingly relevant field of study in recent decades. Migration processes are shaped by gender norms and expectations that influence how men and women make decisions to migrate, the opportunities they can access, and the risks they face throughout the migratory cycle (GMG, 2008). For a long time, migration was understood as a predominantly male experience, while women were placed in a secondary role, often linked to family reunification or the accompaniment of male relatives. This perspective began to shift during the 1980s and 1990s, when feminist scholarship on the social construction of gender provided new analytical tools to understand how identities and gender relations shape migratory trajectories and individual experiences (Curran *et al.*, 2006).

This theoretical turn made it possible to highlight the growing participation of women as independent migrants, particularly in the labor market, which led to the emergence of the concept of the “feminization of migration” (Chammartin, 2002). Although this notion became widely consolidated in academic debates, recent evidence suggests the need to nuance it. Statistical data show that men continue to represent the majority of the international migrant population, and the gender gap has even widened over time. Regional differences also reveal contrasting patterns: while male migrants predominate in the Arab States and Southeast Asia, greater gender parity can be observed in North America and Europe (IOM, 2024).

This growing recognition of women’s participation in migration has also drawn attention to the particular challenges they encounter. For many women, the act of migrating can provide access to paid work, financial independence, and greater self-confidence, often challenging traditional gender roles and opening opportunities for social mobility and transformation. At the same time, however, migration can deepen existing inequalities, as women may encounter violence, exploitation, or human rights violations in contexts where their work is undervalued or excluded from labor protections.

Female migrants often carry the burden of overlapping forms of discrimination, not only on the basis of gender but also linked to their nationality, residence status, or class position (GMG, 2008). While migration can foster social change and greater autonomy, it may also reproduce vulnerability and exclusion in the absence of adequate protections and inclusive labor policies.

While the academic literature has highlighted the centrality of gender in migration experiences, the translation of these insights into policymaking and practice remains partial. Both at the EU and Portuguese levels, gender-sensitive measures have emerged only recently and remain insufficient, suggesting that the mainstreaming of gender into migration policy is still an unfinished agenda, as the next subchapter shows.

### **1.2.1 The Limits of Gender Mainstreaming in Migration Governance**

One of the recurrent limitations identified in the governance of migration and asylum at the EU level is the inconsistent collection of sex-disaggregated data. Although member states are formally required to report on asylum applications by gender, in practice the data are often incomplete or uneven across countries, making it difficult to monitor gender-specific trends or outcomes (Shreeves, 2016). Recent studies further confirm that variations in the way EU member states report sex-disaggregated migration data result in fragmented information. This lack of harmonization reduces the comparability of statistics across countries and limits their usefulness for both research and policymaking, particularly in relation to understanding migrant women's experiences (Donato & Ruiz, 2025).

This problem is part of a broader gap in migration statistics. A recent IOM (2021) report indicates that national and regional statistical systems show significant gaps in the production and use of data disaggregated by sex and gender, as well as by other factors such as disability, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, or indigenous identity. The study further highlights that the lack of gender-sensitive data undermines efforts to combat stigma, stereotypes, xenophobia, and discrimination against migrants. Such discrimination often manifests in limited access to health services and social protection, as well as in increased barriers to exercising and claiming rights (Hennebry et al., 2021).

The absence of systematic gender-sensitive data is directly reflected in labor market outcomes, where migrant women face distinct and persistent disadvantages. Across the EU, migrant women register lower employment rates and higher levels of economic inactivity compared to both migrant men and native-born women (EIGE, 2020). These patterns reflect broader global dynamics. Labor migration corridors remain one of the main drivers of the global gender gap in migration, with disparities even more pronounced than in international migration overall. In 2019, migrant workers

represented 62 percent of the international migrant population, with a difference of 29 million between men and women (IOM, 2024).

A recurring feature is that even women with higher levels of education often face barriers to the recognition of their qualifications and professional experience in host countries (EIGE, 2020). Over time, the EU has introduced measures to protect migrant women in the labor market; however, significant gaps remain. In particular, there is still a need for stronger policies to prevent deskilling and to make better use of migrant women's skills. Barriers to recognition are shaped by labor market regulations and by migration policies, including tied visas and employer sponsorship schemes, which limit bargaining power and reinforce precarity (Ruiz & Donato, 2025). As a result, many migrant women end up concentrated in part-time or low-paid jobs, particularly in care-related sectors. This occupational pattern is closely linked to the unequal distribution of caring responsibilities, which makes women almost four times more likely than men to work part-time (EIGE, 2016).

These patterns are closely linked to the undervaluation of care work, which plays a central role in shaping the labor market situation of migrant women. An article from Østbakken, Orupabo, & Nadim, (2023) points out that reproductive work (cleaning, cooking, basic assistance), are increasingly carried out by immigrants under precarious conditions, reflecting limited recognition, low pay, and weak employment protections. These shortcomings become even more visible in times of crisis, when they are considered indispensable workers but remain among the most exposed groups. In response, many rely on family networks and interpersonal pacts to fill the gaps left by formal systems, which in turn reinforces gender expectations that place them as the main providers of care across transnational contexts (Oso & Buján, 2021).

Another dimension of structural vulnerability is the economic and legal dependency that many migrant women face. In the European context, a significant proportion of women arrive through family reunification schemes, with their residence status tied to that of their spouse or sponsor for several years. Article 15 of Directive 2003/86/EC explicitly establishes that a reunited spouse or partner remains legally dependent on the resident family member for up to five years before being eligible to apply for an autonomous residence permit.

This legal dependency compounds women's economic insecurity. According to EIGE (2020), migrant women are more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than any other group in the EU labor market. Employment outcomes vary depending on the reason for migration: those arriving through family reunification display significantly lower employment rates than women who migrate for study or work. Refugee women, in particular, have an employment rate of around 45

percent, compared to 62 percent for refugee men, and overall migrant women remain concentrated in low-quality jobs, experiencing both labor market segregation and persistent pay gaps (EIGE, 2020).

Migrant women are not a homogeneous group, as their trajectories differ according to nationality, education, migration pathway, and length of residence (Kraal et al., 2009). A recent study in Switzerland explains how the origin of migrant women plays a role in their labor market integration. Women from West Africa face a sixfold higher risk of being excluded from employment, while those from Latin America and Asia experience a fourfold higher risk compared to women from neighboring countries of Switzerland. Educational level also shows differentiated impacts: women from Latin America are twice as likely to be overqualified (Gerber & Wanner, 2019).

An illustrative example of the intersection between nationality, gender, and migration regimes can be observed in Portugal. As shown earlier in Oliveira's (2022) table on nationalities and grounds for residence permits, migrants from Brazil and PALOP include a substantial proportion of women, many of whom obtain residence permits through channels such as study, exchange programmes, professional internships, or volunteering. In contrast, more recent migration flows, particularly from South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, and Nepal, are predominantly male, with women representing only a minority. Crucially, family reunification constitutes the main pathway for residence applications among South Asian women. This dynamic places them in a heightened position of vulnerability, as their legal status, economic opportunities, and prospects for integration are structurally more constrained than those of other migrant groups.

These differentiated pathways of entry have direct implications for women's integration in Portugal. Migrant women with limited proficiency in the host country's language and unfamiliarity with its social norms are likely to encounter significant obstacles to labour market integration (Schieckoff & Sprengholz, 2021). Furthermore, weak protection mechanisms and inadequate recruitment practices heighten their risk of precarious and undeclared employment (EIGE, 2020). These dynamics are closely tied to broader processes of deskilling, as many migrant women end up in undifferentiated positions that fail to reflect their qualifications or professional experience.

Beyond these labour market disadvantages, migrant women face not only the general challenges associated with migration but also the cumulative effects of gender, ethnic, and religious discrimination. Research in Germany has shown that female immigrants are more likely to face discrimination in hiring processes, with the likelihood increasing when they wear a headscarf (Weichselbaumer, 2020). These intersecting barriers highlight that the challenges confronting migrant women cannot be understood through gender or migration alone, but rather through their combined

and mutually reinforcing effects (Kraal *et al.*, 2009). Crenshaw (1989) originally defined this dynamic as intersectionality, a concept that captures how multiple systems of power intersect to generate specific and compounded disadvantages. For migrant women, this perspective clarifies how gendered expectations, racialised stereotypes, and migration regimes interact in shaping their opportunities and vulnerabilities.

This limitation becomes evident in the *New Pact on Migration and Asylum* (2020). The European Commission introduced the *New Pact on Migration and Asylum* with the aim of addressing persistent weaknesses in the Common European Asylum System. Despite its ambition to create a more coherent governance framework, several scholars point out that the Pact has not succeeded in integrating an intersectional approach (Duarte *et al.*, 2021), which limits its ability to take into account the different realities and experiences of migrant women.

Research further indicates that the Pact's emphasis on screening, return sponsorship, and solidarity mechanisms prioritizes administrative efficiency and border control over the protection needs of migrants (Jesse, 2025). While these measures aim to address gaps in previous frameworks, they provide little detail on how women will be treated across the different stages of the migration process. From arrival and initial health checks to border control, detention, and eventual integration, the Pact outlines general procedures for asylum seekers but does not establish clear provisions to address women's specific vulnerabilities (Azad Mow, 2024). As a result, the differentiated realities of migrant women remain insufficiently reflected in EU migration governance

Another aspect that highlights the Pact's limitations is its narrow and uneven treatment of integration policies. European countries have not introduced differentiated measures for women and men, including in the field of social integration (Azad Mow, 2024). In practice, integration is mainly addressed through frameworks such as the Blue Card Directive and other legal pathways designed for highly qualified workers (Jesse, 2025), where rights and opportunities for socio-economic inclusion vary according to migration status and perceived skill level. For instance, under the Seasonal Workers Directive (a scheme in which a substantial share of participants are women) migrants remain dependent on their employers and face significant restrictions in changing jobs. This creates heightened risks of exploitation and directly contradicts the EU's stated objectives of promoting the labour market inclusion of migrant women (Cortinovis *et al.*, 2020).

It can be argued that the persistent absence of a gender-intersectional perspective in EU and member state migration governance reinforces the structural vulnerabilities of migrant women across different domains: from labour market segregation and legal dependency to the lack of harmonized

and disaggregated data, among other issues discussed in this section. Policy frameworks such as the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, although presented as ambitious reforms, continue to reproduce inequalities by prioritizing efficiency and control over differentiated needs for protection and integration.

The gap between political discourses and practical implementation limits the EU's ability to respond effectively to migration realities and creates spaces of exclusion where the rights and experiences of migrant women remain insufficiently recognized. In this context, civil society and the third sector emerge as important actors, addressing unmet needs, challenging discriminatory practices, and promoting innovative strategies for migrant integration, issues that will be examined in the following section.

### **1.3 The Role of the Third Sector in Migrant Integration**

In the European context, the third sector<sup>3</sup> plays a central role in the integration of migrants into host countries. These organisations often take on responsibilities that public institutions do not fully address, providing direct support in areas such as housing, healthcare, legal assistance, language learning, and access to employment (OECD, 2018). Their work goes beyond service provision, as they also act as bridges between migrants and state administrations, helping them navigate bureaucratic systems and exercise their rights.

In the Portuguese context, immigrant associations have existed since the 1970s, accompanying the arrival of communities from the former African colonies and compensating for historical gaps in state capacity and policy implementation (Grassi & Melo, 2007). Despite the existence of a detailed and complex asylum law, the Portuguese State has not implemented structures that allow the development of a comprehensive reception process. In practice, the State deals primarily with the legal-administrative dimension, while relegating reception and integration functions to non-governmental organisations, such as the Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR), with which it contracts certain types of support (Sousa et al., 2022).

The humanitarian crisis of 2015 represented a turning point in the mobilization of civil society in Portugal. Although the Portuguese state expressed a positive willingness to support and receive asylum seekers, its experience in working with forced migrants was limited: only a small number of organisations operated in this field, public institutions had no systematic or dedicated programs for

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this project, third sector organizations are understood as encompassing NGOs, associations, civil society organizations, and local community networks.

this population, and there was little familiarity with the specific needs of refugees. This gap was addressed through the strong response of Portuguese civil society, organisations such as the CPR and Jesuit Refugee Service took the lead in providing reception and integration services, while broader platforms like the *Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados* brought together hundreds of NGOs, religious groups, and local associations across the country (Sousa et al., 2022).

Scholarly analyses suggest that third sector organisations engaged in migration and integration can be broadly categorised into different typologies, depending on their scope, orientation, and mode of intervention. Garkisch et al. (2017) identify four main domains. The first is the direct provision of basic services and social welfare, including housing, healthcare, language learning, and support for labour market integration. The second refers to migrant-oriented capacity development, through training, mentoring, and initiatives that strengthen social networks and human capital. The third domain is system-oriented advocacy, where organisations seek to influence migration policies, combat discrimination, and promote more inclusive frameworks. Finally, the fourth focuses on complementary research activities, through which evidence is generated and disseminated to inform public debates and policy design.

As seen in the Portuguese case, third sector organisations involved in migrant integration have traditionally concentrated on the provision of basic services to address immediate needs and compensate for gaps in state provision. Beyond service delivery, many organisations also engage in capacity development through skills training, community building, and the creation of opportunities for civic participation. Importantly, a growing number of these organisations have extended their role into advocacy, seeking not only to alleviate individual vulnerabilities but also to influence structural change in migration governance. A relevant example is the 2025 joint initiative of 37 Portuguese civil society organisations, which signed an open letter to several government ministers demanding ‘dignified, fair, and effective’ measures for the reception, integration, and inclusion of migrants<sup>4</sup>. This collective action, which included concrete recommendations on migration and development, illustrates how civil society in Portugal is increasingly positioning itself as a political actor, capable of articulating alternative visions of inclusion and pressing the state to adopt more comprehensive and rights-based migration policies.

Third-sector organisations are characterized by greater flexibility and closeness to the communities in which they operate. Thanks to their local embeddedness, they can identify the specific needs of particular groups of migrants and design faster, more tailored responses (Bontenbal & Lillie,

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<sup>4</sup> For further details on this initiative, see the open letter available at: [https://fecong.org/pdf/CartaAberta\\_Migracoes.pdf](https://fecong.org/pdf/CartaAberta_Migracoes.pdf) (accessed October 24, 2025).

2021). Unlike state policies, which often respond through emergency logics or rigid bureaucratic frameworks, these initiatives generate flexible, locally adapted solutions capable of addressing cultural, linguistic, or gender-specific particularities that larger providers tend to overlook (Galera et al., 2018). Their role in labour market integration is one example. Building on their close ties with communities, these organisations translate their contextual knowledge into specific initiatives that support migrants in accessing employment. These include tailored language and vocational training programmes, mentorship schemes that connect newcomers with local professionals, as well as projects aimed at facilitating the recognition of skills and qualifications (Baglioni et al., 2022).

Moreover, they have the ability to mobilize additional resources, such as volunteers or donations, that are not always accessible to the state (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2021). In this process, community mobilization becomes a central element: the involvement of volunteers, neighbors, and local social networks not only expands the operational capacity of these organisations but also strengthens social cohesion by fostering direct encounters between migrants and the local population.

Recognizing that migrants' needs are highly diverse, TSOs can, to some extent, provide more individualized forms of support. Many of their programmes specifically target groups such as refugees, asylum seekers, third country nationals, women, or young people (Gilmartin & Dagg, 2021). An example is gender-sensitive support: TSOs often design tailored initiatives for women, acknowledging that they may face distinct barriers to labour market integration compared to men. To address this gap, several TSOs provide services such as language classes and employment information sessions where parents can bring their children, sometimes complemented by on-site childcare or even home visits (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2021).

However, despite their efforts and flexibility, these organisations continue to face barriers to sustainability, particularly in relation to funding and human and financial resources. While they may identify the specific barriers experienced by migrants, they do not always have the necessary capacity to adapt their activities or extend support across all areas. This limitation is also evident in the implementation of gender-sensitive initiatives, which often require additional resources that TSOs cannot consistently secure.

### **1.3.1 Challenges and Limitations**

Despite their great relevance for the integration of migrant populations in Europe, TSOs have their capacity for action constrained by structural financial limitations. One of the most frequently mentioned challenges is their dependence on external sources and a notable heterogeneity across countries can be observed. While in Italy 86.1% of TSOs rely primarily on private funding, in France

only a minority concentrate a large share of government funds, whereas in Portugal there is a greater balance between public, private, and self-generated resources (FRA, 2017). Such reliance on external funding sources also makes organisations vulnerable to political and budgetary fluctuations. In Italy, for instance, Decree Law 132/2018 drastically reduced funding for local integration projects (SPRAR), transforming reception centers into mere “bed and board” facilities, with the elimination of language classes and cultural mediation programmes (Campomori & Ambrosini, 2020).

This dependency is compounded by the short-term nature of funding cycles, characterized by competitive calls and project-oriented schemes. Such a model increases the vulnerability of organisations and multiplies their administrative burdens, forcing many TSOs to focus their efforts on securing the continuity of their resources rather than on sustaining their political and social engagement in the field of integration (Lang & Badenhoop, 2025).

In this context, a systematic review on implementation in the third sector documents that TSOs faced considerable challenges in applying evidence-based interventions (EBIs), primarily due to a lack of support and expertise, as well as unclear or insufficient guidelines on how to adapt these interventions to different populations (Bach-Mortensen et al., 2018). These limitations are further reinforced by the short-termism of funding cycles, since competitive and project-based schemes deprive organisations of the time, resources, and stability required to consolidate learning, retain skilled staff, and ensure the continuity of interventions (Numerato et al., 2023).

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2017), explains that many smaller TSOs are often unable to access certain funding opportunities, since preparing successful grant applications requires highly trained, specialized, and experienced staff, human resources to which they do not always have access or that they simply cannot afford. In general, smaller organisations face significant difficulties in hiring professionals with expertise in key areas, which further restricts their ability to compete on equal terms with larger and more professionalized structures. These challenges are compounded by high staff turnover and the lack of continuity in both funding cycles and personnel, which disrupt the sustainability of ongoing projects and undermine the long-term capacity of TSOs to deliver consistent and effective integration initiatives (Haddy, et al., 2023).

The lack of resources is a decisive factor that explains one of the central problems identified in this project: the deficit in the inclusion of the gender perspective, which is also reflected in TSOs. According to the Portuguese NGDO Platform (2021), gender gaps continue to exist within development organisations. This remains the case despite being a highly feminized sector. Furthermore, there are

persistent challenges in effectively integrating a gender approach into organisational processes, structures, and practices.

Dawson (2011) notes, many of the processes of gender training and integration within organisations are carried out on a punctual basis, driven by donors and dependent on short-term projects, which prevents their continuity. The absence of stable funding and specialized staff means that gender mainstreaming is reduced to fragmented experiences instead of being consolidated as a structural change. In the same vein, UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality highlights that competition for funds, dependence on external financing, and work overload derived from the "project-to-project" model seriously compromise the sustainability of these organisations (FGE, 2019).

In 2019, UNFPA and UNICEF conducted a gender assessment with civil society organisation partners in several countries across Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East, with the aim of examining their capacity to mainstream gender equality. The study identified as key challenges the existence of gaps in staff training, weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems, and difficulties in understanding and applying systemic change as a metric. Although many Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) expressed a formal commitment to gender equality in their missions and visions, in practice implementation was often limited and fragmented, preventing the consolidation of structural and sustainable transformations.

In many cases, TSOs adopt a generalist approach when designing their activities, seeking to reach the broadest possible audience; yet this strategy often obscures and neglects the specific needs of vulnerable groups. One of the clearest examples of this exclusion can be found in access to language learning, which is considered a fundamental requirement for social and labor market integration. According to OECD (2024) data, migrant women with caregiving responsibilities in the European Union report lower levels of language proficiency than those without children, and these gaps often persist even after several years of residence. Complementarily, the study by Righard et al. (2019) shows that women enrolled in the *Swedish for Immigrants (SFI)* program are more likely to drop out during pregnancy or when caring for young children. This highlights that caregiving responsibilities restrict women's ability to fully benefit from integration services when these are not designed in ways that are adapted to their realities.

This case illustrates that when TSOs design activities without incorporating a gender-sensitive approach, they risk overlooking those who face specific barriers, such as migrant women with caregiving responsibilities. Rather than an isolated issue, it reflects how generalist strategies can limit the real impact of integration processes. This underlines the importance of identifying experiences and

tools that have proven effective in mainstreaming gender, in order to strengthen the capacities of TSOs and ensure that their interventions are more inclusive and sustainable.

#### **1.4 Good Practices and Gender Mainstreaming Tools in Social Organisations**

The institutionalization of gender mainstreaming as a global strategy has its roots in the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. The resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action established gender mainstreaming as a central approach to achieving equality between women and men, stressing that all policies and programs should integrate an analysis of their differentiated impacts across genders. This landmark moment positioned gender mainstreaming not as an optional element, but as a structural commitment to be embedded in policy design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation at all levels. Since then, it has become a key reference framework for states, international agencies, and civil society organisations working to advance gender equality (UN, 1995; ECOSOC, 1997).

Gender mainstreaming in civil society organisations requires not only political will but also the adoption of frameworks, tools, and sustained commitments that enable progress beyond isolated or short-term interventions. *Red Acoge* (2020) emphasizes that incorporating this approach demands action at all levels of the organisation: the substantial level, which defines institutional policies and objectives; the structural level, which regulates rules, procedures, and human resources; and the cultural level, which relates to the values and attitudes that shape internal dynamics. In this sense, gender cannot be conceived as a mere methodological “add-on,” but rather as a transversal axis that permeates both projects and the organisational culture as a whole.

Several international organisations have developed gender toolkits, guidelines, handbooks, and checklists designed to support the integration of gender perspectives into organisational practices and operations. These instruments provide practical guidance for mainstreaming gender across policies, programs, and internal structures, helping organisations move toward more systematic approaches. One such example is InterAction’s *Gender Audit Handbook* (2010), which presents a participatory self-assessment methodology that combines tools such as questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups to identify and address gender imbalances within organisational structures, policies, and programs. Beyond functioning as a diagnostic exercise, this process fosters internal reflection and dialogue, enabling organisations to recognize both overt and subtle forms of inequality. By embedding the findings into institutional systems and everyday practices, the handbook helps ensure that gender mainstreaming evolves from isolated, project-based activities into a comprehensive and sustainable organisational strategy.

Another example is UNIDO (2021), whose *Gender Mainstreaming Guide and Toolkit* emphasizes that gender perspectives must be integrated at all stages of the project cycle, from the initial identification to the final evaluation. The guide is designed to support technical staff, implementing partners, and other stakeholders by providing gender analysis tools particularly relevant at the design stage, while also addressing gender-sensitive indicators, sex-disaggregated data, and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This approach is reinforced by UN Women (2022), which emphasizes that gender mainstreaming must be results-oriented, relying on gender-sensitive indicators and monitoring mechanisms that translate institutional commitments into tangible changes.

Beyond mainstreaming, UN Women (2021) has advanced the integration of intersectionality through its *Resource Guide and Toolkit on Intersectionality*, developed in collaboration with the UNPRPD and members of the Civil Society Advisory Group. This tool is intended to support both organisations and practitioners in addressing how multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination shape the experiences of marginalized groups. It can be applied at the individual or team level to assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices, and at the programme or policy level to supplement design, adaptation, and evaluation processes. By doing so, it helps ensure that mainstreaming efforts do not overlook the compounded inequalities faced by women and other groups situated at the intersections of gender, race, class, migration status, and other identity markers.

At the organisational level, the Spanish NGDO Platform Coordinadora (2019) illustrates how this commitment can be translated into practice, through a gender policy that establishes a common framework for its member organisations. One of its stated objectives is to integrate the gender perspective into all organisational processes, ensuring that the mission, structure, and people linked to the Coordinadora and its entities adhere to a management model based on equality and non-discrimination. This framework is operationalized through concrete measures such as gender audits, the creation of monitoring committees, training opportunities, the use of gender-disaggregated indicators, and communication strategies with a feminist perspective.

In the Portuguese context, Silva and Casimiro (2023) developed a Manual of Good Practices aimed at promoting gender equality in migrant integration policies. The recommendations, directed both to organisations working directly with migrant populations and to policymakers, are structured around four main axes: investment in studies and programs for inclusion and gender equality, including the promotion of research and the strengthening of language and civic learning initiatives; facilitation of dialogue, partnerships, and cooperation, encouraging collaboration between academia, NGOs, migrant associations, and policymakers; promotion of integration and equal opportunities, through measures to improve access to housing, employment, and the recognition of qualifications; and

promotion of shared responsibility in the household and family, by expanding care services and fostering parental leave policies based on equality. Echoing on this perspective, the Portuguese NGDO Platform (2021) defends the idea that a specific budget must be allocated to promote the integration of the gender perspective, stressing that institutional commitments require adequate financial resources to be effectively implemented.

However, not all organisations have the capacity to implement such comprehensive frameworks. As noted earlier, many smaller structures lack sufficient technical and financial resources, which restricts their ability to advance in gender mainstreaming. In response to these challenges, collectives such as the Gender Practitioners Collaborative (2017) developed the *Minimum Standards for Mainstreaming Gender Equality*, comprising eight benchmarks that aim to balance clarity with flexibility (see Figure 3).



Figure 3 Minimum Standards for Mainstreaming Gender Equality (Gender Practitioners Collaborative, 2017)

These standards establish a minimum threshold of quality while allowing each organisation to adapt them to its specific institutional and programmatic context. Building on this approach, Red Acoge (2020) has elaborated a practical guide for the incorporation of the gender perspective in organisations working with migrants. The guide draws on collective experiences and identifies the main difficulties faced when putting this task into practice. It provides concrete guidance and practical tools to support organisations dedicated to the accompaniment and defense of migrants' rights in integrating gender into their structures, programs, and everyday practices.

## **1.5 Concluding Remarks**

The analysis shows that migration governance in Portugal is a good example of both progress and limitations. The country has been recognized in Europe for policies such as the successive National Plans for the Integration of Immigrants and the Strategic Plan for Migration, as well as for measures that expand access to health, education, and civic participation. However, as observed in practice, much of the responsibility for integration has fallen on third-sector organisations, which initially lacked experience in this field and had to learn along the way. Their limited financial and human resources further constrain their capacity to respond effectively. When viewed from the perspective of migrant women's experiences, persistent inequalities become evident: many are concentrated in precarious and poorly protected jobs, such as domestic and care work, while their legal status often depends on family reunification, restricting their autonomy.

In this scenario, third sector organisations, such as the Lisbon Project, emerge as key actors in reaching areas where the state does not, taking on a central role in the integration of migrants and asylum seekers, while the state remains focused on legal and administrative functions. Their close connection with communities allows them to identify immediate needs and provide support such as language classes, legal assistance, or community-based accompaniment. Moreover, their flexibility enables them to adapt interventions to specific cultural and social contexts, something that larger, more bureaucratic state structures often struggle to achieve. In some cases, they have even managed to develop initiatives targeting specific groups of migrants, such as women, by addressing the particular obstacles they face.

The problem is that they do not always have sufficient resources to sustain these types of responses. Many small organisations operate with limited budgets and very few specialized staff, which forces them to design highly general programs that fail to address all gender inequalities. Thus, the lack of stable funding, dependence on short-term projects, and high staff turnover become barriers

that prevent the consolidation of long-term strategies. As we will see in chapter 3 the Lisbon Project, as a small organization, faces many of these challenges.

Acknowledging these limitations, some organisations have begun to incorporate gender mainstreaming tools into their operations through the development of toolkits, guidelines, and checklists. Measures such as gender audits, equality plans, training processes, and the use of gender-sensitive indicators aim to move from isolated actions toward more structural change. These advances demonstrate that it is possible to respond more comprehensively to the differentiated needs of migrants. Building on these experiences, the methodology and project plan designed for this project, presented in the following chapter, draw upon the existing tools and successful practices reviewed in this literature.

## **Chapter 2 – Methodology and Project Plan**

### **2.1 Lisbon Project: Overview of the Organisation**

The project was carried out within the Lisbon Project (LP), a non-profit association based in Lisbon that supports migrants and refugees. The organisation was founded in 2017, initially emerging within Riverside Church<sup>5</sup> as a small group of volunteers providing support to refugee families who arrived in the aftermath of the humanitarian crisis. As one director explained: In its early stages, the organisation focused primarily on assisting refugee families, but as it grew and evolved, its scope broadened to include a wider range of migrant communities. Throughout its trajectory, the association has progressively adapted its practices, maintaining a close connection with migrant communities that has enabled it to identify specific needs and respond flexibly.

This capacity for adaptation has allowed the Lisbon Project to reshape its programs in line with shifting contexts, particularly as Portugal's migration landscape changed from being dominated by Portuguese-speaking migrants to increasingly including newcomers from non-Lusophone countries. This shift is reflected in the profile of the communities it currently serves. According to the Lisbon Project's (2024) Annual Report, the organization has experienced significant growth, with a total of 5,950 people registered, including 2,615 new registrations in that year alone. The diversity of the organization's community is remarkable, encompassing 158 different nationalities and 105 unique native languages, with the largest groups coming from Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Nigeria.

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<sup>5</sup> Riverside Church is an international and interdenominational church in Lisbon that brings together many nations, cultures, and Christian traditions. It has two branches, one in Cascais and another in Arroios, where it shares facilities with the Lisbon Project. See Riverside Church website: <https://www.riversidelisbon.com/> (accessed October 29, 2025)

Given this linguistic diversity, English has become the organisation’s primary working language, used both in activities and in its internal documentation.

The organisation defines its mission as “to build a community that integrates and empowers migrants and refugees.” Its work is guided by four core values: *Empathy, Excellence, Accountability, and Community*, which shape both its internal culture and its approach to integration. In addition, the organisation frames its activities around three main pillars: *Include*, helping migrants and refugees move from isolation to inclusion; *Empower*, providing them with tools to build a life in Portugal; and *Mobilise*, creating opportunities that strengthen social cohesion<sup>6</sup>.

The organisation is structured with the Board and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the top, overseeing the overall functioning. Below them, four main directorates are represented: *People & Culture, Operations, Finances, and Social Care*. The *People & Culture* directorate is primarily dedicated to the internal management of human resources and organisational development, while *Finances* is responsible for budget management and accounting (see Figure 4 for the organisational chart).

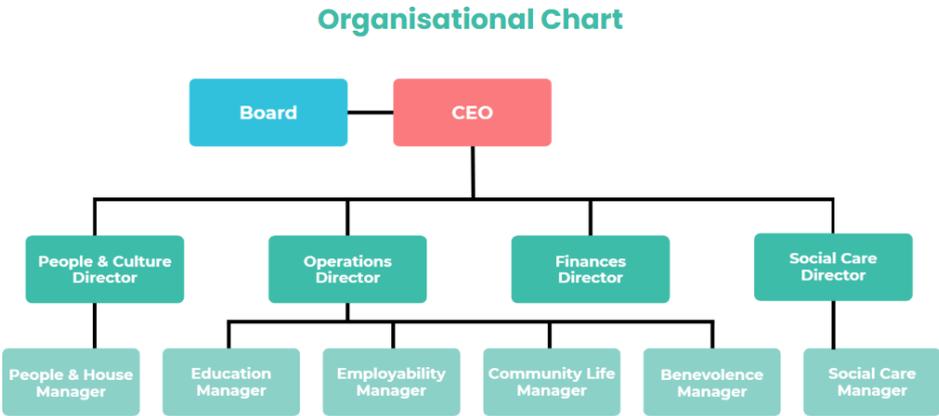


Figure 4 Lisbon Project Organizational Structure

Services provided to beneficiaries are concentrated under the *Operations* and *Social Care* directorates and organized into five key programs (see Figure 5 below):

<sup>6</sup> This information is available on the Lisbon Project’s official website: <https://www.lisbonproject.org/> (accessed October 10, 2025)

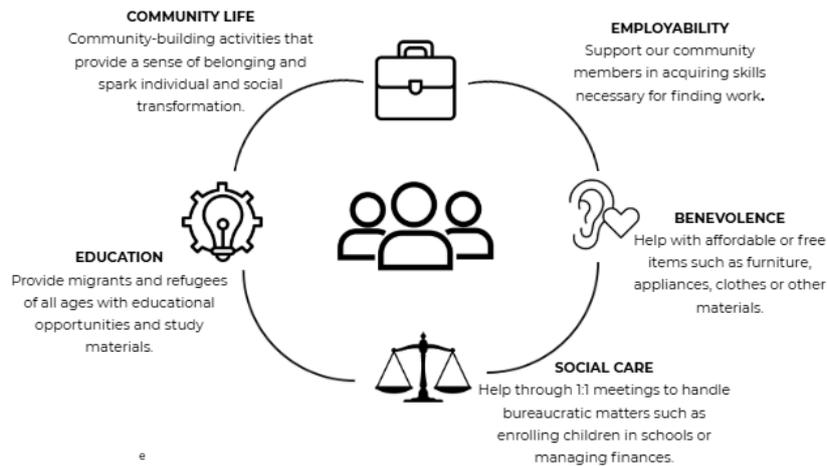


Figure 5 Lisbon Project: Core Programmes

In line with Garkisch et al. (2017), these initiatives position the Lisbon Project within two of the main domains of third sector organisations: first, the direct provision of basic services and social welfare (e.g., language learning, social integration, and labour market support); and second, migrant-oriented capacity development through training, mentoring, and the strengthening of social networks and human capital.

The work of the organisation is sustained by a wide network of volunteers, interns, professionals, and institutional partners. A relevant aspect is that, since English is the organisation’s working language, it creates opportunities for people from different countries to participate, not only, as seen, among the beneficiaries, but also among the volunteers and staff. As a result, the organisation counts a high percentage of international volunteers, with roughly half coming from nationalities such as Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Brazil, while the other half are from Portugal (Lisbon Project, 2024). In the specific case of interns, the Lisbon Project regularly hosts participants from different backgrounds, many of whom arrive through mobility initiatives such as the Erasmus program.

In financial terms, the organisation relies on a mixed funding model, with the largest share of its income coming from individual donors (see Figure 6). In 2024, the organisation mobilized approximately €160,921, reflecting significant growth compared to previous years. This represented a 35% increase from 2023, driven primarily by the rising contribution of individual donors.

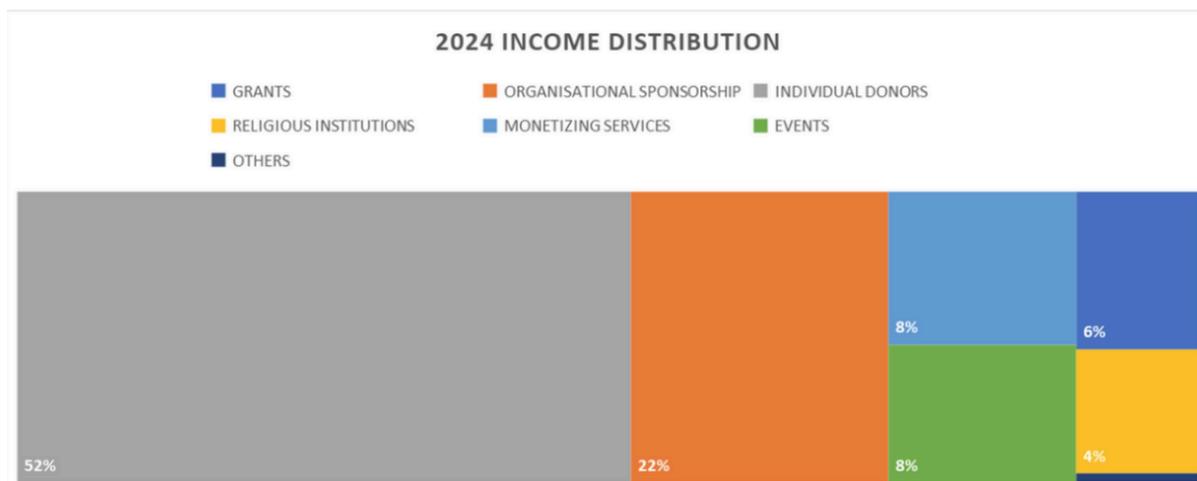


Figure 6 Lisbon Project 2024 Income Distribution

The contribution of public funds is practically non-existent. As one director explained, the organization prefers to avoid public funding due to the bureaucratic burden it entails, reporting and applications are often very strenuous, and the significant delays in disbursements, which the organization has experienced in the past. On the other hand, as highlighted in the literature, public funding tends to prioritize large-scale institutions or short-term, project-based initiatives, leaving smaller civil society organizations with limited opportunities for stable financial support. As a result, the Lisbon Project, like many other third-sector actors, depends heavily on alternative sources of funding.

In the last two years, the Lisbon Project has become increasingly aware of gender imbalances in participation across its activities. The first records of this concern emerged in 2024 during one of the organisation’s mid-retreats dedicated to evaluation and monitoring, where a significant gap was identified: the low participation of women in several activities, particularly in mixed-gender settings. The issue was collectively discussed, and I had the opportunity to contribute to the conversation in my role as an intern, where I carried out responsibilities as project manager for the Benevolence program. During the discussion, several program teams raised concerns related to gender and explored possible strategies to address this gap. It was from this collective reflection that the idea of developing my project around this issue first emerged.

Later, in 2025, as part of a research project conducted at the Lisbon Project, a Participatory Action Research (PAR)<sup>7</sup> process was developed to strengthen internal collaboration among teams in order to

<sup>7</sup> I became aware of this project during the course of my own project at the Lisbon Project, where it emerged as a relevant reference for understanding ongoing gender-related reflections within the organization.

better support female community members. The research highlighted that the challenge was not solely about increasing the attendance of women but rather about providing more holistic and comprehensive support to those already engaged with the organisation (Ruijsenaars, 2025). These antecedents revealed a broader challenge of integrating women within the organisation.

Building on these premises, I decided to develop my project around this challenge, with the aim of enhancing the inclusion of women within the Lisbon Project. To this end, a specific methodology was designed, which involved the development of a work plan and an analytical framework to guide the diagnostic process, combining planning tools with pilot activities. The following sections (2.2 and 2.3) present the project plan, including its logical framework and indicators, as well as the methodology applied for the diagnostic and pilot interventions.

**2.2 Project Plan**

The project was designed as a structured process aimed at exploring and addressing the challenge of integrating women within the Lisbon Project. In order to achieve this, a guiding question was defined: *How is it possible to create conditions that encourage inclusion and increase female participation in the activities of the Lisbon Project?*

To respond to this question, the project established a general objective, namely to *identify the factors that influence the inclusion of migrant women in the activities of the Lisbon Project Association and to develop solutions and recommendations that promote their well-being and integration into the organisation, while respecting their cultural and religious norms*. The specific objectives were operationalized through a sequence of phases, each of which contributed to the gradual construction of knowledge and practice.

**2.2.1 Project Phases**

The project was carried out over a period of seven months, between March and September 2025, and was structured into four interconnected phases. This temporal organisation allowed for a gradual process that combined preparation, diagnostic, design, testing, and the integration of lessons learned, ensuring the progressive accumulation of evidence and its alignment with the organisation’s pace.

The timeline of phases and is presented in the following table.

*Table 1 Timeline of the Project Phases*

Phases	Months						
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep

Organisation Diagnostic							
Design of the Pilot Activities							
Pilot Implementation and Monitoring							
Closure and Recommendations							

### **Phase 1: Organisational Diagnostic**

The diagnostic aimed to examine the current situation of the Lisbon Project in relation to gender mainstreaming. To this end, a framework was created, based on good practices and guidelines developed by social and international organisations on the inclusion of a gender perspective in institutions and their work, and adapted to the reality of the Lisbon Project. Once this framework was designed, a review of internal documents, policies, and procedures was carried out, complemented by the collection of perspectives from team members through interviews.

### **Phase 2: Design of the Pilot Activities**

Building on the findings of the diagnostic, a pilot intervention proposal was developed. This phase included the definition of the specific objectives of the intervention, the design of activities and the allocation of necessary resources, as well as the preparation of a monitoring and evaluation plan. At this stage, the logframe was also developed, which made it possible to systematize the objectives, results, indicators, and assumptions of the proposal.

### **Phase 3: Pilot Implementation and Monitoring**

The third stage was dedicated to the implementation of the pilot activities. During this phase, the activities were continuously assessed in order to contribute to the learnings and recommendations.

### **Phase 4: Closure and Recommendations**

The final stage focused on evaluating the pilot and consolidating the lessons learned. The evidence collected was analyzed with the aim of formulating practical recommendations for the Lisbon Project, oriented towards sustainably strengthening the integration of gender-sensitive practices. The main deliverable of this phase was a final report containing recommendations and conclusions, which was delivered to the organisation and marked the formal closure of the project cycle.

## **2.3 Methodological Approach: A Participatory Process**

Ethical considerations were a central element of this project, given that it involved working with vulnerable populations. The project received formal approval from the Ethics Committee of ISCTE (see Annex A), and all procedures were designed in line with the highest standards of confidentiality,

informed consent<sup>8</sup>, and respect for participants' rights. In addition, a formal protocol was established with the Lisbon Project (see Annex B), which set out the ethical and legal foundations for the collaboration and outlined the responsibilities of both parties regarding the objectives of the project, the use of data, and the safeguarding of participants.

The methodological approach adopted in this project was fundamentally participatory, designed to generate both knowledge and action through the active involvement of organisational members and beneficiaries. This orientation was considered appropriate given the nature of the Lisbon Project, where collaborative practices and community engagement constitute central elements of its mission. By placing participation at the core of the methodology, the project was able to capture diverse perspectives while simultaneously testing practical tools aimed at fostering organisational learning.

The methodology was structured around two main components: first, the development of a diagnostic framework, adapted from international good practices to the specific context of the Lisbon Project; and second, the development of pilot activities, conceived to experiment with gender-sensitive approaches and to collect direct feedback from participants.

### **2.3.1 Diagnostic Framework**

This framework was specifically designed to assess the Lisbon Project's current practices and realities in relation to gender mainstreaming. It guided the diagnostic phase of the project, enabling a structured analysis of how gender considerations are reflected across the organisation's planning, operations, communication, and institutional culture.

The gender evaluation framework developed in this project is grounded in the understanding of gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for achieving a just, transformative, and sustainable model of development. According to the United Nations, gender mainstreaming involves "assessing how planned actions affect women and men, ensuring their experiences are integrated across all stages and areas, so both benefit equally and gender inequalities are not reinforced, with gender equality as the ultimate goal" (ECOSOC, 1997). In alignment with this perspective, the Portuguese Platform of NGOs (2021) emphasizes that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also an essential dimension of development.

The construction of the framework followed three core methodological steps. First, it was informed by a comparative review of existing international and national tools and checklists (for an

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<sup>8</sup> In Annex C you can find the informed consent form, which highlights the confidentiality of the interview and was presented to the interviewees.

overview of this review, see Chapter 1, section 1.4) . These were selected for their practical applicability, conceptual clarity, and relevance to third-sector organisational contexts. The review focused on tools developed by organisations such as UN Women, the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ), Oxfam, and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), as well as Portuguese frameworks produced by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) and the Portuguese NGDO Platform<sup>9</sup>. The selection and adaptation process was guided by the specific characteristics of the Lisbon Project, which operates as a local association rather than a large-scale development agency. Consequently, only tools adaptable to small organisational structures and community-based practices were retained.

Second, the selected tools were synthesized into a single matrix (included in Annex D) which organizes practical evaluation criteria into thematic areas. This matrix was not intended to be used as a strict checklist, but as a flexible analytical tool that could guide observations, structure document review, and systematize interview insights. Its purpose was both diagnostic and operational, allowing for the identification of gender gaps and the generation of recommendations relevant to the Lisbon Project’s realities.

Third, an intersectional lens was integrated into the framework after its initial design. This decision emerged from the recognition that gender inequality cannot be fully understood without considering its intersections with other axes of discrimination, in this case those linked to migration. Drawing on Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit (UN Women, 2021), this lens highlights that women are not a homogeneous group, and that multiple and overlapping forms of disadvantage, based on migration status, race, class, disability, age, or sexual orientation, shape their lived experiences (Crenshaw, 1989). Given the Lisbon Project’s focus on migrant and refugee communities, integrating this perspective was crucial to ensure the framework could adequately capture the complex and specific vulnerabilities faced by women in these contexts.

To provide a clear, coherent, and results-oriented structure, the framework was organized around eight thematic blocks (see Table 2 x below):

*Table 2 Categories of the Gender Mainstreaming Framework Matrix*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Focus of Analysis</b>
Planning & Strategy	Integration of gender considerations into the organisation’s mission, vision, strategic documents, goals, planning processes, and assessments.

<sup>9</sup> See the complete table of documents reviewed to construct the framework in Annex E)

Budgeting & Resources	Allocation of resources for gender-related activities, capacity building, and for mainstreaming gender across overall organisational activities.
HR & Organisational Structure	Gender focal point, gender-related trainings, and gender-sensitive selection processes.
Implementation Of Activities	Gender-sensitive approaches in program activities and participation, including tools and methods based on needs assessments.
Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships	Partnerships, support, and information provided.
Monitoring & Evaluation	Gender-disaggregated data, gender indicators, and reporting with gender lens.
Communication & Public Relations	Gender-sensitive language and representation.
Institutional Policies	Institutional policies, formal commitments, gender policies, and codes of conduct/safeguarding.

Each block outlines specific criteria along with a scale ranging from 'Not Applicable' to 'Meets.' The table also provides space for comments, enabling qualitative observations to complement the assessment. See Figure 7 for an example of the matrix.

CATEGORY	CHARACTERISTIC	Not Applicable	Does Not Meet	Partially Meets	Meets
<b>PLANNING &amp; STRATEGY</b>	1. The (annual) planning process considers gender-related issues and demands.				
	COMMENTS				
	2. The project defines specific gender goals to promote equality between women and men.				
	COMMENTS				
	3. The project's background and context analysis examines the different situations of women and men, as well as the impacts it will have on different groups				
	COMMENTS				

Figure 7 Example of the Structure of the Gender Mainstreaming Framework Matrix

### 2.3.2 Pilot Activities

Based on the results of the diagnostic phase, a set of pilot activities was designed to address the gaps identified within the Lisbon Project regarding gender mainstreaming. These activities sought to foster awareness, promote organisational reflection, and generate practical strategies to strengthen inclusion. Two main initiatives were implemented: Two Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) activities with community members and a Gender Training workshop with staff.

## **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Activities**

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) is an approach that engages stakeholders directly in assessing progress, valuing their lived experiences and local knowledge alongside formal analysis. Unlike conventional M&E, which is often focused on accountability to funders and expert-driven metrics, PM&E emphasizes learning, ownership, and inclusivity throughout the evaluation process (Apgar, 2024).

In the context of this project, PM&E was applied through activities with community members to capture their voices, explore barriers to participation, and generate insights that could inform more inclusive practices within the Lisbon Project. These activities were carried out in two different settings: one more active and participatory, during a Portuguese class for women; and another more observational, during an embroidery group meeting.

The concrete results of these activities, as well as their implementation, are presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.

### **1. Portuguese Class for Women**

The first PM&E activity was implemented during the first Portuguese class that the Lisbon Project has implemented with a specific focus on women. Launched in early 2025 at the A1 level<sup>10</sup>, the initiative emerged from a volunteer's doctoral research project within the organisation. The approach is based on the concept of "Portuguese as a host language," ensuring that language learning fosters integration. For these classes in particular, the volunteer designed all the materials with a strong gender-sensitive perspective, tailored to the realities of migrant women so that the content is practical and applicable to their daily lives.

This setting was chosen as it provided a safe and familiar environment where participants could openly share their experiences as migrant women engaging with the Lisbon Project. The methodology applied was the Conversation Cards exercise, inspired by the participatory practice *Storytelling Connects*<sup>11</sup> and designed to stimulate informal dialogue and reflection in a relaxed atmosphere.

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<sup>10</sup> The activity was carried out in the A1-level class under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Following its success, I later learned that the course was extended to the A2 level, which would also be facilitated by the same volunteer (at least in one of the classes). This continuity allowed the participants to progress to the next level. See also the A1 graduation video published by the Lisbon Project: <https://youtu.be/F7vGWCqR2Q4?si=TebPDZXUIcavGxjm> (accessed October 10, 2025)

<sup>11</sup> *Storytelling Connects* is a participatory methodology documented in the online resource Participatory Methods, managed by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex. Available at: <https://www.participatorymethods.org/tool/staying-socially-connected-and-mentally-active-with-group-storytelling/> (accessed October 10, 2025)

Colorful cards with prompts were placed on the table, and each participant was invited to pick one. The participants could choose to respond if they felt comfortable or skip the card if they preferred not to answer. The prompts were organized into categories such as *Access, Participation, Voice and Expression, Safety, Social Connections,* and *Autonomy* (see Figure 8).

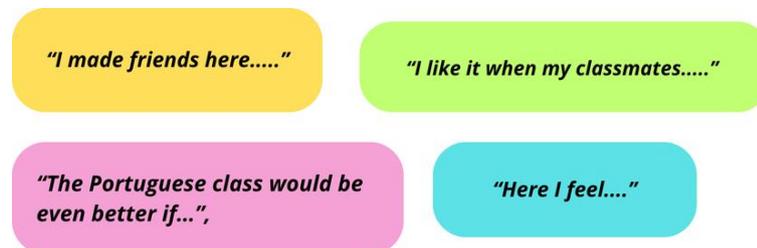


Figure 8 Examples of phrases from the Cards Activity

As this activity was conducted as part of an existing Portuguese class, the prompts were first shared with the class professors<sup>12</sup>, who had a longer-standing relationship with the participants. Their feedback was incorporated to ensure the content was contextually appropriate and well aligned with the classroom dynamics. To integrate the activity fully into the class, the prompts were prepared in Portuguese, allowing participants not only to reflect on their experiences but also to practice the language while responding<sup>13</sup>.

The facilitation of the activity was carried out by myself, with the support of the class professors, which helped to build trust and create a sense of horizontality. In order to preserve confidentiality and foster a safe and spontaneous environment, notes from the activity were taken only at the end, with all contributions recorded anonymously, in line with the ethical guidelines of the project. Field notes were written capturing key phrases, quotations, emotional reactions, recurring topics, and observations on group dynamics. To conclude the activity, each participant received a natural flower with a small message attached, symbolically acknowledging her presence, voice, and contribution to the group.

The expected results of this PM&E exercise included information on the barriers and enabling factors for participation, the motivations and comfort levels of the beneficiaries, indicators of agency

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<sup>12</sup> The Portuguese classes are generally conducted by two professors. This practice was introduced by the Lisbon Project to mitigate the impact of volunteer turnover. With this strategy, there is always another teacher available to replace and support the classroom dynamic.

<sup>13</sup> As this project is written in English, all materials presented here have been translated from their original language.

and social bonding, as well as emotional perceptions of the classroom. These findings provided a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of migrant women at the Lisbon Project.

## 2. Embroidery Group Meeting

The second PM&E activity was carried out during a meeting of the Lisbon Project's embroidery group. The embroidery group is one of the most notable initiatives that emerged at the Lisbon Project in 2024. It began when a volunteer of Indian nationality<sup>14</sup> requested a space to work on embroidery with South Asian migrant women, as part of both an academic and personal project that sought to connect the art of embroidery with South Asian culture, drawing not only on traditional techniques but also on the relational ties fostered among the women. In the words of the volunteer, her *"initial objective was to understand the barriers faced by women from her cultural background and to use craft as a bridge to overcome them"*.

Over time, the initiative expanded and eventually became known as the *Homelore Project*<sup>15</sup>. The project has grown significantly, with one of its most notable achievements being its first art exhibition in 2025, entitled *'All Roads Lead to Home'*, where works created by the participants were presented<sup>16</sup>. It has also consolidated a consistent group, with the same women engaged for over a year. With this growth, the project has secured grant funding, which has made it possible to compensate participants for their attendance and to cover materials and other costs.

In this particular case, the session was not an embroidery workshop but rather a meeting of the embroidery group held after the art exhibition. The objective of the meeting was to collectively reflect on the future direction of the *Homelore* and to gather participants' perspectives on its development, taking into account the significant growth the initiative has been experiencing. For me, this setting also provided an opportunity to analyze three interrelated dimensions: the motivations that led women to engage in the group, the barriers they encountered in sustaining their participation, and the aspirations they expressed for the future. The observations drawn from this meeting served as an entry point to better understand women's pathways of participation within the organisation.

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<sup>14</sup> Nationalities are only mentioned when they are relevant to the context. In this case, the fact that the volunteer is Indian is significant, as it helps to explain the cultural and linguistic connection, she shares with the South Asian women participating in the group, which in turn facilitates engagement and trust.

<sup>15</sup> For more information on the project, see the official Homelore website: <https://homelore.net/> (accessed October 15, 2025)

<sup>16</sup> See the article covering the project's exhibitions: <https://amensagem.pt/2025/04/11/mulheres-imigrantes-artesas-bordados-lisboa-homelore/> (accessed October 15, 2025)

The activities carried out in this session were designed and facilitated by the volunteer who founded the embroidery initiative, together with her project supervisor. I was invited to participate in the meeting, but I adopted a more passive role, since not being part of the group meant I had little to contribute. Instead, I allowed the activities to unfold as planned. Throughout the meeting, I maintained an observational role, sitting apart from the main discussion and taking notes. This position reflected the nature of the activity: although it formed part of the project's PM&E process, the embroidery group operated with its own facilitators and dynamics, largely sustained by the trust-based relationships among participants. For this reason, no external intervention was made, also taking into account language barriers, since the sessions were conducted partly in English but frequently shifted into Hindi, Urdu, and Bangladeshi to accommodate the participants' varying levels of English comprehension.

The session began with a round of introductions in which each participant briefly shared something about herself and responded to the opening question: *"What does this Homelore means to you?"* This exercise set the tone for the meeting, encouraging personal reflection and strengthening the participants' emotional connection to the group. It was followed by a sequence of participatory activities designed to explore motivations, experiences, and aspirations.

First, participants completed the phrase *"I joined Homelore because..."* as a way to reflect on their reasons for joining. The responses were written on post-it notes and later shared in a collective exercise. A second component introduced a LEGO-based activity, where the pieces were used symbolically: each color represented different dimensions such as knowledge, community, potential income, or personal well-being. Participants selected the pieces that best represented what they felt they had gained or contributed through their engagement in the group.

The session concluded with a collective visioning exercise in which participants discussed possible future directions for the group. Using blue and green cards, they identified both their existing capacities and the areas they would like to develop, creating a map of skills and aspirations within the collective.

### **3. Gender Training with Staff**

The Gender Training workshop was specifically targeted at directors, managers, program coordinators, and volunteers directly involved in project management within the organisation. The findings of the organisational gender diagnostic revealed that although the Lisbon Project values diversity and inclusion, the gender perspective was not yet fully mainstreamed across planning and operational levels (see chapter 3). In particular, there was a lack of specific tools to ensure that gender

considerations were incorporated into objective-setting, resource allocation, activity implementation, and the monitoring of differentiated impacts on women, men, and gender-diverse individuals.

The main objective of this training was therefore to raise awareness about the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the organisation's operations and culture, fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all beneficiaries. The session was structured around the practical application of gender mainstreaming tools within project management processes.

In response to the diagnostic findings, The *Gender Training* was conceived with a dual purpose:

1. To introduce and discuss key concepts, such as gender, intersectionality, and gender mainstreaming, in an accessible manner tailored to the organisational context.
2. To present concrete tools enabling teams to apply these principles throughout the entire project cycle, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

Through a participatory format, the training sought to create a safe and collaborative space for participants to understand the intersectionality between gender and migration and to explore how to integrate a gender perspective into their project management practices, enabling them to address specific challenges, recognize institutional barriers, and identify practical opportunities to promote greater equity within their areas of work.

The session lasted two hours and was structured into three main components:

- **Introductory part:** presentation of key concepts and collective discussion.
- **Practical part:** group exercises and interactive dynamics focused on applying gender tools within the project cycle.
- **Closing part:** final reflections and the recording of personal and institutional commitments to ensure follow-up.

At the end of the session, feedback was collected through an online form designed not only to evaluate the content, methodology, and relevance of the training, but also to measure changes in participants' knowledge before and after the workshop, and to gather suggestions for improvement and continuity.

## Chapter 3 – Main Project Activities and Results

This chapter presents the activities carried out throughout the different phases of the project and analyzes the results obtained at each stage. As previously outlined, the process was structured into four main phases: (1) the organisational diagnostic aimed at evaluating the Lisbon Project's internal policies, procedures, and practices in relation to gender issues; (2) the design of the intervention proposal, which defined the objectives, activities, and resources of pilot activities; (3) the implementation and monitoring of the pilot, intended to test the proposed activities in practice and collect feedback; and (4) the closure and recommendations phase, which evaluated the pilot and formulated lessons learned and future guidelines.

### 3.1 Phase 1: Organisational Diagnostic

As mentioned in section 2.3.1, the framework developed for this project guided the organisational diagnostic of the Lisbon Project. The purpose of the diagnostic was to evaluate LP's internal policies, procedures, and practices regarding gender mainstreaming, with a view to understanding the extent to which gender considerations were already embedded across different areas of organisational functioning.

To achieve this, a combination of methods was employed:

- **Document review**, which included internal policies, strategic plans, and programmatic reports.
- **Semi-structured interviews** with staff and volunteers, including managers and directors, in order to capture perceptions and practices related to gender.
- **Participant observation** in mixed-gender activities, which provided insights into organisational dynamics and the lived experience of inclusion.

This methodological triangulation provided a comprehensive basis for assessing the organisation's practices, ensuring that formal structures and everyday dynamics were taken into account.

A total of 30 internal documents were reviewed as part of the organisational diagnostic. These included a wide range of materials such as codes of conduct, guidelines, onboarding documents, safeguarding policies, training resources, risk assessments, internal manuals, reports, budgets, and strategic policies. Programmatic tools like logframes, Objectives and Key Results (OKR) and meeting summaries were also analyzed in order to examine how gender considerations were addressed, or left aside, within planning, monitoring, and organisational operations.

In addition to the document review, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 3 directors, 5 managers, 1 coordinator and 3 volunteers. This diversity of participants provided perspectives from different organisational levels, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of how gender issues were perceived and practiced across both leadership and day-to-day roles.

Finally, participant observation in three mixed-gender activities during March and April 2025 offered further qualitative insights into organisational dynamics, inclusion practices, and the informal processes that shaped how gender relations were experienced within the organisation. This constitutes participant observation because I was directly involved in the activities alongside participants, engaging in the same space and interactions, while simultaneously observing and reflecting on the dynamics that unfolded. Such immersion allowed access to nuanced perspectives and lived experiences that would not have been fully captured through external observation alone.

## Results of the Diagnostic

This section provides a general overview of the results, while more detailed information on each dimension of the framework was presented to the Lisbon Project but will not be disclosed here due to confidentiality. Figure 9 represents the areas in which the Lisbon Project demonstrates a higher level of development (shaded in blue), as well as those where weaknesses or gaps are more evident (no blue shade). This representation is based on the categories defined in the framework, allowing for a visual identification of the organisation’s strengths and the dimensions that require greater attention or investment in future processes of institutional strengthening.

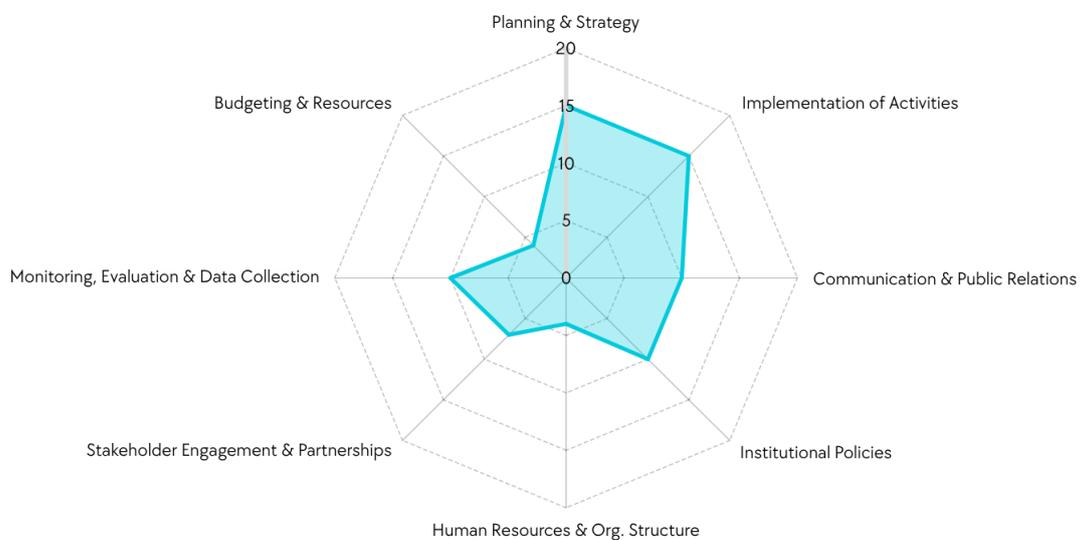


Figure 9 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Lisbon Project Based on the Gender Mainstreaming Framework Matrix

The diagnostic indicates that the Lisbon Project presents its strongest dimensions in *Planning & Strategy* and *Implementation of Activities*, where the organisation has consolidated good practices and demonstrated significant progress over time. However, the analysis also reveals that gender integration remains only partial and often takes place in an informal manner.

In terms of *Planning and Strategy*, the organisation acknowledges gender-related issues during its annual retreats and planning processes and has taken actions to respond to the specific needs of migrant women. These include the creation of targeted spaces and discussions around gender-related risks. However, this attention is not yet systematically embedded in organisational frameworks. Gender objectives remain implicit rather than explicitly defined, and planning documents do not outline corrective measures in case of non-compliance. Contextual analyses show some awareness of gender differences, but this is based largely on informal observations rather than comprehensive assessments. As a result, planning reflects awareness and responsiveness but lacks the formal goals, indicators, and corrective mechanisms that would institutionalize gender mainstreaming across the organisation.

A program manager reinforced this point, admitting that until very recently there were no systematic ways of knowing whether women and men were benefiting equally: “The project was very general. We didn’t collect gender data before, so we couldn’t analyze participation patterns. Now we are starting to, but it is still new.” These reflections confirm that while awareness exists, it has not yet translated into robust mechanisms.

With respect to the *Implementation of Activities*, the Lisbon Project demonstrates considerable flexibility and creativity in addressing gender-related barriers. Once the decline in women’s participation became evident, the organisation responded by introducing adjustments within different programs. Measures such as women-only spaces, adapted schedules for mothers and working women, hybrid learning models and safeguarding campaigns, these strategies reflect a strong commitment to women’s empowerment and inclusivity and stand out as one of the organisation’s most tangible strengths. Yet, despite these advances, equal access across all activities is not consistently guaranteed.

Childcare emerges as perhaps the most critical barrier, as it continues to limit women’s sustained engagement across programmes. Although emerging childcare support demonstrates a clear effort to expand access and participation, it still depends heavily on the availability of volunteers and therefore remains irregular and unconsolidated. This lack of consistent provision reinforces inequalities in participation. At the same time, mixed community events continue to be predominantly male, which seems partly related to the types of activities usually promoted. As one volunteer observed, “the

*dynamics are very male-oriented... men gather around games in the center, while women stay in small groups at the sides.*" This gendered spatial division shapes the overall atmosphere of the events. One female participant admitted that she often felt uncomfortable in such contexts, describing them as *"not really welcoming for women."*

In terms of *Monitoring, Evaluation & Data Collection*, the organisation demonstrates promising initial practices but also faces significant challenges. In the first case, positive steps have been taken by incorporating gender-related questions into enrollment and feedback forms, and by launching the digital platform MyLP<sup>17</sup>, which offers the possibility of centralizing data and linking it across programs. However, these practices remain fragmented and largely reactive: gender data is often used only descriptively, to count women's attendance, without becoming an analytical tool to understand levels of participation, structural barriers, or dropout dynamics. As one manager summarized, *"When we report, it's often just about how many people we served, not divided by gender."*

In addition, feedback mechanisms rely almost exclusively on standardized forms, which present limitations due to language barriers and the perception of bureaucracy, discouraging many women from completing them, as one staff member acknowledged: *"We also have a feedback form, though not everyone fills"*. The absence of gender-specific indicators in planning instruments such as logframes and OKRs further reinforces this limitation, making it difficult to measure transformative change in terms of gender equality.

With regard to *Institutional Policies*, the Lisbon Project has a Safeguarding Policy aligned with international child protection standards, which provides an important foundation. Nevertheless, a gender perspective is not fully integrated into its operational application, and the policy lacks references to international frameworks on the protection of women. Moreover, the organisation does not have a dedicated gender policy. This was also reflected in interviews, where a staff member noted, *"we don't have a gender policy in place."* There are no internal records of a formal gender equality framework or institutionalized tools that systematically address the prevention of gender-based violence or the promotion of equity.

In the areas of *Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships* and *Communication & Public Relations*, the Lisbon Project demonstrates notable limitations when examined through a gender perspective.

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<sup>17</sup> MyLP is a digital registration system, a platform that represented a turning point in its monitoring and evaluation practices. With MyLP, beneficiary data is centralized and linked across all programs, allowing the organization to build unified profiles and track gender participation more consistently. The platform also collects additional information such as household income, number of dependents, legal status, and nationality, factors that frequently intersect with gender inequalities, thus creating the possibility for the organization to conduct deeper and more meaningful analyses with this data.

The organisation's partnership strategy does not explicitly integrate gender considerations. While there have been meaningful collaborations aligned with gender priorities, such as with donors requiring sex-disaggregated reporting or with organisations providing workshops for women, these remain occasional, rather than part of a broader, systematic strategy. Similarly, the Lisbon Project's communication channels provide visibility to women-focused initiatives, mainly through newsletters and social media, with greater emphasis around specific events where programs and achievements are highlighted. However, the absence of a consistent equity narrative means that gender is still communicated as an isolated element rather than as a cross-cutting priority.

The areas where the Lisbon Project shows its most significant weaknesses are *Budgeting & Resources* and *Human Resources & Organisational Structure*. In terms of budgeting, the review of financial and programmatic documents revealed that gender considerations are not institutionalized within resource allocation. There is no specific budget lines dedicated to gender mainstreaming activities or processes, and initiatives that directly impact women are typically financed through the general funds of each program, without earmarking or differentiated tracking. The only exception is *Better Together*, which benefits from a dedicated budget within its host program, offering it a degree of stability that other initiatives lack. Beyond this case, however, the absence of gender-responsive budget lines illustrates that gender has not been embedded in the organisation's financial structure.

With respect to *Human Resources & Organisational Structure*, the Lisbon Project has established clear safeguarding standards and values for staff, interns, and volunteers, promoting respect, cultural sensitivity, and protection from harm. Yet, the integration of a gender perspective within this framework remains limited. Onboarding processes focus on general orientation and safeguarding, but do not include gender training, which restricts the staff's capacity to respond effectively to gender-sensitive challenges in program delivery or internal dynamics. Another recurring difficulty lies in the organisation's reliance on volunteers and interns, which generates high turnover and undermines continuity in gender-focused initiatives.

Based on the literature reviewed reviewed (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.1), these findings are not surprising: third-sector organisations frequently face greater challenges in the areas of financial sustainability and human resources management, which directly affect their ability to institutionalize gender-sensitive practices. The Lisbon Project reflects this broader pattern, where important commitments exist but structural limitations hinder their consolidation and long-term sustainability.

In general terms, the diagnosis shows that the Lisbon Project has developed important practices that reflect a genuine commitment to inclusion and gender responsiveness, but these remain mostly

fragmented and dependent on individual initiatives rather than embedded in organisational structures. While the organisation has demonstrated flexibility and creativity in adapting to emerging needs, the absence of formal frameworks, systematic indicators, and dedicated resources limits the sustainability of its efforts.

For the organisation, this means that progress in gender equality is visible but fragile, as it relies heavily on staff initiative, donor requirements, or temporary opportunities instead of being consolidated as a strategic priority. Strengthening internal systems, through clearer policies, resource allocation, and systematic monitoring, will be essential for transforming gender from an occasional or reactive concern into a cross-cutting principle that guides long-term planning, implementation, and institutional growth.

### **3.2 Phase 2: Design of the Intervention Proposal – Pilot Activities**

The purpose of this second stage was to transform the findings from the organisational diagnostic into a structured proposal capable of guiding the design and implementation of gender-sensitive pilot activities within the Lisbon Project. While the first phase concentrated on identifying gaps, strengths, and weaknesses across internal frameworks, the second phase focused on translating this evidence into actionable priorities, building a coherent strategy that could be tested and later scaled up. In this sense, the phase functioned as a bridge between research and practice, providing the conceptual and operational foundations for piloting gender mainstreaming measures in a realistic, participatory, and context-adapted manner.

The design of the pilot activities built upon the results of the diagnostic and directly addressed the organisational weaknesses previously identified. This approach ensured that the proposal was not only theoretically grounded but also feasible and participatory. The main steps were the following:

#### **Analysis of diagnostic results and definition of pilot activities**

Given the broad range of challenges identified, it was necessary to select specific and feasible entry points for the pilot activities. Following the principle of starting with areas that could generate both immediate improvements and long-term learning for the organisation, while also being feasible within the project's timeframe, two priority topics were defined:

##### **1. Improving feedback collection mechanisms**

- The diagnostic revealed that existing feedback forms are limited by language barriers, bureaucratic perceptions, and lack of gender-sensitive indicators. This weakens

the organisation's capacity to systematically capture women's experiences and participation patterns.

- The pilot activities therefore set out to test alternative methods and adaptations to feedback collection, with the aim of making the process more inclusive, accessible, and analytically useful for gender mainstreaming.

## **2. Capacity building with staff on gender and mainstreaming tools**

- A recurring weakness identified was the absence of structured gender training in staff onboarding and professional development. This restricts the ability of coordinators, managers, and volunteers to apply a gender lens consistently across programs.
- To address this, the pilot included the development and delivery of a participatory training module focused on key gender concepts and practical mainstreaming tools, enabling staff to reflect on their own practices and explore ways to integrate gender considerations into planning, implementation, and monitoring.

By focusing on these two entry points, the project sought to address both technical gaps (data collection and feedback) and capacity gaps (knowledge and skills among staff). Together, these interventions were expected to reinforce LP's ability to move from ad hoc practices toward more systematic and sustainable gender mainstreaming.

### **Definition of the pilot's specific objectives**

These pilot activities were designed as an initial step toward strengthening gender mainstreaming within the Lisbon Project's daily operations, organisational structures, and programmatic activities. Rather than functioning as a one-off initiative, it aimed to create the conditions for gender to become a cross-cutting principle of the organisation's work. The project was conceived as a preparatory intervention, encouraging staff and leadership to reflect on gender dynamics and to progressively integrate a gender lens into planning, monitoring, evaluation, and decision-making processes.

**General Objective:** To contribute to the conscious integration of a gender perspective within the Lisbon Project's organisational structure and operations, thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for its beneficiaries.

### **Specific Objectives**

- **SO1 – Feedback and Participation Monitoring:** Collect and analyze information on the experiences, barriers, and participation patterns of migrant women in Lisbon Project activities, through the use of two participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches.
- **SO2 – Capacity Building for Staff:** Design and implement a participatory training process for the Lisbon Project team, aimed at raising awareness of gender mainstreaming and equipping staff with practical tools to apply a gender lens across programs and organisational culture.

### Creation of the Logical Framework Matrix (Logframe)

As part of the pilot design, a Logframe was developed to structure the activities in a coherent and systematic way. The logframe was adopted in this pilot as a planning and monitoring tool, allowing objectives to be translated into concrete activities, expected results, and indicators. Rather than presenting only short-term deliverables, it was designed to reflect the broader changes that the intervention sought to initiate within the organisation. In this sense, outputs captured the immediate products of the activities, while outcomes pointed to the medium- and long-term transformations anticipated in planning processes and organisational culture.

Although it was clear from the outset that some outcomes could not be fully measured within the project’s timeframe, they were deliberately included in the logframe. This decision reflected the recognition that outcomes, by definition, capture medium- and long-term change, which extends beyond the scope of immediate project deliverables. Excluding them would have reduced the framework to short-term results, underestimating the transformative potential of the interventions. Their inclusion was therefore essential to signal the intended direction of change, particularly regarding organisational culture and gender mainstreaming, and to provide reference points for future monitoring beyond the pilot’s duration. In this sense, the logframe functioned as a management tool for present activities and as a roadmap for the consolidation of processes of change that can only unfold over time.

*Table 3 Logframe of the Pilot Activities*

Level	Type	Expected Results	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
General Objective	Outcome	Gender is addressed as a strategic and practical concern	- Gender mentioned in at least one planning or	Strategic plans, retreat notes, program design documents.	The coordination team is open to integrating new

		in internal planning.	evaluation document.  - At least one action defined with a gender lens in the Lisbon Project's Annual Planning process.		perspectives into planning processes.
	<b>Outcome</b>	The Lisbon Project uses migrant women's input to inform internal reflections and improvements.	- At least one internal process or program is adjusted based on women's feedback.  - Staff explicitly mention women's contributions in a team setting.	Revised planning documents, team meeting minutes, feedback notes.	Staff is willing to listen to and act upon the experiences shared by migrant women.
<b>Specific Objective 1</b>	<b>Output</b>	Conduct at least two participatory monitoring and evaluation activities using observation methods to document how gender shapes migrant women's participation in Lisbon Project activities.	- Number and type of activities observed.  - Variety of participation patterns observed among migrant women	Observation notes, materials used.	Activities occur as planned and allow for meaningful observation; the observer is accepted in each setting.
	<b>Outcome</b>	The Lisbon Project integrates gender-sensitive and participatory M&E approaches into its program evaluation processes.	- Number of program evaluation processes that apply at least one gender-sensitive or participatory M&E tool.  - Staff report learning or reflection.	Evaluation reports, planning documents, internal M&E templates, minutes from meetings.	Staff and volunteers have sufficient time and motivation to integrate new M&E tools into their routines.

<b>Specific Objective 2</b>	<b>Output</b>	Deliver a 2-hour participatory gender training using real LP examples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training conducted.</li> <li>- At least 75% of invited participants attended the full session.</li> <li>60% of participants are satisfied with the quality of the training.</li> </ul>	Attendance sheet, facilitation materials, team reflections	Staff is available and willing to participate in an open and safe environment.
	<b>Outcome</b>	Staff develop greater clarity and intention to apply a gender lens in their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ≥70% of participants report improved clarity or confidence in gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>- At least 2 programs express concrete intentions to apply gender mainstreaming tools in upcoming activities or planning cycles.</li> </ul>	Feedback forms, Commitments Board	There is space for follow-up and support so that the commitments made can be put into practice.
	<b>Outcome</b>	The Lisbon Project strengthens its ability to identify and reflect on how its activities affect migrant women differently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender is explicitly used as a criterion in at least one future planning or evaluation moment (e.g. annual planning).</li> <li>- Participants report increased confidence in applying a gender lens within their roles.</li> </ul>	<p>Internal planning documents that include a gender section or criteria.</p> <p>Meeting minutes or notes showing references to gender in decision-making.</p>	

## **Presentation of the proposal to the organisation**

The results of the diagnostic phase, along with the design of the pilot activities, were formally presented to the Lisbon Project team during the Mid-Retreat in June 2025, as agreed in the collaboration agreement. This moment represented a key milestone in the process, as it allowed the findings to be shared with staff and management in a collective and participatory space. The presentation not only served to communicate the main results of the diagnostic and the rationale of the pilot, but also opened a space for dialogue and reflection among team members.

The organisation's reception was positive, demonstrating an open attitude to listen and reflect on its own practices, as well as enthusiasm to implement the pilot activities. As part of a participatory approach, during the presentation the team were invited to identify the main challenges they face in their daily work when trying to integrate a gender perspective, so that these could be incorporated as inputs for the design of the gender training.

Through this exchange, the proposal was validated by those who would be directly involved in its implementation, ensuring its alignment with the organisation's priorities and realities. At the same time, the Mid Retreat provided an opportunity to reinforce institutional commitment, as staff expressed their willingness to support the objectives and activities of the pilot. In this sense, the Mid Retreat marked the transition from analysis to collective commitment, consolidating the idea that the project would not be an external intervention but rather an initiative built with and from within the Lisbon Project team.

### **3.3 Phase 3/4: Pilot Activities Implementation and Evaluation**

Phases 3 and 4 are presented together, as both focused on the implementation and evaluation of the pilot activities. This integrated approach makes it possible to describe each activity and analyze its outcomes, providing a clearer understanding of their relevance and impact. As mentioned earlier, two main activities developed and implemented during this stage: The PM&E activities and the Gender Training workshop.

#### **3.3.1 Participatory, Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)**

In this section, an analysis of the results of the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) activities will be presented, in order to verify and reflect upon the methodological approach described in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.

### **PME Activity 1: Portuguese Language Class for Women**

For this session, the room was arranged to convey warmth and intentionality. Chairs formed a wide circle, placing participants, teachers, and myself as an invited observer on equal footing. At the center, a low table held materials for participatory activities, while another table in the corner displayed traditional dishes prepared for a farewell celebration for one of the teachers.

In total, twelve women of diverse nationalities and cultural and religious backgrounds attended the session, two of whom were accompanied by their young daughters. The children were given materials to keep them engaged, and their presence was welcomed without disruption or discomfort. On the contrary, it was smoothly integrated into the dynamics of the class, highlighting the group's adaptability and the facilitators' sensitivity to women's family responsibilities. This normalization of children's presence exemplified the broader practice of inclusivity that defined the atmosphere of the class.

Prior to the participatory activities, I was formally introduced to the group as an external observer. Since my presence meant the entry of an unfamiliar figure into an established dynamic, it was important to secure the group's recognition and acceptance. The reception was strikingly warm: the women responded with applause, smiles, and curiosity. Although I initially felt apprehensive about my role, this open and generous welcome quickly eased my unease, allowing me to feel integrated as a temporary participant in the circle.

#### **Activity 1: The "Dream Wall"**

The first activity, designed and facilitated by the teachers, gave me the opportunity to be present as an observer during a deeply personal discussion. Participants were invited to write their dreams on post-its and place them on a collective "Dream Wall" (see Figure 10). Each woman wrote in Portuguese, often hesitantly, yet with determination, demonstrating their effort to practice the language and their willingness to share personal aspirations within the group.



## **Discussion on Life Purpose, Migration, and Diversity**

The sharing of dreams evolved into an organic conversation about life purpose and the consequences of migration. Several women admitted they sometimes doubted whether leaving their home countries had been the right decision. They had often left behind professional stability and strong support networks, only to face language barriers and precarious work in Portugal. Yet others emphasized a new sense of freedom. One woman reflected that, in her country, the path to success was rigid, “*doctor, engineer, or nothing*”, whereas in Portugal she felt freer to imagine becoming a stylist or a musician. This collective reflection revealed the burden and the gift of migration: loss of certainty but also a chance to redefine meaning.

During the discussion, issues of race and intersectionality also emerged. At one point, a Nigerian participant openly gestured to her skin and remarked: “*we face more challenges,*” referring to the forms of discrimination experienced in relation to skin tone. Another participant added that Brazilians are also subject to prejudice, particularly due to their accent. This exchange underscored that, while all participants shared the condition of being migrants, their struggles were not homogeneous. Instead, they were differentiated and layered by intersecting factors such as race, nationality, religion, and gender. Importantly, what could have become a source of tension or division was transformed into a moment of mutual recognition and empathy within the group.

Conversely, another participant reflected that living in Portugal had broadened her horizons by allowing her to interact with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. She concluded that what ultimately mattered was kindness and ethical values, not nationality or religious affiliation. Her words resonated with the group, subtly reframing difference as enrichment rather than division.

## **Activity 2: The “Cards” Reflection Exercise**

The second activity of the session was the card exercise, which I facilitated. Its objective was to encourage personal reflection, emotional expression, and group connection, while deepening the understanding of migrant women’s lived experiences and how these relate to the work and support provided by the Lisbon Project. Participants selected a card and directly completed the sentence aloud, with others adding reflections in a collective process of sharing.

The responses revealed important insights into the women’s experiences within the Portuguese class and, more broadly, within the Lisbon Project. The following images illustrate some of the reflections that emerged during the activity.

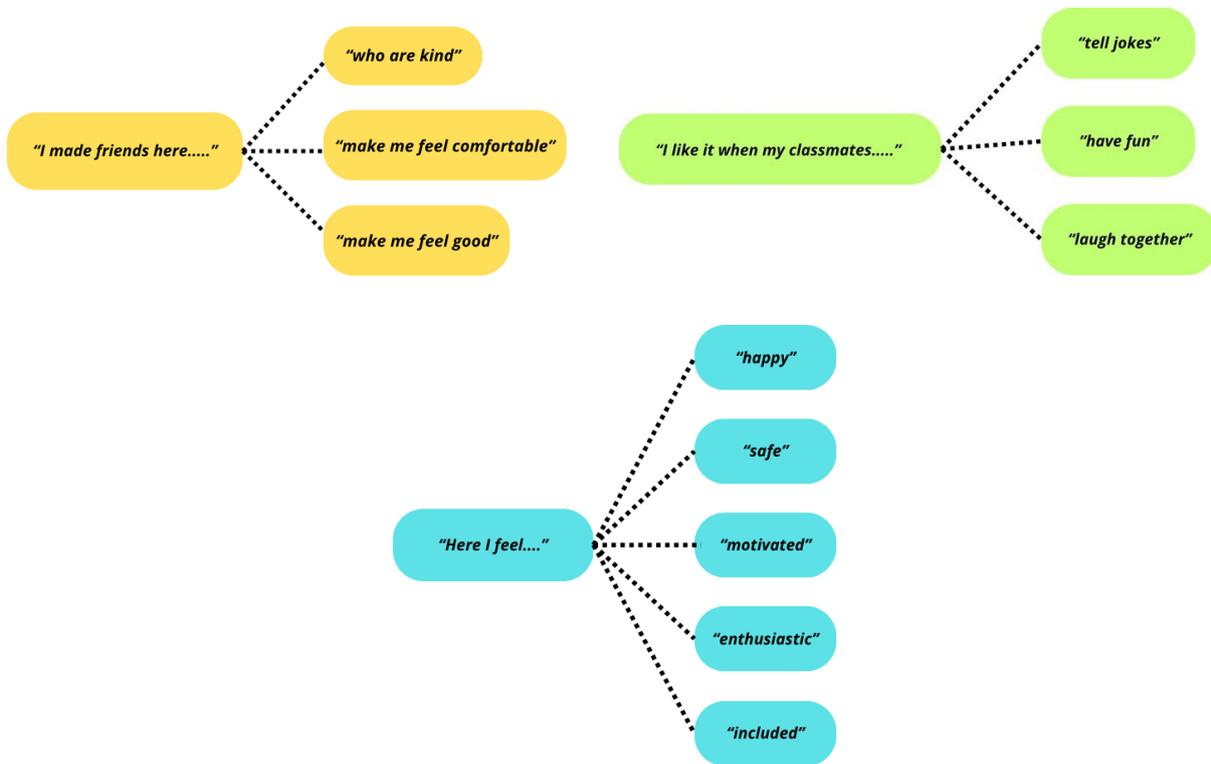
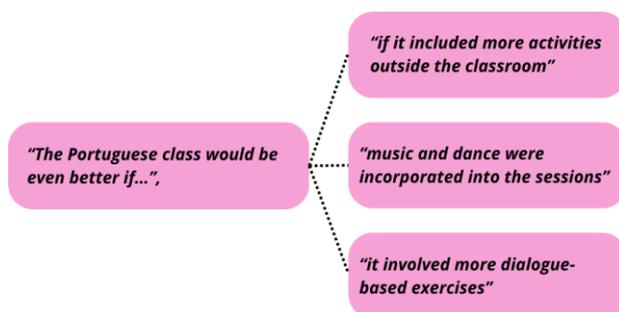


Figure 11 Illustrative Responses from the Cards Activity 1

The responses indicate that the Portuguese class goes beyond its instructional role, becoming a space where participants cultivate relationships and mutual support. They reveal the value of positive group dynamics and the creation of an environment of trust and belonging. Taken together, these elements demonstrate that the class not only contributes to language learning but also strengthens integration through emotional well-being and social connection.

The activity also prompted constructive feedback regarding both the Portuguese class and the Lisbon Project more broadly (see Figure 12).



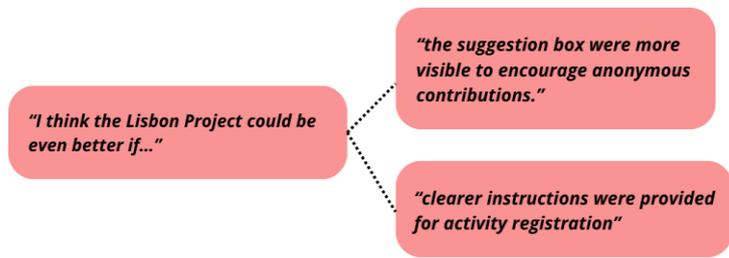


Figure 12 Illustrative Responses from the Cards Activity 2

The feedback gathered highlights the importance of complementing formal learning with more creative, participatory, and socially engaging approaches. It also points to the need for clearer communication and accessible mechanisms that enable participants to navigate opportunities within the organisation with confidence. It is important to note that, when addressing the phrase related to the Lisbon Project, the first participant appeared hesitant to share her perspective, perhaps because she was concerned that her words might be interpreted as criticism. For this reason, it was clarified during the activity that the intention was improvement rather than judgment. This moment illustrates the need to establish conditions of trust and reassurance so that feedback is understood as a constructive tool for organisational development rather than as a form of judgment.

The cards also generated reflections on personal and structural barriers to participation.



Figure 13 Illustrative Responses from the Cards Activity 3

These barriers highlight how everyday socio-economic conditions intersect with the ability of migrant women to engage in integration initiatives. Interestingly, childcare was not identified as a barrier in this context. This may be linked to the fact that on that particular day, two women had

brought their children without difficulty, and the group had naturally integrated them into the session, suggesting that flexible and inclusive practices can mitigate this potential obstacle.

The exercise concluded on a symbolic and celebratory note. As a gesture of gratitude for their time and participation, each woman was offered a flower accompanied by a short message (see Figure 14), which was warmly received and marked the transition into a shared meal. This final moment reinforced the atmosphere of community and mutual recognition that had been cultivated throughout the class.



*Figure 14 Message Attached to the Flower*

### **Individual Conversation with a Participant**

Additional feedback also emerged in a private exchange with one participant, when she was asked whether she would feel comfortable attending a mixed-gender Portuguese class in the future or if she preferred a women-only environment. She responded that she would not mind being in a mixed group and could even see it as “fun,” creating a light sense of competition without it being negative. Nonetheless, she emphasized that she had deliberately chosen the women-only option when registering, precisely because it was available.

Her reflections highlighted the dual value of both arrangements. On the one hand, she recognized that mixed groups could foster diversity and interaction. On the other hand, she underscored the particular importance of women-only spaces, where participants could speak more freely about sensitive issues, such as the female body, clothing, personal health, or everyday challenges, that might feel uncomfortable to discuss in the presence of men. In her view, these settings created a sense of safety and openness that she deeply appreciated, reinforcing the need for inclusive options that address women’s differentiated needs.

## Reflections on the Session

The Portuguese class for women provided more than linguistic training; it revealed itself as a space of psychosocial support, community-building, and mutual recognition. Through participatory activities, the session highlighted both the aspirations and vulnerabilities of migrant women, as well as the structural and personal barriers shaping their integration process. The *Dream Wall* illustrated how migration unsettles not only material conditions but also life purpose, while the *cards activity* underscored the importance of safe and inclusive spaces where women feel empowered to voice their experiences and propose improvements.

Discussions on race, religion, and gender further emphasized the intersectional nature of their realities, demonstrating that migrant women do not face homogeneous challenges but rather differentiated struggles shaped by multiple identities. From the perspective of this pilot activity, the session confirmed the value of participatory monitoring and evaluation as a tool that goes beyond data collection: it creates safe environments where women's voices can emerge authentically, offering the organisation richer insights to inform gender-sensitive planning and more inclusive practices.

## PME Activity 2: Embroidery Group Meeting

The space was intentionally arranged to foster a relaxed and collaborative environment: participants sat on cushions around a low central table where the materials for the session were placed. This informal setup created a sense of equality and comfort, encouraging open dialogue and collective participation.

Although only four women were expected, three arrived well before the scheduled start, demonstrating both commitment and anticipation. Their punctuality reflected the importance they attributed to the project and the attachment they felt toward the group. All participants were already familiar with the facilitators<sup>18</sup>, which contributed to a welcoming and trusting environment. By contrast, my presence as an external observer initially introduced a degree of tension. Before beginning, we asked the group for their authorization for me to participate in the session, and after briefly explaining the academic purpose of the project, the women expressed their agreement. This

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<sup>18</sup> It is important to emphasize that my degree of involvement varied between the two sessions. In the embroidery group meeting, my role was more distant and limited. I was not the facilitator of the activity, nor a member of the group, and I chose not to intervene with comments that might disrupt the connection and momentum among participants. In contrast, my participation in the Portuguese class was more active, which allowed me to establish a closer rapport with the group and, in my view, contributed to gathering more genuine feedback.

process helped establish mutual understanding and eased the initial discomfort, allowing the session to unfold in a natural and participatory manner.

### **Activity and Dynamics**

The session unfolded through participatory activities designed to elicit reflections on the meaning, motivations, contributions, and future of the embroidery group. It began with the question “*What does this Homelore mean to you?*” which elicited highly personal responses. For some, it evoked family memories and connections to their mothers or grandmothers who embroidered, transforming the practice into a symbolic bridge to home and tradition. For others, it represented friendship, social connection, and belonging.

Participants were then invited to share whether they took part in other Lisbon Project activities. Most responded affirmatively, mentioning Portuguese classes, community dinners, the Better Together program, and activities for their children. One woman explained that her initial motivation to join the Lisbon Project was precisely to find a safe space for her children, and only later did she become personally involved in activities like embroidery. These accounts revealed how participation often extends beyond individual interests, linking the engagement of mothers to opportunities for their children and to family well-being more broadly.

When asked “*Why did you join Homelore?*” participants expressed diverse motivations that reflected their personal circumstances: some saw embroidery as a way to develop skills or generate potential income, while others highlighted companionship, the chance to break isolation, or simply to dedicate time to themselves. Mothers, in particular, emphasized the value of carving out personal space beyond domestic responsibilities, whereas younger women spoke more about building friendships and social networks (see Figure 15).

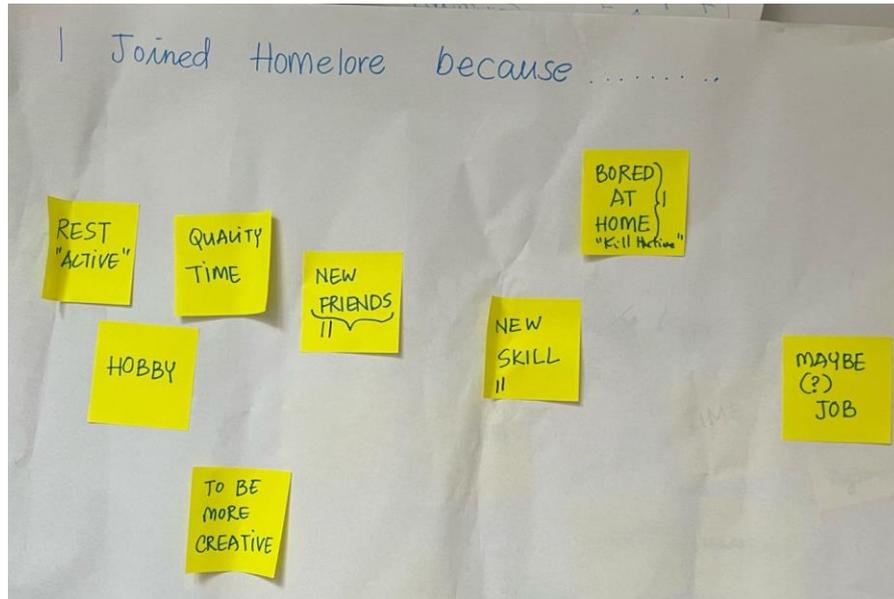


Figure 15 Participants' Motivations for Joining Homelore

These differences became even clearer during the LEGO activity, which asked participants to symbolize what they had gained from the initiative. Their responses revealed practical and emotional dimensions: while some associated the activity with “home,” “stress relief,” or “confidence,” others pointed to friendships, knowledge, and modest aspirations for financial independence. The exercise showed that the embroidery group operates as a site of learning, community, and psychosocial support, balancing women’s needs for rest and connection.

The final part of the workshop invited participants to reflect collectively on the future development of the *Homelore* Project. The facilitators introduced the idea of establishing a more formalized structure, with roles in areas such as communication, fundraising, administration, and production, and encouraged the women to imagine how they might participate in such a model. This proposal generated visible enthusiasm. Participants engaged actively, not only responding to the questions posed but also offering their own suggestions about how the activity could grow and attract more women. The idea of “formalizing” the initiative sparked a sense of possibility, allowing them to envision it as more than a recreational space, as a potential collective project with social and economic relevance.

To make this vision tangible, participants used colored post-it notes to map their existing capacities and aspirations: blue notes indicated skills they already possessed and felt confident about, while green notes represented areas they wished to learn or develop further. These post-its were placed on a large sheet of paper that visually displayed both the group’s current resources and their future learning interests. The exercise revealed a strong desire to expand knowledge, ranging from

technical embroidery techniques to organisational skills, and underscored the participants' willingness to invest in the initiative's growth (see Figure 16).



Figure 16 Participants' Reflections on Homelore Tomorrow

The activity revealed a high level of commitment and enthusiasm among the participants. All of them showed interest in the future of the group and openness to contributing more actively to its development. A particularly meaningful moment emerged around the theme of responsibilities. The proposal to establish defined roles sparked a collective exercise of imagination, in which the women began to envision how the initiative could evolve and how they themselves could become involved in building it. Several expressed the desire to invite new members and imagined themselves leading future workshops, reflecting a shift from a model centered on a single facilitator toward a more horizontal, collaborative, and shared structure.

The session thus became a genuine "space for dreaming", where participants could imagine alternatives and see themselves as active agents of change. This exercise of projection highlighted their willingness to take on greater responsibility and also the group's capacity to function as a laboratory for leadership and shared ownership.

The session concluded on a warm and celebratory note. After the collective reflection, participants expressed feeling motivated and energized by the possibilities they had envisioned, acknowledging that growth would require effort but welcoming the idea of being engaged and productive. As a symbolic gesture of appreciation, each woman received a flower, which reinforced the atmosphere of recognition, cohesion, and shared optimism that had characterized the workshop.

### **General Reflections on the Session**

The meeting highlighted the richness of participatory methods in surfacing women's voices and aspirations beyond what traditional feedback tools might capture. The use of visual mapping revealed that women were eager to expand their participation in areas such as communication, fundraising, and organisational support, while also expressing curiosity about learning new technical and creative skills. This finding reinforced what had already been identified during the diagnostic phase: that women particularly value activities that allow them to develop skills and capacities that can be useful both for personal growth and for future opportunities.

This does not imply that leisure-oriented or social activities are negative or less important, on the contrary, they play a crucial role in fostering well-being, social connection, and community-building. However, in the case of migrant women, supporting skill development becomes particularly important given the specific challenges they face in accessing the labor market, navigating legal and linguistic barriers, and securing financial independence. In this sense, the activity not only demonstrated their attachment to the embroidery group but also illustrated the kinds of initiatives within the Lisbon Project that could attract and sustain their engagement.

Their contributions further showed that women's motivations combined both practical and personal dimensions. For some, the prospect of professional development and modest income-generation was central, while for others the priority lay in social connection, learning opportunities, and spaces for personal growth. The exercise thus underscored the importance of offering diverse forms of participation within the organisation, adapted to different life circumstances and aspirations. By making these motivations visible, the workshop provided the Lisbon Project with a clearer picture of how to design activities that respond to women's interests and strengthen their long-term involvement.

#### **3.3.1.1 Principal Insights Emerging from the PM&E Activities**

The application of PM&E tools in two distinct program contexts of the Lisbon Project, yielded a set of insights that go beyond the specific environments in which they were implemented. What stands out

is the content of the women's reflections, and also how the tools themselves created spaces of expression, revealed hidden dynamics, and encouraged constructive feedback in ways that complemented existing organisational mechanisms.

First, the tools demonstrated their capacity to capture emotional and experiential dimensions often overlooked in conventional evaluations. The "Dream Wall" and the "Cards Activity," for instance, elicited deeply personal testimonies that illuminated aspirations, fears, and structural barriers from the perspective of migrant women themselves. Similarly, the use of visual mapping in the embroidery group proved effective in lowering barriers to participation, while allowing women to dream, to express the knowledge they already possessed, and to articulate what they wished to acquire.

Second, the participatory nature of the tools highlighted the value of safe and inclusive spaces for dialogue. Both activities allowed women to share sensitive topics, ranging from discrimination and gendered barriers to aspirations for professional development, in an environment perceived as non-judgmental. In this sense, the participatory evaluation exercises proved to be more than diagnostic methods; they also acted as interventions that strengthened group bonds and nurtured a stronger sense of agency among the women.

Third, the activities generated practical recommendations for the organisation, ranging from improving communication channels and registration systems to diversifying the types of activities offered, as well as suggestions to enhance the Portuguese class. This demonstrates the potential of PM&E tools to function as iterative feedback mechanisms that foster continuous organisational learning and participatory decision-making. It also illustrates how such approaches may provide richer insights than standard feedback forms, encouraging the organisation to value and integrate them more systematically.

These experiences underscored that the effectiveness of PM&E lies in their adaptability and contextual sensitivity. By tailoring the activities to the characteristics of each group, a language class versus an embroidery meeting, the tools were able to resonate with participants and elicit contributions. The activities made visible the specific challenges migrant women encounter in different contexts, while at the same time highlighting their interests, what they wish to learn, and the activities they would like to participate in. These findings provide the organisation with an opportunity to reflect and consider how its programs and activities can be adapted more effectively to respond to women's needs and aspirations.

An important point to consider in PM&E activities concerns the question of facilitation. As noted earlier, creating an environment of trust requires time and consistent engagement with participants.

In the two groups observed, pre-existing relationships of confidence meant that the sessions were conducted in a supportive environment, something that would be more difficult to achieve in a workshop where participants meet for the first time. This suggests that regular facilitators, by virtue of their ongoing presence, may be well positioned to carry out such activities, as they can build on trust and established bonds that encourage participants to share openly. This role also brings advantages, particularly the depth of understanding that arises from familiarity with the dynamics and the context of the activity (Fleming, 2018).

At the same time, however, this proximity can introduce risks of power asymmetries or social desirability bias, whereby participants may moderate their responses to avoid criticism, as was observed in the Portuguese class. To mitigate this, it is essential to ensure a degree of facilitator neutrality, since impartiality has been shown to enhance trust within groups and support more open and cooperative participation (Wróbel, Lomberg, & Cash, 2021). Such neutrality does not mean being distant, but taking a fair and balanced approach that makes participants feel safe to share critical views without fear of judgment.

In this case, the combination of regular facilitators and my presence as an external figure seemed to create a balance, enabling the continuity of trust and the introduction of a fresh perspective. It is important to note, however, that my position was not that of a completely external facilitator, as I already had prior knowledge of the organisation through my internship and was familiar with some of the participants, even if I did not fully know the specific context or dynamics of the activity. This intermediary position differs from that of a wholly external facilitator, who may bring neutrality and reduce bias but often lacks the contextual knowledge and relational trust required to elicit deeper insights (Fleming, 2018).

Finally, it is important to highlight the ethical considerations inherent in participatory methods, which must always be carefully considered and addressed. It is equally necessary to evaluate whether participatory approaches are the most appropriate choice when ethical concerns cannot be sufficiently managed. Key aspects to take into account include ensuring anonymity, conducting risk assessments, and safeguarding participants. A further challenge is that participatory approaches, particularly those with an action-oriented dimension, can create expectations of change and support that exceed what can realistically be delivered within the limited resources or timeframes of particular projects or programmes. (IDS, 2024). For this reason, it is recommended that organisations adopt a realistic stance and actively manage participants' expectations throughout the process.

### 3.3.2 Gender Training

The second pilot activity consisted of the design and implementation of a Gender Training specifically tailored for the Lisbon Project. The main objective of this training was to raise awareness about the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the organisation's operations and culture, fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all beneficiaries.

The workshop targeted directors, managers, program coordinators, and volunteers directly involved in project management within the organisation, bringing together a total of 15 participants. It followed a participatory approach, using interactive activities to encourage critical reflection and open exchange between team members working at different levels of responsibility.

Before the beginning of the workshop, the objectives of the session were presented in order to establish a clear purpose and to connect the activity with the findings of the organisational gender diagnostic. The objectives were threefold: to build a shared understanding of key gender-related concepts, to present tools to support gender mainstreaming in the Lisbon Project, and to encourage reflection on how these tools could be applied during the organisation's planning and decision-making moments. To manage expectations and provide a clear roadmap, the facilitator also outlined the topics that would be covered: key concepts such as sex versus gender, intersectionality, and gender mainstreaming; tools and examples for integrating gender into the Lisbon Project's work; and a space for practical reflection and commitment.

#### Section 1 - Key Gender-Related Concepts

The session opened with an introductory component aimed at establishing a common understanding of the core concepts of sex versus gender, intersectionality, and gender mainstreaming. Focusing on these three topics was essential: sex versus gender provided the basis for distinguishing biological differences from socially constructed roles; intersectionality offered a lens to understand the multiple and overlapping inequalities faced by migrant communities; and gender mainstreaming introduced practical tools to address these dynamics systematically across the project cycle. To initiate the discussion, participants were invited to share their existing knowledge of these concepts through an interactive Mentimeter exercise, which helped to map different levels of familiarity and set the ground for a more tailored exploration of each topic.

In the case of the distinction between *sex and gender*, participants already demonstrated a relatively solid grasp of the concept. By contrast, the terms *intersectionality* and *gender mainstreaming* were less familiar, with many participants identifying them as either new or not fully understood. This

was later reflected in the feedback provided through the pre- and post-training evaluation form, which measured changes in knowledge across the three terms. (see Figures 17 and 18 for a comparison of pre- and post-training knowledge levels).

How would you describe your understanding of the key concepts discussed during this training session before the training session?

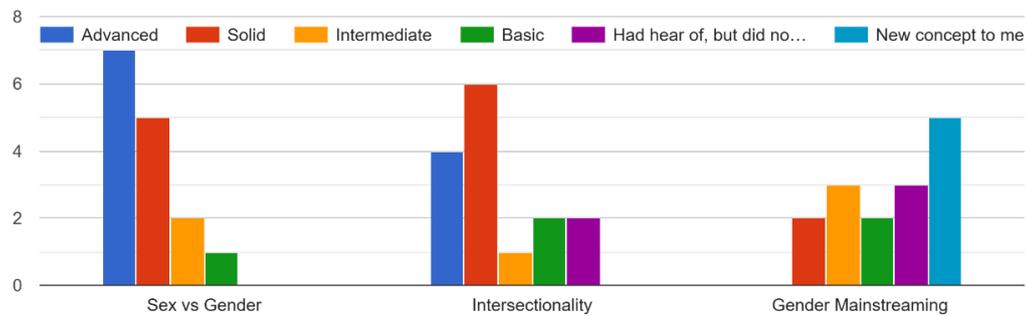


Figure 17 Participants' Understanding of Key Concepts Before the Training Session

How would you describe your understanding of the key concepts discussed during this training session after the training session?

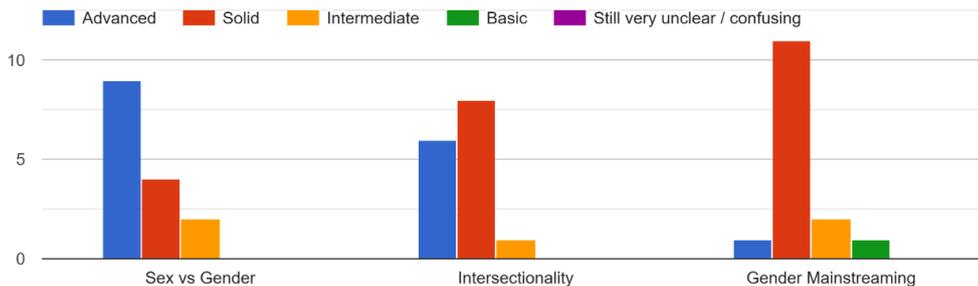


Figure 18 Participants' Understanding of Key Concepts After the Training Session

Before the session, most participants reported solid or advanced knowledge of *sex vs gender*, while *intersectionality* was largely marked as basic or new, and *gender mainstreaming* was the least familiar. After the session, reported understanding improved: participants rated themselves as mostly solid or advanced for all three concepts, with no one selecting “new” or “unclear.” These results suggest that the training was effective in strengthening participants’ conceptual foundation.

In addition to assessing conceptual knowledge, participants were asked to evaluate their confidence in applying the key concepts to their work. This distinction was important, as understanding

a concept does not necessarily translate into the ability to apply it in practice. Measuring confidence therefore provided a complementary perspective: while the first question captured participants’ theoretical grasp of the terms, this second one assessed their readiness to integrate them into project management and daily operations. (see Figures 19 and 20 for pre- and post-training confidence levels).

How confident did you feel about applying these concepts in your work at the Lisbon Project before this training session?

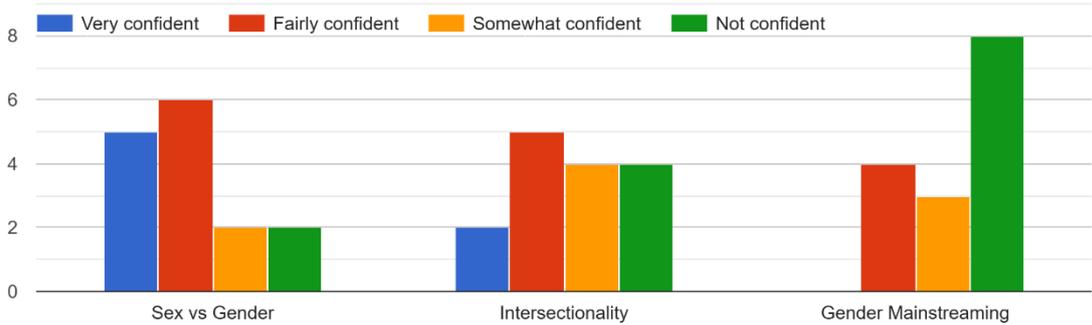


Figure 19 Participants’ Confidence in Applying Concepts Before the Training Session

How confident did you feel about applying these concepts in your work at the Lisbon Project after this training session?

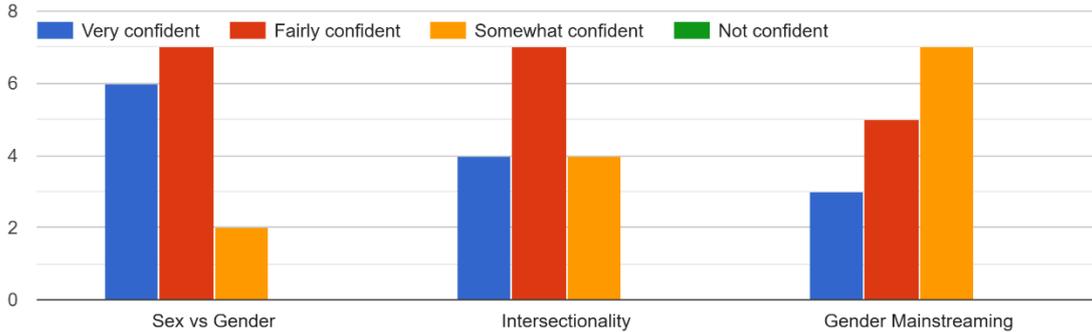


Figure 20 Participants’ Confidence in Applying Concepts After the Training Session

Before the training, confidence levels were highest for *sex vs gender*, more varied for *intersectionality*, and lowest for *gender mainstreaming*. After the training, confidence rose across all three areas, with notable improvements particularly in *sex vs gender* and *intersectionality*. In the case of *gender mainstreaming*, results also showed clear progress, no participants remained in the “not confident” category, yet overall confidence levels remained more modest: most respondents

described themselves as somewhat or fairly confident, and only a small number identified as very confident. These findings indicate that the workshop successfully increased participants’ confidence in applying the concepts, but also suggest that in certain areas, particularly gender mainstreaming, further reinforcement beyond a single training session will be necessary.

**Section 2 - The Project Cycle and Gender Mainstreaming Methods and Tools**

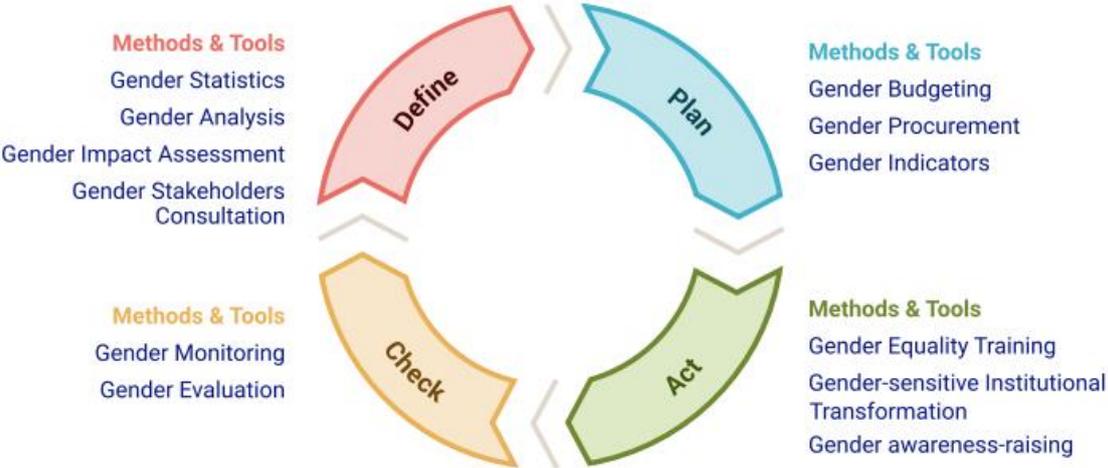


Figure 21 Gender Mainstreaming Methods and Tools for Each Stage of the Policy/Programming Cycle

Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), 2016.

The second component of the workshop focused on the presentation and practical application of gender mainstreaming tools that can be integrated into each phase of the project cycle (see Figure 21). The session began with an expository segment in which the main tools were introduced and illustrated with concrete examples. This presentation also served to connect with and respond to questions that had emerged during the Mid-Retreat, particularly the recurring concern of “when to organize mixed gender activities and when to design targeted actions.”

To address this question, facilitator emphasized that the starting point must always be a gender analysis. By conducting a gender analysis, staff are able to identify the specific needs, expectations, and constraints of different migrant groups, taking into account factors such as cultural norms, family roles, or language access (EIGE, 2019). For example, an analysis may show that many women are unable to participate in mixed activities because of childcare responsibilities. This insight can guide intentional decisions, such as providing caregiving volunteers during Portuguese classes or organizing women-only spaces where participants feel safer and more represented.

Complementary to this, facilitators introduced the use of a gender impact assessment. This tool enables staff to evaluate the effect of specific activities or events, identifying who might benefit and who could be unintentionally excluded (EIGE, 2017). For example, assessing the impact of a mixed employability workshop may reveal that women’s participation remains significantly lower than men’s. With this information, teams can adapt program design, whether through adjusted outreach strategies, additional support mechanisms, or changes in format, to ensure greater inclusivity.

Together, these two tools equip staff to make evidence-based decisions about when to design targeted initiatives and when to promote mixed activities, moving beyond assumptions and toward intentional, context-sensitive programming.

The introduction of these two tools proved particularly useful in addressing the team’s question about when to design mixed activities and when to opt for targeted actions. The feedback collected at the end of the session confirms this added clarity. As shown in *Figure 22*, an overwhelming majority of participants (93.3%) reported that they now clearly understood how to make the distinction and felt confident about when to apply each approach. Only a small minority (6.7%) indicated that they still felt uncertain about the distinction

Do you feel it is now clearer when and how to use gender mainstreaming tools to decide between designing a mixed activity or a targeted action (e.g., for women only)?

15 respuestas



Figure 22 Participants’ Understanding of When to Use Mixed vs. Targeted Activities (Post-Training)

**Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Example**

Within the presentation of gender mainstreaming tools, an example of the PM&E method previously implemented in the Portuguese class for women was introduced. The purpose was to illustrate the benefits of using participatory tools to collect authentic feedback from beneficiaries, which can then be integrated into program design and evaluation.

The objective of presenting this example was to encourage the organisation to incorporate participatory methods into its monitoring and evaluation practices. The activity generated valuable insights related to belonging, safety, social connections, language barriers, and the specific challenges faced by women in accessing other organisational activities, dimensions that are often difficult to capture through conventional feedback forms. From the perspective of the Gender Training, this example demonstrated the advantages of participatory monitoring and evaluation tools: they are simple and cost-effective, produce feedback that is both genuine and grounded in lived experience, and can be flexibly adapted to different programmatic contexts within the Lisbon Project.

At the end of the session, participants were asked whether they would like to use, or were already using, any participatory monitoring and evaluation tools similar to the card-based activity presented (see Figure 23). The responses revealed strong interest in adopting these approaches: 40% indicated that they were not yet using them but planned to implement something similar in their program or team; 33.3% expressed interest but noted they would require additional support or examples; and 13.3% were unsure whether such methods could be applied to their current work. Finally, 13.3% reported already making use of similar participatory tools.

Would you like to use (or are you already using) any participatory monitoring and evaluation tool like the one we presented today (the cards activity)?  
15 respuestas

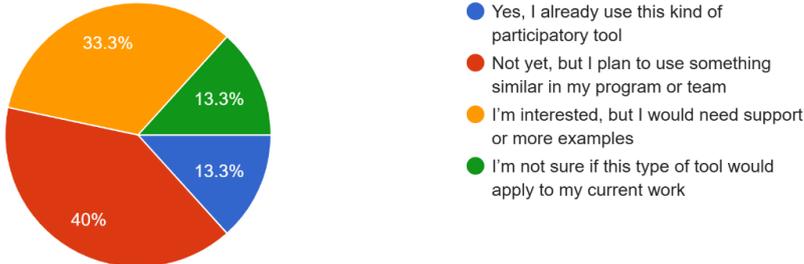


Figure 23 Participants' Interest in Using Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

These results reflect strong interest in participatory approaches, yet also signal a need for continued guidance and practical support to enable their integration. While the training introduced a simple and adaptable format, many participants may require further exposure to participatory methodologies, peer examples, or institutional encouragement to adopt them meaningfully in their teams.

**Section 3 – Applying Gender Mainstreaming Tools: Practical Exercise**

The final component of the workshop was designed as a practical group exercise in which participants were asked to apply the gender mainstreaming tools presented to the Lisbon Project’s own planning and evaluation cycle. The purpose of this exercise was to move beyond conceptual discussion and provide staff with a hands-on opportunity to reflect on how these tools could be integrated into the organisation’s existing processes.

Participants were divided according to their program teams (e.g., Education, Employability, Social Care) and each group was provided with a blank project cycle template (see Figure 24).

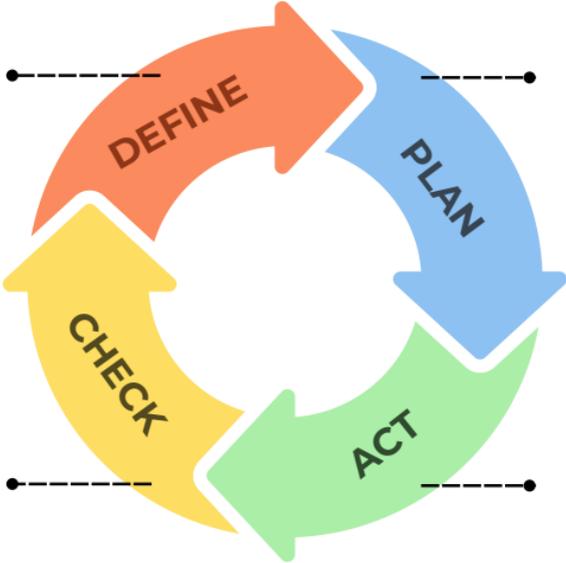


Figure 24 Project Cycle Template

**Step 1 – Identifying planning and evaluation moments.**

The first step was to identify the planning and evaluation moments already established within the Lisbon Project, such as the *Annual Planning*, the *Quarterly OKRs*, the *Mid-Retreat*, the *Quarterly Reports*, and the *Annual Report*, where gender considerations could be systematically incorporated. (see Figure 25).

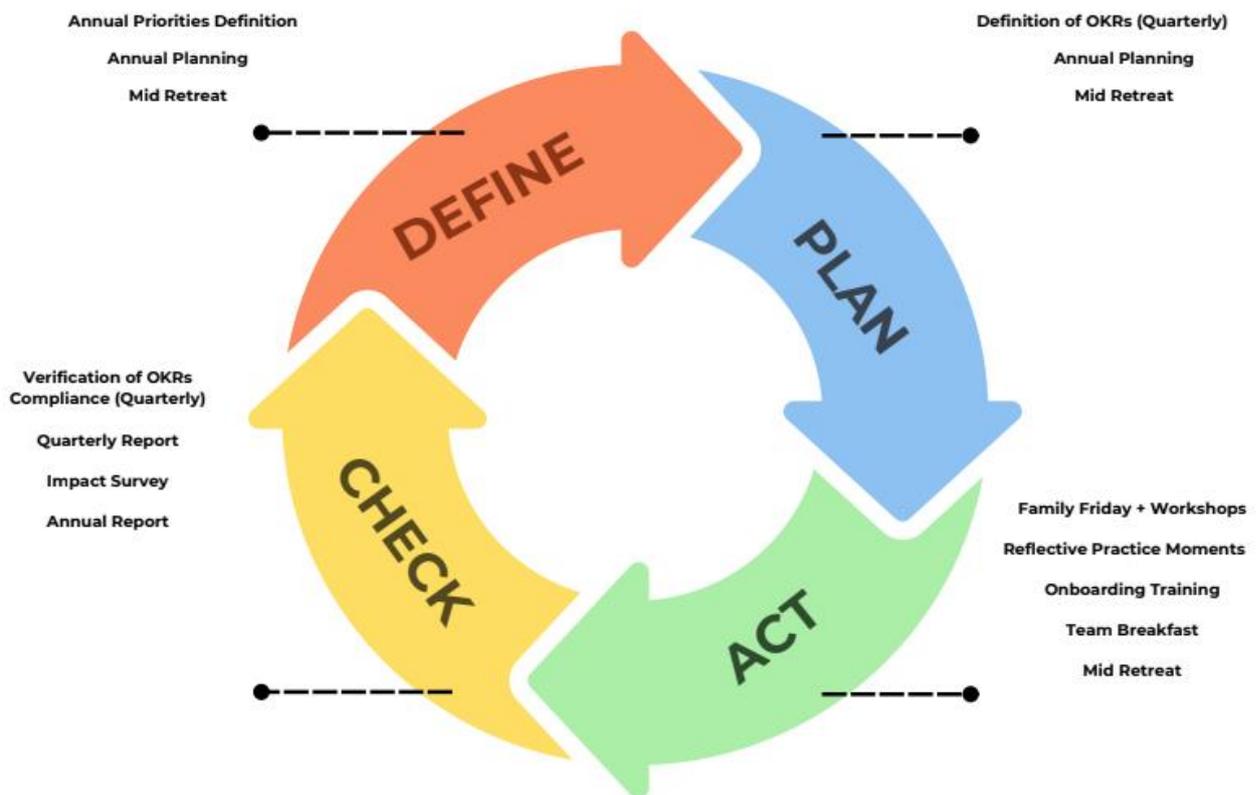


Figure 25 Illustration of Step One in the Activity

## Step 2 – Placing the tools.

Once these key opportunities were mapped, the second step required each team to place the gender mainstreaming tools onto the project cycle, deciding at which moments each tool would be most useful. To deepen the reflection, participants were asked to assign a color code to each tool according to the perceived difficulty of implementation:

- **Green:** Easy to apply — could be implemented immediately.
- **Yellow:** Requires support or adjustments but is viable.
- **Red:** Difficult to apply at present, but desirable in the future.

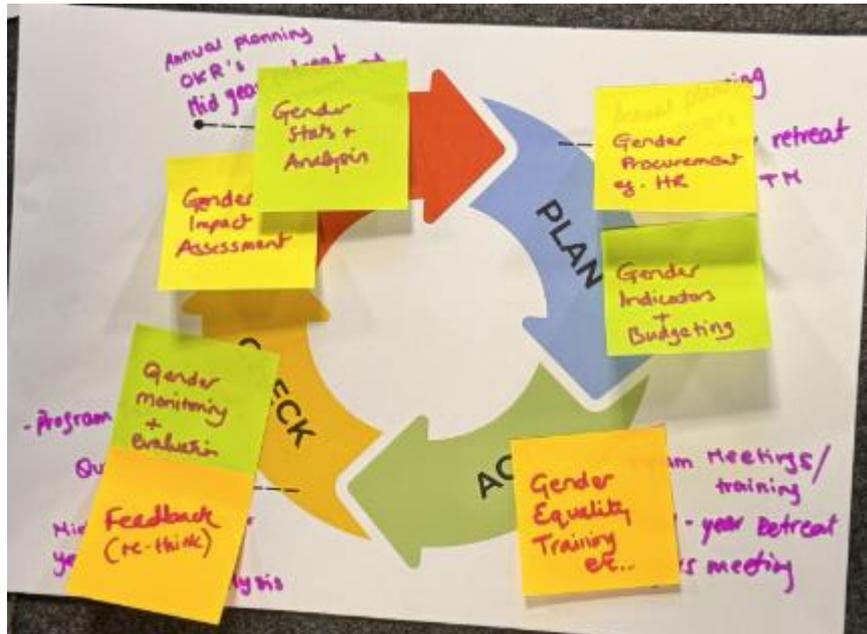


Figure 26 Final Result of the Mapping Activity (Employability Programme)

### Step 3 – Commitments

Finally, each group wrote their commitments on a Commitments Card (see Figure 27), specifying the chosen tool, the moment during the year when they would test it, and the resources or support needed to get started. This step created a sense of accountability and linked the use of gender mainstreaming tools directly to concrete organisational practices.

#### Commitment Implementation

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

##### Tool to Implement Now:

- Tool Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reason for Choice: \_\_\_\_\_
- Expected Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_
- When during the year will you implement it? \_\_\_\_\_
- What would you need to get started? \_\_\_\_\_

##### Tool to Implement in the Future:

- Tool Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reason for Choice: \_\_\_\_\_
- Expected Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_
- When during the year will you implement it? \_\_\_\_\_
- What would you need to get started? \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 27 Commitments Card Template

In order to assess the impact of the exercise, participants were asked to evaluate their level of confidence in applying the gender mainstreaming tools introduced during the session, both before and after the training (see Figures 28 and 29 for a comparison of pre- and post-training ability to apply the tools)

How would you describe your ability to apply the gender mainstreaming tools presented in this training within your work at the Lisbon Project before the training session?

15 respuestas

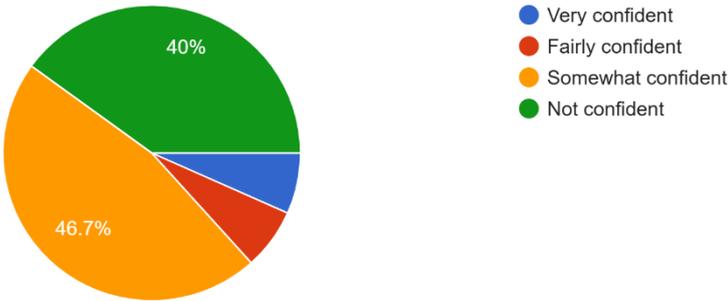


Figure 28 Participants' Confidence in Applying Gender Mainstreaming Tools Before the Training Session

How would you describe your ability to apply the gender mainstreaming tools presented in this training within your work at the Lisbon Project after the training session?

15 respuestas

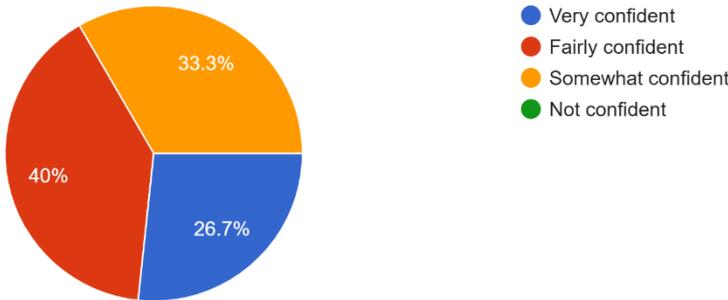


Figure 29 Participants' Confidence in Applying Gender Mainstreaming Tools After the Training Session

Before the session, confidence levels were generally low. Over half of the participants (46.7%) reported feeling only *somewhat confident*, and more than a third (40%) stated that they were *not*

*confident at all*. Only one participant described themselves as *fairly confident*, and another selected *very confident*.

After the training, confidence levels improved but remained moderate. Nearly half of respondents (40%) described themselves as *fairly confident*, while 26.7% reported feeling *very confident*. A proportion of 33.3% still felt only *somewhat confident*, and importantly, no participants identified as *not confident*.

These results demonstrate a positive shift in participants perceived ability to apply the tools, particularly among those who initially lacked confidence. The disappearance of the *not confident* category is a meaningful indicator of progress. At the same time, the relatively high proportion of participants who continued to feel only *somewhat confident* suggests that applying gender mainstreaming tools is still perceived as complex or unfamiliar.

This underscores a gap between conceptual understanding and practical readiness. While the workshop succeeded in introducing the tools and motivating participants to use them, ongoing support, such as technical guidance, peer exchanges, and leadership reinforcement, will be essential to ensure long-term adoption and consistent application across teams. The fact that no one reported high confidence before the training and only a minority reached this level afterward highlights the importance of embedding gender mainstreaming as a continuous organisational process rather than a one-off intervention.

### **Satisfaction with the Training Session**

When asked whether the session met their expectations, 61.5% of participants responded “*Yes, fully*”, while 38.5% answered “*Yes, partially*”. No respondents selected “*No, not really*”. These results indicate a generally positive assessment of the training, with most participants reporting that their expectations were fully met and others noting partial alignment. Written suggestions highlighted the need for additional time to engage with the concepts and tools in greater depth, and one participant recommended that the practical exercise be introduced with an example, even if drawn from another organisation.

With regard to facilitation, 84.6% of participants rated it as *very effective* and 15.4% as *somewhat effective*, with no respondents selecting *ineffective*. Feedback in this area was constructive and focused on improving clarity and application. Comments included suggestions such as providing a clearer breakdown of best practices and offering concrete examples to illustrate how the tools could be implemented. These inputs suggest that while facilitation was positively evaluated, future sessions

could benefit from adjustments that allow for greater clarity, contextualization, and time for structured discussion.

### **General Reflections on the Session**

The Gender Training constituted an important first step in positioning gender as an explicit organisational concern within the Lisbon Project. This dimension was particularly relevant, as it provided an opportunity for staff, coordinators, and volunteers from different teams to reflect collectively on gender-related barriers and opportunities. The session thus represented a starting point for organisational alignment, with participants expressing willingness to integrate gender considerations into future planning, particularly in the definition of objectives and strategies.

The training highlighted both opportunities and challenges in introducing gender mainstreaming tools within the Lisbon Project. A key observation was that oral participation remained limited, especially when discussing the practical application of the tools. This hesitation mirrored participants' self-assessed confidence levels, which were low prior to the session and only moderately improved afterward. The group exercise further illustrated this dynamic. Because it had been designed on the assumption that participants were already familiar with the project cycle and planning instruments, uneven prior knowledge became a structural barrier. While longer-serving staff could draw on operational experience to engage with the task, newer members struggled to follow.

Despite these initial barriers, the final stage of the session, where teams completed commitment cards, generated more active participation. The act of specifying concrete tools, moments of application, and required resources created a sense of accountability and ownership. This indicates that introducing gender mainstreaming tools benefits from being linked to actionable commitments rather than presented solely at a conceptual level. The written outputs also demonstrated that participants were able to move from abstract discussion to program-specific intentions, which is a critical step for institutionalization.

From a facilitation perspective, the session revealed important lessons for future improvement. The assumption of prior knowledge about project management tools limited engagement for some participants, indicating the need to include guided examples before practical exercises. Equally, providing more time for clarification, developing visual templates, and allowing space for informal exchanges would support deeper learning. Follow-up sessions or check-ins were also identified as important, given the high volunteer and intern turnover within the Lisbon Project.

The training also surfaced broader organisational insights. While it strengthened participants’ conceptual understanding of gender, intersectionality, and gender mainstreaming, confidence in applying these tools remained moderate. This highlights the fact that such skills cannot be fully developed through a single training session. Rather, they require sustained accompaniment, repeated practice, and follow-up training opportunities that reinforce both knowledge and application over time. Participants’ own recommendations for more time, concrete examples, and continued support reflect the importance of conceiving gender mainstreaming as a progressive, iterative process that becomes embedded in organisational routines.

Informal comments shared after the session suggested that the training was not perceived as an isolated event, but rather as the beginning of a broader organisational process. One participant noted that one of the most valuable aspects was the opportunity to reflect on how to include a gender perspective in their programme and to discuss this with their team. This perception is significant, as it reflects an emerging shift toward recognising gender as an internal organisational concern rather than merely an external requirement. To sustain this momentum, it will be necessary to organize trainings on a periodic basis, create accessible resources tailored to different levels of prior knowledge, and establish follow-up mechanisms that facilitate the translation of concepts into practice. Only through continued reinforcement and institutional support can gender mainstreaming evolve from an initial awareness-building exercise into a consistent practice integrated into the Lisbon Project’s organisational culture.

**3.3.3 Analysis of the Results of the Pilot Activities**

The analysis of the pilot activities was conducted with reference to the project logframe, which outlined expected outputs, outcomes, and indicators. While all outputs were achieved and could be measured, the outcomes required longer-term observation and were therefore only partially assessed. The following table presents the indicators that were achieved during this project period.

*Table 4 Logframe: Achieved Results*

Level	Type	Expected Results	Indicators	Results Achieved
GO	Outcome	Gender is addressed as a strategic and practical concern in internal planning.	- Gender mentioned in at least one planning or evaluation document. - At least one action defined with a gender lens in the Lisbon Project’s Annual Planning process.	Not measurable within the timeframe of the project; requires long-term observation

	<b>Outcome</b>	The Lisbon Project uses migrant women's input to inform internal reflections and improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least one internal process or program is adjusted based on women's feedback.</li> <li>- Staff explicitly mention women's contributions in a team setting.</li> </ul>	Not measurable within the timeframe of the project; requires long-term observation
<b>SO1</b>	<b>Output</b>	Conduct at least two participatory monitoring and evaluation activities using observation methods to document how gender shapes migrant women's participation in Lisbon Project activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and type of activities observed.</li> <li>- Variety of participation patterns observed among migrant women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two activities were observed.</li> <li>- Different participation patterns were identified among migrant women</li> </ul>
	<b>Outcome</b>	The Lisbon Project integrates gender-sensitive and participatory M&E approaches into its program evaluation processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of program evaluation processes that apply at least one gender-sensitive or participatory M&amp;E tool.</li> <li>- Staff report learning or reflection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not measurable within the timeframe of the project.</li> <li>- 86.6% of staff reported learning or reflection.</li> </ul>
<b>SO2</b>	<b>Output</b>	Deliver a 2-hour participatory gender training using real LP examples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training conducted.</li> <li>- At least 75% of invited participants attended the full session.</li> <li>- 60% of participants are satisfied with the quality of the training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training was conducted.</li> <li>- 80% of invited participants attended the full session.</li> <li>- 86.7% of participants are satisfied with the quality of the training.</li> </ul>
	<b>Outcome</b>	Staff develop greater clarity and intention to apply a gender lens in their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ≥70% of participants report improved clarity or confidence in gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>- At least 2 programs express concrete intentions to apply gender mainstreaming tools in upcoming activities or planning cycles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 73.3% of participants report improved clarity or confidence in gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>- 4 programs express concrete intentions to apply gender mainstreaming tools in upcoming activities or planning cycles.</li> </ul>

	<b>Outcome</b>	The Lisbon Project strengthens its ability to identify and reflect on how its activities affect migrant women differently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender is explicitly used as a criterion in at least one future planning or evaluation moment (e.g. annual planning).</li> <li>- Participants report increased confidence in applying a gender lens within their roles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not measurable within the timeframe of the project.</li> <li>- 66.7% Participants report increased confidence in applying a gender lens within their roles.</li> </ul>
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**General Objective:** The overall objective cannot be measured within the timeframe of this project, as the expected outcomes refer to long-term change. Assessing these changes would require the analysis of subsequent planning cycles that extend beyond the project’s duration. Therefore, the achievement of the general objective remains a long-term goal for the organisation to address and monitor after the project’s completion.

Nevertheless, the pilot activities generated encouraging signals that point in the right direction. Staff demonstrated greater conceptual clarity, multiple programs expressed concrete commitments to integrate gender tools, and participatory methods proved effective in capturing women’s perspectives. Informal conversations further suggested that gender is increasingly perceived as an internally relevant concern with practical implications for programme quality and equity. Moreover, the organisation expressed the intention to begin incorporating gender mainstreaming tools into its upcoming annual planning, signalling a commitment to move from reflection toward more structured and operational practices.

From this perspective, the progress observed in staff learning, program commitments, and organisational openness creates a favorable foundation for gender to be consolidated as a strategic criterion in future planning cycles. If sustained through continued training, follow-up, and leadership engagement, the Lisbon Project has the potential to move from initial awareness to systematic practice, fulfilling the long-term vision outlined in the logframe.

**Specific Objective 1:** With regard to what could be measured, all planned outputs were successfully delivered. At the level of outcomes, partial progress could be observed. The indicator *“Staff report learning or reflection”* was met, since staff highlighted in the feedback forms and discussions that they had learned from the participatory monitoring experience and recognized its potential value.

However, the indicator *“Number of program evaluation processes that apply at least one gender-sensitive or participatory M&E tool”* could not be assessed within the timeframe of the pilot. A positive

finding, nonetheless, was that through the feedback collected during the Gender Training, most program teams expressed a clear interest in applying such tools in the future. This represents an encouraging signal of organisational openness and willingness to engage with gender-sensitive monitoring practices. Still, given the limited duration of this project, it was not possible to measure whether this interest would translate into concrete application in practice.

**Specific Objective 2:** With regard to the outputs, this objective was fully achieved. At the outcome level, progress was more nuanced. The feedback showed an improvement in both theoretical and practical understanding of gender mainstreaming, with participants reporting higher levels of confidence compared to before the training. Nevertheless, some staff, particularly newer members, still indicated the need for further training and support to feel fully prepared for practical application. Given that one of the most relevant aspects of this outcome is the ability to translate knowledge into the effective use of tools, it is clear that sustained capacity-building will be necessary to consolidate results and ensure that gender mainstreaming becomes embedded in everyday practices.

A positive finding was that the indicator *“At least two programs express concrete intentions to apply gender mainstreaming tools”* was surpassed, with four programs doing so during the commitment exercise. This demonstrated strong ownership of the process and institutional willingness to apply the tools in planning cycles.

Regarding the second outcome progress could only be partially assessed. The indicator requiring gender to be explicitly used in a future planning or evaluation process could not be measured within the timeframe of the pilot. However, the second indicator *“participants reporting increased confidence in applying a gender lens”* was clearly achieved, as reflected in the post-training feedback.

## **Chapter 4 – Recommendations and Prospects for the Future**

This chapter presents a set of reflections and recommendations that emerged throughout the development of the project. It begins with a critical assessment of the project itself, identifying its strengths alongside its limitations, areas for improvement, and alternative pathways that could have been pursued. It then turns to the general recommendations for the Lisbon Project, distinguishing between those aimed at immediate changes and those requiring a longer-term perspective. Finally, the chapter closes with my personal reflections, highlighting the learning and insights gained during the process and situating them within my academic and professional journey.

### **Reflections on the Project**

One of the key lessons learned from this project is the importance of having an established relationship with the organisation before implementing gender mainstreaming initiatives. The trust already built with the Lisbon Project was a decisive factor in enabling open dialogue, candid interviews, and the participatory engagement necessary for activities such as the gender training and PM&E pilots. In this regard, the fact that I had previously undertaken an internship with the organisation facilitated the process in significant ways. This prior experience made it possible to adapt the diagnostic framework to the specific tools, practices, and rhythms of the Lisbon Project, rather than imposing external standards that might have appeared disconnected or unrealistic. This was explicitly recognized by the organisation itself during the mid-year retreat, where staff expressed appreciation for seeing the diagnostic and presentation of the results translated into their own instruments, planning processes, and activities.

This prior connection facilitated interaction with both staff and beneficiaries. This experience underlines the value of sensitivity and continuity in evaluation processes, suggesting that organisations may benefit from approaches that combine external expertise with internal familiarity. In fact, as previously discussed, evaluations of this nature are most effective when evaluators are familiar with the organisation's context and dynamics, ensuring trust and relevance. At the same time, external input can add perspective and credibility. Achieving a balance between internal familiarity and external input is therefore essential for evaluations that seek not only to generate data but also to foster meaningful dialogue and institutional learning.

Among the most relevant results identified through this gender assessment is the process itself, which fostered an unprecedented space for structured dialogue on gender within the organisation. Through interviews, participatory activities, and collective reflection, the project brought to the Lisbon Project a deeper level of reflection on the inclusion of a gender perspective. It allowed the organisation

to recognize internal needs in areas that had not previously been considered, a shift that became evident in the interviews and conversations with staff, where participants seemed to demonstrate greater critical analysis of issues they had not reflected upon before. This dynamic also created space for questions to emerge and be openly discussed, enabling staff and volunteers to articulate both challenges and opportunities.

The project also enabled the Lisbon Project to position itself with greater clarity in relation to gender mainstreaming. By identifying areas of strength and weakness, the organisation gained the capacity to establish a baseline from which future progress can be measured. This step was essential: without first defining where the organisation stands, it would be very difficult to determine which pathways to follow or where to concentrate resources and attention. In practice, this meant that the Lisbon Project could move from a more general and aspirational discourse on gender equity to a more evidence-based and strategic understanding of its internal dynamics. The diagnostic process revealed the existing gaps and barriers but also good practices and entry points that can be scaled up.

For example, certain programs already demonstrated a stronger gender focus in their activities, showing readiness to integrate gender-sensitive approaches. By contrast, other areas revealed more challenges, such as limited technical knowledge, high staff and volunteer turnover, or resource constraints, that made it more difficult to ensure consistency or to engage in deeper reflection. Notably, the programs that had a stronger gender orientation tended to be those with lower turnover rates, particularly at the coordinator level, where staff had remained for two to three years. This continuity provided greater stability, institutional memory, and the possibility of gradually embedding new practices, in contrast to programs more affected by frequent rotation, where learning processes were repeatedly interrupted.

Beyond this, one of the most valuable outcomes was that the project prompted the organisation to reflect critically on its methods for collecting feedback. By presenting the results and benefits of participatory monitoring and evaluation the project illustrated how alternative approaches can generate insights that are often missed through conventional forms or surveys. The organisation's openness to engage with these examples signals an important shift. It shows a willingness to move beyond compliance-driven practices and to experiment with tools that capture the lived experiences of beneficiaries more authentically.

One of the central conditions for achieving the integration of a gender perspective in any organisation is its openness and genuine commitment to this agenda. The Lisbon Project has demonstrated such openness, showing itself increasingly willing to engage with gender discussions and

to experiment with new practices. This project marked the beginning of a gender mainstreaming process within the organisation which, although still at an early stage, is clearly intended to continue. In informal conversations with the organisation, the possibility was also raised that I could provide support in future planning cycles to help strengthen and consolidate this work. I also expressed my interest in continuing to contribute, as this project aligns closely with both my professional and personal perspective on advancing gender equality, particularly at the intersection with migration.

### **Limitations Encountered**

The project also revealed a set of structural and organisational limitations that shaped the extent of the results achieved and highlight important considerations for future interventions. A first limitation was temporal: the short duration of the initiative enabled the development and testing of pilot activities, but did not provide sufficient scope to observe the consolidation of practices over time. Outcomes such as the systematic incorporation of gender-sensitive tools into planning and evaluation cycles are, by nature, medium- and long-term processes, and therefore could not be fully assessed within the timeframe of this project.

The openness demonstrated by the Lisbon Project throughout the process is a highly positive signal, but it cannot be assumed that this willingness alone will translate into lasting organisational change. Long-term implementation would be necessary to identify more clearly the challenges the organisation will face in embedding gender mainstreaming in practice. Moreover, organisational change of this kind requires sustained accompaniment, both technical and institutional, and an understanding that results are not immediate but rather the product of gradual consolidation over time.

Another limitation related to time was the implementation of only one gender training session. Although the two-hour training opened the door to new knowledge, as evidenced by the feedback form results, it was clearly not sufficient to ensure a deeper understanding of how to apply gender mainstreaming tools. The feedback also highlighted this gap, showing that while participants gained awareness, they still needed more practical guidance and continued capacity-building to effectively integrate these tools into their work.

A further limitation emerged from the heterogeneity of participants' prior knowledge. While some staff and coordinators displayed familiarity with gender-related concepts and project management tools, others, lacked this background. This unevenness created asymmetries in engagement: those with more experience were able to contribute actively, while others struggled to translate abstract notions into practice. This became most evident during the practical group exercise on applying tools,

which assumed a level of familiarity with the project cycle that not all participants possessed. As a result, some groups advanced more fluidly, while others required additional clarification to proceed.

Finally, high staff turnover also limited the training's impact. For instance, some of the staff members I interviewed in March, such as one manager and one coordinator, had already completed their internships by July, when the gender training was implemented, leaving vacancies in those positions. This situation is thought to be directly linked to the barrier of uneven levels of knowledge, since the new interns were still in the process of adapting to the organization and its working tools.<sup>19</sup>

An additional limitation was observed in the pilot activities on PM&E. Only two examples were tested: one relatively limited in participation and another more dynamic and engaging. Although both were valuable as initial attempts, their reach was necessarily restricted. The more participatory example proved especially effective in generating authentic insights, but its success was closely linked to the specific context of the class, where participants had regular attendance and a sense of group cohesion.

By contrast, programs such as Employability, which are organized mainly around workshops with fluctuating participation, do not create the same conditions of continuity or trust required to implement PM&E tools of this kind. This highlights the need for future interventions to adapt participatory monitoring approaches to the dynamics of each program rather than applying them uniformly. Testing a broader variety of tools in diverse contexts would allow the organisation to better understand their potential and limitations, and, in turn, to build a stronger and more systematic foundation for organisational learning.

### **Learning Throughout the Process and Potential Adjustments**

In retrospect, an important adjustment would have been to assess participants' levels of knowledge prior to the training. The session had been designed under the assumption that staff working in project management or planning roles would already be familiar with the project cycle and its instruments. However, this proved inaccurate, as knowledge levels were far more uneven than expected. This mismatch highlights the importance of conducting prior training needs assessments, in order to tailor facilitation strategies and ensure that activities are accessible to participants with diverse backgrounds and levels of experience. It is also important to note that these challenges are closely linked to the organisation's high turnover.

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<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that this did not affect the overall course of the gender training; however, some programmes are likely to benefit more than others, underscoring the need for continued capacity-building efforts.

The decision to implement a gender training as the central activity was considered appropriate, especially given the limited timeframe of the project. However, the process also revealed possible alternatives that might have been pursued. For example, after the training, participants expressed both doubts and a desire for further clarification, suggesting that follow-up sessions with individual program teams would have been highly beneficial. Such sessions could have allowed staff to explore the tools in greater depth within the context of their own activities, reinforcing learning through practice.

Another possible approach would have been to begin with program-level meetings, in which gender mainstreaming tools were introduced in a more tailored way to each team, and only later organize a broader training session to consolidate knowledge collectively. While individual interviews with managers were carried out, these were more diagnostic in nature and did not replace the potential value of group sessions focused on practical application. This alternative path would have required more time and resources, but it could have strengthened the integration of gender-sensitive practices at the programmatic level and enhanced the sustainability of the process.

In this sense, holding individual meetings with each program team would also have created an opportunity to analyze more concretely the possibilities available to each group for adapting or using PM&E tools. Such discussions would have made it possible to link these tools directly to the dynamics of each program, identifying where they could be most useful and how they might be realistically implemented. Rather than treating PM&E as an isolated exercise, this approach would have encouraged teams to see these tools as part of their own planning and reflection practices, reinforcing both ownership and continuity.

It is important to acknowledge that this project has largely adopted a binary gender perspective, focusing on women and men. This limitation reflects the organizational context and its stage in approaching gender mainstreaming. During my internship, issues of diversity were occasionally raised; however, the organization decided not to pursue them in depth, given its understanding that many of its beneficiaries hold more conservative views. Considering this context, and the fact that gender mainstreaming is not yet fully embedded in the organization, integrating broader notions of gender diversity at this stage could have added further complexity and challenges.

Nevertheless, this does not diminish the relevance of the topic. On the contrary, it highlights the need for the organization, as it consolidates its gender approach, to gradually integrate more diverse perspectives, including those related to sexual orientation and gender identity. This was also mentioned during the gender training, where key concepts such as sex and gender were discussed, and intersectionality was introduced as a way to reflect on the multiple dimensions that intersect with

and shape experiences of migration. Future interventions could build on this foundation, ensuring that gender mainstreaming efforts evolve to include a more diverse and inclusive understanding of gender.

### Recommendations for the Organisation

A detailed set of recommendations was delivered directly to the Lisbon Project as part of this project. In this section, only a general overview is presented, in order to preserve the organisation’s privacy while still offering an outline of the main strategic directions identified. The recommendations were organized along three-time horizons, short, medium, and long term, reflecting the need to start with feasible entry points, move toward consolidation, and ultimately ensure institutionalization of gender mainstreaming.

The visual map (Figure 30) illustrates that gender mainstreaming is a gradual process built on solid foundations<sup>20</sup>. The first months focus on data collection, indicators, and initial training; the following stage introduces monitoring, evaluation, and awareness-raising; and, in the longer term, gender analysis and institutional transformation are consolidated. This progression ensures that gender mainstreaming evolves from isolated actions into a structured and cyclical process of organisational learning.

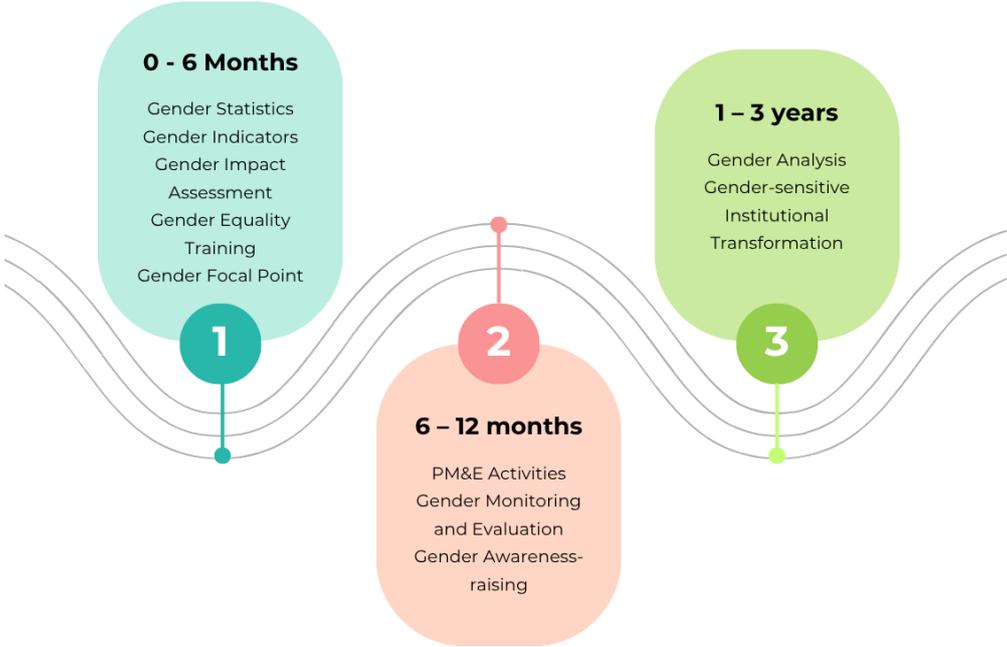


Figure 30 Roadmap for the Progressive Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming Tools

<sup>20</sup> Some gender mainstreaming tools were not included at this stage, considering the current limitations of the organization (for example, gender budgeting). The tools presented were selected as those most feasible at this moment, which does not mean that others cannot be integrated in the future as the organization develops greater capacity and resources.

**In the short term (0–6 months)**, the priority is to embed gender-sensitive measures into existing organisational processes, particularly the upcoming planning cycle. Immediate actions include strengthening data collection practices through the systematic use of sex-disaggregated information, the introduction of basic gender indicators in results frameworks, and the piloting of tools such as gender impact assessments. The short-term measures also emphasize the importance of building internal capacity, for instance by integrating a basic gender module into onboarding processes and designating internal focal points to support teams. This can be achieved by drawing on staff members who already possess gender-related expertise and have expressed interest in supporting the organisation in integrating a gender perspective, thereby ensuring that the process remains rooted in internal resources rather than relying exclusively on external actors. These steps are not intended as isolated activities, but as practical foundations that secure the retention of knowledge despite turnover and that begin to embed gender considerations systematically into everyday organisational practices.

**In the medium term (6–12 months)**, the challenge is to consolidate what began as initial practices into organisational routines that endure beyond individual efforts. This involves ensuring that gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data are not only collected, but also analyzed and systematically included in programmatic and organisational reports. Writing reports through a gender lens is particularly important, as it transforms everyday documentation into a tool for accountability and reflection, making visible the differentiated experiences of women, men, and other groups within the Lisbon Project's programs.

At the same time, participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) approaches should be tested and adapted to different program dynamics, moving beyond the pilot experiences to establish practices that can generate evidence across diverse contexts. Integrating these tools into quarterly evaluations and mid-retreats would allow teams to track progress, identify gaps, and propose corrective measures in a more systematic manner. A semi-annual gender review could serve as a collective moment for programs to consolidate learning, document practices, and build institutional memory.

**In the long term (1 – 3 years)**, the main priority is to consolidate the progress made and ensure that gender mainstreaming becomes a stable and systematic practice within the Lisbon Project. A central step will be to conduct a comprehensive gender analysis using the data and indicators collected consistently over at least one year. This analysis will allow the organisation to move beyond preliminary insights and provide robust evidence on how different groups of beneficiaries experience its programs.

Such an evidence base would allow the organisation to guide the refinement of existing practices and support the identification of structural barriers that may not be visible in the short term. Once these patterns are better established, the organisation will be in a stronger position to decide where to allocate resources most effectively, adapt programs and activities in response to differentiated needs, and strengthen partnerships with external actors that can help address identified gaps.

At this stage, the Lisbon Project will also benefit from investing in continuous gender training for staff and volunteers. By moving beyond introductory sessions and offering advanced learning opportunities, the organisation can progressively build capacity to engage with more complex issues. With a solid baseline of data and experience, teams will be able to explore deeper analyses, particularly on the intersections of gender and migration. This could include examining how stereotypes, cultural expectations, and systemic barriers affect migrant women differently, as well as identifying strategies to mitigate these challenges in program design and advocacy.

Long-term consolidation should involve embedding gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in the organisation's external communications and campaigns. By positioning gender equality not only as an internal concern but also as part of its public voice, the Lisbon Project can reinforce its commitment, mobilize broader awareness, and align its advocacy with its programmatic practices.

It is important to emphasize that the recommendations outlined here are not intended as an endpoint but rather as the beginning of a longer organisational process. This project marked an initial step in opening structured conversations on gender within the Lisbon Project and in introducing tools that can gradually transform practices. The implementation of these recommendations will require time, continuity, and adaptation to the organisation's evolving realities. What is most relevant at this stage is that the foundations have been laid: the organisation has expressed openness, interest, and commitment to advancing gender equality. Building on this momentum, future work should focus on consolidating these first advances, deepening the use of tools across all programs, and progressively embedding gender mainstreaming as a defining feature of the Lisbon Project's institutional culture.

### **Reflections from Coursework and Experience**

During the Master's in Development Studies, the Project Management course coincided with my internship at the Lisbon Project. This parallel experience was particularly valuable, as it combined theoretical learning with practical application in a real organisational setting. It also reinforced my interest in exploring project design and implementation more deeply, providing an opportunity to apply tools and concepts from the course to the everyday challenges of a grassroots organisation.

This experience was fundamental in shaping the idea of this project. It was from this intersection of academic learning and professional practice that my motivation emerged to further strengthen my knowledge in project management. Developing this work has reinforced my understanding of key areas such as project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, while also allowing me to practice critical analysis of future perspectives for the project. In this sense, the process contributed to my academic training but also prepared me to engage more effectively with the practical demands of development work.

Equally relevant were other courses taken during the Master's programme, such as those addressing globalization and the challenges of development, civil society and social movements, and humanitarian action with vulnerable groups. These subjects expanded my perspective and enabled me to link different dimensions of development, from structural global processes to grassroots forms of collective action. They provided a broader analytical framework to situate the case of the Lisbon Project within wider debates on development, migration, and social justice. In fact, these courses helped me to ground theoretical debates in practical realities and to approach my project with a more critical and holistic lens.

In parallel, my own experience as a migrant has been particularly significant in shaping this project. Facing the challenges of integration in a new country allowed me to relate personally to much of the literature used for this project, where I often saw my own circumstances reflected. This lived experience strengthened my motivation to pursue the project, as I could recognize in both the academic readings and the practical PM&E activities many of the barriers and dynamics I have encountered in everyday life. It therefore gave me not only an academic interest but also a personal commitment to contributing to work that addresses the intersection of gender and migration, with the aim of reducing inequalities among these vulnerable groups and promoting their integration and overall quality of life.

## Concluding Remarks

This project represents the final work for the Master's in Development Studies, carried out within the Lisbon Project, a third sector organisation working with migrants and refugees in Portugal. It consisted of a gender assessment of the organisation aimed at identifying good practices and challenges related to gender mainstreaming, while also piloting small interventions and developing recommendations to strengthen the organization's operations and improve the integration of its female beneficiaries. The project followed four main stages: analyzing the organisation's existing documents and policies, designing pilot activities, testing them in practice, and finally evaluating the results to extract lessons learned and propose future steps.

Rather than aiming to propose a universal or definitive model, the project was designed as a pilot intervention, testing practical tools, generating dialogue, and offering initial steps toward institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in organisational practices. The process was therefore exploratory and adaptive, intended to illuminate possibilities while acknowledging the structural constraints faced by small associations.

In Portugal, third-sector organisations are often the first point of contact for migrants and refugees, with roles primarily focused on integration, the provision of basic services, and capacity development, while the State assumes the central legal and administrative responsibilities. Despite the existence of a detailed and complex asylum law, the Portuguese State has not yet implemented structures that allow for a comprehensive reception process (Sousa et al., 2022).

In this context, the role of civil society becomes particularly relevant, as migration remains one of the key academic, political, and social debates in the country. The case of the Lisbon Project is especially interesting, since it operates as a grassroots organisation with close ties to its community and a flexible decision-making structure, while also experiencing rapid growth in recent years. Unlike many organisations dependent on government funding, which typically requires alignment with predefined agendas, the Lisbon Project relies largely on individual donors. This grants it greater autonomy to respond to the specific needs of its community, but it also means that the organisation is not necessarily compelled by donor pressure to adopt gender mainstreaming principles, as is the case for many other organisations.

The findings of this project confirm and expand upon broader debates on gender mainstreaming. One of the recurring challenges observed is the difficulty of translating policy frameworks into practice, particularly when organisations face limited resources and lack specialized technical knowledge (FRA, 2017). These constraints were clearly present in the Lisbon Project, which operates with limited

resources and applies a predominantly generalist approach to its activities, complemented by some specific initiatives targeted at women. However, the organisation does not yet have a cross-cutting gender mainstreaming strategy that systematically integrates gender considerations across all its structures and programmes.

The PM&E activities also brought to light debates that are widely discussed in the literature. Several women reported having experienced greater stability and quality of life in their countries of origin, while facing a decline in these conditions upon arrival in Portugal. This reflects dynamics of deskilling (Ruiz & Donato, 2025), as well as the multiple forms of discrimination that migrant women may encounter. At the same time, the exercise highlighted the importance of intersectionality, as not all women face the same barriers or types of discrimination. This is particularly relevant given that many organisations struggle to base their projects on evidence, often due to limited prior knowledge of migrants' lived experiences (Bach-Mortensen et al., 2018).

In the Portuguese case, third-sector organisations had little experience with migrant and refugee integration and largely had to learn through practice (Sousa et al., 2022), a process that continues today as migration patterns shift from predominantly Lusophone origins to arrivals from South Asia and other non-Lusophone countries with distinct cultural and religious backgrounds. This constant adaptation leaves organisations with little time or resources to engage with academic literature, even though such knowledge could be valuable. Nevertheless, activities like this provide insights that resonate with theoretical debates, but in a more organic way, grounded in lived experience, which in turn gives them added relevance and credibility.

Starting from the premise of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), and recognizing how gender intersects with migration status, language, and socioeconomic position in shaping opportunities and experiences in complex ways, the project underscored the need for the Lisbon Project to systematically apply an intersectionality lens across all its practices. The organisation works with highly diverse groups of migrants, many from non-Lusophone countries and varied cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. This diversity makes it essential for the Lisbon Project to acknowledge that some groups may face heightened vulnerabilities compared to others, and to adapt its approaches accordingly. These dynamics are particularly pronounced in the case of women, as highlighted in Chapter 1, where the intersection of gender with other structural factors amplifies inequalities and exposes them to distinct forms of exclusion.

For the Lisbon Project, the project enabled the organisation to clarify its position regarding gender mainstreaming, transforming dispersed and often informal practices into opportunities for structured

integration. The gender diagnostic provided a baseline, while the recommendations established a roadmap with short-, medium-, and long-term steps. Importantly, the process highlighted that gender-sensitive practices cannot depend solely on individual initiative or informal solutions; they must be institutionalized through indicators, planning tools, and internal policies to withstand the high turnover that characterizes much of the organisation's staff and volunteer base.

Rather than being understood solely as technical adjustments to procedures, gender mainstreaming must be rooted in practices that value dialogue, inclusion, and the lived experiences of those directly involved (Williams, Seed, & Mwau, 1994). In this sense, institutionalizing gender-sensitive approaches goes hand in hand with strengthening participatory mechanisms, ensuring that beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers alike contribute to shaping strategies that reflect real needs and lived realities. Such an approach helps to guarantee that gender mainstreaming is not reduced to compliance or rhetoric, but becomes a meaningful driver of organisational learning and long-term transformation.

By the end of this project the organisation appeared significantly more aware of these limitations and expressed openness and interest in adopting gender mainstreaming tools in a more structured way. This willingness represents a positive outcome in itself and offers encouraging prospects for the future implementation of gender-sensitive practices across the organisation's programmes and structures. The Lisbon Project's willingness to engage with these discussions and to begin testing tools represents a significant first step. The challenge ahead is to transform this initial openness into sustained organisational change. Long-term progress will depend on the organisation's ability to embed gender systematically into planning, monitoring, and evaluation systems, as well as into its broader institutional culture.

Beyond the Lisbon Project, this project also contributes a methodological framework and analytical approach that may serve as a useful reference for other small associations and grassroots organisations working with migrant and refugee populations in Portugal. The methodology combining diagnostic tools, participatory exercises, and program-level integration, demonstrates that gender mainstreaming is not reserved for large institutions with abundant resources. On the contrary, it can be meaningfully advanced in small, resource-constrained organisations, provided that tools are adapted to their specific realities, working cultures, and programmatic practices.

Adaptability is central: the matrix framework is not intended to be applied mechanically, but rather to provide a structured base that can be reinterpreted and contextualized by different organisations. In this sense, the project contributes not only to the Lisbon Project but also to the

broader field of TSOs in Portugal. By showing how locally grounded and flexible frameworks can foster organisational learning, it highlights pathways for embedding gender mainstreaming systematically even where resources are limited.

The case of the Lisbon Project illustrates the broader challenge third-sector organisations encounter in systematically integrating gender perspectives into their organisational structures and daily practices. While this process is often constrained by limited financial and human resources, their role as the first point of contact for migrants and refugees in Portugal makes it both a responsibility and an opportunity. Funders and the State also share this responsibility, ensuring that gender sensitivity is embedded into the initiatives they support. This project provides a small but meaningful demonstration that integrating gender mainstreaming into the practices and operations of organisations like the Lisbon Project is possible, provided there is a strategy that allows practices to be adapted to their specific context and available resources.

Ultimately, from a personal perspective, this project also represented a significant process of learning and growth. Engaging with the complexities of gender mainstreaming within a small, community-based organisation required me to move beyond theoretical debates and to confront the practical constraints, dilemmas, and opportunities that arise in everyday organisational life. This demanded flexibility, the ability to translate abstract frameworks into accessible tools, and a willingness to learn directly from the lived experiences of both staff and beneficiaries. In this sense, the project was not only an academic exercise but also a transformative journey that deepened my understanding of the intersection between research, activism, and practice.

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## Annexes

### Annex A – Ethics Committee Approval Letter



**SPECIALIZED ETHICS COMMITTEE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL ECONOMY  
REVIEW [final] 02/2025**

#### I – Identification

**Project number:** 02/2025

**Proponent identification:** Raiza Bianca Wanderley Mendoza

**Course:** Master in Development Studies

**Project title:** Integration of Migrant Women in the Activities of the Lisbon Project Association.

**Date of submission request:** 13-01-2025

**Date of review:** 31-01-2025

#### II – Analysis and Review

The information provided in the Submission Form and its respective attachments meets the ethical requirements for this type of research project. It includes:

- The research problem and relevance of the study;
- The objective(s) and research questions;
- The method, including the characterization of participants and the recruitment procedure;
- The submission of informed consent, the research protocol (e.g., interview guide), the debriefing document, and the questionnaire on personal data;
- The duly completed Declaration of Responsibility and Ethical Conduct.

#### III – Summary of review: concluding remarks and recommendations

Considering previous comments, **the Specialized Ethics Committee in Political Economy presents a positive review of this dissertation.**

Reviewer

  
Helena Maria de Sousa Lopes

Reviewer

  
João Luís Paiva da Silva

  
Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisboa, Portugal



## Annex B - Agreement of Collaboration with Lisbon Project Association



### Agreement of Collaboration and Ethical Commitment between Raiza Mendoza and Lisbon Project Association

This agreement establishes the ethical and legal foundations for the collaboration between Raiza Mendoza, a student at ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon, and Lisbon Project Association, as part of the thesis project provisionally titled “*Integration of Migrant Women in the Activities of the Lisbon Project Association*” (see Appendix 1 for the Project Plan, which includes a calendar of activities).

The purpose of this document is to outline the responsibilities of both parties, ensure adherence to ethical principles in research, and safeguard the protection of data and internal documents of the organization.

**Responsibilities of the Researcher.** The researcher agrees to:

1. Comply with all applicable ethical and legal standards, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and any relevant national legislation.
2. Not publish or disclose internal documents, confidential information, or any sensitive material from Lisbon Project without prior written authorization from the organization.
3. Use the information provided by Lisbon Project solely for the academic purposes specified in the thesis project.
4. Provide Lisbon Project with a copy of the final work before its publication to ensure that the information is accurate and does not compromise the organization’s confidentiality.

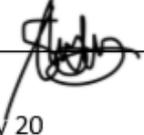
**Responsibilities of Lisbon Project Association.** Lisbon Project Association agrees to:

1. Authorize the researcher to mention the organization’s name in the thesis work, with full knowledge that it will have open and public access upon approval.
2. Provide the necessary information and access to resources, activities, or data required for the development of the project, within the limits established by the organization.
3. Provide the necessary material resources and logistical support for the pilot project phase, within the limits established by the organization.
4. Respect the researcher’s academic process and provide feedback if necessary to enhance the quality and ethics of the project.

This agreement will be valid from the date of its signing until the completion of the thesis project, including its defense and publication of the final work.

**For Lisbon Project Association:**

Jodeé Luz – Operations Director

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  


Date: 8 January 20

**For Raiza Bianca Wanderley Mendoza:**

Signature: RaizaBWanderleyMendoza

Date: 8 January 2025

## Annex C – Informed Consent Form

### INFORMED CONSENT

This study is part of a research project taking place at **Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa**.

The study aims to identify the factors that influence the inclusion of migrant women in the activities of the Lisbon Project Association and to develop recommendations to promote their well-being and integration, while respecting their cultural and religious norms. Your participation in the study, which is highly valued as it will contribute to the development of this project, consists of participating in interviews lasting approximately 40-60 minutes, where you will share your experiences and perspectives regarding your involvement with the Lisbon Project Association.

ISCTE is responsible for processing your personal data, which is collected and processed exclusively for the purposes of the study, based on your consent [Article 9, paragraph 2, point (a) of the General Data Protection Regulation].

The study is conducted by Raiza Mendoza ([rbmwa@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:rbmwa@iscte-iul.pt)) and Prof. Dr. Ana Luísa Silva ([ana.luisa.silva@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:ana.luisa.silva@iscte-iul.pt)), who you may contact to clear up any doubts, share comments or exercise your rights in relation to the processing of your personal data. You may use the contact indicated above to request access, rectification, erasure or limitation of the processing of your personal data.

Your participation in this study is **confidential**. Your personal data will always be processed by authorised personnel bound to the duty of secrecy and confidentiality. Iscte assures the use of appropriate techniques, organisational and security measures to protect personal information. All investigators are required to keep all personal data confidential.

In addition to being confidential, participation in the study is strictly **voluntary**: you may choose freely whether to participate or not. If you have decided to participate, you may stop your participation and withdraw your consent to the processing of your personal data at any time, without having to provide any justification. The withdrawal of consent shall not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal

All your responses will be completely anonymous and confidential. Audio recordings will be made during the interview to facilitate the transcription of your comments and opinions.

These recordings will not be used for any other purpose. Your personal data will be retained only for the necessary period following processing, after which they will be destroyed or anonymized, ensuring your anonymity in the study's results, which will only be disclosed for statistical, educational, or scientific communication purposes, such as conferences or academic articles. Both researchers involved in the project are bound by duties of confidentiality and secrecy. You will be informed if the data processing conditions change during the course of the research.

There are no expected significant risks associated with participation in the study.

Iscte does not disclose, or share with third parties, information related to its personal data.

Iscte has a Data Protection Officer who may be contacted by e-mail: [dpo@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:dpo@iscte-iul.pt). If you consider this necessary, you also have the right to submit a complaint to the Portuguese Data Protection Authority (CNDP).

**I declare** that I have understood the aims of what was proposed to me, as explained by the investigator, that I was given the opportunity to ask any questions about this study and received a clarifying reply to all such questions. **I accept** participating in the study and consent to my personal data being used in accordance with the information that was given to me.

Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_ (place), \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex D - Gender Mainstreaming Framework

CATEGORY	CHARACTERISTIC	Not Applicable	Does Not Meet	Partially Meets	Meets
PLANNING & STRATEGY	1. Gender-related issues and demands are considered in the organization's annual planning process.				
	COMMENTS The organization acknowledges gender-related issues and demands and has taken actions in this area, but these are not systematically integrated into its annual planning.				
	2. The organization defines specific gender-related goals at the organizational level to promote equality between women and men.				
	COMMENTS The organization addresses gender issues through specific initiatives and retreat discussions, but lacks clear organizational goals to systematically promote gender equality. Its approach is more implicit and reactive to identified needs, rather than part of a formal, cross-cutting strategy.				
	3. The project's/program's background and context analysis examines the different situations of women and men, as well as the impacts it will have on different groups.				
COMMENTS The project's context analysis reflects some awareness of gender differences, mainly through informal observations and program-level insights. However, it lacks a systematic and comprehensive approach to examining the different situations and potential impacts on women and men.					

<p><b>4.</b> The project/program includes targeted actions for gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as the integration of gender aspects in non-targeted actions.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS The organization has taken meaningful actions for migrant women’s empowerment, but gender integration in non-targeted actions remains limited and inconsistent, falling short of a systematic approach.</p>				
<p><b>5.</b> The project/program includes strategies to reach out to the underrepresented gender that could benefit from it.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS The projects have made significant progress in reaching migrant women through safe and empowering spaces, but the implementation of these strategies remains informal and is not fully integrated into the projects’ structure, planning, or monitoring.</p>				
<p><b>6.</b> The project/program includes gender-related risks and mitigation strategies in risk assessments and monitoring.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS The organization has recognized gender-related risks and implemented some strategies to mitigate them, particularly for migrant women. However, these initiatives often operate informally and are not fully integrated into formal strategic, budgetary, and monitoring frameworks, limiting their reach and sustainability.</p>				
<p><b>7.</b> The project/program defines corrective measures to be taken if gender equality objectives, results, or effects are not achieved.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS</p>				

	The project does not explicitly define corrective measures linked to gender equality objectives in case of non-compliance. While there is growing awareness and some data collection efforts, a formal framework for corrective actions is not outlined in the planning documents.			
<b>BUDGETING &amp; RESOURCES (Organizational Level)</b>	<b>8.</b> There is a specific budget allocated to integrating a gender perspective.			
	COMMENTS There is no evidence of dedicated budget lines for gender integration.			
	<b>9.</b> A budget is allocated for gender-related capacity building of staff.			
	COMMENTS No funds were allocated for internal capacity building on gender.			
	<b>10.</b> A gender-sensitive approach is applied to the overall project budget, beyond financing gender-related activities.			
	COMMENTS A gender perspective was not applied to the overall budget for 2024 and 2025.			
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES &amp; ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE</b>	<b>11.</b> Basic gender training is provided for all staff, with advanced training for program staff on key concepts, gender-sensitive indicators, and gender analysis in monitoring and evaluation.			
	COMMENTS No specific gender training is provided to staff. The onboarding presentation mentions gender demographics but lacks a dedicated framework or training on gender inequality or gender-based violence.			

	<b>12.</b> A gender expert has been recruited, or project staff possess gender knowledge and have gender-related tasks incorporated into their job descriptions.				
	COMMENTS No gender expert has been hired, and there are no formal gender-related requirements for project staff.				
	<b>13.</b> Staff selection processes (e.g., job interviews and CV screening) focus on maintaining or achieving gender balance in the team.				
	COMMENTS There is awareness and an effort to balance the team by including more men when they apply, as most applicants are women. However, no specific formal measures have been implemented to ensure gender balance in recruitment processes.				
	<b>14.</b> Job advertisements include gender competencies as a basic requirement for candidates.				
	COMMENTS Gender competencies are not explicitly included as a core requirement in most job postings. The only exception is the Better Together coordinator position, which requires the candidate to be a woman.				
<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>15.</b> The project/program ensures that both women and men can provide input, access, and participate in activities.				
	COMMENTS While the intention is open participation and feedback is requested from all genders, attendance at general events is predominantly male.				
	<b>16.</b> Solutions are designed to overcome gender-specific obstacles to participation.				
	COMMENTS				

Several measures have been introduced to address barriers faced by women, including women-only spaces, adjusted schedules, practical activities, and safeguarding efforts such as anti-harassment posters and policies.				
<b>17.</b> Project/program activities and interventions ensure equal participation and access for women and men, considering mobility, time, venue, safety, and financing.				
<p>COMMENTS</p> <p>Although solutions are designed to increase female participation, equal access and participation are not yet guaranteed across all activities.</p>				
<b>18.</b> Tools and methods are used to enhance the full participation and access of women and girls in activities.				
<p>COMMENTS</p> <p>Various methods are used, such as women-only spaces, flexible schedules, hybrid learning models, and gender-based enrollment quotas.</p>				
<b>19.</b> The timing of activities is adapted to the schedules of individuals of all genders within the targeted age group.				
<p>COMMENTS</p> <p>Timing has been partially adapted, with morning classes for women with children and evening options for working women. However, this approach is not systematically applied across all activities.</p>				
<b>20.</b> The project/program considers childcare arrangements for participants.				
<p>COMMENTS</p> <p>Childcare is recognized as a significant challenge. Efforts are being made to form volunteer teams to provide childcare when available, but this is not formally established or consistently offered across all activities.</p>				

<b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<b>21.</b> The project/program establishes partnerships between employers and childcare services to ensure the care of children.				
	COMMENTS There is no evidence of specific partnerships with employers for childcare support.				
	<b>22.</b> Support and information are provided on services useful for workers with dependents, such as caregiving, laundry, and meal services.				
	COMMENTS The Admin Hub (internal web page) provides information on public childcare services and includes an external referral system with organizations offering childcare, psychological support, and other services. The organization also offers guidance, supporting workers with dependents by connecting them to relevant resources.				
<b>MONITORING, EVALUATION &amp; DATA COLLECTION</b>	<b>23.</b> The project/program collects and uses sex-disaggregated data and qualitative information to analyze and track gender issues.				
	COMMENTS Projects collect sex-disaggregated data and qualitative information through individual forms or observation, depending on the activity. At the time of this assessment, the organization did not collect gender-disaggregated data at the organizational level. However, it had begun transitioning to a new software system (My LP) to support this, though it was still in a very early stage.				
	<b>24.</b> The results framework includes gender-focused indicators, goals, and a baseline to track progress on gender equality.				
	COMMENTS Logframes and OKRs generally lack specific gender objectives and sex-disaggregated indicators for tracking gender equality.				

<p><b>25.</b> The project's/program's monitoring and evaluation process covers gender issues and tracks behavioral changes toward greater gender equality.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS The project's monitoring and evaluation process does not currently cover gender issues or track behavioral changes toward greater gender equality.</p>				
<p><b>26.</b> The project/program explains how gender equality objectives, results, and effects will be monitored and assessed.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS Given the lack of clearly defined gender equality objectives and indicators in formal planning documents, there is no comprehensive explanation of how these objectives would be monitored and evaluated.</p>				
<p><b>27.</b> General indicators related to individuals are disaggregated by sex to monitor whether both women and men are reached.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS Sex-disaggregated data is collected in some programs and efforts are underway to improve this through the MyLP system. However, data gaps remain, and some events still record only total attendance without gender breakdowns.</p>				
<p><b>28.</b> The project/program report focuses on gender dimensions, including gender-disaggregated data and gender-related project successes.</p>				
<p>COMMENTS Reports generally do not focus on gender dimensions or consistently include sex-disaggregated data.</p>				
<p><b>29.</b> Project/program monitoring assesses equal access of women and men, boys and girls to project services and activities</p>				
<p>COMMENTS</p>				

	Monitoring of equitable access is hindered by inconsistent data collection and the absence of systematic gender analysis in evaluation processes.			
<b>COMMUNICATION &amp; PUBLIC RELATIONS (Organizational Level)</b>	<b>30.</b> There is a public, visible, and well-communicated gender policy document.			
	COMMENTS The organization currently does not have a formal gender policy.			
	<b>31.</b> Gender-inclusive language is used in both internal and external communication.			
	COMMENTS Communications in English are generally gender-neutral, using terms like “community members” and “participants” to promote overall inclusivity. However, there is no explicit policy or consistent effort to ensure gender-inclusive language across all languages or to promote deeper gender awareness in communication.			
	<b>32.</b> Public media campaigns express support for gender equality.			
	COMMENTS The organization promotes women-centered programs through newsletters and social media, especially on International Women’s Day. However, it does not carry out large-scale campaigns on gender equality.			
	<b>33.</b> There is a protocol against sexual/workplace harassment.			
	COMMENTS A formal policy is in progress. While the Safeguarding Policy addresses abuse and some preventive measures are in place, the organization still lacks clear mechanisms to prevent or respond to gender-based violence.			
<b>INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES</b>	<b>34.</b> The organization's objectives and those of each of its projects are positively concerned with women's issues and improving their social and economic position.			
	COMMENTS			

	The organization's mission reflects an inclusive vision, supported by initiatives aimed at advancing the social and economic position of women and men.				
	<b>35.</b> Frequent consultations and monitoring are conducted with the women involved in the projects.				
	<p>COMMENTS</p> <p>Consultations are conducted, often through informal conversations that work well for some women. However, formal methods (feedback forms) face limitations, and there is no systematic or formal follow-up process in place for all women.</p>				
	<b>36.</b> There is a designated gender contact person within the team, such as a gender expert or gender focal point.				
	<p>COMMENTS</p> <p>There is no designated gender focal point or gender expert within the organization.</p>				

## Annex D – Table of Documents Reviewed to Construct the Gender Mainstreaming Framework Matrix

Authors	Year of Publication	Name of the Document	Organisation / Publisher
EIGE	2020	<a href="#">Gender Budgeting</a>	European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
EIGE	2021	<a href="#">Checklist for gender-sensitive screening of proposals for European Union (EU) directives</a>	European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
Coordinadora de ONGD-España	2019	<a href="#">Política de Género de la Coordinadora de ONGD-España</a>	Coordinadora de ONGD-España
Gell, Fiona & Motla Paresh	2002	<a href="#">Gender Mainstreaming Tools: Questions and checklists to use across the programme management cycle</a>	Oxfam GB
Gender + Migration Hub	2021	<a href="#">Key actions for gender-responsive migration governance</a>	Gender + Migration Hub
GIZ	2023	<a href="#">Addressing Gender in Alternative Development Projects.</a>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
GIZ	2024	<a href="#">Gender Mainstreaming Checklist: Guiding Document for Gender Focal Points and Technical Staff of GIZ Egypt</a>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
ILO	n.d	<a href="#">Roadmap for Gender Sensitive Project &amp; Programme Design</a>	International Labour Organization (ILO)
Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD	2021	<a href="#">A Importância da Integração da Perspetiva de Género nas Organizações</a>	Revista da Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD(23), 12-15.
PO ISE – Programa Operacional Inclusão Social e Emprego	2021	<a href="#">Checklist Princípios Transversais da Igualdade entre Homens e Mulheres e Igualdade de Oportunidades e Não Discriminação</a>	Portugal 2020 & EU
Silva, E., & Casimiro , C.	2023	<a href="#">Manual de Boas Práticas: Integração de pessoas imigrantes em Portugal e apoio à conciliação entre a vida familiar e profissional</a>	ISCSP - Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas
UNDP	n.d	<a href="#">Checklist on Gender Integration in Projects/Programmes Cycles</a>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
UNDP	2025	<a href="#">Gender and Recovery Toolkit</a>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
UNIDO GENDER	n.d	<a href="#">Gender Mainstreaming Checklist for Projects.</a>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

UNOV & UNODC	2021	<a href="#">Checklist for Gender Mainstreaming in Project/Programmes.</a>	United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) & United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Williams, S., Seed, J., & Mwau, A.	1994	<a href="#">The Oxfam Gender Training Manual</a>	Oxfam GB