

Participatory action research case studies

Migrant workers in hospitality

Seville, Spain

Mujeres Supervivientes

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This project has been funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101094652

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1. Introduction

This report is one of a series of three national case studies developed within the framework of the DignityFIRM project, coordinated by PICUM, the Platform for international cooperation for undocumented migrants. Each case study was led by a grassroots organization in a different country:

- **Here to Support**, in Amsterdam (Netherlands);
- **Mujeres Supervivientes**, in Sevilla (Spain);
- **Nomada**, in Wrocław (Poland).

In each city, one migrant worker—formerly undocumented and with experience in the Farm to Fork sectors—was trained as a peer researcher. These peer researchers facilitated focus groups with others in similar situations to identify key challenges, examine working and living conditions, and explore collective strategies for resistance and change. This report brings together the findings of those processes and serves as a foundation for the project’s upcoming action phase.

DignityFIRM is grounded in an interdisciplinary design that includes a strong commitment to Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a core approach. Rather

than positioning migrant workers as passive subjects of research, PAR seeks to engage them as active agents in producing knowledge and shaping solutions. It recognizes lived experience as a critical source of insight and emphasizes collective reflection, empowerment, and action. By training peer researchers within the communities most affected, the project aims to strengthen local capacities, support grassroots mobilization, and generate proposals that emerge directly from those with firsthand experience of exploitation.

The report includes a description of the territorial context and the background of each organization. It details the composition and functioning of the focus groups, followed by a narrative analysis of the main findings. Subsequent sections examine the problems identified across key dimensions of precariousness, as well as the individual and collective strategies of resistance that emerged. Intersectional factors are explored as elements that shape both vulnerability and agency. The final sections offer methodological reflections and propose a series of actions and recommendations drawn from the research process.

For further information:

[PAR cross-country report:](#)

[Participatory Action Research \(PAR\) with migrant workers in farm-to-fork sectors in Amsterdam, Seville and Wrocław \(Legarda, I., 2025\);](#)

[Participatory Action Research \(PAR\), Migrant organisations led actions \(PICUM, 2025\).](#)

2. Context of the study: Seville, Spain

2.1. Territorial context

Spain is a country where the hospitality sector contributes significantly to its economy. According to data from 2023, the hospitality and catering sector contributed 6.7% of GDP and employs approximately 1.4 million people in activities such as bars, restaurants, and pubs, among others.

According to data from the [INE](#), employability in the hospitality and catering sector continues to be significantly higher among Spanish citizens than among foreigners during the three years analysed (2021, 2022 and 2023). The number of Spanish workers is consistently higher than that of foreign workers. However, according to these data, the number of foreign workers has remained stable, with no major variations over time.

However, the INE data does not specify wage differences or working conditions.

Furthermore, it does not seem to reflect the social perception of this situation. After analysing several [press articles](#), it is widely recognised that the hospitality sector is mainly occupied by migrants. In some cases, the migrant population is considered essential to maintaining the functioning of the sector in Spain. These articles also highlight that migrants tend to hold lower-skilled jobs and receive salaries up to 240% lower than those of nationals.

Another relevant aspect in this context is the social imaginary, which we identify from opinions and comments posted on social media on this topic. It is clear that despite reports of the precarious working conditions faced by many immigrants in Spain—such as exhausting working hours, wages below the legal minimum, fraudulent or non-existent contracts, and high exposure to workplace accidents—a considerable part of the population maintains a derogatory attitude towards people from outside the European Union. This social construct reproduces a colonial logic of undignified and abusive treatment towards non-European, racialised people belonging to impoverished and vulnerable classes, perpetuating structural inequalities in the territory.

Migrants, especially those from Latin American countries, are heavily represented in sectors such as hospitality, services, domestic work and care. In

agriculture, it is also common to find workers from Latin America, Eastern Europe and, predominantly, African countries. These people tend to occupy the most demanding, unstable and lowest-paid jobs in the labour market. Key sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, domestic work and construction rely heavily on this migrant labour force, which in many cases works in contexts marked by the violation of labour and human rights. However, far from raising critical awareness, this reality often reinforces deeply rooted prejudices and stigmas in society.

Finally, in the Andalusian context in which this research is currently being conducted, it is important to recognise that Seville is a city deeply oriented towards tourism, which attracts migrant labour to this sector. However, the city also has a collective memory and stories of struggle and resistance led by various social groups and movements that oppose the model of a gentrified, superficial, and consumerist city. This model coexists with marked vestiges of a strongly unequal, highly religious social class culture characterised by a high concentration of land in the hands of large landowners.

Annual celebrations, such as Holy Week and the April Fair, attract mass tourism throughout the year, intensifying during these periods. In this context, a deep-rooted culture of the 'señorito' persists: landowners

who own vast tracts of land and hire day labourers, often migrants, in precarious conditions in settlements dedicated to agricultural exploitation.

This social imaginary reproduces a colonial logic of undignified and abusive treatment towards non-European, racialised people belonging to impoverished and vulnerable classes, perpetuating structural inequalities in the territory.

Immigrants, especially those from Latin American countries, are strongly represented in sectors such as hospitality, services, domestic work and care. In the agricultural field, it is also common to find workers from Latin America, Eastern Europe and, predominantly, from African countries. These people tend to occupy the most demanding, unstable and lowest-paid positions in the labour market. Key sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, domestic employment and construction depend heavily on this migrant workforce, which in many cases works in contexts marked by the violation of labour and human rights. However, this reality, far from generating critical awareness, often reinforces prejudices and stigmas deeply rooted in society.

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It is recognised that the majority of foreigners in Andalusia who are registered as employed work in the agricultural sector, followed by the services sector. In these sectors, in Spain and Andalusia, the labour market has been marked by a high level of temporary employment, mainly due to the seasonality of sectors such as tourism and agriculture, where the demand for employment varies depending on the time

of year. This allows us to understand the lack of stability of these jobs and the search for various sources of economic income.

This analysis highlights the lack of state data that allows us to know in detail the working conditions of migrants working in the hospitality sector, an area with a high presence of foreign population. In addition, there is an absence of information disaggregated by intersectional criteria such as gender, age, socioeconomic conditions, ethnic or racial origin, which limits the understanding of the multiple forms of discrimination that can affect these people. It is also worrying that information on the work of people in an irregular administrative situation is not included, despite the fact that their participation in the labor market is a reality known and documented by various social organizations. This invisibilization is directly related to the current Immigration Law, which has been widely questioned for linking access to rights to the administrative situation and for conditioning regularization to obtaining employment, staying in the country for two years, which generates discrimination and dependency.

The new Immigration Regulations, which came into force on 20 May 2025, introduce improvements such as more flexible requirements and a reduction in the time required to apply for arraigo, understood by the law as 'an exceptional means of

regularisation for foreign nationals who are in an irregular administrative situation in Spain and who can demonstrate sufficient ties to the country', but it does not represent a structural change to the system nor does it incorporate fundamental proposals from organisations that work with people migrants and refugees. This context generates concern in the Regularization Now! (citation, Non-Law Proposal that arises during the Pandemic, based on a National Campaign of signatures of the population with DNI, taken to the Congress of Deputies, to request the Regularization of around 600,000 people in an irregular situation who have been living in Spain for years, in exclusion and on the margins of labor rights and guarantees, social, health, etc.) since there is no clear picture that focuses on the guarantee of the human rights of people who migrate and there are no guidelines that allow fair labor insertion in all sectors of the economy.

2.2. Track record of the organisation in the subject

Mujeres Supervivientes (Women Survivors, MMSS) is an association that emerged in 2012 to care for and accompany migrant women victims of gender-based violence. Creating a community kitchen as a response to the lack of food, "papers", jobs and decent wages, based on the principle that "cooking and eating is a political act". This soup kitchen has become a community space for the meeting of care, of feminist

activism in Seville that has transcended the exclusive sphere of women, incorporating other actors from the community. However, migrant women continue to be the central axis, from the politicization of our lives, we have built critical thinking and organized response to the problems of the city and the people of the Barrio.

Through this dining room and the creation of spaces for reflection, we have been able to meet various people with their respective stories, which have allowed us to approach the participants in this research from a horizontal perspective, in which we all collaborate and participate in the processes of reflection collectively.

Our interpretive framework is based on an intersectional feminist approach. For MMSS, intersectionality represents a constant practice of reflection and debate about our lived experiences. This has allowed us to think and understand ourselves within a context of systemic violence, and to recognize what it implies, in our oppressed, exploited and suffering bodies, to be migrant women in a neoliberal and colonial society that establishes relations of subordination towards migrants. Through the construction of critical thinking, we have been able to question the causes of inequality, migration, hierarchical, racist, patriarchal order and epistemic injustice, which is reproduced through a dominant theoretical framework.

This framework sustains a system of knowledge production that legitimizes structural violence in Western societies, denying the dignity, human rights, and political potential of other models of thought, such as community feminism and Paulo Freire's pedagogies of Popular Education.

In this sense, Participatory Action Research (PAR) represents for us a political perspective and action aimed at questioning power relations, towards the transformation of social, labor and social justice relations from the perspective of the oppressed.

3. Focus Groups

3.1. Process of searching and inviting participants

The search for the participants was carried out using the snowball strategy. Acquaintances and friends were mainly invited, and they in turn facilitated other contacts, the process was as follows:

Contact via WhatsApp: more than 50 people were contacted with a message inviting them to the investigation.

A WhatsApp group was created with the 37 people who were interested in participating, in order to agree on dates and times for the meetings that were comfortable for the majority.

After this process, 19 people were summoned in 2 groups, the first on Tuesday

mornings and the second on Wednesday afternoons. The first aspect we considered before starting the focus groups was to hold a preliminary meeting with the potential participants, which we called "focus group 0". The objective of this meeting was to get to know each other, share a snack and generate an atmosphere of trust and closeness. This initial instance facilitated trust, for the subsequent formation and cohesion of the groups.

However, we observed a "call effect" that generated some confusion: some attendees did not understand the purpose of the meeting so they thought it was a complaint against their employers, others believed that it was a job offer as pollsters, especially when they saw the recorders arranged on the table.

Despite this, this first meeting was key for the people who finally made up the focus groups to be those who understood and shared the purpose of the research, feeling comfortable in the space and with the freedom to express their fears, doubts and ideas. From there we set out towards the collective construction of a safe space.

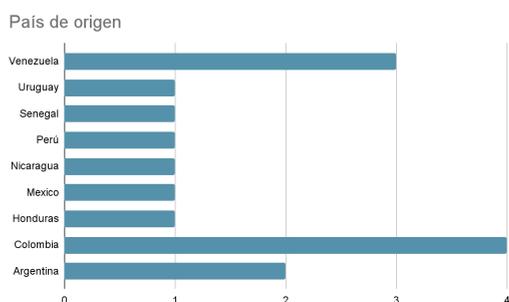
3.2. Composition and characteristics of the participants

Finally, 15 people participated in the research – 9 women and 6 men – aged between 21 and 54 years. All of them work or have worked in the hospitality sector in

Seville, and at some point they carried out this work in an "irregular" way. This condition has had a strong impact on their lives, reflecting on 7 situations such as uprooting, labour and other abuses, difficulties in renting a home or opening a bank account, as well as the need to leave their families in their countries of origin. Added to this are language barriers, adaptation to a new idiosyncrasy and unresolved migratory grief.

In terms of nationality, 14 of the participants came from Latin America and one of them from Senegal

Fig. 1: Country of origin



Another relevant aspect to highlight is the educational level of the people participating in the research: they all have higher education, ranging from technical training to doctoral studies in progress. For some of them, academic training was one of the main motivations for migrating.

In the workplace, in addition to their links with the hospitality sector, many of these people work multiple jobs, in a situation that we identify as multiple jobs. This reality is crossed by gender factors: while women tend to perform work related to care, men are mainly inserted in sectors such as food delivery, construction, among others.

Finally, with respect to the documentary administrative situation, we found that, at the time of the research, six of the participants were in an "irregular" administrative situation, all of them with the expectation of meeting the requirements to apply for some form of arraigo, in accordance with Spanish regulations. 8

However, we note that student visa holders often alternate periods of "regularity" and "irregularity", as they are often forced to renew their visas, temporarily losing their work permits. This implies that ten of our participants have as one of their life objectives to regularize their documentary situation, in order to advance in other areas of their personal development.

3.3. Functioning of the Groups

Our expectations were built from the Mujeres Supervivientes methodology, based on an intercultural and feminist approach from the intersectional perspective. From the beginning, we have sought to collectively create our own rules of coexistence and care, with the aim of generating a reflective space focused on

Participatory Action Research (PAR) and the lived experiences of the participants.

From the researcher's point of view, the most significant difference between the initial expectations and the results obtained was the recognition of the multiplicity of themes that emerged. Although the workplace was the central axis of the groups, it became evident that work is only a dimension that deeply crosses social subjects. For the participants, it was essential to also talk about their migratory processes, motivations, emotions, bonds, relationships and other personal experiences. This allowed us to understand that the vulnerabilities they face in their workplaces are much more complex than we could imagine from an individual perspective, and can only be fully understood from a collective and contextualized perspective, mediated in this case by labor relations.

Regarding the functioning of the groups, we recognize that from the different tools used, it was possible to promote group cohesion, respect, trust, a sense of belonging, support networks and resilience, as well as to promote active listening and provide information resources. We strengthened community ties, sharing useful information for employment and care, as survival strategies in the face of precariousness. One of our objectives was also to generate political advocacy at the neighborhood,

local, family and transnational levels, on the road to the construction of a political-social subject. We work from a comprehensive perspective that articulates body, emotion and thought, building intersubjective relationships between participants, as a way of resisting the fragmentation caused by suffering and racism. We incorporate practices such as conscious breathing, biodanza and self-care 9 as political dimensions of affections, necessary to create a safe environment, of trust and collective belonging.

The recovery of the experiences lived was carried out through personal narratives, framed in labor, human and migratory rights. This process allowed us to resignify our experiences, politicize them and transform them into a collective force. It was a liberating path that took us from the personal to the collective, and from anger and frustration to political power.



4. Narrative analysis of results

4.1. Emerging issues



To address the narrative approach to the results, we chose to visually represent the most repeated words during the encounters through a word cloud. This tool allowed us to identify emerging issues in a clear and accessible way. The visualization evidences a multiplicity of themes, among which the work is positioned as a central axis in the experiences of the participants. However, in the case of migrants, work is not always conceived as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve other objectives, especially those linked to the realization of their life project, understood as the set of aspirations, goals and meanings that each person builds throughout their life according to their values, desires, circumstances and their role in a given community.

Dignity was the word that was most repeated in the meetings, they mentioned it both in their decision to migrate, as well as in the expectations of their work contexts, and in their project for the future, we also find words such as rights, land, family, house, memory, going out, listening, needs. This description allows us to understand that the narratives of the groups revolved around the dreams and desires beyond the vulnerabilities to which they have been exposed when migrating.

This process of emergence of new knowledge is interrelated with the possibility of thinking collectively. Their living conditions, working conditions, relationships

of abuse, mistreatment, exploitation through the gaze of academic and non-academic thinking, which comes from the feminist social movements of Latin America where good living is a concept, a praxis, a sensibility and a being in the world, which encompasses a life with rights, with respect, with coexistence and with the clarity of what is contingent and necessary for personal and community development with equity.

4.2. Patterns identified

During the analysis process, several thematic patterns were identified that allow for a deeper understanding of the experience of migrants in the hospitality sector in Seville. Among the main emerging themes are:

Challenges in the hospitality sector:

Precarious working conditions were evident, highlighting that they occur for all people in both regular and irregular situations. These include long hours, low wages, absence of formal contracts and, in many cases, mistreatment or discrimination based on their origin or immigration status.

Violation of rights:

The participants reported multiple forms of violation of human and labor rights, directly linked to their migrant status. This situation is aggravated in contexts where access to immediate employment becomes a priority,

even when it involves accepting conditions of exploitation or informality.

Desire for comprehensive recognition:

Beyond the workplace, migrants expressed their desire to be recognized as active and integral members of the communities they arrive in. Although they value that their labor contribution is recognized as necessary and valuable, they also aspire to be considered as full subjects, with rights, voice and capacity for social and community participation.

Factors of social vulnerability: In the discussion spaces, the different social indicators that increase their vulnerability were addressed, such as: access to housing, employment, health, sexual orientation, cultural and educational profile, and, centrally, legislation on foreigners. These interrelated factors directly affect living conditions and integration possibilities.

Strengths and capacities: Despite the adversities, multiple indicators of resilience and agency were also identified. Among them are skills, personal resources, capacities to face challenges, generate positive changes, and articulate support networks. The participants demonstrated important tools to assume transformations from a logic of empowerment and resistance.

4.3. Narrative summary

Dignity Firm is a project that represented a political decision not to alter the testimonies and lived experiences of the participating subjects, their contradictions, to embody their life stories, exploitation, their fears, the violence they experienced, their anguish, dreams and all the grief that the migratory journey produces. Through providing welcome, respect and hospitality to the participants.

To build a space in a collective, safe, warm way to talk and deliberate, about their working and living conditions and everything that this process of remembering meant for people, transcending moments of stress and suffering, by remembering the "migratory wound". It should be clarified that some of these people are part of the political, affective ecosystem of the networks of life, work, around our Community Dining Room.

We set out to recognize and take time to name our working conditions of exploitation, humiliation, our responses to this abuse, to recognize and validate our cultural and affective forms of survival, to support each other, as we have been able to resist without losing hope; All this, with the purpose of reflecting and systematizing our labor disputes and ways of resolving them, of creating personal, collective awareness. But, also, we understood, not without pain, that we are colonized, exploited, disrespected bodies and minds, in transition

towards a political and affective emancipation through the community.

The process of gathering information was transformed into a profound exercise of collective reflection and deliberation. It was a space for subjective exchange, mutual recognition, and recovery of personal, social and cultural memories. As social beings, we carry a family and community baggage that, despite adversity, has allowed us to resist uprooting, hopelessness, depression and even suicidal thoughts.

In the focus groups we shared our experiences of migration: the pain of uprooting, the anguish of arriving in a country that presents itself as "welcome" but where, in practice, we were treated as "cheap labour". We did not choose the precarious jobs that we took on – irregular, exhausting, depersonalising – but in these spaces we were able to name our realities, recognise our conditions and affirm our dignity as migrants, with or without papers, in the hotel and restaurant sector.

We document working conditions marked by low wages, exploitation, psychological abuse, and the (little action) lack of institutional response. What is often disguised as "jokes" is nothing more than covert racism, sustained by structures of power and racial privilege. We also identified unjustified dismissals as a strategy to evade labor rights, and the existence of

dynamics that divide us, pitting us against each other, creating internal hierarchies that reproduce the same forms of oppression.

In many cases, we are hired for four hours, but we are required to work ten or twelve, especially in high season. What we are not paid becomes a constant expropriation of our salaries, accumulated for the benefit of the restaurant owners. In addition, we observe how those who were oppressed they can reproduce these same logics when they access positions of power, even when they become employers.

Appealing to personal narratives in the face of these injustices was not only an act of denunciation: it was an act of resistance, an exercise in political action, care and collective love.

5. Definition of problems

5.1. Migratory status

Migratory status was a recurring theme in our focus groups. It was identified that, for most of the participants, the main goal in their lives is to obtain a residence that allows them to have a permanent work permit. In this context, work is perceived as a necessary means to achieve this regularization, which leads them to accept working conditions that they know are not fair.

From this situation, two clearly differentiated subgroups emerged. On the one hand, those who, upon arriving in Spain and finding themselves in an irregular administrative situation, are unaware of their labour rights. They often interpret the fact that an employer offers them work – even in precarious conditions – as an act of generosity, so that they not only ignore the rights they should have access to, but also feel gratitude towards those who employ them, even when exploitation exists.

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"And although the one who was my boss at that time did not pay me everything, I kind of say "shit, he is also risking it" as if I say "among all that, he is gambling because he could be fined".

–
The second subgroup is made up of people who do know their labor rights, but who, faced with promises from their employers to "do their paperwork," decide to stay in precarious jobs in the hope of achieving regularization. They shared experiences in which they waited for months or even years for those promises to be fulfilled, and in many cases, they never materialized.

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"But that man was kind of manipulative a bit, who made you think like he was doing you a favor "I've done your papers so work more hours" and you also accept because they say "in a year I'm going to renew the papers" then

I think I'm going to put up with it and... in two years if I go out here... You have in your mind only that I have to endure, I have to endure, I have to endure"

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Within this group, it was also highlighted that, when labor conflicts arose, those people who had already obtained documentation and knew their rights were they felt more supported to demand decent working conditions and the fulfillment of their salaries. Although these disputes were not always resolved in favor of the worker, they did represent a significant act of defense of their rights and dignity.

In contrast, those who continued to work "as irregular" expressed not feeling entitled or able to complain. This situation increases their frustration and has a negative impact on their mental health, self-esteem and their capacity for agency.

5.2. Job insecurity

Job insecurity, understood from the type of labor relationship, was another of the topics addressed in the meetings. The normalisation of contractual practices that do not comply with current legislation within the hospitality sector is particularly highlighted, constantly stating that "this is how it is in Spain for those here and for us". In the case of participants who did not have a work permit, the absence of a formal contract was the norm. Their employment

relationship was established verbally and, in many cases, payment was made per day worked and not per hour, as established by law. Even these verbal agreements were frequently breached: they were required to stay many more hours than agreed or, at the end of the week, they were not paid the promised amount.

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"He promised me an eight-hour work contract when he was making me work twelve because I had split shifts every day without rest. In other words, my rest was said to be that hours of the split shifts were added... more or less the day fit me and it was from Sunday to Sunday."

"I had a lot of hours, more than 50 hours and I didn't decide much, I put a lot of pressure on us... I was there for four years"

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These situations reflect a structural precariousness in which the lack of legal protection exposes migrants to systematic labor abuses, without real possibility of claim or defense. On the other hand, even those who have a work permit admit to suffering various labor violations. The most common is the execution of contracts for a number of hours significantly less than the total number of hours they actually work. This implies that, before the Social Security and in their work history, the real volume of their activity is not reflected, which limits their access to benefits such as unemployment benefit or social assistance

in the event of becoming unemployed, also hinders their residence application processes since they do not meet the requirements for the different types of roots.

In addition, even if they have formal contracts, these are usually temporary, hourly and with unclear conditions. In many cases, contracts do not specify working hours, allowing employers to modify working hours as they see fit. This lack of stability and predictability makes it profoundly difficult to reconcile work and personal life, and perpetuates a precarious and exploitative work model even within the law.

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"And also that they don't respect people's time. And not just mine. Because it's like those of us who have worked on that here, you know? That they do not respect. In other words, if you have to leave at two o'clock and an inconvenience happens, you have to stay until five. Because you are there and you have to stay. I mean, that has also affected me."

5.3. Inadequate payments

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The salary issue runs through all the components of this research. In the collective meetings we managed to debate and complicate the relationship between capital, labor and well-being. While many of the participants expressed a desire not to be seen solely as a workforce, it was clear that failure to comply with wage

agreements was one of the experiences that most deeply made them feel violated. These situations aroused intense feelings of anger, helplessness and frustration.

Although these wage irregularities are frequent in the hospitality sector, for migrants they acquire a particular weight. In most of the stories shared, employment in the hospitality industry represented their first contact with the world of work in Spain. When remembering that first job, many described it as a hopeful opportunity, an initial step towards a more dignified life and the possibility of sending financial support to their families.

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"And although the one who was my boss at that time did not pay me everything, I kind of say "shit, he is also risking it" as if I say "among all that, he is gambling because he could be fined".

—
However, this initial positive perception was deeply traversed by an internalized colonial relationship towards labor and social rights. In this context, wage abuse is not always recognized as such. On the contrary, many people interpreted the fact of receiving a salary – even if it was low, irregular or unfair – as a gesture that should be appreciated: "in addition to the fact that I am an immigrant, it pays me, badly, but it pays me". This logic of gratitude covers up and normalizes exploitation, silencing demands

for justice and making it difficult to demand dignified conditions. "He didn't pay me well, but he treated me very well..."

After recognizing the general reality of the sector, we began to explore in greater depth the difficulties related to payment. As mentioned in previous sections, these problems are closely linked to immigration status and a Foreigners Law that enables abusive and precarious working conditions, to the type of employment contract. However, we also identified a wide range of violations: hourly wages well below what is stipulated by law, lack of overtime pay, lack of recognition of work breaks, and even, in some cases, non-payment for activities performed.

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"believing that working those 13 hours a day was going to be enough to go to Colombia to visit my grandmother and return to Spain, because I worked very enthusiastically and what they did was give me 200, 300 euros little by little... in the end they ended up owing me 1,600... I haven't been to Colombia yet."

"It wasn't so much the issue of money, I was also with the issue that they promised me "yes, we're going to help you with the visa", when it came to saying like hey, these are the papers for the visa because oh well, let's see, they pay me 6 euros an hour, that is, super poorly paid and they always made me stay longer"

"That you are paid a day of work per day, for example 50, 60, 30 I don't know, whatever they want to pay you, the thing is that you don't know... you enter at an hour, but you don't know the time when you leave, then you end up working 12 hours for 50 euros or for 60

euros and sometimes the man, yes, recognizes you, paid you a little more, but it was not justified."

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These situations linked to wages were the main trigger for the perception of injustice and the recognition of precariousness in the work environment. Some participants reported that these conditions lead to depressive episodes, constant fear, and even feelings of regret for the decision to migrate. However, collective responses also emerged: these experiences led many people to seek support networks, learn about decent working conditions and accompany each other in moments of denunciation or discomfort.

5.4. Lack of rights and protection

As noted in previous sections, the absence of labour rights is a widely normalised component in the hotel and restaurant sector in Spain. In this context, exploitation and abuse are not always immediately recognized as a structural part of the sector's labor dynamics. However, with the passage of time and through collective reflection, many people develop an awareness that allows them to identify that these practices disproportionately affect migrants.

Among the most recurrent problems, even among those who have formal contracts, is the fact that on many occasions they are not registered with Social Security. This

omission, which usually goes unnoticed due to workers' lack of knowledge of the administrative systems, has serious consequences: it prevents access to basic rights and resources such as unemployment benefit, medical leave or retirement.

These violations, far from being exceptional, are part of the systematic (daily) functioning of the sector and reflect a structural precariousness that is aggravated in migrant bodies.

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"I say that perhaps innocence has preserved me from suffering less, right? But I found out that they never registered me with Social Security. And then it turns out that what I have contributed to Social Security, after seven years, at most, is one year. (.) So, of course, when you're young, maybe you don't realize that, right? But as you get older, (..) especially for my mother, she swears that I'm going to have Social Security and retirement and all those things that our elders dream of, but for now I don't have it."

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Another relevant aspect identified was the progressive change in working conditions over time. At the beginning of the employment relationship, many migrants receive promises of having an adequate work team, for occupational safety that protects against accidents and workplace accidents, regular breaks and fair remuneration for the hours worked. In practice, however, these conditions often change quickly.

Over time, employers tend to reduce staff and keep services operational with as few workers as possible, which significantly increases the workload. This dynamic ends up physically and mentally exhausting those who work, generating sustained wear and tear that affects not only their health, but also their emotional well-being and their ability to sustain a life outside the workplace.

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"I am a cook, I decided on an offer, they offered me a very good contract, but in the end it was nothing that he offered me, so much so that I liked what he offered me that I got friends to work. Then at the end of April and the beginning of May there were two people working in the black, inspection came in, they left, there were four of us in the kitchen and the two of us left and there were only two of us so it was the work of four people only in two people... it was terrible, that is, working every day without rest... It was a bad experience. Apart from the atmosphere with the other lady, it was not very good. They didn't pay me what I said and it was exploitation. Because at least I said, "Well, if he is saving two salaries, at least he will give an incentive to the lady and me" but he did not do it..."

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On the other hand, those who already have documentation and have attempted to access institutional services—such as SEPE (the State Public Employment Service, responsible for managing aid, granting

subsidies, generating public employment policies, among other things)—face structural violence, which is expressed in inefficient care and bureaucratic requirements that make it difficult to access job opportunities. Despite having a work permit, they are required to provide additional documentation, such as recognition or certification of studies, a process that can take years in Spain. In the midst of this bureaucracy, they are not offered viable alternatives to improve their current working conditions, which generates frustration and uncertainty.

Likewise, negative experiences have been recorded in other work spaces, including university and professional internship environments. Some migrants have gone so far as to say that, despite their precariousness, "it is better to work in hospitality", which reflects the extent of labour abuse beyond this specific sector. Frequent experiences of dismissals without just cause were also reported, which reflects a deep job instability. Migrants must report to work even when they are sick, injured or after accidents – whether in the workplace or on the road – under constant threat of dismissal if they do not.

All the participants shared similar situations. Even in cases where they had formal contracts, employers used strategies to avoid taking legal responsibility, such as turning colleagues against the affected

worker in order to justify dismissals and thus avoid paying the corresponding sick days. This practice not only violates fundamental rights, but also generates a hostile and deeply dehumanizing work environment.

These situations are directly related to the migratory experience, as there are multiple barriers to accessing basic rights and power dynamics are entrenched – marked by clientelistic dynamics and symbolic hierarchies – which are not exclusive to the hospitality industry, but are part of a social structure deeply rooted in Spanish society. The abuse of migrants, therefore, manifests itself in a transversal way in different sectors, reproducing patterns of discrimination and exclusion that hinder real access to a dignified working life.

5.5. Working and living conditions

This component is key to understanding the reality that migrants face when working in the hotel and restaurant sector. It is important to highlight the lack of adequate physical and health conditions for the performance of work, there is no occupational health and safety training, there are no protocols for accidents and the spaces are not suitable for high temperatures in hot seasons. The work environment, in most cases, is hostile, as described in previous sections. There are constant situations of abuse such as yelling, teasing, minimization, competition among peers, and lack of recognition. All this

contributes to generating a perception of little personal value, closely linked to a colonial logic that suggests that, because of our condition as migrants, we deserve less.

The hostile environment is also reinforced by the treatment of customers. Some clients, when they see migrants in service roles, adopt derogatory and discriminatory attitudes (this aspect will be developed in greater depth in the section on intersectionality). These attitudes reinforce the perception of little value and lack of recognition of their work and their dignity as people.

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"I mean, people who arrive super super stressed to have their coffee and they literally threw the toast at us and they were stuck on the wall, it was a violent public, a hostile public all the time they treated us badly".

"And what affected me more than anything else was the way I dealt with people. You know? Because here people, there are times when they are very despotic. I mean, for example, today they called me like a dog. So, I felt horrible. That's what has affected me the most. Also physical and mental exhaustion. That has affected me a lot"

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The effects derived from this hostility are not limited to the workplace. Overwork has a profound impact both physically and emotionally. The participants stressed that, due to the long hours, they have not been able to establish social ties in the host country, nor participate in everyday aspects

of Spanish culture. In addition, there is a distance from their families and friends in the country of origin, since the lack of material time and the time difference make contact difficult.

All this leads to states of deep sadness, loneliness, anxiety and depression, seriously affecting mental health. This accumulated discomfort transcends the emotional and manifests itself physically in the form of headaches, insomnia, chronic fatigue and other somatizations, reflecting the direct impact of working conditions on the body and mind.

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"Unnecessary shouting, there was a lot of competition between the waiters, it was that "I, I'm the boss, no, I'm the boss" and since obviously I had no experience I was like "Oh yes, you tell me what to do, I do it, I'm very happy" But then there came a moment where I already felt like "Oh her, for it says nothing, you over there you for here, you go there" then there also came a time when I also began to feel very distant from my partner, very alone"

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Within the aspects related to the migratory experience, it is important to recognize that, in many cases, other needs such as grief, the absence of emotional ties or family responsibilities make people put aside the recognition of the conditions of their work reality. This disconnection can function as a

form of avoidance in order to emotionally cope with their situation and survive their "reality".

6. Resistance and response strategies identified

6.1. Individual and collective strategies in the face of disputes

In view of the working and living conditions described above, we sought to identify what actions the participants decided to take, both to solve problems with their employers and to take care of themselves in the face of the effects that these conditions have on their lives. For this, it is important to recognize that, from this perspective, care actions are not only an individual response, they are also a collective and political response that allows people to continue sustaining their lives and fighting for a better life. Taking care of themselves, in this sense, also implies making difficult decisions that respond to an analysis of the structural conditions they face in their day-to-day lives.

Resignation appears as the main action for conflict resolution. This action, although we understand it as an individual decision, as it is the most common among our participants, we also recognize it as a collective response, in the face of the conditions of exploitation and labor abuse. Renouncing, when there is a perceived impossibility of transformation or

improvement of conditions, becomes a form of protection. It is a way of saying "no" to exploitation, even if this refusal does not always have visible effects on the system or on their personal well-being in the long term. We do know that it destabilises the labour market by making it so fluctuating, to the detriment of employers, but also in the cheapening and precariousness of the working workforce.

However, those who make the decision to resign are aware that resignation does not change the structural conditions of the sector, since they have the perception (and employers constantly affirm it) that there are many other people willing to occupy these positions. In addition, employers do not question the reasons for the resignation, in general, they do not make changes or improvement actions to prevent their workers from leaving. This reflects a system that is sustained by rotation and depersonalization, where individual care does not translate into a collective transformation, although it does point out the urgency of rethinking working conditions from a human and labour rights perspective, which provide protection to workers. And therefore, it is fairer.

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"Yes.. So how did I figure it out? Well, I didn't solve it, just like you... That is... Cried... I got very depressed... I started looking for a job quickly... Because I had a feeling that they were going to treat me worse... And they were

going to exhaust me in the worst ways... and I left." "Well, I retired and exploded and I didn't take care of myself in any way, until it was already affecting my mental health. It's just... I was really already noticing that... that I was... I was losing my mental health, so I resigned."

The second group of responses that we find most frequently are actions aimed at the search for well-being, acting in other areas outside of work. These actions are focused on the creation of networks and affective bonds, entertainment, physical activity and hobbies such as reading, music, among others. They also mentioned seeking psychological help or any professional help to address their affectations. In the case of Seville, the participants value the dynamics of the city, which allows them to meet other people in social spaces such as parks and terraces, where not much money is required. In these spaces, it is possible to generate networks and find support, which represents an important form of care and emotional support outside the workplace.

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"Care? Talk to friends, family, sports, running, seek psychological support, listen to music. Reading, watching a movie, escaping a little, because the system turns its back on us, does not consider and respect us."

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These care actions also respond to a perception that it is in their hands to do, since the system does not allow them to act directly to improve their working conditions.

And although they may seem logical, they often require a process to reach them, since to extend life beyond work it is necessary to recognize that, in many cases, this type of work completely absorbs the person, occupying both their energy and their time, which ends up being used only for rest or doing nothing. Rest is an illusion, since due to the long days, the split schedules, the material, emotional and precarious working conditions prevent a true rest and recovery of the workforce, causing people to become alienated. In addition, in most cases, when they are unable to quit – either due to the impossibility of finding another job, their economic situation or their administrative situation – these actions become their only possible source of well-being, thus accepting that they cannot do anything with their work reality.

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"Yes, what I mean by accepting it is that many times it was a job that I had to go no matter what, because I needed to, more than anything else when I was getting my NIE, and yes, I could not resign. (.) So, I wiped away my tears and sometimes cried at work. (..) And many times, being at work, nothing, like I got into myself and pushed forward, I couldn't give up."

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Continuing with the line of search for well-being, actions related to the purchase of objects were also mentioned. On the one hand, these purchases respond to the need

to "survive work", such as buying good shoes to withstand the long hours on your feet. But, on the other hand, they represent a form of emotional compensation and are also linked to the desire to feel worthy and valid again outside the workplace. This point generated a debate around capitalism and care, which was also crossed by the cultural diversity of the group. They reflected on how the act of buying objects is directly related to purchasing power, something that, paradoxically, is achieved "thanks" to the same jobs that deteriorate physical and emotional health. Thus, consumption appears as an ambivalent strategy: at the same time a form of care and a consequence of the system that is sought to be resisted.

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"I have the feeling that these are works that we feel so denigrated. And it's like we're selling our being. So, when we get home what we want is to feel divine"

Dignity, as mentioned in other sections, was the word that was most repeated in our meetings. At this point, the participants agreed that not only their decision to migrate, but also all the actions aimed at achieving their well-being respond to the logic of seeking a dignified life, this search also frames the responses of the participants when they decide to confront their employers.

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"What is dignity... Dignity is, for example, on your days off work, having your car and you go to the beach and stay there. In other words: dignity, dignity. But there are many people who cannot do it, because they do not have any free time to go, at least, to Cádiz, which is here." "He was the first person who spoke to me so clearly, he told me: "dignity is not for sale" that is, dignity is not lived and I had an apron here ... I took it off, I made a ball, I got like this and threw it at him, I hit him in the chest and said "look here you have your job and pay me everything at once if possible" and the man like that super upset with the wife "what's wrong with you?" ... He would say, "You and I'll go to the street," and I would say, "No, since you have a circuit of surveillance cameras here, I want you to hit me."

When deciding to confront their employers, they did so mainly through dialogue, expressing what bothered them and demanding payment for the hours worked. In some cases, to establish this conversation, they preferred to do it in the presence of a trusted colleague or with another leader of the establishment. The answers they obtained were, for the most part, negative: from the beginning they were told that their requests were not possible, or they were given delays that generated the expectation of changes that never came. However, in some cases they achieved small advances, such as the payment of an extra hour, a day of rest or a

somewhat more favorable organization of work.

"So...// Well, the types of answers, well, of course, negative. Indifference to the problem. Make us feel guilty because he acts as a savior. Or the person, well, the employer as a savior. I who gave you, I who gave you the opportunity. Because no one here gave it to you. That kind of thing. More abuse. (.) Dismissals. (.) Positive intervention by the administrator. Here there was a... I mean, in the case of abuse, right? And when the worker set the limit, he got a positive response from the manager to the problem. In other words, he took measures. Yes, there was a mediation. (..) Yes, yes. There was a case that did"

In terms of collective responses, the groups recognized the importance of knowing, both individually and together with co-workers, the country's labor laws. Many do not know what days they are entitled to or the leaves they can request. The debate revolved around the need to value labor laws, have contracts in accordance with the Workers' Statute and know these rights in order to be able to defend themselves and be treated as human beings, without discrimination for being migrants.

"How did we solve it? We look for a medical certificate, (.) we work for a few hours accepting the poor conditions due to the family burden to survive and not sign any

document without reading it. No, without reading it, right?, trying to know our rights"

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Finally, we note that there is a lack of recognition of labor rights, fear of resignation, and distrust in institutions. However, our participants have been looking for ways to respond to and survive labour exploitation, becoming increasingly aware, through group discussions, that something more needed to be done or their realities would not change.

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"What I want to make visible is how there is a system that should protect us and there are some, and capital and businessmen who are also supposed to be in this legal framework of the system and do what they want with our lives, our time and our work. That is what I want to make visible"

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6.2. Forms of self-organization

We noticed that there are few self-organization strategies among the participants, although we observed, within the dynamics of the focus groups, that by sharing information among them they began to expand their ideas about tools and aids that they could access. They recognized institutions, activities and actions both inside and outside the workplace. This brought us to reflect on how the alienation and stress to which they are subjected in these work dynamics often

leave them without time or energy to organize themselves. For this reason, the intervention of the PAR functioned in itself as a space for self-organization, where they could meet, share experiences and begin to collectively build forms of support and resistance in the face of the adverse conditions they face.

One of the participants shared an experience in which he proposed a strike among workers, inspired by actions carried out in other sectors, such as caring for people. However, this initiative did not have the support of his colleagues, who, for fear of possible reprisals or labor consequences, decided not to follow him. This episode reflects the precariousness and vulnerability in which they find themselves, where fear limits the collective ability to organize and demand better working conditions, despite the desire to generate significant changes.

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"He proposed to strike conditions, also to organize to accept minimum bases of working conditions, communicate between the sectors and stand firm. (...)

... because being in a collective is learning to be with the other, to fight (...) to move forward and horizontality too, I think"

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As for legal actions, only one experience related to a trial was mentioned, which corresponded to a friend of one of the participants. This situation was recognized

as a positive act within the group, as it represented a step towards "justice for all." However, it was highlighted that the specific reason for the complaint was a physical aggression, which highlights that, although there are legal mechanisms to deal with certain abuses, these actions are usually activated mainly in serious and obvious cases. This also highlights the difficulties and limitations that people face in accessing justice in situations of exploitation or labor violation that are not always manifested in such a clear or reportable way.

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"It was seeing the exploiter there, with his wife who also exploited us, it was quite strong but to see that the comrade, the friend, was being supported, let's say, justice at that moment really yes, it is like a collective satisfaction, it is not that he beats her but that really those of us who were there testifying, felt like a chill (.)

So outside of him, because the two of us couldn't, we couldn't denounce him anymore as he showed everything on time, that is, it was really a moment of encounter, but also because we hadn't seen each other for two years and seeing the guy there as a pimp and seeing that we were here supporting each other, it felt good, at least solidarity."

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In other experiences shared, it was recognized that the owners of the bars, when pressured by complaints, prefer to offer money directly to the affected people to avoid legal problems, money that people accept due to the same conditions of precariousness and distrust in the Official

Institutions. This is also related to other comments about the insufficiency of fines or sanctions, since, from an economic point of view, it is still more profitable to hire workers without documentation, even if that means paying a fine from time to time. For this reason, the main bet is on regularization movements, which seek to guarantee dignified and legal working conditions for these people, thus generating a structural change that goes beyond punitive measures.

In summary, the forms of self-organization among the participants are few and they face multiple obstacles, such as fear, precariousness, and lack of time or energy due to adverse working conditions. However, the creation of spaces such as the intervention of the IAP has facilitated meetings where experiences are shared and strategies of support and resistance begin to be collectively built. Despite the limited advances in collective organization and the barriers to access to justice, the testimonies show the need to strengthen movements that promote the regularization and defense of labor rights, seeking to structurally transform the conditions that perpetuate exploitation and the violation of rights.

6.3. Community or institutional support and external factors

In this section we also find few mentions of institutional agents beyond the specific case

of the trial mentioned above. During our meetings, we showed that the participants perceive little response and effective support from State entities. On the contrary, feelings of fear and distrust are reflected towards the possible actions that these institutions could establish to protect their rights, but we also recognize a lack of knowledge of them or even a perception that they are not worthy of them.

The fear of filing complaints is particularly strong, given that the hospitality sector is known to be highly linked and there is an informal network of communication between employers. This dynamic allows them to share information to avoid hiring people considered "problematic" or who have reported irregular labor situations, directly affecting the possibility of being employed again of those who dare to denounce. Therefore, it is considered that complaints, far from being an effective defense mechanism, can contribute to perpetuating labor impunity and increase the vulnerability of those affected.

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"One important thing, I could have denounced, why haven't I done it? Here all these people with the power of hospitality groups, the word is spread, and I thought about it. Later I heard that there is a means to make anonymous complaints, but I do not believe in anonymity in the public world."

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This reality underscores the urgency of strengthening institutional mechanisms, such as labor inspections that not only sanction, but also protect and guarantee rights, such as the return to work of those who report abuses, as well as the need to generate safe spaces where people can organize and assert their rights without fear of reprisals.

7. Intersectional factors

Talking about intersectionality in this research is not only urgent and necessary, but fundamental, our epistemological basis recognizes that oppressions cannot be separated, hierarchized or divided, since the system and the context we inhabit exposes us to different types of violence that we assume simultaneously, therefore, our position is that one vulnerability factor cannot be addressed while the others are still present.

Migrating to the North with the aim of starting a new life, this means exposing oneself to a significant decrease in the citizenship rights that we had in our countries of origin, as well as to a condition of subcitizenship – understood as the impossibility of fully exercising human rights compared to a national citizen – a condition that is maintained even when one has documentation.

However, this knowledge deepens when we are directly confronted with these realities, and it is then that we understand the profound impact that this has on our lives, on our rights as citizens, on our dignity, on the conception we have of ourselves and on the idealisation we build about Europe, seen as an imaginary of superiority in every sense. product of cultural colonization. We also face the constant questioning of our culture and the culture of arrival, where it seems that we must accept being considered third-class citizens, because "that's how the world works". When in reality, this situation is due to the historical division between the rich countries of the North and the countries of the Global South, to which we belong.

The intersectional perspective, in this case, has allowed us to identify the relationship between labour exploitation in the hotel and restaurant sector towards people due to their origin, class, regular and irregular administrative situation, etc., and migratory processes, revealing how oppressions intersect to grant basic rights to some, while others are prevented from accessing them.

We observe that, in our context, what prevails is the interest of capitalist accumulation of employers, who take advantage of any factor of vulnerability of the people they hire to advance in this interest. Also lowering wages, due to the high demand of the sector's labour market.

In this process, migrant women are increasingly excluded and with fewer opportunities to access jobs and decent wages.

In the following section we will mention aspects that have already been highlighted above, but that are key to understanding how the particular characteristics of people and/or groups have a direct influence on their employment relationship.

7.1. Relevant identity markers identified

Gender

Gender has been and continues to be a key factor in the recognition of the violation of rights. Historically, women have not only had fewer opportunities at the social level, but, in contexts of crisis, we are the first to be affected, since we assume most of the care tasks. This perspective allows us to identify that the care and social reproduction work carried out by migrant women contributes significantly to the country's GDP, sustaining a social economy that, however, extracts and strips our energy. This evidences not only the abuse and exploitation of migrant women's bodies, but also requires an in-depth analysis that allows us to understand the multiple intersections between discrimination and structural violence, especially in sectors such as hospitality, according to the cases addressed in this research. We also recognize that in this sector, employers tend to prioritize work

done by men. When demanding labor rights, women express higher levels of fear: those who said they directly confronted their employers were mostly men, while women tended to remain silent or resign, as strategies to avoid reprisals or job loss.

In addition, situations of hypersexualization and workplace harassment persist that disproportionately affect women, driven by stereotypes about their sexuality, such as being "fiery," "hot," or being "willing to do anything to get papers." However, by intersecting with migrant origin, men have also been exposed to this type of stereotypes and dynamics of abuse. In the end, what prevails in these situations is a power relationship traversed by a logic of Eurocentric superiority over racialized and migrant bodies, considered as "others."

Ethnicity and nationality

In our research, considering that most of the participants came from Latin America, we identified several vulnerability factors. Primarily, they are exposed to all the stereotypes associated with this culture, such as the hypersexualization mentioned above. In addition, due to colonialist dynamics, they are perceived as less skilled and less valuable citizens. Exposing themselves to situations of racism, violence and discrimination. As a consequence, dynamics such as that of the "savior employer" develop or, after a prolonged time in conditions of exploitation, it is the

same person who ends up assuming that he or she has less value, as a result of the coloniality of power over the peoples who have been and continue to be colonized. This situation has a direct impact on mental health and on the agency's capacity to find solutions.

Another relevant aspect in this category is that, despite having postgraduate studies, in most cases these degrees and certifications are not recognized in Spain. This situation is due to the structural violence that Spain exerts on migrants, not born in Spanish territory, to maintain relations of subordination. This lack of recognition significantly limits access to better-qualified jobs and, therefore, makes it difficult to achieve higher levels of quality of life through decent jobs and wages, personal and professional fulfillment. This situation generates frustration and a sense of waste of talent, in addition to affecting the self-esteem and motivation of migrants. It also contributes to perpetuating job insecurity and colonialist dynamics of subordination.

Social class

Based on the above, social class represents a fundamental component of exclusion in migratory processes, since it changes when migrating. Not only are the economic, social and cultural resources available modified, but also in Spain our participants perceive that the opportunities to climb the social

ladder are lower when they come from a country in the Global South. They affirm that their intellectual, cultural, social and political capital is unknown, regardless of the fact that they have access to university education in some cases, through Public Universities, which supposes a favorable conscience for the struggle for collective rights and dignity. Although belonging to a lower economic class in Spain is in itself a factor of vulnerability, it is important to note that the stereotype that migrants come exclusively from contexts of 'extreme poverty' is not only erroneous, but also contributes to deepening their marginalisation, as migrants are often perceived as people desperate for resources, forced to accept any working conditions, however precarious.

This logic is based on a classist and paternalistic view of migrant labour, in which there seem to be only two positions: those who own the means of production—in this case, the hospitality sector—and those who, as workers, must 'work to live'. Thus, when migrants gain access to employment in the hospitality industry, their social, academic, labour and even economic capital becomes invisible, reducing them to mere objects of production and denying them the possibility of mobility or change.

We want to emphasize that migrating is a human right, regardless of the reasons that lead a person to do so, and that, therefore,

it is necessary to promote and guarantee mechanisms that ensure the full exercise of labor and social rights for all migrants. We understand that the causes of migration, despite being varied, are due to North-South relations, the supply of cheap labor for First World countries. Generating dynamics mediated by European extractivism, violence, wars, political conflicts, poverty, displacement due to climate change, etc.

Migration status

This is another component that is related to the factors mentioned above: the recurring idea that "if you don't have a regularization status, you don't have rights," was constantly pointed out in the meetings. It is known that, compared to other countries in the European Union, in Spain it is "easier" to find work without being regularized, which attracts a massive migrant population. However, when they arrive, many people find that the jobs they can access do not allow them to lead a decent life and, in many cases, they are precarious jobs, without a contract or with contracts that do not respect labor rights, as we have already pointed out. This aspect is clearly linked to a Foreigners Law that makes regularization difficult due to the number of requirements it requires, as well as the normalization that you must wait at least two years in an irregular situation. People who perform these jobs do so in any condition in the hope of improving their living conditions and

being able to support their families in their countries of origin.

In addition, in the midst of the dynamics of work, people have little time to inform themselves and carry out the procedures corresponding to their regularization, if we add to this the stereotypes they face in all contexts, economic precariousness, marginalization, lack of support networks, advice and professional guidance and the barriers they must face due to gender issues. sexual orientation, race and age, it is almost impossible to find a way out. There are those who take years to gain access to regular documentation, however, as mentioned in section 6, our participants seek forms of care and self-organization, this type of research fosters the challenge, of the construction of hope and social transformation, of indignation moving towards dignified action.

7.2. Intersectional analysis as factors in labor exploitation

Gender has been and continues to be a key factor in the In this section we will describe some situations associated with labor exploitation that exemplify how these intersectional factors are present in the daily reality of the people who participated in our meetings. In terms of gender, we found significant differences in the types of work performed by men and women. Women, having to combine several jobs, often work in hospitality along with elderly

care, cleaning and activities related to aesthetics. For their part, men work mostly in construction, on farms and in delivery.

In relation to hypersexualization, women are the ones who receive the most inappropriate comments from clients, unwanted proposals, of a sexual nature from their bosses and have even been victims of harassment situations.

Finally, we recognize that age also intersects with gender. Some participants over the age of 40 indicated that they find it more difficult to find work and that they are required to accept any working conditions due to their age.

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*"And I had a colleague who was also Peruvian. That he was older. A man who harassed me. (.) He harassed me. And I had to... To invent that I had a boyfriend. She said, I have my boyfriend. And I asked for the favor of any friend who called me. At check-out time. And he put a loudspeaker on it. So that he would listen. And... And... Every time the guy came up to me. That is... From the back."
"That in addition... the reality of work... It's so hard... for many women my age who end up believing it. There are people who tell you "Oh, but stop dreaming about jobs and take the first one they give you, as an intern, and if you don't go to the countryside..."*

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The intersection of gender, ethnicity, and nationality also significantly affects working

conditions. There is a particular stigmatization towards migrant women, especially Latin women, who are commonly perceived in Europe as people who "come to find a partner", which increases their hypersexualization in the workplace and prevents them from establishing bonds in their jobs, this is also understood in the relationship between capital and reproduction, since women are judged for establishing affective and sexual bonds. but they are also asked to reproduce and take care of their children, who will be "new workers". However, this hypersexualization is not exclusive to women; Latino men also face these types of stereotypes and situations in their workplaces.

"A sexualization at work, for being Latin American. So, ah, look, Colombian. Fresh meat. Fresh meat. Yes. And they offer it to you as meat for the public."

Racist and xenophobic comments are also part of these exploitative factors. As mentioned above, these types of attitudes not only affect people's dignity and well-being, but also generate division and tension between workers of Spanish origin and those who are migrants. This division generates competition and disloyalty, making it difficult to build relationships of solidarity and collective organization, weakening the ability of workers to claim their rights and improve their working and living conditions.

In addition, these racist discourses contribute to perpetuating stereotypes and prejudices that reinforce structural inequalities in the workplace, directly affecting integration and social cohesion within the workplace.

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*"Lack of camaraderie and because we also understand that we are all victims of work, right? Everyone doesn't overdo it, right? (.....)
Racism, both from those who hire and from clients and between colleagues". "Very xenophobic comments all the time, very racist about everything"*

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Regarding race, one of our participants reported being rejected in one of her jobs because of the color of her skin. The employer, an older woman, claimed to feel "pain" in the areas where she touched her, and attributed this sensation directly to the worker's skin color. This episode clearly shows a racist attitude that not only affects emotionally, but also excludes the person from the workplace. This testimony reflects the harshness with which racism permeates the working lives of racialized migrants, and how the fear of losing one's livelihood often forces them to tolerate deeply discriminatory treatment.

"Then he said it hurt and "it would be because of the color"... and "how is it because of the color?" I wanted you to specify me so that I could become a monster. When I said that it

would be because I was black, that because of the color it was there hurting and I "oh, that is, because it is black, it hurts... it hurts you because you are already in pain" that is already saying and that they will respect and after that she continues to say that if she is going to tell the doctor"

As for the migration status, as mentioned in previous sections, this factor clearly enhances situations of labour exploitation. A concrete example of this is found in political refugees, who are often forced to accept any type of employment, regardless of the conditions, due to the emotional and economic pressure they face.

These people have often left their families in their home countries and feel a great responsibility to provide them with support and send financial resources. Added to this is the expectation that, living in a free country like Spain, they must "take advantage" of any job opportunity, even if it is precarious or unfair, which places them in a situation of greater vulnerability to exploitation.

"That you, because you don't have papers, are mistreated. Do I explain? In other words, you are ahead of you, who is a human being. You don't have to pay a person who doesn't have papers fairly. That doesn't give you any rights. But it's typical."

"That is, I am more of a person because I have papers. (...) My condition as a person is not lost

because I do not have papers. Because I have papers in my country."

All of the above translates into discrimination in working conditions. Where it is recognized that "taking advantage" of the condition of the migrant to make him believe that he is not valid, nor does he deserve humane treatment, with what it means equal treatment, for any of the various oppressions that cross him, under a colonialist conception, where the migrant is always in an inferior category and therefore "naturally" must be exposed to situations of labor exploitation, reflected in the contracts, payments, responsibilities and deals received.

In short, all these practices of abuse in labour relations are articulated and concatenated, under multiple dimensions of vulnerability – such as gender, race and migratory status – configuring a labour system in which precariousness, inequality and exploitation are normalised for migrants. This intersectionality reinforces their exclusion, legitimizes their position as undercitizens and therefore severely limits their access to a dignified life.

7.3. Intersectional analysis as factors in agency and self-organization

Unfortunately, in our meetings, no clear actions of agency or self-organization were identified that explicitly took into account

the intersectional factors to which the participants are exposed. As mentioned in section 6, the collective strategies that emerged are mainly linked to the fact of being migrants and to mutual accompaniment in the processes of integration and resilience in the face of the problems identified.

Despite this, in the development of the meetings, allowing themselves to recognize that the practices of discrimination, racism and machismo were not isolated events or individual experiences, but responded to a colonial, patriarchal and neoliberal system – in which factors such as skin color, gender, origin or migratory status influence – meant a change of perspective for the participants.

This process of discussion and reflection within the PAR fostered a collective awareness that prompted the exchange of information on available resources and strengthened the idea that these vulnerabilities must also be addressed collectively. In this way, although still incipient, a form of resistance based on mutual recognition, solidarity and the creation of support networks among equals began to emerge, as an expression of a shared political subjectivity.

8. Learning and reflections

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a methodology that promotes critical reflection aimed at social transformation, questioning extractivist approaches that treat people as objects of study. For us migrant women, self-representation is essential to recognize ourselves as political subjects with agency, rights, and dignity. This project allowed us to achieve precisely that type of analysis, in which from a relational and subjective approach that values emotions and collective experiences, we managed to approach a reality that seems to be known by everyone but understood by few, the life of migrants who work in the hotel and restaurant sector is crossed by multiple risk factors but also by protective factors that allow us to survive and to act in favor of a dignified life.

As a grassroots organization rooted in the neighborhood, we work with a deep social commitment, valuing not only the results and objectives of the projects, but also the processes, affections, networks and collective learning that contribute to social transformation. From this experience, our main reflection is that it is not enough to adopt a posture of observation or criticism in the face of injustices that affect other people; It is essential to take an active position, sustained by concrete and continuous actions that challenge and combat these same injustices.

8.1. Methodological difficulties and challenges

Taking into account that this project was developed within the framework of our networks and under the gaze and actions promoted by Women Survivors in the neighborhood, and considering the social recognition and interest of the community to participate in our activities, various factors were identified that facilitated contact with the participants, as well as their commitment and credibility in the process. However, given the characteristics of the sector and the living conditions of those who inhabit it, we also face a series of difficulties or methodological challenges that we detail below:

1. Establishing a relationship of trust: This was the first challenge we encountered, for us it was essential that the people who at the meetings felt safe and cared for. We soon realized that holding only two meetings, as planned in the initial project, would not be enough to generate group agreements, adequately explain the objectives, avoid false expectations about the results and, especially, build an atmosphere of trust and cordiality. Therefore, as mentioned above, we held what we call a 0 meeting, in which we address these fundamental aspects before starting dialogues focused on working conditions and factors of violation.

2. Participants' time: Work in the hospitality sector is marked by constant uncertainty in access to the most valuable resource: time. The schedules change from week to week and even from day to day. In addition, in Seville this sector is particularly affected during seasons such as Easter and the April Fair, which coincided with the development of the project. This situation made it difficult for many interested people to participate, forcing us to prioritize those who had greater time availability, which inevitably made us exclude others who also wanted to narrate their realities. On the other hand, the time that elapsed between the second meeting and the action-focused meeting highlighted the instability in the lives of our participants: many of them had changed jobs, cities or even countries in less than two months, which made it impossible to set a date that fit the majority.

3. The care of the members of the project: From the 0 meetings it was evident to us —project coordinator and peer researcher— that coming into contact with these realities would generate personal and emotional affectations, as well as constant reflection. All this implied a significant emotional exhaustion, especially when trying to sustain hope in a context of which we are also a part. This dimension has run through all the components of the project, not only the meetings, but also the preparation of this report. We are aware that it will continue to be present even after

the end of the actions. For this reason, we have tried to establish actions of care for ourselves and to address, to the extent that they have been manifested, the dilemmas, confrontations and contradictions that have arisen in the process. It is essential to recognize our human component and to be aware that this same humanity enriches this type of research

8.2. Aspects to be modified or incorporated into the PAR Guidelines

The PAR Guide has been a fundamental resource in the conceptualization, development and understanding of our research. We recognize Participatory Action Research as a tool that allows us to situate participants as active subjects, political subjects with the capacity for agency to transform their reality. This perspective is especially relevant, since the migratory experience and irregular administrative situations tend to place migrants in positions of less power, reinforcing hierarchies that question their capacity for decision and action. From this awareness, we understand that it is easy to reproduce these same power dynamics from the perspective of the researcher. For this reason, the Guide has served as a tool for continuous reflection to review our own practices and avoid falling into these logics of extractivism and domination.

We value this document significantly. Among the recommendations we have for

this Guide, one of them refers to the recognition of time. Although the importance of considering the time of migrants in an irregular administrative situation is explicitly mentioned, it does not delve into the fact that this is also conditioned by the specific context: the season of the year, origin, religion, family conditions, among other factors. The time must not only be considered in relation to the duration of the activities, but also to the type of activity that is proposed. It is essential to establish some flexibility in conducting interviews and other meetings, so that they are adapted to the realities and needs of the participants. In relation to the category of stigmatization, we recommend expanding the reflection of this section within the Guide. As part of our research, we observed that many people expressed discomfort at the way they are often identified as "undocumented," "vulnerable," "in need," or "victimized." This form of classification, although it may be based on an intention of solidarity, can end up reproducing stereotypes that reinforce symbolic inequality and limit the full recognition of people as active subjects.

For this reason, we propose that the analysis of this category transcend the labels associated with vulnerability and incorporate a more complex perspective, which includes concepts that we address in the report such as infracitizenship, multiple justices (social, economic, symbolic) and,

especially, it is essential that it is understood that these people are not invited to participate because of their shortcomings or precarious situations, but because of their capacity for response, resistance, organization and reflection in the face of their diverse realities.

In this way, a welfare-based or paternalistic perspective is avoided and a more horizontal and transformative approach is promoted, in which all the people involved are recognised as political subjects with a voice, criteria and the right to influence the processes that affect them.

The last aspect that we propose to include in future versions of the Guide is the incorporation of a specific strategy or section that allows identifying the reasons why people decide to participate in research or withdraw from it. We consider that this information is key to understanding the dynamics of the process and adapting the methodologies to the concrete realities of the participating groups and generating environments of trust. In addition, we suggest that this strategy be communicated from the beginning to the people involved, so that they can exercise their agency in an informed way, understanding that their participation is voluntary, respected and valued in all its forms.

Finally, we would like to highlight that the Guide has been a fundamental document in

our journey. It allowed us to consolidate a diverse group, apply flexible methodological strategies and encourage active and conscious participation. In addition, it was a tool that not only guided our collective work, but also enriched our personal reflections.

8.3. Implications for future actions

Taking into account the analysis and observations made, we consider that the methodological proposal of this PAR has been correct in relation to the objectives set. We value the previous analysis carried out and the care with which the different moments, times and methodologies were defined. However, it is important to remember that the objective of a PAR is precisely to adapt to the needs of people, contexts and the historical moments in which it takes place. This implies that adjustments must be made to the initial planning, both before and during the execution of the research process. In our case, we identify the following aspects that we will take into account in future actions:

- a) Expand the number of meetings, both to generate a safe space and to encourage the construction of networks that can sustain themselves autonomously in the long term.
- b) Take into account the characteristics of the context (social events in the city, variations in temperature depending on the season, origin of employers, usual responses from the State, etc.), since these factors have a direct impact on the work reality of

the participants and can significantly modify this reality in short periods of time.

c) Systematize and recover the care strategies implemented by the research teams, so that they can be incorporated into future methodological experiences.

On the other hand, as we have already pointed out, the impact of this type of research is in itself a transformative action. The possibility of providing safe spaces for reflection to people who face contexts of exploitation and alienation on a daily basis is an act of resistance and a significant contribution to social transformation. In this sense, we reaffirm the value of this PAR not only as a research tool, but also as a form of active and political accompaniment to those who struggle for more dignified living conditions.

9. Proposal of Actions

Before starting with the detailed description of the proposals for action, we would like to highlight a relevant aspect within the research process. When the participants were summoned to this last meeting – more than a month after the previous one – significant changes were evident in their work situations, which are already an important part of the results obtained. Some participants shared that they had been laid off from their workplaces or that their workload had increased considerably due to the arrival of massive events in the

city, such as Holy Week and the Seville Fair. One of the participants decided to return to her country of origin; two changed their city of residence, and two others resigned from their jobs in order to seek activities more related to their professional training, even when these were less paid.

These situations reflect the precarious reality of work in the hotel and restaurant sectors in the city. While we cannot say with certainty that these changes were directly triggered by participation in focus groups, some people did express that, when talking about the vulnerabilities to which they are exposed, they made the decision to look for more dignified work alternatives or even consider returning to their country.

These changes also implied what we could consider a low participation in this last meeting (4 people). Although all participants had shown interest in continuing in the spaces, times and the reorganization of their lives no longer allowed them to specify a date that would bring together the majority.

9.1. Identification of problems that can be addressed through the action(s)

In the focus group of the action we focused, firstly, on recognising how lives and personal dynamics change in these short periods of time, and secondly, on collecting ideas that not only arose in this space, but also throughout all the meetings. These ideas

can contribute to transforming the reality of migrants working in the hotel and catering sector, especially those who do not have documentation.

Among the problems that the participants mentioned that they wanted to address, are:

a) The lack of visibility of the work of migrants: They consider it essential that their work and the contribution they make to society be recognized, not from a paternalistic or "poor" vision, but from the recognition as working people, who strive every day to have a better and more dignified life.

b) Stereotypes: This is another problem to which they are constantly exposed, in all the spaces in which they interact, especially in the workplace. They want to have strategies that allow them to be seen as people of integrity, with rights, and learn how to defend themselves against possible aggressions.

c) The lack of recognition of the different profiles: From an intersectional perspective, which understands that multiple vulnerabilities are not hierarchical but experienced simultaneously, we observe that for our participants it is essential to be recognized as people with multiple capacities and characteristics. They want to leave behind the label of "migrant looking for work" and be seen as friends, relatives,

daughters, partners, colleagues, athletes, etc., being also diverse in terms of race, gender, age, beliefs, immigration status, origin, among others.

d) The absence of organization in the sector and the lack of knowledge of their rights: This point was also central to the reflection on the actions. As mentioned, work in the hospitality industry is often absorbing and alienating, does not allow for organization or leave time for institutional guidance. Therefore, it is key to generate spaces and

e) Actions that facilitate political organization and knowledge of their rights.

9.2. Actions suggested by participants

By addressing the participants' ideas in relation to the actions, they were invited to imagine any possible scenario. This was done taking into account the perceived hopelessness in the face of the possibilities of change in the sector. We believe that dreaming is the first step to generate hope and, therefore, to promote actions. In addition, dreaming allows people to appropriate their capacity for agency in situations of violation.

Within the proposals that emerged, the ideas were grouped into two categories: actions at the group and institutional level and actions at the personal level. Among them, we highlight the following:

a) Create a manual for migrants: The participants are aware that, when migrating, they live in a constant state of disorientation and misinformation. They point out that they often make mistakes related to administrative processes, are unaware of their labor rights and do not know who to turn to if they need help. For this reason, they consider it a good idea to develop a "manual for migrants", focused not only on regularisation processes, but also on labour issues specific to the hospitality sector.

b) Generate more meetings among the group of participants and invite new people: Participants stated that it would be appropriate to establish new activities within the group, this time with a focus on training for employment, knowledge of their rights and the creation of networks of trust to share useful and safe information. They pointed out that, on many occasions, they have been victims of scams or fear for their safety, especially when attending job interviews, where situations of harassment have arisen or they feel that their administrative situation could be exposed, this prevents them from trusting the invitations made to them, therefore they assure that the information or new meetings that arise from this project will be very enriching for them.

c) Campaigns and content on social networks: As mentioned above, for our participants it is essential that Spanish society sees them as people of integrity and work. For this reason, the group also talked about the possibility of creating content for social networks. They even proposed the name of the campaign: "The other side of the coin", with the aim of making visible not only the stereotypes to which they are exposed, but also their work reality. One of the ideas was to represent a day of work for a migrant, showing everything that it implies and the strategies they use to take care of oneself in the midst of often adverse contexts. There was also talk of images, posts related to labor rights, among others.

d) Make positive actions visible: Another idea that arose was to make visible establishments that respect their workers and offer a good work environment. The proposal consisted of conducting interviews or videos that allow these spaces to be shown as an example, demonstrating that there are decent work models and that others could follow their example. This action would contribute to reinforcing hope in the possibility of change, as well as to raise awareness of labour rights from a real and close context.

e) Avoid replicating dynamics of abuse: As mentioned in the meetings, it is very common for some Latin American employers or workers to reproduce the

dynamics of abuse and labor violation to which they themselves have been or were exposed at some point. The group reflected that a key personal action is to make these practices visible and avoid replicating them in their own workspaces, with the aim of "breaking the chain of abuse" and actively contributing to the construction of fairer and more respectful work environments.

f) Carry out activities where work is not discussed:

This was the last proposal made and focused on the idea of generating spaces aimed at well-being and personal catharsis, where participants can talk about their relationship problems, coexistence with their roommates, economic difficulties, among other topics, without necessarily addressing the reality of work. They also proposed creating spaces where you can cook, debate, dance and, above all, strengthen and expand the network of mutual support.

9.3. Recommendations for public policies, organizations and academia

In the course of this research, proposals emerged that cut across many sectors of the economy in which migrants participate. These are:

1. Guarantee safe reporting and access to redress mechanisms

- Provide safe and effective mechanisms for victims of labour violations and violence to report abuses.

- Protect migrants from reprisals or deportation during or as a result of filing complaints.
- Include external support from NGOs, trade unions and community organisations.
- Strengthen the practical implementation of firewalls in inspections, social services and justice systems to ensure safe access to reporting and redress.

2. Expand and simplify pathways to regularisation

Strengthen existing pathways—including those based on employment, community, and family—by incorporating, among others, the following reforms into the Immigration Regulations:

Count the time spent processing applications for international protection for the purposes of accessing arraigo.

Adapt the requirements for arraigo to reflect all existing realities, including those currently excluded from the system.

Simplify procedures and remove bureaucratic barriers for workers in precarious sectors.

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3. Guarantee access to basic right

- Strengthen existing pathways—including those based on employment, community, and family—by incorporating, among

others, the following reforms into the Immigration Regulations:

- Count the time spent processing applications for international protection for the purposes of access to arraigo.
- Adapt the requirements for arraigo to reflect all existing realities, including those currently excluded from the system.
- Simplify procedures and remove bureaucratic barriers for workers in precarious sectors.

4. Strengthen access to justice and social services

- Ensure that all migrants, especially women in an irregular administrative situation, have access to social services and justice mechanisms.
- Ensure effective compliance with due diligence obligations by the authorities.
- Create clear channels for reporting and protection measures in labour inspections and municipal services.

5. Support community strengthening

- Provide accessible funding to community-based organisations.
- Create spaces for community education, activism and collective empowerment.
- Promote initiatives that combat discrimination and foster inclusion.

9.4. Proposals for supranational actions / Possibilities for replication or enlargement

Taking into account all of the above, we consider that, for the group involved in this research, the supranational actions that may derive from this work are fundamental. It is essential to recognize that the problems faced by migrants in an irregular administrative situation who work in the food sector are not isolated or local, but constitute a reality shared by several countries of the European Union. This recognition allows the issue to be positioned as an issue that requires joint attention and responsibility, and that can be addressed more effectively through the coordinated promotion of policies and strategies at European level.

In this regard, we propose to strengthen and expand some of the actions already mentioned in the previous section. Among them, we highlight the importance of promoting awareness campaigns that contribute to making visible both the precarious working conditions faced by these people and the positive experiences of resistance, organization and social contribution that they generate from their daily practices. It is also a priority to promote awareness-raising processes around the stereotypes and prejudices that affect migrants, especially in relation to their place in the labour market and their legitimacy as subjects of rights.

We also consider it relevant that the dissemination of the results of this research

is carried out jointly, participatively and on a large scale, putting at the center the people who participated and shared their experiences. In this way, the protagonism is

avoided falling solely on the institutions that lead the process, and the collective, ethical and transformative nature of the knowledge produced is reinforced.

Deliverable information

Schedule Information	
Title and number	Participatory action research case studies. Migrant workers in hospitality. Seville, Spain Mujeres Supervivientes
Work Package, Task and Deliverable	WP7 Participatory Action Research (PAR)
Publication date	10.03.2026
Doi reference	10.5281/zenodo.18939983
Authors	Antonia Ávalos Torres, Lina Marcela Rincón Barón
Dissemination level	PU
Deliverable type	Report

Participatory action research case studies

Migrant workers in hospitality

Seville, Spain

Mujeres Supervivientes

About DignityFIRM

Towards becoming sustainable and resilient societies we must address the structural contradictions between our societies' exclusion of migrant workers and their substantive role in producing our food.

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This project has been funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101094652