



Entretejiendo

**Convivencia
y resiliencia
en Australia**

Talleres gratuitos para
mujeres latinoamericanas

Interweaving

**Coexistence
and resilience
in Australia**

Free workshops for
Latin American women

Latin Stories Australia, 2019

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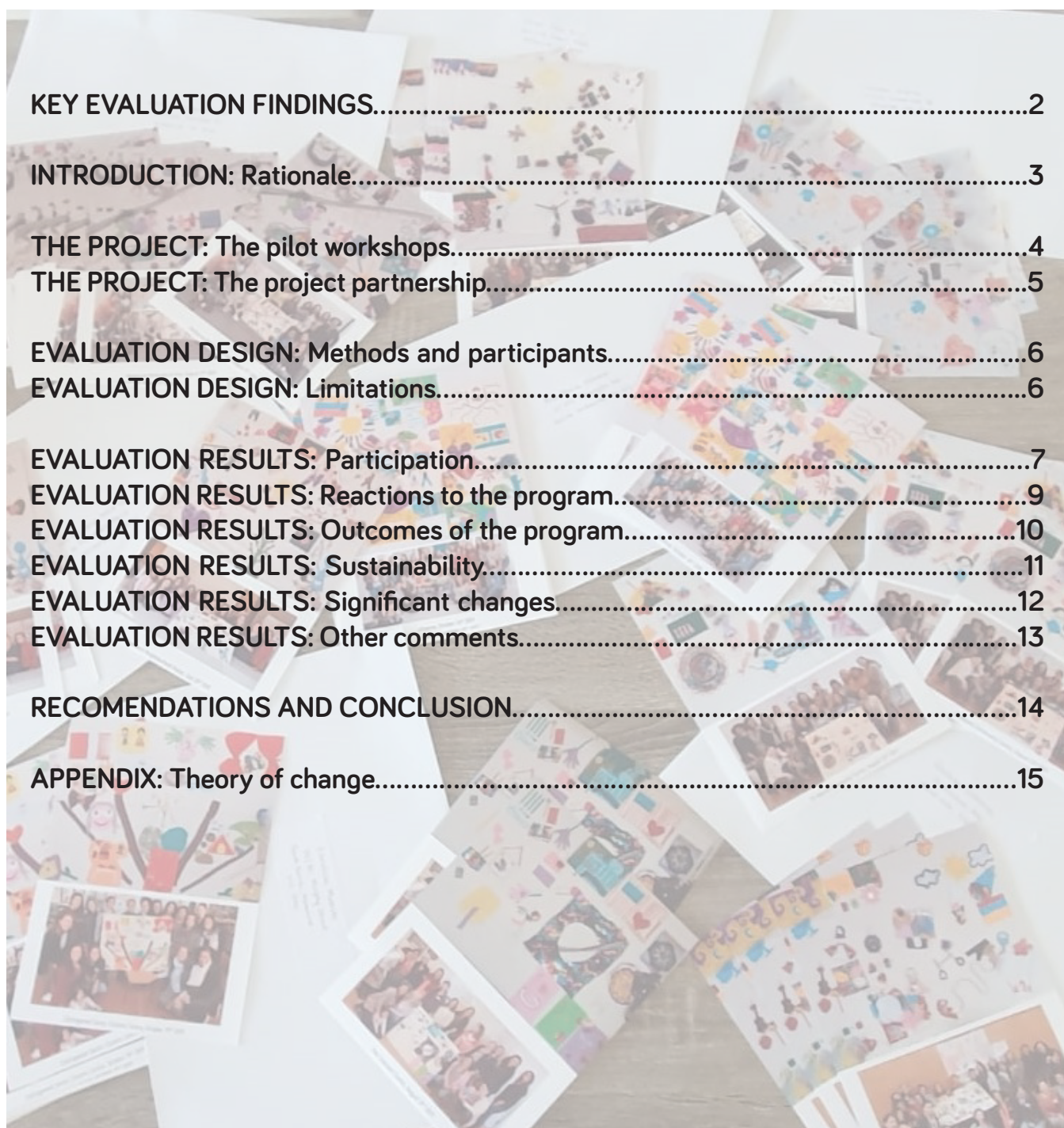
The “Interweaving/ Entretejiendo” pilot project was an initiative by Latin Stories Australia. It was developed thanks to the participation from project partners: Casa Cultura and Momentum Psychology.

This project was was funded by the Department of Home Affairs Fostering Integration Grants program. The grants support new initiatives by not-for-profit organisations that help migrants better integrate into Australian life through employment and community participation.

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INTERWEAVING ENTRETEJIENDO

Key Evaluation Findings
2019 Pilot



122 women from **14**
different **countries of**
origin participated in **9**
workshops around
Victoria

98%

of participants were
satisfied with the
Interweaving
workshops and would
recommend them to
their peers



There was an **increase**
of **social connec-**
tion, sense of be-
longing, inclusion
and **understanding**
Australian way of life

After participating in the workshops...

97%

have made new connections

97%

have more understanding of
others' experiences

95%

have better understanding of
sense of belonging and resilience

92%

reflected on unhealthy patterns
contributing to isolation

88%

have better understanding of
Australian values

88%

have better knowledge on how
to adopt Australian values

86%

have better knowlege on how
to participate in Australian life

88%

have better awareness of social,
religious and cultural diversity

Introduction

This evaluation report presents the process undertaken in the 'Interweaving/Entretejiendo' pilot initiative delivered in 2019, along with discussion of the key project evaluation findings.

Rationale

The Latin American (LA) migration to Victoria has grown almost 300% from those arriving between 2006-2015 in comparison with the previous decade 1996-2005. The 2016 census estimates a population of over 30,648 LA people. This includes people from over 20 countries in the LA Region.

Since 2015 our organisation, has collected over 200 migration stories from LA migrants living in Australia. These stories recount the main challenges faced by this community, their perceived cultural contrasts between Australia and their home country and piece of advice for others to establish successfully into Australian life. Recurrent challenges mentioned by women are absence of family and social networks, feelings of isolation and sense of not belonging. We have also identified that the lack of understanding of Australian values and culture is a barrier to fully feel welcomed and supported by the Australian community.

Latin American women as the target community for the pilot project

In Victoria only 24% of women of LA background have a full-time position and almost 50% are unemployed. This makes LA migrant women more prone to isolation, lack of empowerment and lack of participation into the Australian social, economic and civil life.

Most of these challenges echo the findings of "Hearing her voice: report from the kitchen table conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women on violence against women and their children" in which participants articulated that social isolation is a key problem for CALD women as it may lead them to tolerate violence.

Therefore, LA women are a vulnerable group with potential for integration challenges.

The project

The pilot workshops

The interweaving/entretiendo project is a migrant focused project aimed to increase social cohesion, empowerment, cultural diversity and sense of belonging (see Theory of Change in page 15).

In 2019, a pilot phase was implemented with the Latin American women community in nine different areas in Victoria (Brunswick, Footscray, Prahran, Melbourne city, St Albans, Springvale, Werribee, Collingwood and St Kilda).

In total, 131 women participated (122 as participants and 9 as guest speakers) in a series of workshops on Australian values, inclusion, sense of belonging, resilience and cultural diversity. These workshops strived to assist participants to feel motivated and inspired to be active in their process to feel included within Australian social, economic and civic life.

Goal: The Latin American migrant communities are integrated into Australian society

- Objective 1** Foster social connection
- Objective 2** Encourage the social, economic and civic participation in Australia
- Objective 3** Promote a greater understanding of racial, religious and cultural diversity
- Objective 4** Develop migrants sense of belonging and resilience

Strategy 1:
Workshops with four segments that complement each other

Strategy 2:
Toolkit for participants with key contact details and support services

Strategy 3:
Ongoing support through social media platforms

The project partnership

In 2018, Latin Stories Australia received funding from the Department of Home Affairs Fostering Integration Grants program. The grants support new initiatives by not-for-profit organisations that help migrants better integrate into Australian life through employment and community participation.

The planning and development of the 2019 Pilot project was led by Latin Stories Australia. Latin Stories Australia contracted Casa Cultura and Momentum Psychology, to co-facilitate the workshops and co-develop the toolkit.



Latin Stories Australia is a charity organisation aiming to advance multiculturalism and social cohesion in Australia in a way that is respectful for both the Latin American migrants and the wider Australian society. We provide platforms that (1) increase the sense of belonging, acceptance and legitimacy of the Latin American migrant community, (2) create awareness of the Latin American contribution to Australia's social capital and diversity, and (3) build opportunities for social cohesion for Latin American migrants, especially for those in need.



Casa Cultura develops and delivers intersectional art projects and programs that educate, advance human values, foster creativity and support plurality of expression and choice. Every initiative is conceived to tackle a social issue, fostering dialogue and triggering change in the participants and their circles of influence. Casa Cultura believes that the arts play a pivotal role in enabling people to identify and address issues that affect them, understand their role in the community and connect with others.



Momentum Psychology and Wellbeing Services is a practice of qualified professionals that has been founded as a response to provide quality and affordable mental health services to everyone in the community who may benefit from the services we offer, such as individual, couples and family therapy, as well as group therapy and workshops. At Momentum we want to minimise the barriers that people may experience when accessing to psychology and counselling services, such as high costs and lack of knowledge about how psychology and counselling can help you have a more fulfilling and enjoyable life.

Evaluation design

Methods & Participants

Evaluation Method	Participants
Program documentation review	Program guidelines and materials delivered to participants (training activity plans, presentations, workshop materials, program requirements and any further content provided to participants) (n=10).
Post survey	Participants (n=122) completed a post questionnaire (quantitative and qualitative data) at the end of each workshop.
Most significant change	A reflection exercise to discuss with what have been the most significant changes of the program. Collection of stories happened during the project and few weeks after the workshops finished.

Limitations

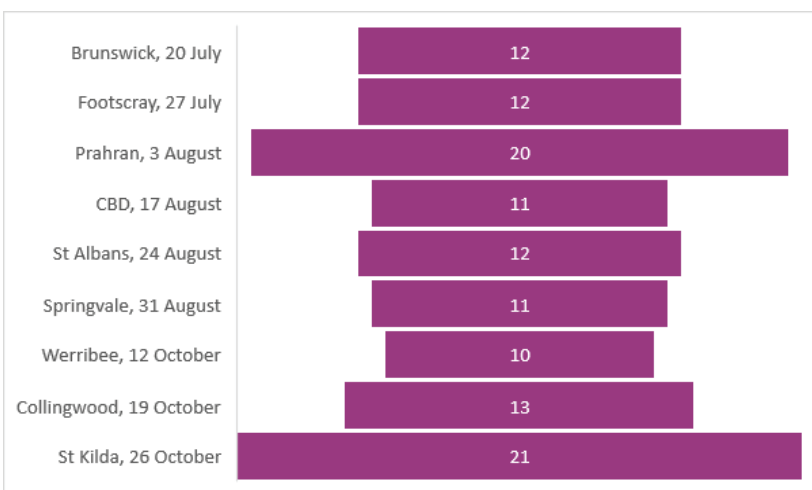
The evaluation findings presented in this report were collected and analysed by Latin Stories Australia who is the leading organisation and heavily involved in project implementation. Efforts were made to ensure no significant bias influenced the data analysis.

Another limitation is that only post evaluation survey was used to collect data on the project's impact on participants knowledge, understanding and skills. These post findings were not compared to a baseline measure.

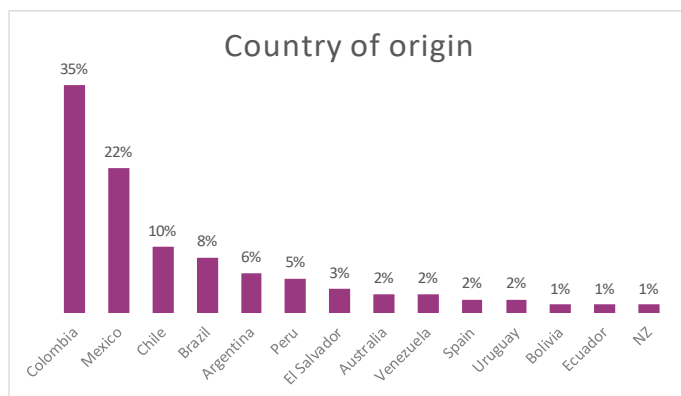
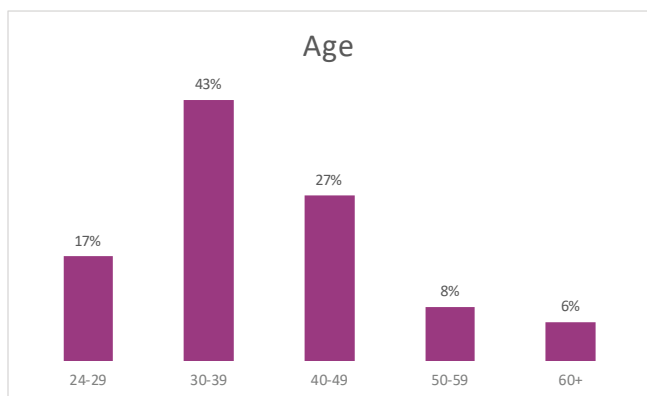
Evaluation Results

Participation

122 women from 14 different countries of origin participated in 9 workshops around Victoria



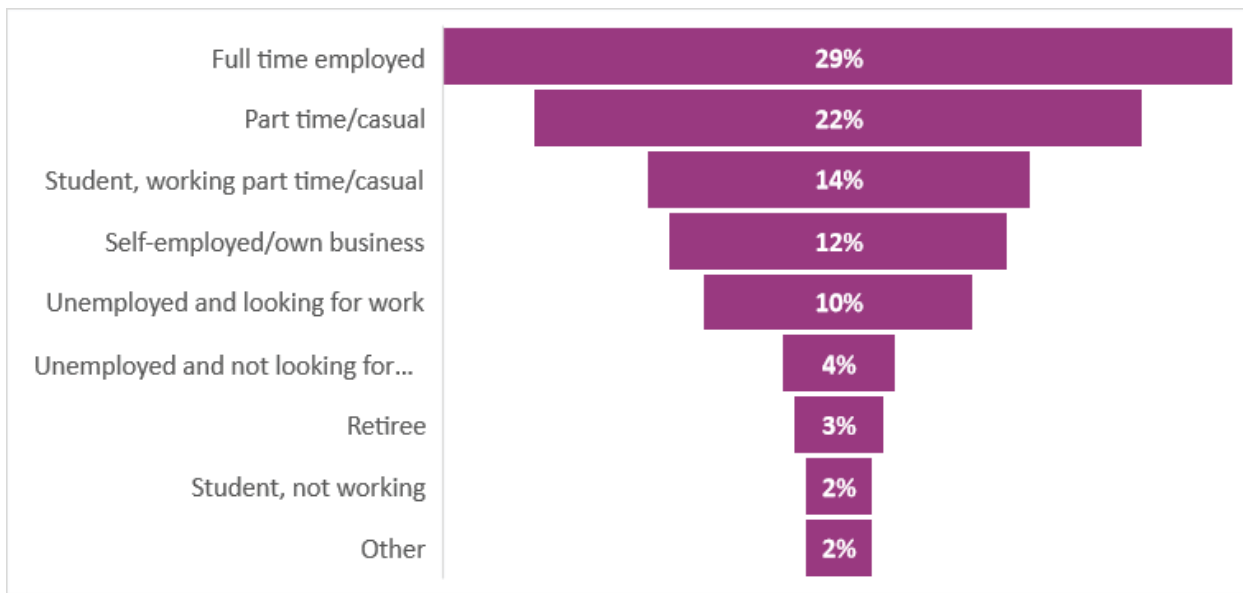
We reached a diverse cohort in terms of age, country of origin, years in Australia, employment status, visa status and care responsibilities



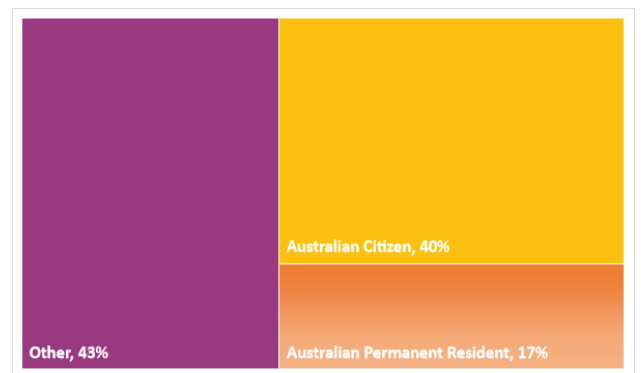
“SPECIALLY IMPORTANT WAS THE INTERGENERATIONAL ASPECT OF IT”

Participant at the Footscray workshop

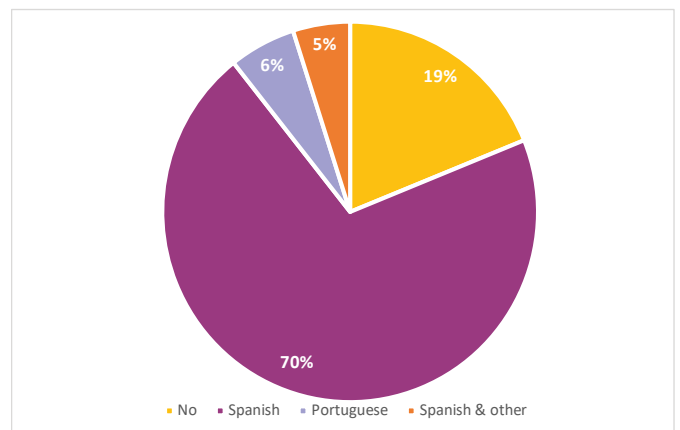
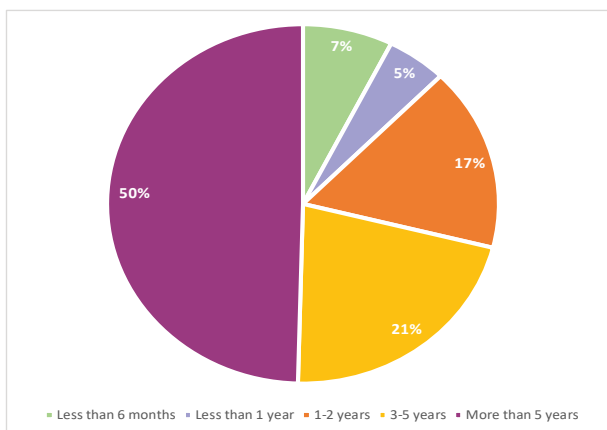
29% of participants are full-time employed and 20% are not employed (for various reasons)



The lack of employment or type of employment available for people could be related to caring responsibilities, age and/or visa status. However, more than 78% of participants are 30-59 years old; 72% of participants don't have children or are 20 years old; and 57% are Australian citizens or permanent residents. These findings suggest that there are other barriers for Latin American women to fully access job opportunities.



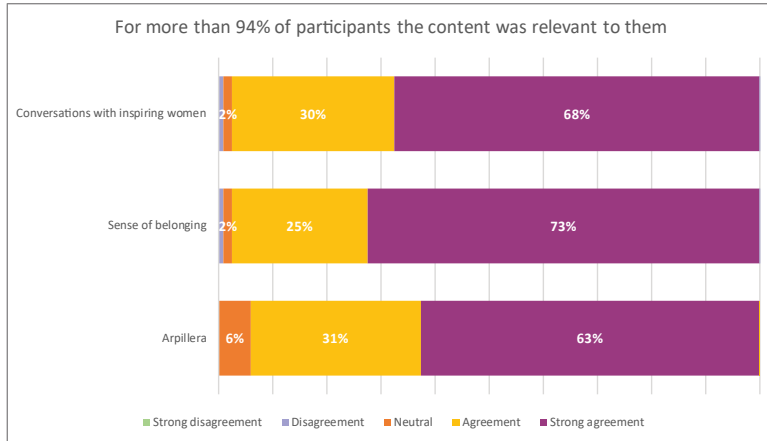
The majority of participants have been here for at least 3 years (71%). Half of them have been in Australia for more than 5 years (settled migrants). However, only 19% only speak English at home.



Reactions to the program

Overall, almost all participants strongly agreed or agreed that the three sections of the workshops were relevant, engaging, provided opportunities to learn from experience; and supported them to reflect on their own behaviours and practices.

For more than 94% of participants the content was relevant to them



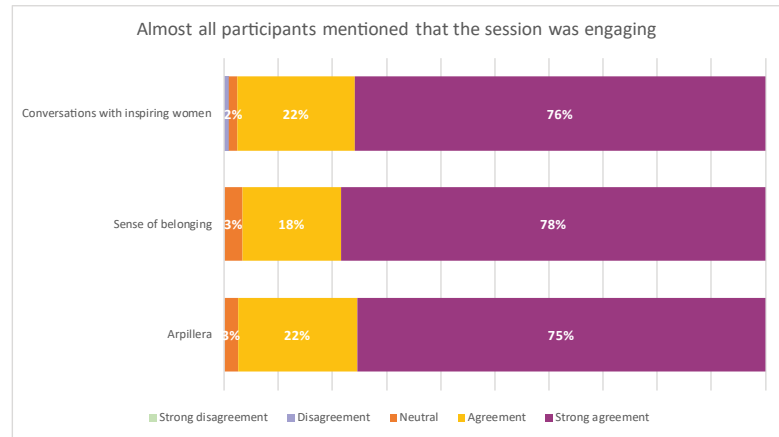
"ALL OF THEM BECAUSE THEY DEAL WITH INTEGRATION, CULTURE, RESILIENCE AND WOMANHOOD"

Participant at the Prahran workshop

"ARPILLERA: EXPRESS THROUGH ART OUR SITUATION AS LATINOS LIVING IN ANOTHER COUNTRY"

Participant at the St Albans workshop

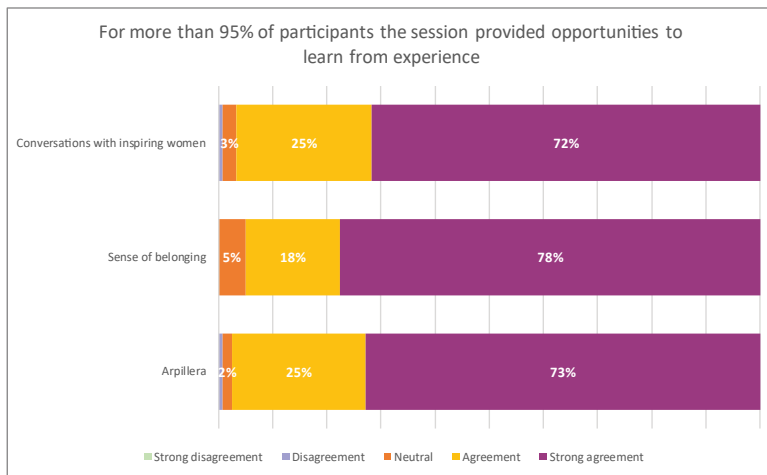
Almost all participants mentioned that the session was engaging



"I AM TRYING TO SETTLE DOWN IN AUSTRALIA AND IT WAS HELPFUL TO HEAR SOMEONE ELSE'S SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE. IT WAS EMPOWERING AND GAVE ME HOPE"

Participant at the St Kilda workshop

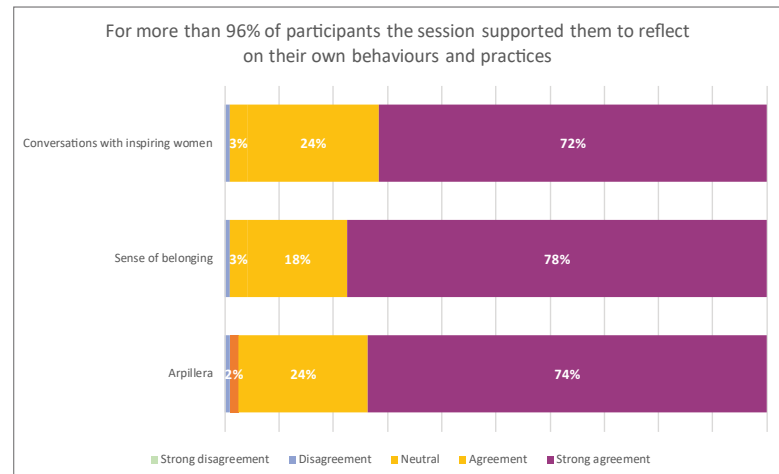
For more than 95% of participants the session provided opportunities to learn from experience



"SENSE OF BELONGING ASKED THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ANALYSE AND GROW FROM EXPERIENCE"

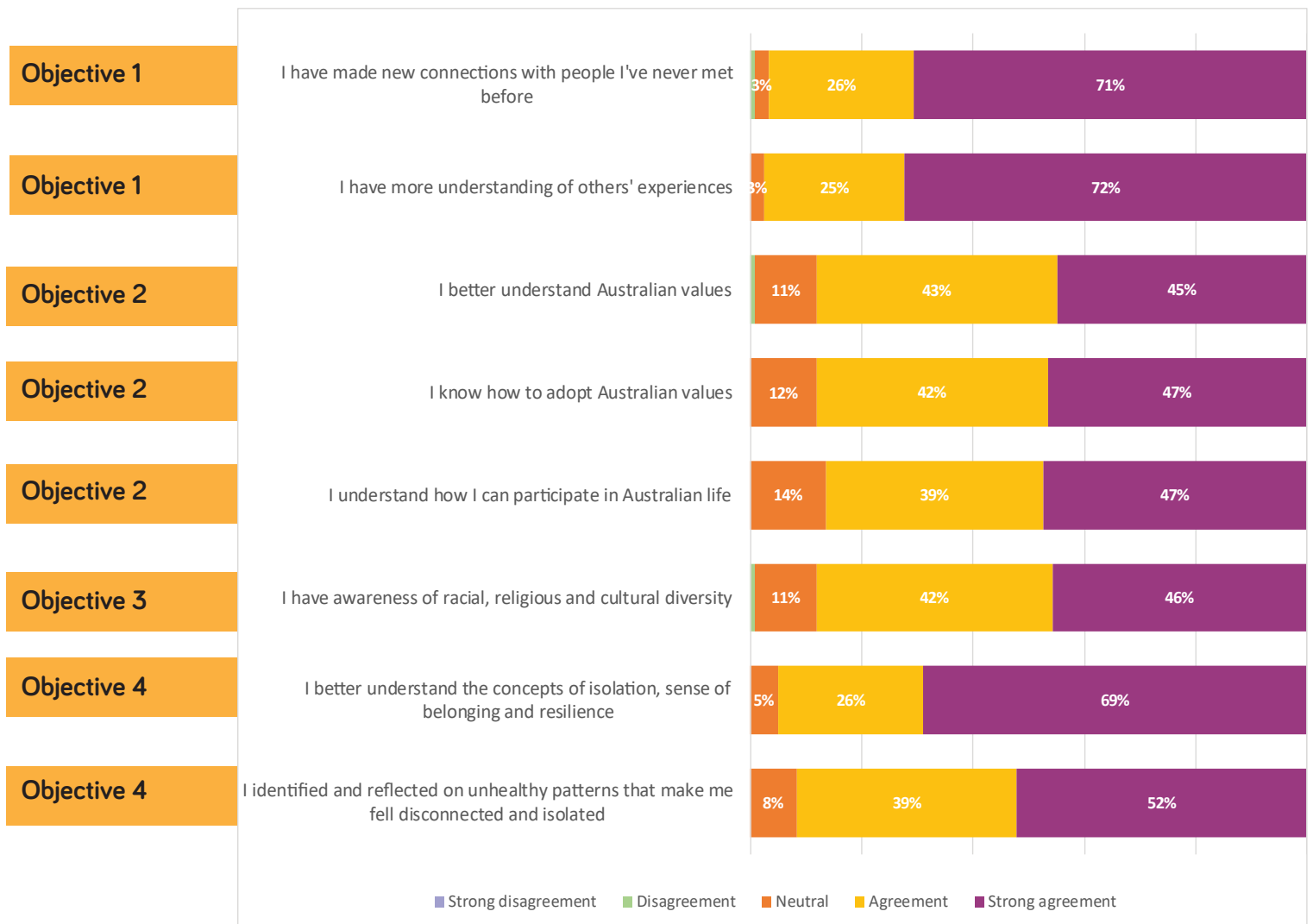
Participant at the St Kilda workshop

For more than 96% of participants the session supported them to reflect on their own behaviours and practices




Outcomes of the program

This post evaluation data indicates the positive impact the topics discussed during the workshop had on participants. Overall, participants indicated that **the workshop fostered social connection (Objective 1)** - (97% strongly agreed and agreed) have made new connections with people and have more understanding of others' experiences. Participants commented that after the workshop, they are **better equipt to participate in the different aspects of Australian way of life (Objective 2)** - 88% of participants better understand the Australian values; 89% know how to aport the Australian values and 86% understand how to participate in Australian life. Participants have a **better understanding of racial, religious and cultural diversity in Victoria (Objective 3)** - (88% strongly agreed and agreed). Finally, participants developed **sense of belonging and resilience (Objective 4)** - 95% strongly agreed and agreed that they better understand the concepts of isolation, sense of belonging and resilience; and 91% strongly agreed and agreed that they identified unhealthy patterns that make them feel disconnected and isolated.



Sustainability

Participants were asked how could they use what you've learnt during the workshop in their life and community



"I CAN APPLY NEW WAYS TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE EVERY DAY. I CAN RELATE TO OTHERS AS I CAN SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY NOW. I CAN GIVE AND RECEIVE OPENLY AND I UNDERSTAND NOW THERE ARE SPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT I DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED"

Participant at the St Kilda workshop

"I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MORE GROUPS OF SUPPORT AND I WILL GET MORE INVOLVED WITH THOSE TO OVERCOME MY CRISIS"

Participant at the St Kilda workshop

"TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE AUSTRALIAN VALUES AND TRYING TO INTEGRATE BETTER IN THE COMMUNITY"

Participant at the Brunswick workshop

"I LEARNT THAT MAKING "AUSTRALIA" MY HOME IS A PERSONAL DECISION AND IF I CHANGE THE WAY I LOOK AT MYSELF WITHIN THIS ENVIRONMENT, MY EXPERIENCE WILL CHANGE"

Participant at the St Kilda workshop

"CREATING ACTIVITIES TO SHARE WITH THE COMMUNITY. USING MY BACKGROUND AS A WAY TO INTEGRATE IN THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY"

Participant at the Brunswick workshop

106 of the 122 participants commented on ways on how they would use their learning / experience after the workshop.

More than 30 comments were related to **Support /Connect with others.**

More than 25 participants mentioned they now they feel empowered to **look for opportunities/events/situations** that will help them to feel included in Australia.

Around 10 participants will **share their learnings** with others AND at work; be **open to new experiences and perspectives**; feel **confident to share their culture and identity with others.** , and will find **new ways to interact with others.**

Other outcomes include: **look for support; change their perspective** (sense of belonging is a decision); and **respect myself and others.**

Significant changes

Collection of stories happened during the project and few weeks after the workshops finished. A reflection session was facilitated to review these stories and discuss what have been the most significant changes of the program.



Gals in Australia (a Facebook group in which Latin American women in Australia support each other) was born after a participant felt empowered, after attending the St Kilda Workshop, to help other migrants. Since its creation on the 27th of October 2019, the group has now 1,344 members. The members have organised 5 free events (for professional, social, and personal development) for Latin American women around Australia (VIC, WA, NSW and QLD).

Professional Migrant Women Mentoring Program (a mentoring group to share with other women how to overcome the barriers to find a professional job). Since its creation, they have run 3 sessions.



"PARTICIPATING IN THE WORKSHOP GAVE ME THE ENCOURAGEMENT I NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT AN IDEA THAT I HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING FOR SOME TIME...THE INTERWEAVING WORKSHOP SERIES WAS A GREAT CATALIST FOR MANY PESONAL CONNECTIONS AND ACTIVITIES THAT ARE STARTING TO UNFOLD IN OUR LATIN AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND BEYOND"

Confidence

"EVERYTHING CHANGE WITHIN ME. NOW I FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT MYSELF AND KNOW THAT I CAN DO THINGS WITHOUT FEAR"

"I FEEL SAFER AND KNOW THAT I AM NOT ALONE. I KNOW THAT I A NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO IS SCARE AND HAS INSECURITIES BY BEING IN A COUNTRY SO DIFFERENT TO OURS"

Positive attitud

"SINCE I PARTICIPATED IN THE WORKSHOP I FEEL MOTIVATED BY THE POSSIBILITIES THAT EXIST TO INTEGRATE INTO THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY WITHOUT LOOSSING OUR IDENTITY. THE WORKSHOP GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART OF A SOCIAL NETWORK OF PEOPLE I FEEL IDENTIFIED WITH AND BE CONNECTED WITH THEIR EXPERIENCES. THIS MAKE ME FEEL I AM NOT ALONE IN THIS JOURNEY"

"IT HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND THAT I NEED TO ACCEPT MY REALITY AND ADAPT IN THIS COUNTRY"

Empowerment to create new oppornities for self and others

Change of attitude towards sense of belonging in Australa

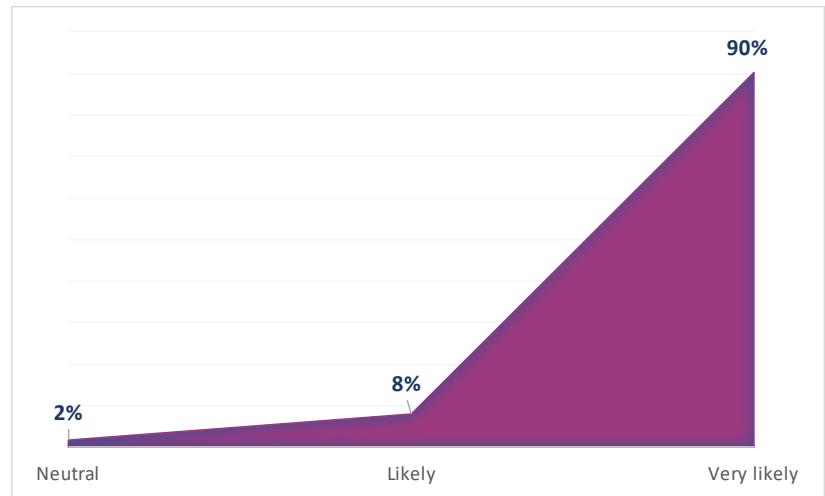
Other comments

Participants were asked how likely would you be to recommend the program to a friend.

Almost all participants were very likely (90%) or likely (8%) to recommend the program to a friend. This suggests that participants found the workshop useful and engaging (as per previous findings - outcomes and relevance sections).

"IT WAS GREAT TO CONNECT WITH FELLOW LATINAS, AND THE CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP WAS RELEVANT, INTERESTING AND ENGAGING. THANK YOU VERY MUCH"

Participant at the Brunswick workshop



Participants were given the option to provide more comments at the end of the survey.

99 of the 122 participants provided comments. Forty-nine comments were related to participants' satisfaction with the workshop and the organisation. Twenty eight comments were thank you notes; and twenty comments were suggestions. The suggestion were related to time (n=7), marketing/attendance (n=6), frequency (n=5), audience, and manage expectations (n=2)

"AMAZING TO HAVE A SPACE AND A GROUP OF PEOPLE THAT CARE TO MAKE AUSTRALIA A BETTER PLACE BY CREATING COMMUNITY AND SHOWING THE BEAUTY AND OPPORTUNITIES OF A MULTICULTURAL COUNTRY"

Participant at the St Kilda workshop

"MORE ADVERTISEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA"

*Participant at the Brunskick workshop
Suggestion: marketing*

"IT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE THESE SPACES TO SHARE NOT ONLY WITH WOMEN BUT ALSO WITH MEN"

*Participant at the Werribee workshop
Suggestion: audience*

"THE ACTIVITIES WERE FANTASTIC, BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO FINISH THEM. MAYBE THE NEXT WORKWHOP COULD RUN UNTIL 4:00 PM"

*Participant at the Springvale workshop
Suggestion: more time*

"I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THESE WORKSHOPS MORE OFTEN AND MAYBE HAVE THEM PERIODICALLY FOR NEW PEOPLE"

*Participant at the St Kilda workshop
Suggestion: frequency*

"THE TIME MANAGEMENT DIDN'T ALLOW TO TALK DEEPLY ABOUT THE TOPICS. IT WAS VERY SHALLOW"

*Participant at the Prahran workshop
Suggestion: manage expectations*

Recommendations & Conclusion

Recommendations

The following list highlights key recommendations that have been identified as a result of the project implementation and evaluation process. These recommendations should be considered for future planning related to the “Interweaving/Entretejiendo” program.

1. Continue the relationship with the previous participants through social media or other channels. This might show organisational authentic commitment to the participants’ well-being and might continue fostering the trust and reputation of the organisations.

2. Consider including other cohorts (Men, LGBTQIA, other migrants communities).

3. Workshops should be longer to provide more time for reflexions.

4. Consider incorporating a new strategy for a more long-term relationship between the project and the participants (e.g. participants-led projects).

Conclusion

The “Interweaving/entretejiendo” pilot project provided a safe and engaging space for Latin American women to reflect on their own experiences as migrants and feel empowered to take action for their integration into the Australia life.

The project design enabled women to increase their knowledge about Australian life and ways to participate on it; cultural identity and diversity; isolation, resilience and sense of belonging.

The project workshops also allowed participants to increase their motivation and confidence to make

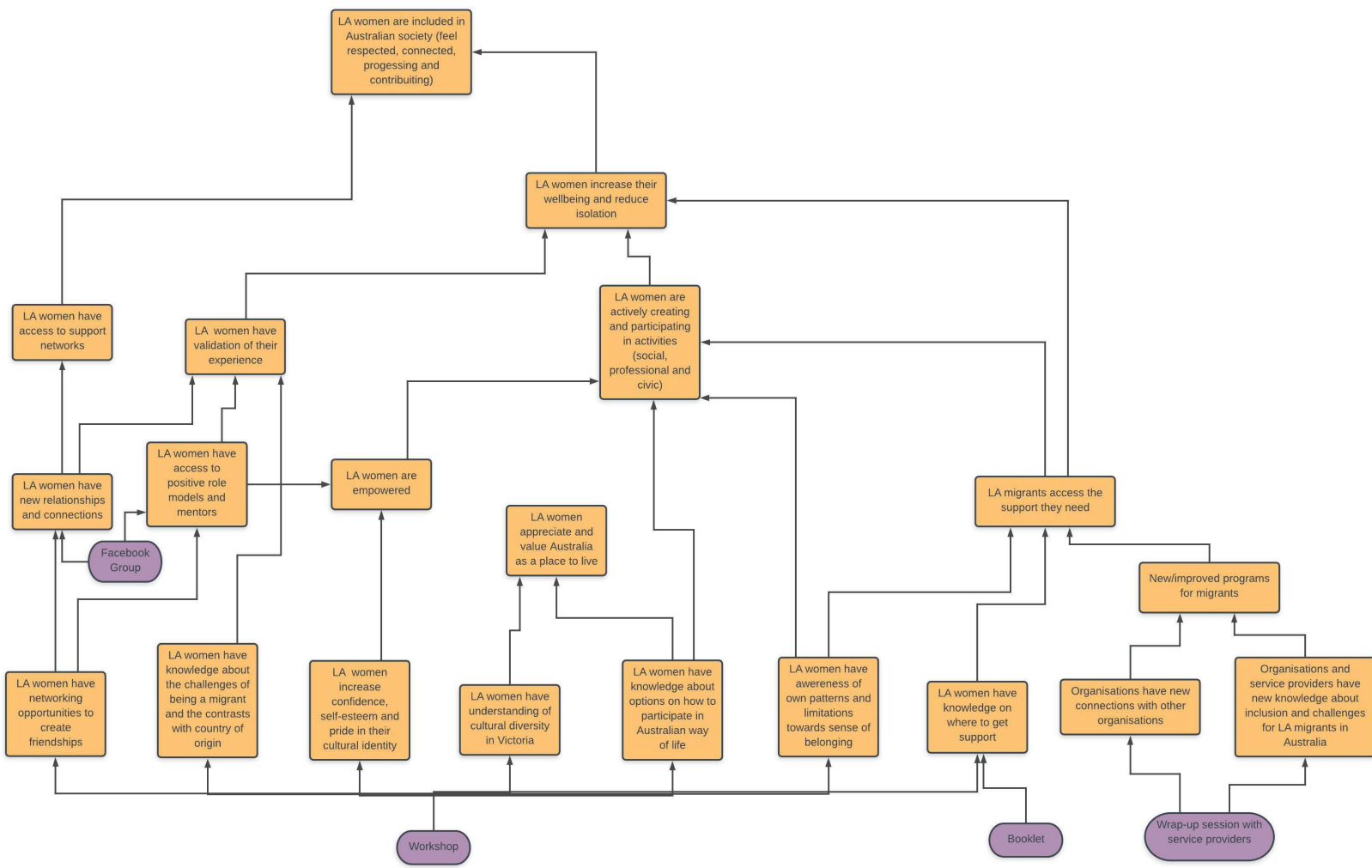
positive change in their lives and community.

In order to maintain and increase this positive change in attitudes and behaviours, on-going support is vital to ensure migrants are supported to successfully be and feel included in Australia.

The high level of commitment from the project partners and the community has enabled this successful collaborative project to occur. This evaluation report highlights the strong need to continue working in partnership and looking for new funding opportunities to address the strong needs of the community.

Appendix

The diagram below illustrates the theory of change for the pilot project



Interweaving/ Entretejiendo 2019 Pilot Evaluation Report

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