



COWORKING SPACES for inclusion

RES-MOVE

Resources On The Move

WORK PACKAGE 2 – Research

T2.7 Data Collection and Reporting – Field research

LOCAL REPORT

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1. The context of the research

Field research was conducted in the province of Valencia, the capital of the Valencian Community. The city's historic richness and modern dynamism provided a vibrant backdrop for the study. Located on the Mediterranean coast, Valencia is Spain's third-largest city by population, after Madrid and Barcelona, covering approximately 134.6 square kilometres. It is home to around 800,000 residents within its city limits and over 1.5 million in its wider metropolitan area.

Valencia is distinguished by its diverse geography, which ranges from urban landscapes to an extensive coastline and surrounding farmland. Its Mediterranean climate and cultural diversity made it an ideal setting for conducting complex interviews. The environment offered a balance between urban and non-urban influences, enabling insights into a broad range of socioeconomic contexts.

Both online and face-to-face interviews were used to collect comprehensive data, accommodating participants' preferences. Most face-to-face interviews took place in the participants' neighbourhoods—in open public spaces and community centres within Ciutat Vella, one of Valencia's most historic districts, as well as in modern areas such as the City of Arts and Sciences. This approach enabled the study to capture voices from different socioeconomic backgrounds and age groups.

Online interviews further allowed researchers to reach participants in suburban and rural areas of the Valencian Community, enhancing the study's geographical and demographic diversity. Valencia's unique characteristics—as a Mediterranean port, a cultural hub, and a centre for education, trade, and tourism—reflect a complex territory where tradition and modernity coexist. This diverse setting enriched the research, providing a broad perspective on the community's perceptions and experiences.

1.1 Migrants and migrant communities in the field and in the labour market

The Valencian Community hosts a significant and diverse migrant population, with 13.9% of its residents born outside Spain as of 2023. This represents approximately 945,580 individuals, predominantly concentrated in Alicante (52%), followed by Valencia (38%) and Castellón (10%). Migration patterns have evolved over the decades: the proportion of migrants rose steadily from 3.8% in 1996 to a peak of 19% in 2012, before slightly declining to 16.25% in 2016 and remaining stable through 2023.

The largest migrant groups originate from Romania (12.6%), the United Kingdom (10.2%), and Morocco (9.1%), collectively accounting for 32% of the foreign-born population. South America also contributes significantly, with individuals from Colombia forming a notable segment of the migrant community. The migrant



population comprises various categories, including economic migrants, students, asylum seekers, and retirees. Among third-country nationals, 371,180 were registered as residents, of whom 72% held general residence authorization, 12% resided under EU free movement rules, and 0.35% were asylum seekers. Naturalization trends show that 25% of the foreign-born population had acquired Spanish citizenship, with the highest rates among South Americans (51.4%), contrasting with lower rates for Asians and Europeans (around 13%).

The integration of foreign workers into the labour market is a key factor in promoting social cohesion and reducing economic disparities. Employment provides not only financial stability but also a vital pathway to social inclusion. In Spain, the foreign-born population numbers 6.7 million, representing 14.3% of the total population. Although the labour force participation rate among foreigners stands at 78%—notably higher than the 63% for native Spaniards—these figures mask persistent challenges in labour market integration.

Foreign workers constitute 16% of the labour force, with an overall employment rate of 57%, compared to 51% for natives. However, this advantage is not uniform across age groups and is influenced by earlier labour market entry and lower levels of educational attainment. Foreign women face particular disadvantages, with an employment rate of 65% compared to 71% for foreign men. Working conditions are generally more precarious for foreign workers: 36% hold temporary contracts versus 23.4% of natives, and irregular employment remains an issue, with 8% of foreign workers employed under verbal agreements compared to 1.7% of Spaniards.

Unemployment continues to be a critical concern. The unemployment rate for foreign workers is 19.7%, significantly higher than the 12% rate for Spaniards. Gender disparities further aggravate this situation, as foreign women are more likely to hold temporary or verbal contracts and to work part-time. Educational attainment does little to close this gap: foreign workers with secondary or higher education still face unemployment rates between 11% and 19%, compared to 4% to 5% among natives.

1.2 CWCS in Spain

Valencia has experienced a notable rise in coworking and collaborative workspaces (CWCS) over the past decade, reflecting global trends toward more flexible, community-driven working environments. As one of Europe's most dynamic urban centres, Valencia hosts an ever-growing number of coworking initiatives fueled by a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a rising population of remote workers.

Fieldwork revealed the presence of approximately 70 coworking and collaborative spaces spread across the city and its metropolitan area. These spaces cater to a wide range of clients, including freelancers, startups, remote workers, and small businesses. Many of them are concentrated in vibrant urban districts such as Ruzafa, El Carmen, and Benimaclet—areas known for their creative and innovative communities.



Some of the most common types of CWCS in Valencia include:

Traditional coworking spaces: These offer shared work environments equipped with amenities such as desks, meeting rooms, and communal areas. Notable examples are A2CW Space and Wayco, the latter operating multiple locations and providing over 3,000 square meters of fully equipped office space.

Niche and specialized spaces: These coworking environments focus on specific industries or professional communities, encouraging collaboration among individuals with shared interests. Examples include Estudio CHAFLÁN and Estudio Medusa.

Hybrid spaces: Some establishments, such as MULTIPRECIO, combine coworking areas with additional facilities like cafeterias and event spaces, creating multifunctional environments that support both work and social interaction.



2. Results from the Field Research

2.1 Migrant`s population and the CWCS

2.1.1 Characteristics and experiences of migrants interviewed

The research included ten migrant respondents: four women over the age of 35 and six men, most of whom are between 25 and 35 years old, with two participants aged 45 and 65, respectively.

The majority of interviewees are either in the process of obtaining residency or hold temporary residency status. Their profiles are primarily those of economic or labour migrants. In terms of education, they possess a diverse range of qualifications, including technical or professional training, university degrees, and master's level education. Most reported having migrated to Spain for economic reasons.

While the majority have acquired some experience in the Spanish labour market, their employment has largely been concentrated in sectors such as gastronomy, beauty services, factory work, crafts, and document translation. Despite their qualifications and professional aspirations, individuals with university or postgraduate degrees frequently find themselves working in positions unrelated to their fields of expertise. These jobs, predominantly in gastronomy, hospitality, and general services, do not align with their academic backgrounds or career goals.

A key finding of the study is the identification of several barriers that hinder migrants' integration into their desired segments of the labour market. One of the most significant obstacles is the lack of legal status, which limits access to formal employment opportunities and often forces migrants into informal or precarious jobs, restricting their professional advancement. Additionally, employer distrust—often rooted in biases related to nationality—further complicates their job search. Gender discrimination adds another layer of difficulty, particularly for women, who face additional challenges in securing stable employment. Lastly, limited familiarity with the local labour market—such as industry expectations, cultural norms, and job search strategies—compounds these difficulties. Addressing these barriers is essential to enabling skilled migrants to fully participate in the labour market and contribute to the host country's economy.

2.1.2 Migrants' interaction and expectations of CWCS

Most of the interviewees had little to no prior knowledge of coworking spaces. Only the younger respondents—those under 35—had some exposure to the concept, although not through direct membership or use. Once the idea of coworking spaces was explained, their response was generally positive. They viewed it as a promising initiative, particularly in terms of creating opportunities for social interaction and professional networking.



Many participants expressed that they would feel motivated to join a coworking space for several key reasons. First, they greatly valued the opportunity to socialize with others in the host country, seeing coworking spaces as a potential bridge for building personal connections. They also recognized the critical role of networking in advancing professionally. For many, access to a professional community within a coworking space represented an invaluable chance to establish connections, share knowledge, and open doors in an unfamiliar job market. The possibility of interacting with individuals who share their professional interests or who could serve as mentors was highlighted as particularly motivating.

In addition, they appreciated the idea of having access to a structured space for work and collaboration. A coworking space was seen not only as a physical place to work, but also as an environment conducive to productivity, creativity, and the exchange of ideas. This was viewed as especially beneficial for those working on independent projects or seeking new employment opportunities.

Finally, participants emphasized that joining a coworking space could serve as an effective means of learning about and adapting to the local labour market. They viewed this integration as extending beyond the professional realm, contributing to a deeper understanding of the host country's cultural and social norms and thereby supporting their overall integration.

Their reflections included statements such as:

- *"To get to know the culture of the place where one is living, or even to discover new job opportunities."*
- *"First of all, getting out of the house and having a space where, in addition to working, I can interact and build social relationships with other people."*
- *"The possibility of using specialized tools and materials that I can't afford to have at home."*
- *"I would also like to be part of a community that values artisanal work, to create professional connections. And coworking spaces can lead to other informal spaces."*

2.1.3 Conditions of getting involved

Some of the interviewees expressed a clear interest in developing professional ideas within coworking spaces, reflecting both creative ambitions and specific career goals. The initiatives mentioned included writing a book, undertaking translation projects related to technology or marketing, developing skills in crafts or painting, and enhancing abilities in areas such as sales or consultancy work.

A key aspect highlighted by the interviewees was the motivation to have access to a mentor within the coworking context. This figure was seen as essential for



providing personalized guidance from someone with greater expertise in their professional field. Having a mentor would not only help improve specific skills but also facilitate entry into the labour market by offering practical orientation and valuable advice on navigating the nuances of the host country's job sector. In this way, coworking spaces were perceived not merely as places to work, but as platforms for professional growth and the creation of meaningful networks to advance their careers.

There were differing opinions among respondents regarding the ideal nature of coworking spaces. Some migrants believed that coworking spaces should maintain a strictly professional focus, without incorporating leisure activities. For this group, coworking was seen solely as a workspace designed to enhance productivity, support professional projects, and foster meaningful work connections. They argued that mixing in recreational activities might detract from the primary purpose of these spaces and undermine the seriousness of the environment.

Conversely, another group of interviewees felt that coworking spaces could benefit from offering recreational and social activities to foster a stronger sense of community among members. They suggested initiatives such as organizing weekend excursions, celebrating members' birthdays, or hosting events to mark national holidays. In their view, these activities would strengthen social ties and make the coworking experience more holistic and rewarding.

Regarding geographic preferences, interviewees did not express a clear inclination for either urban or rural coworking spaces. Their choices were primarily influenced by proximity and the challenges of accessing certain locations via public transportation. While public transport in the province of Valencia is generally regarded as efficient and accessible within the city, it becomes more limited and complicated in rural areas, posing a significant challenge. As a result, those living in urban areas preferred coworking spaces within the city, while residents of smaller towns opted for rural locations that minimized travel time and transportation difficulties. This highlights how mobility conditions and transport infrastructure play a significant role in shaping preferences for coworking spaces, underscoring the need for solutions tailored to the diverse realities across the province.

On the topic of including activities for children, most respondents expressed a positive view, seeing such initiatives as beneficial additions that could support work-life balance.

Finally, interviewees' responses regarding what it means to feel welcomed in a coworking space could be grouped into three main categories. For some, the most important factor was the presence of inclusive and welcoming staff or members; they valued human warmth and a sense of community as key to creating a comfortable and receptive environment. For others, the feeling of being welcomed was linked to the activities offered—specifically, events, workshops, or projects aligned with their professional interests, which foster connections and support personal and professional development. A third group emphasized the importance of high-quality infrastructure and conditions, appreciating modern equipment, well-designed spaces, and environments that promote productivity and comfort.



In conclusion, feeling welcomed in a coworking space depends on a combination of human, professional, and structural factors, reflecting the varied priorities and needs of each individual.

2.2 CWCS and migrant population

2.2.1 Characteristics and experiences with migrant users

All of the coworking spaces referenced by the interviewed participants (10 people) are located within the province of Valencia. One of these is situated in a rural area, while the rest are located in suburban settings.

In terms of membership, most of these coworking spaces have between 3 and 9 members. Another group of spaces hosts approximately 20 to 25 members, and one coworking space—Wayco—has around 200 members. These spaces are mixed gender, with a fairly balanced proportion in all cases, except for the space with 3 members, which is entirely male. The age range of members is between 33 and 45 years, with most falling within the 33 to 35 age group.

All of these spaces self-identify as coworking spaces and are managed with private funding. The majority offer only the core benefit of providing workspaces. However, some also foster a collaborative community and organize occasional workshops. The largest space, Wayco (200 members), offers additional benefits, including workshops, classes, and community events of a social nature; art exhibitions with refreshments; leisure excursions; events where coworkers can present their work and connect with potential clients; and thematic events aligned with local festivities such as *Las Fallas*. Wayco also features *Wayco Learn*, where experts offer classes on specific topics.

The typical profile of members consists of European freelancers or full-time employees whose companies cover the cost of their coworking membership.

Most of the interviewees (8 out of 10) reported no prior experience working in coworking spaces that included economic migrants or individuals fitting the study's profile. Their memberships primarily consist of Europeans or North Americans. Only two coworking spaces—Estudio Chaflán and Multiprecio—reported experience working with migrants, specifically economic migrants from Latin America. Estudio Chaflán organizes inclusive workshops, while Multiprecio has established a support network for migrants. Other coworking spaces mentioned potential or planned initiatives to collaborate with migrants, such as creating a multicultural mural or organizing craft workshops.

None of the coworking spaces currently have formal mentoring programs. However, some members could take on mentoring roles on an occasional basis,



particularly in the context of specific workshops, though not as a permanent feature of the space.

2.2.2 Perceptions and perspectives for a future engagement

In some cases, perceived bureaucratic challenges pose obstacles to collaboration with migrants. In smaller coworking spaces, there is also concern about the risk of some migrants seeking to use the facilities free of charge, which would not be viable, as these spaces operate as economic entities dependent on membership fees and rental payments. Nonetheless, the potential benefits of engaging with migrants were also acknowledged. These include opportunities for cultural exchange and, for migrants, the expansion of their knowledge about the local labour market and the development of professional contacts.

Only three of the coworking spaces—A2CW, Multiprecio, and Estudio Chaflán—have collaborated with NGOs. Of these, only Multiprecio and Estudio Chaflán have had direct interaction with migrants. The remaining coworking spaces reported no prior collaboration or affiliation with such networks, although some expressed openness to partnerships in the next phase of the project and a willingness to offer their facilities for related activities.

There is a shared view among coworking space representatives that the project could play a crucial role in facilitating migrant participation. Specifically, they suggested that the project could invite migrants to engage with coworking spaces, provide funding for activities, and act as a bridge between migrants and these professional environments. By facilitating access, the project could create opportunities for migrants to integrate into the local professional network, acquire new skills, and gain access to resources that support their economic independence. Furthermore, by organizing activities and events, the project could help foster a sense of community and collaboration, benefiting both migrants and the coworking spaces themselves. This would enrich the coworking environment with diverse perspectives and promote greater cultural and professional exchange within these spaces.



3. Reflections and strategic considerations

3.1 Reflection on the existing inclusivity and safe-space actions

In Valencia, most coworking spaces (CWCs) do not currently recognize the importance of creating inclusive and safe environments for migrants and marginalized groups. Nevertheless, some initiatives exist that aim to promote inclusivity, such as hosting workshops or events focused on professional development and fostering networks that connect migrants with local businesses and services. In certain smaller CWCs, there are efforts to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives, for example through the organization of multicultural events and the provision of tailored support to help migrants navigate the local labour market.

These practices could be significantly enhanced by establishing more structured mentorship programs, expanding the availability of language support, and creating targeted initiatives specifically aimed at integrating migrants. While these measures have proven beneficial at the local level and could certainly serve as models for other countries, challenges remain. A major local challenge lies in securing adequate funding for such initiatives and ensuring genuine commitment from the private sector to support marginalized groups. Additionally, a lack of awareness or understanding of the specific needs of migrants continues to hinder the success of these programs.

At the European level, policy harmonization and greater cross-border collaboration would be essential to scaling these practices across the EU. The main challenge lies in balancing the diverse social and economic conditions of different countries while ensuring equal opportunities for migrants across the European workforce.

Improving the recognition of migrants' skills within coworking spaces requires adopting a more inclusive approach that values the diverse backgrounds and experiences that migrants bring. This could involve offering tailored skill assessments, providing platforms for migrants to showcase their expertise, and creating mentorship and training programs designed to bridge gaps between migrants' existing competencies and local labour market requirements.

The project could play a crucial role in supporting migrants' potential by designing tailored workshops, networking events, and resources aimed at skills development in areas such as entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and knowledge of the local market. By facilitating access to workspaces, mentorship, and funding opportunities, the project could help migrants transform their ideas into tangible ventures. Furthermore, by offering professional development resources and creating connections with potential employers or clients, the project could directly enhance employability and support migrants' integration into the local economy.

From an EU policy perspective, while initiatives like the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) aim to support migrant integration, there remains room for improvement. EU policies could place greater emphasis on integrating



migrants into professional environments such as coworking spaces, by promoting partnerships between CWCs and businesses, encouraging the recognition of foreign qualifications, and developing more accessible support systems for migrant entrepreneurs.

Existing mentorship programs and training opportunities within coworking spaces often lack inclusivity for migrants. Key gaps include insufficient entrepreneurial resources—particularly support for migrant entrepreneurs in areas like business planning and funding—and the absence of cultural sensitivity training for mentors to better address diverse backgrounds.

To improve inclusivity, CWCs could integrate measures such as networking events where migrants can present their ideas and connect with potential partners; collaborations with community organizations to enhance access to resources; internships designed to increase employability; and standard practices like pitching events for migrants to showcase their projects and leadership development programs to expand professional opportunities.

Collaboration with stakeholders in Valencia appears feasible, although likely on a temporary basis. The coworking spaces interviewed expressed willingness to engage in workshops and activities if supported with adequate financial resources. However, for stable and lasting collaboration between coworking spaces and other stakeholders, political and administrative efforts are required—efforts that go beyond the scope of initiatives like RES-MOVE. The project can serve as a catalyst or pilot to demonstrate that collaboration for inclusivity is possible, but for such efforts to become sustainable, a broader and more permanent intervention will be necessary.



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