



METHODOLOGICAL TOOLBOX

for Aesthetic Workshops

Azadeh Fatehrad

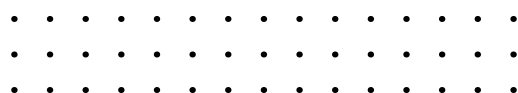


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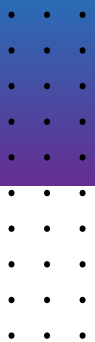
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This Methodological Toolbox is designed as a kit equipped with essential tools, tips, and strategies aimed at assisting researchers and practitioners in designing and conducting collaborative aesthetic workshops. Created with accessibility in mind, this toolbox is ideal for anyone interested in exploring participatory research processes in depth. This Toolbox is produced as part of the MaHoMe research project (2020-2024), generously funded by Nordforsk in partnership with NGOs and facilitators. It is the outcome of a joint effort between the Baltic Art Center Visby, Compass Collective and Kingston University.

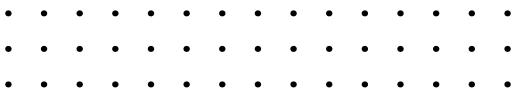
Produced in May 2024, this toolbox is the culmination of a two-year participatory effort, led by Azadeh Fatehrad, the aesthetic work package lead for the MaHoMe project, in collaboration with NGOs and workshop facilitators from the UK, Sweden, and Denmark. Throughout this period, our collaborative network successfully conducted over twelve workshops across these three countries, engaging more than 100 participants in total. The design, implementation, and execution of these workshops demanded extensive coordination and unwavering commitment our involved NGOs and facilitators.



DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In the early stages of planning, we organized two crucial toolkit sessions in Baltic Art Center Visby. The first session aimed to define our methodologies and facilitate an exchange of creative and practical ideas on how to effectively conduct the workshops. This session not only served to align our goals with the project’s objectives but also provided a platform for the facilitators to express and develop their creative talents. The second session took place a year later after completing the workshops and focused on evaluating our approaches and outcomes, refining our strategies for future initiatives.

This document offers a reflection of both toolkit sessions, providing valuable insights for future researchers on planning and delivering effective participatory workshops. Our planning process was simultaneously carried out across three case studies, involving three NGOs and three teams of facilitators. We addressed several logistical challenges, including data management, adherence to ethical processes, and the necessity for translators. Additionally, we managed the recording of discussions and the capture of new media through photography and filming, which played a crucial role in documenting and enhancing the overall workshop experience.



A photograph of a narrow alleyway between old buildings. The building on the left is made of light-colored brick and has a single window. The building on the right is a multi-story structure with several windows and balconies. The image is overlaid with a green-to-blue gradient, which is darker at the top and lighter at the bottom.

Workshop Framework Summary

Making It Home – Migrants’ Memories and Imaginations of Home (2021–2023)

“Making It Home” was a participatory aesthetic workshop series funded by NordForsk and conducted across the UK, Sweden, and Denmark from 2021 to 2023. Developed by Dr. Azadeh Fatehrad the series aimed to provide migrants with a platform to express their experiences of home-making. The workshops engaged migrants as co-researchers, utilizing their smartphones to capture and share images, sounds, and stories that depicted their daily lives and experiences related to home-making. These tools were not just used for storage but as means to actively document and negotiate personal and collective identities and memories across borders.



KEY THEMES AND ACTIVITIES

The central theme of the workshops was the exploration of “home-making” as a dynamic and multifaceted process. Participants explored:

- The transition and adaptation to new forms of home and community.
- Comfort in social interactions and immediate environments.
- Material and social negotiations that defined home.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Workshop participants were diverse adults aged 18 to 65 who were adept at using smartphones. Diversity in gender, ethnicity, education, disability, and time since immigration was crucial. Proficiency in the national language of the host country or English was expected.

Where language presented itself as a barrier, peer to peer translation enabled effective communication, and in the instance of Compass Collective, one of project assistant supported with interpretation where needed.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before the workshops, it was essential to address privacy and consent:

- ▶ Participants had to complete a consent form to share their visual and audio preferences. An important consideration to bear in mind is that should you engage with minors (those under the age of 18) it's essential to obtain the consent of the parent or guardian on the young person's behalf..
- ▶ Anonymity was maintained to protect participant privacy.

These outputs were intended for inclusion on an interactive website and a touring exhibition, highlighting the creative insights into home-making from the migrants' perspectives.

The workshops integrate a theoretical framework focusing on the intersection of arts and research, where the mobile phone's use and artistic preferences become instrumental in exploring aesthetic expression and varied methods. This approach aligns with how creative processes can yield distinct research outputs, demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between technology usage and artistic creativity. Furthermore, each individual's relationship with their phone is highly personal, and allows for an authentic insight into their perspective of the theme of home-making. The device of the phone transcends time, as phones are also full of memories, of times before being displaced and of times where families were united. They are a connecting device. But also remind us our separation. The workshop highlights arts-based co-production through the use of autoethnography, memory exploration, and sensory elements within workshops. These elements foster an embodied, emotional, and aesthetic form of knowledge, revealing how personal and cultural narratives contribute to the creation of meaningful artistic outputs. The workshops navigate the tensions between the desire for creative freedom and the necessity to achieve predefined research outcomes. This is evident in the balance between allowing participants to bring personal artifacts, which supports a more open-ended exploration, and the structured methods that guide the workshops' objectives. Reflections on how these workshops challenge conventional notions of knowledge production question the legitimacy of arts-based co-production. The workshops strive to validate diverse forms of knowledge, particularly personal and sensory experiences that are often marginalized in traditional research paradigms. The dialogic nature of the workshops, facilitates a multi-voiced interaction where participants' diverse backgrounds and experiences contribute to a rich tapestry of knowledge. This approach emphasizes the relational and emergent aspects of communication within the workshop setting.

Through the integration of various artistic methods and the acknowledgment of participants' diverse voices, the workshops exemplify the creation of hybrid, multi-voiced knowledge. This knowledge is unfinalizable, continually evolving and reshaping based on participants' interactions and contributions. The workshops consider emotions as relational and performative, playing a critical role in how participants engage with and contribute to the co-production of knowledge. Emotional expressions tied to personal artifacts and stories enrich the collective workshop experience. The focus on embodiment in the workshops underscores how participants' physical and emotional experiences are integral to knowledge production. The continuous state of becoming, influenced by both material and discursive interactions, shapes how knowledge and identities are co-produced.



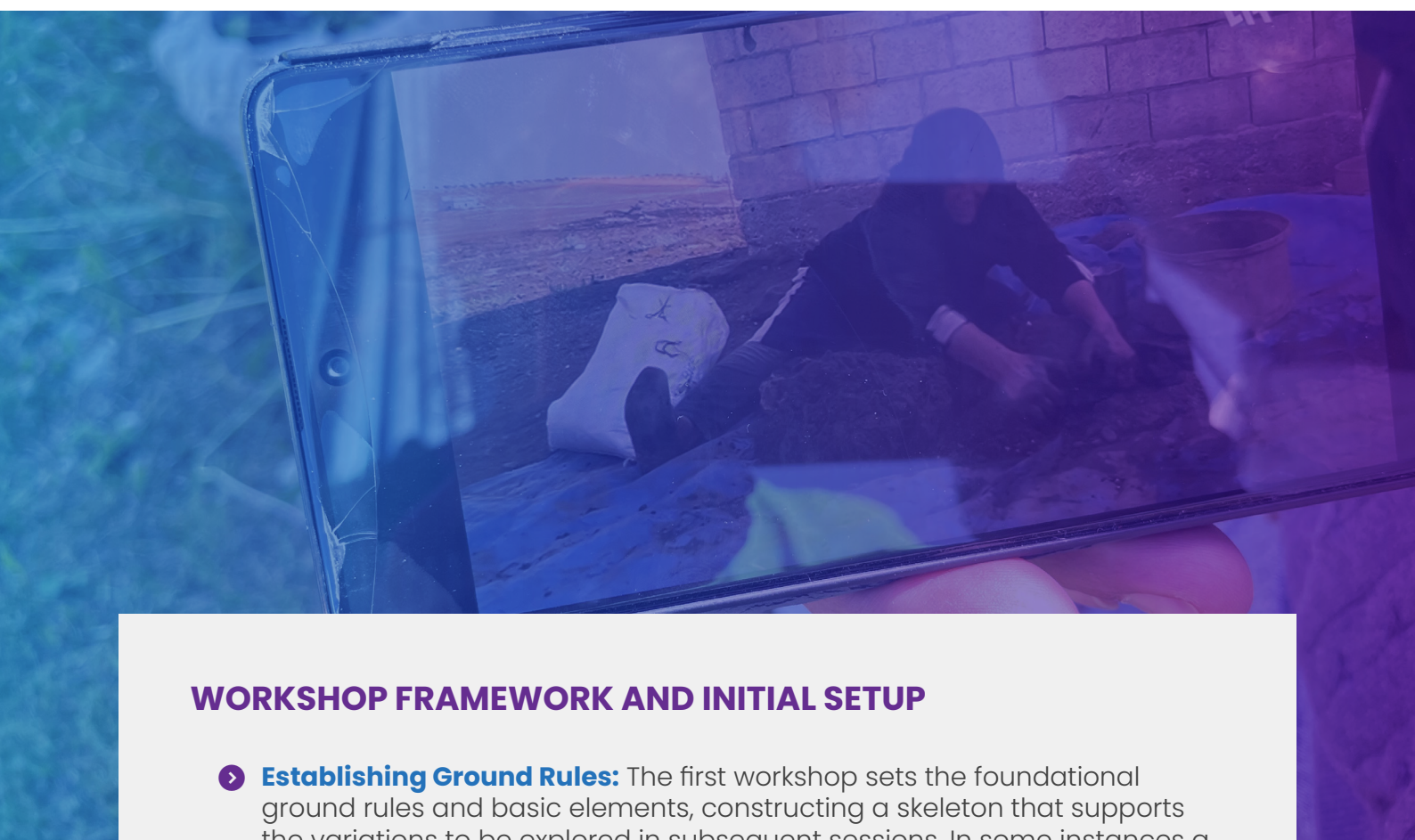
Acknowledging the inherent power dynamics, the workshops consciously address how knowledge and identities are negotiated. Efforts are made to create a level playing field, ensuring that all participants, regardless of their background or skill level, can contribute equally. The phased approach to collaboration is exemplified in activities like storytelling and the use of digital tools, where participants, including dancers in some instances, engage in producing knowledge across varied themes. These activities highlight the iterative and collaborative nature of the workshops.

The workshops conducted across Denmark, the UK, and Sweden facilitated deep reflections on the personal and cultural meanings of 'home'. Through structured discussions, participants explored how home transcends mere physical spaces to encompass complex emotional, relational, and security dimensions.

The following structured text elaborates on the sophisticated dynamics of using mobile phones and artistic preferences to foster aesthetic expression and autoethnography in MaHoMe workshops, focusing on themes of in-betweenness, memory, and the sensory experiences integral to creating a sense of home:

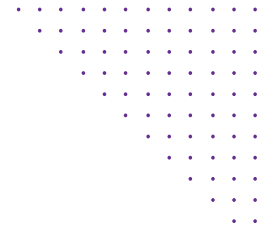
INTEGRATING MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

- **Utilization of Mobile Phones:** Smartphones are employed not just as tools for communication but as instruments for aesthetic expression and varied artistic methods.
- **Artistic Preferences:** Leveraging participants' individual artistic tastes to maximize the utility and creative output from mobile devices.



WORKSHOP FRAMEWORK AND INITIAL SETUP

- **Establishing Ground Rules:** The first workshop sets the foundational ground rules and basic elements, constructing a skeleton that supports the variations to be explored in subsequent sessions. In some instances a collaborative group 'contract', and each member added their signature to the paper, to commit to the creation of a safe and brave space for all.
- **Promises and Expectations:** Each workshop is designed to establish basic promises about what participants can expect and how these foundations facilitate the use of experiences to explore variations. These range from outlining the project in its entirety through an information sheet, and a detailed spoken overview from facilitators. But also to simply setting out the plan for the morning of afternoon workshop, enabling participants feel grounded in the knowledge of what to expect, for example when the breaks are.



THEMATIC EXPLORATION THROUGH WORKSHOPS

THEMES OF IN-BETWEENNESS AND HYBRID SPACES

- **Exploring In-Betweenness:** Discussions on the notion of being in-between, intermediary spaces that participants navigate, which often involve feelings of unbelonging and the deep necessity of homemaking.
- **Hybrid and Open Interpretations:** Encouraging interpretations of hybrid identities and how long participants have been in their current country, fostering a space open to diverse expressions and references.

MEMORY, AUTOETHNOGRAPHY, AND SENSORY ELEMENTS

- **Autoethnographic Approaches:** Utilizing memory and personal stories to engage in autoethnography, helping participants explore their personal and cultural narratives.
- **Sensory Experiences and Artifacts:** Introducing artifacts and sensory elements like the smell of saffron to deepen the sensory experience, possibly encouraging participants to bring personal artifacts that enhance the sense of home.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

CREATIVE PROCESSES AND METHODOLOGIES

- **Artistic Facilitation Methods:** Outlining three or more specific methods or approaches that facilitators can use to guide participants, focusing on sharing ideas and crossing conceptual borders.
- **Non-Therapeutic Approach:** Ensuring the workshop environment remains a creative and explorative space, not therapeutic, using artifacts to elicit artistic effects and sharing personal stories to build transparency and mutual understanding. Creating 'characters' enables participants to step outside of the first person, forming a safe distance from what might be intensely personal and potentially triggering, whilst still being able to express themselves.

PROTOTYPING AND PROCESS TESTING

- **Initial Exploration and Prototyping:** Before engaging in any final artistic production, participants are encouraged to prototype and sketch out ideas, depicting their stories or recording preliminary images to test the aesthetic process.
- **Process Over Product:** Emphasizing the journey of creating over the final outcome, encouraging participants to learn and grow through the aesthetic process.

WORKSHOP LOGISTICS AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

CREATING A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

- **Diverse and Heterogeneous Settings:** Ensuring the workshop environment is comfortable and conducive to creativity, acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of the group where participants vary in age, background, and experience.
- **Sensory and Environmental Considerations:** Discussing and managing sensory experiences within the workshop to meet diverse needs and preferences.

CONSENT AND TRUST

- **Consent Processes:** Handling consent forms with care, ensuring participants understand their purpose and contents before signing. Meetings may be required in advance to build trust and clarify any concerns.
- **Privacy Considerations:** Decisions around recording participants' voices and names need careful consideration to respect privacy and ensure comfort levels are maintained. Translations of consent forms or interpreters can support those with language barriers to fully understand what is being asked of them.

This structured overview captures the intricate planning and thoughtful execution required to run workshops that are rich in sensory and aesthetic exploration, emphasizing personal and cultural expression through innovative uses of technology and art.

1. - Listening
 - Partnerships
 - Delegation of responsibility
 - Clear communication
 - Respect
 - Involving everyone
 - Equity

→ Youth led - Involving the voices of our young people
 ↳ bridge between staff & participants
 Participants are the experts

2. Clean. Large space - studio space
 Well lit - natural light.
 Ideally located for the participants
 ↳ good transport links
 Sound system for playing music
 Prayer room
 Green room / rest room / social space

Professional space - project taken seriously
 - introduces participants to new cultural space
 Chairs, tables, materials
 Welcoming & friendly venue staff
 Refreshments
 Toilets

3. Having a professional photographer/videographer there to capture the process
 (we were so busy facilitating that it was hard to do both)
 Good quality camera

4. - our project was specific.
 Our young people were between the age 16-25 - it meant we got a young person's perspective
 - insight from young people

Having basic English is important
 Having translators is important
 Having support is important
 The needs are met

Initial Reflections and Shared Meanings

Participants began by expressing their personal definitions of home and how they cultivate these environments in their respective countries. The discussions highlighted several recurring themes:

Garden:

A symbol of growth and personal space.



Marriage and Family:

Central to relational stability and belonging.



House:

More than just a structure, a shelter that provides permanence.



Security, Safety, and Legal Status:

Crucial for establishing a settled and secure life.



Cultural and Historical Connections:

Roots, language, traditions, and memories that link to one's identity.



Social Interactions:

Community and social networks that support individual lives.



Daily and Ceremonial Practices:

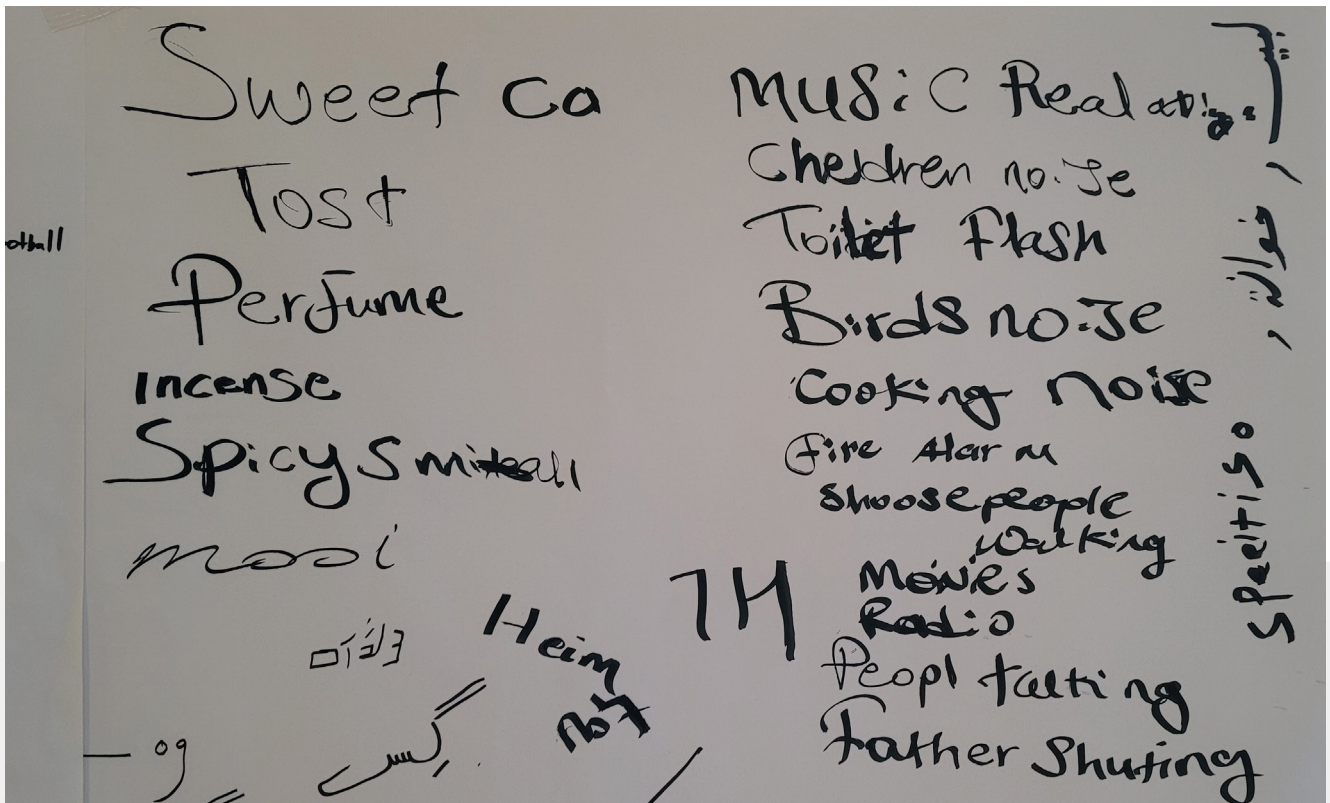
The role of food, holidays, and leisure in creating a homely feeling.



Individual Agency:

The active role each person plays in shaping their environment.





Distilling Core Themes into Keywords Following their initial discussions, participants synthesized their thoughts into keywords. This visual method of using colored sticky notes allowed for the illustration of the diverse yet interconnected elements that define home. Prominent keywords included “garden,” “marriage,” “family,” “security,” “roots,” “language,” and “community.” **Deeper Analysis of Home-Making Experiences** This phase allowed participants to delve further into how the identified keywords related to their own experiences of making a home. Discussions often centered on navigating legal frameworks like immigration processes, and how cultural elements like food and rituals play a pivotal role in re-creating a sense of home in a new environment. **Visualizing Home Through Personal and Symbolic Imagery** In the concluding activity, participants were encouraged to find and share images that resonated with the discussed themes. This collection ranged from personal photographs to symbolic representations such as a bed or abstract concepts like “meta home.” These visuals were shared on a digital platform, enriching the collective understanding of the diverse interpretations of home.



CLICK HERE

The workshop activities underscored that creating a home is a dynamic and evolving process influenced by an individual’s personal history, cultural background, and the socio-political context of their country. This process involves a blend of tangible and intangible elements, ultimately forming a space that offers both security and a profound sense of belonging.

Detailed Insights into Collaborative Work and Workshop Setup



The essence of working collaboratively in these workshops is deeply rooted in the principle of viewing participants as co-experts, which is fundamental for fostering a dynamic bridge between participants and facilitators. This collaborative atmosphere is built on several core practices:

- **Respect and Partnership:** Establishing a respectful and inclusive environment that nurtures partnership, encouraging every participant to voice their opinions equally.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Ensuring clarity in communication, setting transparent objectives and expectations from the start, and establishing ground rules and responsibilities for all involved.
- **Generosity and Legacy:** Promoting a culture of generosity and aiming to create a lasting impact that extends beyond the immediate outcomes of the workshop. This includes dealing with conflicts constructively and ensuring positive closure, allowing relationships to continue and flourish in future collaborations.

WORKSHOP LOCATION REQUIREMENTS

Effective workshops are heavily dependent on the environment in which they are conducted. The location must support both the functional and comfort needs of participants to ensure a productive and engaging experience.

ESSENTIAL AMENITIES

- **Designated Spaces:** The space should have designated areas with reliable electricity and internet access, as well as good lighting and controlled temperature or air conditions to maintain comfort throughout the sessions.
- **Room Features:** A well-lit room with options to blackout is essential, especially if presentations or visual displays are involved. The room should be spacious enough to form a circle with 20 people and offer controlled noise levels to facilitate clear communication.
- **Accessibility:** The location should be accessible, with good transport links, options for printing essential materials, and robust Wi-Fi connectivity.



ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- **Equipment and Supplies:** Facilities should include music playback capabilities or speakers, paper, pens, a flip chart, and a monitor, projector, or TV with an HDMI lead for presentations.
- **Furniture and Layout:** Adequate tables and chairs should be provided, with additional breakout spaces for group discussions or individual work.
- **Specialized Spaces:** A prayer room should be available to accommodate the spiritual needs of participants. Wall space is also necessary for displaying materials or sticky notes.
- **Consistency and Comfort:** It is important to ensure that the room remains consistent throughout the duration of the workshop series, offering a stable and familiar environment for participants.

ADDITIONAL AMENITIES:

Amenities like recharge stations for electronic devices and coffee areas for breaks are crucial for maintaining energy and engagement levels. Adequate ventilation should be ensured, especially if cooking or physical activities are part of the workshop.

- These comprehensive location requirements are designed to cater to both the functional and comfort needs of the workshop participants, ensuring an environment that is conducive to creativity, collaboration, and effective learning.

ENHANCING WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

Documentation plays a crucial role in capturing the nuanced dynamics and outcomes of the workshops:

- **Professional Documentation:** Engaging professionals to handle video and sound documentation ensures high-quality capture of events. Obtaining consent from participants ahead of time respects their privacy and aligns with ethical standards.
- **Engagement in Documentation:** Encouraging participants to take an active role in documenting their experiences makes the process more engaging and personal. This can be facilitated by ensuring the documentation roles are fun and interactive.



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS AND SKILLS

The demographic profile and skill set of workshop participants can significantly influence the workshop's dynamics and success:

- **Age and Skills:** While there is no strict age requirement, participants should possess basic literacy skills to fully engage with the workshop's content. In workshops specifically involving children, additional planning is necessary to accommodate their needs. For mothers, childcare may be needed for them to be able to participate.
- **Engagement Willingness:** Participants should have a proactive attitude and a desire to engage deeply with the workshop activities. This willingness to participate actively is essential for a collaborative and fruitful workshop experience.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES AND LIMITATIONS

Recruiting the right participants is critical for achieving diverse and meaningful engagement:

- **Effective Recruitment:** Utilizing personal invitations through established organizational networks allows for more targeted and effective recruitment. Ensuring regular contact through these networks can optimize recruitment efforts.
- **Potential Limitations:** Recruitment can be impacted by logistical constraints, such as participants' availability and external factors like immigration status, which might limit their ability to engage fully. Over-recruiting can be a strategy to counteract potential drop-offs, ensuring a sufficient number of participants throughout the workshop.





Participants in the workshop were selected based on specific parameters that aligned with the workshop's goals, including age, skills relevant to the activities (like cooking or using technology), and their ability to commit time despite other commitments.

The well-being of participants was a priority, necessitating provisions for accessibility, transportation, and language translation to accommodate a diverse group. Specific needs included assistance with transportation, childcare, and obtaining necessary supplies like food and kitchen equipment. Challenges such as ensuring stable network access for those with limited online connectivity were anticipated. The planning included continuous communication through personal contacts, regular updates, and proactive scheduling to accommodate participants' availability.

CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATIONS

Recruiting participants took considerable time due to the need to match individuals to the specific demands of the project. This process involved extensive outreach through other organizations, personal invitations, and regular engagement to maintain interest and commitment. Despite thorough planning, challenges such as varying levels of skill and the need for significant support for certain participants, like helping mothers, highlighted the need for flexible and adaptive strategies.



Participant Recruitment and Collaboration:

Recruitment Strategies The recruitment process was designed to attract a diverse participant pool. Strategies included offering incentives like certificates, maintaining regular contact, and creatively organizing recruitment events to address challenges like shyness or extroversion among potential participants. Conditions and expectations were made clear from the outset to ensure alignment with the project's objectives. Additional recruitment tactics included word of mouth, monetary incentives, and the promise of a diploma or reward for participation.



Viewing Participants as Collaborators:

Participants were not just attendees but considered co-researchers, which helped in fostering a collaborative environment. This approach allowed for a dynamic where participants' skills directly informed the workshop content, enhancing the relevance and engagement of the activities. Participants used their knowledge and mobile devices to research and inform the content and activities of the workshop, ensuring that facilitators could tailor the experience around the participants' input. Challenges in treating participants equally were addressed through continuous dialogue and ensuring all voices, especially from younger generations, were heard and valued.

TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION AND WORKSHOP SECURITY



TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Given the technological aspects of the workshop, planning had to account for potential issues like participants' varying levels of digital literacy and the logistical challenges of using specific equipment, such as kitchen appliances and tools for building an oven. Preparations included providing training and ensuring access to necessary technology, which helped in minimizing disruptions and facilitating smooth execution of the workshop activities. A sound artist trained young people in Compass Collective to record the workshops as part of the project, enabling it to be a skills building opportunity. In addition, young people learnt basic film-making and editing skills on their phones, which meant they were in the driving seat in terms of documenting the workshops. Furthermore, they were able to walk away with new knowledge around editing apps and a safe space to make their first shorts films on the topic of home-making.



SECURITY AND SAFETY

Security was a critical concern, especially when participants were required to handle tools or engage in cooking activities. Measures were put in place to ensure that all participants could safely use the equipment, which included providing appropriate instructions and supervision. The challenges were particularly pronounced when dealing with construction and usage of complex kitchen equipment. Training was essential. Every staff member attend a safeguarding training. You may also want to think about trauma informed practice within the workshops.



REFLECTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Evaluating Collaborative Practices
The notion of participants as co-researchers was intended to create a balanced and inclusive atmosphere. While this worked to a large extent, ongoing reflections suggested the need for even deeper engagement and more robust frameworks to support participant-led research activities. **Future Recruitment Plans**
If the recruitment process were to be conducted again, improvements would include even more targeted approaches to matching participant skills and project needs, potentially expanding the criteria to include different demographic and interest groups to enrich the diversity and depth of the workshop experience.

ENHANCED PARTICIPANT CARE AND SUPPORT

Enhancing Accessibility and Communication Accessibility was a core consideration to ensure that all participants could engage effectively. This included:

- **Language Accessibility:** Information was provided in simple language with multiple language options available, including digital accessibility features to accommodate all participants.
- **Translation and Coordination Services:** Printing facilities were readily available, and efforts were made to include in-room translators and project or participant coordinators to streamline communication and interaction during the workshop.
- **Effective Communication:** Materials were emailed well in advance and presented on platforms familiar to participants to ensure ease of access and understanding.
- **Problem Solving:** Adequate time was allocated for problem-solving and troubleshooting, ensuring that sessions did not overwhelm participants with too much information at once.
- **Welcoming Spaces:** Create a safe and inviting environment with a friendly greeter to welcome participants at the door or even at the train station. Enhance the atmosphere with music and engaging activities, and provide refreshments to ensure participants feel comfortable and energised.
- **Project Assistant with Lived Experience:** Employ a trainee with lived experience to serve as a role model and a bridge between participants and facilitators. This role offers leadership and facilitation opportunities for a young person, allowing them to be mentored by staff and involved in project design, delivery, and evaluation.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

The structure of the workshops was carefully designed to align with their specific objectives:

- **Resource Allocation:** Depending on the goals of each session, additional volunteers, assistants, or ambassadors might be required in the workshop room to facilitate activities and ensure smooth execution.
- **Workshop Duration and Intensity:** The duration and consistency of the workshops were tailored to balance intensity and effectiveness, ensuring that each session was manageable and productive for all participants.



STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT AND OUTREACH

Recruitment strategies were diversified to enhance participant diversity and engagement:

- **Broad Outreach:** Utilizing referrals and recommendations, word of mouth, partnerships with NGOs and charities, and connections with local groups and societies to reach a wider audience.
- **Direct and Clear Communication:** Ensuring the clarity of the project's goals and its value was crucial. The workshops were marketed as worthwhile endeavors that were worth the participants' time.
- **Support and Incentives:** Providing travel and food support helped to lower barriers to participation, enhancing the overall accessibility of the project.

REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation Reflecting on the processes and outcomes of the workshops suggests continuous areas for improvement:

- **Enhanced Engagement and Support:** Future workshops could benefit from even more robust support structures for participants, including enhanced digital tools and accessibility features.
- **Optimized Recruitment and Coordination:** Learning from this experience, future recruitment efforts could be even more targeted and tailored, with increased use of direct outreach and clear communication to attract and retain a diverse participant base.

Workshop Methodology Overview



Preparation is crucial to set the foundation for a successful workshop. Key elements in this stage included:

- **Programming Development:** The programming was progressively refined, starting from initial interpretations of the workshop brief, such as transforming filmmaking into aesthetic workshops and then into making short films. This evolution was driven by a deeper understanding and interpretation of the brief.
- **Planning for Inclusivity:** Ensuring the workshop was accessible involved providing materials in simple, multiple languages, ensuring digital accessibility, and setting up spaces that were well-lit, large, clean, and comfortable.
- **Logistical Coordination:** Location essentials such as reliable Wi-Fi, sound systems, and adequate ventilation were confirmed. Desirable additions included spaces like prayer rooms, quiet rooms, and social spaces to cater to all participant needs.

CHALLENGES IN PREPARATION

- **Recruitment:** Finding participants with the necessary skills and ensuring their commitment was challenging, particularly when workshops required specific technical skills, such as building an oven for a cooking workshop.
- **Resource Coordination:** Scheduling team-building sessions and ensuring all facilitators were aligned were significant logistical challenges that required meticulous planning and flexibility.

STAGE OF DELIVERY

Delivery focused on the active engagement of participants and the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen challenges.

- **Adaptive Changes:** Sudden changes, such as the addition of a cinematographic element due to facility issues, were incorporated smoothly into the workshop's flow.
- **Participant Engagement:** Emphasizing participants as experts and co-researchers facilitated a deeper collaborative environment. Tools and roles were clearly designated with consents managed ahead of time to ensure smooth operation.

CHALLENGES IN DELIVERY

- **Technological Adjustments:** The need for non-invasive recording methods, professional documentation tools, and testing equipment required quick adaptability and prior testing to ensure efficiency.
- **Handling Sensitivities:** Creating a safe space was paramount, especially when dealing with potentially triggering topics. Adjustments like choosing a familiar and comfortable location for the workshops, such as Eva's home, helped in creating a secure environment.

POST-WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

The post-workshop phase focused on analyzing the outcomes and planning for future improvements.

- ➊ **Evaluating Success and Vulnerabilities:** Discussions centered around the effectiveness of the safe space created, and considerations for future sessions, such as incorporating dedicated spaces for children.
- ➋ **Continuity and Feedback:** The continuation of collaboration, compensation for time, and thorough reflection and evaluations with all team members helped identify areas for improvement and plan for sustained impact.



FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS

As the workshops continue to evolve, several considerations and adjustments have been identified to enhance future iterations. Allowing participants to choose themes that resonate with their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds could significantly increase their engagement and the overall relevance of the workshops. Furthermore, creating opportunities for participants to remain involved in subsequent phases of the project, such as exhibitions or film showings, could significantly enhance the continuity and legacy of these workshops.

On the technological and operational front, there is a recognized need for enhanced support. This includes increased budgeting for technical needs and extending the time allocated for data collection and editing to ensure high-quality outputs. Additionally, the development of staff and facilitators is crucial. Providing more structured time for team-building activities among facilitators and coordinators has been highlighted as essential for fostering a cohesive and effective workshop environment. These adjustments are aimed at not only improving the efficiency and impact of the workshops but also at enriching the participant experience, ensuring that each workshop is as engaging and productive as possible.

Future Researcher



As we look to the future of our workshops, this section outlines a comprehensive approach to preparation, delivery, and evaluation that seeks to enhance the effectiveness of future research programs. By addressing both the successes and areas for improvement observed in previous iterations, researchers can aim to refine their processes and further enrich the participant experience.

Workshop Preparation and Initial Planning: Effective communication is crucial in the initial stages of workshop planning. Utilizing tools like WhatsApp and email ensures that essential information reliably reaches participants. Additionally, the creation of sign-up sheets helps gather vital participant details such as background and age, which are crucial for tailoring workshop content to meet diverse needs. Venue preparation is meticulously handled to ensure that the space is well-lit, optionally blacked out, and equipped with features that surpass basic accessibility needs, including music playback, monitors, and writing facilities. Despite thorough preparations, challenges such as incorrect contact information or technological misunderstandings occasionally arise, necessitating quick resolutions to maintain effective communication lines.



Workshop Delivery and Execution: Each day's activities are carefully planned to address specific themes and challenges, from identifying the target audience to discussing personal investment in the workshop themes. Flexibility in adapting to unforeseen circumstances ensures that the workshop remains responsive to the needs of the moment without necessitating major program changes. The emphasis on collaborative dynamics, where participants are treated as co-researchers, fosters a respectful and engaging environment, crucial for productive discourse and shared learning.

Technological Setup and Challenges: A robust technological setup, including the preparation and functional testing of cameras, monitors, and audio devices, supports the smooth execution of the workshop. Backup options are always ready to mitigate any equipment failures. Managing participant dynamics and ensuring seamless operation of all technical aspects pose ongoing challenges that require vigilant oversight.



Post-Workshop Activities and Evaluation: Following the workshop, feedback and reflections are collected to assess the impact of the sessions and to identify opportunities for improvement. Future planning involves considering more strategic participant recruitment and potentially adjusting the thematic focus to better align with participant feedback and emerging research interests.



Recruitment and Technological Strategies:

Recruitment strategies are designed to attract a diverse group of participants through word of mouth, engagement with NGOs, and the use of social media, emphasizing the clarity of the workshop's objectives to enhance its appeal. Technological preparations are meticulously managed, with thorough testing of all tools and training for participants to maximize their involvement and contribution.

The workshops have successfully created structured yet flexible environments that deeply engage participants. For your reference, we have included two samples of our workshop plans conducted in the UK and Sweden, which exemplify the implementation of our methodologies and participant engagement strategies. Looking forward, there is a clear opportunity to further enhance these workshops by focusing on detailed planning for participant recruitment and technological needs. Adapting the workshop format based on continuous feedback will ensure its ongoing relevance and impact, making each session a productive and enriching experience for all participants.

An aerial photograph of a historic city, likely in Ethiopia, featuring a large, ornate cathedral with multiple levels of arches and windows. The city is densely packed with traditional buildings. The image is overlaid with a green-to-blue gradient. The text "Example of Workshop Plan" is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Example of Workshop Plan



Overview

The workshop held in Sweden provided a unique platform for women to connect with their cultural roots through the shared experience of cooking. Women used mobile phones to share images of the food and gatherings that held significant meaning for them, related to home-making and feeling at home. The focal activity was constructing a wood-fired oven based on online instructions from Afghanistan, which facilitated the preparation of traditional homemade foods from the participants' motherlands.



Objectives

- To explore the rich culinary heritage of the participants and foster a sense of community among them.
- To create a tangible link between traditional cooking methods and the participants' current lives in Sweden.
- To evoke and share memories associated with traditional recipes and cooking methods.



Activities and Execution

Building the Oven

- **Construction:** Participants engaged in a hands-on activity to build a traditional wood-fired oven. This process not only served as a practical cooking facility but also as a cultural bridge, bringing a piece of Afghan architectural and culinary tradition to Sweden.
- **Teamwork and Learning:** The construction activity facilitated teamwork and allowed participants to learn about traditional building techniques that are integral to Afghan cooking.

Culinary Sessions

- **Recipe Sharing:** Women used mobile phones to share images of the food and gatherings that held significant meaning for them, often related to home-making. They brought recipes that had been passed down through generations and used in large gatherings or ceremonial occasions. These recipes were more than just cooking instructions; they were imbued with personal histories and memories, which were recreated and celebrated during our workshops further enriching the MaHoMe Project's exploration of 'Home'.
- **Cooking Together:** The act of cooking became a communal and intergenerational exchange of knowledge and stories, where each dish brought out narratives connected to the participants' homelands.

Cultural and Emotional Engagement

- **Music and Memories:** Participants were encouraged to play songs that they associated with cooking or that evoked memories of their homeland. This element added an auditory layer to the sensory experiences of the workshop.
- **Memory Sharing:** Discussions about specific elements of recipes that reminded participants of their childhoods, such as the smell of bread or the environment of a school kitchen, helped deepen the emotional impact of the workshop.



Outcomes and Reflections

Cultural Connection and Identity

- The workshop allowed participants to express and preserve their cultural identities through food, which acted as a powerful medium for storytelling and memory sharing.
- It also provided a space for women to strengthen their social networks in Sweden, fostering a supportive community bound by shared heritage and culinary practices.

Empowerment and Skills Transfer

- Learning to build and use a traditional oven empowered the participants by connecting them with a skill that is both culturally significant and practical.
- The workshop also highlighted the adaptability of traditional recipes, encouraging participants to think creatively about how they could integrate elements of their cultural heritage into their current lives in Sweden.

Challenges

- Organizing a cooking workshop of this scale involved logistical challenges, particularly in sourcing authentic ingredients and managing the construction of the oven.
- Ensuring that all participants felt equally included and able to share their stories required careful facilitation.

Future Directions

- Based on the success of the workshop, future sessions could incorporate more diverse culinary traditions from other cultures represented within Sweden's immigrant communities.
- There could also be a focus on documenting these recipes and stories in a digital format to reach a broader audience.

MaHoMe Workshop Summary Report

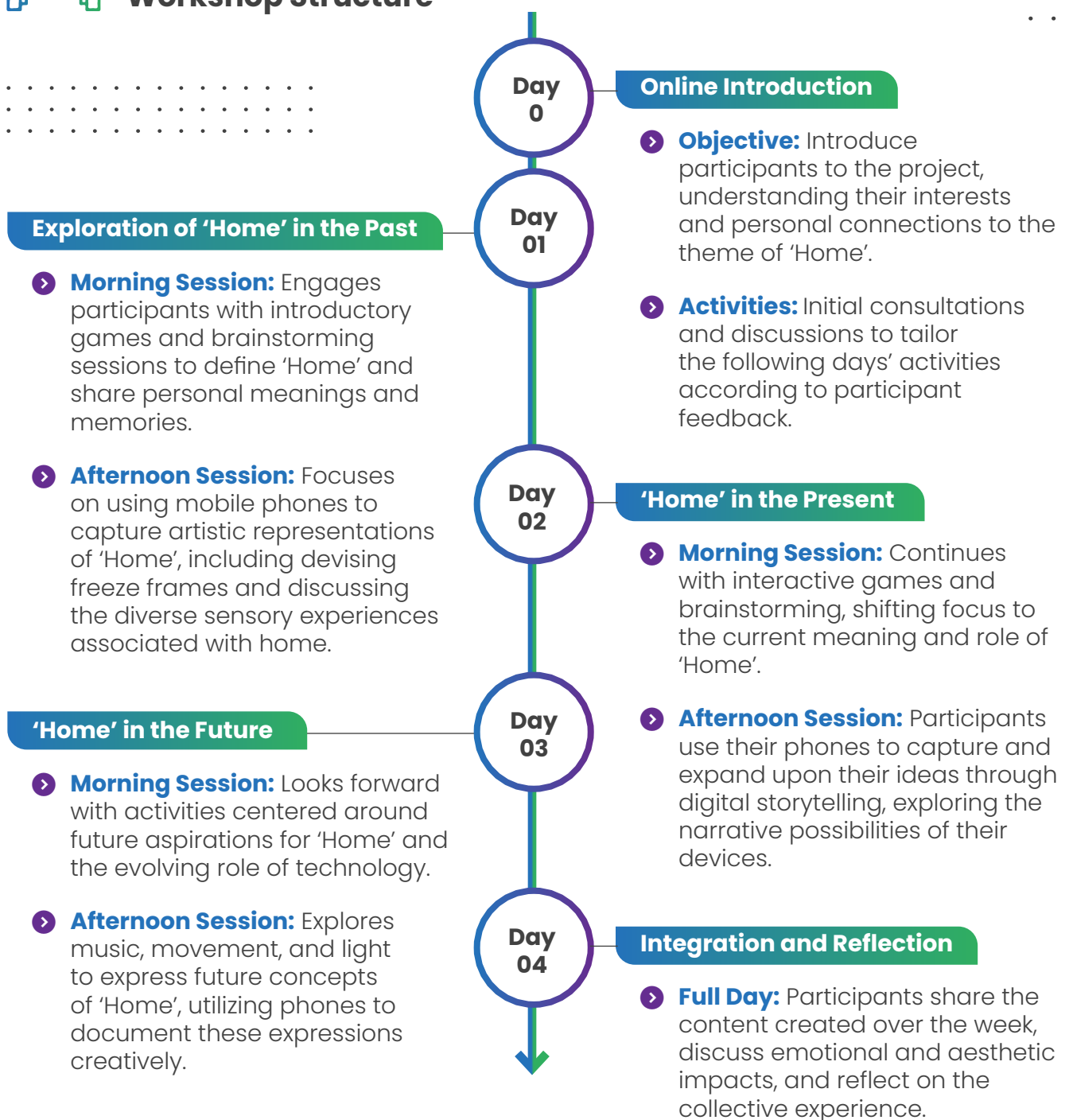


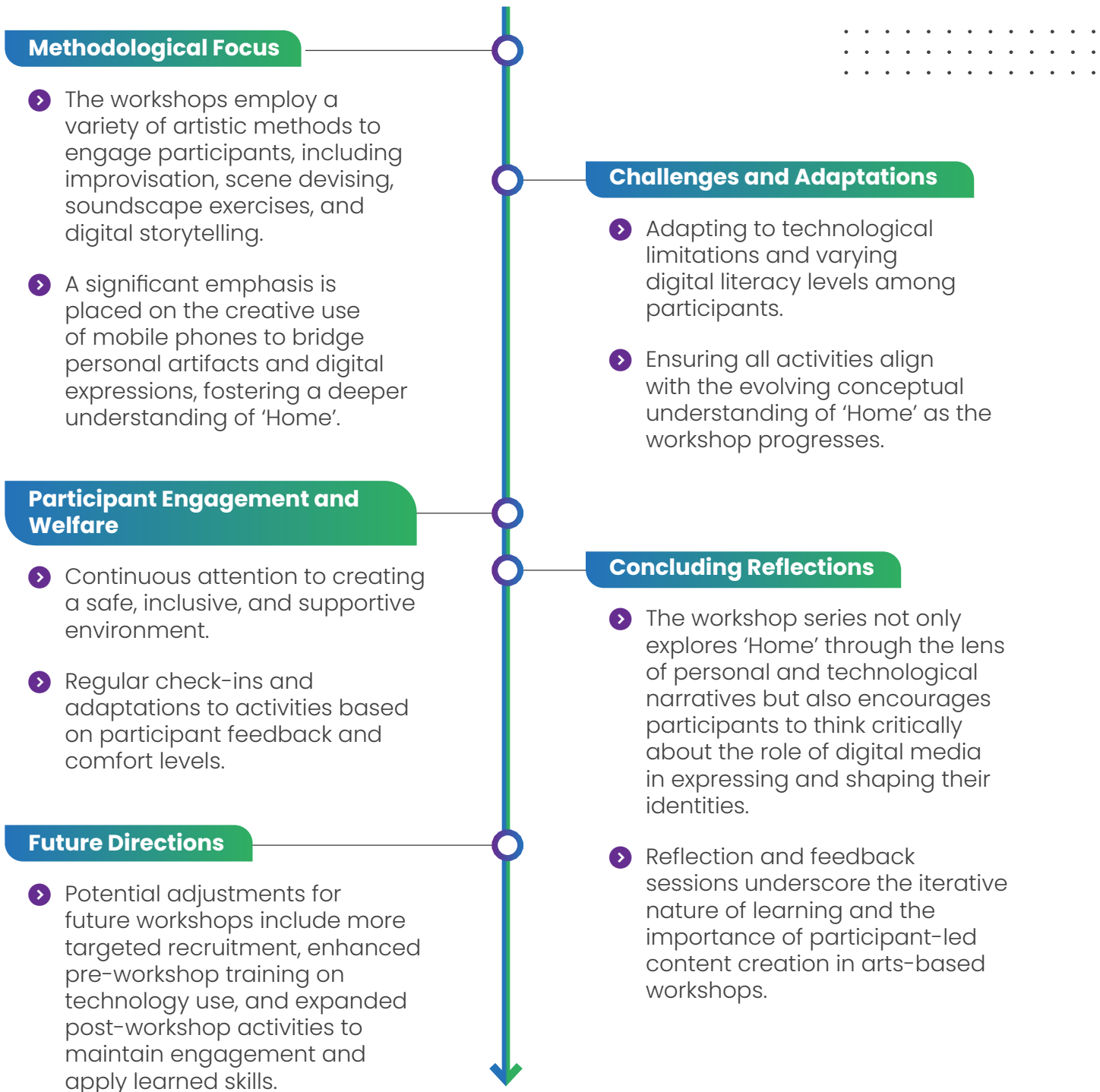
Overview

The UK MaHoMe Project workshop were a multi-day event designed to explore the concept of 'Home' through various artistic and digital expressions using mobile phones. The program were structured to progressively delve into past, present, and future interpretations of home, utilizing participants' personal experiences and technological interactions to craft a narrative that is both personal and universal.



Workshop Structure







Conclusion and acknowledgment



The Aesthetic Toolbox serves as a pivotal resource in bridging the gap between artistic creativity and research methodologies, effectively enhancing the participatory research process. Through its comprehensive approach and collaborative nature, the toolbox has not only supported the creation of meaningful artistic outputs but also fostered a deeper understanding of the complex narratives surrounding 'home-making'. The insights gathered will continue to influence future workshops, ensuring that the legacy of this innovative approach to research and co-production in the arts remains strong and impactful. This document serves as a testament to the successful integration of creative expression with participatory research practices, highlighting the potential for further development and application in diverse research contexts.

This toolkit would not have been possible without the generous contributions of **Anna Norberg, Helena Selder, Leah Gayer, Victor Rios, Jay Jones, Stefen Kullänger, ANDROMEDA 8220, and Eva Hållsten**. We extend our gratitude to our inspiring participants and collaborators in Sweden, Denmark, and the UK, who shared their stories and memories, enriching the project with a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

Looking ahead, we aim to explore new artistic realms and incorporate emerging technologies to further enhance the interactivity and reach of our workshops. Continued feedback from past and future workshops will be instrumental in this development process, ensuring that each iteration is more dynamic and inclusive than the last.

Moreover, the success of this project underscores the importance of multidisciplinary approaches in research and creative practices. By continuing to blend diverse talents and insights from various fields, the Aesthetic Toolbox will not only contribute to the academic community but also have a profound impact on public engagement and cultural exchange. This ongoing journey promises to bring more innovative solutions and inspiring stories to the forefront of artistic and research communities worldwide.