



Creative Fellow 

## Manik Chander

### How do we serve our communities better?

# *Acknowledgments*

Thanks to my Migrant Mama for all the love and resilience you have showed and taught me and for all the times you drive me nuts.

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## ***Main Argument***

I co-founded “My Migrant Mama” with a clear vision: to celebrate migration in Europe. What appears as an oxymoron to many glows with clarity in our eyes. My Migrant Mama celebrates a perspective on migration that everybody sooner or later, especially migrants can adopt. The change in perspectives on our migration narrative can be fruitful for a society as a whole, as well as for migrants of all generations. After successfully launching our first product in 2019, a book portraying eleven Migrant Mamas through their daughters' eyes, we are now putting our learnings in practice and working on a book series designed to foster connections between female millennials and their migrant mothers (self-defined as Migrant Kids and Migrant Mamas).

With my research under the CIRCE initiative, I aimed at taking our needs as a business case study and identifying the topics for our books series and based on this, identifying methods for businesses working with their community as customers. Thus, my research focused on the question: “How do we serve our communities better?” and was divided into two parts. I first tackled the question: “What topics move millennial women regarding their relationships with their Migrant Mamas”; and secondly, “What methods are appropriate to determine the needs of communities of social businesses in the culture and creative industries?”

In order to answer the research questions, I have chosen Grounded Theory, considering the bottom up approach at the basis of our business. Thanks to the data analysis, patterns began to emerge, revealing three central insights: whirlwind of emotions; identity maze; intergenerational communication. A Whirlwind of emotions surrounds the Migrant Kids' relationship with their Migrant Mamas. It goes beyond the known generational differences, as it is heavily related to the migration experience. Witnessing their mothers assimilate and suppress their identities to fit societal norms is deeply painful for these Migrant Kids. Experiences of “othering” and the pressures of assimilation amplify this pain. The Identity Maze including the search for belonging and feeling of loneliness is palpable. Migrant Kids find themselves balancing between two worlds, grappling with the complexities of identity, torn between familial duties and personal aspirations. There is a profound yearning of the Migrant Kids for a deeper

connection with their Migrant Mamas and Intergenerational communication is the tool of healing. Amidst feelings of love and gratitude, there is a desire for understanding, recognition, and open conversations.

In wrapping up, the significance of intergenerational communication is unquestionable. Migrant Kids have expressed the clear need to delve deeper into their roots and generational patterns. This is not just a journey of understanding, but a path towards healing for them and their families. And because barriers like cultural, generational, and language gaps often stand in the way, conversations between generations serve as a compass, guiding Migrant Kids towards a more robust bond with their history and therefore with their family. These findings confirm our direction with the proposed book series, aimed at enhancing the bond between Migrant Kids and their mothers. While strides have been made, pinpointing specific topics for the book remains to be explored. Potential strategies could involve pre-session questionnaires for Migrant Kids or focused group workshops.

For our own business, the choice of "Grounded Theory" as a framework proved to be the right one, because in this framework, my personal background as Migrant Kid enhanced my understanding of the data and at the same time, it kept me anchored to the data. The information from emails, albeit informative, proved to be less suited for this research. It needed further development on the wording of the email text as well as a different time frame. Last but not least, the focus groups were central to my research. A direct approach and physical connection was crucial for our community to open up and find a sense of belonging that allowed them to open up to constructive dialogue.

In conclusion, I can state that social businesses working with their communities as customers shall try out different methods to establish which are the formats in which their communities feel the safest and thus are able to open up. In fact, one overarching revelation was the unmatched power of communities that seek genuine engagement. My message is clear: Trust in your community's power. Engage with them openly, and through this, refine your approach

*"... but why can you not remember yourself? You have been dismembered and disremembered, by Hollywood and colonialism and racism, yes, but also by no one other than you."*

Viet Thanh Nguyen, "A Man of Two Faces"

## ***Creative Endeavour***

In 2019, Melisa and I founded "My Migrant Mama", a movement with the vision to celebrate migration. While this sentiment is commonplace to us, for many, it seems to be an oxymoron, two opposing terms appearing side by side. Yet, in our eyes, it glowed with clarity. Something everybody should understand sooner or later, especially Migrant Kids. My journey to understand the beauty of our oxymoron started with my encounter with Melisa in 2013.

I met her during a semester abroad in Mumbai at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. From the start, we clicked. Our conversations, soon delved into the migration stories of our mothers—women who left a whole life behind and took a leap of faith to a new country they knew nothing about when they were younger than us a quarter-century ago. We enjoyed the comforts of our dorm with cool air from the AC, playing with our smart phones just having ended the skype-calls with our boyfriends in Germany. And even though we had all these gadgets, tools and the international office just around the corner we were exhausted by the experience of living in a new country. While our backgrounds were starkly different — Melisa's journey took her as a child from Peru to Italy, and I was born in Germany to Indian parents — we discovered a shared emotional landscape of having a migration background. This landscape was often characterized by ambivalence, where our ties to our heritage were both a source of pride and sometimes, subtly, a source of shame or discord. We talked about the feeling of being ashamed of our Migrant Mamas being too loud, too colorful, making too fragrant food. But also the joy, resilience and beauty of our migrant families. Now we felt pride but also shame for being so ungrateful. And together we took these ambivalent feelings and moved further to pride, happiness, and healing. Story by story we understood the beauty of the gift we were given as Migrant Kids and decided to write a book about our Migrant Mamas. In doing so, we embarked on a journey of reclaiming our narrative, writing our stories in our words, to understand, and make understood, our migrant stories.



*Melisa and me with our Migrant Mamas*

Talking about our mothers and experiencing migration we could clearly see how the Intersectionality of our Mamas' identities - women, migrants and mothers - shaped their journeys and, in turn, how we saw and experienced our own identities and migration stories. This approach helped us explore our Mamas' experiences more deeply, understanding how each part of their identity influenced and shaped their stories, and ours too. The stories of our Migrant Mamas, while deeply personal, were also reflective of larger, collective narratives of migration, motherhood, and cultural preservation. We sought to capture these narratives, offering them a platform and space where they could be acknowledged, celebrated, and preserved for future generations. In exploring the narratives of our Migrant Mamas, we were not only preserving their stories but also actively engaging in responsibility and agency to shape and define our identities amidst the negative dominant migration narrative of our societies. We focused a lot on Hybrid Identity, which we call Migrant Identity, as we explored our own mix of cultures and identities, created from our cultural roots and the cultures we grew up in. This mix became a way for us to see and understand our Migrant Mamas, celebrating the rich, changing, and lively mix of their (and our) identities. As time unfurled, life intervened, and it was not until five years later that we revisited our shared dream. From the beginning, we had a clear mission: to write a book for Migrant Kids to make them proud of their migration background much earlier than we were.



*Kick-off for "Mama Superstar"*

We asked our friends if they wanted to share the stories of their Migrant Mamas with us and the first ten friends who agreed happened to be women. They were all millennials, like us, and their Migrant Mamas migrated from various countries to Germany, except one - her Migrant Mama moved from Germany to the Netherlands. The Kick-off was a wonderful experience. Twelve female migrant kids in a room talking about the shared identity, crying and laughing about anecdote we understood too well. We told them about our idea for the book 'Mama Superstar' and our aspirations to change the migration narrative and reclaim agency, elements that resonated deeply with the migrant daughters and they decided to join us. First, we equipped the daughters with a questionnaire, to serve as a tool to delve into the stories of their Migrant Mamas by giving them a guideline to have a conversation with them. These dialogs, laid the foundation upon which we interviewed the daughters, which lasted several hours. Based on these interviews, we developed five stories for each Migrant Mama based on the perspectives of their daughters. This process ensured that the narratives were rooted in authentic interactions, and developed through a lens of respect and genuine curiosity. The stories that unfolded within the book were not just accounts of individual experiences but were interwoven with the collective themes and emotions that surfaced through our approach. Thus, the book was not merely a collection of stories but a tapestry of intergenerational narratives, motherhood, and migration, meticulously brought to life through a process that prioritized the voices,



experiences, and agency of the daughters and their Mamas. A year later beginning of 2019 we published our book "Mama Superstar", which narrates the story of eleven Migrant Mamas from the perspectives of their daughters. We were very successful. The book sold over 30,000 times, we gave over 50 readings all over Germany and received emails from thousands of customers. The overwhelming reception, coupled with heartwarming feedback, was a testament to the world's readiness for a new narrative of migration.



*Launch "Mama Superstar"*

Come 2023, a new chapter was in the making — a book series. Our journey from ashamed teenagers to proud women in our 20s, and now reflective adults in our 30s, found us grappling with a poignant question, "How can I love my mother so much and at the same time she triggers me like nobody else does?" aka "Why does my Migrant Mama drive me nuts?" Once again, we were in the middle of our ambivalent feelings and trying to find a way to understand how to celebrate migration. This introspective journey drew us back into the interplay of external and internal Influences on our identities and relationships with our Migrant Mamas. This newfound introspection compelled us to foster meaningful talks — with each other, our therapists, migrant girlfriends, and most importantly, our Migrant Mamas. We understood that we needed more conversations with our Migrant Mamas but we were lacking the tools we needed to tackle profound topics like intergenerational trauma, feminism, mental health, and



joy. This time we were not going to ask our friends and write the books ourselves. We envisioned tapping into our expansive network of female migrant professionals to find experts. First, we needed clarity on which topics the books should cover. This was the research problem that needed solving: determining the topics that resonated most with our community. It was essential not just to trust our gut instincts, but to genuinely pinpoint the needs and interests of our community.

In my quest to do so, I looked into market research. This is where the theoretical concept of the "Minimal Viable Product" (MVP), as conceptualized by Eric Ries in "The Lean Startup", became relevant. However, market research is very limited in many ways. Traditional market research often comes with its set of challenges. For one, it can be both cost and time-intensive, requiring significant financial and temporal commitments. Additionally, while market research typically operates on hypotheses and assumptions, which can be useful starting points, there is a risk of falling into confirmation bias. This is where preconceived beliefs might influence the interpretation of results. Furthermore, such research usually depends on large samples to derive statistically significant results. An often-overlooked issue is the potential bias in data collection. People's behaviors and responses can vary significantly in artificial settings. At times, they might lean towards providing answers that seem socially acceptable rather than sharing their genuine preferences. One unique challenge that startups often grapple with in market research is the dichotomy between what consumers say they want and what they eventually purchase. This is particularly true for innovative products addressing needs that are yet unknown to potential customers. We knew this too well from feedback on our book, which carried a recurring sentiment: "I didn't know I needed this book until I held it in my hands." Such insights underscore why many startups use minimal product versions to test market hypotheses also known as the MVP approach, as conceptualized by Eric Ries in "The Lean Startup." Essentially, an MVP acts as a practical, hands-on form of market research. The MVP is a strategy in which a product, equipped with just the necessary features, is released to early adopters. This approach allows to test the product's viability in the market and gather real-time feedback. Based on this feedback, further refinements and features can be added, ensuring that the final product aligns closely with consumer needs and preferences.

Impact-oriented startups, however, possess a unique resource: their community. And here it gets complicated and addressing it here works as well as anywhere else in the paper. My customers are my community. This reality evokes ambivalent feelings in me, especially given my activist background. From the beginning since we started working on our first product "Mama Superstar" it was clear that our target group are Migrant Kids like us. This means our relationship goes beyond the traditional buyer-seller relationship. This special relationship also makes it very hard for me to reach out to our customers. I do not want to waste their time or energy and I want to make sure that they do not feel exploited. And this challenge is also a strength "My Migrant Mama" shares with many other community driven businesses. At their core, these businesses are about more than just selling things. They are built on shared goals and beliefs. While this path can be fulfilling, it requires careful planning and a strong understanding of the close bond between the business and its community. At the same time, it is important that impact-oriented start-ups know what their customers want so they do not waste their resources in projects that are not really needed by their community. The most important resources that these start-ups have are the people and their passion working for them, but without aligning with the community's pulse, many well-meaning projects risk faltering and wasting the passion of these people. Many startups in the culture and creative industries face a similar challenge: balancing passion with business sustainability. In our pursuit to serve our communities better, we continually wrestled with reconciling our mission and ethical considerations with the pragmatic necessities of running a business.

The opportunity offered by the CIRCE fellowship gave me a chance to focus on crucial research for six months. In the past, this work took a backseat amidst pressing urgencies and financial necessities. With my research under the CIRCE initiative, I aimed to navigate the above-mentioned complexities, focusing on the central question: "How do we serve our communities better?" My research was divided into two parts: firstly, "What topics move millennial women regarding their relationships with their Migrant Mamas"; and secondly, "What methods are appropriate to determine the needs of communities of social businesses in the culture and creative industries?" So put together: "To effectively identify and address the primary concerns of millennial women regarding their relationships with their Migrant Mamas, and determining which

methods are suitable to pinpoint the needs of communities in social businesses within the cultural and creative industries.”

In conclusion, the journey of “My Migrant Mama” is not only a business endeavor but also a deeply personal quest, intertwined with the threads of intergenerational conversations, healing, and motherhood. Through my work for CIRCE, I hope to bridge the gap between our Mission, the true needs of our community and the buying decision of our customers. By understanding and addressing these needs, we can achieve success both in terms of impact and business viability. This dual success will ensure that we can continue to keep working on 'My Migrant Mama' while also sustaining our livelihoods.

## ***Process***

When we decided we needed to do market research for our next product, I looked first into the question I wanted to answer with my research. Many questions for the book series can be answered with MVPs - for example, is content in several languages needed. Are workbooks better fits? These questions will need to be answered, but for me, the crucial question was what topics our new product would cover. So I decided on the following question: “What topics move female Millennials in their relationship to their Migrant Mama?” Next, I looked into what assets we had. We had over 1.000 emails from our customers. When we started selling our first book, we asked all our customers 'Why did you buy the book?' When we got the e-mails, I answered every single one of them and labeled them to identify characteristics of the customers, such as migration background or profession. Unfortunately, we never managed to analyze them any further. This initial interaction with the emails hinted at the untapped insights lying in our data and I decided for a more detailed exploration through text analysis. The second asset that we had built was contact with potential customers who had not yet consumed any of our products but enjoyed our Social media Content. This was a treasure! A group of engaged individuals, already interacting with our content, who might share valuable insights into our research question. Subsequently, the third and most crucial question for me was “How do I want to conduct the research?” I was well

aware that the migrant identity, even though it is a beautiful gift, comes also with its very special challenges. In addition, every relationship between a daughter and her mother is complex. Therefore, it was crucial to me to prioritize the participants' experiences, well-being, privacy, and dignity. Consequently, with these concerns in my mind, I started working on the design of my research.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

For the theoretical framework, I chose "Grounded Theory". This Theory can be situated within the Interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism provides a philosophical grounding for the kinds of inductive, theory-building processes that Grounded Theory methodology employs. Interpretivism posits that reality is not objective but is socially constructed and understood through human experiences and social contexts. It emphasizes the understanding of phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing it. Grounded Theory acknowledges the researcher's influence on the research process. As a female Millennial with a Migrant Mama, I am part of the group that is participating; I bring a unique perspective to the data analysis, enhancing the depth and breadth of emerging theories. At the same time, also facing the challenge of my own bias. Unlike other approaches that start with a set theory and then test it, Grounded Theory lets ideas grow directly from the data being studied. This approach was important in allowing the data to speak, influencing the evolving understanding of the central question and ensuring that the emerging themes were rooted in participant experiences and to limit my bias. In the Grounded Theory approach, the process begins by collecting data in an open-ended manner. Once data collection is underway, the next step is *open coding*. This means *labeling* different parts of the data, such as sentences or paragraphs, with descriptive terms. After this initial coding, the focus shifts to *axial coding*. Here, the goal is to pinpoint the primary themes or axes that become apparent in the data. This involves understanding the relationships, conditions, strategies, and outcomes tied to these main themes also called *categories*. In the next step called *selective coding* these categories are used to identify the core variable that covers all of the data. Finally, a grounded theory is constructed that explains the experiences and challenges of the target group. Grounded Theory is an iterative process. As the data is being analyzed, it might be necessary to return to the field to collect more data, specifically targeting gaps or areas that need more clarity. This is called *theoretical sampling*.

## ***Methodological Framework***

I decided to use a mixed-methods approach to test a variety of methods. Firstly, I planned to employ ***Text Analytics*** for the customer e-mails. This method aids in discerning patterns, trends, and insights. I planned to use techniques like sentiment analysis (to see how people feel), Topic Modeling using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (to see what people talk about the most), and word cloud visualization (a picture showing most used words). My intention was to employ both open and then axial coding to identify initial patterns and categories, hoping that the insights garnered would give me better insight to conduct the focus groups and interviews. The nature of the data, often personal and potentially sensitive, required a thoughtful approach to text analytics. Ensuring that the analysis was both rigorous and respectful, honoring the voices and stories within the data while safeguarding the anonymity and dignity of the participants, was important. I chose and applied each analytical method with these ethical imperatives in mind. Following this, I planned to set up two ***Focus Groups***. By assembling members of the target group, I aimed to facilitate discussions around relevant topics. Each group was supposed to consist of 10 participants who identified as FLINTA\*,<sup>1</sup> where in the age bracket of Millennials (born between 1981 and 1994/6) and had a Migrant Mama. We call the participants affectionately Migrant Kida. All of the Migrant Kids would volunteer by filling out a form responding to a call on My Migrant Mamas Instagram channel. In the call, we would ask for Migrant Kids who want to have an exchange on the question "My Migrant Mama and me - what moves me in our relationship?" Participants in this study would not receive any direct payment for participation. The transcribed focus group session and demographic data obtained by self-report questionnaire would comprise the data for analysis. The interactive setting of a focus group can provide with rich insights into the participants' perspectives and experiences. To round it off, I planned to conduct ***Qualitative Interviews*** with the target group. I chose this approach for theoretical sampling after conducting text-analysis and the Focus Groups. I decided on semi-structured interviews, allowing ample room for personal narratives and emotions to be candidly shared.

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<sup>1</sup> FLINTA is a German abbreviation that stands for "Frauen, Lesben, Intergeschlechtliche, nichtbinäre, trans and agender", translated women, lesbians, intersex, non-binary, trans and agender people. The asterisk represents all non-binary gender identities.

Engaging with personal narratives during the qualitative interviews and the focus groups necessitated a delicate balance of empathetic engagement and methodological rigor. Ensuring that the participants felt heard and valued, while also maintaining a level of neutrality and avoiding any undue influence on their narratives, was crucial. The ethical imperative to honor their stories while safeguarding against any potential bias or influence was consistently at the forefront of the interview process. The biggest priority was the well-being and autonomy of the participants. Given the participants were part of my community, a layer of personal investment and added care was an integral part of my approach. The delicate nature of the themes explored and the vulnerability expressed by participants necessitated a conscientious and compassionate research approach. Ensuring that participants felt safe, valued, and respected throughout their involvement was paramount. Informed consent, anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the research at any point were emphasized and upheld throughout the research.

### ***Date Collection and Analysis***

Embarking on this research journey, several unexpected challenges emerged, prompting thoughtful pivots in my approach and strategy. The ***Text Analysis*** of customer emails presented a notable challenge, particularly in the data preparation phase. The preparation of the data proved more time-consuming than I had anticipated. Ultimately, I was left with 473 datasets. Each dataset comprised of an email from one customer who had purchased a book and responded to our e-mail asking, "Why did you buy the book?" and I had identified as a Migrant Kid based on the body of their e-mail. I did not have any information on age, gender, if they have Migrant Mama or another migration background, which meant I was not able to confirm that they belonged to the target group. Aided by Ameen and using ChatGPT-4 Plus, I explored three methodologies, including Word Cloud Visualization, Sentiment Analysis (including over time), and Topic Modeling using Latent Dirichlet Allocation. Regrettably, these methodologies did not yield the desired clarity. Each analysis approach fell short, prompting me to review all the e-mails individually and commence open coding. Unfortunately, the data preparation, text analysis and open coding of the e-mails took me much longer than I had anticipated and there were little codes and categories I could identify. Still I got valuable insights to prepare for the focus group in the sense that I saw very clearly, what kind of data was missing.



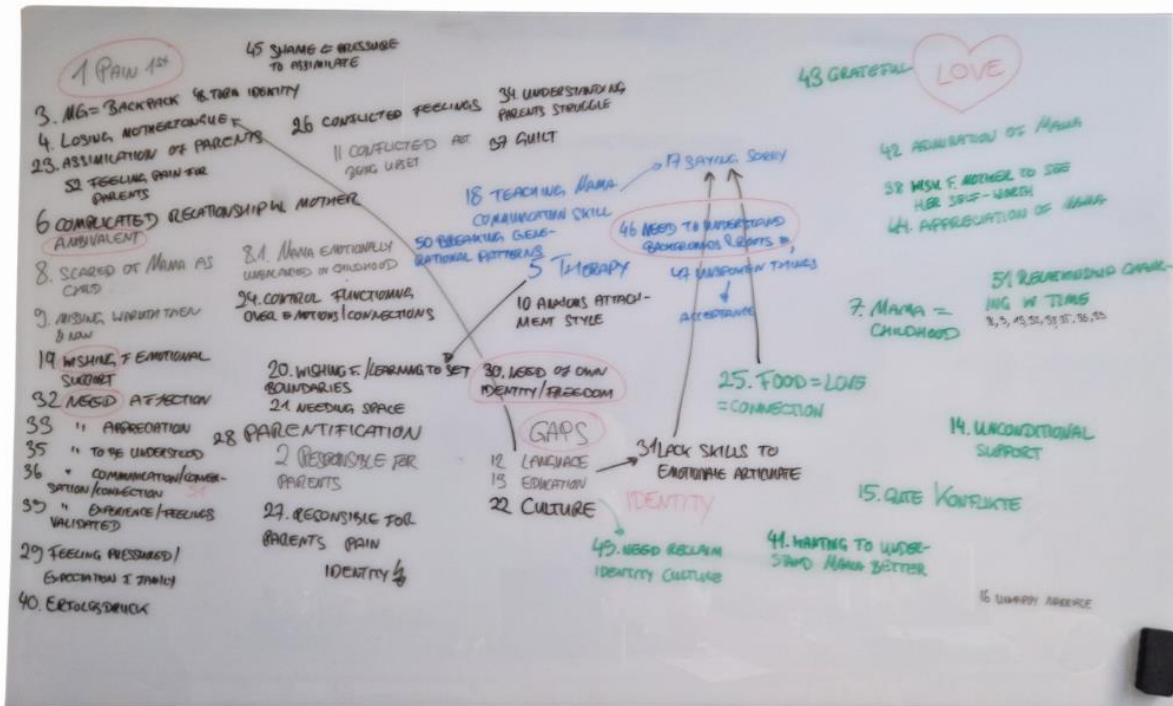
I was lucky that over 20 Migrant Kids filled out a questionnaire and registered interest to be part of the **Focus Group** but unfortunately, due to the time constraint I adjusted my plan accordingly and conducted only one Focus Group. I picked ten participants for the Focus Group that were free for the date I had picked of which seven showed up. One of the participants did not have a Migrant Mama but a Migrant Papa. The structured interview included twelve open-ended questions investigating the participants' perceptions of their relationship to their Migrant Mama. Embarking on the Focus Group, I was infused with anticipation, envisioning an ambiance similar to our gatherings while assembling stories for our book. My questions were carefully crafted, closely mirroring the questionnaire we developed for the interviews with the Migrant Kids for 'Mama Superstar'. However, the actual conduct of the focus group veered unexpectedly. In retrospect, I can admit I had naively anticipated a lighthearted, joyous conversation, akin to the ones I often have with my friends and those we had with the Migrant Kids for our book, "Mama Superstar". Yet, from the outset, the Focus Group took an entirely different turn. I now feel somewhat embarrassed admitting this, but I initiated with an icebreaker, a simple prompt to share a funny incident from their childhood with their Migrant Mama. The first response took me aback, "Oh...that is tough. I am not sure I have a fun story. My memories are mostly sad." The Migrant Kids struggled to recall a fun story, sharing instead, that most memories were, in fact, sad. The next participant echoed this sentiment, the entire group concurred that their dominant experiences were of sadness. The subsequent conversation was steeped in tales of pain, struggle, experiences of racism, and a heartfelt lack of tools to communicate with their mothers in the ways they desired. To be honest, my mind was racing, "How am I going to get out of this?" Like how am I gonna end this conversation without leaving everyone hurt and sore. Perhaps my feelings were more acute than those of the participants were because they seemed to find solace in mutual understanding. Frequent acknowledgments such as, 'Ah, I see everyone nodding. It's good to know I am being understood,' punctuated the dialog, but I was too occupied to notice it in the moment.

In the end, a tool of "My Migrant Mama" and one of my migrant mama saved the day. As "My Migrant Mama", we have devised a call to action (CTA), utilized originally in our interviews for "Mama Superstar". It's a call to action to one's younger self, and this was received warmly by the participants, but the overall mood was undeniably somber until the last participant in the round interjected, "(...) But I also want to mention that I

am grateful to have a migration background. It makes me richer. (...)". This lightened the atmosphere, as everyone wanted another go to answer the CTA, adding their own positive spin. Afterwards I gave them time to reflect on a message to their 'future self' and write it down on the cards I had handed out. I used the time to heat up a dish I had prepared. A meal I had learnt from my Migrant Mama of rice and Chana Masala for dinner provided a comforting end to the evening. Gathered around the meal, our hearts and souls found solace in laughter and camaraderie. Food is definitely the love language of all Migrant Mamas and Kids.

The transcribed session provided me with a lot of data to code, which was a very time consuming process. In the end, I felt I had a solid base of categories to build a theory but also still had a couple of open questions. Consequently, I embarked on conducting ***Qualitative Interviews*** with six Migrant Kids, ensuring they met the same criteria as the participants in the focus group. The structured interview included twenty-seven open-ended questions investigating the Migrant Kids' perceptions of their relationships to their Migrant Mamas. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The data analyzed consisted of the transcriptions from these interviews. The interview experience unfolded much as I had anticipated; mirroring closely the interactions, we had during the interviews for our book.

The open coding was methodical yet proved to be time-consuming. Given the extensive list of open codes, the subsequent axial coding phase, which involved identifying categories, presented its complexities. A consistent referral back to the data was essential to stay true to it. To facilitate the axial coding, I initially opted for manual mind mapping. However, its inherent rigidity made adjustments challenging. Switching to a white board provided the needed flexibility.



Process of Coding - mindmap

Subsequently, I collated the coding results into a table. Although the table offers a structured representation, it does not aptly depict the nuanced interrelationships between codes. Ideally, a detailed mind map would capture this, but time limitations curtailed its development. Despite these challenges, this meticulous process yielded ten axial codes and three selective codes. I found the data too complex to identify one selective code that would cover all the data.

## ***Analysis and Main Insight***

When I looked at the table with the open codes to start my analysis, it was like looking at a maze. After sorting the open codes, I could start seeing patterns and connections that led me to identify axial codes and selective codes. Adding these to the table show the paths of my thinking. As the space is limited, the table in this paper is a shortened version, focusing on the open codes, their properties for clarity, axial codes, and the selective ones.

<b><i>Open Codes</i></b>	<b><i>Properties</i></b>	<b><i>Axial Codes</i></b>	<b><i>Selective Codes</i></b>	
pain, sadness	Negative emotions are the first emotions that delve up when thinking about their relationship to mother in the childhood.	negative emotions	<b><i>Whirlwind of Emotions</i></b>	
guilt, shame	Guilt for being ashamed for Migrant Mama (MM) in past.			
backpack	Migration background feels like a heavy backpack.			
assimilation of parents painful	The experience of seeing parents assimilating is painful for the Migrant Kid (MK).			
shame/ pain of feeling forced to assimilate	Being ashamed of assimilating and denying their migration background			
complicated relationship because of conflicted feelings	A whirlwind of emotions makes it hard to give a clear picture.	conflicting feelings		
understanding for parents struggle				
conflicted about being upset	MK cannot fully feel negative feelings because they understand struggle of MM too well.			
feeling pain/anger for parents	Parents did not feel "bad feelings" so the MK feel they need to take over.	identity struggle		<b><i>Identity Maze</i></b>
torn identity	Insecurities when it comes to own identity - cultural but also in relationship to parents.			
wish to understand background/ roots	MK wish for understanding their parents and family's story better.			
need to find/ reclaim identity	MK feel that they lost parts of their identity and need to find it and/or reclaim it.			
need of finding own identity	It is hard for MK to identify own identity that is independent from their mother.			

feeling pressured	MK feel being pressured to be more economically successful, to take care of parents, and to be available to parents.	need for space	
needing space/ freedom	MK needed and still need space from their mother.		
boundaries	Boundaries are a big topic for MK. They want to put them but they struggle with it.		
parentification	MK feel like they took too much responsibility too early on.	parentification	
responsible for parents happiness	MK feel responsible for the happiness of their parents.		
responsible for parents pain	MK feel that their parents suffered for them and that makes them feel responsible also for the pain of the parents.		
admiration for mother	MK admire what their mothers achieved and did for them.	love	
appreciation of/grateful for mother	MK are grateful to their mothers.		
wish for mother to see her self-worth	MK wish for their mothers to see their self-worth		
support			
Mama is childhood	When MK think of their childhood, they think of their mothers.		
food as connector		unmet needs	
wish for emotional support	Migrant Kids wished and still wish for emotional support.		
Wish for being told Mama is proud	Wish for own efforts to be seen and validated by Mama saying she is proud of them.		
wish to be understood			
wish for communication/ connection	MK wish for communication that led to deep connection		
need of feelings/experience validated	MK feel that their parents do not see their feelings and experiences and they wish for validation.		
wish to hear sorry	MK want their Mamas to say, "I am sorry."	improving relationship	
teaching communication skills and mental health knowledge	MK teach their mothers knowledge on communication and mental health		
overcoming generational patterns	MK want to break generational patterns.		
accepting unspoken things	MK can accept that some things are left unspoken		
good conflicts	MK appreciate conflicts with their MMs if they are being respected as equals		
relationship changing with time	MK feel that their relationship to their mother improved with time because their mother became softer and respects them more as equal.		

***need for connection with Migrant Mama***

Mama emotional unavailable	Mama was so busy and stressed in childhood that the MK had no chance to connect	pain of disconnect	
control / functioning over connection	During childhood mother was busy functioning she could not take care of other needs, especially emotional once		
missing warmth	MK missed emotional and physical affection in childhood		
lack of skills to emotional articulate	MK do not have the language skills they need to speak about emotions with their mother	lack of knowledge and skills	
culture gap	MK feel a culture gap hinders them from connecting with their parents		
language gap	MK feel that the language gap hinders them to have meaningful conversation with their mothers		
loosing mother tongue	MK feel the loss of their mother tongue		
education gap	Difference in education level leads to a feeling of disconnect		
wish to understand mother better	MK feel they need to understand their parents and their roots		

Result of analysis and coding

Based on the data three islands of insight emerged. One dominant observation is the **Whirlwind of Emotions**. To put it simply: it is complicated. There is pain on top or on the bottom - depending on your perspective - of the relationship of Migrant Kids to their mothers. It is not always about the relationship to their mothers. It is more about the heavy backpack of migration. Witnessing their parents, especially their mothers assimilating, diminish their own identities to fit into the societal mold is a heart-wrenching observation for many of these migrant kids. The pain, for many, is exacerbated by the experience of "othering" and having given in to the pressure of assimilation themselves. Another significant theme was **Identity Maze**. The identity tightrope is real. Migrant Kids balance between at least two worlds, sometimes welcomed, sometimes pushed away. And this is not just about cultural identity but also about dealing with the layered complexities of identity. It is about the push and pull, the feeling of being trapped between family duties and themselves. The pressure from families and society, combined with personal responsibility toward parents, makes this struggle even more poignant as Migrant Kids feel that they cannot leave. A third theme emerged around the deep-seated desire for a deeper **connection with their Migrant Mamas**. Amidst love and gratitude, there is also a wish for more: more



support, more recognition, and conversations that are more open. Migrant Kids crave gestures, like an understanding nod or an apology. This need for connection comes from the experiences of emotional unavailability and disconnect from their mothers during childhood, with communication barriers like culture, language, and education gaps.

The good news: Migrant Kids are already working on improving their relationships to their Migrant Mamas and their identity. I could identify several ways. By sparking honest conversations, getting fresh viewpoints, and consciously working towards change, Migrant Kids are paving the way for healthier intergenerational dynamics. Especially negative patterns can be deeply ingrained and challenging to recognize and break. These might include patterns of communication, emotional expression, or even certain beliefs and biases. For Migrant Kids, understanding these patterns is the first step towards breaking and **overcoming generational patterns**. Migrant Kids being part of the Millennial Generation understand the **importance of mental health** and emotional well-being. In this way, Migrant Kids are the perfect multipliers to reach their Migrant Mamas, as they already are “teaching them how to say sorry” or “explaining how racism has affected her”. While conflicts are generally perceived negatively, they can be constructive if they are approached with respect, understanding, and a desire for resolution. For Migrant Kids, **“good conflicts”** with their Migrant Mamas can serve as moments of growth and clarity. The data showed that two things are important for a good conflict from the perspective of Migrant Kids. Firstly, the mother must have been out of the “Funktionsmodus” (just-functioning mode) how several Migrant Kids called it. Growing up, many Migrant Kids felt that their mothers were caught up in juggling life in a new country and taking care of the family that they could not really connect on an emotional level. However, time changes things, and many Migrant Mamas seem to be opening up more as years go by. Secondly, and this is a big one, Migrant Kids need to feel that their mothers see them as adults and deal with them as equals. Engaging in good conflicts can really strengthen the bond, leading to a deeper understanding and setting the stage for more open conversations down the line. At the same time Migrant Kids feel that they could have better conversations and good conflicts with their Migrant Mamas if they could overcome the language barriers and they as well as their mothers could **learn skills to**

***communicate about emotions***. One pain point that stood out from the data is the sting of not having a shared language to delve deep into emotional topics with their Migrant Mamas. This not only keeps the Migrant Kids from connecting but also serves as a brutal reminder of the costs of migration, including not fully mastering their mother tongue. However, even for those Migrant Kids who are fluent in their mother language, there is often a feeling of not having the tools to truly connect emotionally. And this is where improving in on skills like active listening and empathetic responding can really bridge the gap, cutting through cultural and generational differences. Lastly, I want to talk about the magic of food. ***Food has the power to connect***. It is more than just eating; it is a celebration of culture, traditions, and memories. For many Migrant Kids, food is the direct line to their roots, and often, it is the way their Migrant Mamas showed love. Be it preparing traditional meals together or reminiscing over dishes, these moments allow for bonds to be strengthened and stories to be shared. In essence, food does not just fill stomachs in migrant families; it feeds our souls and acts as a bridge between generations.

These insights into the emotional world of Migrant Kids show that there is a profound yearning of Migrant Kids for a deeper connection with their Migrant Mamas and Intergenerational communication is the tool of healing. Amidst feelings of pain, love, and gratitude, there is a desire for understanding, recognition, and open conversations. This conclusions show me that we are on the right track with our idea of developing a product that enhances the bond between millennial women and their Migrant Mamas. Moving forward, our next crucial decision lies in determining whether to proceed with our book series concept or explore other potentially better-suited avenue. Regardless of our choice, pinpointing specific topics for deeper exploration becomes our immediate focus, and this research has significantly illuminated the way forward. Employing a structured approach, with Migrant Kids being prepared beforehand with questionnaire to set the right mood, could yield more focused results in Focus Groups and Interviews. A promising next step could also be Focused Group Workshops.

I gathered valuable insights for the methods for social businesses to connect to their communities. For our own business, the choice of "Grounded Theory" as a framework proved to be the right one, because in this framework, my personal background as Migrant Kid enhanced my understanding of the data and at the same time, it kept me

anchored to the data. Unfortunately, the data I collected from the emails, although informative, was not the ideal source for this particular research. The context of these emails did not directly address the relationship between the Migrant Kids and their mothers. In retrospect, a bolder approach, perhaps posing a direct question even with the potential of some unsubscribes, might have been beneficial. On the other side, the focus group gave me valuable insights and was the heart of my research. It is regrettable that I could not conduct more.

One thing became clear to me throughout this journey: the power of community is unparalleled. Social entrepreneurs in the culture and creative industry, myself included, sometimes grapple with the dilemma of how closely to engage with their community. Yet, my experience through this research underpins that communities wish to be involved. I can affirm that it is crucial for social businesses to experiment with various methods to determine the formats in which their communities feel most secure and are therefore able to open up. Communities crave genuine engagement. Engage with your community openly; they want to be part of the narrative you are crafting. Therefore, while I might not have a clear-cut playbook for other entrepreneurs, my message is simple: Trust in the power of your community. Do not let apprehensions hold you back. Dive into the dialog with them, and through this engagement, refine how best you can serve them.

## ***Linking back to CIRCE***

My journey into researching the intricate relationships between Migrant Kids and their Migrant Mamas has been an enlightening one, revealing the profound ways in which stories mold our identities, especially in diverse European societies. By delving into the nuanced emotional and cultural challenges of second-generation migrants, there emerges a compelling case for fostering innovations that deeply resonate within our migrant communities. In an era where Europe faces a whirlwind of “polycrises”, from the scorching effects of climate change to sweeping socio-cultural shifts, my fellowship with CIRCE showed me how vital the cultural and creative industries (CCI) are in steering public discourse.

Diversity is not just a facet of modern society; it is our superpower. Time and again, diverse ecosystems, be it in nature or society, have shown an unmatched resilience. Migrant Kids, with their kaleidoscope of cultural heritages, are living testaments to this strength. They navigate multiple worlds, drawing strength from each, and in doing so, become embodiments of adaptability and innovation. As societies grapple with multiple challenges, projects like "My Migrant Mama" can offer solace, understanding, and a means to bridge divides. Our upcoming book series is not just about strengthening the ties between Migrant Kids and their mothers; it's about addressing the age-old dilemmas of generational understanding, and not just for those with migration stories but all. As European societies always have been and will be diverse, the cultural and creative industries must rise to the challenge of addressing these nuanced crises, offering platforms facilitating conversations and healing. The stories of Migrant Kids, their hopes, dreams, and struggles, underline a thirst for narratives that echo their unique journeys. This indicates a significant market within the CCI for products and services tailored to diverse European communities. The success of "My Migrant Mama" underscores the vast potential for CCIs to cater to Europe's diverse population. With the uncertainties of Brexit casting shadows, it is more crucial than ever for European projects to truly celebrate diversity, in both narrative and approach. My research was not just an academic exercise; it was a call to action, highlighting the need for a deeper connection with our communities and underscores the need for equipping business in the CCI with the appropriate tools.

In light of my research findings, I advocate for the following two policy recommendations. Firstly, given the instrumental role of diverse narratives, especially during "polycrises", there is an imperative for policies to champion and prioritize diverse voices within CCI. Celebrating and harnessing the resilience that arises from diversity can bolster the creative economy, making it more robust and adaptive to challenges. Secondly, recognizing the transformative potential of initiatives like "My Migrant Mama", it is crucial for policymakers to invest in and support ventures within the CCI that champion intergenerational and intercultural dialogues.