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Designing Collaboration: Building Sustainable Communities in University Alliance CHARM-EU

Abstract

This paper explores the strategic development and piloting of internal networking formats within CHARM-EU, a transnational European University alliance. Guided by theories of Communities of Practice, Networked Improvement Communities, meta-organizations, and marketing perspectives on identity and participation, a set of Guiding Principles was co-created and tested through pilot events. Evaluation data from over 90 participants informed iterative improvements and highlighted success factors and challenges. The study contributes to organizational community-building practice in HEI alliances by proposing adaptive formats for collaboration across institutional and cultural boundaries.

Keywords

community building, European University Alliance, transnational collaboration, networking, guiding principles

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Gestaltung von Zusammenarbeit: Aufbau nachhaltiger Gemeinschaften in der Universitätsallianz CHARM-EU

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag untersucht die strategische Entwicklung und Erprobung interner Netzwerkformate innerhalb von CHARM-EU, einer transnationalen europäischen Universitätsallianz. Auf der Grundlage von Theorien zu Praxisgemeinschaften, vernetzten Verbesserungsgemeinschaften, Meta-Organisationen und Marketingperspektiven zu Identität und Partizipation wurde eine Reihe von Leitprinzipien gemeinsam erarbeitet und in Pilotveranstaltungen getestet. Die Auswertungsdaten von über 90 Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmern flossen in iterative Verbesserungen ein und zeigten Erfolgsfaktoren und Herausforderungen auf. Die Studie leistet einen Beitrag zur Praxis des Aufbaus von Organisationsgemeinschaften in Hochschulallianzen, indem sie adaptive Formate für die Zusammenarbeit über institutionelle und kulturelle Grenzen hinweg vorschlägt.

Schlüsselwörter

Gemeinschaftsbildung, Europäische Hochschulallianz, transnationale Zusammenarbeit, Vernetzung, Leitprinzipien

1 Introduction

As universities navigate growing demands for transnational cooperation, the question is no longer whether to collaborate but how to do so sustainably across institutional divides. In the context of expanding internationalization and evolving EU expectations—analyzed in recent work on European Higher Education Area governance and the European Universities Initiative (cf. Curaj et al., 2024)—*Higher Education Institutions* (HEIs) increasingly experiment with networked forms of engagement, learning, and internal organizational development. These pressures are especially acute in transnational university alliances, which are expected to span institutional boundaries while cultivating cohesion, long-term participation, and durable integration.

CHARM-EU[5] unites nine[6] HEIs in a joint effort to address global sustainability challenges through inclusive, challenge-based education. As part of the European Universities Initiative, the alliance is expected to trial governance and pedagogical models that cut across conventional silos. Its core values—transdisciplinarity, inclusivity, and student-centeredness—also underpin its internal networking and community-building approach, treated here as an important mechanism for alliance-wide integration.

This article explicates efforts to establish networking structures across diverse institutional and disciplinary settings, documenting the iterative development and data-informed testing of an internal community-building method. Although led by the CHARM-EU *work package*[7] (WP) with topical responsibility, the work reported

5 CHallenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based, Mobile, European University.

6 The alliance comprises the University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, the University of Montpellier, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest, Åbo Akademi University, Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg, Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences, and the University of Bergen.

7 Work packages, as modular units of project structure and management, are commonly used within EU-funded university alliances. They typically organize alliance activities across thematic or operational areas (Charret & Chankseliani, 2023).

here seeks to move beyond EU deliverable outlines toward transferable strategies for cultivating communities that persist beyond formal project structures and timelines. In the study, *community building* denotes networking activity that progressively consolidates into sustained communities; the empirical focus is on the design and iterative implementation of internal networking events as a developmental step toward that longer-term aim.

Guided by the question of how theory-informed, data-driven networking pilots[8] can realize sustainable community-building in university alliances, the article draws on Communities of Practice (CoP) to emphasize peer-based learning (Wenger, 2008) and Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) to structure iterative, evidence-based collaboration (Bryk et al., 2015). A complementary marketing and communication perspective highlights how community-building can be intentionally positioned and facilitated within complex transnational ecosystems.

These perspectives inform the principles, implementation, and evaluation of networking pilots across CHARM-EU. Emphasizing iterative piloting that balances structure with agile facilitation, the article traces how community-building principles were formulated, translated into action, and how pilot events contribute to a proposed replicable methodology for cross-institutional engagement, thus contributing to debates on strategic collaboration, organizational learning, and sustainable networking in European higher education. This study thus advances (1) strategy design in meta-organizations by proposing a process model that links bottom-up networking pilots to institutional strategic alignment; (2) CoP/NICs scholarship by specifying conditions under which episodic participation can develop into capability-building; and (3) alliance governance research by identifying pragmatic levers that translate alliance arrangements into routinized practices within member institutions.

8 'Pilots' is a common term used within the European University Alliance context to designate exploratory initiatives designed to inform future structures and practices (see O'Neill & Acheson, 2023). It is deployed here to describe experimental networking events that aim to internally develop the CHARM-EU alliance.

2 Theoretical Framework

A community-building strategy in a transnational higher education context such as CHARM-EU must accommodate complexity across institutional, disciplinary, stakeholder, and cultural boundaries. This calls for an integrated framework that draws on situated and professional learning communities (as strands of educational theory), marketing and communication studies on community engagement and identity, and organizational theory—particularly work on meta-organizations.

2.1 Learning and Improvement

CoP describe how expertise deepens through socially-situated learning grounded in mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoires of practice (Wenger, 2008, pp. 45–46). In higher education, CoP concepts underpin professional learning communities and interinstitutional collaboration, supporting staff development and driving professional growth (Van Vugt & Gallagher, 2025, p. 14). NICs complement this view by offering a design-for-improvement logic: collective problem definition, explicit theories of change, disciplined measurement, iterative testing, and data-driven, evidence-based adaptation (Bryk et al., 2015, pp. 141–142). Where CoP emphasizes relational learning and identity formation, NICs add a structured approach to systematic improvement. For transnational alliances, the joint application is salient: CoP suggest how shared meanings and collaboration emerge in academic communities; NIC specifies how those emergent practices are iterated, measured, and refined across organizational boundaries.

2.2 Interest, Belonging, and Identity

Marketing and communication research concomitantly highlights how communities of interest coalesce around values, identities, and purpose, thriving on voluntary participation and affective affiliation (Millington, 2021, p. 8; Spinks, 2021, p. 64). Networking tends to be more effective when rooted in learning and prosocial intent; people report greater authenticity and energy when contributing to collective goals

(Casciaro et al., 2022, pp. 12–14). Community dynamics are further reinforced by rituals, roles, and storytelling, which provide continuity and identity (Tuten & Solomon, 2018, pp. 180, 185). In academic settings, recurring formats (e.g., pilots), facilitation, and structured reflection can strengthen belonging and sustain participation (Spinks, 2021, pp. 63–65). Digital-age organizations increasingly favor curated, high-trust interactions and connected strategies over scale and episodic contact—anticipating needs and maintaining low-friction, context-sensitive touchpoints to deepen community relationships (de Swaan Arons et al., 2022, p. 87; Siggelkow & Terwiesch, 2022, pp. 10–11; Wilson, 2022, p. 67). Taken together, these perspectives frame academic communities not merely as functional networks but as relational spaces shaped by identity, values, and cultural practices.

2.3 Meta-Organization CHARM-EU

Finally, meta-organization theory offers a lens for alliances whose members are organizations rather than individuals (Maassen et al., 2022). Such entities face distinct governance challenges: aligning strategic priorities, coordinating across systems, and managing institutional diversity where formal authority is limited. In this context, legitimacy and coordination are cultural and strategic achievements, not only administrative ones. Alliances operate as multi-dimensional meta-organizations in which coordination, commitment, and conflict resolution are prerequisites for durability (Maassen et al., 2022, p. 956). Related work emphasizes combining top-down strategy with trust-based, bottom-up mechanisms to enable flexible, responsive collaboration across autonomous institutions (Pinheiro et al., 2024). This perspective underscores the need for adaptive structures that couple formal alignment with collaborative learning and experimentation. University alliances thus function as laboratories for organizational transformation, testing models for cross-border cooperation and internal community building.

3 Strategic Anchoring of Community Building: Guiding Principles and Pilot Events

Building sustainable academic communities within CHARM-EU requires reflexively translating broad EU deliverables into shared, data-informed principles as well as seeding cooperative initiatives that mobilize routine practice. The intent was to create a strategic bridge between alliance-level goals and day-to-day collaboration across heterogeneous institutional and disciplinary contexts. Both the Guiding Principles (GPs) and pilot events—two-day, in-person events with a preparatory online component—emerged through collaborative work informed by the literature outlined above, which oriented design choices and interpretation; collective workshops, group reflections, and cross-partner documentation then surfaced and iteratively refined what proved feasible and transferable.

3.1 Community Building Design Cycle

The design approach followed a research-driven logic that combined inductive exploration, deductive structuring, and phased refinement. The aim was to conceptualize and trial a strategic approach to community building within CHARM-EU by linking institutional needs with stakeholder experience and governance theory, yielding a coherent, adaptable model for interinstitutional, transdisciplinary, and transcultural collaboration responsive to participants and strategic alignment.

In an exploratory phase, best-practice cases were collected and analyzed across partner institutions. To interpret these instances systematically, the work package applied a concise heuristic derived from literature (see Pfortmüller et al., 2017; Spinks, 2021). Six dimensions—Purpose (shared goals and motivations), People (participant diversity and identity), Rules (community norms and boundaries), Rituals (recurring formats that build continuity and belonging), Ways of Working (collaborative forms and practices), and Roles (responsibility distributions and dynamics)—provided a common lens for comparison that refracts an integrative understanding of community as both a learning and a strategic engagement space. Best-practice submissions

were read against these dimensions and then thematically clustered recurring cross-cutting themes crystallized into the GPs:

1. *Definition of Purpose and Ways of Working*: identify strategic CHARM-EU community-building objectives and suitable operational methods.
2. *Reflection On The Status Quo*: review existing formats to determine enablers and constraints**.**
3. *Best-Practice Synthesis*: analyze formats for cultural and structural efficacy.
4. *Thematic and Theoretical Structuring:* cluster practice-based themes and map them to theoretical models.
5. *Pilot Testing, Implementation, and Iteration:* apply and adjust the resulting principles and formats through a series of systematically evaluated networking pilots.

This sequence (see Figure 1) enables repeated movement between reflection and conception, enabling context-sensitive, co-created modification:

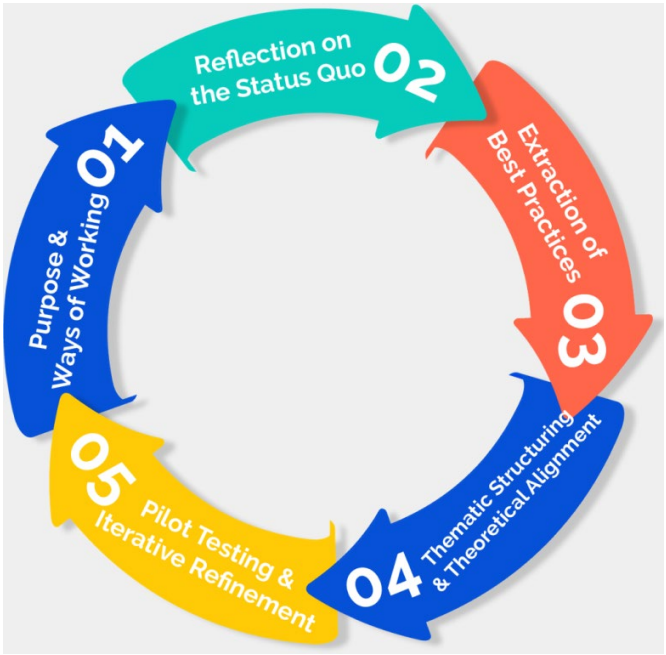

Figure 1: The cyclical process

3.2 Guiding Principles

The GPs for Networking and Community Building emerged through evidence-based developmental efforts informed by theory to support inclusive participation by academic staff, administrative services, and students, fostering mutual understanding and coordinated action. Rather than being externally imposed, the six principles—*Work Agilely* (AG), *Communicate Transparently* (CT), *Engage Inclusively* (EI), *Participate Collaboratively* (PC), *Live Interculturality* (LI), and *Encourage Innovation* (IN)—thus arose from CHARM-EU's internal working structures and were shaped by empirical experience and continuous reflection.

Owing to the role of the theoretical perspectives in configuring the initial design space and structuring the analysis of practice cases, the principles bear those lineages and echo the process that produced them. Conceptually, AG reflects improvement-oriented iteration and flexible event architecture; CT addresses meta-organizational governance challenges; EI and PC draw on mutual engagement and joint enterprise; LI foregrounds sociocultural boundary spanning; and IN emphasizes exploration and learning by testing. This mapping provides a criteria scaffold for the design and assessment of networking pilots.

Conceived as living guidelines, the principles are adaptable rather than prescriptive and were intentionally exercised across varied pilot settings. Strategic orientation was pursued by embedding them across CHARM-EU's internal collaboration layers—activity planning, facilitation training, onboarding materials, and evaluation—so that operational choices in pilot design, delivery, and the iterative feedback cycle aligned with governance aspirations for institutional change. The principles thus function as connective tissue between pilot practice and alliance-level strategy, supporting institutional learning over time. Their enactment in practice—and the tensions that surface—are examined in the following sections.

3.3 Piloting Networking Events

The networking pilot series operationalizes CHARM-EU's GPs as strategic testbeds for refining agile formats aligned with the alliance's mission of integrated, transdisciplinary collaboration. Designed to explore community-building in practice, Pilots focus on three interlinked objectives: enable relationship-building and knowledge exchange across institutional, disciplinary, and stakeholder boundaries; apply and test the six GPs in varied settings; and develop sustainable, collaborative formats rooted in stakeholder experience and aligned with CHARM-EU's long-term strategy.

Importantly, pilots are demand-led, originating from articulated needs within partner institutions rather than centrally mandated topics, and this bottom-up development approach informed each pilot's design. Across themes and methods, core elements

included structured facilitation, guided exchange, iterative co-creation, diverse participant groups (academics, administrative staff, students), and reflexivity moments to enable process reflection and value creation. To ensure consistent application of the GPs, a dedicated facilitator role—independent of the host institution—is responsible for process design, methodological integrity, and reflective guidance, with the role foreseen to expand across the alliance to build out decentralized internal networking capacities. All events balanced structure with open-ended interaction to support contextual flexibility and participant-led innovation. Embedded in the iterative learning cycle, pilots allowed for real-time testing, adaptation, and refinement of networking components.

Between September 2023 and June 2025, seven first pilots were hosted across partner institutions (see Figure 2), each with a distinct thematic anchor (e.g., engineering, language learning, data science, librarianship). Designed to operationalize the GPs, they tested applicability across disciplinary, institutional, and participant contexts. Despite variations in format, pilots shared core logics—specific challenges, structured facilitation, agile collaboration (e.g., Design Thinking, SCRUM, challenge-based learning), and embedded feedback loops. Participants (N = 155; ranging from 6 to 30 per event) spanned institutions and roles, exemplifying CHARM-EU's transdisciplinary and interinstitutional scope. Across the series, the GPs functioned not as abstract ideals but as tools shaping planning, facilitation, interaction, and evaluation. Implementation varied with thematic challenges, institutional context, and participant needs (for instance, group size or preconceived collaborative ventures favored SCRUM over Design Thinking). Collectively, the pilots provide a comparative evidence base for how community-building unfolds under varied conditions and how principles translate into collaborative practice.

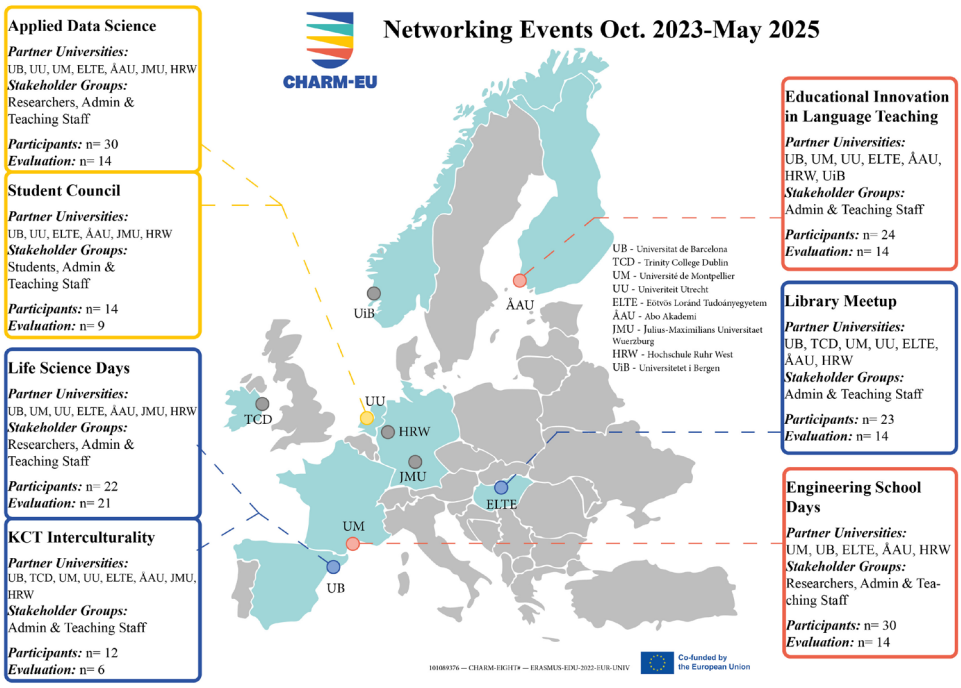

Figure 2: Overview of CHARM-EU Networking Pilot events

4 Methodology

This section sets out the approach used to evaluate the pilots. It generated actionable feedback for iteration, assessed satisfaction, near-term utility, and enactment of the GPs—ensuring transparent alignment between constructs and measures.

4.1 Mixed-Method Design

An embedded mixed-methods design was employed: qualitative open-ended prompts were embedded within a primarily quantitative, post-event survey. The survey captured (a) event-level outcomes (*relationship creation, concrete collaboration planning, peer learning, professional self-reflection, event recommendation*; I–V in Appendix A) and (b) GP performance—the extent to which pilots realized AG, CT, EI, PC, LI, and IN. The qualitative data was intended to unpack high/low ratings, enrich quantitative findings, and to surface design suggestions.

The five event-level aspects (gauged by questions 1 through 5; see Appendix A) were measured with Likert-scale items (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*) and the three targeted open-ended questions (6 through 8; full wording appears in Appendix B) drew out links between participant experience and principle enactment (e.g., clarity of aims/outputs for CT), as well as invited respondents to consider future iterations (e.g., recommended changes to improve follow-through, thus offering complementary insight into individual perceptions and challenges and allowing for convergent analysis.

4.2 Data Collection and Sample

The common survey template was administered immediately after each pilot. Across seven pilots (October 2023–May 2025), $N = 155$ participants attended and $n = 90$ completed the survey (*58% response rate*). Respondents included academics, administrative/professional staff, and students from multiple CHARM-EU institutions. Pilot identifiers supported comparative analysis; analytic datasets contained no personally identifying information.

4.3 Analytic Procedures

Quantitative. For each pilot, means were computed for the five event-level outcome questions and an overall event average (the mean of those five items; see Figure 3). To contextualize dispersion across pilots, we report significant between-pilot SDs and ranges of pilot means (these are not within-pilot respondent SDs). In addition, pilot-level Pearson correlations among outcome means and the overall event average were computed (N = 7) to characterize associations; owing to the limited pilot count, results are read as indicative evidence. Because each outcome is a single item, internal consistency estimates are not applicable.

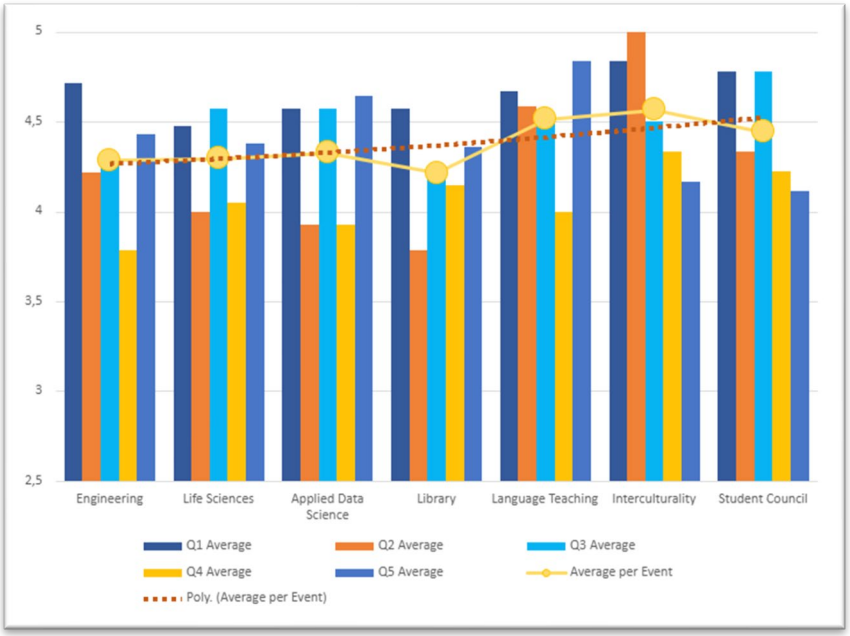

Figure 3: Mean event evaluation scores[9]

9 Bars show pilot means chronologically for questions I–V; the dotted line shows the overall event average; the dashed line indicates a smoothed trend (polynomial fit).

Qualitative. Open responses for each pilot were analyzed using framework-thematic coding anchored in the six GPs, with inductive subcodes for mechanisms, barriers, and design suggestions. Each coded segment was also tagged as a reported strength or an area for improvement. A brief codebook (definitions, inclusion/exclusion rules, exemplars) guided coding. Aggregated frequencies by pilot are visualized in Figure 4 (left panel: strengths; right panel: areas for improvement).

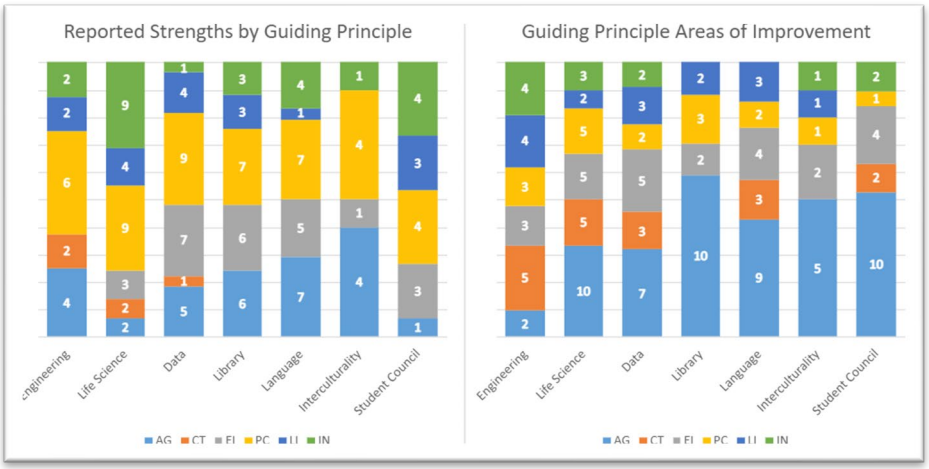

Figure 4: Reported strengths and areas of improvement by Guiding Principle

4.4 Credibility

Credibility was strengthened through standardized post-event instruments across pilots, an audit trail of design adjustments, anonymized analysis, and internal peer debriefing, while limitations—uneven per-pilot samples, self-selection in survey response, and a pragmatic measurement focus—temper the findings and are discussed below. Analyses were largely descriptive; exploratory pilot-level correlations were used to contextualize patterns. In combination with systematic framework-thematic coding and comparative interpretation across pilots, this yielded a multi-layered and replicable view of implementation success and context-specific variation.

5 Findings: Piloting Collaboration Formats in CHARM-EU

This section reports outcomes from the CHARM-EU networking pilots using the evaluation approach outlined above, focusing on participant feedback, thematic variation, and how the GPs played out in context.

5.1 Participant Evaluation Results and Outcomes

Across seven pilots (Oct 2023–May 2025), overall satisfaction was consistently high: all events averaged > *4.0/5*, with a global mean of *4.38*. *Relationship building* (I) was highest (*M = 4.64*), supported by comments such as networking [and] plans for joint programs" (*Language*) and "close connection with colleagues" (*Engineering*). Scores varied by event theme and facilitation methods: *Language* and *Interculturality* exceeded *4.5*, whereas *Library* averaged *4.21*, with frequent requests for clearer expectations and more time for follow-up actions ("short and concise information about expected outcomes"; "more time to work on follow-up actions"). Time pressure recurred across cases (e.g., calls for extra open-networking time for *Engineering* or an additional day for *Interculturality* and *Student Council*). Agile methods (Design Thinking, SCRUM) were valued for flexibility and cross-role exchange.

Principle-linked coding of open responses (see Figure 4) shows that AG and EI drew both praise and critique—highly appreciated when realized, conspicuous when constrained. CT generated the most suggestions for improvement (*N = 18*; especially clarity of aims and outputs). PC was predominantly positive, mirroring high networking scores. LI was referenced less often—likely normalized in a transnational setting—suggesting value to making its pedagogical expression more explicit. Similarly, IN appears inherent in the format—hence its low critical salience, making it contingent on AG and CT. Overall, adaptability in structurally dependent principles (AG, CT, EI) proved decisive, while embedded values like LI benefit from explicit framing.

5.2 Cross-Cutting Lessons

Findings indicate that clear objectives (CT), time/flexibility (AG), and inclusive co-creation (EI/PC) are core enablers of meaningful collaboration. Ratings improved over time (*+0.16*), consistent with cumulative adjustments; later events (e.g., the *Language* pilot) were especially appreciated for stronger pre-briefs, expanded co-creation blocks, shared ownership with documented commitments, and short online follow-ups.

Pilot-level correlations of outcome means reinforce this pattern: II (*concrete planning*) is most closely associated with the overall event average ($r = .93$), alongside a strong I–II link ($r = .80$) and a moderate association of I with the overall average ($r = .71$). Between-pilot variability was largest for II (*SD = 0.42*; *range 3.79–5.00*) and smallest for I (*SD = 0.13*; *range 4.48–4.83*), indicating that *concrete planning* is more design-sensitive while *relationship building* is reliably high across contexts. Read with the qualitative evidence, this suggests that CT and PC underpin II, which tracks perceived value across pilots, whereas *relationship* (I)—though consistently strong—is not sufficient without clarity and actionable follow-through.

Based on the seven thus far completed pilots, estimates are directional rather than definitive—but their stability across events and convergence with qualitative accounts support practical relevance. In this sense, the pilots serve not only as practical experiments but as a dynamic improvement mechanism for institutional learning and organizational development.

6 Creative Tension: Structural Learning in Meta-Organizational Collaboration

The example of the CHARM-EU pilot series elucidates how a principle-guided methodology and relational formats can help bolster cross-organizational collaboration by pairing clear coordination mechanisms with adaptive iteration—aligning with wider shifts toward experimental, networked collaboration in European higher

education (Gallagher & Savage, 2022). Rather than top-down integration, this approach centers mutual learning and low-barrier co-creation, making strategy actionable in everyday practice. Conceptually, the work reported here operationalized three germane strands: CoP, NICs, and Meta-Organization Theory (Bryk et al., 2015; Maassen et al., 2022; Pinheiro et al., 2024; Wenger, 2008). These lenses translated into GPs that cyclically structured networking events and anchored them in follow-through and strategic alignment. In practice, relationship formation results proved reliably high, but concrete action planning tracked the perceived value of the pilots most strongly—showing that clarity and shared commitments are essential complements to community building, and that their impact is design-sensitive.

A defining feature of the methodology is the productive friction between strategic intent and emergent local practice. Pilots leverage structured ambiguity: demands for clear aims, roles, and outputs coexist with calls for open dialogue, co-creation, and tailored pacing. This creative tension, rather than a defect, supports reflection and adaptive learning, consistent with accounts of innovation emerging from the interplay of formal roles and informal processes (Llorca et al., 2025). In this sense, principle-guided pilots function as relational governance infrastructure: iterative efforts that make purposes visible, distribute participation, and operationalize short-cycle improvement. Institutional-alignment pressures[10] are balanced with stakeholder-driven exchange, managed through careful process design and agile facilitation. The formats act as informal mechanisms of organizational learning that complement formal structures, progressing toward a blueprint for relational governance within European University Alliances.[11] Creative tension, when resolved through an adaptive cadence architecture, can thus align local initiative with higher-level strategy and support structural learning across diverse organizational settings.

10 For an analysis of how alliance formation is shaped by existing institutional hierarchies, see Lambrechts et al. (2024).

11 See Fuchs et al. (2023) for a case study of alliance-based learning networks in the EuroTeQ University context.

7 Conclusion and Outlook

This study distilled its conceptual framing into GPs that structure networking and connect it to follow-through and strategic alignment. Across the pilot series so far, the internal formats catalyzed collaboration and, crucially, functioned as lightweight infrastructure for institutional learning rather than as one-off events. In this respect, they operationalize relational governance by linking situated practice to co-owned commitments.

Several limitations temper these claims. The evidence is context-specific to CHARM-EU and may not generalize without attention to institutional fit; participation skewed toward already-motivated actors; follow-up windows were short; perceived value relied partly on self-report; facilitation quality may have produced outsized effects; and resource use and network effects were only able to be partially measured. To strengthen validity and practical utility, forthcoming waves will incorporate a diagnostic to guide local adaptation; broaden recruitment to underrepresented units; extend follow-up; pair surveys with behavioral indicators (e.g., collaborative project completion, cross-unit endeavors launched); introduce a facilitation rubric with basic training and fidelity checks; and expand analysis with ethnographic narrative research on community building in situ during events.

Looking ahead, two complementary paths are envisaged: (1) scaling the methodology by enabling new pilots, diversifying formats, and embedding the GPs more widely; and (2) deepening existing efforts by supporting the implementation of ideas seeded during the pilots, ensuring continuity through planned follow-up, and aligning formats with institutional strategies to a larger extent. Both paths depend on explicit coordination and recognition mechanisms, and on a growing cadre of trained facilitators who anchor the methodology within and across institutions.

The approach reported here is transferable, but it travels best when locally adapted and supported by clear tools—templates, checklists, and shared repositories that make roles, rituals, and accountabilities visible. Framed in this way, the pilots re-

spond to immediate organizational needs while also contributing to emergent governance cultures in transnational higher education. As a developing, evidence-based roadmap, the work offers a pragmatic route for embedding contextual community-building within HEI strategic frameworks and sets out a concrete program for improving its own rigor, equity of reach, and long-term impact.

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Appendix A

Networking aspects	Questions (Likert scale, 1-5)
I. Creation of new relationships across CHARM-EU.	"By attending this event, I have created new relationships with colleagues from other CHARM-EU institutions." (Q1)
II. Development of concrete actions for cooperation.	"By attending this event, I developed concrete actions to cooperate with colleagues from other CHARM-EU institutions." (Q2)
III. Acquisition of relevant knowledge from colleagues.	"By attending this event, I have received new knowledge from colleagues from other CHARM-EU institutions relevant to me." (Q3)
IV. Inspiration for professional self-reflection.	"This event has inspired me to reflect on my own professional development." (Q4)
V. Recommendation of the event to peers.	"I would recommend the event to my colleagues." (Q5)

Appendix B

Networking aspects	Open-ended questions
I. Best aspect of the event	"In your opinion, describe the best aspects of the event." (Q6)
II. Aspects needing improvement	"In your opinion, describe aspects that require improvement." (Q7)
III. Recommendations for future events	"Please suggest any recommendations for CHARM-EU to improve future events." (Q8)