



REPORT ON DEVELOPED SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

WIN

Improving the position of Women in the labour markets of peripheral INdustrial regions

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**DELIVERABLE INFORMATION**

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Partners in charge (authors):	National Management School (NMS), Bulgaria: dr. Lachezar Afrikanov
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Contents

Introduction	5
Social Innovations Overview	6
Austria – Styrian Iron Road Region	10
Creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining”	10
Female mentoring – establishment of female role models	12
Stronger networks – stronger women	13
Bosnia and Herzegovina - Herceg-Bosnian County	16
Step out of the shadow – Don’t tap in the dark	16
Step out of the shadow – Take your place on the market	18
Support for social enterprises	20
Bulgaria – Radomir	23
EdnaZaDruga.bg – Online platform for women Entrepreneurs and Artists	23
Creative and supportive physical spaces for women	25
Edna Za Druga – Women’s association for support, empowerment, and advocacy	27
Czech Republic – Karlovy Vary Region	30
BusinessWomen without borders - (Association for women entrepreneurs)	30
Project day at school for gender equality	31
Motivational workshops to promote gender equality	33
Discussions with school graduates	34
Training programme for aspiring entrepreneurs	35
Hungary - Komárom-Esztergom County	38
Attitude-shaping podcast series for men	38
Showcasing good practices for employers	40
Financial education for women	42
Women's awareness-raising events	45
The best workplace for women award	47
Serbia – Loznica Region	50
Women’s ethno hub – Intergenerational synergy through digital education and better access to the market	50
Women’s ethno hub – Circular economy training and capacity building for rural tourism households and farms	52
Women’s ethno hub – Establishment of social enterprise(s)	54
Slovenia - Trbovlje	57
Razpisne mojstrice – Grant Masters	57
Click for a job / Klik za šiht - An online platform featuring professional profiles from Zasavje	59



Innovation environment for women entrepreneurs	62
Job Happens / Šiht Happens: Career Exploration Day.....	65



Introduction

The current report presents a collection of social innovation ideas developed in the seven pilot regions of the WIN Project. Each idea has been formulated following a shared set of [guidelines for the development of social innovations \(D.2.1.1\)](#), which were jointly agreed upon and implemented by the project partners. These guidelines ensure a structured and coherent approach to innovation, allowing for meaningful solutions that address local needs while remaining adaptable for broader application.

To provide a clear and consistent presentation, all innovations are described using the WIN Innovation Solution Framework. This framework captures key aspects of each idea, including its title, aim, target group, and region, along with a concise summary that highlights the essence of the proposed solution. It also outlines the main implementation activities, expected results, and anticipated impact, ensuring that each idea is both actionable and measurable. Additionally, sustainability and scalability are assessed, exploring the potential for each innovation to be replicated in other regions or expanded at national and European levels.

The report offers a comprehensive overview of the diverse solutions emerging from the pilot regions, ensuring that these innovations can inspire, inform, and guide stakeholders who seek to drive meaningful social change in their own communities.

Social Innovations Overview

The WIN project supported the co-creation of 26 social innovation ideas across seven peripheral industrial regions in seven countries (see Table 1). These ideas were developed by local WIN Innovation Groups using a shared methodology based on the [Guidelines for developing social innovations \(D.2.1.1\)](#). The guidelines ensured that each idea emerged through a participatory, structured process that prioritised relevance to local contexts while maintaining the potential for broader adaptation. All innovations were described using a common template, which allows for cross-regional comparison.

The innovations are presented in the table below, organised by pilot region and classified according to their dominant typology of empowerment. This table allows readers to quickly scan the breadth and thematic focus of each idea, supporting both navigation and deeper analysis.

Table 1 - Overview of social innovation ideas

Pilot region	Innovation idea developed	Typology of Empowerment
Austria – Styrian Iron Road Region	Creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining”	Awareness-raising
	Female mentoring – establishment of female role models	Role-models and mentoring
	Stronger networks – stronger women	Support Network
Bosnia and Herzegovina - Herceg-Bosnian County	Step out of the shadow – Don’t tap in the dark	Motivation
	Step out of the shadow – Take your place on the market	Skills development
	Support for social enterprises	Social entrepreneurship
Bulgaria Radomir	EdnaZaDruga.bg – Online platform for women Entrepreneurs and Artists	Digital platform, Role-models and mentoring
	EdnaZaDruga.bg - Creative and supportive physical spaces for women	Skills development, Support Network
	Edna Za Druga – Women’s association for support, empowerment, and advocacy	Support Network
Czech Republic – Karlovy Vary Region	BusinessWomen without borders - (Association for women entrepreneurs)	Support Network
	Project day at school for gender equality	Awareness raising
	Motivational workshops to promote gender equality	Motivation, Gender Equality
	Discussions with school graduates	Awareness raising
	Training programme for aspiring entrepreneurs	Skills development, Entrepreneurship
Hungary Komárom-	Attitude-shaping podcast series for men	Awareness raising, Gender Equality



Esztergom County	Showcasing good practices for employers	Awareness raising
	Financial education for women	Skills development
	Women's awareness-raising events	Awareness raising
	The best workplace for women award	Recognition
Serbia – Loznica Region	Women's ethno hub – Intergenerational synergy through digital education and better access to the market	Skills development
	Women's ethno hub – Circular economy training and capacity building for rural tourism households and farms	Skills development
	Women's ethno hub – Establishment of social enterprise(s)	Social entrepreneurship
Slovenia Trbovlje	- Razpisne mojstrice – Grant Masters	Skills development
	Click for a job - An online platform featuring professional profiles from Zasavje	Digital platform
	Innovation environment for women entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurship
	Job Happens: Career Exploration Day	Awareness raising

All seven pilot regions contributed actively to the innovation process. Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Serbia each produced three ideas. Slovenia contributed four, while Hungary and the Czech Republic generated five each. Although each idea is unique, they share a common purpose: to unlock new pathways for women's inclusion and empowerment. Some innovations focus on shifting social attitudes, others on building tangible skills or creating supportive ecosystems.

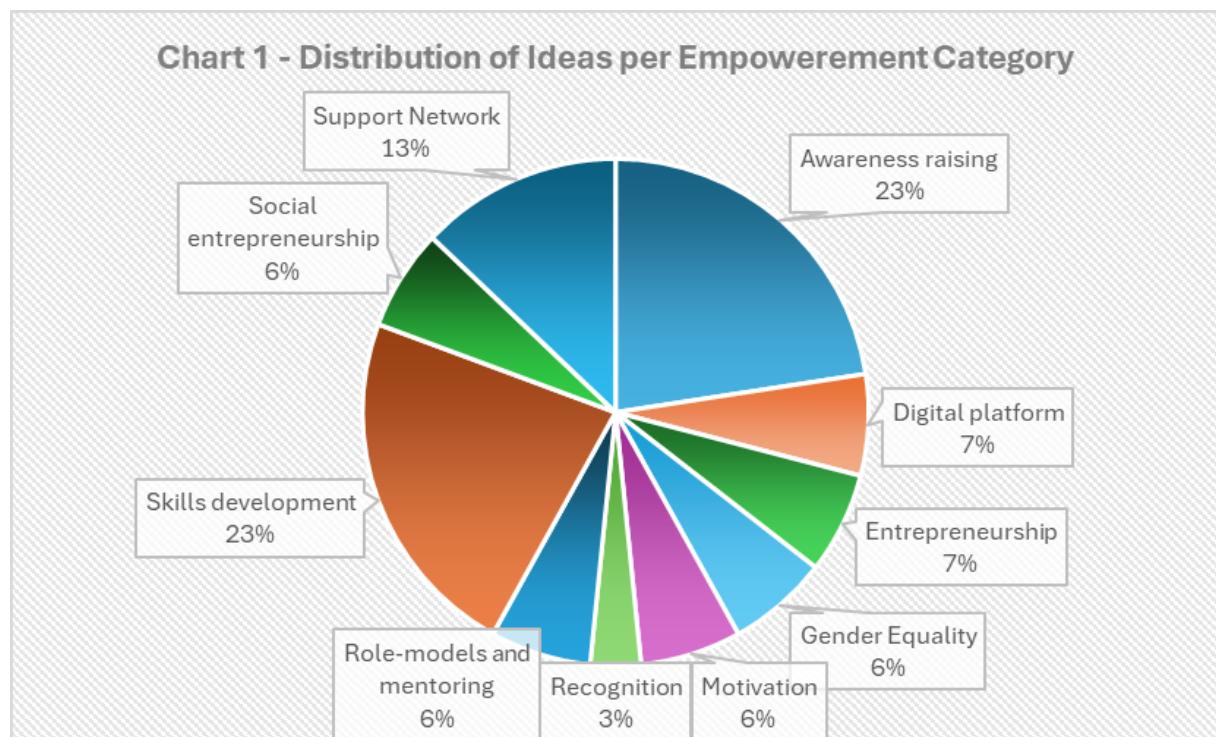
Each innovation was categorised using a custom empowerment typology, developed by the project partners as a tool for identifying strategic patterns and clarifying the different approaches to fostering individual, social, or structural change. Most ideas fall within the category of **awareness raising**, where the primary goal is to challenge gender stereotypes, stimulate conversation, and create space for alternative narratives. The approach is particularly visible in regions like Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, where campaigns, school activities, and public events aim to shift perceptions and foster openness to women's roles in non-traditional sectors.

Another major group of ideas focuses on **skills development**. These innovations invest directly in women's capacities through training, mentoring, or educational programming. Such strategies appear in Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia, and Hungary, reflecting a practical orientation aimed at improving employability, entrepreneurial readiness, and long-term autonomy.



A third cluster of innovations is built around **support networks**, often in combination with role-model strategies and mentoring. Here, the emphasis is not only on what women can learn or do, but also on who stands beside them. These ecosystems of solidarity that are visible in projects from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Austria are designed to reduce isolation, offer guidance, and amplify women's voices through shared platforms and associations. In Bulgaria and Slovenia, **digital platforms** are proposed to connect women to opportunities, enhance visibility, and overcome rural or structural barriers.

Entrepreneurship and social enterprise approaches form another important strand, especially in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These ideas seek to build sustainable structures where economic activity and social value creation go hand in hand.



The typology also reveals how different strategies are often combined within a single innovation. For example, EdnaZaDrug.a in Bulgaria merges digital tools, mentorship, and support networks, while Women's Ethno Hub in Serbia blends skills training with circular economy thinking and social enterprise development. These multi-layered approaches



acknowledge that empowerment is rarely achieved through a single intervention but rather through a constellation of reinforcing elements.

The current overview confirms the relevance of the WIN approach. By starting from local knowledge and needs, and by guiding the innovation process through a common framework, the project has generated solutions that are both diverse and aligned with broader European priorities. Each idea offers a glimpse into what is possible when communities are given the tools, space, and support to rethink social participation and inclusion.



Austria – Styrian Iron Road Region

Creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining”

Aim:

Enhance the visibility of successful women in industry and mining companies, awareness raising for STEM education and female job perspectives in the industrial and mining sector, burst of traditional gender roles, mentoring.

Target group:

Pupils of higher educational facilities, like grammar schools (AHS), Secondary Technical College (HTL), Higher Educational Institution for Economics (HTBLA), Secondary College for Business Administration (HAK).

Target region:

Styrian Iron Road which consists of the district of Leoben and three municipalities in the district of Liezen (Gaishorn am See, Landl, Wildalpen). Schools situated in Leoben and Eisenerz will participate in the competition.

Short summary of the innovation:

The creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining” combines awareness raising for STEM education and female job opportunities. A competition will be carried out in regional high schools. Girls and boys are invited to draw (digital or analogue) their ideas on how they conceive women’s future in industrial and mining companies. The project is conducted together with an advertising agency which has a lot of experience working together with schools. A female role model and the members of the WIN Innovation Group will accompany the initiative. The winning design will be chosen by a jury, consisting of the members of the WIN Innovation Group and an online voting. The winning design will be presented at a final press conference and printed in large format on a public bus touring through the region for one year.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Conceptualization and detailed planning.
- Activity 2: Coordination and preparation of communication materials (e.g. website, logo, coloring page, roll-up).
- Activity 3: Project presentation in the participating schools.
- Activity 4: Implementation of the competition, collection, survey and pre-selection of the designs submitted.



- Activity 5: Jury session and online voting via social media.
- Activity 6: Presentation of results, award ceremony, press conference.

Expected results:

About 500 pupils will have the opportunity to participate in the competition. Presentations in the 6 participating schools will be held in March 2025. Furthermore, a much broader audience will be reached by online voting and accompanying public relation activities. Above all the design/message “Women in industry and mining” will be present in the region for one year on a public bus.

Impact:

The visibility of successful women in industry and mining as well as the awareness for STEM education and job perspectives in the industrial and mining sector for girls and young women will increase.

Sustainability and scalability:

The proposed solution is easily transferable to other regions. Sustainability could be guaranteed by developing topic centered training sessions for schools with appropriate learning materials to become part and parcel of higher education.



Female mentoring – establishment of female role models

Aim:

Enhance the visibility of successful women in industry and mining, awareness raising for STEM education and female job perspectives in the industrial and mining sector, burst of traditional gender roles, mentoring.

Target group:

Pupils of higher educational facilities, like grammar schools (AHS), Secondary Technical College (HTL), Higher Educational Institution for Economics (HTBLA), Secondary College for Business Administration (HAK) and the public. The role model(s) will also support the creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining”.

Target region:

Styrian Iron Road which consists of the district of Leoben and three municipalities in the district of Liezen (Gaishorn am See, Landl, Wildalpen).

Short summary of the innovation:

Women with different jobs in industrial and mining companies will be established as role models which work together with schools to enhance girls and young women’s interest for STEM education and technical jobs. Furthermore, they are part of a campaign with a regional newspaper. Stories of successful female employees in industry and mining will be presented on a two-month basis. Short clips will also be shown on social media.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Conceptualization, detailed planning, consultation.
- Activity 2: Visits in schools and support of the creativity contest.
- Activity 3: Implementation of the media campaign (newspaper and social media), 100 hours, VESTE, role models, media company.

Expected results:

As part of a creativity contest in schools role models will present their careers and working experiences in traditional predominantly male professions to around 500 pupils. 6 presentations in the participating schools will be held in March 2025 which include a speech and presentation of the role model involved as well. A much broader audience will be achieved by the planned media campaign.

Impact:



The visibility of successful women in industry and mining as well as the awareness for STEM education and job perspectives in the industrial and mining sector for girls and young women will increase. First steps of establishing female mentorship activities in regional schools will be made which helps bursting the perception of traditional gender roles.

Sustainability and scalability:

The proposed solution is easily transferable to other regions or levels. Sustainability could be guaranteed by developing topic-centered training sessions for schools with appropriate learning materials and the integration of regional role models to become part and parcel of higher education. Furthermore, the planned media campaign could be prolonged and become an integral part of the public relation activities of VESTE and/or different regional industrial and mining companies.

Stronger networks – stronger women

Aim:

Establishing and/or fostering female networking leads to more empowerment, visibility of successful women in industries, awareness raising, support in developing of full professional potentials as well as strengthening the self-confidence of female employees.

Target group:

Female employees from the region's industrial companies as well as other branches, e.g. craft sector, etc.

Target region:

Styrian Iron Road which consists of the district of Leoben and three municipalities in the district of Liezen (Gaishorn am See, Landl, Wildalpen).

Short summary of the innovation:

Networks have a profound impact on one's career development. While historically especially men were aware of the importance of networking (e.g. in business clubs, service clubs and other associations), female networks are so far hardly to find. Since 2021 a successful female network in the Styrian Iron Road – consisting of several departments like social and care, culture and education, business (self-employment) and networking – has been established. During the meetings of the WIN Innovation group the idea was developed to cooperate and extend the network's impact and implement a new department called "work and industry" which focuses on the needs and challenges of female employees in peripheral industrial regions.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Coordination with the existing female network coordinator or a comparable responsible person.
- Activity 2: Presentation to the network's members.
- Activity 3: Comparative planning of communication activities and events (e.g. a pub quiz or a cooperation with the so called "Erzberg Games" targeting the position of women, or a special guided tour showing job opportunities for women in manufacturing).
- Activity 4: Corporate execution of network activities and continuous communication as well as awareness-raising campaigns.
- Activity 5: Evaluation (planning – conducting – postprocessing of an evaluation workshop).
- Activity 6: Sustainable implementation of the new department "work and industry" in the existing female network Iron Women at the end of the WIN project.

Expected results:

At least 20 women will attend network activities like workshops, lectures, coaching's or other inspiring formats combined with several network activities to different topics such as career planning, financial security, different working-time models and their impacts, etc. Annually 2 meetings, in spring and autumn, are scheduled and conducted together with the female network Iron Women. In the communication activities female multiplicators of at least 4 industrial companies, the Mining University Leoben, the Chamber of Industries as well as the regional branch of the Chamber of Employment are involved. Integration in an existing network furthermore guarantees the sustainability of the objective solution beyond the specific period of the WIN project.

Impact:

The issue to enhance the position of female employees in peripheral industrial regions is implemented as a new department "work and industry" in an existing network and will be communicated through the network's awareness-raising activities. Specific events on a regular basis offer opportunities to be informed and trained as well as to strengthen one's own career-related personal networks.

Sustainability and scalability:

As mentioned above the establishment of a new department in the existing female network Iron Women guarantees the sustainability of the developed solution. Due to its flexible character the solution is scalable as well. Although our experiences with female networking refer to a regional level, existing networks in Styria (e.g. "women in economy" from the Chamber of Economy) already demonstrate their success also on a wider scale.



Bosnia and Herzegovina - Herceg-Bosnian County

Step out of the shadow – Don't tap in the dark

Aim:

The aim is to provide unemployed women with a business literacy training, i.e. the opportunity to acquire the basic tools and skills for independent performance of economic activity, to encourage them to register the work they already do, and to inform them about existing incentive programmes, public calls, the benefits of networking and further independent informing and involvement in relevant initiatives and activities that can contribute to their business development.

Target group:

All unemployed women, regardless of age, qualifications, work experience or work capacity, who want to improve their skills and knowledge necessary for registering and running their own business, those who wish to turn their hobby into a successful business, as well as craftswomen who want to improve the knowledge and skills of their employees.

Target region:

Herceg-Bosnian County, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Short summary of the innovation:

Within this social innovation, unemployed women from the Herceg-Bosnian County would be provided with a free education on key entrepreneurship topics, which are relevant and applicable in every form and type of economic activity. The training would encompass information on annual incentive programmes and public calls, and the process of responding to them. In addition to the training, the possibility of organising mentoring for the beneficiaries of the programme in the form of “do the job for a day” will be considered.

To reach as many interested parties as possible, the call will be carried out within the awareness-raising campaign, radio shows, paid advertisements on social networks, as well as through regular activities of the Employment Office, i.e. individual counselling of unemployed persons and by organising info days in all six municipalities of the County.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Free training in business literacy for unemployed women and women employed in craft enterprises, including two modules: Entrepreneurship basics (Basic digital skills, business management, budgeting, marketing) and Training in maintaining a business (incentive programmes and public calls, recognising and applying to the same).
- Activity 2: Mentorship programme: Entrepreneur's shadow. In order to experience the day-to-day practice of running an enterprise, the beneficiaries of the training programme will be given the opportunity to shadow women entrepreneurs in the pilot region. The proposition is that up to



3 women would shadow a female entrepreneur for a period of time set by the programme of the training, in accordance with relevant laws and in agreement with the mentors.

- Activity 3: Workshops for unemployed women within a job fair. The Employment Office of the Herzeg-Bosnian County plans to organise a job fair in 2025 to present local and regional employers, examples of good practice, incentives and funds, as well as relevant associations.
- Activity 4: Programme evaluation workshop. The goal of the workshop is to evaluate the training programme, gather feedback and insights on how to improve the training programme in the future.
- Activity 5: Info days to inform and raise awareness on existing incentive programmes for unemployed persons and employers, as well as on the rights of unemployed persons and the services the Employment Office provides.

Expected results:

A total of 15 women will directly benefit from the training and mentorship programmes, gaining skills to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial opportunities. Additional women employed in craft enterprises will also participate through employer-supported training. Beyond this, the programme's impact will extend further through workshops, info days across six municipalities, and networking opportunities, reaching a wider audience of unemployed women, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders in the labor market.

Impact:

The innovation will equip women with business skills, increasing their chances of employment, self-employment, and financial independence. It will raise public awareness of available education and job opportunities while boosting women's confidence through training and mentorship. In the long term, more women will enter the labor market, start businesses, and serve as role models for others. The initiative will also encourage the formalization of economic activities, reducing grey economy participation and benefiting both individuals and society.

Sustainability and scalability:

The programme for entrepreneurship training for unemployed women possesses significant potential for sustainability within the regular activities of the Employment Office of the Herzeg-Bosnian County, under whose jurisdiction is also the education of unemployed persons. With the support of relevant institutions, this programme could gain recognition and application in other counties of the Federation of BiH, where women face the same challenges.

Step out of the shadow – Take your place on the market

Aim:



Raising awareness and empowering women in the business world, facilitating and simplification of the entrepreneurial language and support in all aspects related to business, with the aim of creating a more favourable environment for the development and registration of crafts.

Target group:

All unemployed women, regardless of age, qualifications, work experience or work capacity, as well as women who already perform certain business activities and wish to expand their business or register a craft enterprise.

Target region:

Herceg-Bosnian County, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Short summary of the innovation:

To increase the participation and visibility of women in the market and to create an enabling environment for their business success in the Herceg-Bosnian County, the programme would support the establishment of craft enterprises and the launching of entrepreneurial ideas with an emphasis on marginalised groups in society, especially women.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Preparation and implementation of a public call for supporting the establishing of craft enterprises for persons wishing to start or expand and register their business by establishing a craft. The call will be open to all persons with an emphasis on marginalised persons, especially women in the Herceg-Bosnian County who meet the conditions set by the programme.
- Activity 2: Info days in different municipalities within the Herceg-Bosnian County to present the opportunities of the programme to women, conditions for application and the steps in the process of registration of craft enterprises and business expansion.
- Activity 3: Providing mentoring and organisation of round tables with stakeholders from the sectors of entrepreneurship, accounting, legal assistance and financing and approach to financial markets and applying to projects by various donors, where female entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to ask questions, exchange experiences, and gain specific advice from experts.

Expected results:

The programme will directly support 10 women in starting or expanding their craft businesses through mentorship, administrative assistance, and expert advice. At least 5 women per year are expected to register a new craft business or grow an existing one, creating new job opportunities and reducing unemployment. Five info days will provide essential guidance on business development, while 5 round tables will offer expert support and experience-sharing. These efforts will strengthen women's entrepreneurship, boost their economic independence, and help reduce gender inequality in the community.

Impact:



The programme will help 10 women start or expand their craft businesses by providing mentorship, administrative support, and business training. In the short term, they will gain confidence, essential skills, and access to funding opportunities. In the long term, at least 5 women are expected to build sustainable businesses, creating jobs and improving their financial stability. This will reduce unemployment, strengthen women's position in the labor market, and promote gender equality in entrepreneurship. The programme will also foster a strong network of women entrepreneurs, ensuring long-term support, collaboration, and business growth.

Sustainability and scalability:

This programme has the potential to spread to other regions of BiH, as well as neighbouring countries like Croatia and Serbia, given the similar challenges that women face in entrepreneurship. It can also expand to the European level through cooperation with the EU initiatives for women's entrepreneurship. The programme can ensure long-term sustainability through financial support from local authorities, the private sector and EU funds, and the development of mentoring and networking models among women entrepreneurs. Through these collaborations, the programme will have long-term stability and extend its impact to women entrepreneurs.

Support for social enterprises

Aim:

The aim is to support social entrepreneurship in the pilot region through subsidizing contributions of employees in social enterprises.

Target group:

Social enterprises whose activities include the work on improving living and working conditions of socially sensitive categories of the population.

Target region:

Herceg-Bosnian County, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Short summary of the innovation:

This programme would not only support a social enterprise, but consequently future projects of a social nature, since profit in a social enterprise is not divided, but reinvested into the company or into other projects of a social nature the social enterprise itself would implement.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Round table on the benefits of social entrepreneurship with stakeholders, NGOs and experts in the relevant subject matter, in order to elaborate on the benefits of social entrepreneurship, raise awareness and answer questions interested parties may have.





- Activity 2: Info days will present information about the programme and related public call for co-financing, when to expect and how to apply to the programme, and the participants will have the opportunity to ask for information and advice in a manner that is transparent and equally accessible to all interested parties.
- Activity 3: Public call for an employment programme for subsidizing contributions of employees of a social enterprise. The call will be open to registered social enterprises that operate in the pilot area of the Herceg-Bosnian County.
- Activity 4: Open day at the social enterprise. Stakeholders, local authorities and the media will be invited to gain insight into the social enterprises' activity, action plans and planned future endeavours.

Expected results:

The programme aims to establish one social enterprise within the first year, with the potential for expansion and additional support in the following year. Initially, it will subsidize contributions for two employees, though this number may increase if the enterprise is founded by an NGO supporting young people with disabilities or women, offering flexible employment opportunities. Informational activities, including a round table and info days, will provide interested individuals with essential guidance, support, and resources for establishing and sustaining a social enterprise.

Impact:

The programme will introduce social entrepreneurship in the Herzeg-Bosnian County, where none currently exist, aiming to establish at least one social enterprise. In the short term, it will raise awareness of this business model, expand employment support programmes, and create opportunities for socially vulnerable groups. In the long term, profits from social enterprises will fund community projects, increasing social initiatives and improving job opportunities. This will enhance the economic stability and quality of life for disadvantaged groups, helping them gain confidence and financial independence.

Sustainability and scalability:

The programme has sustainability potential at the county level if additional funds can be secured by the Employment Office of the Herceg-Bosnian County and/or the Federal Employment Office. Should the Federal Employment Office support the proposal of this programme, there is the potential of expansion into other counties/cantons of the within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Bulgaria – Radomir

EdnaZaDrugabg – Online platform for women Entrepreneurs and Artists

Aim:

To create a virtual space for connection, support, and representation of women entrepreneurs and artists in the region of Radomir (Bulgaria), fostering visibility, collaboration, and access to opportunities.

Target group:

Women entrepreneurs, artists, and craftswomen in Radomir and surrounding villages. Women looking for professional growth, mentorship, or community support. The local community, benefiting from increased economic and creative activities

Target region:

Radomir (Bulgaria) and surrounding villages with potential expansion to a broader regional and national level.

Short summary of the innovation:

The EdnaZaDrugabg online platform will serve as a digital hub for women entrepreneurs and artists in Radomir, providing an e-shop, success stories, an event calendar, mentorship opportunities, and entrepreneurship resources. The platform will highlight local women's achievements and foster a strong support network.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Establishing the online platform. Between March and July 2025, the technical foundation of EdnaZaDrugabg will be developed, including selecting a platform, registering a domain, and setting up hosting. The platform will feature an e-shop, success stories, an event calendar, a mentorship network, and entrepreneurship resources, all tailored to support women entrepreneurs and artists. A bilingual interface (Bulgarian and English) will ensure accessibility, while the payment system will rely on cash-on-delivery to suit local preferences.
- Activity 2: Creating and managing content. A dedicated content management team will be responsible for keeping the platform active and engaging. They will regularly update success stories, events, and entrepreneurial resources while onboarding women entrepreneurs to the e-shop. Local women will be encouraged to contribute their stories and experiences, ensuring a dynamic and community-driven space.



- Activity 3: Marketing and promotion strategy. A marketing campaign will introduce EdnaZaDruga.bg to the community through social media, local networks, and an online launch event. Partnerships with municipalities, NGOs, and business groups will help expand its reach. To drive engagement, the platform will rely on word-of-mouth promotion, with active users acting as ambassadors to bring in more participants.

Expected results:

100+ women will be engaged with the platform through events, mentorship, and networking opportunities. 30+ women entrepreneurs and artists will be showcased in the e-shop and success stories section. 20+ women to be supported through mentorship opportunities.

Impact:

In the short term, the platform will provide women entrepreneurs and artists in Radomir with visibility, networking opportunities, and access to mentorship and business resources, helping them gain confidence and financial stability. It will create a supportive community where women can exchange knowledge, promote their work, and find guidance, reducing isolation and strengthening their entrepreneurial efforts.

In the long term, the initiative can establish a self-sustaining ecosystem that continuously supports women in business and creative fields, encouraging more women to take entrepreneurial risks. As the platform grows, it can become a replicable model for other rural regions, inspiring similar initiatives and integrating into broader efforts for women's economic empowerment. Over time, it can contribute to changing local perceptions about women's entrepreneurship and fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and shared success.

Sustainability and scalability:

The platform can sustain itself through continuous engagement, local business collaborations, and potential external funding opportunities. The model can be expanded to other regions in Bulgaria and adapted for broader national and European networks, serving as a model for fostering women's economic empowerment through digital communities.

Creative and supportive physical spaces for women

Aim:

To create safe and inspiring physical spaces where women in Radomir can connect, develop skills, and grow personally and professionally through creative activities, educational workshops, and community support events.

Target group:



Women entrepreneurs, artists, and craftswomen in Radomir and surrounding villages. Women seeking creative expression, professional development, or personal growth. The local community, benefiting from workshops, festivals, and public events

Target region:

Radomir (Bulgaria) with outreach to nearby villages

Short summary of the innovation:

By supporting the collaboration between two dedicated creative spaces in Radomir, this initiative will provide regular meetings, workshops, festivals, art therapy sessions, and community visits to support and empower women. The spaces will foster both creative expression and professional development, offering hands-on learning in traditional and modern crafts, entrepreneurship, and personal growth.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Establishing and announcing the collaboration between two physical spaces. The two designated creative spaces - HartArt Sne and Art Workshop MO - will be officially introduced as a community hub in support of women. These spaces will serve as meeting points for craftswomen, artists, and entrepreneurs, providing both a platform for showcasing their work and a space for collaboration. A public launch event will introduce the initiative, attracting local participants and media attention.
- Activity 2: Organizing regular meetings and workshops. Monthly community meetings, training sessions, and creative workshops will take place in the two spaces. Activities will include art therapy (working with clay, painting, music, movement, and breathing exercises), personal development training (public speaking, online presence, basic graphic design for marketing), and craft workshops (ceramics, embroidery, glass painting, decoupage, knitting, and more). Special guest speakers and experts will cover essential topics such as education, violence prevention, health, sexuality, and career development.
- Activity 3: Hosting festivals, bazaars, and outreach activities. The hub will contribute to the organization and participation in seasonal festivals and bazaars to promote and sell the work of local women entrepreneurs. These events will help participants gain financial independence, network with potential clients, and showcase their skills to the wider public. Additionally, visits to surrounding villages will be arranged to engage rural women who may lack access to such opportunities, ensuring the initiative reaches beyond Radomir.

Expected results:

50+ women will be actively engaged in workshops, art therapy, and training sessions. 200+ community members attending events, bazaars, and festivals. 10+ guest speakers and experts providing educational sessions.



**Impact:**

In the short term, the initiative will increase women's access to creative and professional development opportunities, fostering a sense of belonging, support, and empowerment. Through regular meetings and events, women will gain new skills, confidence, and stronger social connections.

In the long term, the initiative can establish a lasting cultural and professional hub in Radomir, enabling women to monetize their creative work, expand their networks, and take leadership roles in their community. The model can be expanded to other regions, creating a nationwide network of supportive spaces for women's growth, learning, and economic empowerment.

Sustainability and scalability:

The initiative will create self-sustaining spaces, with ongoing workshops and bazaars generating income for participants and organizers. The model can easily be adapted and replicated in other towns and villages, fostering a nationwide network of creative and supportive spaces that empower women socially and economically.

Edna Za Druga – Women's association for support, empowerment, and advocacy

Aim:

To create a formal association that amplifies the voices of women in Radomir, providing a platform for initiatives, advocacy, and support services that address key social and economic challenges faced by women in the region.

Target group:

Women in Radomir from diverse backgrounds

Target region:

Radomir (Bulgaria), with potential expansion to nearby regions

Short summary of the innovation:

The Edna Za Druga Association will bring together women from Radomir into a formalized network, allowing them to initiate, lead, and sustain community-driven projects that address economic, social, and professional challenges. The association will advocate for women's rights, provide support services, and create opportunities for skill-building and personal development.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Establishing the legal structure and organizational framework. The founding members will work on registering the association, defining its mission, and setting up an operational structure. The focus will be on creating an inclusive and participatory governance model that allows women from different backgrounds to engage in decision-making and initiative development.
- Activity 2: Identifying priority initiatives and launching support services. The association will conduct meetings with local women to identify key focus areas, ensuring that the initiatives align with real community needs. Potential pilot programs may include legal consultations for employment rights, peer support circles, and childcare advocacy efforts. Additionally, a resource network of volunteer professionals (lawyers, educators, career coaches) will be established to provide advisory and mentoring services to women in need.
- Activity 3: Developing partnerships and long-term sustainability strategy. The association will work on building partnerships with municipalities, local businesses, and NGOs to secure financial and structural support for its initiatives. It will explore funding opportunities through grants, donations, and membership contributions while also advocating for policy changes that benefit women in Radomir. The association will serve as an umbrella organization supporting the online platform, creative spaces, and broader advocacy efforts.

Expected results:

A legally registered women's association with a clear mission and governance structure. 12+ active members leading and participating in initiatives. 5+ key initiatives launched (e.g., workshops and other events). 60+ women reached through support networks and advocacy efforts.

Impact:

In the short term, the association will provide a structured way for women to voice their challenges, find support, and access resources, addressing key social and economic struggles in Radomir. It will create a safe and empowering environment where women can share experiences, seek advice, and participate in community-driven initiatives.

In the long term, Edna Za Druga has the potential to become a leading force for women's advocacy and empowerment in Radomir, ensuring that women's needs are heard and addressed at both community and municipal levels. With time, it can scale its model to other rural areas facing similar challenges, becoming a regional or even national voice for women's empowerment in Bulgaria.

Sustainability and scalability:

By creating a formal structure, the association will ensure the long-term continuation of existing initiatives, including the online platform and physical community spaces. It will work to secure ongoing funding and partnerships while developing self-sustaining services (e.g., paid consultations, workshops, and memberships). The model can easily be adapted to other rural areas in Bulgaria,



where women face similar challenges. Over time, Edna Za Druga can expand its network, share best practices, and advocate for national policies supporting women's social and economic empowerment.

Czech Republic – Karlovy Vary Region

BusinessWomen without borders - (Association for women entrepreneurs)

Aim:

A safe space to share experiences and draw inspiration, to strengthen each other's confidence, to formalize and anchor the initiative of entrepreneurial women (bottom up). Promoting and developing women's entrepreneurial activities with an emphasis on sustainability, social responsibility and regional development. Aim to create a community that offers education, mentoring, networking and inspiration to women entrepreneurs.

Target group:

Women entrepreneurs and aspiring women entrepreneurs.

Target region:

Karlovy Vary Region

Short summary of the innovation:

Association will be established to bring together women entrepreneurs, including start-ups, for the purpose of supporting them: education, resource acquisition, networking, mentoring. It will promote cooperation between women at regional and international level, successful entrepreneurial stories and utilize modern technology for business development.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Education in the form of seminars and workshops; duration - ongoing, responsible persons - members of the organization, sources - membership fees, grant opportunities, fundraising.
- Activity 2: Networking, including sharing experiences and addressing common challenges; duration - ongoing, responsible persons - members of the organisation, resources - membership fees, grant opportunities, fundraising.
- Activity 3: Mentoring, including individual support from more experienced women entrepreneurs.
- Activity 4: Projects with potential for further development: cooperation on regional and international projects.

Expected results:

50 women involved in the organisation's activities. 1000 girls and women in the region reached through online activities. 20 new events a year aimed at promoting women's self-esteem.

Impact:

In short-term perspective, an increase is expected in the number of active women entrepreneurs and their involvement in social and regional development. The long-term impact will be promoting sustainable entrepreneurship, creating new jobs and empowering women in business.

Sustainability and scalability:

Sustainability is ensured by setting the legal entity, securing initial funding from membership fees. The transferability of the innovation is not dependent on a specific location and can be applied to other regions, including abroad, as well as at national levels.

Project day at school for gender equality

Aim:

Increasing the awareness of primary school pupils (boys and girls) about the real labour market with regard to gender equality.

Target group:

Pupils (boys and girls) of 7th – 9th grades of primary school

Target region:

Karlovy Vary Region

Short summary of the innovation:

Presentation to pupils of currently in demand professions, talent and aptitude diagnosis. There will also be a discussion with successful businesswomen or entrepreneurs of the region. All activities will focus on gender equality. The estimated length of 1 project day is 4 lessons. Pupils (boys and girls) will be divided into groups and rotate through the activities.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Using web application "My Life After School" to provide clear information on individual occupations adapted to the regional labour market and the basis for financial literacy. The web application "Pathway to Employment" will introduce pupils (boys and girls) to the steps involved in finding a job. The app introduces pupils (boys and girls) to creating a CV, searching for a job on a job portal, selecting a contract, and learning the basics of employment law.
- Activity 2: Presentation of local companies, their benefits, including special benefits for women and parents (flexible hours, childcare allowances, company kindergartens, etc.), salary conditions and currently in-demand positions. This information will help pupils (boys and girls) to choose their future careers.



- Activity 3: Diagnosis of talents and aptitudes to help pupils (boys and girls) identify their strengths and weaknesses and thus facilitate their choice of future field of study, regardless of gender.
- Activity 4: Discussion with successful women entrepreneurs (collaboration with association BusinessWomen without Borders) or entrepreneurs of the region - presentation of their entrepreneurial journey, including all the obstacles they had to face. The purpose is to show children that they can choose the path of private entrepreneurship as a source of livelihood in addition to employment.

Expected results:

The pilot will involve 2 classes of pupils in one primary school, but the innovation can be applied in more schools. The information will make it easier for pupils (boys and girls) to make decisions about their future career choices.

Impact:

Raising awareness, breaking down prejudices and stereotypes, and blurring gender differences. Enabling the right career choice that will lead to lifelong satisfaction.

Sustainability and scalability:

A general concept for a project day will be developed that will be transferable to other regions with minimal additional costs.

Motivational workshops to promote gender equality

Aim:

Preparing future graduates (male and female) to enter the labour market with gender equality in mind.

Target group:

High school students (male and female).

Target region:

Karlovy Vary Region

Short summary of the innovation:

Motivational workshops are designed to facilitate orientation on the labour market, provide students (male and female) with information on job requirements and learn the skills needed to find a job. Students (male and female) will learn how to write a proper CV, how to present themselves and how



to perform in a job interview, and what rights and obligations they have when entering employment with regard to gender equality. They will also learn how to start a business. The 18-hour workshops will be led by expert lecturers (male and female) and will be implemented in cooperation with employers' representatives.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Creating a CV and cover letter - formal and content correctness, pointing out common mistakes. The essentials and intricacies of employment contracts.
- Activity 2: Practicing job interviews with recruiters from companies, including preparation for the interview with the workshop lecturer (male and female).
- Activity 3: Presenting entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment.

Expected results:

Increasing the awareness and readiness of secondary school students (male and female) and their better application in the labour market with regard to gender equality.

Impact:

Higher self-confidence of female graduates and increased employability of graduates (male and female) with regard to gender equality.

Sustainability and scalability:

A general concept of motivational workshops will be developed that will be transferable to other regions with minimal additional costs.

Discussions with school graduates

Aim:

Increase awareness of the gender-sensitive secondary school offer.

Target group:

Pupils (boys and girls) of 7th - 9th grades of primary school

Target region:

Karlovy Vary Region

Short summary of the innovation:



Increase awareness of the offer and quality of the school through the personal experiences of former classmates (boys and girls) who are currently studying at high schools. Pupils (boys and girls) can thus gain valuable information in the language of their generation. We will try to invite inspiring role models to help us break down preconceived ideas about the gendered nature of certain fields (e.g. hairdresser, metalworker, toolmaker, nurse, etc.).

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Discussion of pupils (boys and girls) with a graduate (male and female) of the same primary school.

Expected results:

The pilot will involve 2 classes in one primary school, but the innovation can be applied in more schools. There will be an increase in awareness of the gender-sensitive offer of secondary schools.

Impact:

The right choice of secondary school regardless of prejudices and stereotypes.

Sustainability and scalability:

A general concept of words will be created that will be transferable to other regions with minimal additional costs.

Training programme for aspiring entrepreneurs

Aim:

To provide systematic support to aspiring women entrepreneurs through a comprehensive educational and practical programme that will enable them to develop their entrepreneurial skills, plan strategically and launch their businesses successfully.

Target group:

Women who want to start or grow their business and are looking for inspiration, practical skills and community support.

Target region:

Karlovy Vary Region with the possibility of an online format for expansion to other regions

Summary of the innovation:



Comprehensive training program aimed at supporting aspiring women entrepreneurs. It combines theoretical knowledge, mentoring and practical exercises. The program includes individual and group activities to help participants create a business plan, build a network of contacts and acquire the necessary skills to run a successful business.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Educational blocks, including workshops on topics such as creating a business plan, basics of business modelling, financing and marketing.
- Activity 2: Mentoring and Consultation, connecting participants with successful women entrepreneurs who will provide individual support and experience sharing.
- Activity 3: Practical projects during which participants will create concrete outputs (e.g. business plan or marketing strategy) during the programme.

Expected results:

50 participants sign up for the programme. 12 female participants who will complete the program and start a business. The emergence of new business projects in the region.

Impact:

The programme will contribute to increasing the number of ready entrepreneurs in the region and support their first business activities. In long-term perspective, it will lead to creation of stable and sustainable businesses, contributing to the development of the local economy and creating an entrepreneurial culture that encourages innovation and collaboration.

Sustainability and scalability:

Funding from grants, participation fees and sponsorship donations. Possibility of replicating the programme in other regions and adapting it to the specific needs of different target groups. Working with regional institutions and communities to promote long-term sustainability.





Hungary - Komárom-Esztergom County

Attitude-shaping podcast series for men

Aim:

To shift attitudes among Hungarian men regarding gender roles, equality, and the value of women's contributions in social, cultural, family, and workplace settings, leading to a more equitable and supportive environment for women. Nurture a deeper understanding and empathy towards the challenges women face, ultimately fostering a change in behaviour and creating a more inclusive society.

Target group:

Primarily Hungarian men aged 25-55, living in urban and suburban areas, who are active consumers of online media, including podcasts. This group encompasses fathers, husbands, managers, and colleagues who directly influence women's opportunities and experiences in the family and at work. Secondarily, we aim to reach a broader audience, including younger men and women, to foster intergenerational dialogue and promote a more inclusive understanding of gender equality.

Target region:

The podcast will be available nationwide.

Short summary of the innovation:

A compelling podcast series featuring well-known Hungarian actors or public figures engaging in honest conversations about women's social, cultural, family, and workplace experiences, designed to challenge traditional perspectives and promote empathy and understanding among men. The innovative element is that we are trying to improve the situation of women through men, and the format itself is an innovative solution.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Content development and production: develop a series of 6-8 podcast episodes, each focusing on a specific theme related to women's situation (e.g., work-life balance, gender stereotypes, pay equity, domestic responsibilities, harassment); recruit Hungarian actors or public figures (ideally a mix of men and women per episode) who are willing to share their personal experiences and engage in open and honest conversations; record and professionally produce the podcast episodes, ensuring high audio quality and a compelling listening experience.
- Activity 2: Promotion and distribution on popular platforms such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. Utilize social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) to promote



episodes, share snippets, and engage with listeners. Partner with local media outlets (radio stations, newspapers, online news sites) to promote the podcast series and reach a wider audience.

- Activity 3: Community engagement and feedback through an online forum or social media group where listeners can discuss the podcast episodes, share their thoughts, and ask questions. Conduct online surveys to assess the impact of the podcast series on listeners' attitudes and behaviours. Use the feedback to improve future episodes and adapt the project to better meet the needs of the target audience.

Expected results:

The podcast will contribute to increased awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by women in the workplace and at home; shift in attitudes among listeners regarding gender roles and equality, as evidenced by survey results; increased engagement in discussions about gender equality on social media and in community forums and participation in events and initiatives promoting women's empowerment.

Impact:

In the short term, the podcast will foster greater empathy and support for women among men, leading to more equitable treatment both in the workplace and at home. Improved communication and understanding between men and women will contribute to a more inclusive work environment, while increased awareness of available resources and support services will empower women to access the help they need. In the long term, the initiative will contribute to breaking down gender stereotypes and reducing discrimination, enabling more women to take on leadership roles and helping to close the gender pay gap. By promoting a better work-life balance and strengthening family support structures, the programme will create a more inclusive and equitable society where women have equal opportunities to succeed.

Sustainability and scalability:

The national release of the podcast would not only have an impact in the pilot region. The podcast format is highly scalable, as it can be distributed online to a large audience at a relatively low cost. The concept can be adapted for other countries by featuring local celebrities and addressing the specific cultural context. The podcast series can be sustained by securing funding from corporate sponsors, government grants, or philanthropic organizations. Building a strong online community around the podcast can help ensure its long-term sustainability and impact.

Showcasing good practices for employers

Aim:

To increase the adoption of female-friendly workplace practices by employers in the Komárom-Esztergom County, leading to improved working conditions, increased job satisfaction, and greater





career opportunities for women. We aspire to create a more equitable and inclusive business environment where women can thrive and contribute fully to the local economy.

Target group:

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and larger companies in Komárom-Esztergom County, particularly those in industrial sectors, that currently have limited or no female-friendly workplace policies. The key decision-makers are HR managers and company directors.

Target region:

Komárom-Esztergom County (Tatabánya, Dorog, Oroszlány).

Short summary of the innovation:

A targeted outreach program where HR managers and company directors from local businesses implementing successful female-friendly policies share their experiences and best practices with other employers in the region, inspiring them to adopt similar measures.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Identification and documentation of good practices. Over eight weeks, the project team will identify 2-3 companies in Komárom-Esztergom County that have successfully implemented female-friendly workplace policies, such as flexible working hours, on-site childcare, equal pay audits, and mentorship programs. Researchers will conduct interviews with HR managers, company directors, and female employees to document the policies, their implementation process, and their impact on both employees and business performance. The findings will be compiled into case studies featuring written descriptions, photographs, and video testimonials, providing compelling examples of best practices that can inspire other businesses to adopt similar policies.
- Activity 2: Employer outreach and awareness raising study visits. Over six months, the project will organize study visits and networking events in Tatabánya, Dorog, and Oroszlány, bringing together HR managers and company directors from local businesses. During these events, participants will receive case studies and promotional materials showcasing the benefits of female-friendly workplace policies. To maximize outreach, the project will also collaborate with local media outlets, including newspapers, radio, and online news platforms, to raise awareness and encourage wider adoption of inclusive employment practices.

Expected results:

At least 10 employers in Komárom-Esztergom County will take part in study visits and networking events, gaining direct exposure to successful female-friendly workplace policies. As a result, participating companies are expected to implement new policies that support women in the workplace, leading to improved working conditions and higher job satisfaction among female employees. Additionally, the initiative will raise awareness among employers, helping them





understand the benefits of inclusive policies for both employees and overall business performance, fostering a more equitable and supportive work environment in the region.

Impact:

In the short term, the initiative will encourage more employers in Komárom-Esztergom County to adopt female-friendly workplace policies, leading to better working conditions and higher job satisfaction for female employees. Companies that implement these changes will also enhance their reputation and attractiveness to potential talent. In the long term, the programme will contribute to a more equitable and inclusive business environment, increasing women's participation in the workforce and helping to close the gender pay gap. As more women gain economic stability, their families and the broader community will benefit, fostering a stronger, more competitive local economy.

Sustainability and scalability:

The innovation is designed for easy adaptation and scalability across Hungary and beyond. By identifying and showcasing good practices from different regions, it can be replicated in other areas, ensuring broader impact. The case studies and promotional materials can be translated into multiple languages, allowing employers across Europe to benefit from the insights and strategies developed. Additionally, establishing a network of "good practice" companies will help sustain the programme's impact over time, fostering ongoing knowledge exchange and encouraging more businesses to adopt female-friendly policies.

Financial education for women

Aim:

To empower women in the Komárom-Esztergom County with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their finances effectively, promote entrepreneurship, and achieve greater economic independence and security. We aspire to bridge the financial literacy gap, enabling women to make informed financial decisions for themselves and their families.

Target group:

Primarily, women aged 25-55 in Komárom-Esztergom County, particularly those with lower levels of financial literacy, unemployed women, and women interested in starting their own businesses. We also aim to reach younger women to promote financial literacy from an early age.

Target region:

Komárom-Esztergom County (Tatabánya, Dorog, Oroszlány).



**Short summary of the innovation:**

A comprehensive financial education program designed to equip women with essential financial skills, starting with family budgeting and progressing to basic entrepreneurial finance, to foster financial independence and promote women-led business ventures.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Curriculum development and trainer training. Over 12 weeks, the project will develop a modular financial education curriculum covering essential topics such as budgeting, saving, debt management, investing, credit, basic accounting, and entrepreneurial finance. The curriculum will be tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by women in the target region, ensuring its relevance and practical application. A team of qualified financial educators will be recruited and trained to effectively deliver the program. Additionally, engaging learning materials - including workbooks, online resources, and interactive exercises - will be created to support participants in building financial literacy and confidence.
- Activity 2: Workshop delivery and community outreach. Over six months, the project will organize financial education workshops in Tatabánya, Dorog, and Oroszlány, providing women in the target group with practical financial skills. To ensure accessibility, workshops will be scheduled flexibly, including evening and weekend sessions, to accommodate women with family responsibilities. If possible, childcare support will be provided to remove barriers to participation. The workshops will be widely promoted through local media, community organizations, and social media channels, ensuring strong community engagement and maximum reach.

Expected results:

At least 50 women will complete the financial education program, gaining essential skills to manage their finances effectively. Pre- and post-program assessments will demonstrate improved financial literacy, with participants showing greater confidence in budgeting, saving, and debt management. As a result, more women will feel empowered to take control of their financial future, with some pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. A measurable increase in savings rates and a reduction in debt levels among participants will indicate the program's success in fostering long-term financial stability and independence.

Impact:

In the short term, the program will equip women with essential financial knowledge and skills, enabling them to make better financial decisions, manage money effectively, and build confidence in handling their finances. This will lead to improved household financial stability and greater control over personal and family resources. In the long term, the program will contribute to greater economic independence and security for women, fostering increased entrepreneurship and the growth of



women-owned businesses. By reducing poverty and financial inequality, it will help create a more vibrant and resilient local economy, benefiting both individuals and the broader community.

Sustainability and scalability:

The program is designed for long-term sustainability and easy scalability. The curriculum can be adapted and translated for use in other regions and countries, ensuring broader accessibility. Online resources and training materials can be made available to a wider audience, allowing more women to benefit from financial education beyond the initial target areas. By training additional financial educators and collaborating with more community organizations, the program can expand its reach, creating lasting impact and fostering financial independence for women on a larger scale.

Women's awareness-raising events

Aim:

To empower women in the Komárom-Esztergom County by raising awareness of their potential, challenging limiting societal conventions, increasing self-confidence, improving self-acceptance, and fostering an environment where they can fully realize their abilities in both their personal and professional lives, actively shaping their roles in society, family, and the workplace.

Target group:

Primarily, women aged 18-60 in Komárom-Esztergom County, with a focus on women who may feel limited by societal expectations, lack self-confidence, or are seeking to advance their careers or personal growth. We will also target younger women to instil these values early on.

Target region:

Komárom-Esztergom County (Tatabánya, Dorog, Oroszlány).

Short summary of the innovation:

A series of inspiring awareness-raising events featuring successful and relatable women sharing their personal stories and practical advice, designed to empower women in the region to challenge conventions, embrace their potential, and confidently pursue their goals.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Event planning and speaker recruitment. Over eight weeks, the project team will organize a series of events by identifying 3-4 inspiring women from diverse fields, including business, arts, science, and community leadership, to serve as speakers. A compelling program will be developed, featuring keynote speeches, panel discussions, interactive workshops, and networking sessions. Suitable venues in Tatabánya, Dorog, and Oroszlány will be secured to



ensure accessibility and a welcoming atmosphere. To maximize attendance and engagement, marketing materials—including flyers, social media posts, and press releases—will be created and distributed to promote the events effectively.

- Activity 2: Event execution and logistics. During the 3-4 days of event execution, the project team will oversee all logistical aspects to ensure smooth operations. This includes managing participant registration, seating arrangements, audio-visual setup, catering, and security. Volunteers and event staff will provide a supportive and inclusive environment for attendees, fostering meaningful engagement. The team will also collect feedback from participants to assess the event's impact and identify areas for improvement in future editions.
- Activity 3: Post-event follow-up and community building. For three months after the events, the project will focus on sustaining the momentum by fostering community engagement. An online forum or social media group will be created to allow participants to stay connected, share experiences, and continue discussions. Additionally, follow-up workshops and webinars will be organized to delve deeper into topics of interest, ensuring ongoing learning and support for women in their personal and professional development.

Expected results:

At least 100 women will participate in the awareness-raising events, gaining a deeper understanding of their potential and the opportunities available to them. The events will help boost self-confidence and self-acceptance among attendees, empowering them to take proactive steps in their personal and professional lives. By fostering networking and collaboration, the initiative will strengthen connections among women in the region, creating a supportive community. As a measurable outcome, more women are expected to pursue new career opportunities, start their own businesses, or take on leadership roles, contributing to greater economic and social empowerment.

Impact:

In the short term, the events will inspire and empower women, boosting their motivation and confidence to pursue new opportunities. Participants will develop stronger communication skills and build supportive relationships, leading to greater involvement in community activities. In the long term, the initiative will contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society, where women have equal opportunities to succeed. As more women gain financial stability and career advancement, economic prosperity will increase for them and their families. Ultimately, the innovation will foster a more vibrant and engaged community, where women play a central role in driving positive social and economic change.

Sustainability and scalability:

The event format is highly adaptable and can be easily replicated in other regions by featuring local speakers and addressing region-specific challenges faced by women. To extend its impact, event materials and resources can be made available online, ensuring accessibility for a wider audience beyond the initial participants. Additionally, the community-building efforts will be sustained



through online platforms and ongoing mentorship programs, fostering continuous support, networking, and knowledge-sharing among women, even after the events conclude.

The best workplace for women award

Aim:

To incentivize and recognize companies in Komárom-Esztergom County that actively create and maintain outstanding workplaces for women, leading to improved gender equality, better working conditions, increased job satisfaction, and enhanced career opportunities for women within the region, establishing a benchmark for female-friendly workplaces and inspire others to emulate best practices.

Target group:

Companies in Komárom-Esztergom County of all sizes, across various industries, that are committed to creating and maintaining equitable and supportive workplaces for women. This includes companies that already have strong female-friendly policies and those that are actively working to improve their workplace environment. The secondary target group are female employees and potential job seekers who are looking for companies with great working conditions.

Target region:

Komárom-Esztergom County (Tatabánya, Dorog, Oroszlány).

Short summary of the innovation:

An annual "Best workplace for women" competition recognizing businesses in Komárom-Esztergom County for their outstanding commitment to creating equitable and supportive workplaces for women, fostering a culture of gender equality and inspiring other companies to adopt best practices. Awards will be given in multiple categories based on company size to ensure fair competition.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Development of award criteria and application process. Over eight weeks, the project team will define clear and measurable criteria for evaluating companies, focusing on gender pay equity, women in leadership, flexible work arrangements, parental leave, childcare support, anti-discrimination policies, and professional development opportunities for women. A user-friendly online application process will be developed to streamline participation. Legal experts will be consulted to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
- Activity 2: Promotion and outreach to companies. Over six weeks, a targeted marketing strategy will be implemented to promote the award competition to businesses in Komárom-Esztergom



County. Local media channels, including newspapers, radio, and online platforms, will be used to generate awareness. Informational webinars and workshops will guide companies through the application process and highlight the benefits of participation. Partnerships with business organizations and chambers of commerce will further expand outreach and encourage engagement.

- Activity 3: Evaluation, judging, and award ceremony. Over eight weeks, a judging panel of HR experts and community leaders will evaluate applications based on the established criteria. Site visits will be conducted to verify the information provided by shortlisted companies. The process will culminate in a high-profile award ceremony, recognizing and celebrating companies that demonstrate excellence in gender-inclusive workplace practices.

Expected results:

At least 30 companies in Komárom-Esztergom County will apply for the "Best Workplace for Women" award, increasing awareness of the importance of female-friendly workplace policies. As a result, participating companies are expected to implement or improve policies that support women in the workforce. Winning companies will see improved working conditions and higher job satisfaction among female employees. The award will also generate positive media coverage, highlighting best practices and promoting gender equality in the workplace.

Impact:

In the short term, the award will encourage more employers to adopt female-friendly policies, leading to improved employee morale, higher retention rates, and an enhanced company reputation. In the long term, it will contribute to a more equitable and inclusive business environment in Komárom-Esztergom County. As more women enter the workforce, especially in leadership roles, the gender pay gap will narrow, fostering a more competitive and innovative local economy.

Sustainability and scalability:

The award program is highly adaptable and can be replicated in other regions by tailoring the criteria and application process to local contexts. Scaling nationally is possible through partnerships with business organizations and government agencies. Long-term sustainability can be ensured through corporate sponsorships, government funding, and collaborations with philanthropic organizations. Establishing a network of "Best Workplace for Women" companies will foster the exchange of best practices, further strengthening gender-inclusive workplaces and ensuring lasting impact.



Serbia – Loznica Region

Women's ethno hub – Intergenerational synergy through digital education and better access to the market

Aim:

A better economic position for women who are either younger, unemployed, belong to older, more vulnerable generations, live in the less developed rural outskirts of Loznica, or lack independent incomes.

Target group:

Older women who offer products (such as traditional crafts, handmade goods, and food products) and services (ethno-households), and younger women who are either unemployed or seeking further professional development, and who want to enhance their digital marketing skills through training in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which is increasingly becoming the standard, also here.

Target region:

Loznica and surrounding areas

Short summary of the innovation:

Intergenerationally connecting older women, those who produce handcrafted goods and homemade products, with younger women who will be trained in digital marketing using AI tools is at the core of this initiative. Younger women will receive training in digital marketing using the most advanced AI tools for automating posts, generating descriptions, and creating visual content. This will contribute to increased competitiveness and improved online visibility, ultimately supporting their further professional activities and development.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Raising Awareness Event at the House of Culture titled Women's Ethno Hub scheduled for March 14, 2025, as part of Loznica's traditional month dedicated to women –Svet žena / World of Women. At this event, the WIN project, pilot activities, and social innovation ideas will be presented. The panel will include relevant stakeholders from the local community, the public sector, major companies as employers, and successful entrepreneurs who will share their stories as role models to motivate the attending women, along with some members of the WIN innovation group. There will also be an exhibition showcasing artisanal products, handmade crafts, homemade products, and handiworks by women from the target group, presented as potential corporate gifts.
- Activity 2: Mapping and connecting two generations of women in Loznica and the surrounding areas.



- Activity 3: Training in digital marketing and sessions for using AI tools for automating posts, generating descriptions, creating visual content, which is trend today. Training will be provided by certified AI manager.
- Activity 4: Young women prepare digital promotional content for products of the older generation.
- Activity 5: Basic training for older women on how to maintain their digital network pages in the future.
- Activity 6: Issuing certificates of attendance/acquired skills (ABW Serbia)

Expected results:

It is expected that many women from both the younger and older generations will engage in these activities, connecting and networking with one another. Several trainings will be carried out according to developed curricula. Additionally, a significant amount of digital content, such as network pages, posts, flyers, reels, catalogues, and other digital products will be created by young women enabling better promotion and sales of traditional products.

Impact:

In the long term, these activities will provide older generation women with better access to both the sales market and the labour market. With the intergenerational connection between these two groups, older women will receive digital promotion for their products, enabling them to access a wider market - not only through personal sales at fairs and exhibitions or directly in ethno-households.

Younger women from the labour market or those seeking better or supplementary employment will have the opportunity to master the fundamentals of digital marketing, and most importantly, learn how to use AI tools - which are increasingly relevant today and will likely soon become indispensable in many activities. This will enable them to prepare materials, articles, and posts on social media more efficiently and with higher quality in the future as well, making them more competitive on the labour market.

Sustainability and scalability:

This could become a good model for further intergenerational networking among similar target groups of women across the country. It could be implemented to achieve a better economic position for women, create employment opportunities, and enhance the availability of traditional products, which are no longer as common, to the wider public and consumers.

Women's ethno hub – Circular economy training and capacity building for rural tourism households and farms

Aim:

To empower women to become a vital part of Loznica's tourism offer, which is rapidly emerging as an important destination, particularly for health and rural tourism (including ethno households, ethno villages, and glamping) by using their prior experience and knowledge, and by acquiring additional expertise in circular economy development through planned socially innovative training and activities.

Target group:

Women who have farms and ethno households, offering food and homemade products and hospitality services.

Target region:

Loznica and surrounding areas

Short summary of the innovation:

Provide training in the circular economy for women who own or manage ethno-households and family farms involved in tourism, with the aim of developing a “zero waste” concept, where nothing or very little is discarded, that has proven attractive to tourists in other parts of the country. Experts will support these women by delivering training to develop this concept and help enhance their presence on the tourist map of Loznica. Additionally, these women will participate in Social Innovation activity no. 1 by collaborating with young girls to showcase their ethno households and products in the best possible way.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Raising Awareness event at the House of Culture titled Women's Ethno Hub scheduled for March 14, 2025, as part of Loznica's traditional month dedicated to women –Svet žena / World of Women. At this event, the WIN project, pilot activities, and social innovation ideas will be presented. The panel will include relevant stakeholders from the local community, the public sector, major companies as employers, and successful entrepreneurs who will share their stories as role models to motivate the attending women, along with some members of the WIN innovation group. There will also be an exhibition showcasing artisanal products, handmade crafts, homemade products, and handiworks by women from the target group, presented as potential corporate gifts.
- Activity 2: Mapping women in rural area of Loznica: identify and connect women in rural areas of Loznica who are involved in managing ethno-households and farms, whether they are formal owners or participate as family members.
- Activity 3: Provide training on circular economy principles and the zero waste concept.
- Activity 4: Connecting these women with young women who will help prepare digital promotional content for their products and services.
- Activity 5: Organize visits to well-known ethno households or villages in other parts of Serbia (e.g., Rudno village, Golija Mt., the Šekler family household) to gain insights and inspiration.

**Expected results:**

Up to 10 households (with many more definitely invited) that possess touristic potential will be enabled to expand their services and touristic offerings, leveraging the appeal of the zero-waste concept. Additionally, farms will be better equipped to produce an increased volume of products for sale under improved conditions and with minimized losses, making them more visible to guests and consumers.

Impact:

Starting from these examples of the first households that have successfully implemented a zero-waste concept and developed their touristic and productive capacities, the number of similar households will grow, thereby enabling the broader implementation of a green economy at a higher level.

Sustainability and scalability:

This could be a good model for other rural households across the region and country, strengthening them for tourism and entrepreneurship. It could be implemented to achieve a better economic position for women, creating better opportunities and improved access to the market.

Women's ethno hub – Establishment of social enterprise(s)

Aim:

To empower women to become a vital part of Loznica's tourism offer, which is rapidly emerging as an important destination, particularly for health and rural tourism (including ethno households, ethno villages, and glamping). To provide the capacity building of rural tourism households and farms with a formal entrepreneurial and commercial framework for the establishment of a social enterprise, which would be the first social enterprise(s) in the Loznica region.

Target group:

Women who have farms and ethno households, offering food and homemade products and hospitality services.

Target region:

Loznica and surrounding areas

Short summary of the innovation:

If any of the women with ethno households or farms show interest, they would be assisted in establishing a social enterprise. Due to the new law, the state offers subsidies for social entrepreneurship, and they could potentially benefit from that later. Since there are no such enterprises in Loznica, this might be a good initiative and an example for future endeavours.

Main implementation activities:



- Activity 1: Raising Awareness event at the House of Culture titled Women's Ethno Hub scheduled for March 14, 2025, as part of Loznica's traditional month dedicated to women –Svet žena / World of Women. At this event, the WIN project, pilot activities, and social innovation ideas will be presented. The panel will include relevant stakeholders from the local community, the public sector, major companies as employers, and successful entrepreneurs who will share their stories as role models to motivate the attending women, along with some members of the WIN innovation group. There will also be an exhibition showcasing artisanal products, handmade crafts, homemade products, and handiworks by women from the target group, presented as potential corporate gifts.
- Activity 2: Mapping women in rural area who would like to transform their households or farms into a social enterprise.
- Activity 3: Providing assistance and guidance in establishment such an enterprise(s).

Expected results:

At least one social enterprise, which would be the first one in the Loznica area will be established.

Impact:

Establishing a social enterprise in Serbia offers significant benefits, including access to government support and subsidies provided through public calls by the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran, and Social Affairs. Gaining formal registration as a social enterprise enhances credibility, making it easier to attract investors, partners, and customers. Beyond economic benefits, social enterprises drive social inclusion by creating job opportunities for vulnerable groups, contributing to both economic and social progress. Additionally, they align with European directives on social innovation and sustainable development, reinforcing Serbia's commitment to EU standards. These advantages help entrepreneurs build sustainable businesses while positively impacting their communities.

Sustainability and scalability:

Since the national legislation regarding social entrepreneurship is relatively new, the emergence of new social enterprises in the country, which are still few, would contribute to their wider expansion and better positioning within the country.



Slovenia - Trbovlje

Razpisne mojstrice – Grant Masters

Aim:

To empower primarily women by enhancing their skills in preparing high-quality municipal grant applications.

Target group:

NGO representatives; Women and others applying to specific municipal tenders; Public sector employees (especially at the municipal level) who interact with grant applicants (secondary target group)

Target region:

Trbovlje Municipality (Zasavje region)

Short summary of the innovation:

Women are the most common applicants to the municipality's public tenders. The municipality is facing the issue that applicants, usually representatives of small NGOs, often fill out application forms incorrectly, incompletely, and hastily, and submit low quality applications. Grant Masters is a social innovation project aimed at empowering primarily women by enhancing their skills in preparing high-quality municipal grant applications. Through tailored training, informative workshops and mentorship, the project equips NGO representatives, mainly women (and others) applying to specific municipal tenders, and public sector employees (municipality's staff) in Trbovlje (Zasavje region) with the know-how and confidence to successfully secure local funding.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Identification of at Least One Tender and Preparations. In this phase, we will identify at least one municipal tender relevant to the project and training. The selected funding opportunities will align with participants' needs and goals. Necessary materials, toolkits, and tailored training content will be prepared to support successful grant applications. Promotional materials will raise awareness and attract participants, while an e-brochure listing all NGOs in the municipality will help identify new applicants and ensure the visibility of funded NGOs. The goal is to equip participants with the knowledge to apply for funding effectively and reduce administrative burdens caused by incomplete applications.
- Activity 2: Reception for NGOs. The reception will strengthen collaboration between local NGOs and municipal authorities. It will provide a platform for NGOs to connect with key stakeholders, learn about available municipal tenders, and discuss challenges in the grant application process. The event will also promote the Grant Masters project, informing NGOs about the training and support available to enhance their grant-writing skills and increase their chances of securing funding.





- Activity 3: Training. This 12-hour training will equip participants with practical skills for navigating the grant application process. It will provide an introduction to municipal tenders, eligibility criteria, and key components of a successful application. Participants will receive step-by-step guidance on proposal writing, setting objectives, defining outcomes, and budgeting. Practical workshops will allow them to practice application writing, receive feedback, and refine their submissions. Expert trainers and mentors will provide personalized advice to help participants build confidence and prepare strong applications.
- Activity 4: Info Day(s). The Info Day(s) will present newly published municipal tenders available through the Grant Masters project. These sessions will provide details on eligibility, application processes, and project goals. Participants will gain a clear understanding of the opportunities, ask questions, and receive guidance on how to align the tenders with their own projects. The sessions will ensure participants are well-prepared to apply successfully.

Expected results:

The program will empower 15 women with the skills and confidence to apply for municipal public tenders, increasing their chances of securing funding. Additionally, 50 NGO representatives will gain valuable insights into municipal tenders through the reception and Info Day(s), improving their understanding of funding opportunities. A practical toolkit will be developed to support the preparation of municipal grant applications, providing clear guidance for future applicants. Furthermore, an e-brochure listing NGOs in the Municipality of Trbovlje will enhance visibility and networking opportunities within the local nonprofit sector.

Sustainability and scalability:

The Grant Masters project can be easily adapted to the municipal settings and executed by the municipality and its institutions, like the Adult Centre of Zasavje. The Grant Masters model is highly adaptable and can be replicated in other municipalities facing similar challenges in grant accessibility. By developing standardized training materials and methodologies, and by disseminating the created toolkit, the project can expand beyond Trbovlje to other municipalities and regions. It can easily be shared and carried out by other municipalities, their (educational) organizations and Regional NGO Hubs which collaborate with municipalities in all the regions in Slovenia. With further refinement, adaptations to specific needs in other transnational regions and countries, the initiative has the potential to scale at the European level, supporting broader efforts to enhance financial literacy, local or regional grant accessibility, and women's empowerment in funding processes.

Click for a job / Klik za šiht - An online platform featuring professional profiles from Zasavje

Aim:

To bridge the gap between young people and the job market and to contribute to youth employment in Zasavje by providing them with relevant information about professions and employers in





Zasavje. This would help them make informed career choices, increase their employment opportunities, and connect them with potential employers.

Target group:

Pupils of the last three grades of primary school; Students of the last two years of secondary school; Employers

Target region:

Zasavje region

Short summary of the innovation:

The project aims to support youth employment in Zasavje by providing a digital platform where young people can explore various professions and connect with local employers. Targeting students in the final years of primary and secondary school, the platform offers career information, employer profiles, and insights into job opportunities. The project also addresses the challenge of youth outmigration and the trend of seeking jobs outside the region by highlighting local career prospects. By educating and informing young people about opportunities within Zasavje, it encourages them to build their futures in the region and contributes to local economic growth.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Preparation phase. The first preparation phase of the platform involves research and planning. This includes gathering information about available job opportunities and professions, identifying local employers, establish agreements for cooperation on the platform.
- Activity 2: Technical preparation of the platform. This phase includes the designing of the platform's structure. It also involves determining the technical requirements for the platform, such as its user interface, database management, and content editing. It also includes a testing phase with the target groups and adjustments.
- Activity 4: Content preparation. This phase includes defining the platform's key features, such as employer profiles, career information sections, etc. Coordination with local businesses and educational institutions to gather relevant data is also a critical part of this phase. Content preparation focuses on gathering and curating career-related information for the platform. The content will include descriptions of professions, qualifications, and growth prospects, as well as testimonials from employers and employees. Also, a video filming preparation involves planning and scripting videos that will showcase the variety of careers and employers in the region. The videos will provide a visual and personal connection to the professions, featuring interviews with employers and employees, job demonstrations, and career advice.
- Activity 5: Promotion of the Platform. The promotion of the platform focuses on reaching young people in Zasavje and raising awareness about its features and benefits. Key strategies for promotion include hosting a launch event to introduce the platform and its objectives. A social media campaign on platforms like TikTok and Instagram will be used to engage students with interactive and visually appealing content, highlighting the benefits of using the platform.





Additionally, collaboration with schools and educational institutions will ensure that students are informed about the platform through presentations and workshops.

Expected results:

The innovation will result in the creation of a web platform, providing a central hub for information and resources. It is expected to attract at least 500 visits, ensuring broad engagement. A launch event will introduce the platform to stakeholders, followed by five workshops designed to educate and support participants. Across all events, at least 200 attendees will benefit from the activities, fostering knowledge-sharing and community engagement.

Impact:

The platform will raise awareness among young people in Zasavje about local job opportunities, career paths, and required skills. It will connect employers with future employees while helping students explore careers through videos and professional profiles. Educators and career counselors will integrate the platform into career guidance, providing structured support for informed career choices.

In long-term perspective, by showcasing local job opportunities, the platform will help reduce youth outmigration and build a more skilled workforce. Strengthening connections between students and businesses will create lasting employment opportunities. Retaining young talent will support local businesses, drive innovation, and boost the regional economy.

Sustainability and scalability:

The platform is highly sustainable, scalable, and transferable beyond Zasavje, with the potential for national and even European expansion. Its digital nature ensures continuous updates, employer engagement, and integration into schools, supported by the Institute for Youth, Sports, and Tourism Trbovlje. Employment services and educational institutions will actively use and maintain the platform, keeping it relevant and effective. Strong partnerships with municipalities, schools, and business networks will further ensure long-term operation. The model is easily adaptable to other regions by customizing content to local labor markets, and its structure can expand to include additional industries. With multilingual options and alignment with EU employment initiatives, the platform could scale nationally through the Employment Services of Slovenia and even support youth employment and mobility across Europe.

Innovation environment for women entrepreneurs

Aim:

To enhance support for women entrepreneurs by developing an innovation support environment for women and strengthening interinstitutional collaboration.



Target group:

Women 30-40 years old, wishing to enter entrepreneurship and/or choose a different career path;
Women 45 +; Migrant women

Target region:

Trbovlje, Zasavje region

Short summary of the innovation:

This innovation promotes women's leadership and entrepreneurship by creating a cohesive network that offers specialized resources, mentorship, and opportunities, fostering an environment where women-led businesses can thrive. It also addresses the challenges women face in entering and sustaining entrepreneurship, such as limited access to funding, smaller professional networks, balancing business with family responsibilities, and a lack of knowledge about entrepreneurship and related topics. By integrating current support structures, the innovation seeks to promote inclusivity and economic growth in the region.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Content development. This phase focuses on developing tailored content and informative material to be used by existing business support environments in order to better tackle women's or women entrepreneurs' needs. The contents are workshops, guides, and mentorship programmes, informative material on entrepreneurship related topics. They will address key challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, providing them with essential tools and resources to start and sustain their businesses.
- Activity 2: Entrepreneurial breakfasts. 12 entrepreneurial breakfasts will offer networking opportunities and discussions to address specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and women who would change their career paths and/or start their own business. They will be structured as peer-to-peer informal (but coordinated) meetings which will take place once per week for approximately three months. The main topics that the meetings will deal with topic like how to open a business, balancing work, private and family life, challenges women face entering or in entrepreneurship, etc.
- Activity 3: Info-point. The Info-point will serve as a resource for women entrepreneurs, providing information and guidance on available support programmes. It will be structured as a network of organizations offering also practical support for opening businesses, legal and financial advice, business registration support, etc.
- Activity 4: Hackathon. The hackathon will bring together women and women entrepreneurs to tackle key challenges in entrepreneurship, particularly in technology, innovation, and social innovations. This intensive, collaborative full-day event will provide a space for participants, including entrepreneurs, mentors, and industry experts, to develop innovative solutions to real-world business challenges. The best ideas will receive support for further development. The

hackathon will also serve as a hands-on learning experience and an opportunity for knowledge exchange among participants.

- Activity 5: Promotional activities. The project will be promoted through a combination of social media campaigns, press releases, and media outreach to ensure visibility and engagement. A dedicated website and newsletters will provide updates, while promotional materials such as flyers and brochures will be distributed at events and partner locations. Public presentations, networking meetups or entrepreneurial breakfasts, and info sessions will further increase awareness, supported by video interviews showcasing participant experiences. Collaborations with local businesses, ESS, Zasavje Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Crafts and Entrepreneurship in Trbovlje, Regional development Agency of Zasavje., and existing business support environments/ecosystems (like PONI and Katapult) will strengthen outreach, ensuring strong participation from women entrepreneurs and key stakeholders.

Expected results:

The project will create a supportive innovation environment for women entrepreneurs by establishing a network of organizations offering entrepreneurship support. A dedicated peer network will connect women entrepreneurs, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing. An info point will be set up to provide resources and guidance. At least 80 women and entrepreneurs will gain knowledge and empowerment through the initiative. Additionally, one hackathon will generate three innovative solutions, further driving entrepreneurial opportunities and problem-solving.

Impact:

Short-term, the program will increase women's participation in entrepreneurship, improve access to knowledge and mentorship, and strengthen support networks. Women will gain skills, confidence, and resources to start and grow their businesses, while institutions will collaborate to create a comprehensive innovation and support environment.

Long-term, the initiative will lead to more successful women-led businesses, greater economic independence, and a more inclusive business ecosystem in Zasavje. Strengthened cooperation among key institutions will enhance entrepreneurial support, while increased women's leadership will drive broader economic and social progress.

Sustainability and scalability:

The innovation is highly adaptable and scalable, with the potential for national and European expansion. It addresses common challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Slovenia and can be replicated in other regions using developed materials and support structures. Key stakeholders, including regional development agencies and business networks, will ensure long-term sustainability by integrating activities into existing programs and securing funding from national and European sources. Additional financial support from sponsors and investors will further strengthen future business ideas, solutions, and hackathons.

The initiative aligns with European gender equality and economic empowerment goals, making it suitable for broader adoption. Activities like entrepreneurial breakfasts, info points, and hackathons are easily replicable and relevant to similar needs in Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, and Czechia. Cross-border collaboration, particularly through hackathons, will foster international knowledge exchange, encouraging organizations in other regions to launch or enhance similar programs, strengthening innovation and support for women entrepreneurs across Europe.

Job Happens / Šiht Happens: Career Exploration Day

Aim:

To bridge the gap between young people and the job market and to contribute to youth employment in Zasavje by providing them with relevant information about professions and employers in Zasavje in an innovative and interactive way. This will help them make informed career choices, increase their employment opportunities, and connect them with potential employers.

Target group:

Pupils of the last three grades of primary school with the focus on girls; Students of the last two years of secondary school with the focus on girls; Employers in Zasavje

Target region:

Zasavje region

Short summary of the innovation:

Šiht Happens: Career Exploration Days is an interactive event in Trbovlje, Zasavje, designed to help pupils and high school students explore career opportunities in an engaging and innovative way. As part of the career fair organized by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS), the event will stand out by using modern, youth-friendly methodologies that make career exploration more dynamic and appealing. Unlike similar events in the region, Šiht Happens will focus on hands-on experiences, real-world insights, and interactive sessions that connect young people with potential employers and career paths in an inspiring way. Targeting students in the final years of primary and secondary school, the event offers profession and career information and insights into job opportunities.

Main implementation activities:

- Activity 1: Preparation phase. The planning for *Šiht Happens* involves several key aspects to ensure a successful event. First, event logistics will be organized, including securing the venue, scheduling employer participation, and structuring the event programme. Content development includes preparing interactive materials such as career guides, industry-specific information, and hands-on activities to engage students effectively. All will be included in a

methodological booklet which will be disseminated and published on the webpages of the Institute for Youth, Sports and Tourism Trbovlje, Employment Services of Slovenia.

- Activity 2: Promotion Campaign. To maximize reach and impact, a strong promotion strategy will be prepared and implemented, leveraging social media, school outreach, and local media to generate awareness and excitement for the event. A social media campaign will be launched, targeting high school students and pupils on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, showcasing various careers and career ambassadors to generate excitement and encourage participation.
- Activity 3: Conducting the event. A key focus will be employer-student networking, providing opportunities for direct interactions through Q&A sessions, career advice, and informational booths. To enhance the experience, innovative methodologies will be incorporated, using creative, youth-focused approaches such as gamification and live demonstrations to make career exploration both engaging and relatable. We will implement career counselling involving e.g. Dixit cards, interactive career stations and visits to employers, hands-on workshop allowing to try job-related skills in fields like STEM and other promising professions in the region, especially where there is a shortage of women, career escape room, Future skills zone (a section dedicated to emerging job trends and opportunities).
- Activity 4: Evaluation. By using questionnaires feedback will be collected from students, employers, and educational institutions to assess the event's impact and effectiveness. Based on these insights, future planning will focus on refining the event and exploring possibilities for expansion to other regions or even a national level.

Expected results:

The innovation will result in one event bringing together students and employers to promote career opportunities. A methodological booklet will be developed as a resource for future use. At least 200 pupils and students will gain valuable insights through event participation, while 20 employers will be actively engaged, fostering stronger connections between education and the job market.

Impact:

Short-term, the event will raise awareness among young people in Zasavje about local job opportunities, career paths, and required skills. Students will explore professions through interactive activities, workshops, and counseling, while employers will connect with potential future employees and promote internships or job-shadowing programs. The event will be integrated into the regular programs of ESS and IYSTT, strengthening partnerships between schools, educational organizations, and career services to improve student career guidance.

Long-term, the event will encourage young people to stay and work in Zasavje, reducing youth outmigration and promoting careers in less traditional fields, particularly for women in STEM. Strengthened connections between employers and students will create long-term engagement, supporting internships, apprenticeships, and job placements. Retaining young talent will boost the local economy, helping businesses grow and driving regional development.



Sustainability and scalability:

Šiht Happens is highly sustainable and scalable, ensuring long-term impact. Local partnerships with employers, schools, and youth organizations provide ongoing support, while its engaging format increases the likelihood of becoming a recurring event. Financial sustainability is secured through funding from municipalities, ESS, IYSTT, and sponsors.

The event model is easily replicable across Slovenia and beyond, supported by a methodological booklet published on ESS and IYSTT's websites. Its flexible structure allows adaptation to different regions, industries, and student needs, addressing challenges like youth outmigration and gender gaps in STEM. Nationally, it can expand through ESS and career fairs, aligning with initiatives to reduce youth unemployment and enhance career readiness. At the European level, the event model can be adapted to different countries or regions, particularly those struggling with high youth unemployment, outmigration issues, or with the underrepresentation of women in certain fields. With multilingual adaptations and alignment with EU employment and educational frameworks, *Šiht Happens* could collaborate with similar initiatives such as Cross-border career fair (organised in Koper, Slovenia), European Youth Week, European Job Days, Erasmus Career/Job Fairs, and IAESTE Career Fairs. This would enable the event to serve as a model for similar programs across Europe, contributing to youth empowerment and local workforce development on a broader scale.