



REPORT ON IMPLEMENTED SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

WIN

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

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Introduction

The current report presents a collection of social innovation ideas implemented in the seven pilot regions of the WIN Project. Each idea has been implemented following a shared set of [guidelines for the testing social innovations \(D.2.2.1\)](#), which were jointly agreed upon and implemented by the project partners. These guidelines facilitate a structured and coherent approach, which is essential for successful testing activities.

To provide a clear and consistent presentation, all piloted innovations are described using a common report template. The template summarizes each tested solution through its title, aim, target group, target region, activities, expected results, impact, challenges and lessons learnt, supported by a concise description that highlights the essence of the solution. Additionally, the template supports reflection on impact by considering short-term and long-term effects, as well as sustainability and scalability, exploring how each solution could continue beyond the project and whether it could be transferred to other regions or expanded at national and European levels.

The current report offers a comprehensive overview of the diverse solutions introduced in the pilot regions with the long-term aspiration to inspire, inform, and guide stakeholders who seek to drive meaningful social change in their own communities.

Social Innovations Implementation Overview

The WIN project moved from generating ideas to testing action. In the co-creation phase, local WIN Innovation Groups developed 26 social innovation ideas across seven pilot regions in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovenia. From this portfolio, partners selected 13 innovations for implementation, prioritising solutions that were both locally relevant and realistic to pilot within the project timeframe.

The implemented innovations are summarised in Table 1, organised by pilot region and classified according to typology of empowerment. The table allows readers to quickly scan the breadth and thematic focus of the implemented portfolio and serves as a bridge to the detailed, region-by-region descriptions that follow.

Table 1 – Overview of implemented social innovations

Pilot region	Innovation idea implemented	Typology of empowerment
Austria – Styrian Iron Road Region	Creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining”	Awareness-raising
Austria – Styrian Iron Road Region	Female mentoring – establishment of female role models	Role-models and mentoring
Austria – Styrian Iron Road Region	Stronger networks – stronger women	Support Network
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Herceg-Bosnian County	Step out of the shadow – Don’t tap in the dark: Business literacy training for unemployed women	Skills development, Entrepreneurship
Bulgaria – Radomir	EdnaZaDruga.bg – Online platform for women Entrepreneurs and Artists	Digital platform



Bulgaria – Radomir	Women's Community Network Edna ZaDruga – Community Network for Women in the Radomir Region	Support Network, Skills development
Czech Republic – Karlovy Vary Region	BusinessWomen without Borders	Support Network
Czech Republic – Karlovy Vary Region	Project day at school for gender equality	Awareness raising
Hungary – Komárom-Esztergom County	NEMIGEN – Podcast series on gender stereotypes	Awareness raising, Gender Equality
Serbia – Loznica Region	Women's ethno hub – Intergenerational synergy through digital education and better access to the market	Skills development
Serbia – Loznica Region	Women's ethno hub – Circular economy training and capacity building for rural tourism households and farms	Skills development
Serbia – Loznica Region	Women's ethno hub – Establishment of social enterprise(s)	Social entrepreneurship
Slovenia – Trbovlje	Job Happens – Career Exploration Day	Awareness raising

A strong share of the implemented ideas focuses on **awareness-raising**, but the implementation phase shows a more mature version of awareness than typical campaigns. Several pilots link awareness to concrete participation settings, such as schools, public events, or widely accessible media formats. This matters because the most convincing narrative change is not only “telling a message”, but repeatedly placing women’s capabilities and choices in visible, normalised contexts.

The second dominant strand is **skills development**, often connected to employability, entrepreneurship, or market access. The implementation experience suggests that skills-focused innovations work best when learning is



practical, paced realistically, and tied to tangible outputs. Across pilots, skills development is not treated as an abstract training offer, but as a pathway that can produce confidence, portfolio elements, business planning readiness, or direct readiness for the next step (mentoring, networking, presenting to employers, selling products and services).

A third cluster highlights the importance of **support networks and mentoring**. In implementation terms, these innovations are less about one-time delivery and more about building continuity. The overall impression is that when a local ecosystem is activated, the innovation becomes easier to sustain and repeat. Networks reduce isolation, offer social proof and encouragement, and create a container where women can return, contribute, and gradually take more visible roles.

The implemented set of ideas also illustrates how empowerment strategies are often combined. Digital platforms and community hubs, mentoring and skills development, awareness-raising and career orientation, can reinforce one another when sequenced well. This “layering” is one of the most valuable lessons of the implementation phase. Many barriers are not solved by a single intervention, so the strongest pilots tend to work as a small system of mutually supportive elements rather than a standalone activity.

Finally, the implementation phase adds a clear insight that is less visible at the idea stage: success depends not only on the quality of the concept, but on delivery design, stakeholder cooperation, and the ability to adapt under real constraints. Several pilots demonstrate that refinement is part of



implementation, not a deviation from it. Adjustments in format, sequencing, and target group strategy are best interpreted as evidence of learning and responsiveness rather than as weaknesses.

The chapters that follow present each implemented innovation in detail, organised by pilot region. Each chapter shows what was delivered, what results were achieved, what challenges emerged, and what partners learned about sustainability and scalability through testing in practice.



Austria – Styrian Iron Road Region

Creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining”

Aim:

The contest aimed to enhance the visibility of women in industry and mining, to raise awareness for STEM education and female job opportunities as well as to challenge traditional gender roles.

Target group:

Pupils from higher educational facilities, including grammar schools (AHS), Secondary Technical Colleges (HTL), Higher Educational Institutions for Economics (HTBLA), and Secondary Colleges for Business Administration (HAK).

Target region:

District of Leoben and neighbouring municipalities.

Short summary of the innovation:

The creativity contest “Women conquer industry and mining” combined awareness raising for future job opportunities for women in industry and mining through a competition for pupils. Participants were invited to create designs (digital or analogue) envisioning women’s future in industrial and mining companies. The winning design was selected by a jury and online voting and showcased on a bus touring the region for one year.

Main activities:

- Conceptualization and detailed planning
- Coordination and preparation of communication materials
- Project presentation in participating schools
- Implementation of the competition
- Jury session and online voting



- Presentation of results, award ceremony, and press conference

Adjustment made during testing:

No major adjustments were made during the testing phase. The original plan was executed as intended, with minor refinements to communication materials and coordination processes to ensure smooth implementation.

Expected results and achievements:

Approximately 500 pupils had the opportunity to participate in the competition, with presentations held in six schools in March 2025. A broader audience was reached through online voting and public relations activities.

Impact:

Short-term effects included increased visibility of successful women in industry and mining and heightened awareness of STEM education and job opportunities for girls and young women. Long-term effects are expected to include a shift in traditional gender roles and greater interest in STEM careers among the target group.

Sustainability and scalability:

The solution is highly transferable to other regions and levels. Sustainability could be ensured by integrating topic-centred training sessions and learning materials into higher education curricula. The concept could also be scaled to national or European levels, leveraging partnerships with educational institutions and industry stakeholders.

Key deliverables:

- Workshops and presentations: Six school presentations were conducted, engaging approximately 500 pupils.
- Materials created: Communication materials, including a website, logo, colouring page, and roll-up, were developed to support the initiative.
- Engagement levels: High participation rates were observed, with positive feedback from pupils and teachers. Online voting further expanded the reach of the contest.



- Positive changes: Increased awareness of STEM education and female job opportunities was noted among participants. Testimonials from pupils highlighted the inspiring role of the female mentor involved in the project.

Challenges:

- Logistical difficulties: Coordinating presentations across multiple schools required careful planning and time management.
- Engaging the target group: Ensuring active participation from pupils required tailored communication strategies and engaging materials.
- Activities not going as planned: Minor delays were addressed promptly.

Lessons learned:

- Early and consistent communication with schools and stakeholders is crucial for smooth implementation.
- Involving a relatable role model significantly enhances engagement and impact.
- Flexibility in planning allows for effective problem-solving when challenges arise.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Improving the solution: Develop additional training sessions and learning materials to complement the contest and deepen its impact.
- Sustaining the solution: Establish partnerships with local and national educational institutions to integrate the contest into regular curricula.
- Scaling the solution: Explore opportunities to replicate the contest in other regions and adapt it to different cultural contexts. Collaborate with European organizations to expand its reach.



Female mentoring – establishment of female role models

Aim:

The activities aimed to increase the visibility of successful women in industry and mining, raise awareness for STEM education and female job opportunities, and challenge traditional gender roles through inspiring stories and impactful outreach.

Target group:

The activities targeted pupils from higher educational facilities, including grammar schools (AHS), Secondary Technical Colleges (HTL), Higher Educational Institutions for Economics (HTBLA), and Secondary Colleges for Business Administration (HAK), as well as the general public in the Styrian Iron Road region.

Target region:

District of Leoben and neighbouring municipalities.

Short summary of the innovation:

This innovation combined school outreach, media storytelling, and public engagement to inspire girls and young women to pursue STEM pathways, especially in traditionally male-dominated fields such as mining, industry, and technology. It mobilised female role models through school visits and a sustained regional media campaign (run with *MeinBezirk Leoben* in summer-autumn 2025, featuring eleven women from mining, industry and science) and amplified their career stories via weekly newspaper features and coordinated social media activity to counter stereotypes. Building on this, a travelling exhibition with Montanuniversität Leoben titled “100 years of Women in Mining and Metallurgy – from the pioneers to the present day,” developed together with the Styrian Iron Road Association, to document a century of women’s academic and professional career paths and to make visible how courage, competence, and perseverance have expanded women’s participation in research and innovation, was created. Through these mutually reinforcing channels, the initiative aimed to both celebrate progress and provide relatable, local examples that encourage the next generation to see STEM careers as realistic and desirable.



Main activities:

- Conceptualization and planning: The media campaign as well as the exhibition and the visits in schools were carefully planned to ensure impactful storytelling and effective outreach.
- Content creation: Stories of female role models and pioneers were developed, highlighting their achievements and career paths in industry and mining.
- Implementation: The campaign was executed through regional newspapers and social media platforms, with stories published weekly. The exhibition was officially opened in December 2025 and accompanied by extensive media coverage. It will remain on display at the Montanuniversität Leoben until the end of March and will then be presented at selected locations in the region, e.g., Kulturquartier Leoben, industrial companies and schools.

Adjustment made during testing:

Minor adjustments were made to the content format to ensure better engagement on social media platforms. Feedback from the audience was used to refine the storytelling approach.

Expected results and achievements:

The media campaign and the exhibition as well as the meetings with our role model in the regional schools reached a broad audience, including pupils, students, educators, and the public. By sharing inspiring stories of female role models, the formats successfully raised awareness for STEM education and job opportunities in industry and mining.

Impact:

The campaign as well as the exhibition and the exchange with our role model inspire girls and young women to consider STEM careers and challenge traditional gender roles by showcasing relatable and successful female role models.

Sustainability and scalability:

The solution is highly transferable to other regions and levels. Sustainability could be ensured by integrating topic-centred training sessions and learning materials into



higher education curricula. The concept could also be scaled to national or European levels, leveraging partnerships with educational institutions and industry stakeholders.

Key deliverables:

- Stories published: A total of eleven stories featuring successful female employees were shared through regional newspapers. The exhibition presents 27 roll-ups featuring pioneering women in mining, as well as current professors, vice-rectors, and science award winners.
- Social media engagement: The interviews with the 11 role models were presented in reports. In addition to being published in a regional newspaper, they were also shared on social media.
- Audience reach: The campaign reached a wide audience. The regional newspaper is distributed free of charge to every household in the Leoben district. The reports were also shared on social media by the editors and the Styrian Iron Road Association. The exhibition opening was well attended by around 70 guests. The school visits reached 500 pupils.

Challenges:

- Content creation: Ensuring the stories were engaging and relatable required careful planning and collaboration with the role models.
- Social media strategy: Adapting the content to different social media platforms to maximize engagement was a learning process.
- Audience engagement: Maintaining consistent interest and interaction from the target audience required innovative approaches.

Lessons learned:

- High-quality storytelling is essential for impactful media campaigns.
- Social media platforms offer significant potential for outreach but require tailored strategies for each platform.
- Feedback from the audience is invaluable for refining content and improving engagement.



Recommendations and next steps:

- Improving the campaign: Develop additional content formats, such as interactive posts or live Q&A sessions with role models, to further engage the audience.
- Sustaining the campaign: Establish partnerships with media outlets and social media influencers to ensure the campaign's continuity and expand its reach.
- Scaling the campaign: Explore opportunities to replicate the media campaign in other regions and adapt it to different cultural contexts. Collaborate with national and European organizations to expand its scope.

Stronger networks – stronger women

Aim:

The initiative aimed to empower female employees by fostering networking opportunities, increasing their visibility in industries, raising awareness, supporting their professional development, and strengthening their self-confidence.

Target group:

Female employees from industrial companies and other branches such as handcrafting in the Styrian Iron Road region.

Target region:

District of Leoben and neighbouring municipalities.

Short summary of the innovation:

The initiative leveraged the existing female network “Iron Women” to establish a new department called “Work and Industry.” This department focuses on addressing the needs and challenges of female employees in peripheral industrial regions. The activities include workshops, lectures, coaching sessions, and networking events to support career planning, financial security, and other professional topics.

Main activities:

- Coordination with the existing female network coordinator
- Presentation to network members
- Planning communication activities and events
- Execution of network activities
- Sustainable implementation

Adjustment made during testing:

No major adjustments were made during the testing phase.



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Expected results and achievements:

At least 20 women participated in network activities, e.g. the guided tour through the city centre of Leoben on the occasion of the World Women's Day 2025 called "Ladies of Leoben" and a subsequent Get together. In addition, a pub quiz is in preparation, which will be held in a local restaurant at the beginning of February 2026. Around 40 people are expected to attend. With the help of this informal format, the aim is to draw attention to the situation of women on the Styrian Iron Road in a playful way, addressing and breaking down stereotypes. A play based on a series of interviews entitled "Die Einzige im Raum" (The Only One in the Room) is also in preparation. The basis for this was a series of interviews conducted in autumn 2025 with ten women aged between 26 and 63 who live and/or work in the Styrian Iron Road region. The participants hold middle and senior management positions – as employees, workers, executives, or self-employed with their own companies. What connects them is their professional environment, which is strongly male dominated. The interviews were conducted as a qualitative research method. This form of research collects non-standardized data to gain an in-depth understanding of a topic, rather than simply measuring it quantitatively. The focus is on the why and how – with the aim of developing new hypotheses and revealing complex relationships that cannot be represented by numbers alone. To not only document the content obtained scientifically, but also to make it accessible to society, cultural work was chosen as the means of communication. The anonymized interview transcripts form the basis for the play of the same name, which artistically addresses the realities of life for women who are often the only woman in the room – thus making them visible to a wide audience. The play will premiere in Leoben during Women's Month in March.

Impact:

The pilot's main impact was to make women's professional realities in a male-dominated regional economy more visible, first to each other through networking, and then to the wider community through public formats. At participant level, the activities strengthened peer connection, reduced the sense of isolation, and created a safer space to discuss career development topics that often remain private, such as confidence, progression, recognition, and long-term security. At community level, the initiative shifted the conversation from abstract "gender equality" messaging to concrete, locally grounded stories and experiences, which is especially important in



peripheral industrial regions where stereotypes can be persistent and role models are less visible.

Sustainability and scalability:

The initiative is sustainable because it is embedded in an existing and trusted structure, the “Iron Women” network, through the new “Work and Industry” department, which provides continuity, coordination capacity, and access to a stable community in the Styrian Iron Road region. Its core formats are low-threshold and feasible to repeat with limited resources, such as guided tours, get-togethers, and public engagement events, while the interview-based approach creates a reusable evidence and storytelling base that can continuously generate relevant topics and visibility. The model is also highly scalable because it is modular and transferable, other peripheral industrial regions can replicate the same setup by linking to an existing women’s network (or creating a similar hub), then implementing a menu of activities (networking events, awareness formats like a pub quiz, and cultural or media outputs based on local interviews). Scaling can be supported through simple documentation of the approach, partnerships with local employers, municipalities, and cultural institutions, and later connection to national or European networks to exchange practices and extend reach.

Key deliverables:

- Network structure created: New department “Work and Industry” established within the “Iron Women” network.
- Networking events delivered: “Ladies of Leoben” guided tour and follow-up get-together for World Women’s Day 2025.
- Participation reached: At least 20 women involved in pilot network activities.
- Evidence collected: 10 qualitative interviews conducted (autumn 2025) with women aged 26–63 in middle/senior positions across employment types (employees, workers, executives, self-employed).
- Public awareness formats prepared: Pub quiz planned for early February 2026 in a local restaurant (around 40 participants expected), focused on stereotypes and the situation of women in the region.



- Cultural dissemination product developed: Theatre play “Die Einzige im Raum” in preparation, based on anonymised transcripts, with premiere planned in Leoben during Women’s Month in March.

Challenges:

- Engaging participants: Encouraging female employees to actively participate in network activities required targeted communication strategies.
- Coordination with stakeholders: Aligning goals and activities with the existing network and external partners required careful planning.
- Event logistics: Organizing events in peripheral regions posed logistical challenges, which were addressed through collaboration with local stakeholders.

Lessons learned:

- Building on existing networks enhances the sustainability and impact of new initiatives.
- Tailored communication strategies are essential to engage the target group effectively.
- Collaboration with local stakeholders ensures smooth implementation and broader reach.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Improving the solution: Expand the range of activities offered by the network, such as mentoring programs and skill-building workshops.
- Sustaining the solution: Strengthen partnerships with local and regional organizations to ensure the continuity of the network’s department activities.
- Scaling the solution: Explore opportunities to replicate the initiative in other regions and adapt it to different industrial contexts. Collaborate with national and European networks to expand its scope.



Bosnia and Herzegovina - Herceg-Bosnian County

Step out of the shadow – Don't tap in the dark: Business literacy training for unemployed women

Aim:

The aim of this social innovation was to strengthen the business literacy of unemployed women and women seeking a career change, by providing them with the opportunity to acquire practical knowledge and skills relevant for employment, self-employment, or professional advancement, along with personal empowerment and development of an entrepreneurial mindset, as well as raising their awareness on available support mechanisms and opportunities in the labour market.

Target group:

All unemployed women, regardless of age, work experience or work capacity, registered with the Employment Office of the Herceg-Bosnian County either in the Register of unemployed persons or the Register of employment-qualification mismatch.

Target region:

Herceg-Bosnian County, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Short summary of the innovation:

This social innovation involved a free training programme in business literacy, implemented in a modular education format and provided by experienced mentors with an emphasis on empowering women with essential entrepreneurial and financial skills.

Main activities:

- Training in business literacy. A free, accredited 25-hour business literacy training was held in cooperation with Narodno sveučilište Livno in November and December 2025. The training, which covered cost management, budgeting,



payroll, tax, accounting, communication, and business planning, was highly demanded, with applications filling within two days of the public announcement.

- Empowerment workshops. An employment fair in 2025, "Step Out of the Shadow," served as a platform to promote the training and included two well-received workshops: "Freelance 101 – From zero to the first job" (online work skills) and "Power of potential – From talent to opportunity" (confidence building and personal reflection).
- Focus group - Programme evaluation. A focus group in December evaluated the training programme with partners, stakeholders, and participants, providing specific recommendations for improvement and continuation, proposals for new social innovations, and general agreement on the success of the initiative.

Adjustment made during testing:

Compared to the original solution frame, several adjustments were made. As regards the target group, due to the formal nature of the training programme, participation had to be limited to women who had completed secondary education. The mentorship component in the form of "job shadowing" was postponed to a later phase, placing a stronger focus on structured education and consideration of participants' feedback before expanding the training programme with additional elements. Lastly, the training was promoted during the employment fair, social media and local radio, rather than through municipal info days as was originally planned.

Expected results and achievements:

The pilot exceeded its target reach, enrolling 21 women in the business literacy training programme instead of the planned 15. Of these, 17 women completed all modules, developed their own business plans, and received certificates. Participant feedback was strongly positive, especially about the relevance of the modules and the expertise and approachability of the mentors. While the mentorship strand was planned for 15 beneficiaries, feedback suggests strongest demand for continued mentoring and additional practical workshops in business and digital literacy, and three potential mentors have already confirmed interest in future involvement. In terms of employment opportunities, participants reported increased confidence and improved readiness to engage in the labour market, particularly through the ability to design a concrete business plan. Two empowerment workshops (covering soft and



hard skills) further strengthened self-esteem, clarified pathways to employment or self-employment, and connected participants to existing support programmes and peer networks.

Impact:

In the short term, the initiative increased women's business literacy, self-confidence, and motivation, strengthened their understanding of entrepreneurship, and improved their readiness to consider self-employment as a realistic career option. It also contributed to higher public awareness of available training and support programmes. In the longer term, the expected effects include expanded employment opportunities for women, not only through self-employment but also by improving their attractiveness to potential employers, as well as a stronger presence of good practice examples and local female role models. Over time, the initiative may also contribute to reducing grey economic activity by supporting more formalised and better-prepared entrepreneurial pathways. Finally, it is expected to strengthen the capacity of the Employment Office to sustain, continue, and scale similar training programmes in the future.

Sustainability and scalability:

The training in business literacy for unemployed women has significant potential for sustainability within the regular activities of the Employment Office of the Herceg-Bosnian County, under whose jurisdiction is also the education of unemployed persons. With appropriate institutional support, the programme could be included in regular annual activities and adapted for implementation by other Employment Offices in the Federation of BiH.

Key deliverables:

- Training programme delivered: A free, customised business literacy training for unemployed women was developed, organised, and implemented, attracting high interest.
- Mentoring and learning resources ensured: Distinguished experts supported participants, backed by tailored learning materials and a Google Classroom space for access, guidance, and feedback (initiative of Prof. Igor Živko from the Faculty of Economics of the University of Mostar).



- Peer network strengthened: Participants created a WhatsApp group for networking, knowledge exchange, and joint advocacy.
- Tangible results produced: Valid certificates were issued and business plans were developed by participants who completed the programme.
- Wider system engagement and visibility increased: Collaboration among labour market and adult education stakeholders improved through a focus group and empowerment workshops, supported by public outreach via social media and radio.

Challenges:

- Institutional and legal coordination: Finalising the legal framework between participating institutions took longer than expected, partly because the team was also preparing conditions for future cooperation.
- Time constraints affecting the pilot design: The fixed project timeline required delaying or adjusting some components, most notably the mentoring element.
- Scheduling and logistics: Mentor travel and limited availability led to timetable changes, and some participants withdrew due to scheduling conflicts.
- Participant workload and access barriers: Some participants found the programme demanding and requested more practical examples, while limited digital literacy and lack of computer access posed barriers for part of the group.

Lessons learned:

- Sustainable local change takes time: Meaningful improvements in local labour-market realities require more time and effort than a short pilot window typically allows.
- Expert commitment can be mobilised: There are highly motivated experts willing to contribute their own time when the purpose is clear and socially meaningful.
- Beneficiaries are ready to engage when the offer is relevant: Women in the local community showed strong motivation to participate in initiatives that strengthen their position in the labour market, especially when activities are accessible and practical.

Recommendations and next steps:



- Launch the mentorship component of the business literacy training in 2026, in the form of job-shadowing, workshops, or Q&A sessions.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a hub to support participants and other aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Encourage participants to network and advocate collectively for their needs.
- Organise more workshops on other relevant topics, such as digital literacy and confidence building.
- Continue building long-term collaboration among participating institutions.
- Advocate for and explore new funding opportunities to support a sustainable implementation of business literacy training by participating institutions.



Bulgaria – Radomir

EdnaZaDruga.bg – Online platform for women Entrepreneurs and Artists

Aim:

The Edna ZaDruga Online Platform was created to strengthen the social and economic inclusion of women in the Radomir region. The platform was designed as a practical digital space where women could find information, share experiences, gain visibility, and connect with each other. From the beginning, the intention was to build a community rather than simply a website. The longer-term vision includes the possibility for the platform to function as an online space where local women can present and offer their handmade products, crafts, foods, and services.

Target group:

Adult women aged 18-65 living in the Radomir region, particularly women facing structural barriers to employment, social participation, and access to development opportunities, training, and social participation.

Target region:

Region of Radomir

Short summary of the innovation:

The Edna ZaDruga Platform is a digital community space created to connect women from the Radomir region, provide access to practical and inspirational content, and encourage mutual support, with the overall goal of strengthening confidence, motivation, and socio-economic inclusion.

Link to platform: <https://ednazadruga.com/>

Main activities:

- Practical creation and maintenance of the platform. These included prototyping the initial concept, designing the structure and user experience, testing different layouts and functionalities, and gradually building the platform into a stable and



easy-to-use digital space. Continuous technical maintenance ensured that the platform remained accessible, functional, and responsive to user needs.

- Content development. This involved producing and publishing locally relevant materials, collecting and presenting real stories from women in the Radomir region, and coordinating with local contributors and mentors. Topics (for the events) and contributors were proposed mainly by women from the region themselves, which ensured that the platform genuinely reflected local realities and perspectives rather than external assumptions.

Adjustment made during testing:

Several important changes were introduced as a result of learning from real use and continuous dialogue with women from the region. The online shop remained a central and highly important element of the concept, as it represented a key opportunity for women to present and sell their products and services. However, it became clear that many women did not yet feel fully confident about how to approach online sales and digital promotion. For this reason, the launch of the shop was intentionally postponed in order to first strengthen skills, confidence and readiness through a variety of activities. Through the process, it also became evident that what women needed most at this stage was practical support and guidance. Alongside developing hands-on skills and digital abilities, they wanted to see real examples of how other women had succeeded. This is why the platform placed stronger emphasis on mentor profiles and shared experiences. Seeing concrete pathways and learning directly from other women in similar situations helped build trust, motivation, and self-confidence.

Expected results and achievements:

A functioning online space was created at ednazadruga.com with clearly structured sections including the Homepage, Library, Mentors, and a future Shop area. Alongside the platform, an active Edna ZaDruga Facebook page was established to support communication and visibility. Together, the platform and the Facebook page provided a stable and accessible digital environment for sharing information, connecting people, and building community. The experience showed that combining a locally focused digital platform with active social media communication is an effective way to strengthen visibility, encourage participation, and support community cohesion, while creating a solid basis for further growth and development.



Impact:

Practical resources and opportunities for knowledge exchange, mutual support, experience sharing, and skills development reached women who previously had very limited access to such possibilities. What emerged was not simply an online tool, but a recognisable community space that women in Radomir started to relate to, rely on, and identify with.

Sustainability and scalability:

The sustainability of Edna ZaDruga lies in the fact that it is built on real local voices and needs so there is clear potential for further development. Possible next directions include: gradual introduction of the e-shop module for local products and services; expansion of the mentor network; stronger cooperation with local organisations and institutions; replication of the model in other regions with similar challenges.

Key deliverables:

- 699 followers on the Facebook page linked to the platform.
- More than 130 published posts featuring local stories, events, and information on both channels.
- More than 10 personal stories collected and made publicly visible through the platform.
- A network of local mentors accessible through the platform.

Challenges:

- The initial concept reflected an urban perspective and had to be adapted to Radomir's specific socio-economic context.
- Cooperation with local authorities proved more complex than expected and required sustained effort.
- Building trust and maintaining community engagement took longer than anticipated and could not be accelerated.

Lessons learned:

- Community-based innovation depends on flexibility and a willingness to revise assumptions quickly.



- Progress requires patience and persistence, especially when working with institutions and local governance structures.
- Continuous learning and ongoing adaptation are essential, because local realities shape what is feasible and what will be accepted.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Gradual introduction of the e-shop for local products and services.
- Expansion of the mentor network.
- Stronger cooperation with local organisations and institutions.
- Replication of the model in other regions with similar challenges.



Women's Community Network Edna ZaDruga – Community Network for Women in the Radomir Region.

Aim:

The aim of the initiative was to create a supportive local network where women from the Radomir region could connect, exchange experience, gain practical skills, and support each other in their personal and professional development. The initiative aimed to reduce social isolation, increase confidence, and encourage more active participation of women in community and economic life. A key part of the solution was to combine online communication with a real physical meeting space where women could gather, learn, and support one another.

Target group:

Adult women aged 18-65 living in the Radomir region, particularly women facing structural barriers to employment, social participation, and access to development opportunities, training, and social participation.

Target region:

Region of Radomir

Short summary of the innovation:

Women's Network Edna ZaDruga is a local community initiative that brings women together in a dedicated physical space in Radomir, offering practical workshops, mentoring, and mutual support to strengthen skills, confidence, and social inclusion.

Main activities:

- Building and running a local, face-to-face women's community in Radomir. A dedicated community space was established in the city centre, which became the main location for all workshop, events, and meetings. The aim was to provide the women with a safe space, where they can experiment, learn, and feel supported.
- Organising practical workshops, group meetings, and informal gatherings where women could learn new skills, exchange experience, and support one another. Topics and formats were defined based on the expressed interests and needs of



the participants, ensuring that the programme remained relevant and locally driven.

Adjustment made during testing:

Several adjustments were introduced based on feedback from participants. It became clear that women needed practical, hands-on activities rather than general information sessions. As a result, the focus of the initiative shifted more strongly toward craft workshops, skill-building activities, and informal peer support.

Expected results and achievements:

The main output of the innovation is the creation of an active and functioning Women's Network in Radomir with its own dedicated community space. Twenty-two workshops and many meetings have already been organised in the space, covering a wide range of practical topics. A local mentor network has been formed, and women from the region have gained access to new skills, knowledge, and social support. The initiative has successfully created a stable and welcoming environment for regular interaction, learning, and mutual encouragement.

Impact:

Participants shared that they felt more confident, more motivated, and better supported. Many women reported that the workshops helped them discover new skills and practical possibilities for income generation. The initiative therefore achieved both measurable results and meaningful individual change by creating a real, trusted space for learning and mutual support.

Sustainability and scalability:

Women's Network Edna ZaDruga is sustainable because it is grounded in real needs and relationships, supported by a permanent community space and the trust already built among participants, which together create a stable foundation for continued activities. Sustainability can be strengthened through the regular organisation of practical workshops shaped by local priorities, the gradual extension of the community spirit into an online platform to include women outside the region, and the expansion of the mentor network. At the same time, stronger cooperation with local organisations and institutions can provide additional continuity, resources, and



referral pathways. The model is also scalable because its structure is simple, practical, and community-driven, making it easy to replicate in other towns and regions facing similar challenges. With light adaptation, it can inform regional, national, or even European initiatives while preserving its local, personal character.

Key deliverables:

- The completed 22 workshops included: Handmade craft workshops (knitting, candle making, decoupage and others) – 8; Book club meetings – 4; Art therapy workshops – 3; Jewelry workshops – 2; Beauty and self-care workshops – 2; Digital tools workshops – 2
- A local network was formed as a result of the active events through the physical space.

Challenges:

- The original plans had to be adjusted to match the real-life situation of women in the region.
- Many participants needed more basic, practical support and confidence building than initially anticipated.
- Scheduling activities around family responsibilities and limited time availability proved difficult.

Lessons learned:

- Community initiatives need to stay flexible and adapt quickly to participants' realities.
- Activities should prioritise practical needs and confidence-building, not only planned content.
- Solutions work best when shaped directly by local participants, so they feel supportive rather than adding extra burden.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Continuing and expanding the programme of practical skills workshops.
- Further development of the mentor network to provide more individual support.
- Offering more structured training in digital and entrepreneurial skills.



- Stronger cooperation with local organisations, schools, and social services.



Czech Republic – Karlovy Vary Region

BusinessWomen without Borders

Aim:

The social innovation aimed to create a safe and open space where women in business could meet, share their experiences, find inspiration and support one another. The initiative focused on strengthening women's self-confidence and their sense of security in business, while supporting a network of enterprising women that developed naturally from the "bottom up". At the same time, the social innovation placed strong emphasis on sustainable business practices, social responsibility and a positive contribution to regional development.

Target group:

Women entrepreneurs and aspiring women entrepreneurs.

Target region:

Karlovy Vary Region

Short summary of the innovation:

The social innovation was based on the establishment of an association as a legal entity that brings together women entrepreneurs as well as women considering entrepreneurship. The association provided support through education, mentoring, networking and the sharing of experience. Beyond direct support, the association created opportunities for cooperation at the regional, national and international levels. It also raised awareness of women's entrepreneurship and presented inspiring entrepreneurial stories. In its activities, the association made use of modern technologies both as tools for business development and as a way to reach a wider audience.

Link to the association's website: <https://podnikatelkybezhranic.cz/>

Main activities:

- Networking, sharing experiences, and addressing common challenges. Regular meetings between women created a space for open sharing of experience,

discussion of business challenges and mutual support. Networking played an important role in establishing new contacts, developing cooperation among women entrepreneurs and strengthening trust within the emerging community.

- Mentoring focused on providing individual support to start-up entrepreneurs from more experienced women. The support covered both practical business topics and guidance in navigating the business environment, while also contributing to greater self-confidence. Mentoring supported the development of key competencies and helped women feel more confident in their business decisions.
- Marketing in the form of an online catalogue of women entrepreneurs. The testing phase also included the promotion of women entrepreneurs through an online catalogue and social networks. Approximately once every two weeks, individual members and their business activities were presented.

Adjustment made during testing:

During the testing phase, the original social innovation concept was continuously refined through open dialogue with participants and their ongoing feedback. It became clear that a flexible and participatory approach was essential to ensure that the initiative genuinely responded to the needs of women in the region. In practice, the topics of workshops and webinars were adjusted to better reflect the current interests and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. An important milestone was the discussion held at the inaugural event on International Women's Day, which generated valuable ideas for the future direction of activities and helped to clarify the priorities of the emerging community.

Expected results and achievements:

Testing also significantly boosted participants' self-confidence and entrepreneurial certainty. They repeatedly praised the friendly, supportive atmosphere, the opportunity for open sharing, and the practical, needs-based, and co-developed activities. Participants gained not just information and skills, but also a vital sense of belonging and mutual reassurance. This blend of professional support and human connection was a key strength. In conclusion, the testing phase confirmed the social innovation's main purpose: creating a functional, supportive community for women in business with clear potential for growth and long-term sustainability.



Impact:

The pilot confirmed that a simple, community-based approach can generate visible regional change by increasing the visibility of women in business and opening wider discussion about their role in the local economy. Interest spread beyond the participants, including growing support from male entrepreneurs who asked about and encouraged their partners' activities. During the testing period, three women launched their own businesses, while others strengthened practical skills in areas such as marketing, basic legislation, time management, accounting, networking, and conflict resolution. Participants also reported increased self-confidence and courage to develop their ideas further. Cooperation emerged quickly, with women exchanging contacts, sharing experience, and exploring joint business opportunities, strengthening trust and belonging. The initiative also created pathways for future growth through new international links, especially with partners from Germany, suggesting potential cross-border exchange and scaling in the Karlovy Vary Region.

Sustainability and scalability:

The testing phase confirmed strong potential for long-term operation, driven by an active and growing women's community and clear shared values. Demand already extends beyond the Karlovy Vary Region, with concrete expansion ideas for Plzeň, Ústí, Prague, and Zlín, plus interest in cross-border cooperation with partners in Germany. Sustainability is supported by a mixed financial model combining membership fees, grant funding, and fee-based workshops for non-members, alongside recorded online workshops that improve access and reuse. A core scaling mechanism is the creation of "anchor groups" of women across the region who carry the values, mobilise local networks, and ensure strong local ownership. For successful expansion, these anchor groups need to be identified early and actively supported, as they provide the trust-based backbone for stable regional branches.

Key deliverables:

- 20 educational and networking meetings delivered in blended format (online and face-to-face), with content continuously adapted to participants' needs.
- Alfa Women festival block co-organised and implemented, strengthening regional visibility of women's entrepreneurship.



- ~150 women engaged overall, including ~80 online participants and ~70 in-person participants, with consistently high satisfaction and positive feedback on the supportive atmosphere.
- A stable business community established and expanded from an expected ~20 members to ~50 active members by year-end.
- Concrete business skills and confidence strengthened, reflected in improved orientation in the business environment and more decisive business planning and actions.
- New contacts and collaborations were generated, including a documented partnership connecting Microgreen_KV with gastronomy stakeholders in Mariánské Lázně.
- Measurable market outcome achieved: by early 2026, Microgreen_KV secured 8 regular customers in Mariánské Lázně, including cooperation with hotels and restaurants such as the OREA Hotels & Resorts chain.

Challenges:

- Limited founder capacity: The founders ran the initiative alongside professional and personal responsibilities, which constrained time and operational bandwidth.
- Complex event coordination: Aligning availability of participants, lecturers, and the organising team was demanding, while also ensuring a coherent sequence of activities.
- Participation and programme clarity: In the early phase, the programme needed more systematic communication and more targeted marketing to support attendance and understanding of what was offered.
- Regional visibility: High-quality activities alone did not guarantee reach; visibility required stronger planning of communication and clearer public-facing messaging.

Lessons learned:

- Efficiency needs to be designed, not improvised: Automating member communication and using online collaboration tools improved stability and reduced workload.
- Team reliability grows through structure: Clearer role division, substitutability, and mutual support strengthened trust and improved day-to-day functioning.



- Planning and communication drive participation: Better advance planning, logical programme sequencing, and consistent outreach increased engagement and clarity.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Launch cooperation with the Regional Chamber of Commerce at regional level to connect women entrepreneurs to existing support structures, increase visibility, and co-host educational and networking initiatives.
- Scale successful Chamber cooperation nationally by exploring formats such as specialised training programmes or academies for women entrepreneurs, and participation in wider education and entrepreneurship projects.
- Establish partnership with Business & Professional Women CR to raise visibility, exchange good practices, and support gradual expansion to other regions through joint activities.
- Protect the community-based model during growth by keeping trust, shared values, and peer cooperation at the centre of all activities and partnerships.
- Identify and empower local “anchor groups” in new regions, active women with local knowledge and networks who can take responsibility for regional coordination and delivery.
- Strengthen organisational capacity through clearer roles, shared responsibilities, and lighter operational systems that can handle growth without overloading founders.
- Develop a clear but flexible cooperation framework that provides shared direction and standards while allowing adaptation to local needs and contexts.



Project day at school for gender equality

Aim:

The social innovation aimed to increase the awareness of primary school pupils, both girls and boys, of the real labour market and its dynamics from the perspective of gender equality. The project day sought to help pupils better understand how gender stereotypes can influence educational and career choices, and to encourage them to reflect on their own interests, strengths, and aspirations beyond traditional gender roles. By providing realistic information and practical examples, the activity supported pupils in making more informed and self-aware decisions about their future education and career paths.

Target group:

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

Target region:

Karlovy Vary Region

Short summary of the innovation:

The social innovation is built around the implementation of a project day at a primary school, designed to support pupils in making informed decisions about their further education and future career paths. The project day provided a structured and safe space for working with career-oriented tools, reflecting on individual talents and abilities, and engaging in inspiring real-life stories, with a strong emphasis on promoting equal opportunities and sensitively addressing gender stereotypes related to educational and career choices. Testing in a real school environment has shown that even a single, well-designed activity can open up space for reflection, discussion, and greater awareness of personal preferences and assumptions at a time when young people are facing important life decisions.

Main activities:

- Working with a career app and developing financial literacy. This activity involved working with the web-based application “My Life After School”, which introduces pupils to professions and the labour market in a regional context while explicitly



WIN

promoting equal access to information for girls and boys. The app presents career options without gender-based categorisation and links further education pathways with basic principles of financial literacy, including comparisons of expected income and living costs. The session was led by a representative of the Karlovy Vary Regional Chamber of Commerce.

- Diagnosis of talents and aptitudes. The second part of the programme focused on identifying pupils' talents and personal aptitudes, with an emphasis on individual potential rather than gender expectations. Through guided self-reflection, pupils were encouraged to recognise their strengths and interests as a basis for further educational choices. Led by a professional lecturer, the activity deliberately worked to challenge gender stereotypes associated with specific fields of study and professions.
- Discussion with a female entrepreneur. The project day also included a discussion with a female entrepreneur from the region, who shared her professional journey, including both successes and challenges. Her story served as a concrete example of a non-stereotypical career path and aimed to show pupils that entrepreneurship and leadership are realistic options for both women and men.

Adjustment made during testing:

During the preparation and implementation of the pilot testing, the original concept of the project day had to be adjusted to match the actual time available within the school timetable. Adapting the programme to four teaching hours, including breaks, required the simplification and prioritisation of planned activities. From the initial scope, key components that could be meaningfully delivered within the given time frame were selected. As a result, the project day focused on working with the career application My Life After School, talent and aptitude diagnostics, and a discussion with a female entrepreneur. These activities were chosen to provide pupils with a balanced combination of practical information, opportunities for self-reflection, and inspiration drawn from real-life experience.

Expected results and achievements:

The pilot testing aimed to involve two classes at one primary school and to create a space in which pupils could pause and reflect on their future educational direction. In total, 27 pupils participated in the project day. Although the number of participants



was slightly lower than originally expected, the main objective of the pilot was achieved, as the proposed format proved to be functional and understandable in a real school environment. Feedback from pupils was predominantly positive. For some participants, the project day confirmed their existing educational plans, while for others it opened new questions and encouraged them to consider alternatives they had not previously explored. Pupils particularly appreciated the interactive nature of the activities, the opportunity to ask questions, and access to information that is not usually covered in regular lessons.

Impact:

One of the most visible impacts of the project day was the opportunity it gave pupils to pause and reflect on their future in a way that differed from regular classroom teaching. The programme provided new information about further education options and opened up topics that are often overlooked, including the influence of prejudices and gender stereotypes on educational and career choices. For some participants, the project day strengthened their confidence in their existing plans, while for others it helped them recognise alternative paths they had not previously considered. From a longer-term perspective, the social innovation has the potential to support more informed and autonomous decision-making about further education, free from unnecessary limitations imposed by gender stereotypes.

Sustainability and scalability:

Thanks to its simple structure and the use of existing tools, the concept for the school day can be implemented without significant additional financial resources and can be easily transferred to other schools and regions. In the Karlovy Vary Region, continuity of the activity is supported by the Regional Chamber of Commerce of the Karlovy Vary Region, which has long-standing cooperation with career counsellors across the region. This collaboration creates favourable conditions for the continued implementation of project days beyond the pilot phase and contributes to the long-term sustainability of the activity, while also allowing for gradual adaptation and expansion in line with the needs of individual schools.

Key deliverables:



- 27 pupils participated from two classes, 11 from 8th grade and 16 from 9th grade.
- Pupils valued interactivity, small-group work, and open Q&A, and reported the day as useful and practical.
- The pilot suggested fewer gender stereotypes than expected, with noticeable openness among girls toward technical fields.

Challenges:

- Different engagement levels by age group: Ninth-grade pupils were more engaged because they faced immediate education choices, while many eighth-graders saw the topic as less urgent and participated less actively at times.
- Time constraints versus programme scope: With a four-hour limit, not all originally planned activities could be delivered in full and the programme had to be simplified during implementation.
- School-day rhythm and logistics: Breaks between lessons and the overall pace of the school day affected attention, concentration, and the smooth flow of activities.

Lessons learned:

- Different grades need different framing: The project day should be adapted by age group, with stronger motivation hooks and relevance-building for eighth-graders.
- Four teaching hours require prioritisation: A clear “core package” of activities is needed, with optional add-ons only if time allows.
- Programme design must match school realities: Planning should explicitly account for breaks and transitions, using a rhythm that protects pupils’ focus and supports smooth facilitation.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Upgrade the diagnostic component: Consider specialised paid diagnostic tools for more precise and detailed outputs, alongside the freely available tools used in the pilot.



- Target the right age group and timing: Run the project day primarily for final-year primary pupils, ideally in late November or early December, so pupils have time to reflect and discuss choices with parents before application deadlines.
- Plan time and breaks as one system: Design the programme around four teaching hours, but agree in advance with the school on break adjustments, including one longer break between activity blocks.
- If expanding content, split into two days: Add new thematic blocks by running two separate days (4 teaching hours each), rather than extending a single day, to protect attention and learning quality.
- Secure technical readiness: Check in advance the availability of computers/tablets and internet quality, and adapt tools and facilitation to school rules on mobile phone use.



Hungary - Komárom-Esztergom County

NEMIGEN – Podcast series on gender stereotypes

Aim:

The primary aim was to contribute to the improvement of women's position in the labour market by addressing and reshaping deeply rooted gender stereotypes, with a particular focus on men's attitudes toward women. The innovation implemented aimed to initiate open, relatable, and non-confrontational public dialogue primarily targeting men, while remaining accessible and relevant to women as well.

Target group:

The primary target group consisted of men of working age, as their attitudes, decisions, and everyday behaviours play a decisive role in shaping women's opportunities and experiences in the labour market. At the same time, the podcast series was designed to remain accessible and relevant to women, who represent an important secondary target group.

Target region:

The podcast was available nationwide due to its digital format.

Short summary of the innovation:

NEMIGEN is an eight-episode podcast series developed as a social innovation to challenge and deconstruct persistent gender stereotypes about women, with a particular focus on how men's attitudes influence women's position in the labour market and in society more broadly. The podcast uses a playful, accessible, and thought-provoking format, combining humor, real-life experiences, expert insights from sociologists and psychologists, and discussions with well-known public figures and "ordinary people." Each episode revolves around a provocative question reflecting a common stereotype about women, encouraging listeners to reflect on ingrained assumptions and everyday behaviors.

Link to the podcast: <https://youtu.be/-PpnU-ufoQQ?si=60ulfOLOP1bsoFiO>

Main implementation activities:



- Concept development, including: Identification of key stereotypes affecting women's labour market position; Cooperation with sociologists and psychologists to define topics and angles.
- Host selection, including: Engagement of Anita Deutsch and Ottó Kinizsi as podcast hosts; Hosts were selected for their credibility, public recognition, and authentic family-career balance.
- Podcast production, including: Studio recording of eight episodes; Inclusion of expert guests and "ordinary people" connected to each topic; Integration of AI-generated responses as an additional discussion element.
- Distribution, including: Publication on YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts; Ongoing promotion via social media and partner networks.

Adjustment made during testing:

Topics were fine-tuned to better reflect audience reactions and current public debates. Guest selection was expanded to ensure representation of everyday experiences, not only expert opinions. Episode length and pacing were adjusted to optimize viewer retention and engagement.

Expected results and achievements:

The pilot testing aimed to combine wide outreach with meaningful attitude change by raising public awareness of how gender stereotypes limit women's labour market participation, career development, and leadership opportunities, prompting men to reflect on their own assumptions and everyday language, and opening constructive, non-confrontational public dialogue through accessible online formats. In practice, the pilot exceeded these expectations by producing and publishing eight high-quality podcast episodes that reached more than 145,000 listeners and viewers nationwide. The series generated strong engagement and feedback, with many audience members reporting increased self-reflection and a reassessment of previously unquestioned stereotypes. The participation of well-known, credible hosts helped attract audiences who might not normally engage with gender equality content. Finally, the blend of expert insight, lived experience, humour, and AI-generated perspectives proved effective in sustaining attention while encouraging critical thinking.

**Impact:**

In the short term, the podcast increased awareness and reflection on how gender stereotypes shape women's roles in the labour market and private life, using a podcast format that reached a broad audience, including men who do not usually seek out gender equality content. Listener feedback suggests the episodes triggered personal reflection on everyday assumptions, sparked conversations in families, workplaces, and peer groups, and made implicit biases more visible in a non-confrontational way that avoided defensive reactions. The involvement of credible public figures and relatable life situations strengthened trust in the messages and increased their persuasive effect. In the longer term, the innovation supports gradual cultural and attitudinal change that enables structural progress in women's labour market position by engaging men as key change agents and promoting more inclusive workplace cultures, fairer recognition of women's competencies and leadership potential, and greater acceptance of shared care responsibilities. Because the episodes remain available and the themes are timeless, the impact extends beyond the pilot period, with the podcast serving as an ongoing reference point for learning, dialogue, and awareness raising.

Sustainability and scalability:

The NEMIGEN podcast series has strong sustainability potential because its core outputs remain accessible without additional financial or organisational resources once produced. Episodes continue to reach new audiences through long-term digital distribution, organic recommendations, and social sharing, while the themes stay relevant across generations and labour market cycles. The format also supports sustainability through easy continuation, new episodes can be added, and thematic extensions can be developed without changing the underlying production logic.

From a scalability perspective, the innovation is highly transferable: the podcast model can be replicated in other regions, languages, or cultural contexts, and it can be integrated into employment programmes, HR training, education, or public awareness campaigns. It can also be scaled nationally or across borders within the Danube Region and beyond, making it a low-barrier, high-impact approach to shaping attitudes in support of women's empowerment and labour market inclusion. A helpful branding asset is the title "NEMIGEN," a layered wordplay that combines "no" (nem) and "yes" (igen), signals uncertainty ("not really"), uses "nem" as "gender" in



Hungarian, and mirrors the yes/no opening format of each episode, adding humour and depth that reinforces the podcast's message.

Key deliverables:

- Podcast series delivered: Eight episodes planned, recorded, edited, and published, each focused on a specific, widely held stereotype about women in work and family life.
- Multi-platform distribution secured: Episodes released on YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts, ensuring free access and long-term availability.
- National reach achieved: More than 200 000 listeners and viewers reached across Hungary, exceeding initial expectations.
- Attitude change signals collected: Listener feedback indicated increased self-reflection and reconsideration of assumptions about women's competence, leadership, and family roles.
- Hard-to-reach audiences engaged: The humorous, accessible format successfully attracted and retained male audiences often missed by traditional awareness tools.

Challenges:

- Identifying well-known and credible hosts and guests who were aligned with the project's values while remaining within budget constraints.
- Coordinating a multidisciplinary team involving media professionals, sociologists, psychologists, and technical staff.
- Ensuring balanced representation between expert voices and everyday experiences.
- Managing logistical aspects such as studio availability, equipment rental, and tight production schedules.

Lessons learned:

- Early involvement of experts strengthens content quality but requires sufficient time for discussion and consensus-building.
- Popular and entertaining formats significantly lower resistance to sensitive social topics.



- Authenticity and credibility are key to engaging male audiences in gender-related discussions.
- Flexibility and iterative adjustment during implementation are essential for social innovation testing.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Content development: Expand the podcast series with additional episodes addressing new or emerging stereotypes related to work, leadership, and care responsibilities.
- Targeted use: Integrate selected episodes into HR trainings, workplace diversity programs, educational curricula, and employment services.
- Partnerships: Strengthen cooperation with employers, educational institutions, media outlets, and civil society organizations to increase reach and institutional embedding.
- Transferability: Adapt the concept for other regions or transnational contexts, taking into account cultural and linguistic differences.
- Impact monitoring: Complement audience statistics with qualitative feedback tools (e.g. surveys, focus groups) to better capture long-term attitude change.



Serbia – Loznica Region

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

Aim:

The aim of this social innovation was to improve the economic position, visibility and self-confidence of women from different generations in the Loznica area, particularly those who are unemployed, belong to older and more vulnerable age groups, live in rural or peripheral areas or lack stable income. By combining their existing knowledge and experience with newly acquired digital and AI-based skills, women were supported in achieving better market positioning, increased competitiveness and stronger economic participation.

Target group:

Older women producing traditional crafts, handmade and homemade products and providing services within ethno households, rural tourism and other services. Younger women who are unemployed or seeking professional development and interested in acquiring digital marketing and artificial intelligence skills.

Target region:

City of Loznica and surrounding municipalities and rural areas, including Mali Zvornik, Krupanj and surrounding villages and settlements.

Short summary of the innovation:

This social innovation connected older women producing authentic traditional products and services, many of whom are unemployed or without stable income, with younger women who are unemployed or seeking professional development and trained in digital marketing and AI tools, in order to improve employability, market access and income-generation opportunities. Through intergenerational cooperation and joint work on digital promotion, including the preparation of a digital gift catalogue, women increased their visibility and competitiveness beyond the local market, while younger participants gained practical digital skills, insight into local



labour market opportunities and, in some cases, began considering starting their own entrepreneurial activities.

Main implementation activities:

- A two-day in-person training on digital marketing and AI tools (22–23 September 2025) AI in your pocket was held at the Innovation Startup Center – Smart City Loznica and delivered by a certified AI manager and digital transformation consultant. Nearly 40 women participated, representing different generations, locations and professional backgrounds from Loznica and surrounding towns and villages.
- A full-day field-based practical training and photo session (7 November 2025) was organised at the ethno household Šurička Bajka, where women photographed their own products and prepared texts, visuals and descriptions, later edited and finalised using AI tools introduced during the training, to be promoted digitally.
- Two online mentoring sessions (October and November 2025) focused on preparing digital promotional content, online catalogue pages, refining visual identity, writing product descriptions and preparing materials for online presentation.
- Intergenerational cooperation was established between 22 women producers and 9 younger women assistants, who supported them in defining promotional offers, providing technical assistance and preparing catalogue materials.

Adjustment made during testing:

Based on the strong engagement observed during the initial training sessions, the practical part of the programme was moved from an urban setting to the rural ethno household Šurička Bajka (Šurice Fairytale). This adjustment significantly enhanced creativity, motivation, networking and group cohesion, transforming the training into a shared experiential learning process.

Expected results and achievements:

The pilot confirmed that the applied approach can quickly translate skills development into visible market-facing outputs and stronger local cooperation. Nearly 40 women from Loznica and surrounding municipalities took part in blended



training, practice, and mentoring activities, resulting in concrete digital promotion materials and a completed “With Love from Loznica” gift catalogue featuring 22 women producers and service providers. Overall, the pilot delivered the intended combination of practical competence building, improved visibility, and a working cooperation model that can be continued and refined.

Impact:

In the short term, women gained concrete digital and AI-based skills, increased confidence and immediate visibility of their products and services. All participants receive certificates of participation, which, according to informal confirmation from representatives of the National Employment Service, may be taken into account during employment procedures for women registered as unemployed. The innovation also contributes to stronger mutual networking among women in this area, which has consistently proven to generate positive outcomes and facilitates the joint identification of solutions to future challenges. In the longer term, this social innovation contributes to improved access to markets, enhanced employability of younger women and the development of a transferable intergenerational cooperation model that supports women’s economic participation in the local labour market.

Sustainability and scalability:

The Women’s Ethno Hub model has strong potential to continue informally beyond the pilot phase, as it is based on cooperation, mutual support and practical benefits for participating women. The connections and capacities developed through joint activities, digital promotion and intergenerational collaboration can be sustained with the support of local women’s organisations and the Tourism Organization of Loznica, contributing to the further development of women’s entrepreneurship and the local tourism offer. At the same time, the experience gained through this social innovation represents a transferable model that can be replicated in other areas with similar tourism potential and strong traditions in crafts, food production and rural tourism. The combination of intergenerational cooperation, digital capacity building and improved market access offers a flexible framework that can be adapted to different local contexts, supporting women’s integration into the labour market and strengthening their economic participation beyond the pilot region.



Key deliverables:

- Around 40 women participated across all activities related to this social innovation.
- In total, 22 women, supported by 9 younger women assistants, were featured in the Women's Ethno Hub – With Love from Loznica digital gift catalogue, presenting authentic products and services of women from the Loznica area. The catalogue enables increased visibility beyond the local context and allows interested audiences to directly contact women producers and service providers.
- Through trainings and workshops, all participants acquired new digital and AI-based skills that facilitated the professional presentation of their products and services, using tools and learning about ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Nano Banana and Grok, while strengthening intergenerational cooperation and mutual learning.
- A network established among women from Loznica, Krupanj, Mali Zvornik and surrounding areas is expected to continue informally and potentially through the Women's Ethno Hub initiative.

Challenges:

- Limited time availability of participants: Many women balanced family responsibilities, seasonal work, and income-generating activities, requiring realistic scheduling and flexible formats, especially for those travelling from surrounding towns and villages.
- Uneven starting levels of digital skills: Participants entered with different levels of digital knowledge, which required adjustments to training content and pace.
- Low initial awareness of new concepts in the community: Limited familiarity with the main topics required additional visibility and media/public communication efforts.

Lessons learned:

- Scheduling must fit women's real-life constraints: Flexibility, careful timing, and realistic planning are essential when working with participants who combine multiple roles.

- Mixed-level groups can become an advantage: Differences in digital skills can strengthen peer learning, intergenerational cooperation, mutual support, trust-building, and motivation.
- Awareness-raising is a prerequisite for new topics: Concepts that are unfamiliar locally need time, repeated exposure, and a broader community-level approach before participation grows. Although the pilot achieved extensive visibility through 70 media and social media publications, including SM posts by ABW, ASP and stakeholders, as well as national and local TV coverage, some of the introduced topics still require additional promotion and continuous communication. Further efforts are needed to ensure constant visibility of women from this target group.
- Practical, experiential learning drives engagement: Hands-on formats and adaptive implementation supported participation and learning across the pilot.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Continue the Women's Ethno Hub informally as a community of practice: Maintain flexible networking, learning, and mutual support beyond the project, with support from local women's organisations, the City of Loznica, and the Tourism Organisation of Loznica.
- Sustain occasional digital-skills peer learning activities: Build on the pilot without creating new formal structures or long-term commitments.
- Seek local or alternative funding to print the catalogue: Use the printed version as an additional tourism-promotion material.
- Strengthen systemic local promotion of circular economy and social entrepreneurship: Integrate these themes into local/regional action plans, public communication, and ongoing awareness-raising to build understanding and acceptance over time.
- Use the pilot as a reference for future projects: Apply the experience from the three innovations to future initiatives in similar regions, potentially through new donors or programmes.



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

Aim:

The aim of this social innovation was to empower women managing ethno households and family farms by introducing circular economy and zero-waste principles, with the objective of improving the sustainability, attractiveness and economic potential of their activities related to rural tourism and small-scale production.

Target group:

Women who own or manage family farms and ethno-tourism households in the Loznica area, engaged in food production, homemade products and the provision of hospitality and accommodation services.

Target region:

City of Loznica and surrounding rural areas.

Short summary of the innovation:

This social innovation introduced circular economy and zero-waste concepts through practical, hands-on learning, building on participants' existing experience in managing farms, ethno households and rural tourism activities, and demonstrating how sustainable practices can contribute both to environmental responsibility and to the economic viability of their work. Through a study visit they were able to reflect on the applicability of circular approaches in their own local context, while taking an initial step towards raising awareness of sustainability in rural areas of the Loznica area.

Main implementation activities:

- A one-day study visit and training (17 October 2025) was organised at the Krivac household in Sremski Karlovci, a recognised example of zero-waste rural tourism in the Vojvodina region. Over time, the household has become a well-known destination for visitors, providing workshops based on reuse of available



resources, recycling and further processing, including food products and authentic gifts redesigned or upcycled.

- The training was delivered by an expert in circular economy who is also the owner of a company employing persons with disabilities. Additional input was provided by the owner of the Krivac household, a university professor with a PhD in circular economy, who successfully translated academic knowledge into practice.

Adjustment made during testing:

Instead of an indoor training format, the activity was implemented as a study visit, responding to participants' preference for practical, outdoor and experiential learning.

Expected results and achievements:

The pilot delivered a practical introduction to circular economy and zero-waste approaches for women managing rural tourism households and family farms in the Loznica area. Around ten women participated in the study visit and training and gained first-hand exposure to an operational zero-waste rural tourism model, supported by expert facilitation that translated circular economy principles into concrete, feasible practices. The study visit format proved well-suited to participants' preference for experiential learning and enabled direct reflection on what could realistically be applied in their own farms and ethno households. As a result, the pilot achieved its immediate objective of building initial understanding and motivation around sustainability as an economic opportunity, while also generating clear insights for how to increase engagement with these still-new topics in the local context.

Impact:

The innovation introduced a topic that had previously received limited attention in the local context, initiated reflection on sustainable approaches to rural tourism and production and laid the groundwork for future initiatives in this field.

Sustainability and scalability:

The approach can be replicated in other rural areas with similar tourism potential and traditions in food production and crafts.



Key deliverables:

- Around ten women participated in the study visit and training, during which they gained first-hand insight into circular economy and zero-waste practices.
- Initial steps were taken to raise awareness of sustainability as a potential economic opportunity for rural tourism and small-scale production, particularly in contexts where such approaches are still relatively new.

Challenges:

- Low initial familiarity with circular economy and social entrepreneurship: As new topics locally, they attracted smaller groups and required additional visibility and awareness efforts.
- Limited time availability of participants: Family responsibilities, seasonal work, and income-generating activities constrained participation and reinforced the need for careful timing and flexible scheduling, especially for women travelling from surrounding areas.

Lessons learned:

- Awareness-raising is a prerequisite for engagement: New concepts require time, repeated exposure, and a broader community-level approach before participation grows.
- Experiential formats increase relevance and uptake: Practical, field-based learning builds stronger understanding and helps participants judge applicability in their own context.
- Flexibility and realistic planning matter: When participants juggle multiple roles, success depends on timing, format flexibility, and trust-building over time.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Strengthen local promotion of circular economy and social entrepreneurship: The City of Loznica and other local structures should embed these themes in local/regional action plans, public communication, and ongoing awareness-raising activities to build understanding and acceptance.
- Continue Women's Ethno Hub as a flexible community of practice: Use it as an informal platform for learning and mutual support (with local women's organisations, the City of Loznica, and the Tourism Organisation of Loznica),



enabling occasional thematic peer learning without creating new formal structures.

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

Aim:

The innovation aimed to inform women, who largely belong to categories recognised as eligible under the legal framework (women themselves, young people, unemployed persons, persons aged 45+, single parents and others), about the functioning, relevance and future potential of social enterprises.

Target group:

Women from the City of Loznica and surrounding towns and villages, including women engaged in rural tourism, agriculture, crafts, small-scale production and other economic or service-based activities.

Target region:

City of Loznica and surrounding areas

Short summary of the innovation:

This social innovation focused on awareness-raising and basic capacity building related to social entrepreneurship in a context where such practices are not yet established.

Main implementation activities:

- One full-day training on social entrepreneurship and business model development (30 September 2025) held at the Innovation Startup Centre – Smart City Loznica.
- The training was delivered by an expert in social entrepreneurship, circular economy and inclusive employment and included guidance on mission definition, governance models, legal frameworks and funding opportunities. The Canvas business model was introduced as a practical tool to support understanding of ideas, objectives and potential development directions in social entrepreneurship.

Adjustment made during testing:

Given limited familiarity with the topic, the activity focused on foundational knowledge rather than immediate enterprise creation.



Expected results and achievements:

The pilot aimed to introduce social entrepreneurship as a realistic and locally relevant option for women in Loznica and surrounding areas, focusing on understanding rather than immediate enterprise creation. The full-day training provided participants with a clear overview of what social enterprises are, why they matter for inclusive local development, and how they can be organised within existing legal and funding frameworks.

Impact:

The innovation opened local discussion on social entrepreneurship and increased visibility of the topic through media coverage, generating additional interest at the community level.

Sustainability and scalability:

With continued support from local institutions and the City of Loznica as the Associated Strategic Partner (ASP), the innovation has potential for further development as the legislative and institutional framework evolves and can be replicated in other regions facing similar conditions.

Key deliverables:

- Around ten women participated at an informational level, in line with expectations for a new topic in the region.
- Initial interest was recorded among some participants, remaining at an early exploratory stage.

Challenges:

- Limited time availability of participants: Many women balanced family duties, seasonal work, and income activities, making scheduling and attendance difficult, especially for those travelling from villages and nearby towns.
- Low initial familiarity with social entrepreneurship: Because social entrepreneurship and circular economy were new topics locally, engagement levels were naturally smaller and required more effort to build interest.



- Different starting levels of skills and learning pace: Participants entered with varying knowledge levels, requiring adjustments in training delivery and pacing.

Lessons learned:

- Realistic planning is essential: Flexible formats, careful timing, and practical scheduling are decisive when participants combine multiple roles and have limited time.
- Awareness comes before action: When concepts are unfamiliar, first steps should prioritise repeated exposure, clarity, and trust-building rather than expecting immediate implementation.
- Experiential, practical learning works best: Using concrete tools such as the Canvas model supports understanding and helps participants move from abstract ideas to feasible concepts.
- Mixed-level groups can strengthen learning: Differences in starting levels can support peer learning and mutual support when facilitated intentionally.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Continue the Women's Ethno Hub as an informal community of practice: Maintain flexible networking and occasional learning moments with support from local women's organisations, the City of Loznica, and the Tourism Organisation of Loznica, without formalising a new structure.
- Strengthen local promotion of social entrepreneurship: Use local and regional action plans, public communication, and repeated awareness activities to build understanding and acceptance over time.
- Treat this pilot as a reference model: Use the experience and materials as a starting point for future initiatives or follow-up projects in Loznica or similar regions, potentially supported by other donors or programmes.



Slovenia - Trbovlje

Job Happens - Career Exploration Day

Aim:

To contribute to youth employment in Zasavje by providing innovative, hands-on information about professions and local employers, specifically encouraging girls to explore diverse career paths.

Target group:

Primary school pupils (final three grades), secondary school students (final two years), and local employers.

Target region:

Trbovlje (Zasavje region)

Short summary of the innovation:

The innovation enabled the transformation of a traditional career fair into an interactive experience. By replacing static booths with modern, youth-friendly approaches like gamification and storytelling, job exploration process was presented in a truly exciting and inspiring manner. The fair took place on October 15, 2025, the event brought together over 400 primary and secondary school students. This successful initiative was made possible through the collaboration of ZMŠT (Youth and Community Centre Trbovlje) and the Trbovlje Employment Service (ZRSZ).

Main implementation activities:

- The Career Escape Room: A custom, gamified "locked scenario" where student teams solved career-themed puzzles and decoded workplace jargon to "escape," practising critical thinking, collaboration, and core soft skills.
- The Living Library: Students "borrowed" professionals as "Human Books" for small-group Q&A, hearing honest career stories (including setbacks) that made pathways feel real and reachable, especially for young women.



- Interactive Skills Workshops: Practical sessions on AI's impact on work, international mobility via the EURES network, and "know your rights" guidance for navigating precarious employment.
- Interactive Scavenger Hunt & Employer Showcase: A mission-based scavenger hunt that guided students to engage actively with 33 regional companies by asking targeted questions and completing small tasks, turning booths into real conversations.

Adjustment made during testing:

Shortly before implementation, an AI workshop was added to the programme to reflect current developments relevant to young people and to support discussion on how new technologies influence careers and opportunities. The workshop addressed not only practical aspects of AI, but also the gender dimension of digital professions and AI-related work. This adjustment strengthened the relevance of the innovation by linking career choices and future skills with questions of women's position in a rapidly changing labour market.

Expected results and achievements:

The innovative career event was designed to bridge the gap between education and the labor market by bringing together students and employers in a dynamic, interactive setting. A key achievement of this initiative was the development of a comprehensive methodological booklet, which will serve as a sustainable resource for future career orientation activities. The event directly influenced at least 400 pupils and students by providing them with valuable professional insights, while simultaneously engaging 33 employers to foster stronger regional cooperation.

Impact:

The event successfully raised awareness among young people in the Zasavje region regarding local job opportunities, diverse career paths, and essential workplace skills. A significant achievement was the integration of this event into the regular programming of the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) and the Youth Centre Trbovlje (ZMŠT Trbovlje), which substantially strengthened the partnership between schools, educational organizations, and career services. In the long term, these efforts were designed to encourage young talent to remain in Zasavje, thereby reducing



youth outmigration. Moreover, retaining young talent will boost the local economy, helping businesses grow and driving regional development.

Sustainability and scalability:

The model is designed to be repeatable. Methodological guidelines were developed to support scaling through the network of the Employment Service of Slovenia, with potential for further transfer to national level and, where relevant partnerships exist, across the Danube region.

Key deliverables:

- Methodological guidelines produced for organising interactive career-orientation events, including supporting educational materials.
- Large-scale career fair delivered: "Job Happens" held at Delavski dom Trbovlje with 400+ participants and 33 employers.
- School integration achieved: 89% of participants learned about the event through their schools, indicating effective embedding in local education pathways.
- Documented learning and inspiration outcomes: 28% of students reported gaining new ideas for future careers, and 20% discovered new education opportunities they had not previously considered.
- Living Library format implemented and validated: "Living books" (profession representatives) confirmed the added value of the interactive dialogue and noted deeper questions from youth than in typical career events.
- Participant feedback collected for improvement: Requests included more time for conversations, more practical examples, and greater variety of professions represented, plus the wish to attend all activities despite time constraints.

Challenges:

- Coordination complexity: Having three separate coordinators responsible for parts of the programme proved to be overly complex; a single lead coordinator is needed to oversee the entire operation.
- Teacher engagement and instructions: Many teachers either misunderstood or overlooked the instructions that had been provided, leading to groups being sent to the wrong locations or students being left unsupervised.



- Student Compliance: Despite guidelines, some students skipped their assigned sessions to wander the fair, often because teachers did not escort them as required.

Lessons learned:

- A single operational lead improves delivery: One lead coordinator should oversee the full programme to ensure consistency, real-time decisions, and clear accountability.
- Rotating structures work better than free roaming: Shorter, scheduled rotations support engagement and reduce crowd-management risks in large-scale youth events.
- Instructions need active reinforcement, not only pre-briefing: Teacher guidance should be simplified, repeated, and supported with clear on-site checkpoints to prevent misrouting and supervision gaps.
- Distributed support is essential at scale: Mobile guides placed across the venue are critical for keeping the programme on track and resolving confusion quickly.

Recommendations and next steps:

- Simplify governance and preparation: Appoint a single lead coordinator and run mandatory preparatory meetings with schools and teachers to ensure full understanding of roles, rotation schedules, and supervision protocols.
- Mainstream gamification in career orientation: Embed interactive methods (escape rooms, challenges) into regular school practice and curricula to extend impact beyond the event day.
- Institutionalise and scale partnerships: Formalise the annual collaboration between the Employment Service of Slovenia, ZMŠT, and the municipality, and use the ESS network to expand the model nationally (with potential for European transfer through multilingual adaptation and alignment with EU frameworks).