



WIN

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REFLECTION REPORT ON IMPLEMENTED SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Online evaluation questionnaire for target groups

Authors:

Maruša Goluža, Primož Gašperič, Jani Kozina, Marko Senčar Mrdaković (ZRC SAZU)

WIN

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

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0 Summary

The Project WIN (Improving the Position of Women in Labour Markets in Peripheral Industrial Regions) study evaluated ten social innovations implemented across seven peripheral industrial regions in the Danube area. This reflection report presents the findings of an online questionnaire conducted among the participants of the pilot actions between October 2025 and January 2026. The study was not statistically representative; rather, the aim of the results was to facilitate learning and reflection. A shared questionnaire structure was used for all the pilots, with only limited adjustments where necessary, to enable comparison between the various activities and regional contexts.

The results show that participants responded positively to the pilot actions, generally considering them to be useful, accessible and well organised. They valued friendly and supportive environments, opportunities to learn new skills, interesting content, and the chance to meet others, share experiences, and build networks. The most commonly reported benefits were acquiring new knowledge and skills, forming stronger social ties and receiving support, and gaining new insights into education, careers, and job opportunities. Some social innovations also contributed to a better understanding of women's position in the labour market.

The findings also highlight several recurring needs. Respondents to the survey often requested more practical examples, additional time for discussion and stronger links to real-life applications. In some cases, they suggested internships, mentoring, additional workshops, or follow-up activities to help translate learning into concrete outcomes. Many said they would like to take part in similar events and initiatives again, suggesting that the tested social innovations formats were relevant and worthwhile. Some social innovations even resulted in permanent platforms for improving women's position in labour markets, representing the greatest success of social innovations.

The report concludes that actions connecting participants with peers, role models, employers or concrete market opportunities were particularly promising. At the same time, the report stresses that future transfer and scaling should focus on stronger practical elements, better promotion, clearer follow-up pathways, and closer adaptation to the needs of specific audiences. Overall, social innovations can meaningfully contribute to gender equality and women's labour market participation in peripheral industrial regions when they are rooted in local needs, provide a supportive setting, and combine raising awareness with practical learning and networking.



1 Introduction

This report (D2.3.3/1) is one of the final items relating to Specific Objective 2 (SO2) of the WIN project: Implementing social innovations to improve the labour market for women in peripheral industrial regions. The social innovations aimed to develop region-specific pilot actions to better integrate women into local labour markets.

Within SO2, the regional PPs, supported by the academic PPs, developed (A2.1), tested (A2.2) and reflected on (A2.3) the overarching concept of social innovation while enabling regional diversification. Each pilot area established a WIN Innovation Group (WIG), which represents the project's target groups, including women, employers, business support organisations and public authorities. The WIGs have focused on their respective pilot areas and co-developed 26 social innovations ([D2.1.2](#)), 13 of which have been tested ([D2.2.2](#)).

The aim of A2.3 is to provide a thorough reflection on and evaluation of the social innovations tested in seven peripheral industrial regions. This process closes the loop by gathering feedback from 1) target groups and 2) key stakeholders on the pilot actions. A2.3 consists of two evaluation components. In connection with PP10 NMS as the overall SO2 leader, LP ZRC SAZU and PP3 UniGRAZ have provided methodologies and guidelines to ensure balanced evaluation by the PPs.

- In D2.3.1, LP ZRC SAZU provided a structured online evaluation questionnaire designed to capture valuable feedback from the various target groups that **participated** in the pilot actions, such as women, employers, and business support organisations. The questionnaire explored participants' experiences, perceptions and opinions of the pilot actions that had been implemented. Regional PPs then conducted the online survey. This is what this report (D2.3.3/1) will focus on.
- In D2.3.2, PP3 UniGRAZ provided guidelines for conducting interviews with key stakeholders involved in **creating** the pilot actions of the seven pilot regions. These guidelines constitute a framework for gathering qualitative insights, perspectives and recommendations from influential individuals and organisations. These interviews enabled the partners to obtain qualitative insights, recommendations and critiques from stakeholders, providing a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes and impacts of the social innovations tested. The outcomes of the interviews are gathered in a separate report (D2.3.3/2).

The SO2 leader will integrate all three reports from SO2 (D2.1.2, D2.2.2 and D2.3.3/1+2) in the development of the WIN Social Innovation Booklet (D2.3.4). The booklet will summarise the knowledge and lessons learned throughout the piloting process, including the stages of development, testing and reflection. It presents successful strategies, experiences and recommendations aimed at improving women's position in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions.

2 Methodology

This report (D2.3.3/1) presents an evaluation of the social innovations implemented in the WIN project as perceived by the various target groups that participated in the pilot actions. It is designed to support learning and improvement, and to enable comparison across social innovations.

These findings come from an online questionnaire designed for reflection and learning among the social innovations' target groups (i.e., the people the social innovations were intended for), not for statistical representation. The results offer a useful snapshot of participants' views and should be read in light of each pilot's local setting.

Evaluation of online questionnaires covers 10 social innovations that were implemented between 14 October 2025–15 January 2026.

Table 1: The ten evaluated social innovations in pilot areas of the project WIN.

Austria: Styrian Iron Road Region	• Creativity contest "Women conquer industry and mining" • Female mentoring – establishment of female role models • Stronger networks – stronger women
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Herceg-Bosnian County	• Step out of the shadow – Don't tap in the dark: Business literacy training for unemployed women
Bulgaria: Radomir Region	• Women's Community Network Edna ZaDruga – Community Network for Women in the Radomir Region
Czechia: Karlovy Vary Region	• BusinessWomen without Borders • Project day at school for gender equality
Hungary: Komárom-Esztergom County	• NEMIGEN – Podcast series on gender stereotypes
Serbia: Loznica Region	• Women's ethno hub – Intergenerational synergy through digital education and better access to the market
Slovenia: Zasavje Region	• Job Happens – Career Exploration Day

2.1 Online questionnaire

Data were collected through an online questionnaire. To make results comparable across social innovations, we worked with a shared core questionnaire using the same structure, wording, and answer options wherever possible. Where a pilot's format required it, we introduced only small, clearly documented adaptations so the questions still matched the overall logic of the survey.

If any social innovation required adaptations to the core questionnaire, these were kept minimal and documented for transparency. The full questionnaire and the example of adapted questionnaire are provided in Annex 1 and Annex 2.

2.2 Target groups and sampling approach

The primary target group were women, especially those facing structural barriers in employment, entrepreneurship, rural development, or social inclusion, including unemployed women, women entrepreneurs, women in agriculture, crafts, and rural tourism. In several countries, girls and boys,

students, employers, and the general public were also included to promote early awareness and broader societal impact. In Hungary, men of working age were specifically targeted, recognising their key role in shaping workplace culture and women's labour market opportunities. The inclusion of both women and men aimed to foster long-term structural change and promote gender equality across different sectors and generations.

Table 2: Survey sample by social innovation.

Pilot area	Social innovation	Target groups	Evaluation period	Usable units
Austria: Styrian Iron Road Region	Creativity contest "Women conquer industry and mining"	- Students of higher educational facilities - Employed women - General public	2025/11/19–2026/01/05	15
	Female mentoring – establishment of female role models		2025/11/20–2026/01/15	7
	Stronger networks – stronger women		2025/11/20–2026/01/05	9
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Herceg-Bosnian County	Step out of the shadow – Don't tap in the dark: Business literacy training for unemployed women	Unemployed women registered with the Employment Office of the Herceg-Bosnian County	2025/11/14–2025/12/19	17
Bulgaria: Radomir Region	Women's Community Network Edna ZaDruga – Community Network for Women	Women facing structural barriers to employment, social participation, and access to development opportunities, training, and social participation	2025/11/18–2025/12/30	19
Czechia: Karlovy Vary Region	BusinessWomen without borders	Female entrepreneurs	2025/11/04–2026/01/05	46
	Project day at school for gender equality	Pupils (boys and girls) of 8th and 9th grades of the primary school	2025/11/04–2026/01/05	33
Hungary: Komárom-Esztergom County	NEMIGEN – Podcast series on gender stereotypes	Men and women of working age	2025/11/12–2026/01/15	75
Serbia: Loznica Region	Women's ethno hub – Intergenerational synergy through digital education and better access to the market	- Women producing traditional crafts, handmade and homemade products and providing services within ethno households, rural tourism and other services - Unemployed women seeking professional development	2025/11/10–2026/01/15	28
Slovenia: Zasavje Region	Job Happens – Career Exploration Day	- Primary school pupils (final three grades), and - Secondary school students (final two years), - Local employers	2025/10/14–2026/01/14	29

Participants in social innovations were invited by the social innovations' organisers to fill in the online questionnaire. To make access easy, organisers shared a link and/or a QR code leading to the questionnaire in the respondents' native languages. The evaluation focuses on capturing feedback from participants involved in or reached by the social innovations, rather than on producing statistically representative estimates. Survey samples by social innovations are presented in Table 2.



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2.3 Structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire included the following thematic blocks:

- respondents' profiles (e.g., age group, education, employment status),
- how respondents learned about the social innovation and what were the main motivations for their participation,
- participation experience (e.g., accessibility, organisation), perceived benefits and outcomes, and willingness to participate again,
- suggestions for improvement.

Questions about the respondents' profiles were single-choice, while other questions were multiple-choice. Suggestions for improvement was the only open-ended question.

2.4 Translation, set-up and distribution

Lead partner, ZRC SAZU, prepared the questionnaire in the project working language (English) and shared it with project partners for peer review. Once the consortium agreed on the final version, partners translated the questionnaire into their local languages.

The online questionnaire was implemented using the [1KA](#) web survey tool, an open-source application for online surveys developed at the Centre for Social Informatics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.

Data collection was coordinated centrally by ZRC SAZU, which set up the online survey and generated access links and QR codes for each language version. These links and QR codes were sent to the PPs responsible for the respective social innovations, who then distributed them to their target groups.

2.5 Data analysis

Not all respondents completed the questionnaire. For analysis, we relied on the results generated by the 1KA tool and used "usable units", meaning questionnaires that were either completed or partially completed. In 1KA terms, these correspond to units with status 6 (completed) and status 5 (partially completed). We excluded questionnaires that were empty or only opened/viewed without any answers.

Results were analysed descriptively (e.g., shares and distributions). Percentages were calculated based on valid answers for each question (excluding missing responses). In multiple-choice questions, total percentage may exceed 100%. Open-ended questions were summarised into main topics of the responses.

2.6 Ethics, consent and data protection

Participation in the survey was voluntary for the respondents. They were informed about the purpose of the evaluation and the use of results in the introductory note in the beginning of the online questionnaire. Responses were collected anonymously, with no direct identifiers.



3 Results

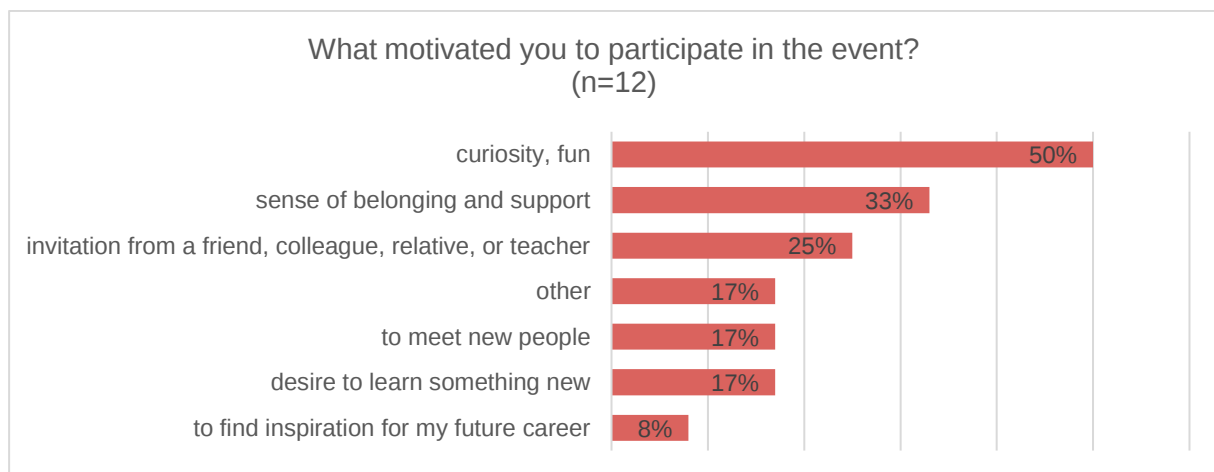
This chapter presents key findings from the questionnaires on the implemented social innovations. It offers feedback from target groups. The findings aim to strengthen the tested solutions, improve future implementation, and support transfer of good practices by documenting what worked, what did not, and which conditions matter for use in other peripheral industrial regions.

3.1 Austria: Styrian Iron Road Region

3.1.1 Creativity contest "Women conquer industry and mining"

The creativity contest "Women Conquer Industry and Mining" aimed to increase the visibility of women in industrial and mining sectors by raising awareness of STEM education and career opportunities for girls, challenging traditional gender roles. Participants in the creativity contest were invited to creatively depict their visions of women's futures in industry and mining through digital or analogue drawings.

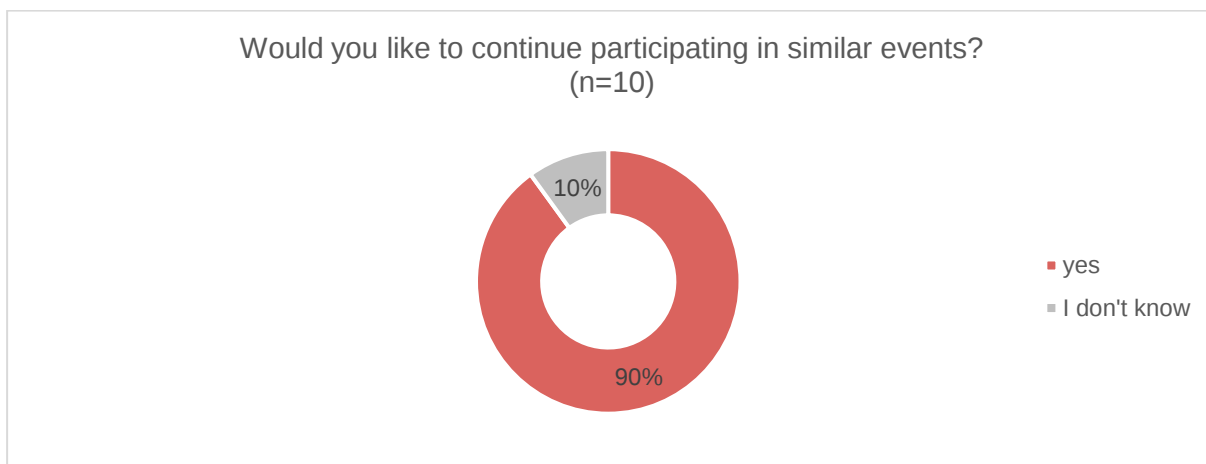
The majority of respondents were aged between 30 and 64 years. 20% were younger than 15 years or older than 65 years. Women represented 70 % of respondents, 30% were men. Respondents found out about the contest via various channels, including associations or NGO, friends, colleagues or other personal contacts, school, media advertisements and as a participant in the WIN project.



According to the respondents, the creativity contest was very well organised. They particularly liked friendly and supportive atmosphere and found content interesting. They appreciated the opportunities for discussion and business networking. The creativity contest also enabled them to learn about new aspects of women in industry and STEM professions. Respondents assessed the Creativity Contest as being highly accessible. It was carried out with the support of schools, and the

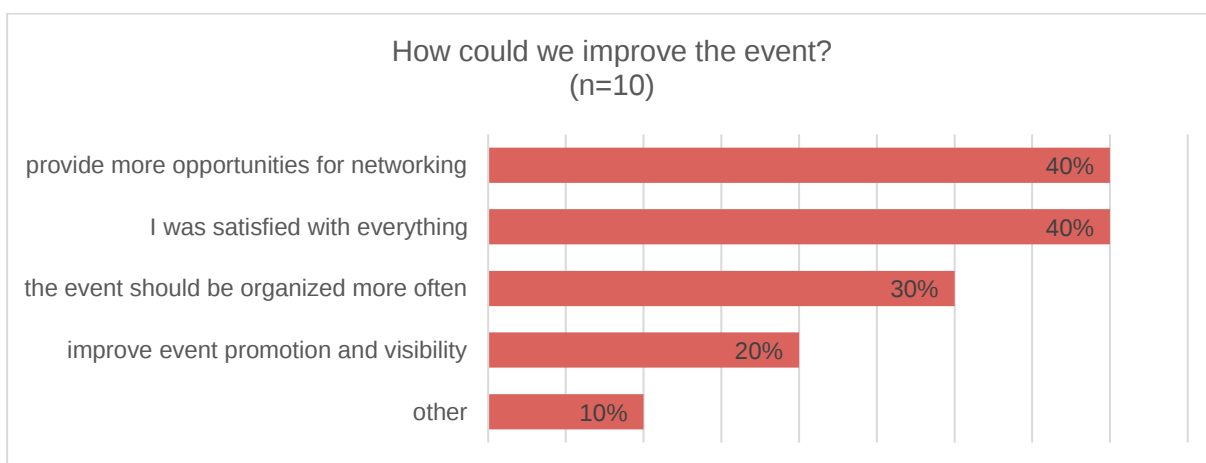
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final presentation took place at an iconic site: the iron mine. The overall visibility was given through the bus, which was decorated with the "winning design" and which will run through the region for one year.



The success of the Creativity contest is reflected in the responses to the question about possible improvements. Respondents expressed high satisfaction with the Creativity contest, stating that they wouldn't change anything and would participate again. Several respondents even suggested organizing similar contests more often.

However, the feedback also points to opportunities for further improvement, particularly in offering more opportunities for networking and strengthening the promotion and overall visibility of the Creativity contest.





The Creativity contest provided participants with many gains, particularly the opportunity to build social ties and support networks.

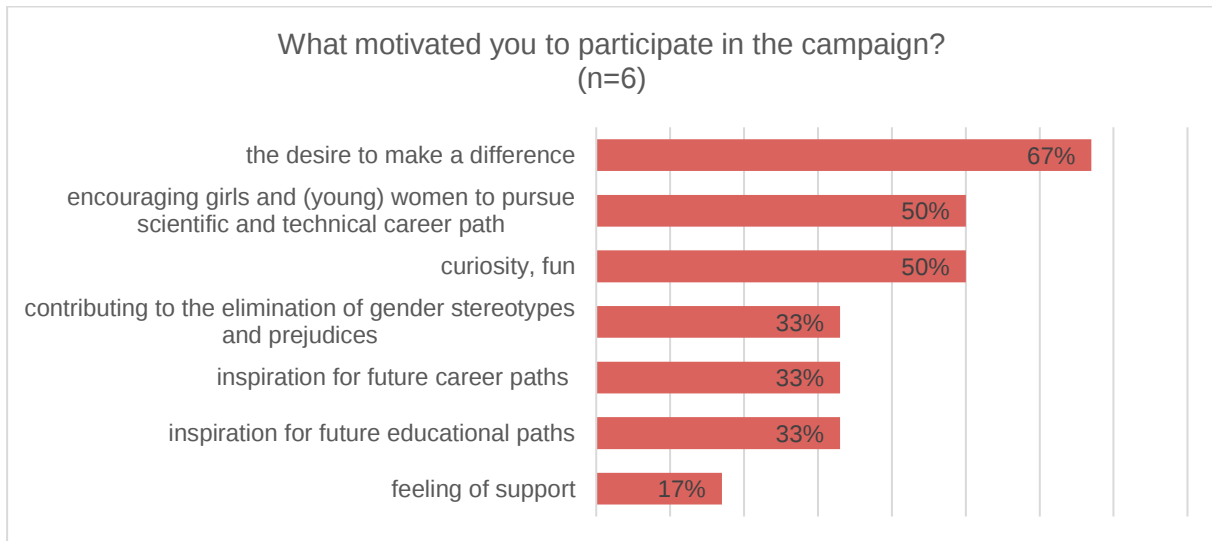
Importantly, it also improved their understanding of women's position in the labour market in the pilot region, which is still heavily industrialised and has traditional gender roles. The Creativity contest also provided participants with new knowledge and skills.

3.1.2 Female mentoring – establishment of female role models

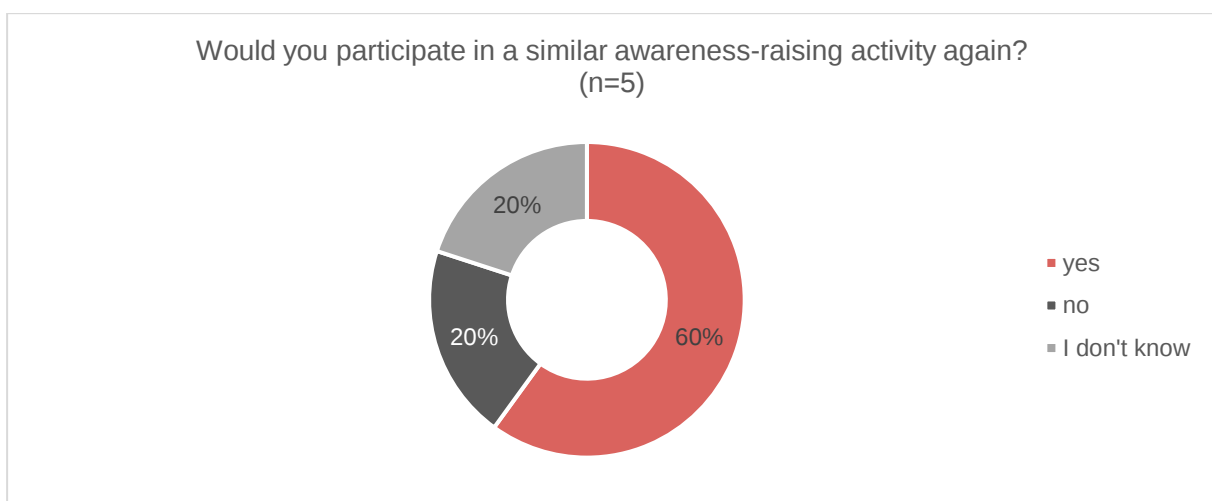
The Role Model campaign comprised a series of events and media representations of female role models, with the aim of increasing the visibility of successful women in industry and mining. The campaign also sought to raise awareness of STEM education and showcase career opportunities for women in these sectors. The target group for this social innovation were female students attending higher education institutions in the Styrian Iron Road region, as well as the general public.

Since the campaign targeted women, all respondents to the online survey were female. Half were younger than 30, while the other half were aged 45–64. Most respondents had higher education, and one third had completed secondary school. All respondents were employed: half were in entry-level positions and half held leading or managerial roles.

Participants joined for two main reasons: they heard about the campaign through friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts (75%) and/or were invited to participate (55%). Their motivations were varied. Most wanted to drive change (67%), encourage girls and young women to pursue scientific and technical education and career paths (50%), or took part out of curiosity and for enjoyment (50%). Other motivations included seeking inspiration for future education and career choices, contributing to the reduction of gender stereotypes and prejudices, and wanting to feel supported.



Participants appreciated the campaign's open and participatory format, but they also identified areas for improvement. For example, the campaign could be better tailored to a specific age group. More than half of the participants would attend a similar campaign again, while 20% would not. For future campaigns, a key suggestion was to increase visibility on social media.



For eventual future organisation of the campaign, one of the respondents suggested that it should be better targeted to the age group.

3.1.3 Stronger networks – stronger women

The social innovation “Stronger networks – stronger women” aimed to build and strengthen networks among women working in industry, particularly those in positions of responsibility. The aim

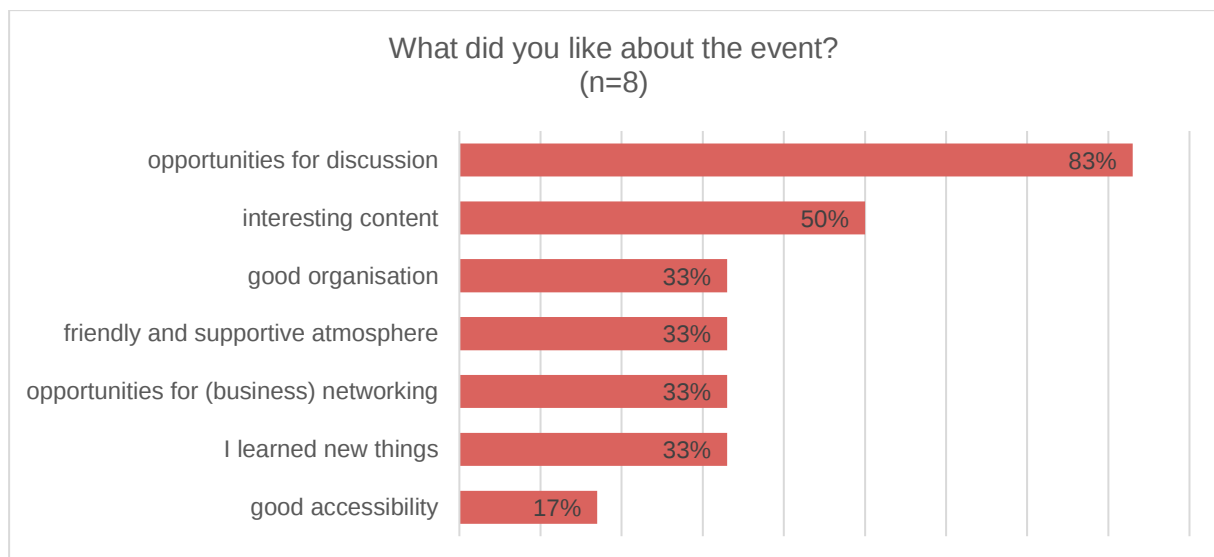


was to boost empowerment and the visibility of successful women in industry. It also sought to raise awareness, provide support for developing full professional potential, and strengthen the self-confidence of female employees.

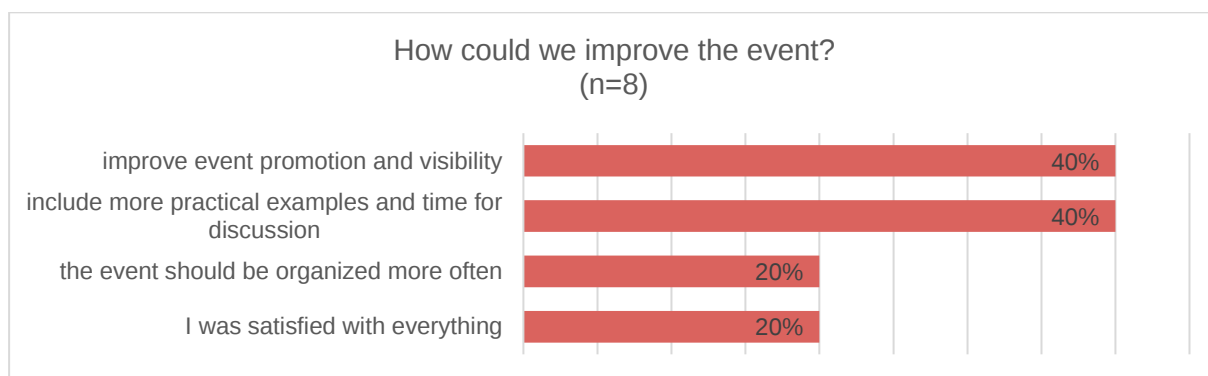
Because the initiative targeted people in leading positions, mainly, but not exclusively, women, the online survey respondents were middle-aged (30–64). Most were women (80%), with men making up 20%. All respondents had higher education (college, university, or academic). Everyone was employed: the majority held a managerial/leading position (60%), some described their role as experienced (20%), and some were employed part-time (20%).

Respondents learned about the initiative primarily through social media (50%) and media advertisements (13%). Others heard about it via an association or NGO (25%), or through friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts (15%). There were three main motivations for joining the network: curiosity or having fun (67%), a desire to learn something new (50%), and meeting new people (50%).

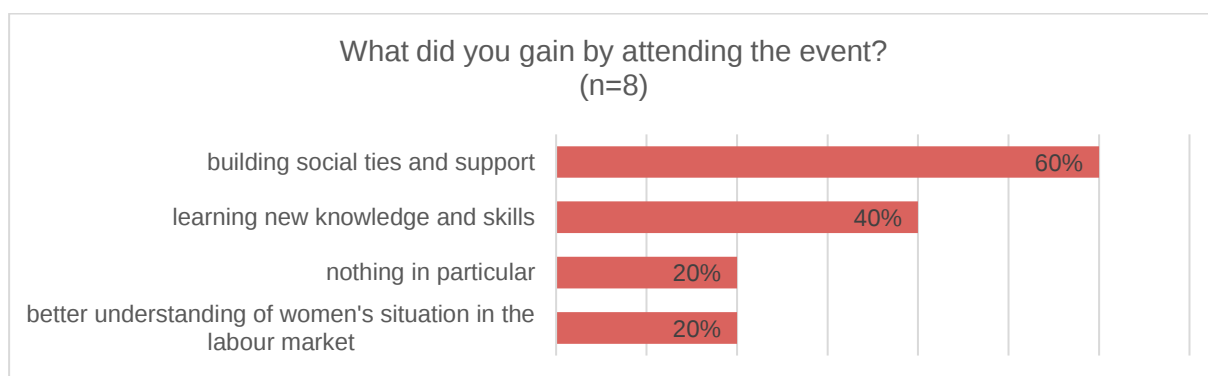
Participants valued the initiative for the discussion opportunities it offered and for its interesting content. They also highlighted benefits such as learning new things, business networking, and the friendly, supportive atmosphere. Good organization and accessibility were also seen as strengths.



When asked how the social innovation could be improved, respondents suggested including more practical examples and more time for discussion, organizing the events more often, and improving the promotion and visibility of the network.



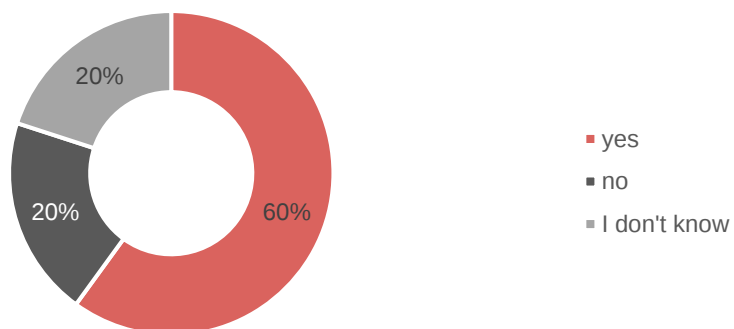
Respondents reported several gains from participating—especially building social ties and strengthening support (60%), gaining new knowledge and skills (40%), and improving understanding of women’s situation in the labour market (20%).



As a result, most would participate in the network again.

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Would you like to continue participating in similar events?
(n=5)



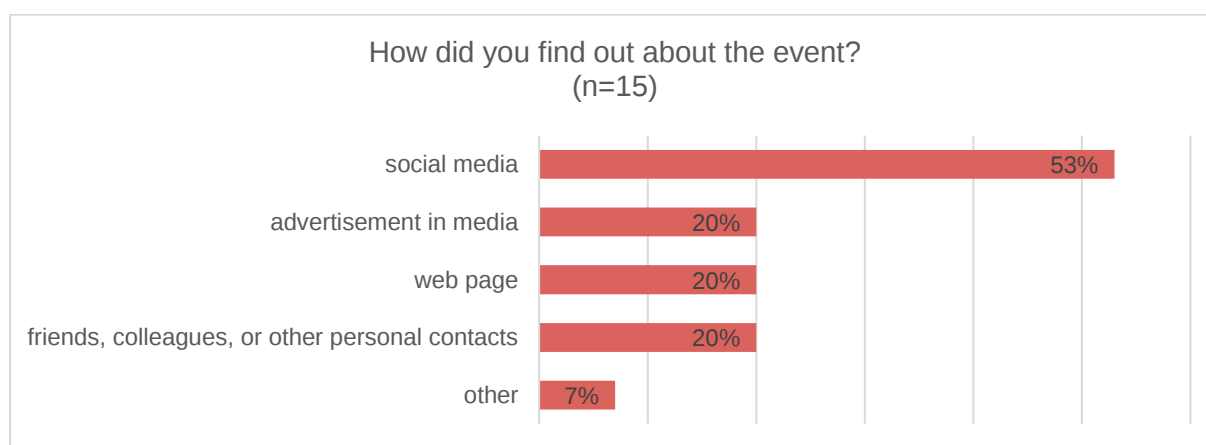
3.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina: Herceg-Bosnian County

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

This business literacy training aimed to strengthen the business literacy of unemployed women and women seeking a career change. It did so by offering practical knowledge and skills that could support employment, self-employment, or professional advancement. The training attracted strong interest and confirmed a clear need for practical business education among unemployed women in the region, especially on self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Because the initiative targeted women, all respondents to the online questionnaire were female. They were aged 30–64. Most had completed vocational or secondary school (73%), while 27% had college/university or academic education. A large majority of respondents were unemployed (87%).

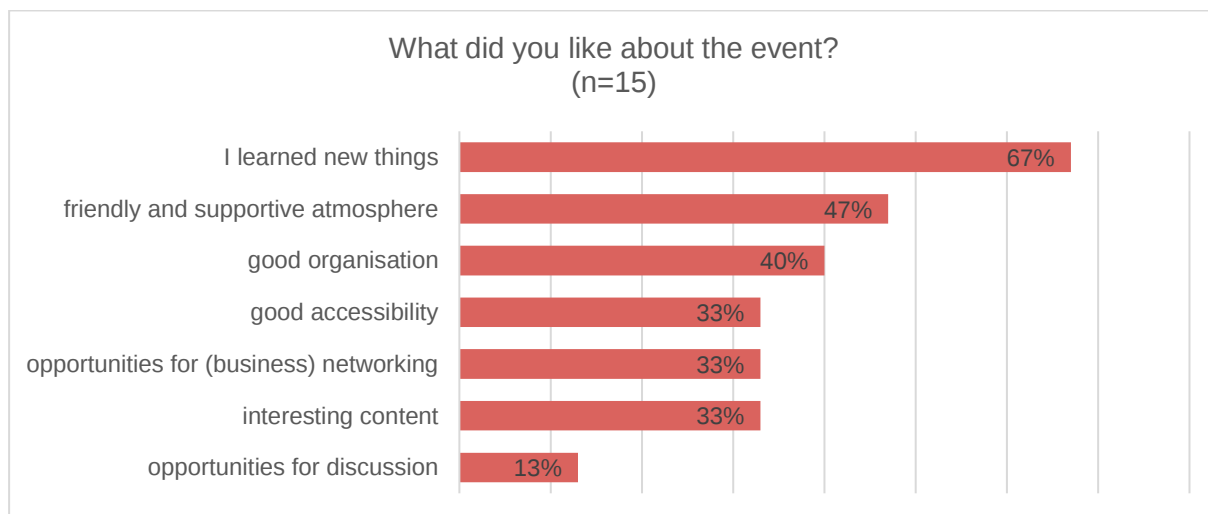
Social media and the media were the main sources of information about the training (73%). Some respondents also learned about it through friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts, and/or via websites such as the employment office page in Livno.



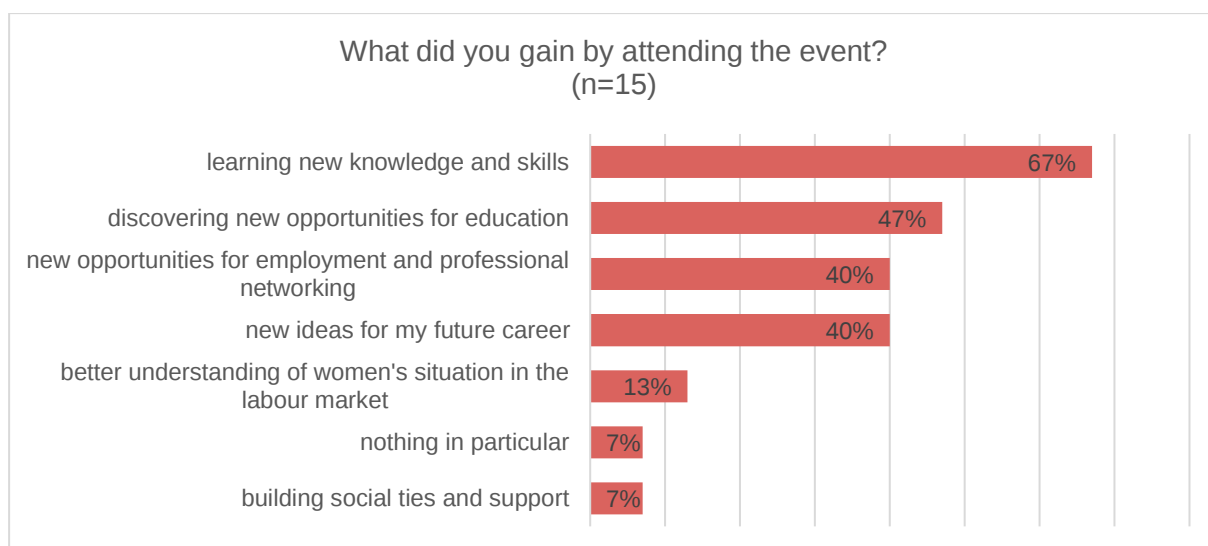
Motivations for participating varied, but three stood out: the desire to learn something new (67%), to find new work opportunities (60%) and to find inspiration for the future career (27%). Participants also hoped more often to find inspiration for future employment options.

Respondents appreciated that the training provided new knowledge in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. They also highlighted good organization and accessibility, along with opportunities for business networking and discussion. The content itself was seen as well prepared.

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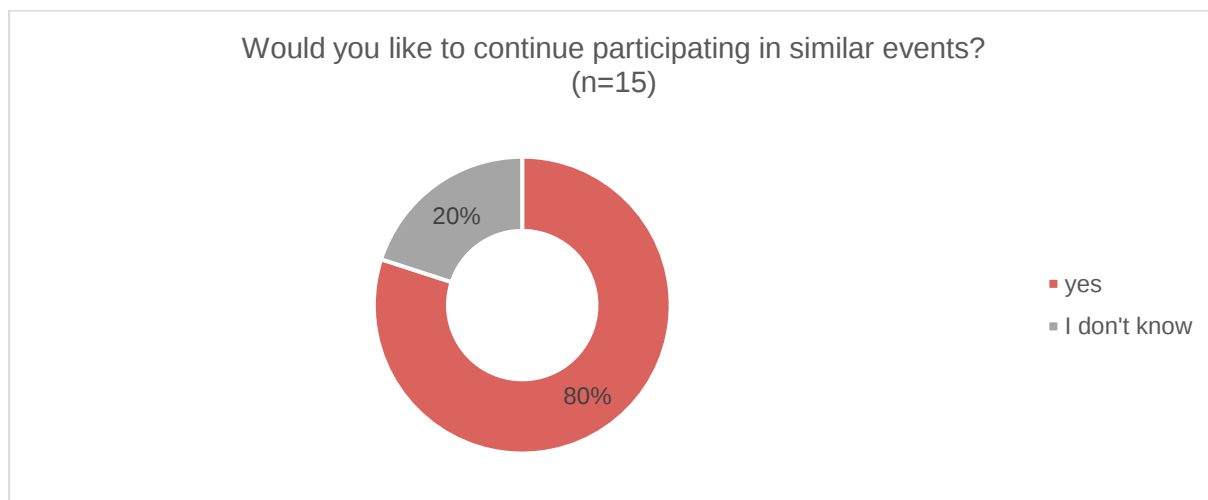


According to the questionnaire responses, gaining new knowledge was the main benefit. Participants also reported additional gains such as opening up opportunities for future education, generating new ideas for career development, and creating pathways toward employment and professional networking. Other reported benefits included building social ties and support, and developing a better understanding of women's situation in the labour market.



The vast majority of respondents would continue participating in the network.

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At the same time, participants suggested improvements for future editions. Some wanted more content specifically dedicated to women. Others recommended including more practical examples and going deeper into the topics, as not all participants had the same level of prior knowledge. One respondent also suggested that the employment office could support participants by helping organize internships, providing real-world experience and increasing the chances of employment.

In addition to the pre-defined options, the questionnaire included an open question inviting respondents to suggest ways in which future training could be improved. Below are some of the responses:

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"Link the employment office with bookkeeping services so people can practice after short trainings that have few practical examples. A certificate without real knowledge does not mean much to me. This connection would help people use their new skills to find a job or start their own business." (BIH-R7)

"Make the content easier to understand." (BIH-R1)

"Help us research the market for the field we choose." (BIH-R2)

"I'd like more frequent trainings with more hands-on practice and computer work. It would also help to offer courses in administrative work or digital marketing." BIH-R6)

"I'm happy with the organization and what we learned, but not everyone had prior knowledge, so the training should start with the basics." (BIH-

"More time should be spent on practical work so participants can turn their ideas into reality." (BIH-R7)

"Offer similar trainings in finance and accounting, and also in writing EU projects. You made us more visible in society and organized everything well. I would only add an internship option so we can gain real-world work experience." (BIH-R10)

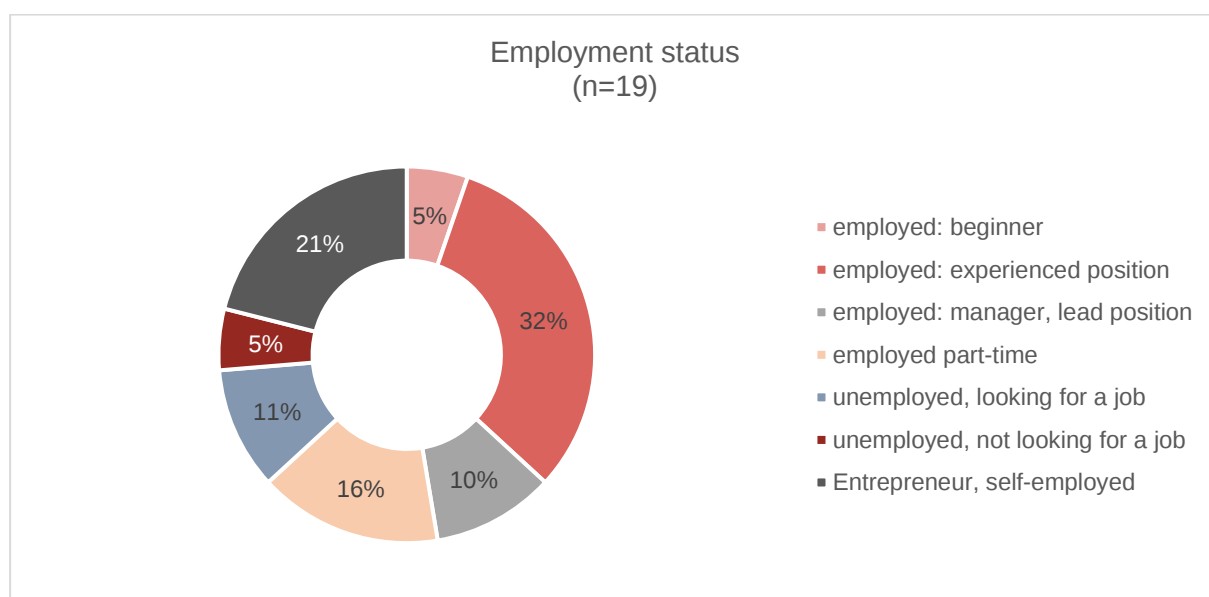
"The theory lectures were good, but we need more practical examples and more time, maybe a few days, to cover each topic properly. One lecture per topic is not enough because there's too much new information and terminology." (BIH-R3)

3.4 Bulgaria: Radomir Region

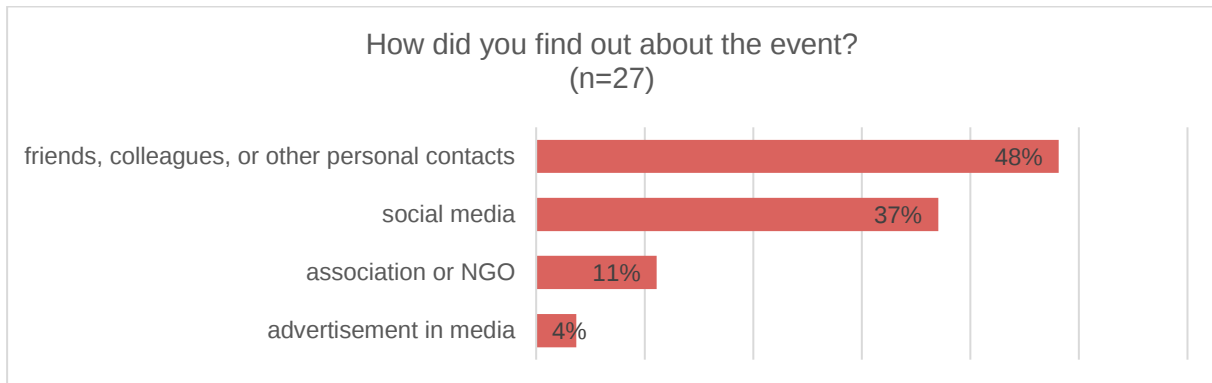
3.4.1 Women's Community Network Edna ZaDruga – Community Network for Women

The Edna ZaDruga Community network was created to connect women from Radomir Region and offer supportive environment for exchanging experience, gaining practical skills, and to support each other in their personal and professional development. It combines online communication with in-person gatherings to reduce social isolation, increase confidence, and encourage more active participation of women in community and economic life.

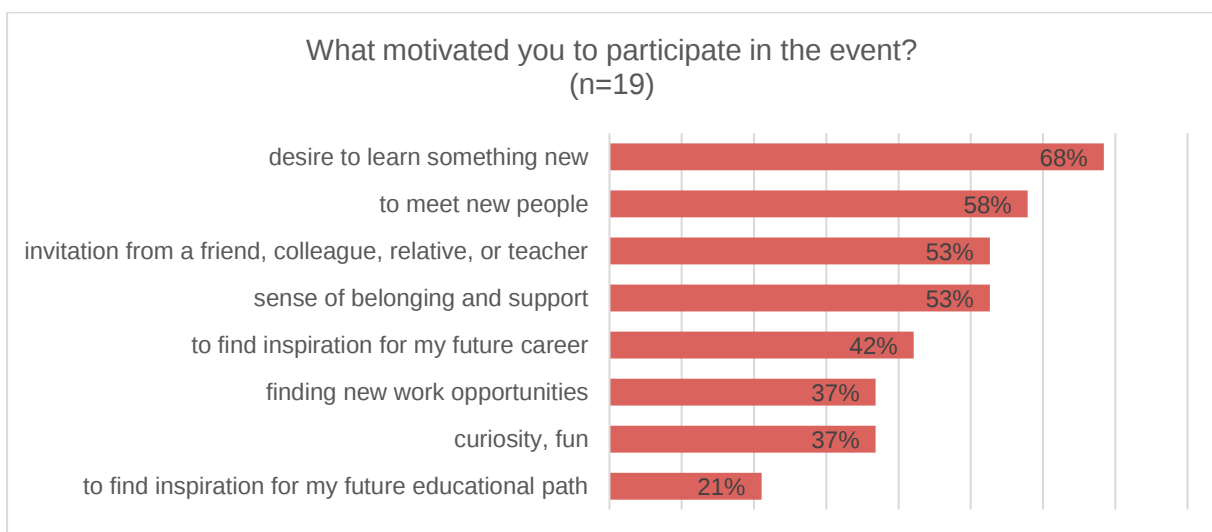
Because the initiative specifically targeted women, all respondents to the online questionnaire were female. Respondents were aged 15–64. Most had completed college/university or academic education (58%), while 42% had vocational or secondary school. Their employment statuses were diverse.



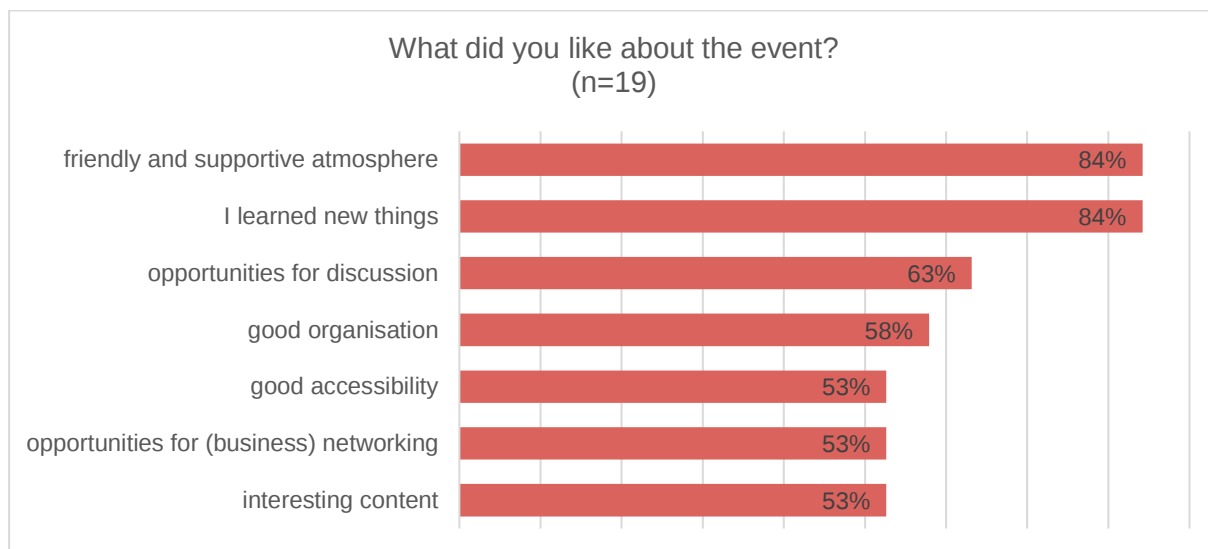
The respondents most often learned about the platform through friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts (48%), followed by social media (37%). Some respondents also found out through an association or NGO in the Radomir Region and an advertisement in media.



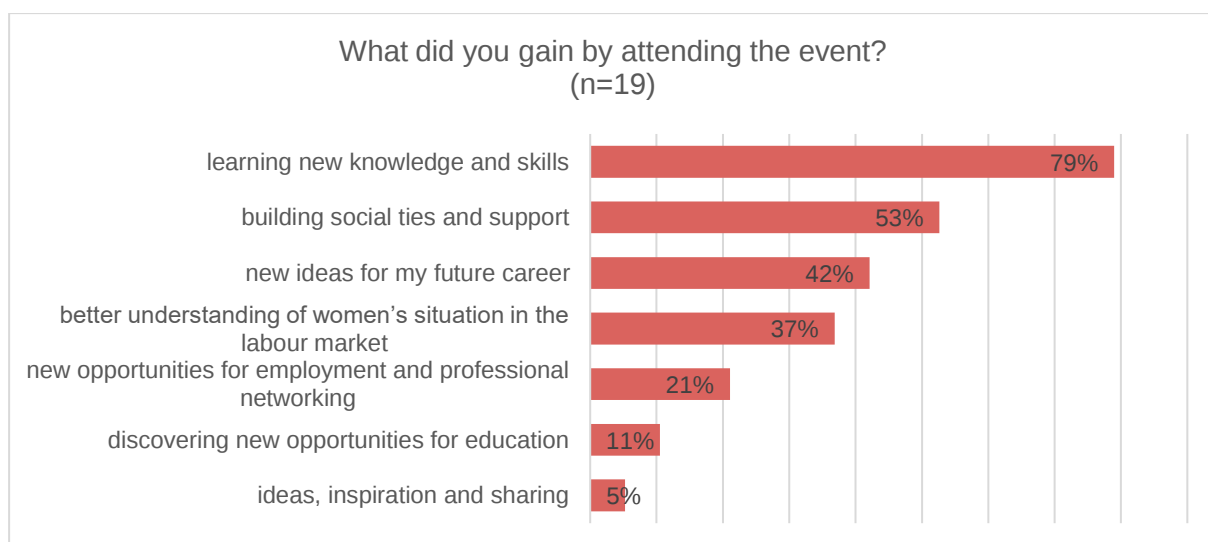
Motivations to participate were varied, but two stood out: the desire to learn something new (68%) and to meet new people (58%). Many also joined because they were invited by friends, colleagues, relatives, or teachers, and because they wanted a sense of belonging and support (both 53%). Participants also hoped to find inspiration for future education and career paths, discover new work opportunities, and take part out of curiosity and enjoyment.



Respondents valued that the platform offered new knowledge in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. They also highlighted opportunities for discussion, good organization and accessibility, chances for business networking, and interesting content.

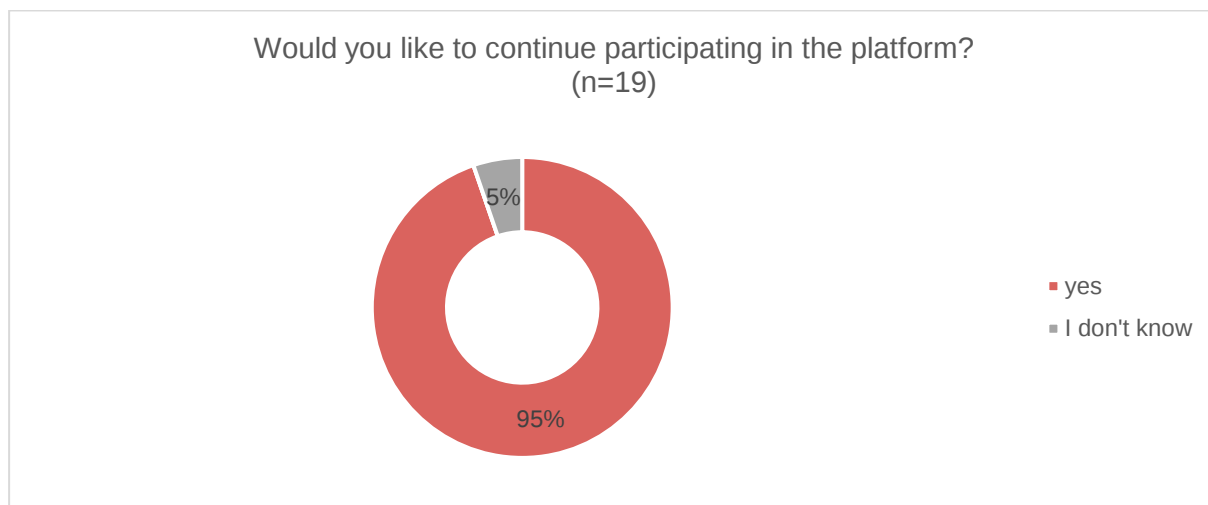


The main reported benefit was gaining new knowledge and acquiring new skills. Participants also described additional gains such as building social ties and support, developing new career ideas, and improving understanding of women's situation in the labour market. Opportunities for employment and professional networking, discovering new education options, and ideas, inspiration, and sharing were also identified as key outcomes.

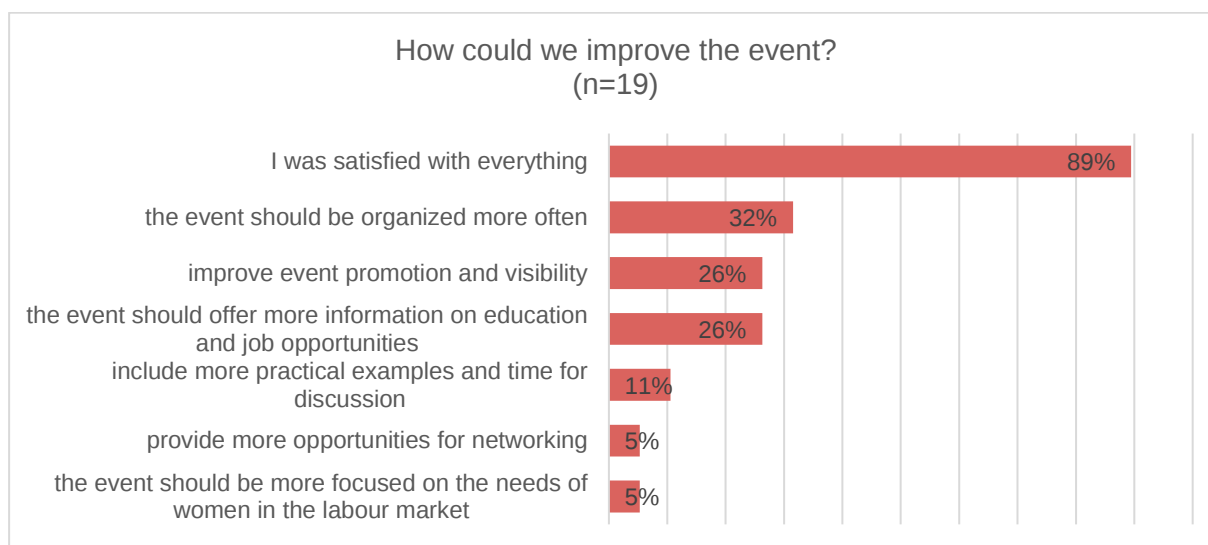


The vast majority of respondents would participate again in the platform.

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The vast majority of respondents would participate again. While most were satisfied overall, respondents suggested improvements of the online platform, such as more regular content, stronger promotion and visibility, and adding more information on education and job opportunities.



In addition to the predefined answers, respondents also used the open-ended question to suggest improvements to the platform, describe the content they would like to see, or simply praise the platform:



3.5 Czechia: Karlovy Vary Region

3.5.1 BusinessWomen without borders

Designed for current and aspiring female entrepreneurs, the initiative created a safe space to share experiences, inspire one another, and build confidence. It formalised a bottom-up network through a legally established association, boosting credibility and supporting long-term continuation, with an emphasis on sustainability, social responsibility, and regional development.

Respondents were largely employed. They identified as self-employed (at least 32%), managers in a company (29%), in an experienced position (20%), or at the beginning of their career (9%).

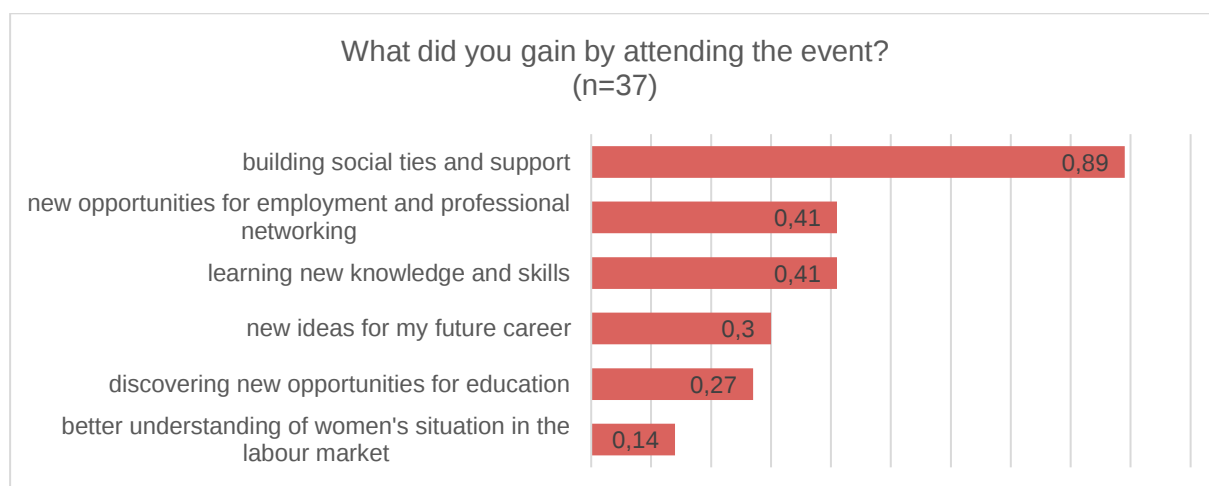
Participants most often learned about the event through friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts (53%) and through social media (47%). Other sources included an association or NGO (25%), a website (16%), and print or radio media (11%).

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The most common motivations for attending were the opportunity to meet people (70%), gaining new knowledge (49%), and finding inspiration for a future career (49%). Other motivations included a sense of belonging and support (35%), looking for new work opportunities (27%), and curiosity or fun (27%).

Respondents most appreciated the event for business networking opportunities (76%), the content (68%), and the friendly and supportive atmosphere (68%). They also valued opportunities for discussion (54%), good organisation (51%), accessibility (38%), and learning something new (35%).

Overall, 57% of respondents were satisfied with the event. At the same time, some suggested improvements: more practical examples (19%), more time for networking (19%), more frequent organisation (16%), and more information on educational and employment opportunities (14%).



Most respondents reported that the event helped them build social ties and support (89%). Many also said they gained new knowledge and skills (41%) and identified new opportunities for employment and professional networking (41%). Other outcomes included new ideas for a future career (30%), learning about education opportunities (27%), and a better understanding of women's situation in the labour market (14%). Beyond these perceived benefits, the testing phase also produced concrete results: three women launched their own businesses, and several new professional collaborations were initiated within the network.

Almost all respondents would like to attend similar events in the future (97%). Additional comments and suggestions were scattered and individual. Respondents did not highlight any specific obstacles to obtaining information about education or employment opportunities.



In addition to the predefined answers, respondents also answered the open-ended question to suggest improvements to the network BusinessWomen without Borders, describe the content they would like to see, or simply praise the initiative:





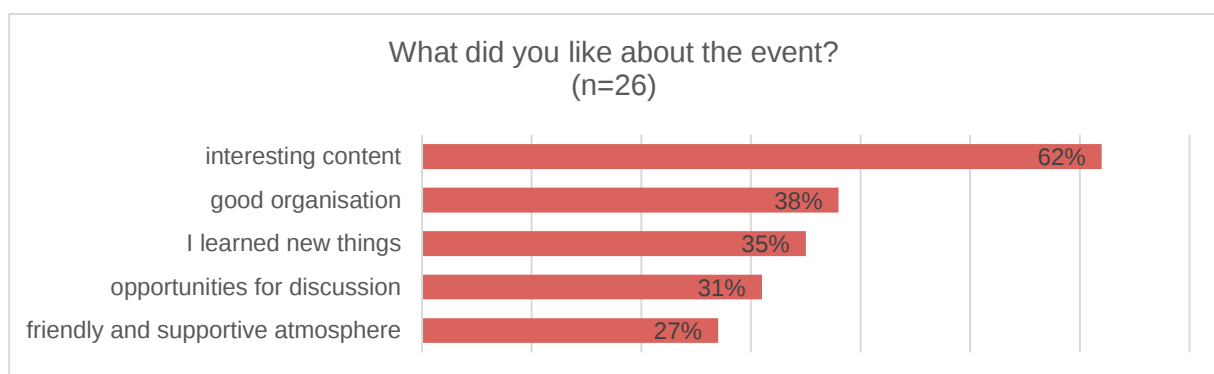
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3.5.2 Project day at school for gender equality

This social innovation aimed to increase primary school pupils' (girls' and boys') awareness of the labour market, with a focus on gender equality. The social innovation confirmed that a short, well-structured project day can meaningfully spark discussion about educational choices and gender stereotypes. Its long-term impact would likely be stronger with follow-up activities embedded in the school environment.

All respondents were pupils in the 8th and 9th grades of primary school and were under the age of 15. A slight majority were girls (54%), while 46% were boys.

Most respondents learned about the event at school (88%), and some also through a career or educational counsellor (15%). The main motivations for taking part were curiosity or fun (50%) and inspiration for a future educational path (50%). Other motivations included a desire for new knowledge (46%) and inspiration for a future career (31%).



Respondents most often said they liked the event because of the interesting content (62%). Other positive aspects were good organisation (38%), learning something new (35%), opportunities for discussion (31%), and a supportive atmosphere (27%). Overall satisfaction was high: 85% of respondents were satisfied with the event. Suggested improvements included organising the event more often (15%), providing more information on educational and employment opportunities (8%), and adding more practical examples and more time for discussion (8%).

When asked about benefits, respondents most often reported gaining new knowledge and skills (58%). They also mentioned new ideas for a future career (35%) and learning about new education opportunities (27%).

Most respondents would like to attend similar events again (88%), while 12% had no opinion. Respondents did not provide additional suggestions for improving future events and did not highlight any specific obstacles to obtaining information about education or employment opportunities.



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3.6 Hungary: Komárom-Esztergom County

3.6.1 NEMIGEN – Attitude-shaping podcast series for men

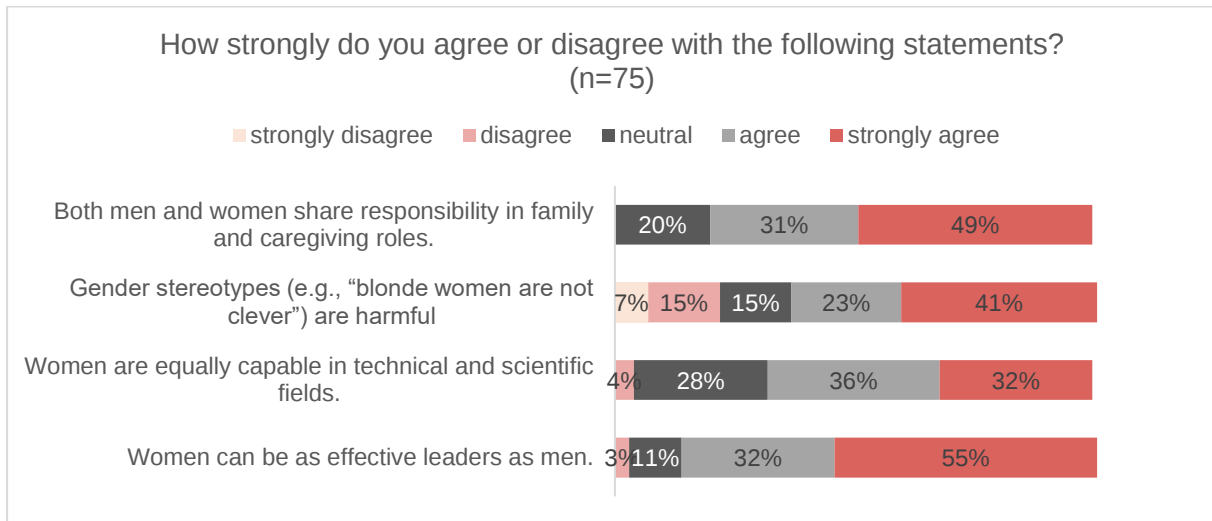
This podcast aimed to encourage Hungarian men to think differently about gender roles and equality, and to recognise the value of women's contributions at home, in society, and at work. The intended result was a more supportive environment for women, based on stronger understanding and empathy and, over time, changes in everyday behaviour.

The online survey reached mostly people aged 30–44 (43%) and 45–64 (32%), with smaller shares younger (22%) or older (3%). Respondents were almost evenly split by gender (49% women, 51% men). Most had higher education (59%) or secondary school (39%). Most lived in a family with children (43%) or with a partner without children (31%). Employees with experience, managers, and self-employed respondents made up the largest group (74%).

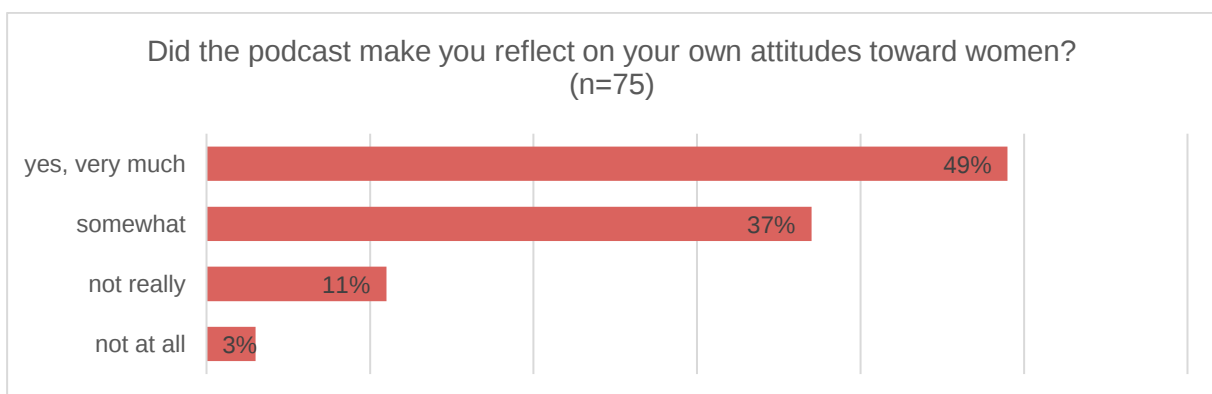
Respondents most often heard about the podcast through social media (40%), friends/colleagues/other personal contacts (23%), an association or NGO (19%), or a website (12%). They listened mainly out of curiosity/fun (36%) or for personal development (29%). Other reasons included recommendations (15%), interest in gender equality or social issues (15%), a desire for new knowledge (12%), and a wish to better understand women's professional position (12%).

Before listening, respondents reported thinking about the challenges women face in family and work life with the following frequency: 11% very often, 37% often, 29% sometimes, and 20% rarely. A gender difference was visible: most male respondents reported thinking about these challenges often, whereas most female respondents reported thinking about them sometimes.

Responses indicated strong support for gender equality. Most respondents (men and women in similar proportions) agreed that women can be as effective leaders as men (32% agree, 55% strongly agree) and that responsibility for family and caregiving roles should be shared (31% agree, 49% strongly agree). Agreement was also high that women are equally capable in technical and scientific fields (36% agree, 32% strongly agree). Here, responses differed by gender: most women strongly agreed, while most men expressed a more moderate level of agreement (agree). A sizable share remained neutral (28%). Most respondents also viewed gender stereotypes as harmful (23% agree, 41% strongly agree), while 15% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed.



After listening, 49% said the podcast made them reflect on their attitudes a lot, and 37% said it did so a little. Many also felt it would influence their behaviour: 53% said they would definitely behave differently in work or private life, and 33% said they might. Respondents also reported increased awareness of opportunities and challenges for women (31% very much, 40% a lot, 27% a little).

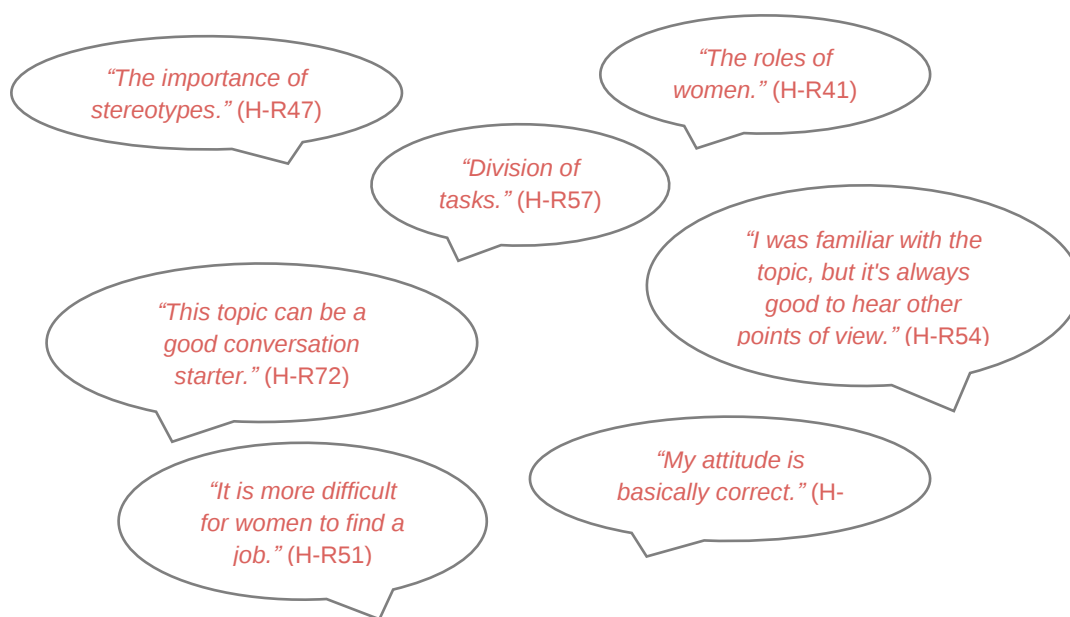


The main takeaways respondents reported were increased awareness of women's work-life balance (38%), a better understanding of women's position in the labour market (35%), motivation for personal or professional development (34%), and ideas for promoting gender equality (31%). Differences by gender were also visible: most female respondents reported gaining inspiration and motivation for personal and professional development, while male respondents most often reported increased awareness.

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Looking ahead, 64% said they would like to attend similar events, 16% felt it was not necessary, and 20% had no opinion. The open-ended question, “What was the most valuable insight or idea you gained from the podcast?”, provided space for personal reflections. Responses suggested that the podcast influenced how listeners perceived women’s roles and gender stereotypes, and encouraged deeper thinking about these issues.

In addition to the predefined answers, respondents also answered the open-ended question on the most valuable insight or idea that they gained from the podcast. Here are their answers:



For future episodes, respondents most often requested content on men’s perspectives and engagement in gender equality (41%) and work–life balance challenges (34%). Stories of successful women (31%) were also a common preference, followed by opportunities for mentoring and networking (24%), ways to combat stereotypes and discrimination (22%), gender equality in education and career opportunities (20%), and policy actions and social innovations for women (20%). Preferences differed by gender: most female respondents wanted more stories about successful women, while most male respondents most often wanted more on men’s perspectives and participation in promoting gender equality.

Respondents did not report specific obstacles to finding information about women’s needs.

Overall, the survey results indicated that the NEMIGEN podcast worked well as an awareness-raising tool and a trigger for reflection within the WIN project. High levels of reported reflection, increased awareness, and stated intention to change behaviour suggested a strong short-term cognitive and

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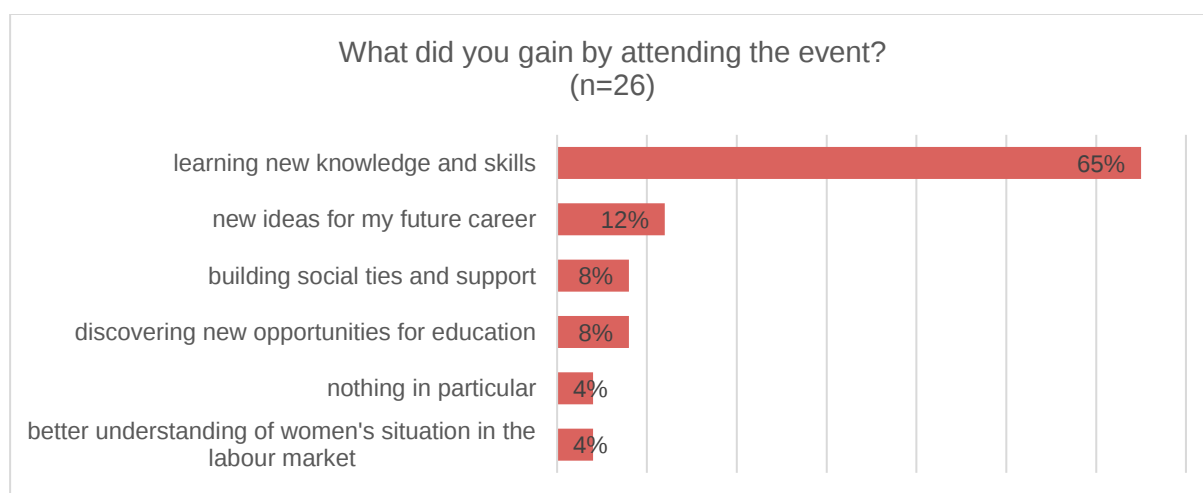
attitudinal impact. At the same time, the audience appeared to have been relatively supportive of gender equality even before listening, indicating that the podcast mainly deepened and reinforced existing awareness. Strong interest in future episodes and related events suggested sustainability potential, and the podcast format appeared suitable for continuing dialogue on gender equality and men's engagement in supporting women's labour market participation. For future development, thematic diversification, more practical examples, and stronger use of real-life case studies could further strengthen impact.

3.7 Serbia: Loznica Region

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

This social innovation focused on improving the economic position of women who are younger, unemployed, part of older and more vulnerable generations, living in the less developed rural outskirts of Loznica, or lacking an independent income. The social innovation was evaluated through an online survey: most respondents were aged 30–44 (42%) or 45–64 (38%), while the rest were younger (15%) or older (4%). All respondents were women. Most had completed secondary school (50%) or higher education (42%), and most lived in a family with children (62%) or in a partnership without children (23%).

Respondents most often learned about the event through friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts (29%), social media (25%), an association or NGO (25%), or an educational counsellor (21%). They joined mainly to learn something new (50%) or to find new work opportunities (23%), followed by curiosity or fun (12%) and inspiration for a future career (8%). They most appreciated the event because they learned new things (42%) and because of the friendly and supportive atmosphere (19%). Other positives included the content (15%) and good accessibility (12%). Overall satisfaction was positive: 62% of respondents were satisfied with everything. Suggested improvements included more practical examples and more time for discussion (15%) and organising the event more often (15%).



In terms of outcomes, almost two-thirds reported gaining new knowledge and skills (65%). Some gained new ideas for a future career (12%) and built social ties and support (8%). A small number reported a better understanding of women's situation in the labour market (4%), while 4% felt they

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did not gain anything special. Most respondents would like to attend similar events in the future (81%), while 19% had no opinion. The open question about suggestions for future events was answered by 9 out of 28 respondents. They mainly expressed satisfaction with the event and hope similar events will continue.

In addition to the predefined answers, respondents also answered the open-ended question to suggest improvements to the social innovation implemented under the initiative Women's Ethno hub. They also describe the content they would like to see, or simply praise the initiative:



Respondents did not highlight any specific obstacles in obtaining information about education or employment opportunities. Overall, the social innovation directly reached women aged 30–62 (83%) who have secondary or higher education.

In addition to the survey findings, the Serbian social innovation showed strong added value through an intergenerational learning approach. It combined the experience and traditional knowledge of women producers with joint development of digital marketing and AI-related skills among



participants from different generations. A core idea of this social innovation was to encourage intergenerational exchange, enabling women to learn from one another by using digital and AI tools while also sharing practical business experience, ideas, and locally rooted knowledge related to production and service provision.

The activities followed a learning-by-doing approach, allowing participants to apply new knowledge through practical exercises, collaborative work, and field-based training sessions. The online gift catalogue, “Women’s Ethno Hub – With Love from Loznica,” emerged directly from participants’ joint work on photographs and product descriptions, developed with the support of AI tools during the training. These materials were later refined and designed into a promotional publication, turning learning outcomes into a concrete communication and market-visibility tool.

3.8 Slovenia: Zasavje Region

3.8.1 *Job happens – Career exploration day*

This social innovation aimed to bridge the gap between young people and the job market and support youth employment in the Zasavje Region. It provided relevant information about professions and employers in Zasavje in an innovative and interactive way, helping young people make informed career choices, improve their employment opportunities, and connect with potential employers.

The social innovation was evaluated through an online survey. Most respondents were aged up to 15 years (57%), followed by those aged 16–29 (39%); together, these two groups make up almost the entire sample. Women represented 74% of respondents and men 26%. The target group for Career Exploration Day includes pupils in the last three grades of primary school (with a focus on girls) and students in the last two years of secondary school (with a focus on girls), which aligns well with the age and gender structure of respondents. Most respondents found out about the event at school (89%).

The main motivations for participating were inspiration for future education (37%) and school encouragement and commitment (cc. 25%). Other motivations included an invitation from a friend, colleague, relative, or teacher (19%), curiosity or fun (15%), inspiration for a future career (15%), and a desire for new knowledge (11%).

Respondents most often liked the event because of its interesting content (40%), while 12% did not. They also highlighted good organisation (24%), new knowledge (24%), opportunities for discussion (20%), a friendly and supportive atmosphere (20%), and good accessibility (20%).

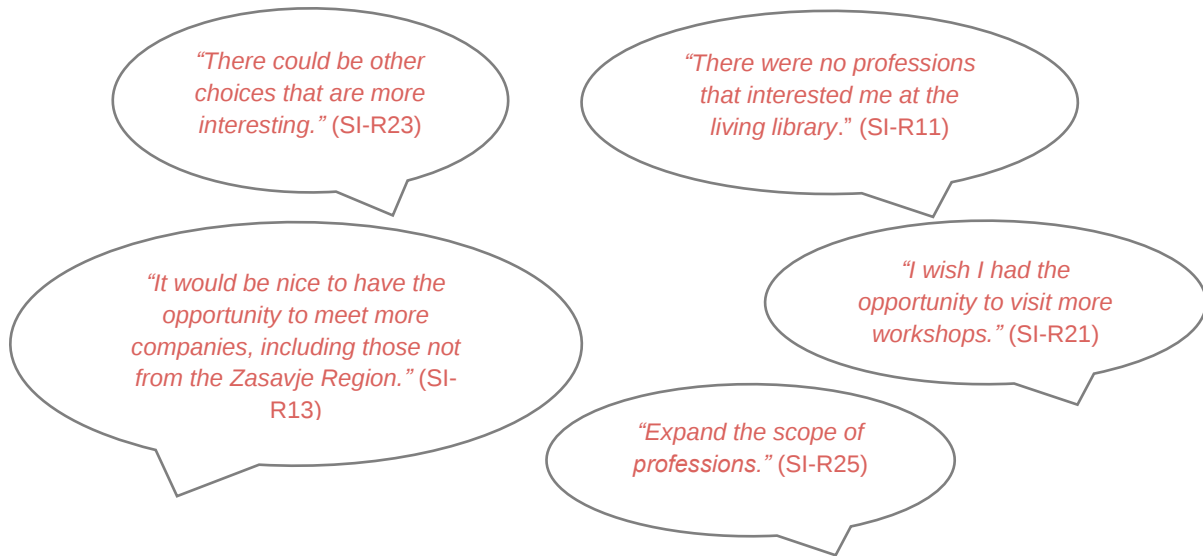


Many respondents suggested that the event could be improved by allowing more time for discussion and practical examples (36%) and by providing more information on education and job opportunities (20%). At the same time, 16% were completely satisfied with the event. Other suggestions included stronger promotion (12%), organising the event more often (8%), and focusing more on the needs of women in the labour market (8%). Other suggestions were to introduce more types of professions and to introduce more interesting professions.

In terms of outcomes, 36% reported that they did not learn anything special at the event, while 28% gained new career ideas. Others learned about new educational opportunities (20%), gained new knowledge and skills (12%), and gained new employment and professional networking opportunities (12%). Half of the respondents would like to attend similar events in the future, 42% had no opinion, and 8% would not attend again.

More than two-thirds of respondents had no additional suggestions for improving future events. Some suggested including educational or career options beyond the Zasavje Region, and a few did not consider the event necessary.

In addition to the predefined answers, some respondents also answered the open-ended question to suggest improvements to the social innovation implemented in the Career exploration day in Trbovlje (Zasavje Region):



Overall, respondents reported no differences in educational or employment needs by gender, although some expressed a desire for a better understanding of women’s position in the labour market. Respondents also did not highlight any specific obstacles in obtaining information about education or employment opportunities. The social innovation directly addressed pupils in the final grades of primary school and students in the final years of secondary school; however, the success of identifying the needs and barriers of girls cannot be determined from the data collected from respondents.



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4 Conclusions

This chapter summarised the results of ten social innovations implemented in the Danube Region and highlighted what worked well, what participants most often requested, and factors that appeared important for transferring activities to other peripheral industrial regions. The conclusions were based on feedback collected through online questionnaires for pilots completed by 15 January 2026. The findings reflected self-reported perceptions of respondents; reported percentages referred to individual social innovation surveys and were not aggregated across all pilot regions.

4.1 Key lessons across pilots

Across very different target groups and formats, participants consistently valued social innovations that made them feel **welcome, supported, and safe**. A friendly and supportive atmosphere was repeatedly mentioned as a key reason why participants enjoyed the activities, whether workshops, networking events, or community formats. For example, participants explicitly highlighted the friendly and supportive atmosphere in the Austrian Creativity contest, alongside discussion and networking opportunities. Similar was in Czechia (BusinessWomen without Borders), more than two thirds of respondents valued the friendly and supportive atmosphere.

Participants rarely joined for a single reason, but two motivations recurred across pilots: **learning something new** and **connecting with others** (meeting people, building networks, and exchanging experiences). This pattern was visible in the Bulgarian community network as well as in the Austrian ‘Stronger networks – stronger women’ pilot. In Czechia, the top motivations to participate in the BusinessWomen without Borders initiative included meeting people and gaining new knowledge.

Feedback also pointed to a recurring **gap between theory and practice**. In several pilots, respondents asked for more hands-on work, practical examples, and time for discussion and networking. Many suggestions stressed the value of “real-world” elements such as internships, mentoring, concrete follow-up support, and opportunities to apply skills soon after short training sessions. This request appeared in multiple pilots. In Slovenian social innovation Job Happens respondents asked for more time for discussion and practical examples. In Czechia (BusinessWomen without Borders) as well respondents asked for more practical examples and more time for networking, including suggestions for a full-day event.

Two pilots illustrated how combining theory and practical skills translated into tangible outcomes. In Loznica (Serbia), an intergenerational learning approach combined traditional producer knowledge with digital marketing and AI-supported tasks. Participants jointly prepared photographs and product descriptions during training, which led directly to the online gift catalogue “Women’s Ethno Hub – With Love from Loznica.” The materials were later refined into a promotional publication, turning learning outputs into a practical communication and market-visibility tool. In Herceg-Bosnian County, structured training combined with a supportive learning environment increased participants’ motivation and confidence to engage in the labour market and consider self-employment.



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4.2 Shared features of pilot regions and outreach

A **strong willingness to continue** was reported in most social innovations. A large share of respondents said they would participate again or continue participating, indicating that the pilots generated interest and perceived value among participants. This was reflected in very high repeat-interest in several pilots, for example in Czechia's BusinessWomen without Borders and the School project day, in Serbia's Loznica training; and a 'vast majority' in Bulgaria's community network. The Austrian Creativity contest also included explicit "participate again" feedback.

How participants heard about activities followed clear patterns:

Across adult-oriented pilots, respondents most often learned about activities through **social media** and **personal networks** (friends, colleagues, and other contacts), with NGOs/associations and websites sometimes reinforcing outreach. This pattern was observed in Herceg-Bosnian County's social innovation, Austria's "Stronger networks – stronger women," the Czech entrepreneurship event, and the Bulgarian network pilot.

For youth-oriented pilots, **schools** were the main channel, as shown in the Czech school project day and Slovenia's Job Happens.

This implied that **outreach** worked best when it followed the everyday communication routes of the target group, rather than relying mainly on generic advertising.

4.3 Reported gains

Across pilots, the most frequently reported gains cluster around:

- **social ties and support** (network building, feeling supported and peer exchange);
- **new knowledge and skills**;
- **new ideas and inspiration for education or careers** (especially for youth participants and people considering career changes).

These patterns were particularly evident in Czechia (BusinessWomen without Borders) and Bulgaria's Women's Community Network Edna ZaDruga.

4.4 Recurring priorities

Several themes appeared repeatedly in quantitative results and open comments:

- **Networking and community mattered.** Participants valued meeting others, exchanging experiences, and feeling supported. Requests for more time to connect, space for self-presentation, and stronger cooperation within women's entrepreneur networks reinforced this, for example in the Czech social innovation BusinessWomen without Borders.
- **Practical learning was prioritised.** Respondents, for example in Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, frequently asked for hands-on workshops, practical examples, longer sessions



(including full-day formats), and deeper coverage. Suggestions such as internships or linking training to real service providers reflected a demand for applied learning.

- **Role models and success stories helped.** This appeared in mentoring formats (e.g., Austria) and in repeated requests for real stories from women entrepreneurs and mentoring (Czechia), and practical experiences (also reflected in preferred topics for the Hungarian podcast).
- **Work–life balance remained central.** It was reported as both a learning outcome and a recurring request for future content, especially in discussions about gender roles in family life. In Hungary, work–life balance was reported as a key takeaway message from podcasts and also as an interesting future topic area.

4.5 Added value and early signs of social innovations' impact

Beyond satisfaction and interest in continued participation, several pilots indicated deeper effects:

- **Reflection and intention to change:** Many podcast listeners in Hungary reported that the content triggered reflection and increased awareness, and a sizable share stated an intention to behave differently in personal or professional contexts. This suggested that a light-touch audio format could influence thinking and self-reported intentions in the short term.
- **Empowerment through networks (entrepreneur and community pilots):** Participants repeatedly valued the combination of knowledge-building and peer contact. These settings supported confidence, reduced isolation, and in some cases helped formalise bottom-up initiatives. The Czech experience suggested that structured peer support, mentoring, and visibility tools contributed not only to individual empowerment but also to practical economic links within the region.
- **Career orientation for youth:** Youth pilots helped participants discover options and develop career ideas. Feedback also showed the need to ensure that the professions presented felt relevant and that enough time was allowed for discussion and exploration. Experience from the Czech social innovation indicated that engagement differed depending on pupils' proximity to key educational decisions, with stronger involvement when activities were delivered closer to decision points.

4.6 Recommendations for transfer and scaling

Design and delivery

- Put hands-on practice at the centre where relevant (work tasks, demonstrations, real examples), rather than relying mainly on presentations.
- Plan more time for discussion and networking, and use longer formats when topics are complex.
- Build in structured moments for self-presentation and peer exchange, especially in entrepreneurship and leadership settings.



Outreach and visibility

- Use channels that already work: social media and personal networks for adult audiences; schools and counsellors for youth audiences.
- Strengthen promotion and improve visibility of activities to reach beyond existing circles.

Follow-up and real-world links

- Where the goal is employability or entrepreneurship, add a clear “next step” pathway (internships, mentoring matches, or links to services that support immediate application of skills).
- Develop partnerships with institutions participants already use (employment offices, NGOs, schools) and connect them with local businesses and service providers where appropriate.

Inclusion and audience fit

- Adapt activities to specific audiences (e.g., clearer age-group focus, as raised in Austria).
- Continue testing formats that involve men in gender equality discussions, as the Hungarian social innovation indicated potential to reach beyond women-only audiences.

Sustainability

- Supported locally embedded groups of organisers and committed participants who have the interest to coordinate follow-up activities, maintain the networks, and help bring in new members and participants (as was the case in the Czech pilot region), since their involvement strengthens shared ownership, continuity, and gradual expansion of activities.



WIN

Annex 1: General questionnaire in English

Name of the event: your opinion matters to us

Dear participant (or some other welcoming note),

Since you attended the **»name of the event«**, we kindly ask you to share your opinion about the event.

This questionnaire aims to encourage reflection on the **»name of the event«** of the WIN project, which focuses on social innovations to improve the position of women in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions.

The survey is anonymous and takes only a few minutes to complete. The collected data will be used solely for the purposes of the WIN project.

We appreciate your feedback and comments.

The WIN project team

How did you find out about the event?

(multiple-choice)

- school
- career or educational counsellor
- association or NGO
- friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts
- social media
- web page
- advertisement in media
- other: _____

What motivated you to participate in the event:

(multiple-choice)

- curiosity, fun
- desire to learn something new
- to meet new people
- finding new work opportunities
- sense of belonging and support
- to find inspiration for my future educational path



- to find inspiration for my future career
- invitation from a friend, colleague, relative, or teacher
- other: _____

What did you like about the event?

(multiple-choice)

- interesting content
- opportunities for discussion
- I learned new things
- opportunities for (business) networking
- friendly and supportive atmosphere
- good organisation
- good accessibility (venue, materials, language, format, timing)
- I didn't like the event
- other: _____

How could we improve the event?

(multiple-choice)

- I was satisfied with everything
- include more practical examples and time for discussion
- the event should be more focused on the needs of women in the labour market
- the event should offer more information on education and job opportunities
- provide more opportunities for networking
- improve event promotion and visibility
- the event should be more accessible (considering location, time, language, or cultural barriers)
- the event should be organized more often
- other: _____

What did you gain by attending the event?

(multiple-choice)

- building social ties and support
- learning new knowledge and skills

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- discovering new opportunities for education
- new ideas for my future career
- new opportunities for employment and professional networking
- better understanding of women's situation in the labour market
- nothing in particular
- other: _____

Would you like to continue participating in similar events?

(single-choice)

- yes
- no
- I don't know

Do you have any additional comments or ideas for future events (for example, what kinds of topics, formats, or activities would you find most useful or engaging?)

(open-ended)

Age group:

(single-choice)

- under 15
- 15–29
- 30–44
- 45–64
- 65+

Gender:

(single-choice)

- female
- male
- other
- prefer not to say

Education level:

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(single-choice)

- primary school or less
- vocational school
- secondary school
- higher education (college/university, academic)

Family status:

(single-choice)

- child or dependent family member
- I live alone
- with a partner (no children)
- in a family with children
- single parent
- other: _____

Employment status and career level:

(single-choice)

- primary-school pupil
- secondary-school or university student
- employed: beginner position
- employed: experienced position
- employed: manager, lead position
- employed part-time
- unemployed, looking for a job
- unemployed, not looking for a job
- other: _____

You have answered all the questions in this survey.

Thank you for your participation.

The WIN project team

<https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/win>



Annex 2: Adapted questionnaire in English for Hungarian social innovation

Podcast title: your opinion matters to us

Dear listener of the podcast (or some other welcoming note),

Since you listened the podcast titled »**title**«, we kindly ask you to share your opinion about the event.

This questionnaire aims to encourage reflection on the »**title of podcast**«, prepared within the WIN project, which focuses on social innovations to improve the position of women in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions.

The survey is anonymous and takes only a few minutes to complete. The collected data will be used solely for the purposes of the WIN project.

We appreciate your feedback and comments.

The WIN project team

How did you find out about the podcast?

(multiple-choice)

- school
- career or educational counsellor
- association or NGO
- friends, colleagues, or other personal contacts
- social media
- web page
- advertisement in print or broadcast media
- other: _____

What motivated you to listen to the podcast:

(multiple-choice)

- curiosity
- desire to learn something new
- to better understand the position of women in professional environments and society
- interest in personal development or empowerment



- it was recommended by someone I trust
- interest in gender equality or social issues
- other: _____

Before listening to the podcast, how often did you think about the challenges women face in family and work roles?

(single-choice)

- never
- rarely
- sometimes
- often
- very often

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Likert: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

- Women can be as effective leaders as men. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
- Women are equally capable in technical and scientific fields. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
- Gender stereotypes (e.g., “blonde women are not clever”) are harmful. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
- Both men and women share responsibility in family and caregiving roles. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

Did the podcast make you reflect on your own attitudes toward women?

(single-choice)

- yes, very much
- somewhat
- not really
- not at all

Do you think you will behave differently in your personal or professional life after listening?

(single-choice)

- yes, definitely



- maybe
- not sure
- no

Has your awareness of women's opportunities and challenges increased after listening?

(single-choice)

- not at all
- A little
- somewhat
- quite a lot
- very much

What did you gain by listening to podcast?

(multiple-choice)

- better understanding of women's situation in the labour market
- inspiration or motivation for personal or professional growth
- ideas for promoting gender equality in my environment
- awareness of challenges women face in balancing work and family life
- new knowledge about policies, initiatives, or success stories
- nothing in particular
- other: _____

Would you like to continue participating in similar events?

(single-choice)

- yes
- no
- I don't know

What was the most valuable insight or idea you took from the podcast?

(Open-ended)

What would you like to hear more about in future episodes?

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(multiple-choice)

- stories of successful women in various professions
- challenges of work–life balance and caregiving
- gender equality in education and career opportunities
- men’s perspectives and involvement in gender equality
- policy measures and social innovations supporting women
- mentoring and networking opportunities
- ways to overcome stereotypes and discrimination
- other: _____

Age group:

(single-choice)

- under 15
- 15–29
- 30–44
- 45–64
- 65+

Gender:

(single-choice)

- female
- male
- other
-
- prefer not to say

Education level:

(single-choice)

- primary school or less
- vocational school
- secondary school
- higher education (college/university, academic)



Family status:

(single-choice)

- I live with parents
- I live alone
- with a partner (no children)
- in a family with children
- single parent
- other: _____

Employment status:

(single-choice)

- primary-school pupil
- secondary-school or university student
- employed: beginner position
- employed: experienced position
- employed: manager, lead position
- employed part-time
- unemployed, looking for a job
- unemployed, not looking for a job
- other: _____

You have answered all the questions in this survey.

Thank you for your participation.

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