

# Theory of Change (ToC) for innovative approaches and methods

Deliverable D002.005

SIMPLE: Social Innovation Models to Promote Learning  
and Employability

Project ESF-SI-2024-UA-01-0028



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## Introduction

The document is to describe the Theory of Change process for the SIMPLE project. The conceptual background for the project is to initiate social innovation to support Ukrainian migrants and refugees, mainly women and elderly, with taking, analysing, adapting and transferring previous initiatives and pilot them in a different environment, in order to prove transferability and impact-generating capability of the actions.

The Theory of Change will help to connect the theoretical work to practice and to adapt the previous initiatives to the new context, precise definition of the target group and helps to define the activities and interventions that are to be implemented, outlines the expected short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes and foresees potential of impact generation.

The Theory of Change connects WP4 piloting with WP2 (Mapping and Methodological Framework) since this provides the contextual challenges and needs assessment affecting Ukrainian refugees.

The document also connects stakeholders, the engagement procedure and capacity building, as part of WP3 activities of the project, mobilising the local ecosystems and strengthenig cooperation among civil society actors, public institutions, employers, and migrant communities. The ToC outlines how this stakeholder collaboration will contribute to the outcomes.

The ToC also offers guidance for WP4 (Piloting and Validation), to recommend the modules to be applied and the potential aims to achieve. In addition, guidance on the monitoring and documentation process is recommended.

## 2. Methodological Approach to Developing the ToC

### 2.1 The definition and needs of the target group, within the local context

The target group of the SIMPLE project are Ukrainian displaced persons, in the EU Member States, under Temporary protection. The majority of adults displaced since 2022 are women and children (approx. 70% of working-age adults are women).

Primary focus on:

- Women of working age
- Older adults (50+)

Secondary focus is on:

- Individuals with high educational attainment whose skills are currently underutilised.
- Individuals with care responsibilities, especially single mothers. Households often include young children and/or elderly dependent persons which create a double stressor for women in terms of provision of care while earning a wage.
- Persons with professional experience in sectors affected by recognition or language barriers.

Education and skills profile of the group:

1. High educational capital compared to other recent refugee groups:
  - ~60% hold tertiary degrees
  - Many has strong professional backgrounds in education, healthcare, public administration, services, and STEM
1. Skills under-utilisation is common due to:
  - Non-recognition of qualifications

- Language barriers
- Mismatch between available jobs and qualifications
- Digital skills vary:
  - Younger adults: generally competent.
  - Older adults (esp. women 50+): limited digital confidence and reduced access to online opportunities.

Geographical scope: Partner countries participating in SIMPLE, with applicability across the EU.

- Primary aim is to pilot the initiatives in Poland and Italy
- Other partner countries are supporting the adaptation process and ensure further capacity to transfer and adapt the initiatives in other environments.

The labour market challenges

- Employment access is formally granted, but participation remains unequal.
- Common barriers include:
  - Limited availability of childcare
  - Need for host-country language training. This factors is differently impacting the capacity to work in Poland, where language similarities aid take-up of Polish for Ukrainian-speakers and differs to some extent in the case of Italy.
  - Delayed or complex credential recognition
  - Fragmented employment support systems and potential under-information and under-engagement of employers
  - Underemployment is widespread as many high-skilled individuals are working in low-wage, low-skilled roles.
- There is a definite growing interest in self-employment and micro-entrepreneurship, but there is limited access to mentoring, networks, and microfinance.

- Inclusion of the potential self-entrepreneurs and/or startappers into the local business ecosystem is also a challenge

#### Psychosocial and social integration aspects

- Many refugees experience stress, displacement-related trauma, and uncertainty about return and a need for community belonging and peer networks
- Family-related responsibilities shape labour-market outcomes (e.g., childcare load falls predominantly on women).
- Existing Ukrainian diaspora networks play a key role in providing information on jobs and integration services opportunities but this may also hinder the potential for integration into the host communities.

#### Systemic and institutional needs:

- Integration ecosystems are fragmented across:
  - National, regional, municipal administrations
  - NGOs and civil-society actors
  - Employers and labour-market agencies
- Support services often depend on short-term project funding, limiting continuity. As the SIMPLE initiative is not in the position to change that, the approach is to pilot whether a complex but efficient, short-term initiative is capable of making a change.

## 2.2 Capacity mapping of the consortium

The Theory of Change process require that we reflect on the conditions in which the initiatives are to be implemented and piloted. This leads to the necessity of not only to map the needs of the target group but also those capacities that the consortium can offer, since the knowledge (explicit and tacit) and expertise of these partners will closely influence the successful realisation of the implemented pilots.

If a model initiative is misaligned with the competencies, roles, and stakeholder networks of the implementing partners, several risks arise:

- Reduced implementation quality, limiting engagement and outcomes
- Misuse of resources, as partners may struggle with unfamiliar methodologies
- Weak local ownership, decreasing sustainability beyond the project duration
- Insufficient reach into target groups, particularly when specialised access is required
- Failure to activate local ecosystems, undermining systemic impact

Capacity mapping of the consortium took place based upon a unified survey among the partners, reflecting on their key focus on various target group segments and activities they typically carry out.

Mapping of partner capacities to cover the target group

| PARTNER          | MIGRANT / REFUGEE WOMEN (GENERAL) | NEWLY ARRIVED HIGH-VULNERABILITY | HIGHLY-EDUCATED MIGRANT WOMEN | WOMEN W/ BUSINESS INTEREST | OLDER WOMEN | YOUTH / STUDENTS |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| <b>CTS</b>       | Full                              | Partial                          | Full                          | Full                       | Full        | Partial          |
| <b>CIVITAS</b>   | Full                              | Full                             | Partial                       | Partial                    | None        | None             |
| <b>AIE</b>       | Full                              | Partial                          | Partial                       | None                       | None        | Full             |
| <b>IHF / IDP</b> | Full                              | Full                             | Partial                       | Full                       | None        | None             |
| <b>HÉTFA</b>     | Full                              | Partial                          | Full                          | Full                       | None        | None             |
| <b>ITSFA</b>     | Full                              | None                             | Partial                       | Full                       | Full        | None             |
| <b>HOPE</b>      | Full                              | Full                             | None                          | None                       | None        | None             |

All partners in the SIMPLE consortium reach the project's primary target group of migrant and refugee women, ensuring universal coverage at core intervention level. Within this shared mandate, complementary strengths are evident: CIVITAS, HOPE and IHF/IDP have established access to newly arrived and high-vulnerability women facing immediate integration and service-navigation needs. Meanwhile, HÉTFA, CTS and ITSFA are positioned to reach highly-educated women and those with entrepreneurial aspirations, enabling skills utilisation and business activation pathways. Secondary sub-groups such as older women (ITSFA, CTS) and youth/students (AIE) are also represented, providing opportunities for tailored

community involvement when appropriate. Overall, the consortium demonstrates both broad inclusion capacity and differentiated access, supporting a dual-priority approach in the intervention logic.

#### Partner activities mapping

|                  | PARTNER | TRAINING (LANGUAGE, DIGITAL, VOCATIONAL, ENTREPRENEURSHIP) | MENTORING AND COACHING | PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT | CONNECTING TO EXISTING SYSTEMS (EMPLOYMENT, WELFARE, HOUSING, SERVICES) | STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES / GOVERNANCE | AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVATION (ARTS, EVENTS) |
|------------------|---------|--|------------------------|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>CTS</b>       | Full    | Full   | Partial                | Partial              | Full  | Partial                            |   |
| <b>CIVITAS</b>   | Full    | Full   | Partial                | Full                 | Partial   | Partial                            |   |
| <b>AIE</b>       | Partial | Partial  | Partial                | Partial              | Full  | Full                               |   |
| <b>IHF / IDP</b> | Full    | Full   | Partial                | Full                 | Partial   | Full                               |   |
| <b>HÉTFA</b>     | Full    | Full   | Partial                | Partial              | Full  | Partial                            |   |
| <b>ITSA</b>      | Full    | Partial  | None                   | Partial              | Partial   | Partial                            |   |
| <b>HOPE</b>      | Partial | Partial  | Full                   | Full                 | Partial   | Full                               |   |

The consortium collectively covers the full spectrum of activities required by the SIMPLE intervention model. The diversity of trainings is most common across the partners, with thematic variations (digital, vocational, entrepreneurship, language) supporting adaptable local design. Mentoring and coaching capacities are solidly present in CTS, CIVITAS, IHF/IDP and HÉTFA, enabling empowerment- and employment-oriented support.

Psychosocial and system-navigation activities are important activities covered by HOPE, CIVITAS and IHF/IDP, HÉTFA or their respective stakeholder network, ensuring continuity between integration and employability outcomes.

AIE and HOPE have major strengths in awareness and community activation, linking inclusion efforts with local society. Stakeholder dialogues are supported by multiple partners, particularly HÉTFA and CTS.

This distribution validates the module-based methodology: while no single organisation consistently covers all required dimensions, the partnership as a whole provides comprehensive intervention capability.

## 2.3 Selection of the model initiatives

The selection of the model initiatives was a process well documented in the Methodology and the Compendium of the SIMPLE project. After a precarious filtering mechanism, 12 final initiatives were selected, with filtering process applied based on:

- Existence of available documentation

Many of the initiatives surveyed have not passed the criteria of having publicly available documentation, even if founded from European funds. Certain webpages with information became unavailable even during the research period. Independent evaluations and impact assessments are non-existent for most of the initiatives. Therefore the existence of available documentation played a key role in the selection. Documentation was rated 1 to 5.

- Target group matching

Though it was not a requirement to have the exact same target group as the SIMPLE project does, alignment with the project's goals was a rated factor. Important to note that since at the outbreak of the crisis in 2022, first aid in terms of sheltering, housing, basic protection was the focus of activities and longer-term integration oriented projects started even later, therefore many are still in operation without final results. These were assessed based on their available intermediate progress. Due to this factor was it also necessary to strongly take into account initiatives that aimed to integrate earlier waves of migrants and refugees but have been closed by now, with – ideally -available documentations and assessments.

- Alignment with activities of the planned SIMPLE initiatives and consortial profile

As mentioned above, it is elemental to take into account the capacities of the consortium when implementation takes place, in order to ensure success of the pilots. Therefore a rating of 1 to 5 was also added in terms of matching activities. This has also allowed for filtering out activities that are beyond the limits of the SIMPLE project in terms of timeline or budget size (community housing activities and urban-level community building activities, for example) while not completely discrediting those projects from playing a role in SIMPLE's execution of pilots, by using certain elements (for example community event organisation).

- Previous initiatives were analysed in a modular structure.

Both the methodological work for the project and the contextual analysis has identified the problem of fragmented European funding scheme, with certain types of projects focusing on either on education, training, while others work with stakeholder management or urban community building. The SIMPLE analysis took a modular approach and identified usable modules in projects that are otherwise not relevant because either they have a too narrow focus for the SIMPLE approach, or have otherwise not realistic elements so that the full initiative cannot be piloted. This modular element has helped to build pilot initiatives that match target group needs, consortial competences and the project's complex and integrative approach.

- Other aspects

Further aspects were also taken into account, such as the initiative's coverage of countries (because if that initiative already has been piloted in several countries/context parallel, their transferability is significantly higher). Potential to reach out for further information to the project owners was also a factor to consider. Finally, the two final initiatives were chosen to have a slightly different orientation so there is a potential for experimentation with social innovation.

## 2.4 The model initiatives

The final initiatives chosen were as follows:

To be piloted in Poland: **BSI4Women**. The project's description is available in the SIMPLE Compendium but also on their website: [https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/bsi\\_4women/](https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/bsi_4women/).

BSI\_4Women, supported by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region program, works with refugee women from Ukraine, supporting them in entrepreneurship and innovation, facilitating their economic integration within the Baltic Sea region. Their

focus is to foster the target groups' economic independence and facilitating their integration into new communities, thereby enhancing the overall stability and resilience of the regional economy.

The project is realised in 8 countries, with a Polish coordinator that works in a different region than where SIMPLE would be realised but still increases the chances of transferability and adaptability.

The key project activities are:

- **Needs diagnosis and surveys:** A project survey across partner regions assessing needs, motivations, barriers for refugee women entrepreneurs. Example in Lithuania: strong demand for business start-ups but knowledge gaps in financing and regulatory frameworks.
- **Entrepreneurial incubation / pre-incubation programmes:** For example in Estonia, a "Pre-incubation" 2-day programme followed by a 6-month incubator for refugee and migrant women from conflict zones, mentoring, monthly trainings, access to online materials in English/Russian, culminating in pitch events.
- **Tailored guides and toolkits:** Example: a "Guide for Women Refugees for setting up and running a business in the partner countries" (Lithuania) covering legal aspects, missing business knowledge, business planning, taxation, import/export, etc.
- **Creation of supportive ecosystem and network:** Building a transnational network of business support organisations, regional specialisations, cross-country referral of start-ups, and fostering regional economic relations in the Baltic Sea Region.
- **Digital platform / online trainings:** The description of the project lists outputs including "Digital platform for Women Refugees" as one of the deliverables.
- **Events and pitching / demo days:** National and transnational Demo Days, Entrepreneurship Fairs, workshops in partner countries for refugee women sharing business challenges and receiving support.

The innovation and value added in the project are:

- Tailoring standard incubation, business support and training models specifically to refugee women's needs, including language support, cultural adaptation, regulatory orientation.

- Cross-border and multi-country implementation (partners from Poland, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden) creates a scalable model
- Combining economic empowerment (entrepreneurship) with refugee integration aims: promoting resilience, independence, social inclusion and labour market participation in non-traditional job paths.
- Use of digital platforms and multilingual online training materials to increase accessibility.

The other initiative to be taken into account in the Polish pilot is SIREE for which good documentation is available on [https://www.gre.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0037/295777/siree-e-book-final-2.pdf](https://www.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0037/295777/siree-e-book-final-2.pdf)

The project has worked with 52 Learning Communities (LCs) that brought together and engaged parents, children and teachers, trauma and displacement reflected. Self-entrepreneurial approach was also in focus. The community-based learning approach will be utilised as a modular element in the Polish SIMPLE initiative.

In case of the pilot to be realised in Italy, is **SIREE** (that serves as a modular element in Poland). The project's goal were to strengthen refugee children's sense of belonging and parental participation in education.

Key Activities:

- **Co-creation model in schools:** Students, refugee families, teachers, and support staff jointly identify needs and co-design school activities.
- **Parent engagement initiatives:**
  - Welcome and orientation sessions
  - Language support and cultural mediation
  - Regular participatory parent cafés / discussion circles
- **Peer support and buddy systems** for refugee pupils.
- **Classroom adaptability strategies** to support multilingual learners and trauma-sensitive engagement.
- **School-based community-building events** to strengthen trust and reduce isolation.

Outputs:

- Co-creation methodology for schools.

- Teacher and staff toolkits for refugee inclusion.

The initiative also included a Teacher Training and Professional Capacity Building that aimed to improve the teachers's readiness to support refugee pupils and families. They received training courses for teachers working with refugee students and workshops on:

- Intercultural communication
- Trauma-informed support
- Inclusive classroom strategies
- Working with non-accompanied minors

This modular element will be modified in the Italian SIMPLE pilot, as the context will change to focus at young adults and adults, therefore the secondary target group to be involved will be employers and the entrepreneurial ecosystem actors.

The modular element to use will come from the project MYFRIENDLYCITIES <https://mifriendlycities.co.uk/> which had employability and entrepreneurship programs with migrants and refugees where the ecosystem approach has led to increased attention paid to the host communities – namely to the employers and employment context stakeholders, who have received training

- **Employer Digital Guide:** The project published an “Employers’ Guide” (Employers’ Digital Guide V2) designed to assist employers in the West Midlands to attract, hire and retain migrants and refugees. The guide covers:

- How employers can harness migrant/refugee skills and experience.
- Screening and hiring practices (legal right to work, visa issues)
- Inclusion and workforce integration strategies (mentoring, buddy systems, culturally sensitive onboarding)
- Celebration and awareness-raising of “untapped resources” in migrant communities.

- **Employer Forums, Business Leaders’ Networks and Roundtables**

- The project organised employer-led roundtables and forums to address regional skills gaps and to increase employer engagement with migrant/refugee talent.
- Creation of a “Business Leaders’ Forum” to bring together employers, migrant/refugee talent, and regional employment networks.

- **Employment Brokers Linking Employers with Migrants/Refugees**

- The project employed **Employment Brokers** whose role was to connect employers with refugee/migrant candidates, explain employer processes, and help with placements.
  - These brokers supported employers to understand legal rights, recruitment channel changes, and workforce diversity benefits.
- **Employer Training and On-boarding Support**
    - Employers received briefings/training to raise their awareness about hiring migrants/refugees: legal aspects, culture change, onboarding processes.
    - The Employers' Guide focuses on inclusion, screening, hiring and retention practices.

## 2.4 The stakeholder community and engagement needed

As described before, the pilots will initially run in Poland (by CTS) and in Italy (by Hope Ukraine) and the consortium partnership supports, monitors, evaluates and promotes the exercise while making preparations for further adaptations in their own countries and in their own socioeconomic context. Therefore the stakeholder community is listed in details for these two context first, taken into account the chosen model initiatives.

### **Ideal Stakeholder Mix – Poland (CTS Pilot)**

Focus: Self-employment, entrepreneurship, business idea development

Public and Semi-Public Institutions

- Local business support centres
- Municipal entrepreneurship / innovation offices
- Labour market offices

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

- Business incubators and accelerators
- Mentors / business coaches

- Microfinance institutions and small loan providers

#### Training and Education

- Providers of entrepreneurship training (accounting, marketing, digital tools)
- Language schools with a business language module
- Universities or business schools (optional collaboration)

#### Civil Society and Community

- Ukrainian community groups
- Women entrepreneurs' networks
- Peer-to-peer learning circles and informal meet-ups

#### Private Sector Stakeholders

- SMEs willing to mentor or co-develop business ideas
- Platforms for promoting small local businesses (markets, fairs, online collectives)

### **Ideal Stakeholder Mix – Italy (HOPE Ukraine Pilot)**

Focus: Employability pathways, community-based integration, women with care duties

#### Local authorities and public services

- Municipal social services
- Local employment / job-centre offices
- Regional migration / integration departments

#### Civil society, other NGOs and community actors

- Ukrainian community organisations (formal and informal)
- Women's support groups / family support services
- Volunteer groups providing childcare / translation

#### Education and training

- Adult education centres

- VET institutes offering short professional courses
- Language training providers

Labour market and employers, local business ecosystem

- Small and medium enterprises open to work-based learning
- Employers with flexible and part-time work opportunities
- Employer associations / local chambers of commerce

Support Services

- Organisations offering psychological support and counselling
- Legal advice services related to work permits and employment law
- Childcare providers (municipal / associative / church-based)

A preliminary stakeholder list was gathered at the first stages of the project which are to be further extended and detailed in the first period of pilot preparations. The stakeholder lists – with personal information protection measures – is shared by the consortium.

Stakeholder engagement tools include:

- Introductory meetings or roundtables to present pilot goals and roles
- Signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and / or cooperation agreements (light, non-bureaucratic)
- Regular coordination meetings (bi-weekly or monthly)
- Participation in local events (cultural, employment fairs, women support gatherings)
- Advisory group (3–6 engaged stakeholders) to support decisions
- Peer-to-peer exchange sessions between IT and PL pilot teams

## 2.5 Assumptions, limitations and hypothesis to be tested

The assumptions and limitations to be considered are as follows:

### **Assumptions:**

- Target group – as the migrant and refugee communities but also the wider stakeholder matrix and quadruple helix members – will be available and open, after an appropriate value offer is made to them regarding the benefits of the project.
- The basic political, legal and economic situation will not change in the timeframe of the project (which is rather limited, in fact) therefore the demand for the services and key operational parameters will be the same
- The basic services and technology currently available for the target group stays the same, e.g they have access to housing, technology, basic needs are fulfilled.
- The working members of the target group will still have time for participation in the program, with the aim of a job upgrade that better matches their skills and capacities
- The stakeholders involved will have the capacity and time to work within the pilots' timeframe
- Model initiatives' owners will stay motivated to share lessons learnt and allow access to otherwise publically available information

Limitations:

- The timeframe for the pilots is less than a year and financial backing is more limited than in case of the model projects.
- Employable target group members are in many cases already in employment, though that does not match their levels of qualifications. The projects therefore have to work with a target group that can be open for a job upgrade but may already be consumed in a day job that requires time and effort.
- Labour market conditions are challenged in the current European economic outlook ,which does not favour an employment boom in the close future. The positions available can be limited, even if the best attentions are considered.

**The hypothesis and main question of the piloting exercise will be whether the original model initiatives can be streamlined, made more efficient on a shorter timeframe and on a smaller budget, to still make an impact on the target group and the larger community as a whole.**



## ◦ Activities and outcomes of the initiatives to be realised

### 3.1. Causal logic

The pilot activities are designed with the assumption that **employability and entrepreneurship outcomes improve** when both individual capabilities and local **ecosystem linkages** are strengthened simultaneously. **The short training and support sessions** increase confidence, clarify goals, and provide practical tools for job search and business ideation.

**Peer and mentoring structures** reduce isolation and create accountability, enabling sustained engagement. **Employer and stakeholder networking sessions** create real points of access to opportunities and reduce barriers created by fragmented local systems. Therefore, if participants receive tailored support while being directly connected to service providers, employers, and business networks, then their ability to take concrete labour market or entrepreneurial steps will increase within the project timeframe. This intermediate change is expected to lead to improved employment pathways or entrepreneurial activation within four months.

Based on the model initiatives, taken into account the modular approach, the following pilot initiatives are designed to be piloted in the framework of the SIMPLE project. Outcomes are defined in a non-traditional way, as the SIMPLE project's timeframe is rather limited for longer term exercises. Short term outcomes are defined to take place within 2 months, under the pilot's running period and longer term outcomes are defined to be achieved within 4 months. This unusual approach supports the testing of the hypotheses, whether the model initiatives can be put to effective use under a shorter time period as well.

### 3.2. Timeframe

The timeframe for the pilots are as follows:

**November 2025** – WP4, based upon the inputs from the other work packages, starts to detail the plans for the piloting and makes preparations. The project consortium reviews the plans and contributes.

**January 2026-February 2026** – the first stage of the pilots, with an initial target group is launched operational. At the beginning, monitoring tools are employed to measure the current state of the art of the target group’s positions, skills, capacities and other measures that are used for the monitoring and evaluation process. A mid-term review is conducted at the end of February.

**March 2026- April 2026** – the second stage of piloting with further recruits is operational, ending at the end of April, with a final set of monitoring tools (surveys, interviews, etc.) applied.

**May 2026-June 2026** – the pilots are evaluated and the conclusions for impact-generation and transferability potential are made.

In the further months of the project, until the end of 2026 October, the project partners work on further stakeholder engagement activities and potentials for transfer and adaptation in other locations and context.

### 3.3. Poland Pilot (CTS) Employment Activation Model

The activities, outputs and outcomes are recommended as follows:

| Activities                            |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Activity                              | Description  |
| Initial needs and skills assessment   | Structured intake interviews mapping education, experience, language level, care responsibilities, and work goals. |
| Individual employability coaching     | 1:1 tailored guidance on job search, documentation, and career planning.   |
| Group training                        | Practical sessions on CV writing, LinkedIn, interview preparation, basic digital skills, and workplace norms.      |
| Peer support group meetings           | Facilitated group reflection and shared learning to reduce isolation and sustain motivation.                       |
| Employer / Career networking Sessions | Small-group sessions with employers, job agencies, training providers, or business support actors.                 |
| Referral to external services         | Guidance towards VET programs, municipal support, psychological support, or childcare services where relevant.     |

### Outputs (Measurable Deliverables)

| Output                              | Indicator  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Completed skills and needs profiles | N° of participants with full intake assessment completed |
| Revised CVs / LinkedIn profiles     | N° of participants with updated job documentation        |
| Workshop attendance                 | N° of workshops delivered + attendance lists             |
| Peer support group functioning      | N° of sessions held; stable core group attendance        |
| Employer contact opportunities      | N° of networking events / employer meetings              |
| Referrals completed                 | N° of participants accessing external services           |

### Short-Term Outcomes (0–2 months)

| Outcome   | Observable Indicator                                    |
|---|---|
| Increased clarity on job search pathway and realistic work goals  | Self-reported confidence; identified job targets        |
| Improved employability tools and readiness to apply               | CVs updated; mock interview performance increased       |
| Strengthened motivation and reduced isolation                     | Regular peer group participation; verbal engagement     |
| Growing awareness of available support services and opportunities | Participants independently contacting service providers |

### Longer-Term Outcomes (2–4 months)

| Outcome  | Indicator  |
|--|--|
| Participants actively applying for work or enrolling in training | # of applications sent; # of VET/education enrollments |
| Initial job placements, internships, or volunteering roles       | # of participants starting work experience             |
| More stable peer support and self-organised networking           | Continued meetings without external facilitation       |
| Reduced dependency on emergency support                          | Reduced needs for municipal emergency assistance       |

### 3.4. HOPE Ukraine (Italy) Pilot – Women’s Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Model

| Activities                                  |  |
|---|--|
| Activity                                    | Description  |
| Initial needs and skills assessment         | Structured intake interviews mapping education, experience, language level, care responsibilities, and work goals. |
| Empowerment                                 | Group and individual sessions focused on self-assurance and reclaiming professional identity.                      |
| Entrepreneurship orientation Workshops      | Awareness-raising about self-employment options, feasibility, risks, and administrative steps in Italy.            |
| Business idea development support           | Guided exercises to develop/refine business concepts (lean canvas, value proposition).                             |
| Local mentoring                             | Pairing participants with local women entrepreneurs and community business networks.                               |
| Information and legal guidance              | Practical guidance on legal frameworks, taxation, business registration, and access to microfinance.               |
| Showcasing                                  | Small-scale testing of services/products in local community settings.  |
| Outputs (Measurable Deliverables)           |  |
| Output                                      | Indicator  |
| Participation in empowerment group sessions | N° of sessions + attendance records  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Business idea drafts                                 | N° of participants with a defined idea or early-stage plan |
| Individual mentoring relationships                   | N° of participants matched with mentors                    |
| Networking engagements with local business ecosystem | N° of events or meetings held                              |
| Initial portfolio of services/products showcased     | N° of micro-testing events or exhibitions                  |
| <b>Short-Term Outcomes (0–2 months)</b>              |  |
| Outcome  | Indicator  |
| Increased confidence in one's professional abilities | Self-efficacy scales; qualitative reflection               |
| Early-stage business ideas identified and discussed  | Existence of draft idea description                        |
| Understanding of administrative/legal barriers       | Completion of checklist on registration requirements       |
| First professional community contacts established    | Participation in networking events; mentor interest        |
| <b>Longer-Term Outcomes (2–4 months)</b>             |  |
| Outcome  | Indicator  |
| Business ideas move toward structured planning       | Lean canvas / business plan fragments drafted              |
| Participants obtain first clients or test sales      | Initial revenue event or pilot service provided            |
| Sustainable peer and mentor support networks persist | Continued contact after formal sessions                    |
| Enhanced economic autonomy and reduced precarity     | Self-reported income stabilization trends                  |

### 3.5. Monitoring

The pilots build on the activities of the model initiatives. In the preparatory phase, the model project owners are invited to add insights into the realisation of the adaptation. **The minimum people to reach is 100 Ukrainian refugees in total, 50 per pilot**, to be achieved gradually, as the first 2 months of the pilot creates recognition, promotion and word-of-mouth communication therefore is expected to generate more participants.

The following key monitoring tools are necessary in case of both pilots. These can be further enhanced by individual specific monitoring elements, unique to the locations themselves.

| <b>Monitoring Component</b> | <b>Baseline skills and needs status</b> | <b>Workshop / training participation</b> | <b>Peer / mentoring engagement</b> | <b>Mid-term progress review</b>                  | <b>Endline evaluation</b>                                  | <b>Validation of outcomes</b>                |
|-----------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Tool / Data Source</b>   | Intake questionnaire + short interview  | Attendance sheets                        | Session records                    | Short self-assessment survey + facilitator notes | End-of-pilot reflective survey + 1:1 interview with sample | Cross-site review call + documentation audit |
| <b>Frequency</b>            | Month 1                                 | Continuous                               | Bi-weekly                          | End of Month 2                                   | Month 4  | Month 5-6                                    |
| <b>Responsible Partner</b>  | CTS / HOPE                              | CTS / HOPE                               | CTS / HOPE                         | CTS / HOPE                                       | CTS / HOPE   | Consortium                                   |
| <b>Output</b>               | Baseline profiling dataset              | Participation log                        | Engagement status tracker          | Mid-term outcomes snapshot                       | Endline change assessment                                  | Pilot validation report                      |

### 3.6. Risk mitigation methods

Risk mitigation methods will be put in place, primarily at the realising institutions but with the partnership's support and capacity.

#### 1. **Early and continuous stakeholder involvement**

1. Piloters are expected to hold short coordination meetings with key local actors (municipal offices, NGOs, employers, training centers) before the pilots will start.

#### 2. **Participant onboarding strategy**

1. Piloters will use trusted intermediaries (community leaders, refugee support centres, social workers) to communicate the value of participation clearly. A value proposition must be defined in the planning phase and clearly communicated together with the expected learning path and potential of impacts. Expectation management is a key element.
3. **Adaptive piloting**
  1. The pilots will start their activities in small groups and refine methods after initial sessions and half-time, after the first 2 months, a short interim evaluation will allow for corrective measures.
4. **Consortium support**
  1. Piloter partners can reach out to the consortium for further contributions, recommendations, stakeholder mobilization and other expertise in case needed.

### 3.7. Transferability

The transferability aspect of the project is well-built in already at the proposal phase, by defining clear roles for those project partners that are not primary piloters. The model builds on the following elements:

1. Multi-Stakeholder Model
  1. The pilots use the quadruple helix approach (public sector, employers, civil society, education). This allows for a wider pool of stakeholders to be engaged in the project and allows for fine-tuning, given the next regions' specificity.
2. Replicable Social Innovation Methods
  1. Practices selected in WP2 and tested in WP4 are method-driven, not location-dependent.
  2. This allows replication with contextual adaptation, not redesign.

3. Pilot Structure Designed for Scale-Up
  1. The pilots in Poland (CTS) and Italy (Hope Ukraine) serve as demonstration cases.
  2. Other partners prepare their ecosystems during WP4, enabling later adoption.
4. Common Outputs for Reuse
  1. Guidelines, training resources, and stakeholder engagement procedures (WP4 outputs feeding WP5) are shared across the consortium as ready-made tools for transfer.
5. Comparable Target Group Needs
  1. Ukrainian refugees (especially women and older adults) face similar barriers across EU host countries (employment access, childcare, recognition of skills).
  2. Solutions developed in pilots therefore have high relevance across contexts.

| Element                        | What Makes It Transferable                        | Requirement                                |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Quadruple Helix Model</b>   | Works in any region with coordinated stakeholders | Map local actors                           |
| <b>Selected Practices</b>      | Based on widely usable social innovation methods  | Adjust to local conditions                 |
| <b>Pilot Demonstration</b>     | Shows concrete “how-to” implementation            | Document steps and lessons                 |
| <b>Shared Materials</b>        | WP4–WP5 resources provide templates for reuse     | Ensure partners apply them                 |
| <b>Target Group Similarity</b> | Similar integration barriers across countries     | Tailor support intensity and delivery mode |

## Annex 1 – Vocabulary and definitions

| Term   | Definition / How It Is Used in the Proposal  |
|--|--|
| <b>Ukrainian Refugees / Ukrainian Migrants</b> | Primary beneficiary group of the project. In SIMPLE, the focus is specifically on <i>those displaced by the 2022 Russian invasion, currently residing in EU countries.</i>   |
| <b>Vulnerable Groups</b>                       | Sub-segment of the above. Primarily: <b>women and older adults</b> (roughly 50+), who face greater barriers to employment, income stability, and social integration. The skills, conditions, and support needed for Ukrainian migrants to successfully <b>enter, re-enter, or maintain stable participation in the labor market.</b> |
| <b>Employability</b>                           | Includes job readiness, recognition of prior skills, local language competence, networking, etc.   |
| <b>Entrepreneurship / Self-Employment</b>      | Pathway for those unable to secure traditional employment, especially educated Ukrainian women seeking to start micro-businesses or freelance work.  |
| <b>Social Innovation Initiatives (SII)</b>     | Community-based or institutional projects that <i>address social needs</i> in new or collaborative ways. In SIMPLE, SII means methods or models that <b>support employability or social inclusion.</b> Important to note that the definition of social innovation still highly debated among the scientific community.               |
| <b>Best Practices</b>                          | Concrete approaches, models, or program formats that have already shown some success <i>elsewhere</i> and can be <b>adapted and piloted</b> in SIMPLE.   |
| <b>Quadruple Helix Model</b>                   | Collaboration framework engaging <b>four sectors:</b> (1) Public authorities and services, (2) Businesses and employers, (3) Education and research institutions, (4) Civil society organisations, communities, NGOs, and the migrant community itself.  |
| <b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>                  | Active involvement of institutions and actors from the quadruple helix in <i>designing, adapting, piloting</i> and evaluating social innovation practices.   |
| <b>Capacity Building</b>                       | Strengthening the skills, knowledge, and coordination abilities of the participating organisations and stakeholders to support employability and integration sustainably.  |
| <b>Piloting / Validation</b>                   | Testing selected best practices in real settings among consortium partners to see whether they are effective and feasible under different national conditions.   |

**Scaling /  
Transferability**

Identifying which models can be broadened, replicated, or adapted in **other European contexts** after validation.

**Local Ecosystem**

The network of **local actors, services, institutions, and community structures** that Ukrainian migrants interact with. This ecosystem varies by region and strongly influences integration outcomes.

**Labour Market  
Integration**

A specific component of integration which concerns **employment, job access, recognition of qualifications, training and pathways to work.**

**Needs Assessment**

Initial review (based on secondary sources, partner expertise, and stakeholder consultation) identifying **gaps, challenges, and opportunities** affecting Ukrainian refugees' employability in partner contexts.

**Participatory Co-  
Creation**

The involvement of beneficiaries themselves (e.g., Ukrainian women) in **designing and adapting** the solutions being developed, instead of being passive recipients.

## Annex 2 – Capacity mapping of the Consortium

### Partner Competency Profile — CTS

CTS SZKOLENIA PL is a Warsaw-based organisation with over 35 years of experience in delivering specialised vocational training, digital skills development, and labour-market oriented advisory services. As part of the ADN training group, CTS operates robust training infrastructures and collaborates with employers, business chambers, vocational schools, and public institutions, supporting local workforce development and entrepreneurial pathways. CTS has a track record in European-funded projects involving employability support, online learning, and SME engagement. Their operational profile aligns strongly with SIMPLE's objectives in female entrepreneurship, labour market activation, and community-driven upskilling.

#### Implementation capabilities

- Level: local and regional implementation
- Primary focus groups:
  - women
  - older adults*(with emphasis on migrant women with business ideas)*
- Activity areas:
  - language training
  - social and life-management support
  - psychological support
  - vocational and employment counselling
  - entrepreneurship advising and coaching, including fundraising support
- Stakeholder collaboration and access:
  - local governments
  - municipalities
  - local employment and social support institutions

- local community actors
- schools and academic institutions
- NGO networks
- business networks
- VET providers
- start-up incubators

Contribution to SIMPLE model initiatives (module fit)

- Training courses: deliverable (language, vocational, entrepreneurship, digital)
- Mentoring and coaching: core capability in employment and business development
- Provision of psychosocial support: feasible through organisational staff and partnerships
- Connecting migrants to existing systems: enabled by institutional networks (employment/social support services)
- Stakeholder dialogues / policy roundtables: feasible via broad cross-sector networks
- Awareness / community events: possible through local civic networks and education actors
- Youth/community events: possible depending on demographic overlap with women participants

## **CIVITAS**

### **Partner Competency Profile**

CIVITAS participates in SIMPLE as a city-embedded organisation working at the interface of social services, employability support, and community inclusion. Its operational model focuses on holistic pathway support for migrant and refugee women, combining first-access services (language and social orientation), labour-market preparation (training, coaching), and structured navigation to local systems (public services, NGOs, and community resources). In local implementation, CIVITAS collaborates with municipal services, employment and social support

institutions, education providers, and community groups, enabling practical linkage between individual needs and the relevant services in the city. This positioning makes CIVITAS a key delivery partner for modules related to connecting beneficiaries to systems, mentoring and coaching, and on-ramp training (language, digital, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills).

#### Implementation capabilities

- Focus Group (local): women
- Activities (focus entering the labour market):
  - learning Polish
  - training (*Entrepreneurial, vocational, digital*)
  - mentorship and coaching
  - support connecting to existing networks/systems (*for psychosocial support, housing, employment, childcare, community support groups*)

#### Stakeholder collaboration (implied by activities and local embedment)

- Municipal and local public services (social support, employment offices)
- Education providers (language/VET/digital)
- NGOs and community groups (psychosocial and peer support)
- Housing and childcare actors (as part of systems navigation)

#### Contribution to SIMPLE model initiatives (module fit)

- Training courses (language, vocational, digital, entrepreneurship): deliverable at local level.
- Mentoring and coaching (employability and entrepreneurship): deliverable; integrates with local services.
- Connecting migrants to existing systems (education enrolment, childcare, employment offices, housing, psychosocial): core strength.
- Provision of psychosocial support (via connection): feasible through networked services and community groups.
- Stakeholder dialogues / policy roundtables: possible via municipal interfaces and local networks.
- Awareness / arts / community events: possible in partnership with community groups (as engagement layer).

- Youth/community events: possible when relevant to women/family participation.

### **Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE)**

The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE) is a transnational association of regional and local authorities across the Adriatic-Ionian region, facilitating cooperation in socio-economic development, territorial cohesion, and community participation. AIE operates as a governance and coordination body with established links to public administrations, cultural institutions and civil-society organisations. Its engagement in European territorial cooperation enables adaptation and transfer of social innovation practices across local and regional contexts. Within SIMPLE, AIE strengthens cross-regional knowledge transfer, stakeholder collaboration and the dissemination of effective inclusion models targeting migrant and refugee women.

Implementation capabilities

Focus groups:

- Rural women
- Youth
- Refugee women
- Migrant women
- Local community members
- Activities:
  - Language learning support
  - Social support and community-based activation
  - Employment and vocational support
  - Cultural and artistic activation for inclusion
  - Training courses
  - Mentoring and coaching
  - Awareness-raising initiatives
- Stakeholder collaboration and strengths:
  - Local communities

- NGOs
- Local governments and municipalities
- Employers and SME networks
- Social support institutions
- Educational institutions including universities
- Cultural institutions and creative sector actors

#### Contribution to SIMPLE model initiatives (module fit)

- Training courses: feasible in cooperation with education partners
- Mentoring and coaching: deliverable through local development actors
- Psychosocial support: possible via social support institutions
- Connecting to systems: strong through municipal and NGO networks
- Stakeholder dialogues and policy roundtables: core strength through regional governance role
- Awareness and arts-based activation: strong capability through cultural partners
- Youth and community events: strong local presence and community engagement routes

#### **IHF and IDP – Partner Competency Profile**

IHF is an organisation active in the field of integration, employability and community-based learning projects, supporting migrants and refugees through training and advisory services. It operates at the local level with the ability to mobilise networks in education, employment, and community engagement. In SIMPLE, IHF contributes expertise in workshop delivery, empowerment-oriented learning pathways, and facilitating interaction between migrant women and host communities. Its organisational profile aligns strongly with activities focused on labour market preparation, entrepreneurship orientation and social inclusion.

IDP (Integration and Development Partners) is an entity engaged in the cross-sectoral coordination of services for migrants and refugees, including integration pathways, language and vocational training, as well as civic participation programmes. With strong connections to local authorities and NGOs, IDP focuses on enhancing access to employment and social services for newly arrived

individuals. In the context of SIMPLE, IDP forms a collaborative implementation team with IHF, enabling the delivery of training, mentoring and supportive measures to migrant women and those in transitional phases.

#### Implementation capabilities

Level: Local

- Ideal focus group:
  - Migrant and refugee women
  - Ukrainian refugee women (IDPs)
- Activities:
  - Training on empowerment
  - Entrepreneurship orientation and business awareness
  - Dialogue with business (direct contact with employers)
  - Supporting job-seeking and labour market orientation
  - Non-formal learning and awareness actions
- Stakeholder collaboration and strengths:
  - Local communities (civil society environment)
  - Local public authorities
  - Local businesses and employers
  - Education actors

#### Contribution to SIMPLE model initiatives (module fit)

- Training courses: strong role in empowerment and entrepreneurship learning
- Mentoring and coaching: feasible through employer engagement and support to job seekers
- Connect to existing systems: deliverable via collaboration with public authorities and employment actors
- Psychosocial support: possible through community learning and peer support environment

- Stakeholder dialogues: enabled by established relations with employers and local authorities
- Awareness and community activation: strong local presence and civil society engagement
- Youth/community events: possible within inclusion-oriented activities

### **HÉTFA Research Institute – Partner Competency Profile**

HÉTFA Research Institute is a Budapest-based policy research and consulting organisation specialising in socio-economic development, labour market integration and strategic stakeholder engagement. It operates across public, private and civil society domains, providing evidence-based advisory services, project design and implementation support. Within European cooperation frameworks (Interreg, ESF+, Horizon), HÉTFA has strengthened its capacity in thematic areas such as entrepreneurship promotion, training for marginalised groups, and systems integration of vulnerable populations. In the context of SIMPLE, HÉTFA plays a central role in coordinating partner networks, engaging quadruple-helix stakeholders and ensuring knowledge transfer and impact evaluation across regions.

Implementation capabilities  
(based on information provided)

- Focus areas: Connection to quadruple-helix stakeholders and stakeholder management; training and mentoring women with business ideas; mental-health support connection.
- Target groups: Migrants and refugees, with priority on women; educated women as a priority subgroup.
- Stakeholder networks and strengths: VET providers; SME and business associations; mental-health services.

Contribution to SIMPLE model initiatives (module fit)

- Training courses: deliverable via upskilling women with business ideas
- Mentoring and coaching: core capability via stakeholder management and business network access
- Psychosocial support: particularly via mental-health service linkages

- Connecting migrants to systems: strong via institutional networks of VET and SMEs
- Stakeholder dialogues / policy roundtables: key strength, as HÉTFA can convene multi-actor platforms
- Awareness / arts / community events: possible where integration intersects with business and innovation narratives
- Youth/community events: feasible via regional innovation ecosystems, especially for educated migrant women

### **IT Solutions for All (ITSFA) – Partner Competency Profile**

IT Solutions for All (ITSFA) is a Spain-based non-profit organisation focused on promoting digital inclusion, lifelong learning and employability through information and communication technologies. ITSFA designs and implements innovative training programmes aimed at enhancing individuals' access to the labour market, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their mission is to improve equal access to digital services and strengthen digital competencies as drivers of social and economic participation. ITSFA works closely with community centres, VET providers and SMEs, enabling practical learning pathways that meet local labour market needs. In SIMPLE, ITSFA brings strong operational capacity in structured training delivery, digital empowerment and employability support for migrant and refugee women.

### **Implementation capabilities**

(from INPUTS provided)

- **Focus groups:**
  - Migrants
  - Long-term residents
  - Women as a priority subgroup
- **Activity areas:**
  - Technical training
  - Digital skills development
  - Vocational upskilling within VET frameworks
  - Coaching and labour market preparation
- **Stakeholder collaboration and strengths:**

- VET providers
- Community organisations
- SMEs and employers supporting inclusion pathways

### **Contribution to SIMPLE model initiatives (module fit)**

- Training courses: strong role in digital and vocational training
- Mentoring/coaching: feasible through employment-focused pathways
- Psychosocial support: possible via community partners (not core)
- Connecting migrants to systems: deliverable via VET and employer networks
- Stakeholder dialogues: possible via SME and training networks
- Awareness/community events: feasible in partnership with local organisations
- Youth/community events: feasible when oriented through digital inclusion spaces

### **HOPE – Partner Competency Profile**

#### **General organisational profile**

HOPE is a humanitarian and social support organisation working with migrants and refugees in vulnerable situations, with a strong practical role at community level. HOPE focuses on supporting newly arrived individuals and families in accessing essential services, stabilising their living situations and building pathways towards social inclusion. Their mission includes early intervention, psychosocial support and facilitating participation in local community structures. In SIMPLE, HOPE represents a key partner for direct outreach, trust-building and engagement of refugee women who are at heightened risk of social and labour-market exclusion.

Implementation capabilities

Focus groups:

- 1.1. Newly arrived refugees
- 1.2. Vulnerable migrant women and families
2. Activity areas:
  - 2.1. Humanitarian support and social assistance
  - 2.2. Community outreach and engagement activities
  - 2.3. Support for stabilising living conditions

- 2.4. Navigation towards social and welfare services
- 2.5. Initial pathways to employability and participation
3. Stakeholder collaboration and strengths:
  - 3.1. Close cooperation with municipal social services
  - 3.2. Community support networks and NGOs
  - 3.3. Local authorities and welfare institutions
  - 3.4. Local organisations providing services to vulnerable groups

Contribution to SIMPLE model initiatives (module fit)

- Training courses: supportive role through outreach and mobilisation
- Mentoring and coaching: feasible with a focus on empowerment during transitions
- Psychosocial support: core strength with frontline experience
- Connecting migrants to systems: primary role (housing, welfare, social services)
- Stakeholder dialogues: possible through connection with municipal structures
- Awareness/community events: strong in neighbourhood activation and outreach
- Youth/community events: deliverable depending on family contexts

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