

enhancing labor market opportunities for migrant women

## MOMENTUM of Cooperation

D3.3 Recommendations on integrating the training programme on social economy in formal VET systems

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## Partners List Abbreviations

Partner	Acronym	Country	Type of entity
ActionAid Hellas	AAH	Greece	NGO
Ministry of Migration and Asylum	MoMA (former YMEPO)	Greece	Public Authority
VENETO LAVORO	Veneto Lavoro	Italy	Public Authority
European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises	EURICSE	Italy	Research Institute
Istituto Regionale per l'Educazione e gli Studi Cooperativi-Irecoop Veneto	Irecoop Veneto	Italy	Training Provider
Cruz Roja Espanola	Red Cross Spain	Spain	NGO
La Fundación de la Universidad de Cantabria para el Estudio y la Investigación del Sector Financiero	CISE	Spain	Foundation
Consejería De Universidades, Igualdad, Cultura Y Deporte Del Gobierno De Cantabria	Government of Cantabria	Spain	Public Authority
Impact Hub Network	IH Network	Austria	Private
Impact Hub Lisbon	IH Lisbon	Portugal	Private
Impact Hub Budapest	IH Budapest	Hungary	NGO



## Introduction

This document is drafted and designed to provide diverse key stakeholders in the field of migrant inclusion, vocational training and job market access, with an overview of the methods and methodologies to apply and of the actions to be taken to promote integration of the training programme on social economy in formal VET systems.

The contents are proposed in the frame of the EU funded project Momentum of Cooperation-Breaking silos, promoting young TCN women's access to targeted vocational training and labour market opportunities through Social Economy. The project is co-funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and helps in shaping an effective collaboration among diverse key actors to overcome barriers and obstacles that third-country women, with a focus on refugees aged 18-35 face in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain when trying to benefit by Vocational Training opportunities or to have access to the job market.

The first chapter provides readers with a description of the project, of the activities that have been carried on and of the deliverables that are available online or on demand.

The second chapter focuses on the definition of Social Economy and on the benefit to include this concept in VET system. Moreover, it offers important insights on how to integrate Social Economy in the program and on the different levels of attention that organisers need to pay for an effective and successful training programme.

The third chapter summarizes some methods used in the project on integrating the training programme on social economy in formal VET systems and suggests a set of key actions.

The fourth and last chapter, "Conclusion", sum up the main findings and underlines certain limitations and potential obstacles that need to be taken into consideration.

We invite you to read all project materials (see the section "Materials" of this document), in order to fully understand the territorial contexts in which training take place and to deep the knowledge about the barriers to inclusion that have been identified. In addition, the project



has identified a number of possible actions in response to these barriers, some of which have not been implemented. We invite you to consider them and to eventually discuss them in your circles. We believe that these materials can be a major source of ideas and reflections for all those involved in the integration of migrant women and VET providers.



## 1. The project: description, activities and deliverables

### 1.1. The project

Momentum of Cooperation is an AMIF EU funded initiative focused on reducing barriers faced by migrant and refugee women undergoing the process of socio-economic integration. Through a gender-sensitive and multi-stakeholder approach, Momentum of Cooperation brings together CSOs, Public Employment Services, VET providers and Social Economy Enterprises at local level, to reduce the structural and cultural barriers faced by Third Country Nationals women in accessing targeted and adapted to their needs vocational training and employment opportunities. The project focuses on refugee women aged 18-35 in the three most affected by migrant flows EU countries, Greece, Italy and Spain and two countries with positive (Portugal) and critical (Hungary) approach to integration. Based on a co- designed multi-stakeholder collaboration framework, MOMENTUM aims at:

- breaking the working silos in services provision;
- promoting a whole-of-government approach to skills development and integration;
- responding to TCN women's multiple vulnerabilities.

In partnership with local stakeholders in five EU countries, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Hungary, Momentum delivers vocational training, one-to-one job counselling sessions and peer-to-peer mentoring to young migrant and refugee women, equipping them with educational and entrepreneurial skills and tools to enter the job market. Momentum is a 24-months programme, implemented from January 2022 to December 2023.

### 1.2. The research

Actions and results of the project are deeply rooted into the findings and outcomes of the first activity: the definition of the primary research conducted in all 5 countries between February and August 2023, identifying the barriers TCN women face in accessing vocational training and the labour market. "D2.2 Primary research finding report" highlights all the relevant findings regarding the following objectives:



- map the obstacles and gendered needs faced by young TCN women with a focus on refugee ones in accessing vocational training programs and the labour market in partner countries;
- identify the needs and challenges for improving collaboration among: a) CSOs working with migrants and refugees, b) Public Employment Services, c) Vocational Education and Training providers, and d) Social Economy Organisations, with the aim of facilitating access of TCN women with a focus on refugee ones in targeted training opportunities and the labour market through Social Economy as an emerging, migrant women-friendlier sector.

To analyse the above-mentioned issues, the partners involved in the research activities have carried out interviews and focus groups and disseminated an online survey.

### 1.3. The Integrated Collaboration Framework

The Collaboration Framework is intended as a document that can provide guidance and inputs to test a new vocational training offer that MOMENTUM project designed, and also as inspiring practices that can lead other actors in other countries to replicate the process. It is in line with the second goal of the MOMENTUM project, which aims at increasing networking and collaboration between the diverse actors involved in the process of opening the job market to TCN women. It can thus work as a model for cooperation among different stakeholders to remove these barriers, developed and discussed during some workshops.

### 1.4. Participatory Labs and Ecosystems

In this project, public employment services, VET providers, CSOs and Social Economy Enterprises are brought together to collaborate based on designed roles and processes.

One of the main actions to increase the collaboration and design an innovative approach and training was the organization of five laboratories, carried out in each of the states involved (25 in total). Participants in these laboratories included people from local institutions and organisations, VET providers, and representatives of civil society and migrant associations. The aims of these workshops were to:





- present the research and collect comments and opinions, in order to highlight the most relevant elements at local level;
- review the integrated collaboration framework and design actions to overcome the identified obstacles at local level;
- discuss the training programme and verify its adherence to the needs of the women in the area;
- support and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders from different fields;
- establish contacts on the territory to facilitate dialogue and contact with potential participants.

These workshops were a unique opportunity to cultivate relations and open communication channels among key stakeholders in the area and build a network around the MOMENTUM project.

They also represented an important moment of confrontation for the participating realities, which in all states highlighted the lack of opportunities for confrontation and meeting. Some of the realities participating in these workshops, and others who joined later because they were interested, have created the ecosystem in each country.

The purpose of this is to support the project through constant monitoring throughout the duration of the project.

## 1.5. The training

The aim of the training is to provide TCN women with the necessary skills to support their integration in the open labour market, utilising Social Economy as a possible step for women's integration. The programme lasts several months (approximal 60 hours in total), to provide the critical emotional time needed to build women's emancipation and confidence and provision of solid skills. The skills and competencies of the women are enforced in the following modules:

- "I as a member of a working team". This module includes experiential team-building activities, as well as the delivery of group training sessions to improve women's soft



and employability skills, such as teamwork, communication skills, problem-solving, planning and organizing.

- “Social Economy Organizations”. This module includes the organization of group training sessions to introduce the Social Economy concept, principles and values and the social role of Social Economy Organizations, to understand the different types of social enterprises, exploring relevant examples and the national challenges and context related to the sector.
- “Employability and Entrepreneurial skills”. This module includes the organization of training sessions to provide the beneficiaries with employability and entrepreneurial skills, such as self-management, adaptability and creativity. Using case study exploration, based on social economy model, participants can link these skills with the real context of social enterprises.
- “One day at a social enterprise”. This module includes the organization of visits at social enterprises of the local ecosystem, in order to understand the type of services or products offered by the local social enterprises and the job-related skills needed to work in the sector.
- “I as a members of social cooperative”. Following the visits at local social enterprises, beneficiaries who are interested in working or becoming members of cooperatives or social enterprises, can have the opportunity to understand roles and rights of members of cooperatives. Complementary training sessions on entrepreneurial skills, the use of Social Economy Canvas tool, as well as a brainstorming session with representatives of Social Economy to develop ideas for social enterprises integrating refugee women can be organised.

The training has some special features that make it particularly suitable for the project target group:

- It includes the main concepts, scopes, values of Social Economy and works in collaboration with the entities that compose social economies.
- It is flexible in terms of schedule and organization of the contents, to adapt to the needs of the participants can be very specific and strongly affected by work-life balance.



- It supports and boosts and active participation of beneficiaries, using participatory activities, group dynamics and learning by doing.
- Each participant can access to Mentoring and one-to-one meeting, to address possible difficulties, have a dedicated time and space and support to adapt the path to her needs.
- It boosts the identification and development of soft skills, to support the participants in understanding and using them in their daily and professional life.

## 2. Social Economy and VET providers

### 2.1. A short definition of Social Economy

The term 'Social Economy' (SE) refers to all business activities that are not only driven by a strong social mission but also intended to be economically viable. Social economy is made up of a diversity of enterprises and organisations such as cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations and social enterprises among other forms that can be specific to each country. What makes them part of the social economy are the shared values and features which unite them, for instance they put people over profits, they often have a democratic governance, and they reinvest most profits for the scope of their mission. There are 2 million social economy enterprises and organisations in the European Union, representing 10% of all the European enterprises. More than 11 million, about 6% of total employment, work for social economy enterprises. However, the success of the social economy cannot be solely measured in terms of economic and financial performance, which is nonetheless necessary to the achievement of their goals, but must above all be gauged by their contribution in terms of social cohesion, good quality employment creation, citizenship participation in the economy, solidarity and territorial ties (Source - Social Economy Charter). The European social model has always been characterised by the prominent role played by a variety of organisations which have been active in Europe for nearly two centuries, have been recognised and regulated in many countries through specific legal forms (including in particular the cooperative, the mutual, and the association), have set up their own representative organisations to interact with public authorities, and have contributed in various ways to the social and economic development of our continent. Over time, the evolution of European



society in the context of the global economy has led to the emergence of new and more diversified needs, which in many cases demand new types of responses.

These responses have come in some cases from the public sector or from private businesses, in some cases from civil society and social economy organisations (SSEOs), and in some cases from entirely new organisational forms inspired by the same principles as social economy organisations, combining a social and an entrepreneurial dimension, but resorting to different institutional arrangements. The broad tendency to take charge of social needs on the part of all of these different actors across the public and private sectors usually goes under the term of 'social entrepreneurship', and the new types of organisations that have emerged, particularly starting in the early 1980s, are often called 'social enterprises'.

## 2.2. Which features of the social economy and of SSEOs are most relevant to the inclusion of migrants?

Social Economy, thanks to its defining characteristics and principles, is contributing to several key EU policies and objectives, such as the achievement of a smart, sustainable and inclusive development; quality employment creation and retention, social cohesion, social innovation, local and regional development, international development and cooperation, environmental protection etc. All these elements are closely linked to the aims and methodologies of the project and, in more general terms, those are key factors for inclusion and integration.

For this reason, MOMENTUM bases its intervention on social economy, it introduces and defines the basic element of SE to all participants in the training and builds concrete bridges between them and SSEOs, that are invited as witnesses, and additional occasion of meeting are set by organising visits to these realities.

SSEOs' added value in integration and inclusion stems from their non-profit nature, the person-centred structure they are keen to develop, and their participatory governance. Noteworthy is also the SSE's inclination to build bridges among different groups and stakeholders and its ability to promote the rights and encounter the needs of the most deprived and excluded persons. Many SSEOs have equipped themselves to face migration challenges by directing migrants towards training and job opportunities that are most suitable and in line with their skills, capabilities, talents, and ambitions as early as possible. Some



SSEOs have activated innovative social inclusion paths themselves, when possible, in cooperation with local communities and municipalities, which have facilitated the matching of labour market needs with the supply of labour at the local level. In some cases, inclusion paths have resulted in new economic activities based on taking stock of the formal, survival, and practice-oriented skills of recipients in a variety of economic fields of activity all of which generate a beneficial impact in terms of welfare, employment, and economic development at the local level.

SSEOs play a key role in the inclusion of non-native persons in the hosting territory also through the creation of decent jobs. Being locally rooted and close to the needs of both recipients and the local population, contributes to making SSEOs not only capable of integrating migrants into the hosting labour market, but also of fostering community engagement and supporting local and social economic development. The activation of holistic integration pathways is particularly pertinent for asylum seekers and refugees, who, compared to other migrant groups or natives, have less networks (of nationals, for example) in the receiving society; have less information at the time of departure, and face more economic and future uncertainties.

SSEOs are intrinsically inclined to consider the person not simply as a worker, but as human being with a particular and sometimes complex background. They help migrants to understand both the “setting” and rules of the labour market of the hosting country, which differs often dramatically from the one of their countries of origin, and the diverse cultural values and traditions of the hosting societies. SSEOs embrace a “holistic approach”, which does not limit itself to link integration exclusively to supporting labour-market inclusion, but it presupposes that attention is paid to a number of crucial structural, social and cultural dimensions influencing the path towards social inclusion.

### 2.3. Why should we include social economy in VET curricula?

We can identify several reasons for suggesting the inclusion of these topics within the proposed training system. All these motivations are supported by the experience gained in the project and the opinion of the people involved in the workshops and laboratories.



- SE can provide insights and reflections on issues such as social innovation, sustainable development, personal and individual growth

Rarely during training does one have the opportunity to address these topics with jobseekers. Very often, in fact, the focus is more on passing on technical or specific knowledge, or on reinforcing specific areas of expertise. Instead, addressing the topic of the social economy allows for the introduction of participatory ways of working in education and to address issues of common interest in a dialogic manner.

- SE allows one to reflect on the development models of both the country of arrival and the country of origin, in the case of learners with a migratory background.

Very often the development model of a country is taken for granted, whereas it can be useful to reflect on the various ways in which the economy is managed.

- SE provide a suitable and person-centre approach that can support the women and improve their capacity to reach autonomy.

The social economy places people at the centre of its work, and this approach is important to apply to various aspects of daily life and integration pathways. Talking about social economy in training courses makes it possible to spread this approach as much as possible and to contaminate other environments as well, starting with the ones attended by the participants.

- SE and SEEs are generally more open to values and develop soft skills.

Their inclusion in the training can help the beneficiaries to understand the importance of those skills and to develop them in a safe environment.

- Talking about social economy can be a stylus for developing one's critical capacity

Including topics of current affairs and economic development allows one to train different points of view, and at the same time one's critical sense.

- SE can support self-entrepreneurship and increase the discussion on (social) enterprise



The training, if deemed suitable, can teach how to use tools for entrepreneurship capacity building and can provide a range of useful information for those who wish to start their own business. It is particularly necessary to address the following issues in training for migrants:

1. What differences are there between the labour market in Italy and in the country of origin?
2. What bureaucratic rules exist in Italy?
3. What is the value of a market analysis and how can I do it?

Similarly, the theme of (social) enterprises played an important role both in the research and in the discussions held during the workshops. In some countries, such as Italy, there are courses specially designed for people interested in starting a business. In other contexts, however, this does not happen, and a migrant who wants to start his own business must extricate herself independently between the regulations. These observations allow us to conclude that it is very important to introduce the theme of social enterprise into training, after having analysed the possibilities of training on the territory. It is in any case very important to name these possibilities because there are many stereotypes and misinformation that lead people to think that it is very easy, and others to believe that it is extremely difficult, to work in this field.

- SE emphasises the importance of networking and gives opportunities to meet

The chances to be part of a network are lower for foreigners, especially asylum seekers and refugees, who are often relatively new to a place, and lack long term relationships. Sometimes, they can rely on the community of origin and compatriots, sometimes not even on that (without considering that it is not necessarily a stable support network that guarantees the freedom of assertiveness, particularly for women). More information on this can be found in the research carried out by the project. It confirmed that the lack of a network (or being only part of a network of compatriots) is a very strong limitation for women in particular. The network is important for several aspects: emotional support, dissemination of information also concerning the world of work, support in the work-life balance. SE can support the development of networks, especially with the local community



## 2.4. How should we integrate SE in VET curricula?

In the light of the experience of the MOMENTUM project, it is important that the topic is incorporated consistently within the training.

The theme takes on a connection with many different topics, such as job search, or skills assessment.

It must be the responsibility of the trainers to find the right moment and the right way to propose the topic, but a proper schedule of the modules can help.

Some considerations:

- The first action to do is to analyse which organisations are present on the territory and how social economy is put into practice on the territory. We have emphasised many times how SSEOs are rooted in the territory and how their value stems precisely from this. It is therefore very important to be aware of how they operate (what they are, how many they are, what they do) before structuring a training that includes one or more modules on this topic
- The topic must be introduced with the necessary care and by providing contextual elements. The trainer should find the best moment to introduce the module(s) about SE.
- The terminology used must be understandable, and language sessions specifically on this topic can be organised if necessary
- The topic could need some time to be “digested” and properly understood, it is important to schedule a proper amount of time
- Practical experience is much more comprehensible than theoretical explanations. Testimonials from outside, visits to external realities, cooperative games and participative activities should therefore be encouraged
- Participants may find similarities between the topics presented and their home context: it is important to give space for personal reflection
- It’s also important to highlight the difficulties and limitations of the Social Economy, and possible limitation that occurs in working at SSEOs. These limits are often linked to the local context and trainers need to be aware of them before the training starts.





## 2.5. Why should we involve Social Economy Entities?

There are several important reasons to involve SEEOs from the very beginning of the organization of a training and during its realization, all linked with the features already mentioned.

- SEEOs are rooted in the civil society and can more easily detect the needs, expectations, difficulties and characteristics of the entire population or of a specific target group. They can have a “privileged point of view” over situations, can detect in advance trends and changes of the civil society.

Including them from the moment the programme is defined makes it possible to identify what the needs of possible participants are, both in relation to the skills to be acquired and the demands of the local labour market.

- SEEOs are in touch with beneficiaries or candidates more than others and are generally accepted by the beneficiaries.

This makes it easier to disseminate initiatives widely, to understand what logistical limitations to participation may exist, and how to remedy them. In addition, it allows for intermediaries on the ground to whom potential candidates can express their concerns about participating.

- SEEOs are an engine of inclusion and can bring this approach to the training, to the society and to all entities involved in the project.

As mentioned, the approach characterising most of SEEOs can have important positive effects on training participation. Furthermore, applying participative modes typical of the social economy is particularly significant for persons who do not habitually attend training courses. Including SEEOs makes it possible to use more experiential methodologies, to organise field trips and to carry out practical activities.

- SEEOs can provide an alternative source of information and motivation to women that are not familiar with the labour market or have only limited experience.

People who have no, or limited, experience in the world of work can particularly benefit from integration and cooperation with SEEOs. Specifically, it is possible to organise short meeting sessions, or activities to 'test' one's skills.



- SSEOs can help with providing, during the course or at external times, an assessment of non-formal skills, and help in the self-assessment of skills.

Migrants often find it difficult to equate their qualifications with those of the country of arrival. Moreover, as our research has shown, women often lack formal qualifications. This issue is very important, and stresses that it is necessary both to make employers aware of the evaluation of skills as a whole and to make people aware of the value of their skills, not necessarily linked to a professional qualification. This issue is of primary importance in particular for migrant women, who have statistically less access to education and professional qualifications.

### 3. Methods and actions

The involvement with Social Economy involves:

- the application of methods and methodologies aligned with the principles of equality, participation, sharing, and active involvement that are embodied by SE and at its fundamental;
- the definition of teaching material that can summarise in an understandable way and with concrete examples the meaning of SE;
- the inclusion of one to one and mentoring sessions, to support the woman in difficult moments and in the identification of her strengths, difficulties, capacities, desires;
- the direct involvement of entities of SE at a different level and in different moments of the training;
- the definition of moments of meet and the construction of “bridges” between SEEOS and the participants;
- an increased collaboration and the construction of ecosystems at local level;
- the inclusion of modules about Social Economy in the training.

Depending on the core theme of the training, specific actions can be identified that can bring added value to the training. Among them, it is possible:

- envisage "speed date" sessions with local realities, in order to encourage meetings and knowledge, also with a view to job placement;



- if possible, periods of study or internship at SSEOs may be envisaged
- include moments of testimony from local SSEOs that can bring their own experience both on their own organization, on social issues with which they are in contact, and finally on topics (such as trends in the local labour market) of greater interest to participants;
- it is also useful to explain:
  - the structuring of the SSEOs (management, management board=
  - roles that can be filled, for example, by members, members, employees and the rights and duties of each
  - possible forms of income and deduction
- as a certain level of understanding of the language is necessary in order not to burden and make the presentation of these concepts difficult, it is therefore not recommended to insert a detailed presentation form of the SE in a class with a low level. In this case it is better to include activities derived by the context of the social economy, such as visits and testimonies.

## 4. Conclusions

Although the project is still ongoing, we can already highlight some important considerations. Many local actors, in particular VET providers, have stressed the innovative value of integrating the social economy into the VET system. MOMENTUM represents therefore a first attempt of that that could become a consolidated praxis.

### 4.1. Main findings

- High interest in developing and discussing the integration of the training programme on social economy in formal VET systems in all the countries involved.
- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of providing specific training for the target group of the project, as it is very rare for this to happen.
- Collaboration and networking among stakeholders is a hot topic in all countries, and a potential weakness since there is a general lack of resources (time and money) to



devote to building and especially maintaining networks. In particular, the importance of involving different actors and also VET providers is emphasised.

- Including Social Economy topics within the course was evaluated positively in the majority of cases. Some possible critical points and points to which particular attention should be paid were highlighted.
- The role of the trainer is crucial. He/she must pay attention to the level of understanding on the part of the participants and adapt the intervention. In addition, the trainer must be able to recognise whether there are people in the class who are interested in setting up social enterprises, whether there are people who could benefit from a skills assessment course (often done together with SSEOs), whether there are people who could benefit from more contact with the community (perhaps by volunteering with SSEOs). This information is rarely available before the start of the course. For this reason it is useful that the course provides some organisational flexibility and allows the trainer to decide which topics to address and with which tools,

## 4.2. Limitations

The project also highlighted some possible critical issues, challenges and points of attention.

First, at first it may be difficult to understand why we talk about the social economy in a training that is not directly focused on this issue. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce the subject with the necessary attention and to provide the necessary context for learning.

Another potential problem is the terminology used in the definition of the social economy, that can be difficult to understand. Moreover, definitions are still the focus of studies and research in this field. This means that only very recently we have come to a definition on a European level, which, however, still differs from some national interpretations. The most practical effect is that the subject is likely to become even more difficult to understand.

Moreover, although the social economy can offer support to all people, it is not always appropriate to talk about it in training, especially if these relate to the strengthening of basic skills.



### 4.3. Materials

The project makes all materials available to the public, and also has a constantly updated website. Moreover, you can always contact the organization involved in case of further questions.

All material produced as part of the project can be found on the webpage of the project. This webpage is entirely dedicated to the project and is updated with respect to its evolution and achievements. In addition, it has a 'News' section containing updates on what is happening in the countries involved. The contents are translated into 6 languages

<https://www.momentumproject.eu/>

You can find the primary research finding report - Mapping of obstacles hindering access of young TCN women to vocational training and labour market, with a focus on social economy and the training material produced for the training programme targeting TCN women.



## List of Abbreviations

Find here below the list of abbreviations listed in number

ITC	Integrated Collaboration Framework
TCN	Third Countries Nationals
VET	Vocational Education and Training
PEs	Public Employment Services
SE	Social Economy Actors (Social economy initiatives and Social enterprises)
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
LA	Local Authorities
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math
IT	Information Technology
EU	European Union



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