

JOINT TRAINING METHODOLOGY

D.T1.2.4

Date 09.03.2020

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Introduction

Today, migration-related issues are a very important challenge for local communities, business and national and local governments. The phenomenon of migration is associated with such concepts as intercultural dialog, social innovation or migrant entrepreneurship. These topics combine together into very elaborate subjects. Everything that is related to the processes of migration, migrants and migrant integration are, and will continue to be, important in the context of the socio-economic challenges faced by contemporary Europe.

This document titled “Joint training methodology” has been written for the Arrival Regions project implemented as part of the European Territorial Cooperation Program “Interreg Central Europe 2014-2020” co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund. The Interreg Central Europe Program supports improvement of the skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions by financing projects such as Arrival Regions. The project's focus is on social innovations, which are considered a driver for social change, among others, in rural areas.

This document focuses on the specific methods which are going to be used during the workshops on the following subjects:

- Intercultural dialog;
- Social innovations;
- Migrants' economy.

The Joint Training Methodology is addressed to Trainers who will deliver the workshops for the target groups of the Arrival Regions Project - regional and local stakeholders, such as representatives of educational institutions, businesses, business environment institutions, government administration and socio-economic partners.

The methodology is supposed to contribute to the standardization of the conduct of workshops, the quality assurance of the workshops and the building of knowledge and awareness among workshop participants and other stakeholders.

1. Context and methodological guidelines

The methodological context consists of topics to be covered by the workshops conducted as part of the Arrival Regions Project. The first involves the subjects of preventing and combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. Another subject area, social innovations, will be discussed primarily in the context of education for integration. The whole body of the topics to be raised ends with the subject of the migrants' economy. The topics that make the methodological context are shown in the following figure:

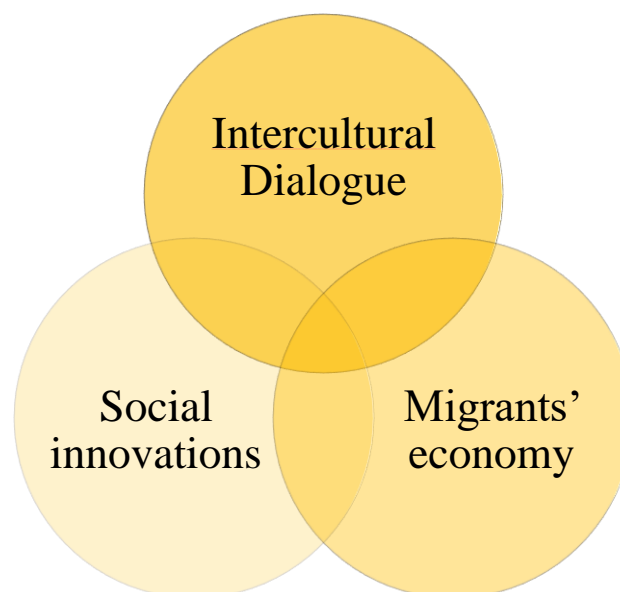


Figure 1. Topics making the methodological context

Source: Own study based on materials from workshops for Trainers – Pilsen, 2019

The topics constituting the methodological context are identical for all the organizations partnering in the Arrival Regions Project. However, these thematic areas are so broad that each of the organizations and each Coach can modify them according to their own requirements. At the same time, these requirements should be based on the methodological guidelines for the workshops, which are presented in this document.

The methodological guidelines for each of the workshops are listed below:

- a. The first workshop on Intercultural Dialogue:
 - Convey the idea of importance of respect for other cultures, religions and customs;

- Aim to achieve a common understanding of the idea of integration.
 - Encourage workshop participants to engage in discussions.
 - Ensure that each participant has a space for the presentation of their views.
 - Convey information and descriptions of various views, cultures and life styles.
 - Consider that the idea of tolerance is multidimensional and multifaceted.
 - The use of the term “tolerance” should mean a natural and uninhibited approach to others without negative associations.
 - Convey that the intercultural dialog should act against racism.
 - Convey that self-reflection is particularly important and useful.
 - Convey that communication skills can and should be learned, like the seeking of mutual understanding.
- b. The second workshop on the Social Innovations
- Stress the importance of new practices in social life (e.g., e-citizen).
 - Highlight the role of education including extracurricular and online education.
 - Describe the role of communication campaigns (awareness raising) addressed to both migrants and local communities.
 - Convey information on the importance of mobility (particular on rural areas) and how social innovations can promote this mobility.
 - Convey information on how social innovations can support the labor market.
 - Describe how social innovations can provide new ideas for, and inspire, local communities.
 - Stress the importance of communication and education.
- c. The third workshop on Migrant’s Economy
- Motivate participants to support immigrants on the labor market.
 - Encourage the building of mutually supportive communities.
 - Promote migrants’ self-employment and motivate the stakeholders to create a supportive environment.
 - Stress that everybody works for the local and regional economic growth.
 - Stress that mutual support is very important.
 - Remind participants that migrants experience hardship, also in economic terms, and many of them are the sole providers for their families, both in Europe and in their home countries.

- Stress that new technologies can facilitate entrepreneurship – like education, good communication, readiness to absorb mobility, or social support.
- Stress that the idea of a civic society is important not only for migrants but also for local communities.
- Stress that infrastructure is important not only for migrants but also for local communities.
- Stress that the labor market should offer diverse employment opportunities to immigrants.

Although the Partners to the Project represent different countries, organizations and environments, they share the same values and they have common goals. According to the guidelines, the workshops are supposed to present ideas for providing non-EU residents with rights, services and opportunities identical as those offered to local communities.

The authors of this methodological concept emphasize the fact that effectiveness of implementation of social innovations depends on continuation of the process of integration. This process should be defined as a positive attitude, willingness to sustain one's own cultural heritage, openness and involvement in the life of the receiving society.¹

¹ I.Parfieniuk: „Między marginalizacją a integracją. Wybór jednostkowych strategii akulturacyjnych i ich uwarunkowania. Procesy migracji w społeczeństwie otwartym. Perspektywa edukacji międzykulturowej.”, edited by J.Nikitorowicz and D.Misiejuk, *Trans Humana Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteckie*, Białystok 2009, ISBN 978-83-61209-30-0.

2. Workshops specific objectives

The main objective of the workshops is to equip their participants with new, valuable and practical skills and competences in implementing social innovation that can contribute to integration of non-EU nationals into local communities.

The detailed objectives have been set for each topical area of the workshops:

- **“Intercultural dialog – preventing and combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance”**
 - Provide the participants with new information on, and skills in, communication, intercultural dialog and equalitarian language.
- **“Social innovation”**
 - Provide the participants with new information on, and skills in, developing and implementing social innovations, following relevant good practices and using social innovation-supporting tools.
- **“Migrant entrepreneurship”**
 - Provide the participants with new information on, and skills in, doing business, stimulating entrepreneurial attitudes, recognizing entrepreneurial models and following good practices associated with migrant entrepreneurship.

3. Common values

The methodological context to, and the guidelines for, the individual topical areas of the workshop, presented in this chapter, translate into the universal values that should be conveyed during the whole process of the conduct of the workshop and cooperation with the stakeholders. These values are shown below.

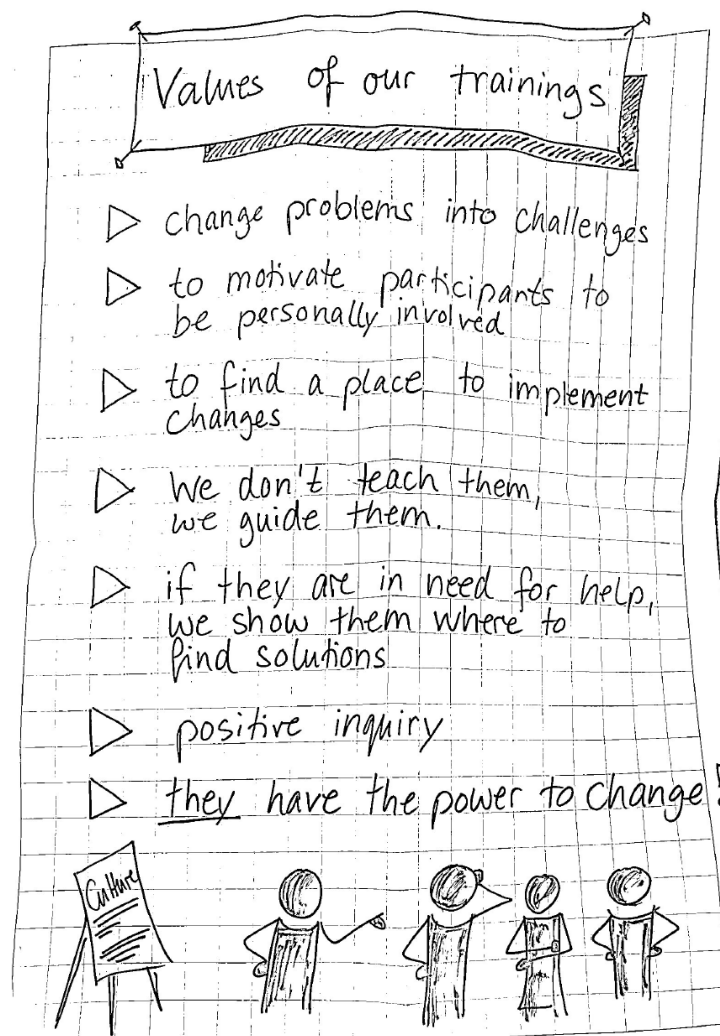


Figure 3. Guiding values communicated by the workshops

Source: Own study based on materials from workshops for Trainers – Pilsen, 2019

The values conveyed by the workshops should be focused on positive aspects, and opportunities for alleviating difficult or crisis situations. **This methodology aims to facilitate this work by systemizing the approach to both organizational and substantive aspects.**

4. Organization of the workshop

The aims presented in this document, supposed to orientate the delivery of the workshops, are intended to provide guidelines on what values should be conveyed during the workshops. The organizational approach is the “last but not least” aspect important to the quality of the workshops. **Note that the workshops are an element of the larger process supposed to contribute to make a change on rural areas.**

The organization of the workshops can be illustrated as follows:

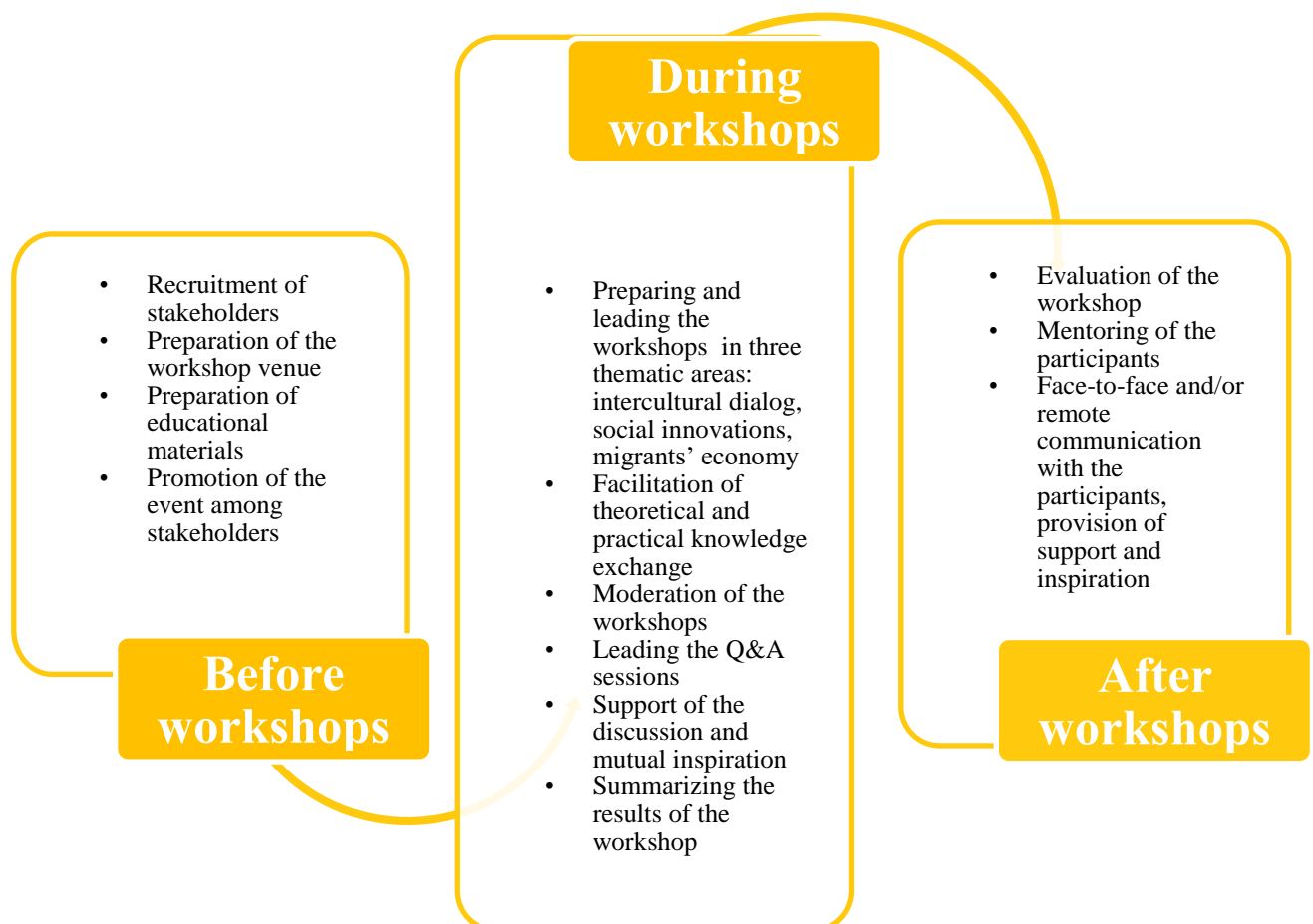


Figure 2. Workshop organization steps

Source: Own study based on materials from workshops for Trainers – Pilsen, 2019

5. Requirements and Regulations

The proposed **rules for applying the methodology** are as follows:

- a) **The workshops should be attended** by representatives of academic and educational institutions, business and its environment, government administration and by other stakeholders such as social enterprises, NGOs; social economy organizations, etc. The Project Partner and/or the Coach is responsible for the recruitment of participants for the workshops (depending on provisions of the Coach engagement agreement).
- b) The overall time frame of delivery of the workshops are identical for all the Project Partners. **The workshops should be held between May and December 2020.** Exact dates and delivery sequence should be agreed on in each instance between the Coach and the Project Partner.
- c) **Trainers selected by Project Partners are required to provide training materials for workshop participants.** These materials should be prepared in the hard copy and electronic formats. It is very important to ensure that the materials contain information about the Project and a marking following the rules of the European Territorial Cooperation Program – Interreg Central Europe 2014-2020. Each Project Partner shall attach a single complete package of the materials to the Workshop Performance Report.
- d) **Each workshop should take approx. 6 hours.**
- e) Each workshop has to start with an introduction and presentation of the Arrival Regions Project idea and of the sources of financing.
- f) Each of the three workshops has to contain a theoretical part as an introduction to the subject to ensure that the participants are on an equal footing as regards their knowledge of the workshop context.
- g) One half of each workshop should be spent on introducing the subject, clarifying problems and presenting the Arrival Regions Project. The remaining time should be devoted to practical exercises and individual or group activities.
- h) Each workshop should end with a summary and Q&A session.

- i) Each Coach is required to provide the questionnaire participants for the purpose of workshops' evaluation. The questionnaire will be identical for all the Arrival Regions Project Partners. The Coach should submit an English summary of, or a report on, the evaluation and/or completed questionnaire forms within one week from the completion of the workshops.
- j) **Mentoring provided by the Coach to the workshop participants** is an indispensable part of the activity. The Coach is required to provide up to 40 hours of mentoring (see Appendix 3). The mentoring should consist of:
- Face-to-face or on-line support for the workshop participants (individuals and groups or communities);
 - Remote support via e-mail, phone, Facebook, Skype, etc.;
 - Experience sharing: offering advice and consultation related to implementation of solutions presented at the workshops;
 - Staying in touch with representatives of the Arrival Regions Project for consultation of matters related to the mentoring and its course, as well as any matters relevant to the conduct of implementation of the process or organizing local communities;
 - Timely preparation of a mentoring report and submission of the report to the relevant Arrival Regions Project Partner.

6. Workshop agenda examples

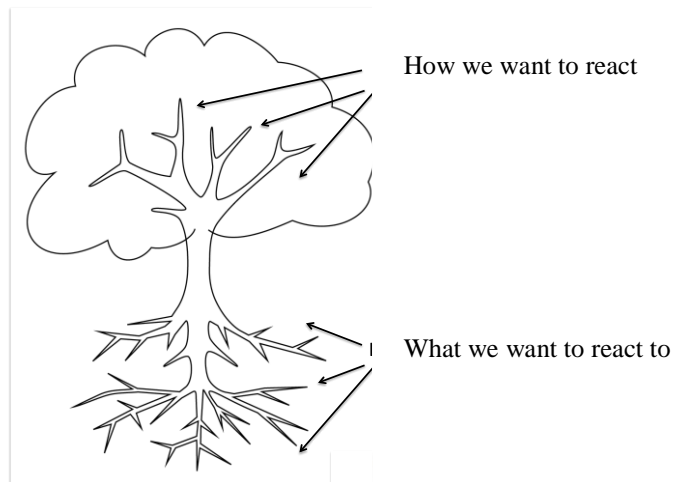
a. Workshop agenda example - Intercultural Dialogue

One day training – approx. 6 hours (start: 9:00 AM, end: 3:00 PM)

	Duration	Timing	Session description
Introduction	90 min	09:00– 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of participants • Discussion of the workshop purpose and guidelines • Setting of rules for the conduct of the workshop • Presentation of participants’ expectations • Presentation of the Arrival Regions Project, its purpose and guidelines (PowerPoint presentation supplied by the Project Partner)
Coffee break	30 min	10:30– 11:00	
Workshop	75 min	11:00– 12:15	<p>Theoretical part (introduction to the subject, explanation of problems, lecture):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The nature of the intercultural dialog in the past and today - Racism - background and effective means of preventing and combating - Xenophobia and other “-isms” and “-phobias” – the origins and the practice - Models of escalation of xenophobic behaviors - Dialog vs. equality-sensitive language – how to prepare for dialog and how to learn an equality-sensitive language <p>This part of the workshops is focused on the learning about the theory, importance and background of the intercultural dialog. It also explains the background to racism and other types of discrimination, which will enable workshop participants to diagnose such situations correctly at their roots and to counteract.</p>
Lunch	60 min	12:15– 13:15	Networking of participants
Workshop	75 min	13:15– 14:30	<p>Practical part (exercises, individual and group activities for participants):</p> <p>Warm-up activity: Three things. Ask the participants to name three things (a car, meal, color, fictional character) that describe their personalities best and start from the first letters of their names. For instance: “Charles” – “colorful”, “cat”, “cake”</p> <p>Main activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what and how you want to respond <p>The activity is divided into two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual work: Each participant writes down 2 situations to which he or she wants to respond.

- Work in groups (5 persons each): Each participant writes down 2 situations. The sheet is circulated, each person adds 2 other situations and the sheet returns to the original author.
- Now we have 10 situations to which the members of the group want to respond. The situations are the roots of the tree and the responses make the crown of the tree.

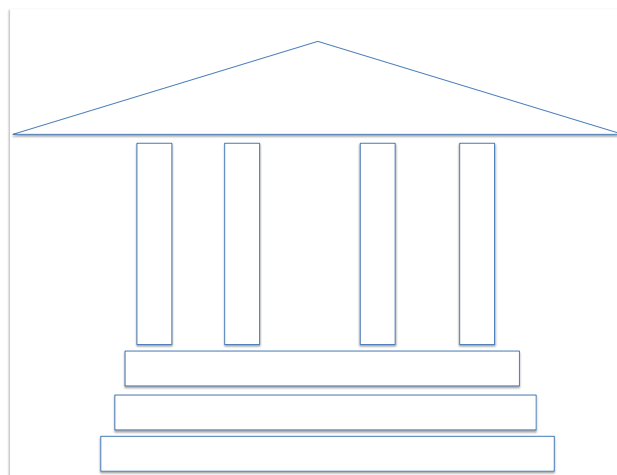
Exemplary illustration: the “roots” (situations) and the “crown” (responses)



The task inspires individual work and thinking about situations involving discrimination or exclusion perceived as particularly problematic. Also, the activity shows that responses can be found by working together.

2. House: The planning of campaigns for equality at a local level. This group exercise inspires discussion on possible local activities. The activities should be written within the illustration of the house at the right place in terms of importance: the foundation, columns and roof.

Exemplary illustration:



While working in groups on the task, participants can acquire knowledge on views and hierarchies of values in others, as well as practical skills and competences for working in groups and for building agreement.

Q&A session with wrap-up	30 min	14:30– 3:00 PM	<p>This is a summary of the theoretical and practical parts of the workshops.</p> <p>The participants are given time to ask questions about the theoretical and practical parts.</p> <p>Each participant wraps up the workshops and describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What he or she has learned and what was most surprising - Ideas for new behaviors and takeaways
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b. Workshop agenda example - Social Innovations

One day training – approx. 6 hours (start: 9:00 AM, end: 3:00 PM)

	Duration	Timing	Session description
Introduction	90 min	09:00– 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of participants • Discussion of the workshop purpose and guidelines • Presentation of the rules for the conduct of the workshop • Presentation of participants’ expectations • Presentation of the Arrival Regions Project, its purpose and guidelines (PowerPoint presentation supplied by the Project Partner)
Coffee break	30 min	10:30– 11:00	
Workshop	75 min	11:00– 12:15	<p>Theoretical part (introduction to the subject, explanation of problems, lecture):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovations vs. social innovations – What are they? How to develop and implement? - Tools for support of the management of social innovations - The role of social innovations in the innovativeness of the region - Examples of good practices in the social innovation <p>This part of the workshops enables the learning of the theory on technological innovations and non-technological innovations. Presents the nature of social innovations, development models and good implementation practices. The purpose of this part is to present social innovations simply, as an inspiration for the participants to feel encouraged in developing social innovations on their own.</p>
Lunch	60 min	12:15– 13:15	
Workshop	75 min	13:15– 14:30	<p>Practical part (exercises, individual and group activities for participants):</p> <p>Warm-up activity: Three things. Ask each participant to tell three things about themselves, including one lie. Ask the others to discover</p>

		<p>the lie. Example: “I am Anne. I like to get up early. I start my day from a coffee. I like Austrian cinema. It is not true that I start my day from coffee because I prefer green tea.”</p> <p>Main activity:</p> <p>1. Find innovative ideas for social innovation:</p> <p>Diagnose a social problem in the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The participants (working in 5 groups of 5 persons each) identify a major problem that they want to solve with a social innovation. They draw a tree of problems and a corresponding tree of goals they want to achieve. <p>The task inspires individual work and thinking about situations involving discrimination or exclusion perceived as particularly problematic. Also, the activity shows that responses can be found by working together.</p> <p>2. Persona</p> <p>Five groups of 5 persons each create a “Persona”. This is a management tool used in the Design Thinking process that, in turn, is used for developing social innovations. The Persona is a real person likely to use the product or service serving as an inspiration to the Design Thinking process.</p> <p>This activity inspires teamwork and teaches in practice how to create the Persona as part of the Design Thinking process. The conceiving of the Persona builds awareness of possible identity, needs and expectations of the addressee. This makes it possible to tailor a social innovation based on hard facts about the audience rather than on intuitions of the developers of the innovation.</p> <p>3. Canvas to the business model</p> <p>Five groups of 5 persons each develop a business model for a social innovation. The model is based on the business model canvas proposed by Osterwalder & Pigneur. The model consists of 9 main building blocks used to build value by an organization. The blocks concern 4 main areas of the business activity: <i>client</i>, <i>offer</i>, <i>infrastructure</i> and <i>finance</i>.</p> <p>The Triple Layer Business Model Canvas (TLBMC) can be presented as a tool to support the creative exploration of sustainable business models and sustainability-oriented innovation. The TLBMC complements and extends Osterwalder & Pigneur (original economically-oriented business model canvas concept with new canvas layers exploring environmental and social value creation. These additional layers both parallel the original business model canvas by highlighting the interconnections which support environmental and social impacts separately, and extend it by drawing connections across the three layers to support an integrated triple bottom line perspective of organizational impact.</p> <p>The activity inspires individual and group work and teaches how to develop a business model canvas in practice for use in the development of social innovations. It also demonstrates how</p>
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			<p>important it is to design a specific value for the addressees (Persona). While working in groups on the task, participants can acquire knowledge on views and hierarchies of values in others, as well as practical skills and competences for working in groups and for building agreement. The participants have a practical opportunity to apply tools used for developing social innovations. This theory and practice will make it possible to inspire the participants create social innovations in their own environments.</p>
Q&A session with wrap-up	30 min	14:30–3:00 PM	<p>This is a summary of the theoretical and practical parts of the workshops.</p> <p>The participants are given time to ask questions about the theoretical and practical parts.</p> <p>Each participant wraps up the workshops and describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What he or she has learned and what was most surprising - Ideas for new behaviors and takeaways

Workshop agenda example - Migrants' Economy

One day training – approx. 6 hours (start: 9:00 AM, end: 3:00 PM)

	Duration	Timing	Session description
Introduction	90 min	09:00–10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of participants • Discussion of the workshop purpose and guidelines • Presentation of the rules for the conduct of the workshop • Presentation of participants' expectations • Presentation of the Arrival Regions Project, its purpose and guidelines (PowerPoint presentation supplied by the Project Partner)
Coffee break	30 min	10:30–11:00	
Workshop	75 min	11:00–12:15	<p>Theoretical part (introduction to the subject, explanation of problems, lecture):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of entrepreneurship as a key to economic growth - Entrepreneurship and its dimensions in the business and in the daily life - Stimulation of entrepreneurial attitudes among immigrants - Immigrant entrepreneurship models - Good practices in the migrants' economy <p>This part of the workshops enables the learning of the theory on entrepreneurship, its importance and roots. It also explains the</p>

			background to entrepreneurship and how to stimulate it. The participants will also learn good practices in fostering the migrants' economy.
Lunch	60 min	12:15– 13:15	
Workshop	75 min	13:15– 14:30	<p>Practical part (exercises, individual and group activities for participants):</p> <p>Warm-up activity: Toilet paper roll. Ask each participant to tear off as many pieces of paper as they want. Then have each person tell as many things about themselves as the number of the pieces taken. This activity is a warm-up but also points at an important aspect to entrepreneurship: what and how much we take upon ourselves has its consequences and translates into further engagement.</p> <p>Main activity:</p> <p>1. Discussion of the career of the founder of the Solaris Bus & Coach S.A. (for more information for more information read Appendix 4), review of the case study and development of a model career path for a migrant.</p> <p>Five groups of 5 persons each develop a model career path based on their experience, knowledge and information sharing with other group members.</p> <p>While working in groups on the task, participants can acquire knowledge on views of others, as well as practical skills and competences for working in groups and for building agreement.</p> <p>The taking of the test will give each participant an opportunity to think about their entrepreneurial attitude and its ingredients. On the other hand, the participation in the career path development workshop will create space for reflection on a policy for supporting careers of migrants.</p>
Q&A session with wrap-up	30 min	14:30– 3:00 PM	<p>This is a summary of the theoretical and practical parts of the workshops.</p> <p>The participants are given time to ask questions about the theoretical and practical parts.</p> <p>Each participant wraps up the workshops and describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What he or she has learned and what was most surprising - Ideas for new behaviors and takeaways

For each of the subject, the Coach should refer to his or her good practices based on experience and knowledge of the specifics of the region and of relevant barriers and opportunities.

References

1. I.Parfieniuk: “Między marginalizacją a integracją. Wybór jednostkowych strategii akulturacyjnych i ich uwarunkowania. Procesy migracji w społeczeństwie otwartym. Perspektywa edukacji międzykulturowej.”, edited by J.Nikitorowicz and D.Misiejuk, *Trans Humana Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteckie*, Białystok 2009, ISBN 978-83-61209-30-0
2. <https://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eupolicylab/technology-and-social-innovation-for-migrant-integration/>
3. <https://www.ewt.gov.pl/strony/o-programach/przeczytaj-o-programach/programy-europejskiej-wspolpracy-terytorialnej/europa-srodkowa/>
4. <http://slq.nu/index4dfc.html?article=denmark-from-book-container-to-community-centre>
5. <https://www.solarisbus.com/pl/firma/o-nas>

Appendix 1 - Arival Regions Participant Feedback Form

TITLE OF EVENT

LOCATION AND DATE

About you

Gender: Male /Female Other / prefer not to say (please underline the appropriate answer)

Age: Less than 30 /Over 30 (please circle the appropriate answer)

Organization type academic and educational institutions/ business and its environment/
government/regional/local administration/ other

(please underline the appropriate answer)

Please outline briefly your current involvement in migrant integration (for example: “migrant integration is the main focus of my work”, “migrant integration is an additional aspect to my work in social services”, “I employ migrants/ I lead a group of employees in which there are migrants”, “I work with migrants”, “I teach migrants”, etc.)

.....

What did you think of the workshop/event? (please circle the appropriate answer)

For each statement, please mark the number that most closely represents how you feel	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Overall, the workshop/event met my expectations	5	4	3	2	1
The trainers were knowledgeable and capable	5	4	3	2	1
I have acquired new knowledge and skills that will be useful for my work	5	4	3	2	1
I have made new contacts with other professionals that will be useful for my work	5	4	3	2	1
I am likely to apply my new knowledge and skills in my work over the coming months	5	4	3	2	1
I am likely to share my new knowledge and skills with professional colleagues over the coming months	5	4	3	2	1

What recommendations do you have for improvements to the workshop/event overall?

.....
.....
.....

Do you have any recommendations or comments on the training materials?

.....
.....
.....

What recommendations do you have for ... (Arrival Region partner) to follow up on this workshop/event?

.....
.....
.....

What recommendations do you have for the authorities in your country/region/city to improve migration integration?

.....
.....
.....

Any other comments or feedback?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 2 - Arival Regions Workshop Report

Contract Details:

[Your Institution Name]

[PP number]

[Name]

[Tel.no.]

[Email]

Workshop Date:

Name of Workshop:

No. of Participants:

Location:

Feedback (5 000 characters)

- number and type of participants/stakeholders
- participants' expectations
- good practises presented
- questions raised by participants
- issues discussed

Photos

Attachments:

- Agenda
- Participants list
- Participant Feedback Form

Appendix 3 - Mentoring Report

[Mentor Name:]

Date and duration of the mentoring meeting:

Name of Mentee:

Tool used for communication

(Face-to-face or on-line via e-mail, phone, Facebook, Skype, etc.)

Main issues covered during the meeting

Appendix 4 - *Solaris Bus & Coach S.A.* good practice

Solaris Bus & Coach S.A. is one of the European leaders in the production of buses and trolleybuses. Based on over 20 years of experience and over 18,000 vehicles manufactured. Solaris Bus & Coach S.A. is one of the leading European bus and trolleybus manufacturers. Benefiting from almost 25 years of experience and having manufactured more than 19,000 vehicles, Solaris affects the quality of city transport in hundreds of cities across Europe every day. The Solaris Urbino 12 electric won the prestigious European "Bus of the Year 2017" competition. In September 2019 Solaris Bus & Coach S.A. joined CAF Group, which acquired 100% of the shares of the company. The brand's creators are Solange and Krzysztof Olszewski. Krzysztof is a graduate of the Warsaw University of Technology in the field of mechanical engineering. During his studies he took a dean's leave to obtain craft qualifications in the field of automotive mechanics (student, journeyman, and finally master). During the holidays he went to work in Sweden, in Stockholm. He took another dean's leave to work together with his wife Solange for a year in Sweden, and then bought half the car repair shop in Warsaw for the money he earned. From 1976 to 1981 he apprenticed and then ran a private car workshop. When he went to West Berlin in December 1981, Martial law began in Poland. Given the uncertainty about the situation in Poland, he decided to stay with in West Berlin. From January 1982 he was employed at the Berlin factory of Neoplan. There he designed central electrical installation significantly improving bus service. He found a common language with the head of the company, who also had technical education and craft qualifications. He was promoted quickly. In 1985 he became the director of a Berlin plant. It was the highest position a person who did not belong to the Auwärter family could achieve in this company. The experience gained during 14 years of work at the company "Gottlob Auwärter GmbH", a producer of Neoplan brand buses, strongly influenced his subsequent independent activities as an entrepreneur. In the first half of the 1990s he returned to Poland and on August 2, 1994 he founded an independent Sales Office in Warsaw, representing the "Gottlob Auwärter GmbH" company. In the same year, together with his wife, he founded the company Neoplan Polska, as a family company with 100% Polish capital. In the years 1994–1995, this company dealt with the distribution of German Neoplan products in Poland. Initially, during the week, Krzysztof still managed the factory in Berlin, and he came to Poland only on weekends, promoting and selling buses. For this purpose he used a city bus, acting as a show bus and a mobile office.

In September 1995, after winning a large contract with MAN for the delivery of 72 city buses to Poznań, he decided to set up his own factory. He got permission from the Auwärter family to use the "Neoplan" brand and the construction of the company's buses and coaches. However, he himself had to raise funds for the project. In autumn 1995, the first 36 employees of the company completed an apprenticeship at the Neoplan plant in Berlin. The Neoplan Polska factory was launched in March 1996 in Bolechów-Osiedle near Poznań. The second factory in Środa Wielkopolska was involved in the construction of bus skeletons and components for them from 1998. Neoplan Polska quickly gained about 50% share in the Polish market of low-floor city buses and tourist coaches.

In 1999, together with the debut of the Urbino family models, Krzysztof created a new brand for Solaris buses. At the end of the 1990s, Olszewski was counting on developing cooperation in the production of tourist coaches with the Neoplan company, which in December 1999 bought 30% of the shares in Neoplan Polska. This decision was also influenced by strong competition on the domestic market, affecting the reduction of product prices, and thus the profits of a large investing company. After MAN's takeover of "Gottlob Auwärter GmbH", these plans failed. That is why in September 2001 Krzysztof Olszewski bought back Neoplan's shares in his company and changed its name to Solaris Bus & Coach. The creation of our own brand has enabled export sales, especially on the German market. Earlier it was impossible due to the agreements between Neoplan Polska and Neoplan.

In July 2005, planning to launch the company on the stock exchange, Krzysztof transformed Solaris Bus & Coach from a limited liability company into a joint stock company. Then, due to its good financial condition, seasonality of production and the possibility of hostile takeover of the company, it abandoned its plans to enter the stock exchange. In 2006, the firm which started the low-floor revolution in Poland, is introducing new innovation— its hybrid bus.

Nowadays, the company is a leader in the field of production of trolleybuses as well as the leading manufacturer of electric buses with a vision of further development.