



## CASE - Team Five- BIRD 2023

### **STRUCTURE OF THE CASE – collaboration between young women and students through WINnovators Module 1. “STEM and STEAM entrepreneurship in the communities - Challenges”.**

In April 2023, the first WINnovators pilot training began in Serbia with an online introductory (kick-off) meeting. This initial phase engaged 15 young women, including entrepreneurs or those intending to start their business, from rural areas or marginalized groups like Roma population or returnees (rejected asylum seekers) among others. The young women received support from 15 female students, resulting in the establishment of 15 two-member teams. The first phase of the pilot concluded by the end of June 2023.

#### **Context (where, who, how)**

Three mentors, two from BADEN and one from ABW Serbia, worked individually with five teams each, guiding them to familiarize themselves with the WINnovators platform and aiding them in executing their tasks or challenges more effectively. The first challenge for each team was to develop their own business plan, focusing the interest of young women and students on courses in creative thinking, project management, idea-to-business development, business plan preparation, etc. The one-on-one approach proved successful; young women closely collaborated with students, and each team received individual mentorship support.

Among the most successful teams was Team Five, consisting of Zdravka Simic (a young female entrepreneur and pedagogic Roma assistant in a primary school) and Ana Kovacevic, a student. Zdravka lives in Smederevska Palanka, a small town in Serbia, and Ana is from Belgrade. Hence, their collaboration took place online via Zoom, email, Viber, or phone calls. They regularly communicated with their mentor from ABW Serbia, through Zoom video calls, email, and phone, consistently uploading prepared materials on the platform.

Zdravka Simic shared her experience in a video testimonial at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnRwGCI-46k&t=5s>.

Aside from the knowledge gained, Zdravka highlighted the pilot's benefits, emphasizing the free training accessible at the participants' convenience and availability.

#### **Activity description (what, how, why)**

During the pilot 1 period, Zdravka established her own company, BIRD 2023, in collaboration with several partners, aiming to offer services across multiple sectors: day-to-day housekeeping (maintenance and cleaning), childcare, eldercare, and delivery services. Working closely with her

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student partner and in tight coordination with her, along with mentor consultations, she drafted a comprehensive business plan for her future endeavors. The insights she acquired have increased her self-confidence in seeking appropriate funding. While still in the research phase, we are optimistic that she will secure additional funds to advance her business.

However, a common issue among members of all teams was the challenge of allocating sufficient time for training. Considering their existing commitments to personal, professional, and other everyday matters, time constraints were prevalent. Consequently, the proposal to extend pilot 1 into a pilot 1, part 2, for interested participants was accepted. Approximately 40% of the pilot 1 participants expressed their interest in continuing these activities.

## **Conclusion**

### ***The insights or learning points and recommendations for approaches supporting collective capacity building***

A good response might be the testimony of one of the team members, Ana Kovacevic, a student, who shared her experience in the WINnovators project, pilot 1:

*- By participating in the program, I had the opportunity to explore the world of entrepreneurship in depth. Through various training sessions, I gained insight into the basics of the entrepreneurial world, learned how to write a business plan and approach the key aspects of running a business. I was especially honored to have the opportunity to work with the entrepreneur Zdravka, with whom I drew up a business plan for her company.*

*- Also, one of the most valuable lessons I received during the program was the realization of the importance of including women from marginalized groups in entrepreneurship. Seeing the strength and determination of these women, and realizing how entrepreneurship can be a tool to empower communities, was extremely inspiring.*

*- In the first phase of the program, together with Zdravka, we successfully developed our business plan. I can proudly say that I am very satisfied with what we have achieved at this stage. I feel that we have laid a solid foundation for our future entrepreneurial adventure.*

*- The platform of the Winnovators program gave me access to a wealth of resources and information, allowing me to learn about different areas within entrepreneurship. This experience really changed my outlook on the business world and gave me the confidence to potentially venture into my own entrepreneurial ventures.*

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*- Overall, the program has been a valuable step in my personal and professional development so far. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this inspiring community and look forward to future challenges and opportunities.*

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