

SIMPLE Social Integration of Migrants and activation of Paths for Learning and Employability

Project no. 2019-1-SE01-KA204-060418



Intellectual Output 3

European comparative report

Piloting the narrative visual approach, materials, and tools

“Migrants’ stories through the use of images”

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Find out more about the project (website)

SIMPLE FB page



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Contributors

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International Women's Association offers a place for women of all nationalities and backgrounds. IKF offers study circles, target group-specific projects and an inclusive and warm environment.

Antoniano Onlus, Bologna Italy, *Jasmeen Shehata*

Antoniano was created in 1953 by the Franciscans. The Institute was established as a community services initiative with the goal of helping the less fortunate, a life rule of the Franciscans. Antoniano offers culture, art and songs to every child, woman, and man to create a more beautiful future, especially the more fragile people.

STEPS, (Strategies and Tools to Enhance People's Skills) Bologna Italy, *Noemi Marchiotto*

Steps pioneers approaches to formal and non-formal learning to enable personal growth as well as inclusive and sustainable change in organizations and territories. STEPS activities: training& empowering, complex projects design, communication strategy, sustainable change making.

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Inova provides consultancy services, training, and coaching programmes in the areas of entrepreneurship, employability, career development and wellbeing, with a focus on diversity and equal opportunities.

Innovation Training Centre, Spain, *Begoña Arenas*

ITC provides solutions in entrepreneurship, training, and R&D projects. A team of experts offers experience in different areas as business administration, law, design and engineering, education, and training.

Changes& Chances, The Netherlands, *Ed Santman*

C&C is a network organization that initiates educational programmes for the underprivileged people as a road to a better future. The essence of C&C is the use of educational working methods with the arts as a catalyst for developing social and employability skills.

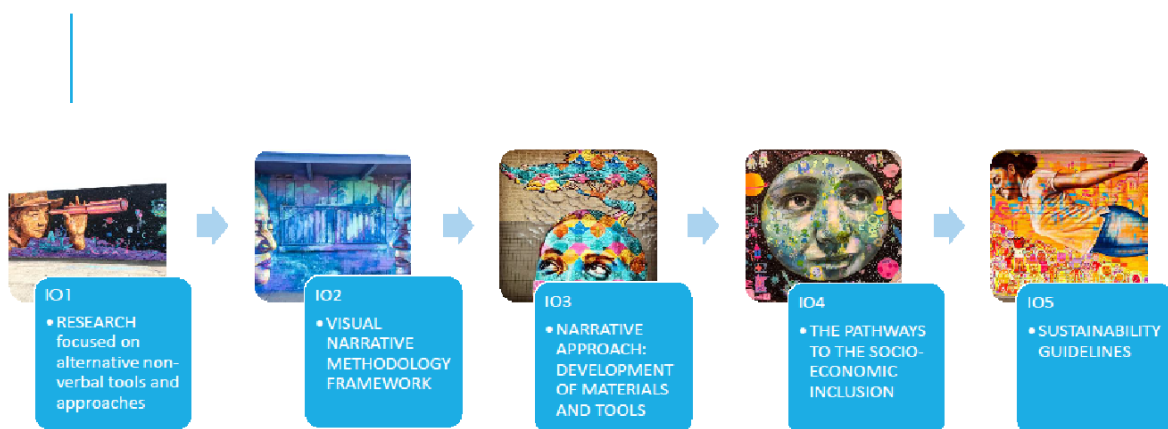
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About SIMPLE project

Background of the SIMPLE project

All European countries are involved in a considerable arrival of migrants, and many of them are asylum seekers, among them are victims of human trafficking. Several attempts have been made in the last few years to implement reception policies by each Member State and at European level. However, most of them are based on a material approach rather than social, psychological and welfare related, focusing more on the legal condition of a person rather than on the social condition, which, indeed, is key to devising good reception and integration policies, both for the sake of incomers and local communities. In every migration, incomers often carry along a psycho-emotional burden of violence and/or physical, sexual, psychological abuse, which needs to be dealt with, not just deciding about a person's life and condition by granting (or not) a permit to stay. It is sadly known that migrants, especially those who come from Sub-Saharan Africa, were very often tortured during their journeys and social operators lack suitable skills and tools to facilitate the integration process of newcomers.



The **SIMPLE** project – **Social Integration of Migrants and activation of Paths for Learning and Employability** – developed and piloted an innovative approach to be applied to facilitate the narration of past stories and events faced by migrant women. SIMPLE will help women to restore their emotional and psychological wellbeing and support a full and fruitful process of social and economic inclusion into the new community.

At the center of the project activities are immigrant women, with a special attention to women traumatized by the travel and human trafficking. In the SIMPLE project the concept of empowerment acquires a significant meaning, as an individual and organized process, through which individuals can reconstruct their ability to choose, design and regain the perception of their own value, their potential and new opportunities. The project's activities are divided in **5 Intellectual Outputs** and will be developed within a two-year framework: from November 2019 until October 2021 by a partnership of 7 institutions from 6 countries: **Sweden, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK.**

Introduction

This document presents the results of the piloting phase of the Intellectual Output 3 (IO3). The piloting phase of the SIMPLE project took place in each partner country which includes Sweden, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Each partner developed a national report with the findings from their partner country, and this report collates the overall impact and success of the piloting phase of the project.

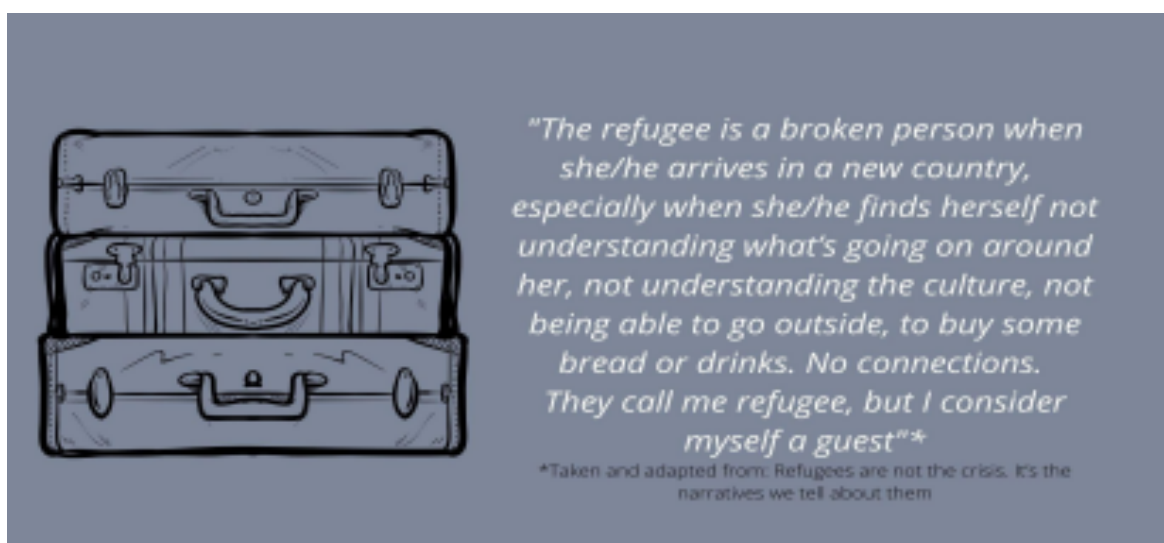
The IO3 had the objective to *create tools* to be used by social operators in their work to support the target beneficiaries and put into practice the intervention model developed by IO2, the visual narrative methodology framework.

The goal of IO3 consisted of *training the operators* and putting them in the conditions to successfully apply the proposed model, as well as testing and assessing the instruments to be used in the different situations typically faced when working with migrants, especially those who suffered post-journey traumas. Some partners piloted the training with operators and other partners with migrant women.

The piloting phase of the project was scheduled between February and April 2021. Some partners have had to postpone their piloting to July 2021 due to the national restrictions in place as a result of Covid-19.

The partnership was able to engage a total of 115 participants in the workshops. Out of these participants, 61 were migrant women and 54 were trainers and social workers.

The workshops organized by the operators were learner-centered, stimulated collaborative learning and call for action so that the learners are not only reading or listening to the trainer but actively doing something (putting the knowledge into practice; method: learning by developing).



Context

The aim of the narrative visual approach is to provide an innovative way to overcome trauma and enhance psychological well-being through non-verbal techniques. The methodology overcomes any limitations faced by migrants when it comes to their language ability.

Out of the box approaches, such as the use of visual narrative methodology, allow professionals to work with clients from a range of cultural backgrounds. One of the lessons learned in this project is that trainers are open to alternative and playful approaches. Starting from the psychologist whose help can be crucial in the stabilization phase of the newcomer to the language teacher or career advisor who can use the tool for better communication and the creation of a relationship with the person.

SIMPLE partners strongly believe that non-verbal tools can improve the path of open-mindedness and acceptance toward an 'newcomer' benefitting mutual understanding and facilitating social integration.

In Italy the visual narrative methodology model was developed and tested by Antoniano Onlus in collaboration with the local network, especially with the multidisciplinary team of Approdi volunteers, who are piloting an innovative psycho-social-health-care system for migrants in Bologna. Such a multidisciplinary team allows the widening of the perspectives on cultural subjectivities, different attribution of meaning and care system. Italian partners evaluate psychological health and define the care program best suited for each assisted person. They define personalized pathways thanks to the collaboration with cooperatives that operate in the institutional reception system and with associations and volunteers on the Bolognese's territory. With this set of assistance people can stabilize and enhance their psychological well-being.

For practitioners Steps Italy and Antoniano Onlus Italy developed a handbook with *materials and tools*: 'Migrants' stories through the use of images. This underpinned the workshop methodology. All partners contributed: IKF Sweden, Arbeit und Leben Germany, INOVA Consultancy United Kingdom, Innovation Training Centre Spain, Changes & Chances The Netherlands.



STORIES THROUGH THE USE OF IMAGES, USING SHUAN TAN'S GRAPHIC NOVEL "THE ARRIVAL"

Silent Books have become a
powerful TOOL for illuminating
the individual lives and share
real-life experiences of
MIGRATION.

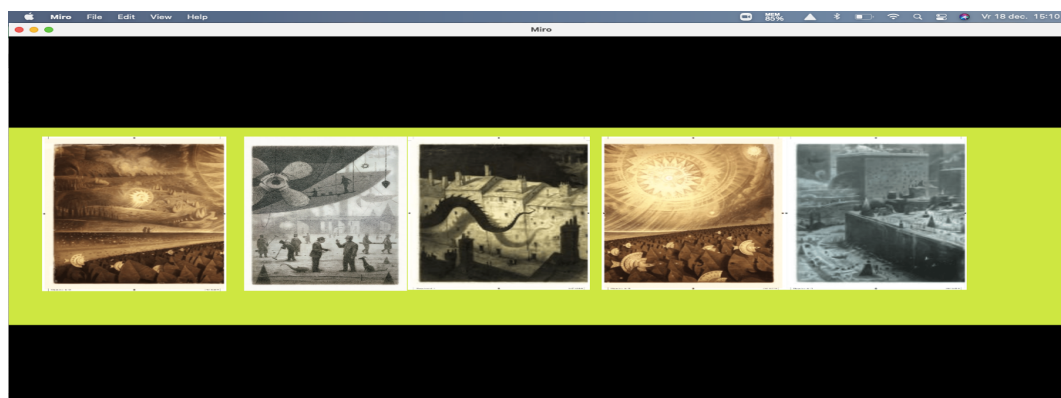


The handbook for practitioners: Materials and Tools 'Migrant stories through the use of images'

The handbook presents tools and materials applicable to the non-verbal narrative methodology. Visual narratives in silent books can be seen as small-scale worlds that take us through the complex dynamic of reading and interpreting cultural, natural, and inner images that we see.

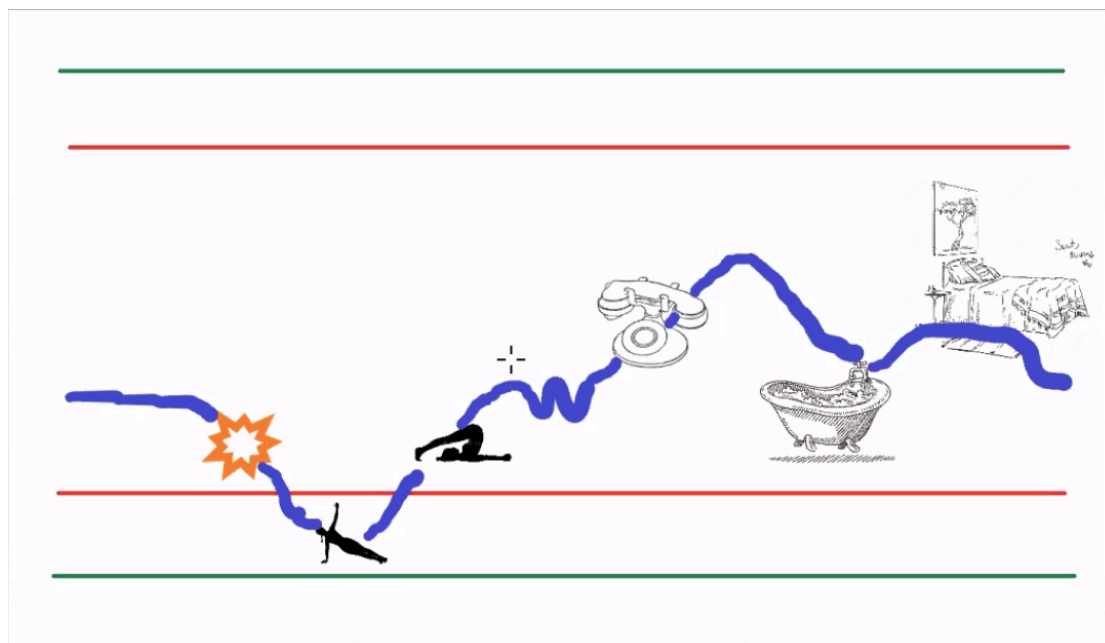
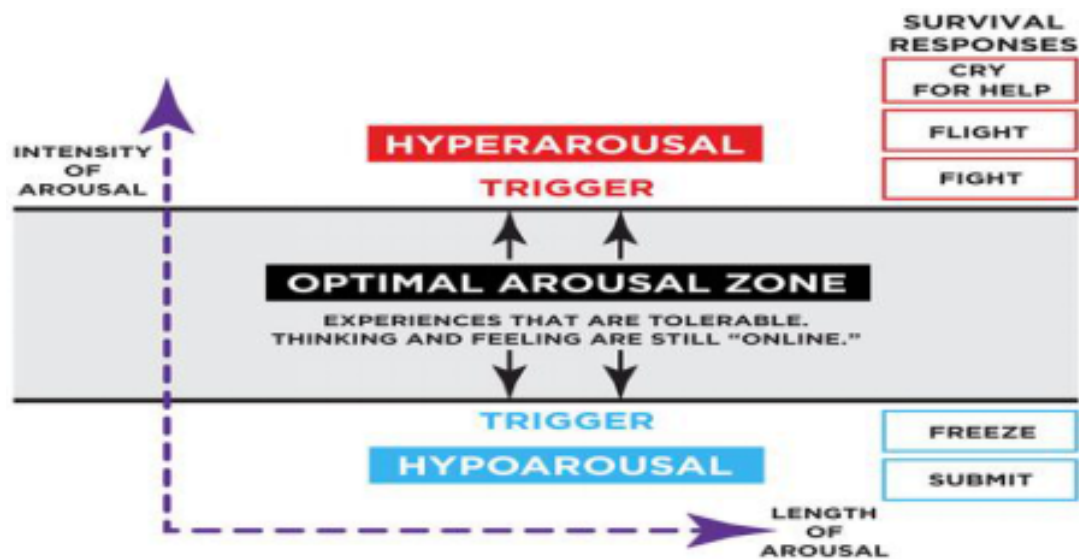
What all these tools have in common is that participants should always feel inside their comfort zone to use them. In addition, to implement these tools, it is essential to have a profoundly non-judgmental attitude and genuine curiosity for the others, who through these tools are sharing with us precious and delicate parts of themselves and their lives.

- *The narrative approach by silent books* revokes the imagination and the voice of the reader and facilitates unforgettable meetings between people as well as representing a successful way to meet across cultural boundaries. They can be tools to work on diversity and inclusion. The process of narration supports the reconstructions of personal life's meanings and allows imagining path for the future. Transforming our experiences into stories, allows us to organize our thoughts, sensations, and emotions. In this SIMPLE project we worked with 'The Arrival' from Shaun Tan, a wordless graphic novel with a story of struggle and survival in a world of unfathomable violence, chaos, and hope.
- The *MIRO digital storytelling tool* was developed by Changes & Changes, The Netherlands. It is a tool to be able to use the images of the book *The Arrival* on the computer. In this tool new images can also be added.

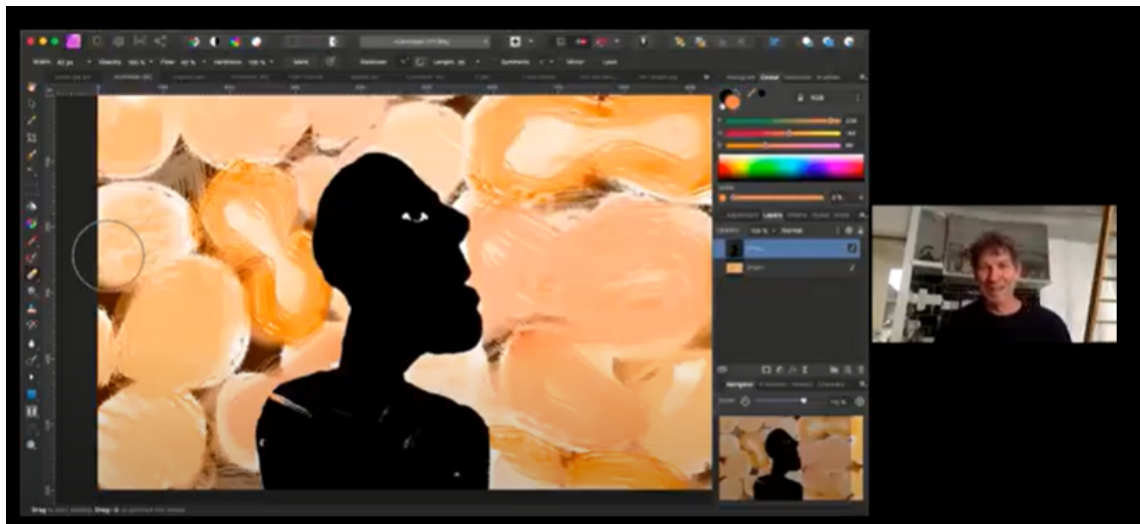


- The window of tolerance aims to promote self-awareness as well as expression and sharing of emotions, sensations, and thoughts.

The window of tolerance is a simple graphic tool created by doctor Seigel to represent brain and body reactions. Thanks to this instrument, individuals can understand their own physiological arousal fluctuation as well as the arousal of others. Being able to observe one's own changes in the arousal, as well as others', is of great importance since it allows us to implement effective strategies to regulate this arousal.



- *Art-based tools* for creative expression overthrow linguistic and age barriers and allow a dialogue free from external bonds and allow people to express everything that is difficult to describe in words. They can be used both individually and in group sessions. Different materials can be used so that individuals can feel free to experiment, play, express themselves in an environment which is free of aesthetic and shape's judgement. The aim is to represent on a tangible medium feeling, sensations, ideas, and thoughts. The activity needs at least 30 to 40 minutes.



- *Body physical exercises* keep the body engaged and active, which is essential for everyone's well-being and creates a safe place in the 'here and now', leaving out difficult memories from the past and worrying thoughts about the future. Basic grounding exercises improve self-awareness, especially for individuals who were forced to migrate and struggle with the consequences of distressing events. The body is the only land that they can carry with them and represents the place of origin and as well the place where difficult memories and experiences can be re-lived. Visualizations promote connections with inner selves and allow us to create new possibilities and experience them at an imaginative level.



Implementation of pathways to social-economic inclusion

Each partner used a variety of different ways to disseminate the IO3 piloting sessions to the target groups. The approach differed between the partners as some approached social workers and practitioners, and other partners targeted migrant women living in their new country. Most of the participants were reached by tutors and local organizations, existing networks of the partners, word of mouth, posters and by social media (blog, Facebook).



Potential participants were personally approached by the partners to check their eligibility and confirm attendance to the training.

Some of them were unable to attend because of dates, times, or having other commitments.

In the project we were able to work with 115 participants in the workshops: 61 migrant women and 54 trainers and social workers.

Piloting IO3							
Partner	Target group	Country of origine	Participants number	Trainers number	Period	Online/offline	Promotion
Italy Antoniano Onlus STEPS	migrant women	Gambia, Nigeria, Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire Ethiopia, Pakistan, Syria, Serbia, Peru, Tunisia, Egypt, Iran, Morocco	12	6	6 month 12 x 10 hours	live individual sessions	tutors local organizations
Germany Arbeit und Leben	migrant women Spanish speaking	Bolivia, Cuba, Peru Ecuador, Honduras Venezuela, Spain	10	3	2 days 10 x 6 hours	Live in INCI e.V.	Iberonetzwerk 17 potential participants
Sweden IKF	migrant women	Somalia, Vietnam, Syria, Lebanon, Irak, Turkey	23	3	1 day 23 x 2 hours	Live in park	word of mouth participants of daily circles
United Kingdom Inova	migrant women	Brazil, Bangladesh, USA, Albania, Cuba Mexico, Palestine, China, Malaysia, Russia, Indonesia	16	2	1 day 14 x 2 hours 1 day 10 x 2 hours	online	social media eventbrite' word of mouth
Spain ITC	trainers students	Spain	44	3	1 day	online	external stakeholders: Cemiry, Almeria acoge, Fundacion CEPAIM
The Netherlands Chances&Chances	trainers social workers	Netherlands	10	2	1 day 10 x 4 hours	online	10 organisations who work with refugees and vulnerable groups

Training sessions, live as well as online, started with an ice breaker to allow participants to get more comfortable around each other. This was especially important due to the nature of the workshops, where many migrant women may have been more reluctant to speak and share their experiences. The art exercises were particularly popular and mindful, and the storytelling materials hit the right note. Working in smaller groups permitted participants to bond and have engaging conversations with people that have gone through similar migration journeys. The advantage of online workshops was that they allow the facilitator to seamlessly divide the group into breakout rooms if needed.

Italy implemented a personalized and individual approach and organized individual sessions for the women over a period of 6 months in which they spend 10 hours with each woman. They started with the phase of stabilization of the individual, followed by the phase of narration with the use of images and concluded with the workshops facilitating socio-economic integration. A social worker, with knowledge of social and cultural context, and two psychologists with experience in treating trauma related migration issues, worked closely together. Some sessions have been recorded for illustrative purposes of the approach in an anonymous way when permissions were granted.

Narration with the use of non-verbal narrative technique: **SHARED JOURNEYS – examples (video)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmRFTERetIk>



In the example a migrant woman, mother of two kids, is narrating her story while scrolling the images of the Shaun Tan book 'The Arrival'. She tells about her memories of a very difficult migration with her family. She survived different military conflicts and two different wars. She had to escape over sea by boat and risked her life many times from hunger, bombs, and a sinking ship.

The non-verbal narrative method was very useful for her. This technique made it possible for her to talk about her emotions and difficulties, it was healing for her. It also helped trainers to understand her problems better and find a tailored strategy of support.

Sessions outside and at open spaces.

Sweden worked in a session of two hours with women who are confronted with isolation and unemployment issues. They wanted to develop communication skills. A translator helped to facilitate the session.



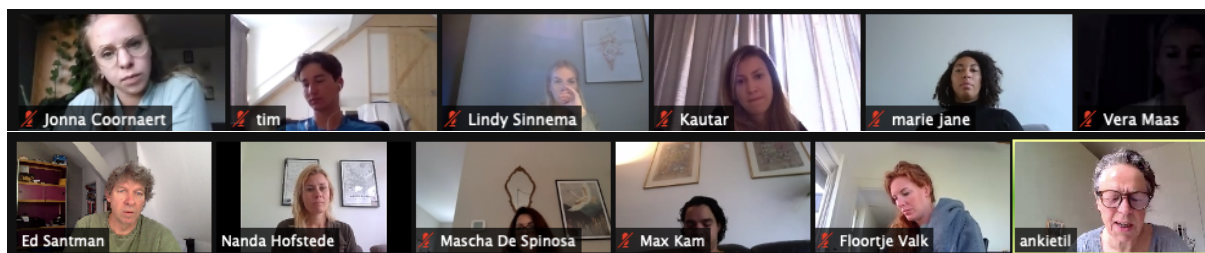
Germany worked in a session of two hours with a diverse group, with participants from mid-twenties to late fifties, from no formal qualification to a university degree. The group was divided in pairs, trainers started by telling their own migrant story using images and asked participants to share their own story.



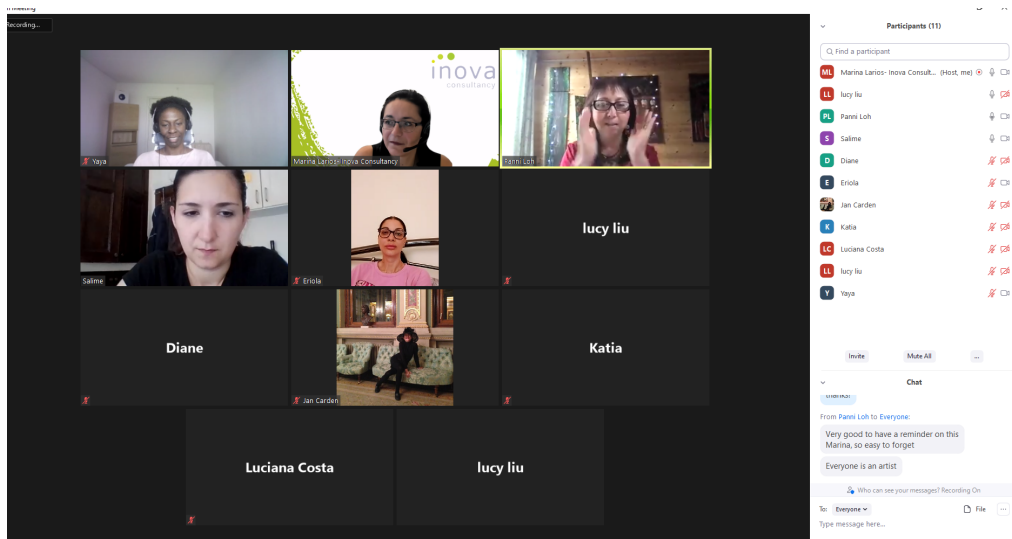
Online sessions

Spain worked with trainers in continuing professional development as well as students, with 44 participants in total. Migrations and intercultural issues are raising interest in Spain, working together with local NGOs made this online event interesting for a lot of stakeholders. Three trainers were involved.

The Netherlands worked in a morning session with a group of thirteen trainers who professionally work with victims of sexually transgressive behavior or sexual abuse, and human trafficking. The handbook with materials and tools was explained and discussed.



UK carried out two sessions of two hours to explore the journeys of migrant women and empower them using creative techniques and mindfulness. The art sessions were particularly popular and mindful. The advantage of online workshops is that the zoom platform allowed the implementation of breakout rooms, where participants could share their personal experiences without the fear of presenting in front of everyone.



One of the online sessions culminated in a poem. Participants were asked to provide two lines / phrases each, based on the theme 'what every woman should carry'. It became a communal group poem to express shared experience and to validate artistic talent. The facilitator worked the poem up from phrases in the chat, preserving individual authorship so they could recognize their contributions

What every woman should carry...

A sense of being whole, not a half of a whole,
Knowledge she is an artist with the ability to give birth to treasures
A sparkling jewel reflecting inner light

She journeys with a smile on her face,
With a positive mindset, a good heart and humour,
Humming a list of songs that feed her soul

With shoes or barefoot, she has distance to life and herself.
She is practical, has water
Drinks in new experiences

Has freedom, independence, ambition
Has her notebook with handwritten scrawls in the margins
Packs a FUD, (female urination device)!

To remind her she is unique
ID and keys to her safe place
A rainbow packed with dreams and a tissue to share with her favourite sisterhood

In cautious alert mode she holds her pocket knife
Conjures the lion heart of her father
Clutching a packet of seeds to plant new trees

The touch of her mother
Floats her big smile, confidence, curiosity, empathy
Power to disconnect when she wants

Her energy thrums to the tune of her goals
She views life differently
More questions than certainties...is happy.

Written by the women of the SIMPLE training.

Covid 19 National restrictions

The Covid situation meant that stakeholders and organisations were sometimes harder to reach. In most of the partner countries it was difficult to realize pilots in person, so an online approach was implemented instead, which was highly successful. A series of workshops over a longer period was not feasible because we were not allowed to enter the institutions. Face-to-face training offers a lot of benefits for learners, thus the partnership aimed to organize the training in person whenever this was possible. However, due to the limitations of COVID-19, this was not possible for some partners, thus online sessions were organised. Nevertheless, great feedback and learning was achieved despite the remote nature of the learning environment. The piloting stage of the project has been a great success across the partnership with a lot of impact on the people involved.

Italy:

Due to its characteristic (3 phases of the framework) described in IO2 'Methodological Framework' the testing phase took a long time, lasting from the beginning of January until the end of June 2021. Italy was able to implement the whole approach, starting with the phase of stabilisation of an individual, followed by the phase of narration with the use of images and concluded with the workshops facilitating socio-economic integration.

Spain:

The pilot program was implemented online in April 2021, via Zoom, with trainers in Continuing Professional Development and students interested in the methodology and the results. They involved external stakeholders from EMME (Enterprises Meet Migrants for Employment) to promote the project and maximize impact.

Sweden:

Sessions were carried out over one session on the 20th of May 2021, in a face-to-face manner. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, learners were able to meet in person in a park outside of the partners offices. They were able to build rapport with each other and build a new network.

Germany:

The piloting was realized in person, also to avoid the potential focus on technical problems and difficulties that piloting online could generate. Due to Covid-19 restrictions it was delayed and took place May, June 2021, in a space from INCE (InterNationale Cultur und Information für Frauen e.V.) an organization that runs German language courses for women, a safe space for many migrant women. Warming up sessions were implemented outside, participants had to wear masks during the workshops and trainers and participants took a COVID-19 test before each session.

United Kingdom:

Sessions were carried out online due to the national restrictions. They took place in June 2021. The online nature of the workshops meant that participants were able to attend from different parts of the UK, which otherwise would not have been possible. The workshops were carried out with migrant women who thoroughly enjoyed the sessions.

The Netherlands:

The organizations C&C planned to do the pilots with reduced their activities as they switched to online working. As long as the lockdown lasted, C&C was not able to have personal contact with newcomers. Given the sensitive subject: victims of human trafficking and sexual abuse, organizations did not allow C&C as an external organization to make direct contact with them in person or online. Additionally, the fact that coordinator Ed Santman is male, was seen as an obstacle to work with their vulnerable group of women. Finally, in July 2021 C&C could organize an online session with Qpido in Amsterdam and worked successfully with their trainers and social workers.

Evaluation

In Italy, since other partners did not work in teams with psychologists and because of the Covid situation, they worked over a longer period on the three phases.

The shorter sessions, mainly based on the body work, the 'window of tolerance' and the narrative technique, had fantastic and positive results.

Outcomes that were reported in all the partner countries, these included:

- they opened up more
- acquired skills
- remembered nice parts of their life's
- were able to share bits of themselves
- got new perspectives; explored new strengths and abilities
- discovered more of themselves and re-established self-esteem
- focused on going from the inside to the outside
- became motivated for work ahead
- regulated emotions
- reduced arousal alarm state and sense of fear
- were able to put distance between 'here and now' and what happened in the past
- enhanced autonomy and independence
- felt better, found joy, trust, and confidence in relationships
- restored damaged psychological competences
- became more confident about their own recourse
- achieved best possible balance between body, mind, and emotions

The SIMPLE partners evaluated by asking all the participants the following questions.
We see in all the countries similar reactions.

Do you have any suggestions on how we could improve the workshop?



How could you apply what you have learnt?

Participants enjoyed the activities and information presented. The comments show that they were engaged in the activities. The ratings are mostly positive, with most participants expressing the enjoyment and learning that they got from these workshops. Many of them outlined ways in which they will bring in what they have learnt into their everyday lives, being more mindful and expressing themselves through art more often, as well as offering some suggestions on how to improve these workshops in the future.

The only improvement the participants asked for is to allow even more time for the sessions, to get to know each other better and share their experiences with people who have gone through similar journeys.

*How our body position can
affect our hormones and
attitude*

*I got excellent information
only need 2 minutes to find
peace in my life*

*How I can express
my emotions
through art*

*Tools to reduce stress
at work*





'The present is today'

Recommendations

- What is important is that participants should always feel within their comfort zone in order to be able to use the tools. It is therefore essential that trainers have a profoundly non-judgmental attitude and genuine curiosity for the others, who through these tools are sharing precious and delicate aspects of themselves and their lives.
- Find a space in which you, as well as the other participants feel as comfortable as possible. Take your time to explain what you are going to do, even though sometimes practice is the best way to really understand some of the presented tools.
- Keep in mind the transversal dimension of the approach, both regarding the scope of intervention (therapeutic and relational) and group of users: not only psychologists, therapists (those will be able to follow the whole process starting from 'stabilization'), but all involved in the reception and inclusion process of newcomers.
- The model can and should be applied by the future beneficiaries according to their abilities. The 'Three Phase Therapy' therapeutic model (especially the delicate phase of stabilization) should be applied by psychologists or psychiatrists. The model is very useful to understand the functioning of a person who has undergone extreme stress or traumatic experiences. This knowledge can help to better understand and evaluate the other person during the help relationship. Be at least with two trainers, and if possible, with a translator.
- It is essential to work with associations and volunteers to create social networks, to engage people in activities that can be empowering, to let them experience new relationships, to feel there are safe places in town.
- The model can and must be adapted to each person and each situation. Timing and duration of the sessions can vary intensely, it can be a shorter one, or on the contrary if someone needs more time to get into memories and feelings, or to share, then it could be a longer session.
- The visual narrative methodology works better in smaller 'trust' groups. Avoid using the term trauma, give freedom to express themselves, use active listening techniques.
- Try to adapt the course to the needs of the women: language; pictures from their own culture; level of education; offer childcare services; organize the course when children are at the kindergarten.
- It can be useful to have more interactive activities, as participants all enjoyed working together and contributing to the session.
- Think of the possibility to make simple infographics, 'HOW TO' guides, to facilitate understanding and further use at different levels. And include short stories of how the methodology was implemented, including testimonials.
- If there are no data protection restrictions offer possibilities for participants to stay connected with the people, they met during the session. Maybe a shared folder on the internet where they could share further ideas and inspire each other to grow, or online meetups.

Conclusions

The piloting in all the countries has been a success, it was highly appreciated by all the participants. The partnership was able to engage a total of 115 participants in the workshops. Out of these participants, 61 were migrant women and 54 were trainers and social workers. Important recommendations for the training were gathered and will be implemented.

Logo	Partner	Country
	Internationella Kvinnoföreningen (IKF) https://www.ikf.se/	Sweden
	Antoniano Onlus della Provincia di Sant'Antonio dei Frati Minori https://www.antoniano.it/	Italy
	Steps srl https://www.stepseurope.it/	Italy
	Changes & Chances (C&C) http://changeschances.com/	Netherlands
	Innovation Training Centre (ITC) https://www.innovationtrainingcenter.es/	Spain
	Arbeit und Leben (AuL) https://www.arbeitundleben.de/	Germany
	Inova Consultancy LTD (Inova) https://www.inovaconsult.com/	UK



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