

Introducing the WISE Project

The [WISE ESF+ project](#) integrates mental health and psychosocial support with employment services enabled by technology-driven solutions to improve the socio-economic inclusion and wellbeing of employable refugee women from Ukraine in Italy and Bulgaria.

By piloting and scaling-up Holistic Support Centres with a trauma-informed and gender-sensitive approach, the project aims to enhance women's employability, skills-job match, lifelong learning and access to the labour market, enable them to better navigate and access social and public services, and enhance their mental and psychosocial well-being.

Project Duration: April 2025 - October 2026

Project Partners: Animus Association Foundation (AAF), Centro PENC - Antropologia e Psicologia Geoclinica, EARLALL, Fondazione IRC Italia, Laboratorio di Gruppoanalisi (LdG), and SkillLab.

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The WISE project partners



WISE First Field Exchange Visit in Rome

From 14 to 16 January 2026, WISE partners met in Rome for the **first Field Exchange Visit**, a key moment for peer learning and shaping the next phase of the project. The visit combined on-the-ground engagement at the **Holistic Support Center** with in-depth discussions on employment pathways, highlighting experiences from **Turin, Milan, Rome, and Sofia**.

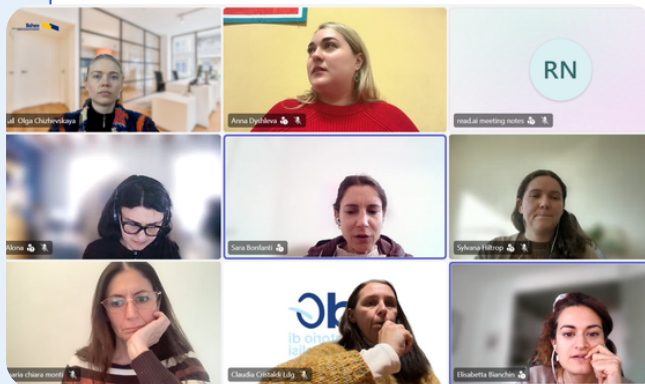
[Read more](#)



WISE coordination meeting

On 18 March 2026, WISE partners met to review progress and align on next steps. Discussions focused on project implementation in Italy and Bulgaria, communication, stakeholder engagement, and interim reporting.

Partners highlighted the ongoing **Women Rise Programme** and **mental health support** as key to building resilience and social connections, while noting a growing **need for more tailored employment support**.



[Read more](#)

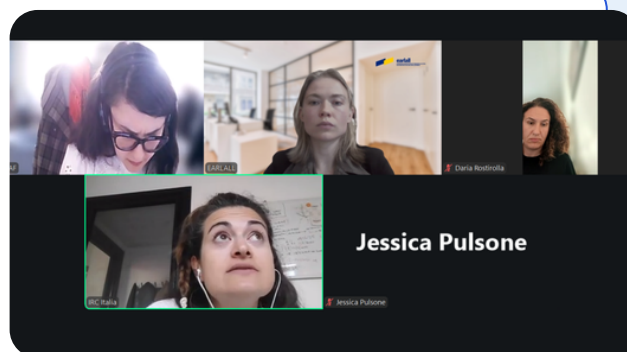
The Holistic Support Centre Model: WISE Webinar Series

WISE partners will launch a series of **four online webinars** in May and June 2026, focusing on the **Holistic Support Centre (HSC)** model and its implementation in **Turin, Milan, Rome and Sofia**.

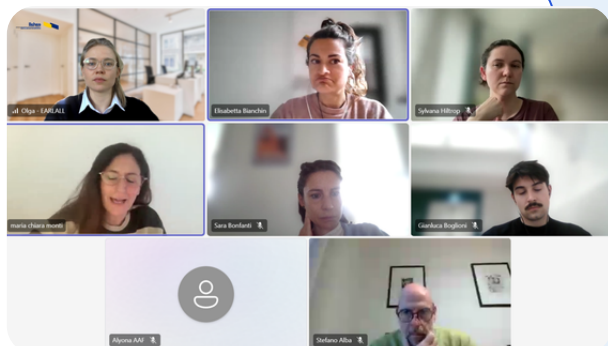
The sessions will cover the HSC and ethnopsychological approach, employment pathways and the SkillLab AI tool, field-based case studies, and the replicability of a gender-sensitive model for refugee women's integration.

The series targets regional and local authorities and organisations working on migrant integration, employment, and social support. For more information and registration, click [here](#).

[Read more](#)



WISE Steering Committee meeting



On 16 April, WISE held a **Steering Committee meeting** to review progress on psychological support activities and align on upcoming actions, including the upcoming exchange visit in Sofia (Bulgaria), webinars, and reporting.

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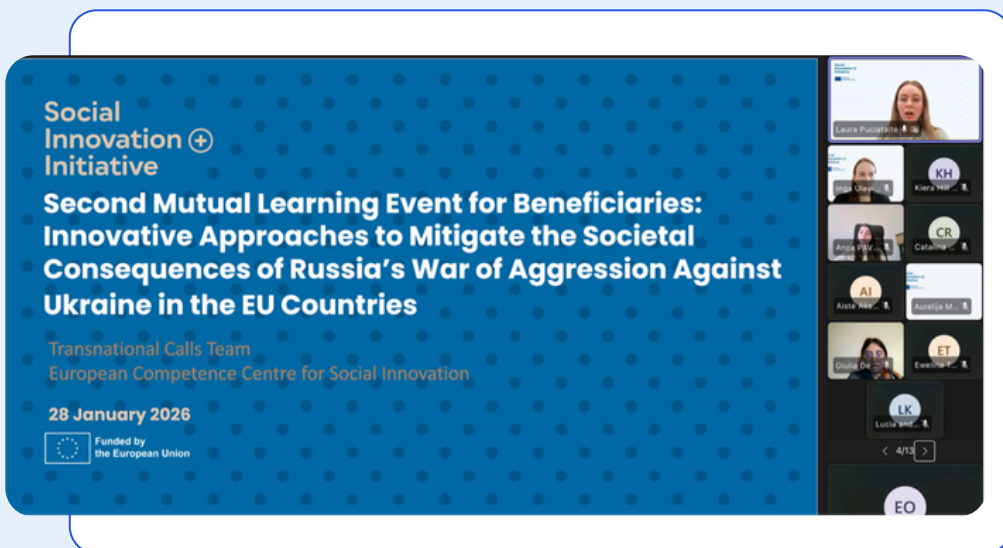
WISE Showcased at SALAM Interreg Europe Event in Timișoara (Romania)

On 28 January, EARLALL presented the WISE project during the 4th Residential Peer Learning Event of the **Interreg Europe SALAM** (Sustainable Access to the Labour Market) project in Timișoara, Romania.

The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders working on migrant integration and labour market access, providing an opportunity to share **WISE's holistic approach** to supporting women displaced from Ukraine.

During the meeting, partners were encouraged to join the **WISE stakeholder database**, fostering synergies between projects and strengthening collaboration on inclusive and sustainable integration pathways.

[Read more](#)



2nd EU Mutual Learning event on Social Innovation

WISE partners took part in the 2nd EU Mutual Learning event on Social Innovation, organised by the **European Competence Centre for Social Innovation**. The event brought together projects addressing the consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine, fostering exchange of practices, lessons learned, and approaches for long-term impact.

The discussions highlighted the importance of peer learning, collaboration, and sustainable solutions, while confirming the relevance of WISE in addressing the specific needs of women under temporary protection and advancing inclusive approaches across the EU.

[Read more](#)

3rd EU Mutual Learning event on Social Innovation

On 24–25 March 2026, WISE partners **Animus Association and the International Rescue Committee Italia** participated in the **Third Mutual Learning Event** organised by the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation under the Social Innovation+ Initiative.



[Read more](#)

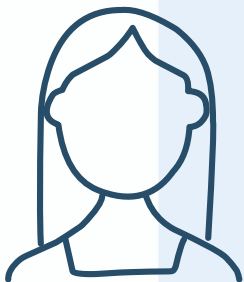
WISE success stories: women displaced from Ukraine

The WISE project supports women affected by the war in Ukraine in rebuilding their lives. These stories showcase the impact of holistic support in fostering wellbeing, confidence, and pathways to employment.



Olena arrived in Italy in early 2022 from Mariupol, after fleeing the war in Ukraine. She was welcomed in Rome and, since February 2024, has been actively participating in the **Safe Space for Women and Girls** run by the International Rescue Committee.

Through the **WISE project**, she took part in over 30 hours of group activities, five job placement sessions, and 12 individual meetings. This tailored support helped her navigate her job search and access new opportunities. Recently, **she secured an internship** through a women's empowerment initiative in Rome, with the prospect of long-term employment. **[Read more.](#)**



N. arrived in Italy from Ukraine at the outbreak of the war with her teenage son, a small suitcase, and the belief they would stay only briefly. Facing uncertainty, she began ethnopsychotherapy sessions at the **PENC Centre** through WISE project.

Over time, these sessions helped her move beyond survival and begin imagining the future again. **With ethnopsychological support and cultural mediation**, she gradually **rebuilt confidence** and a sense of personal agency.

Her story shows how **WISE** provides more than support-it creates the conditions for women to process change, regain stability, and begin imagining a future again.

What's new in the EU?

This section highlights recent developments, tools and policy updates across the EU relevant to integration, employability and support services for WISE beneficiaries.

- A **new migrant information point** has been opened at Rome's main train station, improving immediate access to integration support for newcomers upon arrival. [Read more.](#)
- The **Juma Map platform** provides an overview of services including employment, housing, healthcare, legal aid and social support. Available in 19 languages, it helps users quickly identify relevant support across Italy. Developed by ARCI, UNHCR and the Municipality of Rome. [Read more.](#)
- Updated **guidelines** have been issued **for social workers, volunteers, legal advisers and civil society organisations** involved in migrant reception and support, developed by the Italian Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA). [Read more.](#)
- The **'Futuræ' network** has published a **report** based on interviews with migrant entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of start-up support programmes, **exploring their motivations, expectations and the effectiveness of existing support measures.** [Read more.](#)
- **The Council of the European Union** has given final approval to the **EU Talent Pool**, a new digital **platform connecting non-EU jobseekers with employers across the EU.** The initiative **aims to address labour shortages by matching skills with vacancies in key sectors.** It will also provide clear information on recruitment processes, workers' rights and fair working conditions, while including safeguards against labour exploitation. Successful candidates will still need to complete national procedures to obtain residence and work permits. [Read more.](#)