

## WISE: The event will start soon....

- Please keep your microphone muted when joining.
- Rename yourself as “Name Surname - Organisation/Region”
- You may keep your camera on. Please note that photos may be taken during the session and shared on social media channels
- The session will be recorded
- The recording and presentation will be sent to all registered participants
  - If you haven't registered yet, drop your name and email in the chat
- We will collect questions in the chat and address them during the Q&A slots
  - During the Q&A, you can also raise your hand to ask questions live.

# Voices from the field: case studies, and learnings from Sofia, Turin, Milan and Rome

3rd Online Webinar

8 June 2026

Supported by EARLALL Academy



## Agenda

- ▶ WISE Project Introduction
- ▶ Job readiness Training, Cultural orientation and Psychosocial Support activities
- ▶ Local adaptations and lessons learned
- ▶ Testimonials and Case studies from Turin, Milan (Iryna), Rome (Anna) and Sofia (Oksana)
- ▶ Measuring outcomes and learning from implementation
- ▶ Q&A



## SPEAKERS

**Elisabetta Bianchin** Programme Manager (Economic Wellbeing), International Rescue Committee (IRC)

**Alyona Tabunshchyk** Project Coordinator, Animus Association Foundation, with lived experience of displacement and a background in supporting Ukrainian refugee women

**Federica Rizzi** Integration Counsellor, International Rescue Committee (IRC), specialising in migrant integration, youth support and digital skills development

**Yuliia Lebed** Integration Counsellor and Cultural Mediator, International Rescue Committee (IRC), with expertise in psychosocial support, language training and employment pathways

**Alice Lavagno** Integration Case Worker, International Rescue Committee (IRC), experienced in case management, social inclusion and labour market integration

**Elena Lanteri** Integration Counsellor, International Rescue Committee (IRC), with a background in cultural anthropology and psychosocial and employment support

**Mila Siskovic** MEAL & Protection Monitoring Manager, International Rescue Committee (IRC), specialising in monitoring, evaluation and protection systems



# Elisabetta Bianchin, International Rescue Committee

## Group Activities: Job readiness Training



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# WISE - Supporting Ukrainian (UA) Refugee Women's Socio-Economic Integration and Wellbeing



April 2025 - October 2026

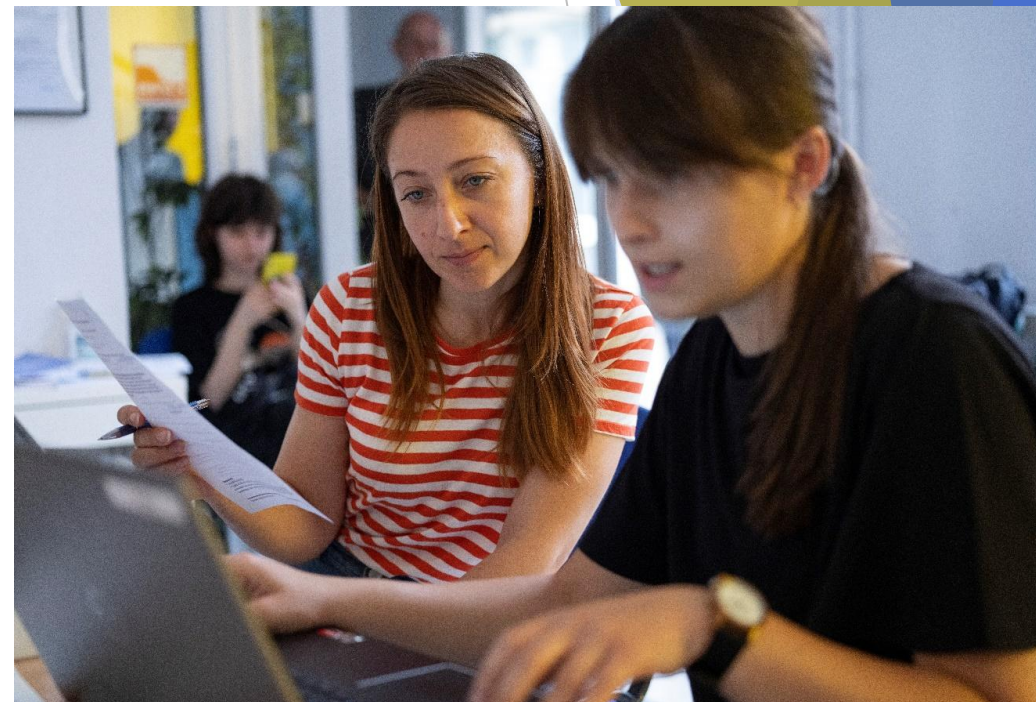


Sofia (Bulgaria), Milan, Rome, Turin (Italy)

## Partners:



**SkillLab**



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Goal: Improve the socio-economic inclusion of employable refugee women from Ukraine, in Italy and Bulgaria

- Navigate the labor market (dual dilemma)
- Access to social and public services
- Mental health, psychosocial well-being, empowerment
- Stakeholders awareness at EU level



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Waiting Dilemma/  
Dual intent

One-Stop-Shop model with Holistic approach:  
Mental Health and Psycho-social support in former Women and Girls Safe Spaces  
+  
Employment Support with gender lens and trauma-informed approach.

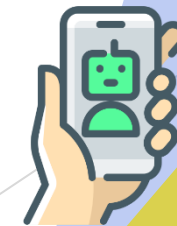


Individual support (case management) and Structured/ semistructured/ unstructured **Group Activities in Safe Spaces (Holistic Support Centers)**



Dissemination for scaling up the Methodology (replicate the model) at local level and in EU

AI-powered digital tool by Skillab



# Group Activities: Job readiness Training



# Group Activities: Job readiness Training

- Job Fairs
- Info sessions/workshops on Job application, CV writing, Job interview preparation, workplace culture
- Mock Interviews
- Workers rights, reading a payslip or a work contract
- Self-employment and tax system
- Information on Universities, and vocational Training
- Recognition of Qualifications
- Structured Language Training (Bulgaria)
- Mock Language Certification Exams

## Group Activities: Cultural orientation



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# Group Activities: Cultural orientation

- Speaking Clubs (Italian)
- Visit to Art Galleries, exhibitions, neighbourhoods
- Info sessions on health system, documentation, permit of stay, schools, kindergarden, pensions, welfare benefits, housing
- Visits to local services (e.g. library, tax and Welfare office)
- "talk to the expert"
- Cinema in Local language

## Group Activities: Psychosocial Support



# Group Activities: Psychosocial Support

- Dance (Bachata)
- Theatre
- Art/painting
- Arts and crafts (e.g. chrochet)
- Makeup artist
- Pilates, Yoga, Tonifit
- Summer / Christmas parties / Traditional Ukrainian celebrations
- Cooking sessions
- Singing
- Visits (e.g. Flower exhibition)
- **Women Rise**

# Local Adaptations and Trends Observed



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# Elena Lanteri

International Rescue Committee, Italy



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## Identified Needs and Trends Observed

- ▶ Significant number of recent arrivals from Ukraine in late 2025-2026
- ▶ Housing, both for those not in shelters and for those in shelters
- ▶ Psychological (isolation, lack of self-confidence, disorientation)
- ▶ Working women - Most women are working in short-term or part-time contracts, and have **care responsibilities: less time and energy** to build long-term plans => Many sporadic individual case-management interventions and difficulty in creating more substantial pathways.

## Key Takeaways

- ▶ Cultural mediation is essential, in multilingual groups having a single mediator can be a challenge
- ▶ Workshops with immediate practical results (e.g. Italian mock exam) work well
- ▶ Parties and celebrations are very appreciated
- ▶ Seeking feedback from the women themselves and **co-creating activities**, where possible. Involving participants in facilitating activities (e.g. Pilates, makeup, yoga, etc)

# Alyona Tabunshchyk

Animus Association Foundation, Bulgaria



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## Identified Needs and Trends Observed in Sofia, Bulgaria

- ▶ Childcare and kindergarten/ school access remain major barriers to integration and employment for young women.
- ▶ Social isolation and limited support networks remain common challenges for elder women.
- ▶ High demand for individual practical support, including remote one, navigating Bulgarian systems and services.
- ▶ Need for emotional wellbeing support and stress relief.
- ▶ Strong interest in creative and hands-on group activities.

## Key Takeaways

- ▶ Practical system-navigation and emotional wellbeing support remain core and recurring needs.
- ▶ Creative, hands-on group activities are an effective engagement tool.
- ▶ Native-speaking field workers are a key enabling factor for outreach, trust-building, and access to services.

# Federica Rizzi

International Rescue Committee, Italy



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## Identified Needs and Trends observed (employment)

- ▶ Mismatch between career expectations of highly qualified workers and local labour market offers (low-paying and low-skilled occupations)
- ▶ Increase in nr. of requests for **online** support
- ▶ Requests for language courses (Italian and Bulgarian)
- ▶ Gap in Services and Labour Market offers for people aged 60+
- ▶ SkillLab app: less relevant where the need is job search and matching rather than career orientation and goal setting, or for lack of time

## Key Takeaways

- ▶ Users look for job placement support rather than job orientation services
- ▶ **Local partnerships** and interdisciplinary collaborations increase opportunities and are key for referrals, service delivery and joint job readiness activities (leveraging expertise of local ecosystem)
- ▶ Leveraging **employment agencies** is a practical and scalable approach
- ▶ **One-stop-shop model** (Combining psychosocial support (PSS) and employment activities) strengthens engagement and pathways
- ▶ Group sessions on employment have less participation than individual support
- ▶ **Recruitment days** are well received and have high turnout

# Alice Lavagno Yuliia Lebed

International Rescue Committee, Italy



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## Trends observed and strategies (psychosocial support)

- ▶ The safe space played a key role in building personal support networks
  - Participants developed friendships and meaningful relationships within the activities
  - These connections often continued outside the project, fostering mutual support, companionship, and shared activities
- ▶ Strong complementarity between activities → Participants who initially engaged through art workshops later joined employment support activities, and vice versa
- ▶ Increase case management desks in different areas of the city, and use shared spaces increased accessibility, outreach and referrals

## Key Takeaways

- ▶ Strengthened connections with local community centers (“Case del Quartiere”) as outreach strategy/referrals
- ▶ Group activities effective in engaging new participants and encouraging continued participation
- ▶ The closed-group format of Women Rise activities fostered a strong sense of trust among participants
  - participants felt comfortable sharing personal experiences

## Case study - S.S. and V.S.: Supporting a Family's Integration Journey (Turin)

**Background:** mother & 20 yo daughter recently arrived in Italy after 3 years in other country

**First needs assessment:** legal, employment, vocational/language training, and recognition of qualifications. No clear priorities

**Case Management+employment support:** Identifying priorities, and defining realistic short- and medium-term goals, while providing continuous guidance.

1. Referral to legal support desk with on-site mediation
2. Italian language training
3. with increased confidence and stronger ability to focus on employment goals and training opportunities. building career pathway as a beautician.
4. CVs, active job searching, enrolment in vocational training, referral (V.S.) and info-sessions (S.S.) for recognition of qualifications. Job fair to gain knowledge of the Italian labour market.

**Holistic aspect:** addressing multiple interconnected needs simultaneously, ensured continuous and adaptable support over time, focused on both immediate needs and long-term integration pathways, and actively promoted beneficiaries' autonomy and decision-making.

# Voices from the field: Testimonials



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## Testimonials - Iryna



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## Testimonials - Anna



## Testimonials - Oksana



# Case Studies



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## "Oleksandra"- Holistic Employment Support (Rome)

Ukrainian woman in her 50s, in Italy for 2 years, working 3 jobs in care/cleaning totaling 15h/week

Initial request: more stable work in the same field

### Employment support:

1. CV/CL writing, referral to JNRC job desk, active job searching, Skilllab tool
2. Information/referrals to language and vocational training (enrolled in caretaker)
3. contract + payslips reading, legal support (conversion of permit of stay)
4. support negotiating end of contract when client found new contract but wanted to leave this new position
5. contract reading and employer/employee communication when client found full-time long term contract. Next steps: support in transitioning to different industry.

Holistic aspect/Case management: civil registry registration, local ID application + housing + WISE group activities including Women Rise, to which she has referred many friends

## Olha: Employment's Support case study (Milan)

**Background:** Olha, Ukrainian woman in her 40s, recently arrived in Italy

**First needs assessment:** vocational/language training, employment and recognition of qualifications (medical doctor)

**Case Management+employment support:**

1. Intake of needs and sorting of priorities
2. Italian language training
3. Referral to Centro Per l'Impiego
4. Support regarding documents (Tessera Sanitaria)
5. CV writing and European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)
6. Continuous case management support

**Holistic aspect:** The intervention combined support across several connected areas, offering sustained and adaptable assistance while addressing immediate challenges, fostering long-term inclusion, and encouraging autonomy among beneficiaries.

## Case study: Navigating Interconnected Barriers – Olga's Family Integration Journey (Sofia)

**Background:** "Olga", Ukrainian woman in her 30s with husband and son (6 yo). Previously in Bulgaria 2022-2023, then Germany. Returned Sofia 2026.

**First needs assessment:** Education (son) - priority. Every issue connected to the next: legal documents (son), health insurance (Olga and her husband), GP (all), employment, banking.

### **Case Management+employment support:**

1. Intake of needs and sorting of priorities
2. Kindergarten enrollment – son accepted same week, GP identified remotely
3. E-consul registration – passport renewal appointment booked
4. Accompaniment to National Revenue Agency (NRA) and National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) – cross-border health debt (Bulgaria-Germany) officially reduced after 1.5 months
5. SkillLab access – CV built and job applications sent – employed
6. Employment contract legality verified via NRA; all health insurance debts cleared
7. Bank account opened after 2 months
8. GP (Olga and husband) registered
9. Primary school (son) application in progress

**Next steps:** permanent housing in Sofia – family's long-term goal, permanent citizenship, career shift (Olga) once settled.

**Holistic aspect:** Addressing multiple interconnected needs simultaneously across six domains; ensured continuous and adaptable support over time; focused on both immediate needs and long-term integration pathways; actively promoted Olga's autonomy and decision-making. Support

Ongoing



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# Measuring outcomes and learning from implementation



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# Mila Siskovic

International Rescue Committee, Italy



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# Measuring outcomes and learning from implementation

## BUILDING AN M&E FRAMEWORK: FROM DESIGN TO MONITORING


### 1. Start with a clear Theory of Change

- Define the overall goal (in WISE: *Improve the socio-economic inclusion of employable refugee women from Ukraine in Italy and Bulgaria (...)*)
- Identify the objectives and outcomes needed to achieve this goal. (improving psycho-social wellbeing and economic empowerment of Ukrainian women).
- Design activities and outputs that will contribute to these outcomes.

### 2. Translate it into a Logframe

The logframe helps operationalize the Theory of Change by defining:

- Indicators
- Means of verification
- Data collection methods
- Assumptions and risks

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES	SHORT TERM OBI/OUTCOMES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	GOAL
<b>S01 stream</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour market assessment &amp; location of SkillLab AI tool for IT &amp; SIG</li> <li>AI skills assessment for each woman; individual CIP development</li> <li>Employment counselling &amp; cultural orientation</li> <li>Job readiness training (language, digital, CV interview)</li> <li>Staff training on HSC model &amp; AI SkillLab tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour market assessment report</li> <li>Location SkillsLab platform for IT &amp; SIG</li> <li>Up to 500 completed CIPs</li> <li>Participation records (needs assessment, training)</li> <li>Staff training report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women accurately articulate skills &amp; their labour market relevance O1.1</li> <li>80% women completing AI skills assessments expressed confidence in describing their skills and awareness of their interests in the labour market</li> <li>HSC staff improve capacity to use the model &amp; AI tool O1.2</li> <li>Impact on staff's training protocol</li> <li>Women increase foundational skills (language, digital) O1.3</li> <li>80% women trained reported skills and knowledge (strongly, very strongly, digital and job readiness training)</li> <li>Women improve job readiness confidence O1.4</li> <li>80% women trained improved confidence in searching and applying for job and skills development opportunities</li> </ul>	<b>S01:</b> Women have the agency, skills and knowledge to access and advance in the host country labour market (and potentially home country upon voluntary return).	 <p>Improved socio-economic inclusion of employable Ukrainian refugee women in Italy and Bulgaria, through scalable Holistic Support Centres leveraging the WGSS methodology.</p>
<b>S02 stream</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-design of HSC model (needs assessment, FGDs, KfUs, co-design workshops)</li> <li>Individual case management: needs mapping, referrals, service navigation support</li> <li>Institutional linkage &amp; MoU registration with service providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline / needs assessment report</li> <li>Co-design workshop package</li> <li>Needs based assessment template</li> <li>Case management participation records</li> <li>Signed MoUs &amp; Letters of Intent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women &amp; households access quality social &amp; public services incl. childcare O2.1</li> <li>80% women use report at least one of her priority needs (including childcare) of their CIP</li> </ul>	<b>S02:</b> Women can better navigate and access social and public services, including childcare, overcoming legal and bureaucratic hurdles.	
<b>S03 stream</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual MHPS sessions (psychologists)</li> <li>PSS group activities &amp; Women Rise programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHPS participation records</li> <li>Women Rise project surveys</li> <li>Psychological Distress Monitoring Checklists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women recognize, express &amp; cope with difficult emotions O3.1</li> <li>10% women able to recognize, express and cope further with difficult emotions</li> <li>Women build social capital &amp; peer connections O3.2</li> <li>70% women feel more connected to the other women in the community</li> <li>Women develop self-confidence &amp; capacity for informed decision-making O3.3</li> <li>10% women feel more self-confident as per PIC self-confidence index after PSS structured sessions</li> </ul>	<b>S03:</b> Women's mental health, psychosocial wellbeing, social connections and empowerment are enhanced, enabling informed decision-making about their futures.	
<b>S04 stream</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External evaluation of piloting (8 months, 4 locations)</li> <li>Development of HSC Model Toolkit</li> <li>Awareness-raising &amp; stakeholder engagement events (webinars, conferences)</li> <li>Sustainability planning</li> <li>SIM database entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External evaluation report</li> <li>HSC Model Toolkit</li> <li>Communication &amp; dissemination plan</li> <li>Stakeholder plan</li> <li>SIM database entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key stakeholders increase knowledge &amp; awareness of the HSC model O4.1</li> <li>80% of stakeholders involved in CB increased knowledge in the HSC model</li> <li>Improve collaboration channels enable stakeholders to consider replicating the model O4.2</li> <li>3 MoUs for HSC contribution; signed letters of intent for the application of HSC;</li> </ul>	<b>S04:</b> Key stakeholders at local and EU level are aware of the HSC model and structures for adoption and replication are in place.	

### Examples of Indicators

#### Outcome indicators (measuring change):

- % women achieving at least one career goal identified in their Career Integration Plan.
- % women feeling more self-confident after structured psychosocial support session

#### Output indicators (measuring delivery):

- women receiving case management support.
- women completing job-readiness training.

# Measuring outcomes and learning from implementation

## MEASURING RESULTS AND EVALUATING IMPACT

### Monitoring System

A strong monitoring system is essential, particularly for individual support activities such as case management and employment support.

In WISE, we used **ETO** (a case management and outcomes tracking software platform) to track: Individual support provided to beneficiaries; case notes and follow-up actions; and participation in group activities.

**Important:** Monitoring and reporting can be highly time-consuming and should be planned from the start, with dedicated staff time and resources.

### Measuring Outcomes

Different activities may require different measurement approaches:

- Pre- and post-assessments for structured psychosocial support activities (Women Rise).
- Outcome-monitoring tools completed by psychologists for individual support pathways.
- Selected indicators measured through the project's external evaluation to avoid overburdening participants.

### External Evaluation

An independent evaluation based on OECD criteria was conducted at the end of the pilot phase, combining: Monitoring data. Baseline and endline assessments. Feedback sessions with refugee women, staff and stakeholders. This external evaluation ensured an objective assessment of the effectiveness, quality and impact of the HSC model and generated evidence for future replication and scale-up

# Discussion / Q&A



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## Join the WISE Webinars Series:



Scan to learn more and register

- ▶ Session 4 - 22 June, 12:30-13:30 CET

### WISE Final Conference

- ▶ SAVE THE DATE: 16 September 2026,  
Brussels

Thank you!



Share your feedback



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