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CREATResili

**A Social Design Methodology for
Working with Vulnerable Women
in Social Entrepreneurship**



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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The role of creativity in addressing pressing social challenges has been widely recognised both in scientific research (González Moreno & Molero Jurado, 2024) and in practice-based social development programmes. The general concept of the CREATResili project is based on the approach of using creative means — especially social design — to build the resilience of marginalised groups and raise overall awareness of social issues. This project focuses on the development of vulnerable communities of women, particularly those living in socially and geographically marginalised conditions. By engaging vulnerable women, the project aims to create tools that promote agency, empowerment, and self-advocacy among women through the introduction of social design and various creative methods.

The project builds on cross-sectoral cooperation. It brings together a governmental humanitarian and development agency (the Hungary Helps Agency), an artistic hub (Pro Progressione), an NGO working with marginalised women (the Jahjaga Foundation), and a tech company (Gjirafa). The Social Design Hub (SDHub) at Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME) joins the consortium to provide professional support and to create a framework for the application, teaching, and adaptation of social design methods in the context of community resilience and gender equity.



In what follows, we provide a general overview of the relevant literature to support the development of the project's methodological framework. Drawing on a review of the literature and a benchmarking analysis of comparable initiatives, we present a structural plan for the methodological content of the Summer University programme organised by the SDHub at MOME, which aims to train artists, creators, design students, and members of the target group. The proposed methodology also incorporates impact monitoring through the use of appropriate tools. Finally, drawing on the lessons learned during the Summer University, we develop a blueprint for a training programme. The blueprint is designed for future application with similar target groups and under comparable circumstances, offering the necessary adaptability. The documented use of the methodology is then analysed, followed by a project assessment and a set of conclusions to inform future applications.

When looking closely at the position of vulnerable women, several frameworks are available to explore vulnerability in terms of ethnicity, economic class, educational attainment, and geographical location (Guthridge et al., 2022). While the magnitude of vulnerable populations is not clearly understood, specific indicators show that vulnerability among women is pervasive. Women in low and middle-income countries often lack control over economic resources and cultural capital, which further deepens their vulnerability (Murembe et al., 2021).

In the Eastern European context, the post-socialist transition to a labour market economy affected many female groups negatively, mainly on the basis of their social class. Metcalfe and Afanassieva (2005), discussing the worker-mother contract in socialist systems, highlight how the transition from a communist economic system to a market economy eroded women's workplace equality, despite

the claims of gender equality associated with the communist socio-economic legacy. New models of social innovation should therefore employ measures of staying mindful of class distinctions within gender (Ghodsee, 2014). Recent research shows growing focus on female household headship and its importance for development planning. The interest in female-headed households can be attributed to their link to rural poverty and labour migration, and to the resulting “feminisation of poverty”, indicating that women are disproportionately represented in economically vulnerable positions compared to men (Rocca et al., 2014). In pursuit of advancing women’s status, economic stability, and independence, the concept of resilience in female entrepreneurship is widely discussed, pointing towards the assumption that limited access to finance, social and cultural constraints, a lack of specialised education, rapid technological change, and conflicting social roles are the major problems faced by women entrepreneurs (Kodisinghe et al., 2013). On the other hand, studies highlight the role of affectivity and cognition in facing adversity (Nassif, 2022).

When training female entrepreneurs, it is essential to promote their understanding of gender literacy and its relevance to creating and managing business entities, particularly for those who juggle family expectations, personal life, and new ventures simultaneously (Pimpa, 2021). Introducing creative and design-based methods in this educational framework supports culturally and linguistically diverse learning environments through culturally responsive practices for equitable and inclusive education (Ramlackhan, 2022). Therefore, the CREATResili programme introduces methods from social design and design thinking in order to facilitate a gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate process with long-lasting impact among vulnerable women as they enter the field of creative entrepreneurship.

The project includes a seven-day Summer University on Social Design, which provides a background for participating artists and designers to gather the necessary knowledge to work with vulnerable communities in a safe, sensitive, and participatory manner.

The Summer University focuses on developing participating artists’ skills in participatory methods, social design, prototyping, presentation, social innovation, and entrepreneurial practice.

Participants will attend lectures, workshops, and maker sessions in a creative process culminating in concept presentations at the end of the week. During these activities, participants will be given the opportunity to try their hand at inclusive and participatory research methods, to experience co-creation that is respectful of the target group’s perspective, and to get involved in an embedded production process making use of the campus’s well-equipped workshop facilities.

Through a structured selection process, the concepts of three artists and designers will be selected for further development during a residency programme, leading to the production and distribution of textile and home goods by the Jahjaga Foundation.





CHAPTER 2

The Context

Design and social entrepreneurship play critical roles in advancing the status of vulnerable women, particularly in contexts where socio-economic disparities are prevalent. By integrating principles of design thinking and social innovation, initiatives aimed at empowering women can effectively address the multifaceted challenges they encounter, ultimately fostering greater gender equality and socio-economic inclusion. This study explores the intersection of design, social entrepreneurship, and women's empowerment, drawing insights from various scholarly works and practical projects with the broader aim of constructing a blueprint of training recommendations for creative professionals in future projects addressing these challenges.



Owing to their inherent capacity to offer interdisciplinary responses to complex, 'wicked problems', social design methods are particularly well-suited to addressing challenges of gender-based discrimination and inequity. By integrating perspectives from various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics, social design approaches offer holistic solutions that consider the interconnected nature of gender inequalities. These methods prioritise the involvement of diverse stakeholders, including affected communities, policymakers, activists, and designers in the co-creation process. Through participatory design workshops, collaborative research projects, and community-based initiatives, social designers can identify the root causes of gender discrimination and inequality, challenge prevailing norms and stereotypes, and develop innovative interventions that promote gender equality and social justice. Moreover, social design methods emphasize iterative prototyping and experimentation, allowing for flexible and adaptive responses to evolving social dynamics. By fostering empathy and empowerment, these approaches enable the voices of marginalised women to be heard, amplify their agency, and catalyse meaningful change at the individual, institutional, and societal levels. Overall, social design methods offer a promising framework for addressing the complex and multifaceted nature of gender-based discrimination and inequity, paving the way for more inclusive and equitable futures.

Besides socioeconomic factors, geographic specificities must also be considered in order to further enhance the status of women with limited access to infrastructure. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations emphasizes the importance of addressing the needs of rural women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In their report titled *Rural women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, Rocca et al. (2014) underscore the significance of empowering rural women through targeted interventions that promote entrepreneurship, education, and access to productive resources. Design plays a crucial role in the development and implementation of these interventions, as it enables the creation of contextually relevant solutions that cater to the unique challenges faced by rural women.

Similarly, Ghodsee points out the emergence of women's nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) in Eastern Europe and their increasing role in shaping post-socialist societies (Ghodsee, 2004). Ghodsee

highlights how these organisations utilize cultural feminism and innovative design strategies to challenge patriarchal structures and promote women's rights. By leveraging design as a tool for social change, these NGOs create spaces for women to voice their concerns, access resources, and participate in decision-making processes, thereby advancing their socio-economic status.

Moreover, the study by Nassif and Garçon (2022) underscores the importance of adopting an integrative approach to understanding resilience in female entrepreneurship. By examining the interplay between individual, organisational, and environmental factors, the authors highlight the need to design supportive ecosystems that facilitate women's entrepreneurial endeavours. Through initiatives that provide mentorship, training, and access to capital, social entrepreneurs can empower women to overcome barriers and thrive in their ventures.

Fashion activism and design for social change represent another avenue through which the status of vulnerable women can be advanced. In *Fashion activism and design for social change – the Making for Change: Waltham Forest project*, Mazzarella (2023) discusses a project that harnesses the power of design and creativity to promote social inclusion and economic empowerment. By engaging marginalised women in sustainable fashion production, the project not only provides them with valuable skills but also creates a sense of agency and community. A similar example focusing on cultural diversity is based in London (UK), where the fashion industry relies on Asian manufacturers, and many South Asian women work under poor conditions. In response to the UK's shortage of skilled machinists — driven by a declining interest in making skills — the project developed a collaborative training framework aimed at upskilling marginalised South Asian women and empowering them within the fashion and textile industry (Mathew & Mazzarella, 2023).

Furthermore, Gutiérrez and Jurow (2016) advocate for social design experiments as a means of achieving equity and social justice. By engaging affected communities and stakeholders in co-design processes, designers can ensure that interventions are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the needs of vulnerable women. Through collaborative approaches that prioritise participatory decision-making and knowledge sharing, social entrepreneurs can catalyse positive change and promote women's empowerment at the grassroots level.

In sum, the intersection of design and social entrepreneurship offers promising avenues for advancing the status of vulnerable women in society. By leveraging innovative approaches, such as cultural feminism, integrative resilience frameworks, and fashion activism, stakeholders can address systemic inequalities and create more inclusive and sustainable communities. However, sustained efforts and collective action are needed to realize the full potential of design-driven interventions in promoting gender equality and empowering women worldwide.





CHAPTER 3

The Target Group

The target group of this study comprises vulnerable women, defined along multiple intersecting dimensions, including economic status, class position, educational attainment, and experiences of gender-based violence. The following sections outline each of these dimensions.

Economic Status and Class Position:

Vulnerable women often belong to marginalised socio-economic groups characterised by poverty, limited access to financial resources, and precarious employment. They may lack sources of stable income, live in impoverished communities, and struggle to meet basic needs such as housing, healthcare, and food security. Their economic vulnerability can exacerbate other forms of disadvantage, constrain opportunities for upward mobility, and perpetuate cycles of poverty.

Limited Educational Attainment:

Women are particularly vulnerable because of their reduced access to knowledge, skills, and economic opportunities. Educational attainment significantly influences employment prospects, earning potential, and social mobility. Women with inadequate education may face barriers to securing well-paying jobs, accessing healthcare and social services, and participating fully in decision-making processes within their households and communities. Limited education can also heighten their vulnerability to exploitation, including gender-based violence, as women may lack awareness of their rights and the resources needed to seek support.

Experiences of Gender-Based Violence:

Vulnerable women often have a history of experiencing gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and exploitation. Such experiences can result from entrenched power imbalances, social norms that perpetuate violence against women, and structural inequalities that limit access to justice and support services. Gender-based violence not only inflicts physical and psychological harm but also perpetuates cycles of vulnerability by undermining women's autonomy, safety, and well-being. Survivors of gender-based violence may face stigma, discrimination, and economic hardship, further exacerbating their vulnerability.



In conclusion, vulnerable women are characterised by their disadvantaged economic status and class position, limited educational opportunities, and experiences of gender-based violence. Addressing the intersecting inequalities that contribute to their vulnerability requires comprehensive approaches that remove structural barriers, promote economic empowerment, and prioritise the

safety and rights of women and girls.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a major source of vulnerability. This study — along with its associated methodology — specifically focuses on responding to the effects of GBV.

According to Green and other authors, intimate partner violence (IPV), characterised by abusive or controlling behaviours towards intimate partners, predominantly affects women and is widespread globally (Green et al., 2015; Coll et al., 2021). Studies estimate that between 15 and 71 per cent of women experience IPV in their lifetimes — a figure that surpasses reported cases of rape and sexual violence in conflict settings (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). The economic cost of IPV is significant — potentially exceeding that of civil wars or homicides worldwide. Addressing IPV is crucial not only for women's agency and empowerment but also for public health, given its association with poor physical and mental health outcomes.

Efforts to combat gender-based violence often involve direct interventions targeting the attitudes and social norms among men that justify or perpetuate such violence. Indirect approaches focus on poverty alleviation, with programmes aiming to empower women economically through cash transfers and microfinance. Economic studies suggest that women's increased earnings can enhance their bargaining power within households, potentially impacting GBV dynamics.

Green et al. (2015) outline two approaches tested through separate experiments: (a) the first centres on a skills and cash-transfer programme among marginalised young adults in post-conflict northern Uganda, and (b) the second assesses the impact of involving male household members in the same programme. Theoretical literature presents conflicting predictions about the impact of increased income for women on gender-based and intimate partner violence. While some suggest that greater financial independence reduces violence by challenging gender inequality and economic dependency, others argue that it may provoke resistance from male partners fearing loss of control.

In summary, addressing gender-based and domestic violence requires multifaceted strategies that address both root causes and socio-economic determinants, in order to disrupt the continuation of these dynamics. By looking at the interplay between gender, economics, and violence within intimate relationships, this study and the accompanying methodological recommendations aim to contribute to the advancement of the status of vulnerable women through the development of design-based approaches.





CHAPTER 4

Women in Social Entrepreneurship

This chapter offers a deeper exploration of entrepreneurship, examining its characteristics and benefits, with a focus on its relevance to women's economic empowerment. In *Entrepreneurship as social change*, Steyaert and Hjorth (2006) describe 'social entrepreneurship' as a hybrid phrase or even an oxymoron. Social entrepreneurship represents the intersection of two distinct worlds: a profit-oriented mindset and the pursuit of social change.

This dual approach can be challenging at times, as the pursuit of social change and the development of income-generating products or services are not inherently aligned. The primary aim of a social enterprise is to address a social issue while generating employment opportunities to support community development. It often entails monetising existing social or cultural values by converting them into marketable goods or services with tangible economic worth. While social enterprises are present in almost every industry, education and healthcare are the two primary fields in which social enterprises are most commonly found.

Social enterprises are impactful on many different levels. They generally contribute to economic development and offer innovative solutions for a whole community (Lasic, 2018). On an individual level, a social enterprise can be empowering for those who directly benefit from the opportunities it provides (Haugh et al., 2016). Many aspiring entrepreneurs believe that their idea is not beneficial or effective enough and they struggle to achieve the entrepreneurial mindset (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000). However, overcoming this initial barrier strengthens their coping skills, enabling them to pursue their goals more effectively and to apply an entrepreneurial mindset in other areas of life. Social entrepreneurship creates stronger communities by bringing people together to work towards a common goal (Chatterjee et al., 2021). More broadly, it fosters social awareness and contributes to a more conscious society through its educational role.

While women's underrepresentation in business and entrepreneurship remains a significant concern, a shift is clearly underway, producing effects not only economically but also socially (Kodisinghe & Semasinghe, 2013; Rugina, 2023). Research consistently indicates that women entrepreneurs have substantial social impact; compared to men, they are more likely and motivated to reinvest their profits into education, health, family welfare, and community development (Brush, 2017). Moreover,



women's entrepreneurial ambitions are often tied to both social and economic objectives, frequently taking the form of hybrid ventures (Meyskens et al., 2011).

Women-led social enterprises have several advantages compared to traditional market-based enterprises. They often introduce a certain diversity of perspectives into their initiatives, which can help generate more ideas and support the development of more holistic approaches to addressing social or environmental challenges. This diversity of perspectives can be sustained through the diversity of leadership, another common characteristic of women-led social enterprises. Empathy and care are often culturally associated with women as gender-based personality traits, and these

qualities play an important role not only in the daily operation of a company but also in generating social impact.

Design plays a significant role in helping social enterprises achieve their goals. As a problem-solving tool, its user-centred approach — whether applied to systems, services, or products — can lead to more effective solutions. This approach places the target group at the centre of the process, focusing on understanding their needs and behaviours. It ensures that the resulting solutions are better suited to the needs of the target group. Design can also be used as a communication tool. Visual elements can help build trust, raise awareness of specific issues, and make the mission of a social enterprise more accessible to the wider public. Design can further support the creation of more sustainable and scalable solutions by enabling the development of existing solutions and the reconsideration of earlier decisions based on feedback from the target group. Iterative processes create a space for experimentation and embrace failure as an opportunity for learning by doing. This leads to continuous improvement and adaptation, both of which are essential in addressing social issues.

When addressing complex social challenges, it is essential to use effective approaches. Design thinking provides a useful framework, and its principles can be integrated into the operation of social enterprises (Kickul et al., 2018). This approach is particularly effective for addressing such complex challenges because of its human-centred approach, which emphasises a deep understanding of the needs and experiences of the people involved. This method encourages empathy, iterative prototyping, and testing, enabling the development of innovative and practical solutions grounded in real-world contexts (Brown, 2008, 2009). Moreover, design thinking promotes collaboration across diverse teams, fostering creativity and integrating multiple perspectives, which can lead to more holistic and sustainable solutions (Cross, 2006, 2010).

Social design focuses on non-market-led design activities (Manzini, 2015), making it a valuable tool for involving vulnerable groups in the process — unlike traditional design approaches, which are less suited to this purpose (Chen et al., 2016). Compared to traditional approaches, social design places a strong emphasis on participation and empowerment, employing co-creation and collaborative tools while also integrating ethical considerations. It addresses systemic issues by working closely with communities to address their specific needs. Methods, tools, and opportunities associated with social design will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.



Good Practices in Social Design-Driven Entrepreneurship

There are numerous examples of social enterprises led by women. The following section highlights a selection of notable cases.

Craftsmanship: The Role of Social Entrepreneurship in Cultural Preservation and Sustainable Growth

Craftsmanship plays an important role in the empowerment of women, particularly within the context of women-led social entrepreneurship. While it holds considerable potential for the community, it also creates a positive impact on a wider audience. One of its key contributions lies in fostering the preservation of cultural heritage, which is closely linked to peer-to-peer learning. By sharing knowledge and personal experiences, communities of women create a sense of belonging and connection, strengthening social bonds and supporting both individual and collective growth. Craftsmanship equips community members with diverse skills and increases their employability, potentially leading to greater financial independence. Traditional craftsmanship uses materials and techniques rooted in historical practices that emphasise longevity — an important aspect of sustainable production. To reach a broader customer base, local markets alone are often insufficient. Building networks among women entrepreneurs engaged in craftsmanship can foster solidarity and help establish a collective voice within the industry. Fair trade global markets provide a platform where craftsmanship-based enterprises can thrive and raise awareness of the values underpinning these initiatives.

Empowering Women through Diverse Social Entrepreneurship

It is worth noting that women-led enterprises can be found not only in the field of craftsmanship but also in technology and AI, with examples including [Atam Nirbhar](#), [Geek Girl Tech](#), or [Femote](#).

There are several initiatives that do not produce tangible goods but focus on education and raising awareness, such as [Our Voices Against Harassment \(OVAH\)](#), [Flone Initiative](#), [Global Girlhood](#), and [Free W.](#)

While many promising ideas and valuable production plans emerge over time, financial challenges often stand in the way. Some organisations focus primarily on providing financial support to women through microfinancing and microloans. Their dedication lies in gradually building women-led businesses by not only providing funding but also sharing knowledge related to loans, financial planning, and general support. Examples include [Grameen America](#), [EnrichHER](#), [Black Girl Ventures](#), [Kaaba Microfinance](#), [Walker's Legacy](#), [Pro Mujer](#), [Village Capital](#), and [Agora 2030](#).

There are several non-profit organisations — such as [Animedh Charitable Trust](#), [Whole World Women's Association](#), and [Safeplan Uganda](#) — whose methods of reaching their target groups and establishing meaningful connections are particularly noteworthy. The engagement with the community begins with getting to know its members and building trust through conversation, participation in community events, and actively listening to their needs. Connection can be established through direct outreach, often via digital platforms, and by forming partnerships with local organisations. Word of mouth also plays a significant role, while established referral systems help connect women in need with appropriate organisations. Once the connection is established, engagement can take many forms, including workshops and training sessions, peer-to-peer support groups, advocacy campaigns, and income-generating activities, often integrated with the provision of health services. These activities can occur over varying timeframes, depending on the goals of the initiative — from one-off workshops or events to long-term support lasting several years. The primary stakeholders involved include community members, staff and volunteers of non-profit organisations, local partners, government agencies, and, in many cases, donors and foundations. Throughout the programme, it is important to maintain a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to capacity building.

Organisation name	Country	Purpose	Target group	Tools
ANA by Karma	Bhutan	ANA by Karma helps craftswomen in Bhutan to make handmade scarves and market their products. It then uses its profits to support women's and community development programmes there. Their retail outlets are available in several countries, including Bhutan, Hong Kong, China, and Malaysia, and they also operate an e-shop.	Mostly poor and illiterate women artisans	Educational activities
Ekatra	India	Ekatra is a women-led social enterprise that produces hand-crafted stationery. With women's empowerment at the heart of its mission, Ekatra engages women from marginalised communities in the co-creation of its products, offering a path to financial independence through the trades of upcycling, recycling, and handcrafting.	Women from marginalised communities	Educational activities, basic knowledge of sustainable material use
Dao Ethical Gifts	Thailand	Dao Ethical Gifts is a social enterprise that offers customisable, unique products handmade by marginalised women using locally sourced materials, providing an alternative to conventional corporate gifts. Each woman receives training in work readiness skills such as sewing, handicrafts, and small business planning, along with innovative life coaching to support the achievement of long-term goals, including financial literacy.	Marginalised women	Upskilling training and work readiness, building self-confidence and dignity
Fugeelah	Malaysia	Fugeelah is a women-led conscious jewellery brand that educates, employs, and empowers refugee children and youth. Committed to quality, the brand is dedicated to thoughtful sourcing, fair wages for the female artisans with whom it co-creates collections, and give-back initiatives that generate meaningful impact.	Refugee children and youth	Education, employment, and empowerment crafts-manship techniques
Fon Fabrics	Myanmar	Fon Fabrics is an ethical fashion brand that offers quality clothing made with handwoven fabrics by Shan artisans from Myanmar. The team travels to remote areas to co-create high-quality fashion with Shan women artisans, providing consumers with authentic pieces of wearable art while supporting sustainable livelihoods for the artisans.	Women artisans	Supporting women preserving local

Organisation name	Country	Purpose	Target group	Tools
I was a Sari	Mumbai	ANA by Karma helps craftswomen in Bhutan to make handmade scarves and market their products. It then uses its profits to support women's and community development programmes there. Their retail outlets are available in several countries, including Bhutan, Hong Kong, China, and Malaysia, and they also operate an e-shop.	Mostly poor and illiterate women artisans	Educational activities
Trama Textiles	Guatemala	Trama Textiles is a cooperative of female Mayan backstrap loom weavers from across Guatemala. The organisation works directly with 100 women from 17 weaving communities in five regions of the Western Highlands: Sololá, Huehuetenango, Sacatepéquez, Quetzaltenango, and Quiché. Its mission is to create fair-wage employment for Guatemalan women, support their families and communities, and preserve and develop cultural traditions by sustaining textile arts and their histories.	Female Mayan backstrap loom weavers	Professional development and education
World for Good	Multiple countries	World for Good is a social enterprise with a dual mission: to create economic opportunities for women living in poverty — where prospects are limited and exploitation is common — and to offer retail consumers a simple way to support human rights initiatives through the purchase of a single tote bag. The enterprise partners with NGOs around the world that employ women from disadvantaged communities and pay fair wages for the production of beautiful and unique cloth bags made from fabric scraps. Profits are reinvested into the business to expand employment opportunities and divert more material from landfills.	Women living in poverty	Providing meaningful employment

Figure 1. A benchmark analysis of social enterprises active in women's empowerment





CHAPTER 5

Social Design: An Inclusive Approach to Social Challenges

Social design is considered a valuable and effective approach to working with vulnerable groups. As an emerging and increasingly vital subfield within the broader discipline of design, it focuses on creating solutions that address societal challenges and promote community well-being. Positioned at the intersection of design, social innovation, and public policy, social design emphasizes collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability, striving to improve human conditions through thoughtful, empathetic approaches to complex (i.e. 'wicked') problems.

Unlike traditional market-based design approaches, which often prioritise aesthetics or commercial viability, social design addresses issues such as inequality, environmental sustainability, public health, and education. Its scope is vast, encompassing projects that range from urban planning to product design and service systems. For instance, socially designed urban spaces foster inclusivity and accessibility for marginalised communities, while healthcare design may include patient-centred hospitals or affordable healthcare products that improve access to care.

Key scholars and practitioners who have significantly shaped the field of social design include Victor Papanek, who championed ethical and sustainable design practices, and Ezio Manzini, a leading advocate of design's role in social innovation and participatory design. Other scholars such as Hilary Cottam have made substantial contributions by reimagining public services through collaborative, human-centred design methods, highlighting the significance of such practices in policy design. Lucy Kimbell's work emphasises the strategic importance of social design in creating systemic change (Kimbell, 2012). These scholars and practitioners emphasise the critical role of empathy, collaboration, and inclusivity in designing for social impact, demonstrating that design can address the complexities of social issues by engaging communities as co-creators in the design process.

Across different fields of application, social design redefines the purpose of design as a tool for addressing pressing societal issues, demonstrating that creativity and empathy can indeed drive social progress. As the field itself is heavily influenced by the social sciences, its methodologies often draw on those of anthropology, sociology, and ethnography, particularly in participatory research and creative activities. Participation-based approaches frequently foster a sense of capability, empowerment, and ownership within communities. As a result, the outcomes often demonstrate positive long-term effects because of the involvement and insights of the target groups.



As an emerging field, social design is guided by a range of principles such as inclusion and empowerment through participation, mutual respect and dignity, trust-building, an awareness of power dynamics, and a general emphasis on long-term engagement (for more, see Chapter 6 — The Methodology). Another crucial principle is the exercise of cultural sensitivity and specificity, which — unlike universal design — addresses challenges through approaches tailored to specific target groups and local contexts, with respect for their particular boundaries, as well as the structural barriers they face and their available resources.

The methodology developed here targets women who have experienced gender-based violence (GBV), involving them in creativity-based activities within the framework of social entrepreneurship. In addition to addressing the direct target group, the current methodology also focuses on training creative professionals who work with similar populations. Through this training, a broader and more sensitive approach can be implemented, equipping designers and artists with the tools and capacity to engage with target groups affected by complex trauma. The purpose of this training is twofold: first, to establish a toolkit for a trauma-informed creative approach; and, second, to raise awareness among creative professionals about integrating social considerations into their work, thereby promoting more sustainable design practices.

As mentioned earlier, addressing complex or wicked problems through design requires a systemic understanding of the challenge. To effectively engage with the target group, the interconnected factors surrounding experiences of GBV must be carefully examined. According to the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011), gender-based violence (GBV) can be categorised into five subtypes: physical violence, verbal violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and socio-economic violence. In practice, these categories often overlap, and GBV victims may experience multiple forms of violence simultaneously or over an extended period. According to Ellsberg et al. (2005), the consequences of GBV include:

- **Physical Health Consequences:** GBV can lead to injuries, chronic pain, disability, and even death. Women may experience reproductive health issues, such as sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and complications from unsafe abortions.
- **Psychological and Emotional Trauma:** Victims of GBV often suffer from mental health issues like depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation. The trauma can have long-lasting effects on their emotional well-being and self-esteem.
- **Social Stigma and Isolation:** Women who experience GBV may face social stigma and blame, leading to isolation from their families and communities. This isolation can further exacerbate their feelings of shame and discourage them from seeking help.
- **Economic Disadvantage:** The impact of GBV can hinder women's ability to work or pursue education, leading to economic instability and dependence. This economic disadvantage can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and vulnerability.
- **Intergenerational Impact:** The effects of GBV can extend to children and future generations. Children exposed to violence may suffer emotional and developmental issues, and they may perpetuate or become victims of violence themselves, continuing the cycle.

Therefore, when assessing vulnerabilities and designing interventions, the interconnectedness and specificity of individual experiences must be carefully considered. Although the approach presented aims at providing a framework for such work, adaptation and tailoring is highly recommended in order to accommodate culturally sensitive aspects and the availability of resources.

Design in general — and social design in particular — draws on trauma-informed approaches from various disciplines to support effective practice (Dietkus, 2022; Eggleston & Noel, 2024; Winfield, 2024). Drawing on her background in both social work and design, Rachel Dietkus (2022) advocates for a trauma-informed approach to design, which involves applying six guiding principles central to trauma-informed practice: (1) Safety, (2) Trustworthiness and Transparency, (3) Peer Support, (4) Collaboration and Mutuality, (5) Empowerment, Voice, and Choice, and (6) Attention to Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues (SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014). These principles were incorporated into the methodology described below (for more, see Chapter 6 — The Methodology). The six trauma-informed principles align closely with those of social design —



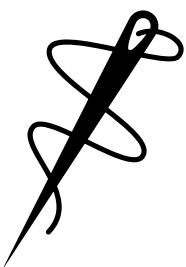
particularly in emphasising trust, collaboration, mutuality, empowerment, and cultural sensitivity as a core value. The upcoming chapter presents the methodology in detail, including the practical implementation of the guiding principles outlined above, and establishes the context for the trauma-informed social design blueprint, which is introduced in Chapter 7 — A Blueprint for the Social Design Training Programme.

Ethical Considerations

The use of participatory tools in fieldwork necessitates careful ethical consideration. This holds true for any research. However, when engaging in in-depth work with vulnerable communities, ensuring their protection becomes an increasingly urgent concern (Mohd Arifin, 2018). In such situations, imbalances in power dynamics may emerge due to the nature of the involvement — such as participants sharing personal struggles or granting outsiders access to their lives — making it essential to prioritise empowerment throughout the process. Projects should only proceed with the full consent of participants to ensure that their right to participatory freedom is upheld. Before entering the field and initiating collaborative work, it is essential to develop cultural sensitivity by gaining a genuine understanding of the local context. This approach helps to avoid ethnocentric biases and false assumptions.

These vulnerable groups often have limited autonomy and face multiple disadvantages, increasing the risk of exploitation. Ethical considerations should therefore guide the entire process, with particular attention to maintaining an attitude of empathy, respect, and non-patronisation. Building trust is a crucial part of embedding these principles into the collaboration. In many cases, such projects are constrained by limited resources — particularly time — which can lead to rushing or overlooking this essential step. However, establishing trust and mutual connection is fundamental to fostering a fruitful and equitable collaboration, as these are key values that shape power dynamics and create a shared language and understanding among all participants. This is the stage at which the goals of the collaboration should be introduced, leading to informed consent from community members and fostering a transparent environment. This stage should also address issues of confidentiality and privacy, ensuring that participants receive clear information about how and where their shared knowledge will be used. These steps help ensure that practitioners safeguard sensitive information and avoid causing discrimination or stigmatisation. The discussion of these topics may cause emotional distress, placing a responsibility on professionals to ensure that no harm is caused throughout the process.

Beyond protection, empowerment is a central element of such collaborations, where meaningful contribution should be supported by fostering participants' capacity for self-advocacy. These principles offer a practical guide to establishing ethically sound collaborations with vulnerable populations.





CHAPTER 6

The Methodology

This document applies the theoretical framework of social design, which seeks to address complex societal challenges by prioritising human needs, ethics, and sustainability. It integrates principles of inclusivity, equity, empathy, and empowerment to create culturally sensitive and adaptable solutions that foster long-term positive change. The following section presents these elements as guiding principles for the process.

Social Design Principles Grounded in Practice: Insights from the Social Design Hub (SDHub) at MOME

- **Human-Centred Design** ensures that solutions are created with a deep understanding of the community's needs and aspirations by involving them throughout the design process.
- **Inclusivity** promotes the active involvement of all stakeholders and seeks to accommodate diverse abilities, backgrounds, and perspectives. It ensures that no individual or group is excluded from the benefits of design solutions.
- **Equity and Empathy** emphasise fairness and understanding in design by addressing systemic inequalities and prioritising the needs of marginalised communities. Empathy enables designers to connect with community members on a deeper level, fostering solutions that are both just and compassionate.
- **Sustainability** integrates environmental, social, and economic responsibility into the design process, ensuring long-term viability. It promotes resource efficiency, ethical sourcing, and solutions that minimise negative impacts on future generations.
- **Collaboration and Participation** encourage co-creation by actively involving diverse stakeholders, communities, and experts in the design process. This approach fosters shared ownership, trust, and solutions that reflect genuine needs.
- **Transparency** upholds openness and honesty in design decisions, fostering accountability and trust. Clear communication about processes, roles, intentions, and potential impacts enables stakeholders to engage meaningfully.
- **Iteration and Adaptability** underscore continuous learning and refinement, allowing solutions to evolve based on feedback and changing circumstances. This approach ensures resilience and long-term relevance in dynamic environments.
- **Empowerment** focuses on enabling individuals and communities to take control of their own challenges and solutions. By providing tools, knowledge, and resources, design becomes a catalyst for self-sufficiency and social change.
- **Cultural Sensitivity** safeguards respect for the values, traditions, and identities of diverse communities, and ensures that design reflects them. It prevents cultural appropriation and fosters meaningful, context-aware solutions.
- **Long-Term Commitment** prioritises sustained engagement over short-term fixes, ensuring that solutions remain effective and impactful over time. This principle reinforces ethical responsibility and ongoing support for communities and systems.

To make these guidelines more tangible, the Design Justice Principles developed by Costanza-Chock were incorporated as a foundation. This approach helps move away from top-down design processes toward collaborative work that builds on communities' strengths and resources, with a focus on empowerment.

Design Justice Principles (Costanza-Chock, 2020)

→ Principle 1

We use design to sustain, heal, and empower our communities, as well as to seek liberation from exploitative and oppressive systems.

→ Principle 2

We centre the voices of those who are directly impacted by the outcomes of the design process.

→ Principle 3

We prioritise design's impact on the community over the intentions of the designer.

→ Principle 4

We view change as emergent from an accountable, accessible, and collaborative process, rather than as a point at the end of a process.

→ Principle 5

We see the role of the designer as a facilitator rather than an expert.

→ Principle 6

We believe that everyone is an expert based on their own lived experience, and that we all have unique and brilliant contributions to bring to a design process.

→ Principle 7

We share design knowledge and tools with our communities.

→ Principle 8

We work towards sustainable, community-led and -controlled outcomes.

→ Principle 9

We work towards non-exploitative solutions that reconnect us to the earth and to each other.

→ Principle 10

Before seeking new design solutions, we look for what is already working at the community level. We honour and uplift traditional, indigenous, and local knowledge and practices.

Social design frequently operates at the boundaries of social work, and the two fields often overlap. As such, it is valuable to draw on the insights and practices of both disciplines.

Given the target group discussed in this study, the following methodological blueprint adopts a trauma-informed approach. The six guiding principles of this approach were established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for use by organisations engaged in trauma-informed care.



Figure 2. Six guiding principles to a trauma-informed approach. Source: samhsa.gov

Like the community-oriented social design principles introduced above, the framework proposed by Dietkus offers guidance for a design practice rooted in social work. Drawing on her combined background in social work and design, Dietkus developed her model Principles with Purpose to offer foundational principles for working at the intersection of social work values, design research methods, and trauma-informed practice. The guide outlines six key aspects, as presented in A transdisciplinary model of change for trauma-responsive design research (Dietkus, 2021), and identifies three core values relevant to this process.

- **Social Work Values** must be anti-oppressive, with a focus on compassionate inquiry and new practices of liberatory social work.
- **Design Research Methods** must be practised with compassionate humility, while building and expanding literacy in trauma knowledge.
- **Trauma-Informed Care Principles** must prioritise decolonised and liberatory trauma work that centres collective care and healing.

A Transdisciplinary
Model of Change for
Trauma Responsive
Design Research

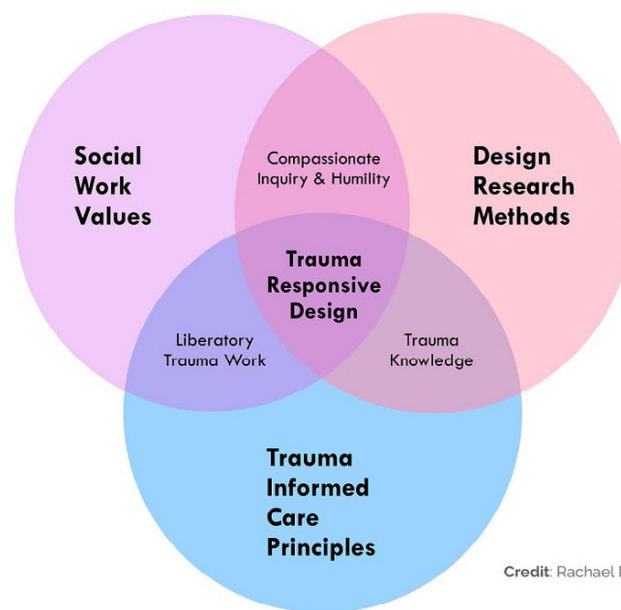


Figure 3. A transdisciplinary model of change for trauma-responsive design research. Source: Dietkus, 2021 ([Social Workers Who Design](#))

Furthermore, the model Principles with Purpose proposed by Dietkus (2021) helps designers navigate these spaces, with values that emphasise mutuality, curiosity, openness, trust, accessibility, transparency, and long-term approaches. Collaborative efforts between social-development work and design should be grounded in these principles to foster shared understanding, common goals, and ethical codes of conduct.

- Building and sustaining trust with meaningful connections.
- Listening to learn and understand through curiosity.
- Establishing and maintaining ethical rapport and social support.
- Giving authentically and generously with acknowledgement.
- Creating and generating access and accessibility.
- Perseverance and consistent care by design.

While design often adopts a problem- and solution-oriented approach, it can result in fixed ‘designerly’ agendas and oversimplified outcomes. It is therefore crucial to explore how a human-centred design process can be approached through a trauma-informed lens. Figure 4 presents a comparison between a traditional social work approach and a trauma-informed approach. While both can be applied to a design process, the trauma-informed approach is particularly suited for use with participatory and inclusive design methods. In the methodological blueprint presented in the following chapter, we rely on the concepts listed in the second column.

Traditional	Trauma-informed
Doing for people	Doing with people
What’s wrong with you?	What has happened to you? What is going right for you?
Service/practitioner as expert	Person as expert on own life
Symptoms and pathologies	Coping strategies
Treatment and cure	Healing and recovery
Noncompliant/disengaged	Overcoming barriers to engagement
These are the service options	What makes you feel safer and how can we better support you? What might you need to live well?

Figure 4. Traditional vs trauma-informed approach. Source: Engage Victoria (2022)





CHAPTER 7

A Blueprint for the Social Design Training Programme

As part of the CREATResili project, a methodological framework was developed for a training programme. The training was delivered as a Summer University, organised by the SDHub at MOME, which provided social design-based training for artists and designers. The programme provided methodological support for craftswomen in Kosovo, enabling them to develop viable product concepts with social impact, intended for production and market distribution. During the week-long programme, trainees engaged with social design methodologies, manufacturing processes, and social entrepreneurship. They developed product concepts for evaluation, which would later be further refined during a local residency programme in Kosovo. Although originally designed to train creative professionals for project participation, the programme also aimed to raise awareness in the creative sector and to develop an adaptable methodological framework.

Structure

The training programme included the following modules:

- Introduction and project briefing
- Lectures and expert sessions (social design, technical training, social entrepreneurship, storytelling through design, presentation skills coaching)
- Workshops on social design methods
- Prototyping sessions
- Consultations
- Presentation and evaluation

Figure 5. The structure of the artistic training programme. Source: Authors

Day/ Session	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
09:00–12:00	Project intro, briefing	Creative session and consultation	Workshop sessions and consultation	Workshop sessions and consultation	Final Presentations	Team-building activity
13:00–16:00	Lectures on social design and participatory methods, workshop visit	Lecture on social Entrepreneurship, lecture/workshop on storytelling, lecture on entrepreneurship	Workshop sessions and consultation	Presentation skills coaching, workshop sessions, and consultation	Evaluation	Farewell
17:00–21:00	Team-building activity	Design walk				

The programme was structured around daily themes, with three-hour sessions held each morning and afternoon. Alongside a project introduction and briefing, Days 1 and 2 included introductory sessions focused on the target group and the methodology. Days 3 and 4 featured design workshops focused on sketching and both low- and high-resolution prototyping, held in a physical workshop space that supported the development of proof-of-concept models, as well as consultation sessions, preferably overlapping with the workshops to facilitate immediate feedback for participants. Day 4 also included presentation skills and storytelling coaching to support participants in effectively and meaningfully communicating their creative process. The final presentations ensured that creators could effectively communicate the intended social message, while also offering an opportunity for participants to engage with and learn from one another’s work through shared feedback and expert evaluation. The evaluation criteria for assessing the developed concepts are provided at the end of the methodological framework and can be adapted for various applications and target groups.



Stakeholder

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the challenge, stakeholders must engage a range of actors to ensure a diversity of perspectives. Therefore, where possible, participants should have access not only to expert tutors and mentors, but also to insights from the direct target group. Including the perspective of a vulnerable target group — when approached with care and inclusivity — not only enhances the effectiveness and impact of the resulting concepts but also adds personal depth and relevance. Figure 6 below illustrates the direct and secondary target groups. In this context, the direct target group refers to women affected by gender-based violence who engage in creativity-driven social entrepreneurship activities. The secondary target group comprises experts, organisations, and professionals who work directly with these women. Both forms of expertise are essential for understanding the reality of the stakeholders' positions and for developing meaningful concepts.

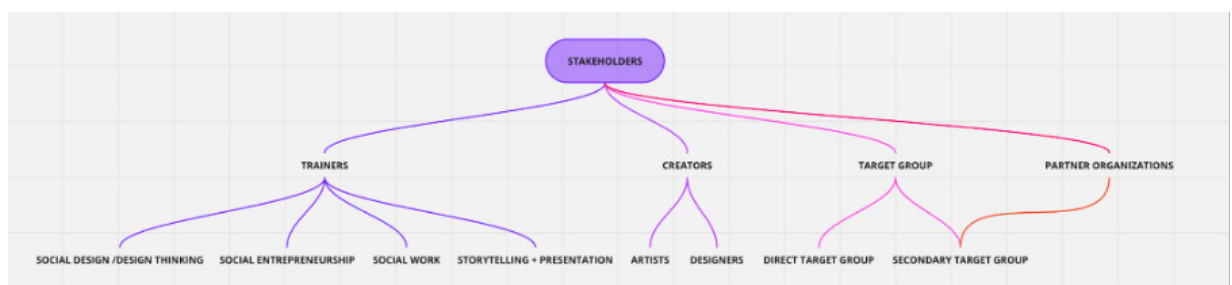


Figure 6. The stakeholder model of a socially driven creative project. Source: SDHub (MOME)

Modules, content, and requirements

DAY 1

Programme: KICK-OFF DAY

MORNING SESSION

- **Project Intro:** After the opening session of the week-long Summer University programme, each partner introduces themselves, and the project brief is presented in detail. Participants get a chance to learn more about the location and the available tools and facilities.
- **Icebreaker:** The morning session is concluded with a gender-thematic privilege walk exercise. This facilitates establishing a common language and helps articulate different notions of gender-based discrimination. A description of the exercise is included in the Appendix.

AFTERNOON SESSION

- **Lectures on social design and participatory methods** are delivered, offering an overview of the field, its guiding principles and tools, and approaches to working with vulnerable target groups and sensitive issues. The specific characteristics of the target group are described in detail, and the importance of a trauma-informed approach is emphasised. The lecture structure is provided in the Appendix.
- **Workshop visit and work safety presentation:** A brief introduction to the available tools and facilities is essential for helping participants understand potential techniques and equipment, and to ensure safe operation within the workspace. This also supports a gradual, paced approach, allowing participants to familiarise themselves with the framework and available resources step by step.

Outcomes:

Participants gain a broader understanding of the stakeholder structure, the core challenge, and the overarching framework.

Lectures on social design and participatory design deepen participants' understanding of how to design for vulnerable social groups and engage with target communities, while also introducing the techniques explored in the workshops.

Tools and Requirements:

Technical equipment for the introductions, presentations, and the icebreaker exercise

Participants:

Expert group, stakeholders, artists



DAY 2**Programme: CONCEPT BUILDING****MORNING SESSION**

- **Structured creative sessions for concept building:** Following the creative icebreaker activities and a 'Fears and Expectations' exercise, participants engage in problem mapping, the formulation of research questions (HMW or 'How Might We' questions), an ideation session, and the development of a Business Model Canvas to address the marketability of their concepts. Templates for this session are provided in the Appendix.
- **Consultation sessions with partner organisations:** Participants gain immediate feedback on their workshop results, helping to validate primary concepts. These sessions draw on each stakeholder's key insights as well as the evaluation criteria.

AFTERNOON SESSION

- **Social entrepreneurship presentations:** Lectures offer participants contextual insight into social entrepreneurship, ranging from broader questions (such as working with the target group) to more practical topics (such as market research and production). It is important to invite external experts from the local social entrepreneurship ecosystem who can reflect on social challenges at a local level and who understand the market environment in which the products are situated.

Outcomes:

Participants gain practical knowledge in social design and design thinking methods. After clarifying their scope, they are asked to define their artistic/creative focus through formulating a 'How Might We question', which helps establish their ideation framework. Following idea selection with the support of mentors at the SDHub (MOME), participants further refine their concepts by considering marketability, using the Business Model Canvas.

Lectures equip participants with an understanding of the practical aspects of social entrepreneurship, as well as visual storytelling and its integration into the design process. This is particularly relevant when designing products that carry a social impact and message.

Tools and Requirements:

Technical equipment for the introductions and the presentations, as well as workshop essentials (large sheets of paper, post-its, and markers)

Participants:

Expert group, stakeholders, artists



DAY 3

Programme: LOW-RES PROTOTYPING

MORNING SESSION

- **Workshop sessions and individual consultation:** Throughout the day, participants work individually with the support of technical staff, alternating between the workshop space and consultation sessions with partners to ensure professional guidance during the design process. Holding two sessions on the same day is necessary to maintain the creative intensity and to allow time for experimentation and, possibly, familiarisation with new techniques.

AFTERNOON SESSION

- **This programme element serves a dual purpose:** It functions as a benchmarking exercise, allowing participants to scan the market, gather inspiration, and learn from existing initiatives, while also strengthening group dynamics by facilitating the discovery of the local design scene and sparking conversations that fuel creative inspiration. The template for the benchmarking walk can be found in the Appendix and adapted to local contexts.

Outcomes:

During creative sessions, participants engage in low-resolution prototyping within the textile workshops. During consultations, they validate their design process with input from expert partners. The main outcomes of the day are low-resolution prototypes, which will be further developed the following day.

Participation in the design walk supports artists and designers in conducting a benchmark analysis to inform their creative process.

Tools and Requirements:

Technical equipment and materials for workshop prototyping, as well as ideation essentials (large sheets of paper, post-its, and markers)

Participants:

Expert group, artists



DAY 4**Programme: HI-RES PROTOTYPING****MORNING SESSION/AFTERNOON SESSION A**

- **Workshop sessions and individual consultation:** Participants are split into two groups but work individually, alternating between the workshop activities and consultation sessions with partners, ensuring professional support throughout the design process. At this stage, prototypes should already demonstrate the core idea, exhibit refined aesthetic quality, and include a well-defined technical specification, along with considerations for future production and training.

AFTERNOON SESSION B

- **Presentation skills coaching:** Participants receive a lecture and consultation support to prepare for their final presentations. A presentation template and the evaluation criteria are included in the Appendix.

Outcomes:

During creative sessions, participants engage in high-resolution prototyping in the textile workshops. During consultations, they validate their design process with input from expert partners. The main outcome of the day is a set of high-resolution prototypes to be presented as final concepts on the last day. These prototypes are expected to meet standards of creative and aesthetic quality, novelty, social impact, and market-readiness.

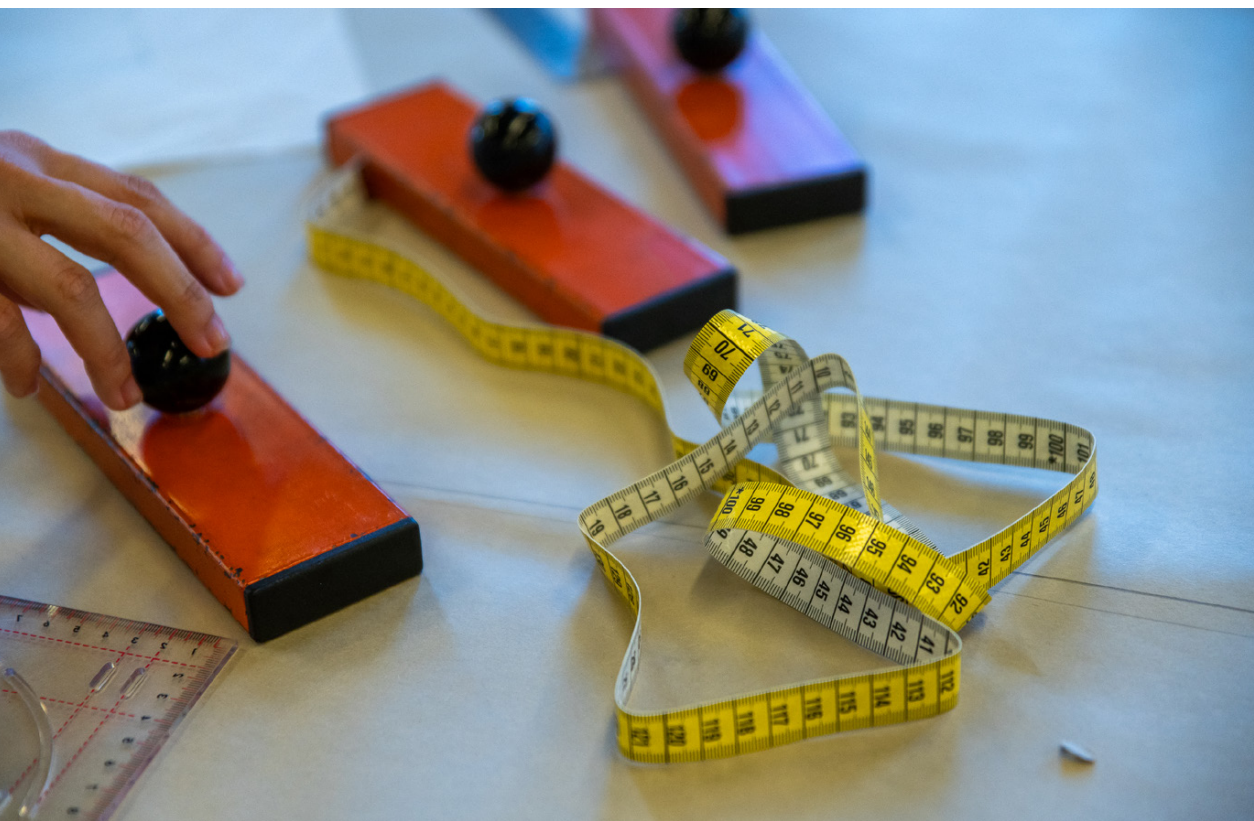
Participants learn about presentation techniques and gain a deeper understanding of how to elaborate on their concepts. With the provided criteria, they develop a clear understanding of qualitative standards for creative product development in social entrepreneurship aimed at generating social impact.

Tools and Requirements:

Technical equipment and materials for workshop prototyping, as well as ideation essentials (large sheets of paper, post-its, and markers)

Participants:

Expert group, artists



DAY 5**Programme: CONCEPT PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION****MORNING SESSION**

Participants are asked to present their research question, focus, process, concept, prototypes, and final results. They are expected to clearly demonstrate both the social impact of their concept and its production potential.

AFTERNOON SESSION B

- **Evaluation:** The presented concepts are evaluated by the partners' committee. Top candidates are selected to participate in an upcoming residency programme, where they can further develop their concepts in collaboration with the target group on site. The evaluation criteria incorporate the following aspects (a template is included in the Appendix):
 - The candidate's body of work: Assessment of the overall robustness of the design, including functionality, aesthetic quality, and coherence of the concept.
 - The social impact of the work: Evaluation of the concept's relevance to the target group and the strength and clarity of its social message.
 - Marketability: Consideration of the design's production potential, technical feasibility, and readiness for market introduction.
 - The candidate's potential: Reflection on the candidate's openness to feedback, clarity and effectiveness of presentation, and demonstrated sensitivity to social issues.

Outcomes:

Participants receive detailed feedback. Three top candidates are selected for a residency, where they have the opportunity to further develop their concepts in collaboration with the target group.

Tools and Requirements:

Technical equipment and materials for workshop prototyping, as well as ideation essentials (large sheets of paper, post-its, and markers)

Participants:

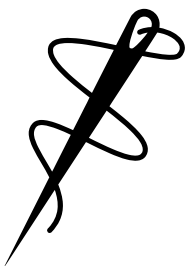
Expert group, artists

Closing

It is essential to provide participants with opportunities to share feedback openly — both on site and through follow-up surveys. Given the sensitivity of some topics, expert tutors are available on site to offer support. Participants should also be given the chance to reflect on their experience and learning journey, as well as to receive detailed written feedback after the evaluation. This supports the integration of new insights, knowledge, and methods, and encourages a long-term shift in the creators' mindset. As a continuation of the 'Fears and Expectations' exercise from Day 2, and if time permits, participants may reflect on their journey either individually or in groups.

The suggested reflection questions include:

- What expectations did you set for yourself for the process and in what way have you addressed them? Can you share the results?
- What fears did you articulate beforehand and how have you addressed them during the process? Have you received any help in doing so?
- Can you share something unexpected that emerged during the process?
- Can you share your hardest struggle?
- Can you share your most important learning?
- Has there been a transformational element in your process?





CHAPTER 8

Analysing the Application Phase: Key Insights

Evaluation Criteria

As in the pre-selection process, a set of criteria was defined to evaluate candidates of the Summer University programme dedicated to artistic training. In order to select the three top candidates advancing to a two-week residency programme, the following characteristics were assessed and scored based on the candidates' presented work (for the evaluation sheet, see the Appendix):

1. The candidate's body of work

- 1.1. The robustness of the design work: The functionality of the design; the designers' ability to integrate the specificities of the target group and the production framework; innovation potential
- 1.2. Aesthetic quality: The pure aesthetic quality of the objects; the adaptability of the design for production; the market suitability of the key characteristics of the design; its alignment with the portfolio of the social enterprise

2. The social impact of the work

- 2.1. Impact on the target group: The design's alignment with the scope of the project and its potential benefits for the target group, including the development of new skills and the feasibility of successful production
- 2.2. The strength of the social message conveyed to users: The design's connection to the social mission of the social enterprise; an assessment of how it reflects a nuanced understanding of the target group's experience

3. Marketability

- 3.1. The production value of the design: The design can be produced with reasonable modifications and aligns with the production range and techniques used by the target group
- 3.2. Market-readiness: The product falls within an accessible price range, supporting its marketability; its aesthetic qualities appeal to a clearly defined target group; the values and functionality of the product are clearly communicable

4. The candidate's potential

- 4.1. The candidate's attitude: The candidate's ability to integrate feedback; the quality of their presentation; their sensitivity to social issues

At the end of the training week, participants were asked to present their work within a limited time using a digital slide format, accompanied by physical demonstrations of their prototypes. These presentations were then graded by all jury members and assessed collectively to produce a final list of top candidates. Throughout the training week, participants received guidance in preparing their presentations through mentoring sessions and were provided slideshow templates outlining the key aspects and content required to effectively showcase their work.

In addition to the criteria listed above, the jury also considered how clearly candidates articulated their work process, the central message of their designs, and the social impact they aimed to achieve.

Insights from the Social Design Training Programme (Summer University)

A digital satisfaction survey was distributed after the training programme. Participants were able to provide feedback throughout the programme, which was addressed constructively. The organisation and content were generally well received, with two participants expressing their appreciation in writing. The survey ensured anonymity and included both general and professional questions.

In response to the question about their overall experience, participants rated the programme 9 or 10 out of 10. Overall, 90–100 per cent reported a positive experience, highlighting professional workshops, creative collaborations, hands-on tasks, and interactive discussions as key strengths. They also appreciated the well-organised structure and the availability of technical support. Exploring the local design scene and social enterprises was considered particularly insightful.

Challenges included the intensity of the schedule, which limited time for reflection. Some participants felt that time constraints affected the depth of engagement, particularly with more complex projects. The organisation in Kosovo appeared somewhat incomplete, although improvements were anticipated for future editions. Based on written feedback, the overall success of the programme was estimated at 70–80 per cent. Participants expressed strong satisfaction with the organisation, noting that communication was prompt and helpful, which contributed to a largely stress-free experience.

The venue received high ratings for its versatility, effectively accommodating a range of workshops and lectures. Most participants found the methodology to be both new and beneficial, offering a structured framework that supported creativity and collaboration. Professional support was also rated highly (90–95 per cent), with the instructors' expertise and feedback regarded as particularly valuable.



Participants wished they had more time to explore cultural aspects, though they felt that the workshop-related needs were fully met. “I have nothing negative to say about your work. I hope to meet again and wish you the best of luck in your future projects. Thank you very much for this beautiful experience,” one participant wrote. Survey results suggest that the current level of organisation should be maintained, and that, if the schedule allows, additional time should be allocated for research, reflection, and feedback. Overall, the programme was considered to represent 90 per cent good practice.

Residency Mentoring

Following the training week, all participants received detailed feedback from all the jury members. The three top candidates were asked to incorporate this feedback into their preparations for the subsequent residency programme. The residency is an in-depth, field-based, and immersive creative process, during which participating artists were invited to spend two weeks with the target group at their atelier in Kosovo to further develop their initial concepts. They were required to prepare a detailed agenda for their stay, with introduction, ideation, creative sessions, and prototyping activities designed in an inclusive, culturally sensitive, and thoughtful manner.

The artists were guided throughout their preparation and residency programme via online mentoring sessions conducted by the stakeholders responsible for the design research framework, who are also the authors of the present document. The mentoring guidelines were based on the same criteria that had been used to assess participants during the Summer University. Additionally, candidates received extensive support engaging effectively with their target groups through cultural insights and interpretation.

Residency participants were invited to provide feedback on their personal learning journey, highlighting how the support shaped their development. They were asked to reflect on the following questions, designed to capture insights into each participant's individual experience and inform improvements in future endeavours:

- How much support did the framework provide for your work and creative process? What did you find helpful? What could have been improved?
- How well did the Residency Programme help you connect with the intended target group? What did you find helpful? What could have been improved?
- How did the residency experience inform your design approach and ars poetica?



Artist responses indicated that they were satisfied with the framework as it helped them enhance their adaptability and deepen their understanding of design fieldwork. They emphasised how it enabled them to truly become one with the community, consequently deepening their empathy. One participant's response emphasised the emotional intensity of the experience, noting that while deep personal involvement could be challenging, it also offered opportunities to develop and strengthen one's professional competence. The structure of the programme — which combined a week of summer university with a two-week field-based residency — opened up new perspectives and offered a renewed understanding of how to work with vulnerable communities.

The participants were mostly satisfied with how the programme helped them connect with the target group. Working together in a learning-by-doing format fostered a closer relationship between the designers, artists, and the women involved with the foundation. Participants also made additional suggestions, including clarifying how the ready-made products would be used, so that



their design could more effectively support that purpose. They expressed a willingness to gain a deeper understanding of the situation of the women involved with the foundation, including their design preferences and their mental well-being.

In their responses to a questionnaire, participants articulated how much the residency influenced their *ars poetica*. They emphasised the programme's complex nature, noting how the interplay between formats and fields unveiled new perspectives and fostered a uniquely layered experience.

An Assessment of the Final Outputs and Recommendations for Impact Evaluation

This section aims to present a system with a clearly defined set of criteria capable of measuring the impact of the process. However, when marketing these products, adhering to the recommended metrics is essential to ensure a comprehensive evaluation.

- **Invested Work:** Considering all resources allocated, including time and marketing activities such as content creation, campaign management, and strategic planning.
- **Pricing:** When positioning a product in the market, pricing plays a significant role in its future success. Therefore, it demands a complex strategy, though it can be adjusted periodically.
- **Reach and Engagement:** Reaching the target audience is challenging when many platforms and products are already available in the market. It is crucial to establish a clear vision of who the primary audience is and how they can be effectively reached.

- **Return on Investment (ROI):** This key indicator measures the financial return relative to the marketing expenditure and helps ensure the effective allocation of resources for maximum impact.

These data-driven metrics will help organisations evaluate the efficiency of such projects using a market-based approach.

Final artistic outputs were not assessed individually at the close of each residency, as their impact and reception are better understood within the context of a market launch and fall outside the scope of this document.

However, stakeholders can monitor their long-term impact using the following guidelines.

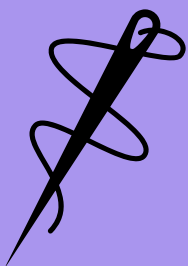
A multidimensional approach is recommended to monitor the impact of the artistic outputs based on the following criteria:

- Engagement
- Community impact
- Artistic value
- Sustainability
- Longevity
- Social awareness

In addition to the values listed above, it is important to emphasise that functionality should not be the sole dominant factor. Unless specific metrics are used, many factors influence pricing and the achievement of the expected results.

The presentation of objects can take different formats, including personal, market-driven, and event-based settings. Each context communicates a distinct value proposition, positioning the product to stand out in the marketplace in different ways. The context of a personal encounter creates a space where the product is presented meaningfully, offering a unique and compelling narrative while conveying its potential emotional or cultural significance. In contrast, a market context focuses on highlighting competitive advantages, pricing, and added value such as craftsmanship, sustainability, and social impact. Lastly, an event-based context — where the product is showcased at exhibitions or cultural events — enables a focus on storytelling, highlighting its value and its contribution to a broader context.

Given that these products convey meaning and social messages, their pricing should reflect that they are more than just functional. Factors such as raising social awareness on a particular issue, improving the lives of creators, and boosting the local creative industry may represent such added value. While these values may not be quantifiable by exact metrics, they play a key role in enhancing the product's market position.





CHAPTER 9

Conclusions



The CREATResili programme has demonstrated the critical role of social design in training artists and designers to work effectively with vulnerable groups. By incorporating participatory methods and a gender-sensitive approach, the programme fosters deeper engagement, equipping creative professionals with the tools to facilitate meaningful and ethical collaborations. The integration of social design principles into training not only empowers artists but also contributes to broader social awareness surrounding gender-based violence, economic inequality, and the marginalisation of women in low and middle-income communities.

A key impact of this approach lies in its ability to reshape the position of vulnerable groups within society. By fostering economic independence, social resilience, and professional opportunities, the programme encourages sustainable transformation. Participants not only develop creative solutions but also gain confidence and agency — both essential for long-term empowerment. Furthermore, the focus on social design ensures that these creative interventions remain culturally and contextually relevant, avoiding superficial or extractive interactions with the communities they serve.

The training methodology itself is structured around two key elements: a one-week Summer University on Social Design and a two-week residency. The Summer University equips artists and designers with theoretical and practical knowledge on participatory methods, social innovation, and ethical engagement with vulnerable communities. This foundational phase is crucial in preparing participants to navigate complex social landscapes while maintaining sensitivity and adaptability. The subsequent residency allows selected artists to deepen their engagement by applying their learning in real-world contexts, refining their projects through on-site collaboration with a social enterprise (Jahjaga Foundation). The iterative nature of this process, supported by continuous feedback loops, ensures that projects remain dynamic, responsive, and aligned with the needs of the community.

Another fundamental strength of the programme is its adaptability and potential for broader future application. The methodologies and frameworks developed within CREATResili can be replicated and adapted to similar contexts, whether in different geographical regions or for various marginalised communities. The emphasis on participatory research, co-creation, and embedded production processes makes it a flexible and scalable model. Future iterations could expand on digital applications, incorporate emerging design technologies, or integrate cross-sector collaborations to enhance impact.

Crucially, the success of this initiative highlights the importance of an interdisciplinary approach and multi-stakeholder implementation. By bringing together artists, designers, policymakers, NGOs, and local enterprises, the programme creates a holistic ecosystem that nurtures long-term change. The engagement of diverse stakeholders ensures that interventions are not only artistically innovative but also socially and economically sustainable.

In conclusion, the CREATResili programme exemplifies the transformative power of social design in fostering resilience among vulnerable groups. By equipping artists with the knowledge, skills, and ethical frameworks needed to engage meaningfully, the programme contributes to broader social awareness and systemic change. Ongoing development and refinement of this approach will be crucial in addressing gender-based violence, economic marginalisation, and social inequities through creative, inclusive, and sustainable solutions.

Appendix

The Benchmark Walk: an outline of the programme

When planning the programme of the Summer University, it was important to include real life examples to inspire participants regarding where and how their future products could be displayed and sold. In order to show them some examples, a design walk was planned where participants had the opportunity to perform a benchmark analysis by visiting selected design shops and concept stores in Budapest. Three locations were chosen based on their distinct customer focus and product selection. The selection criteria included materials and craftsmanship, social or environmental impact, emotional appeal, and user experience. Using these factors as guidelines, the first location was a concept store that offers a wide range of local designer products with the goal of promoting Hungarian designers and helping them make it in the market. Named Wonderlab, the shop offers a space for around 30 talents to showcase their work and communicate their brand's message in a small venue in the city centre. The second location was Retrock, a vintage store, where the entrepreneurs created a space for both local and international brands to sell their own products in addition to the vintage clothing on offer. These brands align with the shop's core values such as sustainability and slow fashion. The third location was a single-brand store opened by Printa, one of the first environmentally conscious brands in Hungary. While the brand's main focus is clothing, they also offer other products centred on the values of craftsmanship.

For the visit, participants received a list of questions based on the defined criteria, which enabled them to map all relevant factors during their visit:

- What is their focus on design, material, and craftsmanship? What kind of materials are used in the product? How do they contribute to the product's durability? What techniques are used, and how do they enhance the product's value?
- Do the products have any identifiable social or environmental impact? How do the products communicate that impact? What kind of design choices were made in order to create value?
- Do the products have emotional appeal? If so, what kind of design choice can create a connection with the customer?
- Examining the user experience, what are the key elements that attract customers?



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