

# BOOST

WOMEN INNOVATORS

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# PROGRAMME

# REPORT



**Boost.**





*“Diversity is critical in all aspects of human development, including tech. It brings unique ideas and perspectives to the table, helps create results that benefits all sections of society. The ambition of BOOST is to support women in playing an active role in conversations and processes which shape our common future and provide a platform for bringing together a community of innovators from across the region.”*

**Tatiana Zilkova**

*Team Leader, Development Cooperation,  
Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic*

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# Programme SNAPSHOT

# 1

## INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Women-led innovations and technologies contributing to gender equality.

# 5

## AGENTS OF CHANGE

Startups, SMEs, social enterprises, civil society organizations, and academic institutions.

# 2

## DEV. PARTNERS

MINISTRY OF FINANCE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND KOÇ HOLDING

# 2

## TRACKS

EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA  
TÜRKIYE

**288** APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM **19** COUNTRIES

Track 1  
45 out of 223

## 55 SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

16 countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia

Track 2  
10 out of 65

### GRADUATES' LOCATION OF OPERATIONS:

Albania – 2	Montenegro – 1
Armenia – 3	North Macedonia – 1
Azerbaijan – 2	Serbia – 1
Georgia – 4	Slovakia – 1
Kosovo <sup>1</sup> – 2	Tajikistan – 1
Kyrgyzstan – 3	Türkiye – 9
Kazakhstan – 3	Ukraine – 4
Moldova – 2	Uzbekistan – 2



**9 GRANTS AWARDED**



**\$ 90,000 GRANT FUNDING**



**\$ 100,000 of CO-FINANCING**

- ✓ **20 FACILITATORS & TRAINERS**
- ✓ **2 BOOST TALKS**
- ✓ **100+ MENTORING HOURS**
- ✓ **20+ MENTORS**
- ✓ **41 GRADUATES** Track 1 – 32, Track 2 – 9

**PROGRAMME**

**12 WEEKS**

**5 MODULES**

**65+ hours of training sessions & workshops**

<sup>1</sup>References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

# WHAT'S BOOST?

## Reimagining our future through innovation!



BOOST is a regional impact acceleration programme, powered by UNDP Europe and Central Asia. Its mission is to tackle complex development challenges and create a more sustainable future. Through BOOST, innovation partners come together to co-design and launch open innovation calls.

BOOST is built to scout, support and scale innovations that could lead to transformational change and systemic impact at a global, regional or country level. By applying systems thinking and bringing together actors from different parts of society, BOOST strengthens innovation ecosystems and enables co-creation of innovative development solutions. Moreover, by making sense of what emerges within and among programme cohorts, BOOST can test and learn from innovators to inform policy-making and UNDP's own programming with the ultimate objective to boost the impact of our interventions, working with complexities.

### **BOOST is:**

- ✓ **a programme for impact acceleration**
- ✓ **a platform to run innovation challenges**
- ✓ **a learning mechanism for complex development challenges**



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# The strategic intent of BOOST

BOOST is rooted in **UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022-25**, which aims to support governments and communities to rebound from COVID-19 and build forward better. Together with our growing network of changemakers and partners, we are working towards building resilience and igniting structural transformation, making sure that **no one is left behind**. To do this, BOOST operates at the intersection between **UNDP's three enablers**:

## DIGITALIZATION

Supporting countries to build inclusive, ethical and sustainable digital societies



## STRATEGIC INNOVATION

Empowering governments and communities to enhance the performance of entire systems, making them adaptive and resilient



## DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

Partnering with governments and the private sector to align public and private capital flows with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and mobilise finance at scale

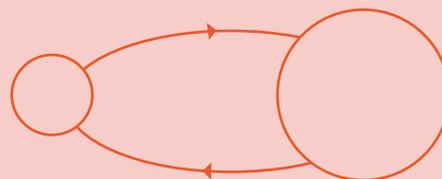
Our ultimate goals are to:



**AMPLIFY** the number, diversity, reach and impact of innovations in the region that contribute to sustainable development.



**BOOST** innovators by providing access to a groundbreaking training programme, equity-free grants, and a pool of international mentors.



**CONNECT** diverse actors of change and their networks to leverage and benefit from diverse capabilities, resources, and knowledge.



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## How BOOST works?

BOOST engages a wide range of public and private, local and international partners to co-design and jointly launch open calls for innovations that tackle specific development challenges related to inequality and poverty, governance, energy, environment, resilience and gender equality. Our calls and programmes are open to private sector entities, non-profits and academic institutions.

From each call, we select a group of innovators to take part in the BOOST impact acceleration programme that incubates and accelerates innovations. We collaborate with our partners on crafting trainings and mentorship and tailoring them to the needs of the participants. During the programme, the selected participants follow a series of modules that help them rethink, develop and scale their innovations.

At the end of the programme, participants showcase their innovations during our BOOST Graduation or Demo Days. Together with our partners, we select and award equity-free grants to the most promising innovations, to enable their further scaling and sustainability.

**Read more about how BOOST works [here](#).**

### OUR STORY

**Read BOOST's story and how we launched in 2020.**

**Find out more about what we've achieved in our 2021 Programme Report.**

# Innovation Challenges



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**Development challenge:** In the Europe and Central Asia region, women’s entrepreneurial opportunities remain scarce.

**Women innovators and entrepreneurs face multiple challenges** – from lack of access to training and mentoring to limited initiatives promoting women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) & business careers. With the accelerated pace of digital transformation, an estimated 70% of women’s jobs worldwide are at risk of automation. At the same time, **women are four times less likely than men to have advanced ICT skills (UNDP 2021)**. Moreover, the limited access to capital remains one of the leading obstacles for women-led or women-founded startups to scale. In Europe, only 2% of investment capital goes to women-led tech companies/startups.

**Hypothesis:** Empowering, investing in, and providing spotlight for women innovators and entrepreneurs will fuel innovation, improve business performance, and unlock growth and economic opportunities for both women and men in the region, and beyond.

**Response:** BOOST: Women Innovators, was designed to support changemakers in the region to harness innovation and technology to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. Through open calls for innovations, women-led or owned startups, SMEs, social enterprises, non-profits, and academic institutions were encouraged to apply with innovative ideas that seek to bridge the gender digital divide in four key thematic areas.

## THEMATIC AREAS

### Women and digital access and use

Innovations that help bridge the gender digital divide, enabling women and girls to equally access and use digital technologies – from creating affordable tech and enhancing digital literacy skills to tackling gender stereotypes.

### Women in the digital economy & STEM

Innovations that help increase women’s active participation in digitally transformed economies and STEM or boost opportunities for women to be creators/drivers of innovation – for instance by leveraging the amplifying effect of emerging technologies, or by facilitating access to affordable finance.

### Women in data

Innovations that can help close the gendered data gap, using gender-sensitive data – data specific to women – to improve research, policy, planning, design, monitoring in urban planning, transportation, manufacturing, and other fields.

### Women in innovation & entrepreneurship

Tech-driven innovations in any market or focus area (from health and finance to education and energy).

5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



# Innovation Challenges

Europe & Central Asia

## Track 1 – BOOST: Women Innovators in Europe and Central Asia

UNDP and the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic launched BOOST: Women Innovators in Europe and Central Asia to support women-led or owned organizations in the region with innovations that can bring down structural barriers and have a lasting positive impact on the lives of women and girls in the region.

### **Type of applicants:**

Startups, SMEs, social enterprises, non-profits and academic institutions

### **Locations:**

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Türkiye

## Track 2 - BOOST: Women Innovators in Türkiye

UNDP and Koç Holding launched BOOST: Women Innovators in Türkiye to boost women-led startups with powerful tech-driven innovations that can change our future and strengthen the startup ecosystem of women innovators, thus helping to close the gender gap in innovation and entrepreneurship in Türkiye.

### **Type of applicant:**

Startups

### **Location:**

Türkiye

“

*“The BOOST: Women Innovators programme is one of the most impactful entrepreneurial programmes I have been involved with, and I've been involved in a lot! The mere fact that they source participants from countries which are normally underrepresented and or overlooked means that they are making available opportunities that help level the playing field. Seeing the participants develop over the course of the 12-week programme is just something to marvel at. A genuine impactful programme impacting lives.*

**Phin Mpofu**

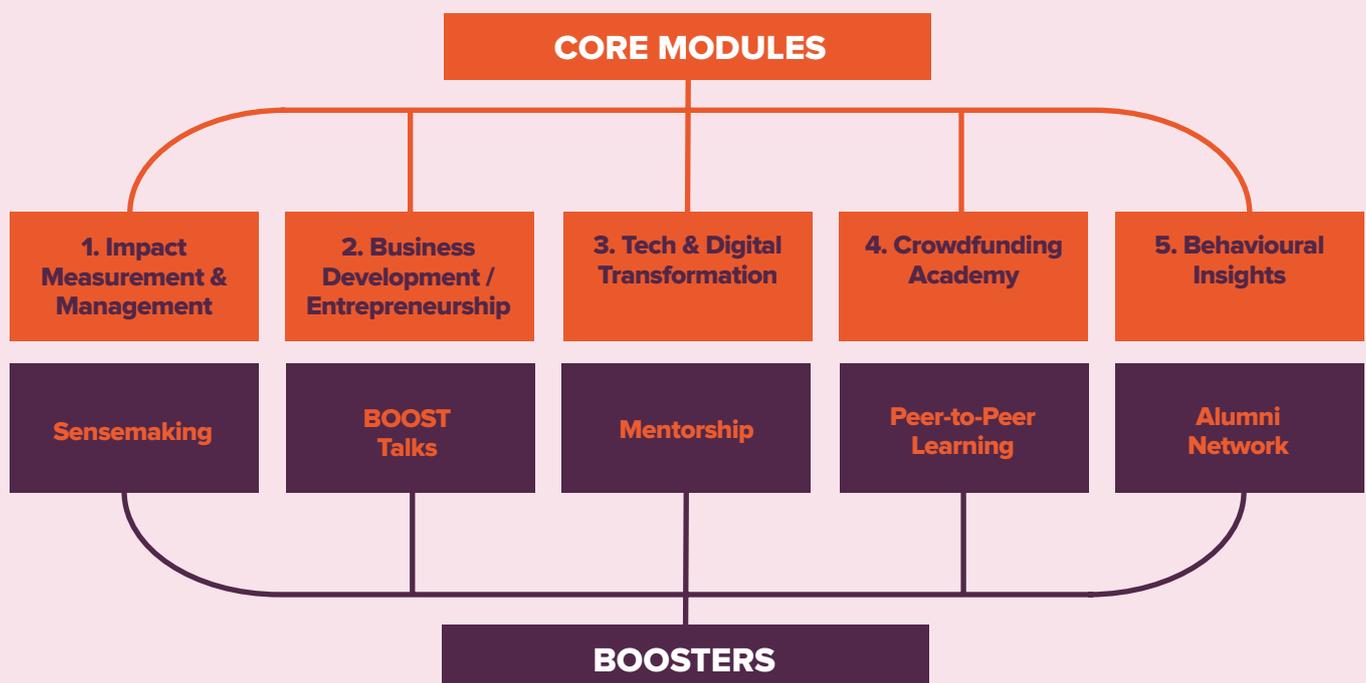
*Director, Global Community  
Startup Grind*

# BOOST: WOMEN INNOVATORS Programme overview



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BOOST's unique 12-week acceleration programme was conducted fully online from May through July 2022 and consisted of a learning and capability development journey comprising five core modules and multiple boosters.



## Programme modules

### MODULE 1: Impact Measurement and Management

Module 1 focused on equipping the organizations with a better understanding of the concept and principles of impact and how impact interlinks with sustainability and scalability. With support from UNDP's impact venture accelerator **ImpactAIM**, the organizations developed impact models, including SDG-aligned impact hypothesis and theories of change, with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators for proper impact measurement and management.

### MODULE 2: Business Development / Entrepreneurship

Module 2 focused on developing the organizations' business, organizational, and management skills and capabilities. Through a wide-ranging set of sessions delivered by **Startup Grind** (Track 1) and **KWORKS** (Track 2), including experts from their respective networks, participants got access to a step-by-step roadmap and approaches to building enduring business models and further develop and scale their innovations.

*“Innovation is not an option but a necessity in today’s world. To remove the obstacles women and girls face in pursuing careers as inventors the BOOST: Women Innovators programme has provided the opportunity to build more inclusive innovation ecosystems.”*

**Ebru Bakkaloğlu Tüzecan**  
Sustainability Coordinator  
Koç Holding

### **MODULE 3: Tech and Digital Transformation**

Module 3 consisted of a self-paced online training course focused on the principles for digital development and how they can be applied to drive social impact. The course, originally designed by Digital Impact Alliance and made available by the UNDP Chief Digital Office, introduced nine digital principles, contextualized them in a case study, and showcased tools and resources that can be applied to all stages of a project life cycle.

### **MODULE 4: Crowdfunding Academy**

Module 4, offered by UNDP’s Crowdfunding Academy, taught participants how to create and launch successful crowdfunding campaigns to get traction, create a community of “backers”, and diversify their funding sources. The course was implemented through self-paced modules, assignments, and mentorship guidance.

### **MODULE 5: Behavioural Insights**

Module 5, implemented by [The Behavioural Insights Team](#), introduced the participants to behavioural insights and its applications. Throughout the module human behaviour and the various cognitive and behavioural biases that drive behaviour were explored. Theoretical materials and real-world examples were complemented with practical tools and methods to identify behavioural barriers and inform the design of successful innovations and projects.

“

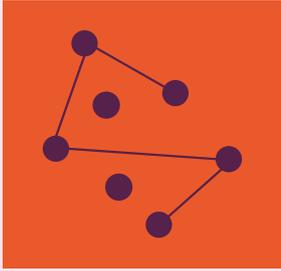
*“The BOOST: Women Innovators programme not only provided women innovators the opportunity to meet with and learn from various experts in the global entrepreneurship ecosystem but it also provided a platform where the participating organizations learnt from each other.”*

**Dr. Beril Boyacıođlu Bakır**

*Manager*

*KWORKS*

## Programme boosters



### Sensemaking

At the beginning of the acceleration programme, a diverse selection of organizations participated in a two-day sensemaking workshop. The process enabled the generation of learnings about the cohort, identified interconnections between different participants, and resulted in systemic-level insights that UNDP and its partner leveraged during final programme design and implementation.



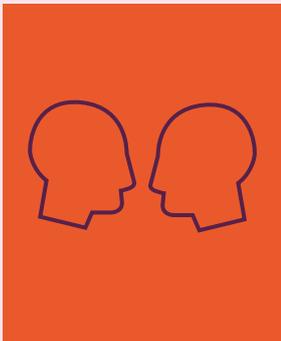
### BOOST Talks

Through the BOOST talks series, public talks with women innovators from the region were organized. The objective was to shed light on specific topics relevant for the participating organizations and the UNDP network, inspire and share learnings.



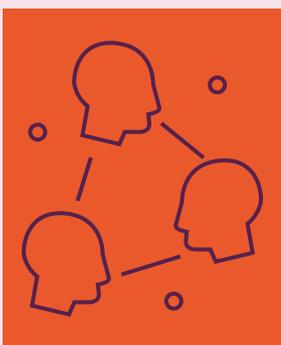
### Mentorship

To provide tailored support and ensure a bespoke learning journey, participants were matched with expert mentors from Startup Grind, KWORKS and UNDP's networks of industry experts and entrepreneurs. Through group office hours and 1-on-1 mentorship sessions, the participants had the chance to get personalized feedback on their innovations and business models.



### Peer-to-Peer Learning

To leverage the diverse skillsets and rich experiences in the cohort, BOOST facilitated multiple opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. Through group work, online discussion forums, and 1-on-1 calls between current and previous BOOST participants, organizations connected to jointly reflect on their learning and help each other reimagine their innovations and bounce ideas. In Kazakhstan, a [local in-person BOOST meet-up](#) was organized, in which the organizations provided feedback on each other's proposals and final pitches.



### Alumni Network

At the end of the programme, the graduates were offered to join the BOOST Alumni network, facilitated by UNDP's Innovation team at the Istanbul Regional Hub. Through this network, the graduates will have access to information about capacity development, networking and funding opportunities and will have the opportunity to connect with previous and future BOOST graduates. The graduates were also invited and offered a fast-track application process to join Startup Grind's world-wide members network.

# BOOST Talks

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Through the BOOST talks series, public talks with women innovators from the region were organized.

The speakers included:

- **Pınar Köse Kulacz**, *Innovation Director at Arçelik on the power of open innovation for social impact;*  
and
- **Funda Sezgi**, *Co-founder and Managing Director at Norrsken Impact Accelerator on the next generation of impact tech entrepreneurs.*



**Boost.** boostimpact.org

**BOOST TALKS**

## The power of open innovation for social impact

with Pınar Köse Kulacz,  
Innovation Director, Arçelik

JUNE 28 (10:00 CET)

**CLICK IMAGE TO WATCH THE RECORDING**

Logos: UNDP, Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, SlovakAid, GYD Kaç, KWORKS, STEM4ALL, startup grind, ImpactArm



**Boost.** boostimpact.org

**BOOST TALKS**

## The next generation of impact tech entrepreneurs

with Funda Sezgi  
Co-founder and Managing Director  
Norrsken Impact Accelerator

JULY 20 (10:00 CET)

**CLICK IMAGE TO WATCH THE RECORDING**

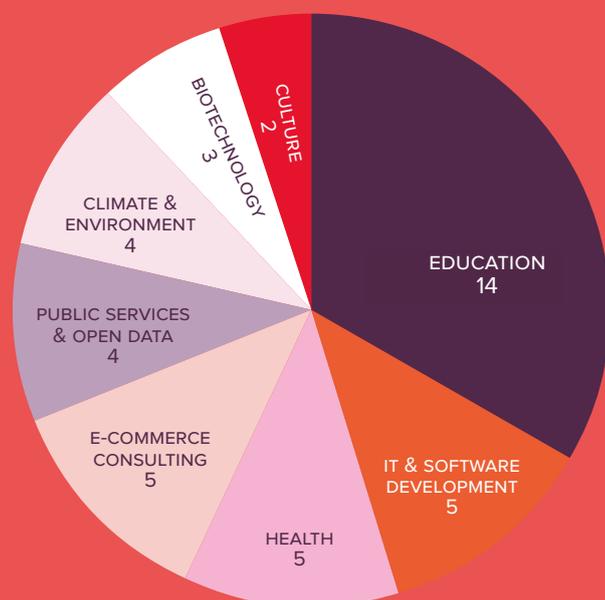
Logos: UNDP, Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, SlovakAid, GYD Kaç, KWORKS, STEM4ALL, startup grind, ImpactArm

# Results and impact

## The selected cohort



## TYPES OF GRADUATES



### What fields participants are working in?

- Education – 14 (33,33%)
- IT & Software development – 5 (11,9%)
- Health – 5 (11,9%)
- E-commerce & consulting – 5 (11,9%)
- Public services & open data – 4 (9,5%)
- Climate & environment – 4 (9,5%)
- Biotechnology – 3 (7,1%)
- Culture – 2 (4,76%)

# WHAT BOOST ENABLED?

*“Being part of the BOOST programme was a life-changing experience. It felt nice to see so many women that thrive for the same mission and goal – to bring impact by clear and inspirational actions.”*

**Dreamups Innovation and Entrepreneurship Accelerator**  
 *Moldova*

## **Creation of a supportive environment and business network for women innovators**

Women typically have less access to business networks, and in the Europe and Central Asia region, women’s entrepreneurial opportunities remain scarce. Throughout the programme, BOOST created a safe and inspiring environment for women innovators to connect with peers, share knowledge and experiences, and get targeted advice from experts who recognize the challenges that women face in entrepreneurship and innovation, including gender discrimination. The sensemaking workshops, mentorship sessions, and the continued interaction and check-ins with participants allowed the BOOST team to identify interconnections between teams and facilitate networking and collaboration amongst these organizations.

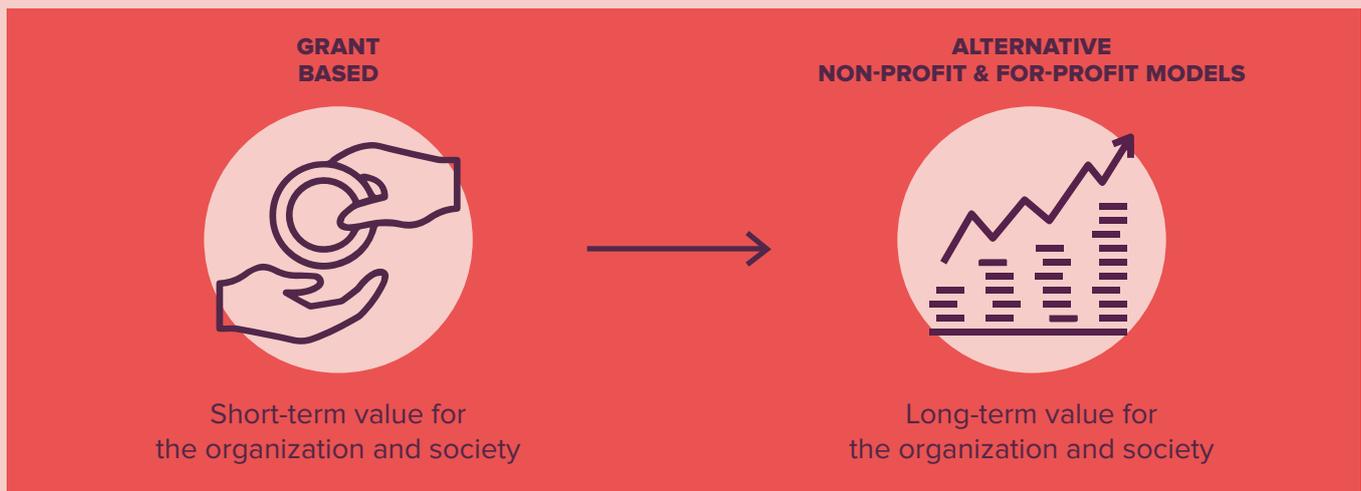
## **Fit for purpose impact acceleration curricula for both for-profits and non-for-profits**

By bringing together organizations from different sectors of society, ranging from startups and SMEs, to civil society organizations and academic institutions, BOOST filled a gap in the world of accelerator programmes. With content sessions continuously adapted to the bespoke needs and interest of the participants, the programme proved relevant to all types of organizations, regardless of their level of maturity or sectoral focus. For example, 84.6% of the organizations had never undertaken impact measurement activities in the past but built understanding of sustainable development during the programme, and developed their organization’s first impact models.

*“BOOST was a great experience for us! It was very inspiring to meet so many women-led innovations across the region. The programme is very content-packed, but all modules are relevant both for startups, as well as for NGOs.”*

**Tech4Impact**  
 *Uzbekistan*

## Mindset shift from grant based to financially sustainable business models



### Nurturing entrepreneurship mindsets to scale impact

Throughout the business acceleration, impact and crowdfunding modules, non-profits explored opportunities to diversify resources, to reduce donor funding dependency and enhance strategic, long-term thinking. Support focused in particular on the organizations' partial commercialization of products or services whilst staying true to their impact visions and theories of change. This required a shift in mindset which at the get go would have been unthinkable for some organizations, that expressed reluctance to go commercial pointing to the never-ending dilemma of having to balance profit and impact. However, during the programme, several non-profit organizations decided to shift their financial models through the creation of social enterprises and thus move from grant-based work to revenue-modelling. Furthermore, the discussions with industry experts and peer organizations helped several non-profits understand and leverage approaches used by their peers, such as using traditional customer acquisition strategies to reach new users/target groups.

*"Thanks to BOOST, we are transforming from a grants-only dependent NGO to a self-sufficient social EdTech startup with the potential to split activities between the NGO and company in the future."*

**Female Algorithm**  
 Slovakia



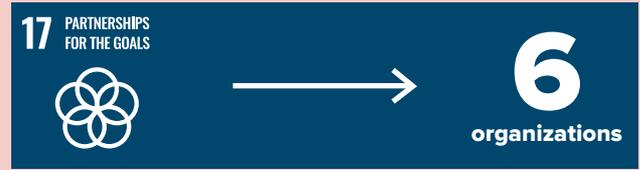
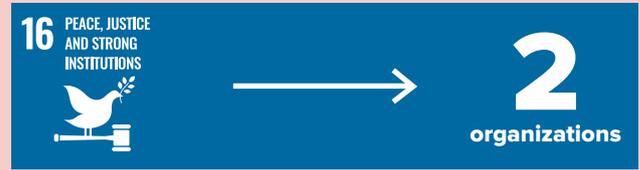
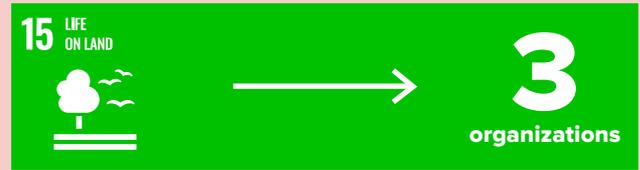
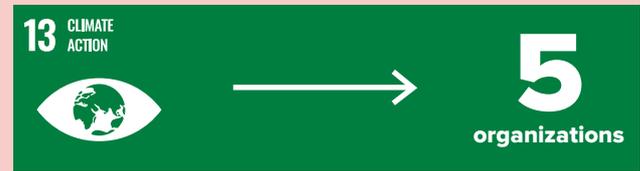
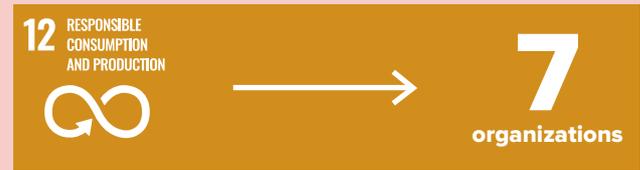
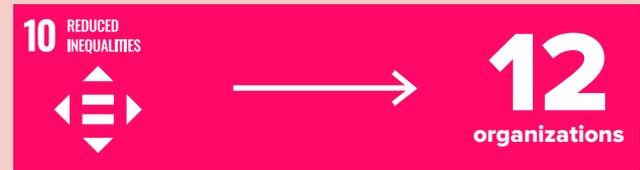
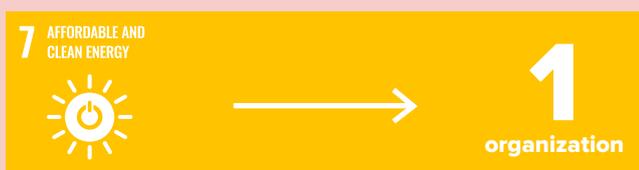
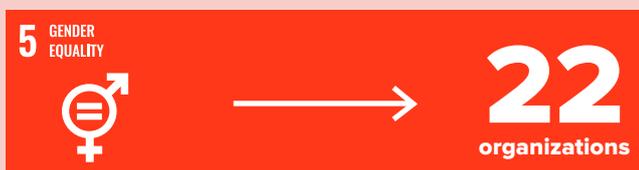
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# Driving sustainable development

*“The BOOST programme helped us to learn new approaches for developing our startup. One of the main important learnings was the alignment of our startup with the Sustainable Development Goals.”*

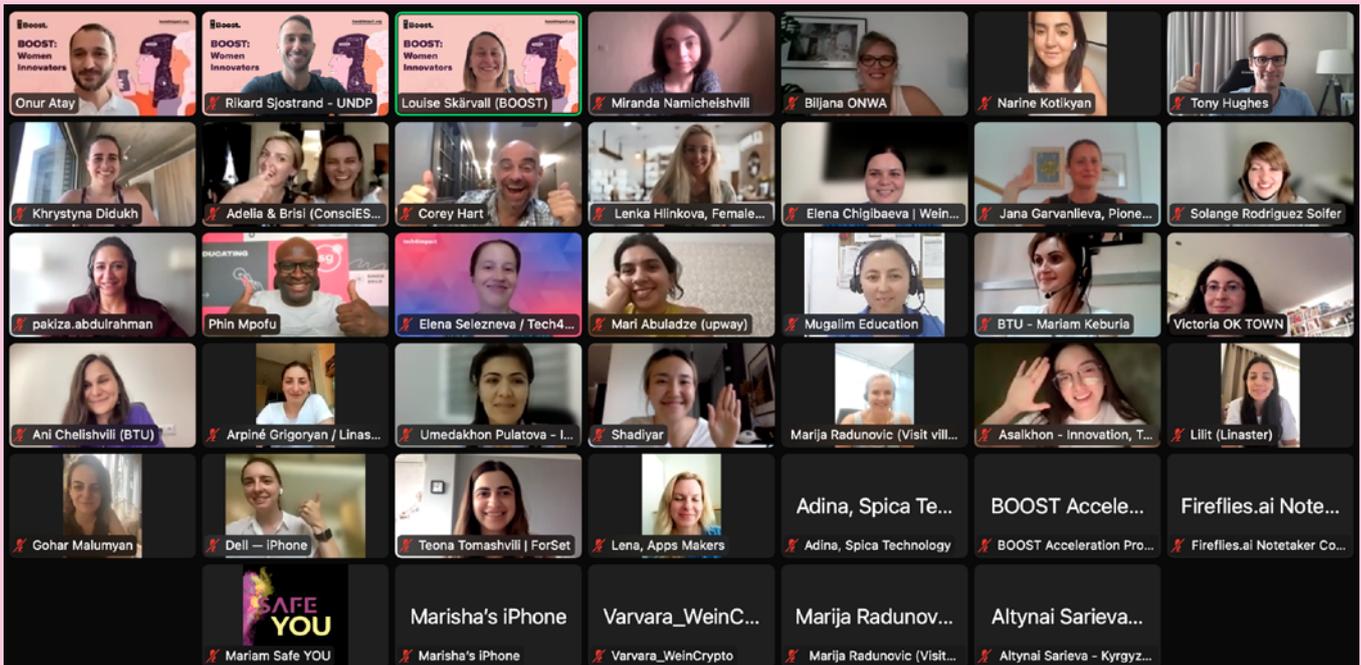
IZZI

 Azerbaijan



For a detailed description of each innovation, see [BOOST innovations](#).

# What BOOST's participants are saying?



**90%** of the BOOST graduates would recommend the BOOST programme to others.

*“Participating in the BOOST programme felt like going on an exchange – immersing ourselves into the culture of social change created by others around the world, exploring various areas from business acceleration to behavioral insights, and cooperating with global change-makers to tackle worldwide development challenges together.”*  
**Girls Power Fund, Kazakhstan**

*“The BOOST programme is a trampoline towards changing lives!”*  
**LLC New Algorithm, Tajikistan**

*“BOOST was an invaluable programme that offered our team the knowledge and mentorship needed to develop stronger and more innovative business practices.”*  
**Impact Innovations Institute, Armenia**

*“BOOST is an excellent accelerator which encourages women innovators to take further steps in business. This 12-week learning journey advanced our business mindset for improving social impact through our innovations.”*  
**Sumatrix Biotech team, Türkiye**

<p><b>OVERALL SATISFACTION RATE</b>   – 4.73 out of 5</p>	<p><b>80% RATED MENTORING</b>  <b>5 OUT OF 5</b></p>
<p><b>RELEVANCE RATE</b>   – 4.73 out of 5</p>	<p><b>83.3%</b> indicated that the impact module was the most relevant for their organization.</p>
<p><b>CONTENT SESSIONS &amp; TEACHING STYLE</b>   – 4.57 out of 5</p>	<p><b>96.6%</b> expressed their desire and readiness to contribute to the next generation of the BOOST programme as an alumnus</p>

## New skillsets and capabilities

Over 70% of the BOOST participants reported they had gained a better understanding of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs and how their organization’s impact contributes to specific goals.

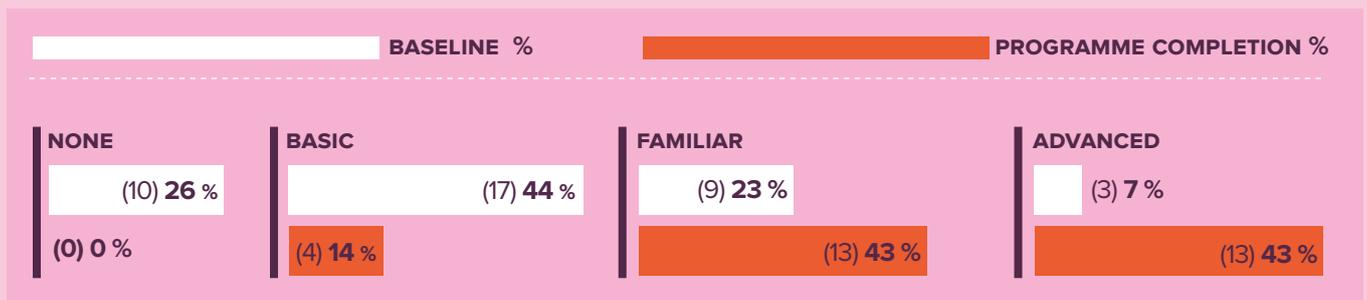
*“We did not have an impact model or any idea how to create one before the BOOST programme. We learned a lot during the programme and are still improving our understanding as well as our strategy by considering our impact as a priority.”*

**Hub21**  
 **Türkiye**

Following the programme, the organizations reported skills and capability development in several fields:

- 93.3%** stated they were now familiar or advanced in designing problem statements
- 86.6%** improved their knowledge of impact goals and indicators of development
- 80%** improved skills and knowledge related to impact measurement
- 60%** connected with impact experts and developed capabilities related to communication and management
- 50%** developed an impact management and monitoring framework for their innovation

## Theory of change (ToC) in place for organisation



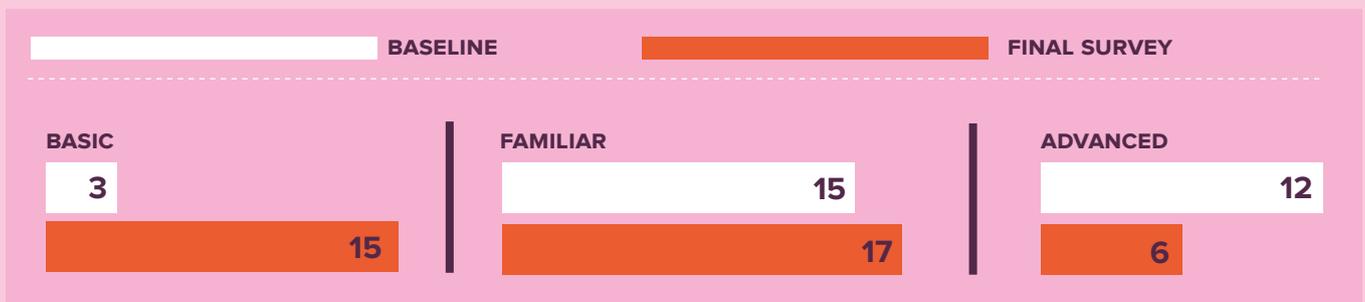
*“The experience with BOOST gave me an opportunity to advance my entrepreneurial mindset to a higher level and understand the different aspects of building a business. It also gave me ideas of who I can partner with in order to help more women.”*

Onwa  
 Serbia

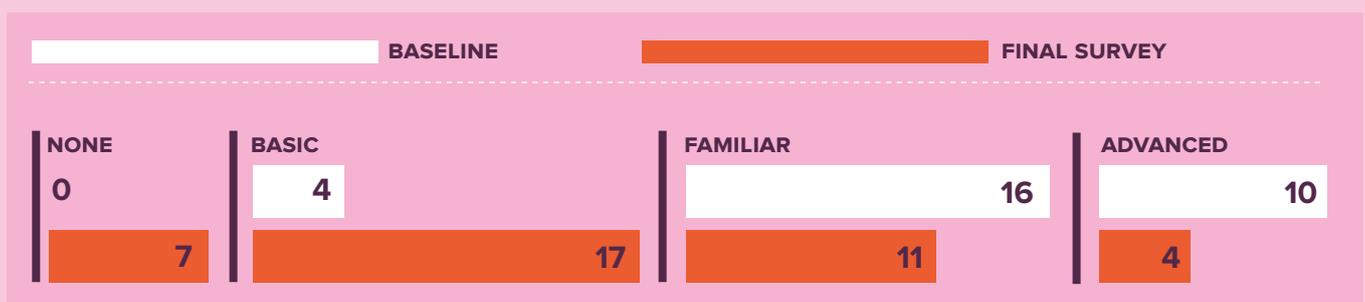
**86.7 %**

**OF BOOST CHANGEMAKERS FURTHER DEVELOPED THEIR BUSINESS MODELS AND PLANS DURING THE PROGRAMME.**

### Business development skills



### Strategy & KPI development skills



**63.3 %**

**IMPROVED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS AND/OR TARGET GROUPS, ULTIMATELY INFLUENCING THEIR STRATEGIES AND GROWTH PLANS.**

*“Joining the BOOST acceleration programme has been one of the best decisions we’ve made all year. The last 12 weeks have been pretty full-on, but with the support of the programme we’ve now got a credible business plan that makes us investor ready and will allow us to take the business to the next level.”*

**Arimars Teknoloji**  
 **Türkiye**

**Resource mobilization & pitching skills**



**34**

**PITCH DECKS WERE DEVELOPED OR IMPROVED, AND TESTED ON INDUSTRY EXPERTS AND THE BOOST EVALUATION PANEL.**

*“The programme helped us to see the global and regional potential of our startup. The digital principles and impact model modules were the ones which affected UPWAY the most – putting our expectations and predictions through these models allowed us to have a stronger foundation for our idea and think of scaling up.”*

**UPWAY**  
 Georgia

*“Thanks to this course, now we will readjust our approach towards being data-driven and building our sustainable business.”*

**IZZI**  
 Azerbaijan

**76.7%**

gained knowledge of new and developing technologies, digital tools, and innovative solutions.

**53.3%**

advanced their digital skills, enabling them to perform more effectively and detect both opportunities and risks associated with digital transformation.

**Data users: how organizations describe their relationship with data**



**I AM A CONSUMER OF INFORMATION.** I don't use data, but I consume data products.



**I AM A DATA INTERMEDIARY.** I take data and turn it into actionable information.



**I AM A PRODUCER OF DATA.** I create data on a regular basis.



 **BASELINE %**

 **FINAL SURVEY %**

female  
algorithm

*“The BOOST programme helped us to articulate our mission and goal clearly and on a professional level. We learned more about SDGs – we knew about them but didn't understand in depth. We developed strategies to prepare and launch a crowdfunding campaign, which we will trial in the autumn on a national crowdfunding platform.”*

**Female Algorithm**  
 Slovakia



*“I have understood the power of impact, SDGs and the next video I will create for my crowdfunding campaign will be totally different.”*

**ArrowStone**  
 Ukraine

**72.2%**

**broadened their understanding of crowdfunding campaigns as a tool to mobilize funding.**

**66.7%**

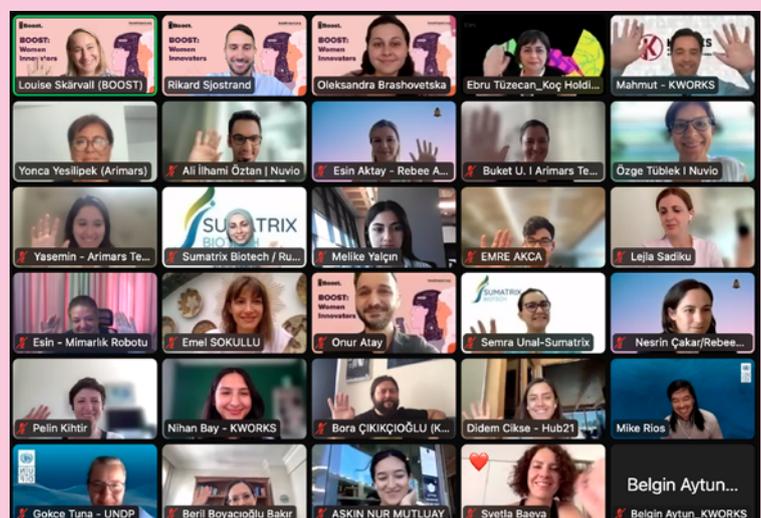
**unpacked the various components that make up a successful crowdfunding campaign.**

**50+ %**

**advanced their storytelling skills for fundraising.**

### Three organizations developed crowdfunding campaigns

(ArrowStone, OKTOWN, VisitVillage), whilst 11 organizations intend to design and launch a crowdfunding campaign for their innovation within the next 12 months.



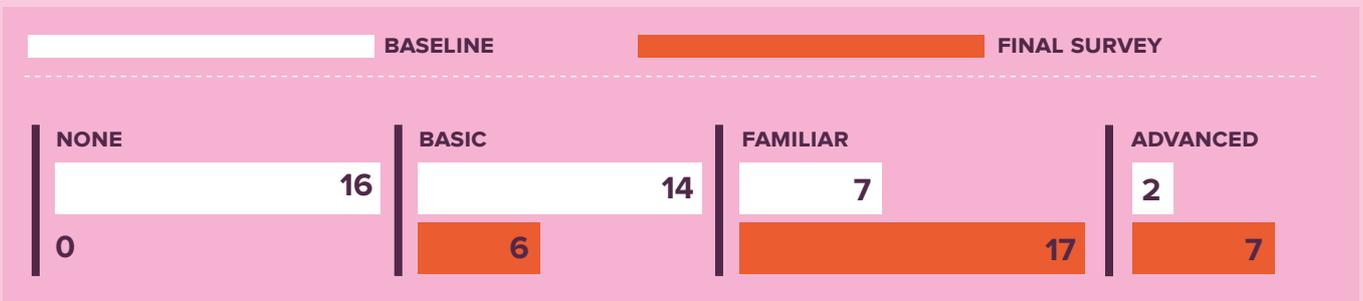
*“BOOST has helped us redefine our business strategy, expand our marketing activities placing a focus on the communities we are serving. Thanks to the behavioral insights' methods, we are now rethinking some of our approaches. Also, we now have a much better pitch deck, incorporating the storytelling element, and are more confident in our idea.”*

**Linaster, Virtual Team LLC**  
 Armenia

**90 %** ↑↑↑

**ADVANCED THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE AND ENHANCED THEIR CAPABILITIES IN APPLYING BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TOOLS.**

**TEAMS’ OVERALL CAPABILITIES/ KNOWLEDGE IN BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE CONCEPTS**



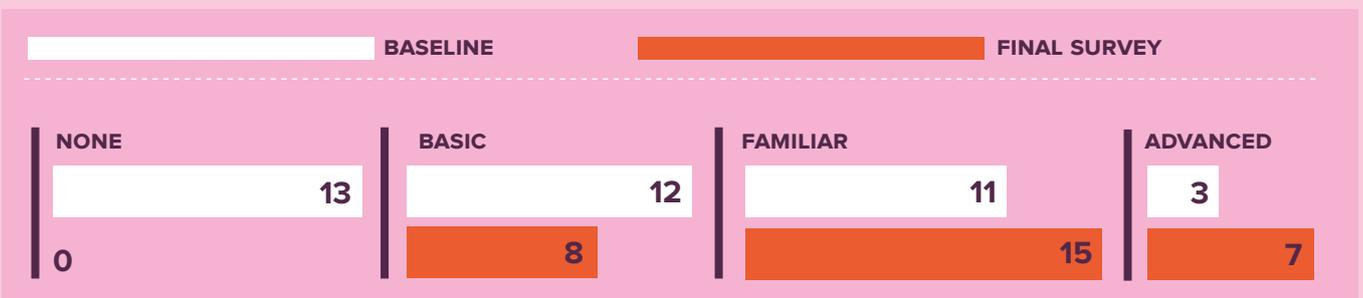
**70 %**

of participants broadened their understanding of how behavioral biases impact their organization and their target groups.

**63 %**

unpacked how their organizations may leverage behavioral insights in their product/service design and outreach.

**TEAMS’ OVERALL CAPABILITIES IN BEHAVIOURAL INFORMED COMMUNICATION**



# IMPACT STORIES

## Track 1: Europe & Central Asia AWARDEES



### ArrowStone Flowers

 Ukraine

ArrowStone Flowers is a woman-led startup that aims to build a digital platform to connect all flower industry stakeholders while promoting a 'buy local' concept to reduce emissions and boost local economic growth. In terms of gender equality, the marketplace enables women to profit from their small gardens or floristry skills via the platform. ArrowStone's founder is Ukrainian Khrystyna Didukh, who has dedicated all her life to the flower business. Following the start of the war in Ukraine, she had to flee and is currently launching the project in Estonia. Within the BOOST programme, ArrowStone shifted direction towards servicing small individual producers and created their first impact model.

**ArrowStone Flowers website** 



### AppsMakers

 Ukraine

AppMakers is a startup, founded by a Ukrainian woman entrepreneur Olena Liashenko, who fled to Austria due to the war. In response to the lack of affordable services for refugees in the EU, she created an app that offers a service marketplace for refugees. It specifically aims to assist Ukrainian women refugees in coping with economic issues as family providers by providing them a space to offer various types of services. The opportunity to obtain feedback from international mentors and the intercultural community was the most beneficial aspect of the BOOST programme for Olena.

**AppsMakers website** 

# IMPACT STORIES



## ConsciESG

 Albania

ConsciESG is a startup founded by two female entrepreneurs, with strong academic background and a passion for sustainable development. ConsciESG consists of a set of developing tools that evaluate the environmental and social impact of Western Balkan companies in order to assist them and investors in efficiently and successfully aligning their strategies around Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies. “BOOST helped us develop a more well-structured approach to progress with our innovative idea,” shared Briseida Gjoza and Adeliada Mehmetaj, co-founders of ConsciESG.

**ConsciESG website** 

**female  
algorithm**

## Female Algorithm

 Slovakia

Female Algorithm is an EdTech startup helping women switch careers to tech and business using a single digital platform. It was established in 2018 by Lenka Hlynkova, entrepreneur and published author. By 2022, the startup has assisted over 6000 women in gaining technical knowledge. Within the BOOST programme, the team started a project training Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia to find decent work in in the technology industry. The most valuable component of the BOOST programme, according to Lenka, was the developed crowdfunding campaign.

**Female Algorithm website** 

# IMPACT STORIES



## Kyrgyz Space Program

 Kyrgyzstan

The Kyrgyz Space Program is a non-profit organization dedicated to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for girls.

It was founded by an all-female team with the intention of launching Kyrgyzstan's first satellite. The organization is now led by seven inspirational young women. Within the BOOST programme, the team focused on constructing an educational platform to encourage youth involvement in STEM through satellite construction. Design thinking, business plan development, and content management were the most valuable for the team.

**Kyrgyz Space Program website**



## Safe YOU

 Armenia

Safe YOU, developed by Impact Innovations Institute, addresses gender-based violence challenges on both an individual and institutional level in Armenia. Since 2019, the team has been working on developing a smartphone application to support the fight against gender-based violence. The project evolved into a social enterprise with the primary purpose of empowering women and improving their safety. Currently the mobile application provides an emergency help function, as well as free remote counselling services for women. The team shared that the BOOST programme helped them to develop an impact model, as well as improve their business strategy and practice pitching skills.

**Safe YOU website**



# IMPACT STORIES



## Spica Technology

 Kazakhstan

Spica Technology focuses on providing affordable medical services to women. The femtech project «CLARITY», led by founder Adina R. Khamitova, was further developed throughout the BOOST programme. CLARITY is a mobile application that connects adult women with an international digital consilium of doctors in obstetrics and gynaecology. Within the BOOST programme, the team worked on improving their business strategy, developing a sound financial model, and getting pitch ready for investors.

**Spica Technology website** 



## WeinCrypto

 Kyrgyzstan

WeinCrypto is a startup founded in 2022 by three young women with the goal of attracting women and youth interested in crypto and developing their own digital, tech, blockchain, and holochain startups. Within the BOOST programme, the team worked on developing WeinCrypto, a decentralized autonomous organization (DAO) that helps women and youth unleash the power of Web3.0 by educating the community, NFT membership, and supporting women and youth Web3.0 enterprises. According to the team, the impact and sustainable development sessions were the most beneficial throughout BOOST programme.

**WeinCrypto website** 

# IMPACT STORIES

Track 2:  
Türkiye AWARDEE



## Hub21 Learning

 Türkiye

Hub21 Learning is a Turkish startup, which focuses on IT education for children and youth. It was founded in 2019 by Didem Cikse and Sylvain V. Roussaire. Its mission is to close the gender gap in technology by boosting the proportion of female students across all programmes. Hub21 plans to use the BOOST grant to train 200 middle and high school girls in coding from economically disadvantaged areas in Türkiye.

The collaboration with peers and impact model development were the most beneficial aspects of the BOOST programme for the team.

**Hub21 website** 

# Development PARTNERS



## **The Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic & Slovak Aid**

UNDP partners with the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic and Slovak Aid through the Slovak Transformation Fund, which supports regional initiatives building capabilities to drive systemic change, induce urban systems transformation and harness the potential of the data revolution, new technologies and innovative finance. BOOST: Women Innovators Track 1 is funded by the Slovak Ministry of Finance.



## **Koç Holding**

Koç Holding is Türkiye's leading investment holding company focusing on sustainable and profitable growth with consistent leadership positions in Türkiye as well as in the region with the aim of becoming an important player worldwide. Koç Holding funded and supported Track 2 of the BOOST: Women Innovators programme.

# Implementing PARTNERS

The logo for Startup Grind, featuring the word "startup" in a bold, black, sans-serif font above the word "grind" in a red, distressed, sans-serif font.

## **Startup Grind**

As the world's largest community of startups, founders, and innovators, Startup Grind educates, inspires, and connects entrepreneurs. Startup Grind led the BOOST programme's Business Acceleration module, and matched the organizations with industry experts providing individual and group mentorship.

The logo for KWORKS, featuring a red circle with a white 'K' inside, followed by the word "KWORKS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

## **KWORKS**

The Koç University Entrepreneurship Research Center (KWORKS) serves as a hub for entrepreneurship activity in Istanbul, helping innovators and entrepreneurs grow their technology-based startups. KWORKS provided one-on-one mentorship to the Track 2 participants, and delivered the Entrepreneurship module.

The logo for The Behavioural Insights Team, featuring a blue geometric icon above the text "THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

## **Behavioural Insights Team**

The BI Team is a global social purpose company founded in 2010 in the United Kingdom with the goal of generating and applying behavioural insights to inform policy, improve public services and deliver results for citizens and society. The BI Team provided the Behavioural Insights module for both tracks, which included content sessions as well as mentorship group and individual meetings.

# UN PARTNERS



## ImpactAIM

ImpactAIM is an Armenian impact venture accelerator designed to drive the scale-up of local and international startups that target SDGs. ImpactAIM carried out sessions for the Impact module of the programme, and provided one-on-one mentorship sessions.



## UNDP Crowdfunding Academy

An interactive training and capacity-building programme that empowers organizations with the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare and run a successful crowdfunding campaign. Eight organizations from the region successfully completed the Crowdfunding Academy (Apps Makers, ArrowStone Flowers, Connect-Ed, ConsciESG, Female Algorithm!, Kyrgyz Space Program, OKTOWN, Visit Village).



## UNDP's Chief Digital Office (CDO)

CDO and BOOST partnered up to leverage funds and provide a transfer mechanism between UNDP-led acceleration programmes. Through its Digital X partnerships-for-scale programme, CDO provided two BOOST alumni the opportunity to reach new markets with **their proven digital solutions.**



## STEM4ALL network

A UNDP and UNICEF led platform dedicated to accelerating gender equality and the representation of women and girls in STEM to meet the demands of the future of work in Europe and Central Asia.

# The BOOST TEAM



**LEJLA SADIKU**  
Team Lead



**RIKARD SJOSTRAND**  
Project Manager



**LOUISE SKARVALL**  
Accelerator Lead



**SVETLA BAEVA**  
Communications Lead



**ONUR ATAY**  
Data & Systems Thinking Consultant



**OLEKSANDRA BRASHOVETSKA**  
Innovation Intern

# Next generation of BOOST

**BOOST** is designed as a platform for co-creation and learning. It's a space powered by UNDP where innovators, investors, and financing & knowledge partners come together to explore and continuously learn about the systems in which we operate, and jointly reimagine and test out new ways of addressing challenges and leveraging emerging opportunities. It allows us to design and deliver targeted support that meet the needs of innovators and other ecosystem players whilst accelerating the implementation of the **SDGs**.

Based on the learnings from the **BOOST: Women Innovators programme**, we envision the following aspects to be centrepiece in its next iteration:

## **AGILE CURRICULUM AND BESPOKE LEARNING JOURNEY**

BOOST is unique in the way it offers an accelerator programme to a mixed cohort of for-profit and non-for-profit organizations, ranging from early stage to more advanced innovations. As such, needs vary and not all organizations benefit from the same support and trainings. The verification process of needs and opportunities for the respective applicants will be amplified before participant selection. In addition, the curriculum will be structured in sprints with accompanying milestones, and offer shorter, more targeted sessions to organizations in specific areas of interest. The team will spend more time identifying and connecting the participants with experts and networks that can help them take their innovations to the next level.

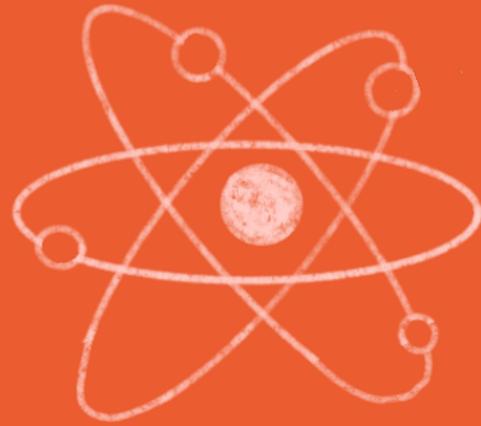
## **CONTINUOUS MENTORSHIP SUPPORT**

More than 80% of the participants of the BOOST: Women Innovators programme highlighted the importance of mentorship support throughout the programme. The support was essential for both innovations on initial stage before entering the market, as well as scale-up stages, not least when it was accompanied with access to new networks. Yet, to ensure maximum outcome of the training, spotlight and grant provided by BOOST, additional technical and personal mentorship support post programme implementation will be required. Ways in which previous graduates can serve as mentors and share their experiences and growth journey will also be explored.



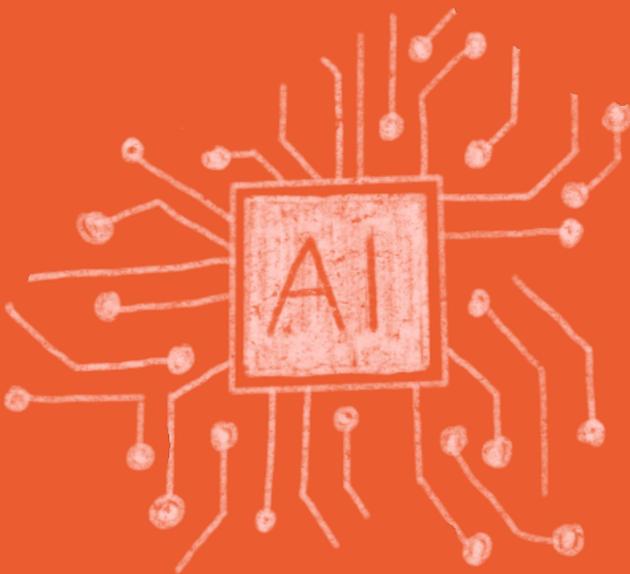
## LEVERAGING THE BOOST NETWORK OF INNOVATORS

The interest in developing online communities for women in Europe and Central Asia, to share experiences, resources, and opportunities has never been greater. After five challenges and 100+ graduates since the launch of the programme, BOOST has grown beyond simply being a learning and organizational development platform, to create a rich network of innovators, partners, and investors. Accordingly, we are launching a BOOST Alumni Network to offer continuous support to the community with new opportunities for learning and funding through digital and physical events, such as online hackathons, summits, investor meetings, inspirational talks and more.



## BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN IMPACT INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION CHALLENGES

By design, BOOST is identifying and accelerating high-impact innovations and organizations in a region where the ecosystem for impact investment still is underdeveloped. BOOST and other UNDP impact venture accelerators (IVAs) thus has the potential to build and put spotlight on a pipeline of innovations that previously wasn't visible to angel investors, venture capital firms, private companies, foundations, government agencies, or even the development community. By joining the UNDP family of IVAs, BOOST will connect with and organise joint events with relevant actors in the impact investment ecosystem. This will put additional spotlight on the BOOST graduates and create new opportunities for them to raise capital and other resources beyond the acceleration programme.



# BOOST

WOMEN INNOVATORS

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# PROGRAMME

# REPORT



**Boost.**

