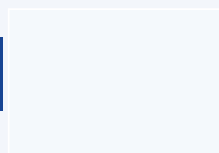




MEASURING THE VALUE OF WORK-LIFE SYNERGY. EVIDENCES AND CHANGES OF THE MASP PROJECT

WP8 FINAL REPORT





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Partners



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Introduction



MASP – Master parenting in work and life – aims to balance work and private life, supporting an equal share of care responsibilities between women and men and encouraging a higher participation of women in the labour market. The main general goal is **to change the perspective of Work Life Balance (WLB), moving to the concept of “Work Life Synergy”**, highlighting the synergy between personal and working dimensions of individuals and the importance of the different roles of a person. In particular, MASP focuses on the following **specific objectives**:

- **To develop and test an innovative Work-Life Balance strategy focusing on two programmes: one dedicated to unemployed women; the second one targeting enterprises and their employees.** The project will facilitate the access to the labour market for women with children up to 3 years and the return to the labour market of employed women with children up to 3 years. At the same time, MASP aims at transforming the parental experience in an opportunity to develop soft skills useful also for the professional career and incentivise the family-related leave for fathers.
- **To improve capacities and knowledge of the key actors involved in the process of balancing work and private life (companies and employers, public and employment services staff, management consultants)** in order to make them aware of work-life synergy perspective and give them tools to implement MASP innovative measures.

- **To develop a sustainable multi-level partnership model in order to create an integrated urban policy in the territories** participating in the project. The multi-stakeholder approach will facilitate the implementation of innovative Work-Life Balance strategies in the workplace and in society as a whole.
- **To foster knowledge and experience sharing between different countries** - in particular Norway - with a strong emphasis on the need to involve more men in care duties.
- **To facilitate the access to information about social protection rights and entitlements.**

The project aims at achieving its goals by a pragmatic strategy, based on existing and already tested tools and on a participative approach, which means active involvement - at any stage - of all the relevant actors, either project partners or external stakeholders. The project focuses on two Italian territories, with different characteristics: the Municipality of Milan and the Autonomous Province of Trento.

The project considers two Italian best practices: MAAM and Family Audit. The MASP project intends to give an initial contribution in developing and policy, which integrates the two experiences, improves them with other elements/activities and tests on different contexts.

The starting point of the project is the **research phase** (WP2).

This activity aims to: a) identify and analyse the best practices of Work-Life Balance strategies; b) analyse the results of the implementation of MAAM training programme and Family Audit within enterprises; c) analyse the specific needs of unemployed women of the testing territories. The project also fosters the **knowledge and experience sharing** between different Member States, in particular between Italy and Norway (WP3). The potential for mutual learning is a key component of the MASP project. While Norway is often held up as a model for gender equality, the country still faces challenges when it comes to ensuring Work-Life Balance and that much can be learned from other countries. Particularly interesting is the co-production practices implemented in Italy between public authorities, for profit and non-profit organisations. Furthermore, the involvement of Reves Network ensures the active participation of its network and, consequently, the knowledge experience across European Member States.

The second phase of the project starts with the development of **training modules** addressing different key actors (WP4), in order to make them aware of the work-life synergy approach and on the characteristics of MASP programmes. In particular, the activity targets: employers and social partners; management consultant and “Family Audit” consultant; public and employment services staff.

Finally, the project **develops and test two innovative Work-Life Balance activities addressing two different targets**: unemployed pregnant women/new mothers (WP5); enterprises and their employees (WP6). Regarding the first target, the project developed the “**MASP public programme for women**” aimed at improving their employability. The programme focuses on 3 main activities: 1) development and testing of a digital training programme for pregnant women/unemployed mothers (CHILD); 2) development and testing of flanking measures for unemployed women; 3) realisation of a parental kit. Concerning the second target audience, the project develops and tests the “**MASP private services for enterprises**”. This includes two

main components: 1) a digital training path for employed parents in big enterprises and SMEs; 2) a process of audit of Work-Life Balance measures.

Over the last few years, Social Impact evaluation as a tool for improving strategy has become increasingly important into the public action and debate¹. This trend is certainly not surprising considering its specific ability in underlying value of the transformation carried out by subjects within the contexts where they operate. In this sense, given the **transformative, ecosystemic, and multidimensional nature** of the concept of impact, it is clear why Social Impact evaluation is even more relevant for the specific topic of Work Life Synergy on which the MASP project focuses.

In the Work Package led by AICCON (WP8), an integrated analysis allowed to assess the transformative capacity of the project on the reference context (i.e. with respect to the different categories of subjects directly or indirectly involved). This strategy considers several observational levels and techniques. First of all a social impact assessment of the project activities was carried out. Secondly, the focus is placed on the analysis of the overall process (paragraph 2. Overall assessment through public policies’ lens and improvement strategy for future projects). The goal is to begin outlining some policy design tips and insights useful for public institutions and social actors active in promoting and supporting Work Life Balance (WLB) interventions. Specifically as stated in the document named “Feasibility study on impact evaluation of the MASP project”, it was not possible to implement the counterfactual approach as model of analysis of the effectiveness of the interventions dedicated to unemployed women. The analysis of qualitative aspects of the process allowed identifying improvement strategy for projects and policies addressing Work Life Balance theme and encouraging active and high quality participation by women in the labor market. Finally the sustainability analysis (§ 3) aims to understand if, how and which project actions (or parts of them) can be carried out in future time.

¹ For more details see: GECES (2014), *Proposed approaches to social impact measurement in European Commission legislation and in practice relating to EuSEFs and the EaSI*, GECES Sub-group on Impact Measurement 2014. Luxembourg, European Commission. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0c0b5d38-4ac8-43d1-a7af-32f7b6fc1c>

1. Social Impact Evaluation

1.1 The framework and the methodology characterizing the social impact analysis

In order to create the Social Impact evaluation framework a bibliographical review was carried out. To generate social impact, the **MASP project should be able to become a practice of social innovation**². In this analysis we assumed that a solution could be considered such³ whether it is able to:

- provide solutions to emerging social needs;
- identify innovative tools and processes to address those needs;
- activate multi-stakeholder partnership in which each part can share its skills and experiences thanks to the relationship established with others;
- generate well-being, understood as a common good.

A socially innovative Work Life Balance policy is effective when:

- it identifies the appropriate tools to analyse the real needs of the beneficiaries;
- it is able to empower citizens, allowing them to carry out their projects with respect to family and work role;
- it is able to produce well-being for its users in the personal, work, and family spheres.

Considering all these elements, the reference literature and previous European evaluation experiences on Work Life Balance topic, the **evaluation framework has considered three interdependent levels of observation** (figure 1).

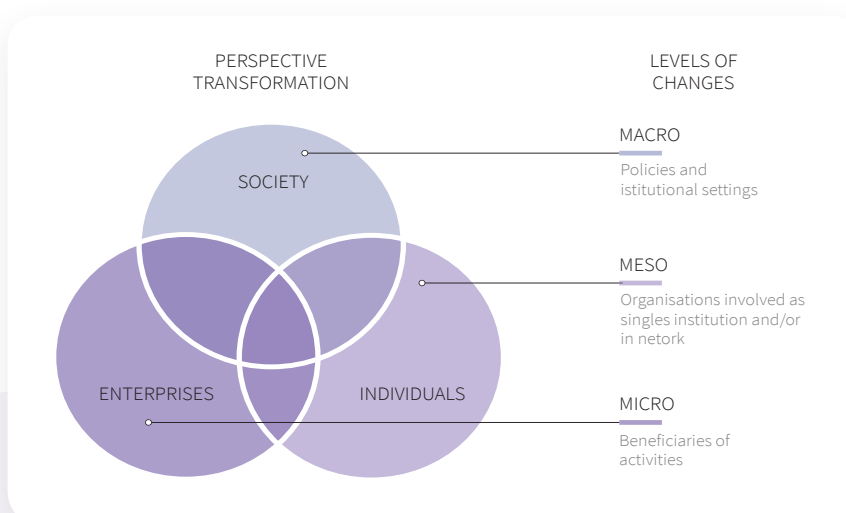


Fig. 1 - The three interdependent levels of observation used in the evaluation framework

²For further details see the WP2 Final report and Macchioni, E., Prandini, R., Rago, S., Miccolis, S. (2019), "Innovazione sociale e buone pratiche di conciliazione vita-lavoro", available at: <https://www.aiccon.it/innovazione-sociale-e-buone-pratiche-di-conciliazione-vita-lavoro/>

³Macchioni, E., Prandini, R., Rago, S., Miccolis, S. (2019), *op cit.*

The micro level of observation intends to investigate the direct or indirect changes generated on the individuals assuming the perspective of the so-called “Integral Human Development”⁴. According to this paradigm, training actions are fundamental in promoting a new welfare strategy of social investment characterised by the so-called “learnfare model”⁵. According to this model, fair education and training opportunities enable citizens – regardless of the different personal starting situations – to develop capabilities to freely choose and carry out their own human and social life vision⁶. In this way they own the necessary tools to choose and freely realize one's their life project in an inclusive society characterised by social justice⁷ – where social justice must not be understood in the classic Welfare State perspective of redistribution, but in terms of inclusion as promoted by the Civil Welfare perspective⁸.

The meso level of observation focuses on transformation for organisations as single entities or in networks. First, the

perspective considers a vision of civil enterprise, pursuing not only profit maximisation, but also the production of well-being, starting from its employees⁹. For example, an organisation could promote the entrepreneurial well-being by giving to the employees the possibility to realise their potentiality. In the evaluation, the team takes also in consideration the theory of corporate citizenship¹⁰, which highlights the contribution of enterprises to policy making. The enterprise is a tool for change and innovation at economic, social and political level. It is therefore necessary to imagine a real organisational transformation in which the company is considered as a “community”¹¹: in this context intrinsic motivations of workers, sharing of values and visions with the company and the quality of work are fundamental.

The macro level of observation allows us to consider a new public management approach characterized by the capacity and orientation of institutions and public policies in

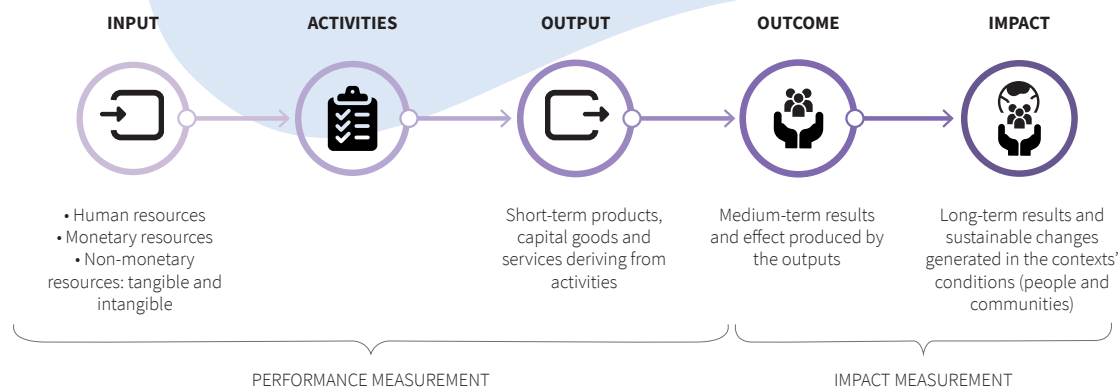


Fig. 2- The different elements of the Theory of Change

⁴ Venturi, P., Rago, S. (eds.) (2013), *Co-Operare. Proposte per uno sviluppo umano integrale*, Atti de 'Le Giornate di Bertinoro per l'Economia Civile 2013 – Edizione XII', Forlì, AICCON. Available [here](#).

⁵ For further detail see: Margiotta, U. (2011), “Nuovo contratto sociale e capitale formativo. Dal welfare al learnfare” in Pavan, A. (ed), *La rivoluzione culturale della formazione continua*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane; Costa M. (2012), “Agency Formativa per il nuovo learnfare” in *FORMAZIONE & INSEGNAMENTO*, vol. 2; Costa M. (2016), *Capacitare l'innovazione. La formatività dell'agire lavorativo*, Milano, FrancoAngeli; Dozza, L. (2012), *Vivere e crescere nella comunicazione. Educazione Permanente nei differenti contesti ed età della vita*, Milano, FrancoAngeli.

⁶ Sen, A.K. (1994), *La disuguaglianza*, Bologna, Il Mulino.

⁷ Costa M. (2012), *op. cit.*

⁸ Alberici A. (2008), “Competenze strategiche e apprendimento permanente. Contesti e modelli per una formazione riflessiva e alla riflessività” in C. Montedoro & D. Pepe, (eds.) *La riflessività nella formazione: modelli e metodi*, Roma, Isfol, pp. 39-61.

⁹ Bruni, L., Zamagni, S. (2004), *Economia Civile. Efficienza, equità, felicità pubblica*, Bologna, Il Mulino.

¹⁰ Scherer, A., Palazzo, G. (2008), “Corporate citizenship in a globalized world: introduction to the Handbook of Research on Global Corporate Citizenship”, in A. G. Scherer & G. Palazzo (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Global Corporate Citizenship*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 1-21.

¹¹ Mintzberg H. (2009), “Rebuilding companies as communities,” *Harvard Business Review*, 7, July-August.

¹² Åkerström Andersen, N. (2016), *Il welfare delle potenzialità*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis.

feeding the Potential Welfare¹². According to this approach, a heterogeneous plurality of territorial actors cooperate in such a way that the potential of all the subjects are enhanced, making innovation possible, in a complex and indefinite context, thus anticipating the 'future of the future'. Thus, the State's main role is to orchestrate (existing and emerging) potentialities of the various territorial entities¹³ and to translate into reality, making innovation happen.

In order to evaluate the social impact generated by the MASP project, we implement the methodology of the **Impact Value Chain (IVC) developed by AICCON** that allows to graphically identify the different steps of the **Theory of Change model**¹⁴(figure 2).

This tool allows describing the addressing need by the organisation, the changes it wants to make (outcomes-impacts) and what it plans to do (activities)¹⁵. It begins from the long-term objectives identified by the organisation, and backwards (backwards mapping), it identifies the necessary conditions to achieve them, following the "if/then" logic.

Inputs are the resources invested in the activity, which can include money, expertise and time of individuals, buildings and other fixed assets such as equipment. The activity is the work undertaken using those resources with the purpose of delivering the outcome intended. **Outputs are products, capital goods and services resulting from an intervention,** that is, the immediate results of the activities carried out by the organisation and for this reason they are directly controllable and under the responsibility of the organisation itself. **Outcomes are instead the medium-long term effects achieved (or presumed) by the outputs** (action, project, and programme). They represent the behavioural, institutional and social changes observable in the medium term influenced by the outputs of the intervention carried out. These results therefore go beyond

the responsibility of the action of the single organisation. External factors influence them and the design of the indicators has to consider them (economic and social situation of the beneficiaries, any cultural resistance, obstacles to achieving the set objectives, etc.). The definition of impact is therefore more complex, as its measurement. **Impact is the sustainable long-term change (positive or negative; primary or secondary) in the conditions of individuals or in the environment.** The intervention could only partially affect the achievement of the impact, thus other exogenous variables influence it (directly or indirectly; intentionally or not)¹⁶. Given the impossibility to observe for a longer period of time the transformation generated by the project actions, **we intend to include a first reflection, as far as possible supported by collected data and evidences, on the ability of the project to contribute in terms of long-term sustainable change (impact).** This impossibility is because, according to the European Commission requirements, the WP8 final report must be delivered at the same time as the project activities end. For this reason **the observation interval of the changes generated by the activities coincides with the interval of realisation of the activities themselves and this fact does not allow for measuring outcomes and impacts properly.**

The methodological choice fell on ToC for at least two reasons:

- it represents a "shared language" often used and known in the field of social innovation, as a project management tool and in the European context;
- it allows to identify and understand the specific way of producing value, analysing "how" (i.e. through which steps) and hypothesizing "why" the intervention has achieved the established objectives.

Considering the classification of the evaluation approaches recognized in the literature¹⁷, **this methodology falls into the**

¹² Åkerström Andersen, N., Grønbaek Pors, J. (2016), *Public management in transition: The orchestration of potentiality*, Bristol, Policy Press.

¹⁴ For more details see: Connell, J.P., Kubisch, A.C. (1998), "L'Approccio della Teoria del Cambiamento applicato alla valutazione delle iniziative integrate di comunità: stato dell'arte, prospettive e problemi"; Stame, N. (2007) (ed.), *Classici della valutazione*, Milano, FrancoAngeli.

¹⁵ Harris, M. (2012), "Non-profits and business toward a subfield of non-profit studies", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41, pp. 892-902.

¹⁶ Zamagni, S., Rago, S., Venturi, P. (2015), *op cit*.

¹⁷ Bengo, I., Arena, M., Azzone, G., Calderini, M. (2015), "Indicators and metrics for social business: a review of current approaches", *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 7(1), pp. 1-24; Stern E. (2016), *La valutazione di impatto - Una guida per committenti e manager preparata per Bond*, Milano, FrancoAngeli.

cluster of models focusing on the process. Another peculiarity of the used methodology is its participatory orientation. On this point, it is possible to underline that the proposed evaluation process was co-constructed with the project partners through a workshop and subsequent moments of discussion and validation. The presence of a stakeholder engagement phase is an element of the quality of the evaluation process itself as it is essential that the entire ecosystem of subjects would be actively involved in the process from the beginning. Furthermore, the partners' engagement was also fundamental in the data collection phase as a mean to reach the direct recipients of the activities.

For more details about methodology (e.g. collection data tools, responses rates, databases behind evidences and results included in this report and so on) see the "Methodological Annex".

Finally, in order to complete the theoretical framework and the Social Impact evaluation system, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States, was applied to the analysis as a further interpretative lens (figure 3). Particularly, the MASP project's activities contributed to the following **Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs**:



Fig. 3 - MASP's contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

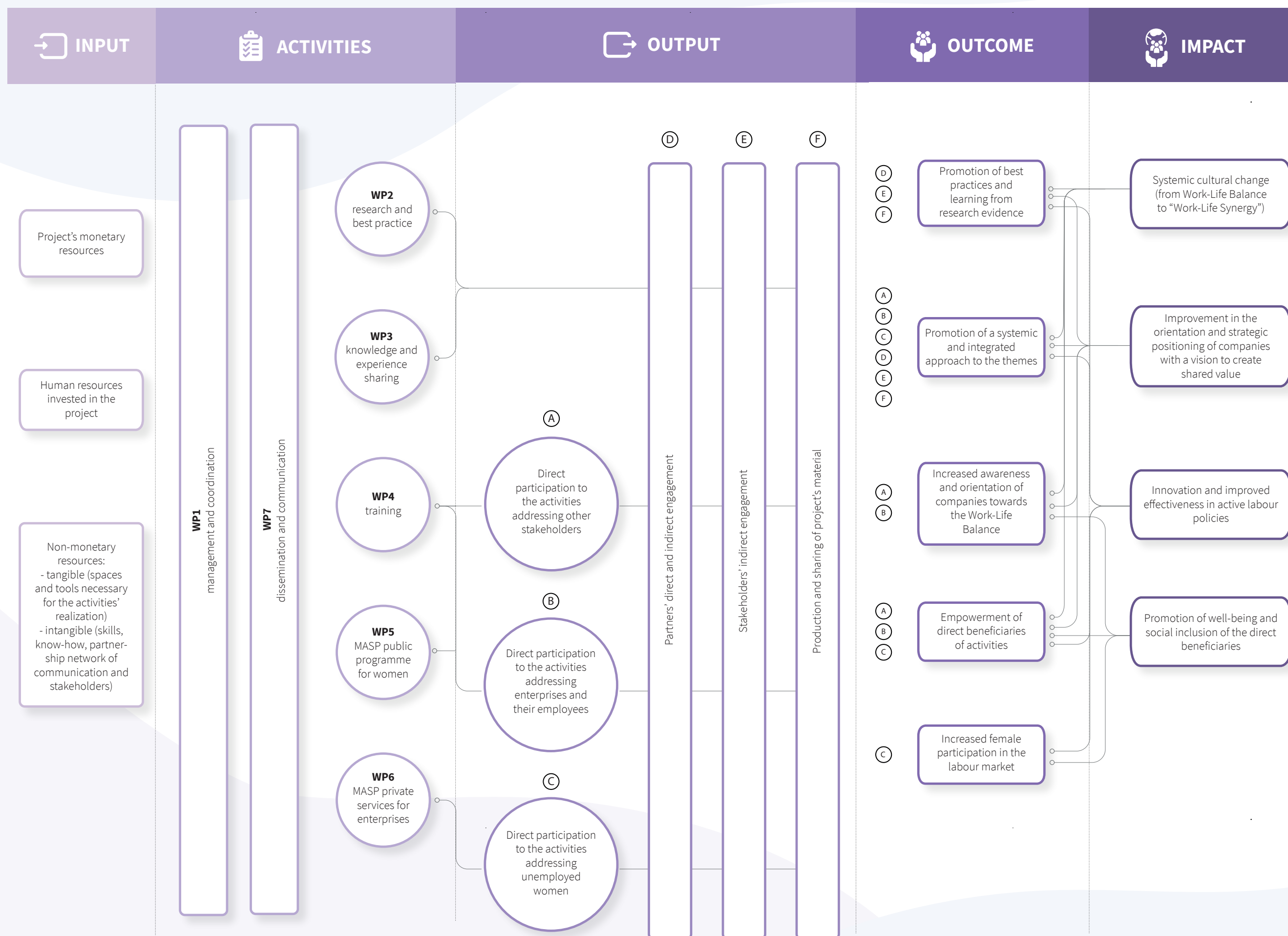


Fig. 4 - The Impact Value Chain of MASP project

1.2 The MASP value generation: impact value chain and stakeholder engagement

As already said **the impact evaluation aims to "give value" to the transformative capacity of the MASP project**. As shown in figure 4, all the steps through which the MASP project was able to generate social changes have been designed applying the Impact Value Chain (IVC).

As outlined an **important unexpected element** to consider was **Coronavirus pandemic** both with respect to **the delay in the activities' implementation** (for more details, see WPs final reports) and in terms of **consequences on the general context and effects on the transformative potential of the project** (for more details, see paragraph 2.3 and 3.1.1.4.).

As already clarified in the WP8 Interim report, an Impact Value Chain for each stakeholder group was not produced, since the relation between activities and stakeholder engagement varied according to the different WPs. For this reason, the IVC has been set up starting from the implementation of the WPs' activities rather than with respect to each stakeholder group. However, the **stakeholders'** point of view has been taken into account thanks to the indication of their **involvement in the WPs activities** (figure 5).

























































actively involved in the
implementation of the activity



direct beneficiaries



indirect beneficiaries

Stakeholders	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP6	WP7
AFOLMET Milano (partner)							
Agenzia del Lavoro Trento (partner)							
AICCON (partner)							
API (partner)							
BIN (partner)							
CGM (partner)							
Comune di Milano (partner)							
Euromasc (partner)							
Lifed (partner)							
Reves (partner)							
Project partners' networks and, more in general, beneficiaries of dissemination activities							
Unemployed women involved in interview/focus group							
Beneficiaries (people and organizations) of WP4 training activities							
Workers of companies involved in WP4 training activities							
Unemployed women taken in charge by employment services' staff of Trento e Milano							
Unemployed women involved in WP5							
Unemployed women's families involved in WP5							
Companies' women employees involved in WP5 started working for							
Family Audit consultant involved in WP6							
Companies involved in WP6							
Companies' employees involved in MAAM/CHILD experimentation (WP6)							
Companies' employees involved in Family Audit experimentation (WP6)							

1.3 The MASP value generation: evaluating evidences

In this section the **most important outcome and impact data collected** will be presented following the flow described by the Social Impact Framework (fig. 4) ¹⁸.

1.3.1 Outcome



Empowerment of beneficiaries of activities

Starting from the results of the WP4 training activities, all the outcome findings seem to be positive with just one critical point. Training modules addressing employers and social partners have not been included in the social impact data collection because of their scarce relevancy, especially for what concerns online webinar format.

As displayed in figure 6 the comparison between training participants' self-evaluation (on a scale going from 1, "low level of knowledge" to 5, "high level of knowledge") before and after the training activities shows a **good effectiveness in all the areas of the employment services' staff knowledge that activities addressed**.

These results are confirmed by the fact that:

- 77% of them states that the **contribution of the WP4 training activities to their change in knowledge and perspective about gender stereotypes and discrimination was good** (on a scale going from "very poor", "poor", "good", and "excellent"), while the remaining 23% declares that this result has been reached with a poor extent.
- The 87% of them highlights a **positive contribution with respect to improvements in terms of knowledge and changes' perspective related to the soft skills' valorization** – 50% with a good extent and 36% excellent one – and the other participants observe poor results in this sense.

¹⁸ For more details about output data, see WPs final reports, the final visual recap at the end of this report and the "Overall assessment" included in this report in the section 2.

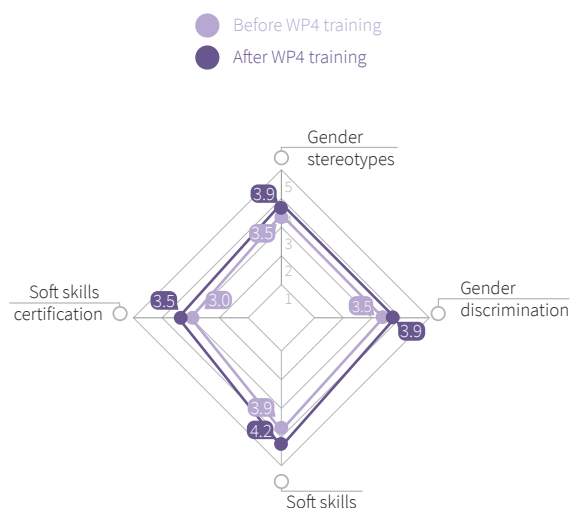


Fig. 6 - Outcome data on empowerment of employment services' staff (WP4)



Fig. 7 – Outcome data on empowerment of FA and organizational consultants (WP4)

Starting from the results of the WP4 training activities, all the outcome findings seem to be positive with just one critical point. Training modules addressing employers and social partners have not been included in the social impact data collection because of their scarce relevancy, especially for what concerns online webinar format.

As displayed in figure 6 the comparison between training participants' self-evaluation (on a scale going from 1, "low level

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These results are confirmed by the fact that:

- 77% of them states that the **contribution of the WP4 training activities to their change in knowledge and perspective about gender stereotypes and**

Standard path: Masp4Skills Platform

Less than 3 unemployed women out of 5 (57%) declares that **MASP programme had no influence in terms of personal growth**, while more than 2 unemployed out of 5 (42%) affirmed that the path had a positive effect on this aspect¹⁹.

Comparing **women's perception about their own empowerment** (before and after their participation in MASP WP5 activities) an **increase** of +0.3 has been recorded in a self-evaluation going from 1 (no awareness) to 10 (completely awareness). This increment allowed reaching a score of 6.6 out of 10.

Customized path: Masp4Skills Platform + flanking measure

Approximately all unemployed women (**96%**) declares that **MASP programme had a positive influence in terms of personal growth**²⁰.

Comparing **women's perception about their own empowerment** (before and after their participation in MASP WP5 activities) an **increase** of +1.1 has been recorded in a self-evaluation going from 1 (no awareness) to 10 (completely awareness). This increment allowed reaching a score of 7.2 out of 10.

Fig. 8 – Outcome data on empowerment of unemployed women (WP5)

¹⁹ 1% of them said that the influence was negative.

²⁰ 4% of them said that the influence was negative.

Standard path: Masp4Skills Platform	Customized path: Masp4Skills Platform + flanking measure
Positive labour market participation related changes observed:	Positive labour market participation related changes observed:
1. Awareness of soft skills (76%)	1. Awareness of soft skills (50%)
2. Awareness of strength and weakness (37%)	2. Awareness of strength and weakness (32%)
3. Writing CV (18%)	3. Knowledge and skills related to job search (7%)
4. Knowledge and skills related to job search (18%)	4. Writing CV (4%)
5. Knowledge and skills related to CV drafting (12%)	5. Knowledge and skills related to CV drafting (4%)

Fig. 9 – Outcome data on observed positive changes related to the empowerment of unemployed women (WP5)

discrimination was good (on a scale going from “very poor”, “poor”, “good”, and “excellent”), while the remaining 23% declares that this result has been reached with a poor extent.

- The 87% of them highlights a **positive contribution with respect to improvements in terms of knowledge and changes’ perspective related to the soft skills’ valorization** – 50% with a good extent and 36% excellent one – and the other participants observe poor results in this sense.

Shifting the focus on **Family Audit and organizational consultants**, the participants’ self-evaluation (on a scale going from 1, “low level of knowledge” to 5, “high level of knowledge”) **after training is lower than the one before the beginning of the activities** (figure 7). This could be because the training activities could have increased the consultants’ awareness about their level of preparation in the areas that was overestimated in the first measurement.

The figure below instead (figure 8) focuses on the beneficiaries’ perception, namely unemployed women participating in WP5.

To be remembered that women could take part in either a digital programme inspired by CHILD/MAAM (i.e. Masp4Skills Platform) or a more in-depth process integrating the digital programme and some personalized flanking measures. The survey results in this case show a differential effect between the two working paths:

As predictable, the **observed positive changes related to the promotion of empowerment recorded by unemployed women** concern mainly a process of awareness (figure 9).

The last direction of the **activities’ empowerment effect interests companies’ employees involved in WP6 through MAAM/CHILD platform**. Evidences provided by indicators usually considered by Lifeed were positive (figure 10): in fact, **74% of participants asserts to have improved soft skills** thanks to the programme with high results, 20% with medium level of skills possession and the remaining 6% declares low results. In addition to this, the majority of the surveyed participants (**72%**) **perceived an increase in their sense of possibility**.

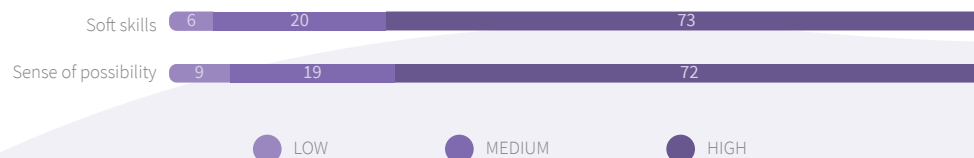


Fig. 10 – Outcome data on empowerment of companies’ employees (%) (WP6)

In particular (figure 11), according to the employees' self-evaluation on a scale from 1 (low level of ability) to 5 (high level of ability) the **3 most relevant positive changes** are related to:

1. ability to delegate
2. ability to create alliance
3. mental agility

In addition to this **almost all the participant (97%) asserts that the programme succeed in generating empowerment** – 71% completely agree and 26% somewhat agree – while 3% disagree.

As already said mainly WP4, WP5 and WP6 contributed to generate this outcome. **Partners' perception is very positive:** on average, the activities carried out within the aforementioned **WPs allowed to achieve these results with an excellent extent** (on a scale going from “very poor”, “poor”, “good”, and “excellent”). As it is possible to see in figure 12, WP5 seems to have contributed the most to generate remarkable results followed by WP4 and WP6.

Further significant elements about this outcome, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, can be found in section 3.2.3.

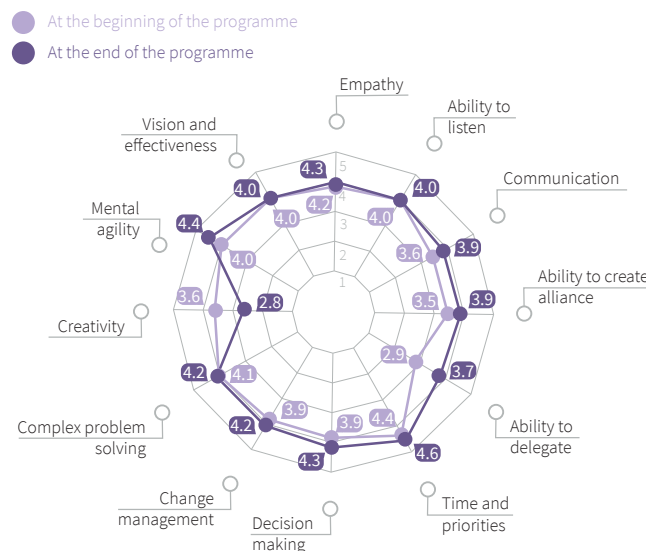


Fig. 11 – Outcome data on empowerment of companies' employees (WP6)

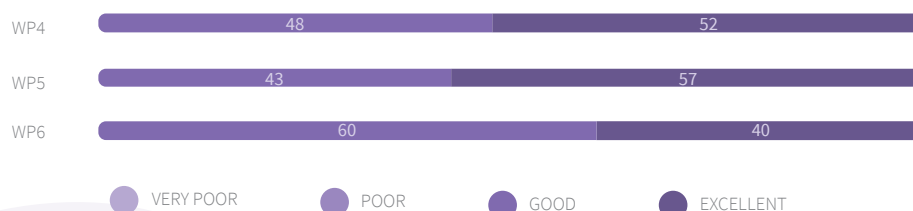


Fig. 12 – Partners' perception about results in empowering direct beneficiaries (%)



Increased female participation in the labour market

Data seems to show **differential effects with respect to the female participation in the labour market** (figure 13): results are **not** so different **in terms of women's employment, but in relation to their perception of the efficacy of the programme** in reaching the outcome goal.

Standard path: Masp4Skills Platform	Customized path: Masp4Skills Platform + flanking measure
<p>Approximately 1 unemployed woman out of 4 (24%) found a job; among them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41% with a permanent contract (26%: Full Time, 15%: Part Time) • 33% with a fixed term contract (23%: FT, 10%: PT) • 10% with a temporary agency contract • 5% with a project based contract • 5% with other typology of contract • 3% with an on-call job contract • 3% with a stage contract 	<p>More than 1 unemployed woman out of 5 (21%) found a job:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% with a permanent contract (33%: Full Time, 33%: Part Time) • 17% with a project based contract • 17% with other typology of contract
<p>2 unemployed women out of 3 (66%) declared that MASP programme had no effect on their job placement and approximately 1 unemployed woman out of 3 (31%) affirmed that their participation influenced it in positive way²¹.</p>	<p>Approximately 2 unemployed women out of 3 (64%) declared that MASP programme influenced their job placement in a positive way, while the remaining percentage 36% affirmed that it had no influence.</p>

Fig. 13 – Outcome data on participation in the labour market of unemployed women (WP5)

²¹ 3% of them said that the influence was negative.

²² AFOLMET data about female employment among their beneficiaries that could be used as an adequate comparison were not available in the moment in which data have been analysed.

²³ ISTAT, Ministero del Lavoro, INPS, INAIL and ANPAL. (2020), "Il mercato del lavoro 2020".

Even though it was not possible to compare MASP employment data with an adequate territorial benchmark²², two elements should be considered when evaluating these results:

- the female employment situation in pandemic described by ISTAT²³ (the Italian national statistical institute) that is possible to summarize in 3 evidences:
 - the gender gap in the employment rate has worsened in 2020, growing from 17.8 to 18.3 percentage points
 - at the 3rd trimester of the 2020, data showed a decrease of 26% in the annual number of recruited women compared to 2019, while for men this piece of data has been attested to 21%.
 - 70% of the 440,000 people that lost their jobs in 2020 were women, with a peak of 98% recorded in December.
- the timing constraint: as already stated, in order to fully understand to what extent the MASP project triggered positive impacts a longer observation interval should be taken into account (context conditions being equal), especially when it comes to employment dynamics, which require time to develop and generate significant changes.

The **partners' perception is quite positive**: according to them, on average, the activities realised in **WP5 contributed to generate this result with a good extent** (on a scale going from “very poor”, “poor”, “good” and “excellent”).

Further significant elements about this outcome and future redesign, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, can be found in section 2.5.

²² AFOLMET data about female employment among their beneficiaries that could be used as an adequate comparison were not available in the moment in which data have been analysed.

²³ ISTAT, Ministero del Lavoro, INPS, INAIL and ANPAL. (2020), “Il mercato del lavoro 2020”.



Increased awareness and orientation of companies towards the Work-Life Balance

According to enterprises participating in WP6, the influence of the project in improving their awareness around Work Life Balance issues could have been more relevant as shown in figure 14. Moreover, according to more than a half of the respondent enterprises (56%) there was no contribution to this outcome in terms of promotion of opportunities for discussion between employees and supervisors/HR about WLB and professional growth. The effect seems to be more significant for what concerns the employees' engagement in the companies' welfare plan design since 2 out of 3 of them (66%) declare the MASP project positively influenced this aspect.

The situation seems to be better analysing the **employees' opinions (involved in WP6 through MAAM/CHILD platform):**

- comparing **employees' perceptions about companies' concerns regarding WLB theme**, before and after the MASP interventions **an improvement** of +0.7 points – on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree) – **was recorded**, passing from a score of 7.0 to a score of 7.7 points.
- 63% of the surveyed employees underlines that **internal meetings aiming to co-design welfare plans integrated the participation in MASP of their organization.**

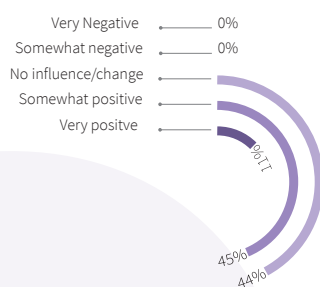
A stronger awareness and orientation of companies in

this sense would be able to have a positive effect on the relationship with the employees. This fact is confirmed by the evidence provided by indicator usually considered by Lifeed: **almost 2 out of 3 participants (64%) asserts to have highly increased their professional engagement thanks to the program**, 31% with a medium extent and the remaining 5% declare low results in this direction.

Mainly WP4 and WP6 contributed to generate this outcome. The partners' perception is very positive: **according to the partners' opinion on average, the activities realised in both the WPs allowed to achieve this result with an excellent extent** (on a scale going from "very poor", "poor", "good", and "excellent").

However, it has to be noticed that awareness-raising processes require time to return positive results. In particular, the in-depth interviews carried out with the project partners underlined the necessity to strategically accompanying the cultural transition that most of the enterprises are going through. For further significant elements about this outcome, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, see sections 3.4.2.1 and 2.3.

Promotion and realisation of co-designed (with employees) welfare plans characterised by high level of flexibility and personalization



Promotion and realisation of meetings and discussions between employees and supervisors/HR about Work Life Balance and professional growth

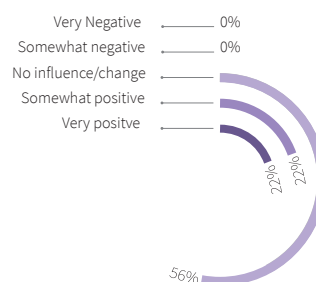


Fig. 14 – Outcome data on companies' awareness and orientation related to Work Life Balance theme (WP6)



Promotion of a systemic and integrated approach by all the social actors addressing the topic

2 enterprises out of 3 (67%) declares in the survey that the **influence of the project was positive regarding the promotion of new kind of relational approach** to the WLB theme: 45% of them evaluated as very positive its contribution, 22% as somewhat positive, while the remaining percentage (33%) stated no changes.

Mainly WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6, and WP7 contributed to generate this outcome and also in this situation the **partners' perception is quite positive**: according to the partners' opinion on average the activities realised in these WPs allowed to reach this result with a good **extent** (on a scale going from "very poor", "poor", "good", and "excellent"). In particular, the WPs that seem to have contributed the most to generate positive results are WP4 and WP3, followed by WP5 and WP6 (figure 15).

The relevance of the MASP project in overcoming the supply-demand dichotomy by promoting an integrated approach to WLB issues, has clearly emerged from the interview process as well, so much that it has been included in the 4 milestone that the sustainability analysis identified as crucial factors to replicate the project initiatives (see paragraph 3.5).

For further significant elements about this outcome and future redesign, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, see section 2.5.

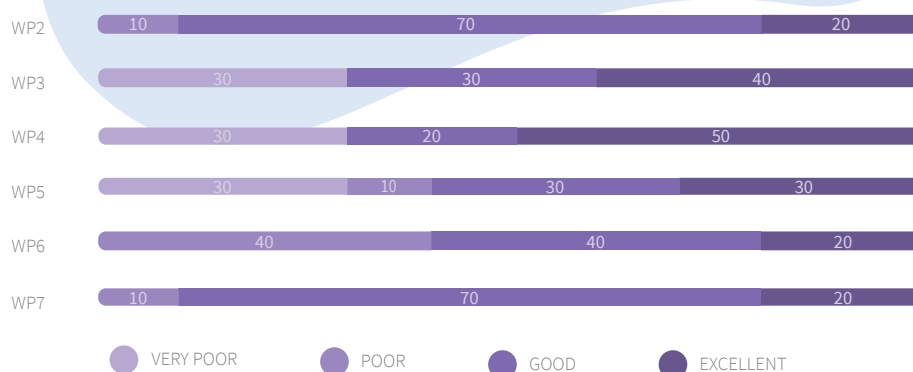


Fig. 15 – Partners' perception about results in promoting a systemic and integrated approach (%)



Promotion of best practices and learning from research evidence

Mainly WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, and WP7 contributed to generate this outcome. The **partners' perception is quite positive**: according to the partners' opinion, on average, the activities realized in these **WPs allowed to reach this result with a good extent** (on a scale going from “very poor”, “poor”, “good”, and “excellent”). In particular, the WP that seems to contribute the most to generate this outcome is WP4, followed by WP3 and WP2²⁴ (figure 16).

The sustainability analysis as well detected the relevance of sharing successful case studies with entrepreneurs in order to sensitize and engage them. For further significant elements about this outcome, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholder, see sections 3.3.3. and 2.6.

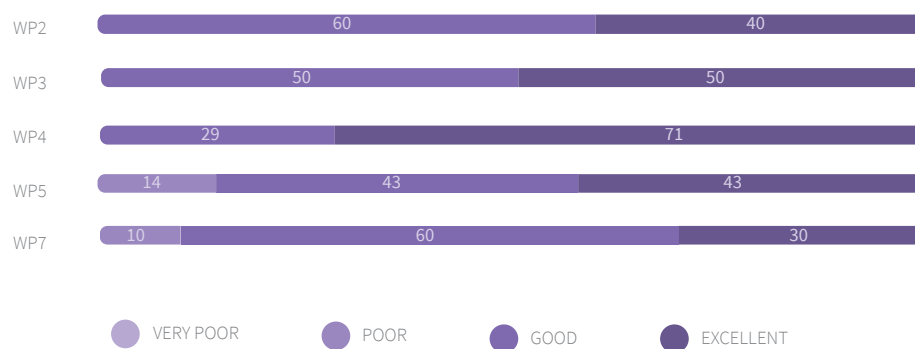


Fig. 16 – Partners' perception about results in promoting best practices and learnings from research evidence (%)

²⁴ 2 partners said that they did not have enough elements to answer to the questions on WP3, 3 on WP4 and 3 on WP5.



Promotion of well-being and social inclusion

In order to understand the initial generation of this impact, we can start focusing on the women that were beneficiaries of the activities (WP5): again, a differential effect seems to be present (figure 17).

Positive evidences on well-being promotion emerge from the **opinion of the employees (involved in WP6 through MAAM/CHILD platform) as displayed in figure 18**. Comparing their well-being self-evaluations on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) a general increase was recorded.

Mainly WP5 and WP6 contributed to start generating this impact. The **partners' perception is very positive**: according to the partners' opinion, on average, the activities realized in these **WPs allowed to reach this result with a good extent** (on a scale going from "very poor", "poor", "good", and "excellent"). As it is possible to see in figure 19 as expected WP6 seems to contribute the most in promoting well-being and social inclusion, followed by WP5.

Standard path: Masp4Skills Platform	Customized path: Masp4Skills Platform + flanking measure
<p>2 unemployed women out of 3 (67%) declare that MASP programme had no influence on her professional well-being, while approximately 1 out of 3 (31%) affirmed that the path had a positive effect on this aspect²⁵.</p>	<p>Approximately 4 unemployed women out of 5 (78%) declared that MASP programme had a positive influence on professional well-being, while the 18% said that there was no effect²⁶.</p>
<p>Comparing women's perception about their own professional well-being level (before and after their participation in MASP WP5 activities) a decrease of -0.7 has been recorded in a self-evaluation going from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). This increment allowed reaching a score of 4.8 out of 10.</p>	<p>Comparing women's perception about their own professional well-being level (before and after their participation in MASP WP5 activities) an increase of +0.8 has been recorded in a self-evaluation going from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). This increment allowed reaching a score of 5.7 out of 10.</p>

Fig. 17 – Impact data on promotion of well-being and social inclusion among unemployed women (WP5)

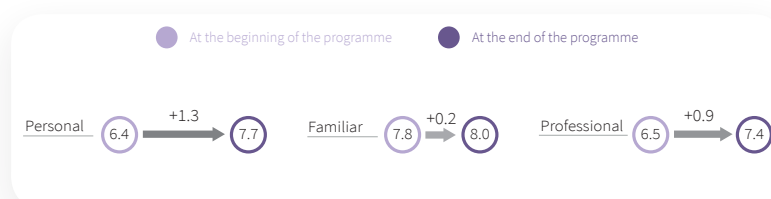


Fig. 18 – Impact data on promotion of well-being among companies' employees (WP6)

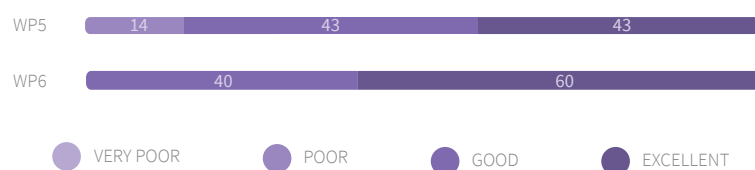


Fig. 19 – Partners' perception about results in promoting best practices and learnings from research evidence (%)

²⁵ 2% of them said that the influence was negative.

²⁶ 4% of them said that the influence was negative.



Innovation and improved effectiveness in active labour policies

An important measure to improve the active labour policies' effectiveness consists of contrasting some intrinsic gender stereotypes and discrimination's dynamics that sometimes could even characterize the intervention intended for overcoming the issue itself. For this reason, the results in terms of employment services' staff self-evaluated awareness are very important (figure 20). After the WP4 training, **the percentage of the operators aware of the presence of gender issues when taking the unemployed women in charge increased of 5 points** compared to the data collected before the MASP project intervention. Another evidence in this sense comes from the opinion of the **unemployed women** involved in the customized path: they **evaluate the employment services' staff ability of promoting a positive and adequate gender approach with a score of 7.3 out 10**.

According to operators' opinion (figure 21) in general **the effectiveness of the employment services' ability to take**

charge of beneficiaries in an innovative way - for example **giving value to life experiences characterizing beneficiaries' paths - seems to be improved** on a scale going from 1 (low level of ability) to 5 (high level of ability).

Mainly WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, and WP6 contributed to generate this impact. The **partners' perception is quite positive**: according to the partners' opinion, on average, the activities realized in these WPs allowed to reach this result with a good extent (on a scale going from "very poor", "poor", "good", and "excellent"). In particular, the WP that seems to contribute the most to generate this impact is WP5, followed by WP4 (figure 22)²⁷.

For further significant elements about this impact and future redesign, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, see sections 2.5 and 2.6.

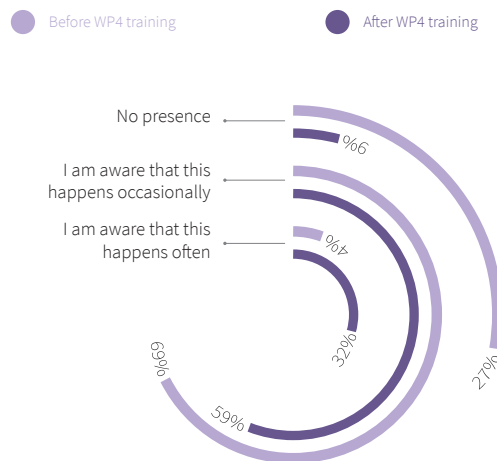


Fig. 20 – Relevant data about innovation and improved effectiveness in active labour policies deriving from perception of the employment services' staff participating in WP4 training

²⁷ 2 partners said that they did not have enough elements to answer to the questions on WP3, 2 on WP4, 3 on WP5 and 5 on WP6.



Fig. 21 – Relevant data about innovation and improved effectiveness in active labour policies deriving from perception of the employment services' staff participating in WP4 training

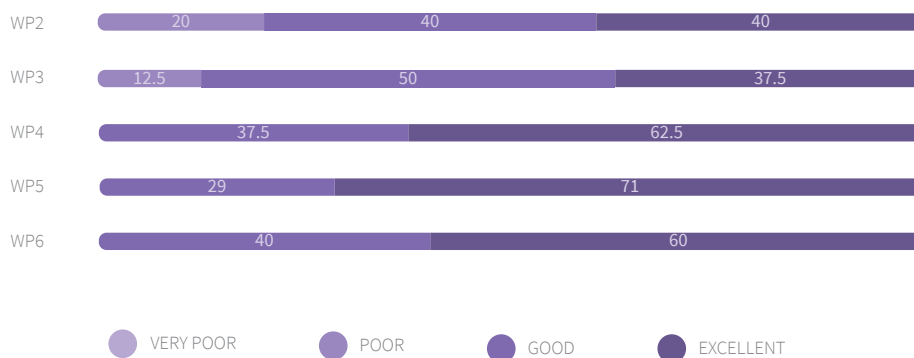


Fig. 22 – Partners' perception about results in innovation and improved effectiveness in active labour policies (%)



Improvement in the orientation and strategic positioning of companies with a vision to create shared value

The transformative capacity of the project with respect to this impact needs to be improved. According to 2 out of 3 companies' perception (67%) there was no changes related to shared value theory' aspect generated by their participation in MASP project; the remaining 33% of enterprises declares that the influence was very positive. Focusing on companies' employees involved in WP6 through MAAM/CHILD platform and comparing

their evaluation about companies' shared value orientation there was a slight improvement of +0.4 on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree) was recorded in the measurement before (score: 6.4) and after (score: 6.8) the programme. For further significant elements about this impact and future redesign, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, see sections 2.3 and 2.5.



Systemic cultural change (from Work-Life Balance to Work-Life Synergy)

According to evidences with respect to this impact promoted by Family Audit and MAAM programmes integration (WP6) the initial results seem to be satisfying: the majority (67%) of the enterprises declares that **the influence of the project was positive in promoting a systemic cultural change** able to overcome the WLB perspective and embrace the Work Life Synergy approach: the 45% of them evaluated as very positive the activities' contribution, 22% as somewhat positive, while the remaining percentage (33%) stated no changes. Other evidences going to this direction are given by:

- **employees' perception: comparing their evaluation of the companies' concerns about WLB theme an improvement** of +0.7 on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree) was recorded in the measurement before and after the program.
- Indicators usually considered by Lifeed: almost **2 out of 3**

of them (66%) asserts to have highly improved synergy between professional and private life, 23% with a medium level of improved and the remaining 11% recorded low results.

Mainly WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6, and WP7 contributed to start generating this impact. The **partners' perception is very positive**: according to the partners' opinion, on average, the activities realized in these WPs allowed to reach the objective with a good extent (on a scale going from very poor, poor, good and excellent). As shown in figure 23, in particular WP6 and WP3 seem to contribute more, followed by and WP4.

For further significant elements about this impact and future redesign, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, see sections 2.3 and 2.5.

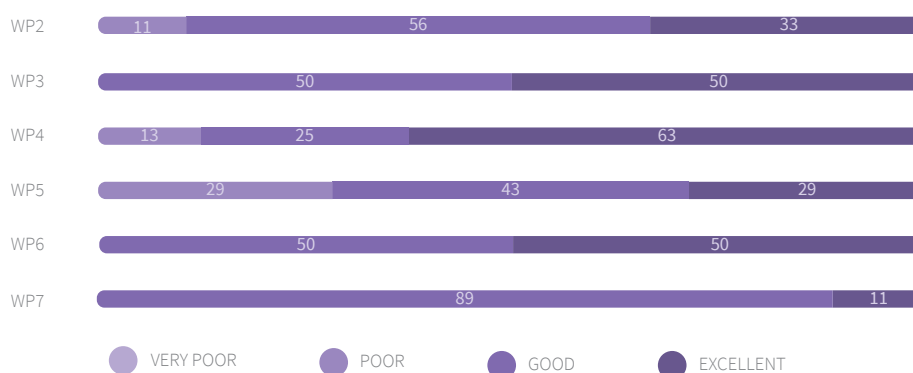


Fig. 23 – Partners' perception about results in promoting a systemic cultural change towards Work Life Synergy (%)

1.4 The MASP value generation: some considerations

Once again, it is important to clarify that time-related issues have affected the Social Impact evaluation:



the timeline of the project, and therefore also the activities of WP8, has gone through **considerable changes** (due to Coronavirus pandemic and other project-related problems – as explained in paragraph 2.2 and 2.3), **delaying the implementation of the tasks as originally planned**



as predictable and stated in the WP8 Interim report, **delays in the activities' implementation produced time shortages for the evaluation process** and the last 4 months of the project could not be completely dedicated to the evaluation of the activities' effects as planned at the beginning; as a consequence data collection and analysis became more complex



as already said, intrinsically **making conclusion about impact and medium-long term effect in a so short-time period** (i.e. just at the end or only few months after the interventions) **results to be very difficult and does not fully allow for highlighting all the benefits of the MASP experience**. This condition limits the possibility to measure the real impact of the MASP programme and increases the **risk to formulate misleading considerations and conclusions** - this fact is particularly true for medium-long term changes such as increased female participation in labour market, improvements in beneficiaries' well-being, companies' awareness and orientation towards the Work Life Balance and the Shared Value paradigm. In order to mitigate the aforementioned risks, qualitative aspects and data perceptions have been preferred over quantitative ones

¹⁸ For more details about output data, see WPs final reports, the final visual recap at the end of this report and the "Overall assessment" included in this report in the section 2.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, relevant considerations and insights came out from the analysis.

A

The role of soft skills, “broader” knowledge and abilities that are not strictly related to the job descriptions and or classical/technical tasks has been emphasized not only, as expected, in regards to beneficiaries of the WP5 (unemployed women) and WP6 (companies’ employees), but also for WP4 training participants (operators and consultants) in terms of areas in which their support to people and organizations should be strength from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. This last insight was confirmed by both recorded improvements after-before (operators) and lower initial level of knowledge/ability characterizing operators and consultants. In addition, the soft skills’ valorization and, especially, certification emerge as relevant areas to foster in these figures’ preparation.

B

As already underlined a differential effect between the WP5 standard paths and customized ones has been recorded from surveyed participants’ answers – in order to draw conclusions in this regard a proper counterfactual analysis should be carried out. Even though employment data about beneficiaries are similar concerning the two engagement options, participants’ perception about the effectiveness of the programme is quite different instead. This evidence seems to reaffirm the importance of a relational and personalized approach to the welfare and social services design and, as stated in the previous point, the relevance of skills’ certification. It would be interesting in this sense to explore the pandemic consequences in order to understand if and to what extent this kind of approach - realized as possible considering the Coronavirus pandemic restriction – is more or less central for the support interventions.

C

A development area highlighted by the not brilliant evaluation results refers to companies’ strategic positioning and orientation towards the Work Life Balance issue and the Shared Value paradigm: awareness raising and change management processes are highly time demanding and require a multistakeholder engagement and commitment, even more when it comes to SME (as explained in section 2.3). Furthermore, the in-depth interviews process carried out with the project partners underlined the necessity to strategically accompanying the cultural transition that most of the enterprises are going through (this topic is further discussed in section 3.4.2).

D

In general (and specifically referring to the previous point) the initial results for WP6 companies' experimentation seems to be encouraging as confirmed by the data regarding both the companies' perspective and the perception of the employees involved in MAAM/CHILD program. These results appear to be even more promising when considering the potential of the international dimension characterizing the project's experimentations – for more details regarding future redesign see section 2.5. Focusing on Lifeed WP6 activities, as already stated in the correspondent WP final report WP, their programme was actually created also in English and made available to the participating companies, many of them multinationals, and actually used by two foreign people (in the English version). It was not possible to carry out a full experimentation with foreign employees, because the activities' implementation has already proved complexity, given the occurrence of the pandemic emergency. However, the same training experience has been already tested by Lifeed with a considerable number of foreign employees in two big companies (i.e. on average 8% of the total number of employees trained); in figure 24 all the indicators usually tracked by Lifeed and included in the Social Impact analysis are displayed allowing for a results comparison between MASP companies and international companies.

		MASP companies	International companies for comparison
% participants who asserts to have improved soft skills and other relevant aspects thanks to the programme	LOW LEVEL	6%	11%
	MEDIUM LEVEL	20%	22%
	HIGH LEVEL	74%	68%
% participants who asserts to have increased the engagement of employer	LOW LEVEL	5%	13%
	MEDIUM LEVEL	31%	19%
	HIGH LEVEL	64%	69%
% participants who asserts to have increased the sense of possibility	LOW LEVEL	9%	8%
	MEDIUM LEVEL	19%	11%
	HIGH LEVEL	72%	80%
% participants who asserts to have improved synergy between professional and private life	LOW LEVEL	11%	11%
	MEDIUM LEVEL	23%	33%
	HIGH LEVEL	66%	56%

Fig. 24- Lifeed indicators' comparison between MASP companies and 2 companies with considerable foreign employees' presence

²⁸ It has to be noticed that the Family Audit sperimentations' implementation has a longer time horizon than MAAM/CHILD one. For this reason in these considerations (and in the analysis), the latter experimentation has been taken into account with a greater weight.



As already clarified – see also section 2.3 – the Coronavirus pandemic situation profoundly had consequences on some WPs activities. As displayed in figure 25 it is interesting to notice that, according to partners' perception, in addition to predictable negative repercussions mainly in terms of generated transformations' depth (e.g. WP3), there were also positive effects in terms of their scale. Thanks to the online activities it was possible to reach a higher number of direct beneficiaries for example with the dissemination and communication actions (WP7) and training ones (WP3). For further significant elements about this considerations and future redesign, emerging from in-depth interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, see section 2.4.



Fig. 25 – Partners' perception about the effect of redesign of the project's implementation due to the pandemic with respect to the changes generated on the context

2. Overall assessment through public policies' lens and improvement strategy for future projects

This overall assessment of the process can be considered a kind of redesigned process evaluation, as it was not done *in itinere* but at the end of the process itself, through a desk analysis of all the operational steps of the MASP project and how they were thought to be interconnected in the project design and in the perceptions of the key actors involved. This desk analysis relied upon:

- 11 interviews with leaders (referred to as WPs) of the work packages and representatives of the enterprises involved;
- the main activities' documentation produced by the project.

This kind of analysis allows for reconstructing the following:

1. How the implementation process has worked.
2. Whether and how the implementation process has achieved the expected outputs.
3. How the implementers and the target have experienced the project.
4. Whether and how contextual factors have been critical to the implementation activities in positive and negative terms.
5. Whether and how the project design has developed as expected.
6. Whether adjustments have been made during the process and, if so, if they have been coherent with the project goals.
7. Whether the project has contributed to generating change

in terms of effectiveness of labour services and strategies and policies carried out by the two public institutions for the promotion of work-life balance within enterprises.

Furthermore, this kind of assessment allows at least for **hypothesizing about the mechanisms that have been activated in the project implementation**. This kind of assessment, then, sheds **light on the strengths and weaknesses of the process itself and, thus, enables the adjustment or redesign of some components** in the event of a positive assessment of the project's sustainability/replicability.

It must be underlined that this kind of assessment targets only the outputs of the project, as the outcomes cannot be controlled by the implementation process itself but are driven by both the project design and contextual factors.

The assessment has been conducted according to the logic of the external observer, who has acted as an independent adviser owing to the fact that they have not been directly involved in the process under analysis.

For more details, see the Methodological Annex.

2.1 Main goals of the project, changes over time and achieved outputs

The main goal of the project was to advance the perspective of Work Life balance towards a more synergetic perspective. The planned strategy was designed around existing initiatives – namely, MAAM and Family Audit – and the operational core of the project was to diffuse them in two specific territorial contexts (Milan and Trento) and to reinforce and enrich the two existing best practices with new elements and activities.

It must be underlined that during the implementation process, the assessment of soft skills in one of the two initiatives gained increasing relevance. Thus, **it has emerged that this specific focus on soft-skills assessment of unemployed woman represents one of the strengths of the project.** In other words, **it can be considered to provide added value compared to the original idea of focusing more closely on the diffusion of the two pre-existing lines of intervention.** This is noteworthy because it shows how a complex project like MASP can drive interesting and potentially promising spillovers in terms of facilitating the emergence and consolidation of new initiative.

Thus, these findings reveal that the implementation process, notwithstanding the pandemic that obliged the deadline's postponement and the redesign of all steps of the project, has substantially produced the expected outputs.

2.2 Level of integration and collaboration among the work packages

The work plan of the project provided for a specific and thoroughly detailed integration of most work packages to deliver the expected outputs. Here, we must distinguish different levels of integration. Three WPs were in charge of general integration: WP1 for vertical integration and WP7 and WP8 needed a good level of horizontal integration to disseminate and evaluate the ongoing project. WP2 and WP3 can be considered necessary antecedents for WP4, WP5, and WP6 to run the operational activities. These latter three WPs should be sufficiently integrated for delivering the three main operational activities (training, services for women and services for enterprises).

According to our analysis, there have been **good levels of collaboration and, accordingly, integration**. However, the following small problems emerged:

1. Initially, WP1 had some problems in effectively performing the expected leadership role due to procedural constraints in hiring the project manager. This slowed down the initial stage of the project.
2. A few problems emerged in preparing the platform due to the reasonable (and probably to be expected at the moment of designing the project) attitude of Lifeed, a private firm, towards limiting the transfer of its experience.
3. The contribution of WP3, while adding an international flavour, appears to have overlapped with the output of WP2. At the same time, the planned length of activities of WP2

lengthened the process. However, the involvement of WP3 contributed to increasing awareness of how complex it is to adopt a work-life balance strategy in reality (i.e. how the context matters).

4. Generally speaking, the different institutional logics of public and private partners created a few problems of coordination and small misunderstandings (that have been overcome).

It must be underlined that **one of the effects of COVID-19, paradoxically, was to favour interactions among WPs due to the shift of all activities online, which facilitated the coordination meetings**. However, it must also be highlighted that the formal design of **the project integration partially clashed with some degree of segmentation of the design itself** (representing one of the major constraints of the project as discussed below). Due to the characteristics of the project implementation, it should be highly appreciated that the implementation was pushed further in terms of the quality of internal collaboration.

2.3 Major constraints

The assessment has uncovered four **major constraints** to the implementation process. They are **linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, procedures, difficulties in involving truly committed private enterprises and a certain degree of segmentation in the project design.**

COVID-19

The outbreak of the pandemic obliged a significant redesign of the project's implementation. All the planned training and dissemination meetings, as well some relevant activities with the target, had to shift online. This created at least five relevant problems and one potential problem:

1. It became **necessary to adapt the project to the online format**, and this was **time-consuming** due to a delay from the Commission in accepting the proposed changes.
2. The **shift to the online format impeded in-person socialization** that is important for building trust and promoting networking among the participants, which are fundamental sources of creating a sense of belonging to a community of practice. This sense of belonging would reinforce the involvement of the target as well as its identification in the practice itself.
3. The **impact of the pandemic triggered the defection** (or a decrease in commitment during the practical stage of the project) **of a few private partners due to** the emerging economic and organizational consequences of the **crisis**.
4. While the **shift online can be considered a potential activator of higher attendance**, in the medium to long term, in the context of a complete online life, **it created an overdose effect**.
5. The **impossibility to undertake only one of the two planned in-person visits to Norway**. As will be explained in section 5, the possibility of observing directly how things

are done in other countries, and thus in other socio-economic contexts, is a dimension that could significantly empower the project.

Procedures

Major constraints emerged due to procedural issues. The most relevant ones are as follows:

1. The **rules of Italian bureaucracy** (and often their local interpretation) **are very demanding, time-consuming and occasionally dysfunctional**. This context produced delays (due to the time needed to hire people, such as the project manager, or to find private partners) and/or sub-optimal choices in buying services (as there are public administrations that interpret the concept of "best offer tender" in a very strict financial way without considering the quality of the offer itself). Furthermore, there were some delays because the project budget was not immediately included in the budget of the leading administration.
2. There was a **delay in the Commission's response** to the request to reschedule and redesign the project due to the COVID-19 crisis together with a change of the Officer. These specific elements relating to the Commission triggered some problems in conducting the project, although they were managed and overcome over time.

Difficulties in involving private enterprises

The involvement of private enterprises (one of the targets of the project) was slightly problematic due to not only the disruption of COVID-19 (which contributed to their decreased participation) but also the lack of significant incentive to participate in, and be deeply committed to, the project. In other words, **without any fiscal or financial incentive, the involvement of**

enterprises can only be based on the will to enhance their organizational reputation or, in the case of enterprises that already have internal programmes focused on the well-being of employees, **to test new solutions**. Usually, these enterprises are either large or they represent a specific innovative type. Generally speaking, then, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) working in more traditional sectors are not very interested in these kinds of programmes without a clear structural incentive. Furthermore, it must be noted that the project design did not envisage that any kind of networking dynamics among the enterprises involved, especially in the case of SMEs, could represent a point of weakness.

In addition, it must be underlined that the MAAM project is very demanding in the sense that it cannot be expected that enterprises would adopt it as a full package to apply to all their employees in the related condition of maternity. This means, for example, that many enterprises could be more interested in adopting “on demand” packages, as they find such programmes fair. From this point of view, then, this programme may have appeared somewhat rigid and, thus, not particularly interesting to some enterprises.

Finally, it must be emphasized that **the project is very ambitious** in terms of expected change to be pursued from the socio-economic perspective. This means that **it is potentially more advanced with respect to the context** (conceptualized in terms of the social, entrepreneurial and industrial cultures and set of organizational practices). **This asymmetry between the level of innovation and advancement of the project and the environment can also explain the relative effectiveness in securing higher SME involvement.**

Segmentation in the project design

The project was designed for diffusing two existing best practices, MAAM and Family Audit, with two public institutional

partners that have been shown to hold differentiated intensities of preference regarding the two initiatives. Therefore, although the project was designed to make the two best practices complementary and to integrate them, the actions to pursue this integration were not always consistent. Moreover, in progress, **one of the two initiatives planned to support the two original best practices emerged as pivotal – the soft-skills assessment of unemployed women**. Consequently, this increased the potential segmentation of the project’s implementation. In other words, the **presence of at least three different practices to work on**, for which their sponsors have different intensities of preference, **has represented a potential constraint** to overcome in terms of increasing the efforts of coordination, interactions among partners and learning.

2.4 Strengths of the project and the activated mechanisms

Despite the major constraints presented above, the project was able to proceed and produce the expected outputs. This must be remarked because it cannot be taken for granted, especially due to the outbreak of the pandemic, which could represent an insurmountable obstacle to the correct functioning of the activities of the project.

Thus, **the capacity to effectively respond to the challenges of COVID-19 shows, from a general point of view, the solidity and robustness of the project.** The way in which the project was redesigned and adapted to the new situation is a clear indicator of the **flexibility and professionalism of the partners involved** and, above all, of the capabilities of those leading the work packages. On this point, it must also be underlined that the temporary suspension of activities due to the pandemic, paradoxically, represented a contingent chance to recover from some delays that accumulated due to the initial slowness in initiating the project activities.

However, there are other elements of strength that allowed the project to end positively and to deal with the various constraints that emerged during the implementation process (as unexpected events, such as problems in the general management and coordination or in the commitment of enterprises, etc.). First, **there was the commitment of the operative WPs, especially WP4 and WP5, together with the leading WP (no.1).** Here as well, **WP8 should be mentioned for its continuous effort to pursue their evaluative role over time.** These WPs showed passion and deep involvement in pursuing the project and finding solutions to the emerging problems. This deep commitment more than counterbalanced the initial delays as well as the procedural constraints.

Second, there was the **agility in adapting the project not only to COVID-19 but also to unexpected and unplanned events**

and dysfunctionality. This agility indicates the capacity to reach a good and effective level of coordination over time (also to overcome the intrinsic designed segmentation of the project) and, thus, to learn how to adjust the collective functioning of the activities in progress.

Therefore, **deep commitment and organizational agility are the major strengths** that enabled the project to produce the expected outputs.

Another strength was the capacity to develop another relevant practice of the project that was partially hidden or, at least, not clearly developed – namely, the implementation of the soft-skills assessment of unemployed women. More than a complementary and supporting initiative, this became a third practice that was diffused together with MAAM and Family Audit.

Regarding the activated mechanisms, the assessment of the process has shown what can be expected. Compliance does not work at all as the main working mechanism for this kind of project. In fact, the characteristics of this project call for something more from a mechanistic point of view. Based on our analysis, we can formulate the hypothesis that the main positive mechanisms capable of pushing the partners to achieve the expected outputs are learning from experience, engagement, cooperative mobilization and reframing. Engagement is the mechanism that accompanied and drove the entire implementation process (during the first part of the process, however, this was partially counterbalanced by fragmented differentiation). **Most of the partners, in fact, acted based on their engagement in the relevance and goals of the project. Learning, cooperative mobilization and reframing were activated by engagement due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** Here, mobilization was activated to respond to the crisis and based on what had been learnt during the previous period of the project. Cooperative

mobilization and learning worked together to push a reframing of the project according to the previous experience and the new situation due to COVID-19.

Regarding the target, this kind of effect would be expected to activate mechanisms like constituency building and trust. However, on this point, we could not collect sufficient evidence. Actually, the main hypothesis (to be tested through further analysis) is that constituency building could be activated in the women involved, while for private enterprises, **the impression is that opportunism is the only basic mechanism that can be activated** (in the following section, point 2 proposes a possible solution to activate more virtuous mechanisms).

It is **not possible to evaluate completely the eventual occurred change in the two public institutions' effectiveness in their labour services and in their strategies and policies for promoting work-life balance within enterprises, because all the characteristics of this change can only manifest after the conclusion of the project.** Only the future practices and actions will reveal the consolidation and institutionalization of the experimented practices that can then be defined and assessed as change. However, both the desk analysis and the interviews have shown the **significant attitude of the two public institutions towards consolidating the practices as part of a strong commitment to institutionalizing them.** Therefore, there is high potential for a change in effectiveness.

2.5 Lessons for future redesign

The analysis of the implementation process allows for drawing some lessons that could drive a better design of future projects in the field of work-life strategies. The following are the more

interesting lessons, or at least “food for thought”, emerging from the overall assessment of the process:

1

There is a need for better work, in terms of analysis and design, on involving enterprises to avoid opportunism being the only activated mechanism (that would drive only a weak commitment). Here, many dimensions could be improved. First, it would be **necessary to focus more sharply on SMEs by involving them in the design stage of the project and eventually include them among the founding partners of the project** (this provision could activate mechanisms like constituency building or accountability). Further, **providing some financial incentive for their involvement could work** (thus activating accountability and emergent gains mechanisms).

2

Regarding the involvement of enterprises, it would be very useful to design the implementation process in a way that the **enterprises involved could be pushed to establish a network for working together**. From this point of view, **it could be promising to designate a specific WP to making the involved enterprises (especially SMEs) interact and share their experiences of the project**. This provision could surely activate highly positive mechanisms, such as bandwagon and normative isomorphism.

3

The **inclusion of local employment centres** should be considered. Overall, they are the institutional implementers of these kinds of policies and their involvement would guarantee a more realistic perspective that would represent an added value for both the design and the operative functioning of this kind of project.

4

This kind of project should also include financial resources (eventually coming from the public institutions involved) to allow the innovations designed through the project or diffused by it to be institutionalized in the territories of reference. Alternatively, there should at least be an agreement according to which the involved public institutions **make a formal commitment to apply the involved programmes/best practices, if the project is successful, in the following years**.

5

Regarding the international side of this type of project, some guidelines have emerged according to the specific perspective the project is thought to have. Three of them are as follows. First, **more significant involvement of international enterprises** could be useful for applying the practices in this kind of organizational context (also for challenging the different local practices of this kind of enterprise). Second, in the case of a foreign country's involvement as an example of a best practice, it could be useful for the project to provide for visits devoted to **job shadowing** – that is, direct involvement in a workplace – to experiment with how these kinds of projects really work in a different society. This could be very useful for understanding how the contexts matter in implementing Work Life strategies. Third, it could **be interesting to involve as an equal partner/leader a similar foreign local administration**. This would increase the reflexivity of the project.

6

Another issue that has emerged from the overall assessment concerns the ambition of this kind of project. In fact, **when the goal is the diffusion of some existing practices**, more than the construction or testing of new ones, it should involve **more territories, more public local institutions and more enterprises**.

7

Some procedural constraints should be expected at the design stage of the project. This means that the **involved public administration should think in advance about its internal procedure** and, if there is an expectation that the procedure could represent a structural constraint for the timing of the project, this should be solved when designing the project. For example, if the procedure for **hiring or for buying services** is expected to be too long, or that it shall not guarantee a high quality standard, then these **activities should be undertaken by other partners**.

8

During the project design stage, **the risk of segmentation should be avoided**. This does not mean that the idea to diffuse existing practices (with their own champions and, thus, with different intensities of preferences) should be excluded. However this characteristic should be taken into consideration to make the project more integrated and to increase the sense of pursuing collective goals. This could be done, for example, **by planning more internal workshops (to increase opportunities for reciprocal learning) and by providing for closer intertwining of practices (i.e. designing the expected outputs in a more holistic way).** **involved programmes/best practices, if the project is successful, in the following years.**

2.6 Final considerations

The overall assessment of the implementation process of the MASP project can be summarized according to whether, how and what questions listed in the introduction that represent the main focus of every evaluation such as this. Figure 26 offers this summary.

Thus, **the overall assessment is positive**, with a couple of dimensions on which the project has earned an even higher grade. While the project implementation process developed in a positive way in terms of outputs achieved, and in developing the main lines of the design and appealing to all the actors involved, there was particular effectiveness in adjusting to the emerging challenges and problems and in activating the proper effective virtuous mechanistic chain.

Owing to some potential shortcomings in the project design (partial segmentation) and the outbreak of the pandemic, this result was not guaranteed. However, the characteristics of most of the partners involved, their commitment and organizational agility allowed for addressing the process towards achieving the expected outputs.

It must be underlined, again, that the positive assessment of the project's implementation is only loosely linked to the project's results. Here, it is important to emphasize that there is no direct causal linkage between the implementation process and the outcome of a programme/policy, while there is a more significant linkage between the output and the outcome (although the outcome is also influenced by many other contextual factors). Thus, the only partially positive results (e.g. the high percentage of women, 57%, who perceived no influence in terms of empowerment driven by their interaction with the platform) cannot be linked to the process but to the design

and the content of the expected output (together with other contextual conditions). However, the analysis of the successful implementation process has revealed some dimensions and elements of the project that could be improved to make it potentially more effective also in terms of results and not only in terms of achieved outputs.

Finally, it must be underlined that this project has shown the **significant attitude and will of the two public institutions to promote and experiment with change in their practices and innovation in the delivery of their services**. This shows that, overall, **public administrations that are aware of their relevance and their pivotal role in addressing social needs and challenges can pursue innovation and learn by experimenting with novel practices**. Thus, they definitively can increase their effectiveness and improve their relationships with the related socio-economic context.









Focus	Pros	Cons	Final assessment
How the implementation process has worked	Since the outbreak of COVID-19, it has developed in a very efficient and effective way.	There was an initial delay due to procedural constraints and weak coordination.	 Positive
Whether and how the implementation has produced the expected outputs	The outputs regarding the diffusion of MAAM and Family Audit (in addition to the experimentation of soft skills assessment) have been achieved.	There could be more involvement of enterprises.	 Positive
How the project has been experienced by the implementers and the target	The implementers seem sufficiently satisfied (for the target, please see § 1. Social Impact Evaluation)	Some WPs perceived problems with coordination and integration.	 Positive
Whether and how there have been critical contextual factors in positive and negative terms for the implementation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The redesign due to COVID-19 has facilitated the implementation of the project. • The two territories involved were receptive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 crisis has caused partial dis-involvement of a few enterprises. • Bureaucratic red tape has delayed some activities. 	 Positive
Whether and how the project design has developed as expected	Overall, it has produced the expected output although through some unplanned changes during the implementation process.	An initial delay due to the pandemic created the conditions for a partially disjointed process.	 Positive
Whether adjustments have been made during the process and, in this case, if they have been coherent with the project itself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adjustments in redesigning the process due to COVID-19 were effective. • There was a full, coherent development of a third initiative. 	None	 Very Positive
What Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement • Cooperative Mobilization • Learning • Reframing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial Fragmentation • Opportunism (of private enterprises) 	 Very Positive
Change in effectiveness of the two public institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong commitment • Significant attitude towards change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic red tape 	 Potentially Positive

Fig. 26 - Assessing the implementation process of MASP

3. Sustainability analysis

Introduction

The objective of this section is to analyze whether and under which conditions the initiatives implemented under the MASP project can be developed and sustainable over time, by correcting those aspect that could undermine the effectiveness of the intervention and reorienting the interventions themselves aiming to gain efficiency and effectiveness in the long-term.

The analysis opens with a brief introduction that wants to be a premise to inform the reader with data and information about the context in which the project has been implemented, underlining the importance and the relevance for such interventions to be carried out.

A more in-depth assessment of the takeaways of the project follows, aiming to summaries the outcomes of the interviews carried out with the project partners in order to gather feedbacks, impressions and suggestions about how to follow up with the project's initiatives.

The analysis continues with the presentation of possible development scenarios for the project that came up through the conduct of the research and the next steps to be taken in order to make the interventions even more effective.

The last chapter focuses on the identification of milestones to be transferred to whoever comes next: this section in fact aims to treasure the obstacles encountered while developing the project initiatives and contribute to create knowledge around the implementation of similar projects.

3.1 Project Contextualization

The project contextualization aims to help the reader understanding the distinctive contextual socio-economic traits that characterize the areas intervened by the initiative (until the local level of observation – Trento and Milan – when possible), and the importance

3.1.1 Context Analysis

In order to fully understand the relevance of the MASP project, positive results achieved, possible corrections and developments, it is impossible to disregard the socio-economic context in which the interventions took place to the extent that it influences the project results.

Nonetheless, given the current historical sanitarian crisis, even

more emphasis has to be placed on such a context analysis.

The project has been implemented in two territories: the Autonomous Province of Trento and the Metropolitan Area of Milan.

3.1.1.1 Legal Framework

While Trento is located within the Trentino Alto-Adige Region, juridically recognized as a so called “Special Statute Region” which implies a broader discretion and flexibility regarding certain legal matters, the Milanese territory remains under the national jurisdiction.

Furthermore, Trento is an *Autonomous Province*, which implies an even higher grade of freedom in decision-making processes: according to the article 116, subparagraph 2, of the Italian Constitution, the autonomous province “*enact laws [...] in social life and local economy matters*”²⁹, normally a ward of the State.

This distinction is crucial in order to get an accurate picture of the two areas’ features and to draw up a coherent analysis of the necessary external conditions for the project to be effectively implemented and to ensure a future sustainability. In fact, the peculiarity of the legal framework of the autonomous province of Trento inevitably influences the ability to create economic incentives for local employers to implement innovative Work-Life Balance initiative to the benefit of their employees. This topic will be further discussed in the paragraph 3.3.3.

3.1.1.2 Local socioeconomic ecosystem

The two territories taken into account for the implementation of the MASP project also differ for what concerns the local economic ecosystem.

The first piece of data that comes in handy to understand the significant context difference between Trento and Milan is the following: the autonomous province of Trento counts 542,425 inhabitants with a € 38,706 GDP per capita and a 5.4% rate of unemployment (assessed for the 4th trimester of 2020, so after the onset of the pandemic crisis)³⁰. Concerning Milan, according to the most recent data available (ISTAT, 2018), 3,265,327³¹ people lives in the territory of the Province of Milan, presenting a € 27,301 GDP³² per capita and a 5.9% rate of unemployment (12% considering people between 15 and 29 years old)³³.

Even this data itself might suggest the substantial differences that have to be taken into account when evaluating the outcome of such a project as MASP. However, for the sake of completeness, other pieces of data are worth being taken into account according to the types of interventions that have been put in place through the MASP initiative.

Regarding the entrepreneurial ecosystem, both the territories are aligned with the national trend that set at 99.9% the percentage of SMEs out of the total number of Italian enterprises: in the metropolitan area of Milan 311,736 SMEs are active (99.7% of all the enterprises active in the province of Milan), while 40,779 (99.86% of the 40,835 total enterprises) are present within the territorial area of the province of Trento³⁴.

Although the two territories are roughly aligned for what concerns the concentration of SMEs out of the total number of enterprises active in the area of reference, further considerations must be done: the metropolitan area of Milan extends for 1.575 km² and it is densely populated (1,928.36 abs/km²) compared to the 84.55 abs/km² of Trento, where the total population is distributed on 6,207.12 km².³⁵ No data is available regarding SMEs distribution, but given the difference in population structure, it is reasonably possible to infer that the same structure stands for entrepreneurial activities.

Moreover, during the interviews carried out in order to develop the sustainability analysis, both the Employment Agency of Trento and A.P.I.³⁶ pointed out a substantial difference between the Milanese and the Trentine SMEs ecosystem due to the different geographical features and the population distribution on the territory, in accordance with what was hinted above. According to the ISTAT in fact, Trentino Alto-Adige (the Region of Trento) presents a way higher grade of urbanization compared to Lombardia (the Region of Milan): in Lombardia 41.9% of the surface is medium or high urbanized against only 9.3% for what concerns Trentino Alto-Adige, where 90.6% of the surface is low urbanized³⁷.

²⁹ For more details: Consiglio della Provincia autonoma di Trento - <https://www.consiglio.provincia.tn.it/istituzione/l-autonomia/peculiarita-storiche-e-giuridiche>

³⁰ For more details Istituto di Statistica della Provincia di Trento - <http://www.statweb.provincia.tn.it/incPage.asp?p=quadroIndicatori/data.asp?ind=1>

³¹ For more details: Istat - Popolazione residente al 1° Gennaio 2021 - <http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx>

³² For more details: Città Metropolitana di Milano - https://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/statistica/benessere_equo_sostenibile/benessere_economico.html

³³ For more details: Città Metropolitana di Milano - https://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/statistica/benessere_equo_sostenibile/lavoro_conciliazione_vita.html

³⁴ For more details: ISTAT Database - <http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?QueryId=20771#>

³⁵ For more details: ISTAT - Superfici unità amministrative - 2 Marzo 2021 - <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/156224#Superfici delle unita amministrative-0>

³⁶ API is the Italian Small and Medium enterprises' association (<http://www.apmi.it>) that has taken part in the MASP project as project partner.

³⁷ ISTAT (2014), "Principali dimensioni geostatistiche e grado di urbanizzazione del Paese".

3.1.1.3 Gender equality

Work-Life Balance and gender equality issues are strictly linked, in fact, as various studies demonstrated, flexible working allows mothers to maintain their working hours after childbirth³⁸, and to remain in human-capital-intensive jobs in times of high family demanded³⁹.

According to the EU gender equality index 2020 Italy shows the “greatest progress on gender equality (10.2 points)”⁴⁰ since 2010, reaffirming the relevance that this topic has been gaining in the last years across all the political forces. Italy in fact has one of the highest gender employment gaps at a European level: among people aged 20-64, the percentage gap between employed women and men stood at 20%, followed by Greece (21) and Malta (22)⁴¹.

Descending to the provincial level of observation, analyzing the two contexts of reference for the project, Trento seems to show a slightly stronger gender inequality compared to Milan, given the data available from the BES⁴². The most recent data available shows that in Trento the number of employed men aged 20-64 is 14% higher than women, while in Milan this gap is lower, 11% (figure 27). The same goes for what concerns young people employed aged 15-29, where the gender gap in Trento is almost 10% (9.9%), while for the province of Milan it reaches 9% only (figure 28).

The last indicator that completes the overview of the gender equality issue in the two areas of intervention is the gender pay

gap, namely the “*difference between the average gross hourly earnings of female and male employees*”⁴³. Again, the territory of Milan seems to show a more equilibrated scenario, even better than the national average: while in Trento men earn on average 37% more than women on an annual bases, in Milan this indicator falls to 29% (figure 29), demonstrating less unequal pay gap ranges.

It has to be underlined that this data needs to be read in the light of what has been discussed in the paragraph 3.1.1.2., regarding the peculiarities of these two territories: Trento is less densely populated than Milan and its economy is more rural based. Data shows in fact that generally in rural areas women participate less in the economic development and usually receive worse treatments⁴⁴.

³⁸ Chung, H., & Van der Horst, M. (2018b), *Women's employment patterns after childbirth and the perceived access to and use of flexitime and teleworking*, Human Relations, 71(1), 47–72.

³⁹ Fuller, S., & Hirsh, C. E. (2018). “Family-friendly” jobs and motherhood pay penalties: The impact of flexible work arrangements across the educational spectrum, Work and Occupations.

⁴⁰ EIGE - European Institute for Gender Equality (2020), “Gender equality index 2020: digitalization and the future of work”, p. 19.

⁴¹ EIGE - European Institute for Gender Equality (2020), “Gender equality index 2020: digitalization and the future of work”, pp. 30-31.

⁴² The law n. 106/2016 introduced in the Italian legislative order the concept of “equitable and sustainable wellbeing” as programmatic tool of the national economic policy. For more details: https://temi.camera.it/leg17/temi/benessere_equo_e_sostenibile

⁴³ Glossary and Thesaurus - European Institute for Gender Equality

⁴⁴ European Commission (2021), “EU Agricultural Economic Briefs - Women in EU agriculture and rural areas: hard work, low profile”, Brief n°7 - June 2012.

		Italy (%)	Milan (%)	Trento (%)
Employement rate (20-64 aged)	Female	53.8	70.2	66.9
	Male	73.4	81.3	81
	GAP	-19.6	-11.1	-14.1

Fig. 27 - Employment rate (aged 20-64) - Data elaboration based on BES data for 2019

		Italy (%)	Milan (%)	Trento (%)
Youth employment rate (15-29 aged)	Female	27.3	35.2	36.9
	Male	35.9	44.2	46.8
	GAP	-8.6	-9	-9.9

Fig. 28 - Youth employment rate (aged 15-29) - Data elaboration based on BES data for 2019

		Italy (%)	Milan (%)	Trento (%)
Employees average annual salary	Female	17,210.00 €	24,350.10 €	15,480.70 €
	Male	24,919.20 €	34,486.40 €	24,730.90 €
	GAP	-7,709.20 €	-10,136.30 €	-9,250.20 €
		-31%	-29%	-37%

Fig. 29: Employees average annual salary - Data elaboration based on BES data for 2018

3.1.1.4 Covid-19 and social challenges

Given the particular historical moment that is occurring and the way it has affected the development of the project object of interest of this analysis, a look at the pandemic crisis is dutiful when outlining the context analysis of the MASP interventions.

The negative impacts of the spread of the virus are already visible, but further consequences are expected, especially for what concerns the labor market. On the other hand, as for all the crisis, new needs are emerging and new working paths will open up accordingly.

Basing on the most relevant impact trends observed in 2020, the “year of the pandemic”, it is already possible to formulate hypothesis on what will be the most pressing challenges to be faced in the next future.

The 54° CENSIS Report⁴⁵ offers a clear overview of how the pandemic crisis has impacted the Italian socioeconomic context in 2020. According to the study published, 50.8% of the Italians declared their financial resources has been affected in 2020, and another 17% stated they have resources available for less than one month (at the moment of the data gathering).

For what concerns the labor market, between October 2019 and October 2020 more than a half of the reduction in employment regarded young people aged 15-35 (-4.4%) and women (-2%), downgrading the women employability rate to 49.1%: more than 1 woman out of 2 is out of the labor market in October 2020, the lowest detection in Europe.

Within this framework, the MASP project acquires even more relevance, by intervening on two sensitive issues that are destined to be addressed urgently in the next few years, among others: women employability and the corporate welfare development.

In fact, according to the aforementioned CENSIS Report the COVID-19 crisis has worsened the socioeconomic conditions of the already vulnerable social categories, in particular young people and women. The document reports: “*in the second trimester of this year [...] only 32 women out of 100 result to be employed or in search of*”.⁴⁶ In addition, it follows: “*for women aged 25-49 [...] the employment rate is 71.9% among childless women, against 53.4% among those with children in preschool age*”, namely 18% of Italian women.⁴⁷

The picture of the Italians society that the pandemic crisis returns, calls for reflections not only about how to protect the most vulnerable social categories but also about proper ways to foster their empowerment and development. This obviously requires political vision, policy innovation and coherent investments.

As hinted above, within such a context, projects such as MASP acquire further relevance in order to experiment innovative methods to face most pressing social challenges. This and other aspects of the relevance of the MASP project will be discussed in the next section.

⁴⁵ CENSIS (2020), “La società italiana al 2020 - 54° Rapporto CENSIS”.

⁴⁶ CENSIS (2020), “La società italiana al 2020 - 54° Rapporto CENSIS”, page 20.

⁴⁷ CENSIS (2020), “La società italiana al 2020 - 54° Rapporto CENSIS”.

3.1.2 Relevance of the MASP project's interventions

According to what the interview process detected, the MASP project represented a crucial opportunity for all the partners to implement and finance interventions that otherwise would have been underrated in terms of priority. In addition to this, it has been discussed in the previous section how the priorities scheme have been substantially changed by the covid-19 crisis.

In addition to this, it is undebatable the increasing attention that the corporate welfare has been gaining in the Italian context in the last few years, as detected by the Welfare Index Report PMI 2020: between 2016 and 2020 in fact the enterprises proactivity in taking measures to the benefit of their employees have been significantly increasing, especially for what concerns SMEs.⁴⁸ In particular, according to the aforementioned report, the Work-Life Balance and parental support is the second most relevant issue for Italian entrepreneurs: 50.6% of the enterprises surveyed in fact put in place at least one initiative concerning this topic.⁴⁹

Moreover, the local administrations involved in the project stated that the gender equality topic after having received particular attention, in term of public resources invested, in the late 90s and first years of the new millennium, with the crisis started in 2008, significant resources was destined to economic recovery, leaving aside such interventions. Nowadays the topic revived due to the necessity of re-organizing and increasing the efficiency of the services offered to the population by segmenting it according to different targets.

Therefore, the MASP project represented a great opportunity because, beyond the intended objectives, it allowed for:

Re-focusing the attention of the **public administrations** on such initiatives with the intention of moving forward on gender equality issues: MASP represented the occasion for destining external resources to specific interventions gender oriented that have been left out in the last years because of the priority attributed to other issues, such as economic reconstruction.

Pushing the evolution process of **public management mindset** that need to be sensitized: the authority represented by the European Commission played a crucial role in incentivizing public administration leaders, despite the low level of sensitivity concerning the specific issues, to adhere to such a project. Given the good results showed by the project development and the relevance of the issues treated it is likely that other similar projects will follow aiming to face similar issues.

Encouraging collaboration between different partners valuing the complementarity natures and missions: this aspect goes along with the following one and refers to the real value added of the MASP project that lies in the ability to tackle the Work-Life Balance and gender equality issues by implementing an integral approach.

Overcome the dichotomy “**supply-demand**” in the interventions’ approach and opening up new working paths: both demand and supply sided actors collaborated within the project frame with the goal of ensuring an integral approach to the issues to be faced. This aspect will appear clear continuing the reading.

⁴⁸ “Welfare Index PMI - Rapporto 2020”. Page 30.

⁴⁹ “Welfare Index PMI - Rapporto 2020”. Page 35.

3.2 Project takeaways

The outcome of the interview process carried out with the project partners allows for considerations of their perceptions regarding the relevance of MASP interventions to the benefit of its recipients.

Looking pragmatically at the MASP project, it is possible to group the interventions carried out by creating 3 categories:

- The **training**: intended for both the supply and the demand sided actors, namely the public and employment services'

staff, the representative organizations and the enterprises.

- The women platform - **Masp4skills**: developed by AFOLMET and tested both in Trento and in Milan.
- The **Experimentation** of MAAM and Family Audit: Milano and Trento shared two best practices with regard to Work-Life Balance risen in their territories and tried to replicate the experience in their contexts of reference.

The goal of the following sections is to pin down the main lessons learned by the partners while carrying out the interventions.

3.2.1 Training

The overall idea of the training is to raise awareness, among all the parties involved in the context of reference, around the issues that the project proposes to tackle. In particular the training sessions have been structured according to the specific audience,

going from informative webinars to case studies presentation, passing through technical aspects directly connected with the Work-Life Balance topic (e.g.: the company-level bargaining)⁵⁰.

3.2.1.1 Intervention

As hinted in the previous paragraph the training modules were intended for different audiences and realized by different actors in the Milan and Trento areas. The training contents follow as summarized by the WP leaders:

1. Video pills intended for the large audience, including citizens in general.
2. Seminars: educational paths intended for employers and

social partners aiming to share good practices and open spaces for debate.

3. Training path intended for consultants and evaluators (Family Audit, organisation, unions).
4. Seminars intended for employers and employees about new scenarios and tools.
5. Training path to the benefit of employment center's staff.

⁵⁰ For more information about the contents of the training, see the project activities reports delivered by the project partners.

3.2.1.2 Lessons Learned

Both AFOLMET and AdL underlined in first place the importance of such an initiative in order to clarify among the beneficiaries of the training the link between the gender equality and the Work-Life Balance topics, namely why better Work-Life Balance practices could benefit women and gender equality in first place. As explained in the paragraph 3.1.1.3, in fact these two issues are strictly correlated but frequently tackled separately: suffice it to say that according to the ISTAT 38.3% of the employed women between 18 and 64 years old with dependants younger than 15 had to change aspects of their working life to conciliate work and private life, while men in the same situation account for only 11.9%⁵¹.

An additional lesson learned by AFOLMET along the training path intended for social partners, employment services' staff and the consultants, has to do with the fact that, in order to make the training effective, it is necessary to involve external experts in the topics of interest. This is true for two reasons:

- Even if the expertise is held internally, it does not represent the core of the activity of an employment services center, reason why is more appropriate to rely on external experts with clear working paths regarding the topics of interests.
- It avoids engagement issues in which it would be possible to incur in case of a peer-to-peer training: external experts arouse trust.

Along the lines, also regarding the employers training it should be noted the delicacy of the engagement aspect, theme which will come out several times in this document. In order to efficiently carry out enterprises training sessions in fact two elements played a crucial role:

- the presence within the project partnership of a **representative organization**, namely A.P.I. that operates in the Lombardian context: even though the number of participants in the webinars has been almost the same in Trento and Milan (25 per webinar on average), the majority of the project's partners underlined the importance of A.P.I. intervention in activating the local entrepreneurial ecosystem;
- the presentation of successful **case studies**: 89.4% of the attendees to the specific webinar stated they were satisfied about the training session and in most of the cases suggested to dedicate even more space to testimonies, underlining the importance for the entrepreneurs to come across similar successful stories.

Regarding the employment services' staff training instead, one consideration is relevant in terms of sustainability of the present project: with a view to differentiating the services portfolio according to the client target, both AFOLMET and AdL reported it is not necessary to train more than a couple of people per center, considering they will be in charge of serving the specific client segment. To be specified that a manual has been drawn up to the benefit of all the non-trained employment services' staff.

⁵¹ ISTAT, 2019, "Report - Conciliazione tra lavoro e famiglia".

3.2.2 Experimentation of MAAM and Family Audit Programme

On the promise that the Family Audit represents a new experience to be tested for the Milanese public administration, but it is already solidly implemented in the Trento area (since 2013, year of the first certify issued), directly promoted by the Public Administration of the Autonomous Province of Trento - Agency for the family, in charge of supporting families and young people of the territory. On the contrary, the MAAM methodology by Lifeed, has already been tested within the Municipality of Milan, while it is the first time that the Trentine public administration comes across this innovative initiative.

MASP represented an opportunity to share virtuous practices aiming to test the two initiatives in different contexts.

According to what emerged from the interview process this

two experiences seem to be complementary, despite the perception of the employers (see paragraph 3.4.1.1.): the MAAM methodology is intended for enterprises' human resources (at all hierarchical levels) to put in value soft skills acquired through non-traditional educational and training paths, while Family Audit is aimed at the employers to accompany them through the creation process of specific internal plans to foster working-life balance to the benefit of their employees. It might be said that MAAM is demand-side oriented, while Family audit is supply-side oriented.

3.2.2.1 Intervention

Milan

In the territory of Milan 10 enterprises adhered to the new parents master path. The training programme has been developed using the MAAM methodology proposed by Lifeed: It consists of 14-20 training modules (basing on personal choice) intended for mothers and fathers to obtain a better understanding of the transition they are going through and the resources and soft skills they are acquiring and developing.

For what concerns Family Audit programme experimentation instead, it has been rethought to be less time demanding (than

the original one developed by the Trentine Agency for the family), otherwise it would not have been possible to be implemented within the project timing. The experimentation has provided an initial assessment of the internal policies of each adhering enterprise and the draft of possible working trajectories.

In the table (figure 30) all the enterprises involved are listed, indicating whether they took part in just one or both the experimentations proposed. 2 Multinationals and 1 big enterprise renounced because of the Covid-19 crisis.

Nr.	Ragione sociale	Family audit	MAAM	Type of business
1	Bayer spa	YES	YES	Multinational
2	Fraasi srl	YES	YES	SME
3	Stantec srl	YES	YES	SME
4	Decathlon italia srl unipersonale	NO	YES	Big enterprise
5	Mars Italia	Renounced	YES	Multinational
6	SANOFI	YES	NO	Multinational
7	CONSORZIO FARSI PROSSIMO	YES	NO	SME
8	Luxottica Group SPA	NO	Renounced	Big enterprise
9	Dolce&Gabbana	NO	YES	Multinational
10	BC-eletronics	Renounced	Renounced	SME
11	GSO Company	Renounced	YES	SME
12	KPMG	Renounced	NO	Big enterprise
13	Intesa San Paolo	YES	YES	Big enterprise
14	Motta Impianti SRL	YES	YES	SME

Fig. 30 - Enterprises involved in the experimentation (Milan) - Data elaboration based on project reports

Trento

In the Trentine territory, only 7 enterprises (figure 31) have been engaged to carry out specific in-depth accompaniment regarding the family audit programme and according to the AdL the engagement process turned to be particularly demanding.⁵²

During the interview process, the project partner pointed out how significantly the Covid-19 restrictions affected the

possibility to engage more enterprises in a more personal and effective manner: in such a context as Trento, predominantly rural, creating bonds with enterprise, especially SMEs, requires time and effort. In addition to this, in the Trentine territory, no representative organization of the enterprises ecosystem has been involved, as for A.P.I. in the Milanese context, which would have turned the engagement process more efficient.

Nr.	Ragione sociale	Family audit	Type of business
1	Alyso	YES	SME
2	Corazzolla	YES	SME
3	Gourmet Italia (Gruppo Dr. Shaer)	YES	Multinational
4	Praim	YES	SME
5	Panificio Sosi	YES	SME
6	Tecnotek Complements S.r.l.	YES	SME
7	Enrica Vinante	YES	SME

Fig. 31 - Enterprises involved in the experimentation (Trento) - Data elaboration based on project reports

⁵² For more information see the project reports.

3.2.2.2 Lessons learned

As for the training initiatives, during the interview process the project partners brought up interesting aspects that feed the sustainability analysis, to the extent that they allow for conclusions regarding how to make the project interventions more effective.

First of all the experimentation process has allowed the meeting of the demand and supply sided actors, which has been pointed out as valuable by the project partners: *“this experience offered us the opportunity to understand how the corporate system works and what it needs”* reported AdL. They note that even if in the past the public administration worked somehow with the entrepreneurial world, this time they literally had access to the enterprise reality to observe it closely.

Therefore, besides the experimentation results, it seems to be already valuable the link created between the ecosystem actors through the initiative.

The second lesson learned regards the experimentation itself. As expected the family audit experimentation in the Milanese context did not return great results: the partners involved reported a decreasing interest in the Family Audit programme due to the high demand of time and resources in order to get the certification.

Most part of the success of Family Audit in the Autonomous Province of Trento in fact depends on the economic incentives that the public administration is able to provide to counterbalance the high investment enterprises are required in order to complete the 5 year process of certification.

As explained in the paragraph 3.1.1.1. the Milanese public administration does not enjoy the same fiscal autonomy, on one

hand and such an incentive system would not be sustainable however in the Milanese context, given the high number of enterprises active in the territory of reference compared to the Trentine area (see paragraph 3.1.1.2.).

The framework described clarify the need of a different incentive structure and last but not the least raises the SMEs issue: corporate welfare policies in fact requires relatively important investment that SMEs struggle to put in place. This topic will be further discussed later on in the document.

3.2.3 Women platform: Masp4Skills

The so-called women platform probably represents the most innovative tool created and implemented under the MASP project. In the beginning the platform was supposed to be developed by a private external firm, but having changed the context due to the Covid-19 implications, the public institution, AFOLMET, took direct responsibility of the platform design and development process.

The platform has not been created “a priori”, but rather designed basing on a field investigation intended for analyzing the most pressing needs of the vulnerable population to be served: young women, specifically women with dependents (see paragraph 3.1.1.4).

3.2.3.1 Intervention

With the Masp4Skills platform, AFOLMET aimed to serve unemployed women by providing a support tool that could guide them through the process of recognizing and valuing the skills developed thanks to the experience of becoming a parent or caregiver. Moreover, the platform aims to turn those skills into assets spendable in the labor market, with the goal of increasing women empowerment and employability.

The platform aims to extend the MAAM initiative to unemployed human resources (women in the specific case of this experimentation) since more than 99% of the employment services centers' users are unemployed.

The platform is composed of 2 parts: one destined to the large

public of users, and the other one intended for 40 selected women to be accompanied through the empowerment process.

All the users of the platform have access to the first section, which is designed to re-activate the user through 3 propaedeutic modules: a first module that aims to assess skills and competences a second one that seeks to provide the users with contents to strengthen their weaknesses, and a last module that addresses the legal issue by centralizing useful information (worker rights, how to behave and who to contact in case of abuse, etc.) and make it available for the users of the platform.

The second section instead is destined to 40 women that have been picked to receive a more customized service: in addition

to the access to all the contents of the first section in fact, these 40 women also got 8 hours of customized takeover, designed to help the user reading the competences map and work on her strengths; the whole path is destined to end up with a final certification of the identified skills and competences issued by accredited organizations.

3.2.3.2 Lessons learned

Recurring themes have emerged during the interviews process while discussing with the project partners about the most relevant positive impacts that the women platform implementation contributed to generate. The aforementioned intervention in fact:

- **Created the opportunity** for the public institutions (AFOLMET and AdL) **to keep on serving** its users readapting the services to the fast-paced context of the Covid-19 crisis: developing technological tools resulted to be the key for the organizations to resist the Covid-19 crisis without suspending the services provision.
- **Represented the opportunity** for the public sector to invest resources on promoting itself **innovative technological supports** to boost its services: usually these initiatives tend to be taken by privates, which was going to be in this case, but the MASP resources together with the proactive disposition of the AFOLMET management set the conditions to take advantage of the opportunity.

All the project partners are intentioned to keep on using and developing the platform, which calls for reflections about how this will managed being the tool direct output of the MASP project, in turn destined for the benefit of all the project partners.

So far, AFOLMET already identified eventual internal resources to be destined to the maintenance and further development of the platform.

Chapter 2 was intended for analysis the project intervention and highlighting the lessons learned while carrying out the interventions. The next chapter will focus more on the limits (endogenous and exogenous) that the development of the project encountered and possible answers to overcome obstacles and limitations in order to turn the project interventions more effective.

3.3 Limits of the project and possible correction

Despite the great effort exerted by all the project partners, some of the results have been affected by unexpected implications. The objective of this section consists of a review of the aforementioned factors and the possible corrections to put in place in order to make the interventions more effective and sustainable in the long run.

Moreover, the fact that the project interventions were carried out in such different contexts allows for comparative analysis that in turn enable considerations regarding the influence of endogenous variables on the project development.

In particular, the sustainability analysis pinpoints three aspects that restricted the capacity of the MASP project to generate an even more satisfying result, with consequences on the financial aspects as well. As hinted before, in some cases the limits identified are strictly linked with the territories of reference and their peculiarities.

3.3.1 Enterprises engagement

It has been possible to detect a lack of efficacy in engaging enterprises, in turn not fully matching the level of results expected. The causes of this scarce responsiveness are attributable to multiple factors:

- the presence or absence of a **second-level organization** able to build trust around the initiative in virtue of the relations already in place with the local enterprises ecosystem;
- the **Covid-19 crisis** and the government restrictions that did not permit in presence initiatives;
- the **conformation** of the **territory** (specific for the Trentine region) that implies higher investments to reach and engage entrepreneurs due to the lower level of urbanization;

This difficulty in engaging enterprises in fact, is particularly evident regarding the Trentine territory, where external training experts have been contracted to conduct the webinars (as for Milan), but the entire enterprises engagement process was delegated to AdL, which typically does not establish direct relations with local entrepreneurs as a core action of its operativity, due to the specificity of its work, which is more demand-side oriented.

Under these conditions, the engaging process turns to be not efficient and particularly demanding from a financial perspective: time and resources are not well allocated, reason why it calls for an adjustment from a sustainability perspective.

Despite the great effort exerted by the agency, in fact, an average of 25 attendants took part in the webinars intended for training the enterprises human resources, and only 7 enterprises of the Trentine territory have undertaken the customized training path conducted by the family audit consultants.

If compared to the Milanese contexts, the majority of the project's partners agreed that a more vivid activation of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem has been achieved. Moreover, during the interview A.P.I. stated that around 100 enterprises were reached.

What emerged allows for one conclusion: A.P.I. played a crucial role in engaging small and medium enterprise (which, as already said, represents 99.7% of the Milanese enterprises) in the territory of reference, and this in virtue of its pre-existent relations established with the local enterprises ecosystem. It seems that A.P.I. intervention in the project was able to create trust around the initiative, arousing the interest of a good number of enterprises that approached the Work-Life Balance topic.

On the contrary, the non-involvement of such an organization as A.P.I. in the Trentine territory represented a substantial limitation in the engagement process efficacy, especially for what concerns small and medium enterprise of the internal regions of the autonomous province of Trento. SMEs of the internal areas in fact were the AdL's target since the beginning of the project, but the aforementioned dynamics combined with the Covid-19 crisis and the impossibility to physically reach those realities, affected the possibility for the project initiative to encounter the agreement of a larger pool of beneficiaries.

Therefore, in the light of what has been said so far, it is possible to conclude that in order to improve the project initiative in a perspective of effectiveness and sustainability, it is indispensable to **involve as project partner a specific actor** that:

- Already maintains **long-term relations** with the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the territory of reference.
- Able to **create trust** among the enterprises engaged around the initiative proposed within the project frame.
- Able to **sensitise the employers** ecosystem in order to ensure the efficacy of the Work-Life Balance policies to the benefit of their employees.

In particular, given the peculiarity of the Trentine territory, characterized by a highly developed cooperative ecosystem, it is recommended for a future sustainable development of the project's initiatives to involve second-level representative organizations of the aforementioned sector. The autonomous province of Trento in fact, presents the highest dimensional rates at a national level regarding the non-profit sector: in the Trentine territory, there are 119.3 non-profit organizations every 10.000 inhabitants that employ 249.2 workers every 10.000.⁵³

In this sense, it is possible to infer that cooperatives, the productive entities of the non-profit sector, account for a relevant part of the wealth generated in the territory of reference, which imposes to rethink the engagement process by considering the non-profit sector as well as the for-profit sector. Two out the institutions that could be involved in the Trentine territory in order to turn the intervention more effective are CLA - Consorzio Lavoro Ambiente and CONSOLIDA - Consorzio della cooperazione sociale trentina.

⁵³ ISTAT (2020), "Censimenti permanenti, l'Italia giorno dopo giorno - Istituzioni non profit".

3.3.2 Family Audit experimentation

The second issue raised by the project development is strictly linked with the experimentation of the Family Audit experience within the Milanese context: the limit in fact clearly emerges when it comes to the replicability of the family audit initiative within such a different context.

As seen in the paragraph 3.2.2., a good chunk of enterprises decided not to pursue the family audit experimentation as outlined within the project frame. This result is even more significant when considering that the Milanese enterprises were not proposed to implement the whole Family Audit cycle (as for the Trentine experience) which is highly demanding in terms investment (time and resources), but rather to be accompanied by Family Audit specialists toward the creation of a corporate plan to incorporate innovative Work-Life Balance practices as for family audit experience in the Trentine area. The experimentation in fact was planned on a 6-month time laps, namely significantly less than the 3 and a half years traditionally forecasted for the full implementation of the Family Audit programme (not counting the maintenance and consolidation processes).

The limitation that the Family Audit experimentation encountered has a dual nature. Firstly the differences related to the legal framework features that the two territories present, as outlined at the beginning of this analysis (see paragraph 3.1.1.1.), played a crucial role: given the fact that the municipality of Milan does not enjoy the same legal autonomy of the province of Trento, it is impossible to offer a competitive incentives system to local enterprises by acting on economic benefits (e.g.: fiscal benefits). The detection of this limit opens the ways to discussions around the future of Family Audit in the territory of Milan, which will be further discussed in the paragraph 3.4.2. Systemic issues to tackle.

Moreover, the Family Audit programme is particularly investment demanding (time and resource), even more for (i) SMEs, which have higher budget constraints rather than bigger enterprise, and for (ii) non-sensitized employers that normally show resistance to innovative initiatives that do not directly affect the productivity or generate tangible positive economic results for the business. This topic as well will be further discussed in the next sections (see paragraph 3.3.3.).

Secondly, the aforementioned lack of sensitivity around the Work-Life Balance topic has hindered a more effective implementation of the initiative. It would be desirable in fact to structure more in-depth intervention paths to the benefit of the entrepreneurs, basing on 4 milestones: awareness, incentives, planning, action. This topic and a possible solution will be provided at the paragraphs 3.4.1.2.

It is evident that the trial and errors process is extremely demanding and not sustainable in the long term, because it implies high costs. From this perspective, a possible solution to overcome this process lies in the redaction of a **preliminary study** that aims to (i) analyze the institutional context and (ii) map the actors ecosystem of the territory of reference. Such an analysis would be useful to assess the existence of the minimum context conditions to ensure the most effective initiative implementation as possible.

3.3.3 Incentives system

As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, the incentives system probably represented the weakest point of the Family audit programme experimentation in the territory of Milan.

The Welfare Index PMI 2020 observed a correlation existing between the enterprise size and the tendency to incur in additional costs related to corporate welfare initiatives to the benefit of the employees. In other words, the report shows that the bigger is the enterprise the more it is likely to incur in additional costs related to corporate welfare compensated by tax saving.⁵⁴

This data suggests that the majority of these incentivizing policies go to the benefit of big enterprises affecting the convenience for SMEs to adhere to Work-Life Balance practices, in turn constraining the potential value creation for these enterprises' employees.

This consideration opens space for reflections around the **corporate compliance**, especially when it comes to SMEs, and the cost-benefit balance that employers are willing to accept when implementing Work-Life Balance practices.

The project experimentation returned clear lessons regarding the fact that the more the implementation of such practices is demanding in terms of time and resources invested, the less entrepreneurs are willing to adopt corporate welfare measures.

If enterprises need simple and automatic economic incentives in order to transpose innovative practices, the only way out from this dilemma consists of combining small tax benefit where possible, with incentives of other nature: reputation and employees fidelity, intended as strategic corporate assets able to generate benefits for the company itself.

The new national and international workforce in fact is increasingly looking for better Work-Life Balance and meaningful jobs, which leads to the fact that on equal terms new generations are more likely to pick jobs within enterprises with better reputation and Work-Life Balance conditions, being these aspects fundamental in order to develop loyalty to the company. In fact, according to the Deloitte Global Millennium Survey 2020, that gathered information from more than 27,500 millennials and Gen Zs from all over the world, *"job loyalty rises as businesses address employee needs, from diversity and inclusion to sustainability and reskilling"*.⁵⁵

Being these aspect more difficult to track, rather than the benefits generated by fiscal incentives, it is crucial to formulate specific results assessments and evaluation methodologies in order to make these alternative incentives systems credible. The more reputational and fidelity benefits are assessed, the more it would create evidence around the efficacy of this kind of incentives complementarily to the fiscal ones. Moreover, the data collected within the MASP project underlines the persuasive force of sharing successful practices in engaging entrepreneurs, so that reporting alternative successful incentives systems implementation could encourage a multiplier effect.

In this sense, in order to ensure the project sustainability it is highly recommended to conduct **preliminary investigations** intended for calibrating non-economic incentives system to put in place. In other words, assessments should be carried out aiming to define under which conditions and to what extent entrepreneurs are willing to incur in additional costs to implement Work-Life Balance policies and practices.

For what concerns economic incentives instead, as already pointed out, not only they are difficult to be ensured when the legislative autonomy of the local administration is restricted, but

⁵⁴ "Welfare Index PMI – Rapporto 2020", fig. 27, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Deloitte (2020), "The Deloitte Global Millennium Survey 2020".

also, in such contexts as Milan the entrepreneurial ecosystem dimension has to be taken in account as well: direct fiscal benefits could be financially non-sustainable for such a context that counts 382,079 enterprises.⁵⁶

In this case it would be interesting to explore the possibility to structure **indirect economic incentives**, such as priority access to calls for application proposed by independent funds. This could represent a working space for the public administration on one side and the private funds on the other (e.g.: interprofessional funds) to structure incentives that does not depend on the legislative framework and can be economically advantageous for entrepreneurs as well.

However, as stressed several times in the present document, incentives (economic or not) alone do not work either, but they necessarily have to be accompanied by the intervention of representative organizations able to create fiduciary bonds between the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and the good innovative practices promoters.

⁵⁶ Camera di commercio di Milano (2019), "Milano Produttiva - 29° Rapporto della Camera di Commercio di Milano, Monza Brianza e Lodi", p. 63

3.4 Future prospects

Because of the analysis presented in this report it is possible to draw conclusions and imagine potential development trajectories and issues to tackle in order to ensure the MASP project sustainability and effectiveness in the long term.

3.4.1 Development trajectories

The initiatives proposed within the MASP project context, as implemented and experimented, has showed space for improvements. The next few paragraphs aim to outline possible development scenarios by recommending actions to take in order to maximize the interventions' impact.

3.4.1.1 Family Audit and MAAM programmes integration

As explained at the paragraph 3.3.2. the Family Audit experimentation with the enterprises of the Milanese area showed important limits due to the significant investment of time and resources that the programme implementation requires. Moreover, what comes out clearly from the interview process is the fact that non-sensitized employers put up resistance when it comes to Work-Life Balance practices implementation. On the other hand, the MAAM programme alone does not ensure the passage from theory to practice.

In this sense, an integration between MAAM and Family Audit programme is desirable in order to increase the chances that Work-Life Balance practices take root: the MAAM initiative could be re-read as preparatory to the implementation of the Family Audit programme. In fact, while Family Audit aims to develop concrete intervention plans in accordance with the organizational structure specificities, the MAAM intervention focuses more on the awareness raising of the human resources employed by the organization regarding the Work-Life Balance and gender equality topics.

It is therefore clear why the overcoming of the dichotomy between these two interventions could represent a significant step toward the dissemination of good Work-Life Balance practices and the closure of the gap between theory and practice.

In order to enable this integration between MAAM and Family Audit programmes, however, it is necessary to previously operate on two critical points:

- The **MAAM** initiative needs to **intercept the top management** as well by reorienting the training targets. This aspect needs to be improved in order for the programme to achieve better results by sensitizing decision makers, in addition to more operative human resources, and pave the way for programs such as Family audit to be implemented consequently.

- **Family Audit** need to be simplified in terms of process (and investment consequently) in order to be appealing also for SMEs. This topic will be further discussed in the next paragraph, along with the incentives topic.

3.4.1.2 SMEs targeting

According to the Welfare Index PMI 2020⁵⁷ there is a clear trend between the enterprise size and the internal development of Work-Life Balance policies: in fact, according to the data, the bigger the enterprise is the more likely is to observe welfare practices put in place.⁵⁸ Then adding that SMEs represent 99.9% of the enterprises in the Italian context, it seems necessary to orient specific interventions to the benefit of this target.

Moreover, according to what emerged during the ITWs process, SMEs encountered significant difficulties in adhering to the initiatives proposed within the MASP project framework due to the high investment required.

All these observations lead to the conclusion that, in order to make the project results more effective and sustainable it is

necessary to reorient the interventions to the specific benefit of the SMEs ecosystem, considering their specificity in terms of structure, needs and investment capacity.

Besides the investment constraints other peculiarities characterizing the small and medium enterprises has to be taken into account when structuring such initiatives intended for the aforementioned target:

- The SMEs **ecosystem** is highly **heterogeneous**, which means that different leaderships present different degrees of sensitivity to the Work-Life Balance topic.
- In a relevant number of cases SMEs **do not** present a **proper management**, but rather they are led by the enterprise owner, in charge of the decision making process, which comes with pros and cons when it comes to innovative initiative such as

⁵⁷ "Welfare Index PMI - Rapporto 2020"

⁵⁸ Ibidem, fig. 15, p. 31.

Work-Life Balance policies.

- SMEs contexts are featured with highly **informal dynamics and relations**, which promotes the development of empathy among employers and employees on one hand, but hinders the formalization and standardization of good Work-Life Balance practices on the other, not to mention that it could incur in unequal treatment of the employees.

In the light of the SMEs peculiarities exposed above, particular actions should be taken in order to achieve the goal of maximizing the impact of such interventions as MASP intended for small and medium enterprises:

- **Preliminary studies** would be desirable in order to analyze SMEs needs and consequently orient the contents of the interventions. The family audit programme partially does this, but the study is highly customized for the selected enterprises to be followed up, which in turn drives up the total cost of the intervention. A more standardized study able to capture the entrepreneurial ecosystem dynamics of the context of reference is strongly recommended to be carried out.
- The enterprise accompaniment should be focused more on **enhancing** already **existing informal** Work-Life Balance **practices** in a perspective of standardization, rather than formulating new innovative action plans that risk to be highly demanding for the enterprise itself.
- Programs such as **MAAM** and **Family Audit** should be **redesigned** to be **more attractive** for SMEs: if we look to the Lifeed clients' distribution, it is immediately clear that the majority of them is represented by enterprises with more than 500 employees, with a well-structured HR department, which SMEs do not necessarily have.
- **SMEs** should get together in the form of a **consortium** for example, in order to break down fix costs connected to the accession to such programs.

It has to be mentioned that part of the actions mentioned above has already been taken - for example Lifeed is already studying how to improve its service for SMEs - but all those initiatives are recommended to be taken in a concerted manner, by co-designing possible concrete solutions to better target and engage small and medium enterprises.

In this, a crucial role will be played by A.P.I., or similar organizations, in virtue of its privileged position: in between the SMEs ecosystem and the local public administration, public private partnerships are in fact highly desirable in order to ensure the efficiency of such initiatives (see paragraph 3.4.2).

3.4.1.3 Masp4Skills Platform development

There is no doubt among the project partners and the beneficiaries of the initiatives that the Masp4Skills platform represents the most relevant achievement of the project, for the reasons discussed in the paragraph 3.2.3.

However, potential developments of the platform itself are desirable and some other issues remain opened.

At the present the platform is being used with a dual objective, namely (i) accompanying unemployed women to the discovery of sensitive soft skills acquired in non-traditional training context and (ii) putting those skills in value when searching for jobs and during the interaction with potential employers.

Given the potential of such a platform is highly desirable to expand its functionality. A couple of possible development of the platform usage are suggested below:

- The platform could be **extended** to **employed human resources** as well: by adapting the contents of the platform it would be possible for the enterprise management to gather information (employees' needs, preferences, skills, etc.) on which basing potential Work-Life Balance initiative plans. This in turn would be useful for the public administration as well when allocating public resources through calls: candidates would already have coherent plans on which to build possible concrete solutions through public funds.
- The platform could be used also to **detect** remarkable **entrepreneurial skills** to be enhanced through a self-employment path in partnership with dedicated organizations: a platform section could be created filled with dedicated contents intended for bringing out self-employment attitudes from the unemployed women that would be selected to

develop those skills thanks to the collaboration with an appropriate local partner (e.g.: incubators).

However, one issue remain opened: the platform is the outcome of the MASP project, but in order to be sustainable and more efficient, it needs to be managed by a specific actor of the territory, that guarantees accessibility to all the local actors that could benefit from its usage, preferably the public administration, in order to ensure equal access to all the applicants. This aspect turns to be crucial also when it comes to the replicability of the project (section 4.5.).

3.4.2 Systemic issues to tackle

As discussed in the paragraph 3.4.1.2., in order to maximize the project impact it is fundamental to strategically target and serve SMEs, in virtue of the fact that they account for almost the totality of the Italian entrepreneurial landscape.

However, the efficacy of the results of this action do not depend on the project partners only: in fact, even in case all the desirable measures would be taken by the project partners, still some issues would have to be tackled in order to remove those systemic barriers to the development of good Work-Life Balance practices within the SMEs ecosystem. The dismembering of those barriers requires time, investments and coordinated

collaboration between multiple national actors, including public administrations, private enterprises, representative organizations and connecting bodies more in general.

Two main issues were brought up frequently during the interviews process, underlining the urgency of tacking action to enhance a substantial process of change: cultural transition and legal framework.

3.4.2.1 Cultural transition

During the interviews process multiple project partners pointed out the generational turnover in place in most of the enterprises' managements involved in the MASP project initiatives. Obviously this is not the first time that such a turnover happens, but this time is particularly crucial since it comes along with a disruptive change of mindset.

In this sense, such projects as MASP enjoy good timing to be transposed: this cultural transition, in fact, needs to be guided in order to return the expected results. Considering that Italy is less accustomed than other European Countries to this kind of initiatives⁵⁹, the supply and demand side ecosystem actors are required to accompany and direct the changing process.

According to the data collected by A.P.I. about the satisfaction regarding the webinars proposed within the MASP project frame, it is clear that entrepreneurs highly value the case study methodology, in other words, they need to know "it works" and "how to make it work".

Moreover, it is in the public domain that the new generation of international leaders tend to attach more and more importance to non-monetary values as indicators of the solidity status of the organizations, including employees' satisfaction, loyalty (turnover), etc.

Because of all these reasons private organizations and public administrations are called to work together to co-design and

⁵⁹ Eurofound, (2016), "European quality of life Report - Survey 2016", page 42.

develop specific paths of accompaniment intended for the entrepreneurial ecosystem to be sensitized towards the Work-Life Balance topic.

In the specific case of Milan, the Lombardian Region already disposed funds for the period 2020-2023 destined to public and private organizations of the regional territory to enhance the Work-Life Balance practices and the corporate welfare

development. This initiative could represent a great opportunity for the entrepreneurial ecosystem (SMEs in particular) to propose pilot projects to keep on testing innovative measures to tackle the Work-Life Balance issues overcoming the investment constraints in presence of high risks of failure.

3.4.2.2 Legal framework

Last but not the least the success of this kind of initiatives is also strictly linked to the legal framework and institutional landscape. According to project's partners and trade associations more and more the Italian institutions are away from the entrepreneurial ecosystem, incapable of proposing coherent solutions to its necessities and challenges.

This is especially true for small and medium enterprises, still perceived as an impediment for the growth of the system. Most of the legislation destined to SMEs in fact is intended for pushing enterprises to grow their volumes of sales infinitely, intrinsically driving SMEs to become big enterprises in order to survive.

This approach inevitably influences the parameters on which entrepreneurs take decisions: they tend to focus on the short-term, making it impossible to structure long-term projects, which is needed in order to implement good Work-Life Balance practices able to trigger positive impacts.

In the light of this analysis, in order to promote the spread of Work-Life Balance practices, it is desirable that all the actors involved,

organized through proper channels, would exert pressure on the system with the goal of a legislative reform, aiming to generate a less stratified and more simplified legal framework to the benefit of the ecosystem.

3.5 Project replicability

As discussed in the paragraph 3.1.1.4, the Covid-19 crisis has reset the social challenges landscape that communities will have to face in the next few years. Issues such as corporate welfare, Work-Life Balance and gender equality, will be for sure at the center of the interventions that governments will need to operate in order to support the post-Covid reconstruction.

Therefore, it appears useful here to synthesize the minimum elements that allow such a project to be implemented and function, hoping it could benefit potential actors that desire to replicate the initiative in different territorial contexts.

In the light of all the analysis in fact, it is possible to identify 4 milestones, not related to and influenced by the context variables, that can be taken as drivers in order to treasure the obstacles encountered and contribute to create knowledge around the implementation of similar projects.

Here are the 4 milestones:

1. PRIORITIZE AWARENESS RAISING OVER ACTION

From the experimentation of MAAM and Family Audit programmes in the Milanese and Trentine contexts, it becomes clear that in order to ensure the efficacy of concrete Work-Life Balance practices implementation (Family Audit aims to draft actual Work-Life Balance plans), it is firstly necessary to sensitize the potential recipients. The value of MAAM methodology within such a project, beyond the original goals set by Lifeed, lies in the capacity of inclining beneficiaries towards the issue.

2. OVERCOME THE DICHOTOMY

It is widely believed among the MASP project partners that the strength of the initiative is represented by the multiple directions of the intervention, which has been planned to tackle the Work-Life Balance issue on all sides by engaging various actors, both supply and demand sided. This comprehensive approach allows for engaging all the parties involved on a practical level: working on one side only would higher the risk of operating non-effective initiatives because the measures need to be promoted, by the demand actors, as well as transposed by the supply actors. In this sense, the second-level representative organizations of the employers is highly recommended to be engaged, within the partnership promoting the project where possible.

3. CLARIFY THE INCENTIVE SYSTEM

As explained in the paragraph 3.3.3, the incentives system has to be prioritized in order to ensure the adherence of the entrepreneurial ecosystem to the initiatives promoted. Given that the economic incentives are not always efficient and mostly subordinated to governmental policies setting, it is crucial to identify clear alternative and complementary incentives systems before implementing the initiative. In particular, it is highly recommended to conduct preliminary studies aiming to explore in exchange of what benefits entrepreneurs are willing to incur in additional costs to implement Work-Life Balance practices. Moreover, entrepreneurs need clear

communication and realistic expectation that should be conveyed by the second-level representative organization in virtue of the fiduciary transfer.

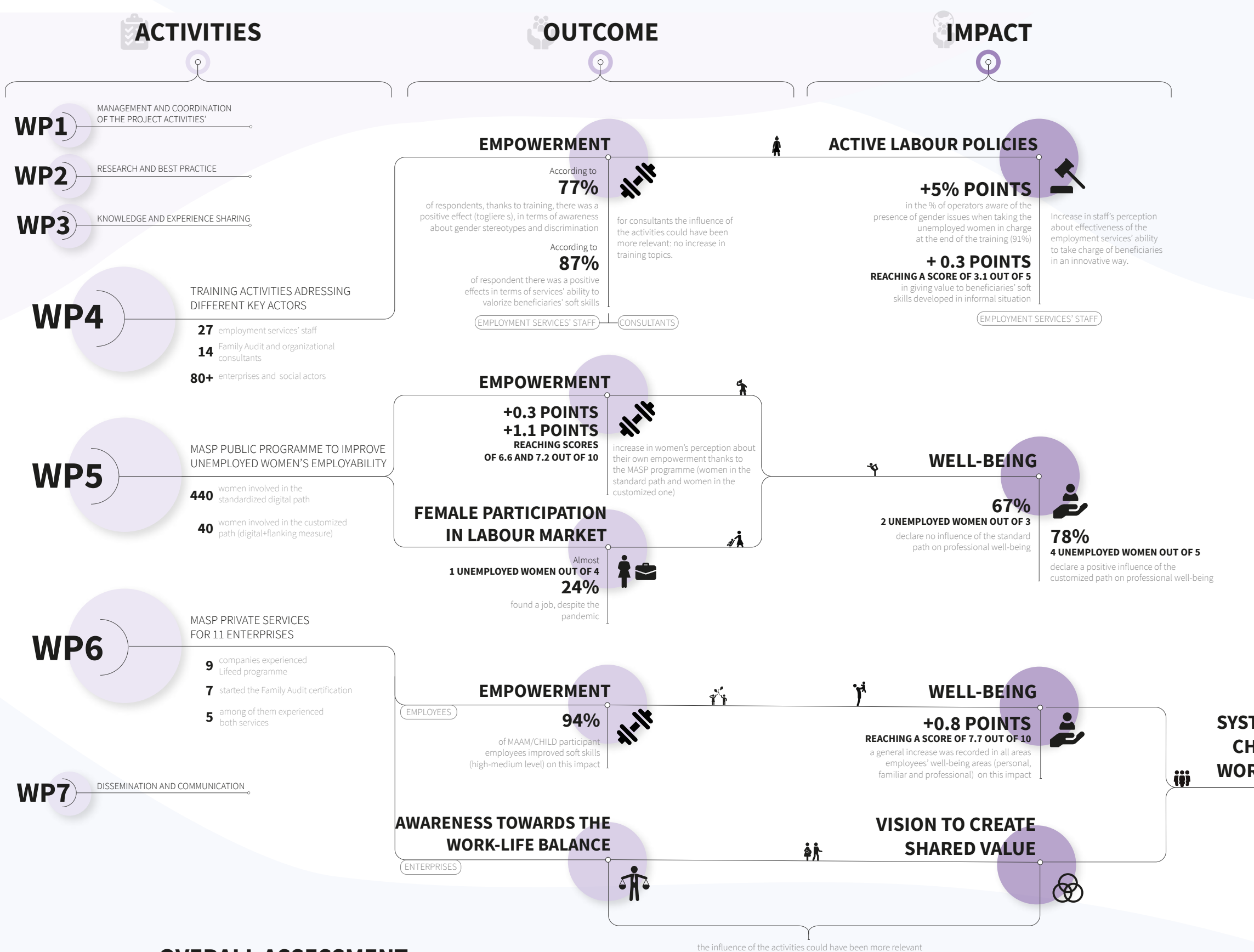
4. VALUE THE EXISTENT

Frequently enterprises are asked to formulate new plans to enhance internal Work-Life Balance practices, but most of the times, as discussed in the paragraph 3.4.1.2., especially within SMEs, informal habits are already in place. It would be sufficient to put those habits in value in a perspective of standardization, which would also represent a lower cost for the entrepreneur and would encounter less cultural resistance being direct bottom-up expression of the corporate culture.

Besides these milestones, two additional issues remain opened when it comes to project replicability and project tools usage. In order to effectively replicate the project in fact it is necessary to:

- Ensure the access to MAAM methodology: Lifeed provided its methodology for free (under the compensation deriving from EU funds - Lifeed was a project partner), but in case of project replication or rollout, it would be necessary to ensure the access to this methodology. The answer obviously lies in identifying one or more payers, namely the public administration, the entrepreneurs themselves or a joint responsibility of both these actors.
- Define Masp4Skills Platform property and utilization limits: being the platform property of the project, in turn property of all the project partners, it has to be clarified who is going to be in charge of the tool maintenance and development. Moreover, as discussed above, in case of project replication it would be interesting to put the platform at the service of other experimentations in the national territory, but this raises further discussions around the platform property. One possible scenario consists of selling the license to other

national actors to access and experiment the platform, around which initiative a business model could be created in order to generate resources to maintain and develop the platform and eventually reinvest in further initiatives on the lines.



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