

Implementing the SIM Educational Programme

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Implementing the SIM Educational Programme Across Europe

In 2025, the Social Impact Manager (SIM) project took a decisive step forward with the pilot implementation of the SIM Educational Programme, moving from design into practice.

The SIM Educational Programme sets out guidelines for the development of a comprehensive training path for Social Impact Manager. Its overarching aim is to create a common understanding of a hybrid and versatile profile of the Social Impact Manager, outlining the essential skills and knowledge needed to help businesses grow simultaneously in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and community development. After finalising and publishing it in January, the consortium started to work on its implementation.

From March to September 2025, the programme has been successfully piloted in **five countries—Croatia, Greece, Italy, France, and Austria**. Each national programme offered a tailored learning experience while maintaining a common European framework built around the five SIM modules:

Corporate Governance and Strategy

Territorial Analysis

Stakeholder Engagement

Project Management

Impact Assessment and Reporting



The Educational Programme was primarily executed by the Higher Education Institutions and VET partners, with the close collaboration of the other partners: business networks, platforms and companies active in the education and business sectors.

The pilots were delivered in a variety of formats; some countries offered the programme online, others in person, and others through blended methods. This has allowed for a diversity of profiles to take part in the piloting.

The call for each piloting was promoted publicly and via the project website, allowing for different profiles to apply. Reflectively, the pilots reached a diverse mix of participants, including students, young professionals, NGO workers, corporate staff, and SME owners. Notably, the majority were students, confirming the strong appeal of the SIM profile among younger generations eager to gain competencies in social innovation, project management, and impact assessment. This mix ensured a dynamic, inclusive, and collaborative learning environment, fully aligned with the SIM project's objective of fostering cross-sectoral engagement in social impact work.

In the following pages, you will find **detailed accounts of each national implementation**, highlighting how the programme unfolded in different contexts and the outcomes achieved.

The implementation has been marked for the inclusion of **diverse pedagogical methods**, including lectures, interactive workshops, case studies, role-playing, and analysis of real-world best practices to make the training interactive and engaging.

Implementation in Croatia

Organisers: Faculty of Economics and Business (University of Rijeka) with Step Ri, JGL d.d., SMART, DIP, and Teodor Petričević

Duration: 22 April – 17 June 2025

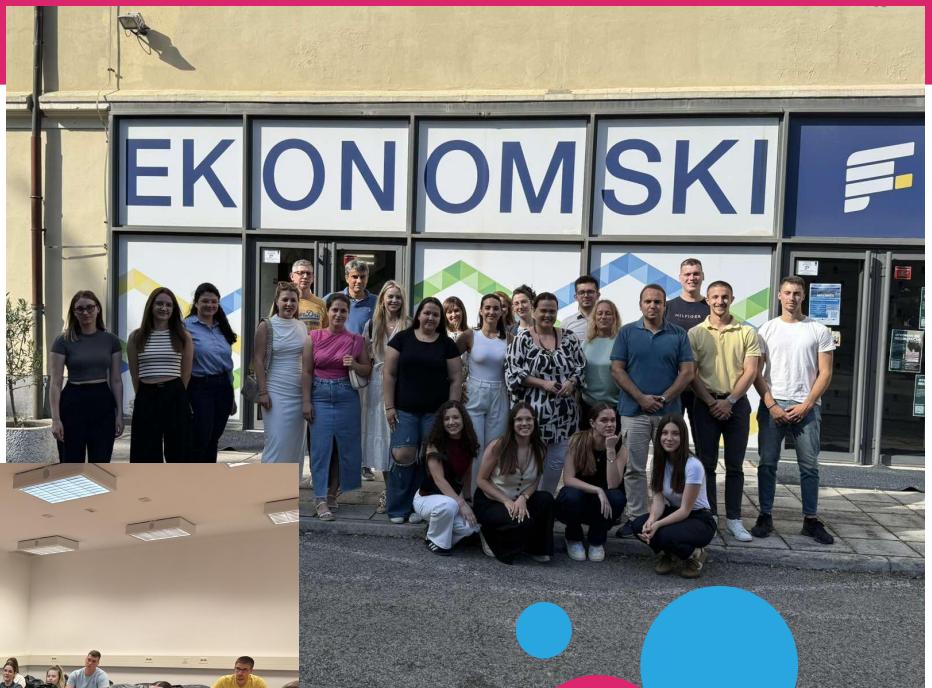
Participants: 21 (14 students, 2 junior professionals, 4 NGO workers, 1 SME owner)

Format: In-person at the Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka, Croatia

Croatia was among the first countries to launch the SIM programme, offering a dynamic learning experience that combined academic knowledge with real-world application. Over two months, participants engaged in interactive lectures, case studies, and teamwork, supported by expert mentors from academia, business, and civil society.

The study visit to Jadran-Galenski Laboratory (JGL) allowed learners to witness best practices in CSR and ESG implementation, linking classroom learning to industry leadership. The hackathon on 13 June was a turning point: interdisciplinary teams developed innovative solutions to challenges posed by local NGOs, guided by experienced mentors.

The programme concluded on 17 June with seven final projects, which demonstrated how participants had integrated SIM principles into practical initiatives. This first Croatian cohort not only acquired new competencies but also built strong cross-sectoral networks, setting a precedent for embedding the SIM approach in higher education and lifelong learning.



Implementation in Greece

Organisers: University of the Peloponnese (UoP), SVE, KMOP EIH

Duration: April – June 2025

Participants: 21 (18 students, 1 private sector, 1 public sector, 1 NGO)

Format: Fully online (Zoom synchronous sessions + asynchronous study materials)

The Greek pilot of the SIM programme successfully demonstrated how online formats can foster engagement and learning across diverse regions. Twenty-three participants took part in training sessions designed to combine academic rigour with practical case studies, supported by leading experts such as Dr. Antonis Klapsis.

The inclusion of company study visits, where learners engaged with organisations applying SDGs in daily operations, enriched the experience with concrete examples of social impact in practice. The online hackathon was another highlight, blending business planning and storytelling with collaborative teamwork.

Participants concluded the programme by submitting individual final projects, each representing a tailored proposal for a social impact initiative. Feedback showed high satisfaction with the programme's relevance to employability and career development. Many participants reported new networking opportunities and increased confidence in applying SIM skills in their professional lives, confirming the transformative value of the training.





Implementation in France

Organisers: Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University with ESS France

Duration: June – July 2025

Participants: 22 (11 job seekers, 6 students, 4 non-profit workers, 1 private sector).

Format: Blended (in-person for modules and hackathon, online for cooperation schemes)

The French pilot stood out for its blended approach, combining in-person activities with online follow-up. Training sessions between June and July enabled participants to gain both theoretical and practical insights, while collaboration with two local communities and partner companies ensured strong links to real socio-economic contexts.

The hackathon provided space for participants to co-create innovative solutions to pressing challenges faced by local actors. These efforts culminated in six final projects, which demonstrated the participants' ability to translate training into actionable initiatives.

The involvement of communities such as Les Mureaux and Paris Marne Est et Bois underscored the programme's emphasis on contextual relevance and inclusion. The French experience shows how SIM can act as a bridge between academic institutions, companies, and communities, creating collaborative pathways for social transformation.



Implementation in Austria

Organisers: Plattform Erwachsenenbildung and die Berater.

Duration: 4 August – 15 September 2025

Participants: 25 (14 corporate professionals, 4 NGO workers, 3 students, 3 junior professionals, 1 SME owner; 68% female)

Format: Online via Moodle, with interactive sessions (kick-off and closing)

Austria's implementation was characterised by a digital-first approach, with most modules delivered through Moodle, supported by two live interactive sessions to foster group cohesion. This format was particularly well-suited to the country's diverse participant group, which included professionals from companies, NGOs, and SMEs.

A hackathon held in Vienna on 28 August brought together participants to address real-life challenges presented by local stakeholders. This intensive one-day activity was praised for its collaborative atmosphere and hands-on learning.

The programme concluded with final projects presented on 14 September, where participants showcased their ability to design initiatives grounded in impact assessment and sustainability principles. Austria's pilot confirms the flexibility of the SIM model, proving its effectiveness both in digital delivery and in engaging experienced professionals committed to integrating social impact into their organisations.



Implementation in Italy

Organisers: University of Milano-Bicocca, Project School, Manageritalia

Duration: 9 May – 30 September 2025

Participants: 25 (3 job seekers, 1 self-employed, 2 researchers, 3 students, 12 non-profit workers, 4 private sector)

Format: In-person

In Italy, the SIM programme reached one of the most diverse participant groups, ranging from students and researchers to NGO professionals and entrepreneurs. Delivered primarily in-person, the training combined theory with participatory workshops and collective discussions, aligning with the Italian tradition of strong civil society engagement.

The hackathon on 24 June brought together participants to design solutions to real societal challenges, with teams mentored by experts from academia and the private sector. The outcomes reflected creativity, collaboration, and a commitment to inclusive innovation.

Beyond the structured modules, participants are currently involved in cooperation schemes running until the end of September, ensuring that the programme translates into sustainable projects. Italy's experience highlights how SIM training can bridge the gap between different sectors and professional backgrounds, cultivating a new generation of managers dedicated to social value creation.



Looking Ahead - The International SIM School in Paris

The next milestone in the SIM journey is the International SIM School, to be held in Paris (4–6 November 2025), hosted by Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University.

This three-day event will bring together 35 selected SIM graduates (7 per country), together with company representatives, project partners, and invited stakeholders. In total, around 70 participants are expected, ensuring a vibrant mix of perspectives and expertise.

Programme highlights:

- Masterclasses on ESG, impact assessment, and sustainable business models.
- Study visits to pioneering initiatives linking companies and communities.
- Knowledge exchange sessions to present national outcomes and co-develop a methodology for impact assessment.
- Networking opportunities to build a sustainable European community of Social Impact Managers.

The International SIM School marks the culmination of the first cycle of the SIM Educational Programme. After months of preparation, delivery, and evaluation across five countries, this international gathering provides a space to reflect on achievements, align methodologies, and envision the future of the SIM profile. It represents the final stage of the programme's implementation and the launchpad for a continuous European platform of cooperation, learning, and exchange.

Looking ahead, the SIM partnership envisions this School as the first edition of a recurring event, potentially hosted in different countries in the coming years. In this way, the International SIM School will ensure that the SIM Educational Programme leaves a lasting legacy: a strong, connected, and forward-looking community of Social Impact Managers working across Europe.





Presenting: Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University

With roots tracing back to the college founded by Robert de Sorbon in the 13th century, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University embodies a unique blend of historical prestige and forward-looking innovation. Established in 1971, the University is today France's leading institution in the Humanities and Social Sciences (SHS), combining academic excellence with a mission to generate knowledge that contributes to a more just and sustainable world.

Each year, over 45,000 students join its vibrant academic community, distributed across 25 campuses in the Paris region. The University's multidisciplinary approach encompasses law, economics, political science, management, geography, philosophy, art, and history, fostering a dynamic environment where disciplines intersect to address the complex challenges of contemporary society.

A member of the Una Europa alliance, alongside 11 other leading European universities, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne is deeply committed to international collaboration and European integration. Its global orientation, extensive alumni network, and engagement in EU-funded projects position it as a central actor in shaping the future of education and research across borders.

With a community of 1,500 professors, lecturers, and researchers, supported by more than 1,200 administrative and library staff, the University is a world-class centre for research and critical thinking. Regularly featured in major international rankings such as QS, THE, and U-Multirank, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne is recognised among the top institutions in the world for the humanities and social sciences. Beyond academic excellence, the University is dedicated to cultivating engaged citizens—graduates equipped not only with professional expertise but also with the analytical skills and social awareness needed to design innovative solutions for the world's pressing challenges.

As a proud partner of the SIM project, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University, together with ESS France, will host the SIM International School in Paris. This event will bring together students, professionals, and organisations from across Europe to exchange ideas, build partnerships, and advance the practice of Social Impact Management within an academic setting that perfectly symbolises Europe's intellectual heritage and commitment to social progress.

Presenting: ESS France



Chambre
française
de l'Économie
Sociale et
Solidaire

Assisting Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University in the organisation of the International SIM School in Paris is ESS France, a key partner that has collaborated closely with the University throughout the development and implementation of the SIM project's outputs.

ESS France is the national umbrella organisation representing the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in France. It unites and coordinates the country's principal SSE families — cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, and SSE-oriented enterprises — as well as the regional chambers of the Social and Solidarity Economy. Together, these entities embody a distinct economic model built upon democratic governance, solidarity, and social utility, placing people and communities at the heart of economic life.

Missions

ESS France acts as the voice and advocate of the SSE at national and European levels, ensuring its visibility and political recognition. Its key missions include:

- Representing and defending the interests of SSE stakeholders in public policy and institutional dialogue.
- Highlighting the SSE's contribution to employment, social cohesion, territorial development, and the ecological transition.
- Fostering cooperation among federations, networks, and regional bodies to reinforce the collective strength of the movement.
- Promoting innovation in inclusive, sustainable, and participatory economic practices.

Principles

Guided by the foundational principles of the Social and Solidarity Economy, ESS France promotes:

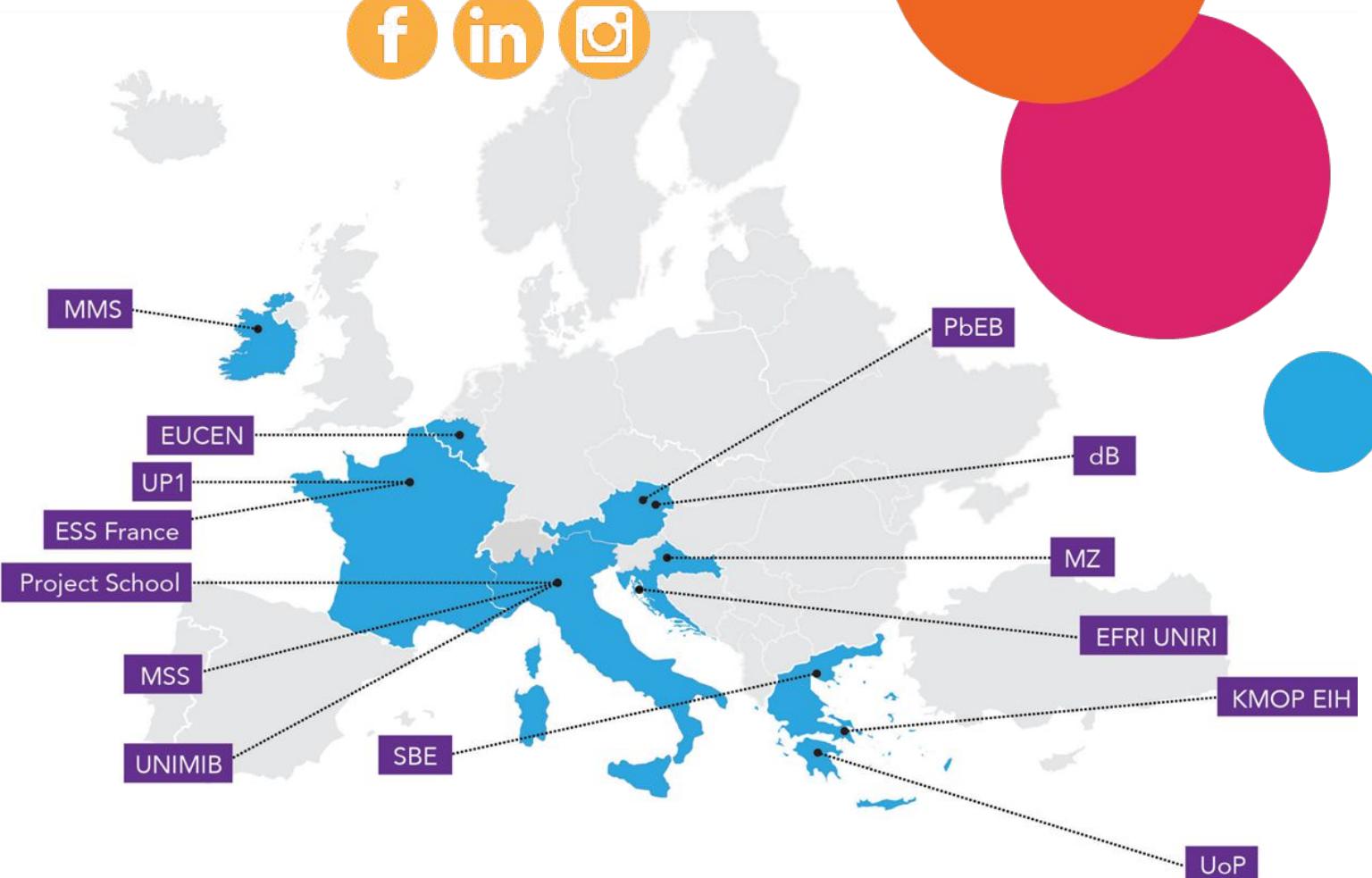
- The primacy of people and social purpose over profit.
- Democratic governance and shared decision-making.
- The reinvestment of profits to sustain and expand collective activities.
- A strong commitment to solidarity, inclusion, and sustainable development.

Role and Impact

At the national level, ESS France plays a decisive role in consolidating and amplifying the visibility of the SSE sector, which today represents 14.9% of private employment in France — nearly 2.7 million jobs. At the European level, it actively engages with institutions such as the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, contributing to the design and implementation of SSE-related policies across the EU. At the international level, ESS France participates in global alliances and networks, promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy as a strategic vehicle for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for advancing a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable society.



Want to learn more
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