

**MEND THE GAP  
FOCUS GROUPS REPORT**

**MEND THE GAP**



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# WP2 Report on Educators Requirements

## Introduction

This report gathers the results of the Focus Groups conducted by the 7 partners of the Mend The Gap project in March and April 2023 in Italy, Spain, Ireland, Greece and France, in the framework of the “WP2 Target groups’ requirements Analysis and Women needs Assessment Toolkit”.

The objective of these Focus Groups was to collect educators’ needs to ensure that the final resources of Mend The Gap are fully adapted to their needs and to those of their target groups.

In this Report the opinions and ideas collected by the partner organisations are compared and analysed, to give partners a clear overview of the educators’ expectations towards the Train the Trainers Programme on financial education and eco-entrepreneurship for women (WP3). This Programme will train the trainers to provide courses to economically empower women by helping them to start their own eco-enterprises.

## Demographic data

### **Educators**

The partners involved a relevant number of educators having different backgrounds and specialisations and working with different groups of women learners. They were recruited among the educators group who organise learning activities in the partners’ organisations or among their associated partners in their countries.

#### ARTIS MULTIMEDIA

- 3 senior educators and social workers
- 3 junior project managers and educators
- 1 volunteer as social worker in women’s organizations

#### KAINOTOMIA

- 1 Mathematics teacher
- 1 Vocational Training tutor
- 1 English language teacher

- 1 Computer Sciences teacher
- 1 career guidance and Financial Education tutor

#### MEUS

- 1 trainer and lawyer
- 1 lawyer at Red Madre Association
- 1 trainer at Folgado VET Center
- 4 researchers and professor at University of La Rioja

#### MOBIUS

- 2 teacher giving Italian literacy classes to migrants
- 4 educators working in a migrant reception centre in the south of Italy
- 2 experts in socio-economic integration of migrants
- 1 educator organising civic and environmental courses for migrants
- 2 experts in Italian literacy education, orientation and job placement
- 1 cultural mediator working in the law field

#### SOLUTION

- 1 junior teacher giving French classes and other kind of classes to migrant women victim of violence
- 1 senior educator with migrants and socially excluded persons
- 1 women entrepreneur and educator with experience in the Red Cross targeting women victim of violence
- 1 senior educator for adults and migrants
- 1 youth educator focusing on activities to raise awareness about women violence.

#### SPECTRUM RESEARCH CENTER

- 13 adult and community educators

#### TRE GHINEE

- 3 teachers in formal settings
- 1 people working in the non-formal setting with migrant women
- 1 advocate working in training for women victims of violence
- 2 stem students working in the informal setting with women with fewer opportunities

## **Learners**

The educators who participated in the focus groups work with the following target groups:

### **ARTIS MULTIMEDIA**

- Women with an immigrant background
- Marginalized women
- Victims of psychological and/or physical abuse
- Women seeking a career change
- Young and senior women
- Adolescent girls facing challenges at school
- Working women encountering obstacles in professional growth

### **KAINOTOMIA**

- Women from different backgrounds and ages, both in formal and informal educational settings.

### **MEUS**

- Young women and mothers
- University women students in the field of Cinema/Sound/Design.
- VET women students in the field of typical man professions (welding, mechanics, etc).
- Women re-entering education as senior citizens
- Women from marginalized groups
- Single mothers

### **MOBIUS**

- Migrant women (single women, mothers or other) newly arrived in Italy
- Minors migrants

### **SOLUTION**

- Migrant women and mothers.

- Young women including students.
- Marginalised women.
- Adult women and senior women.

#### SPECTRUM RESEARCH CENTER

- Women re-entering education after family-rearing.
- Young women.
- Women re-entering education as senior citizens.
- Women from marginalised groups.
- Young mothers.
- Single mothers.

#### TRE GHINEE

- Young women
- Adolescents
- Migrant women
- Women victims of violence
- Young women in a state of vulnerability
- Women with disabilities

## Analysis of educators' inputs

### Obstacles

According to the educators' experience, women face a number of obstacles in education as well as in the labour world.

1. One of the main difficulties highlighted by the educators was the **lack of services for childcare** that mothers have to face. The limited accessibility of childcare including long waiting lists, location, lack of local crèches and the price are a huge obstacle for women wishing to follow a training course or find an employment. In addition, one of the educators who participated in Mobius' Focus Group affirmed that "being a woman with children in a foreign country, without a supportive network, whether fellow countrymen or not, is very hard. So it's very difficult to dedicate yourself to a project and find and funds to make it happen."



2. **Social norms** across all social groups have also been identified as an obstacle for women by most of the educators in the 5 partner countries. In particular, marginalised women face many more difficulties accessing education in comparison to others; this is particularly true for women and girls from the migrant communities or from the travelling communities who are removed from education by their parents at a younger age. In addition, the low schooling level of migrant women makes their integration even more difficult. Another issue for migrant women is the lack of spousal support. It was observed both by Artis' and Solution's educators that often the migrant women need to have agreement from their husbands to take classes". Generally, men demonstrate more assurance and self-confidence and therefore benefit from more opportunities in the workplace, while women suffer from imposter syndrome and do not dare to showcase themselves more.
3. Another problem is the **lack of confidence**, as many women do not feel confident in their learning abilities, even more if they re-enter education after a long time. This obstacle was pointed out by the educators of Tre Ghinee and SRC, explaining that sometimes women have "excessive fear of exposure and the lack of habit of taking the space and time to express their ideas, not fully valuing their abilities and excellences, and always trying not to stand out".
4. **Gender norms and adherence to stereotypes** are also main obstacles to women's empowerment. According to the educators of MEUS, Artis, Tre Ghinee and SRC, some subjects are considered more "masculine" than others which make them unattractive or inaccessible for female learners such as STEM. Such gender stereotypes related to jobs prevent and discourage women from entering traditionally male-dominated fields of work: "many girls during their schooling were de-motivated and directed to subjects that were considered more suitable for the female gender, even if they were not within their interests and talents".

Other obstacles that came out from the confrontation among the educators were:

- Discriminations related to women's place of residence, administrative status for undocumented individuals, maternity, family, and cultural context
- Lack of public transport to these trainings.
- Low starting wages
- Few or no opportunities and less support for women with disabilities

## Usefulness of a financial education and eco-business programme for women

After identifying the main obstacles to women education, employment and empowerment, the focus groups focused on the usefulness for women to learn more about how to access public and private funds and increase their financial capacity to start their own eco-business.

Several ideas came out from the educators' discussions.

Solution's and Tre Ghinee's educators recommended to include **mentors** in the training programme, entrepreneurs who have already gone through the same process, who can give very practical information: "it is important to receive this support from entrepreneurs because when we learn funding or business at school it's not the same thing as when we want to take funds and create our own business."

According to these educators, a mentor who knows the **existing funding opportunities** on the EU, regional and local levels and who can support women in the administrative procedures would be very useful for women wanting to start their own business.

Regarding eco-business, one of the educators involved by Solution added that "especially for **eco-entrepreneurship**, we underestimate the number of funds. But the difficulty is to find information about how to access to these funds".

A problem that was highlighted by the educators of the partner countries was that sometimes **migrant women miss technical competences**, even though they already have their own enterprise. One of the educators from France added: "Especially for eco entrepreneurship, we underestimate the number of funds. But the difficulty is to find information about how to access to these funds".

The educators added that a training programme for women entrepreneurs, also including migrant women, it would be important that the courses are **available in more languages** to support also migrant people who don't know the technical language and to support young foreign women who would like to open a business **instead of doing unskilled and poorly paid jobs**.

SRC also recommends to focus on "social welfare funds to access while out of work that will help women to access **grants** and **scholarships** when re-entering the educational sphere".



## Ideas about a training programme on eco-entrepreneurship and financial education

Many recommendations were collected about the contents and the methodology of the training programme.

To sum up the educators' ideas of the structure and contents:

- the **1<sup>st</sup>** thing would be to get a **cultural education programme** that addresses both men and women, on the **role of women in society and how to empower women**. According to Artis' educators, teachers working with women should be more aware of the forms of discrimination they face and a training programme for them should address such issues in order to enable them to access more opportunities.
- **Secondly**, we should work on other skills such as **soft skills**, critical thinking.
- **Finally**, a section should focus on **eco-entrepreneurial skills and financial skills, the funding available for eco enterprises** (in EU and in each partner country) and a **guide that simplifies** as much as possible **the process of setting up an eco-enterprise**.

Most of the educators highlighted the importance of using the **blended-learning approach** and to keep the courses interactive. MOBIUS' educators recommended that the course also includes **short videos and concrete examples** and Tre Ghinee' educators mentioned a course that can be experimented with **theatrical techniques and dynamics** to continue working on empowerment and assertiveness as well.

Keeping in mind migrant women, some educators also suggested that it would be great to have a section about **administrative procedures and tasks** for migrants.

MEUS' educators claimed that it would be useful for this training course to offer a **working model** different from that of dependent work, more autonomous and **inclusive, eco-sustainable**, possibly **in solidarity with the countries of origin**.

Solution's educators added that it would be useful to have a **list of the stakeholders available in each county** of the partnership, which can accompany and provide information to the women wishing to create their enterprise, a sort of **mapping so the educator won't answer to all questions, but can inform the learners about where to find useful information** and to address them to the competent persons.

Another idea was to have a **Q&A section** where women can easily find answers to most frequent questions.

Finally, some educators also suggested the idea of having women who have already benefited from the training and **convert these women in women's mentor.**

Would it be useful to use an online platform for the training course of Mend The Gap?

Overall, all the educators from the 7 partner organisations agreed that Mend The Gap training course should be available on an online platform. This MOOC should be **interactive** and include many visual elements and a **mind mapping** of the contents of the course that allows to quickly find the information the users are looking for.

An online platform easily and freely accessible with a comprehensive course can be a great resource to help women gain access to information that may have previously been financially out of reach.

KAINOTOMIA's participants in the FG added that "Women in more **rural areas** may face obstacles to accessing courses due to financial constraints or their limited knowledge about available options", so it is very useful to have the courses available on an online platform.

Solution's educators recommended **to avoid PDFs**, but to focus more on visual and interactive materials to make the platform attractive and user friendly.

The importance of having a **mobile version** of the platform was also highlighted by the educators, because sometimes users only have mobile phones and no computer.

## Summary of results and conclusions

The results collected through the focus groups with educators in 5 countries allowed the partnership to collect important information and feedback that will be valuable to understand women learners' needs and those of the educators who work with them.

Men The Gap consortium is composed by organisations that have different goals, missions and target groups. Thanks to this variety, it was possible to collect a wide range of points of view from educators with different specialisations. Mainly, the educators who attended the focus groups had the following profiles:

- Educators working with migrants in a variety of fields
- Social workers working in reception centers
- Lawyers
- University researchers
- Language teachers for migrants
- Educators working with women victims of violence
- Stem students working in the informal setting with women with fewer opportunities

The heterogeneity of the educators also reflected the variety of learners targeted. We can identify the main groups:

- Young women
- Migrant women and mothers
- Women from marginalized groups
- Women victim of violence
- University women students
- Women students in the field of typical man professions (welding, mechanics, etc.)
- Women re-entering education as senior citizens

### **Obstacles**

Regarding the obstacles that the women learners face in regards to education and work, many common points of reflection were found among the educators:

- Childcare
- Lack of confidence
- Insufficient family or spousal support
- Disabilities
- Social norms across all social groups

- Gender norms (i.e. adherence to the stereotype that women are not good at science subjects)
- Low starting wages discouraging women to start their educational journey.

To face these issues, it is recommended that a training programme empowering women and the educators who will be committed in this sense keep these obstacles in mind and adapt the contents and methodology to support women in overcoming these obstacles, for instance by providing examples and other women's success stories that can inspire and encourage them.

Such a training programme should operate to change people's minds, for instance in the perception of some professions that are considered from "male" perspectives, where women do not have representation or good jobs, or not even internships.

### **Usefulness of an online training programme**

Positive feedback was given by the educators about the usefulness of a training programme for women in financial education, gender equality and eco-entrepreneurship. Many of them claimed that they, as educators, miss a solid training about these topics. According to them, the main difficulty for women wanting to start their own enterprise is how to access funds.

The main suggestions provided by these educators regarding a brand new training programme for women entrepreneurs are the following:

- It is important to include a section about **soft skills**, to train educators on innovative ways to strengthen women's skills.
- The activities and exercises should be **interactive**, also including some **learning-by-doing** activities and **theatrical** techniques
- The course should include many **visual elements** and be **multilingual**.
- The training course should be **blended-learning**.
- It is useful to take into account **migrants** and include **administrative procedures** and tasks.
- A section explaining the **funding** for eco-enterprise should be included, as well as a **guide** that simplifies the process of **setting up an eco-enterprise** as much as possible.
- It would be useful to have a **mapping of helpful stakeholders** that educators can recommend to their learners, because they cannot know all the answers, so they can address them to the competent persons.
- **Q&A section** where women can easily find answers to most frequent questions may also be useful.

- For the sustainability of the action, it could be interesting to convert women who have already benefited from the training into women's **mentors**.

Regarding the use of a MOOC where the training resources will be available, the educators agreed that this is a useful solution but that the programme should be delivered **both online and face-to-face**:

- This MOOC should be **interactive** and include many visual elements and a **mind mapping** of the contents to easily retrieve contents. It was recommended to exclude PDFs and other heavy documents, in order to make the training programme more attractive than traditional online courses.
- The training programme should be available on mobile phones too, to facilitate the access of people who do not have a computer.



# Annexes - Reports of the Focus Groups by Mend The Gap partners

## ARTIS MULTIMEDIA

The focus group took place on April 14th, 2023, at ARTIS Multimedia in Saint-Denis, France. It went from 3 pm to 4:15 pm and gathered 7 participants (6 participants in person and 1 was online from Luxembourg).

### Agenda

Time	Item
3pm-3:15 pm	Introduction and presentation of the project
3:15pm - 3:20 pm	Introduction of participants
3:20pm – 4pm	Question and discussions
4pm – 4:15 pm	Conclusions and wrapping up

### Participants

- Rachida, Founder of an NGO and senior educator
- Hassiba, HR in a big company and founder of an NGO
- Ouahiba, senior educator and social worker
- Nacera, youth project manager and educator
- Rayan, junior educator
- Hayet, volunteer for 10 years in women’s organizations
- Manel, project manager and junior educator





## **Moderator**

Manel, project manager and junior educator

The debate and exchanges were animated and rich and could be summarized as follows:

Question 1: what type of women learners do you work with?

- Women with an immigrant background
- Marginalized women
- Victims of psychological and/or physical abuse
- Women seeking a career change
- Young and senior women
- Adolescent girls facing challenges at school
- Working women encountering obstacles in professional growth

### **Question 2: Do you have concrete examples of obstacles facing women learners?**

Hassiba: During my two decades working in HR, I have witnessed multiple instances where women were unfairly denied job opportunities, they deserved due to discrimination. One case that stands out to me is that of a woman who was next in line for a new job and a promotion due to her outstanding performance and hard work. However, a few months prior to receiving the promotion, she mentioned to her colleagues that she was considering having another child. Word quickly spread, and both her colleagues and superiors assumed that she would soon take maternity leave and thus should not be promoted. When I heard about this, I was appalled that even her female colleagues were in agreement. I made the decision to step in and prevent this injustice from occurring. As an HR representative, I interviewed her and offered her the new job and promotion, while also giving her the option to decline. She accepted the position and performed exceptionally well.

In another instance, a woman was on the cusp of receiving a promotion but declined it due to her upcoming maternity leave. I met with her and encouraged her to accept the promotion, reassuring her that she deserved it and that her job would be secure upon her return. After some consideration, she agreed and accepted the promotion.

Ouahiba: Throughout my ten years of working with marginalized women from immigrant backgrounds, I have witnessed many instances where women have been unable to fully utilize their skills due to their circumstances. One particular case stands out to me - a woman came to me seeking assistance with French language skills and paperwork. She was a highly skilled athlete and national champion in her home country of Morocco, but after getting married and moving to France, her husband kept her at home and refused to help her with her paperwork or support her in learning French to find a job. When she tried to push back, he threatened to take their son away from her.

I have also met numerous women with culinary talents who aspired to become entrepreneurs by opening their own shops or restaurants. Unfortunately, many of them were forced to put their dreams on hold or abandon them altogether due to a lack of support from family members or the difficulty of finding someone to care for their young children, or because lack of knowledge of procedures. People offering that counseling were asking for money they could not afford.

My own daughter and many girls I know had to change their address of residence on their resumes because recruiters discriminate against people from the suburbs.

Hayet: In my own experience, I was unable to achieve my personal aspirations due to societal and familial pressures. When I was younger, I had a vision of opening a unique restaurant concept that did not yet exist. However, my husband and family told me that pursuing this dream was not feasible as my primary responsibility was to care for my family and that it would be inappropriate for me to work with strangers outside of the home. Looking back, I often wonder what could have been if my family had supported me. As a result, I now fully support my daughter in her studies and endeavors, as I want her to have the encouragement and opportunities, I was unable to have.

Nacera: I specialize in working with teenage girls who have been excluded from the school system, and my focus is to help them get back on track before it's too late. What I've observed is that often families prioritize investing their resources, particularly in sports, in their sons rather than their daughters. This is because they believe that boys will achieve more and that girls will ultimately be responsible for taking care of their families.

**Question 3: If you had to summarize the obstacles faced by women learners you worked with?**

- Women are conditioned by societal practices, and they limit themselves when faced with legitimate opportunities.
- Men demonstrate more assurance and self-confidence and therefore

benefit from more opportunities in the workplace, while women suffer from imposter syndrome and do not dare to showcase themselves more.

- Few or no opportunities and less support for women with disabilities, who see their salaries decrease because they cannot work as much
- Gender stereotypes of jobs prevent and discourage women from entering traditionally male-dominated fields of work.
- Workplace gender bias
- Societal Norms and expectations
- Insufficient familial support
- Absence of spousal support
- In addition to the usual discrimination, women face other discriminations related to their place of residence, administrative status for undocumented individuals, maternity, family, and cultural context

**Question 4: Do you think you were sufficiently equipped to accompany these women learners who were facing these challenges?**

Not really, we had to improvise and rely on our own networks to guide and provide help as well as find solutions for them.

**Question 5 and conclusion: How should educators be trained to offer the most effective guidance to female learners?**

Rachida: First of all, In order to provide more effective support to women, educators must receive training on various forms of discrimination that women encounter and should remain aware of such issues.

Ouahiba: Providing an online platform easily accessible with a comprehensive toolkit at no cost can be a great resource to help women gain access to information that may have previously been financially out of reach.

Hassiba: In my opinion, HR should be more knowledgeable and proficient in addressing issues of discrimination against women to enable them to access more opportunities. I'm not sure if this can be achieved within the scope of this project, but it's certainly worth considering

## KAINOTOMIA

### Introduction

The aim of this focus group was to explore the existing gaps in training and identify the challenges that educators face in providing courses that also have a positive impact on women's empowerment. Led by facilitators, the focus group consisted of five educators with experience in various fields tied to teaching. Each educator had expertise in a different subject and brought a unique point of view to the discussion.

### Agenda

Introduction to the focus group:

Welcome to the Women's Empowerment Focus Group! This Focus Group is part of the Mend The Gap project, in which teachers from Italy, Spain, France, Greece and Ireland will be invited to submit questions and issues addressed by the project to allow for a thorough and accurate cross-national and cross-cultural comparison. This activity aims to explore and identify the challenges faced by teachers in delivering courses with a positive impact on women's empowerment. It will also allow us to identify any existing gaps in education.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
11:00 - 11:05	Welcome and introduction to the Focus Group
11:05 - 11:15	Presentation of the Mend The Gap project
11:15 - 11:30	Introductory activity
11:30 - 12:00	Questions and discussions on the challenges of delivering educational programmes with a positive impact on women's empowerment.
12:00 - 12:00	Questions and discussions about the types of trainer skills required for Mend The Gap
12:00 - 12:15	Final comments and closure



## Profile of Participants

1. Panos, 48, Mathematics Teacher
2. Vasileios, 36, Vocational Training Tutor
3. Eleni, 48, English Language Teacher
4. Vasiliki, 42, Computer Sciences Teacher
5. Katerina, 54, Career Guidance and Financial Education Tutor



## Questions and Discussions

The discussion started with an icebreaker activity in order to establish an environment of trust, security, and engagement. During the Icebreaker Activity, the participants reported that they worked with women from different backgrounds and ages, both in formal and informal educational settings. An educator from the STEM field shared that she found it difficult to provide training to women learners on a male-dominated industry. The first question centred around the challenges faced when providing courses with a positive impact on women's empowerment. All of the participants agreed that the main challenge was reaching out to women with limited access to education. As one of the educators explained, "Women in more

rural areas may face obstacles to accessing courses due to financial constraints or their limited knowledge about available options. It is our obligation to find ways to reach out and inform them about the opportunities to learn and be empowered.”

Once the topic of the challenges faced by educators was explored, the group shifted the conversation to the types of skills needed for the Mend The Gap project. All of the educators agreed that while covering basic multiple subjects was necessary, they also believe that focusing on skills and topics related to self-confidence, personal development, and career guidance is equally as important as providing technical skills-based education. “It’s essential to provide an encompassing education if we want to truly empower women and give them the tools they need to excel in this competitive world,” one of the educators noted. “By teaching skills tied to personal and professional development, we can create an interconnected curriculum that brings together multiple aspects and prepares them for their future endeavours.”

### **Final Reflections**

At the end of the focus group, each participant shared their reflections and experiences from the discussion. Each educator expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to have an open conversation, as well as their commitment to involve themselves more actively in programs that help to empower women.

“I was so inspired by the discussion and the commitment of the other educators to make a positive impact in their communities,” shared one educator. “I am very grateful for the opportunity to have heard their experiences, and I am confident that working in this capacity with Mend The Gap can truly make a difference in the lives of women all over the world.”

Overall, the educators agreed that by providing courses and training in various subjects, as well as focusing on skills related to personal and professional development, Mend The Gap has the opportunity to make a long-lasting impact on women’s empowerment and success in their lives.

### **Conclusion**

From the focus group, it is evident that educators understand the importance of providing a comprehensive and interconnected curriculum in order to adequately prepare women to excel in their various fields. They recognize the need to educate and empower women, especially those with limited access to education and resources.

The efforts of Mend The Gap in providing projects and courses with a positive impact on women’s empowerment are highly valuable, as it provides women with the tools and skills necessary to excel in their



respective fields. Furthermore, the educators agreed that through their involvement, Mend The Gap can continue to make a long-lasting difference in the lives of women.

## MEUS

### Introduction

This report presents the findings from the Focus Group held in Spain on March 29th, 2023. This Focus Group was organised and facilitated as an online round-table discussion with the following **educators**:

- Rocio, University of Valencia- FAOS Trainer- Lawyer
- Pilar, Red Madre Association- Lawyer
- Diana, Innova Association, Folgado VET Center - Trainer
- Nadia, University of La Rioja (UNIR online) – Researcher and Teacher
- Irene, University of La Rioja (UNIR online) - Researcher and Teacher
- Robert, University of La Rioja (UNIR online) - Researcher and Teacher

### Moderators

- Pilar– MEUS (reporter - notes)
- Cécile– MEUS (moderation – questions)



## Agenda



**Agenda**

- Bienvvenida
- Presentación del proyecto de la actividad
- Consentimiento para grabación y usar datos
- Presentación de los participantes
- Focus Group

Funded by the European Union

### Question 1: What women learners do you work with?

Participants in this focus group usually work with:

- Young women.
- University women students in the field of Cinema/Sound/Design.
- VET women students in the field of typical man professions (welding, mechanics, etc).
- Women re-entering education as senior citizens.
- Women from marginalized groups.
- Young mothers.
- Single mothers.

### Question 2: What obstacles do they face?

- Lack of empowerment culture, lack of trust in themselves: even in a classroom, if not taken care of, the space is occupied by men.
- Comparison with men: they are requested to act in the same way as men on the labour market, rather than having their own style
- Access to labour market: with the same level of qualification, or even with better qualifications, men will be hired before them.
- Lack of financial education: for vulnerable women, even if they earn some money, they don't know how to keep it to finance projects.
- Lack of entrepreneurial mindsets

### **Question 3: What issues have you encountered in working with them?**

Nadia says that in jobs considered "men's jobs" (like cinema/sound) the men were called above women to do the internships so they have been able to learn more. For that, in the classroom, the women had to be reinforced, and eventually, positive discrimination would be needed, so at least women had the same opportunities to work, trying to equalize them.

Irene also notices this situation in the sound department, what she has felt the most is that being a woman, your opinion does not count. It is very important that given the classrooms, women are supported to increase their self-esteem and empowerment.

Nadia also tries to provide female references (success stories) in her training subjects so that they do not feel excluded.

Roberta comments that the teachers are also changing their perception of the situation. If the teachers do not realize this difference, it is not possible to focus on the transformation. But this is changing, slowly.

A clear example is Irene and Nadia who have changed their work from film media to the educational field.

Diana comments that, when she was at the Folgado VET center, in the masculinized professions when a couple of women appeared, for example in welding, renewable energy, nautical etc. the other students always asked their colleagues: what are you doing here? In the end they adapted, and in many occasion were even better than the men, but then, in the end, they could not find work in this area, or it was much more difficult for them to succeed.

The problem thus comes from cultural mindsets: this job is for men and this job is for women.

Rocío comments that her experience is totally different because she comes from giving training to women in Peru, where the problems were much more grassroots. There, FAO gave the training to the women who had to ask the permission of the men so that they could attend the class. The women were racialized, without studies, and subjected to what their husbands or community leader would say. This happens in Spain in ethnic minorities, such as Roma, but luckily, this is not as extended as in Latin American countries.

Pilar works a lot with immigrants who arrive in Spain with that mentality, they do not know how to manage themselves because they have never been given the option to do so, they don't have enough capacity to manage and run a company. They come with careers in Veterinary Nursing, etc., and still, they look for cleaning jobs because it takes a long time to proceed

to the validation of the diploma, and years pass before they can work on their own. Also, in some cases, they accept underpaid jobs because they do not want to earn more than their husbands, even if they are more qualified.

Roberta, all this demonstrates that systemic change is needed in society. This recognition of training and diploma is a common problem, it is not that the title is not used, it is that the homologation is in a long time that it takes many years to be validated to be able to work in your studies.

**We can list as general obstacles:**

- Problem of empowerment in a class, they need to be empowered by trainers with other female examples as references.
- Lack of confidence, they don't feel confident to learn new skills.
- A change of mind is needed, some professions are considered from "male" perspectives, where women do not have representation or good jobs, even to get internships.
- Women in vulnerable situations find it difficult to move forward in their education beyond the home.

**Question 4: What can be done from education?**

Roberta comments on the importance of raising awareness about women's potential, their abilities, including a culture of gender equality. General culture would include more references to women, and an understanding of the context that was before and which is now.

Diana continues by saying that is still a deeply rooted issue in families. Change has to be based on education from the beginning, you have to educate the women's families from the base so that these things don't happen.

Irene totally agrees with Diana, she recently did an internship as a teacher in an institute where she had studied and the change in the classrooms had been spectacular, the change has started in education but there is still a long way to go. Interventions in families are necessary.

If we are already in this unequal situation, and we want to address adult people (so it is not possible to act at a younger age education level), how can we make this change of mindset? With more capacity for self-criticism: there is a lot of imposition, we need to generate a cognitive change in the mind, make the women understand that they can do other things, meet people who have managed to do it, and take them as references. Roberta says that women always think differently and their contribution to society is different. You have to start by respecting the way women are and working from there. It's not about equality with men, but rather being a woman with your abilities.

To get to the same place, you don't need to become a man, but to get there with your own abilities. Pilar adds that motivation is very important, always from your perspective as a woman.

**Question 5: Do you think that it is important to teach your learners to reach financial independence?**

All the participants totally agree with the importance of teaching women on this topic to become independent and to promote their entry into the labor market. One of the problems mentioned before was the lack of capacity of vulnerable women for self-management. So financial management education is fundamental.

**Question 6: How do you imagine a training program of this type?**

Roberta says that taking into account the profile of the learners, the first thing would be to get a cultural education programme that addresses both men and women, on the role of women in society and secondly, work on other skills such as soft skills, critical thinking, etc., and the third part would be to complement it with entrepreneurial skills and financial skills.

All the participants agree with this point, Diana remarks that first, we need to work on a mental recovery about the roles that do not favor men, and after that second work to start working on financial business plan, and success benchmarks etc. Also with this self-knowledge, they can discover abilities and skills that they did not know they had, such as emerging hidden talents.

Irene also comments that the training should be accessible at all times, for instance on an online format, to be conciliable with other commitments. Rocío agrees on this aspect: it is important that for it to be accessible since each woman has a different reality and online they will be able to enter when they can.

Roberta considers that it would be better to have a mixed training (physical and online) because there are also people who need to do it in person with mentoring etc.

Pilar also appoints online during school hours, which is when women can be more receptive, and that when it is in person it has more results because they motivate each other more.

Irene comments as a suggestion that in some cases, it could be interesting to have women who have already benefited from the training and convert these women in women's trainers.



### **Introduction**

This document represents the report of the focus group organized by the Mobius Circle organization and held on 27 April 2023 at the "Crocevia" cultural center in Lecce (Italy).

In addition to the moderators of Mobius Circle, a total of 12 educators took part in the meeting, all part of the staff of Arci Solidarietà Cooperative which mainly deals with the reception and integration of migrants, especially women, in conditions of particular vulnerability.

### **Agenda**

The meeting is aimed at gathering information and input for the creation of training content for a "Train the trainers" programme. The project "Mend the Gap", closing the gender pay and employment gap through female eco-entrepreneurship, is funded by the "Erasmus Plus" programme.

Duration : 90 minutes

Modality : debat/group discussion

#### **PROGRAMME OF THE MEETING :**

Welcome and brief presentation of the project and objectives of the meeting;

Objectives of the focus group : to collect contributions/feedback in order to understand the real needs of social workers from the perspective of women's eco-entrepreneurship education

Short round of introductions: name and area of expertise of participants

Opening of the guided debate through a series of targeted questions aimed at opening a discussion on the topic

Collection of data relevant to the development of an online platform and training courses for educators

### **List of participating educators and professional profile**

- Patrizia
- Alessandra
- Giusi



- Ilenia
- Carlo
- Anna Maria
- Eva
- Antonio
- Giuliana
- Maria Antonietta
- Mauro
- Claudia

### **Moderators**

- Daniela– Mobius Circle
- Alice– Mobius Circle
- Azzurra– Mobius Circle



### **Question 1: What women learners do you work with?**

Speaker 1 (Carlo) : works in Arci with migrant women and men from their arrival in Italy and up to job placement and independence, he is responsible for the literacy process.

Speaker 2 (Mauro): works in ARCI in the second reception project. Mixed project, families, single women, single parents and accompanied minors. Newly landed migrants or people who have already done literacy and training. Areas of action Campi Salentina, Novoli and Squinzano.

Speaker 3: (Eva, same as Anna Maria) they work with women migrants, provide information and offer training for socio-economic integration.

Speaker 4: Coordinator of a SAI, reception project for migrants; they offer training and education (environmental, civic, and in various fields).

Speaker 5: (Antonio, Arci) Collega di Giusy (Italian literacy). Training and orientation and job placement. He points out that, in our area, the training courses that are the most popular among his users are those in the catering and cooking sector. It suggests that information on the establishment of a cooperative company would also be very useful for Italian operators; he does not consider himself well informed on this form of enterprise.

Speaker 6: (Patrizia, Arci) he also works with other private projects, to enhance reception, he has also worked with minors.

Speaker 7: (Alessandra) She works in Caprarica di Lecce, in migrants reception projects, especially women.

Speaker 8: (Giusy) currently has the role of literacy.

Speaker 9: (Ilenia), Arci, currently works as an operator in the SAI project in Novoli.

Speaker 10: (Giuliana) currently works as an operator in the SAI project in Novoli.

Speaker 11: (Anna) .. ambito Novoli Campi Squinzano.

Speaker 12: (Claudia) cultural mediator, currently working in the legal field.

## **Question 2: What obstacles do women migrant face?**

Speaker 7 (Alessandra) She reports that one of the main problems she encounters is the very low schooling level of migrant women, from whatever country they come from. They have no training in any specific sector, having often worked in jobs such as agriculture or hairdressing.

Another problem encountered by many educators is the short duration of reception projects (6 months or a year), not enough time to provide foreign users with everything they need, from literacy to job placement, ideally to be adapted to each individual person with his abilities and personal predispositions and the possibilities offered by the territory. It is really very difficult to achieve this socio-economic integration in such a short time.

Speaker 6 (Patrizia) In her experience she has seen that being a woman with children in a foreign country, without a supportive network, whether fellow countrymen or not, is very hard. So it's very difficult to dedicate yourself to a project and find and funds to make it happen. For foreigners, in Italy there are many bureaucratic obstacles, not counting those of other kinds.

Speaker 8 (Giusi) With respect to the difficulties encountered by foreign women, often with children, she adds that in some cases even the husband becomes a "burden" for the woman, in the event that he is unable to provide for the economic maintenance of the family.

Speaker 13 (Carlo) She adds that the people who benefit from reception projects are almost all vulnerable subjects, such as women victims of trafficking, who often have to deal with a traumatic past, even a very recent one. So this remains a priority issue, even with respect to economic independence.

### **Question 3: What issues have you encountered in working with them?**

Speaker 5 (Antonio) He reports that among his users who do career guidance, young Southeast Asian males are the most "ready" with respect to the possibility of doing business. And more men than women, from all backgrounds, are more likely to be entrepreneurs in general. Women tend to be more inclined to seek and accept jobs as employees, with an immediate income.

It is concluded that the problems of survival are the most pressing, for people who are immigrants, coming from countries at war or migrating for economic or climatic reasons. This is the greatest difficulty with respect to a possible training course on self-entrepreneurship, because it involves long-term planning and investment, which can be a stimulus only in the case of minors or young people, or in projects to enhance welcome, while for those who have just arrived in Italy it is necessary to find immediate sources of sustenance.

Speaker 6 (Patrizia) With regard to development projects, upon leaving the "second" reception, job orientation, he reports that these are written without taking into account the peculiarities of individual users. In his experience, the entrepreneurship training program that he had to follow was too complicated, and far from the real learning possibilities of the recipients. And she reports the material difficulty encountered by women with children, especially foreigners, without a parental or social network, in finding solutions and time to be able to devote themselves to an entrepreneurial project.

Speaker 11 (Anna Rita) she says that culturally, among foreign women, the practice of finding a mate and being mothers and wives as soon as possible is deeply rooted. And with this passage of status, their personal goals and eventual ambitions for emancipation also end. Getting to talk about entrepreneurship with them is very difficult. They have difficulty carrying out a project, with all the bureaucratic steps, the obstacles it entails, the

time it takes to achieve it; they need to have immediate results from their efforts.

**Question 4: Do you think that you have any kind of knowledge about the gender gap and gender discrimination?**

During the discussion, the gender issue is addressed in several moments. We report the speeches that have addressed the topic of the gender gap.

Speaker 6: speaking of the greater propensity of men than women to foreign countries, to the entrepreneurial perspective, Patrizia underlines how it is practically impossible for women to think from a business perspective, since in almost all cases they are responsible for the children and the care of the family , without a family or social network that supports it, and with the added difficulty of a new language.

Speaker 5: He makes a generalization: women coming from Nigeria, for example, are predisposed to work despite having dependent children, but only until they find a partner who can work and support the family (in families originating from African countries , only one of the parents works), so that they can have the role of full-time mothers.

Speaker 6: She says that during the reception period, in the structures and in the accommodation, it is preferred to bring together women with children, so that they give each other support and that some can go to work. And she adds that difficulties of this type are also experienced by Italian women with children who cannot afford private nurseries or baby sitting.

Speaker 7 (Alessandra) The socio-economic integration of women, during the short period of reception projects, even in the case of "second reception", is much more difficult than that of men, since, due to cultural factors, they have always lived in the shadow of a man of the family, of the husband, of the father, of a relative. It is very difficult to convey to them the need and the possibility to take control of one's own life. For this reason, according to her, women go more easily to work as employees, because they would not take responsibility for an initiative, for a personal project. There is a lack of childcare services, Italy "is not a country for mothers".

**Question 5: Do you think that it is important to teach your learners to reach financial independence?**

For many of the educators present, it is a question of materially finding a job for the users who leave the reception project.



Speaker 5 (Antonio) It tells of the experience of some migrant women, former beneficiaries of reception projects, who have found work in an agricultural cooperative, regularly employed and satisfied with the job.

**Question 6 Do you think your students would find it useful to learn more about how to access public and private funds and increase their financial capacity to start their own eco-business?**

Speaker 13 (Carlo): In his experience, if girls and boys from poor or war-torn countries arrive here before starting a family, as minors, they have a better chance of being open to job training, to long-term investment in our area, therefore to self-entrepreneurship.

Speaker 12 (Claudia) He explains that to receive fundings you need to have the Italian citizenship, it is very rare that tenders are also addressed to foreigners.

Speaker (Carlo) In his experience, the idea of entrepreneurship is far from most of the people he meets in these projects, because they have the priority of sending money to families left behind. In addition, many of the migrants are in Italy, not by choice, so they don't invest in the area.

**Question 6: How do you imagine a training program of this type?**

Speaker 5 (Antonio): According to him, in a training program on self-entrepreneurship, it would be useful to include many ideas, such as practical examples, to convey, above all, the concept of planning, growth and development of an idea.

We discuss and conclude together that very simple and effective tools would be useful, short videos, which have the effect of giving concrete examples, easy to understand, accompanied by short texts. A guide that simplifies the process of setting up an eco-enterprise as much as possible.

It would be useful for this training course to offer a working model different from that of dependent work, more autonomous and inclusive, eco-sustainable, possibly in solidarity with the countries of origin (in this case dealing with a target of foreign women).

## SOLUTION

### **Introduction**

On the 14th of April 2023, SOLUTION conducted an online focus group to collect ideas and requirements from educators working with women. The results of this activity are reported in this document and will be analysed in order to develop the training tools and resources of Mend The Gap.

### **Agenda**

Time	Item
12:00 – 12:10	Welcome and presentation of the project
12:10 – 12:15	Presentation of the participants
12:15 – 12:45	Questions and discussions
12:45 – 13:00	Conclusions and wrapping up

### **Participants**

The participants in SOLUTION's focus group were educators working with different kinds of public, from migrant women to young women with fewer opportunities. They work at SOLUTION or collaborate with the association and have also previous teaching experience in other NGOs (the Red Cross, Artis Multimedia, etc.).

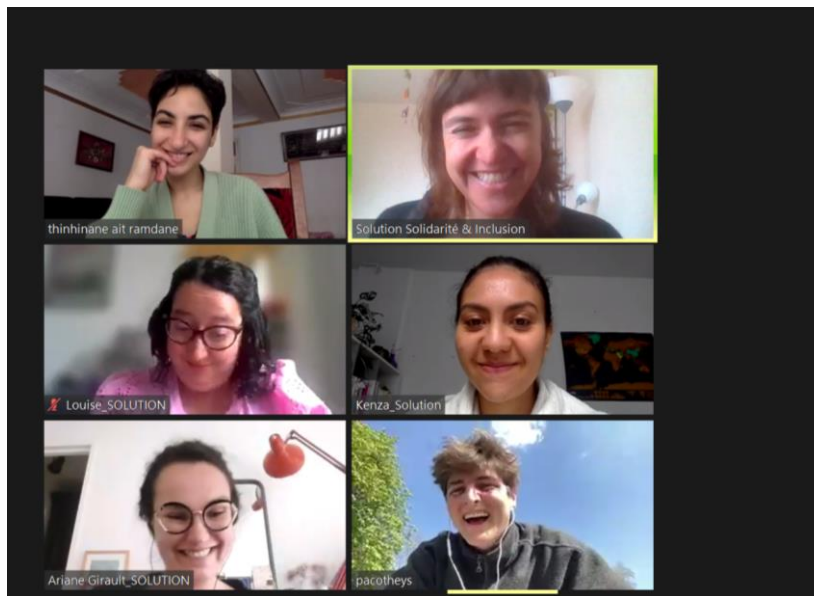
### **Educators**

- Louise, senior trainer
- Kenza, entrepreneur and senior trainer
- Ariane, senior trainer
- Thinhinanestudent and youth educator
- Paco, student and youth educator

### **Moderator**

- Patrizia, Solution : Solidarité & Inclusion





## Question 1: What women learners do you work with?

General profiles:

- Migrant women and mothers.
- Young women.
- Marginalised women.
- Adult women and senior women.

In particular:

- Tina is 22 and volunteered as a teacher for Artis Multimedia association, working with migrant women, often victim of violence and she also taught French to these women.
- Louise is 30 years old, working in associations with migrants and socially excluded persons. She currently gives training courses at Solution.
- Kenza, 28 years old, volunteered for the Red Cross targeting women victim of violence. She is also an entrepreneur, so she knows the difficulties that women have to face in this field. She now works at Solution as a project manager expert in education.
- Ariane is 37, she is EU project manager since 10 years and also an educator addressing older adults and migrants and developing training resources.
- Paco is a student in Political Sciences, working since 5 months at Solution as a youth educator, he has experience in carrying out activities to raise awareness about women violence.

## **Question 2: What obstacles do they face?**

- Tina: What is impressive for me is that often the migrant women need to have agreement from their husbands. This is a big obstacle to their projects. For instance, during my civic service at Artis, I offered to speak with their husbands.
- Ariane: The feminine public is very diversified. We can work with women who are newcomers and don't speak French and with others who, instead, hold a master degree. So it is hard to create resources adapted to all these different groups of women and adapt them to all their needs.

## **Question 3: What issues have you encountered in working with them?**

- Louise: Whatever the target group is, the common issue is that we have few information about public services. It is important to have information on how to access public funds.
- Kenza: I totally agree; especially women have obstacles to access funds. I faced this problem myself. Especially during the covid period it was very hard to access to useful information. In addition, there are no mentors supporting women in asking funds for entrepreneurship.
- Paco: Working on the E-QUALITY project, I noticed that administrative tasks are especially hard for migrant women. The fact that they don't know how long they will stay in French is a big obstacle for them to make projects and plan their future. Especially for entrepreneurship which implies a big engagement of time and money.

## **Question 4: Do you think you are sufficiently informed about gender inequalities and the gaps resulting from these inequalities (pay gap, etc.)?**

- Ariane: Even if we know more or less the topic, we need more information. We are privileged because we studied and conducted researches about this subject, but many people need to know more. So we need to address more the topic of inequalities with educators.
- Paco: it's a very hard topic and inequalities are just the tip of the iceberg. We need to know more about these dynamics of domination. So it's very interesting to learn more.
- Kenza: women entrepreneurs face many stereotypes, like, for instance, the fact that they can't properly deal at once with their

personal and professional life. This represents a big obstacle for them and discourages them to do the work they want.

- Louise: we need to deconstruct the concept we have of working. For instance, the fact that women won't be as successful as men and that it's going to be more complicated for them just because they are women.
- Tina: the problem is also that women have to bear the weight of family. The situation is much more complicated for mothers than for women with no children.
- Ariane: I agree; child care is one of the main challenges for mother. When we have kids we don't have enough time to look for a job

**Question 5: Do you think your learners would find it useful to know more about how to access public and private funding and how to train to set up their own eco-business?**

- Tina: Yes, but we really need a good mentoring. In my experience, when I wanted to create my project, I noticed that we didn't have enough support. For instance, creating a business plan was hard for me. I study business, and yet I didn't know where to start with! If it was hard for me, I can imagine for people who have no knowledge about finance or how to build a project!
- Kenza: it is important to receive this support from entrepreneurs who have already gone through the same process, who can give very practical information. Because when we learn this at school it's not the same thing as when we want to take funds and create our own business. So we need someone who already works in the entrepreneurship field.
- Paco: It is very important that this mentor has some acquaintance with the background and context of the women he/she accompanies. It is important to be accompanied by a mentor who knows the existing funding opportunities on the EU, regional and local levels. The fear of not having enough funds is also a problem. Especially for eco entrepreneurship, we underestimate the number of funds. But the difficulty is to find information about how to access to these funds.
- Ariane: it is identification procedure between mentoree and mentoring activities can also show success stories that are motivating for the mentoree, there is an identification process that can encourage the mentoree. Especially for women to overcome the stereotypes they are trapped in.
- Louise: It is important to have success stories to be inspired for starting a business project.
- Paco: Beyond the identification process, there are migrant women missing technical competences, even though they already have their own enterprise.

### **Question 6: How would you imagine a training programme of this kind?**

- Tina: agree with Paco, it would be great to have a section about administrative procedures and tasks for migrants. And a section where we explain the funding available for eco enterprise. And the kinds of enterprise that we can build.
- Ariane: the duration is very important, because we can't turn the educators into experts in this field. But what we can do, it's to list the stakeholders available in each county of the partnership, which can accompany and provide information to the women wishing to create their enterprise. This will be a sort of mapping in all countries; so the educator won't answer to all questions, but can inform the learners about where to find useful information and to address them to the competent persons. They can propose to be a link between these experts and the learners, they can help to contact them.
- Louise: A work on non-academic questions. Like Q&A sessions, so that the educators will be ready to answer the learners' questions. It would be useful to write down the learners' questions in an informal way and prepare the educators to answer them, like in a kind of forum.

### **Question 7: Do you think it's useful to have an online platform? What would you need to provide this type of training?**

- Ariane: The Q&A is easy to integrate in a platform, to avoid boarding PDF. List of questions with answers to implement Louise' idea. It is important that the online platform is mobile friendly.
- Louise: Important to have mobile friendly version, because often people don't even have a PC, but only their mobile phone.
- Tina: As a student, I prefer questions and interactive formats, instead of PDF.
- Ariane: It's useless to create pages of content, we need to develop attractive online resources.
- Paco: I think that, anyway, a very well structured PDF would be useful too. With well-structured sections on how to do a task, etc. But also adding mind mapping of the contents that allows to find quickly the information we are looking for.



## Introduction

This report presents the findings from the Focus Group held in Ireland on 2nd March 2023. This Focus Group was organised and facilitated as a round-table discussion with educators from the Cavan Institute, Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board and the Local Development Company in Cavan, as part of a 'Power of Community' Event hosted by Spectrum Research Centre in the Cavan Crystal Hotel in Cavan, Ireland. The aim of this event was to engage local education stakeholders, present some of our projects and gain their feedback on key research projects that SRC is partnered in. Mend the Gap was represented at one table on 'Educating Women and Vulnerable Groups'. The event was attended by 54 individuals from different sectors of education. At this event, 13 adult and community educators were engaged in our focus group session. The focus group was hosted as a discussion, where our facilitator, Eleanor Smith, gave all attendees flipchart sheets, sticky notes, and pens, and read the questions aloud, asking participants to write their answers on sticky notes, and attach them to the flipchart sheets. Eleanor then facilitated a discussion on each of the questions presented in the Focus Group Guide.

The methodology followed was therefore an adaptation of the Silent Brainstorming, and Debate models proposed in the Focus Group Guide.

The following report presents an overview of the answers we received to each question.



### **Question 1: What women learners do you work with?**

Participants on the day worked with:

- Women re-entering education after family-rearing.
- Young women.
- Women re-entering education as senior citizens.
- Women from marginalised groups.
- Young mothers.
- Single mothers.

### **Question 2: What obstacles do they face?**

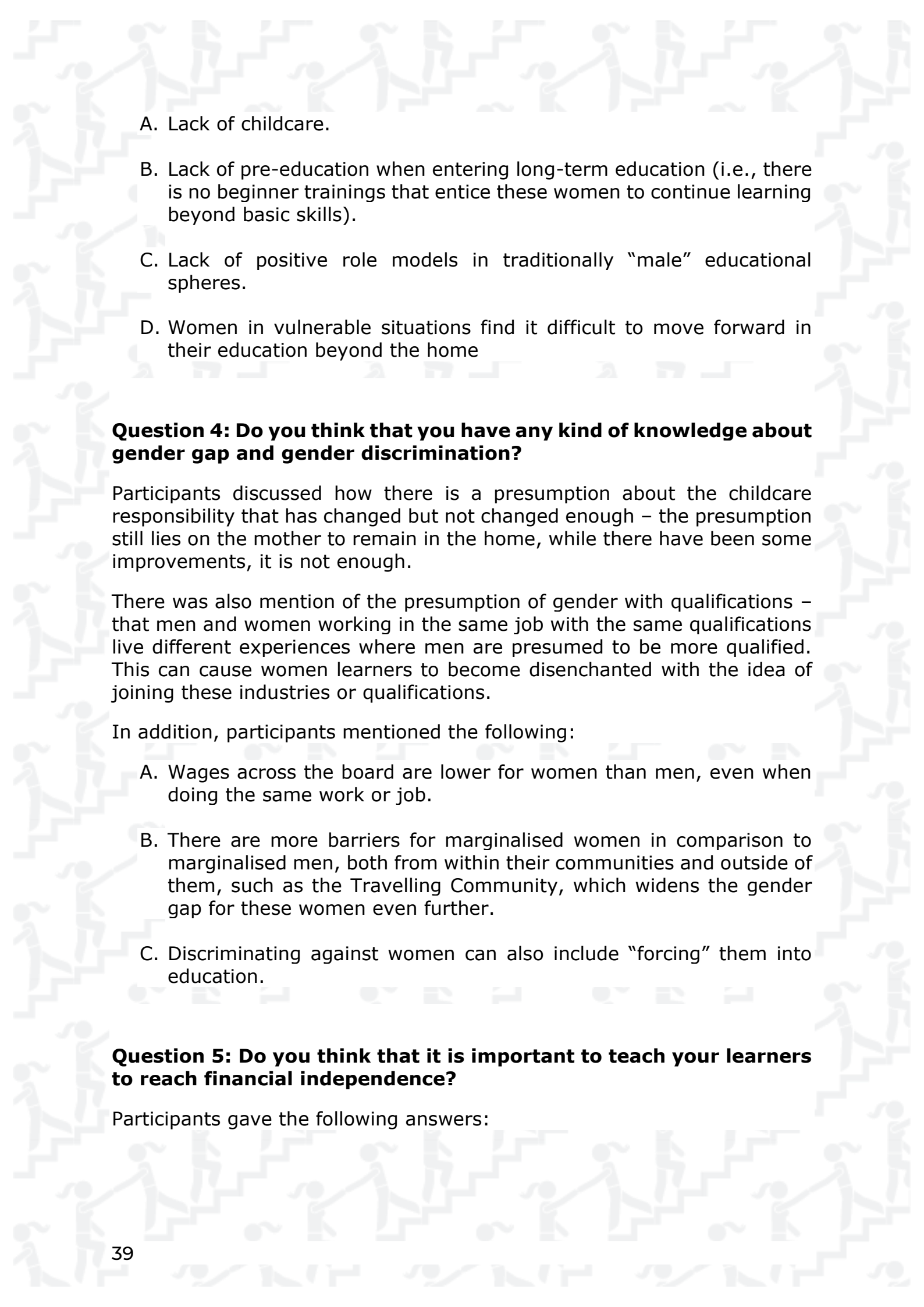
Participants mentioned the following obstacles which impact the women they work with:

- A. Childcare is the main obstacle highlighted by all participants.
  - a. Accessibility of childcare – long waitlists, location
  - b. Availability of childcare – no local creches or only private childcare
  - c. Pricing – overall it is very expensive to use childcare and not valuable in the long-term with the prices.
- B. Lack of confidence – many women do not feel confident in their learning abilities to re-enter education after a long time.
- C. Social norms across all social groups – marginalised women face many more difficulties accessing education in comparison to others; this is particularly true for women and girls from the Travelling Community who are removed from education by their parents at a younger age.
- D. Gender norms – some subjects are considered more “masculine” than others which make them unattractive or inaccessible for female learners such as STEM.
- E. Lack of public transport to these trainings.
- F. Starting wages are low which does not encourage women to start their educational journey.

### **Question 3: What issues have you encountered in working with them?**

Issues encountered by our focus group participants in their daily work included:



- 
- A. Lack of childcare.
  - B. Lack of pre-education when entering long-term education (i.e., there is no beginner trainings that entice these women to continue learning beyond basic skills).
  - C. Lack of positive role models in traditionally “male” educational spheres.
  - D. Women in vulnerable situations find it difficult to move forward in their education beyond the home

**Question 4: Do you think that you have any kind of knowledge about gender gap and gender discrimination?**

Participants discussed how there is a presumption about the childcare responsibility that has changed but not changed enough – the presumption still lies on the mother to remain in the home, while there have been some improvements, it is not enough.

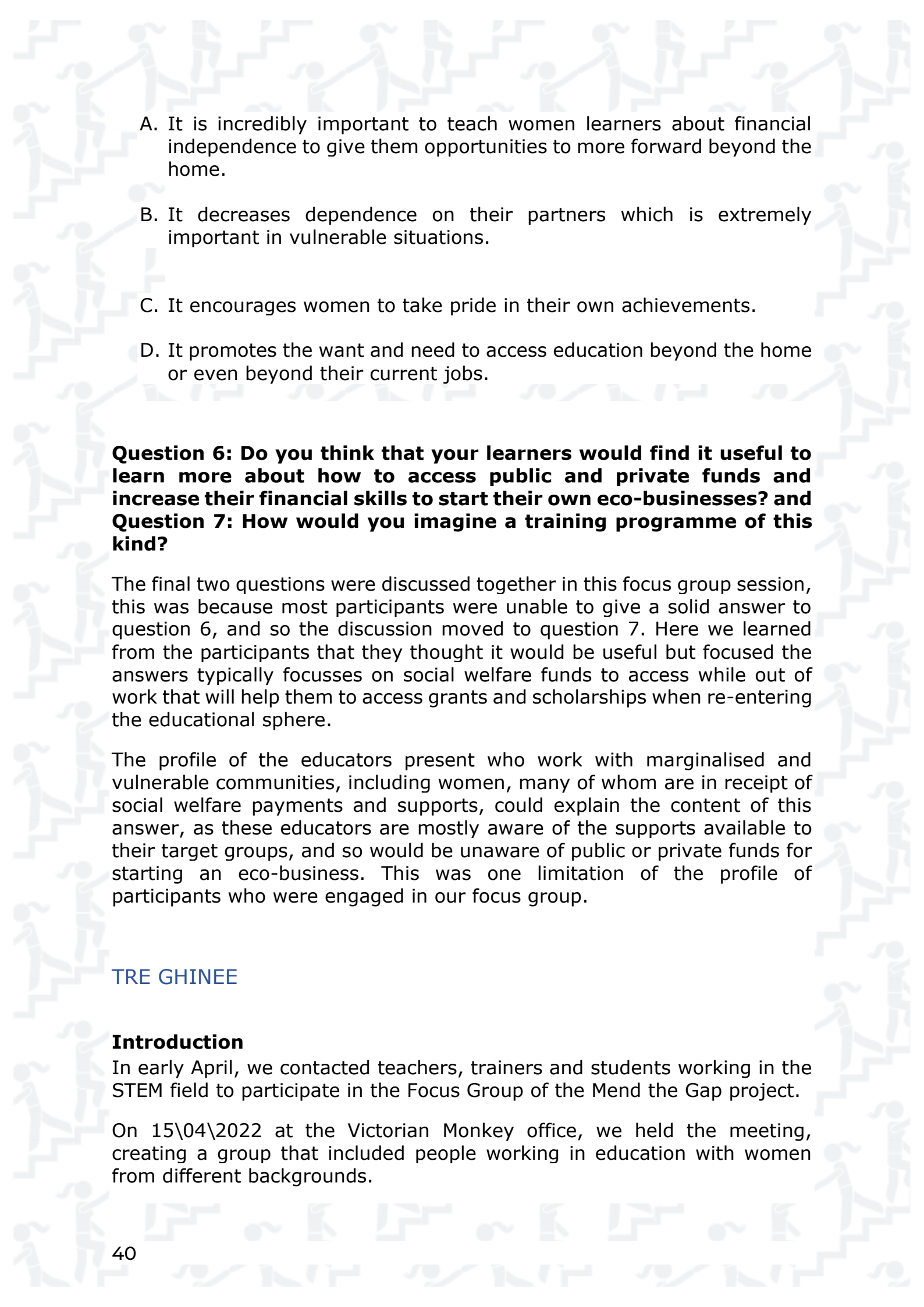
There was also mention of the presumption of gender with qualifications – that men and women working in the same job with the same qualifications live different experiences where men are presumed to be more qualified. This can cause women learners to become disenchanted with the idea of joining these industries or qualifications.

In addition, participants mentioned the following:

- A. Wages across the board are lower for women than men, even when doing the same work or job.
- B. There are more barriers for marginalised women in comparison to marginalised men, both from within their communities and outside of them, such as the Travelling Community, which widens the gender gap for these women even further.
- C. Discriminating against women can also include “forcing” them into education.

**Question 5: Do you think that it is important to teach your learners to reach financial independence?**

Participants gave the following answers:

- 
- A. It is incredibly important to teach women learners about financial independence to give them opportunities to move forward beyond the home.
  - B. It decreases dependence on their partners which is extremely important in vulnerable situations.
  - C. It encourages women to take pride in their own achievements.
  - D. It promotes the want and need to access education beyond the home or even beyond their current jobs.

**Question 6: Do you think that your learners would find it useful to learn more about how to access public and private funds and increase their financial skills to start their own eco-businesses? and Question 7: How would you imagine a training programme of this kind?**

The final two questions were discussed together in this focus group session, this was because most participants were unable to give a solid answer to question 6, and so the discussion moved to question 7. Here we learned from the participants that they thought it would be useful but focused the answers typically focusses on social welfare funds to access while out of work that will help them to access grants and scholarships when re-entering the educational sphere.

The profile of the educators present who work with marginalised and vulnerable communities, including women, many of whom are in receipt of social welfare payments and supports, could explain the content of this answer, as these educators are mostly aware of the supports available to their target groups, and so would be unaware of public or private funds for starting an eco-business. This was one limitation of the profile of participants who were engaged in our focus group.

## TRE GHINEE

### **Introduction**

In early April, we contacted teachers, trainers and students working in the STEM field to participate in the Focus Group of the Mend the Gap project.

On 15\04\2022 at the Victorian Monkey office, we held the meeting, creating a group that included people working in education with women from different backgrounds.

## **Agenda**

18.30 - 18.45 : Project introduction

18.45 - 19.00 : Presentation of participants

19.00 - 19.20 Start working with preliminary getting-to-know-you activities

19.20 - 20. 10 Questions and discussion

20.10 -20.30 Conclusions

## **Participants**

Participants in Le Tre Ghinee APS Focus Group were educators and students who worked as trainers with different audiences.

- 3 People were teachers in formal settings
- 1 People working In the non-formal setting with migrant women
- 1 Advocate working in training for women victims of violence
- 2 Stem students working in the informal setting with women with fewer opportunities

## **Educators**

- Silvia - Stem professor
- Alessandro - Professor
- Valeria - Professor
- Veronica - Youth and senior educator and trainer
- Romina - Lawyer and senior trainer
- Cecilia - Stem student and youth trainer
- Angeles - Stem student and young trainer

## **Moderator**

- Chiara

## **Question 1: What women learners do you work with?**

In general:

- Young women
- Adolescents
- Migrant women

- Women victims of violence
- Young women in a state of vulnerability
- Women with disabilities

In particular:

- Silvia: Teacher of STEM disciplines who have worked for years within high schools and courses for adults who want to complete the school cycle.
- Alessandro: Activist, trainer, and teacher who works with youth and particularly with people with physical and cognitive disabilities
- Valeria: Teacher in school and nonformal settings, works with young women using theatre techniques for empowerment
- Veronica: Non-formal educator who has worked for years with migrant women, working with theatre techniques and teaching Italian, teaches human rights courses for youth, trainers and teachers.
- Cecilia: A physics student, she volunteers by holding physics and math classes for adolescents and youth
- Angelina (Angeles): Physics student, volunteers by teaching courses to adolescents and youth
- Romina: A lawyer and women's rights activist, she has worked for years with women victims of violence in anti-violence centres, holding training on legal issues

## **Question 2: What obstacles do they face?**

Veronica: One of the big obstacles in the training and empowerment of migrant women is the care workload they are subjected to and the resulting lack of time for their training and pursuit of their personal projects.

Valeria: With younger girls, the problem is the excessive fear of exposure and the lack of habit of taking the space and time to express their ideas, not fully valuing their abilities and excellences, and always trying not to stand out.

Cecilia: The adherence to the stereotype that women are not good at science subjects and therefore are often demotivated even before they start.

Angelina: Many girls during their schooling were de-motivated and directed to subjects that were considered more suitable for the female gender, even if they were not within their interests and talents.

**Question 3: What issues have you encountered in working with them?**

Silvia: Even adult women who have had an excellent education struggle to find a job that suits their abilities.

Alessandro: In fact, many would like to open their own business, but feel they do not have enough support from family and institutions.

Veronica: Both access to information to start self-employment and the Italian bureaucracy are really big obstacles.

Alessandro: They are also not very accessible for people with SLD or visual disabilities such as low vision.

Romina: Many women do not know enough about their rights and possibilities to access credit and other tools useful for their economic independence

**Question 4: Do you think you are sufficiently informed about gender inequalities and the gaps resulting from these inequalities (pay gap, etc.)?**

Romina: I think so, but only because I spend a lot of time informing myself and fighting for these issues, the information however is not easily accessible and there should be more talk about these issues.

Angelina: We are approaching the topic, as young women we can experience on ourselves these inequalities and the pay gap, but I don't feel that I have a complete education about it

Cecilia: Yes in fact for us as well, the work we do is volunteer work

Valeria: I feel quite prepared from a social-humanistic point of view, but I would like to know more data and research and especially to have information about other European realities as well to have more comparison

Romina: The question of data is really important. We lack disaggregated data regarding the gender gap.

**Question 5: Do you think your learners would find it useful to know more about how to access public and private funding and how to train to set up their own eco-business?**

Silvia: Absolutely! This kind of information is never provided in formal education and instead, it would be very important.



Veronica: Yes right, very important. After that, it would be important to be followed step by step by entrepreneurial people who have gone down the same path. Because not only access to information is difficult but also following the bureaucratic part of the startup can be very complicated.

Romina: Moreover, it would be important for this information to be available in more languages to support even migrant people who don't know the technical language, to bring young foreign women who would like to open a business instead of doing unskilled and poorly paid jobs closer.

Alessandro: Yes, also because I don't know anything about it, and I would like to know more about it to be able to support my female students as well.

**Question 6: How would you imagine a training programme of this kind?**

Cecilia: I imagine the course to be somewhat interactive, maybe even online so that I can take it when I can and review the useful information whenever needed.

Valeria: I imagine a course where formal training on economic issues, can be experimented with theatrical techniques and dynamics to continue working on empowerment and assertiveness as well.

Angelina: The course in addition to being multilingual in my opinion should have visual aids and learning-by-doing pathways, with many exercises supported by the teacher.

Romina: I think there should be a first module on soft skills and then the more technical ones.

**Question 7: Do you think it's useful to have an online platform? What would you need to provide this type of training?**

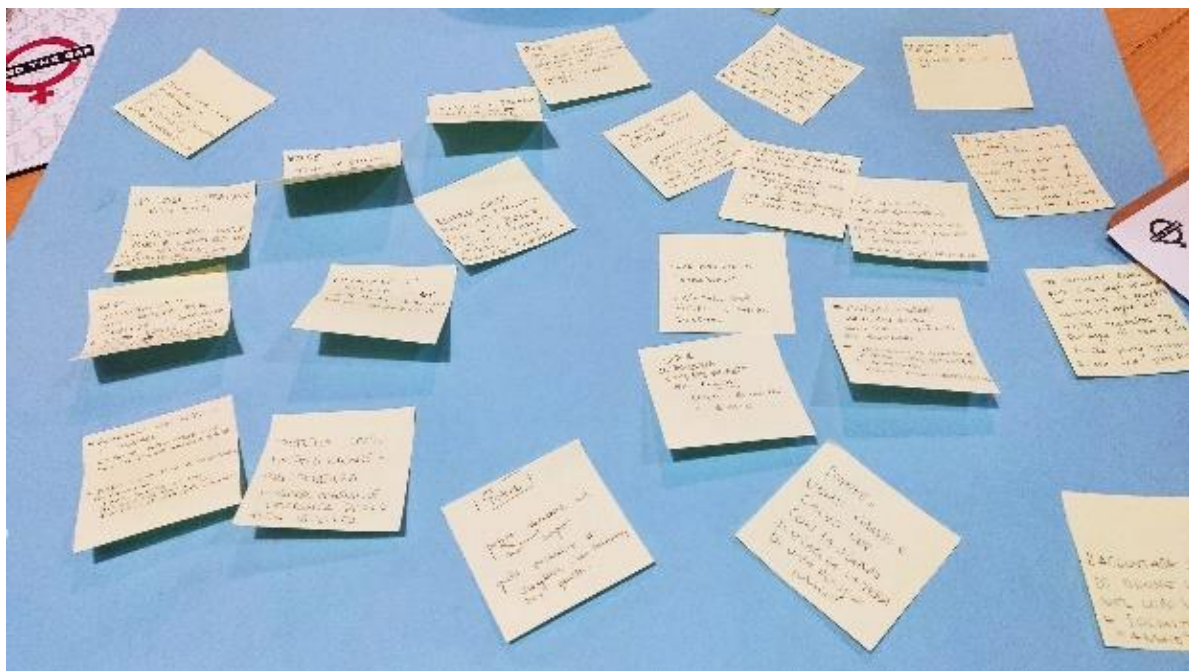
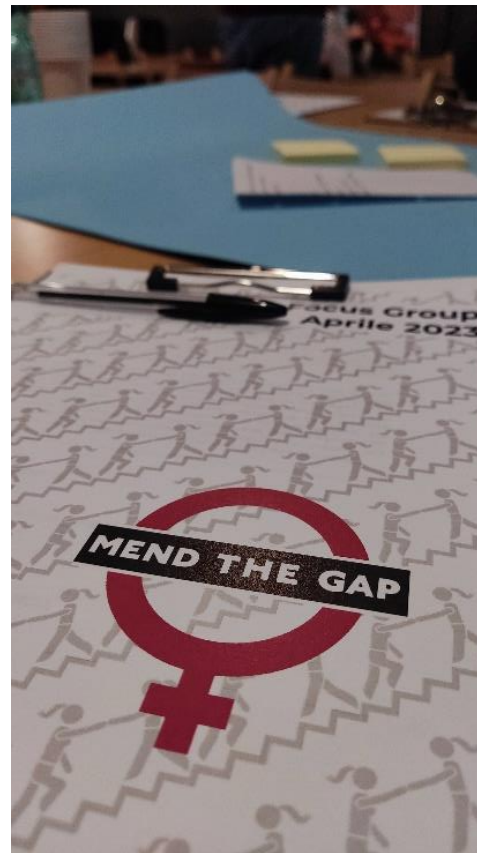
Cecilia: Of course a platform is exactly as I imagined it!

Veronica: In my opinion, in addition to handouts and written materials, there should also be videos and interviews with people who have already done this kind of course.

Alessandro: Very useful, if accessible to women with disabilities as well. The online platform allows you to manage the learning time independently, but I think there should be experts who can be contacted in case of difficulties in understanding or navigation.

Romina: I usually don't like online training, but I think for working women it could be useful and if it was multilingual it could help more people.

Valeria: I prefer interactive training, maybe I might find it a bit too static, there should be some interactive elements, and learning should also be emotionally engaging so it could be challenging.



A pink female symbol (a circle with a cross at the bottom) is centered on a white background. A black horizontal banner is superimposed across the middle of the symbol, containing the text "MEND THE GAP" in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**MEND THE GAP**