



Mending the Gap: Highlights from the Mend the Gap Piloting in Ireland

Spectrum Research Centre organised the blended learning piloting session for the Mend the Gap project on Friday, 11th October 2024 in Virginia, Ireland. The Piloting session for Mend the Gap was carried out in a face-to-face format, followed by self-directed learning by each of the participants. On the morning of the training, the session began with an introduction of the Mend the Gap project to all participants as well as a run-through of the agenda for the morning. There was a small icebreaker activity where participants were given the opportunity to introduce themselves and their businesses to one another. When discussing the different modules on the MOOC topics such as equality, inclusion and what barriers exist for women in the workplace.

There was a group discussion held to allow the participants to express their own challenges either as women or a person with female employees in their workplaces. Topics such as developing soft skills, allowing women to network in business and creating a sense of empowerment among women were discussed and how this can be facilitated within their companies was explored with the group. In module 7 how to make one company more eco-aware was displayed.

Tools on the online learning platform such as the carbon footprint calculator were demonstrated for the participants to bring back and use within their own companies as well as the SWOT analysis template. The gender stereotypes within a workplace were discussed as a group as well as how unconscious bias can have an impact on women at work. It was talked about how to become more aware of gender bias and areas this may happen in were highlighted as well, it was noted how promoting diversity and inclusion can combat the effects.

To end the training on the modules stress management was discussed as well as self-care techniques that can be used to help promote mental health and emotional well-being in the workplace. After a short tea break, the toolkit was also demonstrated to the participants and there were group discussions held using the women's assessment toolkit in relation to their





own workplaces. The training session ended with the sharing of feedback and facilitating questions and answers about the project. Participants were encouraged to engage in self-directed learning after the demonstrations on the day.

Over all the blended learning training was a success. All the participants were open-minded and respectful during conversations and eager to learn from one another's perspectives during the group discussions. There were positive comments towards the content of the modules as they were educational and theoretical but were accompanied by practical and visual tools which suit multiple learning styles. It was mentioned the platform itself was very visually appealing and was clear it had a direct target audience.

