



**MIND THE GAP**  
Promoting Girls and Women in STEM

## Newsletter Edition 2 - Welcome to Mind the GAP!

Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mind the GAP Newsletter! In this issue, you will find out more about our project, the situation of girls and women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects in Europe and news of our events.

The European Mind the GAP project tackles the widening skills gap in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) sector by ensuring that more women and girls are retained in these subjects after the age of 18.

Below you can read about the situation in the three partner countries: Spain, the Netherlands and the UK. But of course the low number of girls studying a STEM subject is a worldwide problem!

The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of our newsletter was released earlier this year. If you missed it, catch up here:

<http://www.inovaconsult.com/documents/1stNewsletter.pdf>

### First 'Mind the GAP!' Gender Awareness course takes place in Sheffield, UK

As our Needs Analysis survey, looking at the training/support needs of both girls aged 16-18 studying STEM subjects and their teachers is now finalized, Mind the GAP project partner Inova Consultancy is pleased to announce that the first pilot of the newly developed 'Mind the GAP!' Gender Awareness course for VET teachers took place in the UK on Monday 13th July with staff from The Sheffield College.

Our Dutch partners have been working on the development of the course materials based on feedback received from both teachers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and girls studying these subjects at Vocational Education level.

This summer the project entered its piloting phase and the new materials will be piloted by teachers across the partner countries over the next few months. The workshop in July was the first to be held.

The day began with an introduction to the project and the need for greater support for women in the STEM sector.



The participants in this session all came from very male dominated areas such as engineering and motor vehicle courses and there were great discussions regarding the numbers of women joining these courses and the influences they have when making the choice to go down this career route.

An interesting exercise which was included in the day was the Implicit Association Test which was adapted from an online tool originally developed by Harvard University. The test demonstrates how much we associate women and men's names to traditional 'male' and 'female' roles. You can try the test [here](#).



### **Do you know that The Netherlands has the strongest stereotypes associating science with men more than women?**

The research is based on the implicit-association test ("IAT") which you can try above, but also very striking is the difference between the Netherlands, UK and Spain!

The researcher developed an interactive table that showed the nations with the strongest stereotypes. The Netherlands is number 1 with the lowest percentage of women in STEM, while the UK is at number 18 and Spain is doing much better at number 64 with many more women in STEM than in the Netherlands!



If you would like to have a look at the research in more detail, then visit, physicist turned psychologist, David Miller's website:

<http://d-miller.github.io/Stereotypes-Table/>

### Promoting STEM Careers - Barcelona's After-School Educational Program - Barcelona, Spain

Many articles target teenage girls (16 years of age) to promote STEM subjects and many actions are undertaken to that end as it is thought that 16 is the best age to make a decision about one's further education.

Yet, it is today a known fact that stereotypes among boys and girls start to appear very early, already between the ages of 12 and 14, due to many reasons such as social tendencies, cultural habits, educational background and so on.

The Mind the GAP partner, WiTEC, in Barcelona is pleased to announce a new project called **STEM- Barcelona's After-School Educational Program** aiming at providing girls but also boys at the age of 12 or 13 with awareness of the impact of such stereotypes when making educational and/or career decisions



The 11 public centres of Barcelona chosen to carry out this experience will focus on raising the number of “wanna-be students in STEM” by helping them improve in fields such as maths, robotics, physics, sustainability, nutrition and so on.



The project has already resulted in the participation of over 300 students to 12-15 sessions throughout the academic year 2014-2015. Given that the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the project has been highly satisfying thanks both to the involvement of participants’ families and to the non-conventional approaches teachers have been using to keep classes interesting and motivational, success is already anticipated for the 2 upcoming years.

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### *Quotes*

*“I do not mind that you are a girl, but the main thing is that you yourself do not mind. There is no reason for it.”*

Einstein

*“It doesn’t matter if you are a woman or a man, the important thing is your determination.”*

Milka Duno

*“Being a scientist is as exciting, creative, and interesting as being an artist.”*

Mayim Bialik

#### Important Abbreviations:

STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths

GAP = Gender Awareness Programme

SET= Science, Engineering, Technology

WiTEC=Women in Science, Engineering and Technology

OERs= Open Educational Resource

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