MIND THE GAP
Promoting Girls and Women in STEM

Celebrating our success this July!

Mind the GAP is coming to an end and we are currently getting ready to host the Final Conference in Sheffield, UK, to celebrate the achievements of this successful European project.

The Mind the GAP project has worked over the last 2 years to tackle 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 and to encourage younger girls into study in these areas.

Within the framework of the Final Conference the Mind the GAP project partners are more motivated than ever to speak with one strong, united voice about the importance of promoting gender diversity in STEM and to interact with teachers and girls in STEM subjects!

As always you can keep up with all our news on Twitter and Facebook!

Increasing gender awareness in the UK, Netherlands and Spain

The Mind the GAP project supports VET teachers of STEM subjects to be more inclusive and gender aware in their teaching. A face to face training programme has been developed and pilot training sessions were delivered in all three partner countries. Please have a look on the Learning Hub for detailed information and for the facilitators guide!

The Final Conference in Sheffield!

We held the Mind the GAP! Final Conference on **Monday 11th July** at the Magna Science Adventure Centre in Sheffield. The event was a FREE day of hands on activities for young women interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths and was attended by local schools, home educators and professional women, including plumbers, electricians and other STEM sectors.

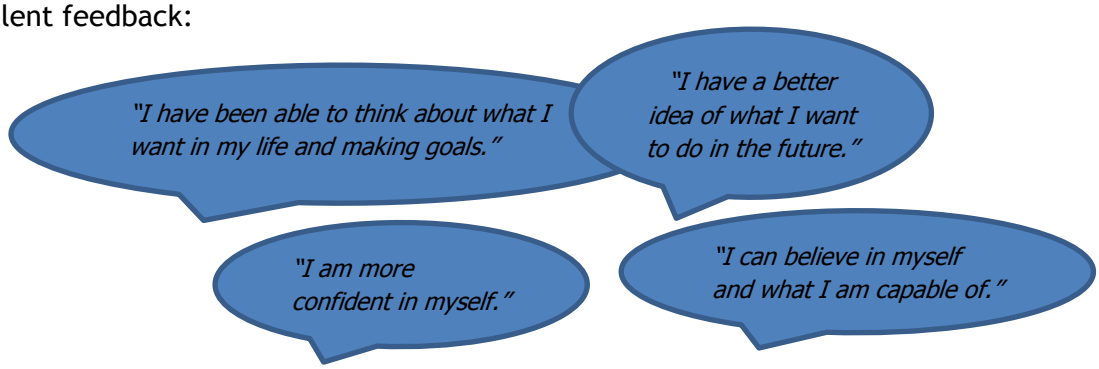
The workshops included a career workout and several practical challenges, such as the Rocket challenge and the Air Balloon which provided opportunities for younger girls to get their hands dirty and try out science experiments in a new environment.

Participants were able to:

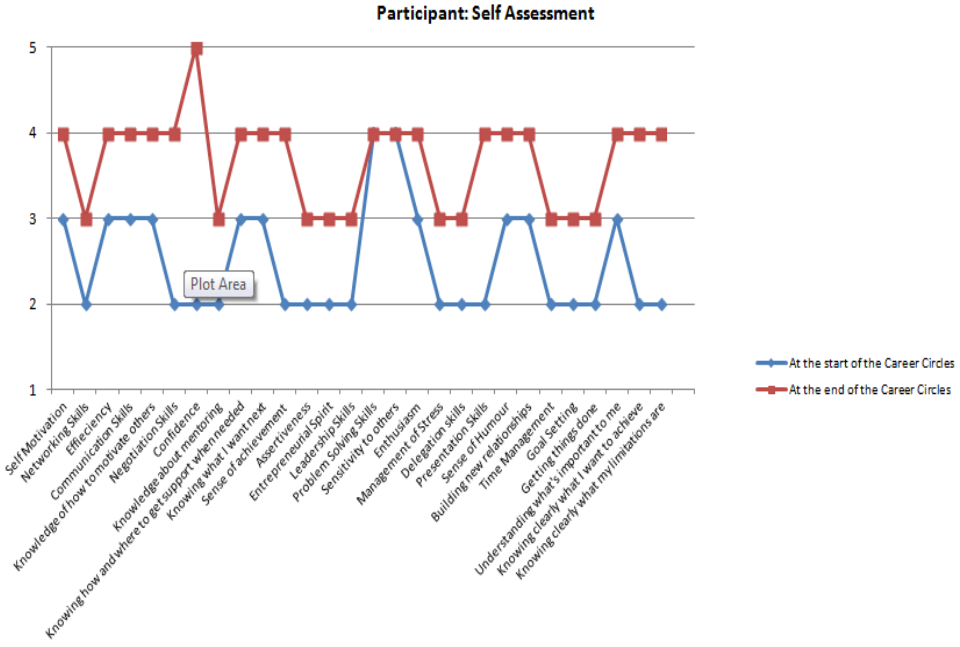
- Find out more about the Mind the Gap project
- Participate in hands on STEM activities
- Meet and talk to pioneering women in technology and engineering
- See the launch of The Sheffield College video, an inspiring interview with 3 female STEM students and 3 women working in STEM

Mind the GAP! Career Circles

Career Circles™ are a training methodology developed by UK partner, Inova Consultancy Ltd, to support young people in thinking about their future careers. Using coaching, mentoring and action learning techniques and guided by a trained facilitator, young people think about and discuss their ambitions, work values and skill sets and work on key areas to develop their employability.
Within the Mind the GAP! project, Circles have been delivered with both young women studying STEM subjects and also with their teachers, to help them understand how they can better support their female students in male-dominated classrooms.
In the UK, the young women who took part benefitted from having space to talk about careers with their peers and develop skills, especially in goal setting. They gave us some excellent feedback:



The girls were asked to self-assess their skills in a variety of areas at the beginning and end of the Circles and the image shows the improvements that were seen during the first UK pilot.



Laia Sánchez explains the results of the European project Mind the GAP! to the Women's Council of Cornellà

On the 14th of June, the Mind the GAP! representative from Citilab, Laia Sánchez, presented to the Women's Council of Cornellà (Catalonia) the Mind the GAP! Project and Consortium, as well as the results from the different actions carried out.

During the session, 26 women from Cornellà got to know the purpose of the project and the tools and resources the project offers to teachers and young girls interested in STEM. Laia Sánchez talked about the Mind the GAP! Project website, which features the Learning Hub, a platform where both teachers and students can access and download useful content that will help them promote and pursue studies in STEM.

Spreading the word about the project to teachers and girls interested in STEM is extremely important, as by 2020, there will be 1.300 people with technical skills needed in the workforce, which is far from the current graduate levels in STEM.

Think you don't use stereotypes? Think Again!

The Mind the Gap project encourages VET teachers of STEM subjects to be more gender aware in their teaching programmes.

In fact, all of us use stereotypes every day and they are an important part of how we make sense of the world. However, it is important to be aware of the stereotypes we use to ensure they do not affect our views in a negative way. A striking example of this is the test several teachers took, called the "implicit attitude test". This test, developed by Harvard University, shows how fast people associate words like "maths" or "physics" with male words like "boy" or "man". Luckily, the test has shown that these stereotypes are weaker in countries where relatively more women are involved in science!

Are you curious about your own implicit stereotypes regarding women and science? Take the test yourself at: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

Quotes

"Young girls need to see role models in whatever careers they may choose, just so they can picture themselves doing those jobs someday. You can't be what you can't see."

Sally Ride: astronaut and astrophysicist, the first American woman in space

"Don't be afraid of hard work. Nothing worthwhile comes easily. Don't let others discourage you or tell you can't do it. In my days I was told women didn't go into chemistry. I saw no reason why we couldn't."

Gertrude B. Elion: biochemist and pharmacologist, recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (1988)

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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 Resources

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This newsletter reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.