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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union





Key Action 2 | Call 2017  
Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices

Project number:  
2017-1-ES01-KA202-038658

Partnership:

- Fundación Laboral de la Construcción (FLC). Spain
- Agencia para el Empleo del Ayuntamiento de Madrid (AE). Spain
- Fondazione ECIPA. Ente Confederale di Istruzione Professionale per l'Artigianato e le Piccole Imprese (CNA). Italy
- Ente per la Formazione e l'addestramento professionale nell'edilizia (FORMEDIL). Italy
- Centro de Formação Profissional da Indústria da Construção Civil e Obras Públicas do Sul (CENFIC). Portugal
- Comité de Concertation et de Coordination de l'Apprentissage du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics (CCCA-BTP). France
- Bildungszentren des Baugewerbes e.V. (BZB). Germany
- Centre IFAPME Liège-Huy-Waremme (IFAPME). Belgium

*The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*

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# WOMEN CAN BUILD

## 1. The perception of the construction sector

In the Council Decision (EU) 2018/1215 of 15 July 2018 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States the council of the European Union decides that the Union is to promote equality between women and men. Moreover it is stated in the Guideline 6 of the Annex that “Member States should ensure gender equality and increase labour market participation of women, including through ensuring equal opportunities and career progression and eliminating barriers to participation”.

In the construction sector the gender ratio is not balanced. According to national statistical offices in Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium and Portugal, women make up around 9 % of the construction workers in Europe. This figure is primarily women in administrative and office positions in construction, as the number of women actively working on construction sites is even smaller. In vocational education training the average percentage of female apprentices is 1-2 %. Therefore the participating training centres face the same difficulties in balancing the gender ratio as well as the recruitment of young female talents.

### Why is there a lack of women in the construction sector?

Despite initiatives to recruit women, the construction sector remains one of the most gender-segregated industries in the world. There is a longstanding perception that the construction sector is male-dominated and suited for men, which is why a challenge unique to the sector is related to the equipment. Most construction protection equipment is still designed with men in mind. This leaves women at a higher risk of being injured on site. As the industry is dominated by men in terms of numbers and surroundings, women are concerned that they might be treated differently because they are female, or that they have to behave in certain ways to be accepted as “one of the guys” in order to be successful.

Regardless on the professional experience of female employee in construction, many people assume, that a project will be led by a man. This is not necessarily down to a sexist view, but based on observations that the building sector is predominantly male. Professions such as construction manager or roofer are still felt in many places to be incompatible with female workers.

This impression is emphasized by the fact that advertising is often targeted in a male-centric way. It can be proposed in a way that promotes construction as a route into a “masculine” and “strong” job, which will build identity and purpose as a man. Alternatively it can be presented as a route for individuals who have struggled in society or in school that are looking to turn their life around and use their energy productively. These images are often aimed at male recipients, which mean that fewer young women feel drawn into working in the construction sector than young men.



Educational centres for the professions of construction are sensitised to the masculine image of the sector and deal with this issue by publishing offers that strive towards diversity by addressing women and men alike as well as people from different cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless it seems that not all companies are aware of the effect of their advertisements.



As construction is perceived as a traditionally masculine sector women might fear that they won't be given the space for reconciling family and working life, as family and construction projects are not always easy to combine due to regular travel or inflexible working hours, which is an important factor to women and their considerations towards the future. As a result, women in construction often drop out after their first child or look for a job in a more family-friendly area.

Other important factors are inner barriers on the part of young women with regards to the professions of the building sector. Construction work is considered dirty and physically demanding for trainees and the technical aspects seems to deter many young women as they fear of not being able to work manually and understand work processes on site as good as their male classmates.

The perception of the construction sector as well as inner barriers are challenges will require many actions and campaigns as well as examples of capable female construction workers who demonstrate that construction can be an area of work for women, too. The living proof of actual examples cannot be denied sceptics and motivate others to consider certain trades.

The aim of the immersive experience for women is to provide a safe environment with skilled trainers to dismantle insecurities and inner barriers and create awareness for the building professions. The practical activities could increase the interest towards the sector and lead to the decision to start vocational training in construction or a related field.

## 2. Immersive training experience for women

The objective of Intellectual Output 2 is the development of an experiential course for women to propose an innovative way to attract women to the construction sector by organizing a practical training course and demonstrate the wide range of professional possibilities in the building branch.

The aim of the training is to break down cultural as well as individual barriers that might prevent women from considering a profession in construction as a possible field of work. Furthermore this action shows the opportunities and career paths of working in construction by addressing the main drives of skill development in the sector such as energy efficiency, sustainable “green” construction and aspects of digitalization. The construction sector faces mayor challenges in order to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions and to improve the performance of buildings and construction materials in order to reach the goals formulated in the Green Deal. These challenges will lead to the upskilling of the workforce, new professions and the modernization and further digitalization of the sector and will create a wide field of professions for men and women in construction.

The workshops shall empower women and demonstrate that they can also participate significantly in the challenges and opportunities of the present and the future. The experience shall give a first impression and indicate the openness of VET centres for women and men alike to enter the construction labour market and be further trained.

The first step is to define the needs of the target group and their interest and perceptions of the construction sector. Based on this definition, the VET centres develop a suitable action for the needs in their region which focuses on barriers to entry, demands for proper information, or more practical training in the main drives of skill development.

## 3. Experiential training outline

In order to organize the immersive training experience, the construction trainers of the participating VET centres and experts in training (project’s staff, pedagogical staff, trainers and administrative staff) considered the needs of the target group in their area with regards to the training action. These needs are decisive for the objectives of the training action and the

definition of the training programme in terms of building procedures to address along the course and its contents.

The project partners of BTP CFA and Centre IFAPME decided to focus on transferring information with regards to the professional options offered by the construction trades as well as to the opportunity to practical training of specific tasks in construction. The project partners of BZB focused to raise awareness towards fields of work such as document management, health and safety, calculations, time management and contact to customers which are often not primarily associated with the occupations in construction. FORMEDIL chose the practical approach to give an insight into green building skills which are of a high demand on the labour market. All training centres emphasized the wide range of professions in the construction branch.

Each training centres had planned to design a one-week course that should last 40 hours but only those who carried out the workshop before the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic were able to reach this target. The different measures taken since March 2020 complicated the organization of the workshops and the agreement of participants and parents to attend a one-week workshop. The training centres had to compromise and offer different solutions such as carrying out the workshop on one afternoon by following hygiene concepts, wearing masks and keeping adequate distance. Four of the six training centres could provide a training experience. The project partners at CENFIC were not allowed to organize the action. The lack of participants and restrictions for the training centres did not allow the formation of face-to-face groups. The results on the immersive experience at FLC were not submitted and are not included in this report.

### 3.1. Participants: Age, background, motivation

The different approaches of the VET centres to organize the workshops in accordance to the needs and interest of women in their region lead to different groups of women with regards to their age, background and motivation in participating at the actions.

At BTP CFA ten women between the age of 18 and 20 were introduced to the training centre by contacting an institution for integration into employment dedicated to young women and men with difficulties (EPIDE). The participants did not have professional experience. Their motivation was to discover the construction trades and opportunities for a future job.

Centre IFAPME reached their 3 participants (7 were enrolled but did not show up) through social media and an advisor at the employment agency. The participants were between 32 and 54 years old and had different educational backgrounds and were all in professional education:

- One woman with a qualification of gardener looking for a new career path after a serious illness preventing her to perform certain physical tasks
- One woman working in a sector highly affected by COVID-19 and looking for a new job opportunity
- One woman with no qualification looking to start a new career after a divorce

All participants were in a process of career re-orientation after a difficult life experience (serious illness, divorce, or unemployment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic) and were curious to learn more about the opportunities offered by the construction sector.



The participants at BZB were all secondary school students of one school that cooperates with the VET centre in order to support their students during professional orientation. BZB employees contacted the teachers of the school who communicated with their students. The participants were between 17 and 18 years old and were interested in the topic of planning and managing building a house – from bid processing to handing over the keys.

FORMEDIL reached nine women between 27 and 59 years of age through their newsletter and the dissemination of the course through employment services. The group was heterogenous with regards to their educational background. Some of the participants were in professional orientation. Their motivation to participate in the action was to achieve new skills related to green technologies in restoration and renovation works.

VET centre	Country	Translated title of the action	Date and duration	No. of participants	Age	No. of trainers
BZB	Germany	Planning and managing building a house – from bid processing to handing over the key	20.01.2020 - 24.01.2020 (5 days, 40 hours)	9	17-18	2
BTP CFA	France	Women in building trades – let's go!	27.01.2020 - 31.01.2020 (5 days, 40 hours)	10	27-31	5
FORMEDIL	Italy		52 hours in 2020: 19.06, 26.06, 29.06, 03.07, 08.07, 10.07, 15.07, 17.07, 22.07, 24.07, 29.07, 31.07, 03.09	9	27-59	3
Centre IFAPME	Belgium	Working in construction – an asset for women	07.10.2020 (4 hours)	3	32-54	3
Fundación Laboral de la Construcción	Spain			10	21-44	2

### 3.2. The action: Description and pictures of the event at BZB

<b>Name of the VET centre</b>	Bildungszentren des Baugewerbes e.V.
<b>Country</b>	Germany
<b>Date</b>	20.01.2020 – 24.01.2020
<b>Title</b>	Project workshop for female secondary school students: Planning and managing building a house - from bid processing to handing over the keys
<b>Number of participants</b>	9
<b>Number of trainers</b>	2

The first action was carried out at the BZB at the end of January 2020. The course was a one-week project workshop for female secondary school students searching for construction jobs during the phase of career orientation. This course was based on a vocational education and training approach, which might end up in a regular apprenticeship or other formal trainings.

In the project workshop, the students slipped into the role of a building contractor or construction manager and were given the task of building a house for a customer and his family. The house should be built ecologically and sustainably from wood. With this idea, the students began to plan the house using software. The finished model house was printed out with a 3D printer and then presented to the customer. In the end, it was built as a walk-in "micro house".

#### Day 1:

Introduction to the construction branch as well as to the added value of the branch and career paths. The team met the customer and his vision for a family house. It should be built respecting ecological and sustainable aspects. This was followed by a team investigation of ecological and sustainable building techniques, the consideration of an appropriate building type etc.

#### Day 2:

Drafting and designing a one-family house with the computer using a particular software and 3D-printing to visualize it for the customer.

#### Day 3:

The satisfied customer ordered. The planning phase covered different steps and tasks by using analogue and digital techniques and including time management. The communication with public authorities and civil-engineers was simulated.

#### Day 4:

Construction phase: The team simulated a construction site. The house was built in a modular form consisting of different elements like wood and windows. The team had to read the building plans, install the materials at the correct places, use machines and solve different problems. At all times health and safety measures were applied and respected. A "report" was prepared for the customer.

#### Day 5:

Finalizing the construction project – acceptance and final calculation with the customer. The customer received the keys.



## Pictures of the event



## 4.2 The action: Call, description, pictures and video of the event at BTP CFA Lille Métropole

<b>Name of the VET centre</b>	BTP CFA Lille Métropole
<b>Country</b>	France
<b>Date</b>	27.01.2020 – 31.01.2020
<b>Title</b>	Women in building trades – let's go!
<b>Number of participants</b>	10
<b>Number of trainers</b>	5

### The call



On dit « maçon » ou « maçonne » ?  
« Plombier » ou « plombière » ?

FEMMES DANS LE BÂTIMENT,  
PARLONS-EN !

**Venez découvrir les métiers de la construction du**

**27 janvier au 31 janvier Au BTP CFA de ROUBAIX**

BTP CFA dedicated five days to the presentation of different professions in construction to ten young women without professional experience in the building trades in order to inform the participants about opportunities offered by the construction branch. During that week the female participants discovered trades they did not know about and experience their capacities at first hand. The aim of the initiation week was to get young women to discover construction trades by doing.



## Pictures of the event



## Video of the event – Super girls week France



[Link](#) to the Video

This video illustrates one of the workshops carried out during the action at BTP CFA. In this workshop the participants got an insight into the work in carpentry. They were given the task to build a candleholder made of wood. The first step was to plan the object and prepare the height, width and depth. Every woman cut the dimensions by using a woodcutting machine. The next steps were to profile the roof, groove the door into the wood and drill the chimney. The object was finished after sanding the wood.

### 4.3 The action: Call, description and pictures of the event at Centre IFAPME Liège-Huy-Verviers ASBL

Name of the VET centre	Centre IFAPME Liège-Huy-Verviers ASBL
Country	Belgium
Date	07.10.2020
Title	Working in construction – an asset for women
Number of participants	3 (7 women were enrolled)
Number of trainers	3

#### The call

**La construction,  
un atout au féminin**

**Le 7 octobre  
2020  
de 13 à 17h15**

**Découverte des métiers  
de la construction pour les femmes  
(dès 15 ans)**

**Une demi-journée pour tester deux métiers au choix  
et trouver votre voie !**

Menuiserie  
 Couverture

Soudure - Travail du métal  
 Peinture

**Au centre IFAPME de Liège  
site Constriform**  
Rue de Wallonie, 21  
4460 Grâce-Hollogne  
**Inscription :**  
[constructionaufeminin@centreifapme.be](mailto:constructionaufeminin@centreifapme.be)  
04 247 68 70

Journée organisée par le Centre IFAPME Liège-Huy-Verviers dans le cadre du projet de partenariat Erasmus+ «Women can build».

Cofinancé par le programme Erasmus+ de l'Union européenne



The action was organized on the model of an afternoon to discover 4 construction trades (carpentry, metallurgy-welding, painting and roofing) exclusively for women, so that they could try out the tools and machines used in the training centre, meet the trainers, ask all their questions and obtain information on job and training opportunities in the construction sector. The course consisted of a short theoretical introduction followed by a two hour pedagogical sequence adapted to a beginner's audience. The participants performed the instructions practically and created small objects to take home.

Pre Covid19, Centre IFAPME planned to carry out four workshops that should take two hours each and the participants should take an active part in two out of four workshops. The action was planned for 24 participants. Six women should participate in every workshop. However, due to the low number of enrolled women (7) because of the pandemic, the number of workshops had to be reduced to the two most popular ones from the choices expressed by the enrolled women, which were in carpentry and metallurgy-welding.

## Pictures of the event







## 4.4 The action: Call, description and pictures of the event at Ente Scuola Edile Piacenza Formedil

<b>Name of the VET centre</b>	Ente Scuola Edile Piacenza Formedil
<b>Country</b>	Italy
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Eco-efficient masonry: green building “how to apply internal and external isolation”
<b>Number of participants</b>	9
<b>Number of trainers</b>	3

### The call

The participants became aware of the course by the FORMEDIL newsletter and the dissemination through employment services.

### The action

The Piacenza building school launched the experimental course for women called Eco-efficient masonry: green building “how to apply internal and external isolation”. The primary objective of the course was to stimulate interest in the sector, addressing cultural barriers and showing career opportunities in the construction sector in the field of energy efficiency. The course saw the active commitment of 9 unemployed women with laboratory practice followed by three trainers. The participants learned about internal and external insulation methods both theoretically and practically in the laboratory.

### Pictures of the event





## 4.5. The action: Call, description and pictures of the event at Fundación Laboral de la Construcción

<b>Name of the VET centre</b>	Fundación Laboral de la Construcción
<b>Country</b>	Italy
<b>Date</b>	Start: March 2020: 10 Participants. The course will be stopped by COVID 19. It restarts in July 2020 with 7 participants. Ends July 2020: 7 Participants
<b>Title</b>	"Nosotras también construimos. Iniciación práctica a la construcción."
<b>Number of participants</b>	10
<b>Number of trainers</b>	1

### The call

The Construction Labour Foundation and the Employment Agency of Madrid City Council made a public call for the training action, which was open for the registration of interested women from 30 January to 22 February 2020.

A total of 76 women registered. Of these, 63 were invited to take part in the selection process at the Retirement Zone Agency. Of this total number of women, 37 attended the process and 16 were selected. 10 women started the training, and 6 were put in reserve.

All the dissemination systems available to the entities were used, both through social networks and in person, through the district offices of the Employment Agency of Madrid City Council, called Agencias de Zona.

It was very important to disseminate at the Area Agency in the district of Villaverde, a reference for all the profiles linked to the construction sector, both for companies and for unemployed people.

In this office, during the call process, an explanatory meeting of the pilot course was held, in order to achieve a greater and more effective collaboration in the process of attracting interested women. Therefore, from the Area Agency was given notice to all women interested in enrolling in the training activity "We also build. Practical initiation to construction".

The selection process was carried out using two employment techniques, one of them being an expert in gender issues and the other an expert in labour intermediation in the construction field, both working in the Retirement Zone and Villaverde Agencies respectively.

The aim was to attract women interested in learning about the different trades offered by the construction industry, from bricklaying to painting and electricity to tiling and flooring. The duration of the training action was 20 hours, for women who, without previous experience, showed the need to learn about the job opportunities offered by the construction sector, learning about them and discovering a new possibility for knowledge and employment.



## The action

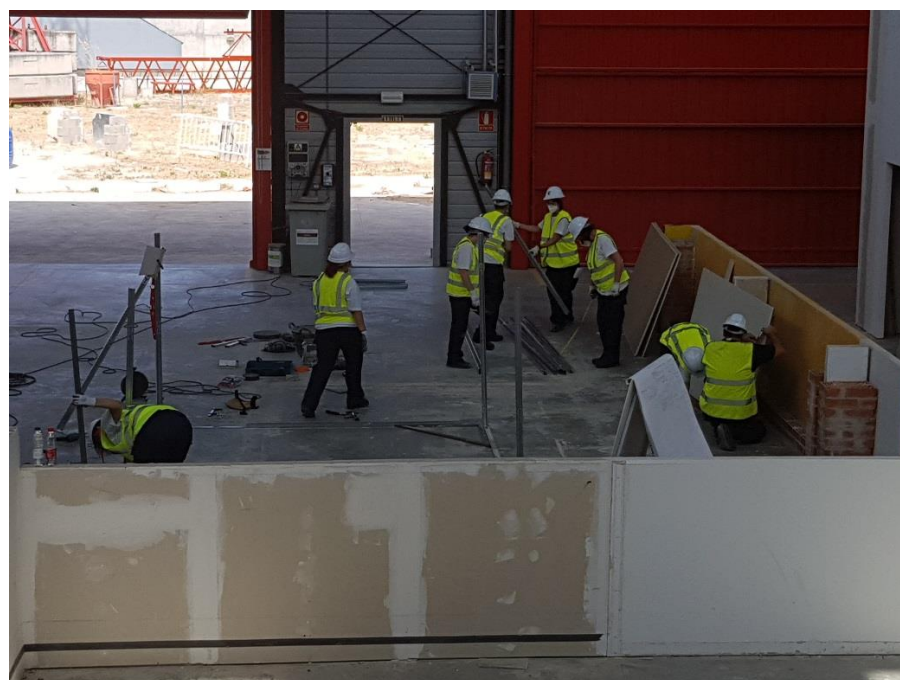


Programación: "Nosotras también construimos, iniciación práctica a la construcción"

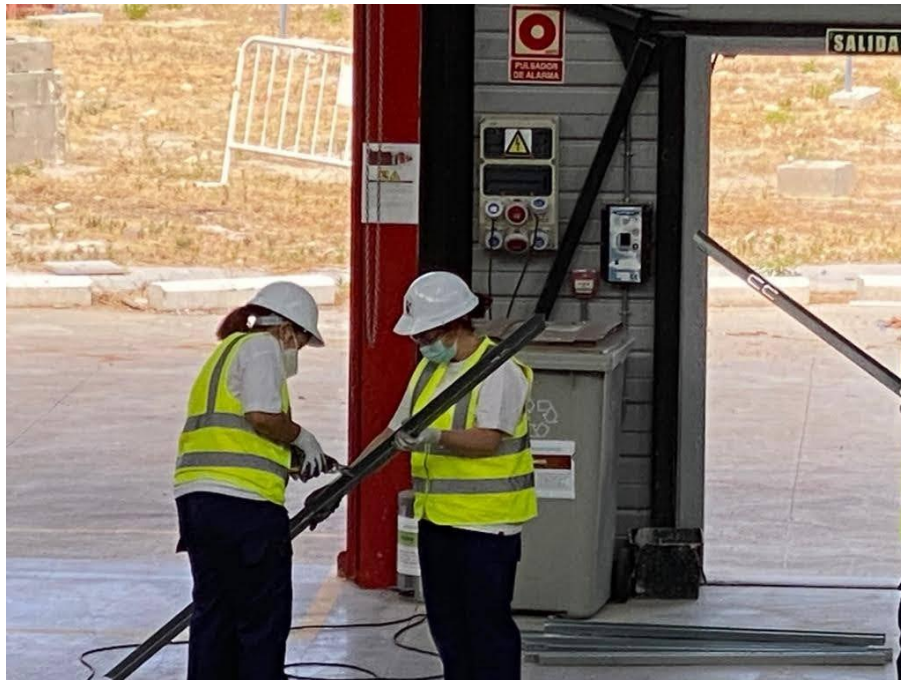
Fecha	Contenido	Lugar
Marzo 25 febrero Miércoles 26 febrero	Proceso de selección (dos mujeres)	Instalaciones AC Agencia de Zona Norte AVENIDA CIUDAD DE BARCELONA S/N, 28057 MADRID 8 horas
	<b> Sesión de orientación inicial </b> Introducción al sector - Caracterización del sector - Distribución de áreas que ofrece - Requisitos básicos de PRL en construcción - Explicación sobre conceptos del curso - De qué va a ir a formar - Para qué va a ir a servir - Qué va a ir a hacer <b> Metodología </b> - Dinámica de grupo para conocerse - Perspectivas e inquietudes de los participantes - Se repartirá la guía de trabajo. Pasa a la grande - Dinámica de motivación (figuras inspiradoras)	Fundación Laboral de la Construcción C/ Rivas, 25, Vicalvaro 28052 Madrid Aula técnica 8 horas
Lunes 5 marzo	<b> Albañilería </b> Levantar un muro de ladrillo	Taller FLC 4 horas
Marzo 12 marzo	<b> Ladrillo - Alicatado </b> Realización de un trabajo de alicatado	Taller FLC 4 horas
Miércoles 13 marzo	<b> Posa terminal </b> Levantamiento de un trabajo acompañado de poses terminal	Taller FLC 4 horas
Jueves 15 marzo	<b> Electricidad </b> Instalación básica de luz sencilla en paramento existente	Taller FLC 4 horas
Viernes 16 marzo	<b> Pintura </b> Realización de un revestimiento Dependiendo de la actividad del curso	Taller FLC 3 horas
Lunes 19 marzo	<b> Sesión de orientación final </b> - Dinámica de grupo y reflexión - Retos de construcción final - Reflexión sobre lo que se ha aprendido - Entrega: acompañamiento/visita a empresas	Instalaciones AC Agencia de Zona Norte AVENIDA CIUDAD DE BARCELONA S/N, 28057 MADRID 8 horas













## 4. Results, successes and learnings

All four Training Centres organized an action that seemed suitable for a chosen target group. The results of the actions took place at several levels. With regards to the participating women those can be seen as practical or internal. The participants of the workshop carried out at BTP CFA reported that they were satisfied to discover trades that were previously unknown to them. They could experience their own hidden talents and capacities they did not know about before. For FORMEDIL this was also the most significant outcome as well as the awareness of being able to carry out the work well. Centre IFAPME evaluated that the most important result is to have been able to give back confidence to women in the process of professional reconversion, through an afternoon of positive exchanges and experiences. Physical results of the different actions were wooden objects such as candleholders, letters or a “micro-house”, which proved that the feeling of being able to carry out a new task could be demonstrated by the creation of physical objects. At BZB the participants were able to undergo theoretically different stages of the value chain and solve problems as a team. The trainers who carried out the actions benefited also from the workshops by gaining more experience in performing a training course outside of the regular training situation and were eager to welcome and look after this new and unusual training group.

The most important insights in terms of learning effects and eye-opening experiences for the project partners can be seen in terms of attitudes, skills and methodology. For BTP CFA and FORMEDIL those insights could be seen in terms of attitudes. The participating women could discover trades that are usually marked as male work and demonstrate that the presence of more women is possible for the construction sector. For BZB the learning effects took place on the level of skills by gaining an insight in different tasks in the construction process such as:

- Read and understand construction plans
- Importance of handling materials and machines correctly
- determine prices
- schedule construction periods
- consider health and safety
- manage skilled workers, materials and machines
- communication, in person and via digital media
- identify methods to gain information

Painting and creating mosaic were particularly successful activities at BTP CFA. For FORMEDIL those were to work with internal insulation. A good combination of theoretical and practical components was beneficial to the participants as was the focus on sustainability. Moreover, their motivation was increased by applying digital contents. FORMEDIL reported a strong commitment of the women who participated in the action.

The participants understood that there are many interesting career paths in the construction industry. The workshop provided them with many tasks within a secure environment where they could explore and make mistakes safely. The workshop in the training centre made the occupations in construction approachable and created a point of contact between the target group and the VET centre.

For Centre IFAPME the project-based approach used in the course (a short theoretical introduction, practical application and the creation of a small object to take home) proved to be particularly effective both in promoting the sector and in valuing the participants who were all beginners. All project partners agree that their target group was suitable for the course.

## 5. Feedback on the events

### 6.1 General feedback

The majority of the feedback received from the wider project environment, the professional world, parents and companies was positive and there was a general openness for the participation of women in the professions of the construction sector. The feedback received at Centre IFAPME was overwhelmingly positive, with many people congratulating the Belgian project partners for the initiative of gender equality in the construction sector. BTP CFA received great feedback from VET centres, girls, women, apprentices and trainers, who all agreed on the necessity to attract more women to the construction branch. Parents, however, were more reticent. The construction sector still remains strongly in the imagination and in popular culture a men's world. BTP CFA mentioned a lack of communication towards the female public regarding the opportunities offered by the sector. This was also confirmed at BZB by young adults who often mentioned, that they do not feel informed enough about the professional opportunities in construction and would like to know more about them. Therefore the presence on trade fairs and the cooperation with schools must be strengthened. More information could also be spread via social media. FORMEDIL added that the project succeeded in making people reflect on the situation of women and their integration into the construction world.

### 6.2 Feedback of the participating women

The four VET centres carried out different actions and focused on topics they considered relevant with regard to their chosen target group within the context of their organization. Therefore the participants had certain expectations when they enrolled to the actions. At FORMEDIL they were interested in learning new skills or knowledge in green technologies in restoration and renovation works. These expectations were met and they learned about internal and external insulation methods with biological materials and received theoretical and practical lessons in eco bricklaying. Other learnings they gained apart from the planned content of the course were team building and support each other to become determined to work on the construction site. At Centre IFAPME the participants expected to discover and try out jobs of the construction sector to see, if they could carry them out. The women's expectations were met. Not only were the participants able to get to know the training centre and the trainers, but they also had the opportunity to produce a small creation with tools and machines. They were also put in contact with the administrative and pedagogical staff and encouraged to contact them directly for personalized guidance, based on past experience and future career aspirations. The participants discovered trades that they knew little or nothing about as well as how to use new tools, machines and techniques. They also learned that the centre and the trainers had experience in training women in the professions of construction and that they could fit in the build environment. At BTP CFA the participants also expected to discover the construction trades and opportunities of future jobs and learned about the wide spectrum of opportunities offered by the construction sector. They considered that some of these paths are easy to choose while other professional paths seemed more difficult. At BZB

the participants expected to try out a feasible practical project with the supervision of experienced trainers. They were interested in the places of learning such as the workshops and eager to be informed about vocational training and further education. The participants rated the practical aspects and tasks of the workshop, the supervision of the trainers, the place of learning and the information they received about vocational education positively. The women wished for more time working on planning activities.

The participants also had the opportunity to state how they perceived the teaching and learning content by the trainers. At all VET centres the trainers received positive feedback to their teaching. BTP CFA explains this by pointing out the sincere involvement of the trainers before and during the action. At Centre IFAPME the participants were impressed by the pedagogy and patience of the trainers with absolute beginners and appreciated the positive experiences about formal female trainees. At FORMEDIL the trainer initially did not believe in the success of the action because he doubted the abilities of the participants.

The impact of the action on the professional choices of the participants at BZB was that all participants agreed on the statement that they are able to understand the technical and planning tasks in small and medium sized companies in the construction sector. Half of the participants said, that their interest in realizing those tasks has risen. The duration of the one week course was perceived as too short. After finishing the action, two participants at BTP CFA were interested in starting to work in the construction trades. One of them applied later at the VET centre as painter and the other one stated that she would start her training in carpentry after completing the EPIDE programme. The group at BTP CFA also perceived the duration of the action as too short. At FORMEDIL some of the women who were just beginning their professional life and showed an interest in pursuing an occupation in construction. Other participants were interested in learning about the topic of Green Building skills and already were registered in the educational programme of the VET centre or even had their own companies. The participants were satisfied with the duration of the course and wished for more information. At Centre IFAPME one of the three women involved in the course was seriously considering enrolling in one of the experimented trades. Even though the experience lasted only one afternoon, the participants found that they learned a lot in 4 hours and appreciated the fruitful exchange with the trainers and the staff of the training centre. Most of the participants said, that they would recommend the action and the training centre to other women.

At all VET centres the participants were questioned about the image they had of the sector and if it changed because of the course. At BTP CFA the participants considered female apprentices as tomboys before participating in the action. This perception changed after they experienced the work themselves. Also they stated that construction is a male world and considered this thought still as true after the immersive training experience. The image of the sector of the participants at FORMEDIL did not change and the project partners argued that a change is only possible if the mindsets of men towards women in those professions will improve. Half of the students participating in the course of BZB stated that they were already interested in technical professions before the workshop was announced. At the end, half of them were interested in planning and managing construction buildings as a professional choice. Therefore the workshop had a positive impact and could maybe support young adults in their decision to opt for those career paths. At Centre IFAPME the participants already had a positive image of the sector prior to the course and the project partners believe that this image was reinforced by the action.



The participants expressed also what they especially liked about the action they attended. At FORMEDIL they enjoyed working in the laboratory all together. According to the participants men should receive training on equal opportunities. At BZB the participated liked to try out a small practical project with the supervision of experienced trainers. They were especially interested in the VET centre as place of learning and were satisfied with the information they received about vocational training and further education. Some of the participants wished to know more about professional paths starting with vocational education and followed by further training. At Centre IFAPME the participants liked the variety of workshops offered and the general atmosphere of the afternoon, which was very positive and welcoming, as were the trainers. The participants would have liked to try out the other two planned workshops (painting and roofing) that had to be cancelled due to the lack of enrolled participants. At BTP CFA the participants also liked the way how trainers and the staff of the VET centre welcomed them. Moreover the organization of the training week was perceived as especially positive as well as the possibility to discover the trades of painting, mosaic and woodwork. According to the participants the training days should be doubled and more exchanges with female apprentices should be planned in order to learn about their paths, experiences and difficulties.



### 6.3 Suggestions for future training actions and projects

Based on the experiences of the training actions, the project partners could formulate suggestions for future projects. These suggestions relate to the organization of the action itself, people who are sceptical toward women working in the sector and the image of the branch.

The main challenge of Centre IFAPME was the recruitment of participants for the course. One possibility to meet this challenge could be to offer the course to women who are on a “break” considering working. Those could refer to women looking for a job or to those who are about to terminate an employment contract or are in a process of reorientation. Due to the image of the sector, for Centre IFAPME it was impossible to convince those women to participate voluntarily in the action. Moreover, future projects could work on developing strategies to promote the sector to a younger female target group (teenagers and young adults) in order to raise awareness towards stereotypes and work on the mindsets of young people. The way of thinking was also a challenge for FORMEDIL. There, men did not believe in the possibility of women to work in construction. Future action should therefore address the mindsets of construction workers and trainers with regard to gender stereotypes of this target group.

For BTP CFA the learning effect was experienced in terms of the organization of the training action and the project partners suggest a more precise scheme for actions following a certain theme. The contents of the actions could be included in the regular training of apprentices addressing the challenge to attract more female VET students to the sector.

The suggestions concerning future training actions and projects made by the project partners of BZB referred also to the concept and realization of the course. BZB proposes that these kind of training experiences could be extended by adding more days and the contents could be developed more detailed. Also, parts of the workshop could be realized on a construction site or building sites could be visited.

The project partners also had ideas about measures to be taken in order to improve the immersive experience in the future. BZB suggested that in order to carry out the workshop properly, more staff is required for the process of organization, media work and post processing. In addition more projects should include contents about sustainability. Another suggestion would be to create more possibilities for young adults to try different tasks. BTP CFA would like to have more time. Centre IFAPME would cooperate with partners with employment services and social organizations that are in direct contact with the target groups, in order to ensure a higher number in participants. FORMEDIL suggested to involve the men working on building sites before and to organize more practical work on site.

## 6. Gender and culture-sensitive communication

While in English the word “student “ is used for all genders, the German language distinguishes between “Schülerin” (female student) and “Schüler” (male student). In order to address a mixed group of students in a speech or in written text, for most of the time it was common to use the male singular (der Schüler) or plural (die Schüler) noun. Only in the last few years there has been a change in the written and spoken language concerning gender appropriate language that addresses women, men and the third gender. In order to learn how to communicate gender sensitive, there are many books, guidelines, articles and advises to find words to address all people in an equal way. In the last years many organizations have already changed or are in the process of changing the way on how they communicate towards reaching gender equality in the language. The effort in changing the way people speak in order to include all genders is big and not easy for everybody. At first it feels unfamiliar to change the way of speaking and writing but through practise it can be learned and internalized. The measures taken at BZB to communicate in a gender and culture-sensitive way in the project and in the course of the immersive experience were also to write gender appropriately and ensure that women are included in the spoken language.

In order to raise awareness towards gender and culture-sensitivity, BTP CFA organized a conference with two stakeholders: The president of the Commission of Craftsmen’s wives and a jurist. FORMEDIL and Centre IFAPME used media for that purpose. FORMEDIL made cartoons (see below) advertising the work of women in the construction sector and Centre IFAPME developed a poster and used friendly illustrations of women in work clothes and with tools of their trades on social media related to this event to encourage women to take up the

challenge of trying out a construction trade and to encourage them to join the sector. Their message was:

“We offer to all women who are interested in the construction trades but who are still hesitating to take the plunge to come and test these trades! Half a day, two trades to choose from, and who knows, maybe a new path in a dynamic and growing sector!”



## 7. Impact

Due to the fact that the women participated between some hours and a week in the workshop and were no longer looked after permanently, long term impacts can not be measured. However, it can be seen that the participants showed more awareness towards the possibilities of the construction sector and finished the actions with a positive feeling which

was reflected in reactions on social media. The exchange of experiences and solidarity strengthened the idea that women can be on site and demonstrated that the sector is accessible to women. The results of the laboratory work will remain visible for the other students and the training centres showed their interest to organize this kind of initiation week on a regular basis. In the long term, the project partners hope that this type of action will strengthen gender equality in the construction industry.

BTP CFA noticed positive behaviour on the part of their VET students: The trainers of the metallurgy-welding workshop prepared the different stations of the workshop with the help of the first-year apprentices (young men between 16 and 19 years old) that had class in the morning. Those apprentices insisted on staying for the afternoon (after their usual class hours) to demonstrate their skills to the women enrolled in the workshop and to promote their job. The trainers really appreciated this unexpected involvement of the apprentices in the workshop, which reinforced the group dynamic at the beginning of the school year and gave the apprentices a sense of value and pride.

## 8. Concept and approach

All project partners agreed that their chosen approaches worked in the courses. The tasks were carried out successfully by the trainers and completed by the participants. For Centre IFAPME the chosen approach to combine short workshops that consisted of a theoretical introduction and immediate practical application was relevant to the objective pursued: to introduce the construction trades to an uninformed public. Centre IFAPME considers that it would have been more difficult to recruit participants for longer workshops, with no guaranteed added value in terms of outcomes.

BZB reflected on the contents of the workshop and was satisfied to have carried out the following tasks:

- Explanation of the work and the client's vision
- Designing the house using software
- Presenting the design
- Planning different tasks of the construction process
- Building a "micro-house"
- Acceptance of the building and settlement with the client

The design and organization of the workshops could be done without great difficulty, thanks to the experience of the training centres and their trainers.

The main challenge to find participants/ attract new VET students does also occur due to the competition of numerous courses of study at universities which are very popular among secondary school students. Centre IFAPME considered offering the course to apprentices who were not working at that time and/or in a process of orientation. But it appeared impossible to convince them to participate voluntarily in the action, due to their negative image of the sector. Perhaps future projects could work on developing strategies to promote the sector to a younger female audience (teenagers and young adults), among who gender stereotypes seem to be more rooted. If Centre IFAPME were to repeat this experience, a cooperation with partners with employment services and social organizations that are in direct contact with the



target groups would be considered useful in order to ensure a higher number of participants. The project partners of FORMEDIL found teachers to be biased and experienced that it took determination to demonstrate them the possibilities for women in the construction sector.

## 9. Publicity work

In order to raise awareness for the project, the partners used different media channels that were visited by various people.

The “Women Can Build” project is visible on the homepage of the BZB. Various women in construction were already interviewed. Those can also be found on the Facebook page of the BZB. In the course of the project there was also contact to a regional newspaper and a magazine for carpenters, which published articles about female apprentices and explained the contents of the “Women Can Build” project. Two apprentices were filmed and interviewed by a television broadcaster. The contents can be seen by students interested in the construction sector, by professionals, stakeholders, multipliers and by readers and audiences that are interested in the topic. In the field of participant acquisition for BZB it seemed that communicating directly with key actor such as dedicated teachers worked well.

NRW / Städte / Krefeld

**RP ONLINE**

Handwerk

**Die Baubranche bekommt ein neues Gesicht**

27. November 2019 um 04:40 Uhr | Lesedauer: 5 Minuten



Mit diesem Aufsteller und Lehrling Esther werben die Bildungszentren des Baugewerbes (BZB) für die Ausbildung zum Maurer. Foto: BZB

Krefeld. Die Baubranche wird jünger, bewusster und stellt sich den Herausforderungen der Zeit. Abiturientin Esther ist ein Beispiel für die neue Generation an Handwerkern. Sie erweitert aktuell ihren Horizont mit einem Team von Auszubildenden bei einem Projekt des BZB im Indischen Ozean.

**Aktuelles**

**Frauen in der Bauwelt  
Women Can Build**



Ob eine duale Ausbildung direkt nach dem Schulabschluss, Studienabschreibern oder Tüchtin von Baustelleneinsteigern: Die Beweggründe und Ausgangspunkte der Auszubildenden sind vielseitig. Deswegen richtet sich das Projekt „Women Can Build“ an Frauen in unterschiedlichen Lebenssituationen, von Schülerinnen über Studienabschreibern, Langzeitarbeitslose bis hin zu Frauen, die sich beruflich umorientieren möchten. Dazu soll ein MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) zum Geschlechterbewusstsein entwickelt werden, der darauf abzielt, kulturelle und soziale Stereotypen sowie Hindernisse bewusst zu machen und zu überwinden. Dieser Kurs soll Auszubildenden und Ausbildungszentren kostenfrei und online zur Verfügung stehen und mit einem Handbuch sowie Arbeitsblättern begleitet werden sowie auch Unternehmen motivieren, weibliche Auszubildende und Fachkräfte einzustellen. In einer weiteren Phase des Projekts sollen Frauen anschließend langfristig ein energieeffizientes Gebäude konzipieren, das neben einem Nullenergiehaus entstehen wird. Somit werden gleichzeitig auch die Themen des nachhaltigen Bauens mit umweltfreundlichen Materialien sowie der Gebäudebruch in den Fokus gerückt. Das Projekt wird vom Essosys-Programm der Europäischen Union gefördert. [www.womencanbuild.eu](http://www.womencanbuild.eu)

Das Projekt „Women Can Build“ wurde mit dem Ziel ins Leben gerufen, die Gleichheit der Geschlechter in der Bauwirtschaft zu fördern. Das Bildungszentrum des Baugewerbes (BZB) in Krefeld beteiligt sich auf europäischer Ebene zusammen mit Bildungszentren aus Spanien, Portugal, Belgien, Frankreich und Italien an dem Projekt. In einem Zeitraum von 36 Monaten (bis August 2020) werden Konzepte erarbeitet, wie geschlechterausgewogene Strukturen im Bauwerk geschaffen werden können, um Chancengleichheit zu gewährleisten und Frauen effektiver in den Arbeitsmarkt der Baubranche einzubinden.

Die Bauwirtschaft ist aufgrund der physischen Arbeitsbedingungen traditionell eine männlich dominierte Branche. Frauen fehlen weibliche Rollenmodelle sowie Mentorinnen, die ein Bewusstsein dafür schaffen, dass eine Ausbildung im Baugewerbe natürlich auch eine Möglichkeit für sie sein kann.

Während dem Projekt „Women Can Build“ möchten die europäischen Partner auf Beispiele von Frauen in der Bauwelt aufmerksam machen. Auf der Internetseite der BZB steht sich jeden Monat eine Auszubildende in einer Interview- und Fotoform vor und berichtet über ihre Erfahrungen.

FORMEDIL used their website and a newspaper with 3.000 subscribers to raise the visibility of the project and Centre IFAPME advertised it on Facebook and LinkedIn. BTP CFA used the social networks (website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) of the VET centre, EPIDE and of the “Women can Build” project website as well as a booklet and a poster. Two outside visitors came during the action: one social assistant who was in charge of one of the girls, and the responsible for EPIDE. External partners called to get to know more about the immersive training experience.

## 10. Transfer, continuity, networking

The participating VET centres organize many different workshops and training courses and are experienced to work with various target groups such as students, who are in professional orientation, apprentices in vocational training and professionals in further education. The contents of the course and the organization and implementation will be transferred to the store of knowledge and can be used for following workshops. BTP CFA envisages including the experiences and creating a mixed group of male and female participants.

The VET centres are open to communicate with regional, national and international partners concerning the results and exchange experiences. The outcomes and photos of the actions were shared on social networks.

BTP CFA resumed the week in a booklet, including the program foreseen and what the participants did. This template can be refined and adapted regarding the age of future volunteers. Once the booklet is ready, it will be uploaded and available for anyone willing to organise an initiation week. With regards to continuity BTP CFA plans to organise actions to the female public on a regular basis.

In order to address the target group of young women, one important aspect is to intensify the contact and communication to teachers and directors of schools. Both female and male students are interested on working on topics that address the zeitgeist as well as the demands of the future. Therefore it is crucial to elaborate on those topics.

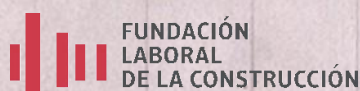
The project partners aim to ensure the transfer of knowledge into the everyday life among the participants. At BZB the participants gained an insight in the different processes in constructing a house. The method applied was action learning. Rather than just listening to the trainer and repeating the task, the students had to participate in solving the task and finishing the project. At Centre IFAPME the participants were given all the necessary information on the training courses offered, the conditions of enrolment and the possibilities of financial support. They were also put in contact with the administrative and pedagogical staff and encouraged to contact them directly for personalized guidance, based on their past experience and future career aspirations. At BTP CFA the initiation week was thought as a serious but playful moment. The idea was to get the participants to discover and learn about the construction trades in a pleasant way so they get back to their usual life with sufficient good memories about what they have done to spread the idea that girls, women are welcomed in this industry, too. Moreover FORMEDIL disseminated the results of the project in the courses at VET centres in order to raise awareness with regards to women working in construction.

During the organization of the immersive learning experiences, the project partners created new contacts and networks or intensified existing ones. For BZB the contacts to the school of the participants were strengthened. FORMEDIL advertised the course in associations of contraction contractors and trade union associations. BTP CFA worked with other VET centres as well as social partners and trade unions.

Other project actors that would be interesting for FORMEDIL would be contacts to companies that build with green methods, since these skills are needed currently and in the future. BTP CFA would like to stay in touch with the centre (EPIDE) where the girls came from and organise other initiation weeks which could be joined by young women and men. BZB would seek more contacts to schools and Centre IFAPME would partner with employment services

and social organizations that are in direct contact with the target groups, in order to ensure a higher number of participants.





**FUNDACIÓN  
LABORAL  
DE LA CONSTRUCCIÓN**

Fundación Laboral de la Construcción  
(FLC). Spain



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PARA EL EMPLEO  
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Agencia para el Empleo del Ayuntamiento de Madrid  
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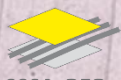
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Centro de Formação Profissional da Indústria da  
Construção Civil e Obras Públicas do Sul (CENFIC).  
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**CCCA-BTP**  
Le réseau de l'apprentissage BTP

Comité de Concertation et de Coordination de  
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**BZB**

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