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# EcoFemSkills Educational Needs Diagnosis: Summary Paper

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## 1. Introduction

The EcoFemSkills project (2023-2-ES01-KA210-ADU-000181192), implemented in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, is a collaborative initiative aiming to equip women from rural and semi-rural areas in Western Greece (Achaia) and Tenerife, Spain with green skills, entrepreneurial tools, training for coping with gender biases so that they can achieve sustainable empowerment. The project is implemented by a consortium led by Precious Plastic Canarias (Spain), in partnership with the Erifyli Center (Greece), DAFNI KEK (Greece) and Factoria Social (Spain).

EcoFemSkills' key objective is to promote sustainability and gender equality through hands-on training workshops using plastic waste as a raw material, and by introducing participants and local societies to the novel DIY Precious Plastic technology. EcoFemSkills aims to build a supportive learning space in which women participants— both locals and migrants—can enhance their employability, challenge gender-related social barriers and support environmental sustainability through skills development and adopting an ecofeminist perspective.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology for assessing the educational needs of the project's target group was drawn from the 'Educational Needs Diagnosis' deliverable of the EcoFemSkills project.



A mixed-method approach was used, combining a self-assessment questionnaire available in Greek and Spanish, filled-in through field interviews and including open-ended responses, as well as quantitative coding of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions. It was made sure that the questionnaires included questions aiming to evaluate both the need and the interest of the women participants mapping knowledge and interest levels and thematic priorities, across the thematics of the EcoFemSkills project: Precious Plastic technology and plastic waste management, environmental education, entrepreneurial empowerment and challenging the gender-based biases.

The questionnaire was distributed to 38 women participants from (semi)rural areas of Greece (Achaia) and Spain (Tenerife) and a respective number of interviews with women from the target demographic. Some women replied online through a form and some in person following the format of the field research interview.

The tool also included sections on demographic information, education and employment, preferred learning methods, barriers to participation and personal expectations.

The purpose of this procedure was to create a series of training workshops across the EcoFemSkills thematics, that would be so stimulating and engaging, as useful and helpful for the women participants, by making sure it is adjusted to their specific needs. But the surveying procedure of the EcoFemSkills diagnostic tool, furthermore provides us with valuable information to further identify the needs of such target groups and assess the value of such projects in women and local communities.

The full questionnaire can be found here:  
<https://forms.gle/jphPSS7szhTTXdi86>



### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Participant Demographics and Background

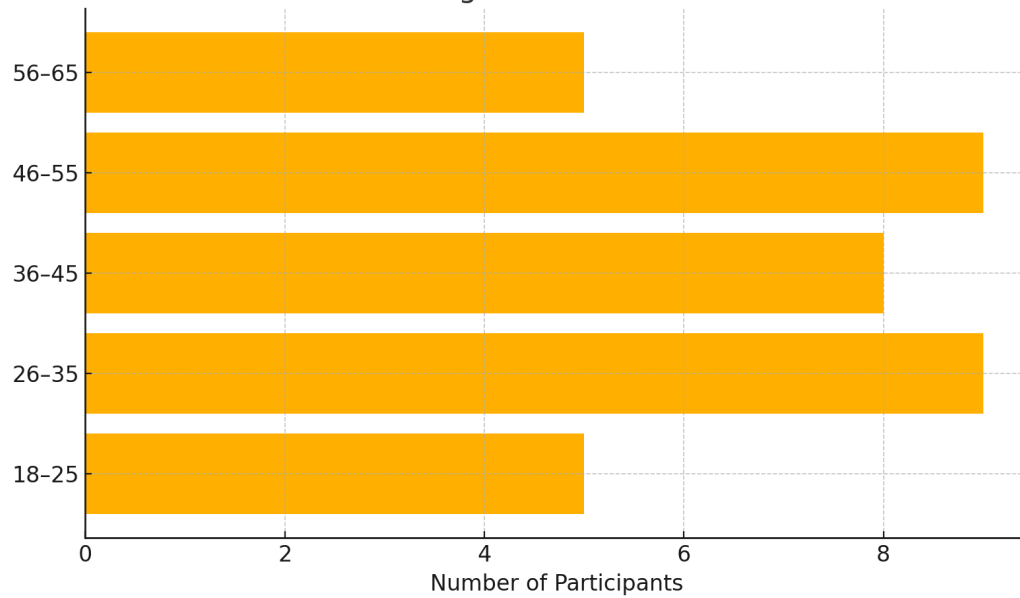
According to the EcoFemSkills project's scope and design all participants that constitute the target group of the project were women from rural and semi-rural areas of Tenerife and Achaia. Most respondents were aged 26–55, with representation across age brackets. Educational background was strong in most participants, with many holding Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Employment status varied, but unemployed/job-seeking was the most common type encountered in the sample of participants, some were part-time/self-employed, and also we had a few full-time or homemakers. Those results demonstrate that there is a need, intention and motivation for adult training and upskilling in this target group across age groups and regardless of educational background but even more for highly educated women. But also a significant issue arises from this dataset, which is no other than the high unemployment rates of women in (semi)rural areas of Europe. As it is stated by [Eurostat, 2024](#) "Within rural areas, female unemployment rates were generally higher than male unemployment rates. In 2023, this pattern was observed in 18 out of 27 EU countries, with the largest gender gaps observed in Greece (where the female unemployment rate for rural areas was 6.9 percentage points higher than the male rate) and Spain (where the female rate was 4.6 points higher)."



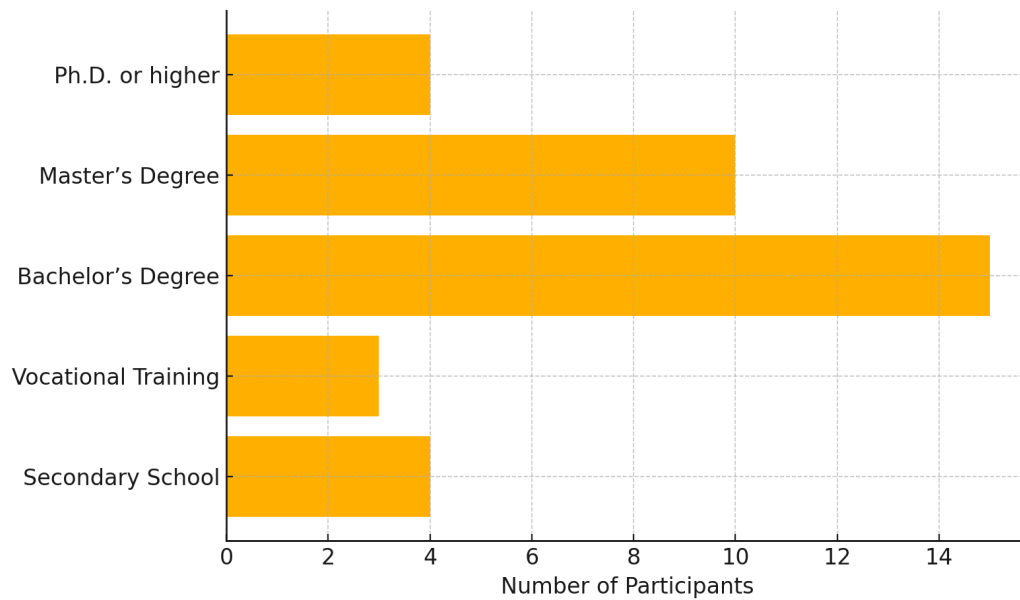
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Age Distribution



Education Level



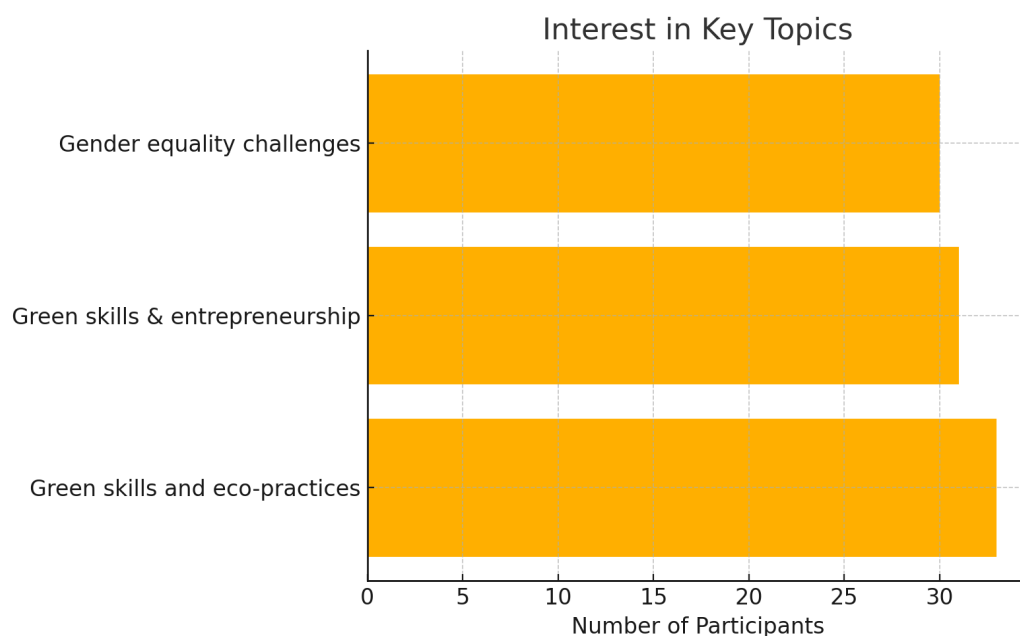


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### 3.2 Knowledge and Interest Areas

Participants expressed high interest in learning about green entrepreneurship and sustainability, showing the need of the participants to turn to green solutions to find jobs. According to the [Global Green Skills Report of LinkedIn, 2023](#), job postings for green employment are growing nearly twice as fast as the number of workers with the skills to fill them. Only one in eight people currently have skills relevant to abating the climate crisis, with women at a particular disadvantage. Hence this interest is a great idea to fill in the gender employment gap in both countries.



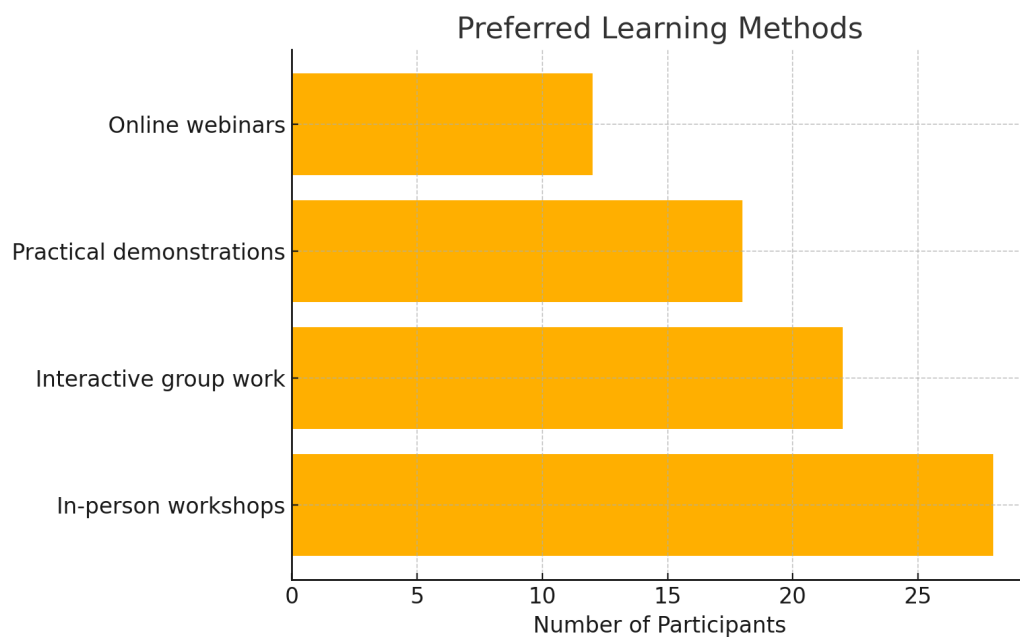
### 3.3 Seminar Expectations and Thematic Priorities

The top expectations included gaining environmental knowledge, entrepreneurial skills and empowerment to start a business. This result in combination with the 3.2. shows that women participants from (semi)rural areas see green entrepreneurship as a solution for unemployment. [Potluri et al., 2024](#) suggest that women-led green entrepreneurship not only may tackle economic exclusion, but also can serve as a vehicle for social innovation, gender empowerment and environmental resilience. Drawing on ecofeminist theory, they argue that women's involvement in sustainable businesses is often driven by values of care, circularity and community well-being. Their research highlights that enabling women to pursue such pathways requires inclusive training, flexible support structures and recognition of informal knowledge systems—core elements of the EcoFemSkills project.



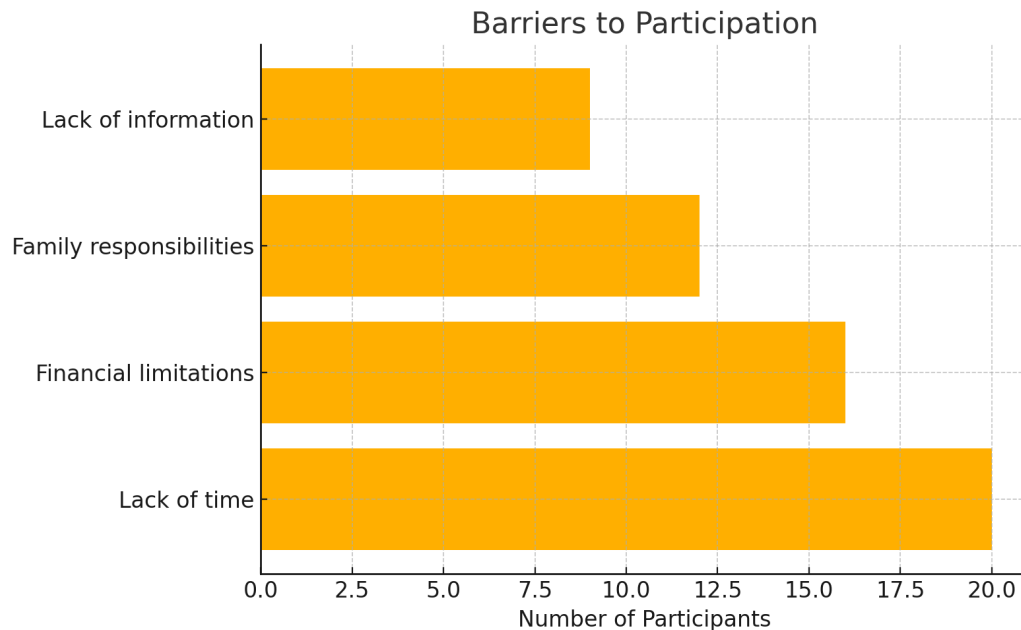
### 3.4 Learning Preferences and Barriers

Preferred learning methods were “in person workshops” and interactive group work, demonstrating clearly the need also for connection and active participation in contrast with the present day isolation and lack of qualitative communication and active listening.





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### 3.5 Life Change Expectations

Participants shared their aspirations and expectations for how the EcoFemSkills experience could influence their lives. These responses fell into four key thematic areas:

#### Employment & Professional Development

- Open new pathways to the labor market
- Gain stable employment (especially to support their families)
- Launch their own businesses
- Improve business and project management skills
- Acquire practical, transferable tools and techniques
- Be introduced to unknown or innovative forms of entrepreneurship

#### Empowerment & Personal Growth

- Feel more confident in their decisions





- Enhance self-esteem and creative potential
- Strengthen their problem-solving capacity
- Reframe their daily lives positively



- Broaden their horizons and mental perspectives
- Take better control of their professional and personal futures
- Gain inspiration from others, especially through creative reuse (e.g., recycled materials)

### **Community & Collective Support**

- Build or expand mutual support networks
- Connect with like-minded women across different communities
- Experience a group learning process that encourages collaboration
- Feel less isolated and more part of a purposeful community
- Create synergy between participants' unique profiles and skills

### **Environmental Awareness & Sustainable Living**

- Deepen their understanding of environmental issues
- Adopt more sustainable practices in their everyday lives
- Inspire older generations (like parents or grandparents) with eco-values
- Discover practical ways to reuse plastic and other waste materials creatively

Their specific responses as testimonials, were grouped below in different but relevant categories. Their answers reflect deep personal motivations and reveal a strong desire for change across four key thematic areas of the EcoFemSkills project.

### **Employment & Professional Development**

- *"To obtain stable employment in order to support my child."*
- *"I hope to acquire new knowledge and tools to improve the management of my business."*
- *"To have carved a clear path to launch my own project."*



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- *"To break out of the daily routine as a retiree."*

### **Empowerment & Personal Growth**

- *"To feel more confident in my choices."*
- *"Feeling that I have new tools within reach."*
- *"To see life more positively."*
- *"I would like to acquire tools that allow me to establish a more self-sufficient and sustainable life."*

### **Community & Collective Support**

- *"To expand my mutual support network and collaborate with others."*
- *"To meet, connect, and share with people who have common interests."*
- *"To gain practical knowledge I can later transfer, contributing to a support network where everyone's skills and profiles can converge."*

### **Environmental Awareness & Creative Inspiration**

- *"I hope to learn techniques, skills and expand my awareness to contribute to environmental preservation and improvement."*
- *"Inspiration and new ideas for recycled materials."*
- *"To be inspired with ideas that help me live more sustainably in everyday life."*



These testimonials demonstrate that participants crave for projects with transformative potential as the EcoFemSkills project aspired to be—not just to find a job or an occupation, but to cultivate ecological consciousness, self-confidence and community solidarity.

## 4. Conclusions

The EcoFemSkills assessment using the educational needs diagnosis questionnaire shows a distinct and urgent need for inclusive, practical and empowering learning pathways among women in rural and semi-rural areas in Greece and Spain. The survey participants in this study were women who faced multiple barriers to inclusion (unemployment, limited training opportunities, and social exclusion), but highlighted their desire and motivation to develop green competencies, start their own enterprises and reconnect with their community and sense of purpose in their lives.

In all project thematics: plastic DIY recycling, environmental awareness, gender empowerment and entrepreneurial readiness, the findings highlight a vibrant potential for transformation since training is rooted in real-life needs and lived experiences. In particular, respondents showed a desire to gain green technical skills but also to cultivate personal agency, not only for themselves but in challenging societal gender exclusionary norms and building women networks of support.

The data showed that green entrepreneurship was broadly perceived as a positive channel towards exiting unemployment and social isolation. But, for the extent of this potential to be realised the learning opportunities need to be:



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- modular and responsive to different knowledge levels and circumstances,
- participatory emphasizing cooperation among participants and co-creation as well collaborative support,
- linking care for the environment with social/feminist justice and equity,
- accessible: face-to-face mainly to ensure vital communication and community building but also hybrid formats in ways that allow flexibility to minimize logistical, economic and time barriers.



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## 5. Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

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