

# THE DIY

DO IT YOURSELF



# WORKSHOPS

## Common European Report



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# INTRODUCTION

As part of the Erasmus+ DIY project (DO IT YOURSELF), a series of practical workshops were implemented in rural communities in Spain and Ireland.

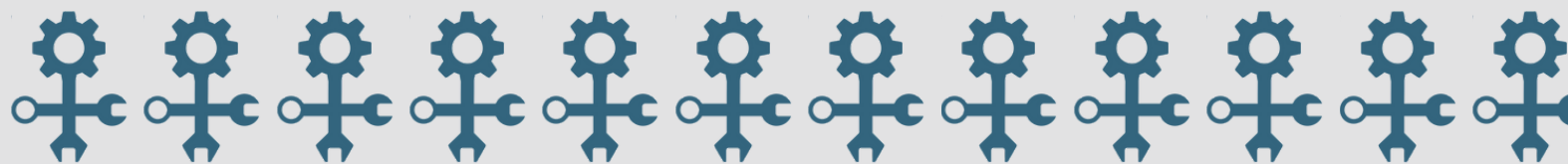
The objective was to empower women and adult learners by equipping them with practical home maintenance skills, fostering social inclusion, and promoting independence.

This phase of the project proved to be a dynamic action research process, where the creation of the project handbook and the delivery of the workshops happened simultaneously to ensure maximum relevance.



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# IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

Originally, the project planned to write the manual first, then teach it. However, both partners agreed to an action research model based on the following:

## **Learning by doing**

We realised it was better to create the manual whilst doing the practical workshops.

Questions asked by participants during the workshops were immediately documented to become content for the handbook.

## **Real-time feedback**

## **EU flexibility**

This amendment allowed for a more organic and "hands-on" learning experience.



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# PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS



**Ireland**  
**(I&F Education)**

Venues

- Sean Ogs (Kilmuckridge)
- Private Art Studio
- Local Gardens

Approach: A "Women's Shed" atmosphere focusing on social connection and community building.

Municipal Library  
of Villaharta •

Private Homes in  
Sierra Morena •

Venues

Approach: Focused on overcoming "technical fear" and professional safety protocols.

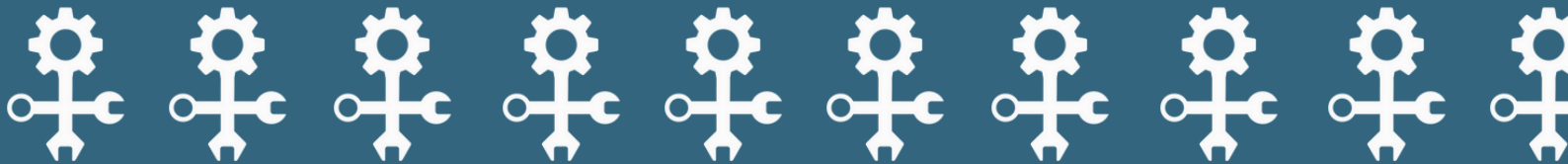


**Spain**  
**(Asociación Villafuente)**



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# CURRICULUM AND MODULES

The workshops covered 6 core modules adapted to local needs:



## INTRODUCTION TO

various tools and the safety protocols

## HANGING OF

pictures and shelves



## BASIC ELECTRICAL

Changing plugs, fuses, and locating faulty circuit on fuse board

## BASIC PLUMBING

how to fix leaking, how to bleed radiators, and how to unblock sink trap



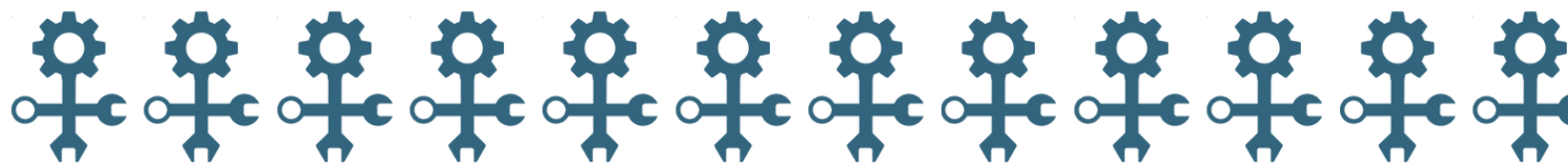
## PAINTING AND DECORATING

## GARDENING, PLANTING AND SOWING



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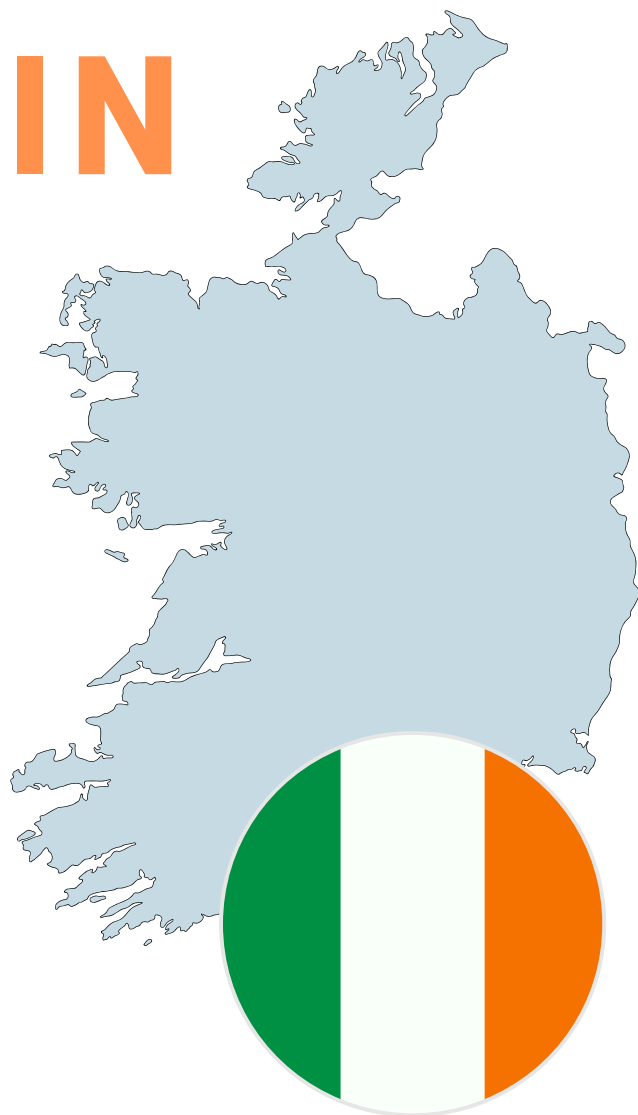


# IMPACT IN IRELAND

The Irish workshops were defined by their creative, project-based approach.

Module 1 - Introduction to Tools and Safety was the foundation of the group's growing confidence.

To demystify the "scary" equipment that many participants had in their sheds but were afraid to use, the group collaborated to create a "Dictionary for Tools" to clarify terminology.



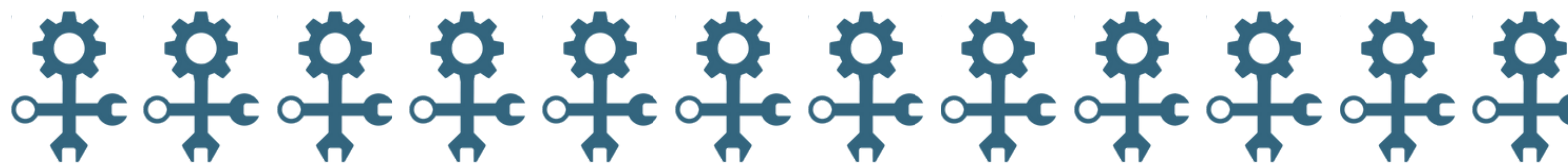
This initiative fostered a safety-first culture where wearing goggles and gloves became second nature rather than a burden



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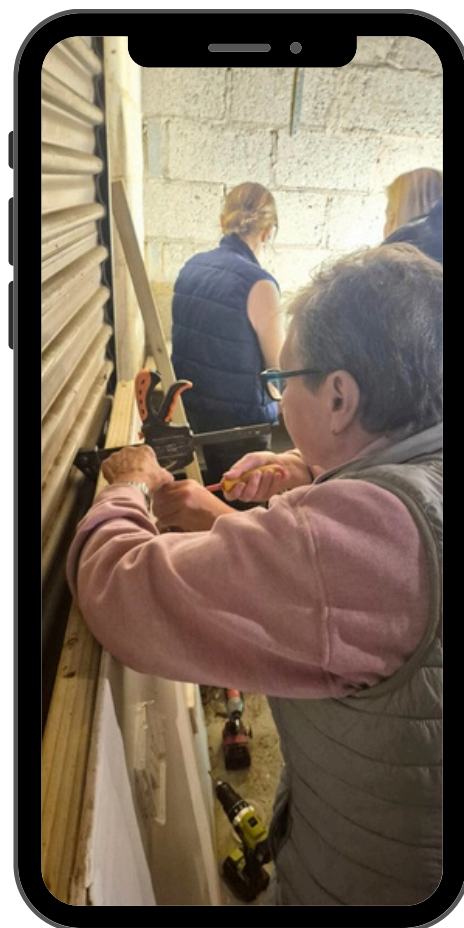


# IMPACT IN IRELAND

Held in late September 2025, the session on Module 2 - Hanging of Pictures and Shelves was described by the group as a "huge success".

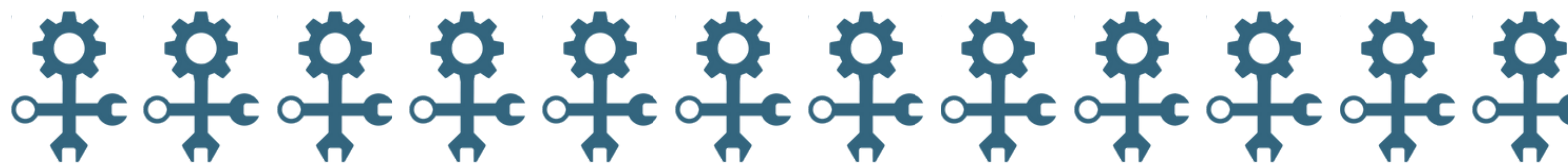
It tackled the specific aesthetic fear of damaging one's own walls.

By practicing the "measure twice, drill once" philosophy and using spirit levels, participants gained the practical skill to independently decorate their homes without waiting for external help.



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# IMPACT IN IRELAND

The electrical module was cleverly integrated into the group's innovative "Map My Home" concept.

The challenge for many was understanding the "mystery" of the fuse board without needing to be a qualified electrician.

Through the mapping exercise, participants learned to identify faulty circuits and locate the main fuse board, empowering them to safely reset a trip switch or identify a blown fuse during a power cut.



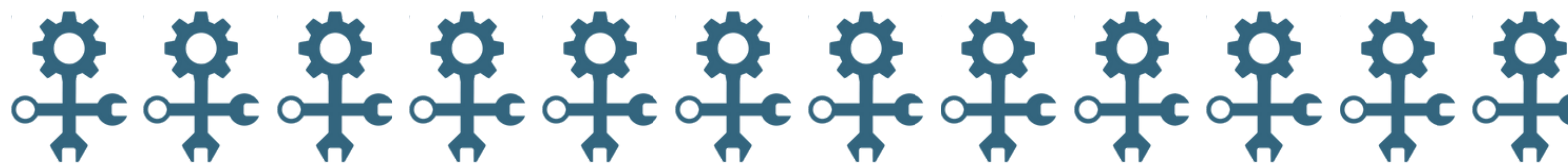
The group constructed this "Template Wall" by mounting a real light switch and double socket onto a plasterboard frame.



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# IMPACT IN IRELAND

Much like the electrical module, plumbing (Module 4) focused on immediate emergency response.



The session addressed the anxiety of knowing exactly what to do in the first few minutes of a household water leak.

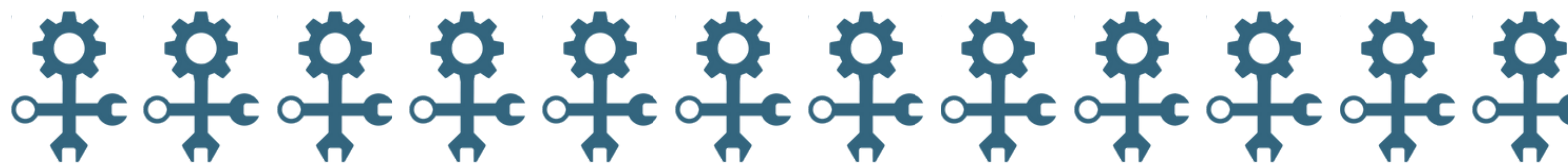
This birthed the practical application of the "Map My Home" idea, providing a visual guide for every participant to locate their stopcock and mains water valve.

The result was a dramatic reduction in anxiety about household emergencies, as participants now know exactly where to turn the water off.



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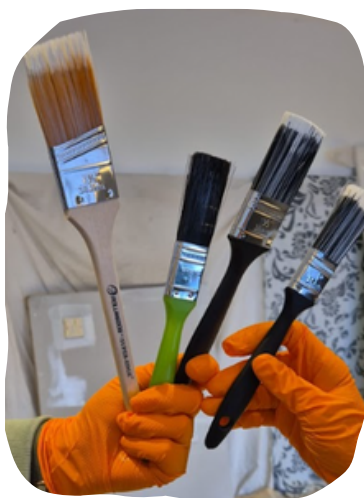


# IMPACT IN IRELAND

For the Painting and Decorating module (5), the group didn't just paint a flat board, but instead they constructed realistic stud Walls. These are timber frames covered with plasterboard, complete with plug sockets and light switches.



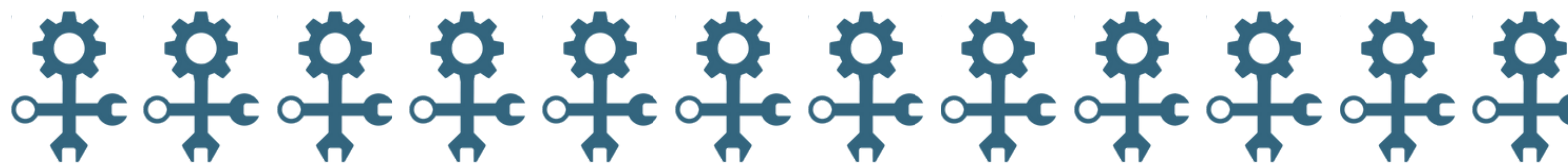
This allowed participants to practise the most intimidating parts of decorating: cutting in around obstacles and preparing surfaces. The group emphasised that preparation is the most important part, spending time sanding and cleaning before a single drop of paint was applied.



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# IMPACT IN IRELAND

The Gardening, Planting, and Sowing module took participants out of the classroom and into the soil.

Focused on the cost-of-living crisis, the group learned to "grow a full meal" (potatoes and salad) using everyday items.

They also learned how to transform 2-litre milk bottles and toilet roll tubes into seedling planters, proving that DIY sustainability is accessible to everyone.



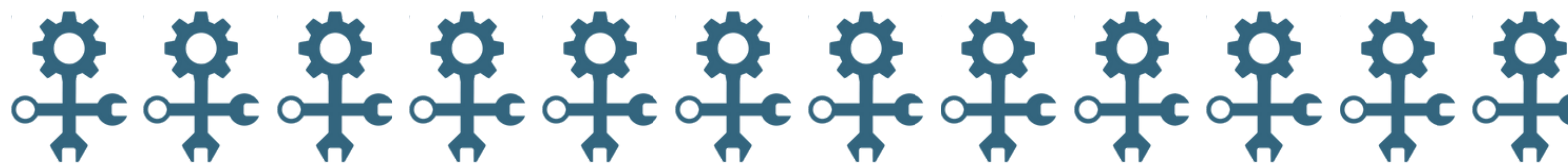
The women's shed vibe beyond the skills, the workshops became a social hub. Meetings were filled with "tea and chats," where sharing "funny stories" about past DIY mistakes created a safe, non-judgmental space to learn from mistakes.



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# IMPACT IN SPAIN



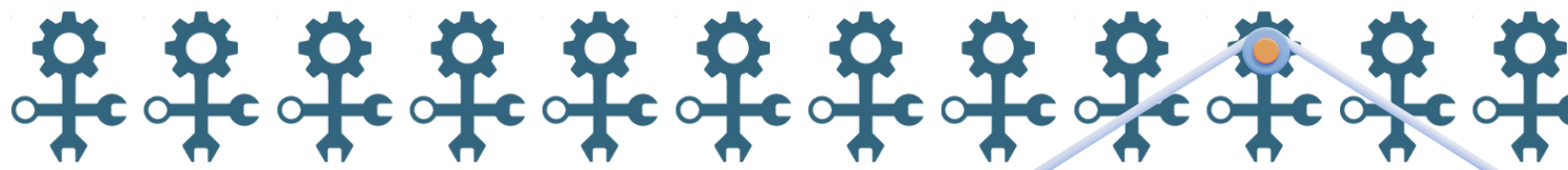
In Spain, the narrative was one of overcoming deep-seated anxieties regarding "technical" work.

For many participants, power tools represented a boundary they had never crossed. This session focused on dismantling that intimidation factor. By introducing essential tools like hammer drills, sanders, and jigsaws in a controlled environment, the group learned not just how to use them, but how to do so safely. The workshop emphasized that safety is the foundation of autonomy; learning proper posture, checking tool conditions, and wearing protective gear allowed the women to move from hesitation to handling equipment with authority.



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# IMPACT IN SPAIN



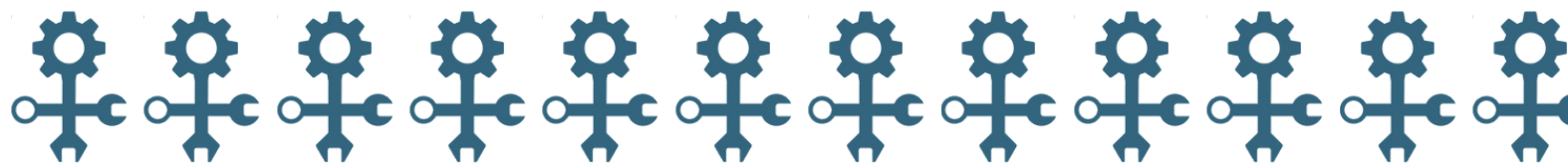
Module Module 2 - Hanging of Pictures and Shelves transformed the concept of "drilling a hole" from a gamble into a science. The session moved beyond the drill itself to focus on the wall; participants learned to identify surfaces, distinguishing between brick, concrete, and "pladur" (drywall), to select the correct anchor for the job.

By practicing the use of levels and tape measures, the group discovered that the secret to a straight shelf lies in the planning. The hands-on practice gave them the confidence to perform one of the most common, yet daunting, household tasks.

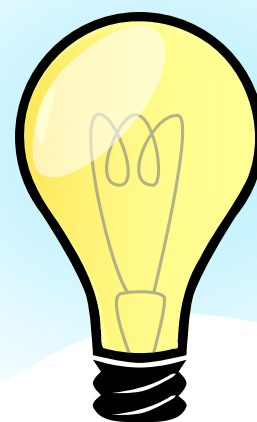


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# IMPACT IN SPAIN

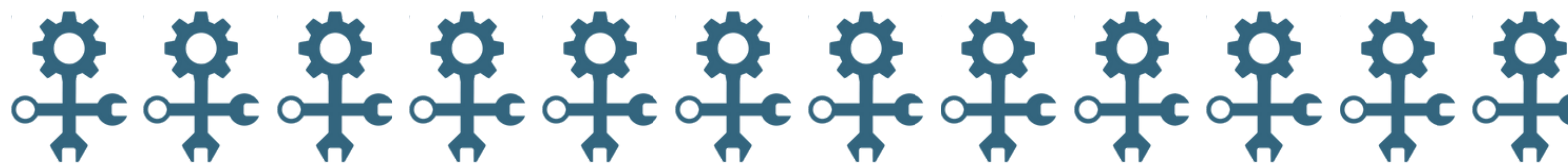


Electricity often provokes anxiety, so this workshop was designed to demystify the grid. The group started with the essentials of safety, learning to identify the phase, neutral, and earth wires, and understanding the critical importance of the main circuit breaker. Through guided practice, the women moved past their initial fears to perform tangible repairs, such as safely changing a deteriorated plug and assembling a simple lamp holder. The transition from anxiety to competence was palpable as they realized they could manage basic electrical maintenance without immediate professional help.

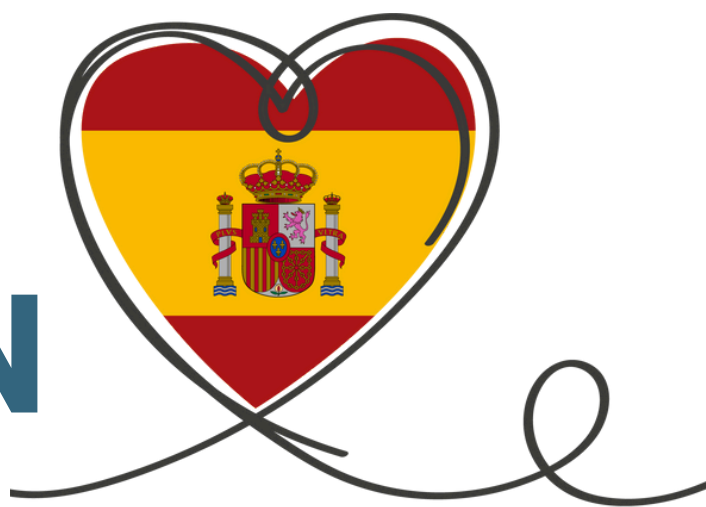


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# IMPACT IN SPAIN

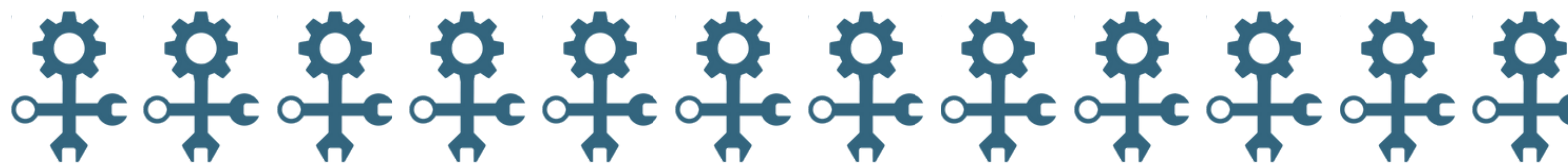


The plumbing session was defined by a hands-on, "get your hands dirty" approach. Participants worked directly with siphons, taps, and valves to understand how water moves through their homes. They tackled common nuisances like leaking taps by learning to change gaskets and washers, and practiced disassembling drainage traps to clear blockages manually.

The atmosphere was one of cooperation and humor; dealing with water meant accepting the occasional splash, which helped diffuse the tension and proved that plumbing problems are solvable with patience and the right wrench.



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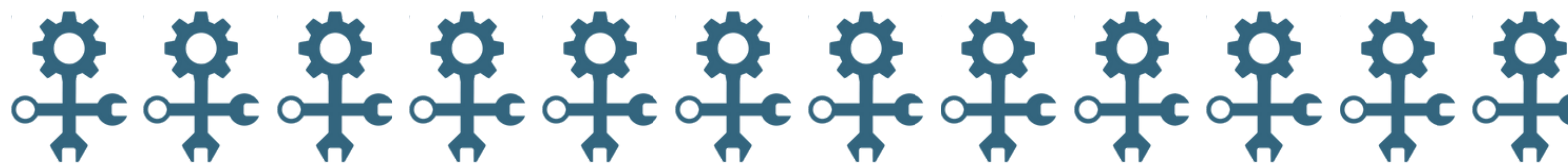
# IMPACT IN SPAIN

The workshop on painting and decorating was unique because it took place in the actual home of a participant, adding a layer of real-world pressure and pride. The group tackled the painting of interior walls, doors, and window sills, quickly learning that the brushwork is only the final step. The session emphasised that a professional finish is 90% preparation; the women spent significant time cleaning, sanding, and applying primer to ensure the result would last. Seeing a real space transform under their hands provided an immediate sense of accomplishment and encouraged them to tackle similar projects in their own homes.



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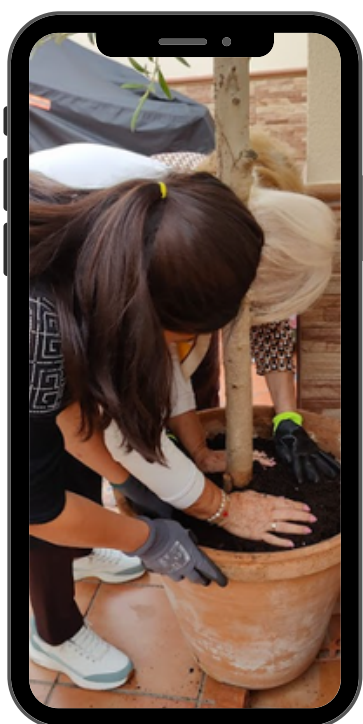




# IMPACT IN SPAIN

Held in a relaxed outdoor setting, the session on Module 6- Gardening, Planting, and Sowing connected technical care with nature. The workshop went beyond simple watering, teaching the group about the specific needs of substrates, drainage, and exposure for different plants.

Participants practiced transplanting seedlings and preparing soil mixes, exchanging home remedies for natural pest control like potassium soap or diluted vinegar. It was a moment of collective learning where technical advice on drainage mixed with shared personal experiences, reinforcing the communal aspect of the project.



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# INNOVATION AND LOCAL ADAPTATIONS



## IRELAND

A unique concept emerged from the Irish group: creating a visual map of the home that highlights critical control points, such as where to turn off the water or the main fuse board.

This tool empowers women to act fast in emergencies.

The Spanish group focused on diagnostic logic.

They developed guides on how to detect pipes/cables inside walls before drilling, ensuring safety and preventing accidents.

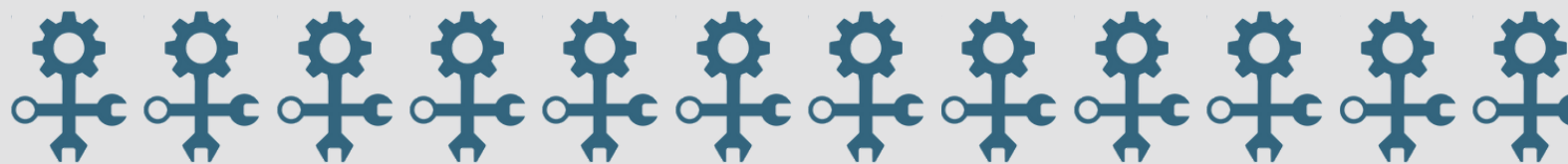


## SPAIN



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# PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK

The quantitative data shows high retention rates, but the true measure of success was found in the atmosphere of the workshops.

In both countries, the feedback revealed that these sessions provided something more than just technical skills: they provided a space for connection, vulnerability, and laughter.

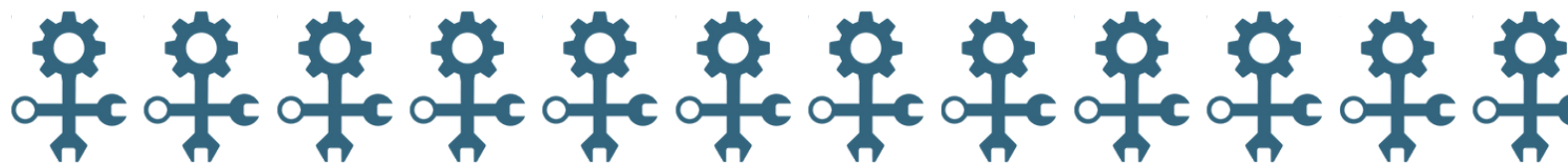


**We feel more secure and prepared to handle tools we used to fear.**

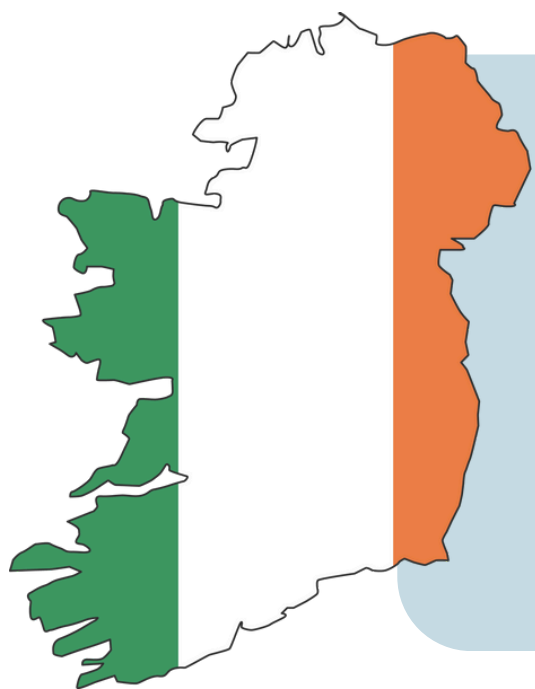


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# PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK

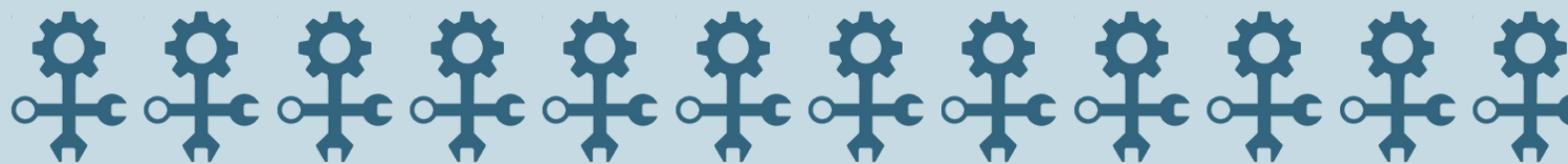


In Wexford, the feedback loop was characterised by a distinct sense of camaraderie. Participants didn't just want to learn the "perfect" way to do things; they wanted to share their mistakes and struggles.

In Córdoba, the feedback narrative went from anxiety to empowerment. Initial surveys showed a hesitation to touch infrastructure due to cultural barriers.



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# IRELAND: CONNECTION AND SOCIAL HUB



The Rural DIY Skills Project evolved quickly from simple training sessions into a transformative experience for women in the community. What began as a workshop to teach practical skills turned into a vibrant hub of empowerment. This supportive atmosphere allowed them to overcome the stereotype that women can't do DIY, replacing hesitation with a deep sense of independence and capability.



This sense of shared contribution extended to the outdoors, where the group tackled gardening modules to grow salads and vegetables.

However, the most lasting impact was the connection formed between participants.

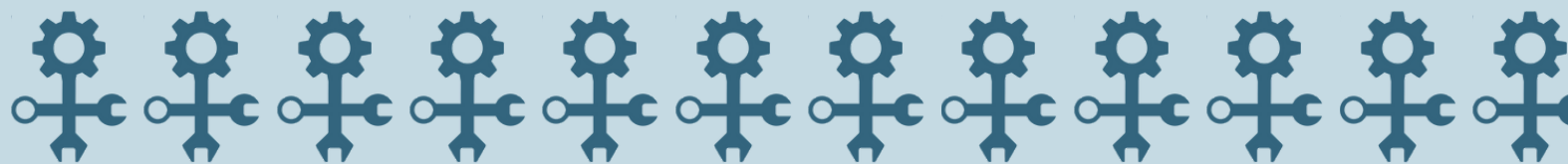
As noted by several participants, the workshops helped fight rural isolation, turning a group of strangers into a lifelong circle of friends.



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# SPAIN:

## HUMOUR AND THE HUNGER FOR MORE

For the Spanish group, the journey was about transforming anxiety into confidence. The plumbing workshop was a turning point; the group used humour as a vital tool to diffuse the tension of "technical" work. Shared laughter, especially when dealing with accidental water leaks during practice, helped break down the fear of failure and the stigma that technical repairs are "too hard".

The engagement was so high that the primary critique was a positive one: a demand for more.

Participants specifically requested the creation of video tutorials and online content, indicating a strong desire to continue their education at home beyond the physical workshops.



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# MULTIPLIER EVENTS

On November 28, 2025, Asociación Villafuente welcomed 25 participants to the Edificio Baobab in Córdoba. The event served as more than just a presentation; it was a vibrant forum for rural women to share their personal victories.

Attendees engaged in a lively Q&A session, sharing stories of how they had already applied their new skills, from fixing leaks to hanging shelves independently. The atmosphere was one of empowerment, highlighting how practical education directly translates to personal autonomy. As a symbolic parting gift, each participant received a screwdriver featuring an inspiring message, a tangible reminder of their ability to take initiative.

To empower immediate action, each participant received a set of two small screwdrivers along with a card featuring an inspirational quote. At the end of the multiplier, the women read these messages aloud: a collective declaration of their new independence and capability.



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# MULTIPLIER EVENTS

Held on November 21, 2025, at Sean Ogs in Kilmuckridge, the Irish event was described as a "true celebration".



With 21 attendees, the evening focused on the strong support network that had evolved over the year. The event showcased the project resources (the manual and workshop guides) but the true highlight was the emotional journey shared by the women. Participants spoke passionately about the friendships formed and the confidence gained.

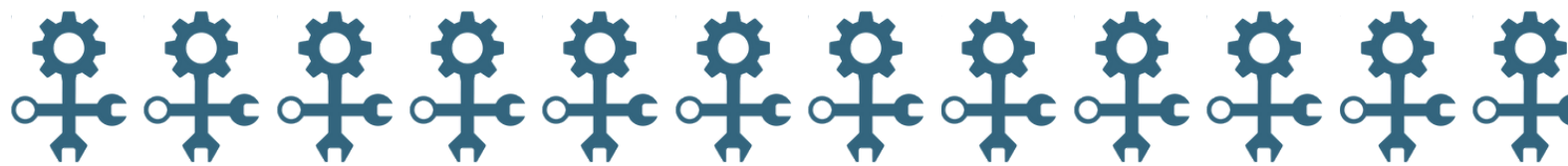
The event successfully welcomed new women into the fold, ensuring that the "Women's Shed" group will continue to thrive well into 2026.



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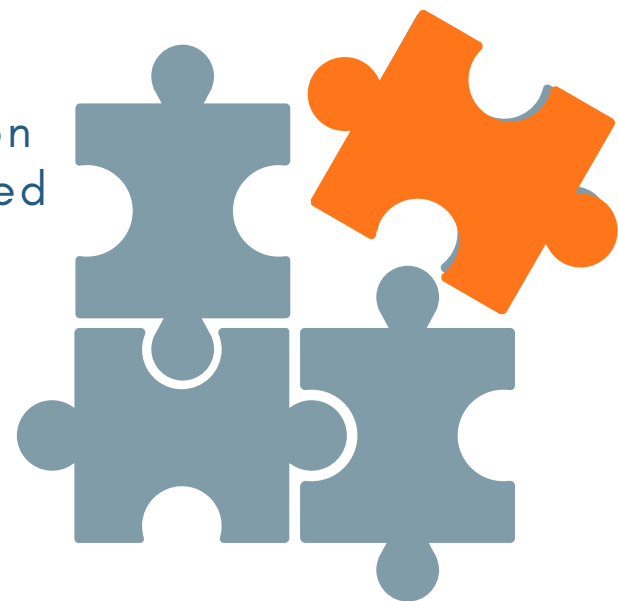
# CONCLUSIONS

The most significant finding of the national workshops was the validation of our methodological amendment. By shifting from a linear timeline to a simultaneous workshop + handbook approach, we transformed the project into a true action research initiative.

The educational materials was not just delivered to the women. They were co-created by them based on real-time needs, ensuring the final handbook is 100% relevant to the rural experience.

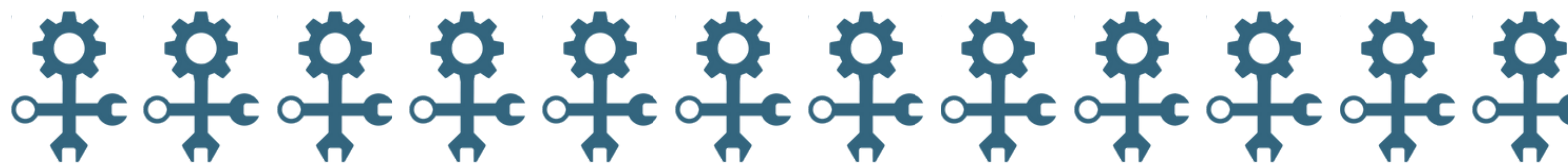
The project successfully bridged the gap between "novice" and "capable." In Spain, the narrative moved from fear of infrastructure to technical competence in plumbing and electricity.

In Ireland, it moved from hesitation to the creative confidence required to build stud walls and "transform a room". In both regions, women have reclaimed agency over their domestic environments.



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# CONCLUSIONS

Beyond the technical skills, the workshops acted as a vital social glue. Whether through the "Women's Shed" atmosphere in Ireland or the collaborative problem-solving in Spain, the project created sustainable local support networks. These groups have expressed a clear desire to continue meeting, proving that the DIY project built community just as effectively as it built shelves.

The DIY Workshops successfully challenged gender stereotypes in the domestic sphere, proving that with the right community support, there is no tool that is "too technical" for anyone.





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<https://villafuente.es/>



<https://instructionandformation.ie/>



[www.diy-project.eu](http://www.diy-project.eu)



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