

## Expected outcomes

**3 Learning Paths** targeting girls and women of different ages and providing them with technical knowledge, practical learning and collaborative skills as appropriate for the group.

1. Curiosity engages 150 girls aged 8-18 in textile and clothing activities designed and delivered in close collaboration with schools and science museums, in order to raise awareness of innovation for those participating.
2. Discovery works with 75 women aged 18-25 who come from textile and fashion universities or institutes. The young women gain leading edge skills by being exposed to innovative practices and Institutions embed modules into existing curricula.
3. The Innovation pathway, finally, addresses 50 women aged 25 and up who have been through some professional training or have had jobs in the T&C industry. The path aims at making them aware of possibilities opened by innovation.

### Definition of terms

**Learning paths:** Behavioural change mechanisms encouraging young girls and women to become innovators following development trajectories that map on to three key life transitions: school; higher education and work.

**Innovation services:** A bundle of resources – including outreach activities, learning events and Lab-based experiments – at the community level, engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including grassroots organisations, schools, museums, and start-up incubators – in collaborative work to bring about change in public perception of gender issues.

**Reputation management:** A leadership promotion mechanism for advisors, Gurus and Ambassadors from within the shemakes network.

### 3 types of with the community

1. Active contribution and participation of relevant individuals and organisations of the local community to the curricula, the modules delivered and the on-going Toolkit in 3 contemporary themes of innovation e.g. wearables
2. Lab-to-Lab projects engaging 50 participants in promoting a more female oriented approach to science and technology research.
3. Business engagement targeting women with an entrepreneurial potential, coming from the Fabricademy and TCBL networks, and matching them with TCBL businesses or start-ups with a specific innovation need. This activity is to lead to at least six start-up opportunities and six new business lines for existing companies.

### Sources

*Used to prepare this policy brief*

This brief is based on the following project deliverables: **D2.1** "Learning Paths: Launch Toolkit" (March 2021), **D3.1** "Innovation Service: Launch Toolkit" (April 2021), **D4.1** "Reputation: Launch Toolkit" (March 2021), **D5.1** "Evaluation Design and Plan" (March 2021). We are grateful to I. Berentzen, A. Cabrera, J. Cullen, A. Gheorghica, C. Guillemot, K. Junge, A. Korey, N. Lichtenthäler, J. Marsh, C. Olivotto, A. Pistofidou, C. Raspanti, M. Real, N. Robles, B. Sandini, E. Sandu, V. Senave, and A. Sofronea - Spataru for their precious insights.

### About shemakes - [shemakes.eu/about](https://shemakes.eu/about)

#### Opportunity Ecosystems Bridging the Gender Gap H2020 - EU.5-101006203

The shemakes Coordination and Support Action aims to empower future female innovators of the sustainable fashion industry through a three-pronged approach of inspiration, skills, and networks. Shemakes provides innovative learning paths, concrete business support and network connections, and inspiring stories of female role models for girls and women of a range of age groups. The consortium includes ten public and private sector organisations from seven EU Member or Associated States. With six "core" Labs and programmed expansion to additional labs, the project has been designed with replicability and scalability in mind through the creation of a European network (see [shemakes.eu/network](https://shemakes.eu/network)).

#### Acknowledgements & contact

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**shemakes**

[shemakes.eu](https://shemakes.eu)



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**WaysForward  
forGender**

**N.1**  
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# Gender Transformative Innovation Ecosystem

**The shemakes.eu project addresses the gender gap in the textile and clothing industry by providing skills, networking and business opportunities designed to increase innovation and sustainability in the sector.**



## Challenges

**Gender equality** is the fifth Sustainable Development Goal and is a **priority for the textile and clothing industry**. In Europe, this sector is made up of 170,000 mostly micro, small and medium enterprises [1], and an estimated 75% of its workers are women [2]. Within the EU, the gender employment gap stands at 11% and the gender pay gap at 16%, having improved only minimally over the last decade. Around 30% of the gender pay gap is due to the overrepresentation of women in relatively low-paying sectors [3], and this is absolutely true in T&C, despite research that clearly demonstrates a connection between gender diversity, innovation and profitability [4].

According to EU Gender Equality Strategy, challenging stereotypes is an integral part of a full-blown mainstreaming plan. It is therefore vital to couple affirmative action with changes in public perception of the gender issue at the workplace. The H2020 project shemakes.eu addresses the gender employment and pay gap focusing on the Textile and Clothing sector. It does so by adding value through innovation to activities in which women mostly work and thus challenges the stereotypes surrounding their roles in this sector.

#### Sources:

- [1] [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/662903/IPOL\\_STU\(2021\)662903\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/662903/IPOL_STU(2021)662903_EN.pdf)
- [2] <https://euratex.eu/wp-content/uploads/EURATEX-Facts-Key-Figures-2020-LQ.pdf>
- [3] [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/gender-pay-gap-situation-eu\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/gender-pay-gap-situation-eu_en)
- [4] <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/manufacturing/articles/women-in-manufacturing-industrial-products-and-services.html>

# Project ecosystem

An **integrated innovation ecosystem** is being developed at EU level, in which life and job opportunities for women in the Textile and Clothing sector are re-thought and based on higher technological knowledge as well as more sustainable design and production in order to increase their positive impacts on the economy. This involves building bridges between traditional technical crafts and contemporary (digital) technologies or skills, which is crucial to disrupt stereotypes and create new opportunities within the T&C sector as a whole. In fact, shemakes.eu brings together two existing innovation ecosystems that offer their specific ways of working to the project: **Fabricademy** (<https://textile-academy.org/>) and **TCBL** (<https://tcbl.eu/>). Fabricademy provides a transdisciplinary curriculum, which focuses on the development of new technologies applied to the textile sector, and is inspired by the FabLab “hacker and maker” alternative education. TCBL is a network of Textile and Clothing Labs that explores and co-designs innovation with their local communities, women and girls as well as businesses, to produce real-life cases with higher probability for further uptake.



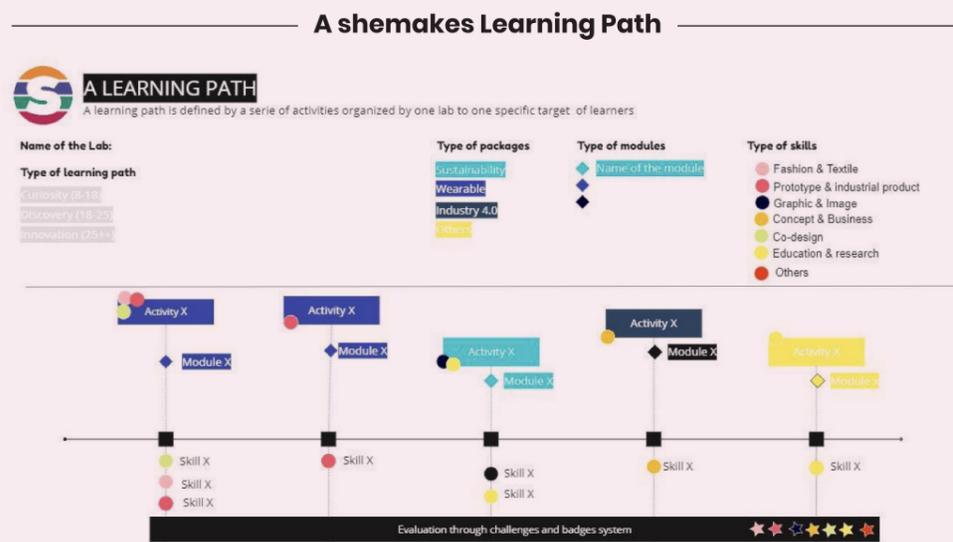
This integration results in shemakes labs, the core of a **“gender-responsive” innovation ecosystem**. There, experimenting with new activities raises women and girls’ appetite for tech-based and social innovation, which helps re-framing their value thus increasing their socio-economic role and their social equity. Responsiveness works as a transformative cycle, that starts with alternative learning-by-doing activities in the 6 partner Labs. Contemporary much needed skills in such areas as wearable technology or industry 4.0 are practiced in a collective process to make mock-ups, prototypes or artistic artefacts as well as documentation and reflection on these experimentations. Part of the innovation process is about engaging the shemakes’ labs communities into designing the best support engagement of women and girls, from institutions to businesses. This multi-faceted innovation, both research and community led, results in reconsidering previously low-paid skills or minor jobs in the T&C sector. Increased value added also means increased social and economic equity for women, which is expanded in scale and scope as **the initial network of Labs is expected to steadily grow during the project**.

# Project intervention axes

More in detail, the project activities are structured along three intervention axes - **Learning Paths**, Innovation Services and Reputation Management – which can be described as follows.

The learning-by-doing activities are defined through three Learning Paths, each representing a series of activities organized by a Lab on one specific target of learners – girls, young women and women. Each activity can be associated with an existing Fabricademy training package that is reinforcing a set of specific skills.

The Learning Paths are important fuel for knowledge exchanges, individual and collective experiences or synergies, all encouraging self-empowerment at local and global scale.



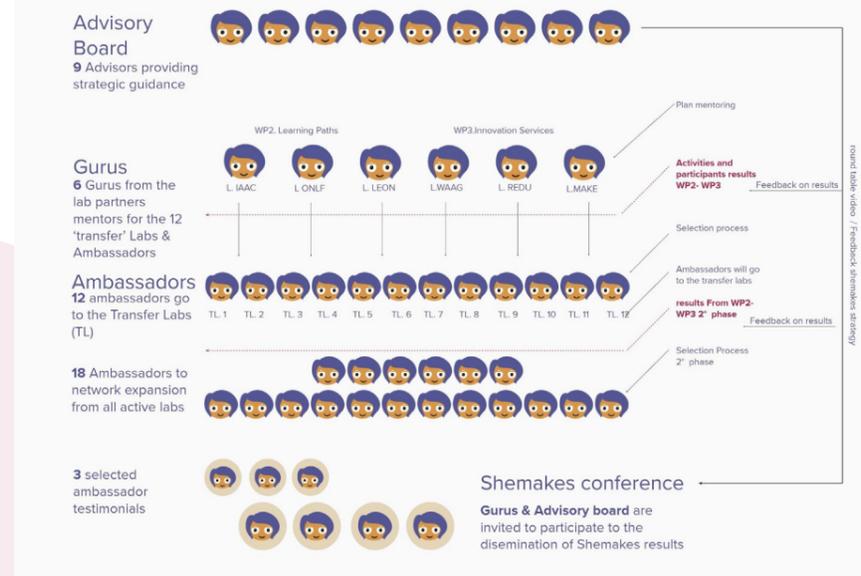
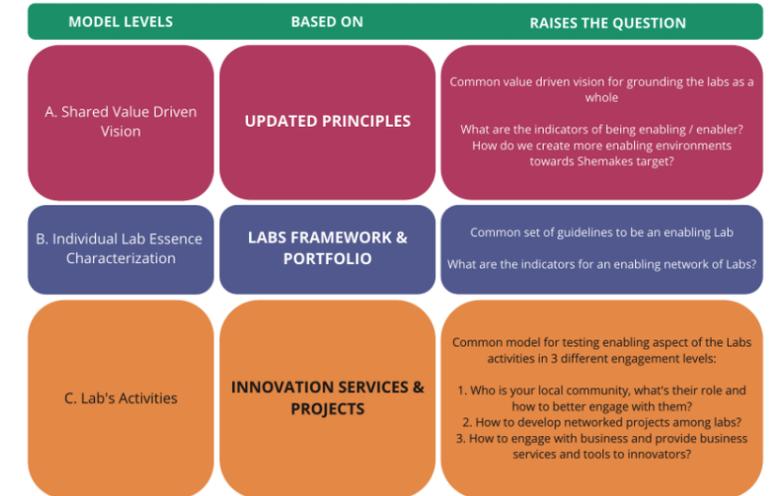
We hypothesize that girls and women participating in the learning paths will gain confidence and skills that will allow them to take part in science, innovation, and entrepreneurship. To support the engagement of additional Labs as well as the continuous improvement and documentation of the Learning Paths, a **Toolkit** is being created that contains guidelines for teachers, facilitators, and curriculum developers.

**Innovation Services** are the next intervention area to raise the role of women as innovators within their local communities, namely open research networks and the T&C business ecosystems.

Engagement activities are backed by principles and values shared by people in the lab as well as framed by resources of the lab, which modelling exercise results in key criteria to expand the network.

Community engagement activities carry out a gap analysis of equal opportunities methods implemented by each Lab and develop replicable innovations to fill these gaps: open laboratories research, workshops and seminars to assist business creation and development or methods to increase gender and innovation awareness with local stakeholders and influencers.

## SHEMAKES ADAPTED MODEL



In line with initiatives such as the EU Prize for Women Innovators, the third intervention area – **Reputation Management** – is based on the emergence of excellence role models to encourage more women to become leaders through innovation. Reputation is a mechanism for inducing a change in perception and behaviour in both social and business contexts. In fact, promoting the importance of specific community members reinforces the identity and shared values of the community as a whole. For shemakes.eu, women recognised as leaders are

committed to innovation and change through practice and evidence as well as consensus. Reputation management is about appointing three types of role models to be key drivers and active members of the project: an **Advisory Board** for the strategic guidance of planned interventions, **Gurus** from initial Labs to act as mentors for the new Labs joining the community and a team of **Ambassadors** who advertise the expansion of the network though peer-sharing their experience.