Scottish Engineering
Inclusive Engineering Programme 2019/2020

Funded by Impact Funding Partners

Delivered in partnership with EQUATE Scotland

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Abstract

In order to further our goals, grow our businesses and successfully become equal and inclusive organisations, it is imperative for individuals and companies to continuously review their equality and inclusion stances, and to implement positive practices to allow for a more progressive, successful and fairer work culture.

Gender inequality has been an issue within many industries for centuries, and the engineering, construction and manufacturing sectors are among some of the worst for female participation, be it in academia or industry.
From the normalisation of gendered-careers from a young age, to the 'leaky pipeline' faced by women progressing from studies into industry, there are several obstacles throughout a woman's career path that can lead to dropping off the engineering ladder.

Time and time again research has proven the business case for gender diversity, and why having a more diverse workforce can positively impact business across several metrics. Attraction, retention and progression of the female engineering workforce requires a better understanding, and for there to be tangible action at a faster rate.

In partnership with EQUATE Scotland, and funded by Impact Funding Partners, Scottish Engineering has delivered the Inclusive Engineering Programme with the goal of helping engineering SME (Small & Medium Enterprise) companies to grasp the importance and need for a better understanding of this topic and to push for positive change.

Acknowledgements

The Inclusive Engineering Programme, stemming from the previous year's gender diversity programme, was brought together thanks to the support and participation of many people and organisations.

I would like to thank the participants and companies who came on board to not only make the programme a success during what is a crucially difficult time due to the outbreak of a global pandemic, but also helped us to learn how we can improve and progress on these efforts going forward.

The programme would not have been possible without the funding and guidance from Impact Funding Partners, who showed understanding and empathy when all projects under the Workplace Equality Fund were being heavily impacted by the uncertainties caused by COVID-19.

I would also like to thank EQUATE Scotland for their continued support, collaboration and efforts to help deliver a programme that we hope will positively impact the Scottish engineering sector and, in turn, help to instigate positive change from the micro to macro levels.

Finally, but not least, I thank the Scottish Engineering team for the hard work, support and effort put into making this programme a success. The extensive network and wisdom provided by the company provided a more stable foundation from which to launch the programme.

Scottish Engineering

Scottish Engineering is the member organisation representing manufacturing and engineering businesses across Scotland. Members are represented and supported in numerous ways, through Scottish Engineering's Employment Law and H&S teams, and through varied networking events where members come together to hear industry updates, learn new skills and share best practice. Scottish Engineering also supports members' interests by working with both Scottish and UK Governments as well as wider industry support bodies such as Scottish Enterprise, NMIS and Skills Development Scotland.

Impact Funding Partners

By supporting and collaborating with organisations across all sectors through fund management, Impact Funding Partners aim to make the most of the strengths and assets within communities by distributing funding, increasing capacity and building trusting relationships in order to create a more fair and inclusive society.
Through their Workplace Equality Fund, the organisation is working to support private businesses to reduce employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers in the workplace.
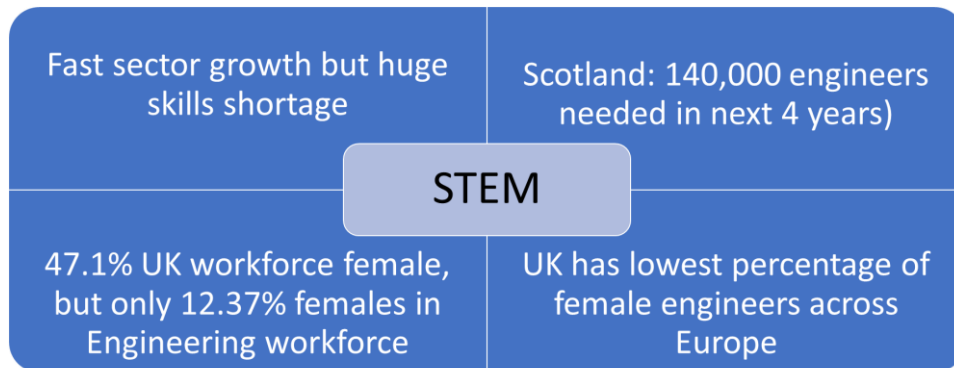
EQUATE Scotland

Established in 2016, EQUATE Scotland is the national expert in gender equality throughout the STEM sectors. EQUATE Scotland makes a tangible and sustainable change, enabling women working and studying in STEM sectors to develop by supporting their recruitment, retention and progression.

The issue

Historically, there has been a plethora of obstacles that has caused the normalisation of systemic discriminations towards those within the protected characteristic groups, and we have seen the push for equality, diversity and inclusion becoming stronger with every passing decade.
Yet, in terms of women in engineering, the rate of change for the participation of women in the engineering workforce, and in academia, has barely changed.

Fast sector growth but huge skills shortage	Scotland: 140,000 engineers needed in next 4 years)
STEM	
47.1% UK workforce female, but only 12.37% females in Engineering workforce	UK has lowest percentage of female engineers across Europe

The STEM fields, including engineering, manufacturing and construction, represent one of the fastest growing sectors across the globe, but face one of the biggest skills shortages.
(Pre-COVID-19 statistics) It was noted that Scotland alone will require 140,000 more engineers in the next 4 years in order to meet these shortages.[1] As such, women cannot be excluded from the efforts and push for growth in the sector.

In comparison to many other sectors, the gender disparity in the engineering sector has been stark. While women comprised 47.1% of the overall UK workforce in 2018, only 12.37% of workers in engineering occupations were females.[2]
Scotland has still shown a faster improvement than the rest of the UK, with 19% of the engineering workforce being female, however, we can see that there is still a lot of work to be done.

Although we have seen an incremental increase of between 1-2% of females in engineering occupations in the UK over the last two years, though previously remaining virtually static, the UK continues to have the lowest participation numbers across Europe, with countries such as Latvia, Bulgaria and Portugal reaching above 50% for female scientists and engineers, and above 30% for female engineers.[3]

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[1] Best Practice Guide for Small & Medium Enterprises, Engendering STEM.

[2] https://www.wes.org.uk/content/wesstatistics

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20190211-1

Remaining competitive on the global market is critical for any sector to remain afloat during economic hardships, and when statistics show that companies who are more gender diverse outperform those who lack in this area by over 21% across several metrics and over 35% when more ethnically diverse (with these numbers likely to be higher now), then the business case for diversity within the sector becomes more apparent.[4]

COVID-19

Economic hardships often lead to under-represented groups becoming more susceptible to discrimination, exclusion and not being supported, which is predicted to also be the case in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

UN reports have stated that women will be amongst the hardest hit by the social, political and economic implications caused by the current climate, however, it has also been reported that women may become the backbone for recovery to this crisis.[5]

In a recent review of the progress of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, statistics show that the manufacturing sector has suffered major job losses and contraction in economic output due to the pandemic. Women are more likely than men to be engaged in vulnerable employment in that sector and are more at risk of losing their manufacturing jobs or livelihoods.[6]

Women are also more likely to take on the primary caring responsibilities at home, and as such the shift to working from home for many hasn't been an easy transition when taking into consideration childcare, domestic tasks and other caring responsibilities.

In the near future, working from home may become a more frequent aspect of work-life, and as such it is crucial for companies to understand, support and help to progress pathways for those from under-represented groups working from home.

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[4] McKinsey & Co
[5] https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women
[6] Progress On The Sustainable Development Goals, The Gender Snapshot 2020, UN

Inclusive Engineering Programme

Programme Origin

In 2018, Scottish Engineering began discussions with Enginuity (previously known as SEMTA) and EQUATE Scotland to initiate an Unconscious Bias & Diversity Training Programme, which then led to the pilot programme for 2018-2019. This was funded by Enginuity, Scottish Engineering, and the Scottish Government.

The programme highlighted the need for gender diversity and equality training within the sector, as well as making clear where improvements could be made.

The Inclusive Engineering Programme, funded by the Workplace Equality Fund (Impact Funding Partners), began near the tail-end of 2019, and consists of four sub-programmes to tackle the different aspects of gender inequality in engineering. A Gender Equality Officer was brought into Scottish Engineering to help deliver the programme, and to work closely with EQUATE Scotland who would deliver training on two of the four sub-programmes.

Objectives

- Providing engineering SMEs with a multi-faceted means of developing a better understanding of the equality and diversity issues within the engineering sector.

- Highlighting the business case for gender equality and the importance of diversity

- Improving employment opportunities for women, thus allowing for more women in leadership roles.

Programme Approach

The Inclusive Engineering Programme consists of 4 support activities. Employers and individuals from SMEs were encouraged to apply to any of the activities they felt were most suitable. The 4 activities are:

- The Leaders Programme - aimed at individuals from SMEs within higher level management roles wishing to enhance their knowledge and experience of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
  (Delivered by Scottish Engineering)

- Unconscious Bias & Fairer Recruitment Training Sessions – 3 cohorts of 2 webinars each, covering the topics of Unconscious Bias and how to make recruitment processes more inclusive.
  (Training delivered by EQUATE Scotland, Administration by Scottish Engineering)

- One to One Support Sessions for SMEs on creating a more inclusive and equal environment within their business and how to implement positive change
  (Delivered by Scottish Engineering)

- Career Enhancement Programme (women only) - aimed at women who are finding it difficult to progress up the ladder within the engineering sector, due to having faced poor experiences and/or lack of opportunities made available.
  (Delivered by EQUATE Scotland)

Engineering SME Companies

At the start of 2019, it was seen that there were 5.9 million private businesses across the UK, with more than 99% of which are small or medium-sized businesses according to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.[7]
The definition of an SME company is that of a business that has fewer than 250 employees.
The Scottish engineering sector is comprised of approximately 99.6% SME companies[8], and as such the data speaks for itself in terms of the importance of SMEs to the economy and to employment.
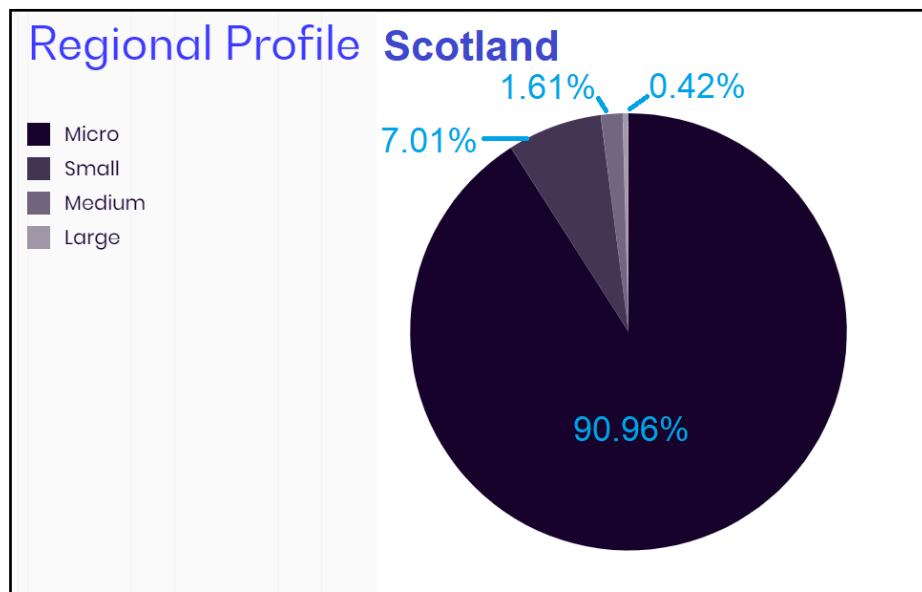
(Statistics from Enginuity)

However, it is understandable that finding the resources and support to instigate positive change for SME companies can be a challenge, which in turn can hold them back from reaping the many benefits of having a more diverse workforce.
From lack of time and staff to commit to training sessions, to the lack of available funds, SME companies can often feel the pressure of providing the organisation with the relevant development opportunities whilst also remaining financially secure.

For these reasons, the Inclusive Engineering Programme was aimed primarily at engineering SME companies in Scotland, with the hope that they may be able to create more inclusive and fairer workplaces.

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[7] https://www.merchantsavvy.co.uk/uk-sme-data-stats-charts/

[8] Enginuity.org

Leaders Programme

Overview

Being a leader requires so much more than just organising and heading a project as it also includes creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment, so that others may flourish and produce the best outputs possible.

The Leaders Programme was aimed at 10 individuals within higher level management roles from engineering SMEs across Scotland, and provided them with role-model training, equality and diversity training and equipped them with the insight on how to actively engage within the sector to create positive change and impact in a sustainable manner.
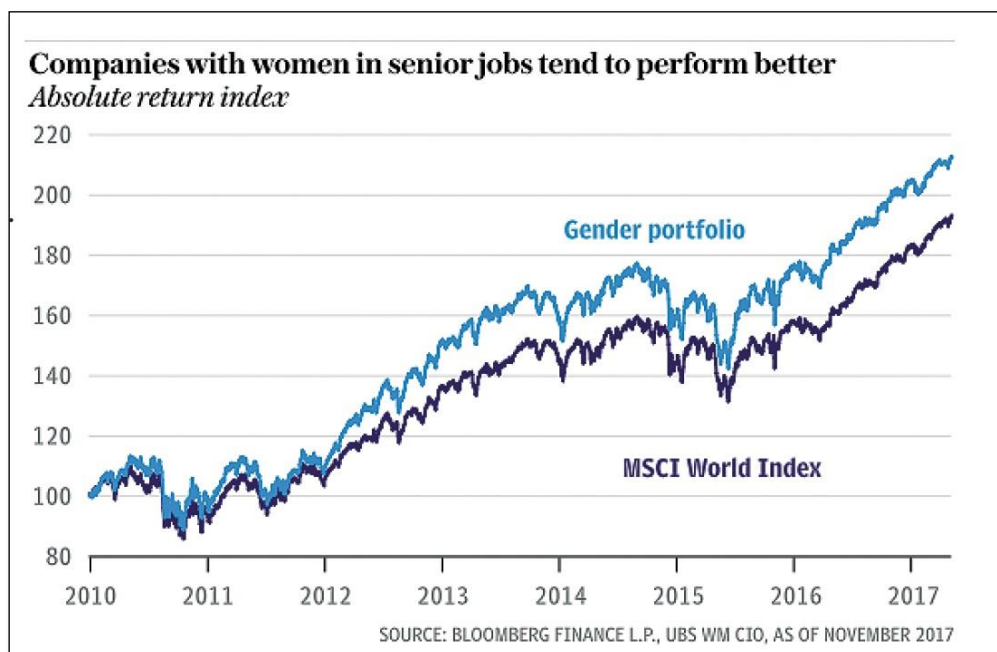
(Statistic from McKinsey & Co – used during Leaders Programme Session 1)

Delivery

The programme was originally to be delivered in the form of 3 half-day morning sessions, with the Scottish Engineering Meetings Rooms to be used as the venue. The central location allowed for participants to gain easier access with public transport links available, whilst also being able to provide reasonable adjustments for those who required them.
The dates for the 3 sessions were as follows:

Tuesday 3rd March, 2020
Wednesday 1st April, 2020

Tuesday 5th May, 2020

The programme saw 14 participants sign up to the programme, exceeding the 10 person goal, and the first session ran successfully at the Scottish Engineering office.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, participants were pushed to work from home and the sessions were delivered online via MS Teams.
The second and third session saw a slight drop in numbers for participation, however, they were still successful as more than half of the participants were still able to take part, but the sudden change to an online virtual platform also proved to be a challenge in itself.

Outcome/Results

The sudden change in delivery due to the current climate of COVID-19 has been a cause for many companies to delay or cancel training sessions of all kinds.
The Leaders Programme took place at the peak of the outbreak and this led to a reduction in participation.

However, the feedback and commitment to change from those who were able to participate has been exceedingly positive, with positive feedback for impact, learning and motivation.

Albeit on an online platform, participants found the interactive activities and thought experiments to be engaging and thought-provoking.
It was found that delivery of a Leaders Programme with a modest number of participants allowed for a sense of community and togetherness to be formed, with many participants sharing experiences openly and also exchanging details.
Participants also pledged to instigate changes with their personal and professional lives, with many taking their training back to office to speak about amongst colleagues.

Some participants who weren't able to attend some of the sessions asked for recaps and requested that the programme be repeated again the following year.

Examples of feedback

"Thank you for today's session! I look forward to taking this further during the 1-1 session with our business [Company] alongside my colleagues!"

"I found today's session very informative, particularly, around job adverts and creating the experience to the potential employee from the offset."

"100%! I'd like to share it with my team and will run a wee session and share learning"

"Lots of information to take to management to help shape some actions and agenda in our workforce"

Unconscious Bias and Fairer Recruitment Sessions

Overview

To create diverse and inclusive workplaces, we have a responsibility to challenge our own unconscious bias on a regular basis in order to grow in a progressive manner. The business case for diversity is clear as mentioned in earlier stats, and for businesses to turn a blind eye to diversity is to also negatively impact their own business progression in terms of financial performance, productivity, innovation, customer satisfaction, employee turnover and more.

In a study conducted by the WISE Campaign, results showed that when employees feel their organisation is committed to diversity and they feel included, the ability to innovate is increased by more than 80%. Similarly, organisations with diverse and inclusive leaders are 70% more likely to have captured a new market in the past 12 months and 45% more likely to have increased market share.[9]

The business case for diversity:
- ✓ **Better choice of skilled workers**
- ✓ **Better platform for innovation and creativity**
- ✓ **Better workforce productivity**
- ✓ **Better customer experience**
- ✓ **Better financial performance**

(Business Case Points for Diversity – WISE Campaign)

To achieve this progression requires businesses to become more inclusive and aware in their recruitment practices, and to then cultivate a workplace culture that enables all employees, regardless of their diversity dimension, to feel valued and appreciated.

Delivery

The Unconscious Bias and Fairer Recruitment Sessions were originally intended to be delivered at different locations across Scotland in order to garner a wider audience for learning. Venues at the following locations had been procured for four half-day sessions, and two online webinars, with an approximate maximum of 20

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[9] WISE – Why Gender Diversity Makes Business Sense

participants per session. The administration and marketing was carried out by Scottish Engineering, and the training was to be conducted by EQUATE Scotland.

Thursday 19th March, 1pm – 4pm: AFRC (Renfrew)

Wednesday 29th April, 1pm – 4pm: Royal Bank of Scotland (Aberdeen)

Wednesday 27th May, 1pm – 4pm: Progress Rail (South Queensferry)

Wednesday 24th June, 1pm – 4pm: Rautomead (Dundee)

With the webinars scheduled for:

Thursday 30th April, 2020

Thursday 14th May , 2020

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, all sessions were moved to an online platform and were delivered as 3 cohorts of 2 sessions each. These were delivered via the WebeX platform. The dates for these cohorts were as follows:

Cohort 1:
Session 1 – 22nd April, 2020
Session 2 – 29th April, 2020

Cohort 2:
Session 1 –30th April, 2020
Session 2 – 14th May, 2020

Cohort 3:
Session 1 – 27th May, 2020
Session 2 – 10th June, 2020

Outcome/Results

When the locational sessions were originally advertised, it was noticed that places for sessions across the Central Belt and the webinars were filling up more so than in areas such as Aberdeen and Dundee.
One of the reasons for this is that the outreach and networks within these regions weren't as strong as in the Central Belt, however, Scottish Engineering had pushed out the event through its contacts and networks (and on several platforms) which did see some interest coming through.

Similarly to the other sub-programmes, due to uncertainties caused by the outbreak, there were some who were unable to attend once the sub-programme format had changed to online sessions.
Sessions still saw anywhere from between six to fifteen participants per webinar though, which allowed for a more relaxed and personalised experience for those

attending.

In the post-session surveys, participants as a majority felt they "Agreed"/"Strongly Agreed", and found sessions "Useful"/"Very Useful", in regard to feeling that they understood more about unconscious bias and identifying it in the workplace, looking at strategies to create more inclusive recruitment practices and more.

Delivering the sessions in two-parts meant that participants would have a chance to digest the information from the first session on Unconscious Bias, before this would then be applied to Fairer Recruitment Practices in the next session.

Some suggestions for future sessions included possibly adding more content about the impact of unconscious bias on those from BAME backgrounds, which has been taken onboard by EQUATE Scotland for consideration.

Examples of feedback:

"I will endeavour to adopt neutral language wherever possible and to challenge my own and others' bias"

"I will be sharing my learning with my team, and adopting the best practice approaches where possible!"

"It was a great webinar, with really interesting content and fantastic presenters, thank you all :) it was also beneficial to have a group who were happy to participate through the chat function - I appreciated the perspectives that provided, thank you."

One to One Support Sessions

Overview

With the challenges and obstacles faced by many SME companies to source out and undertake equality training sessions as mentioned earlier, it was critical that any training provided on a one to one basis should provide the company with as much of the relevant information and advice as possible, while also being personalised to address any worries or issues faced by that particular company in regard to gender diversity.

The One to One Support Sessions offered SMEs a chance to develop/review inclusive policies and positive actions measures into their organisations. This consisted of bespoke training to develop gender equality strategies, gather relevant equalities data and feedback from staff, design and implement appropriate and evidence based positive action measures, and to create bystander interventions/knowledge exchange internally to ensure that inequalities, sexism and bigotry of any kind are challenged and ultimately eradicated by staff across the organization, thus creating more of a culture of inclusion.

Delivery

It was originally intended that the Scottish Engineering Gender Equality Officer would visit the company premises to deliver the sessions as this would also allow for a better understanding of the company work culture, layout, recruitment processes etc This was changed to sessions being delivered online, which also meant that colleagues from other sites across Scotland could also participate if desired.

The initial goal, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, had been to deliver these sessions to 10 SME companies. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the crisis, many companies were unable to commit to their sessions or were unable to apply.

However, the sessions were still successfully delivered online to 7 companies, exceeding the updated target of 5.

Outcome/Results

Similar to the other sub-programmes, the main obstacle of training delivery came in the form of lockdown restrictions, causing all sessions to be held on an online platform.

Although participation was slightly lower than originally intended, the feedback received from the companies was exceedingly positive, with positive feedback for impact, learning and motivation.

Many of the participants have already put the training into place by having changes made to policies, websites, job ad wording, recruitment processes and more. Companies have also requested follow up sessions for more in-depth discussion about parts of the training that had been delivered, and have reported feeling more confident in taking their own next steps towards creating a more inclusive work culture.

Examples of feedback

"I found the presentation informative especially regarding the masculine/feminine/ neutral words used in advertising"

"I would recommend this session to all managers"

"I found the session really useful and will certainly take away the interview techniques, making the candidate feel welcome, as well as the job description bias that can exist."

"Very interesting stats regarding the industry re female engineers etc… One-One session very relatable and specific to [Company]"

Career Enhancement Program

Overview

From facing obstacles in applying for promoted roles and experiencing a lack of opportunities, to finding a lack of inclusivity in job advertisements and during recruitment processes, there is a plethora of reasons behind women falling off the job ladder in this sector or feeling unable to progress.

It has been seen in previous research that women are more likely to deselect themselves from applying for a role due to gender coded wording in job advertisements, and when in employment face the issues of the lack of career progression or not feeling as though they are treated as equally as their male counterparts in terms of pay, workload and many other factors.
Women are also more likely to deselect themselves if they do not meet 100% of the specified criteria, whereas men will still apply even if they only meet 60% of the criteria.

In Scotland, only 23% of women who graduate from STEM subjects remain in industry for more than 2 years, and of those who remain only 12% progress to leadership positions.[10]

The Career Enhancement Programme, having been run by EQUATE Scotland in previous years, was designed to provide 12 women with the training to progress on their career journeys, as well as helping them to apply for promoted roles.
The training was designed and delivered by Marie Kane (EQUATE Scotland Associate) and covered the following aspects:

- Helping to better identify clear strengths and skills, and how to use them for positive outcomes in the workplace
- Clarifying short and long-term goals for career progression
- Improving communication and self-presentation skills
- Creating a network of like-minded women, as well as meeting and learning from industry role models.

Delivery

The programme was originally designed to be delivered as a 3-day programme, with participants interacting in person at the Scottish Engineering office as the venue. Just like the other sub-programmes, this programme had to be adapted for an online

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[10] Best Practice Guide for Small & Medium Enterprises

platform and was instead delivered as a 6 x 2 hour sessions taking place on consecutive Tuesdays between August 2020 and September 2020.

The programme was advertised online and over 40 applications were received, meaning a short-listing was required based on the merit of what was presented in the application form. Considering that there was a high volume of applications, even during the current climate, showcases the want for programmes like these.

Due to health reasons for the trainer, one session was postponed and as such the span of the programme covered 7 weeks, however, the participants were understanding of this.

Each session was delivered via Zoom, and incorporated group exercises and home-work for the next session. Two sessions also invited a role-model guest speaker, which was very well received by the participants.
Participants were asked to complete a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment, and their results were forwarded to them by the trainer, and the sessions also consisted of other self-assessments.

Outcome/Results

Prior to the first session, participants were asked to fill out a pre-event survey in which they gave examples of what they view as being external barriers in the workplace to progression, and examples of what they believed as being internal barriers that hold them back.
A brief summary of the results can be as follows:

External barriers

- Workplace culture: Potential cultural perception of male dominance still being the norm. Gender identities being instilled from a young age. Unconscious bias. Voices feeling quietened.
- Workplace Flexibility: Lack of flexibility when it comes to –
    - quality part-time roles
    - job sharing (hours and responsibility)
    - understanding from employers when it comes to work-life balance (especially for women with family commitments)
    - opportunities for promotion – rigid job descriptions and expectations
- Role Models: Lack of role models, especially within senior roles

Internal barriers

- Fear of failure/mistakes: When being part of a minority, it's easier for mistakes to be noticed and often, with women, this could lead to less chances later.
- Not meeting 100% of the criteria required or set out by the role description.
- Comparison to male counterparts
- Self-confidence: not believing in one's own capabilities or potential.

Throughout the sessions, the participants maintained a sense of motivation and commitment to learning, and the feedback received in the final evaluation form was exceedingly positive.

Participants felt more confident in their own capabilities, leadership skills and abilities by the end of the programme, and had also created a network of encouragement from the sessions.

As the programme was switched to a new, online platform, there were a few technical glitches at the beginning, however, these were easily overcome.

It was noted that participants would have liked a bit more time in the breakout sessions to converse with one another, which will be implemented for any future sessions.

Overall, participants reported feeling much better about their future prospects, and commit to making their own changes by setting short and long term goals.

Examples of feedback

"I really enjoyed getting to know the other women and thought the breakout rooms worked really well. I think it was a good-sized group, thanks for not over-filling! It felt like a really safe and nurturing space"

"I found it a really great programme and incredibly helpful. Thank you for the opportunity. I have gained a lot from the programme in terms of knowledge but also in gaining a better understanding of my strengths and areas to focus on in future. "

"It was great! I loved the content; the group; the keynote speakers. I'm feeling more confident in myself and my abilities as a result of the programme."

Programme Challenges

The application form to the Workplace Equality Fund and objectives stated therein were distinctly different from the preceding year's programme in that the structure was that of several sub-programmes.

The original application was first designed for the programme to begin in October 2019, however, the role of Gender Equality Officer (and Project Lead for this programme) was not filled until December 2019.

With the Winter break soon arriving and many people taking annual leave around the New Year, there was limited time to advertise and recruit applicants for the sub-programmes if they were to begin as soon as late February/early March.

However, through collaboration and team effort, the programme began successfully.

The first challenge then was that, initially, mainly larger companies were applying to take part in the programmes, and there was a lack of SME applications. It was discovered that the main reasons were that some SMEs were worried about the financial strains undertaking training could cause, some did not believe/realise gender inequality is a real issue, some had reputational fears that taking part in the training may imply they had an issue with gender equality within the company, and some lacked the time to commit to training due to lack of staff.
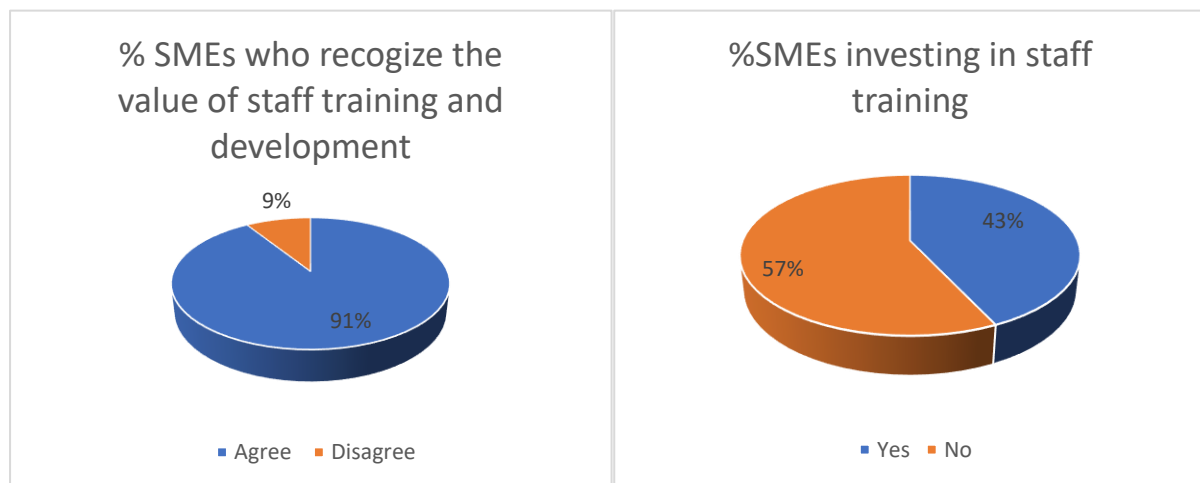
A 2017 report from the Federation of Small Businesses indicates that while 91% of small businesses recognise the value of staff training and development, both in terms of increasing the value of an employee's contribution to the business and in terms of employee retention, just 43% of British SMEs are currently investing in training and development.[11]

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[11] https://www.accountsandlegal.co.uk/small-business-advice/57-of-british-smes-don't-offer-staff-training-and-development

These issues were tackled by offering all sessions free of charge in order to alleviate any financial worries, and session were appropriately timed for those who may have time constraints such as parents or those with caring responsibilities. Sessions were also located centrally with easy access, however, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak all sessions were then moved online.

In the advertisements for the sub-programmes, the business case for the importance of diversity within the sector was highlighted, and as such was made more appealing to those who may have previously had doubts.

As discussed throughout this report, the COVID-19 outbreak presented many issues with the delivery of the programme since all of the sessions were originally intended to be face-to-face. Initially, it was felt that the impact of the programme would be in the interaction of participants, the sharing of experiences and the story-telling elements – based on a human connection.

Although the delivery had to be adapted to be more relevant to a virtual audience, it was seen that the impact was still present and well received, and participants also agreed to this in their post-session surveys.

Adapting to an online platform presented some challenges in itself, including technical glitches, trainers having to familiarise themselves with using unfamiliar applications and connectivity issues for many who were working from home. Through practise and trial, many of these issues were overcome, and during some presentations with many participants, viewers were asked to switch off cameras so as not to affect bandwidth.

The new and unexpected working habits have meant that many people are working from home which, of course, can be difficult for those who may have children or other home commitments. This has however meant that organisations are beginning to realise that employees (who are able to accommodate home working) are able to carry out their work with flexibility, which opens the door to discussion about flexible working going forward.

As we now cross the half-year mark of working through a global pandemic, *zoom burn-out* (for those now attending webinar after webinar) is taking affect for many people, which will require new and innovative ways to get around. In regard to this programme, the development prospect was very much welcomed by the many who took part and requests are still being received for sessions as this programme comes to its conclusion.

Summary

With skills shortages in the engineering sector predicted to worsen from the already high numbers, it is crucial that all of those with relevant qualifications are given the opportunity to partake in engineering employment regardless of their diversity dimension.
The current climate has only highlighted the inequalities faced by women within the sector, and it is important to not only become more aware of these but to also tackle them in order to counter the economic implications that are being paved by COVID-19.

Although facing some obstacles, the Inclusive Engineering Programme has, as a whole, proven to be impactful and successful in planting the seeds for change among many of those who took part in the sub-programmes. From individuals pledging to continually work on their own unconscious bias, to companies now working to improve their policies and outreach, the feedback has been encouraging.

It is hoped that, one day, programmes like this will no longer be needed as discrimination and inequality in all of their forms would no longer be prevalent, however, it can be seen that there is indeed a clear mandate for programmes like this to continue until we reach this goal.