VR BALANCE · THE ONLINE HANDBOOK

Can you flip the script?

A step-by-step guide to replicating the VR Balance course

Advancing gender equity in work and home life through Virtual Reality — a journey across Spain, Lithuania and Poland.

Project 101191101 · Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV-2024-GE)
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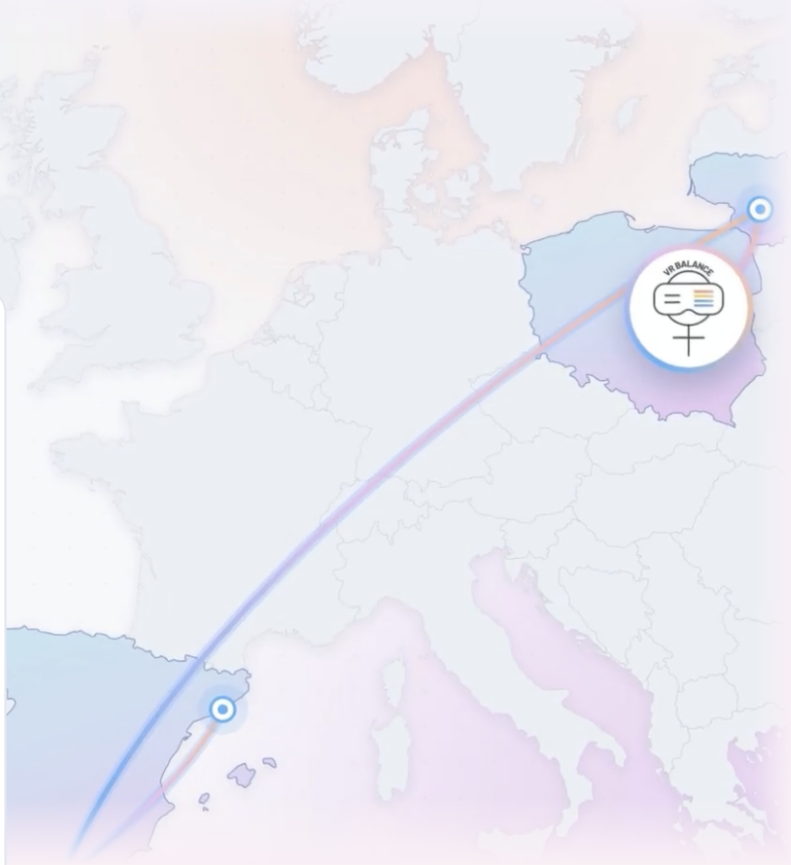

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1 About this handbook

This handbook is the practical, public guide to the VR Balance course. It explains, step by step, how any university, non-governmental organisation, company or training centre — anywhere — can replicate the full training programme: what to prepare, which materials and videos to use, how each workshop runs, how many people to involve, and how to evaluate the results.

Everything described here has been delivered in real courses in Spain, Lithuania and Poland during 2026, in person and online. A **short online version** of the course also exists and is described in Section 10.

Who is this handbook for?

- **Organisations and HR departments** that want to raise awareness of gender gaps and discrimination among their members or employees, improving the working and social environment — for example universities, NGOs, companies and public institutions.
- **Educators and trainers** delivering the course to students, employees or leadership teams.
- **Students and future leaders**, and current leaders — workers in decision-making positions.
- **Researchers** interested in the evaluation framework and the project results.

How to use it

Sections 2–4 give you the essentials: the project, the consortium and the conceptual framework. Section 5 presents the pedagogical model and Section 6 the course structure at a glance. Sections 7–9 are the replication core — a facilitation guide for each workshop, with its materials linked by name. Section 10 describes the short online version. Sections 11–13 cover logistics, evaluation and the results of the original project, and Section 14 collects lessons learned. Appendix A collects every material, with a preview of each file and its public download link. All training materials are available free of charge in English, Spanish, Polish and Lithuanian (VR scenarios also in Catalan).

> **In one sentence**
> The complete course — slides, scripts, card activities, VR simulations, desktop videos and this handbook — can be delivered in a single six-hour training day with two facilitators and a set of rented or purchased VR headsets (or ordinary computers, using the desktop version). No prior VR experience is required from participants or facilitators.

2 The project: context, objectives and justification

Despite decades of progress, gender inequality persists in both professional and domestic life across Europe. VR Balance responds with an educational intervention that combines conceptual learning, structured discussion and immersive experience.

Context. Women still perform around two thirds of unpaid care work in Europe and face a persistent pay gap — 12.7% on average in the EU (Eurostat) — as well as under-representation in leadership. The Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2024) ranks Spain 10th and Lithuania 11th worldwide, while Poland stands 51st: three different starting points that made the partnership a natural laboratory for a shared European intervention. Transgender and non-binary people face additional layers of discrimination that are rarely addressed in standard training. A fuller analysis of the project context is available in Deliverable D2.2.

Objectives. VR Balance promotes gender equality and family-friendly practices by challenging gender stereotypes, mitigating discrimination against women and gender-diverse people, and fostering a culture of shared caregiving responsibilities. It targets both current leaders (managers, academics, employers) and future leaders (university students).

Justification. Traditional equality training often stays at the level of statistics and principles, which audiences may already "know" without feeling. The project's distinctive contribution is the use of immersive Virtual Reality — six first-person simulations that let participants experience gender bias from the inside, in a job interview, at home, at work — because you can't change what you don't feel. The experiential layer is embedded in a structured pathway of workshops, card activities and facilitated discussion, and is measured with a validated pre/post evaluation.

Key facts	
Full name	VR Balance: Advancing Gender Equity in Work and Home Life through Virtual Reality
Funding	European Union — Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV-2024-GE), project 101191101
Duration	24 months (2025–2026)
Coordinator	University of Barcelona (UB), Spain
Partners	Social Innovation Fund (SIF), Lithuania · Women Entrepreneurship Foundation (WEF), Poland · MetaMedicsVR (MMVR), Spain
Target groups	Current leaders (employers, academic and administrative staff) and future leaders (students)
Course countries	Spain (Barcelona), Lithuania (Kaunas), Poland (Warsaw)
Languages	English, Spanish, Polish, Lithuanian (VR scenarios also in Catalan)

What the project produced

- A complete training curriculum: three workshops with slide decks, facilitator scripts and card activities, in four languages.
- Six immersive VR simulations (also available as desktop versions and videos), developed by MetaMedicsVR from testimonies and partner research, for Meta Quest 3 headsets and Windows/Mac desktop.
- A validated evaluation framework: pre/post questionnaires built on the MuGIPS scale, plus a satisfaction survey.
- Marketing and recruitment materials: three poster designs, three folded handouts, two one-pagers, a social-media kit in five languages, a promotional video and the project website.

- Evidence from real courses in three countries, in person and online, documented in public deliverables.
- Scientific output: two communications accepted at the 9th International Health Sciences Congress (July 2026) and an original article submitted to *Educación Médica* (Elsevier), listed in Section 15.

Evidence base

All figures and results quoted in this handbook come from the official project deliverables: D2.1 (training materials), D2.2 (context analysis), D2.3 (marketing materials), D3.1 (VR & desktop simulator), D4.1 (Course Completion Report — Spain), D4.2 (Course Completion Report — Lithuania), D4.3 (Course Completion Report — Poland) and D6.3 (Online Events).

3 The consortium

Four organisations from three countries designed, delivered and evaluated the course together. Each brought a complementary role — and each is a point of contact for replicators in its country.

University of Barcelona (UB) — Spain · Project coordinator
Public research university. The team at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (Bellvitge Campus) coordinated the project, led the scientific and evaluation framework, and delivered the Spanish editions of the course.
Contact: Josefa (Pepita) Giménez Bonafé — pgimenez@ub.edu

Social Innovation Fund (SIF) — Kaunas, Lithuania
Non-governmental organisation with long experience in adult education, social inclusion and equal-opportunities projects. SIF delivered the Lithuanian editions — with separate dates for employers and for students — and hosts the course's interactive readings.
Contact: Audronė Kisielienė — sif@lpf.lt

Women Entrepreneurship Foundation (WEF) — Warsaw, Poland
Non-governmental organisation promoting women's entrepreneurship, leadership and equal opportunities. WEF drafted the workplace-discrimination scenarios and delivered the Polish editions of the course.
Contact: Agata Zioło — a.ziolo@fundacjakobiet.org

MetaMedicsVR (MMVR) — Spain · Technology partner
VR & AI simulation company. MMVR developed the six immersive scenarios and their desktop versions from the partners' scripts and testimonies, and built and maintains the project website and this handbook's online home.
Contact: Beatriz Zambrano — beatriz@metamedicsvr.com

4 Conceptual framework

The course stands on three foundations: the evidence on persistent gender inequality, a body of gender theory that makes that evidence intelligible, and an experiential pedagogy that turns both into learning.

State of the art

European data keep documenting structural inequality: a 12.7% average gender pay gap (Eurostat), two thirds of unpaid care work performed by women, occupational and vertical segregation, and a motherhood penalty visible in pay and promotion. The EU's policy response is accelerating — most recently the Pay Transparency Directive (EU) 2023/970 — but standard awareness training struggles to move people beyond what they already "know". Research on immersive perspective-taking suggests that first-person VR experiences can produce stronger empathy and attitude change than information alone (Herrera et al., 2018), which is the gap VR Balance was designed to close.

Pedagogical base

The course follows the cycle of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984): concrete experience — the VR scenarios — is prepared by conceptual sessions, and followed by structured reflection (debriefing) and action planning. Each workshop combines short expository blocks with card-based activities and facilitated group discussion, and the whole pathway is measured with a validated pre/post instrument so that replicators can compare results.

Key concepts used in the course

- **Sex vs. gender** — the distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender (Oakley, 1972), and gender as a relational category that shapes everyone (Lagarde, 1996).
- **Gender as construction and performance** — from de Beauvoir's analysis of women as "the other" (1949) and Rubin's sex/gender system (1975) to Butler's gender performativity (1990).
- **Gender stereotypes and mandates** — beliefs about "female" and "male" abilities that assign caregiving as a female mandate and leadership as a male one.
- **The care gap and the double burden** — the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work and its economic consequences.
- **Structural sexism** — how historical exclusion became institutionalised in labour markets: occupational and vertical segregation, the pay gap, the motherhood penalty, the glass ceiling.
- **Gender diversity beyond the binary** — the plurality of gender identities, and the compounded discrimination faced by trans and non-binary people.
- **Perception of inequality** — measured with the Multidimensional Gender Inequality Perception Scale, MuGIPS (Schwartz-Salazar et al., 2024).

Full references in Section 15.

5 The pedagogical model

The VR Balance course is built as a gradual learning pathway with four stages. Each stage prepares the next, so the order matters: participants move from understanding concepts, to analysing structures, to feeling discrimination first-hand, and finally to acting on what they have learned.

Stage	
1 · AWARENESS	**Workshop 1 — Gender stereotypes and the care gender gap.** Conceptual foundations: sex vs. gender, gender roles, the double burden of paid and unpaid work, co-responsibility at home. Practical activity 1: rewriting and reformulating stereotypical phrases.
2 · ANALYSIS	**Workshop 2 — Gender discrimination at the workplace.** Structural view: pay gap, motherhood penalty, glass ceiling, legal frameworks, gender equality planning. Practical activity 2: character-card discussion of influential women and gender-diverse figures.
3 · EXPERIENCE	**Workshop 3 — Immersive VR.** Six first-person simulations that turn abstract concepts into embodied understanding, with in-experience quizzes.
4 · ACTION	**Final debriefing and closing.** Guided reflection on the VR experience in small and mixed groups, translating what was felt into concrete personal and organisational commitments.

Why Virtual Reality?

The VR simulations place participants inside someone else's reality — being asked about pregnancy plans in a job interview, coming home to an unequal share of housework, being misgendered on the first day of a new job. Delivered from a first-person perspective and combined with reflection pauses and quiz questions, they make visible the emotional, interpersonal and institutional mechanisms through which discrimination operates. In the original project, this experiential layer was consistently described as the element that moved participants from abstract awareness to empathy and recognition of situations in their own environment.

Key design principles for replicators

- **Keep the sequence.** The VR experience lands much harder after the conceptual groundwork of Workshops 1 and 2; the final debriefing prevents the day from ending on the problem rather than the response.
- **Mix theory with dialogue.** Feedback across all countries consistently asked for more discussion, real-life examples and group exchange — plan generous time for debate in every session.
- **Balance problem and possibility.** The VR scenarios show discrimination; the character-card activity deliberately adds positive role models and pathways of change.
- **Adapt culturally, not structurally.** Replace statistics, examples and legal references with your national equivalents, but keep the four-stage pathway and the pre/post evaluation intact so results remain comparable.

6 The course at a glance

The standard format is a single six-hour training day (which can also be split across two shorter sessions). Adjust start times and breaks to your audience, but keep the sequence and approximate durations.

Time (example)	Component	Length	Content
09:00–09:20	**Opening & orientation**	20 min	Welcome and pre-training questionnaire via QR code.
09:20–10:50	**Workshop 1**	1.5 h	WS1 slides: Gender stereotypes and the care gender gap · WS1 Activity · group discussion.
10:50–11:10	**Break**	20 min	Coffee break; prepare and charge VR headsets, or get the desktop version ready.
11:10–12:40	**Workshop 2**	1.5 h	WS2 slides: Gender discrimination at the workplace — consequences of the gender career gap and causes of economic inequality · WS2 Activity.
12:40–13:30	**Lunch break**	50 min	Set up VR stations and the desktop screening area.
13:30–15:30	**Workshop 3**	2 h	Immersive VR experience — six scenarios in rotation (headsets + desktop).
15:30–16:10	**Final debriefing**	40 min	Debriefing of the VR experience in small and mixed groups; from reflection to concrete actions.
16:10–16:30	**Closing**	20 min	Closing discussion connecting all components; post-training questionnaire and satisfaction survey via QR code.

Group size and audiences

- **Recommended group size: 15–30 participants per facilitator.** This allows genuine discussion and a manageable VR rotation. Groups above ~30 should be split into parallel tracks with additional facilitators.
- **Depending on your objective, run mixed groups or separate editions** for leaders and for students. For example, Lithuania organised distinct dates for employers and for students so discussion could be adapted to each group's experience — this worked well and is recommended.

Staffing

- **Minimum team: 2 people** — one lead facilitator (content, discussion moderation) and one technical support person (headsets, desktop videos, troubleshooting). For groups above 25 or parallel tracks, add one facilitator per additional group.
- Facilitators should prepare the course by analysing the material provided (WS1 script, WS1 slides, WS1 Activity, WS2 script, WS2 slides, WS2 Activity), watch the six scenarios in advance, and rehearse the headset handling once.

7 Workshop 1 — Gender stereotypes and the care gender gap

Slide presentation and cards activity 1 **Duration:** 1.5 hours

Learning objectives

- Understand how gender stereotypes shape expectations around caregiving, domestic labour and family responsibility.
- Recognise the gender care gap and the double burden of paid and unpaid work, and their social, professional and economic consequences.
- Reflect on personal assumptions and identify strategies to promote co-responsibility at home and in organisations.

Content outline

Part	Content
1. Conceptual foundations	The distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender; how gender norms are learned and reproduced through family, school, media, workplaces and institutions; the plurality of gender identities beyond the binary; gender performativity.
2. The care gap	The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work; the double burden; caregiving as a gendered mandate and its normalisation in everyday life.
3. Consequences	Effects on careers, income, rest and free time; the emotional burden of normalised inequality; the link between the care gap and the labour-market gaps analysed in Workshop 2.
4. Co-responsibility	Strategies for sharing care at home and in organisations; family-friendly measures; what individuals, employers and institutions can do.

Activities

1. **Slide presentation** — the facilitator presents the WS1 slides, following the explanations in the WS1 script (which says what to explain on each slide).
2. **Cards activity 1** — participants work with the WS1 Activity cards: rewriting and reformulating stereotypical phrases, making everyday assumptions explicit and discussable.
3. **Group discussion** — what is fair, what is outdated, and how to promote shared caregiving in participants' own environments.

Materials needed
WS1 slides · WS1 Activity cards (printable) · WS1 script — free to download from the materials page, in every language version published so far.

8 Workshop 2 — Gender discrimination at the workplace

Slide presentation and cards activity 2 **Duration:** 1.5 hours · **Theme:** consequences of the gender career gap and causes of economic inequality

Learning objectives

- Recognise the forms of gender discrimination at work: biased hiring, the motherhood penalty, unequal pay, the glass ceiling, harassment and double standards.
- Understand the economic dimension: the pay gap, occupational and vertical segregation, and time use.
- Know the legal and policy tools available — national legislation and EU directives — and how organisations build gender equality plans.

Content outline

Part	Content
1. Discrimination at work	What gender discrimination at work is; leadership and job-role stereotypes; behaviour double standards ("assertive women labelled bossy"); harassment and reporting barriers; breaking stereotypes.
2. The problems in data	The gender pay gap (EU average 12.7%); pay gap and parenthood (couples with children show almost double the gap); time use; childcare and elder-care services; flexible and part-time work patterns.
3. Legal frameworks	*Country comparison — replace with your national framework.* The original covers Lithuania (Labour Code equal-opportunities duties, employers with 50+ staff), Poland (constitutional provisions, Labour Code, National Action Programme 2022–2030) and Spain (mandatory equality plans, Royal Decrees 901/2020 and 902/2020, companies with 50+ staff).
4. Gender equality planning	Methodology for organisations: appointing an equality specialist, training, situation assessment with gender-disaggregated data, goal setting, implementation and annual evaluation.
5. EU alignment	The Pay Transparency Directive (EU) 2023/970 and where national legislation is heading.

Activities

1. **Slide presentation** — the facilitator presents the WS2 slides, following the explanations in the WS2 script.
2. **Cards activity 2** — character-card discussion with the WS2 Activity cards: profiles of influential women and gender-diverse public figures. For example, participants identify the difficulties different public figures faced to get where they are as women or gender-diverse people, guided by three questions: *What obstacles did this person face because of gender? How did they challenge stereotypes? What wider effects did their actions have?*
3. **Group discussion** — what is fair, what is outdated, and how to support equality at work; the facilitator collects strategies on a board.

> **Facilitation tip**
> **Expect resistance.** Facilitators in the original project reported occasional "stormy" discussions where participants challenged the inequality data. This is a feature, not a failure: prepare sources (official statistics such as Eurostat), acknowledge discomfort, and steer the debate toward the evidence and toward what organisations can do rather than who is to blame.

Materials needed

WS2 slides · WS2 Activity cards (printable) · WS2 script — free to download from the materials page, in every language version published so far.

9 Workshop 3 — The immersive Virtual Reality experience

VR headsets + desktop version in rotation **Duration:** 2 hours (+ final debriefing)

This is the experiential core of the course. Six immersive scenarios, each under seven minutes, recreate realistic situations of gender bias in domestic, workplace and social contexts — first-person, with embedded quiz questions, in five languages (English, Spanish, Catalan, Lithuanian, Polish). Every scenario exists in two technically equivalent formats: an interactive VR version for Meta Quest 3 headsets and a desktop version (Windows/Mac), plus video recordings that can simply be screened.

#	Scenario	What participants experience
1	**Workplace bias — "Do you plan to have children?"**	A woman is asked about her family plans during a job interview, exposing discriminatory recruitment practices.
2	**The promotion dilemma — pregnancy discrimination**	A professional is denied a promotion after revealing her pregnancy: the "motherhood penalty" in action.
3	**The care burden — unequal domestic load**	A woman returns home after a full workday and faces unequal household expectations and the emotional burden of normalised inequality.
4	**Work–life balance and intergenerational expectations**	A conversation between a pregnant woman, her partner and her parents, where traditional assumptions about childcare collide with a co-responsible model of family life.
5	**Trans inclusion — Monica's story**	A transgender woman faces mockery, harassment and invalidation of her identity in everyday public and institutional settings.
6	**Non-binary experience — Max's first day**	A qualified non-binary worker encounters misgendering, binary administrative systems, ridicule and lack of institutional support at a new job.

How the scenarios were built
The scenarios were co-created: partner organisations drafted scripts based on testimonies and research (Poland: workplace discrimination; Lithuania: domestic and family care; Spain: LGBTQIA+ discrimination), and MetaMedicsVR merged them into a standardised template — natural dialogue, first-person perspective, embedded quizzes, diverse character design, under-seven-minute duration — refined through several rounds of partner testing.

Running the session step by step

Step 1 — Orientation (10–15 min). Before anyone puts on a headset, present the activity and its purpose (promoting awareness) using the WS3 intro slides: how the equipment works, how the decision-based scenarios flow, hygiene and safety (seated use recommended; remove the headset if dizzy) — and, crucially, the reflective purpose. This is a learning tool, not a technology demo.

Step 2 — The rotation ("activity wheel", ~60–70 min). You will rarely have one headset per person — and you don't need one. The validated model divides the group in two: Group A uses the VR headsets (one headset per 3–4 participants, rotating scenarios among themselves) while Group B watches the desktop versions of other scenarios on screens, with the same quiz pauses. Halfway through, the groups swap, so everyone experiences at least one scenario in full VR immersion and sees the rest on screen.

Step 3 — Final debriefing with the "puzzle" method (~30–40 min). First in homogeneous groups: participants who experienced the same scenarios discuss together — what happened, what they felt, what they recognised from their own environment. Then in mixed groups: groups are reshuffled so each new group contains "witnesses" of different scenarios who explain their scenario to the others — every participant becomes a storyteller, and all six situations

reach everyone. To encourage participation, use questions such as: *What did you learn? What surprised you? What did you recognise from your own environment? What can be done at the individual, organisational and societal level?*

Take-action commitment. Before closing, each participant writes one thing they can do this month to challenge gender roles in their own context (e.g., "normalise men taking parental leave in my team"). The facilitator closes by naming the common mechanisms across scenarios: bias can be explicit or subtle, intentional or embedded in routines, administrative systems and family expectations. Participants then complete the post-training questionnaire and satisfaction survey (QR code on screen) — do this in the room, as response rates drop sharply once people leave.

Equipment checklist

Item	Guideline
VR headsets	Meta Quest 3 (or compatible). 1 headset per 3–4 participants. Renting locally for the training dates worked well — book 2–3 weeks ahead and test on arrival. Alternatively, use computers with the desktop version.
Desktop stations / projector	Laptops or a projector to screen the desktop versions for the non-headset group.
Software / videos	VR builds pre-installed and tested on every headset; desktop versions and videos downloaded locally in the session language (do not rely on streaming).
Connectivity	Wi-Fi for surveys and updates — but keep all videos offline. Wi-Fi instability was the most common technical issue.
Hygiene & comfort	Disposable face covers or wipes for headsets; chairs for seated VR use; charging cables and power strips.
Backup plan	If VR fails entirely, the full session can run on desktop versions alone — this is exactly how the online editions were delivered.

Materials needed

Immersive VR scenarios (Meta Quest 3 builds, or the computer/desktop version) · Six desktop scenario videos · WS3 intro slides · WS3 script · WS3 Activity, the final seminar activity used in the closing debriefing.

10 The short online version

If you cannot bring your audience into a room, the course also works as a 90-minute online event. This format was validated in February 2026 with three national online events in Poland, Spain and Lithuania — 194 participants in total — delivered in national languages. Full detail in Deliverable D6.3 (Online Events).

Block	Length	Content
Pre-test	before start	Pre-training questionnaire via an online form (link or QR shared in the invitation and at the start).
Introduction	25 min	The project and the European gender-equality context at home, at work and in healthcare.
VR simulation component	35 min	Web-based screening of the six scenarios (~5 minutes each) with the same quiz pauses, followed by a short debriefing.
Cards game + debriefing	15 min	A condensed version of the character-card activity, run in plenary or breakout rooms.
Panel discussion + Q&A	15 min	Facilitated exchange with participants; post-test shared at the close.

- **Platform:** any videoconferencing tool works — the original events used Google Meet and Microsoft Teams.
- **Structure mirrors the full course:** the same four-stage pathway (awareness → analysis → experience → action) compressed into 1h30, using the desktop versions instead of headsets.
- **Keep the evaluation:** run the same pre/post questionnaires around the session.
- **Attendance reference:** the original events gathered 56 participants in Poland (two sessions), 82 in Spain and 56 in Lithuania.

Materials for the online version

Online workshop script (EN — the facilitator text of the 90-minute session) · Online workshop slides (ES — the deck used in the Spanish event) · Online session questionnaire (ES — the questions on the six scenarios used as the session's pre/post check) — free to download from the materials page.

11 Planning and logistics

Suggested preparation timeline

When	What to do
6–8 weeks before	Fix dates and venue; define target groups (mixed groups, or separate editions for leaders and students, depending on your objective); if you will collect research data, request ethics approval and prepare consent forms; book VR headset rental or reserve computers for the desktop version.
4–6 weeks before	Launch recruitment using the poster and handout templates (add your date, venue and registration QR code) and the social-media posts of the dissemination kit; brief facilitators.
2–3 weeks before	Confirm registrations; set up the pre/post questionnaires online; test VR builds and download the desktop versions.
1 week before	Print handouts, activity cards and attendance lists and/or attendance certificates (if needed); prepare QR codes.
On the day	Arrive 1 hour early; charge and test every headset; check Wi-Fi; set up the desktop screening area; lay out sign-in sheets.
After	Send a thank-you message with a follow-up survey link; export questionnaire data; document the edition.

Organisation templates

Event schedule (the agenda handed to participants at the University of Barcelona course day, as a model for your timetable) · Presentation template (16:9, PowerPoint / Google Slides, in the project identity and with the EU emblem on every slide, for speakers and facilitators) · Dissemination kit (the three press-style texts with their ready-to-post versions, the social-media images and Poster 1 in five languages, and the consortium's posting calendar) · Posters, handouts and one-pagers as print files.

Budget items to plan for

VR headset rental (the largest single cost — typically per-device per-day, book early) or computers for the VR desktop version · venue and catering · printing (handouts, posters, cards) · facilitator time · **Optional:** professional photographer for documentation, translation of materials into a new language.

12 Evaluating your course

VR Balance uses a before-and-after evaluation design that any replicator can adopt. It measures whether the course changes awareness, attitudes, confidence and intended action — not just whether participants enjoyed it.

Instrument	When	What it measures
Pre-training questionnaire	At the opening, before any content	Participant profile (gender, age, role, education); baseline perception of gender inequality via the MuGIPS scale (25 items across health, violence, education, labour, pay, caregiving, work–life balance, power and representation); prior perceptions of caregiving stereotypes, workplace discrimination and the career gap; expectations.
Post-training questionnaire	At the closing, after the full pathway	The same MuGIPS block (for before/after comparison); perceived learning and changes in perspective; confidence to discuss and intervene; intended actions and perceived barriers; main takeaway.
Satisfaction survey	With the post-questionnaire	Overall satisfaction; most valued components of each workshop; open-ended suggestions.
Attendance & observation	Throughout	Signed attendance lists; facilitator observations; photographic documentation.

Practical notes

- **MuGIPS is a validated academic instrument:** the Multidimensional Gender Inequality Perception Scale (Schwartz-Salazar, García-Sánchez, Martínez & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2024, PLOS ONE). Using a validated scale lets you compare your results with the original project and with future implementations — and, in general, make sure you use questionnaires validated for your audience.
- **Administer online via QR code** with any GDPR-compliant survey tool; keep responses anonymous and individual, and build the time to answer into the agenda at both ends of the day.
- **If you collect data for research or reporting,** obtain ethics approval from your institution and use information sheets and consent forms.

Evaluation instruments

Pre- and post-training questionnaire (EN, editable Word file: participant profile, the MuGIPS block, perceptions and the satisfaction survey, exactly as used in the course) · MuGIPS items (EN and ES, the 25 items of the scale, to be cited with their authors) — free to download from the materials page.

13 Evaluation and impact of the original project (CERV-101191101)

The course was delivered in person in the three partner countries during 2026. The figures below come from the official Course Completion Reports; the online editions are described in Section 10.

Country	Editions & participants	Selected results
Spain University of Barcelona, Barcelona	3 courses (Jan–Mar 2026): a total of **161 participants** (leaders + future leaders).	70.3% satisfied (44.5% very satisfied). Most valued: understanding stereotypes & caregiving (75.8%), discussions and real-life examples (70.3%), understanding workplace discrimination (66.4%). Post-training MuGIPS distribution shifted toward higher perceived frequency of inequality. (D4.1)
Lithuania Social Innovation Fund, Kaunas	4 courses (Apr–May 2026): a total of **103 participants** (leaders + future leaders).	Notably balanced cohort (61.5% men). Post-training: ~90% reported better understanding of workplace discrimination and of systemic causes; ~84% better understanding of how stereotypes shape caregiving; ~81% recognised their own biases about caregiving roles. (D4.2)
Poland Women Entrepreneurship Foundation, Warsaw	6 courses (June 2026): a total of **108 participants** (leaders + future leaders).	84.8% satisfied (60.6% very satisfied). Most valued: the care gap and its economic and social consequences, discussions and real-life examples, and understanding stereotypes and caregiving. Post-training responses shifted toward higher perceived frequency and structural nature of inequality; for the vast majority it was their first VR experience. (D4.3)

What participants consistently valued

- Conceptual clarity on stereotypes, the care gap and workplace discrimination — many participants, including well-informed ones, reported the concepts became explicit and actionable for the first time.
- Discussions and real-life examples, ranked among the top elements in every country.
- The immersive VR experience as the emotional anchor of the day — with effectiveness dependent on good facilitation, debriefing and technical preparation.

What they asked for more of

- More interaction: dialogue, debate, group exchange and guided reflection rather than lecturing.
- More concrete, applied examples close to their own professional context, and more explicit strategies for action.

14 Lessons learned and practical tips

Eight lessons distilled from the courses in three countries, the online editions and the consortium's internal testing — read this page before your first edition.

1. **Keep videos offline.** Wi-Fi instability was the most frequent technical problem. Download all desktop scenarios locally and pre-install VR builds; never rely on streaming during the session.
2. **Plan the headset rotation on paper.** Decide in advance which sub-group uses which headset for which scenario. The rotation model (Section 9) keeps everyone engaged with a 1:3–1:4 headset ratio.
3. **Rehearse in the real room.** Run a full technical test with the actual equipment, projector and Wi-Fi a few days before. Editions that did this ran smoothly; improvisation on the day does not work with VR.
4. **Work actively on gender balance.** Men and non-binary people are harder to recruit, especially in female-dominated fields. Broaden the audience (administrative staff, mixed departments), use leadership framing, and have managers extend personal invitations.
5. **Prepare for pushback.** Some participants will challenge the data. Cite official statistics, keep the tone curious rather than accusatory, and redirect to organisational solutions. Robust discussion is a sign the training is working.
6. **Protect discussion time.** The single most repeated feedback across all countries: more dialogue, fewer slides. If you must cut, cut lecture content — never the debriefing.
7. **Separate audiences when it serves your objective.** Employers/leaders and students engage differently; dedicated editions allow better-targeted discussion.
8. **End on action, not on the problem.** The final debriefing and the personal take-action commitment are what participants remember. Never skip them for lack of time.

Adapting the course to your context

- **New country or sector:** keep the structure, scenarios and evaluation; replace national statistics, legal references (Workshop 2, Part 3) and the card-activity figures with local equivalents.
- **No VR budget:** run Workshop 3 entirely with the desktop versions and the same debriefing structure — this is the validated online format.
- **Shorter formats:** each workshop also works as a standalone 90-minute session (this is how the recruitment posters advertise them); keep the pre/post surveys around whatever you deliver — or run the full 90-minute online version (Section 10).
- **New language:** materials exist in English, Spanish, Polish and Lithuanian (VR scenarios also in Catalan); the standardised templates make additional translations straightforward.

15 Materials, references and contact

Every material is cited in this handbook by its exact name. The full list of course materials — with a preview of each file and its public download link — is collected in **Appendix A** at the end of this handbook.

Scientific output

The University of Barcelona team has presented the programme to the academic community. The abstracts are public; the up-to-date list, with the journal articles as they are published, is kept at metamedicsvr.com/projects/vr-balance/dissemination/#research.

- Manzano Cuesta, A., Navarro Sabaté, À., Santalucía Albi, T., & Giménez Bonafé, J. (2026). Flipping the Script in Health Sciences: Immersive Virtual Reality for Structural Gender Awareness. Accepted communication (virtual poster), 9th International Health Sciences Congress, 1–3 July 2026. Abstract (PDF).
- Navarro Sabaté, À., Santalucía Albi, T., Manzano Cuesta, A., & Giménez Bonafé, J. (2026). Multicentric Online Dissemination Events of the VR Balance Project to Promote Gender Equality through Virtual Reality. Accepted communication (virtual poster), 9th International Health Sciences Congress, 1–3 July 2026. Abstract (PDF).
- Navarro-Sabaté, À., Santalucia, T., Marchant, A., Gallego, M., Zambrano, B., Adalid, R., Manzano Cuesta, A., & Giménez-Bonafé, P. (2026). A VR-enhanced educational programme on gender equity and co-responsibility in Health Sciences: participant satisfaction and perceived learning value. Original article submitted to *Educación Médica* (Elsevier), under review.

References and further reading

- de Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The Second Sex*.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.
- Directive (EU) 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council on pay transparency.
- Eurostat, gender pay gap statistics; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Gender Equality Index.
- Herrera, F., Bailenson, J., Weisz, E., Ogle, E., & Zaki, J. (2018). Building long-term empathy: A large-scale comparison of traditional and virtual reality perspective-taking. *PLOS ONE*, 13(10).
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*.
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- Rubin, G. (1975). The traffic in women: Notes on the "political economy" of sex.
- Schwartz-Salazar, S., García-Sánchez, E., Martínez, R., & Rodríguez-Bailón, R. (2024). The Multidimensional Gender Inequality Perception Scale (MuGIPS). *PLOS ONE*, 19(4), e0301755.
- World Economic Forum (2024). *Global Gender Gap Report*.
- VR Balance public deliverables: D2.1 Training Materials · D2.2 Context Analysis · D2.3 Marketing Materials · D3.1 VR & Desktop Simulator · D4.1–D4.3 Course Completion Reports · D6.3 Online Events.

Get in touch

The consortium welcomes institutions interested in replicating the course, hosting a training or collaborating on research. Contact us at beatriz@metamedicsvr.com, or Pepita Giménez-Bonafé at pgimenez@ub.edu, or through the project website metamedicsvr.com/projects/vr-balance.

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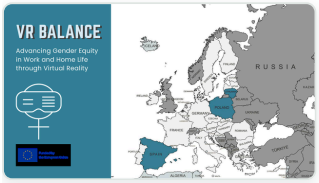
Version 2.2 · September 2026 — revision of version 2.1 (August 2026): partner contacts and the participation table updated; new subsection on the project's scientific output; the appendix now includes the evaluation questionnaires, the materials of the online version, the organisation templates (event schedule, presentation template) and the dissemination kit, all published on the materials page. Version 2.1 stated which language versions are published and added the WS3 Activity; version 2 included the final participation figures for Poland (Deliverable D4.3).

A Appendix A — The course materials

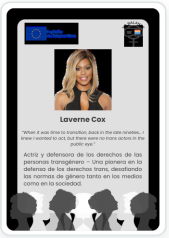
Every material of the course, at a glance. All files are hosted on the project's public website: every link below is **public** and opens or downloads directly, with no login or registration required. Each link opens the corresponding entry on the materials page, where every language version is listed as a separate download. The course itself was delivered in English, Spanish, Polish and Lithuanian, and the translated files are published as the partners deliver them: as of September 2026 the English set is complete and the Lithuanian slide decks and card activities are online, translated by Social Innovation Fund; the Spanish and Polish versions are being added. The second part of the table lists the evaluation instruments, the materials of the online version, the organisation templates and the dissemination kit.



WS1 slides

WS1 Activity cards

WS2 slides



WS2 Activity cards

WS3 intro slides

Material	Formats / languages	Public link
WS1 slides — Gender stereotypes and the care gender gap	PPT/PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT	metamedicsvr.com/projects/vr-balance/resources/#ws1-slides
WS1 script (what to explain on each slide)	PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT	…/resources/#ws1-script
WS1 Activity (cards: rewriting stereotypical phrases)	Printable PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT	…/resources/#ws1-activity
WS2 slides — Gender discrimination at the workplace	PPT/PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT	…/resources/#ws2-slides
WS2 script	PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT	…/resources/#ws2-script
WS2 Activity (character & stereotype cards)	Printable PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT	…/resources/#ws2-activity
WS3 intro slides (introduction to the immersive experience)	PPT/PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT	…/resources/#ws3-slides
WS3 script	PDF · EN, ES, PL, LT (in preparation)	…/resources/#ws3-script
WS3 Activity (final seminar activity: the six scenarios revisited, with every in-experience question and its explanation, plus discussion keys)	PDF · EN, ES	…/resources/#ws3-activity
Immersive VR scenarios	Meta Quest 3 builds & desktop version · EN, ES, CA, LT, PL	vrbalance.metamedicsvr.com
Six desktop scenario videos	Video · five languages	youtu.be/AW-3Ng2oecs

Interactive readings with exercises	Web · EN, ES, LT, PL	godigital.lmlo.lt/interactive_reading.html (add ?lang=es / lt / pl)
Posters 1–3 (A2 print files, with a blank space for the registration QR code) and **Poster 1 in five languages**	PDF · EN; PNG · EN, ES, CA, LT, PL	.../resources/#posters (Deliverable D2.3)
Handouts 1–3 (folded A4 leaflets, one per workshop) and the two **one-pagers** for leaders and for students	PDF · EN	.../resources/#handouts (Deliverable D2.3)
Course handbook (this document)	Web page + PDF	.../resources/#handbook
Evaluation, organisation and dissemination (added in version 2.2)		
Pre- and post-training questionnaire (participant profile, MuGIPS block, perceptions, satisfaction survey)	Word · EN (editable)	.../resources/#evaluation
MuGIPS items (the 25-item scale, to be cited with its authors)	Word · EN, ES	.../resources/#mugips
Online version pack: facilitator script, slide deck and session questionnaire (Section 10)	Word · EN (script) · PDF · ES (slides) · Word · ES (questionnaire)	.../resources/#online-workshop
Event schedule (the agenda of a course day, as a model)	PDF · EN	.../resources/#event-schedule
Presentation template for speakers and facilitators (16:9, project identity, EU emblem on every slide)	PowerPoint / Google Slides	.../resources/#presentation-template
Dissemination kit: the three press-style texts, the social-media posts and Poster 1 in five languages, and the posting calendar	ZIP · EN, ES, CA, LT, PL	.../resources/#dissemination-kit
Publications (accepted abstracts and journal articles)	Web page + PDF abstracts	.../dissemination/#research