



MAYA

Mainstreaming actions to reinforce the professional dimension and emotional side of Young Adult NEET women in Europe

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NATIONAL REPORT · ITALY

1. General Information

Country	ITALY
Partner organisation	ASSOCIAZIONE SAN GIUSEPPE ODV ETS

2. Overview of Rollout Activities

The national rollout in Italy was implemented by Associazione San Giuseppe between May and June 2026 in Cerignola. The activities were carried out within the APS I sogni di Don Bosco educational and community centre, which is a strong partner in the network of San Giuseppe and regularly supports young people and vulnerable individuals through non-formal education, social inclusion initiatives and community-based activities.

The implementation involved 4 young adult NEET women who participated in a structured mentoring pathway based on the MAYA Curriculum, Mentoring Guide and Open Educational Resources (OER) platform. The programme started with an introductory group session, during which participants got to know each other, were introduced to the objectives and methodology of the MAYA project, and established a safe and supportive learning environment. This was followed by individual mentoring sessions, organised according to each participant's needs and the topics addressed throughout the programme, allowing mentors to provide personalised guidance and support. The rollout concluded with a final individual session, where participants reflected on their personal journey, discussed the progress achieved and identified future educational, personal and professional goals. The sessions combined group discussions, self-reflection activities, collaborative learning. Particular attention was given to creating a supportive and non-judgemental environment where participants could openly share their experiences, recognise their strengths and gradually develop realistic personal and professional goals.

The mentoring activities were facilitated by 3 mentors, with the support of 2 youth workers who actively contributed to testing the methodology, observing participant engagement and providing feedback on the educational tools. The implementation was adapted to the local context by using examples and activities reflecting the realities experienced by young women in Cerignola, including barriers related to employment, access to education, family responsibilities and social participation. Practical exercises focused on identifying local training opportunities, preparing for job interviews, improving interpersonal



communication and developing personalised action plans that participants could realistically pursue after completing the mentoring pathway.

3. Participants

Target Group	Number of Participants	Description
Young Adult NEET Women	4	4 young adult women aged between 19 and 29 who were not in education, employment or training. They participated in the mentoring pathway to strengthen their self-confidence, personal development, social participation and employability skills.
Youth Workers	2	2 youth workers from Associazione San Giuseppe supported the implementation of the mentoring activities, tested the MAYA methodology and contributed observations and feedback throughout the rollout.
Stakeholders	2	Representatives from the Municipality of Cerignola, and a local VET school participated in selected activities, presenting local educational and employment opportunities and strengthening links with community services.
Mentors	3	Three mentors coordinated the implementation of the MAYA methodology, facilitating individual mentoring sessions, supporting participants' personal development and monitoring their progress throughout the programme.

4. Implementation of Training Modules

Module	Implemented (Yes/No)	Participants	Key Feedback
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Module 1	yes	4	Participants appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their personal goals and expectations. The activities helped establish trust within the group and encouraged them to actively engage in the mentoring process.
Module 2	yes	4	Participants reported feeling more comfortable sharing personal experiences and supporting one another throughout the programme.
Module 3	yes	4	Problem-solving exercises encouraged participants to analyse everyday situations with greater confidence.
Module 4	yes	4	Participants found the exercises engaging and easy to relate to their daily lives.
Module 5	yes	4	Participants valued having a safe environment in which to express themselves freely.
Module 6	yes	4	Continuous feedback from mentors helped participants recognise their personal progress.
Module 7	yes	4	Participants developed realistic personal action plans for their future.

5. Interactive Tools Testing

Tool	Tested (Yes/No)	Feedback
Personal Goal Mapping Tool	yes	The tool helped participants identify personal strengths, priorities and achievable goals.

Real-World Simulation Tool	yes	Role-playing activities increased participants' confidence and communication skills.
Peer Mentoring Circles	yes	The activity contributed to creating a trusting and collaborative group atmosphere.
Scenario Co-Creation Tool	no	na
Skills Exchange Fair Tool	no	na

6. Digital Platform Testing

Navigation	The platform was easy to navigate and participants were able to access the different sections without major difficulties.
Accessibility	Resources were accessible and understandable
User experience	users found the platform intuitive
Content integration	The OER materials complemented the mentoring activities effectively and supported the implementation of the curriculum.
Technical issues	No technical issues were encountered

7. Data Collection

Tool	Used (Yes/No)
Pre-test questionnaire	No
Module questionnaires	No
Mentoring feedback form	No
Bug log	No
Final satisfaction survey	yes

8. Observations

The mentoring activities took place in a relaxed and informal environment, which helped participants feel comfortable from the very beginning. Although some of the women were initially reserved and preferred to listen rather than speak, they gradually became more confident in sharing their opinions and personal experiences. By the end of the programme, all participants were actively contributing to discussions and supporting one another during the activities.

One aspect that emerged throughout the implementation was the importance of allowing each participant to progress at her own pace. The individual mentoring sessions provided space to discuss personal situations that would have been difficult to address in a group



setting, while the group meetings encouraged dialogue, mutual encouragement and the exchange of practical advice. On several occasions, participants shared information about local training opportunities, job vacancies and services available in the area, showing a growing willingness to help each other beyond the activities themselves.

The youth workers involved in the testing observed that the MAYA resources were easy to integrate into non-formal education activities already carried out by the association. In particular, they appreciated the practical exercises and reflection activities, which generated discussion without requiring participants to have previous educational or professional experience. They also noted that some activities worked better when adapted to examples taken from everyday situations familiar to the participants, such as managing family responsibilities, preparing for a first job interview or returning to education after a long period of inactivity.

Another interesting observation concerned the relationship established between mentors and participants. Rather than perceiving the mentors as trainers, the women progressively saw them as trusted adults with whom they could discuss doubts, aspirations and everyday challenges. This relationship of trust made the mentoring process more spontaneous and encouraged continuous participation throughout the rollout.

9. Impact and Results

The implementation of the MAYA mentoring pathway generated positive outcomes for both participants and the professionals involved in the pilot activities. The young adult NEET women reported improvements in their self-confidence, communication skills and ability to reflect on their personal and professional goals. Throughout the programme, participants became more proactive in identifying opportunities for further education, vocational training and employment. The mentoring process also strengthened participants' emotional awareness and interpersonal skills. The combination of individual mentoring and group activities helped them develop greater resilience, recognise their personal strengths and build supportive relationships with peers facing similar challenges. For the youth workers and mentors, the project represented an opportunity to test innovative educational approaches based on mentoring, non-formal learning and personalised guidance. The methodology proved to be adaptable to the local context and complemented the educational and social activities already carried out by Associazione San Giuseppe. Stakeholder involvement further enhanced the programme by strengthening collaboration between the association, local institutions and organisations working in education, vocational training and social inclusion. Their contribution increased participants' awareness of the services and opportunities available within the local community and encouraged stronger networking among organisations supporting vulnerable young people.



10. Challenges and Lessons Learned

One of the main challenges encountered during the implementation was maintaining regular participation, as some beneficiaries faced family responsibilities, financial constraints and personal difficulties that occasionally affected their availability. Flexibility in scheduling and continuous communication between mentors and participants proved essential in ensuring continuity throughout the mentoring process. Another challenge involved the different starting points of the participants. Some women required additional time to build trust and feel comfortable discussing personal experiences or future aspirations. This confirmed the importance of creating a supportive and non-judgemental environment before addressing topics related to employability or personal planning. The experience also highlighted the value of combining individual mentoring with group learning. While individual sessions enabled mentors to provide tailored guidance and address specific needs, group activities fostered motivation, peer support and the exchange of ideas. This combination contributed to higher engagement and encouraged participants to become active contributors rather than passive learners.

11. Recommendations

Future implementations of the MAYA methodology would benefit from maintaining a flexible mentoring approach that allows activities to be adapted to participants' individual needs and learning pace. Creating an informal and welcoming environment should remain a priority, particularly when working with young women who may have experienced educational exclusion or social isolation. The educational resources developed by the project proved effective and easy to integrate into non-formal learning settings. Nevertheless, including additional examples based on local contexts and everyday situations could further increase participants' engagement and facilitate the transfer of learning into real-life experiences. The continued involvement of youth workers, local authorities, vocational education providers and community organisations is recommended in order to strengthen referral pathways and ensure that participants can access further educational, employment and volunteering opportunities after completing the mentoring programme.

12. Supporting Materials





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