



MAYA

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

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NATIONAL REPORT · PORTUGAL

1. General Information

Country	Portugal
Partner organisation	Amadora Inova

2. Overview of Rollout Activities

National implementation in Portugal was carried out by Amadora Inova between April and June 2026 in Amadora, using the MAYA Curriculum, Mentoring Guide and OER platform to deliver a structured mentoring pathway for young adult NEET women. The rollout focused on ten mentoring sessions per mentee, with two individual sessions and eight group sessions, combining personalised follow-up with community-based learning to strengthen confidence, socio-emotional skills and employability-related competences.

Activities implemented included introductory individual sessions, a group session dedicated to mutual introduction, sharing experiences and building trust, seven thematic group sessions aligned with the MAYA curriculum modules, and a final individual closure session to review progress and next steps. Across the group sessions, participants engaged in practical and reflective activities such as group discussions, self-reflection exercises, mock interviews, confidence-building tasks, peer exchange, problem-solving activities, and the development of personal learning and future planning goals, all supported by the MAYA open educational resources.

The main target group involved was nine young adult NEET women, supported by three mentors from Amadora Inova, while selected group sessions also included invited experts from the local community, namely representatives from the municipality and local NGOs. The implementation was also adapted to the local context by using examples and situations close to the participants' everyday reality in Amadora, especially in relation to employability, access to opportunities, motivation, and social inclusion. One example of adaptation was the use of mock interviews and real-life job application exercises based on common local entry-level opportunities, allowing participants to connect the MAYA methodology with realistic situations they may face in their own pathways.

3. Participants

Target Group	Number of Participants	Description
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Young Adult NEET Women	9	Young adult women not in education, employment or training, based in the local territory, who participated in the full mentoring cycle and engaged in activities aimed at strengthening confidence, social participation, emotional awareness, and employability-related competences.
Youth Workers	0	-
Stakeholders	2	Two local stakeholders contributed to the rollout through selected group sessions: one representative from Amadora Municipality and one representative from a local NGO working on women's integration into the labour market.
Mentors	3	Three experienced professionals from Amadora Inova acted as mentors throughout the implementation, ensuring continuity, structured accompaniment, and guidance across both the individual and group mentoring sessions.

4. Implementation of Training Modules

Module	Implemented (Yes/No)	Participants	Key Feedback
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Module 1	Yes	9	Participants appreciated the focus on their own experiences and needs, reporting that personalisation and co-design helped them feel listened to and more in control of their learning path. They valued exercises on observation and personal learning calendars as practical tools to structure their goals.
Module 2	Yes	9	Group activities helped create a strong sense of belonging and mutual support. Participants highlighted that working as a community, sharing experiences and building a “safe group” reduced feelings of isolation and increased motivation to remain engaged in the programme.
Module 3	Yes	9	Critical-thinking and problem-based tasks were seen as challenging but empowering. Participants reported feeling more confident to express opinions, analyse everyday situations, and reflect on options for their future, rather than feeling passive or “stuck”.

Module 4	Yes	9	Hands-on, multisensory activities and simple digital tools made learning more concrete and engaging. Participants stated that practical exercises helped them understand abstract ideas more easily and that combining tactile materials with digital resources increased interest and confidence in using technology.
Module 5	Yes	9	This module was perceived as highly relevant: participants reported better awareness of their emotions, stress triggers and relationship patterns. They appreciated having space to talk about feelings in a structured way and to practise empathy, communication and conflict-management in a supportive group.

Module 6	Yes	9	Participants found it useful to see their progress recognised over time through observation and feedback rather than formal tests. They reported that regular, constructive feedback from mentors helped them notice small improvements in confidence, participation and skills, making the process feel supportive rather than judgmental.
Module 7	Yes	9	The personal education plans were seen as a key outcome of the programme. Participants appreciated having a clear, realistic roadmap with short- and long-term goals, and reported that writing and discussing their plans helped them clarify priorities and feel more hopeful and organised about next steps in education, employment and community participation.

5. Interactive Tools Testing

Tool	Tested (Yes/No)	Feedback
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Personal Goal Mapping Tool	Yes	Used during the mentoring cycle to help the 9 mentees identify personal strengths, challenges and short-/long-term goals. Participants found it clear and helpful for visualising their paths and linking the modules to concrete steps in education, employment and personal development.
Real-World Simulation Tool	Yes	Applied in group sessions through mock interviews and practical scenarios related to entering the labour market in Amadora and the wider Lisbon area. Participants reported that these simulations made abstract employability concepts more tangible and reduced anxiety about real job-search and interview situations.
Peer Mentoring Circles	Yes	Integrated into several group meetings to structure peer sharing, mutual support and collective reflection after activities. The mentees highlighted that peer mentoring circles strengthened trust, belonging and motivation, and allowed them to learn from each other's experiences in a safe environment.
Scenario Co-Creation Tool	No	-
Skills Exchange Fair Tool	No	-

6. Digital Platform Testing

Navigation	The main sections and resources were accessible, but some OER elements were hard to locate, and internal links were not always intuitive, requiring extra guidance for mentees.
Accessibility	Content was available and readable, but navigation complexity meant that less digitally confident users needed support to find specific modules and tools.

User experience	Overall positive once inside the right section, yet the platform's structure and UX could be streamlined to reduce clicks and confusion when moving between curriculum, mentoring and interactive tools.
Content integration	No issues.
Technical issues	No issues.

7. Data Collection

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

8. Observations

Participant engagement was generally high across the mentoring cycle. The 9 mentees attended the sessions consistently, took part in discussions, and showed increasing willingness to speak, ask questions, and share personal experiences as trust in the group and mentors grew. Group exercises, mock interviews and practical activities based on the MAYA modules helped maintain focus and motivation, especially when linked to real-world situations and future goals.

Learning dynamics were strongly characterised by progressive confidence-building and peer support. At the beginning, several participants were more reserved and cautious; over time, they became more active in proposing ideas, reflecting on their own paths, and connecting content on emotional intelligence, participation and personal planning with their daily lives. The mix of individual and group sessions allowed learning to move from private reflection (introductory and closure sessions) to shared exploration and community-based learning during the group meetings.

Group interaction evolved into a supportive and cooperative environment. The mentees developed a clear sense of belonging and mutual recognition, often validating each other's experiences and challenges. Peer mentoring circles and group reflections fostered empathy and solidarity, and the presence of local stakeholders (municipality and NGO) in some sessions encouraged participants to see themselves as part of a wider community with concrete support options.

Unexpected outcomes included the level of openness with which mentees discussed emotional and relational issues, beyond what was initially anticipated, and the spontaneous



use of the group as a space to exchange practical information (e.g. local opportunities, services, and coping strategies). Another unexpected positive element was that, although additional individual mentoring was offered on demand, none of the mentees requested extra sessions, indicating that the planned combination of individual and group support was perceived as sufficient and meaningful.

9. Impact and Results

The mentoring cycle produced positive results in terms of skills development, confidence and participant engagement. Through the combination of individual and group sessions, the 9 young adult NEET women strengthened transversal competences such as communication, self-reflection, emotional awareness, participation in group settings, goal setting and future planning. Activities linked to the MAYA modules, including mock interviews, peer exchange and personal planning exercises, also supported employability-related learning in a practical and accessible way.

A relevant impact of the rollout was the empowerment of participants as active agents in their own learning and life pathways. Over the course of the programme, mentees showed greater confidence in expressing opinions, reflecting on personal barriers, identifying strengths and defining realistic next steps. The mentoring approach helped create a safe and non-judgmental environment in which participants could reconnect with learning, build trust and recognise their own progress.

The mentoring relationships developed in a consistent and supportive way. The presence of 3 experienced mentors from Amadora Inova ensured continuity, personalised guidance and a stable reference throughout the cycle. At the same time, the group format helped transform mentoring into a shared process of mutual support, where participants also learned from one another and developed a stronger sense of belonging and solidarity.

Stakeholder involvement, although limited in number, added practical value to the implementation. The participation of one representative from Amadora Municipality and one representative from a local NGO working on women's labour market integration helped connect the mentoring process with local support structures and concrete community perspectives. Their contribution reinforced the relevance of the programme in the local context and increased the visibility of possible pathways for social and professional inclusion.

10. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Operationally, one of the main challenges was managing time and logistics for longer group sessions (4 hours) while ensuring that all 9 mentees could participate regularly, given personal responsibilities, transport and occasional health or family constraints. This required flexible scheduling and small adjustments to session flow, such as prioritising key



activities when time was limited. Another operational issue was the need to support participants with lower digital confidence when using the MAYA OER platform, especially because some resources were not immediately intuitive to find, which meant mentors had to provide more guidance and sometimes print or locally host key materials.

Participant barriers included initial low self-confidence, fear of judgement and limited prior positive experiences in education or training. At the start, some mentees were hesitant to speak, explore new activities or think about medium- and long-term plans. Over time, these barriers were reduced through the group's emotional safety, the gradual introduction of reflective exercises, and the use of practical, concrete examples that connected directly to their lived reality.

From an organisational perspective, coordinating the involvement of external stakeholders (municipality and NGO) within the group sessions required careful preparation to ensure their contribution remained aligned with the project's empowering and non-judgmental approach.

Key lessons learned include the importance of combining individual and group mentoring to balance personalised support with community-based empowerment, and the value of integrating module-specific reflection and practical exercises directly into mentoring sessions rather than treating them as separate "training" components. Another lesson was that qualitative, conversation-based feedback (in mentoring sessions and group reflections) can be more meaningful and less intimidating than formal questionnaires for this target group, while still providing rich evidence of change in confidence, skills and engagement.

11. Recommendations

For the training modules, it is recommended to provide more concrete examples and case studies drawn from local contexts (such as Amadora and the wider Lisbon area) and to include shorter, optional activities that can be used when time or energy levels are limited. For the mentoring programme, maintaining the balance between individual and group sessions is advised, while adding simple tools for follow-up (for example, brief written reflections or short check-ins after key sessions) to support continuity and consolidation of learning. Regarding interactive tools, simplifying instructions and providing ready-made scenarios that match the reality of NEET women can help increase usage and reduce the need for extensive explanation during sessions. For the digital platform, improving navigation and user experience by making the OER and mentoring resources easier to locate (for instance, via a clearer menu structure or direct links from the curriculum overview to the corresponding tools) would make access more intuitive for participants and mentors with different levels of digital confidence.

12. Supporting Materials



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