

Kick-off in Konya: the MAYA partnership sets out

In February 2024, five organisations from Türkiye, Austria, Portugal and Italy met for the first time, united by a shared question: how can learning help young women who have stepped away from education and work to find their way back?



Kick-off meeting hosted by Selçuk University, Konya, 26 and 27 February 2024.

A project for young women outside education and work

MAYA (*Mainstreaming Actions to reinforce professional dimension and emotional side of Young Adult NEET women in Europe*) is an Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in the field of youth, coordinated by **Selçuk University**. It starts from a simple observation: re-entering education or employment is rarely a matter of skills alone.

Drawing on the Montessori tradition, with its respect for the individual, careful observation, a prepared learning environment and self-directed activity, the project seeks to strengthen employability while nurturing the confidence, relationships and emotional resources that make change possible.

30

months

Dec 2023 to Jun 2026

4

countries

4

work packages

4

transnational
meetings

Two target groups

Young adult NEET women

Young women outside employment, education or training, whose paths are often shaped by social, emotional and practical barriers rather than by a lack of ability.

Youth workers and trainers

The professionals who accompany these women every day, and who will use the MAYA curriculum, mentoring programme and tools in their own practice.



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Two days to build a common plan

The first transnational meeting took place on **26 and 27 February 2024** in Konya, hosted by Selçuk University. Representatives of all five partner organisations took part: Selçuk University, Canik Public Education Centre, Compass GmbH, Amadora Inova and Associazione San Giuseppe.

Over two days the partners agreed on how they would work together, examined each work package in detail and designed the first research phase. The aim was to listen before designing: surveys, national case studies and literature reviews would come first.

Meeting programme

26 Feb	Opening and presentation of Selçuk University
26 Feb	WP1 • Project management
26 Feb	WP2 • Studies and programmes
26 Feb	WP3 • Open interactive education resources
27 Feb	WP4 • Actions and experiences collection



Partners working on the project plan during the kick-off meeting.



The four work packages agreed in Konya

WP1 • Project management

Coordination, quality assurance, reporting and four transnational meetings.

WP2 • Studies and programmes

Surveys, case studies, literature reviews and the MAYA Handbook.

WP3 • Open education resources

Seven-module curriculum, mentoring programme and interactive tools.

WP4 • Actions and experiences

National pilots, local events and a collection of experiences.

What happened next

- Research in four countries reached 103 young NEET women and 84 professionals.
- The findings became the MAYA Handbook, published in five languages.
- The next partner meeting took place in Lisbon, Portugal, in February 2025.



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Lisbon: from research findings to the MAYA Handbook

A year after the kick-off, the partners gathered in Portugal to reflect on what the research had revealed and to give it a lasting form: a shared handbook and the outline of a training curriculum.



Second transnational meeting hosted by Amadora Inova, Lisbon, 18 and 19 February 2025.

Reviewing a year of research

The second transnational meeting was hosted by **Amadora Inova**. Compass, Canik Public Education Centre and San Giuseppe attended in person, while Selçuk University followed and contributed online.

Partners reviewed and validated the results of the first research phase. The voices of young women and of the professionals who support them, gathered in four countries, became the common ground on which the next steps would be built.

103

NEET women
surveyed

84

professionals
surveyed

8

handbook
chapters planned

5

languages

A shared handbook, written by all partners

The partners agreed that the handbook should support personalised learning and offer practical guidance, so that youth workers can adapt materials to the needs, histories and aspirations of each learner. Each chapter was entrusted to a partner.

A first draft was planned for March 2025 and translation into five languages for April 2025.

Handbook chapters and lead partners

1	Introduction • San Giuseppe
2	Understanding the context • Compass
3	Montessori principles • Amadora Inova
4	Applying them to NEET women • Canik
5	Guidelines for youth workers • Selçuk
6 to 8	Findings, tools, conclusion • Compass, San Giuseppe



Working sessions on the handbook and the training curriculum.



Planning the training curriculum

The partners also agreed the architecture of the WP3 Training Curriculum: seven modules, each combining theoretical grounding with practical tools, and a structured mentoring programme to accompany them. Translation was planned for the summer of 2025, with piloting to follow.

What happened next

- The MAYA Handbook was completed in English, Turkish, German, Italian and Portuguese.
- The seven-module curriculum and the mentoring programme were developed.
- Partners met again in Innsbruck, Austria, in October 2025.



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Innsbruck: reviewing the MAYA training resources

Before the resources reached young women and youth workers, the partners met at Compass in Innsbruck to examine them together, with a critical and caring eye.



Third transnational meeting hosted by Compass GmbH, Innsbruck, 13 and 14 October 2025.

A product review meeting

The third transnational meeting was hosted by **Compass GmbH**, which led the development of the MAYA Training Curriculum. Its purpose was to review the WP3 resources collectively, coordinate the partners' contributions and validate the materials before piloting.

Discussions focused on the seven curriculum modules, the structure of the mentoring programme and the five interactive tools, as well as on quality assurance and the timetable for the national pilots.

7

curriculum
modules

1

mentoring
programme

5

interactive
tools

3

countries
preparing pilots

What was on the table

Training curriculum

Seven modules, from personalisation and observation to the Personal Educational Plan.

Interactive tools

Five ready-to-use activities linking the curriculum to practice.

Mentoring programme

A structured mentoring relationship built on personal goals and regular follow-up.

Quality and next steps

Quality review of the outputs and the calendar for piloting with NEET women and youth workers.



Presentations and discussion at the Compass office in Innsbruck.



What happened next

- The final partner meeting took place in Cerignola, Italy, in December 2025.
- National pilots were carried out in Türkiye, Portugal and Italy in 2026.
- All resources were published on mayaproject.eu.

Cerignola: the final partner meeting

In Cerignola, San Giuseppe welcomed the partners to the last transnational meeting, devoted to bringing the results together, preparing the pilots and thinking about what would remain after the project.



Fourth transnational meeting hosted by Associazione San Giuseppe, Cerignola, 10 and 11 December 2025.

Consolidating what MAYA has built

The fourth and final transnational meeting was hosted by **Associazione San Giuseppe** in Cerignola, Italy, and marked a turning point in the closing phase of the project.

Partners reviewed progress in every work package, paying particular attention to the open education platform, the mentoring programme and the curriculum, and considered how usable and accessible the digital tools would be for women with very different levels of digital confidence.

4th

and final
partner meeting

3

countries
planning pilots

3

multiplier events
held in 2026



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Main topics

Open education resources

Finalising the MAYA platform, the curriculum and the mentoring programme.

Local activities

Partners presented local workshops and pilot plans and exchanged good practices.

Actions and experiences

Collecting case studies, field experiences and impact stories for publication.

Sustainability

Planning the multiplier events, dissemination and the long-term use of the results.

Four meetings, one partnership

Feb 2024	Konya, Türkiye • kick-off
Feb 2025	Lisbon, Portugal • research and handbook
Oct 2025	Innsbruck, Austria • training resources
Dec 2025	Cerignola, Italy • final meeting

A new Turkish partner

Konya Meram Public Education Centre joined the partnership on 1 December 2025, following the withdrawal of Canik Public Education Centre. Meram brought its close links with local learners and became the Turkish field partner for the 2026 pilots.

147

people took part in the three MAYA multiplier events that followed in 2026, well above the target of 80.

What happened next

- Pilots with young NEET women and youth workers in Türkiye, Portugal and Italy (spring 2026).
- Three multiplier events in Cerignola, Amadora and Konya with 147 participants in total.
- Publication of all results on mayaproject.eu.



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WP1 • Project management: keeping five partners on one path

Behind every result of a European partnership lies patient coordination: shared plans, regular dialogue and attention to quality over thirty months.



MAYA partners at the final transnational meeting in Cerignola, December 2025.

What WP1 covered

As coordinator, **Selçuk University** managed the grant agreement, financial transfers, reporting to the Turkish National Agency and communication across the partnership.

Each partner organised its own internal work and records, and hosted or co-organised one of the four transnational meetings, so that responsibility was genuinely shared.

30

months

4

transnational
meetings

4

countries

5

quality
documents

Four transnational meetings

Meeting • host • focus

Feb 2024	Konya • Selçuk University • kick-off and work plan
Feb 2025	Lisbon • Amadora Inova • review of research, handbook
Oct 2025	Innsbruck • Compass • review of training resources
Dec 2025	Cerignola • San Giuseppe • final meeting, sustainability



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Quality assurance

Quality was followed through a project management plan, a quality and evaluation plan, meeting evaluations, checklists and a mid-term evaluation report. Regular online meetings and a shared archive kept deadlines and design decisions visible to everyone.

Project Management Plan

Roles, procedures and timelines for all partners.

Quality and Evaluation Plan

Indicators and tools to follow progress and quality.

Meeting evaluations

Feedback after the kick-off and the second transnational meeting.

Mid-term evaluation

An interim review of results and of the next steps.

Managing a partner change

In 2025 Canik Public Education Centre left the partnership. The coordinator managed the change together with the National Agency, and Konya Meram Public Education Centre joined on 1 December 2025 through Amendment No. 1. Meram took over the Turkish field work, hosted the national pilot and co-organised the Konya multiplier event.



Partner meetings in Lisbon (February 2025) and Innsbruck (October 2025).

Lessons learned

- Define a written handover protocol for any change of partner from the start.
- Do not leave time-bound activities such as mentoring to the last quarter of a project.
- Fix core implementation standards for all countries in advance.



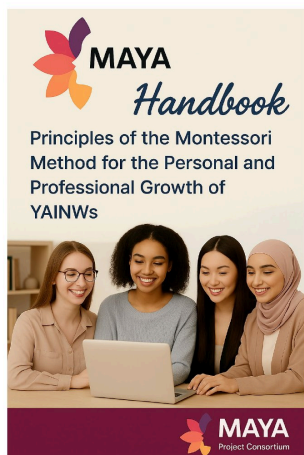
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WP2 · Studies and programmes: listening before designing

Before designing anything, MAYA listened. Research in four countries explored what holds young NEET women back and what helps them move forward, and laid the evidence base for the MAYA Handbook.



Evidence from four countries

Under WP2, led by Canik Public Education Centre, partners in Türkiye, Austria, Portugal and Italy surveyed young adult NEET women and the professionals who work with them, documented national examples of good practice and reviewed the literature on Montessori approaches in adult and professional learning.

The findings were analysed country by country, then compared and brought together in national reports and in the MAYA Handbook, published in five languages.

103

NEET women
surveyed

84

professionals
surveyed

13

literature
reviews

9

national
case studies

How the research was done

Common tools

The same core questionnaires and templates were used in all four countries.

Surveys

Questionnaires for young NEET women and for the professionals who support them.

Case studies and literature

Good practices from each country and reviews of Montessori-based adult learning.

National reports

Country analyses that were compared and brought together at transnational level.

Who took part

Young NEET women surveyed



Professionals surveyed



What the research showed

The research showed that the barriers faced by young NEET women cannot be explained by vocational skills alone. Across the four countries, a set of interwoven obstacles emerged:

Low self-efficacy

Little confidence in one's own abilities.

Limited support

Weak personal and professional networks.

Caring duties

Family responsibilities that limit time and mobility.

Financial constraints

Costs that make participation difficult.

Past learning experiences

Negative school memories that discourage new learning.

Missing emotional focus

Programmes that rarely address the social and emotional side.



The research results were reviewed and validated by the partners in Lisbon, February 2025.

From evidence to resources

- The findings shaped the MAYA Handbook: Principles of the Montessori Method for the Personal and Professional Growth of YAINWs.
- They also defined the seven learning areas of the WP3 Training Curriculum.
- All WP2 outputs are available on mayaproject.eu.



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WP3 · Open education resources: tools anyone can use

Research findings became practical, open resources: a seven-module curriculum, a mentoring programme and five interactive tools, freely available online in five languages.



Youth workers taking part in the MAYA training programme in Konya, June 2026.

One learning path, many resources

WP3 translated evidence into practice. **Compass** developed the training curriculum, **Amadora Inova** shaped the mentoring programme, **San Giuseppe** created the interactive tools and **Selçuk University** built the platform and its video content.

Together these resources form a single learning path, leading each woman from self-awareness and personalised learning towards her own Personal Educational Plan.

7

curriculum
modules

5

interactive
tools

5

languages

2,510

platform visits
by Aug 2026



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The seven modules

- 1 Personalisation and co-design of education; observational learning
- 2 Participatory approach and communities of learners
- 3 Intellectual stimulation of young adult learners
- 4 Development of the senses and tactile approach; technologies
- 5 Emotional intelligence and social-emotional learning
- 6 Monitoring progress: observation and assessment
- 7 Creation of a Personal Educational Plan

Five interactive tools

Personal Goal Mapping

A card to set and follow personal goals.

Real-World Project Simulation

Planning a real project in small groups.

Peer Mentoring Circles

Structured peer support sessions.

Role-Play and Social Simulation

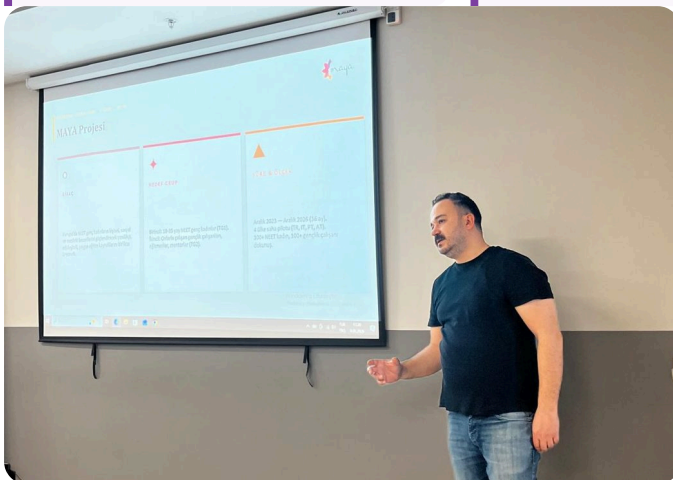
Practising everyday and work situations.

Skills Exchange Fair

Sharing and valuing each other's skills.

Mentoring Programme

One-to-one support built around personal goals.



The resources in use with youth workers in Konya and under review in Innsbruck.

Rated by professionals

- In Türkiye, 21 professionals assessed the resources on eight dimensions: average 4.28 out of 5, and all 168 ratings were 4 or 5.
- All resources are open access, with no registration: mayaproject.eu.



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WP4 · Actions and experiences: MAYA in the field

In spring 2026, national pilots in Türkiye, Portugal and Italy brought the MAYA resources into real learning spaces with young NEET women and youth workers.



A MAYA group session with young women at Meram Public Education Centre, Konya, June 2026.

Testing the approach with real groups

The partners used the curriculum, the mentoring programme, the interactive tools and the platform with their target groups, listened to participants and professionals, and documented what they learned along the way.

Each country adapted the approach to its own context while keeping the same seven modules and the same Montessori-inspired principles, which allowed experiences to be compared and shared.

3

countries
with pilots

38

young NEET women
in the pilots

3

multiplier
events

147

event
participants



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Three national pilots

Türkiye

25 young NEET women followed the seven-module programme; 31 youth workers completed a 16-hour programme; 7 mentor and mentee pairs completed 30 hours of mentoring each.

Portugal

9 young NEET women followed a cycle of 10 sessions (2 individual and 8 group sessions); 19 professionals validated the open resources.

Italy

4 young NEET women, 3 mentors and 2 youth workers took part in a personalised pilot with individual mentoring sessions.



Pilot sessions in Konya and the multiplier event in Amadora.

Sharing the results locally

Multiplier events

29 Apr 2026	Cerignola, Italy • San Giuseppe • 30 participants
12 Jun 2026	Amadora, Portugal • Amadora Inova • 36 participants
19 Jun 2026	Konya, Türkiye • Selçuk University and Meram PEC • 81 participants

What participants and professionals said

- Konya multiplier event: overall satisfaction 4.63 out of 5 (51 feedback forms).
- Two youth workers trained in Türkiye went on to act as mentors themselves.
- National reports and the Compendium of Actions and Experiences are on mayaproject.eu.



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Cerignola: opening the MAYA results to the local community

The first MAYA multiplier event, organised by Associazione San Giuseppe, presented the project's results and invited young women and youth workers to take part in the Italian pilot.



Participants at the MAYA multiplier event, Cerignola, 29 April 2026.

Sharing results, building a local group

Associazione San Giuseppe welcomed 30 participants: educators, youth workers, representatives of civil society organisations and young women interested in the themes of the project. The event introduced MAYA's objectives, methodology and main outputs.

It also served a second, very concrete purpose: to invite young adult NEET women and youth workers to join the mentoring and testing activities that would follow. Six youth workers offered to contribute, and three young women volunteered to take part.

30

participants

6

youth workers ready
to contribute

3

young women
volunteered

4

results
presented


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Programme

The project and the partnership

An introduction to MAYA and to the five partner organisations.

Project results

Handbook, Training Curriculum, Mentoring Guide and Open Education Resources platform.

Local implementation

How the MAYA approach would be applied with young women in Cerignola.

Open discussion

Questions, exchange of experiences and reflection on transferability.



Presentations and discussion during the Cerignola event.

What participants said

Feedback collected at the end of the event showed a high level of satisfaction. Most participants found the resources relevant to their professional work, said they would consult the open materials online and intended to apply elements of the MAYA approach, especially mentoring and learner-centred activities, in their own organisations.

Part of a series

- Cerignola, 29 April 2026: 30 participants
- Amadora, 12 June 2026: 36 participants
- Konya, 19 June 2026: 81 participants



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Amadora: the Portuguese MAYA experience

Amadora Inova brought together young women, educators, youth workers and civil society organisations to present the MAYA results and the experience of the local mentoring cycle.



MAYA multiplier event at Amadora Inova, Amadora, 12 June 2026.

A local event with a European outlook

The event presented MAYA's approach to accompanying young adult NEET women through Montessori-inspired adult learning, mentoring and inclusive educational practice.

Most participants were women aged between 20 and 45: young adult women, youth workers, educators and representatives of organisations working on inclusion, education and employability.

36

participants

9

mentees in the
Portuguese cycle

10

sessions
per mentee

19

professionals
validated the OER


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Programme

The MAYA approach

Montessori-inspired adult learning for young NEET women.

Project outputs

Handbook, seven-module curriculum, mentoring guide and open education resources.

The Portuguese pilot

A mentoring cycle with nine young women from April to June 2026.

Transferability

Good practices and lessons learned for local organisations.



Participants at the Amadora multiplier event.



Why it matters

- The event encouraged local organisations to use the MAYA open resources.
- It strengthened cooperation in Amadora around support pathways for women facing educational, social and labour-market barriers.



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Konya: 81 participants at the MAYA multiplier event

Selçuk University and Konya Meram Public Education Centre shared the MAYA results and the Turkish pilot experience with the local community in the project's largest event.



MAYA multiplier event at Meram Public Education Centre, Konya, 19 June 2026.

The largest MAYA event

Held at **Konya Meram Public Education Centre**, the event brought together young NEET women, youth workers, trainers, centre staff and representatives of local organisations.

With 81 participants, the event exceeded its target of 80, and 51 participants shared their views through the feedback form.

81

participants

49young NEET
women**25**youth workers
and trainers**4.63**satisfaction
out of 5

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Results presented

MAYA Handbook

Based on the principles of the Montessori method.

Curriculum and mentoring

The seven-module Training Curriculum and the Mentoring Programme.

Five interactive tools

Goal map, project simulation, peer circle, role-play and skills exchange fair.

Open education resources

All materials available at mayaproject.eu.



Participants, speakers and the organising team at Meram Public Education Centre.

The experience of the Turkish pilot was also shared: group trainings with young NEET women, the 16-hour programme for youth workers and the one-to-one mentoring cycle.

Who attended

- 49 young NEET women
- 25 youth workers and trainers
- 7 representatives of stakeholder organisations



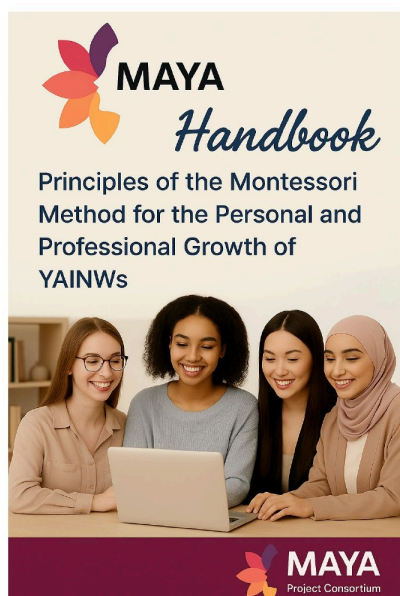
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The MAYA Handbook: Montessori principles for young adult NEET women

A practical handbook for youth workers and educators, grounded in research with young women and professionals in four countries.



What the handbook offers

Principles of the Montessori Method for the Personal and Professional Growth of YAINWs explores how respect for the individual, observation, a prepared environment and self-directed activity can shape adult learning with young women who are currently outside education and work.

It brings together research findings from Türkiye, Austria, Portugal and Italy with practical guidance for youth workers, trainers and mentors.

Authors: Olcay Belli (Compass GmbH) and Angela Maria Loporchio (Associazione San Giuseppe). **Design:** İ. Ferhat Demirbaş (Selçuk University).

5

languages

8

chapters

4countries'
research**Free**open access
PDF

Built on evidence

The handbook rests on surveys with 103 young NEET women and 84 professionals, 13 literature reviews and 9 national case studies prepared by the partners in Türkiye, Austria, Portugal and Italy.

Its chapters were written jointly, discussed at the Lisbon meeting in February 2025 and then translated into five languages.



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Inside the handbook

- 1 Introduction: the MAYA project and who the handbook is for
- 2 Understanding the context of young NEET women
- 3 The role of the Montessori method
- 4 Applying Montessori principles to young NEET women
- 5 Guidelines for youth workers
- 6 Key findings from the research
- 7 Tools and resources
- 8 Conclusion

Montessori principles in the handbook

Respect for the individual

Each woman's pace, history and goals come first.

Observation

Trainers observe before they guide.

Prepared environment

A safe, calm and welcoming space.

Self-directed activity

Learners choose and plan their own steps.

Learning by doing

Hands-on, real-world activities.

Emotional balance

Attention to feelings, confidence and relationships.

Who it is for

Youth workers

Ideas to create safe, respectful and motivating learning environments.

Trainers and educators

Methods for self-directed, experiential and emotionally aware learning.

Organisations

A framework to design inclusive programmes for young women.



Available in five languages

English, Turkish, German, Italian and Portuguese. Download the handbook free of charge from the Project Results page at mayaproject.eu.



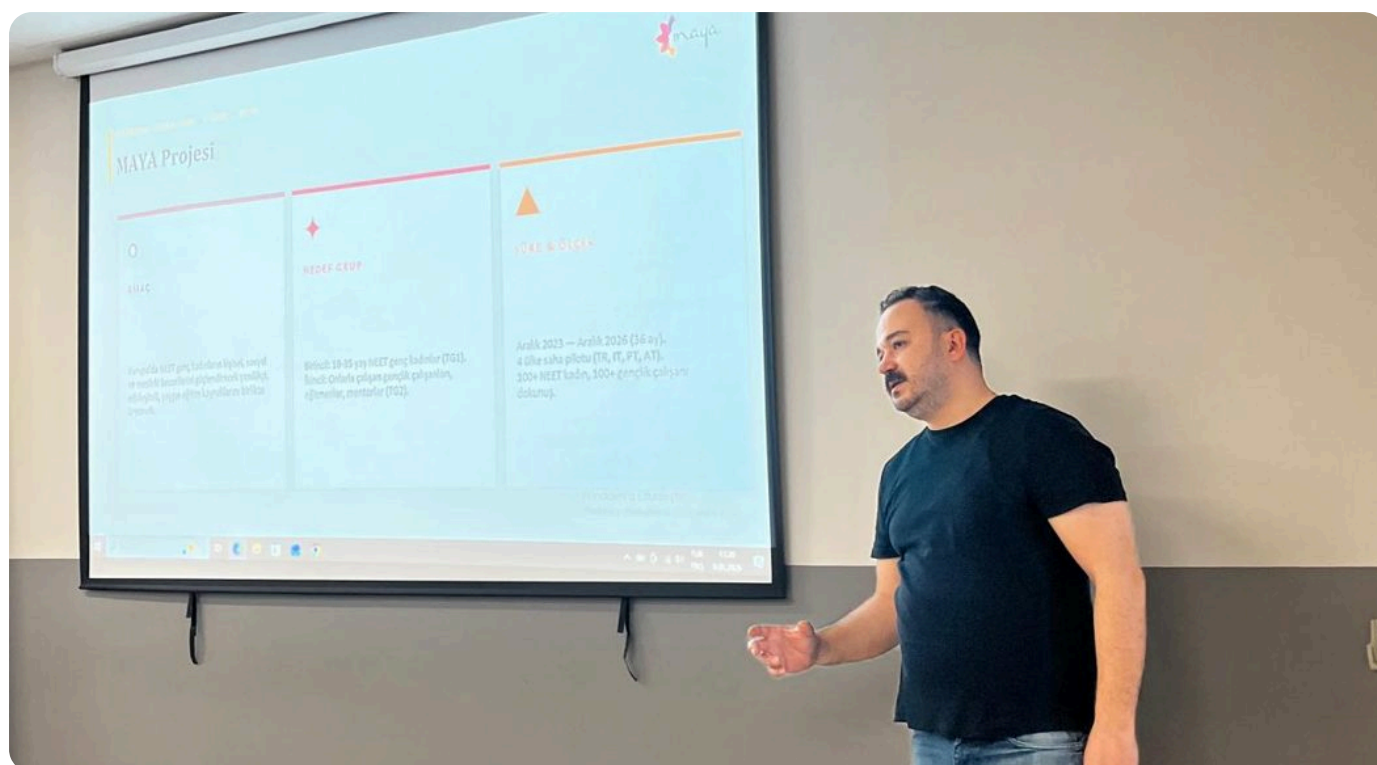
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The MAYA Training Curriculum: seven modules for youth workers

An open, competence-based curriculum that helps professionals bring Montessori-inspired learning into their everyday work with young NEET women.



A session of the MAYA programme for youth workers, Konya, June 2026.

Designed for practice

The curriculum is addressed first to youth workers, adult educators, trainers and other professionals who accompany disadvantaged young women, and secondly to policymakers, civil society and community organisations and training centres.

It can be used in non-formal, vocational, blended and mentoring settings. Each module combines theory, session plans, activities and assessment, and connects with the MAYA interactive tools.

7

modules

5

languages

16 h

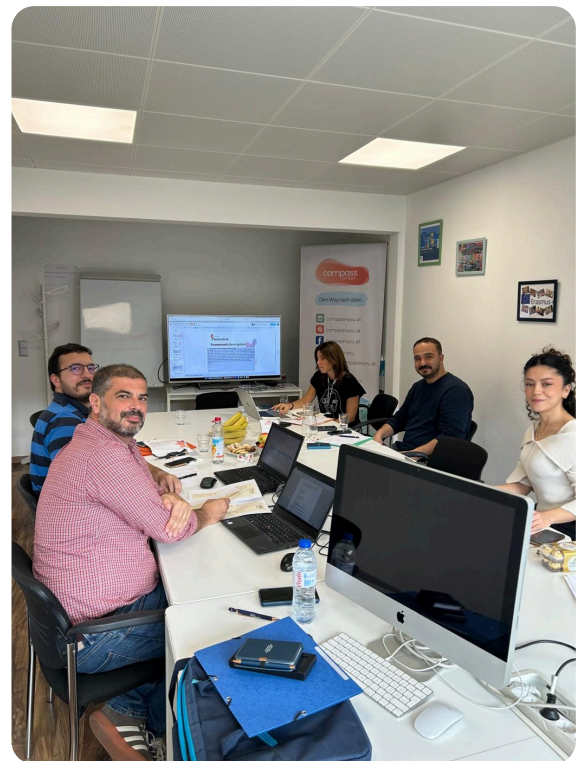
programme tested
in Türkiye

4.28

rating by
professionals (of 5)

The seven modules

- 1 Personalisation and co-design of education; observational learning
- 2 Participatory approach and communities of learners
- 3 Intellectual stimulation of young adult learners
- 4 Development of the senses and tactile approach; involving technologies
- 5 Emotional intelligence and social-emotional learning
- 6 Monitoring progress: observation and assessment of the adult learner
- 7 Creation of a Personal Educational Plan



The curriculum in use in Konya (June 2026) and under review in Innsbruck (October 2025).

Tested and validated

- In Türkiye, 31 youth workers completed a 16-hour programme based on the curriculum.
- 21 professionals rated the resources 4.28 out of 5 on average; all 168 ratings were 4 or 5.
- Open the curriculum online, in five languages, at mayaproject.eu.



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