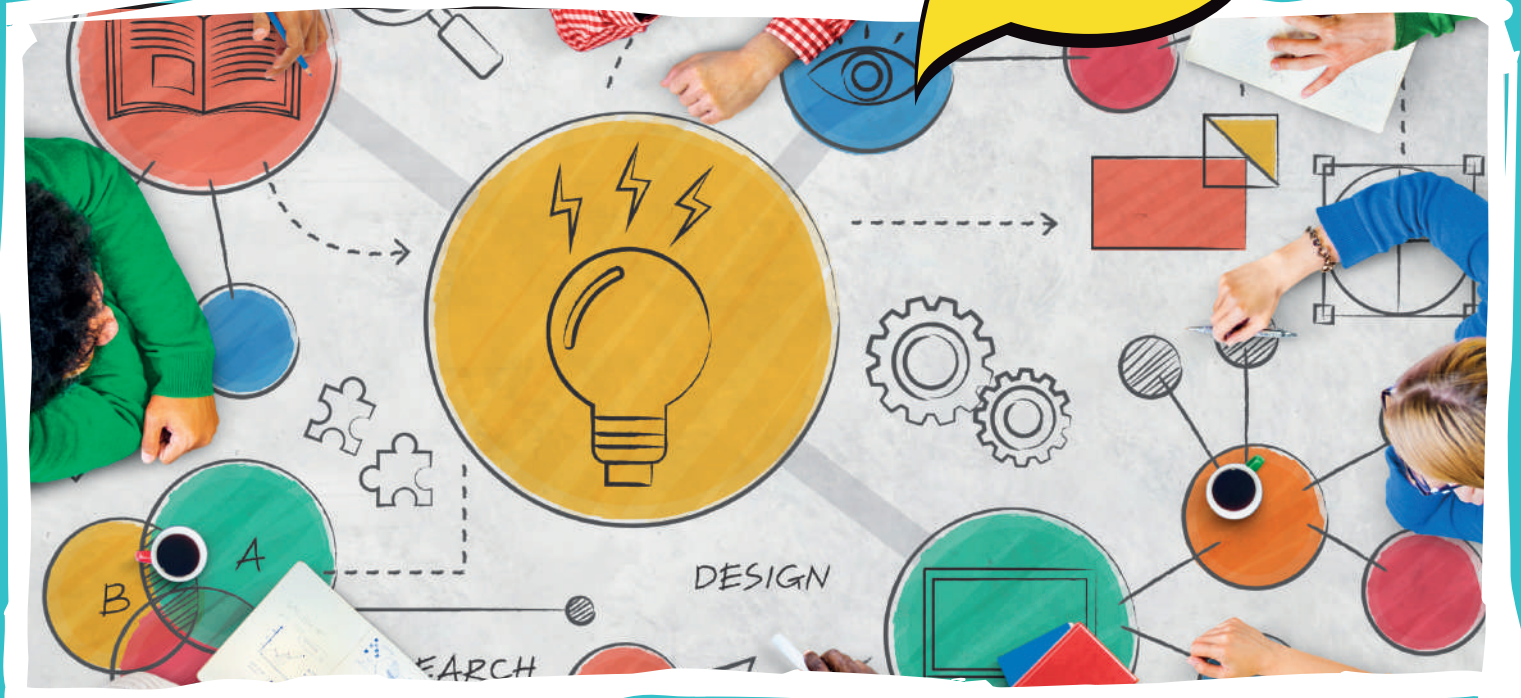
Iceland Liechtenstein Norway grants

Norway grants

Spain



Impact Assessment Report 2021 (1)

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#YoungEntrepreneursSucceed

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1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the impact evaluation carried out to assess the effectiveness of a series of interventions undertaken by the Spanish organization Autoocupació to help unemployed young people develop their emotional capabilities, improve their achievements and behaviors, and, ultimately support them to enter employment or self-employment. The interventions were delivered in the context of the project Young Entrepreneurs Succeed! (YES!) funded by the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. Coordinated through a cooperation of eight partners, the project aims at improving the employment situation of unemployed youth between 20 and 29 yrs old, with a strong emphasis on young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) through innovative approaches and the partners' transnational cooperation on labor market issues.

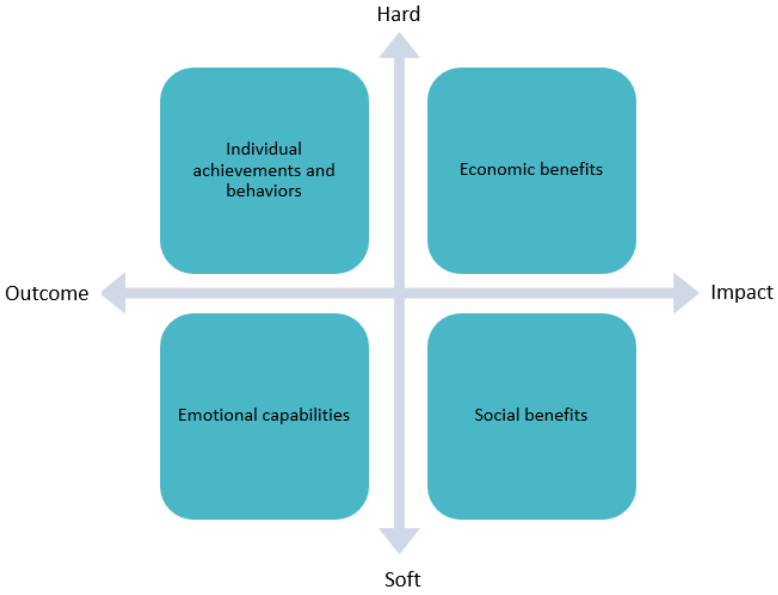
In total, the project targets a sample population of 1,600 unemployed young adults spread across four European countries (Greece, Italy, Poland, and Spain) over three and a half years (2018-2022). This report is to be read in the context of the project's "Impact Management Work Package", representing a systematic effort to provide credible evidence on the causal impact of interventions meant to integrate young adults in the labor market. The Work Package encompasses a series of activities, including establishing clear project objectives, developing an impact assessment framework, creating periodic impact evaluations, and learning to inform decision-making within and among the organizations involved.

This report proceeds as follows. After a brief introduction provided in Section 1, Section 2 explains the impact assessment framework in use. Section 3 provides a description of the interventions. In Section 4, the report moves its focus on detailing the methodology used to conduct the evaluation. Section 5 presents the results, while Section 6 interprets them and discusses the lessons learned to facilitate the translation of findings into practice for the project's partners. The last section concludes and generalizes on potential implications for employment services providers outside the project context.

2 Impact assessment framework

On a general level, the choice of variables for the assessment of outcomes and impact was guided by the conceptual framework by McNeil, Reeder, and Rich (2012), which revolves around four primary areas of evaluation as shown in Figure 1: soft outcomes, hard outcomes, soft impact, and hard impact.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework guiding outcomes and impact assessment adapted from McNeil, Reeder, and Rich (2012).



The categories in the two quadrants on the left-hand side of Figure 1 represent the outcomes (the effects of the project on the target group) whereas the two sections on the right-hand sight refer to the impact (the effects of the project on society). The framework also distinguishes between "soft" and "hard" categories. While soft outcomes and impact are valued by and relate to participants to the project and rely on self-assessment measures, hard outcomes and impact can usually be measured more objectively by other people such as researchers and trainers. Drawing on the conceptual framework described above, during the project workshop in Offenbach in March 2019, evaluators of the project and implementation partners defined the objectives of the planned interventions and discussed potential variables in the four different categories.

Table 1 provides an overview of the variables all partners agreed on to assess the effectiveness of their interventions. Since the activities foreseen by the four organizations responsible for the implementation of the project were partly different due to the diverse local contexts, the category “Individual achievements and behaviors” has been left empty as the choice of hard outcomes variables and the consequent evaluation were left at the discretion of each implementing organization.

Partners, however, agreed on the ultimate purpose of the project and decided to measure the progress in the development of beneficiaries and its effects on society using common variables in the remaining three categories.

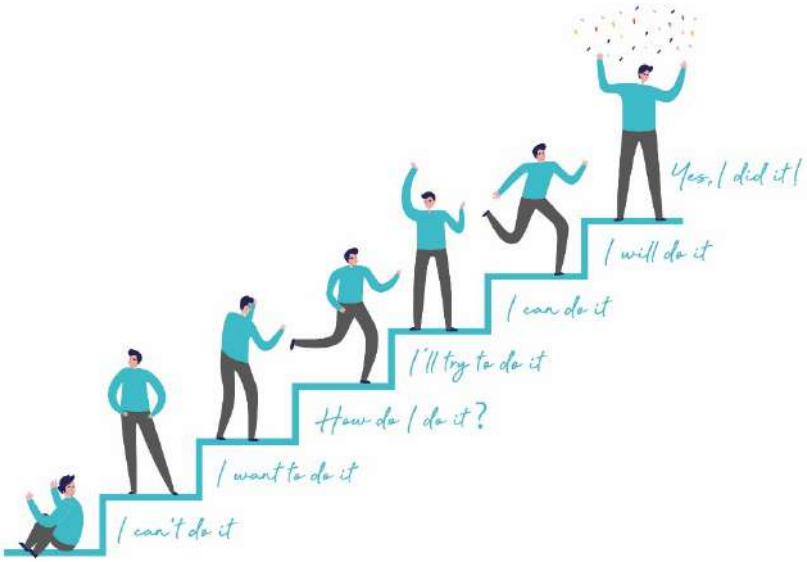
Table 1. Overview of outcome and impact variables.

	Outcome	Impact
Hard	/	labor status, lifetime cost, disposable income
Soft	proactivity, self-efficacy, resilience, search-goals	social responsibility, social trust, institutional trust

All project partners agreed that the assessment of "Emotional capabilities" should include evaluations of self-worth and self-belief, personal skills, attitudes, and aspirations. Therefore, on an individual level, four variables were selected: proactivity, self-efficacy, resilience, and search goals. The variables chosen in this category represent different steps of a staircase to employment or self-employment. The assessment of each step on the staircase has a twofold purpose: 1) thoroughly detecting advancement via small steps of progress, 2) to avoid evaluating a complex issue in black and white, for instance, by measuring only a key variable such as labor status before and after the intervention.

Therefore, different steps in Figure 2 below correspond to the different outcome variables selected, namely proactivity ("I want to do it"), resilience ("I'll try to do it"), self-efficacy ("I can do it"), and search-goals ("I will do it"). On a social level, all project partners agreed that the evaluation of impact should comprise both a social and an economic dimension. To measure progress in building pro-sociality and social capital, partners selected the variables social responsibility, social trust, and institutional trust in the category "Social benefits." Regarding the "Economic benefits" that the intervention could potentially bring to society, variables selected include labor status (specifically, a transition from NEET status to education, employment, or self-employment), lifetime cost, and disposable income.

Figure 2. Staircase to employment or self-employment.



3 Interventions

As of 15.01.2021, 12 training courses for a total of 780 hours delivered were coordinated by Autoocupació, a Spanish foundation that actively promotes self-employment as an alternative in the fight against youth unemployment through the provision of information, guidance, and training. 293 individuals participated in the training courses offered by Autoocupació. Table 2 summarizes the primary information for all training courses. JR_BCN_2_off and JR_GIR_1_off were excluded from the calculation since the two courses were suspended due to the corona virus outbreak and did not resume.

Autoocupació coordinated and delivered four types of training courses. The first type includes a series of community manager training courses that teach how to build, grow and manage a company's or brand's online community. The second type of training courses included a series of modules to train future entrepreneurs. The third type of training courses focused on enhancing the employability of the participants. Finally, the last type of training courses includes a series of office manager training courses that teach how to use the set of computer tools that facilitate office work.

Table 1. Summary of primary information for all training courses.

Training course	Duration (in weeks)	Start date	End date	Type	Mode of delivery	Hours per week	Hours in total	Number of participants
JR_BCN_1_off	5	08.10.2019	14.11.2019	Employability	Offline	~6	40	14
EC_BCN_1_off	4	05.11.2019	28.11.2019	Entrepreneurship	Offline	~10	40	9
EC_TGN_1_off	5	19.11.2019	20.12.2019	Entrepreneurship	Offline	~8	40	21
EC_GIR_1_off	3	27.11.2019	18.12.2019	Entrepreneurship	Offline	~15	40	12
EC_BCN_2_off	4	04.02.2020	03.03.2020	Entrepreneurship	Offline	~10	40	14
EC_GIR_2_ble	3	04.03.2020	08.04.2020	Entrepreneurship	Blended	~15	40	12
JR_BCN_2_off	1	06.03.2020	SUSPENDED	Employability	Offline	~20	25	16
JR_GIR_1_off	2	11.03.2020	SUSPENDED	Employability	Offline	~10	15	12
CM_1_on	6.5	14.04.2020	29.05.2020	Community manager	Online	self-managed	40	80
CM_2_on	6.5	29.04.2020	15.06.2020	Community manager	Online	self-managed	40	75
EC_1_on	5	22.06.2020	29.07.2020	Entrepreneurship	Online	~8	40	21
OM_1_on_BCN	7.5	14.10.2020	4.12.2020	Office Manager	Online	~25	190	14
OM_1_on_TGN	7.5	14.10.2020	4.12.2020	Office Manager	Online	~25	190	6
EC_2_on	3	15.10.2020	5.11.2020	Entrepreneurship	Online	~13	40	15
Total (Excluding JR_BCN_2_off and JR_GIR_1_off)							780	293

3.1 Community manager training courses

A total of 155 individuals were trained through two separate six-and-a-half-week training courses, whose objective were: a) learning how to monitor one's brand and competition through social networks, b) analyzing conversations and opinions on social networks about products or brands, c) mastering techniques for generating positive online reputation about a company, product or service. Additionally, both training courses aimed at developing the following skills: linguistic and audiovisual communication abilities, information processing and digital competence, knowledge and interaction with the online world, social skills.

Both courses lasted 40 hours that were delivered online over a period of 6.5 weeks by Autoocupació. These training courses were provided in collaboration with Centro de Estudios Adams Barcelona S.A. A total of two trainers were involved in the delivery of the training courses. The curriculum was the same for both courses and it comprised the following training modules:

- Introduction to marketing
- New digital marketing
- Digital contents 2.0
- Social Networks
- Community Manager as a professional job
- Analytics & measurement

3.2 Entrepreneurship training courses

A total of 104 individuals were trained through seven training courses, whose objective were: developing participants' entrepreneurial skills to support them in becoming self-employed, learning how to set up a sustainable business, improving employability and professional performance. All courses lasted 40 hours that were delivered over a period that ranged between three and five weeks. Most courses were delivered offline at different locations (Autoocupació Barcelona, Autoocupació Girona, and Autoocupació Tarragona) except for EC_1_on and EC_2_on, which was offered online and EC_GIR_2_ble that was offered using a mixture of both offline and online modalities.

A total of five trainers was involved in the delivery of the training courses. The curriculum was the same for all seven courses and it comprised the following training modules:

- Building connections & self-assessing your entrepreneurial profile
- Developing your business idea
- Developing your business model
- Testing your market

- Planning your business
- Selling your product/service
- Funding your business
- Pitching your business & closure

3.3 Employability training courses

A total of 14 individuals were fully trained through one training courses, whose objective were: developing participants' professional skills to support them in finding a job, improving their employability and professional performance. Two additional training courses (JR_BCN_2_off and JR_GIR_1_off) started offline in Barcelona and Girona venues respectively. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak they were then planned to be delivered online. Low participants' engagement, however, led to their suspension and cancellation. JR_BCN_1_off was delivered offline in Autoocupació Barcelona venues and lasted 5 weeks. The curriculum comprised the following training modules:

- Building connections & self-assessing your employability
- Developing your professional goals & strategy
- Identifying job opportunities & channels
- Developing your personal brand & job search plan
- Building your CV
- Preparing your job interviews
- Preparing your first day at work
- Pitching yourself & closure

3.4 Office manager training courses

A total of 20 individuals were trained through two separate eight-week training courses delivered in the same period, whose objective were acquiring the necessary knowledge to be able to use the set of computer tools that facilitate office work. Specifically, learning how to manage operating systems such as word processor, spreadsheets, databases, and graphical information presentations. Additionally, both training courses aimed at developing the following skills: information processing and digital competence, knowledge, and interaction with the online world.

Both courses lasted 190 hours that were delivered online over a period of 8 weeks by Autoocupació. A total of two trainers were involved in the delivery of the training courses. The curriculum was the same for both courses and it comprised the following training contents:

- Operating system and information retrieval; internet / intranet and email
- Computer applications for word processing
- Spreadsheet computer applications
- Computer applications of relational databases
- Computer applications for graphical information presentations

4 Methodology

4.1 Evaluation design

This research relies on a pre-experimental design. Specifically, the evaluation follows a pre-test/post-test design. Data was collected from the participants twice: once before the beneficiaries took part in the intervention (baseline information) and immediately after they finished the training courses. Although this type of design is often criticized because of weakness in establishing a causal link between project activities and outcomes, the pre-test/post-test design is the most useful in demonstrating the immediate impact of short-term interventions (Monsen, 2018). This design might prove less valid for long-term interventions because a higher amount of circumstances outside the project may arise and interfere with the effects of the project's activities over a more extended period of time.

The questionnaire was developed by the research staff involved in the project, and it contained 46 questions (see the Appendix). Five questions were used to collect demographic information (identification code, gender, age, education, and place of residence), while the remaining 41 questions were used to measure the variables listed in Table 1. Participants answered using a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 to 5) according to their level of agreement with the presented item.

4.2 Measures

4.2.1 Emotional capabilities

Proactivity is a personality trait and attitude to be fostered as proactive individuals "are more likely to engage in career management activities such as seeking out job and organizational information, obtaining sponsorship and career support, conducting career planning, and persisting in the face of career obstacles" (Seibert, Crant & Kraimer, 1999, p. 417). To measure proactivity, we chose to administer Seibert et al. (1999) 10-item version of Bateman and Crant's scale (1993).

Self-efficacy is defined by Bandura (1977) as one's belief about the ability to execute a specific task. Self-efficacy beliefs "determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experience" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). Therefore, they have proven to be a reliable outcome measure when predicting an individual's behavior in several fields, including job search (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994). We employed a short form (six items) of the well-known General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE) by Romppel and colleagues (2013).

Resilience is a personal skill "that enables one to thrive in the face of adversity" (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p. 77), and it is, therefore, a significant asset to have when coping with unemployment and job-search. We measured resilience using the two-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 2).

Search goals refer to the level of aspiration that people have concerning employment that is rewarding and satisfying rather than merely settling for whatever employment might be available (Rich & Delgado, 2010). We used the Work Aspiration subscale by Rich and Delgado (2010) to measure search goals, as suggested by Dahling, Melloy, and Thompson (2013).

4.2.2 Social benefits

Social responsibility indicates an obligation to behave in a way that benefits society. To measure social responsibility, we used the 8-item scale developed by Berkowitz & Lutterman (1968).

Social or generalized trust represents the most prominent element of social capital (Putnam, 1993). It can be defined as a general "faith in people", including individuals we do not know personally. In this report, generalized trust was measured using the five-item trust scale by Yamagishi (1986).

Institutional trust is an "evaluative, performance-based orientation toward political actors and institutions" (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012, p. 2). This variable was measured with the four-item subscale (trust in government in general) developed by Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2014).

4.2.3 Economic benefits

Labor status was measured by asking participants their current employment situation; possible answers were:

- employed
- self-employed,
- unemployed and currently looking for work
- unemployed and currently not looking for work
- enrolled in a formal educational institution

Disposable income was measured by asking participants to select one answer from the following:

- Less than 600 EUR
- 600-1,300 EUR
- 1,300-2,000 EUR
- 2,000-2,700 EUR
- More than 2,700 EUR

The aggregate lifetime public finance costs (from now on **lifetime costs**) are usually estimated using three main elements: benefits, tax loss (both loss of direct and indirect taxes), and national insurance (Coles, Godfrey, Keung, Parrott, & Bradshaw, 2010). In the context of this research, an estimation of the total lifetime cost was not conducted, and this variable was assessed by measuring a change in the proportions of participants that receive unemployment benefits pre/post-intervention.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

Data was collected from 30.09.2019 until 15.01.2021. During this time, all participants in the training courses were asked to fill the same questionnaire on the day the intervention started and the day it ended. Of the 293 beneficiaries, 176 completed pre/post-intervention questionnaires, and the data they provided was used for subsequent analysis. A non-parametric test (Wilcoxon signed-rank test) was used to compare the two sets of scores from the same participants for all ordinal variables. To compare paired proportions related to the hard impact variables, a McNemar test was used to assess the significance of the pre- and post-intervention differences.

5 Results

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics of the sample are presented in Table 3. 121 people in the sample analyzed were women (68.80%), while 53 (30.10%) were men. Two people (1.10%) reported "Other" when inquired about gender. Half of the individuals in the sample (88 people, 50.00%) were between 25 and 28 years old. Younger and older individuals constituted the remaining sample: 51 people (29.00%) were younger than 25 old, and 125 people (71%.00%) were between 25 and 29 years old at the start of the interventions. Concerning education, the majority of the people in the sample (90 people, 51.10%) had a university degree, 67 people (38.10%) had completed high school, three people (1.70%) finished elementary school, and two people (1.10%) had a Ph.D.

The majority of participants (123 people, 69.90%) were not in employment nor education at the start of the intervention, while 53 (22.34%) had a job or were self-employed or students. Although employed or self-employed, these young adults lamented an income earned through precarious and irregular jobs that did not allow for self-support. The most significant share of the sample (120 people, 68.20%) had a disposable income of less than 600 EUR/month when they started the training courses, and only 64 people (31.80%) had a disposable income higher than 600 EUR/month. Finally, 123 participants (69.90%) did not rely on unemployment benefits at the start of the intervention, while 53 (30.10%) did.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics.

Demographics		
Gender	n	%
Female	121	68.80
Male	53	30.10
Other	2	1.10
Age		
≤ 24 years old	51	29.00
25-29 years old	125	71.00
Education		
Primary education	3	1.70
Lower secondary education	14	8.00
Upper secondary education	67	38.10
Tertiary education	90	51.10
PhD	2	1.10
Labor status, disposable income and lifetime cost		
	Pre-intervention	

Labor status	n	%
Self/employed, student[1]	53	30.10
Not in employment nor education	123	69.90
Disposable income		
Less than 600 EUR/month	120	68.20
More than 600 EUR/month	64	31.80
Lifetime cost, Unemployment benefits		
Yes	53	30.10
No	123	69.90

5.2 Soft outcomes and impact: evaluation of emotional capabilities and social benefits

An analysis of the results indicated a non-normal distribution of scores for some of the variables under study. Therefore, in Table 4 the results are presented using both the mean and the median for each variable.

Table 4. Pre/post mean and median for soft outcome and impact variables.

Variables	Mean (Pre)	Mean (Post)	Median (Pre)	Median (Post)
Proactivity	3.96	3.92	4.00	4.00
Self-efficacy	3.97	3.92	4.00	4.00
Resilience	3.97	3.92	4.00	3.90
Search-goals	4.64	4.55	4.67	4.67
Social responsibility	3.93	3.80	4.00	3.88
Social trust	2.74	2.73	2.80	2.80
Institutional trust	3.13	3.03	3.00	3.00

As reported in Table 5, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that there was a significant negative difference in search-goals ($Z = -1.986$, $p<0.05$), social responsibility ($Z = 3.573$, $p<0.05$) and institutional trust ($Z = -2.220$, $p<0.05$) between post- and pre-observations.

[1] This group of people either work in irregular and/or precarious jobs with incomes that do not allow for self-support or are young people who were in their first steps of their entreprneneurial activity and were supported with dedicates services to strengthen their ventures.

Table 5. Wilcoxon test statistics table for soft outcome and impact variables.

Test Statistics[a]							
	Proactivity post-test - Proactivity pre-test	Self-efficacy post-test - Self-efficacy pre-test	Resilience post-test - Resilience pre-test	Search-goals post-test - Search-goals pre-test	Social responsibility post-test - Social responsibility pre-test	Social trust post-test - Social trust pre-test	Institutional trust post-test - Institutional trust pre-test
Z	-1.541	-0.781	-1.178	-1.986	-3.573	-0.124	-2.22
Asymp. P	0.123	0.435	0.239	**0.047**	**0.000**	0.901	**0.026**
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test							
b. Based on positive ranks.							
c. Based on negative ranks.							

5.2.1 Soft outcomes and impact by gender

To assess if the pre-and post-observations were significantly different for specific NEET sub-groups, results were controlled by gender (women=121, men=53). The results are presented in Table 6 using both the mean and the median for each variable.

Table 6. Pre/post mean and median for soft outcome and impact variables by gender.

Variables	Mean (Pre)		Mean (Post)		Median (Pre)		Median (Post)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Proactivity	3.92	4.03	3.90	4.01	4.00	4.00	3.83	4.00
Self-efficacy	3.96	4.02	3.85	4.08	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Resilience	3.96	3.99	3.90	3.96	4.00	4.00	3.90	4.00
Search-goals	4.66	4.57	4.60	4.44	4.67	4.67	4.67	4.67
Social responsibility	3.96	3.83	3.85	3.67	4.00	3.75	3.88	3.75
Social trust	2.81	2.57	2.76	2.66	2.80	2.60	2.80	2.60
Institutional trust	3.19	3.05	3.04	2.99	3.00	3.25	3.00	3.00

As reported in Table 7, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that there was a significant negative difference in social responsibility ($Z = -2.516$, $p<0.05$) and institutional trust ($Z = -2.381$, $p<0.05$) between post- and pre-observation of female participants.

Table 7. Wilcoxon test statistics table for soft outcome and impact variables by gender (female).

Test Statistics[a]							
	Proactivity post-test - Proactivity pre-test	Self-efficacy post-test - Self-efficacy pre-test	Resilience post-test - Resilience pre-test	Search-goals post-test - Search-goals pre-test	Social responsibility post-test - Social responsibility pre-test	Social trust post-test - Social trust pre-test	Institutional trust post-test - Institutional trust pre-test
Z	-1.464	-0.465	-1.848	-1.086	-2.516	-0.807	-2.381
p	0.143	0.642	0.065	0.277	**0.012**	0.420	**0.017**
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test							
b. Based on positive ranks.							

For male participants, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed that there was a significant negative difference in social responsibility ($Z = -2.546$, $p<0.05$) between post- and pre-observation as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Wilcoxon test statistics table for soft outcome and impact variables by gender (male).

Test Statistics[a]							
	Proactivity post-test - Proactivity pre-test	Self-efficacy post-test - Self-efficacy pre-test	Resilience post-test - Resilience pre-test	Search-goals post-test - Search-goals pre-test	Social responsibility post-test - Social responsibility pre-test	Social trust post-test - Social trust pre-test	Institutional trust post-test - Institutional trust pre-test
Z	-0.324	-0.254	-0.629	-1.902	-2.546	-1.023	-1.081
p	0.746	0.799	0.530	0.057	**0.011**	0.306	0.280
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test							
b. Based on negative ranks.							
c. Based on positive ranks.							

5.2.2 Soft outcomes and impact by education

At this point, the authors segmented the evaluation results by education to assess if the pre-and post-observations were significantly different for two sub-groups: individuals with (n=92) and without (n=84) a university degree. The results are presented, using both the mean and the median for each soft outcome and impact variable, in Table 9.

Table 9. Pre/post mean and median for soft outcome and impact variables by education.

Variables	Mean (Pre)		Mean (Post)		Median (Pre)		Median (Post)	
	Without a university degree	With a university degree	Without a university degree	With a university degree	Without a university degree	With a university degree	Without a university degree	With a university degree
Proactivity	3.92	3.99	3.88	3.97	3.92	4.00	3.83	4.00
Self-efficacy	3.90	4.04	3.92	3.92	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00
Resilience	3.97	3.97	3.90	3.94	4.00	4.00	3.90	3.90
Search-goals	4.64	4.64	4.50	4.60	4.84	4.67	4.67	4.67
Social responsibility	3.84	4.01	3.66	3.93	3.88	4.00	3.75	3.88
Social trust	2.56	2.91	2.56	2.90	2.60	3.00	2.50	3.00
Institutional trust	3.21	3.07	3.07	2.98	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

As reported in Table 10, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that there was a significant negative difference in social responsibility ($Z = -3.601$, $p<0.05$) between post- and pre-observation of participants without a university degree.

Table 10. Wilcoxon test statistics table for soft outcome and impact variables by education (without university degree).

Test Statistics[a]							
	Proactivity post-test - Proactivity pre-test	Self-efficacy post-test - Self-efficacy pre-test	Resilience post-test - Resilience pre-test	Search-goals post-test - Search-goals pre-test	Social responsibility post-test - Social responsibility pre-test	Social trust post-test - Social trust pre-test	Institutional trust post-test - Institutional trust pre-test
Z	-1.906	-0.776	-0.026	-1.912	-3.601	-0.393	-1.919
p (2-tailed)	0.057	0.438	0.979	0.056	**0.000**	0.694	0.055
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test							
b. Based on positive ranks.							
c. Based on negative ranks.							

For participants with higher educational attainment (university degree), no significant differences between post- and pre-observation of soft outcome and impact variables.

5.2.3 Soft outcomes and impact by age

Finally, the results of the soft outcomes and impact evaluation were controlled by age to assess if the pre-and post-observations were significantly different for two sub-groups: individuals up to 24 years old (n=51), people between 25 and 29 years old (n=125). The results are presented, using both the mean and the median for each soft outcome and impact variable, in Table 11.

Table 11. Pre/post mean and median for soft outcome and impact variables by age.

Variables	Mean (Pre)		Mean (Post)		Median (Pre)		Median (Post)	
	≤ 24	25-29	≤ 24	25-29	≤ 24	25-29	≤ 24	25-29
Proactivity	3.98	3.95	4.01	3.89	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.83
Self-efficacy	3.92	4.00	3.96	3.90	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Resilience	4.04	3.95	4.05	3.87	4.10	3.90	4.00	3.90
Search-goals	4.67	4.63	4.59	4.53	5.00	4.67	4.67	4.67
Social responsibility	3.89	3.94	3.76	3.82	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.88
Social trust	2.59	2.80	2.61	2.78	2.40	2.80	2.60	2.80
Institutional trust	3.24	3.09	3.18	2.97	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00

As reported in Table 12, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that there was a significant negative difference in social responsibility (Z = -2.497, p<0.05) between post- and pre-observation of participants up to 24 years old.

Table 12. Wilcoxon test statistics table for soft outcome and impact variables by age (up to 24 years old).

Test Statistics[a]							
	Proactivity post-test - Proactivity pre-test	Self-efficacy post-test - Self-efficacy pre-test	Resilience post-test - Resilience pre-test	Search-goals post-test - Search-goals pre-test	Social responsibility post-test - Social responsibility pre-test	Social trust post-test - Social trust pre-test	Institutional trust post-test - Institutional trust pre-test
Z	-0.064	-0.378	-0.202	-0.899	-2.497	-0.066	-1.388
p	0.949	0.706	0.84	0.369	**0.013**	0.948	0.165
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test							
b. Based on negative ranks.							
c. Based on positive ranks.							

Table 13 reports the results of a Wilcoxon signed-rank test for participants between 25 and 29 at the intervention time. The test shows a significant negative difference between post- and pre-observation for one variable: social responsibility (Z = -2.668, p<0.05).

Table 13. Wilcoxon test statistics table for soft outcome and impact variables by age (25-29 years old).

Test Statistics[a]							
	Proactivity post-test - Proactivity pre-test	Self-efficacy post-test - Self-efficacy pre-test	Resilience post-test - Resilience pre-test	Search-goals post-test - Search-goals pre-test	Social responsibility post-test - Social responsibility pre-test	Social trust post-test - Social trust pre-test	Institutional trust post-test - Institutional trust pre-test
Z	-1.794[b]	-1,168[b]	-1.606[b]	-1.755[b]	-2.668[b]	-0.133[b]	-1.767[b]
p	0.073	0.243	0.108	0.079	**0.008**	0.894	0.077
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test							
b. Based on positive ranks.							

5.3 Hard impact: evaluation of economic benefits

The pre-and post-intervention proportions of individuals who were not in employment nor education (versus self/employed, student), low-income earners (versus high), and receivers of unemployment benefits (versus non-receivers) are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Pre/post proportions for hard impact variables.

Labor status, disposable income and lifetime cost				
	Pre-intervention		Post-intervention	
Labor status	n	%	n	%
Self/employed, student	53	30.1	84	47.7
Not in employment nor education	123	69.9	92	52.3
Disposable income				
Less than 600 EUR/month	120	68.2	121	68.8
More than 600 EUR/month	56	31.8	55	31.3
Lifetime cost, Unemployment benefits				
Yes	53	30.1	41	23.3
No	123	69.9	135	76.7

As reported in Table 15, a McNemar test determined a statistically significant difference in the proportion of self/employed, students post-intervention, p = .000 (2 sided). The proportion of people who are employed, self-employed or students is higher at the end of the interventions than at the beginning. The other differences found are non-significant.

Table 15. McNemar test statistics for hard impact variables.

Test Statistics[a]			
	Labor status pre-test & labor status post-test	Lifetime cost pre-test & lifetime cost post-test	Disposable income pre-test & disposable income post-test
N	176	176	176
Chi-Square[b]	15.789	3.781	0
Asymp. Sig.	**0.000**	0.052	1.000
a. McNemar Test			
b. Continuity Corrected			

As for evaluating soft outcomes and impact variables, we then proceeded to segment the results of the impact assessment by gender, education, and age.

5.3.1 Hard impact by gender

A McNemar test was conducted for both male and female sub-samples to determine if the pre-and post-intervention differences found and reported in Table 16 were significant. For women, the change in the proportions of people not in employment nor education (versus self/employed, student), receivers of unemployment benefits (versus non-receivers) pre-and post-intervention was statistically significant. For men, only labor status changed in a statistically significant way.

Table 16. Pre/post hard impact variables by gender.

Labor status, disposable income, and lifetime cost				
	Female (Pre)	Female (Post)	Male (Pre)	Male (Post)
Labor status				
Self/employed, student	40	60	12	22
Not in employment nor education	81	61	41	31
Disposable income				
Less than 600 EUR/month	84	87	34	32
More than 600 EUR/month	37	34	19	21
Lifetime cost, Unemployment benefits				
Yes	40	30	13	11
No	81	91	40	42

Table 17 presents the statistically significant differences found in the female sample: labor status and lifetime cost. For women, the proportion of participants who are employed, self-employed or

students and the proportion of participants who do not receive unemployment benefits are greater post-intervention.

Table 17. McNemar test statistics for hard impact variables by gender (female).

	Labor status pre-test & labor status post-test	Lifetime cost pre-test & lifetime cost post-test	Disposable income pre-test & disposable income post-test
N	121	121	121
Chi-Square[b]	10.028		0.148
Asymp. Sig.	**0.002**		0.700
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)		**0.041**[c]	
a. McNemar Test			
b. Continuity Corrected			
c. Binomial distribution used.			

Table 18 presents the only statistically significant difference found in the male sample: labor status. For men, the proportion of participants who are employed, self-employed or students are greater post-intervention.

Table 18. McNemar test statistics for hard impact variables by gender (male).

Test Statistics[a]			
	Labor status pre-test & labor status post-test	Lifetime cost pre-test & lifetime cost post-test	Disposable income pre-test & disposable income post-test
N	53	53	53
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	**0.041**	0.774	0.791
a. McNemar Test			
b. Binomial distribution used.			

5.3.2 Hard impact by education

AMcNemar test was conducted for both education sub-groups (participants with and without a university degree) to determine if the pre-and post-intervention differences found and reported in Table 19 were significant.

Table 19. Pre/post hard impact variables by education.

Labor status, disposable income, and lifetime cost				
	Without university degree (Pre)	Without university degree (Post)	With university degree (Pre)	With university degree (Post)
Labor status				
Self/employed, student	28	40	25	44
Not in employment nor education	56	44	67	48
Disposable income				
Less than 600 EUR/month	61	62	59	59
More than 600 EUR/month	23	22	33	33
Lifetime cost, Unemployment benefits				
Yes	23	22	30	19
No	61	62	62	73

For people without a university degree, the change in the proportions of people not in employment nor education (versus self/employed, student), receivers of unemployment benefits (versus non-receivers), low-income earners (versus high), pre-and post-intervention was not statistically significant. Table 20 shows the only statistically significant differences found in the sample of people with a university degree: labor status and lifetime cost. For people with higher educational attainment, the proportion of participants who are employed, self-employed or students and the proportion of participants who do not receive unemployment benefits are greater post-intervention.

Table 20. McNemar test statistics for hard impact variables by education (with university degree).

Test Statistics[a]			
	Labor status pre-test & labor status post-test	Lifetime cost pre-test & lifetime cost post-test	Disposable income pre-test & disposable income post-test
N	92	92	92
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	**0.000**	**0.007**	1.000
a. McNemar Test			
b. Binomial distribution used.			

5.3.2 Hard impact by age

A McNemar test was conducted for both age sub-groups (participants who were 24 or younger at the beginning of the interventions and those between 25 and 29 years old) to determine if the pre-and post-intervention differences found and reported in Table 21 were significant.

Table 21. Pre/post hard impact variables by age.

Labor status, disposable income, and lifetime cost				
	≤ 24 (Pre)	≤ 24 (Post)	25-29 (Pre)	25-29 (Post)
Labor status				
Self/employed, student	20	24	33	60
Not in employment nor education	31	27	92	65
Disposable income				
Less than 600 EUR/month	42	45	78	76
More than 600 EUR/month	9	6	47	49
Lifetime cost, Unemployment benefits				
Yes	10	7	43	34
No	41	44	82	91

For people who were 24 or younger at the beginning of the interventions, the differences reported in Table 21 were not statistically significant. Table 22 shows the only statistically significant differences found in the sample of people between 25 and 29 years old: labor status. For people in the age sub-group 25-29, the proportion of participants who are employed, self-employed or students is greater post-intervention.

Table 22. McNemar test statistics for hard impact variables by age (25-29 years old).

Test Statistics[a]			
	Labor status pre-test & labor status post-test	Lifetime cost pre-test & lifetime cost post-test	Disposable income pre-test & disposable income post-test
N	125	125	125
Chi-Square[b]	16.488		0.031
Asymp. Sig.	**0.000**		0.860
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)		0.108[c]	
a. McNemar Test			
b. Continuity Corrected			
c. Binomial distribution used.			

6 Discussion

This evaluation reveals some interesting insights that could potentially help the project's partners planning future waves of training courses in the following months and were therefore discussed with two representatives of Autoocupació. Although the absence of control groups prevents establishing a scientifically rigorous causal link between the project's activities and results, the fact that the interventions were short-term suggests that the outcomes and impact observed are likely to be attributable to the interventions. In light of this, the results show that the interventions were partly effective in generating economic impact by bringing people into self/employment and education. However, none of the training courses contributed to developing the young individuals' emotional capabilities or creating social benefits at this point in time and in the sense described in this exercise.

The evaluation revealed decreasing search-goals, social responsibility, institutional trust and a change from NEET to EET status for the overall sample. No significant effects were found on participants' emotional capabilities (soft outcome) when segmenting by gender, education and age. Concerning soft impact, the data analysis revealed few negative changes in the difference between post- and pre-observations. More specifically, social responsibility decreased for all demographic subgroups, except for people with a university degree. Additionally, women reported a decrease in institutional trust. In general, we believe the negative results recorded for social responsibility and institutional trust to be potentially connected to the current crisis and Catalonia's special position within the Spanish political landscape, respectively.

Finally, the analysis revealed several positive effects on economic benefits (hard impact). A positive change in labor status (from NEET to EET) was reported for men, women, participants with a university degree and those older than 25. Additionally, women showed also an increase in disposable income. The increase in hard impact might be attributable to the fact that Autoocupació has put emphasis on hard skills over soft ones due to the low demand for soft skills training. Therefore, Autoocupació's training courses could benefit from additional elements to foster youth's emotional capabilities. In this regard, future evaluations should also segment the sample by type of intervention to assess if some of the interventions were more successful than other in building positive soft outcomes.

Finally, descriptive statistics emphasized a few criticalities in the process of data collection. For a start, out of the 293 participants to the interventions, only 176 (60%) filled both pre- and post-questionnaires despite the organization's efforts to encourage participation in the survey. This fact highlights potential criticalities (anonymity, length of the questionnaire, online form and, in general, scarce interest) as well as the need for more effective incentives to be put in place to increase response rates.

Secondly, regarding labor status, Autoocupació's representatives pointed out that some young adults who are not in employment nor education might be reluctant to declare themselves as such due to the social stigma of unemployed people. More specifically, some end beneficiaries declare they are entrepreneurs at the beginning of the intervention even though they have not officially started a business. Finally, the item 'student' might have been misinterpreted as there is a possibility that some participants' interpretation of the term includes informal education too, rather than enrollment in a formal education institution.

7 Concluding remarks

The evaluation has several limitations. Firstly, the pre-test/post-test design impedes drawing rigorous causal inference between the project's activities and its results. Secondly, the lack of control groups also restricted the researchers' ability to control for other influential events such as the COVID-19 outbreak happening at the time the training courses were delivered. Finally, it would be useful to collect and integrate qualitative data (such as interviews and focus groups) to validate and explore further the quantitative findings of this evaluation.

In general, organizations working with NEETs face a large number of challenges. For example, the mere engagement of NEETs into training courses cannot be taken for granted, especially if we consider particularly vulnerable groups in this population. With this report, researchers wanted to avoid judging such a complex issue in black and white and provide a more nuanced view of the work organizations like Autoocupació are doing. This evaluation gives evidence that the organization successfully supported NEETs in becoming self/employed or students. However, more work is needed to help young adults in developing long-term emotional capabilities, such as self-efficacy and resilience.

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Appendix

YES! Young Entrepreneurs Succeed

Questionnaire

In the context of this project, we are conducting research on employment and entrepreneurship. The survey should only take 10 minutes. Thank you for agreeing to take part in it. We really appreciate your input!

Using a scale from 1 to 5 please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements (1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5= strongly agree).

*** 1. Please, indicate your registration number:**

2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

4. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

5. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

6. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

7. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

8. I am able to adapt when changes occur.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

9. I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, illness or other hardships.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

10. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

11. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

12. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

13. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

14. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

15. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

16. I excel at identifying opportunities.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

17. I am always looking for better ways to do things.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

18. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

19. I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

20. I will work hard to improve my work situation.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

21. I am willing to put in effort to have a job I enjoy.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

22. Having a good job is important to my sense of well-being.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

23. It is no use worrying about current events or public affairs, I can't do anything about them anyways.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

24. Every person should give some of his time for the good of his town or country.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

25. Our country would be a lot better off if we didn't have so many elections and people didn't have to vote so often.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

26. Letting your friends down is not so bad because you can't do good all the time for everybody.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

27. It the duty of each person to do his job the very best he can.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

28. People would be very better off if they could live far away from other people and never have to do anything for them.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

29. When I was at school, I usually volunteered for special projects.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

30. I feel bad when I have failed to finish a job I promised I would do.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

31. Most people tell a lie when they can benefit by doing so.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

32. Those devoted to unselfish causes are often exploited by others.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

33. Some people do not cooperate because they pursue only their own short-term self-interest. Thus, things that can be done well if people cooperate often fail because of these people.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

34. Most people are basically honest.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

35. There will be more people who will not work if the social security system is developed further.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

36. Generally, our public administration operates effectively.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

37. In general, our public administration is capable of carrying out its policies.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

38. Generally, our public administration cares about citizens' well-being.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

39. In general, our public administration honors its commitments.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

40. In what year were you born?

41. What is your gender?

- ○ Female
- ○ Male
- ○ Other

42. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- ◯ Primary education
- ◯ Lower secondary education
- ◯ Upper secondary education (high school degree)
- ◯ Tertiary education (university degree)
- ◯ PhD

43. What is your current labour status?

- ◯ employed
- ◯ self-employed
- ◯ unemployed and currently looking for work
- ◯ unemployed and not currently looking for work
- ◯ enrolled in a formal education institution

44. Are you currently receiving unemployment benefits of other types of social benefits?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

45. What was your net income last month?

- ◯ Less than 600 EUR
- ◯ 600-1300 EUR
- ◯ 1300-2000 EUR
- ◯ 2000-2700 EUR
- ◯ More than 2700 EUR

46. What is the postal code of the place where you live?

Iceland Liechtenstein Norway grants

Norway grants

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The Scaling trust-based partnership models to recharge youth entrepreneurship: Supporting underserved communities with innovative entrepreneurship support instruments (TPM-RYE) project, benefits from €2,3M grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. The aim of the programme is to activate unemployed youth to access the labour market and promote entrepreneurship.