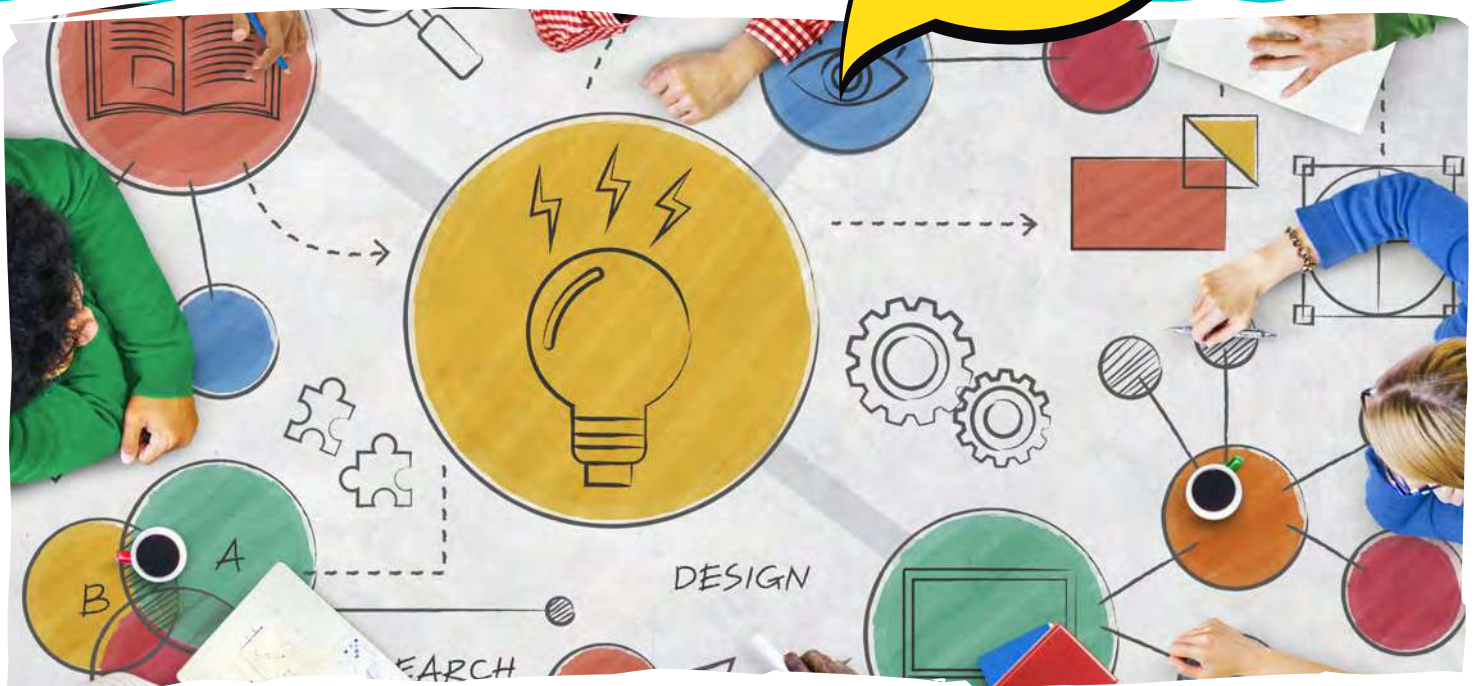Spain

Final Impact Assessment Report 2024

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#YoungEntrepreneursSucceed

Young Entrepreneurs Succeed
Final Impact Assessment Report 2024: Spain

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Introduction

Introduction

This report presents the final results of the impact assessment designed to evaluate the effectiveness of Autoocupació's interventions within the Young Entrepreneurs Success (YES!) program. Autoocupació, one of the partners implementing the YES! program is based in Barcelona and has offices spread across various locations in Spain. The organization has several years of experience in implementing socioeconomic interventions, particularly in the areas of entrepreneurship, business creation, job training facilitation, mentoring, professional guidance, and management, among others.

The YES! program is one of the various social intervention projects funded through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. The program began in the year 2018 with the aim of improving the employment situation of young people neither in employment nor education and training (NEETs) through innovative approaches offered by the transnational collaboration of the project partners[1] on labor market issues.

Following the successful implementation of the project during Phase I (2018 – 2021), with a total of 1,600 NEETs spread across the four implementation countries (Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain), the program got refinanced for phase II, which currently runs from for one year and nine months period of implementation (April 2022 - December 2023), with additional 1020 NEETs, spread across the same region. Table 1 presents a summary of beneficiaries per country in the second phase of the intervention.

Table 1. Overview of phase two activities

Country	Beneficiaries
Spain	250
Italy	350
Poland	150
Greece	300
Total	**1020**

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[1] Partnership within the consortium involved the Implementation partners: Autooccupacio (ES), AN.KA (GR), Youth Business Poland (PL), Microfinanza (IT), and Expertise partners: Munich Business School (DE), Youth Business International (UK), Agricultural University of Athens – Lead partner (GR).

This report is to be read in the context of the project's "Impact Assessment Work Package," which represents a systematic effort to provide credible evidence on the causal impacts of the interventions meant to integrate young adults into the labor market. The Work Package encompasses a series of activities, including establishing clear project objectives, developing an impact assessment framework, producing periodic impact evaluations, and learning to inform decision-making within and among the organizations involved.

The rest of the report proceeds as follows. After a brief introduction provided in Section 1, Section 2 provides detailed explanation of the methodology for conducting the impact assessment. Section 3 describes the interventions conducted by Autoocupació. Section 4 presents the results, while Section 5 interprets them by discussing the lessons learned to facilitate the translation of findings into practice for the project partners. The last section concludes and generalizes on potential implications for employment services providers outside the context of the project.

Methodology

Methodology

Program theory of change

The Theory of Change (ToC) employed for impact assessment was based on the overarching goal of the YES! program: facilitating the transition of young individuals who are currently not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) from this status to active participation in the labor market. This is achieved through the cultivation of their emotional skills and equipping them with the necessary resources to secure employment or embark on successful entrepreneurial ventures. As described in figure 1, the program ToC included the input variables money, staff, experience, AI tool (SkillLab), and knowledge transfer among the partners are expected to support the beneficiaries emotionally, socially, and economically in getting employment or becoming entrepreneurs.

Figure 1 Theory of change framework leading to impact generation
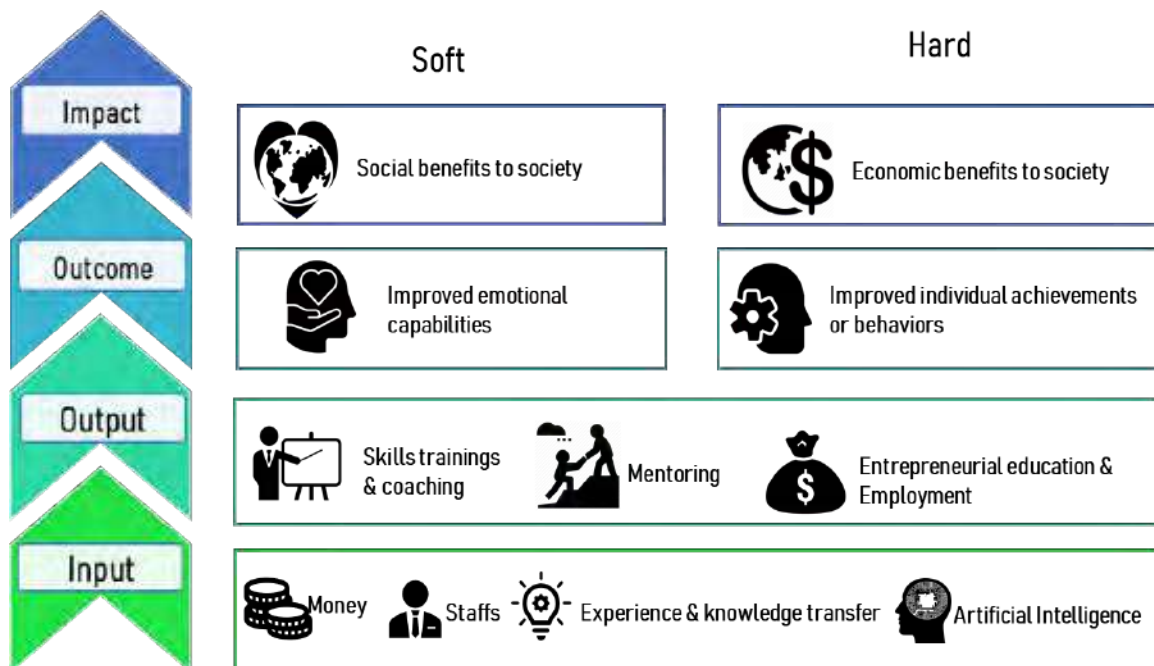
Framework for measuring Impact assessment

The framework for assessing the projects' impact follows the conceptual framework proposed by McNeil, Reeder & Rich (2012). This was centered around four primary areas of

assessment as shown in Figure 2: soft outcomes, hard outcomes, soft impact, and hard impact

Figure 2. McNeil, Reeder & Rich framework for assessing outcomes and impact
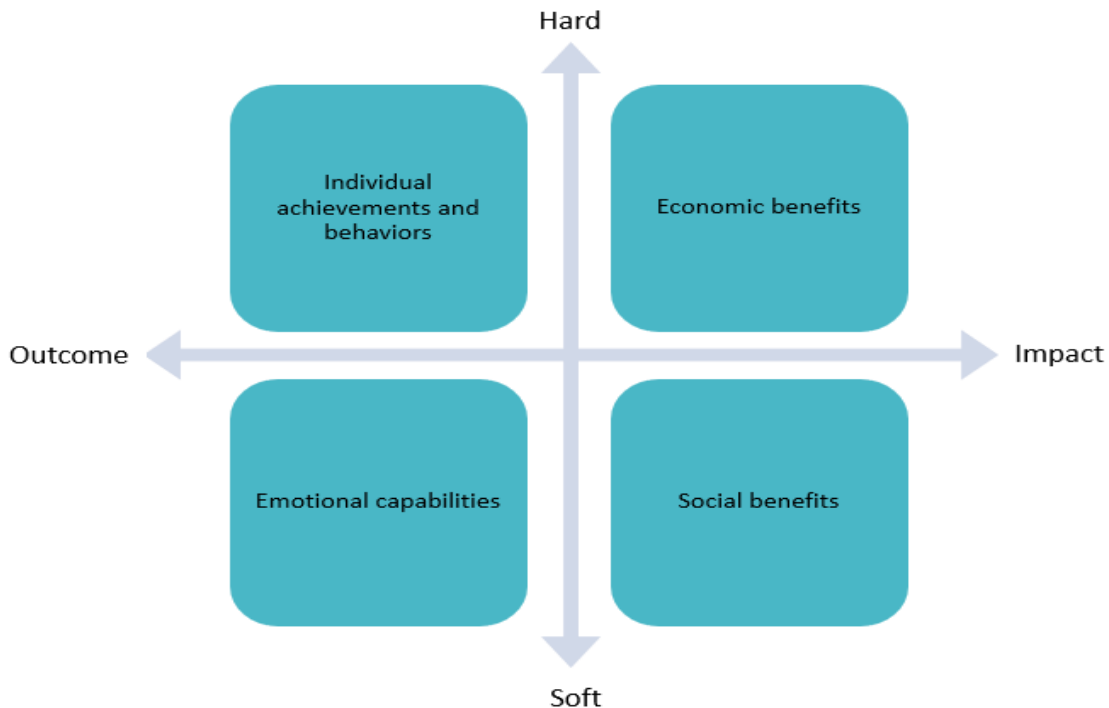
The two left quadrants of the above figure represent the effect of the interventions on the beneficiaries (Program Outcome), while the right quadrants represent the effects of the interventions on society (Program Impact). The left and right quadrants are further subcategorized into four variables. The soft outcome – a measure of "emotional capabilities", soft impact – a measure of "social benefits", hard outcome – a measure of "individual achievements and behaviors", and hard impact – a measure of "economic benefits". The soft outcome and soft impact relied on the self-assessment measures of the program on the participants while the hard impact relied on the reflection of the program on the society and economy.

Following the results of Phase I of the program, a review of the indicators and variables was conducted to assess the impact of the second phase of the interventions. This resulted in the modification and replacement of some of the variables adopted to assess Phase II impact.

Table 2 presents an overview of the variables adopted to assess the effectiveness of the interventions.

Table 2. Overview of outcome and impact variables

	Outcome	Impact
Hard	/	Labor status, Lifetime cost, Disposable income
Soft	Soft Skills	Quality of life

The variable "Soft skills" which is an aggregation of the Likert responses of Self-efficacy, Resilience, and Proactivity was adopted to measure the "Emotional capabilities" of the interventions. This allows the evaluation of the beneficiaries' soft skills. To assess the "social benefits" of interventions, the "Quality of Life" variable was adopted. The QoL variable measures and assesses the life cycle of the beneficiaries based on personal, environmental, and social aspects. These include living conditions, health, and social inclusion. To assess the "Economic benefits" of the intervention on the society, labor status (transition from NEET status to education, employment, or self-employment), lifetime cost (self-reliance or self-sufficiency), and disposable income were adopted.

Evaluation design

The evaluation of phase II interventions relies on a pre-post experimental design. This design method was adopted due to its ability to reveal the immediate impact of short-term interventions (Monsen, 2018). To further assist in measuring the effects due to the participation of the beneficiaries in the interventions, the beneficiaries are further divided into control and comparison groups. The control group included beneficiaries who participated in the interventions with access to the artificial intelligence tool (SkillLab). The comparison group included beneficiaries who participated in the interventions without access to the artificial intelligence tool (SkillLab).

Categorizing the beneficiaries into control and comparison groups would allow researchers to measure and assess the effectiveness of artificial intelligence on the beneficiaries. This

further enabled the partners to gain insight into the potential of the technology (AI in particular) in facilitating the development of emotional capabilities of the beneficiaries as they transition from a NEET status to employment or entrepreneurship in the labor market.

SkillLab

SkillLab is an artificial intelligence tool adopted in the second phase of the YES! program to support inclusive labor market participation. It is a skill-based tool that facilitates the labor market transition, participation, and inclusion of users by showcasing other hidden talents, experiences, and skills possessed by users which are not captured by the typical job application resources. Apart from highlighting the qualifications of its users, the application also captures the users' skills and maps them with possible career paths which might be interesting and can be pursued by them.

The company (SkillLab) believes that no one should be deprived of dignity and livelihood based on race, gender, status, or background because they are unable to articulate their skills, therefore aims to offer equal opportunities to all jobseekers through channeled pathways to socioeconomic participation in education and employment.

Measures
Emotional capabilities

Soft Skill – This variable is derived from the aggregation of self-efficacy, resilience, and proactivity. These variables were aggregated on the assumption of the Classical Test Theory. The CTT allows researchers to aggregate multiple items into a single variable (scale) for analysis on the assumption of the same underlying abilities. DeVellis, R. F. (2012), explains CTT as "a way to combine the individual items into a single score by summing the item responses. … The sum of the item scores is considered to be an estimate of the individual's true score on the construct being measured." Soft skill is used to assess the contribution of the project in developing their emotional capabilities. It is composed of questions nine self-efficacy questions, two resilience questions, and one proactivity question. All questions were measured on a 10-point Likert scale which allows for easy aggregation.

Social benefit

Quality of life – The Quality of life variable was introduced in the analysis to measure the social benefit of the intervention on the beneficiaries. The QoL covers the following dimensions: personal well-being, health, career, and social inclusion. It will allow researchers to not only vividly capture information on the socioeconomic aspects of the participants but also incorporate aspects of their overall well-being (OECD, 2013). To measure the QoL, we deployed three questions from the European quality of life survey, and eight questions from the quality of life and social inclusion survey on a ten-point scale.

Economic benefit

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

- Enrolled in formal education
- Employed as a full time, part time or low wage employee
- Self-employed, freelancer, entrepreneurs
- unemployed and currently looking for work
- unemployed and currently not looking for work

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

- Less than 600 EUR
- 600 – 1300 EUR
- 1300 - 2000 EUR
- 2000 - 2700 EUR
- More than 2700 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.

Data collection and analysis

A mixed-method analysis is adopted for the second phase of the impact assessment. This includes the combination of quantitative and qualitative research analysis. This method of analysis gives room for complimentary and triangulation of findings of a research activity, which also allows for the validation and integration of findings of a research study (Creswell, et al., 2003; Hsieh et al., 2005; O'Cathain et al., 2008).

Quantitative data collection and analysis

Quantitative data was collected from the participants twice using a computer assisted data collection method (survey monkey). First was before the beneficiaries took part in the intervention (baseline information) and immediately after the conclusion of each intervention. The survey links, containing the questionnaire was shared with partners who are responsible for the delivery of the interventions to the beneficiaries. In other to monitor feedback and minimize error due to incomplete or unclean data, two separate links containing entry and exit questionnaires were shared with the beneficiaries.

The entry questionnaire contained 32 questions while the exit questionnaire contained 28 (See appendix). The demographic questions were omitted from the exit questionnaire since the information was already captured in the entry questionnaire, hence the reason why it contained lesser questions in comparison with the entry questionnaire.

To analyze the quantitative responses, a paired sampled t-test was used to check if the means of the variables were reliably different from each other at baseline and post-intervention results of the soft outcome and soft impact variables. Furthermore, a McNemar test was equally conducted to assess the significance of the pre-and post-intervention differences of the hard impact variables.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

For qualitative data collection and analysis, a combination of focus group sessions with the participants, and interviews of coaches and mentors involved in the program was conducted to generate qualitative data. This allowed researchers to understand the perspective of the implementation delivery team (coaches and mentors). Three rounds of focus group discussion were coordinated with participants from Spain. The first round of FGD involved 5 randomly selected participants with a focus on entrepreneurship (participants without access to SkillLab). The subsequent rounds of focus groups involved 8 randomly selected participants from the jobseekers' group (participants with access to SkillLab) and 4 randomly selected participants that participated in the mentoring sessions. The sessions lasted between 60 – 90 minutes and was conducted remotely via Microsoft teams in Spanish and Catalan.

Following the qualitative data collection via focus groups, the interviews of coaches and mentors involved in the program were equally conducted to collect their feedback. 3 mentors and 2 coaches were interviewed for this purpose. The interviews were conducted in English via Microsoft teams and lasted between 40 – 60 minutes in total.

The recorded versions of the interviews and focus group sessions were converted into transcripts (in English) for easy analysis. Qualitative data analysis software (Atlas ti) was used to analyze the data for themes and excerpts to support the findings of the quantitative analysis. Copies of the focus group script and the interview guide (in English) can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Interventions

Interventions

Autoocupació continued implementing the second phase of the YES! interventions which began in May 2022. As of 31st of December 2023, 10 training sessions were coordinated by Autoocupació in this regard. A total of 1022 hours of training was provided over a period of three weeks to seven months. At the end of the sessions, a total of 203 beneficiaries participated in the training programs, facilitated through a combination of online and offline modalities. Provided in Table 3 below is an overview of the training courses.

Three major training courses were delivered to the participants. Community Manager, Office Manager and Entrepreneurship courses. The Community Manager training modules focus on equipping beneficiaries with the skills to build, grow, and effectively manage online communities for companies or brands. The Office Manager training module included contents that prepared the participants for the workplace. These included training on Microsoft office packages, organization in the workplace, introduction to google suits to name a few. The third training course, Entrepreneurship provides comprehensive content to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among the beneficiaries. This includes modules on idea generation, business planning, soft skills, financial management, marketing strategies for products and services, sales, and overall business management.

Table 3. Presentation of training courses

Training courses	Duration	Start date	End date	Content	Delivery mode	Total hours	Total participants
CM_5_on	5 weeks	30.05.2022	30.06.2022	Community Manager	Online	40	38
EC_7_on	4 weeks	27.06.2022	25.07.2022	Entrepreneurship	Online	40	6
CM_6_on	3 weeks	14.11.2022	01.12.2022	Community Manager	Online	40	55
EC_8_on	5 weeks	16.11.2022	20.12.2022	Entrepreneurship	Online	40	5
LL_1_off	7 months	02.01.2023	30.09.2023	Entrepreneurship	Offline	540	12
OM_3_off_BCN	5 weeks	06.04.2023	04.05.2023	Office manager	Offline	90	9
OM_3_off_GIR	5 weeks	06.04.2023	04.05.2023	Office manager	Offline	90	9
OM_3_off_TGN	5 weeks	06.04.2023	04.05.2023	Office manager	Offline	90	10
EC_9_on	8 weeks	10.10.2023	11.12.2023	Entrepreneurship	Online	12	7
CM_7_on	4 weeks	6.11.2023	01.12.2023	Community Manager	Online	40	52
				Total		1022	203

Overview of the coaching and mentoring sessions

During the second phase of the program, a total of 193 beneficiaries participated in either coaching, mentoring, or both sessions. Out of these, 161 beneficiaries participated in coaching sessions alone for a duration of 465 hours. Furthermore, 22 participants proceeded with mentoring sessions for a duration of 87 hours.

Overview of beneficiaries that used SkillLab

Between April 2022 – December 2023, a total of 67 beneficiaries were registered on SkillLab. Among the 62 registered beneficiaries, fourteen of them already have a completed profile on the platform. This is the number of participants that have registered at least 60 skills on the platform. 50 beneficiaries are still in the process of completing their profiles. The distribution of educational qualifications of beneficiaries who have a completed profile on the platform ranges between Highschool certificate and Bachelor's degree. Nine beneficiaries among those who have a completed profile also indicated career interest in at least two areas among the suggested career areas on the platform.

Results

Results

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics of the pre-and post-observations of beneficiaries in the intervention are presented. Figures 3 – 11 show the overall results of respondents' distribution based on age, gender, educational, geographical location, current status, and type of intervention each respondent participated in.

Figure 3 below presents a chart and table of respondents' age distribution. It shows that more than half of the participants (67%) were below 25 years old, and 30% were between the ages of 25 – 29 years old. 3% of the remaining participants did not disclose information about their age.

Figure 3. Age distribution of participants
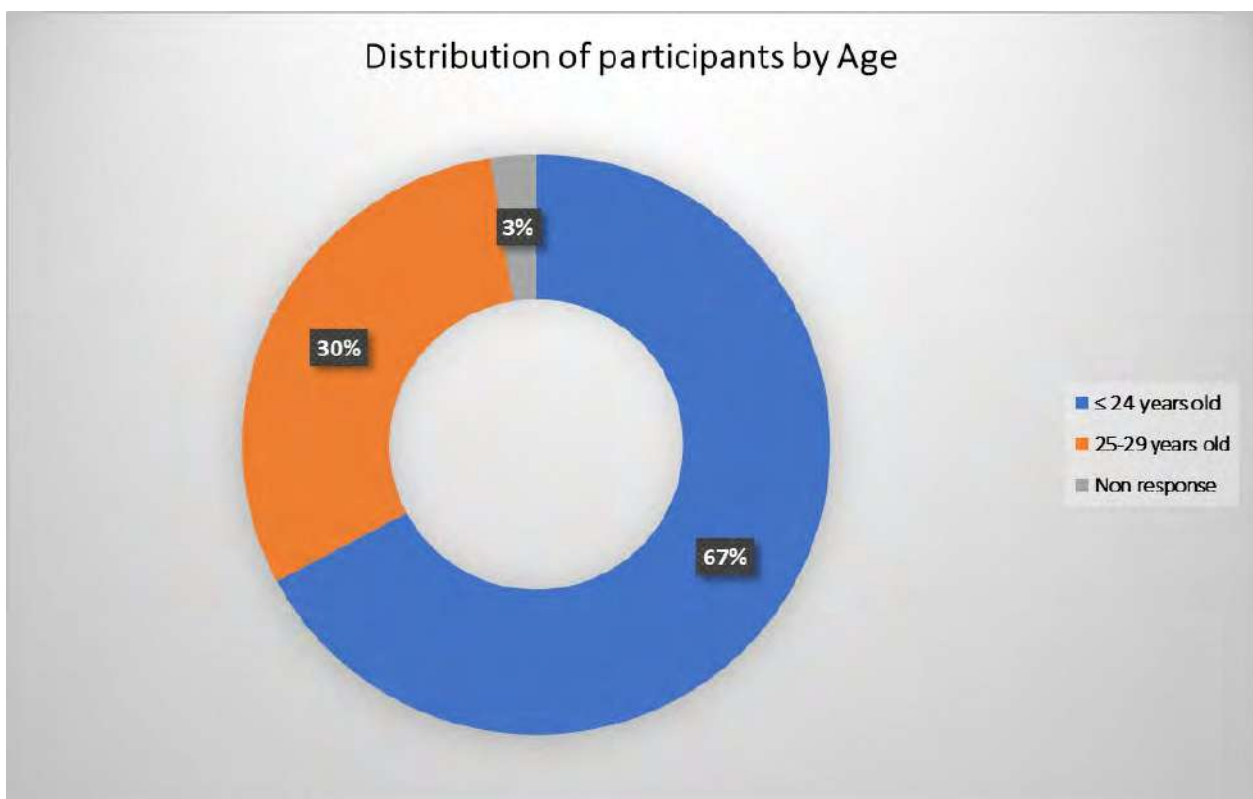
Gender distribution of respondent is presented in figure 4 below. It revealed female participants benefited more in this round of intervention (71%), and male participants

constituted (28%) of the total participants. 1% of the remaining participants did not disclose information about their gender.

Figure 4. Distribution of participants based on gender
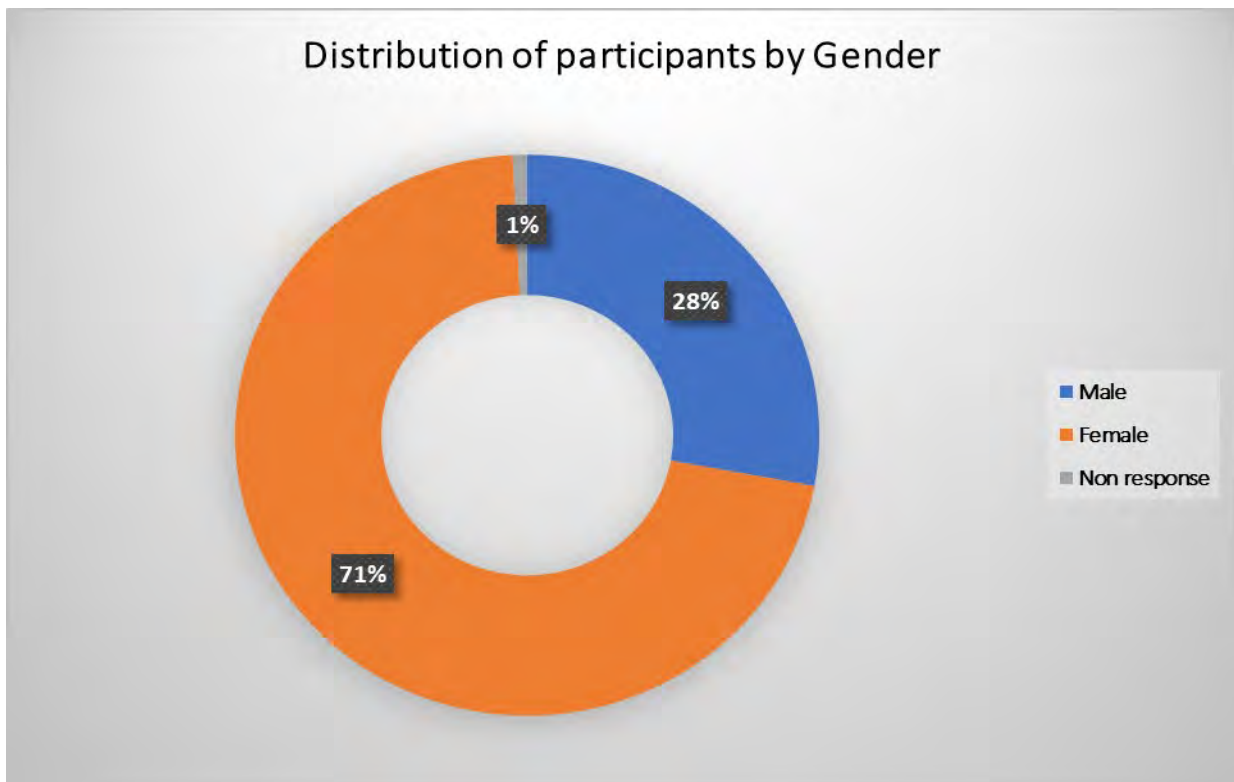
Presented in figure 5 is the distribution of respondents by educational attainment. Result showed 27% of the participants completed bachelor's degree or equivalent, 25.4% completed upper secondary education, 22.1% completed post-secondary education, 11.5% completed master's degree or equivalent, 9.8% completed lower secondary education, and 3.3% completed primary education. 0.8% of the remaining participants did not disclose information about their educational attainment.

Figure 5. Distribution of participants per educational attainment
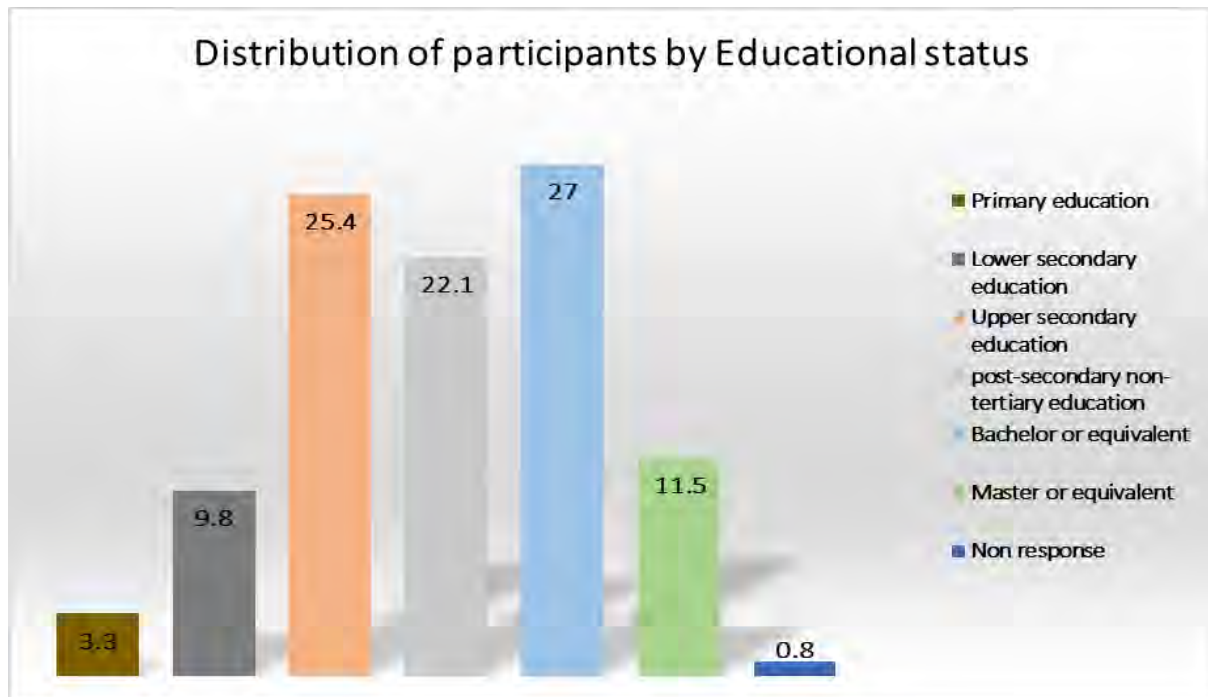
Figure 6 below shows the distribution of according to place of residence. It revealed that participants from urban areas (73%) benefited more from the intervention. 26.2% of the remaining participants are residents in rural areas. 0.8% of the remaining participants did not disclose information about their place of residence.

Figure 6. Geographical distribution of participants
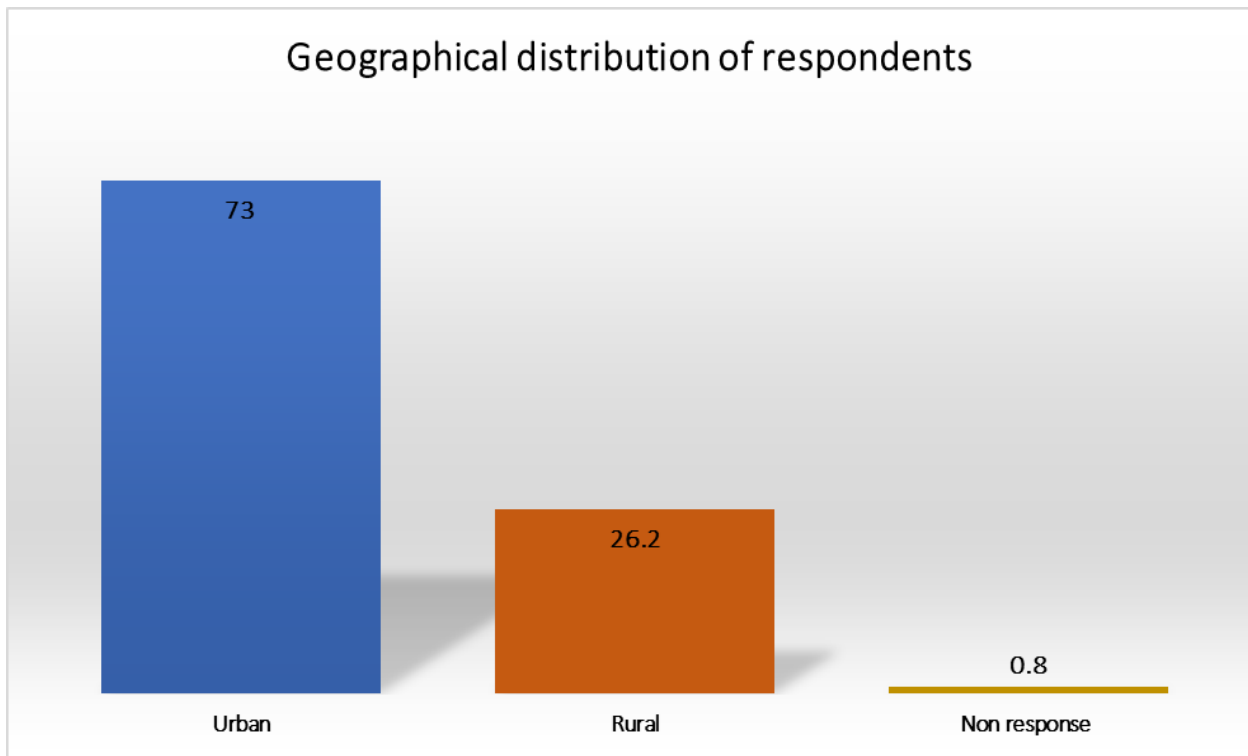
Presented in figure 7 is the distribution of beneficiaries by type of intervention activities. The result showed 72% of beneficiaries participated only in the training sessions. 28 % of the remaining beneficiaries participated in either coaching, mentoring or both.

Figure 7. Distribution of participants by type of intervention

Distribution of participants by Participation type

- Training
- Coaching & Mentoring

28%

72%
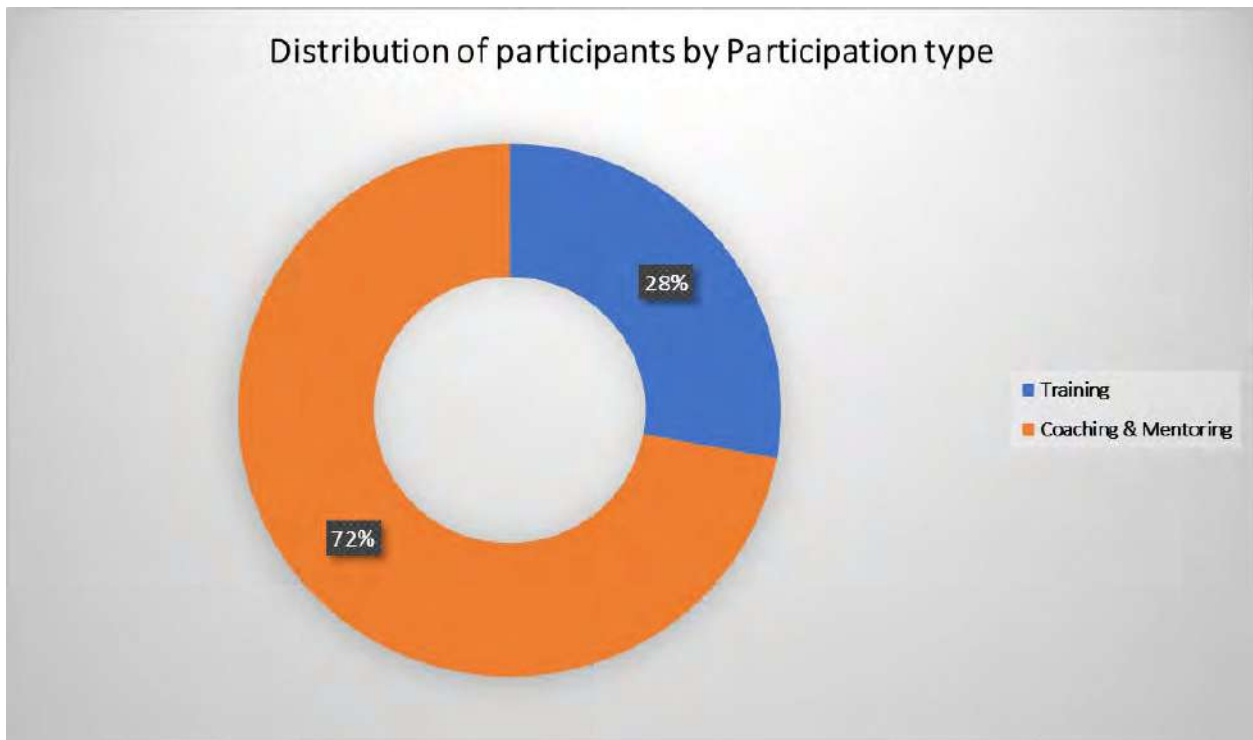
Presented in figure 8 is the is the distribution of beneficiaries by the use of SkillLab. The result showed 58% of participants had no access to SkillLab and 42% of the remaining participants had access to SkillLab.

Figure 8. Distribution of participants by the use of SkillLab
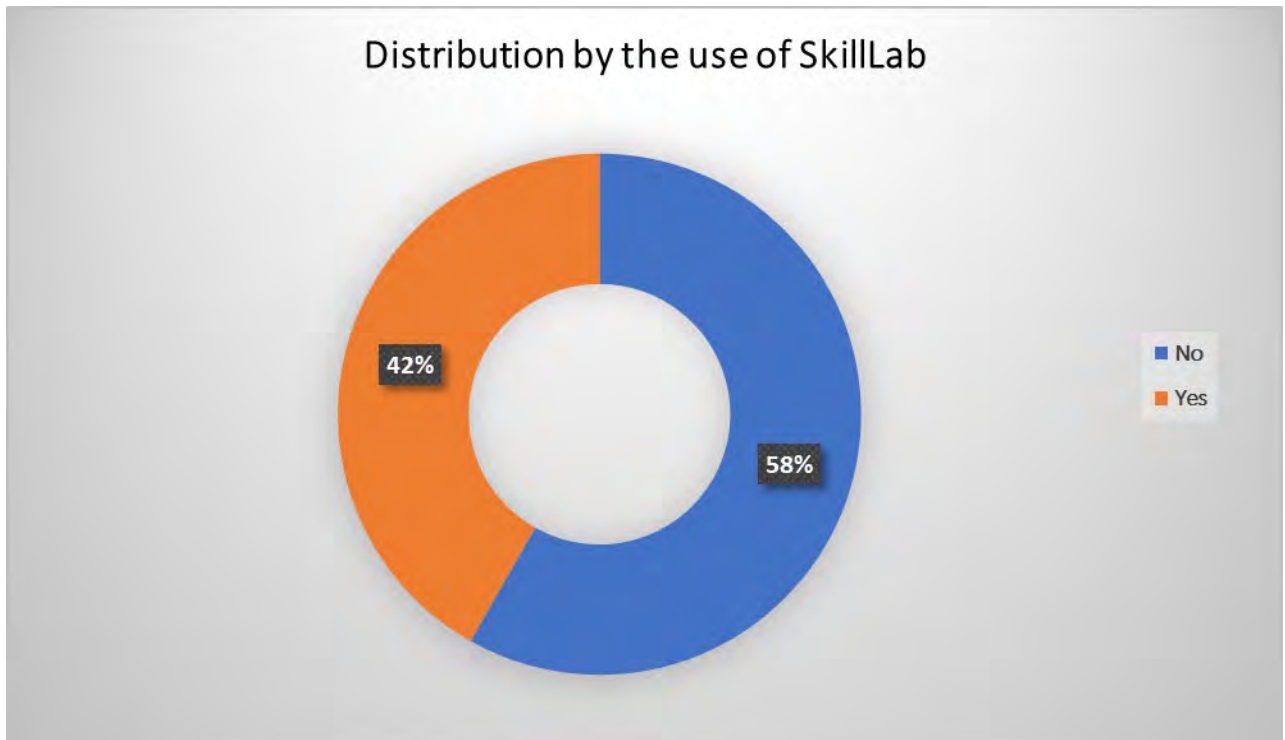
Presented in Figure 9 is the pre-post distribution of beneficiaries by labor status. Pre-intervention results revealed a wider margin between the proportion of participants who are in the NEET category and those who are engaged in labor activities by either being self-employed, enrolled in formal education or employed by an organization. 73.8% are NEETs while 26.2% are employed or students.

Post-intervention results showed a reduction in the proportion of participants who are in the NEET category (67.2%) and an increment in the proportion of participants who are who are engaged in labor activities by either being self-employed, enrolled in formal education or employed by an organization (32.8%).

Figure 9. Distribution of participants by labor status
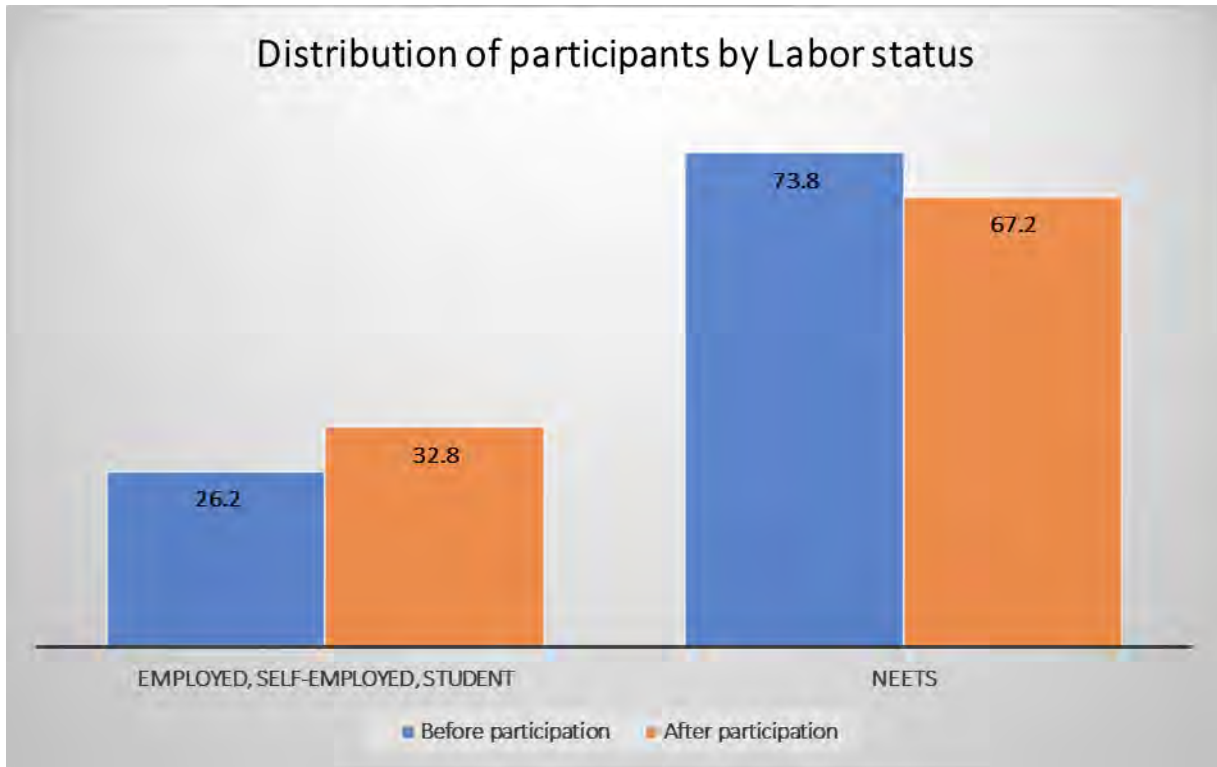
Presented in table 10 is the pre-post distribution of the participants by main source of income. Pre-intervention results revealed 36.9% of the participants have no means of income at all. 30.3% of the participants rely on family support as a means of sustenance, 18.9% rely on government support, 9% depend on income from their paid job or employment, and 4.9% of the remaining participants rely on income from their businesses as the main source of income.

Post-intervention results on the other hand revealed 37.7% of participants have no income at all. 27& of the participants depend on family support as their main source of income, 17.2% rely on oncome from paid employment, 14.8% depend on government support, and 3.3% of the remaining participants rely on income from their businesses as the main source of income.

Figure 10. Distribution of participants by source of income
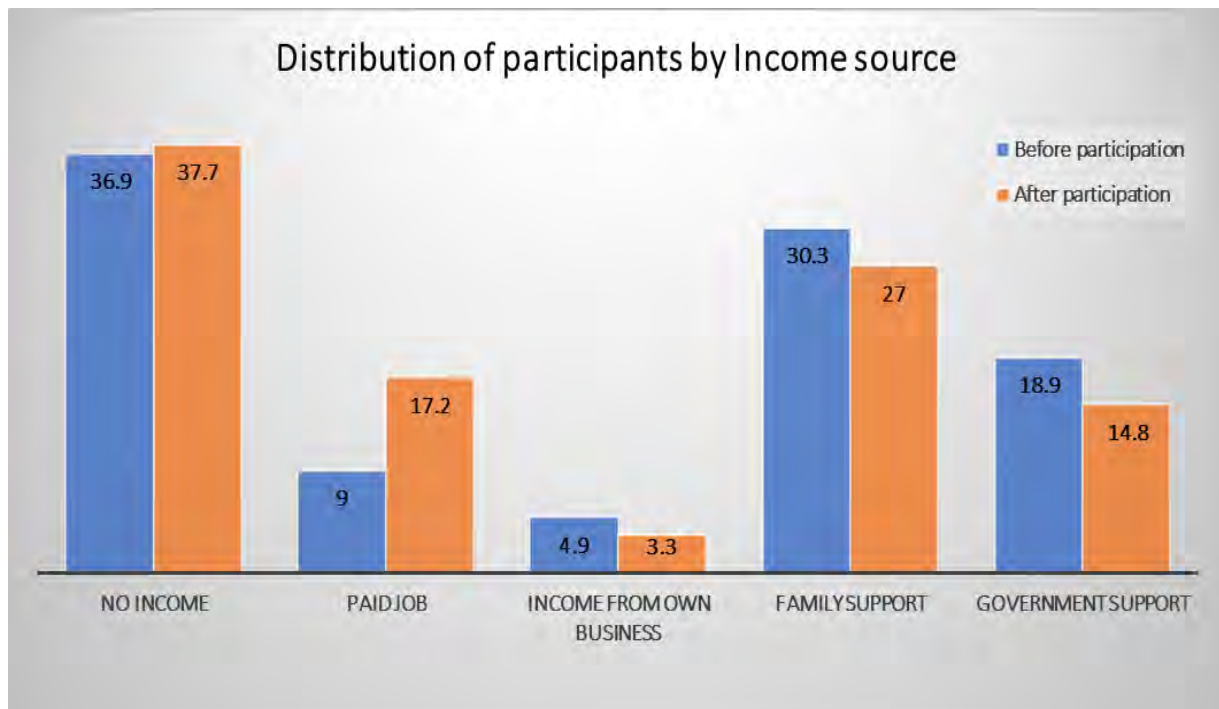
Figure 11 presents the pre-post distribution of the participants by monthly disposable income. Pre-intervention results revealed a higher proportion of the participants (79.5%) have less than 600EUR as their average monthly disposable income, and 15.6% of the participants have more than 600EUR as their average monthly disposable income. 4.6% of the remaining participants did not disclose information about their disposable income.

Post-intervention results showed a reduction in the proportion of participants with less than 600EUR as their average monthly disposable income (65.6%). Conversely, an increment was recorded in the proportion of participants with more than 600EUR as their monthly average disposable income (22.1%). 12.3% of the remaining participants did not disclose information about their disposable income.

Figure 11. Distribution of participants by monthly disposable income
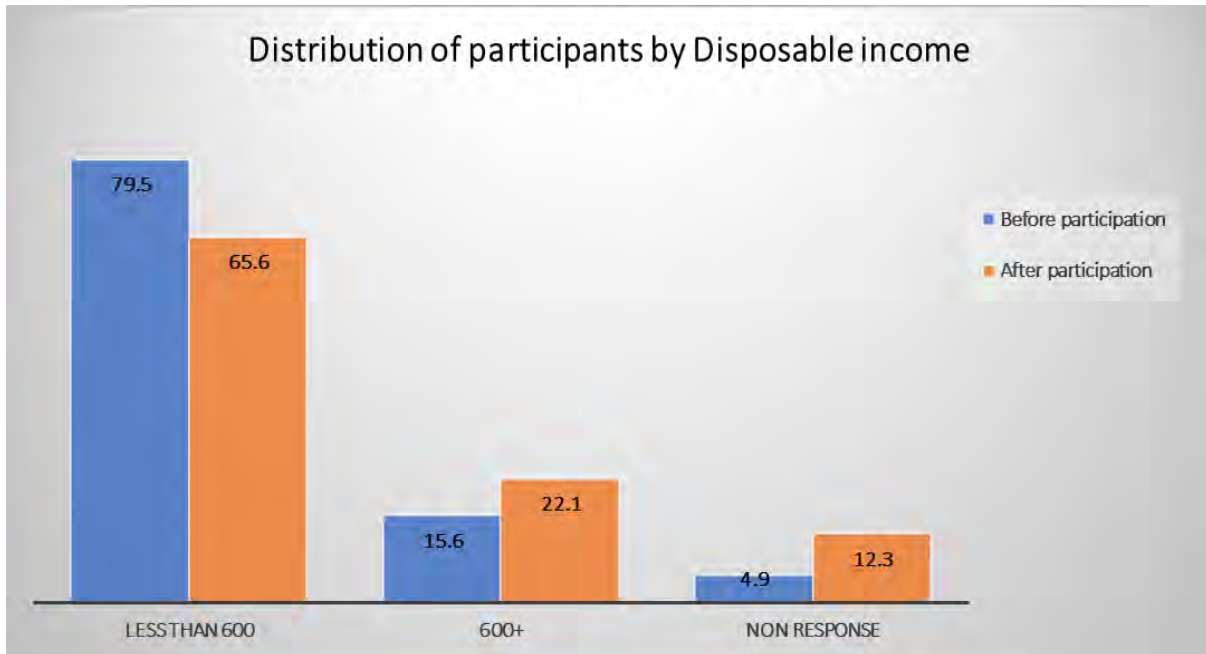

Soft outcomes: Statistical evaluation of soft outcome and impact variables

Table 4 presents the significant test results for the soft outcome and impact variables. The paired sample t-test showed a statistically insignificant difference (p=0.175) between the pre-and post-intervention results of soft skills at a 5% significance level. A similar result was equally recorded for the difference in the soft impact variable (quality of life), which was statistically insignificant (p=0.514) at a 5% significance level.

Table 4. Test of significance difference between pre- and post-intervention

Variables	Mean value (Pre-intervention)	Mean Value (Post-intervention)	p-value
Soft skills	7.645	7.779	0.175
Quality of life	6.978	7.045	0.514

Soft impact: Statistical evaluation of soft hard impact variables

Table 5 presents the statistical analysis of hard impact variables, including labor status and disposable income. The McNemar statistical test results for the observed differences of the pre-post intervention variable of labor status revealed a statistically insignificant outcome (p=0.201) at 5% significance level. However, the pre-post intervention variable of disposable income revealed a statistically significant outcome (p=0.031) at 5% significance level.

Table 5. Test of significance of hard impact (pre-post) variables.

	N	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
Labor status	122	0.201[b]
Disposable income	105	**0.031[b]**

b. binomial distribution used

Overview of focus group participants

Presented in table 6 below is a summary of qualitative feedback from the focus group discussions held with the participants of the program. The participants were divided into two separate groups. The first group involved eight participants who participated in the employment route of the program and had access to SkillLab. The second group of participants involved seven participants who participated in the entrepreneurship route of the program and had no access to SkillLab.

Table 6. Summary of focus group participants

Participants' gender	Program track	SkillLab usage
Female	Job seeking	Yes
Female	Job seeking	Yes
Male	Job seeking	Yes
Female	Job seeking	Yes
Female	Job seeking	Yes
Female	Job seeking	Yes
Female	Job seeking	Yes

Female	Job seeking	Yes
Male	Entrepreneurship	No
Male	Entrepreneurship	No
Female	Entrepreneurship	No
Female	Entrepreneurship	No
Female	Entrepreneurship	No
Male	Entrepreneurship	No
Female	Entrepreneurship	No

Analysis of focus group feedback from the participants (SkillLab users)

Analysis of the focus group feedback of the participants with SkillLab access were purposefully coded under six key themes. The themes encompassed Program reflection, Self-belief and professional growth, feedback on the Interventions (training, coaching, and mentoring), feedback on SkillLabs usage, insights into Challenges and prospects, and identified Areas for improvement. Figure 12 below presents a graphic description of the themes and the explanatory codes.

Figure 12. Emergent themes and sub-themes from the focus group discussion (SkillLab users)

Program reflection	Self-belief & professional growth	Interventions – Training, coaching & mentoring	Feedback on SkillLab	Challenges & future prospects	Areas of improvements
Professional growth opportunity	Shift in perception capabilities	Practical approach	Skills identification	Language issue	Increase coaching sessions
Transformative	Improved self-confidence	Holistic personal development	Inflexible CV structure	Adapting to varying dynamics	Organizational visits for insights
Skill enhancement	Pathway to self-discovery	Self-reflection & confidence boost	Unlinked to job portals	External commitments	Stability of facilitators
	Goal settings	Supportive & empathetic coaching		Continued support	

- **Program reflection:** The participants reflected on their journey throughout their time in the program. This includes their diverse perspectives on their experiences with the program were captured in one word, highlighting the transformative impact of the program. The participant testimonials revolve around themes of opportunity, transformation, effectiveness, improvement, growth, practicality, resilience, and learning, providing a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted benefits derived from their engagement with the project. For many participants, joining the program represents a significant opportunity. The program, offering career guidance and administrative training, is viewed as an opportunity to enter the administrative field. Excerpts from the discussion are presented below:

  > "*If I had to define the program in one word, it would be opportunity because for me, being able to join Autoocupació and be a part of this project is an opportunity. I am young and working and training at the same time was not going well for me, so being part of Autoocupació and being offered programs such as career guidance and administrative training, I see it as an opportunity since I wanted to enter the administrative field.*" Participant A

"If I had to define it in one word, it would be transformative or hopeful. I had worked in the hospitality industry, and due to personal problems, I had a moment of crisis. I wasn't sure what to do, and I felt that hospitality wasn't for me. Then I came across with Autoocupació, and for me, it was finding a path and a glimmer of hope because I felt completely lost." Participant B

"I think the word is effectiveness because Autoocupació has helped me a lot in terms of looking a job, studying" Participant C

"For me, it would be improvement because I believe the program helped me to improve professionally and access better job opportunities." Participant D

"I believe Autoocupació is an opportunity to grow, in general. In this training, they provide you with all the tools to grow professionally and personally." Participant E

"I would define it as practical. My time at Autoocupació has been helpful in guiding me and figuring out what I want because I was completely lost and didn't know what to do." Participant F

"For me, the word would be resilient. I think the staff have helped all of us in self-confidence, getting to know ourselves better, advancing in our personal progress, not only professionally but also in overcoming challenges we face in our daily life." Participant G

"For me, in one word, it would be learning." Participant H

- **Self-belief and professional growth:** The reflection of the program's impact on participants' self-belief and professional growth was discussed. Emerging topics in this regard revolved around the shift in participants' perception about their abilities, the boost in self-confidence because of their engagements in the program, ability to set goals and conquer challenges, and their journey towards self-discovery. The participants reflect on their initial struggles, the supportive environment provided by the program, the pivotal role of teachers, and the impactful individual coaching sessions that contributed significantly to their personal development. They emphasized the fundamental role of self-confidence in achieving

success, highlighting that without belief in one's abilities, obstacles become stumbling blocks. Provided below are excerpts from the discussion:

"When I started the program, I had very poor self-confidence, almost none. My parents are teachers, and I've always struggled with studies, so I didn't see myself capable of facing certain challenges. However, after my time in Autoocupació, not only did I successfully complete the training, but it also opened my eyes and made me see myself with the right eyes and see that I am capable of this and much more." Participant G

"In this program, your confidence changes from the moment you enter the classroom because both the teachers and the coach convey a sense of calm that you are going to learn." Participant B

"Sometimes, one thinks they have good self-esteem and self-confidence, but when you must interview with someone, you sometimes blank out and don't know what to say about yourself." Participant A

"I must say that the growth I've experienced here has been quite beneficial because I feel like I can focus on what truly means working. Everything that is done here is related to real-life situations, and I feel like I'm on the path to work." Participant D

"It has helped me figure out what I want because I was too comfortable before. This program has allowed me to set goals and challenges I want to achieve, and it has pushed me to step out of my comfort zone." Participant C

"Regarding personal growth, I was in a critical emotional situation. While working in the hospitality industry… At that time, I felt at the highest point of personal and professional growth, but when I left that job, I suddenly went from being at the top to hitting rock bottom, with no goals, no hope… thanks to being at Autoocupació, I have again that feeling of doing well, of being fulfilled, happy with myself." Participant C

"…with this training, new doors have opened, another opportunity for me to hold on to, making me feel better, like I am progressing, and finding my place in a job where I feel fulfilled." Participant B

"The best thing about this program is that it opens many doors for us and helps us with the knowledge we might have already had a little of, reinforcing and improving it a bit more." Participant A

- **Interventions (Training, coaching, and mentoring):** The reflections of the participants regarding the interventions were shared during the discussions. Discussions revolved around the practicality approach adopted during the delivery of the program, which supports the participants personal development holistically, and the impact on the interventions in boosting the self-confidence through the support they received from the facilitators throughout the program. Excerpts from the discussions are presented below:

  "In my case, in the first place, it's been about personal growth; secondly, the training, which is very complete and has prepared us for the labor market… So, the feedback is that there are multiple variables depending on how you look at it, but wherever you look at it, you can find results." Participant H

  "It has given us self-confidence. I felt that I was fine where I was, and this has helped me see that I can achieve more, that I can achieve better stability, and I can aim for more. It has taught me to trust myself more and see that I can accomplish many things… Personally, it has helped me know exactly what I want, where I want to go. As my colleagues mentioned earlier, it made me realize that the CV I thought was perfect might have had a lot of unnecessary information." Participant F

  "Receiving the training has helped me become more qualified, to argue my CV more effectively, and, as they mentioned, it has increased my confidence, as what I've studied can be defined, shared, and explained in a better way." Participant D

  "From the perspective of the training, we've practiced a lot of Microsoft Office skills. For instance, I have always used computers, but I had the chance to go deeper into typing and getting to know the Microsoft Office package,

using all its tools… Also, learning about treasury and accounting has helped me understand how a company operates from the inside in financial and economic matters." Participant A

"I had a very low level of Microsoft Office skills, and starting the training has helped me get better at it. I've also gained knowledge in other areas such as human resources, learning to do payrolls, employee recruitment, etc." participant F

"For me, coaching has given me confidence because you have someone who treats you with empathy, who knows how to explain things, so you understand them. The good thing about coaching is that everything they teach you is useful for the rest of your life." Participant C

"Coaching helped us more with self-assurance, moral values, and other things that you get from your family, having that support that helps you to move forward… Honestly, in my case, if it hadn't been for my coach, I wouldn't be here today and to me, it has been one of the most important pillars." Participant E

- **Feedback on Skill lab:** The participants shared their opinion regarding the use of artificial intelligence (SkillLab) in the intervention. They express appreciation for its simplicity and skill-focused approach, but concerns are raised about its fixed structure and limitations in CV sharing. The report delves into the tool's strengths and limitations, shedding light on its utility for personal skill identification, interview preparation, and its role in shaping a clear understanding of one's professional abilities. SkillLab is lauded for its user-friendly interface, allowing participants to highlight skills effortlessly without the need for extensive written content. Participants commend the tool for suggesting relevant skills based on desired job roles, streamlining the process of identifying key competencies necessary for specific positions. The simplicity of the tool stands out, making it accessible for users across various skill levels. Despite its advantages, concerns are raised about SkillLab's fixed structure, limiting flexibility in CV creation. Excerpts from the discussion are presented below:

  "I liked it because you don't have to write much; it simply suggests the skills you have and keywords. If you want to work as an office manager, it suggests the skills you need, which is very helpful. However, at the end of creating

the CV, I don't think the structure is the best, so I wouldn't use it to create my CV since it has a fixed structure and isn't flexible." Participant B

"It doesn't allow you to send it to anyone, so it's not useful for obtaining a CV, but I really liked that it values skills you've acquired in non-professional experiences, such as volunteering or caregiving." Participant E

"Maybe it is not for having a product to present to a company, but it's very useful for having a clear idea of your skills and how to stand out in an interview." Participant A

- **Challenges and future prospects:** The challenges faced by the participants included managing external commitments, adapting to varying class dynamics and overcoming language barriers. Participants faced these challenges by supporting peers, seeking coaching, and persisting in their training despite external work commitments. They also expressed the need for continued coaching post-program completion. They also emphasized the importance of job placement support, especially for entry-level positions in the administrative field. Excerpts are provided below:

    "The language barrier was a big challenge for me. When I arrived, I didn't understand Catalan, although I had studied it in Colombia, I had never spoken it. Working on it here helped me overcome the embarrassment of speaking it and learning a new language while studying." Participant H

    "In my case, we had a teacher who was very different from the other teachers. This had a great impact on me because she could not communicate effectively, making it difficult for me to attend her classes and understand her… I overcame this challenge through the coaching sessions and by convincing myself that I was able to finish the training, considering it only as an obstacle in the way. In the end, the teacher has a significant influence on the class, so the relationship between the instructor and the students is essential to keep us motivated in the training." Participant G

    "During the course, I found a job, and it was a challenge to continue with the training, considering that I finished my work shift late in the evening and had

to wake up early to attend classes. In the end, I realized it was a way to pursue my dreams and keep fighting." Participant C

"I would say continuing with coaching sessions would be helpful. They have been of great help to me. Since we won't always have the same CV, we'll need to keep it up to date and search for new job opportunities. Having these coaching sessions is a valuable tool we can use to find employment." Participant D

"I think it would help us, even if we find a job, or if we don't find one yet, to have a place where we can go, where they look for beginners, since in the administrative field they usually look for more experienced people. Also continuing to offer new courses and training to keep learning, specializing, and improving our CV." Participant F

"Something that would also be useful is having a mentor who can help us understand this job and continue guiding us. I will apply for one." Participant A

- **Areas of improvements:** Participants shared suggestions on how the program could be further improved. Their suggestions revolved around stability of facilitators to enhance trust and the established connections and incorporating visitation to different organizations to further boost the commitments of the participants towards the program. Additionally, increasing group coaching sessions and study support hours were proposed for a more comprehensive learning experience. Excerpts are provided below:

    "…we've had changes in both teachers and coaches, and that has thrown us off balance. Adapting to each new person, building trust, establishing a connection… Not having stability, at least for me, has been difficult. Participant E

    "I think it would be interesting to visit more companies and have them explain what they do, the day-to-day life of an administrative role" Participant D

    "I completely agree with what she said, as it's a way to motivate people who might have an unclear path, and it helps you gather more strength and

motivation to complete your training and have a clear career goal."
Participant A

"I would also increase the number of group coaching sessions, which help create a good atmosphere among classmates, as well as extend the hours of study support, since some of us lack sufficient study techniques." Participant F

Analysis of focus group feedback from the participants (Non SkillLab users)

The responses gathered from participants during the focus group sessions underwent coding and thorough analysis. These codes were then utilized to extract overarching themes from the data. More specifically, six key themes were employed to classify the feedback provided by participants engaged in the entrepreneurship route of the program. These themes encompassed program reflection, self-belief and professional growth, interventions (such as training, coaching, and mentoring), insights into challenges and prospects, and identified areas for improvement. Overview of participants' responses are presented in figure 13 below.

Figure 13. Emergent themes and sub-themes from the focus group discussion (non-SkillLab users)
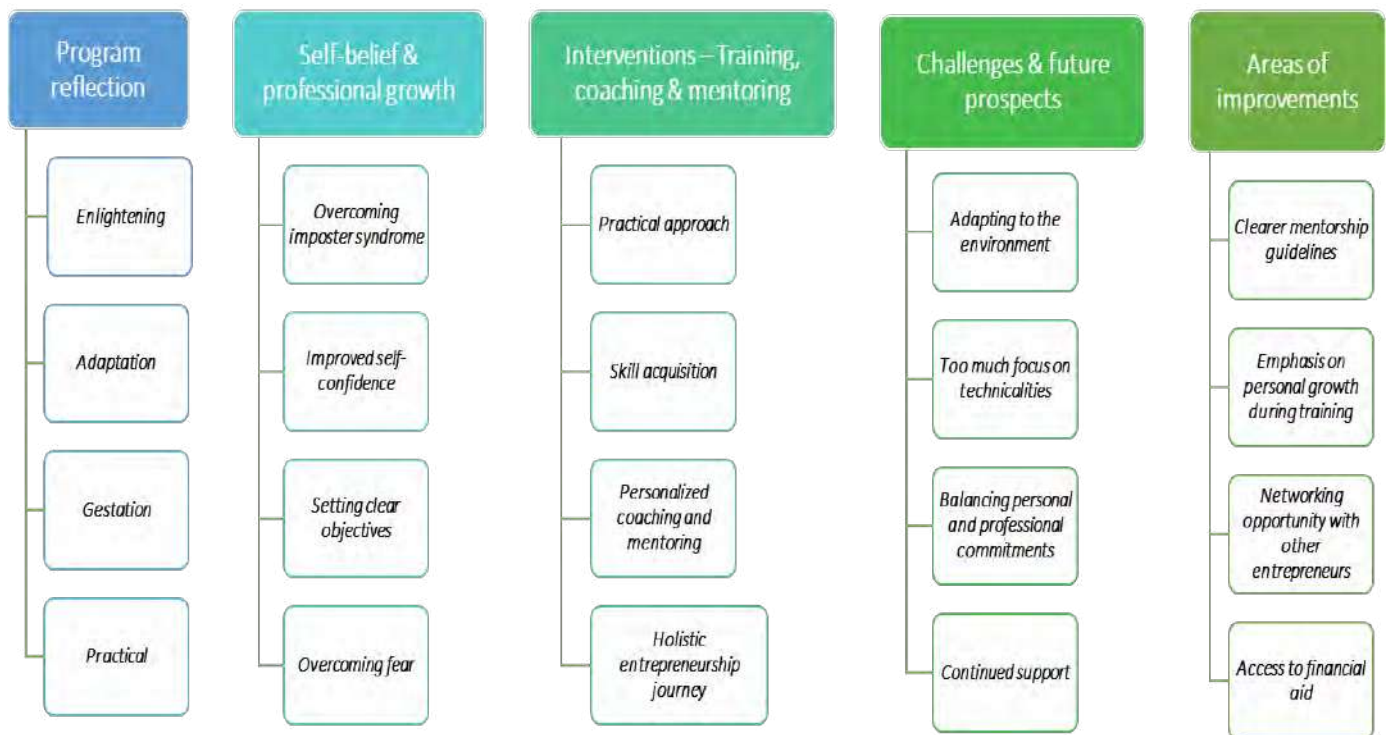
- **Program Reflection:** Participants expressed a sense of significant personal growth and learning throughout the program. Themes such as adaptation, enlightening, gestation and practical emerged as the participants summarized their participation in the program. Provided below are excerpts from the discussions:

"…aside from being a very good experience, I believe I have learned and grown a lot." Participant A

"…the word would be gestation, because it has been like a birth, a project that has grown inside me and that I've had time to nurture and develop." Participant E

"…most important thing for me in this program has been the development of various skills and knowledge in business management." Participant C

"I would define my journey in self-employment as adaptation, because there have been good things and bad things that have happened during this period, and thanks to my colleagues and professors, I have learned to adapt and overcome obstacles." Participant B

"…the process has been enlightening. Basically, it has clarified many scattered ideas in my head and made me focus on the ones that mattered, so I could concentrate on them and progress further." Participant D

- **Self-belief and professional growth:** Participants reflected on the transformative impact of the program on self-belief, practical knowledge application, and the acquisition of valuable skills crucial for project development is crucial to self-growth. Several participants acknowledged the program's incredible helpfulness, particularly given their lack of formal education in business matters. There is an initial lack of belief in their own capabilities to navigate the complexities of business. The program becomes instrumental in dispelling this self-doubt, proving that they indeed possess the abilities to move forward. Excerpts from the discussions are presented below:

"I come from the artistic world, and I think what I experience is common in other sectors, but what has been very important for me is that within the training there are other artistic projects. It allows us to overcome imposter syndrome, as it puts us on the same level as projects with much more formal themes." Participant B

"Being able to have this training has been like having a compass; it has allowed me to lean on it and feel in my comfort zone, growing securely and

avoiding pitfalls. At some point in the process, I gained the confidence that I no longer had in myself." Participant C

"It helped me break through the idea that maybe I couldn't do this alone and that there is a way, right? And that I can create my own business." Participant E

"For me, it has been incredibly helpful because I don't have a formal education in business matters, and I didn't believe in myself in this regard. I didn't think I was capable of handling all of this, and this program has shown me that I do indeed have the abilities to move forward." Participant D

"It has been about setting a roadmap from the beginning, which has allowed me to work on it and see that we could achieve it. Having clear objectives has allowed me to have a clear path professionally and improve my structure." Participant B

"Having clear objectives has allowed me to improve my consistency and productivity, both personally and professionally. It has given me a single focus." Participant F

- **Interventions (Training, coaching, and mentoring):** This theme reports interventions initiated on the impact of a training and coaching program, specifically in the context of their desire to initiate projects. Participants highlighted the program's role in providing resources and tools that significantly enhance their capabilities, thereby facilitating the realization of their projects. The program has not altered their intrinsic desire to embark on new ventures. Instead, it has played a pivotal role in providing the essential resources necessary for project initiation. Several participants reported having a strong desire to start something but lacked the requisite knowledge, path, or means to execute their ideas. The program becomes the catalyst that bridges this gap, offering the tools needed to bring their aspirations to fruition. Presented below are excerpts from the discussions:

  "The university provides us with the theory, in my case. That's why the training I received has meant progress. We can understand things like knowing the client, how to approach them, and what tools I need. We've moved from theorical knowledge to taking action." Participant C

"Understanding money matters and what an expense and an investment are. Personally, it has affected both my personal and professional lives because, in the end, I come from a family of public employees, from a context that is not aware that one can be self-employed and how to manage money. Understanding money's value has helped me a lot." Participant F

"I think the training has also helped me by providing tools for self-awareness and really extracting everything I can offer, both as a professional and as a person. I think this has helped me in such a way that now I want to learn other professional techniques and how to focus them in the future." Participant E

"The mentor helped us a lot throughout the entrepreneurial process. I am 24 years old and I still don't have much experience, and moreover, my mentor had an incredible experience and helped me a lot. Sometimes, he has also seemed like a father figure; we have created a very close personal bond. He accompanied me throughout the whole process." Participant B

"Mentoring has provided us with skills that weren't as developed. Having a dedicated space for it forced us to find the time to delve deeper and learn about new areas." Participant C

"The coaching gives me feedback that I wouldn't have had on my own. It allows me to make a better assessment and gives me more confidence. Also, it provides support, especially because we are very young." Participant A

- **Challenges and future prospects:** A transformative journey within an educational and entrepreneurial context, focusing on challenges faced and overcome is tied both to individual growth and corporate development. Several participants reflected on initial difficulties, adjustments, and personal growth during the program, illustrating the evolution of their mindset and approach to their profession. By acknowledging initial hardships faced, particularly in working with unfamiliar individuals with diverse energies, there is a need to understand the challenge of building connections in a classroom setting, coupled with initial tensions, is candidly shared. Excerpts are presented below:

"I suffered a lot at the beginning because it was very difficult for me to imagine working with people I didn't know at all, with very different energies, and at the beginning there was some tension between us. Things always happen. But later, with time, we knew each other, and it has been a good experience to be able to share the classroom, get to know each other." Participant B

"The challenge was how to leave the studio, because I was very focused on my profession, which was ceramics. I worked and produced in it. And suddenly we had to attend classes on a schedule, in a space, do all the homework, … And this, to balance studying and producing at the same time, forced me to learn to prioritize and give time to both things." Participant E

"To stop focusing on the product itself and focus on other related issues, because since I am a very technical profile, I was too focused on having a perfectly developed product. The challenge so far has been trying to set aside that aspect of designing and manufacturing the product and focus more on the business as a whole." Participant D

- **Areas of improvements:** There are perspectives on the importance of diverse networking approaches and a comprehensive feedback loop, emphasizing the potential benefits of mentorship in team organization. Participants noted the value of connecting with individuals from various training groups, fostering mutual contribution, and gaining external perspectives for goal clarity and organizational structure. In advocating for a broadened approach to networking, participants suggest the consideration of various types of networks beyond the immediate group. They stress the importance of establishing a general feedback loop, not only within their own group but also with individuals receiving training in other groups. Excerpts from the discussions are presented below:

  "…but on an entrepreneurial level, it would be interesting to have a network and get to know each other someday, to benefit from the relationship between entrepreneurial projects. Interacting with all those who are interested." Participant C

  "I think it would be good to consider different types of networking and a general feedback loop, not only with us, but also with people receiving

training in other groups. Being able to meet new people and knowing what you can contribute to other people and what other people can contribute to you." Participant A

"As well as financial support. In my case, knowing that there are so many social aid programs has been very useful. Until now, I didn't know about them, and I know that in the future, they will be very useful resources that I will try to use." Participant F

Overview of interviewed coaches and mentors

Table 7 below presents the summary of the feedback from the interviewed coaches and mentors engaged in the program. A total of five coaches and mentors were interviewed to collect their input and feedback regarding interventions. Two coaches and four mentors were interviewed in this regard.

Table 7. Summary of interviewed coaches and mentors

Participants' gender	Input	Expertise
Female	Coach	Job coach
Female	Coach	Job Coach
Male	Mentor	Entrepreneur
Male	Mentor	Entrepreneur
Male	Mentor	Entrepreneur

Analysis of interview feedback from coaches and mentors

The analysis of interviews from the coaches and mentors in the program is presented below. The feedback was coded under seven themes. The coaching and mentoring strategies adopted in the program, feedback on the most effective coaching and mentoring techniques, challenges faced by the participants, observed transformational changes from the participants, the programs' strengths and weaknesses, suggestions for further improvements, and long – term impact strategies. Figure 14 below presents a graphic description of the themes and the explanatory codes.

Figure 14. Emergent themes and sub-themes from the interviews of coaches and mentors

Strategies for coaching/mentoring	Effective coaching/mentoring techniques	Challenges participants faced	Observed transformational changes	Programs' strengths & weaknesses	Suggestions – Areas of improvements	Long-term Impact Strategies
Open question strategy	Creation of safe space	Lack of autonomy & fear of failure	Improved decision making	Shorter duration	Post intervention support	Engaging multiple expert mentors
Active listening	Providing feedback	Financial insecurities	Knowledge acquisition	Flexibility on the choice of a mentor	Extended duration	Continued support
Effective planning	The 5C methodology	Insecurity	Enhanced self-confidence	Wider coverage through virtual mentorship	Regular mentor training	Leverage of established connections
Role-playing	Active listening	Lack of motivation & experience	Setting up businesses	Financial component	Frequent mentor-mentee interactions	
The 5C methodology	Role-playing	Distinguishing between realistic & idealistic projects		Commitment issues from the participants		

- **Strategies for Coaching/Mentoring:** Different strategies have been itemized by the mentors and coaches based on their experience with the participants. Sub-themes that emerged under this theme include the use of open question strategy, active listening, effective planning, role-playing and adoption of the 5C methodology. Undoubtably, these techniques have proven to help boost the self-confidence of the participants, particularly when engaging NEETs, there is need to first establish a relationship between the coach or mentor and the participant. In this case supporting the participants empathetically and actively listening to their needs proved to be a useful tool in this regard. One of the mentors reported:

  "…creating an environment of trust, doing active listening, bring a reference through guidance." Coach A

  "Also, we teach them like in the active listening, just not listening to what they are saying, no it's like listen more about it like body language, paying attention." Coach B

  "Also using activities and invite them to and giving them a leading role, to the young people I mean. We tried to get them to make their own decisions and say their own words." Coach A

"…we teach them in open questions, like how it's properly to ask to know get directly to the solution, so try to give the youth the opportunity to look for what is the best solution for their problem and being there just as assessment." Coach B

"We teach them also in something that we call the 5C's, it's like a spinning wall where you are, being a mentor just follow the steps to get the conclusion. Like first listen, then make the entrepreneurs think about the alternative that they have to choose, leave them and help them to choose the best alternative, and then if you want you can give them more tips that they don't think about it." Coach B

"I really listen to what the other people want to say, I don't need to talk at all, and then we usually try to plan ahead the whole process, what is going to happen during the meeting after I understand when everything that these people or this person has." Mentor B

"We work about the open questions… every meeting starts with 'What do you want to talk about'." Mentor A

- **Effective Coaching Techniques:** The coaches and mentors highlighted the coaching and mentoring techniques that were most effective in engaging with the participants. Feedback shows the importance of participant-driven discussions and mentorship training, and how the program is committed to establishing a safe space that encourages feedback, highlights strengths, and supports ongoing personal and professional development. Other techniques include the use of the 5C technique, role playing, active listening and feedback sessions from the participants. Excerpts are provided below:

  "For example in the most important creating a bond between the coach and the participant, where the young person can feel that he is in a safe space." *Coach A*

  "So all the mentors receive mandatory information where we teach them the methodology that we think it's useful and interesting to help the youth entrepreneurs, and we teach them in open questions." Coach B

"…we think it's important to always offer a positive feedback to the participant, promoting lifelong learning and encouraging them to continue building their life project." Coach A

"You take real life scenarios and then they have role play and then they pretend like a customer and then they tell you how they can like relate with you so which is exactly what they are going to face in the real world…" Mentor B

- **Challenges Faced by Participants:** The coaches and mentors shared the challenges faced by participants, such as lack of autonomy and fear, financial constraints, insecurity, distinguishing between realistic and ideal projects, and lack of experience and motivation. Excerpts from a respondent report that:

    "…the main challenge for obstacle we face have been the lack of autonomy of the person in search of employment. We have found difficulty in when the young people leave the coaching, they continue with the job that has been agreed. In a bigger picture, also we have experience fear of failure." Coach A

    "Most of them like the problems or challenging they are facing is motivation. I think they are scared sometimes to be an entrepreneur as a young people because they don't have experience in those things." Coach B

    "And also young people with little work experience in that this little inexperience has been truly negative with precarious contracts." Coach A

    "…most of them they don't feel like secure about what they're doing, they don't know how to empower themselves. Most of them feel insecure about moving forward because of whatever situation they have, sometimes because of family, sometimes because of the themselves or sometimes it's because of finance or any other reason." Mentor B

- **Observed Transformational Changes:** The facilitators itemized several observed transformational changes in the program demonstrating the program's impact, noting shifts from negative to empowered states, how best participants can confront negativity and

viewing challenges as growth opportunities. Among the notable improvements are the improved decision making by the participants, knowledge acquisition, improved self-confidence and the push to start a business. Excerpts from the interviews are presented below:

"…we have helped young people to learn the professional objective, and from this we have established like I said actions to follow a path in order to achieve the desired goal." Coach A

"So most of the times when we finish, all of them it's like, what do you get from this relationship, the answer used to be I'm more self-confident in myself and in my project and I'm I think now I'm more capable to do it alone than I was at the beginning." Coach B

"They also have improved their self-esteem and also helping young people to create bonds with other young people with equals to know also the most beneficial employment chance for them." Coach A

"…what I'm seeing is every single day there's something else that I can see that she understands better and take better probably she's making taking better decisions…" Mentor B

"What I've seen is that right now they are able to launch create a new company and they know probably ten times more than they knew before and it's not because they have learned." Mentor C

"…get also more knowledge in more technical things that they needed to. Like what we were saying, if you are not good at sales at the end of the mentoring relationship you gain and you get some tools to improve your sales." Coach B

- **Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program:** The coaches and mentors highlighted the importance of the programs' structure, which lies in the relationship between the facilitators and the participants, through the tailored support the participants received from them, and the flexibility to decide who mentors them or change their mentors during their participation in the program. A few weaknesses were equally highlighted by the coaches and mentors.

These include the shorter program duration, lack of financial component into the program design, emphasis on the need to establish connections with the labor market, and issues of commitment from the participants. Excerpts from the interviews are shared below:

> *"One of the weaknesses is that the program used to be short. Because I'm going to meet them once, twice per month, six month, one year depending. But still it's so short that you're going to see this people, 10times 12times maximum sometimes. So the evolution from nothing to creating a company from nothing in one year is not so heavy.* Mentor C

> *"The participants in have a reference person with whom they can share all the concerns and gaps. And also, they come voluntarily and they are willing to be guided… And also the coaching was individualized and personalized to the person's interest."* Coach A

> *"And also there has been difficulty on creating a role of trust in the virtual coaching sessions even though I say that it was possible to schedule and it's not the same as the in person coaches."* Coach A

> *"I think the strengths are the experience of the mentors, dealing with entrepreneurs and ability of entrepreneurs. The weaknesses I think distance, the face to face meetings of the mentoring time, there are long term projects, difficult raising capital."* Mentor B

> *"Sometimes youths have a lot to think, and thinking too many things sometimes, and it's difficult in some cases to get this responsibility in knowing that mentors are doing this as a volunteer and they have to respect their time, and it's something that it's helping them."* Coach B

> *"I would say that one of the strengths is how this entrepreneurs have access to someone or some organization not just to me or to other mentors but to an organization, helping them in the process where most of them are going to get lost at some point, so that's really nice…"* Mentor B

> *"And many of the training have been done by distance learning and that has allowed many people from all over Catalonia and the rest of Spain participate in the program. And also choose the pace of the learning."* Coach A

- **Areas of further improvements:** The program explores strategic improvements for a creative entrepreneurship program, emphasizing the importance of thorough research in project planning, encouraging a long-term vision for sustained development, introducing informal post-intervention check-ins, and enhancing engagement with business networks. These proposed enhancements aim to optimize participant outcomes, foster lasting mentor-participant relationships, and broaden job opportunities within the creative entrepreneurship landscape. A key recommendation for program enhancement is the inclusion of workshops, case studies, and mentor-guided exercises that can be integrated to fortify participants' research capabilities. Provided below are excerpts from the interviews:

> *"Making a work plan more immediate so that they can have results and see that they are achieving things in a short term."* Coach A

> *"I think it should be like something really friendly, like yeah coffee with a mentor after six months. Like in a chill way, in a relaxed way, in non-super structural thing. It's just coffee with their mentor and share what had happened in the last six months. Just to close up this relationship, I think this could be really nice."* Mentor B

> *"I think that to make the intervention further strength we would have liked more contact with the Business Network, so that young people and the participant could establish contact not only with the XXX like I said before but also with companies and entities in the sector that they are interested in."* Coach A

> *"…we ask also to the entrepreneurs that when they have a meeting with the mentors, bring us a report of the meeting. So this is a way that I can read it and I can yeah get it if there's something that has to change or if they have any other need that the mentor cannot give to them."* Coach B

> *"…I would say that maybe organize some more of the meetings for some team building activities that Autoocupaccio can handle and help us connect easier, especially at the beginning."* Mentor C

"I think that following the relationship is the key of this. If you are informed and you know what it's happening in each relationship, like in a close way, it's better to improve and the intubation." Coach B

- **Strategies for Long-Term Impact:** To ensure a lasting impact, the coaches and mentors recommended teaching the participants the importance of engaging mentors with diverse expertise, continual support for the participants and leveraging the already established connections between the organizers, facilitators, and the stakeholders in the labor market. The following excerpts are provided from the interviews:

    "…making companies in the territories aware of the importance of giving young people job opportunity after, and also to collaborate with these companies to have continuous follow-ups, so that when they have a determine a certain vacancies available, they can think of us as intermediaries, and we are like a gateway for these young people to access the labor market and get like I said their first work experience." Coach A

    "Maybe to make this relationship longer and by knowing that this person is gonna need some extra support, to provide them with extra mentors in different areas, that this person because she or he joined the program at the very beginning…" Mentor C

    "I would say that probably keeping this relationship with the mentee for a longer time, not as a mentee anymore but maybe in some way being able to be the person that these other mentees wants to contact with because the programs is ended, the program is finished." Mentor B

Discussion

Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the analyzed results of the YES! project. The second phase of the program was implemented with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (SkillLab) to complement the efforts of the project partners and the participants as they transition from NEET status into the labor market through employment or entrepreneurship.

The results revealed a higher level of engagements by the participants in the whole components of the program (training, coaching/mentoring) compared to the proportion of participants that only participated solely in the training component. This notable difference could be attributable to the organization's extensive experience and expertise in the Spanish market in mentoring young people and helping them navigate the entrepreneurship market across Spain. Even though the results were statistically inconsistent with the direct impact of the intervention on the participants, the qualitative feedback from the participants showed the importance of the program in ensuring a pathway for them as they strive to become gainfully employed in suitable positions or successful entrepreneurs.

Regarding the general economic situation of the participants, results indicated a notable improvement in the proportion of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) within the project. Approximately 6.6% of the participants transitioned out of the NEET category by either securing gainful employment, becoming self-employed, or enrolling in formal education. This positive outcome highlights the impact of the interventions, which provided tailored coaching and mentoring, and vital training that addresses participants' specific needs. This personalized approach played a crucial role in emphasizing the impact of the interventions in supporting and empowering individuals in their market entry endeavors.

Progress was equally recorded by the participants towards self-sufficiency as evident in the increment recorded in the proportion of participants that were gainfully employed after participating in the program. Approximately 8% of the participants found a paid job after they participated in the program. Progress was equally recorded as evident in the proportion of the participants that rely on government support and family income was observed. Around 3% of the participants discontinued relying on their family for means of sustenance and 4% equally ceased receiving government assistance. These results were consistent with the aim of the program in equipping the participants with the needed skills and resilient spirit needed

to be an active player in the labor market. Although positive results were observed regarding the economic situation of the participants upon their engagements in the program, the impact recorded could not significantly influence the participants quality of life, their soft skills, and their labor status. However, the participants' disposable income proved to be statistically significant.

Concluding remarks

Concluding remarks

A collaborative approach involving multiple initiatives and efforts from the Spanish government and local actors has been instrumental in addressing NEETs and unemployment challenges in the country. These resulted in the promotion of vocational training nationwide and the provision of support to local actors who facilitate job coaching and entrepreneurship programs, including mentoring, for the young and unemployed population throughout Spain.

Recognizing the plethora of challenges faced by NEETs, such as insufficient skills and qualifications hindering job applications, limited job prospects, diminished self-esteem and confidence, restricted access to vital social and economic support services, and mental health issues, some of these obstacles were addressed through the YES! interventions implemented by Autoocupació. The initiative not only aims to enhance employment prospects for young individuals but also focuses on fostering their emotional resilience and improving their overall quality of life as they navigate the Spanish labor market.

The interventions encompass a multifaceted approach, combining targeted training programs in high-demand sectors of the Spanish market with coaching and mentoring support to nurture the entrepreneurial aspirations of young individuals. By providing a holistic framework of support, the YES! interventions empower NEETs to overcome barriers, develop vital skills, and pursue rewarding opportunities on their journey toward sustainable employment and personal growth.

Despite the significant impacts attributable to the project, some obstacles were encountered during the implementation of this phase of the interventions. One notable challenge was the utilization of AI technology, which aimed to motivate participants to present their skills in a format suitable for the job market. Considering the dual-pathway approach of the intervention, which focuses both on employment and entrepreneurship, it was observed that only participants interested in the employment route showed interest in utilizing the introduced AI tool. However, this approach also posed challenges related to operating and navigating the platform, leading to difficulties and discouragement among certain individuals. In particular, locating specific skills within the platform's directories

proved to be a struggle for some participants, further hindering their engagement with the AI system.

In some of the feedback provided by the participants, coaches, and mentors, towards the design and the implementation of the intervention, they noted it would have been more insightful to have a longer engaging time with the coaches and mentors. This could have a lasting impact on the mentoring components of the program. This was also validated by the submission of the coaches and mentors. They noted the schedule of meetings of mentors and coaches engaged in the program could have facilitated engagements and encourage shared learning among the facilitators.

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IA report (YES!). Previous impact assessment reports

SkillLab Inc. https://skilllab.io/en-us

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.

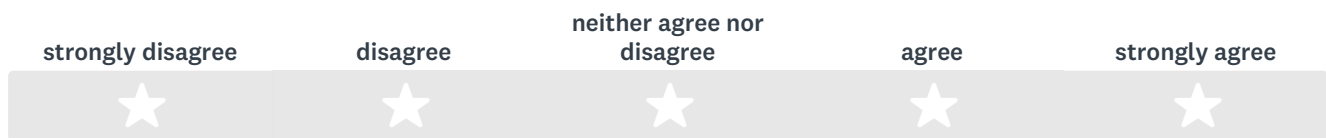| strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★

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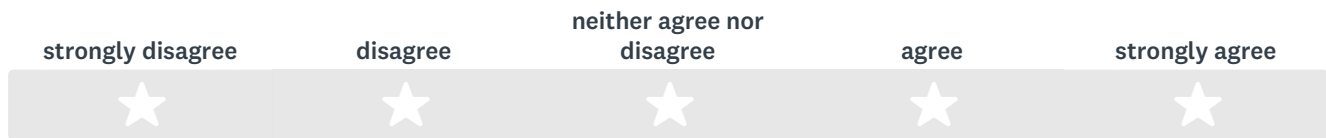
32. Those devoted to unselfish causes are often exploited by others.

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
★	★	★	★	★
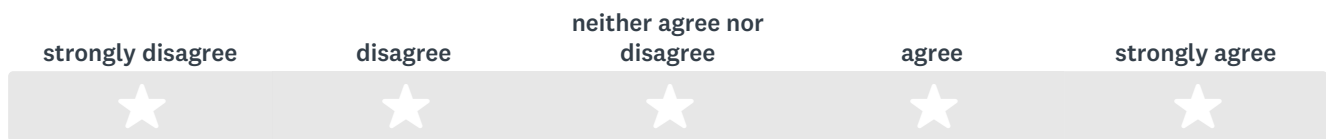
34. Most people are basically honest.

strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
★	★	★	★	★
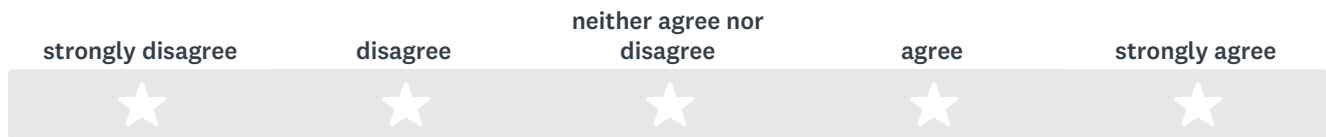
35. There will be more people who will not work if the social security system is developed further.

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?

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https://youngentrepreneurssucceed.com/

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