



Mobility against youth unemployment in Sicily

Annex 4

Final report

Lessons learned and future plans



Co-funded by
the European Union

Social Innovation 
Initiative

MOBILITY AGAINST YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SICILY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS AND IMPACT OF THE PROJECT**
- 3 KEY SUCCESS FACTORS**
- 4 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
- 5 FUTURE PLANS**
- 6 ANNEX 1**



LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE PLANS

Project number	ESF-SI-2022-ALMA-01-0036
Project title	AmuNEET – Mobility against youth unemployment in Sicily
Project Beneficiary	CESIE – Ente del Terzo Settore
Project duration	from 02/10/2023 to 02/04/2025

INTRODUCTION

AmuNEET: Mobility against youth unemployment in Sicily, a project coordinated by CESIE ETS. AmuNEET involved 26 young Sicilian NEETs to participate in a social empowerment experience of about 12 months within the ALMA programme, which included a preparation phase with individual coaching and counselling sessions, a work-related mobility experience in APROXIMAR (Portugal), ASSOCIACIÓ ALBA (Spain) and KEA (Greece) and a Follow-up phase combining individual coaching and career guidance with further reflection and their integration into the labour market, in education or trainings.

ALMA - Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve - is an ESF+ initiative within the “Social Innovation+ call”. It aims to support young people not in employment, education or training (the so-called NEETs, “Not in Employment, Education or Training”). The program promotes the social empowerment of disadvantaged youth by helping them integrate into society, improve their skills, knowledge, and experience and boost their self-confidence. The goal is to help disadvantaged youth integrate into society by accessing employment or training courses through educational and vocational experiences abroad and ultimately find their way into the labour market.

This report provides the main outcomes of AmuNEET project and the lessons learnt, with an outlook to prospective follow-up actions and upscaling of ALMA framework within the ESF+ or national measures.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS AND IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The project AmuNEET aimed to positively impact NEETs in Sicily, by facilitating their transition to employment through preparation and follow-up activities in their home country, following by work related learning experience in another EU country, to improve their psychological well-being, self-motivations, soft skills, and life goals through a tailor-made approach.

Additionally, the project aimed to strengthen collaborations between national and transnational stakeholders, expanding cooperation between public and private entities working with NEETs.

Finally, the project aimed to enhance participants' prospects for employment or training while establishing a strong collaboration amount different entities to implement ALMA types programme for future collaboration and the expansion of similar initiatives to support NEETs.



THE PROJECT HAS IMPACTED TO A SIGNIFICANT LEVEL

IMPACTS ON PARTICIPANTS

Empowered Sicilian NEETs by providing them with work-related learning experience opportunity for skill development, personal growth, and increased self-confidence. Six months of practical work-related learning experience in another EU country provided hands-on experience, helped them to improve the employability through the acquisition of professional and personal skills and competences that can influence their career paths and personal development.

IMPACTS ON ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Partner organisations expanded their networks, improved administrative capacities, and enhanced their ability to support NEETs. The national and transnational partnership contributed in creating sustainable networks of stakeholders to support NEETs.

IMPACTS ON NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL LEVEL

Contributed to increase youth participation in similar programs like ALMA, strengthened connections with stakeholders, and enhanced support networks for vulnerable groups. The project raised awareness and engagement of young people and relevant stakeholders, including policymakers through final events, as well as other dissemination channels, and project's social media channels.



Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to assess and monitor the project's outcomes. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires administered to participants, while qualitative insights were gathered through focus groups and interviews conducted at three time points: before (T0), during (T1), and after (T2) the mobility.

To evaluate the results and impacts, we assessed key indicators such as self-reflection, soft skills, expectations and motivations, and life satisfaction. Overall, descriptive statistical analyses indicate that participants' self-reflection decreased from T0 to T1, followed by an increase from T1 to T2.

Similarly, soft skills showed a significant improvement over time, particularly in areas such as self-confidence, openness, interpersonal relationships, intercultural competence, leadership, and resilience. Additionally, the trend in hope revealed a slight decline from T0 to T1, followed by a significant rise at T2, likely reflecting initial adaptation challenges that were ultimately overcome by the end of the project.

Finally, life satisfaction scores increased over time, suggesting an overall improvement in quality of life as a result of the experience ([See Annex 1](#)).

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

The AmuNEET project has achieved success in different level, thanks to several key factors that have guaranteed effective implementation of the foreseen activities in line with project objectives. These factors include structured planning, strong partnerships development, comprehensive selection and support of participants, and a well-defined monitoring and evaluation with an active involvement of professional mentors and tutors in supporting participants during all three phases of the project.

Successful factors of the project are related to the main objectives that previously established, to support vulnerable Sicilian NEETs by facilitating their transition to employment through work-related learning experience in another EU country and to integrate them into the society and to the labour market. Indeed, thanks to the project, participants gained valuable skills, work experience, increased self-confidence through professional and personal development.

Thanks to the project, 3 participants have started their professional carrier, 2 have decided to return into their education, 2 started new trainings to become professional in their field. We believe that these numbers will be increased in near future as some participants are waiting for the positive answer after the job interviews with different companies.



3 PARTICIPANTS
have started their professional carrier

2 PARTICIPANTS
have decided to return into their education

2 PARTICIPANTS
started new trainings to become professional in their field

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons Learned Log						
No.	Situation description	Impact on Project	Early warningsigns	Cause	Actions	Improvement Recommendation
1.	Partnership development	Strong partnership of the project	Difficulties in identifying suitable partners with experience in working with NEETs	Lack of collaboration between private and public institution	The partnership selection was prioritised national and transnational partners with experience in youth and NEET-related work. Additionally, CESIE's extensive network helped identify and involve partners with relevant experience	It is recommended to form the partnership with strong local connections with both the target group and potential hosting companies. Strengthen collaboration between public and private institutions to improve partnership opportunities in future projects
2.	Project management	Successful implementation of planned activities and achievement of project objectives	Implementation of all the activities foreseen in the project and to reach the project objectives	Not being able to maintain timeline and provide successful results of the project	CESIE prepared and presented during the kick off meeting, detailing information about work plan, activities to be carried out for each WP, roles of each partner, aspect of financial management, and internal communication methods. CESIE shared the project management strategy to all national and transnational partners at the beginning of the project, and was discussed during the kick off meeting in Palermo	It is recommended to establish regular progress monitoring meetings, develop time management strategies, and create a structured risks mitigation plan. Strengthening internal communication and regular meetings among partners to discuss potential risks, delayed and find common solutions
3.	Time Management Issues	Delays in deliverables, risk of dropout in any stage of the project	Time management, partner changes, risk of dropout	Poor planning, not finding motivated participants for the project	Wider selection process, monthly updates from partners about the activities, regular evaluations and monitoring of participants	Use project management tools, set realistic deadlines, regular monitoring
4.	Human resource management	Quality implementation of project activities	Not familiar working with NEETs, lack of experiences in mentors and tutors	Lack of motivations and experiences	Partners were selected based on their previous experience working with young people and NEETs. Mentors were provided with guideline and resources to use to follow the participants learning progress. All hosting partners were asked to identify different profiles working in the project (project manager, financial manager, mentor etc..)	To provide specialised training for mentors and tutors, provide ongoing support and feedback, and implement a mentorship shadowing program to build experience before direct engagement with NEETs
5.	Risks management	Identified possible risks and proposed mitigation measures	Potential risks identified during project implementation	Various internal and external factors affecting project implementation	Risk mitigation measures were considered from the project writing stage. These risks were continuously updated throughout the project implementation, based on real-time challenges and solutions. Some adjustments were made to ensure smooth implementation	It is recommended to implement a proactive risk assessment framework with periodic reviews together with partners and find rapid solutions to reduce potential risks
6.	Reaching NEETs at the first level	Motivate young people to participate in ALMA types initiatives	Lack of knowledges in this type of opportunities, not confident to travel abroad, identification of NEETs	Social and economic situation	Call for selection in English and Italian language was published and it was promoted by different entities working with young people and NEETs. Face to face interviews were organised to provide all necessary information about project activities and to understand participants motivation on the project	Face to face meetings helped participants to gain confident, get to know each other better and to understand fears and motivations

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons Learned Log						
No.	Situation description	Impact on Project	Early warnings/signs	Cause	Actions	Improvement Recommendation
7.	Low involvement of target groups/drop-out risk	Participant's strong motivations brought a positive impact to the project	Participants fears to go abroad, linguistic issues	Lack of experience, first time living abroad	After the careful selection of participants, several activities were organised to prepare them to for the mobility abroad. These included specific training sessions, language classes, and intercultural activities, ensuring their enthusiasm and willingness for a successful experience in foreign countries	It is necessary to provide continuous guidance and support before, during, and after mobility. This can include strengthening preparatory activities, mentorship, and fostering peer support networks to reduce fears and improve participants' confidence in adapting to new environments
8.	Not finding suitable placement/drop-out risk	Overall, participants were satisfied with their working environment. However, in some cases, they changed companies during mobility	Lack of motivation in selected working area, participants doesn't know in what field they would like to build their carrier	Lower education, lack of work experiences, changes in participants' interests or expectations	Regular evaluation meetings with mentors and work company tutors were conducted to assess participants' satisfaction with their placements. In cases where the placement was not a good fit, adjustments were made by changing companies or modifying tasks to better match with participants' interests and skills	it is essential to have meetings with host companies during the preparation phase, before the mobility in order to match their profiles with placement, Additionally, it is essential to provide regular evaluations, provide the possibilities to change the tasks or the company can help maintain participants' motivation during the mobility experience
9.	Implementation of the mobility	Effective Selection and preparation	Not being able to reach the target number/risks of dropout	Lack of awareness, or personal limits of potential participants	An extensive selection process was conducted, utilizing media, public institutions, and private sector partnerships to maximise outreach. For the preparation activities included English courses, intercultural workshops, and personalised development plans, equipping participants with essential skills before their departure and to motivate them to remain in the project	Communication strategies through online campaigns, social media to reach the right candidates Strengthen collaboration with organisation working with NEETs, and implement a continuous engagement approach to keep participants motivated throughout the project
10.	Evaluation		Insecurities, concerns,	Leaving the comfort zone	<u>Quantitative measure:</u> Questionnaires to assess self-reflection, soft skills, hope, and satisfaction with life; <u>Qualitative measures:</u> Focus groups with participants to investigate future perspective and ideas, feelings about the work-related learning experience, supportive or hindering personal characteristics (e.g., behavioural, skills) for carrying out this experience, cooperative skills, work skills (e.g., working with others from different cultures, autonomy, problem solving)	Increased need for mentoring and individualized support
11.	Monitoring	Stronger transformational effects in self-reflection, soft skills, hopes, and satisfactions with life	Low participation in language course, lack of extra activities, house problems, lack of supporting at work	Lack of proactiveness	Quantitative measure Questionnaires to assess self-reflection, soft skills, hope, and satisfaction with life Qualitative measures - Focus groups with participants to investigate future perspective and ideas, feelings about the work-related learning experience, supportive or hindering personal characteristics (e.g., behavioural, skills) for carrying out this experience, cooperative skills, work skills (e.g., working with others from different cultures, autonomy, problem solving)- Focus group with host institutions to monitor the ongoing work-related learning experience abroad, and to know host organizations' point of view of the participants' skills, competencies, working abilities, such as work in a multicultural environment, manage stress, coordinate other people, decision making, and problem-solving Interviews with employers to collect information about the workplace, spaces, organisation, job type, and work schedule	Increase participants' engagement. Host institutions should ask participants to provide a written and signed justification for absences; Host institutions should provide participants a scheduled plan with activities once a week or let the participants propose activities they like. Identify, through a group vote, a participant who will act as the spokesperson for common issues. Weekly meetings with all the participants to talk about work, house, and extra activities plan

FUTURE PLANS

The AmuNEET project has established long-term impacts in multiple levels, which will sustain its effects even after its conclusion. Project activities have played an important role in building the skills and confidence on participants by empowering them to set their employment goals by involving in the work-related learning experience and follow-up activities. The project raised awareness and engagement of all community members and relevant stakeholders, including policymakers through dissemination channels. Particularly, during the final event in Palermo, different public and private institutions participated and discussed on the situation of NEETs in Sicily and required initiatives to support them. The experiences from the AmuNEET project will be used as a key source for future expansions of the ALMA programme on improving progress towards the reintegration of the ALMA model in Sicily.



AmuNEET is expanding the ALMA programme through its widespread dissemination results (report, [testimonials](#) [videos](#), best practices, recommendations etc.), through relevant communication tools ([website](#), [Facebook page](#), [Instagram](#), media, conference events, print materials, articles and press releases, etc.). The project has played a vital role to increase CESIE's collaboration with local and national institutions like VET providers, job agencies, training centres that are working with NEETs such as; [FSE Sicilia](#), [Employment Centre of Palermo](#), [CONFESERCENTI Palermo](#), [EUROMADONIE](#), [Euroform](#), [EURES Sicilia](#), [Europe Direct Palermo](#), [Sicindustria](#), [Centro Orientamento e Tutorato \(COT\) UNIPA](#), [Associazione I.D.E.A.](#) and in European level including European Commission-funded initiatives, which will help in implementing ALMA types of programmes in Sicily in the near future.

CESIE will continue supporting NEETs by participating in different programmes, as we are set to host NEETs from Spain and Germany in the near future through ALMA initiatives, we expect this kind of programme will be launched also in Sicilian contexts, to be able to engage more NEETs in future ALMA programmes.

PARTNERS



Coordinator
CESIE ETS
Italy
www.cesie.org



Associació Alba
Spain
www.aalba.cat



KEA – Centre of research and development of Syros
Greece
www.keaimsyou.gr



APROXIMAR, Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social, CRL
Portugal
www.aproximar.pt



Università degli Studi di Palermo

UNIPA - Dipartimento di Scienze Psicologiche, Pedagogiche, dell'Esercizio Fisico e della Formazione
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Project number: ESF-SI-2022-ALMA-01-0036

ESF+ Social Innovation+ Initiative funding Under the Program ALMA - Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve

Call number: ESF-SI-2022-ALMA-01

European mobility and social inclusion for integrating disadvantaged young people NEETs



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