



MYSEA – Mediterranean Youth, NEETs and Women advancing Skills, Employment and Awareness in the blue and green economy

Promising Practice

Implemented by:

CIES Onlus, Università degli Studi di Palermo, Eurotraining, LDN, UTSS,
Jordan University of Science and Technology

Where:

Italy, Greece, Lebanon, Tunisia, Jordan

Status:

Implemented 16/10/2020–15/12/2023

Summary:

MYSEA tackles youth unemployment in the Euro-Mediterranean region by offering training and collaboration with TVET institutions for sustainable opportunities in the emerging blue and green economy for women and young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

Overview

MYSEA project responds to unemployment by transforming borders into a possibility for cooperation and development. It brings together countries to identify and address common challenges and opportunities. All countries experimented and delivered trainings both online and in-person, complemented with a dedicated platform and engaging activities (coaching and mentoring sessions).

Description

The MYSEA project

MYSEA is a Euro Mediterranean project funded by the 2014-2020 ENI CBC “Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme”, which stands as the largest Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) initiative implemented by the EU under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The anticipated outcome of the project was to provide opportunities for young women and NEETs to apply both soft and hard skills acquired during the training period. Additionally, the initiative served as a platform for the exchange of experiences and the implementation of national employment schemes to support youth employment.

Five participating countries

The core initiative of the project focused on planning and implementing a shared training pathway for all participating countries – Italy, Greece, Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan. The primary goal was to narrow the gap between labour demand and supply in the emerging blue and green economic sectors. The development of the training curricula was shaped by research involving enterprises, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and potential beneficiaries, aiming to identify the emerging skills and professional needs within the agri-food and waste management production sectors.

Common regional identity

The project aimed to establish a common regional identity and enhance the capacities of institutions in implementing national youth and women employment programmes. MYSEA envisioned formulating recommendations for a decent work policy for young people and developing an agenda for the acquisition of in-demand skills within the

blue and green economy. To achieve this ambitious goal, MYSEA built relationships with various institutions that became associate partners of the project: ministries, employment agencies, chambers of commerce, local municipalities and civil society associations.

Objectives

MYSEA aimed to increase the employability of young people, women and NEETs in the agri-food and waste management sectors by developing a training path focused on both sectors, and by strengthening local governance and sectoral alliances between economic actors and TVET to align curricula with the needs of the blue and green economy.

Promoting social and labour inclusion in challenging contexts

MYSEA was primarily focused on promoting social and labour inclusion in challenging contexts. Common issues were identified by all participating countries in the project.

Unemployment rates on both sides of the Mediterranean are alarmingly high, ranging from 20% to 35% for youth, and one in four young individuals in Southern Mediterranean countries are not in employment, education or training. Additionally, women face underrepresentation in the labour market due to persistent social and economic barriers, coupled with gaps between legislative efforts and actual implementation.

The strength of the initiative was that all partners in their respective countries implemented training programmes that were tailored to their needs, taking into account the specific contextual nuances of each locality. This adaptability ensured that the training initiatives were contextually relevant and impactful, creating a link between the training activity and the territory of reference.

All countries experimented with the combination of online learning and live sessions, a dedicated platform and in-presence activities. This was complemented by coaching and mentoring sessions, providing beneficiaries with a well-rounded preparation for on-the-job training activities.

Outcomes and impact

Training, mentorship and career guidance

MYSEA involved about 800 young people, women and NEETs in five countries in the Euro Mediterranean Region. Through oriented training and following mentorship and career guidance, MYSEA promoted knowledge of the agrifood and waste management industries, which are expanding thanks to sustainable technology and eco-responsible innovations.

Sector-skills alliances

To foster career-changing opportunities, the project promoted an innovative approach of sector-skills alliances between economic actors and TVET institutions. These alliances not only created a space for discussion but also facilitated the exchange of knowledge and practices. This collaboration aimed at aligning educational curricula more closely with industry needs. As a result of these efforts, a total of 20 agreements were signed, further cementing the commitment to knowledge sharing and curriculum alignment among the actors involved in all countries.

Policy papers and Skills Development Agenda

Each partner elaborated national policy papers containing an analysis of critical issues and recommendations to be approved and implemented by relevant local public and private stakeholders to foster high quality sectoral training and decent work conditions for youth, women and NEETs.

Challenges

Recruitment of beneficiaries

Reaching young people who are out of education, training and work is in itself very complex and a common difficulty encountered by those working with this target group. By involving local institutions, territorial bodies, associations active in the area and the most relevant economic actors, it was possible to reach a significant number of beneficiaries.

Drop out of beneficiaries

To limit the drop-out rate, one strategy adopted was to build individual training pathways, adapted to the needs of each trainee and to the level of background and skills at the time of enrolment. Close monitoring and continuous guidance were necessary to jointly build the individual training plan, based on specific interests. Being personally involved in the definition of their own training course has led to an increase in the trainees continuing their training.

Internship/on-the-job experience

The implementation of the internship/work experience has faced issues in nearly all partner countries. Due to the ongoing economic crisis and, in some cases, the lack of impactful active labour policies, particularly regarding youth unemployment, it has been challenging on one hand to find companies willing to host and support the project's beneficiaries in workplace internships in the intervention areas, and on the other hand, the beneficiaries preferred to directly access concrete job opportunities instead of going through an internship.

Insights

While the cross-border work approach ensured the possibility to elaborate a common outlook and create common strategies to counteract high unemployment rates, it also often slowed down the implementation of activities. The consultation activities and the sharing of decision-making processes as well as the translation of the elaborated content into a local perspective took a long time which further delayed the planning of activities. When planning, it is important to take this time into account and to establish for which activities shared cross-border work is essential and for which activities local work is more relevant to project implementation.

Next steps

Several agreements were signed by the project partners with institutions and organizations for the future utilization of the training material produced by the MYSEA Project. The MYSEA training curricula will be used on other projects such as the AMIL project – Alliance multi-stakeholder for Migrants' Integration and Labour – funded by Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. In addition, the microlearning platform will be accessible for the next two years.

In Italy, the associations established during the mentorship paths will play a key role in the future sustainability of the MYSEA project's actions. In all participating countries, the associations will be responsible for promoting activities aimed at development, training and job placement with a specific focus on economic and social sustainability.

Learn more

Elena Marchetti, Project Manager and Loredana Gionne, Head of International Cooperation and Co-Development, Centre for Information and Development Education – CIES ONLUS, helped to compile this document.

For more information, please contact:

e.marchetti@cies.it
mysea.coordination@cies.it
l.gionne@cies.it

To learn more about the MYSEA project, visit:
<https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/mysea>

Discover other practices

The **UNESCO-UNEVOC Innovative and Promising Practices database** presents successful projects tackling key themes in TVET, such as entrepreneurship, youth employment, the green transition, digitalization, private sector engagement and more.

Learn more on our website at:
<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/promisingpractices>

Questions or comments? Contact our team at:
unevoc-pp@unesco.org

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The ideas and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

© UNESCO, 2024

This document is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<https://en.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).

Cover photo: © MYSEA
Design: UNESCO-UNEVOC