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Back on Track

TRAIN THE MENTOR CURRICULUM

**To facilitate sustainable engagement to rural
NEETs**

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Introduction

As part of the Back on Track project, this document focuses on a unique and often overlooked members of the labour market: NEETs – young people, aged 15–24 (sometimes including 25–26) who are ‘Not in Education, Employment, or Training’. This group frequently lacks significant experience in training and development, requiring tailored approaches to help them engage effectively in learning and career-building processes. For mentors and trainers, understanding NEETs' distinctive perspectives, attitudes, and challenges is essential to creating meaningful interventions.

NEETs hold untapped potential and are indispensable to the labour market, particularly in today's digital economy. However, many of them face barriers related to digital literacy, which must be addressed to enhance their competitiveness and employability. How can we best support them on this journey? This document compiles practical guidelines and strategies to help mentors and trainers more effectively engage with and support NEETs in their learning and development processes.

The modules outlined in this document cover key areas designed to equip mentors and trainers with the tools they need to better manage and guide NEETs. These modules address essential topics such as:

Promoting digital inclusion strategies for NEETs, including identifying gaps in digital skills and highlighting the importance of digital competencies in today's job market.

Exploring distance learning opportunities, from understanding the basics of online learning to selecting appropriate platforms, finding free courses, and guiding NEETs through the process of learning online.

Mentoring and support techniques, offering practical approaches for individualized support, resilience-building, and mentoring that fosters trust and rapport.

Each of the six modules follows a similar framework, starting with a pre-module quiz, to engage mentors and assess their initial level of knowledge. Following the first quiz the modules introduce key theoretical concepts, then case studies, and wrap up with roleplaying scenarios, where mentors can put to practice their freshly acquired skills and expertise. To round out the module, a final quiz is included at the end of each module, to consolidate and solidify the most important pieces of information.

We believe that the entire document with all 6 modules will support the mentors and the trainers to hold workshops and other types of education for the NEETs, that will contribute to the effective development of digital skills and to the competitiveness of the target group in the labour market.

A summary about the modules

In the following the main content will be presented for each module in order to support the review of the curriculum, and the determination of which key components to be incorporated into the actual training sessions.

The objective of **Module 1** is to make it possible for the participants to understand the background and the challenges of the NEETs. After completing the training, the mentors will be able to comprehend socio-economic and educational barriers, recognize psychological impacts, identify key influences from family, community, and social contexts, apply communication techniques to build trust and engagement, develop tailored, supportive approaches to empower NEETs.

The main challenges of NEETs, that will be detailed in this module, are geographical and financial barriers (transportation costs, living expenses, economic burden on families), lack of local opportunities (limited job availability, vocational and skill-building programs, isolation and limited networking), psychological impact (sense of hopelessness, lowered self-esteem).

The most important lessons for mentors are the followings: understanding the importance of resource access (funding and transportation support, community programs), promoting localized vocational training and job opportunities (partnerships with local businesses, introducing remote and online work options, advocacy for infrastructure investment), and building emotional resilience and self-worth (developing personal growth programs, providing role models and success stories).

Furthermore Module 1 reflects on the psychology of trust and interpersonal rapport, the background and aspirations of NEETs and there is a special focus on the rural youth.

More case studies were composed to the module with topics such as young NEETs (high school dropout facing lack of motivation, and young people without a job, in a restricted community and without material possibilities to move). A roleplay scenario closes the module and it is about NGO-/Public Institution- Motivating the young NEET to act.

The aim of the **Module 2** is to present techniques about trust-building and rapport in working process with the special group of people. The module focuses on practical skills necessary to effectively engage with young people who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs). Building trust and fostering genuine connections are essential components of successful mentoring, especially when working with vulnerable groups who often face significant social, emotional, and structural challenges.

This module focuses on understanding the psychological principles behind trust and rapport, exploring the barriers NEETs commonly experience, and providing mentors with actionable communication techniques to overcome these obstacles. The aim is to create a safe, non-judgmental environment where NEETs feel supported and motivated to engage in their own personal and professional development. Through this module, mentors will gain a deeper understanding of how to approach NEETs with empathy, respect, and a flexible communication style that nurtures trust and encourages active participation.

In Module 2 the following topics will be discussed in groups: awareness of the challenges that NEETs face (previous negative experience, alienation from institutions, fear of being judged, low self-esteem, etc.), emotional safety: building trust, reducing the fear of failure, improve communication, stimulation of personal growth, prevention of emotional stress, increase engagement, stages of building trust, effective communication techniques: active listening, non-verbal communication, avoiding judgment, positive targeting, giving feedback with respect, empathy.

At the end of the Module 2 there can be found 3 case studies and 3 role-play scenarios that can support the participants for better understanding and elaborating the learnt knowledge. The module closes with a quiz.

Module 3 introduces practical mentoring techniques for individualized support and resilience-building. During this training the individualized support will be defined and a very useful framework, the MSCI (My System of Career Influences) will be presented for the participants. The module includes guidelines, how to conduct a motivational interview and what should a career construction interview consists of.

The next step during this training the PCAP (Personal Career Action Plan) will be elaborated with help of the mentors and a very important discussion takes place about the building resiliency in the work with NEETs. At the end of the training a case study and a final self-assessment test supports the participants to understand better the learning materials.

Module 4 concentrates on the career specific topics, like how to set goals as well as creating action plans, and monitoring success for NEETs. This chapter is designed to provide mentors with the skills and tools to guide NEETs in setting realistic (SMART) goals, developing short- and medium-term action plans, and establishing milestones to monitor and demonstrate progress.

By the end of this module, mentors will be equipped to support NEETs in breaking down their long-term aspirations into achievable steps, maintaining motivation, and adjusting strategies as necessary. Self-reflection and aspiration will be improved during the sessions. The module consists of 5 sessions and it includes training exercises too, like Blob tree or career pizza method. Beneath of SMART criteria there are several good advices for prioritization (what is important or not). The following sessions provide a structured way to develop the short and medium-term action plans, set milestones and monitor progress, demonstrate and adjust the elaborated strategies if needed.

The **Module 5** deals with the methods to guide NEETs in using local and online resources. Its aim is to develop mentors' knowledge about up-to-date information regarding life skills, self-employment, labour markets, and online education.

This training focuses also on the scholarship programs (e.g. Erasmus) and the trends affecting employees, internships, volunteering opportunities. The participants can get acquainted with the concepts and practices of online learning and lifelong learning. After this theoretical part more scholarships for secondary education and scholarships for higher education will be detailed.

Moreover, the labour market challenges and labour market structure has a brief overview. Further topics can enlarge the knowledge of the participants: Migration and the departure of qualified workers, legal framework for internships, social media for employment purposes, cybersecurity. In the next part of the module a 'Basic Knowledge Test' should be filled in by the participants. The training closes with a case study for mentors and a role-playing exercise.

In the **Module 6** the mentor can read recommendations about the promotion of digital inclusion strategies to NEETs. The chapter starts with a short introduction to digital skills and an overview of productivity software (e.g. Microsoft Office, Google Docs, that are used for working), communication platforms (e-mail, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, that are effective in internal and external communication) and information technology (searching and exchanging information).

The module shows the main gaps in digital skills and provides definition, presents the importance of digital skills in the job market. The participants can learn about the basics, the communication skills, the data management, the security and privacy topics in connection with the topic.

The participants can fill in a checklist about their own digital skills, so that they can analyse the level of the personal competencies. After the self-assessment a group discussion allows the opportunity to share ideas to the participants. The next step is to learn basics about Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Excel, Google Sheets, Power Point, e-mail, outlook, LinkedIn, and how to write CV with Europass, Canva, and how to prepare cover letter.

The module's following part gives further job search advices and more information about portals and presents courses (distance education opportunities), and theoretical knowledge about digital side income (freelancing). At the end of the module the participants prepare own personal digital development plan.

1. Module 1 – Understanding NEET backgrounds and challenges

Introduction

The module on "Understanding NEET Backgrounds and Challenges" is crafted to equip mentors with the insights needed to effectively support young people who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs). Mentoring NEETs involves recognizing the distinct socio-economic, educational, and psychological barriers they often face, from limited opportunities and systemic disadvantages to issues of motivation and self-esteem.

This module focuses on helping mentors comprehend the complex factors influencing NEETs' lives, including their family, community, and educational environments. By delving into these contexts, mentors can develop a tailored approach that meets NEETs where they are, fostering a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere. The goal is to empower NEETs through empathetic engagement, addressing their unique needs and aspirations.

Through this module, mentors will gain a clearer understanding of NEET-specific challenges, enabling them to guide young people with patience, respect, and strategies that promote growth and resilience.

Targets

The aim of the "Understanding NEET Backgrounds and Challenges" module is to provide mentors with a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic, educational, and psychological factors that shape the lives of NEETs. This knowledge enables mentors to create a tailored, empathetic approach that addresses the unique needs and barriers NEETs face, ultimately fostering a supportive environment where these young individuals feel motivated and empowered to pursue personal and professional growth.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this module, mentors will be able to:

Comprehend Socio-Economic and Educational Barriers:

Mentors will gain an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic and educational challenges that NEETs commonly encounter, helping them to better contextualize the difficulties these young people face in accessing opportunities.

Recognize Psychological Impacts:

Mentors will learn about the psychological effects, such as low self-esteem and lack of motivation, that may result from NEETs' unique experiences. This will enable mentors to adopt a compassionate, patient approach in their interactions.

Identify Key Influences from Family, Community, and Social Contexts:

By exploring how family, community, and social environments shape NEETs' aspirations and values, mentors will be equipped to understand the broader contexts that influence NEETs' behaviour and decision-making.

Apply Communication Techniques to Build Trust and Engagement:

Mentors will acquire practical communication strategies that foster trust and encourage NEETs to engage openly, laying the foundation for a safe and non-judgmental mentoring environment.

Develop Tailored, Supportive Approaches to Empower NEETs:

Mentors will be able to create personalized support plans that address the specific needs and goals of each NEET, facilitating pathways for growth in both personal and professional areas.

These outcomes aim to prepare mentors to interact with NEETs in ways that are insightful, empathetic, and empowering, enhancing their capacity to support NEETs' long-term development effectively.

1.1. Pre-module quiz

1. Which age group generally falls under the definition of NEETs?

- a) 12–15
- b) 15–24 (sometimes up to 25–26)
- c) 18–30
- d) 25–35

2. What does the term “NEET” stand for?

- a) Not in Early Education or Training
- b) Not in Education, Employment, or Training
- c) New Entrant to Educational Training
- d) No Employment or Educational Transition

3. Which of the following do you think is a common psychological reaction among NEETs due to repeated failures?

- a) Decreased self-confidence
- b) Sense of hopelessness
- c) Unwillingness to try new things
- d) All of the above

4. Which type of skill do you think mentors need most to connect effectively with NEETs?

- a) Strict discipline enforcement
- b) Empathy and active listening**
- c) Ability to offer financial loans
- d) Technical (ICT) expertise

5. In your opinion, what is the mentor's primary role when first meeting a NEET?

- a) To suggest job opportunities
- b) To identify the NEET's skills and personality**
- c) To share personal success stories
- d) To evaluate the NEET's willingness to relocate

1.2. 2 key areas in „Understanding NEET backgrounds and challenges”

To effectively support NEETs, it's essential that mentors are equipped with both the interpersonal skills and contextual awareness needed to address the unique challenges these young people face. This is why the following two knowledge domains we selected for mentor training:

1.2.1. The psychology of trust and interpersonal rapport

Theoretical Foundations

- **Trust and Psychological Safety:** The concept of trust is pivotal in any mentoring relationship, especially when dealing with NEETs who may have experienced previous disappointments in educational or social settings. Trust is built on consistency, empathy, and genuine concern for the mentee's well-being. Psychological safety, a term coined by Amy Edmondson, refers to a state where individuals feel safe to express themselves without fear of negative consequences. In a mentoring context, this means creating an environment where NEETs can share their fears, hopes, and challenges without judgment.
- **Attachment Theory in Mentoring:** Attachment theory, initially developed by John Bowlby, provides valuable insights into how human beings form and maintain emotional bonds. Applying this theory to mentoring, a mentor can be seen as a secure base from which NEETs can explore their potentials. Secure attachment in this context helps to mitigate feelings of anxiety and boosts self-esteem, crucial for NEETs who may struggle with insecurities and societal pressures.

- Empathy and Active Listening: Carl Rogers' person-centered therapy highlights empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence as fundamental to fostering effective therapeutic relationships. For mentors, demonstrating empathy means genuinely understanding the NEET's feelings and perspectives without judgment. Active listening is critical here—it involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and then remembering what the NEET says. This practice not only validates the NEET's feelings but also encourages a deeper exploration of their thoughts and emotions.

Techniques for Building Rapport

- Effective Communication Skills: Beyond active listening, effective communication involves non-verbal cues such as body language, eye contact, and facial expressions that convey openness and respect. Techniques such as mirroring the body language of NEETs can subtly create a more relaxed and conducive environment for open communication.
- Validation and Emotional Intelligence: Validating the emotions of NEETs involves acknowledging their feelings as understandable and legitimate in their context. This acknowledgment can help NEETs feel heard and understood, which is vital for building trust. Emotional intelligence plays a significant role here, as it allows mentors to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions effectively in interactions with NEETs.
- Role-Playing and Scenario-Based Learning: Implementing role-play scenarios where mentors can practice responding to fictional but realistic situations involving NEETs can be highly effective. These scenarios can demonstrate how to handle various emotional responses from NEETs, such as reluctance, frustration, or anxiety, and allow mentors to develop and refine their interpersonal skills.

Application in Mentoring

- Creating a Safe Space: To apply these techniques effectively, mentors must focus on creating a safe space where NEETs can feel secure in expressing their true selves. This involves consistent behavior, privacy, respect for the mentee's views, and a non-judgmental approach. The physical setting also plays a role; a comfortable and private meeting space can enhance the feeling of safety and openness.
- Tailoring Approaches to Individual Needs: Each NEET has a unique background and set of experiences that shape their perception of trust and safety. Mentors need to tailor their strategies to accommodate the individual needs and comfort levels of their mentees. This might mean adjusting the pace of meetings, the type of questions asked, or the level of directness in the communication.
- Feedback and Adaptation: Effective mentoring involves continuous feedback and adaptation. Mentors should seek regular feedback from NEETs about what is working or not in their relationship and be willing to adapt their approach accordingly. This flexibility not only improves the effectiveness of the mentoring process but also reinforces the trust and rapport between the mentor and NEET.

1.2.2. Socio-economic and educational context of NEETs

- Economic Factors Influencing NEET Status: Economic instability is a significant factor that predisposes young people to become NEETs. This includes macroeconomic conditions such as high unemployment rates and economic recessions, which reduce job opportunities and increase competition for available jobs. On a microeconomic level, personal or family financial instability can prevent access to educational opportunities, necessitating early entry into the workforce, often into low-paid and unstable jobs. Discussing programs like government subsidies, job creation strategies targeted at youth, and financial aid for education can provide context on mitigating these economic barriers.
- Geographic Disparities: The geographic location of a NEET strongly influences their access to quality education and employment opportunities. Urban areas might offer more opportunities but also present higher living costs and competition, while rural areas might suffer from a lack of infrastructure, including educational institutions and internet connectivity. Exploring interventions such as the development of rural education centers, broadband expansion projects, and urban support programs can provide insights into how these geographic disparities can be addressed.
- Educational Barriers: Many NEETs face significant educational barriers, including early school leaving due to academic disengagement or personal circumstances such as bullying or needing to support their family economically. There's also the issue of educational mismatches, where the education system does not align with the labor market's demands, leaving young people with qualifications that do not meet employers' needs. Highlighting programs that offer vocational training, apprenticeships, and career counseling can help mentors understand how to guide NEETs in navigating these challenges.
- The Impact of Family and Community: Family attitudes towards education and work can profoundly impact a young person's likelihood of becoming NEET. In some cases, familial pressure to contribute financially can lead to early school leaving, while in others, a lack of emphasis on the importance of education may deter academic engagement. Additionally, communities might either support or stigmatize unemployed youth, influencing their self-esteem and motivation to seek employment or education. Discussing community-based support programs, family counseling, and education on the importance of sustained schooling could be beneficial.
- Policy and Institutional Frameworks: Government policies and institutional frameworks play critical roles in shaping the socio-economic landscape for NEETs. Policies that focus on educational reform, employment incentives for businesses to hire young people, and targeted support schemes for vulnerable groups are crucial. Understanding the policy environment helps mentors guide NEETs in taking advantage of available aids and programs.

These theoretical domains equip mentors with both the psychological and contextual knowledge necessary to create a meaningful impact in the lives of NEETs, addressing their unique barriers and fostering trust-based, supportive relationships.

1.3. Case studies for understanding the challenges, background and aspirations of NEETs

The cases regarding the understanding of the challenges, the context and the aspirations of NEETs, which we identified following the discussions with the stakeholders and also with 2 young NEETs from the workshop:

- It clearly illustrates the socio-economic and psychological challenges and barriers of NEETs.
- They are presented from a personal perspective to enable mentors to better empathize with and understand the unique experiences of these young people.
- It provides direct applicability to mentoring practices, focusing on individual experiences rather than institutional aspects.

1.3.1. Case study 1: The rural youth without access to higher education

Background:

This case study focuses on a young man from an isolated rural area where access to education and employment is extremely limited. After completing the eight compulsory classes, the young man did not have the financial resources to go to a city school and, as a result, did not obtain any additional qualifications.

Main challenges:

Faced by NEETs in similar situation are:

Geographical and Financial Barriers:

- **Transportation Costs:** The cost of traveling to a nearby city for high school or vocational training is prohibitive. Rural areas are often underserved by public transportation, making daily commuting difficult or even impossible.
- **Living Expenses:** For students in remote areas, attending school in the city may require them to live away from home. This incurs additional costs for rent, food, and other essentials, which can be unaffordable for families already struggling financially.
- **Economic Burden on Families:** Many families in rural areas rely on low-income, subsistence agriculture. Supporting a child's higher education or training often requires financial sacrifices that families cannot sustain, especially if there are multiple children.

Lack of Local Opportunities:

- **Limited Job Availability:** Small, rural communities often have limited job opportunities, primarily centred around seasonal agricultural work, which does not offer steady income or career progression.
- **Vocational and Skill-Building Programs:** In cities, young people have access to programs that help them build practical skills, but rural areas typically lack such resources. Consequently, young people like him are left without avenues to develop vocational skills that could lead to employment or self-sufficiency.
- **Isolation and Limited Networking:** Geographic isolation means fewer chances to interact with professionals or employers who could offer guidance, internships, or job placements, which are often crucial for career **development**.

Psychological Impact

- **Sense of Hopelessness:** For many NEETs in rural areas, the limited access to education and work can lead to feelings of hopelessness, frustration, and a lack of motivation. This young man, like others in his situation, may feel “stuck” in a cycle of poverty and limited opportunity.
- **Lowered Self-Esteem:** Being unable to continue education or find meaningful work can lead to diminished self-worth. This sense of inadequacy might prevent him from seeking further opportunities, even when they become available.

Lessons for Mentors

1) Understanding the Importance of Resource Access:

- **Funding and Transportation Support:** Mentors working with NEETs from rural backgrounds should recognize the importance of facilitating access to educational resources. This could involve connecting youth with scholarships, grants, or subsidies specifically aimed at covering transportation and housing costs for students from isolated areas.
- **Community Programs:** If funding for transportation or relocation is not viable, mentors could advocate for bringing educational programs closer to these rural areas. Mobile training units or online vocational courses, for example, could provide an alternative pathway to skill-building without the need to relocate.

2) Promoting Localized Vocational Training and Job Opportunities:

- **Partnerships with Local Businesses:** Mentors could work with local businesses, cooperatives, or farming organizations to develop training programs in agricultural management, basic entrepreneurship, or other locally relevant skills. Such programs could offer young people like him a path to self-employment or cooperative-based income.
- **Introducing Remote and Online Work Options:** Digital skills training could be introduced to help rural NEETs access remote job opportunities. Basic courses in areas like IT support, online sales, and digital marketing could open up new employment options that do not require relocation.
- **Advocacy for Infrastructure Investment:** Mentors and community leaders could collaborate to advocate for improved infrastructure and investment in rural areas, including reliable internet, which could significantly expand educational and employment opportunities through online platforms.

3) Building Emotional Resilience and Self-Worth:

- **Developing Personal Growth Programs:** Mentors should consider programs that build self-confidence and resilience, helping young people overcome feelings of helplessness. Workshops focusing on personal strengths, problem-solving, and setting achievable goals can empower them to seek solutions to their challenges actively.
- **Providing Role Models and Success Stories:** Mentors can share success stories of individuals from similar backgrounds who managed to overcome barriers. Seeing examples of others who succeeded despite challenges can be motivating and provide practical strategies.

Conclusion

This case study emphasizes the complex barriers faced by rural NEETs, from financial limitations to lack of local opportunities and emotional challenges. For mentors, the main takeaway is the importance of tailored support that considers both immediate needs (like transportation or local job training) and long-term empowerment (like digital skills and emotional resilience). By addressing these issues, mentors can foster hope and self-sufficiency, helping NEETs like this young man to envision a future beyond the limitations of their circumstances.

1.3.2. Case study 2: Young NEET high school dropout facing lack of motivation

Background:

This case study focuses on a young woman who dropped out of high school due to difficult family circumstances. She faced pressure to contribute financially to her household, which limited her ability to focus on her studies and led to her leaving school before graduation. Now, she finds herself in a challenging situation: on one hand, she wants to develop a career and gain independence; on the other hand, she feels obligated to support her family. This dual pressure has left her with low self-esteem and a lack of motivation, making it difficult for her to envision a positive future or take steps toward personal growth.

Main Challenges:

Family Responsibilities vs. Personal Aspirations

Financial Pressure: The young woman is responsible for contributing to her family's income, which means taking on low-paying or irregular jobs. This limits her time and energy for any form of self-improvement or skill-building.

Emotional Burden: Family obligations weigh heavily on her. She feels a sense of duty that can be difficult to reconcile with personal aspirations, leading to internal conflict and further lowering her motivation to pursue her own goals.

Psychological Barriers

Low Self-Esteem and Sense of Inadequacy: Dropping out of high school and being unable to pursue her own goals has affected her confidence. She may see herself as "not good enough" for further education or more meaningful work.

Lack of Motivation: Without a clear vision of a career path and feeling stuck in her current situation, she finds it hard to build the motivation needed to seek better opportunities or educational pathways.

Lessons for Mentors:

Balancing Family Obligations and Personal Growth:

- **Setting Small, Achievable Goals:** Mentors can help her define realistic and manageable goals that allow her to work on self-improvement without feeling overwhelmed. For instance, she could start by setting aside a few hours each week to work on basic educational or career-related skills.

- **Communicating the Value of Self-Development:** Mentors can encourage her to see that improving her own skills and education can ultimately benefit her family as well, by providing a path to more stable and rewarding employment in the long term.

Emotional and Psychological Support:

- **Creating a Supportive Space:** It's essential for the mentor to offer a non-judgmental and supportive environment, where she feels safe to share her concerns and explore her goals.
- **Mindfulness and Coping Strategies:** Teaching her basic coping strategies, like mindfulness or stress management techniques, can help her manage the anxiety associated with her responsibilities and lack of motivation.

Facilitating Access to Education and Career Resources:

- **Connecting with Supportive Resources:** Mentors could link her to resources like scholarships, online courses, or vocational programs that can be accessed part-time, allowing her to balance family obligations with skill-building.
- **Mentorship and Role Models:** Introducing her to individuals who have overcome similar challenges can inspire her and show that progress is possible, even from difficult circumstances. A mentor who has achieved success despite similar obstacles can provide valuable advice and encouragement.

Conclusion:

This case study illustrates the complex psychological and social barriers that NEETs like this young woman face. Mentors working with youth in similar situations can make a difference by offering emotional support, helping them set manageable goals, and connecting them with resources for gradual self-improvement. By fostering a sense of self-worth and motivation, mentors can help young people take the first steps toward breaking the cycle of dependency and building a fulfilling, independent life.

1.3.3. Case study 3: The young man without a job, in a restricted community and without material possibilities to move

Background:

A young NEET from a small community where the labour market is very tight. He has applied to various jobs in larger cities, but the distance and travel costs make it impossible for him to attend interviews and accept offers.

Main Challenges:

- **Barrier to access to the labour market:** Jobs in cities are inaccessible due to high transport and housing costs.
- **Lack of local opportunities:** Employment options are almost non-existent in the small community.

Lessons for Mentors:

Mentors can use this case study to develop creative remote employment or online training solutions. We can explore how to support young people in identifying and developing skills that can be leveraged independently or in collaboration with organizations that enable remote work.

Conclusion:

These case studies highlight the unique and complex challenges faced by young NEETs in Romania. Each case highlights the importance of personalized and empathetic approaches to mentoring. Recommendations for mentors include:

- **Adaptation of Support Approaches:** Focusing on individual solutions, depending on the specific context of each young person.
- **Using Local Resources:** Networking with local organizations to provide educational and professional support tailored to the needs of these young people.
- **Developing Transferable Skills:** Encouraging NEETs to develop skills that can be applied independently or in remote work contexts.

1.4. Roleplay scenario: NGO-/Public institution- motivating the young NEET to act

You are a mentor, representative of an NGO/Public Institution whose main purpose is to support young NEETs from rural areas to enter personal development and career guidance programs/projects, which facilitate their insertion on the labour market. You meet with Gigel, a young man who just graduated from high school 6 months ago. During your first meeting, Gigel is reluctant to speak, giving one-word answers and often avoiding eye contact. During the interaction, Gigel is agitated, anxious, he is not open in dialogue or actions, motivation is completely lacking.

The purpose of the mentor:

Use personal anchors, icebreakers, active listening, open-ended questions and non-verbal communication (body language, eye contact) at the beginning of the discussion to encourage Gigel to share his thoughts and feelings.

The role of Gigel:

At the beginning, the young man puts barriers in communication, expressed non-verbally (crossing his hands, legs, avoiding eye contact), conveys minimal interest, gives short answers suggesting a real discomfort in the given situation. As the mentor uses appropriate techniques, the young person relaxes and begins to build a dialogue relevant to the situation, presenting the situations, actions, obstacles that led him to the current situation.

Additional mentor guidance:

- Avoid situations of coercion during dialogue, calling for patience and empathy, then the young man will feel in his comfort zone and implicitly will be open to dialogue.

New situation:

During the meeting, Gigel brings up personal anchors, family or conjunctural/social examples of inaction in the given situation (for example, "I don't think I'm competent enough to

handle a job," "I don't know what I'm good at", "My family doesn't support me to follow other forms of courses that would help me find a job"). Use it as a moment to build trust through validation and empathy.

Debrief Questions for Role Play Scenario: NGO-Motivating the NEET Youth to Action

- 1) What strategies did you use to keep the dialogue open, even when Gigel gave short answers, without tending to develop the topic?
 - What to pay attention to: Maintaining a calm, encouraging and empathetic tone, even when you encounter resistance, is important to keep the conversation open and to build trust and a comfort zone.
- 2) How did you balance the conversation when Gigel felt blocked or uncomfortable to continue the dialogue?
 - What to pay attention to: Sometimes silence offers space for reflection and can encourage the other person to open up. In these situations, the mentor can use a personal anchor to break the ice, to create empathy and a comfort zone (for example: when I graduated high school, I felt a little lost, disoriented, I didn't know which path would be right for me, in at that moment I tried to identify a model around me, a person who inspired me and became successful. I wondered if I would like to follow that path that I consider a model and what I could do I'm there too. Have you ever thought about this? Is there/was someone like that around you? You don't need to answer me now, you can think about this aspect) How did you manage these moments? Did they make Gigel more comfortable or did they create tension?
- 3) What role did open-ended questions play in encouraging Gigel to share more?
 - What to pay attention to: Open-ended questions allow Gigel to explain his thoughts and feelings rather than giving simple yes/no answers. How did your open-ended questions help guide Gigel into a deeper conversation?
- 4) How did you address Gigel's anxiety without directly confronting her?
 - What to pay attention to: Gigel showed anxiety and defensive communication from the beginning. How did you handle this emotional setting without making Gigel feel pressured to acknowledge or explain his discomfort?
- 5) What signs have you seen that indicate Gigel is starting to trust you?
 - What to look for: Did Gigel's body language or communication style change as trust was built? How did these changes affect how you continued the conversation?
- 6) How did your own body language affect the conversation?
 - What to pay attention to: A mentor's body language can have a significant impact on creating a sense of safety. The smile and the eye contact play a very important role regardless of the moment of the discussion. How have you used gestures, eye contact, or posture to create a more open and trusting atmosphere?
- 7) How did you validate Gigel's feelings and what impact did that have on the conversation?

- What to pay attention to: Validation is essential when building trust. Certain expressions used during the process of creating the comfort zone are very important - example: I understand this situation and I experienced it at your age, it is sometimes challenging to understand what you feel and how you decide to act. How did acknowledging Simeon's fear or doubt help him feel understood? How has that affected her willingness to share more personal details?
- 8) What would you do differently in a future session with Gigel or someone in a similar situation?
 - What to pay attention to: Looking back on the conversation, what changes would you make in your approach to increase engagement or trust more quickly?
- 9) How did you manage your emotions when Gigel was not cooperative, and the comfort zone seemed like it could not be created regardless of the strategies applied?
 - What to watch out for: Working with a resistant person can sometimes cause impatience or feelings of rebellion. How did you stay calm and focus on helping Gigel instead of getting frustrated by the slow progress?

1.5. Final quiz

1. Which of the following best describes a core socio-economic challenge faced by NEETs in rural areas, as discussed in the module?

- a) Excessive choice in job opportunities
- b) Financial constraints and lack of local job options**
- c) High-quality public transportation networks
- d) Overabundance of vocational programs

2. Why is understanding the psychology of trust critical in mentoring NEETs?

- a) Because most NEETs have advanced psychological training themselves
- b) It helps mentors identify and address emotional barriers to engagement**
- c) Trust is irrelevant if mentors offer a good job placement
- d) To ensure mentors can maintain authority over the NEET

3. Which of the following did the module emphasize as a significant emotional impact on NEETs?

- a) Unshakable self-confidence
- b) Frequent feelings of hopelessness or low self-esteem**
- c) Excitement about mainstream education

d) Strong belief in institutional support

4. In the context of NEETs, what are the primary benefits of recognizing family, community, and social influences?

a) It helps focus solely on the NEET's individual path, ignoring external factors

b) It identifies external pressures or support systems shaping the NEET's actions

c) It allows mentors to bypass personal experiences of the NEET

d) It emphasizes competition among NEETs

5. The module presented case studies illustrating barriers NEETs encounter. Which of the following was a key takeaway from these scenarios?

a) NEETs rarely face financial issues; it's mostly a matter of choice

b) The mentor's role is minimal because external factors can't be changed

c) Tailored and empathetic approaches are essential to address individualized needs

d) NEETs are entirely responsible for their situations

6. What is the most effective first step in engaging a NEET who feels demotivated and distrustful?

a) Urge them to sign up for any available internship immediately

b) Create an emotionally safe space and listen to their concerns

c) Show them your credentials and past success stories as proof

d) Emphasize the time they've already wasted

7. From the module, how can mentors address the psychological impact of repeated failures on NEETs?

a) By dismissing their past as irrelevant

b) By acknowledging their frustrations and reframing failures as learning steps

c) By focusing solely on job placement without emotional support

d) By encouraging them to forget everything and "start fresh" with no reflection

2. Module 2 – Techniques for building trust and rapport

Introduction

The module on "Techniques for Building Trust and Rapport¹ with NEETs" is designed to equip mentors with the knowledge and practical skills necessary to effectively engage with young people who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs). Building trust and fostering genuine connections are essential components of successful mentoring, especially when working with vulnerable groups who often face significant social, emotional, and structural challenges.

This module focuses on understanding the psychological principles behind trust and rapport, exploring the barriers NEETs commonly experience, and providing mentors with actionable communication techniques to overcome these obstacles. The aim is to create a safe, non-judgmental environment where NEETs feel supported and motivated to engage in their own personal and professional development. Through this module, mentors will gain a deeper understanding of how to approach NEETs with empathy, respect, and a flexible communication style that nurtures trust and encourages active participation.

Targets

The main aim of this module is to enable mentors to understand the unique challenges faced by NEETs and to develop effective strategies to build trust and understanding. By the end of the module, mentors will have the tools to:

- Recognize the social, emotional and psychological barriers NEETs face when trusting authority figures or institutions.
- Apply communication techniques that foster a safe, supportive and collaborative environment.
- Build meaningful relationships that encourage NEETs to actively participate in the mentoring process, leading to improved social, life and professional skills.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this module, mentors will be able to:

- Identify the main barriers to trust
- Create emotionally safe spaces
- Use effective communication techniques
- Guide NEETs through the confidence building stages
- Encourage long-term engagement and growth

This module provides the theoretical basis for applying these techniques in practical settings.

2.1. Pre-module quiz

¹ close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well

- 1) **What is a key initial step to building trust with NEETs?**
 - a) Making assumptions about their experiences
 - b) Setting strict rules from the start
 - c) Offering solutions before hearing their story
 - d) **Being patient and listening to their concerns**
- 2) **Why is active listening important when mentoring NEETs?**
 - a) It helps the mentor gain control of the conversation
 - b) **It allows NEETs to feel valued and understood**
 - c) It reduces the need for verbal communication
 - d) It eliminates the need for empathy
- 3) **Which of the following best describes empathy in mentoring?**
 - a) **Putting yourself in the shoes of the NEET**
 - b) Solving the NEET's problems for them
 - c) Judging the NEET's actions to provide direction
 - d) Telling them how they should feel
- 4) **When mentoring NEETs, why is it important to build a non-judgmental environment?**
 - a) It allows mentors to correct behaviour more easily
 - b) It reduces the mentor's emotional involvement
 - c) **It helps NEETs feel safe to share their experiences**
 - d) It increases the mentor's authority
- 5) **Which of these is an effective way to establish rapport with NEETs?**
 - a) Sharing personal success stories
 - b) **Respecting their pace and personal boundaries**
 - c) Setting strict timelines for change
 - d) Comparing them to others who have succeeded
- 6) **What role does body language play in building trust with NEETs?**
 - a) **It can convey openness and attentiveness**
 - b) It has no significant impact
 - c) It shows authority and control
 - d) It is only useful in formal settings
- 7) **Why should a mentor avoid making assumptions about a NEET's situation?**
 - a) **Assumptions can create misunderstandings and hinder trust-building**
 - b) Assumptions save time during the mentoring process
 - c) It helps the mentor take control of the situation

- d) It allows for more structured mentoring sessions

2.2. 2 key areas in „techniques for building trust and rapport with NEETs”

The purpose of the topic is to discuss effective strategies to engage young people (NEETs). We will pay special attention to building trust as a key element in the mentoring process. We will look at the key components of connecting with rural youth. We will discuss the skills that a mentor should possess to build a safe and supportive environment where NEETs can feel understood and motivated to participate actively in the process of their social and professional integration.

This presentation covers the psychological principles behind trust and understanding, focusing on the specific challenges NEETs face and how these challenges affect their willingness to engage. Understanding their mindset and emotional state is essential to building authentic connections.

We will also focus on specific, actionable communication techniques that foster trust and connection with NEETs. This will give mentors a theoretical understanding of the dynamics of communication and practical strategies they can apply.

Building trust encourages active participation, increases motivation and supports the development of young people's social and life skills.

Specifically, the focus is on 2 key themes:

- 1) “Awareness of the challenges that NEETs face”
- 2) "Effective Communication Techniques for Building Trust"

2.2.1. Awareness of the challenges that NEETs face

To find out the challenges faced by NEETs, we need to understand:

- 1) NEETs' Barriers to Trust
- 2) The Importance of Emotional Safety
- 3) Stages of Trust-Building

We will take a closer look at each of the three points, starting with:

1. Understanding barriers to NEETs' trust

Understanding the barriers to NEETs' confidence is a key element in working effectively with this group of young people. Often their experiences with educational institutions, work environments or social services have been negative, leading to a loss of trust in the systems that are supposed to help them. Here are some key barriers to trust that need to be addressed:

1.1. Alienation from institutions

- Many young people from the group of NEETs, especially those from marginalized backgrounds and rural areas, have had negative experiences with educational, social or labour institutions. This leads to mistrust of authority figures who are perceived as representatives of these systems.

1.2. Previous negative experience

- Repeated failure or rejection in education, job search, or training programs may lead to reluctance to engage with mentors or institutional support. This creates a sense of hopelessness and a belief that support systems cannot help them.

1.3. Fear of being judged

- NEETs may fear being judged or stigmatized for their current situation. This fear of being looked down on makes them hesitant to engage with mentors, as they may expect criticism instead of help.

1.4. Low self-esteem and confidence

- Often, NEETs struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness that lead them to believe that they do not deserve or cannot succeed in education or the job market. This can make it difficult to build trust as they do not believe in their own abilities.

1.5. Social isolation

- NEETs often face social isolation, which reduces their opportunities for contact with positive examples and role models. A lack of social engagement can lead to mistrust and alienation from new initiatives or mentoring.

1.6. Cultural and generational differences

- Mentors are often perceived by NEETs as belonging to a different generation or cultural background. These differences can create barriers to communication and trust, as they may feel misunderstood and unable to connect with their mentors.

1.7. Family dynamics and peer influence

- Very often behind the mistrust lies a family environment that discourages their attempts to relate to authority figures or peer groups. A fact that reinforces negative attitudes towards mentoring and institutional support. Also, if NEETs have grown up in environments where unemployment, lack of prospects or social tension prevail, they may feel mistrust of the social system and societal structures. They may not see the point in their efforts if there are no examples of success around them.

1.8. Digital inequality

- In the digital age, lack of access to technology and the internet can undermine NEETs' confidence in their own abilities to engage in the modern world of work and education. Digital isolation leaves them feeling like they have no way to be competitive.

Suggestions for overcoming these barriers are:

- a) Personalized trust /mentors must approach with an understanding of the specific background and difficulties of NEETs in order to subsequently build relationships and gain their trust/.
- b) Non-judgmental support /creating an environment where NEETs feel accepted and protected from judgment/
- c) Peer mentors /inclusion of mentors from similar backgrounds or have faced similar challenges/
- d) Small steps /small, achievable goals to build confidence/

2. The importance of emotional safety

Emotional safety is a critical factor in the successful interaction between mentors and youth such as NEETs. To achieve such an environment, mentors must show empathy, respect young people's personal boundaries and offer support without imposing pressure. This will create conditions for a more successful inclusion of NEETs in society and will support their personal development.

2.1. Building trust

- Emotional safety gives youth a sense of security that they can express their thoughts and feelings without being judged or criticized. This trust is fundamental to the successful interaction between mentors and NEETs, as it encourages them to be open and honest in sharing their problems and needs.

2.2. Reducing the fear of failure

- Many NEETs have experienced failures in the past, which often leads to fear of repeating the same. An emotionally safe environment removes this fear by allowing them to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes without fear of criticism or negative consequences.

2.3. Improve communication

- In an environment of emotional safety, youth feel more comfortable sharing what worries or excites them. This facilitates open and honest communication between them and their mentors, creating conditions for better understanding and more effective collaboration.

2.4. Stimulation of personal growth

- Emotional safety gives NEETs the space to express themselves authentically, explore their interests and develop new skills without fear of judgment. This is essential for building self-confidence and stimulating personal growth.

2.5. Prevention of emotional stress

- When young people do not feel emotionally safe, they often experience stress and anxiety, which can make them more resistant to advice and help. Providing a safe environment helps reduce this stress and encourage their motivation and activity.

2.6. Increase engagement

- An emotionally safe environment makes NEETs feel accepted and supported, which increases their engagement with mentoring programs and learning and development processes.

3. Stages of building trust

Building trust is a gradual process that requires time, patience and consistency on the part of the mentor. Each stage is critical to establishing a solid relationship that will enable NEETs to fully engage with the change process and develop their skills and confidence for the future.

3.1. Initial contact and making the first impression

- Objective: To create a sense of openness and goodwill on the part of the mentor.

- Actions: At this stage the mentor should show positivity, respect and interest in the mentee's personality. It is important to build a relaxed and informal environment where young people feel comfortable and accepted.
- Key point: Establish initial contact that is cordial and unobtrusive.

3.2. Evaluation and building of mutual understanding

- Objective: Assessment of youth needs, challenges and expectations.
- Actions: The mentor should actively listen, ask open-ended questions and demonstrate understanding and acceptance of NEETs' personal experiences and emotional state. This stage is critical for building empathy and mutual understanding.
- Key point: Young people begin to share more about themselves and their experiences, feeling understood.

3.3. Establishing trust

- Purpose: Reinforce confidence that the mentor is trustworthy, respectful and discreet.
- Actions: The mentor must be consistent in their actions, keep his promises and demonstrate respect for the youth's personal boundaries. It is important to show that help is unconditional and that the goal is support, not control.
- Key point: Young people begin to feel comfortable sharing deeper feelings and concerns.

3.4. Strengthening the relationship through working together

- Purpose: To strengthen the relationship through active participation in common activities and goals.
- Actions: Mentor and NEETs start working together on specific tasks or personal development plans. This phase involves setting small, achievable goals that build confidence and commitment. Successful small steps build trust and show youth that they can count on the mentor.
- Key point: The first successes and achievements in working together strengthen the relationship.

3.5. Full commitment and partnership

- Goal: Building a deep, mutually supportive relationship that enables youth to develop and actively engage in the process of change.
- Actions: At this stage, the mentor and the NEETs have already built a solid relationship based on trust and respect. Youth feel confident to share deep personal goals and work on them with the mentor's help. The relationship turns into a partnership where young people actively participate in their own development.
- Key point: NEETs show full commitment and begin to take initiative in the learning or personal development process. To conclude, ask the mentee to overview the whole process and summarize the main learning points and the most important takeaways.

SMART Objective:

S (specific): By the end of the training module, participants (mentors) will be able to identify and explain at least three main challenges faced by NEET youth, including:

- a) socio-economic barriers
- b) social isolation
- c) lack of access to education or employment opportunities and
- d) to be able to propose a strategy to deal with each of these challenges.

M (measurable): Understanding will be measured by a post-training test or discussion where mentors must list challenges and match them with appropriate mentoring strategies. At least 80% of participants must score at least 75% on the test or show very good thought process during the discussion.

A (achievable): The objective is achievable as the training module will provide focused and clear information about NEET youth, their challenges and possible solutions. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with the material through interactive activities and examples.

R (relevant): This objective is relevant because understanding the specific challenges faced by NEET youth is fundamental for mentors to build trust and develop appropriate strategies to effectively support these youth.

T (time-based): The goal will be achieved by the end of the training module.

2.2.2. Effective communication techniques to building trust

Effective communication is an essential element in building trust with NEETs. Given their often vulnerable position and the challenges they face, it is important to use specific techniques to facilitate the process of building trust and open communication. Here are some key techniques:

1. Active listening

- Active listening involves not only hearing the words, but also understanding the emotions and intentions behind them. This means focusing on the speaker, giving them time to express themselves, and showing that you understand and respect their point of view.

How to apply it: Maintain eye contact, nod your head to show understanding, ask clarifying questions, and repeat or paraphrase what you heard to show you got it right.

2. Non-verbal communication

- Non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures and posture are just as important as the words you use. Open and friendly non-verbal communication helps create a safe and supportive environment.

How to apply it: Maintain a relaxed and welcoming posture, avoid closed gestures (crossed arms), maintain eye contact, smile when appropriate and be attentive to NEETs' body language.

3. Avoiding judgment and prejudice

- NEETs have often faced judgment and stereotyping in the past, so it is important to avoid any criticism or negative comments about their past experiences or choices.

How to apply it: Accept what the young person says without criticizing him or imposing your own opinion. Instead, encourage him to share how he sees his future and what he wants to change.

4. Positive targeting

- Instead of focusing on past failures or difficulties, an effective technique is to direct the conversation to opportunities and future goals. This can increase NEETs' motivation and create a sense of control and direction.

How to apply it: Ask questions like, "What would you like to achieve?" or "What are the things that inspire you?" Show support for their goals and aspirations.

5. Clear and open communication

- It is important to be clear and direct in your communication with NEETs to avoid misunderstanding or confusion. This includes clearly stating goals, expectations and opportunities.

How to apply it: Use simple and direct words, avoiding complicated or bureaucratic language. Be transparent about the options you offer and the steps that need to be taken.

6. Giving feedback with respect

- Feedback should be constructive and supportive, not critical or judgmental. The aim is to help NEETs see their progress and understand what they can improve without feeling demotivated.

How to apply it: Start with positive comments, then offer specific tips for improvement and end on an encouraging note. For example: "You did a great job with that! Maybe next time you can try and..."

7. Flexibility in communication

- Every NEET is different and may respond differently to different approaches. Flexibility in communication style and adapting it to the needs of the young person is a key aspect of successful communication.

How to apply it: Be observant of cues from the youngster and adapt your approach to their behaviour and preferences. For example, if someone is shy, it may be helpful to use a more informal and soothing tone.

8. The role of empathy in building rapport:

Empathy is one of the main tools for successful communication and connection with NEETs. It is important for mentors to demonstrate active listening, understanding and support while avoiding a judgmental tone. This creates a solid foundation for building a long-lasting and productive relationship that can help young people overcome their difficulties and successfully integrate into society.

- Empathic listening - When the mentor shows understanding of the young person's emotional state by expressing sympathy and support. For example: "I understand this has been difficult for you" or "That sounds like a really challenging situation."
- Reducing tension - Many NEETs feel socially isolated or experience anxiety in contact with authority figures. An empathic approach from mentors helps reduce these tensions and remove barriers by creating a safe environment for communication.

- Increased self-confidence - When NEETs see that their feelings and experiences are important to the mentor, they begin to feel more valued. This leads to an improvement in their self-esteem and confidence in their own capabilities.
- Better understanding of needs - Empathy allows mentors to delve deeper into the emotional state of NEETs and understand their needs. This knowledge helps to provide more effective and personalized support.
- Stimulate motivation - When NEETs feel supported and understood, they are more motivated to take steps towards change and development. An empathetic approach inspires young people to work on themselves and seek new opportunities.

SMART Objective:

S - By the end of the training module, participants (mentors) will be able to apply at least three effective communication techniques:

- a) active listening
- b) asking open-ended questions and
- c) using appropriate non-verbal behaviours that are aimed at building trust with the youth of the NEET group.

M - The understanding and application of the techniques will be measured through a practical task, role plays or a post-module discussion where 80% of participants must successfully demonstrate skills in using at least three of the mentioned communication techniques.

A - The goal is achievable because the training module will provide participants with a practical orientation and opportunities to practice communication techniques through simulations and role-plays.

R - This goal is relevant because building trust with NEET youth is a key step in creating an effective mentoring relationship, and communication skills are at the heart of this process.

T - The objective will be achieved by the end of the training module.

In general, this is what the tools might look like to help mentors tailor their approach to the process of building trust and rapport with NEETs.

This is the theoretical basis for applying these techniques in practical settings.

2.3. Cases Studies

2.3.1. Case study 1: Engaging a disengaged NEET in a rural setting

Anna is 18 years old, of Roma origin, lives in a rural area and has been cut off from education and the labour market for three years. She dropped out of school due to bullying and has since developed a distrust of adults, especially authority figures. A mentor from a local youth support service is assigned to work with her to help her build confidence and re-enter education or training.

The mentor had to build initial trust with Anna, who is defensive and closed to authority figures. He shared that he initially took a non-authoritative, peer approach to unlock Anna's trust. He practiced active listening and empathy, focusing on validating Anna's experiences without judgment. The mentor had a positive demeanor and tried to be a reliable and supportive figure. With flexibility and support, he offered Anna alternative paths for education or personal development that suited her personality.

The techniques he used were - active listening, creating a safe space, empathy and open-ended questions.

Using these techniques, the mentor helps Anna feel heard and respected. Over time, Anna begins to trust her mentor and reveal her aspirations, leading to discussions about her future educational goals.

Questions regarding the mentor's work with Anna and evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies used:

- 1) How successful were the techniques the mentor used to overcome Anna's initial resistance?**
 - By treating Anna as an equal rather than a subordinate student, the mentor reduces the power imbalance that her defensiveness may cause. Active listening and empathy make Anna feel truly heard and respected, which helps build emotional safety. The mentor created a safe, non-judgmental space where Anna could share her experiences at her own pace and gave her the freedom to be vulnerable without fear of criticism. Thus, restoring confidence and trust after years of isolation is more easily achieved. The mentor's flexibility respects Anna's autonomy and shows her that he is willing to work with her on her terms. This takes the pressure off and allows her to explore options she feels comfortable with.
- 2) How did the mentor's non-authoritative, peer-like approach help build trust with Anna, and why was this important for working with someone who distrusts authority figures?**
 - The non-authoritative approach allows Anna to feel safe and supported. By gradually adapting the mentoring process based on Anna's progress, the mentor demonstrated a high level of flexibility, ensuring that Anna's emotional readiness guided the pace and direction of the mentoring.
- 3) How did offering alternative education and personal development pathways align with Anna's unique situation?**
 - Offering alternative education and personal development paths tailored to Anna's unique situation by respecting her distrust of authority reduces pressure and adapts options to her interests and personality. This allowed her to explore education at her own pace, in ways that felt safe and manageable. This flexibility allowed Anna to regain confidence and control over her learning path without feeling overwhelmed.
- 4) In what ways did the mentor adapt his strategies based on Anna's progress and how flexible was the mentoring plan in meeting her unique needs?**
 - The mentor's strategies were very flexible and adaptable to Anna's unique needs. The non-authoritative, peer-based approach, active listening and offering

alternative educational pathways enabled Anna to feel safe and supported. By gradually adapting the mentoring process based on Anna's progress, the mentor demonstrated a high level of flexibility to help Anna rebuild trust, gain confidence, and ultimately engage in discussions about her future educational goals. In this case, Anna's emotional readiness guides the pace and direction of mentoring. The mentor's adaptability ensures that the mentoring plan is personalized, supportive, and responsive to Anna's needs.

5) What are the key indicators of success or progress in Anna's case and how could they be used to guide the mentor's future interactions with other NEETs?

- The key indicators of success in Anna's case include her growing trust in the mentor, increased openness about her aspirations, and her willingness to explore educational or personal development paths. These indicators show emotional healing and re-engagement with learning. For future interactions with other NEETs, these indicators can guide the mentor to prioritize trust-building, active listening, and personalized, flexible development plans, adapting strategies to each individual's emotional readiness and needs.

2.3.2. Case study 2: Rebuilding confidence and trust after multiple failures

Theodore, 24, has been in and out of short-term jobs but has faced repeated setbacks, including being fired for lack of skills. After numerous failures, Theodore no longer believes that education or work is viable for him. He has become disengaged and distrustful of programs aimed at helping him.

The mentor had to rebuild trust after repeated negative experiences. He begins by acknowledging Theodore's past disappointments and reframes the failures as learning experiences.

The mentor has allowed Theodore to express his frustration without judgment. He listened to his concerns. This helped Theodore to feel heard and respected and to see the strengths or skills he had gained from his previous jobs, even if they were short-term. The mentor has set many small goals that have helped James achieve rapid success. It somewhat restored his confidence. However, after a while, applying for a job, Theodore again suffers disappointment and does not want to continue working with the mentor anymore.

1) How did the mentor rebuild trust with Theodore after his repeated negative experiences?

- The mentor rebuilt trust by acknowledging Theodore's past disappointments and validating his feelings. By reframing Theodore's failures as learning experiences, the mentor helped create a supportive environment where Theodore felt understood and respected. This trust-building process was reinforced by allowing Theodore to express his frustrations without judgment, showing that the mentor was genuinely listening and committed to his success.

2) What role did setting small goals play in Theodore's progress?

- Setting small goals was essential in restoring Theodore's confidence. These achievable milestones provided a sense of accomplishment and helped Theodore feel that he was making progress. Rapid successes from smaller tasks helped him

regain some belief in his abilities, demonstrating that incremental progress can be highly motivating for individuals who have faced setbacks.

3) Why did Theodore disengage after another job disappointment, despite earlier progress?

- Theodore likely disengaged because the job application disappointment triggered his previous feelings of failure and scepticism about the viability of work for him. While small goals had restored some confidence, the setback reawakened his self-doubt, causing him to retreat from the mentoring process. This suggests that setbacks still have a powerful impact on Theodore's sense of worth and resilience, indicating the need for deeper emotional and psychological support.

4) What could the mentor do to re-engage Theodore after this setback?

- The mentor could re-engage Theodore by addressing his disappointment head-on, allowing him to express his frustration, and validating those emotions once again. Reframing the setback as part of the learning process and emphasizing the progress Theodore has already made can help reduce the emotional weight of the failure. Additionally, revisiting previous successes and shifting the focus temporarily to skill-building or personal development, rather than job outcomes, might help restore Theodore's confidence.

5) How could the mentor better prepare Theodore to handle future disappointments?

- The mentor can better prepare Theodore by incorporating resilience-building techniques, such as stress management, positive reframing, and self-compassion exercises, into their sessions. By helping Theodore develop coping mechanisms for handling rejection, the mentor can reduce the emotional toll of future setbacks. Additionally, focusing on long-term growth rather than immediate job placements, and celebrating personal development, could help Theodore manage expectations and bounce back more effectively.

2.3.3. Case study 3: Building rapport through digital mentorship

Elena, a 20-year-old living in a remote region, struggles with social anxiety and prefers communicating digitally rather than face-to-face. She is a NEET and has been isolated for months. A mentor is assigned to work with her, but all interactions are through digital platforms like video calls and messaging.

In this case, the mentor used digital platforms, which reduced social anxiety and allowed Elena to engage without the pressure of face-to-face meetings. The tutor adapts to her needs, offering communication at her pace, which is less stressful for her. Engaging online helps Elena develop digital confidence, improving her employability and comfort with technology.

On the other hand, online communication may lack the warmth of face-to-face meetings, possibly making it difficult for Elena to build trust with her mentor. Text-based interactions can lead to misunderstandings, especially if Elena misinterprets feedback due to her anxiety. For this, the mentor should regularly check that he is understood by Elena to prevent miscommunication.

All of this can prevent her from overcoming her social anxiety and prolong her isolation. The mentor should introduce her to low-stress social interactions such as group video calls or online communities, gradually drawing her into offline engagement with face-to-face opportunities to

reduce her isolation. Building Elena's confidence can be done by setting small and achievable goals.

1) How can the mentor balance Elena's comfort zone and personal growth?

- The mentor can respect Elena's preference for digital communication while gradually encouraging her to step out of her comfort zone. This might involve introducing new activities like online group interactions or virtual events that gently push her boundaries. As Elena becomes more confident, the mentor can suggest small face-to-face experiences, ensuring she doesn't feel overwhelmed. By offering continuous support and monitoring her progress, the mentor can help Elena grow while ensuring she feels safe throughout the process.

2) How can mentors ensure they provide equal support to mentees with different communication preferences?

- Mentors can provide equal support to mentees by first understanding each individual's communication style and preferences. They can offer a range of communication options, such as video calls, emails or messages, to suit different needs. Regular check-ins ensure that mentees feel heard and supported, regardless of the method used. Flexibility and adaptability are key to building rapport, allowing mentors to adjust their approach when necessary. By keeping the lines of communication open and being attentive to feedback, mentors can ensure that all mentees get the support they need in a way that works best for them.

3) What qualities make a mentor effective in a remote or digital environment?

- An effective mentor in a remote or digital environment needs strong communication skills to ensure clarity and understanding across virtual platforms. They must be empathetic and able to build rapport without personal interactions, showing that he cares about the mentee's progress. Technical knowledge helps the mentor navigate the various digital tools seamlessly. Consistency in planning and follow-up creates a sense of reliability and security that they have support even from a distance. Finally, the patience and adaptability of the mentor is crucial.

4) What strategies can mentors use to build trust in a digital-only relationship?

- The mentors can build trust by being consistent and reliable in their communication, keeping scheduled meetings, and keeping promises. Active listening is key, ensuring that the mentee feels heard and understood. Being transparent about sharing experiences and providing feedback creates openness. Offering support and encouragement without being overly critical creates a safe, trusting environment. The mentor's understanding in dealing with the mentee's challenges can strengthen the relationship, even in a virtual environment.

5) How can mentors handle disengagement from mentees in a remote setting?

- Mentors can address disengagement by first reaching out to mentees to understand why, using open-ended questions to explore any challenges they may be facing. They should offer flexibility in communication methods or scheduling to reduce pressure. Constant support, encouragement and understanding is needed. If necessary, mentors can adjust the mentoring plan to better match the mentee's current situation, helping to restore rapport and engagement.

2.4. Role playing scenarios

2.4.1. Role playing scenario 1: Overcoming initial resistance

You are a mentor meeting Simeon, a 19-year-old who dropped out of school and has been unemployed for two years. During your first meeting, Simeon is reluctant to talk, giving one-word answers and often avoiding eye contact. You've noticed he seems anxious and defensive.

Mentor's Goal:

Use **active listening**, **open-ended questions**, and **non-verbal communication** (body language, eye contact) to encourage Simeon to share his thoughts and feelings.

Simeon's Role (Played by a Trainee):

At first, show minimal engagement, give short answers, and use body language that shows discomfort (e.g., crossed arms, avoiding eye contact). As the mentor uses appropriate techniques, gradually open up and share a bit more about your background, fears, or aspirations.

Additional Guidance for Mentor:

- Use **reflective listening** to paraphrase what Simeon says (e.g., "It sounds like you've had a tough time lately. Can you tell me more about that?").
- Avoid pushing Simeon for answers; instead, show patience and respect for his pace.

New Twist:

Midway through the conversation, Simeon mentions something personal (e.g., "I don't think I'm smart enough to go back to school."). Use this as a moment to reinforce trust through validation and empathy.

Debrief questions for Role-Playing Scenario 1: Overcoming Initial Resistance

- 1) What strategies did you use to maintain a positive tone even when Simeon was giving one-word answers?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Maintaining a calm and encouraging tone, even when met with resistance, is crucial in keeping the conversation open. What specific approaches (e.g., tone of voice, patience) helped keep the conversation moving forward?
- 2) How did you balance asking questions with allowing silence or pauses in the conversation?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Sometimes silence gives space for reflection and can encourage the other person to open up. How did you manage these moments? Did they make Sam feel more comfortable, or did they create tension?
- 3) What role did open-ended questions play in encouraging Simeon to share more?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Open-ended questions allow Simeon to explain his thoughts and feelings rather than giving simple yes/no answers. How did your open-ended questions help guide Sam into a deeper conversation?
- 4) How did you address Simeon's anxiety without directly confronting it?

- **What to pay attention to:** Simeon exhibited anxiety and defensiveness early on. How did you navigate this emotional landscape without making Simeon feel pressured to acknowledge or explain his discomfort?
- 5) What signs did you see that indicated Simeon was beginning to trust you?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Did Simeon's body language or communication style change as trust was built? How did these changes influence the way you continued the conversation?
- 6) How did your own body language affect the conversation?
 - **What to pay attention to:** The mentor's body language can have a significant impact on creating a sense of safety. How did you use gestures, eye contact, or posture to create a more open and trusting atmosphere?
- 7) What did you learn about handling a defensive or closed-off attitude during mentoring sessions?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Working with someone who feels defensive can be challenging. What techniques or insights did you gain from this role-play that will help in future sessions with NEETs or similar individuals?
- 8) How did you validate Simeon's feelings, and what impact did that have on the conversation?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Validation is essential when building trust. How did acknowledging Simeon's fears or self-doubt help him feel understood? How did this affect his willingness to share more personal details?
- 9) What would you do differently in a future session with Simeon or someone in a similar situation?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Looking back on the conversation, what adjustments would you make in your approach to increase engagement or trust more quickly?
- 10) How did you manage your own emotions or frustrations during the conversation?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Working with a resistant individual can sometimes provoke frustration or impatience. How did you stay calm and maintain focus on helping Simeon rather than getting frustrated by the slow progress?

2.4.2. Role playing scenario 2: Handling a NEET with low self-confidence

22-year-old Maria faces several job rejections and feels demoralized. She believes she lacks the skills or intelligence to succeed and isn't sure if mentoring will help her. She avoids eye contact and speaks hesitantly.

Purpose of the mentor:

Used **positive reinforcement** and **empathy** to build Maria's confidence. To help her identify her strengths and change her mindset from failure to growth.

The role of Maria (played by an intern):

Express self-doubt and pessimism. As the listener's mentor validates your experience, he gradually shows a willingness to engage and explore opportunities for self-improvement.

Additional guidelines for the mentor:

- Begin by acknowledging Maria's feelings of failure without dismissing them (e.g., "I understand why those rejections were difficult for you.").
- Use open-ended questions to explore her past successes, even minor ones, and help her recognize her abilities.
- Offer gentle encouragement that focuses on progress rather than perfection (e.g., "We all start somewhere. What matters is that you're willing to try again.")

New twist:

Maria mentions a past experience where she felt proud (e.g. completing a project or helping someone). As a mentor, use this moment to learn how these strengths can be applied to her future goals.

Debrief questions for Role-Playing Scenario 2: Handling a NEETs with low self-confidence

- 1) How did your initial approach help or hinder Maria's willingness to engage?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Consider how the first few moments of the conversation set the tone. What adjustments did you make to ensure Maria felt comfortable and encouraged to share?
- 2) What open-ended questions were most effective in getting Maria to talk about her strengths?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Not all questions will resonate equally with someone struggling with low self-confidence. Which specific questions encouraged Maria to reflect on her skills and strengths?
- 3) How did you recognize when it was the right moment to shift from validating her feelings to offering encouragement?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Timing is key in transitioning from empathy to encouragement. How did you gauge the right moment to shift the focus from validation to helping Maria see her potential?
- 4) What challenges did you face when trying to maintain a balance between empathy and motivation?
 - **What to pay attention to:** It's essential to offer empathy without letting the conversation focus too heavily on negativity. How did you maintain this balance and avoid overwhelming Maria with encouragement too early?
- 5) In what ways did Maria's self-doubt manifest during the conversation, and how did you address it?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Maria expressed self-doubt, which can be subtle or overt. What signs did you pick up on, and how did you respond to ensure she felt supported but not pressured?

- 6) How did Maria's willingness to engage change throughout the conversation, and what triggered those changes?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Look for moments where Maria began to open up more. Was there a turning point in the conversation? What did you say or do that encouraged this shift?
- 7) How did you help Maria view her past rejections as part of a learning process rather than a reflection of her abilities?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Reframing failure as part of the journey to growth is important for self-confidence. What language or examples did you use to help Maria change her perspective on rejection?
- 8) What specific strengths or successes did Maria mention, and how did you highlight their relevance to her future goals?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Maria's past successes, no matter how small, can serve as stepping stones. How did you connect these moments to her potential future achievements?
- 9) What role did your non-verbal communication play in helping Maria feel supported?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Your non-verbal cues such as posture, gestures, and facial expressions play a significant role in creating a safe space. How did you ensure your body language was encouraging and welcoming?
- 10) How did you respond when Maria expressed doubt about the effectiveness of mentoring?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Maria may have expressed doubt about whether mentoring would help her situation. How did you address these doubts without dismissing them, while still maintaining a hopeful and supportive tone?

2.4.3. Role playing scenario 3: Building trust in a digital mentorship

Ivan, 21, prefers communicating digitally due to social anxiety. He avoids video calls but is willing to chat via messaging. Your goal is to establish rapport using digital tools while respecting Ivan's comfort zone.

Mentor's Goal:

Use **consistent digital communication**, **empathic messaging**, and **patience** to build trust with Ivan. Practice crafting supportive messages that demonstrate active listening and empathy, even in a text-based format.

Ivan's Role (Played by a Trainee):

In the beginning, provide short, unengaged responses to simulate Ivan's anxiety. Gradually open up if the mentor responds in an encouraging and non-pressuring way.

Additional Guidance for Mentor:

- Start with simple, non-invasive questions like "How has your day been so far?" and avoid overwhelming Ivan with too many inquiries at once.

- Use short, positive affirmations in response to Jake’s messages (e.g., “I hear you. That sounds frustrating, but I’m glad you shared it.”).
- Avoid rushing into video calls or more personal questions—respect Ivan’s preferred pace.

New Twist:

Ivan expresses some deeper concerns about his future (e.g., “I just don’t see how things will get better for me.”). As a mentor, respond with patience and empathy, providing gentle encouragement without pushing too hard.

Debrief questions for role-playing scenario 3: Building trust in a digital mentorship

- 1) How did you adapt your communication style to match Ivan’s preference for text-based communication?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Reflect on how you tailored your responses to fit Ivan’s comfort zone. What specific strategies did you use to make your messaging feel personal and supportive despite the limitations of text?
- 2) What role did empathy play in building trust with Ivan, and how did you convey empathy through text-based messages?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Building trust through digital communication can be challenging. How did you ensure that your responses conveyed empathy and understanding? Which phrases or approaches were most effective?
- 3) How did you handle the pacing of the conversation to ensure Ivan didn’t feel overwhelmed?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Digital conversations can feel either rushed or too slow. How did you manage the timing of your messages and questions to respect Ivan’s comfort level? Did you notice any cues indicating when to slow down or proceed?
- 4) What non-verbal cues are missing in text-based communication, and how did you compensate for their absence?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Without the benefit of body language and tone of voice, how did you ensure Ivan felt supported? What techniques did you use to communicate warmth and encouragement?
- 5) How did Ivan’s initial responses (e.g., short or unengaged replies) influence your approach, and what strategies helped encourage more engagement?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Ivan initially provided brief, unengaged responses. How did you adjust your approach to encourage deeper conversation? What specific techniques helped him gradually open up?
- 6) How did you create a safe space for Ivan to express deeper concerns (e.g., “I don’t see how things will get better for me.”)?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Ivan shared some deeper personal concerns. How did you ensure that your response provided support and encouragement without being too directive or overwhelming?
- 7) What was the most challenging part of maintaining engagement through digital messaging, and how did you address it?

- **What to pay attention to:** Digital communication often lacks the immediacy of face-to-face interactions. What challenges did you face in keeping the conversation flowing, and how did you overcome these obstacles?
- 8) How did you balance asking questions with allowing space for Ivan to process and respond at his own pace?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Reflect on the balance between asking questions and giving Ivan time to reflect. How did you manage this balance to avoid making him feel pressured or overwhelmed?
- 9) What indicators did you notice that Ivan was starting to trust you more, and how did you build on this trust?
 - **What to pay attention to:** Trust is built slowly, especially in a text-based mentorship. What signs did you observe that Ivan was beginning to trust you, and how did you reinforce this trust?
- 10) How did you validate Ivan's feelings and concerns without rushing to offer solutions?
 - **What to pay attention to:** It can be tempting to jump straight to problem-solving, but validation is key in building trust. How did you show Ivan that you understood his concerns without immediately offering solutions?

2.5. Final quiz

- 1) **What is one of the most common barriers to building trust with NEETs?**
 - a) Lack of motivation to work
 - b) Alienation from institutions due to negative experiences
 - c) Lack of access to social media
 - d) Overconfidence in their abilities
- 2) **Why is emotional safety important when working with NEETs?**
 - a) It prevents mentors from becoming too involved emotionally
 - b) It ensures that NEETs follow strict guidelines
 - c) It reduces the mentor's responsibility for the NEET's progress
 - d) It allows NEETs to feel comfortable and open up without fear of judgment
- 3) **Which of the following is NOT a challenge commonly faced by NEETs?**
 - a) High levels of self-esteem
 - b) Social isolation
 - c) Negative past experiences with institutions
 - d) Fear of being judged by authority figures
- 4) **What is the primary goal of the "initial contact" stage in building trust?**
 - a) To gather personal data about the NEET
 - b) To establish authority as a mentor
 - c) To create a sense of openness and goodwill

- d) To begin discussing employment opportunities immediately
- 5) **How can mentors encourage NEETs to engage in conversations during mentoring sessions?**
 - a) By offering financial incentives
 - b) By actively listening and asking open-ended questions
 - c) By strictly following a scripted conversation
 - d) By avoiding personal topics altogether
- 6) **Which stage of trust-building involves setting small, achievable goals to build confidence?**
 - a) Initial contact
 - b) Strengthening the relationship through working together
 - c) Full commitment and partnership
 - d) Establishing mutual understanding
- 7) **What is a key action for mentors to take during the “evaluation and building mutual understanding” stage?**
 - a) Assessing the youth’s physical capabilities
 - b) Limiting the discussion to academic or employment-related issues
 - c) Setting strict guidelines for the mentoring process
 - d) Actively listening to NEETs and understanding their experiences
- 8) **Which of the following is a suggested way to overcome NEETs’ social isolation?**
 - a) Encourage peer mentoring with individuals from similar backgrounds
 - b) Avoid discussing personal experiences
 - c) Offer them independent study programs
 - d) Focus solely on job search strategies
- 9) **How should mentors provide feedback to NEETs to support their progress?**
 - a) By offering only positive comments
 - b) By giving constructive and respectful feedback
 - c) By criticizing their past mistakes to ensure they learn
 - d) By offering vague comments to avoid confrontation
- 10) **Why is non-verbal communication important when mentoring NEETs?**
 - a) It helps create a welcoming and supportive environment
 - b) It conveys authority and control
 - c) It limits the need for verbal interaction
 - d) It discourages NEETs from sharing too much personal information

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, "Techniques for Building Trust and Rapport with NEETs" is a vital module for mentors who seek to make a meaningful impact in the lives of young people who are disengaged from employment, education, and training. Building trust is a complex and gradual process that requires patience, empathy, and an understanding of the unique challenges NEETs face. By applying the principles and techniques covered in this module, mentors will be better equipped to create a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment where NEETs feel understood and valued.

Throughout the module, we explored key barriers to trust, such as past negative experiences, fear of judgment, and social isolation. We also provided mentors with practical communication strategies, including active listening, non-verbal communication, and the importance of emotional safety. These techniques are not only tools to engage NEETs but also stepping stones toward fostering their confidence and motivation to re-engage with society.

As we conclude this module, it is important to emphasize that building trust is the foundation of a successful mentoring relationship. Mentors must remain consistent, reliable, and open, encouraging NEETs to take small steps toward personal and professional growth. By setting achievable goals, providing constructive feedback, and demonstrating unwavering support, mentors can inspire NEETs to overcome their challenges and actively participate in their development.

The journey of trust-building is ongoing, and the mentor's role is to guide, support, and empower NEETs to unlock their potential and envision a brighter future. The knowledge and skills gained in this module will serve as a powerful framework for creating lasting, positive changes in the lives of the young people they mentor.

Key Takeaways:

Trust and Rapport: Trust is the foundation of effective mentoring. Building rapport with NEETs is a gradual process that requires understanding their unique barriers and needs.

Effective Communication: Techniques such as active listening, non-verbal cues, and empathy are essential in creating a safe, supportive environment where NEETs can open up and engage.

Personalized Support: Tailoring the approach to the individual challenges that NEETs face is crucial for fostering trust and encouraging their active participation in the mentoring process.

Ongoing Engagement: Building trust is an ongoing process that extends beyond the initial stages of mentoring. It requires consistency, patience, and a long-term commitment to the NEET's personal and professional growth.

As the mentor moves forward, it is essential to remember that their role has the potential to make a profound and lasting difference. A general conclusion can be drawn by the educators about the importance of NEETs involvement and development in digital skills.

3. Module 3 – Practical mentoring techniques for individualized support and resilience-building

This module will be focused on practical mentoring techniques assisting in individualized support and resilience-building, that are vital for helping NEETs for coping with setbacks and achieve their goals. These techniques include personalized mentoring plans that address specific needs, strengths, and aspirations. Building resilience involves teaching coping strategies, encouraging a growth mindset, and providing continuous emotional support.

Overall and specific goals of the module:

Overall goal: Supporting mentors in the implementation of different tools and techniques for individualized support

- 1) To develop mentors' knowledge of different tools and techniques for individualized support for NEETs
- 2) To develop specific skills that are important for identifying key priorities when working with NEETs

After this module, the mentors will:

- Recognize the importance of individualized support
- Be informed about different tools and techniques for individualized support
- Use different tools and techniques (such as: my system of career influences, motivational interview, personal career action plan, career construction interview...)
- Understand different aspects of resilience and how to support it
- Understand how to map key issues when working with NEETs in terms of resilience (emotional regulation, self-confidence, self-awareness, experience-based learning, stress management) and prepare an individual plan accordingly
- Be informed about different local supporting resources

Introduction

To measure the current level of understanding among mentors, trainers will administer a brief quiz. This quiz will assess participants' familiarity with core concepts such as effective approaches for engaging NEET youth, knowledge of local resources available to support young people, and methods for promoting resilience. The results of this quiz will give trainers insight into the group's baseline knowledge and help tailor the training to address any identified gaps, ensuring that each participant can progress confidently through the upcoming sessions.

The introduction could be presented like this (and takes approx. 30 minutes):

“This module is designed to provide you with basic knowledge and skills on support tools and techniques you can use to support NEETs you work with. The idea is to introduce tools used in career development, which are recognized as highly motivational for activating NEETs and encouraging them to pursue education or employment. Taking into account that you work individually with NEETs, we will discuss how you can map key areas of work with them and develop an individual activation plan for each person.”.

3.1. Pre-module quiz

- 1) Which statement best describes “individualized support” in the context of mentoring NEETs?
 - a) Applying the same strategy for all mentees to ensure fairness
 - b) Tailoring support to each mentee’s unique background, needs, and goals
 - c) Focusing only on academic progress and standardized goals
 - d) Assigning mentees to large group sessions without one-on-one follow-up
- 2) What do you believe is the main benefit of building resilience in NEETs?
 - a) Ensuring they never experience setbacks
 - b) Helping them recover more quickly from challenges and maintain motivation
 - c) Encouraging them to avoid risk and stay in their comfort zone
 - d) Eliminating their need for external support in the long run
- 3) In your opinion, how critical is it for mentors to adapt mentoring techniques to each NEET’s personal story and environment?
 - a) Not important — most NEETs share similar challenges
 - b) Somewhat important — only in severe cases
 - c) Very important — each NEET’s history and context significantly affect their progress
 - d) Optional — mentors should focus on a universal approach
- 4) Which of the following do you think describes the main goal of a motivational interview in mentoring?
 - a) Forcing NEETs to accept a predetermined career path
 - b) Exploring a NEET’s intrinsic motivations and ambivalence to foster change
 - c) Testing the NEET’s knowledge of employment and training opportunities
 - d) Convincing NEETs to participate in mentor-led group activities
- 5) Based on your current understanding, what is a key component of a Personal Career Action Plan (PCAP)?
 - a) A strict timeline that the mentor enforces
 - b) Generic milestones that apply to all mentees equally
 - c) Individualized goals and realistic steps to achieve them
 - d) Solely academic targets without considering personal challenges
- 6) What do you believe is the primary factor enabling NEETs to “bounce back” from setbacks?
 - a) Luck and external circumstances
 - b) Consistent financial support alone
 - c) A combination of positive coping strategies and mentor guidance

d) Avoiding all forms of constructive criticism or feedback

7) Which of the following statements best reflects your view on career construction interviews for NEETs?

- a) They are unnecessary, since most NEETs already know their career interests
- b) They help NEETs reflect on personal experiences and shape future career goals
- c) They replace the need for building trusting relationships
- d) They are solely about testing the NEET's job interview skills

3.2. Session 1: Defining the individualized support

Individualized work with NEETs is important because it is adapted to specific needs, circumstances, and interests. Most importantly, it is based on the personal pace and dynamics of the person with whom the mentor works. Therefore, the individual work plan implies a holistic approach, which takes into account the intellectual, emotional, and social aspects and needs of the NEET. An individualized approach allows the tasks to be adapted to the individual interests and needs of the person, which achieves a higher level of motivation and engagement, which ultimately leads to better results and a sense of personal satisfaction during the process of acquiring new skills or improving existing ones and planning a career path. Taking the initiative and strengthening the capacity of NEETs for career planning is important for further career development, and an individual plan can contribute to the development of independence and the development of skills for planning career goals, as well as future monitoring of one's progress. This approach will enable mapping and focus on the mentee's strengths, as well as the development of specific skills needed to realize the person's potential.

Before mentors start working directly with young people in the NEET situation, it is necessary to clearly understand the factors affecting their position. These include a lack of work experience, which can be an obstacle to finding a job, and low self-confidence regarding their skills and qualifications. Additionally, NEETs may be targets of prejudice or discrimination. Therefore, one of the mentor's tasks is to help the mentee build resilience through an approach based on patience, trust, mutual respect, and a clear division of responsibilities. Therefore, it is important for the mentor not to be judgmental towards the person in the NEET situation, but also to indicate the scope of the person's responsibility. In addition, the mentor provides support to the NEET person to better understand the situation and see the consequences and possible actions that can be taken to overcome the aggravating circumstances.

Access to youth who are in a NEET situation should be designed to:

- **Adaptation to specific needs and circumstances**

Each young person in a NEET situation has specific life circumstances and faces complex challenges in areas such as socio-economic status, education, family circumstances, discrimination, prejudice, etc. Understanding these factors is the basis for developing an individual work plan, but also for personalized support in a way that best suits the young person with whom the mentor works. With this approach, mentors will avoid the trap of a universalistic approach to NEET youth but rather focus on individualized tasks and goals that are adapted to the specific needs of the person. In addition to awareness of the obstacles, it is also important to raise awareness of the possibility of future growth and development. The mentor's task is to provide

support to the NEET to recognize and further develop their qualities and capacities, and later jointly devise a plan for developing the necessary skills and competencies.

- **Focus on personal pace and dynamics**

NEET can be faced with various factors (such as lack of concentration, demotivation, etc.) that can affect the dynamics of achieving set goals, therefore these factors must be taken into account in the process of planning and evaluating goals. By setting goals that take into account all internal and external factors affecting a young person, mentors can increase the probability of success. Recognizing both common challenges and individual differences, this approach strengthens the NEET's motivation and self-confidence for future progress. By adapting tasks, plans, and goals to the interests and needs of a young person in a NEET situation, their motivation and engagement to fulfil them increases. Additionally, through tasks defined in this way, mentees will have the opportunity to measure and see the concrete results of their work, which will further increase the feeling of personal success, self-evaluation, and motivation for the next steps toward achieving the set goal.

- **A holistic approach to work**

Instead of focusing on technical, academic, or professional skills, when working with NEET youth, mentors will focus on providing support in the emotional and social development of the person, taking into account the intellectual, emotional, and social aspects of the NEET person's life. For the career development of NEET youth, it is necessary to strengthen emotional stability as well as their capacity to deal with stress and solve problems, which can be potential obstacles in further career planning and development. The mentor's role in this part is to encourage NEET youth to take an active role in planning and following their goals and developing their independence. Independence, orientation to results setting realistic goals, mapping potential obstacles and developing strategies to overcome them are important for further navigating the labour market. It is important for a young person to feel accepted, without additional pressure or judgment. In this process, the mentor, taking into account all aspects of the mentee's personality and the circumstances that determine his current position, creates an environment for open dialogue and a relationship of trust where the mentee can be free to discuss difficulties and obstacles. The role of a mentor is to provide support to a young person to develop their resilience, i.e. to build resilience to face challenges more easily, but also to deal with failures and obstacles.

3.3. Session 2: Tools, techniques & resources

This session is designed to equip mentors with essential tools to enhance their work with NEET youth, including *My System of Career Influences*, *Motivational Interviewing*, *Personal Career Action Plan*, and *Career Construction Interview*. Trainers will begin by introducing each tool, explaining how it can support NEETs in building self-awareness, identifying goals, and taking actionable steps toward personal and career development. Following the tool presentations, trainers and mentors will refer to other modules, where the following topics will be presented in more detail: local support resources, such as community stakeholders, relevant organizations, and institutions that can provide additional support to NEETs throughout their activation process. This collaborative dialogue will give mentors a clearer understanding of the network available to them and how to leverage it effectively.

The final part of the session will involve mentors working individually on case studies, applying the presented tools in practical scenarios. These case studies will provide mentors with hands-on experience, serving as models for implementing the tools and crafting individualized action plans for NEETs. To set the stage for learning, the session will open with an exploration of

mentors' existing knowledge of similar tools they have previously used. Trainers will facilitate this discussion, actively noting key insights from mentors to build upon their experiences and create a strong foundation for learning. This approach aims to deepen mentors' skills and confidence, ensuring they are fully prepared to apply these tools in real-world contexts with NEET youth.

Presentation in this session will cover:

My system of career influences:

The My System of Career Influences (MSCI) is a structured tool designed to help individuals explore and understand the various influences shaping their career choices. Based on a systems theory framework, MSCI encourages users to consider multiple factors - such as personal, social, and environmental influences - that play a role in career decision-making. It offers a reflective process where users examine their values, skills, interests, and past experiences, as well as external factors like family expectations, cultural norms, and socioeconomic conditions. By mapping out these influences, MSCI empowers individuals to gain clarity about their career aspirations and make informed decisions aligned with their personal circumstances and future goals. This tool is particularly valuable in career counselling and educational settings, supporting both adolescents and adults in navigating complex career paths. Through MSCI, users can gain a holistic view of their career journey, identify any potential barriers, and set realistic, meaningful objectives for their professional growth.

Motivational interview:

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a counselling approach that helps individuals resolve ambivalence and strengthen their commitment to positive change. Developed in the field of addiction counselling, MI uses a non-judgmental, empathetic, and collaborative style to encourage individuals to explore their motivations, values, and goals. The approach is based on open-ended questions, reflective listening, and affirmations that help clients articulate their reasons for change and build confidence in their ability to achieve it. By empowering individuals to set their own goals and strategies, MI fosters a sense of ownership over the change process, making it particularly effective in areas like health behaviour change, mental health treatment, and career counselling. This client-centred technique is widely recognized for its adaptability and success in supporting personal transformation across a variety of settings.

Career construction interview:

The **Career Construction Interview (CCI)** is a structured, narrative-based approach used in career counselling to help individuals construct a meaningful and personalized career path. Grounded in career construction theory, CCI encourages clients to explore their life stories, values, and aspirations to understand how these elements can inform their career choices. Through a series of open-ended questions, clients reflect on themes such as their role models, favourite stories, and early recollections, which reveal underlying motivations and strengths. By identifying patterns in their experiences, clients gain insights into their career identity and the types of work that align with their sense of purpose. CCI is especially useful in helping individuals navigate transitions, such as starting a new career or finding direction after a setback. This introspective process fosters self-awareness and helps individuals make intentional career decisions that align with their personal narratives and future goals.

Personal career action plan:

A Personal Career Action Plan (PCAP) is a structured, goal-oriented roadmap that helps individuals identify and achieve their career objectives. This plan outlines specific career goals, the steps needed to reach them, and any resources or skills required along the way. By breaking down larger aspirations into manageable actions, a PCAP provides clarity and direction, making it easier to track progress and adjust as necessary. Individuals typically assess their current skills, strengths, and areas for development, as well as any potential challenges they may face. The action plan may also include timelines, milestone achievements, and support networks to keep individuals motivated and accountable. PCAPs are widely used in career counselling and personal development to support focused, proactive career growth and ensure that each step is aligned with one's long-term vision and goals.

Following the presentation of these tools, mentors and trainers will engage in a collaborative discussion to explore the benefits and potential barriers associated with each tool. This dialogue will allow mentors to share their insights and initial reactions, highlighting the aspects they find valuable as well as any concerns or challenges they anticipate. Trainers will then guide the conversation to address common obstacles, such as time constraints, accessibility, or possible resistance from NEETs, and will offer strategies to overcome these barriers. If mentors express the need for additional clarification, trainers will delve deeper into specific steps for each tool, providing examples and practical applications to enhance understanding. By addressing both advantages and limitations, this session will equip mentors with a balanced perspective, empowering them to use these tools confidently and effectively in their work with NEET youth. This interactive approach ensures that all participants have a thorough grasp of the tools and are prepared to adapt them to the unique needs of their mentees.

This discussion will be followed by mapping key stakeholders, their areas of work and expertise, as well as the importance of networking in the terms of supporting NEETs. This part highlights that engaging stakeholders - such as schools, employers, social services, and community organizations - allows a coordinated approach, pooling resources and expertise to create comprehensive support for NEETs. By working with diverse partners, support programs can offer a range of opportunities, from skill-building workshops and internships to mental health and social services, all of which are essential for the holistic development of NEET youth. Networking also increases awareness and reduces stigma around NEET status, encouraging communities to invest in and prioritize youth support. Furthermore, these partnerships help bridge the gap between young people and the job market, making it easier for NEETs to access employment opportunities, mentorship, and career guidance. In short, networking with stakeholders ensures a more sustainable, effective impact, giving NEETs the tools and connections they need to succeed. This segment will particularly focus on local stakeholders available in each country / local community where mentors will provide their work.

The final part will include individual work on case studies in which mentors will get one example of a NEET. Based on the information provided, mentors will create an individual plan of work and map the key resources required. The mentors will present their solutions, and trainers and mentors will discuss it. The discussion will be facilitated in an interactive and collaborative manner, with the goal of engaging all participants and creating an open space for sharing insights and experiences. Throughout the discussion, trainers will offer additional insights, provide examples, and suggest solutions to challenges identified. The aim is to create a collaborative learning environment where mentors feel supported, and their expertise is acknowledged, while also offering new strategies and perspectives to enhance their work with NEETs.

The session will conclude with a reflective summary where trainers will highlight the key insights shared by participants throughout the training. This will include a recap of the main

insights, experiences, and ideas discussed during the session, as well as any important questions or observations raised by the mentors. By capturing these contributions, trainers will ensure that the session's most valuable takeaways are clearly acknowledged and reinforced. The session will then transition to a short Q&A segment where mentors can ask trainers any remaining questions or seek additional guidance on applying the tools in their individual contexts. Trainers will respond with practical advice, offer examples, and address any specific concerns that arise. The aim of this closing segment is to ensure that all participants leave the session feeling confident and equipped to apply what they've learned, while also providing an opportunity for further clarification and support.

3.4. Session 3: Building resiliency in the work with NEETs

This session is focused on providing mentors with basic skills in resilience and how it can be developed in their work with NEETs.

The session will start off with a short presentation covering the following topics:

Resiliency:

Resilience is the ability to adapt and recover from adversity, challenges, or setbacks. It involves the capacity to maintain a positive outlook, cope with stress, and keep moving forward despite difficulties. Resilient individuals are able to bounce back from tough situations by drawing on their inner strengths, such as problem-solving skills, emotional regulation, and a supportive social network. Resilience also involves a sense of purpose and the belief that one can overcome obstacles, which helps to foster perseverance and hope. It is not an innate trait but rather a set of skills that can be developed over time through experiences, coping strategies, and social support. Building resilience is particularly important for youth, as it empowers them to navigate life's challenges and pursue personal and academic success despite adversity.

Key aspects of resilience in working with NEETs:

Key aspects of resilience in working with NEETs include building *self-efficacy*, which involves helping them believe in their ability to succeed by setting achievable goals and celebrating small successes. *Emotional regulation* is another important aspect, as teaching NEETs how to manage their emotions, especially when faced with setbacks or stressful situations, enables them to cope with frustration and disappointment in a constructive way. *Strengthening social support* is also crucial, as it encourages NEETs to build strong, positive relationships with mentors, peers, family, and community members, providing both emotional encouragement and practical help when needed. Additionally, *fostering a sense of purpose* and motivation helps NEETs find meaning in their pursuits, whether in education, work, or personal growth, providing direction and commitment to their goals. Lastly, teaching NEETs *how to adapt to change is vital*, as being flexible and open to new opportunities and environments enables them to overcome barriers and achieve success. These key aspects of resilience help NEETs navigate life's challenges and create pathways for long-term success in education, employment, and personal development.

Addressing priority aspects in the terms of resiliency:

Based on the above-mentioned content, mentors will be supported to address priority aspects in terms of resilience they can support based on their capacities and competencies. By giving concrete examples from previous work, mentors will discuss how they defined key areas of work and how they managed the process (e.g. someone was highly unmotivated for employment

due to lack of self-confidence, and the mentor developed an individual action plan that included different activities to boost self-confidence)

This session will be concluded with the role-play. Mentors will be in the role of both mentors and NEETs and will try to address key areas that are recognized as areas for improvement.

Closing:

The final part of the module will focus on a comprehensive summary of the workshop, where trainers will highlight the key aspects that have been covered and emphasize the most important takeaways. This will include a recap of the significance of individualized support for NEETs, underscoring how tailored approaches can address the unique challenges faced by each individual. Trainers will also revisit the tools presented during the session, ensuring that mentors understand their practical application and how these tools can be used effectively in their work. Additionally, there will be a focus on the importance of building resiliency among NEETs, reinforcing how fostering resilience can empower young people to overcome obstacles and pursue personal and professional growth.

Following the summary, the session will transition into a Q&A segment, where mentors will have the opportunity to ask any questions or seek clarification on specific aspects of the module. This interactive part of the session will allow mentors to address any uncertainties and gain a deeper understanding of the concepts discussed.

To conclude, trainers will facilitate an evaluation discussion to gather feedback from the mentors about their overall satisfaction with the module. This will include assessing the content, methodology, and overall experience of the workshop. The feedback will be valuable in understanding how well the module met the mentors' needs, and it will help trainers identify areas for improvement in future sessions. This evaluative discussion will also give mentors a final opportunity to voice any thoughts, concerns, or suggestions before closing the workshop.

3.5. Case study for mentors

1) Let's meet Nikola...

Nikola is 29 years old and lives in a city area with his parents. He is pursuing a PhD in History from the Faculty of Philosophy. So far, he hasn't gained any work experience, as he believes that a job matching his qualifications will soon open up at the university, but it is uncertain when that will happen. Under pressure from his parents, who insist that he find a job to become financially independent, he starts to explore job market possibilities but has no interest in applying to any of them.

As a mentor, how would you start your work with him?

2) Let's meet Zora...

Zora is 19 years old and has completed primary school. She entered a common-law marriage at just 16 years old and had no motivation to continue her education. She has one child. Due to the increased inflation rate, social services financial support does not cover any of her basic needs, and in this moment, she has no belief that she could do “any decent job” due to her formal education and lack of job experience. She sees non-formal education programs as expensive and believes they are “intended for normal people who are capable of learning”. Also,

she is concerned that she will not have any support in her family to pursue any education as this is “appropriate for mother to waste her time on that.”

As her mentor, what you will prioritize in work with her and why?

3) Let’s meet Milan...

Milan is 21 and lives in Aleksandrovac. He completed high school in a village near Zrenjanin and he grew up in a foster family. Milan is unemployed and has no steady income. He is trying to work in the fields, but due to a lack of machinery, he is not having much success with his current work. Nikola wants to work but doesn't trust government services and believes there are no decent job opportunities near his home.

As his mentor, how you would motivate him to further explore job or education possibilities and where you find potential challenges?

3.6. Curriculum for individualized support and resilience-building

Topic of the module:	Practical mentoring techniques for individualised support and resilience-building	
Short description of the training:	<i>Practical mentoring techniques that focus on individualized support and resilience-building are vital for helping NEETs cope with setbacks and achieve their goals. These techniques include personalized mentoring plans that address specific needs, strengths, and aspirations. Building resilience involves teaching coping strategies, encouraging a growth mindset, and providing continuous emotional support. Main areas to elaborate could include how to develop personalized mentoring plans, strategies for resilience-building, coping mechanisms, and practical exercises to reinforce learning.</i>	
Duration:	Total module duration: 6 hours, including breaks.	
Objectives and learning outcomes of the module:	<p>Overall objective: Supporting mentors for implementation of different tools and techniques for individualised support</p> <p>After this module, the mentors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognize the importance of individualised support ○ Be informed about different tools and techniques for individualised support ○ Use different tools and techniques (such as: my system of career influences, motivational interview, personal career action plan, career construction interview...) ○ Know different aspects of resiliency and know how to support it ○ Know how to map key issues in the work with NEETs in the terms of resiliency (emotional regulation, self-confidence, self-awareness, experience-based learning, stress-management...) and to prepare individual plan according to it ○ Be informed about different local supporting resources. 	
Content of the module:	Topic:	Duration:
	Introduction: Presentation of the agenda, objective and learning outcomes; digital quiz	30’
	Session 1: Defining the individualised support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why individualised support is important in the terms of NEETs 	60’

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key elements that need to be taken into account (personal / social characteristics, social and family background, previous experience...) 	
	Break 20'	
	Session 2: Tools, techniques & resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentations of different tools and techniques: my system of career influences, motivational interview, personal career action plan, career construction interview ○ Mapping local support resources (stakeholders, organizations, institutions) ○ Implementation of the tools on the case studies 	120'
	Session 3: Building resiliency in the work with NEET <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining resiliency ○ Key aspects in the resiliency in the work with NEETs ○ Addressing priority aspects in the terms of resiliency ○ Developing of individual plan ○ Role-play 	60'
	Closing: Summary of the workshop, Q&A, evaluation	30'
Methodology:	During the workshop, the trainers will use different methods to engage participants: group discussions, case studies, group and individual work, role play	
Technical requirements and handouts:	Laptop, projector, PowerPoint presentations, case studies	
Trainer qualifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum degree/university degree in social sciences ○ Practical knowledge and professional experience in working with youth ○ At least 2 years of professional experience in leading training sessions ○ Excellent communication, moderation, mentoring, and presentation skills ○ Experience working with and understanding youth needs ○ Previous experience as a trainer in the relevant areas. 	

3.7. Final Quiz

- 1) Please explain why we need the individualized support for every NEET we work with?

- 2) The personal career action plan is based on...

- a) Individual's needs and interests
- b) Real possibilities on the labour market and education opportunities
- c) Mentor's experience with the employment and his knowledge on labour market opportunities
- d) Real assessment of individual's competencies and areas of development

- 3) **Does resiliency mean that someone does not experience any negative emotions and challenges?**
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- 4) **Which of the following is a recommended technique for building resilience in NEETs**
- a) Avoid discussing past failures to prevent negative emotions
 - b) Encourage trial and reflection on small, achievable goals to boost self-efficacy
 - c) Enforce strict discipline to eliminate any chance of backsliding
 - d) Provide immediate solutions without exploring the NEET's underlying issues
- 5) **My system of career influences includes:**
- a) Historical trends and political decisions
 - b) Media
 - c) Personality and personal beliefs
 - d) All of above
6. **During a motivational interview, which factor is the mentor primarily focusing on when working with NEETs?**
- a) Imposing an ideal career path for the mentee
 - b) Identifying the NEET's ambivalence and internal motivations to facilitate change
 - c) Taking detailed notes to report to local authorities
 - d) Testing how quickly the NEET can come up with short-term goals
7. **Which of the following best describes the role of a "career construction interview" in the individualized support process?**
- a) A fixed template of questions to identify universal career paths for NEETs
 - b) An in-depth exploration of the NEET's personal story, values, and aspirations to craft a tailored career direction
 - c) A formal job interview simulation focusing on immediate placements
 - d) A method to test the NEET's basic knowledge of various industries

4. Module 4 – Setting goals, creating action plans, and monitoring success for NEETs

Objectives and learning outcomes of the module:

This module is designed to provide mentors with the skills and tools to guide NEETs in setting realistic goals, developing short- and medium-term action plans, and establishing milestones to monitor and demonstrate progress. By the end of this module, mentors will be equipped to support NEETs in breaking down their long-term aspirations into achievable steps, maintaining motivation, and adjusting strategies as necessary.

Module Objectives:

- Understand the importance of goal setting in the mentoring process.
- Learn methods to assist NEETs in identifying long-term aspirations and breaking them down into actionable short- and medium-term goals.
- Develop skills to create detailed, realistic action plans tailored to individual NEETs.
- Master techniques for setting clear milestones and monitoring progress.
- Explore tools and strategies for demonstrating success and maintaining motivation.

4.1. Pre-module quiz

- 1) Which of the following do you believe is the biggest benefit of helping NEETs set clear goals?
 - a) It ensures they never face any future challenges
 - b) It provides them with a sense of direction and motivation
 - c) It guarantees immediate employment opportunities
 - d) It replaces the need for mentoring altogether
- 2) How important do you think it is to break down long-term goals into smaller milestones for NEETs?
 - a) Not important — NEETs should manage big goals on their own
 - b) Slightly important — it can help in some rare cases
 - c) Very important — it makes large objectives more manageable and achievable
 - d) Optional — mentors can just provide broad advice
- 3) When mentors set goals with NEETs, what is one factor you believe mentors should consider most?
 - a) The mentor's personal ambitions
 - b) The specific needs, interests, and limitations of the NEET
 - c) The local job market
 - d) The mentor's past successes with other NEETs

- 4) **How familiar are you with the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) framework for goal setting?**
- a) Not at all familiar
 - b) Somewhat familiar — heard about it but never used it
 - c) Quite familiar — have applied it in some contexts
 - d) Very familiar — use it regularly in mentoring
- 5) **In your current opinion, what is the best way to keep NEETs motivated once they set an initial goal?**
- a) Reminding them only at the end of the mentoring period
 - b) Frequently celebrating small wins and progress
 - c) Ignoring obstacles and focusing on job outcomes only
 - d) Emphasizing potential failures to encourage fear-driven motivation
- 6) **Which statement best describes how self-reflection can help NEETs stay focused on their goals?**
- a) It keeps them constantly questioning their decisions in a negative way
 - b) It allows them to understand their progress, strengths, and areas needing improvement
 - c) It shifts responsibility entirely onto the mentor
 - d) It is mainly used for writing formal reports to public institutions
- 7) **What role does prioritization play when NEETs have multiple goals?**
- a) It helps them tackle everything at once
 - b) It ensures minor tasks are completed first, regardless of urgency
 - c) It allows them to decide which goals are most important or time-sensitive
 - d) It replaces the need for time-bound deadlines
- 8) **In your view, how critical is it for mentors to discuss potential obstacles or risks when setting goals with NEETs?**
- a) Not important — focusing on challenges can demotivate them
 - b) Highly important — anticipating barriers helps create realistic action plans
 - c) Somewhat important — only if the NEET brings it up
 - d) Optional — risks will be obvious without discussion
- 9) **What might be a common reason NEETs lose motivation partway through goal achievement?**
- a) They accomplish everything too quickly
 - b) Goals are too broad or unrealistic without clear milestones
 - c) They have too many financial incentives
 - d) They receive too much mentor attention

10) **When initially discussing goals with NEETs, how should a mentor handle the mentee's personal aspirations (e.g., hobbies, interests)?**

- a) Focus purely on job-related tasks
- b) Incorporate them into the plan to enhance engagement and motivation
- c) Discourage them to keep a single-minded approach
- d) Ask them to share these hobbies only after finding a job

4.2. Session 1: Introduction to goal setting, self-reflection and aspirations

Objective:

To understand the importance of goal setting and guide NEETs in identifying their long-term aspirations. The session takes approx. 1.5 hours.

Topics Covered:

- The role of goal setting in personal and professional development.
- Understanding NEETs' backgrounds, challenges, and aspirations.
- Techniques for helping NEETs explore their interests, values, and long-term goals.

Activities:

- Group discussion on NEETs' challenges and how goal setting can help.
- Self-Reflection Using the Blob Tree
- Introduce the Pizza Method for dividing life into sections and setting goals for each area.
- Interactive exercise: Guiding NEETs through a self-reflection activity to identify their aspirations.

Description:

Group Discussion: Challenges Faced by NEETs and the Role of Goal-Setting

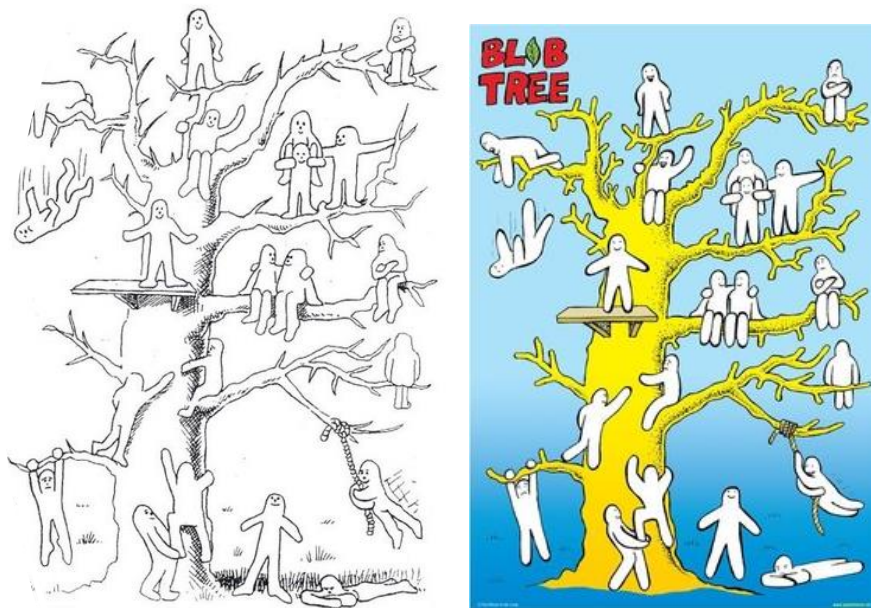
This session will begin with a facilitated group discussion on the specific challenges faced by NEETs (young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Participants will explore barriers such as lack of motivation, limited opportunities, and social or personal issues. The discussion will then focus on how setting achievable goals can empower NEETs, helping them build a sense of direction, purpose, and self-confidence.

Self-Reflection Using the Blob Tree, and Pizza Method

Following the discussion, participants will engage in a self-reflection exercise using the Blob Tree² tool. This visual tool helps individuals reflect on their emotional state and personal development by identifying with different figures on the tree, representing various moods and

² Wilson, P., Long Lan (2018): The Big Book of Blob Trees, Routledge

feelings. It's a creative way to understand where they are in life and how they perceive their current situation.



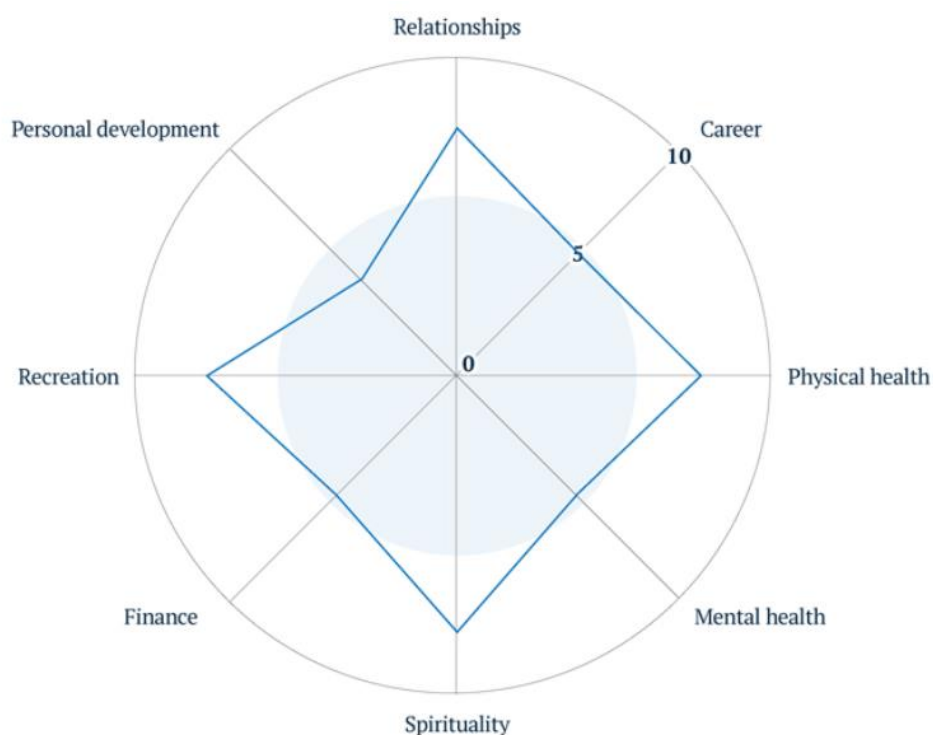
Source: [Ian Long](#) and Pip Wilson, 2008³

Pizza Method Self-Reflection Activity

In this engaging self-reflection exercise, participants will use the "Pizza Method" to assess different areas of their lives. Similar to slicing a pizza, participants will divide their lives into key segments such as career, personal growth, relationships, and well-being. Each slice represents a different life domain, and participants will rate their satisfaction in each area. This visual and interactive approach helps individuals see where they feel fulfilled and where there is room for improvement. The Pizza Method encourages participants to think about how balanced their "life pizza" is and to identify specific areas they wish to focus on for personal development.

The "Pizza Method" is a widely used variation of the "Wheel of Life" or "Life Balance Wheel," popularized in coaching and self-development fields. While there isn't a singular source for the term "Pizza Method," it is essentially a visual metaphor similar to these established techniques, where life is divided into segments for self-assessment. The "Wheel of Life" concept was introduced by Paul J. Meyer, a pioneer in goal-setting and personal development, and has since been adapted into various forms, including the "Pizza Method."

³ <https://www.pipwilson.com/p/blob-tree.html>



Source: Paul J Meyer, who founded the Success Motivation Institute® in 1960⁴

Interactive Exercise: Guiding NEETs to Identify Aspirations

In this interactive activity, participants will be guided through a step-by-step self-reflection process. Through this, NEETs will be encouraged to think about their personal aspirations, skills, and potential. They will then map out their goals, identifying both short- and long-term objectives. This exercise will help them recognize their strengths and areas for growth, building a foundation for future steps toward education, employment, or training.

4.3. Session 2: SMART goal setting and prioritization

Objective:

To introduce the SMART framework for setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals. (The session takes approx. 1 hour.)

Topics Covered:

- Introduction to the SMART goals framework.
- How to apply SMART criteria to long-term and short-term goals.
- Techniques for prioritizing goals to ensure focus and manageability.
- Using Vision Board

Activities:

⁴ <https://www.lifecoach-directory.org.uk/content/wheel-of-life-tool.html>

- SMART goal-setting workshop: Mentors practice setting SMART goals based on NEETs' aspirations.
- Prioritization exercise: Mentors learn to guide NEETs in prioritizing their goals.

Description:

SMART Goal-Setting Workshop: Mentors Practicing Goal Setting for NEETs

In this workshop, mentors will practice the art of setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals. The focus will be on how to align these goals with the aspirations of NEETs, making them realistic and motivational. Mentors will learn how to break down larger goals into actionable steps, ensuring that NEETs can track their progress and stay on course. This hands-on session will include practical examples and role-playing to reinforce the techniques.

Prioritization Exercise: Guiding NEETs to Prioritize Their Goals

This exercise teaches mentors how to help NEETs prioritize their goals, ensuring that they focus on what is most important and feasible. Mentors will practice techniques for evaluating goals based on urgency, importance, and available resources. By understanding how to prioritize, NEETs can avoid feeling overwhelmed and remain motivated to achieve their objectives step-by-step.

Visualization of the goals

A **vision board** by Jack Canfield and Tony Robbins is a creative tool used for personal development and goal setting that helps individuals visually represent their dreams, aspirations, and future goals. Typically, it's a physical or digital collage made up of images, words, and quotes that symbolize what a person wants to achieve in different areas of life—such as career, health, relationships, or personal growth.

The process of creating a vision board involves selecting visuals that resonate with one's goals and desires, which can come from magazines, online images, or personal photos. The board serves as a daily reminder of what the person is working toward, helping to maintain focus and motivation. By regularly seeing their goals in a visual format, individuals are more likely to stay inspired and aligned with their objectives.

Vision boards are commonly used in coaching, goal-setting workshops, and self-reflection activities, encouraging individuals to not only think about their future but also bring it to life in a tangible and motivating way.

4.4. Session 3: Developing short- and medium-term action plans

Objective:

To create detailed, realistic action plans that break down long-term goals into achievable steps. The session takes approx. 1.5 hours.

Topics Covered:

- Breaking down long-term goals into short- and medium-term objectives.

- Creating detailed action plans with specific tasks, timelines, and resource needs.
- Importance of flexibility and adjusting plans based on progress and changing circumstances.

Activities:

- Action plan development workshop: Mentors work on creating action plans for sample NEET scenarios.
- Group discussion on common challenges in action planning and how to overcome them.

Description:

Action Plan Development Workshop: Crafting Action Plans for NEET Scenarios

In this interactive workshop, mentors will work on developing actionable, step-by-step plans for sample NEET scenarios. Using real-life examples, they will practice translating NEETs' aspirations and goals into concrete action plans. Mentors will learn how to structure these plans with clear milestones, timelines, and responsibilities, ensuring that NEETs have a roadmap to follow. This hands-on session will strengthen mentors' ability to support NEETs in creating realistic and effective plans for their personal and professional development.

Group Discussion: Overcoming Common Challenges in Action Planning

Following the workshop, participants will engage in a group discussion about the common challenges faced when creating and implementing action plans for NEETs. Topics may include motivation, resource limitations, unforeseen obstacles, and how to maintain momentum. Mentors will share insights and strategies for overcoming these challenges, ensuring that NEETs stay on track and committed to their action plans.

4.5. Session 4: Setting milestones and monitoring progress

Objective:

To establish clear milestones and learn methods for monitoring progress and maintaining motivation. The session takes approx. 1 hour.

Topics Covered:

- The role of milestones in tracking progress and sustaining motivation.
- Techniques for setting effective milestones.
- Tools for monitoring progress (journals, apps, charts, etc.).

Activities:

- Milestone setting exercise: Mentors practice setting milestones for short- and medium-term goals.
- Introduction to progress tracking tools and their application.

Description:

Milestone Setting Exercise: Mentors Practicing Milestones for Short- and Medium-Term Goals

In this exercise, mentors will focus on setting key milestones that help NEETs break down their short- and medium-term goals into manageable steps. By practicing how to define clear, achievable milestones, mentors will ensure that NEETs can track their progress over time. This activity emphasizes the importance of setting realistic benchmarks that not only guide NEETs toward their goals but also keep them motivated by celebrating small successes along the way.

Introduction to Progress Tracking Tools and Their Application

This session introduces mentors to various progress tracking tools and systems, such as digital apps, spreadsheets, or simple tracking charts, that can be used to monitor NEETs' goal achievement. Mentors will learn how to apply these tools in a practical way to help NEETs stay organized, accountable, and on track. The focus will be on selecting tools that are easy to use and adaptable to different types of goals and individual preferences.

4.6. Session 5: Demonstrating success and adjusting strategies

Objective:

To explore ways to demonstrate success, adjust strategies as needed, and maintain NEETs' motivation. The session takes approx. 1 hour.

Topics Covered:

- Techniques for visually demonstrating success (timelines, graphs, etc.).
- Communicating progress effectively to NEETs and their support networks.
- Adjusting goals and action plans based on progress and feedback.
- Maintaining motivation through positive reinforcement and celebrating small wins.

Activities:

- Success visualization workshop: Mentors create visual tools to demonstrate NEETs' progress.
- Role-play: Communicating success and providing constructive feedback to NEETs.

Description

Success Visualization Workshop: Creating Visual Tools to Showcase NEETs' Progress

In this creative workshop, mentors will design visual tools that help NEETs clearly see their progress over time. These tools may include progress charts, timelines, or vision boards that visually map out milestones, achievements, and future goals. By making success visible, mentors can help NEETs stay motivated and see how far they've come, reinforcing their sense of accomplishment and forward momentum. The workshop emphasizes the power of visualization in boosting confidence and maintaining focus.

Role-Play: Communicating Success and Providing Constructive Feedback

This session involves a role-play exercise where mentors practice how to effectively communicate success and provide constructive feedback to NEETs. Through realistic scenarios, mentors will learn how to celebrate progress with NEETs in a way that reinforces their efforts while also offering guidance for further improvement. The role-play focuses on using positive reinforcement and constructive criticism to help NEETs stay motivated and develop resilience, preparing them for continued growth.

4.7. Closing

Summary of the Workshop:

- Recap of the key concepts covered, including the importance of goal setting, action planning, and monitoring progress.

Key Takeaways:

- Highlight the most critical points for mentors to remember, such as the application of the SMART framework and the importance of flexibility in action planning.

Q&A:

- Open the floor for any questions from participants to clarify doubts or expand on specific topics.

Feedback Collection:

- Gather feedback from participants on the module's content, structure, and delivery to improve future sessions.
- The whole closing takes approx. 30 minutes.

4.8. Final quiz

- 1) **Which aspect of goal setting did the module emphasize as crucial for maintaining a NEET's motivation?**
 - a) Offering only long-term objectives so the NEET can see the big picture
 - b) Breaking down targets into small, manageable steps (short- and medium-term goals)
 - c) Avoiding any discussion of timeframes to reduce pressure
 - d) Setting identical goals for all NEETs to compare progress
- 2) **How does the module suggest mentors handle the need to revise or adjust a NEET's action plan over time?**
 - a) Avoid any changes to maintain consistency
 - b) Only revise goals when the NEET requests it
 - c) Monitor progress regularly and adjust milestones or timelines as needed
 - d) Wait until significant failures occur, then re-evaluate

- 3) **The module highlighted the importance of ‘monitoring success.’ What is a recommended strategy for doing this effectively?**
- a) Checking in only once a year to measure final outcomes
 - b) Using regular check-ins or milestones to track and discuss progress
 - c) Solely relying on standardized tests or exams
 - d) Allowing the NEET to handle all self-monitoring without mentor input
- 4) **Why does the module stress self-reflection in a NEET’s goal-setting journey?**
- a) It helps NEETs identify personal drivers, strengths, and areas needing improvement
 - b) It encourages mentors to take full control of the process
 - c) It reduces the need for any action plan or follow-up
 - d) It is used mainly to critique the NEET’s past decisions
- 5) **According to the module, how should mentors and NEETs demonstrate and celebrate success in the action-planning process?**
- a) By only focusing on major achievements and ignoring small wins
 - b) By having monthly group presentations to compare NEETs’ performance
 - c) By acknowledging incremental progress, using it to build confidence and momentum
 - d) By postponing any celebration until the NEET has reached a final career goal
- 6) **What is the purpose of defining SMART goals specifically for NEETs, as highlighted in the module?**
- a) To give a mentor a shortcut to evaluate NEET performance
 - b) To ensure the goals are clear, trackable, and realistically attainable
 - c) To discourage NEETs from exploring personal interests
 - d) To fill out obligatory paperwork for funding agencies
- 7) **Which of the following best describes an effective method of recording and tracking NEETs’ milestones?**
- a) Rely on the NEET’s memory without formal tracking
 - b) Maintain a written or digital log/diary for regular progress checks
 - c) Wait until the end of the mentoring period for an all-at-once review
 - d) Mentors should keep progress data private from the NEET
- 8) **How does the module suggest mentors address a plateau or stagnation in the NEET’s progress toward their goals?**
- a) Ignore it until the NEET brings it up
 - b) Reassess the goals, possibly breaking them down further or adjusting timelines
 - c) Declare the plan a failure and start over with new objectives
 - d) Impose stricter deadlines to push progress

- 9) **What role does “prioritization” play in short- and medium-term goal setting for NEETs?**
- a) Ensuring all goals are tackled simultaneously
 - b) Identifying the most urgent or valuable goals to address first
 - c) Focusing primarily on financial goals to ensure quick job placement
 - d) Automatically ranking job-related goals above personal aspirations
- 10) **Why is it crucial to review and adjust a NEET’s action plan even after small successes?**
- a) To remind the NEET they still have a lot to accomplish
 - b) Because minor wins might not be relevant to the overall plan
 - c) To maintain momentum and ensure each new step reflects current strengths and needs
 - d) To discourage overconfidence and reduce celebration

5. Module 5 – Methods to guide NEETs in using local and online resources

Module 5 is focusing on the scholarship programs, labour market, internship and volunteering opportunities. This section outlines the key topics related to working with mentors. The assigned trainer will use the curriculum along with suggestions for exercises, quizzes, and presentations, which are detailed and form an additional part of this document.

Specific goals:

- 1) Develop mentors' knowledge and skills to provide up-to-date information to selected users (NEET youth) regarding life skills.
- 2) Enhance mentors' knowledge and skills for working with NEET youth in areas such as the availability of scholarship programs, (self-)employment, internships, labour markets, and online education.

Introduction:

After the greeting and introductions (approx. 30 minutes suggested), this section should familiarize participants with the workshop content, learning outcomes, and objectives. It is very important to emphasize which teaching units this module will cover. Besides these details, inform participants about the logistical aspects.

The introduction can be presented like this:

"This module is designed to provide you with the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for successful career planning and development in today's world. The goal of this module is to introduce you to opportunities for financial support through scholarships, labour market trends, the importance of gaining practical experience through internships and volunteer work, and the benefits of online learning as a flexible approach to education, which you will pass on to NEET youth in the field. It is also essential to convey to NEET youth the importance of lifelong learning, which is a key part of professional development, allowing you to continually improve to remain competitive in the labour market."

The learning outcomes of this module include a better understanding of scholarship programs and how to utilize them, insights into labour market needs, the importance of internships and volunteering, and knowledge of platforms and tools for online learning. This module is relevant as it prepares you for work with youth in the field.

Note: After the introductory part, conduct a digital pre-test/quiz found in the attachment.

5.1. Pre-module quiz

Topic 1: Scholarship Programs

1) What is a scholarship?

- a) A loan that must be repaid
- b) Financial support for education that does not need to be repaid
- c) Salary for work
- d) Financial aid exclusively for education

2) What is the most important criterion for receiving a scholarship?

- a) Social status of the family and the student
- b) Academic success, financial need, or specific circumstances related to the scholarship
- c) Location of the university
- d) Applying online

Topic 2: Labor Market and Internships

3) What does an internship entail?

- a) Voluntary work without compensation aimed at gaining experience
- b) Performing tasks under the supervision of more experienced workers to gain experience
- c) Permanent employment
- d) Temporary work with a high salary

4) What is the main goal of an internship?

- a) A quick path to permanent employment
- b) Only obtaining diplomas
- c) Gaining work experience and skills needed for the labour market
- d) Extending education without gaining new skills

Topic 3: Online and Lifelong Learning

5) What is lifelong learning?

- a) Learning exclusively during school age
- b) Learning only until the completion of university
- c) Online learning in a short time frame
- d) Continuous acquisition of new knowledge and skills throughout life

6) How does formal education differ from online learning?

- a) Formal education is always online
- b) Formal education has stricter requirements and quality control
- c) Online learning is always free
- d) Online learning is more recognized than formal education

5.2. Session 1: Scholarship programs

At the beginning, introduce participants to the session content and learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this session, mentors will be able to:

- Understand how to access and search for scholarship programs.
- Transfer knowledge to users on how to apply key elements of scholarship applications.

During the session, you can use the following guidelines, which need to be supplemented with current information:

The participants can work in groups and discuss the following opportunities together. Scholarship programs offer significant opportunities for young people, providing them with the chance to advance their education, broaden their horizons, and acquire new skills that will assist in their further educational and professional development. Scholarships are available for various levels of education, including primary, secondary, and higher education. These scholarships may be available at the community level, nationally, or through private foundations and international organizations.

Searching for scholarship programs

In this section, introduce users to current scholarship programs and present at least two online portals that publish calls for student and scholarship applications. Inform them which public bodies and companies issue scholarship calls and create a potential database of information on expected public calls.

Scholarships for Secondary Education:

Explain to participants that at the secondary education level, scholarships are primarily targeted at students with excellent academic performance or those from low-income families or socially vulnerable groups. Many governments offer scholarships as a means of encouraging further education and supporting those in need. Common criteria for these scholarships include academic success, social status, and results in competitions and extracurricular activities.

Additionally, there are scholarship programs specifically aimed at supporting students from rural areas, children from families with disabilities, and minority groups, with the goal of reducing social inequality in access to education.

Scholarships for higher education

Scholarships for university students are available at various levels and through private and international foundations. Examples of local scholarship programs include government scholarships and private funds.

Erasmus Program

One of the most well-known mobility programs for students is Erasmus. Funded by the European Union, this program enables students to spend part of their studies or internships in one of the EU member countries and some countries outside the EU. The Erasmus+ program also offers opportunities for higher education staff to participate in exchanges and professional development.

- **Mobility for Study Purposes:** This part of the program allows students to spend several months at foreign universities. During the exchange, students attend lectures, take exams, and earn ECTS credits recognized by their home university.

- Internships: The Erasmus+ program also offers students the opportunity to complete internships abroad, where they gain valuable work experience, develop professional skills, and build a network of international contacts.
- Joint Master Programs: The Erasmus Mundus program offers scholarships for students who want to pursue joint master's studies at multiple European universities. These programs are highly competitive and provide students with the opportunity to earn degrees recognized by multiple institutions from different countries.

Accessing Scholarships and the Application Process

The application process for scholarships varies depending on the program but generally requires meeting certain criteria such as academic success, socioeconomic status, and participation in community activities. Required documentation typically includes enrolment certificates, professor recommendations, a motivation letter, and often proof of language proficiency. (Here, focus on preparing applications and accompanying documents, with attention to archiving and storing documentation.)

For international scholarships, such as the Erasmus+ program, candidates are usually required to provide proof of English language proficiency, often in the form of a TOEFL or IELTS score, and have a high academic average. Candidates are also evaluated based on their motivation, the relevance of their studies to their professional development, and their potential to contribute to the community upon their return.

Note: At the end of this session, conduct the "Time Management" exercise found in the attachment. Explain that the purpose of the exercise is time management and setting priorities, which is crucial in tasks involving deadlines. Additionally, thoroughly cover: preparing for scholarship applications; practical creation of CVs and motivation letters; presentation of successful scholarship applications; preparation, sorting, and archiving of documents.

5.3. Session 2: Labor market internships, and volunteering

The session takes approx. 2 hours. At the beginning, introduce participants to the session content and learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this session, mentors will be able to:

- Explain how to search for job listings.
- Show users how to familiarize themselves with potential employers.
- Explain the key elements of job applications.
- Transfer knowledge and skills to users on how to present themselves to employers.
- Identify the key competencies when presenting to an employer.
- Explain the legal framework for volunteer, internship, and employment engagements.
- Explain how users can gain practical knowledge and skills needed for the labour market.
- Show users how to search for and access opportunities for retraining and further qualification.
- Introduce users to (self-)employment programs.

- Present users with the state of the labour market in terms of wages, job demand, and future professions.

The session continues with practical applications and case studies.

Employer search

Introduce participants to ways they can connect with employers. Show them that job applications are not limited to responding to public job postings and competitions but involve active participation in NGO activities, internships, volunteering, and more. Present at least three online portals that publish job postings. Additionally, inform participants about employment opportunities through job fairs and similar events. Explore all potential options.

Reading job postings, Creating a CV, and Cover letter

Show participants how to read and understand job postings. Explain that one CV and cover letter cannot be sent to all employers but should be tailored to the needs of the employer and the specific job posting. Create a list of potential job interview questions and conduct a practical exercise. (CV and cover letter have been prepared in the Modul 1.)

Labor market challenges

In this section, it is important to mention that the labour market is facing several challenges, including a high unemployment rate, especially among young people, and a mismatch between the education system and labour market needs. These factors significantly impact the country's economic development as well as the prospects of young people completing their education and entering the labour market. Note that a possible declining trend in unemployment is not always a reflection of new employment, but more often of people leaving to work in developed countries. The participant can collect statistical information about the local labour market, e.g. which is the largest portion of the unemployed for young or older people, who face a lack of employment opportunities and the need to acquire additional skills and experience to make them more competitive in the market.

Labor market structure

The labour market is often characterized by an uneven distribution of jobs between urban and rural areas. Most jobs are available in larger cities, while rural areas are affected by a lack of employment opportunities. At the same time, the service sector, particularly tourism, trade, and IT, is experiencing growth, while industrial sectors like agriculture and manufacturing are stagnating. One of the key challenges facing the labour market is the mismatch between the skills employers demand and those that candidates possess. The education system often does not keep pace with the labour market's needs, resulting in graduates frequently being inadequately prepared for available jobs. Employers increasingly require specific technical skills, foreign language proficiency, digital literacy, and practical experience, which many young people lack after completing formal education.

Migration and the departure of qualified workers

One of the most significant problems facing the labour market is the departure of young and highly educated professionals abroad in search of better living and working conditions. This phenomenon, known as the "brain drain," has serious consequences for the country's economic and social development. Young people, faced with a lack of opportunities, often choose

emigration, which reduces the availability of qualified labour and increases pressure on remaining resources.

Internships

Internships are crucial for gaining practical experience and developing professional skills, especially for young people who are finishing their formal education and entering the labour market for the first time. Internships allow young people to apply theoretical knowledge in real work situations, become familiar with work processes, and develop professional contacts.

Legal framework for internships

Prepare the legal framework that regulates labour relations. Present the most important points in the law. Note that internships are regulated by legislation that can be subject to change. Interns are entitled to a minimum allowance, but this is often not enough to cover basic living expenses, which may discourage many young people from applying for these positions. Given that internships often do not guarantee employment after the completion of the internship, many young people face uncertainty. However, employers who engage interns have the opportunity to assess their skills and potential, and later employ them in permanent positions. Additionally, young people who have completed internships have an advantage when seeking employment, as they have gained practical experience that employers often require.

Internship programs and volunteer work

Explain that there are various programs that support internships, including those funded by the government, international organizations, and the private sector. Additionally, there is a growing number of initiatives in the private sector, particularly in the IT industry, which offers young talent internships to gain experience and skills needed to work in rapidly growing tech sectors. IT companies often offer internships as an introduction to permanent employment, which is an important step for young professionals in this field. Volunteer work plays a significant role in societal development, especially among young people who want to contribute to the community, gain experience, and develop skills. Although volunteering is unpaid, it provides an opportunity for personal and professional development and can be a stepping stone to future employment.

It is very important to mention at least two calls for internship programs published by the Employment Service and other institutions or non-governmental organizations.

Legal framework

Inform participants that volunteer work is often regulated by laws that define the rights and obligations of volunteers as well as the organizations that engage them. Volunteers are entitled to insurance against injuries during volunteer work, and they can receive a certificate of experience, which can be useful when seeking employment. Additionally, the law recognizes different types of volunteering, including short-term and long-term volunteer projects.

Social media for employment purposes

Explain in detail how social media can be used for job-seeking. Present ways of communicating with employers via LinkedIn, YouTube, and similar networks and forums.

After the module, conduct a case study illustrating the topic through practical scenarios found in the attachment. It is also necessary to practically familiarize participants with the

differences between internships, volunteering, and employment. Don't forget to explore and present the financial framework (taxes, contributions, and other obligations) for employees, interns, and volunteers.

The content should cover checking CVs, cover letters, and other topics mentioned in the detailed curriculum.

5.4. Session 3: Online learning and lifelong learning

The session takes approx. 1 hour. At the beginning, introduce participants to the content and learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of this part, mentors will be able to:

- Explain to users the importance of lifelong learning;
- Present users with ways to acquire education (formal, non-formal, informal);
- Practically introduce users to at least three platforms for online learning;
- Explain the advantages and challenges of online education;
- Introduce users to methods for evaluating educational programs (based on the recognition of certificates/diplomas).

During the session, you can use the following guidelines, which should be supplemented with current information:

Online learning

Online learning enables users to learn anywhere and anytime, eliminating traditional barriers related to physical presence and time constraints. Referring platforms such as Coursera, edX, Udemy, and Khan Academy offer hundreds of courses in various fields, allowing users to learn about topics ranging from technology, business, languages to art and science (Note: The engaged mentor could practically introduce online platforms, as well as other methods of online learning, e.g., Zoom, Google Meet). Online courses are especially useful for people who want to improve their professional skills, retrain, or expand their knowledge in a particular area of interest.

The flexibility of online learning is one of its greatest advantages, allowing students to adjust the pace and method of learning to their needs and obligations. Additionally, online learning often provides access to world-renowned experts and universities, enriching the experience and providing high-quality education available to a wider audience.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is a continuous process of acquiring knowledge and skills throughout one's life, whether through formal or informal education. The dynamic changes in the labour market and the rapid advancement of technology require individuals to constantly adapt and improve to remain competitive and relevant in their careers.

The concept of lifelong learning includes not only formal education, such as courses, certifications, and university programs but also informal ways of learning, such as seminars, workshops, mentoring, volunteering, and self-study. Through lifelong learning, individuals develop professional, technical, and soft skills, which help them adapt to changes and advance in their careers.

Cybersecurity

Introduce participants to ways they can protect themselves in the online space, beyond classic antivirus programs. Familiarize them with the Data Protection Act, and advise them on which data should not be publicly shared. Inform them of the most common personal data abuses, as well as how to recognize online frauds. It is very important to introduce them to the use of web and online banking, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of this type of payment.

Note: At the end of the module, conduct a practical exercise on using online education platforms. Additionally, administer the digital final test provided in the appendix.

CONCLUSION

Summarize the key parts of the workshop, lessons learned, and highlight the main takeaways in approx. 30 minutes. Offer participants time for questions and gather their feedback. An online evaluation of the workshop can be conducted at the end, followed by the distribution of certificates to participants.

These are the key points to be presented at the conclusion of the workshop:

- 1) Scholarship Programs – There are numerous opportunities for scholarships in BiH and abroad, and a successful application requires thorough preparation and a clear career plan.
- 2) Labor Market – Adapting to changes in the labour market through the development of specific technical and soft skills is crucial for employment.
- 3) Internships and Volunteering – Practical experience and social engagement through these forms of work help young people improve their CVs and become more competitive in the job market.
- 4) Online and Lifelong Learning – Continuous improvement through online platforms and lifelong learning is becoming a necessity in a dynamic business environment.

For all teaching units, closely follow the developed methodology that is part of this curriculum. You may supplement it with up to 10% of your own content in the form of case study exercises and/or current information.

5.5. Case study for mentors

Introduction

Introduce NEET youth to the labour market and the opportunities available to them. You should know that NEET individuals often lack motivation, their self-confidence is low, they give up quickly, and in many cases. Some may have applied for a job but were unsuccessful. Therefore, it is essential to prepare well for each mentoring meeting. Create an individual work plan based on the NEET profile you are working with.

The main goal of mentoring is to help NEET individuals become aware of the available services and programs for education and employment and motivate them to actively engage in job or education searches.

Work section:

- 1) Discover their interests and goals: use the attached exercise.

- 2) Inform them about the available employment, self-employment, and education programs (requalification and additional qualification).
- 3) Inform them about opportunities for part-time jobs.
- 4) Develop an action and follow-up plan.

Key elements of the process

Once you have identified the goals and interests, present the following to the NEET youth:

1) Available employment and Self-employment programs

Explain that throughout the year, various institutions issue 5-6 calls for the employment of youth, long-term unemployed individuals, people with disabilities, veterans, and similar groups. Familiarize yourself with these calls to provide NEET youth with accurate information. Go through the rules, procedures, and application process together. If the call is open during the mentoring process, prepare and submit the application together to the relevant institution.

2) Self-Employment Programs

Introduce NEET individuals to current self-employment programs issued by institutions, companies, and the civil sector. Additionally, many foundations have ongoing calls for starting independent business ventures. Research and gather information about these calls. If a call opens during the mentoring process, prepare and submit the application together. Consult with experts in entrepreneurship about the process of business registration and market development for new businesses. Together with the NEET, visit the relevant offices to gather information about registering a business entity or trade. Visit NGOs and development agencies that deal with business development or have funds for business growth, where you can receive adequate information. Familiarize yourself with these calls in detail to transfer accurate information to NEET individuals.

3) Requalification and additional qualification programs

In addition to employment and self-employment calls, there are periodic calls for requalification and additional qualification (for example: CNC operator, business accounting, training for central heating installation, training for photovoltaic panel installation...). Familiarize yourself with these calls in detail to provide NEET individuals with accurate information. If a call opens during the mentoring process, prepare the application together.

4) Part-time job opportunities

Inform NEET individuals about opportunities for part-time jobs. Search for job platforms. Introduce them to occasional job possibilities (e.g., delivery driver).

5) Action and Follow-Up plan

Create a detailed activity plan for (self-)employment and/or requalification/additional qualification with deadlines, and follow the NEET individuals throughout the mentoring process. Offer all necessary support, especially in resolving administrative obstacles. Explain how to write requests, how to pay fees, which institutions provide specific documentation, and so on.

5.6. Role playing exercise

Purpose: The exercise is designed to provide mentors with the opportunity to put the recently learned knowledge about development of life, business and communication skills to practice by reenacting real life situations with NEETs.

Goals:

- Increase the awareness of NEET youth regarding real-life situations.
- Develop the mentor's skills in motivation and communication.
- Help the young person recognize their own abilities and potential.
- Explore life opportunities and resources within the community.

Notes during the role play process:

The mentor is the person leading the conversation and motivating the NEET youth. There is a real possibility that the young person may resist cooperation and express doubt. Therefore, it is essential that the mentor prepares well for this aspect of the task, using their skills in motivation, creativity, and presentation.

- **Patience and understanding:** The mentor should remain calm and demonstrate empathy for the challenges the young person is facing.
- **Goal:** The mentor's aim is to motivate the young person through specific activities, such as:
 - Visiting the post office to learn how to send documents.
 - Opening a bank account.
 - Enrolling in an entrepreneurship course or similar programs.
- **Use of practical examples:** The mentor provides real-life examples and specific opportunities to illustrate the value of these activities.

Preparation:

Mentors should prepare an online platform where they can share screen content. Additionally, it's necessary to gather promotional materials and information about local resources (banks, post offices, educational opportunities, registration processes, etc.). If the task involves online registration, mentors should test the application process before presenting it to NEET youth.

For 1-on-1, offline work, the space can be a meeting room, hub, or an open area. If the mentoring process is offline, NEET youth should be taken to relevant locations (banks, post offices, etc.) that are part of the mentoring focus.

Exercise Flow (Role play):

- **The conversation begins:** The mentor and the young person start a dialogue. The mentor tries to motivate them for a specific task, such as going to the post office to send documents or encouraging them to open a bank account. The young person resists, repeatedly giving negative responses like, "Why do I need this?", "There's no way this will help me", "Everything is pointless."
- **Mentor strategies:**

- **Empathy:** The mentor shows understanding for the young person's fears and insecurities. ("I totally get how you feel. It's perfectly normal to be worried...")
- **Clarity:** The mentor provides clear, realistic examples of how these activities can be helpful. ("If you do this, see how much you can achieve... For example, opening an e-account in the bank gives you access to...")
- **Support:** The mentor offers concrete steps and assistance in completing these activities. ("You'll need a bank account, whether you're working from home or when you get a job in the future...")
- **Motivation:** The mentor aims to boost the young person's confidence with encouraging statements, e.g., "We all start small, but every victory matters." ("Opening an account can help you manage your money and give you access to important resources. Do you realize how useful that could be?")

Key elements to convey to NEET youth during the role play:

- **Basic administrative terms and roles:**
 - **Post office services:** Explain the various services the young person can access at the post office (sending and receiving packages, paying bills, buying stamps, etc.).
 - **Understanding basic terms:** How to address an envelope, registered mail, return receipt, bulk mail; Payment slip, payment instructions, recipient, sender, purpose of payment, etc.
- **How to fill out a payment slip:**
 - **Example slips:** Bring real examples of slips typically used for utility services, taxes, tuition fees, or other obligations.
 - **What goes in each field:** Explain every field on the payment slip (name and surname, address, amount, purpose of payment, account number of the recipient, reference number, payment code).
 - **Importance of accuracy:** Provide examples of consequences when data is entered incorrectly (e.g., money not reaching the right account).
- **Post office procedure:**
 - **What to bring:** For example, ID card, money or card, a completed payment slip (if they already have one), and any other necessary documents.
 - **Queue and waiting:** Explain how the queue system works, using numbers (if there's a ticket system), and how to interact with staff.
 - **Paying for services:** How to pay for services, the difference between cash and card payments.
- **Opening a bank account:**
 - **Required documentation:** ID card, identification number, proof of residence, possibly proof of income.
 - **Types of accounts:** Savings account, current account, cash and non-cash payment cards.

- **Bank services:** Online banking, mobile apps, account management, account maintenance fees, transactions.
- **Practical advice:** How to read bank statements, set daily limits on cards, report card loss or suspicious activity.
- **Understanding security:**
 - **Basic precautions:** How to protect personal information when filling out slips and handling cards (never share your PIN, verify the accuracy of transactions).
 - **Using electronic services:** Explain online payments and the benefits of electronic banking (as well as the risks).
- **Practical exercises:**
 - **Simulations and hands-on experiences:** If possible, take young people through these processes with real-life simulations – visit the post office, fill out a real payment slip, or open a bank account with the mentor’s guidance.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Depending on the needs of the youth, the mentor should explore other essential skills NEET youth may require and adapt the situations accordingly. For instance, they may need to know how and where to obtain a passport, driver’s license, change their last name (in the case of marriage), notarize documents (diplomas, ID cards, etc.), obtain a tax certificate, and more.

5.7. Training for mentors

Name of the training	Training of mentors
Short description of the training:	<i>Providing practical skills to mentors who will work with target users in the community with the aim of introducing NEET youth (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) to available support systems in the community.</i>
Duration	<i>Total training duration: 6 hours, excluding breaks.</i>
Specific goals	6) <i>Develop knowledge and skills for mentors to provide up-to-date information to selected users (NEET youth) in terms of life skills.</i> 7) <i>Improve the knowledge and skills of mentors who will work with NEET youth in fields such as the availability of scholarship programs, (self-)employment, internships, the labour market, and online education.</i>
Learning outcomes:	Unit 1: Scholarship programs <i>Learning Outcome(s): By the end of this section, mentors will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Understand how to access and search for scholarship programs;</i> ○ <i>Transfer knowledge to users on how to apply key elements when applying for scholarship programs.</i> Unit 2: Labor market, internships, and practice <i>Learning Outcome(s): By the end of this section, mentors will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Explain to users how to search for job postings;</i> ○ <i>Describe ways users can get acquainted with potential employers;</i> ○ <i>Introduce users to key elements of job applications;</i> ○ <i>Convey knowledge and skills to users for presenting themselves to employers;</i> ○ <i>Identify key competencies for employer presentations;</i>

Name of the training	Training of mentors	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Explain the legal framework of volunteer, internship, and employment engagement;○ Clarify to users how they can gain practical skills needed for the labour market;○ Familiarize users with opportunities for retraining and further education;○ Introduce users to (self-)employment programs;○ Present the state of the labour market regarding wage levels, job demand, and future job trends. <p>Unit 3: Online education and lifelong learning</p> <p>Learning Outcome(s): By the end of this section, mentors will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Explain the importance of lifelong learning to users;○ Present ways to acquire education (formal, non-formal, informal);○ Practically introduce users to at least three online learning platforms;○ Explain the benefits and challenges of online education;○ Teach users how to evaluate educational programs (based on certification recognition/diplomas).	
Training content	Name of training unit	Duration
	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Introduction of the topic, objective and learning outcome of the module○ Description of why this module is relevant to the overall objective of the activity○ Digital quiz to initiate active participation and test the “baseline” knowledge	30 minutes
	<p>Unit 1: Scholarship programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Types of scholarship programs (state, private, international, exchanges);○ Searching for scholarship programs; Introduction to online platforms for scholarship search; Using scholarship portals;○ Preparing for applying to scholarship programs; Practical CV and motivation letter preparation;○ Presentation of successful scholarship applications;○ Document preparation, sorting, and archiving;○ Deadline tracking; Time management exercise – "Urgent vs Important" matrix	1 Hour
	<p>Unit 2: Labor market, internships, and practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Searching for employers and job postings; Introduce users to job search methods and online employment portals;○ Introduce users to job fairs;○ Key aspects of human relationships in organizations; Present the importance of respecting diversity in organizational settings;○ Clarify the differences between internships, practice, and employment; Practically present employment contracts, occasional work contracts, and internship contracts; Highlight key	2 Hours

Name of the training	Training of mentors	
	<p>elements and obligations upon signing the contract;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explain the legal framework of employment; Practically present the expected financial compensation for each type of engagement; ○ Explain the legal employment possibilities for students; ○ Present the importance of volunteering as a job opportunity; ○ Demonstrate how to use social networks/online methods for presenting oneself to employers – LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.; Introduce users to how important social networks are during the job search process (what to post, what kind of photos, names on social networks, etc.); ○ Collecting references; ○ Practical CV and motivation letter creation; ○ Present co-financing employment programs and self-employment programs; ○ Introduce users to key/common questions in job interviews; ○ Introduce users to the professional and technical skills expected from interns; ○ Familiarize users with labour market trends; What are the fast-growing and fast-declining jobs; ○ Practical job interview simulation; ○ Practical stress management and self-confidence development exercise during job interviews. 	
	<p>Unit 3: Online education and lifelong learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advantages and challenges of online education; ○ Searching for online and offline courses; ○ Presentation of online platforms for online education; ○ Recognizing poor-quality courses; ○ Cybersecurity in the online space; What information should be publicly shared? ○ Acquiring and validating certificates; Clarifying the difference between acquired knowledge and received certification; ○ The importance of combining practice and learning; ○ Evaluating education based on ratings; ○ Practically introducing users to at least three online learning platforms; ○ Practical application exercise for a course / If possible, conduct an online registration for an online/offline course 	1 Hour
	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summarising the workshop ○ Key takeaways 	30 minutes

Name of the training	Training of mentors	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Q&A ○ Feedback collection ○ Certificate distribution 	
Methodology:	<p>Unit 1: Scholarship programs Methodology: Interactive discussion, Power Point presentation, case study analysis, practical exercise.</p> <p>Unit 2: Labor market, internships, and practice Methodology: Interactive discussion, Power Point presentation, case study analysis, practical exercise.</p> <p>Unit 3: Online education and lifelong learning Methodology: Interactive discussion, Power Point presentation, practical exercise.</p>	

	Time	Content
Agenda:	To be decided by the trainer (and depending on group engagement)	<p>Introduction and logistical information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to the topic, basic terms, objectives, and learning outcomes ○ Pre-test of topic knowledge <p>Session I: Define terms, Theoretical framework, Practical framework, Test/Quiz</p> <p>Break</p> <p>Session II: Define terms, Theoretical framework, Practical framework, Test/Quiz</p> <p>Break</p> <p>Session III: Define terms, Theoretical framework, Practical framework, Test/Quiz</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Post - test ○ Summarize the day ○ Questions ○ Evaluation and feedback ○ Certificate distribution
Trainer qualifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum degree/university degree in social sciences; ○ Practical knowledge and professional experience in working with youth; ○ At least 5 years of professional experience in leading training sessions; ○ Excellent communication, moderation, mentoring, and presentation skills; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Experience working with and understanding youth needs; ○ Previous experience as a trainer in the relevant areas.
Comment:	<p>The proposed topics serve as a framework and should be adapted to the needs of the participants, their knowledge absorption, skills, etc. Participants should receive tools to more easily master the topics covered.</p>

5.8. Final quiz

Topic 1: Scholarship Programs

- 1) **Who can apply for a scholarship?**
 - a) Only students with excellent grades
 - b) Only government employees
 - c) Anyone, regardless of the requirements
 - d) **Students who meet the criteria set by the institution or organization**
- 2) **What is required to apply for a scholarship?**
 - a) Application by e-mail
 - b) Application through family connections only
 - c) **Completing an application and submitting the required documentation, and relevant recommendations**
 - d) Recommendations from employees of the institution

Topic 2: Labor Market

- 3) **What does the term "labour market" mean?**
 - a) A place where products are sold
 - b) **A place where employers seek workers and workers seek jobs**
 - c) A place where workers sell their products
 - d) A place where financial transactions are conducted
- 4) **What is the primary purpose of an internship?**
 - a) Volunteering without any benefit
 - b) Securing permanent employment
 - c) **Gaining practical skills and work experience**
 - d) A paid vacation during studies
- 5) **What factors can influence the demand for workers?**

- a) Personal experiences
 - b) Technological changes and economic conditions
 - c) Tourism
 - d) Workers' political views
- 6) **What is the best way to prepare for a competitive labour market?**
- a) Obtain a variety of certifications and qualifications
 - b) Focus solely on academic achievements, and research labour market
 - c) Rely on personal connections and networking only
 - d) Research and wait for job opportunities

Topic 3: Online and Lifelong Learning

- 7) **What is the main advantage of online learning?**
- a) Mandatory attendance in the classroom
 - b) Flexibility in time and place of learning
 - c) Higher cost compared to traditional education
 - d) E-learning on online platforms (ZOOM, Google Meet etc)
- 8) **What does the concept of lifelong learning entail?**
- a) Learning only during formal schooling
 - b) Learning only at the university level
 - c) Learning only via the internet
 - d) Continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills throughout life
- 9) **Why is lifelong learning important in the modern labour market?**
- a) Because it facilitates employment in government institutions
 - b) Because it enables adaptation to rapid changes in technology and industry
 - c) Because it provides formal qualifications
 - d) Because it is part of basic education

6. Module 6 – Promoting digital inclusion strategies to NEETs

Introduction to Digital Skills

In today's world, where technology plays a crucial role in all aspects of our lives, digital skills are essential for personal and professional success. Every day, we are exposed to digital tools—ranging from simple software to complex systems for data and project management. Proper utilization of these tools increases productivity and competitiveness in the job market.

This module aims to prepare mentors to identify gaps in basic digital skills among participants and help them develop the technical capabilities needed in the modern work environment. The program is designed for participants to engage in hands-on practice, and therefore, they will need a computer, laptop, or tablet. (In this module we provide many techniques and guidelines, and the trainer can choose of these based on the local conditions, there is no need to use all of the suggested exercises.)

6.1. Pre-module quiz

- 1) **Which of the following best describes “digital inclusion” in the context of NEETs?**
 - a) Providing everyone with free laptops
 - b) Ensuring NEETs have equal access, skills, and opportunities to benefit from digital tools
 - c) Replacing all in-person training with fully online programs
 - d) Focusing solely on urban youth with internet access
- 2) **Why might digital literacy be crucial for NEETs seeking employment?**
 - a) Most jobs today require basic computer and internet skills
 - b) Employers prefer candidates with no digital knowledge
 - c) It allows them to avoid communication with employers
 - d) It has little relevance for rural job opportunities
- 3) **When you hear “identifying gaps in digital skills,” what first comes to mind?**
 - a) Testing advanced programming competencies only
 - b) Figuring out which core digital competencies a NEET lacks
 - c) Focusing strictly on smartphone usage
 - d) Ignoring technical details and focusing on soft skills
- 4) **Which of the following do you think is a primary barrier preventing NEETs from accessing online learning platforms?**
 - a) Lack of interest in any form of skill development
 - b) Limited or no internet connectivity in rural areas
 - c) Availability of too many free courses
 - d) Employers discouraging online learning

- 5) **What do you believe is the easiest first step for NEETs to start enhancing digital competencies?**
 - a) Immediately learn advanced coding or cybersecurity
 - b) Familiarize themselves with basic office software (Word, Excel)
 - c) Avoid text-based communication and focus on videos
 - d) Outsource digital tasks to others
- 6) **Which statement best reflects your current view on freelancing as a potential income source for NEETs?**
 - a) It's only suitable for highly skilled IT professionals
 - b) It can be started with basic digital skills and grown over time
 - c) It requires a formal degree in web development
 - d) It's too risky due to inconsistent earnings
- 7) **If a NEET lacks confidence in their digital skills, what is one factor you think would motivate them to start learning online?**
 - a) Immediate high income guaranteed
 - b) Access to user-friendly tutorials and supportive mentors
 - c) Online courses that are lengthy and technical
 - d) Fear of being left behind
- 8) **How important is it for NEETs to learn about online safety and privacy measures (e.g., secure passwords, avoiding scams)?**
 - a) Not important — these issues are rare
 - b) Moderately important — some might need it
 - c) Very important — lack of awareness can lead to security risks
 - d) It's only important for advanced users

6.2. Identification of gaps in digital skills

6.2.1. What are digital tools and why are they important?

Digital tools are technologies and software that enable the efficient completion of tasks. This includes programs for text editing, spreadsheets, data management, and project management. For the purposes of this plan, we will categorize digital tools into three main categories:

- 1) **Productivity Software** – Tools such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs are used for working with texts, spreadsheets, and presentations.
- 2) **Communication Platforms** – Email, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams facilitate effective internal and external communication.

- 3) **Information Technology** – The internet serves as a means for searching and exchanging information, which is the foundation of digital literacy.

Participants in the educational program will learn not only how to use these tools but also how to integrate them effectively into their work activities.

6.2.2. The importance of digital skills in the job market

Today, digital skills are a key component for success in any job position, regardless of the industry. Employers expect employees to be able to use digital tools to perform everyday tasks. Mentors should prepare participants to:

- Send and receive emails, organize folders, and schedule meetings in calendars.
- Create and edit documents using software such as Microsoft Word.
- Search for information online and manage data in programs like Excel.

The ability to work with these tools is crucial not only for obtaining a job but also for career advancement. Employees who master these tools are better equipped to face changes in the job market.

6.2.3. Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion ensures that everyone has access to technology and the opportunity to learn how to use it, regardless of their prior experience. Many people who have not yet worked with technology may find digital skills challenging or unattainable. Therefore, the role of mentors is crucial in ensuring equal access to educational materials and helping these individuals overcome initial fears and uncertainties.

Educational programs focused on digital inclusion provide the foundations of digital literacy and ensure that no one is left behind.

6.2.4. Identification and analysis of gaps in digital skills

One of the main tasks for mentors is to identify gaps in the participants' knowledge. These gaps can limit their ability to fully leverage their potential in the job market. Common areas where gaps in digital skills arise include:

- **Basic Computer Skills** – Working with operating systems, software, and the internet.
- **Communication Skills** – Effective use of email and other communication tools.
- **Data Management** – Basics of data analysis, working with spreadsheets, and managing databases.
- **Security and Privacy** – Knowledge of safe internet usage and protection of personal information.

To effectively identify these gaps, it is beneficial to include a digital skills analysis as part of the educational program. This analysis will allow participants to discover which basic digital skills they already possess and where there is room for improvement. Common tasks that participants perform in their daily lives or work should be analysed, even if they may not recognize them as part of digital competencies. This exercise will help not only to identify weaknesses but also to boost participants' confidence by showing them what they already excel at.

Subsequently, mentors should utilize the results of this analysis to target the reinforcement of participants' digital skills, helping them better prepare for the challenges of the modern job market. The skills analysis will provide a clear overview of which areas to focus on during instruction and how to gradually develop the necessary knowledge and abilities. At the end of the workshop, it will be evaluated whether participants have made any progress in developing their skills, enabling mentors to better assess the effectiveness of the instruction and tailor it to the individual needs of participants.

In this way, mentors can effectively support the personal and professional growth of participants and ensure that they are prepared for the demands of the digital world.

6.2.5. Exercise – Digital skills analysis

Checklist	Yes	No
Can you attach a file (like a photo or document) to an email?		
Do you know how to create a new folder on your computer to organize files?		
Can you use Google to find specific information, like job listings or directions?		
Have you used Facebook, Instagram, or other social media?		
Do you know how to create a simple PowerPoint presentation with text and images?		
Can you download and install an app or program on your phone or computer?		
Do you know how to apply for jobs online?		

6.2.6. Group discussion

The group discussion will focus on guiding participants to reflect on the digital skills that are essential for most job positions today. The mentor's role will be to emphasize practical, everyday tasks that participants perform without realizing how crucial their digital skills are for fulfilling work responsibilities. The discussion will be structured to help participants understand how even basic digital skills can open doors to new job opportunities.

Discussion Process

The discussion will begin with several questions that will help participants think about the role of digital skills in the job market in general. The aim is to encourage participants to recognize the skills they are already using and which ones they could further develop.

Example Questions:

- What digital skills do you consider essential for the current job market?
- What job positions have you noticed that require the use of technologies such as email, Microsoft Word, or the Internet?
- What digital skills would you like to learn to enhance your chances of obtaining or retaining a job?

6.3. Basic digital tools

6.3.1. Introduction to key digital tools

Mentors will provide participants with knowledge of essential digital tools and platforms necessary to enhance their employability. Participants will focus on tools commonly used when applying for jobs. They will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with these tools through practical exercises, enabling them to effectively use technology in a professional environment.

6.3.2. Word processors

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word is a widely used word processing software that plays a vital role in creating, editing, and formatting documents across various professional and educational settings. Mastering Word is essential for effective written communication, enabling users to produce high-quality reports, letters, resumes, and other documents with ease. The software offers a range of features, including spell check, grammar suggestions, and formatting tools, which help enhance the clarity and professionalism of written work. Additionally, Word's collaboration features allow multiple users to work on the same document simultaneously, facilitating teamwork and streamlining projects. Its user-friendly interface and extensive templates make it accessible for users of all skill levels, from beginners to advanced writers. Understanding how to utilize Microsoft Word efficiently can significantly improve productivity and organization, making it a crucial tool for anyone looking to succeed in today's digital landscape. Overall, proficiency in Microsoft Word not only boosts one's writing capabilities but also opens doors to numerous professional opportunities.

- **Use for job applications:** Word is used for creating resumes, cover letters, and other professional documents. With templates, users can quickly assemble professionally formatted documents.
- **Professional formatting:** Participants will learn to use styles, set paragraphs, headings, headers, and footers.
- **Exercise:** Participants will write a short text in Microsoft Word. During the exercise, they will practice various formatting techniques and export the document to PDF.

Google Docs

Google Docs is a cloud-based word processing tool that revolutionizes how we create, edit, and collaborate on documents. One of its standout features is real-time collaboration, allowing multiple users to work on the same document simultaneously from different locations, making it an ideal choice for teams and groups. Google Docs also offers seamless integration with other Google Workspace applications, such as Google Sheets and Google Slides, enhancing productivity and streamlining workflow. Users benefit from automatic saving, which ensures that no work is lost and allows for easy access to documents from any device with an internet connection. The platform also provides a variety of templates, formatting options, and comment features that facilitate effective communication and feedback. Moreover, Google Docs supports various file formats, making it easy to share documents with others, regardless of their preferred software. With its user-friendly interface and extensive capabilities, Google Docs is an essential tool for anyone looking to enhance their writing and collaboration skills in today's digital

environment. Mastering Google Docs not only improves individual productivity but also fosters effective teamwork, making it a vital resource for students, professionals, and anyone engaged in collaborative projects.

- **Create and edit documents from anywhere:** Participants can work on documents from any device with an internet connection.
- **Real-Time collaboration:** Multiple users can work on the same document simultaneously, making it ideal for team collaboration or feedback.
- **Exercise:** Participants will create a short text in Google Docs, practicing features like sharing and commenting.

6.3.3. Spreadsheets

Microsoft Excel

Microsoft Excel is a spreadsheet application widely used across various industries for data analysis, organization, and visualization. Its robust features allow users to perform complex calculations, create detailed budgets, and analyse data sets with ease. Excel's formula and function capabilities enable users to automate calculations and streamline data management tasks, enhancing efficiency and accuracy. The application also offers powerful data visualization tools, including charts and graphs, which help users present information clearly and effectively. Additionally, Excel supports data manipulation through features like pivot tables, allowing users to summarize and analyse large volumes of data quickly. Its compatibility with various data formats and integration with other Microsoft Office applications further enhances its versatility. With the increasing reliance on data-driven decision-making in today's world, mastering Microsoft Excel is essential for professionals and students alike. Whether you are managing a personal budget, conducting research, or preparing reports, Excel equips you with the tools to organize and analyse your data effectively, making it an indispensable skill in the modern workplace.

- **Data management and analysis:** Participants will learn to create spreadsheets, and sort, and filter data, which can be useful for tracking job applications, for example.
- **Exercise:** Participants will create a job application tracking spreadsheet, including interview dates and employer responses.

Google Sheets

Google Sheets is a versatile cloud-based spreadsheet application that facilitates collaboration and data management in real-time. As part of Google Workspace, it allows users to create, edit, and share spreadsheets seamlessly, making it ideal for teamwork and remote collaboration. One of its standout features is the ability to work simultaneously with others, enabling multiple users to edit and comment on a document in real-time, which enhances productivity and communication.

Google Sheets offers a range of functions and formulas similar to those found in traditional spreadsheet applications, allowing users to perform calculations, analyse data, and create dynamic reports. Additionally, it provides various data visualization tools, such as charts and graphs, to help users represent information clearly and effectively.

The application is easily accessible from any device with an internet connection, ensuring that users can work on their spreadsheets anytime, anywhere. Its integration with other Google

services, such as Google Forms and Google Drive, further enhances its functionality, allowing for streamlined data collection and storage.

As data-driven decision-making becomes increasingly important in today's digital landscape, mastering Google Sheets is essential for professionals and students alike. Whether you are tracking expenses, analysing survey results, or creating project timelines, Google Sheets equips you with the tools to manage and present your data efficiently and collaboratively.

- **Real-Time Collaboration:** Participants will learn how to share spreadsheets and work on them simultaneously with others.
- **Exercise:** Participants will create a simple budget spreadsheet, which they will review and edit collaboratively.

6.3.4. Presentations

Microsoft PowerPoint

Microsoft PowerPoint is a presentation software that plays a crucial role in effective communication across various fields, including education and business. Learning to use PowerPoint equips individuals with valuable skills that enhance their professional development. With its ability to convey ideas clearly and visually, PowerPoint helps users create compelling presentations that capture their audience's attention. Mastering this tool not only sets individuals apart in the job market but also fosters creativity and design skills. Furthermore, PowerPoint enhances learning and understanding by organizing and summarizing information effectively. It encourages collaboration and teamwork, essential components of many professional environments. In today's digital world, having proficiency in PowerPoint can significantly improve one's online presence and networking opportunities. Its user-friendly nature and accessibility make it an ideal tool for learners at all levels. Overall, understanding Microsoft PowerPoint is an essential skill that can lead to numerous opportunities for growth and success in both personal and professional settings.

- **Creating presentations:** Participants will learn how to build visually appealing presentations.
- **Exercise:** Participants will prepare a presentation about their skills and experience, which they will then present to the group.

Google Slides

Google Slides is a cloud-based presentation tool that allows users to create, edit, and share dynamic presentations effortlessly. As part of Google Workspace, it enables real-time collaboration, making it easy for teams to work together from different locations. Users can seamlessly contribute to presentations, providing feedback and making edits simultaneously, which enhances teamwork and creativity.

One of the key benefits of Google Slides is its user-friendly interface, which provides a variety of templates, themes, and design elements to help users create visually appealing presentations without the need for advanced design skills. Additionally, it offers various features such as transitions, animations, and the ability to embed multimedia elements like videos and images, which can enhance the overall impact of a presentation.

Google Slides is easily accessible from any device with internet connectivity, allowing users to work on their presentations anytime and anywhere. Its integration with other Google services, such as Google Drive, ensures that all presentations are automatically saved and can be easily shared with others via a simple link.

In today's fast-paced digital world, being proficient in Google Slides is essential for effective communication and presentation skills. Whether you're presenting to colleagues, pitching ideas to clients, or sharing information in a classroom setting, Google Slides provides the tools you need to deliver engaging and professional presentations.

- **Exercise:** Participants will collaboratively create a presentation on a chosen topic and practice sharing and providing feedback.

6.3.5. Communication tools

Email (Gmail, Outlook)

Email has become an essential communication tool in both personal and professional settings, with applications like Gmail and Outlook leading the way. These platforms offer robust features that enhance productivity and facilitate effective communication.

Gmail, known for its user-friendly interface, integrates seamlessly with other Google services, such as Google Drive and Google Calendar, making it easy to manage tasks and collaborate with others. With powerful search capabilities, users can quickly find important messages, and features like labels and filters help organize their inbox efficiently. Additionally, Gmail offers advanced security measures, such as two-factor authentication and spam protection, ensuring that users' information remains safe.

On the other hand, Outlook is a comprehensive email client that provides not only email management but also calendar, task, and contact features. Its integration with Microsoft Office applications makes it an excellent choice for businesses, allowing users to easily schedule meetings, manage projects, and share documents. Outlook's focused inbox feature helps users prioritize important emails, while its powerful organizational tools streamline workflow.

Both Gmail and Outlook are accessible on multiple devices, enabling users to stay connected and manage their communications on the go. Proficiency in these email applications is crucial in today's digital age, as effective email communication is vital for collaboration, networking, and professional development. Whether for personal use or in a corporate environment, mastering these platforms can significantly enhance one's productivity and communication skills.

- **Job applications:** Participants will learn how to effectively use email for sending resumes and cover letters.
- **Exercise:** Participants will create a job application email and provide each other feedback on its format and content.

Google Meet

Google Meet is a video conferencing tool that has become indispensable for remote communication and collaboration. Designed to facilitate virtual meetings, it offers a user-friendly interface that allows participants to connect seamlessly from anywhere in the world. With features like high-definition video and clear audio, Google Meet enhances the quality of online interactions, making it ideal for business meetings, educational purposes, and social gatherings.

One of the standout features of Google Meet is its integration with other Google Workspace applications, such as Google Calendar and Google Drive. This integration enables users to schedule meetings directly from their calendars, share files effortlessly, and collaborate in real-time during video calls. The platform supports a wide range of devices, ensuring that users can join meetings from desktops, laptops, tablets, or smartphones.

Security is a top priority for Google Meet, which employs advanced encryption and other safety measures to protect user data. The platform also allows hosts to control meeting settings, such as muting participants and managing access, ensuring a secure and organized meeting environment.

With its ability to accommodate large groups and provide features like screen sharing, live captions, and virtual backgrounds, Google Meet is a versatile tool that caters to various needs. In today's increasingly remote world, mastering Google Meet is essential for effective communication, collaboration, and maintaining professional relationships.

- **Exercise:** Participants will practice a mock video interview and receive feedback from others on their presentation and communication skills.

6.3.6. Professional networking and job search

Participants will now explore LinkedIn, learning how to use it effectively for professional networking, creating a standout CV, writing a compelling cover letter, and searching for job opportunities.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform that plays a crucial role in today's job market and career development. With over 900 million users worldwide, it serves as a dynamic space for professionals to connect, share industry insights, and showcase their skills and experiences. The platform is designed to facilitate networking, making it easier for individuals to build relationships with colleagues, industry leaders, and potential employers.

One of the key features of LinkedIn is the ability to create a personalized profile that highlights a user's education, work history, skills, and accomplishments. This profile acts as a digital resume, allowing users to present themselves professionally to a global audience. Additionally, LinkedIn provides tools for users to share content, such as articles and posts, which can enhance their visibility and establish them as thought leaders in their respective fields.

LinkedIn is also a powerful job search tool, offering a vast array of job listings from various industries. Users can leverage the platform to apply for positions, receive job recommendations based on their profiles, and connect with recruiters. Moreover, LinkedIn's networking capabilities enable users to join groups and participate in discussions, providing opportunities for learning and collaboration.

The platform emphasizes continuous learning through its LinkedIn Learning feature, which offers a wide range of online courses to help users develop new skills and stay updated on industry trends. By investing time in building a strong LinkedIn presence, professionals can enhance their career prospects, expand their network, and remain competitive in an ever-evolving job market.

- **Creating a professional profile:** Users can create professional profiles on LinkedIn to showcase their skills, work experience, and achievements, which helps build a personal brand and attract employers.

- **Job search:** LinkedIn offers a wide range of job listings that can easily be filtered by industry, location, or employment type.
- **Networking:** LinkedIn allows users to connect with professionals from different industries and maintain up-to-date contacts, which is crucial for job searching or career development.

Creating a CV with Europass

Europass is a platform that enables users to easily create a professional resume (CV) in a standardized format recognized across Europe. This ensures that users can present their skills, qualifications, and experiences to potential employers in a clear and structured manner. The Europass CV is particularly beneficial for those applying for jobs in different European countries, as it adheres to a format that is widely accepted by employers and educational institutions. The platform provides several template options, allowing users to customize their CVs according to their personal style while still maintaining a professional appearance. Additionally, Europass offers guidance on how to effectively describe skills and competencies, making it easier for users to highlight their strengths. Users can also incorporate other Europass documents, such as the Europass Language Passport or the Europass Mobility document, to provide a more comprehensive overview of their abilities and experiences.

Creating a CV with Canva

Canva is another useful tool that offers visually appealing and modern templates for creating resumes. It is a simple and user-friendly platform that allows users to design a visually striking resume within minutes. Canva features a drag-and-drop interface, making it accessible to users with varying levels of design experience. With an extensive library of templates, graphics, and fonts, users can tailor their resumes to match their personal brand and the industry they are targeting. Canva also allows for easy customization, enabling users to adjust colours, layouts, and text to create a unique resume that stands out to employers. Once the resume is complete, users can easily download it in various formats, such as PDF or PNG, for sharing or printing. Additionally, Canva provides collaboration features, allowing users to share their designs with others for feedback before finalizing their resumes.

- **Exercise:** Participants will create a resume using Europass or Canva, or Microsoft Word/Google Docs.

Cover letter – How to write a cover letter:

A cover letter is a personal document attached to a resume when applying for a job, internship, or other opportunities. Its goal is to convince the employer or admission committee that you are the right candidate for the position. In the letter, you express your interests, motivation, and the contributions you can bring to the team or organization.

- Structure of a cover letter:
 - **Header:** Include your name, address, phone, and email. Also, add the date and the recipient's contact details (company, job title, name if known).
 - **Introduction:** State why you are writing (e.g., "I am responding to the job posting for..."). Briefly introduce yourself and explain why the position interests you. Mention how you learned about the position.
 - **Body:**

- **First Paragraph:** Explain why you are interested in this position or company and what motivates you about the work or organization.
- **Second Paragraph:** Mention your relevant experiences and skills, emphasizing how they align with the job.
- **Third Paragraph:** Provide examples of your successes that demonstrate your competencies.
- **Conclusion:** Express interest in an interview and thank them for considering your application.
- **Signature:** Sign off with "Sincerely" and your name.

Exercise: Using the structure, participants will write their cover letters in Microsoft Word/Google Docs.

6.3.7. Job search

- Prepare Your Resume and Cover Letter: Tailor your resume and cover letter to highlight skills and experience relevant to each job.
- Pay attention to the requirements of the local labour market and search for those portals, that are popular in your country.
- Use Multiple Sources: Don't limit yourself to one portal. Use different job portals, social networks (e.g., LinkedIn), staffing agencies, and company career websites.
- Proactive Approach: Don't hesitate to send your resume to companies that aren't currently advertising openings. Many companies appreciate proactive candidates and may keep your resume for future opportunities.
- Build Your Network: Use your contacts – personal recommendations and connections can be key to finding the right job.
- Emphasize Your Personal Brand: Build your personal brand, for example, through a professional LinkedIn profile, and make it clear to employers what you have to offer.
- Be Patient and Persistent: Job searching can take time. Keep a positive attitude, update your materials regularly, and don't give up
- Job fairs and events: Attend career fairs, networking events, and online webinars where you can gain valuable contacts or learn about new job opportunities.
- Improve your skills: Use the time in between jobs to enhance your skills—courses, certifications, and new abilities can give you a competitive edge.

Emphasize to participants that they should send their resumes to places where they are not currently hiring – they often appreciate a proactive approach.

6.4. Exploring distance education opportunities (Courses)

6.4.1. What is distance learning and why is it important?

Distance learning has become an increasingly popular way to acquire new knowledge and skills. In today's world, with constant access to the internet and technology, it is no longer

necessary to be physically present in a school or university to study. Distance learning allows people to learn from the comfort of their own homes, at their own pace, and according to their schedules. For complete beginners, it's a great opportunity to broaden their horizons without having to leave their comfort zone.

This type of education has many benefits. In addition to the flexibility that allows you to study in your free time, it also offers the ability to tailor the learning pace. Each student can organize their lessons according to their abilities and needs. Moreover, this mode of study is financially accessible—many online courses are free or available for a nominal fee, meaning education is open to the wider public, regardless of their financial means or geographic location.

6.4.2. What are online learning platforms?

Online platforms for distance learning are websites that offer various courses and educational materials, often in the form of videos, quizzes, or texts. These courses are usually created by experts in the subject, ensuring high quality. Additionally, upon successfully completing the course, you can often earn a certificate that serves as proof of your newly acquired skills, which can be a great advantage when job hunting or advancing in your career.

Here are some of the most popular online platforms:

- **Coursera:** Collaborates with prestigious universities and global companies, offering courses in technology, marketing, business, and many other fields. Ideal for beginners as courses are structured and easy to understand.
- **edX:** Offers thousands of courses from top global universities. Great for beginners who want to get a high-quality education for free, though certificates are usually paid.
- **OpenLearn:** Provides free courses on various topics, from personal development to digital skills. The advantage is a wide range of topics suitable for complete beginners.
- **Alison:** Specializes in free courses in technology, business, or healthcare. Excellent for beginners looking to develop new skills for personal and professional growth.
- **FutureLearn:** Offers courses in collaboration with universities and organizations, featuring both free and paid options. A good choice for beginners to develop foundational skills.

6.4.3. How to choose the right platform and course for beginners?

Navigating the world of online learning can be overwhelming for newcomers, given the plethora of available options. To streamline the selection process, potential learners can consider several key questions:

- **What skills does one want to gain?** – For complete beginners, it's important to focus on courses that provide the basics. Whether they want to learn how to use a computer, improve communication skills, or start learning programming, foundational courses are key.
- **How much time can be dedicated to studying?** – Time availability should be considered. Some courses last only a few hours, while others may span weeks or even months. It's essential to choose a course that fits into one's schedule.

- **Is a certificate needed?** – If the course is for personal interest, an official certificate might not be necessary, so free courses may be ideal. However, if it's for job hunting, having a certificate could be a valuable advantage.

Additional Useful Tips:

- **Utilize Filters on Platforms:** Many online platforms offer filtering options based on price, enabling users to view only free courses by adjusting the settings accordingly.
- **Explore Different Categories:** Individuals interested in specific areas, such as digital literacy or entrepreneurship, can navigate courses by category. Platforms like edX or Alison often facilitate easy browsing based on specific topics.
- **Read Reviews and Ratings:** Before finalizing a course selection, reviewing feedback from previous participants can be beneficial. This information helps gauge whether a course will meet expectations and learning objectives.

6.4.4. How to find free courses?

For many beginners, locating high-quality education that is free of charge is crucial. Fortunately, several platforms offer access to free courses, with certification often being the only associated cost.

To find free courses, consider the following steps:

- **Use Search Filters:** On platforms like Coursera or edX, setting a filter for free courses is straightforward and helps narrow down options quickly.
- **Search for Keywords:** Look for courses labelled as "introductory" or "basic," as these are frequently available at no cost and are tailored for complete beginners.
- **Explore Platforms Specializing in Free Courses:** OpenLearn and Alison are particularly noted for providing extensive selections of free courses.

6.4.5. Examples of online courses

For those eager to begin a learning journey and in need of inspiration, here are three specific courses suitable for complete beginners:

1) Basic Excel Skills for Data Management

- **Platform:** Coursera or Udemy
- **Price:** Free (certificate available for purchase)
- **Content:** Gain proficiency in essential Excel functions, learn to create charts, analyse data, and utilize pivot tables. This course is perfect for beginners aiming to enhance their data management capabilities.

2) Google Sheets: Real-Time Collaboration and Data Management

- **Platform:** Google Skillshop
- **Price:** Free
- **Content:** Discover how to efficiently use Google Sheets for collaborative projects and real-time data analysis. Ideal for remote workers seeking effective data management solutions.

3) **Creating an Optimized LinkedIn Profile**

- **Platform:** LinkedIn Learning
- **Price:** Free trial version
- **Content:** Learn strategies to optimize a LinkedIn profile, an essential tool for job seekers. This course is particularly beneficial for those looking to improve visibility to potential employers.

6.4.6. **How to search for courses?**

Effective searching for online courses that fit specific needs can be practiced by following these steps:

- 1) **Choose a Platform:** Select from options like Coursera, edX, or Alison.
- 2) **Use Filters:** Set the filter to "free" or "introductory course" on the chosen platform.
- 3) **Compare Courses:** Review several courses and compare their content, duration, and participant reviews. Aim to find a course that resonates and targets the skills to be developed.

6.4.7. **Creating an education plan: How to successfully complete a course**

Achieving success in online studies requires a well-structured plan. This strategy will help maintain motivation and ensure timely course completion. The following steps assist in crafting an effective learning plan:

- 1) **Choose the Right Course:** Identify a course that aligns with personal or career goals.
- 2) **Set a Schedule:** Establish a consistent study routine, such as dedicating one hour each day or two hours weekly, based on availability.
- 3) **Define Goals:** Clarify what is to be gained from the course, whether foundational digital literacy skills or enhanced data management expertise.

6.5. **Digital side income**

In this section, participants will learn step by step how to start earning money online through platforms like Etsy, freelancing, and working as a virtual assistant. Each of these options will be explained in detail, including what Etsy is, how freelancing works, and the role of a virtual assistant. These flexible methods allow for remote work from home or anywhere, even without prior experience. Participants will explore how each type of side hustle operates, what essential knowledge is needed to begin, and engage in practical exercises to help take their first steps.

6.5.1. **Etsy**

Etsy serves as an online marketplace for selling handmade or digital products that can be downloaded, including templates, graphics, and other creative goods. This platform is particularly suited for those with creative hobbies or an interest in crafting unique items such as jewellery, art pieces, home decorations, clothing, or craft supplies. There is no need for a personal website or

prior business experience, as Etsy offers an accessible environment for reaching customers globally.

How it works:

- 1) Create an account on Etsy and establish a shop.
- 2) List the products for sale, including high-quality photos and detailed descriptions.
- 3) Customers purchase products, and the seller either ships physical items or provides digital files for download.
- 4) Etsy charges a small commission on each sale, but the seller determines the product price to cover costs and generate profit.

Example: A seller might create handmade bags, upload photos on Etsy, and describe the materials and dimensions. When a customer purchases a bag, payment is processed through Etsy, and the seller then ships the item directly.

Additional information:

- **Target audience:** Etsy attracts a diverse customer base interested in unique and personalized items. Sellers can tap into niche markets by focusing on specific themes or styles.
- **Marketing tools:** Etsy provides various marketing tools, including promotional listings, ads, and social media integration, to help sellers reach a wider audience.
- **Community support:** Etsy has a strong community of sellers who offer support and share experiences through forums and local meetups, helping newcomers feel less isolated in their entrepreneurial journey.
- **Success stories:** Many successful sellers on Etsy have turned their shops into full-time businesses, showcasing the potential for significant earnings with dedication and effective marketing strategies.

6.5.2. Freelancing

Freelancing represents a form of self-employment where services **can be** provided to clients worldwide on a remote basis. Freelancers operate independently, offering expertise in various fields such as graphic design, copywriting, web development, translation, digital marketing, video editing, and more.

How it works:

- 1) Sign up on a freelancing platform like Upwork or Fiverr.
- 2) Create a profile detailing the services offered, such as graphic design, writing, programming, or consulting.
- 3) Clients reach out to assign projects, and freelancers work on specific tasks for an agreed-upon fee.
- 4) Upon project completion, payment is received, allowing freelancers to gradually build their careers.

Example: A graphic designer may create a profile on Fiverr to offer logo design services. When a client orders a logo, the designer fulfills the request and receives payment upon submission.

Additional information:

- **Diverse opportunities:** Freelancing offers a wide range of opportunities across various industries, allowing individuals to find work that matches their skills and interests.
- **Building a portfolio:** Successful freelancers often build a portfolio showcasing previous work to attract clients and demonstrate expertise. This can include samples, testimonials, and case studies.
- **Networking and collaboration:** Freelancers can network with other professionals in their field, leading to collaborations and referrals that may result in more job opportunities.
- **Time management:** Effective time management is crucial for freelancers, as they must balance multiple projects and deadlines while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- **Financial considerations:** Freelancers should be aware of tax implications and plan for irregular income, often setting aside funds for taxes and retirement savings.

6.5.3. Virtual assistant

A virtual assistant provides remote support to individuals or businesses, handling various tasks that may include administrative work, meeting organization, email management, presentation creation, social media management, and customer service. This role allows for flexible work arrangements from home or any location with internet access.

How it works:

- 1) Sign up on a platform like Upwork or Freelancer and list services as a virtual assistant.
- 2) Clients hire virtual assistants for diverse tasks, such as calendar management, email responses, data entry, or bookkeeping.
- 3) Work is conducted remotely, with communication maintained via email, chat, or video calls.
- 4) Payment is received upon task completion, either per project or hourly.

Example: A virtual assistant skilled in organization may assist small business owners by managing their calendars, emails, and customer communications. A client may request help with scheduling meetings for the upcoming week or organizing project documentation.

Additional information:

- **Variety of tasks:** Virtual assistants can specialize in different areas such as social media management, content creation, customer support, or project management, making it a versatile career choice.
- **Skill development:** Virtual assistants often develop valuable skills in communication, organization, and time management, which can be beneficial in other professional roles.

- **Client relationships:** Building strong relationships with clients is crucial for securing repeat business and referrals. Clear communication and understanding client needs can lead to long-term partnerships.
- **Flexibility:** The virtual assistant role allows for a flexible schedule, making it an attractive option for those seeking to balance work with personal commitments.
- **Potential for growth:** As experience and skills grow, virtual assistants can transition into higher-paying roles such as project managers, operations managers, or business consultants.

6.5.4. Practical steps and exercises

Exercises for Etsy:

- 1) Create an account on Etsy, imagining a product to sell, such as handmade jewellery.
- 2) Take multiple photos of the product from different angles, upload them, and provide a detailed description.
- 3) Set a price and select a delivery method (e.g., postal service or electronic delivery for digital products).

Exercises for Freelancing:

- 1) Sign up on Upwork or Fiverr.
- 2) Develop a profile describing the services offered, such as writing articles or logo design.
- 3) Browse job listings and identify a small project to apply for.

Exercises for Virtual Assistants:

- 1) Identify personal strengths in areas like planning, organizing, or customer service.
- 2) Create a profile on Upwork, offering virtual assistant services.
- 3) Explore tasks posted by clients and respond to offers that match skills.

These exercises facilitate the development of digital side income while enhancing skills in online business. The platforms present numerous opportunities, even for those who are new to digital entrepreneurship.

6.5.5. Courses on starting with Etsy, Freelancing, or Virtual Assistance

A wide variety of online courses are available for those interested in selling on Etsy, freelancing, or becoming a virtual assistant. These courses cater to both beginners and more advanced learners seeking to refine specific skills. Various courses are tailored to each area:

For those interested in Etsy, comprehensive courses guide participants through the entire process, from shop setup to sales optimization and marketing strategies. Topics typically covered include establishing a shop, creating product listings, taking attractive product photos, pricing strategies, and effective marketing techniques.

Examples of courses for Etsy:

- **Etsy Masterclass:** This course outlines how to create a successful shop, manage inventory, and engage with customers.
- **How to Sell on Etsy: Complete Guide to Etsy:** This course includes strategies for optimizing product visibility, attracting customers, and managing finances effectively on the platform.
- **Etsy Search Engine Optimization (SEO) & Marketing:** Focuses on optimizing search visibility for products on Etsy and utilizing social media for sales promotion.

What will be learned:

- Establishing and setting up a shop.
- Creating appealing product photos and descriptions.
- Basic SEO techniques for Etsy to enhance product discoverability.
- Effective pricing, inventory management, and customer communication.
- Fundamentals of advertising and promotion on Etsy.

Freelancing courses assist individuals in identifying and honing the skills they can offer clients. These courses often focus on specific freelancing niches such as writing, graphic design, programming, or marketing, along with general courses teaching how to effectively present oneself on platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, or Freelancer.

Examples of courses for Freelancing:

- **Freelance success for beginners:** Designed for newcomers, this course provides insights into the freelancing process, portfolio creation, and client acquisition.
- **Upwork mastery:** Guides learners through setting up an Upwork account, acquiring clients, writing compelling proposals, and building a solid reputation.
- **Freelance writing 101:** A specialized course for aspiring freelance writers covering writing techniques, pricing strategies, and effective client communication.

What will be learned:

- Presenting oneself effectively on freelancing platforms.
- Building a portfolio and crafting offers.
- Client acquisition and project management.
- Pricing structures and invoicing practices.
- Effective communication and negotiation with clients.

Courses for virtual assistants cover a broad range of tasks, with a focus on managing calendars, client communication, workflow organization, and utilizing digital tools for efficient task management.

Examples of courses for Virtual Assistance:

- **Become a Virtual Assistant:** Offers guidance on entering the virtual assistant field, essential skills, and client acquisition strategies.

- **Virtual Assistant Bootcamp:** Comprehensive training covering calendar management tools, social media oversight, and email management.
- **Advanced Virtual Assistant skills:** Aimed at those with basic skills who wish to learn advanced techniques such as project management and advanced tools like Asana, Slack, or Trello.

What will be learned:

- Using tools like Google Workspace (Gmail, Calendar, Drive) for organization.
- Managing meetings, emails, and tasks effectively.
- Client communication and customer service fundamentals.
- Basics of marketing and social media management.
- Invoicing and pricing setup basics.

Where to find these courses:

Numerous courses can be found on well-known platforms such as:

- **Udemy:** Offers an extensive array of courses on Etsy, freelancing, and virtual assistance, often at affordable prices with periodic discounts available.
- **Skillshare:** A popular platform emphasizing creative courses (including Etsy) and freelancing, along with administrative skills training.
- **Coursera and edX:** These platforms provide more generalized courses focusing on business, marketing, and skills applicable to freelancing or virtual assistance roles.

Courses for Etsy, freelancing, and virtual assistance significantly enhance the likelihood of success. Focusing on specific areas of interest and investing time in skill development aligned with market demand is crucial. Whether the goal is to sell on Etsy, work as a freelancer, or assist businesses as a virtual assistant, numerous courses are available to guide participants step by step toward achieving success.

6.6. Personal digital development plan

In the final part of the workshop, participants will focus on assessing their individual progress and planning their further digital development. Together, they will evaluate the skills they have acquired during the workshop and what they have learned, as well as compare their initial digital skills analysis completed at the beginning to see how they have progressed. The goal is for each participant not only to reflect on their development so far but also to set clear goals for further education and growth in the coming months. This part will involve independently completing an updated digital skills analysis, followed by a group discussion on the results and future directions.

Structure of the digital skills analysis

Participants will complete a questionnaire that will help them clearly articulate their progress, needs, and goals. The questionnaire will be divided into four key areas:

What did you learn during the workshop?	
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What else do you want to learn?	
What do you still need to learn?	
Other targets for your digital development?	

6.6.1. What participants learned during the workshop

In this section, participants will reflect on the specific digital skills they have acquired during the workshop. They may include new tools, techniques, and knowledge that they now use in their daily work. The workshop primarily focused on:

- **Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint):** Participants learned the basics of working with these tools, including creating documents, spreadsheets, charts, and presentations.
- **Google Docs and Sheets:** They mastered the basic use of online collaboration tools, learning to share files, work in real-time with colleagues, and use basic functions for data management.
- **Google Slides:** Participants learned how to create simple presentations and share them effectively.
- **Creating resumes and cover letters**
- **How to obtain further education online**
- **Digital side incomes**

While completing this section, participants can consider how they apply specific skills in practice and which tools help them most in their work or personal lives.

6.6.2. What they still want to learn

Next, participants will focus on areas that interest them but were not explored during the workshop. These may include advanced features of tools they already know or new skills they would like to acquire. Examples may include:

- **Advanced Excel Functions:** Working with pivot tables, more complex formulas, and task automation.
- **Advanced Collaboration in Google Docs:** Better utilization of commenting features, permission management, and integration with other Google tools.
- **New Online Courses:** Participants may be interested in further education in areas such as online marketing, design, or data analysis. This section can be used to identify topics they are interested in and for which they would like to gain more information.

6.6.3. Identifying gaps and needs

This part will focus on what participants need to fully utilize their acquired knowledge and digital tools. They can identify areas they did not have enough time to explore during the workshop or tools they have not yet managed to implement effectively in their work. Examples may include:

- **Working on specific projects:** How to start with specific projects, such as managing online projects or analysing real data in Excel.
- **Digital tools for efficiency:** Participants may want to explore tools that enhance their productivity, such as macros in Excel or automation tools in Google Sheets.

6.6.4. Additional goals for their digital development

In this section, participants will set goals for their further digital development over the next 3–6 months. They can focus on skills they would like to improve or new tools they would like to try. This will help them plan their growth in the digital realm and gradually move towards greater digital literacy.

Examples of goals may include:

- **Improving the use of advanced features in excel and Google Sheets:** How to perform more complex data analyses or optimize workflows.
- **Mastering new presentation tools:** Enhancing the visual aspect of presentations using tools like Canva or improving work with multimedia content in PowerPoint and Google Slides.
- **Obtaining certificates from online courses:** Identifying and completing online courses that offer certifications, which can increase their chances of career advancement.

Exercise - Recommended structure for digital development:

Structure of digital development				
Goals based on current skills: What do I already know, how do I use it, and how can I improve?				
Plan for the next 3–6 months: What specifically do I want to learn? What resources and tools do I need for that (e.g., online courses, tutor)?				
Time schedule: How much time per week/month				

Structure of digital development				
can I dedicate to my digital development? What specific steps will I take each month?				
Tracking progress: How will I measure my progress? This could include completed projects, earned certificates, or newly mastered features in the tools I use				

6.6.5. Discussion and evaluation

After completing this analysis, there will be a group discussion during which participants will have the opportunity to exchange experiences and share their plans. We will discuss the specific steps each participant will take to achieve their goals and what additional resources or support they might need. The discussion will also serve as inspiration for others, who can draw from the ideas and experiences of their colleagues.

At the end of the workshop, participants will receive recommendations on how to continue their digital development, where to find additional educational resources, and how to effectively plan their time for self-study.

6.7. Final quiz

- 1) **Which of the following is a recommended approach for identifying a NEET's digital skill gaps, according to the module?**
 - a) Assuming all NEETs have the same level of computer literacy
 - b) Using a basic checklist or self-assessment to see which competencies need improvement
 - c) Only focusing on internet browsing and ignoring productivity tools
 - d) Relying on the NEET to figure it out independently
- 2) **Why is digital inclusion so critical for NEETs, as highlighted in the module?**
 - a) It only matters in urban settings with strong internet access
 - b) It helps NEETs become more employable and reduces social exclusion

- c) It requires heavy government investment in technology without direct benefits
 - d) It's a niche concern, not a widespread issue
- 3) **What is one key benefit of introducing NEETs to basic productivity tools (Word processors, Spreadsheets, Presentations)?**
- a) These tools are rarely used in the workplace
 - b) They allow NEETs to collaborate, create resumes, and organize data effectively
 - c) They focus solely on advanced programming skills
 - d) They are irrelevant unless the NEET wants a tech-based career
- 4) **The module discusses online learning platforms. Which of the following is a best practice when guiding NEETs in choosing a platform or course?**
- a) Advising them to only select paid courses for better quality
 - b) Encouraging them to identify personal interests and goals, then pick a relevant beginner-friendly course
 - c) Randomly choosing highly rated courses without tailoring to the NEET's skill level
 - d) Recommending advanced courses immediately to "push" them
- 5) **What was emphasized in the module about "digital side income" (e.g., freelancing, selling on Etsy)?**
- a) It's only feasible for individuals who already have formal business training
 - b) It's a potential alternative for NEETs to earn income if they develop the right skills and online presence
 - c) It's too complicated and not worth mentioning to NEETs
 - d) It replaces the need for career guidance in traditional employment
- 6) **According to the module, which of the following actions can promote digital inclusion for NEETs in rural communities?**
- a) Assuming that rural NEETs have no interest in digital tools
 - b) Setting up local or mobile internet access points and offering basic IT training sessions
 - c) Encouraging them to relocate to big cities for better internet
 - d) Limiting training to advanced digital marketing courses only
- 7) **Which statement accurately reflects the module's recommendation about protecting privacy and security online?**
- a) NEETs should keep the same password for all platforms to avoid confusion
 - b) Basic security practices (strong passwords, recognizing scams) should be covered early in digital skills training
 - c) Only advanced cybersecurity professionals need to know about online threats
 - d) Mentors should handle all security matters for NEETs to avoid mistakes

- 8) **What approach does the module advocate for when helping a NEET build a personal digital development plan?**
- a) Creating a rigid, mentor-driven plan with no input from the NEET
 - b) Collaborating with the NEET to set specific digital learning goals, timelines, and check-ins
 - c) Quickly enrolling them in multiple advanced courses
 - d) Focusing only on short-term employability rather than digital competence
- 9) **Why is it important to celebrate small wins in a NEET's journey toward stronger digital skills?**
- a) Because large achievements are too rare to mention
 - b) It increases their confidence and motivation to continue learning
 - c) It distracts them from bigger failures
 - d) Celebrations are unnecessary for adult learners
- 10) **After completing module, you discuss freelancing with a NEET who is hesitant. According to module recommendations, what's a good first step to encourage them?**
- a) Insist they start a freelancing profile immediately without preparation
 - b) Help them identify basic skills they already have (e.g., translation, design) and set up a simple profile
 - c) Advise them to wait until they earn a professional certificate
 - d) Tell them freelancing is not viable unless they have a large social media following

6.8. Sources

Digital Skills Learning Platforms

- GCFGlobal Learning - gcfglobal.org
- Google's Applied Digital Skills - applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com
- Learn My Way - learnmyway.com
- Alison - alison.com
- FutureLearn - futurelearn.com
- OpenLearn - open.edu/openlearn
- Coursera - coursera.org
- edX - edx.org
- Udemy - udemy.com
- EU Academy - academy.europa.eu
- Canva: <https://www.canva.com/>

- Etsy - <https://www.etsy.com/>
- Fiverr - <https://www.fiverr.com/>
- Udemy - <https://www.udemy.com/>

Office and Productivity Tools

- Microsoft Office Support - support.microsoft.com
- Google Workspace Learning Center - Google Workspace Learning Center
- LinkedIn Learning - [linkedin.com/learning](https://www.linkedin.com/learning)

Job and Career Resources

- Job Platforms - [cvapp.cz](https://www.cvapp.cz)
- Etsy Seller Handbook - [etsy.com/seller-handbook](https://www.etsy.com/seller-handbook)

Research and Reports

- Government Reports and Studies
 - [EDU | OECD](https://www.edupolicy.org)
 - [Euro area unemployment at 6.4% - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

Non-Profit Organizations

- [About Digital Promise – Digital Promise](https://www.digitalpromise.org)
- [Creating Digital Public Infrastructure for Empowerment, Inclusion, and Resilience \(worldbank.org\)](https://www.worldbank.org)
- Good Things Foundation - Digital Skills Programs for NEETs - [goodthingsfoundation.org](https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org)

Frameworks and Competence Models

- European Commission - Digital Skills for the Digital Economy - ec.europa.eu
- UNESCO - Digital Skills Frameworks and Initiative - [unesco.org](https://www.unesco.org)
- The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp) - joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu

Academic Journals

- Knowledge mapping of vocational education and training research (2004–2020): a visual analysis based on CiteSpace | Scientific Reports (nature.com) - <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-49636-7>

Books and Articles

- "The Digital Divide" by Susan Crawford
- "Digital Skills for the 21st Century" by David Buckingham

Conclusion

This curriculum presented a comprehensive framework designed to improve the capabilities of mentors engaging and working with NEETs. Through the six modules, this program systematically equips mentors with the understanding, theoretical knowledge and practical tools necessary to effectively and sustainably support this underrepresented group, fostering the integration of NEETs into productive educational and workforce trajectories.

The curriculum starts with an in-depth examination of the socio-economic, psychological, and educational contexts that characterize the lives of NEETs, providing a foundation upon which mentors can build effective engagement strategies. Subsequent modules expanded on this foundation, introducing mentors to advanced interpersonal techniques, digital literacy frameworks, and strategic action planning methodologies. Each module was carefully constructed to address distinct aspects of the NEETs' experience, ensuring a holistic approach to mentorship.

The strategic emphasis on digital inclusion and skills development is due to the evolving demands of the global labour market. By preparing mentors to address digital literacy, the curriculum not only aims to close the skills gap but also to enhance the employability of NEETs. Moreover, the focus on individualized support plans acknowledges the diverse needs and backgrounds of NEETs, promoting a personalized approach to mentorship that respects each participant's unique circumstances.

The curriculum progresses from establishing a theoretical understanding to applying this knowledge in practical settings, utilizing role-plays, case studies, and interactive discussions. This pedagogical approach ensures that theoretical insights are effectively translated into practical mentoring practices, thus enhancing the real-world applicability of the knowledge imparted.

From an academic standpoint, this curriculum contributes to the broader discourse on youth unemployment and social exclusion, offering a structured educational response to these issues. It challenges traditional views on education and workforce readiness by advocating for more inclusive, adaptive learning environments that cater to the specific needs of marginalized youth.

Professionally, the curriculum enhances the skill set of mentors, enabling them to implement tailored interventions that are both empathetic and effective. By fostering an environment where NEETs can develop essential life and job skills within a supportive framework, mentors help mitigate the adverse effects of prolonged disengagement from formal learning and employment.

As we move forward, continuous evaluation and adaptation of the curriculum will be essential to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in diverse contexts. Feedback from mentors and NEETs will be systematically gathered and analysed to refine educational strategies and outcomes. Additionally, expanding the curriculum to include more advanced digital tools and emerging technologies will further empower NEETs to navigate the complexities of modern economies.

In conclusion, this curriculum stands as a pivotal resource in the efforts to reintegrate NEETs into educational paths and labour markets. It encourages a proactive, responsive, and thoughtful approach to mentorship, urging mentors to act not only as educators but as catalysts for change. By aligning educational strategies with the needs of NEETs, mentors can significantly influence the trajectories of these individuals, contributing to a more inclusive and dynamic society.

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Development Association NERDA

Pannon Novum West-Transdanubian Regional Innovation Nonprofit Ltd. (PANOV)

Philanthropy, Charitable Foundation of the Serbian Orthodox Church

Foundation for Improvement of Employment Possibilities PRIZMA

Human Innovation Group Nonprofit Ltd. (HICS)

YES Forum EWIV - Youth and European Social Work Forum

ipcenter.at Ltd.

Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency (SZ REDA)

Ministry of Economy of Tuzla Canton (MPTK)

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia (CCIS)

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