READY4WORK
IMPACT ASSESSMENT RESULTS
SPAIN AND GREECE

Volunteer mentoring for young people in transition to work
Autoocupació · ANKA · European Microfinance Network

Social Innovation Initiative

Co-funded by the European Union

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

DESIGNING THE PROGRAMME: FROM NEEDS TO PURPOSE

Purpose of the programme

"The Mentoring Programme is designed to empower mentees to take control of their personal and professional futures."

- Mentees build their own roadmap, explore paths and craft strategies towards their goals.
- Support continues into the world of work once a job is found.
- **The mentee sets the agenda.**

1 Understand the needs

16 in-depth interviews with young people in Barcelona and Karditsa: clear ambitions, but little knowledge, experience or strategy to navigate the labour market.

2 Co-design with the partners

Six online and two in-person workshops facilitated by EMN, which also trained the coordinators; job centres, training providers and employers involved from the start.

3 Ground it in a philosophy

Non-directive and voluntary, built on dialogue and adult learning; it starts from young people's resilience, not a deficit view.

Source: Ready4Work Mentoring Guide v1.1, chapter 2 (Planning). Start small: 25–30 matches in the first year.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - AN.KA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

SIX STEPS FROM OUTREACH TO IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1	2	3	4	5	6
Planning	**Outreach**	**Selection**	**Training**	**Matching**	**Monitoring & evaluation**
• Needs and purpose • Stakeholders and capacity	• Job centres, training providers • WhatsApp beats e-mail	• 30–60' interview and profile • Signpost those not yet ready	• Induction, groups of 7–15 • Peer learning, supervision	• Chemistry before sector • No-fault divorce after 3 sessions	• Monthly mentoring agenda • Pre, End, Post assessment

The mentoring programme manager
runs every step, from outreach to evaluation

50–75
active relationships per manager (100–150 with an information system)

Capacity
is the key success factor: without enough staff time the programme fails

Source: Ready4Work Mentoring Guide v1.1, chapters 2–7.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

arka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

MENTORING METHODOLOGY: MENTEE-LED AND NON-DIRECTIVE

How a session works

1 Exploration
What do you want to achieve today?

2 New understanding
What are the possible solutions?

3 Action planning
What are your next concrete steps?

Alred and Garvey's three stages, with Kolb's experiential learning cycle. The mentee sets the agenda and writes the action plan.

Who mentors are

- Volunteers, 2–4 hours a month
- Listen, ask questions, balance support and challenge
- Committed to non-directive mentoring, willing to learn
- Know the open and hidden labour market
- Help mentees build their own network

Careful with role models: they risk dependency and a directive "been there, done that" stance.

What sessions focus on

- Personal development, professional development and career planning
- At least 6 months: weekly at first, then twice a month
- The present, not the past: referral if counselling is needed
- Ground rules revisited: "Is it OK if I share my experience?"
- Topics: confidence, job search, hidden job market, dealing with rejection

Source: Ready4Work Mentoring Guide v1.1, chapters 3–6 and induction training slides (Annex 3).

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

arka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANIKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

READY4WORK IN BRIEF

What it is

One-to-one volunteer mentoring of at least six months, non-directive and led by the mentee's own agenda, covering personal as well as professional goals.

Who it serves

Young people aged 18–29 at risk in the labour market: a wider group than the NEET definition, selected on eight at-risk criteria (next slide).

Who delivered it

Autoocupació (lead, Barcelona), ANKA (Karditsa, Thessaly), European Microfinance Network (methodology, impact assessment, EU dissemination). Funded by ESF+ Social Innovation+.

117 young people enrolled in Barcelona (target 90)

97 young people enrolled in Thessaly (target 90)

6+ months of one-to-one mentoring per relationship

Source: Ready4Work Impact Assessment reports, Spain (Autoocupació) and Greece (ANKA).

KEY MESSAGES AT A GLANCE

1 Unemployment roughly halved, and stayed down

- Spain: 58% → 19% unemployed at the 3-month follow-up (n=31)
- Greece: 53% → 27% unemployed at the 3-month follow-up (n=30)

2 Permanent contracts signal stability

- Spain: permanent contracts rose from 13% to 52%
- Greece: permanent 13% → 20%; most new jobs were temporary (7% → 27%), a risk factor

3 Psychosocial change is visible

- Greece: 8 of 10 scales improved significantly by the end, and gains held
- Spain: increased agency and taking responsibility for learning and development

4 The relationship is the engine, structure the ceiling

- Change runs through a credible, safe relationship that rebuilds self-worth and agency
- Gains are bounded by precarity, low pay, housing and saturated labour markets

Evidence is observational: no control group, small matched samples (Spain n=31, Greece n=30 for Pre → End → Post), follow-up of three months.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

WHO IS AT RISK: SELECTION CRITERIA WIDER THAN NEET

Young people aged 18–29 in a situation of:

1. **Unemployment**
2. **At risk of unemployment**
3. **Underemployment: hours**
   fewer than 30 hours of work a week
4. **Underemployment: mismatch**
   qualifications do not match the job requirements
5. **Informal work**
   work without a contract
6. **Income below the minimum wage**
7. **LGBTQIA+**
   identifies as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community
8. **Migration or refugee background**

Why it matters: Many participants have good qualifications: their risk lies in short hours, mismatch, informal work and low pay.

Source: Ready4Work selection criteria (Background section of both reports).

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

ENTRY PROFILE PRE-INTERVENTION

Entry profile	Spain	Greece
Participants at entry	117	97
Mean age	25.5	25.4
Women	64%	62%
Unemployed at entry	55%	44%
Permanent contract at entry	18%	12%
Income below €700 a month	46%	48%
Living with family of origin	56%	58%

Not the textbook NEET

Good qualifications did not protect against unemployment, short hours or low pay.

- Spain: 84% earned at or below the minimum wage; 66% of those working had under 30 hours a week.
- Greece: no one reported €1,500 a month or more at entry; 37% were still studying.

Source: Pre-programme surveys, Spain n=108, Greece n=96. Greek income figures exclude the 20% who did not report income.

HOW WE ASSESSED IMPACT

PRE	END	POST
Programme entry	After 6+ months of mentoring	3 months after support
Spain n=117 **Greece n=97**	**Spain n=40** **Greece n=49**	**Spain n=31** **Greece n=30**

What we measured

- Employment status, contract type, income bands, intention to return to education
- 10 validated psychosocial scales (1–10), each tested with paired t-test and Wilcoxon
- Interviews: Spain 7 mentees and 4 mentors; Greece 8 mentees and 4 mentors, reflexive thematic analysis

How to read the results

- No control group, by ethical choice: no young person was refused support
- Small matched samples detect only medium-to-large effects
- Spanish follow-up data fall in June–July, a seasonal employment peak
- Interviews purposively sampled; not representative of the cohort

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

WHY THERE IS NO CONTROL GROUP: ETHICS OF CARE

Those who need help receive it

Autoocupació's mentoring rests on an ethics of care (Held, 2006): support from others is a basic human need, and there is a moral duty to give it to those who need it now.

- No one is refused support or made to wait to build a control or waitlist group.
- The needs of the young person come before the convenience of the evaluation.
- In practice: 117 young people onboarded in Barcelona instead of the 90 committed (+30%).

Two contrasting choices

- Resnjanskij et al. (2021): capped places and used rejected applicants as a randomised control group
- Parola et al. (2022): dropped a planned control group on a practitioner's ethical grounds

How the design compensates

- Pre, End and 3-month Post measures; two tests per comparison
- Triangulation of employment data, scales and interviews
- Next: interviews to saturation, longer follow-up, comparison with other interventions

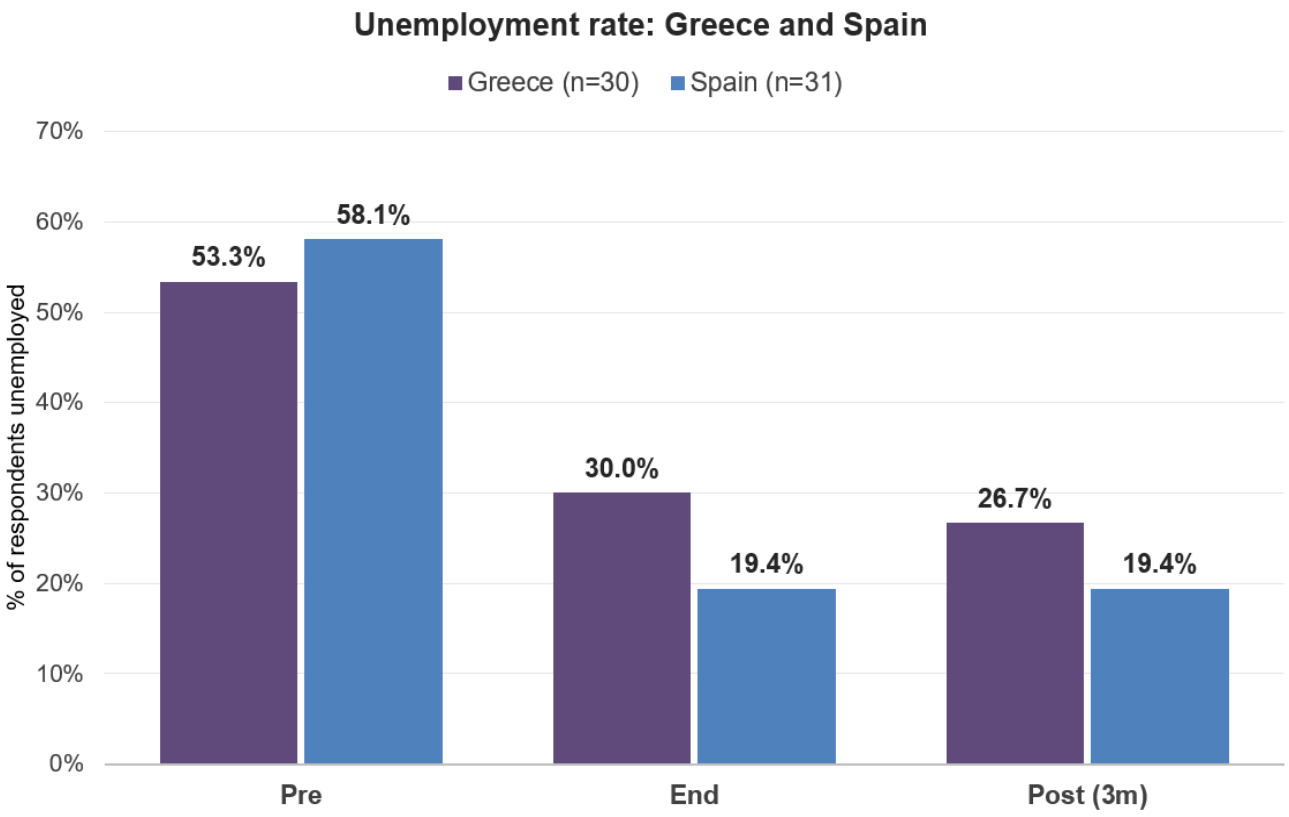
Source: Spain report, 6.3 Impact assessment; Greece report, 6.3. Held, V. (2006) The Ethics of Care. Both reports accept a weaker causal claim as the price of this position.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANIKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

UNEMPLOYMENT FELL BY HALF AND THE GAIN HELD



Source: Pre → End → Post surveys, full-triad completers. Percentages of respondents in each country cohort.

−39 pts

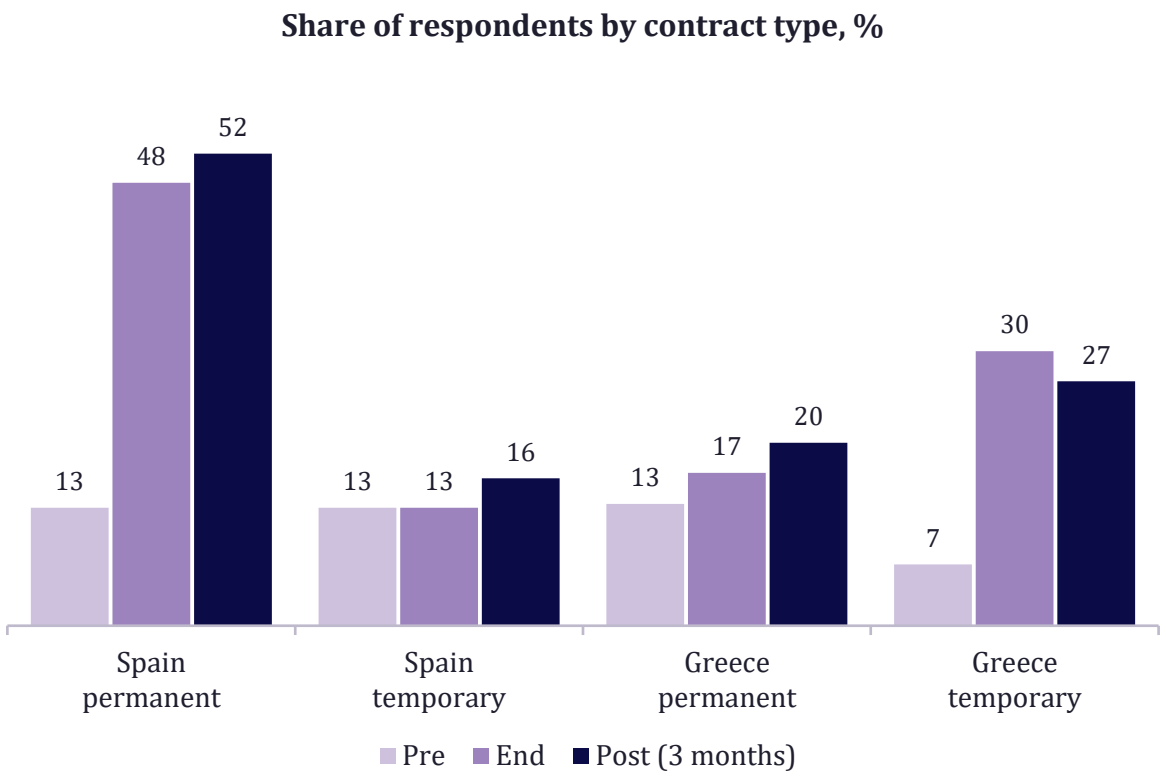
Spain: unemployment 58% → 19%, unchanged at follow-up

−27 pts

Greece: 53% → 30% at the end, 27% at follow-up

- Wider Pre → End groups confirm the pattern: Spain 58% → 20% (n=40), Greece 49% → 30% (n=49).
- Fewer employed respondents worked under 30 hours: Spain 69% → 32%, Greece 22% → 14%.

PERMANENT CONTRACTS SIGNAL STABILITY; TEMPORARY WORK IS A RISK FACTOR



Temporary work: an entry, but a risk

It leads to cycles in and out of employment and to underemployment.

Spain

- Permanent contracts 13% → 52%
- Those starting unemployed often entered temporary or seasonal work first

Greece

- Permanent only 13% → 20%
- Most new jobs temporary (7% → 27%), some flowing back to unemployment

Source: full-triad completers, Spain n=31, Greece n=30. Greek context: Eurostat temporary employment, 15–29 year-olds.

INCOMES ROSE, BUT NOT YET TO FINANCIAL SECURITY

SPAIN

+€313
average monthly income gain at follow-up

9% → 26%
earning more than €1,500 a month

73% → 36%
of the formally employed below minimum wage

GREECE

+€409
average monthly income gain at follow-up

0% → 13%
earning more than €1,500 a month

44% → 53%
of the formally employed below minimum wage

Spain: an "invisible ceiling" at €900–1,099. Above it, people hold or advance; below it, earnings cluster at minimum-wage and part-time levels.

Greece: only 18 of 30 gave usable income figures at both points, and the below-minimum-wage share fell to 6% at the end before rising again. Gains are real but fragile.

Source: income bands, band-midpoint estimates. Minimum-wage comparison among formally employed respondents (Spain n=11, Greece n=9 at entry). Small numbers: read as direction, not precise estimates.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

arka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANIKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

TWO INDICATORS OF PROGRESS TOWARDS STABLE EMPLOYMENT

1 Form of contract

- **Permanent contract**
  - **Temporary or part-time**
    - **Seasonal or informal**
      - **Unemployed**

2 Income and the minimum wage

- **Above the minimum wage**
  - **Around the minimum wage**
    - **Below the minimum wage**

Minimum wage used: Spain €1,180, Greece €920 a month

	Not permanent	Permanent
Above min. wage	**Paid but insecure** can fall back when the contract ends	**Most stable** permanent and above the minimum wage
Below min. wage	**Precarious** highest risk of falling back into unemployment	**Secure but underpaid** stable contract, income still too low

Spain
Permanent 13% → 52%
Below min. wage 73% → 36%

Greece
Permanent 13% → 20%
Below min. wage 44% → 6% → 53%

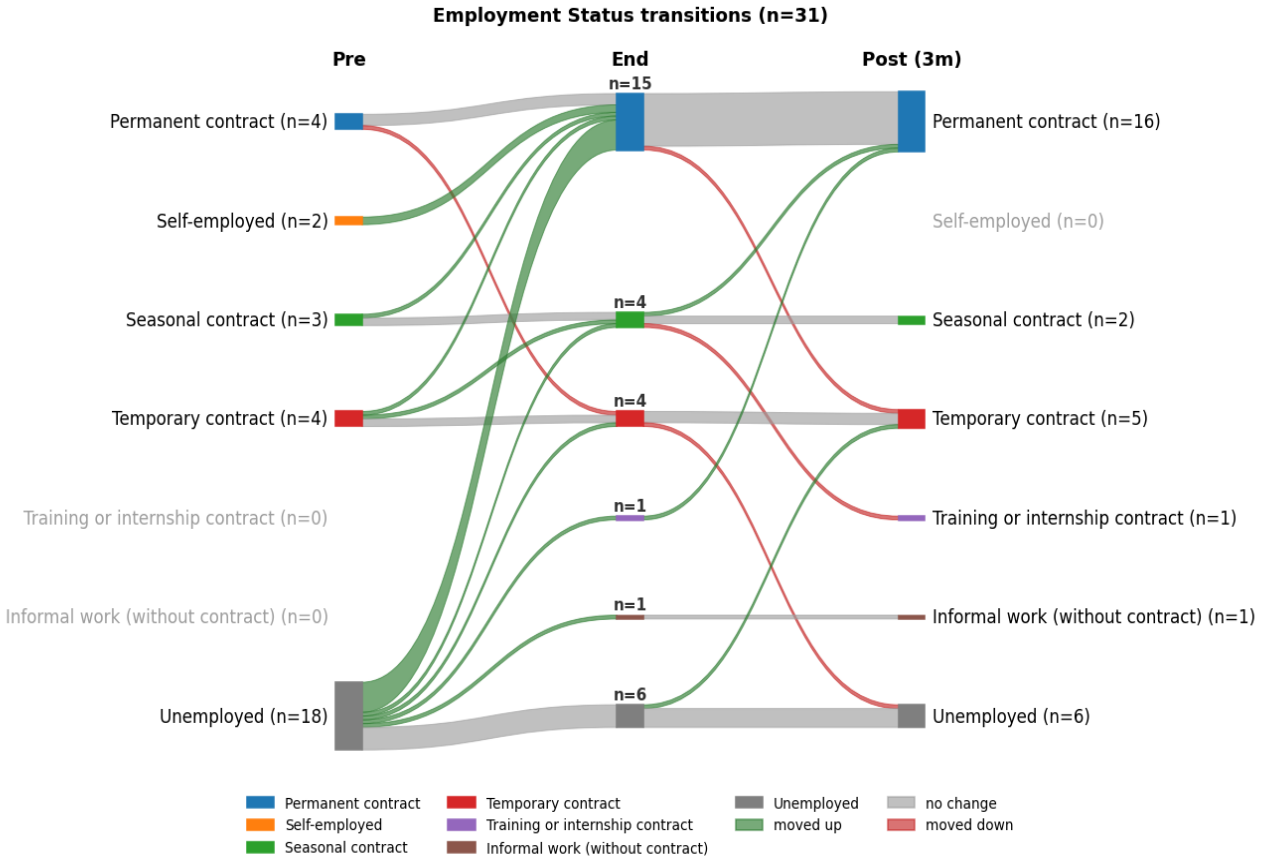
Source: both reports; contract shares for full-triad completers, minimum-wage shares among formally employed respondents (Spain n=11; Greece n=9, 18, 15). Pre → End → Post.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

arka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

SPAIN: EXITS FROM UNEMPLOYMENT LEAD INTO PERMANENT WORK

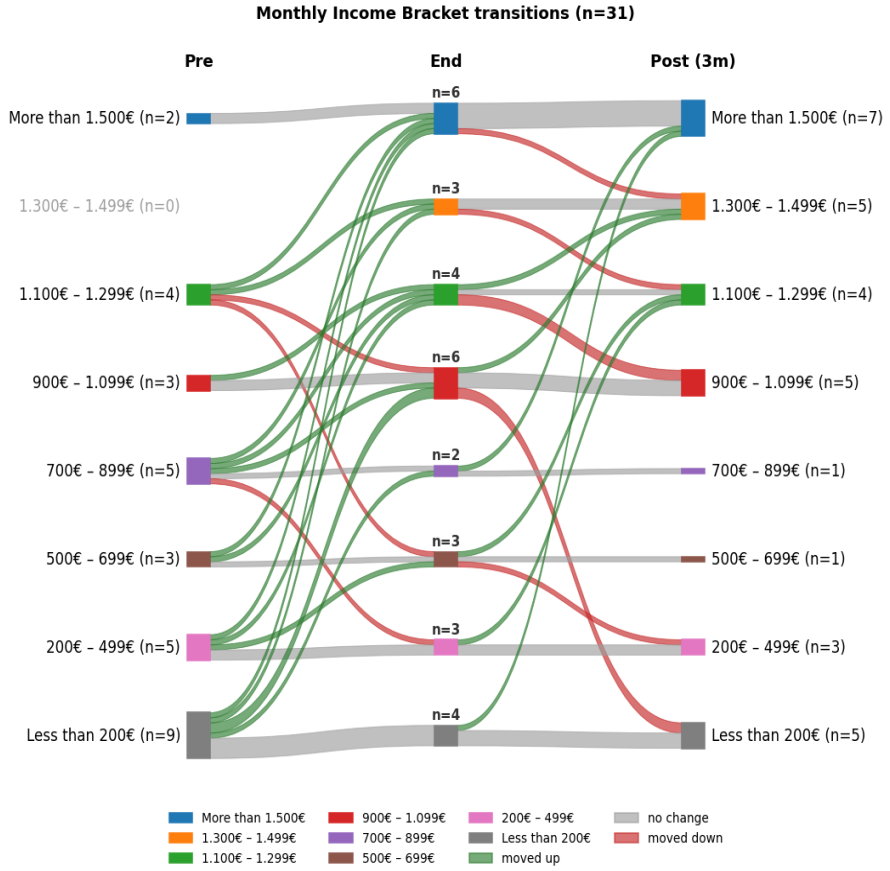


Source: Spain report, Figure 7 (full-triad completers, Pre → End → Post).

Reading the flows

- Green: towards more stable work; red: towards less stable work
- Permanent contracts 3 → 10 → 12, and they hold
- Temporary and seasonal work moves both ways
- 4 of 12 initially unemployed were still unemployed at follow-up

SPAIN: AN INVISIBLE INCOME CEILING AT €900–1,099

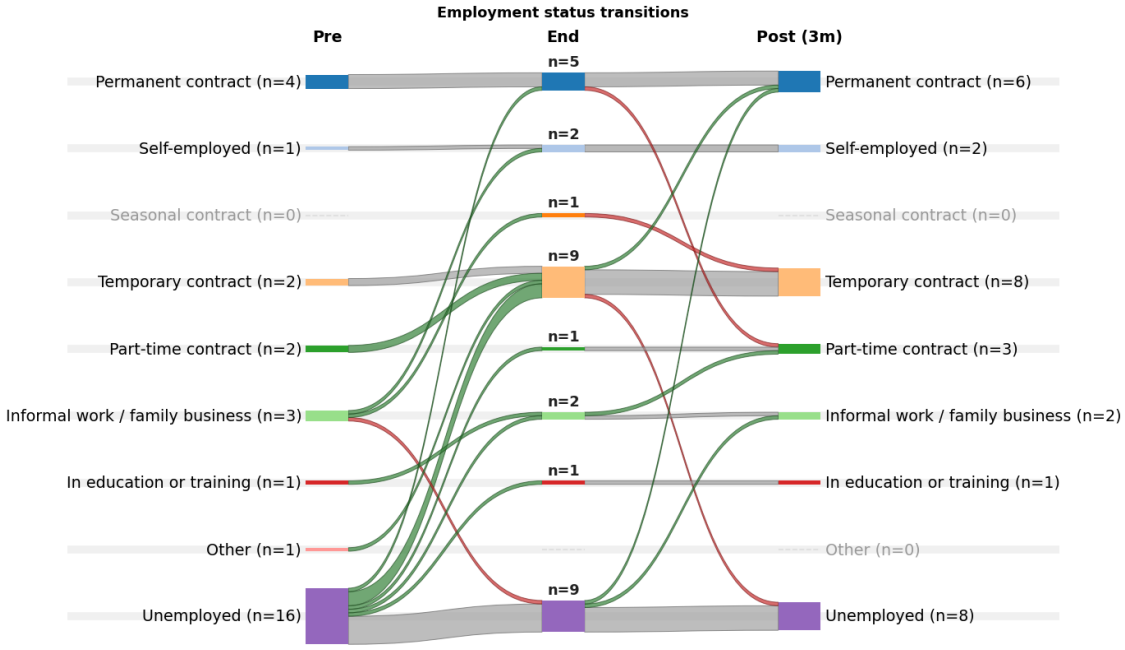


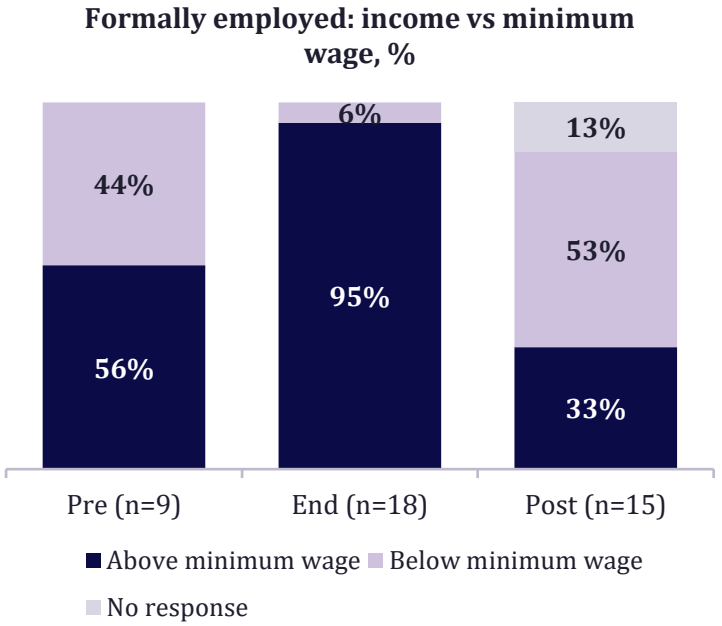
Source: Spain report, Figure 9 (full-triad completers, Pre → End → Post).

Reading the flows

- Colours show the starting income bracket
- Above about €1,100, people stay or rise: more than €1,500 grows 2 → 5 → 6
- Below €900–1,099, flows go both ways, some back under €200
- Minimum wage: €1,180 a month

GREECE: MOSTLY TEMPORARY JOBS, A RISK OF FALLING BACK





Most moves into work were temporary contracts, a risk factor; the income gain at the end did not hold three months later.

Source: Greece report, Figure 6 and Table 13. Very small numbers for the minimum-wage comparison: read as direction only.

RISK SITUATIONS: UNEMPLOYMENT FALLS, INSECURE WORK PERSISTS

SPAIN (n=31)



Unemployment, short hours and low pay fell; temporary or seasonal work stayed at about a quarter.

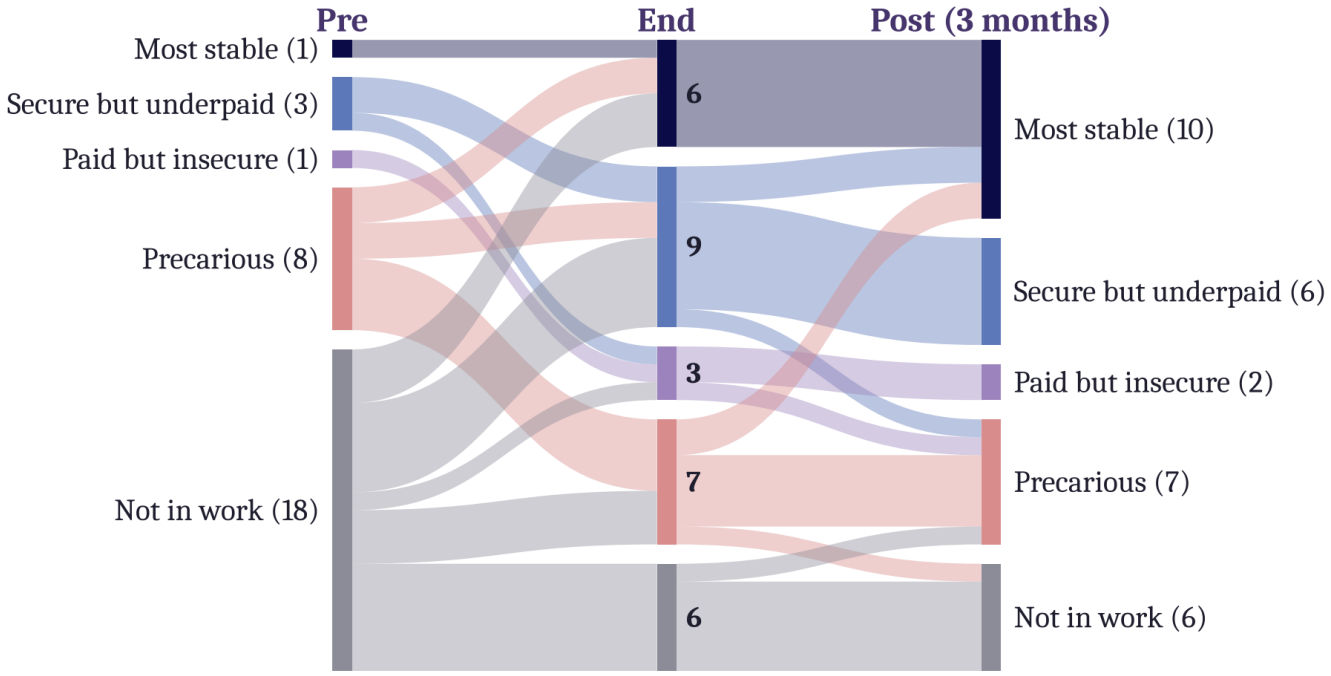
GREECE (n=30)



Unemployment fell, but temporary work rose to 27% and low pay was back at 53% after support.

Shares at each point, not individual tracking. [1] Share of those in employment. [2] Share of the formally employed (Spain n=11; Greece n=9, 18, 15). Source: Tables 9, 12, 13 (Spain) and 11, 12, 13 (Greece).

SPAIN: INDIVIDUAL PATHWAYS TOWARDS STABILITY (N=31)

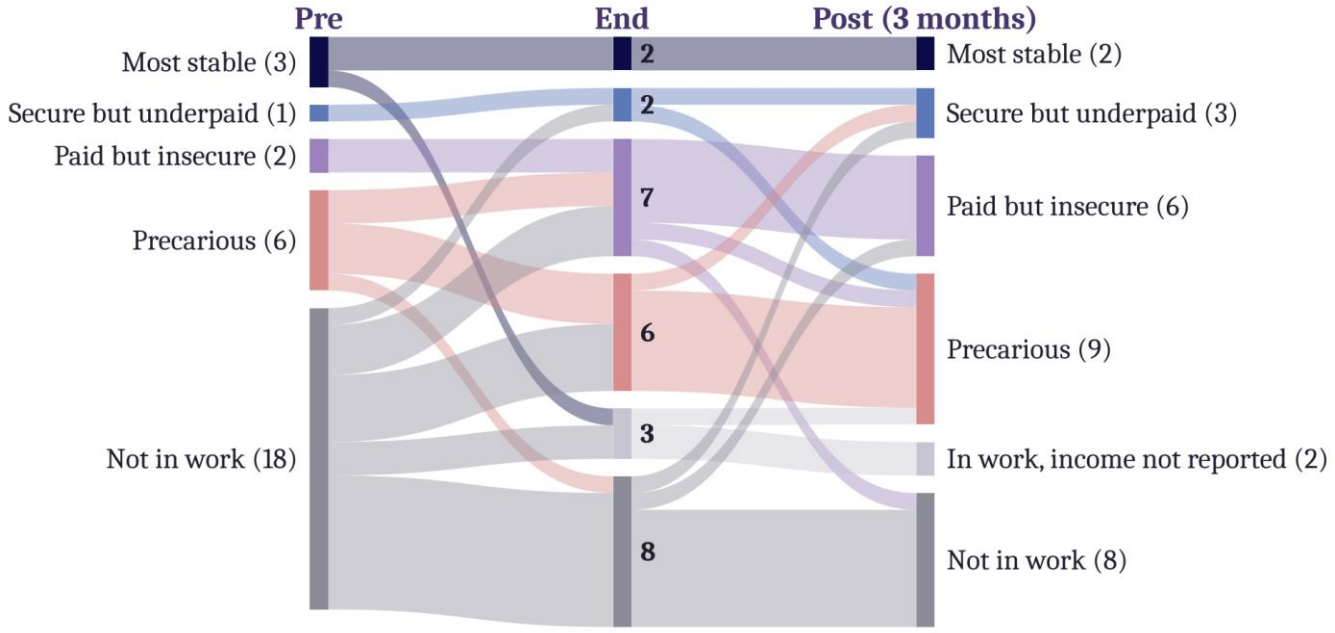


What the pathways show

- Most stable: 1 → 6 → 10 people
- Not in work: 18 → 6 → 6
- Of the 18 not in work at entry, 6 were most stable at follow-up; 5 were still not in work
- Precarious work persists: 8 → 7 → 7

Source: individual survey data, full-triad completers (Spain September file n=31; Greece October file n=30). Spain's n differs from the report (n=23) because the data file was updated later. Most stable = permanent contract and income above the minimum wage.

GREECE: MORE PEOPLE IN WORK, FEW REACH STABILITY (N=30)

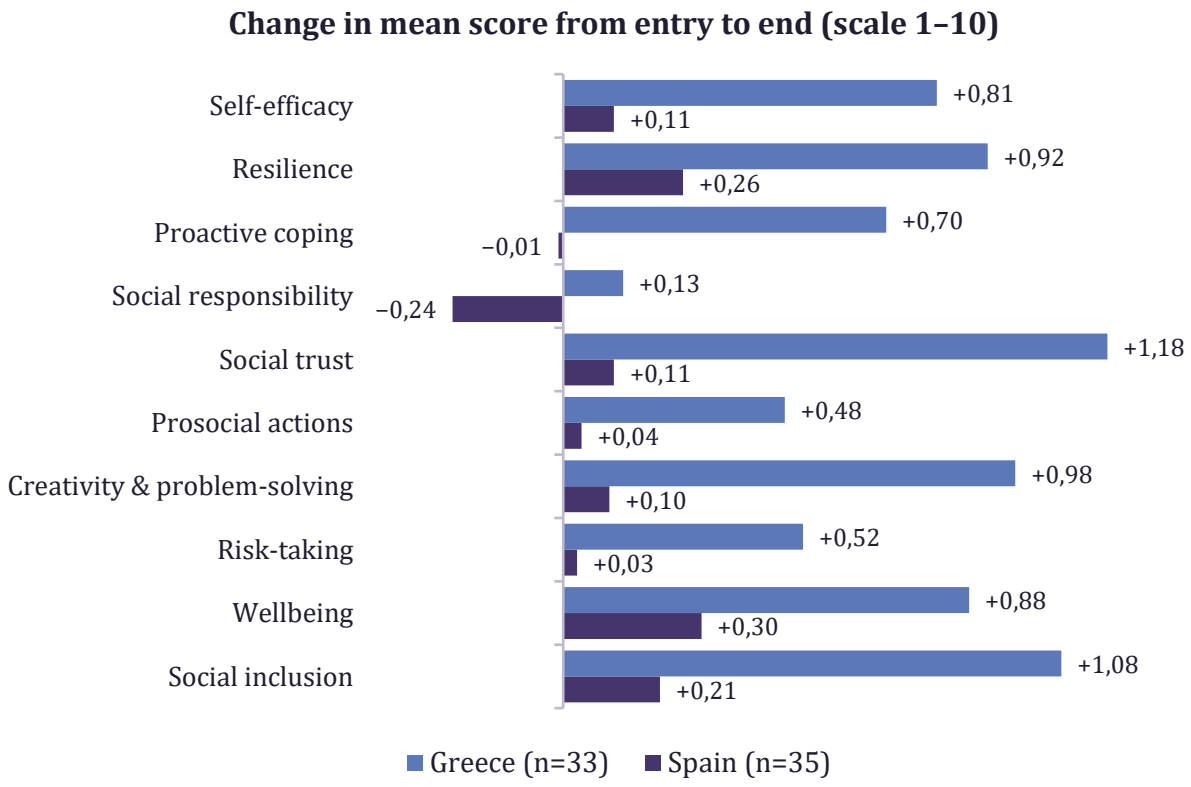


What the pathways show

- Not in work: 18 → 9 → 8 people
- Precarious 6 → 7 → 9; paid but insecure 2 → 7 → 6
- Of the 17 unemployed at entry, none reached the most stable category; 7 were still not in work
- Most stable: 3 → 2 → 2; one person kept a permanent contract but did not report income

Source: individual survey data, full-triad completers (Spain September file n=31; Greece October file n=30). Spain's n differs from the report (n=23) because the data file was updated later. Most stable = permanent contract and income above the minimum wage.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SCALES: CLEAR GAINS IN GREECE, STABILITY IN SPAIN



Greece

- 8 of 10 scales significant at the end (both tests agree)
- Gains held: no significant decline after support; 5 still significant at 3 months

Spain

- No statistical significant change; both tests mostly agree in all 30 comparisons
- Social inclusion is the only scale rising at every step (+0.50 by follow-up)

Source: matched Pre → End groups. Greek gains significant (p<.05, t-test and Wilcoxon) on all scales except social responsibility and risk-taking.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser
avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANAKA S.A.
EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

WHY THE SCALES TELL DIFFERENT STORIES

1

Ceiling effect

Spanish participants started higher on 9 of 10 scales (mean 7.44 of 10), leaving little room to move.

2

Statistical power

Matched samples of 23 to 35 can detect medium-to-large effects only.

3

Adaptive resilience

Participants had adjusted to precarity; an 8 → 9 step is harder than 6 → 7.

4

Interviews fill the gap

In both countries mentees describe real gains in self-worth and agency.
16 mentee interviews
8 mentor interviews

The two reports draw different lessons for future measurement

Spain: De-emphasise generic psychosocial scales; prioritise employment outcomes and qualitative mechanisms.

Greece: Keep the battery, but treat near-ceiling and trait-like scales (risk-taking) with caution.

Source: Considerations and Conclusions chapters of both reports; Spanish baseline from the n=108 Pre survey.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANAKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

HOW CHANGE HAPPENED: WHAT MENTEES TOLD US

1 **The relationship is the active ingredient**

Credibility from lived experience and a safe, non-hierarchical space. Where the match failed, content could not compensate.

2 **Working on the self, not the CV**

Confidence, self-worth and a calmer response to setbacks. Job-search tools were the vehicle, not the point.

3 **Effort meets a ceiling**

Spain: migration rules, credential recognition, housing. Greece: low pay, inflation, a saturated market.

4 **Owning the change without over-claiming**

Mentoring reinforced rather than created change, alongside therapy, study and public services.

"…just because one person didn't think I was a good fit for their project, it doesn't mean I'm not cut out for the job."

Mentee, Barcelona

Source: reflexive thematic analysis of post-programme interviews (Spain 7 mentees, Greece 8 mentees).

Autoocupació Soc el que vull ser

arka DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANIKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

THE MENTORS' PERSPECTIVE

Why they mentor

- Reciprocity: giving back what they received, or lacked
- The role changes them: from directing to guiding
- Greece: 2 of 4 recruited colleagues as mentors

How they work

- Confidence is the lever; self-belief precedes hiring
- Guiding, not doing: the mentee sets the agenda
- Listening, questions, concrete examples

What weighs on them

- Holding frustration about barriers they cannot lift
- Setting boundaries on personal matters
- Greece: referring cases that need psychological support

What mentors in Greece asked for

Fewer, firmly committed sessions rather than a mechanical minimum · ongoing mentor training and recognition of mentors' skills · a closing evaluative session · combining mentoring with coaching and training

Source: interviews with 4 mentors in each country.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

arka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

SAME MODEL, TWO CONTEXTS

	Spain · Barcelona	**Greece · Karditsa** (Thessaly)
Labour market	Youth unemployment above EU at every education level; high temporary work	Very high unemployment after upper-secondary; self-employment 11% (EU 6.1%)
Participants	58% unemployed at entry	53% unemployed at entry
Route into work	Permanent contracts 13% → 52%, temporary and seasonal 23% → 23%	Temporary contracts 7% → 27%; permanent 13% → 20%
Barriers named	Experience paradox, housing, recognition of certificates	Saturated market, gaps in foundational education, low pay and inflation
Delivery	Experienced mentor pool; advanced mentor training in year 2	Preparation and accompaniment of dyads under-resourced

Source: national context data (INE, Hellenic Statistical Authority, Eurostat) as cited in the two reports.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

avka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

THEORY OF CHANGE: WHAT THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS SO FAR

EARLY SIGNS

Long-term impact

Too early to measure after 3 months. Mentors recruiting peers is a first sign; financial security depends on wages, contracts and housing.

SUPPORTED

Short-term outcomes

Job-seeking success in both countries; soft skills shown by scales (Greece) and interviews (both).

CONDITIONAL

Activities → outcomes

The relationship is the mechanism, but only where matching, preparation and time are adequate.

Two amendments to the model

1 Delivery condition

Change happens only when matching, preparation and support get enough time and care.

2 Structural limits

Mentoring improves how people navigate the market; it cannot fix the market itself.

Source: Theory of Change validation chapters of both reports.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

arka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA - ANKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

CONCLUSIONS

1. **Clearest impact in the labour market.** Unemployment significantly reduced in both countries and the gain held three months after support.

2. **Entry is not yet security.** Temporary work, low pay and income thresholds keep part of the cohort precarious.

3. **The relationship is the mechanism.** Credibility, safety and a mentee-led agenda rebuild confidence and agency.

4. **Mentoring accelerates, within limits.** It speeds individual transitions but cannot change housing, migration rules or saturated markets.

5. **Strong, convergent, observational evidence.** Enough to guide design and continuation decisions, not to prove causality.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAMME

1 Differentiate the support

Longer, tapered mentoring for those still unemployed, in temporary work or below €900–1,100.

2 Embed in an ecosystem

Referral pathways to employment, legal, migration and mental-health services.

3 Invest in matching and preparation

Lived experience and chemistry first; protect coordinator time for the pairs.

4 Support mentors continuously

Supervision, peer circles, advanced sessions on frustration and boundaries.

5 Prepare mentees

Light-touch orientation so mentees set the agenda; revisit ground rules.

6 Commit time well

Fewer, firmly committed sessions; a closing evaluative session.

Autoocupació
Soc el que vull ser

arka
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KAROITSA - ANIKA S.A.

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND FUTURE ASSESSMENT

Policy

- Recognise how mentoring contributes to the goals of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular Principle 1 (lifelong learning) and Principle 4 (active support to employment)
- Build on mentoring as a complement to public employment services, adding long-term, individual support to their existing offer
- Consider contract consolidation and wage progression alongside exits from unemployment when measuring success

Future impact assessment

- Follow participants for 12 months or more, across the seasonal cycle
- Add a comparative frame against other interventions, without withholding support
- Continue interviews until saturation
- Agree how to use the psychosocial scales (the two reports differ)
- Use AI tools to cut analysis cost, with human interpretation