

Mission Statement RIA-AE Network

‘Adult education matters’ AND ‘To explore the unexplored’

Adult education provides skills development opportunities to help EU citizens find better jobs and improve well-being. Yet it remains a “poor cousin” of compulsory and higher education, often disconnected from social policy and the education system at large, receiving limited budgets and policy attention compared to other sectors. Nevertheless, research shows that adult education matters and that adult education plays a significant role in promoting personal, social and economic well-being.

The impact of Erasmus+ on adult learners has been less researched so far and little is known about the impact of the Erasmus+ programme on the environment and socio-economic resilience of adult learners. To better coordinate research activities on the impact of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education and to enable the further development and quality improvement of the Erasmus+ programme, a transnational research network is to be established named: **The Research-based Impact Analysis of Erasmus+ Adult Education Programme Network (RIA-AE Network)**.

The objectives of the RIA-AE network

The RIA-AE Network has various objectives:

- 1) to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education within the Erasmus+ programme;
- 2) to strengthen cooperation and dialogue between research, policy and practice;
- 3) to contribute to further development and quality improvement of the Erasmus+ Programme by enabling high-quality and practice-oriented evaluation and impact research.
- 4) to enlarge the visibility of the benefits of adult education in the EU and Member States and the role of Erasmus+ (advocacy).

Means

In order to achieve these objectives, the RIA-AE network aims to establish cooperation between National Agencies of the Erasmus+ from different European countries interested in developing a new approach to programme evaluation and impact assessment in the field of adult education within the Erasmus+ framework.

This framework opens the possibility to take stock of existing research and knowledge on the benefits and impact of adult education (repository), curate this knowledge and update knowledge by implementing different research projects to evaluate the impact of mobility projects and partnerships. Research designs can focus on impact at individual, organisational or systemic level, and can explore core thematic areas such as the priorities of the Erasmus+ programme. One such research project is an impact study of Erasmus+ on adult education organisations, staff and adult learners in Europe.

Cooperation framework

Cooperation within the Network is based on shared responsibility and is always open to new members. The cooperation framework includes a number of national agencies and external research partner institutions (e.g. universities, research institutes). Each NA involved in the network can decide whether to carry out the research projects itself (depending on resources and staff expertise) or to commission a partner.

Values

To achieve the goal of high-quality research, network partners adhere to common standards of social and educational research that meet internationally recognised ethical standards. The methods used for the research activities may include all methods commonly used in sociology, political science and education - quantitative, qualitative or a mixture of different methods.