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NATIONAL REPORT RIA-AE NETWORK

IMPACT OF ERASMUS+ ON THE ADULT EDUCATION SECTOR IN SLOVENIA

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ADULT EDUCATION



CMEPIUS

Centre of the Republic
of Slovenia for Mobility
and European
Educational and
Training Programmes

Erasmus+

Enriching lives, opening minds.





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Abbreviations

AE	Adult education
AEGC	Adult Education Guidance Centres
ESF	European social funds
IKT	Information-communication technology
KA1	Key action 1
KA2	Key action 2
LLL	Lifelong learning
LLLW	Lifelong learning Weeks
NA	National Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
RIA-AE	Research-based Impact Analysis of Erasmus+ Adult Education Programme Network
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SDLC	Self-Directed Learning Centres
SIAE	Slovenian Institute for Adult Education
SSIO	Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education
SSPSI	Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training
U3A	The University for the Third Age
VET	Vocational education and training



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PART B – SHORT SUMMARY REPORT



Summary of result

BACKGROUND OF THE MONITORING STUDY

Erasmus+ is the **EU flagship mobility programme** for education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. The programme offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in the following six main areas: higher education (HE); vocational education and training (VET); school education; adult education; youth; and sport. It aims to reach out to a wider range of groups such as younger students, disadvantaged individuals, and smaller grassroots organisations.

For the **Adult Education Sector**, the Erasmus+ programme aims to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of adults whose conditions for changing their personal situation through educational opportunities are difficult. Adult learning under Erasmus+ should lead to greater ownership and autonomy through improved language, numeracy, digital and other skills for vulnerable adults.

Till now, **less is known about the impact of Erasmus+** on adult learners, staff, volunteers and organisations in the field of adult education. To fill this gap, a transnational research network has been established, funded by Erasmus+: **The Research-based Impact Analysis of Erasmus+ Adult Education Programme Network** (RIA-AE network).

The RIA-AE network worked on the development of a **transnational monitoring study** for programme evaluation and impact analysis. The monitoring focuses on the question of the benefits of participating in Erasmus+ adult education projects, i.e. the identification of factors that have contributed to positive or negative, short-term or lasting changes, e.g. in the personal, organisational and professional spheres. In addition, it determined to what extent the objectives set by the EU in this framework (inclusion and diversity; digitisation; sustainability/climate; participation in democratic life) have been realized.

To be able to address the effects of Erasmus+ on the different programme levels (organisation, staff, learners), the monitoring study was located in a **multi-level model** of adult education. The model distinguishes between the micro, meso and macro levels, which can be decisive for access and take-up, but also for the effects of international projects in individual, organisational or systemic terms.



The challenge of widening participation of learners lies in the alignment of activity structures at the macro, meso and micro level.

The main objective of the transnational monitoring study was to provide the National Agencies with information on the impact of the Programme on (1) participating institutions, (2) staff and (3) adult learners who have participated in a mobility activity individually or in groups, as well as on the benefits for their living environment and socio-economic resilience.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological approach of the national monitoring study included five modules:

Module 1 – Analysis of existing impact studies and project documentation:

Available existing impact research was considered that has been carried out in the last decade on the impact of Erasmus on the adult education sector in Slovenia. Moreover, programme data were analysed on type of beneficiaries that participated in Erasmus+, topics addressed in Erasmus+ projects and impact data based on participant reports (based on QlikView and QlikSense).

Module 2 – Survey among participating AE organisations: To get a good picture of the impact of Erasmus+ on AE institutions in Slovenia, all AE institutions, which participated as coordinators in a KA1 and/or KA2 project in the previous (from 2018 onward) and current programming period (till the end of 2022), were invited to participate in an online survey. There were 72 such organisations. 51 organisations responded to the invitation to take part in the online survey, giving a response rate among coordinators of KA1 and/or KA2 projects of 70.8%.

Module 3 – Case studies with Erasmus+ beneficiaries: 5 case studies were conducted at AE institutions that participated in Erasmus+. For each case study, we conducted focus group interview with director, Erasmus+ coordinator and professional staff (in four case studies, three staff members were involved, while in one case study one staff member participated). Altogether, in focus groups with AE organisations 23 participants were involved.

Module 4 – Interviews with adult learners: To get a picture of participation, experiences and impact of mobility for adult learners (new component in the current Erasmus+ programme), in total 12 adult learners were interviewed that



participated in a mobility action. For this purpose, we conducted 3 focus groups with adult learners who had recent mobility experience. In addition, we also conducted 3 interviews with Erasmus+ coordinators who organised the mobility for adult learners.

Module 5 – Interviews with non-participating organisations: 2 interviews were conducted with AE institutions with no experience in 2021-2027 Erasmus+ about why they have not (yet) applied for mobility of adult learners, and the obstacles experienced for their organisations.

KEY FINDINGS

The accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+

Main **types of organisations** participating in KA1 projects are AE centres/folk schools, which are also key public providers of AE in Slovenia, followed by NGOs and other public service providers (e.g., libraries, museums). Variety of other organisation types also appears, but much less frequently. Main types of organisations participating in KA2 smaller partnership projects are NGOs, followed by AE centres/folk schools, while in strategic partnership AE centres/folk schools share a slight advantage over NGOs type of beneficiaries. Other types of organisations also appear as project partners, but much less frequently.

Main **obstacles for participating in Erasmus+** are related to lack of time, staff (understaffing) and financial (underfunding) constraints. A particular challenge for the mobility of adult learners are adults with physical disabilities.

Majority of organisations participated in five or more Erasmus+ projects and as among their main target groups, most adults are participants with fewer opportunities, **inclusiveness of Erasmus+** in Slovenia is high. Moreover, as there is also a high proportion of organisation that participated in only one project within the Erasmus+, this signals that Erasmus+ is attractive to organisations that have not previously benefited from the programme, meaning that Erasmus+ programme **maintains its accessibility** to newcomer organisations.



Impact at meso level

Main impact on **internationalisation** of organisations can be observed, as considerable number of organisations implemented various practices that facilitate internationalization processes, while organisational embedding of internationalisation is also noticed.

Main **impact on learning offer** is notable in integrating outputs and insights gained into new or existing provision in participating organisations, better cooperation with organisations supporting participants with fewer opportunities, better alignment of the learning offer with the needs of adult learners and better accessibility for different groups of adult learners. However, the impact is the weakest in paying attention to participation in democratic life, common values, and civic engagement. After participating in Erasmus+ projects, most organisations pay more attention to the digital skills, professional development of staff, inclusion and diversity, and networking/partnerships with other organisations.

Main findings regarding the **impact on horizontal priorities** show that two priorities improved the most, that is inclusion and diversity, and digitalisation, while other two (green transition and participation in democratic life) improved to some extent.

Factors **hampering the use of outputs** and products developed with the Erasmus+ are related to lack of time, low motivation of staff, lack of management support, insufficient international network of quality partners, and financial constraints. Factors stimulating the impact are related to priorities given in the organisations to the Erasmus+, motivated and professionally self-fulfilled staff, teamwork, management support, quality network of international partners, and good project management.

Impact at micro level

The highest ranked **learning outcomes** gained in the **mobility of staff** are: learned from good practice abroad; improved social and civic competences; shared knowledge acquired through mobility activity with colleagues; became more motivated to carry on developing professional skills; increased cultural awareness and expression; new teaching/training methods; new contacts/expand professional network; improved teamwork abilities and communication skills; improved English language skills; knowledge about



culture of the host country and its educational system; knowledge needed for working with vulnerable group of adults; knowledge about integration of migrants/minorities groups in education and/or labour market; improved organisational skills.

In light of **professionalisation and staff development**, relevant impacts includes: development of international competences among staff, better pedagogical and didactic skills, better confidence, adaptability, and perseverance, better ownership (agency) to contribute to (international and intercultural) society, improvement of language skills, better identification of learners' educational needs and ability to develop more appropriate learning pathways for adult learners, improved competences for the use of digital learning technologies, and increased attention to inclusion and diversity.

Main **impact of Erasmus+ on adult learners** is evident from their acquisition of new social contacts outside their environment, increased self-confidence, increased participations in activities in their environment, gained new knowledge and skills, strengthened digital skills, intercultural and relational competence.

Factors stimulating the impact of Erasmus+ on staff and adult learners are good contacts and cooperation with reliable partner organisations, flexibility of organisations involved, good mobility planning and good companions at mobility for adult learners. **Factors hampering** the impact are related to lots of work for organisations, underfunding for organisations and adult learners at mobility, and participants of mobility from some vulnerable groups (i.e., adult learners with physical disabilities, migrant woman).

Impact at macro level

The **impact on other organisations** shows that participation in Erasmus+ has impact on adapting the offer and delivery of training to other, related organisations that were not involved in the project. However, while organisations involved in Erasmus+ believes that Erasmus+ results had impacted some system related issues in AE in Slovenia, there are no clear indicators that show the impact of Erasmus+ on **AE government policies**.

Factors stimulating impact on other organisations are related to organisation involvement in umbrella organisations and sharing of project results through local and national professional networks. **Factors that hamper** the impact of Erasmus+ on government policies are related to the fact that Erasmus+ is not part of national AE policy and/or national AE implementation programmes.



POLICY POINTERS

How to increase the impact at micro level

Mobility of staff and adult learners should support and target more mobilities that focuses on strategies for better participation in democratic life and civil society and strengthening the knowledge of EU values.

In view of the general cost pressures, it is necessary to increase the resources available for the mobility of both professional staff and adult learners.

There is a need to equalise the funding between professionals and adult learners which both receive for mobility purposes. Individual support for adult learners should be tailored to the target group and not treated equally with other beneficiaries of the programme (pupils, students) due to their different needs.

How to increase the Impact at meso level

Adult education organisations should pay more attention to the topic of participation in democratic life, shared EU values, and active citizenship, as well as to the issues of green transition.

The criteria for which organisations can apply for and implement the Erasmus+ programme for the adult education sector need to be narrowed down and made more precise.

The European Commission should make it possible to purchase equipment as an eligible cost, thereby also improving the material conditions of the organisations.

The results, solutions, and innovations of Erasmus+ projects should be exchanged annually between organisations active in the field of adult education in meetings/events within their respective associations.

How to increase the Impact at macro level

Erasmus+ should become part of national AE policy, in the same manner as other EU tools are (e.g., ESF).



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To implement reforms and achieve longer-lasting effects of Erasmus+ in adult education at a systemic level (KA3 projects), it is essential to involve the relevant competent ministries in such projects.



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Part C – MAIN REPORT



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C.I INTRODUCTION



Introduction

ERASMUS+

Erasmus+ is the EU flagship mobility programme for **education, training, youth, and sport in Europe**. The programme offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in the following **six main areas**: higher education (HE); vocational education and training (VET); school education (including early childhood education and care - ECEC); adult education; youth; and sport. It aims to reach out to a wider range of groups such as younger students, disadvantaged individuals, and smaller grassroots organisations.

The **general objective** of Erasmus+ emphasises **lifelong learning** as underpinning the educational, professional, and personal development of people in education, training, youth, and sport, both in Europe and beyond. The programme Actions aim to contribute to sustainable growth, ensuring that citizens have quality jobs, building social cohesion, facilitating innovation, and strengthening European identity and active citizenship.

In 2021-2027, as with the previous programme, Erasmus+ comprises three **Key Actions**. Some Actions are managed at the **centralised** Commission level, either directly or through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (**EACEA**). Other Actions are managed at the **decentralised** level through the network of **Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs)**¹ whose role is to promote the programme, disseminate information nationally, support applicants and beneficiaries, assist the Commission in the selection process for funding, monitoring and evaluating projects, and work with other NAs and the Commission, for example sharing high quality practice and project achievements. These include:

- **KEY ACTION 1 (KA1): Learning mobility of individuals (staff and learners)**: aiming to Influence education, training, and youth systems, result in positive long-term effects on individuals, ultimately inspiring policy reforms and drawing new resources for mobility opportunities throughout Europe and beyond.
- **KEY ACTION 2 (KA2): Cooperation among organisations and individuals (Previous: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices)**: aiming to develop, transfer, and/or implementation

¹ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/national-agencies>



of innovative practices at the organisational, local, regional, national, and European levels, with beneficial long-term consequences on the participating organisations and policy systems.

For the Adult Education Sector, the Erasmus+ programme aims to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of adults whose conditions for changing their personal situation through educational opportunities are difficult. Adult learning under Erasmus+ should lead to greater ownership and autonomy through improved language, numeracy, digital and other skills for vulnerable adults. The figure below provides the reconstructed Theory of change (ToC) of Erasmus+ for the adult education sector.

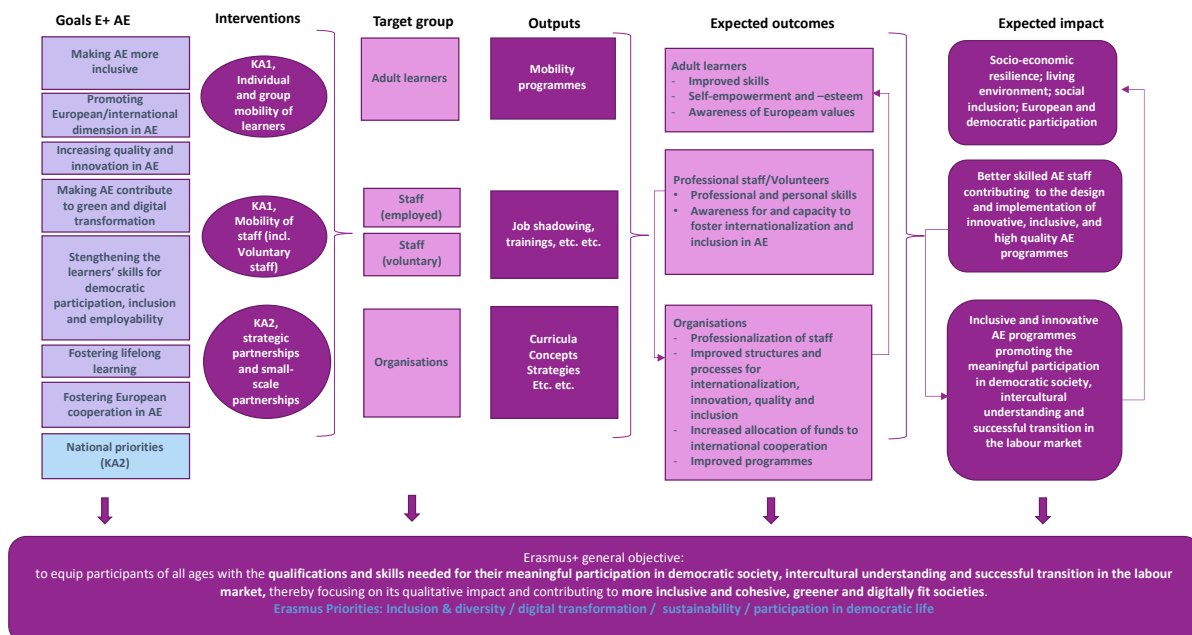


FIGURE 1: INTERVENTION LOGIC ERASMUS+ IMPACT ON THE ADULT EDUCATION SECTOR



THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPACT MONITORING

Till now, less is known about the impact of Erasmus+ on adult learners, staff, volunteers and organisations in the field of adult learning. To better coordinate research activities on strengthening 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 has been established, funded by Erasmus+ (see box below with the mission statement of the RIA-AE network).

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.

Box 1: Mission statement RIA-AE network

MULTI-LEVEL FRAMEWORK

The RIA-AE network works on the development of a transnational monitoring study for programme evaluation and impact analysis in the field of adult learning. The monitoring focuses on the question of the benefits of participating in Erasmus+ adult education projects, i.e. the identification of factors that have contributed to positive or negative, short-term or lasting changes, e.g. in the personal, organisational and professional spheres. In addition, it will be determined to what extent the objectives set by the EU in this framework (inclusion and diversity; digitisation; sustainability/climate; participation in democratic life) could be realized. Based on this information, recommendations can be made for improving the programme.

To be able to address the effects of Erasmus+ on the different programme levels (organisation, staff, learners), we propose to locate the monitoring study in a multi-level model of adult education. The model distinguishes between the micro, meso and macro levels, which can be decisive for access and take-up, but also for the effects of international projects in individual, organisational or systemic terms (Brüning and Kuwan, 2002).²³ Brüning and Kuwan, (2002) notably stress that the answer to the challenge of widening participation of learners lies in the alignment of activity structures at the macro, meso and micro level. To provide a basis for interdependence of these levels 'mobilisation strategies' and 'clusters of instruments, to increase the participation in learning or to mobilize specific target groups into learning' (Broek and Hake, 2012, p. 400), are necessary. The framework connects the following factors (cf. Brüning and Kuwan, 2002):

- the subjective and social barriers of the individual (micro level);
- the provision of educational services by educators, educational institutions and other organizations (meso level), taking into account the above-mentioned barriers at the micro level;
- the framework conditions and development opportunities of adult education organisations through participation in mobility programmes (meso level);
- and political decision-making (macro level) to create the necessary conditions for the meso level.

Figure 2 shows the interplay of these three levels influencing the impact of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education within the

² Schrader, J. (2011): Struktur und Wandel der Weiterbildung. Bielefeld: wbv.

³ Brüning, G. & Kuwan, H. (2002): Benachteiligte und Bildungsferne - Empfehlungen für die Weiterbildung. Bielefeld: wbv.



Erasmus+ programme. For each of these levels key factors can be identified to describe and analyse the specific influences of the impact of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education within the Erasmus+ programme.

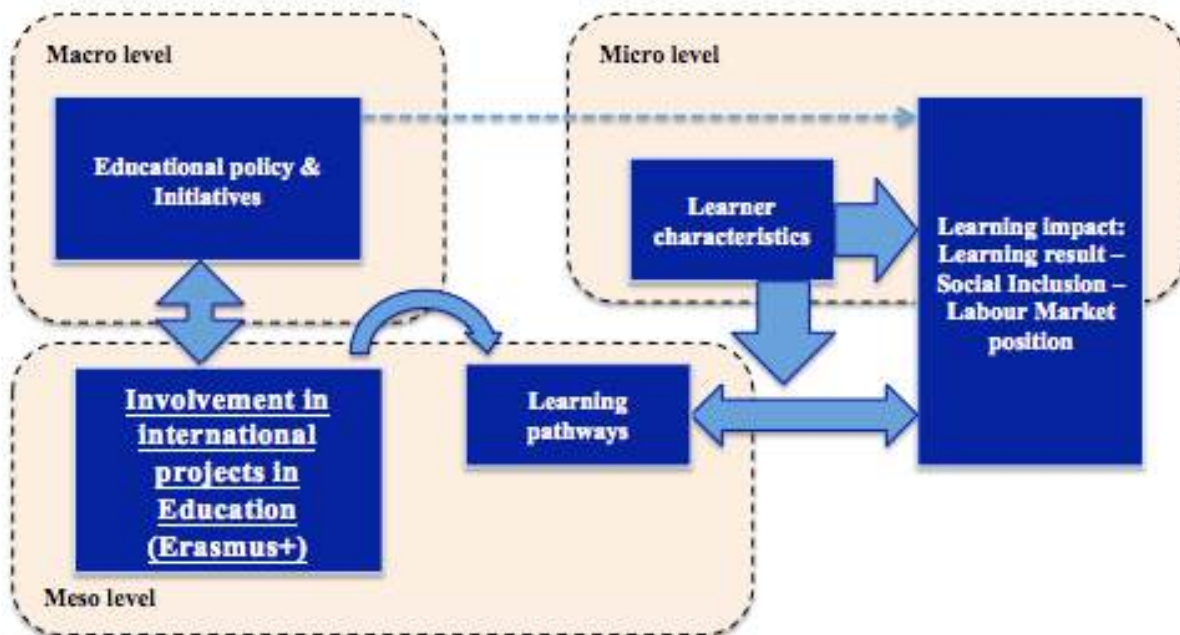


Figure 2: Interplay of key factors at macro, meso and micro levels

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of the transnational monitoring study is to provide the National Agencies with information on the impact of the Programme on (1) participating institutions, (2) staff and (3) adult learners who have participated in a mobility activity individually or in groups, as well as on the benefits for their living environment and socio-economic resilience.

Although the monitoring study aims to determine the impact of individual actions at micro, meso and macro levels differentiated according to the guiding principles KA1 and KA2, in practice the beneficiary organisations often participate in several parts of the programme and projects (KA1 and KA2) and in different roles (e.g. as coordinators and partners). Such "double" participation has a cumulative effect on the organisation, staff and learners, making it difficult to attribute the impact to individual parts of the programme or projects. Rather, a link between effects can be assumed. In this way, KA2 projects can directly



strengthen the educational offer of organisations. However, this provision also has an impact on adult education staff and individual learners. Staff and learner mobility could also have an indirect impact on organisations. Therefore, we jointly present the research questions to be addressed in Table 1.

Research
How accessible/inclusive is the programme for the target groups? (chapter 4)
– What are the specificities and characteristics of the adult education organisations participating in the Erasmus+ programme?
– What are the specificities and characteristics of participants, staff, volunteers and adult learners who, individually or in groups, participate or have participated in an Erasmus+ project?
– What does this information say about the accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ internationalisation projects in the network countries (Erasmus+ priority inclusion and diversity)? Are there any ‘Mobstacles’ for organisations, professionals and learners to participate?
What is the impact of participation in KA1 and KA2 projects at the AE institution on the following areas... (chapter 5)
– The quality of the organisation and in particular the organizational embedding of internationalisation in the organisations (strategy, finances, project management, networks, validation of international competences)?
– Policies for the professional development of their staff in relation to individual needs and organisational objectives?
– The introduction of new or adaptation of existing offers (programmes, activities, modules or new/adapted pedagogical, didactic and validation activities)?
– The adaptation of (educational) activities and programmes to the needs of learners?
– The involvement of learners in programme design?
– Improving accessibility for adult learners (inclusion)?
– Quality assurance policies?
– The use of information and communication technologies and the digitisation of programmes (Erasmus+ priority digital transformation)?
– The promotion of the teaching of international competences and common values (inclusion and diversity; tolerance; sustainability/ environment/ fight against climate change, digitisation, global citizenship, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, etc.) in the offers (see Erasmus+ priorities: Inclusion & diversity / digital transformation / sustainability / participation in democratic life?



- Sustainable cooperation and synergies between adult education institutions, charities, cultural institutions, labour market actors and civil society to promote the independence of adult learners?
- The dissemination, exchange of knowledge and experience within the organisation and with other (more or less experienced) organisations?
- The establishment and development of an international network?
- How do the impacts differ between the different types of adult education institutions (formal, non-formal, governmental, civil society, private)?

What impact does participation in KA1 and KA2 projects have on staff in the areas of ... (chapter 6.2)

- Skills, knowledge, attitudes, competences
- Foreign language and intercultural awareness
- Digital competences, including to allow a shift towards digital education
- Competences linked to occupational profiles
- Understanding of practices, policies and systems across countries
- Understanding for and ability to address issues of social inclusion and diversity
- Capacity to trigger changes in terms of modernisation and international opening within their educational organisations
- Organising mobility projects
- Managing cooperation with European partners
- Management skills (mentioned only in KA2)
- Sustainability competences (mentioned only in KA2)
- Self-confidence, adaptability and perseverance?
- The application and exchange of the international experience gained among the employees?
- Identification with European society and the values associated with it (integration, diversity, tolerance, anti-discrimination, etc.)?
- Professional development and career?
- Motivation and satisfaction in daily work?

What impact do KA1 and KA2 projects have on adult learners in the areas of ... (chapter 6.3)

- Skills, knowledge, attitudes, competences?
- Foreign language and intercultural awareness
 - Awareness and understanding of the European Union and common European values (e.g. respect for democratic principles, human dignity, unity and diversity, intercultural dialogue, as well as European social, cultural and historical heritage)
 - Key competences



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Digital skills and media literacy – Sustainability-related skills and awareness for green transformation – Self-empowerment and self-esteem – Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
<p>Labour market outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enhanced employability, improved career prospects and economic independence
<p>Lifelong learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved learning performance and motivation for taking part in education and training – Enable learners to participate in training
<p>Social Inclusion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – More active participation in society and enhanced positive interactions with people from different backgrounds – Socio-economic resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is there a difference in impact between participation in group and individual mobility?
<p>What impact do KA1 and KA2 projects have on other organisations and policy developments? (Chapter 7)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Will the experiences from the KA1 and KA2 projects be taken over by other organisations that have not participated in Erasmus+ (dissemination of results)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do the results of the KA1 and KA2 projects contribute to policy developments at local, regional, national and European level? – Policy reforms – Attracting new resources for mobility opportunities – Raising participation of adult of all ages and socio-economic background in adult education
<p>Lessons to support the effectiveness and efficiency of future Erasmus+ programmes (Chapter 8)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How can the accessibility of the Erasmus+ programme to the target group adult learning be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Which AE organisations are pioneers and why (with which institutional peculiarities including special features of the offers)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What are the opportunities and challenges for the participation of target groups?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What are the first experiences with the KA1 individual or group mobility of adult learners and what are the opportunities and risks?



<p>– What monitoring information is needed annually in addition to the "participation reports" in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Erasmus+ programme on the target group of adult learners? Can research provide a frame of reference that enables a sustainable improvement in effectiveness?</p>
<p>– How can the NAs support the AE institutions even more strongly in reaching impact?</p>

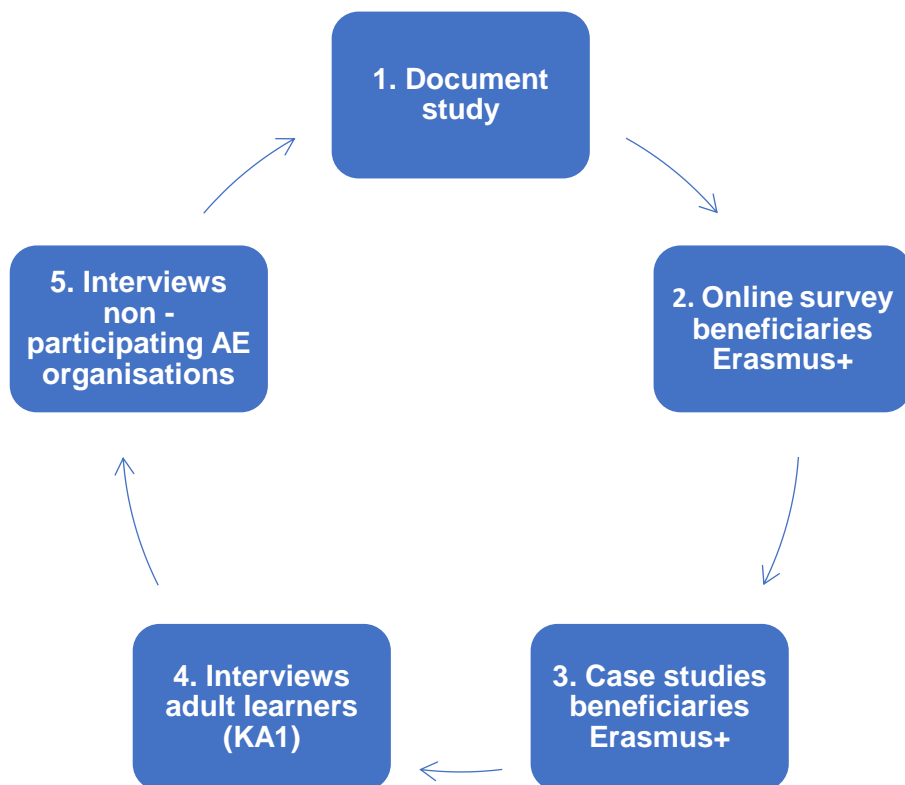
Table 1: research questions



Research design

INTRODUCTION

The methodological approach of the national monitoring study includes five modules, which are repeated over the three waves 2023, 2025 and 2027 and thus enable an update of the impact monitoring:





MODULE 1: ANALYSIS OF EXISTING IMPACT STUDIES AND PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Available existing impact research was considered that has been carried out in the last decade on the impact of Erasmus on the adult education sector at national level. Moreover, programme data were analysed on type of beneficiaries that participated in Erasmus+, topics addressed in Erasmus+ projects and impact data based on participant reports (making use of programme monitoring data, based on QlikView and QlikSense).

MODULE 2: SURVEY AMONG PARTICIPATING AE ORGANISATIONS

To get a good picture of the impact of Erasmus+ on AE institutions in Slovenia, all AE institutions, which participated as coordinator in a KA1 and KA2 project in the previous (from 2018 onward) and current programming period (till the end of 2022), were invited to participate in an online survey.⁴ There were 72 such organisations. 51 organisations responded to the invitation to take part in the online survey, giving a response rate among coordinators of KA1 and KA2 projects of 70.8%.

Participation in the survey was anonymous. The data collected were used solely for the purpose of displaying the results of the survey, in such a way that no individual organisation can be identified.

The survey sample is relatively diverse, despite the small number of participants. Among the organisations included in the survey sample, AE providers (school/institute/centre) are the most strongly represented (four out of ten organisations), one in four organisations is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or an association, and more than one in nine is (also) a cultural or artistic institution. Among the organisations surveyed, the majority are those with between 11 and 50 employees - almost half of them; almost a third are small organisations with up to 5 employees.

The data collected through the questionnaire to measure the impact of Erasmus+ on the AE sector are processed using statistical data analysis. The results are presented at the level of the frequency distribution of the responses. As not all respondents answered all questions, the numerus (number of

⁴ Contact persons of beneficiary organisations of projects were selected whose start date according to the grant agreement is no earlier than 1st of January 2018 and whose end date is no later than 31st of December 2022.

respondents who answered the question) is also given for each question or item within a question.

MODULE 3: CASE STUDIES

In addition to the analysis of existing information at the NA and the survey, five case studies were conducted at AE institutions that participated in Erasmus+. We conducted 5 focus groups with AE organisations, with a total of 23 participants (see Table 2). The organisations were selected in cooperation with NA. In the selection process we choose organisations with experience in KA1 and KA2 projects, paying attention to both the geographical spread of the organisations and the different types of organisations involved in Erasmus+ projects in the field of AE.

Table 2: Focus groups with organisations in the field of AE

Organisation	Participants	Interview code
1 Library	Director, coordinator professional staff (3x)	Erasmus+, FG-1
2 Folk schools (AE centre)	Director, coordinator professional staff (3x)	Erasmus+, FG-2
3 Folk schools (AE centre)	Director, coordinator professional staff (3x)	Erasmus+, FG-3
4 Folk schools (AE centre)	Director, coordinator professional staff (1x) ⁵	Erasmus+, FG-4
5 NGO	Director, coordinator professional staff (3x)	Erasmus+, FG-5

Focus groups with AE organisations, that lasted between 100 and 120 minutes, were conducted between October and November 2023. All interviews were audio-recorded, and the data processed. Oral consent to participate in the study was also obtained from focus groups participants.

⁵ Due to Covid-19's illness, only one of the three planned staff attended the focus group.



MODULE 4: INTERVIEWS ADULT LEARNERS (INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP MOBILITY)

To get a picture of participation, experiences and impact of mobility for adult learners (new component in the current Erasmus+ programme), in total 12 adult learners were interviewed that participated in a mobility action. We conducted 3 focus groups with adult learners who had recent mobility experience (see Table 3). The adult learners participated in a mobility 5 days. Two groups (FG-6 and FG-7) of participants undertook mobility to Malta to attend an English language course, and one group (FG-8) undertook mobility to Turkey to attend a course on learning filigraphy.

Focus groups with adult learners were conducted in October-November 2023 and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. All adult learners were aged between 60 and 72 and retired. Interviews were audio-recorded, and the data processed. Written consent to participate in the study was also obtained from focus groups participants.

Table 3: Focus groups with adult learners

Organisation	Participants	Interview code
Folk schools (AE centre)	Adult learners (5x)	FG-6
Folk schools (AE centre)	Adult learners (5x)	FG-7
Folk schools (AE centre)	Adult learners (2x) ⁶	FG-8

In addition to the focus groups, we also conducted 3 interviews with Erasmus+ coordinators who organised the mobility of adult learners in the period October-November 2023, lasting between 30 and 35 minutes (see Table 4).

Table 4: Interviews with Erasmus+ coordinators

Organisation	Interview code
Folk schools (AE centre)	I-1
Folk schools (AE centre)	I-2
Association for AE	I-3

⁶ Due to Covid-19 disease, only two of the five participants took part in the focus group.



MODULE 5: INTERVIEWS WITH NON-PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Two online (Zoom) interviews were implemented with AE institutions (see Table 5) with no experience in 2021-2027 Erasmus+ about why they have not (yet) applied, and the obstacles experienced for their organisation and target groups. Interviews lasted 30 minutes and were conducted in February 2024. Both interviews were recorded through Zoom platform, and the data processed. Oral consent to participate in the study was also secured from participants.

Table 5: Interviews with AE institutions with no experience in 2021-2027 Erasmus+

Organisation	Participants	Interview code
Folk schools (AE centre)	professional staff	I-4
Folk schools (AE centre)	professional staff	I-5



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ADULT EDUCATION

C.II KEY FINDINGS



Short portrait of the adult learning sector in Slovenia

INTRODUCTION

Before independence in 1991, Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia, which existed from its foundation in the aftermath of World War II until it collapsed in 1992. Yugoslavia was a socialist state, decentralised and organised as a federation with a system of worker self-management and social property. Education was public, and AE emerged as a response to the need to educate workers (vocational education to satisfy industry needs) and society at large (political education to satisfy the socialist society's needs). AE practices were supported through state infrastructure (People's and Worker's Universities and AE centres within companies). However, after independence, the 'old' AE infrastructure collapsed, but the state introduced an array of systemic measures that gave new impetus to AE development: special funds were granted in the state budget; the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education⁷ (SIAE) and other professional bodies were established; a special AE law was enacted in 1996; and in 1998, the SIAE prepared a national AE programme. Moreover, several new private AE providers were established, new AE associations emerged, and new forms of provision were set up (e.g., study circles, lifelong learning weeks, etc.) (Mikulec, 2021)⁸.

AE **governance** is state based, in which the ministry responsible for education and ministry responsible for labour have the main responsibilities, but they also receive support from other ministries (for culture, health, etc.) and professional bodies (e.g., SIAE). Private organisations are the predominant providers of AE, while public organisations that provide public service from 2020 on, i.e. folk schools (AE centres), established by municipalities account for 34 organisations in 2022 (Mikulec, 2023)⁹. There are also approximately 250 other providers (e.g., schools, associations, libraries, museums) that provide formal and non-formal programmes for adults (ACS, 2023)¹⁰. However, while in Slovenia number of bodies and councils (**stakeholders**) exist whose roles cover AE to varying degrees (e.g., Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult

⁷ See <https://www.acs.si/en/>

⁸ Mikulec, B. (2021). The influence of international intergovernmental organisations on Slovenian adult education policies. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 40(1), 37-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2021.1871674>

⁹ Mikulec, B. (2023). Od projektnega k sistemskemu urejanju izobraževanja odraslih. *Sodobna pedagogika*, 74(4), 160–179.

¹⁰ ACS. (2023). Info-mozaiik: Ponudba izobraževanja in učenja za odrasle v Sloveniji v letih 2022 in 2023. <https://arhiv.acs.si/info-mozaiik/2023/112.pdf>



Education (SSIO)¹¹, Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training (SSPSI), the main shortcoming is that these bodies (stakeholders) have no decision-making or spending capacities¹². Therefore, strengthening the government engagement with stakeholders in the field of AE is a must in Slovenia¹³.

Slovenia mainly comprises a **conservative welfare state regime** in which it is typical to invest in industry-specific skills and to favour skilled workers. Therefore, the AE's focus is on vocational education and training (VET), while AE policy is framed closely by the EU's conceptual and financial influence (Košmerl & Mikulec, 2021)¹⁴ (e.g., 57% of total AE expenditures come from European social funds (ESF), which is the highest rate among OECD countries (OECD, 2019)¹⁵). In recent years, due to the discouraging results in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) - more than 30% of adults have low literacy levels and numeracy skills -, Slovenia established closer collaboration with the OECD under the 'Skills Strategy Projects' initiative, and the OECD Skills Strategy Team produced a "Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report" alongside preparing "Skill Strategy Implementation Guidance Reports for Slovenia" (Mikulec, & Guimarães).¹⁶

ADULT EDUCATION POLICIES IN SLOVENIA

AE in Slovenia is defined as education, training and learning to acquire, update, enlarge and deepen knowledge, and it includes both vocational and general education for personal development, cultural enlightenment and social needs. Several acts (laws) regulate AE, and the **Adult Education Act (2018)**¹⁷ defines public interests determined by the **AE master plan**. Until now, three master plans were adopted: The first covered the 2004–2010 period¹⁸, the second one covered the 2013–2020 period¹⁹, and the third one covers 2022-2030 period. All

¹¹ For the role that the Council and its committees perform see OECD. (2018). Skills strategy implementation guidance for Slovenia: Improving the governance of adult learning, OECD Skills Studies. OECD Publishing, pp. 59-60.

¹² Ibid., pp. 14-15.

¹³ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁴ Košmerl, T., & Mikulec, B. (2021). 'You have to run it like a company': The marketisation of adult learning and education in Germany and Slovenia. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 12(1), 47-63. <https://doi.org/10.3384/rela.2000-7426.ojs3466>

¹⁵ OECD. (2019). Getting skills right: Future-ready adult learning systems. OECD Publishing, p. 94.

¹⁶ Mikulec, B., & Guimarães, P. (2023). The OECD solutionism and mythologies in adult education policy: skills strategies in Portugal and Slovenia. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 45(3), 324-343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2022.2092090>

¹⁷ Zakon o izobraževanju odraslih (ZIO-1). (2018). Uradni list RS, št. 6/18.

¹⁸ Državni zbor RS. (2004). Resolucija o nacionalnem programu izobraževanja odraslih v Republiki Sloveniji do leta 2010 (ReNPPIO 2004–2010).

¹⁹ Državni zbor RS. (2013). Resolucija o nacionalnem programu izobraževanja odraslih v Republiki Sloveniji za obdobje 2013–2020 (ReNPPIO 2013–2020).



three master plans defined priority areas, goals and measures for implementation. Priority areas of the first two included: (1) non-formal education (e.g., programmes for literacy skills, social cohesion etc.); (2) formal education (programmes for improving formal education attainment of adults); and (3) AE for the labour market (programmes on active labour market policy and provision of recognition of prior learning). In the third master plan, two additional (fourth and fifth) priority areas were included: research and development, and AE activities (e.g., guidance, recognition of prior learning, professionalisation of adult educators, quality development, awareness raising, information activities) (Mikulec, 2021; ACS, 2022)^{20 21}.

Main **priorities** (challenges) identified by third **AE master plan** (covering 2022-2030 period) are²²: (a) Increasing participation of adults in lifelong learning (LLL), especially vulnerable groups of adults that participate less in LLL activities; (b) developing different forms of learning and new approaches to vulnerable groups (e.g., older adults, young adults, adults with special needs, socially excluded unemployed); (c) modernising basic school AE programme; (d) developing new approaches in upper-secondary education; (e) developing new programmes for the development and enhancement of basic skills and general education; (f) developing new policies and tools for recognition of prior learning (RPL); (g) training of AE professionals; (i) increasing the number of research in the field of AE; (j) Developing and upgrading online tools for monitoring the AE sector; (k) Strengthening the dialogue and partnership in AE governance and cooperation.

Beside these, broader challenges are also addressed, such as (ACS, 2022)²³: ‘big changes’ (i.e. digitalisation, globalisation, demographic change and environmental threats); balancing the objectives of skills acquisition between the needs of work and the personal development of individuals; and improving the governance of all segments that affect AE.

However, in Slovenia, **no national priorities for Erasmus+** in the field of AE exists.

²⁰ Mikulec, B., & Jelenc Krašovec, S. (2016). Marketising Slovene adult education policies and practices using mechanisms of the Europeanisation of education. *European journal for research on the education and learning of adults*, 7(2), 151-170. <https://doi.org/10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela9081>

²¹ Mikulec, B. (2021). The influence of international intergovernmental organisations on Slovenian adult education policies. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 40(1), 37-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2021.1871674>

²² ACS. (2022). RESOLUCIJA o nacionalnem programu izobraževanja odraslih v Republiki Sloveniji za obdobje 2022–2030 (ReNPIO22–30). Andragoški center Republike Slovenije, pp. 42-43.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.



EXISTING STUDIES ON THE IMPACT OF ERASMUS+ ON THE ADULT EDUCATION SECTOR

(1) Interim National Report on the Implementation and Impact of Erasmus+ Programme (Klemenčič, 2017)²⁴

The evaluation study included 301 AE institutions and 89 respondents in the AE sector. Respondents came from various institutions. At the institution level, the majority of respondents (91%) believed that participation in the EU programme had a positive impact on the use of new learning tools and materials, familiarity with new forms and methods of teaching, the use of diverse forms and methods of teaching, training of foreign language teachers, familiarity with and understanding of AE systems in partner countries, familiarity with foreign didactic environments, motivation of educators to introduce changes and innovations in teaching. A bit fewer (between 80 % and 90 %) believe that cooperation has a positive impact on the social competencies of educators, the organisational and managerial skills of educators, educators' awareness of the European cultural and moral values, strengthening respect for different cultures and familiarity with the European institutions. At the system level, most respondents: believed that participation in the EU programme had a positive impact on innovation and the dissemination of good practices within Slovenia (96 %); considered that it impacts the professional development of adult educators (93 %), and believed that it promotes quality improvements, and a general increase in the quality of learning/teaching (91 %). Among 80 % to 90 % of respondents believed that participation in the programme had a positive impact on the internationalisation of the AE system, the participation of different stakeholders, promotion of awareness of the importance of LLL in Europe, support to national AE policies, the dissemination of good practices in Europe, and the better use of EU transparency and recognition tools.

(2) Reports of 207 participants who participated in individual mobility in the field of AE (Mikulec & Stanovnik Perčič)²⁵

The analysis of the individual mobility of participants encompassed data for the period 2014–2016 (in total, 207 educational staff members). According to the opinion of participants in individual mobility, the latter most strongly influenced their professional development in the field of acquiring new knowledge about good practices abroad, their social, linguistic and cultural competencies, the professional field of work (or teaching), and the practical skills relevant to their

²⁴ Klemenčič, E. (2017). Vmesno nacionalno poročilo o implementaciji in učinkih programa Erasmus+. Cmeplus.

²⁵ Mikulec, B., & Stanovnik Perčič, A. (2019). Professional development of adult educators and the role of the EU programme. Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes, pp. 18-19.



professional development. Mobility also has a significant impact on the strengthening of professional networks involving educational staff, the familiarity with AE systems in other countries, and the use of new methods for assessing and valuation of knowledge acquired both in formal and non-formal education. It is also possible to recognise the impact in acquiring managerial and organisational skills, and the skills of using information and communication technology.

(3) International (co)operation of two selected AE institutions (Mikulec & Stanovnik Perčič)²⁶

Interviews with 2 Erasmus+ coordinators about acquired knowledge of their staff in KA1 and KA2 projects and professional development of employees showed that: (1) Their employees gain knowledge in various fields. They specifically put an emphasis on counselling, work with vulnerable target groups (e.g., migrants, the unemployed, adults with special needs), basic education, key competencies, education for sustainable development, inter-generational learning, motivational measures, the use of information and communication technology (IKT) in education, modern approaches to teaching and learning, and media literacy. (2) Employees in the AE organisation gain and/or strengthen also other competencies: language competencies, computer-digital competencies, intercultural competencies, communication competencies, and organizational and managerial competencies. Unfortunately, these benefits do not reach all staff in the organisation to the same extent. Due to the large number of outsourcers at AE centres, the effects of the EU programme primarily reach regular employees of the organisation.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 20-24.



CONCLUSIONS

National policy priorities in the field of AE are: increasing participation of adults in LLL (especially vulnerable groups of adults); developing different forms of learning and new approaches to work with vulnerable groups; modernising basic school AE programme and developing new approaches in general and upper-secondary education; further development of RPL; training of AE professionals; further development of online tools for monitoring the AE sector; strengthening the dialogue and partnership in AE governance and cooperation.

Main **stakeholders involved** in the field of AE are ministry responsible for education and ministry responsible for labour, SIAE, SSIO, and various providers, such as public organisations (i.e. folk schools) that provide public service (basic school, counselling and guidance for adults) in AE, private organisations, and other providers (schools, associations, libraries, museums).

In Slovenia, there are **no national priorities for Erasmus+** in the field of AE.

The **blank spots in existing impact research** are that just two studies (with own limitations) on the impact of Erasmus+ on the AE sector are available till now. While some data on the impact of Erasmus+ on organisational level exist, as well as data regarding this impact on professional staff, we lack impact research on adult learners as well as more credible impact research of the Erasmus+ on system level and policy reforms.



The accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is one of the priorities of the Erasmus+ programme and it is therefore important that the programme is attractive to organisations that have not previously benefited from Erasmus+, as well as to vulnerable participants who would otherwise be less likely to participate in internationalisation activities. This chapter discusses the characteristics of AE institutions that participated in Erasmus+ in the previous and current programme period, but also the characteristics of adult learners who benefit from the developed outputs (KA2) and/or mobility (KA1). On this basis, statements can be made about the accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ within the AE sector in Slovenia.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS IN ERASMUS+

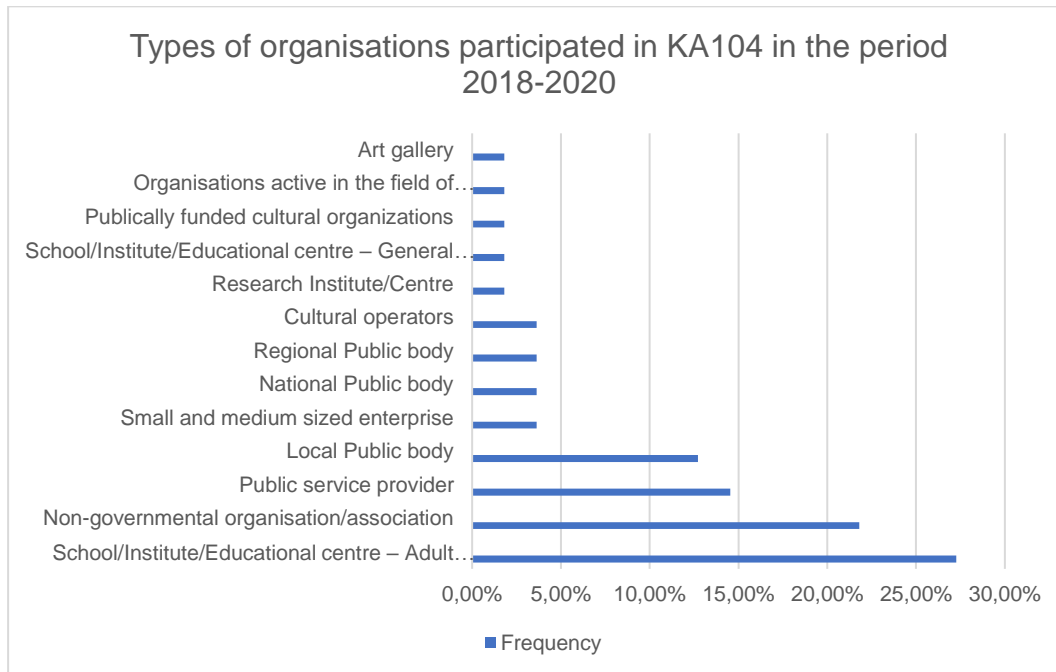
2018-2020 period

In the period 2018-2020, there were 143 KA104, 96 KA204 (among which 16 were coordinated by Slovenian AE organisations) and 4 KA227 projects in Slovenia.

Characteristics of partners involved in KA104 projects show different organisation types participated in Erasmus KA104 projects, among which “School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education” (27,27 %) was the dominant one among organisations in Slovenia, followed by “Non-governmental organisation/associations” (21,81 %) and “Public service providers” (14,54%). Other organisation types appeared less frequently (see Figure 3)²⁷.

Figure 3: Type of organisations that participated in KA104 in the period 2018-2020

²⁷ Due to international comparability of data, we use and show data as they are originally classified. However, there are big inconsistencies in the classification of data into types of organisations. Some AE centres/folk schools are not classified under “School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education” as they should be, but under “Local Public body” (i.e. RIC Novo mesto, LU Velenje, LU Radovljica) or “Organisations active in the field of humanitarian aid” (i.e. Javni zavod Cene Štupar - Center za izobraževanje Ljubljana). Similar confusion can be noticed with libraries, as they are classified under “Cultural operators”, “Local Public body”, “Public service provider” and “Regional Public body”. Therefore, if we merge and create new categories for the most common types of (first four) organisations, we can say these are: “School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education” (N=19), Non-governmental organisation/association (N=12), libraries (our category) (N=6), museums and galleries (our category) (N=5).

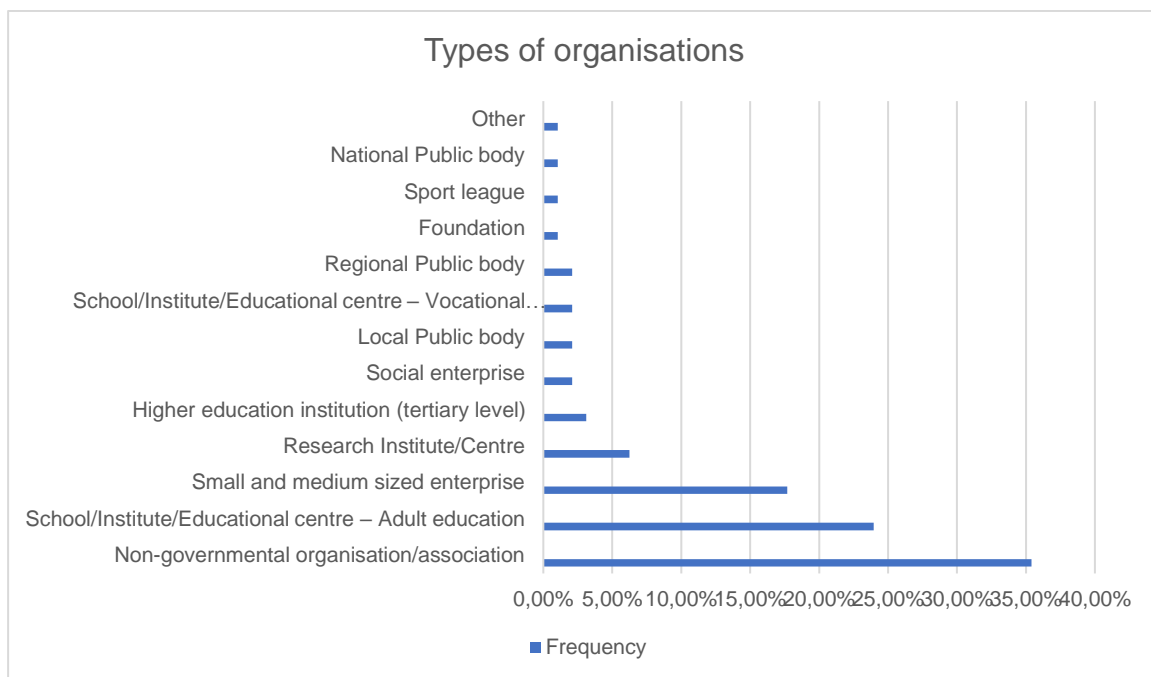


Source: EPLUS database.

Characteristics of partners involved in **KA204** projects show different organisation types participated in the period 2018-2020, among which “Non-governmental organisation/association” (35,41%), “School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education” (23,95%), and “Small and medium sized enterprise” (17,70%) were the dominant ones. Other organisation types appeared less frequently (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: Type of organisations that participated in KA204 in the period 2018-2020



Source: EPLUS database.

16 KA204 projects were coordinated by Slovenian organisations, while in other remaining strategic partnerships for AE, Slovenian organisations participated as partners. Among coordinated organisations, these were mostly main public AE providers (i.e. adult education centres/folk schools which are included under organisation type “School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education”) that coordinated 12 projects, while 2 projects were coordinated by two different “Non-governmental organisation/association” and per 1 project by Social enterprise organisation and Small and medium sized enterprise.

Characteristics of 4 Slovenian partners involved in four **KA227** projects (in which 18 organisations took part) show that 3 organisations belong to “Non-governmental organisation/association” and 1 to “Local public body” (i.e. library).

Among the organisations that participated in the **online survey**, most of them (39,2 %) are adult education providers. A quarter of them are NGOs. The other institutions are represented in smaller share (see Table 6).



Table 6: Type of organisations that participated in KA104 and KA204 in the period 2018-2022

Organisation description (n = 51)	f	%
Adult education provider (school/ institute/ centre)	20	39,2%
Non-governmental Organisation (NGO)/ association	13	25,5%
Art & culture institute	6	11,8%
Local/ regional government	5	9,8%
Enterprise	3	5,9%
Social Enterprise	3	5,9%
Library	3	5,9%
Open University	2	3,9%
Employer organisation (association; chambers of commerce)	1	2,0%
Vocational Education and Training provider	1	2,0%
Healthcare institution	1	2,0%
Youth organisation	1	2,0%
Other (<i>tolmačenje, študije, izobraževanje, prevajanje, raziskave</i>)	3	5,9%

Source: Survey.

Out of 32 KA204 projects, 22 (68,75 %) included participants with fewer opportunities.

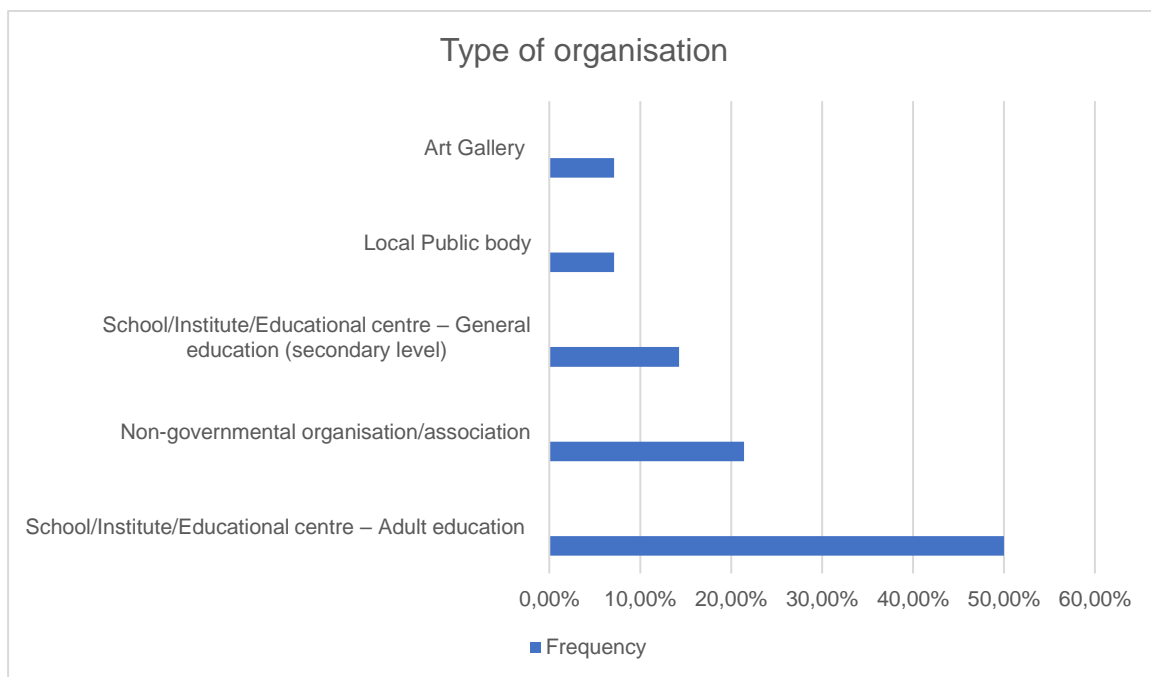
2021 – 2027 period

In this period, data from finalised and ongoing projects show: 14 KA120 projects, 10 KA121 (1 finalised/9 ongoing) projects, 13 KA122 (2 finalised/11 ongoing) projects, 12 KA210 (2 finalised/10 ongoing) projects and 10 KA220 (all ongoing) projects in Slovenia.

Characteristics of partners involved in **KA120, KA121 and KA122** projects show that one **type of organisation** dominate, i.e. School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education. Other types appear less frequently (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Type of organisations that participated in KA120, KA121 and KA122 projects in the period 2021-2022



Source: QlikSense.

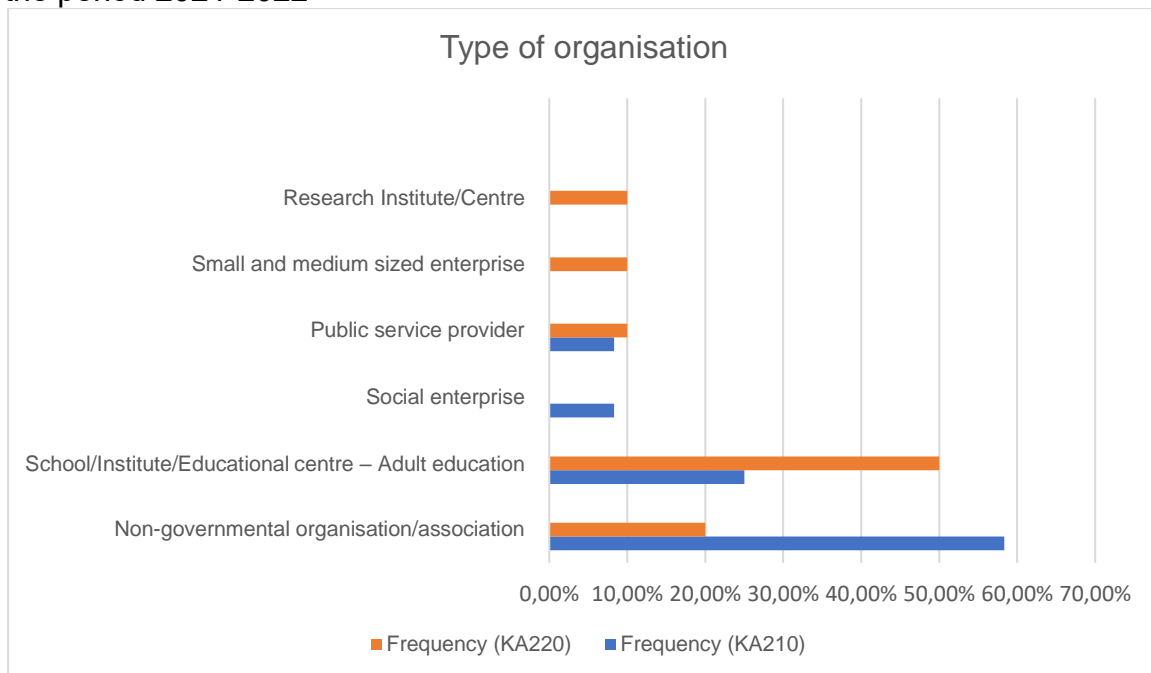
Out of 20 KA 121/122 projects (14 KA 122 and 6 KA 121), 13 (65,0 %) projects included participants with fewer opportunities (all together 113 adults, majority of which were female).²⁸

Characteristics of partners involved in **KA210 projects** show that one type of organisation dominate, i.e. Non-governmental organisation/association (58,7%). This is followed by School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education (25,0%), while other two types are presented to much lesser degree. Furthermore, characteristics of partners involved in **KA220 projects** show that one type of organisations dominate, i.e. School/Institute/Educational centre – Adult education (50,0%) (see Figure 6).

²⁸ No data were available regarding participants with fewer opportunities for KA210 and KA220 projects.



Figure 6: Type of organisations that participated in KA210 and KA220 projects in the period 2021-2022



Source: QlikSense.

Size of participating organisations

Almost half of all institutions (47,1%) that participated in the survey have between 11 and 50 employees. Almost a third of the organisations (31,4%) are micro-units with a maximum of 5 employees. About a fifth of them have between 6 and 10 employees (see Table 7).

Table 7: Staff working in organisations by the end of 2022

Number of employees in organisation	f	%
1-5	16	31,4%
6-10	10	19,6%
11-50	24	47,1%
101-250	1	2,0%
Total	51	100,0%

Source: Survey.



The majority of respondents (42,0%) reported having more than 250 adult learners engaged in learning activities, signifying a substantial level of participation. A significant portion (22,0%) of respondents stated that there were 11 to 50 adult learners engaged in learning activities. There were more than 100 adult learners engaged in learning activities by nearly two-thirds of organisations (62 %) (see Table 8).

Table 8: Number of adult learners participated in learning activities provided by organisation in 2022

Number of adult learners participated in learning activities	f	%
None	2	4,0%
1-10	2	4,0%
11-50	11	22,0%
51-100	3	6,0%
101- 250	10	20,0%
More than 250	21	42,0%
Don't know	1	2,0%
Total	50	100,0%

Source: Survey.

Newcomers to the programme

The majority of organisations (39,2%) indicated a substantial level of engagement, reporting participation in five or more projects within the Erasmus+ programme since 2014. However, the proportion of organisation that participated in only one project within the Erasmus+ programme since 2014 is second largest (29,4 %) (see Table 9).

Table 9: Number of projects (KA1 and KA2) organisation participated since 2014

Number of KA1 and KA2 projects participated in (as coordinator or partner) since 2014	f	%
1	15	29,4%
2	6	11,8%
3	3	5,9%
4	5	9,8%
5 or more	20	39,2%



Don't know	2	3,9%
Total	51	100,0%

Source: Survey.

Almost all organisations have already been coordinators in the KA2 Erasmus+ project(s), more than three quarters have been partners. A smaller percentage of organisations have been associate partner (see Table 10).

Table 10: Role of organisation in the KA2 Erasmus+ project(s) in the previous (2014-2020) and current (2021-2027) Erasmus+ programme

Role(s) of organisations in the KA2 Erasmus+ project(s) (n = 29)	f	%
Coordinator	28	96,6%
Partner	23	79,3%
Associate partner	3	10,3%

Source: Survey.

The vast majority of organisations do not hold an Erasmus+ accreditation for mobility in AE. One quarter of organisations stated that they hold the accreditation (see Table 11).

Table 11: Number of organisations currently holding an Erasmus+ accreditation for mobility in AE

Current existence of an Erasmus+ accreditation for mobility in AE	f	%
Yes	13	26,0%
No	33	66,0%
Don't know	4	8,0%
Total	50	100,0%

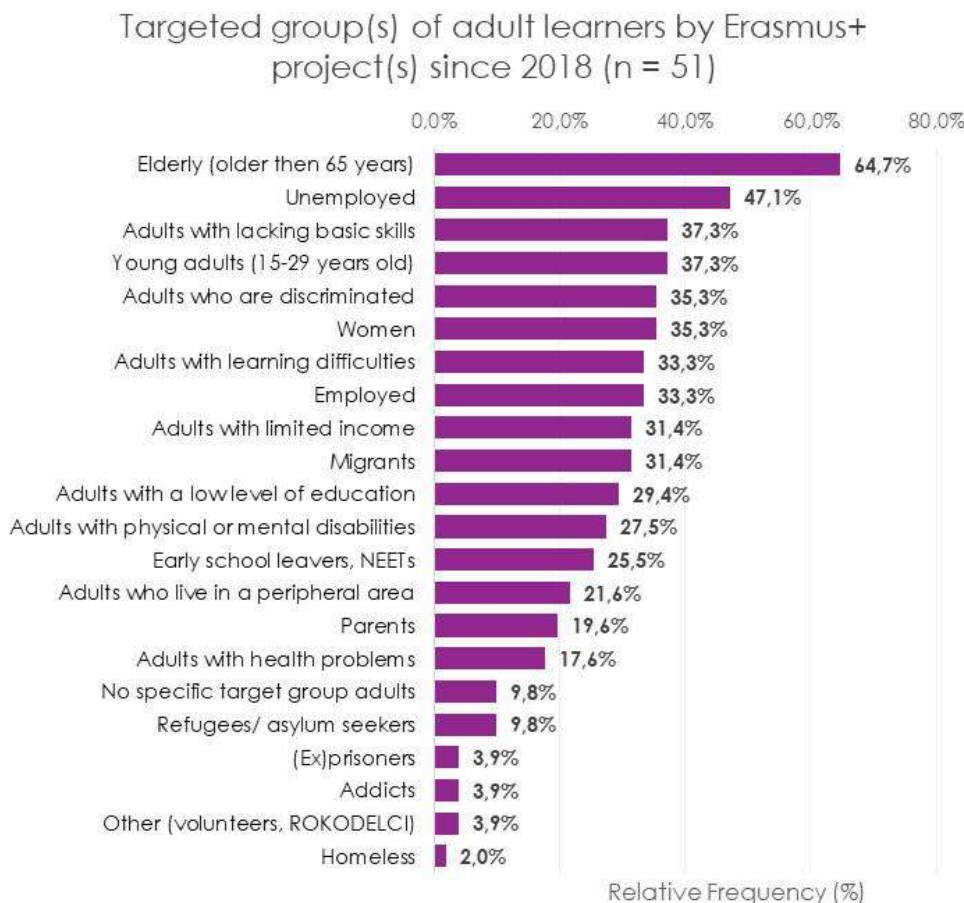
Source: Survey.



ADULT LEARNERS' PARTICIPATION

A diverse range of target groups for Erasmus+ projects since 2018 was found, since the majority of organisations targeted more than two groups of adult learners. However, the emphasis was on elderly (targeted by 64,7 % organisations), unemployed adults (targeted by almost half of institutions), and those with lacking basic skills and young adults (both groups were targeted by 37,3 % organisations) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Erasmus+ project(s) targeted group(s) of adult learners since 2018



Source: Survey.

Similarly, data from the case studies show (FG1-5), that organisations in the field of AE most often targeted elderly, as well as migrants and professional staff:



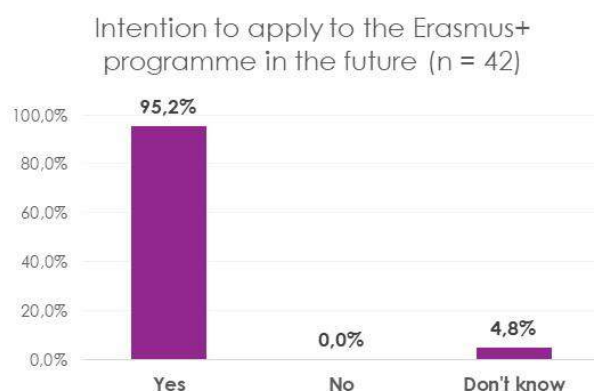
- Organisation 1: elderly, professional staff, decision makers in local communities, employees;
- Organisation 2: migrants, unemployed adults, elderly, young adults (dropouts), low-qualified adults, professional staff, women;
- Organisation 3: migrants, elderly, young adults, entrepreneurs, professional staff
- Organisation 4: migrants, employees, professional staff, elderly;
- Organisation 5: elderly women, young adults, migrants, minorities.

OBSTACLES FOR PARTICIPATING IN ERASMUS+

General mobility obstacles

Based on experience with the Erasmus+ programme, as shown in Figure 8, almost all organisations are willing to apply to the programme again in the future.

Figure 8: Intention of organisation to apply to the Erasmus+ programme in the future



Source: Survey.

Nevertheless, organisations also reported about some berries and obstacles for future participation in Erasmus+ programme. Most often they are facing with time (e.g., project application is time-consuming), staff (understaffing) and financial constraints (e.g., lack of financial resources for KA2 projects). To a lesser extent, they also recognise berries in finding reliable partners, keeping sustainability of project results due to the non-existing national financial support



mechanisms, motivating adult learners to participate in mobility or staff to use project result, and failing the call for proposals, which is demotivating for future project applications.

Three organisations through case studies reported about following obstacles:

- Organisation 1: convincing (motivating) staff to participate in mobility, organisation of mobility.
- Organisation 3: staff and financial constraints.
- Organisation 4: financial constrain for mobility of staff and adult learners.

Coordinators of Erasmus+ see major obstacles in: (a) staff's fear, especially external lecturers, regarding mobility (and use of English language), (b) vulnerable groups of adult learners (e.g., woman migrants, adults with special needs or disabilities), (c) underfunding (i.e., “a lot of work for organisation, for little money”) (I-1, I-2, I-3).

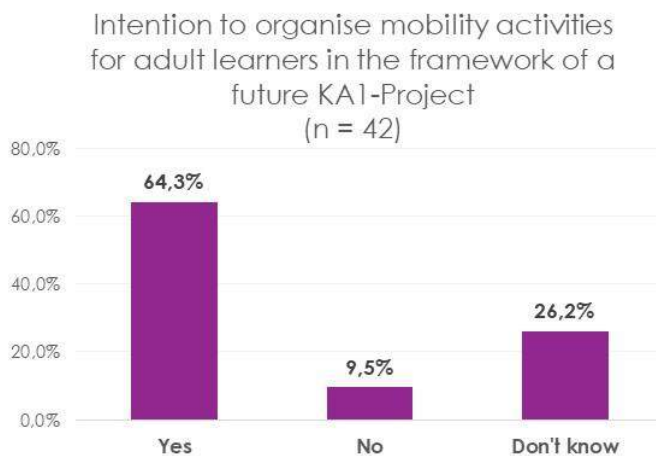
Non-participating organisations emphasised as the major obstacles understaffing, financial constraints (underfunded) and time constrains (I-4, I-5).

Specific obstacles for KA1 mobility for adult learners

Majority (64,3 %) of organisations reported that they plan to organise mobility activities for adult learners in the framework of a future KA1-Project ("Learning mobility of individuals"), however, more than quarter (26,2 %) were undecided.



Figure 9: Intention of organisations to organise mobility activities for adult learners in the framework of a future KA1-Project



Source: Survey.

The major obstacles for organisations preventing them to plan mobility activities for adult learners in future KA1 project are: (a) lack of time; (b) suitability of organisation (i.e., “We are not a suitable type of organisation”); (c) getting participants; and (d) understaffing.

We got similar results from case studies (FG1-5). All organisations reported that they plan to apply for KA1 – Adult learner mobility in the future. However, they also raised obstacles and berries related to time, staff and financial constrains:

- Organisation 1: time constraints, preparation of adult learners for mobility.
- Organisation 2: no barriers.
- Organisation 3: time and staff constrain.
- Organisation 4: financial constraints (particularly problematic is funding mobility of adult learners which would need increase in funding – see Box 1).
- Organisation 5: no barriers.

“For participants, the costs are no longer covered at all. This is because the “lump sum” remains as it was at the beginning. You know how costs have risen, e.g. air fares, hotels etc. And, in fact, even with the employees, we are more or less no longer covered. ... This is where the European Commission should react ... It really bothers me that the European Commission has stipulated that the funding for participants is significantly less than that for professionals. But do you know what that means? If we are talking about the vulnerable, they are even more vulnerable, but they have 50% less funding. I cannot take them to a hostel,



sorry ... There is a need to at least equalize these resources [between professionals and adult mobility participants], because there is no logic here.” (Participant FG-4)

Box 1: Financial obstacles of adult learners' mobility

Coordinators of Erasmus+ emphasised two additional obstacles for the mobility of adult learners: participants with physical disabilities face difficulties in participating and lack of financial resources for the costs of host organisation (I-1, I-2, I-3).

Non-participating organisations emphasised as the major obstacles: size of organisation and lacking support of a director, understaffing, lacking support regarding the application from NA, problems relating to the reporting, employed adults (lacking time for mobility) (I-4, I-5).

Finally, adult learners participating in group mobility didn't report about any obstacles.

CONCLUSIONS ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

Specificities and characteristics of the AE organisations participating in the Erasmus+ programme are the following ones. Main types of **organisations participating in KA104 projects, as well as in KA120, KA121 and KA122 projects**, are AE centres/folk schools, which are also key public providers of AE in Slovenia that carry out formal and non-formal adult education programmes for professional, personal, and general needs. These are followed by NGOs (one with and other without educational focus) and “Public service providers” (e.g., libraries, museums). Variety of other organisation types also appears, but much less frequently. Main types of **organisations participating in KA204/KA227 and KA210 projects** are NGOs, followed by AE centres/folk schools, while in KA220 projects AE centres/folk schools share a slight advantage over NGOs type of beneficiaries. This finding is a bit surprising, as we would have expected that AE centres/folks schools would dominate also in KA204/KA227 or KA210 projects. Nevertheless, when we look at projects coordinated by Slovenian organisations in KA204/227, we can observe that mostly AE centres/folk schools are coordinated organisations. Furthermore, other types of organisations also appear as project partners, but much less frequently. However, a bit surprisingly, no Universities of the third age can be found among KA204/227 or KA1 beneficiaries.



Specificities and characteristics of **participants, staff, volunteers and adult learners** who, individually or in groups participated in an Erasmus+ project are next one. Staff working in AE institutions have mostly between 11 and 50 employees and work with more than 250 adult learners or are micro-units with a maximum of 5 employees working with 11 to 50 adult learners. The staff is well familiarised with Erasmus+ programme, as almost all organisations have already been coordinators in the KA2 Erasmus+ project(s), while more than three quarters have been partners. Nevertheless, the staff works for AE organisations, where most organisations do not hold an Erasmus+ accreditation for mobility in AE. The most often targeted group of adult learners, with which staff works in AE organisations, are elderly, unemployed adults, those with lacking basic skills, young adults, migrants and professional staff.

Main obstacles for participating in Erasmus+ (general and more specific for KA1 mobility for adult learners) are related to lack of time, staff (understaffing) and financial (underfunding) constraints. As a particular challenge for KA1 mobility for adult learners were recognised some particular vulnerable groups of adults (e.g., adults with disabilities).

On the one hand, as majority of organisations participated in five or more Erasmus+ projects since 2014 and as among their main target groups are also various vulnerable adults, we can argue that **inclusiveness** of Erasmus+ in Slovenia is good. Moreover, two thirds of projects included participants with fewer opportunities. On the other hand, as there is also a good proportion of organisation that participated in only one project within the Erasmus+ since 2014, we can argue that this might signal that Erasmus+ is attractive to organisations that have not previously benefited from Erasmus+, and therefore maintains its **accessibility**.



Impact of Erasmus+ at meso level

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we look at the impact of Erasmus+ on the organizations. This includes the impact of Erasmus+ on how internationalisation and other Erasmus+ priorities are embedded in participating organisations, but also the quality of staff and the learning offer of participating organisations. As organisations could carry out various activities and projects with Erasmus+ funding, we first looked at the different types of products developed. We then asked what sustainable impact Erasmus+ participation had, including on the organization and the learning.

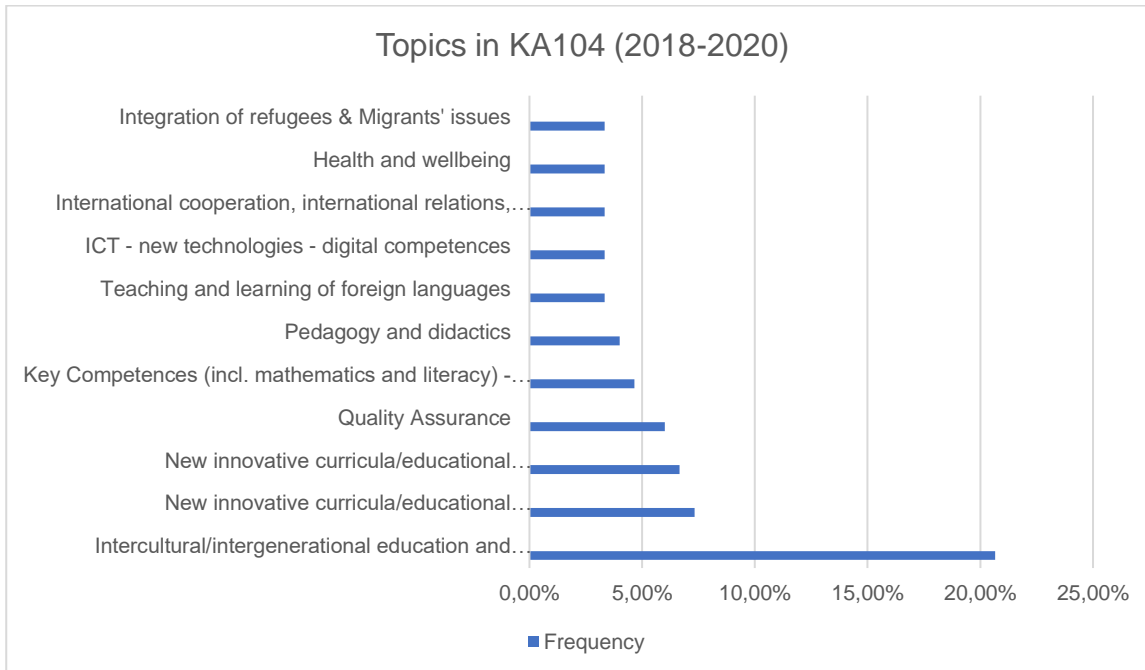
TYPE OF PRODUCTS DEVELOPED AND TOPICS ADDRESSED

Type of topics addressed

In the period 2018-2020, 51 projects addressed 150 topics. Among topics addressed by KA104 projects, the “Intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong)learning” topic received greatest attention. Other topics addressed appeared less frequently (as seen from Figure 10).

Figure 10: Main topics addressed by KA104 projects in the period 2018-2020²⁹

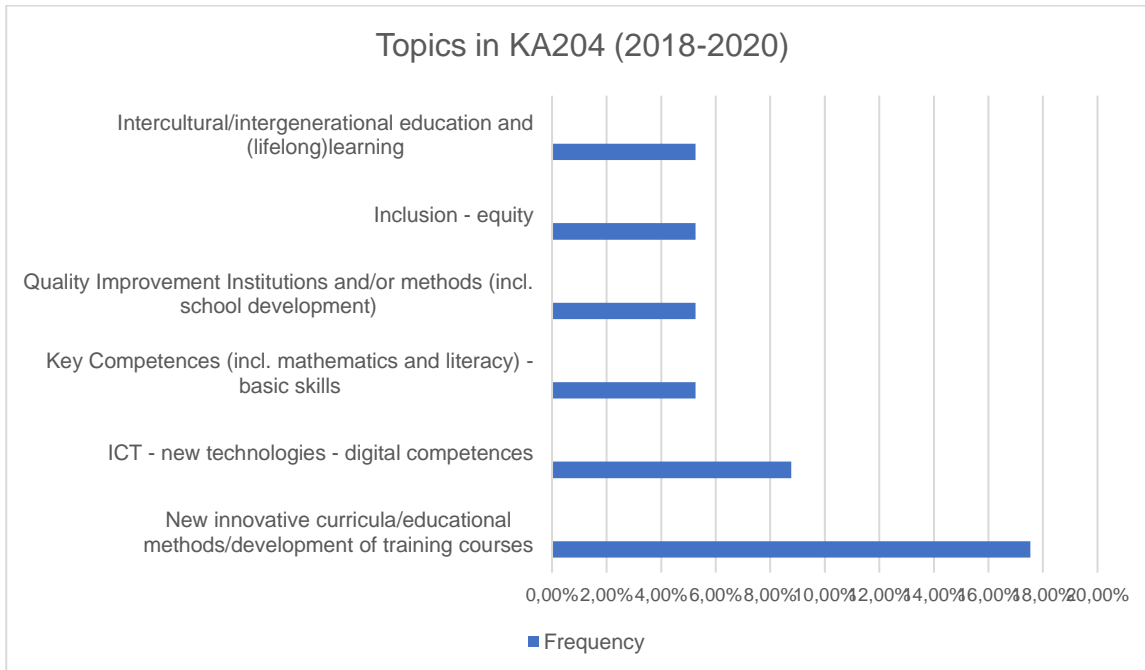
²⁹ Other topics (e.g., Environment and climate change; Cultural heritage/European Year of Cultural Heritage; EU Citizenship, EU awareness and Democracy; Romas and/or other minorities) appeared less frequent than 3 % and were not included in the overview.



Source: EPLUS database

In the same period, 20 KA204 projects addressed 114 topics. Among topics addressed, “New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses” received greatest attention. Other topics addressed appeared less frequently (see Figure 11).

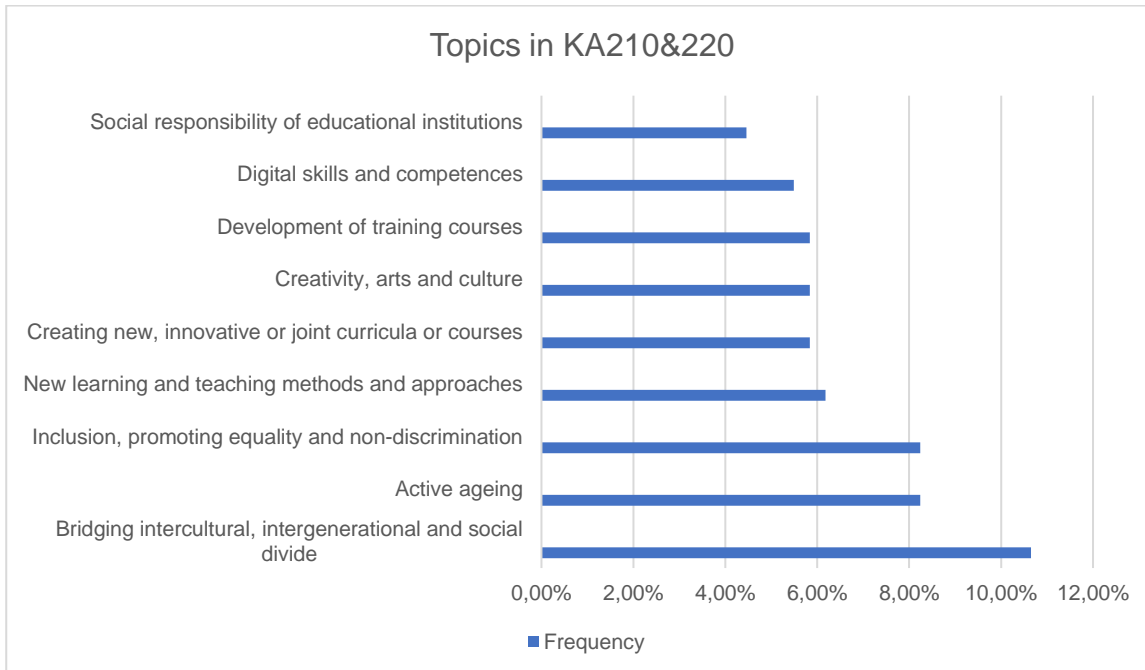
Figure 11: Main topics addressed by KA204 projects in the period 2018-2020



Source: EPLUS database

In the period 2021-2023, 13 KA122 projects addressed 38 topics. Among these, three topics dominated: “Key competences development” (N = 4; 10,52 %), “Disabilities” (N = 4; 10,52 %) and “Inclusion, promoting equality and non-discrimination” (N = 3; 7,89 %). Other topics appeared less frequently. Among topics addressed by KA 210 and 220 projects – 21 projects addressed 291 topics –, nine topics dominated (see Table 8), while others appeared less frequently (less than 4 %).

Figure 12: Topics addressed by KA 210 and 220 projects



Source: QlikSense.

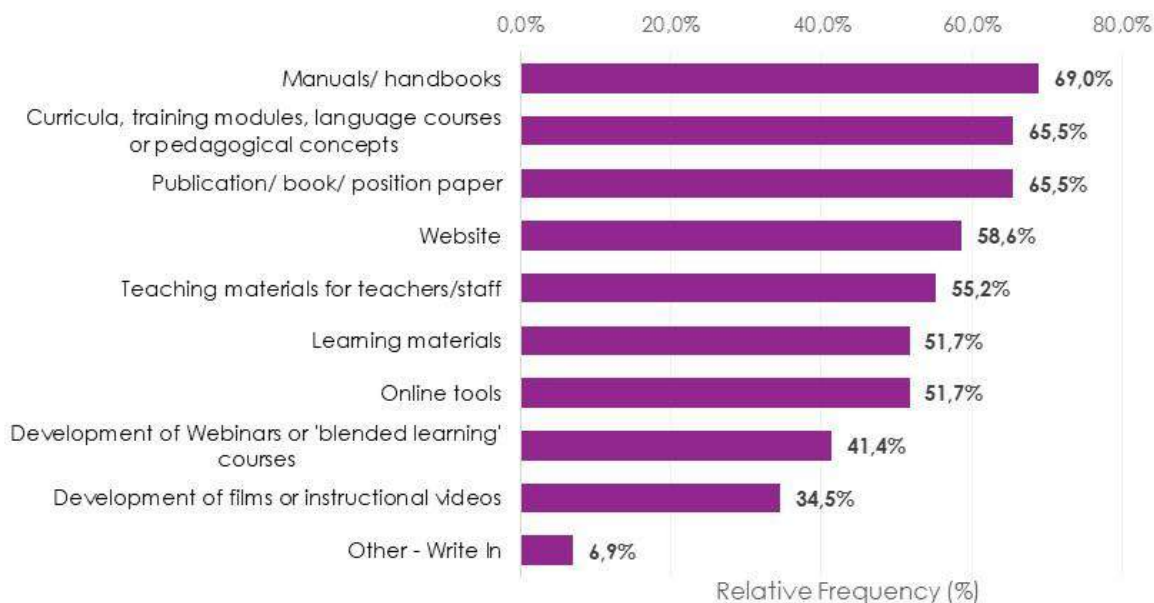
Type of products developed

The survey results show a diverse range of outputs and products developed by organisations participating in KA2 projects (see Figure 13). However, the majority of organisations (69,0%) have developed manuals or handbooks, and a significant percentage (65,5%) have developed curricula, training modules, language courses, or pedagogical concepts. An equal percentage of organisations (65,5%) have contributed to publications, books, or position papers. A substantial portion of organisations have developed websites (58,6 %) and produced teaching materials specifically designed for teachers and staff (55,2 %), and learning materials (51,7 %). More than half of organisations (51,7 %) have created online tools. A substantial but slightly smaller percentage (41,4 %) have engaged in the development of webinars or 'blended learning' courses. Smaller percentage of organisations (34,5 %) have ventured into the development of films or instructional videos.

Figure 13: Outputs or products developed as part of participation in KA2 in Erasmus+ (2018-2022)



Outputs or products developed as part of participation in
Key Action 2 in Erasmus+ (2018-2022)
(n = 29)



Source: Survey.

Case studies (FG1-FG5) show a bit different picture. Most often participants reported that they developed handbooks/guidelines, webinars or 'blended learning' and films or instruction videos. These are followed by online tools and curricula, training modules, language courses or pedagogical concepts, while didactic material for professional/volunteers and adult learners, and publication/position paper receive less attention.

Added value of Erasmus+ support

The survey results suggest (see Table 12) that a significant number of respondents believe that Erasmus+ participation had a substantial impact on the implementation of supported actions after 2018 with a majority indicating that without such participation, these actions would not have been implemented. A significant portion (23,5 %) believes that the supported actions would have been implemented, but in a slimmed-down form. Only few (5,9 %) believe that if their organisation would not participate in Erasmus+, there would be no difference in the implementation of supported actions after 2018.

Table 12: The implementation of actions after 2018 if not participating in Erasmus+



The implementation of actions if not participating in Erasmus+	f	%
Yes, there would be no difference	3	5,9%
Yes, but later in time	1	2,0%
Partly, in a different form and content	4	7,8%
Partly, then in a slimmed-down form	12	23,5%
No	26	51,0%
Don't know	5	9,8%
Total	51	100,0%

Source: Survey.

For organisations, the main added value of Erasmus+ lies in: strengthening European citizenship, professional development of staff, learning from the experience of others, quick problem solving, recognition of organisation in local and international environment, networking of organisations and strengthening of NGO sector (FG1-FG5).

IMPACT AT ORGANISATION LEVEL

Impact on internationalisation

A considerable number of organisations have implemented various practices to facilitate internationalization processes (see Table 13). The most prevalent practices include participation in international networks and activities (51,0 %), having guidelines for managing international projects (44,9 %), and the presence of a policy or strategy for internationalisation (42,9 %). Additionally, a notable proportion (36,7 %) considers the development of international competences in performance discussions, while a smaller percentage (6,1 %) has a dedicated budget for internationalisation activities.

Table 13: Conditions facilitating internationalisation process in organisations

Conditions to facilitate internationalisation processes (n = 49)	f	%
The organisation systemically participates in international networks and internationalisation activities	25	51,0%
Guidelines or agreed processes are in place how to manage international projects (e.g. design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)	22	44,9%



The organisation has a policy/ strategy for internationalisation	21	42,9%
Development of international competences is discussed in performance appraisals and career talks (e.g. as part of a personal development plan)	18	36,7%
There is a dedicated budget for internationalisation activities	3	6,1%

Source: Survey.

For majority of organisations the conditions to facilitate internationalisation processes since 2018 have improved in at least some extent, if not significantly (see Table 14). The conditions to facilitate internationalisation processes remained the same for smaller proportion of organisations (14,0 %).

Table 14: Improvement of conditions for facilitation of internationalisation processes in organisations

Improvement of conditions to facilitate internationalisation processes	f	%
It has improved significantly	12	24,0%
It has improved	29	58,0%
It has remained the same	7	14,0%
It has decrease.	1	2,0%
It has significantly decreased	0	0,0%
I don't know	1	2,0%
Total	50	100,0%

Source: Survey.

The survey also shows a generally positive impact of Erasmus+ participation on the organisational embedding of internationalisation (see Table 15). All internationalisation activities are carried out through projects. The strongest impact that Erasmus+ participation seems to have is strengthening of the international network of organisations, and increased awareness of the added value of international projects. According to the majority of organisations the management of international projects has been improved due to the Erasmus+ participation. Additionally, a notable proportion considers better strategy, enhanced support for professionals and adult learners, and increased funding as impacted by the Erasmus+ participation. Notably higher proportion of organizations disagree or are undecided that Erasmus+ participation strengthened HR policies and enhanced support for volunteers.

Table 15: The impact of participation in Erasmus+ since 2018 on the organisational embedding of internationalisation of organisations



The impact of participation in Erasmus+ since 2018 on the organisational embedding of internationalisation	n	Fully agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Completely disagree	Not applicable
Our organisation is more aware of the added value of international projects.	50	74,0%	22,0%	2,0%	2,0%	0,0%	0,0%
There is a better strategy for internationalisation within our organisation.	50	28,0%	42,0%	20,0%	8,0%	0,0%	2,0%
There is more support for internationalisation activities for our professionals within our organisation.	50	32,0%	44,0%	20,0%	4,0%	0,0%	0,0%
There is more support for internationalisation activities for our volunteers within our organisation.	50	22,0%	28,0%	32,0%	8,0%	0,0%	10,0%
There is more support for internationalisation for our adult learners within our organisations.	50	34,0%	44,0%	16,0%	6,0%	0,0%	0,0%
There is increased funding for internationalisation within our organisation.	50	32,0%	42,0%	16,0%	8,0%	0,0%	2,0%
HR/ staff policy for internationalisation within our	50	20,0%	36,0%	28,0%	14,0%	0,0%	2,0%



The impact of participation in Erasmus+ since 2018 on the organisational embedding of internationalisation	n	Fully agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Completely disagree	Not applicable
organisation has been strengthened							
The management of international projects (design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning) has been improved.	50	52,0%	40,0%	8,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
The international network of our organisation has been strengthened.	50	74,0%	24,0%	2,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%

Source: Survey.

According to the organisations, the most visible benefit of participating in Erasmus+ represent increased network of partner organisations. This is followed by acquiring new knowledge and competences, and exchange or learning of good practices. Other benefits, that appear less frequently, are increased visibility in the (local, international) environment, improved self-esteem of employees, strengthening of intercultural competences, greater social inclusion of adult learners, and financial support to organisations.

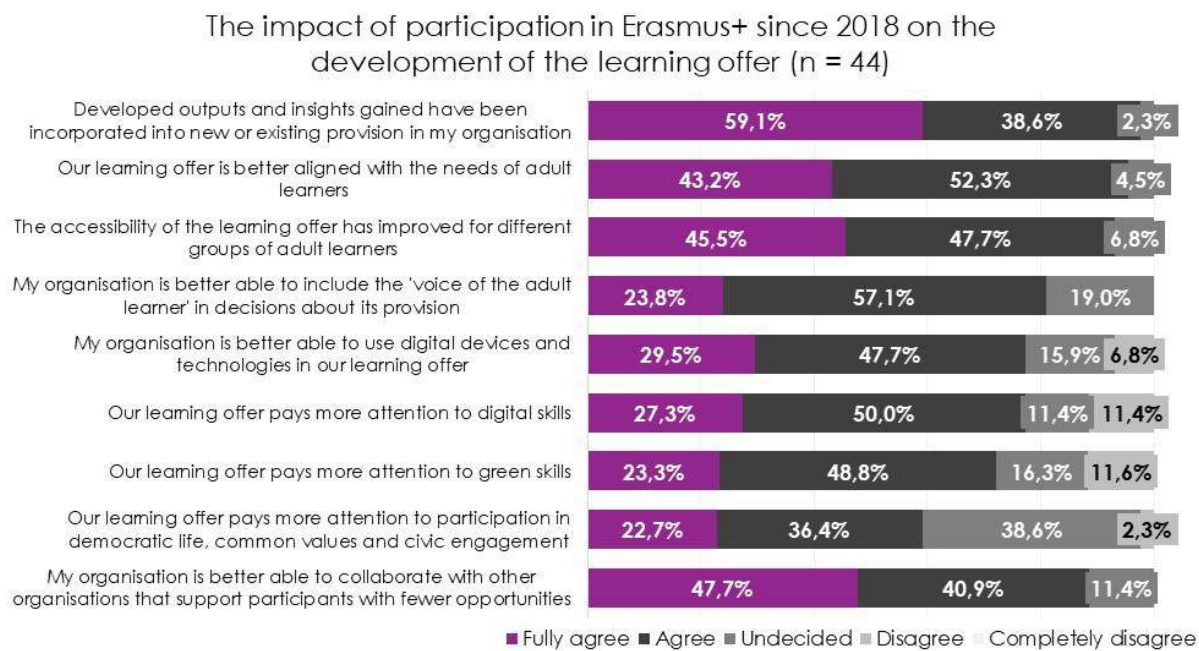
Impact on learning offer

In the context of the development of learning offer, the most important impact of Erasmus+ participation since 2018 is the integration of outputs and insights gained into new or existing provision, which is agreed by the vast majority of organisations, at least to some extent (see Figure 14). The view that participation in Erasmus+ has resulted in better cooperation with organisations supporting participants with fewer opportunities, better alignment of the learning offer with the needs of adult learners and better accessibility for different groups of adult learners is strongly shared among the organisations' representatives.



However, other impacts are also important, although the proportion of those who do not identify them as such is slightly higher (around 20%) than for the impacts mentioned above. Namely, participation in the programme has resulted in better integration of learners' views in decisions about its provision and better use of digital devices and technologies in learning offer, as well as more focus on digital skills and green skills. The impact of Erasmus+ participation is the weakest in paying attention to participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement, which is now receiving more attention in more than half of organisations than before the programme.

Figure 14: The impact of participation in Erasmus+ since 2018 on the development of the learning offer in organisations



Source: Survey.

After participating in Erasmus+ projects, most (three quarters) of organisations are paying more attention to digital skills and professional development of staff (see Figure 15). Two thirds of organisations are paying more attention to inclusion and diversity, and less than two thirds to networking/partnerships with other organisations. Green transition and the fight against climate change and learner motivation and well-being are themes that receive more attention from more than half of the organisations following their involvement in an Erasmus+ project. Just under half pay more attention to European values and teaching/learning with digital technologies. The remaining topics received more attention from (just) a third or less of organisations after joining the project. The



EUROPEAN UNION



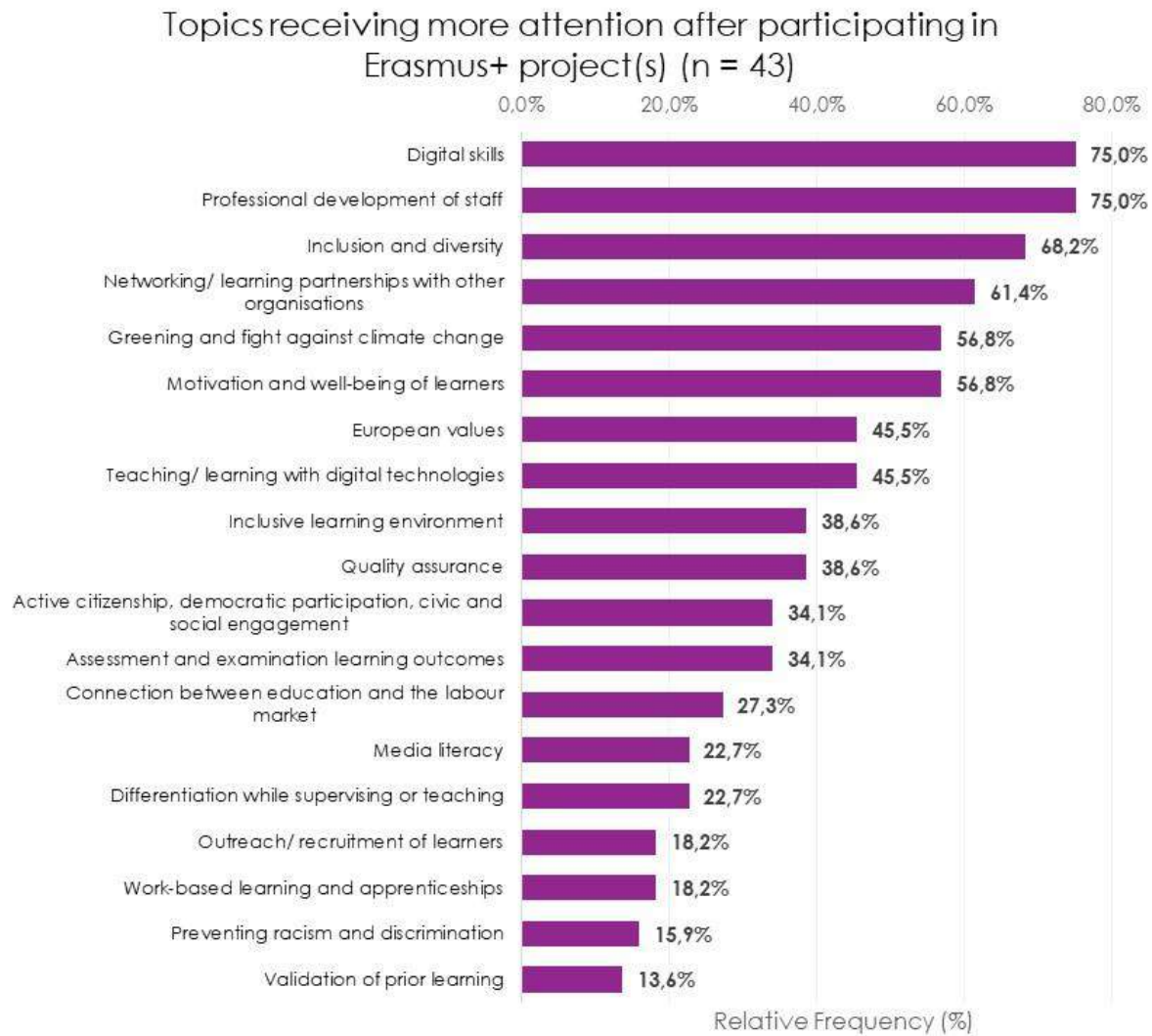
RIA

ADULT EDUCATION

smallest number of organisations pay more attention to the prevention of racism and discrimination and to the validation of prior learning.



Figure 15: Topics receiving more attention after participating in Erasmus+ project(s) since 2018



Source: Survey.

Examples showing that participation in one or more Erasmus+ projects since 2018 has strengthened learning offer of organisations to adult learners/participants are shown in box 2:

In the period after the closure due to the coronavirus, staff received training in the use of digital technologies, which we then successfully integrated into our learning offer (distance learning, blended learning, learning by apps, etc.).

Several new workshops or courses (e.g., for migrants, elderly, adults with special needs) were held because of staff mobility.

We now provide training with modern tools, use of Robot, use of 3D printing.

As part of international projects, we have developed several training courses which we have then used to develop study circles for members of the University for the Third Age (e.g. painting with the EBRU technique, storytelling, etc.).

We now provide intergenerational workshops, we improved learning programme for the people 65+, and did adaptations for the visually impaired participants (including the elderly).

Box 2: Examples indicating strengthen learning offer of organisations to adult learners

Impact on horizontal priorities

Inclusion and diversity

The organisations have implemented various activities to facilitate inclusion and diversity (see Figure 16). A significant majority (69,6 %) incorporates the voice of learners in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of their offerings, and are cooperating with other organisations that support participants with fewer opportunities. The prevalence of staff training on inclusion and diversity is among highest (60,9 %). More than half of organisations stated that they have dedicated staff responsible for coordinating, communicating, and implementing inclusion and diversity activities. A notable percentage (43,5 %) reported having procedures in place to ensure that their training offerings are inclusive, while a little less than one-third of organisations (32,6 %) reported having an inclusion and diversity strategy and action plan in place.

Figure 16: Conditions that facilitate inclusion and diversity in organisations

Conditions to facilitate inclusion and diversity (n = 46)



Source: Survey.

Participation in Erasmus+ regarding horizontal priorities improved the most under the priority and attention given to inclusion and diversity (see Table 16).

Table 16: The improvement in the delivery of adult learning from 2018 onwards

The improvement in the delivery of adult learning	n	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much
Attention to inclusion and diversity	45	6,7%	0,0%	31,1%	31,1%	31,1%
Attention to digitalisation	46	6,5%	6,5%	28,3%	32,6%	26,1%
Attention to environment and fight against climate change	46	6,5%	15,2%	28,3%	32,6%	17,4%
Attention to participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement	46	6,5%	6,5%	43,5%	17,4%	26,1%

Source: Survey.

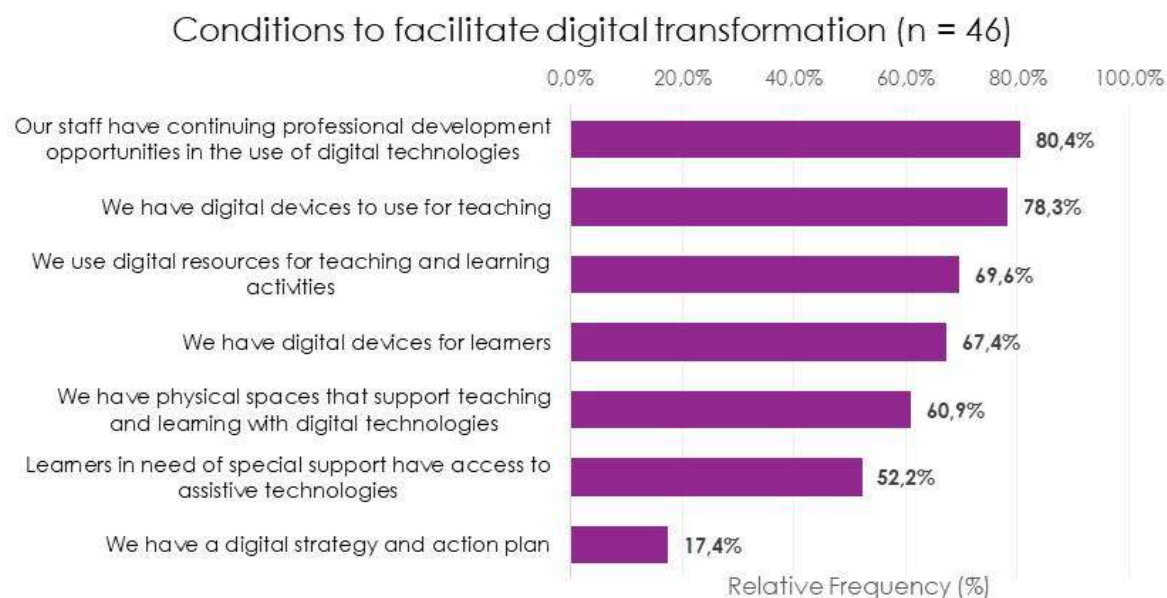
Greater social inclusion of adult learners is also one among benefits recognised by organisations after participating in Erasmus+.



Digital transformation

The prevalence of professional development opportunities (80,4 %), availability of digital devices for teaching (78,3 %), utilization of digital resources for teaching and learning (69,9 %) and having physical spaces that support teaching and learning with digital technologies (60,9 %) is high (see Figure 17). More than half of organisation reported learners in need of special support have access to assistive technologies, while only few (17,4 %) reported having a digital strategy and action plan in place.

Figure 17: Conditions that facilitate digital transformation



Source: Survey.

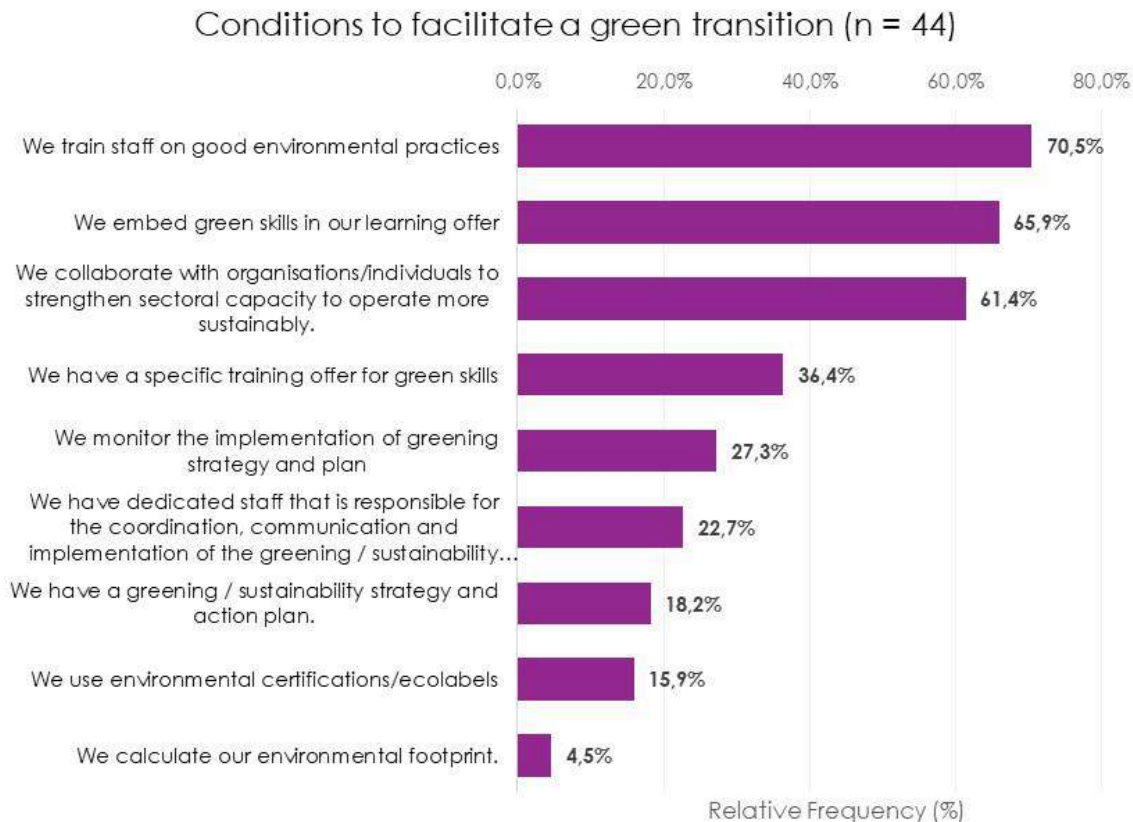
Participation in Erasmus+ significantly improved attention to digitalisation significantly (see Table 16), since more than half of organisations reported improvements to a greater extent.

Green transition

A green transition is mostly facilitated by staff training (70,5 %), embedding green skills in learning offer (65,9 %), and by collaboration to strengthen sectoral sustainability capacity (61,4 %) (see Figure 18). A little over one third of organisations offer training for green skills. Other conditions are in place in smaller proportion of organisations.



Figure 18: Conditions that facilitate green transition



Source: Survey.

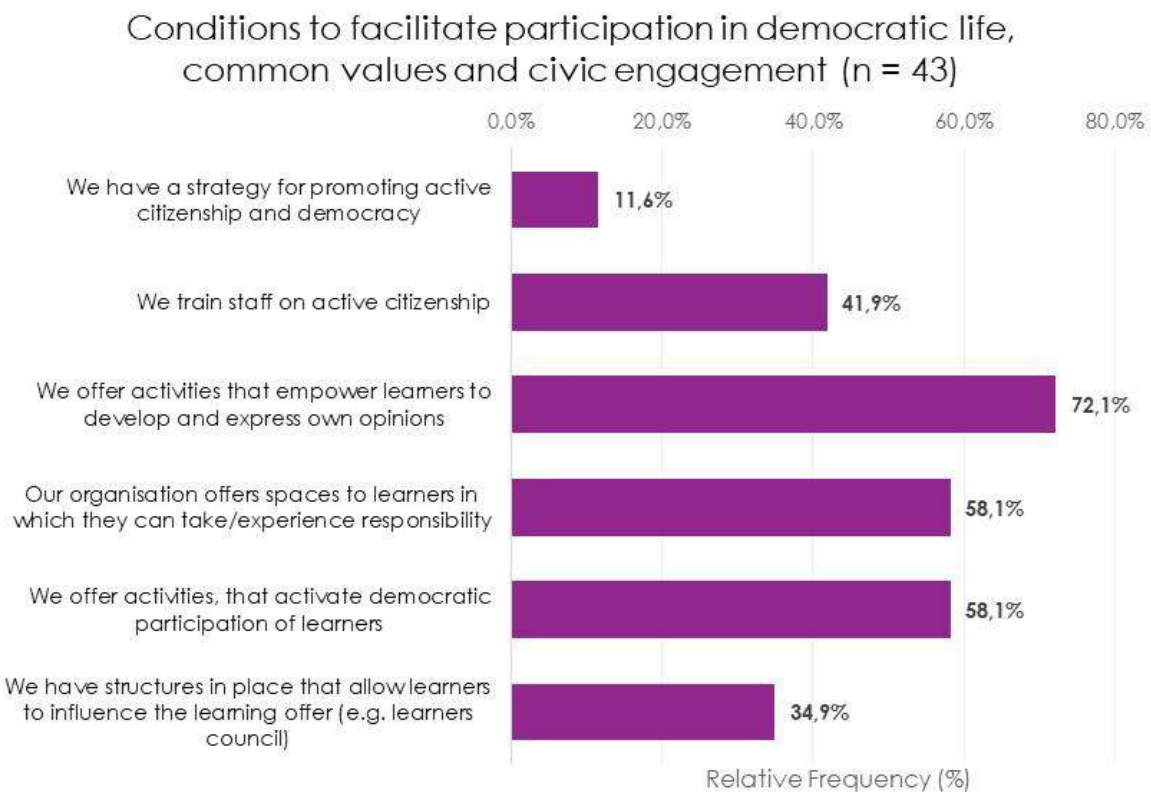
Participation in Erasmus+ also improved attention to green transition (see Table 16), as half of organisations reported improvements in attention given to environment.

Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement

The most common activity organisations perform to facilitate participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement is offering activities that empower learners to develop and express own opinions (72,1 %) (see Figure 19). Organisations often (58,1 %) offer spaces to learners in which they can take/experience responsibility, and activities that activate their democratic participation. Staff training is performed by 41,9 % organisations. A little over one third of them have structures in place that allow learners to influence the learning offer. Only few (11,6 %) reported having a strategy for promoting active citizenship and democracy.



Figure 19: Conditions that facilitate participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement



Source: Survey.

Attention to participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement has also improved (see Table 16), with the vast majority of organisations reporting improvements to at least some extent.



FACTORS HAMPERING OR STIMULATING IMPACT

There is a significant level of ongoing utilization of the outputs and products developed in KA2 since 2018, since the majority of respondents reported at least a moderate level of usage (41,4 %), with a substantial proportion indicating a high level of ongoing reliance on these outputs (see Table 17).

Table 17: Utilization of outputs and products developed in KA2 since 2018

Utilization of outputs and products developed in KA2 since 2018	f	%
Not at all	0	0,0%
Only a little	0	0,0%
To some extent	12	41,4%
Rather much	11	37,9%
Very much	6	20,7%
Don't know	0	0,0%
Total	29	100,0%

However, survey results and focus groups (FG1-FG5) data also indicate barriers and motivating factors stimulating use of outputs and products developed with the support of Erasmus+ since 2018. Among barriers, most often mentioned are lack of time, low motivation of staff (lecturers) involved, lack of management (i.e., director) support to the projects, insufficient network of quality international partners, and financial constraints (e.g., translation of material from English to national language, funding of further continuation and development of project activities). Among stimulating factors, most often mentioned are: clear priorities (regarding Erasmus+ projects) set in organisations, motivated staff engaged in projects, professional self-fulfilment of the staff, team work, management support, quality international network of partners, good project management, sharing of good practices, and developing new approaches and tools.



CONCLUSION

For majority of organisations the conditions to facilitate internationalisation processes since 2018 have improved. Main **impact on internationalisation** can be observed, as considerable number of organisations implemented various practices that facilitate internationalization processes (e.g., participation in international networks and activities, developing guidelines for managing international projects, acceptance of a policy/strategy for internationalisation). Furthermore, a positive impact of Erasmus+ participation on the organisational embedding of internationalisation (e.g., strengthening international network, increased awareness of international projects, management of international projects) is also noticed.

Main **impact on learning offer** is notable in integrating outputs and insights gained into new or existing provision in participating organisations, better cooperation with organisations supporting participants with fewer opportunities, better alignment of the learning offer with the needs of adult learners and better accessibility for different groups of adult learners. However, while other impacts on learning offer are also important, the impact is the weakest in paying attention to participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement. After participating in Erasmus+ projects, most organisations pay more attention to the digital skills, professional development of staff, inclusion and diversity, and networking/partnerships with other organisations. While other topics also receive rather high attention (e.g., green transition, learner motivation and well-being), the smallest number of organisations pay more attention to the prevention of racism and discrimination and to the validation of prior learning.

Main findings regarding the **impact on horizontal priorities** show that two priorities improved the most, i.e. priority given to inclusion and diversity, and digitalisation, while other two (green transition, participation in democratic life) improved to some extent.

The organisations have implemented various activities to facilitate inclusion and diversity (e.g., incorporating the voice of learners in their learning offer, cooperating with other organisations supporting participants with fewer opportunities, staff training on inclusion and diversity), digital transformation (e.g., professional development opportunities, availability of digital devices for teaching, utilization of digital resources for teaching and learning), green transition (e.g., staff training, embedding green skills in learning offer, collaboration to strengthen sectoral sustainability capacity), and participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement (e.g., activities that



enable learners to develop and express own opinions, activities activating democratic participation). Staff training is performed by 41,9 % organisations.

Factors **hampering** the use of outputs and products developed with the Erasmus+ are lack of time, low motivation of staff (lecturers) involved, lack of management (i.e., director) support, insufficient international network of quality partners, and financial constraints, while factors **stimulating the impact** are priorities given in the organisations to the Erasmus+, motivated and professionally self-fulfilled staff, team work, management support, quality network of international partners, good project management.



Impact of Erasmus+ at micro level

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we look at the impact of Erasmus+ on staff and adult learners within participating organisations. Aspects of professionalisation includes the guidance of learners, the mapping of learning outcomes and the focus on inclusion and diversity.

IMPACT ON STAFF

In 2018, 87 participants (staff) mobilities were completed. In Table 18, multiple choice answers about learning outcomes gained in the mobility show that the highest ranked learning outcomes are the following ones: Learned from good practice abroad (96,55 %); achieved Social and civic competences (96,55 %); sharing knowledge acquired through mobility activity with colleagues (96,55 %); Become more motivated to carry on developing my professional skills (95,40 %); achieving better Cultural awareness and expression (94,25 %); Building up new contacts/expand professional network (93,10 %); improved Teamwork abilities (91,95 %) and Emotional skills (90,80 %); Reinforced a positive attitude of sending institution towards sending more staff on teaching assignments, job shadowing or training abroad (90,80 %); and Strengthened cooperation with the partner organisations in this project (90,80 %). As seen from Table 18, also other learning outcomes statements are highly ranked (e.g., learning to learn, gaining practical skills relevant for my current job, starting/joining new European project), while the three lowest ranked learning outcomes statements are that staff: gained Competences in mathematics, science and technology (28,39 %); Digital competence (29,88 %); and Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the labour market (33,33 %).

Table 18: Learning outcomes of staff that participated in mobility exchange in 2018



Learning outcomes (N=87)	Agree (strongly, rather)	Disagree (strongly, rather)	Neither agree nor disagree
Competences in mathematics, science and technology	16	41	30
Digital competence	26	32	29
Learning to learn	77	4	6
<i>Social and civic competences</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>/</i>	<i>3</i>
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	65	8	14
<i>Cultural awareness and expression</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>/</i>	<i>5</i>
Improved my career and employment opportunities	68	10	19
<i>Become more motivated to carry on developing my professional skills</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Learned from good practice abroad</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>/</i>	<i>3</i>
Gained practical skills relevant for my current job and professional development	72	5	10
Improved my knowledge of the subject I am teaching and/or my professional field	70	6	11
Shared my own knowledge and skills with learners and peers	76	1	10
Been able to experiment and develop new learning practices and teaching methods	58	11	18
<i>Built up new contacts/expand my professional network</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>
Improved my knowledge of education systems in other countries	76	5	6
Improved my awareness of methods for assessing and giving credit for skills or competences acquired in formal and informal learning context	56	4	27
Become better aware of European funding mechanisms for projects in my field of education and training	61	3	23
Analytical skills	57	9	21
Practical skills (e.g. planning and organising, project management, etc.)	73	3	11
Organisational/management/leadership skills	66	3	18
<i>Teamwork abilities</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Emotional skills (e.g. having more self-confidence, etc.)</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>



<i>Creating opportunities for me to share the knowledge acquired through my mobility activity with colleagues</i>	84	1	2
Using new teaching/training methods, approaches and good practices at my sending institution	75	4	8
Introduction of new subjects or curricula at my sending institution	58	9	20
Creating opportunities for the launch or development of new educational activities such as curriculum development, development of joint courses or modules, academic networks, etc.	61	9	17
<i>Reinforcing a positive attitude of my sending institution towards sending more staff on teaching assignments, job shadowing or training abroad</i>	79	2	6
Improving the organisation and management at my sending institution	68	4	15
<i>Strengthening the cooperation with the partner organisations in this project</i>	79	/	8
Strengthening my sending institution's efforts to internationalise its activities	74	2	11
Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the labour market	29	8	50
Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the civil society	50	4	33
Starting or joining new European/international projects	75	5	16

Source: Participants reports, 2017, 2018.

Additionally, open answers from participants (staff) about knowledge, skills and competences developed show that participants most often reported that they gain new knowledge in: (a) integration of migrants in educational settings and labour market, (b) management, assessment and evaluation of programmes/projects, (c) new active methods of teaching, and (d) guidance and counselling of adults and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Other, less frequently mentioned new knowledge and skills gained are related to working with vulnerable groups of adults, better intercultural understanding, better use of English language and communication skills, better understanding of non-formal education, acquaintance with Social and Emotional Learning



Approach, getting to know culture and costumes of host country among others. (Participants' reports, 2017, 2018).

In 2019, 93 participants (staff) mobilities were completed. In Table 19, multiple choice answers about learning outcomes gained in the mobility show that the highest ranked learning outcomes are the following ones: achieved better Cultural awareness and expression (100 %); created opportunities for sharing knowledge acquired through mobility activity with colleagues (98,92 %); achieved Social and civic competences (97,84 %); Learned from good practice abroad (97,84 %); Building up new contacts/expand professional network (96,77 %); improved Teamwork abilities (95,69 %); Become more motivated to carry on developing my professional skills (92,47 %); Strengthened cooperation with the partner organisations in this project (92,47 %); Using new teaching/training methods, approaches and good practices at my sending institution (90,32 %); Reinforced a positive attitude of sending institution towards sending more staff on teaching assignments, job shadowing or training abroad (90,32 %). As seen from Table 19, also other learning outcomes statements are highly ranked (e.g., learning to learn, gaining practical skills relevant for my current job, knowledge of education systems in other countries), while the three lowest ranked learning outcomes statements are: Competences in mathematics, science and technology (17,20 %); Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the labour market (34,40 %) and Digital competence (37,63 %).

Table 19: Learning outcomes of staff that participated in mobility exchange in 2019

Learning outcomes (N=93)	Agree (strongly, rather)	Disagree (strongly, rather)	Neither agree nor disagree
Competences in mathematics science and technology	16	39	38
Digital competence	35	19	39
Learning to learn	71	5	17
<i>Social and civic competences</i>	91	1	1
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	60	3	30
<i>Cultural awareness and expression</i>	93	/	/
Improved my career and employment opportunities	53	10	30
<i>Become more motivated to carry on developing my professional skills</i>	86	/	7
<i>Learned from good practice abroad</i>	91	1	1



Gained practical skills relevant for my current job and professional development	80	3	10
Improved my knowledge of the subject I am teaching and/or my professional field	71	6	18
Shared my own knowledge and skills with learners and peers	75	1	17
Been able to experiment and develop new learning practices and teaching methods	50	10	33
<i>Built up new contacts/expand my professional network</i>	90	/	3
Improved my knowledge of education systems in other countries	72	5	16
Improved my awareness of methods for assessing and giving credit for skills or competences acquired in formal and informal learning context	49	16	28
Become better aware of European funding mechanisms for projects in my field of education and training	60	9	21
Analytical skills	57	6	30
Practical skills (e.g. planning and organising, project management, etc.)	80	1	12
Organisational/management/leadership skills	76	3	14
<i>Teamwork abilities</i>	89	/	4
Emotional skills (e.g. having more self-confidence, etc.)	76	1	16
<i>Creating opportunities for me to share the knowledge acquired through my mobility activity with colleagues</i>	92	/	1
<i>Using new teaching/training methods, approaches and good practices at my sending institution</i>	84	2	7
Introduction of new subjects or curricula at my sending institution	39	23	31
Creating opportunities for the launch or development of new educational activities such as curriculum development, development of joint courses or modules, academic networks, etc.	48	16	29
<i>Reinforcing a positive attitude of my sending institution towards sending more staff on</i>	84	/	9

*teaching assignments, job shadowing or training abroad*

Improving the organisation and management at my sending institution	61	3	29
<i>Strengthening the cooperation with the partner organisations in this project</i>	86	/	7
Strengthening my sending institution's efforts to internationalise its activities	77	3	13
Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the labour market	32	18	43
Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the civil society	52	8	33
Starting or joining new European/international projects	68	2	23

Source: Participants reports, 2017, 2018, 2019

Additionally, open answers from participants (staff) about knowledge, skills and competences developed show that participants most often reported that they: improved English language skills (mentioned 16 times); gained knowledge in using new educational methods (mentioned 15 times); improved knowledge about culture (mentioned 14 times); improved knowledge about educational system of host country (mentioned 13 times); improved knowledge needed for working with vulnerable group of adults (mentioned 12 times); gained knowledge about integration of migrants in education and/or labour market (mentioned 11 times); improved communication and organisational skills (both mentioned 10 times). Other, less frequently mentioned new knowledge and skills gained are related to improved management skills, digital skills, problem solving skills, intercultural competences, social competences, among others (Participant reports, 2017, 2018, 2019).

In 2020, 19 participants (staff) mobilities were realised. In Table 20, multiple choice answers about learning outcomes gained in the mobility show that the highest ranked learning outcomes are the following ones: increased Social and civic competences (100 %); increased motivation to carry on developing professional skills (100 %); Learned from good practice abroad (100 %); Creating opportunities to share the knowledge acquired through mobility activity with colleagues (100 %); Using new teaching/training methods, approaches and good practices at my sending institution (100 %); better Practical skills (94,73 %); improved Teamwork abilities (94,73 %); Strengthening the cooperation with the partner organisations in this project (94,73 %); increased Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (89,47 %); better Cultural awareness and expression (89,47 %); Built up new contacts/expand my professional network (89,47 %);



Reinforcing a positive attitude of my sending institution towards sending more staff on teaching assignments, job shadowing or training abroad (89,47 %). As seen from Table 20, also other learning outcomes statements are highly ranked (e.g., learning to learn, digital competence, knowledge of education systems in other countries), while the three lowest ranked learning outcomes statements are: Competences in mathematics science and technology (0,00 %), gained analytical skills (42,10 %), and Improved career and employment opportunities.

Table 20: Learning outcomes of staff that participated in mobility exchange in 2020

Learning outcomes (N=19)	Agree (strongly, rather)	Disagree (strongly, rather)	Neither agree nor disagree
Competences in mathematics science and technology	/	10	9
Digital competence	15	2	2
Learning to learn	15	1	3
<i>Social and civic competences</i>	19	/	/
<i>Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship</i>	17	/	2
<i>Cultural awareness and expression</i>	17	2	/
Improved my career and employment opportunities	12	2	5
<i>Become more motivated to carry on developing my professional skills</i>	19	/	/
<i>Learned from good practice abroad</i>	19	/	/
Gained practical skills relevant for my current job and professional development	15	1	3
Improved my knowledge of the subject I am teaching and/or my professional field	13	3	3
Shared my own knowledge and skills with learners and peers	16	/	3
Been able to experiment and develop new learning practices and teaching methods	11	/	8
<i>Built up new contacts/expand my professional network</i>	17	/	2
Improved my knowledge of education systems in other countries	15	2	2
Improved my awareness of methods for assessing and giving credit for skills or competences acquired in formal and informal learning context	13	3	3



Become better aware of European funding mechanisms for projects in my field of education and training	14	2	3
Analytical skills	8	3	8
<i>Practical skills (e.g. planning and organising, project management, etc.)</i>	18	/	1
Organisational/management/leadership skills	15	/	4
<i>Teamwork abilities</i>	18	/	1
Emotional skills (e.g. having more self-confidence, etc.)	14	/	5
<i>Creating opportunities for me to share the knowledge acquired through my mobility activity with colleagues</i>	19	/	/
<i>Using new teaching/training methods, approaches and good practices at my sending institution</i>	19		
Introduction of new subjects or curricula at my sending institution	14	1	4
Creating opportunities for the launch or development of new educational activities such as curriculum development, development of joint courses or modules, academic networks, etc.	14	1	4
<i>Reinforcing a positive attitude of my sending institution towards sending more staff on teaching assignments, job shadowing or training abroad</i>	17	/	2
Improving the organisation and management at my sending institution	15	/	4
<i>Strengthening the cooperation with the partner organisations in this project</i>	18	1	/
Strengthening my sending institution's efforts to internationalise its activities	16	1	2
Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the labour market	12	1	6
Strengthening my sending institution's cooperation with players in the civil society	14	1	4
Starting or joining new European/international projects	14	1	4

Source: Participants reports, 2018, 2019



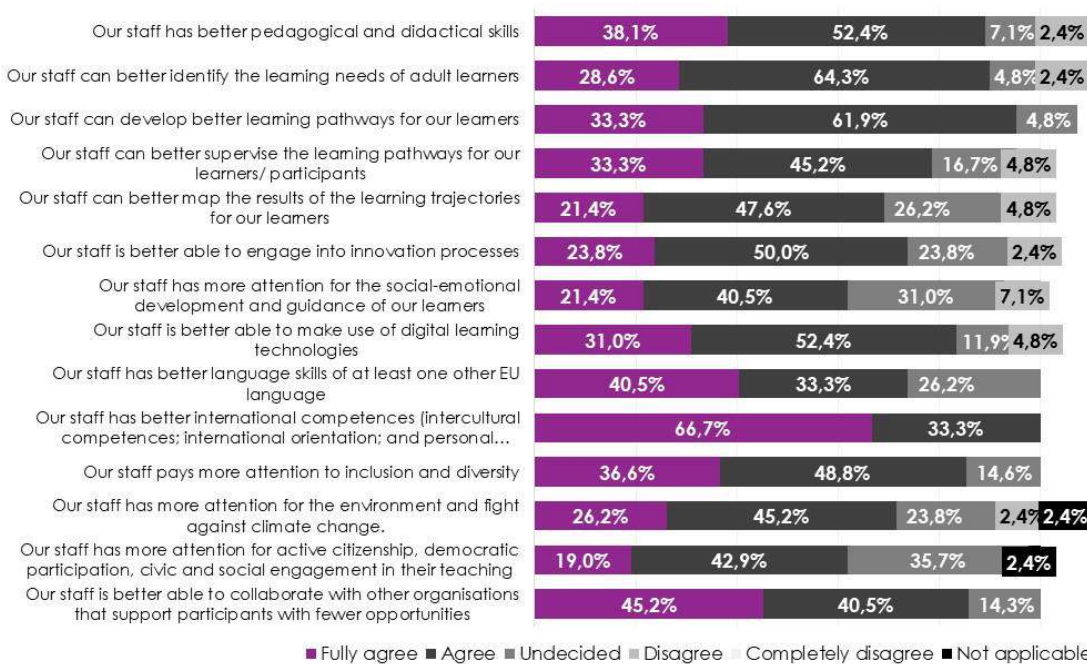
Additionally, open answers from participants (staff) about knowledge, skills and competences developed show that participants most often reported that they: gained knowledge about integration of migrants/minority groups in education and society (mentioned 10 times); gained knowledge in using new educational/teaching methods (mentioned 5 times); gained knowledge about motivating adults for participation in lifelong learning (mentioned 5 times); improved knowledge about educational system of host country (mentioned 3 times). Other, less frequently mentioned new knowledge and skills gained are related to improved English language skills, intercultural competences, improved knowledge about culture and working with vulnerable groups of adults.

Furthermore, the survey data show that in the context of professionalisation and staff development, the development of international competences (intercultural competences, international orientation and personal development) among staff can be highlighted as one of the most important impacts of Erasmus+ participation (see Figure 20). All the organisations indicate that there has been progress in this area, which they attribute to their involvement in the programme. Most (at least three quarters) of the organisations have also made progress in working with other organisations supporting participants with fewer opportunities and in improving their language skills in at least one other EU language, while at least 40% of the organisations have made significant improvements. The vast majority (at least 90%) of organisations have seen improvements in staff members' pedagogical and didactic skills, their identification of learners' educational needs and their ability to develop more appropriate learning pathways for them, but a smaller proportion of organisations (between a quarter and a good third) have seen significant improvements in these areas. Among the impacts of participation in the programme, typical of the majority (around 85%) of organisations, are improved competences in the use of digital learning technologies among staff and increased attention to inclusion and diversity, although significant improvement in these areas occurred in around one third of organisations. The same is true for progress in monitoring the education of our learners, where three quarters of organisations report progress and one third report significant progress. Improvements in the integration of innovation processes and a greater focus on the environment and the fight against climate change are reported by just under three quarters of organisations after Erasmus+, and a significant improvement in these two areas is reported by around one quarter of organisations. For around two thirds of organisations, participation in Erasmus+ has resulted in better recording of learner outcomes and greater attention to learners' socio-emotional development, as well as greater attention to active citizenship, democratic participation and social engagement. Significant improvement in these areas is characteristic of around one fifth (20%) of organisations.



Figure 20: The impact of participation in Erasmus+ since 2018 on the professionalisation and development of staff

The impact of participation in Erasmus+ since 2018 on the professionalisation and development of staff (n = 42)



In box 3, some examples of how participation in Erasmus+ project(s) since 2018 has improved the quality of staff in organization included in the research, are given:

We have more English language skills, as well as more documents available in English language.

Among staff, the awareness of the problems faced by young people and adults with fewer opportunities has increase, while staff shows more tolerance, understanding and empathy.

The use of ICT in educational activities has increased and we have available more e-learning materials.

The staff produce better quality workshops and courses by introducing new teaching methods.



By creating a digital learning environment and implementing the flipped learning method, we have strengthened our educational offer and better prepared ourselves to meet the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Staff gained additional competences to develop new programmes and incorporating new teaching methods. This has increased the quality of programme delivery, or the delivery of new programmes aimed at learners.

Box 3: Examples of improved quality of staff that participated in Erasmus+ since 2018

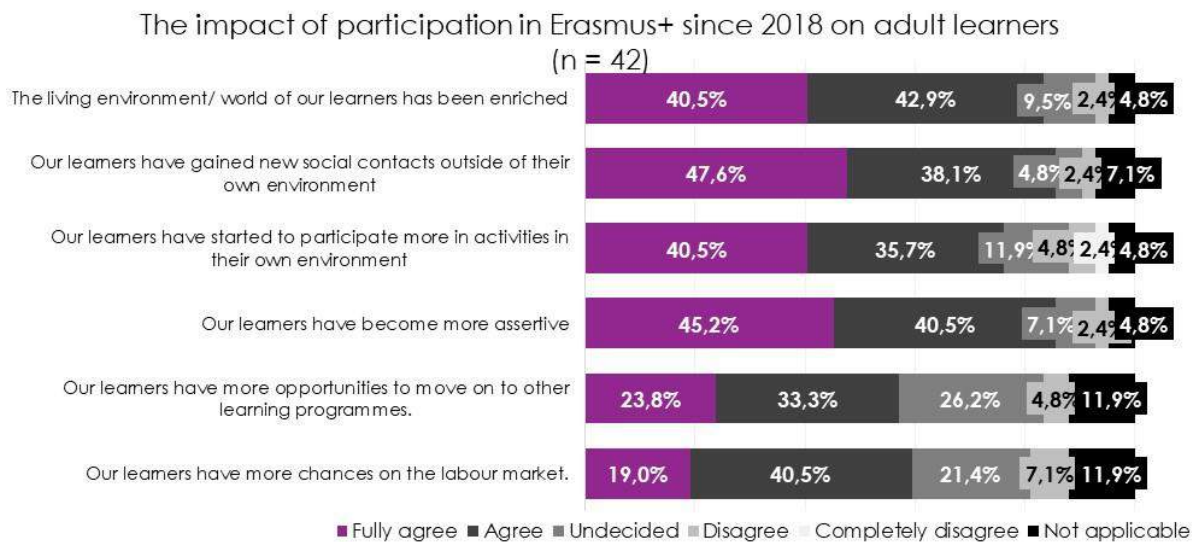
Case studies (FG1-FG5) also revealed, that the most often changes in attitudes and actions of professionals and volunteers because of participating in Erasmus+, are: better pedagogical and didactic skills, better confidence, adaptability, and perseverance, and better ownership (agency) to contribute to (international and intercultural) society. These are followed by offering better learning paths for adult learners and greater awareness of the added value of gaining international experience and competences. Lastly, changes related to the knowledge of adult learners and mapping learning needs of adult learners were also detected.



IMPACT ON ADULT LEARNERS

From the perspective of adult learners, the impact of Erasmus+ participation is substantial for a significantly high proportion of organisations (see Figure 21). Just under half of the organisations report significant changes in the acquisition of new social contacts outside their environment and increased learner self-confidence. Four out of ten organisations report significant improvements in the living environment of learners and their participation in activities in their environment. Comparatively speaking, the impact of participation in the programme on opportunities for transition to other educational programmes and labour market opportunities is the least intense. More than half of the organisations report an improvement in these opportunities, while a smaller proportion of organisations (just under a quarter or just under a fifth respectively) report a significant improvement.

Figure 21: the impact of participation in Erasmus+ since 2018 on adult learners in their organisation



Source: Survey.



In box 4, some examples of how participation in Erasmus+ project(s) have impacted adult learners are given:

Adult learners met some of their EU peers and exchanged experiences.

In addition to enriching their language skills, adults who took part in our international activities also made new contacts abroad.

A participant who has been involved in an international project has gained employment.

Participation of our members from the University for the Third Age in local activities in international projects gave our members the opportunity to meet people from different cultures and to communicate with them in a foreign language, which improved their linguistic competences, increased their motivation to learn foreign languages, and at the same time improved their international competences.

The vocational skills competition (and the good ranking) gave the learners a boost in confidence and led to their involvement in further education.

Older pensioners were given the opportunity to participate in a course abroad, learn e.g. paper filigree and other techniques (art, felting), and transferring this knowledge to other learners in the local environment after mobility. Some were travelling for the first time, strengthening their social, intercultural and language skills.

One of the Ukrainian participants started to develop a support group for Ukrainian artists and creators, refugees, and internally displaced people immediately after the war started, under the mentoring support of our project. She formed the group not only based on existing knowledge, but also on the basis of the knowledge acquired in the project, which she recognised as a key element for the successful development of a living community, which after 8 months has more than 5000 members connected in a virtual community.

Box 4: Examples of the impact of the Erasmus+ on adult learners

These findings are supported, but also complemented, by both the interviews with Erasmus+ coordinators (I-1–I-3) and by the learners themselves (FG-6, FG-7 and FG-8). Both point out that adult learners have gained new knowledge and skills (e.g., they have improved their knowledge of the English language, philography, gained knowledge of the culture of the host country), improved their self-confidence (they have shaken off the fear of travelling, they dare to speak to a foreigner in English language in their own place or abroad), strengthened their digital skills (they have learnt to use the WhatsApp application on their



smart phone, they have also used the Google Maps application on their phone and various applications for translating Slovene and English words), strengthened their intercultural competence (e.g., they learned to shake off stereotypes about Muslims) and relational competence (participants stay in contact with each other, cooperate and help each other after the mobility is over). As one participant (adult learner) pointed out, the relational aspect was extremely important for the mobility participants:

And also between us, there was such a strong bond between us, we had another "broken" husband with us and we all took care of him. It's that bond that stays with you forever. These relationships that are so important today but are braking everywhere. We were like one big family that got on well. We looked after each other. (Participant FG-7)

All adult learners who participated in the mobility highlighted in the focus groups (FG-6–FG-7) that they were extremely satisfied with all aspects of the mobility (e.g. the organisation before and during the mobility, the professional work and the teacher at the host organisation, the learning materials, the cultural programme), that they spread the word about their positive experience among their peers, and that they would be happy to participate in mobility again if offered the opportunity. Some examples of adult learners about the Erasmus+ are summarised in the box 5 below:

I liked it very much. It was the first time I had attended such a training. I am very satisfied. I would like to have more experiences like this. I have no negative opinions, I liked everything very much. (Participant FG-6)

Very satisfied. It was a learning experience without pressing ... we were relaxed ... I really enjoyed it, the staff were very friendly. (Participant FG-6)

Only positive experiences. Happy with everything ... Professional approach from the lecturer, she worked very cohesively [towards the group] ... no negative experiences. (Participant FG-6)

The learning material we were given was very useful for us. We are still translating and reading it now and it is also a great motivation for us to continue to improve our skills. I have the whole winter to learn English now. (Participant FG-7)

I'm very happy ... I'm happy with the organisation itself ... they welcomed us so well, very friendly tutors ... they also introduced us to their [Turkish] basic words, the food ... I liked the filigraphy itself so much, it was something completely new ... So, it was such a nice experience, I'm very grateful to the AE centre/folk



school that they remembered that and that I had the chance to go ... It really made my life so much better. (Participant FS-8)

I was more than pleasantly surprised by the invitation and the idea of including pensioners in Erasmus+. I liked the really good organisation, both on the Slovenian side and on the Istanbul, Turkish side, and of course the kindness of all the people who were involved in our free time and the work where we did the filigraphy course... In a word, no mistakes. (Participant FS-8)

When I retired, in a way, not quite literally, you get ticked off. You're no longer relevant to interesting things. But that [participation in mobility] was one big plus during that period, to see that you can still be interesting and useful, so to speak. And that gives me energy and maybe confidence. (Participant FS-8)

Now comes the organisation of the workshops and the transfer of this knowledge [from filigraphy course] to the groups at folk school ... this is something new and exciting and, in the end, I can tick this off as another good experience. (Participant FS-8)

Box 5: Experience of adult learners with Erasmus+ programme

CONCLUSIONS

Main impact on staff. Multiple choice answers about learning outcomes gained in the mobility of staff in the period 2018-2020 show that the highest ranked learning outcomes are: learned from good practice abroad; improved social and civic competences; sharing knowledge acquired through mobility activity with colleagues; become more motivated to carry on developing professional skills; better cultural awareness and expression; using new teaching/training methods, approaches, and good practices at my sending institution; building up new contacts/expand professional network; improved teamwork abilities; reinforced a positive attitude of sending institution towards sending more staff on teaching assignments, job shadowing or training abroad; strengthened cooperation with the partner organisations in this project. Furthermore, open answers from staff about knowledge, skills and competences developed show that the staff most often: improved English language skills; gained knowledge in using new educational/teaching methods; improved knowledge about culture of the host country; improved knowledge about educational system of host country; improved knowledge needed for working with vulnerable group of adults; gained



knowledge about integration of migrants/minorities groups in education and/or labour market; improved communication skills; improved organisational skills.³⁰

Furthermore, the survey data show that in the context of professionalisation and staff development, the development of international competences among staff can be highlighted as one of the most important impacts of Erasmus+ participation. Other impacts include: better pedagogical and didactic skills, better confidence, adaptability, and perseverance, better ownership (agency) to contribute to (international and intercultural) society, progress of organisations in working with other organisations supporting participants with fewer opportunities, improvement of language skills of staff, their pedagogical and didactic skills, their identification of learners' educational needs and ability to develop more appropriate learning pathways for adult learners, improved competences for the use of digital learning technologies, and increased attention to inclusion and diversity. Improvements in the integration of innovation processes and a greater focus on the environment and the fight against climate change are identified to lesser extent.

Main impact of Erasmus+ on adult learners is evident from their acquisition of new social contacts outside their environment, increased self-confidence, increased participations in activities in their environment, gained new knowledge and skills, strengthened their digital skills, strengthened their intercultural competence and relational competence.

Factors stimulating the impact of Erasmus+ on staff and adult learners are good contacts and cooperation with partner organisations (working with reliable partner), flexibility of organisations involved, good mobility planning (e.g., content and logistics) and good companions at mobility of adult learners, while factors hampering the impact are lots of work for organisations with underfunding for organisation and adult learners at mobility, and participants of mobility from some vulnerable groups (i.e., adult learners with physical disabilities that move difficult at mobility in a city, migrant woman).

³⁰ Interestingly, in the period 2018-2020 no major emphasis was given to knowledge gained among the staff about digital and/or green competences. Furthermore, while knowledge about better cultural awareness was highly ranked, no emphasis was given to wider identification with European society and the values associated with it (integration, diversity, tolerance, anti-discrimination, etc.).



Impact of Erasmus+ at macro level

INTRODUCTION

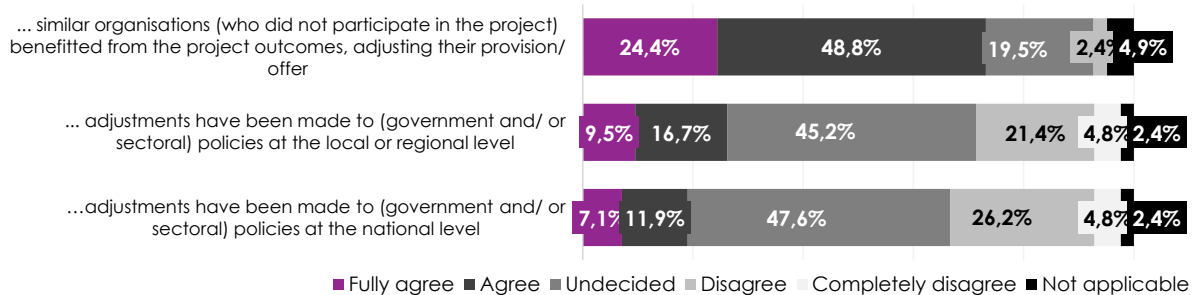
In this chapter, we look at the impact of Erasmus+ beyond participating organisations. It addresses aspects such as how other organisations benefitted from the project outcomes, adjusting their provision/ offer, but also whether adjustments have been made to (government and/ or sectoral) policies at the national and regional level due to Erasmus+ projects.

IMPACT ON OTHER ORGANISATIONS

In terms of the impact of Erasmus+ beyond participating organisations, participation in Erasmus+ has had the greatest impact in adapting the offer and delivery of training to other, related organisations that were not involved in the project (see Figure 22). A large majority of organisations (almost three quarters) consider that these organisations have benefitted indirectly, while a quarter of organisations consider that this benefit has been substantial.

Figure 22: Impact of participation in Erasmus+ beyond its own organisation

Beyond organisational impact of participation in Erasmus+ (n = 42)



Source: Survey.

Data from case studies (FG-1–FG-5) also show that similar organisations, not included in the project, benefitted from the project outcomes, as the results were disseminated most often through the organisations of various events (e.g., “Inspirational visits”, yearly events traditionally organised by AE centres/folk schools, EPALE community) and shared through events of similar umbrella

organisations or associations (e.g., Association of Education and Counselling Centres of Slovenia, Federation of Slovenian Library Associations).

IMPACT ON NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND SECTORAL POLICIES

As seen from Figure 22, around a quarter of the organisations identify the impact of their participation in the programme on the adjustment of adult education policies at local or regional level, and around a fifth on the adjustment of these policies at national level.

Data gathered from the case studies (FG-1–FG-5) also show, that to some extent, some adjustments were made of policies at local level (e.g., formation of non-governmental body responsible for minority representatives) and at national level. For example, Quality Day that was implemented because of a good practice example through Erasmus+ at one AE organisation, was taken over by SIAE and this became a “national event” as it is now disseminated through national body (SIAE). Some examples of this impact on local, regional and national level policies are summarised in box 6:

“The field of counselling/guidance seems to me to be an excellent example of how all the stakeholders, from the Ministry [of education], the SIAE, the providers, to the participants in counselling/guidance, have managed to set up a great system in the country, to the point where it has now come into the public network. I think it's all the result of some Erasmus projections... it's a 20-year journey that has gone through Erasmus”. (Participant FS-2)

“I saw once on an exchange in England that they were doing a quality week, and we then introduced a quality week at AE centre/folk school X, we presented it at SIAE and from that there was a Quality Day, a national Quality Day, which SIAE took from us and that's one such result that definitely came from our Erasmus”. (Participant FS-4)

“If I look at what is at national level, e.g. Basic and Vocational Competences which is a tendered [project], or inter-generational centres, these were created on the basis of European projects, and they [the ministry responsible for education] than adopted them and put them out to tender”. (Participant FS-4)

Box 6: Impact of Erasmus+ impacts at system level

However, a review and analysis of the AE master plan (see Chapter 3.2) shows that although both AE master plans are aligned with key European strategic



documents and policies concerning adult education (Mikulec, 2021, 2024)^{31 32}, the Erasmus+ programme is not among them. The current master plan merely states that the objectives of the master plan are implemented by all ministries from the state budget and EU financial mechanisms, among which the Erasmus+ programme is mentioned once (ACS, 2022)³³. However, if we look at the implementation of the master plan through the adopted annual programmes for adult education, we find that Erasmus+ funds are not actually included in the annual programmes, as only the state budget and the European Social Fund are included (Sotošek & Beltram, 2021).^{34 35 36} Moreover, also the decision-makers (i.e., ministry responsible for education) emphasised that the Erasmus+ programme has no direct influence and impact - either in the short or long term - on the adult education system, on the development of adult education policy, on the implementation of reforms in adult education, on the work of the Ministry responsible for education, which is the umbrella ministry for the management of adult education in Slovenia, as well as on the work of the SIAE (Mikulec & Kristl, forthcoming)³⁷.

³¹ Mikulec, B. (2021). The influence of international intergovernmental organisations on Slovenian adult education policies. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 40(1), 37–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2021.1871674>

³² Mikulec, B. (2024, forthcoming). Adult learning and education policy mobilities: Following adult learning and education policy development in Slovenia. In M. Milana, P. Rasmussen, M. Bussi (Eds.), *Research Handbook on Adult Education Policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

³³ ACS. (2022). RESOLUCIJA o nacionalnem programu izobraževanja odraslih v Republiki Sloveniji za obdobje 2022–2030 (ReNPIO22–30). Andragoški center Republike Slovenije, p. 43.

³⁴ Vlada Republike Slovenije. (2021). Letni program izobraževanja odraslih v Republiki Sloveniji za leto 2022. http://mizs.arhiv-spletisc.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/direktorat_za_srednje_in_visje_solstvo_ter_izobrazevanje_odraslih/izobrazevanje_odraslih/index.html

³⁵ Vlada Republike Slovenije. (2022). Letni program izobraževanja odraslih v Republiki Sloveniji za leto 2023. https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MIZS/Dokumenti/Odrasli/LPIO/2023/LPIO2023_za-spletno-stran.pdf

³⁶ Sotošek, A. in Beltram, P. (2021). Poročilo o uresničevanju Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu izobraževanja odraslih v Republiki Sloveniji za obdobje 2013 – 2020 (ReNPIO 2013 – 2020). Andragoški center Slovenije.

³⁷ Mikulec, B., & Kristl, N. (2024, forthcoming). Evalvacija programa Erasmus+ za obdobje 2014 – 2023. Sektor: Izobraževanje odraslih. Cmpenius.



CONCLUSIONS

The **impact on other organisations** shows that participation in Erasmus+ has impact on adapting the offer and delivery of training to other, related organisations that were not involved in the project.

However, while organisations involved in Erasmus+ believes that Erasmus+ results had impacted some system related issues in AE in Slovenia (e.g., establishing counselling/guidance service, implementing quality day, designing basic school programme guidelines for adults), we could not find (non)direct link towards the **impact of Erasmus+ on AE government policies**.

Factors **stimulating impact** on other organisations are related to their involvement in umbrella organisations (e.g. associations) and sharing of project results through local and national professional networks (e.g., SIAE newsletter, EPAL community). One of the factors that **hampers the impact** of Erasmus+ on government policies, is that Erasmus+ is not part of national AE policy and national implementation programmes.



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C.III CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY POINTERS

Support of NA: strengths and challenges

KEY FINDINGS

The accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+

Main **types of organisations** participating in KA1 projects are AE centres/folk schools, which are also key public providers of AE in Slovenia, followed by NGOs and other public service providers (e.g., libraries, museums). Variety of other organisation types also appears, but much less frequently. Main types of organisations participating in KA2 smaller partnership projects are NGOs, followed by AE centres/folk schools, while in strategic partnership AE centres/folk schools share a slight advantage over NGOs type of beneficiaries. Other types of organisations also appear as project partners, but much less frequently.

Specificities and **characteristics of participants, staff, volunteers, and adult learners** who, individually or in groups participated in an Erasmus+ project are the following ones. Staff working in AE institutions have mostly between 11 and 50 employees and work with more than 250 adult learners or are micro-units with a maximum of 5 employees working with 11 to 50 adult learners. The staff is well familiarised with Erasmus+ programme, as almost all organisations have already been coordinators in the KA2 Erasmus+ project(s), while more than three quarters have been partners. Nevertheless, the staff works for AE organisations, where most organisations do not hold an Erasmus+ accreditation for mobility in AE. The most often targeted group of adult learners, with which staff works in AE organisations, are elderly, unemployed adults, those with lacking basic skills, young adults, migrants, and professional staff.

Main **obstacles for participating in Erasmus+** are related to lack of time, staff (understaffing) and financial (underfunding) constraints. A particular challenge for the mobility of adult learners are adults with physical disabilities.

Majority of organisations participated in five or more Erasmus+ projects since 2014 and as among their main target groups, most adults are participants with fewer opportunities, **inclusiveness of Erasmus+** in Slovenia is good. Moreover, as there is also a high proportion of organisation that participated in only one project within the Erasmus+ since 2014, this might signal that

Erasmus+ is attractive to organisations that have not previously benefited from the programme, meaning that Erasmus+ programme **maintains its accessibility** to newcomer organisations.

Impact at meso level

Main impact on **internationalisation** can be observed, as considerable number of organisations implemented various practices that facilitate internationalization processes, while organisational embedding of internationalisation is also noticed.

Main **impact on learning offer** is notable in integrating outputs and insights gained into new or existing provision in participating organisations, better cooperation with organisations supporting participants with fewer opportunities, better alignment of the learning offer with the needs of adult learners and better accessibility for different groups of adult learners. However, the impact is the weakest in paying attention to participation in democratic life, common values, and civic engagement. After participating in Erasmus+ projects, most organisations pay more attention to the digital skills, professional development of staff, inclusion and diversity, and networking/partnerships with other organisations.

Main findings regarding the **impact on horizontal priorities** show that two priorities improved the most, i.e. priority given to inclusion and diversity, and digitalisation, while other two (green transition, participation in democratic life) improved to some extent.

Factors **hampering the use of outputs** and products developed with the Erasmus+ are related to lack of time, low motivation of staff, lack of management support, insufficient international network of quality partners, and financial constraints. **Factors stimulating the impact** are related to priorities given in the organisations to the Erasmus+, motivated and professionally self-fulfilled staff, teamwork, management support, quality network of international partners, and good project management.

Impact at micro level

The highest ranked **learning outcomes** gained in the **mobility of staff** in the period 2018-2020 are: learned from good practice abroad; improved social and civic competences; shared knowledge acquired through mobility activity with



colleagues; became more motivated to carry on developing professional skills; increased cultural awareness and expression; new teaching/training methods; new contacts/expand professional network; improved teamwork abilities and communication skills; improved English language skills; knowledge about culture of the host country and its educational system; knowledge needed for working with vulnerable group of adults; knowledge about integration of migrants/minorities groups in education and/or labour market; improved organisational skills.

In light of **professionalisation and staff development**, relevant impacts includes: development of international competences among staff, better pedagogical and didactic skills, better confidence, adaptability, and perseverance, better ownership (agency) to contribute to (international and intercultural) society, improvement of language skills, better identification of learners' educational needs and ability to develop more appropriate learning pathways for adult learners, improved competences for the use of digital learning technologies, and increased attention to inclusion and diversity.

Main **impact of Erasmus+ on adult learners** is evident from their acquisition of new social contacts outside their environment, increased self-confidence, increased participations in activities in their environment, gained new knowledge and skills, strengthened digital skills, intercultural and relational competence.

Factors stimulating the impact of Erasmus+ on staff and adult learners are good contacts and cooperation with reliable partner organisations, flexibility of organisations involved, good mobility planning and good companions at mobility of adult learners. **Factors hampering** the impact are related to lots of work for organisations, underfunding for organisations and adult learners at mobility, and participants of mobility from some vulnerable groups (i.e., adult learners with physical disabilities, migrant woman).

Impact at macro level

The **impact on other organisations** shows that participation in Erasmus+ has impact on adapting the offer and delivery of training to other, related organisations that were not involved in the project.

However, while organisations involved in Erasmus+ believes that Erasmus+ results had impacted some system related issues in AE in Slovenia, there are no clear indicators that show the impact of Erasmus+ on **AE government policies**.

Factors stimulating impact on other organisations are related to organisation involvement in umbrella organisations and sharing of project results through local and national professional networks. **Factors that hamper** the impact of Erasmus+ on government policies are related to the fact that Erasmus+ is not part of national AE policy and/or national AE implementation programmes.

POLICY POINTERS

How to increase the impact at micro level

Main weaknesses

Data obtained show that there is a lack of evidence that participation in Erasmus+ provides professional staff with a deeper knowledge of the EU and its policies, as well as fostering a more active participation in democratic life and civil society^{38 39}. Similar, there is also a lack of evidence supporting the claim that adult learners gained "better knowledge of EU values"⁴⁰. However, we found clear evidence that because of the energy crisis affecting each household, adult learners and staff in adult education are underfunded.

³⁸ Cf. 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme intervention logic: Annex 3. (n.d.).

³⁹ Cf. Annex 4: 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme intervention logic. (n.d.)

⁴⁰ Ibid.



Recommendations

Mobility of staff and adult learners should support and target more mobilities that focuses on strategies for better participation in democratic life and civil society and strengthening the knowledge of EU values.

In view of the general cost pressures, which are also reflected in the cost of air tickets and accommodation, it is necessary to increase the resources available for the mobility of both professional staff and adult learners.

There is a need to equalise the funding between professionals and adult learners, which both receive for mobility purposes. Individual support for adult learners should be tailored to the target group and not treated equally with other beneficiaries of the programme (pupils, students) due to their different needs.

How to increase the Impact at meso level

Main weaknesses

The smallest impact Erasmus+ had on meso level was in strengthening attention to participation in democratic life, shared values, and active citizenship. Furthermore, according to the climate crisis, the impacts on promoting the adaptability of organisations to the green transition were detected, but at a level that is too low. Next, we have not seen any direct effects on "improving the dialogue between academic research and policy makers"⁴¹ at meso level. Finally, adult education as defined by Erasmus+, opens the floor to any institution offering non vocational topics, regardless of their institutional backroad and knowledge base, which can heavily undermine quality of learning offers provided.

Recommendations

Adult education organisations should pay more attention to the topic of participation in democratic life, shared EU values, and active citizenship, as well as to the green transition.

The criteria for which organisations can apply for and implement the Erasmus+ programme for the adult education sector need to be narrowed down and made more precise.

⁴¹ Cf. 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme intervention logic: Annex 3. (n.d.).



The European Commission should make it possible to purchase equipment (e.g., for adults with disabilities) as an eligible cost, thereby also improving the material conditions of the organisations themselves.

The results, solutions, and innovations of Erasmus+ projects should be exchanged annually between organisations active in the field of adult education in meetings within their respective associations.

How to increase the Impact at macro level

Main weaknesses

Data show that the impact of Erasmus+ at system (macro) level is actually very limited: Erasmus+ is not part of AE policy at national (system) level; Erasmus+ funding is not included in annual AE programmes; decision-makers do not recognise the impact of Erasmus+ on AE at national level (system, policy, reform), nor that the programme has contributed to better understanding of key EU tools and policies in the AE sector⁴².

Recommendations

Erasmus+ should become part of national AE policy, in the same manner as other EU tools are (e.g., ESF).

To implement reforms and achieve longer-lasting effects of Erasmus+ in adult education at a systemic level (KA3 projects), it is essential to involve the relevant competent ministries in such projects.

⁴² Cf. 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme intervention logic: Annex 3. (n.d.).



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PART D –Annexes



Annex 1: Individual case study reports

CASE STUDY: ORGANISATION 1

Date: 25. 9. 2023

Interview plan:

8.45 – 9.15: Interview with Erasmus+ coordinator

9.15 – 11.15: Focus group with director, Erasmus+ coordinator, and 3 professional staff with experience from Erasmus+ programme.

Recording: audio

Consent: oral

Portrait of the organisation:

Public Library is a meeting point for all generations and a place of cultural expression that encourages lifelong learning and supports creativity. The organisation is the heart of a small community of around 10,000 inhabitants and a house of friendly culture where people learns, discovers, and connects.

Activities: lending of library materials, organisation of travel lectures, exhibitions (of artistic creativity, as the exhibition space allows for painting, photography, sculpture and other similar exhibitions), psychological evenings (hosting psychologists, psychotherapists and other guests), children's matinees, theatre performances, cinema, fairy tale lessons for children, literary and discussion evenings, and fairy tale evenings for adults.

The library also offers:

- *Study Circles*⁴³ that have been implemented in the library since 2008, when two reading study circles began their work and are still running today without interruption. They are run by 5 qualified tutors. Each year

⁴³ More information about study circles network in Slovenia is available at: <https://sk.acs.si/en/home>



they offer 10 different thematic study circles and also include various vulnerable groups (physically handicapped, visually impaired, hearing impaired, adults with physical and mental disabilities).

- *The University for the Third Age* (U3A) that was founded in 2009. The purpose of the university is to educate for personal growth and to organise better quality leisure time. Members meet once a week for various thematic lectures and workshops.
- *Lifelong learning Weeks* (LLLW)⁴⁴: library have been participating in the LLLW as an event provider since 2008 and as a regional coordinator of LLLW events since 2013. Under library coordination, more than 60 subcontractors (educational, cultural and other public institutions, companies, associations, entrepreneurs, etc.) work together to organise more than 100 events each year.

Target groups: children, youth, adults, elderly.

Target groups in Erasmus+ projects: elderly, professional staff, decision makers in local community

Erasmus+ experience: 2 projects, one related to heritage preservation (KA1) and other to storytelling techniques for staff and the use of digital tools for elderly (KA2).

Other project experience: cooperation in national projects (e.g., promoting reading culture among basic school pupils), European agricultural fund for rural development projects (e.g., local development).

Highlights:

Participants of focus group are convinced that participation in Erasmus+ brings a range of positive effects: exchange of knowledge and experience, learning good practices, strengthening interpersonal relationships among coworkers, professional and personal development (e.g. strengthening digital skills, public speaking skills, better foreign language skills, improved self-confidence, strengthening intercultural competence), enables the establishment of international cooperation, and organisational growth.

In the context of participation in Erasmus+, organisation developed following products/outputs: publications (stories with illustration), films and instruction videos, training courses.

⁴⁴ More information about LLLW is available at: <https://www.acs.si/en/projects/national/lifelong-learning-week/>



The most important effect and/or impact of participation in Erasmus+ is the development of the organisation and the team (collective), new insights that inspire their work, and seeing/experiencing examples of good practice abroad.

According to the belief of participants of focus group, many other effects/impact of participating in Erasmus+ that were unplanned effects occurred, such as gaining knowledge among staff about project management, better digital and English language skills, overcoming the fear of public speaking among employees, greater independence and self-esteem among employees, better energy flow among coworkers.

Main success factors for Erasmus+ are good teamwork (from conception, writing to implementation), support from the management (director) during application and implementation of project, support from the whole team (collective), i.e. the team supports the project and understands why it is important that organisation participate in the project.

Focus group quotes extracts pointing out different important effects of Erasmus+:

I have had very good experiences ... with Erasmus and the predecessor projects of Erasmus. These are my first work experience ... and that's how I've learned the most, in terms of work organisation ... You make a lot of friends, you mature personally. (FG-1 participant)

These projects put you a little bit out of your comfort zone, where you can then meet new people and be more open to new experiences, you have contact with good practices in other countries. (Participant FG-1)

You come out of the trip full of a certain enthusiasm and you bring that positive spirit both at home and in the working environment. (Participant FG-1)

When we got our first Erasmus+ project, it really helped to shift something in us. We were given the opportunity to take a new path, which gave us new courage, a confirmation that we were going outside our comfort zone and that this would bring positive results ... And that Erasmus+ gave us this opportunity, I am personally very grateful (Participant FS-1)

Someone among us was very afraid of international projects, and now that person is herself the coordinator of application for a new project. That is a crazy achievement ... There are a lot of things like that in each one of us ... [Due to



participation in Erasmus+] each one of us has freed himself from some fears and gets a new impetus. (Participant FS-1)

For the work of NA it is important to impress other organisations in a slightly more light-hearted way. It seems to me that organisations get scared because quite often things are presented as a super complex, international Erasmus+ project, you have to follow these and these objectives ... and then a lot of people give up ... Erasmus+ should be presented more in terms of good practice of these projects, and more inspirational ... that's the first step and then you highlight 'the boundary conditions are like this'. Rather than first starting to spell out the boundary conditions at length ... I think you must get people excited first and when they want it and whatever they have to do to get it, they will be excited ... that's what needs to be communicated first, what are the positive effects. (Participant FG-1)

CASE STUDY: ORGANISATION 2

Date: 26. 9. 2023

Interview plan:

9.30 – 10.00: Interview with Erasmus+ coordinator

10.00 – 12.00: Focus group with director, Erasmus+ coordinator, and 3 professional staff with experience from Erasmus+ programme.

Recording: audio

Consent: oral

Portrait of the organisation:

Adult education centre/folk school, that is situated in municipality with around 33.000 inhabitants, offers the innovative learning environment for all generations and different target groups with up-to-date and high-quality knowledge for personal and career development. Their educational programmes attract over 4,000 participants a year, gaining knowledge and skills in formal education programmes (e.g., basic school for adults, selected programme of upper-secondary vocational education) and non-formal programmes in the following areas: vocational training, language training, computer and ICT training and leisure programmes.

The AE centre also offers:

- *Guidance for adults*: with its Counselling Centre, it is included in the public network of “Adult Education Guidance Centres” (AEGC)⁴⁵ for the implementation of counselling activities, which is implemented as a public service. It operates within the public network for the provision of counselling services in AE. Counselling is aimed at: (1) enrolment of adults in education and continuation of education, (2) identification and documentation of (prior) knowledge and skills, (3) guidance at self-directed learning.
- *Study Circles*: led by a specially trained mentor. The basic motto of the Circle is "each one teaches everyone". The content and topics are

⁴⁵ For more information about these, see: <https://www.acs.si/en/projects/national/adult-education-guidance-centres/>



unlimited, depending on the members of the circle, their needs and wishes. The Study Circle is a free form of education and socialising.

- *The University for the Third Age (U3A)*: is part of the “Slovenian University for the Third Age network”⁴⁶ and offers non-formal education in language courses, computer and ICT course and health course for elderly.
- *Self-directed learning Centre*⁴⁷: At the Self-Directed Learning Centres (SDLC), adults can acquire, consolidate, and improve their knowledge independently. To support the self-directed learning process, professionally trained counsellors help the participants select their learning materials and learning methods. The SDLCs offer materials for self-directed learning, modern learning technologies and the professional and guidance support of the SDLC staff.
- *Lifelong learning Weeks (LLLW)*: Every year in May, AE centre organise a range of free activities as part of Lifelong Learning Weeks. AE centre works with a network of more than 45 different partner organisations and in this way contribute to the implementation of events in the region that reflect the importance and manifestations of lifelong learning.

Target groups: young adults, adults, elderly.

Target groups in Erasmus+ projects: migrants, unemployed, elderly, young adults (dropouts), professional staff.

Erasmus+ experience: from 2014 on, included in more than 50 Erasmus+ (KA1 and KA2) projects dealing with, among others: eco-literacy and green education for climate action for staff and adult learners, digital literacy for staff and adult learners, language learning for adults, upskilling older workers (55+) and providing guidance to small and medium size companies, training of mental health leaders, educating for human rights and citizenship education, awareness raising against disinformation and conspiracy theories, training of vulnerable women for their integration in the labour market, training and guidance for workers before retirement, basic school for adults, development of virtual simulation games for teaching purposes, development of flipped classroom approach, training of vulnerable young adults to increase their employability.

Other project experience: cooperation in various national projects (e.g., Mobile heroes, Digital Competences 55+, Counselling for adults), projects supported by European Social Funds (e.g., Project learning for young adults, Competences, Acquisition of key and vocational competences,

⁴⁶ For more information about this network see: <https://www.utzo.si/en/>

⁴⁷ For more information about this network see: <https://www.acs.si/en/projects/national/self-directed-learning-centres/>



Multigenerational centre), Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (e.g., Centre for intercultural dialogue), European agricultural fund for rural development projects (e.g., SAŠA Intergenerational Centre "Generations under the canopy", In the spirit of the Fruit Forest, Šaleška Valley Learning Parks), Norway grants.

Highlights:

Participants of focus group are convinced that participation in Erasmus+, as well as its predecessor programmes, brings a range of positive effects: exchange of knowledge and experience, learning good practices, strengthening interpersonal relationships among coworkers, professional and personal development, provides rapid solutions to respond to current challenges and needs of organisations (e.g. working with migrants, use of digital technology during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, etc.) and organisational growth. Staff involved in Erasmus+ also learn to be tolerant in expressing different opinions in an international environment, strengthen intercultural competences and common values of the EU.

In the context of participation in Erasmus+, organisation developed following products/outputs: curricula, training modules, language courses, handbooks/guidelines, website, didactic material for professional/volunteers, learning materials for adult learners, online tools, publications, Webinars and 'blended learning' courses, films, or instruction videos.

The most important effect and/or impact of participation in Erasmus+ is that the programme: fosters peace and mutual understanding among people being part of Erasmus+ in the EU, enables learning from each other (good practices) and international cooperation, facilitates the development of new methods and tools that enable staff to effectively adapt its offer to the fast changing social needs, as well as provides rapid solutions to current challenges and needs of organisations in local environment (e.g. working with migrants, use of digital technology, etc.).

According to the belief of participants of focus group, many other effects/impact of participating in Erasmus+, that were unplanned effects, occurred, such as: participation in mobility project stimulate some adult participants to finish their incomplete basic school education, to get higher educational levels through formal education, realise their business ideas (e.g., opening butcher shop), continue their education through participation in non-formal programs (e.g. intergenerational learning, learning digital skills through the use of smart phones); staff participating in Erasmus+ used gained knowledge of blended



learning in teaching foreign language at other educational institution many years after projected ended.

Main success factors for Erasmus+ are human resources: motivated staff, interested partners (organisations and staff included in the project), and professional self-fulfilment of staff included in the project.

Focus group quotes extracts pointing out different important effects of Erasmus+:

I have had a very nice positive experience... I am happy when I can offer something new to our people through projects. (Participant FS-2)

For me it's great ... I enjoy all the events, the social exchanges, you do something new, you can find a new solution and you can implement it within a year. You don't have to wait for some [very long] system change. For example, now there is a refugee crisis, we will make a couple of manuals, materials and it will already be in use... especially in non-formal education, a lot of materials are created on demand. (Participant FS-2)

The added value of Erasmus+ for me is its fast responsiveness. If a problem occurs this year, there will be at least one possible solution already next year. You can come up with a suggestion and, if you frame it well, you can try to solve it already by yourself, without waiting for long time for solution to come. (Participant FS-2)

It was through Erasmus that all the materials for AE basic school were developed, which were not available in the country at that time. All the participants who took part in the project finished AE basic school, although this was not the aim of the project, but their participation in the project motivated them not only to finish basic school for adults, but also to make other success stories. For example, one participant continued with education on a 3-year vocational programme, after, he did two more years [to finish upper-secondary education programme] and then went to university. For one participant in AE basic school, this is almost zero probability to achieve this. In short, people have completed their basic education, continued their education, set up their lives and professional careers ... some of them have even started businesses. One small thing like that, being able to participate in one mobility, led to much bigger results and impacts in participants lives in the years to come. And there are many such stories. (Participant FS-2)

The field of counselling, to me, is a great example of how all the stakeholders from the Ministry, SIAE, the providers, to the participants of counselling, have



managed to set up a great system in the country, to the point that it has now come into the public network. I think it's all the result of some Erasmus projections... it's a 20-year journey that has gone through Erasmus. (Participant FS-2)

CASE STUDY: ORGANISATION 3

Date: 5. 10. 2023

Interview plan:

15.00 – 15.20: Interview with Erasmus+ coordinator

15.20 – 16.35: Focus group with director, Erasmus+ coordinator, and 3 professional staff with experience from Erasmus+ programme.

Recording: audio

Consent: oral

Portrait of the organisation:

Adult education centre/folk school is situated in municipality with around 21.000 inhabitants. Its main mission is to develop and spread a culture of lifelong learning in the local environment and the wider region. The AE centre offers and provide wide choice of educational programmes and workshops in both formal education (e.g., basic school for adults, selected programme of upper-secondary vocational education) and non-formal education (in the areas of vocational training, language training, computer and ICT training and leisure programmes), as well as guidance service to adults.

The AE centre also offers:

- *Guidance for adults:* with its Counselling Centre, it is included in the public network of “Adult Education Guidance Centres” (AEGC) for the implementation of counselling activities, which is implemented as a public service. It operates within the public network for the provision of counselling services in AE. Counselling is aimed at: (1) enrolment of adults in education and continuation of education, (2) identification and documentation of (prior) knowledge and skills, (3) guidance at self-directed learning.



- Different *study circles*, which represent a free form of education and socialising.
- *Self-directed learning Centre*: The centre offers learners and those who wish to learn in self-directed way the possibility of self-directed learning with the help of a tutor and the use of ICT materials.

Target groups: young adults, adults, elderly.

Target groups in Erasmus+ projects: migrants, elderly, young adults (dropouts), entrepreneurs, professional staff.

Erasmus+ experience: included in more than 30 Erasmus+ (KA1 and KA2) projects dealing with, among others: professional staff training in blended learning, competences increasing employability of adults, digital skills of adults and companies, sustainable development goals of adults and companies, critical thinking skills for recognising fake news for elderly, quality assurance and mentorship for staff, intergenerational solidarity, skills for managing digital identity of adults, inclusion of migrant and refugees, new teaching/learning methods.

Other project experience: cooperation in various national projects (e.g., Lifelong Learning Week, Education for Sustainable Development Week), projects supported by European Social Funds (e.g., Lifelong Learning Centre, Raising Literacy Levels, Guidance and Counselling in Adult Education), European agricultural fund for rural development projects (e.g., Bee Reads Honey; Less Oil, More Environment; Restoring Cultural Heritage), project supported by municipality (e.g., Family Centre).

Highlights:

Participants of focus group are convinced that participation in Erasmus+ brings a range of positive effects: learning good practices, professional and personal development of staff, strengthening partnerships and visibility locally and internationally, increased quality of staff (strengthening their professionalisation) and learning offer, strengthening interpersonal relationships among coworkers, organisational growth, and financial benefits. Staff involved in Erasmus+ also learn to be tolerant in expressing different opinions in an international environment, strengthen intercultural competences and feel like European citizens.

In the context of participation in Erasmus+, organisation developed following products/outputs: handbooks/guidelines, website, didactic material for

professional/volunteers, online tools, publications, Webinars and 'blended learning' courses.

The most important effect and/or impact of participation in Erasmus+ is that the programme enables: professional development of staff, partnerships and greater visibility in local and international environment, better quality of organisation (increased quality of the learning offer and staff involved).

According to the belief of participants of focus group, also other effects/impact of participating in Erasmus+, that were unplanned effects, occurred, such as: better teamwork among coworkers in the organisation, the institution's reputation and credibility have improved locally and internationally, openness of the organisation and its staff (this being more willing to learn and develop professionally), continuous growth of the organisation.

Main success factors for Erasmus+ are: clear priorities in home organisation, motivated staff, organisation and staff included in project that care about the main goals of the projects, credible project partners.

Focus group quotes extracts pointing out different important effects of Erasmus+:

These projects [and international cooperation] give you a certain professional confidence. (Participant FG-3)

Erasmus gave me the content that I couldn't get in Slovenia. The field of sustainability in Slovenia was at blank slate at that time ... I could only get that abroad. Absolutely, professional knowledge is one of the most important effects of Erasmus+ programme. (Participant FG-3)

Erasmus+ projects are ... an ongoing thing, for our growth ... we are constantly growing, developing ... each individual, but also as an institution... We are opening up new areas that we want to learn about (e.g. social entrepreneurship) ... It [Erasmus+] is one such ongoing process now. I don't see us stopping, but it is something we are growing with. (Participant FG-3)

Erasmus enables you to strengthen partnerships locally and internationally ... the growth and quality of the staff and the quality of the content offered by the organisation. (Participant FG-3)

Erasmus enables the openness of the organisation ... the openness of the staff and the willingness of the staff to learn and grow ... as an individual, if you are

not willing to learn, then you don't function in an Erasmus projects, because it is about new situations, new people, new topics ... and these bring new challenges to the organisation as well. You also have to grow as an organisation. (Participant FG-3)

If it hadn't been for Erasmus+, I might have run out of [professional] challenges on my side. Because Erasmus gives you a certain breadth, a certain possibility, and I feel that as a very big motivation [for my work]. (Participant FG-3)

CASE STUDY: ORGANISATION 4

Date: 27. 11. 2023

Interview plan:

9.40 – 10.00: Interview with Erasmus+ coordinator

10.00 – 11.45: Focus group with director, Erasmus+ coordinator, and 1 professional staff with experience from Erasmus+ programme.

Recording: audio

Consent: oral

Portrait of the organisation:

Adult education centre/folk school is situated in municipality with around 22.000 inhabitants. Its mission is to become a modern educational centre, offering new knowledge, ideas and trusted educational opportunities, and providing the conditions for the highest quality lifelong learning and education for each and every one. The AE centre on yearly bases works with approximately 2500 adult learners and offers wide choice of educational programmes in both formal education (e.g., basic school for adults, selected programme of upper-secondary vocational education) and non-formal education (initial integration of migrants, language training, computer and ICT training and leisure programmes), as well as guidance service to adults.



The AE centre also offers:

- *Intergenerational centre*: offer free content for social inclusion, education, intercultural and intergenerational networking. Its main objective is to increase the social inclusion of adults - especially vulnerable adults.
- Different *study circles*, which represent a free form of education and socialising.
- *Lifelong learning week (LLLW)*: LLLW's mission is to promote the importance, role and opportunities of learning and education at all stages of life and for all the roles that people take on - as individuals, as members of families, work teams and other communities.
- *National Month of Shared Reading*: As an institution working in the field of reading culture and literacy development, we have recognised for several years the need for a comprehensive approach to promoting reading literacy and reading culture. That is why we joined the National Month of Reading Together - a campaign to promote reading among different target groups.
- *Education for Sustainable Development Week*: Education, as the core activity of our institution, is a factor of development and a key tool for finding solutions in the field of sustainable development, which is why, in the framework of the Sustainable Development Week, we carry out educational events with the aim of developing eco-literacy for all generations.
- *The University for the Third Age (U3A)*: is part of the Slovenian University for the Third Age network and offers non-formal education in creativity, health, geography, cultural heritage, sport, art history and mental exercise for elderly.

Target groups: young adults, adults, elderly.

Target groups in Erasmus+ projects: migrants, elderly, young adults (dropouts), unemployed, professional staff.

Erasmus+ experience: This is the first AE centre/folk school that started with cooperation in Erasmus+ predecessors programmes (e.g., Grundtvig, Lifelong learning) in Slovenia. It was included in over 50 Erasmus+ and its predecessors programmes projects dealing with, among others: intergenerational learning between AE organisations and kindergartens, learning strategies and training for social entrepreneurship and community health, quality assurance in AE, active ageing and solidarity between generations, distance/online learning methods for vulnerable adults, blended learning approach and storytelling in adult education, inclusion of migrants.



Other project experience: cooperation in various national projects (e.g., Support activities in adult education), projects supported by European Social Funds (e.g., Key competences of adults, Local point SVOS - Online Skills Assessment Questionnaire; Centre for Employee Counselling and Knowledge Assessment; Social activation), European agricultural fund for rural development projects (e.g., PlurAlps - a pilot activity for immigrants), project supported by municipality (e.g., Intergenerational centre), Norway grants (e.g., Towards a healthy old age).

Highlights:

Participants of focus group are convinced that participation in Erasmus+ brings a range of positive effects: learning good practices, professional and personal development of staff, organisational growth and development, gaining and implementing new knowledge in practice, making learning offer more up to date, increased quality of staff/organisation, strengthening interpersonal relationships among coworkers. Staff involved in Erasmus+ also learn to be tolerant and strengthen intercultural competences.

In the context of participation in Erasmus+, organisation developed following products/outputs: curricula, training modules, language courses; handbooks/guidelines; website; online tools; publications; Webinars and 'blended learning' courses; and films, or instruction videos.

The most important effect and/or impact of participation in Erasmus+ is that the programme enables: better quality of learning offer (educational programmes), development of professional competences of staff, recognition of the organisation as a credible institution in the local and international environment.

According to the belief of participants of focus group, also other effects/impact of participating in Erasmus+, that were unplanned effects, occurred, such as: to be the best AE centre/folk school in Slovenia, to develop and successfully implement a wide range of non-formal education programmes (from the good practice abroad), to be recognised as a main institution or a "hub" for various social events in local community.

Main success factors for Erasmus+ are: good project idea (that include good planning and implementation of the project), experience in project work, choosing viable partners, establishing a friendly relationship with partners, monitoring and responding to project activities on an ongoing basis.



Focus group quotes extracts pointing out different important effects of Erasmus+:

Erasmus projects are commonplace for folk schools. They have to be, because without them we don't see any chance of progress. (Participant FG-4)

I decided to apply for a European project as soon as possible in 1999 ... and we have developed over the years into one of the ... best folk schools in Slovenia, thanks to Erasmus+ and all the previous projects ... Folk school X is definitely the result of international cooperation, as it is now. Financially too. At that time, we did not have any municipal co-financing. Today we are one of the folk school's that has the biggest share [co-financed by the municipality]. Because after a few years, when we brought so much European money to folk school X, then it was no longer such a problem to convince the municipal structure that it would be good to give something [financially] in return. (Participant FG-4)

I once saw at an exchange in England that they had a quality week and we then introduced a quality week at folk school X, we presented it at the SIAE and from that came a quality day, a national quality day, which the SIAE took from us and that's one result that definitely came out of our Erasmus. (Participant FG-4)

In Slovenia, the system [of adult education] is set up like this. What is national is not about development, it is about funding some established and politically agreed activities. Everything else has been developed through Erasmus+ or previous projects. Which is also the logic of Erasmus ... to develop something in that, and then it goes into a system that is funded at national level, and that has happened a lot of times. (Participant FG-4)

For participants [adult learners], the costs are no longer covered at all. This is because the lump sums remain as it were at the beginning. You know how costs have risen, e.g. air fares, hotels. And, in fact, even with the employees, we are more or less no longer covered. ... This is where the European Commission should react ... It really bothers me that the European Commission has decided that the funding for adult learners is significantly less than that for staff. Do you know what that means? If we are talking about the vulnerable, they are even more vulnerable, but they have 50% less funding. I cannot take them to a hostel, sorry ... There is a need to equalize these resources [between staff and adult learners in mobility], because there is no logic here. (Participant FS-4)



CASE STUDY: ORGANISATION 5

Date: 10. 10. 2023

Interview plan:

9.40 – 10.00: Interview with Erasmus+ coordinator

10.00 – 12.00: Focus group with director, Erasmus+ coordinator, and 3 professional staff with experience from Erasmus+ programme.

Recording: audio

Consent: oral

Portrait of the organisation: NGO is situated in municipality with around 13.000 inhabitants. Its mission is to empower vulnerable social groups in Slovenia and the wider region; to develop educational, cultural and artistic programmes and other activities that foster a responsible, tolerant and creative society. The NGO achieves its objectives through educational activities: conferences, seminars, educational workshops, expert debates and consultations, the preparation of professional and literary materials. Its activities also include networking with related institutions, cooperation with national and international organisations in the field of culture, art and education. Main topics covered by the NGO are: promoting intercultural cooperation and a sense of belonging to the community and preventing radicalisation in society; empowering members of vulnerable social groups through non-formal education in the fields of culture, arts and social sciences, with the aim of increasing knowledge and skills in these fields and improving the quality of relations between people of different cultures and identities; developing diverse and accessible cultural and artistic events.

Target groups: youth, adults, different generations (first, second, third) of migrants from ex-Yugoslavia

Target groups in Erasmus+ projects: young adults, migrants, older women, minority groups of different generations

Erasmus+ experience: Involved in 8 Erasmus+ projects dealing with, among others: sustainable development and sustainable lifestyle, motivation of minority



groups for participation in LLL, cultural heritage and social inclusion of minorities in their communities.

Other project experience: cooperation in various national projects (e.g., Cultural projects in the field of different minority ethnic communities and immigrants in the Republic of Slovenia), projects supported by European Social Funds (e.g., Cultural with ECO project; Entry for participants in the 7D online classroom), Europe for Citizens Programme (e.g., Minority stories).

Highlights:

Participants of focus group are convinced that participation in Erasmus+ brings a range of positive effects: learning good practices, professional and personal development of staff, better self-confidence of the staff, establishing social networks and international partnerships, organisational growth and development, strengthening interpersonal relationships among coworkers. Staff involved in Erasmus+ also learn to be tolerant and strengthen intercultural competences.

In the context of participation in Erasmus+, organisation developed following products/outputs: curricula, training modules, language courses; handbooks/guidelines; website; learning materials for adult learners; publications; Webinars and 'blended learning' courses; and films, or instruction videos.

The most important effect and/or impact of participation in Erasmus+ is that the programme enables: international involvement and networking of the organisation, methodological improvement and institutional development of organisation, better self-confidence of organisation (e.g., being comparable with other organisations abroad), reflection of professional work at home organisation.

According to the belief of participants of focus group, also other effects/impact of participating in Erasmus+, that were unplanned effects, occurred, such as: solidarity and intergenerational cooperation between participants (participants maintain contacts through Viber group communication long time after mobility is over); joint initiatives between similar organisations dealing with minority groups (e.g., Minority safe pack initiative); greater visibility and improving the situation of minority groups in Slovenia.

Main success factors for Erasmus+ are: good management of the project, knowledgeable partners involved in the project, identification of partners with project aims, and clearly set target group (of adults) project is aiming at.



Focus group quotes extracts pointing out different important effects of Erasmus+:

At the level of the organisation, the most important impact of Erasmus+ would be its international dimension ... that we always have a network we can turn to and deliver quality projects. (Participant FG-5)

Erasmus+ gives us much needed confidence ... when you go to a good organisation and see that they are doing the same as you, only systemically stronger. You realise that you are not bad, but that you still have room for improvement ... besides, of course, all the knowledge we brought, the examples of good practice (from online classrooms to specific working methodologies) ... we also grew a lot systemically. (Participant FG-5)

Erasmus+ enables institutional empowerment, in terms of infrastructure, staffing, facilities, tools we create ... improving the management capacity of the organisation, better access not only to the target base [group] but also to decision makers, stakeholders, experts, other organisations. (Participant FG-5) For me, exchanges [mobility] and international cooperation mean that you not only see how well others are doing, but that you also have the opportunity to look back at yourself ... it gives you the opportunity to critically reflect [on your own work]. (Participant FG-5)

One of the effects of the Erasmus programme [that is expected in medium term] is an improvement in the situation of minority groups in Slovenia at various levels... the legislative aspect ... the financial aspect ... The improvement of the status of minority groups itself is addressed in Erasmus projects and also comes[out] at national level. (Participant FG-5)

Erasmus strengthens ties between partners, creating long-term good relations with international partners. (Participant FG-5)

At the end, when you see these people [participants] happy ... that's fantastic. You have the feeling that you are giving something back to society. (Participant FG-5)

The Erasmus programme helps to strengthen the NGO sector, which generally works very well in Slovenia, and the more programmes like this that support and finance the NGO sector, give it a chance, the better. Then we will have a better society, which I think has been shown many times with the NGO sector in Slovenia, that it is more responsive and critical (whether it is floods, or changes of power, or initiatives). In a broader sense, I think it is good that Erasmus supports such organisations. (Participant FG-5)