



INCLUSION EDUCATION



RESEARCH ON THE NEEDS OF BENEFICIARIES
ON THE TOPIC OF INCLUSION AND
DIVERSITY IN THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

FINAL
REPORT

RESEARCH ON THE NEEDS
OF BENEFICIARIES ON
THE TOPIC OF INCLUSION
AND DIVERSITY IN THE
ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

FINAL
REPORT

Contractor:

3s research laboratory - Forschungsverein
Wiedner Hauptstrasse 18
1040 Wien
Austria

Contact Person:

Monika Auzinger
Phone: +43 1 585 09 15-12
E-mail: monika.auzinger@3s.co.at
www.3s.co.at

Publisher: Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes

Editing and proofreading (in alphabetical order):

Tajana Krstonošić, Josip Luša, Ljubica Petrović
Baronica

Authors (in alphabetical order):

Monika Auzinger, Zsuzsanna Zarka, with
contributions from Verena DiChristin

Illustrations: Kiosk studio, SALTO

ISBN number: 978-953-8160-23-3

Vienna, May 6, 2024



Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.





Table of Contents



1 Introduction and background	5
1.1 Introduction and objective of the assignment	5
1.2 Methodology	6
1.2.1 Survey of Erasmus+ beneficiaries	6
1.2.2 Online focus groups	7
2 Findings from the research	8
2.1 Respondents' profile	8
2.2 Respondents' experience with inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+	11
2.3 Key challenges experienced by beneficiaries	20
2.4 Key challenges experienced by participants with fewer opportunities	24
2.5 Topics, formats and activities for support	28
3 Conclusions and recommendations	31
List of abbreviations used	35
Annex	36
Survey data - additional tables and figures	40
Focus groups	44



Figures



Figure 1	Respondents' profile: I am responding to this survey in my role as (a)...	6
Figure 2	My organisation/institution can be best described as (a)...	8
Figure 3	In which of the following fields is your organisation primarily active?	9
Figure 4	How many staff members does your organisation currently have?	9
Figure 5	Organisation's role	10
Figure 6	Respondents' experience with the Erasmus+ Programme	10
Figure 7	Most recent funding period in which the organisation has involved participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects	11
Figure 8	Barriers that Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants face	12
Figure 9	Barriers that Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants face – by education sector	12
Figure 10	Experience in identifying/reaching out to participants with fewer opportunities	13
Figure 11	Experience in identifying and collaborating with KA1 mobility partners	14
Figure 12	View on organisational capacity and expertise to support mobility of participants with fewer opportunities	14
Figure 13	Experience with Erasmus+ financial mechanisms	15
Figure 14	View on Erasmus+ financial mechanisms to support inclusion and diversity	15
Figure 15	View on administrative requirements to request Erasmus+ funding	16
Figure 16	View on formats and activities for the promotion of inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+	16
Figure 17	View on support offered by National Agencies at application stage	17
Figure 18	View on support offered by National Agencies at implementation stage	17
Figure 19	View on impact of Covid-19 on the ability to involve participants with fewer opportunities	18
Figure 20	Perception of involvement of participants with fewer opportunity as a positive experience	18
Figure 21	Perception of Erasmus+ involvement as a positive experience for participants	19
Figure 22	Intention to continue to involve participants with fewer opportunities in KA1 mobility	19
Figure 23	Existence of an internal strategy or policy covering inclusion and diversity	20
Figure 24	Key challenges experienced by beneficiaries	20
Figure 25	Ten most frequent challenges experienced by beneficiaries	24
Figure 26	Ten most frequent challenges faced by KA1 mobility participants with fewer opportunities	27
Figure 27	Respondents' interest in suggested support topics	28
Figure 28	Breakdown of survey responses by education sector(s) covered and by country	41
Figure 29	Organisation's role(s) in Erasmus+ KA1 learning mobility	41
Figure 30	Organisation's role in Erasmus+ KA1 learning mobility – by country	42
Figure 31	Respondents' experience with the Erasmus+ Programme – by country	42
Figure 32	Existence of an internal strategy or policy covering inclusion and diversity – by organisation type	43



Table



Table 1	Survey responses by country	40
----------------	-----------------------------	----

1

Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction and objective of the assignment

This report analyses and summarises the findings from research on the needs of beneficiaries on the topic of inclusion and diversity (I&D) in the Erasmus+ Programme.

This research was commissioned by the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP), which has been appointed as SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion and Diversity in Education and Training (SALTO ID ET).¹

SALTO ID ET offers a range of resources and services to help National Agencies in implementation of the Erasmus+ programme, as well as individuals, organisations and institutions participate in Erasmus+ in an inclusive way. This includes guidance on how to design projects and information on best practices for promoting inclusion. The services provided seek to support the mission of the Programme, which is that everyone should have the opportunity to participate and benefit from Erasmus+, regardless of their background or circumstances.

The objective of this research is to provide valuable insights for SALTO ID ET to further develop and tailor their offer, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of beneficiaries and the challenges they face when involving participants with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+ Programme, specifically for Key Action 1 mobility (KA1) in the fields of school education (SCH), vocational education and training (VET), higher education (HED) and adult education (ADU).



¹ <https://saltoinclusion.eu>

1.2 Methodology

The methodology for this research followed a multi-method approach that included desk research, an online survey among beneficiaries on the topic of I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme and online focus groups with representatives from various sectors and countries. Following data collection, the findings were analysed and the present report on the needs, challenges and support requirements of beneficiaries on the topic of I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme was delivered.

1.2.1 Survey of Erasmus+ beneficiaries

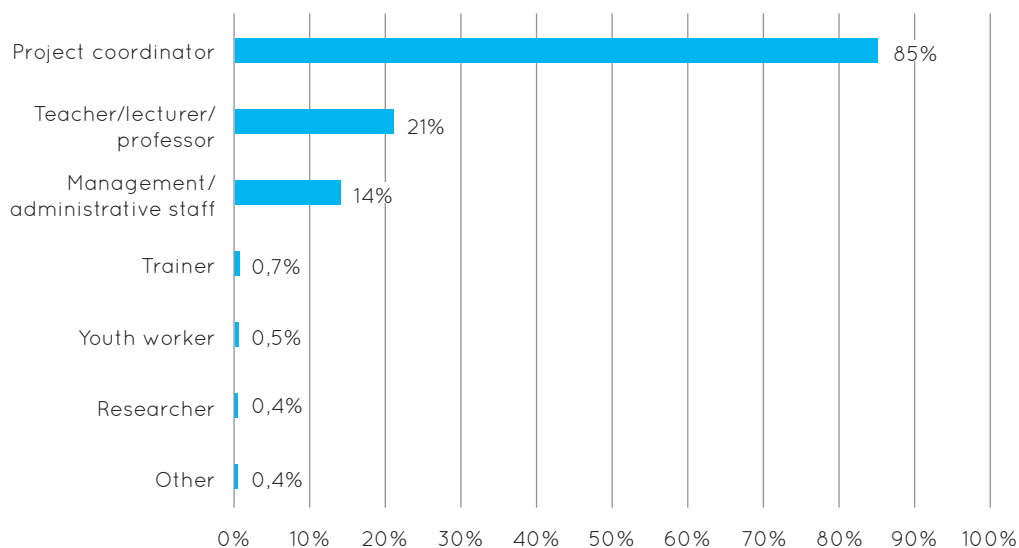
The survey, carried out online through the EU Survey tool, was addressed to representatives of beneficiary organisations that have been involved in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects that included the participation of participants with fewer opportunities. The survey included 16 questions, with a mix of open and multiple-choice questions, and took respondents around ten minutes to complete.

The survey, which ran between November 6, 2023 and December 10, 2023, gathered 1325 valid responses from 16 countries (see Table 1 in the annex). While the survey questionnaire was generally addressed to organisations with prior experience in involving participants with fewer opportunities to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme, a small share of respondents indicated that they had no such

prior experience. These respondents were presented with a shortened questionnaire that did not include any questions on their experience with I&D in Erasmus+. As a result, the sample sizes in the analyses presented in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 are slightly smaller, as they do not include data from respondents with no prior experience.

Regarding the composition of respondent profiles, 85% of respondents replied in their role as project coordinators within their organisations. About 20% of respondents replied as teacher/lecturer/professor, while approximately 14% of respondents replied as management or administrative staff. In addition, a small number of respondents replied as trainers, youth workers, researchers or in another capacity.

Figure 1 | Respondents' profile: I am responding to this survey in my role as (a)...



Source: Survey, n = 1325 responses from 16 countries; multiple responses allowed.

1.2.2 Online focus groups

Building on the findings and preliminary results from the online survey, three online focus groups were held, the first on December 15, 2023, the second on December 18, 2023 and a third on March 1, 2024.² In total, 15 representatives participated in the focus groups, representing seven countries (Croatia, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) and three educational sectors (VET, SCH and HED).

The key objective of the focus groups was to gain additional insights into the challenges and support needs of beneficiary organisations that characterise their daily practice when promoting I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme.



² A focus group on adult education was scheduled for December 19, but was not held as registered participants eventually did not join. A focus group on higher education was initially scheduled for December 13, but was eventually postponed to March 1, 2024.

2

Findings from the research

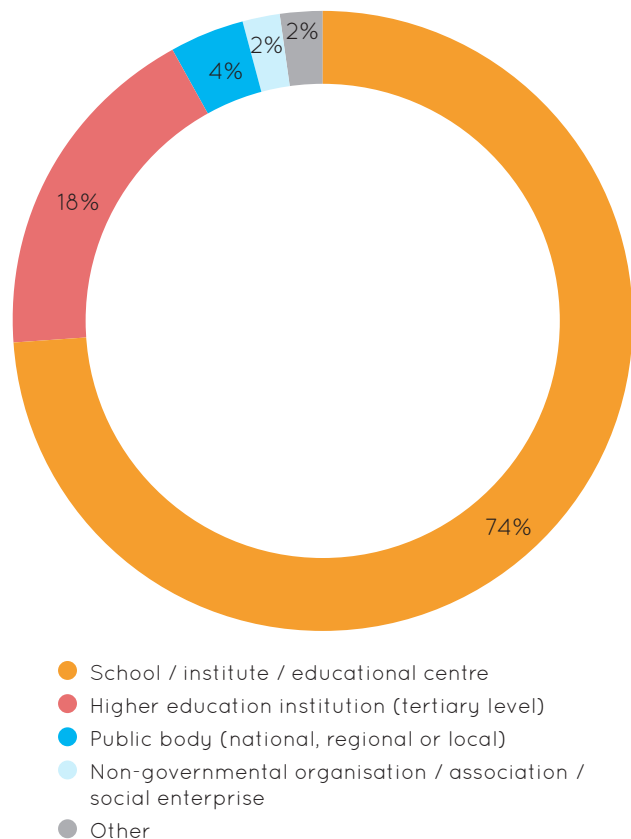
This chapter presents the findings from the data collection, including desk research, the conducted survey among Erasmus+ beneficiaries and the online focus groups held.

2.1 Respondents' profile

To build a profile of the respondents and the beneficiary organisations they represent, the survey contained key background information questions about the type of organisations, the country where they are based, their fields of activity and the size of the organisation. Additionally, the survey also asked respondents to identify the capacity in which the organisation currently participates in the Erasmus+ KA1 Learning Mobility of Individuals, along with the year(s) of their participation. This information not only provides an overview of the profile of the respondents, but also makes it possible to analyse any differences in relation to the core questions of the study. For example, can we identify differences between individual countries, educational sectors or types of institution with regard to experiences and challenges with I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme?

Figure 2 provides details on the organisation types represented by respondents, with over 70% of respondents from a school/institute or educational centre. The second largest group was higher education institutions with 18% of respondents, while a smaller number of respondents represented other types of organisations, such as public bodies, non-governmental organisations, SMEs or social partners of varying backgrounds.

Figure 2 | My organisation/institution can be best described as (a)...



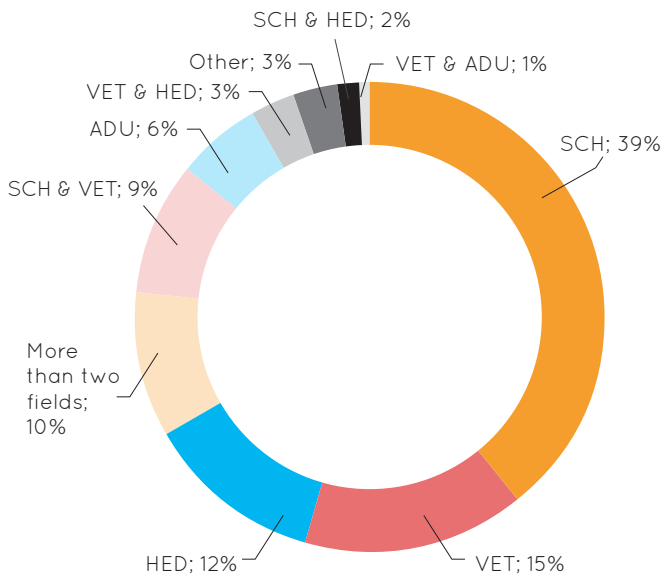
Source: Survey, n = 1325 responses from 16 countries.

A follow-up question asked respondents to identify the prime fields of activity for their organisation. Respondents could tick more than one box, if relevant for their organisation's profile.

Figure 3 below represents the variations in responses, with the majority of respondents representing one field - 39% of respondents representing SCH, 15% VET and 12% HED. Ten percent of respondents represented an organisation active in more than two fields, while organisations active in two fields were represented by smaller number of respondents (regardless whether that was for SCH & VET, VET & HED, SCH & HED or VET & ADU).



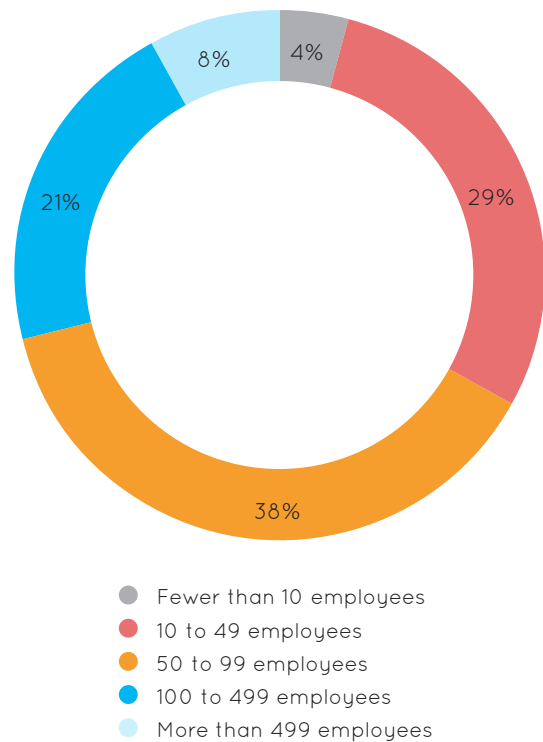
Figure 3 | In which of the following fields is your organisation primarily active?



Source: Survey. n = 1325 responses from 16 countries; multiple responses allowed. SCH = school education; VET = vocational education and training; HED = higher education; ADU = adult education.

Figure 4 below provides additional insights regarding the size of the beneficiary organisations. In this case, 38% of respondents replied on behalf of an organisation with 50 to 99 staff members, with a further 29% representing smaller organisations with 10 to 49 staff members and 21% with 100 to 499 staff members. Considering the overall spread, almost three quarters of responses came from organisations with less than 100 staff members (72%), with a smaller proportion representing large organisations with more than a hundred members of staff.

Figure 4 | How many staff members does your organisation currently have?



Source: Survey. n = 1325 responses from 16 countries.

Considering the participation profile of beneficiary organisations, it is worth noting that 66% of the respondents represented sending organisations, 60% participated as project coordinators, 41% were receiving organisations and 28% have experience as project partners (with multiple responses allowed). This spread indicates that there are more sending organisations represented among the respondents than there are receiving ones and, similarly, more respondents indicated experience as project coordinators than project partners. A small number of responses came

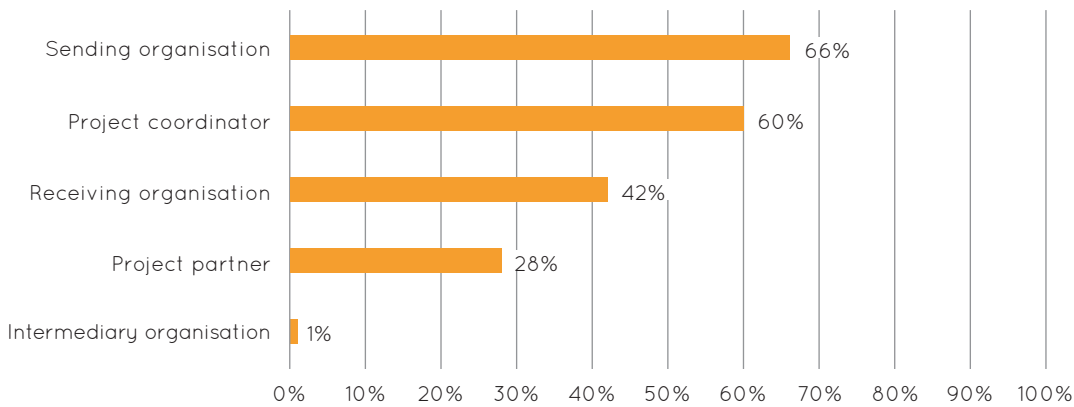
from respondents representing organisations that have no KA1 mobility experience as yet – these responses were not considered in the analysis of this question.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate in which year(s) they (have) participated in the Erasmus+ Programme. This question sought to establish the years of experience beneficiary organisations of the respondents have with involving participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ KA1 mobilities.

Regarding the participation year(s) of beneficiary organisations in the Erasmus+ Programme, the figure below provides

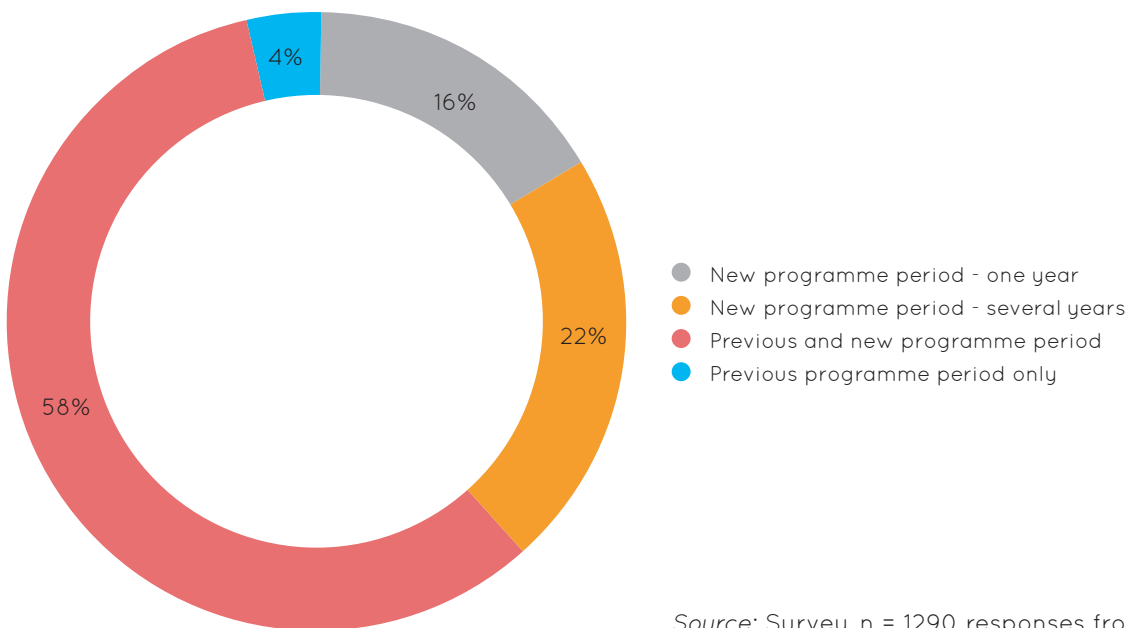
the insights that over 56% of respondents represent organisations that participated in both the previous and the new programme period.³ Over 20% of beneficiary organisations have been participating for several years in the new programme period, with over 15% of respondents representing beneficiary organisations that are new to the programme. A small number of respondents represent organisations that participated in the previous programme period only. To conclude, it can be summarised that a clear majority of respondents have several years of experience in the Erasmus+ Programme.

Figure 5 | Organisation's role



Source: Survey. n = 1284 responses from 16 countries; multiple responses allowed.

Figure 6 | Respondents' experience with the Erasmus+ Programme



Source: Survey. n = 1290 responses from 16 countries.

³ The previous Erasmus+ Programme period refers to the period from 2014 to 2020. The current programme period refers to the funding cycle from 2021 to 2027.



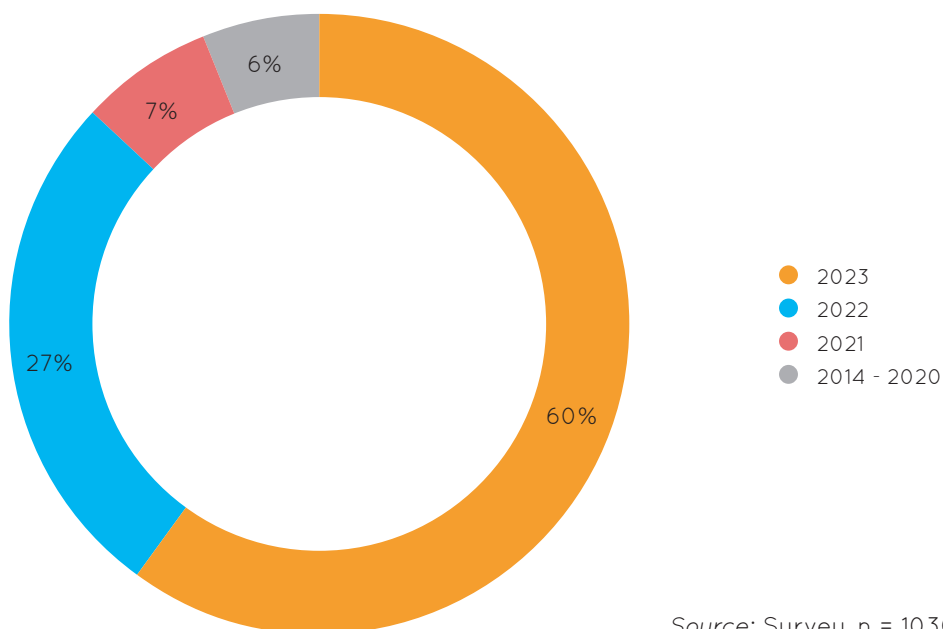
2.2 Respondents' experience with inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+

The next section of the survey sought to gain more insights into respondents' and their organisations' most recent experience with I&D in the Erasmus+ programme. The questions in this section were multiple-choice questions and also included a Likert scale grid question with six available options.⁴

For the questions in this entire section, respondents were asked to report on their most recent experience with I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme. As the figure below indicates, the large majority of respondents have very recent experience in the programme, with almost 90% having participated in the programme in the past two years (2022 or 2023).

Another 20% of respondents selected that their organisation has not yet involved participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility. These responses were not considered in the analysis of this question, as the questionnaire primarily addressed respondents with prior experience in this field.⁵

Figure 7 | Most recent funding period in which the organisation has involved participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects



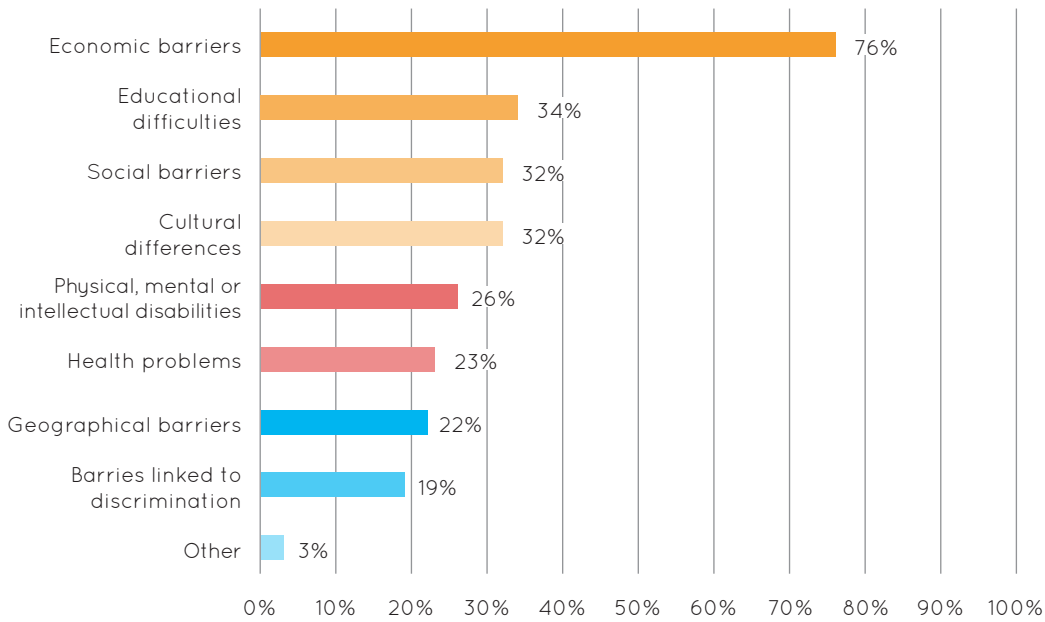
Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

⁴ Strongly agree – agree – neither agree or disagree – disagree – strongly disagree – do not know/cannot say

⁵ There are two possible explanations for this significant share of respondents who had not yet involved participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility. First, for some respondents, 2023 was the first year in which they had been involved in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility, which means their projects had started but mobility action had not started by the time the survey was distributed. Second, it is possible that some selection bias occurred in distributing the survey at national level, i.e. in some cases the questionnaire might have been circulated to recipients with no prior experience in involving participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+.

The survey then moved on to build an understanding of the main barriers that such mobility participants face.

Figure 8 | Barriers that Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants face

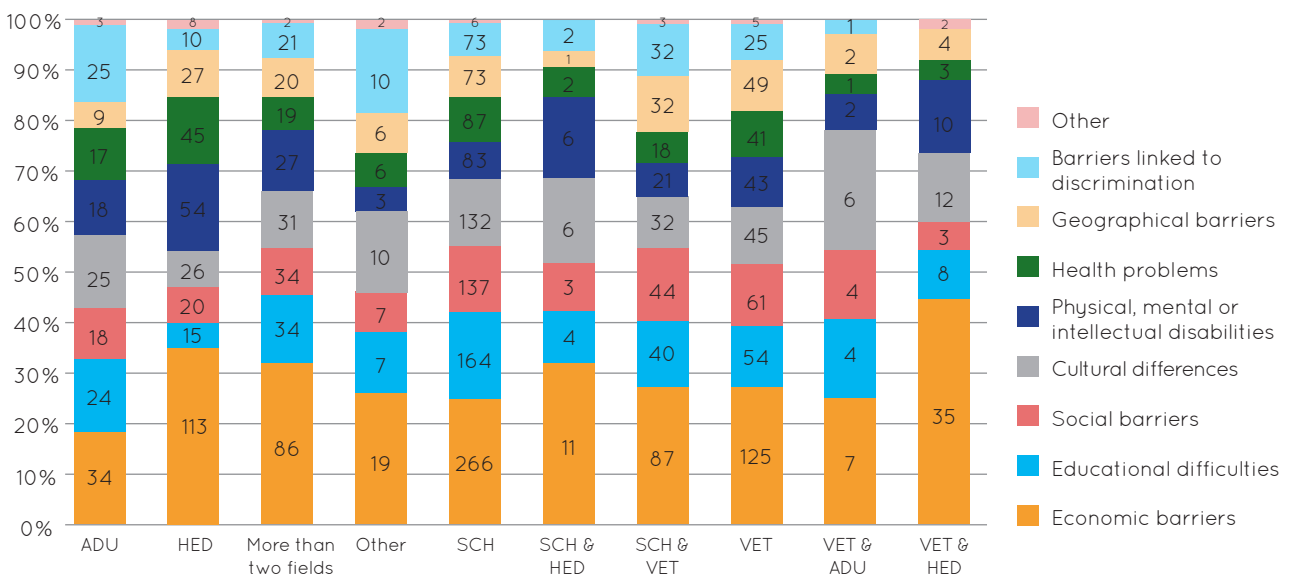


Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries; multiple responses allowed.

As the figure illustrates, an overwhelming majority of respondents (76%) chose economic barriers. Educational difficulties (e.g. addressing NEETs), social barriers and cultural differences (e.g. linguistic adaption difficulties), along with physical or mental disabilities and health problems, follow as top barriers for participants. When analysing the responses based on the education sector(s) in which the respondents are active, it appears

that while economic barriers are still present, physical, mental or intellectual disabilities are more represented in HED than in the other sectors. It is worth noting that the barriers show a more even spread for ADU and also in VET. Additionally, in VET, while the economic is still the leading barrier, other difficulties appear somewhat more evenly spread in the responses.

Figure 9 | Barriers that Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants face - by education sector



Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries. Bars show number of mentions, multiple responses allowed.

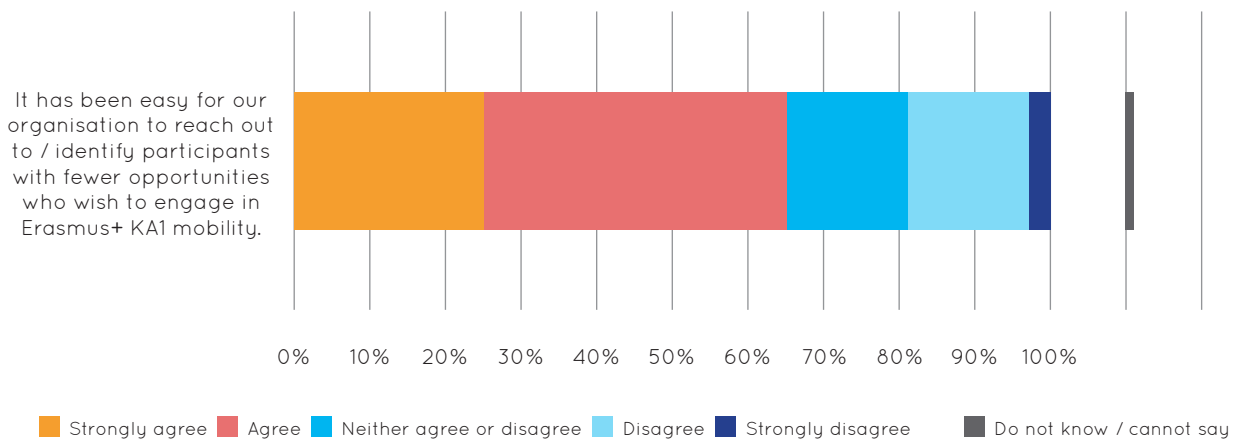


Beneficiaries' experience with I&D in Erasmus+ was in particular surveyed through a six-point Likert scale grid questionnaire, where respondents were asked to select an option that best represented their views for 13 statements. The Likert scale options were *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither agree or disagree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree* and *do not know/cannot say*. In the following figures, the shares of respondents selecting 'do not know/cannot say' are presented separately from the other categories. For all but one category, this share is below 5% of responses.

Only for the question on adverse impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, a larger share (14%) of respondents indicated that they cannot or do not know how to respond to this question. When analysing the data across countries and across education sectors overall, variations are minor, i.e. respondents' perceptions and opinions on these aspects are largely similar, independent of which country they come from or which education sector they cover. In a few cases, variations in the response pattern across countries could be identified – these are referred to in the respective paragraphs.



Figure 10 | Experience in identifying/reaching out to participants with fewer opportunities



Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

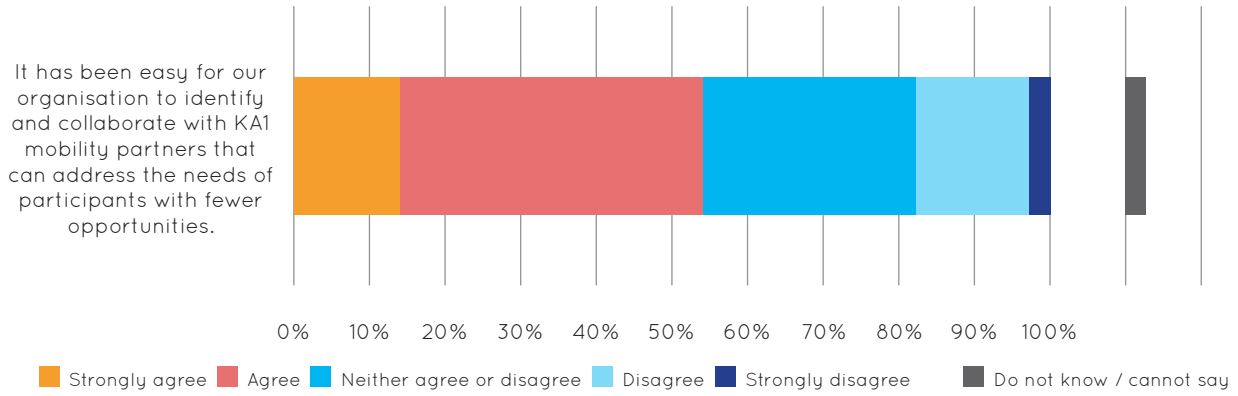
About two-thirds of respondents indicated they strongly agreed or agreed that it has been easy for their organisation to reach out to or identify participants with fewer opportunities who wish to engage in an Erasmus+ KA1 mobility. When analysing the data across countries, the share is significantly lower for respondents from Portugal and Sweden, where only about half of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

Interestingly, this is somewhat in contrast with responses to one of the open questions in the survey where one of the key challenges respondents named as experienced by beneficiaries was related to identifying eligible participants (see section 2.3 below). Similarly, in the next section of the survey addressing possible support topics, 43% of respondents picked outreach to participants with fewer opportunities (see section 2.5 below).





Figure 11 | Experience in identifying and collaborating with KA1 mobility partners



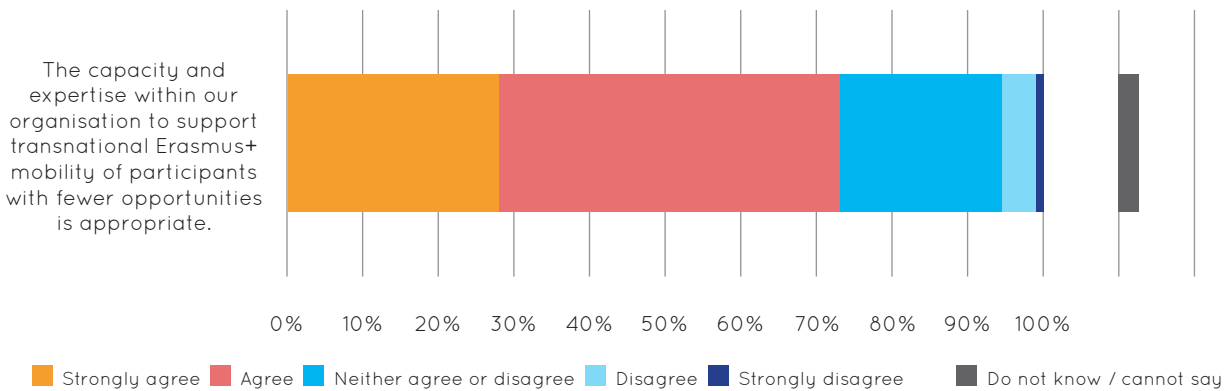
Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

The question of identifying mobility partners shows slightly more variation in answers, with 14% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing that this has been ‘easy.’ It is also worth noting that 28% of respondents did not commit to either agreeing or disagreeing and about 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (5% of respondents chose ‘do not know’). These shares are significantly lower in the case of Portugal, where only 28% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, indicating that the identification of mobility partners could be more of an issue there.

Contrasting responses from this question with insights from elsewhere in the survey and also from focus groups, a more nuanced picture emerges. Responses to the open questions (see section 2.3 below) indicated finding appropriate partners for a mobility programme was a challenge. This was reinforced by responses to the open question on support topics (see section 2.5 below), where 52% of respondents chose partner finding a support topic of interest. These insights were further reaffirmed by focus groups, where participants were eager to see partner matching mechanisms and supports as an area of future development.



Figure 12 | View on organisational capacity and expertise to support mobility of participants with fewer opportunities



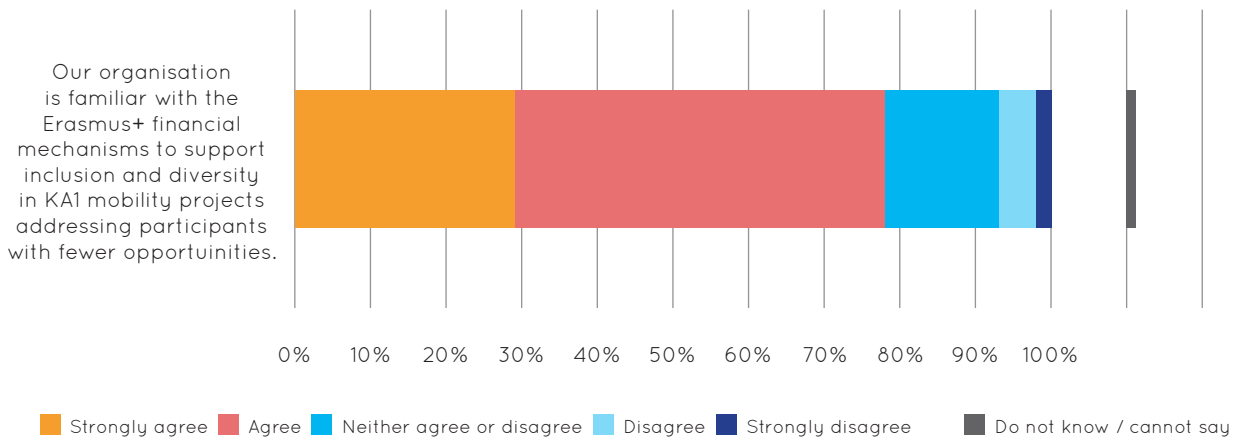
Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

In a similar pattern, 45% of respondents selected agree and 28% of respondents selected strongly agree that their organisation has appropriate capacity and expertise to support transnational mobilities for participants with fewer opportunities. However, further in the survey, when selecting support topics of interest, 49% of respondents

selected ‘training and exchange of good practice,’ indicating that they are nevertheless eager to enhance organisational knowledge and expertise. For Hungary and Portugal, smaller shares of agreement can be identified, indicating that organisational capacity and expertise might be perceived as a more significant barrier.



Figure 13 | Experience with Erasmus+ financial mechanisms

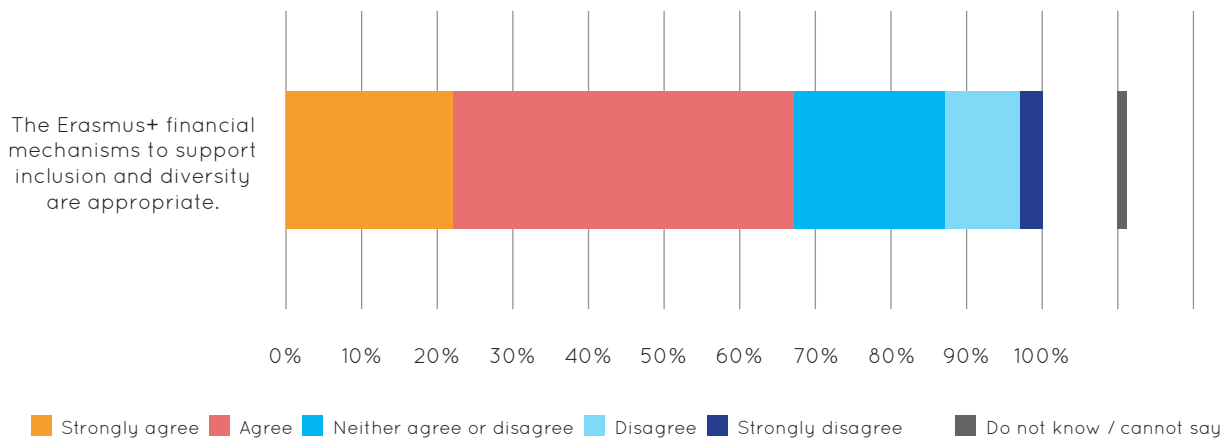


Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

The figure above indicates good levels of familiarity with Erasmus+ financial mechanisms, with 78% of all respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.



Figure 14 | View on Erasmus+ financial mechanisms to support inclusion and diversity



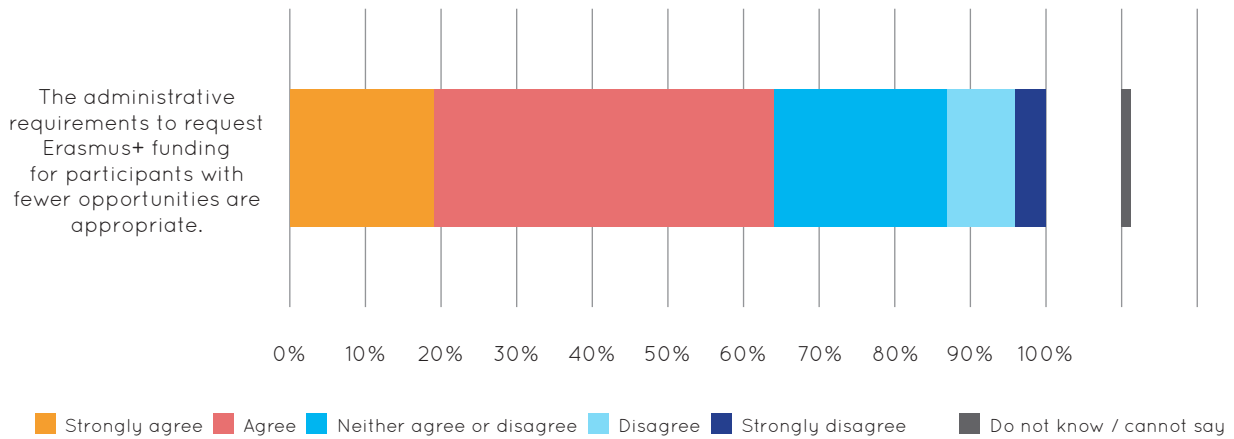
Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

Regarding the financial mechanisms to support I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme, 67% of all respondents strongly agree or agree that they are appropriate, with 20% opting for neither agree or disagree. A significant variation can be observed for Portugal, where only 40% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed.

Comparing responses here with insights from the open questions, it is worth noting that financial supports there were identified by 50% of respondents as a topic of interest. Focus group insights underline a potentially emerging view that while financial mechanisms are indeed appropriate, beneficiaries feel that not all their expenses have coverage.



Figure 15 | View on administrative requirements to request Erasmus+ funding



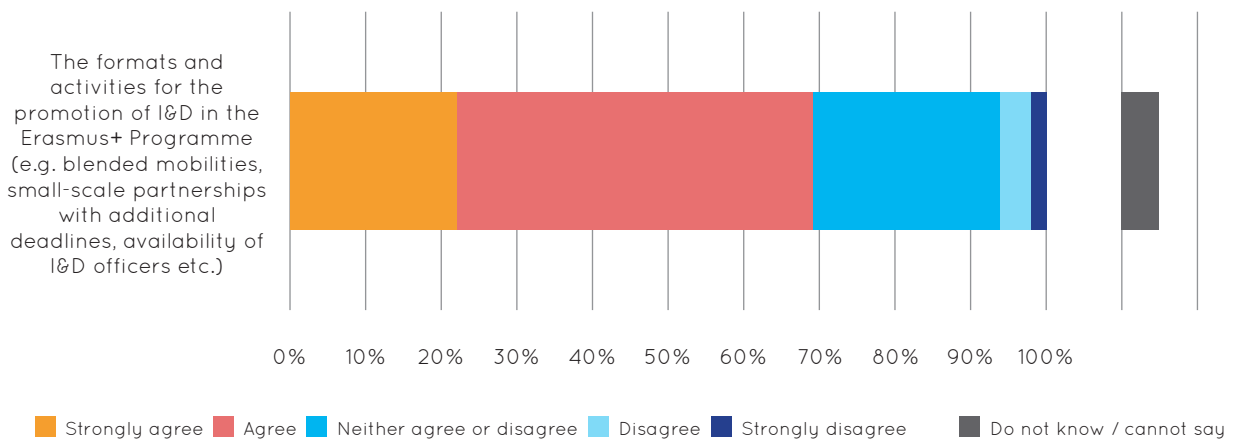
Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

Regarding the administrative requirements to request Erasmus+ funding for participants with fewer opportunities, 64% of respondents selected strongly agree (19%) or agree (45%). A notable 22% of respondents opted for neither agree or disagree, while 12% of

respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. For Portugal and Sweden these shares are somewhat lower, with less than half of the respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement.



Figure 16 | View on formats and activities for the promotion of inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+



Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

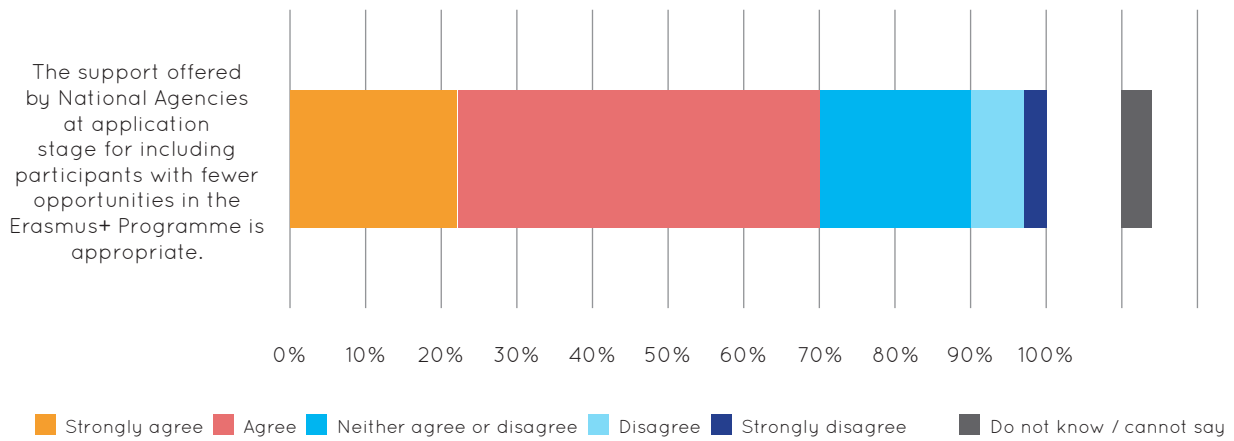
Considering the formats and activities for the promotion of I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme (e.g. blended mobilities, small-scale partnerships with additional deadlines, availability of I&D officers etc.), two-thirds of respondents (69%) agree or strongly agree with the statement. The rest of the respondents tended to opt for neither agree or disagree, with only 6% selecting disagree or strongly disagree, and 5% indicating 'do not know.'

On the topic of appropriate support received from National Agencies at application stage, two-thirds of respondents (69%) indicated they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. While 19% of respondents opted for neither agree or disagree, 10% of respondents felt they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.





Figure 17 | View on support offered by National Agencies at application stage



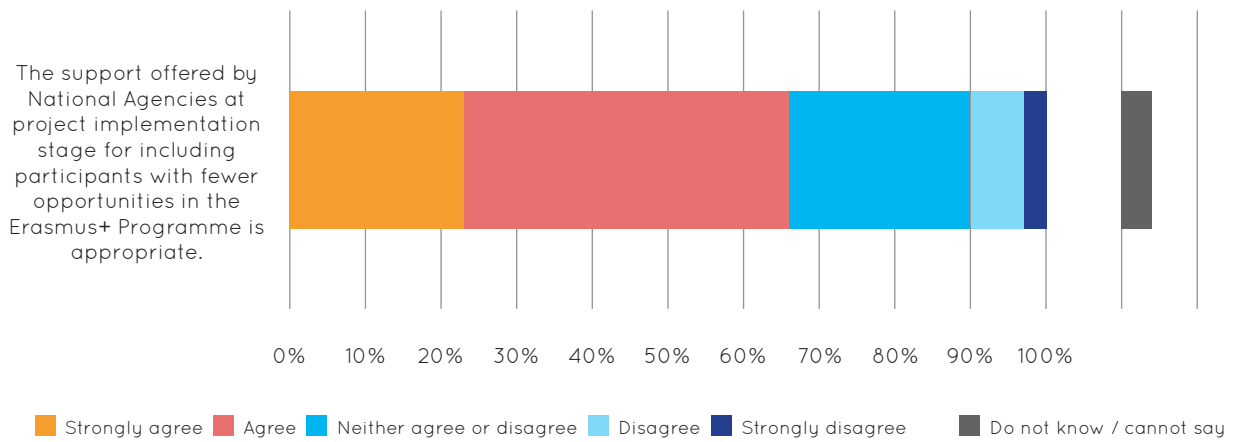
Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

Comparing these results with the next question on National Agency support at the implementation stage, a very similar view emerges – 66% strongly agree or agree, 21% neither agree or disagree, 10% disagree or strongly disagree, while 4% of respondents

selected ‘do not know.’ Results from Portugal stand out on this particular statement, with only 32% strongly agreeing or agreeing.



Figure 18 | View on support offered by National Agencies at implementation stage



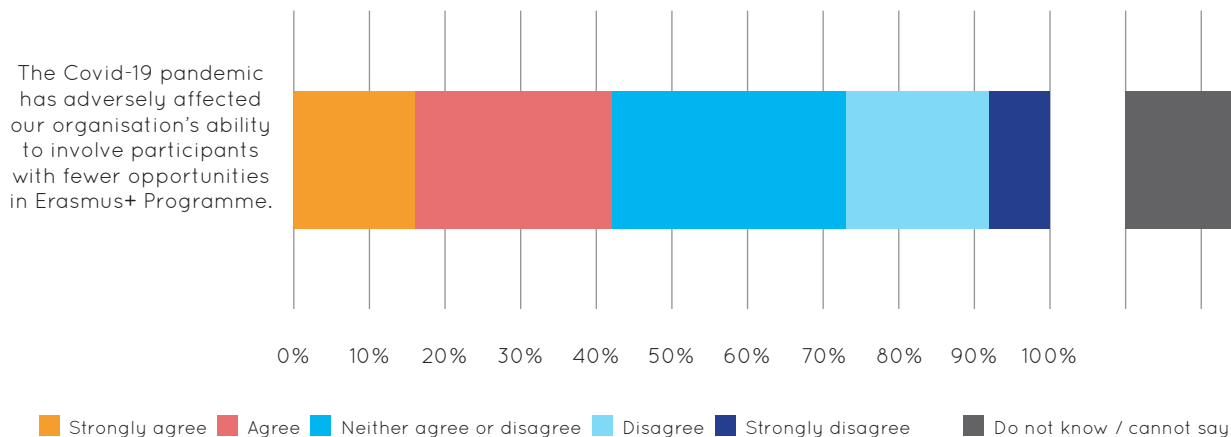
Source: Survey, n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

Considering the Covid-19 question regarding the global pandemic adversely affecting beneficiary organisation’s ability to involve participants with fewer opportunities, there was a much wider spread in the responses.

This included, as indicated above, a significant share of respondents who indicated that they could not say/did not know how to answer this question (20%), which could not be observed for any of the other questions.



Figure 19 | View on impact of Covid-19 on the ability to involve participants with fewer opportunities



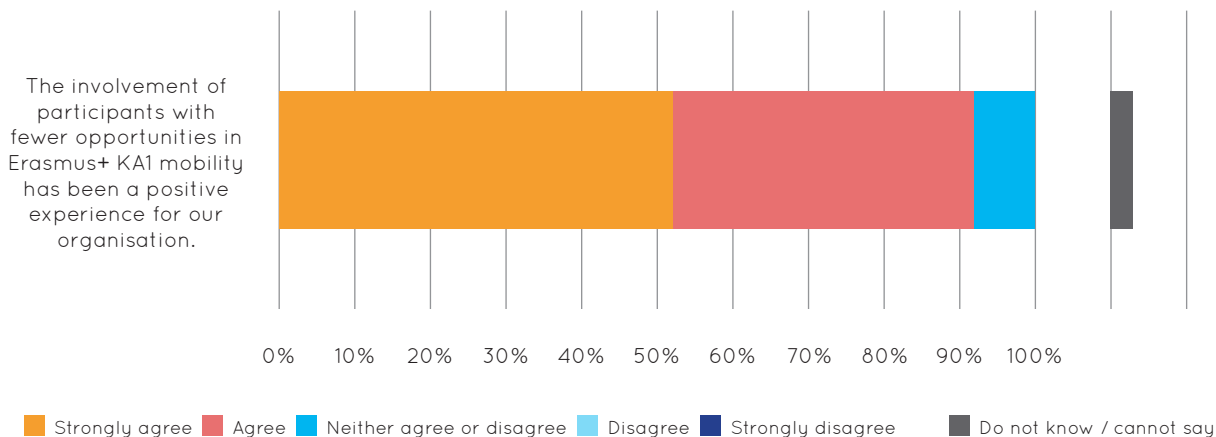
Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

Looking at the spread of responses in the figure above, 38% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, almost third of respondents (27%) neither agreed or disagreed, while 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A significant 14% opted for 'do not know.'

Considering how positive it has been for organisations to involve participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ mobilities, an overwhelming 90% of respondents chose strongly agree and agree with the statement.



Figure 20 | Perception of involvement of participants with fewer opportunity as a positive experience



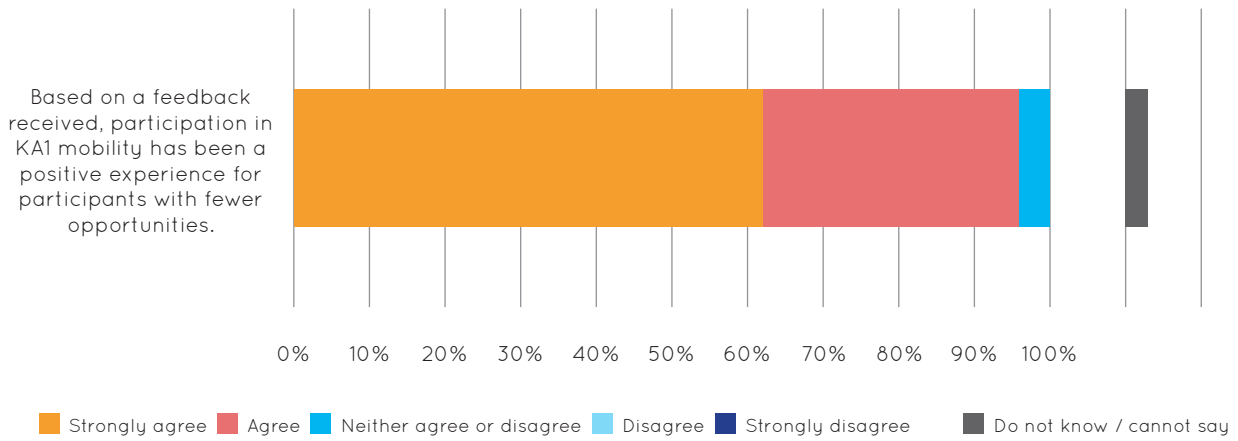
Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

Looking at the picture from the participants' point of view, feedback indicates a similarly positive overall experience. In this case, 92% of the respondents selected strongly agree or agree with the statement of whether KA1 mobility has been a positive experience for participants with fewer opportunities from their organisation, with very few

responses recorded for either disagree or strongly disagree. There are no identified variations across countries, suggesting that the involvement of participants with fewer opportunities is perceived as a universally positive experience for organisations across countries.



Figure 21 | Perception of Erasmus+ involvement as a positive experience for participants



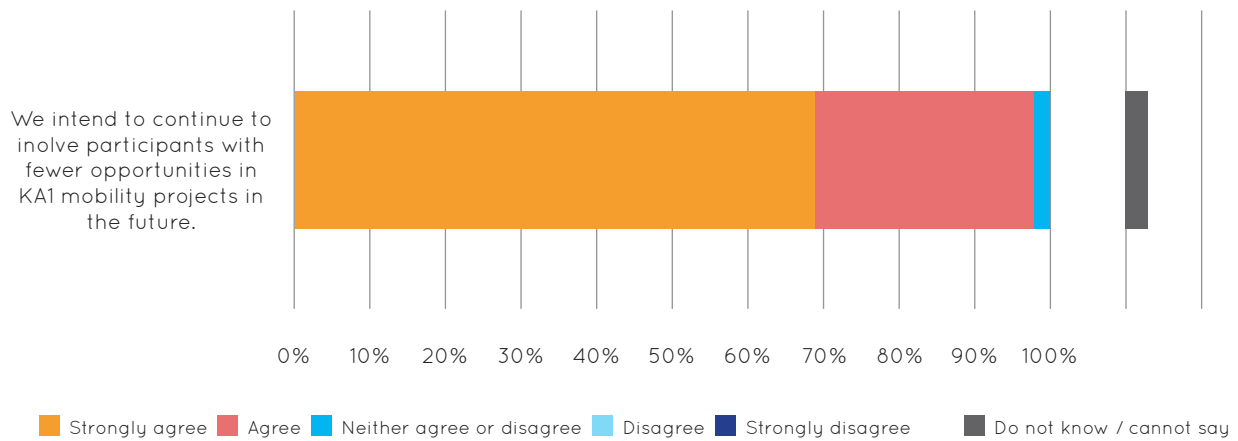
Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

Putting these two perspectives together, it is not surprising that 98% of respondents indicated for the final question that their organisation intends to continue involving participants with fewer opportunities in KA1 mobilities. Similar to the previous question, there were no responses recorded for disagree or strongly disagree here either.

There are no identified variations across countries, suggesting that the involvement of participants with fewer opportunities is perceived as a universally positive experience for participants across countries.



Figure 22 | Intention to continue to involve participants with fewer opportunities in KA1 mobility

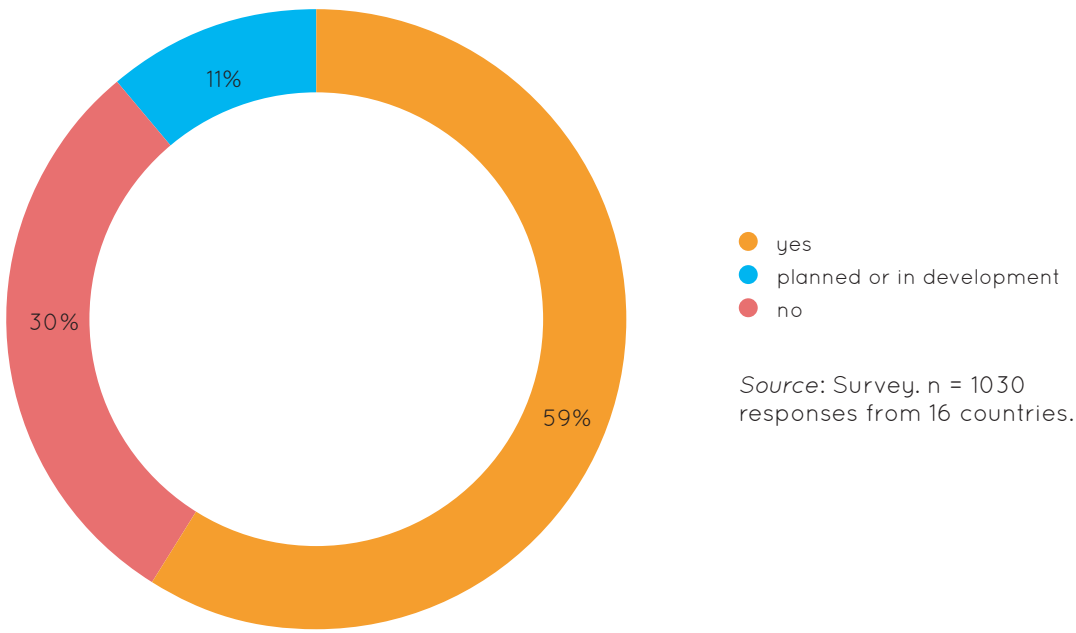


Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries.

The final question of the section sought to identify whether respondents' institutions have an internal strategy or policy in place for I&D. The figure below indicates that almost two-thirds (69%) have a policy in place, with a further 29% having one planned or in development, with only a small number of respondents selecting no.

When reviewing the results based on the fields of the respondents' institutions, it appears that non-governmental organisations and public bodies are more likely to have no policy in place (see Figure 32 in the annex).

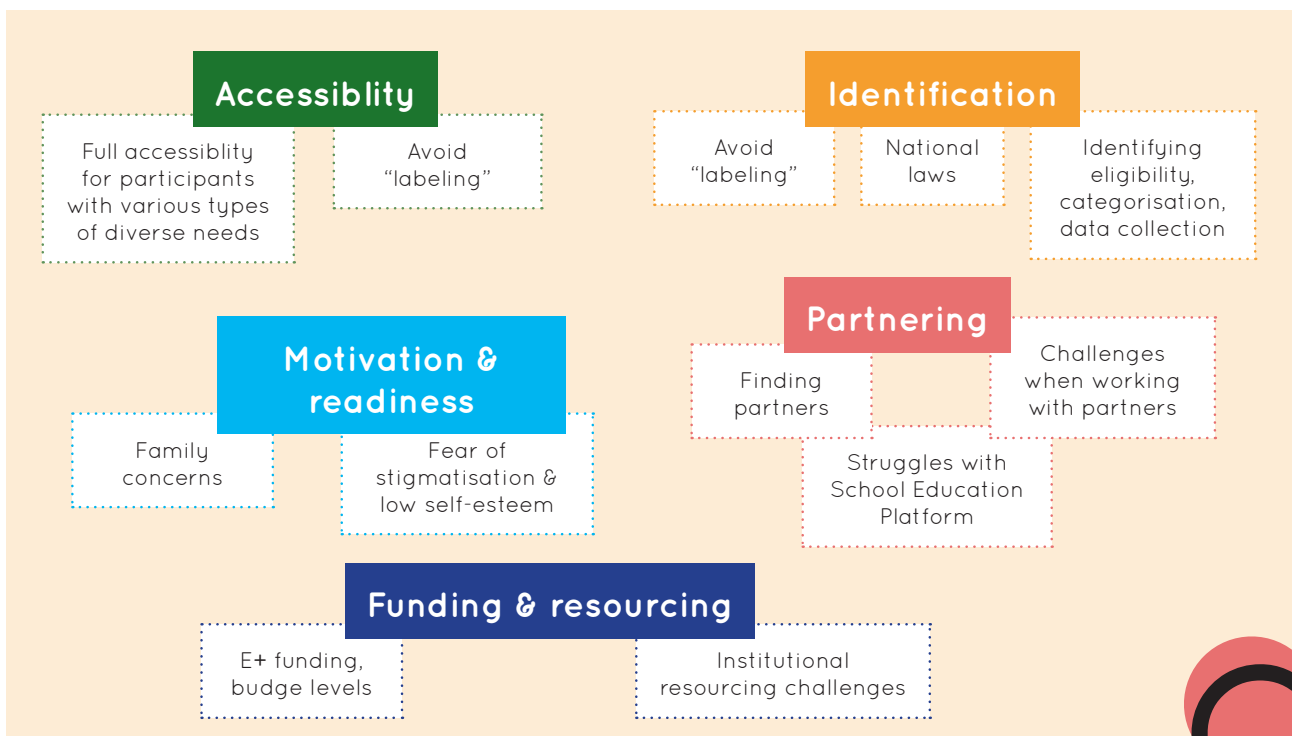
Figure 23 | Existence of an internal strategy or policy covering inclusion and diversity



2.3 Key challenges experienced by beneficiaries

The survey and focus groups sought to identify the key challenges that beneficiaries experience when dealing with topics of I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme. These can be grouped around five major themes, as illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 24 | Key challenges experienced by beneficiaries



Source: Own illustration based on results from the survey and focus groups.

The leading challenge beneficiaries identified is related to ensuring **full accessibility** for participants with all types of diverse backgrounds and needs. These range for example from socio-economic backgrounds through marginalised communities to various health, physical, and cognitive needs.

Beneficiaries noted that planning and participating in mobility for such participants is a complex challenge, depending on their background and needs. Supporting such participants requires continuous attention, sensitivity and careful approach from experienced and qualified staff, particularly when supporting mobility participants with various mental health, neuropsychiatric conditions and/or physical mobility difficulties. Focus group beneficiaries reaffirmed the challenges associated with having specifically trained staff available and having the funds to cover their travel with the mobility participants.

However, respondents were also keen to highlight the life-changing potential of an Erasmus+ mobility:

"Our students have different disabilities. For them [this] is the "opportunity of their lives" so we should have more mobility opportunities so all students can participate in Erasmus+. Maybe shorter programs for one week because the most important thing in this case is the life experience they have."

(Survey respondent no. 1075, from a school/institute/educational centre)

Amongst the various socio-cultural backgrounds and challenges in this category, a niche but potentially growing challenge was noted around the participation of **learners who come from non-EU backgrounds**. In the particular example highlighted in one of the focus groups, the students in question had permanent residency in the sending EU country yet still experienced entry being denied into the receiving country. The beneficiary suggested a practical approach to create an Erasmus+ ID card or a Certificate to enable such participants to prove that they are taking part in an Erasmus+ mobility, to facilitate exemption from immigration and/or national laws that would otherwise prevent them from entering the country.

Secondly, several respondents also expressed their frustration about the **complexity of target group categories**, their difficulties with interpreting the various descriptions and the resulting challenges with identifying eligibility for participation. Particularly, both survey respondents and focus group participants wish to see more precision regarding the definition of fewer opportunities for each of the categories. In their experience, difficulties arise when navigating what qualifies, and notably, what does not qualify as fewer opportunities. In addition, they would also welcome more clarity on the type of documentation required for proving eligibility under each of these categories. Adding further complexity, certain categories appear to have multiple interpretations across different countries, prompting respondents to call for a set of programme level criteria or guidelines to bridge such gaps.

"Severe health problems that need specific adaptations are the easiest examples [to identify], but when it comes to social and geographical barriers there is no common understanding shared by all participating countries [regarding] which conditions can be considered "fewer opportunities". The participating institutions need clearer protocols for identifying and communicating participants with fewer opportunities, at least for the financial grant purposes. The receiving European institutions cannot take the decisions about participants' conditions based on the supporting documents (difficulties of translation, getting official legalised documents, etc.), it should rather be the decision of the home university based on some common criteria or instructions from [the] Erasmus+ Programme (grouped by countries or regions, for example)."

(Survey respondent no 209, from the higher education sector)

Tying to identification, multiple respondents also noted that national regulations in some countries limit the data they may be able to collect, creating a barrier to potential participation at the earliest stages. The Swedish Education Act for example champions diversity and inclusive classrooms, but also prohibits discrimination. This latter aspect creates difficulties with data collection on participants with fewer opportunities. In

addition to programme and national level challenges, numerous respondents also mentioned that sometimes the difficulty is due to lack of available proof or required documentation (for example learners from marginalised communities or refugees).

Another key challenge beneficiaries identified was **low levels of motivation and readiness** within the target groups. Responses here invariably pointed to the continuous efforts required to motivate in particular learners to participate in Erasmus+ mobility and overcome their resistance.

“The main challenges have to do with the motivation of these people so that they feel safe when carrying out mobility; it is very important for our organisation to guarantee the quality of the practices. The good track record of the consortium, the establishment of procedures to be available and closer to the participant has generated confidence and security in the students. In reality, what we offer is support to evolve as a person and develop transversal skills in the student.”

(Survey respondent no 218, national, regional or local public body representative)

Closely connected to this theme is the importance of **working with families** to ensure they support learners to engage with and ultimately participate in the mobility. In addition to overcoming the reluctance of individuals, multiple respondents identified the crucial task of easing the concerns of the participants’ families regarding feasibility, safety and benefits of the programme.

“Being a primary school, our biggest challenge is reassuring parents of our students who are in need of inclusion and diversity to have faith that both the children and we, their teachers, can make a successful Erasmus story.”

(Survey respondent no. 694, from a school/institute/educational centre)

Respondents are also conscious that sometimes individuals’ reluctance to participate can be linked to cultural and/or socio-economic backgrounds and they go the extra mile to encourage their participation.

“Participants in the Erasmus+ Programme often come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Encouraging cultural sensitivity, understanding, and adaptation among participants to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment is crucial. This includes addressing language barriers, cultural differences and promoting mutual respect.”

(Survey respondent no 276, from a school/institute/educational centre).

Participants in focus groups provided additional perspectives here by adding that such situations are sometimes difficult with **cultural and religious backgrounds** where parental permission is denied, particularly for female learners. The importance of effective awareness and outreach strategies were also noted in this context.

“Reaching and informing individuals from diverse backgrounds about the opportunities and support channels offered by the Erasmus+ Programme can be challenging. Limited awareness may result in potential participants not fully understanding the possibilities available to them or the resources and assistance they can access. Effective outreach strategies are essential to ensure inclusivity in participation and to communicate the diverse benefits of the Erasmus+ Programme. This involves overcoming language barriers, utilising diverse communication channels, and tailoring information to the specific needs and contexts of potential participants.”

(Survey respondent no 78, from the higher education sector)

Higher education focus group participants echoed the significance of communicating with students through channels they already use to reach the target group and inform them about the opportunity. Personal contact, if available, was also noted as a particularly valuable tool to motivate students to engage and apply.

The fourth major challenge beneficiaries identified was **funding and resourcing**. Beneficiaries noted financial constraints as the allocated budget within Erasmus+ is frequently insufficient to support participants with fewer opportunities. Respondents commonly experience participants ruling themselves out from the programme as the funds provided do not cover all their expenses or they feel unprepared to host a visiting exchange student.

“The main challenge we face is funding, as ours is a regional school, with students from low-income families, who already struggle to cover their children’s usual expenses, so participating in a project which usually involves extra expenses, for transport (which is not completely covered by Erasmus+ grant, as we live in a badly connected area), dietary restrictions or special healthcare is frequently difficult.”

(Survey respondent no 562, from a school/institute/ educational centre)

Depending on the background of the participant and accessibility levels, some would require a teacher and/or carer to travel with them and funding coverage within Erasmus+ can pose challenges for making such arrangements. Furthermore, additional funding coverage challenges include ensuring teachers’ and coordinators’ **time spent** is appropriately recognised and paid through project grants. Focus group participants underlined here that the lack of information in the Erasmus+ Programme guide or official position from National Agencies on the topic contributed to a wide range of approaches where a large number of coordinators have no official time or insufficient time allocated for Erasmus+ project work.

Organisations also often experience challenges with ensuring teaching staff and other support staff are available and received sufficient **training** to accompany learners with various backgrounds and needs on mobility programmes. In addition to the availability of trained staff, organisations sometime also struggle with receiving sufficient **funds to cover the expenses** of staff accompanying learners. On a national and programme level, beneficiaries also noted that the **advanced budgeting requirement** prior to receiving applications means that organisations do not know how many such participants they may need to support in the forthcoming cycle.

From the perspective of beneficiaries, an additional challenge was around **finding partners with a matching profile**, values and programmes for their mobility plans. Respondents would welcome a searchable international database or network to support this early phase of establishing international partnerships. Further difficulties may also arise during the early partnership stages when sending organisations are seeking to ensure the availability of facilities and infrastructure in the receiving organisations for their participants with varying degrees of fewer opportunities. In a few cases difficulties with the hosting families and arrangements may also arise, although this appears rather sporadic.

“The biggest challenge is to find organisations willing to give the opportunity to our participants with fewer opportunities in the adult education field. Since usually there is no budget for the host organisation when it comes to the mobility of learners (and all our learners are refugees and migrants, thus participants with fewer opportunities), mainly organisations are not interested in participation and hosting in general.”

(Survey respondent no 873, from a non-governmental organisation/association/social enterprise)

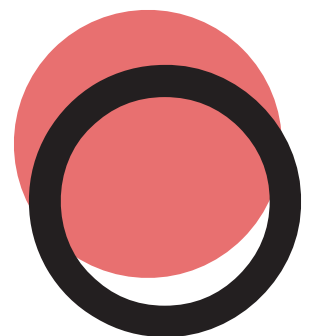
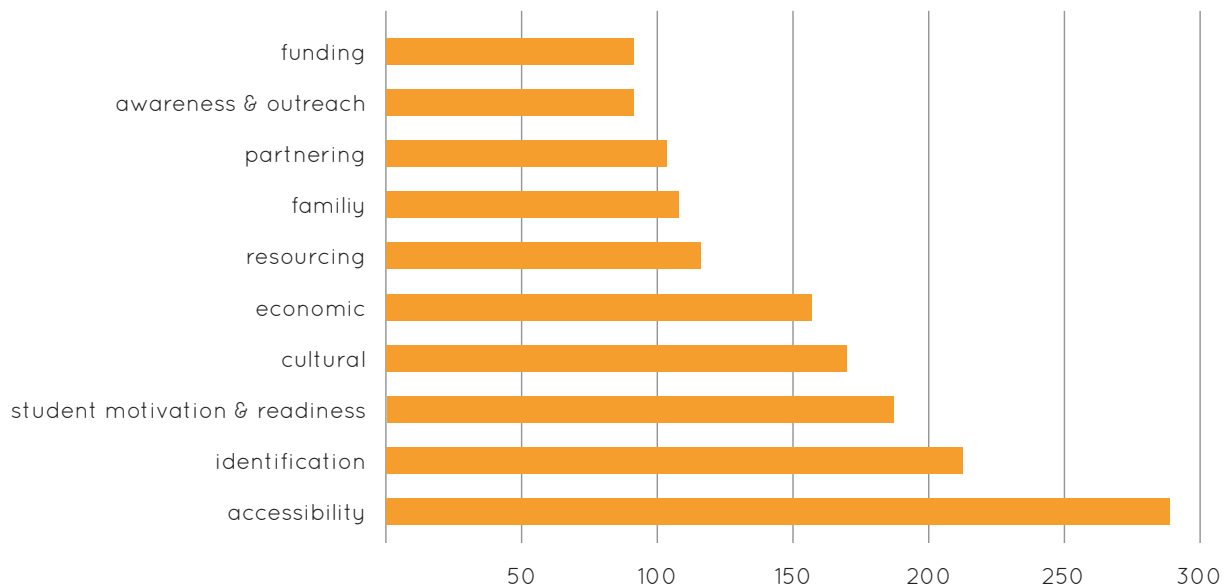




Figure 25 below summarises ten most frequent challenges experienced by beneficiary organisations when dealing with topics of I&D in the context of the Erasmus+ Programme, as identified from the analysis of open text answers.

Figure 25 | Ten most frequent challenges experienced by beneficiaries



Source: Survey, n = 1162 responses from 16 countries. Based on the categorisation of open text response; multiple categorisations per response possible.

2.4 Key challenges experienced by participants with fewer opportunities

The survey and focus groups also asked respondents and participants to reflect on the key challenges participants with fewer opportunities face when getting involved in an Erasmus+ KA1 mobility. These can also be grouped around five major themes:

- Economic (any socio-economic difficulties of participants that create barrier to participating in mobility)
- Participant motivation & readiness (motivation of target group to participate, overcome resistance)
- Language (language barrier, creating difficulties with integration in receiving environment)
- Individual experience (lack of individual experience with mobility, going abroad, travelling alone, fear)
- Accessibility (accessibility for participants with various types of diverse needs)



The leading challenge for participants with fewer opportunities was identified as **economic**, where socio-economic difficulties of participants create a barrier to participating in mobility. Participants with limited personal funds and/or lack of access to financial support feel that the costs associated with travel, accommodation and daily expenses can create a significant barrier to engaging with the programme. Respondents noted that participants with such difficulties also feel self-conscious and unprepared to host visiting exchange students. Additionally, learners with socio-economic difficulties are reluctant to participate if the mobility would take them to a higher income country (as scholarships even with the top-ups would not cover their expenses) or if the length of the mobility clashes with their work schedule.

A second core challenge respondents mentioned for participants was around **participants' motivation and readiness**. Overcoming the target group's resistance to consider the opportunity and motivate them to apply featured high in the responses.

"[Students have] no confidence in that they are able to participate in the project. Here, we work a lot with communication and guidance to strengthen the students so they feel confident to participate. Without guidance from staff, these students would not be able to go."

(Survey respondent no 565, from a school/institute/educational centre)

Similar to when reflecting on organisational challenges, the category of participant motivation was also closely interlinked with family for this question as well. Respondents here further underlined how family plays a crucial role whether participants feel encouraged to apply.

"According to our experience, the involvement in the mobilities of participants with fewer opportunities is a challenge in the first moments where we have to create confidence in the possibilities of successful participation in families and students. Once this challenge has been overcome, and with the help of accompanying teachers and the necessary adaptations, participation is usually very good."

(Survey respondent no 618, from a school/institute/educational centre)

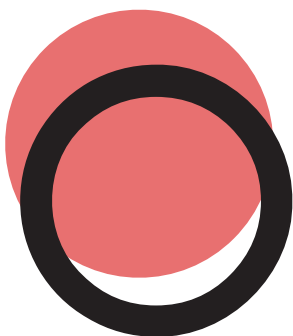
A further psychological and social barrier was also noted where potential participants do not wish to be identified as someone with 'fewer opportunities', **fearing potential stigmatisation**.

"They impose barriers to themselves. We feel they don't want to be exposed to this kind of processes where they have to "demonstrate" that they are participants with fewer opportunities."

(Survey respondent no. 558, from a school/institute/educational centre)

"A significant number of excluded participants (e.g. students with disabilities) do not want to be perceived as part of "marginalised groups", meaning that they might not prefer a dedicated web portal for "disabled opportunities", but rather low-key information that is available alongside the standard information about the mobilities. But in that case, there is a risk that such students might get lost in "too much information". Therefore, the challenge for institutions is how to disseminate the information to potential applicants with fewer opportunities while minimising the inconveniences such persons may experience (e.g. stigmatisation)."

(Survey respondent no 749, from the higher education sector)



The higher education focus group noted similar points during discussion, with one participant sharing that their institution established the term ‘specific needs’ as a more inclusive description, whereas other institutions practice the highest levels of confidentiality and minimal information requested as an approach to alleviate students’ concerns.

Participants experiencing significant **language barriers** in English and/or in the language of the mobility country was another frequently mentioned challenge. Such communication difficulties can create barriers in engaging with the mobility, integration in the receiving environment and also with successful participation in the classroom or placement.

Closely linked to the topic of motivation was the fourth theme of **individual experience**, where participants’ lack of personal experience can pose a significant barrier. Respondents here mentioned such examples as participants having no previous experience with mobility, going abroad, travelling alone, spending time away from their home and family.

“Participants with fewer opportunities or special needs face the challenge to “step over their shadow” and get out of their comfort zone. They need to learn to function in new, unknown environment, meet new people and use foreign language. This may cause anxiety and discomfort. We are there for these students to support them. The experience from Erasmus+ will help them in their future - they will be more capable to deal with new situations and not worried to find help, if they need some.”

(Survey respondent no 10, from a school/institute/ educational centre)

“Being able to participate in mobility is already an achievement. Some of the candidates who find themselves in these circumstances have not been able to leave their local environment, so having the opportunity to enjoy mobility in a country different from their own will allow them to open their minds to other cultures and customs. Furthermore, participation will allow you to improve linguistic competence in the destination country and acquire a more European mentality.”

(Survey respondent no 1020, from a school/institute/ educational centre)

Analogous to reflections on organisational challenges, respondents also added **ensuring accessibility** as a key challenge when considering Erasmus+ engagement from the perspective of participants. Participants from diverse backgrounds and needs mean similarly diverse specialised support services may be required. As these requirements can be highly individual, the challenges associated with facilitating mobility for such participants thus largely depend on the nature of the specific accessibility background.

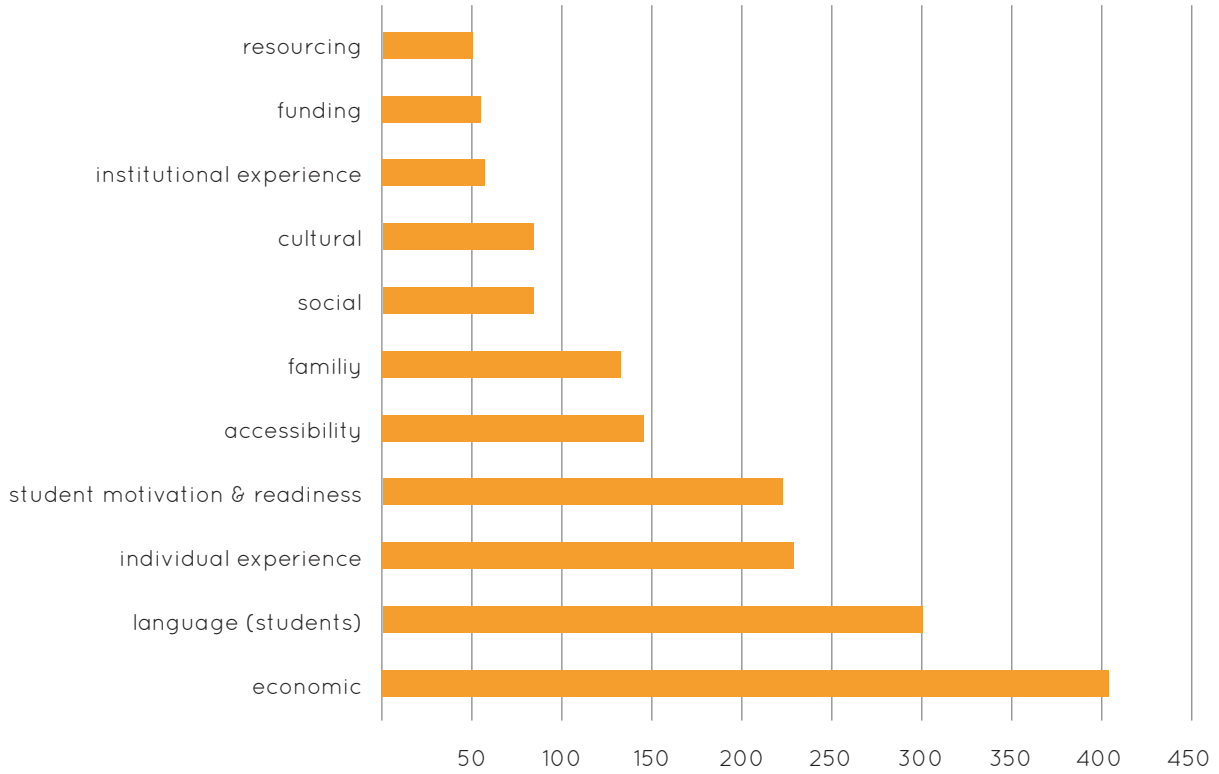
“The project/ mobility itself has to be planned in a way that is accessible to people with different disabilities. If the mobility/ project is not adapted to specific needs, then participants with fewer opportunities would face many challenges - if they would even be able to participate in this kind of project/ mobility. Lack of knowledge and understanding the specific needs of different groups of people with disabilities could accumulate challenges. There are less projects/ options that are specifically planned for participants with fewer opportunities.”

(Survey respondent no 304, from a non-governmental organisation/association/social enterprise)



Figure 26 below summarises ten most frequent challenges faced by participants with fewer opportunities when participating in KA1 mobility, as reported by the beneficiaries in the survey.

Figure 26 | Ten most frequent challenges faced by KA1 mobility participants with fewer opportunities



Source: Survey, n = 1219 responses from 16 countries. Based on the categorisation of open text response; multiple categorisations per response possible.



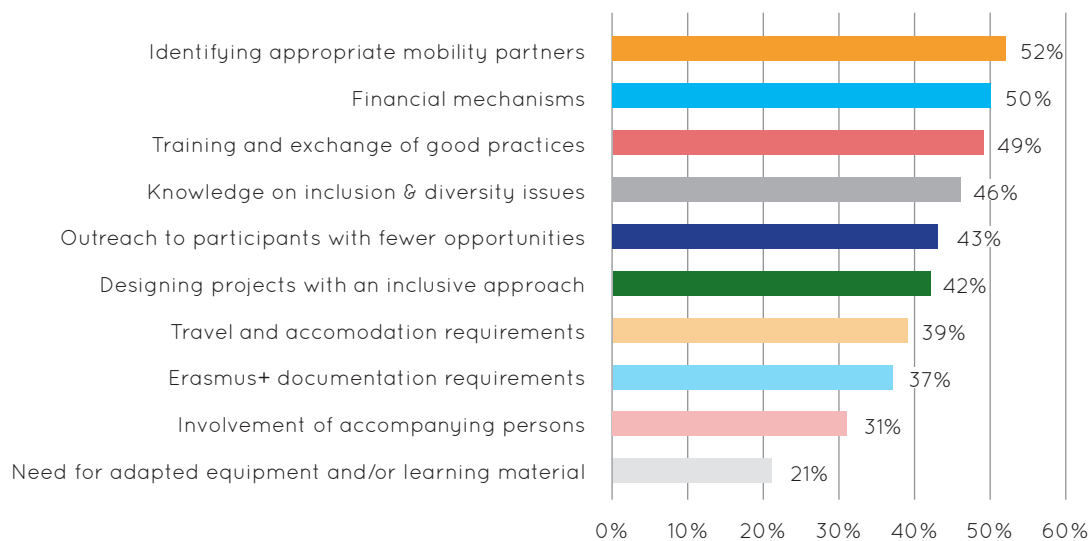


2.5 Topics, formats and activities for support

Both the survey and the focus groups provided beneficiaries with an opportunity to identify areas or topics where they wished to receive additional support in relation to providing equal access to the Erasmus+ Programme.

In the multiple-choice question of the survey, as the figure indicates below, there was a good spread in the areas identified:

Figure 27 | Respondents' interest in suggested support topics



Source: survey n=1325 responses from 16 countries. Multiple responses allowed.

Figure 27 shows that more than 40% of all respondents consider the following topics to be most relevant: identifying mobility partners, financial mechanisms, training and exchange of good practices, knowledge on I&D issues, outreach to participants with fewer opportunities and designing projects with an inclusive approach.

Considering the sector and background of beneficiaries, the responses showed no great variation based on the country or the sector the beneficiary represented, indicating that the topics listed for support show an international and cross-sectoral relevance across the Programme.

An open question of the survey and the focus groups provided beneficiaries with a chance to elaborate on their suggestions, ideas and/or concerns regarding inclusion & diversity in the Erasmus+ Programme. Reflecting on expectations and wishes for support, a large number of beneficiaries commended the inclusion focus of the programme, stressing

the importance of continuing this as a core feature in future years.

When comparing the leading topics from the multiple-choice question and the responses from the open question and focus groups asking beneficiaries for additional reflections on supports, there is a great overlap between the key elements. Of the top themes listed by more than 40% of respondents, only outreach and designing projects with an inclusive approach did not feature extensively in open comments.

Considering recommendations, many respondents and focus group participants expressed a desire for a structure or mechanism that facilitates **sharing good practice** across the entire Erasmus+ Programme. Significant number of responses were dedicated to wishing to see good practice approaches to various aspects of planning and operations, more guidance and webinars dedicated to different themes and templates to be developed and shared.

“More documentation such as manuals with concrete ideas and good examples from a variety of institutions in Europe. Professional development of teachers and staff at institutions, both to be better equipped to teach in classrooms including students with fewer opportunities, and also how to address, meet and follow-up with students with fewer opportunities during the semester (and not just at the beginning).”

(Survey respondent 254, from the higher education sector)

There is a huge appetite for seeing and learning from good practice in approaches to inclusion, practical tips and success stories. Developing opportunities to make such good practice examples regularly available through *peer learning activities* can be helpful in both national and Erasmus-wide contexts. Focus group participants in particular were keen to highlight their interest to participate in both national level and internationally organised peer learning activities to facilitate a wider pool of networking and learning opportunities. As a focus group participant put it at the end of the session:

“It’s easier when you know that you are, you know, part of a group with [the] same problems and lots of similarities. We recognise ourselves in all of you actually. So thank you.”

(Focus group participant, from a school/institute/ educational centre)

Furthermore, more **training opportunities for participating staff** also featured frequently on respondents’ and focus group participants’ wish list. Topics identified included those specific to I&D, but also more general ones such as managing Erasmus+ projects and fulfilling various administrative requirements. Examples of I&D specific training suggestions included diversity awareness training, cultural competency training and inclusion,

intersectionality and transculturality training. Providing education and **training for companies** receiving learners and interns with fewer opportunities who represent a variety of different backgrounds and needs was also suggested in a focus group.

In addition to good practice sharing mechanisms and more training opportunities, a third major emerging theme was around the **facilitation of finding partnerships**. Responses here referred to establishing a *searchable international database*, workshops and other collaborative opportunities supporting beneficiaries find Erasmus+ partner institutions and experts. The importance of being able to identify suitable partners based on their experience and expertise, their suite of programmes or themes was mentioned frequently in this context. Suggestions here included establishing a network of institutions willing or volunteering to share details for populating such a searchable pool of available partners.

There should be a platform where we could register our school with a profile, providing details on the size of the school and its features. It’s time for Europe to prepare a platform like that where you can choose [your partner] from the matching schools.

(Focus Group participant, from a school/institute/ educational centre)

A focus group suggestion was to expand the way the European School Education Platform is currently used. This platform, used for example to support eTwinning, may be suitable for such a partnership matching purpose if schools provided relevant additional details with their profile such as the size of the school, its experiences and features, along with the type of partnership they are seeking.

Additional themes from support topics included frustrations about the complexity and volume of **documentation** required from participants and institutions alike, along with returning to the theme of **funding** and particularly to the challenging timeline of advanced budgetary requirements prior to number and type of applications are known.

Concerning beneficiaries' experience with the **Erasmus+ financial mechanisms** to support I&D, survey findings in chapter 2.3 showed that the majority of respondents deem them appropriate, alongside good levels of familiarity with the financial mechanisms. Nevertheless, financial mechanisms rank among the most sought-after topics for support, driven by a growing perception that not all expenses are adequately covered.

Respondents also wished to see allowances adjusted in the context of the rising cost of living and climbing inflation. Beneficiaries also highlighted the importance of all relevant details clearly stated in the programme guide, with examples and precise instructions on what is covered in the grant and how these allocated funds may be spent.

Furthermore, a National Agency level recognition and allocation of **time spent** on coordinating Erasmus+ projects along with teaching and/or carer staff members' extra time is an important concern for many beneficiaries. This particular aspect was a key insight learnt from the open question responses and the focus groups on the topic of supports.

Further recommendations of note included such topics as:

- In HED, promote and increase awareness of existing blended mobility options for participants who work or have families and cannot participate in whole semester or longer mobility programmes
- Peer mentoring for participants
- Tailored support programmes for participants with specific needs
- Ensure resources and assistance are customised to individual circumstances
- Introduce info sessions on cultural understanding for counsellors and psychologists in host institutions (to support incoming learners).
- Find ways to more actively involve families in participation activities and mobilities
- Further possibilities for group mobility

"My idea for support would involve a comprehensive approach that combines financial aid, mental health support and cultural education to ensure that all participants, regardless of their background, can fully engage and benefit from the enriching experience of the Erasmus+ Programme."

(Survey respondent no 1101, from a school/institute/ educational centre)



3

Conclusions and recommendations

The key objective of this research has been to develop a better understanding of the needs of beneficiaries on the topic of I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme. Additionally, the research sought to develop insights for SALTO ID ET to further develop and tailor their offer, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of beneficiaries and the challenges they face when involving participants with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+ Programme.

While we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment, these challenges highlight the importance of ongoing efforts to improve communication, provide necessary accommodations and raise awareness about biases and prejudices to create a more equitable and diverse Erasmus+ experience.

(Survey respondent 1178, Erasmus+ coordinator, higher education/VET)

Overall positive experiences emerge when asking Erasmus+ beneficiaries about their experience with I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme (KA1). Furthermore, a large number of the beneficiaries surveyed commended the inclusion focus of the Erasmus+ Programme, stressing the importance of continuing this as a core feature in the years to come.

Nevertheless, challenges and potential areas for improvement become evident when analysing the findings from the research. In particular, the insights from the focus group discussions provided a more detailed account of the operational struggles faced by individual institutions.

Overall, the analysis of data across countries and across education sectors shows relatively little variation, i.e. respondents' perceptions and opinions are not significantly influenced by which country they come from or which education sector they cover. Still, focus group findings provide a more nuanced picture to the survey findings, highlighting the heterogeneity among education institutions in terms of learner demographics and, consequently, variations in terms of their requirements for support in I&D.

The leading challenge that Erasmus+ beneficiaries identified relates to ensuring full accessibility for participants with all types of diverse backgrounds and needs. Related to this is the perceived complexity of target group categories, which makes it difficult for actors to identify an individual's eligibility for participation.

Another key challenge identified by beneficiaries relates to low levels of motivation and readiness within the target groups, which require continuous efforts and outreach to motivate learners to participate and overcome their resistance or hesitation. This aspect is closely related to participants' cultural and religious backgrounds and to the role of their families.

As regards the Erasmus+ Programme, respondents generally considered the financial mechanisms to support I&D and the related administrative requirements as largely appropriate. This does not exclude, however, that some of the challenges frequently mentioned by beneficiaries relate to these two aspects. Financial constraints are among the key challenges identified by beneficiaries – both with regard to coverage of travel and subsistence expenses but also with regard to recognising the time spent by teachers and coordinators.

Last but not least, an additional challenge relates to finding partners with a matching profile for KA1 mobility.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, the study results also provide clear evidence on the significant added value that these activities have. After all, the questions with the clearest response results (with approval rates of more than 90%) were those related to the perception of Erasmus+ mobility as a positive experience – for both organisations and participants with fewer opportunities. Based on these results, it does not come as a surprise that 98% of respondents indicated that their organisation intends to continue involving participants with fewer opportunities in KA1 mobilities.

Beneficiaries provided rich feedback on which areas or topic they would wish to receive additional support in relation to providing equal access to the Erasmus+ Programme. These refer in particular to identifying mobility partners, financial mechanisms, training and exchange of good practices, knowledge in I&D issues, outreach to participants with fewer opportunities, as well as designing projects with an inclusive approach.

Overarching recommendations can be summarised as follows:





*National Agencies
or
SALTO
recommendations*

- Provide **clarity** around multiple areas: administrative guidelines, eligibility of participants to take part in project activities and documentation required. Streamline the processes and criteria requirements to simplify participation and reduce the administrative burden on participants and coordinators.
- Provide structured **training** opportunities on various themes. These can be generally on I&D but also around specific topics in more depth.
- Raise awareness about the **inclusion support** budget category among beneficiaries and applicants to ensure they are informed about this possibility. Provide clear guidelines on how to access and utilise these funds effectively, in line with national regulations.
- Consider opportunities and support for more actively involving **families** in the mobility process. Survey results indicate that beneficiaries consider families as key to making a learner's mobility happen.
- Establish various mechanisms for **sharing good practice** such as via international networks, searchable database, webinars and success stories.
- Establish **peer learning networks** for sharing experience.
- Provide a **partnership matching** database or internationally searchable website.



Programme level
recommendations

- Consider scope to enhance the current process for **budgetary requirements** to ease difficulties with planning one year ahead when learners with fewer opportunities are involved.
- Provide opportunities to recognise coordinators' **time spent** on Erasmus+.
- Create and maintain mechanisms for **sharing good practice** via various means such as international networks, searchable database, webinars and success stories.
- For study periods abroad in HED, promote and increase awareness of the existing option of **blended mobilities** for students who cannot spend a whole semester abroad due to various reasons, such as family commitments or work. By highlighting and encouraging the use of these shorter, more flexible study periods, the mobility offer can become more inclusive and accessible.
- Explore scope for more actively involving **families** in the mobility process (see above).
- Concerning **terminology**, rethink the inclusion aspect of the term 'fewer opportunities.' Survey evidence indicates that people tend to choose not to participate in Erasmus+ mobility rather than being identified as someone belonging to this category.
- Streamline and clarify the **definitions and documentation requirements** for the 'fewer opportunities' categories to ensure consistency and ease of understanding across different countries. Provide precise guidelines and criteria to help coordinators and participants accurately identify eligibility and reduce confusion.

"As far as I can say, the main challenge our participants have faced so far is related to the lack of knowledge about inclusion and diversity and the lack of adapted learning material as well: many books, videos and other materials used in schools still don't portray diversity in our society and they're not different according to the different abilities."

(Survey respondent no 293, from a school/institute/ educational centre)

List of abbreviations used

ADU	Adult education
AMEUP	Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (Croatia)
ESC	European Solidarity Corps
EU	European Union
GDPR	EU General Data Protection Regulation
SCH	School education
HED	Higher education
I&D	Inclusion and diversity
KA 1	Key action 1 (learning mobility of individuals)
NA	Erasmus+ National Agency
SALTO	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities
SALTO ID ET	SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion and Diversity in Education and Training
VET	Vocational education and training

Annex

Survey questionnaire

A: Key information

1. I am responding to this survey in my role as (a)...

Please tick all that apply

- Project coordinator
- Teacher/lecturer/professor
- Trainer
- Management/administrative staff
- Youth worker
- Researcher
- Other, please specify: _____

2. My organisation/institution can be best described as....

- Higher education institution (tertiary level)
- School/institute/educational centre
- Non-governmental organisation/association/social enterprise
- Public body (national, regional or local)
- Small or medium sized enterprise (SME)
- Large enterprise
- Research institute/centre
- Social partner or other representative of working life (chambers of commerce, trade union, trade association)
- Other, please specify: _____

3. Country in which your organisation is based: _____

4. In which of the following fields is your organisation primarily active?

Please tick all that apply

- School education
- Vocational education and training
- Higher education
- Adult education
- Youth
- Sport
- Other, please specify: _____

5. How many staff members does your organisation currently have?

- Less than 10 employees
- 10 to 49 employees
- 50 to 99 employees
- 100 to 499 employees
- More than 500 employees
- Do not know

B: Your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme

6. Please select the option(s) that best describe(s) your organisation’s (current or previous) participation in Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Learning Mobility

Please tick all that apply

- Project coordinator
- Project partner
- Sending organisation
- Receiving organisation
- Intermediary organisation
- My organisation has not been involved in Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Learning Mobility so far.

7. In which year(s) did your organisation participate in the Erasmus+ Programme?

Please tick all that apply

- 2023
- 2022
- 2021
- 2014-2020

C: Your experience with inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+

For the questions in this section, we ask you to report on your most recent experience with inclusion and diversity in the Erasmus+ Programme.

8. Please select the most recent funding period in which your organisation has involved participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects:

- 2023
- 2022
- 2021
- 2014-2020
- Our organisation has not yet involved participants with fewer opportunities to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme.

9. Which are the barriers that your Erasmus+ KA1 mobility participants face??

Please tick all that apply

	Barrier(s) that our KA1 participants face
Physical, mental or intellectual disabilities	<input type="radio"/>
Health problems	<input type="radio"/>
Educational difficulties (e.g. addressing NEETS)	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural differences (e.g. linguistic adaption difficulties)	<input type="radio"/>
Social barriers (e.g. limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours)	<input type="radio"/>
Economic barriers	<input type="radio"/>
Barriers linked to discrimination (e.g. linked to age, ethnicity, religion, gender)	<input type="radio"/>
Geographical barriers (e.g. targeting remote or rural areas)	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify: _____	<input type="radio"/>

10. Please tick the box in the grid below which best represents your view

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know/ cannot say
It has been easy for our organisation to reach out to/ identify participants with fewer opportunities who wish to engage in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility.						
It has been easy for our organisation to identify and collaborate with KA1 mobility partners that can address the needs of participants with fewer opportunities.						
The involvement of participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility has been a positive experience for our organisation.						
Based on the feedback received, participation in KA1 mobility has been a positive experience for participants with fewer opportunities.						
The capacity and expertise within our organisation to support transnational Erasmus+ mobility of participants with fewer opportunities is appropriate.						
Our organisation is familiar with the Erasmus+ financial mechanisms to support inclusion and diversity in KA1 mobility projects addressing participants with fewer opportunities.						
The Erasmus+ financial mechanisms to support inclusion and diversity are appropriate.						
The administrative requirements to request Erasmus+ funding for participants with fewer opportunities are appropriate.						
The formats and activities for the promotion of inclusion and diversity in the Erasmus+ Programme are appropriate (e.g. blended mobilities, small-scale partnerships with additional deadlines, availability of inclusion & diversity officers).						
The support offered by National Agencies at application stage for including participants with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+ Programme is appropriate.						
The support offered by National Agencies at project implementation stage for including participants with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+ Programme is appropriate.						
The Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected our organisation's ability to involve participants with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+ Programme.						
We intend to continue to involve participants with fewer opportunities in KA1 mobility projects in the future.						

11. Does your institution have an internal strategy or policy covering inclusion and diversity in place?

- yes
 no
 planned or in development

D: Beneficiary needs and support

12. What are the main challenges that your organisation faces in dealing with topics of inclusion and diversity in the context of the Erasmus+ Programme?

13. What are the main challenges participants with fewer opportunities face when getting involved in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility?

14. For which of the following aspects would you be interested in receiving support with a view to assuring equal access to the Erasmus+ Programme?

- Outreach to participants with fewer opportunities
- Knowledge on the inclusion and diversity issues
- Identifying appropriate mobility partners
- Designing projects with an inclusive approach, addressing barriers to participation
- Travel and accommodation requirements
- Need for adapted equipment and/or learning material
- Involvement of accompanying persons
- Erasmus+ documentation requirements (Participant report, beneficiary report)
- Financial mechanisms (e.g. inclusion support, exceptional costs, mobility top-up)
- Training and exchange of good practices

15. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your expectations, wishes or ideas for support related to promoting inclusion and diversity in the Erasmus+ Programme?

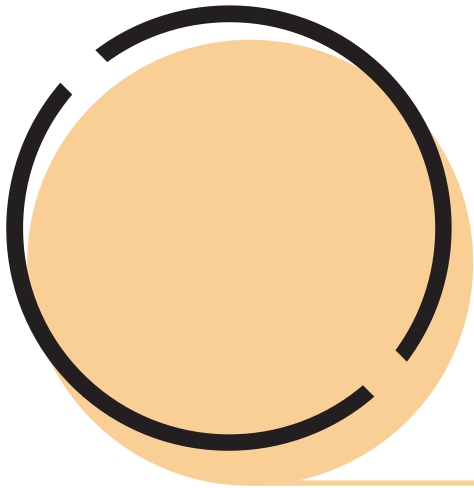
16. Would you agree to be contacted for the purpose of our study, to participate in an interview or focus group discussion? Thank you for providing your name and e-mail address.

(This question is optional; your contact information will exclusively be used by the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes and its contractor 3s for the purposes of the SALTO Resource Centre.)

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____





Survey data - additional tables and figures

This section includes tables and figures with additional survey data not presented in the main part of the report.

Table 1 below shows the breakdown of survey responses received by country. As the results indicate, over 60% of the respondents represented Spain, with Sweden and Croatia following.

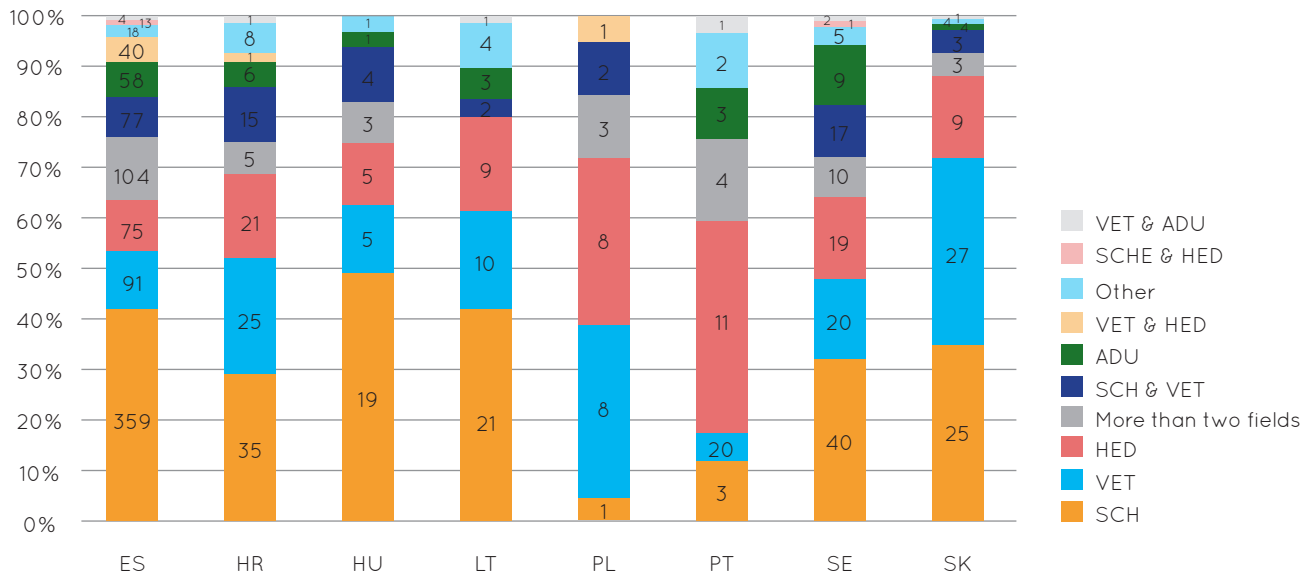
Table 1 | Survey responses by country

Country	Responses	% of total responses
Austria	1	0.1%
Belgium	4	0.3%
Croatia	117	8.8%
Estonia	1	0.1%
Germany	8	0.6%
Hungary	38	2.9%
Iceland	3	0.2%
Ireland	2	0.2%
Lithuania	51	3.8%
Netherlands	1	0.1%
Poland	23	1.7%
Portugal	25	1.9%
Slovakia	88	6.6%
Slovenia	2	0.2%
Spain	839	63.3%
Sweden	122	9.2%
16	1325	100%

Source: Survey, n = 1325 responses from 16 countries.



Figure 28 | Breakdown of survey responses by education sector(s) covered and by country

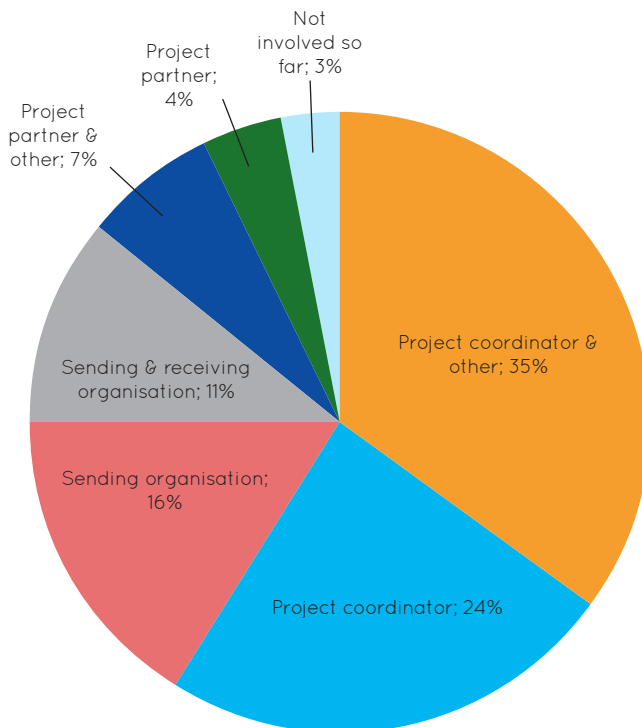


Source: Survey. n = 1325 responses from 16 countries. Countries with fewer than 20 responses not shown in the figure. Bars show number of mentions (multiple responses allowed).

One question asked respondents about the fields in which their organisations are primarily active. The country specific breakdown above provides additional insights whether certain fields were more represented among particular country respondents. Generally, the pattern of more responses from the SCH background can be observed across the countries. However, respondents from Poland, Portugal and Slovakia bucked the trend and had comparatively more respondents representing other fields, such as VET (especially for Poland) and HED (especially for Portugal) than respondents representing SCH. The figure above illustrates the distribution of survey responses across education sectors for those eight countries that submitted more than 20 responses.

In another question, respondents were asked to select the option(s) that best describe(s) their organisation’s current or previous participation in Erasmus+ Key Action 1 mobility. As respondents could select multiple answers from the listed options, the results show a pattern of respondents choosing more than one role for their organisation. Figure 29 provides additional insights on the categories that respondents tended to pair when choosing their response.

Figure 29 | Organisation’s role(s) in Erasmus+ KA1 learning mobility

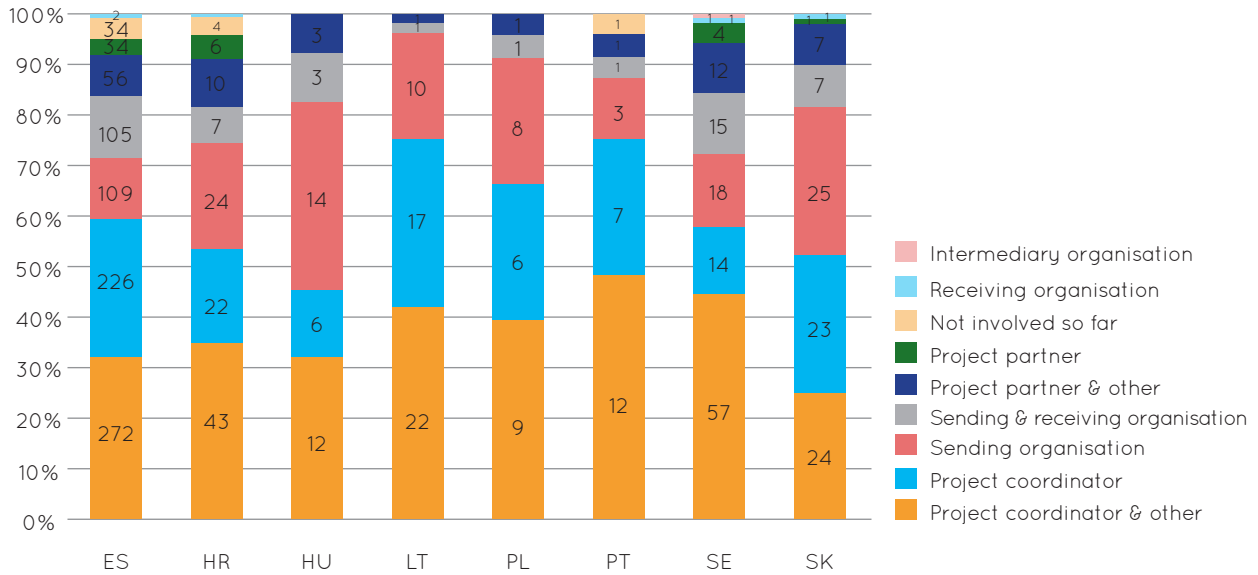


Source: Survey. n = 1325 responses from 16 countries; multiple responses allowed.



Furthermore, the figure below provides insights regarding country specific patterns for the same question. Results are shown for those eight countries, for which more than 20 responses have been submitted.

Figure 30 | Organisation’s role in Erasmus+ KA1 learning mobility – by country

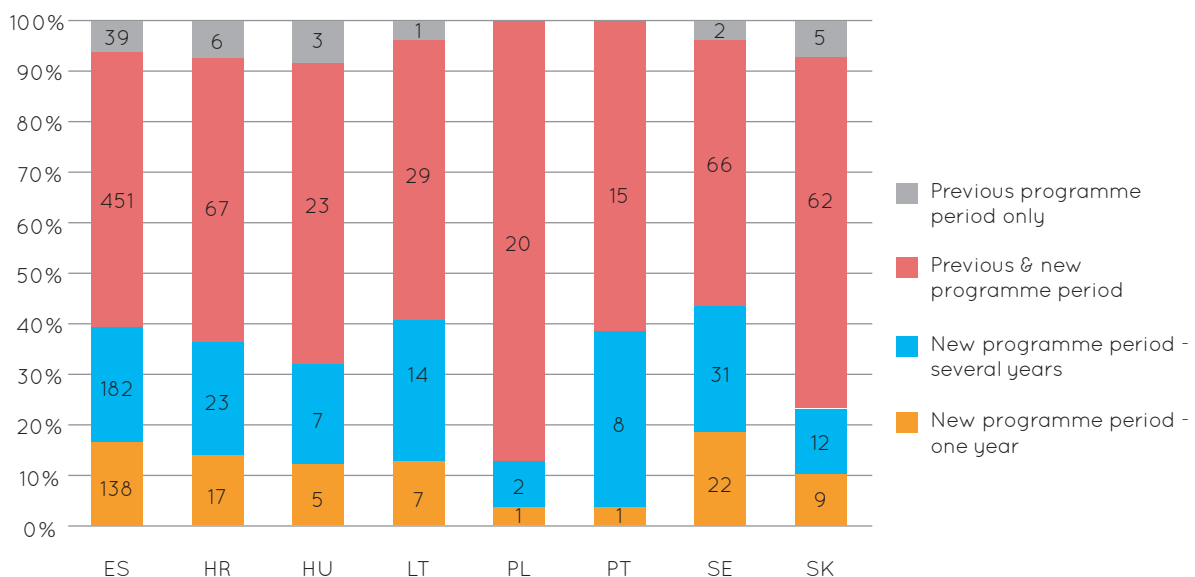


Source: Survey, n = 1325 responses from 16 countries. Countries with fewer than 20 responses not shown in the figure. Bars show number of mentions (multiple responses allowed).

Respondents were asked to identify the years in which their organisation participated in the Erasmus+ Programme. The figure below provides additional insights regarding any country specific patterns in the responses regarding the spread of active years in

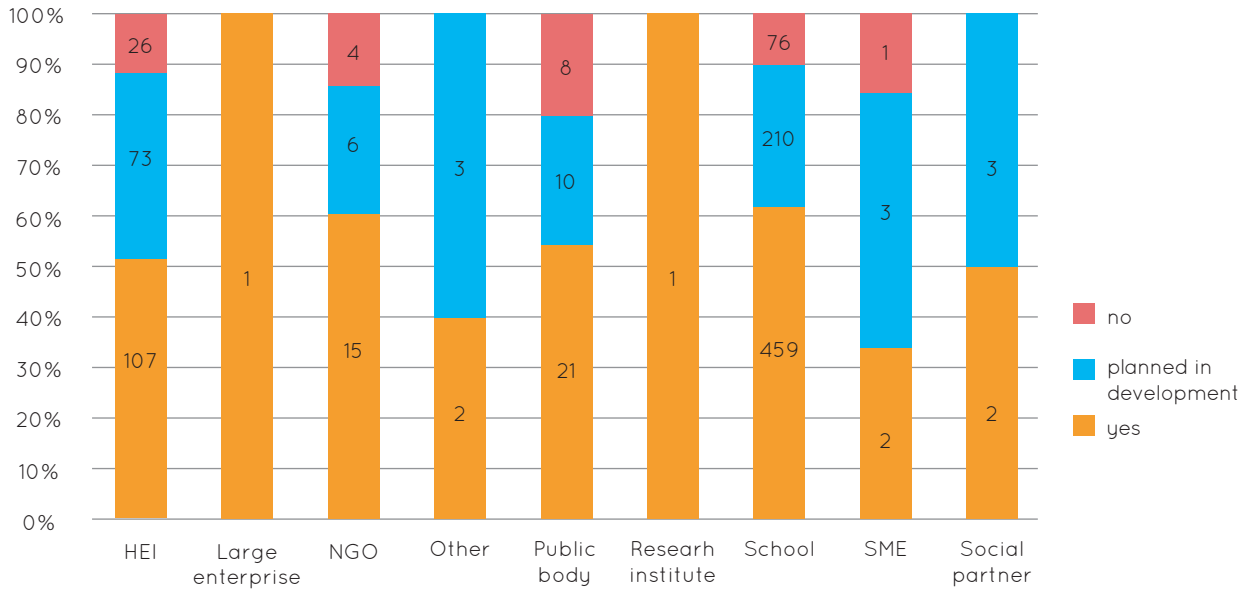
Erasmus+ Programme. Similar to the general trend of responses, in country breakdowns the ‘previous and new programme period’ replies dominated across the board. Again, results are shown for those eight countries, for which more than 20 responses have been submitted.

Figure 31 | Respondents’ experience with the Erasmus+ Programme – by country



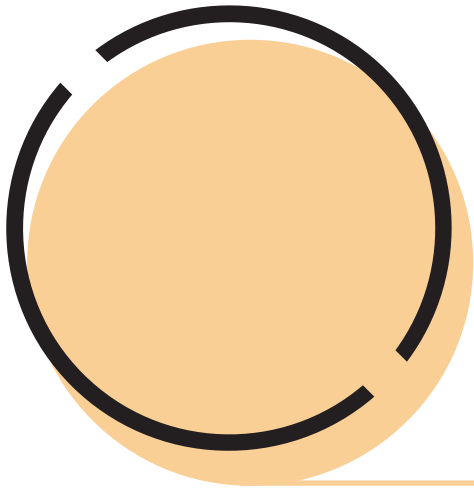
Source: Survey, n = 1290 responses from 16 countries. Countries with fewer than 20 responses not shown in the figure.

Figure 32 | Existence of an internal strategy or policy covering inclusion and diversity – by organisation type



Source: Survey. n = 1030 responses from 16 countries. Numbers in the bars indicate the number of mentions (multiple responses allowed). NGO = non-governmental organisation/association/social enterprise; HEI = higher education institution (tertiary level); public body = public body (national, regional or local); SME = small or medium sized enterprise; social partner = social partner or other representative of working life (chambers of commerce, trade union, trade association); school = school/institute/educational centre.





Focus groups

In total, 15 representatives from seven countries were consulted through the focus groups, representing various primary and secondary schools (both SCH and VET) as well as higher education institutions.

Focus Group 1 with a focus on VET (December 14, 2023) – summary of key discussion points

Q.1. How do you deal with I&D within your organisation? Do you have a special policy in place?

In Sweden, schools follow the Education Act that prohibits discrimination. Sweden's student body is diverse and the Education Act ensures that classrooms are socially inclusive by design. Every learner can apply for an Erasmus+ Programme following a transparent process, with various supports in place for applicants.

Q.2. Which kind of specific inclusion & diversity support have you requested within your projects?

Do you have any experience with preparatory visits?

- Multiple types of supports, such as inclusion support, extra funding for visas, extra funding for support materials for participants (especially during Covid-19).
- A particular challenge was noted around keeping up to date with changing visa policies of various countries. A concern mentioned in this context was that **learners from non-EU backgrounds** with

a permanent residency in Sweden have increasingly been experiencing entry being denied into receiving countries. The representative noted that they are seeking to ensure such learners travel with a teacher/representative to tackle such situations. They also work with intermediary organisations that facilitate placements; these organisations can also offer some support with such country specific difficulties.

- In some cases, requests for additional funding to **cover extra preparatory time** teachers spend with learners was rejected by the National Agency.
- Regarding preparatory visits, in the coordinator's experience the funding allocated tends to fall short of actual expenses. A workaround they devised was to **combine a preparatory visit with a job-shadowing** already happening. Owing to limitations of funding cycles, an additional difficulty with a preparatory visit grant can arise if too much time lapses between the preparatory visit and the planned mobility. This can sometimes happen easily as a large number of preparatory visits and mobilities take place during the spring (timing in the school calendar).

Q.3. What are the key challenges you as an organisation face with regard to I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme?

- The level of experience and readiness of companies to receive interns and learners with various **cultural and/or health backgrounds** (such as learners with neuropsychiatric conditions). Structured, in-depth approach is required to provide training for companies regarding the various types of learners, their backgrounds and their needs.
- Motivating **high achieving learners** to participate in mobilities. These learners tend to feel they would miss out on schoolwork if they undertake a mobility and sometimes opt out. Communication on the benefits of mobilities can be key when navigating this particular challenge.
- The preparatory and discussions phase is crucial when working with participants from various backgrounds, this means additional work for teaching staff. Ensuring Erasmus+ grants would **cover extra time** and work is an ongoing difficulty.

Q.4. What could the Erasmus+ Programme do to alleviate some of the challenges faced?

- **Financial support for the preparatory time and work** of teaching staff.
- Provide more specificity in the programme guide regarding the definition of fewer opportunities, clarifying **what is covered and what is not covered by the term 'fewer opportunities.'** Interpreting the definitions and putting them into practice can be challenging, especially for certain

categories such as geographical barrier or social background (e.g. distance from the nearest airport, potential coverage of an airport hotel if the participant lives far etc.).

- Swedish legislation states that education is free, this in practical terms means that schools and institutions need to cover any shortfall between Erasmus+ grants and the actual expenses of the mobility.
- Providing **structured education and training** for beneficiaries on the various types of learners would be beneficial.

Q.5. What could National Agencies do to address the existing challenges / help you as an organisation to further promote inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+?

- On the topic of participants from non-EU backgrounds and their difficulties entering their receiving countries, the Erasmus+ Programme should be exempt from various immigration laws and regulations. An **Erasmus+ ID card or a Certificate** could enable them to showcase that they are participants in an Erasmus+ mobility, thus should be exempt from immigration laws that would otherwise prevent them from entering the country.
- Ensure Erasmus+ grants cover accompanying teachers go with learners on the mobility.
- In the Swedish context, as the Education Law prohibits discrimination, they are not allowed to distinguish applicants as individuals with fewer opportunities **in the beneficiary module.** As a workaround, they've been encouraging schools to try and differentiate within their application (to ensure they can receive the funds).



Focus Group 2 with a focus on school education (December 18, 2023) – summary of key discussion points

Q.1. What are the key challenges you as an organisation face with regard to I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme?

R1:

- Increasing number of both incoming and outgoing participants have **social & relational difficulties**, e.g., autism.
- **Cultural and/or religious background** related challenges. The school has difficulties when parental permissions are denied, this is especially prevalent for female learners.
- There are also cases with **specialised dietary requirements**, although these situations are more manageable than supporting participants with autism or different cultural backgrounds.
- **Economic challenges**, associated costs especially with certain health and mobility backgrounds that would require trained staff accompanying the learner.
- More **specialised teachers** are required to accompany learners on mobility, to help them with challenging new situations, with extra funds also required to cover related expenses.

R2:

- Agreeing with R1 on challenges mentioned, R2 shared a workaround they've been employing, namely to find and arrange that retired teachers accompany learners. Such arrangements also need funds and available personnel.

R3&R4:

- Being new to Erasmus+ Programme, with only job-shadowing experience to date, R3&R4 expressed gratitude to be able to learn from the **good practice** of experienced beneficiaries, especially in relation to supporting learners with autism and various mental health related challenges.

R5:

- Challenging to plan and budget one year in advance. In this representative's experience, getting their school accredited also made accompanying administration more complex. They would welcome more

clarity on the guidelines given, particularly around timelines for receiving grants allocated.

R6:

- Echoing the challenge of preparing **budget one year advance**, requiring coordination and planning.
- Difficulties with getting **exceptional costs arising during mobility** accepted for coverage. Information received from National Agency in some cases differed from that in the Erasmus+ Programme guide, creating confusion and potential for losing out on funds.

R7:

- **Partner finding and matching** making difficulties. A searchable database or website with partner profiles and such information as school size, experience and features would be very beneficial.

R8:

- Agreeing with the need for a partner matching facility, the representative suggested an alternative, to expand the way the **European School Education Platform** is currently used (e.g. facilitates eTwinning) by adding school profile information there, using an existing platform as opposed to creating a new one.

R9:

- Recognition and allocation of **time spent** is a big challenge. It is not currently outlined in national or Erasmus+ Programme level guidelines how many hours per week a coordinator would ideally need.
- National Agencies should provide clarity on this and outline recommendations regarding the **weekly hours for an Erasmus+ coordinator**, perhaps as part of the agreement for holding the grant or as part of the accreditation process. The practice in this respect differs widely, depending on how much time individual headmasters allocate to Erasmus+ coordinators. Many do their work as extra hours, not as part of their official timetable. Having this extra work recognised is a continuous challenge.

R10:

- Highlighted a good practice example where Erasmus+ projects was introduced as an **optional subject** in the school timetable. In this case, the school had dedicated space in the timetable providing opportunity for both learners and staff to work on Erasmus+ projects on a weekly basis, with the projects changing in each term.

Q.2. What could the Erasmus+ Programme do to alleviate some of the challenges faced?

- Formal allocation & recognition of **time coordinators spend** on Erasmus+ projects.
- Support **partner matching** through an international, searchable database or interactive platform.
- More **funds & grants** to cover expenses incurred.
- Providing regular, structured **peer learning activities** to facilitate sharing good practice and networking, both at national & Erasmus+ Programme levels.

- Provide more concrete and **precise information in guidelines** (particularly in relation to allocation of coordinators time, who pays their work and expenses, what funds are available and how they may be spent).
- Supports for training and payment of professional assistance with mobilities (**specialised staff travelling with participants**).

Q.3. Do you have experience with preparatory visits?

- Multiple participants across countries represented in the focus group have experience with preparatory visits, commending the valuable opportunity, highlighting the benefits of being able to visit the partner, see their facilities and make arrangements.
- One participant mentioned combining job-shadowing and preparatory visits to ensure funds allocated can cover expenses for both.

Focus Group 3 with a focus on higher education (March 1, 2024)
– summary of key discussion points

Q.1. Please tell us about your experience with inclusion & diversity in the Erasmus+ Programme. How do you deal with I&D within your organisation? Do you have a special policy in place?

- Most students [at R1's university] are part-time students who also work or students who have families. **Blended mobility** has been a good opportunity for such students, providing them with more chance to participate in Erasmus+ mobilities. Mobility top-ups are requested and used and they also provide motivation for students to engage.
- R2: Similar profile of students at [R2] university, the institution developed an **inclusion plan** to support students in E+ programmes. Institution also has its own additional grants for students with lower socio-economic backgrounds who excel in their studies.

- R3 represented a large university with a **broader profile of student backgrounds**, including students with limited working capacities, health difficulties, migrant and political refugee backgrounds, students with families, students with children, students with no parents etc. The National Agency here delegates decision to the individual institutions on identifying student groups in need of support (social assistance).
- R4 represented a similarly large university with a broad profile of students, the institution is the leader in inclusion in R4's country. The university has an **equality plan** in place to support students, whether they are outgoing or incoming students. The university has a number of active students' unions and student groups, including for minority groups.
- R4's institution uses inclusion support both based on **real costs and top-ups** (a point that was supported by other representatives as well)

- The group has **varying experience with blended mobilities**: students who work welcome the opportunity, while it can also be beyond reach for students on certain types of programmes (especially those with set curricula and high levels of traineeship, such as medicine and nursing).

Q.2. What are the key challenges you as an organisation face with regard to I&D in the Erasmus+ Programme?

- Inclusion support based on **real costs** is a helpful mechanism, but the process is currently too complicated with a **heavy administrative burden**. Students who have difficulties with going abroad already tend to struggle to collect all receipts during their mobility.
- **'Student with fewer opportunities' as a label**: students rather wish to avoid being labelled as someone with fewer opportunities. As a way to address this, R4's institution began using the phrase 'specific needs' to be more inclusive in their approach.
- Providing **accessible information** to students who are blind or with low vision, deaf or hard of hearing or students with reading difficulties.
- Students with specific needs experience lack of **visibility**: the importance of seeing someone with similar difficulties to feel seen.
- Working with **host institutions**: ensuring they understand incoming students' specific needs (e.g. access to housing, students who have kids and wish to take them on the mobility would need to arrive earlier)
- **Many universities do not support blended mobility** programmes. Experience also shows that **personal contact is better** when discussing partnerships with university partners.
- Reaching students: **channels of communication** and how information is conveyed to a more **digitally active generation** of students. Importance of finding channels students already use such as university Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs).
- Post-pandemic, students' understanding of certain concepts appear to have altered and they need to be advised that 'submit' means a physical signature, not just an online document completed. R4's institution identified this challenge through monitoring drop-out rates during learning

agreement stages. This necessitates additional work and follow through from staff to ensure students can participate in their mobilities.

- Institutional **coordinators frequently work extra hours** to ensure students can be supported with all their needs, overwhelming and stressful for staff.

Q.3. What could National Agencies do to address the existing challenges / help you as an organisation to further promote inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+?

Is there any specific support offer/service offer that you would request / that would help you further promote I&D in your Erasmus+ projects?

- Address inclusion with **more understanding of the various challenges** associated with going abroad, e.g. it's not possible for students to go 'green' all the way during travels, students with kids need additional supports to take their children with them on the mobility
- Certain programmes have no **international mobility** opportunities at present. There is a need for national legislation in such cases, support from National Agencies can play a key role.
- Digitalisation is valuable but ensure it does not limit options for students (e.g. **a digital component as an express requirement** during short mobilities can be a limitation)
- Extend scope of availability for **short term mobilities**
- Facilitate electronic, **online signature on paperwork**
- More clarity regarding the **guidelines for Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)**
- Address the heavy administrative burden by **revisiting the level of paperwork needed**
- **Fewer mandatory requirements in the programme** (e.g. info sessions on host country can be helpful but don't make it mandatory to attend)
- Organise **information sessions for student counsellors and psychologists on cultural understanding** (specifically in the context of supporting incoming students), across the whole Erasmus+ Programme
- Need for **peer learning opportunities** for coordinators across Europe, benefit of **mutual exchange mechanisms** across institutions/countries



EUROPEAN UNION