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GUIDEBOOK TO INDIVIDUAL PUPIL MOBILITY WITH UNDERPRIVILEGED AUDIENCES - COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND PUPIL MOBILITY ORGANISATIONS



About

The present Guidebook is the main output of the Erasmus+ co-funded project Expanding Learning Mobility to New Audiences through School - Civil Society Partnership (ELM). This guide aims at helping schools to cooperate with pupil mobility organisations to effectively promote, support, recognise and leverage this experience, particularly among less advantaged pupils.

The IPM handbook released by the European Commission in July 2022 is complementary to this guide: while the IPM Handbook explains how to manage Erasmus+ IPM projects in general, this guidebook looks specifically at how to encourage and support and ease cooperation between schools and pupil mobility organisations in the planning and running of Individual Pupil Mobility (IPM) programmes, specifically targeting young people with fewer opportunities.

In addition, this guide can be useful not only in the implementation phase of an Erasmus+ IPM project but also for drafting an application for the KA1 accreditation in the school sector, following the [Erasmus+ Quality Standards](#).



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Chapter 1 gives an overview of Individual Pupil Mobility within Erasmus+, focusing on the inclusion of disadvantaged pupils. **(E+ quality principle 1, Basic principles - Inclusion)**

Chapter 2 lays the foundation for cooperation between schools and non-profit pupil mobility organisations, highlighting its benefits and potential challenges and providing suggestions for its optimisation. **(E+ quality principle 2, Good management of mobility activities)**

Chapter 3 expands on the suggested educational approach to IPM, learning journeys and learning objectives. **(E+ quality principle 3, Providing quality and support to the participants)**

Chapter 4 focuses on the recognition of learning periods abroad, touching on EU guidelines, learning agreements and assessment. **(E+ quality principle 3, Providing quality and support to the participants)**

Chapter 5 covers a series of practical and risk management aspects necessary for the smooth running of IPM projects. **(E+ quality principle 3, Providing quality and support to the participants)**

Chapter 6 touches upon the promotion of IPM, comprising examples and suggestions for communication. **(E+ quality principle 1, Basic principles - Inclusion)**



Introduction

The ELM project, which rises from the yet unexplored potential of Individual Pupil Mobility (IPM) within Erasmus+, focused on the inclusion of pupils from underprivileged backgrounds in this type of learning mobility, in line with the priorities of Erasmus+ school mobility actions. The project focused on increasing schools' capacity to organise study periods abroad for disadvantaged students, with non-profit pupil mobility organisations serving as supporting partners.

All the participants in the project's piloting pupil mobility programme came from a wide variety of different backgrounds, emphasising pupils with fewer opportunities as the project's ultimate mission and goal were to provide access to mobility to a broader audience. Concretely, the project has given 12 underprivileged pupils from four different countries (Belgium French-speaking, France, Latvia, and Spain) the opportunity to experience a 2-month learning mobility programme abroad between February and March 2022. Project partners included one school and one non-profit pupil mobility organisation from each of the aforementioned countries as well as one international non-profit organisation, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), as the leading organisation.

IPM is not a new entry into the EU funding programme for education and training. Following a pilot study coordinated by EFIL, an individual pupil mobility action was introduced into Comenius – the EU-funded initiative for school education 2007-2013. This action was therefore included as one of several mobility formats under "Strategic partnerships in the field of school education" in the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020. The new Erasmus+ programme, which runs from 2021 to 2027, focuses on expanding pupil mobility options. IPM has thus been adopted by the European Union as a strategy for promoting European citizenship and school internationalisation, with direct interaction between sending and receiving schools.

Today, Erasmus+ is a unique opportunity to further improve the internationalisation strategy of school establishments in general, and through individual mobility programmes in particular. Therefore, all the ELM project's actions and outputs are aimed at assisting teachers, school leaders, and educators from pupil mobility organisations in using the new Erasmus+ programme to make quality learning mobility a reality for a broader audience as internationalising schools.

Development of the Guidebook

This guidebook was created throughout the project's development. The various chapters were also written and modified over their various phases, as decisions were taken, depending on their results and success. A lot of the later chapters are based on the partners' previous experiences and knowledge which, once shared, combined and put to the test within the piloting of the ELM project, resulted in the present Guidebook.

Individual Pupil Mobility (IPM)

What is Individual Pupil Mobility?

Individual Pupil Mobility is an educational programme for secondary school pupils between 14 and 18 years old which provides them with the opportunity to spend up to a full school year in a host school abroad, living with a host family. The Erasmus+ programme in the school education field provides financial support for this activity.

Why IPM?

Immersion in the community is a key component of learning mobility that has a transformative effect on students. This is especially true when students attend a local school, live with a host family and integrate into the local community for two to ten months. Groups of students moving around can inspire others to move around and pique their curiosity about other cultures. Schools with student mobility have more prosperous practices and connections to the outside world.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, it is crucial for young people to begin developing global competences from an early age since working across borders is decisive in addressing global issues and promoting peace.

Students and schools across Europe have had access to this experience since 2009 thanks to EU funding. Providing more young people with the opportunity to partake in an IPM programme during their school years helps them in acquiring fundamental life skills and cross-cutting competences, promoting their personal growth, employability, and active citizenship in Europe. The necessity and desire to place more emphasis on abilities like critical thinking, intercultural competence, and problem-solving, which are particularly fostered through learning mobility experiences, is evident in the new Erasmus+ strategy. IPM is a tool for schools as well who, in hosting and sending pupils, work towards improving their internationalisation strategy.



How can inclusivity be factored in Individual Pupil Mobility?

Inclusivity is one of the three priorities of the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 strategy. It is envisioned as the programme's capacity to advance diversity in all of its manifestations as an important source of learning, both by funding initiatives that prioritise inclusion and by easing access to mobility for those with less opportunity.

For more information, consult the [implementation guidelines of the Diversity and Inclusion strategy](#).

Including pupils considered underprivileged, who, for various reasons, are less likely to consider learning mobility, comes with an added set of challenges that require careful reflection. In these more fragile contexts, the need to resort to reliable and experienced models that guarantee quality mobility and attention to inclusion is even greater and provides the space to focus on:

- Building and nurturing closer contact between sending and host school;
- Ensuring support throughout all stages of the application process, mobility period, and after the return/re-entry period;
- Considering each pupil's particular needs and circumstances and adapting preparation, integration, and re-entry accordingly;
- Including preparation and support for pupils' natural families.



Promoting diversity and centring inclusion in its activities and aims

In the context of an IPM project, inclusion can take many forms. Even within our project, the criteria and factors taken into account to promote the inclusion of pupils with fewer opportunities took different shapes depending on each country's and school's contexts. Striving for inclusion can present several challenges if not properly thought through and prepared for.

In the case of our schools, challenges to outreach manifested in several ways. A few examples would be:

- Lack of parental involvement: not many parents were present throughout their child's application, selection and preparation processes;
- Self-exclusion: for a diversity of reasons, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to consider even applying for a mobility opportunity as they deem it inaccessible for them;
- Fear of rejection: given pupils' particular ethnic, national and religious backgrounds, for example, they may fear a lack of acceptance in their host country based on visible identifiers.

Inclusion begins even before the dissemination stage with each school's decision on the criteria of selection. With regards to addressing an IPM project with inclusion in mind, we recommend:

- Removing the focus on academic achievement, which helps lower the chances that it poses a barrier to disadvantaged students who can naturally be excluded by it;
- Preparing the pupils in advance, working to develop their motivation and goals;
- Considering pupils' individual needs during the different activities of the Learning Journey (e.g. providing meals during Ramadan for Muslim pupils to break fast);
- Holding information meetings and Q&A sessions with teachers not directly involved in mobility, pupils and their families;
- Surveying pupils and their parents to gain a better understanding of the school community and how their particular needs can be met throughout the selection and preparation process;
- Promoting the programme as an opportunity open to all with full cost coverage, explaining clearly the application procedure and the importance of the motivation (avoid using words like 'inclusion' or 'underprivileged' as this would contribute to stigmatising pupils who apply and are then selected);
- Proactively seeking out students who may be self-excluding from applying for IPM.

School and pupil mobility organisations - cooperation model

Cooperation with a Pupil Mobility Organisation in the context of Erasmus+ IPM

Why?

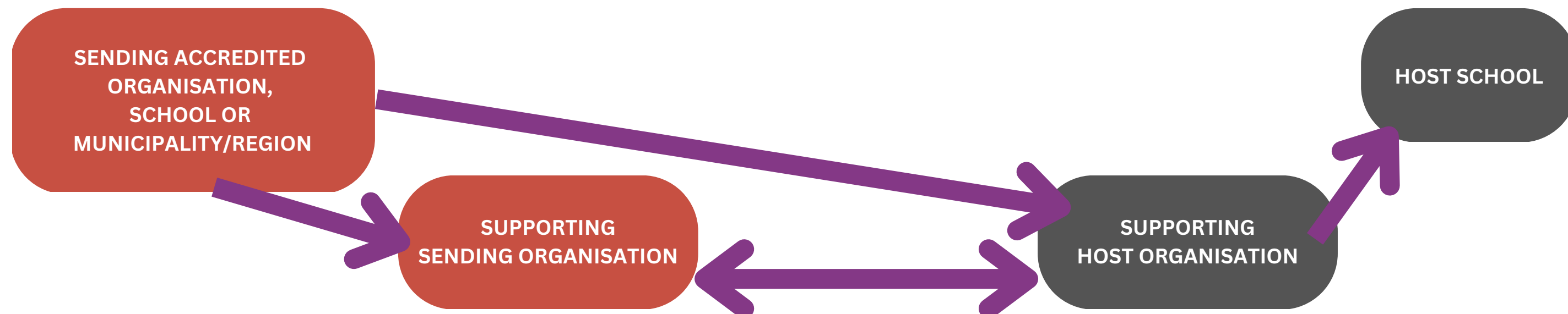
Diving into Erasmus+ for schools can often feel like a daunting process to embark on. Managing logistics, the intercultural learning preparation of pupils and all stakeholders involved, and the development of the Learning Agreement to ensure the recognition of the learning outcomes of the period abroad can feel like an impossible task to take on alone.

Non-profit pupil mobility organisations have long-standing experience in organising individual pupil mobility programmes for developing the competences needed for living in intercultural societies. These organisations are part of a European and/or worldwide network of similar organisations rooted in local communities, and sharing procedures and quality standards

Within Erasmus+, schools can choose to partner up with a non-profit pupil exchange organisation as a 'supporting organisation'.

Cooperation between schools and pupil mobility organisations is the key to guaranteeing that the objectives of an IPM project are achieved and that the process goes easily and smoothly, generating the maximum positive impact for the young participants and the entire community of sending and hosting schools involved.

How does it work within Erasmus+?



How to make cooperation successful?

Communication

- Defining clear communication channels and habits, ensuring honest and regular communication between stakeholders;
- Agreeing on a common calendar with planned meetings, clear deadlines, check-in points, etc.;
- Having clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- Aligning goals and expectations;
- Having a shared decision-making process - both schools and pupil mobility organisations take full responsibility and ownership of the project;
- Emphasising knowledge of sending and host schools' specific community context.

Whole-school approach

- Teachers are involved in and supported through the IPM project in its entirety (selection process, support of pupils, preparation of sending/host classes);
- The project is connected to essential and relevant issues for the school's community;
- Teachers are encouraged to develop intercultural learning and global competence in their classroom;
- All pupils, school staff, and families have knowledge of and are involved in the internationalisation of the school.

What are the benefits of such cooperation for the schools?

- Access to an existing network of schools and support networks on both the sending and host sides;
- Faster and easier communication/bridges with schools and organisations in other countries;
- Support for a systematic approach to the internationalisation of the school, thanks to the development of relationships with a variety of foreign schools and organisations;
- Support based on specialised knowledge of the logistical and administrative aspects of individual pupil mobility,
- Access to a wide range of educational resources to support pupils' and teachers' learning journey, based on well-tested methodologies and expertise in intercultural learning and non-formal education within pupil mobility contexts;
- Support with standard procedures that are shared on the sending and hosting side;
- Cost optimisation.



What is the role

of schools?

- Promote Erasmus+ IPM projects within the school community;
- Select pupils;
- Develop and evaluate the Learning Agreement* in collaboration with the host school and the pupil;
- Recruit host families;
- Communicate with sending/host school and supporting organisation;
- Involve teachers in the preparation of sending pupils and host classes;
- Support teachers in participating in intercultural learning activities/training and in becoming more globally competent;
- Ease the process of recognition of outcomes of learning periods abroad by supporting the pupil's learning journey.

*Learning Agreement:

An agreement that defines, in collaboration between the sending and host schools, the expected learning outcomes to be developed by the pupil in the host school, and how to assess them to ensure recognition by the sending school. This is compulsory for any pupil going abroad with Erasmus+ , regardless of their length of stay.

of supporting organisations?

- Provide the use of standardised functioning processes;
- Find host schools;
- Facilitate pre-departure, arrival, and return support activities and training;
- Support the school in pupil selection;
- Provide schools with intercultural learning opportunities and educational materials;
- Support with host family recruitment, including host family preparation;
- Promote the integration of pupils with other pupils involved in mobility programmes (both sending and hosting);
- Share best practices with schools (supporting materials, timelines, etc.);
- Support pupils and host families throughout the process (individual check-ins, mediation if needed);
- Provide risk management in close contact with the schools (24/7 emergency line, pre-defined risk management procedures);
- Organise travel and logistics in close contact with the school.

What strengths make a supporting organisation the best partner for schools?

- Proven knowledge and experience with individual pupil mobility (sending and hosting);
- Access to a network of pupil mobility organisations in a variety of Erasmus+ programme countries;
- Human Resources 100% dedicated and specialised in intercultural learning and mobility projects;
- Knowledge and experience of Erasmus+ objectives, requirements, and processes.



What is the timeline of an IPM project?

IPM projects need to be planned well in advance so as to give both hosting and sending partners time to organise all the pre-departure steps, including putting the host and sending schools in contact for the elaboration of the Learning Agreement, and recruiting host families. IPM projects cannot be rushed or improvised. The following suggested timelines could be of great help to plan everything in advance.

Mobility starting in January



Mobility starting in September



- Responsibility of the sending side (schools and supporting organisations together)
- Responsibility of the support organisation on the hosting side
- Responsibility of the pupil

* Note that although a mobility period can range between 1 and 10 months, not all countries accept extended mobility in the second semester.

Educational Approach

A. Experiential Learning

Experiential learning encourages learning firsthand, allowing pupils to gain the ability to develop, gain understanding and broaden their knowledge by learning from experiences, with support and encouragement to reflect on what has been experienced and learned. Experiential learning within IPM requires structured moments of learning that support pupils in further exploring their lived “day-to-day” experiences as well as integrating and relating these to previous theory and knowledge.

Benefits include:

- A broader view of the world and an appreciation of their community;
- Insight into their own skills, interests, passions, and values;
- Opportunities to collaborate with diverse organisations and people;
- Self-confidence and leadership skills.



B. Whole-school Approach

Taking a whole school approach to a project implies involving all actors, from administration, teachers, school staff, pupils, parents and the wider community at every level. The idea of a whole school approach enables all actors and their interactions both within and outside of school grounds to be taken into consideration, recognising the role that each stakeholder has in fostering the pupils' learning experience. This approach takes into account both formal and non-formal learning moments and opportunities throughout the IPM experience and implies collective collaboration from and within the entire school community.

Who are the actors invested and involved in an IPM project?

- Pupils;
- Their sending and host classes;
- Teachers;
- Natural families;
- Host families;
- School staff;
- Pupil exchange organisations as ‘supporting organisations’;
- Etc.

A whole school approach is crucial to a school’s internationalisation efforts. The internationalisation of schools is the “intentional and transformative process of including international, intercultural and global dimensions within the whole school in order to enhance the quality of education for all students, teachers and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society” (Baiutti 2019, 26 Author’s translation). If conducted with a whole school approach, IPM projects are an example of moving towards the school’s internationalisation. This is included in the school’s pedagogical profile as well as considered and discussed by the teachers in charge, together with the school’s administration.

C. Intentional Learning Process

Mobility is a powerful tool by itself but...

- It is a very intense experience that can lead to multiple situations (eg. miscommunication, cultural shock) ;
- It depends on many actors and conditions which need careful examination, acknowledgement and consideration (previous knowledge of the hosting country's culture, clear programme rules, safety tips, knowledge of the pupil's particular needs);
- It is far more than an academic trip: it demands more effort from all parties involved (the intercultural learning experience is not only for pupils but other actors involved, mainly the host family and the school!) ;
- It may lead to a big amount of extra work/extra uncertainty for all the actors involved if the rules of the programme, standard procedures and role of each party are not clear for all the actors involved.

These highlight the importance of a well thought out and planned Learning Journey for all the actors involved so they can better be accompanied through any potential obstacles that may arise and may be prepared to actively engage and participate in the pupils' IPM.

The Learning Journey

The Learning Journey (LJ) involves different steps and activities which are aimed at increasing every stakeholder's engagement in the programme. In fact, each audience (pupils, host families, sending families, hosting class, sending class and teachers) should have their learning journey tailored according to their needs and learning objectives previously defined.

We recommend that the school allocates a contact teacher and administrative support staff to the project to guarantee the maximisation of time and resources made available and ensure the smooth running of the Learning Journey.

The pupil's LJ is focused on enhancing their ability to engage in their study abroad, to acquire and develop global competences and to put them into practice. The LJ intends to support pupils' experience abroad at every stage and the application of said competences before their return home to actively engage and participate in their communities, contribute to society and change the world.

The LJ for all other stakeholders is aimed at supporting the LJ of the pupils, and at the same time develop the intercultural competence of all those involved.

The LJ plan suggests activities to be carried out for, with and by the different stakeholders in each phase of the process. These activities will have different individual aims and goals and, together, will lead to a smoother running of the project and maximise learning opportunities for all.

The planification of the LJ suggested below is merely tentative and suggestive. Having piloted our project for a 2 month mobility period, during Covid-19 restrictions which differently impacted schools in each country, it was not possible to implement all the activities mentioned for each audience and each stage of the mobility. The activities which were piloted by the majority of the project partners have been highlighted.

Objectives of activities for teachers

- Raise awareness regarding the key importance of mobility in students' learning journey;
- Identify the professional and personal value of leading/engaging in E+ mobility projects;
- Equip teachers with a valuable set of tools to deliver ICL activities, manage the programme and support pupils and families involved in the programme
- Gain a good understanding of the mobility programme process (steps, responsibilities, communication channels, risk management...);
- Raise overall cultural awareness
- Develop cross-cultural communication skills;
- Develop intercultural sensitivity;
- Build effective global relationships;
- Commit globally.

Objectives of activities for sending classes

- Self-awareness as individuals in order to better understand the influence of their culture on their views, values and personalities;
- Self-awareness as a cultural group in order to better understand themselves as representatives of a certain culture, being able to define values, traditions, and beliefs and to share them with others;
- Develop intercultural communication skills in order to engage with others with respect and consider the various aspects influencing the meaning of the information received;
- Develop awareness of others and other cultures;
- Raise interest in intercultural awareness, and global processes, develop the habit of asking questions, when facing new and unknown situations or behaviour patterns.

Objectives of activities for sending families

- Awareness of needs of their child before, during and after exchange period;
- Good understanding of the mobility programme process (steps, responsibilities, communication channels, risk management...);
- Exploration and development of intercultural awareness and understanding as individual global citizens and as a family.

Objectives of activities for host families

- Develop self-awareness touching upon self-understanding both as individuals and a family, and the influence of their cultural background in behaviours, values, perceptions and attitudes;
- Accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities;
- Communication skills and empathy: active listening, awareness of non-verbal communication, deeper sensitivity to others;
- Develop intercultural competence: appreciation for diversity, respect and acceptance for diversity, develop strategies for coping with cultural differences;
- Develop interest and concern about global affairs.

Objectives of activities for host classes
(from AFS Educational Goals)

- Personal realm: self-awareness, creative thinking, critical thinking, defining self in terms of ideals and values;
- Interpersonal realm: empathy, communication skills, commitment to others and contributing to the group;
- Cultural realm: building intercultural friendships, cultural knowledge and awareness, non-verbal communication, and intercultural effectiveness;
- Global realm: global concern, commitment to contributing to the world community.

Objectives of activities for exchange pupils
(from AFS Educational Goals)

- Personal realm : Self-awareness, creative thinking, critical thinking, motivation and self-confidence, defining self in terms of ideals and values;
- Interpersonal realm : empathy, flexibility and social skills, communication skills, commitment to others and contributing to the group;
- Cultural realm : building intercultural friendships, cultural knowledge and awareness, foreign language skills and non-verbal communication, intercultural effectiveness;
- Global realm : global concern, global understanding, commitment to contributing to the world community.

Online Learning

The ELM project piloted a blended mobility programme. Blended mobility combines the physical experience abroad with virtual activities which can range from virtual exchanges with other classes to individual learning activities. Blended mobilities are another essential step in working towards a whole-school approach to IPM by further involving pupils and teachers who may not be participating in mobility themselves by providing them with the opportunity to partake in an international experience.

In our project we mainly explored three activities:

Virtual Exchange: this activity allows hosting and sending classes from different countries to connect and engage in intercultural learning activities without leaving the classroom. Through teacher-led structured activities, the opportunity to interact with a class from another country aids in expanding intercultural awareness and sensitivity.

GlobalUp! Teen: this online interactive learning programme provides learners with opportunities to develop global competence: increase self-awareness, and develop cross-cultural communication, critical thinking, and conflict resolution skills. Through online modules, forum spaces and through guided-reflection sessions, learners have access to a range of information invaluable in supporting their learning, understanding and development. Read more on [AFS Intercultural Programs website](#).

eTwinning: the European Commission's platform for teachers and school staff helps teachers plan and organise on-site and online activities with their classes and colleagues from other countries partaking in Erasmus+. The platform offers features to support collaborative projects, share best practices and successes and support teachers' learning.

These activities were integrated into the ELM project to further complement mobility and provide pupils with intercultural interaction opportunities.

	Pre-departure/Pre-arrival (10-2 weeks before the programme) (led by the supporting org)	Reflection Stop 1 (1st week of the programme) (led by teachers and/or the supporting org)	Reflection Stop 2 (4th week of the programme) (led by teachers)	Reflection Stop 3 (6th week of the programme) (led by teachers)	Re-entry (Up to 10 weeks after the end of the mobility) (led by teachers and/or the supporting org)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions (15 min) • The intercultural learning Framework (activity+metaphors of culture) (45 min) • Selfportrait (act + identity) (30 min) • One way-two way communication (act+E. T. Hall theories) (30 min) • How to conduct and debrief an intercultural activity (60 min) • Rules, responsibilities and useful materials (30 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions (15 min) • 7 tricks for a better adaptation (30 min) • Draw your adaptation line (the cultural adaptation models) (30 min) • Rules and responsibilities (15 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up • Videoforum • Debriefing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping the textbooks and educational materials (search for bias, stereotypes and generalisations) • Debriefing with students. (DIVE) • Initiatives and tools to foster global relations (mapping my own territory, school) • Why and how can these initiatives be helpful in bringing the world and people closer? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etwinning project
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions: the story of my shoes (30 min) • Simulation: How do we introduce ourselves? (diversity) (45 min) • Identity flower or creating a character (45 min) • My intercultural encounter (communication skills) (60 min) • Break • What to expect from your programme. Letter to myself (60 min) • Programme details (rules and responsibilities) (60 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions (10 min) • 7 tricks for a better adaptation (30 min) • Draw your adaptation line (the cultural adaptation models) (20 min) • Rules and responsibilities (30 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videoforum (depending if they watch the movie or not) 45 min • Follow up (15 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping the news (At home) • News analysis (At home) • Debriefing (45 min) • Follow up (15 min) • Initiatives and tools to foster global relations (mapping my own territory, school..) (At home) • Why and how can these initiatives be helpful in bringing the world and people closer? (1 hour) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Effect+. • Presentation of my experience in class
Sending Families	<p>Session 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions (10 min) • Intercultural framework and the importance of IPM (20 min) • The rules and responsibilities (30 min) • What to expect from your programme (30 min) <p>Session 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The picture of the year (DIVE) (30 min) • The butterfly effect (20 min) • The adaptation cycle (30 min) • Q&A (10 min) 				

	Pre-departure/Pre-arrival (10-2 weeks before the programme) (led by the supporting org)	Reflection Stop 1 (1st week of the programme) (led by teachers and/or the supporting org)	Reflection Stop 2 (4th week of the programme) (led by teachers)	Reflection Stop 3 (6th week of the programme) (led by teachers)	Re-entry (Up to 10 weeks after the end of the mobility) (led by teachers and/or the supporting org)
Hosting Families	Session 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions (10 min)• The story of my shoes (20min)• The adaptation process (30 min)• Rules and Responsibilities (30 min) Session 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 tricks for a better adaptation (30 min)• What to expect from the program (20 min)• Tips to welcome your pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions (10 min)• The picture of the year 20 min)• DIVE (20)• Follow up on the experience (30min)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions (10 min)• Follow up on the experience (30 min)• Fatima (50 min)• Recommendations on how to face the end of the project (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging in local activities
Sending Class		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dustten and Sendut (cultural simulation) (50 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual exchange (90 min.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global impact Project (depending on the project)• Virtual Effect+
Hosting Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The danger of a single story (50 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dustten and Sendut (cultural simulation) (50 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual exchange (90 min.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global impact Project• Virtual Effect+ (150 min.)

Recognition of Learning Outcomes

The ELM project built on the outcomes of the *Expert Network on recognition of outcomes of learning periods abroad in general secondary education*, aimed at implementing the Council recommendation of 2018 on automatic recognition calls on Member States to “... make substantial progress towards automatic mutual recognition [so that] the outcomes from a learning period of up to one year abroad in another Member State during upper secondary education and training are recognised in another, with the learner not being required to repeat the programme year or achieved learning outcomes in the country of origin, provided that the learning outcomes are broadly in line with the national curricula in the country of origin.”

Despite learning mobility being at the top of the EU education policy agenda, there are still many EU Member States with insufficient processes for the mutual recognition of study abroad periods.

Learning Agreement (LA)

Within a school-to-school individual pupil mobility programme like the one funded by Erasmus+, the Learning Agreement is an agreement that defines, in collaboration between the sending and the host schools, the expected learning outcomes and conditions for their recognition. Within Erasmus+, it is compulsory for any pupil going abroad, regardless of their length of stay.

Within the ELM project, the LA has been used as a tool allowing for sending and host schools to discover and agree on ways to broadly align the learning outcomes of their curricula, following the principles of the Council recommendation.

Therefore a template was developed based on the work of the Expert Network on recognition, including several sections of the current Erasmus+ LA template. The developed template was worked on throughout the project to better adapt and cater to its needs.

Ideally, the LA must be sent out to teachers in the host school 2 months before departure and returned to be processed and signed 1 month before departure.

The Learning Agreement is crucial for:

- The recognition of the pupil's study abroad period;
- Fostering a smoother transition between sending and host schools;
- Involving teachers in each pupil's individual mobility project;
- Help cater for each pupil's needs and interests;
- Promote academic adaptation.

Template Outline

SENDING SCHOOL:

- General information, contact information, programme of study;
- Learning outcomes specific to the curriculum of the sending school - timetable, mandatory elements of curriculum;
- Assessment of progress and outcomes;
- Arrangements for the recognition of the learning outcomes from the period abroad;
- Arrangements for compulsory end-of-school year examinations.

HOST SCHOOL:

- General information, contact information, programme of study placement;
- School attendance - timetable;
- Assessment of progress and outcomes - general planning.

OVERALL:

- Intended Learning Outcomes - portfolio, transcript, timetable, assessment of intercultural competences and other competences;
- Commitments - pupil, sending school, hosting school;
- Signatures - pupil, sending school, hosting school, legal guardian.

The Learning Agreement may present a few challenges:

- Little time can be dedicated to thinking and completing the LA and making it as complete, detailed and feasible as possible;
- The understanding that pupils on mobility will learn far more if not overloaded with work and tasks from the sending school is not widespread;
- Pupils are not always aware that the agreement is binding and therefore that it is their responsibility to assess their workload and manage their time effectively.



Assessment of Intercultural Competences

‘Intercultural competence is the learning outcome which is specific to long-term individual pupil mobility. However, the debate on how to evaluate intercultural competences remains as one of the main challenges of individual pupil mobility.

For that, Fondazione Intercultura, in collaboration with the University of Udine, have developed the Intercultura Assessment Protocol, a model for schools to evaluate the intercultural competences acquired by those secondary school students taking part in a mobility programme abroad.

The protocol follows an action research involving more than one hundred teachers and a group of experts, and offers a set of tools for secondary school teachers to evaluate the acquisition of intercultural competences during and after the student’s period abroad.

The Intercultura Assessment Protocol (IAP) © 2021 Mattia Baiutti includes:

- Pupils’ logbooks;
- Pupils’ presentation guidelines upon returning;
- Teachers’ Observation Forms for the Assessment of Pupils’ Presentations;

Within ELM, the IAP elements have been used, in particular the logbook (once during the mobility), the Pupils’ presentation guidelines upon returning and the Teachers’ Observation Forms for the Assessment of Pupils’ Presentations.

For more information on the assessment of transversal and intercultural competence in the context of individual pupil mobility, a Training Model has been developed by the above mentioned Expert Network.

Practical and Risk Management Aspects

Why is risk management so important?

Risk management is crucial for the success of any project as it eases tasks and processes, helps reduce uncertainty, and reduces losses and expenses, therefore aiding in protecting pupils from any potential foreseen and unforeseen risks. Although risk management cannot always prevent risks, anticipating any potentiality can lower their impact and allow all parties involved to make the best possible decisions in any given situation.

For the partners and families involved, it is reassuring to know that the other stakeholders share the same procedures and clear communication guidelines.

In the ELM project, we based our procedures in AFS' Standards, policies and procedures, a set of instructions and rules shared throughout the AFS worldwide network that is built on 75 years of experience organising study abroad programmes. We did make some arrangements to make sure that schools were sufficiently part of the decision-making processes in case of need. We also adapted the participation agreement model that AFS uses since, in the Erasmus+ programme guidelines, the scholarship contract should be signed between the sending school and the pupil going abroad and their parents.

For procedures and checklist examples we suggest looking into AFS Intercultural Programs' Standards, Policies and Procedures



Contracts

In the ELM project, we decided to only use a scholarship contract (between the sending school, the pupil and their parents - in some countries, the pupil mobility organisation also co-signs the agreement). This was possible because the school partners and pupil mobility organisations were already tied by the project's contract, and since the division of tasks was previously agreed by the project partners. However, for the organisation of IPM projects in the contexts of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, we recommend that contracts are signed between different stakeholders :

- between accredited sending school, parents and pupil;
- between accredited sending school and the supporting organisation on the sending side- (SOS);
- between accredited sending school, supporting organisations on the hosting side (SOH), co-signed by the supporting organisation on the sending side. If the Erasmus + NA allows, the SOS can have a contract with the SOH directly, co-signed by the school.

The Learning agreement is considered the contract between sending and host school.

We detail below which topics each contract should cover.

Scholarship contract

Parties: accredited sending school, parents, pupil

- Financial conditions - payment; cancelation; early departure;
- Insurance - medical liability;
- Responsibilities of hosting partner (supporting organisation on the hosting side) and host family;
- Travel;
- Pupil's behaviour and their obligations (e.g. school attendance, independent travel, driving, alcohol and drugs);
- Obligation to fill in the E+ Survey after mobility.

Supporting organisation contract (sending side- SOS)

Parties: accredited sending school, supporting organisation on sending side

- Tasks of the supporting organisation only (e.g. Selection process, Travel, Insurance,)
- Tasks of the supporting organisation in cooperation with school (eg. communication with host organisation)
- Expected participant behaviour
- Communication and decision-making (eg. on student early return)
- Quality control mechanisms
- Consequences in case of poor or failed delivery
- Flexibility mechanism
- Compensation for services

Supporting organisation contract (hosting side - SOH)

Parties: accredited organisation (school), supporting organisation in hosting side + co-signing of supporting organisation in sending side

- School and host family recruitment
- Insurance and well-being support
- Expected participant behaviour
- Communication and decision-making (eg. on student early return)
- Quality control mechanisms
- Consequences in case of poor or failed delivery
- Flexibility mechanisms
- Compensation for services



Communication and general support

As we already mentioned, good communication is the key to successful cooperation as it increases trust among partners, ensures that all stakeholders have the same level of information, and keeps procedures running smoothly. Communication with all participants of the programme - the pupil, but also the host family - is also key to making sure that the programme is going well, and to trying to mitigate risks that can be from different levels of gravity: it can allow us to identify miscommunications between the pupil and the host family and try to solve them before they get worse, but it can also help perceive that the pupil feels uncomfortable at the host family/that one of the family members have had inappropriate behaviour, and in this case removing the pupil from the host family is the safest option to ensure their safety. In between these two examples of risk situations, we can find many other situations where the pupil or the family might need help and support: the pupil might be having difficulties adjusting to the school or family life, they might be getting homesick or having a hard time disconnecting from their life back home, which can affect their integration in the host country, to name a few issues that might incur.

In the ELM project, we decided to appoint different contact persons depending on the public and the topic.

Following are the contacts we implemented.

- Contact Teacher (sending side): that followed the pupil's pre-departure preparation from pre-selection, going through the documents needed for the hosting country, coordinating the learning agreement and keeping close communication with the pupil and the natural family before departure.
- Contact Teacher (host side): that was a contact person for the pupil during their experience abroad for all matters concerning the school life. This person needs to be known by the pupil (preferably a teacher of one of their classes so that they can more easily build a relationship) and also by other teachers that can come to the Contact Teacher in case of school-related matters.
- "Buddy": that can be a regular school mate or even a former participant to an exchange programme (in this case, this buddy more easily understands the struggles and adjustment difficulties the host pupil might be facing) who introduces school life and colleagues to the pupil, helping them to integrate in school life and getting in touch with them regularly to check that they are going well.
- Local volunteer: usually the local volunteer from then pupil mobility supporting organisation that is in charge of hosting programmes for hosting in their region, that can check that everything is going well during the intercultural activities organised during the programme.

For the host family:

- One adult contact person, that has a previous experience as a host family - if possible-, can contact the family from time to time to make sure that everything is going well. This person can also organise mediation sessions between the host family and the pupil as needed, with the help of experienced local volunteers if needed as well.

For the natural family:

- Usually, the natural family does not have a specific contact person but knows the contact information from the volunteers that have prepared the pupil before departure, and whom they can contact if needed.

Emergencies

When organising pupil mobility programmes, we need to keep in mind that the pupils are in a vulnerable position: they are away from their parents in a foreign country, where they don't necessarily know yet the language, and all aspects of the culture and social life. They can also need medical assistance any time during the programme, or even miss a connecting flight when going abroad or returning home, and need immediate assistance to know what to do.

That is why it is very important to have a 24h emergency line that pupils, host families and sending families know about and can contact in case of need. This line must be held by organisations expert in mobility that know the procedures to follow and who can give instructions, ask for more detailed information and keep the involved partners informed about the situation as needed.

Recommendations for promoting individual pupil mobility

Importance of promotion targeted at different audiences

The promotion of IPM within Erasmus+ is a somewhat delicate and intricate process. It is important to take into account the particular audience being addressed, their particularities, their doubts, their goals, their questions, etc.

What audiences are we trying to reach?

- Pupils;
- Parents;
- Teachers;
- Headmasters;
- Classes.

Dissemination efforts need to be adapted to each particular school context and audience. The cooperation between schools and support organisations is crucial at this particular stage as each has knowledge that, combined, will allow for smoother information sessions. For example, the teachers and school staff have an understanding of their pupils and the needs of their parents which the support organisation does not and would not otherwise be aware of needed addressing. The support organisation has vast experience with IPM and the practical and academic knowledge needed to address the diversity of questions and challenges actors such as pupils, parents and teachers may present them with.

Our questions for the future

Parents. How can we get parents' attention, motivate them and engage with them?

Communication. How can the supporting organisation get to know people from disadvantaged backgrounds better so we can better communicate?

Selection. Should we and how do we systematize the selection process?

School expectations. How can we better align the expectations of schools that are more oriented towards academic results and schools that are more oriented towards personal development?

Religion. For religious practices, what is the right balance between adaptation by the participant and adaptation for the participant by the host community?

Practical preparation. How can we better support young people in the preparation of student files and other practical aspects? inclusion vs individual motivation

Training to participants. How can we better organise training in terms of group cohesion, active participation, adapted content on ICL and social class and a sensitive approach towards diverse needs (for example during Ramadan)?

Funding. Erasmus+ offers additional funds for supporting inclusion; how is it best spent when including young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds?

Messaging

As mentioned throughout this guide, communication is a crucial aspect of managing an IPM project. It is important that the way information is curated throughout the various stages of the project is adapted to whom the messages are aimed at.

The ELM pilot has revealed that teachers and school staff are crucial in helping tailor messages to parents as they will be the most knowledgeable of the specificities of this audience and central actors within the school community, whom parents already know and trust. From our experience, there are parents who culturally have more of a tendency to get involved in the various processes of IPM while others tend to not participate as actively.

Messaging with sending families is particularly relevant during the dissemination and preparation stages of IPM but since not all pupils will be actively supported by their parents, administratively speaking, processes need to be adapted and tailored to pupils' particular needs, be it a long time or individual support, for example.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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Expanding learning mobility to new audiences through school-civil society partnerships
2020-1-BE01-KA201-074973