Impact of ERASMUS+ on the Adult Education Sector in Portugal

National report RIA-AE network

RIA

ADULT EDUCATION

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Revision made by the Portuguese NA.

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Abbreviations

AE	Adult Education
HED	Higher Education
ICT	Information and communication technology
KA1	Key Action 1
KA2	Key Action 2
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RIA-AE	Research-based Impact. Analysis of AE field in projects granted by the Erasmus+ Programme
SCH	School Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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PART A – SHORT SUMMARY REPORT

1. Overview of the results

This overview is based on the different sections of this report. To avoid misunderstandings, it might happen that some paragraphs are exactly the same and those that can be found throughout the document.

Background of the monitoring study

Erasmus+ is a well-acknowledged programme promoted by the European Commission to the promotion of mobility and cooperation in education, training, youth, and sport. It offers mobility and cooperation in six different fields[1]: higher education (HED); vocational education and training (VET); school education (SCH); adult education (AE); youth (YOU); and sport (SPT). From these six fields, adult education is still in need of being increased funding[2]. Even though, the programme for this specific field intends to strengthen educational, social and economic conditions of adult learners, especially those with fewer opportunities. It is also intended at targeting a wide range of providers, mainly non-governmental organisations, grassroots organisations, but also public and private/profit-making organisations[3]. The main purpose is to foster the involvement of organisations that are closer to adult learners, to increase educational and learning opportunities, to empower adult learners in individual and collective terms. The purpose is that these learners acquire ownership and autonomy through projects and activities aimed at social inclusion, ICT learning and development, sustainable development, social participation and democratic civic engagement[4].

In spite of the relevance of adult education in the Erasmus+ Programme in many countries and in the European Union itself, little is known about the impact of the programme in the participating organisations (in what refers to the organisations

[1] The debate upon adult education as a research field has been made by several authors to refer to an autonomous domain of research, with specific topics and methods for data production and analysis. Although the debate about adult education as an academic discipline or field of practice throughout the twentieth century is well known, we share the view of Bron and Jarvis that see adult education as a 'young scientific discipline', usually a 'sub-discipline of education/pedagogy', where the 'learning of adults in formal, non-formal and informal settings constitutes a specific field of research', in Bron, A., & Jarvis, P, 2008, Identities of Adult Educators: Changes in Professionality. In E. Nuissl & S. Lattke, Eds., *Qualifying adult learning professionals in Europe* (pp. 33–44). W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co., p. 38). Therefore, throughout this report we will use the term field to refer to adult education.

[2] For more details, please check: European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), European Parliament report on Erasmus+ (2019), https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/European-parliament-report-on-Erasmus-EAEA-response-April-2019.pdf

[3] For more details, please check p. 135. In European Commission (2024). Erasmus+, Guia do Programa, https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-11/2024-Erasmus%2BProgramme-Guide_PT.pdf

[4] For more information, please see: Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2025), https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/pt-pt/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme/objectives-features and https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/pt-pt/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme

themselves, to staff[5] and adult learners[6]), which are granted to develop projects and activities in the UE and in other parts of the world which have agreements with this supranational organisation. To fill this gap, a transnational research network, including a significant number of countries[7], with their Erasmus+ National Agencies and research teams, was established.

The Research-based Impact Analysis of Erasmus+ Programme Network (RIA-AE network) is one of the outcomes of this transnational research effort, and it is the first monitoring study that specifically addresses an evaluation of impact of the Erasmus+ Programme in organisations that have developed KA1 and KA2 granted projects and activities. The monitoring focuses on the benefits of participating in Erasmus+ Programme, i.e. the identification of factors that have contributed to positive or negative, short-term or lasting changes, e.g. in the personal, organisational and professional spheres. In addition, it determined to what extent the objectives set by the European Commission for this framework (inclusion and diversity; digital transformation; environment and fight against climate change; participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement[8]) have been accomplished.

To analyse the effects of Erasmus+ Programme on the different levels (organisation, staff, learners), this study is being developed according to a multi-level model (macro, meso and micro) that is presented in the next sections of this report. The model distinguishes between the micro, meso and macro levels, which can be decisive for access and take-up, but also for the effects of international projects in individual, organisational or systemic terms. The challenge of widening participation of learners lies in the alignment of activity structures at the macro, meso and micro levels.

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

Methodological approach

[5] By staff, it is meant a person who, on either a professional or a voluntary basis, is involved in education, training or non-formal learning at all levels.
[6] By adult learner, it is meant any adult who, having completed or being no longer involved in initial education or training, returns to some forms of non-vocational continuing learning (formal, non-formal or informal)."
[7] These are 20 countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Türkiye. For more information, please check: EPALE - Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, The RIA-AE Network (2025),https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/ria-ae-network
[8] For more information please check pp. 7-10: Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2025), https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-11/erasmus-programme-guide-2025_en.pdf

The methodological approach for this national study includes document analysis, a survey and case studies with interviews divided into five modules:

Module 1 – Analysis of data found in the open website of the European Union of the Erasmus+-Programme, referring to funded projects and existing studies on this funding Programme that have involved Portuguese organisations (as coordinators or partners institutions in which Portuguese organisations were also part of[9]).

Module 2 – Analysis of data from an online survey to organisations granted by the Erasmus+ Programme on adult education, from 2018 to 2022. The survey was launched in October and November 2023, focussing on the characterisation of the organisations, impact of funding of the Erasmus+ Programme in the organisations; and obstacles faced by these organisations in developing applications and implementing projects and activities.

Module 3 – Analysis of data from specific cases[10] selected due to their relevance in terms of impact, that participated in Erasmus+ Programme on adult education. For each case, interviews with the organisations' directors/representatives were carried out. In some cases, the organisations' Erasmus+ coordinators and professionals and/or voluntary staff were also inquired. These were individual interviews. In some cases, group interviews were also carried including adult learners. Apart from interviews, documents of the organisation under study, such as websites, report and applications to the Erasmus+ Programme were also considered. Document analysis was made to the referred documents.

Module 4 – Analysis of data from the interviews carried out to adult learners, who participated in Erasmus+ projects and activities, selected in Module 3. These were mostly individual interviews.

Module 5 - Analysis of data from the interviews carried out to representatives of organisations that have never participated in Erasmus+ projects. These were individual interviews.

Key findings

The following paragraphs include general comments of the study developed. Detailed information on general comments made may be found in further sections of this report.

- **The accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ Programme[11]**

[9] Although the relevance of such projects, this study focus on projects coordinated by Portuguese institutions. Projects coordinated by other countries institutions were not included in this study.

[10] By cases, it is meant organisations that were funded by the Erasmus+. Data collection included interviews to several people involved in these institutions, such as coordinators, educators/staff and/or learners, documental analysis of websites of the funded projects, applications, and reports.

[11] Accessibility and inclusiveness are two concepts that are not deeply approached in this report. The use of such words in this report refers to friendly users' applications, by which these are made "more or less easily".

According to data collected in this project survey in the Module 2, the organisations participating in KA1 projects on adult education are mostly NGO, followed by Schools/Institutes/Educational centres involved in adult education learners and staff mobility. The organisations participating in KA2 are mostly NGO, followed by higher education institutions and small and medium size enterprises. Detailed information concerning these institutions will be provided to the reader in further sections of this report and in Module 2 report.

Following data collected in this study, the main obstacles for participating in Erasmus+ Programme on adult education are related to: a) lack of staff (understaffing), who can be specifically involved in the development of applications and implementation of projects procedures, b) constraints arising from the complexity of the application and development procedures, and financial (underfunding) issues; c) lack of knowledge regarding the possibilities of Erasmus+ projects, mostly associated with mobility of higher education or secondary education students. Detailed information concerning these institutions will be provided to the reader in further sections of this report and in Module 2 report.

The majority of organisations participated in five or more Erasmus+ projects. This means that most organisations are experienced in applying and developing Erasmus+ projects; therefore, the Programme maintains its accessibility.

Regarding participants, many adults are unemployed, with low levels of education, young adults lacking basic skills, adults with limited income and with learning difficulties. Considering the target audience (staff and/or learners) it is possible to conclude that, in Portugal, Erasmus+ on adult education is a rather inclusive programme, involving adults facing social and economic constraints and few opportunities' participants, being, for many, the mobility activity the first opportunity to travel abroad.

- **Impact at meso level**

The main impact on internationalisation of organisations was observed, as according to the online survey (Module 2) organisations claim to have a policy/strategy for internationalisation, and have participated in international networks and activities on a regular basis[12].

The main impact on learning offer is expressed by the inquired organisations as being better prepared to collaborate with other institutions that support fewer opportunities' participants. These organisations are able to incorporate outputs or insights gained from the Erasmus+ projects and activities developed into new or

[12] For more information on this issue, please check: Erasmus+ Portugal, Estudos e Publicações (2025), https://erasmusmais.pt/recursos/estudos-e-publicacoes/#Portugal

existing learning provisions and improve the alignment of this offer with adult learners' needs.

The main findings regarding the impact on horizontal priorities evidenced that inclusion and diversity are part of the organisations' strategy and action plan and in training offers. Additionally, adult learners' opinions are considered when developing, monitoring and evaluating the existing offer.

Factors hampering the use of outputs and products developed within Erasmus+ projects and activities are related to: a)organisational issues, such as differences between the goals of each organisation and the goals of the funded project; b) staff issues, namely, resistance to engagement in projects and activities that are different from those usually implemented by each organisation, and changes in staff, namely precarious work contracts that might only be temporarily involved with the organisation.

- **Impact at micro level**

The highest ranked learning outcomes in the mobility of staff are: learning from new activities (knowledge acquired from activities including new contents, pedagogical methods such as active methods in which the involvement of adult learners is more significant, the use of ICT tools and new educational materials), and new practice approaches (such as project-based learning, project-management, design-thinking); increased staff efficiency and efficacy in pedagogical issues; and specifically how to increase awareness of adult learners needs, ways of thinking and strategies to developing activities for specific social groups, namely those with special needs, disable and/or fewer opportunities.

In what concerns to the level of professionalisation and staff development, relevant impacts include: the development of cultural competencies, and language skills in, at least, one foreign idiom, commonly English; improvement of pedagogical and didactical skills allowing to collaborate with other organisations that support participants with fewer educational opportunities.

The main impact of Erasmus+ Programme on adult learners is related to new social contacts learners have made outside their regular social environment when participating in an Erasmus+ projects and activities – learners claim they were enriched by participating these initiatives. It was also highlighted that learners were more available to join further educational activities. At the competencies level, adult learners refer to have developed language competencies depending on the country the mobility took place (English, Spanish, Italian), specific competencies related to their professional occupation, emotional intelligence, awareness of cultural diversity and different ways of being and understanding the world and global

change. Participants are unanimous in referring that mobilities increased their self-confidence, and in some cases, were a life changer event.

Factors stimulating the impact of Erasmus+ Programme on adult learners included the promotion of social inclusion, new and different education and learning materials, and of new job opportunities, in national and international settings.

Factors hampering the long-lasting use of outputs and products (after funding ends) concern the organisation itself (different aims of the organisation compared to projects developed, resistance of staff to engage in the project and staff changes as a result of temporary or precarious employment contracts such as happening at the meso level.

- **Impact at macro level**

Although it is not the main aim of this study to assess the impact at the macro level, the interviews made showed that projects developed had some kind of impact on other organisations alike the ones granted which shows that participation in Erasmus+ Programme has impact on adapting and delivering offers. There is a kind of transferability effect when one organisation is funded and another similar organisation also sees Erasmus+ as an opportunity to apply.

However, while organisations involved in Erasmus+ Programme believe that Erasmus+ results had impacted on other similar organisations (as these see also an opportunity to apply), there are no clear indicators given by interviewees (such as changes in public policies) that show the impact of Erasmus+ Programme on AE general policies at government and/or sectoral policies at local, regional or national levels.

Factors stimulating impact on other organisations are related to knowledge development on the diversity of adult education, as a field of practice and of policies in Europe, and on the variety of pedagogical methods used in implemented activities.

Factors that hamper the impact of Erasmus+ Programme on government policies are due to the fact that Erasmus+ is not a part of the national existing AE policy[13] and/or national AE implementation programmes.

Reasons for not applying to Erasmus+ grant

From the analysis of the interviews, it was clear that most organisations are not aware of the different possibilities provided by Erasmus+, associating them solely with mobilities for higher education or secondary school students. This is also the reason why they have never considered participating, the lack of knowledge.

[13] Promoted by the National agency for qualification and vocational education and training (such as *Qualifica Programme* – more details in QUALIFICA, www.qualifica.gov.pt).

All organisations consulted considered the participation in Erasmus+ mobilities could be very positive, especially for staff, who could bring new knowledge and different working approaches. However, one of the greatest obstacles for employees is time availability (time management and family and work responsibilities), and for organisations, the lack of human resources to replace in case of absence.

All organisations (like directors, representatives, etc.), except one, mentioned that it would be difficult for adult learners to adhere to such initiatives, due to lack of availability, cultural issues, and also the belief that such initiatives are no longer for their age cohort.

Recommendations for National Agency, when provided, are related to the need for more information, and the usage of different channels and networking in the communities, the creation of Erasmus ambassadors to disseminate the information at a local level, so the information can reach smaller community organisations. Adequate financing provision according to mobilities' destinations is another suggestion. Finally, assistance in gathering adequate partners and in the development of funding applications are also mentioned.

Policy pointers

- **How to increase the accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ Programme on adult education**

The following paragraphs are suggestions based on the data collected in this study, some by interviewees, and some others by the research team itself based on different kind of data collected.

It is important to keep the Erasmus+ Programme, owing to its aims, participants (both for adult learners and staff) and organisations involved. In Portugal, funding available for non-formal adult education is difficult to find (due to lack of specific non-formal education programmes existing), and when available, it is scarce and difficult to get (owing to bureaucratic rules). Thus, it would be important to increase the amount of funding and to have less bureaucratic rules to apply.

Erasmus+ applications are based on a set of complex procedures. For larger organisations, which are already skilled, applications are easy to make. It is therefore important to ensure by the European Commission that other organisations, having mainly staff on a free-lance and part-time basis have access to this funding Programme and that is and that is provided some assistance in developing applications by NA, for instance.

Additionally, it is important to (re)think by Erasmus+ NA, decision makers, and funded organisations themselves, projects involving (low-skilled, non-regular-participants) adult learners. The preference for non-formal education and active pedagogic methods, focussing on a social and cultural dimensions, is a relevant option to involve adult learners that are not usual participants in adult education activities.

- **How to increase the impact at micro level**

Following suggestions made in the development of this study, the increase in the participation of both adult learners and staff in adult education should be based on activities and projects linked to wider values and objectives (such as those of a cultural, civic and political kinds). These aims are in need of considering the challenges that nowadays all European Union countries face, in particular in Portugal, such as the ageing of society, among others.

Projects and activities need to be based on active pedagogical and didactical methods to foster the educational and social dimension of the implemented initiatives. The social dimension is a central aspect to the inquired adult learners and staff. Erasmus+ mobility is a very good way to promote social contacts and networks, but also for sharing, dialog, tolerance, respect for differences, and critical reflection on differences and different cultures and countries.

Considering that Erasmus+ Adult Education projects are focused on non-vocational education activities, these initiatives can be an essential way to promote the global citizenry. It could allow adult learners and staff in adult education to become more aware of challenges and opportunities of living in the European Union based on democratic and peace values.

- **How to increase the impact at meso level**

It is important to promote sharing of knowledge and competences, outputs and results achieved in the Erasmus+ Adult Education projects. National and international networks and partnerships created by this Programme can be a starting point for promoting share and dialog among organisations which projects are funded by the Programme, and for a critical reflection on outputs and results achieved, on the main values of the European Union, and on processes to build democracy and social participation.

Considering interviews made in this study, applying and granted projects, namely grassroots and non-governmental, lacking full time staff, need to be considered in the funding procedures, both when applying (having application procedures that are simple and reliable enough) and when developing projects and activities it would be important that staff are not composed only by volunteers, but also by formal employees, in the case of funded projects that staff are not only volunteers, but formal employees, when projects are funded).

- **How to increase the impact at macro level**

Following suggestions collected within this study, Erasmus+ in Portugal is still considered a complement of funding for organisations when it comes to adult education. As there is not a non-formal adult education policy in the country, this programme relies on itself, without any kind of articulation with the existing adult education programme (such as the *Qualifica* programme), mainly based on formal adult education offers. Portugal requires a non-formal adult education policy, and to develop bridges between the national policy and the Erasmus+ Adult Education, to provide the necessary stability and continuity in projects and activities developed by local organisations.

Due to the nature of projects and activities funded by Erasmus+ Programme, without a national adult education non-formal policy, a connection with other public entities, such as the ministries and departments of environment, culture and sports, among others, could be promoted.

Although being a well-acknowledged programme, the Erasmus+ Adult Education needs to spread the word on what refers to its aims and its outputs and results, among non-governmental and civil society organisations; public/State dependant organisations; and also private/profit-making companies, through differentiated channels, including social media, community interventions or ambassadors of the Programme. A better visibility and social recognition of the importance of this Programme is central to its survival and also to its maintenance in the European Union and in the national context.

PART B – MAIN REPORT

B.I INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

1.1. Erasmus+ Programme

ERASMUS+ is the European Commission flagship Programme for education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. Being well-known and relying on more than two decades of development, the Programme offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in the following six main fields: higher education (HE); vocational education and training (VET); school education (including early childhood education and care - ECEC); adult education (AE); youth (YOU); and sport (SPO). It aims to reach out to a wider range of groups such as younger students, disadvantaged individuals, and smaller grassroots organisations.

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

As in the previous Programme (2014-2020), the current Erasmus+ 2021-2027 comprises three Key Actions. Some Actions are managed at the centralised Commission level, through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Other Actions are managed at the decentralised level through the network of Erasmus+ National Agencies (NA)[14] whose role is to promote the Programme, disseminate information nationally, support applicants and beneficiaries, assist the Commission in the selection process for funding, monitoring and evaluating projects, and work with other NAs and the Commission, for example sharing high quality practice and project achievements[15]. These include:

- KEY ACTION 1: Learning mobility of individuals (staff and learners): aiming to Influence education, training, and youth systems, result in positive long-

[13] See foot note 6.
[15] For more information, please check: Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2025), https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme/implements

term effects on individuals, ultimately inspiring policy reforms and drawing new resources for mobility opportunities throughout Europe and beyond.

- KEY ACTION 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions (Previous: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices): aiming to develop, transfer, and/or implementation of innovative practices at the organisational, local, regional, national, and European levels, with beneficial long-term consequences on the participating organisations and policy systems[16].

- KEY ACTION 3: Support to policy cooperation at European Union level, thereby contributing to the implementation of existing policies and the development of new policies, which can trigger modernisation and reforms, at European Union, and systems' level, in the fields of education, training youth and sport[17].

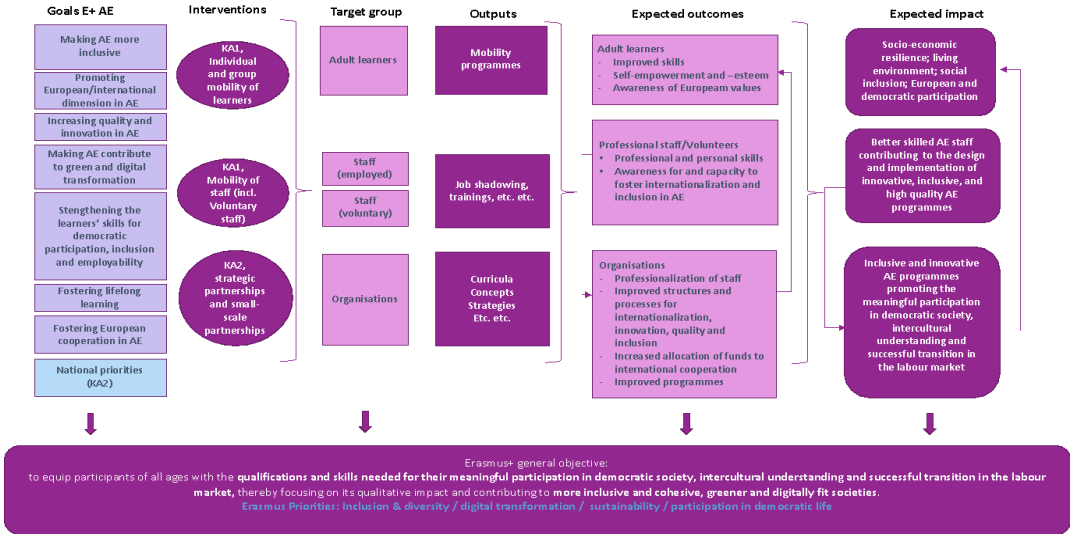
In what concerns to the adult education field, the Erasmus+ Programme aims to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of adults, whose conditions for changing their personal situation through educational opportunities are difficult. Adult education under Erasmus+ Programme should lead to greater ownership and autonomy through improved language, numeracy, digital and other skills for vulnerable adults. The figure below provides the reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) of Erasmus+ for the adult education sector[18].

[16] For more detailed information, please check key-action-2: Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2025), https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2

[17] For more detailed information, please check key-action-3: Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2025), https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-3

[18] The theory of Change has been an option of the international coordination of this study. More detailed information can be found in: Change the Game Academy (2025), https://www.changethegameacademy.org/shortmodule/theory-of-change-toc/

Figure 1: Intervention logic Erasmus+ impact on the adult education field



Source: Intervention logic Erasmus+ impact on the adult education field. Adapted. From https://www.evalacademy.com/articles/what-is-theory-of-change-in-evaluation

1.2. The importance of impact monitoring

Little is known about the impact of Erasmus+ projects on adult learners, staff, and organisations in the field of adult education. To better coordinate research activities on strengthening the impact of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education, and to enable the further development and quality improvement of the Erasmus+ Programme, a transnational research network has been established, funded by Erasmus+ (see box below with the mission statement of the RIA-AE network).

Table 1: Mission Statement RIA-AE Network[19]

'Adult education matters' AND 'To explore the unexplored'

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

The impact of ERASMUS+ on adult learners has been less researched so far and little is known about the impact of the ERASMUS+ Programme on the environment and socio-economic resilience of adult learners. To better coordinate research activities on the impact of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education and to enable the further development and quality improvement of the ERASMUS+ Programme, a transnational

[19] For more information, please check: EPALE - Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (2025), The RIA-AE Network, https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/ria-ae-network

research network is to be established named: The Research-based Impact Analysis of ERASMUS+ - Adult Education Programme Network (RIA-AE Network)

The objectives of the RIA-AE network

The RIA-AE Network has various objectives:

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

Means

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

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

Cooperation framework

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

Values

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

Source: *EPALE - Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (2025), The RIA-AE Network, https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/ria-ae-network*

1.3. Multi-level framework

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

To be possible to address the effects of Erasmus+ on the different Programme levels (organisation, staff, learners), we propose to locate the monitoring study in a multi-level model of adult education. The model distinguishes between the micro, meso and macro levels, which can be decisive for access and take-up, but also for the effects of international projects in individual, organisational or systemic terms (Brüning & Kuwan, 2002)[20,21]. Brüning and Kuwan (2002) notably stress that the answer to the challenge of widening participation of learners, lies in the alignment of activity structures at the macro, meso and micro level. To provide a basis for interdependence of these levels 'mobilisation strategies' and 'clusters of instruments, to increase the participation in learning or to mobilise specific target groups into learning' (Broek & Hake, 2012, p. 400), are necessary. The framework connects the following factors (cf. Brüning & Kuwan, 2002):

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

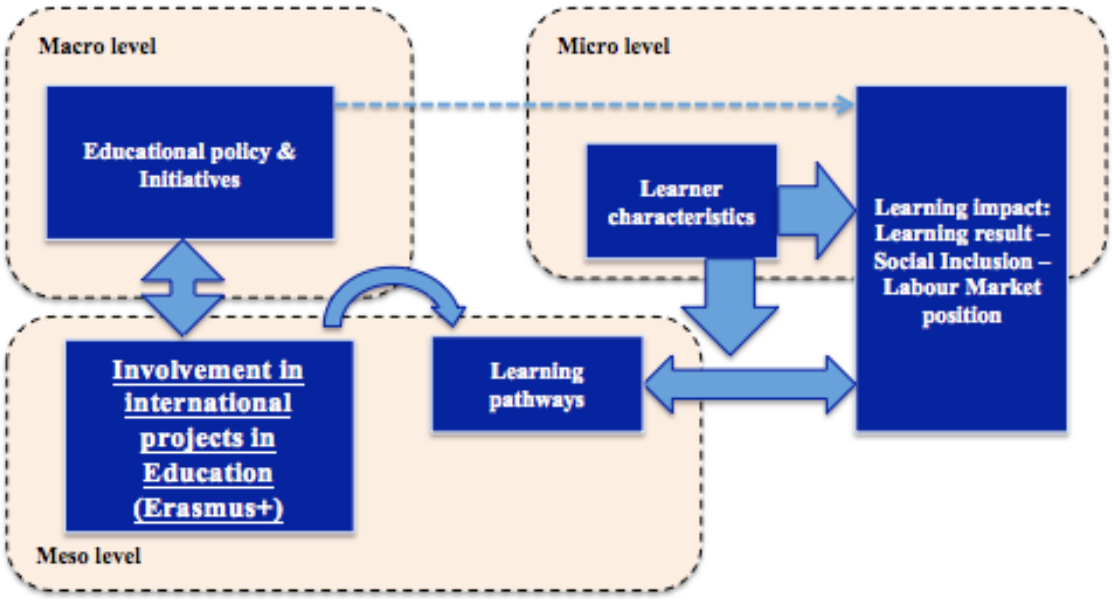
Figure 2 shows the interplay of these three levels influencing the impact of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education, within the Erasmus+ Programme. For each of these levels, key factors can be identified to describe and analyse the specific influences of the impact of international

[20] Schrader, J. (2011). Struktur und Wandel der Weiterbildung. Bielefeld: wbv. The theoretical framework was provided by the international coordination of the study.

[21] Brüning, G. & Kuwan, H. (2002). Benachteiligte und Bildungsferne - Empfehlungen für die Weiterbildung. Bielfeld: wbv. The theoretical framework was provided by the international coordination of the study.

cooperation and mobility projects in adult education, within the Erasmus+ Programme.

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



Source: Figure provided by the international coordination of this study

1.4. Purpose of the study and research questions

The main objective of the transnational monitoring study is to provide the National Agencies with information on the impact of the Programme on (1) participating institutions, (2) staff and (3) adult learners who have participated in a mobility activity individually or in groups, as well as on the benefits for their living environment and socio-economic resilience. Additionally, interviews to organisations' representatives that didn't apply to Erasmus+ grants were made in order to understand reasons behind non-participation in applications.

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

learners' mobility could also have an indirect impact on organisations. Therefore, we jointly present the research questions to be addressed in Table 2.

Table 2: Research questions of the study

Research questions
How accessible/inclusive is the Programme for the target groups? (chapter 4)
– What are the specificities and characteristics of the adult education organisations participating in the Erasmus+ programme?
– What are the specificities and characteristics of participants, staff, volunteers and adult learners who, individually or in groups, participate or have participated in an ERASMUS+ project?
– What does this information say about the accessibility and inclusiveness of ERASMUS+ internationalisation projects in the network countries (Erasmus+ priority inclusion and diversity)? Are there any 'obstacles' for organisations, professionals and learners to participate?
What is the impact of participation in KA1 and KA2 projects at the AE institution on the following areas… (chapter 5)
– The quality of the organisation and in particular the organisational embedding of internationalisation in the organisations (strategy, finances, project management, networks, validation of international competences)?
– Policies for the professional development of their staff in relation to individual needs and organisational objectives?
– The introduction of new or adaptation of existing offers (Programmes, activities, modules or new/adapted pedagogical, didactic and validation activities)?
– The adaptation of (educational) activities and programmes to the needs of learners?
– The involvement of learners in Programme design?
– Improving accessibility for adult learners (inclusion)?
– Quality assurance policies?
– The use of information and communication technologies and the digitalisation of Programmes (Erasmus+ priority digital transformation)?
– The promotion of the teaching of international competences and common values (inclusion and diversity; tolerance; sustainability/ environment/ fight against climate change, digitalisation, global citizenship, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, etc.) in the offers (see ERASMUS+ priorities: Inclusion & diversity / digital transformation / sustainability / participation in democratic life?
– Sustainable cooperation and synergies between adult education institutions, charities, cultural institutions, labour market actors and civil society to promote the independence of adult learners?
– The dissemination, exchange of knowledge and experience within the organisation and with other (more or less experienced) organisations?
– The establishment and development of an international network?
– How do the impacts differ between the different types of adult education institutions (formal, non-formal, governmental, civil society, private)?
What impact does participation in KA1 and KA2 projects have on staff in the areas of … (chapter 6.2)
– Skills, knowledge, attitudes, competences – Foreign language and intercultural awareness – Digital competences, including to allow a shift towards digital education – Competences linked to occupational profiles – Understanding of practices, policies and systems across countries – Understanding for and ability to address issues of social inclusion and diversity – Capacity to trigger changes in terms of modernisation and international opening within their educational organisations – Organising mobility projects – Managing cooperation with European partners – Management skills (mentioned only in KA2) – Sustainability competences (mentioned only in KA2)
– Self-confidence, adaptability and perseverance?

– The application and exchange of the international experience gained among the employees?
– Identification with European society and the values associated with it (integration, diversity, tolerance, anti-discrimination, etc.)?
– Professional development and career?
– Motivation and satisfaction in daily work?
What impact do KA1 and KA2 projects have on adult learners in the areas of … (chapter 6.3)
Skills, knowledge, attitudes, competences? – Foreign language and intercultural awareness – Awareness and understanding of the European Union and common European values (e.g. respect for democratic principles, human dignity, unity and diversity, intercultural dialogue, as well as European social, cultural and historical heritage) – Key competences – Digital skills and media literacy – Sustainability-related skills and awareness for green transformation – Self-empowerment and self-esteem – Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
Labour market outcomes? – Enhanced employability, improved career prospects and economic independence
Lifelong learning? – Improved learning performance and motivation for taking part in education and training – Enable learners to participate in training
– Social Inclusion? – More active participation in society and enhanced positive interactions with people from different backgrounds – Socio-economic resilience
– Is there a difference in impact between participation in group and individual mobility?
What impact do KA1 and KA2 projects have on other organisations and policy developments? (Chapter 7)
– Will the experiences from the KA1 and KA2 projects be taken over by other organisations that have not participated in ERASMUS+ (dissemination of results)?
– Do the results of the KA1 and KA2 projects contribute to policy developments at local, regional, national and European level? – Policy reforms – Attracting new resources for mobility opportunities – Rising participation of adult of all ages and socio-economic background in adult education
Lessons to support the effectiveness and efficiency of future Erasmus+ Programmes (Chapter 8)
– How can the accessibility of the Erasmus+ Programme to the target group adult learning be improved?
– Which AE organisations are pioneers and why (with which institutional peculiarities including special features of the offers)?
– What are the opportunities and challenges for the participation of target groups?
– What are the first experiences with the KA1 individual or group mobility of adult learners and what are the opportunities and risks?
– What monitoring information is needed annually in addition to the "participation reports" in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Erasmus+ Programme on the target group of adult learners? Can research provide a frame of reference that enables a sustainable improvement in effectiveness?
– How can the NAs support the AE institutions even more strongly in reaching impact?

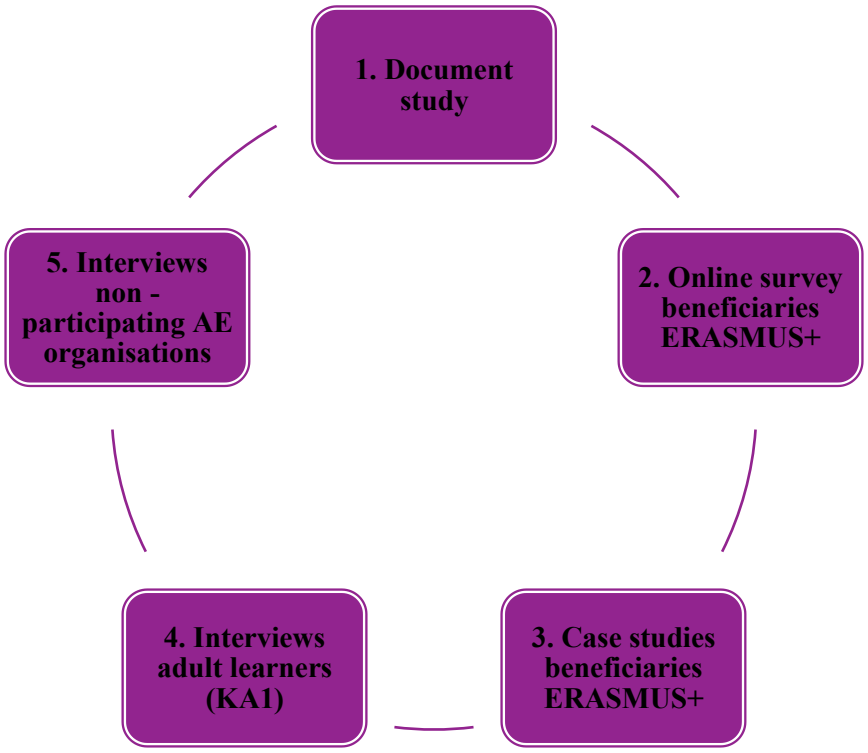
Source: Data provided by the international coordination of this study.

2. Research design

2.1. Introduction

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

Figure 3: Research-cycle of RIA-AE



Source: Research cycle figure provided by the international coordination of the RIA-AE study.

2.2. Module 1: Analysis of existing impact studies and project documentation

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

based on the European Commission Erasmus+ dashboards, whose information and data were requested to the Portuguese National Agency).

2.3. Module 2: Survey among participating AE organisations

To get a good picture of the impact of Erasmus+ Programme on adult education funded projects in Portugal, all AE institutions, which participated in a KA1 and KA2 projects (as coordinators) in the previous (from 2018 onward) and current programming period (till the end of 2022), were invited to participate in an online survey[22]. The survey was launched on the 27.10.2023 to 128 organisations. The deadline for the online survey was 10.11.2023. Due to the small number of answers (N=58) the survey was launched again on the 11.11.2023, and it got an additional of 48 answers. A total of 106 answers were collected (answering rate: 63%).

2.4. Module 3: Case studies

In addition to the analysis of existing information at the NA[23] and in the survey, four case studies were conducted at institutions that participated in Erasmus+ Programme on Adult Education from 2018 to 2022. Case studies were selected from a convenience sample, including all KA1 and KA2 projects, funded during the referred period, considering attempting to diversify the following criteria: i) geographical location, ii) type of organisation and iii) main topics addressed.

Interviews conducted lasted between 1 to 2 hours and were made from January to March 2024, face-to-face and online (recorded in video through the zoom platform). All interviews were audio recorded, and data processed by content analysis. Oral[24] and written consent to participate in the study was obtained from all interviewees.

These cases can be seen as relevant examples, as representative models, of the wide variety of Erasmus+ projects have granted in Portugal. During this report, quantitative data got from the online survey and qualitative one, from interviews and documents analysed were used in order to get a triangulation of data.

[22] Contact persons of beneficiary organisations of projects were selected whose ending date according to the grant agreement is no earlier than 1st of January 2018 and whose end date is no later than 31st of December 2022.
[23] Such as applications and reports.
[24] In interviews in which oral consent was provided, the consent can be found in video records that the research team has in its possession.

Table 3: Staff interviews carried out in Module 3

Organisation	Interviewee	Code
1. Non-formal/liberal adult education organisation (Lisbon metropolitan region) – KA104 project	Staff 1 Staff 2 Staff 3 Staff 4 Staff 5	C1-E1 C1-E2 C1-E3 C1-E4 C1-E5
2. Cooperative directed at non-formal education of disabled (Lisbon metropolitan region) – KA204 project	Director Staff 1 Staff 2	C2-E1 C2-E2 C2-E3
3. Town council located in the North of Portugal – KA104 project –	Director Staff 1 Staff 2	C3-E1 C3-E2
3. NGO located in Castelo Branco – (C5) - KA204	Coordinators Staff 1 Staff 2	C4-E1 C4-E2 C4-E3

Source: Own elaboration

3.1. Module 4: adult learners interviews (individual and group mobility)

To get a picture of the participation, experiences and impact of mobility among adult learners (a component of the current Erasmus+ Programme), a total of twenty three people that participated in a mobility action (KA104[25] and KA122[26]) were interviewed. Interviews were conducted from October to December 2024 and were carried out mostly face-to-face, but also online[27], with each individual. The interviews were audio recorded and data processed. A written consent form to participate in the study was signed by all interviewees.

For the purpose of this report, all cases were considered and quotes from interviewees were used to illustrate main findings. These cases can be seen as relevant examples of the wide variety of Erasmus+ projects have granted in Portugal.

Table 4: Adult learners' interviews carried out in Module 4

Organisation	Interviewee	Code
1. Non-formal/liberal adult education organisation (Lisbon metropolitan region) – KA104 project	Adult learner1 Adult learner2 Adult learner3 Adult learner4 Adult learner5 Adult learner6	D1 D2 D3 D4 D5 D6
2. Adult education centre in the Centre of Portugal	Adult learner1 Adult learner2	B1 B2
3.NGO in the North of Portugal	Adult learner1	C1

[25] Adult Education staff mobility (2014-2020).
[26] Short-term projects for mobility of learners and staff (2021-2027).
[27] The zoom platform was used for these interviews. Video records are kept and in possession of the research team.

	Adult learner2	C2
4. NGO located in the Centre inland of Portugal	Adult learner1 Adult learner2 Adult learner3 Adult learner4 Adult learner5 Adult learner6 Adult learner7 Adult learner8 Adult learner9 Adult learner10 Adult learner11 Adult learner12 Adult learner13	A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10 A11 A12 A13

Source: Own elaboration

3.2. Module 5: Interviews with non-participating organisations

To understand the reasons why some organisations do not participate in Erasmus+ Programme, 7 representatives from 7 different organisations were interviewed. The criteria for the choice[28] of the organisations that have never participated in Erasmus+ was that these organisations should have similar goals and activities to those which participate in Erasmus+ projects, to understand the reasons for the non-participation. Interviews were conducted from October to December 2024 and were carried out mostly face-to-face, but also online[29], with individuals. The interviews were audio recorded, and data processed. A written consent form to participate in the study was signed by all interviewees.

Table 5 – Non-participating interviews carried out in Module 5

Organisation	Interviewee	Code
NGO located in Lisbon Metropolitan Area	President	NSR
NGO located in Coimbra, Centre of Portugal	Teacher	NB
Parish council, Lisbon Metropolitan Area	President	NJF
Charitable institution in Lisbon Metropolitan Area	Board member, kindergarten teacher	NIP
Adult education centre in the Centre of Portugal	Coordinator	NCQ
NGO involving elderly located in Lisbon Metropolitan Area	Coordinator	NAS
Training department of a company located in. Lisbon	Coordinator	NEP

Source: Own elaboration

[28] The selection of these organisations was done randomly, according to knowledge and contacts each of the members of the research team has.
[29] The zoom platform was used for these interviews. Video records are kept and in possession of the research team.

B.II General contextualization of the study

4. Brief overview of the adult education field in Portugal

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the governance of the adult education field in Portugal, the Adult Education infrastructure, type of stakeholders involved and main policy priorities. It also provides an overview of existing research with impact on the adult education field, relevant to the Erasmus+ Programme.

3.2Adult Education Policies in Portugal

In the last two decades, adult education as a public policy (named adult education and training) [30] has emerged as a field with some weight in terms of formal education and professional qualification policies (Guimarães, 2013; Doutor & Guimarães, 2019; Barros, 2023)[31]. Policy developments have been strongly influenced by European Union guidelines for lifelong learning and funding. In this context, adult education and training policy has gained greater importance as a social policy, being important for employment and economic policies development, focused on increasing productivity and competitiveness of workers in enterprises and workplaces. Nowadays the problems associated with the performance of the economy dominate national political discourses and public offers directed at adults, as well as the constraints arising from the low levels of literacy of the Portuguese population: in 2021, 62% held a secondary education level and 28% held a higher education degree, being significant the difference between those aged 30-54 holding a higher education degree (33%) and those aged 55-64. Additionally, the illiteracy rate has been being devalued in the public policy, which, although low, is still registered in this country (3%, in 2021)[32]. The PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult

[30] In Portugal, the term used to identity the policy under development is "adult education and training" (educação e formação de adultos). This term reflects the importance given to vocational education and training in the public policy, following a human resources management approach and the influence of the European Union, in specific the European Social Fund guidelines, as discussed by Lima & Guimarães (2011).

[31] Guimarães, P. (2013). Reinterpreting lifelong learning: meanings of adult education policy in Portugal, 1999–2010. International Journal of Lifelong Education, 135-148; Doutor, C. & Guimarães, P. (2019). Adult education and lifelong learning policies: An analysis of Greece and Portugal. Andragoška spoznanja/Studies in Adult Education and Learning,15-31; Barros, R. (2023) The right to education of adults in Portugal, The International Journal of Human Rights, 27(5), 950-973.

[32] For more information, please see: Instituto Nacional de Estatística [National Institute of Statistics], https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0011330&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2; https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0011606&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2

Competences) results also show low literacy levels of the Portuguese population[33].

In the last twenty years there can be observed a trend towards the organisation and consolidation of central and local administrative political structures that regulate and carry out the adult education and training policy[34]. In present times, the National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education (Decree-law no. 36/2012, of February 15) is in charge for the policy development. This Agency launched the *Qualifica Programme* in 2016 and established the *Qualifica Centres* (Ordinance no. 232/2016, August 29), the local centres for the adult education and training policy development. Apart from these centres that develop guidance, counselling and recognition of prior learning as an offer[35], other entities (public, private and of the civil society) implement and offer several training forms, such as adult education and training courses, short term training, modular training, Portuguese Language courses for foreigners and Basic Skills training, as well as Local Projects Promoting Qualifications, Technological Specialisation Courses and Secondary Education Completion Paths make up the range of education and adult training covered by public policy. These offers are part of the *Qualifica Programme,* and the subprogrammes associated with it, as in the case of *Qualifica Indústria* and *Qualifica AP* (Public Administration). These offers currently benefit from funding from the European Union (in most cases of 85%), particularly within the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Plan – Recover Portugal[36].

In spite of this public policy, the development of adult education non-formal activities raises several questions that are simultaneously related to the (still little) importance that adult education has assumed in the political agenda and the fragility that marks public policy (Lima, Melo & Guimarães, 2021)[37]. Although the Portuguese population positively appreciates adult education and training, whether formal, informal or non-formal[38], there is still little variation in the offerings included in public policy, most of them covering basic and secondary education

[33] For more information, please see: OECD (2024), Inquérito às Competências dos Adultos 2023: Portugal [Adult Skills Survey 2023: Portugal], https://www.oecd.org/pt/publications/inquerito-as-competencias-dos-adultos-2023_c1f3bc22-pt/portugal_3d83066e-pt.html

[34] Apart from administrative political structures, other policy instruments can be noted such as the National Qualifications Catalog (Order no. 13456/2008, of May 14) and the National Qualifications Framework (Ordinance no. 782/2009, of 23 July) which follows a structure very similar to the European Qualifications Framework. It is also worth noting the adoption of the Key Skills Standards, Methodological Guides and the Quality Charter that allow the development of various offers aimed at adults, as well as, more recently, the Qualifica Passport (Ordinance no. 47/2017, of 4 February), an important instrument for recording and managing individual and institutional adult education and training courses.

[35] In Portuguese, Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências.

[36] For more information, please check: República Portuguesa, Recuperar Portugal, Plano de Recuperação e Resiliência (PRR), https://recuperarportugal.gov.pt/

[37] Lima, L. C., Melo, A. & Guimarães, P. (2021). A A@tualidade da Educação Permanente. APCEP/ulmeiro.

[38] For more information, please check detailed data in: República Portuguesa, Cultura Portugal, https://www.culturaportugal.gov.pt/pt/saber/2023/10/estatisticas-inquerito-a-educacao-e-formacao-de-adultos-2022/

and training and qualification offers aimed at the general population but also at low-skilled adults, the unemployed and those with fewer opportunities. In this sense, there are no national political purposes of education for social and cultural development, or other civic and political purposes, nor are activities of non-formal education, socio-educational animation, cultural and ecological promotion, or experimentation contemplated in the public policy. In fact, the Erasmus+ Programme plays a significant role in supporting activities and projects that are not part of the public adult education policy as this programme is aimed at promoting non-formal and also informal adult education hold by quite diverse organisations (public, profit-making and NGOs – large, small or grassroots ones) holding social, cultural, political, civic and ecological aims.

In what concerns the Erasmus+ Programme, in Portugal, in 2022, it was observed that there were developed 16 KA1 mobility projects in the adult education field, with the total amount of 561.795 euros granted by 24 organisations. In what refers to KA2 Cooperation projects, 23 adult education projects were implemented, involving 94 organisations, with the total amount of 3.261.226 euros. It should also be noted that 77% of the Cooperation projects, in general, were directed at digital transformation, while 31% focused on the environment and the fight against climate change, and 27% on inclusion and diversity. To stress that only 13% were referring to participation in democratic life, on common values and civic engagement[39]. Following Erasmus+ European Union priorities[40], Erasmus+ fosters to "support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport in Europe and beyond, thereby contributing to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, to driving innovation and to strengthening European identity and active citizenship. As such, the Programme shall be a key instrument for building the European Education Area, supporting the implementation of the European strategic cooperation in the field of education and training with its underlying sectoral agendas. In addition, it is key in advancing youth policy cooperation under the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and developing the European dimension in sport"[41].

[39]For more information, please check: European Union (2023). Erasmus+ in Portugal, https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-11/Erasmus%2B%20Portugal%20in%202022%201.pdf

[40]For more information, please check: European Commission (2025), Erasmus+ Programme Guide, https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme/objectives-features

[41] For more information, please check in p. 6: European Commission (2025), Erasmus+ Programme Guide, https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-01/erasmus-programme-guide-v2.2025_en.pdf.

3.3 Existing studies on the impact of Erasmus+ Programme on the adult education field

In Portugal, several studies[42] can be found considering the impact of Erasmus+ Programme. These studies refer to the field of adult education at national level in the last decade[43].

Guilherme (2022) Master's dissertation aimed to answer the following research question: "how can we increase the impact of KA2 projects from Erasmus+ Programme in the target-groups?" (p. 17). The study results stressed the significant impact of Erasmus+ funding in organisations under analysis. Therefore, Guilherme states the following: "The results from the empirical evidence enable us to assess the relevance and level of achievement of project objectives, development effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability" (2022, p. 2). It is also added that "those who benefited from the Programme felt significantly more connected to Europe and believe that participating in these projects is valuable for their international career and training" (p. 39), emphasising the good implementation of the projects.

Another study, such as the research by Vieira and Silva (2020)[44] aimed at "contributing to a new vision of the value of intercultural exchanges, taking into account the role of the digital context in which they are disseminated". The study reflected upon the project applied by the enterprise Sinerconsult titled *Learning Together* (KA1). The main aim of the courses was "to guarantee to their trainees a memorable training experience" (p. 26). This project included a wide range of courses that allowed the mobility of teachers and other schools staff. These participants attended some sessions on digital and local culture promotion, focussing on soft skills (respect and self-esteem, transparency, social and environmental responsibility, tolerance, awareness, communication, among others) along with international mobility. Owing to the significant impact these courses and mobility had in participants, authors concluded that intercultural projects are central for people adjustment to economic and social change and to develop "a critical thinking about their own culture and the cultures of other people" (p. 27).

Some other study not focussing only on the impact of funded projects in Portugal but in which staff of this country joined, stressed the involvement of participants

[42] More studies that were not used for the writing of this report to be found in: Erasmus+ Portugal, Estudos e Publicações, https://erasmusmais.pt/recursos/estudos-e-publicacoes/. Also considered the unpublished document titled "Searching for measures for the better exploitation of Mobility for learners and staff in adult education. Case study on "Portugal", ProgressConsult, Faro, 29/07/2024.
[43] Search was done in RCAAP data basis and in google scholar.
[44] Vieira, M. & Silva, M. (2020). Learning together: case study of an ERASMUS+ KA1 organization. In H. Martins and M. Silva (eds.), *Transformação Digital. Dimensões Organizacionais e Societais* (pp. 22-28). Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia.

within large mobility activities in KA1 and KA2 projects, however not exclusively addressing Adult Education, but including teachers and youth workers. Valkova Tarasova et al. (2020)[45] reflected upon the so-called LTTC (long-term training course): *InFormal*, a project focussing on the integration of non-formal learning into formal education" (p. 345). Based on the development of a course attended by regular schoolteachers and youth workers, it was conceived after assessing participants' needs and aimed at developing new approaches and methods on a non-formal kind to be included later on the participants own professional practice. The project was considered by participants a life-changing experience, having opened new ways of understanding formal and non-formal linkages. Therefore, "it developed into a valid training for educators which offers mostly a mirror onto own educational activities, intense peer learning and professional trainer input, in order to merge formal and non-formal education spheres" (p. 362).

3.4 Conclusions

The national priorities in the field of adult education in Portugal in what refers to the adult education and training public policy under development are aimed at increasing the school education levels and professional qualification of large sectors of the Portuguese population. This is done following a set of specific provision. However, non-formal adult education is not part of the public policy. In the non-formal and informal adult education domain the Erasmus+ Programme plays a significant role in the development of a quite diverse range of activities and projects.

In the provision of adult education and training policy several stakeholders can be found, namely those that are public institutions (such as the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP) and local learning centres – that develop mainly counselling and guidance and recognition of prior learning - established within an application logic, being these in fact public institutions, private/profit-making or non-governmental institutions). Additionally, the same diverse range of stakeholders can be found in the provision of the existing formal vocational education and training provision.

In non-formal adult education, and considering also informal education, the range of providers are significantly diverse, including also public institutions, non-governmental and private/profit-making. These providers can be linked to (formal and non-formal) adult education, but many of these are directed at developing quite different aims, activities and projects, being these educational

[45] Valkova Tarasova, O., Stindl, P., Yom, J., Chardymova, N., Imre, S.-B. & Valek, L. (2020). Integration of non-formal learning approaches into the formal education by peer learning of teachers and youth workers. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 12(1Sup1), 345-365.

or not. Therefore, it is a challenge to identify and analyse non-formal adult education as activities and projects might be included in larger initiatives devoted at other social, cultural, political, civic and environmental domains.

The Portuguese priorities for Erasmus+ Programme in the field of adult education are linked to those of the European Union. Additionally, they include some others, more related to the adults' educational situation in present times, such as the significant rates of low-skilled adult learners. The main purpose is to reduce the number of low-skilled adult learners. Therefore, the improvement of basic skills in literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and language skills is a relevant priority. In complement, targeting the low participation rates in adult education and lifelong learning observed in this country, the Erasmus+ Programme in Portugal also aims at enabling access to adult learning organisations, projects and activities as well as to improve and expand the offer of educational opportunities[46].

The existing research on the Erasmus+ Programme in Portugal is scarce and mainly concerning the impact of the funding Programme itself in local organisations funded; the value of intercultural exchange got by joining projects and activities implemented; and the approach to new/non-formal education approaches and the acquisition of knowledge and competences referring to non-formal active pedagogic methods. Therefore, a wide range of issues didn't get the attention of research, including, among others: the organisations granted (characteristics, historic path, aims, etc.) and, for instance, the educational projects and activities implemented after being funded by Erasmus+ Programme; the adult education staff, educational projects and activities attended in terms of professional development; and the learners themselves in what relates to educational projects and activities attended and learning experienced.

[46] For more information, please check in p. 6, European Commission (2025), Erasmus+ Programme Guide, https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-11/erasmus-programme-guide-2025_en.pdf.

5. The accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ Programme

5.1. Introduction

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

5.2. Participating organisations in Erasmus+ Programme

5.2.1. 2018-2020 period

Considering KA1, particularly KA104 (Staff mobility), coordinating institutions were mainly non-governmental organisations, while some others were schools/institutes/educational centres and vocational education and training institutions.

As for KA2, namely KA204 (Strategic partnerships for adult education), most coordinating institutions were non-governmental organisations, some others were higher education institutions and small and medium enterprises.

Table 6 - Type of adult education organisation and action types granted (2018-2020))

Coordinating organisation	Action Type	KA104	KA121	KA122	KA200	KA204	KA210	KA227
		fr	fr	fr	fr	fr	fr	fr
Adult education organisation	Adult education staff mobility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Counselling body	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
European non-governmental organisation	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Foundation	Adult education staff mobility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Coordinating organisation	Action Type	KA104	KA121	KA122	KA200	KA204	KA210	KA227
Higher education institution	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
Higher education institution (tertiary level)	Strategic Partnerships addressing more than one field	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Local public body	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Adult education staff mobility	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Partnerships for Creativity	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Non-profit making cultural organisation	Adult education staff mobility	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Partnerships for Creativity	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Non-governmental organisation	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	Adult education staff mobility	43	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	7	0	0	0	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	22	0	0
Public institution	Adult education staff mobility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regional public body	Adult education staff mobility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
School/ Institute/ Educational centre	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	Adult education staff mobility	19	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
School/ Institute/ Educational centre - Adult education	Adult education staff mobility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
School/ Institute/ Educational Centre - Vocational Training	Adult education staff mobility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coordinating organisation	**Action Type**	**KA104**	**KA121**	**KA122**	**KA200**	**KA204**	**KA210**	**KA227**
Small and medium sized enterprise	Adult education staff mobility	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Social association	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Social partner or other representative of working life	Adult education staff mobility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vocational educational and training institution	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	Adult education staff mobility	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Strategic Partnerships for adult education	0	0	0	0	4	0	0

Source: Data gathered in https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/pt-pt

Inquired organisations developed funded projects, mainly in KA104 (Adult Education staff mobility), followed by KA204 (strategic partnerships for adult education).

Table 7: Projects funded by per key action and per action type

Funding Year	Typology	Key Action	Action Type	fr	%
2018-2020	KA104	Learning mobility of individuals	Adult education staff mobility	58	59,8
	KA204	Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices	Strategic partnerships for adult education	36	37,1
	KA227	Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices	Partnerships for creativity	3	3,1
Total				97	100,0

Source: Data gathered in https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/pt-pt

The majority of organisations inquired were non-governmental organisation, whereas some others were formal education providers, such as schools, institutes or centres, welfare organisations, higher education institutions and primary or secondary education schools.

Table 8: Type of organisation inquired

Type of Institution	fr	%
Adult education provider (School/ Institute/Centre)	17	16,04

Child day care/ Kindergarten/ Early childhood education	2	1,89
Primary/ secondary general education	11	10,38
Higher education Institution (tertiary level)	12	11,32
Folk high school	1	0,94
Accreditation, certification or qualification body	2	1,89
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)/ association	29	27,36
Welfare organisation	13	12,26
Healthcare institution	1	0,94
Civil society organisation	4	3,77
Sport club/ association/ federation	3	2,83
Research institute	2	1,89
European network/ association	1	0,94
Other	8	7,55
Total N	106	100,00

Source: Data from the online survey

5.2.2. 2021 – 2023 period

In the 2021-2023 period (table 9), institutions with projects funded by Erasmus+ Programme in key action KA121 (accredited projects for mobility of learners and staff) were non-governmental organisations, as well as school/institutes/educational centres and vocational education and training institutes (with accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education).

In the same period, KA122 (short term projects for mobility of staff in adult education)funded projects were applied by, mainly, non-governmental organisations. In KA210 (small-scale partnerships in adult education), were mainly non-governmental organisations.

Table 9: Projects funded by action type and type of organisations (KA1 and KA2)

	Action Type	KA121	KA122	KA210

Coordinating organisation		fr	fr	fr
Adult education	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	1
Local public body	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	1	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	1	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	0
Non-governmental organisation	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	2	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	7	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	4
School/ Institute/ Educational centre	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	2	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	1	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	0
Small and medium sized enterprise	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	0	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	1
Vocational education and training institution	Accredited projects for mobility of staff in adult education	2	0	0
	Short-term projects for mobility of staff in adult education	0	1	0
	Small-scale partnerships in adult education	0	0	0
Total		7	10	6

Source: Data gathered in https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/pt-pt

5.2.3. Dimension (staff numbers) of participating organisations

The number of staff in the organisations inquired varied a lot. Most organisations answering to the survey had from 11 to 50 hired staff members (21; 19,8%), while a significant number had more than 250 staff (16; 15,1%), and some other between 1 to 5 staff members (16; 15,1%). Additionally, some reported having from 51-100 (15; 14,2%), and some others from 101 to 250 staff members (14; 13,2%).

Table 10: Dimension of the organisation (according to the number of staff) that answered to the survey (by the end of 2022)

Number of staff	fr	%
NR	12	11,3
1-5	16	15,1
6-10	12	11,3
11-50	21	19,8
51-100	15	14,2
101-250	14	13,2
More than 250	16	15,1
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

Most organisations (36; 38,7%) had 101 to 250 learners involved in activities developed in 2022, while a much smaller number (31; 29,2%) only had 11 to 50 leaners.

Table 11: Learners participating in learning activities in 2022

Number of learners	fr	%
NR	12	11,3
0	4	3,8
1-10	13	12,3
11-50	21	19,8
51-100	10	9,4
101-250	25	23,6
More than 250	16	15,1
Don't know	5	4,7
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

5.2.4. Newcomers to the programme

In what refers to the number of Erasmus+ projects funded, inquired organisations became beneficiaries (either as coordinators or as partners organisations of 1, 2, 3 or 4 projects) since 2014, and a significant number of them have participated in 5 or more projects[47].

Table 12: Projects (KA1 and KA2) joined by the organisation since 2014

[47] It is important to note that organisations that started their participation in the Programme during the previous phase (2014-2020) could not be accredited, simply because accreditation in the adult education field only became available for the new Programme (2021-2027). Organisations that are not newcomers and applied for accreditation could only have done so from the new programme (the first call for accreditation was in 2020, but funding was granted starting in 2021).

Number of projects	fr	%
NR	13	12,3
1	17	16,0
2	15	14,2
3	8	7,5
4	16	15,1
5 or more	35	33,0
Don't know	2	1,9
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

The majority of organisations inquired (60; 56,6%) participated as a coordinator in the projects, while a slight smaller number (55; 51,9%) joined as partner. Only a much smaller number (9; 8,5%) joined as an associated partner[48].

It is important to note that an organisation can act as a partner in one or more projects, while simultaneously serving as the coordinator of its own project.

Table 13: Profile of organisation inquired

Role in the Project	fr	%
Coordinator	60	56,6
Partner	55	51,9
Associated partner	9	8,5
Total		100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

Most organisations (48; 45,3%) were not Erasmus+ accredited for mobility in adult education when their projects were funded by the Erasmus+ Programme[49].

Table 14: Accredited organisations (Erasmus Accreditations – KA120 AE)

Organisations with Accreditation	fr	%
NA	13	12,3
Don't know	9	8,5
No	48	45,3
Yes	36	34,0
Total	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

[48] Within an Erasmus+ project, these partners will be called "associated partners". For eligibility and contractual management aspects they are not considered to be project partners, and they do not receive any funding from the Programme as part of the project.

[49] If these organisations were not accredited, they could only apply for a specific action, KA122. This situation is natural, since organizations tend to gain experience in KA122 actions and only later apply for accreditation (KA120) by developing KA121 actions from there.

5.3. Adult learners' participation

Most projects developed (45; 42,5%) involved adult learners with low levels of education, unemployed adults, young adults, adult learners lacking basic skills, adults with limited income and adults with learning difficulties.

Since organizations often serve multiple profiles and needs, this survey question was designed to allow multiple responses.

Table 15: Adult learners' profiles (inquired organisations with projects granted since 2018)

Adult learner profiles	fr	%
No specific target group adults	8	7,5
Adults with physical or mental disabilities	27	25,5
Adults with learning difficulties	32	30,2
Adults with limited income	34	32,1
Adults with a low level of education	45	42,5
Adults with lacking basic skills	37	34,9
Adults with health problems	12	11,3
Adults who are discriminated	26	24,5
Adults who live in a peripheral area	18	17,0
Employed	23	21,7
Unemployed	39	36,8
Women	28	26,4
Refugees/ asylum seekers	13	12,3
(Ex)prisoners	8	7,5
Elderly (>65 years)	22	20,8
Young adults (15-29 years old)	38	35,8
Addicts	1	0,9
Homeless	3	2,8
Parents	11	10,4
Early school leavers, NEETs	17	16,0
Other	10	9,4

Source: Data from the online survey

The quantitative data got by the online survey can be illustrated by qualitative data from document analysis. In case study 2 (C2), a consortium of three organisations, the preference for target groups involving staff who regularly works with low-levels of education, low-skilled, unemployed and socially disadvantaged learners is clear. Also, the project aims were directed at fostering social inclusion. Adults with learning disabilities were also the target-group of the project analysed in C2 (case study 2).

Case study 2[50]

"The consortium formed by three associations dedicated to social intervention, with different target audiences, felt the need to train and train organizations and staff for inclusive education with a European dimension in a systemic and critical perspective, capable of questioning and changing practices. Foster interdisciplinary intervention methodologies and inter and intra consortium approaches, in an attitude of co-training and social co-responsibility, promoting the quality and efficiency of practices for adult education. Reflect on practices and experiences from other European countries/contexts in a perspective of lifelong learning, in the sense of inclusion. Expand knowledge about other cultural and educational realities. With particular reference to the cultural, linguistic and social diversity of the resident and migrant population, disadvantaged communities and people with specific needs. Education and training for citizenship / intercultural education and training, for creative problem solving in relations of equity and inclusion" (Website Erasmus+ - Background of the consortium of case study C2)

"The project identifies needs, goals and key areas and outlines objectives to train and empower organisations and consortium staff, promote the recognition of personal capabilities and social issues and the skills of the participants involved and select the methodologies and tools (of a practical, creative and innovative nature) that allow them to carry out an inclusive intervention in citizenship values in the municipality of XXX among the most needy target population and disadvantaged" (application of the case study C2).

"The main objective (of the project) is to increase the competences of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and related Professionals and Relatives in the implementation of ICT YYY (a specific axis of the project funded) for improving cognitive functions, and therefore, their QoL. Specific objectives of ZZZ (the project) are:
• To increase the awareness of this target group regarding the relevance of ICT-SG
• To select and collect proper ICT-SG for better training the cognitive functions of YYY[51] according to the specific needs and capacities.
• To transfer knowledge, guidelines and procedures on how to use ICT-SG to produce specific aimed outcomes in terms of cognitive functions and Quality of Life • To develop and improve Digital Skills of YYY
To increase the socialization of YYY through the collaborative gaming and involvement of the Relatives in the use of ICT Serious Games out of the care centers." (Application of the case study 2 - C2)

[50] The authors of this study decided to keep the English(UK) throughout the document, although in some quotations, referring to applications or websites of organisations studied English (USA) might be used.
[51] Deleted for anonymity.

Case study 2

"As part of our quality policy we address clients' needs in different services, respecting ethical principles we've adopted, in order to obtain the best results in terms of education, occupation, training, employment, accommodation, home care, health, leisure and free time; we promote a high performance and continuous skills upgrading of employees and managers; develop networks and multidimensional partnerships, that allow the establishment of synergies in the activity of the Cooperative and its partners, contributing to the promotion of appropriate responses to client's needs; promote and develop research and innovation projects, with the intention of improve the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities and other people in disadvantage. We develop our activities always protecting the environment, developing appropriate actions to achieve better conditions of life and habitability of our planet; develop, establish and assume a continuous improvement of services, with qualified and motivated teams and a person-centred approach" (Source: application C2, p. 22).

5.4. Obstacles for participating in Erasmus+ Programme

5.4.1. General mobility obstacles

The large majority of the inquired organisations (73; 68,9%) claimed that they will apply to Erasmus+ Programme in the future.

Table 16: Number of organisations that will apply to the Erasmus+ Programme in the future

Intention to apply in the future	**fr**	**%**
NR	25	23,6
Don't know	7	6,6
No	1	0,9
Yes	73	68,9
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

Regarding the obstacles, or barriers when participating in Erasmus+ Programme, the organisations inquired often referred to:

- Lack of staff to prepare applications and develop projects, especially when these projects are implemented in schools, and the lack of knowledge to prepare applications (in specific when small organisations or NGOs are applying); also the lack of time to apply and develop a project, due to the daily activities of the organisations and the workload involved in participating and coordinating projects;

- Complexity of the application procedures and development of projects procedures (in terms of administration and financial issues), allowing the "professionalisation" of some larger and more skilled organisations, which are able to apply and develop successful projects, and the exclusion of grassroots organisations, less skilled and with less skilled staff to develop the projects;
- Less number of funded projects in previous years, and short funding to pay for travel expenses and subsistence;
- Lack of learners to participate in the development of projects;
- Difficulties with foreign idioms, and skills to join the development of projects.[52]

Constraints concerning lack of time were frequently expressed in the interviews (C1 and C2), as many organisations, such as NGOs, are understaffed and do not have time to write applications and to developing projects (interviewee 1, case study 1).

Case study 1

"We're just a small team and the requests are many and sometimes our time is less than a full week of 7 days isn't enough. The constraint is mainly ours, lack of time." (C1-E1)

5.4.2. Mobility activities

Most organisations (48; 45,3%) plan to organise mobility activities for adult learners in the future.

Table 17: Number of organisations planning to organise mobility activities for adult learners in the future

Planning to organise mobility activities	fr	%
NR	25	23,6
Don't know	17	16,0
No	16	15,1
Yes	48	45,3
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

With regard to the reasons preventing organisations from planning mobility activities for adult learners in the framework of a future KA1 project, these were some of the most mentioned:

- Lack of staff to prepare applications and to develop projects;

[52] These were obstacles and barriers referred in an open question of the online survey.

- Lack of learners to join, due to lack of availability, or because the organisations' domain of intervention was not specifically adult education;
- Lack of availability to travel (in terms of time constraints, funding, motivation or interest to participate in the funded projects);
- Some of the inquired organisations are not working specifically in the field of adult education, which prevents these organisations to join further applications[53].

The interviewee of case study 1 mentioned challenges in preparing applications, due to the characteristics of the project target-groups. These challenges require trained staff that might be sensitive enough to consider diversity, low school and basic skills levels, and also the fact that, in some cases, Portuguese is not the native language among adult learners.

Case study 1

"Organisation of case study 1 is rooted in the multi-identity cultural diversity of its people, in dialogue with other national and global contexts. XXX represents the central space for the confluence of migratory flows (Africa, South America – Brazil, Asia, Eastern Europe). For this reason, one of the challenges of the educating city XXX, it is to promote balance and harmony between identity and diversity, safeguarding the contributions of the communities that comprise it and the right of all those who inhabit it, in the recognition of cultural identity. The population has low levels of education and qualifications, significant levels of illiteracy, failure, retention, dropout and school dropout, higher than the national average, a persistent lack of motivation among the most disadvantaged community for training, permanent education and lifelong learning. It is considered pertinent to transform these constraints into opportunities for strategic intervention by partner organisations in solving complex problems, which requires ongoing training and updating of knowledge and skills on the part of the staff of the consortium associations" (C1-E1).

[53] These were reasons referred in an open question on this issue of the online survey.

6. Impact of Erasmus+ at meso level

6.1. Introduction

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

6.2. Type of products developed and topics addressed

6.2.1. Type of topics addressed

In what refers to topics addressed in Erasmus+ (KA104) funded projects, these were the most referred: Intercultural/generational education and (lifelong) learning; ICT – new technologies – digital competences; Inclusion/equity; New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses; and Quality improvement institutions and/or methods (including school development).

Regarding topics addressed in Erasmus+ (KA204) funded projects, these were the most referred: Inclusion/equity; ICT – new technologies – digital competences; New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses; and Disabilities - special needs.

Table 18: Topics addressed in KA1 and KA2 projects

Topics addressed in KA1 and KA2 projects	KA104 fr	KA121 fr	KA122 fr	KA200 fr	KA204 fr	KA210 fr	KA227 fr
Intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong) learning	46	1	0	0	8	0	1
Inclusion - equity	21	0	0	0	20	0	3
Quality Improvement Institutions and/or methods (including school development)	18	0	0	0	3	0	0
Energy and resources	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Cooperation, international Relations, development cooperation	9	0	0	0	2	0	0
Pedagogy and didactics	8	0	0	0	5	0	0
New Learning and Teaching methods and approaches	2	0	4	0	3	1	0
Creativity, arts and culture	1	0	4	0	0	0	0
EU Citizenship, EU awareness and Democracy	11	0	0	0	4	0	0
ICT - new technologies - digital competences	26	0	0	1	19	0	0
Creativity and culture	10	0	0	0	7	0	3
Disabilities - special needs	6	0	0	0	10	0	1
Access for disadvantaged	8	0	0	1	3	0	0

Topics addressed in KA1 and KA2 projects	KA104 fr	KA121 fr	KA122 fr	KA200 fr	KA204 fr	KA210 fr	KA227 fr
Social Dialogue	4	0	0	0	2	0	0
Natural Sciences	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
New innovative curricula/educational methods/ development of training courses	19	0	0	0	19	0	0
Teaching and learning of foreign languages	7	0	1	0	1	0	0
Civic engagement/ responsible citizenship	5	0	0	0	4	0	0
Cultural heritage /European Year of cultural heritage	2	0	1	0	3	2	0
Social entrepreneurship / Social innovation	3	0	0	0	1	0	0
Inclusion, promoting equality and non-discrimination	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Entrepreneurial learning - entrepreneurship education	6	0	0	0	5	2	0
Research and innovation	4	0	0	0	5	0	0
Digital Skills and competences	0	0	4	0	0	3	0
Initial and continuous training for teachers, trainers and other education staff	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Digital content, technologies and practices	0	0	4	0	0	1	0
Environment and climate change	4	0	1	0	1	0	0
Health and wellbeing	2	0	0	0	4	0	0
European identity and values	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Key competences development	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Development of disadvantaged rural and urban areas	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Active ageing	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Recognition (non-formal and informal learning/ credits)	10	0	0	0	3	0	0
Key competences (incl. Mathematics and literacy) - basic skills	6	0	0	1	4	0	0
Early school leaving/ combating failure in education	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regional dimension and cooperation	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overcoming skills mismatches (basic/transversal)	5	0	0	0	2	0	0
Open and Distance Learning	2	0	0	0	3	0	0
Digital Safety	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Gender Equality /equal opportunities	1	0	0	0	5	0	0
Integration of refugees	2	0	0	0	9	0	0
Quality assurance	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Creating new, innovative or joint curricula or courses	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Social/ environmental responsibility of educational institutions	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recognition, Transparency, Certification	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Enterprise, industry and SMEs (incl. Entrepreneurship)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Migrants issues	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Development and urbanisation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cooperation between educational institutions and Business	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Post-conflict/post-disaster rehabilitation	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Reception and integration of refugees and migrants	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Green skills	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Awareness about the European Union	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Home and justice affairs (human rights & rule of law)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Labour market issues incl. career guidance / youth unemployment	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Promoting gender equality	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Migrants' issues	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Development of training courses	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Community development	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Source: Data from online survey

Case study 2

The focus of the project was the development of an innovative methodology of participatory living labs for inclusion where YYY, their careers, their trainers, healthcare professionals, game-designers/ developers, university students from related disciplines, people from local communities, volunteers, form mixed teams and design ideas-prototypes of serious games addressing the needs of YYY. Through this approach, the

aim was to create a set of innovative materials that contribute to the quality of life of the YYY and professionals that work with them, such as: games (digital, physical, phygital) that adapt to the ages, interests and needs of YYY; E-courses and materials for strengthening the competences of trainers of YYY, relevant professionals, caregivers and organisations addressing YYY (source: Application form C2).

6.2.2. *Type of products developed*

Many organisations (53; 50%) mentioned that they developed learning materials and curricula, training modules, languages courses, or pedagogical concepts with the implementation of Erasmus+ projects. Many others (51; 48,1%) referred the development of manuals and handbooks, and the production of websites.

Table 19: Organisations according to outputs and products developed in the implementation of Erasmus+ projects

Type of products developed in projects	**fr**	**%**
Curricula, training modules, language courses or pedagogical concepts	53	50,0
Manuals/ handbooks	51	48,1
Website	51	48,1
Teaching materials for teachers/staff	45	42,5
Learning materials	53	50,0
Online tools	49	46,2
Publication/ book/ position paper	18	17,0
Development of Webinars or 'blended learning' courses	34	32,1
Development of films or instructional videos	29	27,4
Other	6	5,1

Source: Data from online survey

In case study 2, outputs and products concerned ICT materials and games, after the development of several workshops. This project received the Inclusive E+ Award by the Portuguese Erasmus+ Education and Training Agency in 2021. The outputs and materials developed are still currently being used.

Case study 2

"Following a codesign approach in which people with individual disabilities were involved in the development process from the beginning, PPP resulted in three main outputs: the QooL CITY Game (a collaborative serious game, available in board and online versions, where players are engaged in a joint-play activity to have fun and achieve training objectives together), the Game Catalogue (a set of games and platforms suitable to PID, in which each game can be selected according to the cognitive function to be trained) and a host of Training Materials (conceived to provide support to PID, professionals and relatives when using the QooL CITY Game

with training purposes). All resources are freely available".(Case study 2 website on the project KA2 developed)

"The six PPP partners are now focused on further developing the project, both by putting together a five-year exploitation plan as well as moving forward with a controlled research study in which the positive outcomes observed by technicians and social workers while PPP was implemented can be confirmed and systematized.
According to staff comments to be found in the Case study 3 website on the project KA2 developed, "It was a challenging job because it involved a population with very specific needs, which is why we followed a methodology that involved targeted population groups from the beginning. We held several codesign workshops and some of the ideas proposed in them were included in the final game" (Case study 2 website on the project KA2 developed).

Source: Case study 2 website on the project KA2 developed

6.2.3. *Added value of Erasmus+ support*

The majority of organisations surveyed (61; 57,5%) states that the Erasmus+ funded project wouldn't have been implemented if they haven't been funded.

Table 20: Implementation of projects without funding

Implementation of projects without funding	**fr**	**%**
NR	13	12,3
Don't know	7	6,6
No	61	57,5
Partly, in a different form and content	10	9,4
Partly, then in a slimmed-down form	14	13,2
Yes, but later in time	1	0,9
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

In Case study 2, according to interviewee C2-E1, the grant from Erasmus+ Programme was fundamental, as it was said that it would be impossible to develop without this support.

Case study 2

"The development of intellectual products with Erasmus+ support is fundamental. The cornerstone of the internationalisation of any organisation is a way for us all to be involved in a structured process with a beginning, middle and an end, with a concrete objective and also the needed support to achieve that objective. This project included personal knowledge of other people in other foreign organisations, the exchange of experiences, the knowledge that is gained among everyone, because there are people from other countries and other cultures, it involves getting to know other

organisations that work on the same topic and even realising that the problems we face are all very similar here and in other countries. It was important to understand whether the difficulties we have today with our adult learners have already been overcome by other organisations. And how did they overcome it? Our work is done much better this way, with support from Erasmus, because, as I said, we are involved in a concrete objective in 2 or 3 years and it was actually enough for the change to occur. Financing was essential. Without this support it would not have been possible" (C2-E1)

6.3. *Impact at organisation level*

Most organisations (65; 61,3%) held an internationalisation policy and strategy and systematically participate in international networks and internationalisation activities. A significant number (46; 43,4%) claimed that they have developed guidelines or agreed processes on how to manage international projects.

Table 21: Organisations with a policy and strategy for internationalisation

Internationalisation	**fr**	**%**
The organisation has a policy/ strategy for internationalisation	65	61,3
There is a dedicated budget for internationalisation activities	19	17,9
Development of international competences is discussed in performance appraisals and career talks (e.g. as part of a personal development plan)	25	23,6
The organisation systemically participates in international networks and internationalisation activities	63	59,4
Guidelines or agreed processes are in place how to manage international projects (e.g. design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)	46	43,4

Source: Data from the online survey

Most organisations (39; 36,8%) argued that organisational conditions improved significantly after the development of projects funded by the Erasmus+ Programme.

Table 22: Organisational conditions after participation in ERASMUS+ Programme

Organisational conditions after participation in ERASMUS+	**fr**	**%**
NA	16	15,1
I don't know	2	1,9
It has decrease.	3	2,8
It has improved	36	34,0
It has improved significantly	39	36,8
It has remained the same	10	9,4
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

From several statements, it is possible to conclude that organisations fully agree, or *agree* that the international network, and the management of international projects (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) was strengthened. They are also more aware of the added value of international projects and the strategy for internationalisation was improved.

Table 23: Organisational embedding in internationalisation

Answers	... our organisation is more aware of the added value of international projects		... there is a better strategy for internationalisation within our organisation		... there is more support for internationalisation activities for our professionals within our organisation		... there is more support for internationalisation activities for our volunteers within our organisation		... there is more support for internationalisation for our adult learners within our organisations		... there is increased funding for internationalisation within our organisation		... HR/ staff policy for internationalisation within our organisation has been strengthened		... the management of international projects (design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation) has been improved		... the international network of our organisation has been strengthened	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
NA	16	15,09	16	15,09	16	15,09	17	16,04	16	15,09	16	15,09	17	16,04	17	16,04	17	16,04
Fully agree	63	59,43	42	39,62	33	31,13	18	16,98	31	29,25	27	25,47	18	16,98	36	33,96	54	50,94
Agree	20	18,87	34	32,08	38	35,85	15	14,15	30	28,30	23	21,70	22	20,75	42	39,62	28	26,42
Undecided	5	4,72	10	9,43	12	11,32	23	21,70	13	12,26	18	16,98	27	25,47	6	5,66	5	4,72
Disagree		0,00	3	2,83	5	4,72	8	7,55	3	2,83	14	13,21	11	10,38	3	2,83	1	0,94
Completely disagree	1	0,94	1	0,94	1	0,94	2	1,89	1	0,94	3	2,83	4	3,77	1	0,94	1	0,94
Not applicable	1	0,94			1	0,94	23	21,70	12	11,32	5	4,72	7	6,60	1	0,94		0,00

Source: Data from the online survey

Factors that hampered the take up and use of outputs and products developed with the support of Erasmus+ Programme since 2018, referred by interviewee 4 of case study 2, were defined as challenges associated with staff preparing applications, namely when specific knowledge is required (according to data from the online survey).

Case study 2

"I wouldn't say obstacle, I would say challenge. Applications must be made on the basis of a European development plan. We need to have this plan, and we need to improve the plan that we have at the moment. We have this challenge. We need people here in our organisation who know how to do this and have the time to do this, that have the needed contacts with other organisations to develop a plan that has an international dimension" (C2-E1)

6.3.1. *Impact on learning offer*

From the analysis of several interviews, it is possible to conclude that organisations *fully agree* or *agree* that they are better able to collaborate with other organisations that support participants with fewer opportunities. They also *agree* or *fully agree* that developed outputs and insights gained have been

incorporated into new or existing provision within the organisation itself, and that their learning offer is better aligned with the needs of the adult learners.

Table 24: Organisations representatives' opinions regarding the impact of Erasmus+ Projects since 2018 in the learning offer

By participating in Erasmus+ ...	... developed outputs and insights gained have been incorporated into new or existing provision in my organisation		... our learning offer is better aligned with the needs of adult learners		... the accessibility of the learning offer has improved for different groups of adult learners		... my organisation is better able to include the 'voice of the adult learner' in decisions about its provision		... my organisation is better able to use digital devices and technologies in our learning offer		...our learning offer pays more attention to digital skills		... our learning offer pays more attention to green skills		... our learning offer pays more attention to participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement		... my organisation is better able to collaborate with other organisations that support participants with fewer opportunities	
Opinion/Frequency	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
Fully agree	33	31,13	30	28,30	21	19,81	17	16,04	27	25,47	27	25,47	19	17,92	21	19,81	40	37,74
Agree	46	43,40	41	38,68	40	37,74	40	37,74	49	46,23	37	34,91	35	33,02	49	46,23	37	34,91
Undecided	5	4,72	10	9,43	17	16,04	24	22,64	7	6,60	15	14,15	22	20,75	10	9,43	6	5,66
Disagree		0,00	1	0,94	2	1,89	1	0,94	1	0,94	2	1,89	4	3,77	2	1,89	1	0,94
Completely disagree		0,00		0,00		0,00	1	0,94		0,00		0,00	1	0,94		0,00		0,00
Not applicable	3	2,83	5	4,72	5	4,72	4	3,77	3	2,83	4	3,77	5	4,72	4	3,77	3	2,83

Source: Data from the online survey

Adult learners – satisfaction

One of the 23 adult learners interviewed (B2), stated that he did not like the experience and mentioned that he had no interest in participating in further mobilities, due to dietary issues and poor accompaniment.
All other participants considered the mobility a great experience and would like to repeat it. They claimed that "*It was a magnificent experience. I had just retired. So, I think it was a grateful therapy*!" (A5).

Apart from B2, all participants interviewed are unanimous regarding the overall satisfaction with the mobilities, from the organisation, and accommodation, accompaniment by their organisation and the host organisation "*It was very good, very positive, very well organised.*
"*People were very well involved. Interaction was always there, although we were all different, different ages, jobs, the interaction by the group who received us was very successful*" (D1), the fact that the trainers adapted the learning to each trainee, "*There were always abler people.*

But he (the trainer) was always careful not to leave us behind, he was always asking, 'did you understand?" (A5), and developed specific group dynamics.

"*I think (the training sessions) were personalised for each member of the group, there was always that interaction, that concern to know what a person does, where the*

person works, understand the person, know the life perspective, these dialogues always occurred" (A3).

Digital skills, inclusion and diversity, networking, and learning partnerships with other organisations, as well as active citizenship, participation and democracy are topics referred to as having received more attention than before ERASMUS+ project development.

Table 25: Topics emphasised after Erasmus+ project development

Topics given greater importance after ERASMUS+ participation	**fr**	**%**
Digital skills	59	55,7
Greening and fight against climate change	50	47,2
Media literacy	11	10,4
Inclusion and diversity	57	53,8
Active citizenship, democratic participation, civic and social engagement	51	48,1
Preventing racism and discrimination	29	27,4
European values	44	41,5
Connection between education and the labour market	35	33,0
Outreach/ recruitment of learners	17	16,0
Inclusive learning environment	37	34,9
Differentiation while supervising or teaching	5	4,7
Teaching/ learning with digital technologies	43	40,6
Work-based learning and apprenticeships	17	16,0
Validation of prior learning	19	17,9
Assessment and examination learning outcomes	15	14,2
Motivation and well-being of learners	36	34,0
Quality assurance	29	27,4
Professional development of staff	41	38,7
Networking/ learning partnerships with other organisations	56	52,8
Other, namely: innovation environments	1	0,9

Source: Data from the online survey

Case study 2

The organisation team[54] considers that participation in the ID Gaming project has brought very positive impacts to the organisation, namely:

- the new topics covered, taking into account that they had little knowledge about so-called "serious games". This theme led staff to investigate a new topic and thus allowed them to add value to the work they were already developing and expand their knowledge;

- reinforcement of the innovation component and the quality of materials, projects and services offered to the population - in this sense, the ID Gaming Project allowed the development of a project that responds, in an innovative way, to the characteristics and needs that its audiences identify

[54] By organisation team, we mean interviewees, such as the coordinator of the project funded and the staff directly in charge of the project development.

- Gain more experience in co-creation/codesign processes. organisation had already worked on previous projects using this participatory methodology and the ID Gaming Project allowed to consolidate knowledge and expand experience in this practice

- The fact of having taken on the role of coordinating an Erasmus + project for the first time is seen as a new challenge and an "upgrade". The organisation had already participated in other Erasmus + projects, but not as a coordinator.

- Sharing knowledge and experiences with other organisations contributed to the growth of the organisation and the expansion of its network. As the organisation director (E1) mentioned, the interest in the topic and the development of this project sparked new collaborations and renewed others. For example, it was possible to work with a technical researcher to deepen the potential of gamification and construction of innovative games and it was also possible to work again with a partner with whom they had already had a very positive experience in another project. The Consortium of ID-GAMING has been established as a result of the previous cooperation of the entities working in the Intellectual Disability Sector, including the joint participation in several projects and international working groups. They share an interest in implementing a project for boosting the application of ICT Serious Games for YYY, due to the relevance of this topic and their previous experience in this field. The fact that they are working with a good, well-structured support network, with adequate deadlines and well-defined objectives and 100% support, are aspects also highlighted regarding the positive impacts for the organisation (C2-E1).

The examples provided in interviews quotations evidenced that the participation in one or more Erasmus+ funded projects since 2018 had strengthened the learning offers to adult learners/ participants, namely in the following aspects:

- Many examples given were about new education activities and learning referring to ICT and the use of ICT (websites, online available platforms and contents, etc.) in which creating new outputs and products was a significant learning;
- Other examples referred to the learning of foreign idioms, and sustainability and sustainable development topics, new evaluation methods and other new topics that were not in general previously approached;
- The sharing of learning and experiences by learners in international cooperation and partnerships (Source: data from online survey).

The above-mentioned examples highlight the diversification of contents, or learning moments and pedagogical methods, but also the skills to conceive, implement and evaluate educational activities (Source: data from online survey).

Adult learners – competencies

Based on interviews to adult learners (N= 23), the acquired competencies are mostly at the language level (*fr* 9), some in Spanish and English, "*What have I gained most with Erasmus? Language improvement, for we were there (in Lugo) 7 days and we had to manage, not only English, but mainly Galician, because they do not speak Castilian there…*" (B1), others in Italian, "*it was a very good experience because, besides learning Italian grammar for a week, we were also inserted on a cultural and verbal context, with the trainers and people around us*" (A6).

Other competencies, according to the trainings attended are understanding cultural diversity (B1), raised awareness regarding online communication and dangers (C1, C2), "*what has improved? (…) being attentive if (news) are fake or not. The fact that I can alert minors (…) but also friends, parents, and even myself, so I do not waste so much time on social media*" (C2), and the use of technology to teach (D1, D2), and work, "*the importance of that digital tool in my life, that I did not use much before, and I began to realise, ok, I can use this even at a professional level, limited, of course, but helps me a lot and sometimes spares me a little in my time management*" (C2), "*Yes (I apply the knowledge), especially regarding digital competencies, because where I work, we use it a lot. So all those hints, recommendations that I learnt in the mobility, I am using*" (C1). Many participants (*fr* 12) referred they apply this knowledge in their professional and personal lives, "*yes, I use the dynamics (learnt), because they were interesting and motivate us to deal with our personal problems*" (A2). All participants referred an increased self-confidence "*… and freedom, when we have kids, moreover with the pandemic, being able to participate in something like this gave me, not only confidence, it improved my self-esteem. We get better with a little freedom, which I did not have anymore*" (D1). Many considered the mobility as a turning point in their lives (A1, A5, A6, B1, C2, D2) "*I was invited to be a trainer in my area, and that is why I say that these Erasmus programme brought me fantastic things, liberated me to activities that I thought I was not able to do (…) this has really given me strength to go a little further*" (C2), some because they could not have experienced such an opportunity if not for Erasmus "*It was the first time, pensions are very low (…) and I did not work many years, so my pension is miserable and I do not have the chance to travel abroad*" (A1) others because they had a dream of visiting the country, and others because they thought that at their age, it would not be possible to learn so much (A1, A5, C2, D2), "*I think these initiatives are very good, not only for the youngsters, but also for the adults, who end up giving up their lives, we are adults now. And go back to school and participate in these programmes it is fantastic and so worthy*" (C2). Participants from South America (A3, A4, A6, A7, C1) mentioned they felt more integrated into the Portuguese society because they had the opportunity to share this experience with Portuguese colleagues "*because here in Portugal, there is a big Brazilian immigrants, and what happens often is that foreign communities are very restricted to their ethnic or social groups (…) the mobility allowed that share with Portuguese and Brazilian colleagues (…) we shared experiences and it was very good*" (A5).

Other examples referred to the availability of learners to keep on learning throughout life (being lifelong learners), the raising of learner's motivation to learn, and the increasing of awareness concerning the learning developed. Learners became more willing to learn and recognised the importance of learning new knowledge and skills (Source: data from online survey).

From several statements, it is possible to conclude that organisations representatives *fully agree* or *agree* that learners have made new social contacts outside of their environment, when participating in the ERASMUS+ project, and as a result, the living environment and world of learners has been enriched. Some organisations *mostly agree* and *fully agree* that learners have more opportunities to move to other learning programmes (Source: data from online survey).

From the interviews to adult learners, it is possible to conclude that Erasmus+ mobilities have a set of advantages regarding the development of personal and professional competencies such as an increased self-esteem and self-confidence, and in these cases, digital competencies and digital awareness, and language skills. The mobilities also foster understanding regarding diversity due to the knowledge and experiencing different cultures. At the inclusion level, mobilities foster the participation of adults who, due to economic difficulties, lack of knowledge and/or fear, would not participate otherwise. The learning and the experience remain through their lives and provides confidence to deal with different challenges, being a life changing event in some cases. Mobilities bring people closer.

However, as it was also evident, the information is asymmetric. All participants were unaware of these mobility opportunities, so more must be done at dissemination level so more participants can be included and benefit from the mobilities, which could be done through the community, parish councils and municipalities.

6.3.2. Impact on horizontal priorities

- **Inclusion and diversity**

Most organisations (57; 53,8%) state they had an inclusion and diversity strategy, and an action plan, that they were cooperating with other organisations in supporting participants with fewer opportunities (56; 52,8%), and that they trained staff on inclusion and diversity (55; 51,9%).

Table 26: Organisations concerned with inclusion and diversity strategy and action plan

Inclusion and diversity	**fr**	**%**
We have an inclusion and diversity strategy and action plan	57	53,8
We have dedicated staff responsible for the coordination, communication and implementation of inclusion and diversity activities	24	22,6
We train staff on inclusion and diversity	55	51,9

We use the voice of the learners for developing, monitoring and evaluating our offer	47	44,3
We have procedures in place to assure our training offer is inclusive	38	35,8
We are cooperating with other organisations that support participants with fewer opportunities	56	52,8

Source: Data from the online survey

Most organisations claimed that attention to inclusion and diversity had become a major concern and had significantly improved in adult education activities promoted since the funding of Erasmus+ projects from 2018 onwards.

Case study 2

The Erasmus+ Programme has proven to be suitable for several aspects, namely (E1, E2):
- opens the doors to projects organised by organisations of this type and that work with this target audience (E1);
- the European dimension of the Erasmus+ Programme allows participants to expand knowledge and learn about the work of other similar organisations;
- it is more accessible than other programmes that require more academic knowledge.

The director of case study 2 (E1) considers that, despite the Erasmus+ Programme having a high level of complexity, it is more suitable for those who develop action research projects;
- because the projects of this organisation are mostly oriented towards civil society and Erasmus+ grants can supply 100% support. As the Erasmus+ have a specific grant line to fund these projects, it becomes more suitable.

No major obstacles were referred. The Covid-19 brought some inconveniences, namely the fact that the organisation had to work remotely; however, as the partners already knew each other, this event did not cause complications or delay the work (Interviewees E1, E2 of case study 2).

o Digital transformation

Most organisations (78; 73,6%) affirmed that they used digital resources for teaching and learning activities, and many others (67; 63,2%) argued that they had digital devices for learners (55; 51,9%) and others that staff had continuing professional development opportunities in the use of digital technologies (59; 55,7%).

Table 27: Organisations holding a digital strategy and an action plan

Digitalisation	**fr**	**%**
We have a digital strategy and action plan	34	32,1
Our staff have continuing professional development opportunities in the use of digital technologies	59	55,7
We have digital devices to use for teaching	67	63,2

We have digital devices for learners	55	51,9
We have physical spaces that support teaching and learning with digital technologies	52	49,1
Learners in need of special support have access to assistive technologies	29	27,4
We use digital resources for teaching and learning activities	78	73,6

Source: Data from the online survey

- **Green transition**

Most organisations (52; 49,1%) argued that their staff were trained on good environmental practices. Some others (51; 48,1%) referred that they embed green skills in their learning offers, they collaborated with organisations to strengthen sectoral capacity to operate more (45; 42,5%) and some others (41; 38,7%) had a green and sustainability strategy and action plan.

Table 28: Organisations having a greening and sustainability strategy and action plan

Sustainability	**fr**	**%**
We have a greening / sustainability strategy and action plan.	41	38,7
We calculate our environmental footprint.	20	18,9
We have dedicated staff that is responsible for the coordination, communication and implementation of the greening / sustainability strategy.	35	33,0
We train staff on good environmental practices	52	49,1
We use environmental certifications/ecolabels	17	16,0
We collaborate with organisations/individuals to strengthen sectoral capacity to operate more sustainably.	45	42,5
We monitor the implementation of greening strategy and plan	26	24,5
We embed green skills in our learning offer	51	48,1
We have a specific training offer for green skills	26	24,5

Source: Data from the online survey

An interesting example of an Erasmus+ project referring to the green transition is case Study 3.

Case study 3
The XXX has a long history of applications to several European Union programmes (15 in total), such as the Erasmus+ ones.

Objectives of the project
"The project aimed to respond to the needs identified in pedagogical terms and in terms of contact with the various target audiences that fall within adult education. The project objectives were defined as follows:

-Development of pedagogical skills within the scope of informal and non-formal adult education for the environment and sustainability;

	-Implementation of more modern and effective educational/communication practices; -Greater communication effectiveness, to trigger societal and intra-institutional changes; -Improve the quality of work and daily activities; -Contribute to motivation and satisfaction through personal and professional development opportunities; -Create and benefit from an international network of good education/communication practices; -Increase language skills; -Increase the international profile of DOMA technicians and give them the opportunity to see other realities and ways of implementing environmental projects.
Given the reduced internationalisation of its environmental technicians, ML believed that their professional effectiveness would be greatly improved with the development of a European vision of their work. With mobilities they could see examples of how to better interconnect European policies with what has been the local plan and understand the importance of their work within the general framework of the ongoing mobilising action. Lousada is a municipality focused on Europe and intends to continue developing partnerships and cooperative work methodologies in the future, ensuring innovation and competitiveness. We believe that excellence is achieved by valuing human resources and, to this end, international cooperation is essential. We intend to fully implement the objectives of the Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda for sustainability, and to this end we intend to train our staff in understanding and assimilating this European mission, for better implementation in local governance - empowering them to act!"	

Source: General data on the project to be found in https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/

- **Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement**

Most organisations (70; 66%) claimed that they offered activities that empowered learners to develop and express their own opinions, and many others (61; 57,5%) argued that they offered activities that activate democratic participation of leaners, and others still trained staff on active citizenship (55; 51,9%).

Table 29: Organisations having a strategy for promoting active citizenship and democracy

Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement	fr	%
We have a strategy for promoting active citizenship and democracy	45	42,5
We train staff on active citizenship	55	51,9
We offer activities that empower learners to develop and express own opinions	70	66,0
Our organisation offers spaces to learners in which they can take/experience responsibility	48	45,3
We offer activities, that activate democratic participation of learners	61	57,5
We have structures in place that allow learners to influence the learning offer (e.g. learners council)	25	23,6

Source: Data from the online survey

Table 30 provides an overview of the level of improvement in all priorities. As it is possible to see, inclusion and diversity was the most improved priority, closely followed by digitalisation, and participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement. Environment and fight against climate change was the less improved priority.

Table 30: Level of Improvement in priorities

Level of Improvement	Attention to inclusion and diversity		Attention to digitalisation		Attention to environment and fight against climate change		Attention to participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
NA	18	16,98	19	17,92	19	17,92	20	18,87
Not at all	1	0,94	1	0,94	3	2,83		0,00
Only a little	4	3,77	3	2,83	9	8,49	8	7,55
To some extent	16	15,09	22	20,75	27	25,47	20	18,87
Rather much	40	37,74	38	35,85	29	27,36	37	34,91
Very much	27	25,47	23	21,70	19	17,92	21	19,81

Source: Data from the online survey

In case study 3, the wideness of aims achieved is clear as it is stated in the following quotes.

Case study 3

"In the 19 mobilities carried out, we managed, directly and indirectly, to achieve these objectives, with regard to technical skills. But equally important was developing social skills, a critical spirit, and a sense of belonging to the local reality, within a European

context. We really managed to implement our European Development Plan, and all technicians gained another idea of what the Green Deal, the European Union and "European spirit" mean. In this context, we particularly highlight the importance of the internal seminars for transferring knowledge and disseminating the experiences that we organised in December 2022 and April 2023. The objective was for all mobilities carried out to be "passed on" to the entire XXX, so the councilor, who also participated in 3 mobilities. In these seminars, each participant presented to the councilor 2 good practices seen or learned during mobility, which could be replicated/applied in Lousada, such as pedagogical, communication, management of environmental issues or language learning/development methodologies, but also indirect learning, such as social or cultural aspects. In other words, the sharing of reflections on the international experience of the participants, mainly with regard to the implementation of environmental programs. These reflections brought a collaborative dynamic between those who went and those who did not go to the mobilities and had repercussions on the adoption of some approaches in adult teaching, mainly involvement techniques, and brought a marked environmental awareness and the real meaning of the Green Deal missions and their application and constraints in different European contexts. These were key seminars that consolidated all individual mobility experiences within the XXX collective.
With all this, we believe that we have achieved the objectives of ensuring that our staff: i) is more effective in carrying out their tasks and in their educational "mission"; ii) build a European vision of your work and thus have a greater capacity to interconnect the European plan for the environment (Green Deal) and local actions in Lousada; iii) are better communicators and, therefore, more capable of transferring knowledge outside the institution (public) but also internally, in a co-learning system with peers/colleagues; iv) develop language skills, which are fundamental for understanding and transmitting content on the European agenda and v) gain a taste for internationalisation, mobility and international networking, having easier access to good practices that they can replicate/implement in their daily lives day" (C3-E1).

Source: Data gathered in Erasmus+ website on case study 3 in https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details

6.4. Factors hampering or stimulating impact

A significant number of organisations (29; 27,4%) referred that they still use outputs and products developed in the Erasmus+ KA2 projects. Some (18; 17%) claimed that, to some extent, they still use these outputs and products. However, there is a significant absence of answers to this question (34; 32,1%).

Table 31: Organisations still using outputs and products from ERASMUS+ KA2 projects

Use of outputs and products from ERASMUS+ KA2 projects	fr	%
NA	34	32,1
Don't know	1	0,9
Not at all	3	2,8
Only a little	5	4,7
Rather much	29	27,4
To some extent	18	17,0
Very much	16	15,1
Total N	106	100,0

Source: Data from the online survey

Concerning the factors that stimulated the take up and use of outputs and products developed with the support of Erasmus+ Programme since 2018, the answers given by inquired organisations were linked to:

- The relevance, utility, quality and social and educational value given to outputs and products;
- The existence of strong and reliable partnerships, both at a national and international level;
- Outputs and products developed aimed at fostering social inclusion, diversity tolerance, sustainability, etc.;
- The potential transferability of the Outputs and products developed made them usable in quite different contexts;
- Organisations' recognition of the added-value of outputs and products developed during the project implementation.

It must be stressed that non-participating organisations referred also to several issues to be considered by NA.

From the analysis of the interviews of Module 5, it was clear that most organisations are not aware of the different possibilities provided by Erasmus+, associating them solely with mobilities for higher education or secondary school students. This is also the reason why they have never considered participating, the lack of knowledge.

All organisations considered the participation in Erasmus+ mobilities could be very positive, especially for staff, who could bring new knowledge and different working approaches. However, the greatest obstacles for staff are time availability, and for organisations, the lack of human resources to replace in case of absence.

The contribution that each organisation has in internationalisation and international cooperation (Source: Data from the online survey).

As for factors that hampered the take up and use of outputs and products developed with the support of Erasmus+ Programme since 2018, the answers given by inquired organisations referred to:

- The organisations' themselves, namely in what concerns a) the aims these organisations fulfil in their daily activities that could be different than the ones of the Erasmus+ project funded, b) resistance of staff that didn't join the funded project to change and to do tasks and activities differently, c) changes in staff within organisations meant that, after some time, the staff involved in the project development were no longer employed by the organisation, and relevant information and practices were, to some extent, lost;
- The social and educational context in which projects are developed, which related to d) the lack of budget, the lack of human and technical resources, e) the lack of good, experienced, dynamic and motivated partnerships, both national ones and international ones

The wider context of projects' implementation, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, when face-to-face activities were at stake or when digital skills were needed to develop most of tasks, and activities included in the Erasmus+ funded project (Source: Data from the online survey).

7. Impact of Erasmus+ at micro level

7.1. Introduction

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

7.2. Impact on staff

From statements referred in the online survey, organisations most *fully agree* and *agree* that staff developed better international competences, and better language skills in at least one language, as well as better pedagogical and didactical skills and that is more able to collaborate with other organisations that support participants with fewer educational opportunities.

Table 32: Impact on professionalisation and staff development

By participating in ERASMUS+ ...	... our staff has better pedagogical and didactical skills		... our staff can better identify the learning needs of adult learners		... our staff can develop better learning pathways for our learners		… our staff can better supervise the learning pathways for our learners/ participants		... our staff can better map the results of the learning trajectories for our learners		... our staff is better able to engage into innovation processes		... our staff has more attention for the social-emotional development and guidance of our learners	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
NA	25	23,58	24	22,64	24	22,64	24	22,64	24	22,64	24	22,64	25	23,58
Fully agree	38	35,85	31	29,25	30	28,30	23	21,70	22	20,75	32	30,19	26	24,53
Agree	38	35,85	41	38,68	41	38,68	37	34,91	35	33,02	44	41,51	35	33,02
Undecided	4	3,77	10	9,43	9	8,49	14	13,21	19	17,92	6	5,66	17	16,04
Disagree		0,00		0,00		0,00		0,00		0,00		0,00	1	0,94
Not applicable	1	0,94		0,00	2	1,89	8	7,55	6	5,66		0,00	2	1,89
By participating in ERASMUS+ ...	…our staff is better able to make use of digital learning technologies		… our staff has better language skills of at least one other EU language		... our staff has better international competences (intercultural competences ; international orientation; and personal development)		... our staff pays more attention to inclusion and diversity		… our staff has more attention for the environment and fight against climate change		... our staff has more attention for active citizenship, democratic participation, civic and social engagement in their teaching		... our staff is better able to collaborate with other organisations that support participants with fewer opportunities	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
NA	25	23,58	24	22,64	24	22,64	24	22,64	47	44,34	24	22,64	26	24,53
Fully agree	32	30,19	39	36,79	44	41,51	33	31,13	24	22,64	28	26,42	37	34,91
Agree	38	35,85	29	27,36	32	30,19	37	34,91	32	30,19	36	33,96	36	33,96
Undecided	9	8,49	12	11,32	6	5,66	12	11,32		0,00	17	16,04	7	6,60
Disagree	1	0,94	1	0,94		0,00		0,00	2	1,89		0,00		0,00
Not applicable	1	0,94	1	0,94		0,00		0,00	1	0,94	1	0,94		0,00

Source: Data from the online survey

Case study 2

The coordinator refers to participating in multidisciplinary meetings with international partners and holding workshops as experiences that had a positive impact on the professional training of all Technicians involved, as they allowed them to expand their knowledge. They also point out these moments of mutual learning as something that brought more satisfaction and motivation to the project. For example, the possibility of learning from an Italian partner in the area of digitalisation and the collaboration with the research centre of an university (XXX) also enhanced internal learning.
One of the interviewed technicians mentioned that the games produced proved to be very useful tools for her work as a trainer, both to get a better knowledge of students and to promote interaction between them (E3).

In what refers to examples on how participation in one or more Erasmus+ projects since 2018 improved the staff skills, these were some of the most common ones:

- Learning from the development of new activities, including different contents, pedagogical methods, ICT tools, educational materials;
- Learning from the implementation of activities according to new practice approaches such as project-based learning, project-management, design thinking, team building, etc. which reinforced the cohesion among staff and motivation to keep on working in the adult education field;
- Learning developed among staff improved work implemented by staff itself, in terms of the use of new knowledge and contents, resources and tools (among these ICT), pedagogical and didactical methods;
- Learning of new knowledge and competences referring to learners, in what concerns the awareness of learners needs, ways of thinking and of developing activities for special social groups (such as those that are disabled);
- Learning of new idioms and developing self-confidence to work in international settings;
- Learning on adult education practices in other countries, referring to different of ways of thinking about adult education and implementing adult education activities, by the giving of an European dimension of the field and allowing practice transfer;
- Learning that allowed developing further projects – projects developed were considered starting points for further activities, but also a way of motivating for the development of knowledge and competences acquired;
- Learning that allowed the professionalisation of staff, when the establishment of an NGO directed at adult education practices development were settled;

The improvement of the social recognition of the organisation implementing the Erasmus+ project by other organisations (Source: Data from the online survey).

7.3. Impact on adult learners

From several statements, it is possible to verify that organisations *fully agree* or *agree* that learners have made new social contacts outside of their environment when participating in the Erasmus+ project. Also, as a result, the living environment and world of learners has been enriched by this participation. Some *mostly agree* and *fully agree* that learners have more opportunities to participate in other learning programmes.

Table 33: Impact of adult education Erasmus+ projects (by organisations' representatives)

By participating in ERASMUS+...	... the living environment/ world of our learners has been enriched		... our learners have gained new social contacts outside of their own environment		... our learners have started to participate more in activities in their own environment		... our learners have become more assertive		... our learners have more opportunities to move on to other learning programmes		... our learners have more chances on the labour market	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
NA	25	23,58	24	22,64	24	22,64	25	23,58	25	23,58	24	22,64
Fully agree	36	33,96	38	35,85	26	24,53	21	19,81	28	26,42	22	20,75
Agree	30	28,30	24	22,64	27	25,47	26	24,53	35	33,02	33	31,13
Undecided	8	7,55	13	12,26	21	19,81	27	25,47	12	11,32	16	15,09
Disagree		0,00	1	0,94	1	0,94	1	0,94	1	0,94		0,00
Completely disagree		0,00		0,00		0,00		0,00		0,00	1	0,94
Not applicable	7	6,60	6	5,66	7	6,60	6	5,66	5	4,72	10	9,43

Source: Data from the online survey

Some of the examples given by organisations showing the impact on adult learners participating in Erasmus+ Programme included:

- The promotion of social inclusion, when fewer opportunities adult learners were able to develop tasks and learn new knowledge new knowledge and developed new skills that allowed that allowed them to have a "normal" life. In this line of reasoning personal and social development was very much stressed by several organisations. The raise of staff awareness concerning to social inclusion, sharing life experiences, intercultural and differences acceptance and recognition were also mentioned;
- The promotion of new and different kinds of methods in education as well as learning materials, fostering pedagogical differentiation;
- The promotion of new job opportunities, both in national and international settings. New learning allowed some adult learners to get new jobs, others were able to perform their jobs in a more complex way, developing new professional tasks and skills – such as mentoring and tutoring -, some other adult learners decided to emigrate after acquiring new skills (language, cultural, etc.);
- The development of new skills regarding ICT and ICT use, such as online platforms, educational materials, products, etc. was relevant for learners' everyday lives;

- The increase of learning motivation, by the use of active pedagogical and didactical methods, new and more relevant contents for learners, as well as the development of new evaluation tools (ex-ante and ex-post).

The development of knowledge and skills that allow the link between abstract contents and theory to practice, tasks and activities that learners develop on a daily basis. (Source: Data from the online survey).

Case study 2

- Codesign approach[55]

Following a codesign approach in which YYY were directly involved in the development process from the beginning, ID-GAMING resulted in three main outputs: the QooL CITY Game (a collaborative serious game, available in board and online versions, where players are engaged in a joint-play activity to have fun and achieve training objectives together), the Game Catalogue (a set of games and platforms suitable to PID, in which each game can be selected according to the cognitive function to be trained) and a host of Training Materials (conceived to provide support to YYY, professionals and relatives when using the QooL CITY Game with training purposes) (Source: application form of Case study 2).

The codesign approached challenged population with very specific needs, professionals and relatives to work together toward the objectives of the project. According to the coordinator (C2-E2), this had an important impact on everyone involved and contributed to the construction of quality materials.

Development of digital competences

The project was not objectively aimed at developing digital skills, but it allowed acquiring and improving some of these skills through practice. Through the construction of an online platform, participants interacted and experienced new learning tools that were different from those they had access to until then (C2-E1).

Learning through playing - motivation

"One of the young participants said, «I don't know how to read very well, nor do I like it very much», but later we noticed that he made leaps in learning when reading because he was so motivated and involved in the game" (C2-E1).

[55] The spelling of codesign (and not co-design) was kept following the documents of this organisation referring to this specific project.

8. Impact of ERASMUS+ at macro level

8.1. Introduction

In this chapter, we look at the impact of Erasmus+ Programme beyond participating organisations. It addresses aspects such as how other organisations benefitted from the project outcomes, adjusting their provision/offer.

8.2. Impact on other organisations

From the collected data, organisations *fully agree* and *agree* that similar organisation that did not participate in the project benefited from the project outcomes, adjusting their provision and offers.

Table 34: Impact on the project development beyond the organisation itself

By participating in ERASMUS+ ...	... similar organisations (who did not participate in the project) benefitted from the project outcomes, adjusting their provision/ offer		... adjustments have been made to (government and/ or sectoral) policies at the local or regional level		... adjustments have been made to (government and/ or sectoral) policies at the national level	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
NA	24	22,64	24	22,64	24	22,6
Fully agree	22	20,75	3	2,83	4	3,77
Agree	31	29,25	24	22,64	12	11,3
Undecided	21	19,81	31	29,25	34	32,1
Disagree	1	0,943	10	9,434	12	11,3
Completely disagree	1	0,943	6	5,66	9	8,49
Not applicable	6	5,66	8	7,547	11	10,4

Source: Data from the online survey

Case study 2

As mentioned in point b) the project promotes highlight the international meetings, visits, and co-creation of workshops as moments of socialisation that contributed to mutual learning between professionals and partner entities involved. As examples, two of the interviewees (C2-E1, C2 -E2) mention the holding of an 'easy reading' workshop - which is one of organisations's areas of expertise - allowed this 'know-how' to be passed on to partners. The project's final report also states the holding of at least 4 multiplier events that allowed results to be shared with similar entities from different countries and several other workshops co-created through partnerships. According to the Final Report, "the participation in co-creation workshops promoted the involvement of local entities such as Service Providers, City Councils, and Special Education Schools, together with the national and European event's participation in other dissemination actions through the publication of articles, press releases, and

publications in other channels has impacted our target group in a way that supports the project objectives".
From the final report, participating organisations mentioned as projects' impact in their ones:

- *Partners recognised and valued the acquisition of more knowledge about serious games and about game design.*
- *Enhancing the fact QQQ [56] game proved to be a useful tool for delivering training and services to YYY having an impact on increasing their Cognitive Functions and Quality of Life;*
- *Partners recognised the importance of bringing together organisations from different areas and people with different backgrounds. Diversity is a big added value! KKK[57] and*
- *LL[58]L improved their position as experts in the application of ICT-Serious Games and Assistive Technologies to Intellectual Disabilities, had strengthened person-centred approaches for developing new knowledge and tools that could be replicated in other collectives with special needs.*
- *Partners recognised the importance of involving end users in different stages of the process (co-creation, review sessions, validation, multiplier events) which resulted in a strong feeling of ownership ("our" Project!)*
- *Partners recognised that it is still very challenging to involve relatives (due to their low level of engagement, availability issues, and COVID-19 lockdown rules)*
- *Despite the difficult conditions this partnership faced while developing ID-GAMING project during 2020 mainly, all objectives were tackled with high-quality levels and respecting inclusion premises such as the ones this project was built upon: Co-Design, Easy to Read; Participation, and Universal Design.*
- *All partners have to the congratulated for having worked as a real team where a diversity of competencies complement each other and lead all to achieve the desired goals (Source: application of C2).*

In terms of impact on public policies, no data was provided by the interviewees. In terms of results that were important for other organisations, interviewees of C2 (E1, E2) highlight as an example the fact that the products were adapted by another similar Portuguese institution. This institution contacted the organisation to request authorisation to adapt the games to a senior audience.

In short, holding workshops, disseminating the products that resulted from the project, in meetings and multiplier events, seem to have contributed to attracting other organisers, sharing knowledge, and validating the products that were created.
Source: application form of Case study 2 and interviewees C2-E1, E2.

Case study 3

[56] Deleted for anonymity.
[57] Deleted for anonymity.
[58] Deleted for anonymity

The project was important as it was part of a wider strategy to conceive policies and to promote practices directed at the efficient use of resources, including the optimisation of the waste management system, the ecological improvement of the municipality territory, in what includes forests, arboreal heritage, water courses, urban ecology, energy, among others (application, page 12).

It was also a relevant strategy to the involvement of the local municipality inhabitants/community within the sustainability education municipal project, aiming at dissemination of scientific culture, environmental education, and appreciation of natural values, for families, the general public and school communities.

The XXX was the main actor in the conception, submission of application and development of the project.

Apart from sustainability education, internationalisation was also a relevant topic approached. Environmental policies of the XXX are national (established since 2014), but closely relate to European Union policies on sustainability and environment literacy and education.

Source: Data gathered from the project website https://www.cm-lousada.pt/cmlousada/uploads/document/file/4808/2020_06.pdf and interviews C3-E1, C3-E2.

B.III CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY POINTERS

9. NA support: strengths and challenges

The accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ Programme

Most organisations participating in KA1 projects are mostly NGOs, followed by Schools/Institutes/Educational centres involved in adult education staff mobility. Most organisations participating in KA2 are also mostly NGO, followed by higher education institutions and small and medium size enterprises.

Main obstacles for participating in Erasmus+ Programme were related to lack of staff (understaffing) that can be specifically involved in applications and development of projects procedures. Other obstacles were related to constraints arising from the complexity of the application development procedures, and financial (underfunding) problems. Another constraint relates to difficulties in having learners joining the projects and activities funded, because several of them do not have the knowledge and competences on foreign idioms (such as English).

The majority of organisations participated in five or more Erasmus+ projects (Cf. table 12). This means that most organisations are experienced in applying and developing Erasmus+ projects; therefore, the programme maintains its accessibility. A rather interesting number of organisations have participated in the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of adult education for the first time, which means that it is rather accessible.

Among main participants, most adults have low levels of school education, are unemployed, young adults lacking basic skills, adults with limited income and with learning difficulties. As such, in Portugal, Erasmus+, in the field of adult education, is a rather inclusive programme[59], involving adults facing social and economic vulnerabilities and having fewer opportunities.

Case study 2

Lessons to support effectiveness and efficacy of future Erasmus+ programmes

The case study 2 director (E1) considers that the National Agency could make a greater investment in disseminating project results and products, both among the general population and among political actors. It would be important for them to mobilise this data and results to lobby political decision-makers, especially with regard

[59] The concept of inclusion requires in-depth critical reflection. It is used widely in European Union documents and guidelines. However, within this study it still requires a systematic review and critical reflection.

to public policies aimed at this public. The fact that these are experiences and tools that have been produced, validated and tested, can enhance and have a multiplier effect (C2-E1).

Impact at meso level

The main impact on internationalisation of organisations can be observed, as these claim to have a policy/strategy for internationalisation and they have participated in international networks and activities on a regular basis. Therefore, Erasmus+ Programme seems to get the internationalisation of the participating organisations that were funded by the Erasmus+ grants.

The main impact on learning offer relates to the fact that organisations consider to be better prepared to collaborate with other organisations in supporting participants with fewer opportunities. Organisations also claim they are able to incorporate outputs or insights gained from the Erasmus+ in the field of adult education when it comes to projects and activities developed into new or existing provision. These also referred that the education offer is better aligned with adult learners needs.

The main findings regarding the impact on horizontal priorities show that inclusion and diversity are part of the organisations' strategy and action plan and in training offers of staff. Additionally, adult learners' opinions are considered when developing, monitoring and evaluating the existing offer.

Factors hampering the use of outputs and products developed with the Erasmus+ Programme are related to organisational issues such as: i) differences between the aims of the organisation and the aims of the project; ii) staff issues, concerning resistance to engagement in projects and activities, different from the regular programmes implemented by the organisations, and iii) changes in staff, namely precarious work contracts or volunteers that might be involved in the organisation for a short time.

Case study 1

"This Erasmus+ project in the field of digital education for older adults has the potential to influence the design and implementation of public policies on education for non-formal education adults in the European Union and in Portugal. It also aims to disseminate these practices to other national and European entities with a mission and interest in adult education, particularly focusing on those adults who typically participate less in training programmes. Digital education is part of the European Union's strategic guidelines to address the challenges of the digital era. However, there

has been significant investment mainly in the education of children, youth, and highly educated adults. Older adults with lower educational backgrounds have been largely excluded from these public policies, contributing to a widening gap in digital skills between younger and older adults" (C1-E1).

"This project demonstrates its relevance and utility of interventions in this field and the need for investment in public policies. This need is even more pressing in the context of Europe's aging population. The logic, organisation, and operation of the project can serve as inspiration for policies and practices in the education of older adults in Portugal and in the European Union. RRR[60] and the other partners have conducted outreach activities to ensure the project's dissemination within Senior Universities both nationally and internationally. The award given by the National Agency contributes to the project's recognition and social visibility, thereby enhancing its dissemination. The dissemination within Senior Universities is an objective of RRR: "[The project] was widely replicated and disseminated among other universities that did not directly participate but benefited from the project's products" (E1). With this project, RRR strengthened the conviction regarding the importance of investing in this type of training: For us as an institution, it gave us the feeling that this is an area that continues to be necessary. Therefore, if we continue to have applications in this area of digitalisation, we will continue to be partners and want to participate because we know that we still have many universities and many students who will need this type of content and development, not exactly as developed in this project, but potentially in other forms" (C1-E1).

"The participation of this organisation in Erasmus+ Programme had the following impacts on the organisation: i) Strengthening and consolidation of the organisation's European Partner Network: ii) the collaboration with diverse partners across Europe enriched RRR's network, providing mutual benefits and fostering long-term relationships; ii) National Recognition: The project was nationally recognised for its relevance and social utility, receiving an award from the National Agency - this recognition significantly contributed to the institution's prestige; iii) Improvement of adult educators' training/staff training. The project enhanced the training of staff in other associated Senior Universities, particularly in digital education, thereby raising the quality of education provided; iv) Sustained Offering of Digital Education: The project reinforced the continuous offering of digital education for older adults in Senior Universities. This area is crucial for promoting equal opportunities, inclusion, autonomy, and well-being among older adults; v) Project Dissemination: The project was widely disseminated across the Senior Universities within the RRR network, ensuring broader reach and impact; vi) Experience Sharing: RRR and its Senior Universities shared their experiences and methodologies with partner countries and beyond, enhancing the global educational landscape; vii) Training in Erasmus+ Applications: The project provided technical teams in Senior Universities with valuable training in preparing and managing Erasmus+ applications, improving their capability to engage in future projects. The impacts identified are highlighted in the interviewees' statements: "Knowing partners in such diverse countries always brings added value to us, and we

[60] Deleted for anonymity.

also leave something there. Having an European project with a partner from Latvia to create a network of senior universities " (E2).

"The National Agency awarded our project, and [the partners] also disseminated this in their country. It had a much bigger impact in other countries, and we will always continue, of course" (E2).

"It was a very important experience for him [educator responsible for module design and project implementation at the Senior University of Castelo Branco] because sometimes it's about going abroad and realising that we are already doing a lot of good things. But also, as he said – You caught me because you slightly deconstructed my daily work methodology. He himself had to rethink how he would approach this issue (of cybercrime)" (E1).

"The [responsible educator] then passed it on to other colleagues. These things spread – working methods, non-formal education methodologies, being available for anyone to consult the contents and products on the site. We ourselves talk about this in other universities, which are already 400 in Portugal. If at least half of them consult and get an idea here and there, I believe the impact sometimes exceeds what we can follow" (E2).

"They know where to find content. If they must give content on internet safety, they know they can find it there" (E1).

Impact at micro level

The highest ranked learning outcomes gained in the mobility of staff are: learning from new activities (in terms of new contents, pedagogical methods, ICT tools and educational materials), and new practice approaches (such as project-based learning, project-management, design-thinking); staff efficiency and efficacy in pedagogical and didactical issues; and learning referring to adult learners, in what concerns awareness of learners needs, ways of thinking and developing activities for specific social groups, namely special needs.

In light of professionalisation and staff development, relevant impacts include: the development of international competences, and language skills in, at least, one foreign idiom; improvement of pedagogical and didactical skills allowing to collaborate with other organisations supporting participants with fewer educational opportunities.

The main impact of Erasmus+ Programme on adult learners is related to new social contacts learners have made outside of their regular social environment when joining an Erasmus+ Adult Education project and activities – learners were

enriched by their participation. It was also highlighted that learners became more available to join further educational activities.

Factors stimulating the impact of Erasmus+ Programme on adult learners included the promotion of social inclusion, new and different education and learning materials, and of new job opportunities, in national and international settings.

Some factors hampering the take up and use of outputs and products concerning the organisation itself are:

i) different aims of the organisation comparing to projects developed,
ii) resistance of staff to engaged in the project and
iii) changes in staff resulting in a high turnover of staff (most of them, volunteers).

Impact at macro level

The impact on other organisations shows that participation in Erasmus+ Programme has impact on adapting and delivering the offer.

However, while organisations involved in Erasmus+ believe that Erasmus+ results had impacted some system related issues, there are no clear indicators that show us, clearly, the impact of Erasmus+ AE projects and experiences on political decision making and/or sectoral policies at local, regional or national levels.

Factors stimulating impact on other organisations are related to knowledge development on the diversity of adult education as a field of practice, of policies in Europe, and on the variety of pedagogical and didactical methods to be used in activities implemented. Additionally, inquired organisations also referred to the strengthening of local and national partnerships, and the reinforcement of local, national and international recognition of the organisation itself, as a provider in adult education.

Factors that hamper the impact of Erasmus+ Programme on government policies are related to the fact that Erasmus+ is not part of national AE policy and/or national AE implementation programmes.

Policy pointers

According to interviews made to representatives that didn't apply to Erasmus+ grants, the following recommendations were stressed.

NB interviewee believes that NA must ensure enough financing to attract people to participate in the mobilities. It was also mentioned that some organisations monopolise the projects, as they are aware of how the system works and are able to develop successful applications.

Although NA carries out several information initiatives, it is not enough, as there are small organisations that do not have enough staff or time to attend to those events. Reference people or ambassadors within communities are needed to spread the word. Some concerns regarding the end of financing, which in most cases, mean that everything that a project has developed will be lost, "*So, I mean, this is a responsibility that also happens, that is, these people who are often abandoned for everything else, and that that project, that activity is the only thing they have left, and then the funding ends. Even that we take away from him. And there is a grieving process here, it is mourning for the activity, mourning for the people with whom it works, whether for the person who benefits the participant, or for the technical team, who invested, who worked so hard, who reached a stage, who managed to involve people, because that takes time, we know, we want to involve a community, if we want to develop. If we want to create a network, this is not done in a short time, is it? In other words, it is necessary to work continuously and sustainably. And you lose, that's terrible. I think it's very, very bad*" (NB). Sustainable financing is needed, so teams can continue to work and be professionalised. Polytechnic institutions could also play a part as mediators of this information within the community.

NIP interviewee's opinion, much more information is required, and should be provided directly to the different organisations, through the local community, parish councils, municipalities, closer local organisations that could disseminate the information, "*I think that there should be more dissemination among the different institutions, organisations or through the local community, the parish councils, the municipalities and reach perhaps the local entities, they are closer to us, to the institutions, so that this information can reach*" (NIP).

Interviewee from NCQ mentioned that NA provides all the necessary information, but the funding is short. Financing should be granted according to the distances and the countries chosen for the mobilities.

NEP interviewee believes that NA could provide and disseminate more information and help in finding partners, as the advantages of participating in Erasmus+ are clear, "*(NA should) Disseminate, inform, make known the possibilities that exist in the first phase. And then, I imagine that the second challenge, which is not easy at all, is to help find partnerships, that's it. (…) How organisations can align so that projects are mutually interesting. How to do things, therefore... but that would say that, at least in relation to the reality of EEE*[61]*, I don't know if in other organisations, in short, higher education, things will be different, but outside of higher education, for example, there is no information. People don't know.*" (NEP). He also mentions that mother organisation could have the conditions to implement an Erasmus project, although the

[61] Deleted for anonymity.

bureaucracy associated to public procedures and regulations could pose some difficulties.

NAS interviewee mentioned that no information has ever come from the NA.

NJF interviewee believes that NA could disseminate more information regarding mobility projects through social media and that information should be directed to specific organisations, as some people think that this mobilities "*are just for other people, (mobilities) do not arrive here*" (NJF).

- **How to increase the accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ Programme**

It is important to keep the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of adult education programme owing to its aims, participants (both adult learners and adult educators) and organisations involved. In Portugal, funding available for non-formal and informal adult education is difficult to access, and when available, it is scarce. For the same reason, it is also important to raise the amount of funding.

Applications to Erasmus+ Programme in the field of adult education are based on a set of complex procedures when it comes to grassroot organisations. Larger and already skilled organisations, develop applications easier than smaller and less experienced organisations. Therefore, it is important to assure that other organisations, mostly depending on volunteers or staff on a free-lance and part-time basis have access to this funding programme.

Additionally, it is important to (re)think projects that involve (low-skilled, non-regular-participants) adult learners. The preference for non-formal education and active pedagogic methods, focussing on a social and cultural dimensions, is a relevant option.

- **How to increase the Impact at micro level**

The raise of participation of both adult learners and staff in adult education is to be based on activities and projects that are connected to wider values and aims (such as those of a cultural kind, of civic and political ones), considering challenges that all European Union countries face in present times and in Portugal in particular, such as the ageing of society and migration.

Regarding adult learners, in case studies interviews, the participation in the project was much appreciated by staff and learners:

Case study 1

"We are working on collaborative learning, on non-formal education. We are concerned with social rights and values, such as freedom, tolerance, equality of opportunities for all, non-discrimination" (C1-E1; interview to staff).

"Since ever Inclusion issues were dealt in this project. Even when learners with disabilities are concerned. The fact that learners know English has been a significant factor for having this project impacting on learners" (A5; interview to learner)

"My participation in this project has impacted in my personal life. We are alive and learning. I feel much more included than before joining the project" (A6; interview to learner).

Case study 4

Most of the adult participants had no knowledge of how to search for and use the internet in their daily lives or had very rudimentary skills in this area. The impact of the project is recognised by all the older adult participants (older than 55), who emphasise learning about internet use and security precautions to avoid various problems. This is evident in their statements: "I didn't understand anything about the internet [now] I prioritise security more, I pay more attention […] the interest in knowing the dangers of the internet [now] we are more comfortable […] I liked everything I learned" (A5).

"there are things I do [now] that I didn't do before, I didn't know" A6).

"it helped me a lot to overcome certain fears and to know how to get around them […] now I'm much more comfortable" (A7).

"we were alerted to the dangers of using the internet, phishing, cybercrime, cyberbullying, viruses…" (A8).

"almost everyone was doing it wrong […] being careful with the internet was one of the things that stuck with me […] everything was good, everything was positive" (A4).

"it was great" (A11).

"it helps guide our lives" (A10).

"we knew little about computers, we started to learn […], we talked, we learned, it was very good" (A10).

"I learned a lot… I loved it, [the trainer] explained to us the dangers we face all the time, I learned things I didn't know, it's great to be prepared for the problems that exist on the internet" (A9).

"we learned to create secure passwords" (A9).

"[the trainer] taught us, made us do things the right way" (A11).

"we created a group on Telegram to communicate among ourselves" A12).

Additionally, they highlight the importance of the project in getting out of the house, having routines, establishing social contacts, and receiving cognitive stimulation. This is visible in the statement: "we learn here […] it forces me to get out of bed […] we learn […], it's very important, it occupies time and the mind" (A8).

"I've been depressed… then I started coming, I started liking it" (A10).

This idea is reinforced by the coordinator: "people reach this age and want to continue learning, they like to remain in a routine system that makes them leave the house, that somehow gives them a motivation to continue living beyond their professional activity" (A1).

Older adults understand that the project has helped strengthen the dynamics of the Senior University, a space where they can engage in significant and useful learning, which helps maintain autonomy in their lives and well-being. They express great interest in continuing to participate in training, in digital technologies and other areas.

They recognise the importance of the adult educator in this process: "[the trainer] is very nice" (C4-E8). "[the trainer] is patient dealing with the elderly " (A5).

"thanks to [the trainer] we had online classes during the pandemic […] we like him very much" A10).

"he is very kind" (A11).

"he has a lot of patience" (A12).

These impacts on older adults were also mentioned by the project's trainer: "the project had an impact not only on the Senior University but also on the students and the new learning they had, […] there was a change […] they thought they had a very interesting password, but they didn't, so they decided to change it" (A3).

As it is possible to observe, adult learners enlarged their social networks, developed digital competencies and literacy, language skills, cultural awareness. The learning acquired is applied in the adult learner's daily life. All

adult learners considered that the participation in Erasmus+ mobilities enabled them to build their self-confidence, and some were even able to try new job opportunities due to the increase of their self-esteem. For migrant adult learners, participating in Erasmus+ Programme was an opportunity to increase their social networks, have further contacts with Portuguese people, and thus feeling more integrated. The great majority of adult learners were very satisfied with their participation, and no negative aspects were highlighted. Most suggestions referred to the possibility of widening the participation to other disadvantaged adults.

According to several adult learners interviewees (B1, A3, A4, A5, A6, C2, C1, D1 and D2), language skills improvement has to be highlighted, mostly in English, although other languages were also referred. Additionally, digital literacy and application of digital tools for work, namely when referring to social media.
The application of acquired knowledge to life can also be mentioned, when referring to work or individual and social problems faced.
Increased self-confidence and self-esteem was said too, namely when activities took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. The granted projects participation were always referred as life changer events. This was particularly significant when migrants were at stake and interviewed.

As for staff, the participation was again highly valued, particularly, the use of English as an idiom:

Case study 1

"Right now we only speak English. This is a revolution to be made in this kind of projects. English supports us when communicating and prevents everyone from speaking their own idiom" (C1-E1).

"Staff was involved in this project. When the project was concluded, the staff applied the knowledge and skills they had developed while carrying out the Erasmus+ activities. New pedagogical and didactical activities were being developed. Additionally, activities concerning to inclusion were very important" (C1-E2).

"The main outcome was not the production of videos, but the sharing in a specific social context, with others. To experience and acknowledge other perspectives, other ways of doing, was the main outcome, the one I valued most" (C1-E3).

"I developed leadership skills. The contact with other partners and how they managed their institution, was very important for me as a leader" (C1-E4).

"In terms of professional development, the main impact was to be aware of to learn when talking about a specific issue, to acknowledge the different possibilities made available by the project, and to overcome idiom and cultural differences. To learn digital competences was also relevant for me because I consider myself as an info excluded" (C1-E5).

Case study 4

The impact of the project on the staff was as follows: i) increased awareness of other cultural realities, projects, and pedagogical practices; ii) enhanced recognition of the importance of their work as adult educators; iii) improved pedagogical practices among adult educators. This is evident in the statements from the staff participants.

"[the involved staff said justifying the use of English that was very much valued] – "you caught me because you deconstructed my [work] methodology" (C4-E1)

"Staff XXX then passed it on to other colleagues and these things keep passing on, ways of working, non-formal education methodologies" (C4-E2).

"we learned things, but we also left our teachings there" (C4-E2).

"it was about absorbing some content that at first, I thought it wouldn't be interesting for the seniors […] the project gave me some concepts...they were concepts I already had, but it gave me the opportunity to test if they could be applied in the classes or not. […] The impact for me was that, some parts of the project that I thought didn't make sense and then I think I managed to convey them well and it made perfect sense and I continued to apply them, I didn't just apply them here but continued to apply them in the other 17 parishes of the municipality of Castelo Branco, where I go" (C4-E3).

- **How to increase the impact at meso level**

It is important to find ways of sharing knowledge and competences, outputs and results got from joining the Erasmus+ project in the field of adult education projects. National and international networks and partnerships created by this programme can be a starting point for sharing and dialog among organisations funded by the programme and for a critical reflection on outputs and results achieved, on the main values of the European Union and on processes to build democracy and social participation.

Applying and funded organisations, namely grassroots and non-governmental, lacking full time and long term staff, need to be considered in the funding

procedures, both when applying (having application procedures that are simple and reliable enough) and when developing projects and activities (it is important that staff are not only volunteers, but are linked to organisations by a more longer duration and stable connection when projects are funded).

Case study 1

The project coordinators/managers mentioned several suggestions/recommendations to ensure greater effectiveness, quality, and scope of ERASMUS+ projects, particularly in strengthening practices and entities experienced in adult education: i) budget flexibility, It's important to ensure greater flexibility in the budget defined at the time of application, especially regarding funds for airfare and activities that may change due to price increases. This is essential to maintain the project's dynamics and quality; ii) swift replacement procedures, ensure more flexibility and speed in replacing individuals scheduled for mobility in cases of illness or death; iii) reduce bureaucracy, reduce the bureaucracy associated with some of these processes; iv) balanced evaluation, seek a better balance between qualitative and quantitative dimensions (indicators) in the project's definition, monitoring, and evaluation. This balance could have a very positive impact on the results, v) Increased Budget for Adult Education, increase the budget for adult education due to the utility of these projects and the aging population. This is evident in the statements: "Since Europe... But we are the second oldest country in Europe, perhaps the funding for adult education can also increase, which would be a great asset, especially since there are fewer and fewer young people and more and more older people!" (E1); "We get lost in bureaucracy and then we forget what is important. In our case, working with seniors [the most important] is the work with them day-to-day and the project results, rather than the evidence that must be presented [photos, number of social media posts, etc.]" (C1-E2).

Additionally, they consider mobility a fundamental aspect for the sharing and dissemination of appropriate and innovative practices, peer learning through the exchange of experiences and knowledge, the construction of an European identity, mutual knowledge, respect, solidarity, and empathy for others. Thus, they consider it very important to ensure the continuity of this possibility.

"I saw the potential of being European" (C1-E1).

"There is still a great deal of prejudice towards immigrants and Almada does not have a cultural policy aimed at immigrants" (C1-E1).

"These projects contribute to peace, to understanding" (C1-E1).

"There is a growing recognition of the value of mobility of teachers, non-teaching staff and students in European countries" (C1-E1).

"You need to know how to be in Europe!" (C1-E1).

There have been changes in attitudes and behaviours relatively; cooperative, group work; project work; sharing; there are many prejudices we still have about Portugal and these projects allow us to overcome these prejudices (C1-E1).

From the organisations that have never participated in Erasmus+ initiatives, the suggestions provided include a wider dissemination through social media, and a direct contact with community organisations and companies, which can be made through Erasmus+ Programme ambassadors. For most of these organisations, Erasmus+ is still solely associated with higher education and secondary education students traveling abroad, the first, to attend curricular units abroad, the second, to exchange within families.

- **How to increase the impact at macro level**

Erasmus+ Programme in the field of adult education in Portugal is still considered a complement of funding of funded organisations' projects. As there is no adult education non-formal policy in this country, this programme relies on itself, without any articulation with the existing adult education policy, mainly based on formal adult education offers. It is, therefore, important to have in Portugal a non-formal adult education policy and to establish a connection between the national policy and the Erasmus+ Programme in order to give stability and continuity in projects and activities local organisations develop.

Due to the nature of projects and activities implemented funded by Erasmus+ Programme, within a national adult education non-formal policy a connection with other public services, such as environment, culture, sports ministry and departments, among others. When developing such policy, informal adult education could be a relevant outcome.

The Erasmus+ Programme needs to spread the word on what refers to its aims and its outputs and results, among non-governmental and civil society organisations; public/State dependant ones; and also private/profit-making ones. A better visibility and social recognition of the importance of this programme is central to its survival and also to its maintenance in the European Union and in the national context.

Case study 3

"National and local public administration should be more flexible and attentive to activities that promote lifelong learning, such as projects funded by Erasmus+" (C3-E1).

"Erasmus+ Projects funded have to rely upon non-formal activities and active pedagogical and didactical methods" (C3-E2).

"outcomes from projects funded by Erasmus+ need to be divulged. The impact of such projects is a long lasting one in adult learners' lives. This lifelong learning needs to be divulged and acknowledged by adult learners" (C3-E3).

Limitations and difficulties of organisations for not applying to Erasmus+ grants

NB interviewee mentioned that the reasons for the no involvement of this organisation in adult mobilities are due to the specific organisational structure of the project, which is coordinated by a higher education institution (although being a NGO), and many partners. It is a non-formal and personalised education project, with no physical structure nor formal characterisation, hence it is not a formal entity.

NIP has never considered the possibility to apply for international trainings or establishing partnerships. Locally, some projects are developed, with the community, the parish council, and smaller organisations, as it was unaware of the possibilities.

NCQ referred that the participation in mobilities is being considered, but there are some difficulties, such as the different areas staff works in, the prices of travel and accommodation, as they flow according to the season.

NSR have never considered to develop or implement a project due to lack of knowledge.

In NEP, the interviewee has never explored the possibilities provided by Erasmus+, nor considered an individual mobility, and the organisation has never considered an application. He was also unaware that traveling and accommodation were financed in these projects.

Limitations and difficulties concerning the development of this study

The development of this study of impact involved several limitations. This report is based on data gathered and concerns cases and interviewees opinions expressed. It can't be generalised to all Erasmus+ projects funded and all participants, being these people in charge for institutions, staff or adult learners. In what refers to difficulties among these:

- The need to follow decisions made by the international coordination of the research. These decisions were to be followed by all countries involved and, on some occasions, they made sense to some countries and not so much to others. An interesting example of this situation was related to the translation of documents sent to gather data that was not always adapted to the Portuguese context of adult education.

- Difficulties concerned the collection of data. Some interviews were scheduled and rescheduled on several occasions owing to lack of time of interviewees or interviewer. The data collection phase lasted much longer than expected.
- Writing about the Erasmus+ Programme requires the use of specific terminology. Translation of documents sent by the international coordination didn't always allow the use of such terminology in Portuguese. Additionally, not always researchers and interviewees were aware of such terminology, which involved difficulties in the writing of this report.