



GO INCLUSIVE

7 TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Erasmus+ and inclusion

“ Everyone needs to be able to benefit from the same opportunities, and can also give back to society ”

Mariya Gabriel

An international exchange is an incredible experience and a unique opportunity in your life. Erasmus+ offers pupils, students, adult learners and education professionals an opportunity to gain new knowledge and experiences abroad.

At the National Agency for Erasmus+ Education & Training, we strongly believe in the power of internationalisation – not only as a unique opportunity to broaden your personal and professional horizon, but also to help you on your road towards global citizenship.

We believe it is important for everybody to be able to participate in Erasmus+, and in society. This is why we seek to stimulate inclusiveness and diversity in all Erasmus+ projects.

Using the possibilities offered by Erasmus+, we aim to promote the development of an inclusive society in which every individual is able to contribute their own specific background and competences – irrespective of education, religion, sexual orientation, skin colour, socio-economic background and physical or mental disabilities.



“ He wanted to show his parents he had the strength to do it ”

“Our main criterion was what the student wanted to learn. For instance, there was a boy with a visual impairment. His parents thought he wouldn't be able to join the trip to Croatia, but he wanted to show them he had the strength to do it. We selected him on the basis of his personal objective, and he has grown tremendously. When he returned, his parents felt he was a different child.”

HARRIËT VAN SPRANG, HEADMISTRESS PRIMARY SCHOOL DE WEGWIJZER, TILBURG



The Erasmus+ programme offers a wealth of opportunities to promote inclusive international mobility and create an impact. It is for participants of all ages, from primary education to adult education.

Read our **7 tips for inclusive international exchange** and contribute to a society that allows everyone to participate!



Erasmus+ is the European grant programme for education, training, youth and sport. Its objective is to contribute to economic growth, employment, equal opportunities and inclusion in Europe. The programme aims to give as many people as possible an opportunity to fully participate in society and the labour market by encouraging them to develop their skills and competences. Through international cooperation, Erasmus+ helps to improve the quality of education and training and of youth work across Europe.

VIEW ALL THE FUNDING OPTIONS ON [ERASMUSPLUS.NL](https://www.erasmusplus.nl)

So what exactly do we mean by 'inclusion'? And why is inclusion so important within Erasmus+? Take inspiration from these examples and tips from the world of practice!

TIP #1

Zoom in on target groups that feel the programme is not for them

Marianne Driessen, coordinator for inclusion at the National Agency for Erasmus+ Education & Training:

“Erasmus+ centres around the key European notion that everybody should have the opportunity to develop their talents and take part in society. The projects undertaken in recent years have shown us, however, that some groups felt the programme was not for them. For example, while we did reach schools for bilingual education, we received hardly any applications from schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. So we thought about strategies to reach those target groups as well.”



Below are some practical tips that will help educational organisations expand their reach:

- **Offer suitable support**

Marianne: “We encourage organisations to reach out to all target groups and offer the most suitable types of support, such as extra guidance. For example, in higher education additional funds are available for mobility initiatives, on top of the regular grant. We are also seeing new mobility formats, including shorter and blended exchanges preceded and/or followed by a virtual component. This offers opportunities for students who have less time available to spend abroad. Extra funds, suitable support and other mobility formats are great instruments to engage more target groups.”

- **Look beyond the ‘usual suspects’**

“Educational institutions could reach out specifically to target groups that feel the programme is not for them, rather than merely focus on the ‘usual suspects’ – students who are likely to succeed anyway. There are several ways in which they can do this. For example, they could engage parents and mentor groups (peer groups) or highlight stories told by ambassadors.



Society is becoming more and more diverse, but we don’t always see that reflected in the projects, exchanges and partnerships.”

- **Think in terms of what is possible**

“I noticed that VET institutions have work placement programmes for individual students, but also organise exchanges for groups of students representing different levels. Students who felt uneasy about doing an exchange on their own positively thrive after spending 3 days abroad, and begin to take initiatives on their own. The Erasmus+ programme for 2021–2027 provides more opportunities for these types of group mobility.”

TIP #2

Don’t allow potential obstacles to stop you

A study or work placement abroad is a unique and valuable experience for those who undertake it. The organising institution must have all the resources it needs to prepare for and guide that experience effectively, especially in the case of participants with special support needs (due to a physical or mental disability, for instance).

This is why Erasmus+ provides extra funding for a range of things – accessible accommodation, medical guidance, auxiliary equipment, adapted teaching materials, a helper, etc.

Salim was diagnosed with a progressive muscle disease at a young age. However, that did not prevent him from doing part of his law studies in Rome. Salim: “In my case it takes an extra effort, that’s evident. But it actually felt like a wonderful challenge because

SCAN THE QR
CODE AND
WATCH THE
VIDEO!





when people say something is impossible, which they often do, that motivates me to prove that in fact it is possible.”

Think in terms of solutions

Salim is quite satisfied with the help he received: “Erasmus+ helped me with a lot of things, and that included assistance via the university. They helped me find solutions and a budget. We managed to arrange everything and were really happy with the guidance we got.”

“ Don’t allow fear to hold you back: take up the challenge! ”

Preparation is crucial, but Salim also found out that you cannot anticipate everything. He has clear advice for anyone considering an international mobility experience: “Don’t allow fear to hold you back; take up the challenge. Go for uncharted territory, and avoid safe choices or things within your comfort zone. Just let it all happen to you. After all, a negative experience is still an experience. You don’t always need to be afraid of that. Often it’s not so difficult to get around the obstacles, imaginary or otherwise.”

TIP #3

Plan a preparatory visit

As part of funded Erasmus+ projects, project coordinators and participants can now plan a joint preparatory visit to the educational institution that organises the activity abroad (such as a study period, work placement or training course). This is particularly relevant in the case of mobility activities that involve participants with special support needs.



Guarantee high-quality activities

In certain cases, it is also possible for an individual participant to undertake the preparatory visit alone, or in the company of a family member or helper.

The purpose of the visit is to ensure that the activities are of good quality, by:

- Preparing and facilitating administrative arrangements for the mobility project;
- Helping the participant gain confidence;
- Achieving a solid partnership between the institutions involved.

The preparatory visit can also help to arrange personal assistance, assess the participant’s individual wishes and enable the

organisations involved to make the requisite adaptations in time, before the mobility project actually takes place.

Additional options per sector

In addition to the preparatory visit, there are further options per education sector for which the home organisation can apply for extra funds. Check the official Programme Guide or consult your Erasmus+ programme adviser.

TIP #4

Short but effective

One new feature in the Erasmus+ programme 2021–2027 is the possibility of a short exchange – for example, a minimum of 2 days in VET and a minimum of 5 days in higher education. Low-threshold, short-term mobility projects for individuals are now also available in the adult education sector.



Short-term mobility projects and group mobility projects

Short-term, small-scale individual mobility can be an important experience for participants whose circumstances prevent them from doing a mobility project of standard duration. An initial experience like that can help them go on a longer international exchange when they feel up to it at a later point in time.

This can also be in the form of a short-term group mobility project. The Niveau2Plus Team at Koning Willem I College used this opportunity, enabling students with informal care tasks or with young children to gain an international experience just like their fellow students.

Georgia Vasilaras, coordinator for Internationalisation at Koning Willem I College: “A group of

30 Niveau2Plus students went on a 2-day trip to Brussels. They had all received an Erasmus+ grant for this exchange, which was intended to promote European citizenship and intercultural learning.

The programme included a visit to the House of European History and the European Parliament, but the students also had time to explore the city. It was a resounding success. One of the students, for example, wanted to feel what it was like sitting behind one of those famous microphones, and they just said: go ahead! It was a moving sight.”

“We set up a small Erasmus+ project for level 1 and 2 VET students, and they really liked it. The students who returned were extremely motivated. It opens their eyes. They realise that working and learning across the border is not just for level 3 and 4 students. We are now examining the possibilities for running these short-term projects more frequently.”



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PAULINE VAN DEN BOSCH, GILDE OPLEIDINGEN, ROERMOND

More inclusion in Europe

COMMON EUROPEAN NUMERACY FRAMEWORK

adult education

People with low numeracy skills have trouble dealing with situations in which numbers, measures and connections play a role. Just like functional illiteracy, low numeracy has a profound influence on a person's daily life. In this project, University of Applied Sciences Utrecht joined forces with partners from Ireland, Spain and Austria in developing a properly substantiated and widely supported framework that promotes national, regional and local initiatives to improve numeracy skills among adults.

CENF.EU

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WORK4ALL

vocational education and training

The Work4all project involved collaboration of 7 VET institutions and 2 experts from 6 European countries (the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Lithuania and Italy), from November 2019 to September 2021. Their joint purpose was to create more jobs for students with a disability. The project was based on the Inclusive Job Design method. Birgit Grimbergen (senior staff member of REA College Pluryn): "In the search for a suitable job for a student with a disability, the focus is usually on the individual. In this project however, the emphasis was on the added value for the employer. This means that we analysed the work processes and activities of existing jobs and converted tasks into long-term jobs. This saves time for existing staff and creates new jobs."

WORK4ALL-EP.EU

So what exactly do we mean by 'inclusion'? And why is inclusion so important within Erasmus+? Take inspiration from these examples and tips from the world of practice!

TIP #5

Think big, but start small

Even small steps in internationalisation can have huge effects for all pupils – no matter whether you work in primary or secondary education, in special primary education or in higher education (teacher training college). The eTwinning digital platform allows everyone to join in and gain international experience immediately, in their own classroom!

Judith Pijpers, Erasmus+ coordinator at SBO Merlijn, a school for special primary education in The Hague: “We started small at the time, with eTwinning, a low-threshold online community for schools in Europe. Via this platform, our Exchange Bear went to a school in Germany. Everyone enjoyed watching the bear paying visits to the pupils. The added advantage of an online project via eTwinning is that you don't need to apply





for a grant and that it's quite easy to launch a project yourself."

SBO Merlijn has been involved in international activities for over a decade. Many of the pupils feel frustrated because they were unsuccessful in regular education, so one key task for the teachers is to make the children realise once again that learning is fun. The activities in other countries quite literally enable the pupils at SBO Merlijn to expand their horizon.

Pijpers: "They cross borders, strengthen their social skills and improve their self-esteem. They can say they've been abroad, and that's good for their self-confidence."

New platform for digital exchange

The European School Education Platform is the meeting place for people who have a connection with the world of education – such as school staff, researchers, policymakers and other experts. The platform is also the home base of eTwinning, the community for schools in Europe. eTwinning provides your pupils with an opportunity to have a look beyond the border. Through eTwinning, children can come into contact with their peers in over 40 countries and learn about each other's language, culture and local environment. In that context, they can work together on a variety of themes, such as media skills, the climate or human rights. And all of that without travelling!

[SCHOOL-EDUCATION.EC.EUROPA.EU/ETWINNING](https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/etwinning)

TIP #6

Reach more students via [InclusiveMobility.eu](https://www.inclusivemobility.eu)

More inclusiveness in mobility programmes: that is the purpose of the new Erasmus+ programme and the European Higher Education Area. But how to contribute to inclusive international mobility as an educational institution?

Over the past 2 years, the international consortium of the Erasmus+ EPFIME project has worked to create more opportunities for students with support needs to participate in international mobility. One of the project results is InclusiveMobility.eu, a platform that helps higher education students with a disability by providing them with the information they need to study abroad.



IS THE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION NOT YET AVAILABLE ON **[INCLUSIVEMOBILITY.EU](https://www.inclusivemobility.eu)**? THEN CREATE A FREE ACCOUNT!



TIP #7

Share your knowledge

Evaluate your efforts to reach out to under-represented student groups and share the outcomes with others – they can benefit from your experiences!

- Use **your own experiences and new insights** to inform colleagues, teachers, students, friends, family members and others about inclusive international mobility.
- Set up your own **ambassadors' network** to support the exchange of knowledge and experiences on international mobility.
- Remember to motivate students who have been on international exchange to sign up for the **ambassadors' network at WilWeg!** By sharing their tips and experiences, they will encourage other students to make a similar step across the border.

“ We all share the same passion ”

“What I admire most is the fact that all schools share the same passion. We all believe it is important to ensure that pupils with a disability are properly equipped to participate in society. Perhaps they'll never be government ministers, but surely they can become happy global citizens. We can see that ambition in all countries. If we get another opportunity, I won't hesitate for a second to join again.”

**MARIANNE BECKERS OF
HERMAN BROERENSCHOOL
IN ROERMOND, A SCHOOL
FOR CHILDREN WITH A
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY**



Did you know that Erasmus+ has been one of the EU's most successful programmes for 35 years?

Almost 13 million participants since 1987

The Erasmus+ programme supports the educational, professional and personal development of those who take part in education, training, youth and sports activities, in Europe and beyond. As such, the programme contributes to sustainable growth, employment, social cohesion and a stronger European identity.

Key priorities of the Erasmus+ programme for 2021–2027 are inclusion, digitalisation, participation and Green Erasmus+ (sustainability, environment and climate).

Do you work in the education or youth sector? Then read more on our website about the possibilities that the Erasmus+ programme can offer your organisation.

VIEW ALL THE FUNDING OPTIONS ON [ERASMUSPLUS.NL](https://erasmusplus.nl)



#1 Inclusie



#2 Green Erasmus+



#3 Digitalisering



#4 Participatie

PUBLICATION DETAILS



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7 tips for inclusive international exchange

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