



Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Erasmus+: the European Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

EU Member States, third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme (nearly 140 countries worldwide)

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

European Commission, Erasmus+ National Agencies, European Education and Culture Executive Agency

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training, Youth, Mobility, Students, Teachers, Alumni, Erasmus Mundus, Cooperation Projects, Capacity Building, Virtual Exchanges, Learning, Teaching, Inclusion

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Erasmus+ aims to help generations of Europeans to become active citizens, with the skills, knowledge and experience to tackle the challenges facing our society, both now and in the years to come. These challenges include rising unemployment, climate change, economic and post-conflict migration, digitalisation, globalisation, physical inactivity and the multilingual structure of Europe's united but diverse nations. Erasmus+ funds projects that help people and countries move towards a more circular, green economy where little is wasted, and pollution is minimised. Other projects nurture the democratic process in Europe and its influence globally. Some projects focus on inclusion of those who are socially or economically marginalised, while others help prepare today's youth for an increasingly digital world. Erasmus+ also promotes young people's participation in democratic life. This is how the EU invests in people with a view to unlocking individuals' potential, regardless of age or background, in support of Member States' efforts to develop human resources in Europe and beyond. Erasmus+ offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in higher education, vocational education and training, school education (including early childhood education and care), adult education, youth and sport. It contributes to national reforms and modernisation in these fields through peer learning and exchanges, analytical work, surveys, studies, and cooperation with international organisations.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

i) Which population was affected?

ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?

iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

In the education and training fields, Erasmus+ targets individuals - students, teachers, institutional leaders and staff at all levels, apprentices, trainees, volunteers, youth workers and young people in general, as well as institutions and organisations. Since 1987 when it was first established, 12 million people have participated in the programme, and 10 more million are expected to participate between 2021 and 2027. Each year, more than 300,000 students study or train under Erasmus+. Citizens need to be better equipped with the knowledge, skills and competences in an evolving society that is increasingly mobile, multicultural and digital. Spending time in another country to study, to learn and to work should become a standard.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that access to education is essential to ensuring a swift recovery, while promoting equal opportunities for all.

Erasmus+ supports the objectives of the European Education Area, of the European Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, of the European Union Youth Strategy and of the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2021-24). The programme also supports the European Pillar of Social Rights, implements the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, develops the European dimension in sport. Reflecting the importance of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and tackling climate change in line with the Union's international commitments, the Programme aims to contribute to mainstreaming climate actions and to achieving an overall target of 30 % of Union budget expenditure supporting climate objectives, also in line with the European Green Deal.

Erasmus+ enhances societal links through mobility, exchanges and capacity building, nurturing social resilience, human development, employability, active participation. It provides regular channels for people-to-people cooperation, promoting values, principles and interests around common priorities.

The mobility of learners and staff is the flagship activity of Erasmus+. Through the unique experience of living, studying, training or travelling abroad, participants gain self-confidence and soft skills, discover different cultures and build interpersonal and professional relationships worldwide. This fosters employability and active participation in society, contributes to social inclusion and strengthens a common identity based on shared values.

The programme also helps to make education more relevant and responsive in third countries not associated to the Programme. It contributes to human and institutional development, sustainable socio-economic recovery, growth and prosperity, good governance, peace and security. Cooperation projects and policy development activities enable organisations to gain experience in international cooperation, to exchange good practices and network, strengthening their capacities to pursue quality and modernisation, and to be ready for the green and the digital transformations. It strengthens the role of the European Union as a global actor.

In the period 2014-2020:

Over 10 million people participated in Erasmus+ mobility activities, including 270 000 who benefited from short-term mobility grants for exchanges between programme and partner countries.

2.6 million European student cards were issued by universities and other institutions.

94% of participants in Erasmus+ youth mobility activities declared they improved their skills.

900 000 Erasmus+ vocational education and training mobility grants were awarded. Nearly 50% of Erasmus+ trainees were offered a job in the company where they trained.

760 000 young people were involved in Erasmus+ youth exchanges

39% of participants in Erasmus+ youth mobility activities were from an underprivileged background. 80% of Erasmus+ graduates are employed within three months of graduation, while 72% state that their Erasmus+ experience helped them land their first job.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation? *

Erasmus+ supports the following activities:

- a) Learning mobility of higher education students and staff; of vocational education and training learners and staff, of school pupils and staff, of adult education learners and staff.
- b) Cooperation among organisations and institutions: partnerships for cooperation and exchange of practices, for excellence and for innovation; online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation.
- c) Support to policy development and cooperation on the EU education and training policy agendas; EU tools and measures to foster the quality, transparency and recognition of competences, skills and qualifications; policy dialogue and cooperation with education and training stakeholders and organisations; cooperation with other EU instruments and support to other EU policies; dissemination and awareness-raising and other general measures.

Teaching, learning, research and debates on European integration; support to institutions pursuing an aim of European interest.

As the lack of language skills is one of the main barriers to the participation in European education, training and youth mobility opportunities, Erasmus+ offers online language support (OLS) that helps participants - in a flexible and easy way – to improve their knowledge of the language in which they will work, study or volunteer abroad so that they can make the most out of this experience. OLS also contributes to the objective of the programme, to promote language learning and linguistic diversity.

Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes have been carrying out their activities since 1987 in EU Member States and, progressively, in third countries associated and non associated to the programme.

In general terms, Erasmus+ is open to any public or private organisation active in the fields of education, training, youth or sport, with additional specific criteria depending on the actions. Several Actions are also open to other players in the labour market.

As a general rule, organisations participating in Erasmus+ projects must be established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme. Certain Actions are also open to participating organisations from third countries not associated to the Programme, notably in the fields of higher education, vocational education and training, and youth.

The Erasmus+ budget has almost doubled:

Erasmus+ budget 2014-2020 : 14.7 billion euro + 1.8 billion euro for global cooperation

Erasmus+ budget 2021-2027: >26 billion euro + 2.2 billion euro for global cooperation

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

Erasmus+ individual mobility for students, staff, trainees, apprentices, volunteers, youth workers and young people enhances knowledge, skills and attitudes, increases employability, builds self-confidence and independence, stimulates curiosity and innovation, fosters mutual understanding and builds a sense of belonging.

Erasmus+ helps organisations to develop their capacity to operate in international settings, to improve governance and management methods, to access more funding opportunities and strengthen their ability to prepare, manage and follow-up projects, to network and engage in transnational partnerships, to exchange best practices, produce innovative outputs, and to facilitate individual learning mobility.

The programme also helps to develop accessible and high-quality digital learning, fosters the capacity of teachers, trainers and youth workers to use digital tools and content, tests and promotes distance and blended learning.

Organisations and participants with fewer opportunities, with disabilities, educational difficulties, or a migrant background, as well as those living in rural and remote areas, are at the heart of the programme objectives.

The programme also contributes to building up knowledge and understanding of sustainability and climate action, including by leading example and encouraging participants to use low carbon transport.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

The EU added-value of Erasmus+ is uncontested. No other mobility and cross-border cooperation programme offers comparable scale, scope, variety and efficiency as Erasmus+. If Erasmus+ did not exist, learners and staff mobility and European cooperation in the sectors concerned would be substantially lower. The programme has also contributed to improve the knowledge and understanding of the EU and to develop a European identity.

Erasmus+ is complementary to other EU instruments such as the European Structural and Investment Funds and EU Research and Innovation programmes.

What worked well:

Inclusion: Erasmus+ has been reaching out to an increasing proportion of disadvantaged people (11.5% of the total number of participants in 2014-2020). The actions targeting youth were the most successful in reaching out to young people with fewer opportunities (31% of beneficiaries) through non-formal learning activities.

The programme has triggered innovation among participating organisations and institutions, boosted cooperation between different education and training sectors, youth and sport, and has helped to enhance resilience and recovery.

Erasmus+ has also strengthened the EU's global outreach, promoting cooperation between Europe and third countries which are not part of the programme ('Partner countries'). The opening to the world has contributed to the internationalisation of EU universities, opened up new opportunities for individuals and organisations from enlargement, neighbouring and developing countries - and contributed to disseminating EU values and experience.

Over 35 years, the programme has been expanding to new target groups, improving its geographical balance and the proportion between small and larger countries.

The interim evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme identified potential for improvement in various areas, that the new programme 2021-2027 is designed to address:

- Increasing inclusiveness: widening access to the programme, especially for individuals with fewer opportunities and for small organisations; addressing the lack of foreign language skills hindering transnational activities.
- European awareness: fostering knowledge and understanding of European integration and a sense of belonging to Europe among youngest generations;
- Increasing global outreach, while addressing the complex implementation of international actions in higher education;
- Stimulating innovation, which seldom extended beyond the direct Erasmus+ grant beneficiaries;
- Better involving policy-makers in policy calls, as in the past the take-up of policy innovations and lessons learnt at national level has been limited;
- Rationalising policy priorities in support to strategic thematic areas, reinforcing activities in sectors with an expansion potential (Vocational Education and Training, Schools and Youth); maximising relevance and impact of adult learning, Jean Monnet actions for EU studies and Sport actions;
- Creating and reinforcing synergies with other EU instruments.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

For 35 years, Erasmus+ has been supporting the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, and lifelong learning, in Europe and beyond. It has helped to pursue sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, innovation and active citizenship.

The programme is greatly valued by stakeholders and the general public, benefitting from a strong brand name that is recognised well beyond the group of direct beneficiaries.

A coherent lifelong learning approach is central to managing the different transitions that people face in life: Erasmus+ is an integrated programme that covers lifelong learning in all contexts – formal, non-formal or informal (including through youth and sport activities) – and at all levels: from early childhood education, schools and vocational education and training, to higher education and adult learning. Erasmus+ is closely connected to the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

Through cooperation in formal, informal and non-formal learning, the Programme addresses key challenges-including economic recovery and youth unemployment; skills' mismatches, low employability and education poverty; global competition for talents; Information and communication technology potential and digital divide; social exclusion and intolerance; lack of trust in the EU and low participation in democratic life; threats to the integrity of sport and, more generally, to common European values.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 mid-term evaluation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0050&rid=2>

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0050&rid=2>

Staff Working Document : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018SC0040>

Erasmus+ Impact Assessment : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=SWD:2018:277:FIN>