



**European  
Movement**  
United Kingdom



CENTRE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
LEARNING AND  
LEADERSHIP



**The National  
Campaign for  
Erasmus+**

# Unlocking opportunity: Why the UK needs Erasmus Plus

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FOREWORD BY

# Nick Harvey



When the United Kingdom left the European Union in January 2020, it also chose to withdraw from the HORIZON Europe research and innovation programme and the EU Erasmus Plus education and training programme, even though it could have retained membership of both. The last government finally recognised the disastrous impact of the loss of research funding on our universities and the wider economy by negotiating re-entry to HORIZON in 2023, but to date we have not rejoined Erasmus Plus.

Against this background, the decision at the May 2025 EU-UK Summit to work towards the re-entry of the UK into the Erasmus Plus programme is to be warmly welcomed. The programme was established in 1987 and is widely recognised as having been highly successful in enabling people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in school and youth exchanges, vocational training, social volunteering, academic study, and many other kinds of international projects. Erasmus Plus has also supported thousands of transnational partnerships to promote knowledge transfer and innovation in education, training, youth work and lifelong learning.

In recent years, the programme has focused on building the capacity and flexibility of the education sector to meet the changing skills needs of the 21st century economy more effectively, prioritising factors such as the green transition, digitisation and the demand for more workplace learning tailored to employer needs. This closely aligns with the UK government's current skills and industrial priorities. It also includes a strong emphasis on equal opportunities, social inclusion and promoting participation in democratic life.

We are launching the UK National Campaign for Erasmus Plus to mobilise support for the UK's full participation in the programme and to encourage the government to bring this to fruition as soon as possible. This will represent an important step forward both for education and skills development in the UK and for our political, economic and cultural relationships with other countries. By enhancing the education, employability and civic engagement of both young people and adults, Erasmus Plus will help build a safer, fairer and more prosperous society.

This report will describe the main objectives and activities of the programme and some of the benefits that resulted from the UK's membership of Erasmus Plus before 2020 along with case studies from organisations that were involved, including schools, colleges, universities, youth groups and adult education institutions. It will also look forward and describe some of the exciting new opportunities that have become available since we left from which we can benefit in the future.

**Sir Nick Harvey**  
Chief Executive – European Movement UK

# 01

## What is Erasmus Plus?



Erasmus Plus is the EU's programme for education, training, youth and sport. By promoting transnational cooperation, it supports the educational, social, personal and professional development of young people and adults from a wide variety of age groups and social backgrounds from school through to vocational and higher education and the world of work. It also promotes innovation and the exchange of best practice within the educational system and enhances its capacity to address changing skills needs within the labour market.

Erasmus Plus has a worldwide membership and network which includes not only 27 EU member states but also 6 further full member non-EU programme countries (Norway, Iceland, Serbia, Turkey, Liechtenstein and North Macedonia), and 160 additional partner countries who are eligible to take part in aspects of the programme ranging from Eastern Europe Countries such as Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Russia, to Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Lebanon to Asia and as far afield as Japan and Australia. It is based on a partnership model, with funding allocated to participating organisations jointly involved in either mobility or strategic partnership projects, incentivising all to fully participate'.

**The general objective of Erasmus Plus is to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport in Europe and beyond. The overarching priorities of the current 2021–2027 programme are:**



### **1. Supporting the Green Transition and the fight against climate change**

The Erasmus Plus programme is a key instrument for building knowledge, skills and changing attitudes on climate change and supporting sustainable development.



### **2. Digital Transformation**

Erasmus Plus plays a key role in supporting citizens of all ages in acquiring the digital skills and competences they need to live, learn, work, exercise their rights, be informed, access online services, communicate, critically consume, create and disseminate digital education content.



### **3. Promoting Social Diversity and Inclusion**

Erasmus Plus seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions. Organisations and participants with fewer opportunities themselves are at the heart of these objectives. With this in mind, the programme puts mechanisms and resources at their disposal. When designing their projects and activities, organisations should have an inclusive approach, making them accessible to a diverse range of participants.



### **4. Fostering stronger participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement**

Erasmus Plus supports active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning, it fosters the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy. Priority is given to projects that offer opportunities for people's participation in democratic life, as well as social and civic engagement through formal or non-formal learning activities.

**In addition to these priorities, projects can be based around a wide variety of topics and led by all kinds of educational, charitable or community organisations.**



## The main activities supported by Erasmus Plus to achieve its overall objectives are described under the following key actions

### Under Key Action 1

**Promoting the Learning Mobility of individual young people, staff, trainee apprentices and youth workers** organised through schools, colleges, universities, adult education and youth organisations.

Opportunities can range from eTwinning projects between schools in different countries to short and longer term placements which provide the opportunity for young people and staff to learn and gain professional experience abroad. In addition to enhancing young people's future employability and career prospects, international mobility placements can have a life changing impact on beneficiaries, enhancing their personal development, enabling them to develop confidence and soft skills exposing them to foreign languages and new cultures, and broadening their horizons.

**Over 16 million people have participated in Erasmus Plus learning mobility programmes since 1987 and annual numbers are growing, with 1.436 million beneficiaries in 2024 alone.**



## Under Key Action 2

**Fostering cooperation and strategic partnerships between organisations and institutions to promote the exchange of best practice and develop innovative teaching, training and learning methodologies and tools and build the capacity of partner organisation to meet the needs of different target groups both within and outside the workforce.** Projects are routinely funded for up to 3 years and consist of partners from a minimum of 3 countries. **Over 44,000 projects have been supported since 2014, an average of 4,500 per annum, led by partnerships of schools, colleges, universities, adult education and youth organisations.**

Additional types of project include schools etwinning, youth participation initiatives, support for sporting events and higher education teaching and research programmes.

Erasmus Plus is a decentralised programme, primarily managed by national agencies appointed by the government in each country. Organisations apply for funding, and report results to their own national agency, who assess the quality of projects in relation to the general objectives of the programme as well as any specific national priorities. The overall level of grant funding available in any country is commensurate with the level of its contribution to the programme.



# 02

## ERASMUS PLUS; THE UK'S EXPERIENCE

Prior to its withdrawal from Erasmus Plus, the UK had a highly successful track record of participation in the programme. In 2020 alone, our last full year of participation, no fewer than 948 projects led by UK organisations were funded, amounting to over £190 million of grants.

An estimated additional £30 million of grant was received by UK organisations in 2020 through their participation in projects led and funded by other countries.



## Also in 2020:

# 55,681

55,681 UK young people, adult learners and staff from schools, colleges, universities, youth and community organisations participated in UK led learning mobility projects under Key Action 1. Many more took part in projects led by organisations in other countries

# 2,258

2,258 organisations participated in 379 UK led Key Action 2 strategic partnership projects. These included schools, colleges, universities, NGOs and public bodies.

These projects typically involved the joint development of innovative education and training methodologies, tools and curricula to address the skills needs of particular groups of learners and of employers. Thousands of learners benefited from the products developed.

## UK organisations led:

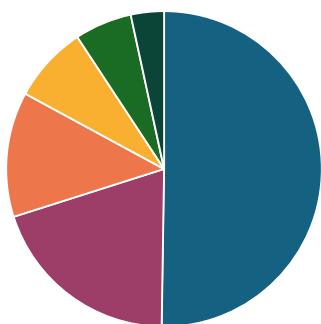
- 29** capacity-building projects outside Europe
- 8** cooperation projects between HE / FE institutions and businesses
- 50** partnerships in the field of sport
- 7** Erasmus Mundus joint degree programmes
- 8** large scale social inclusion projects in education, training and youth

In total, around

# 1 million people in the UK

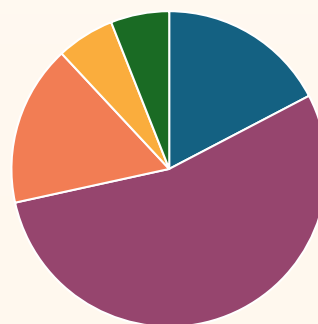
have benefited from Erasmus Plus since the original programme began in 1987.

## Grants to UK organisations 2014-2020 (GBP)



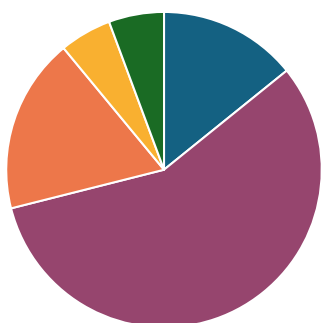
50%	Higher education	£413,435,846
20%	Vet	£163,350,171
13%	School	£105,379,043
8%	Youth	£64,546,938
6%	Adult education	£48,291,596
3%	Other	£27,801,855

## Projects led by UK organisations by region 2014-2020



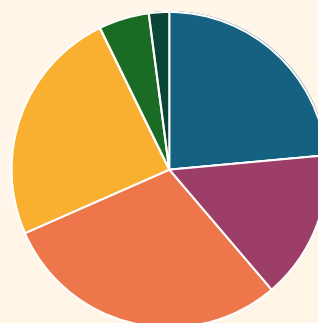
17%	London	1146
54%	England (other)	3585
17%	Scotland	1090
6%	Wales	393
6%	N. Ireland	396

## Grants to UK organisations by region 2014-2020 (GBP)



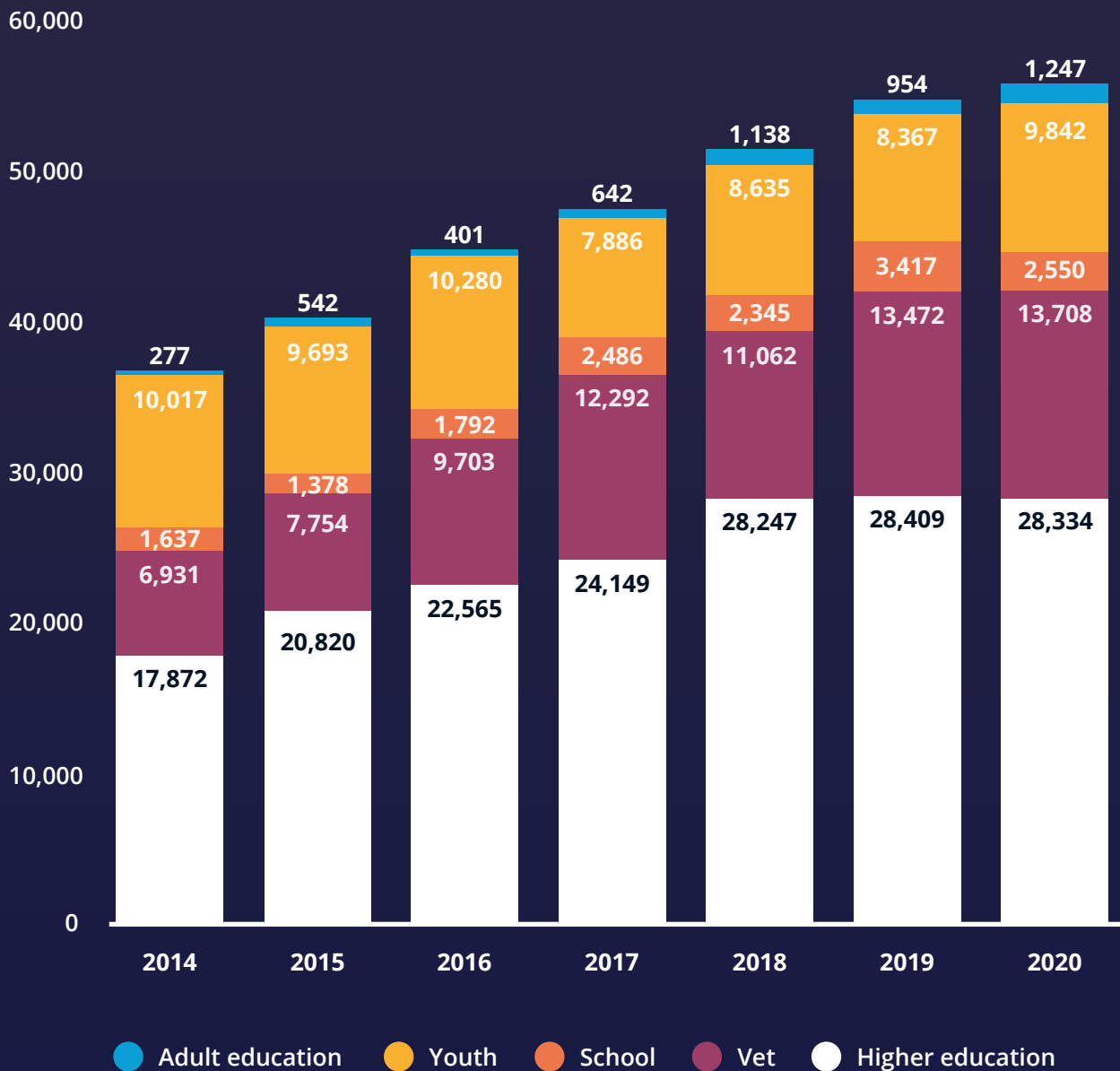
14%	London	£116,776,367
57%	England (other)	£467,934,273
18%	Scotland	£147,706,256
5%	Wales	£43,852,977
6%	N. Ireland	£46,535,575

## Projects led by UK organisations by sector 2014-2020



24%	Higher education	1556
15%	Vet	1006
30%	School	1959
24%	Youth	1609
5%	Adult education	342
2%	Other	137

## Individual UK mobilities 2014-2020 by sector (KA1 only)



There is a widespread myth that Erasmus Plus caters exclusively for the higher education sector and for university students who participate in learning mobility programmes. In fact there has always been a high level of participation of learners from non-university, including disadvantaged backgrounds. In the UK's last full year of membership for instance, there were 649 UK led mobility projects of which 437 or two thirds were led by colleges, schools, youth organisations and adult education providers from throughout the country, and the remaining one third by universities. For strategic partnership projects, only 30 out of 379 projects were led by universities.

# 03

## THE BENEFITS OF ERASMUS PLUS

Full participation in Erasmus Plus will bring immediate and long term benefits to individuals, organisations and communities across the UK. These include:



### Prosperity and growth

Erasmus Plus raises educational attainment, ultimately leading to better employment outcomes. Research by Universities UK International (UUKI) shows that it leads to greater graduate employability, better degree outcomes and higher salaries, particularly for students from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds: on average, those who travelled abroad during their degree earned 6.1% more, and those in work were more likely to be in a graduate level job than their non-mobile peers. Black graduates who were mobile were 70% less likely to be unemployed than their non-mobile peers, and Asian graduates earned on average 8% more and were 71% less likely to be unemployed.

Similarly, the Erasmus Plus Higher Education Impact Study, carried out for the European Commission, found that students who complete an Erasmus Plus mobility placement for studying or training boost their employability skills, with a large majority (72%) saying it had been beneficial or highly beneficial in finding their first job. They can expect faster career advancement: staff with international experience are given greater professional responsibility according to 64% of employers. Erasmus Plus participants also have better employability prospects long-term, being half as likely to experience unemployment five years after graduation than non-mobile graduates.



## International experience

encourages independence, self-confidence and resilience. It is a highly effective way of developing the soft (transferable) skills that employers require. Young people improve their communication, critical thinking and team working abilities, as well as their creativity and general curiosity about the world. According to UUKI and many recent industry reports, employers are looking for more developed skillsets to distinguish between potential candidates with similar levels of academic attainment.

These benefits apply especially to young people not at university. Participation in international activities provides accreditation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning and gives young people a story to tell which differentiates them in the jobs market. It also gives them the chance to build lasting personal and professional networks.

## Foreign language

skills and the ability to work with people from different backgrounds and countries are also highly valued by employers. Anyone who takes part in an exchange of any length will gain some exposure to other cultures and languages; longer term projects such as volunteer placements provide exceptional opportunities to learn a foreign language in depth. On the other hand, the working language for the vast majority of Erasmus Plus projects is English, and the English language is our country's top cultural export and the lingua franca of global trade: so enabling young people from elsewhere to speak it better is hugely in the national interest.

Erasmus Plus promotes international policy discussion and collaboration on key educational and training topics. By fostering international cooperation and sharing best practices, it contributes to the modernisation of education and training systems. It also promotes and encourages lifelong learning, resulting in an increasingly educated workforce. Most people who participate are eager to come back for further opportunities.

## Digital transformation

is a key driver of the 21st century economy and a priority of the Erasmus Plus programme. The programme enables cooperation between institutions working on innovative practices, for which there may be no other sources of funding. The same applies to cooperation in other fields of national importance, such as the creative industries or sport. The programme helps organisations of all sizes to expand their reach, impact and growth on a global scale. The programme has a growing focus on building the capacity of education and training organisations to assist employers in key economic sectors to address changing skills needs resulting increasingly rapid technological change, the green transition and other factors such as the need for more flexible lifelong and workplace learning opportunities to upgrade workforce skills.



## Exchange of Best Practice

Within educational institutions and other types of organisations, Erasmus Plus creates opportunities for exchange of best practice and continuing professional development of staff, leading to improvements in quality, innovation and job satisfaction.

## Broadening Horizons

Erasmus Plus broadens horizons. Exposure to different cultures, traditions and lifestyles develops appreciation of diversity and contributes to social cohesion. It raises people's awareness of their own cultural values and biases, interest in other cultures, and skills in adapting behaviour and communication to different cultural norms and values. This developmental process involves reflection, open-mindedness, flexibility, and a willingness to engage with different ways of life. It also enables young people to understand more about their own country's wider international relationships. In our interconnected world, this intercultural competence is a crucial skill which leads to:



### **Professional Success:**

individuals can work more effectively in international teams, navigate global business, and foster positive working relationships across different cultures.



### **Personal Growth:**

It broadens one's worldview, enriches personal experiences, and promotes more meaningful connections with people from diverse backgrounds.



### **Effective Communication:**

It allows for clearer communication and understanding, minimizing misunderstandings that can arise from cultural differences in values and communication styles. Escaping from a narrow everyday environment and mixing with others from unfamiliar places helps young people and adults to see their own problems in perspective.





## The Environment and Climate Change

The programme prioritises projects on themes of environment and climate change, increasing opportunities for cross-border cooperation between organisations, and empowering young people to take their own initiatives at local level. Their generation will be most affected by climate change; Erasmus Plus is a means of enabling them to start working together now.

Communities benefit from inward exchanges involving young people from different countries. Youth exchange projects in particular provide an opportunity for positive interactions, often across generations, which change perceptions and reduce prejudice.

**Erasmus Plus gives young people strong, lifelong friendships and connections with people from all over the world.**

## Democracy and Citizenship

Erasmus Plus develops civic consciousness, responsibility and democratic participation in the real world and online. Through policy dialogue projects (Key Action 3), young people are empowered to engage in substantive discussion with policy-makers on all kinds of issues and at all levels. This can have a significant impact on youth involvement in decision-making by creating mechanisms to make this a reality and by increasing the effectiveness of youth advocacy groups within public and civil society organisations.

Many projects give young people experience of volunteering and positive social action over short or long periods. This increases their sense of agency and motivates them to make a difference in their communities.





## Social Inclusion and Equity

Erasmus Plus promotes equal opportunities and social mobility. Participation raises aspirations and overcomes the belief of many young people that “I would never be chosen for this” or “it isn’t meant for me”. Having experienced the sense of inclusion in an international exchange, they become more motivated to look for the same in education or other areas of their lives.

**Erasmus Plus creates opportunities for young people facing any kind of disadvantage, such as:**



Disability



Lower educational attainment



Geographical isolation



Victims of discrimination



Cultural difference / minorities



Economic disadvantage

Organisations working with people suffering from any form of exclusion are motivated to apply for grants to make possible what once seemed impossible.

# 04

## Case Studies



## Example 1: Key Action 3: Higher Education

# Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility

Organisation; Universities UK International (UUKi)

This project aimed to support HEIs and FE Colleges in developing and implementing effective strategies to increase participation in mobility programmes. The project focused on five groups that are underrepresented in mobility:



Students from a low socio-economic background



Students from low participation neighbourhoods



Black and minority ethnic students



Students with a disability



Students who are care leavers



### The main activities were to:

- **Analyse national mobility data & statistics** and build a picture of participation & the challenges faced by DA/UR students
- **Support 4 institutions to conduct detailed analyses** of participation of disadvantaged / underrepresented groups over a 3 year period.
- **Analyse pre and post mobility performance of mobile students**
- **Produce a transferable toolkit** consisting of practical advice and case studies to help HEIs develop effective strategies
- **Analyse data to ensure that UK HEIs are better placed to both monitor participation by student profile and to implement effective processes to widen participation.**

The project was delivered by Universities UK International (UUKi), supported by the UK National Agency for Erasmus+, and managed by the UK's Department for Education (DfE). It involved 1 HEI from each of England, Scotland and Wales experienced in widening participation and outward mobility programmes; an FE College to learn more about the impact of early engagement in mobility opportunities; and was complemented by a parallel Irish project sharing expertise, research tools and findings.

Erasmus Plus funding enabled an important piece of research which cut to the heart of the debate around the value of international mobility and the need to widen access to opportunity for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, thereby contributing directly to national as well as institutional policymaking.



## Example 2: Key Action 1: Youth Mobility

# Create Your Own Opportunities

Organisation : MDHAIL Ltd, Livingston, Scotland

This project was an international youth exchange exploring how to deal with the problem of youth unemployment, by sharing experiences, ideas and best practice between the participating countries. It focused on learning how young people can use the competences that they acquire in their everyday lives. Participants were also given the space, context and guidance to plan common projects that could be implemented in the immediate future. The aims & objectives were:



To increase young people's employability, develop their professional skills and increase their efficiency;



To provide participants with information about ways of finding job vacancies relevant to their interests and skills, to assist them in developing their CVs, and to give them advice on how to succeed in job interviews;



To raise awareness of various freelancing opportunities, advantages and perks, and how to become a freelancer;



To assist participants to maximize their creativity and see everything around them as a possibility;



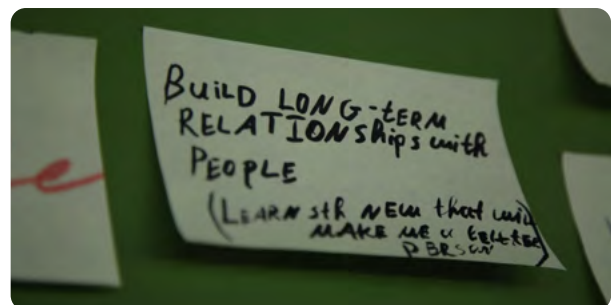
To give participants an intercultural experience, practice tolerance and break stereotypes & prejudices by meeting representatives of different countries, cultures, backgrounds and religions;



To build meaningful relationships leading to future cooperation and projects

The youth exchange took place in Bakuriani, Georgia, preceded by online preparatory activity. There were 42 participants (including 2 facilitators) from 8 different countries: UK, Georgia, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Armenia, Italy and Romania. The profile of the participants was: unemployed youth, young people facing social or educational difficulties, recent university graduates and others wanting to discover and develop their soft skills. Priority was given to young people with fewer opportunities such as those from minority or marginalised groups.

Participants improved their CV writing, job-seeking and interview skills, and their general employability. They learned how to build an online personal brand that would be attractive to potential employers. By defining their professional and personal skills and better understanding their strengths and weaknesses, they could develop a clearer vision of their professional future and the opportunities open to them. Participants made personal action plans. The project also improved their intercultural understanding and tolerance, cultural awareness, communication skills and ability to work in an international team.





### Example 3: Key Action 2 Partnerships for Creativity

# RE-WRITE: Resources for Education in Writing Radio Plays to Inspire Transition into Creative Employment

**Organisation:** No Place Productions, Liverpool

The Covid crisis caused an unprecedented rise in unemployment and marginalisation. Covid unemployment has not been equally shared across society, with women and socio-economically marginalised groups hit hardest across Europe. The creative industries have been one of the most harmed economic sectors due to Covid, with its survival secured primarily via the digitalisation of its content, demand for which has continued to grow post pandemic. However, this shift exposed a skills gap in digital competencies amongst this sector's workforce. There are currently limited resources for adults in audio/digital skill development, and even fewer codeveloped with all players (learners, educators, arts employers) on a European level.

RE-WRITE's aim was to develop skills & inclusion through creativity & the arts by creating 3 new, innovate learning resources, which would improve & extend the supply of high-quality learning opportunities for adults. The objectives were:

- to develop, test & embed a set of creative non formal learning resources to upskill & nurture the creative artistic talents & digital competencies of adults removed from the labour market
- to foster entrepreneurship & employment opportunities in the audio digital/creative sector
- to increase learners' understanding of employers' needs, and to successfully identify & secure employment opportunities in the digital media sector
- to upskill learners in innovative social media use, to promote their own creative works on a national and international level, to create sustainable self-employment, & foster entrepreneurship within the post-Covid creative/digital sectors.

## 726 participants

directly took part in the co-production of RE-WRITE.

These included unemployed adults, adult educators from a range of fields, arts employers & employees, digital entrepreneurs & other stakeholders. Extensive piloting and evaluation of each of the 3 resources took place in each partner country, with a total of 91 learners and 32 adult educators participating and dissemination activities reached over 20,000 people.

RE-WRITE has answered the need to develop digital competencies of those effected by the Covid crisis, as well as help rebuild Europe's artistic sector.



## EXAMPLE 4: Key Action 2: Strategic Partnerships for Education and Training

# Care Skills Escalator (CASE)

Organisation: Dundee and Angus College

The aim of the project was to develop and test a new 'Skills Escalator' model and approach to the development of the skills and competencies of front line health and working with elderly people living with dementia, using innovative technologies and focusing on workplace learning. It was developed by a partnership including municipalities and training providers in Sweden, Latvia, Spain, and Romania in response to the rapid increase in levels of dementia throughout Europe and gaps in the skills of staff working with dementia sufferers.

The products of the project included a transnational learning and knowledge platform, a transferable online dementia care learning programme including audio visual case study materials highlighting best practice translated into all the partner languages, and a toolkit which includes guidance for care providers seeking to implement the programme. These products were used by hundreds of staff during the course of the programme and have been used by thousands more since it finished in 2022.

'Being part of this Erasmus international dementia care project was a valuable experience for the college, its participants and for the wider care sector. During the project, care staff and managers engaged with the CASE platform, which offered flexible, scenario-based learning rooted in experience-based and project-based learning principles. The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive. The platform offered a scalable and inclusive way to support workforce development and continues to have the potential to shape how we train and retain care professionals in the future.' Jane Roscoe, Dundee and Angus College



## Example 5: Key Action 2: Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education

# Skills Innovation Training

**Organisation: Ballybeen Women's Centre, Belfast**

Skill IT was a transnational adult education innovative / strategic partnership which aimed to develop, design and implement inclusiveness strategies for enhancing basic skills, in particular digital skills for adults with low level or no qualifications, those in low skilled occupations, unemployed, migrants and economically inactive, older people and the least skilled.

The project addressed the issues of low levels of digital literacy and competency amongst adults who are disadvantaged and at risk of exclusion, and stagnating participation in adult learning in different countries. It aimed to strengthen cooperation between partner organisations working with relevant target groups, to improve access to learning opportunities, and to increase digital competence and literacy amongst the hardest to reach groups, using an innovative transnational approach involving local and regional adult education organisations, teachers, trainers and the adult learners themselves.

Skill IT allowed adult learners from different target groups and staff from partner countries to cooperate on designing and developing an innovative ICT Education Model, which was then tested in each of the 7 partner countries (Northern Ireland, Turkey, Czech Republic, Italy, Greece, Spain and Croatia). Partners were involved in identification of the needs of their target groups-adults with low level or no qualifications, those in low skilled occupations, unemployed and economically inactive, migrants/refugees, older people and those with the least competence in digital skills. ICT training modules were developed in response to these needs. Implementation and delivery involved a training course for peer mentors identified by each partner from within their target groups.

The project has helped to enhance the digital skills of adults who do not traditionally engage in ICT Training through lack of skills, fear or ability and are at risk of exclusion. It has created new inclusive opportunities for increased participation in lifelong learning activities, and reconnected excluded groups to learning, the labour market, and public services, thereby encouraging them to become more active citizens within their countries.



## EXAMPLE 6: eTwinning project

# Christmas Traditions around the World

Organisation: Alderman's Green Primary School, Coventry

This school is in one of the most disadvantaged areas of the city and this is reflected in the number of pupils receiving pupil premium and with SEND designations. Over 35 languages are spoken in the school. Many pupils never leave their local area and few have had the chance to go abroad.



This project was undertaken with a Year 3 class (age 7-8). They were joined by schools in many different countries including Albania, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Portugal, Bosnia, and more. The pupils recorded and uploaded through eTwinning a Christmas carol / song from their respective countries, as well as a short video showing traditions. They learnt some of the songs that our partners had uploaded compared Christmas traditions.

As a result of this and other eTwinning projects pupils communicated well with their peers and set an example of using good English. They learnt how to tailor their language, accordingly, speak clearly, without use of slang, so that their peers with English as a second language could understand. They had to ensure that their spelling and punctuation was good in their written work. eTwinning helped these youngsters to learn about different cultures across the world and to understand that no culture is 'right' whilst others are 'wrong'. Pupils began to become curious about the world and wanted to explore it. They would ask if they could go and visit their peers. While it may not always be possible to broaden children's horizons by visiting the country, eTwinning was the next best thing.

*'I came to realise that these eTwinning projects were so important in primary education, to start to break down stereotypes, barriers and xenophobic rhetoric. My pupils quickly learnt that children in other countries go to schools like theirs; learn the same subjects; like football, dancing, singing, computer games, just like them; and even if they have a different colour skin and speak a different language, they can be friends. Once we lost access to eTwinning it was much harder to engage in meaningful international work.'*

Anna Grainger



## Example 7: Key Action 2: Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education

# “Without Words”

**Organisation: Headway Arts, Blyth, Northumberland**

This project was developed to explore the potential for cross cultural communication through visual storytelling, exploring how creative and non-verbal mediums such as dance, music, mask, puppetry and physicality can be used to increase access for disabled people across Europe, working specifically, but not exclusively with, people who have learning disability, sensory or neurological impairment. It was developed in partnership with organisations from Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal and Sweden. The project explored concepts of non-verbal communication and its use within disability arts, asking how we can use these to generate fully inclusive opportunities without compromising artistic quality or disassociating the disabled person.

The project structure was developed to identify how learners can adapt to different methodologies and mediums. Collectively the project identified common barriers experienced by people with learning disabilities, Autism and other needs: isolation; loneliness; a denial of experiences of quality; environmental factors, a lack of understanding in the mainstream of needs and how these are best overcome; low confidence; lack of independence; having decisions made for you; communication issues. We identified a common need to provide the following outcomes:



Increased participation of disabled people in the arts



Increased participation of disabled people in lifelong learning



Greater cultural contribution of people with learning disabilities to the wider community

The project has resulted in a greater awareness of the issues of access and quality in learning disability arts, the adoption of best practice by the partner organisations enabling them to improve the quality of their service delivery, and an increase in the participation of learning disabled and neurodiverse people in their communities.

Erasmus Plus funding has enabled us to provide genuinely equal opportunity for people of all ages who are frequently excluded by reason of disability or learning difficulties.



# 05

## DID YOU KNOW...

### that with Erasmus Plus funding:



- The Scottish Football Association improved quality in football coaching across their community club structure
- The Atlantic Whale and Dolphin Foundation enabled 99 students to gain hands-on experience in marine animal research and sustainable tourism through short placements in Tenerife
- Athletics Northern Ireland worked with the Portuguese Athletics Federation to develop enhanced training practices, leading to improved performance standards & greater representation at international competitions
- Cardiff City & County Council empowered young people to get involved in the ecology planning and visitor management of Flat Holm island, a designated nature reserve and Special Protection Area.
- Voices From Care (Cardiff) addressed the long-term inequalities faced by young people in care by facilitating discussions between 250 young people, service providers and policy makers
- Glengormley Primary School (Northern Ireland) worked with partners in 5 other countries to promote the health and environmental benefits of cycling to school, and to develop safe practices
- Staff from six primary schools in Lincoln and Poland worked together to develop organisational skills for complex projects in areas of deprivation, and to enable interaction between pupils across language barriers

- Hook Norton Primary School and their partner school in Vara, Sweden, used a combination of eTwinning and pupil exchanges to encourage a rich and meaningful cross-curricular approach to learning Maths
- Canary Wharf Consulting Ltd (London) created training courses and resources for career counsellors and adult educators to support adults with low skills and qualifications to access the labour market
- The University of the Arts London worked with 4 other leading arts institutions in Europe to develop pedagogical approaches and innovative methods to teach ceramics, aiming to sustain the future of the subject
- Community Coach Ltd (Sussex) addressed the lack of educational opportunities in tennis coaching by sharing best practice across Europe, leading to the development of an international tennis coaching qualification
- Barnsley FC built on existing relationships with clubs in Malta and Italy to create job-shadowing opportunities for staff, in order to deliver high-quality coaching and impact positively on youth development outcomes
- The National Enterprise Network developed resources and training to improve the capacity of entrepreneurship education providers to teach blockchain technology to their SME and entrepreneur learners
- The Brook Special Primary School (London) and 4 European partners created original resources for using music and drama across the curriculum to promote social inclusion and to support communication and social skills
- The University of Birmingham with partners in Israel, Greece and Spain developed a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for teachers and professionals working with children with autism
- A1 Arborists Ltd (Carlisle) implemented improvements in training provision, quality standards and certification for Forest Machine Operators, thereby enhancing job safety and job mobility in this green sector occupation
- Trade Management Services Ltd (Birmingham) contributed to combating obesity by designing online information and training resources to support small food service businesses in offering healthier products
- Social Farms and Gardens (Bristol) created new formats of training to support public sector organisations and schools who want to work with or create urban/community gardens and farms in their areas or sites
- Buckinghamshire New University promoted active collaboration and partnership across the HE, industry and public sectors in order to improve qualifications and skills for technology-assisted water management

# 06

## Recent Developments in Erasmus Plus

There have been major developments in Erasmus Plus since the UK left the programme in 2020. The programme has become more focused on the need to enhance the capacity of the education and training system to address the skills needs of key economic sectors of the economy, resulting from the impact of factors such as the green transition, digitisation, and the need for a more flexible response to rapidly changing lifelong learning needs within the workforce.

A new 'Centres of Vocational Excellence' strand has been included within Key Action 2 which seeks to develop high quality education provision which supports innovation, regional development, lifelong learning and smart specialisation and which is more relevant to the world of work as well as being more attractive to learners and employers. Key elements include the development of Regional Skills Ecosystems, Knowledge Triangles bringing together research, training and practice and the development of innovative products, with a particular focus on workplace learning. 64 COVEs have been approved in the last 4 years. They cover skills needs in a wide range of sectors including advanced manufacturing, offshore energy, aerospace and defence, healthcare, tourism, agribusiness, AI and other new technologies, STEM. Construction, Hospitality and Sport. Each project involves at least 4 partner countries and 8 partners, has a maximum budget of 4 million euros and lasts 4 years. There is a strong emphasis on sustainability, and COVEs are expected to remain in place and expand after the period of project funding.



The 2021 – 27 Erasmus Plus programme has also strengthened its existing commitment to promote inclusion and diversity which is one of its 4 'horizontal' priorities.

The guidance states that "Projects are encouraged to support participants with fewer opportunities, for example, people with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds or remote areas or facing social, economic or educational barriers."

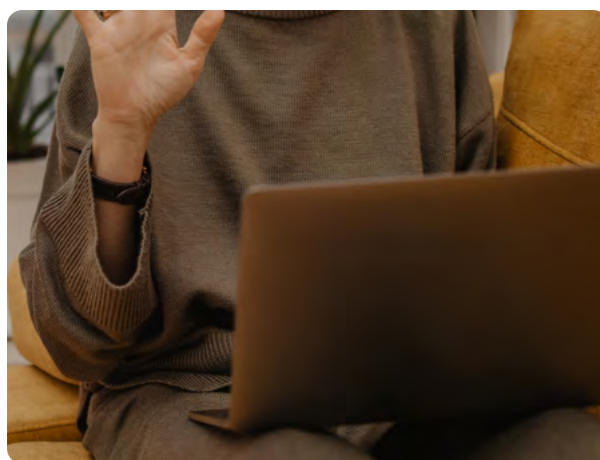
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**Several measures – including additional funding – have been introduced to make opportunities more accessible to all.**

In addition to DiscoverEU, which subsidises travel around Europe for 18-year-olds, the programme now includes a "DiscoverEU Inclusion Action" strand, specifically designed to enable travel by individual young people or small groups who would normally be excluded for financial or other reasons. The age limits have been extended to 18-21, and funding allows for an accompanying adult where necessary.

The programme has introduced “virtual exchanges” for the higher education and youth sectors. These projects consist of online activities that promote intercultural dialogue and soft skills development. They make it possible for every young person to access high-quality international and cross-cultural education without physical mobility. While virtual meetings cannot fully replace physical mobility, participants can nevertheless reap some of the benefits of an international educational experience. Virtual exchanges can be easily integrated into other youth (non-formal education) projects or higher education courses and may draw participants from either or both sectors. All projects have to include organisations and participants from non-EU countries in the Balkans, eastern Europe, north Africa or sub-Saharan Africa.

In the past, one of the biggest obstacles to participation in mobility projects, especially to smaller organisations, was the absence of any support for their administrative costs. The new programme has addressed this by introducing an organisational costs element based on the number of participants. A further improvement has been an increase in daily allowance rates for participants’ subsistence, more accurately reflecting the true cost of accommodation and food. “Green travel” allowances have been introduced to encourage travel by train or bus instead of air, wherever this is practicable.



A new ‘youth participation’ strand provides small scale grants for informal groups of young people to organise social action or learning projects in their own communities. These can be purely local activities: any transnational partnership element is optional.

Under Key Action 2, a new category of Small Scale Partnerships allows for pilot projects and cooperation between organisations, including those with no prior experience of Erasmus Plus, thereby making entry to the programme much easier and encouraging longer term relationships.

By fostering international cooperation and sharing best practices, Erasmus Plus also contributes to the modernisation of education and training systems



# 07

## **The Young European Movement Supports the National UK Campaign for Erasmus Plus**

Young European Movement are championing the youth voice in EU-UK relations and campaigning to ensure a bright and hopeful future of opportunity is delivered for British youth. We believe in the importance of maintaining strong political, social and economic ties with our European neighbours to ensure that future generations are not left behind our peers on the continent in the post-Brexit era.

YEM also recognises the unique value the UK can draw from the ERASMUS+ scheme, and the correspondingly high quality of students the UK can attract from across Europe. We also believe passionately in the value of youth mobility schemes and programmes such as ERASMUS+, which provide life-changing opportunities for learning, personal development and professional growth. ERASMUS+ has provided vital funding for youth programmes at home, as well as sending young Brits abroad, and the return of that funding will provide a desperately needed injection of support to the UK's struggling youth sector. A strong youth sector is essential for improving equality of opportunity and a strong education for young people, and YEM believes that UK youth deserve the same chances as their peers on the continent. Through our 'Open Doors, Open Future' campaign, we are working to ensure the successful delivery of an extensive Youth Experience Scheme, which meets the needs of British youth, as well as the UK rejoining ERASMUS+ as a full member.

# 08

## Conclusion

The UK National Campaign for Erasmus Plus believes that the case for rejoining the programme at the earliest opportunity is overwhelming. We also believe that the government supports this goal but the deal is not yet done and we need to mobilise as much support as possible to help ensure that the negotiations reach a successful conclusion.

**The campaign is independent but is supported by the European Movement UK (EMUK).**

### Our Recommendations



The UK should re-enter the EU Erasmus Plus Programme as a full member, joining the 6 non EU member states who currently enjoy full membership of the programme.



The UK should re-enter the programme at the earliest opportunity, preferably by 2026, before the end of the current programme period.

# Next Steps; How You Can Get Involved

Whoever you are, help us to spread the word about the huge opportunities that Erasmus Plus can bring to young people, adults and organisations throughout our society. In Particular:



**If you are an MP or peer or a member of the Scottish Parliament or Welsh Assembly** we would love to talk to you about our campaign.

**You can contact our campaign team on [richard.kilpatrick@europeanmovement.co.uk](mailto:richard.kilpatrick@europeanmovement.co.uk)**



**If you are involved in a trade union, business organisation, a body representing potential sponsors** of Erasmus Plus projects such as schools, further education colleges or universities please circulate this document as widely as possible and encourage as many organisations and individuals as possible to contact MPs and peers to urge them to support the campaign.



**If you are an individual who supports the aims of the campaign** contact your MP and tell them why you think they should support our campaign. You can see how your area has benefited from Erasmus and write to your MP by visiting our campaign tool [fundedbyerasmus.co.uk](http://fundedbyerasmus.co.uk) or scan the QR code below.



**Scan the QR code**

# 09

## ERASMUS+: FURTHER READING WITH LINK

### Inclusion and Diversity

The Programme seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions. It provides learning mobility for Individuals -pupils, students, trainees, apprentices, adult learners and young people.

Home - Erasmus+	Erasmus+ Programme Guide - Erasmus+	Introduction - Erasmus+
Introduces the scope and possibilities of Erasmus+. Tabs lead to the essential aspects of the programme.	The comprehensive description of opportunities for organisations and individuals participating in Erasmus+.	This is a detailed technical description of the Erasmus+ programme.
<a href="https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/">https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/</a>	<a href="https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide">https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide</a>	<a href="https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/erasmus-programme-guide/introduction?pk_source=website&amp;pk_medium=link&amp;pk_campaign=pg&amp;pk_content=pg-landing-online">https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/erasmus-programme-guide/introduction?pk_source=website&amp;pk_medium=link&amp;pk_campaign=pg&amp;pk_content=pg-landing-online</a>



### A Schematic Guide to the Erasmus+ Programme: DIGIMUSE\_Guide\_EN.pdf

Power point illustrating how EU programmes function and the position of Erasmus+. Could be used as a presentation.

[https://www.ihfeurope.eu/docs/DIGIMUSE\\_Guide\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ihfeurope.eu/docs/DIGIMUSE_Guide_EN.pdf)

### Erasmus Skills: unpacking the employability benefits of mobility

“The ability to translate what you have learned while being in another country has become even more critical.” The aim is to help students understand what they’ve gained abroad, to reveal to them the institutional perspective, and thereby adding value for employers.

<https://www.eaie.org/resource/erasmus-skills-employability-mobility.html>

### Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE)- European Commission

EYE is an international exchange programme for entrepreneurs. The EU offers financial support to help cover travel and living costs, making the programme more accessible.

[https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/learn-and-plan-entrepreneurship/erasmus-young-entrepreneurs\\_en](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/learn-and-plan-entrepreneurship/erasmus-young-entrepreneurs_en)

# CONTRIBUTOR ORGANISATIONS



**European  
Movement**  
United Kingdom



**The National  
Campaign for  
Erasmus+**

[europeanmovement.co.uk](http://europeanmovement.co.uk)



**CENTRE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
LEARNING AND  
LEADERSHIP**

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[globallearningassociation.org](http://globallearningassociation.org)