

MOBILE TEACHERS CHANGE THEIR SCHOOLS

Impact study of Erasmus+ mobility projects for school education staff.
Polish national report.

erasmus⁺

MOBILE TEACHERS CHANGE THEIR SCHOOLS

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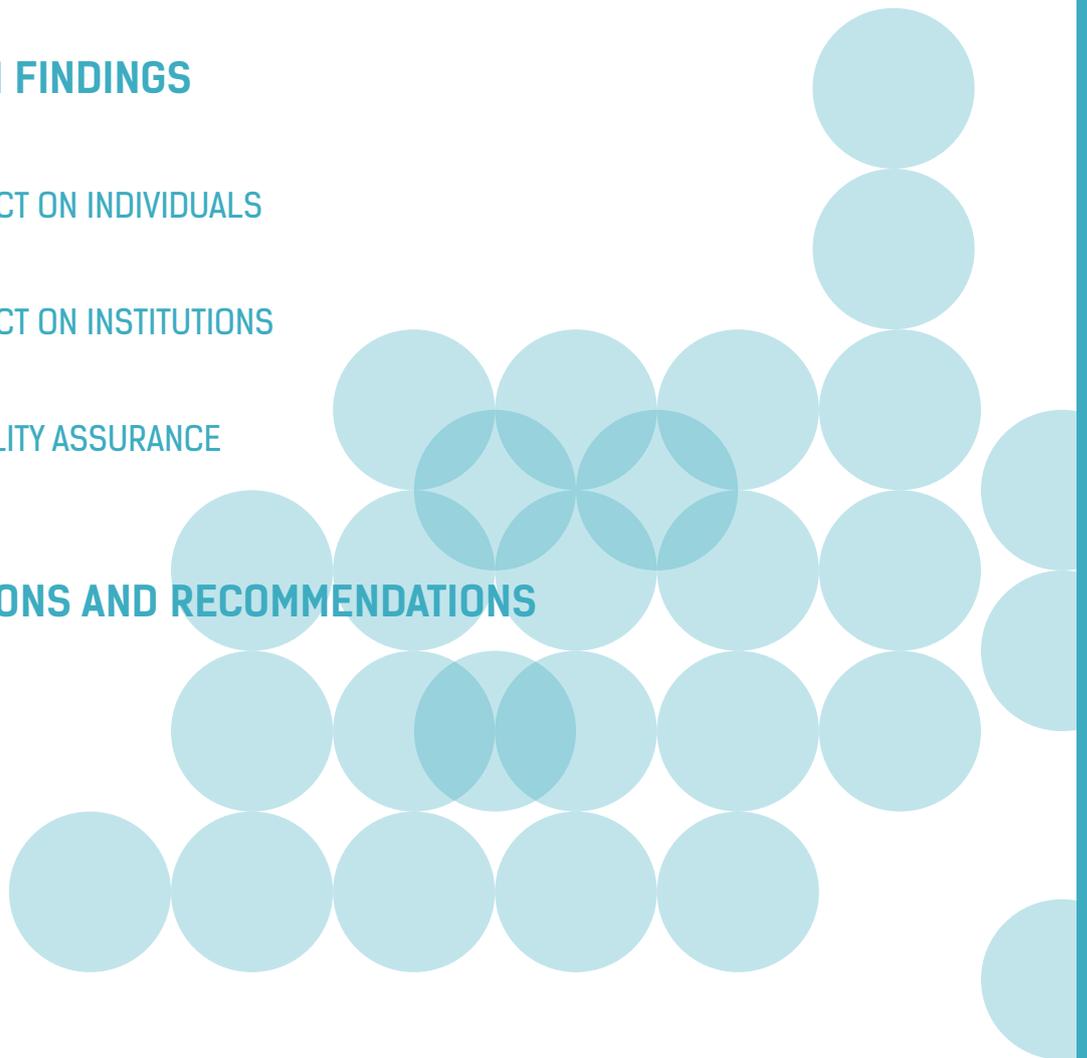
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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the analysis of Erasmus+ international mobility projects for school education staff. The research aimed at measuring impact of projects supported under Erasmus+ in Poland (Key Action 1 in school education sector). The national research covered mobility projects supported by the Erasmus+ Polish National Agency and submitted under the first call for proposals announced in 2014. The core objective of research activities was to analyse the impact of projects on its participants and on increasing the potential of institutions implementing transnational mobility.

The study was performed within a joint international project coordinated by five National Agencies from Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Germany and Poland responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ mobility for school education staff. The project was initiated by the Lithuanian National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme in order to perform a qualitative analysis of school education projects

and measure the impact as well as to identify good practices among beneficiaries from the involved countries.

Context of programme implementation

According to Erasmus+ Programme rules, the mobility projects for school education staff promote transnational mobility activities targeting staff employed in educational institutions and aiming to:

- support the acquisition of competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) for personal development and labour market;
- support the professional development of those who work in school education field, with a view to innovating and improving the quality of teaching;
- enhance foreign language competences;

Erasmus+ Programme. Key Action 1 – Mobility projects for school education staff. Applications and projects processed in 2014 (as on 31 December 2014).

	KA1 Mobility projects for school education staff
Number of applications submitted	521
Number of applications accepted	135
Grant amount	EUR 3,485,458.00
Number of applications on the reserve list	242
Number of applications rejected	144
Number of agreements signed	135

- raise participants' awareness and understanding of other cultures and countries, offering them the opportunity to build networks of international contacts;
- increase international dimension of organisations active in the education field so that they become more attractive providing programmes that better respond to the needs of individuals;
- reinforce synergies and transitions between formal and non-formal education, vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship;
- ensure a better recognition of competences gained through the learning periods abroad.

The eligible applicants in Poland are institutions providing general, vocational, or technical education on any level from pre-school to upper secondary education. It was eligible to apply only once per selection round (once a year). As opposed to the Lifelong Learning Programme rules, individuals cannot apply directly for a grant.

Although the maximum duration of project is 1 or 2 years, the mobility activities in another Programme Country must be carried out from 2 days to 2 months.

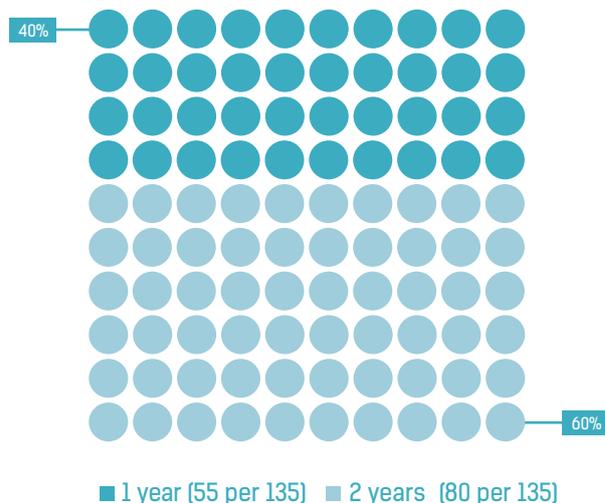
The projects covered by research comprised one or more of the following activities:

- teaching assignments (teaching at a partner school abroad);
- professional development courses (participation in structured courses or training events abroad);
- practical experience in education (job shadowing/ observation period abroad in a partner school or in another relevant organisation active in the field of school education).

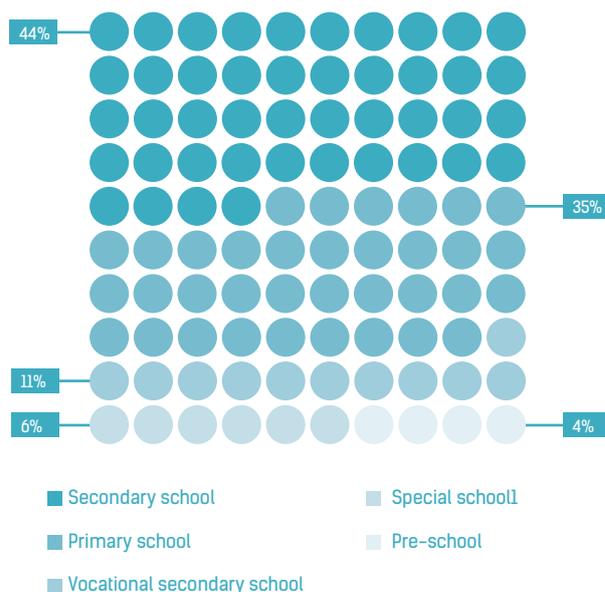
During the implementation of a mobility project, a minimum of two partners from different Erasmus+ Programme countries (one sending and at least one receiving organization) must be involved. Applicant organization is in charge of applying for the mobility project funding, signing and managing the grant agreement and reporting. As the sending organization the applicant is also in charge of selecting teachers and other school education staff to go abroad. Receiving organization can be either

a course provider, partner school or other relevant organization, which is in charge of receiving participants and offering them a programme of activities, or benefiting from a teaching activity provided by them.

As a result of the first call, the National Agency received 521 Polish staff mobility project applications. Following



Duration of mobility projects for school education staff in the first selection round (2014).



Types of institutions involved in mobility projects for school education staff under the first selection round (2014).

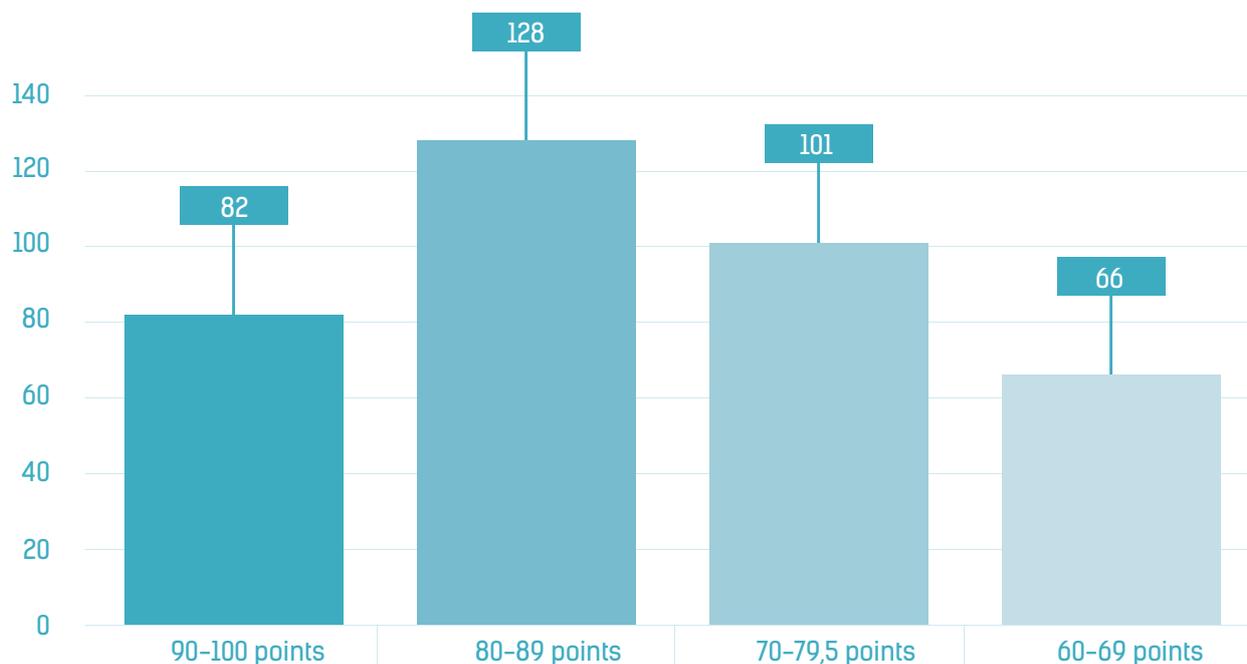
assessment, the National Agency accepted for funding a total of 135 projects. This means that 26% of applicants were awarded grants while 386 projects were rejected. An average grant amount for the implementation of a project was 25,818 EUR.

Implementation of the majority of projects was planned for a period not exceeding 24 months, which significantly affected the analysis, as in accordance with methodology all research activities were implemented ex-post. Given this kind of approach, it was necessary to limit the group of projects under analysis to the cases where mobilities had already been carried out.

Lower, upper, general and technical secondary schools constituted a great majority of institutions involved in mobility projects for school education staff, awarded under

call 2014 by the Polish National Agency. This means that over 95% of all awarded institutions could be considered as the target group of the research. Pre-schools were the smallest group of beneficiaries. Their share in the total number of supported mobility projects did not exceed 5% of all granted institutions.

A comparison of evaluation results proves a relatively high quality of project proposals submitted under the first call. More than half of projects exceeding the threshold of 60 points, scored over 80 points (out of which over 80 projects scored between 90 and 100 points). Those high scores prove that Polish applicants had, generally speaking, no problem with planning project activities as required by the Programme rules.



Qualitative assessment of mobility projects in the first selection round (2014).



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The analysis was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The **quantitative research** was carried out using a questionnaire addressed to four main groups of respondents:

- **mobile teachers** – teaching staff participating in mobility training abroad under projects covered by the survey;
- **non-mobile teachers** – teaching staff employed in educational institutions participating in projects covered by this survey, but not involved in the mobility;
- **pupils** – students aged above 15 who were taught by the teachers participating in the projects;
- **parents** – the parents (or legal guardians) of pupils attending institutions participating in the survey. Only parents actively involved in school life were included.

The survey was carried out on-line. Links to the questionnaires (translated into Polish and adjusted to the na-

tional context) for all four target groups were provided to contact persons in schools within the sample. The National Agency received a total of 1787 completed questionnaires (out of which 30% were completed by the pupils). The questionnaires were delivered to respondents via an on-line survey tool (active links to questionnaires were e-mailed to each group).

The **qualitative research** was conducted by way of focus group interviews (FGI) and analysis of case studies.

The three focus groups were organized for two different groups of participants: representatives of school leaders and participants of mobility projects involving job shadowing component. A total of 25 representatives of schools took part in the interviews. The schools were selected by the National Agency on the principle of non-probability sampling (with their availability and geographical location as the main criteria) from

Questionnaire completion rate (number of respondents by target group).

	Mobile teachers	Non-mobile teachers	Pupils	Parents
Number of submissions	350	412	596	429
Response rate	19,6%	23%	33,4%	24%

among the total number of schools in the sample selected for qualitative research (on-line survey). Each meeting with respondents was organised in a different location, which made it possible to obtain the views of school representatives from various regions of Poland.

Each interview recording was fully transcribed. However, it should be noted that the quotations in this report have been significantly abridged (this mainly refers to respondents' long utterances covering a number of topics) and edited (mainly in order to eliminate respondents' colloquial language, interjections, digressions and unfinished thoughts).

The case study analysis was the last stage of the qualitative research. As most activities concerned good practices in mobility, this proved to be useful in determining strongest links of the project implementation at the institutional (or consortium) level. It also helped to indicate potential problems during project implementation and adequate solutions to obstacles faced by beneficiary schools. This analysis was based on individual and group interviews with beneficiary representatives, project leaders and mobility participants. The school leaders were interviewed individually while teachers (both mobility participants and other staff) were interviewed in larger groups.

According to the survey methodology, 3 case studies were analysed. The two of them concerned projects implemented by schools (good practices) as the remaining one was an initiative of a consortium of educational institutions. The latter was the only project accepted in the 2015 call to be analysed (due to the fact that consortia were not allowed to submit applications under the first selection round).

The recordings of good practice case study interviews were also fully transcribed and the utterances that have been published in this report were edited and abridged. The survey was carried out in the beneficiary institutions.

All research activities were carried out anonymously. Therefore, this report contains no data about institutions randomly selected to be included in the sample for quantitative and qualitative research and no detailed data about projects to undergo case study analysis.

Sample description

The quantitative research sample was selected on the basis of all mobility projects for school education staff under Erasmus+ awarded in 2014. In accordance with the adopted methodology, the research activities were conducted ex-post and therefore, the projects co-financed in the first selection round were analysed first. The analysis included projects: finalized (with final reports concerning all mobilities submitted and accepted), completed (with final reports concerning all mobilities submitted) and those where all mobilities had been implemented (still ongoing as the final reports were not yet received by the NA).

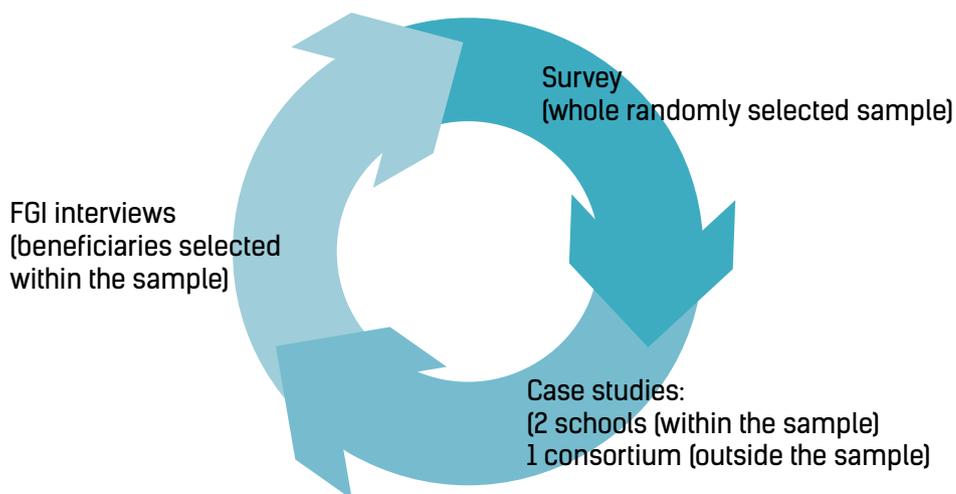
As the analysis was to focus on the institutional benefits of staff mobility, it did not include projects with one participant. All pre-schools were also excluded from the analysis. Only school/pre-school centres were taken into consideration, as they provide instruction also to primary school pupils. As a result, 46 projects, which agreed to the participation in this research following notification by post and email, were selected for the research sample.

The FGI interviews' respondents were selected from all projects in the sample to undergo quantitative research. On the basis of geographical data, three different locations (Warsaw, Toruń, Katowice) were chosen for conducting interviews and then participants who were able to attend those interviews (in terms of distance and logistics) were invited to the meetings. Respondents were selected from among those who confirmed their readiness to attend.

Case study projects were selected on the basis of quality assessment. In case of consortium activities (awarded in 2015 and not yet completed) the project was selected as that with the highest number of mobilities). The core objective of sampling was also to ensure the diversity of selected projects that represented different types of institutions operating in various regions of Poland, which were economically and demographically different.

Transnational research context

The analysis was performed within a joint international project coordinated by five National Agencies from Lithu-



Ensuring data triangulation. Chart of research activities.

ania, Estonia, Finland, Germany and Poland responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ mobility for school education staff. The project, initiated by the Lithuanian National Agency for Erasmus+, aimed at quality assessment of school education staff mobilities, evaluating project results and identifying good practices among beneficiaries at both national and transnational levels. The main objective of the

activity was to analyse the impact of mobility projects on school education staff and on increasing the potential of institutions implementing such projects.

As the national research was a part of transnational project, the tools provided by the Lithuanian project leader were used by the Polish research team. The main preparatory and consultative activities (discussing the methodology, adopting universal

Questionnaire completion rate in countries implementing research activities (number of respondents by target group).

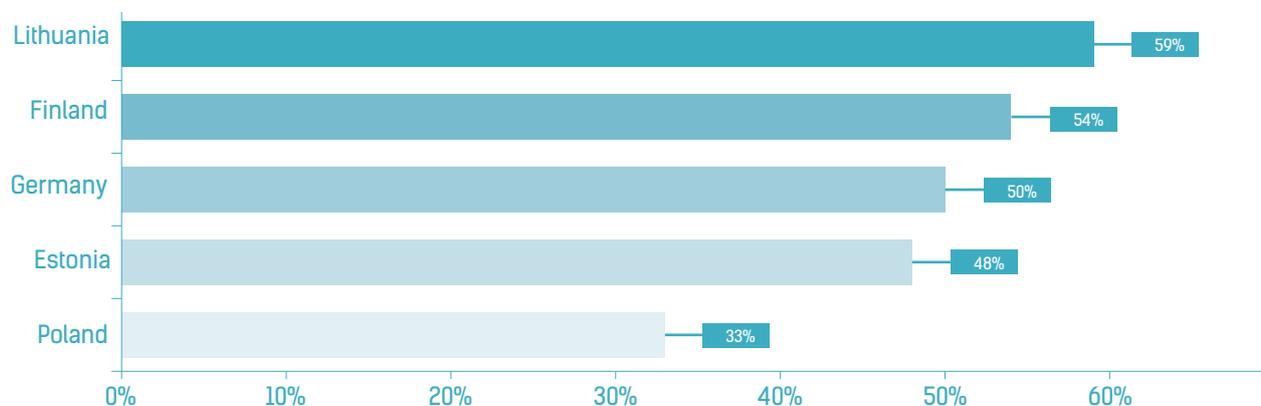
	Mobile staff	Non-mobile staff	Pupils	Parents	Total
Estonia	112	175	466	222	975
Poland	350	412	596	429	1787
Finland	127	123	150	109	509
Germany*	376	-	-	-	376
Lithuania	218	283	549	231	1281
Total	1183	993	1761	991	4928

*The current data from Germany relate only to mobile staff

terminology and activities timeline) were implemented before launching the national part of the research. In accordance with the objectives, the Lithuanian coordinators are responsible for the development of analysis guidelines and for the standardisation of research activities in all five partner countries.

Although the core objective of this report is to present Polish results of the research, the data collected at the

national level was also made available to the Lithuanian leading experts in order to summarize all research activities. Furthermore, the research outcomes in transnational report are expected to be presented in the context of relevant national education systems and the opportunities for in-service teacher training and school staff professional development in all five partner countries.



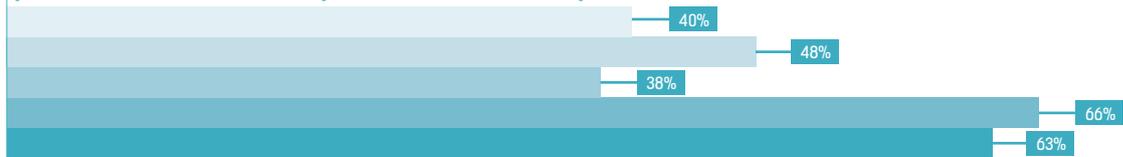
Previous experience of in-service training abroad (mobile staff).



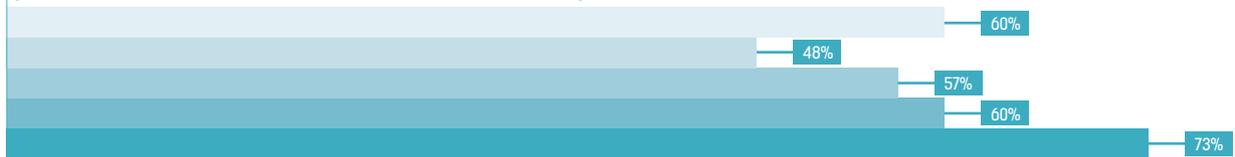
Overall satisfaction with mobility (questionnaire for mobile staff).

Before mobility...

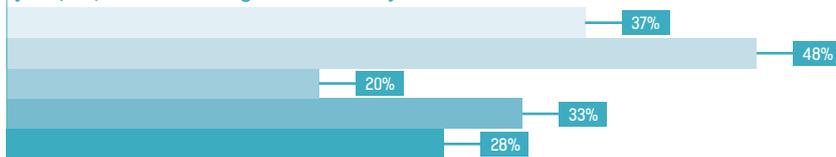
you read about educational system in the host country.



you searched for additional information about mobility-related topic.



you prepared teaching material for your visit.

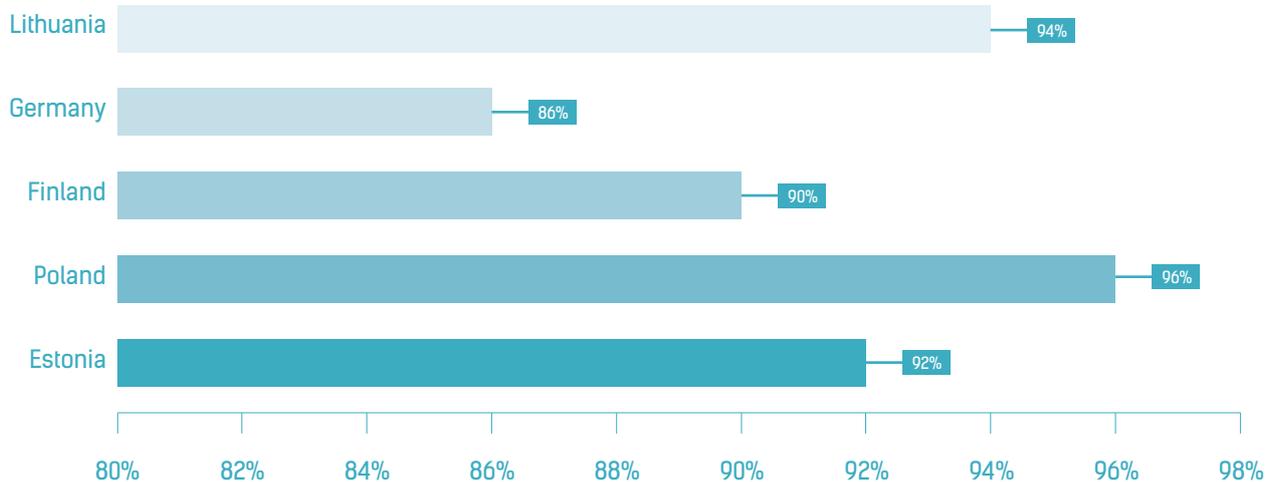


you did no additional preparation.

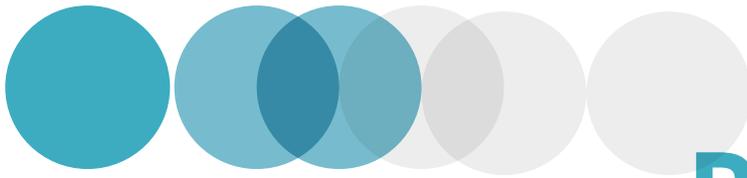


Activities undertaken before training abroad (questionnaire for mobile staff)

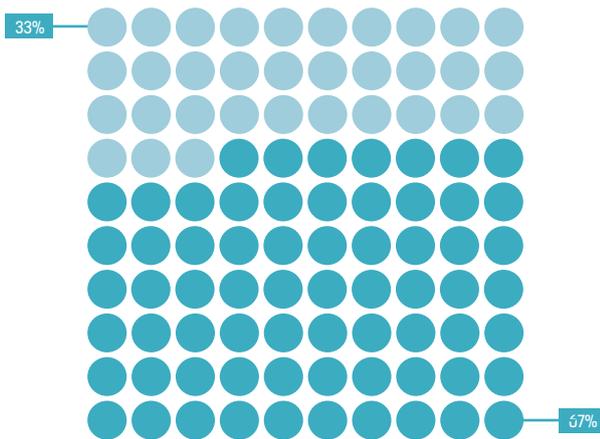
After mobility completion I apply new ideas in my work



Impact on participants (questionnaire for mobile staff).



RESEARCH FINDINGS



Previous experience of in-service training abroad (questionnaire for mobile staff).

Motivation

The vast majority of questionnaire respondents did not have any previous experience with international learning mobility. The previous experience in mobility abroad was declared by less than one third of a total number of respondents. Many respondents also confirmed that the Erasmus+ mobility experience often proved to be not only first professional training of that kind but also the first ever trip abroad. Noteworthy, respondents also pointed out that the project concept was a result of co-

operation with other schools, which had already implemented similar activities. Some survey participants said that their institutions had never participated in projects other than Erasmus. Therefore, it was their first encounter with international projects, which was a great challenge. However, there was hardly anyone claiming that making such efforts was pointless.

It seems that the habits of former Comenius beneficiaries played a significant role in the first project selection round, hence the high popularity of professional development courses (over two thirds of respondents declared their participation in professional development courses as part

This was the first project of that type. Never before had we participated in such projects.

It turned out that our language teachers, after completing schools here in Poland, have never been abroad.

I got interested in the implementation of Erasmus+ projects in the process of cooperating with another school. That school implements many such projects.

of their mobility). Teaching abroad was the least popular among the respondents of the survey, which may be due to the fears of their language command being insufficient (this mainly applied to teachers of subjects other than languages). This is also confirmed by the results of qualitative research (that kind of fear was often reported by focus group interview respondents).

According to focus group participants, the topics of their projects mainly stemmed from the existing development priorities of their school or from the specificity of its functioning (e.g.: a small number of pupils or functioning as part of a larger school centre structure). The choice of the content-based scope of mobility projects for school education staff also resulted from schools' current needs, often described in the context of recent changes to the Polish education system. In such cases the implementation of mobility projects proved to be a method for solving concrete and previously indicated problems and for coping with new challenges faced by sending institutions. Sometimes those challenges were directly linked to changes to the Polish education system and to the organisation of the education process. In such cases the project topic was also chosen in the context of general developmental priorities for an institution.

Sometimes the order of things was different and first there was a will to participate in a project and then the teaching staff started looking for a topic they would find interesting. But even in such cases the choice of a content-based scope of the project was preceded by a specific analysis of needs (usually a survey). Although in such cases an idea for a project resulted from teachers' individual needs, that kind of analysis was performed from the perspective of the strategic objectives of an institution.

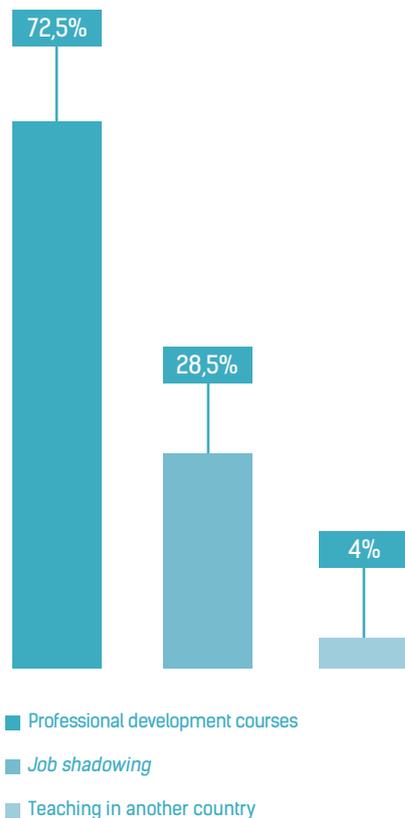
Of course, surveys were not the only way of diagnosing the needs of schools involved in mobility projects. In smaller institutions, where teaching staff is composed of several up to a dozen or so persons, that kind of analysis often happened during a conversation, brainstorming or group discussions with the participation of teaching staff members and school leaders. Sometimes project

There is a large group of Roma minority children in my school. We have no such examples and we are unable to watch other schools. However, the school we found has almost 30% of Roma pupils. We went there to learn something, to watch and look for new solutions.

I work in a very large school, which employs fifty teachers and there are lots of kids. There were communication problems between teachers(...) and hence our training involving communication and personal relations improvement.

We tried to choose a topic which would bring something new to the school. We identified weak points giving rise to concern.

This was the first time that six-year olds started school as first year pupils. We wanted to see how other schools were adapted, mainly in Great Britain where compulsory schooling age is much lower.



Popularity of different training activities abroad (questionnaire for mobile staff).

applications were motivated by needs not directly linked to the organisation of school work, but by the willingness to become familiar with new teaching methods, for example classwork methods aimed at activating pupils and involving them in the process of independent learning. These needs also became the leitmotiv of projects.

In our case ideas start with a survey. Then we are ready to come up with an idea and start creating our project.

In the case of small institutions everyone can say what needs they have and that is how we discuss it.

IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS

Despite the fact that applying for Erasmus+ mobility grants is determined by rules different than those for staff mobility projects under the Lifelong Learning Programme in the previous programming of EU funds (when projects were submitted by participants and not by institutions), benefits of implementing projects continued to be significant both for applying institutions and participants. It is closely linked to the fact that transnational mobility is a very important experience for individuals shared by those who jointly participated in the project. Hence such mobility is perceived mainly from the perspective of individual benefits. However, it is to be noted that these benefits are shared by other people and the institutions to which the participants are linked in terms of their work.

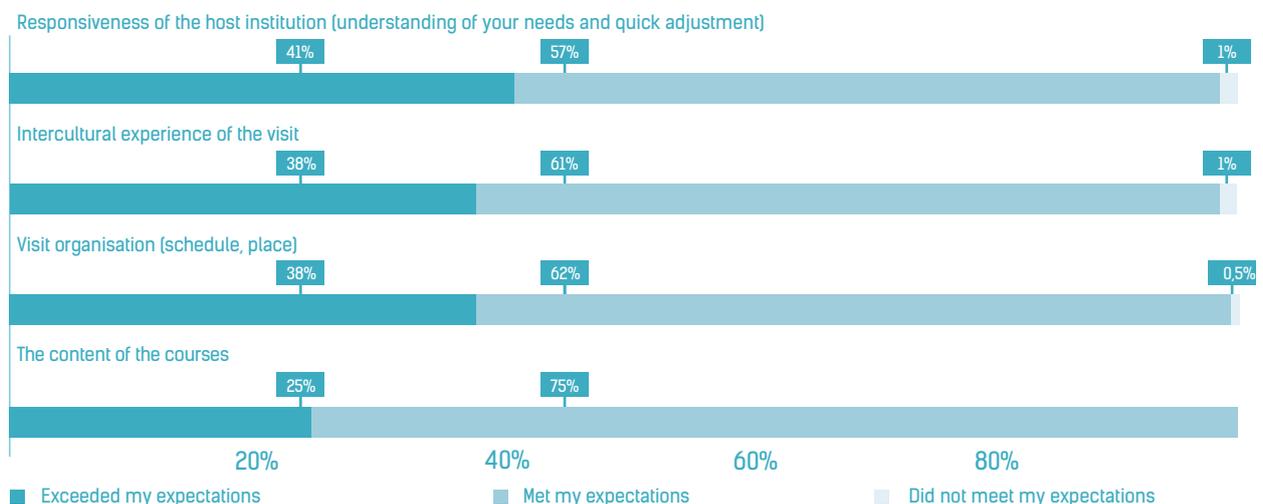
The responses of survey participants indicate a very positive assessment of the quality of completed mobilities. The content of the courses was particularly highly rated, there were no negative opinions in this respect. That proves that transnational mobility experience can be considered

This is really about a change in mentality. I think that the whole of Europe is following such trends in education. The trends consist of pupils' autonomy, subjective approach, paying no attention to grades as it is not the grades that shape people in the future.

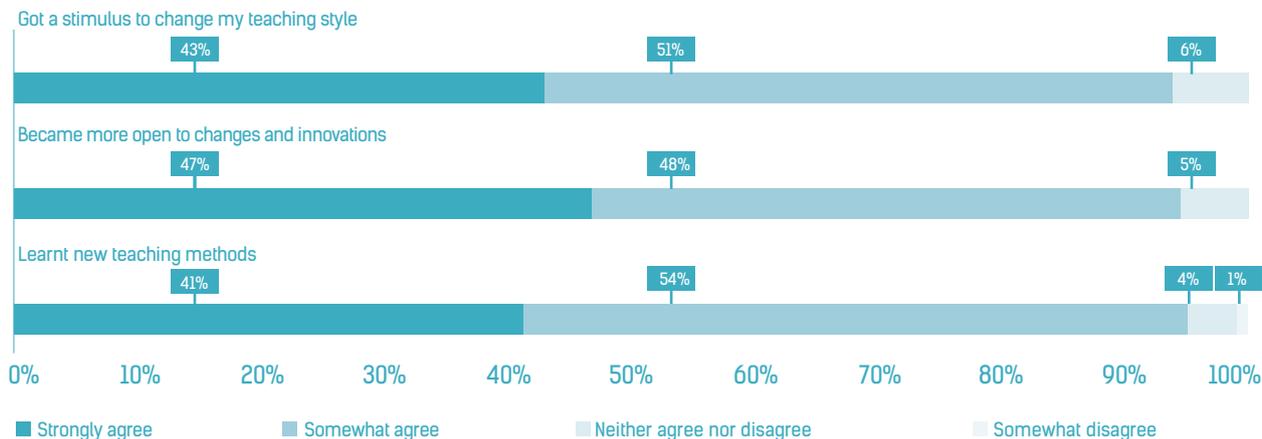
"I am your parent and you have to have good grades and that's it" is the kind of support that we see quite frequently. And that is not what it is all about.

We are learning how to be tolerant and curious. Because we learn one thing and then we want to learn another one. We are bitten by the curiosity bug, in other words by outgoing mobility we broaden our horizons. This is not a cliché, this is true!

How well did the ERASMUS+ KA1 mobility meet your needs?



Overall satisfaction with mobility (questionnaire for mobile staff).



Change in attitudes (questionnaire for mobile staff).

as one of the most adequate forms of in-service training for Polish school education staff.

Change in attitudes

In opinion of participants, mobility teaches people tolerance and opens them to others. It allows them to look at an issue from a completely different perspective, which facilitates their insight into other cultures and promotes a different approach to education. The participants also stressed the influence of projects on general change in professional attitudes and in daily routine of the teaching process. These changes often related to mentality, especially where participation in projects contributed to increased tolerance and openness to other teaching approaches. There were also reflections on the need to change the atmosphere of learning in Polish schools in favour of increased autonomy and enhancing internal motivation. The most frequent attitudes in Polish mentality and in the tradition of education are often overly authoritarian or overprotective, which blocks the development of internal motivation based on cooperation, still very rare in Polish reality.

As regards benefits from mobility, a higher degree of self-esteem is a very important aspect. It helps maintain motivation to continue work with pupils and introduce change. Some respondents suggested a departure from the usual lesson scenario. This was mainly due to becoming familiar with different methods of class work and ways of transferring

It is not that we sit in a classroom. We move around, we go outside.

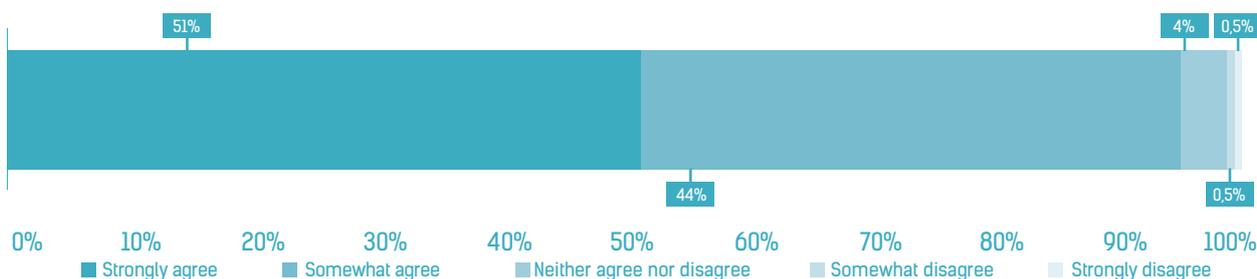
I think that after such courses teachers conduct more interesting classes and mobilise their pupils to classwork. Teachers who become more open and more tolerant impart these characteristics to their pupils.

knowledge. When teachers opened up to cooperation and interaction with their pupils, they noticed a big change in their attitude to classes. Teachers also see that pupils themselves prefer new forms of classes which motivate them more and sometimes they even propose more innovations themselves.

Development of language skills

Improvement of communication skills in a foreign language was another important benefit raised during the interviews. The respondents often stressed that studying foreign languages in Poland was mainly focused on learning grammatical structures, which does not necessarily mean the acquisition of communication skills in a foreign language. Contact with foreigners is instrumental in understanding that they often use the project language to be understood, although they make grammatical errors and their vocabulary

Improved the practical use of foreign languages



Development of language skills (questionnaire for mobile staff).

is limited. These issues are not a problem so they do not hinder the willingness to communicate with foreign project participants. This means that training abroad plays a vital role in encouraging people to use foreign languages.

The opinion of participants is that such projects offer new opportunities for teachers, especially in relation to improving language teaching competences. A number of participants noticed that when project involved teachers to a greater extent (especially if its topic is related to new methods of class work), it would bring more benefits to pupils (such methods are more readily used during classes). It is particularly applicable to situations where a foreign language becomes a tool serving the purpose of curriculum implementation. Therefore, mobility projects prove extremely useful, especially in the case of schools providing bilingual instruction. Teachers who gained professional qualifications

We want to prove that it is possible to find a way of learning a foreign language in a village as well. There are different ways.

Our teachers pay more attention to the grammar and not to communication. Those pupils have no such complex. They speak ungrammatically but they use foreign languages and that is due to the fact that they have opportunities to hold such conversations.

in a Polish school often find it difficult to transfer their methods of class work to working in a different language. Experience gained during mobility seems to be helpful in such situations as projects give them opportunities for exchanging techniques and methods used by the Polish teachers and by those from abroad. This, in turn, really improves teaching methods and helps stimulate pupils' interest. Participation in such projects often encourages teachers to offer new vocabulary and conduct part of classes in a foreign language. It is really important that this also has greatly affected pupils' attitude. They now notice that it is really important to learn foreign languages and that there is nothing to fear about making mistakes.

These projects also contributed to introducing other forms of teaching foreign languages, which shows that classes can be given in more interesting way. This encourages pupils to increase their active participation and involvement in the life of their school. It is significant that these benefits were enjoyed not only by the project participants. Participation in mobility had a visible influence on the school community, especially from the perspective of non-mobile teachers and pupils as their language competences had improved. Participation in projects contributed to increased interest in languages in the school community (both among teachers and pupils), increased significance of language competences (especially among older teachers) and improved communication competences (breaking language barriers).

Thanks to the mobility I wanted to boost my professional experience. I study English intensively and I conduct bilingual geography classes, because we often have mobilities abroad.

We teach in two languages, so this programme is something we need very much. It allows us to exchange methods of work and get to know the cultures of other countries.

That is a great experience for a teacher who is not an English language specialist. This is very helpful in relation to methodology, but also in overcoming your fear, as you are not a teacher of English but you have to teach in English.

We organise lots of classes to demonstrate that the knowledge of foreign languages is a must. We have songbooks and group games. We also give additional points to those who use English.

Application of new technologies

The focus group participants often recognized the idea of applying new technologies as crucial, especially during the implementation of curricula for higher grades in primary and lower secondary schools. Lots of respondents considered ICT-based teaching as a chance for getting through to that age group and for developing their interest in the learning process including independent use of knowledge. New skills contributed to the improved performance in tasks other than teaching (e.g. keeping records, assessment and collection of teaching materials).

The necessity to acquire new knowledge related to operating and using modern equipment and software had also stemmed from general changes in the perception and use of modern technologies by new pupils coming to school. Thanks to the project its participants learned to use innovative tools and methods during classes and extracurricular activities.

Założyliśmy anglojęzyczny teatr, aby zachęcić uczniów nie tylko do nauki języka, ale również do większej aktywności.

Using multimedia equipment and new ICT for self-study, for example when doing homework, proved essential for raising the quality of the learning/teaching process. Information coming from participants leads us to believe that the project results will be durable and will contribute to the development of teacher competences and will significantly influence the functioning of the institution. This is endorsed by participants' declarations concerning further studying and gaining ICT knowledge on one's own..

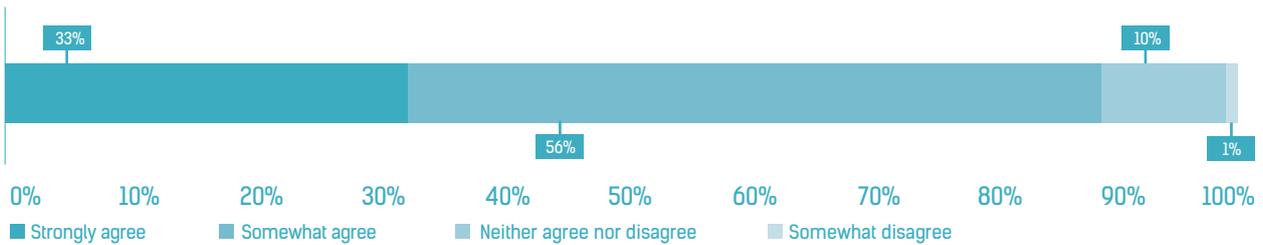
Noteworthy, there is a change in some teachers' attitude to mobile phones, which are not permitted to be used in class in Polish schools. Still pupils incessantly use their mobiles also during classes. However, it has been noticed that if mobile phones are introduced to a lesson scenario, pupils use them for learning instead of entertainment. It is said that even the hardest opponents of modern technologies are slowly taking to such solutions and because nowadays most pupils have access to the Internet on their smartphones, they also have better opportunities of using source materials. An opportunity to streamline one's own work, especially tasks not directly related to teaching but more to documentation, assessment and collecting materials useful in work is also a thing of great importance.

I took part in a project devoted to the familiarisation with blended learning. It was about exploring methods which could be used in work with lower secondary school students. Every day we were shown new tools available on-line or smartphone applications.

This is about not wasting time on paperwork. If spread sheet exists, why not use it?

Kids have to know those devices are not only to play with but that they also serve different purposes.

Developed my ICT skills for teaching



Developing ICT skills (questionnaire for mobile staff).

My knowledge was low and now it has improved. I was afraid to touch something in case I break it, and the equipment was expensive... Thanks to the project I am no longer afraid of looking for and applying new solutions.

It is true that ICT skills were a great benefit to the school. I think that there are many more programmes, we only know a few of them and I am sure there is a wealth of them...

Parents start realising that there is electronic equipment in the school, in each classroom, and that classes are held using multibooks and when a teacher enters the classroom the laptop gets switched on at once and things start happening, the class is alive.

We are opening a technology class with tablets. They will serve as textbooks.

If a 3D room is created, it will be really something, with glasses and applications. All of us will be able to use it.

Promotion prospects

The participants had different opinions regarding benefits offered by foreign mobility projects for school education staff in the context of professional advancement. Some agreed that there was a direct link between improving competences while abroad and increasing their chances for promotion. Other respondents said, however, that mobility should be treated more like one of the promotion factors, in the context of procedures and systemic guidelines. It is important that mobility is often seen as an attractive form of in-service teacher training, especially in the case of those teachers who have already reached the top level of the professional advancement scale.

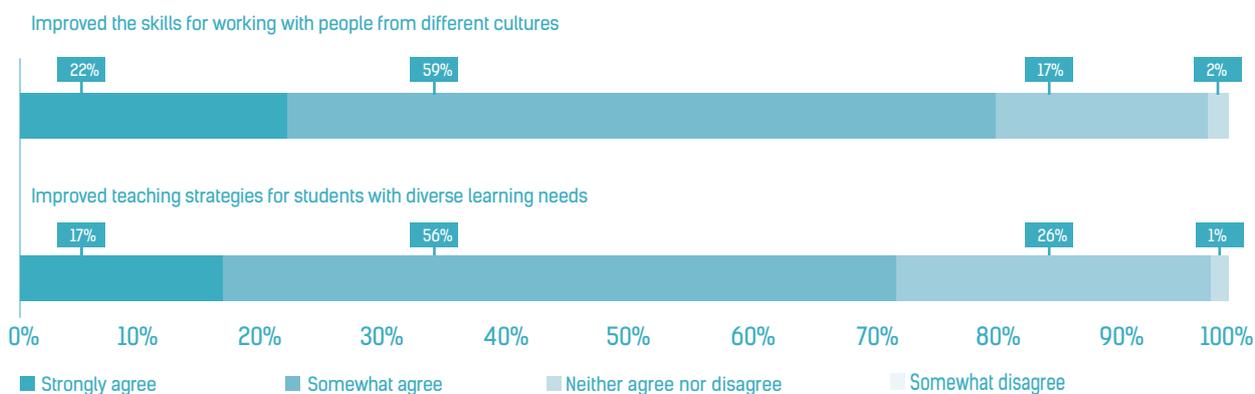
Mobile phones... This is a nightmare, especially in such schools as mine. However, what we observed there, allows us to make use of them not to play, but to learn something.

My colleague is not a big fan of computers and modern technologies. After the course she allows her pupils use these devices during classes. From the viewpoint of her pupils this is a total change.

I am sure this can translate into professional advancement as participants have something to be proud of and something to boast about.

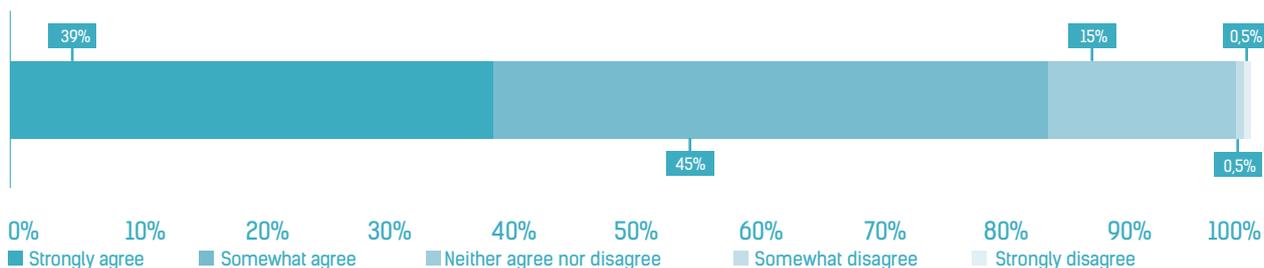
I can see now that a large group of teachers are improving their language competences. We have a group of staff who are working towards their promotion so after hours English teachers organise classes for them. This is just one of the elements that helps in professional advancement.

The situation in my school is that most of our staff are chartered teachers, which means that they have already reached the top of their career ladder. These people possess really high qualifications. At some point we realised that they were no longer interested neither in training we organise at school nor in self-education, so we decided that taking part in such mobilities could be adequate training for them.



Improving professional skills (questionnaire for mobile staff).

Staff mobility under Erasmus+ is significant for teachers' assessment and further career.



Impact on career progression (questionnaire for mobile staff).

IMPACT ON INSTITUTIONS

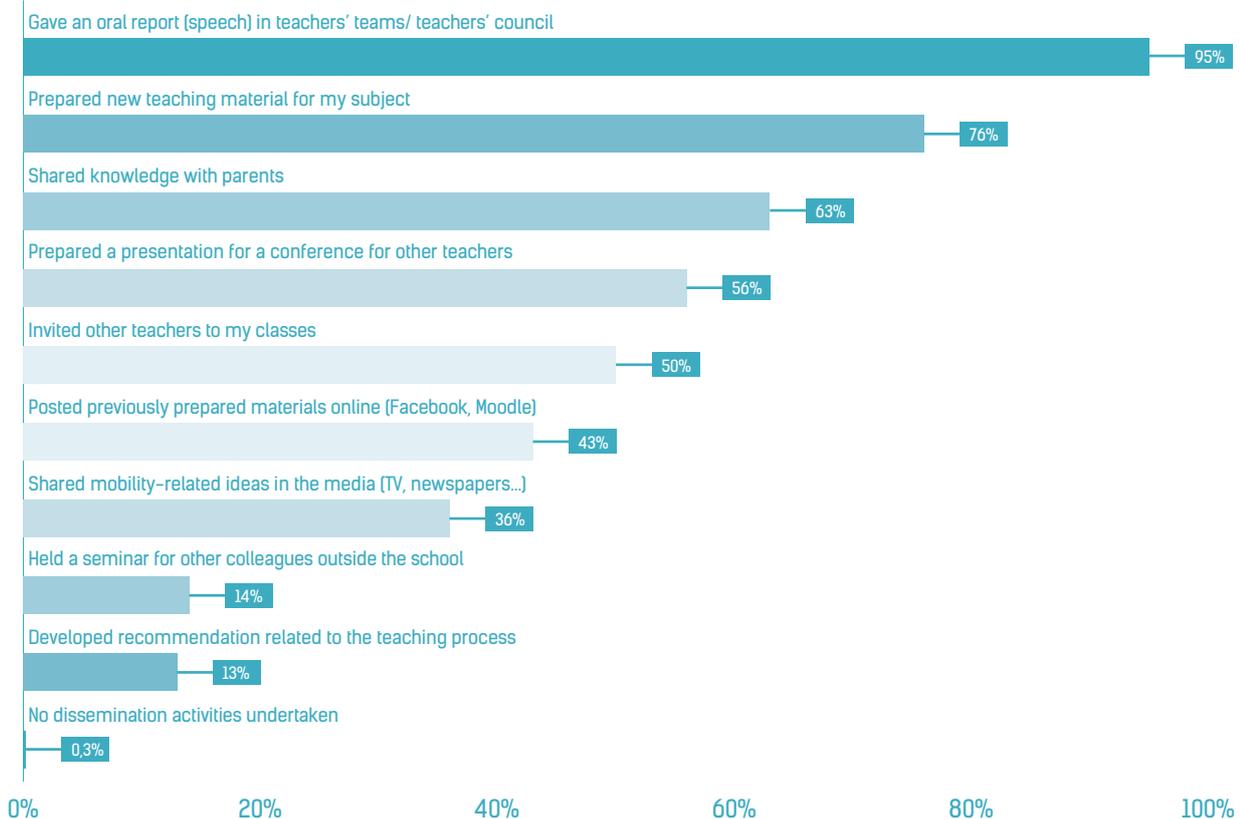
Both teachers (mobile and non-mobile) and pupils indicated that their mobility results should not merely have a chance to play an important role in the functioning of their school, but should actually do so. This influence should be visible not only in the teaching (improving pupils' knowledge and skills) but also in the wider, social context (influence on the school culture including the attitudes and values). The survey results show that these projects had a significant influence not only on participants, but also on schools. The respondents of all target groups of the survey confirmed that mobility had contributed not only to the acquisition of

new knowledge, but also to the improvement of school's functioning.

Knowledge sharing

The survey showed that knowledge acquired as a result of mobility is a significant factor in the development of home institutions. This aspect is also considered as important by the participants themselves. This is confirmed by the implementation of dissemination activities by over 95% of mobile teachers.

How did you share your knowledge and experience after mobility?



Dissemination of results implemented by project participants (questionnaire for mobile staff).

Almost all respondents confirmed they applied mobility results in their work and shared their newly acquired knowledge and experience with other teachers and staff in home institutions. Over three quarters of respondents said they had developed new teaching materials. A great majority of respondents tried to encourage their colleagues to generate and implement new ideas leading not only to the improvement of pupils' competences but also to the development of their school. Over two fifths of respondents tried to involve parents. This shows that in the opinion of respondents, information about newly acquired knowledge and skills is disseminated mainly among the teaching staff of schools involved in projects.

The responses on knowledge transfer at local, regional and sectoral levels were slightly different. Although more than half of respondents confirmed that they had prepared a presentation for a conference, a definitely smaller proportion confirmed direct interaction with those potentially interested in results obtained during project implementation (seminars for other participants, recommendations). The media, both traditional ones (TV, press) as well as the Internet, which is used by participants to post electronic

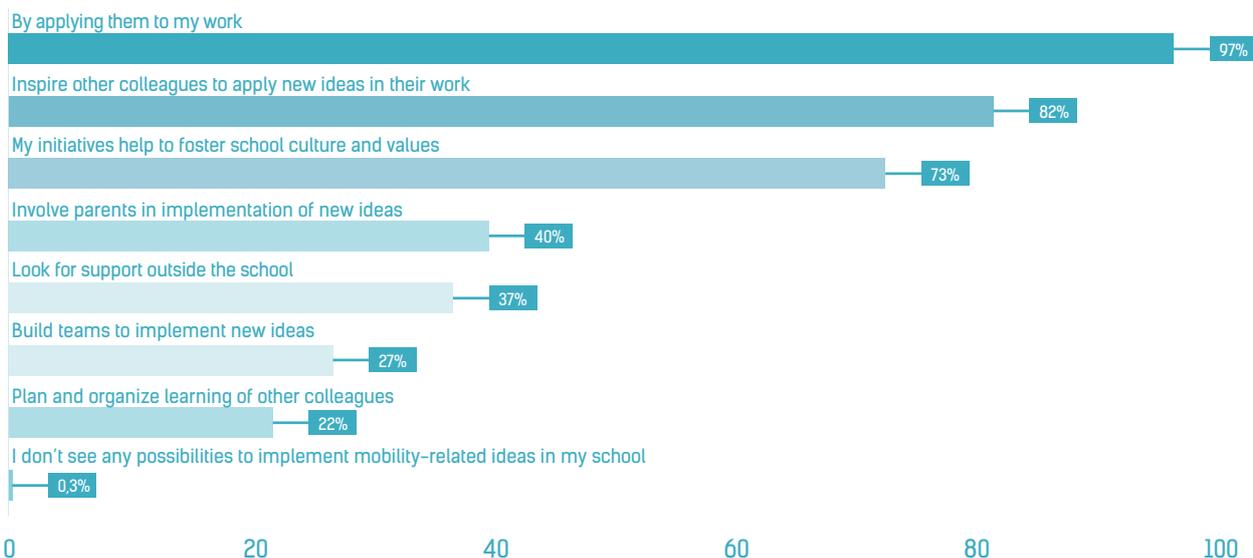
It is obvious that having undergone training staff apply newly acquired skills in practice. We were divided into small groups and each group was to report what we had learnt. I can say that teachers really make use of it..

In our town, the so-called teaching bulletin is published every year and it reaches various centres. The latest issue to be published will contain a report covering our mobility. This is then read by various people who may benefit from that material.

Upon their return, our teachers prepared training not only for the teachers of our school but also for those from other schools. It involved presentations and workshops. They also presented their achievements outside the school. I hope someone benefitted from that.

We publish things as well. But this can be done also by the school running body, the local TV or radio station.

How do you implement the ideas inspired by staff mobility?



Dissemination of project results (questionnaire for mobile staff).

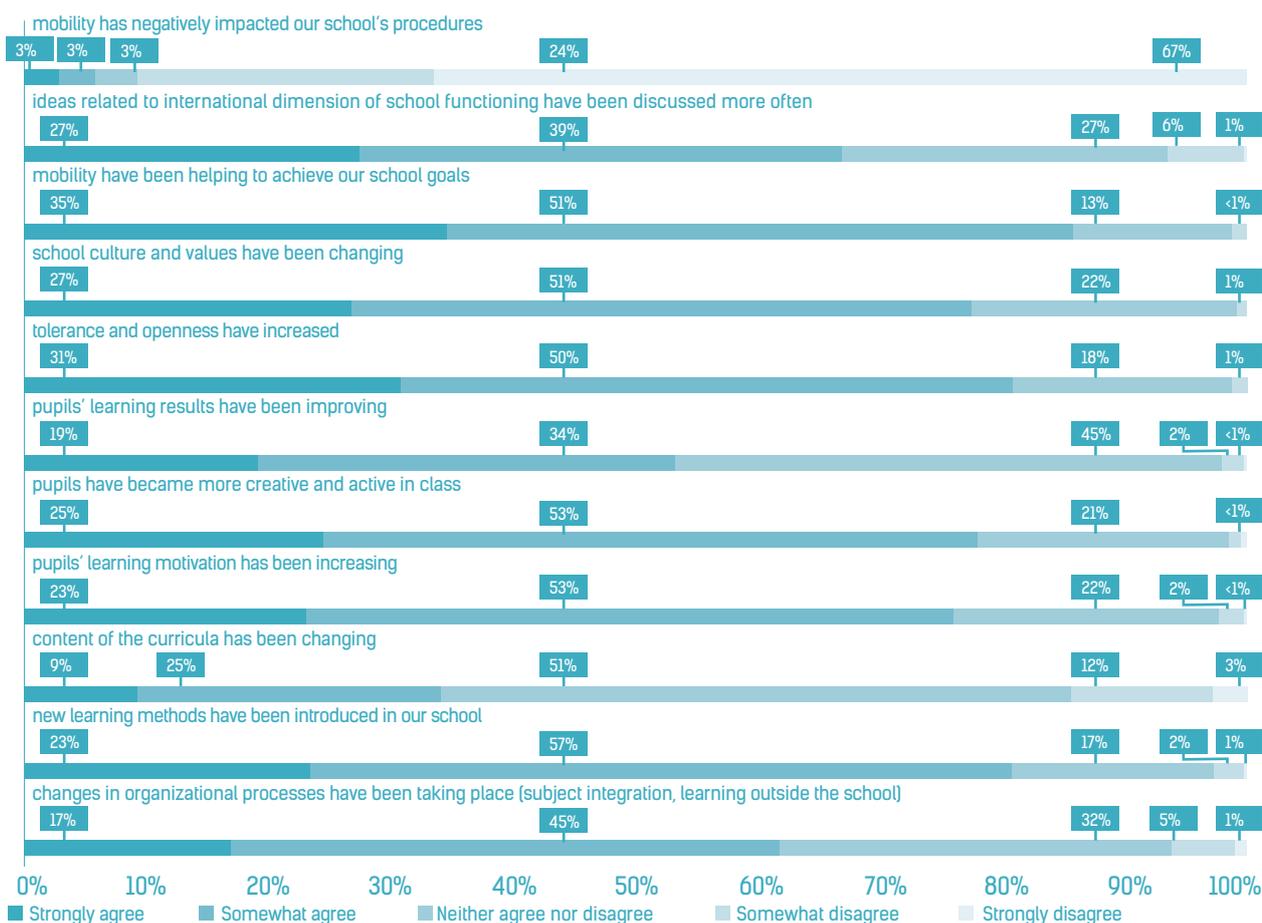
materials, are a significant channel through which mobility participants have disseminated project results.

During their focus groups interviews the respondents said that the rule was to share knowledge acquired abroad with other teaching staff members. It was also confirmed that knowledge sharing often goes beyond the school. School heads claimed that project participants also organise training for teachers in other institutions and prepare articles in which they share their experience and newly acquired knowledge and skills. This is undoubtedly linked to the necessity of ensuring quality of the dissemination of mobility results, which had to be planned by beneficiaries at the application stage.

Improved staff competences

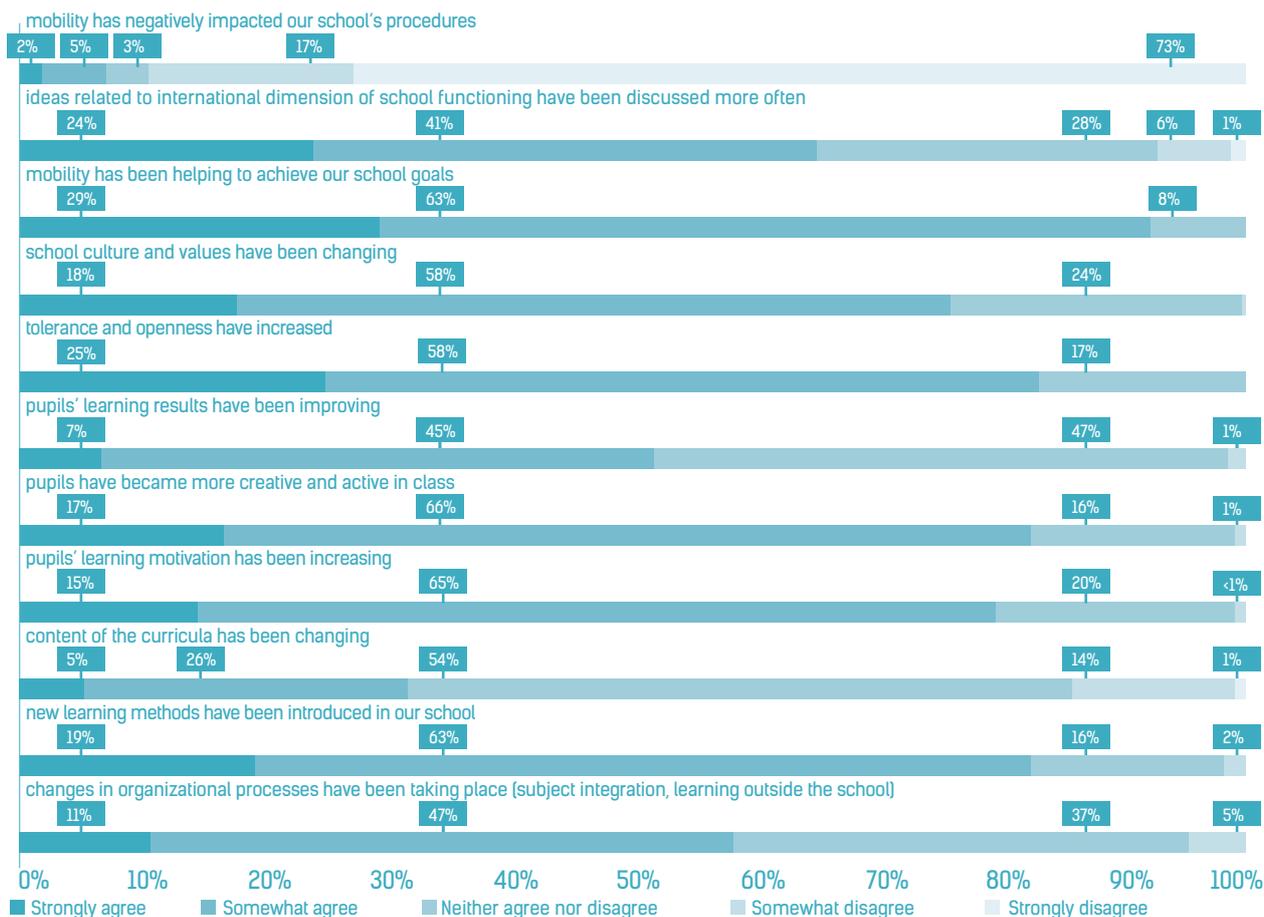
The survey enabled to estimate benefits of project implementation in the systemic context of sending institutions. Both survey and interview participants stressed that participation in those projects had a positive influence on both schools and teaching staff. Most of participants confirmed that first of all, their involvement in mobility had brought benefits to their schools (only less than 6% of respondents indicated the negative influence of their mobility training on the school's functioning). The vast majority of respondents believe that the project contributed to the introduction of new forms of teaching. More than half of mobile teachers also noticed changes to the organisation of the educational

Upon completion of ERASMUS+ staff mobility in our school...



Benefits for sending institutions (questionnaire for mobile staff).

Upon completion of ERASMUS+ staff mobility in our school...



Benefits for sending institutions (questionnaire for non-mobile staff).

Those who did not take part in these projects are usually curious, they ask questions and have the urge and energy to get involved in new project activities.

Quite a lot of people said they had not participated in the mobility as they were afraid of the language barrier. Now I can see that a large groups of teachers are improving their language competences. We have a group of teachers who have started the professional advancement procedure so after hours English language specialists organise classes for them.

process. Over three quarters of respondents were aware of the projects' influence on school culture and the local community.

Non-mobile teachers were of a similar opinion as the changes involving application of new teaching methods have been noticed by over 80% of respondents in this group. Slightly lower number of respondents had noticed positive impact of projects on pupils' motivation. However, more than half of non-mobile teachers discovered an increase in the frequency of discussions related either to internationalisation or to activities implemented by their institution in this field. Interestingly, respondents not participating in mobility training abroad were slightly more optimistic in some of abovementioned aspects, including

When we were in Germany, there was a room with a sofa and a coffee machine. And there was a sheet of paper saying: "No work permitted". They kept going there to read... In our school there is no place where we could talk to a parent, let alone sit down...

key areas of mobility positive influence on home schools. A slightly higher number of respondents from that group noticed improvement in pupils' learning achievements and the fact that discussions concerning the internationalisation of their institution had become more frequent.

Becoming familiar with different education contexts

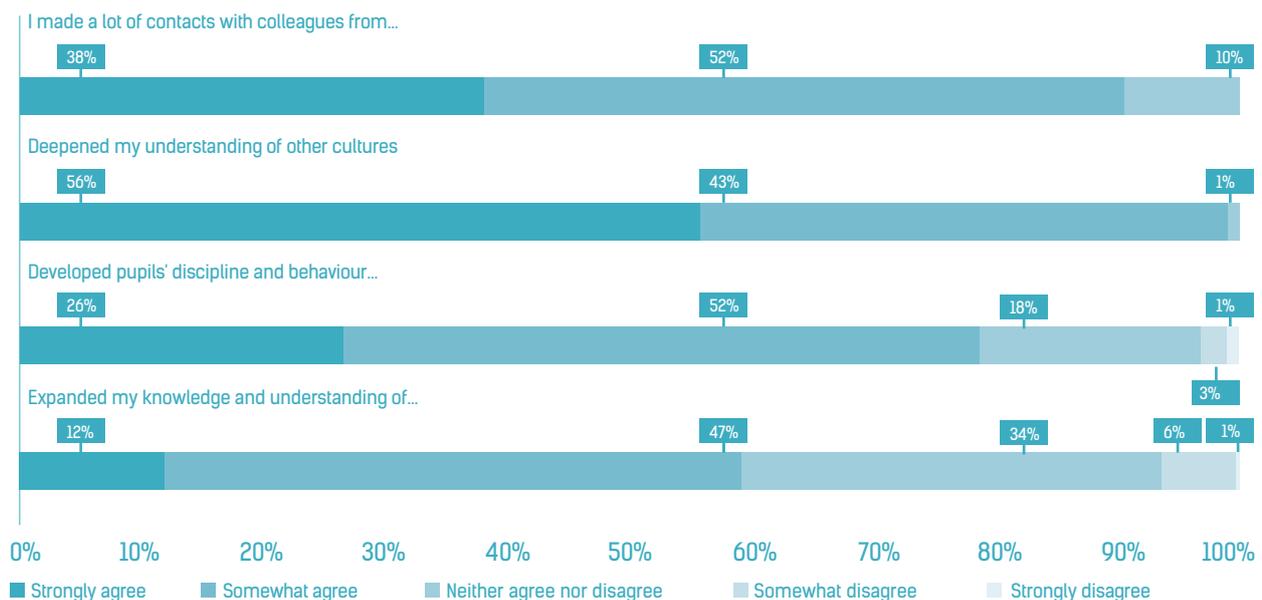
Attention was drawn to the differences in the specificity of teaching profession in different European countries, e.g. considerably higher number of teaching hours and incomparably higher remuneration. It often happens that such working conditions lead to a different perception of teaching profession, especially in these countries where

teachers seem to enjoy high respect and experience more comfort in their working environment as well as much higher prestige in the local community.

Discipline that stems from a specific context of the school performance (e.g. cultural diversity of pupils) was an additional subject raised by many respondents as something which is uncommon in Polish educational environment. Better discipline in class, despite comparable numbers of pupils was often emphasised. As a consequence pupils' strong internal motivation to learn was observed in contrast to the, characteristic for Polish schools, external motivation based on marks.

Impact of mobility on the school community

It seems that the participation in mobility activities significantly influenced the functioning of schools, both teachers and pupils and sometimes even parents, as well as institutions in the school environment. This was also confirmed by pupils' responses. Almost all respondents from that group confirmed the importance of applying new technologies by



Becoming familiar with different education contexts of teachers (questionnaire for mobile staff).

In that school discipline is ideal and exemplary despite the fact that the environment was difficult. However, the school was able to achieve that.

In this school discipline is great and the only thing that I should have brought here from there is a bit of that discipline. Whatever he said was taken seriously.

Another thing that surprised us was different pupils' approach. When the teacher said "You have 10 minutes", the whole class was ready with their tasks after this time.

In Poland we focus on grades. It came as a big shock to us in England, when teacher tested the knowledge of times tables. Nobody was cheating. The teacher was reading out the calculations and the correct answers. The kids marked a plus or a minus on their sheets.

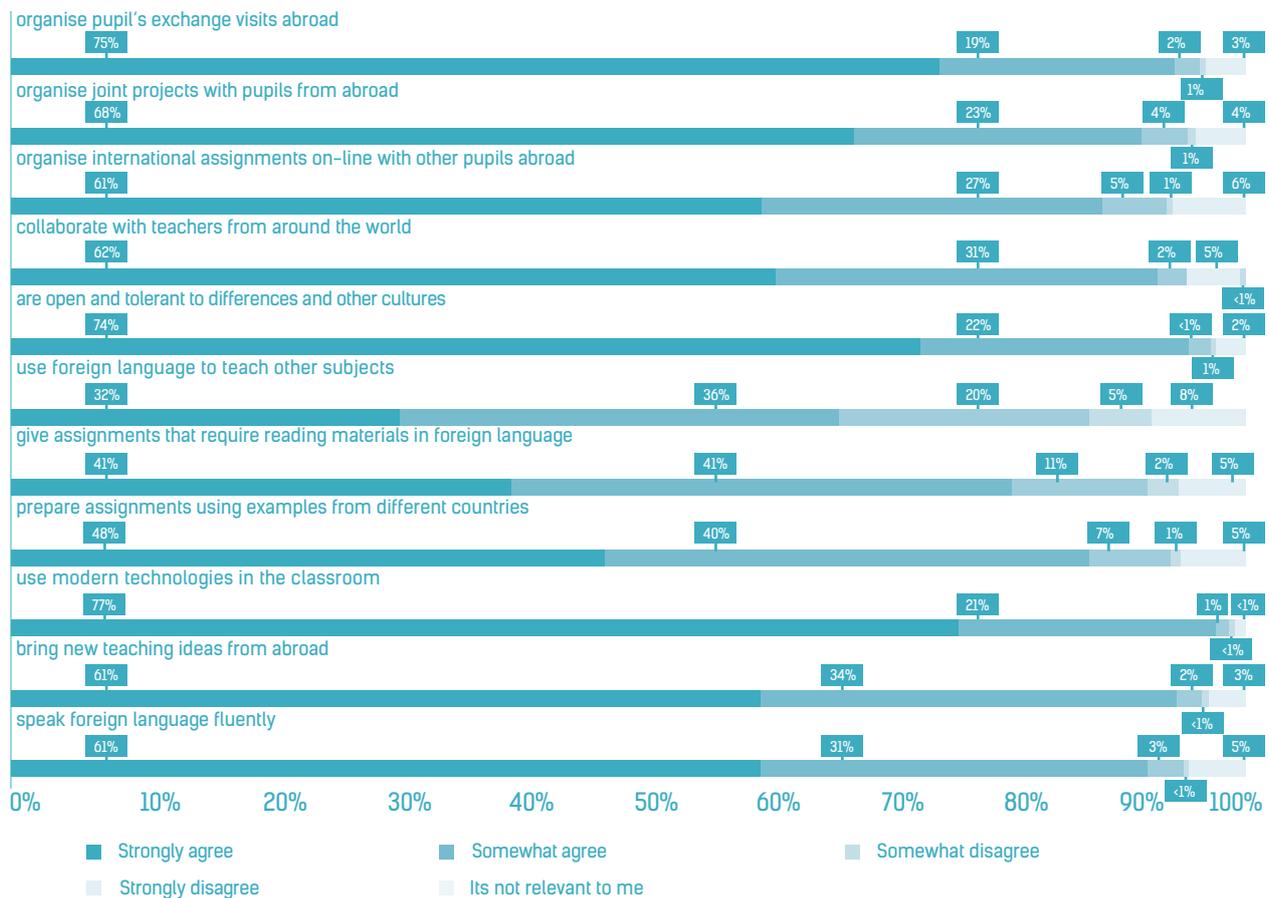
teachers (over 97%) and introducing of new teaching ideas from abroad (over 94%). It is worth noting, however, that a much lower number of pupils (over 67%, which is still a very high percentage of respondents) considers the use of foreign languages in teaching other subjects as important.

Pupils often expressed their views on increasing the level of internationalisation in Polish schools. Responses linked to the willingness to participate in projects involving pupils from other countries and international pupils exchange programmes were also significantly frequent (over 90% of respondents). It seems that cooperation between teachers from different countries is important to this group of respondents (over 90% of responses).

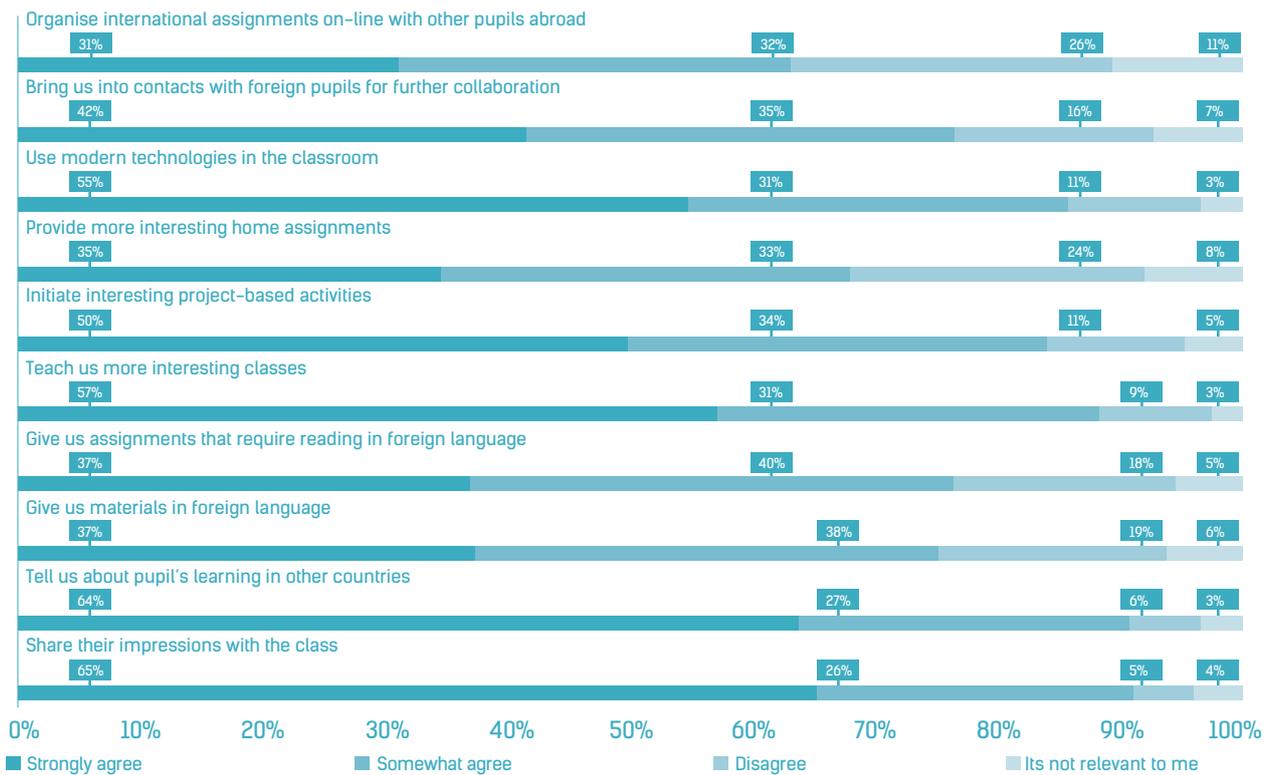
A change in attitudes also seems extremely significant. Over 95% of pupils claimed that tolerance and teachers' openness to cultural differences was important to them.

It can also be concluded that generally speaking, pupils see the mobility results in a positive light. Over 90% of

How important is that your school teachers



What is the behaviour of your teachers after they return from the training activities abroad?

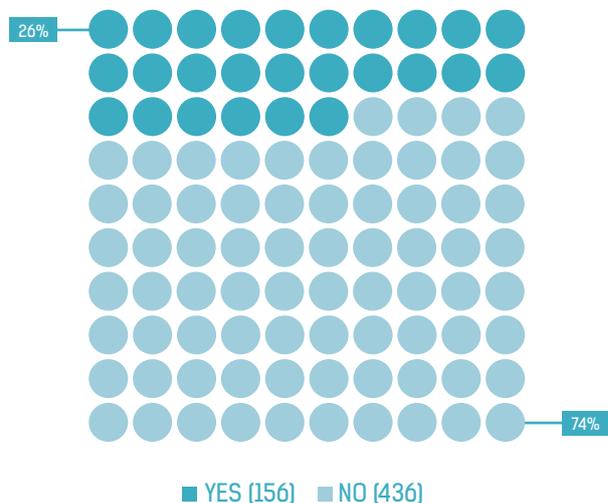


Results of school education staff mobility (questionnaire for pupils).

pupils claimed that teachers shared their observations upon their return and talked about their training period abroad.

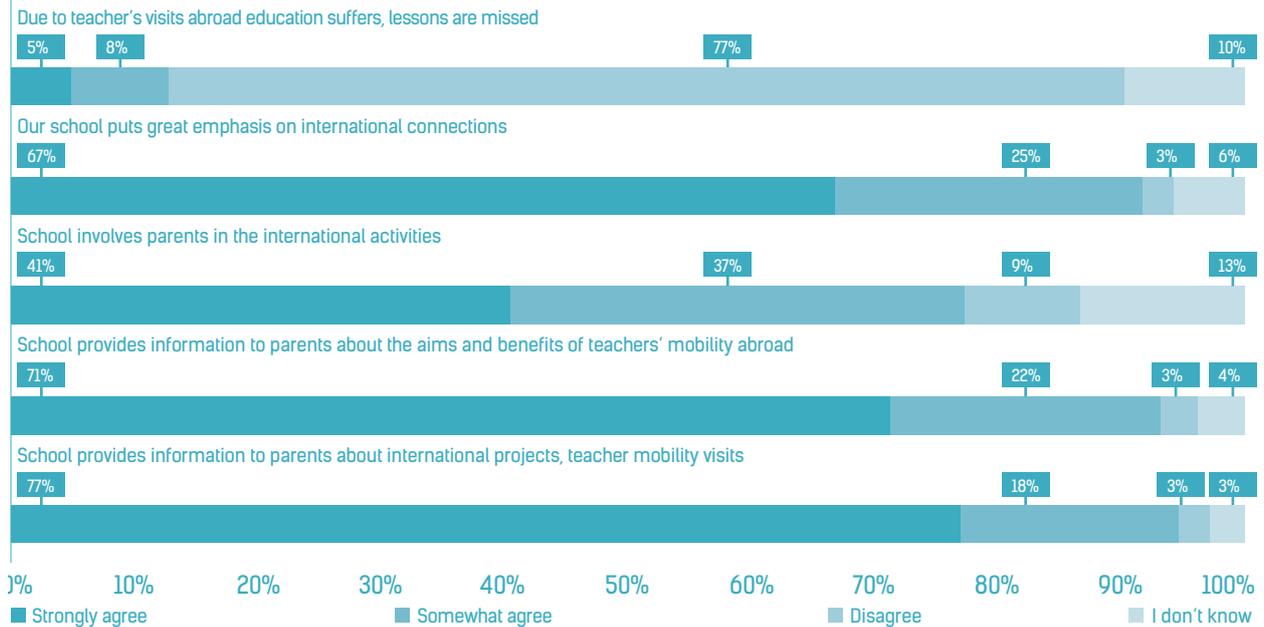
Pupils pointed out the internationalisation of their school as the weakest aspect among the mobility outcomes. Only over 60% of them said that teachers organised work on-line, with other pupils from abroad. This is particularly interesting as this area seems to the pupils to be the most important one from the perspective of potential benefits from such projects. Such opinion may stem from the fact that the vast majority of pupils participating in the survey had never taken part in international educational mobility (such as pupil exchange programmes). Almost three quarters of respondents declared no experience in transnational pupil exchange projects. Such an outcome corresponds with data coming from the questionnaire for mobile teachers. Gener-

Have you ever been abroad with student exchange programme?



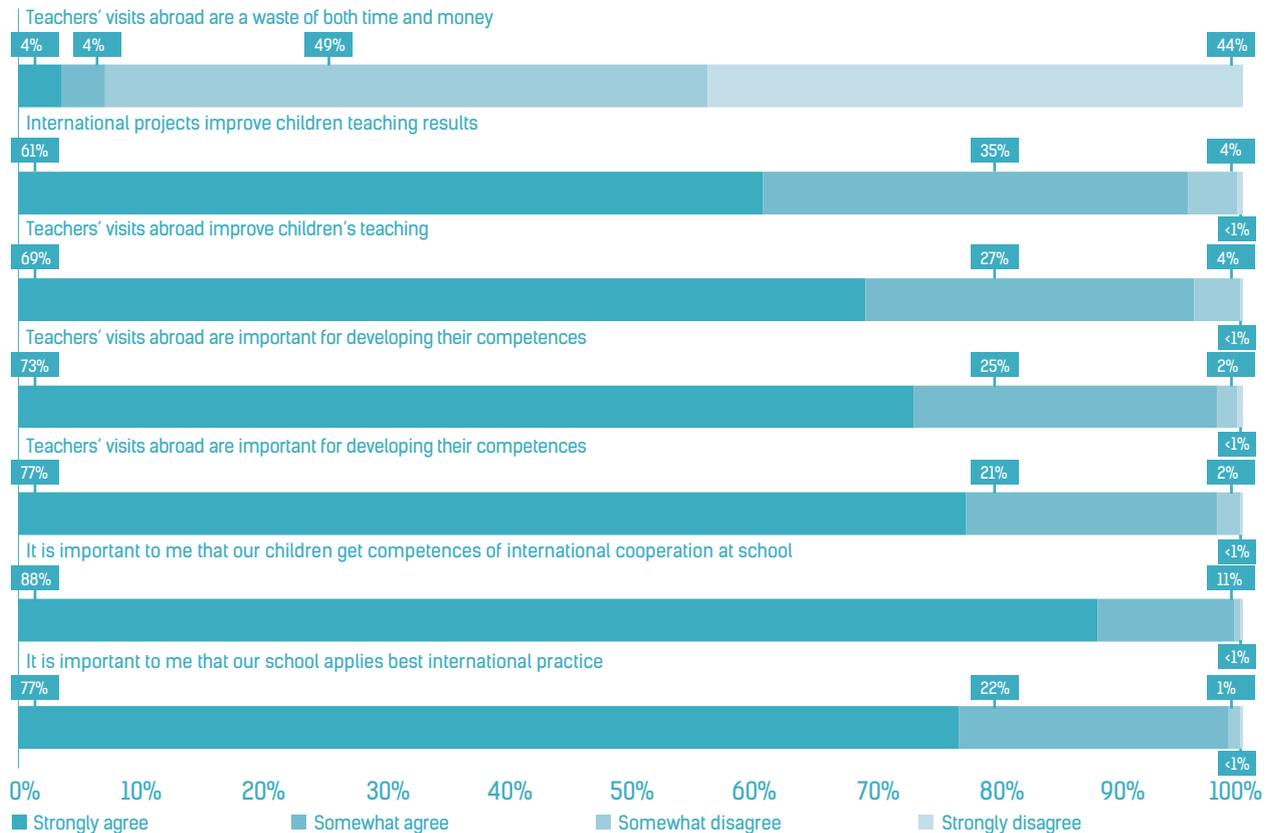
Transnational learning mobility experience (questionnaire for pupils).

What is your opinion about the international activities in your child's school?



Mobility benefits for home institutions (questionnaire for parents).

What is your opinion about the benefits of internationalisation of your school?



Mobility benefits for home institution's environment (questionnaire for parents).



In bigger towns competition is stronger and each school is trying to stand out, and participation in such projects sends a clear message to candidates that this school has set itself some tasks and has undertaken additional activities.

Well, a school is just a school and it has to shine, especially when it is situated in a smaller town, near a big one. This is a problem as when we look at statistics we would have enough pupils but unfortunately, half of them go to the bigger town.



ally speaking, none of these groups had been involved in transnational mobility before and, taking into consideration the results of qualitative research, it often turns out that the project implementation was an opportunity not only to carry out the first ever training abroad but also to leave the country for the first time. It is worth adding that this lack of previous mobility experience also results from a high degree of competition at the stage of calls for proposals and a relatively low success rate while applying for grants (due to financial constraints, the National Agency provided funding to only one fourth of all submitted applications in the first selection round).

Noteworthy, pupils' views on the essence of internationalisation of their schools are echoed in their parents' opinions. Nearly all of them (over 99% of respondents) claimed that acquisition of competences related to the international cooperation was important for their children. There was also a link between mobility, development of home schools (96%) and above all, improving pupils' learning achievements (over 95%) noticed by most respondents. The parents who participated in the survey were mainly of the opinion that school's benefits gained during mobility had outweighed potential losses. However, it has to be

stressed that this cohort relatively frequently pointed at the risk of neglecting the school's educational function due to the projects (over 12% of respondents raised the issue that as a result of staff mobility pupils do not have certain classes). Information on the objectives and outcomes of projects passed to parents is seen as a positive thing. Parents noticed the importance that schools attach to the internationalisation of educational institutions. They also confirmed that schools themselves involved them in such activities.

Increased competitiveness of schools

Almost all respondents said that one of the main reasons why they had submitted their applications – and at the same time one of the most significant benefits resulting from projects – was an increase in the school's prestige in the local community. A higher competitiveness of the school as compared to local education offer seems one of the most frequent reasons why a decision was made to become involved in a mobility project. This is mainly due to the big competitiveness of schools on the local education market. This is mainly caused by the necessity to fight for pupils in the situation of demographic decline. The perspective of lack of interest in a school displayed by a sufficient number of candidates means not only making worse use of the teaching staff's competences but it may also lead to the institution being closed down. Implementation of EU projects is one of the ways in which such risks could be avoided.

The increased competitiveness of schools was important especially to those respondents who work in institutions situated in bigger urban centres. In smaller towns participation in projects was often described as a way to survive. This mainly applied to schools in villages situated near big agglomerations as they are exposed to the risk of losing pupils to competitive urban schools. In such situation the projects turned out to be a real chance for ensuring school's attractiveness to the young and for surviving in the local community.

Integration of teaching staff

Joint participation in a project usually had a significant influence on the integration of teaching staff. It was often stressed that such influence extended to persons not participating in projects directly (non-mobile teachers). Active participation and commitment were a wonderful occasion to learn effective cooperation. This is a meaningful result especially in the context of the functioning of Polish schools where due to demographic decline schools are merged to form larger institutions. During one interview its participants talked about large schools composed of several smaller institutions where initially teachers were engaged in conflicts, later resolved thanks to participation in a project, joint activities and opportunities to get to know each other. Participating in mobility projects also strengthened



I was selected for this mobility during an additional recruitment process. And now I see that those who were there with me are the same people with whom I cooperate the most often and on whom I am sure I can rely.

their participants' identification with the home institution. Sometimes job shadowing allowed them to see their work place in a positive light. Some group interview participants emphasised that foreign partners valued the quality of work at Polish schools.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Appropriate preparation

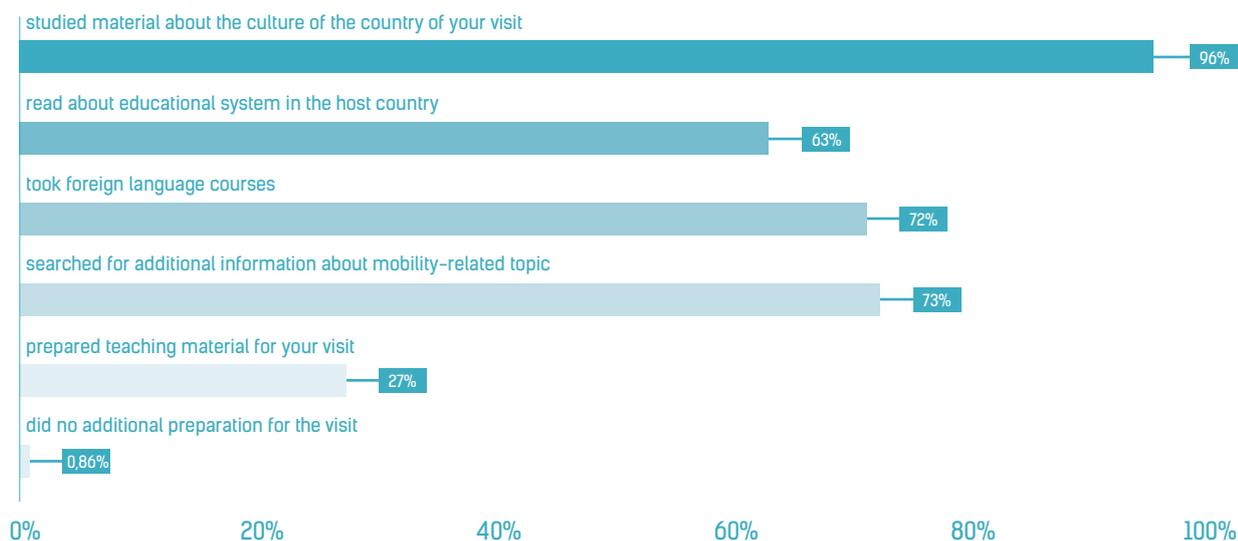
In accordance with the rules of Erasmus+ Programme, an appropriate preparation for transnational mobility is a significant factor ensuring high quality of training abroad. This is also confirmed by the results of the survey. According to the declarations in the questionnaires almost each mobility participant tried to improve his/her knowledge of the host country (only less than 1% of respondent said they had not been involved in preparatory activities before going abroad). In the case of a great majority of respondents, preparatory activities were of a general nature or directly linked to the improvement of language competences (over 70% of respondents had participated in language classes). The systemic context of mobility destination country also seems important to participants (almost two thirds of mobile teachers had acquired information on the education system in the host country).

Adequate partnership

The choice of the right partner organisation also seemed very important, as it allowed mobile teachers to carry out quality learning period at host institutions. Participants emphasised that the specificity of international mobility does not require visiting an exemplary school. It is often much more important to find an institution struggling with problems similar to those encountered back home, which allows participants to apply any new solutions in a better way.

“At first we visited an exemplary school. But then we were at a school which is similar to ours. It is worth looking for the areas where you can use your partner’s experience.”

Before the mobility you...



Activities undertaken before training abroad (questionnaire for mobile staff).

Challenge facing

At focus group interviews, the participants were also asked to identify the biggest challenges in the implementation of their projects. One of the most frequently reported problems related to cooperation with school running bodies at the level of municipality. Although this cooperation is usually adequate, insufficient support provided by the competent local bodies caused problems to some schools participating in the survey. There were also some voices that people involved in the project on behalf of the school running body are not always able to dispel doubts or meet formal requirements. It was also pointed out that dissemination of information and introducing local authorities to the idea of mobility might remedy the situation to a certain extent.

Yes, we had a problem related to funds. The programme started in August, the first mobility was in September, the funds were transferred to our commune but the council did not confirm that we were allowed to use those funds.

The same approach should be reserved for local authorities in charge of school management. For example, a meeting of commune leaders whose schools participate in Erasmus+. If they talked to each other like we do, that would be a positive thing.

In the opinion of some participants, excessive bureaucracy is the difficulty that prevents some schools from joining a project. Moreover, such difficulties may also prevent school heads and local educational authorities from involving schools in European projects. Some of respondents claimed that the systemic background was often the factor that blocked changes in schools. Therefore, participation in projects cannot initiate more significant changes in schools as it is the need for changes at the national level.

That is what red tape is, it clips your wings. That is probably why some teachers do not get on with their authorities, with their school heads. This is why they are not liked by them.

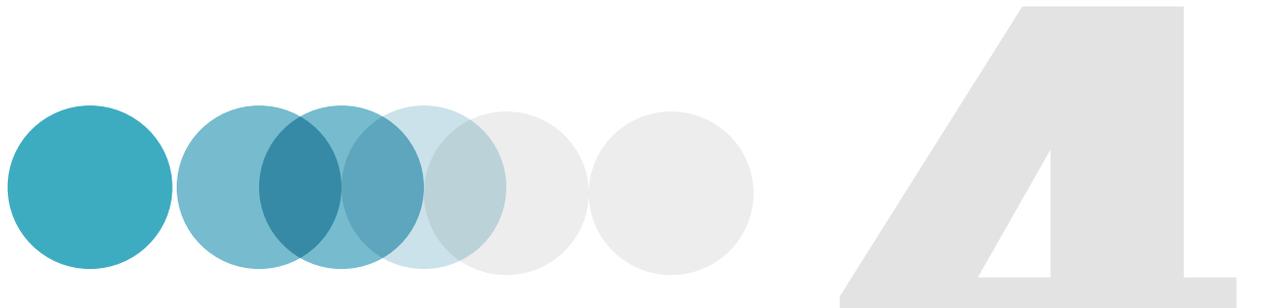
I know about a situation in which a council official said „Do not apply for more Erasmus funds because I will not be able to account for that“.

Of course we can create new projects, submit applications and all this can result in a new document or a new CD in our archives. Changes at the national level are necessary.

The aspect of ensuring continuity of school performance is particularly significant in the context of planning and organising mobility, because it requires a large part of teaching staff to be absent from school. Lack of solutions in the school organisation which would facilitate mobility was another element mentioned in discussions (e.g. compensation for teachers replacing those who have gone away).

My colleague said she had to take unpaid leave for the duration of her mobility.

In our school when you stand in for your colleague you are not paid. And people are angry that they have to stand in for us.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The results of the analysis lead us to believe that the change to the principles of mobility projects, as opposed to the guidelines of the Lifelong Learning Programme (since 2014 projects should be submitted by institutions, not by participants), has no negative influence on project quality. Most of the respondents are trying to use their newly acquired experiences not only to their individual benefit, but also to support the development of home schools. However, the significance of institutional benefits should be strengthened, as this will lead to broadening of mobility results..

2. Poland offers a relatively large amount of courses for school education staff, including those free of charge provided by specialist institutions financed with the State budget funds. However, Polish teachers face problems if they wish to participate in training abroad which they consider to be more interesting, as it also turns out to be expensive, especially due to the lack of support by the school's and local authorities' funds. This is why a significant number of schools had not been involved with similar mobility initiatives before joining Erasmus+. Moreover, a significant number of respondents claimed

that participating in a mobility project became their very first opportunity to travel abroad.

3. International mobility is an immensely attractive form of in-service teacher training, especially for those who have reached the top of their career ladder. Changes occurring after the completion of mobility projects affect not only project participants. Other members of teaching staff are often interested in participant reports presented at teaching staff meetings. They are also keen on using new teaching materials.

4. Multiple new solutions have been introduced to daily school performance. It is important that those changes did not only refer to solutions relating to teaching or organisation, but also to the arrangement of the school space, infrastructure changes and purchasing new equipment and teaching tools. However, the earliest noticeable results of mobility involvement are related to strengthening teacher-pupil relations. Teachers have become more open and more willing to include unconventional methods in their courses, which motivates their pupils to get more involved in classes.

5 Language teachers were a large group among the project initiators. Other teachers have more concerns related to participation in such activities.

This is mainly due to language barriers and only sporadic mobility even in their private lives. It is therefore necessary to stress the importance of quality preparation focused on extensive language courses which should enable wider groups of teachers to participate in projects.

6 Participation in the projects has significantly influenced the school environment. This influence relates to teachers' and pupils' improved language

competences, change of attitude towards everyday responsibilities at school (change of attitudes and increased commitment) and changes to the attitude of school heads towards professional development of the teaching staff. Project participants are keen on sharing their knowledge not only with the team in their own institution but also outside (at the regional, local and sectoral levels). The dissemination of project outcomes has significantly contributed to increased visibility of the Erasmus+ programme (participants claimed their project results encourage other schools to apply for grants). Therefore, it would be advisable to enhance the promotion and the idea of sharing project results (e.g. use of Erasmus+ Project Results Platform for dissemination and exploitation of project results).

7 The topics of the projects mainly stemmed from the schools' current development needs (in some cases linked to the current systemic changes).

The current needs of schools were often identified at the teaching staff meetings. That kind of brainstorming sessions often allowed to develop mobility plans and to identify the institutional needs. Such approach should be considered a good practice as it resulted in bringing project topics in line with the expectations of the schools (both mobile and non-mobile teaching staff).

8 Difficulties in cooperation with school running bodies at the local level (this problem is especially challenging for those who have previously applied

to the NA as individuals) claimed by participants prove that it would be advisable to enhance cooperation with local government bodies (e.g. training on the general programme rules and on benefits of participation in Erasmus+).

9 Ensuring the continuity of school work is an organisational problem resulting from the implementation of mobility projects (this refers mainly to smaller

schools and to projects involving a high number of mobilities). However, according to those schools that have learned to cope with the problem, apart from efficient organisation of replacements, it is easy to fit in the implementation of a project if the schedule is well planned. According to respondents school holiday periods are the best time for mobility, so are winter breaks or the very beginning or end of the school year.

MOBILE TEACHERS CHANGE THEIR SCHOOLS

Impact study of Erasmus+ mobility projects for school education staff. Polish national report.

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Erasmus+

