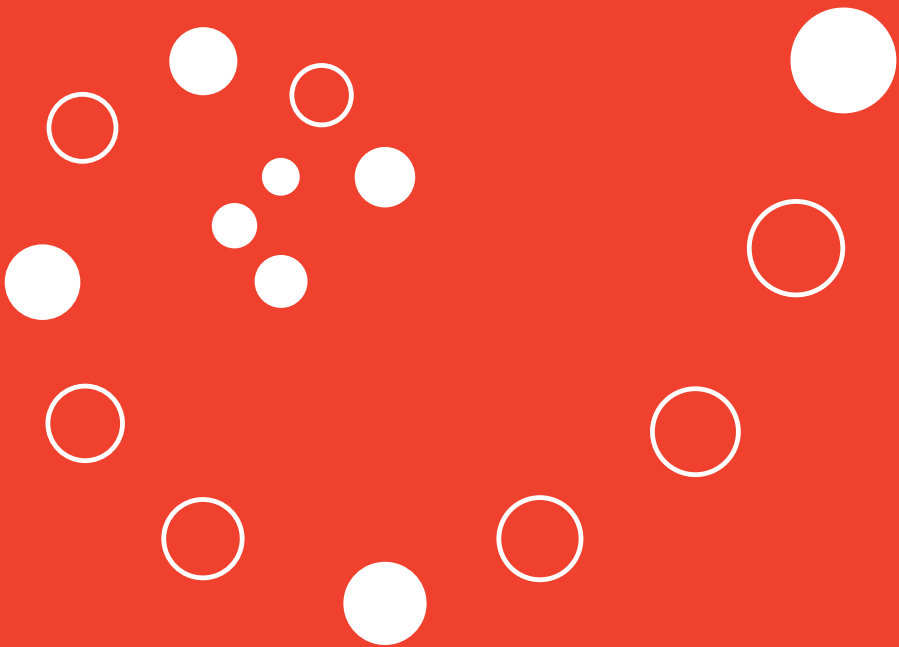


How did mobile teachers change their schools?



Research report on the long-term impact of international
mobility on Polish school education staff



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DTP and cover design:	Artur Ładno
Printing:	Multigraf Drukarnia Sp. z o.o. Bydgoszcz
Publisher:	Foundation for the Development of the Education System National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme Al. Jerozolimskie 142a, 02-305 Warsaw  www.frse.org.pl kontakt@frse.org.pl  www.erasmusplus.org.pl

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ISBN 978-83-65591-94-4

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Citation: M. Pachocki, *How did mobile teachers change their schools? Research report on the long-term impact of international mobility on Polish school education staff*, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2019.

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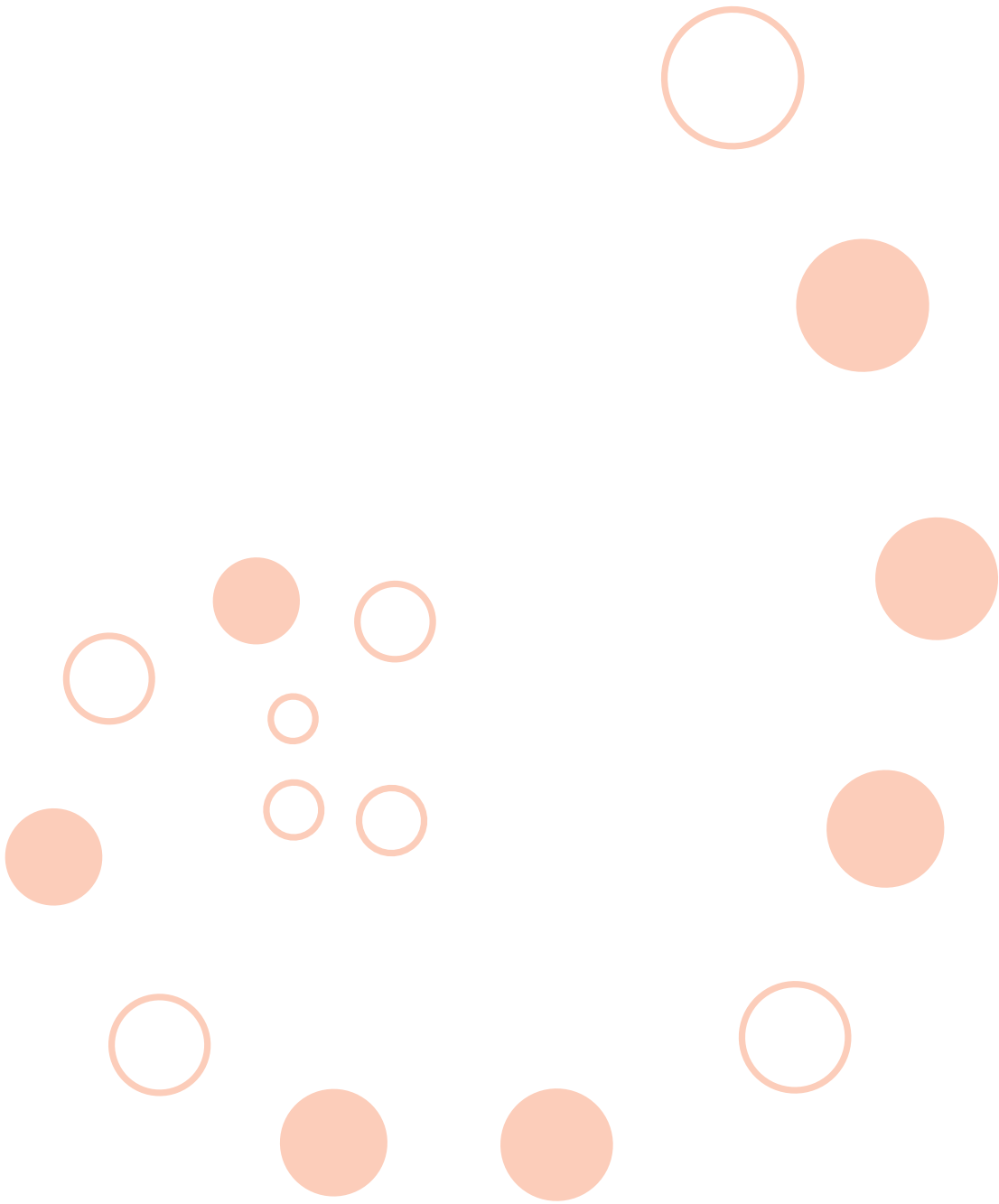
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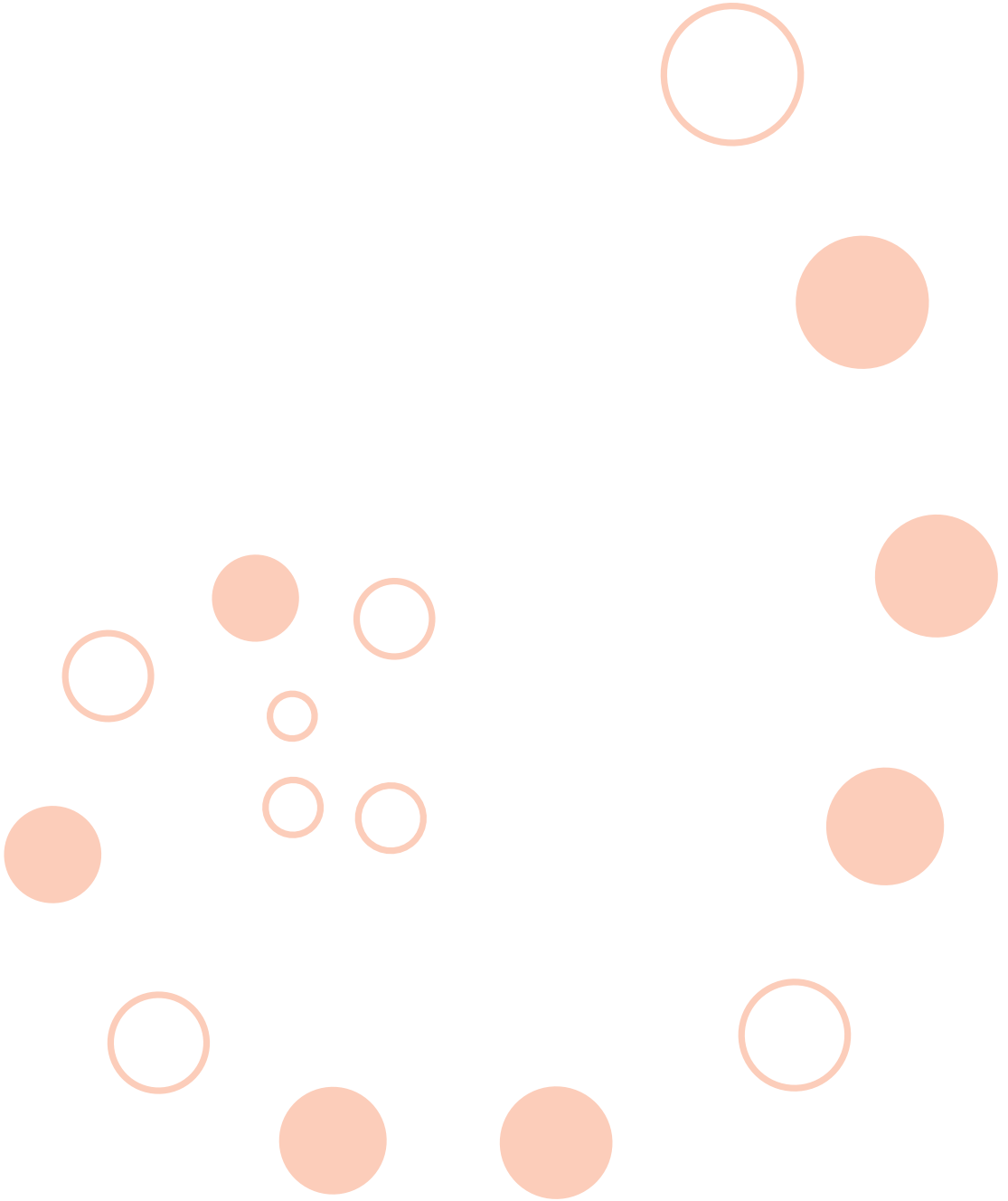
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1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a study on the school staff foreign mobility projects funded under the Erasmus+ programme in Poland. The research was carried out by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, which acts as the Erasmus+ Polish National Agency. Our study was launched in 2016 and it concerned schools that have completed projects approved under the first call for mobility project proposals. The results of surveys, focus group interviews and case studies conducted at that time were published in the report entitled "Mobile teachers change their schools"¹. Two years after the completion of the first phase of the study, we had an opportunity to return to the same schools to find out if the project outcomes were sustainable and useful for the work of teachers and for their schools. Although this report comprises a summary of the two stages of the study, due to the objectives and methodology, we have paid much more attention to the more recent results and we have treated the first research phase as a reference for interpretation of our general findings.

The main idea for the study stemmed mainly from the change in the nature of funding the school staff mobility projects in the current EU financial perspective (2014–2020). Before 2014, the mobility offer was addressed to teachers who applied for the funds on their own. According to current programme rules, only the education institutions can apply for the school staff mobility projects. Therefore, potential institutional benefits that schools can derive from individual mobility form the crucial aspect of project assessment. The study had a longitudinal character and took into account the time that passed from the return of teachers from mobility abroad. In accordance with the rules of the Erasmus+ programme, the teachers' international experience should increase their competences aiming to improve the quality of schools' performance. Therefore, the analysis of project outcomes concerned mainly those, which should have any sustainable institutional impact on their schools.

The main questions we tried to answer concerned the impact of individual teaching staff mobility on the sending schools. We tried to find whether the results of teachers' mobility experience stand a chance of being widely used in

1. Pachocki, M. (2016), *Mobile teachers change their schools. Impact study of Erasmus+ mobility projects for school education staff. Polish national report*, Warsaw: Foundation for the Development of the Education System, czytelnia.frse.org.pl/mobile-teachers-change-their-schools.

schools? And, does such experience contribute to permanent changes, which are significant for further functioning of those schools? Nevertheless, this report also focuses on how mobility can positively affect the individual professional competences, foreign language skills and changes in teachers' attitudes, especially as to the use of new teaching methods acquired abroad. The report also discusses problems related to changes in the organisational structure of schools, including changes in the organisation of teaching staff's work. A significant part of information about the effects of mobility also concerns the impact these changes have on the climate and institutional environment of educational institutions.

The report also attempts to identify the factors that can determine the success of a mobility experience from the perspective of improving the quality of work at the sending institution. A natural consequence of the analysis carried out in this respect are recommendations, which may help schools to better and more effectively plan mobilities and to develop a broader strategy of internationalisation thanks to the implementation of subsequent mobility programmes co-financed not only under the Erasmus+ programme, but also as part of other programmes addressed to Polish educational institutions.

Programme context

In accordance with the principles of Erasmus+, educational mobilities for school education staff are to support international mobility of people employed in educational institutions and primarily aim to:

- foster the acquisition of new competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes), both for participants' personal development and in order to boost their employability;
- support continuing professional development of education staff to foster greater innovation and improve the quality of teaching;
- promote more efficient use of foreign languages by teaching staff;
- increase knowledge of other countries and cultures thanks to international networking;
- promote greater internationalisation of educational institutions in order to make their offer more attractive and more responsive to the needs of the learners;
- strengthen synergies and facilitate transitions between formal education, non-formal education, vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship;
- ensure the recognition of competences acquired during study abroad.

In Poland, any general, vocational or technical education institution operating at any level, from preschool to upper secondary school, can apply for the mobility project. The maximum project duration is one or two years, but the teachers' stays in one of the countries supported by the programme may vary from two days to two months and a given institution can submit only one application in each competition year. As a general rule, projects examined in the study cover one or more of the following activities:

- teaching assignments (teaching in partner schools abroad);
- professional development courses (participation in organised activities or training abroad);
- gaining practical educational experience (participation in *job shadowing* activities and observation periods abroad in a partner school or other institution operating in the school education sector).

A mobility project should involve at least two institutions from different Erasmus+ countries, including one applicant institution and one host institution at minimum. An applicant is responsible for submitting a mobility project proposal, signing and managing the grant agreement, and reporting. It is also a sending organisation who is responsible for selecting teachers and other staff involved in school education and sending them abroad. A host organisation is a course provider, partner school or other competent organisation responsible for hosting the participants and offering them the programme of activities.

The Erasmus+ mobility offer for school teachers is a continuation of financial support for individual teachers' mobilities, which the European Commission provided under the previous financial programmes (including the SOCRATES and Lifelong Learning Programme). However, contrary to the guidelines for previous financial instruments, Erasmus+ staff mobility funding mechanism does not support project proposals submitted by individual participants. Only schools or consortia formed by various educational institutions can apply for funding for teacher mobility projects. A clear and reliable description of the school's internationalisation strategy, including a detailed European Development Plan (EDP) should form an important element of the proposal. EDP should describe how the proposed mobility project responds to the needs of the institution and how knowledge acquired by the teachers can contribute to improving the performance of their home institution. It should be added that the change in the Erasmus+ programme rules also affects the significant increase in the amount of grants that particular schools are awarded under the programme. While in the previous financial perspective the support was provided to individuals, in the current programme one institution can receive a grant to send abroad a large number of participants. Therefore, the willingness to examine the institutional

impact of projects, and in particular its effectiveness, sustainability and possible benefits for the schools, is also the natural consequence of the current EU strategic approach towards the financial support of the school staff mobility.

Transnational research background

The Polish study formed part of transnational research project initiated by the Lithuanian Erasmus+ National Agency². The common methodology was applied in all surveyed countries, which entailed the use of similar research tools (surveys, focus group interviews and case studies of good practice examples).

Table 1. Response rate in partner countries (number of respondents by target group)

		Project participants	Non-mobile teachers	Students	Parents	Total
Estonia	2016	112	175	466	222	975
	2018	92	-	-	-	
Finland	2016	127	123	150	109	509
	2018	121	-	-	-	
Lithuania	2016	218	283	549	231	1281
	2018	235	-	-	-	
Germany*	2016	376	-	-	-	376
	2018	-	-	-	-	
Poland	2016	350	412	596	429	1787
	2018	156	-	-	-	
Total	2016	1183	993	1761	991	4928
	2018	604	-	-	-	

* Data collected at this stage in Germany related only to questionnaires completed by mobility participants. The German partner did not participate in the second phase of the study.

The research first phase involved the Erasmus+ National Agencies from Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Poland and Germany (which took part only in the quantitative study). In 2018, the next phase of the survey was carried out in the same countries, with the exception of Germany. Both stages of the study were

2. Švietimo mainų paramos fondas (abbr. SMPF, Eng. Education Exchanges Support Foundation)

summarised in the form of national reports and in a joint transnational reports, which was the responsibility of Lithuanian leading experts³.

Table 2. Qualitative research sample in all participating countries

		Estonia**	Finland	Lithuania	Germany***	Poland****
FGI*	2016	School leaders (6 x 8 persons) Mobility participants (1 x 4 persons)	Management staff (2 x 5 persons) Mobility participants (1 x 8 persons)	Management staff (2 x 7 persons) Mobility participants (2 x 12 persons)	-	School leaders (1 x 12 persons, 1 x 8 persons) Mobility participants (1 x 8 persons)
	2018	Interviews were conducted as part of the case studies	School leaders (1 x 7 persons) Mobility participants (1 x 8 persons)	School leaders (1 x 13 persons) Mobility participants (1 x 15 persons)	-	School leaders (1 x 5 persons) Mobility participants (1 x 7 persons)
Case studies	2016	3 projects	3 projects	3 projects	-	3 projects
	2018	3 projects	1 project	1 project	-	1 project

* FGI – Focus Group Interview.

** In Estonia, group interviews formed a part of the case study

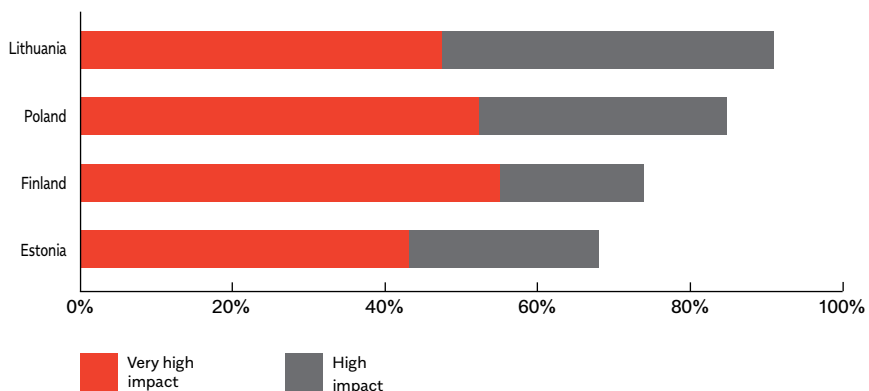
*** In Germany, qualitative study was not conducted.

**** In Poland, after the completion of the international study, one additional group interview and one case study were conducted. Although the data from these interviews could not be included in the joint international analysis, they were used to prepare this report (mainly the quotations and overall conclusions).

The survey results showed that teacher mobility had a positive impact on teachers' professional activity in all countries. More than two years after the completion of projects, the majority of international mobility participants appreciated the mobility to partner institutions and considered it as a factor affecting their professional development. The most frequently declared achievements concerned the change of attitude among the teaching teams (mainly the openness to innovations), which translated into introducing new technologies, tools and new teaching methods.

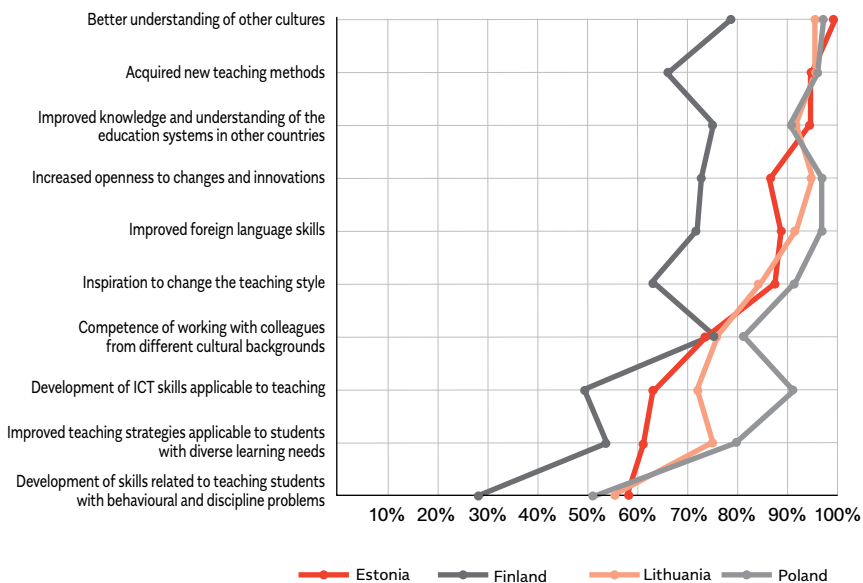
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3. The following transnational reports were worked out under this research: Balčiūnas, S., Damkuvienė, M, Valuckienė, J. (2017), *Impact and Sustainability of the Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 1 Mobility Projects for School Education Staff Research Report*, Education Exchanges Support Foundation; Balčiūnas, S., Damkuvienė, M, Valuckienė, J. (2019), *Longitudinal study on the Impact And Sustainability of the Erasmus+ Programme*, Education Exchanges Support Foundation; *Key Action 1 Mobility Projects for School Education Staff* (2019), Education Exchanges Support Foundation.

Figure 1. Overall mobility impact on further professional and personal development of participants (teachers' perception 2018)



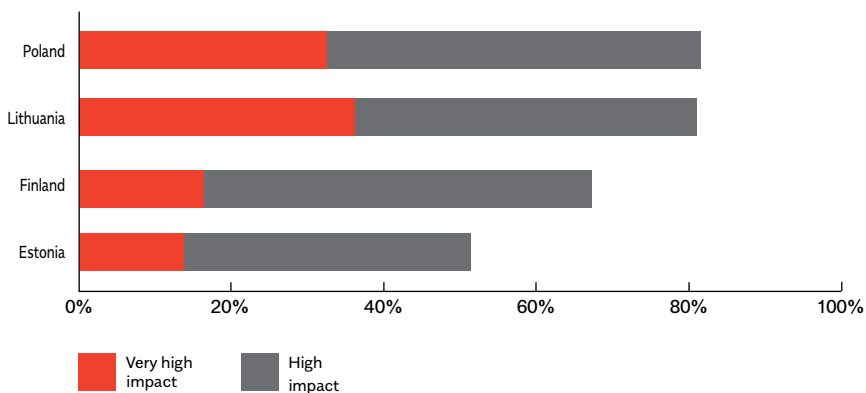
Many teachers have noticed that such a change in professional attitudes had a positive long-term impact on the interactions between teachers and students, as well as on the school's climate and culture. Another lasting change identified by the participants was an increase in self-confidence, which often stemmed from improved foreign language skills and intercultural competences, as well as from the possibility to broaden their horizons and to learn more on how the teaching in other European countries looks like. According to data, the higher self-esteem of Finnish teachers was mainly due to the feeling that Finnish education system, as compared to other European countries, was of very high quality, while for Estonian, Lithuanian and Polish teachers the mobility served as an opportunity to prove that they could cope in new conditions, and upon their return they could significantly improve the quality of their teaching and share knowledge about new ideas from abroad. The research participants also stressed that the use of new teaching methods had a positive impact on students' involvement and motivation to learn.

Figure 2. Mobility impact on individual competences of teaching staff (teachers' perception 2018)



Mobility also improved the image of schools. The participants declared their experience contributed not only to raised quality of teaching, but also to greater internationalisation, which increased the prestige of schools. Long-term effects of the projects included changes in infrastructure and new equipment, which started to appear in the institutions covered by the study

Figure 3. Overall mobility institutional impact on sending schools (teachers' perception 2018)



The survey also revealed differences in the perception of changes that should take place in schools as a result of mobility. While Polish and Lithuanian teachers postulated that projects should primarily have a long-term impact on the organisation of work of their schools, teachers from Estonia and Finland often stressed that it was more important to consolidate existing good practices than to implement any radical changes in curricula, teaching or in the organisation of the schools' work.

2. Research methodology

According to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, sustainability of outcomes is the capacity of to continue and to use the achieved results after the project completion. This means that the sustainable results should be exploited in the longer-term perspective⁴. To achieve the sustainable outcomes, the mobility projects should be designed and implemented in such a way that sustainable change can be achieved by further exploitation of the results at the sending institutions. Therefore, the main objective of the study was to measure long-term impact of teachers' mobility on the entire school, as well as to determine factors that make projects sustainable after the completion of mobility.

The study was carried out in two phases. In 2016, a quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted in schools that took part in the first call for proposals concerning school education staff mobility. Projects that had already been completed, and those where all planned mobilities had already taken place, were selected for the study. Two years later, we returned to the same schools to check the extent to which the effects of mobilities turned out to be lasting and contributed to institutional development of educational institutions.

The objective of quantitative approach was to assess the sustainability of the outputs two years after the end of the projects. The aim of the qualitative approach was to find evidence of changes that had taken place as a result of mobility, to identify factors that determined the success of a project and to verify if the sending institution fostered broad impact of the project and sustainability of its outputs.

Research questions

The most important questions that the results of the study were intended to answer were the specific long-term effects of mobilities and benefits of international experiences of school education staff for the institutions. The analysis of these benefits was also intended to show whether the change in the strategic approach to staff mobility as part of Erasmus+ (projects implemented as a result of institutional plans of schools and not as a result of individual

4. See: *Erasmus+ Programme Guide, Version 1*(2019): 24.10.2018, European Commission Directorate General Education & Culture (DG EAC), Brussels 2018 , p. 314.

decisions taken by mobility participants) entails specific benefits that can be considered as a significant advantage of the change in the programme principles.

The first phase of the study conducted in 2016 focused on the impact and potential sustainability of mobility outcomes directly after project completion. At that phase, the focus was on new competences acquired by mobility participants and changes taking place in schools, which had been noticed not only by mobile teachers but also by other staff members, school heads, students and their parents.

In the next phase of the study, our attention was paid to long-term impact of mobility. The task of project participants and educational institution leaders was primarily to help to determine the extent to which the effects of mobility could be considered sustainable, the level of their exploitation in their schools, and how they could be translated into further development of the institutions. This means that the next phase of the study focused more on the results achieved at institutional level than on individual benefits derived by mobility participants. Considering the institutional dimension of project outcomes, the potential for changes taking place within schools, with particular emphasis on the impact of teachers' international experience on such aspects as the climate and institutional environment of the school, also formed important aspects of research.

Research tools

The quantitative study was conducted on line. In the first phase, the questionnaire was addressed to four groups of respondents:

- teaching staff who had participated in mobilities organised as part of analysed projects;
- other teachers employed in educational institutions who did not participate in mobilities organised as part of analysed projects;
- students (aged 15 and more) who attended lessons taught by mobile teachers;
- parents (or legal guardians) of students attending a given educational institution who were actively involved in the school life on a daily basis.

The questionnaires were translated into Polish and adjusted to the national context. Links to the questionnaires for all four target groups were emailed to contact persons in individual schools. The National Agency received a total of 1787 completed questionnaires, out of which 30% were completed by the students. The questionnaires were delivered to respondents via an on-line survey tool (active links to questionnaires were e-mailed to each target group).

In the next phase of the survey, the questionnaire was addressed only to former participants of mobilities. As before, links to the questionnaire (available in the same on-line survey tool) were e-mailed to schools (to the addresses of front offices and project coordinators) with a request to make them available to all participants of the previous phase of the survey. Finally, 156 respondents took part in the survey, which means that we managed to reach more than 44% of the teachers from the original target group. According to information obtained from school representatives, the decrease in the number of respondents in comparison to the previous stage of the questionnaire survey was mainly due to personnel changes in schools (change of place of employment, maternity and parental leaves, etc.)

Table 3. Number of respondents with fully completed questionnaires (by target groups)

	Mobility participants		Non-mobile teachers		Students		Parents	
	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
Number of respondents	350	156	412	-	596	-	429	-
Response rate	19.6%	44.6%	23%	-	33.4%	-	24%	-

The qualitative study involved a method of focus group interviews (FGI) and analysis of case studies featuring good practices. Representatives of school leaders and participants of mobility projects involving *job shadowing* component were invited to attend focus group interviews. A total of 25 representatives of schools participated in the first phase of the study involving two interviews with school leaders and one interview with former mobility participants. 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. In the second phase of the study, interviews were held in the same locations. Just as in the case of the survey questionnaire, the aim was to organise meetings with the same participants, which was not always possible, mainly due to personnel shifts in the surveyed institutions.

Table 4. Number of interviews in both qualitative research phases

	FGI (school leaders and project coordinators)		FGI (mobility participants)	Case studies (schools)	Case studies (consortium)
2016	2		1	2	1
2018	1 FGI*	1 IDI**	1	1	1

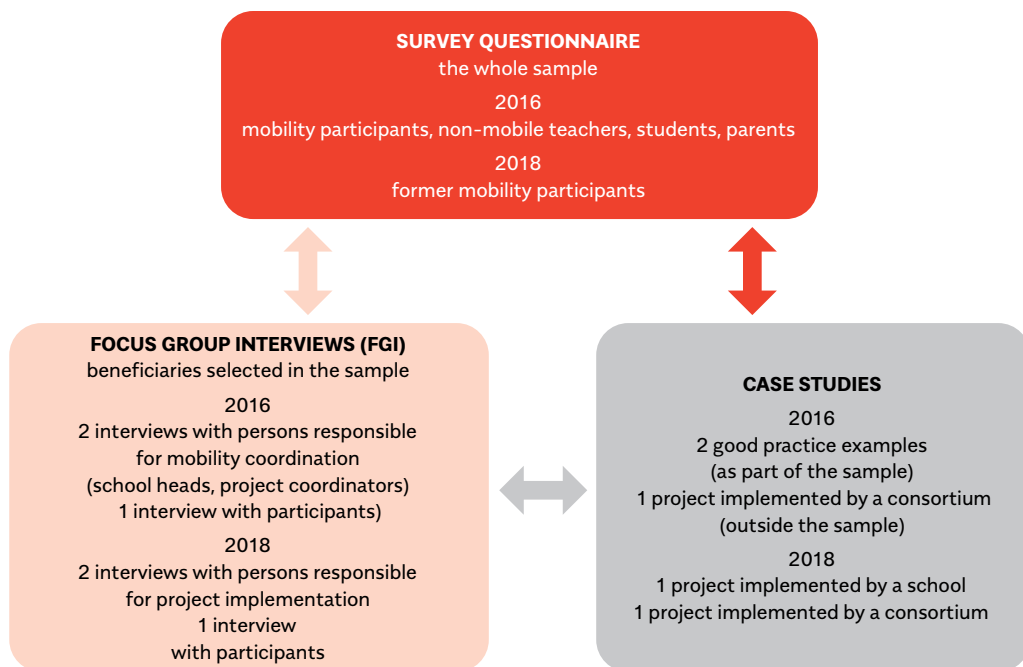
* FGI – Focus Group Interview.

** IDI – Individual In-depth Interview. Due to non-availability of participants, one of the planned FGIs at the second phase was conducted as an in-depth interview.

The last phase of qualitative study was the analysis of case studies of good practice examples. The aim was to identify the strengths of mobility at institutional level, possible problems that could hinder the project implementation, and the ways in which individual institutions dealt with such difficulties. The survey took form of in-depth and focus group interviews with representatives of applying institutions, project coordinators, mobility participants and non-mobile teaching staff. In the first phase of the research, two examples of good practice projects implemented by schools and one project coordinated by a consortium of educational institutions were examined. The latter project was also the only exception, as the activities taken within the project co-financed in 2015 were examined (this stemmed from to the lack of possibility for consortia to submit applications in the first call for proposals). In the next phase of research, we returned to the two projects, including one implemented by a consortium. The case studies were carried out in the schools. Each interview was digitally recorded and the recordings were fully transcribed.

All the quotations in this report illustrate the second phase of qualitative research. It should be also noted that the quotes have been edited (mainly in order to eliminate respondents' interjections, digressions, unfinished thoughts and colloquial language) and abridged (this refers to respondents' long utterances covering a number of topics).

Figure 4. Research activities during both phases of the study



Sample

The quantitative research sample during both phases was selected on the basis of all mobility projects for school education staff awarded under the first call for proposals within the Erasmus+ programme. The analysis was conducted ex-post and therefore in the first place the study focused on closed projects (complex final reports on all mobilities were submitted and settled), completed projects (complex final reports on all mobilities were submitted) and unfinished projects with all mobilities completed (complex final reports were not submitted).

As the analysis was to focus on the institutional benefits of staff mobility, it did not include projects with just one participant. All preschools were also excluded from the analysis to make sure that the study focused only on primary and secondary schools. However, primary schools with nursery units were taken into consideration, as they provide instruction also to primary school learners.

As a result, 46 projects, which agreed to participation in this research following notification by post and email were selected for the research sample. Finally, respondents from 44 schools took part in the survey, this is why in the next

phase of the survey the invitation to participate was sent only to these schools (34 schools took part in the second phase of the survey).

Schools from which respondents were selected for focus group interviews in both phases of the study were chosen from the same pool of projects as in the case of the quantitative study. On the basis of data on all school locations in the sample, three interview locations were selected in different Polish cities, and then invitations to participate in interviews were sent to those institutions for whose representatives it was possible to travel to a given place with taking distance and logistical issues into consideration. Having confirmed their willingness to participate, each of invited schools delegated respondents who took part in the next phase of the survey.

Case study projects were selected on the basis of qualitative assessment of completed activities. In the case of not yet completed projects carried out by consortia, the ones with the highest number of completed mobilities were selected. The 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.

Research Ethics

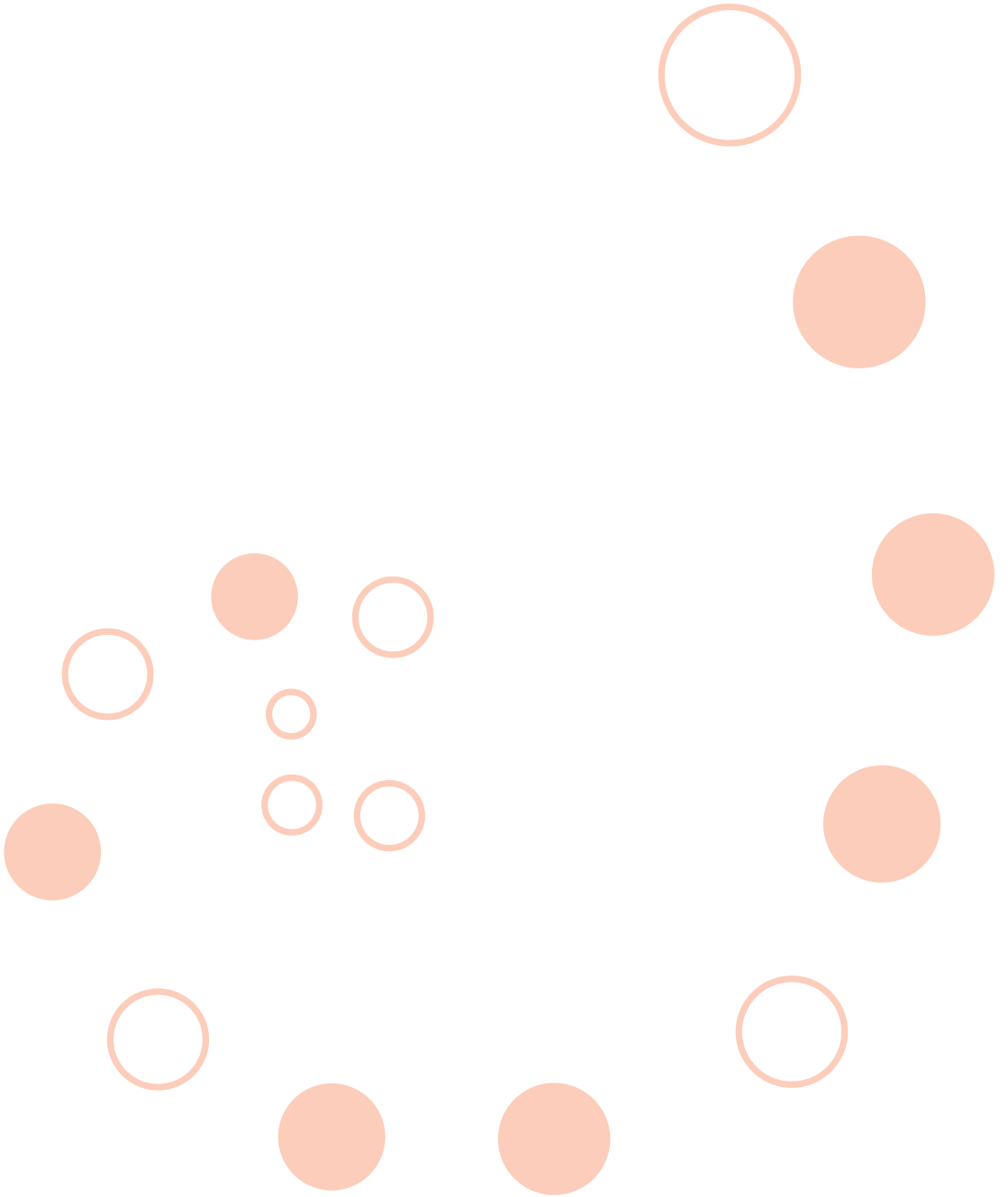
In order to ensure quality in the process of data acquisition within the study, all research activities carried out were based on anonymous responses. Therefore, this report does not contain any detailed data concerning the sample drawn to fill in the questionnaires or any information about institutions implementing projects selected for the qualitative research. Survey respondents were not asked to provide personal or contact data or any other information that would allow for identifying their home schools. A similar approach was used when conducting interviews and case studies, therefore no data concerning either the participating institutions or our interviewees are featured in the publication. However, if interviewees provided information that allowed for identifying a given school or person, such data has been anonymised.

Limitations

The most important constraint for the second stage of the survey was the lack of access to all participants who took part in the first stage of the survey. This barrier stemmed from various obstacles, including changes in school management, structural changes in institutions (e.g. school closures or mergers), permanent or temporary personnel shifts (e.g. maternity leave, sick leave and other circumstances beyond the control of researchers, respondents or sending schools). The situation was even more difficult when these obstacles concerned

not only former participants, but also project coordinators (which was also the case in some sending institutions).

The significant limitation in interpretation of research results also stems from adopted methodology, the results of which are based on the declarations and perception of research participants. This is particularly important for the analysis of qualitative data obtained in longitudinal studies, where it is difficult to avoid certain bias related to the flow of time passed from the initial intervention. Therefore, in the case of data obtained from interviews, their interpretation may also be affected by issues such as selective memory of participants, attribution error, telescopic effect, and finally over-interpretation. Although it is difficult to avoid such limitations when conducting research of this nature, the method used to minimise difficulties related to the interpretation of results consisted in the use data triangulation (using data from interviews and questionnaire research and cross-checking with contextual data), as well as the use of observation techniques when conducting case studies.



3. Development of schools

This chapter presents the main outcomes of mobility, with a special focus on mobility outcomes that related to institutional development of sending schools. This resulted from general objectives of the Erasmus+ programme, according to which the development of sending schools should form an important priority accompanying the support for the mobility of school education staff, and the benefits of mobilities should not apply to outgoing teachers alone. As this report mainly presents the results of the second phase of the survey⁵, the presented results first of all concern the outputs, which proved sustainable and significant in the wider context of the operation of analysed schools. Although the data collected in the first phase of research activity served primarily as contextual data, the comparison of the results of the two phases of the study helps to better illustrate the long-term impact of mobility on the sending organisation, its teachers and the school community as a whole.

Change in attitudes

Participation in training abroad had a significant impact on the changes in teachers' professional attitudes, especially if their international experience contributed to a greater openness of schools to learning about other cultures and contexts of education. Participants in the first phase of the survey often declared that the trips offered an opportunity to experience a different approach to education, which allowed them to look at Polish schools from a completely different perspective. Many participants noted that mobility had a major impact on the change in professional attitudes and habits related to their daily teaching. It often turned out that the changes described above also related to their own approach to duties performed. One of significant benefits of mobility was an increase in motivation to continue working with students.

The second phase of the survey confirmed the declarations made earlier. Questionnaire respondents were asked about the impact of mobility on the overall development of their schools and their professional growth. The distribution of responses was quite similar, both in terms of benefits for individuals and for institutions. More than 75% of respondents declared that the impact of international training on their professional development and the

5. The results of the first phase of the survey are presented in more detail in: Pachocki 2016.

development of their schools was large, and more than one third of teachers stated that mobility had greatly contributed to further development of both schools and project participants.

Figure 5. Mobility impact on schools and individuals, N = 156 (2018)

How would you describe the impact of Erasmus+ mobility projects on:

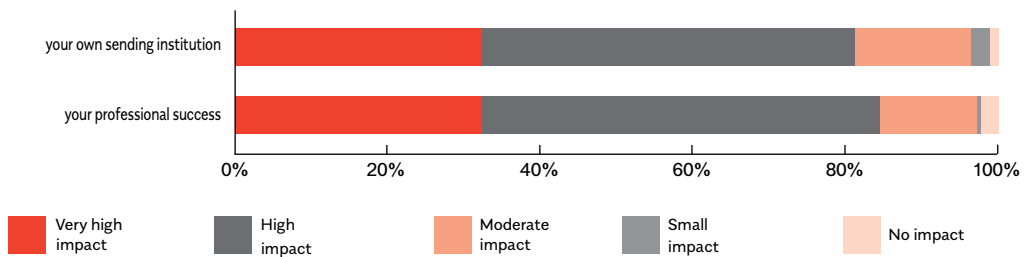
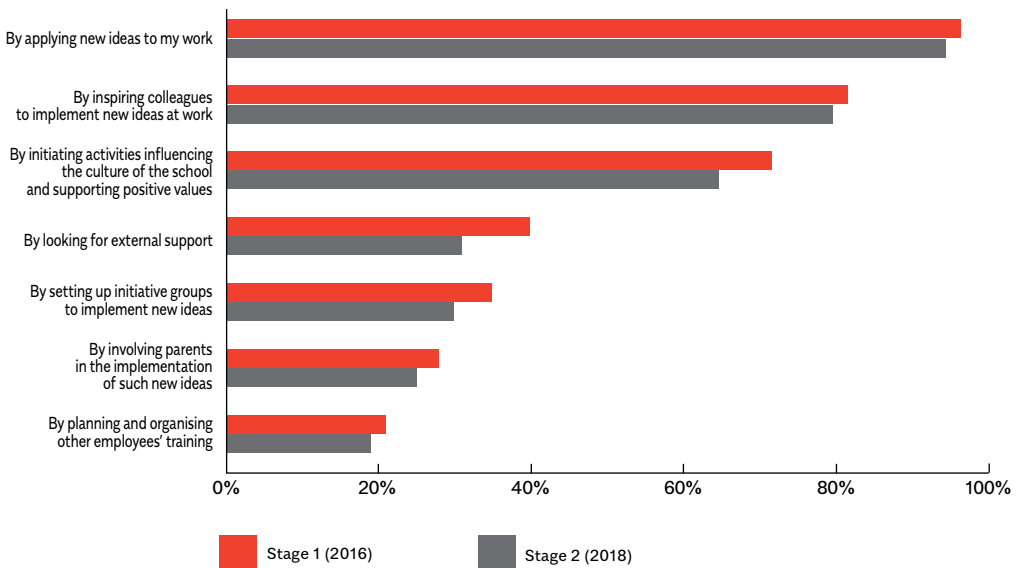


Figure 6. Further use of mobility results, N = 350 (2016) N = 156 (2018)

How do you implement ideas generated during mobility projects?
(the figure represents the percentage of respondents who agreed with given statements)



The changes that took place in schools often concerned so called soft project results. The interviewees drew attention, among others, to the change

of mentality of teaching staff, which had a direct impact on the greater openness of teachers to new methods of working with students. They pointed out to a significant interdependence between personal development, increase of professional competences and activities aimed at further development of professional competences.



We have learned a lot and implemented as many innovations as we could. We are continuing to do so as far as it is possible. What matters most are the things that stayed in our minds, which have a huge impact on the quality of work in our school. Thanks to cooperation and commitment, the world before us is wide open. [...] We do what we can – maybe not everything is possible – but I think we are trying our best.



This project has been an eye-opener for us.



Change in the world view of teachers forms the basis for taking any action. If this proves successful, it will definitely improve the quality of our organisation's work. Erasmus+ contributes greatly to these changes. It promotes personal development of teachers and changes their outlook on life. To me, the programme was a starting point for numerous changes. For several years, I have been learning English, implementing new methods of work, and I am often inspired by European school education systems. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the programme. It was a great experience.

In the opinion of participants in both phases of the survey, the fact that they managed and coped in new conditions during their stay abroad (more than two thirds of mobility participants in the first phase of the survey had no previous experience with mobility projects) also contributed to the change in the attitudes of teachers. It should be taken into account that the experience of observing work in partner institutions led to further participation of teachers in training and continuous development of schools as institutions. Mobility experience inspired the majority of survey respondents to develop, take up postgraduate studies and face new professional challenges.

Most of us are continually developing. We are semi-specialist teachers. I teach entrepreneurship and business activity, transport and logistics, economics and computer science. Kids see me reading books and learning new things all the time. This makes them realise that learning is important and useful.

Mobility triggers openness and new energy. You can use it to develop personally or to take up a new course of study. Some mobile teachers have become involved in school's life. We've become more modern.



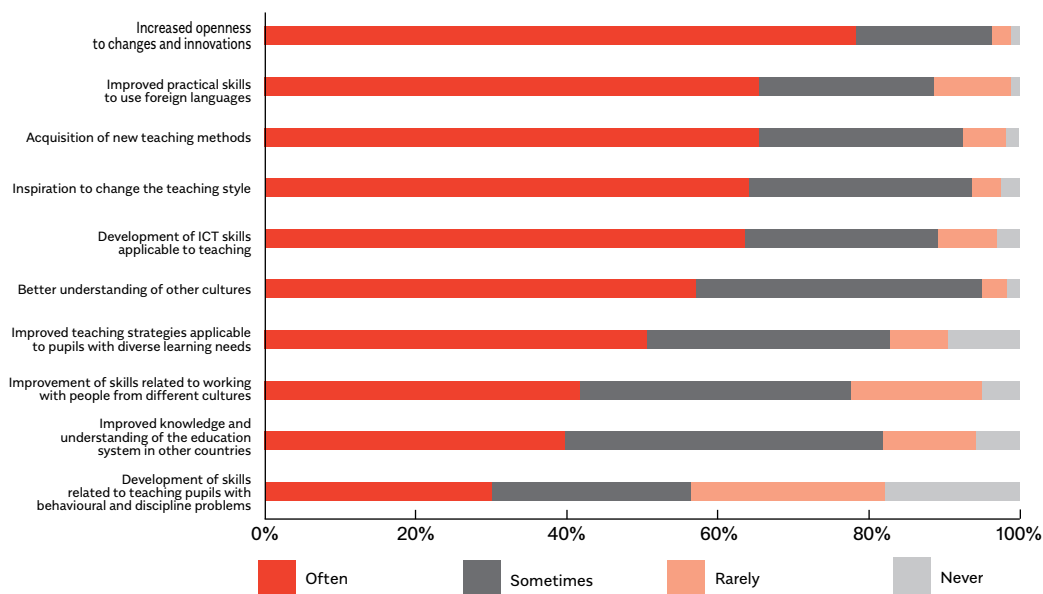
Over the four years, we have continued our activities and started to develop and implement projects for students. Thanks to project activities teachers and students have grown considerably - at least one third of our teachers have taken up different courses and become aware of the importance of language skills and professional development.

Strengthening the teaching teams

The changes that took place in institutions after the end of mobilities also involved greater openness of teaching staff to new solutions concerning education process and methods, in which institutions are managed. Nearly two-third of respondents confirmed that they were using new teaching methods in their work, especially those related to foreign languages (65%) and digital technology (63%). Many respondents used in their work new competences related to learning about other cultures (57%) and the ability to work with people with different cultural backgrounds (41%).

Figure 7. Frequency of using newly acquired competences in teachers' everyday work, N = 156 (2018)

How often do you use skills acquired during mobility in your everyday work at school?

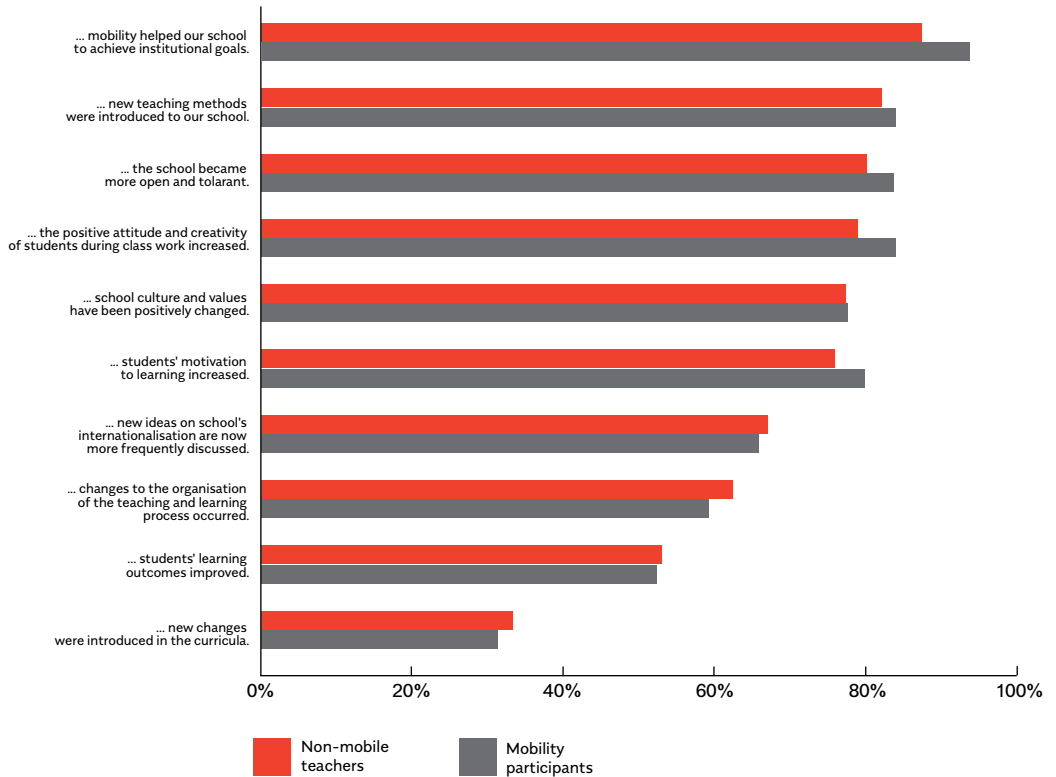


Over the time passed since the end of the projects, not only mobility participants, but also non-mobile teachers started to use new working methods and tools discovered at partner institutions abroad. The data collected during the first phase of the quantitative study made it possible to compare the benefits of

mobility for schools in the opinion of mobile and non-mobile teachers. The survey showed that the assessment of benefits is similar among respondents from both groups, which can mean that changes in schools went beyond the sphere of competences of individual mobility participants.

Figure 8. Perception of mobility institutional benefits by the schools, summary of responses of mobility participants N = 350 and non-mobile teachers N = 400 (2016)

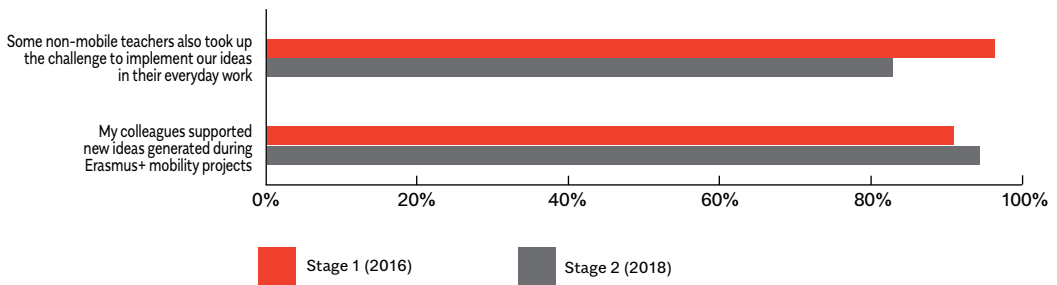
Do you agree that:
(the percentage of respondents who agreed with given statements)



The results of the first phase of study also showed that the joint participation in the project had a positive impact on the integration of schools' teaching staff. It was often stressed that this impact also extended to people who did not personally participate in mobilities. The joint activity and involvement also formed a good opportunity to acquire team work skills. The comparison of the results of the two phases of the questionnaire survey shows that a large percentage of mobility participants declared the involvement of other teachers in the process

of changes taking place in schools as a result of the project. It should be added that two years after the end of the first phase of the survey, almost 95% of respondents confirmed that their colleagues supported new ideas proposed after their return from mobility (less than 90% in the first phase of the survey). On the other hand, the percentage of former project participants claiming that non- mobile teachers also took up the challenge to implement project outcomes decreased significantly (slightly over 82% of declarations compared to over 96% in the first phase of the survey).

Figure 9. Support of teaching staff for the implementation of project outcomes, N = 350 (2016) N = 156 (2018)



To participants of interviews conducted during the second phase of the study, quality team-building opportunities offered to teachers at a given school were an important benefit resulting from mobility projects. Many presented examples related to efforts aimed to enhance cooperation by the teachers. Questionnaire respondents and interview participants declared that participation in the projects had a positive impact both on the quality of operations of institutions carrying out the projects and on the teaching staff employed there. The majority of participants in the projects were of the opinion that mobilities were beneficial for the development of the teaching staff as a whole. In many cases, participation in projects strengthened mobile teachers' identification with their sending institutions.

It naturally translates into benefits for the school. First, a group of teachers should be integrated before going abroad [...], and then this process is intensified during mobility, when the staff spends a week together experiencing various situations, not only during classes and training. Teachers often lack time to talk to one other on daily basis. After such a trip, they often come to the conclusion that someone is a really great companion, and they have never had the opportunity to spend time together before.

The experience gained abroad contributes to team-building at the school. Initially there were no volunteers to participate in the project, and now we have to select candidates. Mobility participants, especially occupational subject teachers, have transferred to the school various solutions observed abroad. We used some of them in our laboratories.

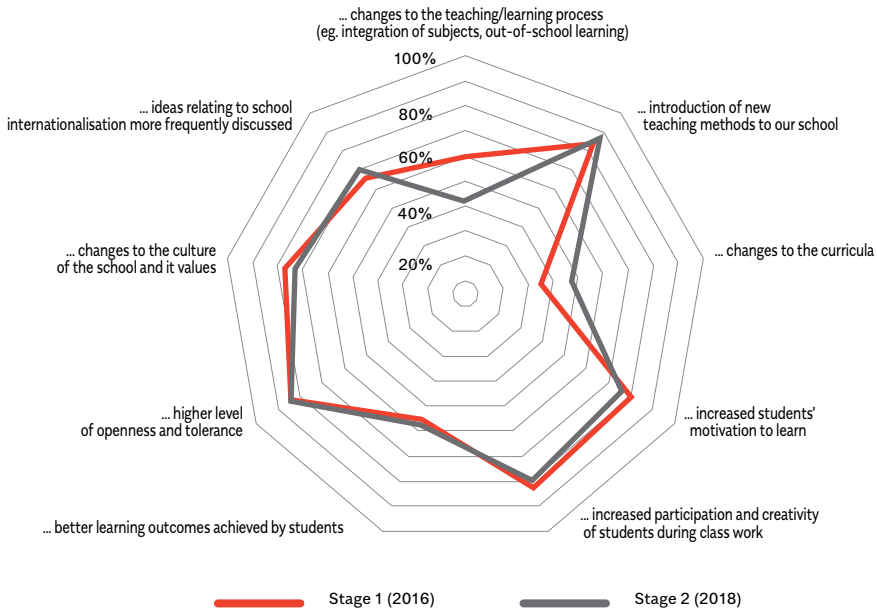
It turned out that the stay abroad was often the first opportunity for teachers to get to know their colleagues better. Unlike private companies and large corporations, schools do not organise team building events or trips that could lead to better integration of teaching staff. In fact, mobility played this role and, although it was not its main objective, the results of such integration proved to be significant for institutional development of the school.

New teaching methods

The first phase of the qualitative study showed that an important effect of mobility for teachers was frequent attempts to integrate the developed outputs of mobility projects in the teaching process. The vast majority of respondents to the questionnaire also found that mobility experiences had contributed to the introduction of new teaching methods. More than 50% of respondents also noticed changes related to the organisation of the education process. In the first phase of the survey, there were also voices concerning the need for change in the delivery of teaching postulating greater autonomy in the teaching and learning process. Among declared changes, some participants postulated these relating to the organisation of teaching (e.g. departure from a rigid lesson plan and the primacy of grading).

Figure 10. Impact of mobility on school development, N = 350 (2016) N = 156 (2018)

On completion of Erasmus+ school education mobility projects, we observe:



Respondents during both phases of the questionnaire survey were asked to indicate changes that occurred in their sending institutions after their mobility. Although the comparison of results of the two phases of the study shows little differences in declarations in the majority of the defined areas of change, in the case of changes in curricula, the level of positive declarations in 2018 has increased as compared to the results obtained in the first phase of the survey. The opposite trend is easily noticeable in terms of changes relating to the organisation of the education process. Over time, the percentage of positive statements made by participants who observed changes in schools in this respect has clearly decreased, which may indicate a larger long-term impact of projects at individual level (new teaching methods used by some teachers) than at the level of the whole school.

After the completion of the project, pedagogical innovations could be observed in our school. As a part of additional hours, we have introduced classes in European economy and culture taught in English.

Our innovations have proven their worth, as they have produced interesting results. These not only involved extracurricular activities. We have implemented a project concerning self-government. We have established cooperation with a local volunteering centre, and a school volunteer club, in which students have become very involved.

A student TV station was launched and supported by teachers who did not participate in the project. The people who did not participate in the mobility are involved in our activities, these new ideas have activated them. [...] Certainly you can't impose additional work on anyone, but they can see that others are doing something, so if they don't take action, the chance of success is slim.

The tangible results related to the improvement of quality of education mentioned by the interviewees concerned many different areas in which new teaching methods could be applied. The majority of examples referred to newly acquired methods and tools, the most common of which were the use of new technologies in teaching and the introduction of different elements of language learning in non-language subjects. They mainly have a positive effect on the increase of students' activity, motivation and their ability to focus on delivering the task. According to teachers and school heads, such changes have often contributed to better learning outcomes.

Our students have gained a lot in terms of teaching materials. Finally, we can say that some really interesting classes have been established.

Now, we teach geography in English using a travel planning application. Children can see for themselves how to gain practical knowledge and then they present the information collected in a foreign language.

Some participants of the focus group interviews also confirmed that mobility contributed directly to the change in curricula. It should be noted, however, that this was not the case for all schools in the survey and not all modifications were seen as radical changes in the curriculum. The most frequently mentioned changes concerned the introduction of some elements observed at partner institutions, including the introduction of CLIL⁶ methodology, increasing the role of non-formal education (e.g. through the introduction of international volunteering projects).

6. Content and Language Integrated Learning e.g. by introducing foreign language materials related to a given field of knowledge. The CLIL methodology is promoted by the European Commission as an effective form of language teaching.

We have also created a pedagogical innovation aimed to introduce volunteering as a teaching process. We cooperate with one of the charities in our region. People from all over the world come here to help those in need. They help people renovate their homes, repair their equipment. [...] And our children help them raise funds to buy paint and brushes. Every time a group of people coming from all over the world comes to visit us. We have had visitors from America, and recently Canadians have visited us.

Within the framework of the project, biology teachers gained competences in teaching their subject in English. Then, we applied a pedagogical innovation and now biology and natural science lessons at our school are partly taught in English. This has contributed greatly to better results in the examination in English taken upon the completion of lower secondary school.

Participants in interviews conducted during the second phase of the survey often declared that their participation in mobility served as an inspiration to use digital technologies in teaching. Although in 2016 many of them stressed that they treated it as a novelty that could lead to greater student involvement in learning, the next phase of the survey showed that such solutions have become a standard in many schools and that many of the results of ICT projects are still being used in class.

We have introduced new and interesting solutions, such as virtual classrooms and using computer applications and programmes in teaching. Many of the tools that we use are basic, but they were a novelty for us. Now such innovations are a standard to us.

A lot has changed in our school over the past four years. Four out of eight classrooms have been equipped with interactive whiteboards, which is an excellent result for a rural school. There's a laptop in every classroom. In addition, we have managed to hire teacher assistants and assistant teachers. When we applied for funding in 2014, I had no idea that we would be able to achieve so many of our project objectives.

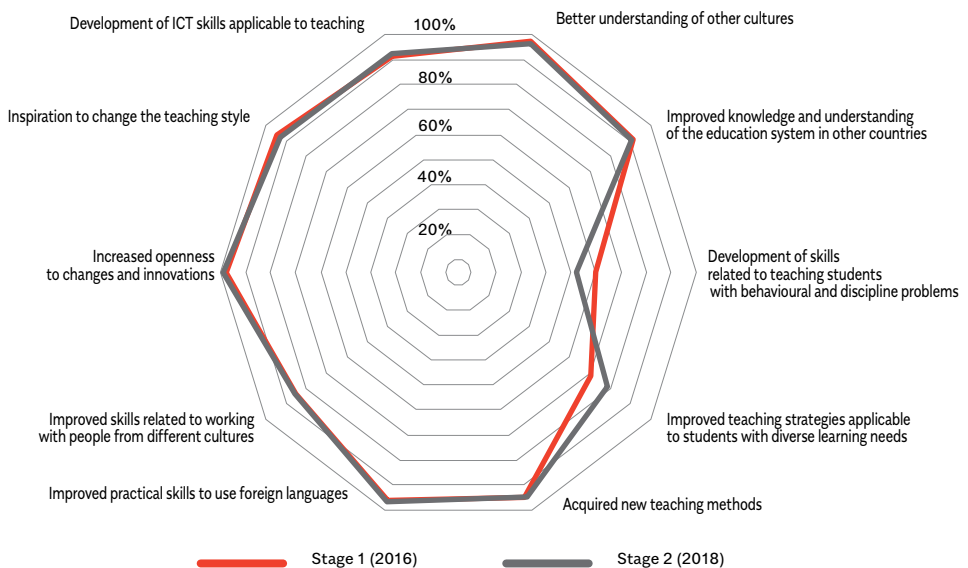
Improved foreign languages skills

Talking about important benefits of participation in training abroad, survey participants most frequently indicated the opportunity to learn languages. During the first phase of the study, former mobility participants often admitted that language teaching in Polish schools was mainly focused on learning grammatical structures and rules, which does not necessarily mean the acquisition and development of communication skills in a foreign language. Contact with foreigners proved that skills gained during preparatory courses were instrumental in problem-free communication despite errors and limited vocabulary. It was

frequently the case that such shortcomings did not pose a major communication problem, which helped to overcome not only timidity but also language barriers. Therefore, the added value here is that teachers were not only encouraged to intensify the use of languages when communicating with their foreign partners, but also in other day-to-day situations which they faced abroad.

Figure 11. Mobility impact on individual skills, N = 350 (2016) N = 156 (2018)

The figure represents the percentage of respondents who agreed with the given statements



The survey questionnaire also asked former mobility participants about the usefulness of new competences gained during their mobility projects abroad. The results showed that the highest percentage of responses focused on exploring other cultures and improving language skills. A comparison of data collected during both phases of the study shows that the level of positive responses covering those aspects remained just as high two years after the end of the first survey. In the first phase of the survey, over 95% respondents confirmed that participation in mobility contributed to improved language skills and over 50% of teachers said they improved their language competences to a very high degree. In 2018, the percentage of former participants reporting improved language skills thanks to mobilities was over 97%. More importantly, similar responses were also given by interviewees.

Qualitative research participants also gave examples of modified curricula, mainly in the scope of initiating the provision of other subjects in a foreign language. A large number of those respondents noticed that the more teachers were involved in mobilities and the more satisfaction they drew from them, more benefits were brought to students, as teachers were more willing to use new methods 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. Some respondents said they did not have enough methodology-related experience to work with pupils while using a foreign language. That is where knowing techniques and methods used by teachers from partner countries proves helpful. Participation in international mobility may significantly improve teaching methods, thus stimulating pupils' interest in a subject. Participation in such projects often encourages teachers (not only those teaching languages) to introduce new vocabulary and provide part of classes in a foreign language. Teachers also say that this also has greatly changed the attitude of their students. They have now realised that it is really important to learn foreign languages and not to be afraid of putting that skill to practical use.



We should introduce CLIL elements and implement methodology-related solutions discussed during training. We ought to show our students that we carry on learning languages and provide them with opportunities of international meetings.

Those projects also contributed to introducing other - and often extraordinary - forms of teaching foreign languages. These new methods helped students gain confidence in using their language skills and proved that classes could be provided in a more interesting way. Teachers say that this encourages students to increase their active participation and involvement in the life of their school. Significantly, these benefits were enjoyed not only by mobility participants. Participation in mobility visibly influenced the school community by contributing to an increased interest in languages in the school community (both among teachers and students), increased significance of language skills (especially among older teachers) and improved communication competences (breaking language barriers). Changes in attitudes to teaching often resulted from the fact of acquiring new language skills by teachers. In the opinion of interviewees, school education staff mobilities also provided lots of opportunities to improve language teaching competences.

Teachers participating in that project did not speak English, but this will change during the next mobility project [...]. We could feel that there was a language barrier, therefore it was

difficult to fully benefit from that mobility. We now know that language classes should be provided by native speakers.

Introducing regular language classes for our teachers would be a thing worth doing. And although it would be a great idea, there is a financial barrier. That is why providing such classes in each school is impossible.



It is necessary to motivate co-workers to get language certificates, continue cooperation with international partners and develop bilingual instruction.

Increased schools' internationalisation

In the first phase of the survey respondents often said they would be willing to participate in another mobility project if only they were provided with such an opportunity. The second phase of the survey confirmed Polish teachers' willingness to participate in another international mobility project. This was particularly applicable to respondents asked to indicate the most relevant activities contributing to further institutional development in schools after project completion. A great majority said that the best way would be to continue similar projects. Respondents were of the opinion that teachers should be provided with opportunities to participate in further projects and gain new knowledge during international mobility and visits to educational institutions in other European countries. Teachers stress that international mobility is still an attractive and effective form of competence development, which is why those who have not participated in such projects so far should be encouraged to get involved.



Teachers should continue their regular participation in more mobility projects and strive to improve their qualifications in line with the needs of their pupils and school.



It is necessary to provide language classes to teachers of subjects other than English – the language is a gateway to thematic and methodology training and facilitates contact with teachers from all over the world.

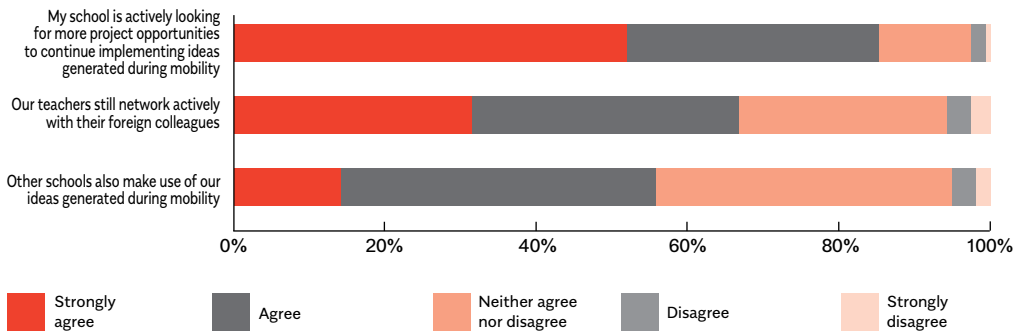


We have to look for new project opportunities to carry on the implementation of ideas generated thanks to mobility and develop existing links to exchange experience, but above all - arouse enthusiasm indispensable for continuing and developing activities. (for example, by motivating school leaders or contact with participants in other projects).

Survey participants claimed that the school internationalisation was one of the most important long-term benefits of mobility. Thanks to teaching staff members' international experience, schools can develop and acquire new contacts abroad, which contributes to the establishment of new partnerships with educational institutions throughout Europe. Awareness of benefits stemming from international cooperation is therefore raised among other school employees, students, parents and other institutions cooperating with schools. The vast majority of respondents also confirmed that their schools were active in searching sources of funds for their new international projects and over 50% of teachers said that their schools were active in international networking with foreign partners.

Figure 12. Mobility impact on further international activities, N = 156 (2018)

Do you agree with the given statements?



Owing to mobility and new projects, Polish schools have an opportunity to discover that international cooperation is a way to improve school functioning. Some participants were of the opinion that their institution had increased their degree of internationalisation. They admitted they were more aware of how education was modernised in countries other than Poland. Therefore, their mobility was predominantly seen as a tool enabling them to draw from the best European practices, new systemic solutions and the most recent trends in education. Moreover, increased internationalisation seems to be not only a factor contributing to a school's better position on the local education market. It is also frequently seen as a factor improving teachers' and students' self-esteem. This is due to the improved perception of their school by the local community. The status of an "internationalised school" enhances its image in the community.

I think we are going in the right direction and becoming a school which can be called international. This is also due to the fact that some students who previously left for England and Germany with their parents, are now back to our school. We also have pupils who are from abroad [...].

When we ask our pupils why they decided to study here, they indicate opportunities to build new international links. They know we host pupils from other countries and that they themselves will be able to go abroad. This encourages them to choose learning in our school and even the choice of profile is not so important. This attitude is very important for us, especially in light of low birth rates.

Interviewees say that in most cases mobility was the first step towards internationalisation. On completion of their projects, those schools undertook further international activities with various partner institutions. In many cases teacher mobility also contributed to the implementation of similar projects organised with students in mind. It is worth noting that schools have started looking for sources of funding other than the Erasmus+ programme (including bilateral cooperation with the involvement of non-public sources). More importantly, many schools are interested in opportunities to use financial grants from other sources than EU funds.

We have learnt to deal with the formal side of implementing our educational projects. There are also international groups coming to us from Germany and the Netherlands as part of pupil exchange... Therefore, our pupils and teachers are able to watch all those processes [...].

It would be great to be awarded a grant for another project that we are planning for a higher number of teachers. They will be able to see at last what schools abroad look like and how they teach.

The results of our qualitative research showed that many schools made use of their new experiences by implementing more project activities. The fact that the project-based method is now more frequently used in teaching and other areas of school functioning is one of the essential outcomes of mobility. This might be due to the necessity to think in project terms when planning and implementing international mobility. Moreover, mobility (often implemented for the first time in certain schools) contributed to lodging grant applications for more projects, not only those linked to mobility. Informal activities undertaken by Polish and foreign schools are also worth mentioning. Some of those activities were part of town twinning (on behalf of partner institutions).

We are in constant touch with the organisation with which we implemented the project. Owing to mobility we established closer links with our hosts. Our teachers mainly observed the provision of classes and organisation of school work.

Together with our Italian partners we implemented a strategic partnership project. Our students developed their programming skills. As we are able to communicate with the school, we organised private pupil exchange and cooperation between our towns. The towns boast of similar Renaissance architecture and their mayors are interested in cooperation. We are considering town twinning.

School heads participating in focus research agreed that international projects might contribute to broadening the strategy of school development. In the opinion of respondents, the most frequent expectations linked to project implementation focus on internal institutional changes, pupils' learning outcomes (mainly those relating to using English) and on changes to the attitude of teachers, especially towards applying new educational methods. The prestige of schools in local and regional communities seems to be still important, but more from the perspective of attracting good students and cooperating with local governments.

The mobility project initiated more activities resulting in further cooperation with our partners. The Erasmus+ programme rules have become a standard in our school. Now that Spanish visitors are with us we know that everything should be organised in the same way as for Erasmus. These are sure-fire good practices.

Having observed the work of another institution we started looking for new teaching tools. We improved our knowledge of English, which helped us discover lots of teaching resources available online. Having implemented more projects, we bought software and now we have completed a project for pupils and bought more tablets. We are continuing more activities in the area of robotics and projects that support teacher development.

It is noteworthy that in a number of cases newly acquired experience and Erasmus+ project outcomes are used in further activities, frequently financed also by other sources. Respondents say that owing to the experiences that they acquired during their project they know what effective international cooperation should involve. This refers to such issues as the standards of foreign pupil admission, organisation of international events or such aspects as the rules of communication between foreign partner institutions.

Increased prestige and competitiveness of schools

During the first phase of the survey, almost all respondents said that their willingness to raise the prestige of their schools and improve their competitiveness against the background of the local education offer was one of the most important reasons for lodging grant applications (and one of the most essential benefits arising from the implementation of their project). In the opinion of school heads participating in the survey this was due to the fact that schools had to compete to attract new students in a period of demographic decline.

This increased competitiveness of schools was important especially to those respondents who work in institutions situated in bigger urban centres. In smaller towns applying for participation in projects was often described as a way to survive. This mainly applied to schools situated near big agglomerations, as they were exposed to the risk of losing students to competitive urban schools. An insufficient number of students means breaking the continuity of forms and, consequently, may lead to closing down a school. In such situations international projects were regarded as a chance for making a school attractive to young people and - hence - for its survival.

We are great at recruiting new students. Our students achieve excellent results at final examinations. We can also see that various institutions display a great interest in cooperating with our school. We have become leaders and that is why our activities and involvement are appreciated.

To other schools we are an example to follow. They see how many things we have managed to do [...].

Also during the second phase of the survey teachers indicated the significance of school prestige as an important institutional benefit resulting from international projects. However, this was referred to much more rarely than during the first phase. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the implementation of mobilities changes the strategic approach of schools to ways of benefiting from mobility. Inasmuch as schools decided to lodge applications to increase their competitiveness on the local education market, on completion of their projects they realised that benefits linked to institutional development proved much more important. Therefore, having reached a certain level of internationalisation, schools prefer to use their international experience in a decidedly fuller way that goes beyond benefits resulting from gaining prestige among local educational institutions.

Impact on schools' climate and culture

The results of both phases of the survey confirm that teachers participating in mobility see its relevance not only to the development of the school in the area of teaching and its organisation. During both phases over 75% of respondents confirmed the impact of projects on school culture and pupil communities, including increased pupil motivation (although the level of positive responses in those areas was slightly lower during the second stage of the survey). During the second phase of qualitative research teachers said that their experience and knowledge gained during mobilities made them realise that it would be greatly beneficial to organise similar projects for pupils.

We have become more tolerant. [...] I think that many of those values will be applicable to educating our pupils. We encourage them to travel and talk about tolerance towards others. The more open we become, the more open the school becomes.

Teachers also noticed that pupils themselves preferred new forms of classes, owing to which they were better motivated. Sometimes they even suggested more innovations linked to the forms of classes. Respondents often indicated that pupils were more interested when traditional forms of providing classes were abandoned. When teachers opened up to interaction with pupils, they also noticed a change to their attitude to learning. Respondents often said that new projects involving international pupil mobility and virtual mobility activities turned out to be a long-term outcome of mobility projects. In institutions providing vocational education, mobility projects for teaching staff repeatedly contributed to the implementation of projects involving international student placements and apprenticeships.

During those four years, when continuing projects and creating new ones, we began to plan projects for students, which we are now implementing. Our teachers and students have greatly developed thanks to project activities.

Results improve with motivation. Our new methods provide students with an encouragement to work. [...] They are developing their independence and gaining confidence.

Our students prepared various activities and classroom demonstrations for younger pupils. That was about sharing knowledge and project outcomes.

More importantly, teachers frequently emphasised that pupils watched their attitudes, verified knowledge and followed their teachers' development. Owing

to their commitment, teachers become an authority, an example to follow that might contribute to the achievement of better learning outcomes.

Our pupils watch what we are doing and judge our experience. Over time, our ex-pupils come to our school to see what is happening, and they value our methods which they find useful when studying at university.

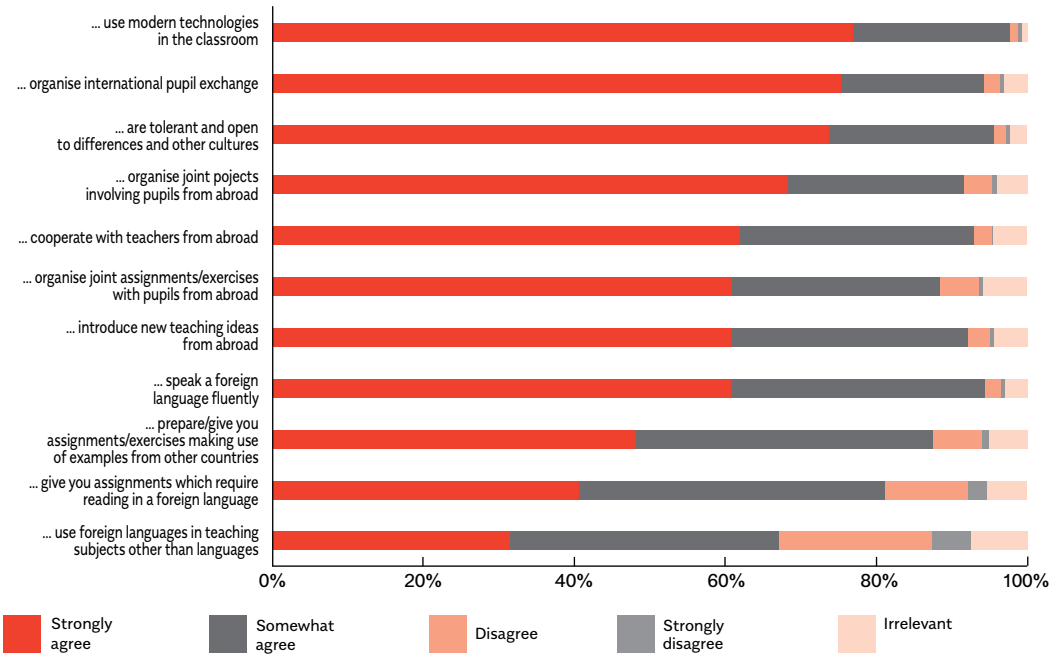
Our project was not limited to teacher mobility. If a teacher is an example to follow, they can transfer the outcomes of a project onto children and parents.

Having gained new competences abroad, our teachers have now started sharing their experience during classes. Therefore, pupils no longer see them as "teachers with a piece of chalk" associated with the school building. Instead, they realise that these are people who might have their ambitions and broad horizons.

The respondent group participating in the first phase included not only teachers, but also pupils and their parents. Data collected during the survey proves that in general, pupils' views on mobility projects are very positive. Over 90% of them said that after mobilities teachers shared their observations and talked about learning abroad. A similar percentage of positive responses refers to cooperation between teachers from different countries. Pupils acknowledged that such cooperation might prove important for the development of their school (over 90% of all responses). Changed attitudes also seem extremely significant. Over 95% of pupils claimed that tolerance and teachers' openness to cultural differences was important to them.

Figure 13. Teacher's mobility benefits as perceived by students N = 596 (2016)

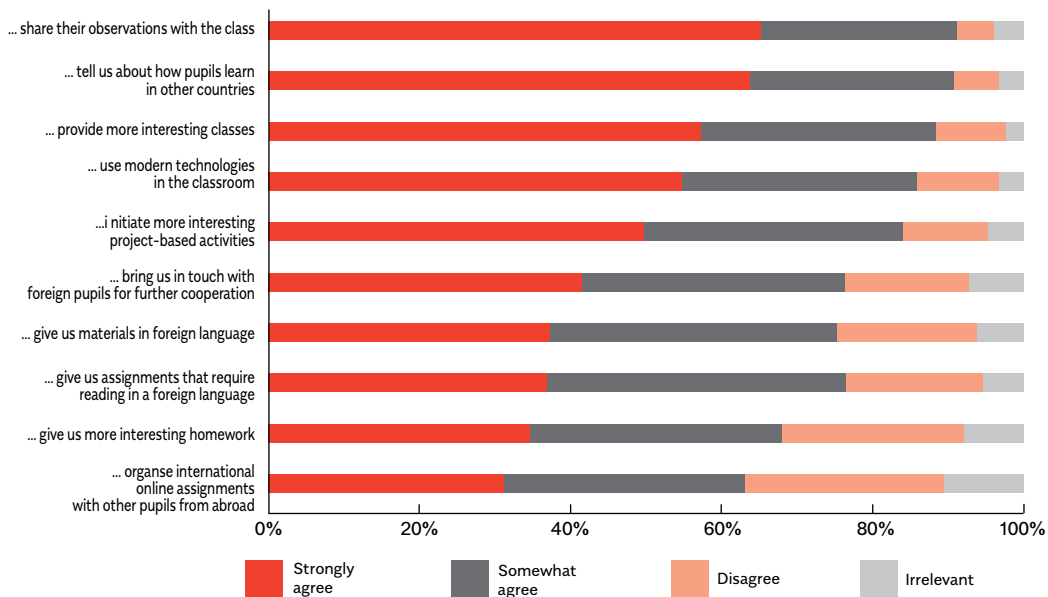
Do you agree that it is important that your teachers...



Pupils gave the lowest ratings to activities linked to internationalisation of their school. Less than two thirds said that having returned from their mobility teachers implemented projects involving the participation of pupils from schools abroad. This is all the more interesting as it is participation in international projects that pupils deemed the most important long-term benefit resulting from mobility projects for school education staff. Pupils often said that they would like to participate in projects involving children from other countries and in pupil exchanges (over 90%). It should also be emphasised that the vast majority of pupils had never participated in international mobility. Only just over one fourth of them were able to boast of an international mobility experience.

Figure 14. Teacher's mobility results as perceived by students N = 596 (2016)

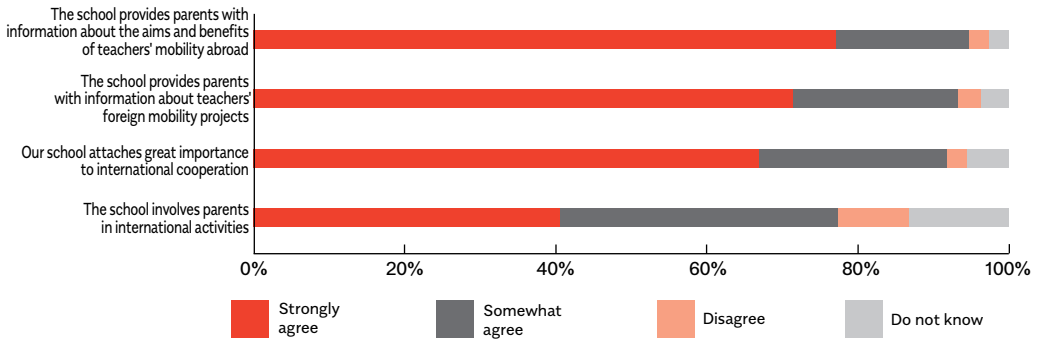
Do you agree that after mobility completion your teachers...



Pupils' opinion on increasing international activities is also confirmed by the responses of their parents who took part in the first phase of the survey. Almost everybody (over 99%) said that gaining international cooperation competences by their children was important. They also noticed a link between international mobility and school development (96%), including a link between school internationalisation and pupils' learning outcomes (over 95%).

Figure 15. Mobility benefits for the environment of the home institution, parents' opinions N = 429 (2016)

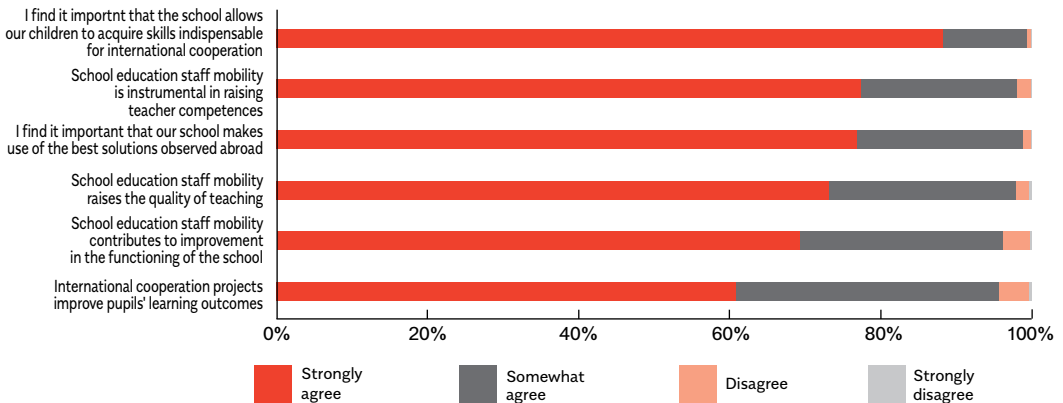
Dou you agree with the given statements?



It is worth emphasising that not all parents participating in the survey had positive views on school education staff mobility (over 12% of respondents raised the issue that as a result of staff mobility pupils miss instruction). Information about the objectives and outcomes of projects passed to parents is seen as a positive thing. Parents notice the importance that schools attach to the internationalisation of educational institutions. They also confirmed that the school itself involved them in such activities.

Figure 16. Mobility benefits for the environment of the home institution, parents' opinions N = 429 (2016)

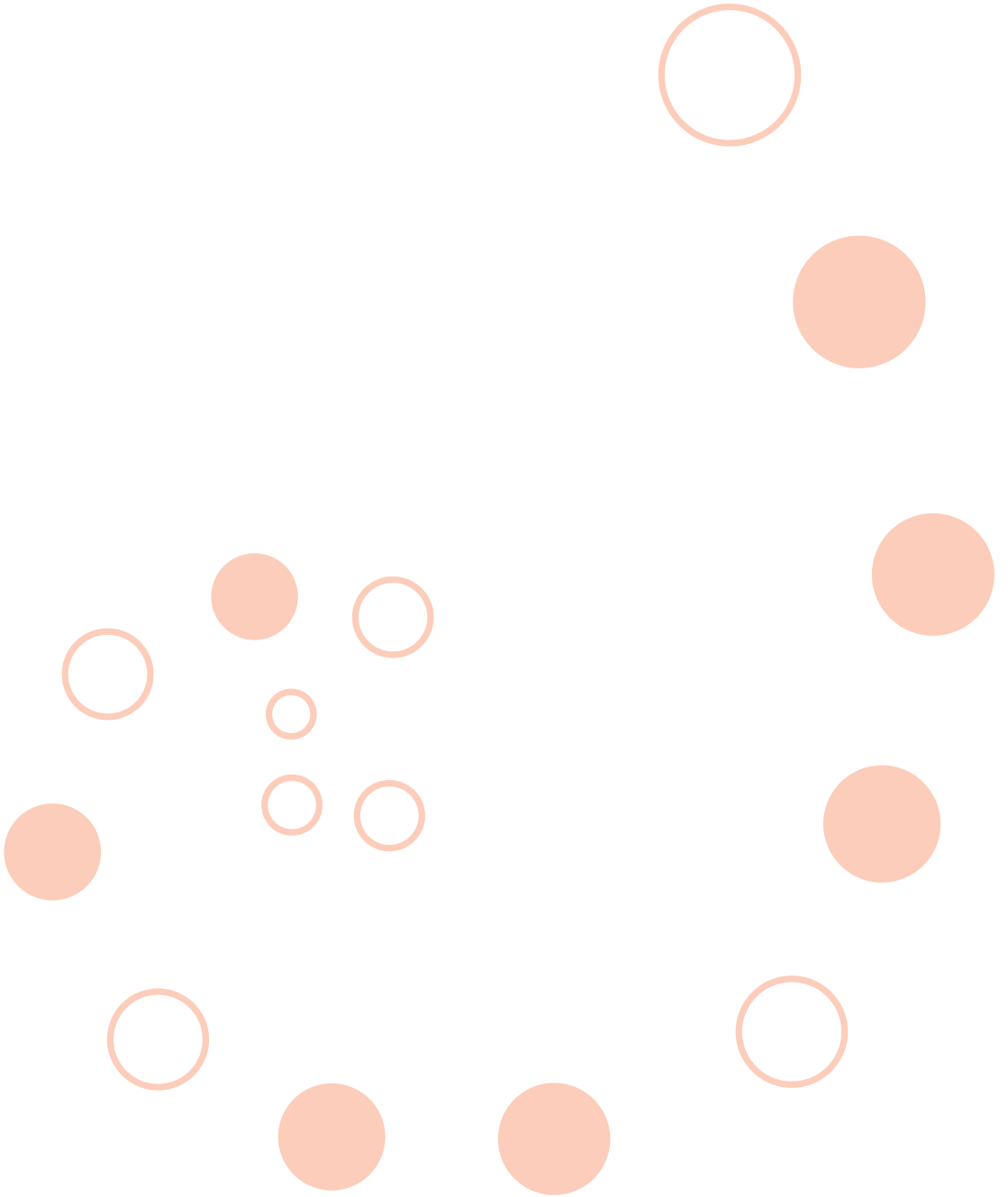
Dou you agree with the given statements?



The results of the second phase of the survey show, however, that teacher-parent cooperation is an area which requires increased quality assurance.

Although interviewees claimed that there was some influence of mobility also on this area, the data collected reveals a different picture. In the first phase of the survey over two fifths of teachers said they tried to get parents involved in the implementation of new initiatives. However, in 2018 the level of such responses was just under 20%. Nevertheless, such data does not necessarily prove difficulties with involving parents in changes taking place in schools. Increased parental involvement in this area may not be an indispensable condition for such changes to occur.

Thanks to the projects we have now broadened our horizons and changed our approach to teaching. [...] Teachers with that kind of experience are bound to work better, they know more about education in other countries. The quality of work and cooperation with parents is also better - as that kind of cooperation in other countries differs from our standards.



4. Success factors

This chapter presents the survey results with particular emphasis on the number of success factors that have proven instrumental in bringing schools durable and satisfying outcomes. The readiness to be a leader, share knowledge gained during mobilities and enjoying the support of school heads are the success factors that teachers quoted most frequently. It was just as important to ensure that there were no discrepancies between projects objectives and the needs of the schools that participated in the survey. The verification of project outcomes from the perspective of their quality and relevance to schools was another issue taken into consideration.

Role of leadership

The results of both survey phases show that the commitment of teachers coordinating project activities is the main contributor to a successful project. Owing to their work and commitment, they are able to promote project outcomes among other teachers and introduce changes to schools, thus guaranteeing the durability of such results. They are often the only people who are responsible for the preparation of project applications, organisation of activities, documentation, project implementation as well as settlement and evaluation. Hence, they have full knowledge of their project. They are the only person responsible for the entire project. Project coordinators often said that their international cooperation was their passion and project implementation was a source of immense satisfaction.

Projects must involve enthusiasts. Each mobility and each returning participant brings some new energy to the school.

Teachers are incredibly committed to their projects. They often pass their enthusiasm on those who have never participated in mobility.

Respondents participating in both phases of the survey emphasise that the commitment of people involved in project work is important because of the massive amount of work that such projects require. If there are no people committed to a project in an institution, then it is difficult to guarantee its durability and continue its activities after completion. Almost all interviewees were of this opinion and project coordinators frequently emphasised the

satisfaction that they derived from international cooperation. If a school has passionate teachers, their commitment to projects frequently gives them personal satisfaction resulting from acquiring new knowledge, broadening their horizons or improving general competences while implementing unconventional tasks. Project coordinators find individual benefits particularly important as they are seen as a reward for their additional work and encourage them to get involved in more tasks.

Not all teachers who have never been involved in a project realise and understand how much time has to be devoted to project activities.

Project coordinators need to have knowledge of such things as visas, insurances and they need to have some cash. [...] Each new project teaches us what to look out for next time as each new problem raises our awareness of what we should avoid not to make similar errors in the future.

The results of the survey show that it is leaders who perpetuate project outcomes. They directly influence their project, which is why they are able to introduce innovative solutions as soon as the project is completed. In many cases the durability of project outcomes was guaranteed by those who were involved. If people involved in a project leave their employer, it is more and more difficult to continue the introduction of changes in sending schools, especially when such activities go beyond teachers' contract duties and responsibilities. It is, however, risky to have just one person who has full knowledge of a project as when the person leaves, the know-how is not passed on to others.

Nobody refused to help me when I asked, but if I assume responsibility for something, then I'd rather do this myself than correct other people's mistakes.

I do not involve anybody in formal issues as I would have to devote lots of time to collect information from other people. I would not be sure that everything would be done within the specified time.

One person is unable to keep an eye on everything and nobody is eager to be the coordinator, nobody wants to sign documents, etc.

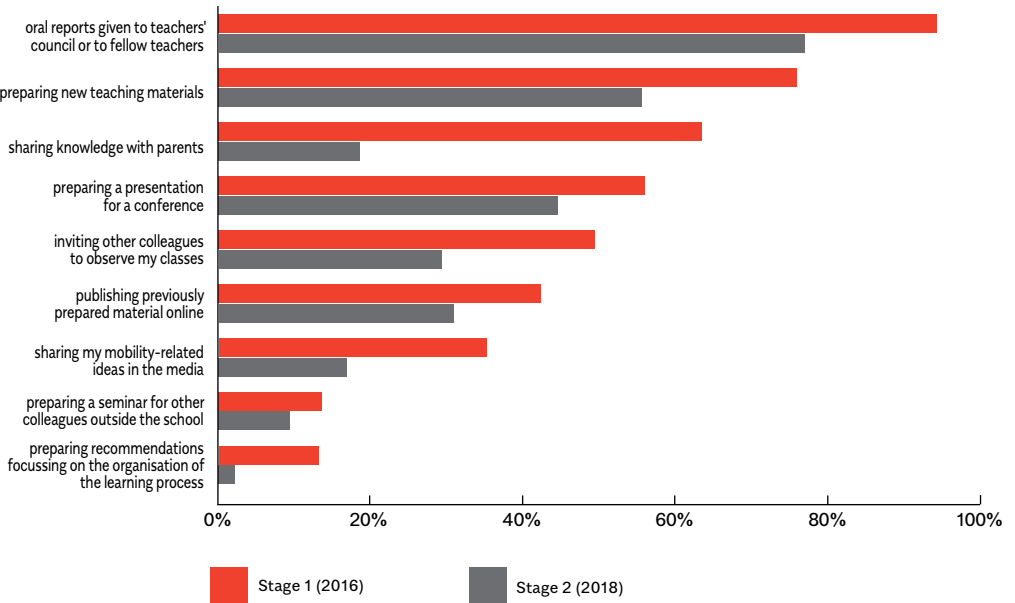
Knowledge sharing

The survey shows that knowledge sharing is one of the significant factors increasing the level of exploitation and durability of project outcomes. Participants in the first phase of the survey said they were very active in the

field of disseminating activities (over 95% of mobility participants shared their knowledge and experience with other people or institutions). Over three fourths of respondents prepared new teaching materials and almost two thirds said that they shared their newly acquired knowledge with their pupils' parents.

Figure 17. Dissemination of project outcomes (teachers' perception), N = 156 (2018)

In your opinion, which of dissemination forms contributed the most to visible changes in your school?



According to participants' responses, sharing new knowledge at local and regional levels as well as among educational institutions looked differently. Although over 50% of participants in the first phase confirmed they had prepared a presentation required for a conference, a decidedly smaller number of respondents said they had undertaken activities involving direct interacting with representatives of other institutions potentially interested in their project outcomes (seminars for other participants, recommendations).

The second phase was marked by a significant drop in responses confirming knowledge sharing. This is particularly true for presenting project outcomes outside the school. The survey results show that schools sending their teachers abroad are much more willing to disseminate the results of such mobilities within their teaching staff and less likely to share their experience at meetings with representatives of other schools (for example at in-service teacher training

workshops, conferences on such issues as teaching methods, science or the implementation of joint teaching projects). Interestingly, many respondents said that it was the dissemination of outcomes outside the school that had a decisive impact on the final success of their project. Respondents said they shared their knowledge and observations with other teachers at teaching staff meetings, training sessions and workshops. This contributed to a growing interest in mobility projects among teachers from other schools.

The first step was to share our knowledge with other teachers during training events. What we knew could inspire others. We held training sessions not only for our teachers, but also in our region.

The dissemination of outcomes is important and we enjoyed the support of the school leaders. We sent out invitations to schools, we wanted to share our knowledge of using ICT with other language teachers from our town. All it took was one phone call from our school head to some schools so their representatives could be allowed to participate in training.

Interestingly, regardless of the type of disseminating activities undertaken by schools, recommendations to share knowledge were indicated at each stage of the survey. They mainly focussed on the organisation of various forms of knowledge sharing and also on the dissemination of project outcomes. Teachers also emphasised that such activities guaranteed not only knowledge sharing, but also passing on the idea of mobility and acquiring knowledge abroad to other teachers and even pupils.



We should share our newly acquired knowledge and observations on new methods when talking to fellow teachers.

If there are any questions, I willingly share my knowledge and skills. This is one of the Erasmus+ programme outcomes.

Unlike quantitative research respondents, interviewees often offered their support to other institutions (for example through training other teachers, open lessons and granting access to resources). They also emphasised the necessity to cooperate with the local environment and institutions operating in the close proximity of the school.



It is important to cooperate with the local environment, teachers from other schools, and to share your experience on social media.



On return from your mobility you have to share its results and show its outcomes to the community. At teacher-parent meetings or special events it is also important to emphasise which activities impacted the development of the school.

In our case we would like to help other schools and offer them guidance on how to create a project. Teachers from other schools attended workshops organised in our school. Owing to that it was possible to promote the idea of project implementation and pass on that knowledge.

Some responses focussed on the promotion of the project and its outcomes not only within the educational institutions concerned, but also in the media. Although there is a drop in the number of such survey responses (just over 30% in the second phase as compared with over 40% in the first phase), it is worth emphasising that interviewees willingly talked about such forms of outcome dissemination.

The dissemination of outcomes is important. During the project, articles concerning our mobilities were posted on the website of our school, on other websites and in the local press. [...] A radio journalist came to interview us and a journalist from a local newspaper interviewed both teachers and pupils.

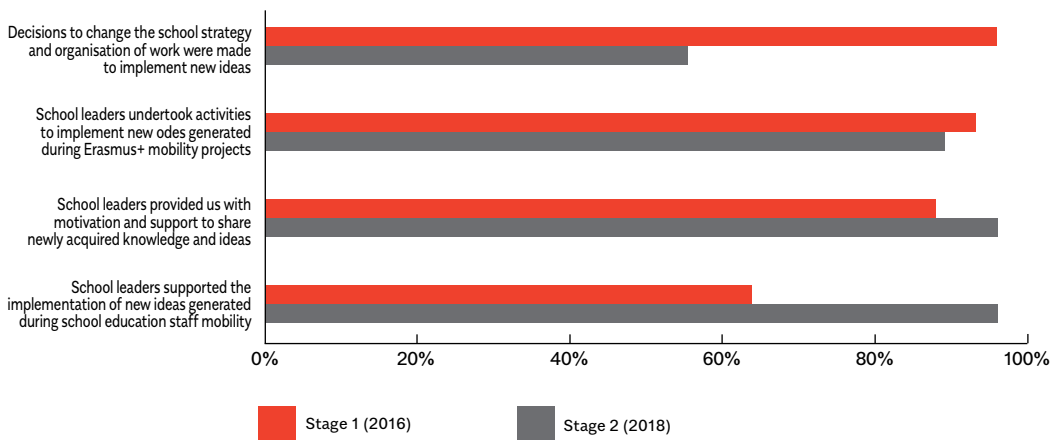
We share the outcomes of our project on a number of websites. We also prepared lesson scenarios using new tools which we shared on the principle of open licences.

Support provided by school leaders

The survey shows that support offered by persons managing the sending institution is a vital factor ensuring project success and the institutional development of the school. During both phases of the survey, its respondents considered it important. Moreover, the survey results show that school leaders were willing to support ideas coming from their teaching staff upon completion of mobility projects. Just under 65% of those participating in the first phase said that their school leaders supported the implementation of new ideas from abroad. Two years later that kind of support was reported by over 96% of survey participants.

Figure 18. Support provided by school leaders in the implementation of mobility results, N = 350 (2016) N = 156 (2018)

The figure represents the percentage of respondents who agreed with the given statements



School heads participating in group interviews said that teachers should share their project-related knowledge and experience with them. The more school heads know about mobility, the higher the chances for the exploitation of its outcomes. Former mobility participants frequently claimed that it was school heads that played a vital role in the strategic exploitation of foreign experiences at institutional level. However, they warned that school heads' support itself might prove insufficient if there were no leaders among teachers and no other persons ready to introduce innovations.

The approach of school leaders is the key to the implementation of projects. The school head encouraged us to implement this project. He always had a positive comment to make. He even participates in such initiatives and creates projects himself. When school leaders get involved in a project, teachers become part of this process.

The school head and their approach are the most important element, also flexible employees open to new ideas [...]. There must be a person convinced of the value of the project and aware of its benefits.

Consistency between projects and needs of the school

The second phase of the survey proves that the durability of project outcomes is mainly dependent on the degree to which project activities are linked to school strategies. Mobility participants quoted lots of examples of introducing

new foreign methods and tools to their everyday work. Consistency between the project and the needs of the school, its teachers and pupils is another success factor.

Our school development strategy aims at improving the openness of our school to various types of activities, such as voluntary service, promotion of education, in-service teacher training and international cooperation. We have to remain open and mobile. We have to continue learning to keep up with all systemic changes.

Many years ago we decided to be a modern school. We were the first ones to introduce an online register created by our pupil with the help of the IT teacher. We equipped our school and used "modernity" as our trademark.

Respondents are of the opinion that projects must be linked to the current problems experienced by educational institutions (such as difficulties with obtaining satisfactory results at final examinations, necessity to provide new specialisations to satisfy the needs of local labour markets).

Our statutory documents include activities obliging us to work in the region, to promote the school, but also to cooperate with other entities in this respect. We are involved in voluntary service.

All schools have a vision and a development mission when they prepare a project. That is why they set goals to be achieved within a dozen or so years. This project was part of this: we want to educate children, show them Europe, encourage them to learn languages, motivate and open them up to new experiences.

Another significant success factor contributing to the institutional development of schools consists in the regular monitoring of results and comparing them against the original goals set in the project application. This was particularly visible in the case of those institutions which tried to include mobility in a broader development strategy resulting from their needs. In the process of comparing the original goals and the actual results, it sometimes became obvious that the school development plan was out of date.

We have to consider the situation of the school and examine its needs which influence so many issues including relevant stages of education. In this situation, everyone can notice something in the project, something that could be used.

When we completed the project, we started finding room for certain innovations. Additional classes were introduced outside of the schedule as a teaching innovation programme. They covered such topics as economics and European culture and were provided in English.

Interviewees shared their achievements and success. They also talked about the necessity to verify results and – sometimes – about adapting them to the changing needs of their recipients. In some cases the verification of results also stemmed from the changing needs of pupils or a change in the functioning of the school.

Having introduced e-handbooks as a result of the project, we noticed that – frankly speaking - there was no benefit to be derived from that at secondary school level. You have to put everything into practice and see if there are any benefits. Nowadays, that technology distracts them you have to modify solutions. It is only after three years that you see whether or not a change has been successful.

After we completed the project we had meetings, and at teaching staff meetings we spoke about the outcomes, a film was made and we shared information with other employees of our school. Some of them realised that such projects looked a bit different. When new ideas arose, there were new people willing to participate.

5. Conclusions

1 The results of the survey show that knowledge and experience gained as a result of mobility may significantly contribute to further development of sending schools. A large number of survey participants confirm that project-related changes introduced in their schools are durable and they are made use of by their educational institutions. More importantly, project outcome durability also includes intangible results, in particular those concerning changes in attitudes or an increase in openness to teaching innovations and other modifications of curricula and teaching methods.

2 Respondents are of the opinion that mobility can significantly contribute to the improvement of education quality. They quoted lots of examples of such positive changes. A large majority of such examples concerned raising the quality of language teaching, introduction of various elements of learning English while teaching other subjects and using new technologies during classes. All those methods have a positive influence on pupils' participation, their motivation to learn and, as a result, they contribute to the achievement of better learning outcomes.

3 In the opinion of survey participants, the great majority of needs relating to the modernisation of the teaching infrastructure of home institutions stemmed directly from the new knowledge and competences that teachers acquired during mobility. Respondents emphasised the fact that teachers need modern tools and new equipment (such as laptops, tablets and interactive whiteboards) to be able to make full use of their new skills linked to new technologies.

4 It was often emphasised that mobility can largely contribute to further professional development. Changes to the approach to self-learning were often a result of improved language competences. Improved language skills made teachers realise that developing their competences in other areas was worth doing. More importantly, respondents often emphasise the fact that teachers continually developing their skills are an inspiration to pupils as an example to follow. Consequently, self-learning teachers may have a positive influence on pupils' learning outcomes.

5 In the case of majority of schools, mobility significantly contributed to undertaking more activities aimed at school internationalisation. Having returned from their mobilities, many teachers undertook numerous activities going beyond Polish boundaries, including various forms of cooperation with partner institutions. In many cases, school education staff mobility also contributed to the implementation of similar projects organised with pupils in mind. It is worth mentioning that some schools used funds coming from programmes other than Erasmus+, including funds from sources outside the European Union.

6 Respondents also said that international projects might contribute to the development of a broader strategy in the matter of the institutional development of schools. Interestingly, during the first phase of the survey teachers often said that their project was intended to raise the prestige of their school on the local education market. However, it is the results linked to the project, especially those relating to the improvement of education quality, that were later seen as more important. And although projects are still implemented to raise school prestige, this seems to be done to attract good and ambitious pupils rather than improve school popularity during the next recruitment period.

7 Teachers often indicated the human factor as a key element indispensable to ensure the durability of outcomes. Both project coordinators and school heads were of the opinion that their teaching staff must display a positive attitude, without which it is impossible to introduce any changes to the school regardless of whether they involve education, infrastructure modernisation or work organisation. Moreover, the nature of international cooperation projects itself requires passionate teachers ready to devote their time to the preparation of project applications and project coordination. More importantly, respondents emphasised that such initiatives should come from teachers themselves and leadership is not something that can be ordered by the school head.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations below are based on the results of research into the long-term effects of school education staff mobility and are intended not only for schools already involved in mobility projects, but also for those which might be interested in lodging a grant application under the Erasmus+ programme.

- The survey results show that Polish teachers are willing to use their experiences of international mobility in developing their teaching skills. As a great majority of such skills involve two basic areas of competence (language learning and using ICT), it would be worthwhile to make a better use of the offer of international training to develop other skills. Therefore, it would be advisable to identify the competences of teaching staff members. Its results may also be helpful when preparing a strategy aimed at the improvement of teachers' competences in schools.
- Although the survey showed that improved language competences were one of the most visible results of mobility participants, it has also to be said that their limited command of foreign languages was one of the most common barriers preventing teachers from going abroad. This barrier is particularly applicable to longer-serving teachers who did not learn English at school or university. This problem can be remedied by introducing preparatory activities before international mobility projects. As schools employ language teachers, it is also possible to organise language courses for non-language teachers, in addition to activities linked to project implementation. Such activities would help overcome potential participants' language barrier, thus increasing teacher participation in international projects.
- Participation in international mobility showed that a properly selected project team was a key factor leading to the appropriate implementation of projects and the dissemination of their outcomes. Teachers involved in an international mobility project guarantee the durability of its outcomes. Therefore, project teams

should be taken good care of – an appropriate number of teachers should be involved, and their commitment should be adequately rewarded.

- Survey participants also said that project activities should involve not only teachers but also other school staff members, which may positively influence further development of schools. It should also be noted that that kind of enlargement of the target group may be an example to follow by teachers who have not yet been involved in the process of changes in their schools.

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Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE) operates as the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme implemented in the years 2014-2020. FRSE is also responsible for other European educational and information initiatives in Poland: eTwinning, Eurodesk, Eurydice, Europass, ECVET and EPALE. The Foundation also supports cooperation with countries in the East via the Polish Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund, the Polish Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange and SALTO-EECA Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre. Since 2014, FRSE has been involved in the implementation of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development.

The Foundation organizes many educational events including competitions promoting projects' results. It coordinates the European Youth Week and co-organizes events in the framework of European Day of Languages. It also conducts research and has a publishing house which issues, among others, such quarterly magazines as „Języki Obce w Szkole” (“Foreign Languages at School”) and „Europa dla Aktywnych” (“Europe for the Active”).

