Documentation TCA "Optim-AL3AL 3: How to involve Learners in KA1 projects" in Bergisch Gladbach, 27.-29.05.2024

"Optim-AL 3: How to involve Learners in KA1 projects" continued the series of TCA to optimize learning mobility and paid special attention to inclusive learner mobility. Learners were also invited to participate in this TCA, together with a representative from an AE institution.

Day #1

The TCA started on 27.05.2024 punctually at 15:00 o'clock. With the NA employees, 60 participants from 20 countries came together to spend two days on the topic of optimizing learning mobility.

The first day served for the participants to get to know each other and the venue through icebreaker exercises and an entertaining evening with games and a Eurovisions quiz. The presence of 6 learners from 4 countries, contributed to the inclusive aspect of the topic, as they came from quite different backgrounds. Their participation brought valuable perspectives to the discussions.

Day #2

The second day started with an interactive group discussion on the question where the participants see their strengths (what we are already doing) and where they see potential for development in relation to inclusive learning mobilities. Each group worked with a template that represented a tree, the roots symbolizing the strengths and the branches the potential for growth. The results showed many commonalities, but also differences between participants.

Summary of common results:

Strong Roots	Potential for Growth
- Meaningful training opportunities, planning, administration, digital skills, personal competences. - Capability to deal with learners with mental disabilities, mothers, retired, cultural differences out of and within Europe - Micro-qualifications, language courses, courses for people with disabilities, integration courses - Experience, Language, Qualification	- To deal with administrative challenges/reduce the administrative burden - To strengthen the soft skills of the participants (learners) - To enhance confidence, self-esteem, independence and self-efficacy of learners - To enhance the knowledge and use of digital instruments and tools. - To reach out more to strongly marginalized groups

Then, the participants worked on the following exercise:

Working Group 1: Needs, Benefits and Challenges of Mobility for Adult Education Organisations 🕐 60

NEEDS and BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
Why are you involved (or looking to be involved) in Erasmus+ Mobility? How does this align with your strategic development plan? What benefits does mobility deliver to you as organisation?	What are the biggest challenges of planning and delivering mobility: consider this question as an organisation [additional session planned to review the adult learner perspective]. Categorise your answers under key headings.
Share All Experiences	Share All Experiences

Show your results using a single flipchart per group.

For the first working group phase, 5 small groups were formed. The following **needs and benefits** were mentioned:

- Motivation
- Personal development
- Learning organisation
- European values and identity
- Create opportunities for inclusion (education for all)
- Increased cooperation also in the local environment
- Exchange of good practice
- Learning from each other and
- Inspiration and improed language skills for staff

Challenges:
- difficulties to cope with finances and management. (Fear of the newcomers)

- background of the more precarious employment situation in which the staff in adult education often find themselves.
- Motivation: Just as motivation can increase, it can also decrease if those who engage still get extra responsibilities.
- It seems that administration and financial management are faced as a challenge from lots of the participating institutions, not only from the newcomers.

In the next session, participants were invited to review the basics of project development:
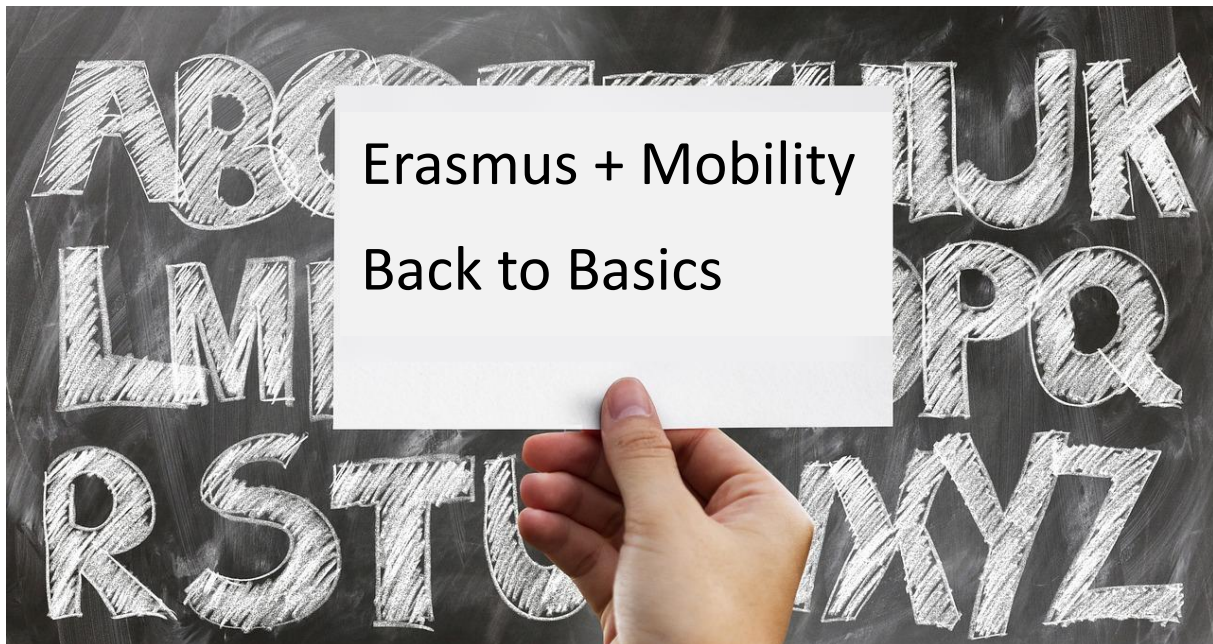
Before

During

After

Then, another group work was started:

Working Group 2: Benefits, Challenges and Solutions - Effective Engagement and Support of Adult Learners in Mobility

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BENEFITS and CHALLENGES of Mobility for Adult Learners	SOLUTIONS: Effective Adult Learner Engagement
What are the BENEFITS of mobility for Adult Learners (consider learner perspectives)? What CHALLENGES exist for engaging and supporting adult learners on Erasmus+ mobility programmes?	Consider each of the listed challenges and discuss and agree on possible (or actual) solutions for addressing these: how can you effectively engage and support adult learners on Erasmus+ mobility programmes?
Share All Experiences	Share All Experiences

Show your results using a single flipchart per group.

For Learners, the benefits are seen in an enormous increase in (for example)
- Motivation and skills like self-confidence and new perspectives
- European identity and awareness

On the other hand, there are a lot of challenges like
- Fear of the unknown and language barriers, but this can vary and depends on the type of learners
- Language and Learning skills

Solutions are:
- Good preparation
- Possibility of peer learning activities
- Good support structure and trust into the teachers and accompanying persons
- Clear, simple and well-structured programme, flexible time tables and breaks
- Clear rules

Day 2 closed with a team building activity followed by a guided city tour in Cologne and a dinner at Stadtgarten Restaurant in Cologne.

Day #3

After breakfast, the programme continued in the plenary with a short introduction of the Agenda, some changes in the schedule and identifying possible lost and lonelies. Fortunately, there weren't any, so the agenda continued with the final session of Working groups.

Working Group 3: Building an Optimal Programme for Engaging and Inclusive Adult Learner Mobility ⏰ 60

TASK	HOME INSTITUTION	HOST INSTITUTION
Prepare a one-week plan for a group of FIVE adult learners undertaking Erasmus+ mobility to another country?	Consider perspectives of the SENDING institution and the participating learners (i.e. learner needs and expectations)	Consider perspective of RECEIVING institution (adult educators; programme offers; support networks)
Share Real Experiences	Share Real Experiences	Share Real Experiences

Show your results using a single flipchart per group.

The seminar closed after the presentation of the results of this session.

Conclusion:

Very positive feedback from participants, useful content for the participants and many inspirations for future European Cooperation.