

Mobility in Erasmus+ 1

First results in the fields of school education, higher education and adult education

Executive summary



Introduction

Learning mobility abroad in the fields of school, higher and adult education provides an opportunity to look into results and in particular, assess its early impact in these areas.

In the chapters of this first Erasmus + impact study, the analysis builds on the results of the implementation of mobility projects and emphasises critical issues and innovative aspects introduced by the structural changes of the European Union programme. Training and learning mobility abroad have a long tradition in the programmes dedicated to education and the new challenge that Erasmus+ has taken up is based on quality training, by focusing on the acquisition of knowledge, abilities and competences. The benefits of training will impact individuals, institutions, organisations and society as a whole and will contribute to promote growth, equality, prosperity and social inclusion in Europe and other countries.

The new opportunities of learning mobility for teachers, trainers, students and youth workers aim to improve professional competences, favour multilingualism in order to create new projects and connections between the formal, non-formal and informal sectors.

Methodological note

This study, the first of the Erasmus + series, focuses on the analysis of the first results of the annual projects for mobility and learning, that is, key action 1 (KA1) of the Erasmus+ programme. The main goal was to assess how many and which effects had the implementation of the KA1 Erasmus + projects on the institutions that benefitted from annual funding in the 2014-2015 period and on those who were involved in the implementation of the project activities. The publication is organised into three chapters each one dedicated to one of the areas of competence and responsibility of the Indire's Erasmus+ national agency, namely school education, higher education and adult education. Each chapter examines in depth one of the three areas:

Chapter 1 – Erasmus + learning mobility. First results in the field of school education

Chapter 2 – The impact of Erasmus + on higher education: the results of KA1 Action

Chapter 3 – Survey on adult education mobility. First results of the projects of Key action 1 in Erasmus+

The study builds on the analysis and study of quantitative and quality data derived from the *Participant form*, the online questionnaire that all participants of KA1¹ Mobility projects have to fill out when they return from their mobility experience abroad. Moreover, qualitative data deriving from two different focus groups specially set up to assess the themes of this publication were used to compile the chapters dedicated to school education and adult education. **The resulting picture was also enriched by best practices and field experiences providing significant information also on the future developments of the most recently concluded projects.**

Our attempt was to assemble a big picture view of how Erasmus+ mobility projects brought about changes in individuals' competences, and more in general, in the organisation of institutions also paying attention to elements of continuity and discontinuity with the actions dedicated to training activities abroad of the preceding Lifelong Learning Programme.

¹ KA1 is the acronym of key Action 1 used in this publication

Chapter 1. Staff Learning mobility Erasmus+. First results in the field of school education

Premise

The project KA1 learning mobility presented and implemented by a school is a school programme with aims and scopes regarding not only individuals taking part in mobility projects but the entire school. This shift from an approach based on individuals' training – as it happened in the past with the LLP programme – to an institutional approach is crucial in view of a larger impact. In 2014, In Italy, 107 KA1 projects have been financed in the school education sector. Out of this number, 48 had a one-year duration and 59 a two-year duration. These projects supported the mobility of 1,700 teachers and school staff with a budget of more than 3,6 million Euros. Our analysis concerns the one-year long projects that were concluded and ongoing in the period from 1 June 2014 to 31 December 2015. This first Erasmus + journal is therefore the first attempt to analyse the results and the impact of KA1 projects.

Fig.1 KA1 mobility projects in the field of school education financed in 2014

	Number of projects	Individual mobility	Budget €
Two-year KA1 projects financed in 2014	59	1,076	1,303,807
One-year KA1 projects financed in 2014	48	629	2,354,689
Total	107	1,705	3,658,496

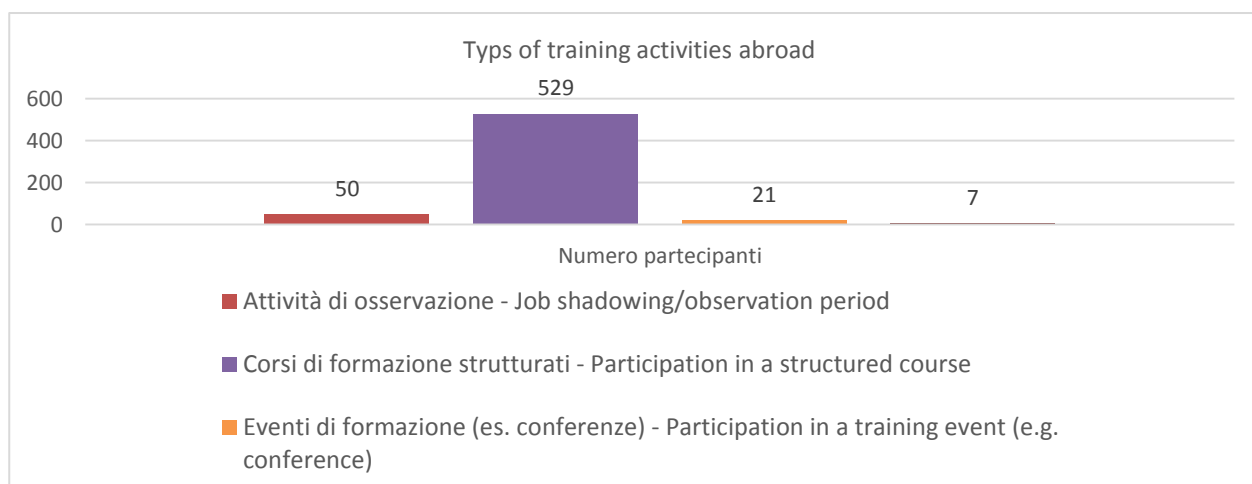
The analysis tool was the *Participant Report Form – KA1 – Learning Mobility of Individuals – Mobility of Staff in School Education*,² the online document that all participants of KA1 Mobility projects have to fill out when they return from their mobility experience abroad (or before that the home institution submits the final report to the National Agency). Moreover, in order to have a more complete picture of the first impressions of schools and staff involved in KA1 projects we realised a focus group, and submitted a very articulated questionnaire to the representatives of 12 schools beneficiaries of funding for an annual KA1 project in 2014.

General data analysis: types of activities, countries of destination, languages, awards and certifications

The data analysis starts with the aim of assessing from the data available the impact of this action on schools and school staff who participated in mobility.

Fig. 2 Types of training activities abroad carried out by school staff who filled out the *Participant Report Form*

² In this Chapter, we refer to this document as Participant Form

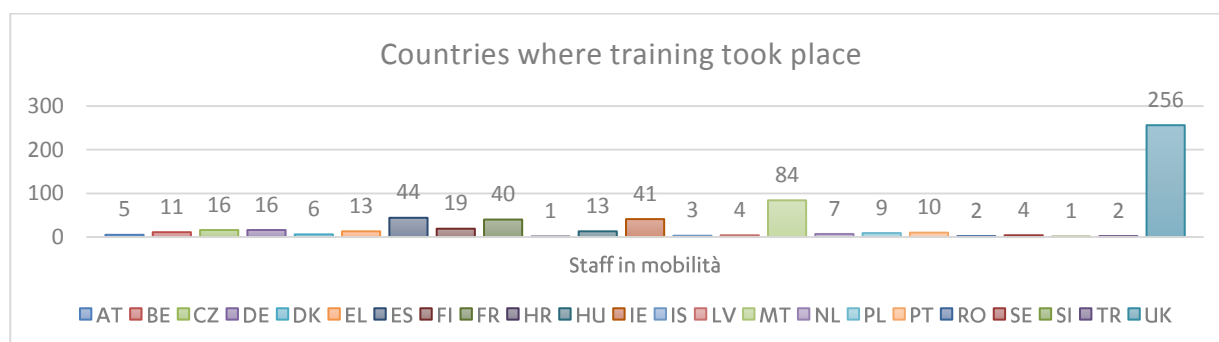


As far as KA1 projects are concerned, the first clear element is that the majority of school staff who participated in mobility attended structured courses abroad as it is visible in figure 2. The other types of mobility, such as job shadowing, that is a period of observation in another school abroad or the teaching assignment, that is actual teaching activities in foreign schools, were carried out by a small number of teachers. Attendance in a structured course represents, as in the preceding LLP programme, the most frequent choice because in its very nature it addresses specific needs of professional updating; and at European level, there is a large provision of these courses provided by qualified institutions.

Linguistic competences

Carrying out professional training abroad is strictly related to language competences as the courses and the teaching/observation activities are carried out in languages different from Italian. For this reason a series of questions of the Participant Report Form are dedicated to languages, and as we will see in the next paragraph, the improvement of foreign languages competences is one of the main reasons why school staff decide to take part in this kind of training activity.

Fig. 3 – Countries of destination for training - Staff in mobility



The preference for the English language was confirmed as in the past. A total of 544 people out of 607 declared that English was the most used language in mobility, and the UK remains the main destination to carry out training activities, followed by Malta that is also in the English speaking area. The importance given to linguistic competences is also confirmed by the fact that before mobility 397 people followed a language course of the main language to be used for the training and 560 stated they improved their linguistic knowledge thanks to mobility. **Awards and certifications:** from the analysed reports emerged that

94% of the people who took part in mobility were issued a certification or formal recognition. A large proportion of participants was given the certificate issued by the training course organiser while a smaller part was awarded the Europass Mobility Document.

The reasons why school staff participated in mobility projects

Among the main reasons supporting school staff mobility there are professional development and the acquisition of new competences and abilities that can be useful for the teaching of one's own discipline or for coordination, organisational and administrative activities carried out in the school (as it is shown by Figure 4).

Fig. 4 Reasons supporting participation in KA1 projects training activities

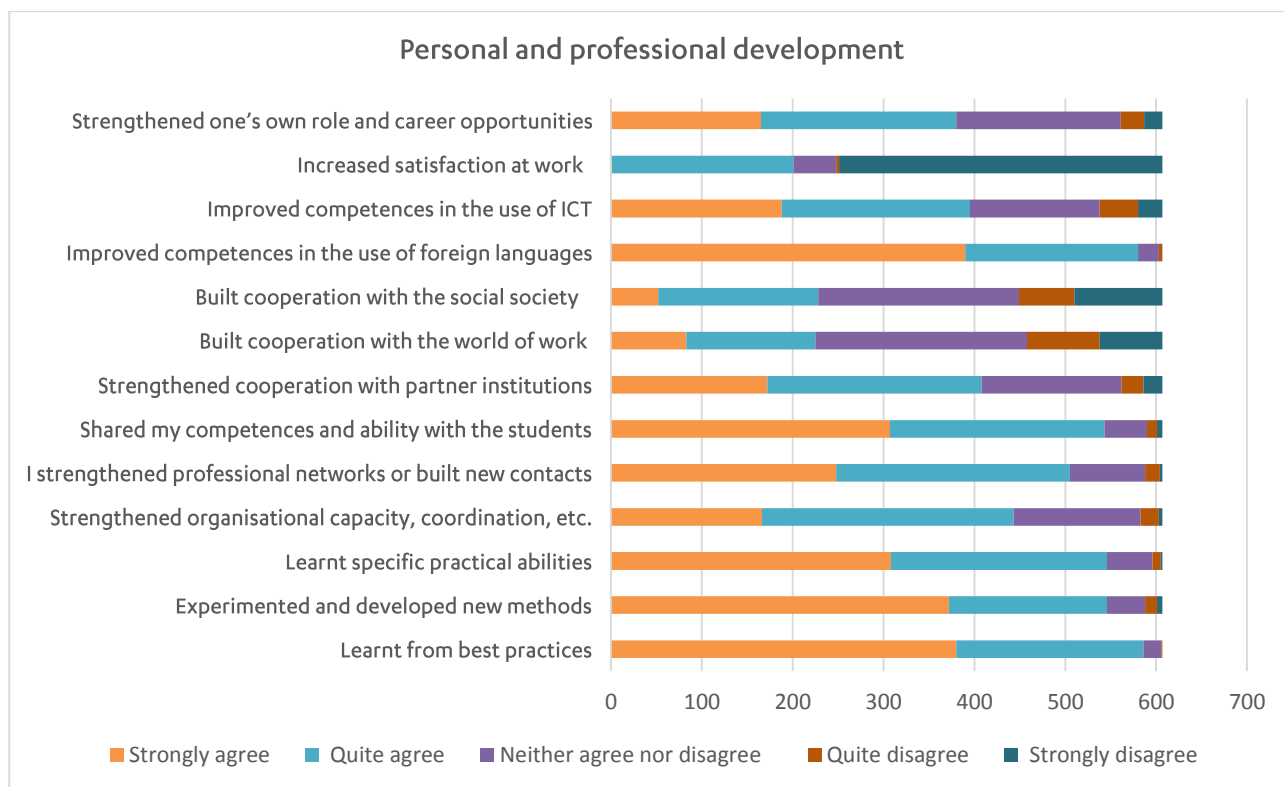
The main reasons to participate in Erasmus + KA1 mobility projects	Number of preferences
To develop my professional abilities and enhance the relevance of the subject I teach	422
To Improve my linguistic knowledge	408
To acquire specific knowledge and know-how of best practices implemented abroad	398
To experiment and develop new teaching methods and practices	387
To acquire practical abilities relevant for my work and for my professional development	375
To increase my social, linguistic and/or cultural knowledge	350
To increase my satisfaction at work	295
To meet new people	264
To build new contacts/enlarge my professional network	261
To improve the services offered by the institution I work for	224
To share knowledge and abilities with the students	218
To improve future career and work opportunities	148
To strengthen the cooperation with the partner institution	111
To generate beneficial effects, such as development of the curricula, joint courses or modules, academic networks, collaborations etc.	94
To build up links with the world of work	20
Other reasons	2

In general, there is a tendency to interpret the KA1 training experience as a moment of personal professional development, and the aspects related to the development of the school as a whole are less relevant. Probably, Italian school staff are not used to adopting a broader view of their work context. For this reason, the changed approach of the KA1 projects in comparison with Comenius in-service training can contribute to raise awareness about the contribution each teacher can give to the school system as a whole, and therefore, support the perception of their role at school not limited to the functions relating to teaching their subject.

The impact at individual level

The aspect that received highest agreement (strongly agreed) is the improvement of the linguistic competences and this completely matches with the motivations listed above. Improvement in the use of a foreign language is in fact the second main motivation why school staff participated in the Erasmus+ mobility for schools.

Fig.5 How mobility contributed to personal and individual development

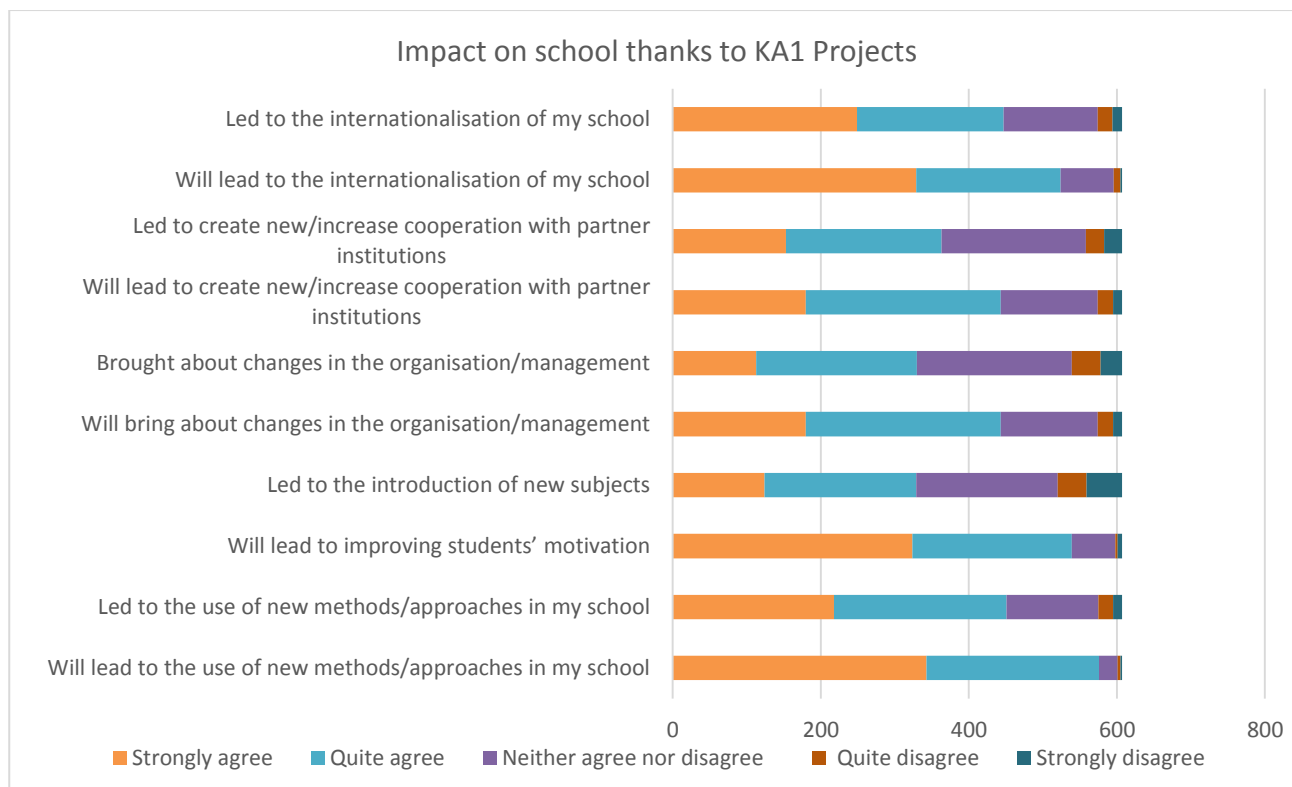


To conclude, it can be said that considering the correspondence between the motivations given before mobility and the level of acquisition/improvement/development of competences and abilities, declared after mobility, the school staff involved in the KA1 project reached the objectives that they had set for themselves before participating in the project. This is a very significant aspect because the perception of having satisfied initial training needs is very important for an action that has among its main objectives that of contributing to the improvement of the quality of teaching in Europe and this somehow shows that Erasmus+ KA1 projects are on track.

The impact on schools

Overall, as far as impact on school is concerned, it can be said that without any doubt the staff who participated in the KA1 project had the impression that this experience had an impact and can have an impact in the near future also on the school not only on their professional growth. The most positive reactions - also in the case of the impact on the school and for the impact at individual level - are related to the improvement of personal competences. Changes related to the introduction of new teaching methods and increased involvement of students thanks to these methods are in fact perceived as feasible.

Fig.6 What impact the mobility of the school staff participating in the KA1 project had on the school of provenance



Focus group: in 2014, twelve representatives of twelve schools beneficiaries of one-year funding for a KA1 project were invited to participate. The schools chosen represent the three levels of education: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. Schools of the three macro geographical areas of the country, that is north, centre, and south were involved, and mostly the teachers who coordinated the projects participated.

The discussion was carried out in groups of 6 with a moderator conducting the debate on the basis of a questionnaire drawn up by experts in the education sector and by the staff of the Italian national agency and two observers who collected outcomes. The focus group questionnaire that was used as prompt for peer discussion is organised into three parts: “preparing for mobility”, “development and impact at individual level”, “development and impact at school and class level”. Generally, as far as individual development is concerned, all the focus group participants highlighted that training activities abroad allowed the acquisition of new skills and professional competences and observation of best practices which were transferable to their work environment.

Conclusion

The analysis carried out in this first journal dedicated to the first results of the Erasmus+ programme confirmed the importance of mobility and in general the positive impact of the KA1 projects on the school staff and the school involved in the project. With certainty, it can be stated that the realisation of a mobility project brings about growth, and the observation of the data of the reports of the participants and the focus group showed a complex scenario. However, the two main tools to carry out the survey provided very clear and coherent information. We summarise some of the key aspects of our analysis below:

1. The Erasmus + KA1 mobility projects stimulated increased sharing and collaboration in Italian schools. This allowed the involvement of school staff who previously had never taken part in European professional pathways. The strengthening of Joint programming and planning was carried out through the creation of work groups that also tried to implement common work practices.

2. professional experience in another country, attending courses delivered in a foreign language and teaching activities in foreign schools produces improved and/or renewed interest in learning foreign languages. Improving competences in a foreign language is one of the main motivations why school staff decide to take part in a mobility project.

3. participation in the project allows the acquisition of competences that can be spent at school; for example by playing a support role or the role of referent for the international activities of the school and it also allows the acquisition of enhanced awareness of already possessed competences. Therefore, this aspect is not accompanied by a real career progression and there isn't a formal recognition of the competences acquired to be spent in other schools.

Chapter 2. Staff Learning mobility Erasmus+. First results in the field of higher education

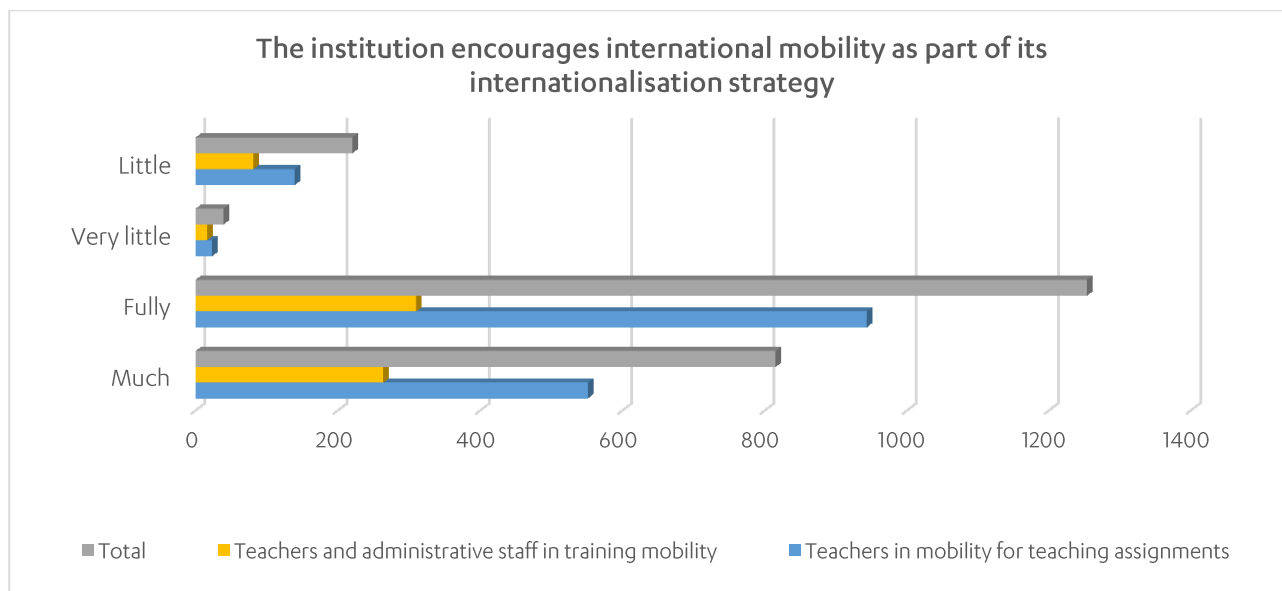
Premise

The Erasmus+ programme supports professional development of academic staff with a strategic approach aimed to modernise and internationalise its mission with an impact on the system itself. On one hand, it foresees teaching assignments abroad; on the other hand, it promotes training periods abroad organised into workshops, job shadowing and training, providing participants with the opportunity to make use of their competences and acquire new ones, with significant impact on the professional capacity of each person and befitting both home and receiving institutions.

This chapter presents a detailed study on academic staff mobility. In particular, the answers given by the participants to the community questionnaire after mobility were analysed. The aspects taken into account are: the motivations sustaining participation in the Erasmus + activities, impact on home and receiving institutions, certification, and general satisfaction about the experience abroad. A total of 2,329 people filled out the questionnaire and the referring year is 2014/2015.

Staff mobility was part of the internationalisation strategies of institutions for higher education more than in the past, in fact, most of the participants declared they had been strongly encouraged to take part in the project by their home institution as part of the strategy to strengthen cooperation with partner institutions and open new training pathways for students. (figure 1).

Fig.1 The institution encourages international mobility as part of its internationalisation strategy



The mobility initiatives of the programmes not only impact individual knowledge and competences of teaching and non-teaching staff of higher education but they have also a positive impact on students and the entire institution. This threefold aspect results from the motivations that mostly propel beneficiaries to take part in mobility which range from training (such as “acquiring knowledge and specific knowhow through best practices learned from the partner institution” and “developing professional abilities and increasing the relevance of the taught subject”) to the opportunity to “strengthen cooperation with partner institutions” and “build new networks”. As far as students are concerned, the need to “share knowledge

and abilities” and “increase quality and quantity of mobility from and to the home institution” prevail. (fig 2.).

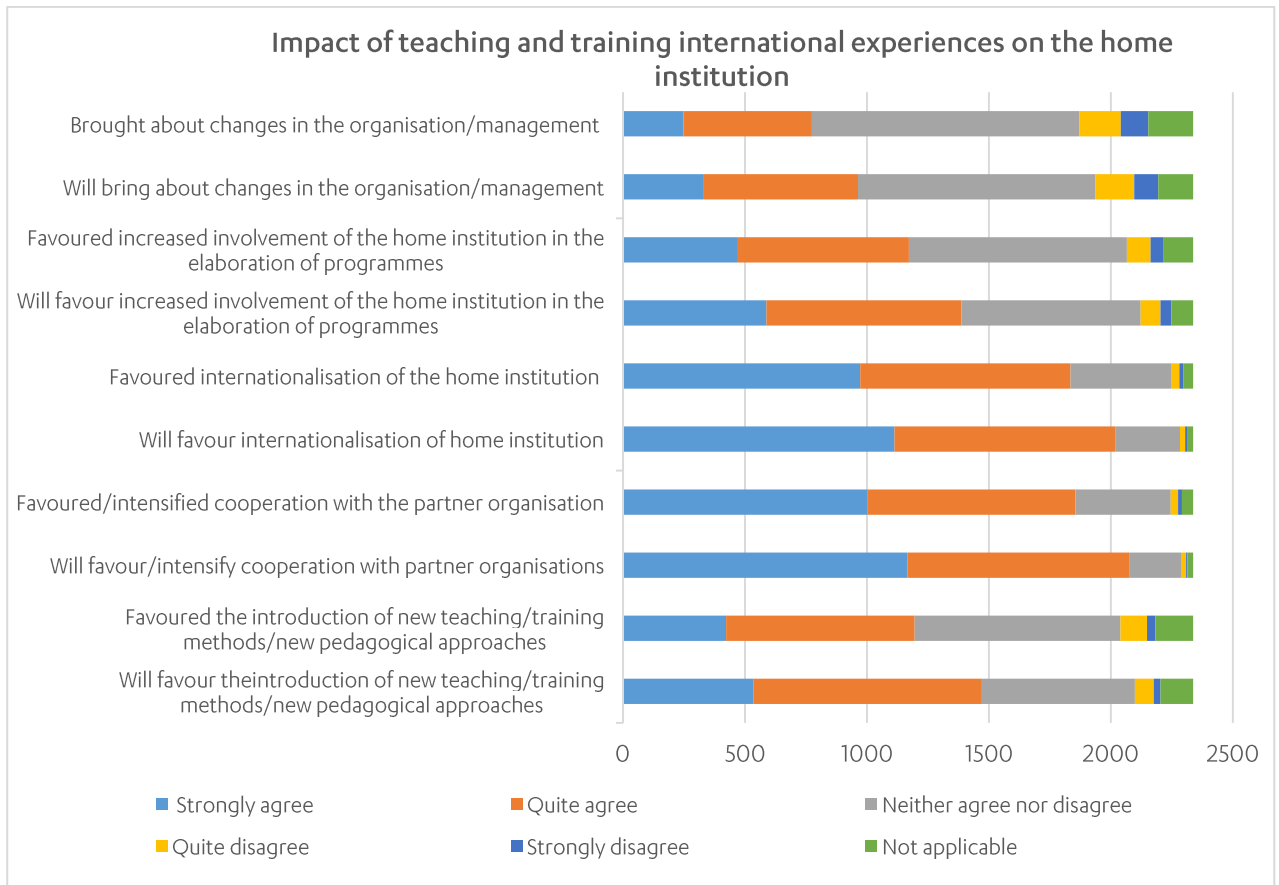
Fig.2 Main reasons to take part in KA1 Erasmus+ mobility

What were the main reasons to take part in KA1 Erasmus+ mobility	Number of preferences
Strengthening cooperation with partner institutions	3,288
Building new contacts/ enlarging professional network	1,372
Acquiring knowledge and specific knowhow through best practices learned from the partner institution	1,276
Developing professional abilities and increasing the relevance of the taught subject	1,195
Sharing knowledge and abilities with students	1,192
Increasing quality and quantity of mobility from and to the home institution	994
Enhancing my social, linguistic and/or cultural knowledge	915
Enhancing satisfaction at work	884
Experimenting and developing new practices and teaching methods	780
Improving my linguistic competences	773
Acquiring relevant practical ability to be used in one’s own profession and	752
Improving the opportunities offered by the home institution	705
Meeting new people	668
Generating positive impact such as the development of programmes, courses and joint modules, academic networks, research collaborations etc.	655
Improving future work and career opportunities	434
Building links with the world of work	161
Receiving an Erasmus+ grant	126
Others	32

* In the questionnaire “What were the main reasons to take part in KA1 Erasmus+ mobility” more than one answer was allowed.

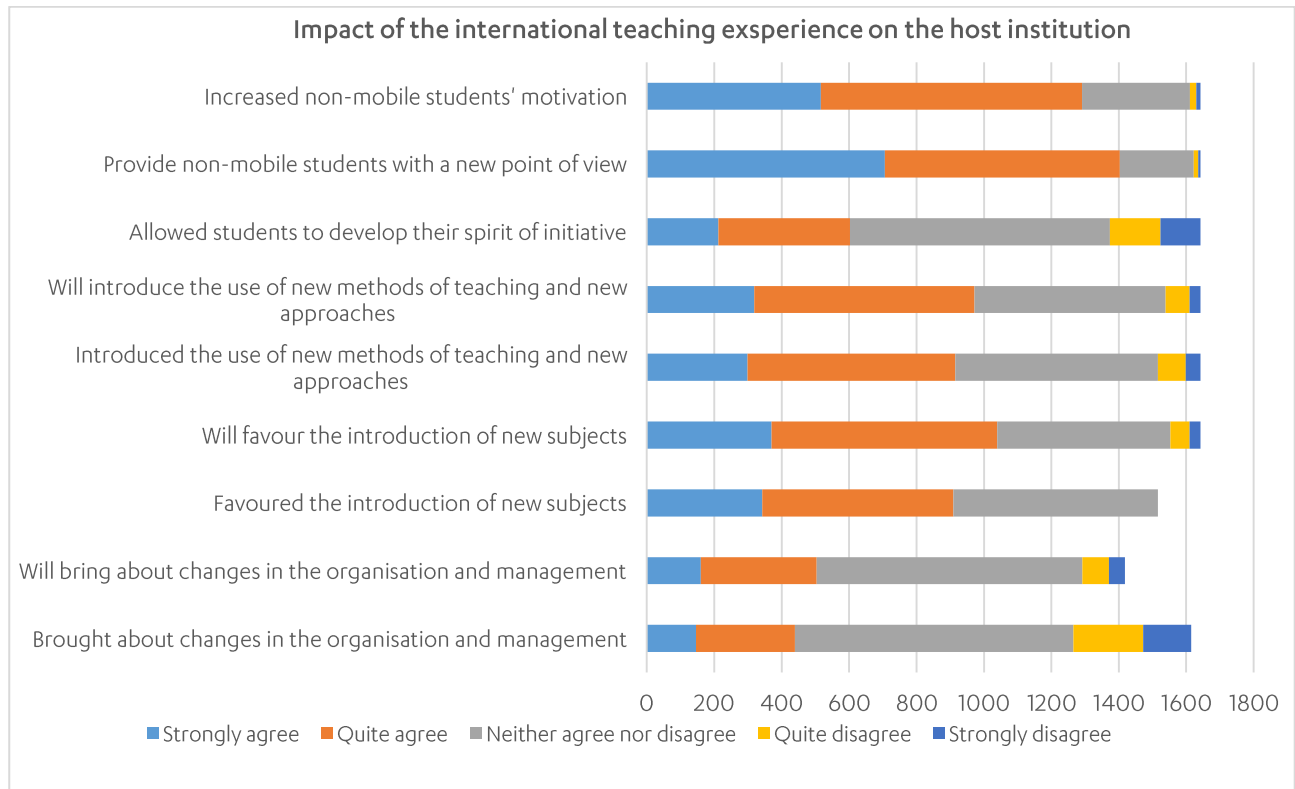
Investing in staff mobility abroad has a strong impact on the cooperation with partner institutions; this aspect receives the majority of positive answers from beneficiaries when they are questioned about the impact of the international teaching and training experience on the home institution. They agree in saying that through their experience relationships with foreign institutions can be strengthened and networks can be developed. Equally strong impact on the home institution is highlighted also in terms of internationalisation by encouraging the introduction of new teaching methods, pedagogical approaches and exchange of best practices. Opinions are instead less defined regarding changes brought about in the organisation and management, with a prevailing number of undecided people. (fig.3).

Fig. 3 Impact of teaching and training international experiences on the home institution



When teachers are asked to self-evaluate the impact of their presence on the receiving institution, their answers emphasise the introduction of new teaching methods and subjects. The perception of provoking effects is stronger with students: beneficiaries agree on the impression of having brought to non-mobile students a new point of view on the outside (“internationalisation at home”) and enhanced motivation to start an experience of study and training abroad. Motivation becomes less clear regarding possible changes brought about in the organisation and management of the partner institution and the development of the entrepreneurial spirit of students (“the answer neither agree nor disagree prevails”) (fig.4)

Fig. 4 Impact of the international teaching experience on the host institution



The recognition of the mobility period is treated in a discretionary manner. Generally 46% of the answers highlight a non-formal recognition or even some forms of final certification. (Specifically, 30% of beneficiaries declared they expect to receive a non-formal recognition” and 16% “no recognition”). If the two types of activities are analysed separately it is clear that in the area of training the non-official recognition prevails; while teachers include the time spent abroad in their annual work plan. 22% of teachers and 15% of in-training staff include the mobility period in the annual evaluation of performances (Fig. 5). The answers about the type of recognitions are organised into those who declared they were satisfied 48% of the cases) and those who thought that other forms of recognition could have been used (22% of the answers) (fig. 6). When the beneficiary was asked what form of recognition would have been appropriate the prevailing answer was the inclusion of mobility in the final evaluation of activities and in the annual plan, increasing in this way the weight of this activity in the organisation and recognising the added value that the experience abroad gives to work activities; economical reward was also increasingly mentioned (fig 7).

Fig. 5 Expectations about the recognition of the mobility period:

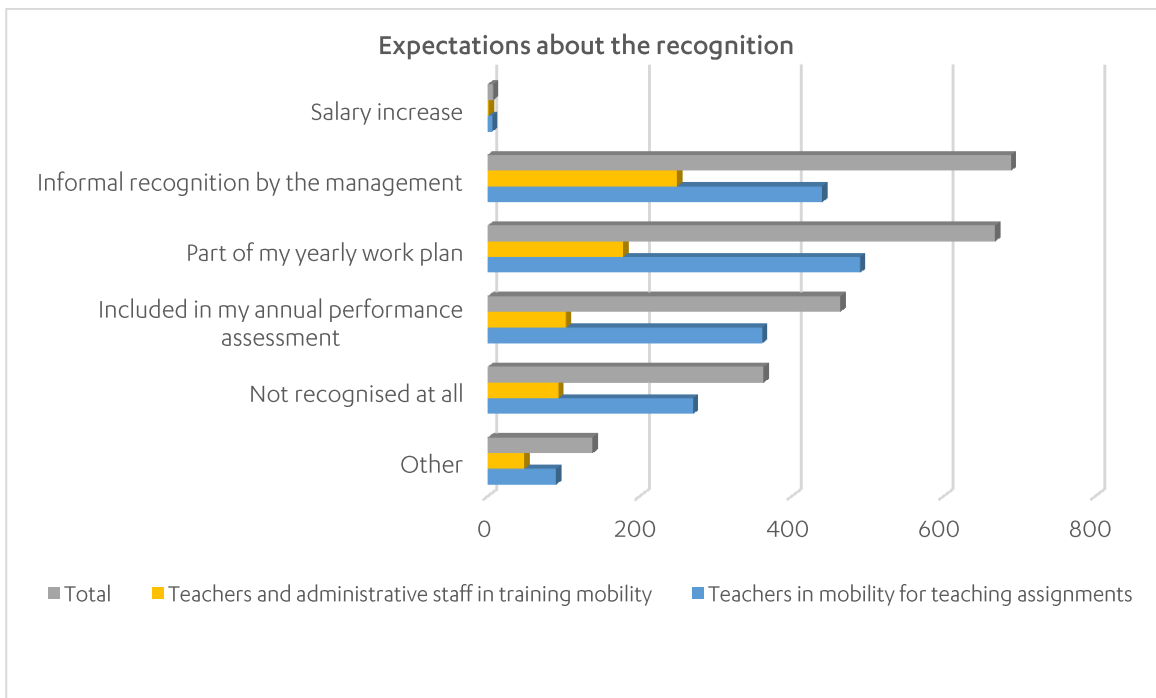


Fig. 6 Satisfaction about the modality of recognition

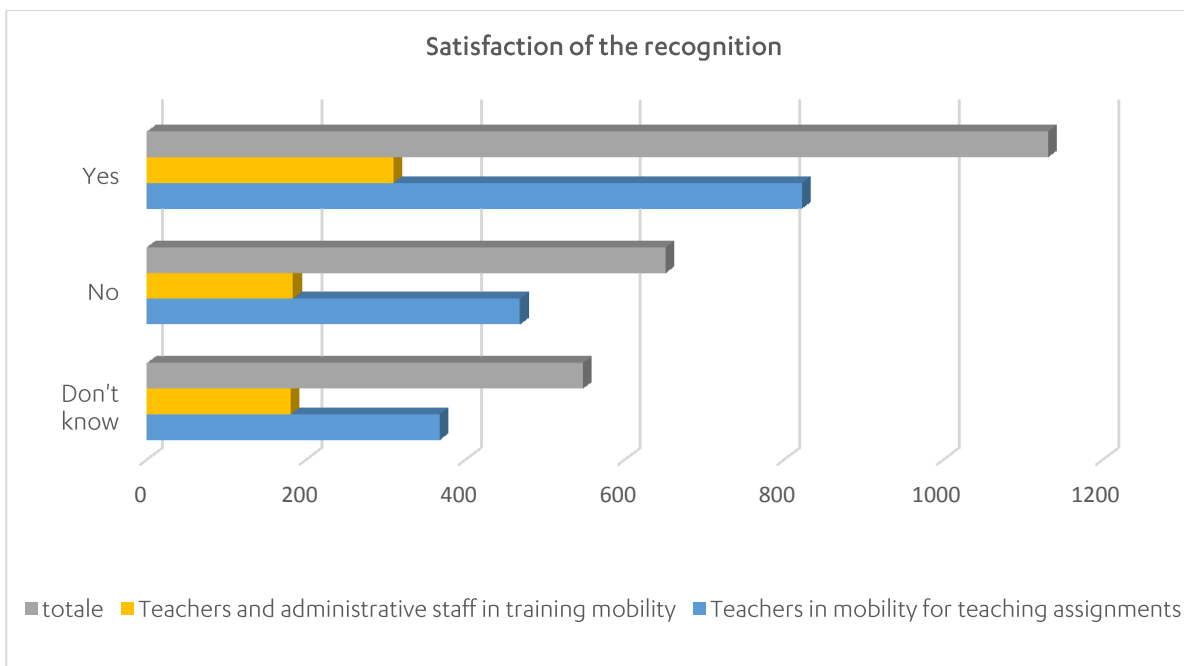
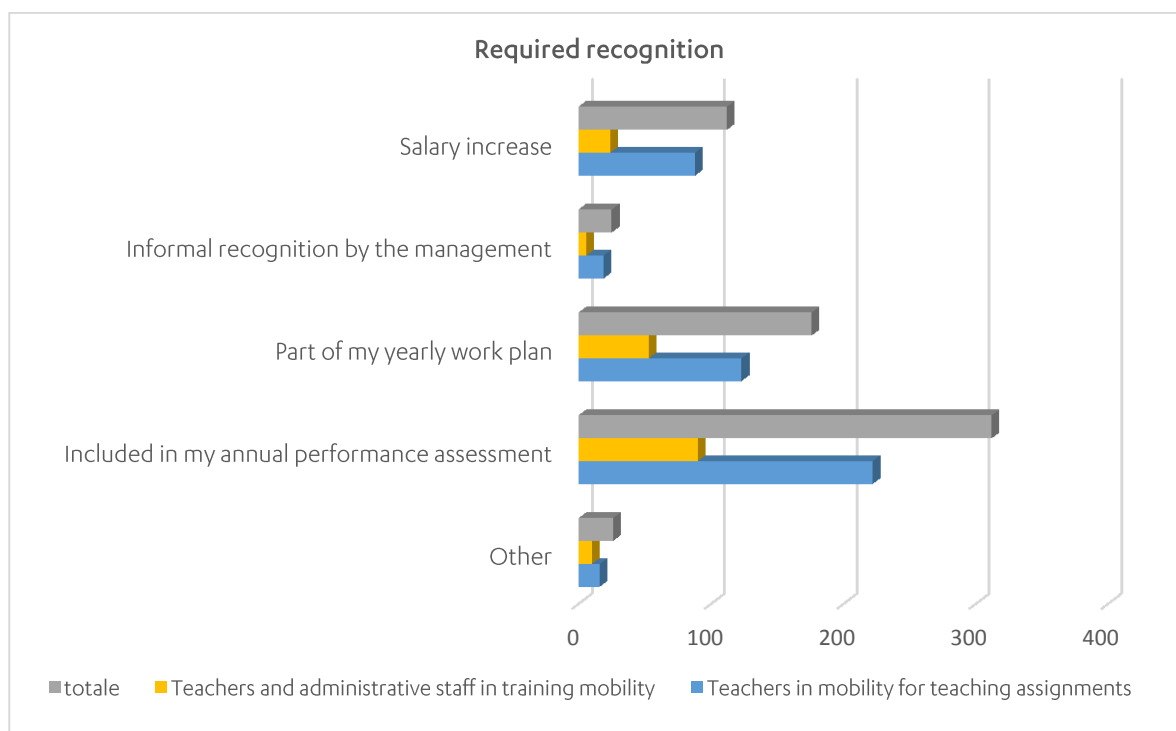


Fig.7 Required recognition



In both types of mobility the appreciation rate was very high with 98% of participants who declared they were very satisfied (80%) or quite satisfied (18%); moreover, to confirm the positive outcome of the experience the percentage of beneficiaries who would suggest it to a colleague was almost 100% (figures 8 and 9).

Fig. 8 Appreciation of the mobility experience

Appreciation of the mobility experience	STA*	STT**	Total
Very satisfied	1.312	561	1,873
Quite satisfied	328	106	434
No opinion	11	4	15
Quite dissatisfied	-	-	-
Very dissatisfied	2		2
Total	1,657	672	2,329

Fig. 9 Suggesting mobility to a colleague

Suggesting mobility to a colleague	STA*	STT**	Total
yes	1.650	672	2.322
No	7		7
Total	1,657	672	2,329

* Staff Mobility for Teaching Assignments

** Staff Mobility for Training

Conclusions

The programme aims to improve integration of teaching and non-teaching staff mobility in the policies of their Institutions. The answers to the Participant's Reports provided by teachers and staff in mobility follow this trend: the participant, strongly encouraged to leave by his/her institution perceives that his/her experience abroad had a positive impact in terms of internationalisation by intensifying cooperation with partner organisations and introducing new teaching methods, pedagogical approaches and exchange of best practices. As far as hosting institutions are concerned, non-mobile students highlighted the effect of mobility in what is called internationalisation at home and the incentive to take part in experiences of study and internship abroad. As regarding recognition, results showed that the experience abroad is not included in a specific way in the career of the beneficiary. Many expectations were met supporting a positive attitude towards the future developments of the programme.

Chapter 3 – Staff Learning mobility Erasmus+. First results in the field of adult education

Premise

Our analysis avails itself of essentially two tools for the management of the programme’s actions, the data bank Epluslink and a breakthrough in the implementation of Erasmus+: the platform Mobility tool, that is, a digital environment where the Commission, the National Agency and beneficiary institutions interact. The system interface allows users to fill out monitoring documents required at the various stages of designing, to enter data, and update and modify them at different times. This third chapter aims to take stock of and highlight the first effects of the impact of annual KA1 projects. Our research sample was made up of 18 projects that involved 214 people who took part in adult education staff mobility abroad. The analysis is based on two documents issued by the European Commission, the final report, useful to identify possible critical issues but also best practices emerged during the projects’ life cycle, and the **Participant Report Form** a sort of report participants draw up at the end of their activity that is structured as a questionnaire mainly to collect quantitative data relating to the type of activity carried out, its duration, the country of destination, the results produced in terms of learning outcomes, competences and new abilities acquired. The interesting aspect of the Report is the possibility to elaborate additional quantitative data among which the motivations that sustained the choices of participants, the impact of learning at personal/professional level and on the institution, and the intention to carry out other Erasmus+ projects. This is significant information that draws a rather complete picture of what has been realised and offers food for thought on how the activity abroad was received by participants in terms of quality impact.

The main sections of the Participant Report Form are: **Purpose of the Participant report, Identification of the Participant and General Information, Achievements and impact, Certification and Formal Recognition, Conclusions**. The analysis we developed availed itself of this tool providing the point of view of the interested parties: teachers and trainers who deemed useful to take part in an experience that could have developed their knowledge and professional competences, create a network of new partners and favour the development of new practices in their institutions. The sessions of the report form are organised in groups of multiple choice questions. From the comparison of the aggregated data extrapolated from the 214 reports, attempts have been made to draw up, both at short and long term, the actual and future impact of KA1 projects, identifying possible critical issues and strengths.

Fig.1 KA1 mobility projects adult education sector, financed in 2014

KA1 annual project financed in 2014	18	214	427.213
KA1 biannual projects financed in 2014	6	123	232,624
Total	24	337	659,837

The mobilities foreseen in the 24 projects approved were in total 337, organised into two types of training: structured courses or training events (including job shadowing activities) and teaching /training assignments.

Fig. 2 Types of training abroad and number of people involved

Types of mobility	Participants
<i>Staff training</i>	179
<i>Teaching /training assignments</i>	35
Total	214

First assessment of the KA1 annual project, 2014-2015

The concept of individual mobility in Erasmus + has changed significantly since this learning experience is part of a European development plan addressing staff's training needs as part of a strategy of innovation and internationalisation of education. Among the main aims of the KA1 mobility projects there is the drawing up of a monitoring strategy and evaluation to make sure that the activities foreseen are relevant and have a real impact on the quality of teaching introducing didactic innovation and development of educational systems. In the training staff category many different activities can be realised: a job-shadowing period or participating in events and thematic conferences. The data of all the different types of education and training activities abroad, carried out by the beneficiaries in one year, are listed in the table above. The average duration of structured courses is generally 5-7 days (there are also courses of two weeks), whereas the activities have a duration ranging from 2 to 14 days.

Countries of destination of mobility, divided by type: training activities abroad and teaching/training activities. The most requested country to carry out an experience of staff training abroad (the category includes courses, thematic conferences and job shadowing) was the United Kingdom (33), followed by Spain (25), France (22), Romania (20), Lithuania (15), Finland (12), Germany (9), Malta (8), and other countries (Figure 3). The high number of training activities carried out in the United Kingdom is motivated by the fact that many courses are linguistic courses, that is to say, centred on the teaching of foreign languages (usually the English language) and in-depth courses, but we also found training activities focused on different themes and teaching methods, for example on the use of theatre for social inclusion, citizenship and individual entrepreneurship, European planning and the involvement of disadvantaged groups.

Fig. 3 Country of destination for the training activities (structured courses, conferences, job shadowing)

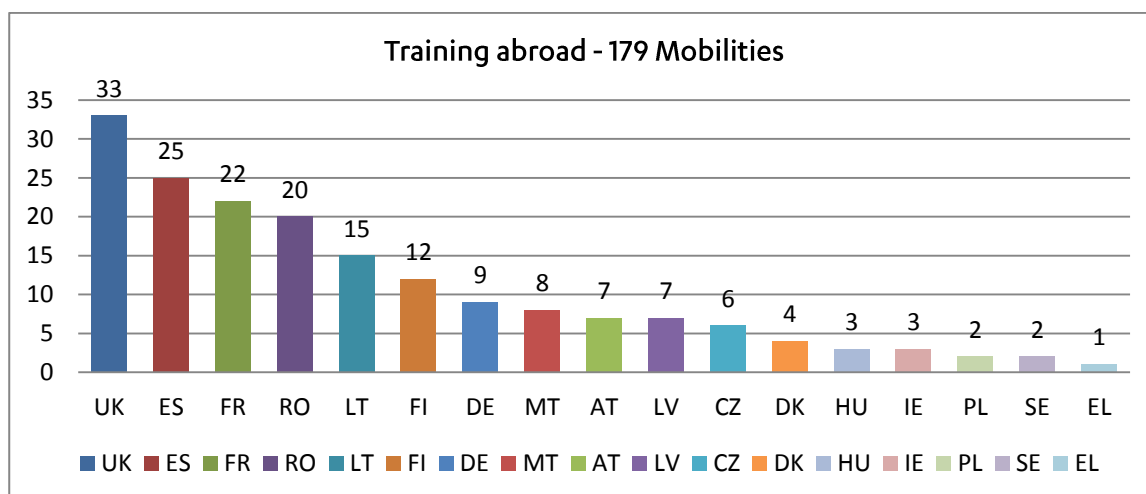
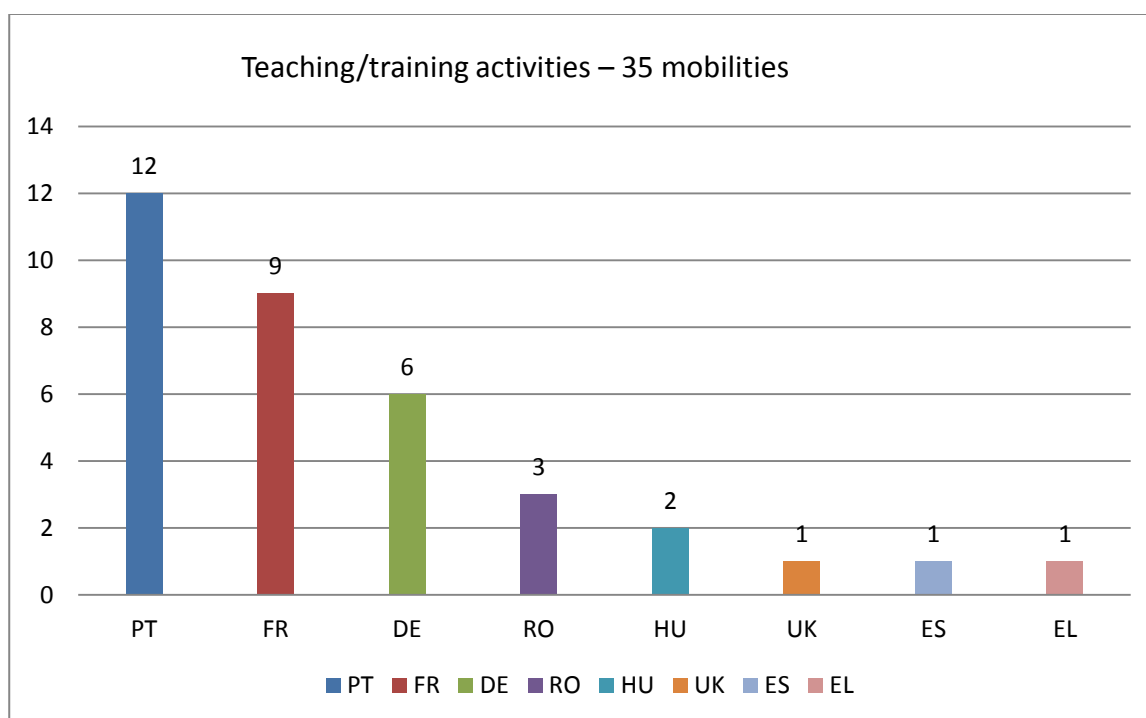


Fig. 4 Countries where teaching/training activities were carried out

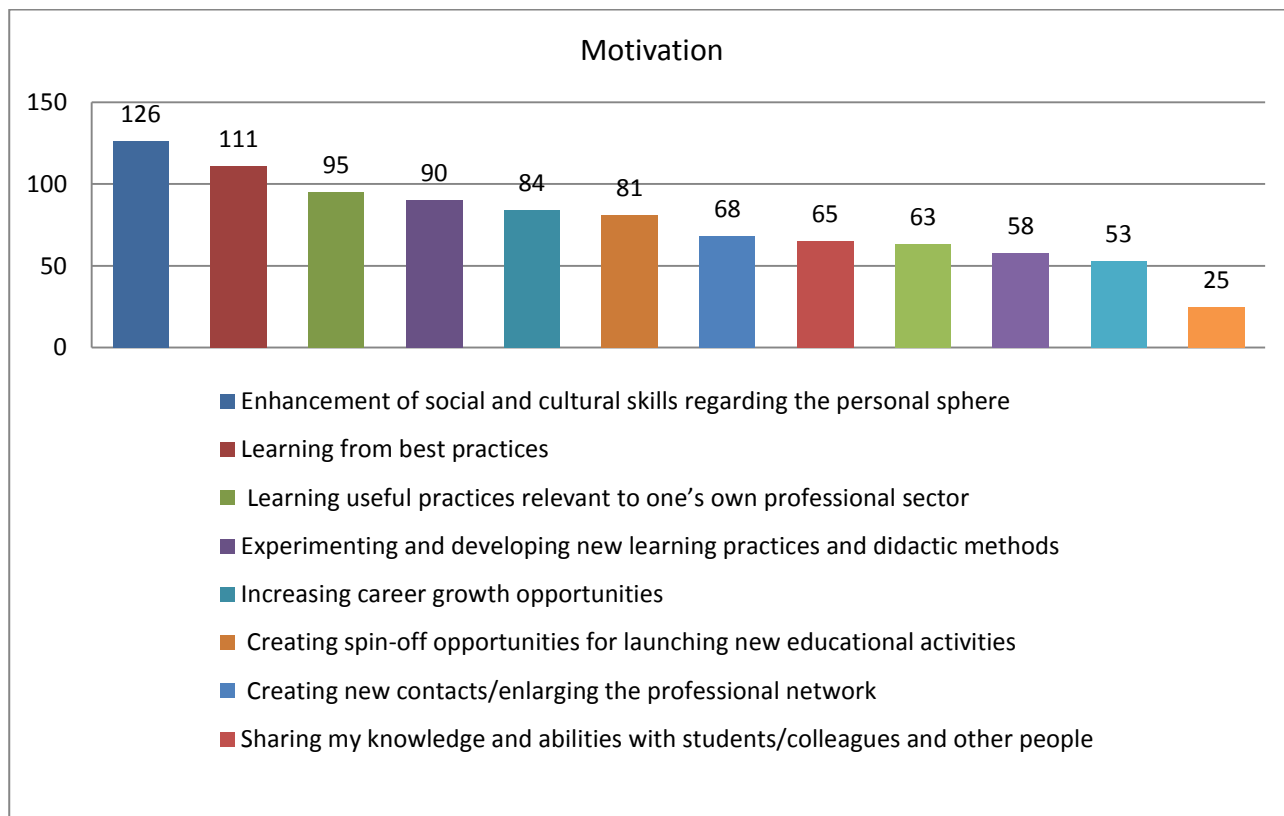


Motivations

The analysis of the experiences of training abroad highlights the process of identification of the motivations that led to the planning of activities relating to the training needs. Among the motivations and the most recurrent expectations emerging from the *Participant Report*, there is the enhancement of social and cultural skills regarding the personal sphere (126). The other most significant motivation is learning from best practices (11) followed by the need to learn useful practices relevant to one's own professional sector (95). A Leitmotif of in-service training mobility is the acquisition of new teaching practices, in particular as far as adult formal education is concerned: 90 participants out of 214 are motivated by this need, so quite a high percentage (42%) if we consider that formal adult education is a sector that has recently been

reorganised in the provincial centres for adult education (CPIA)³. The other aspects are related to career growth opportunities (84), development of innovative ideas and spin-off experiences for new activities (81), enlargement of professional network (68), sharing knowledge and abilities with students or colleagues (65), increase satisfaction on the job (63), create new contacts (58), strengthen cooperation with the partner institution (53), build cooperation with players in the world of work (25).

Fig. 5 Motivations for training



Appreciation rating

The training experience abroad has always contributed (from Socrates, LLP, to Erasmus +) to improve professional skills and promote employability, as well as to enhance personal development at work and in the community. There are many benefits that can be drawn from this type of experience and the two most important are: the improvement of language skills and the enhancement of skills that in an increasingly intercultural world will be useful throughout life. This can be inferred from the responses that the beneficiaries gave regarding the degree of satisfaction with the activity carried out: 188 chose the option "very satisfied" and 21 "quite satisfied" (Figure 9). Overall, the training offer proved to be qualitatively valid.

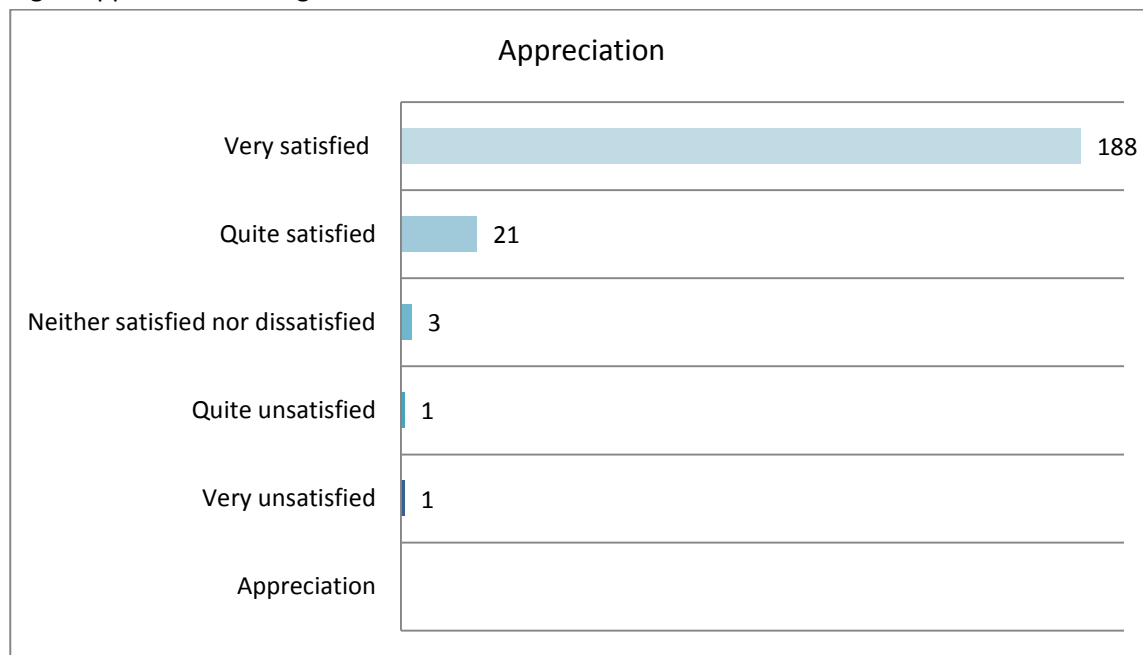
Regarding the digital tools for researching training activities in other countries, it seems useful to mention the new digital platforms, the School Education Gateway⁴ and for the adult sector Epale⁵

³ CPIA (Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti) are institutions where formal educational pathways are provided to students of any age. The reform which established them was in 2012.

⁴ School Education Gateway (linked to eTwinning, the community for schools in Europe) is a unified access portal for teachers, schools, experts and other actors in the educational sector. It presents European educational policies, news,

that are very useful for those wishing to choose courses, seminars or job shadowing in another European institution. Unfortunately, for the moment, we do not have a precise figure on the number of training activities abroad identified through EPALE, the virtual Community dedicated to the EDA world (Educazione degli adulti - Adult Education), a multilingual portal in continuous growth for teachers, trainers, researchers, academics and policy makers engaged in adult education in Europe.

Fig. 6 Appreciation rating of the activities carried out



Impact at professional level

The main objective of the KA1 Action was providing participants with the opportunity to: acquire enhanced knowledge about the European dimension of adult education; deepen the knowledge of different educational systems; and improve one's own linguistic, professional and cultural competences. Another breakthrough of the KA1 projects is the strong influence and impact of the personal experience on the entire institution. Small associations and large training centres have integrated and updated their offer with European experiences as the need to get out of the national network and start building contacts with the rest of the world increased.

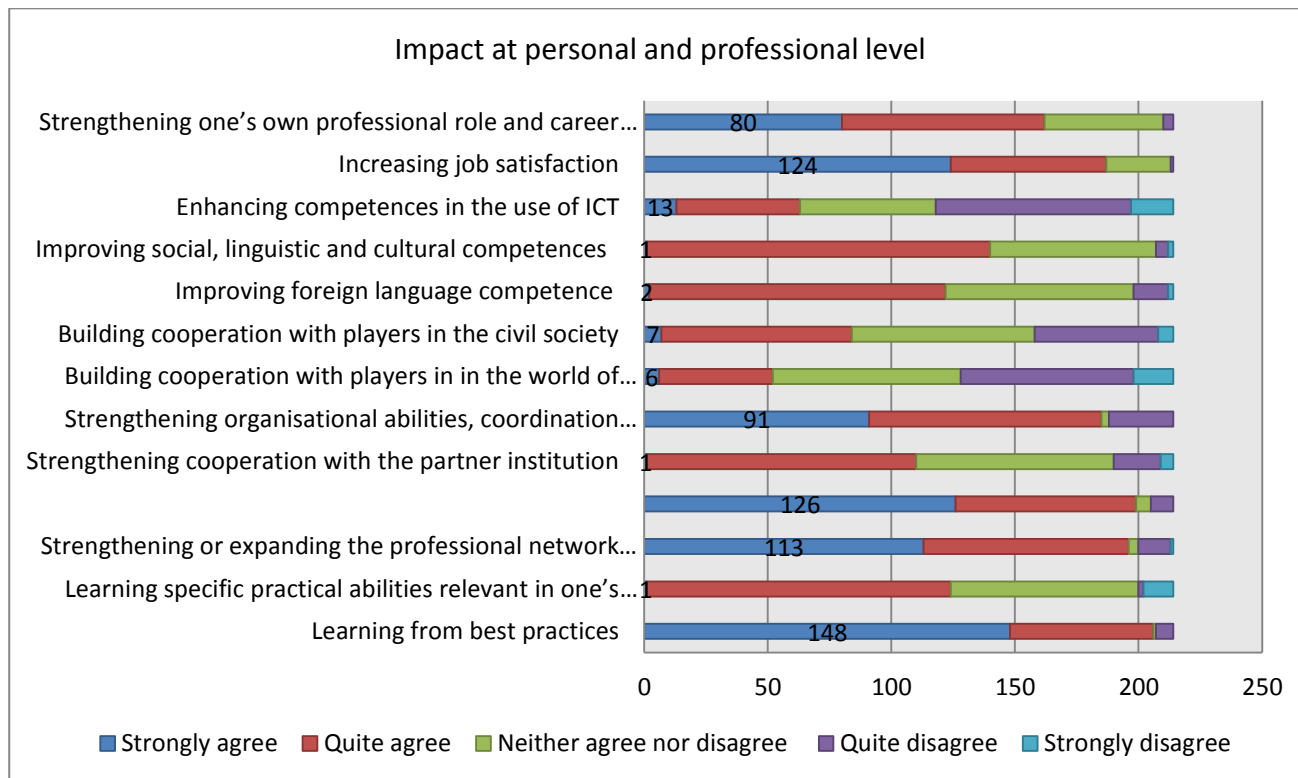
The participants had to rate their approval of certain statements, choosing between strongly agree, quite agree, agree, disagree, quite disagree and strongly disagree. Among the most chosen aspects of improvement and growth there was to learn new methodologies and teaching approaches for the implementation of best practices (148 strongly agree) that highlights a deep need for exchange, and learning from direct experiences and from the hands-on experience of European colleagues. There is also a marked preference for all those professional skills that affect the improvement of professional skills in

trends, expert articles, national initiatives, actions for schools, areas for interaction, educational projects, best practices and other resources. <http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/index.htm>

⁵ The Epale platform, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, is organised around the sharing of content relating to adult learning, including news, blog posts, resources, events and courses, <http://ec.europa.eu/epale/it/about>

teaching, such as sharing their knowledge and skills with learners (126), strengthening organisational skills (113), improving job satisfaction (124). Those who have chosen the option "neither agree nor disagree" show that probably they do not yet have sufficient elements and useful parameters to measure the impact of their learning (it could be considered the equivalent of "I do not know").

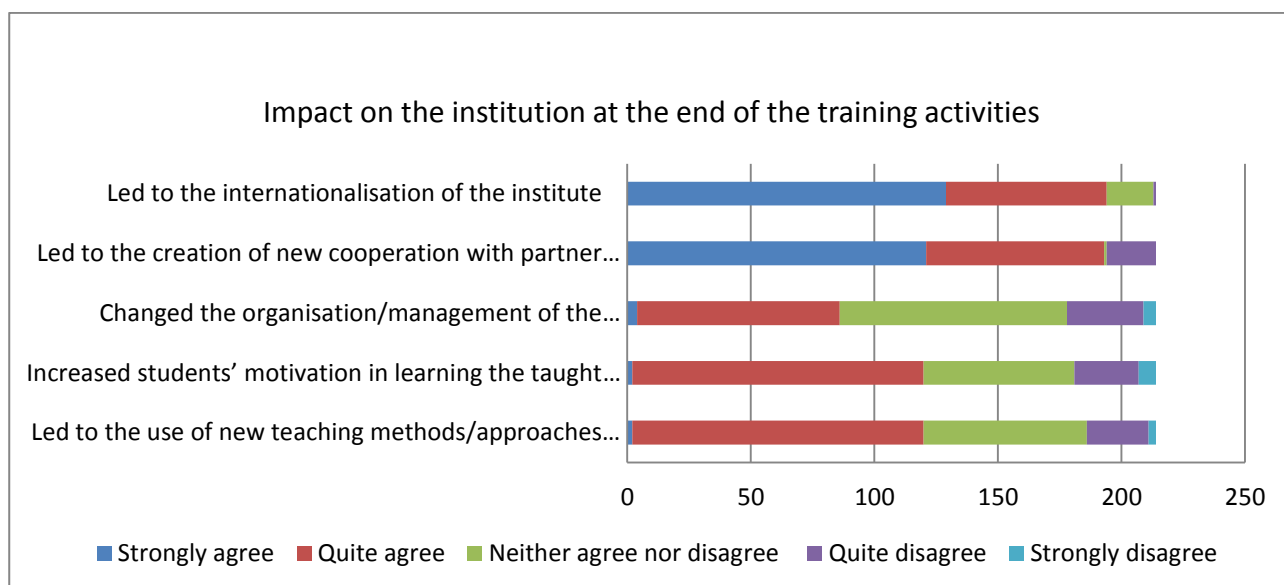
Fig. 7 Short term impact of the experience at professional level



Impact at the institution level

As far as the quality of learning is concerned, we have repeatedly noticed that during the activity it is possible to meet many people with whom it is possible to create future collaborations and projects, while from the management and organisational point of view, other methods of administrative application are discovered and adopted. The contamination between different knowledges and methodologies brings new stimuli and greater involvement also to adult learners. The figure below shows which improvements have taken place at the level of the institute, in particular for the educational and managerial sectors.

Fig. 8 Impact on the institution



Focus group

In order to have an objective feedback and verify some of the theses discussed during the analysis of the documents and the digital questionnaires, we deemed useful a direct exchange with the people behind the data elaborated in the graphs and tables previously showed. The most appropriate methodological process for our qualitative analysis seemed to be the focus group, a flexible technique to detect opinions of an interest group on a specific theme. The objective of the focus group was to collect the experiences carried out during learning mobility and the investigation method used was a questionnaire specially set up by the National Agency and submitted to the participants during the event. The working table was participate in by two cultural and theatre associations, **Teatro due mondi** (Faenza) and **Mirmica** (Milan) committed to theatre pedagogy for social inclusion and the involvement of disadvantaged groups; a research and training body that offers qualification and requalification courses and carries out social researches, **E.RI.FO** (Florence); and finally, the Centro Iniziativa Democratica Insegnanti, Cidi (Grosseto) - Centre for teacher's democratic initiative, an association of teachers of all types of schools and subjects dealing with professional updating initiatives and didactical research.

At the end of the meeting a series of strengths highlighted during the debate were outlined:

- the sharing of all project activities during the drafting of the European development plan
- monitoring and evaluation of training, both in progress and at the end of the activities
- the involvement of other local institutions
- the opportunity to see and learn about other institutions operating in the same sector
- the adoption of new teaching methods and the opportunity to pass on their educational skills
- dissemination and exploitation of results to expand the network of international collaborations

No particular critical issues emerged and we verified in several moments that everyone in the group had fully realized the planned activities. The only issue to report was the request by the beneficiaries to carry

out further meetings (focus groups) with other institutions involved in the KA1 action and with the National Agency, at different times, as an opportunity for a collective reflection on the experiences realised, to systematically investigate the value and significance of learning mobility, especially after a year or two from the project's conclusion.

Conclusions

The first results of the KA1 project are yielding results and several objectives have been achieved. It might be too early to assess the success rate of these first experiences of training of the staff involved in adult education, but we thought useful and appropriate to understand what had happened in the first 12-15 months of Erasmus+, during the implementation process of the 18 KA1 projects. The strong point emerged in the new planning dedicated to training abroad was the central role of the European Development Plan. All the staff involved in mobility showed increased awareness of the meaning of learning in an international dimension both at personal/professional level and at the institution level. Also those who didn't take part in the experience have developed new strategies and innovative methods for planning didactic activities thanks to the analysis of the training needs of the institute, and contributed to the quality of the training project abroad.

Inevitably, this new approach, produced a series of changes: the organisations dealing with adult education that are actually very limited and local, were involved in the European project and almost all of them started a series of initiatives relating to the competences learnt abroad and invested in training to improve study and learning methods.

During the analysis we noticed that in parallel with the quantitative growth in the participation in the mobility a qualitative growth of planning was produced. The impact of this change could be measured in a systematic way in the next years, but a first goal was achieved: in the institutions, after the shared reflection on the necessity of training the full awareness of the importance of active commitment for all age groups and in any learning environment was achieved. The success/failure of training abroad depends mainly on the strategic commitment of all the actors involved and on the full realisation of all the activities foreseen in the project life cycle. The strong motivation sustaining a KA1 project will necessarily produce long-lasting and sustainable results.