Youth Partnership

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Community Impact Indicators for Learning Mobility
Desk research

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Content

Acronyms

CIPPEC – Center for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth

EPLM – European Platform on Learning Mobility

E-QUA – Erasmus QUAlity hosting Framework

ESS – European Social Survey

ESC – European Solidarity Corps

EU – European Union

EU-SILC – European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions

IDP – Internally Displaced Person

IOM – International Organisation for Migration

ISCED – International Standard Classification of Education

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PT – Programme Theory

RAY network – Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of European Youth Programmes

SALTO ESC RC – SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre

SALTO RC – SALTO Resource Centre

TOC – Theory of Change

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Introduction

"*The impact on sending and hosting communities is in many cases only a by-product in mobility projects, something that happens on the side while organisers are focusing on the learning processes of the participants. However, if you deem that there is potential that the project may also benefit communities, you should think this aspect into your project from the start and reflect on what you can do to promote this.*" (Kristensen 2019: 160)

The impact of learning mobility on the participants of the projects is well known, broadly researched and published. However, while the impact on communities is known by practitioners or experts of the youth field, and often referred to as "added impact", it is rarely neither at the centre of studies nor measured. Recent developments in European youth policies and programmes show that more emphasis is put on understanding the impact not only on the individual level, but also on the local community or wider society.

In order to carry out research on the impact of learning mobility on communities, it is necessary to focus on some preliminary questions: What constitutes impact? And, for that matter, how can we define a community? What does a community entail? What do we already know and what more do we need to know in order to improve learning mobility programmes, projects and initiatives? What is feasible? How is impact ensured and evaluated? Which sectors of youth work are aware of the existing information, and who else needs to know? How is the research being connected to policy makers and practitioners across Europe? How is policy being built on the evidence from practice?

Background information

The work on the indicators of the impact of learning mobility on community stems from the previous research and activities of the EPLM network.

The conference "The Power of Learning Mobility", held in Ostend in April 2019, focused on the impact of learning mobility on different levels: the impact on the individual level, the organisational level and the community level – as well as their connections and mutual influence. The preparation for this conference highlighted the lack of profound research and material on the impact of learning mobility on the community level. In a follow up to the conference, **desk research on social impact tools and resources** was conducted in 2019, mapping and analysing the existing material.

Then, **the desk research on indicators of social impact** analysed existing approaches for indicators of impact on different levels. From this analysis came the following findings:

1. There is a lack of coherent research approaches to assessing the impact of learning mobility for communities or society.
2. Various research results indicate that there are effects of learning mobility programmes on home and host community:

- individual learning effects have impact on the person's assessment of the sending community upon return;
- fostering of co-operation;
- increased participation, increased involvement in community issues, increased interest in political issues;
- higher acceptance of diversity in society (sending community).

3. Concrete indicators or methods for measuring the impact on the community level are seldom formulated.
4. Existing indicators and methods for impact assessment are almost exclusively focused on the participants and project leaders or managers.

Based on the previous work on this topic, this current paper focuses on community impact from the following perspectives:

- it looks at the impact of learning mobility on both the hosting and sending communities;
- it looks at community impact from three angles: individual, (youth) organisations and community;
- it looks at various thematic topics, including the following:
  i) employment (labour market as well as training and employability);
  ii) education and skill / competence development;
  iii) infrastructure;
  iv) co-operation and networking;
  v) participation, democracy, and active citizenship;
  vi) culture and diversity;
  vii) tolerance – acceptance – respect;
  viii) inclusion;
  ix) identities and belonging.

These topics, although interrelated and mutually influential, can be grouped in different thematic areas which are analysed in this report as a basis for the development of indicators on the impact of learning mobility on hosting and sending communities.

While the indicators offer an objective, non-context-specific approach, they are significant at this time as they will also help to assess the impact on communities of the redefinition of learning mobility, driven by the lockdown measures imposed by Covid-19. These indicators can also offer insight into how the high level of community engagement and collaboration, which was witnessed in many communities in an effort to prevent the dissemination of the disease, had any connection or linkage with learning mobility.

Besides this research, the European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre also further explored the topic of community impact. This stemmed from the need of organisations in the field to translate the recent research into a practical guide that explains the basics of the concept and provides some examples of how to improve community impact starting from the project level.

Thematic areas

Area 1: Skills, competences, employability

Many types of mobility programme emphasise as their key goal the acquisition of skills and competences that can be useful in the labour market. Different types of (hard and soft) skills that could be learnt and/or developed abroad are one of the main reasons why young people engage in mobility programmes in the first place.

More and more academic research and project evaluation reports show the impact of learning mobility on the individual level, where engaged individuals acquire new knowledge, develop skills and competences that increase their chances of finding a (good and well-paid) job. The transfer of knowledge, skills, competence and experience from one social context to another could have an impact on the local labour market and community. If a young person returns to their country, she or he participates in the process of knowledge and skills transfer which enriches the home community.

Area 2: Active citizenship and participation

Community engagement is of paramount importance to achieve a participatory, active, inclusive and peaceful civil society. Citizenship education and participation are therefore at the core of many of the programmes that support learning mobility and manuals for youth workers or youth leaders. The rationale behind learning mobility and youth work is to create a more active, responsible society that, in the long run, understands and lives by the principles of active citizenship in general, and European citizenship in particular.

Young people play a significant role towards that paradigm (Christens and Zeldin 2011), but the extent to which their participation in learning mobility programmes, projects and initiatives concretely unfolds remains to be assessed.

The type of impact that goes through the direct participants of the learning mobility into societies could indeed be significant but is rarely proven with evidence and is mainly based on the personal opinions of the participants. In this sense, it is not possible to draw general and thorough conclusions on how community impact concretely unfolds. Impact usually remains abstract as the concepts of participation and citizenship education are rather broad. In this sense, there is a need to develop indicators that could show that the change in a community has occurred, and how it might look, when each of these areas is assessed.

Area 3: Social capital, culture and return migration

Building on the Council of Europe's indicators for intercultural dialogue in non-formal education activities, this section focuses on proposing community impact indicators of intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue in the context of youth learning mobility.

Intercultural learning in this context refers to the process of becoming more aware of, and having a better understanding of, one's own culture and reflecting on both our identity (identities) and other cultures, in order to increase international and cross-cultural tolerance. According to this concept, culture is understood as a term holding various elements: customs and traditions, religions and norms, gender roles, social structures (such as the concept of family), degree of individualisation or degree of openness.

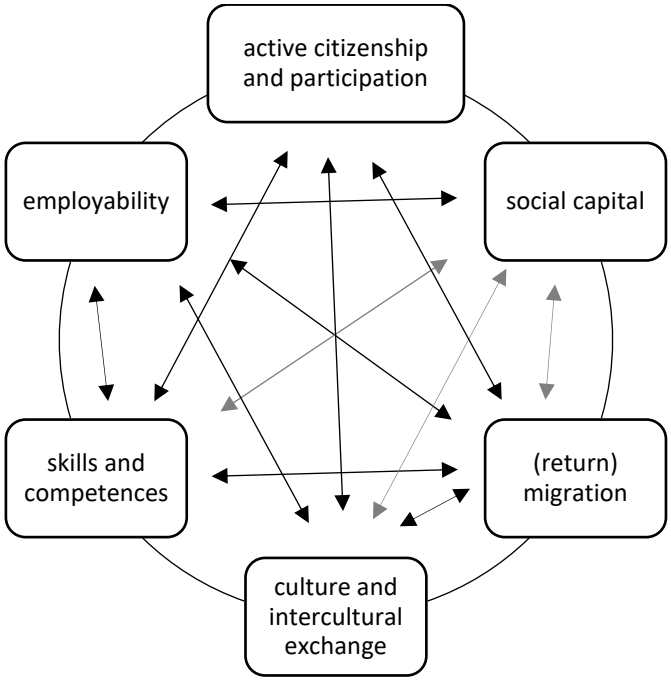
Social capital can be understood, following Putnam (2001), as connections between individuals, social networks and norms based on reciprocity and trust. These connections can be bonding inside groups of individuals referring and creating a feeling of common identity, bridging to other groups and linking between socially structured groups. Learning mobility creates new connections, thus changing existing social networks in hosting and sending communities. Recent discussions also focus on the mutual influence of social capital and solidarity.

The impact of return migration after mid- to long-term learning mobility is strongly connected to changes in social capital in the communities of the returnees – both on the sending and the hosting side.

Indicators of community impact in this section focus on the following points: the change of awareness and reflection of identities; changes in intercultural understanding, openness to diversity and trans-cultural change of communities' bonds, bridges and links in communities, solidarity, infrastructural connections and innovations.

It is important to remember that the three areas and their subtopics are interconnected and mutually influencing, thereby also multiplying the impact.

Figure 1: Areas of impact – mutual connectedness



The report is structured in five chapters covering the three areas and it is organised according to the intersections and connections of the subtopics: participation and active citizenship; social capital; skills and competences; culture and intercultural exchange; and (return) migration. Therefore, it shows and analyses examples of existing indicators in these fields. In each chapter, those same indicators are then presented in tables to provide insights in the different fields and measurement methods, determined by different research interests. Some of the indicators can serve as concrete models for indicators on the impact of learning mobility on communities. Other existing indicators are particularly interesting for the special area that they are measuring. Consequently, the examples presented are illustrations for the fields that should be included in the development of indicators, as well as models for the way in which they concretely measure.

In the conclusion, the authors suggest a system of indicators to measure the impact of learning mobility on communities structured by both the activity/project timeline and the level of reference of data provision. Although a current framework of indicators is by no means a final one, it can already foster reflection for all the stakeholders in mobility projects: young participants, project leaders/partners, and people involved in organisations and/or communities.

Community impact of learning mobility – existing research

Impact at the community level is mentioned as a significant goal of almost all learning mobility programmes. In addition to the positive effects expected at the individual, organisational and institutional levels, changes are also expected at the community level. Through sending and receiving individuals, the communities should enrich their capacities, become more open to diversity, and have more respect for European values.

In this regard, the European Platform on Learning Mobility (EPLM) initiated the development of methods for monitoring the effects of different learning mobility programmes on the individual, organisational and community levels. So far, several significant steps have been taken:

1. In 2018, the first desk analysis was conducted which analysed the importance of learning mobility and its impact on communities (Garbauskaite-Jakimovska 2018).
2. In April 2019, the EPLM Conference: Power of Learning Mobility (Ostend) was organised, and its main goal was to explore what learning mobility means for communities and society at large, as well as to enable conditions for more cohesive societies, improve the altruism that comes with making a community a better place, and provide equal opportunities for all.
3. Initial research on community impact. Two desk analyses were conducted during 2019 with the aim of mapping the resources and creating a starting point for researching the effects of learning mobility.
    a. Desk Research on Indicators of Social Impact
    b. Desk Research on Social Impact Tools and Resources
4. In 2020, an initiative for writing the paper "Vision for the EPLM: Quality Learning Mobility for Positive Community and Societal Impact" was launched – "since the emphasis on the role of the community in learning mobility is growing, we often need evidence that the value of learning mobility for and impact on the community is there" (p. 2).
5. In 2020, an internal working document for the EPLM Steering Group "Community impact – a practical guide" was created. This internal document then evolved, with support from the European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre, into the Practical Guide to Community impact (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska, Nicodemi and Severino (2020)).

This research and development of indicators is part of the ongoing quest to evaluate the broader impact of learning mobility programmes, projects and initiatives.

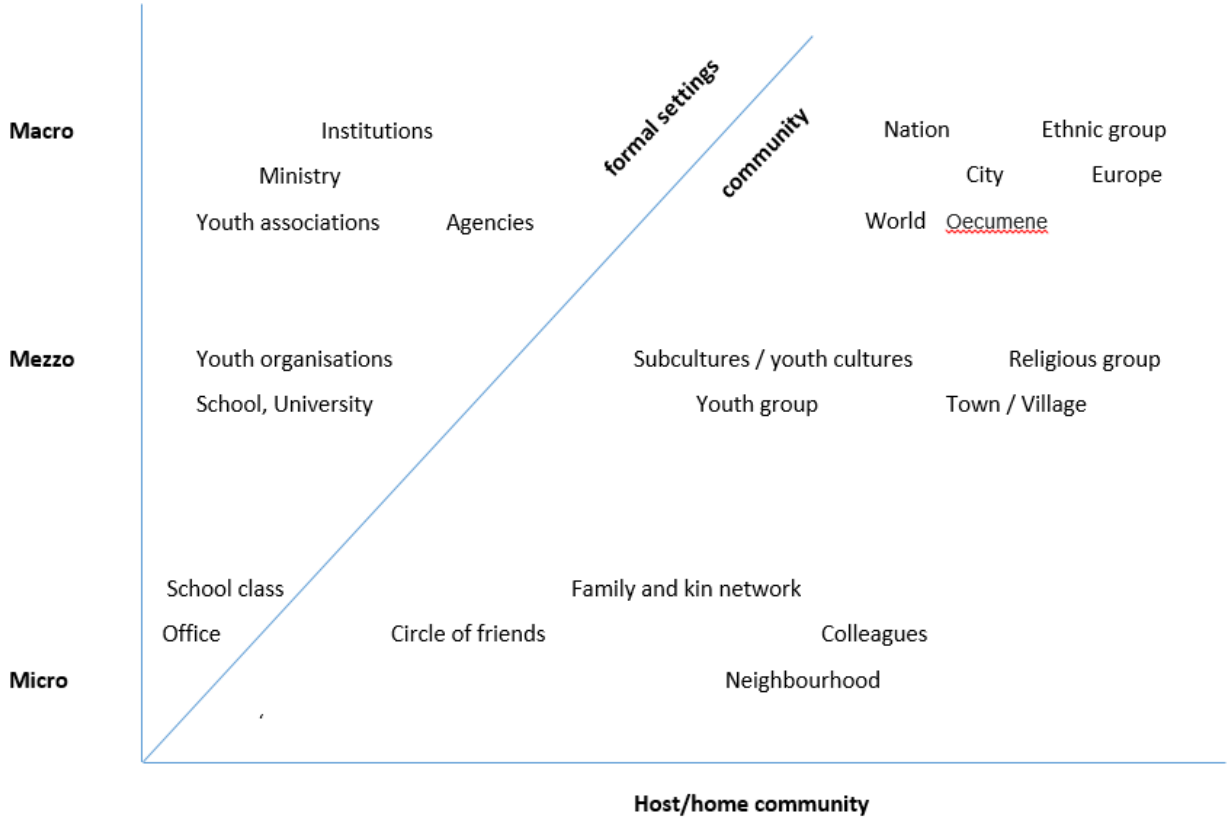
What is community?

Crow identifies community as people who have something in common, but there is much debate about precisely what that core common element is (Crow 2007: 617). The classical definition of community given by F. Tönnies (1955) implies grouping based on place of residence, feelings, some similar attributes, sense of belonging, identification and common goals. The classical community is a traditional village, and opposite to the community stands a society – which is rationally arranged and guided by instrumental goals. Although we have fewer and fewer of these traditional communities, it does not mean that communities of people do not survive; they only change some of the attributes, but the key ones remain – social connections, common perspective (or goals), common actions, identification and common space (face-to-face or virtual). Community in this sense implies personal involvement and a certain degree of investment in the functioning of the social group. Communities can be formed on the basis of occupations, so youth workers or youth researchers form a community that transcends territorial boundaries. Community sometimes overlaps significantly with an institutional setting. In this sense, for example, a person can work in an organisation and belong to a certain team that is guided by instrumental goals and activities, and at the same time maintain informal relationships with colleagues regularly (or occasionally) forming a different type of relationship – community-like. On the other hand, there are communities based primarily on identity. Youth cultures (for example, the extreme metal scene) are composed by local, national and international communities, and these are based on a common taste and identity.

Because of their characteristics, communities motivate people to give back. They are very important agents of social solidarity and as such are very important when planning policies: “Whether the basis of a community is common residence, common interest, common identity, or some combination of these factors, it is necessarily the case that the relationships will be exclusive to some degree” (Crow 2007: 618).

When analysing learning mobility, we distinguish several types of community. The host community forms the context into which the participant arrives. It is most often a town, a city, a group of young enthusiasts, colleagues, an ethnic group or a nation. The home or sending community refers to all communities to which the programme participant otherwise belongs – from youth cultures, circles of friends, neighbourhoods, towns, etc. Communities as such function on several levels (see Figure 2) – micro, meso and macro – and the impact that an individual can have on them is different.

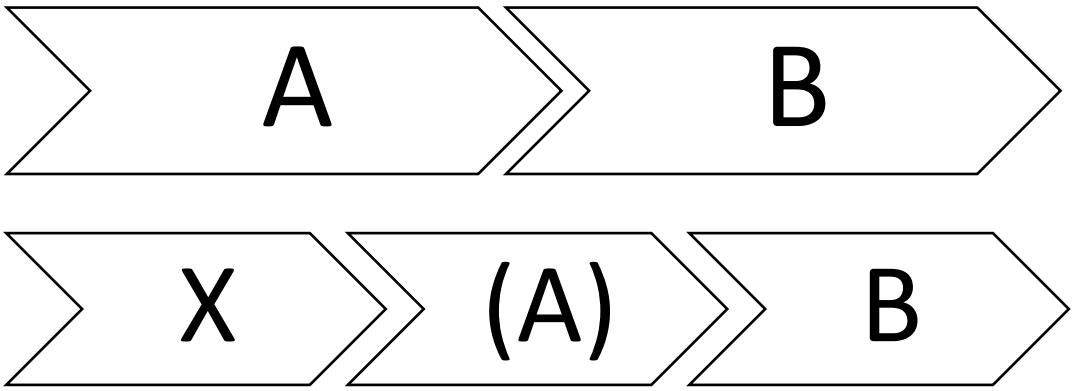
Figure 2: Types of community



Impact and theories about social mechanisms bringing about the effects

Impact can be defined through the "if … then …" type of statement. It is also useful to include the notion of change in the definition. When A changes, then B will change too because A is **causally linked** to B – a change in A causes a change in B. Additionally, it is also necessary to show how A causes B to change, because changes in A and B may also accidentally coincide, **without any causal connection** between them. To rule out this possibility, a mechanism of how A influences B needs to be made explicit. Although it seems simple and easy, in the social world it is usually very challenging to identify the causal effect of A on B. The simplest type of cause-and-effect relationship would involve A causing B, for example, travelling abroad causes absence from the local environment. But event A – the decision to go abroad – can have a cause, therefore the causal chain can be extended further. It may be a consequence of another event, X – for example, the severance of an emotional connection, or the end of education – so that A only as a result of X leads to B. These examples translate the general successionist model of temporal causation.

Figure 3: Successionist model of temporal causation



Configurational models of causation maintain that an outcome is brought about by the simultaneous presence of several factors. For example, going on a trip can be the result of wanting to see a city we have never been to, being on a vacation, the fact that currently in that city a friend rented an apartment so that free accommodation is offered, and enough financial means are available. All these reasons together make the journey possible. In any case, it is very important to know that isolating the effects of learning mobility on the community is very challenging. The person enrolled in a programme is influenced by experiences in that programme as well as by other experiences. Establishing a causal influence of a mobility programme requires disentangling the influence of the learning mobility programme from the influence of other factors. Moreover, community itself is a very complex phenomenon, and identifying effects of these changes on community is even more challenging. Even if recognising that building a causal model of the influence of mobility on community is a highly challenging enterprise, this does not mean that the endeavour of considering these effects should be abandoned or disregarded. On the contrary, only by researching influences of different social forces, actors and factors on community, especially in a world that is becoming more mobile and connected, will it be possible to better understand the phenomenon.

When considering the effects that learning mobility can have, it should be borne in mind that there are several types of effect. The following dichotomies are important to consider:

1. direct and indirect
2. intended and unintended
3. positive and negative.

Direct effects refer to changes that can be identified in the immediate environment and it can be claimed with great certainty that they are caused by learning mobility in which an individual or group has participated. This type of effect occurs directly through the individuals who, with conscious intention and/or under the influence of experiences gained during mobility, cause a change in the community. Therefore, for example, the effect of an individual's mobility could be the introduction of new content/arguments in conversations with friends that can lead to a reduction in the distance towards people of a different sexual orientation, or volunteering in a community of someone belonging to another ethnic group can have two effects: a change caused by volunteering (for example, building a trim track, or clearing a forest) and reducing the ethnic distance to that ethnic group by young people with whom s/he worked in the host community. In both cases, the effects are direct because they imply that people

intervene in the host or home community and change the physical and/or social world with their presence and activities. Depending on the type of effect, we can isolate these with greater or lesser certainty.

Indirect effects imply changes that occur under the influence of learning mobility of individuals, not through direct communication but through the transmission of content that becomes the "new normal". These effects can be represented by ripples formed by throwing stones into the water. For example, a higher number of young people going abroad from a community increases the chances of a relationship and marriage between young people from different ethnic groups, and the intensification of such programmes and practices brings with it a greater degree of acceptance of interethnic ties and marriages. Although these effects can be relatively easily theorised and hypothesised, producing convincing empirical evidence to support their existence is very challenging. Usually, research designs do not match this challenge. Consequently, one can only speculate that there are certain associations as convincing empirical evidence of the existence of theorised causal links is difficult to ascertain.

Effects can be **intended** or **unintended**. Intended effects include all changes that are expected and mostly planned by the learning mobility programme. They include the most common changes at several levels – from the individual, organisational to the community level – and all the effects that the programme organiser has anticipated, or that the type of programme implies do belong to this group. For example, one of the goals of a student exchange may be intercultural learning (e.g. decreasing the level of ethnic distance) in the home and host community. Unintended effects refer to the effects of these mobilities that none of the planners accounted for. For example, learning mobility can lead to the destruction of the idealistic image that young people have of other nations and actually lead to a greater ethnic distance. "Brain drain" or emigration of capable and motivated young people to another country is another example of an unintended consequence, which may occur as a result of a learning mobility programme. When analysing the effects, it is important to consider the unintended consequences, because if they are positive, then they increase the positive impact of a learning mobility programme, but if they are negative, then they would reduce it. This shows the needed and valuable interconnection between practice, research and policy as, in the first case, policy makers may want to find ways how to increase them but in the second case, how to minimise them.

The third group deals with the *wanted* and *unwanted* effects, or as they can provisionally be labelled "**positive**" and "**negative**", depending on the perspective adopted or the views held. Certain experiences of a learning mobility project can be positive, and their effects are usually wanted. Intercultural learning, active participation, environmental activism and other effects are just examples of some of them. But there are also experiences that have "negative" consequences for the community. For example, an increasing number of learning mobility programmes/initiatives makes young people more likely to leave home communities for good or for longer periods. This phenomenon, known as brain-drain or capacity drain, leaves home communities with lower performance and changed demographic structure in the long run (because they bring with them future demographic changes, i.e., marriages, births, etc.). The last example shows that the same process may have positive as well as negative effects and that they may vary across communities having a positive effect in one community and a negative one in another, or being perceived, understood and assessed differently by different members/stakeholders in the community itself.

In general, an understanding of the intended change as well as of the measures that are deemed appropriate to produce the change are outlined in the theory of change (TOC) and programme theory (PT). In policy processes, they serve the purpose of describing why and how a concrete intervention affects

society and brings about the desired and planned change. While PT focuses more specifically on the intervention and its impacts, the TOC is somewhat more general as it takes a wider look at the phenomenon addressed. The main value and contribution of both is that clearly formulating the TOC and PT makes the details and processes that are believed to be important clear and visible. This creates an explicit understanding of the intervention and how it is expected to work, which in turn enables the formulation of shared terms that is a necessary prerequisite for effective communication about the intervention. Especially important is that this way of thinking allows critical examination of assumptions about the problem at hand; reliance on uncritical or under-critical assumptions is one of the major reasons why programmes fail to deliver results (see Fox et al. 2016: 42-58; Centre for Theory of Change). Reliable and valid understanding of the circumstances and possibilities is crucial for making amendments to the programme at later stages.

Learning mobility

The European Platform for Learning Mobility in the Youth Field defines learning mobility as **transnational mobility** undertaken for a period of time, **consciously organised for educational purposes** or to acquire new competences, knowledge, skills and attitudes within a different, international learning context. It covers a wide variety of projects and activities and can be implemented in **formal or non-formal settings** (Kristensen, 2019: 5). The EPLM focuses on non-formal learning with links to informal learning and formal education. Learning mobility in this framework aims to increase participation, active citizenship, intercultural learning and dialogue, individual competency development and employability of young people. Mobility is also to be understood as a possible source of genuine and diverse learning experiences, and it therefore becomes important to critically investigate links between learning mobility (settings and contexts) and identity building (EPLM, Principles (n.a.)). The concept is usually associated with physical and organised learning mobility but national mobility experiences and the virtual mobility that facilitates and supports physical mobility experiences, as defined above, should not be overlooked, especially as this has gained in prominence due to the pandemic.

Furthermore, the distinction between **short-term and long-term programmes** seem to be significant in researching the value of learning mobility for the communities (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska 2018: 2).

- For **short-term actions**, the impact on communities is usually not specifically targeted, but it appears in studies considering the general impact of mobility programmes and is mostly presented in an abstract way. The impact on communities varies depending on the learning **mobility activities** that are implemented and, for the most part, on the **main aim** of the activity. Furthermore, **short-term programmes** are usually focused on personal development of the participants in the mobility activity, so therefore the research on impact on the broader society or communities is more often directed to the home (sending) communities and relies on a multiplier effect. In contrast, in long-term international volunteering (including work camps), which is usually directed at working with local communities, the general impact is **more visible** and appears more often.
- The impact of **long-term learning mobility programmes** such as volunteering or short-term programmes that are specifically directed to work with communities (work camps, or short-term volunteering, or the ESC actions), is targeted and analysed in detail more often. Even though the

general impact studies are not focused on the development of one concrete competence, **they indicate that most of the gain by the community comes from long-term volunteering activities when foreigners are immersed in local communities**. The impact on local communities is often not measured, but implied and tightly connected with communication, direct actions of volunteers in order to benefit the communities or, in the case of closed small communities, living together, being present among other members.

There are three main approaches for how learning mobility impacts communities (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska 2018: 2):

1. Most of the time, impact on the community is achieved by involving community members in the activities of learning mobility and **direct interaction** with the participants.
2. The "**multiplier effect**" impact is achieved by participants taking action in their **home communities**.
3. The impact on communities might embody itself in visibility measures or in the dissemination of results targeting the **local communities**. As a result, these communities would be engaged in, and informed about, the issues that the organisers of the project intended to address.

The impact of learning mobility on the community level is stronger and more positive in the case of communities that have not had many prior interactions with foreigners. It is important to note that usually the impact on communities or wider society is interpreted through the impact on young people and their readiness to become more active members of their communities after the learning mobility activities. This aspect is very strong in the case of **inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities** into learning mobility which, according to researchers, results in them becoming more active members of their societies after the mobility.

Theories behind the learning mobility interventions

Theories of change (TOCs) and programme theories (PTs) contain statements about beliefs that **learning mobility causes changes** at the level of individuals participating in the learning mobility programmes. Measuring this change is relatively straightforward and easy. Understanding and measuring changes at the level of a community, or any collective of individuals, is more complex. In its simplest form, changes at the level of a collective can be described as consisting of the changes that operated in the individuals who have participated in a learning mobility programme. Since they are members of a community, the community changes when its members change.

Community-level effects can happen in a range of ways, not only in the shape of changes in its members' attitudes, competences, knowledge or conduct. For instance, one can hypothesise that travel experiences of the returnees will have effects on other members of the community. There can be different mechanisms for how the changes in returnees will spread and can include those who have not directly participated in the mobility experience. For instance, they may bring a change in other members' attitudes toward other ethnic groups, or in their knowledge. The changed behaviour that individuals with travel experience manifest may have an impact on other young people.

At a large scale, the **effects of mobility** can be divided into:

- changes at the level of individuals with an experience of mobility
- "overflow" of the individual effects to others.

However, social mechanisms responsible for transferring the individual-level changes to other individuals, as well as to the community at large, are largely unknown. Therefore, the researchers' task is to explore how the mobility experience spreads from returnees to other members of the community as well as to the community at large. In this sense, the (potential) change in the feelings, sense of belonging, commitments and common goals of a relatively small community needs to be taken into account. One might wonder, what research methods would be appropriate for that task? Ethnographic methods possess a good potential to shed light on what happens within a community with several returnees from abroad. Observations over a longer period of time, participation in community life, and in-depth interviews would provide insight into the mechanisms and impact of different forms of mobility on both the community and the individuals within it.

Given the practical need to measure effects relatively quickly after a mobility experience, a quantitative methodology can provide useful tools. Quantitative indicators may give an overview of different aspects of the phenomena addressed. For instance, such indicators may include:

1. the number and characteristics of participants enrolled in a mobility programme;
2. personal experiences of those who were mobile, such as testimonies of perceived changes;
3. perceived changes at the community level;
4. experiences of individuals in the community – their perceptions of the changes caused by those who returned/came.

When gauging changes at the community level caused by the learning mobility experience, indicators should be focusing on the community and group characteristics. These indicators can be based on characteristics of individuals, but they can also be characteristics of the natural, physical and social environment. For example: the unemployment rate in a specific town/community; the share of entrepreneurs among employees in a village; level of air pollution in a city; number of buildings in a neighbourhood, or hate crime rates among young people in a city quarter. Indicators like these can provide data about the believed effects of different initiatives and projects.

To summarise, understanding the effects of a mobility experience is a highly challenging undertaking because of the complex nature of the causal connection between the learning mobility and its manifestations. Outcomes of mobility experiences on the individual level and effects on the community level are both fairly complex phenomena. A comprehensive understanding of the entire mix requires a significant research effort.

However, from the perspective of policy processes, such a thorough and comprehensive understanding is not necessary. Although policy programmes are built on programme theories that outline the link between the policy measure and its expected outcomes, building and testing the theory is not amongst the goals. For policy purposes, describing immediate outputs of a programme, as well as societal outcomes building on the outputs, is sufficient in most cases. Consequently, indicators are a good tool to address those purposes.

Indicators

An **indicator** is a quantitative or a qualitative variable that provides a reliable means to measure a particular phenomenon or attribute. It can be reliably measured, and it provides a succinct description of the condition or performance of a selected aspect of a system (e.g., institution, service, economy, society). In the public policy contexts, indicators describe policy **inputs** (such as required finances), processes (such as activities to be performed), **outputs** (such as a number of participants in a certain activity) and **outcomes** (a change in society). They can be used to provide evidence of how conditions or performance vary over time (by comparing indicators at different points in time) or across a system (by comparing indicators for different entities, such as schools, within a system) (OECD, 2006: 19). Importantly, indicators help to determine how close the situation is to the result that is sought, according to the previously established evaluation criteria (see CIPPEC). For each policy measure, a unique set of indicators needs to be developed.

Programme-specific indicators should be based on the explicit conceptual description of the realm, phenomena, and the role of an intervention addressing it. These should be made explicit in the form of programme theory, which in turn may build on a range of theories.

Indicators should meet certain quality criteria such as, for instance, those described in the SMART system. According to SMART criteria, indicators should be:

- **Specific**: The measured changes should be expressed in precise terms and suggest actions that can be taken to assess them.
- **Measurable**: Indicators should be related to things that can be measured in an unambiguous way.
- **Achievable**: Indicators should be reasonable and possible to reach, and therefore sensitive to changes the project might make.
- **Replicable**: Measurements should be the same when made by different people using the same method.
- **Time-bound**: There should be a time limit within which changes are expected and measured.

From the policy cycle perspective, two types of indicators can be distinguished:

- **Formative/output indicators**: Indicators that are used for capturing how an intervention is implemented and what are its immediate outputs. The focus is primarily on describing the implementation of an intervention, not so much on societal outcomes and effects that the intervention is expected to deliver eventually. This approach is known under labels such as performance evaluation, formative evaluation, monitoring.
- **Summative/outcome indicators**: Indicators that are used to capture changes in society are thought of as outcomes of an intervention. The focus is primarily on capturing societal outcomes and effects that the intervention is expected to deliver eventually. This approach is known under the labels: impact evaluation, summative evaluation, ex-post evaluation (Connolly et al. 2019).

Skills, competences, employability

In the context of the labour market, two often encountered terms are skills and competences. There is a common understanding that skills constitute an aspect of competences. The Council of the European Union recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning from 22 May 2018 defines skills as the ability and capacity to carry out processes and use existing knowledge to achieve results. Competences are wider and defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, i.e., skills appear as one aspect of a competence. The list of competences in the framework includes:

- literacy competence;
- multilingual competence;
- mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering;
- digital competence;
- personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- citizenship competence;
- entrepreneurship competence;
- cultural awareness and expression competence (European Union 2018).

Some of them relate to mobility in a fairly straightforward way, such as multilingual competence, cultural awareness and expression. In fact, mobility in general is a valuable way of gaining career-relevant competences and skills, such as problem solving, tolerance and self-confidence (European Commission 2018).

Additionally, a distinction between soft and hard skills is sometimes made. Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterise a person's relationships with other people. Examples of soft skills include the ability to communicate with prospective clients, mentor your co-workers, lead a team, negotiate a contract, follow instructions, and get a job done on time. In a workplace, soft skills are considered to be a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills. While soft skills are hard to quantify, the level of hard skills can be measured, and they are usually obtained through formal education and training programmes. In the labour market nowadays, a balance of soft and hard skills is usually sought after, excellence in either soft or hard skills is not enough (Kenton 2021).

Background of the challenge

Many types of mobility programme emphasise acquisition of skills and competences that can be useful in the labour market. Spending part of or an entire study period abroad supports the development of a range of soft skills, in addition to acquiring professional skills. However, studies have focused on the effects on people (individuals) who go abroad. From this perspective, learning mobility increases their human as well as social capital. Effects of learning mobility on the community occur through two steps: step one is the effect of learning mobility on individuals' skills, competences and employability, step two is the impact of the individual-level enrichment on the community: on professional, collegial, local community, and society. This mechanism is depicted in Figure 4:

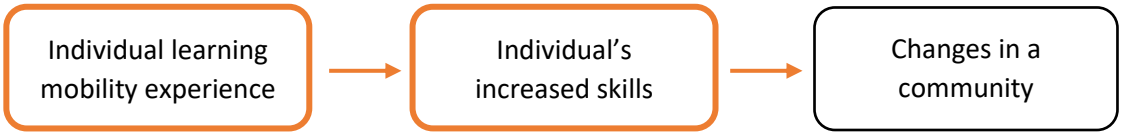


Figure 4: Two-step process of impact

An increasing number of academic research and project evaluation reports show the **impact of learning mobility** on the individual level, showing that individuals acquire **new knowledge, develop skills and competences** and that a mobility experience increases their chances of finding a (good and well-paid) job.

Individuals with increased knowledge, skills, competences and experience returning from abroad could impact the local labour market and community. The impact of learning mobility on a community is indirect, as it is built on the experiences, knowledge and distinct behaviour of young people with learning mobility experience. This can have two distinct effects. The first refers to the newly acquired skills and competences that the individuals returning from abroad bring back to their community. This changes the community and may make it more open, innovative and dynamic.

The second effect is the spill-over effect which occurs when new standards in behaviour, thinking and social relationships spread and diversify the community as other community members gradually accept those new ways of acting as well.

Effects of "learning mobility" depend on the final destination after learning mobility. If the programme beneficiary returns home, the effects of change brought about by the participant are measured in that community. However, if the person either stays in the host community or moves on to another community, the effects of learning mobility occur in the new community. Also, the learning mobility influences the community of origin through absence of the person from their home community.

One of the hypotheses/assumptions coming from economics is that investment in (formal, non-formal and informal) education pays off and the return on investment for society is considerable. The return on investment when it comes to "learning mobility" may be higher when going abroad, as it not only increases educational outcomes, but also enables intercultural learning and soft skills development. These increase the hiring value of the individual in the job market, and also make the country/region/city a more competitive environment. However, there is little direct evidence of how this mechanism works.

As the research will show below, the effects of the learning mobility on the individual level (development of skills and competences) are relatively well researched, while the effects on the community level are not.

Skills development through learning mobility

Jacobone and Moro (2015) report results of a study based on a control group and pre- and post-test analysis. The authors used 28 indicators to measure five sub-dimensions of employability: career development/learning, degree subject knowledge, understanding and skills, experience, generic skills and emotional intelligence.[1] The results show that the learning mobility experience of students was associated with increased levels of employability. Also, several other features increased which also support employment, such as intercultural sensitivity, self-efficacy, and language proficiency. This study recognises that improving skills due to mobility, both hard and soft, especially communication and work skills in an international environment, increases the chances of employing young people, both nationally and internationally.

Marcotte, Desroches and Poupart (2007) studied the participation of 349 business graduates from the University of Quebec in Montreal in 2004 in international mobility programmes. The effect of the programme was positive on the participants' career prospects since "participation in international mobility programmes was moderately useful in obtaining a job and an international appointment, and that it led to career advancement and professional accomplishment".

A study by Soares and Mosquera (2020), using recall data from a period several years earlier, showed that Erasmus+ students held an opinion that their perceived employability level was higher after the mobility experience than before. Researchers distinguished between five general factors that constitute employability and, in the study, they identified two different configurations of the factors that were responsible for the perceived increased level of employability: adaptability skills and teamwork skills, career-orientation skills, managerial skills and personal skills. While the first set of skills can be associated with international work, the second set has more conventional career orientation (Soares and Mosquera 2020).

Similarly to Soares and Mosquera, Weibl (2015) considered the subjectively perceived level of employability important, and included the dimensions of better employment prospects as a consequence of study abroad and the expectation of a higher salary after study abroad.

Results of the Erasmus Impact Study (European Commission 2014) show that 52% of Erasmus students increased their skills and 81% of students felt they had experienced an improvement in their skills. Moreover, when compared with non-mobile students, even if Erasmus students showed higher skill levels before departure, they increased their advantage by 42% upon return. The mobility experience increased confidence levels in particular. Of no little importance is the finding that 64% of employers stated that international experience was important for employment. The study considers a range of other skills and

1. Four of the pre–post differences were statistically significant; only the emotional intelligence scale showed no difference.

competence to be closely related to employability, such as foreign language proficiency, intercultural awareness, adaptability, flexibility, innovativeness, productivity, motivation, endurance, problem-solving abilities and being able to work productively in a team.

The study E-QUA (Erasmus QUAlity Hosting Framework) also focuses on the enterprises' perspectives and needs, as well as skills for employability of Erasmus students. The study aims to show the importance of transversal/soft business skills obtained during learning mobility. The results of the study clearly show that employers value soft skills, and take them into account when hiring young people (Confalonieri et al. 2015).

Confalonieri et al. in another paper (2016) define employability as a mix of the following skills: effective communication, ability to work in groups, leadership, process management, openness to others, creativity, global and multidisciplinary approach. They refer to a number of studies where they found some evidence of the positive impact of a mobility experience on employability. However, their conviction is that the positive effects occur only when the mobility experience is of high quality.

The **effects on the home community** are most often **seen as positive**, as they bring new standards, knowledge and professional approaches, which then slowly become standards of the community, so they represent the drivers of these changes. Even when they do not return to the home community, but maintain regular contact, they transfer their knowledge, experiences and standards through friendships and professional relationships.

Nienaber et al. (2020) showed that levels of employability (defined as a specific configuration of high levels of personal adaptability, social and human capital, and career identity) and levels of international mobility notably co-vary. Those who rank higher on the employability index also have a significant mobility experience. However, which has been the cause and which has been the effect cannot be established from the analysis. Possibly, there is a two-way causation there – certain personal features support mobility and mobility contributes to development of certain personal features. Authors conclude that "Here it is especially important to mention that not only upward vertical but also downward mobility increases the employability of young people" (Nienaber et al. 2020: 29).

A study by Mizikaci and Arslan (2019) concluded from a qualitative study that a two- to four-month Erasmus mobility of Turkish students led them to the opinion that the mobility experience did contribute to their personal development (self-esteem, development of adaptation skills, social development and leadership skills), professional development (use of academic knowledge and skills and new perspectives to solve problems related to their profession), and academic development (acquiring new knowledge and skills, learning the research processes and gaining related study skills). These changes in turn made them better prepared for their future professional careers back at home or internationally, they believed.

Siemers (2015) reports self-assessed improvement of skills as a result of mobility experience. The list includes interpersonal skills, which are essential to deal, work and communicate with other people, also including people from different cultures, and self-sufficiency skills such as problem-solving skills,

organisational skills, adaptability and reflection skills. Evidently, those are necessary in work contexts, although not limited to the professional environment only.

Archer and Davison (2008) recognise that companies in the UK value international experience highly, and a significant number of employers take into account whether, how much and in what way candidates were involved in learning mobility programmes. They notice that "a number of employers from companies with international dealings or with an international parent indicated that they saw international mobility and language skills as important capabilities in a new graduate" (Archer and Davison 2008: 10).

Roman and Paraschiv (2019) explored the relationship between entrepreneurship and mobility across Europe and concluded that "experience of mobility inside the European space has a positive impact on entrepreneurship, which could lead to the attenuation of youth unemployment as well as to a sustainable economic development for the home countries" (Roman and Paraschiv 2019: 774).

Hua and Cairns (2017) used qualitative methods to investigate the effects of studying young people from China in Norway and came to the conclusion that the benefits of this form of learning mobility are multiple. They use the term mobility capital that young people acquire during their studies abroad and which "can be comprised of a dynamic range of these resources: expanded social networks, a higher earning potential, better understandings of other societies and internationally recognized educational credentials acquired while abroad. While enhanced foreign language fluency, in particular of the English language, is also prominent, there is also recognition of the significance learning outside the classroom has upon personal and professional development" (Hua and Cairns 2017: 3).

To summarise, a positive causal effect of mobility may occur either directly, by enhancing specific features important for certain professions (e.g. handling new device in medicine), as well as indirectly by enhancing general soft skills such as foreign language skill, multiculturalism and other similar features that help to collaborate and communicate with other people. Interestingly, the very fact of having spent time abroad increases the attractiveness of a candidate for an employer.

Employability is predominantly conceptualised as a multidimensional phenomenon. Employability typically comprises of the dimensions of:

- **generic skills**: communication, creative thinking, decision making, social responsibility, interculturality, managing diversity, problem solving, teamwork, transdisciplinary mindset, etc.;
- **personal skills**: enthusiasm, dedication, intuition, flexibility, hardworking, etc.;
- **technical skills**: use of IT technologies, coding, handling various technical devices, etc.;
- **professional skills**: skills related to certain profession, more concretely to the field of study.

Existing indicators for skills and competences

There is a clear **link between a learning mobility experience and the development of competences, knowledge and attitudes** that are relevant to the **labour market**. However, these findings mainly describe the effects of learning mobility of university students. The EU programme Erasmus has been found to be a success story in terms of enhancing students' competences through learning mobility. Far less is known, however, about the effects of other forms of learning mobility. Additionally, most of the programmes evaluated and researched are medium- or long-term projects and less is known about the effects of short-term projects.

Based on what was learned from the studies, it is possible to hypothesise that it is likely that a learning mobility experience will raise professional as well as transversal (soft) skills of participants. When the participants return to their home country after the learning mobility experience, their chance of employability is likely to be increased. When they get employed, their skills will contribute to increasing the overall quality of the workforce as well as employment standards in the local labour market. It is also likely that the **elevated quality of the labour market** will attract international companies, which in turn **might improve community life**. However, these are hypotheses based on earlier research and which still need support from original empirical research.

Most of the data collected about skills, competences and employability include quantitative indicators. The official statistics collect and analyse some of these indicators. EUROSTAT collects the number of young people involved in the ISCED 5-8 levels of study, which arrive in EU countries from abroad, by the field and level of study.

Studies focusing on the impact of learning mobility on skills and competences most often use self-assessment scales. Some studies have measured the level of competences, knowledge and attitudes before and after the programme. Some studies have also used treatment and control group design.

Qualitative studies are also not rare in this field. They provide us with a deeper understanding of the motivation, experiences and life paths of young people studying abroad.

Indicators used in studies and official statistics

The effects of learning mobility on skills and competences are operationalised through indicators developed within specific programmes or frameworks. For example, within ERASMUS+ 2014 the employability skills include the set of indicators used in Flash Eurobarometer as well as skills based on the memo© factors. In the **E-QUA (**Erasmus QUAlity Hosting Framework), three groups of soft skills are identified by employers according to the level of significance. The EUROSTAT database also holds indicators on mobile students. Table 1 gives an overview of some of these frameworks and relevant mobility-related indicators.

Table 1: Indicators for skills and competences

Employability skills	
Flash Eurobarometer	Teamwork skills
	Sector-specific skills
	Communication skills
	Decision-making skills
	Foreign language skills
	Good reading/writing skills
memo© factors	Confidence – to have confidence and a conviction of one's own abilities
	Curiosity – to be open and curious about new challenges
	Decisiveness – to know better what one wants and to reach decisions more easily
	Serenity – to be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses
	Tolerance of ambiguity – to be tolerant towards another person's values and behaviour
	Vigour – to be able to manage one's own career, to be better able to solve problems
E-QUA Erasmus QUAlity Hosting Framework: three groups of soft skills are identified by employers	
Most relevant competences	Communication
	Customer/user orientation learning skills
	Results orientation
	Continuous improvement
	Negotiation
	Teamwork
Medium relevant competences	Creativity/innovation
	Adaptability to changes
	Contact network
	Tolerance to stress
	Analysis skills
Less relevant competences	Management skills
	Leadership

	Commitment/identification with the organisation
	Decision making
	Work-life balance
	Self-awareness
	Conflict management
Indicators in EUROSTAT	
Mobile students from abroad	Mobile students from abroad enrolled by education level, sex and field of education
	Mobile students from abroad enrolled by education level, sex and country of origin
	Share of mobile students from abroad enrolled by education level, sex and country of origin
	Distribution of mobile students from abroad enrolled at education level by sex and field of education
Degree of mobile students from abroad	Degree mobile graduates from abroad by education level, sex and field of education
	Degree mobile graduates from abroad by education level, sex and country of origin
	Share of degree mobile graduates from abroad by education level, sex and country of origin
	Distribution of degree mobile graduates from abroad at education level by sex and field of education
Credit mobile graduates	Credit mobile graduates (at least three months abroad) by education level, type of mobility scheme, type of mobility and sex
	Credit mobile graduates (at least three months abroad) by education level, country of destination, type of mobility and sex
	Credit mobile graduates (less than three months abroad) by education level, country of destination, type of mobility and sex

The advantages of these EUROSTAT indicators are that one can track the number of foreign students coming in at a national level. The downside of these indicators is that they are limited to higher education and incoming migration only, and do not include the assessment points for those leaving their home country. There is no data on those that left and then returned, and there is no data on the wide range of learning mobility programmes outside the formal education system.

Active citizenship and participation

Background

Research shows that learning mobility contributes to more active and cohesive societies, by promoting participation and fostering citizenship education. It also shows that, through learning mobility projects, the hosting communities are becoming more active, they participate in more common activities together, and also engage more with local organisations (Jezowski et al. 2017: 16). There is also evidence that participating in a learning mobility programme leads to more active participation in the local (home) communities (Bello 2011: 352) and that "the ability of such programmes to influence levels of civic engagement and sense of civic responsibility" is apparent (Stanley 2005: 109). Young people's participation in learning mobility also translates both in an enhanced sense of self and a more significant understanding of the socio-political issues that surround them (Stanley 2005: 109), which could potentially lead to more engagement at the community level. Furthermore, it also promotes a deeper level of agency by making young people feel that they can try to "bring about change in society" (Stanley 2005: 109). Shalayeva notes that volunteering, for example, "promotes active citizenship and facilitates participation in society; it safeguards the democratic foundations of European societies and is deeply rooted in their nature" (Shalayeva 2012: 4). These and other publications are based on the insights of experts and draw on the logic that if individuals participate in the learning mobility, this benefits the community. These conclusions are important, but they depart from an individual-level standpoint and assessment. While there is more likelihood for action to be taken and these young people will be, in principle, more active in the result of joining a learning mobility, it is still important to develop instruments that will allow us to evaluate how this enhanced community engagement will translate specifically in the community and impact on it.

The type of impact that goes through the direct participants of the learning mobility into communities can indeed be significant but is rarely proven and it is mainly based on the personal opinions and self-refection/assessment of the participants. In this sense, general and thorough conclusions cannot be drawn on how the community impact of learning mobility manifests.

In light of the research carried out, and the desk research "Indicators of Social Impact" (Connolly et al. 2019) and in "Social Impact Tools and Resources" (Galstyan et al. 2019), it is clear that community impact and, particularly, active citizenship and participation, have been gaining increased attention at the local, national, international and European levels, and that these are particularly relevant in the field of learning mobility. The impact usually remains abstract as the concepts of active citizenship and participation are rather broad. It is challenging to identify the principles, key actions, goals and benchmarks that the community impact of these areas should enshrine or aim for.

The gaps identified, as well as the limited existing indicators, suggest that there are no golden rules for the development of indicators of community impact for these thematic areas, but that they are still needed. Indicators, as they offer measurable benchmarks of process and outcomes, will allow the assessment of how, and in what ways, aspects of active citizenship and participation in learning mobility projects effectively support communities and contribute to achieving the community goals.

More concretely, descriptive indicators seem to be an appropriate measurement tool, as they show the development of a variable, i.e., that the change in a community occurred, but are not too narrow to only assess a concrete policy target that would be very difficult to define for such a wide scope. They can also offer further insight on how that change might look. To make the development of these indicators possible and considering the very broad nature of these thematic areas, it is useful to "deconstruct" the concepts of active citizenship and participation into specific and measurable layers.

Citizenship and participation

While citizenship and participation are two different concepts, they can both be seen "as representing an expression of human agency in the political arena" (Lister 1998: 228-29) with shared boundaries and contact points. In this sense, participation can be seen as a vehicle that allows citizenship to assume a more dynamic (active) nature and unfold resulting in community impact and engagement.

In order to be an (active) citizen, access to participation is a sine qua non condition. This is not to argue that citizenship status is limited to those who participate, but that "fulfilling [its] full potential"(Lister 1998: 228-29) is very much linked to a proactive attitude.

Young people have a crucial role in demanding a more active role in defining and translating into practice the concepts of citizenship and participation (Equitas 2016). Accordingly, young people are in a privileged position "to make a difference in ways that provide them with tangible benefits and develop healthier communities. Young people who view themselves as change agents, and adults who are their allies, are instrumental to this approach" (Checkoway and Gutiérrez 2006: 3).

There are many examples of how young people can have a role in giving power to citizenship, from political participation, social involvement at the community level, volunteering, to international activist campaigns, such as the climate movement Fridays for Future.

Learning mobility within the European framework focuses on increasing participation and active citizenship, and incorporates a transnational element consciously organised for educational goals. For this reason, learning mobility is of key importance in helping to enhance community engagement and propelling community impact both in sending and hosting communities (EPLM).

In line with the underlying goals of the learning mobility framework, some literature (Jezowski et al. 2017, Bello 2011, Shalayeva 2012, Stanley 2005) suggests that learning mobility has some sort of impact on communities in the spheres of active citizenship and participation, but there are many open questions that remain.

Thinking Box 1! Active citizenship and participation in the community
Are communities that welcome more learning mobility participants (already) more active in terms of active citizenship? Do these communities promote more participation in the overall spheres of the community life? Are they more demanding towards the need of citizenship education after being in contact with these participants? And what about the communities that send the participants? Are they already more prone to

support their members to participate in learning mobility, more civically engaged and better educated on citizenship? Or do they become so when the participants come back? Does a handful of participants make a difference? Or, on the other hand, does change only occur when the participation numbers in learning mobility are significant? How much time does it take for impact to go through direct participants and wider into the community?

Citizenship vs. active citizenship

The scope of the concept of citizenship is not easy to define, on one hand, because it enshrines a vast number of elements and dimensions, influenced by competing political traditions, but also because there is a high degree of contextualisation implied.

Regardless of the challenges imposed by the definition, citizenship is often described as a relation between the people and the state. Veldhuis (1997) divides this relation into four dimensions: political, social, cultural and economic (Council of Europe 1997). According to Georgescu (2017), the political dimension enshrines political rights and responsibilities towards the political system, the social dimension concerns the behaviour between individuals and relies on loyalty and solidarity, the cultural dimension deals with a "consciousness of a common cultural heritage" and the economic one with the relationship of the individuals with the labour and consumer dimensions (Georgescu (ed.) 2017: 14).

Although there is no commonly agreed definition of solidarity, it is accepted that it is human rights oriented, that it enshrines a sense of empathy for those with whom one identifies with but also for those who are different, it is inclusion driven (*for all, with all*) and it includes engagement *in and for* the community (as broadly understood, i.e., from your neighbourhood to a region of the world which is facing challenges) (Nicodemi and Bačlija Knoch 2020). This understanding also highlights Georgescu's argument on solidarity being an important element of the social dimension of citizenship.

Indeed, solidarity is also at the core of many European youth policies and programmes, with strong social priorities, and more particularly at the centre of the European Solidarity Corps programme, which has strong connections (and generates many opportunities) to (bring about) community impact and development.

Continuing with the specific concept of citizenship, Stokke (2013) brings a more dynamic perspective and proposes to look at the forms of citizenship differently: citizenship as a legal status, as rights, and as membership, citizenship as participation. A full citizen, according to Stokke (2013), has access to all of these dimensions. In other words, the ones without membership are culturally excluded, the ones without participation are politically excluded. While the political or rights-based dimension of citizenship is the most common, Brooks and Holford claim that the expression of citizenship is not limited to the political dimension: "citizens work, shop, are parents and friends, join clubs and societies, play sports, watch television: all these and more are expressions of their citizenship" (Brooks and Holford 2009: 26).

Indeed, while the traditional notions of the concept of citizenship were primarily focused on the legal relationship between the individual and the state, in its different dimensions, citizenship is now understood as having far more layers than this traditional dichotomy. In this sense, citizenship departs from this legal construct but is more than that: it includes both a personal **sense of belonging** and the

sense of belonging to a **community** which can be shaped and **influenced** by the individual **directly** and **indirectly** (Council of Europe 1997).

A community is a social or cultural group larger than one's immediate circle (family and friends), based on a sense of belonging. It consists of many social groups and different organisations and may include a specific geographical area (neighbourhood, city, country, or group of countries, etc.) or a shared ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska, Nicodemi and Severino 2020). A community is a stance of responsibility that links and gathers people together via a face-to-face, online, blended encounter of "being-for and feeling-for the other" (Todd 2004 cited in Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska, Nicodemi and Severino 2020).

It is therefore evident that citizenship and community go hand in hand as "the way we define citizenship is intimately linked to the kind of society and political community we want" (Mouffe 1992: 25). In this sense, it is of paramount importance to understand to what extent learning mobility projects that somehow address (**active**) **citizenship** shape and impact both the sending and host communities.

While the understanding of the concept of **citizenship** certainly encompasses young people, there are particularities that translate how **young people exercise it**. Accordingly, citizenship of young people is also defined as "social interaction, at home and among peers, that stimulates young people to negotiate their ways of interacting with the society and the community they live in" (Dolejšiová and López (eds.) 2009). This includes the creation of new public interaction spaces and **forms of bonding and connection** through the internet, social media, and digital tools, allowing both for self-expression of their identities and development of their citizenship (Harris et al. 2007; Cho et al. 2020; Council of Europe 2018).

Some authors, including Isin (2000), argue, however, that this need to promote and be gathered around "micro-cultures" in search of identity and recognition might contribute to jeopardising the boundaries of citizenship, particularly if the peer group is subject to some sort of marginalisation.

Tebelius and Ericsson argue that young people find it important to belong to specific groups that can embody a lifestyle over shared values and a common ideology. The authors also argue that participation in collective actions is many times spontaneous and short in duration, not resulting in long-term engagement (1995, 1997, 2001, cited in Lindström 2010).

However, young people also seem more inclined to embrace an understanding that goes beyond physical barriers or borders to encompass a "cosmopolitan citizenship" (Linklater 1998) that recognises rights and obligations that go beyond their country or region and are more prone to act towards vulnerable groups and oppressed communities (Beauregard and Bounds 2000, cited in Lindström 2010: 54).

It seems that young people rely on an understanding that citizenship should encompass a **broader societal concept in which legal rules are less its cornerstone whereas social and cultural norms, practices, meanings and identities shall have the floor** (Föllesdal 2007), where they have an active and participatory role.

Indeed, although traditional understandings of citizenship revolved around a more static view of how being a citizen unfolds, the concept came to evolve to incorporate a more dynamic, participation-reliant perspective, and practical application, towards what is called "active citizenship".

Active citizenship is defined as "participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy" (Hoskins 2006).

The Active Citizenship Composite Indicator (Hoskins et al. 2006) suggests that there are three dimensions of active citizenship: political life, civil society and community. Political life "refers to the sphere of the state and conventional representative democracy such as participation in voting, representation of women in the national parliament and regular party work (party membership, volunteering, participating in party activities and donating money)" (Hoskins et al. 2006). Civil society concerns political non-governmental action, and civil society is described as "the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values" (Hoskins et al. 2006). Community life, on the other hand, "refers to activities that are less overtly political and more orientated towards the community – 'community- minded' or 'community-spirited' activities … less directed at the political governmental sphere".

This is not to argue that active citizenship disregards its intrinsic dimension as legal status, but that it should also encompass a "role" (European Youth Forum 2002), including the participation in diverse communities' spheres.

This "role" dimension required from (**active**) **citizenship** will be difficult to achieve without **citizenship education**, which includes a personal process of growth, the expansion of democratic values and principles, a recognition of the richness of cultural diversity, human rights and responsibilities towards others as well as "attitudes of mutual respect and open-mindedness; openness to dialogue and to change; empathy; co-operation skills; knowledge of related issues; and critical thinking" (Golubeva 2018: 7). In this sense, (active) citizenship education somehow relies on a "lifelong learning process" (Golubeva 2018: 7).

Citizenship education, often found together with the concept of democratic citizenship education, is a significant part of the Council of Europe's agenda. As the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education defines it: "'Education for democratic citizenship' means 'education, training, awareness-raising, information, practices, and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law'" (Council of Europe 2010: 7).

In this sense, **citizenship education** is the first stepping-stone that needs to be present for communities to start participating, namely, by developing civic attitudes, and engaging in a more active citizenship role, resulting in changed behaviour in the long run.

Participation

The connection between **active citizenship** and **participation** is well established. Young people are an important piece of the puzzle in ensuring that communities are fully engaged as [**youth**] **participation** is often considered as a key mechanism for the construction of citizenship. "First, this is due to its educational function, leading to social participation and associative life. Second, it is due to its democracy-building quality, leading to representativeness and democratic culture" (Dolejšiová and López (eds.) 2009: 9). The extent to which this effectively impacts on citizenship formation remains unclear, and the level of impact

that it has on the community is still to be assessed. There are some preliminary indications and insights that hint to the positive impact of **youth participation** in the community, within the context of learning mobility, as "the activities supported by foreign volunteers lead to more visibility of the local organisation and thus to higher participation of local young people" (Jezowski et al. 2017), for example.

The RAY Long-Term Effects study (Bárta, Fennes and Gadinger 2019) shows that many participants claim a higher interest in political and social issues due to having participated in the learning mobility experience – resulting in increased levels of participation post learning mobility. However, it is important to note that although these indicators for individual perceptions include interest in political, European and environmental issues, this assessment is only carried out through questionnaires to the participants and not to other community members, which would make it difficult to assess the full extent of community impact as communities are more than a sum of different individuals.

Participation is widely seen, and accepted, as a key underlying principle of democracy and has therefore occupied a central stage in the European agenda, with many European institutions and organisations giving strong and constant emphasis on the importance of youth participation in implementing and promoting the development of active citizenship and an overall democratic paradigm.

The concept of (**youth**) **participation** is very broad, but it always relies on actively engaging and involving young people in decision-making processes, empowering them to have a voice on issues that directly affect or are connected to them (at the individual level in terms of skills or wider community-based projects) (Percy-Smith, 2015; Christens and Zeldin 2011). This can refer to a range of different decision-making processes, from governmental political or policy decisions, to how a community space is used, to the running of a youth organisation but also young people taking individual and/or collective action with the intention of **making a change** to the world around them. This can mean taking political actions such as organising or being involved in protests, as well social and civic activity such as community improvement initiatives at local level or volunteering for a cause or civil society organisation (SALTO Participation and Information Resource Center 2020; Barta, Boldt and Lavizzari 2021).

In practical terms, it translates into involving young people in different projects and activities, organisations, governmental, institutional and community structures. In the European agenda, **youth participation** has been mainstreamed at the same time as a goal, a principle and a practice in the work and philosophy of the youth. Youth **participation** can be seen and lived as a **process** (not a single event but a continuous engagement of young people in decision-making processes, happening at **multiple levels** (including the local/community level and not only the individual one) and as **a power distribution and sharing** mechanism (balancing decision making and engagement) (SALTO Participation and Information Resource Center 2020). In this sense, youth-related activities need to effectively include young people, genuinely empower them to express their opinions and views on the issues at stake and be given an effective opportunity to influence the outcome.

As a result of this oriented approach and, as "expressions of participation, young people are organizing groups for social and political action, planning programs of their own choosing, and advocating their interests in the community. They are raising consciousness, educating others on matters that concern them, and providing services of their own choosing" (Checkoway and Gutiérrez 2006: 1).

The ways in which **youth participation** takes shape is rich and diverse and, while the trend seems to indicate that there is a decline in young people's participation in formal elections and engagement with political institutions, the level of interest of young people in politics, social and ecological matters is considerable as they are more prone to engage in civic activism initiatives. It seems, therefore, clear that **youth participation** has a strong connection with **active citizenship**, as it cannot be looked at in isolation or as departing from a blank state (Golubeva 2018: 8).

Current trends show that youth involvement and engagement in community affairs, as well as in charitable work, is more significant than with election campaigns or other more orthodox forms of political participation, and that "community based civic involvement" is a "natural and age-appropriate" form of engagement and activity for many young people (Keeter 2004: 1).

In this sense, young people have been key players in leveraging civic activism, i.e., reclaiming "social norms, organisations, and practices, which facilitate greater citizen involvement in public policies and decisions" (Keeter 2004: 1). The activist movement Fridays for Future has developed to encompass different country-level representations, which in turn organise community-based initiatives tackling the climate emergency and ecological matters. Civic activism also includes "access to civic associations, participation in the media, and the means to participate in civic activities such as nonviolent demonstration or petition" (International Institute of Social Studies n.a.).[2] It seems clear that civic activism is one of the expressions/manifestations in which participation, within the sphere of active citizenship, can take shape, in a nuanced form of **participation**.

Accordingly, "no single strategy characterizes all approaches to participation" (Checkoway and Gutiérrez 2006: 1), in order for a community to become more civically active and participate in social, economic, political or cultural life, it needs to develop competences that are needed for participation – highlighting the importance of citizenship education as well. Geboers (2013) notes that "with regard to citizenship, a distinction can be made between the citizenship behaviour and the components of competences on which this behaviour is built. Those components of competences can be formulated in terms of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and reflection" (Rychen and Salganik, cited in Geboers 2013: 160). In this sense, knowledge includes awareness of how a democratic society operates. Attitudes are mostly concerned with respect for each other, engagement, open-mindedness towards difference. Necessary skills are those linked to communication and pondering different views and understandings. Reflection should embody critical thinking, particularly on the interactions between societal and individual spheres Geboers (2013: 160).

Learning mobility can be one of the vehicles through which this citizenship behaviour and these components of competences can be fostered and mainstreamed to (positively) impact on communities.

Because learning mobility is "consciously organised for educational purposes or to acquire new competences or knowledge" and "it aims to increase participation, active citizenship of young people" (EPLM n.a.), **participation** is both in the rationale of learning mobility projects but also in some of the goals and outcomes. It is therefore of paramount importance to assess how and the extent to which change in

2. This specific reference refers to civic activism and is part of the Indices of Social Development, developed by the International Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The indices permit an estimation of social development effects for a broad range of countries using indicators on economic growth, human development and governance.

these areas, in the community, occurs in the short, medium and long run. In addition to the potential added value that it will bring to the community, this assessment will be useful and beneficial to measure change while designing, planning and implementing learning mobility projects and initiatives so they conscientiously reflect **active citizenship** and **participation** dimensions at the community level (EPLM n.a.).

In order to do so, it seems to be necessary to assess the community members' attitudes and behaviours regarding participation, diversity, rule of law, etc. and observe what is happening citizenship-wise in "an organised way at school, in families, civic organisations and political parties, and in a less organised way via associations, mass media, the neighbourhood and peer groups" (Georgescu (ed.) 2017: 14). This ex ante evaluation/assessment would also allow confirmation of whether there was actual change in behaviours in the long run.

This overall analysis seems to suggest that the indicators to describe and measure the impact of **active citizenship** and **participation** at the community level could include in general terms:

- the number of educational activities with the community (workshops, training activities, seminars) on citizenship education-related topics;
- the number of participants in these activities;
- the number of awareness-raising, information activities (campaigns, promotions) on active participation, civic activism.

Additionally, some other indicators could be put forward tackling the results of these initiatives:

- the change in the exercise and defence of democratic rights and responsibilities in society;
- the change in how diversity is valued and perceived;
- the change towards a more active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

Existing indicators on active citizenship and participation

As mentioned, although the importance of community impact has been increasingly noted, addressed, studied and researched, indicators of community impact in these thematic areas are scarce. Community impact indicators, specifically linked to learning mobility and directly tackling active citizenship and participation, are missing. There are some useful tools and resources, but either they do not fully cover a community impact assessment with relevance to learning mobility or they very much focus on individual-level assessment and evaluation.

As already addressed, the **Active Citizenship Composite Indicator Index** (Hoskins 2006) departs from the operationalisation of the concept of active citizenship by outlining key "dimensions of active citizenship" (Political Life, Civil Society, Community Life and Values required for Active Citizenship). This is in line with the conceptual analysis that was developed above and is of particular interest to this research.

According to this Index, the Political Life dimension has a strong link with the paradigm of "representative democracy" and would include **participation** in the sphere of voting, gender representation in the national parliament in the elections and party involvement. Contrary to the other key dimensions, this was not divided in subsections due to the diversity of data used as the basis. An example of these indicators is, for

instance, membership of political parties. Although this example could be important if a macro-level study were to be carried out, it is not necessarily useful if micro and meso level impact of a small sending/hosting community is to be considered. Indeed, it would likely be difficult to establish a direct link between a specific learning mobility project or initiative and its impact in politics at the national level. However, these indicators can still be a good basis to assess whether learning mobility projects in a specific community have some level of impact in the community decision fora, for example, the gender distribution of the political parties in the municipal assembly.

In terms of the Civil Society key dimension, the Index mainly focuses on political non-governmental action, activities and initiatives based on a set of 18 indicators and it covers participation in protests (signing petitions, ethical consumption), human rights and environmental and trade union organisations (membership, participation in activities, volunteering), environmental organisations and is also influenced by the availability of data.

Table 2: List of basic indicators for the dimension of civil society

Civil Society Dimension	
Sub-dimensions	***Description***
Protest	*Working in an organisation or association*
	Signing a petition
	Taking part in lawful demonstrations
	Boycotting products
	Ethical consumption
	Contacted a politician
Human Rights Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work
Trade Union Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work
Environmental Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money

	Voluntary work

On the other hand, Community Life encompasses the activities that are more "community minded" and not as manifestly "political". As the Index also clarifies, Community Life includes, or has a very close connection with, Civil Society but has nonetheless been differentiated as it was understood that its scope is more focused on community support mechanisms and not so significantly on the political and accountability spheres of governments.

Table 3: List of basic indicators for the dimension of community life

Community Dimension	
Sub-dimensions	***Description***
Non organised help	*Non-organised help in the community*
Religious Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work
Business Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work
Sport Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work
Cultural Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work
Social Organisation	*Membership*
	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work
Teacher Organisation	*Membership*

	Participation
	Donating money
	Voluntary work

This dimension departs from 25 base indicators to then be outlined in seven sub-dimensions (which include unorganised help, religious organisations, business organisations, sports organisations, etc.) with specific sets of questions per each sub-dimension (participation, membership, volunteering).

Finally, the dimension of Values is highly reliant on the aggregation of indicators on democracy and human rights, i.e., tackles the definition of active citizenship itself. This concrete dimension departs from 11 basic indicators and is outlined in three sub-dimensions (human rights, intercultural competences and democracy).

Table 4: List of basic indicators for the dimension of values

Civil Society Dimension	
Sub-dimensions	***Description***
Human rights	*Immigrants should have same rights*
	Law against discrimination in the workplace
	Law against racial hatred
Intercultural	*Allow immigrants of different race group from majority*
	Cultural life undetermined/enriched by immigrants
	Immigrants make country worse/better place
Democracy	*How important for a citizen to vote*
	How important for a citizen to obey laws
	How important for a citizen to develop an independent opinion
	How important for a citizen to be active in a voluntary organisation
	How important for a citizen to be active in politics

The Index offers a thorough outline of indicators with relevance to both **active citizenship** and **participation**, and while there is some potential for adaptation, it still presents gaps (as Hoskins et al. clearly acknowledge) in terms of application to community impact assessment. First, the indicators developed in the Index rely heavily on the availability of data sources, which do not have a specific connection to learning mobility. Additionally, the availability of data in the field of **active citizenship** and **participation** at the community level is scarce in itself, which would pose challenges in developing the assessment/evaluation framework, if departing from a similar approach. Examples of challenges presented are: the discrepancy in terms of data available for traditional forms of participation (e.g.,

participation in elections); and informal participation initiatives (which are very common in learning mobility projects). The Index also aimed to use a methodology that would make it possible to carry a comparative study of the countries involved. However, this level of uniformisation might be very difficult to achieve when looking at very different communities, with different sizes and characteristics, and different assessment needs.

More recently, UNICEF developed a set of **Minimum Quality Standards and Indicators for Community Engagement** (UNICEF 2020), which can offer some direction on finding common ground and shedding light on what is worth considering when looking at the specific impacts at the level of communities, with the necessary adaptations intrinsic to learning mobility.

This set of Standards and Indicators defines **community engagement** as "[a] foundational action for working with traditional, community, civil society, government, and opinion groups and leaders; and expanding collective or group roles in addressing the issues that affect their lives. Community engagement empowers social groups and social networks, builds upon local strengths and capacities, and improves local participation, ownership, adaptation and communication. Through community engagement principles and strategies, all stakeholders gain access to processes for assessing, analysing, planning, leading, implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions, programmes and policies that will promote survival, development, protection and participation" (UNICEF 2020: 6).

What this definition seems to highlight very importantly with respect to the remit of this research is the emphasis on community engagement as a tool for improving local participation, which can be leveraged if learning mobility projects clearly address community engagement as part of the project/initiative. It also hints on how community engagement could be seen as a vehicle for monitoring and evaluating, ultimately, leading to increased **participation** which, as already noted, is extremely important to the development and implementation of **active citizenship**.

Although this set of Standards and Indicators focuses on "international development practice and humanitarian assistance" they are not exclusive to less developed countries and are a useful tool in providing cross-sectoral "guidance for gender-sensitive community engagement approaches in high-, middle- and low-income countries" as well (UNICEF, 2020: 2).

The rationale for this assessment tool departs from establishing common standards that are then grouped to cover core standards, implementation, co-ordination and integration, and resource mobilisation standards. The indicators are then used to measure the performance of each of these standards to improve the quality of community engagement, support in achieving community goals, and providing measurable achievements of process and outcomes. The scoring of indicators uses a Likert Scale (scoring from five to one) and it uses this numeric scale to provide benchmarks for achieving goals, for evaluating how well the community engagement practices reflect and align with the minimum standards set out (UNICEF 2020: 35).

This set of Standards and Indicators is also clear in acknowledging these indicators as a basis, but also mentioning that they need to be tailored to adapt to local contexts and be in line with the needs of the different actors, stakeholders and communities.

It is interesting to note that the set of Standards and Indicators presents a binary set of indicators (one for national and local governments, another for NGOs, CSOs and implementing agencies) which could be

interesting to explore and implement, with the necessary adaptations, within the community where the learning mobility takes place.

While many of the minimum standards and the indicators would be difficult to adapt to the realm and context of learning mobility, and are very much focused on the humanitarian sphere and organisational and project management dimensions, there are interesting insights that could be adapted within the thematic areas of active citizenship and participation.

One example refers to the indicators that tackle the core standard of "participation" and are phrased as:

- Community goals for participation are identified and achieved
- Community members are aware of mechanisms for participation
- Community members have positive experiences of participation (UNICEF 2020: 40).

Another dimension pertains to the core standard of Empowerment and Ownership and the following indicators:

- Issues identified are among the top priorities of communities for community action
- Communities demonstrate an ability to explore key issues, develop action plans, carry out action plans and evaluate results
- Community members feel that they "own" the project; that it is "for them" (UNICEF 2020: 41).

In terms of **citizenship education**, concretely, there is an additional tool that can also be potentially adaptable and useful, the UNESCO Measurement of Global Citizenship Education (Skirbekk et al. 2013), which proposes the construction of a composite indicator with three complementary levels:

- societal (e.g., the level of democracy macro level indicators of openness);

- the supplier (e.g., provision of education; availability of training relevant for global citizenship); and

- the receiver (civic identity, values, skills and knowledge) (Skirbekk et al. 2013).

There are few references to community in the document and the approach seems to be more in line with a very broad understanding of community, i.e., "a set of interconnected ideas and beliefs on matters of societal, distributive, political, institutional and environmental importance, referring to a broad, culturally and environmentally inclusive worldview", i.e. a "global community" (Skirbekk et al. 2013).

Accordingly, the methodological approach is focused on nationally representative surveys to ensure a global coverage, and it is not regional or local community focused.

Notwithstanding, the indicators that are put forward especially at the "supplier" and "receiver" levels (highlighted below) are in line with the elements that were highlighted in the analysis of the conceptual framework and the connections between **active citizenship**, **participation** and **citizenship education** and might be reshaped to respond to the needs of community impact assessment of learning mobility projects:

Table 5: Measurement of Global Citizenship Education (Skirbekk et al. 2013)

Supplier	Education system	• Enrolment rates • % of children in employment (aged 7-14) (World Bank) • **%** of **students studying abroad** • **%** of **students going participating in international exchange programmes during studies** • **%** of **foreign students and teachers** • Classroom size • Pupil/textbook ratio	Aggregated level data from international and national organisations (UNESCO – UIS, IBE, World Bank)
	Teacher characteristics	• Average number of pupils per teacher • % of trained teachers • % of full-time teachers • Teacher attrition rate • % of teachers with tertiary level diploma • % of teachers who studied abroad*	Aggregated level data from international and national organisations (UNESCO)
		• Subsample of surveys on teachers' attitudes, values and behaviour	Individual level data – general purpose survey or designed survey in collaboration with Pew or Gallup
	Curriculum	• Presence of curriculum on intercultural communication, civic education, international geography, ecology and sustainable development • Average number of foreign languages available for student at different levels of education	Aggregated level data from international and national organisations (UNESCO – IBE)
Receiver	Knowledge and skills	• **Knowledge about global challenges and problems** o Have you heard of the Millennium Development Goals? o To what extent do global environmental challenges require that you change your own behaviour? • ***Knowledge of languages**** • ***Use of internet and modern ways of communications*** o Can you use a personal computer? o How often, if ever, do you use a personal computer?	Individual level data – general purpose survey or designed survey in collaboration with Pew or Gallup
	Attitudes and values	• ***Global identity and openness*** o Level of agreement with a statement "I see myself as a world citizen" o Level of agreement with a statement "A benefit of the internet is that it makes information available to more and more people worldwide" • ***Willingness to help others*** o Would you be willing to pay higher taxes in order to increase your country's foreign aid to poor countries?	Individual level data – general purpose survey or designed survey in collaboration with Pew or Gallup

		• ***Acceptance of universal human rights, equality*** o Justifiable – For a man to beat his wife o Justifiable – homosexuality o Women have the same rights as men is an essential characteristic of democracy • ***Sustainable development*** o Level of agreement on an increase in taxes if the extra money were used to prevent environmental pollution o For certain problems, like environment pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions • ***Anti-fatalistic attitudes*** o Agreement with statement "people can do little to change life"	
	Behaviours	• ***Involvement in civic activities*** o Did you vote in your country's recent elections to the national parliament? o Are you an active member of an NGO?	Individual level data – general purpose survey or designed survey in collaboration with Pew or Gallup

All the aforementioned tools seem to indicate community-level orientations to some extent, i.e., referring to population groups and not exclusively to individual assessments, but they do not specifically address most of the relevant dimensions of **active citizenship** and **participation** (or **citizenship education**) at the community level.

Social capital

The concept of **social capital** gained high consideration, both in the field of research and in the public realm, following Putnam's landmark book "Bowling alone". But Putnam was not the first to analyse the concept. Hanifan is generally believed to have been the first to use the notion to describe the community feeling in rural areas by the "goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit, the rural community, whose logical center is the school" (Hanifan 1916: 130). Sociological and economic research on social capital started only in the second half of the last century and became dynamic around the year 2000. There is no general consent on the definition of social capital, but all are concerned with social relationships as a resource and their effects on the individual, the group and society. The different researchers, e.g. Granovetter (1973), Loury (1977), Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) or Putnam (1995) focused on different facets – depending on the academic discipline and their research interest. Therefore, social capital can be interpreted as individual resource or benefit (Bourdieu), as collective asset (Coleman) or as public good (Putnam), where these interpretations are not mutually exclusive.

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1997) offered an approach to structure **social capital** in three dimensions: **structural**, **cognitive** and **relational**. This study will follow this approach for understanding the impact of learning mobility on social capital. Following Granovetter, the structural dimension of social capital concerns the properties of a social network and describes the configuration of linkages between units or individuals. It looks at network ties or configurations between actors, analysing the network according to density, connectivity and hierarchy.

Whereas the **structural dimension looks at rules and procedures** (including roles), the relational dimension focuses on the nature and quality of the relationship between actors. The **relational dimension** of social capital describes the **particular relationship** people have established, like friendship, respect, or obligations. The main aspects of this dimension of social capital are trust and trustworthiness, norms, expectations and identity and identification. This dimension is also described as the bonding inside a group.

The third dimension forms the communication inside the network and to the outside. It relates to those resources that provide shared representation and systems of meaning among parties. **This relational dimension reflects the shared understandings** in the form of shared language, codes and narratives, shared values and attitudes, as well as shared goals and visions. This dimension of social capital is of high importance in the context of learning mobility.

Bonding and bridging (and linking)

If **social capital** is seen primarily as a public good and not as an individual asset, it refers mainly to connectedness or embeddedness. It describes the strengths, widths and depths of networks in a given social structure – be it a sports club, a workplace or a religious congregation. If the networks of an individual member of each such social group are analysed, one finds connections between seemingly different social groups. Accordingly, it makes sense to differentiate between links and connections in a given social structure from the links and connections between social structures. Following Putnam (1995, 2000), and Gittel and Vidal (1998) these different forms of connections in social capital can be seen as

bonding social capital (within a social structure) and **bridging social capital** (outward from a social structure).

Applying this differentiation, bonding social capital can be interpreted as exclusive whereas bridging has an inclusive approach. An increase in bonding social capital enhances closure of groups whereas increased bridging opens the groups and enables outward-looking co-operation. Bridging and bonding are not opposing trends – they can both increase at the same time, by strengthening links within the group, and establishing and promoting links to external elements and groups.

Linking is the third important form of social capital, referring to the connection to individuals in positions of power and to formal institutions. This scaling-up (vertical bridging) is the main dimension of social mobility, "linking social capital which refers to ties between the ordinary people and those individuals representing power and authority should play a decisive role in creating equal access to critical resources for every group in the society" (İzmen and Üçdoğruk Gürel 2020). While bonding and bridging can be understood as horizontal connection between social actors, linking social capital is constituted by hierarchical connections to institutions. Thus, a connection between the micro and the macro level is established.

Positive and negative effect of social capital

In social science, it is mostly the positive effects of social capital that are highlighted – the benefits one earns for being connected in a network and using supportive structures inside. However, the costs that are connected with participating in networks should not be ignored. The supportive structure functions on the shared belief that support is mutual and can be asked for if needed (this can be called "reciprocity").

In 1998, Portes highlighted the negative consequences of social capital supporting exclusion. He pointed to four negative effects of social capital: exclusion of outsiders (elitism), excess claims on group members (expected support), restrictions on individual freedoms (e.g. sects and cults, strict traditional or family ties), and downward levelling norms (outward discrimination). It is clear that Portes refers to the bonding effect of social capital, which strengthens the links between elements of existing social groups. The exclusive factor of strong bonds in a network leads also to the negative effect of separation of a certain group of society as a whole (sects, criminal groups, separatists). However, an interpretation if the effect is positive or negative is often based on a subjective perception.

In his analysis of network societies, Castells (2009) emphasises the fact that the bridging element of social capital has an effect of change on societies by opening alternative connections and might even alter power relations.

Examples of existing indicators for social capital

An OECD statistic working paper presented four interpretations of social capital – all with the perspective of measuring social capital:

Table 6: Four Interpretations of Social Capital (OECD 2013:19)

	Network structure and activities	**Productive resources**
Individual	Personal relationships	Social network support
Collective	Civic engagement	Trust and co-operative norms

Personal relationships refer to the **structure** – intensity, intimacy, density and width – of personal networks. **Social network support**, on the other hand, means the **benefits individuals gain by being part of a given personal network**. Whereas any analysis of the personal relationships describes solely the structure of the network as a whole and the position of the individual knot in the network, investigating social network support can range from effects on individual well-being to information, practical help and even to an economic return of investment analysis – but always focused on the individual level.

When including any bridging element provided by individual members to widen and connect different networks to a net of groups, the effects are externalised and thus create positive externalities for the group, the community and society as a whole.

Analysing **personal relationships** might seem inappropriate as it invades the private sphere, but it helps to identify socially isolated and therefore vulnerable groups, and even to interpret the impact of societal trends on social interaction. Insight on social support provided by networks highlights not only individual benefits like well-being but also on social mobility, and this is essential for the indicators for impact on communities.

Civic engagement refers to actions on the collective life of a community or society (see Active citizenship and participation), whereas **trust and co-operative norms**, finally, reflect on "the cognitive factors that shape the way people behave towards each other and as members of society" (OECD 2013: 34). The latter interpretation of social capital takes into account generalised trust (as it is described in various value theories e.g. Inglehart 1977, Fukuyama 1995), trust in institutions and co-operative rules and norms. The effect of trust and co-operative norms can be seen in the reduction of transaction costs – the necessity of formal legal agreements – allocation of resources, but also social control.

The social capital question databank from the OECD holds many questions that are already frequently in use to measure social capital. The questions stem from various surveys (e.g. from EU-SILC). In Table 7, sources of the indicators are noted after the question in brackets. In some cases, different formulations are used (e.g. regarding the time span reflected in the question).

Table 7: Indicators for Social Capital

Personal relations	
Frequency and mode of contact	How often do you usually get together with relatives [outside the household] during a usual year? (EU-SILC)
	How often do you usually get together with friends [outside the household] during a usual year? (EU-SILC)
	How often are you usually in contact with relatives [outside the household] during a usual year, by telephone, letter, fax, email, SMS, etc? (EU-SILC)
	How often are you usually in contact with friends [outside the household] during a usual year, by telephone, letter, fax, email, SMS, etc? (EU-SILC)
	Did the frequency of contact change after a (learning) mobility experience?
Size of network	How many friends or acquaintances do you keep in fairly regular contact with? (Finnish Leisure Survey)
	"How many of your close friends live in the same city or local community as you?" (Canadian General Social Survey (GSS))
	Think of all your friends you had contact within the last month: Of all these people: how many have the same mother tongue as you? (GSS)
	About how many times in the past 12 months have you been in the home of a friend of a different race or had them in your home? (U.S. Social Capital Benchmark Survey)
	"Have you met new people through volunteering in the past 12 months?" (GSS)
	"In the past month, how many new people did you meet outside of work or school, that is people who you hadn't met before and who you intend to stay in contact with? How many of these people did you meet on the Internet?" (GSS)
Function	How many people, if any, are there with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters? (ESS)
	Compared to other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities? (much less than most; less than most; about the same; more than most; much more than most) (ESS)
Social network support	
	"If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?" (Gallup World Poll)
	"Have you ever received financial or material assistance, or moral support from a friend, close one, neighbour, or family member (living outside of household)?" (INSSEE Quality of life)
	If you are looking for a new job, to whom would you turn to first? (Social Capital in the Region of the Czech Republic Survey)

	Do you personally know a member of State or Federal parliament, or local government that you would feel comfortable contacting for information or advice? (Australian GSS)
	If you had a serious personal crisis, how many people, if any, do you feel you could turn to for comfort and support? (UK harmonised question set)
	In the last four weeks, have you provided any of the following forms of unpaid help to anyone (relative or not) living outside your household? • economic assistance; health services (injections, medication, etc.); • caring for adults (help with bathing, dressing, eating, etc.); • childcare; • help with household activities (washing, ironing, grocery shopping, preparing meals, etc.); • accompaniment, companionship; • completing paperwork (at the post office, bank, etc.); • help in performing work outside the home; • help with study; • help in the form of food, clothing, etc.; • other; • none (ISTAT)
	Do you feel that your family, relatives and/or friends make too many demands on you? (ISSP survey on Social Relations and Support Systems)
Civic engagement	
	Have you participated in any of the following types of organisation in the past year: political parties or trade unions; professional associations; churches or other religious organisations; recreational groups or organisations; charitable organisations; and, activities of other groups or organisations (EU-SILC)
	Similar questions in Eurobarometer, ESS with varying list of organisations.
	Have you in the previous year taken part in one of the listed activities: boycotted, or deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons; took part in a demonstration; attended a political meeting or rally; contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or a civil servant to express your views; donated money or raised funds for a social or political activity; contacted or appeared in the media to express your views; joined an Internet political forum or discussion group; signing a petition; joining in boycotts; attending peaceful demonstrations; joining a strike; any other act of protest (World Value Survey)
	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: People like me don't have any say about what the Government does?
	How interested would you say you are in politics? (ESS)

	Have you in the last six months attended any event that brings people together such as fetes, shows, festivals or other community events? (Australian GSS)
	How often in the last 12 months have you organised, helped in the organisation of, or just participated in activities, events held at your place of residence or the area where you live? (Polish Social Cohesion survey)
Trust and co-operative norms	
	Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people? (World Value Survey)
	How safe do you or would you feel while walking alone after dark in the area surrounding your home? (Polish Social Cohesion survey)
	Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: crime, violence and vandalism in the local area? (EU-SILC)
	Please tell me how much you personally trust each of the following institutions: country's parliament; legal system; the police; politicians; political parties; the European Parliament; the United Nations (ESS) press; the government; the local (municipal) authorities (Quality of Life)
	Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves? (ESS)
	Have you done any of the following in the past month: Helped a stranger or someone you didn't know who needed help? (Gallup World Poll)
	Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish (ESS)
	Gay male and lesbian couples should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (ESS)
	To what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country]'s people to come and live here? How about people of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people? (ESS)
	Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries? (ESS)

Culture and intercultural dialogue

In the framework of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe 2008), the Council of Europe has defined **culture** as a descriptive concept that includes "everything relating to ways of life, customs, beliefs and other things that have been passed on to us for generations, as well as the various forms of artistic creations". In other words, culture describes a wide range of phenomena starting from general "ways of life" and life practices, to specific collectivities based on location, nation, history, lifestyle and ethnicity, as well as systems and webs of representation and meaning, and realms of artistic value and heritage.

Intercultural understanding and intercultural competence are more important today than ever before, because they make it possible for one to address the root causes of some of the most virulent problems of today's societies, in the form of misunderstandings across cultural, socio-cultural, ethnic and other lines: discrimination, racism, hate speech and so on. **Intercultural dialogue** in this context refers to **an open and respectful exchange of views** between individuals and groups with different backgrounds, on the basis of **mutual understanding and respect** (Council of Europe 2008). The ultimate purpose of this exchange is to create a **co-operative and willing environment for overcoming political and social tensions** (Platform for Intercultural Europe 2008). The focus here is on understanding different perspectives, on active and respectful listening and commitment to human rights and social action.

The field of intercultural dialogue in non-formal education is evolving continuously. The approaches, the methods and the context in which it is taking place are changing and adapting to new realities. **The value of youth work and youth organisations is particularly recognised as essential to advance intercultural dialogue in a non-formal education context**. Such structures often succeed in reaching out and giving a voice and an opportunity to young people who are often marginalised, giving them a chance to engage in dialogue and in generating greater solidarity and opportunities for social cohesion within **neighbourhoods and communities**.

Mobility is understood as a possible source of genuine and diverse learning experiences, and it therefore becomes important to critically investigate links between **learning mobility** (settings and contexts) and **identity building** (as one of the key features of culture). Learning mobility in this regard aims to improve the following areas of young people's lives: participation, active citizenship and democratic engagement, access to rights, social inclusion, **intercultural and intergenerational learning** and dialogue, individual competency development including digital competence, European cohesion, global solidarity, value-based learning, peace, diversity, sustainability and impact on the community. This list is not exhaustive.

The **guidelines developed by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership** offer an insight into specific aspects that need to be taken into account throughout the life cycle of an **international/intercultural activity** in order to create an environment for intercultural dialogue and learning. **The approach** to intercultural dialogue presented in these guidelines is a human rights-based approach. The focus is not only on culture and cultural differences, but on identity in its broader sense, on social and political context and power relations (EU-CoE youth partnership 2009).

Existing indicators for intercultural dialogue

In order to organise non-formal learning/education activities that contribute to intercultural dialogue, **the tool of indicators for intercultural dialogue is developed around the three main phases of an activity** (preparation, implementation, and follow-up), which can serve as a **reference point**. The 15 criteria and their related **indicators for intercultural dialogue in non-formal education activities** are **specific to intercultural dialogue**. Each criterion has between two and seven indicators, depending on its complexity. The indicators refer to aspects relating to the people that take part in the activity, to the processes that are facilitated and to the content that is discussed (EU-CoE youth partnership 2009).

A detailed but not exhaustive list of criteria and indicators for intercultural dialogue in non-formal education activities cover various steps of the process from **preparation to implementation to follow-up**, as indicated in Table 8.

Table 8: Criteria and indicators for intercultural dialogue in non-formal education activities

To what extent are these indicators present and considered in your (**international/intercultural)** activity?	
Preparation phase	1. The **overall aim and the objectives** of the activity are explicitly linked to intercultural dialogue and learning. 2. The **diversity** of those involved in the activity provides a possibility for intercultural dialogue and learning. 3. Facilitators use **updated theoretical base and diverse methodologies** of intercultural dialogue and learning to plan the programme. 4. **Activities** focused on understanding the functioning of stereotypes, prejudices and different forms of discrimination and social injustice are planned in the programme. 5. Contents of the **programme** relating to intercultural dialogue are clearly connected to the daily life contexts of participants.
Implementation phase	6. **Multilingualism** is used if needed. 7. There is **a clear connection** between intercultural dialogue and other main topics of the programme. 8. The activity takes into account aspects related to **identity** and **power relations**. 9. The activity stimulates participants to **develop their knowledge** about the historical and cultural background of the people they interact with and the social and political context in which they live (The **local community** (partners associations, local government, etc.) participate actively in the programme). 10. The activity stimulates the **development of attitudes** like empathy, solidarity, openness and respect for otherness. 11. The activity stimulates the **development of skills** like critical thinking, multiperspectivity and tolerance for ambiguity. 12. The activity increases participants' awareness about **global interconnectedness** and the role of solidarity and co-operation in addressing global challenges. 13. Facilitators engage in **conflict transformation** in compliance with human rights principles.
Follow-up phase	14. Participants are encouraged and supported to **act as multipliers** of intercultural dialogue and engage in social transformation. 15. The activity contributes to **building the evidence of good practices** in intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue (Facilitators share their experience, what worked well and what did not work well, with members of

	different professional communities; the activity serves as evidence for future activities and decisions on intercultural dialogue in the field of practice, policy and research).

For any non-formal learning activity as well as for learning mobility activities, indicators for the following **dimensions of intercultural dialogue** should be checked: respectful sharing of opinions, appreciation of diversity, meaningful interaction, dialogue between equals, learning about each other, learning from one another, and social transformation.

Criteria 9, 10 and 11 refer specifically to intercultural competence. Within the implementation phase, criterion 9 includes the indicator that addresses active participation of the local community (partners associations, local government, etc.) in the programme. This indeed could potentially serve as a point of reference for development of more concrete indicators to measure the impact of international/intercultural activities at the community level (including both hosting and sending communities).

A Quality Framework for Learning Mobility in the youth field defines principles, indicators and particular types of projects of learning mobility (e.g. European Voluntary Service, Youth Exchange, Study Abroad, Work-camps) although it does not make direct reference to measuring the impact of learning mobility at the community level. Despite the fact that the learning outcomes are evaluated at project and individual level, in a short-term and long-term perspective, this quality framework includes **non-intended outcomes**. Namely, in the evaluation, organisers cover both explicit objectives and other outcomes, positive or negative, that resulted from the project (principle 19) that could be potentially relevant for development of more specific community impact indicators in the future.

(Return) migration

The boundary between mobility and migration is thin and often – it seems – reliant on personal preferences. Intra-EU migration is also referred to as intra-EU mobility, which appears also due to the intensifying negativity in the discussion about migration. Furthermore, one speaks of learning mobility if young people are staying for more than a few weeks or months or even a year in another country for training or study.

But migration and mobility do have some main differences. Migration can be defined as a movement of individuals from their place of living (or centre of their lives) to another place and accompanied by a change of social group structure for a time longer than 12 months. This description stems from different sources, like the online glossaries of the European Migration Network (EMN) 2021 and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM n.a.). Beside the minimum timeframe of one year, the change in the social relations of the individual is central. The crossing of a state border is not essential for this definition, but the ongoing debates focus mainly on cross-border migration. A long-lasting movement from one place of residence to another inside a given country is often not labelled as migration – even within the refugee legal framework – Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are (legally) not considered as refugees. Therefore, all migration is mobility but not all mobility is migration.

The discussion on the links between (learning) mobility – especially regarding university students – and migration is currently just developing (e.g. King and Raghuram 2013; Carling, Czaika and Bivand Erdal 2020). In this discussion, the focus is either on the impact of learning mobility on migration aspirations upon return, or on the connection between student mobility programmes and the prolonged stay in the country of studies. The analysis of stage-to-stage processes of migration regards both the intensification of individual learning mobility and family reunion. On the other hand, "student migration illustrates how access to resources affects the type and degree of fragmentation of migration journeys over time, but also how fragmented migration journeys reflect relationships between the amount of resources and accessible migration pathways" (Carling, Czaika and Bivand Erdal 2020: 10).

School pupils' learning mobility experiences (also promoted by various programmes such as Erasmus+) have – so it seems – until now not been at the centre of interest of migration research, nor have any youth exchange programmes.

Learning mobility for a longer period of time has an impact on the individual but it also has an impact on the communities: on the host community and the sending community. One of the main impacts is seen in the change of social capital induced by mid- to long-term mobility. Another one is the direct economic impact e.g. via remittances for the sending community or consumption in the hosting community.

Existing indicators for (return) migration

The impact of (return) migration is often measured with economic indicators (e.g. remittances, development of the gross national income) which can only be of very limited use for learning mobility related assessments. But other indicators on aspirations, educational success of family members, change of norms and values in destination societies are more apt to be applicable for learning mobility.

Overviews of various indicators on migration can be found in Melde (2012), Chappell and Sriskandarajah (2007) and also on the Migration Data Portal (2021); Table 9 shows some of these indicators.

Table 9: Indicators on migration (Melde 2012)

Employment after migration	Increase/decrease of employment rate among non-migrant household members in households with migrant(s)
Housing and living conditions	Investments in improvements of housing; investments in new housing since migration
Education at household level	New educational levels of non-migrant household members financed since migration occurred in the household; increase in length of school/university attendance of non-migrant household members since migration occurred in the household
Wider social surrounding	Change/alteration in traditional culture, norms and values; changing values linked to diasporas' work culture in destination countries
Host community	Increase/decrease in members of same origin community at destination; extension/decrease of social groups and networks, both physically and via information technology; changes in power relationships of individual members of the social networks and groups
	Impact of confidence in own society on decision to migrate

Gaps in research

Having in mind the complexity of the task and the insufficient mechanisms available to assess how different models of learning mobility affect changes in different types of community, high-quality studies that can offer some input on how these mechanisms and tools can be designed and implemented are of paramount importance and are very much needed.

In terms of skills and competences, the focus should be on the returnees and their informal networks, and the professional environment. The returnees could offer information on their perception of the importance of the programme, and their experiences during and after the programme. Their informal networks could offer testimonials on how the returnees have inspired, encouraged and affected them to change their way of thinking and behaviour, while the professional environment could explain the benefits to the companies and the process of working that these individuals bring. The approach would include methods such as focus, in-depth and semi-structured interviews, participation and observation, ethnographies, and other qualitative approaches. This would give insight into the complexity of this process, and recognition of the positive as well as potentially negative effects.

Recommendations for improving the quantitative baseline include regular evaluation of these programmes (short and long term) in terms of developing different skills and competences of the beneficiaries. In addition, it is necessary to develop research methods which would occasionally analyse the effects of specific learning mobility programmes on different (home and host) communities, including professional communities, informal networks, and others.

In the thematic areas of active citizenship, participation, social capital development and intercultural dialogue/exchange, individual level assessment seems to be the norm (Hylton et al. 2018, Brunton-Smith and Barret 2015; Skirbekk et al. 2013; Dam 2011; Hoskins et al. 2008), reinforcing the existence of a research gap in terms of community impact assessment.

Notwithstanding, and while indicators at the individual level alone do not respond to the demands and needs of community impact assessment, they are still important as “qualitative data might be used to capture individual and collective stories of social change, including personal perceptions” (Animating Democracy n.a.). The key challenge remains to depart from an exclusively individual-level paradigm to incorporate specific community-level indicators.

As thoroughly analysed in the methodology section of this desk research, and referred above in the section dealing with the skills and competences, qualitative indicators might offer a good methodological option for these thematic areas as well, as they allow room to measure evidence of change in community members’ values, attitudes and sentiments (though interviews, storytelling, focus groups), while being systematically collected and categorised for change assessment in the community (Animating Democracy n.a.). Quantitative indicators might be helpful in assessing the increase of certain parameters in the community, for example the increase/decrease of participation in political processes or the number of initiatives or workshops organised on citizenship education, as well as the number of petitions and protests, within the civic activism sphere of participation. What seems to be important is to carry some

level of ex ante and ex post evaluation assessments. Indicators will be extremely useful, as they will provide guidance on what those involved need to assess and consider.

Participatory evaluation, as also mentioned, holds a special position in the European agenda as youth participation is one of the key principles of the youth field. In this sense, it is particularly relevant when we are looking at active citizenship and education. In this sense, it is of paramount importance to consider this dimension when developing these indicators (Checkoway and Richards-Schuster 2003).

In any case, many studies dealing with the question of community impact are not directly researching the community members, leaving aside the benefits that a community-based research approach can leverage when the assessment sought is the impact at the community level (Beckman et al. 2011). Some examples of research on community impact which did not involve the community directly are Jezowski et al. (2017), "The impact of European Voluntary Service projects on local communities", in which the interviews were conducted with the representatives of NGOs to know more about the impact of the learning mobility on the community, and Hampden-Thompson et al. (2017), which surveyed teachers about the attitudes of their students towards community and belonging. This is increasingly more challenging if change is being assessed in terms of the world views and values of the community, without involving it.

An additional potential methodological angle that might be worth considering is a more developmental-based evaluation philosophy which has been seen as more comprehensive and adequate to complex situations in which contexts and values shift. Because it is focused on helping individuals, groups, organisations and communities, it constantly adapts interventions – moving from the traditional paradigm of formative evaluation, more focused on situations where the priority is to ameliorate existing models, programmes or strategies, and summative evaluation that retrospectively focuses on describing the outcomes of those same models (Simister 2017; Guijt et al. 2012).

It is important to note, however, that this methodological angle shall not be considered as a model to adopt, as it does not focus very much on objectives and indicators and it is often time- and resource-consuming, which would not respond to the needs in this case (Simister 2017; Guijt et al. 2012). It still can provide, however, some working tools to look at the complexities of community impact while analysing and designing the methodology of the final set of indicators.

Up to now, no specific indicators on social capital development nor on intercultural dialogue/exchange are regularly used to measure the impact of learning mobility at the community level.

Examples of proposed indicators

In general, and based on the analysis carried above, this study can propose indicators on three levels:

1. general (macro indicators)
2. self-assessment indicators (e.g. about skills and competences)
3. indicators based on the experience of community members and members in partner organisations:
    a. professional community
    b. informal networks.

This differentiation holds for all the analysed thematic areas, i.e., the fields of active citizenship and participation, culture and intercultural dialogue, skills and competences or migration.

Data on the macro level as in the areas of education, employment, labour market, election turnout or economy, can in many cases be extracted for the community level. Data on existing organisations and associations in communities, on the other hand, is not available in many cases, neither is data on mobility experiences, intercultural exchanges, or engagement levels and dimensions in the local community.

This shows that it is not only necessary but mandatory to involve stakeholders in the host and sending communities in the data-collection process to ensure a participatory research approach, as already mentioned. The views and perspectives of the communities' stakeholders and agents are essential to observe the changes in the communities and produce solid data on community impact assessment. This is naturally not limited to objective data like number of associations before the learning mobility and whether it changed post learning mobility, but also includes information regarding diversity, intercultural exchange, existing challenges in communities, or even the expectations of inhabitants.

Because change is easier to assess from a benchmark of time, this study suggests including indicators already in the planning phase of any mobility programme/activity and in the implementation phase as well. Contrarily to an exclusive ex ante/ex post model, the implementation phase is important to monitor changes which can be described as community impact. The ex-post evaluation, carried out some time after the learning mobility initiative ends, is of paramount importance to *close* this assessment circle and offer conclusions on what (and how things) changed.

Since many data collection tools and mechanisms on the macro level (surveys like ESS, Eurobarometer or Eurostat data) are conducted on a yearly basis, and in line with what was mentioned above, it seems beneficial and useful to follow this rhythm and to have three stages of data acquisition: in the planning phase of a learning mobility, during the learning mobility (implementation), and 12 months after the end of the activity.

It is clear that the macro-level statistics and surveys will not follow the phases of implementation of a single learning mobility project, neither will it be possible to adopt this approach/model in all communities. Notwithstanding, based on the analysis above, the study considers that – with more or less adaptations – the time structure proposed offers a solid guideline on what to consider, or more specifically, on what and how to measure. The research also considers that the existence of this time-frame might be particularly

useful, supportive, and relevant in smaller communities in which macro-level data might not give a significant insight.

At this stage, it also has to be pointed out that while there are many macro-level assessment tools and mechanisms with relevance in terms of community impact, specific macro-level assessments that make it possible to evaluate the impact of learning mobility in communities are still missing. In this regard, for example, data on unemployment cannot be compared considering a learning mobility experience.

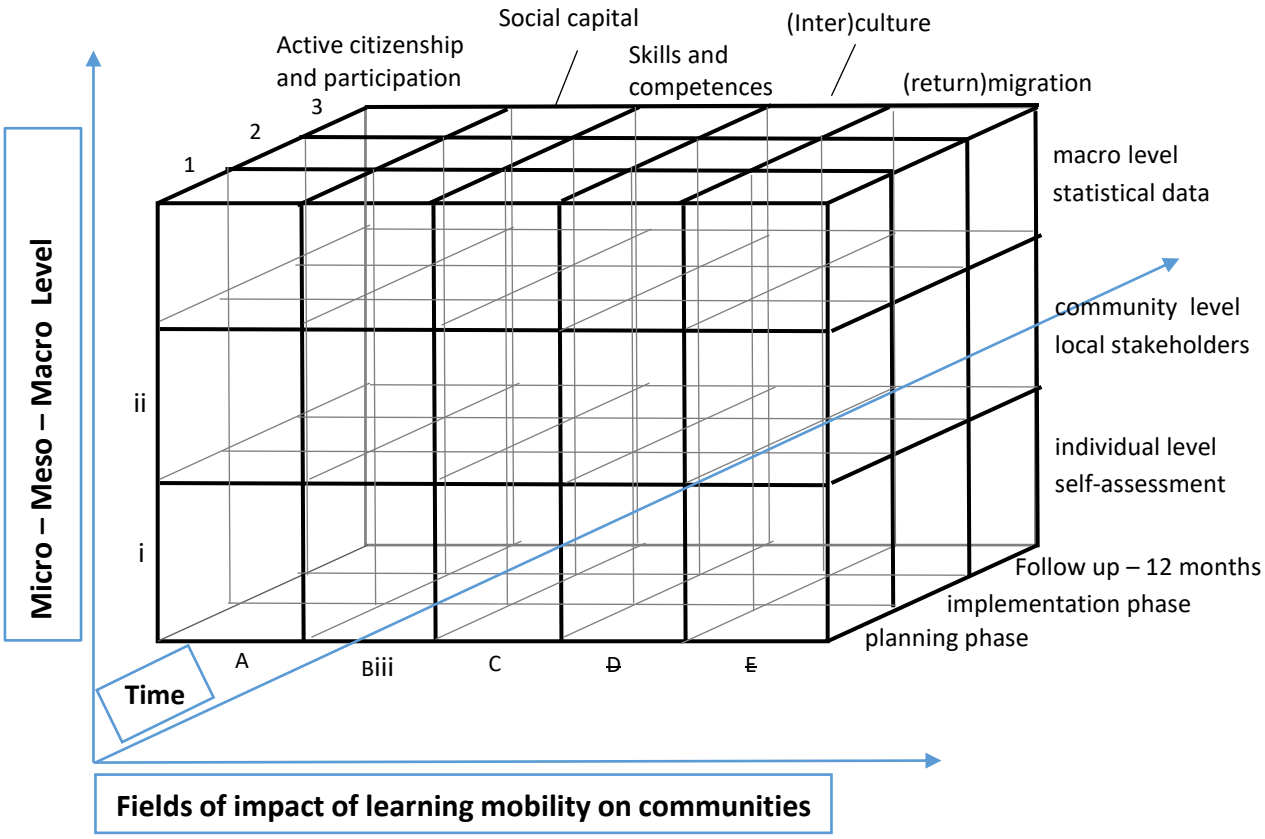
Having this in mind, this study suggests a framework for development of indicators according to Table 10.

Table 10: framework of indicators for impact of learning mobility on the community level

			Ex ante/Ex post
Macro level	Statistical data on, e.g.: Labour market/unemployment rates Trust Election turn out		Statistical data on: Labour market/unemployment rates Trust Election turnout
Organisational/ community level **(project leaders and stakeholders in community)**	Existing structures/associations Engagement Trust Mobility experience Diversity/intercultural exchange	New projects initiated through volunteers Impact on economy	Existing structures/associations Engagement Trust Mobility experience Diversity/intercultural exchange Perceived change in associations, engagement, support, diversity/intercultural exchange; mobility; trust, economy
Individual level **(participant)**	Attitudes Behaviour Skills Work experience Participation Trust Social networks (bonding, bridging) Intercultural contacts	Change: Experience Skills Social networks Behaviour/attitudes	Attitudes Behaviour Skills Work experience Participation Trust Social networks (bonding, bridging) Intercultural contacts
↑Level/time	**Preparation phase**	**Implementation phase**	**Follow up + 12 months**

The table shows that different areas of impact can be addressed in different phases of a project on different levels and with various methods. One can also illustrate this iterative, multi-variable and multi-level approach (IMM) of indicators in a diagram (Figure 5).

Figure 5: 3D-model of iterative multilevel multivariable (IMM) approach for indicators



This model allows, furthermore, the expansion of the cuboid by augmenting the axis for fields of impact with another field of impact (e.g. economy) creating a new row F. The inner cuboids can be described in details by its co-ordinates,by the field of impact, on which level (by whom) and at which point in the project when the indicator is applied. The indicator(s) focusing on "social capital" 12 months after the project provided through self-assessment of the participant is (B,i,3). The figure with the co-ordinate (C,ii,1) refers to indicators in the field "skills and competences" for the community level in the planning phase of the project. So, the first co-ordinate indicates the field of impact, the second shows the level of assessment and data provision, and the third co-ordinate indicates when the data is collected.

Suggested indicators/fields of indicators

In the following section examples of proposed indicators that can measure outcomes and impact of learning mobility activities on different levels are suggested. Furthermore, it is denoted in which field of the 3D-model of the IMM approach the indicators will be placed. **The formulation of these indicators is not exhaustive, mandatory or exclusive. It departs from an adaption of the existing indicators analysed in the different sections to provide an indicative (example oriented) framework**. Consequently, it has to be further developed before the indicators can be tested in the next phases.

General learning mobility indicators needed in macro-level surveys and statistics (e.g. ESS, Eurostat):

- *Number of young persons involved in programmes abroad by type* (formal, non-formal, informal) and the length of the programme *(by age, gender, socio-economic background, education etc.)*
- *Number of young persons involved in programmes within the country in specific local community by type* (formal, non-formal, informal) and the length of the programme
- *Number of young persons from abroad involved in programmes within the country region/local community by* type (formal, non-formal, informal) and the length of the programme
- *The ratio between long-term ingoing and outgoing learning mobilities*.

Examples – Skills and Competences

Labour market indicators

- *The employment rate, disaggregated by: 1. never involved, 2. short-term, 3. of medium duration, and 4. long-term learning mobility projects.* ***(C,iii,1) and (C,iii,3)***
- *The unemployment rate, disaggregated by: 1. never involved, 2. short-term, 3. of medium duration, and 4. long-term learning mobility projects.* ***(C,iii,1) and (C,iii,3)***
- *The numbers of entrepreneurs (company owners), disaggregated by owner (not) involved previously in learning mobility projects: 1. never involved, 2. short-term, 3. of medium duration, and 4. long-term.* ***(C,ii,1) and (C,ii,3)***
- *The number of new companies per year, disaggregated by owner (not) involved previously in learning mobility projects: 1. never involved, 2. short-term, 3. of medium duration, and 4. long-term.* ***(C,ii,1) and (C,ii,3)***

Employer's assessment (Euro-flash barometer) of employee's skills, disaggregated by: 1. never involved, 2. short-term, 3. of medium duration and 4. long-term learning mobility projects. **(C,ii,1) and (C,ii,3)**

- Language skills
- Communication skills
- Analytical and problem-solving skills
- Ability to adapt to and act in new situations
- Decision-making skills

- Team-working skills
- Sector-specific skills
- Planning and organisational skills
- Good reading/writing skills
- Foreign language skills
- Computer skills
- Good with numbers

S*kills based on the memo© factors **(C,I,1)** and **(C,I,3)***

- *Confidence* – To have confidence and a conviction of one's own abilities
- *Curiosity* – To be open and curious about new challenges
- *Decisiveness* – To know better what one wants and to reach decisions more easily
- *Serenity* – To be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses
- *Tolerance of ambiguity* – To be tolerant towards another person's values and behaviour
- *Vigour* – To be able to manage one's own career, to be better able to solve problems

The skills that individuals acquire during learning mobility projects can be measured in two ways: 1. through self-assessments, indicators and scales, and 2. with less robust measurement through the assumed acquired competences based on the aims of the programme mobility, or research findings.

Examples – Active Citizenship and Participation

- New project for host community developed by young person(s) from outside **(A,ii,2) and (A,ii,3)**
- Existing programme/project is expanded due to the involvement of young person(s) from outside **(A,ii,2) and (A,ii,3)**
- Local networks of institutions/organisations are established (fostering co-operation in host community) **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in new initiatives carried out in the community as follow up of the mobility (e.g. youth centre is established after a youth exchange) **(A,ii,1) and (A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in projects organised in the community as follow-up of the mobility (e.g. multicultural street food festival) **(A,ii,1) and (A,ii,3)**
- NGOs, religious organisations, other civil society/community organisations are established as follow-up of mobility (e.g. NGO for youth with special needs) **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)** or ex post: **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in NGOs, religious organisations, other civil society/community organisations recognition after the mobility **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase* in NGOs, religious organisations, other civil society/community organisations publicity through the mobility and attract more volunteers in the community **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in new initiatives carried out in the community as follow-up of the mobility (e.g. youth centre is established after a youth exchange) **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**

- *Increase/decrease* in projects organised in the community as follow-up of the mobility (e.g. multicultural street food festival) **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in membership of NGOs, religious organisations, other civil society/community organisations
- *Increase/decrease* in democratic initiatives, workshops and activities as follow up-of the mobility **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in protests/boycotts **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in ethical consumption or climate emergency related initiatives, projects, campaigns **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- More young people from the sending community apply for mobility project **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- More youth NGOs in the hosting community apply for mobility projects **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)**
- *Increase/decrease* in turn-out in elections **(A,iii,1)** and **(A,iii,3)**

Citizenship education: all **(A,ii,1)** and **(A,ii,3)** and **(A,iii,1)** and **(A,iii,3)**

- *Increase/decrease* in democracy-related initiatives, workshops and activities as follow-up of the mobility
- *How important for a citizen to vote, disaggregated by: (1) Unimportant; (2) Slightly Important; (3) Moderately Important; (4) Important; (5) Very Important*
- *How important for a citizen to obey laws, disaggregated by: (1) Unimportant; (2) Slightly Important; (3) Moderately Important; (4) Important; (5) Very Important*
- *How important for a citizen to develop an independent opinion, disaggregated by: (1) Unimportant; (2) Slightly Important; (3) Moderately Important; (4) Important; (5) Very Important*
- *How important for a citizen to be active in a voluntary organisation, disaggregated by: (1) Unimportant; (2) Slightly Important; (3) Moderately Important; (4) Important; (5) Very Important*
- *How important for a citizen to be active in politics, disaggregated by: (1) Unimportant; (2) Slightly Important; (3) Moderately Important; (4) Important; (5) Very Important*

Community engagement: **all (A,ii,2)** and **(A,ii,3)**

- *Community goals for participation are identified and achieved, disaggregated by: 1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (**5**) Strongly agree.*
- *The project enhanced community member's awareness of mechanisms for participation, disaggregated by: 1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (**5**) Strongly agree.*
- *Community member's positive experiences of participation increased, disaggregated by: 1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (**5**) Strongly agree.*

Examples – Social Capital

Regarding social capital, a suggestion is to focus not only on the macro level of trust and co-operative norms (via macro-level statistical data) and community level (via community members) of civic

engagement, but also on the individual assessment of both the social network support (see Table 5) and the personal relationships.

*Macro indicators **(B,iii,1)** and **(B,iii,3)**:*

- *General trust in society*
- *Trust in institutions (government, parliament, democracy, policy, justice…)*
- *Participation (election turn out)*

*Individual level **(B,I,1), (B,I,2)** and **(B,I,3)***

- *Structure of personal network (before and after learning mobility activity)*
- *Experienced social network support*
- *Size of the individual's network in the communities (bonds and bridges)*

*Community member level **(B,ii,1)** and **(B,ii,1)***

- *Linking social capital (before and after learning mobility activity)*
- *Number of learning activities*
- *Mobility activities outside*

Examples – Culture and Intercultural Dialogue

Indicators in this field can be applied to special projects but also to the individuals experiencing the learning mobility, or to the community.

- *The overall aim and the objectives of the activity are explicitly linked to intercultural dialogue and learning **(D,ii,1)***
- *The diversity of those involved in the activity provides a possibility for intercultural dialogue and learning **(D,ii,1)***
- *Facilitators use updated theoretical base and diverse methodologies of intercultural dialogue and learning to plan the programme **(D,ii,1)***
- *Activities focused on understanding the functioning of stereotypes, prejudices and different forms of discrimination and social injustice are planned in the programme **(D,ii,1)***
- *Contents of the programme related to intercultural dialogue are clearly connected to the daily life contexts of participants* **(D,ii,1)**

- *Increase/decrease in intercultural exchange and dialogue in the community outside of institutional structures **(D,ii,1**) and **(D,ii,3)***
- *Increase/decrease of organisations/events for intercultural learning **(D,ii,1)** and **(D,ii,3)***

- *The activity increases participants' awareness about global interconnectedness and the role of solidarity and co-operation in addressing global challenges **(D,ii,2)***
- *Facilitators engage in conflict transformation in compliance with human rights principles **(D,ii,2)***

- *The activity stimulates participants to develop their knowledge about historical and cultural background of the people they interact with and the social and political context in which they live (The local community (partners associations, local government, etc.) participate actively in the programme)* ***(D,i,2)*** *and* ***(D,ii,2)***
- *The activity stimulates the development of attitudes like empathy, solidarity, openness and respect for otherness* ***(D,i,2)*** *and* ***(D,ii,2)***
- *The activity stimulates the development of skills like critical thinking, multiperspectivity and tolerance for ambiguity* ***(D,i,2)*** *and* ***(D,ii,2)***

- *Attitudes towards diversity in the society changed sustainably* ***(D,i,1)*** *and* ***(D,i,3)***

Examples – (Return) Migration

In this field, indicators focusing on education in the household/social surrounding of the young person and networking in the long-term learning experience would provide information on the impact of learning mobility on the community.

- *New educational levels of non-migrant household members financed since learning mobility occurred in the household* ***(E,iii,1)*** *and* ***(E,iii,3)***
- *Increase in length of school/university attendance of household members since learning mobility occurred in the household* ***(E,iii,1)*** *and* ***(E,iii,3)***
- *Increase/decrease in members of same origin community at destination of the learning mobility; extension/decrease of social groups and networks* ***(E,ii,1)*** *and* ***(E,ii,3)***
- *Impact of confidence in own household/social surrounding on decision to migrate (to enter learning mobility)* ***(E,iii,1)*** *and* ***(E,iii,3)*** *or* ***(E,ii,1)*** *and* ***(E,ii,3)***

Conclusions and next steps

Preamble

The aim of any development of indicators is not to judge or to pressure youth workers, practitioners and young people over their learning mobility projects, but to provide a structural framework for planning, implementing and following up after a learning mobility takes place. **Community impact indicators should not point to failures or be instrumentalised for funding purposes**. **Indicators are learning instruments**. They serve the purpose of evaluating the achievement of objectives, to show the challenges and obstacles that might be faced, and to highlight the intended and unintended impact of the activities. The goal of any evaluation is to translate into improvement for next projects. Furthermore, an evaluation – thoroughly executed – can provide information which can be useful even in simply preparing and implementing future or current projects. Additionally, indicators can also lead or assist in designing and implementing more successful projects, improving chances of funding, and showcasing a positive public image.

In order to do so, indicators have to cover a broad range of outputs, outcomes and goals of learning mobility projects. This does not mean that all these can be thoroughly planned or always expected. On the contrary, indicators should not stop with intended outcomes and impact but shall also measure outcomes that were not intended. The Theory of Change (TOC) and the Programme Theory (PT), as suggested by the study, are useful tools to consider in approaching and assessing those same unintended (and unexpected) impacts.

Theoretical background

The development of testable indicators on the impact of learning mobility on communities will have to build on an existing theory. Accordingly, it seems advisable to refer to approaches from the Theory of Change (ToC) and/or the Programme Theory (PT). The theory of change (ToC) will make it possible to:

- identify specific causal links among outputs and outcomes, with evidence
- describe the causal pathways by which interventions are expected to have effect, and identify indicators to test their validity over time
- be explicit about assumptions about these causal pathways, which includes an analysis of barriers and enablers as well as indicators of success.

Furthermore, the developed indicators will have to fulfil various prerequisites:

Value freedom and respect of traditions

The prevailing opinion of people involved in learning mobility programmes is that individual experience in this regard has a valuable impact on the individual, on participating organisations and on hosting and sending communities. In specifically pointing to outcomes, it often leads to a value-based understanding of the intended effect of learning mobility as a "black or white" perspective, i.e., impact as either positive or negative. **It is advisable to refrain from any form of judgmental perception of desirable and not preferable impact. The indicators have to be formulated value-free to enable objective data collection**.

Not all personal experiences in a learning mobility project are positive, not always are siblings or friends of returnees impressed. The impact of the one person's objectively negative experience (e.g. violence) can be very strong and far-reaching. It can have "positive" outcomes (e.g. prevention projects before a learning mobility) and "negative" ones (e.g. forming of extremist identity). Additionally, some outcomes are very difficult to evaluate: Is it "positive" or negative" if a young learner returns from the mobility and influences many peers to follow the example and these decide, after experiencing the alternative ways of living abroad, to leave the community?

Strongly connected to the value-free formulation and interpretation of indicators is the necessity to respect different traditions and cultures. Intercultural dialogue and learning often lead to unintended mutual cultural influences and therefore to transcultural developments. During, or upon return, participants of learning mobility projects might experience rejection because of the cultural differences, attitudes, ideologies or traditions. Indicators that delve into the perception of change in the community might induce negative assessments. This naturally must be reflected in the interpretation of indicators.

Testing

After developing the concrete indicators, it is advisable, as next steps, to focus on:

a) Including variables that are important for learning mobility in **macro-level** statistics and surveys.
b) Testing the indicators in **selected communities** with an **ex post approach** – to then roll out indicators so more communities can make use of them and use them in a two-phase approach.
c) Testing a number of indicators with individual participants of selected learning mobility projects (ESC, Erasmus+ youth) in the planning phase, during the project and 12 months after the project – here a co-operation with the RAY network and with the Youth Pass might be advisable.

The number of already suggested indicators (fields of indicators) is quite significant. It seems reasonable and pragmatic to test the IMM approach (see Table 10) in **either** one of the five fields of impact, **or** in more than one field, but only on one of the indicated levels, as a preliminary step. This is needed, before advancing to a more comprehensive and broad testing phase, which would include the final list of indicators.

As the link of community impact and learning mobility is very specific, and considering the research gaps thoroughly assessed above, it might be useful to consider the development of a centralised online database with multi-actor (research, policy, practice), multi-level (individual, organisational and community) and multi-phase (planning, implementation, post mobility) indicators entry points. Such a database, thoroughly promoted and disseminated, would ensure that solid, useful and meaningful data is available on community impact of learning mobility.

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