

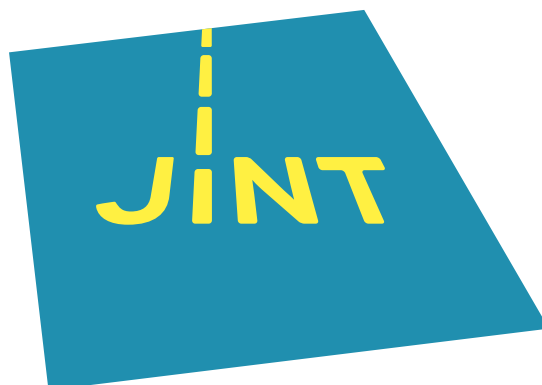
CHANGING LIVES

THE
POWER
OF LEARNING MOBILITY

CHANGING SOCIETY

REPORT

**EPLM CONFERENCE
1-4 APRIL 2019, OSTEND**



‘EPLM is not a chemical element... it is a platform for exchange’ - Koen Lambert

What is the EPLM?

The European Platform for Learning Mobility in the youth field (EPLM) is an open participatory space for exchange and cooperation between practitioners, researchers and policy makers. By ‘practitioners’ the Platform means programme staff, trainers and consultants, youth workers and other multipliers in the youth field and in youth work.

The EPLM has a mission to engage in the improvement, knowledge, visibility and recognition of learning mobility in the youth field.

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The conference

Aim of the conference

This conference looked at the impact of quality learning mobility projects in the youth field, and the balance between personal and societal gain. It explored what learning mobility means for communities and society at large, as well as individuals.

The context in 2019 – where does (quality) learning mobility find its place?

Europe is changing. Over the last few years, the role of civil society and youth work is becoming more and more relevant. With the influx of refugees, far-right populism threatening the cohesion of the EU and the trends of violent radicalisation, a renewed activism is apparent, expressing solidarity with new relevant groups and stressing respect for human rights to be safeguarded. There are many upcoming developments on the European level, including the new EU Youth Strategy and the Youth Goals within that, the European Solidarity Corps, DiscoverEU programme, new EU Youth Programmes being developed and the Council of Europe's Agenda 2030, to list a few. In this changed context, quality learning mobility (as a concept and a practice) has to redefine and find its place and role again. We believe that societal impact is one aspect of that which needs to be re-evaluated and promoted further.

It's important to support:

Changing LIVES: personal gain of individuals: development of competences, intercultural learning, increase in employability, developing European values, increase in personal investment and benefit ...

However, we should discover more how to:

Change COMMUNITIES: more cohesive society, the altruism that comes with making a community a better place, impact of volunteering on host communities, internationalisation at home, providing opportunities for all, increased contribution and gain through the interchange that learning can bring ...



Quality in learning mobility – what for?

Youth has become a priority at policy level in the EU in recent months and years. Budgets have increased and the development of new EU programmes (European Solidarity Corps, DiscoverEU, etc.) have brought an additional emphasis on increasing the number of mobilities – more opportunities, for more young people.

There is concern by many in the field that this current focus on quantity will detract from the learning and impact that mobility projects can have. Statistics are meaningless in proving the success of a project – it is rather the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained, and how this contributes to the development of societies and individuals in their communities.

Quality framework – handbook and app

Responding to this concern, quality mobility tools have been developed by the European Platform for Learning Mobility to support project organisers across Europe. A handbook and a web app have been built through extensive involvement of stakeholders since 2016. They are based on the [22 quality principles](#), and will include resources, tips, tricks and good practice to encourage further quality development. They were launched at this biennial EPLM conference, which took place in Ostend.

We hope that these tools will provide a common ground from which the youth field can increase learning and impact through better quality mobility projects.

Now the question is – what can quality projects bring? Where is the emphasis for the learning, and how can quality learning mobility impact more than the individual? The EPLM power conference opened up these conversations.



Questions for the conference

Within quality learning mobility projects, how can we ...

- help young people to make (more of) a difference on a societal level?
- ensure that we are capitalising on the potential of the two-way impact of projects (hosting community on the project and project on the community)?
- assess the societal impact, from the perspectives of research, practice and policy?
- balance the individual and societal gain of learning mobility projects? Which tools, methodologies and approaches work well?
- ensure that these opportunities are not only for the privileged and the resourceful?



It was hosted in the Flemish town of Ostend, Belgium, in the Grote Poste - an old Post Office converted now into a cultural centre. Accommodation and conference costs were covered through the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme, with support from the youth partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

As 2019 marks the 30th anniversary of learning mobility programmes in Belgium, part of this event was used to celebrate that.

Learning Mobility is more than Erasmus+. The EPLM includes many networks, programmes and stakeholders, including National Agencies that have helped support the biennial conferences. JINT (NA BE-FL) contributed its expertise as host of this 2019 EPLM event.

‘It is nice that we have good projects, but what is important is how these projects contribute to the development of societies and individuals’

- Koen Lambert

Scope of the conference

Koen Lambert, director at JINT vzw (the Flemish National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission): “What do young people learn from learning mobility, also what do society and communities gain from it?” We want that from these individual experiences, impact goes to local communities and societies. It is very much related to the changing contexts of European policies. Important elements of the changed contexts are from the big strategies that the two European institutions have, and also the European Solidarity Corps. It’s this word SOLIDARITY that is in the centre of it and that is about impact on the society. And also the new initiative ‘DiscoverEU’ which also provokes some new issues about learning mobility. Enough challenges to go on discussing.’

Participant profile

There were around 130 people who participated in this conference. As the EPLM supports the connection between research, practice and policy, this event had representation from all of these, as well as young people themselves. The national delegations (maximum of four people per country) came from six different profiles:

Youth worker/

NGO worker in the youth field

Young person (aged 18+)

especially if they have a story to tell about how their learning mobility experience influenced them to make a (positive) impact on society

Policy maker

from local/regional/national level, related to youth policies

Researcher

Social scientists (and those who have other relevant PhD studies) with an interest/record in societal impact, especially from the youth field

People from 'local communities'

those connected to society impact or social capital, rather than learning mobility

National Agency staff members

Representatives from Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes across Europe





What are we talking about?

The value of learning mobility and its impact on communities – desk research

The preparation process and relevance for the youth field of the topic of the EPLM conference 'The Power of Learning Mobility: changing lives, changing society' shows that it is time to acknowledge that learning mobility impacts on many more players than the individual participants and their personal or professional development.

Desk research was carried out at the end of 2018 to assess the current analysis of the value of learning mobility and its impact on communities. Here are a few key summary points that came from the desk research:

HOW DO MOBILITY PROJECTS REACH THE COMMUNITY AND HAVE AN IMPACT ON IT?

There are **three main approaches**:

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. This means that the participants improve their competences and acquire certain values during their mobility. Afterwards, they either get actively involved in various activities targeted at creating a more active, responsible and cohesive society, or they simply share their knowledge and newly gained points of view with their families, friends and other peers;
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.

Short-term mobility activities

- 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. It is mostly presented in an abstract way, formulated very often as ‘there is (positive) impact’.
- Short-term programmes are usually focused on the personal development of the participants in the mobility activity. 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.
- The impact on the communities or society in general is less direct, more difficult to grasp and requires a complex research methodology which, especially in short-term projects, is not the main aim.
- In short-term projects, the impact of learning mobility is less obvious and tangible immediately after the learning mobility, but can have significant impact on the long-term perspective and contribute a great deal to the development of local or national youth work practices and policies – although it can be difficult to prove.

Long-term mobility activities

- In long-term international volunteering (including work camps), which is usually directed at working with local communities, the impact is more visible and appears more often in studies or in the presentation of the results of the project.
- The general impact studies indicate that most of the gain by the community comes from long-term volunteering activities when foreigners are immersed in local communities.

Local communities

- The impact on local communities is often not measured, but implied. It is 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.
- 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.
- The local host communities do actually benefit from interaction with the participants of learning mobility and it helps the communities to become more open to differences in people, perspectives or needs.
- A fairly common feature in publications on the topic of impact on communities is that it is known to experts, participants of the learning mobility projects, and might even be obvious to the communities themselves. However, the lack of actual empirical research, numbers or real stories shows a lack in proof that learning mobility has an impact not only on the participants’ personal and professional development, but is also valuable to society.
- Most of the research does not involve the community members themselves, but is researched through the participants of the learning mobility or through the organisers of projects (initiatives). They are often asked for their opinion on how their learning mobility project affected the local community or the broader society.
- The impact of learning mobility on communities is to the most extent implied, but rarely supported by data, evidence or actual research with the members of local communities.
- There is a need for further research directly tackling the impact on communities as the data that is currently available is most often formulated with ‘might have’, ‘can have’, ‘potentially’, ‘intuitive’.

Quotes from research*

Returned volunteers 'possess a massive ability to shape attitudes, change mindsets, and give global perspectives to domestic situations' (Thomas 2001).

'The impact on local communities is also remarkable: 98% of interviewed representatives registered a positive impact on cultural/intercultural competence in their communities, and 79% in the participation of local people in the daily life of the community' (Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations 2016).

'As a result of their participation, young people felt they could try and bring about change in society and their participation had impacted on their sense of who they were and their understanding of political and social issues' (Stanley 2005).

'Volunteering allows people to gain competences valuable for the labour market and enhances societal cohesion; it 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).

'Mobility experiences give young people the vital skills they need, not only for future employment, but also to be citizens and active participants in society' (Garrahy 2013).

'A majority of ... EVS volunteers (75.5%) declared that they did intend to participate more actively after their periods of time abroad' (Ančić and Brajdić Vuković (eds) 2017).

Youth exposure to cultural diversity does not only benefit the individuals directly involved but also the communities concerned, as well as families and peers. It helps spread a culture of openness, solidarity and tolerance which has an impact beyond the individual participants directly involved' (Lejeune 2013).

'Youth exchanges are specifically appreciated for bringing an intercultural dimension to the local project environment ... but at the same time they rank low for involving the local community in the project – a challenge for short-term projects with multilingual/multicultural groups' (Fennes et al. 2011).

*selected bibliography available on page 38

The concepts



Key concepts discussed during the conference connected to learning mobility and its quality, value and impact on society. The researchers, practitioners, young people and policy makers (and some people who represent more than one of these sectors) met, questioned and shared points of view on these concepts on how they connect to youth work and learning mobility. This way a common theoretical ground started to converge from the different perspectives of participants.

What follows here is some of the discussion from the working groups, giving a flavour of the sharing and contributions at the event. It is acknowledged that the topics aren't fully elaborated - just some issues lightly touched upon to recall their priority in the connection to community impact of learning mobility.

Learning mobility and its importance

What is learning mobility? What do we mean when we say learning mobility in the youth field? What are the differences between learning mobilities in the youth field and in other fields? What makes traveling into a learning mobility? What are the limitations of international youth work? These and many more were the questions that the participants of the conference discussed and tried to find an answer to. Several crucial aspects of learning mobility need to be taken into consideration:

- Ties between **youth work and learning mobility**. It was brought up by the participants that sometimes learning mobility and any other action implemented in the field of youth (or by youth) are blended together. This either signals that learning mobility is a common and a very important activity and method in youth work, or that we tend to attribute more achievements to learning mobility than we should.
- **Migration** due to forced reasons **and** its link to **learning mobility**. It was agreed that in the long term learning mobility enhances understanding of diversity as added value, it contributes to open-mindedness, more tolerance, and more knowledge about other cultures. This allows considering learning mobility as a tool for better inclusion of those who migrated, including refugees and asylum seekers, and look into how these young people can benefit from learning mobility and how learning mobility can help create a more inclusive society for all.

In most of the discussions more attention was brought to the individual level and individual gain from the learning mobility. This is neither good nor bad keeping in mind that the impact on the individual often translates into concrete actions and into impact on the local or the societal level (this is acknowledged by practitioners, young people and the researchers). In conservative settings, where youth work is not as developed, learning mobility is seen as the main possibility for young people to gain experience, to allow themselves to be different. The participants of the conference raised a theory that the younger the participants of the learning mobility are, the stronger the impact on them can be. Ideally, the long-term effects of a mobility measure in the local community lead to changes:

- in the individual;
- in the community;
- to all actors (even 'informal ones', like parents of participants, etc.);
- other systems (formal education structures, professional world, etc.).

Social impact

One of the main issues raised by the participants is the necessity to reflect on definitions of community, community impact, social impact. Several insights from the desk research on this matter can be helpful.

'The term "**community**" is used to denote a social or cultural group that is larger than one's immediate circle of family and friends and to which one feels a sense of belonging. There are numerous types of groups that might be relevant here, for example, the people who live within a particular geographical area (such as a neighbourhood, a town or city, a country, a group of countries such as Europe or Africa, or indeed the world in the case of the "global community"), a more geographically diffused group (such as an ethnic group, faith group, leisure group, sexual orientation group, etc.), or any other kind of social or cultural

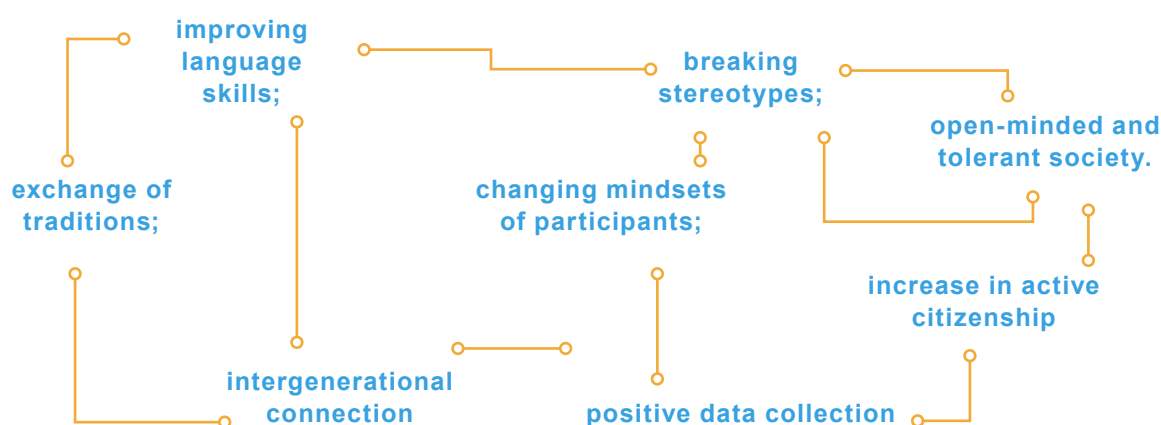
group to which an individual feels a sense of belonging' (Council of Europe 2016: 41). Local community as a term usually appears in the publications about long-term volunteering. 'Local community – the hosting organisation, the target groups of the hosting organisation as well as all other inhabitants of the city/village where the organisation is located' (Jezowski et al. 2016).

Society – 'A large group of people who live together in an organised way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done. All the people in a country, or in several similar countries, can be referred to as a society' (Cambridge dictionary online).

Impact – 'There is a tendency to confuse outputs and impact. Outputs are results, which have been intended and achieved by a project. Impact is the effects, which those results have on individuals, organisations, systems or policies. For example, an output of a training course is what a person learns while on the course, while the impact is what the person does subsequently with that new learning ... The numbers involved and the visits made are outputs but the impact is to be found in the increased intercultural awareness of the students or in their collective awareness of the heritage and culture of Europe' (Doyle 2011: 15).

According to Frank Vaclay, 'a convenient way of conceptualising social impacts is as changes to one or more of the following: people's way of life – that is, how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis; their culture – that is, their shared beliefs, customs, values and language or dialect; their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities; their political systems – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives, the level of democratisation that is taking place, and the resources provided for this purpose; their environment – the quality of the air and water people use; the availability and quality of the food they eat; the level of hazard or risk, dust and noise they are exposed to; the adequacy of sanitation, their physical safety, and their access to and control over resources; their health and well-being – health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity; their personal and property rights – particularly whether people are economically affected, or experience personal disadvantage which may include a violation of their civil liberties; their fears and aspirations – their perceptions about their safety, their fears about the future of their community, and their aspirations for their future and the future of their children' (Vaclay 2003: 8).

Social impact of learning mobility according to the participants of the conference can be grasped in:



A distinction should be made between the impact on hosting communities (NGOs, families, etc.) and the personal/local impact after coming back home. Learning mobility is also seen to be important to encourage youth work processes on the local level and the community level.

Another more critical aspect, connected to the social impact, is the nature of it. As learning mobility can be a strong tool to support the development of societies, it is important to take into consideration that at the same time it can reinforce the social division between those who get involved in learning mobility and those who are left behind.

“Social impact can be positive or negative. It’s up to you!”

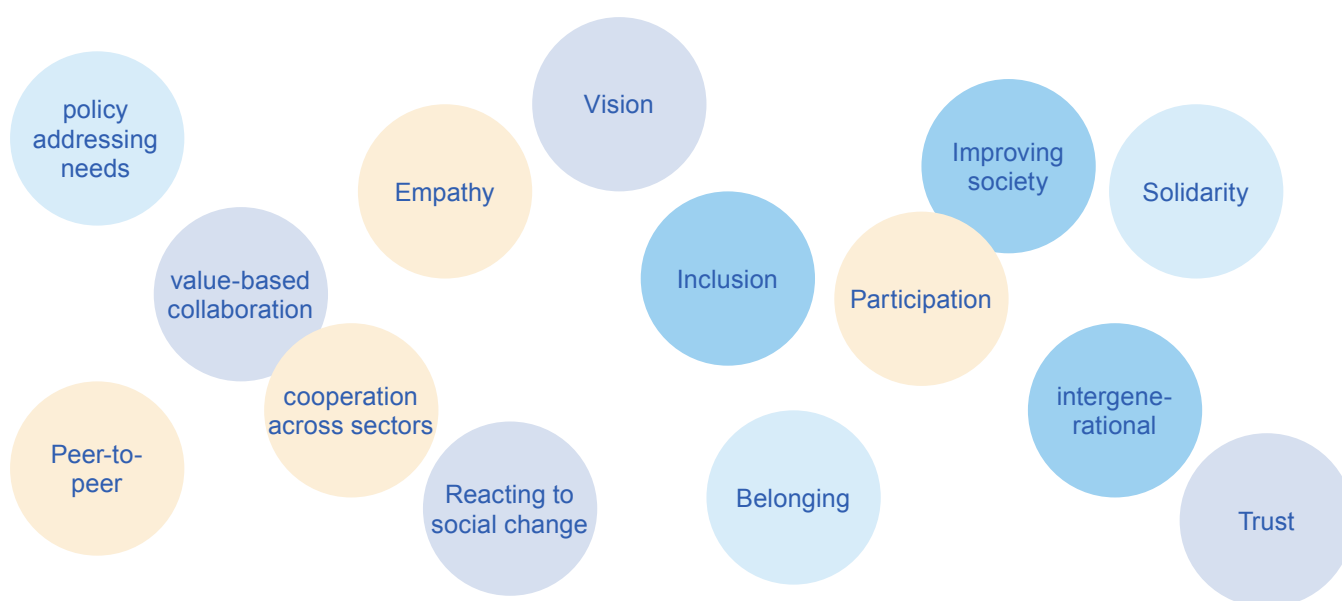
- Participant at the conference

Civic engagement

Civic engagement and active participation can be interpreted and understood as part of the impact of learning mobility or a condition for learning mobility to happen. Participants in the conference distinguished the challenges that are connected to the concepts of civic engagement and participation:

- reaching the young people who are left out of youth organisations and youth work activities;
- linking formal and non-formal education;
- recognition of pursuing more than the individual personal development, by bringing societal gain into the scope of the action;
- space for youth to define civic engagement and build a culture of civic engagement;.

KEYWORDS



SUPPORT

- The concept needs to be more clearly defined
- Those with fewer opportunities should be engaged more, through increased financial support and training, more knowledge and education...etc
- Tailor-made policies that would encourage civic engagement and more commitment to keep these policies sustainable.
- Recognition of the value of civic engagement and better communication of the impact on individuals in society.

Quality in learning mobility

“A common idea of quality gives you a clear goal to reach for.”

The concept of quality in learning mobility connects this conference to the three-year-long development of a quality framework. “What solutions can we find to increase the quality of projects in learning mobility? More money, but what about the quality of support measures?...And there are so many tools that help you to improve quality and capture all the great things out of your project,” claimed the group, discussing quality in learning mobility. Here is a first brainstorm from one of the working groups:

Stakeholders in the process of quality assurance:

- trainers
- community
- individual participants
- donors (national agencies and assessors)
- organisations.

Attributes of quality in learning mobility:

- accessibility
- communication
- experience
- opportunity
- preparation
- mentoring
- outreach
- safe environment.

Actions to support quality in learning mobility:

- provide quality information before, during, after the mobility
- involve young people
- informal education (the right mindset)
- support for follow-up
- linking with research.

Some tools shared in the group:

- quality principles
- [Handbook on Quality in Learning Mobility](#)
- Q! App <https://www.qualitymobility.app/about>
- Im-prove <http://im-prove.inexsda.cz>
- Youthpass
- app4learning.

Another way to ensure quality could be **accreditation**, which would also boost the common understanding of what quality is.

More discussions and questions are raised on the topic of how to evaluate, measure and document quality. Several ideas on **what to evaluate** were shared:

1. Our work

- A. procedures
- B. processes

2. Impact

- A. emotional competence
- B. skills
- C. learning
- D. personal stories

How to measure?

- qualitative tools
- .fi logbook
- quality assessment of youth work (peer review)
- personal stories.

More indicators, principles, tips and tricks, resources and much more on how to aim for quality in learning mobility in the youth field can be found in the [Handbook on Quality in Learning Mobility](#) and the [Q! App](#).

Competences gained through learning mobility

Learning mobility can provide competences that are not always taught in schools: social skills, community engagement, leadership, etc. Learning mobility can have different roles and often it is the unique possibility for young people to develop these skills, especially contributing to the development of their autonomy. Recognition is necessary for those participating, as well as those who design and deliver the projects, in order to link the competences gained through learning mobility to more concrete and sustainable outcomes. Many tools have been developed on national and international level that now do this (Youthpass etc). However, what is often forgotten, but should be taken into consideration, are the competences gained by members of the local community during the learning mobility experience. What young people learn when being engaged in the local community:

- deeper understanding of local strategies for local and global issues;
- new professional options;
- local and international partnerships and inspiration for future projects;
- skills for leadership and mobilisation of other groups in society;
- conflict sensitivity;
- and more

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR SELF ASSESMENT?

As much as the range of competences that can be gained during learning mobility is important, it is also crucial to not forget to document them, to validate them and to aim for recognition.

Youth policy and learning mobility

‘We need to bridge policy development to the importance of learning mobility. Foster and highlight the approach of learning mobility. The goals, the learning aspects, the access to it and the promotion of the process and of its outcomes,’ note the participants.

There were many reflections on current issues of youth policy on learning mobility. The main issue was developing **learning mobility programmes** in all countries. For this, according to the participants, there is a need to bring down the barriers and foster co-operation between all levels of policy: from local to regional to national to European to global; take into account the external factors and ensure the quality; explore and take into account the surrounding, societal, socioeconomic background, accessibility factors, experiences, need for preparation, need for mentoring and higher outreach.

Another challenge is that youth policy is too diverse in Europe. Some countries don't even have ministries for youth, some don't promote learning mobility and some don't involve young people when developing youth policies.

One more critical aspect on youth policy and learning mobility is also brought up by asking if learning mobility really makes a change. The challenge is rather connected to the lack of data to support policy on learning mobility. On the other hand, it is important to signal to the other groups not to expect that learning mobility can solve all the problems immediately.

Ideas for improvements and action:

- more support for non-formal education
- more action for integration of migrant families
- linking governments and youth organisations
- more attention to disabilities groups
- supporting policy makers
- advocacy work – policy papers.



Keynote speeches

Practice – Mobile School



Arnoud Raskin is the co-founder of Mobile School and StreetwiZe. He is an internationally recognised social entrepreneur, Ashoka Fellow, and author of the book *StreetwiZe: What managers can learn from street kids*.

Arnoud has led Mobile School to become a global organisation with over 40 mobile schools in over 20 countries. Mobile School has over 60,000 contacts with street youth annually. Arnoud has led StreetwiZe to become a top provider of talent development and leadership training to corporate clients, making co-creation possible that focuses on the needs of the company as well as having a positive impact on street kids around the world.

Arnoud Raskin presented the idea of Mobile School – an initiative that is meant for street-connected youth, refugee children and other kids and young people who do not connect to the formal education system and spend most of their time on the streets. The idea is to approach young people for whom the street becomes more important than home, school, family, etc. where educators come to young people with activities to help them find what they are good at, interested in or simply to teach them something new. The initiative of Mobile School attracted plenty of attention and you can learn more about it on www.mobileschool.org.

Another topic that is important in connection to how the Mobile School idea functions is the sustainable model of it – to develop other activities that helps the organisation generate funding for the activities for those who are not in a position to pay for the learning opportunities that are essential to them. As was acknowledged by the participants in the conference, the work of the organisation can be described as ‘passion to vision to concrete action to impact to improvement circle’.

The third point that Arnoud wanted us to learn was the importance of knowing the impact of the work we are doing and design the programmes according to the needs of those we are working with – young people.

**‘It happens often that we design solutions for problems that are not existent’
– Arnoud Raskin**

The presenter drew attention to the importance of technology and how it can be helpful in order to include more young people into the evaluation process and not to measure only what the youth worker does, but also ask young people how they are perceiving it. An Erasmus+ KA2 project “streetsmart-impact” is producing an App for youth workers to use to manage and measure impact. It’s expected to be released at the end of 2019. You can sign up to be on their mailing list for news.

Practice – How learning mobility can impact on society. The case of a village of 300 people



Jo Claey's is an international trainer and member of a number of training networks. He has been active in international youth work since 1995 and runs a small social enterprise aimed at creating employability opportunities in rural areas, using non-formal education as a core activity. 'As a non-formal educator/trainer, father of two, small wannabe farmer and citizen (and a bunch more roles), the principle of coherence between theory and practice led me to an intense use of mobility projects as an empowerment tool in our small rural community. An intense use not in the sense of quantity, but in how to explore to the maximum win-win situations for all possible stakeholders involved, enlarging the learning outputs/outcomes and creating a sustainable lasting impact, especially in the host community (our village).'

Jo Claey's presented the case of the village that he and his team live and work in. Over the years the Vila da Marmeleira became a Rural Centre of Non-formal Education. In his inspiring presentation Jo referred many times to the practices, actions and initiatives that they implemented with their community. Practices and tips on how to make more connections with the local community during a learning mobility project:

- Branding is important. Branding the village, branding the community.
- Think about the size of community you want to have an impact in. Come up with the tools for community involvement according to this.
- Make sure everyone has to win at it. Financially, culturally, language-wise. 'If the group will use the village, the village should use the group as well'.
- Include people from different realities.
- Train families to have dinner with groups as a learning session. 'We ask them what they can teach the participants and afterwards there is a debriefing with the family. We know after this evening that the group will never be complete. If the group is not complete, it means that more people are learning.'
- Try to use all possible infrastructures.
- Pay local artists.
- Whatever can be local has to be local.
- Bring people from another village to join the final event.

“We ask them what they can teach the participants and afterwards there is a debriefing with the families. We know after this evening that the group will never be complete. If the group is not complete, it means that more people are learning.”

Research

The researchers did a joint keynote speech that included several researchers in answering a few questions about research. The researchers not only wanted to share their points of view, but also wanted to learn what the audience thought regarding these questions (the research always has to go on, doesn't it?):

WHY DO RESEARCHERS DO RESEARCH?

- To find data that can answer the questions, to explain, to have data, and to imagine the future, to support youth policy makers with evidence. Not for money.

WHY IS RESEARCH ON LEARNING MOBILITY IMPORTANT?

- Research supports and helps both policy makers and practitioners. First of all it helps to agree what learning mobility is, what the essential aspects of it are. We need proper knowledge and cannot do everything using only our intuition. The researchers are drafting papers, gathering the knowledge that can potentially be useful for supporting youth policy processes.

HOW IS RESEARCH DONE?

- Many aspects of learning mobility and impact cannot be measured directly. Therefore they have to be measured indirectly and that is subjective. The research tools have to be adjusted to the characteristics of the group that is participating in the research, especially if we're working with teenagers. Researchers start with posing questions. Some of them are more direct, others are more complicated. What is important is how we pose the questions. This will lead to a path that you will have to follow. From this you choose the methodology of research, for instance you can opt for using apps, statistics, big data analysis for answer the questions. The research is not being built from scratch by the researchers every time. We are sitting on the shoulders of previous researchers. There is more and more increased co-operation in Europe in the field of research and the RAY network is just one example of it.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO DO RESEARCH?

- The needs for research are indefinite. Five things are very important:
- money. To know how to access funding as the methodologies are costly;
- to know how to design your research. How the available tools can help you answer the questions;
- passion;
- support;
- guidance.



Policy



Luc Delrue

Luc Delrue, the Secretary General of the Flemish Ministry Department of Culture, Youth and Media, shared powerful messages about learning mobility.

'The EU is strongly convinced that if we bring young people in contact with each other from across Europe, Europe will become stronger, closer, and richer.'

“The impact of these programmes is of course not always tangible. We know it. The impact often materialises in the long-term.”

What is the effect? The effect we see is that in one way or another when people come back home they try to innovate. They are motivated. They have extremely important experiences.'

'The impact is clear. Self-development, individual freedom, equality are the key values of our society. And the Erasmus+ Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes have proved to be successful to bring Europe to life and bring Europe together.'



Florencia van Houdt

Florencia van Houdt has been involved in youth policy and programme activities in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture since 2009. During her career in the European Commission, Mrs van Houdt has dealt with different topics, including youth, research and entrepreneurship. Currently, she is Head of Unit responsible for actions in favour of young people, including the EU Youth Strategy, youth activities under Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, the European Youth Portal and, more recently, DiscoverEU.

Florencia van Houdt reminded everyone that in the European Union we believe in learning mobility and this must be clear from the doubled budget and the ambition to include three times as many participants. Mrs van Houdt also noted that Erasmus+ is one of the most successful achievements of the European Union and it should be accessible to more people: the programme should be more inclusive and accessible, to reach more diverse people from diverse backgrounds and challenge poverty and exclusion of youth. The speaker drew attention to the fact that we have different ways to make learning mobility programmes more accessible: youth-led participation, more flexible formats and presented the DiscoverEU initiative as one of the new approaches to learning mobility.

What is out there



This part of the report involves good practices, useful tools, available research, and supporting policies that are connected to the improvements of the social impact of learning mobility. The improvements in social impact encompass the methodologies, inclusion of people with fewer opportunities, unexpected impact of learning mobility, and they address youth policy, solidarity, shrinking spaces of civil society, etc.

Good practices

Examples of impact in the local community and broader society with the mobility project come through working directly (organising activities, facilitating workshops) with the people from local communities; through co-operating with local businesses and getting them interested in other countries, cultures or languages; through promoting and financing practices that in the long run have a lasting impact on changed behaviours or local policies. Here are some examples of impact mentioned

at the conference:

- awareness raising on certain (sometimes sensitive) issues tackled in learning mobility within the involved local community (e.g. LGBTI)
- facilitate respectful intercultural dialogue (often resulting in finding out people have more in common than differences);
- after an Erasmus+ project event, a gathering of young people that only participated indirectly in the project got motivated to enrol in English language lessons to be able to interact more with international participants next time;
- changing the attitudes towards more sustainable choices (e.g. DiscoverEU changed the attitude of beneficiaries towards public transport modes (i.e. train over plane);
- regions and cities have substantially developed through European funding and support.

‘How can we plan for an unexpected societal impact?’

‘Where is the line between individual impact and social impact?’

Effective methods/approaches to reach impact on society are divided into three major groups which are in line with the stages of the learning mobility project: preparation (before the activity), implementation (during the activity) and follow-up (after the activity).

BEFORE LEARNING MOBILITY

- **Choose the staff wisely.** Make sure the facilitator/youth worker is ready to guide the young people, to build their self-esteem, social and emotional competences, resilience, etc. taking them out of the comfort zone but without getting into the danger zone.
- **Co-operate with other sectors.** Get in touch with those that can contribute to a common action (partnership-building activities can be of value for this), exchange good practices and experiences, make sure that they share the needs of their target groups, include young people, youth workers, organisations, policy makers, businesses, etc. Take the time and make the effort to prepare the members of the local community, especially those who will have special roles in the project (e.g. homestays), do intercultural and language preparation. Create social media groups (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) not only for the participants in the learning mobility, but including other stakeholders as well;
- **Work on inclusion.** Include more young people who do not usually participate in learning mobility projects. Have someone working on activating the young people with fewer opportunities, making sure that they can go. (Stefana, Romania)
- **Prepare the participants.** Start from the clear motivation and expectations of young people and recognise their ideas and views regarding the interactions with local community. Prepare the group for the interactions: how to behave, what to do or not to do, intercultural preparation, how to deal with local resources, surroundings, etc.

DURING LEARNING MOBILITY

- **Carry out activities in public spaces and facilitate mutual learning for the participants of the learning mobility and the local community.** Link your programme activities to the local community so that it is rooted in the hosting environment. Provide participants with the opportunity of homestays, do treasure hunts, city tours, workshops in schools, common actions with locals, such as public parties, sports events, cooking invitations/parties, street feasts, charity work in the local community, interviews on the street with locals on suitable questions, street art, flash mobs, public presentation of results, theatre, etc. Make sure the groups are balanced between participants of learning mobility and locals.
- **Produce common goods,** exchange knowledge, identify of the usefulness of hosting a project in local community, leave something that reminds the locals of the project or initiative.
- **Support local businesses.** Organise eating/catering at local restaurants.
- **Involve different actors from the local community:**
 - ◇ Peer groups in general and those who like to do some activities together, informal groups of young people, church, sports groups, school, scouts, voluntary organisations, language school, travel agency, health systems (for young people who need support after the learning mobility), library. It can also be organisations working with the municipality, university, online community, etc.
 - ◇ There is frequent co-operation between libraries, school and NGOs. Library is there to create a platform where the knowledge that was gained in the learning mobility is transmitted to the broader community (family, friends, teachers). (Mikkel, Denmark)
 - ◇ 'In my city, it is a church-initiated activity. This is the place where young people become more motivated to go abroad in countries with other religions. They organise small events to invite people to try different food and dance, Islamic festival, food market.' (Gil, Portugal)
 - ◇ Involve local politicians.

- ◇ Mobilise actors and resources for new partnerships in your learning mobility projects. It will give added value to the project: more impact, positive communication with different people backgrounds and mentalities, better integration into the host environment and helping local people benefit from the intercultural learning experience.
- Integrate reflection and debriefing with young people on their learning and how to transfer it into their personal context and into benefit to their local community when they come home.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FROM THE QUALITY HANDBOOK:

- Use your grant to choose a venue that supports social or educative work they are doing for the local community (a centre for social innovation, a university, a local association, a youth lab, etc.).
- Use local natural, cultural or sport centres for the organisation of some programme activities.
- Interview people in the local community on the topics relevant for their learning mobility.
- Develop and implement mini-projects/activities in the local community.
- Invite local associations on different topics to do some activities in the programme (an NGO market or festival, a presentation of experiences: round table, forum, etc.).
- Create an activity during the project or at the end (graffiti, sport race, parade, exhibition, wildlife conservation, etc.) with local groups of young people.



- Invite local participants that have been on a previous project to talk about their experiences.
- Visit local young entrepreneurs active in the topic you are working with or visit a challenging company or enterprise.
- Invite local volunteers to develop a session on some aspect of the local reality (environment, employment, group building, etc.) to translate some sessions of the mobility activity, or to share their expertise if they are studying the subject of the programme.
- Invite local politicians and stakeholders to the project or ask them to welcome your group in the Town Hall.
- Organise an intergenerational lunch or dinner with locals in a social café or bar.
- Organise a meeting with host families.

- Contact an expert on the topic of your project to share the results in a certain stage or to show him/her the final product of the project.
- Organise an interview with your participants on a local radio or TV or your participants can interview locals.
- Invite potential employers to the final evaluation.
- Organise the welcome party with local volunteers.
- Ask a local artist to prepare a show for the final party.
- Have a final exhibition or parade that takes your project to new places in town.
- Make a conscious choice to have local organisations/social enterprises for as many aspects of the project as possible (local food, local transport, local materials, local venues, local services, etc.).

AFTER LEARNING MOBILITY

This is the time when learning mobility goes not only beyond the group of participants and the local environment of the place where the learning mobility is taking place, but also reaches the local communities that the participants are coming from as well as the broader society. What are the good practices for actions after the mobility?

- Organising multiplier events in the surrounding area and making it available for a longer time in case they are interested in the existing or future projects being organised there or elsewhere.
- Organising assessment activities with locals and asking them reflective questions on the impact of the learning mobility on them and their community.
- ‘Supporting young people to put in place some ideas that they have once they are back in their communities.’ (Adela, Czech Republic)
- Integrating the experience/opportunities/lessons learned in the daily offers and activities of the organisation.





INSPIRING PRACTICES/PROJECTS/INITIATIVES

- Social Erasmus – ESN France: during long-term mobility exchange programmes young people are involved on a short-term basis in getting engaged in projects (e.g. voluntary work) and connect to local organisations for mutual learning
- Project Futsal (bilateral project, Ireland and Wales) aims to up-skill unemployed people to increase their prospects and potential for full-time employment and encourage them to further their education. Clear societal impact: involved young people also get active in the local communities as football coaches in schools or disability programmes
- DiscoverEU. After the first calls of DiscoverEU an unexpected sense of community was developed among young programme participants from all over Europe. They stayed connected to share experiences, tips, information on their countries of origin, to meet and to host each other. Being open to groups of young people and not only to individuals, DiscoverEU may have encouraged a profile of young people to apply that would have not done so for other mobility programmes limited to individual applicants.
- projects to empower young people to participate in elections -such as this one political example 'generation Europe' from the ALDE party (and we are sure there are more from other political parties).
- Promoting democratic values 'Democracy and the youth'.
- Europe goes local.
- Die Villa Leipzig
- Discover EU
- Generation Europe



CLICK ME



CLICK ME

Tools

Here are some tools that were mentioned at the conference and can be used by practitioners and explored by policy makers in order to understand the impact on the individuals and the social impact better and as a result pay greater attention to it in the work that is being done. Tools developed by SALTO, NAs or EPLM:

-
- Making waves – SALTO Inclusion publication to help you think and plan how to make the biggest waves possible with your mobility project.
-
- UK NA Impact tool – What could the impact of your project be, and how to measure it? Video guide and impact tool freely available
-
- EPLM Handbook & App – A directory of resources, expertise, ideas and activities that help you organise quality mobility activities with and for young people. PDF Handbook and web-based App.
-
- The KISS project – promoting the sustainability of the social and solidarity economy (SSE). Includes a sustainable development plan around the areas of democracy, cooperation, quality of work, environment, relations and emotions, coherence.

Research

Research is useful if we need to back up our initiatives, to get to know other perspectives and points of view that are developed not only by observation, but using tools and measures that usually encompass bigger scope, takes theories into consideration and broadens our understanding.

-
- Example of comparative research done with 10,000 young people from Euromed region related to education, inclusion, gender roles, mobility etc.
-
- Research-based analysis of Youth in Action/Erasmus+. Including information databases, EVS impact evaluations, and other data/results of projects available.
-
- Analysis of the youth centre statistics collected from all over the country.
-
- European Youth Forum report on Erasmus+ giving supplementary perspectives to the official report, and advocacy messages.
-
- by European Youth Forum, measuring foundations of wellbeing, basic human needs and opportunity, on global level.

Policies

This part refers to the policies that are functioning and are in one way or another supporting learning mobility and its social impact. These are useful to know, analyse, question or contribute to.

-
- The establishment of the European Solidarity Corps and the demand to increase Erasmus+ funds are a clear proof of the positive impact of learning mobility at programme level.
-
- European Youth Strategy.
-
- Co-management system of the Council of Europe.
-
- The two European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe.
-
- National and European agencies for learning mobility funding, organising and supporting projects.
-
- Universal declaration of human rights.
-
- Civil society participation on developing structures.
-
- Recommendation on Youth Work (2017) available online.

What do we need?

What is missing?

'Learning mobility always has an influence on people, it is impossible to be indifferent ... It can take time but things always change. The question is, "how to capture this?". Measurement and evaluation tools need development, promotion and connection between the sectors, to be more effective. Here are some needs expressed at the conference:

Data on impact and measurement tools

'I am missing data on the impact. Stories are nice, but for advocating the value of mobility, we need something concrete.' This part of the report looks into the burning questions of what to measure? Why and how?

What to measure

On one hand the tendency is clear – 'we need more evidence that learning mobility is not just about tourism. We need to invest more in gathering evidence but without losing the spirit of the projects.' On the other hand, people do not feel at ease with having more research interventions in learning mobility projects as it might 'kill the process in these projects'. Yet the ideas and needs for measurement are rather clear – some are more practice oriented – how to improve the work that we are doing. Others are more policy oriented – 'to have data and stories that can convince politicians that it matters even if they don't understand or support it'. Some are research oriented – 'to give theoretical frame to what is already happening'. Even though it seems to be easier to evaluate the individual than the societal impact, what must not be forgotten is that each person is a member of society, and that therefore changes in one person's life often snowball into changes in society. So what do we want (or need?) to measure and communicate based on evidence:

- how are other actors affected by the learning mobility? For this more voices should be included into the research, not only young participants and youth workers involved in learning mobility;
- impact on individuals: hard (professional) skills young people gain during learning mobility;
- intended and unintended impact of learning mobility;
- impact on local communities and society:
- long-term societal impact of learning mobility;
- intergenerational connection within local communities in mobility projects;
- correlation between specific participation or non-formal education methods for local engagement and their impact;
- and many more:

Tools for measuring social impact

‘Learning mobility always has an influence on people, it is impossible to be indifferent ... It can take time but things always change. The question is, “how to capture this?”’

NEEDED: CLEAR DEFINITIONS

- Awareness of what impact is, short-term and long-term impact.
- What is societal impact?
- Concept of learning mobility – what it is and what it is not.

NEEDED: FOR PRACTITIONERS

- **Simple tools developed with youth workers and researchers to:**
 - ◇ clarify what is the expected impact of learning mobility project before it starts or is designed;
 - ◇ measure development of competences;
 - ◇ gather feedback on the implemented activities in order to improve;
 - ◇ measure community/local/social impact;
 - ◇ monitor the projects and their impact;
 - ◇ follow-up with the participants and partners;
 - ◇ measure long-term impact with young people.
- **Information on existing methods,** styles, and procedures to collect, evaluate and report data.
- **Indicators** – what can be assessed.
- **Assessments by national agencies** after one year within relevant questions, not just the Mobility Tool questionnaire.

‘How do you measure the change of something if you did not plan in advance to measure the starting point?’

NEEDED: FOR RESEARCHERS

‘Learning mobility always has an influence on people, it is impossible to be indifferent ... It can take time-but things always change. The question is, “how to capture this?”’. Measurement and evaluation tools need development, promotion and connection between the sectors, to be more effective. Here are some needs expressed at the conference:

- based on target group
- based on what you want to measure
- based on funding requirements (‘value for money’/social investment on money).

The researchers feel the need to have longitudinal research in order to capture results e.g. after 10 or 20 years . In the Research-based Analysis of Youth in Action Erasmus+, they have data from 2007 to present day, which allows more of a longitudinal approach (<https://www.researchyouth.eu/>).

Regarding **new tools**, there are ideas to elaborate a tool to measure quality impact related to the new sustainable development goals.

Practices

A big responsibility for achieving or even aiming for societal impact is put on the practitioners: to include more diverse groups into the learning mobility activities, to spread the right information to young people, to societies and decision makers, to facilitate the learning process before, during and after the learning mobility. The needs of and for youth workers, youth leaders and others working with youth are the following:

Training needs

- training of youth workers on recognising the needs of young people;
- values of youth work;
- intercultural skills;
- guidance (personal, academic, professional);
- how to deal with the retention of people and motivate young volunteers to participate (as is the case in Montenegro);
- how to raise awareness on the consequences of non-voting.

Support before and after learning mobility

If we are aiming for bigger community impact or impact on a societal level, there is a need to connect learning mobility projects better, to understand that **learning mobility is part of a bigger picture**. Therefore more attention should be paid to educational processes going on before and after the international activity. Participants in the conference think that preparation and training would **increase the awareness** and provide a reflection basis for further solidarity, community actions and learning outcomes. **Preparation should be done for both positive and negative effects of learning mobility:** ‘We need less of presuming that the experience is just positive for everyone, that everyone becomes an expert upon their return and that this type of experience is what everyone should go through’, note the participants. When the participants come back from their learning mobility experience, they should be supported to put what was learned into the context of the community and this should be done with help of youth workers who could assist in creating the opportunities needed to transfer the learning and achieve the societal impact. The support for the young people after the learning mobility is crucial in the long-term activities, which, according to research, have a bigger impact on individual’s life. ‘We expect them to be stars that glow and it doesn’t work like that. When young people come back they are not welcomed so they get to be disengaged, and can feel trapped. Accompanying measures are needed to achieve an impact in the society. Therefore, Erasmus+ needs to take more responsibility for that,’ says Manfred from Austria. Other participants add that we need better ways and more resources (guides, tips, advice) for coping with and for those returning. Also more ideas are needed on how to share experience with friends and peer groups on the positive and negative effects of learning mobility. There is a need for a better and more supportive environment once young people are back that would acknowledge the value of coming back to community rather than the one reinforcing the divide. It was concluded that if young people are not supported, there will be no sustainable impact.

‘How to make sure that acknowledging unexpected negative impact does not jeopardise future applications?’

Accessible information

Communication and information is tightly connected with the need to include more diverse people into the learning mobilities as 'there are a number of people who do mobility for a hobby (mobility tourist), not for the impact any more. We need to focus on specific groups that are not touched' (participant at the conference).

The hardest struggle is to overcome the mental barriers within the person, therefore more effort should be put into coming up with ways to convince the 'difficult' ones. The young people who think learning mobility is not for them. And reaching out is not always working: 'there are a lot of people who are not aware of the possibilities, not in touch with young people who went abroad, is it only the happy few.

According to the participants in the conference, the problem lies in the language that is used and the messages that are communicated about the opportunities to participate. What can be worked on in the future, is to create

- clear message 'what is in learning mobility for a young person?' in general;
- adjusted messages according to different target groups, types of activity;
- language is not simple enough for everyone to understand;
- not enough additional measures for inclusion groups in the learning mobility projects and not enough visibility of the measures that are available.

Communicating the value and results

Communication of the value of learning mobility and results as well as its impact leads not only to inclusion of more diverse groups of young people, but also to more easily get the message through to different stakeholders including decision makers. What are the issues in the communication sphere, according to the participants in the conference in Ostend?

- Missing **information about learning mobility opportunities** that is directed to broader society; more information is needed for public administration as well as more European-level information campaigns to bypass national bottlenecks and firewalls.
- **Promotion of the results of projects** is not yet optimised and the platform for dissemination of results is not user friendly.
- There is also a lack of knowledge of how to connect the projects and local realities. **How to bring the results and learning outcomes to the local surroundings.** The tools for transferring the information of projects to the local community are missing.

Standardisation and quality

This is a topic of discussion balancing between the freedom of formats and the willingness to draw lines for what learning mobility is and what it isn't, what constitutes a good learning mobility project and how much it is allowed to deviate from those pre-approved good practices.

PRO-STANDARDISATION NEEDS

- NGOs could be accredited and registered at European level, to bypass national barriers and limitations.
- There should be more overview at European level for evaluating and assessing project applications especially from countries where there is a tendency to shrink spaces for civil society, to ensure a more transparent and unbiased assessment of applications, which could be anonymous to avoid negative reactions.
- Universally accepted values of being a youth worker are not existent, as there are different interpretations based on ideology and political point of views.

PRO-FREEDOM NEEDS

- More openness to radical projects and formats.
- Fewer barriers and obstacles to mobility, to avoid killing enthusiasm of young people, organisers of projects.

Policies

‘When does youth work promote its own values and at what point is it “abused” to promote a political agenda?’

Many ideas are shared by the participants on what is missing in the policy angle of the youth field regarding learning mobility. The missing aspects regarding the policies vary according to regions. Some say that there are hardly any youth work structures or relevant support in some countries; others ask how to transfer EU Recommendations at local and national level? Therefore the first missing part is **transferring international practices to national to local practices and policies**. The problems are:

- the support from the European level does not always reach the local level as **the national structures and political differences can block or undermine youth policy developments**;
- initial **enthusiasm about youth policy developments in some countries and regions has dropped significantly** because policies and structures at national level have not changed accordingly;
- **changing systems is difficult**. Even though specific events in European and global stages create momentum and impact on the levels of solidarity, there is not always enough political will to continue to change the structures and systems. Also missing legal frameworks on national levels is influencing the amount of youth work being political;
- international youth work is nice to have but the municipalities are not really supporting it as **youth work is not a priority** at local level.

Another aspect the policies were criticised for was their **(in)stability**. Some people said the policies change like the wind, the policies are not sustainable and do not demonstrate commitment to civic engagement. The unstable policies and political contexts create risk situations for learning mobility.

Some participants asked if there is still a problem with **recognition of learning mobility**, others said there is still not enough of it. According to the participants, there is still not enough recognition of:

- the value of civic engagement
- youth sector in general
- political responsibility for societal development
- the importance of extra funding for engagement.

Cross-sectoral approach

The cross-sectoral approach is still considered to be a gap in the youth field even though it has a great potential to promote positive change. Participants in the conference see it as a result of lack of communication between research and policy makers; between practice and research, between policy makers and youth, etc. Others believe it is because of the lack of effort and openness from different actors:

- the research community tends to be quite closed;
- policy makers do not show much care about the outcomes and feedback coming from the field.

Realistic ideas and actions

The ideas for improvement are a mix of good practice examples that are proposed to be copied or adapted by other practitioners and reactions to the gaps and needs in the practice, research and policies. We call it realistic ideas, though some of them are more ambitious than others. The ideas and actions are divided into groups according to the model of triangle (practice, research, policy). Although it is important to acknowledge that in order for some of the proposed measures to be implemented, co-operation from all angles is crucial.

Triangle co-operation

Measurement and research

- Establish a **clear channel** (easy, known) **for exchanging information between researchers and practitioners**. Use research as a tool to gather best practices for practitioners to use and **translate the research language** to practitioner/young person language. Make sure that young people are involved in this: 'nothing about us without us'.
- Co-operate between practitioners and researchers in the field:
 - ◇ train NGOs to do basic research;
 - ◇ make long-term projects in order to assess long-term impact and to enrich research;
 - ◇ dedicate time and include professionals to collect periodical data in order to assess societal impact;
 - ◇ create methods together in order to grasp the changes in the behaviour of participants and others affected;
 - ◇ have tools for measuring the impact;
 - ◇ Mapping of what already exists to be able to connect the dots from all angles and to connect existing academic research with the needs of youth workers.

Visibility and information about the possibilities for youth

- Centralised and renewed database of resources.
- Collect and share existing success stories.
- Instead of focusing too much on gathering more evidence, we should invest in getting more young people with fewer opportunities involved. Research could help to find out what are the levers that get them on board.

Long-term activities and programmes with focus on continuity

- Projects should be planned in such a way that they allow staying in touch with participants after they are over; this would allow better assessment of mid-term and long-term impact. For this, developing support structures, alumni networks, databases and platforms to exchange experiences might be useful as well as involving participants in long-term effects assessments.
- Some impact has to mature in order to be measured. Therefore, we should have longer periods for monitoring and measuring the impact and trace longer-term effects.

- Strategic planning/synergies between programmes: prepare learning pathways to participants and support moving from one learning mobility programme to another (e.g. DiscoverEU to Erasmus+).

Practice

‘Which values should youth work promote?’

The following are ideas for practitioners to employ in order to have a bigger community or societal impact with learning mobility projects:

Before the mobility

- Ways to reflect on and present unexpected impact could be included in the project cycle (including application and evaluation), so managers of mobility projects and policy makers are aware that they could exist and should be consciously checked.
- Mapping and learning from past projects can help us see what should be done to avoid mistakes and contribute to foresee possible unexpected impact in the future.
- Focus more on language barriers for accessing learning mobility.
- Take into account the local context: what does the community need? What problems should be addressed?
- Do not overpromise to the participants, to the community, to the funders. Less is more.

During the mobility

- **Focus more on measures to involve local communities:**
 - ◇ bring together participants and local communities, create common spaces where participants and local community could meet;
 - ◇ use open methodologies and different methods to make an impactful bridge to the concrete world around the setting of a learning mobility;
 - ◇ organise campaigns for young people to spread the information made by young people;
 - ◇ organise info-sessions in schools and youth centres, etc.;
 - ◇ involve mass media (adapt to the language) and social media (wisely);
 - ◇ organise constructive feedback.
- **Bring in the political:**
 - ◇ include politicians and other local actors from the community;
 - ◇ have a stronger focus on explaining young people what is the outcome of voting/not voting;
 - ◇ connect learning mobility to the policy-making process by organisations.

After the mobility

- More focus on the after-mobility phase to ensure a longer-lasting and sustainable impact within the local community.
- Better follow-up, more opportunities for follow-up after learning mobility projects.
- Initiatives to set up in home community after returning from the learning mobility experience.
- International initiatives to promote learning mobility e.g. network of ambassadors.
- Evaluate a learning experience with participants and affected locals: by interviews, evaluation forms or other methods (see co-operation with researchers). Repeat the interviews after a longer period of time to see changes in the longer perspective.
- Provide continuity and avoid one-shot experience.

Visibility and communication

FORM

- Use digital tools and social media to make things visible and attractive.
- Organise online campaigns that are friendly and straight to the point.
- Update the platform for sharing the results, reports, and tools according to the topic (in our case – the topic of the impact on local communities).
- Encourage young people to do the peer-to-peer information campaign.
- Organise an event to showcase the benefits of international youth work and learning mobility at local level. Show the tangible and positive changes e.g. renewing bus stops with volunteers.

CONTENT

- Communicate the success stories, as well as the failures.
- Create the ‘yes you can’ message in order to reach out to underrepresented groups to improve on the inclusion.
- Create clear messages using accessible language, being aware that learning mobility is a process happening everywhere.

Research

Database catalogues and platforms

- A catalogue/overview/mapping of existing impact research methodologies is needed.
 - Create a platform where all actors in learning mobility were part of the research puzzle.
-

Publications

- More positive publications on societal impact, systemic effects on the organisational level or the community.
 - Show research results, not only numbers, but also something visual, attractive, understandable – translate it into a more simple and understandable language.
-

Indicators and tools for measuring impact

- Create indicators for societal impact.
 - Conceptualise the unexpected societal or individual impact.
 - Establish ex-ante indicators to assess impact immediately after the activity and one year after its end.
-

Options for next steps in response to the findings of desk research

- Use a 360-degree feedback model to assess impact from different perspectives. Use self-assessment tools and cross-assessment frameworks (peer evaluation).
- Gather real experiences from host communities that were impacted by learning mobility: conduct interviews, focus groups or surveys with the family members or friends of those directly involved in learning mobility activities.
- Re-balance the focus on short-term mobility and its impact on the communities – not only on mid- and long-term mobility.
- Co-operate with the participants of learning mobility activities, train them and include them into societal impact assessment as researchers in their home communities.
- Initiate a longitudinal study that would start with surveying the representatives of host communities of volunteers before and after learning mobility activities. In order to implement this strategy on research, a very close co-operation with the national agencies and the co-ordinating and hosting organisations would be crucial.

Policy

‘Does youth work within the EU have a certain political direction?’

What can be done in the youth policy field regarding learning mobility and improvements for the community and societal impact? Participants share their ideas for possible updates and improvements:

Updates on the learning mobility programmes

GENERAL

- Support strategic long-term partnerships ensuring multi-level impact.
- Take societal impact more into consideration in the evaluation of the submitted projects even though it requires more budget and training;
- Update the platform for Erasmus+ result dissemination;
- Add learning mobility to the city twinning initiative.

POLITICAL

- Make learning mobility more political.
- Address visa issues for mobility projects (e.g. non-nationals, neighbouring regions).
- Establish a clear connection between sustainable development goals (by United Nations) with sustainable impact in learning mobility activities in the new frame of the EU Youth Strategy, especially linked to quality education and reduction of inequalities.
- Include young people and youth organisations to be part of boards of national agencies to decide money allocation.
- Use key action 1 projects as a starting point for youth dialogue projects and raise the awareness for the political meaning of an individual project.

ENVIRONMENTAL

In order to diminish the negative impact of the learning mobility on the environment, the following actions are proposed:

- Include digital signature in mobility programme application forms and agreement, so there is no need for printing to sign documents for each single project.
- Create a SALTO centre on environment.
- Make environment a (real) programme priority.
- Make environmental awareness a competence in the YouthPass.
- Promote (more) regional partnerships for project: one project would have to be very good for granting long distance travelling.
- Encourage online exchanges, training courses, meetings, APVs, etc.

Impact on international and local policies

‘The political discourse is changing the narratives... youth work needs to be adapted to certain political trends, but how to handle this?’

In order to address the rapid changes and the challenges described in the ‘what is missing’ part of this report, some ideas for linking international and local policies, influencing improvements on policy level and the role of learning mobility in all of it are proposed:

- Create a bigger network of active European youth work/organisations to increase the pressure on policy makers to make a change.
- Promote applying the co-management model of the Council of Europe also in other areas and fields.
- Have meaningful information on how to apply EU Recommendations by municipalities.
- Involve the whole variety of stakeholders at local level, not only municipal.
- Involve local authorities systematically in mobility projects; consider local authorities as a target group of mobility programmes as they can contribute to achieving bigger social impact together with young people and different actors who work with them.
- Promote a stronger cross-sectoral dialogue with decision makers to be more inclusive in local politics and allow young people to have experiences of having power.
- Develop universal strategies or frameworks (like EU directives) with short-term actions and results.

Funding

- Provide finances for spreading good practices, good stories, role models, research-practice dialogue.
- More support for the follow-up of impact on Erasmus+.
- More flexible funding for money-related barriers, e.g. portable grants and support services for inclusion (helpers, medicine, etc.).
- More support to European youth organisations.
- Funding for cohesive societies, inclusion.
- Transparent information about available support, gathered in the same place in an easy language.
- Provide EU operating grants also to national or regional umbrella organisations, not only to those operating at EU level.
- Youth forum, young people and youth organisations to have power in sitting at the table where money allocation is decided.

If you want to dig deeper

A selection of the bibliography that was used for the desk research to prepare for the conference:

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Participant list

EPLM Conference: The Power of Learning Mobility, 1-4 April 2019

The team and those with a role

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22	Belgium	Floor	Van Houdt	Keynote speech – policy – Head of Unit ‘Youth programmes, outreach tools and traineeships’ at European Commission
23	Portugal	Jo	Claeys	Keynote speech – practice. Non-Formal Educator/trainer, father of 2, wannabe farmer and citizen. Workshop facilitator

24	Belgium	Luc	Delrue	Keynote speech support – policy Secretary General, Department of Culture, Youth and Media: Flemish Government
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26	Slovenia	Tea	Jarc	Lead Facilitator
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29	Germany	Seher	Ünlü	Power input – story from young people
30	Germany	Giacomo	Cozzolino	Power input – story from young people
31	Latvia	Paula	Kukle	Power input – story from young people
32	Romania	Alexandra	Damaschin	Power input – story from young people
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39	Romania	Mihaela	Ameriei	Workshop facilitator
40	Serbia	Snežana	Baclija Knoch	Workshop facilitator. Quality Handbook author
41	Estonia	Kätlin	Kuldmaa	Young people’s storytelling, April 2nd evening
42	Latvia	Joren	Dobkiewicz	Young people’s storytelling, April 2nd evening

Participants: representing practice, policy, research and young people

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134	Turkey	Yunus	Duman

