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*Adult Education*  
**MOBILITY  
CHARTER**

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*How to do a learning mobility*



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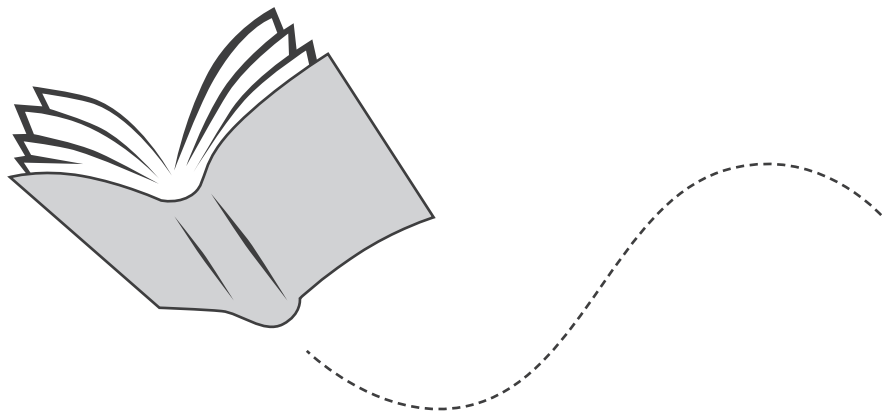
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# PREAMBLE

We, the supporters of the Adult Education Mobility Charter, believe that access, participation and active experiences in the field of adult education should be reconsidered in order to gain more knowledge and share good practice. We are convinced that every person (educator, teacher, trainer, stakeholder, etc.) engaged in adult education, especially younger staff, should have the opportunity to learn and develop their skills as part of their continuing professional development (CPD). Currently only a few have the opportunity to attend and participate in activities which are otherwise open to everyone working in the adult education sector.

This Charter, created by the AE-PRO – European Adult Education (Younger) Professionals Learning Platform project, is a support framework of learning mobilities for all participants and activities. It supports any agreement between participants and activities.

The Charter does not only promote exchange activities; it has a wider ambition to foster cooperation between individuals, organisations and institutions.

In summary, the Charter promotes activities such as job shadowing, guest teaching, study visits, conferences, short visits, courses and observations for all participants who are actively working in the field of adult education.

This agreement of standards for participants, tutors and adult education organisations creates a common understanding of the definition of participants, tutors and adult education organisations and provides a common set of basic responsibilities for all participants.

## *The objectives of the Charter:*

### **1. EUROPEAN DIMENSION**

The Charter supports the mobility and cooperation between European countries and adult education organisations within those countries. It strengthens the role of adult education in confronting European challenges through cooperation and exchange between adult education organisations and adult educators.

### **2. ORGANISATIONAL DIMENSION**

The Charter promotes appropriate forms of mobility and funding. It aims to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training systems, as well as “foster cooperation between individuals, organisations and institutions.”

### **3. INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION**

The Charter increases the mobility of adult education (for younger) staff and improve its conditions. It helps to ensure that mobility participants always have a positive experience both in the host country and in their country of origin on their return, and to provide guidance on mobility arrangements for learning or other purposes, such as professional betterment, to all participants in order to enhance personal and professional development.

# EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES

## **WHY EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES?**

Adult education in Europe can be strengthened by developing the professional competencies and international awareness of adult education staff, including teachers, trainers, administrators and managers.

Success factors depend on the contribution of all parts. It is not just an exchange activity itself, it is also about the participant's contribution to ensure successful results.

In this context, participants and exchange activities have two important parts or aspects. On one side, adult educators – whether they are teachers or those employed in the administration of adult education organisations – can receive a grant to undertake a training activity in a country abroad. The training activity can be either a training course or a less formal type of training activity, such a study visit, job-shadowing, attending a conference or seminar. This could be called the outgoing element of the exchange process: individuals go outside of their country to improve their professional competences.

On the flipside, training providers and adult education organisations would receive participants or colleagues from all over Europe: the incoming element of the exchange process. These host organisations can publish their courses/trainings, where potential learners can also search for exchange/training activities.

## *Benefits of mobility activities*

### **1. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Participants who attend training activities wish to acquire new knowledge, experiences and skills which are relevant for their own career, work and target groups, employer or organisation.

### **2. EUROPEAN DIMENSION**

Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own daily experiences from a European perspective. Through comparison with other systems and practices, they can understand more deeply the importance and relevance of their own work in a wider political and educational context.

For participants, learning in a European context is often an “eye-opener” for the specific experiences, methods and tools of their colleagues in other European countries. It is not only the input of the trainers or hosts, but also the learning with and from each other which can help learners to develop particular professional skills.

Through exchanging thoughts and experiences within a course, participants may be able to generate ideas and find partners for further cooperation projects.

### **3. INTERCULTURAL SKILLS**

In working together, participants and staff can also develop their individual intercultural skills, which, in today's world, have become basic transversal skills: a learning aim for all adult educators whether in a national or international context.

Back home, participants can spread awareness about the advantages of international further training courses or activities and motivate others to join in a programme.

## INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION

Exchange activities are attended by an international audience from the adult education sector. They may involve trainers from different parts of Europe, and they may also be organized by an international team, for example, when training providers from different countries cooperate in the joint organisation of a course.

Whatever their role in the course, everyone will experience working and learning in an environment that is different from the norm. The courses allow participants to learn about adult education in other countries, to learn from practice and experience in other educational structures and traditions, to reflect on their own work in view of others, to communicate in a foreign language, to learn about other daily life and work cultures, to develop ideas for future cooperation, etc.

## *Effects of interculturality*

- Adult educators are not all the same. The field of adult education in Europe ranges from purely informal to strongly formalized and institutionalized learning contexts, and from purely general to very specific job-related education. The systems are still very different, and professionals in adult education might have quite different social backgrounds, professional roles, target learners and practical experiences.
- The use of a foreign language, often a third or bridge language, might also demand extra time for additional explanation, translation or clarification in different languages.
- Different communication codes might challenge facilitation skills. For example, there will be differences between individuals and cultures in how to interpret interrupting each other or not; ways of criticising; of presenting one's opinion more, or less directly; the level of politeness in the use of language; body language; physical distance when talking to and working with each other; dress codes for work; leisure time; keeping to time limits or not; and demanding the right to speak or waiting for being asked.
- Cultural preferences concerning for example: diets for religious, health or lifestyle reasons, or concerning what time of year to hold the course/session, might influence logistical processes.
- Participants might be surprised by what you offer as daily life and work culture (types of meals, schedule of working hours and breaks, standard of accommodation, teaching and learning methods, options for cultural activities). Participants should be aware of different habits and expectations, and be prepared to do things differently.
- In summary, participation in an exchange activity and the intercultural dimension are not mutually exclusive. Both complement each other. Diversity should be seen as an opportunity as well as a profitable experience.

# MOBILITY IN ADULT EDUCATION

Mobility activities in adult education are organized learning or teaching stays in other European countries for educational staff. The European Commission supports mobility activities under the Key Action 1 “learning mobility for individuals” of the EU program Erasmus+.

Mobility activities may involve teaching purposes at partner training courses, job shadowing, study visits, conferences and short visits. These activities are organized by adult education institutions (Community colleges, clubs, church institutions of adult education, etc.).

## **VIRTUAL MOBILITY VS. PHYSICAL MOBILITY?**

In today's world it is very popular to be connected via the internet for many reasons. One of them is for education tasks. Internet access and social media are basic tools in the adult education sector. Virtual mobility in education is a popular use in many countries and for many people. Virtual mobility is a good tool to be able to connect quickly to knowledge providers, but what is the difference between that and physical mobility? Physical mobility really adds to the experience.

Physical mobility, throughout learning process, includes other dimensions and skills. Everything is real: people, places, learning material, etc. Everything is easier to follow and more memorable. Besides this training abroad extends the practical skills of participants, and is a key component of the international experience.

Participants who are working with administrative issues have opportunities to benefit from international partners. Against the background of the different organisations in the adult education sector, to be outside of the country of origin and doing an exchange activity contributes to the professional approach in adult education both in the personal area and

in terms of organizational development of the adult education organisation.

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR A MOBILITY GRANT?**

You can apply for a mobility grant in your own country or country of origin. You can contact your national agency which is responsible for applicants and application forms.

## *Prerequisites for participants in mobility activities*

The participation in mobility activities for adult education staff is subject to certain requirements:

- Participants should be willing to travel.
- Each tutor, peer, stakeholder, administrative staff can participate if they can prove work experience in the field of adult education. This work experience can be gained via working as a professional in this area or via an internship.
- The participation is open to participants who are working in adult education organisations (sending organisations) as permanent staff or freelancer.
- The participation is also open to volunteers who meet the prerequisites.

# COMMITMENT OF THE PARTIES

## **VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT BY A PARTICIPANT**

The participant should:

- Be aware that a success of mobility is also on own recognizance.
- Prepare for the selected activity independently through reading, online research, collecting questions, etc.
- Be actively involved in the selected activity.
- Show willingness to engage in working processes.
- Be open to new experiences, to new methods and work systems during the chosen activity.
- Show appreciation of the new impressions gained during the selected activity.
- Be reliable and follow the rules of the host organisation.
- Be open to other cultures and ideas.
- Be open to critique. During the activity, there may be feedback from other participants or tutors. The participant should receive this feedback openly and react constructively to it.
- Attend the activity regularly as set by the host organisation.

## **VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT BY A TUTOR**

The tutor should:

- Check with the host organisation that the location is suitable for the activity. These activities could be training courses, job shadowing, study visits, conferences and short visits.
- Be responsible for the agenda and the content of the activity.
- Be well prepared for the activity.
- Be willing to give the participant insight into working processes and to give the possibility of new experiences.
- Show openness to questions during the activity.
- Be open to other cultures, ideas and perspectives while working with participants from other countries.
- Be open to critique.
- Be able to use new techniques.
- Provide feedback on the participant's homework in timely manner.

## **VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT BY THE HOST ORGANISATION**

The host organisation should:

- Be responsible for ensuring that the location is suitable for the activity and properly equipped in consultation with the tutor.
- Find a suitable tutor for the activity.
- Find suitable participants and is responsible for the invitation of the participants.
- Help the participants and the tutors with logistics (e.g. to find the corresponding hotels, to find the location of the activity).

## **VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT BY THE SENDING ORGANISATION**

The sending organisation should:

- Ensure that the sent person is suitable for the activity.
- Support the sent person with expenses.



# DEFINITIONS

## **MOBILITY**

Learning mobility of individuals is all about providing opportunities for individuals to improve their skills, enhance their employability and gain cultural awareness. Beneficiaries are able to spend a period of time in another participating country gaining valuable experience of life, study and work with the aim of increasing the opportunities available to them in the future. Mobility for adult education staff can be used to support staff engaged in both teaching and non-teaching roles, either through teaching/training assignments abroad; and/or staff training abroad, including structured courses and training events, job shadowing and observations.

## **ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATION**

Adult learning is multifaceted and can take place in different forms, in terms of course content, structure, and format. Adult education opportunities are available in different formats and options, depending on lifestyle and time. Adult education can take place in the workplace, through "extension" school or "school of continuing education". Other learning places are community colleges, folk high schools, colleges and universities, libraries, and lifelong learning centers.

In this Charter 'adult education organisation' is the key concept that includes all institutions that work in the field of adult education. Adult education organisations have several tasks. One of the most important tasks is to empower adults in their roles as citizens, community members, workers,

parents and family members.

Adult education organisations promote lifelong learning and the development of problem-solving skills through a continuum of services, including Adult Basic Education, languages and more.

In this publication we have two terms within an adult education organisation: host organisation and sending organisation.

- **HOST ORGANISATION**

In the Adult Education Mobility Charter host organisations are referred as every adult education organisation that actively supports all participants providing learning mobility places for adult education staff. A host organisation is a host of any kind of activities related to mobility.

- **SENDING ORGANISATION**

In this Charter we classify a sending organisation as the adult education organisation that sends participants to host organisations. That means they send participants that actively take part in activities related to mobility.

## **A PARTICIPANT**

A participant is someone who takes part in an activity inside Learning Mobility. This might be because of private or professional reasons. Examples for participants are tutors, peers, stakeholders, policy-makers, etc.

## **A TUTOR**

Tutors are those who work directly with participants. They work in adult education organisations, in this case for the host organization. They work in several fields of adult education as skills-based tutors, adult education facilitators, language tutors, basic skills tutors, etc.

In the context of the AE-PRO Mobility Charter organisers and administrative staff of the host organisation are also considered as tutors.

## **ACTIVITIES FOR ADULT EDUCATION STAFF**

This publication refers to activities for adult education staff in host organisations (adult education organisations) as activities with the main purpose: to gain more work experience and improve skills.

This guidebook considers for adult education staff the following activities: teaching/training assignments abroad; staff training abroad including structured courses and training events; job shadowing and observations. There are also activities such as study visits, conferences and short visits.

Educational partnership is a continuous partnership between schools and business/industry, unions, governments and community organisations, etc. They are mutual agreements between two or more parties to work together on projects and activities that will enhance the quality of education.







The European Adult Education (Young) Professionals Learning Platform (AE-PRO) project (2014–2016) offers a capacity building e-training for (younger) staff in adult education about European developments and adult education in other countries.

We aim to increase the knowledge of staff about adult education in Europe and increase the exchange of innovation across Europe through intergenerational learning, and the learning of experts as well as peers. We also aim to provide opportunities for the professional development and training of staff in adult education through the coordinated use of Erasmus+ mobilities.

*[www.ae-pro.eu](http://www.ae-pro.eu)*