

# CHAPTER 3:

## DURING MOBILITY



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# Index

Introduction To Chapter 3: During Mobility

The Travel

Arrival: Welcoming, On-Arrival Training and Adaptation

Welcoming

Internal On-Arrival Training

Adaptation

The Support Network

The Mentor

The Tutor

The Accompanying Person During Mobility

Learning Process





Communication With People With Intellectual Disabilities

Crisis Management

Concluding the Mobility

# INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 3: During Mobility

The third chapter of the P.R.I.M.E. handbook focuses on the stage of the project cycle that begins when a participant with intellectual disabilities (PWID) leaves their home to embark on the mobility experience, continues throughout the entire stay, and ends when they return home.

<b>Project Application &amp; Management</b>	<b>Before Mobility</b>	<b>During Mobility</b>	<b>After Mobility</b>
 Chapter 1	 Chapter 2	 Chapter 3	 Chapter 4

In this chapter, you will find useful information, best practices, and tips on how to make your inclusive mobility project effective for the participants throughout their whole trip.

This is not a general guide to supporting participants in a mobility project, but rather an additional set of suggestions on how to make that support more inclusive for PWID.

From the moment your participant sets off for their journey and arrives at the destination, they are already in the DURING mobility stage. This adventure continues until the moment they return home.

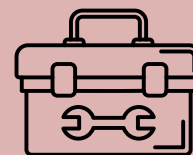
The steps you will find in this chapter for supporting your participant include:

- Travel and how to support PWID,
- Arrival, welcoming, and on-arrival training or adaptation period,
- The mentor figure and mentoring: supporting local integration, linguistic and cultural adjustment, and good practices,
- The tutor and how to support the participant during the activities,
- The role of the accompanying person during the mobility,
- The learning process,
- Crisis management,
- Monitoring and evaluation

# THE TRAVEL

Once the travel arrangements have been made jointly between the participant, the accompanying person, and the sending and hosting organisations, the pre-departure preparation (see Chapter 2) should already have supported the participant in preparing for the journey.

Comprehensive travel manuals for PWID have been developed to foster readiness for travel and encourage confidence and independence.



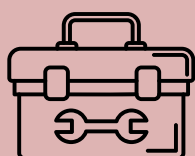
- Travel Training Manual, created by Down Syndrome, Queensdale, is a good model to refer to when creating a comprehensive local travel guide to be used during the mobility experience.
- Travel Guide for People with Disabilities, created by Turkish organisations, is a more general resource that can also be valuable when preparing a guide.
- Guide for Air Travellers with Developmental Disabilities, developed by an airline company, was originally intended as a framework for their staff; however, it also provides some tips and advice for passengers preparing for travel.



During the flight for Green INclusive Academy Project (KA2), Germany



Adult education, The agents of social inclusion (SIA), Spain, Participant - ARMINAS, 2023



Travel organising apps, such as Triplt, offer advanced features designed to make travelling smoother and less stressful. Apps like these provide helpful reminders and real-time alerts, ensuring travellers remain informed and prepared at every stage of their journey. From flight updates to itinerary changes, they help keep everything organised and make travelling more convenient.

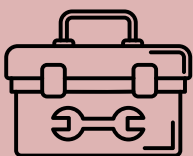




Testing airport assistance



Adult education, The agents of social inclusion (SIA), Italy, Participant - Martynas , 2023



The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a discreet tool for people with hidden disabilities to voluntarily indicate they may require extra assistance, understanding, or patience. By wearing the Sunflower symbol, they can communicate their needs in a subtle and dignified way.

This initiative runs year-round to support individuals with non-visible disabilities, raising awareness, training businesses, and sharing personal stories to promote inclusivity and foster greater understanding in society.

When travelling by plane, remember whether or not you have requested **personal assistance** at the airport. If not, contact the HelpDesk to request it.

Using public transport (train) in a foreign country, Green INclusive Academy Project (KA2), Germany



**GREEN TIP:**

As discussed in Chapter 2, travel arrangements should be considered carefully. Whenever possible, think about more sustainable travel options, provided that the condition of the PWID and the distance make this a. Trains, buses or shared transportation are regarded as 'Green Travel' and can be a more sustainable choice during your mobility.

When travelling, it can also be useful to make use of the **SUNFLOWER LANYARD:**

# ARRIVAL: WELCOMING, ON-ARRIVAL TRAINING AND ADAPTATION

When the participant and accompanying person arrive at the destination and reach the accommodation, it is important to ensure a smooth transition. (Remember to prepare a user-friendly and clear 'how to arrive to' guide – see Chapter 2).

## Welcoming

Arriving in a new place is easier with a warm welcome.

The hosting organisation can prepare a welcome kit: perhaps including a snack or some water, gadgets or practical items, and a short info pack or guide about the surroundings. This could include where to find supermarkets, pharmacies, and places of interest, including the activity venue or workplace. If possible, provide this in an easy-to-read format (see Handbook).

If welcoming in person is not possible, arranging a welcome call upon arrival is always considered good practice.



*Welcome*



Exploring new cities, learning new cultures , Green INclusive Academy Project (ka2) , Frankfurt - Germany

## Accommodation



Adult education, The agents of social inclusion (SIA), Germany, Participant - Sandra, 2023

It is essential to have suitable accommodation that meets the participant's needs. Before the mobility, all relevant information should have been shared, and accommodation prepared accordingly, particularly ensuring accessibility if the PWID also has physical disabilities.

In the Infopack and pre-departure preparation (see chapter 2), participants should have been informed about bringing necessary items, such as towels and sheets. A useful tip is to always have a backup plan in case these items are forgotten. Depending on the arrival time, the hosting organisation can prepare a basic food and grocery kitchen kit; there might not be time to go to a supermarket immediately. A basic starter set of cooking essentials (salt, pepper, sugar, oil, etc.) and hygiene (toilet paper, hand soap, etc.) can be very helpful.

As shared in Chapter 2, there are different types of accommodation. Most often, accommodation is shared either with other participants or between the participant and the accompanying person. It can be helpful to establish some 'house rules' between those living in the accommodation and the mentor. This may include schedules and shared tasks for managing the house (such as cleaning and taking out the garbage). These rules can be developed through adapted activities that promote clarity and cooperation.

In our experience, it can be very valuable and rewarding to have accommodation that hosts participants with and without disabilities. PWID can be supported by their peers while also sharing experiences, knowledge, and skills. This strengthens their sense of inclusion, and, at the same time, gives all participants the opportunity to develop responsibility, usefulness and cooperation within the group.



Learning on how to recycle during an LTA, Green INclusive Academy Project (ka2), Bad Homburg, Germany

## Internal on arrival-training

Although some programmes provide training organised by the National Agency, this rarely applies to participants in short-term mobilities; for example, in ESC volunteering, it is usually only offered for mobilities lasting longer than two months. Therefore, it is essential to conduct internal training to ensure participants feel welcome, become familiar with the new environment, and adapt more easily. A good on-arrival training can include the whole participant group and cover a variety of different topics, such as:

- Getting to know each other
- Team building
- Learning about the organisation, workplace or activity venue – this could include a tour
- Meeting the people involved, like mentors, tutors, other participants and staff – this can be done formally or through a welcome event or welcome party, where everyone gathers around a good meal or participates in an activity such as music. This also helps to develop social skills and create bonds.
- Basic linguistic activities (see examples below)
- Cultural learning activities to mitigate culture shock (check below some examples)
- Training on the local recycling system, since this differs from country to country
- Discovering the local context and surroundings, for example, through a tour or a game.



A



B



C

A. What better way to get to know each other than with a table soccer game? Green INclusive Academy Project (KA2), Frankfurt, Germany

B. Making and Sharing Vegan Waffles with other participants, Green INclusive Academy Project (ka2), Bad Homburg, Germany

C. Sharing Greece's local recycling system during an LTA, Green INclusive Academy Project (ka2), Bad Homburg, Germany

D. Visiting Local Ecological Park during project meeting, Green INclusive Academy Project (ka2), Athens, Greece



D



## Recycling and Waste Management

Establish clear guidelines on recycling and waste management for all participants. Provide separate waste and recycling bins, and inform everyone about the local recycling practices. The hosting organisation can organise a specific activity to explain the local system of waste sorting and collection.

Here is an example of [an activity about waste sorting](#).

## Adaptation

Physical and psychological barriers should be dealt with to create an environment that is completely accessible for PWID.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is also important to train staff accordingly.

Additionally, the participant needs some time to become familiar with the new environment. You can help to facilitate this process by providing appropriate support and opportunities for gradual adaptation.

## HOUSING AND WORKPLACE

**Pictograms** around the house or workplace help make it easier for PWID to orient themselves.

Ensuring the safety and privacy of all participants, regardless of gender, is essential, particularly for those with disabilities. Mixed-gender activities should be supported by suitable facilities, such as safe restrooms and housing, to ensure a comfortable learning environment.

Although this handbook focuses on people with intellectual disabilities, we need to consider that often participants may have multiple disabilities. All needs should be considered, including those linked to physical and sensory impairments. One of the main priorities is ensuring that all participants can physically reach the facilities. Therefore, taking into account the participants' mobility requirements, such as ensuring that dining places, restrooms, and buildings are accessible. Accompanying persons, mentors and tutors must also modify their pedagogical approaches to accommodate PWID's varied learning requirements. For instance, using tactile learning aids to support those with visual impairments or using sign language or visual aids for participants with hearing impairments.

## MONITORING

It is crucial that sending and hosting organisations, together with the participant and their support network, collaborate to understand and assess the participant's needs. This allows all parties to better prepare for and adapt to potential barriers the participant may face (see Chapter 2).

Despite preparations, new contexts and environments may present unexpected challenges, as the participant may encounter situations they have never faced before.

For this reason, continuous monitoring of the context, situation and environment during the mobility is essential.


Barriers for PWID can take many different forms, and overcoming them requires careful preparation and teamwork. Involving participants themselves in recognising and resolving these issues is a crucial strategy for breaking down barriers; their personal experiences often provide valuable insights into their own needs to find effective solutions.

**Evaluating the Activity Environment:** Ensure that the participant can access the facilities safely and engage fully in the activities proposed.

**Modifying Instruction:** Adapting strategies for all participants (from a **Universal Design perspective**) benefits everyone, with or without disabilities. Techniques like keeping to a consistent schedule can help maintain structure and improve comprehension.

## Universal Design

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.



Universal Design is an approach to designing products, environments, and experiences that are accessible and usable by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or background. The goal is to create inclusive solutions that accommodate diverse needs, without requiring adaptation or specialised design. Examples include curb ramps, automatic doors, and user-friendly websites.

**Creating a Plan of Action:** Work with participants to develop a strategy for addressing identified obstacles. Assign clear responsibilities to those in charge of making necessary changes, and set deadlines for their implementation. Actively involve not only the participant but also the accompanying person, mentor, tutor and other participants, if appropriate.

# THE SUPPORT NETWORK

In the previous chapter, we discussed the importance of the participants' support network.

In the hosting environment, other figures can be involved as part of this support network to reinforce the welcoming and safe environment of the PWID.

- **“Buddy” System** (see below for more details): Establishing a *buddy* system with neighbours, friends, or community members fosters a sense of community, ensuring everyone has someone to rely on, including during emergencies (see specific chapter). This can enhance overall safety and resilience.
- **Community Involvement:** Connecting with local support groups and organisations for PWID can expand the resource and support pool. Research community groups, non-profit organisations, or advocacy organisations that focus on supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities, such as local branches of national organisations or grassroots support networks.

Reach out to group leaders, introduce yourself or your organisation and express a willingness to collaborate

- Build trust and rapport by contributing through events, workshops, or meetings
- Share useful informational materials, tools, or services such as educational content, accessibility solutions, or training opportunities

## Roles in Mobility of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities



### Mentor

Supporter of daily life and well-being

#### Typical in:

- VET
- ESC



### Tutor

Guide and supervisor of learning/work-related tasks

#### Typical in:

- VET
- ESC



### Facilitator / Trainer

Integrative figure managing both learning and personal support in group settings

#### Typical in:

- Youth Exchanges
- Training Courses

- Collaborate on activities that align with shared goals, such as inclusive activities or awareness campaigns and offer volunteer time or expertise to support their events or initiatives
  - Facilitate connections between different groups or individuals to strengthen the local community.
- Communication channels such as social media, newsletters, or events can be useful to amplify their work and increase their visibility

## THE MENTOR

In each mobility project under Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programme, a key support figure for the participant is the MENTOR.

By MENTOR, we mean the person in the hosting context who supports the participant with daily needs (such as where to go in case of difficulties), facilitates integration into the community or group, and assists with the learning process.

This figure is referred to as a MENTOR in Actions like ESC volunteering, VET mobilities or ADU mobilities.

In Actions like Youth Exchanges or Training Courses (KA1 in the field of Youth), the equivalent figure may instead be called the FACILITATOR or TRAINER.



Adult education, The agents of social inclusion (SIA), Portugal, Participants  
- Ugnė and Kristina. Accompanying staff - Julija and Dovilė, 2023

## The role and the profile of the mentor



As mentioned, the MENTOR is the person in the HOSTING context who supports the participant with daily life, local integration, and any needs outside the work or activity context.

*The role of the mentor is crucial in helping participants overcome social, emotional, and physical challenges, as well as helping them learn new skills. A competent mentor is aware of these potential difficulties and provides timely, appropriate help to ensure the participant's experience is smooth, empowering and successful.*

There is no specific profile required for a mentor. Depending on the Action, each National Agency (NA) may or may not issue suggestions or guidelines for this role. It is advisable to check with your NA. In most cases, the mentor is considered a voluntary role, meaning that it is taken on by someone who genuinely wants to be involved. In our experience, it is a role that one is called to; this role requires dedication, patience, flexibility and a willingness to learn – to learn from the experience and from your mentee. This role must be carried out with commitment and heart.

## Mentoring competence framework

The Mentor's role is gaining increasing importance in the field of ESC and Erasmus+. Training is often offered to help mentors develop their competencies. Sometimes these trainings are provided by NAs for mentors at the national level, while other training can be found in the [SALTO-YOUTH training calendar](#).



Additionally, the “Mentoring Competence Framework” was recently created to provide clear and effective guidance for mentoring practitioners in the ESC Programme.

The “Mentoring Competence Framework” was developed by member practitioners of the **Mentoring under Construction Community**. More about this community is available at [SALTO](#). Join the [Facebook group](#) or [request access to the Learning Hub](#), which contains a wide range of resources.

For TRAINERS and FACILITATORS, the [ETS Competence Model](#) is also available. It defines the competences, characteristics, and profile of these learning support roles.

## Mentoring people with intellectual disabilities



VisMedNet Association Mentor with an Italian VET trainee

Mentoring during Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps mobility is essential during the programme, especially for PWID, since they often need extra support with managing anxiety in a new setting, adapting to the new culture and managing their emotions.

Mentoring PWIDs offers a valuable opportunity to make a lasting impact by helping them develop the skills needed to become independent and flourish as individuals. Understanding the unique difficulties PWID may encounter and the tactics that can support them in a learning environment is essential, whether you are an experienced mentor or completely new to the role. For mentors who may not have experience working with PWID, the following elements and tips offer fundamental guidance. They highlight the importance of tolerance, compassion, and flexibility in creating a supportive and empowering mentoring relationship.



Mentoring is a personally enriching experience. Understandably, mentoring PWIDs may seem more challenging, especially if this is a new experience. However, your mindset and preparation are key to your personal success in this type of mentoring. Mentoring participants without disabilities might be perceived as easier, but many find that this is not the case. In fact, many mentors have given feedback that their experience mentoring PWIDs was much easier and much more enjoyable than they had expected before their experience.

In the 'Mentoring Under Construction Community', you can find a series of [PODCASTS](#) addressing different aspects of mentoring, including issues. Among them is a [PODCAST dedicated to mentoring people with intellectual disabilities](#) shared by the P.R.I.M.E. partners. There are various strategies or methods you can adapt to strengthen mentoring with PWID.

## Reinforced mentoring

Working with PWID may require *reinforced mentoring*. This means dedicating more time or resources to ensure all the needs of your PWID are met than you would with other mentees. Reinforced mentoring may involve:

- Holding more meetings with your mentees
- Providing additional support with mediation and adaptation
- Adapting methods and techniques to meet individual needs
- Creating more activities, or tailoring existing ones, to allow full participation in the experience.

Participants in mobility projects often feel anxious when entering a new context. For PWID, managing these emotions can be even more challenging.

Reinforced mentoring can therefore include programmes or workshops that teach coping strategies for dealing with anxiety, frustration, or sensory overload, helping PWID build resilience in challenging situations during the mobility.

Many non-formal education activities can be used during mentoring. The key is to know your participants and adapt to their characteristics.



**Remember:** Every person is an individual. Therefore, activities should not only be adapted to accommodate the intellectual disability being dealt with, but also to the person's unique preferences and ways of learning. A participant may not enjoy, understand, or benefit from a specific activity; so it is essential to know your PWID and tailor the approach to them.

Mentoring PWID often requires adapting methods to ensure they can express themselves. Creating environments and spaces during the mobility where PWID feel comfortable expressing themselves, whether through art, music, or other forms of communication, to support their emotional well-being.

The mentor should work closely with the accompanying person to find the best ways of supporting communication and self-expression.

Different methods can be explored and tested with the mentee, such as:

- A colour system (red-yellow-green)
- Emoticons and smiley systems
- Pictures, photos, or pictograms

In this way, you can identify the most effective tools for enabling your PWID to communicate and participate fully.

## Good practices and ideas for mentoring people with intellectual disabilities

Alongside *regular* and *reinforced* mentoring, some innovative approaches are being tested across Europe.

Here are some examples:

### ***BEST BUDDIES***

Best Buddies International is a non-profit organisation focused on creating opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Its mission is to build a global volunteer movement that supports:

- **One-to-One Friendships:** Promoting meaningful connections between individuals with and without disabilities.
- **Integrated Employment:** Helping PWID find and maintain jobs within inclusive workplaces.
- **Leadership Development:** Empowering PWID to develop confidence, advocacy skills, and leadership abilities.

Through this movement, “Best Buddies” aims to foster inclusion and improve the quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities worldwide.

At present, the movement promotes ‘buddies’ locally, but applying this system to mobility projects for PWID is already being tested.

In what ways and how can this work? – In this programme, participants are paired with a peer or mentor, which provides structured opportunities for social interaction. This approach promotes inclusion by ensuring that each participant has a trusted companion during activities and events. Research on social inclusion indicates that mentoring relationships can provide emotional support, facilitate communication, and encourage participants to step outside their comfort zones.

By encouraging participation in buddy programmes, mobility projects give participants the tools to develop and strengthen their social networks. These connections not only enrich their experience during the mobility but also contribute to long-term emotional and social development.

Another project, “Inclusive Campus Life” created a Handbook on [How to Organise a Buddy System for People with Intellectual Disabilities](#).



**Watch Story**

## **PEER MENTORING, SEVERAL MENTORS, AND ONLINE MENTORS**

In addition to the official mentor, organisations that regularly work with PWID can involve their members in a 'peer mentoring programme'.

A peer mentor is someone close in age to the mentee who can act as a sounding board for ideas and plans and provide informal guidance. Being mentored by a peer, usually with a similar disability, can reinforce a sense of connection, equality and responsibility.

This approach benefits both sides:

- For those with disabilities, it provides a chance to welcome foreign participants, develop tolerance, learn about other cultures, and feel a sense of responsibility and usefulness.

They can take on tasks that suit their abilities and interests, such as local integration, showing newcomers around, or offering language practice.

- For the mentee, the relationship creates a sense of horizontality and equality. At times, participants may view the mentor or accompanying person as an authority figure, which can create a feeling of inferiority. Having a peer mentor helps to counterbalance this, while deepening local integration and strengthening social skills.

Pairing should ideally take into account participants' interests, but connections must also feel natural. Flexibility is essential: if a pairing does not work, the peer mentor should be changed to avoid uncomfortable situations and tension. The official mentor should remain attentive and support this relationship. Based on our experience, peer mentoring is highly beneficial, though it does not substitute the *official mentor*.

## **SEVERAL [Mentors] AND ONLINE MENTORS**

The "Mentoring Under Construction Community" have created a PODCAST: *'This episode looks into a new perspective of organising mentoring for volunteers with disabilities: what if volunteers had several mentors, what if mentors could also have disabilities? What if there was a resource platform to ensure mentoring even across borders?'*

Here, you can listen to [all their podcasts](#) and be inspired.



# THE TUTOR

At work or during activities, participants in a mobility project should be supported by a TUTOR. This person, within the hosting context, supports participants by assigning tasks, managing schedules, providing task-related training, and overseeing all matters connected with the main activity of the project (such as an internship, volunteering or training placement).

Here we use the term TUTOR, but depending on the Action, this role may be referred to differently: in VET mobilities, it could be the person responsible in the workplace (such as the employer or supervisor), while in Youth Exchanges and Training Courses it may correspond to the FACILITATOR or TRAINER.

## Role and responsibilities of the tutor



Davide Gugnoni During his placement at Restyle Café KaraBobowski – VisMedNet Association Made In Europe VET KA1

Tutors who are not used to working daily with people with disabilities may require guidance on how to host, manage and support your PWID from abroad. It is therefore important that, before the mobility begins (see Chapter 2), the organisation provides training for staff, or at least shares all relevant information about the PWID with the host. This should not only involve the tutor, but also any other staff members who will be in direct contact with the PWID.

For example, in VET internships, private companies and employers are often involved, many of whom have little experience with inclusion. In such cases, it is critical that both the employer and the employees are informed about the participant's needs. This helps them to identify the best ways to provide support and ensures that staff members responsible for training the participant understand the importance of patience, kindness, repetition and even firmness where required.

During VET mobilities, it is crucial that the employer and the employees are also aware of the needs of the participant to understand the best way to proceed, and so that employees who may be involved with training the participant will understand the need for patience, kindness, repetition and even firmness where required.

During activities, participants with disabilities (sometimes with multiple disabilities, including cognitive impairments) may require additional support. For example, they may perform very well when repeating tasks but struggle with analysis or decision-making. Tutors, together with others such as the accompanying person, should establish an environment that accommodates these needs by offering further guidance and clarification whenever necessary.

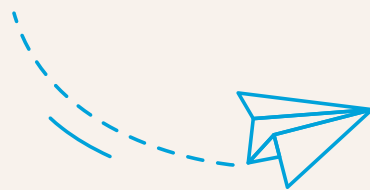


## Adapt programme

Some participants may not be accustomed to working independently, either because they come from highly protective family backgrounds or because this is their first experience of this kind. Tutors should be aware that pushing these participants into challenging or demanding tasks too quickly can cause distress. While it is important for PWID to understand that acquiring new skills can be challenging, participation in activities should always be voluntary rather than imposed.

Patience and flexibility are essential qualities for tutors and other staff. It is often necessary to adapt schedules, working hours, rest times, and even the activities themselves. Adapting to the participant's pace may feel slower, but it is generally far more beneficial than forcing progress. When the timing is aligned with the participant's needs, the impact and outcomes are usually deeper and longer-lasting.

Interesting material on this topic can be found in the handbook '[Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training](#)'.



Adapting the programme according to the participant's needs and interests - Gosia (Poland, PSONI) in the National Library of Malta, 2026

# THE ACCOMPANYING PERSON DURING THE MOBILITY

The role and tasks of the accompanying person (AP) are outlined in Chapter 2.

During the mobility, the AP is often the most vital person. They must be a constant guide for the PWID, assisting with daily interactions, helping to interpret social cues, managing sensory overload and encouraging self-esteem and autonomy.

The AP is not only there to support the participant, but also encouraged to use the experience for their own experience and personal growth. The Erasmus+ or ESC mobility should be an enriching experience for all involved.

One of the main barriers to mobility can be communication in the new country. Here, the AP plays a crucial role in helping to navigate language and cultural barriers.



Accompanying person during a VET mobility

The PWID needs this support to clarify issues and explain clearly to properly inform others, who might not immediately understand the need for special care, particularly where attitudinal barriers exist. The AP must be able to communicate requirements and manage the PWID's emotions in such situations. Therefore, it is imperative that there is a clear handover between the sending and hosting organisations.

The hosting organisation should be welcoming and create a safe space for open communication. Full transparency about the participants' requirements and disabilities is necessary for a tailor-made experience.

## Support to the accompanying person

The role of the AP can vary depending on the agreements made before the mobility between the organisations, participant, AP, and support network (like family). The PWID's level of independence and autonomy plays a significant role in the AP's approach.

The AP's responsibilities may include mediation and communication in the new context, support in the workplace and during activities, or assistance with daily life, such as orientation in the surroundings, managing household tasks, or personal assistance.

Even when there is a support network in the hosting context that includes a tutor (at work) and mentor, the AP generally spends the most time with the PWID, often sharing all leisure and free time.

Because this role is demanding, the AP may also require support and breaks to safeguard their own well-being. Mobility is a new experience for the AP too, bringing unfamiliar contexts, emotions, and a strong sense of responsibility.

Caregiver burnout can occur, particularly during longer mobilities. This underlines the importance of structures that promote safe independence. Safely encouraging autonomy and independence in the PWID provides the AP with moments of respite to take care of themselves. Support should be available to prevent burnout, which should not only include physical breaks but also moral support.



Adult education, The agents of social inclusion (SIA), Portugal, Participant Samanta. Accompanying staff - Ieva, 2023



Luca Spada During his placement at Sotto La Prosciutteria KaraBobowski – VisMedNet Association

Communication and moral support should also be made available to any staff involved (mentors, tutors, colleagues, coordinators). This can be coordinated through a dedicated person in the hosting organisation, but even a simple group chat can be effective in keeping the network connected and providing mutual support. Professionals can also be involved to offer tips and advice on handling specific situations.

The hosting organisation, particularly the mentor, can step in to assist the AP and the other staff where necessary; ideally, however, these arrangements should be agreed upon in advance.

If the participant's level of autonomy allows, the AP can take breaks by coordinating relief times with the hosting organisation. They can coordinate with the mentor, tutor, other staff or even fellow participants. Breaks can occur both during work and free time. For example, the PWID can go for a walk or a coffee with the mentor or another participant, while the AP has some time to rest.

**The hosting organisation can step in to assist the AP and the employees where necessary; however, it would be best to organise this beforehand. The AP usually gets a respite during the participant's work experience in VET mobilities. If the AP needs to be there at all times, they can coordinate with the hosting organisation for breaks to avoid burnout.**

PWID can gradually improve their independence, granting the AP some relief as they become less needed for routine tasks such as preparing breakfast or cleaning the apartment. Through routines and with encouragement to carry out simple self-evaluations, PWID can be motivated to take on more responsibilities, relying on their AP only when necessary rather than constantly. Of course, this will depend on the type and degree of disability.

This increased independence will allow the AP to take breaks, reducing stress and fatigue that can arise from continuous supervision. This approach was described in the Kramer et al study<sup>[1]</sup> which used digital tools for monitoring and assistance of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Hence, running simulations for problem-solving exercises can help PWID navigate scenarios more effectively on their own. It may help the AP to establish a causal relationship and form of communication channel with the PWID if they do not know each other before the mobility. Adding some element of gamification can make the process more engaging; this allows the AP and PWID to feel more like peers in a shared learning experience. Further in this chapter, you will find some methods for PWIDs to develop autonomy and independence.

<sup>[1]</sup> Kramer, J. M., Ryan, C. T., Moore, R., & Schwartz, A. (2017). Feasibility of electronic peer mentoring for transition-age youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities: Project Teens making Environment and Activity Modifications. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 31(1), e118–e129

# LEARNING PROCESS

Any Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps experience should be an educational experience and a learning opportunity for every participant.

Analysing the learning process, keeping records, and raising awareness of the competences acquired is not always easy, particularly for PWIDs.

One of the responsibilities of the mentor and tutor, with the support of the accompanying person (AP), is to ensure that the participant's learning journey is as enriching as possible. Proper mentoring provides structured support and encourages PWID to build self-confidence in various social or technical tasks. Helping to set and achieve goals is an effective way of fostering self-esteem, while providing concrete evidence of their personal growth journey<sup>[1]</sup>.

Approaching the learning process begins even before the mobility (see Chapter 2), by analysing the participant's abilities, competences and establishing the learning goals, together with the participant.

During the mobility, the focus shifts to documenting learning progress, monitoring and evaluating outcomes, and adapting the experience to reach the best results possible.

It is a collaborative effort between the participant, accompanying person, mentor and tutor that, when carried out effectively, can lead to a successful learning process.

## How to record and monitor the learning process

### LEARNING GOALS

The learning process can begin before the mobility (see chapter 2). On arrival, however, the mentor and accompanying person can support the participant in establishing clear learning goals for the mobility experience.

Some examples of tools that can be used include:

Learning Goals with Pictograms: Establish learning goals using pictograms of actions and select four goals to develop. These can be placed into a schedule where participants mark their daily progress, whether they completed the action or developed the skill.



<sup>[1]</sup> [Article about mentoring students with intellectual disabilities](#)

**SWOT Analysis:** This method, commonly used in many sectors to assess performance and plan future development, can be adapted for people with intellectual disabilities (PWID). When modified appropriately, it becomes a valuable self-assessment tool that supports goal setting and reflection. This approach invites individuals to reflect on both their strengths as well as areas where they require additional support through a structured form of self-reflection.

**Write a Letter to Your Future Self:** Guide participants through writing a letter addressed to their future selves. Prompts can include:

- What do I hope to achieve through this training?
- What challenges am I facing now, and how will I overcome them?
- How do I want to feel about my progress in a few months?

Once written, the letter can be stored (either physically or digitally via platforms like the [FutureMe website](#)) and revisited after a set period (like at the end of the mobility, in six months or a year) to assess personal growth and reflect on changes in perspective.

## JOURNAL OR DIARY



Evaluating the day in the evening. Adult education, The agents of social inclusion (SIA), Sweden, Participants - Roberta, Justa, 2023

Participants can be encouraged to keep a journal or diary of their activities during the experience. This can take different formats, depending on their skills or preferences. For participants with limited writing skills, consider using alternative methods like voice recordings, visual records with photos and videos, drawings, or using symbols to express their thoughts.

This journal or diary will be a great tool for final reflection and evaluation, and it also serves as a meaningful keepsake for remembering the experience once back home.

## DAILY REFLECTIONS



Mobility calendar to support the participant in time management

Together with the AP and/or the mentor, it is helpful for the participant to reflect on their day.

Reflecting on daily tasks, challenges, and achievements highlights the progress PWID has made on their personal journey.



Casual self-evaluation tools like this can boost confidence when reflecting on the achievements of the day. Over time, reflecting on cumulative achievements and any struggles that have been overcome can foster long-term self-appreciation, self-love and self-esteem.

Here is an [example of a daily evaluation](#).

Self-evaluation does not need to be formal; it can also take the form of a simple conversation with a couple of straightforward questions. If necessary, visual elements can be included to support communication.

## PERIODIC MENTORING

In general, the mentor should meet regularly with the mentee. As noted in the section on reinforced mentoring, for PWID, these meetings may be required more frequently. In short-term experiences, where there is less time to adapt, regular mentoring sessions are particularly valuable for monitoring progress and providing support.

Check in with your PWID to assess whether any further adaptations are needed to ensure their full participation in the experience. These moments also allow you and your team the opportunity to adjust activities to better align them with the PWID learning goals, if required. Always keep close contact with the AP to gather additional input from the daily experience. The AP may observe non-verbal feedback that the PWID might find difficult to express directly to the mentor or coordinator.

## PR.I.M.E. OER to SUPPORT THE LEARNING PROCESS

There are several tools that can be used and directly integrated into activities with your PWID. PR.I.M.E. has created an Open Educational Resource, in a gamified approach, designed to help you support your PWID during the learning process. (See Chapter 0)

# How to develop learning

The support network can organise several activities and moments to support participant learning in different sectors: linguistic learning, cultural integration, community participation, independence and autonomy, technical competencies, budget and time management, and many more.

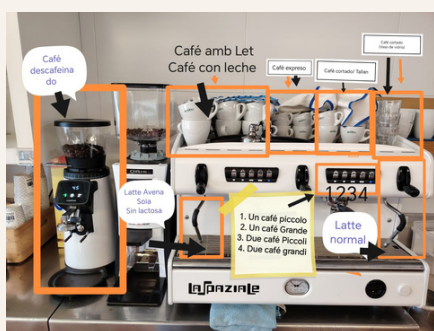
## LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL LEARNING

The mobility experience is likely to involve a language barrier. While it is ideal if the AP and members of the hosting organisation can translate to help mitigate this barrier, digital tools may facilitate this issue. Applications such as Google Translate or Google Lens can provide immediate translation into the participant's native language. Although communication barriers are becoming easier to mitigate with digital tools, it is important to remember that language is part of culture. Certain expressions may not translate well, so participants and staff should be reminded to speak directly and avoid using ambiguous expressions.

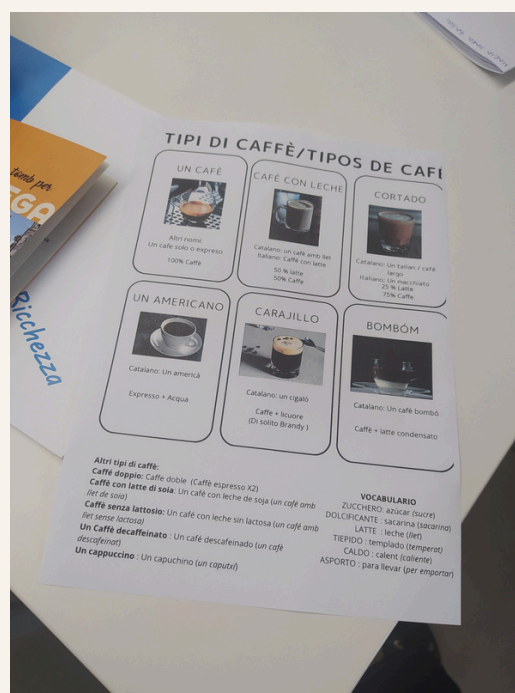
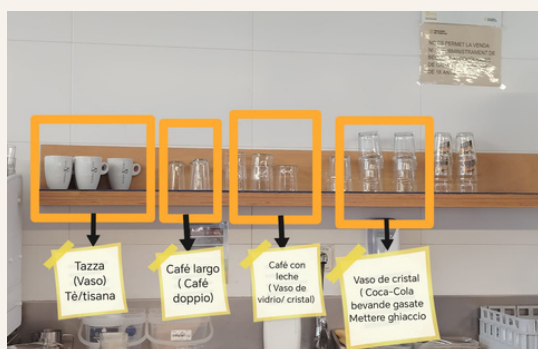
The Erasmus+ and ESC programmes also provide OLS - Online Language Support designed to help participants improve their knowledge of the language in which they will work, study or volunteer abroad, so that they can make the most of this experience.

If non-digital methods work better for your PWID, you can introduce activities to develop their linguistic skills. Together with your participant, decide whether the focus should be on developing the language of the hosting country or English, for example. Activities can then be adapted depending on whether your PWID is more comfortable with writing, reading, or speaking skills.

Simple activities can be introduced in daily life. For instance, Post-it notes can be placed throughout the house with the name of objects written in the participant's native language (door, window, couch); the PWID must then add the equivalent word in the chosen language (for example, English). Leaving the notes in place allows them to practise regularly during the mobility.



Explanation image created by a VET accompanying person to support the trainees in their working place



At work, interactive activities can involve both the PWID and colleagues. For example, PWID could write the days of the week in their own language (or in English) on a shared calendar so that everyone learns together. This can also be done with basic sentences or phrases like 'Good morning', 'Thank you' or 'Please'. A matching game can also be organised, turning the process into a playful and healthy competition.

Another effective way of learning new words while promoting social integration, independence and cultural learning is to visit the local market together. Shopping for fresh, healthy food provides opportunities to learn the names of local produce and to discover regional specialities.

Cultural learning can be deepened by organising community events where participants present themselves and their culture, perhaps offering some typical food. In return, special cultural integration activities can be arranged with local organisations and companies — for example, a cooking class (such as making pizza or fresh pasta in Italy) or a traditional activity (such as dancing sevillanas in Spain). These activities should be adapted to the participants' interests, creating authentic and enjoyable opportunities for cultural exchange.

## **SOCIAL SKILLS AND LOCAL INTEGRATION**

During mentoring sessions, the mentor, together with the AP, can role-play with PWID and guide them through conversations that help improve their communication. By practising expressing themselves in both structured scenarios (for example, in a shop) and casual scenarios, the AP can model social cues through tone of voice and body language, guiding the PWID to a better understanding and, consequently, the courage to speak up.

For example, when planning to attend an event during the mobility, the AP can simulate the situation of bumping into a stranger. Similarly, the AP can model the role of a co-worker during the internship and simulate conversations to help the participant feel more confident navigating these social interactions.

Developing social skills is closely linked to increasing local integration. Here are some examples of how to promote this:

## **CONTRIBUTE WITH THEIR STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS**

Engaging in the local community is a valuable aspect of mobility programmes, fostering social inclusion and enriching participants' experiences. For PWID, identifying their interests and strengths is a crucial first step in ensuring meaningful community engagement. Research in social integration emphasises the importance of personalised activities that resonate with individuals' passions and capabilities, as these instil a sense of accomplishment and belonging. Exploring hobbies is a practical way to identify activities participants find enjoyable and fulfilling. Interests in art, music, sports, or gardening can serve as entry points for connecting with local groups or events. Research by Mansell & Beadle-Brown<sup>[1]</sup> (2012) show that engagement in familiar or enjoyable activities helps participants feel more at ease in new environments, making it easier to build relationships and overcome initial hesitations.

<sup>[1]</sup> Mansell, J., & Beadle-Brown, J. (2012). *Active support: Enabling and empowering people with intellectual disabilities*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Recognising strengths is equally important (see also the personal SWOT ANALYSIS). Focusing on what participants are good at not only builds their confidence but also provides opportunities for them to showcase their abilities within the local community. For example, a participant with a passion for dancing can organise and lead a dance activity. This allows them to shine in their element, fostering positive interactions and gaining admiration from others. As a result, they can feel more confident and motivated to engage in additional activities during the programme.



Volunteering project in Italy, Kara Bobowski. Participants - Kasparas and Tomas (2024)

Tailoring activities to align with both interests and strengths produces a double benefit: participants feel valued for their unique contributions, while the community gains a better understanding of their capabilities. Such interactions pave the way for meaningful social connections and greater inclusivity. By encouraging participants to pursue their hobbies and leverage their strengths, mobility programmes can create a foundation for lasting community engagement and personal growth.



ESC volunteer speaker in a local meeting about disabilities and sexuality

## **JOINING COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES**

Joining community groups and activities is a powerful way for PWID to become part of local life during mobility programmes. Active involvement in social groups fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens interpersonal skills, both of which are essential for building confidence and forming relationships.

Local clubs, classes, or workshops aligned with participants' interests provide ideal opportunities for engagement. Activities such as art classes, sports teams, or hobby groups offer a structured setting where participants can connect with others who share similar passions. These environments not only encourage skill-building but also facilitate social interactions in a supportive context. For instance, joining a local painting class allows participants to express their creativity while also creating opportunities for meaningful exchanges with community members, helping to broaden their social networks.

## **VOLUNTEERING IN THE COMMUNITY**

Beyond the mobility programme itself (VET internship, ESC volunteering, youth exchange or others) or even as part of the programme, PWID can be encouraged to join other local volunteering activities. Volunteering offers another valuable pathway for community engagement. Meaningful contribution in this way enhances participants' self-worth and helps them feel like an integral part of the community. This also strengthens the hosting organisation's local network and builds connections with other local initiatives. Examples include assisting at animal shelters, participating in community garden projects, or supporting local events. Such opportunities enable participants to give back while fostering mutual respect and understanding. For example, when participants volunteer at a local charity event, working alongside community members, their contributions are warmly received, and participants often feel proud to be part of something significant.

These activities serve as a bridge between participants and the local community, creating shared experiences that break down barriers and build trust. By joining clubs, classes, or volunteer initiatives, participants not only gain new skills and experiences but also contribute to creating a more inclusive community.

Fostering social connections is essential for community integration for PWID during mobility programmes. Building meaningful relationships and developing social skills contribute significantly to a participant's sense of belonging, emotional well-being, and overall success during the mobility experiences. Social connections are fundamental not only for enhancing quality of life but also for supporting long-term independence.

PWID can be supported in this process through the PEER-MENTORING or the BEST BUDDIES programmes.



## SOCIAL EVENTS



Volunteering in Italy, Kara Bobowski.  
Participants - Kasparas and Tomas. (2024)

Attending social events is another powerful way to promote social integration. Community fairs, festivals, and neighbourhood gatherings are informal settings where participants can meet new people, engage in activities, and experience the local culture. These events serve as social spaces that encourage spontaneous interactions and provide an opportunity to practice communication skills in a relaxed atmosphere. For example, participants can attend local festivals, where they can enjoy the performances and also interact with local residents. By participating in the event's activities, such as dance performances and games, participants become more confident in initiating conversations and forming new relationships. These positive interactions contribute to a sense of community and belonging that lasts beyond the mobility programme.



**GOOD PRACTICE:** Short-term ESC volunteers from Poland and Lithuania in Italy participated in a fashion show together with students and local people with disabilities: they wore second-hand clothes and creative outfits to send a message about the environment and sustainability. See [VIDEO](#).



Social and Cultural Participation - Tour of the Inquisitor's Palace, Malta, 2026

## COMMUNITY CENTRES AND LIBRARIES

Accessing community resources is a vital strategy for integrating participants with intellectual disabilities (PWID) into the local community during mobility programmes. Community centres and libraries provide inclusive spaces where participants can engage with others, develop new skills, and access various services tailored to their needs. These resources not only support personal development but also foster social inclusion and independence.

Community centres are often hubs of social activity, offering a wide range of programmes and services for people with disabilities. These centres provide opportunities for PWID to join group activities, attend workshops, and take part in social events that encourage inclusion. Many community centres organise specific programmes designed to support accessibility and inclusion, such as adaptive sports, art workshops, and social clubs. Research on community inclusion highlights the importance of these centres in providing a sense of belonging and offering opportunities for PWID to interact with peers and local residents. For example, participants may attend inclusive dance classes at a community centre. This enables them to express themselves creatively while building self-esteem and social connections with community members. Additionally, community centres often have knowledgeable staff who can provide tailored support, helping participants enjoy a positive and enriching experience.



Libraries are also valuable community resources, offering various programmes that encourage both learning and social engagement. Often less formal than other public spaces, libraries provide a welcoming environment where PWID can engage with others. Activities such as book clubs, storytelling sessions, and educational workshops create opportunities to explore new interests, enhance literacy skills, and engage in meaningful conversations. For instance, attending a weekly storytelling session at a local library allows participants to engage with local children and other community members. This helps them to practise communication skills and build social relationships in a casual, welcoming environment. Libraries often host free events and workshops, granting access to educational materials, digital tools, and community support services; resources that participants may otherwise not have.

By leveraging community centres and libraries, mobility programmes can offer participants valuable opportunities to enhance both social and learning experiences. These spaces not only provide participants with practical tools and services but also create a sense of community, allowing them to connect with others in meaningful ways.

## INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY



Volunteering in Italy, Kara Bobowski.  
Participant - Kasparas. (2024)

Promoting independence is a key element in empowering PWID during mobility programmes. Developing life skills, encouraging self-sufficiency, and supporting independent use of transportation independence all contribute to participants' overall well-being and integration into the community. Encouraging participants to take on responsibilities and make independent decisions boosts their confidence, fosters a sense of accomplishment, and strengthens their connection to the world around them.

Skill development is key to fostering independence. Practical activities, like cooking classes or computer courses, provide essential skills that can be applied in daily life. For instance, cooking classes teach meal preparation while building self-sufficiency and confidence. Computer courses increase digital literacy, giving participants greater access to information and communication. Participants can gain independence by preparing their meals and managing time through cooking workshops. Research shows that life skills training improves autonomy and self-esteem.

Fostering trust is essential for supporting participants' emotional growth. Encouraging them to take on tasks independently, such as cooking or managing transportation, helps build self-confidence and resilience. Planning and managing their daily schedules further enhances their sense of control and independence.

By focusing on skill development, transportation independence, and building trust, mobility programmes can significantly enhance participants' self-confidence and autonomy. These practices not only promote independence during the programme but also empower participants for long-term personal growth.

Let us explore strategies and useful tools that can support the process of fostering autonomy



Trainee at the supermarket

**Training and development  
of autonomy in daily life**



## DAILY ROUTINE

PWID rely on their daily routines for stability. Travelling abroad can disrupt these routines, making it difficult to maintain established routines such as making the bed or cleaning up after meals in a new environment. Structured living is important. The AP should support the continuation of pre-established routines, helping the PWID to adapt them while abroad. It is also important to keep note of any routine medication, as participants might forget it since their routine practices are now different.

Depending on the nature and extent of the disability, the AP can provide structured support which encourages independence, such as creating daily schedules and establishing a regular transport route to follow [4]. This should help normalise the travel experience to reduce overwhelming feelings. Mentoring can include setting measurable and achievable goals to promote confidence and self-assurance in PWID. Understanding these routines and goals is important.

Creating routines and scheduling daily tasks creates a helpful structure, which is particularly helpful in VET and work placements, where predictability and clarity have been shown to reduce stress, lower anxiety and support success. Extensive experience from the P.R.I.M.E. partners and collaborators confirms that PWID benefit significantly from structured tasks, which boost confidence and self-esteem. Our experiences are also confirmed by research by Lee et al. (2019) [5] where students with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) benefitted from consistent, structured tasks and environments during their work placements. Apart from boosting their confidence, it also supported a smoother integration.

Another practical example would be for the AP to help integrate the PWID's regular morning and evening routine during the mobility. This would be much easier if the participant and their AP have already established a relationship, since the AP would be familiar with important issues such as allergies, intolerances or triggers for panic attacks. The AP and hosting organisation could collaborate to build structure into the activity programme, supporting both learning and success. Consequently, the participant would quickly integrate into the new setting, feel more at ease, and hence practise better communication and ask for help wherever necessary. These structured moments could be managed independently, reducing the AP's mental load, while further strengthening the participant's self-confidence and sense of self-worth.

[4] Ontology for Mobility of People with Intellectual Disability: Building a Basis of Definitions for the Development of Navigation Aid Systems -- [978-3-030-50523-3\\_23.pdf](#)

[5] "I'm Destined to Ace This": Work Experience Placement During High School for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder  
Elinda Ai Lim Lee<sup>1,2</sup> · Melissa H. Black<sup>1,2</sup> · Tele Tan<sup>2,3</sup> · Torbjorn Falkmer<sup>1,2,4</sup> · Sonya Girdler<sup>1,2</sup>  
Published online: 3 May 2019



Davide Gugnoni KaraBobowski – VisMedNet Association Made In Europe VET KA1

**When we work together to create a system that works, we can all achieve success together.**

Preparatory training using tailor-made digital tools has again been highlighted as an effective method of boosting confidence and readiness for mobility. While practising with these tools before mobility is crucial, repeating these exercises during the mobility can provide PWID with an additional layer of self-assurance.

Confidence-building and readiness training for the AP are equally important, since the change of scenery requires adjustment on their part as well. The AP transmits emotions to the PWID, whether calm or anxious. This preparation ideally begins before the mobility, but it usually continues into the early days abroad. Key areas to cover include, but are not limited to, the local transport systems, daily living practices like rubbish collection, shopping and managing prices and becoming familiar with other country-specific aspects of daily living.

Establishing a daily routine helps participants develop **time management** skills. Digital tools can be of assistance.

Although the following applications may require some initial setup, they are generally straightforward to use afterwards and can significantly increase independence by structuring the day in detail.

## Examples include:

<p><b><u>Good Karma Applications</u></b></p>	<p>This company offers apps for people with disabilities, including a <u>visual planner</u>. Instead of writing a to-do list, this digital planner allows PWID to organise their day visually, by adding images of tasks to complete daily, weekly or monthly.</p>
<p><b><u>Tiimo</u></b></p>	<p>This app integrates a timer with a to-do list, promoting concentration, particularly for those with ADHD; knowing that a task has a specific time limit encourages focus. AI assistance can help plan tasks, estimate time frames, and arrange tasks in order of importance.</p>
<p><b><u>Choiceworks: Supporting Time Management and Task Completion</u></b></p>	<p>This app uses visual timetables and task checklists to help PWID manage daily routines. It supports understanding the order in which tasks must be accomplished through visual cues and offers a structured approach to time management.</p>
<p><b><u>First Then Visual Schedule: Building and Following Routines</u></b></p>	<p>This visual schedule is widely used. It presents sequential tasks or visuals to guide PWID through following daily routines. It offers a clear visual roadmap of what needs to be done and in what order. It is particularly helpful for participants who thrive on structured routines.</p>

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND SUSTAINABILITY

It's crucial to remember that PWID are more likely to live sedentary lifestyles and to experience health conditions such as high blood pressure, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. To support participants' overall well-being, it is important to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices when designing mobility programmes.

Sports and active leisure can be included in the programme, whether through organised activities or during free time. Options might range from hiking in the mountains to lighter activities, such as walking in a park, yoga workshops, or dance sessions.

If you want to encourage exercise, check out [this YouTube channel](#).

Apart from physical activity, a healthy lifestyle is connected with nutrition. When a PWID requires a specific diet, everyone involved should support this.

**GREEN TIP:** Encourage healthy and sustainable eating by accompanying participants to the local markets to buy local products. **Plan meals, make a shopping list, and buy according to the list to reduce food waste.**

Supporting cognitive health is equally important. A useful digital tool is: **BrainHQ:** Cognitive Training for Enhanced Mental Function. This app provides a series of scientifically designed activities aimed at enhancing cognitive skills such as memory, concentration, and problem-solving. It offers an enjoyable and engaging way to improve cognitive function and mental agility, making it suitable for PWID.



**Encourage Local and Plant-Based Catering**

Prioritise providing local, seasonal ingredients and plant-based options. This supports healthy nutrition and reduces the environmental impact of food production and transportation.

**LOCAL MOBILITY**

Transportation is another key area for promoting independence. Teaching participants how to use public transport or arranging alternative transport options enables them to travel independently. Becoming familiar with local bus routes or cycling paths allows them to engage in social and educational activities without needing constant support. For example, training participants to use public transport helps them gain autonomy in navigating the city, while also developing practical skills and confidence.

Practical tools such as walkthrough guides can be particularly effective for building confidence and independence in PWID. These can be created using real images so that landmarks are recognisable, allowing participants to build familiarity and confidence in different scenarios. The participant can also use their mobile device to record their own journey, taking photos of key landmarks along the way to reinforce their learning and further internalise the experience.

Creating tools such as walkthroughs for PWID can build confidence and independence, particularly when real images are used so that landmarks are recognisable and familiarity in a range of scenarios can be achieved. The value of such a tool is that skill-building is foundational to building confidence in new environments, and familiarisation will enhance readiness. The participant could also use their mobile device to record their own experiences and take pictures of landmarks they see on their way to internalise the experience even further.

This could include helping PWID with following online maps for wayfinding. Here is an article about [an Adapted Wayfinding System for Pedestrians with Cognitive Disabilities](#).

There are many digital tools that can support travel and navigation, such as [Google Maps](#). Digital travel assistants designed to help PWID travel more independently while staying safe are valuable tools to search for. [An article here](#).

Look for apps specifically created for PWID to foster a sense of safety and security. Allowing the AP to save routes and encourage PWID to practise the route until they feel confident completing it independently. This will not only provide a break for the AP but also ensure they can still monitor the PWID at all times. Such tools are not only valuable for the Erasmus+ experience but can continue to support independence once back home.

It is interesting to see how digital resources can be helpful, as highlighted in the article [‘Improving quality of life of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities through ICT’](#).



The aforementioned learning applications and maps with real-time location sharing can contribute to self-assurance and security. Having the accommodation close to the workplace or activity site also allows the participant to walk the same route every day, recognising the path and making it easier to remember.



If your organisation has the possibility, provide bikes and promote a healthy and sustainable way of moving around.



Promoting a GREEN Erasmus during a VET short-term mobility



Another article explores [behavioural adaptation for PWID in the mobility context](#).

For more information on travel safety and tips for people with learning disabilities, we encourage you to read this helpful guide: [Travel Safe Guide for People with Learning Disabilities](#).

To learn how to prepare for travel and overcome fears, we recommend reading the "[Travel Training](#)" manual prepared by Down Syndrome Queensland.

Participant getting oriented using digital tools

## BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Effective money management is a key skill for promoting financial independence and confidence, particularly for PWID in mobility programmes. Experience shows that financial literacy is essential for fostering autonomy and enhancing learning outcomes.

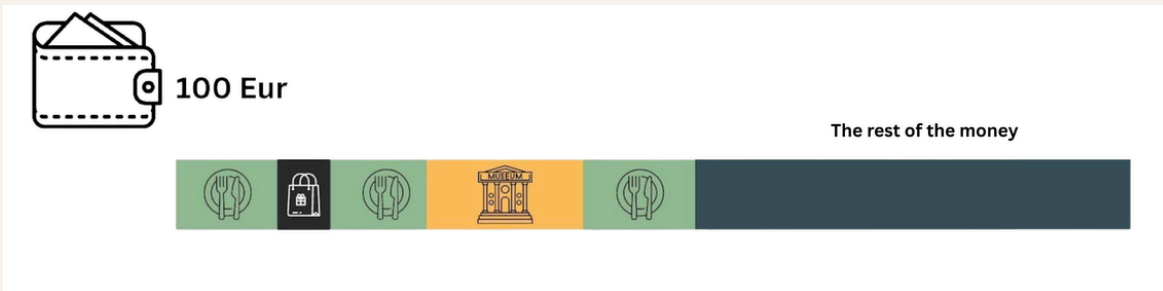


Creating a budget is a fundamental step in managing money. Simple, categorised budgets help participants allocate funds for essentials such as food, transport, and personal needs. Visual aids, such as pie charts, can make budgeting concepts easier to understand and retain. Digital tools can further simplify expense tracking, while spreadsheets with clear templates provide structured expense recording for participants who are comfortable with basic technology.

Practical training is crucial for developing these skills. Short workshops led by budgeting experts can help participants understand expense tracking and resource allocation. For example, participants can use apps and visual tools to track daily spending. This method prevents overspending and builds confidence in managing personal finances. A good practice could involve dividing budgets into daily allowances, which makes spending limits clearer and more manageable to follow. The sending organisation or the AP can help teach this to participants in place of a budgeting expert.

Group discussions and individual coaching during mobilities are also effective. Participants can use daily meetings to reflect on spending habits and address financial challenges collaboratively, leading to better expense prioritisation and preparation for unexpected costs.

By combining theoretical concepts, digital tools, and hands-on practice, mobility programmes equip participants with essential money management skills, ensuring financial stability during their experience and fostering long-term independence.



## SCHEMATIC EXAMPLE

Technology can also be used to track spending and ensure that participants stay within their budget. There are many freely available apps that can be downloaded to a mobile device and used to track spending. Examples of such apps include [Simple Budget](#), [Spendee](#) and [Cashew](#). There are many other financial budgeting apps to choose from if these do not suit your needs.

When downloading apps, it is important to verify the source, check both positive and negative reviews, and be clear about the app's intended use; for example, a simple budgeting app should not require bank details since it does not involve transactions, hence you should never share unnecessary details. These apps usually require initial setup and manual input; however, these tasks can foster responsibility and lead to improved financial literacy. Depending on the participant's level of familiarity with technology, the AP could help with entering daily spending so that finances remain organised.



VET short-term trainee using digital payment

## COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

One of the concerns identified among project staff when implementing inclusive projects for PWID is the lack of knowledge about how to communicate and interact effectively. Below are some practical tips.

How to communicate effectively:

- **Use Simple Language:** Speak in short sentences with clear and simple words or phrases.
- **Speak Slowly:** Talk at a calm and steady pace without raising your voice. Pause to give the person time to process, and avoid overloading them with too much information at once.
- **Repeat and Check Understanding:** Repeat questions if necessary and ask the person to explain what they have understood in their own words.
- **Be Mindful of Speech Patterns:** Remember that a person's ability to speak may seem stronger than their actual level of understanding. Double-check comprehension.
- **Understand Their Experience:** Try to see things from their perspective and acknowledge their feelings.
- **Focus on Strengths:** Highlight what they are good at to build confidence and motivation.
- **Use Active Listening:** Listen attentively without interrupting, this helps them feel calmer and more understood.
- **Praise Self-Regulation:** Encourage and praise positive actions, like taking deep breaths, especially during stressful moments. For example, say, *"I like how you're taking deep breaths; it seems to be helping you."*
- **Offer Choices:** Ask what they need right now, like a glass of water, a snack, or something comforting. This gives them a sense of control, especially in stressful situations.
- **Consider Writing:** Some people may prefer to express themselves in writing. Test this option if appropriate.
- **Use Visual Aids:** Pictures, drawings, or visual tools can help make communication clearer.
- **Use Gestures:** Hand movements and body language can support your message, making it easier to understand.

## When Communicating with Non-Verbal Individuals

<b>Explore Alternative Communication</b>	Use writing, pictures, gestures, eye contact, or facial expressions to connect. Experiment to find what works best for each individual.
<b>Stay Inclusive</b>	Do not assume that someone cannot hear or understand simply because they are not speaking; treat them with the same respect as you would give anyone else.
<b>Use an Adult Tone</b>	When speaking with an adult, avoid using a tone suited for children. Always address them appropriately.
<b>Minimise Distractions</b>	Create a calm environment to help maintain focus during the interaction.
<b>Ask Close-Ended Questions</b>	Use simple questions with clear options, such as "Yes" or "No," to gather information and encourage communication.
<b>These steps ensure respect and inclusivity while supporting effective communication.</b>	


You can learn more about this in the PR.I.M.E. [Online Training 'Disability and How to communicate with PWID'](#), as well as reviewing the [training material](#).

Depending on the culture the PWID comes from, the sending organisation might not always disclose all the necessary information, particularly when the participant is borderline and faces more challenges than defined disabilities. When a safe space for open and effective communication is created, some disabilities might become apparent during the mobility experience itself.

The need for detailed profiling is critical, especially when the PWID is mildly on the spectrum. Sharing these profiles is imperative. They should be as detailed as possible and include previous incidents, such as panic attacks, wandering off, or purposely getting lost. Knowing these details helps create a safer overall environment.

Encourage the use of easy-to-read, easy-to-understand language and use images to bolster communication (see CHAPTER 2).

Simplified language, including pictograms, can help reduce linguistic barriers and encourage PWID to communicate in alternative ways, despite not knowing the hosting language.



These materials can be created in a digital format to remain eco-friendly.

Using pictograms is considered a positive practice, according to [Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training: A Practical Guide](#) and [SymbolChat: A flexible picture-based communication platform for users with intellectual disabilities](#). This was also the focus of the [AbleChat](#) project, which simplified communication to increase inclusivity ([about it](#)).

When communicating directly, our experience shows that PWID may find it confusing if someone addressing a group of people speaks in a single style, especially when the group is mixed. In such cases, different levels of understanding may exist, and one communication style may not be appropriate for everyone. We found it useful to first communicate with the group and then ensure that PWID have understood individually. This can also serve to gently remind non-PWID in the group to be mindful of inclusivity and mutual support.

When the group consists entirely of PWID, and there are instructions to follow (such as where to meet or what to do), especially if the AP is not present, we seek feedback from each participant to confirm that everyone has understood. This has often created a positive group dynamic, where participants explain instructions to each other and resolve misunderstandings together. Hearing the instructions repeated in their own words allows us to double-check that everyone has understood clearly.



Alice Sangiorgi, Serena Nioi, Davide Gugnoni, Matteo Panzetti, Francesca Mezzio, Ndeye Dione, Rodolfo Modugno, Gian Marco Poponi, Sara Genestrini and Elisa Genestrini  
Kara Bobowski - VisMedNet Made In Europe 6 VET KA1



[Watch Story](#)



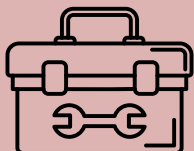
Ensure clear communication with all participants in the group



In the experience of the P.R.I.M.E. partners, it is useful to create a WhatsApp group for quick questions and answers with the PWID and/or the AP. It is an effective form of communication that is easy, handy and quick to create. It is a good way to keep close contact and share tips about events happening nearby, reminding the PWID to greet their employer and colleagues, if the mobility is linked to a work experience, internship or training activity. Such a readily available point of contact creates another layer of security, which boosts confidence.

A joint WhatsApp group including all the participants, APs, and staff from the sending and hosting organisations is a good way to streamline communication. This logistical group ensures that everyone is where they are supposed to be and allows for rapid sharing of important updates. However, experience has shown that these large groups can be overwhelming for PWID because they might not know everyone in the group. For this reason, a smaller, more practical group chat where the participant knows everyone involved would be a safer place for more casual communication. This group would include the participant, their parents, the AP, a member of the hosting organisation and, where necessary, the tutor. Communicating through a mobile device is quick and practical, covering daily matters, such as parents checking whether medication has been taken. Parents can encourage participants to help out and share photos and videos, which could then be used to document the trip. These practical groups tend to remain active after the mobility, maintaining friendships built during the experience.

Many participants face reluctance from their families, who may have concerns about the activity's viability and safety. Building a close relationship with family members, starting before the mobility, is crucial to gaining their support. Families will feel less anxious and be more willing to participate if they are informed about the programme's benefits and how it might empower their loved ones. Maintaining contact during the mobility further reassures families, helping to ease anxiety and, consequently, prevent passing on these worrying feelings to the participant.



### **Proloquo2Go - Enhancing Communication Through Symbols**

This symbol-based communication tool was created to help individuals who struggle to express themselves clearly. It is especially helpful for people with developmental delays, autism, or intellectual disabilities. Using adjustable, user-friendly interfaces, the app provides a comprehensive system of visual symbols, images, and text that facilitates communication.

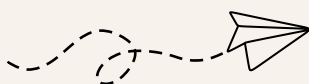
To further support communication, you can also promote digital skills. Here are links in easy-to-read format that explain how to send [emails](#) and [instant messages](#), to facilitate communication with family and friends back home.

## **TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE DIGITAL (but what to pay attention to)**

Technology is central to modern life, and the AP's digital literacy is of critical importance. This includes small digital tasks, like sharing a live location on an instant messaging app.

Technological improvements have significantly enhanced support systems for PWID, enabling greater independence, communication, and skill development. Many applications (apps) created specifically for this purpose provide valuable resources to help overcome barriers in communication, time management, cognitive function, and navigation.

Information and Communication Technologies have advanced considerably. Today, there is a plethora of online and digital tools that can support communication, social interactions, inclusion, and even assist with daily activities.



Even simpler, as noted above, reminders and alarms can be set according to the PWID's schedule, such as setting reminders to take medication or input their daily spending into a budget app. Learning to use these tools independently is essential for applying them effectively. With technological advancements, many tools are now easy to use. Tutorials can be found online, such as on the [Inclusive Digital Academy](#) or YouTube. Family, friends, or the AP can support PWID by training them on how to use these apps until they are able to use them independently. Confident use of digital technology can also grant the AP short breaks, knowing that the PWID can properly use and be supported by these tools. For example, if the PWID can confidently use communication apps, then the AP can rest while the PWID is talking to family and friends back home. Similarly, if reminders are set for routine tasks, the AP only needs to supervise that the tasks are actually carried out, resulting in further independence for PWID and, of course, increased self-confidence.

When selecting apps and other digital tools, always ensure that they are easy to use. Wherever possible and appropriate, choose apps specifically designed with PWID as the end-user. Also, ensure that the language and symbols used are comprehensible and enhance the experience of using the tool.

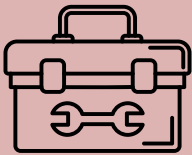
**This interesting article explores the real usefulness of apps for transportation.**

Lastly, it is important not to overwhelm the participant with too many apps at once. It is best to introduce digital tools gradually, allowing sufficient time for familiarisation, learning, and practicing independent use. Ideally, new tools should be introduced only after the PWID is confident and has integrated current tools. This process can also be developed as a group activity, bringing together a small group of PWID with similar needs to learn how to use the tool. Over time, they can foster new friendships by helping and encouraging each other.



# CRISIS MANAGEMENT

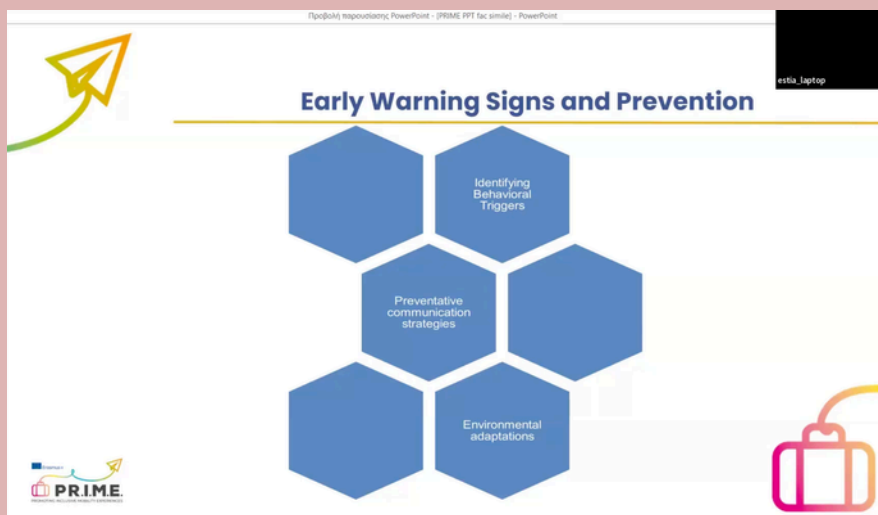
Mobility experiences can pose significant challenges for individuals with intellectual disabilities (PWID), particularly during emergencies or health crises. These challenges are often worsened by systemic issues, such as inadequate emergency preparedness, communication barriers, and the lack of disability-inclusive policies. Effective crisis management requires tailored interventions, specialised staff training, and the use of assistive technologies to ensure equitable safety and accessibility during travel-related emergencies.



## CRISIS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The *Crisis Management in Mobility for People with Intellectual Disabilities* training is a comprehensive, interactive program designed to equip caregivers, professionals, and support staff with practical knowledge and tools to handle crises effectively. The training structure involves two main pillars. The first focuses on crisis management during mobility, covering essential topics such as understanding intellectual disabilities in the context of mobility, assessing risks, developing individualised support plans, recognising early warning signs, and applying real-time de-escalation and emergency response techniques. The second pillar addresses crisis management in everyday life, preparing participants to respond to a wide range of critical situations, including natural disasters, home emergencies, bullying, and emotional regulation challenges. Engaging discussions, experience sharing, and interactive resources, like videos and games, enhance the learning experience and support practical application.

Click here for the [video](#) and [materials](#).



## COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING

In emergency management, PWID face significant barriers, especially during health crises and in situations requiring mobility. These challenges stem from difficulties with communication, accessibility, and understanding emergency procedures, which can become life-threatening in critical situations. Recent research<sup>[6]</sup> highlights key aspects of these barriers and proposes inclusive strategies to improve emergency preparedness and response for PWID.

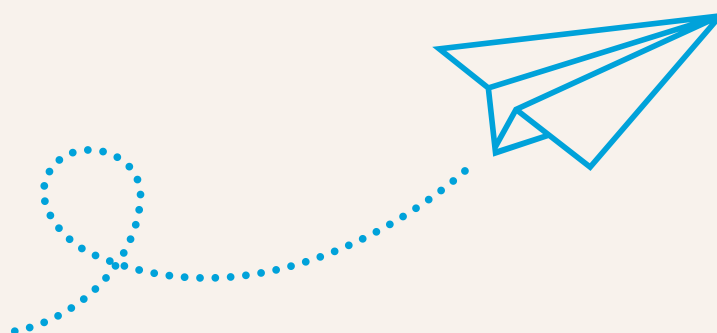
Behavioural crises in PWID often arise from a complex mix of factors. These individuals require a careful balance between their personal needs (developmental, health, and emotional) and the support provided by their environment, social connections, and relationships.

Emotional difficulties often arise when expectations or support change. For example: a recent move, a change in staff (staff turnover can be very high in some group homes), a change in daily routines (such as starting school or work), a change in work activities, or inadequate work requirements (such as unrealistic expectations for completing tasks or travelling alone without support).

Disruptions to this balance, whether due to changes in routine, health issues, or social dynamics, can cause distress, which may lead to new behavioural challenges or an increase in existing ones. Recognising these triggers and maintaining supportive environments is key to preventing or managing such crises effectively.



Crisis Management Story



<sup>[6]</sup> Stjernholm, L. (2024). Inclusive preparedness: Intellectual disability and disaster risk reduction. Lunds Universitet/Lunds Tekniska Högskola.

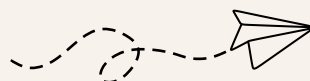
When traveling, unexpected situations can occur, so it is helpful to know how to handle the moments when things do not go as planned. We refer to these situations as "bumps in the road." It's a good idea to start thinking about these challenges after the participant has gained some confidence and learned some useful skills, but before the accompanying person (AP) begins to give them greater independence.



**Ensure you have enough money or a credit card with you. In many cases, you will need to pay upfront for services such as medical care abroad, even if you are fully insured.**

Managing changes in behaviour in participants with intellectual disabilities (PWID) can be challenging and may pose safety risks to the person and those around them. Addressing these situations often involves:

- **Understanding Expressions of Distress:** Recognising how PWID communicate their distress, both verbally and nonverbally, is essential for effective care.
- **Collaborative Care:** Supporting individuals requires teamwork between the accompanying person, primary care clinicians, emergency services, hospitals, developmental disability services, and community resources. Together, they can assess, intervene, treat, and prevent crises.
- **Clinician's Role:** Whether in a clinic, emergency department, or hospital, clinicians must address medical needs while advocating for psychosocial and emotional support. This ensures the best possible care and health outcomes.
- **Resource Availability:** Access to resources varies depending on the location, population, and policies in place. The accompanying person, with the support of the mentor, should explore local and remote services, including virtual options, and understand referral processes to connect individuals with appropriate care.
- **When Specialists Are Not Available:** If dedicated teams for adults with intellectual disabilities are unavailable, primary care clinicians may need to rely on limited support or medication to manage the crisis. Proactively identifying resources in the community can help improve support options.



A collaborative, resource-driven approach is key to ensuring comprehensive care for PWIDs during behavioural crises.

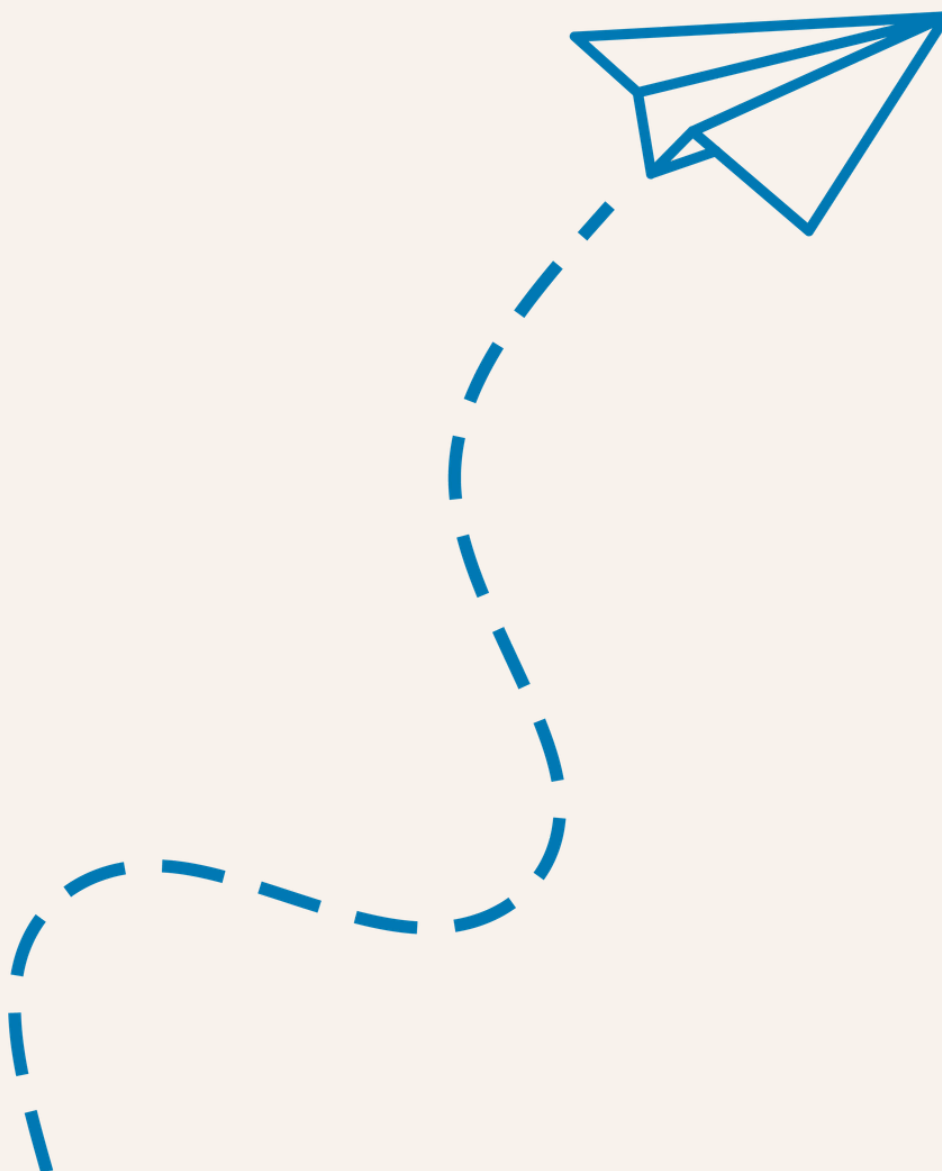


READINGS RECOMMENDS:

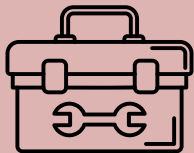
[Guide for assisting people with disabilities in case of disasters](#)

[First Aid Instructions for 10 Medical Emergencies](#)

[First Aid Posters and Easy Language](#)



When supporting PWID during a crisis, the goal is to create a calm and supportive environment. Enhanced communication skills and systematic approaches can significantly improve the Accident and Emergency (A&E) experience for PWID.



The First Aid IFRC app is a valuable tool for learning and applying first aid in everyday situations and emergencies. Here's what makes it stand out:

- Instant Access to First Aid Information: Provides clear, step-by-step guidance for common first aid emergencies and practical safety tips for crises.
- Engaging Learning Experience: Interactive quizzes help you track your progress, build knowledge, and gain confidence in your ability to handle emergencies.
- Safety Tips: Includes advice for water and road safety to help you stay prepared.
- Offline Access: All content is preloaded, enabling you to use the app even without an internet connection.
- Earn and Share Badges: Interactive quizzes let you earn badges that can be shared with friends to spread lifesaving knowledge.
- Multi-Language Support: Enhanced multilingual capabilities make it accessible worldwide.
- Connection to Local Training: Links to your local Red Cross or Red Crescent training resources, both online and in person.
- Emergency Number Integration: Easily call for help directly from the app, no matter where you are, with support for emergency numbers like 911, 999, and 112.

This app is available in multiple languages. It is a practical, accessible, and engaging resource for anyone looking to be better prepared for emergencies.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Informed Consent** is the process of providing clear, accessible, and complete information about a proposed action, its purpose, potential benefits, risks, and alternatives. This enables PWID and their family or carer to make an informed decision about their participation.

**Travel insurance** offers travellers financial protection against a variety of unexpected issues during their trip. It may cover different situations, such as:

- **Lost or Delayed Luggage:** Compensation for lost, damaged, or delayed bags.
- **Medical Care:** Coverage for medical expenses if you become ill or injured while travelling.
- **Trip Cancellations or Interruptions:** Reimbursement for non-refundable trip costs if you need to cancel or cut your trip short due to unforeseen circumstances.
- **Emergency Assistance:** Access to emergency support, such as evacuation or repatriation.

Having travel insurance ensures financial protection and provides support if something goes wrong during your journey. This allows you to focus on enjoying the experience with peace of mind.

Depending on the disability and individual needs, tailored travel insurance for people with disabilities may be suitable.



If you need emergency medical attention during the trip, call the European emergency number.

European emergency number: 112

Phone numbers for emergency services can be found in the health section of each country's [travel advice](#).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_emergency\\_telephone\\_numbers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emergency_telephone_numbers)

[https://www.dt.com/ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Global-911\\_Emergency-Contacts.pdf](https://www.dt.com/ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Global-911_Emergency-Contacts.pdf)

The **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** is a free card available to individuals insured under a statutory social security system in the EEA countries, Switzerland, and certain citizens or residents of the United Kingdom.

**What the EHIC Covers:**

- Provides access to medical treatment in another participating country under the same conditions as local residents.
- Covers necessary medical care during a temporary stay, such as treatment for illnesses or injuries occurring during the visit, as well as care for chronic or pre-existing conditions requiring attention.

**Key Features:**

- **Cost:** Medical treatment is provided either free or at a reduced cost, depending on the country's healthcare system.
- **Validity:** The length of time the card remains valid depends on the country that issued it.
- **Not a Replacement for Travel Insurance:** While the EHIC covers state healthcare services, it does not cover private care or costs like medical repatriation.

The EHIC ensures access to essential healthcare during travel and provides peace of mind in case of unexpected medical needs.

Website

Cards are issued by your [national health insurance provider](#).



Italian group travelling safely to the Netherlands, IDA project (KA2 ADU)

## CONCLUDING THE MOBILITY

Time has passed, and the mobility experience is coming to an end. As an organisation, you should remember to conclude the project by closing the experience with the participants.

### LAST MEETING AND FAREWELL

We recommend holding a final meeting with your participants, not only to check on how they feel about the experience, but also to give recognition and appreciation for their presence in your organisation.

### FINAL EVALUATION

This last meeting is also an opportunity to carry out a final evaluation of the experience, while ideas, opinions, and feelings are still fresh.

There are several possible approaches, with various methods, as described earlier in the 'Mentoring Activities' section of this chapter.

Key topics to consider evaluating may include:

- Travel to the destination
- Accommodation
- Food in the destination country
- The city and country that hosted you
- The hosting organisation
- The project coordinator
- The mentor
- The tutor
- The accompanying person
- The group (if applicable)
- The activities you participated in
- Support from the sending organisation
- Local integration
- The learning process - was it easy to learn?

This evaluation can be conducted as a chat where participants can use various methods to express themselves (colour system, emoticons, and other visual tools).

Alternatively, it can be carried out in written form, ideally using an easy-to-read format.



Evaluation meeting with short-term ESC volunteers using coloured cards (green, yellow, red)

Emoticons can be used for final evaluations

## REFLECTION ON LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

The recording and monitoring of learning achievements should have taken place throughout the mobility.

After completing the mobility experience, participants should acknowledge their learning achievements. The mentor and AP can work together to support the participant in this reflection, using alternative methods and activities where helpful.

One example is the 'Self-Assessment Checklist'. The goal is for the participant to reflect on the skills they have practised and assess how confident they feel in each area.

The PRIME Learning Process tool can also support this process.

When reflecting with the participant, together you can prepare certificates such as the YouthPass and Europass.

The PRIME project has also created support documents in an easy-to-read format linked with the YouthPass and Europass. To learn more, please check the 'easy-to-read documents' section and the online training on this subject.

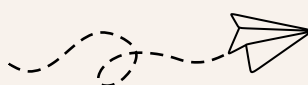
## PARTICIPANT'S REPORT REMINDER

During this final meeting, remind the participants and their AP that, on the last day of mobility, the participant will receive an email directly from the European Commission containing a link to the report, which must be filled in.

This is the '*Participant's Report*' - an official and very important document that the participants must fill out and submit within 30 days of the end of the mobility.

It is therefore important for both the AP and the sending organisation to support the participant in concluding this task.

Since the document is not very easy to understand, the PRIME project has created a support document in an easy-to-read format to help fill it out. To learn more, please check the 'easy-to-read documents' section and the online training on this subject.



## FAREWELL PARTY

It's time to pack; do not let your participants leave without a proper conclusion to their experience. You can organise a farewell party with their peers, other participants, the whole organisation staff, or even with the local community, depending on the context, the nature of the experience, and the participant's comfort.

During the party, you can celebrate their achievements by awarding certificates (including for the accompanying person – see the next chapter), and sharing photos or videos of the experience with everyone.

Other meaningful activities can include:

- Collecting a postcard signed by everyone
- Taking a 'family photo'
- Making a 'mailbox' where everyone can leave farewell messages or small gifts to be given to the participant.



Certificates LTTA IDA project



Group photo, last day of mobility in Malta 2026