PR.I.M.E.

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE MOBILITY EXPERIENCES

NEEDS ANALYSIS REPORT

Needs and difficulties of project staff implementing inclusive mobility experiences in Erasmus+ (VET, ADU, YOUTH) and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

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ERASMUS+ KA2 VET

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The photos in this Report are from inclusive mobilities done by PR.I.M.E. Partners in parallel projects. Consent for use of image was respected and each Partner was responsible for ensuring that. The index of photos can be consulted at the end of this document.

Partners:

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

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According to the Erasmus+ Annual Report 2022[1], the number of participants in mobility activities (in the field of education, training, youth, and sport) since 1987 has reached 13,7 million. In 2022 alone, more than 1,2 million learners and staff conducted a mobility activity, individually or in groups. The programme supported about 134,000 participants with fewer opportunities (13.3% of the total).

The Commission has set up dedicated inclusion measures to increase the inclusiveness and diversity of the Erasmus+ Programme for the period 2021-2027. Inclusion and diversity is one of the priorities for funding projects, promoted through programmes, such as Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps.

The inclusiveness of projects incorporates mobility of participants with fewer opportunities. Those are defined in the 'Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy'[2] as participants that face social barriers, cultural differences, economic barriers, geographical obstacles, barriers linked to discrimination, barriers linked to education and training systems, health problems and disabilities (the latter also called "special needs" in previous Programmes)[3].

The detailed Erasmus+ Annual Report of 2021[4] gives information not only about participants with fewer opportunities but also about the ones with 'special needs'; throughout all the KA1 mobility projects, from a total of 954,569 participants, 104,124 had fewer opportunities (10.9%) and just 8,550 had 'special needs' (0.9%).

In the Erasmus+ Annual Report of 2022, there is only information about participants with fewer opportunities. Regarding the mobility of individuals, it is interesting to see the involvement of participants with fewer opportunities[5] in the different fields:

- 34.5% in Higher Education (HE);
- 29% in School Education (SE);
- 18.3% in Vocational Education and Training (VET);
- 16.4% in Youth;
- 1.5% in Adult Education (ADU).

In the European Solidarity Corps[6] (ESC), participants with fewer opportunities were:
- 41% in 2018-2020[7];
- 35% in 2021-2022[8].

There has been increasing attention by organisations to meet one of the main priorities of the programmes[9] and measures and strategies for inclusion have been implemented by the EU[10] (in 2022, 25% of the total budget was assigned to projects prioritising 'Inclusion and Diversity'). However, most of the projects are directed towards participants with 'fewer opportunities', with a very low rate dedicated to participants with 'special needs'. It is difficult to have detailed data within the 'special needs' group, but there is an even lower percentage of participants with intellectual disabilities (PWID).

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1. Erasmus+ Annual Report 2022: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9020d5f5-8f3a-11ee-8aa6-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
2. Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/implementation-guide-lines-erasmus-and-european-solidarity-corps-inclusion-and-diversity-strategy
3. https://researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/RAY_inclusion_report_v17-20200918_layout.pdf pp.15 'Some target groups (...) find themselves in several of the situations listed above at the same time. (...) The 'comparative disadvantage' is important, because being in one of the situations referred to above does not automatically lead to fewer opportunities compared to peers (not all people from minorities are discriminated, a person with a disability is not necessarily disadvantaged if the environment is adapted, etc.). The risk of exclusion because of specific factors and obstacles varies according to Country and context.'
4. Erasmus+ Annual Report 2021: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ff16650b-7b6e-11ed-9887-01aa75ed71a1
5. In the 2014-2020 programme, the data information about participants with 'special needs' and 'fewer opportunities' were collected separately. From the new programme (2021-2027), the 'special needs' are included in the 'fewer opportunities
6. ESC Report 2018-2019 https://youth.europa.eu/sites/default/files/esc_ar_2018-2019_-_op_version.pdf
7. ESC performance 2018-2020: https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20230331134457/https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/programme-performance-overview/european-solidarity-corps-performance_en
8. ESC performance 2021-2022: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/programme-performance-statements/european-solidarity-corps-performance_en
9. In the ESC Report 2018-2019, 33% of ESC volunteering projects had 'Inclusion' as a topic. In the Erasmus+ Report 2022: KA2 VET had 155 projects with 'Inclusion' as a topic; KA2 ADU had 346 projects with 'Inclusion' as a priority; 'Inclusion of marginalised young people' was the second most chosen topic by the youth workers mobility (YOUTH).
10. See the 'History' on 'Policies and definitions in the youth field at European level related to young people with fewer opportunities', pp. 10-15. https://researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/RAY_inclusion_report_v17-20200918_layout.pdf

Around Europe, in recent years, inclusive projects have mainly focused on participants with migrant backgrounds and on issues, such as gender equality. Concerning 'special needs', projects are mainly focused on physical disabilities or in the field of short-term group mobilities.

The **PR.I.M.E. project – PRomoting Inclusive Mobility Experiences** aims to increase the quality of mobility experiences for people with intellectual disabilities, by developing the competencies and knowledge of the project staff that implements projects and supports participants. The consortium involves 7 partners from 7 different European countries, including organisations that work with people with intellectual disabilities, organisations that work with mobility projects, organisations that work with mobility projects for people with intellectual disabilities, and a technical partner to develop innovative digital tools to support in these inclusive mobilities. The project is based on the needs and difficulties identified by the partners that have already carried out mobility projects for people with intellectual disabilities (PWID). Partner organisations are themselves the first to feel the need to address these needs. Through the PR.I.M.E. project, they want to:

- enhance the competencies of organisations and staff,
- improve the quality of inclusive mobilities by providing strategies and tools to include PWID in mostly individual mobility projects,
- contribute to the joint development of different fields: training, youth, and adult education.

This **Need's Analysis Report** is the first output, aiming at identifying the needs and difficulties that project staff face during the different phases of implementation of mobility projects directed at PWID. The findings of the present report will be used to create the following outputs that seek to address the needs identified:

1. Handbook with guidelines, tips, tools, activities, and good practices for project staff to use in the implementation of the inclusive mobility projects.

2. Official Documents in easy-to-read versions and guidelines on how to create personalised and non-official documents to support the PWID.

3. An Open Educational Resource to support the preparation of PWID in the form of a digital tool in augmented reality.

4. An Open Educational Resource to support the learning process of PWID in a gamified approach.

All these outputs will be available on the PR.I.M.E. platform, accessible and free, along with all the training material.

IMAGE 1
Valentina in Lithuania, 'Made in Europe+' (VET, 2019)

NOTE FOR PR.I.M.E. PARTNERS

According to the Factsheets of Erasmus+ 2022, the field with the most grants assigned in all partner countries (Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, and Poland) is Higher Education (HE). Most of the mobility projects granted are from School Education (SCH) (in Greece, Italy, and Lithuania) and Youth (Cyprus and Malta). For France and Poland, HE and VET were the sectors with the most mobility projects approved respectively. All countries analysed have the highest number of organisations from the Youth field, except from France, which has schools as the main type of organisations receiving grants.

A common element to all partner organisations' countries is the fact that Adult Education (ADU) is the field with the lowest number of organisations, mobility projects approved, and grants assigned. Finally, in all 7 countries analysed, only Poland has 'Inclusion and Diversity' as a first priority for approved projects. The other countries have this priority in second place (Cyprus, Lithuania, and Malta), third place (Greece and Italy), fourth and last place (France). The 'Digital Transformation' Priority had more relevance in the 2022 projects in these countries.

This research study will not consider Higher Education (HE) and School Education (SCH), since it focuses on Universities and Schools. Taking into consideration the Erasmus+ 2022 Report, in the three fields of Adult Education (ADU), Youth and Vocational Education and Training (VET), the country with the most projects approved is Spain and the one with the most grants is Germany. The biggest number of organisations in this field are in Youth and VET for Spain and ADU for France. The biggest number of participants expected were from Poland (for ADU and Youth) and France (for VET). The top two destinations for these fields, are Italy and Spain. The countries that sent the biggest number of participants are France in VET sector, as expected, and surprisingly Italy in ADU and Youth projects.

Concerning the relation between the PR.I.M.E. Partners, it should be highlighted that:
- All countries have more local participants primarily in the Youth field, except from Lithuania, which sends more participants to Poland. This confirms the relationship between Poland and Lithuania in the Youth field; since Lithuanian participants are the second highest number received in Poland for these kinds of projects.

- Cyprus sends most participants in Greece for ADU and VET projects. For the Youth field, Greece is the second destination for participation and hosting.

- The highest number of participants hosted in ADU mobilities in Cyprus, Malta, and Greece is from Poland. Greece also hosts a high number of Polish participants in the VET field.

- Lithuania and Malta receive the highest number of French participants in the VET field.

- Italy is the most interesting destination for the ADU field (for Greece and Lithuania) and VET field (for Lithuania and Malta) and the second in the Youth field (for Malta and Greece). Besides, France hosts the highest number of Italian participants in VET mobilities, followed by Malta for Youth projects.

This data shows that geography (distance) and cultural similarities can play a significant role, when choosing partnerships for mobility projects.

IMAGE 2
PR.I.M.E. Gadgets, Preliminary Visit in Italy of 'ESCalade Volunteering Mountain 3' (ESC, 2024)

METHODOLOGY

The 'Needs Analysis' process started during the application stage by identifying the needs of the partnering organisations of the PR.I.M.E. project. During the project implementation, a second needs analysis was conducted between December 2023 and March 2024, involving:

1. **Literature review** at a European level, covering the several actions of Erasmus+ (VET, ADU, YOUTH, HE, SCH) and the European Solidarity Corps programme (ESC - volunteering projects).

2. **Field research** via an online survey, focus groups and video interviews.

3. The **survey** was administered online through emails, newsletters, social media and direct contact to allow the participation of diverse organisations within the EU, regardless of their physical location, and the collection of the maximum number of answers.

In total, 370 participants answered from:

• Organisations that work with people with intellectual disabilities (PWID),
• Organisations that work with mobility projects (VET, ESC, YOUTH, ADU),
• Organisations that work with both (inclusive mobilities).

While the minimum objective was to reach 350 answers, the higher number reached allowed greater rigour and information for the topic in question. Most answers were from countries from PR.I.M.E. organisations.

The survey was first provided in English and then translated in Italian, Lithuanian, Polish and French, as language was a barrier for organisations that work with people with disabilities.
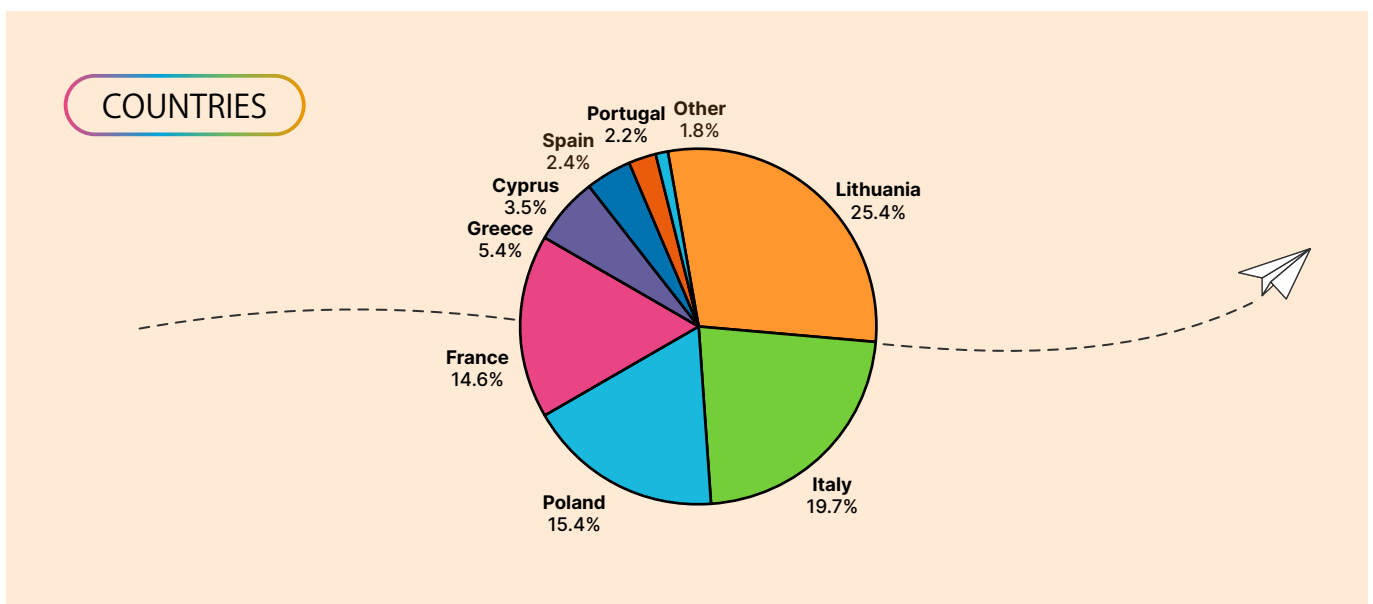

IMAGE 3
Focus group with former participants in mobility projects done by PSONI (2024)

Country	Percentage of answers		
Lithuania	25.41%	Malta	1.08%
Italy	19.73%	Romania	0.81%
Poland	15.41%	The Netherlands	0.54%
France	14.59%	Slovenia	0.54%
Greece	5.41%	Hungary	0.54%
Cyprus	3.51%	Latvia	0.54%
Spain	2.43%	Estonia	0.27%
Portugal	2.16%	Bulgaria	0.27%
Other[11]	1.89%	Austria	0.27%
Sweden	1.62%	Croatia	0.27%
Germany	1.62%	**Total**	**100.00%**
Czech Republic	1.08%		

FIGURES 1 & 2
COUNTRIES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE ONLINE SURVEY

According to Figures 1 and 2, the majority of the survey participants is primarily from countries from PRIME organisations. The participation of other European countries, such as Spain and The Netherlands allows a better understanding of the reality of European mobility projects and organisations working with people with disabilities across Europe.

Concerning the types of organisations included in this study, according to Figure 3, the surveys has more responses from organisations that already work with mobility projects that include PWID ('inclusive mobilities') (37%). More than a quarter (27%) organisations that work with PWID and 17% that work with mobility ('non-inclusive' for PWID) answered the survey. This data will lead to an understanding of why organisations working with PWID do not do mobility projects with their users and why organisations working with mobility do not include PWID.

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11. Others: United Kingdom: 3; Turkey: 2; Jordan: 1; Ukraine:1

ORGANISATION WORK

Both
39.9%

People with intellectual
disabilities
27.4%

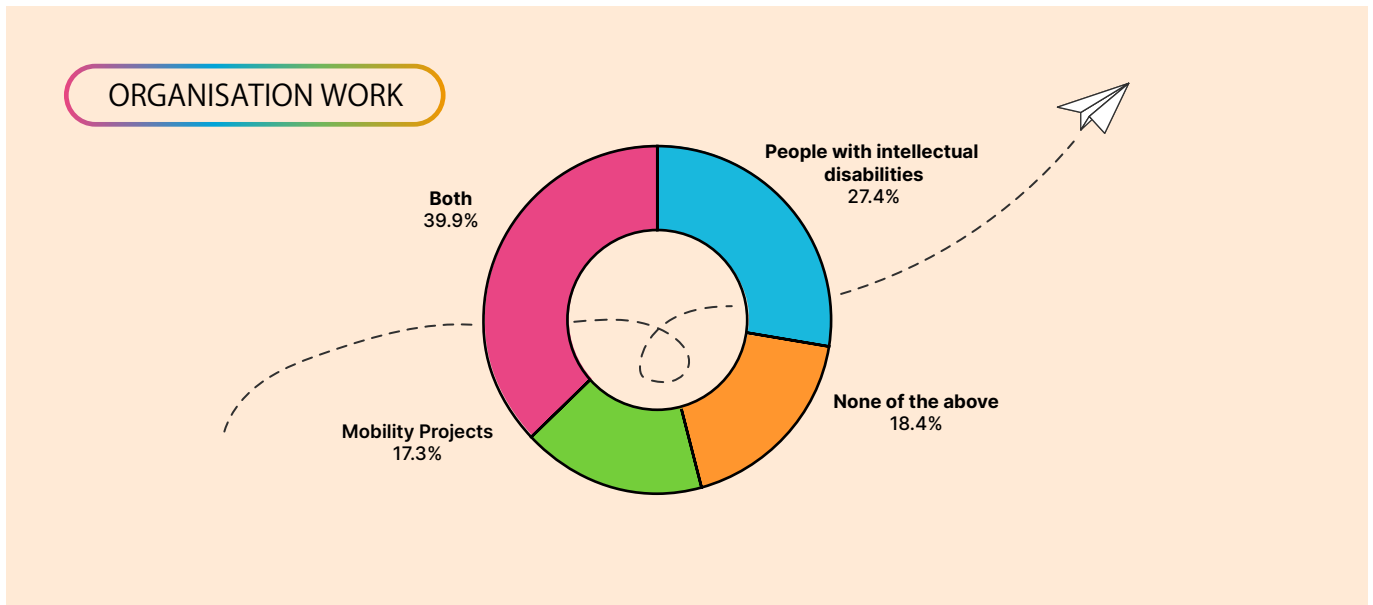Mobility Projects
17.3%

None of the above
18.4%

FIGURE 3
TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE ONLINE SURVEY

The main goals were to identify:
- the barriers not allowing organisations that work with people with disabilities to participate in mobility projects.
- the barriers not allowing organisations that work with mobility projects to include PWID in their projects, and the kind of fewer opportunities they include.
- the needs and difficulties of organisations that already work with inclusive mobilities (for PWID) during the project implementations.

For higher quality information, various **interviews** and **focus groups** were also conducted with different groups involved in the entire process, such as parents, mentors, individuals who accompany people with disabilities in their mobility or individuals who have had an experience abroad and wanted to share their perspectives. While this information has mostly been used to promote the project through social media, it is also presented in this report.

Partners conducted 9 **focus groups** with 37 participants from the following target groups (Figure 4):

Project staff (project managers, mentors, tutors, coordinators, accompanying persons...)

Persons with intellectual disabilities who never participated in mobility projects.

Focus group participants

Family members of people with intellectual disabilities, who have or have not participate in mobility projects.

Former participants of mobility projects with intellectual diabilities.
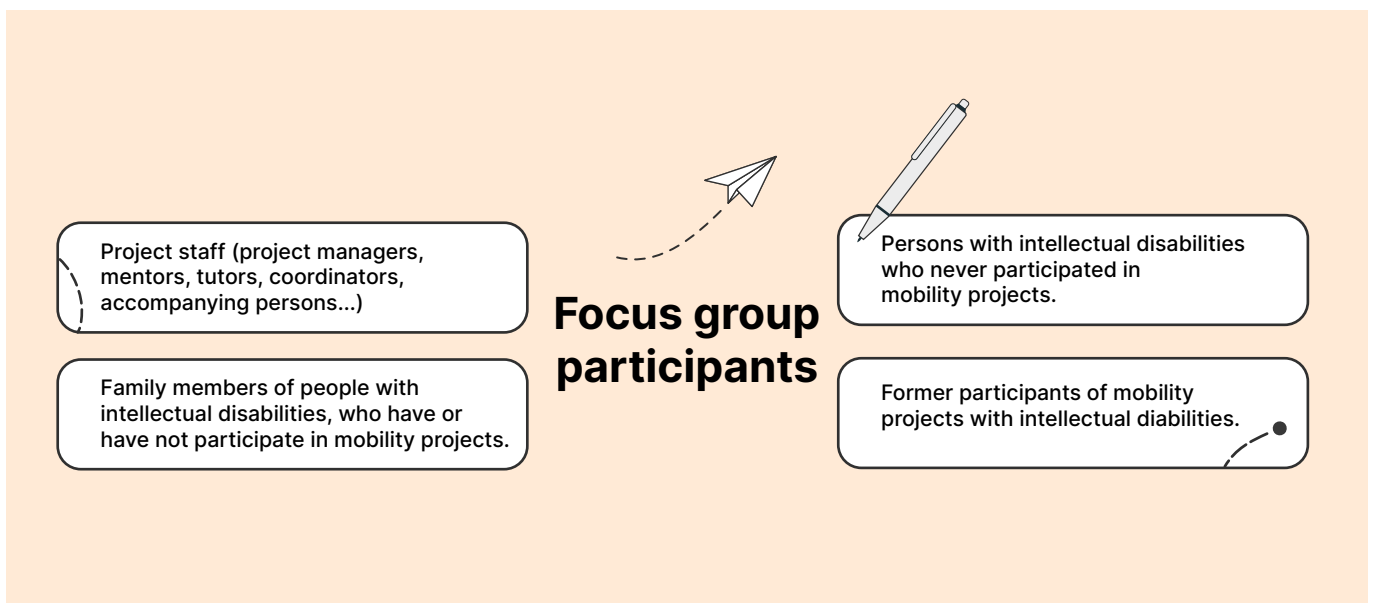
FIGURE 4
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

In total, 5 individual **interviews** were also conducted with different targets as Figure 5 shows. These interviews are available on the PR.I.M.E. project YouTube page
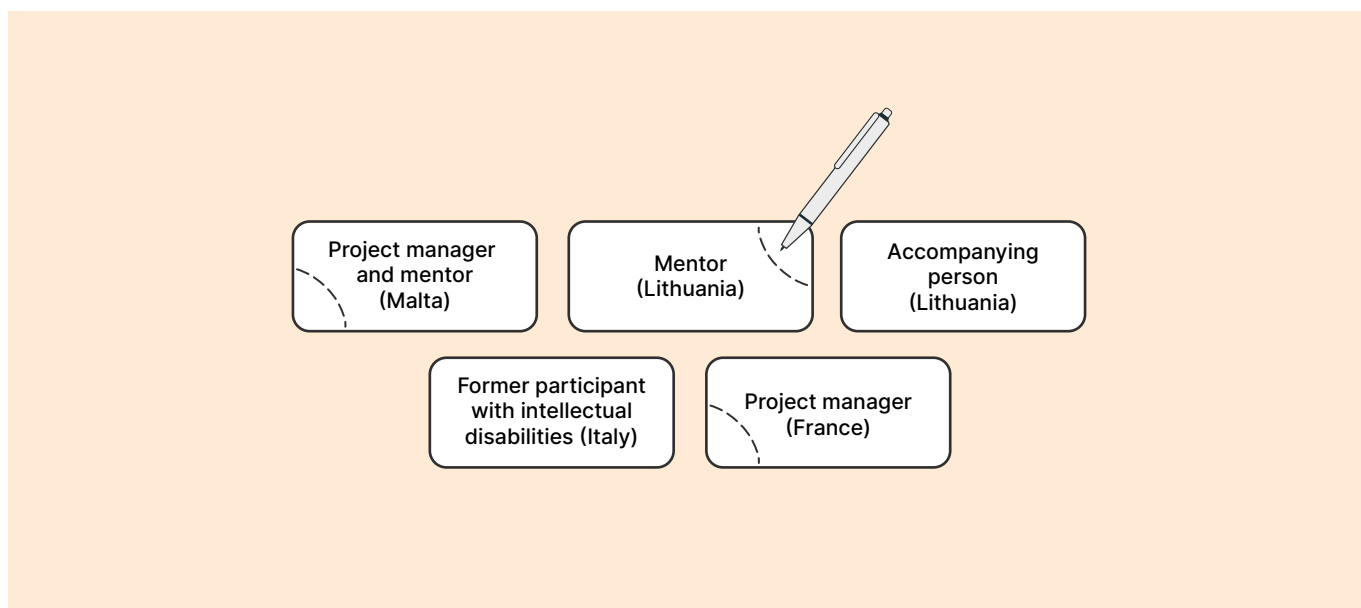

FIGURE 5
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

IMAGE 4
Focus group with Former participants in mobility projects from Lithuania (2024)

INTERNAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

During the application stage of the PR.I.M.E. project, the Partnership identified some difficulties and needs in the implementation of inclusive mobilities during previous years, mainly in volunteering projects (European Voluntary Service and European Solidarity Corps), VET traineeships (Vocational Education and Training), Youth Exchanges and Adult Education projects (Erasmus+).

The needs and difficulties identified in the different implementation phases are:

- Finding suitable partners and creating a qualified working team to guarantee suitable support to participants.
- Understanding the programmes and the related support measures that can be used for the participation of PWID for those who are new to these projects.
- Participant constraints, such as the limit of age or the participation within 12 months from the school graduation (in VET projects).
- Using suitable measures and activities for the selection of the candidates and their preparation before mobility.
- Finding people with the right profile and attitude to accompany participants and limited financial support (lack of some sort of remuneration).
- Making suitable and accessible practical and logistic arrangements.
- Understanding and filling out official documents.
- Proper insurance for participants and management of sanitary issues.
- Personalising and adapting activities and tasks during mobility, according to the needs of each participant.
- Reinforcing mentoring and support to participants and accompanying persons, which requests more dedicated human resources, knowledge, and time.
- Finding suitable ways to support the learning process of PWID.
- Finding suitable follow-up measures on how to support participants after mobility.
- Finding suitable communication strategies to promote mobility for PWID.

These identified needs have been the foundation of the project and the starting point of further research and analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review involves desk research to comprehend statistics and studies done by other EU organisations and institutions. No research studies were found concerning the needs and difficulties faced when implementing mobility projects for PWID, specifically for ESC, VET, Youth and ADU.

The first related research identified was done within the project **'SIEM – Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility 'Maybe it will be different abroad'** that gives the student and staff perspectives on diversity and inclusion in student exchanges[12]. While this research does not focus on participants with disabilities[13], it confirms that students from disadvantaged groups are less likely to participate and the impact of a mobility programme on these groups is often more pronounced. The same finding is mentioned in another research[14] in the field of youth: the learning outcomes of participants in Erasmus+ projects are as high as or even higher if they indicate one or more disadvantages compared to their peers.

Closer to this research is the project **'Inclusive Mobility - Making Mobility Programmes More Inclusive for Students with Disabilities'[15]**, which focuses on the mobility of people with disabilities in Higher Education. Although Higher Education and School Education are not areas investigated in this research[16], some results from this study can be useful for the PR.I.M.E. project.

As a result of this project, an Inclusive Mobility Alliance[17] was created, establishing the definition of 'Inclusive Mobility':

> *Inclusive Mobility is creating adequate conditions to learn, work or volunteer abroad for people with fewer opportunities, by addressing their diverse support needs. It is a needs-based approach to what the individual beneficiary needs to ensure a safe and exciting mobility period abroad. It is important to individualise these needs, as they are specific. What the person/ beneficiary says they need is what they should receive. The mobility is not only academic, but encompasses social aspects that play an important role in the experience abroad and the potential link to connect with the local community.*

This research report[18] starts with the fact that there is a lack of real data about PWID due to characteristics of statistic registration. Normally participants are registered as having 'fewer opportunities' or 'disability' (in general). Additionally, there are different legal definitions of the term 'disability' across countries. The most common data collected by Higher Education institutions is for students with visual and hearing impairment, and physical disability.

In fact, this research collected information about the type of disabilities of mobile students. Dyslexia was the most commonly reported disability (39%), followed by chronic illness (30%), physical disability (25%), visual impairment and autism (17%), mental health illness and hearing impairment (14%) and other reported types of disabilities[19] (13%), ADHD (12%). Psychiatric disorders (6%), dyspraxia (5%), dyscalculia (4%), tic disorder (2%) and stuttering (1%) were the least represented.

Although students with disabilities are underrepresented in mobility programmes, they are very interested in studying, training, or volunteering abroad. What prevents them from participating is sometimes connected to their own needs and difficulties[20]. The same report declares that (...) *students with disabilities are often confronted with psychological barriers (e.g. 'Study abroad programmes are not designed for me') and social*

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12. SIEM – 'Maybe it will be different abroad': https://siem-project.eu/documents/SIEM-survey-report_2022_10.pdf
13. Focus on: students with low-income households, students from rural backgrounds, ethnic minority students and students who are first generation to enter Higher Education (HE).
14. Exploring Inclusion in Erasmus+ Youth in Action: https://researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/RAY_inclusion_summary-20200924_layout.pdf.
15. To know more about 'Inclusive Mobility' project: https://epfime.inclusivemobility.eu/
16. Higher Education is dedicated only to Universities. School Education is dedicated only to schools. PR.I.M.E. project targets are organisations outside the formal education (non-profit, associations, cooperatives, and so on).
17. More information about 'Inclusive Mobility Alliance': https://www.esn.org/inclusive-mobility-alliance.
18. Inclusive Mobility Research Report: https://epfime.inclusivemobility.eu/docs/Website_Research_report_Inclusive_MobilityTAG.pdf
19. Other reported types of disabilities are migraine, dysphonia, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, dysgraphia and 'several types of brain impairments'.
20. A vast majority (78% of students with disabilities) did not participate in international mobility programmes.

barriers (e.g. 'My parents are too concerned') when they consider participating (...) the impact of the disability can present another barrier. Students with disabilities might be opting out of the chance to studying abroad simply because study abroad does not feature in their mental maps because they feel that their disability will not be catered for. In this sense, some barriers are perceived barriers and consequently are self-imposed by students rather than existing in reality.'

From the participants' perspective, students experience three types of barriers not allowing them to participate in mobility experiences (Figure 6):
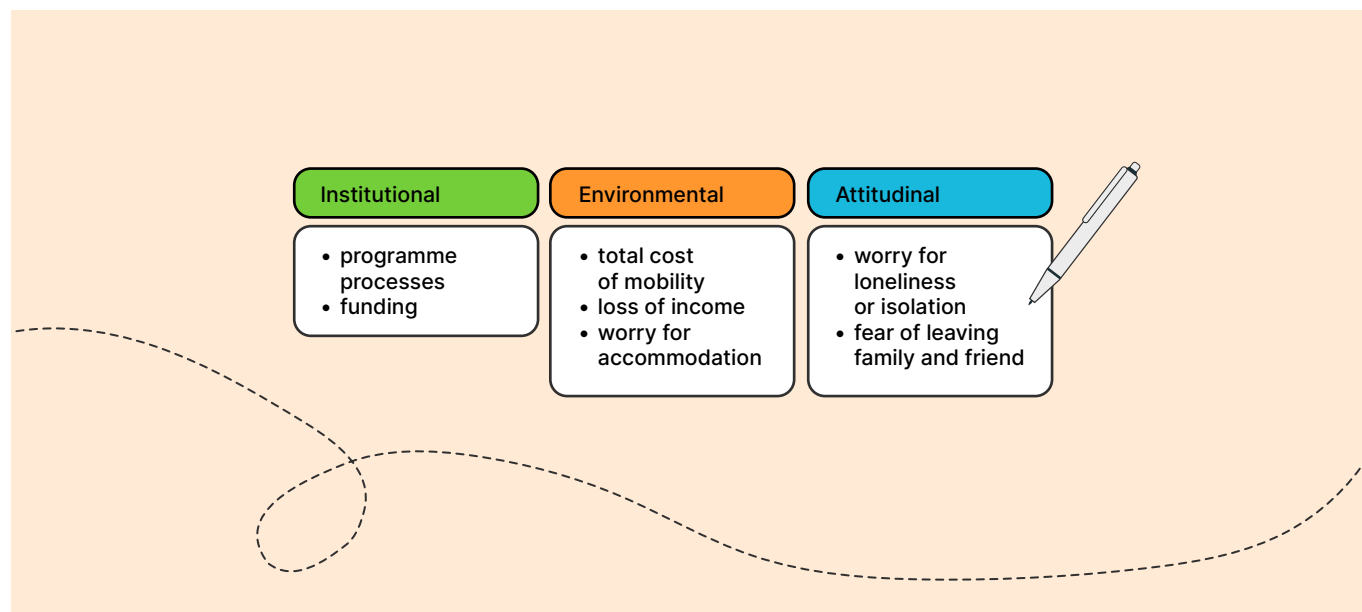

FIGURE 6
TYPES OF BARRIERS FACED BY HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Other interesting data for the mobility participants is:

1. **The disclosure of the ability:** A considerable number of students choose not to disclose their disability to the home institution (sending organisation), if not asked to, because they do not consider it important, or they do not want to be labelled. A substantial number of students do not disclose their disability to the host institution (hosting organisation) either[21]. Analysis by disability type indicates that approximately half of the students with a psychiatric disability (55%) and autism (48%) do not disclose their disability when preparing for their study abroad.

2. **The lack of information:** A substantial portion of students with disabilities does not think that Erasmus+ or other mobility programmes are also open for them.

3. **The main motivators for participation:** students with disabilities take part in mobility to have the opportunity to live abroad, improve and widen future career prospects, expand social networks, and learn different language practices and teaching methods.

4. **The main barriers for participation:** students might not participate due to financial burdens, fear of separation from partners, children, and friends, difficulty to find adequate and accessible accommodation, insufficient skills in the foreign language, expected delays in the progress of studies, lack of (accessible) information about the host organisation and country, support services (only 32% of documents are in easy-to-read), challenging application process, difficult eligibility criteria and inaccessible application process.

5. **Factors that facilite participation:** Students with disabilities quite often participate in short mobilities and value the flexibility of short duration periods. Preparatory visits can have a positive impact on reassuring and reducing doubts and fears.

6. **Benefits of participation:** mobility programmes improve language skills, and contribute to personal confi-

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21. Disclosure of the disability is less common for students with a psychiatric disorder (51%), ADHD (60%), mental health and or chronic illness (66%), in comparison to students with a physical disability (82%) or visual impairment (83%).

dence, and personal development. In addition, students with disabilities testified about a more normalised self-perception, making them feel more similar to their peers.

From the organisation and staff perspectives:

- *Most often, students have to provide medical information and pass a needs assessment that will allow for the provision of personalised support, grants and funding.* The need to provide documents (privacy issues) can prevent participants from disclosing their condition, for fear of stigmatisation, since participants are not their disability.

- The institutions encourage students with disabilities to go on outgoing mobility. It is promoted more by the sending of participants rather than the hosting.

- *International officers and inclusion officers are often not aware of the challenges faced by international students with disabilities.* The staff has low knowledge about participants' needs or challenges.

- Higher Education institutions cannot support international students with disabilities effectively due to a difficult and reliable partnership, despite the more structured network of 'Inclusive Universities'[22].

Concerning needs, challenges and practices, the **SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion & Diversity (Education & Training)** did a 2023 research study within National Agencies on the topic of Inclusion & Diversity in the Erasmus+ Programme[23].

According to this research, 20 National Agencies (NA) from 17 different countries have established National Inclusion and Diversity Strategies[24], 4 others are currently working on their strategy and are also taking the role of the 'Inclusion Officer' into consideration.

In the same research, 94% of respondents declared that their NA has measures to specifically focus on eliminating barriers to physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities. Despite this, the respondents' views on the accessibility of their offer revealed that the needs of intellectually impaired individuals are less addressed compared to other types of impairment or need.

The difficulties highlighted in the research include:

- Lack of common definition or understanding of 'inclusion'.

- Some Agencies require appropriate strategies and examples for implementation (they would like some clear examples and suggestions on how the 'inclusion support' can be used). Definition of documentation requirements for inclusion support *('How to strike the balance between asking too much, putting additional obstacles, or keeping too much of an 'open door' that could promote misuse of funds?')*.

- Beneficiaries sometimes have difficulties with providing evidence on having participants with fewer opportunities: not all respondents with fewer opportunities can be identified, and the fear of stigmatisation is an issue.

- National Agencies face difficulties reaching and engaging newcomers. There is a lack of financial resources on the part of the beneficiaries.

- 'Easy to read language' is not yet used in official documents, which requires many National Agencies to undertake additional translation work of the programme documents. The use of 'easy' language (for example regarding the programme documents) is one area of interest that National Agencies would like SALTO Inclusion & Diversity to work on.

- Another topic of interest that National Agencies would like SALTO Inclusion & Diversity to work on is the mapping of organisations working with people with fewer opportunities at the European level.

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22. Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan of EACEA: https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-09/EACEA%20INCLUSION%20AND%20DIVERSITY%20ACTION%20PLAN%20adopted%2005.04.2023_0.pdf
'Each Higher Education Institution, by signing the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, commits to ensuring equal access and opportunities to participants from all backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities'. Also, the 'European Universities Alliance' is in existence.
23. SALTO research on National Agencies' needs on the topic of Inclusion and Diversity: https://www.ampeu.hr/files/SALTO-Research-NA-Needs.pdf
24. To see all National Inclusion & Diversity Strategies: https://saltoinclusion.eu/resources/national-strategies/

- One suggestion of National Agencies to reach and engage the target group is the development of an E-Book in an easy-to-read format to help beneficiaries organise inclusive mobilities.

It is interesting to also highlight some difficulties and challenges identified in specific national strategies.

A. Croatian Strategy

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Among the challenges in the VET field, beneficiaries highlighted insufficient capacity and lack of knowledge regarding ways in which persons with fewer opportunities could be involved in project activities. While interested in sending persons with fewer opportunities to mobility periods abroad, some organisations in this field are not well-acquainted with the support mechanisms offered by the programme and therefore opt not to involve them.

Beneficiaries from the field of Adult Education cited a lack of motivation and reluctance of learners to engage in physical mobility, while limited resources leave staff with insufficient time to deal with and explore the topics of inclusion and diversity. Beneficiaries also pointed out potential stigmatisation as an obstacle that deters some groups from participation.

Key challenges identified in the field of Youth refer to the lack of awareness related to opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme, fear of being stigmatised and absence of adequate support in different phases of project implementation. Organisations actively involved in the implementation of projects as part of the European Solidarity Corps programme additionally highlighted the lack of financial resources, outreach work, administrative barriers, and increased workload as some of the key challenges preventing a more significant involvement of underrepresented target groups.

B. Danish Strategy

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The apparently low percentage of participants with fewer opportunities in VET mobilities (8.4% in 2022) is connected with the way information is recorded. 'Special needs' students have not been registered, as there has been no tradition of calculating students in this way. One of the difficulties for organisations is the lack of clarity on what specific inclusion costs will be fully covered. Furthermore, in all fields, it is generally pointed out that the main reasons to not apply are the lack of resources, competences, and time, as well as the difficulty in finding international partners. Additionally, in the Youth field, the barriers include the overly long time to respond to applications, the inability of the project budget to receive funding for operations and salaries and the complexity of the application process. The reasons that new organisations do not apply are also the lack of knowledge about the possibilities for inclusion in the programmes and insufficient funds in the project budget to cover specific costs associated with the inclusion actions.

C. Latvian Strategy

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The barriers in Latvia include a lack of supportive staff or people with fewer opportunities/special needs in the organisation (64%), as well as psychological and personal restraints of the potential participants (22%).

D. Maltese Strategy

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Lack of knowledge and awareness of available opportunities is mentioned again in the Maltese Strategy as a barrier to participation. Apart from this, the participant's unwillingness to disclose sensitive data such as forms of disability, learning difficulty, medical condition, etc. explains the very low percentage of declared participants with fewer opportunities.

The beneficiaries mentioned the need for more information and training about the programmes and their benefits and support to identify and reach young people with fewer opportunities, especially those not attending formal education and not members of organisations. A simplified application process, reduced paperwork and funds for parents to accompany young people with disability are also suggested.

E. Portuguese Strategy

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In Portugal, the needs identified are connected to the lack of funds or difficulties in the administrative part of

the programme. Furthermore, small organisations that work with people with fewer opportunities find it hard to participate in the programme due to a lack of information, administration issues or lack of economic resources.

Many National Agency Strategies aim to increase the number of participants and organisations that include people with fewer opportunities in their mobility projects[25]. However, this increase does not necessarily mean higher quality. The increase in quantity forces the increase of quality, so the result can take longer but deliver a greater impact.

The issue of quality is also stressed in the research report on **the inclusiveness of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes and the contribution of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in enhancing inclusion in the Youth field**[26], which was released in January 2024:

> *There is a need for a shift in approaching the Programmes, emphasising the development of and support of inclusive initiatives projects, rather than focusing on the number of young people with fewer opportunities included.*

The topic of 'Disabilities' was the 8th most chosen 'Inclusion topic' in Erasmus+ Youth and ESC projects granted in 2022, with less than 30%. This research confirms some conclusions of other research and statistics and draws new ones.

Concerning National Agencies, it is recognised that there were improvements in the last programming of Erasmus+ Youth and ESC, as well as difficulties. The support for inclusion projects requires a bigger financial investment, which often leads smaller National Agencies to have to decide between more 'general' projects or fewer projects but with a greater focus on inclusion. This contradicts the intentions of the horizontal priority and would benefit from the revision of the budget allocated to the actions that particularly support inclusion and diversity.

One of the main issues is the need to clarify the primary concepts of inclusion and diversity, which are often not well understood by newcomers (the same applies to the principles of non-formal education).

A new topic that arises from this research, which also confirms the internal need analysis conducted during the project application stage, is the fact that to enhance inclusion and diversity age flexibility of participants is required.

National Agencies referred to bureaucratic complexities, and the need for more support to small organisations, increase in the budget allocation and simplification of the procedures. The coordination costs (such as salaries) should be covered, as is the case of KA2 Strategic Partnerships where the costs for experts can be included. Furthermore, current budget allocations are insufficient, especially given the rising prices[27].

New organisations are often reluctant to engage in mobility programmes due to additional work, support required from the national agencies, the need for a greater understanding of inclusion and diversity concepts and the complexity of the application processes. They also lack inclusive strategic plans or do not know how to initiate them. Heavy bureaucratic processes, language barriers, and financial constraints remain significant obstacles. In addition to the difficulty in finding reliable partnerships, there is a lack of care regarding the rights and responsibilities of lead and partner organisations. There were shared several cases of mismanagement (from both sides).

This report also makes an important reference: *'It is also worth underline the fact that some Organisations do not highlight the inclusion dimension, consciously rejecting the use of the label of 'young people with fewer opportunities' for their participants.'* For some organisations, the level of justification and demands exceeds what they ethically and morally accept. Due to their national regulations, some national agencies require data and personal information to label participants as 'young people with fewer opportunities' and provide organisations with exceptional costs or lump sums.

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25. As said in the research report on the inclusiveness of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes and the contribution of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in enhancing inclusion in the Youth field (linked below): *There is an existing perception that the European Commission prioritises quantity over quality. Achieving quantity in inclusion and diversity requires time, necessitates a more thoughtful approach, and involves providing consistent support to Organisations every step of the way.*

26. Making EU Programmes More Inclusive – Research Report: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4498/MakingEUProgrammesMoreInclusiveResearchReport.pdf

27. This research was released in January 2024. In the Erasmus+ and ESC guides of 2024, the budget was increased.

Significant challenges have been underlined, particularly for participants with disabilities. The tailored measures to ensure inclusion and accessibility to mobility initiatives exist, but they seem to be unknown to potential newcomers who do not know 'where to start'. Interviewees also stressed hesitations due to lack of experience and concerns about 'fitting in' and managing logistics, which can easily hinder motivation.

Organisations see inclusive project mobilities as a challenge to their internal management. Balancing inclusion with other tasks is a big challenge. Managing other projects or job-related tasks can be challenging and inclusion projects require time. This balance is crucial and often complex.

According to **Erasmus+ Annual Report 2022**, mobility activities for learners in Adult Education in 2022 increased by more than 75%. Learning mobility of staff in this same field increased from 8,000 (in 2021) to more than 14,000 participants (in 2022). In the Adult Education field, a total of 88% of learners with fewer opportunities were involved. The report highlights that *the engagement of learners in Adult Education and in particular learners with fewer opportunities in learning mobilities is a process which takes time, especially for Adult Education providers which need to adapt in terms of capacity building*.
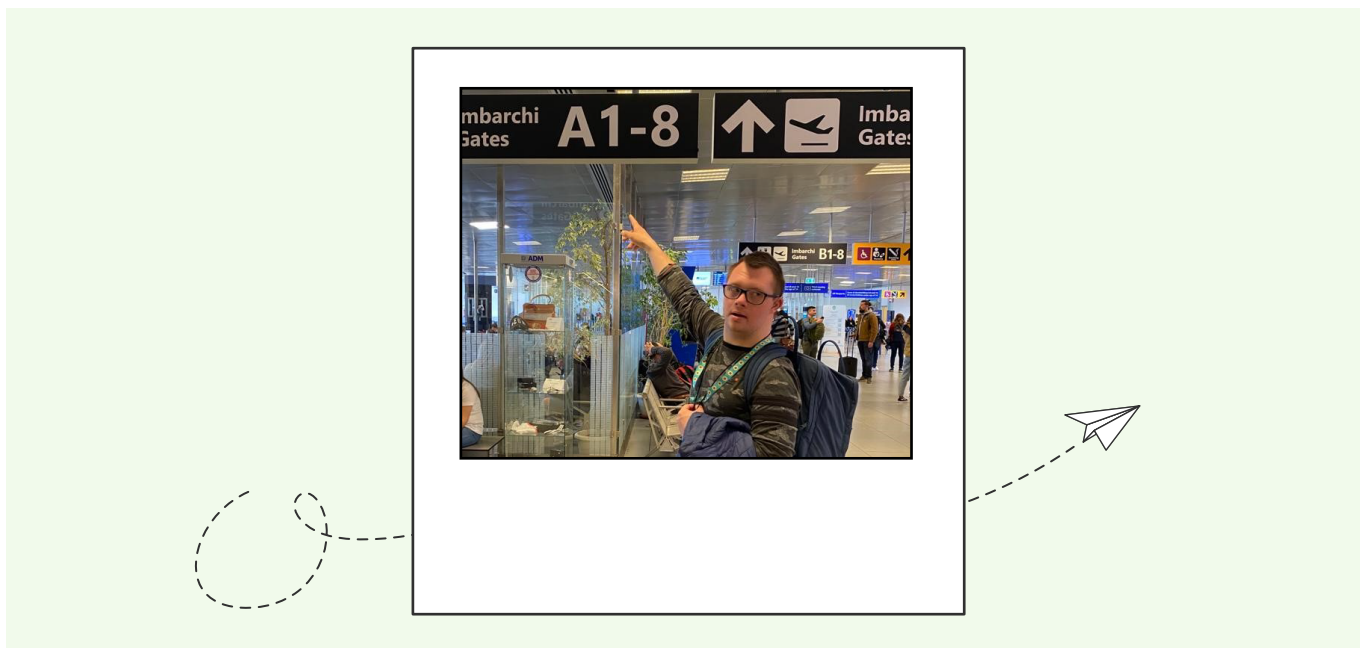

IMAGE 5
Martynas in Italy, 'The agents of social inclusion' (ADU, 2023)

INCLUSION MEASURES FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

—

Inclusion is a transversal priority of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes and the improved access of the programme to people with fewer opportunities is one of its main objectives.

The Commission has set up dedicated inclusion measures in the programmes aimed at better promoting social inclusion and improving outreach to people with fewer opportunities in the fields of education, training, youth, and sport. In October 2021, the Commission published a **'Framework of Inclusion Measures for Erasmus+'**, which aims to increase the inclusiveness and diversity in the programme. The measures include dedicated financial support, tailored support to participants throughout all phases of the project, support to participating organisations, flexible learning offers, priority in the selection process and clearer communication and reporting.

At the same time, an **'Inclusion and Diversity Strategy'** covering all programme fields was co-developed with stakeholders. The strategy provides practical guidance on how to implement projects that are more inclusive. Based on the overall principles and mechanisms at the European level, the **National Agencies** drew up **Inclusion and Diversity Plans** to better address the needs of participants with fewer opportunities and support the organisations working with these target groups in their national context.

At the same time, two dedicated **SALTO Resource Centres** supporting the implementation of the programme are also key players in promoting and rolling out inclusion and diversity measures, in particular as regards to gathering knowledge, and conceiving and running capacity-building activities for National Agency staff and programme beneficiaries. In April 2022, the new **SALTO Inclusion and Diversity** was nominated for the education and training fields. It will work in coordination with the already well-established **Youth Inclusion and Diversity SALTO**, building on its experience, but adapting its activities to the specific needs of the **Erasmus+ Education and Training fields**.

Likewise, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency **(EACEA)** plays an equally important role in the programme strands, which are managed centrally.

In the field of youth, as of 2022, the integrated DiscoverEU action into Erasmus+ includes an action specifically targeted at young people with fewer opportunities. With this **DiscoverEU Inclusion Action**, organisations and informal groups of young people can receive support to carry out projects, allowing young people with fewer opportunities to participate in DiscoverEU on an equal footing with their peers.

Special attention is also given to the inclusion of people who are unable to apply for long-term physical mobility, due to their field of study or some barriers they face. In this regard, **blended mobility activities** – combining both physical and virtual mobility – offer additional opportunities to participate in the programme.

In the field of sport, Erasmus+ sport actions promote social inclusion. The **#BeInclusive EU Sport Awards** aim to celebrate organisations, which show inspiring examples of the power of sport in fostering the inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Source: full information in the Erasmus+ Annual Report 2022.

RESEARCH
FINDINGS

During the needs analysis phase, more data was collected on the difficulties and needs faced by project staff when implementing inclusive mobilities for PWID.

As already mentioned, the online survey collected 370 answers from:
- Organisations that work with people with disabilities, but not with mobility projects;
- Organisations that work with mobility projects, but do not involve PWID;
- Organisations that already work with mobility projects involving PWID (inclusive mobilities).

IMAGE 7
Vidas in Belgium during the 'Inclusion & Diversity Forum 2024'

ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK WITH PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, BUT NOT WITH MOBILITY PROJECTS

The organisations that work with people with disabilities on a daily basis and do not engage them in mobility projects have provided, through the online survey, the reasons why they do not undertake these types of projects with their users.

Reasons why organisations do not do mobility projects for their users with intellectual disabilities

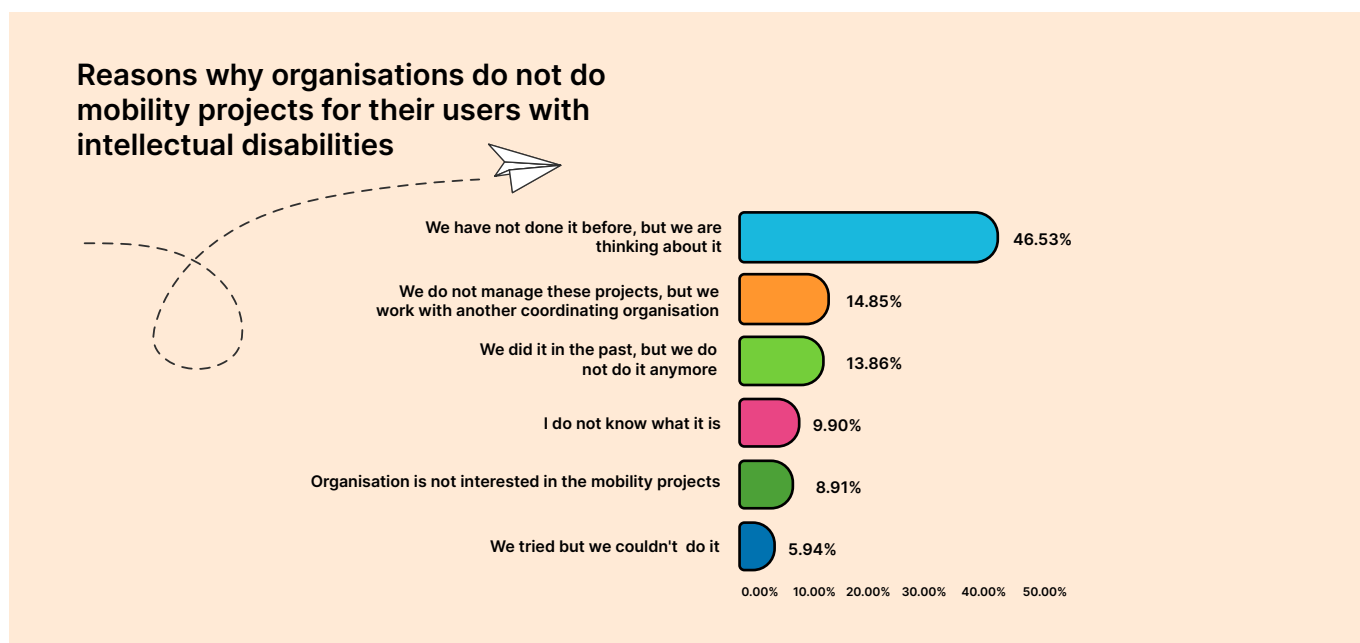| Reason	Percentage
We have not done it before, but we are thinking about it	46.53%
We do not manage these projects, but we work with another coordinating organisation	14.85%
We did it in the past, but we do not do it anymore	13.86%
I do not know what it is	9.90%
Organisation is not interested in the mobility projects	8.91%
We tried but we couldn't do it	5.94%

FIGURE 7
REASONS WHY ORGANISATIONS DO NOT DO MOBILITY PROJECTS FOR THEIR USERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Figure 7 illustrates that there is a significant number of organisations that do not currently engage in mobility projects with people with disabilities, but consider it (46.53%), proving that the interest exists. There is also a percentage of organisations that do not directly manage or coordinate mobility projects but collaborate with other organisations to do so (14.85%). This shows that sometimes the administrative burden and process that a mobility project entails is not in line with the possibilities of some organisations. Fewer organisations did these projects in the past, but currently do not (13.86%).

Special attention should be paid to the almost 10% of organisations that are unaware of the existence of these projects. This highlights that misinformation prevents organisations from engaging in mobility initiatives. Many solely operate within centres for people with disabilities and do not participate in mobility projects simply because they are unaware that such projects, tailored to people with their characteristics, exist.
Less than 9% of the organisations claim that they are not interested in mobility projects, while 6% of the organisations have attempted, unsuccessfully, to engage in such projects. This is due to various internal issues, such as the lack of dedicated staff or financial resources, the unfamiliarity of the English language as a means of communication to coordinate and carry out these projects successfully.
Out of the 101 organisations that do not currently engage in mobility projects, 99 have expressed a desire to learn more about such initiatives. Two organisations responded that they are not interested in learning more due to:

1. **The low level of English proficiency among the educators working in the organisation.** This makes communication before, during, and after the project and the drafting of reports to be completed after the project hard. The linguistic barrier seems very important for organisations at a bureaucratic level and for project management. However, even if it is largely referred to as an important issue during mobility in focus groups done with former participants with intellectual disabilities (as shown further on in this report), according to several testimonies, it is not an issue for participants during the mobility:

> *"They (the service users) also acquire new skills as they learn to communicate in a new language - English, Spanish, French – it depends on which country the volunteers come from. The staff also develops their language skills, communicating with a person from another country."* Lithuanian mentor

> *"Have you ever thought that, for example, before leaving, you need to improve your English?*
>
> *Yes, I am training all the time. I have an application– Duolingo. I am learning French and English. I want to learn because I am travelling"* Participant with intellectual disability

> *"(…)the language factor surprised us. I mean she never learnt a word, but they understood each other. (…) often communication is her weak point, right? But also there, she did well…"* Mother of a former participant with intellectual disability

> *"(…) the language barrier, which was an issue before the mobility, was no longer a problem. We were impressed by the amazing adaptability of our PWID, who managed to communicate and make themselves understood in other ways rather than with words".* French accompanying person

This demonstrates that language turns out to be mostly a bureaucratic issue and not a practical one. People with disabilities and mobility workers see it as a challenge and an opportunity to learn, rather than an impediment during the mobility itself.

2. **The organisation's primary focus to provide basic daily care to people with disabilities.** The perception that these kind of projects are complex to manage and require more resources prevents organisations from participating, despite the proven (human) benefits that bring.

Based on this data, it is evident that organisations that work with people with disabilities but are not currently involved in mobility projects are open to the idea of undertaking such initiatives. However, they face specific challenges, such as language barriers or the need for more information. The PR.I.M.E. project can address these needs by promoting such initiatives and providing a guide on how to carry out various types of mobility projects (such as volunteering abroad, internships, exchanges, etc.) involving people with disabilities, from the initial steps to the final stages. Nevertheless, the European Commission should also re-evaluate some procedures, as previous studies and research identify.

IMAGE 8
Kasparas in Italy, 'ESCalade Volunteering Mountain 3' (ESC, 2024)

ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK WITH MOBILITY PROJECTS
(NOT INCLUSIVE, THAT DO NOT INVOLVE PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES)

Organisations that work with mobility projects but do not involve PWID were also analysed. This type of organisation represents 17% of the sample throughout Europe. It is worth observing that the majority of organisations do not work solely with one type of mobility but rather carry out at least two types of projects for different participant profiles. The organisations in the sample of this research study[28] carry out the following types of projects:

Types of mobility projects undertaken by the organisations that do not include PWID

- Other **12.8%**
- Erasmus+ Youth Exchange **21.8%**
- ESC - European Solidarity Corps (European volunteering) **14.3%**
- Erasmus+ Adult Education **18.8%**
- Erasmus+ Mobility of Youth Workers - Training Course **14.29%**
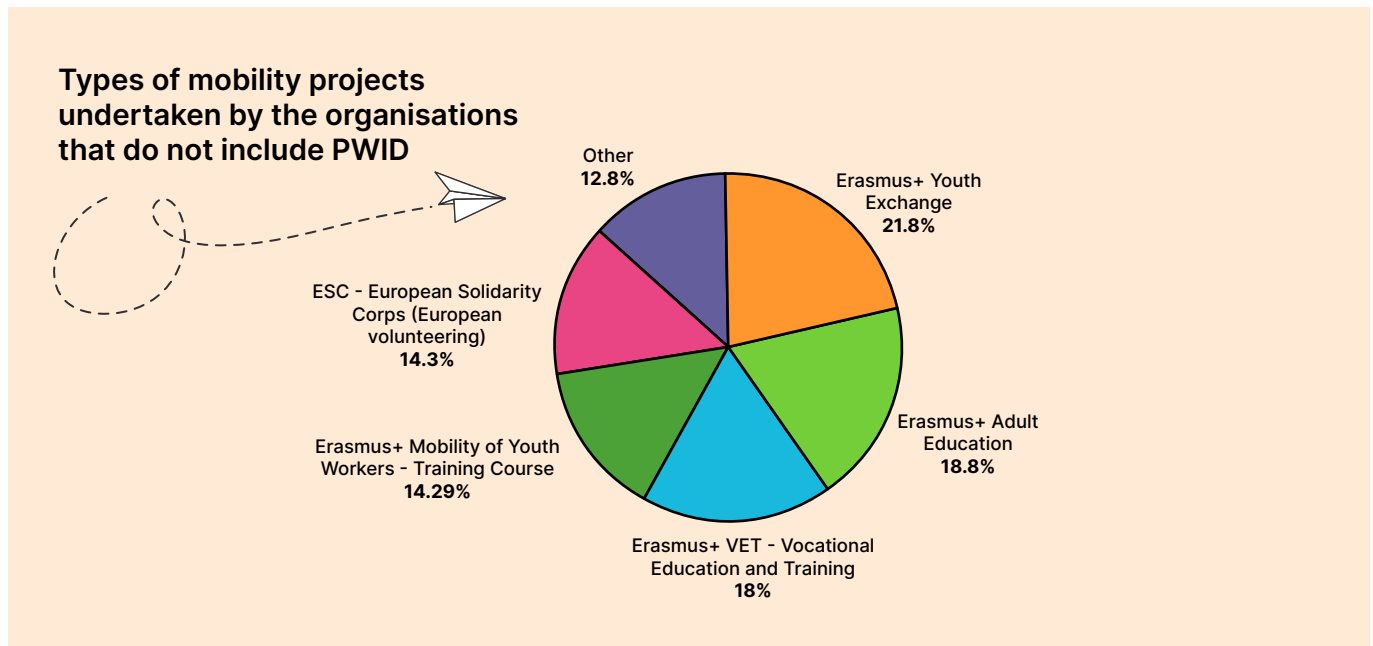- Erasmus+ VET - Vocational Education and Training **18%**

FIGURE 8
TYPES OF MOBILITY PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY ORGANISATIONS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE PWID

As shown in Figure 8, the highest percentage of mobilities consists of **'Erasmus+ Youth Exchange'**[29], with nearly 22% of organisations working with this type of mobility. These projects are, by default, short-term group mobilities for young people. The second type of mobility that the participating organisations mostly work with is **'Erasmus+ Adult Education'**[30], which involves group or individual, short or long term mobilities. In the third place, but very close to the previous type, there are the **'Erasmus+ VET - Vocational Education and Training'**[31] mobilities, which share similar characteristics with the second type, but learners should benefit from the project within 12 months of graduation. Participants can go abroad to undertake internships and improve their professional careers, benefiting from training in another country and what that entails (learning a new language or improving existing language skills, gaining greater independence by stepping out of their comfort zone, etc.). The fourth most common type of mobility for 14.29% of the organisations is **'Erasmus+ for Youth Workers - Training Course'**[32].

The same percentage (14.29%) is observed for the **'ESC - European Solidarity Corps (European Volunteering)'**[33]

28. It doesn't reflect the overall numbers EU-wide. This, can be seen in the Erasmus+ and ESC reports analysed previously.
29. Erasmus+ mobility projects for young people - Youth Exchanges are meetings of groups (from 16 to 60 participants) of young people (from 13 to 30 years old) from at least two different countries who gather for a short period (from 5 to 21 days) to implement jointly a non-formal learning programme on a topic of their interest.
30. Erasmus+ mobility for learners and staff in Adult Education – for the learners concerned, these can be group mobilities (from 2 to 30 days) or individual mobilities short-term (from 2 to 29 days) or long-term (from 1 to 12 months). Learners can be any person benefiting from activities provided by an organisation active in the adult education field. This is defined at a national level.
31. Erasmus+ mobility for learners and staff in Vocational Education and Training – the learners' mobility can be a group one (from 2 to 30 days) or individual mobilities short-term (from 10 to 89 days) or long-term (from 3 months to 12 months). The condition is that learners benefit from the mobility within 12 months from their graduation.
32. Erasmus+ mobility projects for youth workers – are learning activities for the professional development of youth workers, with no age limit, that can be group mobility (maximum 50 participants), from 2 to 60 days.
33. European Solidarity Corps – volunteering activities – are cross-border individual volunteering, for young people between 18 and 30 years old. It can be long-term from 2 to 12 months, or short-term from 2 weeks to 2 months (for people with 'fewer opportunities'). Also, short-term mobilities from 2 weeks to 2 months can be for team volunteering for groups between 10 and 40 volunteers.

mobilities, which involve volunteering in a foreign country from 2 weeks to 12 months. The main difference between this type of long-term mobility project and the previous ones is the lack of being bound to a training field. Finally, 12.78% of the participating organisations are involved in 'Other' projects. Most of them are independent of Erasmus+ or ESC mobilities, but still involve mobility with national public funds or European funds managed at a national level. Examples given by the respondents include Transnational Mobility Directive Piemonte Region (Italy), JUVENTUS (Germany), or 'Servizio Civile Universale' (Italy).[34]

Due to the interest of this research, organisations of this type provided the reasons why they do not work with PWID in their projects. Figure 9 shows the most representative responses.

Reasons to not involve PWID in the mobility projects

Too much work 3.92%
Too complicated 6.9%
Lack of human resources 25.5%
Other 17.7%
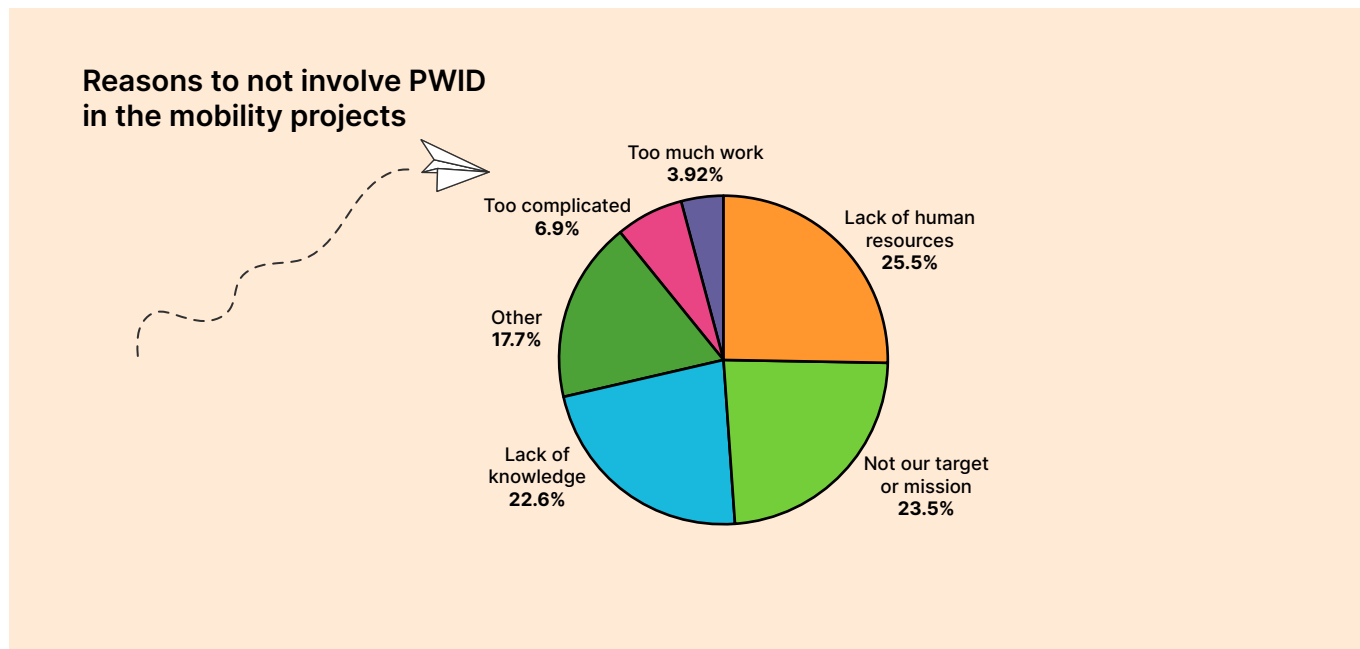Not our target or mission 23.5%
Lack of knowledge 22.6%

FIGURE 9
REASONS WHY ORGANISATIONS DO NOT INVOLVE PWID IN THEIR MOBILITY PROJECTS

A main reason for the 25.5% of the organisations is the lack of human resources, meaning that their staff is either unprepared or insufficient to tackle such challenging projects. Secondly, 23.5% of the organisations are not interested in working on inclusive projects, while 22.6% lack adequate knowledge (including those lacking experience) to work with people with disabilities. The 6.86% of the organisations admit that including PWID in their mobility projects is "too complicated".

A percentage of 4% of the organisations admit that such projects require too much work. This percentage could also decrease through the project, which will teach a more efficient implementation process. The perception that inclusive projects (especially for PWID) require more work than other mobilities is connected to the lack of information, the complexity of bureaucracy for possible inclusion measures, or the extra effort that requires the preparation and management of mobilities of PWID. The PR.I.M.E. project will provide tools and resources that can be used by all organisations. Despite that, as seen in the results of previous studies, the European Commission should re-evaluate the procedures and clarify some management details of inclusion support.

The 17.65% corresponding to the 'Others' option mentioned the issues explained previously, such as the lack of demand from this profile of individuals, different structural problems, or the focus on other types of disabilities. It is worth noting that out of the 64 organisations that completed this part of the questionnaire, only 3 stated that they were not interested in learning more about these types of projects. Two of them consider it irrelevant to their mission, and one already collaborates with another organisation that carries out these types of projects. Partnerships (including local) can be a solution for the lack of resources in small organisations. This confirms that, as mentioned earlier, there is no lack of interest or prejudice on the part of organisations, but rather misinformation or lack of resources that prevent inclusive projects from being carried out. The present project can address such needs.

Many of these organisations have stated that they do work with PWID, but they are not a specific target group, or

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34. Other programmes and actions can be found at a local, national, or European level. Some examples of other programmes or types of mobility projects are CERV, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, Youth Guarantee, and so on.

they try to include them in smaller projects. They have also indicated that there are structural issues such as travel (flights) or finding suitable accommodation where they can feel comfortable and adapting activities. On the other hand, some organisations highlight the lack of demand from people with disabilities to participate in mobility projects. In other words, they are open to working with individuals with disabilities, but their profiles do not reach their organisations, so there is often an external barrier, rather than an internal one. As shown in previous studies, the barriers that prevent PWID from participating also influence the possibilities of organisations to include this target.

The focus groups confirm the difficulties of PWID being involved in these projects, preventing organisations from finding the target.

> *"...I think I'm too old to go on mobilities because, for example, to volunteer, you have to be of a certain age."*
> Lithuanian PWID with 44 years old who never participated in a mobility project.
>
> *"I would like to (do mobility projects), but I need an assistant (accompanying person). (...) I think you need to know the foreign language very well. The language of the country you are going to."*
> Lithuanian PWID who never participated in a mobility project.
>
> *"And I would need to improve my independence skills before that. (...) Counting money, language barrier, getting to know the customs and traditions of another country. I might be able to communicate, but I would need an assistant to explain everything."*
> Lithuanian PWID who never participated in a mobility project.
>
> *"...would you find it difficult in another place? When you don't know the environment? - Definitely yes. It's not yet clear how other people will react to us. They haven't seen us; they don't know our disabilities. The scariest thing is the first encounter. Because I always think how they will react to me. (...) It's important for me to know how not to scare the other person, to be able to get close to them."*
> PWID who never participated in a mobility project.

For the respondents with intellectual disabilities who had some mobility experience, all fears disappeared after the first experience:

> *"I get very stressed before trips. I want to go, but I'm stressed and then I have trouble sleeping. I feel the same way all the time. I still have strong internal emotions. When I get there, I'm also stressed about where we should meet, whether I will remember where we will meet, etc. But I would like to participate in the projects. When I was on the project for a week - the first two nights were difficult, but later it became normal. I like travelling because I meet new people and also develop the language."*
> Polish former participant with intellectual disabilities.
>
> *"I really wanted to go and volunteer, but I was afraid of the plane. Now I'm not scared anymore. I've conquered my fear."*
> Former participant with disabilities.

The focus groups reveal that all former participants with intellectual disabilities found out about the opportunity to participate in mobility through their daily centres.

There are organisations focused on other types of profiles, such as individuals with diabetes or physical disabilities, so they lack experience in mobilities involving PWID. Thus, it becomes evident that **there is no prejudice against these individuals.** Different issues can be addressed, with outputs from the current research study, to facilitate mobility with more inclusive characteristics.

ORGANISATIONS THAT ALREADY WORK WITH INCLUSIVE MOBILITIES

The organisations that work with inclusive mobilities represent the largest portion of the sample (37%). These organisations carry out all kinds of projects involving PWID. Figure 10 presents the types of mobilities conducted by these organisations, highlighting differences with organisations that only carry out mobilities (not with PWID):
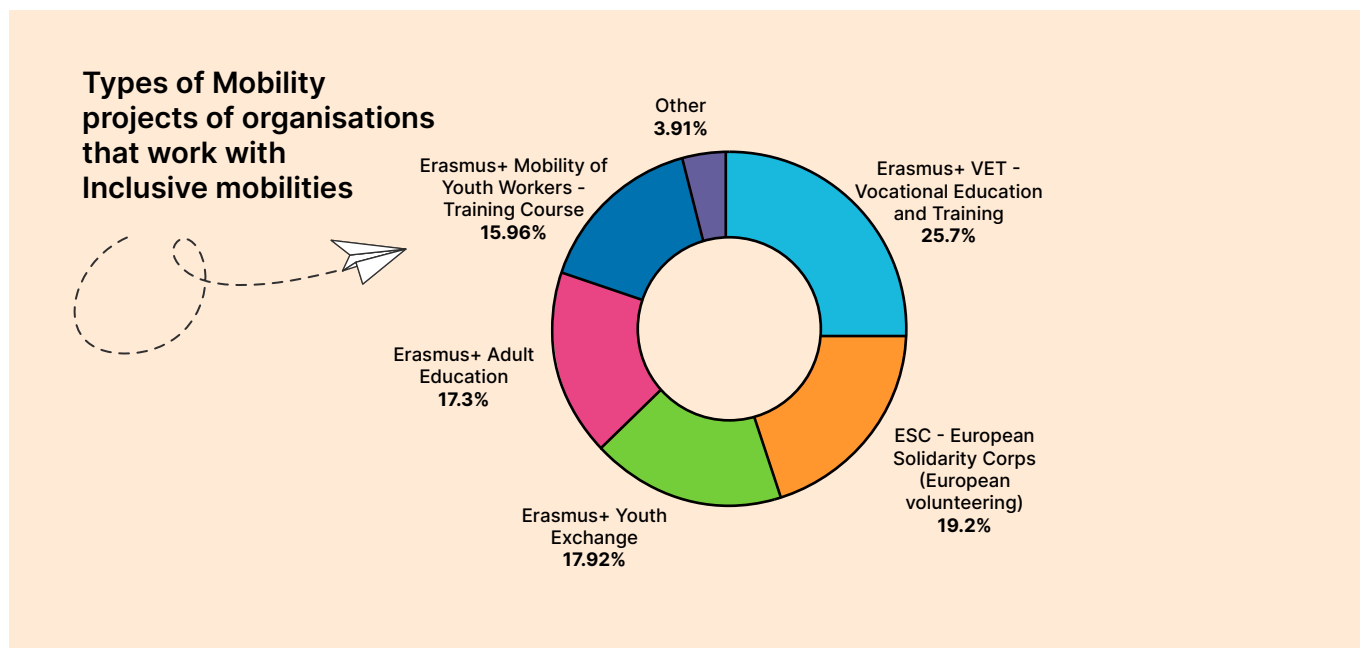

Types of Mobility projects of organisations that work with Inclusive mobilities

Other
3.91%

Erasmus+ Mobility of Youth Workers - Training Course
15.96%

Erasmus+ VET - Vocational Education and Training
25.7%

Erasmus+ Adult Education
17.3%

ESC - European Solidarity Corps (European volunteering)
19.2%

Erasmus+ Youth Exchange
17.92%

FIGURE 10
TYPES OF MOBILITY PROJECTS DONE BY ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK WITH INCLUSIVE MOBILITIES

The most common mobilities are **'Erasmus+ VET - Vocational Education and Training'**, accounting for 25.73% and **'ESC - European Solidarity Corps (European Volunteering)'**, with more than 19%. This represents a significant increase compared to organisations that do not work with inclusive mobilities, where the percentage for this type of projects was 14%.

'Erasmus+ Youth Exchange' comes third with 17.92%. Interestingly enough, this type of exchange was the top choice for organisations not involved in inclusive projects, accounting for 21%. **'Erasmus+ Adult Education'** follows with 17.26%, which reached a higher percentage for the organisations solely focused on mobilities. Additionally, 15.96% of the participating organisations work on **'Erasmus+ Mobility of Youth Workers - Training Course'**, while only 3.91% engage in other types of projects, of which 1.63% of the total amount corresponds to Erasmus+ Higher Education.

Organisations that work with mobility projects (not for PWID) involve more Youth Exchanges (short-term group mobilities) due to simpler procedures that do not request any kind of compulsory accreditation. On the other hand, organisations that already work with inclusive mobilities for PWID, prefer short – term individual VET and ESC mobilities, that can be more personalised. Moreover, even if these are actions that require accreditation or a 'Quality Label'[35], they prefer to do these more personalised and quality mobilities from the moment they are prepared and willing to involve PWID, proving that they are capable of doing it with quality.

The differences and interests between those working with non-inclusive mobilities and those working with all types of profiles are evident, as the former have programmes more focused on formal education such as VET or Adult Education. The latter focus more on the experience of engaging in activities abroad, such as

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35. In some types of actions and fields of Erasmus+, organisations can ask for short project grants or start the process for accreditation. Once the accreditation is approved, it facilitates the approval of grants. Especially in ESC volunteering mobilities, organisations need to apply for accreditation and demonstrate the quality they can guarantee when hosting or sending volunteers, and/or the capacity of project management to coordinate and ask for grants.

volunteering and exchanges, although VET projects also hold significant importance.

These organisations have expressed their satisfaction with the implementation of the projects on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 10 represents maximum satisfaction and 1 represents minimum satisfaction), as shown in Figure 11. Nearly half of the organisations (46.72%) have rated their satisfaction with 10. In descending order, 20.44% have rated with 9 and 8, which, along with the maximum satisfaction, means that more than 80% of the organisations are very satisfied with their inclusive mobility projects. Following this, 8.76% of the surveyed organisations rate their satisfaction with 7 (still high). Lastly, there are less than 4% of organisations that are not as satisfied with their inclusive mobility projects (rated below 6).

**Satisfaction
of the organisations that work
with Inclusive Mobilities**

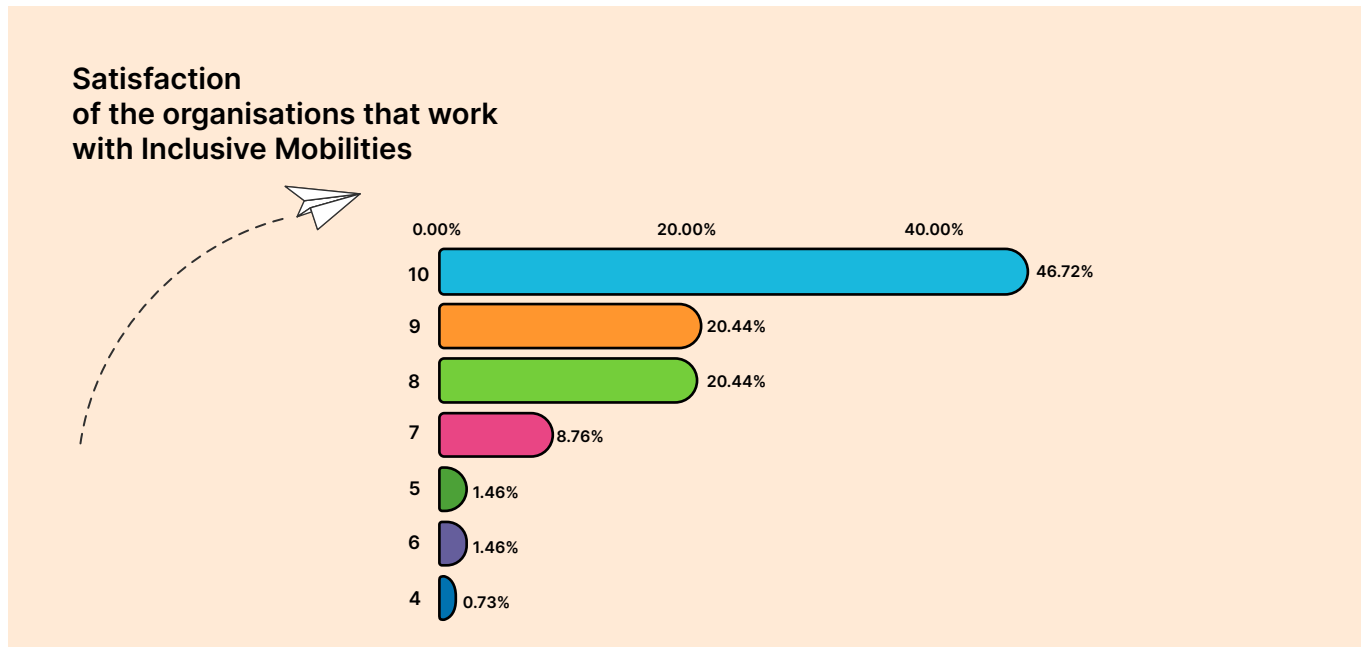|	
10	46.72%
9	20.44%
8	20.44%
7	8.76%
5	1.46%
6	1.46%
4	0.73%

FIGURE 11
LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF THE ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK WITH INCLUSIVE MOBILITIES

The results show that even though these projects might be more difficult or require more effort and resources, the benefits are broader. As said in an interview with a project manager, it is a matter of habit and getting used to these projects:

"It was only when we started this type of project that there was some anxiety about what was going to happen, who the volunteers were, what was going to happen to them. But now that we have been implementing volunteering projects for many years, everybody knows the process. Before the volunteers arrive, the whole community is introduced to the volunteer, and everyone is looking forward to the volunteer with the greatest anticipation."

To specify and better understand these types of projects, organisations have been asked about the profile of people with 'fewer opportunities' they work with based on the definition given by the European Commission (Figure 12).
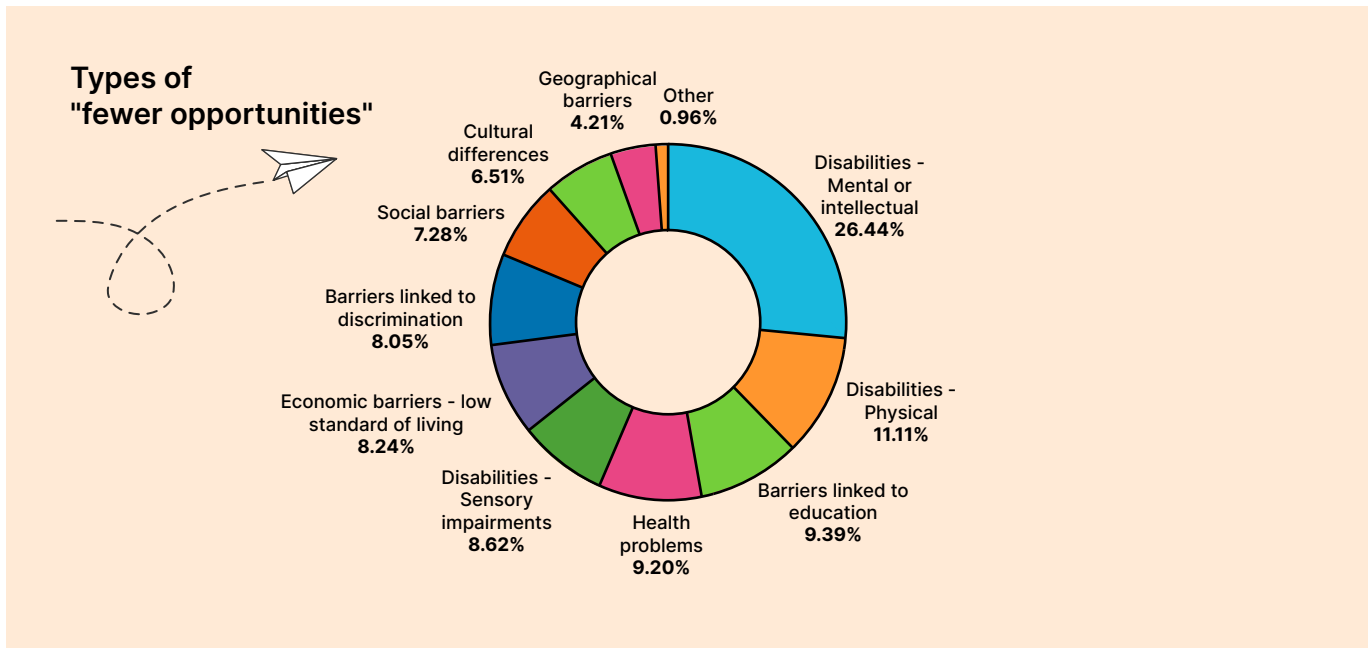
Types of "fewer opportunities"

Geographical barriers 4.21%
Other 0.96%
Cultural differences 6.51%
Social barriers 7.28%
Barriers linked to discrimination 8.05%
Economic barriers - low standard of living 8.24%
Disabilities - Sensory impairments 8.62%
Health problems 9.20%
Barriers linked to education 9.39%
Disabilities - Physical 11.11%
Disabilities - Mental or intellectual 26.44%

FIGURE 12
TYPES OF 'FEWER OPPORTUNITIES' THAT ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH INCLUSIVE MOBILITIES INVOLVE

The largest group involved in inclusive mobilities is individuals with intellectual or mental disabilities (26.44%), followed by those with physical disabilities (11.11%). 9.39% of organisations work with individuals facing educational barriers or barriers with the formal training system. Another 9.20% work with individuals facing other health problems, while 8.62% work with people with sensory disabilities (visual or hearing impairment). 8.24% of the organisations work with individuals with economic barriers and 7.28% with those with social barriers (discrimination due to drug-related issues, marginalisation, family problems...). Culturally diverse individuals (affected by racism or refugees facing cultural inclusion issues) account for 6.51% of the organisations surveyed, while 4.21% work with those facing geographical barriers (living in rural areas or areas with limited resources). This data was collected through direct questions to the participating organisations and can be different from the data officially registered during projects. In official data collection, people do not disclose the 'fewer opportunities' due to fear of stigmatisation.

DURING THE PROJECT APPLICATION

Organisations were then asked about the difficulties in each phase of a project cycle. The difficulties when carrying out European mobility projects are shown in the following figure.
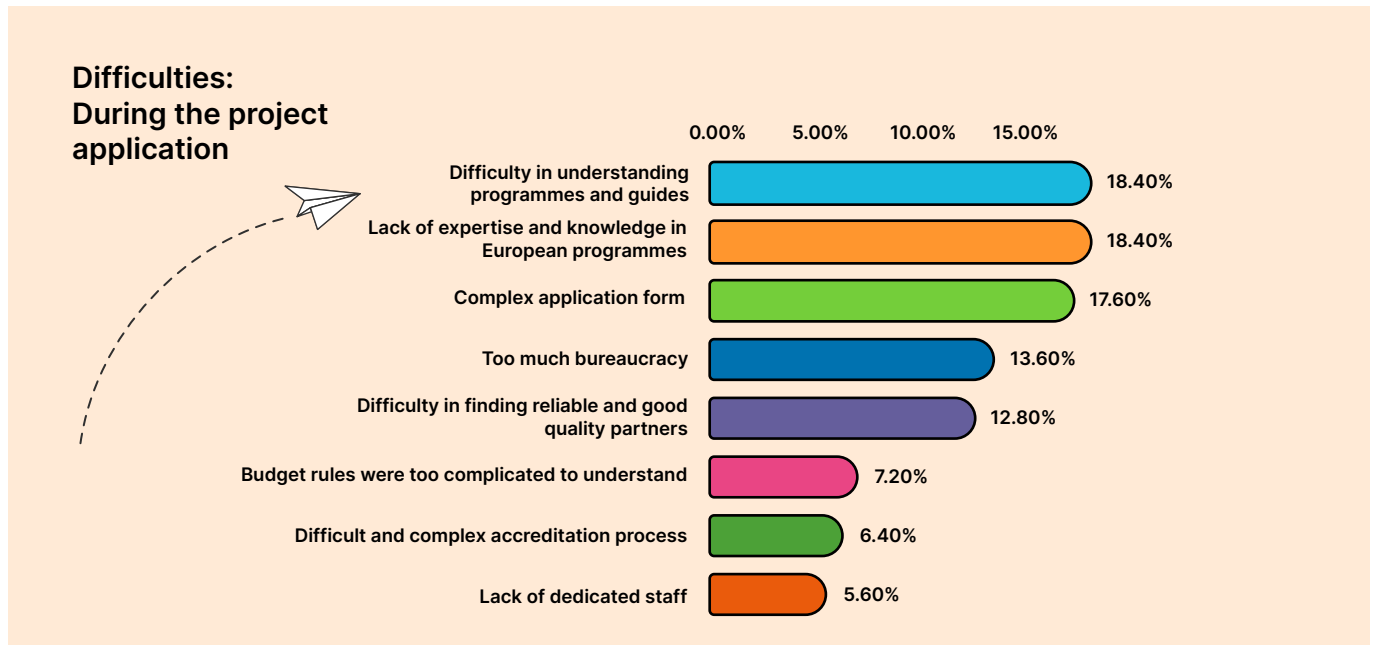
Difficulties: During the project application

Difficulty	Percentage
Difficulty in understanding programmes and guides	18.40%
Lack of expertise and knowledge in European programmes	18.40%
Complex application form	17.60%
Too much bureaucracy	13.60%
Difficulty in finding reliable and good quality partners	12.80%
Budget rules were too complicated to understand	7.20%
Difficult and complex accreditation process	6.40%
Lack of dedicated staff	5.60%

FIGURE 13
DIFFICULTIES FACED BY ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK WITH INCLUSIVE MOBILITIES, DURING THE PROJECT APPLICATION PHASE

According to Figure 13, the two main issues are the comprehension of the guides and programmes and the lack of knowledge regarding European projects (18.4% each). In other words, the European Commission's guides and bureaucracy can be overly complex for organisations seeking to undertake such projects. Other studies have proven that these difficulties can prevent newcomers, smaller or less experienced organisations from participating. The complexity of the application forms and the bureaucracy follow with 17.6% and 12.8% accordingly. The fifth challenge faced by organisations undertaking this type of project is finding quality and reliable partners (12.8%). The partnership is a difficulty already identified in other studies. The importance of a good partnership especially in mobilities of PWID is 'half-way' for a successful project.

"I would think that collaboration before the volunteer arrives is very important. Both with the mentor, with the tutor and with the assistant. It is very important to discuss the various details, it is important to inform the volunteer and prepare him/her for the culture he/she is going to, the activities he/she is going to do, to clarify his/her expectations, so that when he/she arrives, he/she already knows what he/she is going to do and what is going to happen to him/her."
Lithuanian mentor.

The sixth problem relates to the difficulty of managing the budget in accordance with the rules (7.2%). Here, the difficulties also declared by the National Agencies to clear the rules of documentation requested and examples of inclusion support measures is pointed out. The seventh problem is the accreditation process that organisations must go through before being able to carry out projects (6.4%). For the type of projects that require accreditation, this process is long, but once approved, the process of the grant request is facilitated.

Finally, as we have seen in organisations that do not work with mobility, staff may not be adequately prepared due to lack of experience (5.2%), language barriers, or other reasons. This can pose a challenge when implementing mobility projects, even in organisations that are familiar with it.

Despite this, the staff interviewed in the focus groups declared that mobility projects also helped them develop competencies and improve their abilities, including when implementing inclusive mobilities.

"The staff also develop their language skills, communicating with a person from another Country's culture, getting new ideas, thoughts for new activities. The Organisation improves its international profile, makes new contacts with Organisations and learns lessons to improve the quality of its activities. I am always gaining new skills myself. Usually, the volunteers who come are very free, so for me volunteering has given me such a European liberation, a feeling of being a European citizen."
Lithuanian mentor.

IMAGE 9
Sofia in Bulgaria, 'IDA – Inclusive Digital Academy' (KA2 ADU, 2022)

BEFORE MOBILITY

Once the project has been approved, the experience of participants abroad must be prepared. The following therefore shows the difficulties that Organisations encounter before starting the mobility:

Difficulties: before mobility starts

- Other **1.94%**
- Insurance issues **4.43%**
- To organise suitable programme, agenda or schedule **5.54%**
- To organise proper activities according to participant's profile **9.42%**
- To define the learning goals **9.42%**
- The participants pre-departure preparation **9.42%**
- The participants selection process **9.97%**
- To find and/ or prepare accompanying persons **17.73%**
- Logistic aspects **17.17%**
- Complicated official documents to prepare **14.96%**

FIGURE 14
DIFFICULTIES FACED BY ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK WITH INCLUSIVE MOBILITIES, BEFORE MOBILITY STARTS

The main difficulty encountered by organisations is finding or preparing the person who will accompany the participant with a disability during the mobility (17.73%). Secondly, logistical aspects such as finding accommodation or a workplace (17.17%), bureaucratic difficulties and the preparation of documents (14.96%) make the process of preparation harder.

As largely mentioned in previous studies, official documents and some administrative procedures are not accessible to all. Then talking about people with intellectual disabilities, is important to work with accessible language and easy-to-read documents, so participants can self-advocate and consciously accept the experience. PR.I.M.E. project intends to produce guidelines and documents in easy-to-read to support participants that face not-accessible official documents.

The selection process of the participants is the fourth issue (9.97%) followed by the preparation of participants before departure, the clear definition of their learning goals and the organisation of activities according to the participant's profile (9.42% each). Finally, organisations often have to deal with insurance-related problems (4.43%), because not all actions provide insurance for participants. There are no clear procedures to support participants who already have health issues.

Some of this data was also confirmed in the focus groups. PWID, families and staff agree that the accompanying person is key for the support of the participant.

"…the accompanying person makes all the difference! If it is someone also enthusiastic, it's easier…"
Mother of a former participant with disabilities.

"I was more scared than my daughter (…) but knowing the accompanying person, knowing she was not alone, the fact they were already friends and she was with peers… (it calmed me down)"
Mother of a former participant with disabilities.

"And what would have to happen for you to overcome all the fears you listed? - I would need an assistant who would always be there to help."
PWID who has never participated in a mobility project.

"You don't get to know the PWID volunteers, especially from another country (…) When you don't know a person's character, their habits, their features, that is the biggest challenge. First of all, you have to know the volunteer well. (…) It takes time, but the volunteer's assistant, who comes with him, helps a lot."
Mentor of participants with disabilities.

"…with the help of an assistant, certainly a good number of PWID volunteers would be able to participate fully in such projects."
Lithuanian mentor.

The programmes do not define the profile of the 'ideal' accompanying person. However, focus group participants provide some essential qualities:

"…leave with someone of their age is remarkable because they don't have a 'mum' or 'dad' with them, but some peer, of the same age…"
Father of a former participant with disabilities.

"…we were calm because (…) the accompanying person was a girl that already knew the participant… they had a connection already, she was very enthusiastic and motivated…"
Mother of former participant with disabilities.

"…it is not easy to find an accompanying person (…) someone who takes the responsibility (…) someone trustworthy for two weeks (…) that knows English (…) if they work, it's difficult to take two weeks leave at a stretch (…)"
Parents of former participants with disabilities.

"...in terms of responsibilities, we did have a lot, because we had to be available for the 7 PWIDs 24/24h. We endorsed both the role of the workshop monitor and home educator. However, it is not heavy because we are well prepared, and we know our PWIDs well, although they are different during the mobility (we discover their true characters)."
French accompanying person.

"And who should be the accompanying person? An employee or a family member? Employee!! (Educator/staff of the Organisation)
PWID that never participated in a mobility project.

"The main burden for me (...) is making the timetables for the educational team who are going abroad for 10 days with a group. (...) that's the most complex (...), because you obviously have to comply with labour law and so when you go beyond Saturdays and Sundays and all that, it's way more complex."
Project manager.

"...an assistant coming with a PWID volunteer should know the volunteer well beforehand. Not to get to know the volunteer just before departure, but well before. Know his/her character, features, etc. When you don't know a PWID well, you are certainly much more likely to encounter challenges."
Lithuanian mentor.

"It was easy to find volunteers to accompany our PWID, as it is an amazing opportunity not to be missed both for us and our PWID to live a new experience. We knew we would come back 'different"
French accompanying person.

The accompanying persons themselves explained their role in the mobility.

"During the mobility, the PWID referred to us on all occasions, to move around, and organise visits or activities. It is a 24×7 management, we had to stay alert and be reactive at all times. (...) we were the psychologist, doctor, nanny, moral support, translator and guides... (...) While remaining both consistent, flexible and attentive, you have to step out of your own needs and provide the main human qualities to carry out this project: kindness, patience, availability, listening..."
French accompanying person.

"We got on well with everyone. We did everything together. The assistants were not the leaders of the volunteers. We were equals and we made decisions together. Or rather, we just advised if we needed help. They saw that I trusted them and therefore they were independent."
Lithuanian accompanying person.

Focus groups have also demonstrated that during pre-departure preparation there are optimal ways to assist PWID and their accompanying person:

"We organised regular meetings with PWID to give as much information as possible and reassure them about all medical protocol aspects, treatments, and equipment. We shared photos and feedback from the team who attended the staff mobility [Preparatory Visit]: this feedback was very important as it concretely answered most of the PWID questions and apprehensions. It allowed them to project themselves: they could see where they will be staying, where they will be working, etc…"
French accompanying person.

"(The PWID) needs to know everything about his day, so if he was already working with him on explaining what the day would be like, what they would have done, I mean, for him it's essential to know (…) so all the concrete aspects had been told to him and those concrete aspects give him confidence… in fact, he left calmly, I must say."
Mother of former participant with intellectual disabilities.

"Because a properly trained volunteer will definitely stay until the end of the project and will implement the project with quality. If the volunteer is not properly prepared, he/she is more likely to face crisis situations and may even leave the project early. This is something that is really very important."
Lithuanian mentor.

"When there was a project, there were weekly meetings. When there was a trip, there was a meeting, for example, you discussed the schedule and how we arrived in the country. Those who organised the trip gave us a schedule, what activities would take place and at what time. This was very helpful. It is important for me."
Former participant with disabilities.

"My mother always helps me pack. I'm packing myself, but I don't know what to take and I still have the support of my assistants. My assistants support me well."
Former participant with disabilities.

"I went for a pre-planning visit with a worker. And then we flew with the team. We had a tour there so that we knew where we were going to live with the volunteer team and what we were going to do there. It was my first flight."
Former participant with disabilities.

The different actors, such as a project manager, a mother, a mentor, and the participants themselves stress the significance of proper preparation before mobility to ensure security, confidence and a smooth experience. Curiously, PWID state that they would like to have more linguistic training before mobility to be able to act independently and not rely on the accompanying person. However, short-term mobilities are not eligible to offer linguistic support and the existing tools provided are not adapted to participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties.

"They (the accompanying persons) are needed, for example, when someone doesn't know the language and needs help to communicate. He can be a translator."
Former participant with disabilities.

"They can speak English. They communicate. And they translate for us what we need to do, what we are going to do, they explain everything."
Former participant with disabilities.

"So, you think that if you don't know the language, you can't go to the project? - You can, but you need an assistant."
PWID who has never participated in a mobility project.

The difficulty of the documents before travelling has been shown also in the interviews of the professionals, as we can see in the following testimony of an accompanying person who has participated in mobility projects with PWID:

"There were a lot of documents. We had to make sure that all the volunteers had bank accounts, we had to prepare contracts, and we had to take care of travel and health insurance. It was a lot, but we managed (…) They were involved in the process. They went to the bank, read the contracts, and signed them. (…) It was difficult to understand. At that time, there was very little information in easy-to-understand language in general. Contracts had to be interpreted and translated into an understandable language."

The bureaucracy in programmes and national systems was one of the issues also mentioned in the interviews:

"And one more thing, I am very happy to offer opportunities, but I find a lot of bureaucracy that I have to face when trying to employ people of different backgrounds. I try to be as inclusive as possible; I believe it is the right thing to do, but then I find a lot of bureaucracy because they do not understand that I want to do this to help others, and to build the community, and have a good feeling inside myself. However, they think that I have an ulterior motive, so it would be good to have help with employing and having more interns."
Maltese Entrepreneur, and business owner in the catering industry.

DURING
THE MOBILITY

The following figure shows the most common difficulties during the mobility as reported by the respondents. However, the Figure displays responses to the answers given by more than 10 people. It is important to note that additional challenges have been identified, including the complexities of travel (flight) with people with disabilities and the need for mentoring or support for accompanying persons.
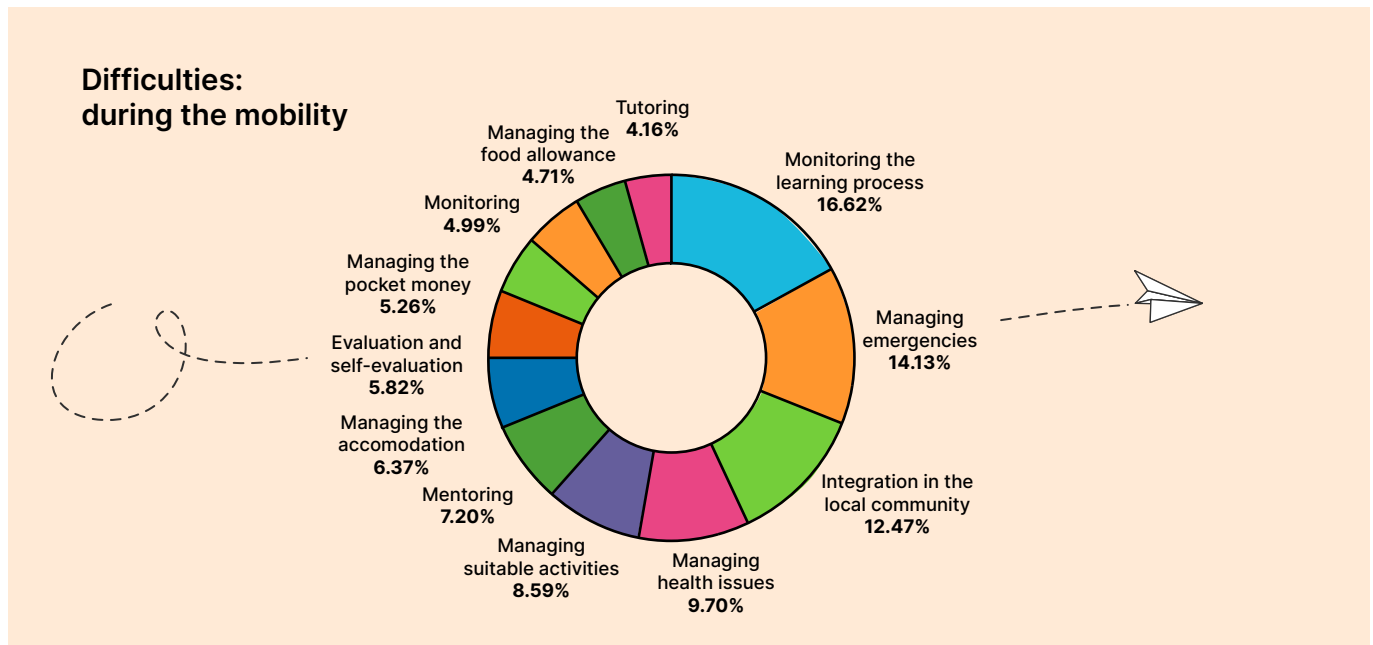

Difficulties: during the mobility

- Tutoring **4.16%**
- Managing the food allowance **4.71%**
- Monitoring **4.99%**
- Managing the pocket money **5.26%**
- Evaluation and self-evaluation **5.82%**
- Managing the accomodation **6.37%**
- Mentoring **7.20%**
- Managing suitable activities **8.59%**
- Managing health issues **9.70%**
- Integration in the local community **12.47%**
- Managing emergencies **14.13%**
- Monitoring the learning process **16.62%**

FIGURE 15
DIFFICULTIES FACED BY ORGANISATIONS DURING THE MOBILITY

The survey results indicate that the most challenging aspect is monitoring the learning process (16.62%). This main difficulty is connected to the issue of defining learning goals before mobility (9.42%). The second difficulty identified is managing emergencies (14.13%), followed by integration into the local community (12.47%), and managing health issues (9.7%). Finding suitable activities for PWID (8.59%) and mentoring them (7.2%) were also identified as challenging. 6.37% of respondents found managing accommodation to be difficult, followed by 5.82% who consider the evaluation and self-assessment difficult when dealing with mobilities for PWID. The remaining difficulties were managing the pocket money (5.26%), monitoring (4.99%), managing the food allowance (4.71%), and tutoring (4.16%).

The focus groups further explore these issues. Participants stress that in cases of emergencies or health issues, the accompanying person plays a crucial role in providing reassurance to PWID and resolving issues.

"Whatever I had to deal with, R. helped me."
Greek former participant.

"I didn't know the language. And I called Mr T. and he helped me."
Greek former participant.

The person in charge was explaining everything to our group and Mr T. was translating it for us, so everything went well."
Greek former participant.

"My ears would fall asleep when I was taking off on the plane, so the staff member put head-phones on me. She said don't be afraid to fly. I was scared of flying on a plane."
Polish former participant.

"I got sick while volunteering. I was nauseous. They took me to the hospital. (…) and gave me medicine."
Lithuanian former participant.

The difficulty to find suitable activities for PWID and mentor the participants was mentioned in focus groups.

"One of the PWID wasn't confident with the pace of work her internship would require, so we had to find a solution for her to work in a different department and thus avoid the risk of leaving her in a stressful situation."
French accompanying person.

"The period of volunteering has to be planned together with the volunteer, what he/she plans to do, his/her expectations, to clarify to the volunteer our organisation's expectations for his/her volunteering period. It was also to carry out constant evaluations, to have constant conversations, to find out if the volunteer really understands all the information well. Also prepare information that is easy to understand, so that he/she can understand it. (…) It is easier with volunteers who do not have a disability because they do not need to prepare information in easy-to-understand language. Evaluations are simpler. But with PWID volunteers, you have to prepare in advance, get to know the volunteer beforehand, understand and assess his/her abilities, adapt the different assessments, meetings, and plans. Customise information to the individual."
Lithuanian mentor.

A Lithuanian mentor elaborated the profile of mentors or tutors:

"…you have to have a willingness to interact with people because you have to interact with volunteers a lot. Especially with PWID volunteers and know how to communicate. It is also very important to have psychological knowledge because sometimes there are crisis situations where you need that knowledge."
Lithuanian mentor.

AFTER
THE MOBILITY

Finally, the organisations have outlined the challenges that sometimes arise after the mobility of a PWID. Specifically, they refer to the final reports that must be completed once all participants return back to their country of origin and the mobility programme concludes.
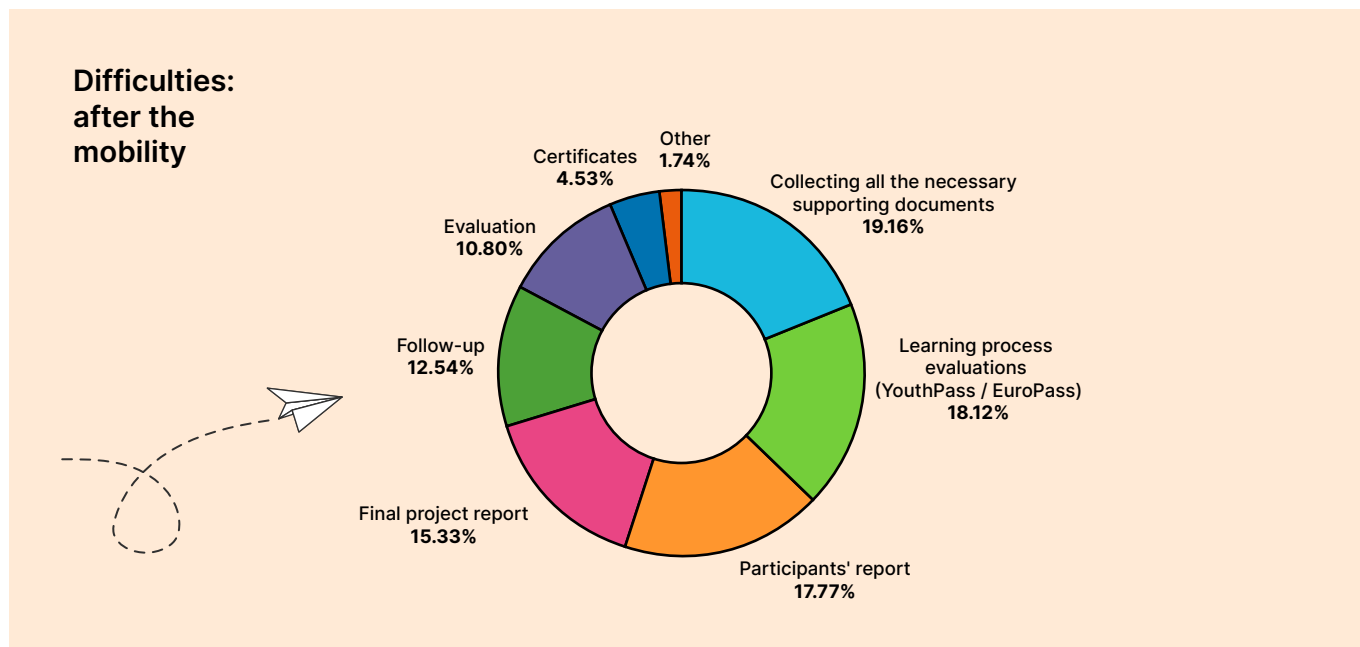
Difficulties: after the mobility

Certificates **4.53%**

Other **1.74%**

Evaluation **10.80%**

Collecting all the necessary supporting documents **19.16%**

Follow-up **12.54%**

Learning process evaluations (YouthPass / EuroPass) **18.12%**

Final project report **15.33%**

Participants' report **17.77%**

FIGURE 16
DIFFICULTIES FACED BY ORGANISATIONS AFTER THE MOBILITY

According to Figure 16, the main challenges reported by organisations are collecting all necessary supporting documents (19.16%), evaluating the learning process (18.12%), and obtaining the Participants' Reports (17.77%). Certificates and 'Participant's Report'[36] are some of the official and compulsory documents difficult for PWID to understand.The Project's Final Report (15.33%), follow-up (12.54%), evaluation (10.8%), and certificates (4.53%) are also reported as difficulties.

According to the focus groups, employers who conduct internships with PWID find it challenging to evaluate due to the limited time available. The evaluations are often conducted for protocol or bureaucratic reasons of the sending organisation:
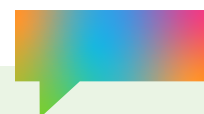
"Since we tried to integrate them into a regular working environment we did our best to report and evaluate the same ways that we would with our other employees so we looked at performance but we understood that they were only with us for a couple of weeks so of course they were not going to be as efficient as someone who has been doing the job for years. The sending company had sent us an evaluation form which not only asked about the work performance but also asked us about the holistic integration and social integration with coworkers."
Maltese employer.

36. The 'Participant's Report' is an official questionnaire sent automatically by the European Commission to all participants of some types of mobilities. It aims to get an evaluation of the project, from the participant's point of view, within 30 days from the end of the mobility.

CONCLUSION
AND NEXT STEPS

The main aim of this research is to increase the knowledge on the needs and difficulties faced by Organisations and staff when implementing mobility projects for people with intellectual disabilities. These results should be useful to better target the Outputs PR.I.M.E. project wants to produce. For that, PR.I.M.E. Partners developed targeted research, but complemented it with other possible EU research and studies.

One first conclusion is the **difficulty on getting real statistical information** on these projects. In one part, due to the methodology of collecting data within Erasmus+ and ESC programmes, which do not detail (currently) participants with intellectual disabilities. For one side, this information could be useful for statistics and research studies like the ones we presented here. On the other hand, it approaches a very sensitive but important issue: the participant's privacy. If from one part the Organisation would benefit from the knowledge of all needs that participants may have, to be better prepared, from the other part, this can be less inclusive, and participants may have fear of stigmatisation.

About this argument, we can conclude with a reference from one of the studies analysed: *A more sensitive approach to labels: parallel to reflections on inclusion, integration, equality, equity, and diversity, among other topics, another area of tension has emerged concerning the use of 'inclusion labels' or 'young people with fewer opportunities'. While this reflection is ongoing and answers vary without 'right or wrong' ones, there is a call for a deeper understanding of Organisations that refuse to use these labels for ethical and moral reasons, even though they implement inclusion projects. Additionally, a few National Agencies, constrained by their national regulations, dive into the personal details and backgrounds of potential 'young people with fewer opportunities' participation to justify the label and the possible extra funding. Those National Agencies should strive to minimise or reduce the impact of these inquiries.'* [37]

This is an issue that should be discussed within the European Commission together with stakeholders and representatives of those targets: **how to be inclusive without being labelling.**

Even if this research is dedicated to the difficulties faced by Organisations, we cannot ignore that some reasons that prevent Organisations to do inclusive mobilities are related to the **barriers and difficulties faced by participants** themselves. During focus group, interviews and other research found during our literature review, reveals that people with intellectual disabilities often don't participate for lack of knowledge on the existence of these adapted projects, or because they cannot fit in the requirements (age, for example). Besides, the fears faced by families and participants themselves sometimes prevent them to participate. Some also have fear of stigmatisation, of discrimination, and don't feel to disclosure their special needs.

For what concern fears, anxiety or doubts from participants and family, Organisations and National Agencies can invest in targeted and accessible detailed information, directly in the participants contexts (dissemination of results, good practices, successful stories told by their peers directly in the daily centres, for example). This research also demonstrates that a good preparation before departure (that may include Preparatory Visit to the hosting context, online meetings with the Hosting Organisation, and so on) to the participant and the accompanying person, giving all information as possible, can reduce the level of anxiety or doubt.

This research showed why **Organisations that work already with people with disabilities,** having knowledge on this target needs, **do not work with mobility projects**. Besides the cases where Organisations have other focus or mission, the main internal barrier is the lack of dedicated staff or resources to do mobility projects, or the lack of knowledge and competences on managing European project funds, due to complex applications, too much bureaucracy and the real need to have dedicated staff to those projects (other than linguistic barrier). In some cases, these Organisations rely on other experienced Organisations to manage these projects, involving their own users. Also the lack of financial resources are a barrier, since European projects are runed under co-financing rule and inclusive projects require even more resources.

Of course that internal management issues in each Organisation cannot be solved by this project. But there are some suggestions of solutions that can be done to solve some of these problems and promote the involvement of a bigger number of Organisations that work with people with disabilities. The lack of human resources inside the Organisation that work with people with disabilities can be overcome by the local Partnerships in which

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37 Making Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps more inclusive: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17 4498/MakingEUProgrammesMoreInclusiveResearchReport.pdf

the Organisation rely on another local and more experienced Organisation to involve their own users. These local partnerships could be more recognised by the Programme, even economically. Ideally, to directly involve the Organisations that work with people with disabilities, it should be done some investment on training (also provided by National Agencies) to increase capacity building and staff competences, other than simplifying application processes and bureaucracies, to promote the participation of newcomers.

For the **Organisations that work with mobility projects**, with dedicated staff experienced on that, **not always involve participants with intellectual disabilities.** Some because consider that these projects require too much work or are too much complicated, because require specific knowledge and extra effort. Others would like to, but cannot find participants with that profile. Regarding the participants, some local partnerships with Organisations that work with people with disabilities or communication actions adapted and directed to the target, in their own context, could facilitate reaching it.

The general perception that inclusive mobility projects are more complicated and requires more effort and resources, it has some reason. The investment on quality instead of quantity always bring benefits in what concerns human values, but for an Organisation often prevents it due to the lack of financial recognition of that effort. With PR.I.M.E. project and its Outputs, some adaptation work and methodologies can facilitate the involvement in inclusive projects, but also there are some structural issues to be improved so Organisations can be more willing to promote this kind of mobilities.

Finally, the **Organisations that already involve people with intellectual disabilities in their mobility projects** could increase quality in their projects by solving some of the difficulties encountered.

Difficulties **during project application** are mainly related with bureaucratic complexity in several level, which could be facilitated through the simplification of Programmes' procedures. One, also big, difficulty encountered is connected with Partnership and finding a reliable Organisation to work with. A good network could be built, collecting and registering reliable quality Organisations willing to work with participants with intellectual disabilities in mobility projects. This should be done ideally by the Programme itself, but PR.I.M.E. project will start a network that hopes to grow.

One of the most encountered difficulties when **preparing mobilities** for people with intellectual disabilities relate to the accompanying person: one of the most important figures. How to find them, how to cover the costs, who are the most appropriate profiles, what are the competences and characteristics needed...? The Programme should recognise more this figure. Besides this, PR.I.M.E. project will dedicate a wide part of the Handbook to this figure and its definition.

Also, the pre-departure preparation will have a big relevance in this project, providing some useful tools and materials, also innovative digital ones with gamified approach.

Accessible documents are important (in easy-to-read) and flexibility and adaptability of programmes, activities and agendas for PWID's needs **during the mobilities**. Being always learning experiences, monitoring it (including learning process) should be facilitated through some tools provided by PR.I.M.E. The management of practical issues, and emergencies are essential issues for staff in a daily basis.

What to do in the **end of the project,** at a bureaucratic level, depends a lot on the Programmes requirements. However, communication, dissemination and impact can be evaluated and increased with some tips shared.

IMAGE 10
Madga and Wojtek in Sweden, 'Different Sounds' (KA2 ADU, 2024)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The PR.I.M.E. project cannot necessarily solve all needs and difficulties. While the EU Commission wants to give the organisations a key role in making inclusion a reality, structural improvements to the mobility programmes are essential.

Some Policy Recommendations are provided below, complementing suggestions from other projects.

The **framework of inclusion measures for the programmes** established by the EU in 2021[38] provides some proposals, which should be taken into account:

- *Supporting the organisations on their development, accessibility and interaction with participants with fewer opportunities before, during and after the project.*
- *Supporting the staff that deals with issues of inclusion and diversity and works with participants with fewer opportunities (training sessions, peer learning experiences, networking opportunities and job shadowing opportunities).*
- *Reaching out people with fewer opportunities in their respective personal environments by tailoring the approach to their specific information and accessibility needs.*
- *Supporting participants with fewer opportunities before, during and after their participation in mobility programmes with preparatory visits, linguistic support, reinforced mentoring and coaching*
- *Providing financial support to organisations working with participants with fewer opportunities is a way to recognise their additional efforts and effectively involve these target groups in their project activities.*
- *Making the application and reference documents user-friendly, accessible and available in different languages. The documents should have a clear structure and use simple language to support the needs of people with fewer opportunities.*
- *Funding under the Programmes to offer training activities aimed at the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities for inter alia experts, practitioners, staff of the organisations and participants.*
- *Providing suitable and accessible information material by the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps National Agencies. To support the implementation of these tasks, inclusion action plans should be developed and inclusion and diversity Officers shall be appointed in the National Agencies.*

Quite similar suggestions are made on the **'Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan'**[39]:

- Providing specific financial support for people in need of additional support, personalised accompanying measures, and more flexible formats.
- Developing training about inclusion inside the EACEA[40] itself and reinforce the importance for the National Agencies and Institutions to be the first ones to be trained on the matter.
- Creating an Ambassadors' Network of former participants with fewer opportunities that can help promote the programmes among people with fewer opportunities, acting as role models and sharing their experiences.
- Ensuring the accessibility of information: clear and comprehensive language for information and communication, solutions suitable for the visually and hearing impaired on the website, sign language translations during events.

An interesting recommendation to increase the impact of inclusive education resulting from another research[41] is to provide the possibility for projects of a longer duration than 2 or 3 years and provide funding for follow-up activities.

The **'Inclusive Mobility Alliance'** made some **Recommendations on making the Erasmus programme 2021-2027 more inclusive'**[42], which can be implemented to Higher Education and Youth fields of Erasmus+, the school sector, Adult and VET sector, as well as other programmes and mobility schemes (e.g. European Solidarity Corps, traineeships, etc.).

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38. Framework of Inclusion Measures in Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-10/comm-2021-7493_en.pdf
39. Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan: https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-09/EACEA%20INCLUSION%20AND%20DIVERSITY%20AC-TION%20PLAN%20adopted%2005.04.2023_0.pdf
40. EACEA - European Education and Culture Executive Agency
41. Focus on Inclusion in Education: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6b6c1010-ec9c-11ec-a534-01aa75ed71a1
42. Inclusive Mobility Alliance Recommendations: https://epfime.inclusivemobility.eu/ima/booklet

Some of the recommendations that could be useful for PR.I.M.E. project research are:

• Training and capacity building on inclusion, with training co-created and co-designed with organisations and experts in the disability field;
• All information and material should be inclusive and accessible;
• Ensure clarity, transparency and flexibility for special needs costs (also known as 'Inclusion Support');
• Improve partnerships;
• Create and promote 'Inclusive Office' or 'Disability Officers' in the programmes that can support organisations;
• Create a Peer-Support network, such as ambassadors and local mentorship. This could be done through the involvement of trained volunteers willing to support participants, possibly managed, trained and supported by existing volunteer organisations that could get the proper means and support for it.

Within this project, a useful tool could be an accessible centralised online platform in inclusive mobility translated in all official EU languages. The platform can have a forum, videos and easy-to-read material, and an extensive list of all the organisations that provide support for those with disabilities across Europe. The European Commission can co-create and codesign this platform with NGOs, users and experts in the field.

IMAGE 11
Serena in Malta, 'Made in Europe 7' (VET, 2024)

ADDED VALUE OF
THE PR.I.M.E. PROJECT

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The PR.I.M.E. partnership will use the results presented in this Needs Analysis Report to develop the following outputs, which aim to address the identified issues and needs:

1. **Handbook** with guidelines, tips, tools, activities and good practices for the project staff. It can be used in the implementation of the inclusive mobility projects for PWID (during the four phases of the project cycle):

a) During the project application:
- What kind of mobility projects can be done inside Erasmus+ and ESC programme?
- What are the procedures?
- What makes a project inclusive?
- How do you search for reliable partners?
- What are the inclusive measures available, including the financial aspects?

b) After the approval of the project, before the mobility starts:
- possible inclusion measures, like preparatory visit
- selection and preparation of participants and accompanying persons
- profile of accompanying persons
- logistic aspects
- proper pre-departure preparation;

c) During the mobility:
- support to participants, reinforced mentoring
- monitoring
- integration in the community
- support in the learning process
- emergency management
- support tools for budget management;

d) After the mobility:
- Evaluation
- certification
- Participant's Report
- Follow-up
- Dissemination of results.

2. Official **Documents** of Erasmus+ and ESC Programme in easy-to-read support versions (Learning and Volunteering Agreements; Participant's Report; Youthpass and Europass) and 'Guidelines' to create personalised and non-official documents in easy-to-read versions to support the PWID, with some examples and good practices;

3. An **Open Educational Resource** to support the **preparation of participants** with intellectual disabilities in **augmented reality** tool, like a scenario to reduce the stress of the first time travelling, or how to pack the luggage;

4. An **Open Educational Resource** to support the **learning process of participants** with intellectual disabilities in a **gamified approach**.

All of these outputs will be available in the **PR.I.M.E. platform**. which will be fully accessible and free for all interested project staff and organisations.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accompanying person
According to Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'A person who accompanies participants (learners, staff, young people or youth workers) in a mobility activity in order to ensure their safety, provide support and assistance, as well as assist with the participant's effective learning during the mobility experience. In individual activities, an accompanying person may accompany participants with fewer opportunities or minors and youngsters with little experience outside their own country. In case of group activities in the field of education and training, qualified education staff must accompany the group to facilitate the learning process.'* In this Report, some participants in interviews or focus groups also used the word *'assistant'*.

According to the ESC Guide 2024: *'A person who accompanies participants with fewer opportunities (particularly participants with disabilities) in an activity, in order to ensure their safety, provide support and extra assistance, as well as assist with the participant's effective learning during the experience'*.

Accreditation
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Process to ensure that the organisations wishing to receive funding under an Action of the Erasmus+ Programme comply with a set of qualitative standards or pre-requisites laid down by the European Commission for that Action.'*

ADU
Adult Education Action in Erasmus+ Programme – according to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'All forms of non-vocational adult education, whether of a formal, non formal or informal nature (for continuous vocational training see "VET").'* The adult learners are: *'Any adult who, having completed or being no longer involved in initial education or training, returns to some forms of non-vocational continuing learning (formal, non-formal or informal).'*

APV
Advanced Planning Visit or Preparatory Visit – According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Visits to the country of the receiving organisation prior to the start of mobility activities to prepare and ensure high quality of those activities. Examples include tasks to facilitate administrative arrangements and build trust and understanding between organisations involved.'*

According to the ESC Guide 2024: *'Planning visit to the host country prior to the start of a volunteering activity. The purpose of the visit is to prepare and ensure high quality of those activities, build trust, understanding and a solid partnership between organisations and participants involved.'*

Blended mobility
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Combination of physical mobility and a virtual component, facilitating collaborative online learning exchange/teamwork.'*

Certificate of participation
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'In the context of Erasmus+, a document issued to any person who has completed a learning activity in the field of education, training and youth, where applicable. It certifies the attendance and, where applicable, the learning outcomes of the participant in the activity.'*

Co-financing
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'The principle under which part of the costs of a project supported by the EU must be born by the beneficiary or covered through external contributions other than the EU grant.'*

Discover EU Inclusion Action under Erasmus+
According to Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Under the DiscoverEU Inclusion Action, Organisations and informal groups of young people can receive support to carry out projects allowing young people with fewer opportunities to participate in DiscoverEU on equal footing with their peers. DiscoverEU offers young people who are 18 years old a chance to have a short-term individual or group experience travelling across Europe by rail or other modes of transport where necessary. (...) one to five young people with fewer opportunities from the same Country (and eventually accompanying persons) gather for a short period to travel through Europe. Inclusion Action mobility from 1 to 30 days.'*

ESC
European Solidarity Corps Programme. Is a European programme that allows young people between 18 and 30 years old to do volunteering mostly abroad. There are long-term opportunities, between 2 and 12 months, and short-term opportunities between 2 weeks and 2 months. The latter can be done individually or in teams, mainly for young people with fewer opportunities.

Europass
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'The Europass online platform, an action of the European Skills Agenda, provides individuals and organisations with web-based tools and information on learning opportunities, qualifications frameworks and qualifications, guidance, skills intelligence, self-assessment tools and documentation of skills and qualifications, and connectivity with learning and employment opportunities. The Europass platform also offers tools and software to support digitally signed credentials, as announced in the Digital Education Action Plan, through the European Digital Credentials for Learning. The platform interconnects with national data sources for learning opportunities and national qualifications databases or registers.'*

HE
Higher Education Action in Erasmus+ Programme. Erasmus projects for universities. PR.I.M.E. project is not dedicated to this action.

Hosting/Receiving Organisation
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'The (main) organisation that provides learning content to participants in mobility activities by using its own resources and expertise. The hosting organisation cooperates with the sending organisation to define the expected learning outcomes and the methods that will be used to achieve them. It then executes the learning programme and conducts monitoring and mentoring during the activity.'*

Inclusive Mobility
Mobility project for people with disabilities. According to the definition of 'Inclusive Mobility' from the Inclusive Mobility Alliance: *'creating adequate conditions to learn, work or volunteer abroad for people with fewer opportunities, by addressing their diverse support needs. It is a needs-based approach to what the individual beneficiary needs to ensure a safe and exciting mobility period abroad. It is important not to generalise needs, needs are specific and the individualised aspect in it is highly important. What the person/beneficiary says they need is what they should receive. It is not only about academic mobility but also about the social aspects that play an important role in the experience abroad and the potential link to connect with the local community.'*

Learning mobility
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Moving physically to a country other than the country of residence, in order to undertake study, training or non-formal, or informal learning.'*

Learning outcomes
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Statements of what a participant knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.'*

Mobility/Learning Agreement
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'An agreement between the sending and receiving organisation and the participating individuals, defining the aims and content of the mobility period in order to ensure its relevance and quality. It can also be used as a basis for recognition of the period abroad by the receiving organisation.'*

National Agency
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'A designated body in charge of managing the implementation of the Programme at national level in a Member State or in a third country associated to the Programme. One or more National Agencies may exist in each country.'*

Newcomer Organisation
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Any participating organisation that has not previously received support in a given type of action supported by this Programme or its predecessor programme either as a coordinator or a partner.'*

Non-formal learning
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Learning which takes place through planned learning activities where some form of learning support is present, but which is not part of the formal education and training system'.*

Participants with Fewer Opportunities – According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'People with fewer opportunities means people who, for economic, social, cultural, geoFigure al or health reasons, a migrant background, or for reasons such as disability and educational difficulties or for any other reasons, including those that can give rise to discrimination under article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the programme.'*

PWID
Person/People/Participant With Intellectual Disability. This is the final beneficiary of the PR.I.M.E. Project.

Quality Label
According to the ESC Guide 2024: *'Procedure that ensures that the organisations wishing to receive funding under an Action of the European Solidarity Corps respect a set of qualitative standards or prerequisites defined by the European Commission for that given Action. Depending on the type of organisation and/or the country where the requesting organisation is located, the Quality Label is carried out by the Executive Agency, a National Agency or a SALTO Resource Centre.'* The Quality Label can be for LEAD (that allows organisations to ask for grants and manage the whole project, coordinating between the partners), SUPPORT (to be able to send volunteers abroad) and/or HOST (to allow to receive volunteers in the organisation's own services and activities).

SCH
School Education Action in Erasmus+ Programme. Erasmus for schools. PR.I.M.E. project is not dedicated to this action.

VET
Vocational Education and Training Action in Erasmus+ Programme: According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'Vocational education and training is to be understood as the education and training which aims to equip young people and adults with knowledge, skills and competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market. It may be provided in formal and in non-formal settings, at all levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), including tertiary level, if applicable. For the purpose of Erasmus+, projects focusing on initial or continuing vocational education and training are eligible under VET actions.'*

YOUTH
Youth Action in Erasmus+ Programme. It can consist of mobility for 'young people' (considered by the programme as being between 13 and 30 years old) such as 'Youth Exchanges', or mobility for youth workers (Training Courses).

Youthpass
According to the Erasmus+ Guide 2024: *'The European tool to improve the recognition of the learning outcomes of young people and youth workers from their participation in projects supported by the Erasmus+ Programme. Youthpass consists of: a) certificates that can be obtained by participants in several Actions of the Programme; and b) a defined process which supports young people, youth workers and youth organisations to reflect about the learning outcomes from an Erasmus+ project in the field of youth and non-formal learning. Youthpass is also part of a broader European Commission strategy which aims to enhance the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and youth work in Europe and beyond.'*

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