DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT CAMPAIGN

DEC

A Vademecum for Inclusive Adult Education and Erasmus+ Mobility for Learners with Disabilities

Erasmus+ KA210-ADU — Small-scale Partnership in Adult Education
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The Partnership

The Digital Empowerment Campaign brings together three organisations active in adult education and lifelong learning across Italy, Spain and Poland. Their complementary expertise — inclusive and digital adult learning, European project management, and entrepreneurship and labour-market skills — underpins the content of this Vademecum.

YouNet Reggio-Emilia (Italy) — Coordinator

The association YouNet Reggio-Emilia is the sister association of YouNet APS and was created for the implementation of training and international mobility projects in the territory of Reggio Emilia and Parma within the Erasmus+ programme.

The main mission of YouNet Reggio-Emilia, through the realisation of vocational and educational placement projects, is to strengthen the employability of young people and facilitate their transition into the labour market thanks to the multifaceted experience of transnational mobility.

To achieve this, YouNet Reggio-Emilia promotes and manages the organisation, at local and international level, of voluntary activities and short, medium and long-term training activities. Volunteers and employees thus acquire awareness and strategic skills in European project management, in particular on the Erasmus+ programme.

All our initiatives aim to build an inclusive and tolerant society based on dialogue, to support and encourage active citizenship by promoting the growth of the European and intercultural dimension, placing the emphasis on young people and the local authorities with whom we collaborate.

We believe that our mobility, volunteering and technical-professional training initiatives can contribute to the renewal of the traditional education system and to the promotion of exchange with local realities.

Erasmus Learning Academy — ELA SL (Spain)

The Erasmus Learning Academy (ELA) is a training centre that strongly supports and believes in the innovation, modernisation and internationalisation of education.

We design and deliver training courses and structured training events for teachers, trainers, headmasters and other education staff, and we support them in participating in learning mobility experiences (e.g. job shadowing, study visits) to foster the improvement of their competences and the quality of education. Our mission is to foster excellence and quality improvements in education and training. We have worked in the education sector for more than 10 years, so we know the real context and the challenges that teachers face every day.

Fuelled by our genuine, motivated and passionate approach, we regularly participate in international training and European conferences to keep our know-how up to date. We actively take part in the network of Erasmus organisations in many ways: hosting participants from other countries and sending our staff abroad through Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects; taking part in

conferences and contact activities organised by the National Agencies and the EU institutions; designing or participating in Erasmus+ KA2 innovation projects and strategic partnerships; and sharing our knowledge with organisations that have less experience in the Programme by providing advice, mentorship or other support.

FuturaProject (Poland)

FuturaProject is an organisation specialised in business consultancy and entrepreneurship support, with a strong focus on helping adults develop skills aligned with the current labour market and emerging business trends.

We design and deliver tailored programmes aimed at fostering entrepreneurial competences, innovation and professional growth. Our activities combine practical business guidance with modern development strategies, including the integration of digital tools and artificial intelligence, to ensure that our services remain relevant, up to date and responsive to market needs.

Through consultancy, mentoring and structured support, FuturaProject assists adults who wish to strengthen their professional profile, launch new initiatives or improve their performance in competitive environments. We promote a results-oriented approach that transforms ideas into concrete opportunities and supports sustainable business development.

Our beneficiaries come from diverse professional backgrounds and age groups, reflecting the inclusive nature of our mission. We work closely with each participant to understand their individual needs and objectives, offering customised solutions that enhance skills, adaptability and long-term career prospects. Our commitment is to empower adults to actively participate in the labour market and contribute to innovation and economic growth.

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About the Digital Empowerment Campaign

This publication is the main result of the Digital Empowerment Campaign (DEC), an Erasmus+ project dedicated to making adult education and international mobility genuinely accessible to learners with disabilities. It gathers, in a single practical handbook, the evidence collected during the project and the concrete tools and measures developed in response to that evidence.

What is DEC?

The Digital Empowerment Campaign is a Small-scale Partnership in Adult Education (Erasmus+ KA210-ADU), carried out between February 2025 and July 2026 by three organisations from Italy, Spain and Poland: YouNet Reggio-Emilia (coordinator, Italy), the Erasmus Learning Academy — ELA SL (Spain) and FuturaProject (Poland).

The project responds to a persistent inequality in European adult education: adults with disabilities remain among the groups least able to access learning and international mobility opportunities — not because they lack ability or motivation, but because programmes, materials and learning environments are too often designed without them in mind.

The vision behind this publication

DEC starts from a simple conviction: access is not the same as participation. Offering a learner a place on a course, or a seat on a mobility, does not by itself make that experience meaningful. Real participation depends on whether content, tools and environments are genuinely usable, and on whether learners feel confident, prepared and supported.

The project's answer brings together two European competence frameworks — DigComp (digital competences) and LifeComp (personal, social and learning-to-learn competences) — in the belief that digital and life skills, developed together, are what turn access into genuine inclusion. Digital competences help learners overcome physical and communication barriers and reach educational and professional opportunities; life competences give them the confidence, motivation and resilience to take ownership of their learning. Neither is sufficient on its own — and this combined approach is the thread that runs through the whole Vademecum.

From listening to action

This Vademecum was built in a deliberate sequence: first listening, then responding. The project began with a transnational Needs Analysis that gathered the perspectives of both adult education staff and adult learners with disabilities across the three countries.

The evidence that emerged — that the real obstacles are rarely about access to technology, but rather about inaccessible content, cost, low confidence and a lack of clear guidance — shaped everything that followed. The recommendations drawn from that analysis are answered directly by the chapters that follow it: one focused on everyday inclusive teaching practice, and one on participation in Erasmus+ mobility.

What this Vademecum is, and who it is for

This Vademecum is a practical, evidence-based handbook for making adult education more inclusive for learners with disabilities. It is written above all for adult education organisations and their staff — trainers, educators, tutors, project coordinators and administrative teams — who want to adapt their programmes and their mobility activities without needing specialist technical knowledge or large budgets.

Learners with disabilities are the ultimate beneficiaries: every recommendation is designed to widen their access to, and participation in, both adult education and international learning. The guidance deliberately favours low-cost, replicable and time-efficient solutions, because these are the conditions under which the small organisations that make up much of Europe's adult education sector can realistically put inclusion into practice.

How this Vademecum was developed

The handbook was co-created by the three partner organisations, each contributing its own expertise and national perspective. It is grounded in the field evidence collected during the project and aligned throughout with European policy frameworks for inclusion and key competences, including the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the DigComp and LifeComp frameworks.

The Vademecum is published as an accessible digital document and is available in four languages — Italian, Spanish, Polish and English — to support the widest possible use across European adult education communities.

How to Read this Vademecum

This Vademecum is designed to be a working tool rather than a report to be read once. This short section explains how it is organised and how to find what you need quickly.

The structure at a glance

The Vademecum is organised in three chapters that follow the logic of the project — from understanding needs, to acting in the classroom, to acting in mobility:

- **Chapter 1 — Needs Analysis and Evidence Base:** presents the findings of the transnational survey of adult education staff and learners with disabilities, the barriers identified, and the operational recommendations that follow from them.
- **Chapter 2 — Guidelines and Good Practices for Inclusion:** offers practical principles, ready-to-use teaching practices and free or low-cost tools to make everyday adult education more inclusive.
- **Chapter 3 — Measures to Increase Participation in Erasmus+ Mobility Opportunities:** provides concrete guidance for making international mobility accessible, from preparation and accompaniment to inclusion funding and follow-up.

How the chapters connect

The three chapters are meant to be read as a connected whole. Chapter 1 establishes what learners and staff actually need; Chapters 2 and 3 respond to those needs with concrete measures. Throughout the two practical chapters, recurring “This approach aligns with…” notes link each recommendation back to a specific finding of the Needs Analysis, so the reader can always see why a given practice is suggested. The case studies are numbered in a single continuous sequence across the practical chapters (Practice 1–2 in Chapter 2 and Best Practice 3–10 in Chapter 3), reflecting this shared logic.

Features to look for

To make the Vademecum easy to use in daily practice, several recurring elements appear throughout:

- **“This approach aligns with…” notes —** connect each practice to the evidence in Chapter 1.
- **Case studies and best practices —** real-world examples (numbered 1–10) showing how the measures work in practice.
- **Barrier–Solution mapping —** a quick-reference table matching common obstacles to evidence-based solutions.
- **Checklists —** ready-to-use lists for planning accessible activities, mobility and reporting.
- **Tool cards with “How to use” guides and accessibility notes —** practical, mostly free or low-cost digital tools, each with guidance on using it inclusively.

- **Cross-references —** “See…” links that connect related sections across the chapters.

Suggested reading paths

The Vademecum can be read from beginning to end, but readers in a hurry can also enter it at the point most relevant to them:

- **Trainers and educators** looking to make their teaching more inclusive can go straight to Chapter 2.
- **Mobility and project coordinators** preparing Erasmus+ activities will find the most relevant guidance in Chapter 3, including the section on inclusion funding.
- **Managers and decision-makers** who want the evidence and the priorities first should start with Chapter 1 and its operational recommendations.

Whichever entry point you choose, the Needs Analysis in Chapter 1 provides the rationale behind every recommendation in the rest of the document.

Key terms and acronyms

- **EdA / Adult Education —** education and training provision for adults.
- **DigComp —** the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens.
- **LifeComp —** the European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competences.
- **KA1 —** Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (learning mobility of individuals).
- **UDL —** Universal Design for Learning.
- **WCAG —** Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- **“Fewer opportunities” —** the Erasmus+ term for people facing obstacles (e.g. disability, economic, social or geographical) that limit their access to its opportunities.

CHAPTER 1 - Needs Analysis and Evidence Base

Lead partner: FuturaProject

Abstract
This chapter presents the findings of the Needs Analysis conducted within the Erasmus+ KA210-ADU project "Digital Empowerment Campaign" (DEC). The analysis collected 159 validated responses from adult education (EdA) staff and adult learners with disabilities across Italy, Spain and Poland, using two structured online questionnaires aligned with the DIGCOMP and LIFECOMP frameworks.

The results reveal an encouraging base for inclusive digital adult education: learners possess solid technological access and foundational digital skills, while staff demonstrate a positive attitude towards inclusion and strong basic digital competences. However, systemic gaps persist on both sides. Staff lack knowledge of accessibility standards, Universal Design for Learning and advanced digital skills needed to produce inclusive content. Learners face significant barriers related to inaccessible content and environments, financial constraints, limited motivation and low confidence — particularly regarding Erasmus+ mobility opportunities.

Key convergences between the two groups point to a shared need for accessible content and learning environments rather than better technology, for economically sustainable solutions, and for targeted guidance and motivational support to increase participation in both EdA programmes and Erasmus+ mobility.

These findings directly inform the recommendations presented in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Vademecum, which provide practical guidelines for inclusive educational practices and strategies to facilitate access to Erasmus+ opportunities for learners with disabilities.

Keywords
Needs analysis, adult education, disability inclusion, DIGCOMP, LIFECOMP

1. Introduction

The Needs Analysis represents a core activity of the Erasmus+ KA210-ADU project "Digital Empowerment Campaign" (DEC) and constitutes the evidence-based foundation for all subsequent project outputs.

Its main purpose was to:

- Identify existing barriers to participation in adult education and Erasmus+ mobility opportunities for learners with disabilities.
- Assess the level of digital competences (DIGCOMP) and life competences (LIFECOMP) among adult education staff and learners with disabilities.
- Collect data to inform the design of inclusive, accessible and needs-based project results.

The analysis adopted a dual perspective, gathering evidence from both EdA professionals and adult learners with disabilities across Italy, Spain and Poland. This approach ensured that the findings reflect not only organisational capacity and staff preparedness, but also the lived experience, needs and aspirations of learners themselves.

The results presented in this chapter directly inform the practical recommendations and guidelines developed in Chapter 2 (Guidelines and Good Practices for Inclusion) and Chapter 3 (Measures to Increase Participation in Erasmus+ Mobility Opportunities).

2. Methodological Framework

Target groups involved

The Needs Analysis was targeted two complementary groups:

Adult Education Staff: Trainers, educators, tutors and administrative staff working in adult education organisations, NGOs, training centres and social cooperatives, eventually directly involved in supporting adult learners with disabilities.

Adult Learners with Disabilities: Adults aged approximately 20–65, with physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, often characterised by low levels of formal education and limited access to digital tools.

The dual perspective ensured a holistic understanding of both organisational capacity and learner experience.

Data collection tools and approach

The Needs Analysis was conducted through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Key features of the methodology applied in the study:

- Two structured online questionnaires, one for staff and one for learners.
- Digital format to ensure accessibility and transnational participation (Microsoft Forms)
- Quantitative data were aggregated to identify trends, gaps and recurring needs
- Qualitative answers were coded and grouped by thematic areas.

Alignment with DIGCOMP and LIFECOMP frameworks

The questionnaires used in the study were developed in line with LifeComp and DigComp, which are conceptual frameworks developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) to define and promote essential skills for life, learning and work in the 21st century. They form part of a broader European initiative to foster lifelong learning.

Countries involved and sample size

The questionnaires were disseminated in Italy, Spain and Poland. In addition, in order to reach a wider group of respondents, questionnaires were produced and distributed in English.

The Needs Analysis collected 159 validated responses.

3. Key Findings – Adult Education Staff

Profile of respondents

The staff sample shows a generally high level of experience in adult education, with almost half of respondents having more than ten years of professional practice. This confirms the reliability of the data, as responses are grounded in long-term, real-life educational experience.

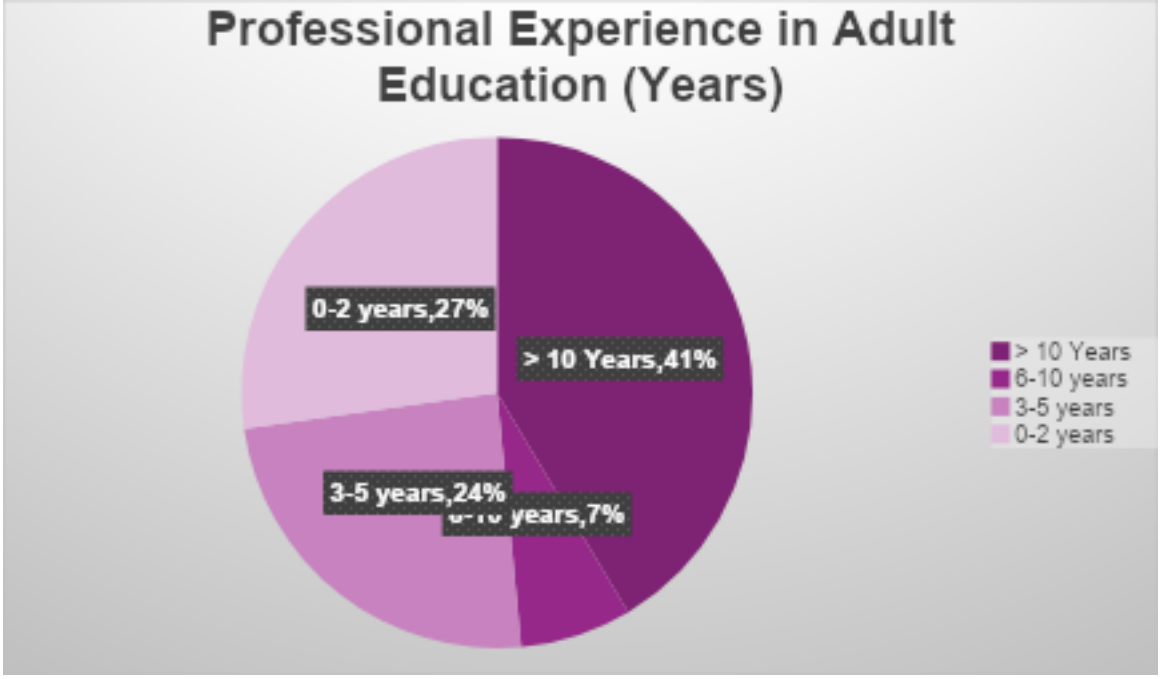

Figure 1 – Professional Experience in Adult Education (Years). Distribution of respondents by years of professional experience in the adult education sector.

Most respondents work in non-institutional or hybrid organisational contexts, mainly within NGOs and third-sector organisations. This diversity highlights the need for practical and flexible solutions that can be applied in settings with varying levels of resources, procedures, and structural support.

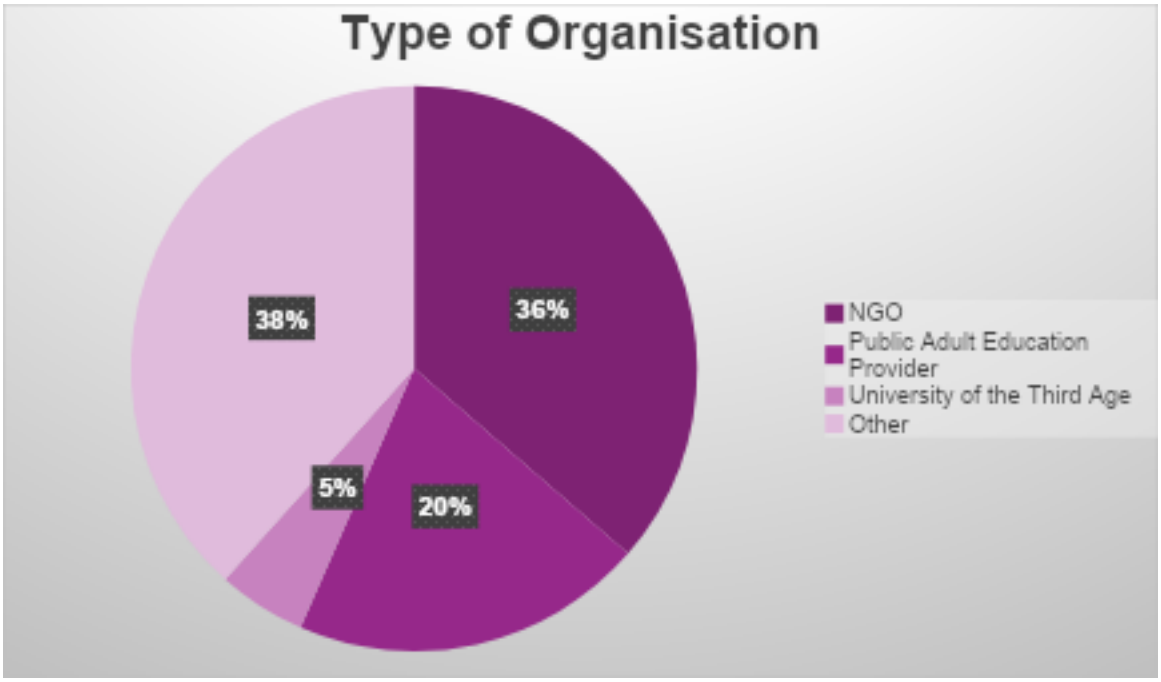

Figure 2 – Type of Organisation. Breakdown of respondents by type of organisation in which they are employed.

While approximately three quarters of the staff have at least some experience working with people with disabilities, nearly half describe this experience as limited. This indicates a clear need for structured guidance, training, and practical tools to strengthen inclusive practices.

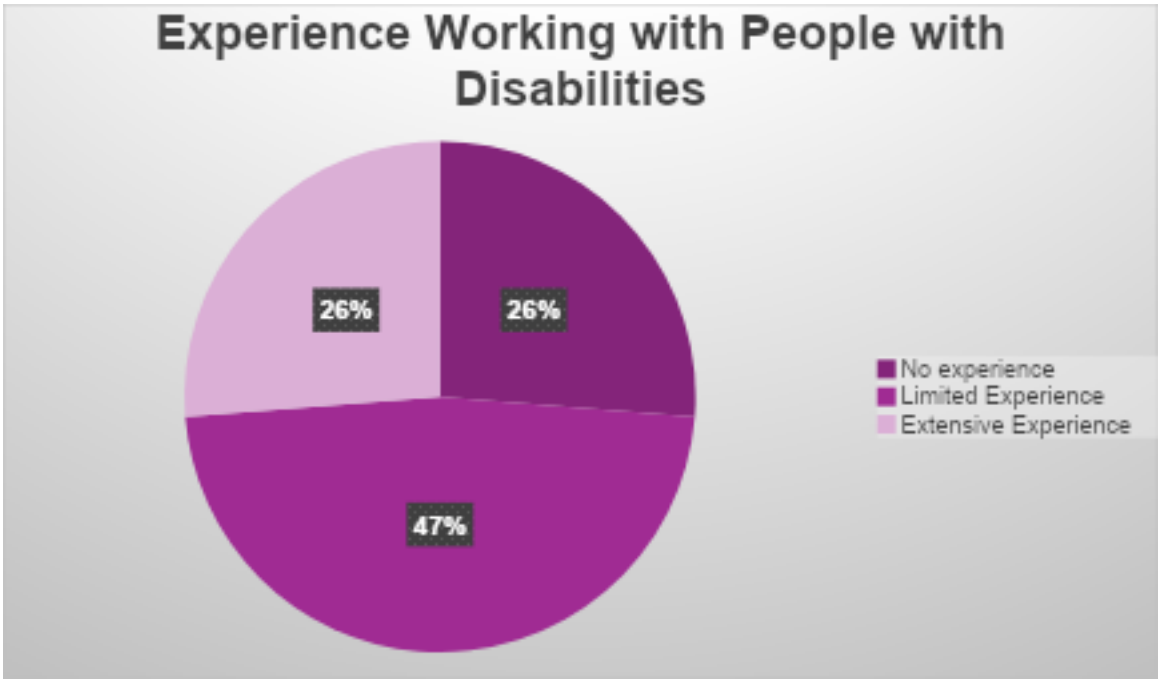

Figure 3 – Experience Working with People with Disabilities. Self-reported level of experience in working with learners with disabilities.

The use of digital tools in teaching and training is widespread, with the large majority reporting frequent or constant use. This represents a strong enabling factor for the adoption of accessible digital tools and inclusive digital solutions, provided they are user-friendly and adaptable to different educational contexts.

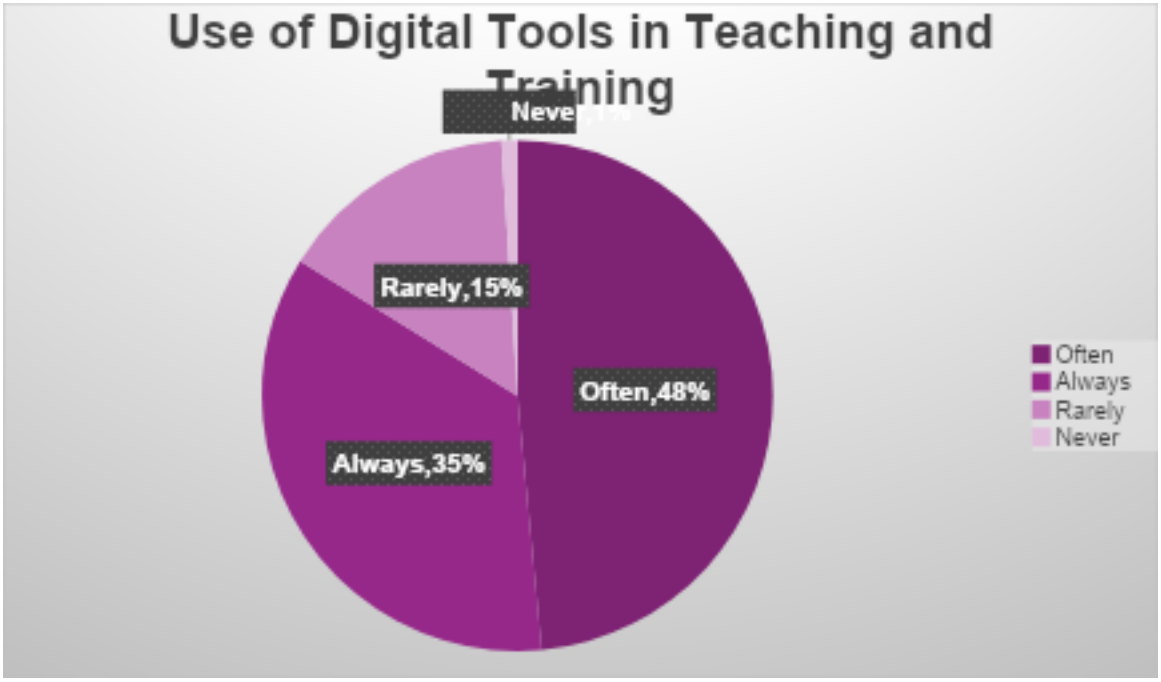

Figure 4 – Use of Digital Tools in Teaching and Training. Frequency of use of digital tools in educational and training activities.

Existing inclusive practices

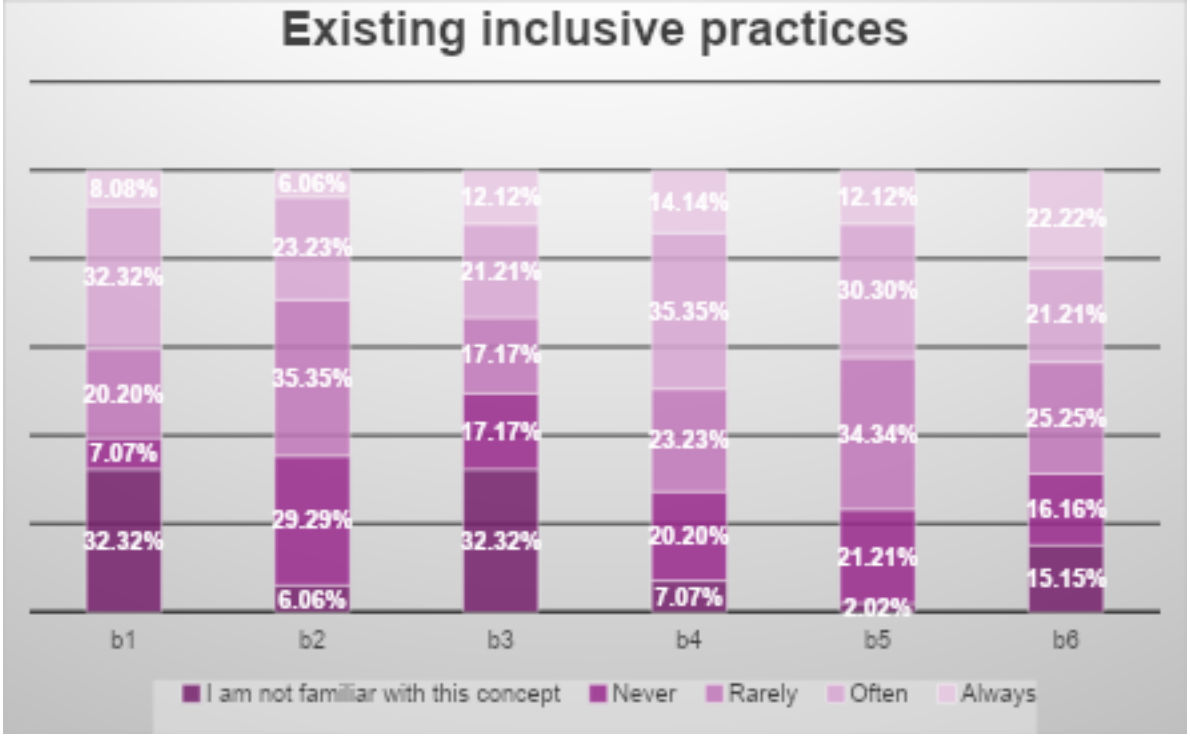

Figure 5 – Existing Inclusive Practices. Staff awareness and frequency of use of six inclusive practices (B1–B6) relevant to adult education for learners with disabilities.

The analysis examined staff awareness and use of six inclusive practices relevant to adult education for learners with disabilities:

- B1 – Learning materials in accessible formats, compliant with recognised standards (e.g. WCAG)
- B2 – Subtitles, written transcripts, sign language interpreters or equivalent support
- B3 – Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- B4 – Tutor or peer educator support
- B5 – Text alternatives and audio descriptions for images and videos
- B6 – Measures to support participation in Erasmus+ mobility opportunities

The findings reveal a clear divide between people-based support practices and content accessibility practices.

Tutoring and peer support (B4) and text alternatives and audio descriptions (B5) are the most widely adopted, with approximately half of respondents reporting frequent or constant use. These are practical, relationship-driven measures that staff can implement without specialised technical knowledge.

By contrast, knowledge of formal accessibility frameworks remains a significant gap. Around one third of respondents are entirely unfamiliar with accessible format standards such as WCAG (B1) and with Universal Design for Learning (B3). These are precisely the frameworks that enable systematic, replicable inclusion rather than ad-hoc solutions.

The use of subtitles, transcripts and sign language support (B2) presents a different pattern: while almost all staff are aware of these tools, nearly two thirds never or rarely use them,

suggesting that awareness alone does not translate into practice — likely due to lack of time, resources or technical skills.

Measures to support participation in Erasmus+ mobility (B6) show the most polarised distribution: while over 40% of respondents use them often or always, 15% are entirely unfamiliar with such measures and a further 16% never apply them. This points to an uneven integration of mobility support across organisations.

Overall, the data indicate that staff tend to rely on interpersonal and informal support strategies, while structured, standards-based approaches to accessibility remain underused or unknown. This gap is a priority area for capacity building.

Main barriers to inclusion

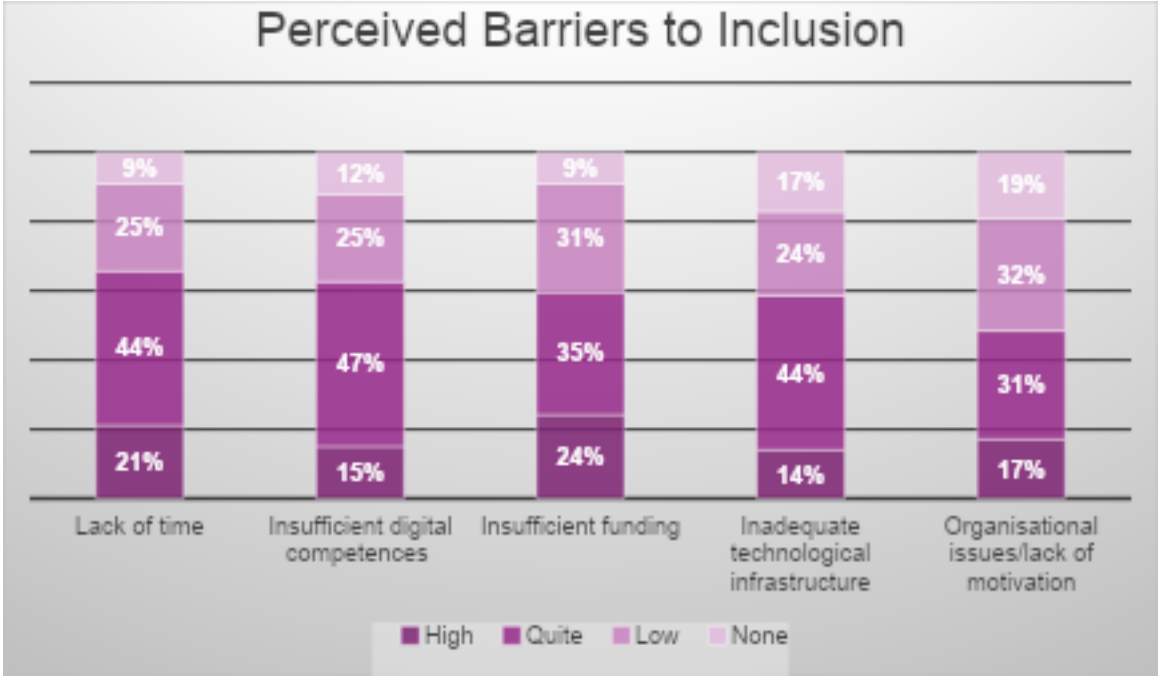

Figure 6 – Perceived Barriers to Inclusion. Staff assessment of the significance of five potential barriers to implementing inclusive practices.

Staff were asked to rate the significance of five potential barriers to implementing inclusive practices for learners with disabilities, on a scale from "None" to "High".

The most significant barriers are capacity-related. Insufficient digital competences emerge as the most widespread concern, with 62% of respondents rating it as a high or quite significant barrier. This is closely followed by lack of time (65%) and inadequate technological infrastructure (58%), which together point to a systemic challenge: staff who are willing to adopt inclusive practices often lack the skills, the time to develop them, and the tools to implement them.

Insufficient funding is rated as a high or quite significant barrier by 59% of respondents, with nearly a quarter considering it highly significant — the highest proportion in this category.

This suggests that while funding is not the most pervasive barrier, where it is felt, it is felt acutely.

Organisational issues and lack of motivation, while rated lower overall (48% high or quite significant), should not be underestimated. With nearly one in five respondents rating it as highly significant, motivation can act as a negative multiplier: when organisational commitment is weak, even good tools and adequate resources risk not being adopted.

Taken together, the data suggest that the main obstacles to inclusion are not attitudinal but structural. Staff show willingness to engage with inclusive practices, but face a combination of skill gaps, time pressure, resource constraints and sometimes insufficient organisational support. Addressing these barriers requires practical, low-cost and time-efficient solutions that can be realistically integrated into existing workflows.

DIGICOMP strengths and gaps

An analysis of the respondents' digital competences was carried out in accordance with DIGICOMP framework, including 5 areas:

Competence Area 1: Information search, evaluation and management
- Competence 1.1: Browsing, searching and filtering information
- Competence 1.2: Evaluating information
- Competence 1.3: Managing information

Competence Area 2: Communication and collaboration
- Competence 2.1: Interacting through and with digital technologies
- Competence 2.2: Sharing through digital technologies
- Competence 2.3: Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies
- Competence 2.4: Collaborating through digital technologies
- Competence 2.5: Digital behaviour
- Competence 2.6: Managing digital identity

Competence Area 3: Content creation
- Competence 3.1: Developing digital content
- Competence 3.2: Integrating and re-elaborating digital content
- Competence 3.3: Copyright and licences
- Competence 3.4: Computational thinking and programming

Competence Area 4: Safety, wellbeing and responsible use
- Competence 4.1: Protecting devices
- Competence 4.2: Protecting personal data and privacy
- Competence 4.3: Supporting wellbeing
- Competence 4.4: Protecting the environment

Competence Area 5: Problem identification and solving
- Competence 5.1: Identifying and solving technical problems
- Competence 5.2: Identifying needs and digital technological responses
- Competence 5.3: Identifying creative solutions using digital technologies

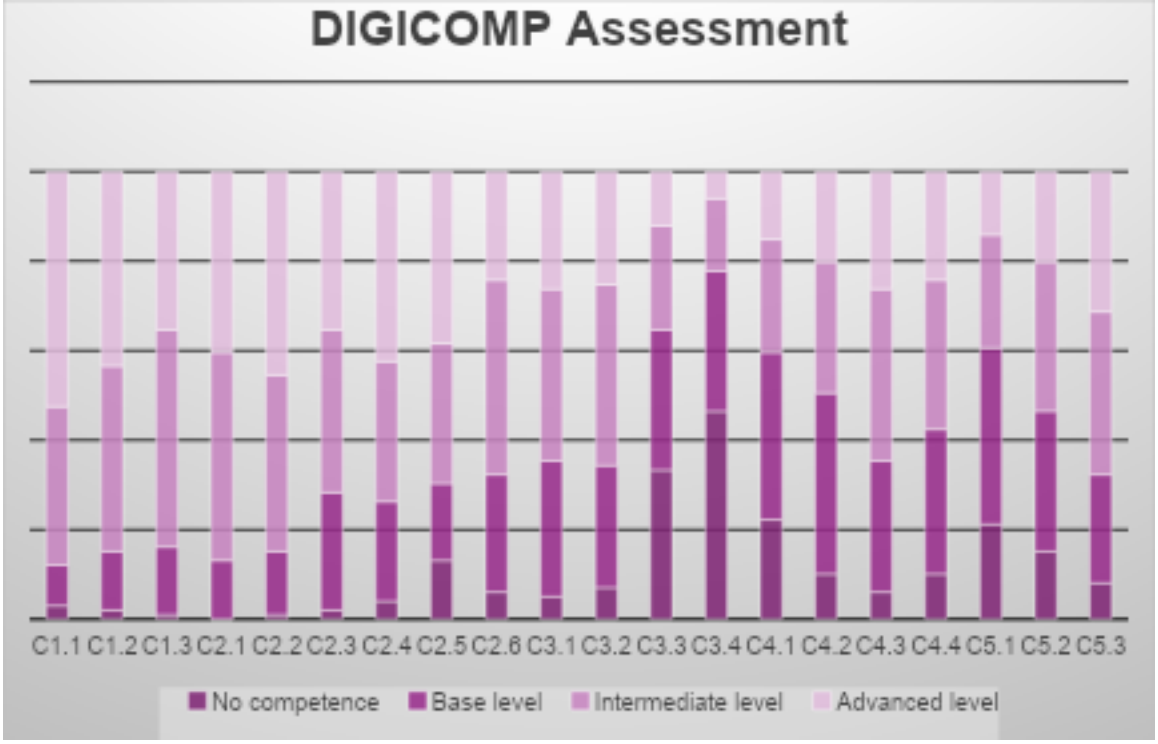

Figure 7 – DIGCOMP Assessment (Staff). Self-assessed level of digital competence across the five DIGCOMP areas and their sub-competences.

Overall, the findings show that staff are strong in basic and intermediate digital skills, but less confident in the skills required to create, manage and maintain digital content in a correct, secure and sustainable manner.

Key strengths include

- browsing, searching for and filtering information (1.1): 53% of respondents declare advanced skills,
- evaluating data and content (1.2): 43% of respondents declare advanced skills,
- sharing via technology (2.2): 45% of respondents declare advanced skills,
- collaborating through digital technologies (2.4): 42% of respondents declare advanced skills.
- The staff therefore appear, on average, capable of integrating digital tools and navigating information and resources. This is consistent with the frequent use of digital tools in training.

Critical weaknesses, directly linked to inclusion:

- copyright and licences (3.3): 33% of respondents declare no skills in this area,
- programming (3.4): 46% of respondents declare no skills in this area,
- protecting devices (4.1): 22 % of respondents declare no skills in this area,
- identifying and solving technical problems (5.1): 21% of respondents declare no skills in this area.

These weaknesses have a potentially critical impact on the implementation of accessibility measures in adult education:

- without solid skills in copyright and content management, it is difficult to produce and reuse accessible materials correctly;

- without security and privacy, it is risky to work with digital tools and sensitive data;
- without troubleshooting skills, the adoption of inclusive digital solutions can easily be disrupted by practical problems.

Consequently, staff may be unable to independently develop complex inclusive digital content or solutions, and may struggle to support learners with disabilities in developing more advanced digital skills that are transferable to employability, unless there is targeted strengthening in these areas.

LIFECOMP strengths and gaps

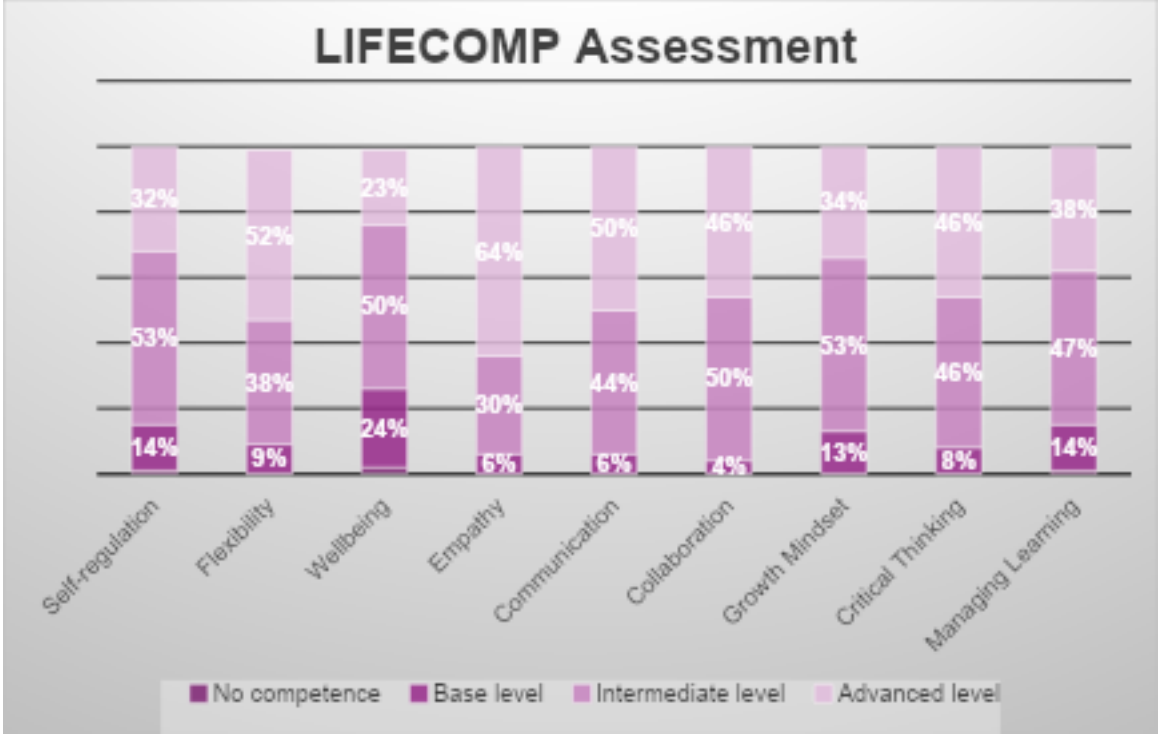

Figure 8 – LIFECOMP Assessment (Staff). Self-assessed level of life competences across the LIFECOMP framework areas.

A high level of awareness regarding inclusion and strong interpersonal skills have been observed. The areas requiring support and development are primarily self-regulation (awareness and management of emotions, thoughts, and behaviour) and wellbeing (the pursuit of life satisfaction, care for physical, mental, and social health, and the adoption of a sustainable lifestyle). A significant barrier may also be the Growth Mindset (believing in one's own and others' potential to learn and grow), with only one-third of respondents rating their competence in this area as high. Respondents also highlighted the need to improve their competence in planning, organising, monitoring, and reviewing their own learning. Failure to address these needs hinders the maintenance of inclusive practices in the long term, especially when time and resources are limited.

4. Key Findings – Adult Learners with Disabilities

Profile of respondents

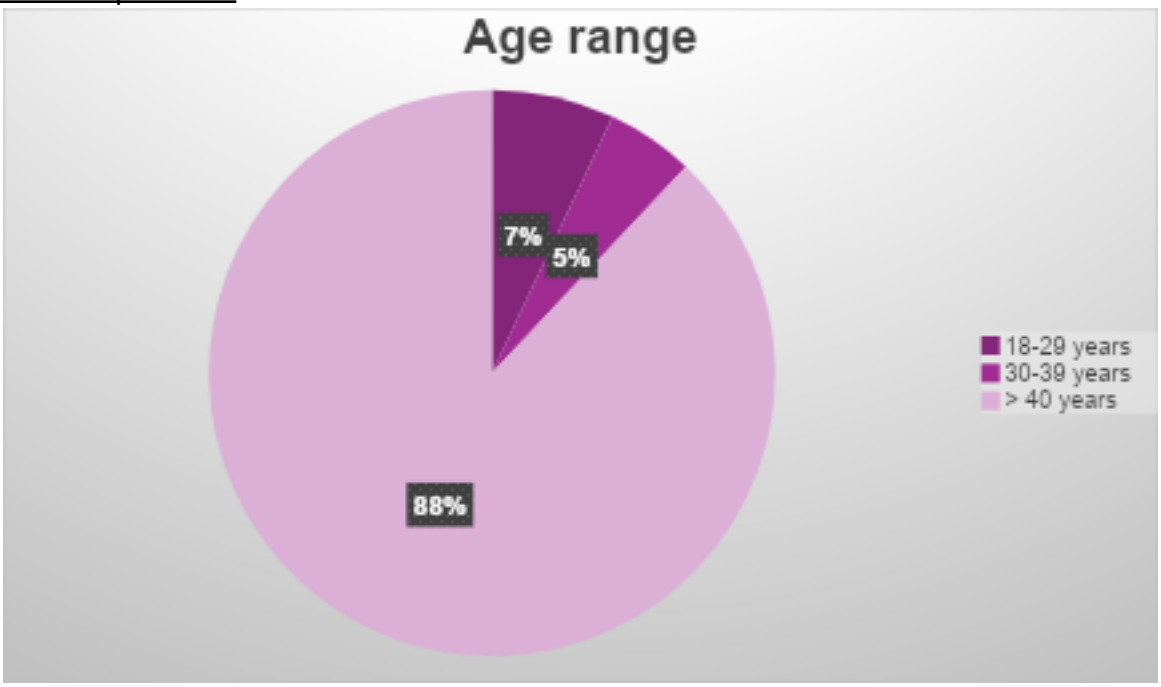

Figure 9 – Age Groups. Distribution of respondents by age group.

The survey included respondents from various age groups, with the largest group comprising people over the age of 40 (88%).

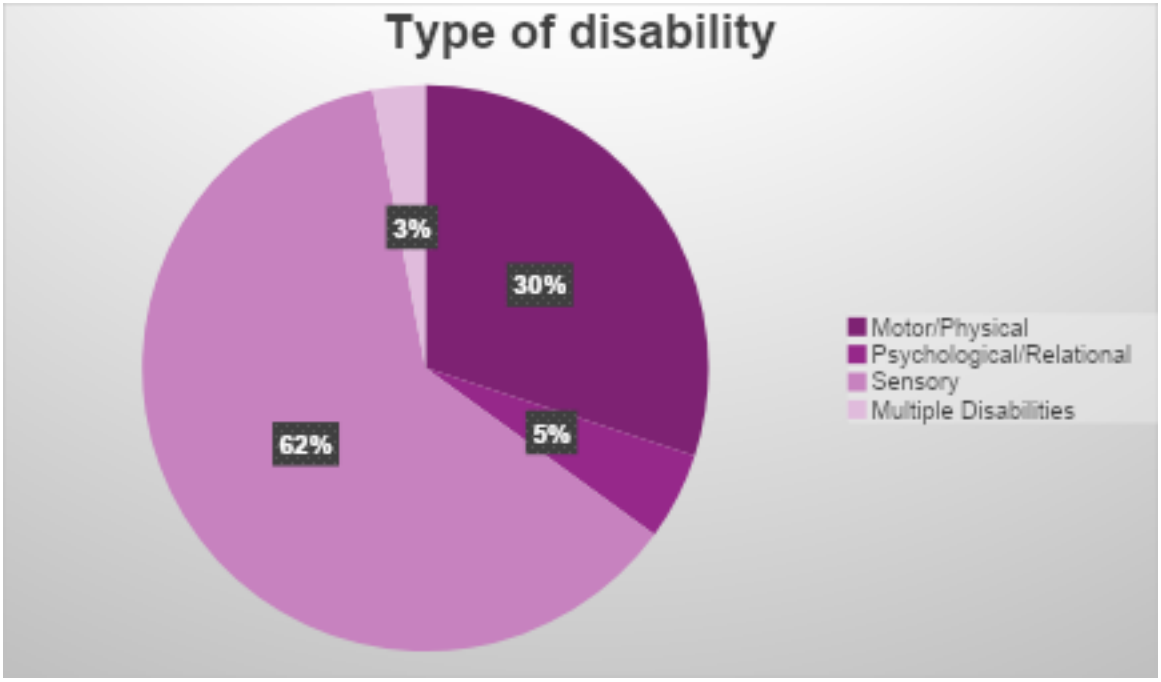

Figure 10 – Type of Disability. Breakdown of respondents by type of disability (sensory, motor, psychological/relational, multiple).

The study involved people with various types of disability – primarily sensory (visual, hearing) – 62%, motor – 30%, and psychological and relational – 5%. Respondents with multiple disabilities represent 3% of the sample.

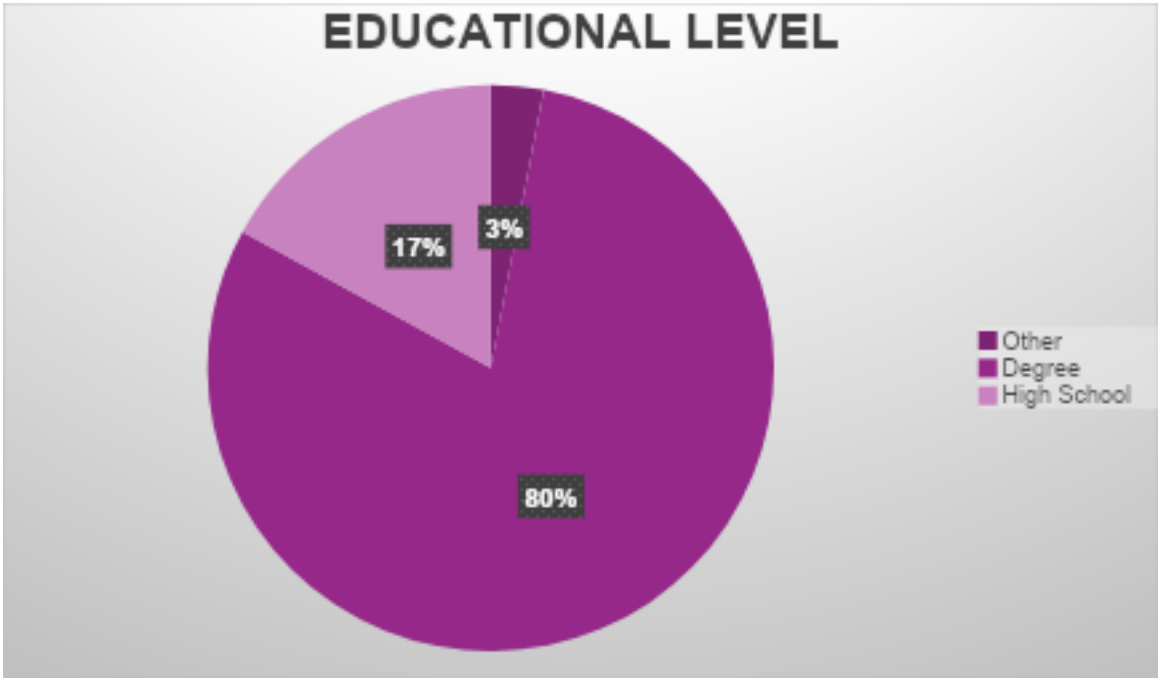

Figure 11 – Educational Level. Distribution of respondents by highest level of education attained.

The majority of learners surveyed hold a university degree (80%), while 17% have completed high school education and 3% report other qualifications.
This relatively high educational profile suggests that the barriers to participation in adult education for learners with disabilities are not primarily linked to a lack of prior education, but rather to other factors such as accessibility, motivation and support.

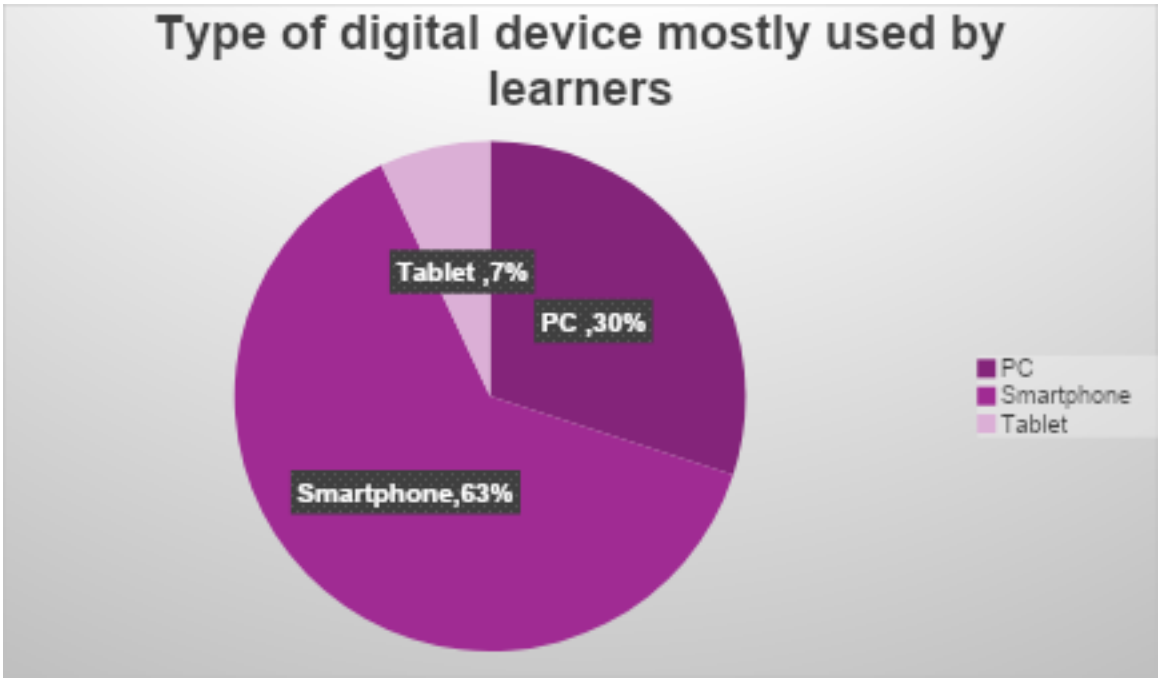

Figure 12 – Type of Digital Device Mostly Used by Learners. Primary digital devices used by respondents for communication, learning and information searching.

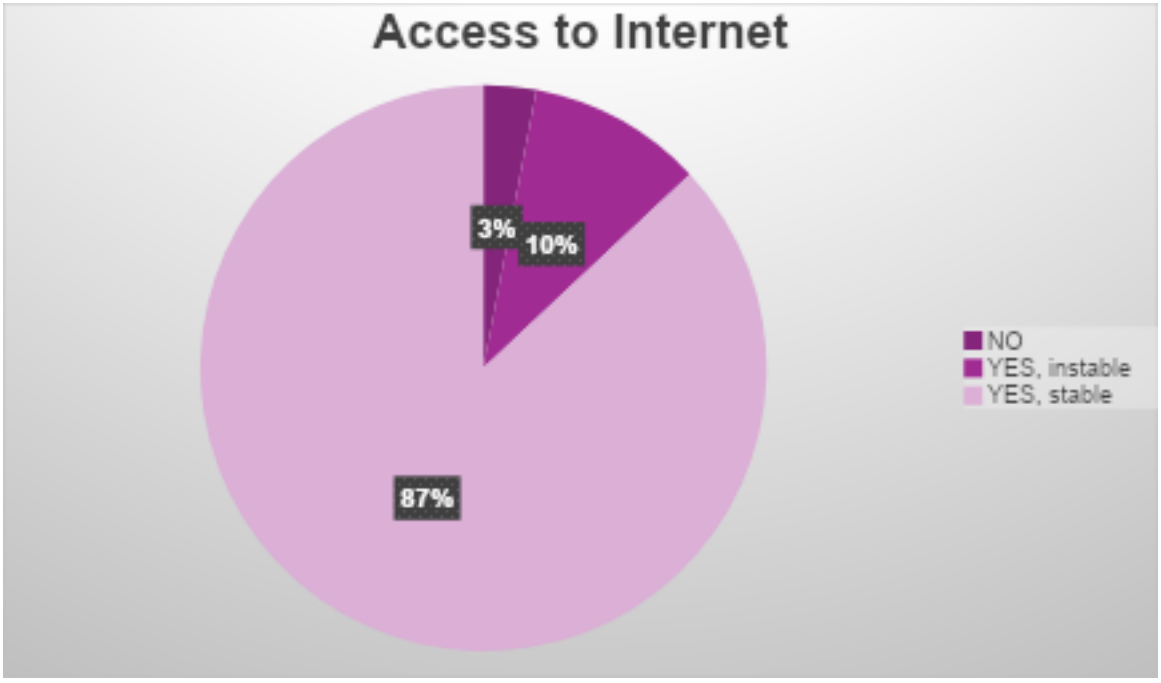

Figure 13 – Access to Internet. Percentage of respondents with internet access and stability of connection.

The main digital devices used by respondents for communication, learning and searching for information are smartphones (63%) and PCs (30%). Only 7% use tablets for these purposes. Internet access is nearly universal (97%), and the large majority (87%) report a stable connection.

While technology access is not a significant barrier for this group, the strong predominance of smartphones over PCs is noteworthy. Smartphones are primarily consumption devices — suitable for browsing and communicating, but limited when it comes to tasks that require content creation, document editing or more structured learning activities. The low use of PCs may therefore reflect not only a preference, but also a limited level of digital literacy and a narrower range of digital practices. This is consistent with the competence gaps identified in the DIGCOMP analysis (see below), particularly in areas such as content creation and problem solving.

From a practical standpoint, these findings have a dual implication: on one hand, learning materials and platforms must be mobile-friendly to match actual usage patterns; on the other, EdA programmes should actively support learners in developing PC-based skills that are essential for employability and more autonomous digital participation.

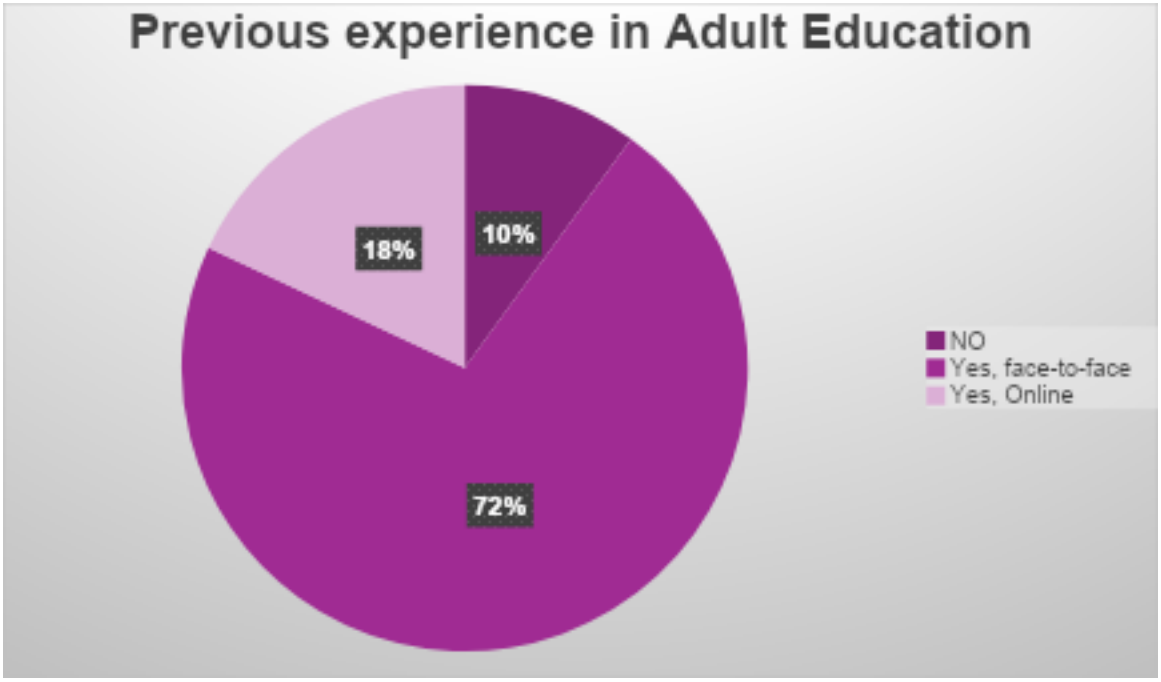

Figure 14 – Previous Experience in Adult Education. Participation rate in adult education programmes, including digital/online formats.

The large majority of respondents (90%) had already taken part in adult education programmes, while 10% had no previous experience. However, only 18% had participated through digital or online channels.

Given that the survey targeted individuals already engaged with or considering adult education, the high rate of prior participation is expected. The relevant finding here is the very low uptake of digital learning formats. This suggests that online or blended EdA programmes are either not sufficiently available, not adequately promoted, or not perceived as accessible and suitable by learners with disabilities. For EdA organisations aiming to expand inclusion, this represents both a gap to address and an opportunity: a large pool of motivated learners exists, but digital pathways have not yet reached them effectively.

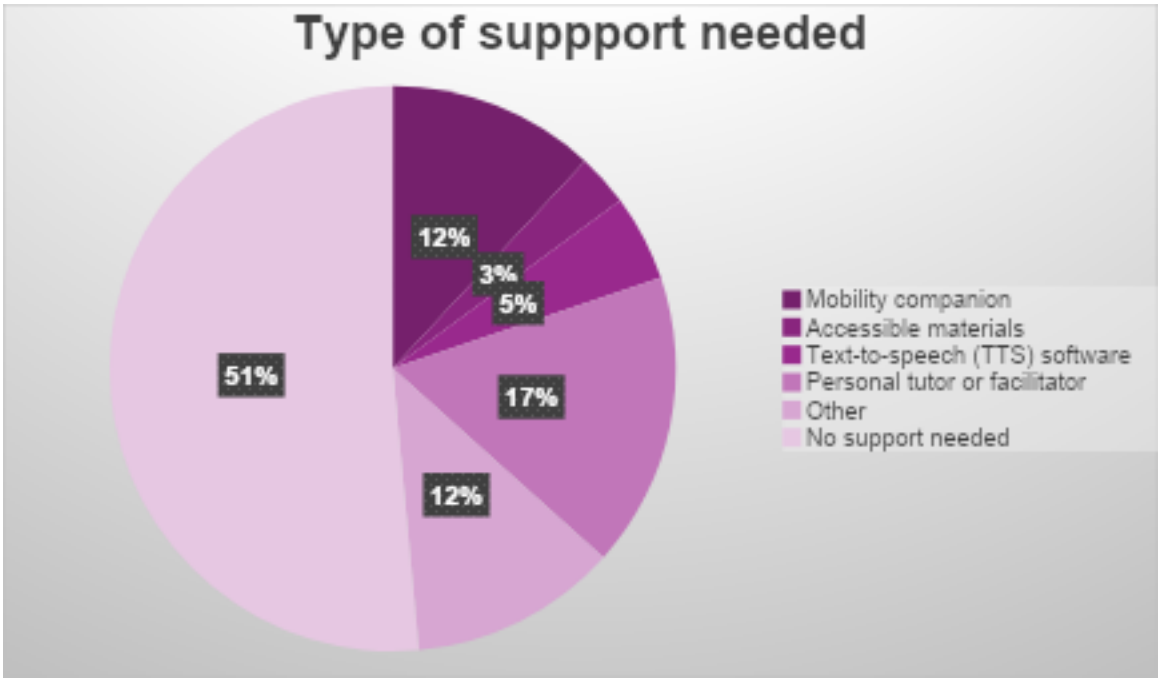

Figure 15 – Type of Support Needed. Types of support required by learners when participating in adult education programmes.

Over half of respondents (51%) report not needing any special support when participating in adult education programmes. Among those who do, the most frequently cited needs are a dedicated tutor (17%) and a mobility companion (12%).

The fact that a majority of learners with disabilities perceive themselves as autonomous in educational settings is a significant finding. It challenges the assumption that disability necessarily requires intensive individual support, and suggests that many learners can participate effectively provided the learning environment and content are inherently accessible. This reinforces the case for investing in universal accessibility measures — such as inclusive content design and accessible venues — rather than relying solely on individual support arrangements. At the same time, the demand for tutoring and mobility companions, while expressed by a minority, points to specific needs that should not be overlooked, particularly when designing Erasmus+ mobility experiences where learners face unfamiliar environments and additional practical challenges.

Barriers to accessing adult education

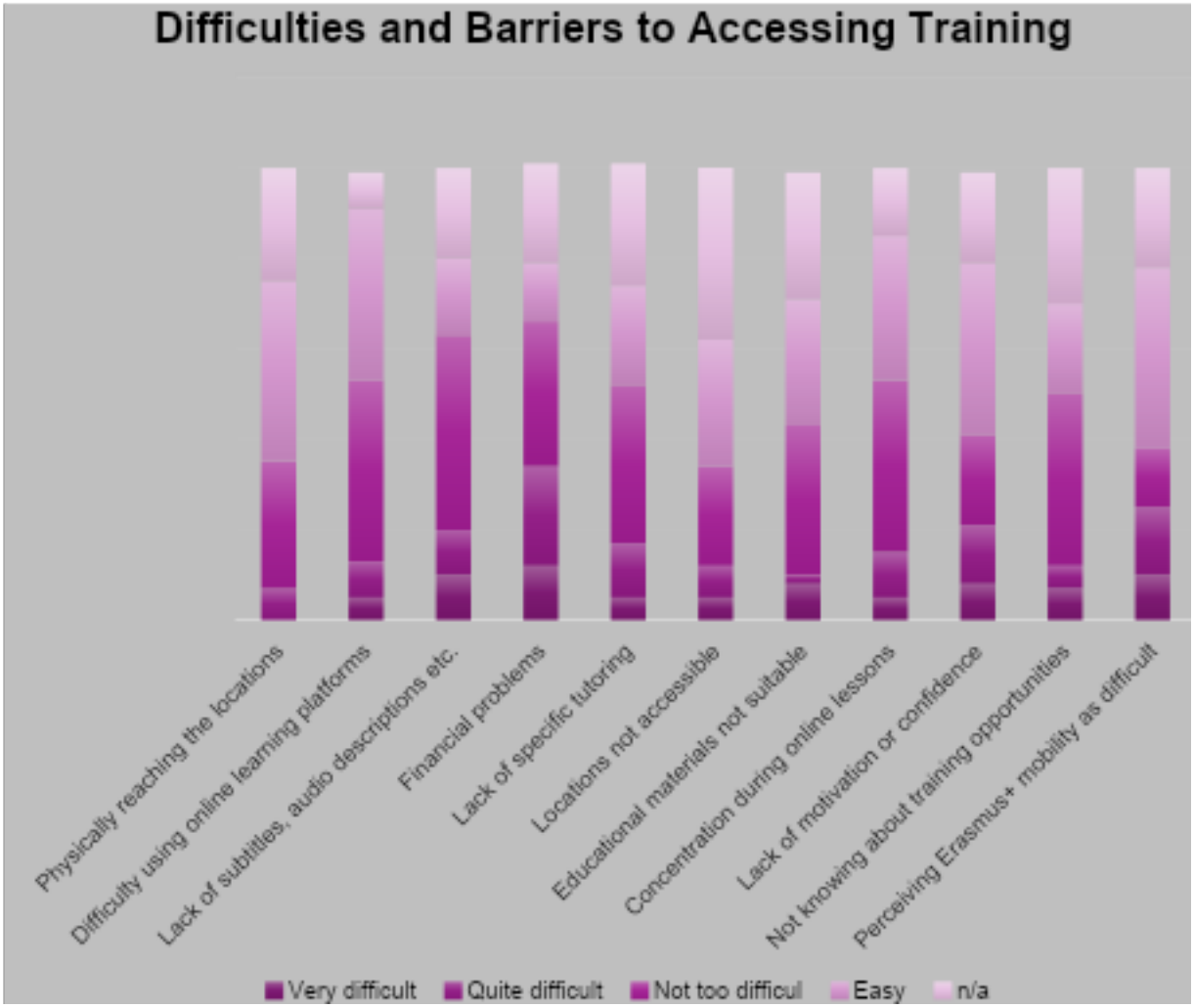

Figure 16 – Barriers to Accessing Adult Education. Learner assessment of the difficulty posed by potential barriers to participation in adult education and Erasmus+ mobility.

Respondents were asked to rate the difficulty posed by several potential barriers to their participation in adult education programmes. The main barriers cited are:

- Financial problems that make it difficult to participate in courses (34% find it very or quite difficult)
- Perceiving Erasmus+ mobility as difficult (25% find it very or quite difficult)
- Lack of motivation or confidence (21% find it very or quite difficult)
- Lack of subtitles, audio descriptions, or other aids (20% find it very or quite difficult)
- Lack of specific tutoring (17% find it very or quite difficult)
- Concentration during online/digital lessons (15% find it very or quite difficult)

Financial constraints emerge as the most significant barrier by a clear margin, affecting over one third of respondents. This finding is particularly relevant given that many inclusive solutions — assistive technologies, dedicated support, adapted materials — carry additional costs that can further exclude those who are already economically vulnerable.

The second most cited barrier is the perceived difficulty of Erasmus+ mobility, reported by one in four respondents. Combined with the 21% who cite lack of motivation or confidence, this suggests that psychological and informational barriers play a substantial role alongside practical ones. Many learners may not lack the ability to participate, but rather the confidence, guidance and clear information needed to perceive mobility as a realistic and achievable opportunity.

Accessibility-related barriers — such as the lack of subtitles, audio descriptions or tutoring — affect a smaller but significant proportion of respondents. Notably, these are barriers that EdA organisations can directly address through content design and support services, making them a concrete and actionable priority area.

LIFECOMP strengths and gaps

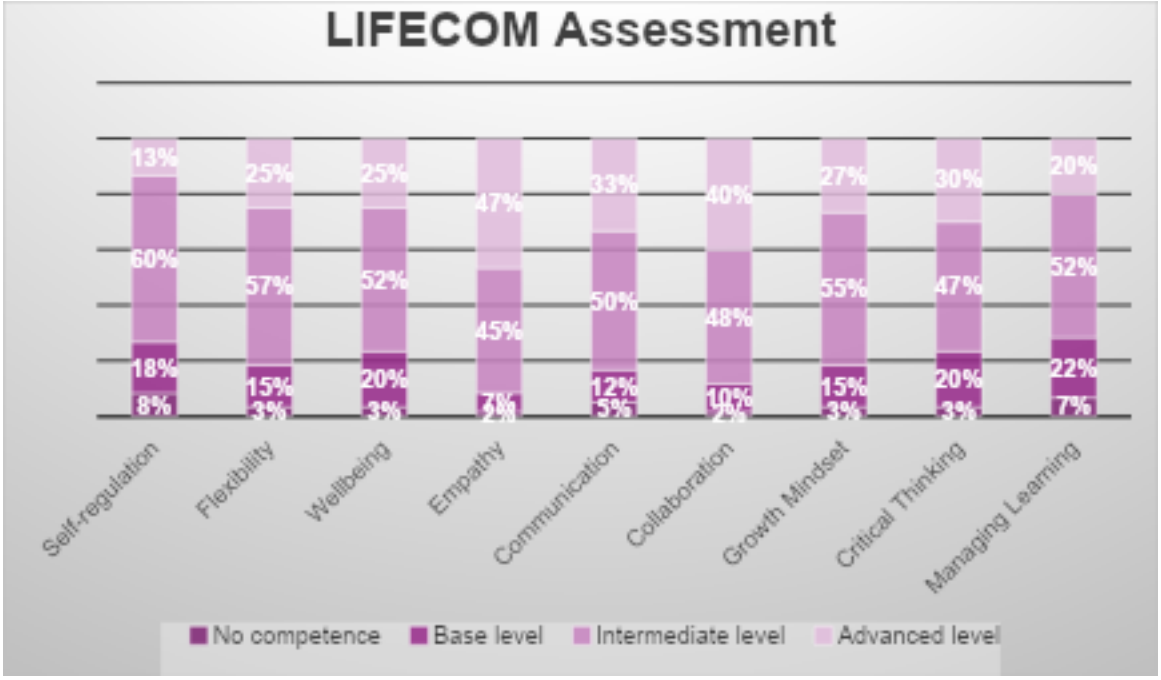

Figure 17 – DIGCOMP Assessment (Learners). Self-assessed level of digital competence across the five DIGCOMP areas and their sub-competences.

Learners rate their interpersonal competences positively, expressing relative confidence in empathy, communication and collaboration. These are foundational skills for participation in group-based and collaborative learning environments, and represent a strength that EdA programmes can build upon.

The most significant gaps are reported in areas that relate to personal management and autonomous learning:

- Managing learning (29% report basic or no skills)
- Self-regulation (26% report basic or no skills)
- Wellbeing (23% report basic or no skills)
- Critical thinking (23% report basic or no skills)

These gaps are particularly relevant for learners with disabilities. Difficulties in managing one's own learning and in self-regulation can limit the ability to engage with flexible or self-directed

learning formats — precisely the formats that offer the greatest potential for accessibility and inclusion. Similarly, gaps in wellbeing competences may reflect the additional emotional and psychological challenges that learners with disabilities face in educational contexts, including frustration, lack of confidence and social isolation. Without targeted support in these areas, learners risk disengaging even when accessible content and environments are available.

DIGICOMP strengths and gaps

The analysis of the respondents' digital competences was carried out in accordance with DIGICOMP framework, including 5 areas (described above):

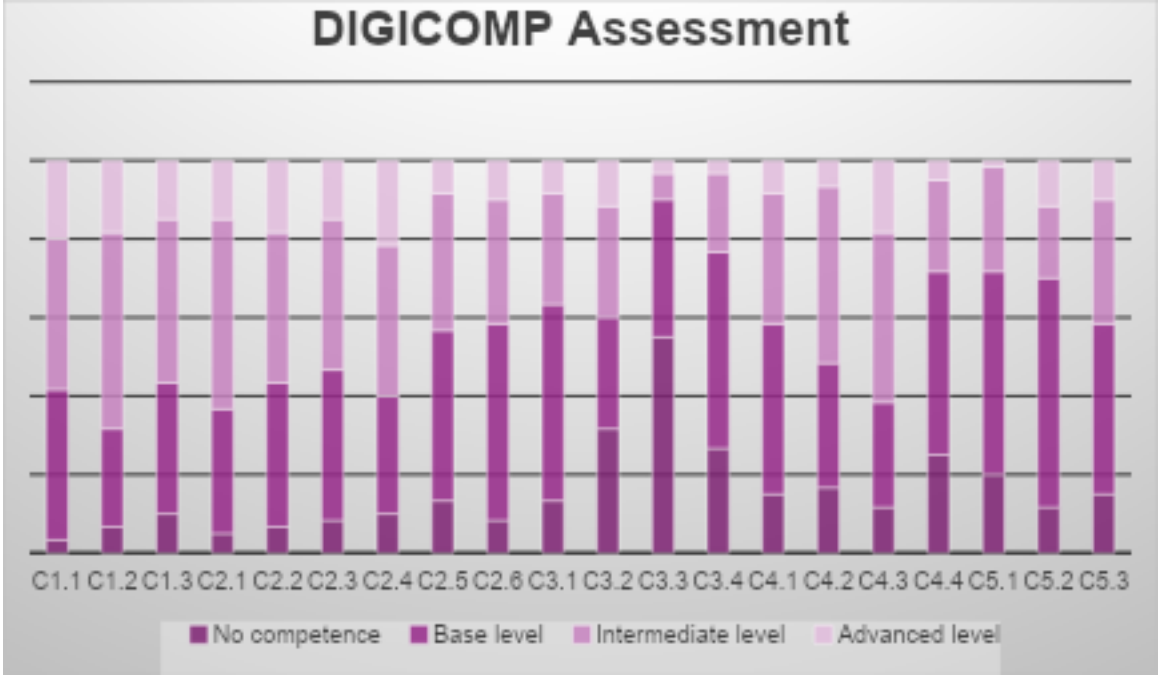

Figure 18 – LIFECOMP Assessment (Learners). Self-assessed level of life competences across the LIFECOMP framework areas.

Learners demonstrate solid competences in using digital technologies for information and communication purposes. The strongest areas include:

- Evaluating information (68% at intermediate or advanced level)
- Interacting through digital technologies (63% at intermediate or advanced level)
- Supporting wellbeing (62% at intermediate or advanced level)
- Collaborating through digital technologies (60% at intermediate or advanced level)
- Browsing, searching and filtering information (58% at intermediate or advanced level)
- Sharing through digital technologies (57% at intermediate or advanced level)

- Managing information (57% at intermediate or advanced level)

These results confirm that learners are generally capable of navigating digital environments, accessing information and communicating online — skills that are consistent with their high smartphone usage and near-universal internet access.

However, the data reveal severe gaps in the more advanced and productive dimensions of digital competence:

- Computational thinking and programming (77% at basic or no level)
- Identifying and solving technical problems (72% at basic or no level)
- Identifying needs and digital technological responses (70% at basic or no level)
- Developing digital content (63% at basic or no level)
- Integrating and re-elaborating digital content (60% at basic or no level)
- Protecting devices (58% at basic or no level)
- Copyright and licences (55% report no competencies at all)

The pattern is clear: learners can consume and interact with digital content, but lack the skills to create, adapt, protect and troubleshoot it. This gap has direct implications for their autonomy, employability and capacity to participate fully in digital or blended learning environments. It also mirrors the weaknesses identified among staff, suggesting that the digital ecosystem around these learners, offers limited opportunities to develop higher-order digital skills. EdA programmes therefore need to go beyond basic digital literacy and actively support learners in building productive and safety-related digital competences.

5. Comparative Conclusions: Staff and Learners with Disabilities

An Encouraging Base with Systemic Gaps

The Needs Analysis reveals a fundamentally positive starting point for inclusive digital adult education. Learners with disabilities demonstrate solid technological access — with 97% having internet connectivity and widespread smartphone use — a high level of prior engagement with adult education (90%), and generally strong interpersonal competences. Their educational profile is relatively high, with 80% holding a university degree. Staff, for their part, show a positive attitude towards inclusion, with approximately three quarters having at least some experience working with learners with disabilities, and the large majority regularly using digital tools in their teaching practice.

However, beneath this encouraging surface lie systemic gaps that prevent both groups from fully realising the potential of inclusive education.

Main Convergences Between Staff and Learners

Accessibility of Content and Environments, Not Technology

The data consistently show that the primary barriers to inclusion are not about access to technology, but about how content and environments are designed. Learners report significant difficulty with the lack of subtitles, audio descriptions and other aids (20%), while over half report needing no special individual support — indicating that they can participate autonomously when the environment is inherently accessible. On the staff side, approximately one third are entirely unfamiliar with accessibility standards such as WCAG and with Universal Design for Learning, and nearly two thirds never or rarely use subtitles, transcripts or sign language support despite being aware of them.

This points to a fundamental mismatch: the most significant barriers are not technological but structural — rooted in inaccessible content, non-adapted learning materials and insufficient knowledge among staff of how to create accessible resources. Addressing this gap requires building staff capacity in standards-based accessibility practices, not simply providing more technology.

Economic Constraints as a Shared Barrier

Financial barriers emerge as significant for both groups. Among learners, economic difficulties represent the single most cited barrier to participation (34%). Among staff, insufficient funding is rated as a high or quite significant barrier by 59%, with nearly a quarter considering it highly significant. Accessibility must therefore also be understood in economic terms: solutions that rely on expensive tools or dedicated specialist support risk being unsustainable, particularly for the small-scale organisations that constitute the backbone of adult education in many European contexts. The use of free or low-cost tools, open resources and replicable low-threshold solutions should be actively encouraged.

Motivation and Support for Erasmus+ Mobility

One in four learners perceives Erasmus+ mobility as difficult, and 21% cite lack of motivation or confidence as a barrier to participation in adult education more broadly. On the staff side, 15% are entirely unfamiliar with measures to support participation in Erasmus+ mobility, and a further 16% never apply them. These findings suggest that the perceived difficulty of mobility is shaped not only by practical obstacles, but also by a lack of clear information, guidance and encouragement — from both institutional and personal perspectives. Participation in EdA and Erasmus+ mobility requires a combined strategy that addresses practical barriers alongside psychological ones: clear communication, orientation, support services and role models who can demonstrate that mobility is achievable.

Converging Digital and Life Competence Gaps

Both staff and learners display a strikingly similar pattern in their digital competences: solid skills in information browsing, communication and collaboration, but significant weaknesses in content creation, copyright management, device protection, problem solving and computational thinking. For staff, these gaps directly limit their ability to produce accessible learning materials and support learners in developing advanced digital skills. For learners, they constrain autonomy, employability and the capacity to engage with more structured digital learning formats.

In the LIFECOMP domain, both groups show strength in interpersonal competences but gaps in self-regulation, wellbeing and growth mindset. For learners, difficulties in managing their own learning (29%) and self-regulation (26%) can hinder participation in flexible or self-directed formats. For staff, limited confidence in growth mindset (only one third rate it highly) and gaps in

self-regulation may undermine the sustained effort required to adopt and maintain inclusive practices over time, particularly under conditions of limited resources and time pressure.

6. Integrated Operational Recommendations

Drawing on the convergent findings from both target groups, the following operational recommendations are proposed as priority areas for action. These recommendations directly inform the guidelines and measures presented in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Vademecum.

Accessible Venue Selection

Given that accessibility of physical environments remains a concrete barrier — and that over half of learners report being able to participate autonomously when conditions allow — EdA organisations should introduce minimum accessibility criteria and practical checklists for venue selection. This ensures that inclusion begins with the learning environment itself, before any content or pedagogical adaptation is considered.

Inclusive Digital and Blended Learning Pathways

Learners have near-universal internet access and are familiar with digital communication tools, yet only 18% have participated in online learning. This gap represents a significant untapped opportunity. EdA organisations should develop digital and blended pathways that leverage learners' existing device usage while ensuring full content accessibility — including mobile-friendly design, subtitles, audio descriptions and compatibility with assistive technologies.

"Ready-to-Use" Accessibility Package for Staff

With one third of staff unfamiliar with WCAG and UDL, and nearly two thirds not using subtitles or transcripts despite awareness, the barrier is clearly not just knowledge but also practical implementation. Staff need ready-to-use templates, models and examples — accessible slide templates, document formats, subtitle guides, transcript models — based on UDL principles and accessibility standards. These should be designed to minimise the additional time and effort required, directly addressing the time pressure reported by 65% of staff.

Low-Cost Training and Free Tools

Given the financial constraints reported by both learners (34%) and staff (59%), solutions must be economically sustainable. Training programmes and the Vademecum itself should prioritise free or easily accessible tools, open educational resources and low-cost approaches that can be adopted by small-scale organisations without significant additional investment.

Motivation and Guidance for EdA and Erasmus+ Mobility

The combination of perceived difficulty (25% of learners), lack of confidence (21%) and uneven institutional support for mobility (15% of staff unfamiliar with mobility support measures) calls for a targeted communication and guidance strategy. This should include clear and accessible information about Erasmus+ opportunities, step-by-step orientation pathways, testimonials from learners with disabilities who have participated in mobility, and practical support services that

reduce the perceived complexity of the process. The goal is to transform mobility from an intimidating prospect into a realistic and supported opportunity.

References and Annexes

ANNEX – Summary Tables and Figures

This section provides the complete numerical data underlying each figure presented in the chapter. For ease of reference, tables are numbered to correspond with their respective figures.

Table 1 – Professional Experience in Adult Education (Years)

Professional Experience in Adult Education (Years)	
> 10 Years	41%
6-10 years	7%
3-5 years	24%
0-2 years	27%

Table 2 – Type of Organisation

	Type of Organisation
NGO	36%
Public Adult Education Provider	20%
University of the Third Age	5%
Other	38%

Table 3 – Experience Working with People with Disabilities

Experience Working with People with Disabilities	
No experience	26,26%
Limited Experience	47,47%
Extensive Experience	26,26%

Table 4 – Use of Digital Tools in Teaching and Training

Use of Digital Tools in Teaching and Training	
Often	48%
Always	35%
Rarely	15%
Never	1%

Table 5 – Existing Inclusive Practices

	I am not familiar with this concept	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
B1 – Learning materials in accessible formats, compliant with recognised standards (e.g. WCAG)	32,32%	7,07%	20,20%	32,32%	8,08%

B2 – Subtitles, written transcripts, sign language interpreters or equivalent support	6,06%	29,29%	35,35%	23,23%	6,06%
B3 – Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	32,32%	17,17%	17,17%	21,21%	12,12%
B4 – Tutor or peer educator support	7,07%	20,20%	23,23%	35,35%	14,14%
B5 – Text alternatives and audio descriptions for images and videos	2,02%	21,21%	34,34%	30,30%	12,12%
B6 – Measures to support participation in Erasmus+ mobility opportunities	15,15%	16,16%	25,25%	21,21%	22,22%

Table 6 – Perceived Barriers to Inclusion

	High	Quite	Low	None
Lack of time	21%	44%	25%	9%
Insufficient digital competences	15%	47%	25%	12%
Insufficient funding	24%	35%	31%	9%
Inadequate technological infrastructure	14%	44%	24%	17%
Organisational issues/lack of motivation	17%	31%	32%	19%

Table 7 – DIGCOMP Assessment (Staff)

	No competence	Base level	Intermediate level	Advanced level
Competence 1.1: Browsing, searching and filtering information	3%	9%	35%	53%
Competence 1.2: Evaluating information	2%	13%	41%	43%
Competence 1.3: Managing information	1%	15%	48%	35%
Competence 2.1: Interacting through and with digital technologies	0%	13%	46%	40%
Competence 2.2: Sharing through	1%	14%	39%	45%

digital technologies				
Competence 2.3: Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies	2%	26%	36%	35%
Competence 2.4: Collaborating through digital technologies	4%	22%	31%	42%
Competence 2.5: Digital behaviour	13%	17%	31%	38%
Competence 2.6: Managing digital identity	6%	26%	43%	24%
Competence 3.1: Developing digital content	5%	30%	38%	26%
Competence 3.2: Integrating and re-elaborating digital content	7%	27%	40%	25%
Competence 3.3: Copyright and licences	33%	31%	23%	12%
Competence 3.4: Computational thinking and programming	46%	31%	16%	6%
Competence 4.1: Protecting devices	22%	37%	25%	15%
Competence 4.2: Protecting personal data and privacy	10%	40%	29%	20%
Competence 4.3: Supporting wellbeing	6%	29%	38%	26%
Competence 4.4: Protecting the environment	10%	32%	33%	24%
Competence 5.1: Identifying and solving technical problems	21%	39%	25%	14%
Competence 5.2: Identifying needs and digital	15%	31%	33%	20%

technological responses				
Competence 5.3: Identifying creative solutions using digital technologies	8%	24%	36%	31%

Table 8 – LIFECOMP Assessment (Staff)

	No competence	Base level	Intermediate level	Advanced level
Self-regulation	1%	14%	53%	32%
Flexibility	0%	9%	38%	52%
Wellbeing	2%	24%	50%	23%
Empathy	0%	6%	30%	64%
Communication	0%	6%	44%	50%
Collaboration	0%	4%	50%	46%
Growth Mindset	0%	13%	53%	34%
Critical Thinking	0%	8%	46%	46%
Managing Learning	1%	14%	47%	38%

Table 9 – Age Groups

Age range	
18-29 years	7%
30-39 years	5%
> 40 years	88%

Table 10 – Type of Disability

Type of disability	
Motor/Physical	30%
Psychological/Relational	5%
Sensory	62%
Multiple Disabilities	3%

Table 11 – Educational Level

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
Other	3%
Degree	80%
High School	17%

Table 12 – Type of Digital Device Mostly Used by Learners

Type of digital device mostly used by learners	
PC	30%
Smartphone	63%
Tablet	7%

Table 13 – Access to Internet

Access to Internet	
NO	3%
YES, instable	10%
YES, stable	87%

Table 14 – Previous Experience in Adult Education

Previous experience in Adult Education	
NO	10%
Yes, face-to-face	72%
Yes, Online	18%

Table 15 – Type of Support Needed

Type of suppport needed	
Mobility companion	12%
Accessible materials	3%
Text-to-speech (TTS) software	5%
Personal tutor or facilitator	17%
Other	12%
No support needed	52%

Table 16 – Barriers to Accessing Adult Education

	Very difficult	Quite difficult	Not too difficul	Easy	n/a
Physically reaching the locations	0%	7%	28%	40%	25%
Difficulty using online learning platforms	5%	8%	40%	38%	8%
Lack of subtitles, audio descriptions etc.	10%	10%	43%	17%	20%
Financial problems	12%	22%	32%	13%	22%

Lack of specific tutoring	5%	12%	35%	22%	27%
Locations not accessible	5%	7%	22%	28%	38%
Educational materials not suitable	8%	2%	33%	28%	28%
Concentration during online lessons	5%	10%	38%	32%	15%
Lack of motivation or confidence	8%	13%	20%	38%	20%
Not knowing about training opportunities	7%	5%	38%	20%	30%
Perceiving Erasmus+ mobility as difficult	10%	15%	13%	40%	22%

Table 17 – DIGCOMP Assessment (Learners)

	No competence	Base level	Intermediate level	Advanced level
Self-regulation	8%	18%	60%	13%
Flexibility	3%	15%	57%	25%
Wellbeing	3%	20%	52%	25%
Empathy	2%	7%	45%	47%
Communication	5%	12%	50%	33%
Collaboration	2%	10%	48%	40%
Growth Mindset	3%	15%	55%	27%
Critical Thinking	3%	20%	47%	30%
Managing Learning	7%	22%	52%	20%

Table 18 – LIFECOMP Assessment (Learners)

	No competence	Base level	Intermediate level	Advanced level
Competence 1.1: Browsing, searching and filtering information	3%	38%	38%	20%
Competence 1.2: Evaluating information	7%	25%	50%	18%

Competence 1.3: Managing information	10%	33%	42%	15%
Competence 2.1: Interacting through and with digital technologies	5%	32%	48%	15%
Competence 2.2: Sharing through digital technologies	7%	37%	38%	18%
Competence 2.3: Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies	8%	38%	38%	15%
Competence 2.4: Collaborating through digital technologies	10%	30%	38%	22%
Competence 2.5: Digital behaviour	13%	43%	35%	8%
Competence 2.6: Managing digital identity	8%	50%	32%	10%
Competence 3.1: Developing digital content	13%	50%	28%	8%
Competence 3.2: Integrating and re-elaborating digital content	32%	28%	28%	12%
Competence 3.3: Copyright and licences	55%	35%	7%	3%
Competence 3.4: Computational thinking and programming	27%	50%	20%	3%
Competence 4.1: Protecting devices	15%	43%	33%	8%
Competence 4.2: Protecting personal data and privacy	17%	32%	45%	7%
Competence 4.3: Supporting wellbeing	12%	27%	43%	18%

Competence 4.4: Protecting the environment	25%	47%	23%	5%
Competence 5.1: Identifying and solving technical problems	20%	52%	27%	2%
Competence 5.2: Identifying needs and digital technological responses	12%	58%	18%	12%
Competence 5.3: Identifying creative solutions using digital technologies	15%	43%	32%	10%

ANNEX – Needs Analysis Questionnaires
The following two questionnaires were used to collect data for the Needs Analysis conducted within the DEC project. Both instruments were developed in alignment with the DIGCOMP 2.2 and LIFECOMP frameworks and were distributed digitally via Microsoft Forms in four languages (Italian, Spanish, Polish and English).

QUESTIONNAIRE A – Adult Education Staff
Welcome! This questionnaire is designed for professionals and trainers working in the field of adult education.
Its purpose is to collect useful information to promote more inclusive and digitally competent practices in educational programmes aimed at adults with disabilities.
The questionnaire is anonymous and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked about:

- Your professional profile
- The inclusive practices you adopt
- The challenges you face
- Your digital and life competences

Please answer honestly: there are no right or wrong answers. Thank you for your contribution!

Section A – Professional Profile

No.	Question	Type	Response options
A1	How many years have you worked, including non-continuously, in the field of adult education?	Multiple choice	▢ 0–2 years ▢ 3–5 years ▢ 6–10 years ▢ > 10 years
A2	Select the type of organisation you work for in the field of adult education.	Multiple choice	▢ ADU – Public adult education institution ▢ NGO – Third-sector organisation ▢ EO – Employment centre ▢ HIGH – University of the Third Age ▢ Other
A3	Do you have experience working with people with disabilities?	Multiple choice	▢ No ▢ Yes, limited ▢ Yes, extensive
A4	How often do you use digital tools in the classroom or during training (e.g. computers, tablets, online platforms, educational apps)?	Likert (4)	◯ Never ◯ Rarely ◯ Often ◯ Always

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Section B1 – Inclusive Practices
For each of the following educational practices, indicate how frequently you adopt them in your work.
Scale: 1 = I am not familiar with this concept / 2 = Never / 3 = Rarely / 4 = Often / 5 = Always

No.	Practice	1	2	3	4	5
B1	Do you adapt learning materials into accessible formats compliant with digital accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG 2.1)?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

No.	Practice	1	2	3	4	5
B2	Do you use subtitles, written transcripts, or sign language interpreters (e.g. national sign language)?	○	○	○	○	○
B3	Do you apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to make teaching accessible to all?	○	○	○	○	○
B4	Do you involve tutors or peer educators to support participants with disabilities or specific needs?	○	○	○	○	○
B5	Do you provide multimedia materials with audio descriptions or text alternatives for images and videos?	○	○	○	○	○
B6	Do you facilitate the participation of learners with disabilities in Erasmus+ mobility opportunities for learners and staff?	○	○	○	○	○

Section B2 – Main Challenges in Inclusion and Digitalisation
For each of the following challenges, indicate how much it represents an obstacle in your work with adult learners with disabilities.
Scale: 1 = High / 2 = Quite significant / 3 = Low / 4 = None

No.	Challenge	1	2	3	4
B7	Lack of time to adapt materials or methods	○	○	○	○
B8	Insufficient digital competences among staff	○	○	○	○
B9	Insufficient funding for equipment or inclusion support	○	○	○	○
B10	Inadequate technological infrastructure (e.g. tools, software, connectivity)	○	○	○	○
B11	Lack of interest or motivation from the organisation or staff towards inclusive practices	○	○	○	○

Section C – DIGCOMP 2.2 Self-Assessment
Please assess your level of digital competence across a range of skills defined by the European DIGCOMP 2.2 framework.
For each item, select the level that best describes your current abilities.
Scale: 1 = No competence / 2 = Basic / 3 = Intermediate / 4 = Advanced
If you are not familiar with the meaning of a competence, select "No competence".
Competence Area 1: Information and Data Literacy

No.	Sub-competence	1	2	3	4
1.1	Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and content	○	○	○	○
1.2	Evaluating data, information and content	○	○	○	○
1.3	Managing data, information and content	○	○	○	○

Competence Area 2: Communication and Collaboration

No.	Sub-competence	1	2	3	4
2.1	Interacting through digital technologies	○	○	○	○

No.	Sub-competence	1	2	3	4
2.2	Sharing through digital technologies	○	○	○	○
2.3	Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies	○	○	○	○
2.4	Collaborating through digital technologies	○	○	○	○
2.5	Netiquette (digital behaviour)	○	○	○	○
2.6	Managing digital identity	○	○	○	○

Competence Area 3: Digital Content Creation

No.	Sub-competence	1	2	3	4
3.1	Developing digital content	○	○	○	○
3.2	Integrating and re-elaborating digital content	○	○	○	○
3.3	Copyright and licences	○	○	○	○
3.4	Programming	○	○	○	○

Competence Area 4: Safety

No.	Sub-competence	1	2	3	4
4.1	Protecting devices	○	○	○	○
4.2	Protecting personal data and privacy	○	○	○	○
4.3	Health and wellbeing	○	○	○	○
4.4	Protecting the environment	○	○	○	○

Competence Area 5: Problem Solving

No.	Sub-competence	1	2	3	4
5.1	Solving technical problems	○	○	○	○
5.2	Identifying needs and technological responses	○	○	○	○
5.3	Creatively using digital technologies	○	○	○	○
5.4	Identifying digital competence gaps	○	○	○	○

Section D – LIFECOMP Self-Assessment
Please assess your personal level in relation to a set of life competences defined by the European LIFECOMP framework.
For each item, select the level that best represents you today.
Scale: 1 = No awareness or skill / 2 = Basic / 3 = Intermediate / 4 = Advanced

There are no right or wrong answers: please respond honestly based on your current experience.

No.	Competence	1	2	3	4
1	Self-regulation – managing emotions, impulses and behaviour	◯	◯	◯	◯
2	Flexibility – adapting to different situations and roles	◯	◯	◯	◯
3	Wellbeing – caring for physical and mental health	◯	◯	◯	◯
4	Empathy – understanding and respecting others' perspectives	◯	◯	◯	◯
5	Communication – expressing oneself and listening effectively	◯	◯	◯	◯
6	Collaboration – working in a group towards common goals	◯	◯	◯	◯
7	Growth mindset – seeing mistakes and feedback as opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯
8	Critical thinking – analysing information, reasoning and evaluating	◯	◯	◯	◯
9	Managing learning – planning, monitoring and reflecting on one's own learning	◯	◯	◯	◯

Section E – Community of Practice

No.	Question	Type	Response options
E1	Would you like to join our Community of Practice on Facebook? If yes, open [LINK-FB] and sign up.	Binary choice	◯ Yes, I will sign up ◯ No

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QUESTIONNAIRE B – Adult Learners with Disabilities

Welcome! This questionnaire is designed for adults with disabilities who have participated in – or would like to participate in – adult education programmes.

Its purpose is to better understand your needs, the difficulties you encounter, and what kind of support could help you learn more effectively.

The questionnaire is anonymous, takes approximately 10 minutes, and your answers will only be used to improve future courses and make them more accessible to everyone.

There are no right or wrong answers. We only ask you to respond honestly.

Section A – Personal Profile

No.	Question	Type	Response options
A1	How old are you? Select your age group.	Multiple choice	▢ 18–29 years ▢ 30–39 years ▢ 40–50 years ▢ > 50 years
A2	What type of disability do you have, if you wish to indicate it?	Multiple choice	▢ Motor/Physical ▢ Sensory – Vision ▢ Sensory – Hearing ▢ Cognitive/Intellectual ▢ Psychological/Relational ▢ Multiple disabilities
A3	What is your highest level of education? Select the option that best describes your educational background.	Multiple choice	▢ No qualification ▢ Middle school ▢ High school diploma ▢ University degree ▢ Other
A4	Which digital device do you use most often? Select the device you use most frequently for communicating, studying or searching for information.	Multiple choice	▢ Smartphone ▢ PC ▢ Tablet ▢ Assistive device (e.g. screen reader, communication device) ▢ I do not use digital devices

No.	Question	Type	Response options
A5	Do you have access to the internet at home?	Multiple choice	▢ Yes, I have a stable connection ▢ Yes, but the connection is slow or unstable ▢ No, I do not have internet access
A6	Have you ever participated in adult education courses?	Multiple choice	▢ Yes, in person ▢ Yes, online ▢ No

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Section B1 – Difficulties You Encounter in Education
For each situation described below, indicate how much it represents a difficulty for you.
Scale: 1 = Very difficult / 2 = Quite difficult / 3 = Slightly difficult / 4 = Not difficult at all / 5 = Not applicable

No.	Situation	1	2	3	4	5
B1	Do you find it difficult to physically reach the venues where courses are held?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B2	Do you find it difficult to use digital platforms for online learning?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B3	Do you experience a lack of subtitles, audio descriptions, or other aids when attending a course?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B4	Do you have financial problems that make it difficult to participate in courses?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B5	Do you lack personal support, such as a tutor or companion, during courses?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B6	Are the venues where courses are held insufficiently accessible for your disability?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B7	Are the learning materials you receive not suited to your needs?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B8	Do you find it difficult to concentrate during online or digital lessons?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B9	Do you lack the motivation or confidence to enrol in a course?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B10	Are you unaware of the training opportunities available in your area or online?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
B11	Have you ever considered participating in a training mobility abroad through Erasmus+?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Section B2 – Desired Support
What type of support would you most need to participate more effectively in a course?
Select one or more options.

Response options

- ▢ Personal tutor or facilitator
- ▢ Accessible materials (e.g. Braille, simplified text)
- ▢ Text-to-speech (TTS) software
- ▢ Mobility companion
- ▢ Other
- ▢ No support needed

Section C – DIGCOMP 2.2 Self-Assessment
Same structure and items as Questionnaire A, Section C (see above).

Section D – LIFECOMP Self-Assessment
Same structure and items as Questionnaire A, Section D (see above).

Section E – Community of Practice

No.	Question	Type	Response options
E1	Would you like to join our Community of Practice on Facebook? Open [LINK-FB] and sign up.	Binary choice	◯ Yes, I will sign up ◯ No

CHAPTER 2 - Guidelines and Good Practices for Inclusion in Adult Education

Abstract

Inclusion in Adult Education means more than just giving people access to learning: it requires combining life skills and digital skills to create real opportunities for everyone. Many adult learners, especially those with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds, face barriers that traditional education models don't fully address. These barriers can't be overcome by focusing only on personal growth or only on digital tools. Instead, both must work together.

This section provides a clear, practical framework for making Adult Education more inclusive, based on the European LifeComp and DigComp frameworks. It helps educators, trainers, and mobility coordinators turn inclusive principles into real actions, offering step-by-step guidance for working with adults with disabilities.

Life skills, like independence, emotional strength, and social interaction, help learners feel confident, take control of their learning, and connect with others. But in today's world, these skills aren't enough on their own. Digital skills, such as finding and using online information, communicating digitally, and solving problems with technology, are just as important. When we combine LifeComp and DigComp, we ensure that learners don't just access education and they can truly participate, grow, and succeed.

By linking theory with practical strategies, this section helps create learning environments that are accessible, supportive, and engaging. This way, all learners (regardless of their background or abilities) can develop the confidence, skills, and independence they need to thrive in both education and life. Without this combined approach, inclusion efforts may fall short, leaving learners without the full support they need.

Keywords: Inclusive Adult Education, Peer support, LifeComp, DigComp, inclusion, equitable access, digital accessibility, Assessment strategies, Multimodal learning.

Theoretical background

This chapter of the Vademecum is built upon a solid theoretical foundation that combines European and international policy frameworks with competence-based approaches to inclusive Adult Education. The principles, strategies, and tools presented here are informed by key policy documents and competence models that shape inclusive practice.

The chapter aligns with policy frameworks such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). These frameworks emphasize the importance of removing systemic barriers and ensuring equitable access to education for all adults, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

From a competence perspective, this chapter integrates the LifeComp and DigComp frameworks to foster inclusion.

- Life competences include personal autonomy, emotional regulation, social interaction, adaptability, and lifelong learning, empowering adults to navigate challenges and engage actively in their communities.
- Digital competences ensure meaningful participation in digital environments, addressing skills such as information literacy, communication, safety, content creation, and problem-solving.

Inclusion therefore requires a multidimensional approach that integrates personal development, social participation, and digital accessibility. By combining these frameworks, educators can create learning environments that are not only accessible but also empowering and responsive to the diverse needs of adult learners.

The theoretical background outlined here provides the foundation for the practical strategies, teaching methods, and resources discussed in this chapter, ensuring they are rooted in both theory and real-world application.

2.1. Linking DIGCOMP and LIFECOMP to Inclusive Practice

A. Digital competence areas most relevant for inclusion

In an increasingly digital world, digital competences are essential for ensuring that all adult learners, regardless of background or ability, can fully participate in education and society. Among the areas defined by DigComp, the following are particularly critical for fostering inclusion in Adult Education:

- **Information and Data Literacy** helps learners access and understand digital information. Developing the ability to search, evaluate reliable sources, and use online information supports autonomy and reduces barriers to knowledge.

- **Communication and Collaboration** through digital tools enables learners to connect with educators, peers, and support networks. Skills in using email, messaging platforms, and collaborative tools are especially important in online or blended learning environments.

- **Digital Content Creation:** Creating digital content allows learners to express ideas and demonstrate learning through digital formats such as documents or presentations. This competence encourages active participation and supports different ways of communication and expression.

- **Safety and Responsible Use** is essential for protecting learners who may be more vulnerable to online risks. Understanding privacy, data protection, and responsible online behaviour helps learners engage confidently and safely in digital environments.

- **Problem-Solving and Adaptability** helps adult learners with disabilities overcome digital barriers, navigate platforms with greater confidence, and maintain continuity in their learning process.

By focusing on these key digital competence areas, educators can create more accessible, equitable, and empowering learning experiences. Integrating these skills with Life competences (such as autonomy and resilience) ensures that adult learners are not only able to access digital tools but also use them effectively to achieve their personal and professional goals.

B. Life Competences Supporting Autonomy, Motivation, and Participation

LifeComp provides a structured approach to developing autonomy, motivation, and active participation in Adult Education. Through the cultivation of personal and interpersonal skills, adult learners with disabilities build the confidence and abilities necessary to take ownership of their learning, engage meaningfully with peers, and navigate challenges that may hinder their participation.

- **Autonomy** grows through skills like self-organization, decision-making, and problem-solving. This allows adults to set goals, track their progress, and adapt to difficulties.

- **Motivation** is strengthened by fostering self-confidence, resilience, and a growth mindset. This helps learners see their potential and keep going, even when things get tough.
- **Participation** improves with social and communication skills, enabling learners to work in teams, share ideas, and contribute to group activities.

By integrating these competences into educational practices, educators can create supportive and empowering learning environments. In these settings, adult learners feel capable, respected, and equipped to pursue their personal and professional aspirations.

C. Examples of integrated competence development

To illustrate how LifeComp and DigComp can be integrated in practice, consider the following examples of competence development in Adult Education:

- **Personalized Learning Paths:** A learner with limited digital skills (DigComp) might struggle to participate in online courses. By combining emotional resilience and adaptability (LifeComp) with digital literacy training (DigComp), educators can design personalized learning paths that build both confidence and technical skills. For example, a learner might start with basic digital navigation exercises while simultaneously developing strategies to manage frustration and stay motivated.

- **Collaborative Projects:** Group projects that require both social interaction (LifeComp) and digital collaboration tools (DigComp) can foster integrated competence development. Learners might use online platforms to co-create content, practice communication skills, and solve problems together, all while building trust and a sense of community.

- **Real-World Applications:** Activities that connect learning to real-life situations help learners apply personal autonomy, digital skills, and social engagement in meaningful ways. For instance, a learner might develop a digital presentation on a topic of personal interest, combining research skills (DigComp) with self-expression and public speaking (LifeComp).

2.2. Basic Principles of Inclusion in Education

A.Inclusive approach and "design for all" in non-institutional contexts and with variable resources

Inclusion must be embedded from the planning stage of any educational activity. Learning activities, materials, and environments should be designed to be accessible to the widest possible range of learners, following the "Design for All" principle.

These principles are grounded in the evidence-based needs identified during our research, ensuring that inclusion strategies address the actual barriers faced by adult learners and staff.

Practical Implications for Educators:
Before implementing any course or activity, educators should systematically assess:

- *Are learning materials available in multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, visual)?*
- *Can learners access content using assistive technologies?*
- *Are instructions clear, structured, and easy to follow for all participants?*

B. Accessibility vs. usability

Inclusive digital learning for adults with disabilities relies on two fundamental principles: accessibility and usability. While accessibility ensures that learners can technically access digital platforms, tools, and materials, usability focuses on how easily and effectively they can use these resources. Even if a tool is accessible, poor usability can create barriers, making it difficult for learners with cognitive, motor, or sensory disabilities to engage meaningfully.

This approach directly addresses the critical needs identified in our field research:

- The Need for Confidence and Motivation: Rather than just general self-efficacy, our research shows that 55.5% of learners perceive educational mobility as 'too difficult.' This framework provides the psychological and motivational support needed to bridge this 'confidence gap.'
- The Need for Accessible Content Creation: Instead of basic digital literacy, our focus is on the specific need for educators to create accessible materials (subtitles, transcripts, and Easy-to-Read formats) to overcome the barriers reported by learners.
- The Need for Usable Environments: We prioritize the need for 'usability' in both digital platforms and physical venues, ensuring learners can navigate them independently without financial or technical barriers.

For example, consider a training video:

- *Accessibility* is ensured by adding captions and audio descriptions, making the content available to learners who are deaf, hard of hearing, or visually impaired.
- *Usability* is improved by dividing the video into short, clearly labeled chapters, helping learners with attention or cognitive challenges navigate and focus on relevant sections.

C. Inclusion as a multidimensional concept

Inclusion in Adult Education extends far beyond physical access: it is a comprehensive approach that ensures all learners, particularly those with disabilities, can fully engage and succeed. True inclusion involves multiple interconnected dimensions:

- **Physical accessibility:** Ensuring learning spaces are barrier-free (e.g., ramps, adjustable furniture, accessible restrooms).
- **Digital accessibility:** Making tools and content usable for everyone (e.g., screen readers, captions, keyboard navigation).
- **Linguistic clarity:** Using clear, straightforward language and providing translations or simplified formats to ensure understanding.

- **Emotional safety:** Creating environments where learners feel secure, respected, and free from discrimination.
- **Economic accessibility:** Minimizing financial barriers (e.g., affordable materials, subsidies for assistive technologies).
- **Social belonging:** Cultivating a sense of community and acceptance, so every learner feels welcome and valued.

This multidimensional perspective on inclusion directly addresses the priority needs identified in the field research:

- The Need for Human Support and Tutoring: Our research shows that learners prioritize peer support and human tutoring as the most effective inclusive practices. Inclusion is built through direct assistance and accompaniment rather than just theoretical empathy.
- The Need for Digital Usability and Content Access: The focus is on overcoming multisensory barriers (the lack of subtitles, transcripts, and audio descriptions). True digital inclusion is achieved by ensuring that platforms and content are technically usable and accessible, preventing the exclusion of learners with visual or hearing impairments.

D. Person-centred and flexible learning paths

Learning in Adult Education must adapt to the individual needs, strengths, and rhythms of learners with disabilities.This can include:

- Alternative formats for assignments (e.g., audio recordings, videos, or visual presentations instead of written reports).
- Adjustable pacing to accommodate different learning speeds and needs.
- Multiple participation modalities (e.g., chat, sign language, voice messages, or asynchronous contributions).
- Hybrid or blended learning options to provide accessibility and comfort.

This approach addresses the practical autonomy and resource needs identified in our research:

- The need for technical independence and resourcefulness: Rather than focusing on abstract ideas like self-regulation, our findings show that learners need to gain the confidence to manage their own learning tools. We achieve this by providing clear and simplified orientation paths. This helps to reduce the feeling that education and mobility are too difficult.
- The need for economic and adaptive solutions: Instead of general problem-solving, we prioritize the use of low-cost and free digital tools. This directly responds to the financial barriers mentioned by both staff and learners. It ensures that technology is a tool for inclusion rather than a reason for exclusion due to costs.

Example: A learner might submit a video instead of a written report or use chat instead of speaking live.

E.Reasonable accommodation and universal measures

Universal measures (such as clear lesson structures, plain language, and visual supports) help learners with disabilities to engage more effectively. In the same way, reasonable accommodations, like extended deadlines or one-on-one mentoring, ensure that individuals can participate fully and succeed.

This approach aligns with the practical priorities identified in our study:

- The need for social inclusion and human support: Our research shows that inclusion is most effective when there is direct support. Promoting respect and equity means creating a system where peer tutoring and human assistance are always available to the learner.
- The need for accessible and functional technology: Moving beyond general digital safety, we focus on the practical use of assistive tools. This means ensuring that technology is not only secure but also fully accessible and easy to use, so that digital barriers do not lead to exclusion.

F.Inclusion as an ongoing process

Inclusion is not achieved through isolated actions, but through continuous reflection and improvement. Organizations must actively listen to learners, regularly assess digital accessibility, and address participation gaps to ensure their tools and practices remain effective and relevant.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for continuous feedback and adaptation: Our research shows that inclusion is a moving target. Rather than just lifelong learning in general, we focus on the need for staff to regularly check if their materials are still accessible and if the learners feel supported.
- The need for constant evaluation of tools:This ensures that the tools used by the organization remain usable and do not become new barriers for learners with disabilities.

To deepen inclusion, institutions should integrate the principles of the *Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy* into their policies, incorporate accessibility audits into course planning, and establish feedback mechanisms that meaningfully involve learners with disabilities. Monitoring key indicators, such as participation, completion rates, and learner satisfaction, helps track progress and identify areas for growth. Additionally, accessibility must be a priority in all stages of Erasmus+ mobility, from planning to follow-up.

Looking ahead, efforts should concentrate on enhancing educators' digital accessibility competencies, systematically embedding *Universal Design for Learning*, and increasing the participation of adults with disabilities in transnational mobility opportunities.

2.3 Ready-to-Use Inclusive Teaching Best Practices

This section translates our research findings into concrete teaching practices that can be directly applied in Adult Education settings. Instead of following theoretical models, these

practices are designed to address the specific gaps identified in our Needs Analysis, such as the lack of staff time, the need for accessible content, and the importance of learner motivation.

Each of these 7 practices provides clear guidance and practical examples for immediate use, focusing on the real-world barriers reported by educators and learners. At the end of the section, a Barrier–Solution Mapping table is included to help educators identify specific challenges and apply the right evidence-based solutions. We also include case studies to show how these strategies work in real Adult Education contexts, creating a clear link between our research data and daily classroom reality.

A. Inclusive classroom and online activities

Activities based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) focus on engagement and autonomy. They give learners different ways to access information and express what they know. This helps create an environment that respects different abilities and communication styles.

Some practical strategies include providing content in multiple formats like text, audio, and video, and allowing learners to respond in the way that suits them best. Using structured templates is also key to making complex tasks easier to manage.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for accessible and multisensory content: Rather than just focusing on general content creation, we address the specific lack of subtitles, transcripts, and audio descriptions identified by learners. Providing information in different formats ensures that everyone can access the material regardless of their disability.
- The need for time-saving and structured tools: Our research shows that educators often lack the time to create new materials. Using pre-designed templates and broken-down tasks helps both the staff to work more efficiently and the learners to stay focused without feeling overwhelmed.

Practical Scenario: Instead of only asking for a written report, learners can choose how to show what they learned, such as through a short audio recording, a video, or a visual map. This reduces the pressure and builds their confidence.

B. Clear communication and plain language

Using clear, structured language reduces barriers, especially for learners with cognitive disabilities or limited digital literacy. It supports comprehension, confidence, and active participation.

It is advised to: use short, simple sentences, avoid abstract or complex terminology, organize instructions with bullet points, include icons and visual cues to guide learners and highlight key deadlines and required actions.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for simplified communication and guidance: Our research shows that learners often feel overwhelmed by complex information. By using simple language and clear steps, we address the "confidence gap" and make educational opportunities feel more reachable and less intimidating.
- The need for cognitive accessibility: We focus on making information easy to process. This directly addresses the multisensory and cognitive barriers reported in our study, ensuring that instructions are inclusive for everyone from the start.

Practical Scenario: Instead of: "Please engage in asynchronous collaborative interaction via the LMS.", use: "Write your comment in the discussion forum before Friday."

C. Learner motivation, trust, and emotional safety

A safe environment promotes participation, emotional well-being, and resilience, especially for learners with disabilities. Inclusive strategies help learners feel respected, supported, and confident to engage fully.

Some inclusive strategies could be to: establish group agreements to set expectations for respectful interaction, use tools that allow anonymous participation when needed, encourage peer support and collaborative problem-solving, normalize asking for clarification or help, and provide private channels for communication with educators.

These strategies are aligned with:

- The need to bridge the confidence gap: Our research shows that 55.5% of learners see mobility and education as too difficult. By creating an emotionally safe environment, we directly address this lack of motivation and help learners overcome the fear of failure.
- The need for human support and tutoring: Learners reported that they value personal connection and peer support above almost everything else. Instead of just focusing on emotional regulation as a concept, we prioritize the creation of supportive networks that help learners feel safe and accompanied.

Practical Scenario: when discussing sensitive topics in an online forum, allow learners to post anonymously or use private messaging to the instructor. Peer mentoring can be encouraged to provide support, while group agreements remind everyone of respectful communication norms.

D. Onboarding and orientation

Inclusion begins before teaching starts. Preparing learners with disabilities for the course ensures they feel confident, informed, and ready to participate fully.

Before the course begins, ensure that learners are provided with: a simple, clear course guide, a tutorial session on digital tools and platforms, contact information for technical or learning support, clarified course expectations and available accommodations and accessible versions of materials in advance.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for orientation and reduced perceived difficulty: Our research shows that many learners feel that education and mobility are too difficult or intimidating. Providing clear information and tutorials before the course starts helps to bridge this confidence gap and makes the learning process feel more manageable.
- The need for technical independence: Instead of just focusing on general digital literacy, we provide direct support to help learners navigate specific platforms. By giving them materials in advance and showing them how the tools work, we ensure they have the independence they need to start the course without technical stress.

Practical Scenario: Before the course begins, schedule a short orientation session where learners explore the platform, ask questions, and access materials in multiple formats. This sets a foundation for confidence, independence, and smooth participation.

E.Tutoring and peer-support models

Peer and tutor support is essential for strengthening inclusion and fostering collaboration among learners with disabilities. Providing structured opportunities for mutual assistance and guidance helps build confidence, empathy, and a sense of community.

Possible support models could be: ”learning buddies” to provide mutual assistance, small group mentoring for guidance and encouragement, rotating peer feedback to promote collaboration and diverse perspectives and digital support hours for technical or learning help.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for human support and accompaniment: Our research shows that learners value human tutoring and peer support more than any other inclusive practice. By creating these support models, we directly respond to the learners' desire for personal connection and assistance during their learning process.
- The need for social connection to overcome barriers: Rather than focusing on theoretical collaboration, we address the practical need for learners to feel less isolated. These models help reduce the anxiety and difficulty reported by many participants, making the learning experience more inclusive through direct human interaction.

Practical Scenario: Assign learners to small peer groups or buddy pairs and rotate feedback responsibilities. Schedule regular digital office hours where learners can ask questions or receive guidance. This approach encourages teamwork, empathy, and confidence while ensuring that all learners feel supported in online or blended learning environments.

F. Inclusive assessment practices

Assessment should measure learning outcomes without limiting participation, ensuring all learners, including those with disabilities, can demonstrate their knowledge effectively.

Possible strategies could be to: offer alternative formats for demonstrating learning, such as text, audio, video, or visual projects, use formative feedback throughout the course, not only final grading, provide extended time when needed and share assessment criteria clearly in advance.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for practical reflection and adaptation: Rather than just focusing on the theory of self-improvement, our research shows that staff and learners need to see constant results. This means reflecting on what works in the classroom and adapting materials to make sure they remain useful and easy to understand.
- The need for accessible digital expression: Instead of general content creation, we focus on the specific need for learners to express themselves through accessible digital tools. This addresses the barriers to communication identified in our study, allowing everyone to participate using the format that works best for them.

Practical Scenario: Allow learners to choose how they submit their work (text, audio, video, or visual) and provide feedback throughout the process.

G. Table: Barrier–Solution Mapping

Barrier	**Universal Measure**	**Reasonable Accommodation**	**Identified Need**
Difficulty understanding instructions	Plain language + visual structure	Individual explanation session	Need for simplified communication and guidance
Limited digital skills	Tool tutorial session	One-to-one digital coaching	Need for technical independence and confidence
Anxiety in speaking in public	Anonymous participation tools	Alternative written participation	Need to bridge the confidence and motivation gap
Visual impairment	Accessible document formats	Screen reader compatible files	Need for accessible and multisensory content

H. Case Study Examples from Practice

Practice 1: Applied Success Model for Technical Independence (Case Study 1)

Context:
An Adult Education centre organised a 6-week digital literacy course. Several participants had mild cognitive disabilities and low prior digital experience.

Challenges identified:

- Difficulty following long instructions.
- Anxiety when using unfamiliar platforms.
- Fear of making mistakes publicly.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- All instructions were provided in short, step-by-step format.
- Visual icons were added next to each task.
- A short onboarding session was dedicated only to platform navigation.
- Anonymous participation tools such as Mentimeter were used.
- Assignments could be submitted as audio instead of written text.

Results:

- Attendance rate increased compared to previous courses.
- Learners reported higher confidence in using digital tools.
- Completion rate improved significantly.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for human support and accompaniment: Directly addresses the fact that learners value personal contact above any other measure.
- The need for social connection to overcome barriers: Transforms individual challenges into shared successes, significantly reducing anxiety.

Practice 2 : Applied Success Model for Peer-Support (Case Study 2)

Context:
An Adult Education organisation prepared a learner with visual impairment for a short-term Erasmus+ mobility activity abroad.

Challenges identified:

- Access to mobility documentation.

- Navigation of travel logistics.
- Access to digital materials during training sessions abroad.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- All documents were provided in screen-reader compatible formats.
- Pre-mobility orientation included a digital accessibility test session.
- The host organisation was informed in advance about accessibility needs.
- A peer-support system was arranged during mobility.

Results:

- The learner completed mobility successfully.
- No major accessibility barriers were reported.
- The organisation developed a checklist for future inclusive mobilities.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for human support: Addresses the learner's priority for personal accompaniment during challenges.
- The need for accessible content: Ensures digital materials are functional for all users from day one.

2.4 Free or Low-Cost Teaching Tools and Materials

Digital tools can significantly reduce barriers in Adult Education when selected and used intentionally. However, accessibility does not depend only on the tool itself, but on how it is implemented.

The tools below are grouped by function and include practical inclusion considerations.

A. Content Creation and Collaboration Tools for Inclusive Adult Education

Google Workspace / Microsoft 365

These are digital office suites (including documents, presentations, and spreadsheets) that work in the cloud. They are used to create materials that several people can edit at the same time, making them perfect for teamwork. Educators use them to allow "silent participation" through comments and to ensure documents are readable for everyone.

- Particularly useful for: Learners with mobility impairments; learners who benefit from structured templates; learners needing collaborative scaffolding

- Accessibility note: Use the "Check Accessibility" button (found in the Review or Tools tab) before sharing. It automatically detects if your font size or colors might be difficult for some learners to see.

- How to use Guides: Google Docs Accessibility Guide (Text instructions), 5 Accessibility Features in Microsoft 365 (Video tutorial).

Canva / Genially
These tools help create visual and interactive content that makes learning more dynamic.

Canva is an easy "drag-and-drop" design tool for making posters and infographics using professional templates.

Genially is used to create interactive presentations where clicking on icons reveals extra info, reducing the amount of text on screen.

- Particularly useful for: Learners with language barriers, cognitive disabilities, or low digital confidence who benefit from visual cues, intuitive interfaces, and reduced writing pressure.
- Accessibility note: Keep your designs simple and clean. Too many colors or moving icons can distract or overwhelm learners with cognitive disabilities. Use white space to keep the focus on the learning goal.
- How to use Guides: Canva: Simple Design Tutorial (Video), Add interactivity in Genially (Video).

B. Participation and Engagement Tools for Inclusive Adult Education

Mentimeter
Mentimeter is an online tool used to create interactive presentations and live polls. It allows the audience to answer questions, vote, or share ideas in real-time using their own phones or computers. Its primary use in an inclusive classroom is to enable anonymous participation, allowing everyone to contribute their thoughts without the fear of being judged or having to speak in front of others.

- Particularly useful for: Learners with social anxiety; learners hesitant to speak publicly
- Accessibility note: Ensure *screen reader compatibility* for visually impaired learners.
- How to use Guide: How to use Mentimeter for Beginners

Padlet
Padlet is a digital "bulletin board" where you can pin virtual sticky notes. It is used to create a shared space where learners and educators can post ideas, links, images, and even audio recordings. Its main advantage for inclusion is its multimodal nature: instead of being forced to write, a learner can record a voice note or post a picture to show their understanding, making it an extremely flexible tool for collaboration.

- Particularly useful for: Learners with communication difficulties; learners needing flexible timing

- Accessibility note: Use the "Audio" or "Video" recording features directly within the Padlet note. This is a game-changer for learners with dyslexia or those who find typing frustrating, as they can simply "speak" their ideas onto the board.
- How to use Guide: Padlet Tutorial for Teachers (Video tutorial)

Kahoot

Kahoot is a gamified learning platform that transforms assessments into interactive, competitive sessions. The educator displays questions on a central screen, and participants respond in real-time using their own mobile devices or computers. This tool is primarily used to increase engagement and check for comprehension in a dynamic way. By introducing a "game-show" format, it helps to lower the psychological barrier to participation and provides educators with immediate data on the group's progress.

- Particularly useful for: Learners with shorter attention spans, and groups that require a low-pressure environment to demonstrate their knowledge

- Accessibility note: Time-based quizzes may disadvantage learners with cognitive disabilities. Adjust time limits whenever possible.
- How to use Guide: Official Kahoot Tutorial for Educators (Video tutorial)

C. Online Learning and Communication Tools for Inclusive Adult Education

Zoom / Microsoft Teams

These are video conferencing platforms designed for virtual meetings and remote learning. They allow educators to conduct live classes, share their screens, and facilitate group discussions from any location. Beyond simple video calls, these tools are essential for inclusion because they offer multiple ways to communicate, such as built-in text chats and automated captions, ensuring that learners can follow the lesson regardless of their physical location or hearing ability.

- Particularly useful for: Learners with mobility issues; learners needing flexible pacing

- Accessibility note: Always record your sessions (with participant consent) and enable automated captions.

- How to use Guides: Zoom Accessibility Features (Video tutorial), Teams Meeting Tutorial (Video tutorial).

YouTube

YouTube is a global video-sharing platform that serves as a massive library of educational content. It is used to provide visual and auditory explanations of complex topics, making it a vital resource for multimodal learning. Educators use it to supplement lessons with diverse perspectives and to allow learners to control their own learning experience by pausing, rewinding, or slowing down the content to ensure they fully understand the material.

- Accessibility note: Check auto-generated subtitles for accuracy before sharing with learners.
- Particularly useful for: Learners with low literacy or language barriers, individuals who prefer visual communication, and students who require self-paced learning.
- How to use Guide: How to use YouTube Accessibility Features (Video tutorial).

D. Accessibility and Support Tools for Inclusive Adult Education

Microsoft Immersive Reader
Immersive Reader is a free, built-in tool that helps improve reading comprehension by removing distractions and providing a personalized reading experience. It is used to read text aloud (text-to-speech), change font size and spacing, and even break words into syllables. By highlighting lines or individual words as they are read, it helps learners maintain focus and significantly improves accessibility for those who struggle with traditional blocks of text. It is built directly into Microsoft Word, OneNote, Outlook, and can also be found in many educational apps like Canvas.

- Accessibility note: Encourage learners to use the Picture Dictionary feature within the tool. When enabled, clicking on a word shows a simple illustration of its meaning, which is an excellent support for learners with low literacy or language barriers.
- Particularly useful for: Learners with dyslexia; learners with reading difficulties.
- How to use Guide: How to use Immersive Reader in Microsoft Word (video tutorial)

NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access)
NVDA is a free, high-quality "screen reader" that converts text on a computer screen into spoken words or Braille. It allows learners with visual impairments to navigate websites, read documents, and use applications independently by using keyboard shortcuts instead of a mouse. It is an essential tool for digital inclusion, ensuring that blind or low-vision learners have the same access to educational software and materials as their peers.

- Accessibility note: NVDA needs Headings (using the "Styles" menu in Word or Google Docs) to tell the learner how the document is organized. Without these, the learner is "lost" on the page. Additionally, always add Alt-Text (a short text description) to your images; otherwise, the screen reader will simply say "Image," and the visually impaired learner will miss that piece of information entirely.
- Particularly useful for: Learners who are blind or have significant visual impairments, as well as students with severe dyslexia who benefit from hearing every element on the screen described.
- How to use Guide: Getting Started with NVDA (Video tutorial).

WAVE (Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool)
WAVE is a suite of evaluation tools that helps educators and content creators ensure their web content is accessible to everyone. Instead of reading a complex report, you enter a website's address, and WAVE provides a visual overlay of the page. It highlights exactly where there are

problems, such as text that is too hard to read against the background or buttons that are not labeled for screen readers. It is used to "audit" materials before they are shared with learners, ensuring no one is excluded by technical barriers.

- Accessibility note: The evaluation of digital resources through WAVE allows for the identification of "hidden" barriers that may not be apparent to all users. High-frequency errors, such as low color contrast or unlabeled buttons, can make navigation impossible for learners with visual or cognitive impairments. Systematic use of this tool ensures that all shared links and platforms meet international accessibility standards (WCAG)
- Particularly useful for: Educators developing digital content, organizations auditing their web presence, and professionals seeking to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in digital environments.
- How to use Guide: Introduction to the WAVE Tool (Video tutorial)

DeepL

DeepL is an advanced machine translation tool powered by neural networks that provides highly accurate and natural-sounding translations. Unlike standard translators, it excels at understanding context and nuance, making it an essential resource for multilingual classrooms. Educators use it to translate course materials, while learners use it to bridge language gaps, allowing them to participate in discussions and complete assignments in a local language they have not yet mastered.

- Accessibility note: Machine translation should be used as a support tool, not a final authority. Automated systems can occasionally miss cultural specificities or specific technical jargon.
- Particularly useful for: Learners with limited local language skills, and educators who need to adapt complex academic texts into a learner's mother tongue to ensure full comprehension.
- How to use Guide: DeepL Translator: Getting Started (Video tutorial).

Future Indications

As digital technologies and inclusive practices continue to evolve, educators of adult learners with disabilities will face new opportunities to enhance learning experiences. Adaptive learning platforms will allow content to be personalized to each learner’s needs and abilities, supporting autonomy and differentiated learning. Multimodal and immersive tools, such as interactive multimedia or virtual and augmented reality, can make learning more engaging while accommodating diverse abilities and learning styles. Integrating Universal Design principles from the outset will ensure accessibility is built into all learning materials and activities. Online communities and peer mentoring platforms will expand opportunities for collaboration, social support, and knowledge sharing across locations. Artificial intelligence will further improve accessibility through automatic transcription, translation, and content adaptation, facilitating participation for learners with varied needs. To keep pace, educators will need ongoing

professional development to combine LifeComp and DigComp competences with emerging technologies and inclusive strategies.

In practice, future-focused teaching emphasizes flexibility, learner-centered design, and the intersection of technology and inclusion, preparing learners for meaningful participation in education and society.

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CHAPTER 3: Measures to Increase Participation in Erasmus+ Mobility Opportunities

Participation in Erasmus+ mobility programmes can offer significant learning, social, and personal development opportunities for adult learners. However, individuals with disabilities and other learners with fewer opportunities often face multiple barriers that limit their participation. These barriers may include lack of accessible learning environments, insufficient preparation for international activities, and low confidence or awareness among potential participants.

This chapter explores practical measures that adult education organisations can adopt to increase participation in Erasmus+ mobility opportunities. It focuses on inclusive approaches to mobility design, accessibility of learning activities, preparation and support of participants, and organisational practices that help remove structural barriers.

The chapter provides practical guidance for adult education organisations, facilitators, and project coordinators who wish to make mobility programmes more accessible and inclusive. It highlights how accessibility and inclusion can be integrated into the preparation, implementation, and follow-up phases of mobility activities. By applying these support measures, organisations can create learning environments where all participants can engage meaningfully and benefit from international learning experiences.

Keywords:

Erasmus+ mobility; Inclusive adult education; Accessibility in learning activities; Learners with disabilities; Participation in international learning

Why Erasmus+ KA1 Matters for Inclusion in Adult Education

Benefits for learners and organisations

Participation in Erasmus+ mobility activities generates a wide range of benefits for both learners and adult education organisations.

Benefits for learners:

- strengthening confidence and self-esteem
- encouraging independence and autonomy
- developing communication and social skills
- fostering intercultural awareness and openness
- providing motivation for continued learning

For adult learners with disabilities, these benefits can be particularly significant. Participation in international learning environments often helps learners challenge self-limiting perceptions and discover new possibilities for personal development.

Benefits for organisations:

- strengthening international partnerships
- improving staff competences in inclusive education
- promoting innovation in teaching and learning methods
- enhancing organisational visibility and outreach
- supporting the development of inclusive institutional practices

For organisations, mobility experiences become opportunities for institutional transformation. They are encouraged to create accessible environments, adapt learning methods and provide support mechanisms that enable diverse learners to participate meaningfully.

Mobility as part of a learning pathway

For adult learners, mobility can serve as a catalyst that encourages continued participation in education and training. Exposure to new environments often stimulates curiosity, motivation and interest in further learning opportunities.

Mobility experiences may contribute to:

- discovering new educational pathways
- strengthening motivation for lifelong learning
- building networks that support future opportunities
- developing competences applicable in everyday life

Inclusion and accessibility as quality criteria

Accessible mobility programmes ensure that learning environments are designed to accommodate diverse needs and participation styles. This includes addressing barriers related to infrastructure, communication, learning methods and support systems.

Inclusive mobility projects often demonstrate high levels of participant engagement and rich learning experiences because they create environments where all participants feel valued and able to contribute.

By embedding accessibility and inclusion principles in mobility design, organisations contribute to the broader goals of equitable and accessible lifelong learning.

See practical accessibility measures for mobility design in : Inclusion Measures in Erasmus+ Mobility

Inclusion Measures in Erasmus+ Mobility

Inclusive mobility is grounded in the broader Erasmus+ priority of **inclusion and diversity.** It aims to ensure equal access to mobility programs for individuals with fewer opportunities, including people with disabilities. The programme encourages organisations to remove structural barriers and provide additional support when necessary so that participants can fully benefit from international learning experiences.

From an educational perspective, inclusive mobility reflects the principles of **inclusive learning environments** and **person-centred educational pathways**. Instead of adapting learners to rigid programme structures, organisations are encouraged to adapt activities, environments and support systems to participants' needs. This approach recognises diversity as a normal and valuable dimension of learning groups.

Inclusive mobility requires a **combination of universal accessibility measures and individual support**. Universal measures aim to make environments accessible to the widest possible range of participants, while individual accommodations respond to specific needs that cannot be addressed through general design solutions.

In practice, this means that inclusion must be integrated into all phases of the mobility: preparation, implementation and follow-up.

Individual needs assessment before mobility

The first step in inclusive mobility planning is understanding the specific needs of each participant. Needs assessment is a collaborative process that enables organisations and participants to identify the required support measures.

Organisations should explore **functional needs related to participation in learning activities and travel situations**. Needs assessments should be conducted sufficiently in advance of mobility activities to allow time for planning and coordination between organisations.

See additional preparation measures in: Preparation and Accompaniment of Learners

The assessment process should involve:

- the participant
- the sending organisation
- the hosting organisation
- where appropriate, support persons or family members

Open dialogue helps build trust and allows participants to express concerns, expectations and support needs. Info-sessions can be organized in different settings, such as in a 1:1 conversation, or in small groups. Step-by-step orientation helps participants and support persons understand different aspects of the mobility program.

Example questions to map general areas of individual needs assessment:

Area	Guiding questions

Mobility and physical access	Are there any barriers related to movement, transport or infrastructure? Are there any accessibility requirements related to accommodation or activity venues (e.g. elevators, adapted bathrooms, quiet spaces)? Does the participant require assistance during travel (e.g. airport assistance, accessible transport services)?
Communication	Does the participant require adapted communication formats, translations or assistive technologies? Are there communication preferences that facilitators should be aware of during group activities?
Learning environment	Are adjustments needed in training methods or learning materials? Are there preferred ways of participating in group work (e.g. smaller groups, written contributions, visual materials)? Are there any concerns about participating in group or intercultural activities?
Health and well-being	Are there health considerations that organisers should be aware of? Are there any special dietary needs that organisers should consider? Are there situations that could create stress or discomfort during the mobility (e.g. crowded environments, long schedules)?
Personal support	Is an accompanying person or facilitator required?
Orientation and preparation	What kind of other information or resources would help the participant in the preparation for the mobility program (e.g. preparatory meeting, written materials, etc.) ? What are the participant's main expectations from the mobility experience? Are there any concerns or uncertainties the participant would like to discuss before the mobility?
Digital access	Does the participant need support in using digital tools or online platforms used during the mobility?

Accessibility of travel and accommodation

Accessibility planning must start early and involve both logistical and organisational considerations. Communication should also include service providers to verify accessibility conditions before confirming bookings.

Important aspects of travel & accommodation include:

- accessible transport options
- proximity between accommodation and activity venues
- availability of accessible rooms and facilities
- quiet or low-stimulus environments for participants who may require them

Accessibility planning checklist for travel and accommodation:

Area	Accessibility considerations
Transport	assistance needed in booking, accessible boarding procedures, assistance services during travel, what to bring (e.g. ID card or passport, etc.)
Accommodation	accessible rooms, elevators, adapted bathrooms, clear instructions for check-in and check-out, information about nearby services (pharmacy, medical assistance, shops, etc.), what to bring (e.g. clothes according to weather and planned activities)
Location	safe and accessible routes between accommodation and venue, alternative means of transportation, maps or visual guides for orientation, indoor-outdoor alternatives according to weather conditions
Facilities	quiet spaces or rest areas, accessible dining areas, access to drinking water, what to bring (e.g. disability card, specific medicine, etc.)
Information	Information in multiple formats (visual+audio) shared in advance (venue description, travel guidance, etc.), clear instructions and contact points, accessible graphics, translations where needed, emergency contacts indicated

See financial mechanisms supporting accessibility measures in: Erasmus+ Inclusion: Definitions and Funding Instruments

Accessibility of learning activities

In many Erasmus+ mobility activities, non-formal learning methods (such as group discussions, experiential exercises, simulations, workshops, etc.) are used. While these methods are highly engaging, they must be facilitated carefully to ensure accessibility. This means, facilitators should be prepared to adjust activities according to participants' needs.

Practical strategies for accessible learning activities:

- providing clear instructions for activities
- allowing flexible participation formats
- combining visual, oral and written communication
- allowing additional time for reflection and discussion

Inclusive facilitation checklist:

Aspect	Inclusive practice
Instructions	use clear and simple language, use translation where needed, check understanding regularly, ask for feedback, invite questions or clarifications

Participation and group work	allow multiple ways to contribute (speaking, writing, digital tools, visual contributions), provide assistance when needed and encourage peer support within the group, ensure balanced participation, encourage respectful communication and mutual support
Materials	provide visual and written versions, accessible graphics, subtitles or transcripts where relevant, ensure visibility of materials for all participants (seating arrangements)
Timing	allow flexibility in activity duration, include breaks when needed

Preparation of facilitators can include:

Aspect	**Preparation steps**
Knowledge	Understanding functional needs (mobility, sensory, cognitive, emotional); awareness of inclusive and non-formal education principles; familiarity with accessibility tools and inclusive communication methods; awareness of potential barriers in international learning environments.
Skills	Adapting activities to different learning styles and participation formats; using clear and accessible communication; facilitating inclusive group dynamics; managing time flexibly; observing participants' needs and adjusting methods during activities.
Attitudes	Openness and respect toward diversity; willingness to adapt plans when necessary; patience and empathy toward participants' needs; commitment to creating a supportive and safe learning environment.
Challenge management	Be aware that multiple scenarios are possible and handle them with confidence. The facilitator's self-trust and calm response influence the overall learning atmosphere and participants' sense of safety.
Psychological preparation	Reflect on potential uncertainties and remain comfortable with flexibility; avoid perfectionism and focus on participation; be prepared to ask for support from co-facilitators or organisers if needed; maintain a positive and encouraging attitude toward unexpected situations.

See reflection and recognition processes in: Post-Mobility Follow-up and Recognition

Communication and learning materials

Information should be accessible, understandable and provided through multiple formats. Digital tools can support, e.g. through automatic captions, translation tools or screen-reading technologies.

Practical measures for communication and adaptation of learning materials:

- using plain language in written materials

- providing subtitles or transcripts for videos
- offering written summaries of oral instructions
- using visual supports such as diagrams or icons
- providing materials in advance

Safety, safeguarding and risk management

Ensuring participant safety is a fundamental responsibility for organisations implementing mobility activities. Inclusive mobility planning should include clear procedures for safeguarding, emergency situations and participant well-being.

Organisations should prepare:

- emergency contact procedures
- clear roles and responsibilities for staff
- protocols for responding to health or safety incidents
- systems for monitoring participant well-being during the activity

Participants should receive clear information about whom to contact if they encounter difficulties during the mobility.

Risk management planning checklist:

Area	**Preventive measure**
Health	emergency contact information available, basic information about nearby medical services (pharmacy, hospital), information on participants' medical needs collected in advance where appropriate
Safety	clear safety instructions for venues and accommodations, emergency exits and meeting points explained, important documents identified in advance (e.g. ID/passport, insurance, disability card)
Communication	designated contact person for participants, brief orientation session on the first day covering venues, schedules, and support contacts
Well-being	regular check-ins with participants (e.g. reflection groups, morning check-in, evening check-in), feedback loops, mid-term evaluation
Crisis response	predefined emergency procedures, "what if" scenarios, collaboration of participating organisations, clear procedure for reporting problems, concerns, or incidents, clear procedures for requesting assistance

Preparation and Accompaniment of Learners

Inclusive mobility preparation is closely linked to the concept of **learner empowerment**. For adult learners with disabilities, empowerment often requires additional support mechanisms that facilitate participation and reduce barriers related to unfamiliar environments. Preparation processes can help learners anticipate potential challenges and develop strategies to manage them.

Step-by-step orientation

A clear and structured orientation process helps participants understand what to expect and how to prepare for the experience. Info-sessions can be organised in a 1:1 setting or in small groups, encouraging open dialogue, allowing participants to ask questions and express concerns. For some learners, involving family members or support persons in the orientation process may help strengthen confidence and trust.

See information about accessibility arrangements in: Inclusion Measures in Erasmus+ Mobility

Pre-departure info-session topics and elements to address:

Topic	**Key elements to address**
Mobility objectives	learning goals and expected outcomes
Programme overview	schedule and learning activities
Practical arrangements	transport, accommodation, food (special dietary needs), logistics
Accessibility	accessibility of venues, learning activities, and available support measures
Communication	contact persons, intercultural aspects
Support contacts	accompanying person, facilitators, emergency contacts
Expectations	participant roles and participation guidelines
Documentation	personal documents, certificates of attendance, recognition of learning
Application process	application form, eventual costs, selection criteria
Digital tools	platforms or tools used (e.g. communication channels or learning tools)

Minimum digital preparation

Digital competences are increasingly important in mobility activities, as many organisational and learning processes rely on digital communication platforms.

Participants may be expected to:

- access online materials
- use digital meeting platforms
- communicate through messaging or collaboration tools
- complete online evaluation or reflection activities

For learners with limited digital experience, organisations should provide basic digital preparation before the mobility. It can be delivered through short practical sessions where participants can practice using the tools that will be used during the mobility.

Minimum digital preparation for mobility:

Digital skill	**Example**
Online communication	using video meeting platforms to participate in meetings or preparatory sessions
Document access	opening, downloading, sharing materials and documents
Messaging tools	communicating with organisers or peers
Basic digital safety	managing passwords, protecting personal data, recognising suspicious messages
Online forms	completing digital forms (e.g. registration or feedback surveys)

Support before, during and after mobility

Before mobility

Participants should receive clear information, preparation info-sessions (including digital preparation) and individual guidance (including personal needs assessment) where necessary. This stage is particularly important for addressing logistical concerns and emotional readiness.

During mobility

Support systems should remain accessible throughout the mobility experience. Such measures help ensure that participants feel safe and supported in case of difficulties.

Support systems during the mobility:

- designated contact persons
- regular check-ins with participants
- peer support systems, mentoring
- assistance from accompanying staff

After mobility

Follow-up activities allow participants to reflect on their experience and consolidate the learning outcomes of the mobility.

Post-mobility activities may include:

- reflection sessions
- competence validation processes
- sharing experiences with peers
- dissemination events

See post-mobility reflection and recognition activities in: Post-Mobility Follow-up and Recognition

Post-mobility Follow-up and Recognition

Learning that takes place during mobility activities often occurs through **experiential and non-formal learning processes**. Participants develop competences through interaction, collaboration, problem-solving and exposure to new environments.

Reflection activities allow participants to identify what they have learned, while competence validation tools help translate these experiences into recognisable achievements. As recognition processes make these learning outcomes visible, they contribute to building a culture of lifelong learning. By implementing these post-mobility activities, international experiences become part of a continuous personal and educational development pathway.

Validation of competences

After mobility activities, participants should be supported in reflecting on their learning outcomes. Structured reflection processes help learners recognise the skills, knowledge and attitudes they have developed during the experience.

Common reflection methods include:

- group reflection sessions
- guided discussion with facilitators
- personal reflection journals
- evaluation questionnaires

One widely used tool in Erasmus+ mobility activities is **Europass Mobility.** It provides a structured framework for documenting developed competences during non-formal learning activities. Europass Mobility encourages participants to reflect on their learning journey, do self-assessment of the competences they have gained, and describe them to document the learning outcomes.

For adult learners with disabilities, the validation process should remain accessible and supportive. It should allow participants to express their learning outcomes in ways that suit their communication preferences.

Visibility and empowerment

Post-mobility activities can also contribute to empowering participants by giving visibility to their experiences and achievements. These activities allow learners to reflect on their experiences while inspiring others to participate in similar opportunities. Visibility initiatives can also help organisations raise awareness about inclusive mobility and demonstrate the positive impact of international learning experiences.

Participants may share their mobility experiences through:

- presentations in their organisations or communities
- participation in dissemination events
- short testimonials or interviews
- contributions to project communication activities

Continuity in education and employability

Mobility experiences can serve as stepping stones for further educational or professional development. For many participants, international mobility can increase confidence and motivation to pursue new opportunities that previously seemed inaccessible.

Organisations can support participants by helping them explore opportunities that build on the competences they developed during mobility.

Possible follow-up actions include:

- encouraging participation in further training programmes
- connecting learners with local educational initiatives
- supporting participants in identifying transferable skills relevant to employment
- linking mobility experiences to broader lifelong learning pathways

Summary of post-mobility follow-up and recognition:

Follow-up area	**Example actions**
Reflection	group discussion, personal reflection, feedback sessions
Recognition	Europass Mobility or other competence validation tools
Visibility	testimonials, presentations, project dissemination events
Future pathways	connecting learners with further education or training opportunities
Knowledge sharing	participants sharing their experience with peers or within their organisation

Evaluation	collecting feedback through surveys or evaluation forms to improve future mobility activities

Erasmus+ Inclusion: Definitions and Funding Instruments

Inclusion as a programme priority

Inclusion and diversity represent one of the horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ programme. This priority encourages organisations to design projects that actively reduce participation barriers and increase the involvement of underrepresented groups.

Adult education providers are encouraged to consider **functional needs related to participation** and to design support measures that respond to real participation barriers. This means developing mobility activities that are accessible to participants with diverse backgrounds, learning needs and personal circumstances.

Inclusive project design may involve:

- adapting communication and outreach strategies
- providing accessible learning environments
- offering additional preparation and support
- allocating resources to address accessibility needs

"Fewer opportunities" and disability-related needs

The Erasmus+ programme uses the concept of **participants with fewer opportunities** to describe individuals who face obstacles that prevent them from accessing educational or mobility opportunities.

Types of barriers and limiting circumstances:

- disabilities or health-related conditions
- socio-economic challenges
- geographical isolation
- educational disadvantages
- migration or minority backgrounds

It is important to recognise that barriers often arise from the interaction between individuals and their environment. For example:

- a venue that lacks accessible infrastructure can create barriers for participants with mobility impairments,
- complex communication formats may create barriers for participants with cognitive or learning differences.

Instead of categorising participants solely according to “disability types”, organisations should focus on identifying **participation needs.**

Disability-related functional needs and possible support:

Type of need	**Example support measure**
Mobility	accessible transport or adapted accommodation
Sensory	subtitles, visual materials, assistive devices, screen reader compatible materials
Cognitive	simplified instructions, structured activities, clear communication, translations
Health	medication management support or rest periods
Emotional, psychological	mentoring, supportive facilitation, individual check-ins, additional time for activities

Erasmus+ Inclusion support funding: How to use it

The Erasmus+ programme provides specific financial mechanisms that allow organisations to cover additional costs related to inclusive participation.

Funding instruments supporting inclusion in KA1

In Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects, inclusion can be financially supported through **two distinct budget lines**.

1. Inclusion support for organisations

This is a **lump sum contribution** included in the project budget as part of organisational support.

Its purpose is to help organisations cover the additional work required to prepare, accompany, and support participants with fewer opportunities.

This funding may be used, for example, for:

- additional preparation meetings with participants
- personalised guidance before departure
- coordination between sending and hosting organisations
- staff time dedicated to inclusion planning
- mentoring and accompaniment during preparation or follow-up
- adapting communication materials or orientation resources

Because this contribution is a lump sum, it **does not require proof of actual expenditure through invoices or receipts** in the same way as exceptional costs.

2. Inclusion support for participants (special needs support / exceptional costs)

This budget line covers **real additional costs directly linked to the participation of a person with disabilities or specific support needs**.

These costs are reimbursed based on **actual expenditure**, normally up to 100% of eligible costs.

Examples may include:

- personal assistants or accompanying persons
- sign language interpretation
- accessible transport arrangements
- adapted accommodation or room upgrades required for accessibility
- assistive devices or specialised equipment
- accessible learning materials in alternative formats
- specific medical or support services needed during the mobility

This budget must normally be requested during project planning or through later budget management procedures where allowed by the National Agency.

It is important to note that:

- these funds belong to a **separate budget envelope** within the Erasmus+ grant;
- organisations may sometimes reallocate available project funds to cover these exceptional costs, depending on the grant agreement rules;
- **additional funding beyond the total approved grant cannot be requested once the grant agreement has been signed**.

For this reason, early planning and realistic budgeting are essential.

When to use each funding instrument - examples of inclusion support in practice:

Situation	Funding type most relevant
Extra preparation meetings with a participant before mobility	Inclusion support for organisations
Staff time spent coordinating accessibility arrangements	Inclusion support for organisations
Producing simplified orientation materials	Inclusion support for organisations
Hiring a sign language interpreter	Inclusion support for participants / exceptional costs
Paying accessible taxi transport during the mobility	Inclusion support for participants / exceptional costs
Covering costs for a personal assistant	Inclusion support for participants / exceptional costs

In practice, many mobility projects use **both** forms of support together.

Planning inclusion support effectively

To use inclusion funding well, organisations should:

- identify support needs early during participant selection and preparation
- discuss needs directly with the participant and, where relevant, support persons
- distinguish between support covered through organisational planning and support requiring additional exceptional-cost budgeting
- estimate costs realistically and document assumptions clearly
- coordinate with the hosting organisation before confirming arrangements
- verify current rules with the Erasmus+ National Agency and the Erasmus+ Programme Guide of the relevant year, as budget rules may be updated between programme calls

Financial support works best when embedded in a broader inclusion strategy. Funding alone does not guarantee accessibility, but it can enable organisations to create the practical conditions that make participation possible.

See accessibility measures described in: Inclusion Measures in Erasmus+ Mobility

Documentation and evidence checklist

Good documentation helps organisations plan inclusion effectively, communicate clearly with partners, and report Erasmus+ expenses correctly.

However, documentation requirements differ depending on the type of inclusion funding used.

1. Documentation for inclusion support for organisations (lump sum)

When inclusion support is received through organisational support, this contribution is managed as a **lump sum**.

This means that organisations are **not required to provide invoices or proof of actual expenditure for each individual cost** in the final financial reporting.

Nevertheless, it is good practice to keep internal records demonstrating how inclusion was planned and implemented.

Useful internal evidence may include:

- participant needs assessment forms
- notes from preparation meetings
- internal planning documents
- communication with partners regarding support arrangements
- adapted training materials or accessible participant information
- mentoring or accompaniment records
- feedback from participants after mobility

These materials can be useful for quality monitoring, internal evaluation, and future project planning.

2. Documentation for inclusion support for participants / exceptional costs

When using **special needs support / exceptional costs**, documentation requirements are more formal because reimbursement is based on **actual costs incurred**.

For these costs, organisations should normally keep:

- invoices and receipts; proof of payment; booking confirmations
- contracts with service providers, where relevant
- accessibility service agreements
- evidence explaining why the cost was necessary for participation
- communication with the hosting partner regarding the requested support

Examples include:

Documentation element	Example evidence
Needs assessment	record of participant support needs, pre-departure questionnaires, notes from interviews/consultations
Support plan	description of accessibility measures, emails or notes confirming agreed support arrangements, internal budget planning documents
Financial records	invoices/receipts/contracts (proof of payments) for accessibility services, such as: sign language interpretation; adapted local transport, specialised equipment rental, etc.
Activity reports	evidence of implemented measures, attendance lists or confirmation of participant involvement in activities, photos (where appropriate), final evaluation results, lessons learned

These documents may be required by the National Agency during reporting or later checks. Documentation should demonstrate that:

- inclusion support responds to actual participant needs
- the measures are directly linked to the mobility activity
- funds are used in accordance with programme guidelines.

Reporting exceptional costs in the Beneficiary Module

For exceptional costs related to inclusion support, organisations should report them in the relevant section of the **Beneficiary Module**, indicating:

- type of support provided
- reason why the support was necessary for the participant's participation
- amount actually spent
- justification of eligibility in relation to the mobility activity

Supporting financial documents should be kept by the beneficiary organisation and made available if requested by the National Agency.

Because *reporting procedures may vary slightly depending on the project year, call, or National Agency instructions*, organisations should always verify the latest guidance in:

- the Erasmus+ Programme Guide of the relevant year
- the Grant Agreement
- the Beneficiary Module user guide or National Agency reporting instructions

Practical internal checklist before project closure

Before final reporting, organisations may use the following checklist:

- Participant needs assessment completed
- Accessibility arrangements confirmed with host organisation

- Inclusion support measures implemented during mobility
- Exceptional cost invoices collected and archived (where applicable)
- Proof of payment available
- Supporting communication with partners saved
- Participant feedback collected after mobility
- Costs checked against approved Erasmus+ budget
- Reporting section in Beneficiary Module reviewed before submission

Keeping clear and proportionate documentation not only supports compliance, but also helps organisations improve future inclusion planning and make mobility experiences more accessible over time.

Case Study Examples from Practice

The following micro-scenarios and practical examples can help illustrate how inclusion support mechanisms may be applied in real mobility contexts.

Best Practice 3: Communication Accessibility in International Workshops

Context:
An adult education organisation hosted an Erasmus+ international workshop involving participants from different countries. One participant had a hearing impairment and communicated primarily through lip reading and written support. The workshop included presentations, group discussions, and video-based activities.

Challenges identified:

- Difficulty following spoken discussions in large groups.
- Limited access to audiovisual content without subtitles.
- Risk of missing informal exchanges during group work and networking moments.
- Increased fatigue caused by continuous concentration during oral communication.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- Written summaries of the main discussions were provided after each session.
- All videos used during training included subtitles.
- Facilitators were asked to speak clearly, one at a time, and face participants while speaking.
- Key instructions were also shared in written format through printed materials and digital documents.
- Seating arrangements were adapted so the participant could clearly see speakers during discussions.

Results:

- The participant was able to actively engage in both plenary and small-group activities.
- Communication barriers during the workshop were significantly reduced.
- The participant reported feeling included in discussions and able to follow the learning process more independently.
- Organisers integrated subtitled materials and written summaries as standard practice for future events.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for accessible communication, ensuring that information is available through multiple formats.
- The principle of equal participation, allowing participants to contribute to discussions with confidence.
- Universal Design for Learning, by combining oral, written, and visual communication methods that benefit all participants.

Best Practice 4: Facilitation Support Through Adapted Learning Methods

Context:
During an Erasmus+ mobility workshop for adult learners, one participant with cognitive learning difficulties joined a programme involving group reflection activities, collaborative tasks, and practical exercises.

Challenges identified:

- Difficulty processing long verbal instructions.
- Need for additional time to understand tasks and transitions between activities.
- Anxiety in fast-paced group exercises.
- Hesitation in speaking in front of larger groups.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- Instructions were broken into shorter steps and repeated using plain language.
- Visual supports and written keywords were used to structure each activity.
- Additional time was allowed before moving from one task to the next.
- The participant was given the option to contribute verbally or in writing.
- Facilitators checked understanding individually before beginning activities.
- Group work was organised in smaller groups to create a more supportive environment.

Results:

- The participant remained engaged throughout the mobility experience.
- Confidence in participating in group activities increased over the course of the programme.
- The learner contributed more actively once clear structure and flexibility were provided.

- Facilitators reported that simplified communication improved the experience for the whole group, not only for one participant.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for flexible learning environments, adapting methods to individual learning rhythms.
- The principle of person-centred support, recognising that inclusion often requires methodological adaptation rather than separate activities.
- The promotion of learner confidence and emotional safety, which supports active participation in mobility.

Best Practice 5: Logistical Accessibility in Mobility Planning

Context:
A participant with reduced mobility was selected for an Erasmus+ training activity abroad. The programme included several days of workshops, accommodation, local travel, and social activities in the host city.

Challenges identified:

- Need for step-free access throughout the mobility.
- Difficulty with long walking distances between accommodation and training venue.
- Need for adapted transport during arrival and local transfers.
- Concern about access to common spaces such as dining areas and meeting rooms.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- Accessible accommodation was booked close to the training venue.
- Step-free routes between accommodation and activity spaces were verified in advance.
- Accessible transportation was arranged for airport transfer and local mobility.
- The host venue confirmed elevator access and adapted bathroom facilities.
- Participants received clear accessibility information before departure, including maps and contact details.

Results:

- The participant attended all training sessions and social activities without major logistical barriers.
- Travel and daily movement during the mobility were manageable and safe.
- The participant reported feeling more confident thanks to receiving practical information before departure.
- The organisation developed an internal accessibility checklist to support future mobility planning.

This approach aligns with:

- The need to remove physical and environmental barriers in international mobility.
- The importance of proactive planning, where accessibility is integrated from the preparation phase.
- The Erasmus+ principle of inclusion and equal access, ensuring mobility opportunities are accessible to all participants.

Best Practice 6: Personal Assistance as a Support Measure During Mobility

Context:
An adult learner with health-related support needs participated in an Erasmus+ mobility activity abroad. To ensure full participation, the learner travelled with a support person who assisted throughout travel, accommodation, and learning activities.

Challenges identified:

- Need for practical support during travel and transfers.
- Additional assistance required during daily routines linked to the mobility experience.
- Need for emotional reassurance in unfamiliar environments.
- Coordination required between participant, support person, sending organisation and host organisation.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- Funding for an accompanying person was included in the Erasmus+ mobility budget.
- Roles and responsibilities of the support person were discussed and agreed in advance.
- The host organisation received information before arrival regarding the support arrangements.
- Accommodation was organised to ensure suitable access for both participant and accompanying person.
- Daily communication with facilitators helped adapt the schedule when necessary.

Results:

- The participant completed the mobility successfully and took part in all core learning activities.
- Health-related needs were supported without limiting participation in the programme.
- The presence of the support person increased confidence and reduced stress during mobility.
- Both organisations gained practical experience in coordinating personal assistance support for future mobilities.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for individual support measures, tailored to specific participant circumstances.
- The principle of autonomy with support, enabling independent participation while ensuring necessary assistance.
- Inclusive mobility as shared responsibility, involving cooperation between participant, sending organisation and host organisation.

Best Practice 7: Digital Accessibility and Pre-Mobility Preparation

Context:
An adult education organisation prepared a group of learners for an Erasmus+ mobility course abroad. Several participants had limited digital skills and little experience using online meeting tools, digital forms, and shared learning platforms required before departure.

Challenges identified:

- Difficulty accessing digital information related to mobility preparation.
- Limited confidence using online platforms for registration and communication.
- Fear of making mistakes when using unfamiliar digital tools.
- Risk of exclusion from pre-mobility activities due to digital barriers.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- A short digital onboarding session was organised before mobility.
- Participants received step-by-step visual guides on how to access shared documents and online platforms.
- A trainer provided individual support for registration and platform access.
- Practice sessions were offered for video meeting tools before the international activity began.
- Important information was shared both digitally and in printed format.

Results:

- All participants successfully completed the pre-mobility preparation tasks.
- Confidence in using digital tools increased before departure.
- Participants engaged more actively in online meetings with the host organisation.
- The organisation introduced digital preparation sessions as a standard step for future mobilities.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for digital inclusion, ensuring that technology supports participation rather than becoming a barrier.
- The importance of preparation and accompaniment, especially before international mobility.

- The principle of accessible information, by providing content in multiple formats and levels of complexity.

Best Practice 8: Emotional Support and Mentoring During Mobility

Context:
An adult learner participating in Erasmus+ mobility abroad experienced anxiety related to travelling, staying in an unfamiliar environment, and interacting in an international group.

Challenges identified:

- Anxiety before departure.
- Difficulty adapting to new routines and unfamiliar surroundings.
- Fear of speaking in a foreign language during activities.
- Risk of withdrawal from social moments outside formal training sessions.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- A mentor from the sending organisation supported the learner before departure.
- A welcome session was organised upon arrival to introduce the venue, programme, and people involved.
- Daily check-ins were scheduled with facilitators during the mobility.
- Quiet moments and optional breaks were included in the programme schedule.
- A peer participant was identified as a buddy for informal support during activities.

Results:

- The participant completed the mobility successfully.
- Anxiety levels decreased after the first days of the programme.
- Participation in both learning and social activities increased progressively.
- The learner reported feeling supported, safe, and more confident in international environments.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for emotional and psychological support in inclusive mobility.
- The importance of safe learning environments, where participants feel comfortable asking for help.
- The value of mentoring and human connection as key enabling factors for participation.

Best Practice 9: Language Inclusion in International Mobility Activities

Context:
A group of adult learners participated in an Erasmus+ training activity conducted in English. Some participants had limited foreign language skills and were concerned about understanding content and interacting with peers from other countries.

Challenges identified:

- Difficulty understanding presentations in English.
- Low confidence speaking in group discussions.
- Concern about missing important information.
- Hesitation to participate in intercultural exchanges.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- Facilitators used clear and simple language during sessions.
- Key content was summarised visually through slides, keywords, and diagrams.
- Written summaries were shared after each workshop.
- Participants were encouraged to express themselves using simple language or visual tools.
- Translation tools and multilingual support materials were made available when needed.

Results:

- Participants remained actively involved in learning activities despite language differences.
- Confidence in communicating in an international environment increased.
- Interaction between participants from different countries improved during the week.
- The mobility created a more multilingual and inclusive learning atmosphere for the entire group.

This approach aligns with:

- The need for linguistic inclusion in international mobility settings.
- The principle of accessible communication, ensuring comprehension beyond language proficiency.
- The Erasmus+ value of intercultural exchange, making participation possible for learners with different communication backgrounds.

Best Practice 10: Financial Support as a Measure for Equal Participation

Context:
An adult learner with limited financial resources was selected for an Erasmus+ mobility opportunity but was unsure whether participation would be possible due to additional personal costs linked to travel preparation and accessibility needs.

Challenges identified:

- Concern about covering mobility-related expenses not included in standard budgeting.
- Risk of withdrawing from participation for financial reasons.
- Stress related to managing unexpected costs before departure.
- Limited access to information about available Erasmus+ inclusion support funding.

Inclusive measures implemented:

- The organisation carried out an individual needs assessment to identify additional support needs.
- Erasmus+ inclusion support funding was requested to cover accessibility-related costs.
- Clear information was provided about eligible expenses and reimbursement procedures.
- Organisers maintained regular communication with the participant during preparation.
- Budget planning was reviewed together to reduce uncertainty and financial stress.

Results:

- The participant was able to join the mobility activity without financial barriers preventing participation.
- Financial stress before departure was reduced.
- The participant completed the mobility successfully and reported high satisfaction with the support received.
- The organisation improved its internal procedures for explaining inclusion support funding to future participants.

This approach aligns with:

- The need to reduce economic barriers to participation.
- The Erasmus+ inclusion and diversity priority, ensuring equal access to mobility opportunities.
- The importance of transparent information and support planning, enabling participation from the earliest stage of project preparation.

Future indications

As mobility programmes evolve, organisations will need to strengthen their capacity to design accessible learning environments and provide appropriate support mechanisms for diverse participants. Future efforts should focus on further integrating accessibility considerations into all stages of mobility planning. Training facilitators and project coordinators will play an important role in ensuring that mobility activities are designed with flexibility and awareness of diverse learning needs.

Another important direction involves strengthening collaboration between organisations and support networks around participants. Early planning can help ensure that accessibility needs are identified and addressed before mobility activities take place.

Digital tools and assistive technologies will also continue to expand opportunities for inclusive participation. Accessible communication formats, translation tools, and adaptive learning technologies can help reduce barriers and support meaningful participation in international learning environments.

Finally, when mobility experiences are connected with preparatory learning, mentoring, and post-mobility reflection, they can contribute to long-term empowerment and engagement in lifelong learning. By strengthening inclusive mobility practices, adult education organisations can contribute to creating more equitable opportunities for participation in international education and cooperation.

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