

# SUMMARY OF THE ERASMUS+ STUDY ON THE EFFECTS AND PERCEIVED IMPACT OF STAFF MOBILITY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Staff mobility within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme offers a valuable opportunity for the professional development of vocational teachers and other educators, as well as for the enhancement of key competences. In Estonian vocational education, cross-border learning mobility for staff started to develop rapidly in 1998 with the launch of the European Union-funded Leonardo da Vinci programme. The support scheme, now known as Erasmus+, enables schools to send educators abroad to job shadow foreign colleagues, participate in courses and training, or teach. The programme, which began with only 22 mobilities in 1998, now reaches nearly 700 staff mobilities per year. In 2024, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps Agency conducted a study for the first time to assess the outcomes and impact of mobility for both educators and VET institutions.

The results of the study clearly indicate that staff mobility within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme supports both the professional and personal development of VET teachers and other vocational education professionals. As a result of the mobility experience, teachers developed various important professional skills and knowledge. Respondents rated the development of teaching-related knowledge and skills as the most significant, particularly those needed to enhance their teaching. In addition, their ability to implement a learner-centred approach also improved significantly (see Figure 1).

## As a result of the learning mobility(s), I developed/improved... (ratings on a scale of 1-5)

Share of positive answers, i.e. the answer options: 5 – completely agree and 4 – rather agree



Figure 1. Teachers' assessments of the development of professional competences

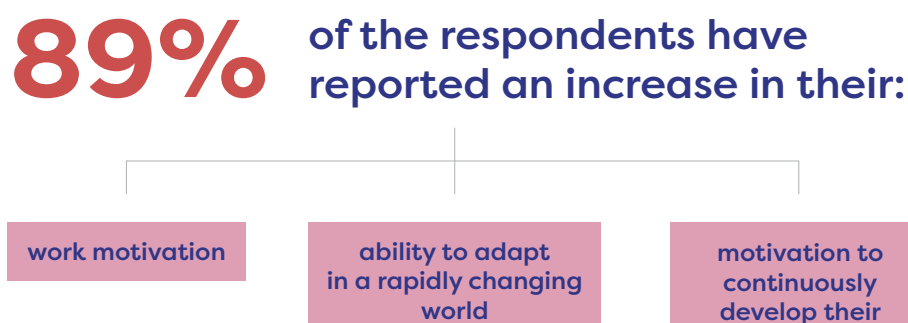
As a result of the mobility, non-teaching educators significantly developed knowledge and skills relevant to their work. During the learning mobility, they gained ideas for implementing innovations in their field, as well as new knowledge and skills to perform their work more efficiently.

As a result of the experience gained through mobility, teachers and other educators have implemented significant innovations in their work – such as improving their teaching approaches, applying new methodologies, and updating teaching materials based on international experience. Collaboration among colleagues has also increased, especially with those who have participated in the mobility themselves.

In addition to developing competences important for work, participation in learning mobility increases work motivation and the desire to continuously improve one's professional skills. Experience in an international environment also fosters adaptability, which is crucial in a rapidly changing world.

### **As a result of participating in the learning mobility, my ... (ratings on a scale of 1-5)**

*Share of positive answers, i.e. answer options 5 – completely agree and 4 – rather agree*



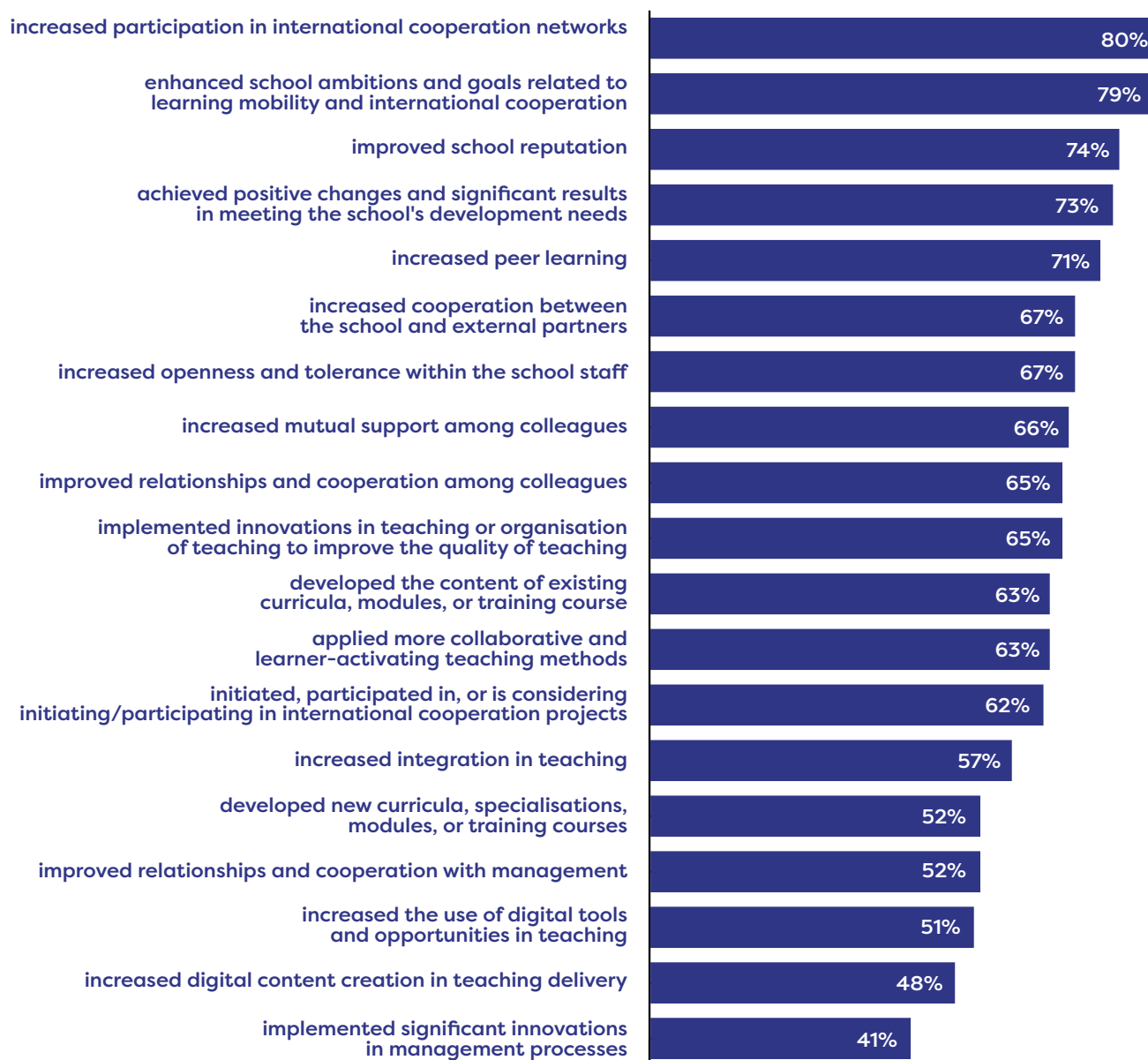
The impact of learning mobility is also evident at the organisational level. For example, educational institutions have updated the content and organisation of studies, implemented new methodologies, and promoted international cooperation (see Figure 2). Existing curricula and modules have been improved, and new ones have also been developed.

In addition, learning mobility has contributed significantly to meeting the overall development needs of schools, and the reputation of institutions participating in international cooperation has improved. Participation in mobility has strengthened relationships between colleagues, increased mutual support, and encouraged peer learning, which in turn has enhanced internal cooperation within schools.

Thus, the impact of mobility goes far beyond the individual level – it improves the quality of vocational education and training, thereby helping to better prepare learners for future challenges in a rapidly changing environment, including those in the labour market.

## As a result of the learning mobility of educators, our school has ... (ratings on a scale of 1-5)

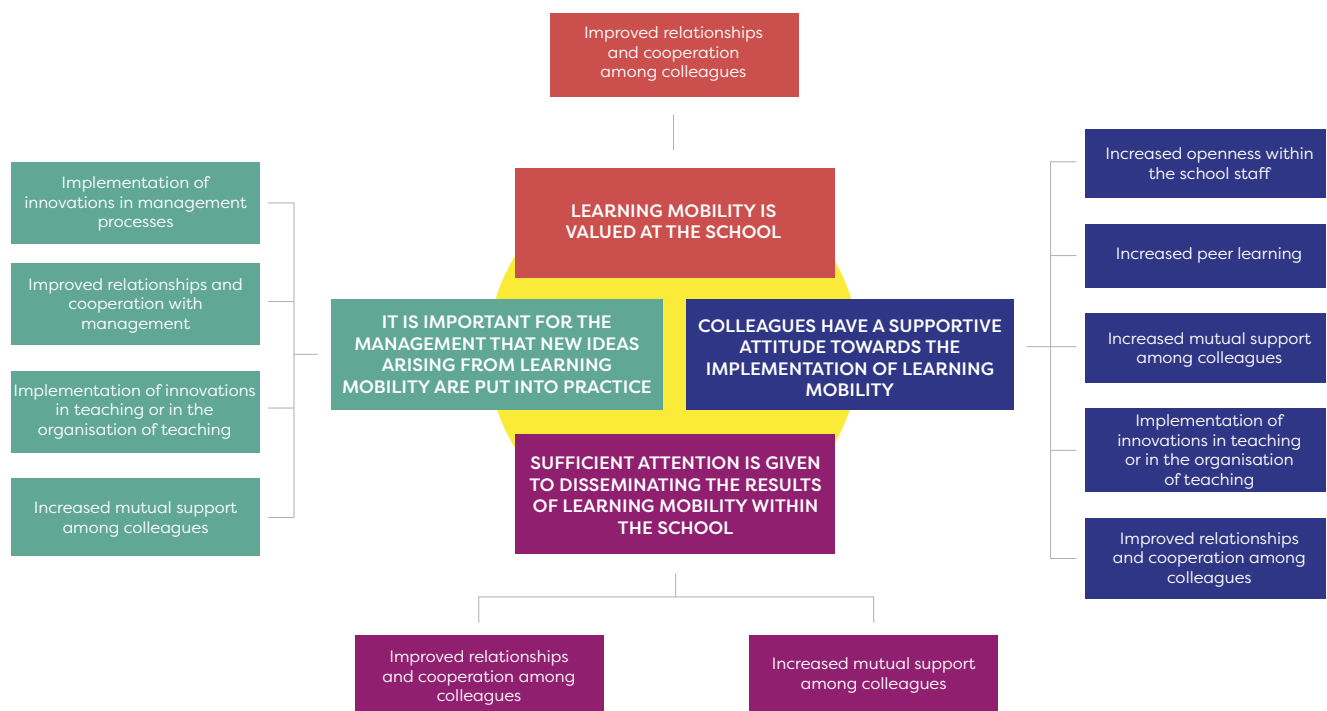
Share of positive answers, i.e. the answer options: 5 – completely agree and 4 – rather agree



**Figure 2.** Aggregate assessments of the impact of learning mobility at the school level for educational staff who have participated and those who have not participated in learning mobility

Participation in learning mobility has led to several new initiatives within the schools. For example, a 'green team' has been established, and a pop-up restaurant has been organised. Beyond the school's internal projects, new international development projects have also been initiated or joined because of the mobility.

The study revealed that valuing learning mobility is key to its impact and outcomes within educational institutions. Two important factors strengthen this impact: the supportive attitude of colleagues towards learning mobility and the clear commitment of management to applying the experiences of colleagues who have participated in learning mobility in school life.



**Figure 3.** Factors influencing the impact of learning mobility in an educational institution

The study also highlighted several suggestions and recommendations for increasing the results and impact of learning mobility in vocational education and training institutions. Firstly, it is important to pay more attention to the development of digital competences through courses and training during staff mobility, as these deliver better results compared to job shadowing. Developing digital competences is essential for teachers and VET specialists to apply digital technologies more effectively in their work. It is also recommended to promote blended mobility – complementing physical mobility with a virtual component – to enhance the quality and benefits of mobility. According to educators who participated in blended mobility, the virtual part creates added value and is mainly used in preparation for mobility, for example, by getting to know representatives of the host organisation or other participants, specifying objectives and content, and mapping participants’ prior knowledge and skills in courses and trainings.

The study also sought to shed light on the causes and consequences of non-participation in learning mobility among educators. It was found that lack of information was the main reason for non-participation – many educators (35% of respondents) were not sufficiently aware of mobility opportunities or had not yet found a suitable opportunity for self-improvement abroad. Insufficient foreign language skills (reported by 29% of respondents) and organisational issues, such as difficulties finding substitutes during their absence, also proved to be obstacles. Notably, among those who have not participated in learning mobility, the largest group were educators with up to five years of employment (39%).

To increase school-wide impact, it is important to involve more educators who have not yet participated in learning mobility. Increasing their awareness of the benefits of mobility, and fostering a positive attitude and readiness for cooperation, is crucial. To this end, providing more support and mentoring to teachers and educators with less work experience – the largest group of non-mobile staff members – can encourage their participation and professional development. Participation in mobility can also enhance job security for new teachers: survey results show that the majority (87%) of those who have participated in mobility feel more confident in their career choice and wish to continue in their profession.

To increase institutional impact, it is important to disseminate mobility results more systematically and effectively. Using targeted dissemination methods – such as sharing knowledge and experience through mini-lessons, workshops, study groups, or seminars – can lead to greater impact than brief or superficial exchanges about experience.

In conclusion, Erasmus+ staff mobility has been successfully and effectively implemented by Estonian vocational education and training institutions. The study confirms that the expected results and effects of learning mobility outlined in strategic documents by the OECD<sup>1</sup> and CEDEFOP<sup>2</sup> are also visible in Estonian vocational education. The international experience and self-improvement offered by the Erasmus+ programme are crucial for vocational teachers and educators, contributing to improvements in quality and internationalisation, strengthening international cooperation, and supporting the overall development of vocational education institutions.

Read more in the full research report (in Estonian): [Erasmus+ study on the effectiveness and perceived impact of mobility of educators in vocational education and training - Erasmus+ | Erasmus+](#)

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1 OECD (2020). Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators. Paris: OECD Publishing: <https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>

2 Cedefop (2023). The future of vocational education and training in Europe: synthesis report. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series, No 125: <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/08824>

