

COURSE FOR
PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS

DIDACTIC UNIT 10

**THE ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAMME
AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL
FOR STUDENTS WITH LOW VISION**



Looking out for a School for All

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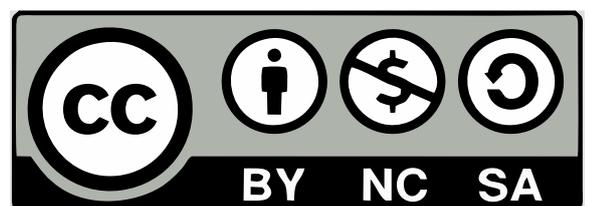
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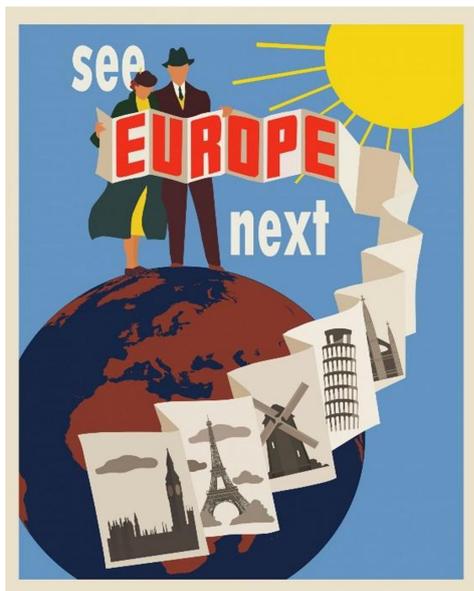
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“Much more than a financing program, Erasmus Plus has become an open gateway to Europe and the world for our young generations.”

- Mariya Gabriel

OBJECTIVES OF THE DIDACTIC UNIT

At the end of this chapter, you will:

- Know what the Erasmus Plus Programme is, and its characteristics.
- Know the opportunities offered by the Erasmus Plus Programme to finance projects and mobility activities of pre-primary education teachers.
- Know the Results Platform, a unique opportunity to find resources and educational results in terms of inclusion that are the result of the work and efforts of teachers, schools, institutions, and companies from all over Europe.
- Learn about the tools linked to the Erasmus Plus Programme for teacher networking, especially the eTwinning and School Education Gateway platforms.
- Discover ideas for projects related to low vision.

INTRODUCTION

This training course for teachers of pre-primary schools is framed within the Project “Looking out for a School for All: Early Educational Inclusion for Students with Low Vision”, developed by REDTREE MAKING PROJECTS COOP. V., along with ALBA (Spain), ANIRIDIA EUROPE, ANIRIDI NORGE (Norway), ANIRIDIA ITALIANA (Italy), and SMALLCODES (Italy). The ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAMME approved to financially support this project through the Spanish National Agency - SEPIE on the year 2018.

This program is a European initiative that supports the structuring of a common space and offers its participants -especially school teachers- a unique opportunity to develop their personal and educational skills and carry out learning between equals from the most innovative inclusive projects in schools

across Europe. This Unit intends to show all users of the course this opportunity that we support without a doubt, and believe that it can specifically contribute to improve the quality of teaching in early ages and support the hard work of teachers of these levels. This is why we decided to include this Didactic Unit, to allow you to learn more about these opportunities and encourage you to benefit from them in the future, perhaps with a stay abroad (through volunteering or in a mobility activity), by actively participating in a project that helps to improve the working capabilities of an association or school, or by accessing the multiple platforms and resources that the Programme offers to teachers.

Both in the sections that you will find below and in the downloadable contents, we will help you understand what this program is, what it is for, how you can participate in it, and where to find more information about it.

10.1 EXPLANATION OF THE PROGRAMME

Erasmus Plus is the EU program to support education, training, youth, and sports in Europe. Its budget of 14,7 billion € has provided more than 4 million Europeans the opportunity to study, train and gain experience abroad. But Erasmus Plus –with a duration from 2014 to 2020, and a new continuing program from 2021 to 2027– is not only aimed at students but also at teachers of all fields and at youth in general. As the result of the merging of seven previous programs, it offers opportunities to a wide variety of persons and organizations.

Work in the fields of education, training, youth, and sports can be an important help in addressing social and economic changes, the main challenges that Europe will face during this decade, and in supporting implementation of the European Political Agenda for growth, employment, equity, and inclusion. The program is a very useful tool on the European scale, helping to combat the educational inequalities generated as a result of barriers and obstacles for students with SEN.

The efficiency of education and training systems and youth policies provide people with the skills required nowadays by the labor market and the economy, while allowing them to play an active role in society and achieve the full potential of life and their personal development. Reforms in the fields of education, training, and youth can reinforce the process towards these goals, based on a shared vision among policy-makers and stakeholders, strong evidence, and cooperation in different fields and levels.

The Erasmus Plus Programme is designed to support the efforts of participating countries to efficiently use the potential of European human and social talent, taking into account the principles of lifelong learning, linking support to formal, non-formal and informal learning in the fields of education, training, and youth. Moreover, it enables opportunities for cooperation and mobility with partner countries, especially in the areas of higher education and youth.

The Programme supports actions, cooperation, and tools consistent with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives, such as Youth on the Move and the New Skills and Jobs Agenda. It also contributes to achieving the objectives of the Strategic Framework for Education and

Training for European cooperation in education and training and the European Strategy for Youth, relying on open methods of coordination.

This high investment in knowledge, skills, and competences will benefit individuals, institutions, organizations, and society as a whole, as it contributes to growth and to ensuring equality, prosperity, and social inclusion in Europe and beyond.

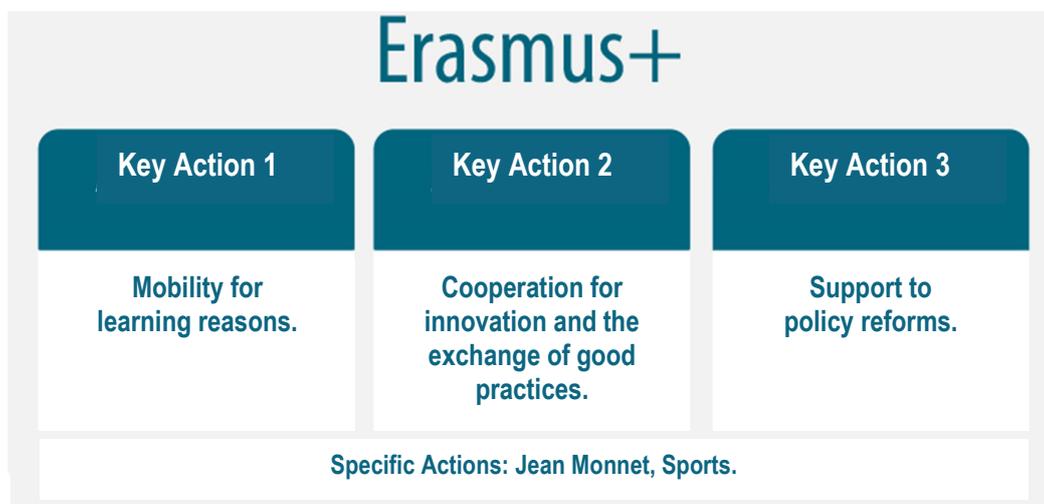
10.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME¹

The Erasmus Plus Programme has as its main objectives the achievement of:

- The objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the main objective on education.
- The objectives of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training (ET 2020), with its corresponding benchmarks.
- Sustainable development of partner countries in the field of higher education.
- The global objectives of the renewed Framework for European cooperation in the field of youth (2010-2018).
- Developing the European dimension in sports, especially in grassroots sports, in line with the Union Work Plan for Sports.
- The promotion of European values, in accordance with article 2 of the EU Treaty.

10.3 STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

To meet these objectives, the Programme finances specific projects in each of its work areas, mainly promoting:



¹ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_es

10.3.1 KEY ACTION 1: MOBILITY OF PERSONS

Mobility activities in the field of education, training, and youth play a fundamental role when it comes to providing people of all ages with the necessary means to actively participate in the labor market and in society in general. Projects framed in this action promote transnational mobility activities aimed both at learners (students, trainees, apprentices, youth, and volunteers) and educators (university or other level teachers, trainers, youth workers, and workers of organizations in these fields).

On the other hand, Erasmus Plus offers more space than previous Programs to develop mobility activities involving partner organizations with different origins, active in different socio-economic areas or sectors (university students, VET students in training of internships in companies, NGOs, or public organizations, teachers in professional development courses in companies or training centers, experts from the business sector who give lectures or training in higher education institutions, companies active in Corporate Social Responsibility that develop volunteer programs with associations and social enterprises, etc.).

10.3.2 KEY ACTION 2: THE CREATION OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The objective of Strategic Partnerships is to support the development, transfer, or implementation of innovative practices and the execution of joint initiatives to promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchange of experiences at the European level. The activities supported by this Key Action are expected to have positive and lasting effects on the participating organizations, on the political systems they are framed into, and on the organizations and individuals directly or indirectly involved in them.

This Key Action is intended to deepen the development, transfer, or application of innovative practices at the organizational, local, regional, national, or European level. At a systemic level, they are intended to promote modernization and strengthen the response of the education, training, and youth systems in the face of the main challenges in our world: employment, economic stability and growth, the need to promote social and civic competences, intercultural dialogue, democratic values, fundamental rights, social inclusion, non-discrimination, active citizenship, critical thinking, and communicative competences through current media.

10.3.3 KEY ACTION 3: DIALOGUE BETWEEN YOUTH AND POLITICIANS

The activities to support policy reform are aimed at achieving the objectives of the European political agendas, specifically the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training (ET 2020), and the European Strategy for Youth. This action promotes the active participation of young people in democratic life, and encourages debate on the issues and priorities established in the Structured Dialogue and in the renewed political framework on youth ("Structured Dialogue" is the name given to the discussions held between youth and youth policy makers to change policies).

These debates are structured according to priorities and calendars, and include events where young people discuss the issues agreed with policy makers, youth experts, and representatives of public authorities in charge of youth policies. More information on the Structured Dialogue can be found on the European Commission website.

10.3.4 SPECIFIC ACTION: JEAN MONNET

The aim of the Jean Monnet actions is to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of EU studies throughout the world. These actions also seek to boost dialogue between academics and policy makers, especially with the objective of improving global and EU leadership.

Studies on the EU include the study of Europe as a whole, with a special emphasis on integration, attending to both internal and external aspects. They promote European citizenship and address the role of the EU in a globalized world, improving knowledge and facilitating future engagement and dialogue between people worldwide.

10.3.5 SPECIFIC ACTION: SPORTS

Actions in the field of sports are intended to contribute to the development of the European dimension in sports by generating, sharing, and disseminating experiences and knowledge on its various aspects across Europe.

Ultimately, sports projects supported by Erasmus Plus should lead to higher levels of participation in sports, physical activities in general, and volunteering.

10.4 THE ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAMME FOR CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Erasmus Plus wants to improve the quality of **pre-primary, primary, and secondary education** in schools across Europe. It offers pre-primary teachers **Mobility for Learning** opportunities, with the objective of expanding and improving their professional development, and enabling collaboration with their counterparts from other European countries. Through **Strategic Partnerships**, it supports the exchange of good practices and innovation criteria to address common challenges, especially the processes of inclusion in the classroom and the full development of children from 0 to 6 years of age, fostering links in the after-school environment with other educational and training areas.

WHAT CAN ERASMUS PLUS OFFER TO YOUR SCHOOL

All schools, pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools can join Erasmus Plus. Funding is available for staff mobility projects and transnational associations, as we have pointed out in the previous sections. Furthermore, during the drafting of this project, agreements have already been reached between the European Parliament and the Member States for the new Continuation Program from 2021 to 2027, with a specific budget of more than 26.000 million Euros.

Entire classes or groups of students can visit partner schools, and individual students can spend a longer time in a school in another country. Among the opportunities this offers, we can highlight:

- The development of activities abroad to expand the knowledge and skills of pre-primary teachers.
- Teachers, staff, and students can get to know other European countries.
- Broadening the horizons of the students, raising their aspirations, and increasing their life skills.
- Connecting with other schools across Europe.
- The cooperation between schools to improve their level and quality of teaching.
- Establishing links with companies, policy makers, youth organizations and other partners in your own country and throughout Europe
- Teaching in associated schools.

All these different activities can last from two days to two months, and some of them in special cases can even last for a year.

ONLINE PLATFORMS LINKED TO THE ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAMME

eTwinning

— www.eTwinning.net/es/pub/index.htm—



The Erasmus Plus **eTwinning** platform is the largest online community of schools in Europe, with more than 250.000 school workers from schools in all member counties. Through this platform, both teaching and non-teaching staff (managers, advisers, librarians, etc.) are able to connect with other schools to create online activities in which students and employees participate. eTwinning is an excellent way to communicate with other schools and exchange ideas.

Teachers can register and participate in different activities, such as:

- Discussions with other colleagues.
- Online projects from classroom to classroom.
- Online cooperation between members and professional development.
- Development of ideas for Erasmus Plus projects with teachers in other countries.

All the work done in the eTwinning platform is carried out within a secure online environment, and the platform is often used in conjunction with other Erasmus Plus projects to maintain contact with partners.

If you want to check out the available opportunities, just register at www.eTwinning.net.

School Education Gateway— www.schooleducationgateway.eu/es/pub/index.htm—

SchoolEducationGateway

School Education Gateway is a single point of access for teachers, experts, policy makers, and other European participants in changing school education, including pre-primary education and care (ECCE), and vocational education and training (VET). This platform is free for all users; schools interested in starting a project in Erasmus Plus will find a lot of useful tools:

- A space for information: with new content every week, including expert opinion articles, news articles, interviews, updated publications, and practice examples.
- A catalogue of resources like recent research reports, teaching materials created in European projects and training courses, and the European Toolkit for Schools, with materials on preventing early school leaving and a self-assessment tool to help you develop your own school actions.
- “Teacher Academy”, an opportunity for teacher development that offers free online courses developed by internal experts, webinars, and teaching materials.
- A search tool for partners of strategic partnership and other mobility opportunities.
- An online training course to prepare Erasmus Plus project applications.

Erasmus Plus Project Result Platform

Erasmus+

Plataforma
de Resultados— <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects>—

The Erasmus Plus Project Results Platform is the European Commission’s database for the Erasmus Plus Programme: it contains descriptions of all projects funded under the Programme, including the contact information of participating organizations and results of all completed projects, with links to their websites.

It is the perfect place to check what an Erasmus Plus project looks like and what can be achieved with one. The platform contains good practices and success stories, making it ideal for those seeking inspiration for their own project ideas.

You can use the available search criteria on the Platform’s website, filtering by Programme, year, country, keyword, etc. to find exactly the type of project you are looking for.

- [E+PRP tutorial video](#)



10.5 IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROJECTS WITH LOW VISION STUDENTS

First of all, we know that Erasmus Plus as a Programme is a useful tool at the European level for promoting inclusion and fighting educational inequalities generated as a result of barriers and obstacles for students with special educational needs (SEN). One of its objectives is to help member countries improve their inclusive policies and practices in the field of education, by supporting projects that contribute to the development of inclusive educational systems to guarantee the right of all students to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. This also entails another objective: to improve the life chances of students and the possibilities of actively participating in society.

Although the educational policies, practices, and contexts of each country are different, the Programme (in collaboration with the European Agency for the Development of the Education of Students with SEN www.european-agency.org) establishes strategic lines to promote inclusion in the educational field:

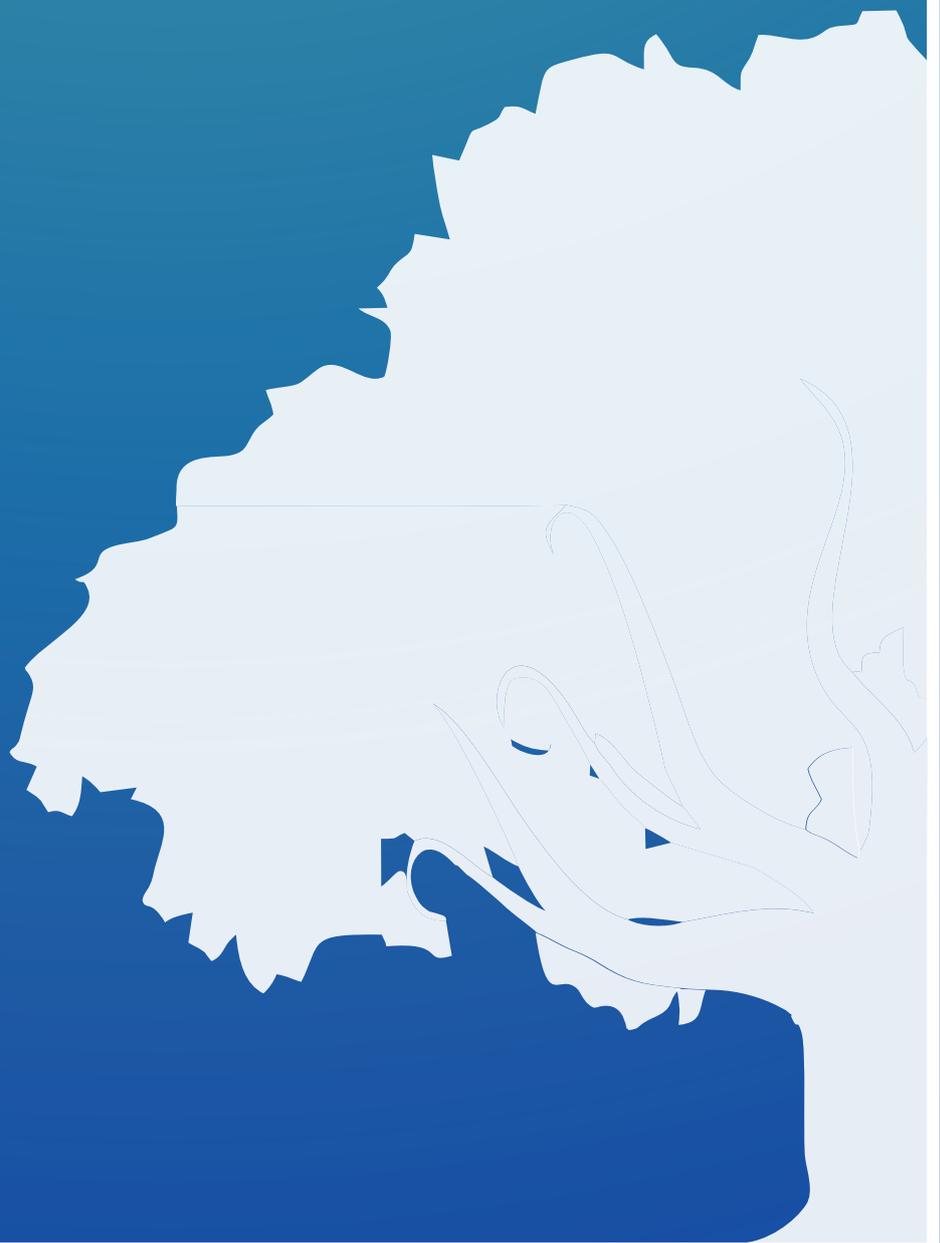
- Promoting quality in the field of special needs and inclusive education by maintaining a long-term framework for expanded European collaboration.
- Facilitating the effective exchange of knowledge and experiences among and within member countries.
- Identifying the key factors impeding or supporting progress, and providing countries with information and guidance.
- Analyzing and reviewing the evolution of policies in countries, to support the development of effective and sustainable inclusive education systems.

Among other examples, Erasmus Plus supports innovative projects aimed at:

- Improving the learning of students with disabilities or special needs so they complete educational cycles.
- Facilitating the transition to the labor market to students with disabilities or SEN.
- Improving the access, participation, and performance in education and training (both formal and non-formal).
- Prepare teachers and workers for the challenges they might face related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

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