
International Mobility Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities Project (IMD)

Introduction

International mobility gives young people a chance to learn a new language, gain confidence and independence and gives an understanding of different cultures. We know that experiencing a mobility programme can help boost employability and provide participants with different transferable skills.

However, the participation of young people with disabilities in mobility programmes can be as low as [0.17% to 2.8% of all Erasmus+ programme participants](#). Raising the level of awareness of young people with disabilities about international mobility opportunities and the reasons why it can be beneficial, is a challenge. This observation that so many young people with disabilities are missing out on these opportunities made way for projects bringing together many disability and international mobility stakeholders, including ourselves at AHEAD.

[It began with MappED, which you can find at this link](#). The objective of the MappED project was to provide students with disabilities equal opportunities for participation in Erasmus+ programmes. The main output being an interactive map that detailed accessibility in different universities across Europe. However, as many young people with disabilities may not have access to higher education an international mobility can be a beneficial option to those who aren't third level students, it made sense to look at ways of making international mobility inclusive to youth in general.

International Mobility and Disabilities Project

This project, International Mobility and Disabilities (IMD), is funded by the Erasmus+ Youth and Sport Agency from February 2019 to January 2021. AHEAD is a partner in the project. alongside six other organisations:

- Erasmus Student Network France, coordinate the project
- Droit Au Savoir, a disability organisation that support students in France
- Jugendinfos, a national network of Youth Centres in Austria
- SV-Bildungswerk a student support organisation in Germany
- Udruga Zamisli, a support organisation for young people with disabilities in Croatia

The **main aim** of the project is to provide clear and accessible information for young people with disabilities on all stages of international mobility. Secondly, it aims to reach youth workers and stakeholders in international mobility for young people and provide disability awareness and information on how best to support youth with disabilities.

There are four **project objectives**, with the main one being the creation of an online platform to encompass the project and create a one-stop-shop for youth, youth workers and other stakeholders looking for information on mobility programmes.



The Web Platform

[This platform had its preliminary launch on April 9th 2020, with information on the overall project and reasons to study abroad.](#) The platform includes different elements that will help answer questions youth with disabilities might have prior to taking part in a mobility programme. At the moment there is a range of articles on what young people need to do before going abroad. This includes advice on finances, housing, health insurance, social life, as well as some advice on what to do once you get back home. Other parts of the project will be added to this webpage alongside the major feature of the site, an interactive European map with contact information for organisations in that country with expertise in either disability or international mobility.

The other objectives of the project are:

- a study on short international mobilities in Europe and the experience of young people with disabilities who have participated in a mobility programme
- research into best practices in Europe on welcoming young people with disabilities from abroad
- a toolbox for youth workers to help them better to understand the barriers facing youth with disabilities when going abroad and guidelines on how to support them

Training Opportunity – Zagreb, Croatia

As part of the project, a training opportunity connecting youth workers and youth with disabilities took place in Zagreb at the end of February 2020. The training was hosted by project partner Udruga Zamisli and there were 15 participants in total, 8 youth workers and 7 young people with disabilities. The main objective of this five-day training event was to gather people from various backgrounds and experience level of international mobility and discuss how to make mobility more inclusive. It also provided an opportunity to gather feedback on project outputs that had already been produced and explore those left to be produced.

To do this, there were 6 workshops throughout the training event on the following topics:

- Information on the Online Platform
- Designing a toolbox for Youth Workers
- Setting Criteria for Hosting Structures for welcoming youth with disabilities
- Recommendations on personal assistants
- Youthpass

and finally, one workshop focused on collecting testimonials from participants.



IMD Project participants attending a workshop

[For more information on the project, you can visit the project webpage here, where you can leave feedback on the content and overall accessibility of the site.](#)



Hannah Kelly

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Hannah (she/her) is the Student and Graduate Engagement Officer in AHEAD. Her role involves working to include the student voice in the work of AHEAD and creating inclusive environments for disabled students in extracurricular settings. As part of her role, she was the co-founder and now coordinator of the USI/AHEAD Students with Disabilities Advisory group. This group helps to inform the strategy and policy of AHEAD and USI concerning the inclusion of students with disabilities in HE and FE. Outside of her work with AHEAD, Hannah is a volunteer with Dublin Lesbian Line and is a public speaker, particularly in the areas of intersectionality and inclusion.