

# Virtual Exchange Factsheet

## Introduction

Virtual exchanges or virtual mobilities have been happening on a small scale for many years. The necessity to find alternatives to traditional student mobilities & the new technologies now at hand should encourage us to explore how best we can offer these virtual opportunities to our students.

The majority of students are now familiar with real time media communications. Even 4 year olds are successfully learning remotely by Microsoft Teams & Zoom. Virtual experiences with care & consideration can be offered to all students, including those who in normal times would not go to another country.

Virtual mobilities can also be used as an introduction & preparation for a planned mobility or as an incentive to those who may be reluctant to go abroad.

## What A Virtual Mobility Might Include

As part of a citizenship education programme, virtual mobility would support the development of European dialogues; enhance intercultural knowledge & communication; increase the understanding of democracy & other current European issues, such as refugees, climate change & sustainability.

Using social media such as Teams, & on an individual basis FaceTime/Zoom/Instagram/WhatsApp etc., for conversation practice & to strengthen foreign language education is an obvious case. More widely across all VET programmes, virtual mobilities can be appropriately employed to exchange technological practice; develop common joint projects; compare & share practice in industry and the workplace; & provide key information on the host country in preparation for a placement/exchange.

## How To Make A Start

- Be clear what your objectives are for a virtual mobility.
- Have a clear aim, a simple method & choose content that fits in with your curriculum & student ability level and that of your partner's institution. Identifying an international partner you already know & are comfortable with is a good place to start. Advice on new partners is at hand.
- Having a discussion with your students & agreeing with them how best to initiate contact with your mobility partner is the first step. Then organise a communication protocol between teachers & students & regularly review & evaluate this.
- Channels of communication might include, as well as email, those most used by your students; but check what is recommended /allowed & make use of Microsoft Teams, Facebook & LinkedIn groups, BlackBoard & YouTube which you can also use to live stream.
- Make the best use of your students' ideas for the exchange of vocational practice & joint projects.
- Make with your partner a clear programme with a timeline.
- You might try to begin with a Mystery Box project. Details of this idea are found on the next page.

## Possible Problems

- Lengthy, complicated projects that seem to take forever. Best start with a virtual mobility that is quick & easy & is seen by your students as a success.
- Ensure you have enjoyed some success before adding on extracurricular activities.
- Regular contact & conversations with staff at your partner should avoid delays in them communicating with your students.
- Language issues. Students at every level can learn at least 5 key words. Use the free language apps. & Google Translate for pronunciation. Discuss with your students how best they can overcome the barriers. Remember that you can always use subtitles on any videos you make.

## Helpful Resources

[https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual/resources\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual/resources_en)

<http://www.euroapprenticeship.eu/en/virtual-mobility.html>

<https://www.movidis.eu>

[https://eadtu.eu/documents/Innovative\\_Models\\_for\\_Collaboration\\_and\\_Student\\_Mobility\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://eadtu.eu/documents/Innovative_Models_for_Collaboration_and_Student_Mobility_in_Europe.pdf)