



# Inclusion and diversity in student mobility

Mons, 15 Mai 2023



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# SIEM Project

Student mobility leads to  
**social mobility**

More opportunities in life for young people from disadvantaged background by increasing their participation in the Erasmus+ programme.



**Widening participation** of less advantaged and underrepresented groups



Increase the **interaction** between International students and **local communities of underrepresented groups** in order to increase intercultural exchange and visibility of international student mobility.

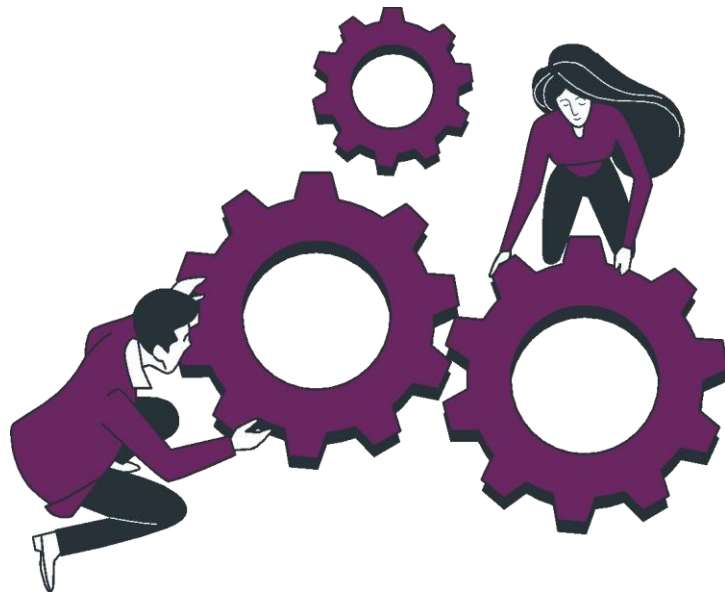


Making the Erasmus+ programme more **inclusive**



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# SiEM Project partners

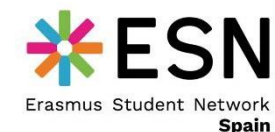


**Diverse  
partnership**

European networks, &  
Universities, National  
Student Organisations

**Cross sectoral  
collaboration**

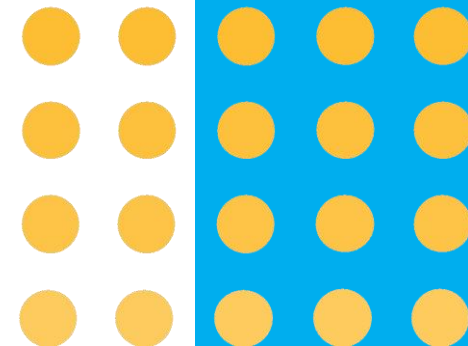
higher education,  
inclusion organisations  
& youth work



# “Maybe it will be different abroad”

## Research Report:

Student and Staff Perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion in student exchanges



# Research on Inclusion & Diversity

<p><b>Student survey</b> (12,820 responses)</p> <p><b>Staff survey</b> (786 responses)</p>	<p><b>Focus Groups</b> 6 focus groups in 4 countries</p> <p><b>Study visits</b> 6 institutions</p>
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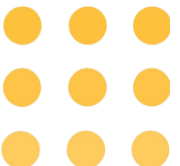
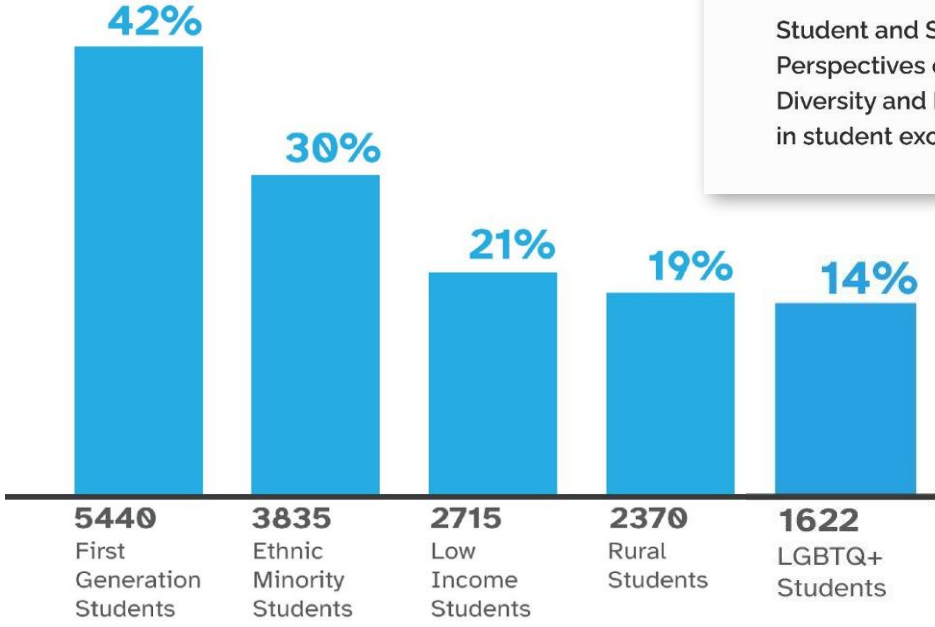


**Respondents with disadvantaged backgrounds**



**65%**  
mobile students

**35%**  
non-mobile students



# 93%

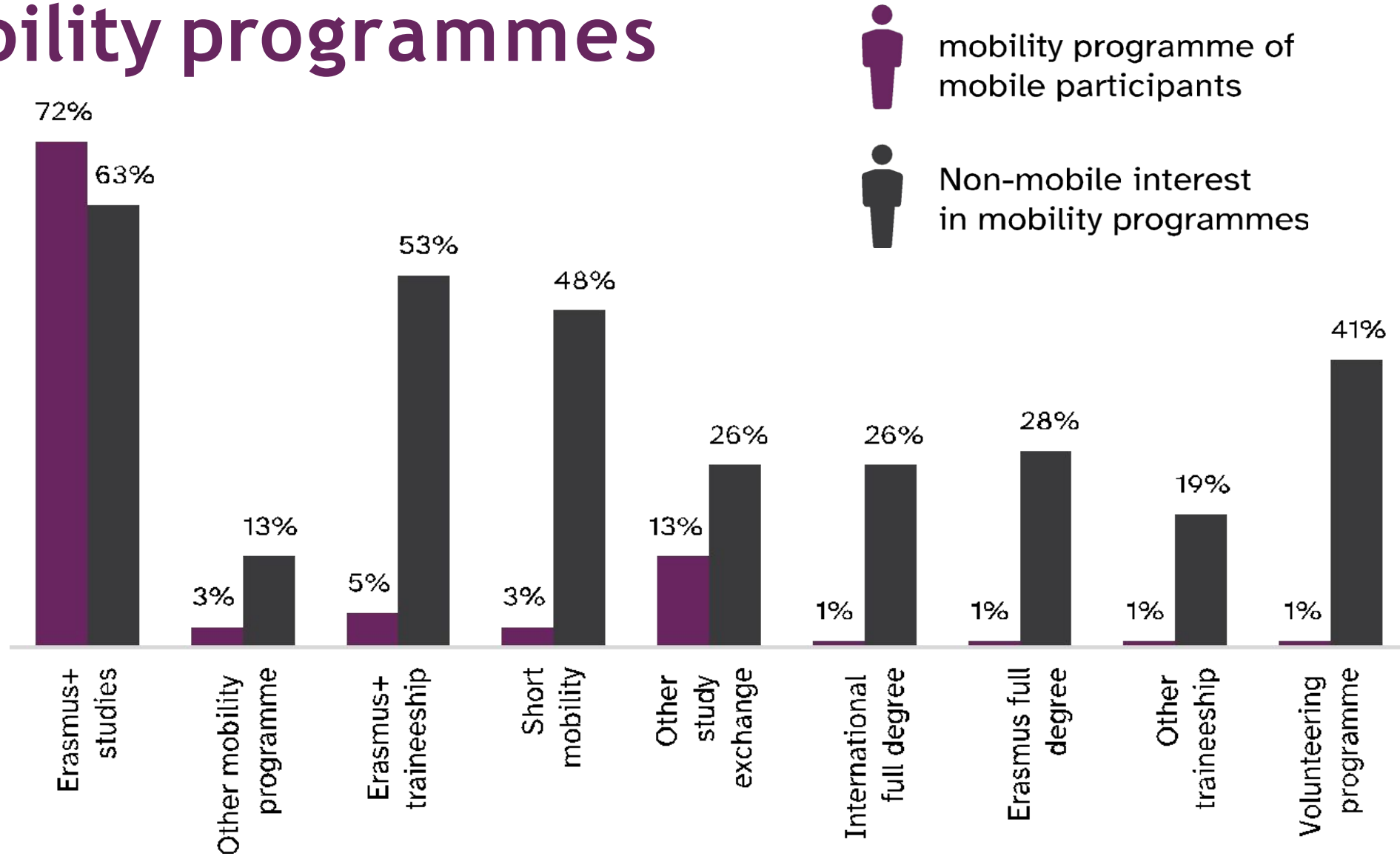
Outgoing mobility is included in 93% of staff survey respondents' institutions' strategic plans

A third of HEI respondents include reference to disadvantaged groups in their strategy.

Student Group	All
Students from low-income households	71%
Students from rural areas	25%
Students from minority ethnic groups or with a migration background	47%
Students from Roma and Traveller communities	26%
Students who are first in family to go to university, pioneer students	27%
Students living with disabilities	61%
Students who are care providers, students with dependants, including student parents	40%
Students with religious beliefs	7%
LGBT+ students	17%
Mature students, life-long learners	24%
None of the above	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>765</b>



# Student impressions: Mobility programmes



# 67%

of students reported a monthly living cost over 501 EUR.

# 73%



Of staff reported a monthly living cost over 501 EUR.

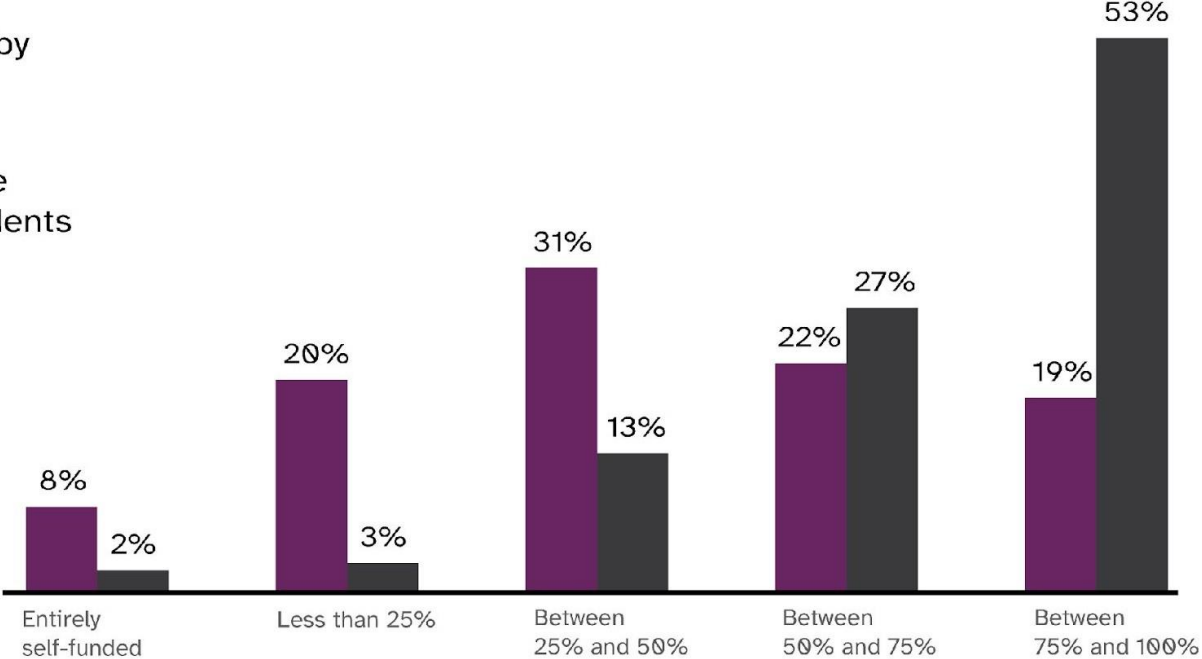
## Cost of living per month reported by mobile students





# Financial support offered versus needed

-  Actual grant coverage by mobile respondents
-  Needed grant coverage by non-mobile respondents



50%

**59%**  
received less than 50% financial support

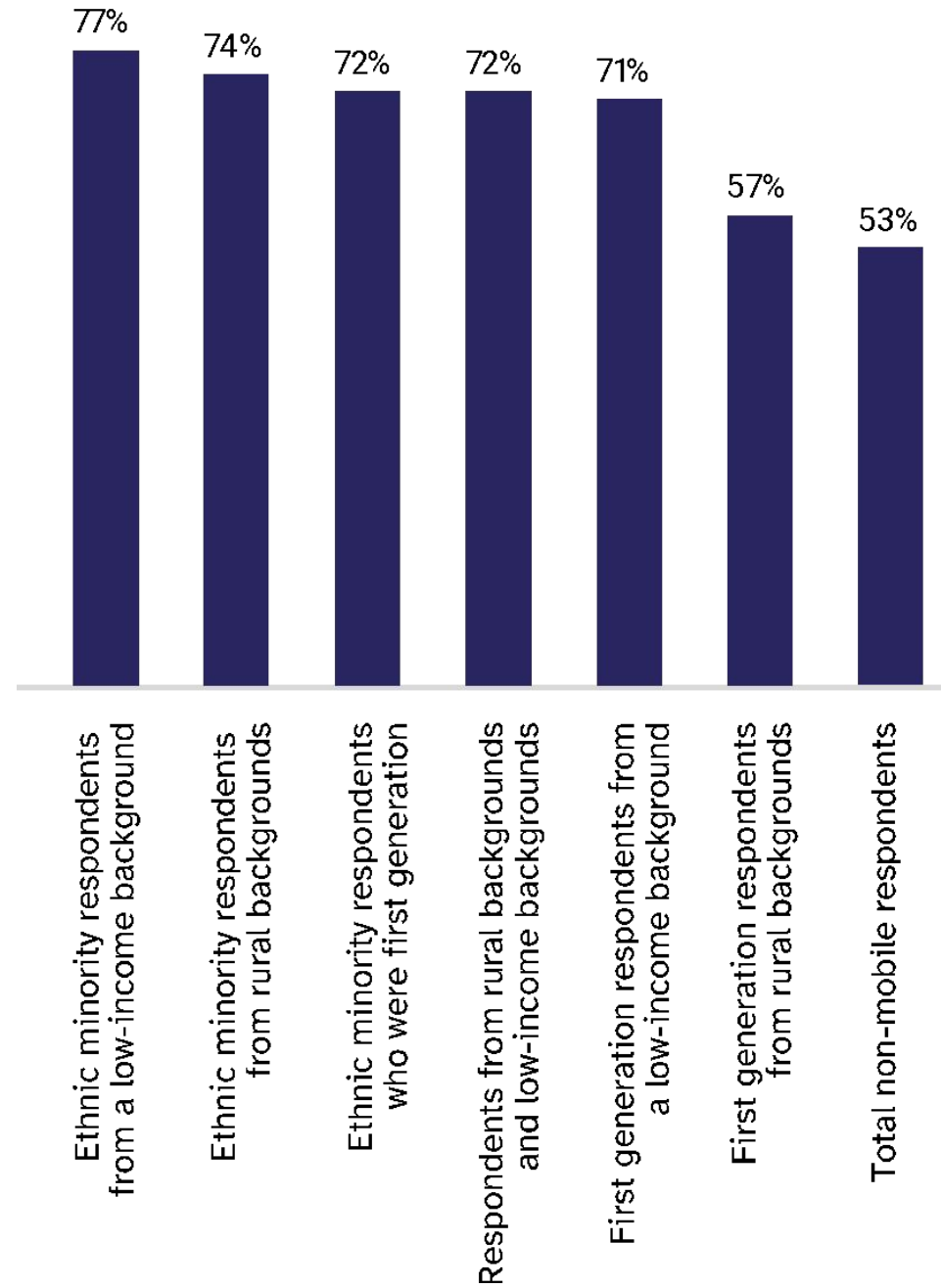
**80%**  
indicated they would need more than 50% financial support



# Student impressions: financial support offered versus needed

Students with fewer opportunities indicated they needed 75% of their mobility costs covered at a higher rate.

Intersectionality has a **big influence**



# Barriers to mobility



of students reported advancing initial costs to be a barrier to participate in mobility.

*“I am someone who has to combine five jobs to pay for my room and studies.”*

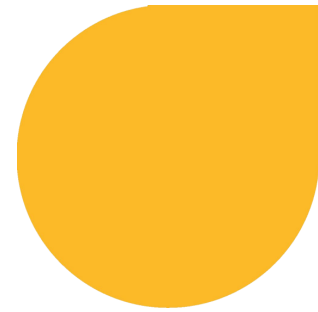
*“I have to spend everything I earn immediately. Saving for Erasmus is therefore extremely difficult.”*

**- student quote**

# Student support

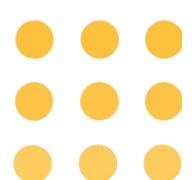
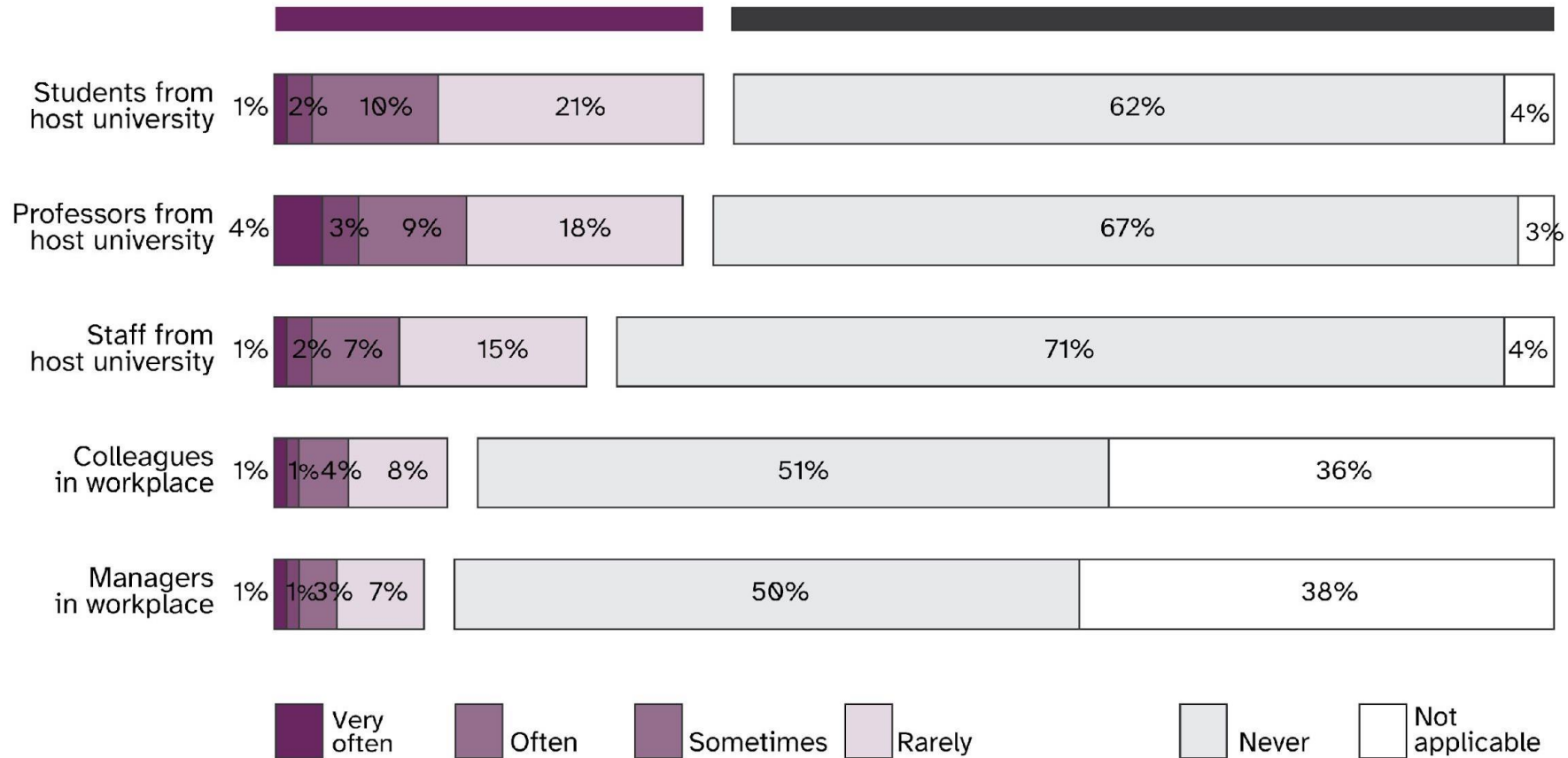


# Student impression: treatment by members of the host society



**34%** felt treated unfairly or negatively at some point during their exchange

**66%** never felt treated unfairly or negatively during their exchange



# Preparation support

67%

of Respondents took part in official briefing events with International officers and found them useful.

*& would like more support with ...*

94%

Information about available funding

88%

Support with application process

86%

Help choosing a host university

56%

Was not offered an activity with fellow students or mobility alumni to discuss mobility

83%

Indicated they would like to discuss with peers in a more social setting



# Barriers to mobility

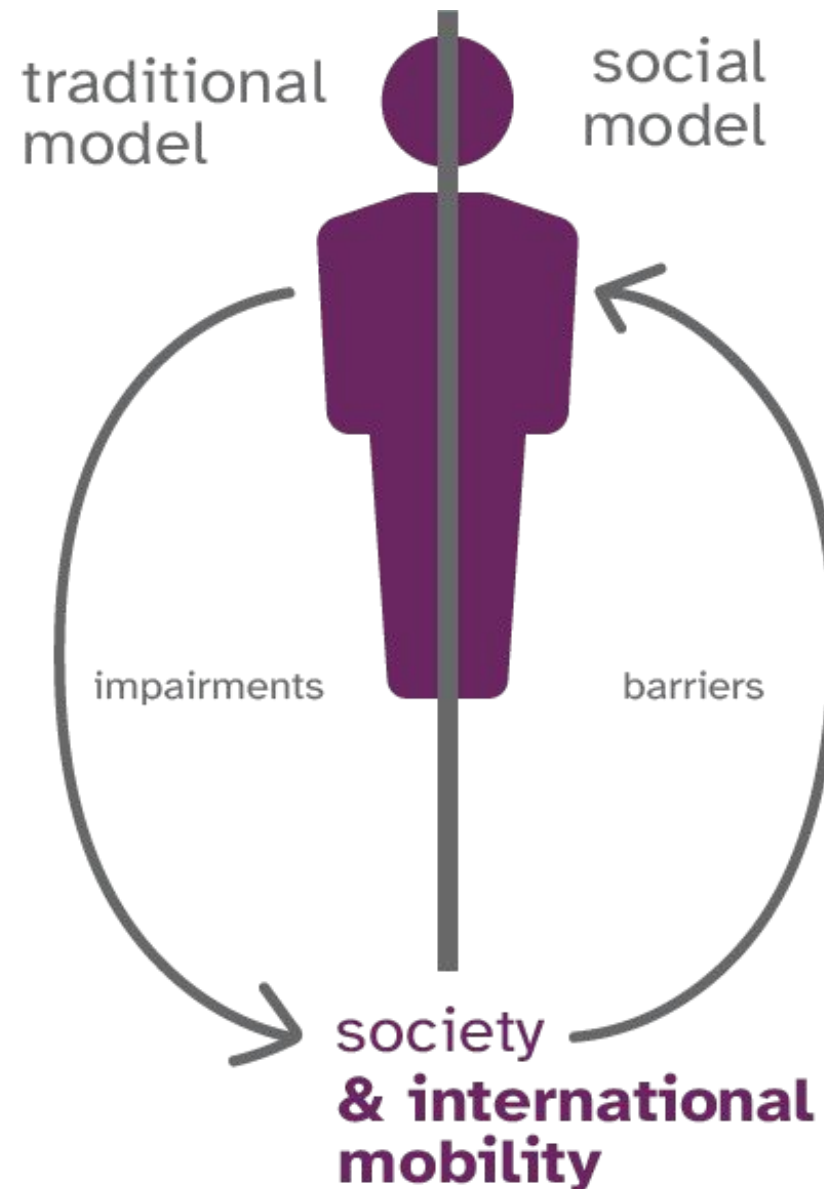
Following the  
Social Model to  
inclusion



Inequality will always be present in society, the goal is to organize it in such a way that includes all people

## The Social Model to Inclusion applied to mobility

Applied from the Social Model to disability (Oliver, 1983)



Applied from the Social Model to disability (Oliver, 1983)



# 3 Barrier types



## Institutional

barriers that **reflect the programmes** that are being offered and the **regulations that coincide** with these programmes that may **impact the access** of specific student groups to mobility opportunities.

## Environmental

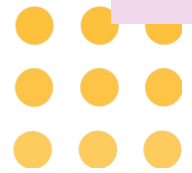
**Environmental** and **societal factors** that influence the person's decisions to take part in a mobility.

**access to information** as well as **personal backgrounds** impact mobility participation.

## Attitudinal

Attitudinal barriers tackle the **belief system and emotions** around the topic of mobility opportunities, to see how they influence their participation rates.

**internalised barriers** can severely impact their identification with the opportunity.



# Examples of the Barrier types



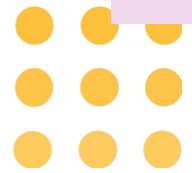
## Institutional

- Insufficient funding
- Advancing initial costs
- Loss of financial support
- No recognition of credits obtained abroad.
- Information about mobility opportunities & funding
- Difficult application processes ...

## Environmental

- Family
- Low income / loss of income
- Society does not value mobility
- Low involvement on campus due to other commitments / commuter student

## Attitudinal

- Erasmus seems like an opportunity for wealthier students.
  - Society does not value competences gained abroad
  - Family / friends don't support studying abroad.
- 

# 3 Barrier types

## Institutional

barriers that **reflect the programmes** that are being offered and the **regulations that coincide** with these programmes that may **impact the access** of specific student groups to mobility opportunities.

**REGULATION  
CHANGE**

## Environmental

**Environmental and societal factors** that influence the person's decisions to take part in a mobility.

**access to information** as well as **personal backgrounds** impact mobility participation.

**EXTRA SUPPORT  
PROVIDED**

## Attitudinal

Attitudinal barriers tackle the **belief system and emotions** around the topic of mobility opportunities, to see how they influence their participation rates.

**internalised barriers**

**COMMUNICATED  
TO STUDENTS**




# Research Report

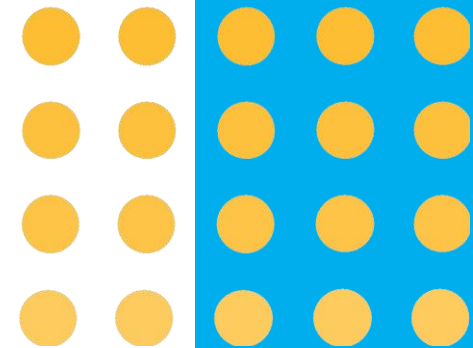
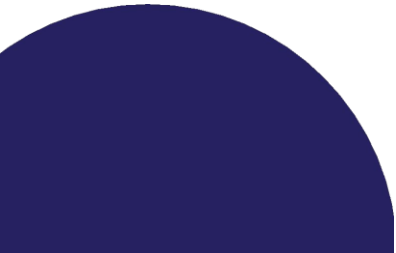
An extensive **research report** that gathers input of 12.000 students and 750 staff members across Europe and beyond on the inclusion in international student exchanges.

The research report showcases the **14 recommendations** targeting

- European Commission
- National Agencies
- Higher Education institutions
- International student organisations.

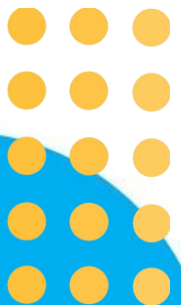


**So now we know the  
problems.  
What's next?**



# Building Capacity in Inclusion and Engagement Support

- **Build Capacity for Universities and Student Representatives** to improve support for Student Mobility.
  - Organising training and conferences for students and staff.
  - Facilitate interaction with target groups through workshops.
- Prepare **Guidelines** and supporting tools



# Engaging International Students with local communities.

- Training for **student representatives** to act as **multipliers** and connection builders between
  - International students
  - Local communities
- Tools to help **design impactful activities**
- Create an **impact assessment tool** to see how our actions impact local communities and **bridge with sustainable development goals**



# Advocate for changes in the Exchanges in general and Erasmus+ in particular.

- Create Recommendations to improve programme.
- Participate in the development of mobility programmes and Advocate for technical changes to the programm
- Ensure that the student voice is heard in the process.





# Barriers to inclusion in mobility

## Insights from minority groups underrepresented in mobility



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# 5 Minority Groups

Students from  
low-income  
backgrounds in  
Student Mobility

Students from  
the LGBTQ+  
community in  
Student Mobility

First Generation  
students in  
Student Mobility

Students from  
Ethnic Minority  
groups in  
Student Mobility

Students  
from Rural  
Communities in  
Student Mobility



# 1. Students from low-income backgrounds in Student Mobility

While financial barriers are a major concern for all respondents; students from a low-income background signal this is a significantly larger issue than their better-off peers.

**21%** 2715 respondents from low income backgrounds

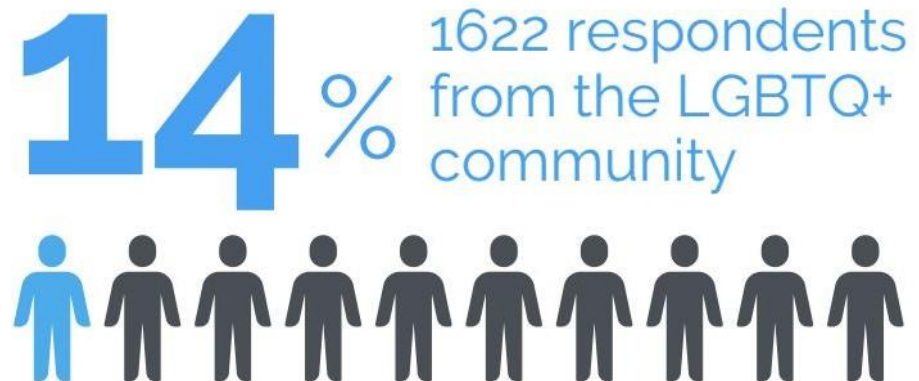


**71%** of universities recognise students with low-income backgrounds as students with fewer opportunities.

## 2. Students from the LGBTQ+ community

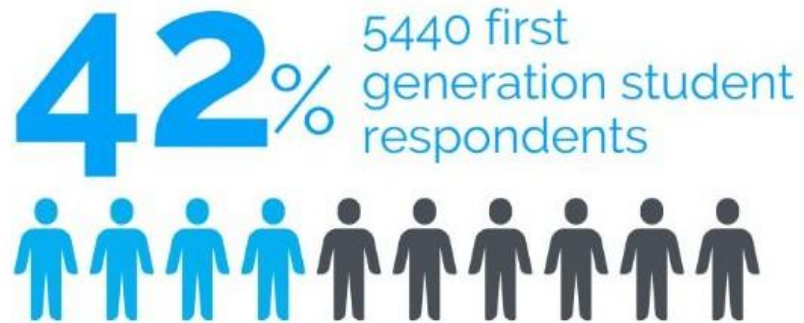
**Discrimination on exchange** - Students from an LGBTQI+ background report are 15 times more likely to experience discrimination compared to their peers.

**17%** of universities recognise students from the LGBTQI+ community as students with fewer opportunities.



# 3. First Generation students in Student Mobility

For respondents who were first generation 4% went on exchange without a grant, compared to 10% of the others. Intersectionality between first generation students and students from low-income backgrounds seems to be key to keep in mind.



**27%** of universities recognise first generation students as students with fewer opportunities.

# 4. Students from Ethnic Minority groups in Student Mobility

44% of respondents from ethnic minority groups reported that they would be highly likely to participate in an event with mobility alumni.

Almost a third (32%) of respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds reported experiencing discrimination, with 14% reporting this on the basis of race or ethnicity (compared to 3% for white respondents)

**47%** of universities recognise students from ethnic minority groups as students with fewer opportunities.



**30%** 3835 respondents from ethnic minority groups

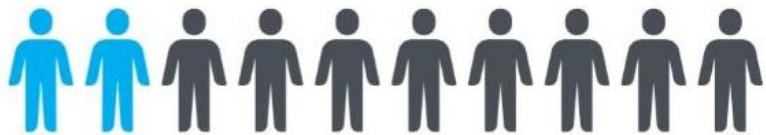


# 5. Students from Rural Communities in Student Mobility

43% of ethnic minority students from a rural background reported being treated unfairly by students.

53% of non-mobile respondents reported needing at least 75% of the mobility programme costs to be covered by funding if they were to go abroad.

**19%** 2370 respondents  
from rural groups



**25%** of universities recognise students from rural communities as students with fewer opportunities.

# Barriers to inclusion in mobility

Factsheets on Minority groups to  
be published on [siem-project.eu](http://siem-project.eu)



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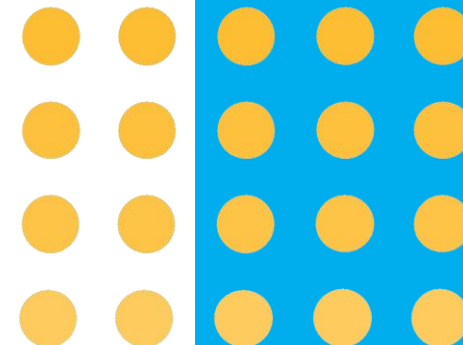


# Contact us

[Siem-project.eu](http://Siem-project.eu)

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Please refer to the research report as:

Allinson K., Gabriels W.,(2021). Maybe it will be different abroad; student and staff perspectives on diversity and inclusion in student exchanges. SIEM Research Report, [siem-project.eu](https://siem-project.eu)

The Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility (SiEM project) has been funded by the Social Inclusion and Common Values: Contribution in the Field of Education and Training, the call at EACEA/21/2018



Co-funded by the  
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