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PROMOTING STUDENT LEARNING
THROUGH "TIME FOR TEA" PROJECT

*Mobility in education system is on the rise. People have been attracted to study abroad from medieval times. Emo of Friesland is widely believed to have been the first international student in Oxford in the 12th century. His motives to study abroad were almost the same as that of the students' of the 21st century – to experience new culture, gain knowledge and skills, build networks and develop competences. Globalisation has more than ever boosted mobility of students and youth workers all over the world. The article aims at investigating the main types of mobility, their advantages, as well as the downside of such programmes. It will particularly focus on the overall purpose and outcomes of a concrete Erasmus+ funded three-stage international youth worker mobility project called **Time for Tea**.*

***Key words:** educational/academic mobility, mobility of youth workers, Erasmus+, **Time for Tea** project, student exchange, virtual mobility, intercultural awareness, incoming/outgoing mobility, professional development, employability*

There are certainly different motives underlying the desire of millions of people to study abroad. Student exchanges became popular after World War II, and are intended to increase the participants' understanding and tolerance of other cultures, as well as improve their language skills, broadening their horizons. Student exchanges also increased further upon the end of the Cold War. International students or those on study abroad programmes may stay in the host country from six months to several years.

Since the 2000s new concepts of student mobility and/or academic mobility have become more widespread. Mobility is defined as 'moving physically to another country, in order to undertake study, work experience, research, other learning, teaching, research or related administrative activity, supported as appropriate by preparation in the host language. Academic mobility refers to students and teachers in higher education moving to another institution inside or outside of their own country to study or teach for a limited time. In some cases, it is chosen for positive reasons, usually by young students with no family commitments /https://one-more-step.eu/en/Mobility-Programme/Glossary-and-definitions/.

The adverse side of academic mobility is that it may create cultural, family, socio-economic, and academic barriers. The Bologna process attempts to lower these

obstacles within the European higher education area. A previous Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education set a target of at least 20% of those graduating in the European higher education area having participated in a study or training period abroad by 2020. Mobile students are usually divided into two groups: *free-movers* are students who travel entirely on their own initiative, while *programme students* use exchange programmes at a department, faculty, institution, or national level (such as Erasmus, Nordplus or Fulbright) /http://edu.gov.md/sites/default/ files/document /attachments/.

Nowadays, the traditional Erasmus exchange (which involves travelling) has been complemented with *virtual mobility*, or Virtual Erasmus, in which students from different countries may study together without leaving their home. The need to expose the maximum number of students to the benefits of working and interacting with members of other cultures has led many educators to engage their students in telecollaborative or online intercultural exchange projects with partner students in distant locations around the globe. These exchanges usually involve collaborative project work using two or more languages /https://www.eaie.org/blog/.

The EU Erasmus mobility programme is one of the largest international student exchange programmes in the world, which has supported already more than three million participants since 1987. It brings together more than four thousand academic institutions and companies across 33 countries and aims at boosting the participants' job prospects by encouraging international mobility and promoting the development of personal skills, such as intercultural awareness, openness, and flexibility /European Commission, 2014: 4/.

According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the mobility of international students has significantly increased in the past four decades, from 250,000 in 1965 to approximately 3.7 million in 2011. UNESCO suggests that there are over 2.7 million students studying in a country other than their origin country /OECD, 2011: 320/.

In the expanding global labour market need for graduates who have the right skills to enter employment is increasingly rising. Student mobility is any opportunity for students to work or study abroad whilst undertaking their degree programme – whether undergraduate or postgraduate. It can be both *incoming* and *outgoing* in the form of bilateral exchange or one-way study abroad. Global competencies such as cultural awareness, language skills and adaptability are valued by employers, and outward mobility is regarded as critical to the development of graduates who are able to operate in a global market place. As European Commission states: "These periods of time spent abroad help young people to gain the skills they need to thrive in the labour market both today and in the future. As well as boosting job prospects, mobility also contributes to personal development by opening minds to new experiences and cultures" /A Statistical Overview of the ERASMUS Programme in 2011-12: 20/.

Outbound programmes for student mobility may also include internships, research, elective modules, study visits, formal student exchanges. Students may undertake part of their internship (with appropriate learning outcomes) as a short-term training abroad to provide them with an international perspective to their programme of study. Research may be chosen to be conducted in external research institutions, universities, industries or communities through mutual agreement between supervisors, or to participate in research collaborations.

However, the decision to study abroad is not an easy one to make, and many students reported that the availability of funding, the total cost of the experience, levels of personal safety and security and the reputation or perceived quality of the host location were key factors they considered when making their decision. When considering studying abroad, the students examined mentioned a number of barriers including; fear of isolation, insufficient funding, lack of knowledge regarding available opportunities, lack of language skills as well as language training options, and the potential impact on degree length /European Commission. The ERASMUS Impact Study; 2014: 65/.

Another aspect of educational mobility is the mobility of youth workers. As the Youthpass certificate states, "Learning mobility projects of youth workers support the professional development of youth workers by enabling them to acquire new skills and professional experiences. They boost skills and employability through activities organized in the field of education, training, youth, and sport. The projects may include transnational activities such as seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits and job shadowing periods abroad. The projects also contribute to strengthening the quality and the role of youth work in Europe". Youthpass certificate is a recognition instrument for projects supported by Erasmus + for Youth in Action programmes. It helps to document the development of competences, as well as to confirm completion of the described respective project /https://www.youthpass.eu/en/.

The given paper will demonstrate how some of the aims pursued by mobility programmes can be implemented and accomplished on the example of a concrete project. It will also present the benefits and the results achieved from the given project. The learning mobility project of youth workers *Time for Tea* is funded by Erasmus+. It is a three-stage activity, which was developed in 2013 by education and training providing organization Momentum World Community Interest Company (CIC). *Time for Tea* official website states, "The project was founded as a tool to help young people have a voice. It uses design as a creative medium to engage with their peers and adults who can influence change. It is ideally suited for schools, universities and community groups." /http://www.time4tea.info/.

Many young people are isolated from social processes in the sphere of politics, economics, defence, culture, education, ecology, which are widely believed to be the business of limited groups of competent people and policymakers. Young people mostly explain their exclusion with lack of interest in those spheres. In

addition, they think they do not have any authority and are not empowered to participate in various social processes, despite the fact that the decisions taken by policymakers affect directly the society and young people in particular. *Time for Tea*'s main mission is to provide favourable atmosphere and tools in the most creative way, so as they are able to unleash their vast potential, imagination and believe they can make a difference.

The project uses tea as the second most widely consumed drink in the world. Tea is known and loved by most people, regardless of nationality, age or race. It unites people around the tea table both during formal and non formal occasions. Thus, tea drinking time is usually used for thinking, reflecting or socializing. But the main inspiration of the project is an Indian peace activist, ecologist Satish Kumar, who took tea as a peace offering to the leaders of four states in 1956. He went on foot without any money to London, Paris, Moscow, and Washington DC. During his pilgrimage Mr Kumar met many people from different walks of life, campaigning for peace, non-violence and trying literally to change the world /https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbWBIHDBm04&t=66s/.

In August and October 2017 Momentum hosted two groups involving around 60 educators from 15 European countries for one week *Time for Tea* training course, at Brunel University and Newland Park, London. The training was aimed at developing knowledge, skills and providing necessary methodologies to organize and conduct the project at the local/national level. Among the participants were representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine, the UK, Italy, France, Spain, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Lithuania, Romania, Jordan, Macedonia. Armenia had two participants in each group. The objectives were to practice the activity and then make a detailed action plan for organizing *Time for Tea* in the home country, and create a photo or video report as a follow-up to share it on the project's website.

The training course covered the following activities: introductions and team building; introduction to the *Time for Tea* concept; presentation of participating partner organizations: discussions about formal and non-formal education; group discussion on global issues, the qualities of the "21st century Human" and how education can develop these; preparation and simulation of a *Time for Tea* group project; action planning; intercultural evening. The facilitators for the first group in Brunel University were Paul Oxborough (Creative director), Ben Holland and Andrew Hadley (CEO).

Time for Tea is a simple-to-do project with no age limitation. However, the main age segments it is designed for are secondary school to university students. The project has the following successive steps:

- Identify the group of young people
- Discuss local and global issues that matter most to them
- Choose the most important topic(s), and develop your message
- Select an audience you would like to hear your message

- Create the most original packet or box of tea
- Find an interesting way to deliver tea and the message to the recipient
- Tell the world about your job done (through newspapers, social networks, photo and video report, etc)

Time for Tea **project dissemination in Armenia: YSU students'** *Time for Tea* **project results.** *Time for Tea* is presented in Armenia in cooperation with the ABCD Innovation Center non-profit organisation. I am one of the four participants from Armenia in the given project and attended Brunel University, London for the training course with the first group in August 2017. The second stage of the project, work at the local and national level started in October. *Time for Tea* was presented by me at the training course organized by AELTA for teachers and lecturers of Tavush marz, including a few towns and villages. Training entitled "Empowering recipes for EFL teachers" took place in Ijevan YSU branch October 16th-17th ̦ 2017.

Time for Tea was then disseminated through a poster presentation during a Conference "4 Cs 4 Change", during the AELTA's 14th Convention, which took place in Aghveran, on 17th-18th of November. During the conference the representatives of the US Embassy in Armenia, the British Council, the COAF and around hundred English teachers and lecturers gathered to share their teaching experience, knowledge and skills. It was launched at Yerevan State University in November. Twenty (20) first and second year students, from the Faculties of Economics and Management, Mathematics and Mechanics were enrolled in it. The work lasted a month. During the project all the activities included in the training course for youth workers in the UK have been implemented with the students. They discussed numerous issues they were concerned about. Students had a lot of team work, trying to figure out the causes and consequences of the proposed problems, as well as thinking about how they can be solved. They touched upon the following fields of social life - Ecology, Climate, Education, Technology, Healthcare, Communication, Wars, Politics, Urban infrastructure, Ethics. Some of the discussed issues involved: *transport, traffic jams/congestion, global warming, ecology/ pollution, safety of nuclear power plants, destruction of green zones, deforestation, lack of drinking water, epidemics/diseases, adverse mining effects, killing the stray dogs, discrimination, corruption, lack of civic mobility, mismanagement of economy, migration, unemployment, terrorism, human trafficking, insufficient funding of education, technology addiction, face-to-face relationship being replaced by virtual world, lack of skills, lack of skilled/innovative young educators, overcrowded classrooms*.

One of the important activities requiring a lot of creativity and cooperation was *Mission Impossible*, where four teams had each to accomplish their task within the allocated time. During the activity the teams:
- created a new brand of tea, representing the values of the whole group,
- came up with a tea song,
- shot a TV commercial for their new brand of tea

- opened a new a Facebook page *"Time4Tea*, YSU, Armenia", gathering 30+ likes in 15 minutes.

Besides the commercial, students developed a photo and video collection of the whole working process, which was uploaded on YouTube /https://www. youtube.com/watch?v= kxTwRmaIeaU/.

The participants were later divided into three teams, each focusing on one topic to research and develop their message: **War**, **Terrorism** and **Corruption**. After their messages had been devised, the students started the creative part of the project, the design of the tea package to be sent to their chosen addressee. On December 15th , 2017 the three teams presented their final results in front of the panel and guest students at "the Loft" art and entertainment center, during the International Tea day event. A short summary of each presentation is given below:

The "**War**" team spoke about dire consequences of the latter on our everyday life, health, education and economy in particular. They showed how the absence of war could bring to peace, economic growth, good education and healthcare. A book was designed which when opened, turns into a big town with pictures of a dark side affected with war and the bright side with thriving life in all spheres of life. When closed, the book had the symbol of peace as Time, 4 (for), and a cup with a tea packet in it. The team chose Pope Francis as their recipient to send their message to in the form of a video and tweet by Twitter.

The second team spoke about **Corruption** demonstrating it with the help of a cash cow, a hungry and thin peasant who feeds and grooms the cow, and a fat wealthy, corrupted man stealing the milk from him. The main message was that corruption cannot be dealt with unless there is moral awakening among people. Everybody should understand the serious consequences of this evil on healthcare, education, defense and other spheres. There is an urgent need to instill in every individual the sense of responsibility to stop engaging in any unfair and corrupt practices. The team decided to take their message in person to Transparency International office in Yerevan.

The third team developed their message on **Terrorism**. Terrorism was called one of the biggest threats to humanity which does not have mercy for anyone anywhere. The students made a half open globe with tea packets in it offering possible solutions. Members of the team also pierced flag pins at the spots which had been affected by the biggest terrorist attacks. Subsequently, each student mentioned one and lit the bengal fire over it to commemorate the victims. At the end of the presentation they asked the panel members to take a packet of tea and read out loud the solutions they offer. The globe and the message was due to be taken to the UNO office in Yerevan.

All the above mentioned activities were carried out within the frames of non-formal education, with a lot of games, team work, creative drawing and handwork. The final results of the project of all participating countries were presented during the meeting and showcase event in London, April 2018 after the final 3rd stage of

the programme, which took place in Newland Park (April 10th -14th). The event hosted a lot of guests: representatives of the UK Naional Agency, British Council, educators, teachers and students who were introduced to the concept, aims, methodology, benefits and the results of the project.

Time for Tea is ideal for making young people think, speak out, communicate and create. Thus, the project develops the team working, presentation, self-expression, critical thinking and English language speaking skills, as well as boosted active citizenship, self-confidence, youth social inclusion. The project is a good example showing how young people demonstrate their knowledge, talents, believe in their own power of being creators and make a change in their communities. *Time for Tea* network or international community is gradually expanding: the participants can share their experience with their peers from other countries on *Time for Tea'*s official website. It was an amazing experience for both young participants and youth workers who had a good chance of cross-cultural communication experience paired with an acquisition of new knowledge and skills. What is more important, *Time for Tea* is fun, thus teenagers and adults engage in it with pleasure.

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L. ԲԱՐՍԵՂՅԱՆ – *Սովորողների ուսման գործընթացի խթանումը "Time for Tea" ծրագրի միջոցով.* – Կրթության ոլորտում շարժունությունը կտրուկ աճ է ապրում: Դեռ վաղ միջնադարից մարդկանց հրապուրել է արտասահմանում սովորելու գաղափարը: Առաջին միջազգային ուսանողը ուսանել է Օքսֆորդում դեռևս 12-րդ դարում: Այդ ժամանակից ի վեր ուսանողների այլ երկրում սովո-րելու դրդապատճառները հիմնականում չեն փոխվել. ծանոթանալ նոր մշակույ-թի հետ, ձեռք բերել լրացուցիչ գիտելիքներ, հմտություններ, կապեր և մասնա-գիտական փորձ: Հոդվածի նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել շարժունության հիմնա-կան տեսակները, դրանց առավելություններն ու որոշ թերությունները: Շարժու-նությունը հոդվածում դիտարկվում է Էրազմուս+-ի կողմից ֆինանսավորվող եռափուլ *Time for Tea* ծրագրի հիման վրա. Ներկայացվում են ծրագրի հիմնական նպատակները, բովանդակությունն ու արդյունքները:

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Л. БАРСЕГЯН – *О роли проекта "Time for Tea" в повышении мотивации студентов.* – Мобильность в образовании быстро растет. Еще в раннем средне-вековье людей привлекала идея обучения за рубежом. Первый международный студент учился в Оксфорде в 12-ом веке. С тех пор основные мотивы обучения за рубежом почти не изменились: приобщение к новой культуре, приобретение дополнительных знаний, навыков и профессионального опыта. Целью данной статьи является изучение основных типов мобильности, их преимуществ и некоторых недостатков. Мобильность рассматривается на основе трехэтапной программы *Time for Tea*, спонсируемой Erasmus+. В статье представлены основные цели, содержание, а также результаты реализации данного проекта.

Ключевые слова: образовательная/академическая мобильность, профессио-нальная мобильность, Эразмус+/Erasmus+/, проект *"Time for Tea"*, обмен студентами, виртуальная мобильность, межкультурная осведомленность, входящая/исходящая мобильность, профессиональное развитие, возможность занятости