**What makes for a successful intercultural mobility experience?**

In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of developing the intercultural skills of learners and workers. One way of developing these skills is to participate in a mobility programme. A mobility programme is an element built into a training or learning programme that offers the possibility of completing some of the training or learning in a different place; usually, a different country.

As more and more people take advantage of intercultural mobilities, it is useful to ask some questions:

**Is the programme well planned?**

Any mobility opportunity should meet the needs of the learners who are undertaking it. A course of study is developed to meet the identified vocational and educational needs of the learners. In the same way, an intercultural mobility should take into account the new cultures that learners will engage with. It should prepare participants to consider how they communicate with intercultural partners and give them a clear idea of the desired outcomes from a mobility opportunity.

**Is self-reflection encouraged?**

In addition to clear ideas about desired outcomes, participants in a mobility should be encouraged to reflect on their personal development. This should happen alongside any other forms of assessment. Self-reflection will allow participants to review their own beliefs, values and behaviours, which we know are at the core of the understanding of culture (see The Iceberg Model) and reflect on how the observable behaviours that arise from these core values might be interpreted by intercultural partners.

**What sort of experience should you expect?**

Individuals may sometimes find it challenging to be operating in a completely new context. However, a planned mobility offers the opportunity to identify areas of unfamiliarity and to work with partners to understand and bridge any gaps that might create uncertainty or misunderstandings in a safe and supportive environment. This is a huge learning achievement, and it will have applications far beyond the time spent on the mobility.

**What can an individual learn on an intercultural mobility?**

Intercultural mobilities provide the chance to raise individual awareness of cultural differences. This is a fantastic opportunity. However, the most successful experiences will accomplish more than giving new knowledge. Learning new skills of how to be open and adaptable in the face of unfamiliar contexts or cultures is very beneficial. Learning new behaviours for new situations and new skills for exploring and resolving unfamiliar challenges are extremely valuable in a learner’s future life.