



WESHARE WECARE

**Intergenerational and
intercultural homeshare booklet
for higher education institutions
in Europe**

This booklet aims to raise the awareness of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Europe about a solidarity-based accommodation option for international students: intergenerational and intercultural homeshare.

WHAT ARE INTERCULTURAL AND INTERGENERATIONAL HOMESHARE PROGRAMMES?

Homeshare programmes are solidarity-based initiatives which enable two unrelated people to live together for their mutual benefit. Normally, it encompasses an intergenerational component, involving young students, trainees or professionals and senior people. To ensure the quality and affinity of the homeshare programme, usually local (non-profit) organisations working in the field of intergenerationality and interculturality are responsible for connecting the parties and overseeing the homeshare agreement.

These types of initiatives entail a myriad of benefits at individual level, including accessibility to affordable quality housing, breaking down barriers between generations and/or cultures or fighting against loneliness of older people. Nevertheless, these programmes can also have a long-lasting impact on the broader local context, involving public entities or higher education institutions.

Within their internationalization strategies, HEIs across Europe acknowledge the crucial role of international student mobility to fulfill their institutional mission. Accordingly, institutions strive to support their prospective outgoing and incoming students by providing them with information throughout the mobility journey, particularly in the early stages of mobility (i.e. pre-mobility), including guidance on how to find student accommodation; in fact, it has been shown that the development of support systems for mobile students on the practical aspects of mobility have been enhanced¹ in the past few years. However, in spite of HEIs' efforts, research has shown that students continue to struggle to find the necessary information to find suitable accommodation².

¹ *Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study (2019).*

² *HousErasmus+ Research Report (2017).*

As a result, the [WeShareWeCare project](#) aims to provide Higher Education Institutions and particularly, International Relations Officers (IROs) and housing officers with reliable information about a socially responsible accommodation option for international students, directly contributing to a successful mobility journey for all.

In addition, higher education institutions can benefit from intergenerational and intercultural programmes in multiple ways:

- Help IROs or housing officers to offer quality accommodation options to international students;
- Enhance the welcoming process of international students;
- Implement the social inclusion strategy of the institution;
- Implement the intercultural policy of the university.
- Facilitate the integration of the international student in the local community;
- Strengthen links with the local community and valorise the social investment of HEI's third mission (i.e. contribution to society);
- Ensure that students from low-income households or other disadvantaged backgrounds can afford going on mobility.

5 WAYS IN WHICH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS CAN SHARE INFORMATION TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ABOUT INTERCULTURAL AND INTERGENERATIONAL HOMESHARE PROGRAMMES THROUGHOUT THE MOBILITY JOURNEY

BEFORE APPLYING

- Categorise intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes as an accommodation option when in mobility in the institution's website dedicated to provide information to prospective international students.

In this early stage of the mobility journey, making information on homeshare programmes and opportunities available can inform the students' choice of host institution.

PRE-MOBILITY

- Include intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes as an alternative accommodation option in the informational package pre-mobility for both outgoing and incoming students.

This is particularly important for students from less advantaged backgrounds, as these accommodation options normally entails no or reduced financial costs.

- Actively encourage prospective international students to either reach out to local associations managing intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes with which their host HEI has an agreement with (if any) OR to directly reach out to local entities working with homeshare programmes in their future host city.

Pro-tip: make the WeShareWeCare list of European active local associations working with intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes clearly visible and accessible online for students.

DURING MOBILITY

- If the International Relations Office involves local students in the local integration of international students (i.e. buddy system), share the information about intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes with the manager of this programme and the actual 'buddies'. The student board at university level or Erasmus Student Network sections can support this task.

POST-MOBILITY

- Creating material to promote this type of accommodation option when abroad will help to add authenticity to the message, greatly enhancing its impact and increasing the interest of future international students.

Pro-tip: personal testimonials can be a great way to give face to experiences of international students participating in intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes. Simple, short videos or photo quotes from (international) students with homeshare experience can have an impactful influence.

WHAT CAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DO TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN BENEFITING FROM INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL HOMESHARE INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES?

1. Creation of bilateral partnerships between HEIs and associations/ non-profit organisations managing intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes at local level.

We strongly encourage institutions to take the initiative to research whether there are associations of this nature in their local context. If so, consider reaching out to them to create a formal and durable partnership with them to secure intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes as an additional quality and solidarity-based accommodation option for international students.

Pro-tip: Check the WeShareWeCare list of European active local associations working with intergenerational and intercultural homeshare programmes to find an organisation working in your city.

2. Redirect international students to the WeShareWeCare online platform to find quality accommodation offers.

Prospective international students or already on mobility will be able to register to the platform and browse accommodation offers in their host city posted by local seniors or by local associations managing homeshare programmes on behalf of seniors.

Keep in mind that participation in this type of intergenerational and accommodation programmes is always handled by the local association and not by the senior homeowner directly. Make sure that international students are aware of this.

THE WESHAREWECARE ONLINE PLATFORM

Available in English, French & Spanish

THE WESHAREWECARE PROJECT



From a modest initiative to a 3-year Erasmus+ project, the [WeShareWeCare](#) project aims to bring cultures and generations together by connecting European seniors with international students through homeshare and related activities on an online platform. The project has the following main objectives:

- Improve the welcoming and integration of mobile students with an accessible homeshare service, and intergenerational and intercultural activities.
- Strengthening the local collaborations between higher education institutions, international students welcoming structures and intergenerational home sharing associations.

In parallel, the project will also aim to:

- Delivery of a research study aiming to provide clarity on how the different national legal frameworks impact intergenerational and intercultural activities and practices.
- Research on the factors hindering or fostering intergenerational and intercultural experiences which will trigger the development of a pedagogical guide for students and seniors, a training kit for local associations, and a recommendations booklet intended toward political stakeholders for advocacy purposes.

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