GRACE BRIEF #2
Mutual Learning Plan

Within the GRACE project, six organisations ('implementing partners') developed a set of grounding actions to implement RRI institutional change, and five others ('cooperating organisations') supported them in the process.

A **Mutual Learning Plan** was designed to encourage and support **mutual learning dynamics** among the partners. It defined the approach, contents and activities of the mutual learning process of the project.

Theoretical and methodological framework

1.   *Mutual learning and institutional change*

The literature in the field of adult education and organisational studies defines **mutual learning** as a process aiming at collectively building knowledge on shared themes, with a strong focus on **problem-solving**.

GRACE considered mutual learning both as a **learning method** and a general **approach to institutional change**.

✓ Mutual learning is clearly a **learning method**, i.e., a method based on learning from one's own and others' experience. In this perspective, mutual learning is viewed as the most effective option to take for increasing one's own capacity to prevent or manage the problems which inevitably emerge in designing and implementing the ground actions.

✓ Mutual learning can be also understood as a general approach to **institutional change**. This concept refers to a process aimed at introducing permanent changes in a way in

which an organisation works. This means modifying the **norms** (mission, procedures, protocol, organisational structures, etc.) but also the **social patterns** (cognitive, emotional, relational, behavioural, etc.) which are dominant or largely shared by most people inside the organisation.

2.   *Aims of the Mutual Learning*

In the context of GRACE, mutual learning can be considered as an effort to identify **benchmarks**, i.e., best solutions for common problems, analysing their underlying enabling conditions and discussing ways for adapting them to different circumstances.

To pursue this aim, **three specific objectives** should be also attained:

- Providing the implementing partner with **practical knowledge** to effectively manage the problems they meet in implementing the grounding actions

- Helping them **gain awareness of and formalise what they actually have learnt** from their own experience

- Facilitating a comparison among the different grounding actions allowing to generate a **more comprehensive and in-depth knowledge** of RRI-oriented institutional change processes as they emerge from the practice of the partners.

3.   *Components of the Mutual Learning Plan*

In methodological terms, the mutual learning process included **three components**, thought to allow implementing partners to develop the GAs anticipating or timely reacting to possible obstacles and constraints and to increase their skills and capacities in managing RRI over time:

- **Mutual Learning Workshops**: 2-day sessions fully devoted to the mutual learning exercise involving all the project partners

- **Mutual Learning on-line meetings**: 1-2 hours on-line meetings focusing on specific issues which are common to many or all the implementing partners

- **Mutual Learning Exchanges:** involving only some partners (e.g. only two)

Substantive aspects

Being a process requiring an exchange among many actors, mutual learning is a **dynamic process** which cannot be fully planned from the beginning. The Mutual Learning Plan will develop throughout a project, its contents evolving together with the evolution of the project.

However, a general framework of the main topics considered in the different phases of the project was defined for the GRACE project:

Phase	Main Topics
Preparatory phase (M5-M10)	- RRI: what and why - The RRI keys: contents and aims - Institutional change and grounding actions: what they are and why they are important - The dynamics of institutional change - How to design the grounding actions - How to design the Roadmap - Evaluation and impact assessment of GAs
Development phase (M11-M34)	- Establishing an effective team - Involving leaders and mobilising key actors - Developing negotiations - Managing resistances and obstacles - Coordinating the GAs with each other
Stocktaking phase (M30-M35)	- Institutional arrangements for ensuring long-term sustainability to GAs - Lessons learned from the implementation of the GAs - Developing the Roadmap towards RRI