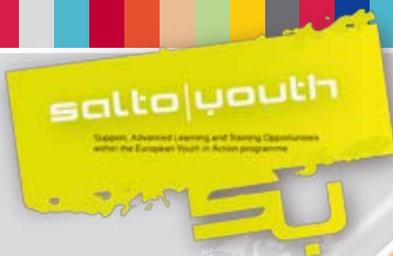


SALTO-YOUTH
SOUTH EAST EUROPE
RESOURCE CENTRE



Hopscotch to Quality in EVS

Handbook for EVS Promoters

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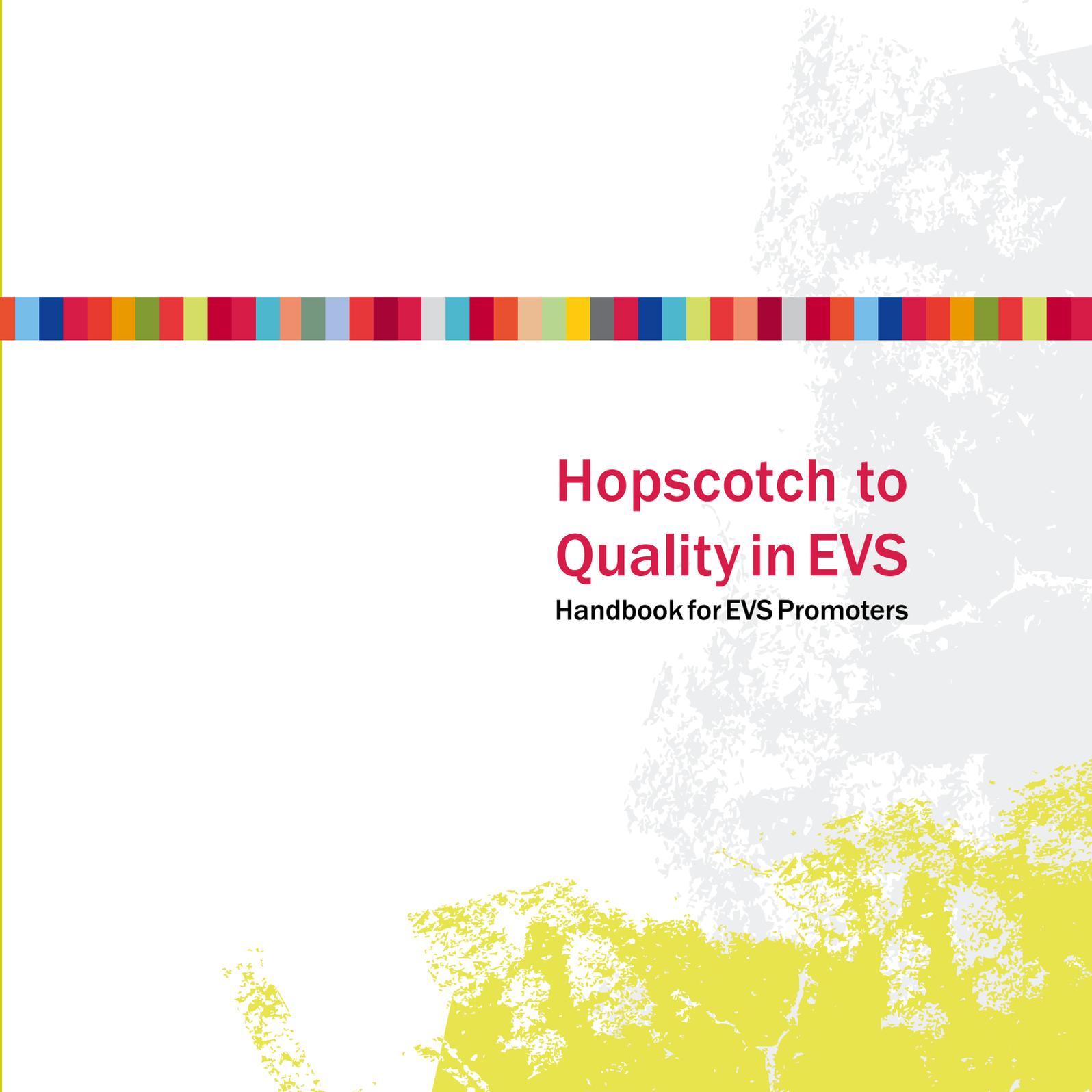


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Welcome to the 'Hopscotch to Quality in EVS!'

Did you ever play the hopscotch game as a child? Basically, to play it you need to hop through all the fields of the hopscotch, (usually drawn with chalk on the side walk or school yard), in different ways in order to reach the last field, which is your goal. Our goal is to support you in implementing European Voluntary Service (EVS) projects that lead to great results and learning outcomes for your organisation as well as your volunteers. Hopping carefully and successfully through the different fields of our EVS hopscotch should bring you to this goal.

Opportunities offered by the Youth in Action Programme

The Youth in Action Programme, which includes the European Voluntary Service, covers the period 2007 to 2013. It is the EU programme for young people aged 15-28 (in some cases 13-30). The Youth in Action Programme aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future. It is a programme for all! It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people regardless of their educational, social and cultural background. The Programme contributes to the acquisition of competences and is therefore a key instrument in providing young people with opportunities for non-formal and informal learning with a European dimension.

For project organisers from Neighbouring Partner Countries in South East Europe¹, the Youth in Action Programme offers a range of possibilities for participation. EVS maintains a central place in the Programme. Within EVS Activities, young people can help in a social, cultural or other organisation or institution in another European country for a period of 2 – 12 months. EVS is accessible for young people from Programme Countries and Partner Countries alike. Further

¹ The Neighbouring Partner Countries in SEE include; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244/1999, Montenegro and Serbia. Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, currently still Neighbouring Partner Countries, are running preparatory measures for joining the Programme as full members in 2011.

complementary possibilities for participation in the Youth in Action Programme are offered to organisations from SEE under Action 3.1. – Youth of the world – which provides possibilities for financial support for youth exchanges, training and networking activities.

Furthermore, the Youth in Action Programme offers some tools aimed at raising project quality, valorisation and learning outcomes. Accreditation of all organisations involved in EVS based in Programme or SEE countries, (Host, Sending and Coordinating organisations), as a prerequisite for applying for project funding as well as the implementation of the EVS training cycle for volunteers, are such tools. The introduction of another tool, Youthpass, promotes better recognition and validation of key learning competences acquired through participation in projects.

Cooperation with South East Europe became possible with the beginning of the YOUTH Programme in 2000. Since then, the number of organisations from SEE that have used the programme, the partnerships with organisations in other European countries, and the quantity of projects implemented have increased greatly. Under the Youth in Action Programme, increased financial means have been made available to promote this trend and to enable organisations from SEE to take the responsibility for coordinating projects. The political background is the EU's enlargement policy towards all the countries of the region and the aim to work towards European standards in the youth field in the region.

The countries of the SEE region are at different stages related to the process of accession to the European programmes and to the European Union as such. The most advanced in this respect, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, both candidate countries to the EU, have established National Agencies for Youth in Action and the Life Long Learning programmes and are expected to join the programmes as full members in 2011.

The Hopscotch to Quality in EVS: What's in it (for me)?

While the possibilities for organisations from SEE to participate in the Youth in Action Programme have increased over the past years, so have the needs for support in organising projects according to the philosophy and requirements of the Programme. This is particularly true for EVS, the most complex Action of the Programme.

This is where the idea for this publication had its origins: We wanted to

compile a handbook which raises awareness and understanding of the various organisational, administrative and, in particular educational and content-related aspects, which – if put into practice – will add quality, better results and deeper learning outcomes to your EVS projects. We also wanted to offer tips and points for reflection to make the information useable and user-friendly, specifically for Host and Sending organisations based in the countries of South East Europe.

Accordingly, this handbook is structured around Part B – the Hopscotch to Quality in EVS, where all major aspects are covered. The other parts are nevertheless essential additions: Part A provides important background information, in particular for those less familiar with the EVS programme. Part C takes a look at evaluation, follow-up and dissemination and exploitation of results. The Appendices compile examples of relevant documents of use in EVS, an explanation of terms used (Glossary) and information on where to find further support and resources.

Formal criteria for participation and funding details are only briefly dealt with, as far as they serve as a basis for understanding the Programme. For complete and up-to-date information, we advise you to regularly consult the websites of the European Commission (in particular the Youth in Action Programme Guide) and of the SALTO SEE Resource Centre. If you need any further assistance, do not hesitate to contact our office.

This handbook was written by three authors coming from different countries of South East Europe, all having extensive experience in the field, and working in close communication with the SALTO SEE staff.

If you and/or your organisation are not yet familiar with running EVS projects, we would like to encourage you to read through the whole Hopscotch. If your organisation already has a long-standing experience in EVS, we hope that you are still curious to find out how you can increase the value of your EVS projects, for the benefit of your volunteers and your organisation.

We hope that this publication will become a companion in your further EVS projects, where you can check one or other aspects relating to EVS projects as you go along, according to your specific experience and needs.

Wishing you good luck with your future EVS projects!

Your SALTO SEE team



photo: MOVIT

Part A.

Building Common Ground



Quiz: Are You An EVS Expert?

Warm-up question:

0. The abbreviation EVS stands for:
- Enhanced Voltage Stress
 - Exchange Virtual Server
 - European Voluntary Service

Although all the given answers in the example are correct (in fact there are 35 identified meanings of the abbreviation!), for this publication we'll use these three letters with the meaning of "European Voluntary Service".

So, we hope you are ready for the real quiz of 15 questions below, where **only one of the given answers is correct!**

Good luck!

"The Real stuff":

- 1.** If you typed "European Voluntary Service" in your search engine, the number of hits you could expect would be:
- 1-100.000
 - 100.001-10 million
 - more than 10 million
- 2.** European Voluntary Service programme, also known as EVS, started in:
- 1996
 - 1998
 - 2000

- 3.** European Voluntary Service is managed by:
- European Council
 - Council of Europe
 - European Commission

- 4.** EVS is also known as "Action 2" in the programme called:
- YOUTH
 - Youth in Action
 - Youth for Understanding

- 5.** EVS is essentially:
- a language course abroad
 - an internship in a company
 - none of the above

- 6.** EVS is primarily about:
- informal learning
 - non-formal learning
 - formal learning

- 7.** EVS is open to all young people aged:
- 18-30
 - 18-30, exceptionally 16-30
 - 18-30, exceptionally 18-35

- 8.** European Voluntary Service supports:
- only individual voluntary service
 - only group voluntary service
 - both individual and group voluntary service

- 9.** According to the rules of the programme, a volunteer can participate in an EVS project:
- only once
 - exceptionally, twice
 - maximum three times

- 10.** EVS projects and EVS Activities are:
- simply synonyms
 - an EVS project may have one or more EVS Activities
 - an EVS Activity can include one or more EVS projects
- 11.** The name of the resource centre publishing this publication is SALTO. The acronym stands for:
- Support, Alternative Learning and Training Opportunities
 - Support, Advice and Lifelong Training Opportunities
 - Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities
- 12.** If the applicant organisation from an EU programme country is applying for a project with South East Europe, the application is submitted to:
- National Agency
 - Executive Agency
 - National youth ministry
- 13.** In order to participate in EVS, interested organisations from South East Europe have to be:
- accredited
 - certified
 - qualified
- 14.** The Common European Framework of Key Competences for lifelong learning describes learning in EVS as consisting of:
- 6 competences
 - 7 competences
 - 8 competences
- 15.** The instrument for recognition and visibility of learning outcomes in EVS is called:
- Europass
 - Youthpass
 - Vol-pass

Correct answers:

1c, 2a, 3c, 4b, 5c, 6b, 7b, 8c, 9b,
10b, 11c, 12a, 13a, 14c, 15b

Please calculate your quiz score and find some useful tips below. For more information about the questions from the quiz, just keep on reading this publication!

Your total score is: _____

Absolute beginner (less than 5 correct answers)

Don't get discouraged with the amount of new terms and concepts; EVS is much easier than it sounds. Anyway, we would suggest that you read this publication carefully and if possible talk to some ex-EVS volunteers or organisations involved in EVS from your region.

Good rider (from 5-8 correct answers)

You are on a good track to becoming knowledgeable about EVS. However, there are still a few things which need to be clarified. To consolidate your knowledge, we would suggest you look for more information in this publication and visit recommended websites about the programme.

Expert in EVS (9-12 correct answers)

Apparently, you know this programme inside out. However, some things might have been changed in the latest Programme Guide and your knowledge needs to be refreshed. After reading this publication, download the latest version of the Guide from the European Commission's website.

EVS Master (13-15 correct answers)

Congratulations, it seems that you are holding the "black belt" in EVS. You may use this publication either to reflect on certain deeper aspects of EVS or to challenge some of your already pretty well established beliefs and understandings concerning this programme.

EVS – Exciting Facts and Figures About It

At the moment of drafting this publication, if you would Google “European Voluntary Service” you would get about 15,100,000 hits², discover a large number of EVS related e-groups, numerous EVS blogs and several groups on Facebook. Even if you have absolutely no idea about EVS, it would be obvious that you have encountered some kind of global phenomenon.

So, what is it about? Let’s quickly review the main pieces of the EVS puzzle!

Following an initiative of the European Commission and a strong demand from civil society, the European Union launched the European Voluntary Service (EVS) as a pilot action in 1996. The programme enabled young people from EU member states to spend a period of voluntary service in another European country, contributing to local community development and their own personal growth. The response to the evaluation of the pilot action showed that EVS was regarded as a relevant policy to meeting various challenges. These included; increasing European mobility, fostering active citizenship, tackling problems of social cohesion and enabling youth transition towards adulthood. EVS also tackled marginalisation and social exclusion, social deviance and delinquency, intolerance, xenophobia, and racism. EVS was also regarded as a means to promote social cohesion and solidarity within and outside the European Union³. Subsequently the European Voluntary Service was established as the EVS Community Action Programme (1998-1999), the then Action 2 of the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006) and current Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013).

Youth in Action Programme:

- Action 1 – Youth for Europe
- Action 2 – European Voluntary Service
- Action 3 – Youth in the World
- Action 4 – Youth Support Systems
- Action 5 – Support for European Cooperation in the Youth Field

Some facts and figures about EVS:

- During the first 10 years of EVS (1996-2006) approximately **30,000 young volunteers** participated in the programme.
- In the Youth in Action programme, it is expected that the number of participating volunteers should increase to up to **10,000 volunteers/year**.
- An average individual grant per volunteer (2005) is approx. 7,000 EUR.
- At the beginning of November 2009 there were **4,136** organisations accredited to participate in EVS⁴.
- Action 2 - EVS projects are covered by at least 23% of the total Youth in Action budget (885 million Euro).

² Accessed on 23.2.2009

³ The ex-ante evaluation of the Multi-annual European Voluntary Service Programme for Young People – Report prepared by the Tavistock Institute, UK, October 1996

⁴ Please note, that this number was just a state of affairs in November 2009. The actual number of accredited EVS promoters is constantly increasing. Check the database of accredited EVS organisations: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm

Today, within the Youth in Action Programme, the European Voluntary Service provides young people from participating countries (including South East Europe) with an opportunity to have an international voluntary experience. This can take place either as;

- a. 2 months to 12 months in an **individual EVS activity** or
- b. 2 weeks to 12 months in a **group EVS activity**, involving anything from 2 – 100 volunteers

Although it includes elements of language learning, travelling and gaining some work experience, **EVS is not:**

- occasional, unstructured, part-time volunteering
- an internship in an enterprise
- a paid job; it must not replace paid jobs
- a recreation or tourist activity
- a language course
- exploitation of a cheap workforce
- a period of study or vocational training abroad

In fact EVS is a true “learning service”. Throughout **non-formal learning** experiences young volunteers improve and/or acquire competences for their personal, educational and professional development as well as for their social integration. At the same time, it is an opportunity for young people to express their solidarity and social responsibility through **voluntary service** in local community development. The programme also supports increased youth mobility and contributes to the development of a genuine European citizenship. The documentation of the experience and recognition of learning outcomes is implemented through the instrument called **Youthpass**. This is based on the common European framework of 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.⁵

The programme is open to **ALL young people aged 18 – 30 years**, regardless of their social, cultural, educational or economic background. In cases of young people with fewer opportunities⁶, if fully justified, it is possible to involve volunteers from 16-30 years. Typically, EVS is a “once in a lifetime” experience – a volunteer can take part in only one EVS Activity. However, the exception could be made in cases of volunteers with fewer opportunities who could take part in more than one EVS activity, provided that the total duration of the combined periods of Service does not exceed 12 months.

⁵ For more information about Youthpass and Key competences for Lifelong Learning, please read the chapter “Support and Recognition of Learning in EVS” in this publication or visit the Youthpass webpage: www.youthpass.eu

⁶ For more information about this aspect in EVS, you may read the chapter “Inclusion in EVS” in this publication

Some typical benefits for young people from participation in EVS:

- increased self-esteem
- sense of independence and self-initiative
- foreign language competence
- communication skills
- project management skills
- intercultural sensitivity and awareness
- team work skills
- establishment of networks and partnerships
- work experience gained
- ...

Some typical benefits for organisations involved in EVS:

- improved profile and image of the organisation
- “European profile”
- improved people and project management skills
- foreign language competence
- intercultural sensitivity and awareness
- additional ideas and new perspectives
- enhanced ability to work in an international partnership
- ...

The EVS project includes three main phases:

- planning and preparation
- implementation of the Activity
- evaluation (including reflection on a possible follow-up)

The total duration of the project, including all project phases cannot exceed 24 months.

Each EVS project might include one or more EVS Activity. An EVS Activity has three essential components:

- actual voluntary service
- EVS training and evaluation cycle
- on-going support for the volunteer⁷

Each EVS project is developed in partnership between the **Sending Organisation**, the **Host Organisation**, the **Coordinating Organisation** and a **volunteer (or volunteers)**. In a simple EVS project, the role of Coordinating Organization is taken either by the Sending or Host Organisation. In this case the Coordinating Organisation is responsible for submitting the application, as well as for overall management of the project.

In more complex projects a separate Coordinating Organisation might apply for the project on behalf of the partnership of several organisations involved. In this case the Coordinating Organisation does not have to be either the Sending or Host Organisation. However, in order to get involved in EVS **all organisations have to be accredited for the Sending, Host and/or Coordinating role**. The accreditation procedure is managed either by National Agencies in programme countries or SALTO SEE in South East Europe⁸. All accredited organisations and their projects are published in the public database at the European Commission’s website⁹.

The EVS organisations, also called “promoters”, could be:

- a non profit/non-governmental organisation;
- a local or regional public body;

⁷ For more information about dimensions of volunteer support, EVS training and the evaluation cycle, see chapter: “The Support System Around the EVS Volunteer”

⁸ For more information about how to become an accredited organisation for EVS in South East Europe, take a look at the SALTO SEE guide “Stepping into EVS”: <http://www.salto-youth.net/Elsee/>.

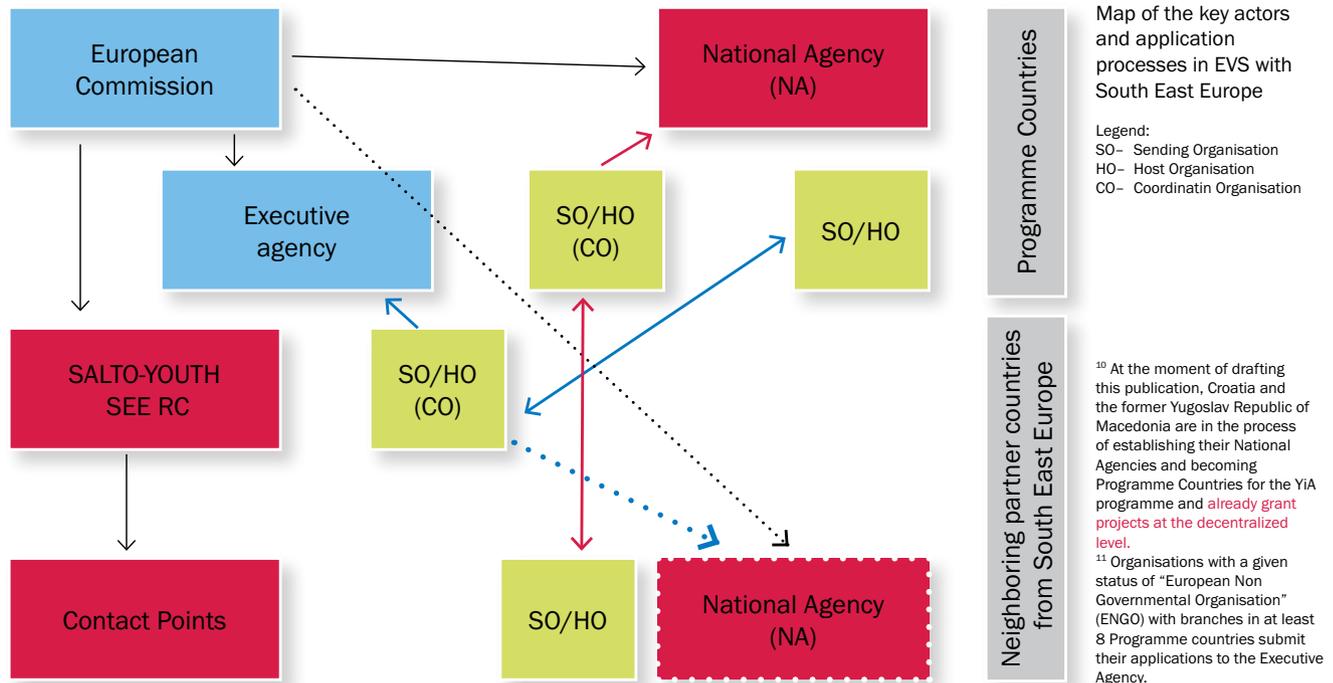
⁹ Database of accredited EVS organisations: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm

- a body active at European level in the youth field;
- an international governmental organisation;
- a profit-making organisation (only when it organises an event in the area of youth, sport or culture).

To be eligible as an applicant, a promoter must be legally established either in a programme country or South East Europe. One of the promoters assumes the role of Coordinating Organisation and applies for the whole project ('one-sided funding') on behalf of all the promoters. **Applications** for the projects could be submitted to:

- A National Agency in the applicant country, if the applicant organisation is coming from a programme country¹⁰ ("decentralized applications", as shown with **RED arrows** in the picture below).
- The Executive Agency if the applicant is coming from a Neighbouring Partner Country from South East Europe¹¹ ("centralized applications", as shown with **BLUE arrows** in the picture below).

Applications cannot be submitted to SALTO-YOUTH SEE Resource Centre or the Contact Points for Youth in Action in the region! For detailed information about the application procedures, please visit the European Commission's website and download the latest version of the Youth in Action Programme Guide.



The beginning

“What is EVS and how did it start on my island?” wonders a lady from the foreigners’ office of a small police station on an Adriatic island. And, “why is a blond girl standing in front of me asking to extend her residence permit, which **cannot** be extended?” She didn’t ask those questions to the girl, but explained to her in a relaxed and attentive manner that none of them could do anything about a residence permit at the moment. She should simply go away and come back next week.

When she left the police station, Anna’s world fell apart. She had overwhelmingly wanted to carry on with her project and stay on that beautiful island, even though it sometimes drove her crazy with its relaxed approach to everything. She would have to make it on her own again. The people in her Host Organisation knew less about the registration of a volunteer than she did, they would convince her they would deal with it the following day, like they always promised. Her Sending Organisation felt very far away at this moment.

Anna had personally found both the Host and the Sending Organisations, and it was she who had worked on her project application the most, so she mainly blamed herself for her current situation of being frightened of being deported. She had called and written an email to the people in the Resource Centre in Ljubljana. They had tried to help, giving her a few pieces of advice but even they didn’t know the current legal provisions. Later, a guy from Zagreb called her explaining that, as an EVS volunteer, she unfortunately cannot get the residence permit extension. She should simply stay there and take it easy, freely walk around the town and the police would simply get accustomed to the fact that she is there and completely forget that she needs a residence permit. What an explanation!

Anna was not the first EVS volunteer in South East Europe. She is one of the many EVS volunteers who have successfully finished their projects and is one of a few who have remained abroad longer. Her story however is very similar to many other stories of those first EVS volunteers. It would be possible to search through various reports, reference numbers and contracts in files to find who the first EVS volunteer in the SEE region was. But for now, all in all we can conclude that EVS volunteers are here around us, they come and go and come back. Some of them send new volunteers, some of them stay forever. For good things in life to linger and last, it is not important who started them and when.

EVS started including South East European countries in 2000. At that time the SEE region was mainly an unknown for EU organisations dealing with EVS and similar programmes. They had heard about it in media, occasionally in breaking news if the conflict would escalate. Only a year earlier a series of snapshots of columns of refugees, bombardments and death from the region had spread around the world.

However, in the region there were organisations where such a programme was in accordance with their visions and missions. There was a huge amount of energy and will to make an impact on civil society. The very notion of the existence of civil society was a novelty which wasn't best understood by the majority of people. In such an environment organisations made efforts to be transparent and understood in their communities as well as among their donors. In the absence of a wider understanding, there wasn't a significant support from the state institutions. Some countries in the region were just abandoning totalitarian regimes, so even the legal framework for organisations to exist was not properly defined. Thanks to support that came from a variety of international programmes, many organisations quite successfully developed their programmes and capacities. Many of them created networks and partnerships and became active on an international level. Sadly the news of the opening up of the EVS programme in the region went



largely unheeded. Those wishing to learn more were often lost in the complexity of information on one side and the lack of practical experiences on the other.

That's why it is probable that the first EVS volunteers in South East Europe were unaware that they were the ones. Someone somewhere in the region opened up and read the Programme Guide and realized that EVS could integrate with and contribute to the existing work of their organisation. Perhaps it was that person who recalled that they knew of a young girl in their French partner organisation who kept saying that she would like to come to the region. So why not try something new and bring that motivated young person to support the work of their organisation?



photo: Youth Association creACTIVE

Developments

Just a few years later EVS projects significantly increased in the region. Co-operation with South East European countries became a priority of the programme. Not only were considerable financial funds allocated to the new priority but efforts were increased on the promotion of, and support to the programme. This was achieved predominantly by intensifying and expanding the work of the SALTO SEE Resource Centre in Ljubljana as well as through several European NGO Large Scale projects. European NGO's already involved in EVS immediately recognized the new opportunity, not only for the funding of EVS projects but also for offering new and exciting volunteering opportunities in the newly-formed countries. They did not find it too difficult to find partners in the region because there were already organisations involved in local, regional and international programmes including youth exchanges. During 2003, over 50 EVS volunteers came to or left the region within multilateral EVS projects.

50 volunteers is a big increase compared to the figure of a year earlier and maybe the figure itself doesn't sound significant, but the numbers should be examined. We can multiply 50 volunteers by 6 months and that result by the number of work hours per month. Then there is the number of beneficiaries the volunteers organised different youth activities with. They participated in workshops that tackled various topics, including: the fight against prejudice; peace building; the promotion of co-operation on a European level; they taught languages; they spread information on HIV/AIDS prevention; designed, created and wrote new projects; exchanged information; and often did a lot of simple daily tasks. However, it is difficult to describe a single sensation of the other culture, a moment of cognition, revelation of invitation or rejoicing, in the success of figures.

This initial influx of volunteers produced a very important result. During these Large Scale projects and multilateral EVS projects, organisations from the region and EU countries got to know each other and learnt to work together. The regional organisations became aware of EVS management

through learning by doing. The organisations initiated their own bilateral EVS projects and the number of EVS volunteers slowly increased. These organisations' positive experience gradually attracted other organisations, thus increasing the variety of EVS projects. The most prominent promoters of EVS were the volunteers themselves, who established contacts with their peers during their EVS experience and stayed in touch for a long time after. The interest of young people from the region in EVS projects grew as well, and EVS gave some young people a chance to leave their countries for the first time.

The SALTO SEE Resource Centre gave its support to organisations involved in EVS. In fact, SALTO SEE was challenged to build up a support system for EVS similar to those in Programme Countries. This was done with limited resources and a lack of involvement of Governments in the region. The lack of accreditation, the irregular and interrupted EVS training cycle and the lack of organisations' experience in EVS management affected the quality of the projects. When the quality of EVS projects is in question, volunteers often experience difficulties with the people they work and live with. The development of accreditation increased the organisations' awareness of EVS itself and the projects became more visible through the 'Expression of Interest' (EI) database. The regular EVS training cycle became a significant resource for individual support to volunteers and their understanding of the learning processes they were going through. Ensuring of quality standards, a number of trainings, information activities and a chance to apply for EVS projects to the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) saw the number of EVS volunteers grow rapidly reaching three digit figures annually.

Impact

The further development of EVS projects in the region depends on the level of understanding of such programmes within the local communities and countries themselves. Compared to early 2000, the comprehension of the work of civil society organisations and concepts such as volunteering and non-formal education in societies has increased. The public institutions themselves began to develop policies on support measures and the promotion of such concepts. The recognition and the validation of volunteers work and that of non-formal education directly improves the conditions for each EVS project. Nowadays, Anna wouldn't have such a big problem solving her residence permit because the Law on volunteerism has now come into effect in Croatia. Today this legislation exists in Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and is being rapidly developed in other countries of the region together with other forms of support.

The EVS projects in the region contribute to the promotion of volunteerism, non-formal education, inclusion and youth co-operation. It can be realistically estimated that less than 5% of individuals are involved in volunteering no matter if it is young people or the population in general. Basically a small number of young people are involved in civil society organisations and other civic initiatives. As a new and exciting opportunity for young people, EVS has certainly contributed to the inclusion of young people promoting a wider concept of volunteerism as an



photo : Grupa "Hejide da..."

expression of active citizenship. There are examples in the region where organisations who first became involved in EVS began to develop local volunteering programmes for young people within their own communities. Many of these volunteers brought different experiences and ideas contributing to organisational capacity building.

Young volunteers acquire new competences and develop positive social values and so gain better positioning in the labour market. As a form of non-formal education, EVS shows plenty of successful examples of individual development and career making. Some EVS volunteers have continued to work on issues related to their EVS experience in their Sending Organisation, international organisations and the public sector. Others have found themselves working in other areas but the experience and skills acquired in EVS are of a lifelong benefit. Unfortunately, non-formal education, like volunteerism has still not been fully recognized and cherished in the region. There is still a very small minority of young people who participate in any form of non-formal education. Fortunately, initiatives to recognize non-formal education are connected to EU integration, and so slowly there are improvements in the recognition of and support to non-formal education programmes. These programmes are becoming more visible every day.

EVS volunteers have been welcomed by organisations that have been primarily into non-formal education, youth work and volunteerism. Given the EVS impact over the years, the developments in volunteering and positive trends in the development of the Youth in Action Programme in the region, the number and the quality of EVS projects is expected to further grow. The next step is to include more organisations, but also public institutions. Very few public institutions in region have been accredited so far. Non-governmental organisations that primarily deal with disability, social exclusion, equal opportunities, health, and minorities have also not been involved in EVS in any significant number. Their inclusion would enable EVS projects to extend their programmes, support the existing work and provide new learning opportunities for young people.



EVS in South East Europe in numbers and figures

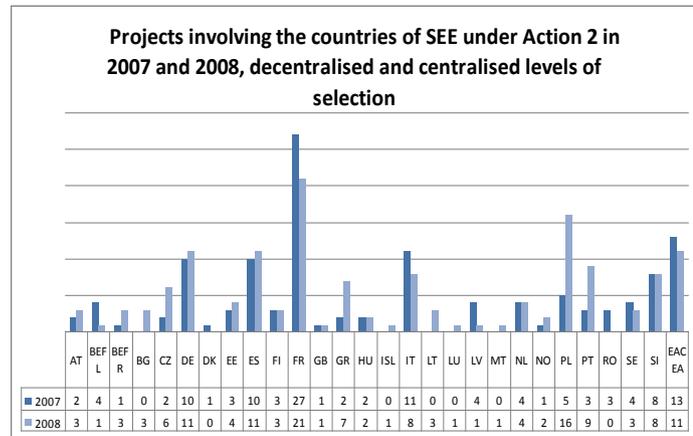
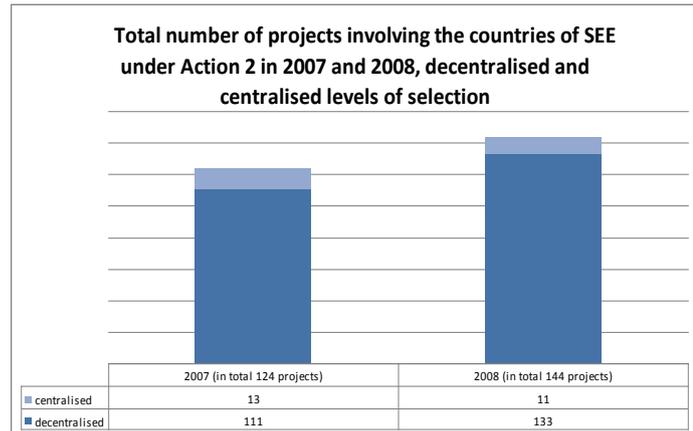
Number of EVS promoters in South East Europe listed in the European database on accredited EVS organisations on 5th November 2009

	Accredited as Sending Organisations	Accredited as Host Organisations	Accredited as Co-coordinating Organisations	Accredited Organisations (total per country)
Albania	5	4	2	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22	24	17	29
Croatia	13	10	10	16
FYR Macedonia	27	24	17	31
Montenegro	4	4	4	4
Serbia	28	21	23	34
UNMIK/Kosovo	1	2	1	2
TOTAL SEE	100	89	74	123

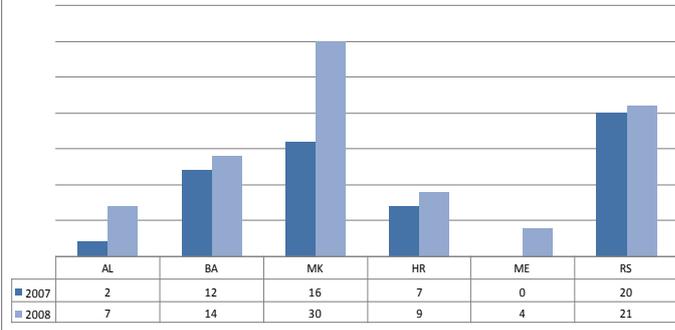
Looking at the table, you might be wondering why the numbers don't match - why is the number of accredited organisations per country smaller than the total amount of the accredited organisation as Sending, Host and Coordinating. It is simply due to the fact that in many cases the same organisation is accredited for various roles - Sending, Host and/or Coordinating. Please note that the numbers change almost daily. For up-to-date information, please check the database on the website of the European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm).

photo: Youth Cultural Centre Abrašević

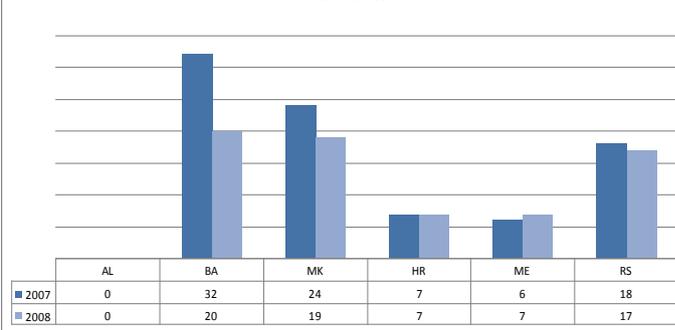
EVS projects with South East Europe implemented in 2007 and 2008



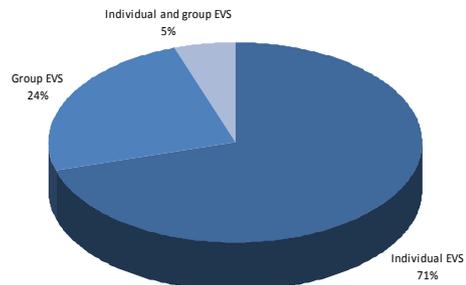
Action 2 projects sending volunteers from SEE in 2007 and 2008 (involvement of SEE countries), decentralised level of selection



Action 2 projects hosting volunteers in SEE in 2007 and 2008 (involvement of SEE countries), decentralised level of selection



Type of activity in Action 2 projects involving countries of SEE (individual / group EVS) in 2008, decentralised level of selection



Note: The figures regarding type of activity in Action 2 projects above are almost equal for 2007 (74% Individual EVS; 20% Group EVS; 6% Individual and group EVS).



photo: MOVIT

Volunteers going to and coming from South East Europe in the period 2008 - 2009

About 130 - 140 volunteers annually have been taking part in EVS training sessions organised within the training cycle for volunteers by SALTO SEE in South East Europe in 2008 and 2009.¹²

About 2/3 of these volunteers have been hosted in a country of SEE; 1/3 have come from SEE and have been hosted in a Programme country.

Of the volunteers going to South East Europe, about 3/4 have been hosted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or Serbia. Over 1/3 have come from France, the remaining 2/3 from various European countries.

Volunteers coming from the region have been hosted in a variety of countries all over Europe; the majority have been hosted in the countries bordering the region, those in the South of Europe and Germany.

¹²This number might not equal exactly the number of volunteers actually coming from and going to SEE. We estimate that about 5 - 10 % of volunteers have not been taking part in the training cycle organised by SALTO SEE during this period.



How can this information be useful for me and my organisation?

- You can find more about organisations in your area that have participated in EVS projects and learn about their experiences.
- Some EVS volunteers may already live in your area. You can find out about their experiences or discover something from the ones that have finished EVS.
- You can use the current EVS project results published and the current publications and researches as an inspiration and example in creating your own EVS projects. Share your experience and results!¹³
- You can check if you are familiar with the volunteer work legislation in your country.
- Which forms of recognition and validation of non-formal education can be detected in your country?
- Discover if you can draft an EVS project promoting non-formal education and volunteerism! How do other EVS projects do it?
- List the 10 most important pieces of information and arguments to encourage a young person to apply for an EVS project.
- Could your organisation support other inexperienced organisations to step into EVS? How would you do it?
- Challenge yourself, picture a public institution, how would you present EVS to it?

photo: Youth Cultural Centre Abrašević

¹³ Consult and share your good practice for instance on the Database of good practice projects with Neighbouring Partner Countries on the SALTO-YOUTH website at http://www.salto-youth.net/NPC_good_practise_projects/.

EVS Project Cycle and Phases

Now, let's check your knowledge about projects in general: **Which are the main phases of any project?** And a more specific question: **Which are the phases of an EVS project?** (The answer is somewhere in the first pages of this publication).

In many aspects, an EVS project is similar to other projects that you or your organisation might implement. In any project you plan and prepare, then you implement, and finally evaluate after the project activities are completed. It is the same with an EVS project – obviously you can host the volunteer before you finish all the necessary preparations, but note, you cannot just close the project without evaluation and reporting.

Nevertheless, EVS projects are specific and differ from other projects in a number of aspects. These are some of them:

1. Firstly (and you should already know this one), European Voluntary Service is part of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission. Thus, all EVS projects must be implemented according to the rules and procedures of the Programme, (application forms, deadlines, financial rules...). Some of the basic rules are included in this handbook while others can be found in the Youth in Action Programme Guide.
2. An important aspect of EVS projects is the accreditation. Usually you are not asked to be accredited in order to implement other projects, even when doing other types of projects under the Youth in Action Programme. However, in order to coordinate EVS projects and to be able to send and host volunteers, your organisation has to be accredited in advance. Accreditation serves to gain access to EVS and to ensure a common quality standard in EVS.
3. Each EVS project is based on an international partnership, (composed of Sending Organisation, Host Organisation, Coordinating Organisation and volunteer/s). Naturally, the partners come from different countries, it is this that brings the process of partnership-building and project implementation to a more advanced level.
4. Finally, quality in preparation, intercultural dimension, recognition of learning and other elements are much more complex and demanding in EVS projects in comparison to other actions in the Youth in Action Programme.

Framing the EVS project

In general, projects should be easier to understand if they are put into a frame; even more if the frame represents a graphic timeline of the project cycle. From our experience, this should also work with EVS projects. Let's try. Look at the graphic timeline below for a few minutes and try to understand what happens in each phase of the EVS project.

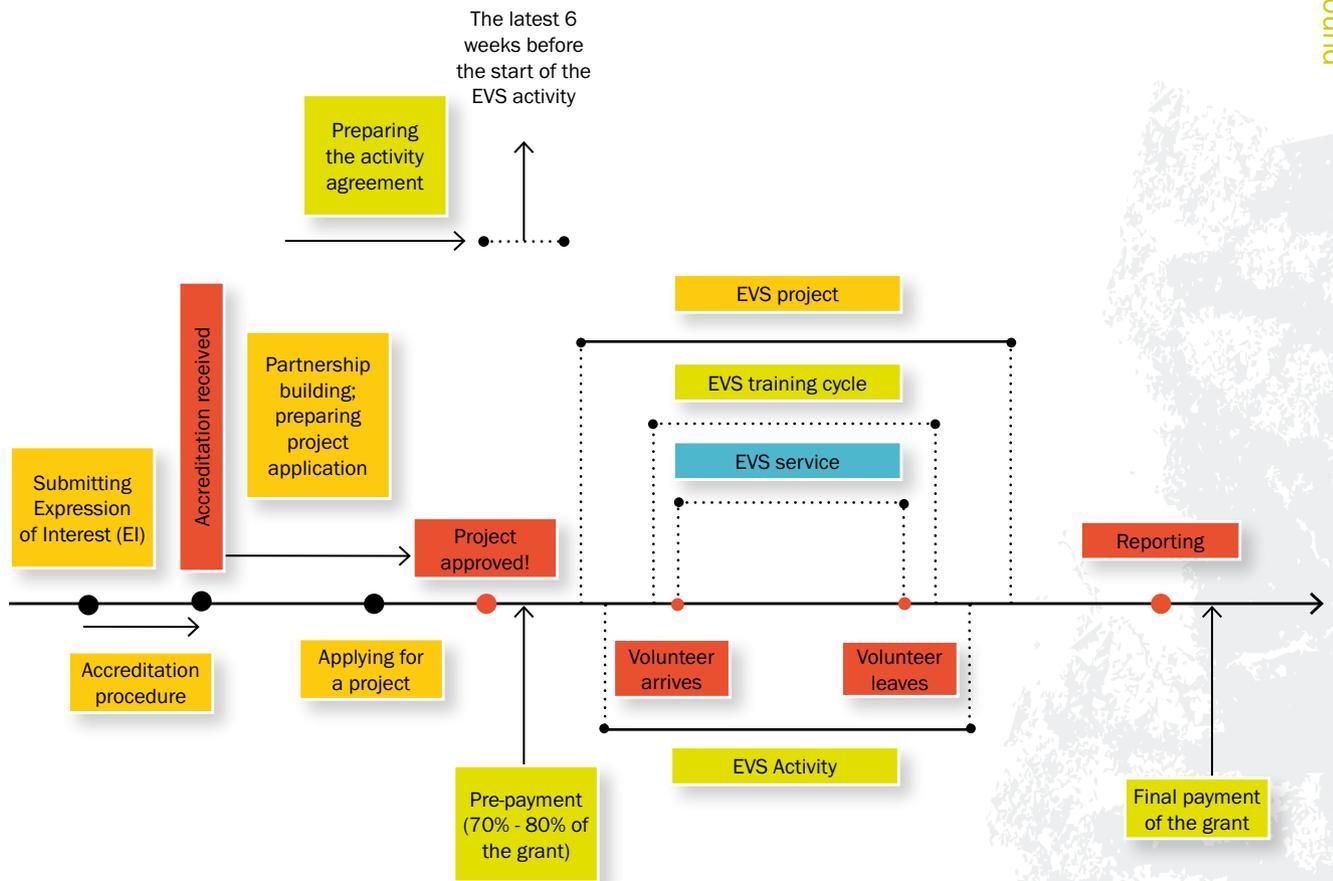




photo: Youth Association creACTIVE

Did you notice how short the time is between the volunteer's arrival and departure when compared to the whole project duration?

In fact, though an EVS service might last for only six months, sometimes even shorter, the whole EVS project may take up to 24 months. Considering the fact that there is an accreditation procedure before the project itself and reporting after it, it takes a long time to get prepared, implement and evaluate an EVS project.

When analyzing the timeline, please keep in mind that it refers to a simple EVS project, which includes only one EVS Activity. EVS projects sometimes have other phases as well, which we did not include here. We also assumed that the EVS project was immediately approved, which is not always the case; but hopefully, it will be with your project.

The notes that follow are a narrative explanation of each phase of the project cycle. Read them carefully and try to connect them to what was graphically presented in the diagram.

- Accreditation. Every organisation that is interested to send or host EVS volunteers first has to be accredited for being the Host, Sending and or Coordinating body. The accreditation procedure is launched by filling in and submitting the 'Expression of Interest', as well as other required documents. The accreditation procedure might last for a month or two (or even longer), and thus it is important to plan for this in advance. For detailed information regarding the process of accreditation see the accreditation guide "Stepping into EVS"¹⁴, published by SALTO-YOUTH SEE.
- Partnership-building starts after the organisation receives EVS accreditation. It is a process that may last for a couple of months (or longer), as it includes the time necessary for looking for partners – Host/Sending Organisations and potential volunteers, as well as for establishing functional relationships between all sides of the project. This is the time to agree about all details of the EVS project, to decide about the application deadline and the place to apply (National Agency or Executive Agency). The application form itself should also

¹⁴ Accreditation guide "Stepping into EVS" can be downloaded at: <http://www.salto-youth.net/download/1650.pdf>



be prepared during this period. The concept of partnership is described in more details in the section “Quality in Partnership”.

- Selection of a volunteer may take place either before or after applying for the project application form.
- The Activity Agreement can be prepared, signed and submitted either before or after filling in the application form.
- The project application form can be sent to the Executive Agency in Brussels (if application is by an organisation from South-East Europe), or to a National Agency (if application is by an organisation from a programme country). There are three deadlines per year available for applying to the Executive Agency (1st February, 1st June and 1st September), and two additional for applying to a National Agency (1st February, 1st April, 1st June, 1 September and 1st November). It usually takes 2 to 4 months to receive the selection results, and find out if your project has been approved.
- After the project is approved, the applicant (Coordinating) Organisation receives a contract to sign. Upon signing the contract, the Executive Agency or National Agency sends pre-payment for the project, which is 70% to 80% of the total grant.
- The EVS project starts. The date assigned for the project start in the application form is the date when first costs related to the project can be made.
- The EVS Activity starts. The volunteer has still not left their home country – the actual EVS service is only one part of the EVS Activity. Pre-departure training takes place in the country of the volunteer. In this period of time, the Sending Organisation prepares the volunteer for the project.
- The EVS volunteer arrives in the host country and the EVS service starts.

- During the EVS service, the project activities are implemented. On-arrival and Mid-term evaluation are held in the host country. The EVS service ends after the time period indicated in the application form (2 weeks to 12 months). The volunteer leaves the host country.
- The volunteer has a final evaluation meeting in their home country. The Sending Organisation organises support for the volunteer upon their return to their home country.
- The EVS project ends. Last costs can occur on the last day of the project, as stated in the application form.
- Final report for the EVS project should be submitted at the latest two months after the project ends. All partners in the project should submit a final report.
- After the final report is approved, the applicant/Coordinating Organisation receives the remaining 20% to 30% of the grant.

To have a clearer and more realistic vision of the timetable, we have created an example. But before reading it, please keep this in mind: **if the graphic timeline above was a simplified generalisation, then this is an even more drastic one. In reality, the timeframe of an EVS project depends on many different factors. You might need a much shorter or longer time period to implement your project.**

For example: if you are planning to host your first EVS volunteer during autumn/winter, then you should submit your Expression of Interest a year before. If everything goes well, your organisation should receive the accreditation by the end of February. If you manage to find partners and to prepare the project application form during the next couple of months, then you could use the deadline of 1st June to apply for the project. In this case, you would probably receive the results by the end of August. The project starting date could then be 1st October, while the volunteer would have the Pre-Departure training during October or November. The volunteer will then arrive on the 1st December, and stay until the 1st September of the following year (9 months). The EVS project ends on the 1st December, and the final report is submitted by the following 1st February. The National Agency decides about the reports and probably during April it informs the applicant (Coordinating Organisation) that the report has been accepted. After few months the final payment is completed.

What did we assume in this case? Firstly, that the project application is submitted to a National Agency. Usually more time is required when you apply to the Executive Agency. Secondly, we assume that the National Agency answers positively, both on the application and the final report – this is not always the case!

Please keep this in mind only as an example, not as a guideline. In fact, each EVS project is different and unique, though it should always follow the rules of the Youth in Action Programme.



photo: Youth Association creaCTive

Part B. Quality in EVS



Hopscotch to Quality in EVS¹⁵

The approach to quality in EVS in this publication could be presented as in the **Hopscotch model** below. It goes beyond effective project management and underlines *key quality aspects (and potential “crisis points”) within an EVS experience*. The following chapters deepen the understanding of each “quality step” by offering reflection points and practical strategies on how to ensure successful passing through the fields of the EVS hopscotch.



Key aspects of quality in EVS

¹⁵ The model of “Hopscotch to Quality” was originally developed for the SOHO training course programme by Darko Markovic, 2008.

Your Involvement in EVS as “Reflected Practice”



Perhaps, the story about ensuring quality in EVS starts even before you have really got involved in it. It starts with questions for (self)-reflection:

- Why do I and my organisation want to get involved in EVS?
- What are our values and principles that we would like to promote through EVS?
- How do we understand the aims and the concept of EVS?
- How is the concept of volunteering and voluntary service understood in our community and our country, in general?

Where do you stand?

Read the following statements and see whether you **agree more** or **disagree more** with each one:

- For volunteers, EVS is primarily a good preparation to get a better job.
- If there is no visible impact on the local community, you should stop organizing EVS.
- EVS is mainly about the individual learning of the volunteer.
- Even in a badly organised EVS, the volunteer can learn a lot.
- The main aim of EVS is to develop European citizens.

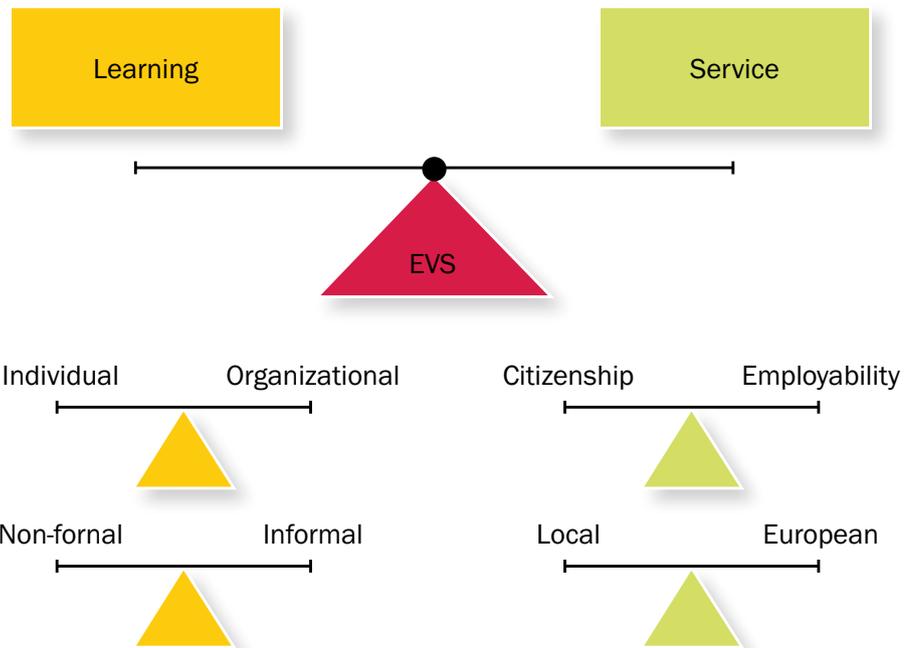
Answering the statements above might bring some additional clarity about your own approach to EVS, especially with your own values, principles and practices being reflected on. This will support you to become more communicative with your potential EVS partners. It can be a good idea to check your own understanding of EVS against the official principles laid down in the **EVS Charter**¹⁶ and exchanging your views with your potential EVS partners.

As you may see in the Charter, EVS is best understood and defined as a “**learning service**” and one of the main challenges of each EVS project is **how to reach the balance between those two aspects – ‘learning’ and ‘service’**.

Learning in EVS is mostly built into real life experience as well as actual volunteer activities. It must be clear that there is no set recipe as to whether this ratio should be at 50:50 or 55:45 or 40:60 or... In fact, this is very much influenced by your own and your partner’s understanding of EVS practice. Due to various reasons, your approaches could be similar or they could be very different, the latter in particular being potentially conflictual. So, let’s see the main “tensions” that often emerge and how they can be resolved in order to reach an agreed balance.

¹⁶ The European Voluntary Service Charter can be found in the Programme Guide

As shown in the picture below under the “learning dimension”, one of the key areas for misunderstanding in EVS is linked to the following questions: is it only about the learning of the volunteer or is it the organisations involved in EVS (particularly, Host Organisations), who learn something as well? If yes, what do they learn? And are they open for learning and for truly being a “learning organisation”?



EVS as a “learning service”

Another learning dilemma in EVS is linked to the understanding of the terms “informal” and “non-formal” learning¹⁷. In fact both of these aspects are present in the EVS learning experience. It is true that volunteers learn a lot informally by being immersed in their life experience abroad. However it is still important to ensure the non-formal learning dimension in EVS, which demands more of a planned and structured approach to learning from the organisations involved.

On the other side of this rocker, under the “service” aspect, it is important to check your own understanding of the reasons for voluntary service. Is it more about providing young people with relevant work experience and the learning of new skills and competences which will help them become more employable in the future? Or is it more about enabling young people to act as real active citizens, helping their own/other’s communities in dealing with important issues and problems?¹⁸

¹⁷ For more information see the chapter: “Support and Recognition of Learning in EVS” in this publication

¹⁸ For more information about history and reasons for voluntary service, take a look at sections 1.3 and 1.4 in the T-kit International Voluntary Service, p. 11-15



Finally, is it also a dilemma of “local vs. European”: is it more about working for the benefits of the local community in the host country or it is more about promotion of European values, identity and citizenship?

There are no “correct” answers to these dilemmas, but they are worthwhile thinking through and communicating your thoughts and beliefs to your partner organisations and your volunteers. **Having a dialogue about these aspects with your partners is a good way to avoid misunderstandings based on different values, concepts and motivation to get involved in EVS.**

Inclusion in EVS

Reflection exercise – selection of volunteers:

Imagine yourself being a representative of the Host Organisation who is about to select a volunteer for your EVS project. You have received two volunteer profiles:

- A 25-year old girl, just finished her studies in sociology, willing to have a year off to consider her future and gain some intercultural experience, has a good command of English and is very motivated to work in a social project.
- A 19-year old boy, who left school when he was 16, living in challenging neighbourhood in a suburb of a capital city, has interest in sports, but very basic English language competence, his main motivation is to get any useful skills which might help him in getting a job.

Who would you select? Why?

The simple dilemma in the exercise¹⁹ above tests us and raises many essential issues regarding our own approach to and understanding of EVS. Moreover, it hits the very heart of the core values and history of European Voluntary Service, as well touching the issue of inclusion as one of the main quality aspects in EVS.

“(Social) inclusion is the process by which efforts are made to ensure that everyone, regardless of their experiences and circumstances, can achieve their potential in life”.

- Edinburgh Youth Social Inclusion Partnership.

*“**Inclusion**, in practice, is an on-going **participative process** (a process that recognises that young people are the experts of their own lives, that empowers individuals to control the process and set the agenda according to their current circumstances) that equips **young people**, irrespective of age, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, belief, socio economic status or ability, with the skills, knowledge and opportunities necessary to **actively participate** (having the power and the opportunity to contribute, and having that contribution recognised and respected) as equal citizens at all levels of society...”*

- Going International – Opportunities for All, p.7-8, SALTO Inclusion RC.

¹⁹ Inspired by the exercise “Making the right match” from the SOHO training course.

In fact, back in the mid 90s, there were many mobility and voluntary exchange possibilities in Europe. However for most of these there were various requirements for participation – either a status (e.g. student), or certain level of professional expertise or a substantial participation fee. It was clear that these things were barriers for many young people to benefit from these opportunities. And that’s how a vision was born – to create a new voluntary exchange programme, which would be open for ALL young people, regardless of their social, economic or cultural background. Such a programme would provide young people with important non-formal learning opportunities. It would provide possibilities to gain important personal and professional competences, enabling them to get better integrated into society and the labour market. It would become a means of combating social exclusion and therefore one of the main priorities would be “inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities”. And that’s how EVS was created²⁰

Essentially, when speaking about EVS we should never forget the original inclusion idea, which is still the driving force and one of the main priorities of the Youth in Action Programme. Unfortunately, in reality, very often it is not the case that young people with fewer opportunities have priority in our EVS projects²¹. Sometimes, we select people who would be rather “easier cases” to manage or more useful “helping hands” in our organisation, and so fail to use the full potential of EVS as a tool to combat social exclusion. In fact, EVS is a powerful experience that can change lives, even in some cases the only opportunity for a positive change, to break the vicious circle of discrimination, and empower a young person to take an active role in his or her own life.

Who are “young people with fewer opportunities”?

Following the Programme Guide definition, “*Young people with fewer opportunities are young people that are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the situations and obstacles mentioned in the non-exhaustive list below. In certain contexts, these situations or obstacles prevent young people from having effective access to formal and non-formal education, trans-national mobility and participation, active citizenship, empowerment and inclusion in society at large*”²². The most common types of obstacles these young people face are: *social* (e.g. young people facing discrimination), *economic* (young people in long-term unemployment or poverty), *disability* (young people with mental or physical disabilities), *educational difficulties* (e.g. early school leavers), *cultural differences* (e.g. immigrants or refugees), *health problems* (e.g. young people with chronic health problems) and *geographical obstacles* (e.g. young people from remote or rural areas). For a detailed description of those, please consult the latest version of the Programme Guide.

Alen Murga from Livno, Bosnia Herzegovina, volunteered from June to December 2003 in Fürst Donnersmarck Haus in Berlin, Germany.

Alen worked and lived with disabled people. 128 persons live permanently in the Centre. His work started early in the morning. His tasks with the disabled people included waking them up, helping them to take a bath, dress and have breakfast, and also taking them outside for a walk in the street, in a park, or through the city.

Alen had not worked with disabled people before coming to the Fürst Donnersmarck Haus. Even though he felt a bit insecure in the beginning, he had a great time in the project and got along very well with the inhabitants and staff at the Centre. He felt that working with disabled people can be hard sometimes but is always rewarding.

Language was no problem for Alen who speaks German fluently. From 1992-1999 he had lived in Germany with his parents because of the war situation in Bosnia Herzegovina. The EVS programme was a good opportunity for him to come back to the country where he had spent most of his childhood and to do something useful at the same time.

The German team before Alen’s departure: “We all miss Alen, even before he is leaving Berlin tomorrow”

²⁰ For more information about the history of EVS, see the booklet “Use your Hands to Move Ahead”, published by SALTO Inclusion RC, it can be downloaded from: <http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusionforall/>

²¹ For example, in the YOUTH programme in 2003, only 19% of all EVS projects (long and short-term) involved young people with fewer opportunities: SALTO YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre. “Use Your Hands to Move Ahead”. 2006. Brussels. p 4.

²² European Commission. Youth in Action Programme Guide. 2009. p 5.



photo: Slavica Panova and Petra Pekovec

Inclusion measures in EVS

Apart from the general intention of the Youth in Action Programme to ensure that all the projects, including European Voluntary Service are open and accessible for all young people, there are a number of specific practical measures that can help project organisers in fulfilling this task. Specifically in EVS in the case of young people with fewer opportunities there are several “inclusion measures”:

- There is a possibility to organise shorter EVS activities (previously called “short-term EVS”), with a minimum of 2 weeks, which provide the possibility to make a tailor-made mobility opportunity, adequate to the needs and reality of any individual. Plus there is a possibility to take part in another EVS Activity within the total duration of 12 months.
- Following the specificities of the living realities of some young people, there is a possibility to take part in EVS from an earlier age – from the age of 16.
- There is a possibility to have an advance planning visit to the Host Organisation before the actual EVS Activity in order to ensure all the conditions for living, working and learning in EVS.
- The costs related to a reinforced mentorship for a young person with fewer opportunities can be covered and can include the preparation stage as well as the duration of the stay abroad.
- Justified exceptional costs related to the needs of a young person with fewer opportunities can be met, (e.g. additional health care, special premises or equipment, additional accompanying person, additional personal expenses in the case of economic disadvantage etc.)²³

²³ European Commission. Youth in Action Programme Guide. 2009. p 60.

Making our EVS projects more inclusive!

Clearly, working on enhanced inclusion in EVS we would certainly need a bit more careful planning and management and certainly more sensitivity and awareness. The following are recommendations from the “Inclusion Strategy of the Youth in Action Programme”²⁴ :

- An EVS project with young people with fewer opportunities should be **embedded in a process** before and after the actual project and not remain an isolated event.
- When preparing and implementing inclusion projects, particular emphasis needs to be put on the analysis of the profile and needs of the young people and a corresponding **tailor-made and supportive approach adopted**.
- Inclusion projects should focus on young people’s **competences** and aim at developing their **potential**, rather than focussing on deficits and problems.
- A **solid partnership** between the organisations and individual youth workers involved in a project should be established based on commonly agreed objectives, concepts and methods.
- Projects should possibly be implemented **in association** with other national, regional or local inclusion programmes and persons and institutions outside of the project context (family, school, etc.).
- The **step-by-step approach** should be encouraged for young people with fewer opportunities, for instance starting with a youth initiative or youth exchange, then continuing with the voluntary service, moving on from a short-term EVS to a long term EVS etc.

For more practical ideas about how to set up a step by step approach in working with young people with fewer opportunities in EVS, there are several practical booklets published by the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, e.g. “*Going International – Opportunities for All*”, “*Use Your Hands to Move Ahead*” etc.²⁵, there is also the booklet “*Get Involved*” about short-term EVS²⁶, as well as the inspirational booklet, “*Including all with the ‘Youth’ Programme*”, published by the European Commission²⁷.

Ruta from LITHUANIA was an EVS volunteer in Montenegro for 8 months in the youth NGOs ADP ZID and SOS IN MONTENEGRO

During her stay in Montenegro, Ruta had the opportunity to support the work of two NGO’s and work on different tasks and activities. In the summer period she was supporting the organisation of international camps for ADP ZID in Montenegro. She was assisting with the placement of young people from abroad, the organisation of workshops and the preparation of technical equipment. Ruta also took part in and learned from the programme.

She really liked this, as she says, learning through games, but also the more serious work she was involved in: “... Serious work for me started in the autumn; I think...I became more engaged with topics such as violence against women, human rights, equality, peace etc., because I faced it in practice. To make it clearer, I should probably say that I worked in an SOS hotline for women and girls, victims of violence. Although the profile of the work is quite stressful, it is meaningful to do, for sure”.

²⁴ European Commission. Inclusion Strategy of the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013). 2007. CJ/05/2007-2-EN.

²⁵ Inclusion booklets: <http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusionforall/>

²⁶ Get Involved. NA, Poland: http://www.youth.org.pl/s/p/artykuly/7/7/get_involved.pdf

²⁷ Including All with the Youth Programme: <http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusioninspiration/>

Quality in Partnership

Partners needed! Good partners needed! Good relations with partners needed!

When speaking about partnership in the framework of the Youth in Action Programme, it should be noted that it is not only important to find partners for your projects, but also to establish **strong, reliable and responsible relationships** with all sides of the project. This is also true about EVS projects. To recap, an EVS project is composed of a partnership between the volunteer(s) and the Sending, Host and Coordinating Organisations. All these actors involved in the project have specific tasks and responsibilities that should be completed. In addition, most of the tasks require communication and coordination among the partners. Thus, a high quality project can be reached only if good relations are established inside the partnership.

Who, where, what, how?

Who are eligible partners?

According to the rules of the Youth in Action Programme, a partner in an EVS project (Sending, Host or Coordinating Organisations) can be:

- a non profit/non-governmental organisation; or
- a local, regional public body; or
- a body active at European level in the youth field; or
- an international governmental organisation; or
- a profit-making organisation (only when it organises an event in the area of youth, sport or culture)

There are no restrictions regarding the type of partners you choose. For example, if you are preparing a project through your non-governmental organisation, you can still have a local public body as a project partner. It is up to you to find the partners you work with, you just have to respect the division between Programme and Partner Countries. EVS volunteers from Programme Countries can do their EVS placement in both Programme Countries and Partner Countries. Young people from Partner Countries (like the countries of South East Europe) can only be volunteers in Programme Countries. In practice this means that organisations from South-East Europe cannot exchange volunteers among themselves.

Alice Salza from Torino, Italy, was an EVS volunteer in the Volunteers' Centre Zagreb (VCZ) in Croatia.

Alice was involved in the project Human Rights Messengers, organised together with SCI Gate. She was working in a team in the summer work camps of VCZ that was running workshops and doing other work related to human rights education. She also helped to prepare a publication about non-formal education and human rights issues.

"According to my tasks", she says, "I had the chance to travel a lot, and for me this was a great opportunity to discover different places, to get to know many people. I enjoyed this aspect of my work a lot!"

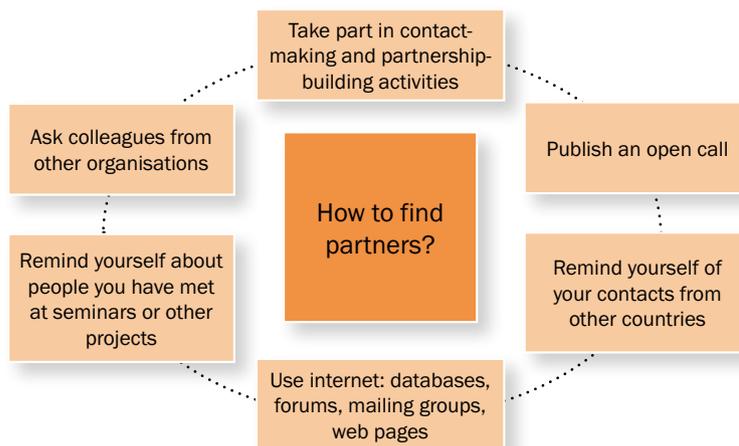
When it comes to potential volunteers, you only need to remember that the Programme is open to all young people aged 18 to 30, regardless of their social, cultural, educational or economic background.

Of course, when you are identifying organisations and volunteers to do a project with, you should keep in mind your expectations, the project theme, the organisations' profile, the volunteers' interests and many other important factors. It is really a challenge to find the right partners and volunteers for the right project.

Where to find partners?

There are a number of ways in which partners can be found for an EVS project. There are also differences in the order in which the partnership can be established. Sometimes the Sending Organisation contacts Host Organisations regarding potential EVS projects. In other cases the volunteer gets in touch with a Sending Organisation, which then looks for an available Host Organisation. Sometimes the volunteer finds a Host Organisation by themselves, and then looks for a Sending Organisation.

In general, the best way to find a partner organisation is to check the **official database of accredited EVS organisations, managed by the European Commission**. There you can search for EVS projects according to various criteria, including topic, country, project length and similar. The database is especially convenient for young people interested in EVS, because using it they can access all EVS projects online. Your organisation will also be added to this database as soon as your EVS project is accredited.



How to find partners for EVS projects

However, you may also choose another approach when looking for partners. If you have taken part in any international projects in the past, you can always contact the people you have met there. If you have not participated in any, maybe some of the members of your organisation have? Practices of various organisations show that contacting colleagues from other countries that you already know may be of great use. Even if they do not work with Host/Sending Organisations, they might be able to recommend you a reliable organisation from their country. Thus, it is strongly recommended to take part in international projects or events organised by various organisations, National Agencies or by SALTO-YOUTH SEE Resources Centre; especially in ones that are aimed at contact-making and partnership-building.

Modern trends

In recent times, organisations are becoming more creative in **using the internet to find project partners**. At this time there are a large number of Yahoo/Google mailing groups, web pages and Facebook groups devoted to the presentation of projects and searching for interested organisations and volunteers. SALTO SEE has launched an online Forum for finding partners for Youth in Action projects. In addition, you can also sign-up to the SALTO SEE's online newsletter in order to receive announcements about various projects and events organised by SALTO or by other actors in the field.

Nevertheless, it is important to be careful when selecting partners through the internet. If you do not know the organisation personally, it is always useful to check their web page or to ask for references regarding their work.

What do partners do?

The list of tasks that organisations have in the process of implementing EVS projects depends on the role that they take. Sending, Host and Coordinating Organisations have many tasks in common, but they also have a number of different tasks and responsibilities.

To help you in understanding the order of tasks and the usual division of responsibilities between the partners in an EVS project, we are including an example of a project. In this example, a volunteer from a Programme Country is sent by their **Sending Organisation** for an EVS service in South-East Europe. The project was applied for by the **Host Organisation** to the Executive Agency in Brussels. Consequently, **the Host Organisation takes over the role of Coordinating Organisation for the project**.

Zoran Misovski from Struga, Macedonia, was an EVS volunteer in Spain

Zoran's host organisation was the Youth Service of Murcia in Spain, where he was volunteering in the Youth Department of the Municipality of Murcia.

He explains: "The most important (part of my stay) was my work in the Municipality. I learned a lot about how to work successfully with youth on local level. Now, within our process of decentralization in Macedonia, I use this experience together with my organisation to lobby for the creation of local youth policies." Zoran and his organisation, Youth Forum EYE, are now involved in the promotion of the Local Youth Action Plan, together with the Municipality of Struga.

"During my stay in Spain I met a lot of interesting people and made a lot of friends. Very exciting for me was my meeting with the Spanish crown prince", says Zoran.

Important to remember: This example includes only one EVS Activity, one volunteer, and one Host and Sending Organisation. It shows just one possible scenario for the division of tasks, it is not necessarily always like this. This example also assumes that the initiative for this project was taken by the volunteer, who contacted the Sending Organisation regarding potential EVS Host Organisations in South-East Europe. We already mentioned that it is possible for the Sending and Host Organisations to establish a partnership themselves and to identify a volunteer afterwards.

Before the EVS service starts:

- The **Sending Organisation** provides the volunteer with detailed information about EVS
- The **Sending Organisation** supports the EVS volunteer in finding and contacting potential Host Organisations
- At the same time, the **Host Organisation** prepares the task description for the volunteer, and undertakes a process of volunteer selection
- After the volunteer is selected by the Host Organisation and the partnership is established, the **Host Organisation** starts a process of preparation for the project application form. The Sending Organisation is also expected to get involved in this process
- The **Host Organisation** facilitates the process of creating an Activity Agreement together with the Sending Organisation, which also makes sure that the volunteer is involved in this process
- The **Sending Organisation** prepares the volunteer before departure for the EVS service
- The **Host Organisation** initiates a number of activities to prepare itself for hosting, particularly regarding the practical aspects of the project
- Together with the Sending Organisation, the **Host Organisation** ensures that the volunteer is covered by the obligatory EVS insurance
- The **Sending Organisation** assists the volunteer in the procedure for getting a visa/residence permit
- The **Sending Organisation** makes sure that the volunteer participates in pre-departure training in the home country

During the EVS service:

- The **Host Organisation** takes care of the following aspects:
 - Organises all practical issues regarding the project
 - Coordinates and implements the activities during the EVS project
 - Provides the volunteer with personal, task-oriented, and language support
 - Ensures the volunteer's participation in the on-arrival and mid-term trainings
- The **Sending Organisation** keeps in contact with the volunteer and the Host

Matea from Slovenia was a volunteer in Belgrade

“As I said before, there are the 12 of us in “Hajde da...”, but having Matea was like having one more member in the organisation.”, recalls Jelena from the team of “Hajde da...”, a youth NGO from Belgrade.

Matea was part of the team preparing, implementing and evaluating a Youth Summer Camp and its follow-up activities. She participated in the creation and implementation of the programme for a presentation of an animated TV serial for children and others, called “Down With Injustice!” She helped with preparing materials for the International NGO fair which took place in Novi Sad, in December 2004, where she was also part of the team representing “Hajde da...”

The team of “Hajde da...” happily announces: “Matea initiated the idea of a future Action 3.1 project – a youth exchange which should take place next summer in Greece, she developed it with some of us. Now we are waiting for an answer from the Greek National Youth in Action Agency. Hopefully, it’ll be positive, as we all look forward to working with Matea again!”

Organisation. In case there are certain difficulties the Sending Organisation is required to take part in the resolving of the issue

After the EVS service:

- The **Host Organisation** prepares the final report for the project, together with the volunteer
- The **Sending Organisation** ensures the volunteer's participation in the final evaluation of the EVS project
- The **Sending Organisation** supports the volunteer in re-integrating back into their society
- The **Sending Organisation** offers a possibility for the volunteer to develop activities in their home country with the purpose of sharing their experiences and for the dissemination of the results of the EVS project

In general:

- The **Host Organisation** takes the role of Coordinating Organisation, and therefore has responsibility for the following aspects:
 - Financial and administrative responsibility for the project to the Executive Agency
 - Coordinates the project in cooperation with the Sending Organisation
 - Distributes the EVS grant according to the signed Activity Agreement
 - Together with the volunteer and with the Sending Organisation, it completes and issues the Youthpass certificate for the volunteer²⁸

How to build quality partnership in EVS

Establishing a good relationship with your partners is not an easy task, especially when most of the communication is done by e-mail or phone. It is difficult to trust and rely on somebody you have never personally met, but in most cases this is essential in order to implement international projects. Usually you do not have the funds needed to travel and meet the potential partners. (It is possible to ask for additional expenses for this purpose, which is done when applying for a project that includes volunteers with fewer opportunities.) Thus, you have to build a **long-distance high quality partnership**. To help yourself with this, try to follow these guidelines:

- Establish open and honest communication from the beginning. Do not over-exaggerate your work, capacities or working plans
- Be realistic about the description of your host project, or about the profiles of the interested EVS volunteers
- Agree about the rules and principles for cooperation. Do not make changes without consultation

²⁸For more information see section "Support and Recognition of Learning in EVS".

- Complete your tasks on time, and share information about the results
- Respect the agreed deadlines
- Be efficient in your communication. Try to answer e-mails immediately and be available all the time
- If possible call your partner(s) - using phone, Skype, Messenger or other communication tools
- Regularly check the situation and coordinate with each other about any common tasks
- Provide your partner(s) with support and assistance. It is not possible that everyone knows everything
- Stay motivated about the project

There was something called an...

Activity Agreement

The Activity Agreement is a document that is prepared and signed in original by all sides involved in the EVS project – all organisations and volunteer(s). **It is aimed at ensuring a solid partnership among the promoters and volunteers in each EVS Activity.**

The Activity Agreement formalizes the distribution of rights and responsibilities for all sides. It also lays down the tasks, working hours, practical arrangements, and the expected learning process and learning objectives of the volunteer(s).

Usually it is not necessary to send the Activity Agreement together with the project application form, though you may do so. If signed later, it must be sent at the latest 6 weeks before the start of the EVS Activity.

All sides should be involved in the preparation of the Activity Agreement and should agree about its content. In case of any substantial changes, all sides should sign and submit a revised Activity Agreement. In case of doubt, the criteria and rules of EVS (as set by the Youth in Action Programme Guide) should prevail over any arrangements in the Activity Agreement.

In Appendix 5d) of this handbook you can find the list of minimum requirements when preparing the Activity Agreement with your partners.

24 year-old Jelena Ilic from Serbia participated as an EVS volunteer in the Polish youth association Semper Avanti from Wroclaw.

Jelena joined a big team of local and international volunteers preparing international youth cultural events and manifestations. She was involved in the preparation of a big multicultural event, the St. John's Parade and performance in the city of Gdynia in Poland, on the Baltic Sea coast. She worked together with almost 100 young artists from 7 countries. She took part in the different workshops, publicity, 2 big parades, 3 concerts...

"Girls who are not married make flower crowns to find out if they will get married this year. They throw them on trees, and the times they need to make the crown stay on the tree indicates in how many years they will get married", explains Jelena. From the Polish Slavic tradition.

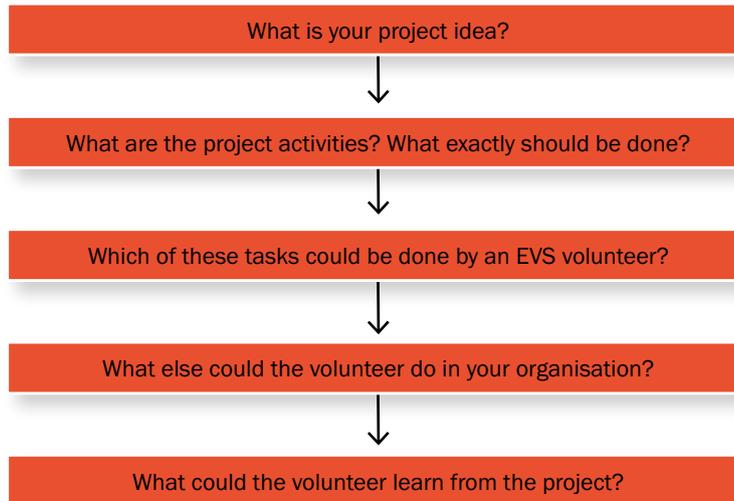
Her task was to help in the preparation of workshops, prepare information materials for the young artists coming from other European countries, divide them into rooms, show the surroundings to them, and be their guide and first contact person. "At the beginning, for a moment, I was worried how, in which way, people from all these countries will make something new. They brought lot of recognizable cultural things (music, national dances). For a few days they created almost complete new surroundings and offered it to the audience. It was really amazing to follow their preparations and to give them technical and emotional support", says Jelena.

What to do with your partners

Task description

A couple of months ago you were drinking coffee in your favourite café when an old friend entered and joined you at the table. Talking about work and life in general, he introduced you to EVS – a European programme for the volunteering of young people. In the period that followed you talked about this programme with your colleagues, you found more information, analyzed the current work and future plans of your organisation and concluded that you would like to start hosting volunteers. Now, that you have the motivation, the next thing to do is to start creating the task description for the volunteer.

To start with, try to answer these questions:



Now try to define what the exact tasks of the volunteer in your organisation would be. How do you envision the EVS project? How do you imagine the volunteer's involvement in the project?

A common mistake that organisations make when preparing the task description is to take the organisation's needs as a starting point for planning. This approach

is not right, as it is not focused on providing the volunteer with well planned working and learning experiences, but rather on simply providing the organisation with another staff member. **EVS is not a programme created to support the organisations when they need employees that they cannot pay for.** At the other end of the scale is another mistake that organisations make – not providing the volunteer with any tasks at all.

To avoid making such errors before even applying for an EVS project, try to keep in mind the following guidelines while creating the task description:

- The volunteer should not replace paid staff
- The volunteer's tasks should not include too much administrative work
- Try to create as detailed a task description as possible, containing concrete tasks and practical examples. It is also required to create daily and weekly timetables of proposed activities
- Try to present the task distribution using percentages – for example 30% of the time on preparing and implementing workshops, 20% on promotional activities etc
- Volunteer's ideas and initiatives should be welcomed
- Try to make a balance between the service and learning dimension of your project. On one hand, volunteer's activities should be linked to the local community and to concrete project activities, while on the other they should provide sufficient learning opportunities

Planning the task description is something that you do when you are preparing the Expression of Interest. It is then revised and detailed when making the project application and finally defined after the volunteer is selected. There should be constant communication among the project partners during the process, and the volunteer's specific needs, experiences and ideas should be included in the last stage.

After your project has been approved, your EVS volunteer selected, and the task description completed, try to ask yourself the following questions before starting the project activities:

- Is the task description realistic?
- Does it correspond to the volunteer's needs, knowledge and experiences?
- Who will work together with the volunteer on this project?
- What kind of training and task-oriented support should be provided to the volunteer? How and by whom?
- Are there any specific resources or working conditions that should be provided?

At the end, feel free to make further changes and adaptations together with the volunteer.



Edith Ginouvier from France was a volunteer in YCS YMCA Macedonia in Skopje.

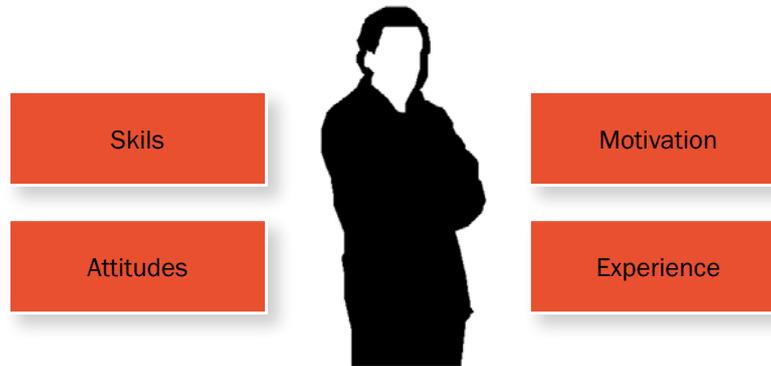
Edith worked on the YCS YMCA Macedonia project for help and relief of refugees living in the Prespa region in the Southwest of Macedonia. These 52 families, around 140 people, live in a former hostel situated by the Prespa Lake. They are ethnic Macedonians from Albania who had to leave the country at the beginning of the Nineties because of the political and economic problems they were facing. Most of them have been in Prespa-Macedonia for over ten years, but their living conditions are still very difficult and have not really improved during all this time. Although they finally received Macedonian citizenship in 2004, they do not have anything to start a new life as Macedonian citizens.

Edith was working with a group of local and international volunteers of YCS YMCA Macedonia on raising awareness in Skopje and Macedonia as a whole, especially among young people, of the hard living conditions of the people of this local community. They organised humanitarian actions in cooperation with the local authorities of Skopje and Resen and the business sector of Macedonia. On different occasions, they brought clothing, food and other supplies, spent time with the people and played with the children.

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Selection of a volunteer

Before you continue reading this text, spend a few minutes reflecting on the profile of volunteers that you would like to have in your organisation. Focus on the skills, attitudes, motivation and past experiences that the volunteer should possess.



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Edith thinks that the most important aspect was the personal contact with the people: “In addition to bringing clothes we had the possibility to have a longer talk with some of the people living there and to ask them questions about their background, their situation here in Macedonia, and their feelings and hopes for the future. This part of the action was without doubt the most interesting one, since it allowed us to discover their situation more deeply and to establish a real relationship with them. And it certainly also was an important moment for them since, as a man I interviewed explained to me, it’s very rare that somebody actually asks about and listens to their story and situation here, although they have a lot of things to say about it.”

Having a clear task description and desired volunteer profile, the Sending Organisation for your project can now start recruiting volunteers. It is best if the process of selecting a volunteer is done together with your partner. However, sometimes it happens that the Host Organisation is contacted directly by interested volunteers. Even in these cases, the partnership has to be established with a Sending Organisation from the volunteer’s country, and a Coordinating Organisation has to be defined before the project application is made. However, selecting the volunteer is not directly linked with submitting the application form. **Volunteers can be selected either before or after the project has been applied for. Please Note:** The National Agencies have different rules about this issue and thus it is better always to consult before applying.

It is important that the volunteer you select shows interest in your project, the volunteer’s background and experiences should correspond to the project theme. To assure this the Host Organisations usually use application forms for interested candidates. There is no official application form for volunteers, you can create your own or use one that is already used by other organisations. An example of such a volunteer application form can be found in Appendix 5a). Besides application forms, it is also common to ask for a CV and motivation letter, or to interview the interested candidates by phone. Such a selection process should



result in the selection of a volunteer that would be suitable for your EVS project.

There are two important things to remember when selecting EVS volunteers:

1. Remain realistic with the expectations
2. Be open for volunteers with different backgrounds

One of the basic characteristics of the Youth in Action Programme is that it is open to all young people. This means that you should be inclusive in the process of selection and not set overly high requirements for potential volunteers. The idea of selecting EVS volunteers is not to look for the perfect candidate who would be able to implement a great project by themselves, but to choose an interested young person who would be able to contribute to the project – and also learn from it. Thus, it is neither realistic, nor according to the programme's ideals, to look for a youth worker with 5 years of experience who would come to train your young members and develop your organisation. As a Host Organisation, you are required to be ready to provide the volunteer with task oriented support and training according to the volunteer's needs and projects requirements. Normally, both sides would learn from this process, particularly in the context of sharing knowledge, experiences and ideas.

photo: Grupa "Hajde da..."



Katharina Dieckmann from Germany was an EVS volunteer in the small village of Kuterevo in the Velebit Mountains in Croatia.

The village has 600 inhabitants. It is located in a valley surrounded by beautiful nature and forests. This natural environment has been used for a sanctuary of bear orphans. By means of village and mountain tourism, the small community is making efforts to sustain this small and isolated village, and at the same time, this is the only home for a number of bear orphans.

Together with a local team of professionals and volunteers, Katharina helped in the work of this unique ecological environment, supporting the needs and efforts and making friends with both local people and bears.

“One day, I worked together with my supervisor inside the fence of Mrnjo Brundo, the “big bear”. And Mrnjo Brundo came and wanted something from me. I said to him “rik” (go back) together with some strong movements, and he went back. It was fascinating... My work was never boring, there was always something new. Especially during the summer time, when I guided the visitors to see the bears.”

What to do at home

Practical arrangements

To host an EVS volunteer means to face a lot of issues of a practical nature and to respond by creating solutions that are at the same time affordable and of good quality. Sometimes this is not an easy job and you need to be conscious about it when applying for the project. Accommodation, visa or a language course, are not tasks that can be arranged in a couple of days. They are part of a longer process of preparation that starts well before the volunteer arrives.

Visa and residence permit

Before arranging other practical issues, make sure that you launch the procedures related to obtaining a visa or residence permit for the volunteer. Sometimes these administrative procedures are simple and do not require much time, but it often happens that various documents need to be provided, which prolong the time it takes to obtain the right visa or residence permit.

Both the Sending and Host Organisation are responsible for this part of the preparation, though the promoter that acts as the Coordinating Organisation has a particularly significant role. The EVS volunteer should be provided with all the necessary information, assistance and supporting documents needed for obtaining the visa/residence permit. If needed, the National/Executive Agency can also get involved by providing supporting documents.

Regulations concerning visa and residence permits vary from country to country.

Thus, it is necessary to contact the host country’s embassy regarding the specific rules, procedures and required documents. Embassy web pages are not always up to date, in most cases right information can be received by phone or e-mail. It is also recommended to contact relevant institutions within the hosting country as sometimes they can provide more accurate information.

In general, you should plan a considerable amount of time for obtaining visa and residence permits. You should also take into consideration the time needed for any supporting documents to arrive by post – such as the Invitation Letter. An Invitation Letter is a document prepared by the Host/Coordinating Organisation, which describes the project and the reasons for inviting the volunteer. An example of such a letter can be found in Appendix 5b) of this publication.



It makes a difference if the volunteer is going on an EVS project from a Programme country to South East Europe or vice versa.

- Nationals of Youth in Action Programme countries in most cases do not need a visa to enter any of the countries of South East Europe as tourists. **They do need a residence permit** if they want to stay for a longer period (usually more than three months) and do a voluntary service. The countries in South East Europe have different laws on volunteerism and specific procedures for issuing the residence permits. In some of them international volunteerism is not defined well (or even at all) by the legal system. It is strongly advised that you check the local regulations and contact the national authorities in charge of this issue (usually the Ministry of Internal Affairs).
- Nationals of most South East European countries are required to obtain a visa in order to do their voluntary service in a Programme country. Since the visa is usually for a long period of time and for a reason that is not tourist travel, procedures are much longer, visa expenses are higher, and more documents are required. In many cases the whole visa procedure is completed by the authorities in the host country. It is always recommended that you check all details related to the procedures before even applying for the project. Plan a considerable amount of time for the obtaining of a visa – even a month or two!

Pablo Respaldiza from Bilbao, Spain, was a EVS volunteer in the small town of Prozor in the Rama region of Herzegovina, the southern part of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the war and since 1998, the Mayor and the pre-war Bosnian population of Prozor have come back to their homes. Not everyone. Some still live in other towns, and other people that are not born in Prozor live there instead. The population of the town is about 60 % Bosnian Croats and 40 % Bosniaks.

“Ten years after the end of the war the situation in the town is very bad. The town is totally divided between the two ethnic groups. The town infrastructure really supports this division. There is only one street, and that street is the line that divides the people of the town”, says Pablo: “There are also two different educational systems, Croatian and Bosnian. The children are going to the school at different times. One ethnic group of children goes to school at 8 am; the others go at 1 pm. This makes the situation in the town even worse, because the kids of the same age in such a small town don’t spend any time together. They don’t play together; they don’t learn together, they don’t live together...” Pablo was involved in organizing many youth activities, such as photo workshops and theatre plays, aiming to bring together the two ethnic groups.

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Insurance

Through an agreement that the European Commission has reached with an insurance company, all EVS volunteers are insured for the whole duration of their EVS project. The insurance policy is the same for all volunteers and it covers illness, accident, death, permanent disability, loss of identification and travel documents and other risks as described in the policy itself.

All insurance costs are paid directly by the European Commission and are not included in the project budgets. The Sending Organisation is responsible for sending the volunteer’s details to the insurance company. The procedure for doing this is rather simple and short. It is completed online, using the official web page. To log in, you have a user name and password which is provided to the Coordinating Organisation when the project is approved. The web page for making the insurance claim is: <http://www.europeanbenefits.com/> (then click on European Voluntary Service on the right side of the home page).

With this insurance, the volunteer is able to use the health care system in the host country. When visiting a doctor or buying medicine the volunteer or the Host Organisation usually cover all the expenses and then receive full reimbursement – upon presentation of the original bills/invoices. For any specific questions on how to use the insurance you should directly contact the insurance company. Support by phone is available 24 hours a day.

Accommodation and food

The Youth in Action Programme Guide does not contain specific guidelines regarding a volunteer’s accommodation. The EVS Charter states that **the Host Organisation “has to ensure safe and decent living and working conditions for the volunteer”** but it does not go into details about the type of accommodation. Thus, when talking about general standards we usually refer to the “common sense” and we take the living standard of students in the country as a “minimum requirement” for the quality of living conditions for volunteers.

There are a variety of ways in which accommodation and food can be managed. Which option you will choose depends very much on the host’s environment, though it has to be taken into consideration that the final decision should be made in consultation with all the project partners.

The most common example of addressing this issue in South East Europe is by accommodating the volunteer in a rented apartment or part of a house. This is particularly used when the organisation hosts more than one volunteer at a time. Sometimes volunteers are hosted in local families, and more rarely in an organisation’s own facilities. Student dormitories are used as an option as well. Consequently, volunteers either prepare food by themselves (using monthly food

allowance) or they receive meals in the family, dormitory or other institution that the organisation cooperates with.

When thinking about possible accommodation options that you could use for your volunteer, always take into consideration all the positive and negative sides of each option. Using a local family would definitely support the volunteer's integration into the local environment, but it would not guarantee privacy or independence. Using an organisation's own facilities might be very cheap and convenient, but would probably not provide a clear distinction between the volunteer's living and working environment. Though apartments sometimes might be more expensive, they would probably provide the volunteer with the greatest living conditions, their own bathroom and kitchen as well as protected privacy.

Ultimately it is up to you and your partners to decide about the type of accommodation. Just remember that when you are signing the contract you are not providing accommodation to a friend for a couple of days, but to a team member of your organisation for the next months, or even a year.

Local transport

As Host Organisation, you are obliged to ensure that means of local transportation are available to the volunteer. The implementation of this task depends very much on the local context – the living and project environment of the volunteer. In general, this means that the volunteer should be able to use the local bus, tram, metro or other means of transportation to travel from home to the working place and back again. Sometimes the use of a bicycle is more convenient for both the volunteer and the Host Organisation and so it can be considered as the means of local transport.

Language training

Language support is one of the four types of support provided to the volunteer during an EVS project. **The Host Organisation is expected to arrange language training for the volunteer.** There is no specific rule about its format, duration or frequency. It will vary depending on the volunteer's needs, interest and abilities as well as the capacities of the Host Organisation.

Some organisations decide to involve the volunteer in courses organised in language schools, while others hire teachers to work with the volunteers. The latter option is particularly convenient if the organisation hosts more than one volunteer at the same time. In case you do not have enough funds to pay for a language teacher, you can always contact students of languages in their last years at faculty. This sometimes works really well since there are many students interested in practicing their skills or wanting to do an internship before looking for a job.

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“After the summer we thought it would be a good idea to organise a language course for the people of the town. The idea was a Spanish course with a book from which they could learn also English. The aim was to put Croats and Bosnians in the same classroom, as their education system doesn't allow them this. Their age was not important. What was important was that all the children were together... We succeeded in recruiting 70 people from Prozor and other places in the Rama region.

Preparing the environment

Step one: The people

Between signing the contract for the volunteer's accommodation and checking the possibilities for organising language training, it might be useful to ask yourself the following question: **Have you informed the others about the EVS volunteer?** Now you would probably ask: "But who are 'the others'?" 'The others' refers to everyone in your organisation and beyond who will come into contact with the volunteer through their work.

Let's start with the **team members of your organisation**. Probably, besides you, there are other people who work in the organisation – as employees or as volunteers. These are the people that will be the EVS volunteer's most common company, at least during the starting period of the EVS project. It is very important that you inform them about the new team member and even more important is to prepare them for cooperating and co-existing with a person from another country. At this point, it is important to reflect about the past experiences and competences of your colleagues. Have they ever worked in a multicultural team before? Have they been involved in a process of intercultural learning? How much do they know about other cultures? Do they have any prejudices about the country where the volunteer comes from? Do they speak English? Finally, would they be happy or not that an EVS volunteer is joining your organisation?

It should not be difficult to prepare your organisation for the volunteer's arrival. Getting an EVS volunteer is usually an exciting event that offers unique and extra-ordinary learning experiences for the whole team. It is a real pity if the organisation does not use it.

It is up to you to decide who else you would inform about the volunteer. Still, do not forget to talk to the **young members of your organisation** – they might be very excited about a volunteer's arrival and could be of great use for integrating the volunteer into the local community. Also, do not forget the people from any important **partner organisation or institution**. If the volunteer is to have roommates, talk to them before the volunteer's arrival. At the end, inform the **neighbours**, all important friends and anyone whom the volunteer would probably meet in the near future. This will help you to provide a safe and welcoming environment for someone who comes to live in your community.

And think even broader – is it important that the **local community** is informed about the volunteer? Again, this very much depends on your own local reality. If the EVS project is based in a big city, then there is not much sense in informing the local community – apart from perhaps the closest neighbourhood. But arrival



photo: Mladinski center Brežice

of a foreign volunteer might be a big event for a smaller town or a village. In such situations, informing everyone about the volunteer's arrival would be useful not only for the community, but also for your organisation and the volunteer. Think about creative ways of doing it – organising informative meetings with the local population, preparing an event for them (presentation, party...), distributing promotional materials or anything else that you find suitable for the community.

Step two: The project

From the moment you get the idea to host EVS volunteers until the first volunteer arrives, the project activities should be planned a couple of times and on different levels. At each subsequent stage, the activities should be made more concrete and more adapted to the volunteer's needs and interests. Project planning starts when you submit the Expression of Interest, continues with the preparing of the application form and goes into deeper details when you select the volunteer and prepare the task description.

It is difficult to imagine that big changes might happen after such a thorough process of planning. Nevertheless, there are many factors that influence the EVS project and some of them are out of your control. In some situations, the volunteer arrives much later than was initially planned. Therefore **it is of crucial importance to check and re-plan the project before the arrival day.**

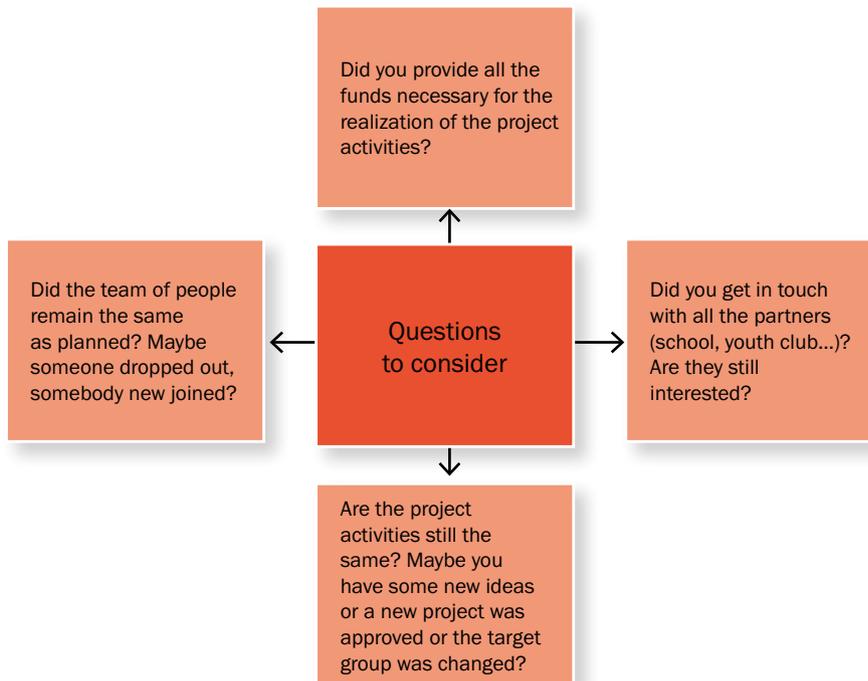




photo: Miladinski center Brežice

When preparing the project, don't forget about the **target group** – the people that you work with. For any project participants it is usually important if a new member joins the project team, especially if the one is from another country. It might be useful to ask yourself how much the target group knows about different cultures, what their level of tolerance is and what would be useful for them to know. Then you can make your own strategy for preparing them, which will depend on the profile of people involved in your project.

Step three: The supporting system

While getting ready to host, it is essential to establish the supporting system for the EVS volunteer. Providing support to the volunteer (on a few different levels) is mainly the responsibility of the Host Organisation. The system of support should be provided and well structured before the volunteer arrives, like a **safety net for the young person coming to work on a project in an unknown environment**.

More detailed information about the supporting systems that you should provide and about the people who should be involved in them are contained in the section “The Support System Around the EVS Volunteer” in this publication.

EVS project – Day Number 1

Your first EVS volunteer is arriving tomorrow. We assume that you have already arranged the practical issues, such as visa, accommodation and local transport. You have also identified a mentor and found a language teacher. Your staff team is ready for the new team member, the project is already functioning and everything seems to be in order for this challenge. But is there anything else you need to plan?

The first day of the EVS project is an event of extra-ordinary importance for the volunteer. Consequently, volunteers expect that this day is also very important for the Host Organisation and all team members are very excited about it. Thus, if the volunteer's arrival is not treated with enough attention, the volunteer might get the impression that the organisation does not care much about him or her. Very often volunteers leave home with an expectation that everyone in the Host Organisation is just sitting and impatiently waiting for their arrival. However, they soon realize that each organisation has its own life and not everything stops because they are starting their EVS service. But why shouldn't you provide them with a warm welcome? **So forget about your other duties tomorrow and plan the first day for your volunteer!**

Here is a list of what you might plan for your volunteer's first day:

- Double-check the volunteer's arrival time and make sure that there is somebody from the organisation to pick up the volunteer at the airport or bus/train station. Such first contact in the new environment provides the volunteer with a feeling of safety
- Spend some time introducing the volunteer to their new environment, place of living, neighbourhood, nearest shop, organisations office and anything else you think is important
- Think about the people that will work the closest with the volunteer. Take them out for a drink or lunch together with the volunteer
- Buy a local mobile phone number for the volunteer
- Organise a welcome party – if you see that the volunteer is not too tired

Questions to consider after the first day:

- How much time is enough for the volunteer just to “hang around” and discover the new environment?
- When to start with the project activities?
- When to start with the language course?
- How will you introduce the volunteer to the project?

EVS project – the days to follow

Many EVS volunteers in South East Europe complain that their organisation's approach to doing things is too slow. This impression especially refers to the first few weeks of EVS projects. It is at this time that the volunteer's expectations for a dynamic and exciting life in a new culture are faced with the organisation's tendencies to plan, react and do things rather slowly.

A common misperception of Host Organisations is that the volunteer would love to spend the first few weeks just relaxing, meeting new people and enjoying life. Very often they do not introduce the volunteer to the actual project and do not provide them with activities. But **EVS volunteers want to be busy** – especially in the first period after arrival; they have changed their living environment and they are starting a new part of their life without old friends, obligations and habits. This is why you should not wait too long before you involve the volunteer in the project activities. After all, don't forget that the EVS project is not a holiday or just exploring a new culture. Assuming that the volunteer would prefer to just “hang around” in the new environment is not only a misperception of the volunteer's needs and expectations, but it is also a misunderstanding of EVS and of the Youth in Action Programme in general.

Another mistake of organisations is that sometimes they wait too long to start with the language course. If they are hosting more than one volunteer in approximately the same period of time, usually they wait for all the volunteers to arrive before they start the language course. Though this might be more convenient for the organisation, you should also have in mind that **for the volunteer it is very important to start learning the local language as soon as possible**. Even if you are planning to start a common language course with one teacher for all the volunteers, you should think on providing at least basic classes for the volunteer who arrives first.

Beginnings are never easy. This is also true for the EVS service. Probably much of your time and energy will be consumed during the first few weeks of the project with all of these issues and the problems that arise from them. But with time, the volunteer will become more independent and will get used to the team, project and environment. You can then expect greater productivity from the volunteer and success of the project.

To do at the beginning of the EVS project:

- Introduce the volunteer with the project environment, target group and planned activities
- Make sure that the volunteer receives enough personal support by the mentor and the other members of your organisation
- Assign a person to work with the volunteer
- Make sure that the volunteer is not left alone during the working day
- Involve the volunteer in the current activities of the project
- Give a chance to the volunteer to start implementing simpler tasks and project activities on their own
- Invite the volunteer to take part in other activities of the organisation
- In short, make the volunteer feel like a part of your team!

The Support System Around the EVS Volunteer

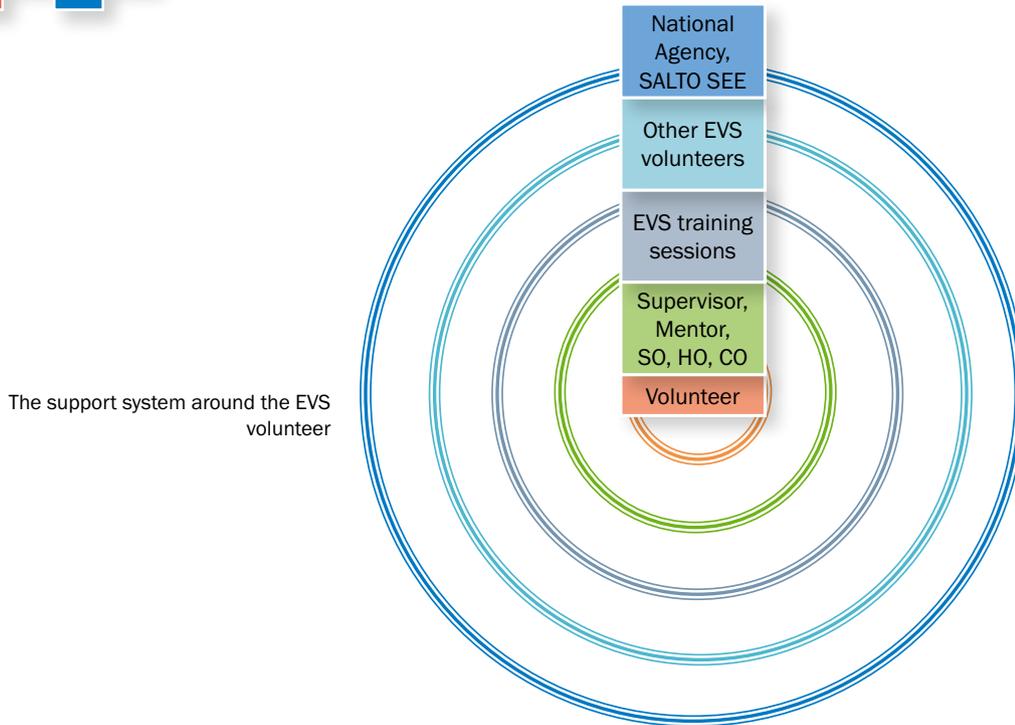


There is a considerable amount of challenge for each volunteer in any EVS project. This is linked to integration into a new working environment, adapting to new living conditions, getting familiar with the local community and foreign culture, typical lack of understanding of the host country language, etc. In addition to that there are many personal challenges and issues a volunteer needs to deal with. These include; leaving home, having a break from their “regular life”, missing friends and family, own fears and uncertainties, and the stereotypes and prejudices they bring with them.

It is clear that to ensure the proper integration and a quality “learning service” there is a considerable amount of support needed (see table below).

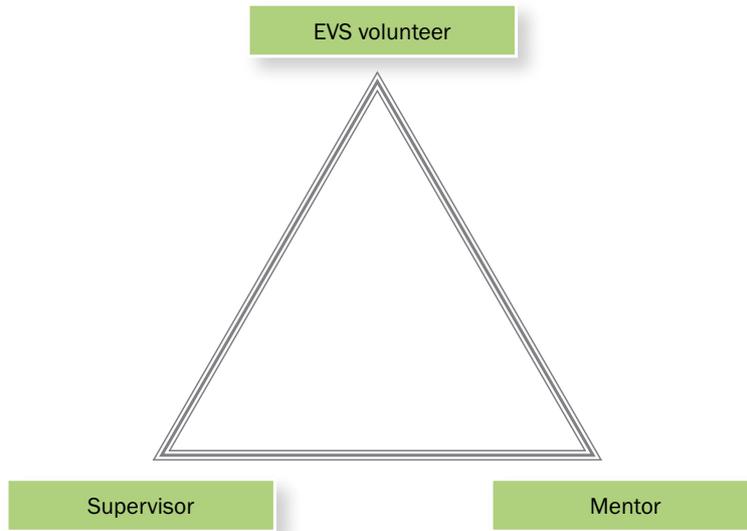
Dimensions of volunteer support – responsibility of Host Organisation	
Task related support	The Host Organisation is responsible for providing volunteers with adequate training and support in relation to the volunteers' tasks. Persons who are familiar with these tasks should guide them. Regular private meetings with the volunteer and the project supervisor should be ensured.
EVS training	The Host Organisation is responsible for sending the volunteers to an on-arrival training session and mid-term evaluation. (The Sending Organisation is responsible for ensuring pre-departure training and a final evaluation meeting.)
Linguistic support	The Host Organisation is (mainly) responsible for arranging language learning opportunities. The format, duration and frequency of this training can vary depending on the volunteers' needs and abilities, their tasks in the Host Organisation and the capacity of the Host Organisation. Language training must be free of charge for the volunteers and be included in the regular working time.
Intercultural learning support	The Host Organisation should be prepared, sensitive and aware of the intercultural challenges the volunteers might be facing when experiencing the host culture (people's communication patterns, attitudes, beliefs, values etc.). There should be enough safe space for the volunteers to reflect on their intercultural experiences, to deal with feelings related to possible culture shock and to use these as precious moments of learning and personal development.
Personal Support	The Host Organisation should provide sufficient personal support to help overcome, and if possible prevent, any difficulties, either in the volunteers' personal lives or in their activities in the Host Organisation.
Free time and socialising	The Host Organisation should be aware that the time a volunteer spends outside of work is as important for their well-being and satisfaction as the working time. Therefore, the Host Organisation is responsible for helping to avoid the nightmare of “free time” by facilitating the integration of the volunteers into the local community, discovery of the host town, opportunities for meeting other young people, socialising and participating in leisure activities, etc. People from the organisation of a similar age and with similar interests as the volunteer could be of great help in this process. Contacts with other EVS volunteers should be encouraged wherever possible.
Learning support	The mentor nominated by the Host Organisation should be able to support the volunteers' learning processes during their EVS service, encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning, reflect on learning with them regularly and help in the self-assessment of learning outcomes. Finally, the mentor should be able to help the volunteers in making these achievements visible and recognised through the implementation of Youthpass (see section “Support and Recognition of Learning in EVS”).

In fact, when thinking about WHO should provide support for the volunteer, it can be good to imagine a multi-layered support system around the EVS volunteer, (see picture below).



Ideally, the support would already have started with the Sending Organisation, which nominates a “sending mentor” or “contact person”. This is to ensure the proper preparation of the volunteer and keep an on-going communication with the volunteer during their time abroad.

However, it is the Host Organisation that plays the major role in providing the necessary support to the volunteer during their service. The Host Organisation should nominate at least two persons – a task related support person, also called a “supervisor”, and a mentor. In reality there are different practices in different organisations, but it is strongly advised that these two roles should be different people. They have different roles and need to ensure different aspects of volunteer support. It is also important to stress that in case of any conflict between the volunteer and one of the support persons, the third party could mediate.



EVS "V-M-S" triangle

Support people in the Host Organisation

Supervisor

(task-related support person)

- Introduction to the organisation (values, history, rituals, members etc.)
- Information support
- Technical support
- Task-related training (shadowing)
- Project-related support
- Clarity of given tasks on daily or weekly basis
- Safety and security of working environment
- Providing a regular system of monitoring, evaluation and feedback
- Support to attend EVS training sessions
- Encourage volunteer to attend language training

Mentor

- Personal support
- Intercultural adaptation and intercultural learning support
- Help in crisis situations and problem solving (SOS)
- Potential mediator in case of conflict between volunteer and supervisor
- Support reflection on learning during the service (Youthpass process)
- Recognition of volunteer's learning outcomes (Youthpass certificate)
- Introduction to the community and other volunteers (optional)
- Support social life (optional)

The task-related support person is usually the formally responsible person for the project within the organisation and acts like a kind of “line manager” with the volunteer. They should provide him/her with clear task descriptions, necessary task-related training and feedback. On the other hand, the mentor could be a person either from the organisation (not working on the same project as volunteer), or outside of the organisation (having enough competences and readiness to play the mentor role). Talking about competences there is no formal list of those needed (in the picture below you may find competences for mentors as brainstormed during the SOHO training, Brussels 2009); there are certainly minimum competences needed, but one could say that there are no “supermentors” and the best mentor is – the available mentor. Indeed, this is primarily a voluntary (and unpaid) function, so the aspect of availability and motivation to do mentoring should be taken seriously while selecting people for this role²⁹.



photo : MOVIT

For more information about the role of the mentor in relation to learning, see the section “Support and Recognition of Learning in EVS”.

The next layer of the support system is about the ensuring of the volunteer's participation in the whole **EVS training and evaluation cycle**:

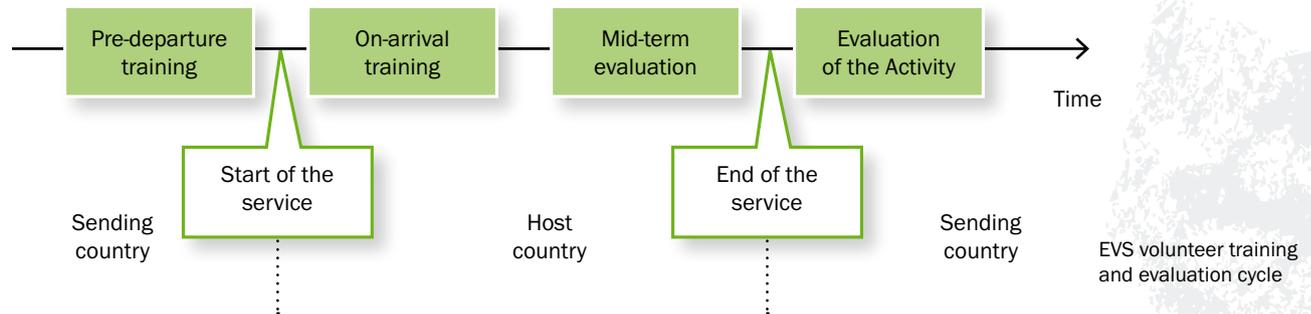
- Pre-departure training
- On-arrival training

²⁹ For more information about the roles of support persons you can check the T-kit International Voluntary Service, p. 53-66

- Mid-term evaluation
- Evaluation of the Activity

In Programme Countries, the EVS training and evaluation sessions are organised by the National Agencies, while in Partner Countries from South East Europe, this is arranged by SALTO SEE. However, it is the responsibility of the Sending Organisation to ensure the volunteer's participation in the pre-departure training and evaluation of the Activity, and it is the responsibility of the Host Organisation to send the volunteer to the on-arrival training and mid-term evaluation.³⁰

EVS training sessions are an important part of the volunteer's non-formal learning process during EVS. They are also an opportunity for the volunteer to evaluate the project and create a network with other EVS volunteers in the host country or across South East Europe.



The **networking with other EVS volunteers** is one of the most important sources of support for each volunteer during their service. These networks usually allow the important sharing of experiences, facilitate problem solving and provide additional mobility possibilities³¹.

The last but not least important layer of the volunteer support system are the official bodies (**National Agencies and SALTO SEE**) which monitor the quality of the EVS projects implemented. They collect feedback from volunteers and organisations and act as quality support mechanisms through the EVS accreditation process, trainings, publications (like this one!), and other measures.

³⁰ For more information about EVS training and evaluation cycle see latest Programme Guide, contact your National Agency and/or visit SALTO-YOUTH SEE RC webpage: <http://www.salto-youth.net/seeEVS/>

³¹ See "EVS Volunteer Training – Guidelines and Minimum Quality Standards", European Commission, November 2004.

Cultural Adaptation and Intercultural Learning in EVS

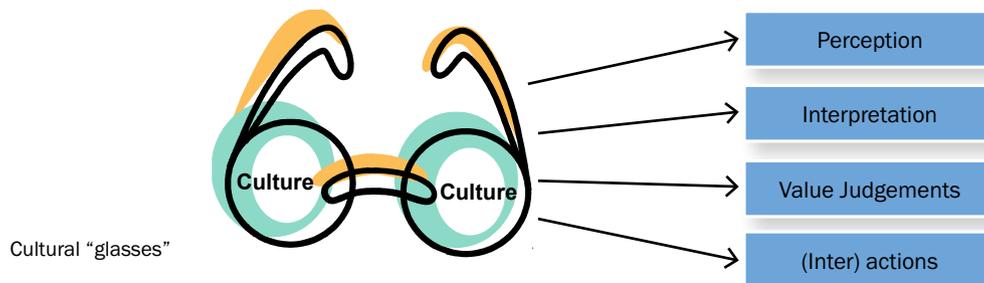
Our cultural values and basic assumptions do not only influence our own behaviour, but influence our perceptions of the behaviour/practices of other people.

In the volunteer's shoes...

You might not be aware of your own cultural “baggage” (values, beliefs, assumptions) and “cultural glasses” unless you are confronted with another culture. Paradoxically, intercultural learning is not learning about others from a different cultural context, but it is primarily learning about oneself – with the others. This is exactly the process your volunteer might be facing during their service. So, let's try to step into the volunteer's shoes and see how it feels.

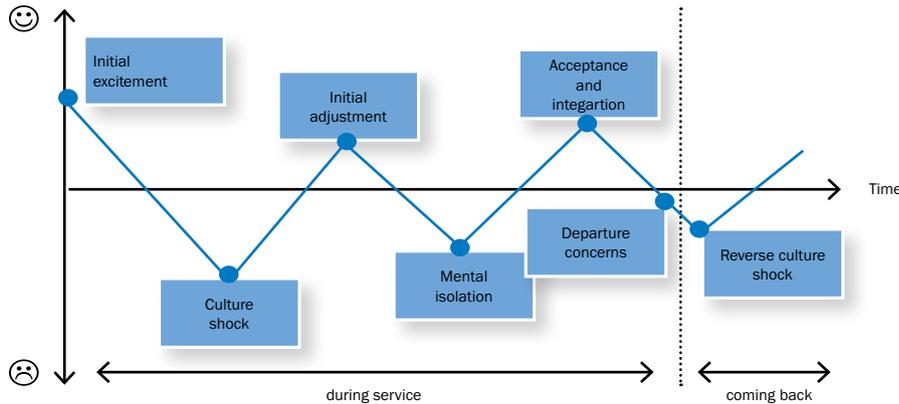
If you have lived abroad for a while or travelled on your own for the first time, you might remember this confrontation, when “normal was not normal” and “clear was not clear” anymore, when everything was questioned. You may remember a strong emotional effect involving a feeling of insecurity, confusion or fear.

The ability to handle such a situation obviously varies from volunteer to volunteer according to their genuine capacity to adapt to new circumstances. Besides, it depends largely on the extent of preparation for this confrontation and on the degree of empathy and support available in the new environment, i.e. of the Host Organisation.



Cultural adaptation and culture shock

There are different theoretical models which try to show visually the emotional process a volunteer might be passing through during and after the service period. One such model is presented in the picture below. It represents the internal dynamics like a **ride on a roller coaster**, consisting of ups and downs, both as normal (but sometimes nevertheless difficult) parts of the process of cultural adaptation in the new living (cultural) environment.



A ride on a roller coaster
- the curve of "cultural
adaptation"

According to this model, in the very beginning of the service, volunteers are likely to feel some kind of *initial excitement* and fascination with everything in the new culture. However, usually just a few weeks after arrival, probably the most important and critical phase occurs – the phase of “*culture shock*”. The confrontational period starts, the first emotional low phase is a reaction to the absence of familiar patterns of communication and social interaction. How far you experience culture shock will depend on a number of factors, including personality, how different the culture is from your own, level of social support you receive, and the purpose of your stay (Gibson, 2000). Finally, don't forget that the lack of competence in the host country language may significantly amplify these feelings!

In the phase of culture shock, the personal support from the Host Organisation (and in particular the person in the role of mentor) is crucial. In a way, the development of the rest of the stay depends a lot on the joint ability of the volunteer and the Host Organisation to overcome this beginning phase. The support person (mentor) should keep an eye on the symptoms of culture shock, which can be both physical and psychological (see table below).

Possible symptoms of culture shock³²

Physical

- Lack of hunger
- Sleeplessness
- Tiredness
- Minor aches
- Too much eating, drinking or sleeping

Psychological

- Homesickness
- Frustration
- Fear of being cheated
- Resentment and anger towards locals
- Impatience
- Defensive or aggressive behaviour
- Avoidance of contact
- Inability to work well
- Lack of ability to deal even with small problems

With adequate support (personal, emotional, linguistic etc.), overcoming the stage of culture shock should lead to *initial adjustment*. During this phase, volunteers feel much more positive, can easily function with the rest of the team, can focus on the tasks and communication becomes more genuine and open.

However, after a certain period of time, volunteers might start to miss their friends and family, feeling that “life out there is happening without them”. This might be followed by problems to express themselves well in the new language. As a result, volunteers might feel frustrated, lonely and isolated. The phase of “*mental isolation*” can be the most easily overcome if volunteers have already managed to find new friends in the Host Organisation and social activities to be part of. The mentor is also called on to help again.

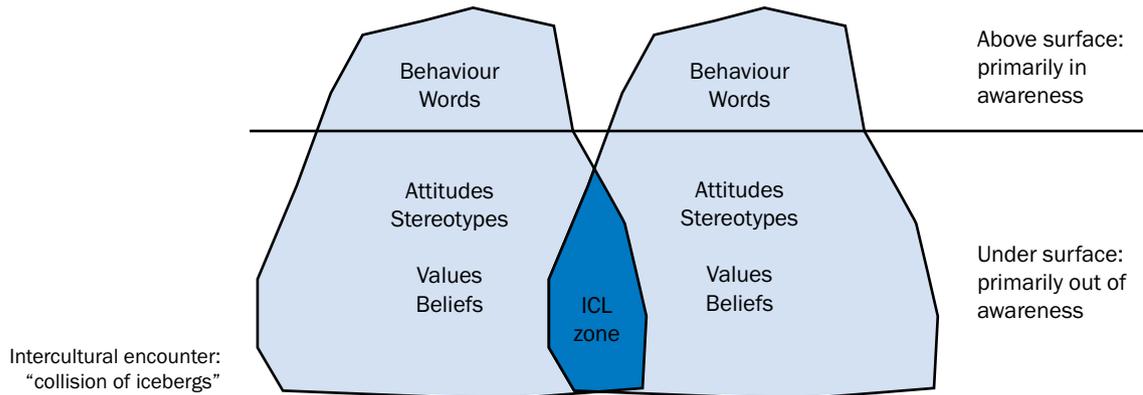
If successfully managed, this stage can lead to a period of “*acceptance and integration*” (also called *genuine adjustment* phase). During this stage, volunteers are fully accustomed to the habits, customs, food and characteristics of the people in the host culture. They feel comfortable with friends, people and language.

Finally, approaching the end of the service period, some *departure concerns* can arise. Some people might feel afraid of what comes after their return home, others might be sad to leave.

To return home after the service can be both pleasant and difficult, especially after a longer and more intensive EVS. Ex-volunteers have reported certain challenges in re-adapting to their original environment and culture, facing a very similar phenomenon as culture shock from the beginning of the service. But if the “culture shock” was the expected confrontation with the unfamiliar, this “re-

³² For more information and tips on how to deal with culture shock see International Voluntary Service, T-kit, p. 63-65

Intercultural learning as an understanding of confrontation



One way of presenting the complexities of culture is the "iceberg model"³³ above, which describes culture in terms of a relatively small "visible part" on the top and a larger "invisible part" under the surface. Following this logic, an intercultural situation could be seen as an encounter (or collision) of two "cultural icebergs". What we can hear (words) or what we can see (practices) is primarily in our awareness. However, how we interpret the words, customs and behaviours perceived, is largely under the influence of our own cultural assumptions, beliefs, values and stereotypes towards the culture we are confronted with. At the same time, real reasons for certain behaviours and practices lie deep under the surface of the other iceberg.

Receiving information about the host culture is certainly very important for the volunteer's orientation and adaptation, but the real potential for intercultural learning is under the surface. Mostly, intercultural learning is not something that just happens by itself. It is rather an active process of reflecting on and sharing the reasons for why we see things in the way we do. In other words, why are some things "normal" and "acceptable" for me while others are not? What does this tell me about my culture? And why are other things so important for people in the host country? What does this tell me about them? Can culture be changed? Can I change it? Can I choose it? Do I feel frightened when I am confronted with cultural differences? How do I deal with ambiguities? Do I feel angry? Why? Am I able to understand and empathize, even if I do not agree? What were my stereotypes about the host country? How do they correspond to my experience during the service?

³³ For more information about the iceberg model of culture see Intercultural Learning T-kit, p.17-35



photo: Grupa "Hajde da..."



At the end of the day, intercultural learning offers an endless space for personal development, and voluntary service is a wonderful opportunity for the development of intercultural competence. It is therefore the ultimate goal of an EVS project to provide space for bringing up issues related to confronting cultural attitudes, revealing deep cultural values and speaking openly about stereotypes. Only through this kind of interpersonal and intercultural experience can we learn how to deconstruct our stereotypes, appreciate our diversity and rediscover our common humanity.

True, this is easier said than done. An effective facilitation of intercultural learning experiences of your volunteers requires substantial intercultural competences of the Host Organisation (and the mentor, in particular). It requires a readiness to share, openness, a non-judgmental attitude, self-awareness, flexibility, tolerance to ambiguity, and empathy. Finally, do not forget that facing the challenges of intercultural learning is only possible in an atmosphere of safety and mutual trust, which needs to be created first. We cannot learn when we are frightened, but we learn the best when challenged and stretched.

Some intercultural learning tips for the mentor:

- Be ready for your own intercultural learning
- Be aware of your own cultural values and how they influence your perceptions
- Establish an atmosphere of confidence and respect
- Maintain open and sincere communication with the volunteer
- Take a non-judgmental and non-defensive attitude
- Be ready to be engaged with understanding
- Don't be afraid of conflicts
- Ask good and open questions



Dual nature of the
conflict

Understanding conflict

Lack of understanding, misunderstandings, disputes and conflicts are part of everyday life, (or even human nature), just like understanding, agreement and co-operation. They may be unpleasant, but they are nothing to be afraid of. It is important to know how to deal with these situations, how to handle them, transform them and make the most of them in order to develop better and more productive relations. The Chinese letter below suggests that each conflict situation has a dual nature – bearing a potential for violence as well as potential for learning and positive development.

Perhaps due to the frequent use of the term “conflict” in the media in relation to extreme violence, conflicts usually have a negative connotation. In this publication, we discuss conflicts as a natural human relationship, based on the incompatibility of legitimate interests or needs and involving two or more sides, in the intercultural context of an EVS project. Conflict situations should be seen as a “normal” part of the volunteer’s integration process into the living and working environment.

Within the complex situation of an EVS project, a wide range of potential conflict issues exist between a volunteer and a Host Organisation (or host community). Conflicts in EVS can be categorised into three areas. They may be due to different personalities, needs and interests (interpersonal). Or they may be due to a clash of cultural practices and values (intercultural). Finally they may be due to a violation of the rights, responsibilities and agreements in the Activity Agreement (contractual disputes). Certain situations could be a combination of two or three of the different aspects. For example, a conflict about the expected level of accommodation quality might be influenced by a volunteer’s personal expectations and customs or differences in cultural and social standards, but it could be a serious violation of the volunteer’s rights as laid down in the EVS charter and the Activity Agreement.

Major conflict types in EVS:

- intercultural
- interpersonal
- contractual

Conflict prevention measures

Thorough preparation, clear motivation of the volunteer and Host Organisation, clear understanding of the role of a volunteer, clarity on rights and responsibilities of all the parties involved, sufficient and correct information about the Host project/Organisation, a good understanding of the intercultural aspects of EVS, and so on... These are just some of the factors that may prevent a potential crisis situation, or at least decrease the number of potential conflict issues, during the voluntary service.

Potential conflict situations in EVS projects: what would you do?

Example 1:

The way of communicating in the host country involves far more “touching” than in the volunteer’s country. In the beginning the volunteer did not pay much attention to the fact that her supervisor sat very close to her during meetings and was touching her hand. Lately, the volunteer has felt it was too much and she believes her supervisor is sexually harassing her. What should she do?

Example 2:

The volunteer’s EVS placement is a youth hostel where he is supposed to run different leisure time activities for the hostel guests. However, he has stayed in the project for two months already and has mainly been assigned to take care of cleaning rooms, doing laundry and cooking. What should he do?

Example 3:

The Host Organisation is working with people with disabilities and elderly people and is hosting a volunteer in a long term EVS project. She is a very nice and skilled person, but she has no initiative of her own. Another problem is that she simply does not communicate with people. The mentor believes she is shy and homesick. What should the mentor do?

It is crucial to start establishing an atmosphere of trust and open communication between all partners from the very beginning of the voluntary service.

Another important issue for long-term engagements (like EVS) is the importance of the relationships with the people we work and live with. The importance of the relationship should motivate the volunteer, and yourself in a conflict situation to find a balanced way to solve the conflict rather than aiming to win at any cost – *to find a way for both parties to get what they need and maintain the relationship.* When confronted with a conflict situation a winning formula is: empathy for the other side + assertiveness from your side + constructiveness in the resolution process.

Below you may find a list of practical questions and strategies to be asked and used in a conflict situation.



photo: Ørjan Mikkelsen



However, in the case of a serious conflict or crisis situation, you might have need to discuss it further or ask for some additional support. A list of useful contacts and sources of support can be found in Appendix 2.

Effective conflict resolution strategies

DO I WANT TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT?

Be willing to fix the problem.

CAN I SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE, NOT JUST MY OWN POINT OF VIEW?

Broaden your outlook.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS AND ANXIETIES OF EVERYONE INVOLVED?

Write them down.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THIS FAIR?

Negotiate.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES?

Think up as many solutions as you can.

Pick the one that gives everyone more of what they want.

CAN WE WORK IT OUT TOGETHER?

Treat each other as equals.

WHAT AM I FEELING?

Am I too emotional?

Could I get more facts?

Should I take time out to calm down?

Should I tell them how I feel?

WHAT DO I WANT TO CHANGE?

Be clear. Attack the problem, not the person.

WHAT OPPORTUNITY CAN THIS BRING?

Work on the positives, not the negatives.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE IN THEIR SHOES?

Do they know I understand them?

DO WE NEED A NEUTRAL THIRD PERSON?

Could this help us to understand each other and create our own solutions?

HOW CAN WE BOTH WIN?

Work towards solutions where everyone's needs are respected³⁴.

³⁴ Reproduced from Conflict Resolution Network. www.crnhq.org

Support and Recognition of Learning in EVS



It is not news in the Youth in Action Programme to say that EVS is about learning. In fact, since the very beginning of EVS in 1996 participating volunteers were learning a lot about how to:

- live independently
- get integrated into a work place environment
- increase intercultural awareness
- improve communication skills and foreign language competencies
- run a project
- work in a team
- express solidarity and social responsibility
- and much much more...

At the same time, we should not neglect the fact that this was also a learning process for the other actors involved – Sending Organisations, Host Organisations, mentors etc.

However, what is really new and it comes with the implementation of the Youthpass, is the demand to make this learning *more explicit* (Youthpass Guide, p.30) and the learning support *more intentional*. For those concerned about the “service” aspect in EVS, it is important to say that this new focus does not imply any changes in the nature and the concept of EVS as a “learning service”. It does however introduce a new perspective on learning support in general and mentoring in particular.

This new perspective comes from the *lifelong learning* discourse in education and learning in Europe. As shown in the table below, this new lifelong learning approach challenges the “traditional approach” to education, trying to bring more passion to learning and ownership over the process and outcomes to the learner:

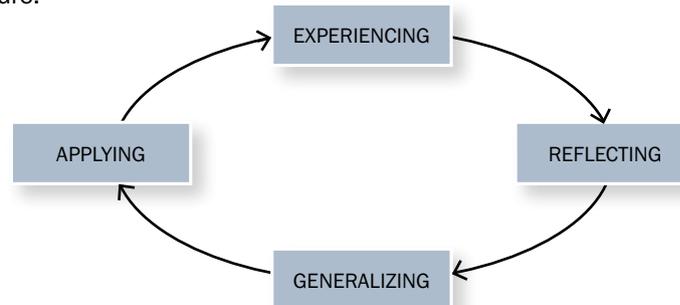
Traditional approach	Lifelong learning approach
Learning is:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happening primarily in the formal education sector • Ends with the formal schooling (with certain exceptional moments) • Difficult and painful • About things you can use only later in your life • Set by others • About giving you answers for life • Implied: the more answers you know the better you are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happening in various educational settings (formal, non-formal, informal) • A never ending and lifelong process • Meaningful and enjoyable • About things that you think are important • Set and organised by you • About finding new and better questions for life • Implies: the more competent you are to learn the better you are

Traditional vs. Lifelong learning approach, inspired by input given by P. Kloosterman during the UNIQUE training course 'Facilitating the Volunteers Learning' for mentors in EVS projects, Budapest 3 – 9 May 2009

In this lifelong long learning process EVS is seen as *unique and important*. It is a “*lifelong learning opportunity*” that concretely supports the development of essential competences in personal development, social and community life, as well as for entering the labour market. So why is that?

The easiest answer is that EVS involves a relatively long learning process (in comparison to a training course or a seminar, for example). Learning embedded in a living experience makes it genuine, relevant and meaningful for the learner. One could say there is a great potential for learning in EVS, but in order to use it to the maximum, it needs to be well supported and facilitated.

Remembering the words of A. Huxley, who said that “*experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you”*, we need to think about how to use the volunteers’ experiences and challenges as learning situations. As in life in general, we tend not to use everything we have experienced to learn something. These life experiences need to be transformed into learning, they need to be reflected, understood and generalized as well as applied in the other (similar) situations. And when applied they bring us a new experience to start the learning cycle again (see picture below). But on this journey through the experiential learning cycle, the volunteers need to be accompanied by other people who are able to facilitate the process. Apart from other support persons involved in this process at various moments (EVS trainers, other EVS volunteers, local volunteers etc.), in order to utilize the full potential for learning in EVS we need *trained and competent EVS mentors*, ready to get involved in this learning adventure.



Kolb's experiential learning cycle

In most cases EVS mentors are not paid professionals, but rather volunteers or just available people who are motivated to help Host Organisations in organising EVS. This new function of mentoring raises lots of conceptual and practical questions. For example, how do you integrate the facilitation of learning in regular mentoring, how do you start this process, how do you motivate a young person to get involved in the process, what is the mentor's role in this process, are there any available tools that we might use, etc. So, let's consider mentoring as learning support in EVS.

Mentors as facilitators of learning

Perhaps it is good to remember that mentors are learners too and in the same way that their volunteers have learning histories so do they. This affects their concept and attitude towards learning and consequently towards the learning support they provide. So it might be a good idea, if you plan to be an EVS mentor, to start working on your own **awareness about learning**, using the reflective sentences in the text box below:

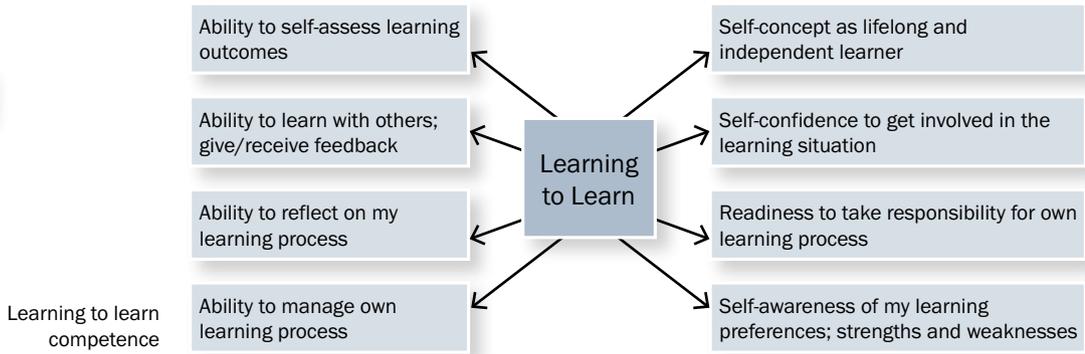
Awareness of my own learning

- When I hear the word “learning” I think...
- A situation that made me enjoy the process of learning was...
- A situation in which I have felt the largest resistance towards learning was...
- What motivates me to learn and work on my personal development is...
- What blocks me in the learning process is...
- Successful learning for me is when...
- The way I prefer to learn is...
- In an ideal learning situation my role would be...
- In an ideal learning situation the role of other people would be...
- Generally, when my learning is at stake, I believe...

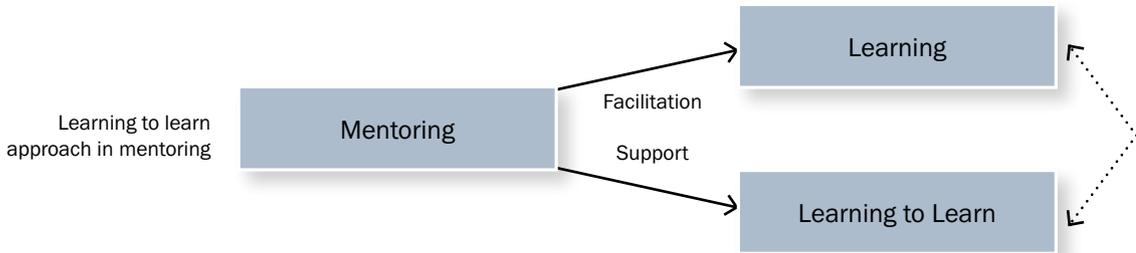
You might want to do a similar process with your volunteer at the beginning of the mentoring process, setting the stage for passionate, engaged and “self-directed learning” in EVS!

Most of us are not born as self-directed learners ready to be fully responsible for our learning process. It is hard therefore to expect our volunteers to be immediately capable and competent learners. In fact, most of us still need to develop our **learning to learn** competence, and for that we need a great deal of confidence, trust and support with the people we learn with. As shown in the picture below the ‘learning to learn’ competence consists of several attitudes, skills and abilities. When developed these allow us to fully develop our potential, experience joy and challenge in learning situations and have complete ownership over the learning process. Supporting your volunteers in development of this competence might be a great learning adventure for you, as well as one of the biggest benefits for them in their EVS.





This brings us to the next mentoring point to consider – what should be your **general approach to facilitating learning** and what should be the mentor’s role accordingly. Actually it seems that the volunteers’ learning involves at least two distinct levels – firstly learning about something; e.g. communication skills, and secondly, learning to learn competence development. Therefore, it might be good to think about a mentoring approach which could address **BOTH – learning AND learning to learn**.



Working on both levels might look challenging, but it is quite natural and they complement each other. It is like “method in action”, where the process can also become the content to reflect about and learn from.

But supporting your volunteer in becoming a self-directed learner does not imply leaving them on their own. Self-directed learning is not meant to be a lonely experience with an absent mentor (e.g. “call me when you need me”). On the contrary, you need to be there and present, providing space and time to your volunteer, like a gardener who creates the fertile environment and uses appropriate tools. Still it is only the plant who decides when and how it wants to grow!

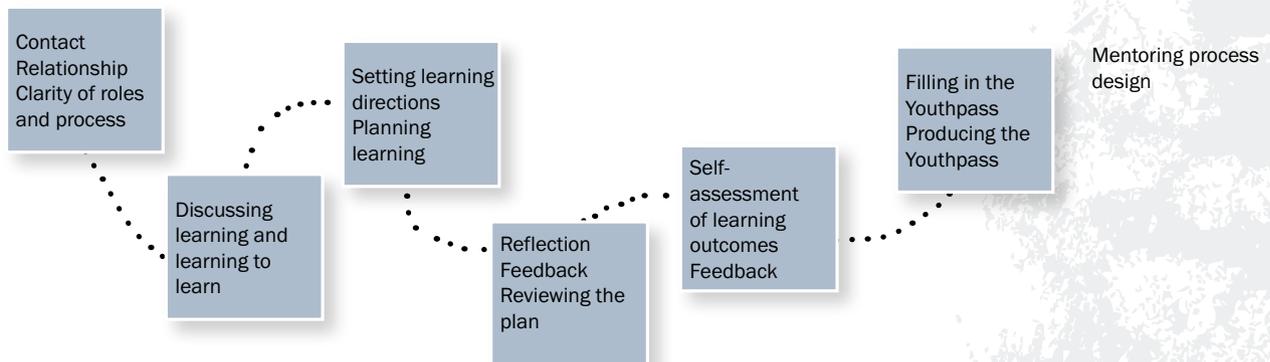
Planning the mentoring process

If you are interested in developing your learning to learn mentoring, the question remains, is there a model for such a process?

To stay consistent with your approach, you should be aware of the diversity of learning preferences/styles/capacities of each volunteer, there is **no one size that fits all**. Each process has to be tailor made for each particular person, relationship, context and style of your own mentoring.

However, there might be some common elements **in the beginning** and the end of the process, while the largest diversity of strategies and steps will be seen in between (see picture below). In the beginning you might expect to work on the relationship building, establishing a climate of trust and support, agreeing on the process and dynamics of meetings and sharing expectations about each other's roles. There might also be a moment to discuss the concept of learning, self-directed learning and learning to learn, in order to challenge potential negative images about learning and increase their motivation to get involved in an exciting learning process. **In the end** of the process, you may expect that your volunteers should be doing self-assessment and identification of learning outcomes, enriched with your feedback and trying to describe those when filling in the Youthpass certificate.

All the steps **in between** should be completely tailor made, although they should include the setting of learning directions/objectives, regular reflection talks about learning and learning to learn, and the use of various learning support tools (learning diaries, learning plans, self-reflection tools etc.). There should also be continuous giving/receiving feedback and moments of self-assessment. For more practical information and tools on how to support volunteers learning, take a look at the chapter "How to Support Learning" in the **Youthpass Guide**, accessible at <http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/guide/>



Youthpass and Key competences for lifelong learning

Following the debates about the need for better recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field in Europe, the new Youth in Action Programme has introduced the Youthpass certificate. It is a mechanism and a tool to make the learning in the Youth in Action projects (including EVS) more visible: to young people themselves, to youth workers, and to other sectors. In other words, it aims at better individual recognition of learning achievements and better social recognition of youth work. It is based on the principles of non-formal education and includes the self-assessment of learning outcomes done by the volunteer at the end of their service.

The self-assessment part is using the *European framework of 8 Key competences for lifelong learning* (see text box)³⁵.

It is important to stress here that the 8 key competences framework is just a framework. It does not imply a demand that all youth work projects (and EVS) should change their focus completely and now start working only on the development of these competences. In fact, this framework is built into the Youthpass to serve as a “translation tool” or “common language” with other sectors (education, employment, vocational education and training etc.), thus making these certificates better understood and accepted outside of the youth field.

The authorization to produce the certificates is given to the Coordinating (applicant) Organisation, along with the project number, but obtaining the certificate itself remains – the right of the volunteer. It is the responsibility of the project organisers to inform the volunteer about this possibility, but it is the volunteer who chooses whether to do it or not. However, it is expected that if there is a good “Youthpass process”, including effective mentor learning support, the Youthpass certificate would come at the end as the icing on the cake. The first two pages are filled in by the responsible person from the Host Organisation, while the self-assessment part is done by the volunteer in a dialogue with his/her mentor.

For more information about Youthpass in EVS, see the Youthpass website <http://www.youthpass.eu/> and Chapter “Youthpass in Practice: Youthpass in EVS” in the Youthpass Guide <http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/guide/>

- Key competences for Lifelong learning:
1. Communication in mother tongue
 2. Communication in foreign languages
 3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
 4. Digital competence
 5. Learning to learn
 6. Social and civic competences
 7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
 8. Cultural awareness and expression



Youthpass certificate

³⁵ For more information about Key Competences, consult the following publication. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf

Part C.

The Last, but certainly not least important issues



Volunteers' Personal Projects in EVS

Each volunteer should carry out a personal project during their service and the organisations should support it. A personal project can be about almost anything. Many volunteers already have an idea about their personal project before the activity starts. Some volunteers will need support with ideas and suggestions.

Personal projects should reflect the personal interests of the volunteer and can be connected with studies, hobbies, interest in travelling, the discovering of the country and region, art, fun, volunteering, global movements... Personal projects could also be connected to the theme of the service in the Host Organisation, but do not have to. Sometimes volunteers decide to promote EVS and European youth cooperation. Personal projects can create meaningful time outside of the service and lead to new motivation and better results of the overall EVS project. The personal project can continue after EVS and it can be part of a follow up or exploration of the results of activities.

What will actually happen mainly depends on the volunteer. Organisations can give support with ideas, suggestions, contacts, information, planning, equipment and working space etc. Some volunteers may need more support than others and some show more interest than others. In many cases, Host and Sending Organisations can benefit from volunteers' projects, for example with new contacts, a new publication or even new activities and methods.

Personal projects can be almost anything, so keep your mind open to be ready to recognize any great idea from your volunteer! Here is one really great example:

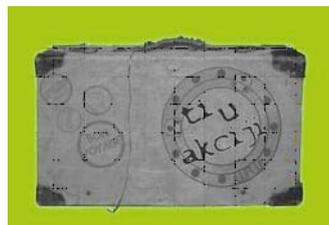
A group of EVS volunteers met during an "on-arrival training" in Sarajevo. Some of them had already been some time in their Host Organisations and some of them had just arrived. In the evenings they discussed volunteering and EVS in the region and came to the idea that they could do something together. They had time, so why not use it for something. The idea became known as "Ti u akciji" (You in action). Ti u akciji is an informal group founded by 9 volunteers working in different Serbian NGO's. On their blog, <http://tiuakciji.blogspot.com/> and in different activities in Serbia they promote the Youth in Action Programme. Their Host Organisations, that are promoting volunteering as well, supported the idea from the beginning. The volunteers managed to prepare a project application, they won a grant from state funding and became very active on the blog, in public and in street presentations. Over time they have made a lot of contact with a lot of young people from different parts of Serbia. They promote EVS by being a "Living Library" – meeting interested people and sharing their own experiences. They also promote "Bookcrossing" and have started an EVS "Journal Crossing" that is simply a paper where volunteers can share their EVS experiences, and then pass it to other volunteers. The Journal is crossing the region now and is collecting new stories about personal projects

Of course, this is one complex example that is the result of great motivation by a group of volunteers. There are numerous examples of individual personal projects. One is the project of Francesca, an Italian volunteer in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was in a small Bosnian village where she discovered hand crafts and traditional clothes made by local women. Soon, she got in contact with organisations in Italy and started to organise the promotion and distribution of the crafts in Italy. In this way, she actually made a significant impact on the income, (which is usually very low), of the women in that village.

Another volunteer, Alice, came with a video camera; this was not a standard piece of equipment in her Host Organisation at that time. She visited several other EVS volunteers and made a short documentary movie about EVS in the region that was later used as material for the promotion of EVS.

Stefania created a photo exhibition of different international volunteering activities she participated in during her EVS.

There are many examples of small everyday activities that EVS volunteers have done as personal projects and activities: language courses for local young people, workshops on different topics, accompanying disabled young people to go to school every day. Some of the volunteers produced brochures, guides or blogs about their experience or about the countries where they did their service.



Project "Ti u akciji"
(You in action)



Evaluation in EVS Projects

Evaluation is an integral part of every project cycle. The purpose of the **evaluation** process is to reflect on the overall project cycle and check and prove if the project objectives and expectations were met. An appropriate evaluation requires identifying which information needs to be collected and which methods will be used to analyze the information prior to the beginning of the project cycle. The results of the evaluation process are used to understand the real impact of the project as well as for the planning of future projects and policies.

Evaluation processes can be done during the project itself, usually after key events or in certain moments in time. The results of this process can be used in the next steps of the project. Final evaluations happen after the last planned activity of the project has ended. Findings from the final evaluation can be used in the presentation of results of the project as a proof of project success. They can also be used for improvement of management, and for planning future strategies, programmes and activities. If you want to have an even closer overview of everything that is happening inside and around your project and more frequently check if you are actually on the way to achieving your planned results, you need to involve a monitoring process. Monitoring has all the elements of evaluation but as it is continuous it helps you to tune your project and make adjustments according to the real time situation. Evaluation and monitoring are both participative processes and they should involve all important stakeholders in the project – both those who implement it and those who are beneficiaries.

Let's imagine an EVS project that consists of two EVS Activities. Two volunteers are coming to the same Host Organisation. The first one is arriving in January for 6 months and the second in May, for 4 months. They will organise activities with children.

Months of the project	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1st volunteer	■											
2nd volunteer					■							

Evaluation TASK 1: Can you try to answer the following questions:

- What do you need to evaluate in the EVS project?
- How you can use the findings of the evaluation?
- When will you organise the evaluation?
- How can you monitor your EVS project?

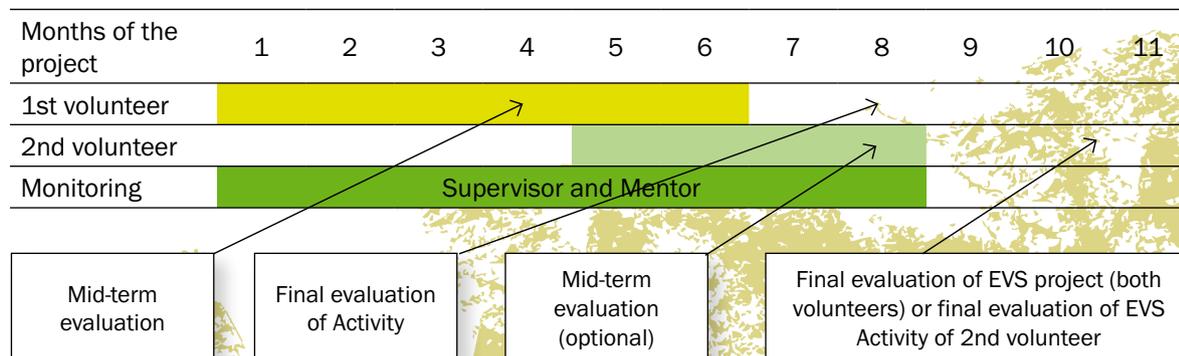
Evaluation as an obligatory part of each EVS project

The EVS project itself involves evaluation and each organisation is obliged to ensure that volunteers attend the evaluation sessions in the EVS training cycle. The aim of the evaluation is to make the project and its results more sustainable. The evaluation phase addresses the actual fulfilment of the project (which may include several different Activities). It aims to assess whether the objectives of the project have been achieved and the expectations of the promoters and volunteer(s) have been met.

Mid-term evaluation, (compulsory only for an EVS service lasting more than 4 months), provides volunteers with an opportunity to evaluate their experience so far, as well as to meet other volunteers from different projects throughout the host country. The **final evaluation** of the activity addresses the realization of the EVS Activity, its aims, objectives, motivation, expectations, and tasks performed during the EVS service. It should bring together the volunteers and their Sending Organisations with the aim of reflecting on what happened during the EVS Activity and assessing the support and communication provided by the Sending Organisations. It also aims to facilitate the reintegration of the volunteers back into their home country. Mid-term and final evaluation meetings are organised by the National Agencies and SALTO SEE.

The supervisor and the mentor are in regular contact with the volunteer and so have a monitoring role in the project. The supervisor is supporting the volunteer in his/her working tasks and guides the volunteer with suggestions for improvement. In a similar way, the mentor reacts to the personal needs of the volunteer and suggests improvements to the organisation. The mentor also supports the volunteer to reflect on their learning process and helps the volunteer to plan further learning. In this sense, monitoring is not something that is specifically defined, but it happens naturally in that kind of relation. The roles of EVS supervisors and mentors are actually “monitoring” the performance and personal development of the volunteer.

Having this in mind, let's go back to our project with the two volunteers. It will have the following schedule for evaluation. Notice that you can organise the final evaluation in two ways and that the mid-term evaluation is optional for the second volunteer.



In this formal EVS evaluation system, it is obvious that the supervisor and mentor are involved in the EVS project during the whole period and have a monitoring role. The findings of a mid-term evaluation can be used to improve the running of the project. A mid-term evaluation in the period of the first volunteer can also be used to better prepare the project for the second volunteer. If a final evaluation was organised to close the first volunteer period, these findings will be too late to improve the current project of the second volunteer. However the final evaluation could be held at the end of the second volunteer's period, this would then be an overall EVS project evaluation for the period of both volunteers.

Is this enough?

Take a look again at your answers for Evaluation TASK 1. Did you come up with more ideas that you would want to evaluate?

Probably you have noticed that the representatives of the Host Organisation are not participating in the meetings within the training and evaluation cycle! Volunteers participate in all parts of the cycle, while Sending Organisations can be invited to the final evaluation. However, Host Organisations, (and Coordinating if involved), as key partners in the EVS project should benefit from these evaluation moments. Of course, results of evaluation sessions can always be exchanged among promoters, but can we, and should we, do more?

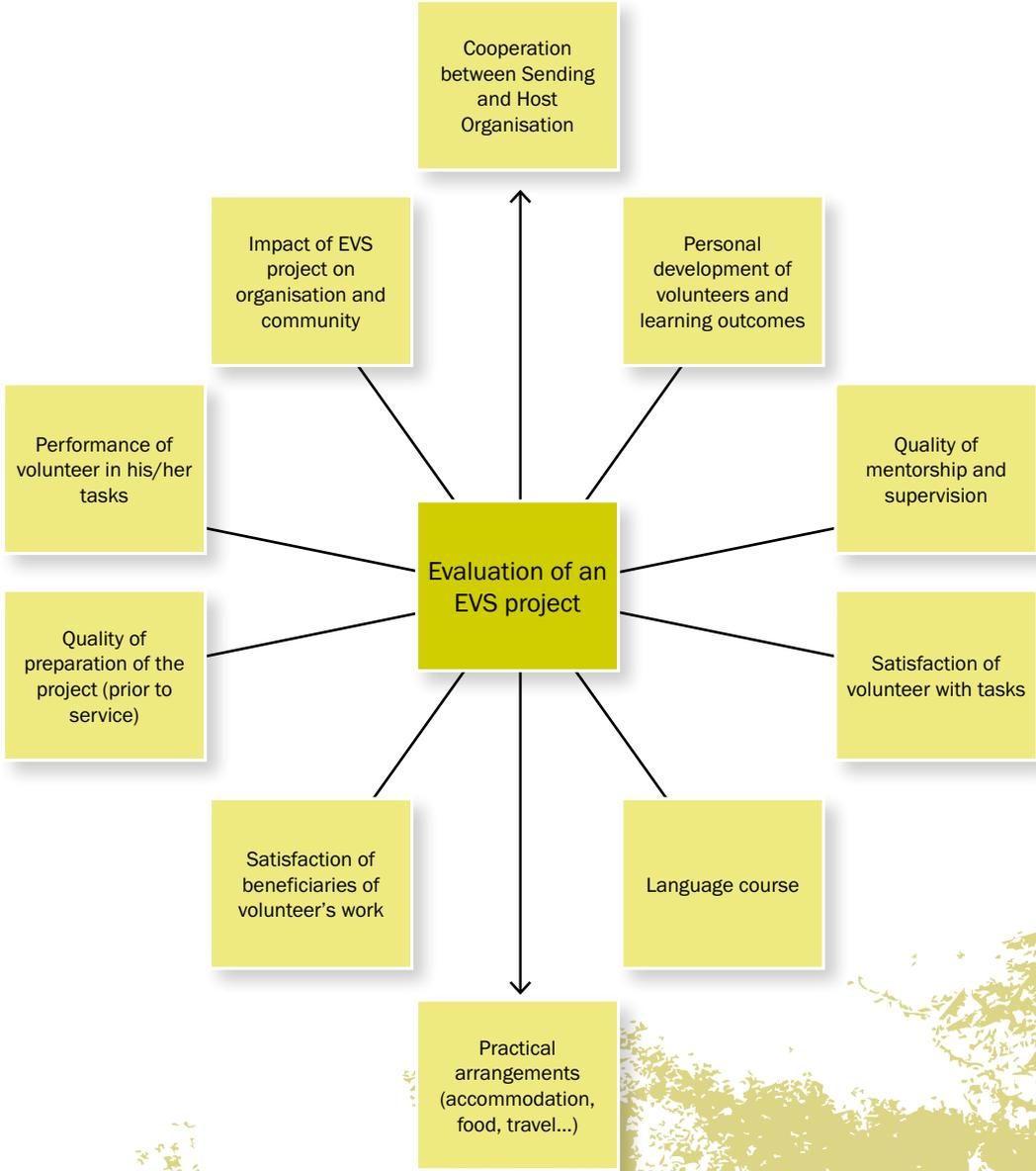
It is in the interest of every partner to participate in the on-going evaluation process and use its results, as it can improve the quality of existing and future EVS projects. Especially as all projects do not go smoothly and when something goes wrong different actors have different points of view. It is important to involve all sides in the evaluation if you are interested to find out what really caused difficulties and how to overcome them next time. All of this means that promoters need to involve additional resources in the evaluation and think **HOW** (methods!) they will organise it!

If you are interested to get more information about evaluation (and monitoring) you can check a very useful Youth Partnership Training Kit 10 "Educational Evaluation in Youth Field" http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/10/Tkit_10_EN and the SEEYN Volunteer Management Handbook which can be found at www.seeyn.org

Evaluation TASK 2: Can you try to answer the following questions:

- Has your organisation already developed evaluation and monitoring processes? Can you incorporate your EVS project into them?
- How can you evaluate the service component of EVS?
- How can you evaluate the learning component of EVS?
- Who should be involved while evaluating EVS projects? Who should organise evaluation?
- How you can monitor your EVS project?
- What methods of evaluation do you already know? Where can you find more methods and tools?

Here is just one possible proposal of **WHAT** to evaluate in an EVS project:



Follow Up of EVS Projects

EVS volunteers will always take something from their EVS experience and put it into their future lives. Some of them will stay active in activities related to the theme of their project. Some will organise new projects or even start new organisations. EVS will orientate many of the volunteers in their choice of careers or future studies. Some of them will be inspired with their experience of being EVS volunteers and they will start to organise EVS projects themselves. Some of the volunteers continue to support their Host Organisation in various ways. Sending and Host organisations make follow ups of the project as well. They continue to involve volunteers, further improve the quality of projects or sometimes involve other organisations in EVS. Sometimes they further develop projects initiated by EVS volunteers. Volunteers sometimes make follow ups of the personal projects they did during their EVS. EVS partners can follow up their EVS project cooperation with other actions of the Youth in Action Programme or other common initiatives.

Follow up often happens spontaneously and is not planned in advance. However, if you do plan possible follow up of an EVS project in advance, you can expect to attain even bigger impact and get more from your EVS experience. In a way this prolongs involvement of the volunteer or duration of the partnerships. There are certain structures and support for follow up in existence. In most countries, volunteers have the possibility to become involved in the activities of national structures of former EVS volunteers during or after their EVS. These structures work on youth and volunteering issues. Their activities generally include providing support to EVS volunteers and setting up platforms for communication and networking among former EVS volunteers for sharing experiences. Some promoters involve former EVS volunteers in the dissemination and exploitation of results in their home countries. Promoters can create advanced strategies for follow up around the theme of EVS projects and create networks of former volunteers and partner organisations that can promote and advocate for a/the chosen theme on a European level.

Here are some examples of follow up of EVS projects:

- *Kris collected toys in his home town and shipped them to the orphanage in the town where he did his EVS.*
- *Sarah organised a group of Belgium volunteers and organised a project for them in cooperation with her former Host Organisation. The local volunteers did the fundraising for the project and came to Bosnia and Herzegovina, (one year after Sarah's EVS ended), to repair the roof of the house for one poor family.*
- *Rita started to work for her Sending Organisation. She is now coordinating other EVS projects, youth exchanges and job shadowing as well as projects of another EC programme (Europe for Citizens). In most of them, Rita is involving organisations she met and worked with during her EVS.*
- *Miloš continued to lead work-camps and work with youth exchange programmes in France*



photo: Aleksandar Gubaš

after his EVS. He got involved in other projects and associations from France and got a part time job in his Host Organisation.

- *Charlie started to work for the European Youth Forum after his EVS in Montenegro. Later on, he started to work for the European Commission on accession programmes for the Western Balkan countries.*
- *Ruben started to work for the National Agency in his home country.*
- *Leo published a guide for young people from the UK who plan to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina.*
- *Petar, together with a few friends and other volunteers, established and registered an organisation in his home town. The organisation promotes various forms of volunteering in the small town and it is the first organisation of that kind in the area.*
- *Tea managed to organise the export of handicrafts made by women in the village where she did EVS to her home municipality.*

There are numerous examples of personal follow ups of EVS projects. Former volunteers started studies, wrote theses about their host places or the theme of their project, they made life-long friendships, moved to other places, married and had kids... We will not reveal more about them now, (you can find some on the web sites of former volunteers), but we will ask you to think a bit more:

Follow up TASK:

- Can you list at least 5 possible follow up activities for your project?
- Can you envisage follow up activities during the project preparation? It is impossible to predict what will happen in such a long period, but it is useful to think about how to start and plan follow up activities even before the project starts.
- Can you still follow up your previous EVS project(s)?
- What are good steps during the EVS project that will ensure follow up?
- Dissemination and exploitation of results can be one of the follow up actions (you can even ask for additional funding). Think about how to involve EVS volunteers in these measures.

Dissemination and Exploitation of Results

It is worth while informing others about the outcomes of EVS activities, both the Service and Learning parts. Successful projects can attract young people and organisations to join EVS. Actually, many volunteers hear about EVS from former volunteers. Organisations are also exchanging information and suggestions; it is always wise to ask organisations who have already finished an EVS project to share their experiences, in that way you can find out many small practical details that make projects even better. In this way, the outcomes of your project are multiplied.

Actors in EVS should promote their results at the policy level – mainstreaming as it is called in the Programme Guide. Mainstreaming is done through a structured and planned process of convincing decision-makers to use successful results from certain projects by incorporating them into local, regional, national or European systems and practices. Host and Sending Organisations and former EVS structures could get more recognition and support from different systems. For instance EVS could receive recognition in national legislation or co-funding from a local community. But this requires active promotion of positive experiences and the convincing of the wider public of the impacts of EVS.

Those actively involved in EVS know about the positive outcomes it produces, but it is another thing to convince other people – who might also be in power in some relevant institution – that EVS brings something positive to volunteers, projects and communities. Some Mayor of a small town in the Balkans or a member of the European Parliament may have never heard about EVS or they may not even like it. Potentially they could both do something good for EVS, if they started to like it. They will only start to like it if they hear about the positive outcomes.

It is not only the promoting of best practices and outcomes of each EVS project, it is also important to think about how we are doing it. In EVS projects, in the application stage, organisations are asked to plan how they will promote the results. This can of course happen after a project is over, as the focus is on the results and not on the service itself. Standard dissemination and exploitation measures may have the same format as visibility measures during the period of service (for instance a blog). These measures should also actively involve the volunteer. In this way projects can be promoted both in the hosting and sending country. Volunteers can involve their peers in volunteering, but can also multiply competences gained during service. Volunteers can also transfer methods and good practices between similar organisations in different countries.

Organisations and volunteers can plan additional dissemination and exploitation of the results of their activities and receive financial support within the EVS project. Possible activities are:

- organising public events: presentations, conferences, workshops...



- creating audio-visual products: CD-Rom, DVD, short movies...
- setting up long-term collaboration with the media: series of radio/TV/press contributions, interviews, participation in different radio/TV programmes...
- developing information material: newsletters, brochures, booklets, best practice manuals...
- creating an Internet portal

Such activities can take place in the hosting or sending country as well as on a European level, for instance through cooperation with similar organisations, joining different networks, initiatives and campaigns.

One of the great possibilities for promoting results of EVS activities is the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EYV 2011). There is more about the EYV 2011 and related actions at the European Volunteer Centre (CEV, www.cev.be). The link to the official decision on EYV 2011 in all European languages can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=198321

Can you think of more specific and innovative ways of how to promote the results of your EVS project?

photo: Ørjan Mikkelsen

Appendices



photo: MOVIT

- http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm - official database of accredited EVS organisations on the website of the European Commission. Browse projects by country, theme, duration and other criteria
- <http://www.salto-youth.net/database> - links to partner-finding tools created by SALTO SEE:
 - online SEE-EU Partner Searching Forum aimed at establishing partnerships for Youth in Action projects, including EVS (<http://partnerji.mojforum.si/>)
 - online database of Partner Organisations from SEE
- <http://www.mva.si/eu/> - database of youth partner organisations from the EU and beyond run by Eurodesk Slovenia
- <http://www.jugendfuereuropa.de/service/kontaktboerse/english/> - online forum of the German National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme
- <http://www.youthnetworks.eu/> - initiative of NoBorders to facilitate work of EVS organisations and involvement of young people in EVS
- <http://www.salto-youth.net> - official web page of SALTO-YOUTH. Among other contents, there you can also find information about events organised by the different SALTO Resource Centres, including contact-making and partnership-building activities
- <http://www.salto-youth.net/mySALTO/login/?pfad=/newsletter/> - registration page of SALTO-YOUTH. By signing in you can register for SALTO-YOUTH newsletters
- <http://groups.yahoo.com> - mailing groups of yahoo. In the search field try writing EVS, European Voluntary Service, Youth in Action or similar. Then you can ask to join the groups you find interesting
- <http://groups.google.com> - mailing groups of Google. The approach is the same as with yahoo
- www.facebook.com - the popular social networking site is also used for finding partners and projects within the Youth in Action Programme. There are a number of Facebook groups for this purpose, such as Youth Partner Network...

Appendix 2

Where to Find Support

Who can be contacted?	What kind of support can you expect?	Contact details
Your partner organisation	Your first partner to be contacted for all questions related to your EVS project during all stages of the project To be contacted in case of a conflict with the volunteer	Contact details of your partner organisation
Youth in Action National Agency Or	To be contacted by the Coordinating (applicant) Organisation for all issues related to the project grant (procedures, criteria, rules, obligations)	In the case where the project application was to the Youth in Action National Agency, it is to be contacted by the Coordinating Organisation coming from the Programme country.
Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency	Support in applying for visa and residence permit Contact in case of a conflict with your volunteer and/or partner organisation that you are unable to resolve among the project partners	For the contact list of all the National Agencies, consult the website of the European Commission (see below) In cases where the project was applied by an organisation from South East Europe, the Coordinating Organisation may reach the Executive Agency at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php
European Commission Youth website	The latest version of the Programme Guide with detailed information about the Youth in Action Programme Contact list of all National Agencies European database of accredited EVS organisations EVE - the electronic platform for the dissemination and exploitation of results of projects supported by programmes implemented by the Education and Culture Directorate-General. All application and report forms Useful resources, publications and documents related to programmes and major policy developments	http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

Who can be contacted?	What kind of support can you expect?	Contact details
SALTO-YOUTH South East Europe Resource Centre (SALTO SEE)	<p>Information and tools targeting in particular co-operation with South East Europe within the Youth in Action Programme</p> <p>Some materials about the Youth in Action Programme in your local language</p> <p>Accreditation of Expressions of Interest (to participate in EVS) for organisations in South East Europe</p> <p>EVS training cycle for volunteers in/from SEE</p> <p>Training opportunities in South East Europe</p> <p>Tools for finding partners</p> <p>SEE E-Newsletter</p> <p>Information about Youth in Action Contact Points in the countries of SEE</p> <p>Can be contacted for advice, also in case of serious difficulties in EVS projects (such as conflict with your partner organisation)</p>	<p>SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre</p> <p>MOVIT NA MLADINA (National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme in Slovenia)</p> <p>Dunajska cesta 22, SI- 1000 Ljubljana</p> <p>Tel: +386 1 430 47 47</p> <p>Fax: +386 1 430 47 49</p> <p>see@salto-youth.net</p> <p>www.salto-youth.net/see</p>
Contact points for Youth in Action Programme in South East Europe	<p>Information about the Youth in Action Programme and its possibilities</p> <p>Consultation on project development and partner-finding</p> <p>Promotion of the Programme, which might include local training activities</p> <p>Publications about the Programme in the local languages</p>	<p>List of all contacts at SALTO-YOUTH SEE website: www.salto-youth.net/contactpoints</p> <p>YiA web presentations developed by Contact Points:</p> <p>www.mladiuakciji.rs</p> <p>http://mladiuakciji.com/</p>
SALTO-YOUTH website	<p>Trainers on-line for Youth database (TOY)</p> <p>Toolbox for Training (database of training methods)</p> <p>European Training Calendar</p> <p>Information and resources of all eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres</p>	<p>www.salto-youth.net</p>
EURODESK	<p>Information for young people and youth workers about youth in Europe</p> <p>Information about funding possibilities</p> <p>Information about youth policy and research</p>	<p>www.eurodesk.org</p>

Appendix 3

Useful Links and Resources

About EVS

Introduction to EVS for interested young people:
<http://www.evsguide.eu/>

Introduction to EVS for interested organisations:
www.action2.eu

Collection of weblogs of EVS volunteers:
<http://www.myevs.net/>

Network of European volunteers' associations:
<http://www.neva-network.org/>

Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations:
<http://www.alliance-network.eu/>

The Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO):
www.avso.org

EVE (Online platform for the dissemination and exploitation of results of projects supported by programmes implemented by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture):
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/about_en.htm

“Stepping into EVS” (Accreditation guide for SEE)
<http://www.salto-youth.net/Elsee>

Non-formal education and learning

Youthpass Guide:
<http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpassguide/>

Youth Partnership training manuals (T-kits):
http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/T_kits/

Youth Partnership Coyote magazine:
<http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/Coyote>

UNIQUE 's Learning2Learn Project:
www.learning2learn.eu

The encyclopaedia of informal education:
www.infed.org

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – European Reference Framework:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf

Inclusion in Youth in Action

Inclusion booklets
<http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusionforall/>

“Including all with the Youth Programme” booklet
<http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusioninspiration/>

Youth in Action in South East Europe

Youth in Action contact points website in Serbia
www.mladiuakciji.rs

Youth in Action contact points website in BIH
<http://mladiuakciji.com/>

South East Europe Youth Network (SEEYN)
<http://www.seeyn.org/>

Agency for mobility and EU programmes in Croatia
<http://www.mobilnost.hr/>

National agency for European educational programmes and mobility in FYR Macedonia
<http://www.na.org.mk/>

EU Enlargement

Enlargement DG of the European Commission
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm

Accreditation: process that ensures that promoters wishing to participate in an EVS project comply with the pre-set quality standards of Action 2. In order to be accredited, promoters must fill-in and submit an 'Expression of Interest' form, which mainly contains the general motivations and ideas of the promoter regarding the EVS activities.

Applicant: promoter who submits a project in order to get a grant. The applicant either: 1) applies in order to receive a grant covering only the activities it is responsible for (consult the definition of 'split funding'); or 2) applies for the whole project on behalf of all promoters (consult the definition of 'one sided funding').

Beneficiary: if the project is selected, the applicant becomes the beneficiary of the Youth in Action Programme grant, signs the grant agreement, receives a financial grant for the project and assumes the responsibilities for its implementation.

Coordinating Organisation (CO): promoter carrying out at least the following tasks: 1) bearing the financial and administrative responsibility for the entire project vis-à-vis the National or Executive Agency; 2) coordinating the project in cooperation with the partner promoters; and 3) distributing the EU grant between the promoters according to their roles within the project. The Coordinating Organisation assumes the role of 'applicant' in case of projects supported through one-sided funding.

Duration of project: period which includes the preparation phase, the implementation of the Activity and the evaluation phase (including reflection on a possible follow-up).

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency: operational since 2006 and located in Brussels, the Executive Agency (EACEA) has the mission to implement a number of strands of more than 15 Community funded programmes and actions in the fields of education and training, active citizenship, youth, audiovisual and culture. Website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php

EVS Activity Agreement: internal agreement among EVS promoters and volunteer(s) formalising their distribution of tasks, responsibilities and the share of the EVS grant.

EVS Activity: core part of the EVS project composed of the EVS service, the EVS Training and Evaluation cycle and the different kinds of support provided by the promoters for the volunteer(s).

EVS Charter: European Commission's document highlighting the roles of each promoter in an EVS project, as well as the main principles and quality standards of EVS.

EVS project: the framework for one or several EVS Activities, clustered in one grant application. An EVS project has 3 phases: 1) Planning and Preparation; 2) Implementation

of the Activity/ies and; 3) Evaluation (including reflection on the possible Follow-up).

EVS service: actual period of the volunteer's stay and involvement in the activities with the Host Organisation – from the arrival to the departure date.

EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle: compulsory trainings and evaluations, used for preparing and helping the volunteers before, during and after their EVS service.

Expression of Interest (EI): please consult the definition of 'accreditation'.

Follow-up: set of activities/projects carried out after the project is finished in order to keep the project's results alive and sustainable and to increase its impact.

Host Organisation (HO): promoter hosting the Activity/service of a Youth in Action project.

National Agencies (NA's): structures established by the National authorities in each Programme country in order to manage and implement the Youth in Action Programme at a decentralised level.

One-sided funding: form of financing applied to one single promoter who submitted an application for the whole project on behalf of all the promoters. If the project is granted, the applicant will be the beneficiary of a single grant agreement.

Promoter: any organisation, body or group of young people involved in the implementation of a Youth in Action project. Depending on its role in the project, a promoter can be a partner, an applicant and/or a beneficiary.

Sending Organisation (SO): promoter sending a (group of) volunteer(s) enabling them to take part in an Activity/service abroad.

South East Europe: one of the three Neighbouring Partner Regions of the Youth in Action Programme. It consists of the following partner countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (under UNSC Resolution 1244/1999), Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Full membership in the Youth in Action Programme of Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is expected for the beginning of 2011.

Split funding: form of financing applied to all the promoters who submitted separately to their respective National Agency an application related to their part of the project. If all the applications are selected, each applicant will be the beneficiary of a grant agreement.

Youthpass: recognition strategy enabling participants of the Youth in Action Programme to receive a certificate describing and validating their non-formal learning experience.

For a more comprehensive Glossary of terms used in Youth in Action Programme, consult the latest version of the Programme Guide.

The following forms and templates are examples and are intended only as guidelines for you to create your own.

Appendix 5a

Volunteer Application Form

The Volunteer Application Form is one of the most efficient tools to match a volunteer with the appropriate project. It should preferably be short and clear, but cover all the basic relevant information.

Application Form

Personal Details

- Name
- Age
- Sex

Contact Address: where you can be reached for all purposes concerning this application

- Address
- Telephone
- E-mail

Other Personal Details

- Date of Birth
- Nationality
- Place of Birth
- Passport number

Additional Personal Information

- Marital status, family members, etc.

Additional Contacts for Cases of Emergency

- Family's address/telephone/email, if different from yours
- Person to be contacted in case of emergency (name, address, telephone, e-mail)

Volunteers Background and Experience

- Please describe your current living situation (with family/friends, house/flat, city/small town)
- Please describe your education background/training
- Additional comments you want to add

- Please give details of any previous or current work experience
- What is your mother tongue?
- Do you speak any foreign languages?
- What are your hobbies?



photo: Youth Cultural Centre Abrašević

- What are your plans for your future?
- Please describe yourself, including your strengths and weaknesses
- Please describe briefly a national and/or international issue that has affected you
- Do you have any international experience (for example: participation in camps or conferences in other countries, contact with people of other cultures, etc.)?
- Have you been involved in any organisations, movements, service programmes or other projects? If so, please give details

Motivation and Expectations

- What is your understanding of voluntary work?
- What are your main reasons for going abroad?
- What type of voluntary work would you like to do and why? (please list project preferences)
- Preferred country/region? (if there are more placements in different countries or regions)
- What skills do you have? (working with children/youth, working with disabled people, teaching, sports, music, working with elderly people, computers, manual skills, others)
- Do you have a drivers licence? If so, would you be willing to drive in a foreign country?
- What do you hope to gain from and achieve during the voluntary service?

Some Concrete Attitudes and Needs

- What challenges and difficulties do you think you will encounter living in another culture with a different set of values?
- Indicate your preference from the following types of living situations in which you would like to be placed? (Host family, living in a residential social work project, shared accommodation, etc.)
- Do you have any objections to sharing a room?
- Do you smoke?
- Do you have any special dietary requirements

Some Space for Additional Information from the Volunteer/Applicant

-

Invitation letter for the volunteer to be presented to the embassy

INVITATION LETTER

This is to certify that...

Full name of the volunteer, born on date of birth, in place of birth, country of birth, passport Nr. number of passport of the volunteer

has been accepted as a participant in the "name of the EVS project", which is organised by full name of the applicant organisation with the support of the European Commission in the framework of the European Voluntary Service programme within the Youth in Action Programme of the European Union.

In the framework of the above-mentioned project number of the project, name of the volunteer will participate from volunteer's time of arrival in the host country to date of departure in the voluntary service project "name of the EVS project", in town and country of the placement of the volunteer, under the supervision and responsibility of name of the Host Organisation / names of Host and Co-ordinating organisations, following the terms of the European Voluntary Service Programme of the European Commission.

Name of the Host Organisation guarantees to take full responsibility for all expenses incurred by name of the volunteer during the above-mentioned period, including insurance, board and lodging, pocket money, as well as domestic and international travel costs.

Short information (max. 2 sentences) about the Host Organisation (head office, mission or goals)

We would appreciate any assistance you can provide in order to make this exchange program possible and we remain at your entire disposal should any further clarification be necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Date, place

responsible person
Host Organisation

Note: The underlined spaces should be filled in with information by the user.

In order to obtain a visa or residence permit for the host country, volunteers need to present to their embassy an invitation letter from their Host Organisation, which is addressed directly to the embassy. It should be short and clear, and provide five pieces of information:

Part 1

Full data about the volunteer

Part 2

Name of the EVS project and of the applicant organisation

Part 3

Time of the volunteer's arrival and departure, place (town, village) of the host placement

Confirmation of responsibility taken on by the Host /Co-ordinating Organisation

Part 4

Host Organisations guarantee of full responsibility for the expenses that are covered for the volunteer

Part 5

Short information about the Host/Coordinating Organisation

Note: The invitation letter should be properly signed by the responsible person, and confirmed by the stamp of the Host/Co-coordinating Organisation

Welcome letter for the volunteer

Letter head

Address
Address
Address

Date

Dear *name of the volunteer*,

We are happy to confirm your participation in the European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme and in this specific project. All members of staff and volunteers in our organisation are sending you a warm welcome!

We are looking forward to your arrival and stay in our country and organisation, and we will be happy to introduce you to our work and culture.

Who are we?

Short description of the organisation's aims and objectives

Short description of the staff that the volunteer will work with

Why did we want to have an EVS volunteer?

Short description of the reasons for hosting this EVS project

What can you do to make your participation successful?

Host Organisation's main expectations from the volunteer

What will we do to make this project successful?

Short description of the initiatives and support that the Host Organisation will provide

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Looking forward to seeing you!

Host Organisation team

Minimum requirements for an Activity Agreement (Programme Guide, 2010)



photo: MOVIT

The Activity Agreement is a key element to ensure a solid partnership among promoters and volunteers in each EVS Activity. It shall contain at least the following information:

1. Project title and reference of the grant agreement (if applicable)
2. Names of the Coordinating Organisation, the Sending Organisation(s) and the Host Organisation(s) involved in the Activity
3. Role and tasks of the volunteer(s)
4. Division of rights and responsibilities among promoters and volunteers
5. Division of the EU grant (according to the above responsibilities)
6. Names and signatures of the representatives of all promoters in the Activity
7. Names and signatures of all volunteers involved in the Activity
8. A table with all volunteer details (working hours, practical arrangements, expected learning process and learning objectives of the volunteer)

A copy of the signed Agreement must be submitted to the granting Agency, either together with the application form or at a later stage. In this last circumstance, the agreement must be sent at least 6 weeks before the Activity starts.

It must also be handed out to all partner promoters and volunteers involved in the Activity.

This Agreement is binding on all partner promoters and volunteers involved in the Activity. In case of substantial modifications, a new agreement has to be signed and an updated table with all volunteer's details has to be sent to the granting Agency for information.

Notes About the Contributors



Darko Markovic is from Belgrade, Serbia: Trainer, psychologist and psychodrama therapist, one of the founders of Grupa “Hajde da...” www.hajdeda.org.rs and founder and owner of ‘Inn.Side – people and training’. Member of the Council of Europe DYS Pool of Trainers and the SOHO training team. As a trainer, he has been working with various social groups: youth, NGOs, youth workers, teachers, trainers, public servants, managers etc. His main areas of interest are training of trainers, intercultural learning, emotional intelligence, EVS related training and better social recognition of non-formal education both at national and European level. His training motto is: Training with passion - Learning with smile.

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Dragan Atanasov is from Skopje, Macedonia: Youth worker, project manager and trainer, currently working for the Youth Association creACTIVE (www.cre-act-ive.org). Since 2007, he has also been involved in the work of SALTO-YOUTH SEE as an EVS accreditor and trainer of EVS training sessions. As a project manager, he has implemented a number of local and international youth projects, including EVS, exchanges and training courses. He is mainly focused on supporting the creativity of young people. As a trainer, he mostly works on the training of youth work, intercultural learning, project management and active citizenship.

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Domagoj Kovacic, is from Zagreb, Croatia: He has been involved in the EC YOUTH Programme and EVS since 2003. He started to work as ICYE regional coordinator for SEE for multilateral EVS and information projects. He has worked with different youth, volunteering and environmental organisations in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These include; Youth Centre Livno, Green Action, Volunteers Centre Zagreb, Una Emeralds and Local Democracy Agency Sisak. He works as accreditor and trainer in the EVS training cycle for SALTO SEE RC. Since 1999 he has been involved in the work of the South East European Youth Network that focuses on youth volunteering in SEE region; he is a Board member and trainer. Currently, he works as Executive Director of SEEYN in the Secretariat in Sarajevo.

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SALTO-YOUTH stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European Union's Youth in Action Programme.

SALTO-YOUTH is a network of eight Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. The Centres provide youth work and training resources and organise training and partner-finding activities to support organisations, youth workers and National Agencies responsible for the implementation of the Youth in Action Programme. The network is part of the European Commission's Training Strategy within this Programme. It works in synergy with other partners in the field. In 2010 SALTO-YOUTH celebrates its 10th anniversary. More information: www.salto-youth.net

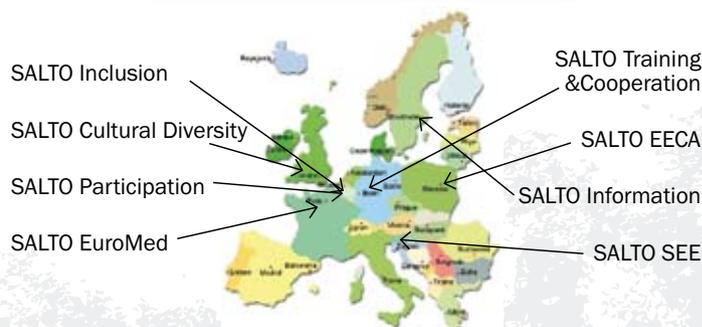
What is the SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre (SALTO SEE)?

SALTO SEE was established by the European Commission in April 2002. It aims to facilitate, increase and consolidate the participation of partners from South East Europe in the Youth in Action Programme through training and partner-finding activities and various other tools. The political framework for its work is the EU's enlargement policy towards all the countries of the region and the aim to work towards European standards in the youth field in/with the region.

Its office in Ljubljana, Slovenia, works with the support of networks of trainers and accreditors, in particular within the European Voluntary Service strand of the Programme, as well as Youth in Action Contact Points located in the countries of South East Europe.

The main activities of SALTO SEE include accreditation of EVS promoters in South East Europe, implementation of the EVS training cycle for volunteers in South East Europe, training and partner-finding activities for youth leaders and youth workers, collection and production of resource materials, and providing individual support, information and advice. SALTO SEE works in cooperation and networking with other European institutions and actors in the field of youth and non-formal education.

Where are the SALTO's based?



www.salto-youth.net/see

**SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre
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Slovenia**

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REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA ŠOLSTVO IN ŠPORT
URAD ZA MLADINO

