



Erasmus+

EVS GUIDE

GOOD PRACTICES IN EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROJECTS



kaebnai

kultur arteko ekintza berria
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PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

This EVS Guide was developed in partnership with the following European Non-Governmental Organizations:

- Austria –Spiku
- Belgium - JOETZ VZW (Youth and Civil initiatives in the rose valley NGO)
- Bulgaria - Youth and Civil initiatives in the rose valley NGO
- Croatia – RAPLECTION
- Cyprus - Learning Centre for Youth
- Czech Republic - KURO Hradec Kralove
- Denmark - Brønderslev Ungdomsskole
- Estonia - Continuous Action
- France - Les chemins de l'Europe
- France - Centre des Bureaux
- Germany - Open Door International e.V.
- Greece - United Societies of Balkans – U.S.B.
- Hungary - NYITOTTÁS A VILÁGRA ALAPÍTVÁNY
- Ireland - County Limerick Youth Theatre
- Italy - TDM 2000 International
- Latvia - Baltic Regional fund
- Lithuania - Visagino kurybos namai
- Poland – Laja Foundation
- Portugal – Associação Spin
- Romania – Ofensiva Tinerilor
- Slovakia – Mladiinfo Slovakia
- Slovenia - SKUC Association
- Spain – KAEBNAI
- Sweden – A-net YouthForum
- United Kingdom - Community Action Dacorum

Coordination by Kaebnai

Participants gathered from 10 -17 of December 2014 in Zarautz – Spain at the Seminar

“EVS practice sharing event”

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1. WHY AN EVS GUIDE AND HOW TO USE IT



WHY AN EVS GUIDE AND HOW TO USE IT



This EVS Guide - Good Practices in European Voluntary Projects was developed with the help of different persons involved in EVS Projects - namely members of Sending and Receiving European organizations, coordinators, mentors and ex-volunteers - in order to gather a diverse range of information that may be useful to the different roles.

Kaebnai will also be, for the second time, a Receiving organization in the year 2015, and the information here gathered will be used for improving the quality of the last phase of project – 9 EVS volunteers from 9 different EU countries doing their service during 2015.

The Guide is structured in 8 chapters, each one covering particular topics indicated above on the 2nd and 3rd pages of this Guide.

2. TO SEND OR TO HOST:

THAT'S THE QUEVSTION



2.1. Being a Sending Organization

To be a Sending organisation you need to be accredited by the National Agency. As an organisation you need to apply for the accreditation. Once it is accepted you are in a position to send the volunteers abroad. Please visit your NA website for further information.



The aspects the sending organisation and potential volunteer need to consider:

Positive:

- Without SO there is nobody to host
- We give an opportunity to participate
- We manage more paper work in the beginning
- We do pre-departure training
- Sending organization is doing the advertising in host country
- We find partnerships
- We help with the travel
- When RO makes a mess, we have to clean it up and bring volunteer home
- We give opportunities to young people
- We spread our culture in the countries where we are sending volunteers
- We make the world more achievable for youth
- Volunteers gain the knowledge and experience which they later share with us and local community

Negative:

- No clear instructions before the departure (no pre-departure training/ meeting)
- No pre-departure training
- No contact with the sending organization during the EVS project
- No contact with volunteers often during the EVS
- Dissemination is expected from EVS but no support is provided by the sending organization.
- There is more responsibility in the beginning
- Poor selection of volunteers (the right selection of the volunteers is quite important; selection by SO and RO in cooperation)
- No cooperation with the Receiving Organization
- Not having an after-meeting/reflections

2.2. Being a Receiving Organization

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To be a Receiving organisation you need to be accredited by the National Agency. As an organisation you need to apply for the accreditation. Once it is accepted you are in a position to host the volunteers from abroad. Please visit your NA website for further information.

Positive:

- Skype interviews
- Check organizations
- Extra pair of hands
- Raise a project
- Prepare well to receive a volunteer
- Receiving organizations provide detailed information of their activities and local areas —
> Introductions to the project
- Intercultural awareness
- Overcoming challenges

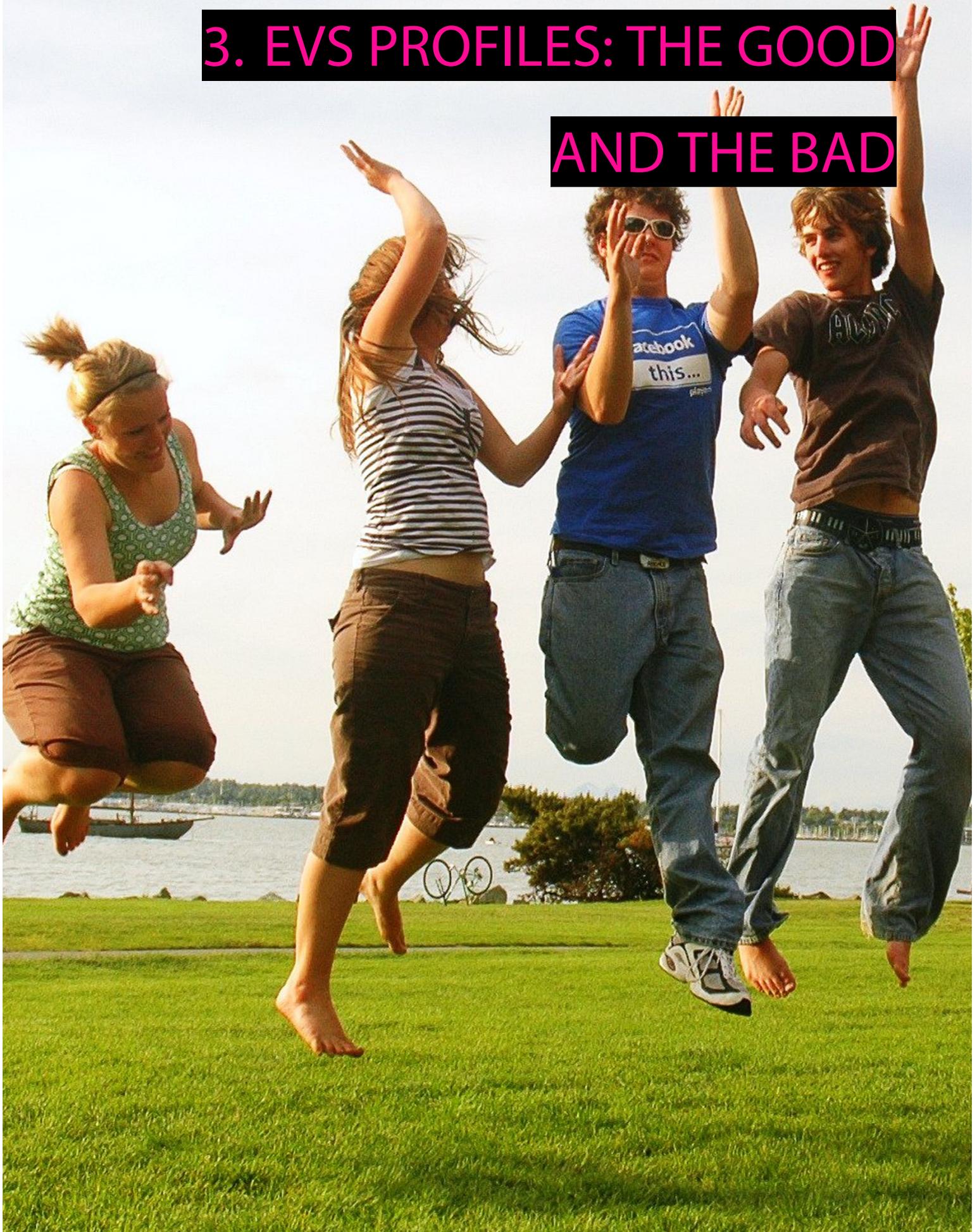
- Exchange of ideas and knowledge, exchange between everybody and the different cultures
- Financial support for volunteers
- The mentor is a friend and a personal guide
- Communicate with previous organization/volunteer —> Good communication
- Personal space for increasing confidence/independence
- Supporting volunteers to take part of the seminars (good for the volunteers and also for the influence to the project)

Negative:

- Too much paper work for the organization
- Need to find mentors, accommodation, etc.
- More responsibility during the project than the sending organization
- Volunteer may not fulfill expectation of the receiving organization
- They have to spend pretty much time for volunteers and deal with their problems, conflicts
- Provide the trainings (on arrival, mid-term and evaluation)
- Host organization must also provide technical trainings

3. EVS PROFILES: THE GOOD

AND THE BAD



3.1. Volunteers

POSITIVE ATTITUDES	NEGATIVE ATTITUDES
Organized	Homesick
Independent	Lazy
Responsible	Grumpy
Ready to make a challenge	Not creative
Positive	Pessimistic
Open-minded	Problematic
Excited	Inflexible

3.2. Mentors

POSITIVE ATTITUDES	NEGATIVE ATTITUDES
Friendly	Grumpy
Smiley	Unfriendly
Positive	Negative
Curious	Not interested
Social	Aggressive
Interested in cultures	Dominant
Organized	Unwilling to help

3.3. Coordinators

POSITIVE ATTITUDES	NEGATIVE ATTITUDES
Organized	Bossy
Knowledge of relations	Not ethical
European awareness	Lazy
Willing to make decisions	Not interested
Willing to help	Negative
Responsible	Overwhelmed
Communicative	Impatient

4. EVS CONFLICT RESOLUTION



4.1. Conflict scenarios

These are some of the short scenarios of conflicts highlighted during the EVS volunteering by the participants of seminar. They are taken from reality and given as examples of what kind of conflicts could appear during the service:

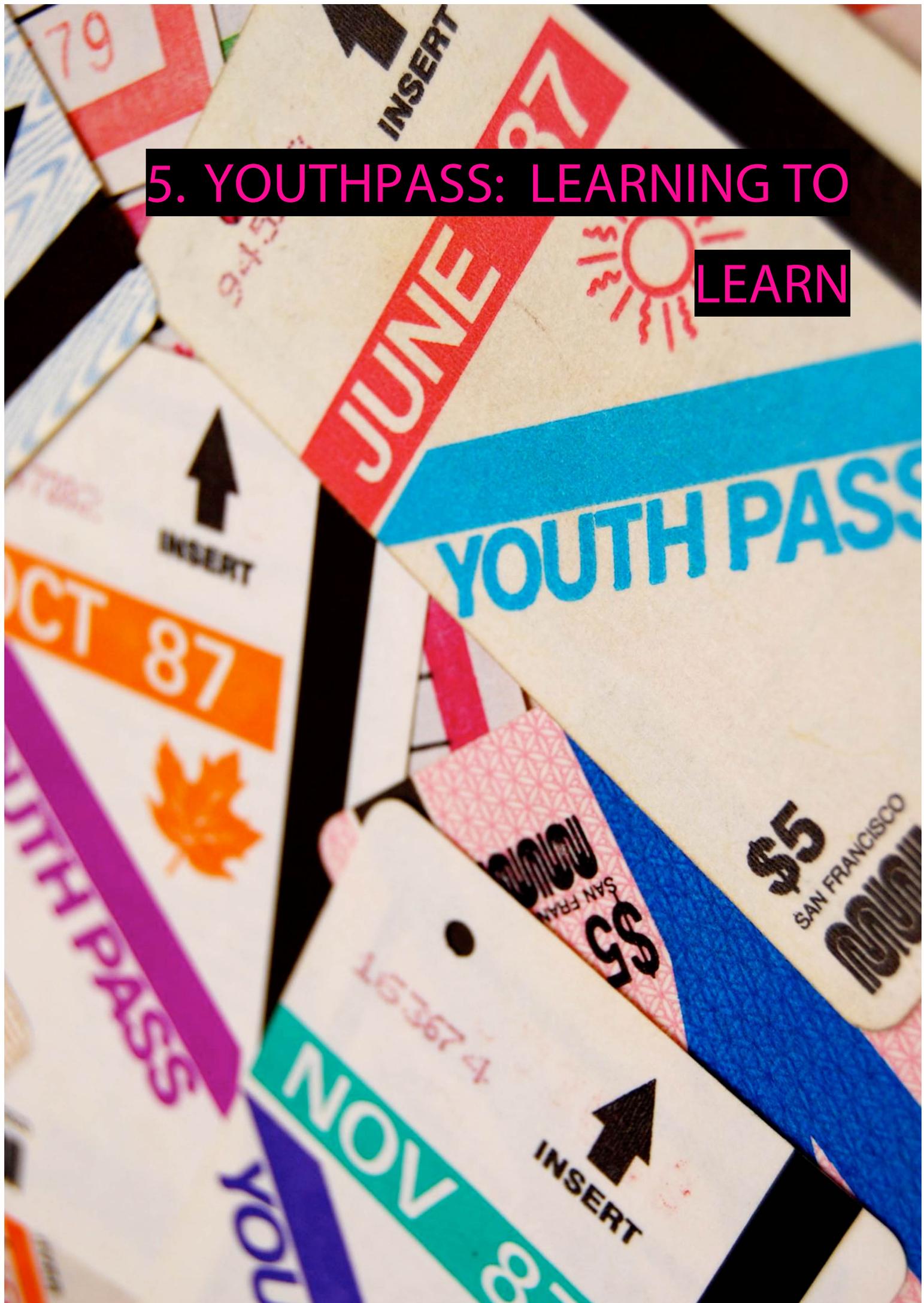


- There was a fight about a stolen wallet. Due to the language barrier miscommunication took place between 2 EVS volunteers. Local citizen was very helpful who called the mentor but mentor failed to resolve the conflict.
- Excited volunteers arrive at school. They talk about what are their expectations from the project according to the description given by the organization. The coordinators divided the tasks between the volunteers explaining the future tasks to them. The expectations and reality were totally different which resulted the conflict between the volunteers and the organization.
- EVS volunteer working with disabled people was very nervous and smoked a lot. One day he gave drugs to a young girl with mental health problems. The drugs had severe impact on the girl that she decided to commit suicide. When the coordinator found out about it,

the conflict started. They had a huge disagreement about the volunteer's behavior and it resulted into a massive problem. Two other volunteers saw this incident and told the coordinator. They also mentioned about other problems they had with that volunteer's behavior.

- Our conflict dealt around the story of an EVS flat mate that fell seriously sick/ill (something like bronchitis). He coughed all night, woke up all the flat mates who need to wake up early in the morning for work. He refused to take medicines and visit a doctor. After a month the situation was getting worse and worse and the anger raised resulting a conflict between all the volunteers.
- 2 Volunteers decided to use the Association's computer without permission. They were aware that it's against the rules but they did it anyway. While using the computer they damaged it. They were not willing to take the responsibility, so they left the office without informing the staff. In the next day the mentor and the coordinator tried to use the computer and they found out that it's broken. After the discussion amongst the staff they decided to call the volunteers in to talk to them about the broken computer. During the discussion the volunteer's admitted the mistake but they were not willing to contribute to the repairing costs.
- During EVS stay volunteer broke her leg. She tried to contact mentor (who was at the protest). Coordinator was on holidays so unable to contact. Volunteer finally called the hospital with limited language skills and the message was "currently all lines are busy" please call back. Friend was also out partying, so, unable to reach. Volunteer was without any medical help for 12 hours which could have been disastrous.

5. YOUTHPASS: LEARNING TO LEARN



What is it and why is it important

Youthpass is a document, where you write down everything you have achieved/ learned during the EVS. Therefore, you in the end have all the learnings, competences and achievements in one place, which can also help you with your employment.

5.1. Tips for writing your Youthpass

But how can you remember all the competences after 2 or even 12 months? Here are some tools to help you write the best Youthpass.



- It's good to have weekly meetings (personal) with mentor/coordinator/friends from project. After that, it could be monthly. In the meetings you together discuss and evaluate the experiences, activities, try to find the key competences/ learnings/ skills/ knowledge and write them them down.
- Write down daily report/notes about new learnings and activities you were involved in. Then mentor can give you feedback. You collect all the notes and digitalize them weekly.
- Monthly or every week/2 weeks make a list of tasks which you want achieve.
- You can make a (video) blog, video/photo collage, photo diary, record your reflections, thoughts about your work/how you realize them, your feelings.

- Make a graphic form for your tasks (write when it will finish, if it was challenging, relevant, new, etc.), comics (do a picture, draw it, resume in it events or tasks from your job), flip chart (the concept is the same as diary but more visual).
- www.leargas.ie/YouthPassGuideApril09.pdf can help you to reflect how the problems change after time, how were they in the beginning. Access the template from the website or create your own competencies. The 8 key competencies for volunteer to complete are: digital competences, learning to learn, mathematical competences in science and technology, communication in foreign language, communication in a mother tongue, interpersonal, intercultural and social competencies and civic competencies, cultural expression and entrepreneurship.
- Write a letter to yourself and open it in the middle of the project. It can be motivational or more like a reminder.

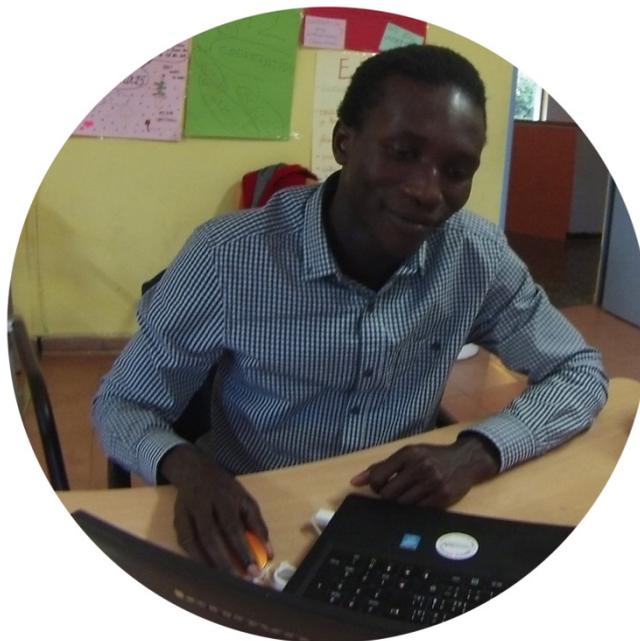
6. GOOD PRACTICES IN EVS: KEYS FOR SUCCESS



6.1. Sending organization's role

Ways of finding a project or receiving organization:

- a) Finding a project by a sending organization using database, websites, blogs, Facebook, etc.
- Collect applications for project from possible volunteers (motivation letter and written resume and/or video)
- Apply for the project to the receiving organization
- Select volunteers: Personal meetings or Skype meetings to hear the motivation and expectations of the volunteer and get more information about receiving organization



When the volunteer is selected, the sending organization provides:

- Preparation/orientation meeting
- ✓ Overview of the cultures
- ✓ Intercultural preparation
- ✓ Role structure of the EVS (information about host organization + mentor) / expectations

- ✓ Money overview
 - ✓ Agreements, insurance, tickets
-
- Applying for funds to National Agency.
-
- b) Sending organization publishes approved projects.

During the EVS:

- Keeps contact with the volunteer and receiving organization
- Offers support when volunteer has problems/conflict
- Makes sure the volunteer received on-arrival and mid-term (in case it's a long-term project) trainings

6.2. Receiving organisation's role

- Accreditation of organisation
- Develop a project and apply to National Agency
- Select Volunteers (EVS) then apply to National Agency (both processes are used in various countries)
- Have EVS profiles, CVs, Motivation letter, introduction video. Joint approach by host and EVS
- Skype meeting and having clear information about the organization and person attending
- Accommodation arrangements: shared flat/house, hostel, hosting family (there are advantages + disadvantages)
- Flight + Insurance (host organization responsibility); transport from airport, local transport
- Advance Planning Visit (advisable but optional)
- Introduction to the organization, local area facilities and mentor
- EVS weekly allowance (have a paper signed acknowledgement of money)
- Programmes of activities (can be weekly or monthly)

- Around 6 Hours a day volunteering however if they do something over the weekend they need a day off in the week day
- 2 days off a week and 2 days holidays a month
- Languages classes (if required)

Possibilities in accommodation:

- Participants can live in apartment, hostel, host family, or dormitory. The place should be spacious and the maximum participants in one flat shouldn't be higher than the facilities (bathroom, kitchen) can accommodate. It's a good idea if the volunteer lives close to his or her working place. The place should be fully-equipped. Wi-Fi should be provided
- Also, it is possible to allocate budget for accommodation and allow the volunteer to find a suitable apartment for him or herself with help of the host organization



Coordinator's and mentor's roles

This part of the guide will talk about the Coordinator's and Mentor's role. It will give you step by step information about how the EVS project is managed.

Coordinator's role:

- The coordinator's role is to manage the EVS project as well as keep contact with the sending organisation prior to exchange. The coordinator puts the project together and sends the application to the National Agency. Once the project is funded the Coordinator needs to do the following:
- To find out as much as possible about the volunteer through Skype, emails and/or social networking.
- To have a better understating of volunteer and to establish better working relationship. it's better to have a Skype interview with volunteering asking them variety of questions. It gives coordinator a better picture of the EVS/volunteer.
- It is the responsibility of Coordinator to help to book the flight and arrange the travel from the airport to place where they will stay. They are introduced to the accommodation on a very 1st day and information is provided to them in terms of what facilities they have in the house and what rules they need to respect.
- Once the volunteer is in the country of host it is coordinator's responsibility to provide them with one or two days of full introduction to their organisation and local facilities of the areas in which they are in, e.g. local library, hospital, police, medical centre and cultural activities. They should also provide Information on transport and on supermarkets.
- The coordinator shares the programme of activities with the volunteer and how much allowance they will be having while they are volunteering. This is based on the local inflation rate.
- The volunteer is introduced to the Mentor during the introduction by the Coordinator or it can be few days after.

Mentor's Role:

- The mentor's role is to be impartial during the project delivery. The mentor needs to have the full knowledge of the project as well as the organisation. It is recommended that the Mentor is from outside the organisation however the down side of that is they are not familiar with the project which is sometimes not very practical.
- The mentor should be a person who introduces local culture and cultural places in informal environment. Helps in orientation in the city/town/village.
- The mentor should make meetings with volunteer to evaluate his/her volunteering and in case of any emergency inform the coordinator and organization with the agreement of volunteer.
- The mentor has to be a person whom the volunteer contacts in case of any everyday necessities or problems that mentor could solve for or together with the volunteer
- They are like a friend and listening ear to the EVS volunteer. The mentor will talk to them about the Youthpass during the project. They will talk to them about 8 competences mentioned in the Youthpass. For further information please visit the website: <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>
- They will resolve the conflict if arises during the service however the mentor is unable to resolve the conflict unless the coordinator steps in.
- If the Mentor leaves the organisation or job it is important that the replacement is found immediately.

6.3. Local integration

Local integration is crucial for the volunteer. Receiving organisation has to try it's best to help volunteer integrate in local society. Below you will find some clues to it.



- Receiving organization has to send information pack to EVS prior to departure, including local area information and basic information about the country.
- Receiving organization should facilitate information to volunteers (email, telephone, Skype ID, Facebook) so he or she feels comfortable and can always contact the host organization.
- Receiving organization should provide website of the organization, some videos of previous volunteers and the city where the project takes place to see and learn about the area and country. Facilitate contact with previous volunteers.
- Receiving organization has to register volunteers on on-arrival training for EVS.
- Introduction by the receiving organization to local volunteers and/or members, local area, facilities, local cultural activities matching their interests, supermarkets, police, library, hospital, school.
- Getting volunteers involved in events: festivals, such as Christmas lights, summer fairs, etc.
- Encourage volunteers to try local food, visit places, theatres, etc.

- Encourage volunteers to talk to locals and make a video about the history of the area where they live.
- Introduce the volunteers to the neighbourhood, families, mentor friends and all the staff members.
- Language classes, encourage volunteers to share their interests and hobbies with the local community.
- Tell volunteers about national history, political and social systems, laws and economical issues.
- Intercultural exchange with staff members.
- Receiving organization should help the volunteer to deal with cultural shock. Try to find different activities, help to make his or her comfort zone bigger.

6.4. Linguistic training

The volunteers have to be provided with a linguistic training of local language(s). The duration of training depends on organisation's decision how long the volunteers need it to accomplish the goal of it. For better learning results good to consider the following:

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- Best to get attention early with non-formal activities (songs, games, role plays, etc.)
- Small groups work much better. They learn much faster

- Charismatic teachers, who are creative, are the best. Create many conversations. Students need to start speaking from day one
 - It is good to introduce vocabulary that is similar in both languages. Motivation to take part and continue doing so
 - Especially long-term it is beneficial to have textbook for visual input
 - Teachers need to start using the local language increasingly more
 - Mixing classroom exercises with real life scenarios (go to market, bargain the price etc.)
 - Lessons should be systematic and regular
 - Creativity needs to be emphasized
 - It is good to carry a notebook and always increase vocabulary
 - Organizing a language club where volunteers can practice their language through fun activities
 - Mentors as trainers (practice language)
 - Mixed groups - (EVS volunteers + locals) to meet in bar, café – shared leisure times...
 - Classes with volunteers are cheaper than teacher
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-
- Regular structured language classes
 - Speed date
 - Tandem
 - Intercultural evening
 - Implementing local language gradually during work
 - Outdoor tasks
 - Couch surfing
 - EU links language courses
 - Meetings / debates about topics to practice language
 - Linguistic games
 - Stickers with words in local language (to use at home, office, other working place(s))
 - Language apps
 - Electronic language courses

6.5. Technical training



- During the EVS, starting from the beginning, receiving organization should provide technical training for the volunteers
- Each of the technical trainings should be adequate to the tasks the volunteers will perform

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For example: work in school (space you are working with, the team teachers, directors etc., children/pupils, mentors or someone else should introduce you to the others with whom you will be working together. Together with some teachers, director you can prepare plan of activities and show the schedule of schools special days).

Environmental protection: know the tools and methods you are going to use. There could be intercultural exchange showing the volunteers around. Also, you are focused on cultural learning and sharing. You have to show them organization and tools, materials and methods which are useful for work. In addition, it is important to remember about giving them a plan of activities. If they live in a hostel/family you must introduce them to the environment.

- Showing them around the working area
- Introducing them to the people from the organization
- Introducing the tasks and creating a plan of daily activities
- Insuring that the volunteer has someone ready to help and support in any case

- If it is necessary organization must arrange the translator for a while (provide lessons) for on effective communication about the tasks.
- Present to the volunteer the material, tools and methods, it has to use in the development of the activities.
- Warn volunteer of some dangers that may exist and present them necessary safety measures.

6.6. Meals

Here you will find some good and bad practices experienced in different EVS projects of different countries.



Good practices	Bad practices
Receiving organization gives the volunteer money to buy food.	The receiving organization does not provide food money on time or does not do it at all.
If receiving organization buys the food, then the volunteer might be able to make the shopping list.	The organization does not support (by providing materials about cooking, cheap places to buy food) a volunteer in case s/he has difficulties to find/cook it by himself/herself.
Cooking classes from the organization to the volunteer or from the volunteer to the	Canteen prepares unbalanced meals for the volunteer.

organization or other local people.	
Seminars about healthy food for volunteer, receiving organization and local people.	Receiving organization buys the food without asking the volunteer.
Starting an ecological garden or small farm animals.	The receiving organization buys the food, but frozen and precooked meals.
Information from the organization about local farmers and markets.	Sometimes organization does not provide promised meal or forgets to do it.
Providing information about access to meals in restaurants or similar services instead also.	

6.7. Leisure time

Let's see how you can enjoy your free time during the service.



An example of free time use during one week:

- Monday: local language classes (2h) – exercises (yoga, dancing, running)
- Tuesday: concerts, exhibitions of local artists
- Wednesday: cooking classes/restaurants (Teach him/her how to cook their classical food)
- Thursday: Language classes
- Friday: Meet other volunteers. Party time (perfect time to speak with locals)
- Saturday-Sunday: 2 days trip around the country

Mentors have an important role in volunteer's leisure time, therefore they can support a volunteer in organizing them and even take part in if available. See the possible list below:



- Planning with volunteer about the activities to do
- Invite the volunteer to participate in the local festivities (Christmas, Carnival, Pintxo-pote etc.)
- Discovering the country and neighboring towns
- Learning lunch, cultural nights: video from home countries, movies, homemade traditional food
- Cooking lessons, barbecue etc.

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Some suggestions for a volunteer to experience more fruitful and creative activities during the project could be:

- Starting a new project during the project. For example:
 - ✓ Social work
 - ✓ Physical activities for disabled people (yoga, gymnastics, dancing, etc)
 - ✓ Intercultural days for kids
- Language lessons
- Community work. For example: Picking up trash, gardening, recycling
- Making crafts out of recycled material
- Creating awareness videos

6.8. Travel and VISA

Here below you will find some useful information about the travel and VISA issue.



- Hosting families / organization info pack about the place where volunteer will stay and about bus / train companies
- Volunteer looking for the best way how to manage the trip
- Volunteer sending potential possibility for trip
- Traveling to the project site

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Info pack

- Scheduled for bus / train from the airport to organization
- Nearest airport
- Nearest bus stop at the airport
- Web pages for the cheapest tickets
- Map of the town with marked way to organization
- Prices for the bus / train ticket
- Pick up the volunteer at the airport
- Local trips → host organization sends information about prices, bus schedules, accommodation



VISA

- Some countries require visa to enter
- Application dates: some countries require different processing dates. It is very important to plan the visa acquiring carefully and thoroughly
- There are different dates for processing
- Visas are for different duration and purposes (travel, work, study, vacation...)
- Prices can vary (short visas are cheaper).
- Sometimes official invitation is required
- In some cases it is enough to just register your residency
- In Schengen area you enter once and can more freely travel
- Some countries require a visit to the embassy, others enable to do it through internet
- In some countries person can stay for some time (3 months) before visa is required
- Invitation letter is sometimes needed
- Registration of the volunteer in the police / public services
- Paperwork can be complicated. Be prepared!
- Keep informed your National Agency

7. I WANT TO BE AN EVS

VOLUNTEER: HOW TO DO IT?



7.1. Where can I search for opportunities/programmes?

Prior to applying you can search for EVS programme at the following websites:

www.europa.eu/youth/evs_database

www.youthnetworks.eu

The website provides you all the information about the programme, the country you want to do the EVS, the organizations accredited both as sending and hosting and other relevant information.



7.2. How can I apply for EVS?

- **First step** is to find a sending organization from your own country that can support you through all the pre-departure process.
- **Second step** is to find a project that deals with a topic you are willing to work with and that is interesting for you.
- **Third step** is to update your CV and write a good motivation letter, then you can apply (send through email) to your desired Receiving Organisation/project.

7.3. How much in advance do I have to apply?

You need to apply at least about six months prior to your EVS exchange because it takes National Agency some time to analyse your application. Also, In some cases there may be “last minutes” projects where an EVS has cancelled his/her participation due to their circumstances and the organisation has place to offer.

7.4. How many times can you apply for EVS?

For organisation they need to apply per funding call which are: 4th of February, 30th of April and 1st of October in 2015 as an example. Please, do visit the website regularly to stay updated about the deadline dates as they are sometimes slightly changeable.

For individual you can apply for maximum two times in your life but it has to be in order: If you apply first for the short term EVS (from 2 weeks to 2 months) then you can apply for the long term. It has to be done the way that you don't exceed the 12 months in total (including first short term).

In case you apply for long term first, after you are not allowed to take part in other short or long term EVS project any more.

7.5. How many days of sick leaves are we entitled to?

You are entitled to the sick leave however it needs to be within reasonable limits.

7.6. What kind of job can I find with EVS or can I work part time during the EVS?

By the rules of the EVS programme you cannot find other official job rather than your EVS volunteering. In case you still do it, an organization has a right to cancel your EVS project.

7.7. Can I leave the project earlier?

You cannot leave the project unless you have reasonable reason and if you do, you cannot take part in the future EVS programmes anymore.

7.8. Do I have to pay additionally?

No you do not have to pay any additional costs.

7.9. Is the EVS accepted as a qualifying period?

It's not accepted as a qualifying period.

7.10. Can we volunteer outside the Europe within EVS programme?

Yes, you can volunteer outside the Europe however do check the criteria of those countries.

7.11. What happens if I cannot manage abroad and abandon my project?

If you cannot manage abroad and decide to abandon the project the consequences are that you are unable to take part in any future EVS programmes.

7.12. Can I be in sexual relation with a mentor, coordinator or with any another participant/part of the project?

It all depends on local reality and organizational rules of receiving organization. It's not an important part of EVS, of course it can happen any kind of relation, but it can have some undesirable consequences, that's why every part of the EVS project has to consider and be attentive to this aspect.

7.13. What is the greatest achievement after the EVS?

- Awareness of new cultures
- Raised self-awareness
- Increased confidence and competences
- Opened opportunities for future employment

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7.14. Can I find a job easier after finishing EVS project?

Of course you can! Actually EVS project gives you experience and a great opportunity to develop your skills and present yourself in the labour market afterwards.



7.15. Do I need some special skills for EVS?

You definitely need motivation but being independent and confident is very important. Also the knowledge of other languages is a useful tool.

7.16. What should I take to EVS?

Your personal belongings as well as your clothing according to the weather of the country you are going to. If taking any medication please take them with you. Any documentation you may need during your stay abroad please take them with you.



7.17. How to prepare us for EVS?

Your sending organization may provide you a pre-departure training that would be recommended to attend. Moreover try to learn more about the culture of the country you are going to, about the customs, basic rules and lifestyle. Inform yourself also about the organisation's work and get mentally prepared for a long stay away from your family, friends and beloved ones. Be open minded and have no high expectations.

7.18. How long is EVS?

It can be from 2 months to 12 months however 6, 7 and 9 months are often available.

7.19. Topic/project that you can apply for?

It depends on what the receiving organization proposes and also an individual's initiative what they would like to do in the EVS exchange. Here are some of the examples highlighted:

Working with the children, Working with Media tools, volunteering at the NGO's projects, human rights and environment etc.

You can find projects in the EVS database related to your area of interest.

7.20. Does the project fund the subsistence costs i.e. food allowance/pocket money?

Yes, you are provided a weekly or monthly allowance for your food according to the country's inflation rate. The pocket money is fixed by the country in the project by the Erasmus Plus programme.

7.21. How many people can an organization host?

It depends on accreditation, type of project and capacity of the organization.

Tips for volunteers:

- Have a good communication.
- If the director does not treat staff in an appropriate way then the staff can sometime treat the volunteers the same way.
- There is not always a mentor available.
- You have to create your own tasks depending on the organisation's capability.
- Take care about yourself, they won't do everything for you. Be independent!
- Try to learn the language even without linguistic classes.
- Sometimes can ask for extra guidance and support in a sector for example with disabled people.
- They give you some tasks but it is still volunteering, so you can find your own way of working.
- Do not take the responsibility of an employee.

- The National Agency can help you when needed.
- On – arrival and mid-term trainings give you the chance to meet other EVS volunteers

Short comments from experienced EVS volunteers about their projects:

Living conditions

Georgia: one bathroom/toilet for 12 people, meeting/living room was comfortable. We got privacy, balcony/yard.

Italy: Problem with hot water (boiler)

Denmark: No problems. Private room. (2 floors apartment, heated floor)

France: Perfect house (two floors, 5 volunteers)

Indonesia: Excellent conditions, the problem: language barrier.

Receiving organization

Georgia: Great. We had good coordinator who spoke the language but some mentors ability to speak the language was not so good.

Italy: Friendly, helpful. Had a problem with punctuality.

Denmark: Helpful, frequent reminders on the work to be done.

France: Skype conversations, perfect organisation, good English.

Indonesia: Hosting family really kind. Mentor was not so available.

Project

Georgia: Great idea, there wasn't a clear aim. A lot of leisure time however the project was too short.

Italy: Useful volunteer work for local community.

Denmark: Nice, 25h/per week, teaching Spanish. Sometimes I felt like a slave 😊

France: Environmental project was nice.

Indonesia: I discovered a different world.

All the above given information in this guide is developed by members of experienced 24 European Union organizations in EVS programme. We hope all the above given information is helpful and can be useful for young people searching for volunteering opportunities abroad.