

I. Introduction

The current guide is the fruitful result of the analysis of needs, opportunities and risks that a community may have, regarding the development and implementation of EVS projects.

The analysis was conducted as a part of the ACT NOW project (Active Citizenship Through New Opportunities Worldwide, co-financed by the European Commission - Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture, through Youth in Action Programme, Action 3.2 Youth in the World: Cooperation with countries other than the neighbouring countries of the European Union, Call for Proposals EACEA/11/10) within the job shadowing activity, and it comprised the analysis of several communities from 3 counties of the Development Region South-West Oltenia, involving: the work of 4 youth workers from Cameroon, Argentina, Sierra Leone and Peru, the collaboration of 5 partner organizations, local stakeholders from 14 urban and rural communities, and the collaboration of 3 EVS project managers.

The job shadowing activity, in the current context, looked at exposing the youth workers to the reality of EVS projects, to reveal the specificities of EVS project management in general and EVS project management in specific social contexts.

The specific feature of the current job shadowing activity is that it required consistent and direct contribution of the youth workers in their learning process, focusing on the practical learning and exercise through research, community discovery, data collection, direct interaction with key actors in EVS, evaluation and reporting.

The job shadowing activity had multiple objectives: to give the opportunity for the job shadowers to exchange experience and expertise in implementing youth projects in general, EVS projects in particular; to improve the skills related to EVS projects implementation; to enhance their experience in order to be able to identify the specific needs, opportunities and risks within a community or organization regarding EVS projects; to learn how to evaluate their own organizations and communities' capacity for implementing EVS.

The needs and opportunities analysis and risks assessment of the communities in the realm of EVS, was conducted according to the methodology exposed in the "Kit on Needs Analysis and Risk Assessment in EVS", developed by experts as part of the ACT NOW project. That is supposed to be a tool for the country managers in order to conduct in country trainings but also to stand as a tool for other organizations keen on quality and sustainability in EVS projects. The kit explains how to do this analysis and by what instruments, all theory and methodology being applied to EVS features and oriented to facilitate in-depth knowledge of the context and environment within which EVS projects may be implemented so that they can produce maximum impact and efficient use of resources.

The role of this guide is to offer to youth and organizations interested in taking part

in and implementing EVS projects, a clear image of the different types of needs, risks and opportunities in relation to the implementation of EVS projects, that can be identified in communities more or less experienced in working in the field of community youth development.

The data comprised within this report was collected by experienced youth workers, by direct contact with representatives of NGO's and EVS volunteers, by direct observation of activities developed within EVS projects implemented in Romania - the Development Region South-West Oltenia, and by taking direct contact with the people and the culture of the country. The results of this guide form the analysis of the reality, intercultural dialogue and informational exchange generated around EVS projects, with the particularity of having a multicultural perspective and a diversified professional experience.

Special thanks to authors for their effort and dedication to the work accomplished: field work through data collection, documentation, conducting interviews, organizing events, team work, data analysis and much more.

Job shadowing period: 15th of April – 15th of May 2011.

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II. Romania

Location&Geography:

Romania is a country located in South-eastern and Central Europe, North of the Balkan Peninsula, on the Lower Danube, within and outside the Carpathian arch, bordering on the Black Sea. Almost all of the Danube Delta is located within its territory. Romania shares a border with Hungary and Serbia to the west, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova to the northeast, and Bulgaria to the south.

Capital City: Bucharest

Area: 238,392 sq km

Languages:

Romanian 91%

Hungarian 6.7%

Romani 1.1%

Other 1.2%

Population: 21,698,181

Currency: 1 Leu (ROL) = 100 bani

Time Zone: EET (UTC+2)

Dialing code: +40

Government: semi-presidential parliamentary democratic republic

Romania is a member of the European Union since 2007.

National day: 1st of December

Religion: Eastern Orthodoxy

Religious Holidays:

Christmas

St. Nicholas (December 6)

Saint's Days (St. John, St. Constantine, St. Elena, St. Ilie and St. Mary)

Flowers Sunday

Easter



Traditional dishes: a diverse blend of different dishes from several traditions with which it has come into contact, but it also maintains its own character. It has been greatly influenced by Ottoman cuisine while it also includes influences from the cuisines of other neighbours, such as Germans, Serbians, and Hungarians.

Popular Personalities:

Nadia Comaneci - winner of three Olympic gold medals at the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and one of a few gymnasts ever to be awarded a perfect score of 10 in an Olympic gymnastic event. She is also the winner of two gold medals at the 1980 Summer Olympics. She is one of the best-known gymnasts in the world.

Gheorghe Hagi - a former Romanian footballer. He was famous for his passing, close control, long shots and was regarded as one of the best attacking midfielders in Europe during the 1980s and 1990s and is considered the greatest Romanian footballer of all time.

Count Dracula - a centuries-old vampire, sorcerer and Transylvanian nobleman, who claims to be a Székely descended from Attila the Hun. He inhabits a decaying castle in the Carpathian Mountains near the Borgo Pass. Unlike the vampires of Eastern European folklore, which are portrayed as repulsive, corpse-like creatures, Dracula exudes a veneer of aristocratic charm which masks his unfathomable evil.



History

Romania emerged as a personal union of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia under prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza in 1859 and as the Kingdom of Romania under the Hohenzollern monarchy, it gained recognition of independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. In 1918, at the end of the World War I, Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia united with the Kingdom of Romania. At the end of World War II, parts of its territories (roughly the present day Republic of Moldova) were occupied by the USSR and Romania became a socialist republic, member of the Warsaw Pact.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Romania started a series of political and economic reforms. After a decade of post-revolution economic problems, Romania made economic reforms such as low flat tax rates in 2005 and joined the European Union on January 1, 2007. While Romania's income level remains one of the lowest in the European Union, reforms have increased the growth speed. Romania is now an upper-middle income country economy.

III. Communities studied

Gorj County

Gorj County is situated in the south-west part of Romania. It has a surface of 5602 sq. km and 396.000 inhabitants.

The natural landscapes found throughout Gorj County vary from mountain ridges, traces of quaternary glaciations to hills and plateaus which cross each other and create gorges. The wonderful relief has lead to development of tourism and are worth to be mentioned: Ranca Resort which is situated at 1600 m above sea level and continues to grow, the ski paths situated on Cornesu Mountain with different levels of difficulty.

There are also a lot of museums, monasteries, churches and other wooden constructions with a authentic architecture.

The city of Targu Jiu is the capital of Gorj county and it is a important economical and cultural centre. It also has a important part in the cultural heritage of Romania because it hosts the work of the famous sculptor Constantin Brancusi, true symbols of the city if Jiu.

Representative communities in Gorj county, available for EVS placements are the following:

- **Tismana** - a small city near Tirgu Jiu, in south-west part of Gorj County; it has 10 000 inhabitants with a high percentage of youngsters, having 3 unit school, and active cultural house and infrastructure sport for young people. The main economic activity is the agriculture, civil construction and livestock. The city is known due to Tismana Monastery, one of the biggest from Romania and for the wonderful landscape offered by mountains.

- **Bustuchin** - a community with 3470 inhabitants; the main occupation of the people is into agriculture field. In terms of infrastructure, they have 7 kindergartens, 6 primary schools and gymnasiums, 1 high school "Grupul Scolar Industrial Bustuchin", 1



Cultural House, 3 libraries and a weekly market.

- **Musetesti** - a village in North – East side of Gorj County which has received the European Village Indicator due to several European programmes that have been conducted here like: restoration of Holy Angels Wood Church, the set up of the Euro House - Information Center and technical training in computer use, water works of the village and the building of a modern sports hall.

- **Hurezani** - a village 50 km far from Tirgu Jiu with good potential of development and particularly development of enterprise activities



- **Rosia de Amaradia**

- a community situated in the north east part of Gorj county, with a population of 3600. The locality is made up by 8 villages: Ruget, Seciuri, Becheni, Stejari, Șitoaia, Dealul Viei, Dealul Roșu și Roșia de Amaradia. The locality has

2 gimnaziums, one technical high school, 7 primary schools and 7 kindergartens. Most of the people work in mining industry, coal. There are shops in every village where you can buy food, materials for cleaning, clothes etc. There are 7 churches in locality, 3 cultural houses, students being very keen in making shows at special occasions during the year.

- **Rovinari** - a mining town, with the economic base of coal mining (surface and groundwater) and electricity production in thermal power station town, being one of the first in Europe as size. Rovinari is at short distance of Tirgu Jiu, being in its area of influence.

- **Balteni** - located in the South – West part of Romania and in the central part of Gorj County at 35 km from Tirgu Jiu.

- **Motru** - the second largest city in Gorj County after Tirgu Jiu. Motru is located in south-west of the County at 44 km far from Tirgu Jiu and has a population up to 23.000.

- **Novaci** - a shepherd's city situated 30 km east of Targu Jiu. It sits at the foot of the mountains offering tourists and inhabitants clear air, beautiful landscape. From Novaci

you can reach the highest road in Romania, called Transalpina.

- **Baia de Fier** - situated 10 km east of Novaci, also at the foot of the mountains. A lot of tourists visit Baia de Fier each year for the caves, for the scenery or even to ski.

- **Bumbesti Jiu** - sits at the entrance to one of the wildest roads in Romania. A good road with great landscapes. Many tourists come just for the scenery, every year. Not far from this city are some very old ruins which have not been promoted for tourism.

- **Ticleni** - a city located about 25km south west from Targu Jiu. A little more than 50 years ago, petroleum exploiters found a good source of oil rich in minerals with healing properties. It was destroyed about 30 years ago by the communists and the place has remained in ruins ever since.

- **Targu Carbunesti** - a city situated about 20 km south-west from Targu Jiu. It has a population of approximately 9000 inhabitants.

- **Matasari** - one of the oldest mining cities ever to be established in Gorj county. The city is situated 30 km west from Targu Jiu.

- **Pestisani** – a commune situated in the north west of Gorj county counting 4283 inhabitants. Construction of two large lakes has led to the development of mountain roads network next to Oslea masiff. Pestisani is known not only as the birthplace of Constantin Brancusi but even as a location for hiking novel.

Volunteer Work

- **Intercultural communication and multi-linguism**

All communities allow the intercultural exchange and thus, the facilitation of intercultural communication through multi-linguism and contact with the local culture, habits, mentalities, traditions, stereotypes, particular issues of all kinds starting with local economy, educational services, cultural life, social cohesion, etc. Part of the communities studied in Gorj county are either rural, either former rural communities which have recently become, due to population increase, towns. Rural communities usually preserve a rich cultural legacy according to which the inhabitants organize their lives and interaction. The common issues facing these communities are related to the fact that youngsters are not aware of their cultural background and its' importance for their identity and for the opportunities it may offer if it is valued.

At the same time, youngsters living in these communities have very few opportunities to get in contact with other cultures and to become aware of their own cultural identity and of their





membership within the European space, which values unity and at the same time, diversity. The educational services, the economic deprivation and sometimes even the geographic position, turn these communities into isolated spaces with no possibilities for diversifying interaction and promoting their cultural uniqueness.

Inhabitants though, in general, and youngsters in particular, have proved to be open to interact with and to know different cultures, to live and to work together with people coming from different countries. Most of the communities studied have been beneficiaries, as hosts, of EVS projects and are able to define some of the impact that these projects have determined in their communities in terms of intercultural communication: youngsters have learned to discover, to talk about, to share and to promote their local culture, have learned to activate the local cultural and social life, have improved their language skills due to several language projects developed by EVS volunteers in their communities, have found common languages to facilitate communication and understanding among different cultures, etc.

The risks in terms of intercultural communication, specific to these communities, are related mostly to mentality of locals who sometimes can have traditional views, rejecting new cultures or judging the different cultural behaviours of the EVS volunteers. For example, one of the EVS volunteers has faced the following situation: her EVS fellow was a boy with whom she developed a solid friendship; some of the locals have seen the boy hugging the girl on several occasions and they judged this gesture as inappropriate between a boy and a girl who do not have an officialised relationship and they doubted the seriousness of the two volunteers and their capacity to work with their children.

Obviously, this is not the situation in all the communities and these kind of barriers can be overcome with patience, tolerance and objectiveness.

Another risk can be the shallow approach of children and youngsters towards activities that promote intercultural communication. Rural communities especially are facing the following common situation due to economic deprivation: most of adults and youngsters are leaving outside the country to work, usually in domains like agriculture and building and their interaction with a foreign country and interest towards a foreign country is limited to the material benefits it may bring to them.

- **Information and awareness campaigns**

Most of the communities in Gorj county where the community needs analysis and risk assessment was conducted, are small rural areas, isolated in terms of information reach, where youngsters don't have access to a wide range of information and where information and awareness campaigns developed within EVS projects come as a great

opportunity to determine community openness, to increase tolerance, and level of knowledge among inhabitants and especially among youngsters on a series of topics of current interest like: environment, educational opportunities, job opportunities, sexual education, promotion of healthy habits, discrimination issues, sensitization of local governance to youth issues and development of youth projects, etc.

With the help of the volunteers who worked in some of these communities, like Bustuchin for example, the youngsters found out about some of the European programmes that can contribute to improve education, and to facilitate youth mobility, have found out about ways to protect environment, about ways to promote their projects and interests to the local governance so that receive support, etc. Not only youngsters have benefited from awareness and information campaigns but a wide range of people – parents, teachers, representatives of the local authorities.

Bustuchin has hosted EVS volunteers and has benefited from several information and awareness campaigns. The organization has two offices in this locality, one in the central village, Bustuchin, and the main one in the most populated village, Poiana Seciuri.

In both communities, the volunteers had the possibility to conduct the following campaigns:

- to promote friendship and understanding among youths at national and international level
- to organise conferences and seminars regarding youngsters' issues of current interest
- promote European Voluntary Service among youngsters from Bustuchin and the localities around.
- campaigns on themes such as : alcohol effects, drugs, discrimination, gender equality, smoking, etc.

Either the youngsters are just receivers of the information made available through information campaigns or they are the organizers themselves and the ones who prepare the information and the messages to be delivered, there is a clear need and at the same time opportunity to conduct information campaigns in the communities of Gorj county.

- **School tutoring and extracurricular activities**

Most of volunteers' activities and intervention, once they are placed in a community, begin from the school as it is an organized environment with stakeholders who can offer essential support and guidance to volunteers in their work for youngsters' benefit. Therefore school tutoring and extracurricular activities are part of the workload of most of the EVS volunteers, especially at the beginning of an EVS project.

All teachers recognize the need of human resource to ensure school tutoring, after classes especially, and to activate and innovate the extracurricular activities calendar

which exists in most schools but which either remains only on paper, either is not so attractive for children and it does not contribute much to their development.

The school tutoring through after-schools, week-end schools or summer schools means to assist the children while they are doing their homework, to offer them language classes, dancing, painting, singing classes, interactive games, etc. School tutoring can be quite attractive to children



especially if it is provided by a young foreign volunteer as it involves also extracurricular and non-formal education which can be provided in very creative and innovative ways. School tutoring helps improving school attendance –which has become a problem in rural areas- to increase interest in education and to promote social inclusion and interaction. Moreover, some teachers have proved to be interested in collaborating with volunteers for conducting extracurricular activities, in order to exchange experience in non-formal methods of education.

In most of the communities can be found infrastructure for developing extracurricular activities and school tutoring programmes: all communities have cultural houses or there are free spaces within schools or city halls.

• Fundraising

Fundraising activities are not common ones within these communities. Generally there is little expertise and knowledge to set up a fundraising campaign or to approach local authorities to support financially some projects or initiatives. Besides the lack of expertise there is also the belief that fundraising campaigns are not successful in these communities because of lack of material resources.

In reality, both in Tismana and Bustuchin have already been initiated fundraising campaigns and the results were satisfying: people were mobilized and the volunteers managed to help few poor families on different occasions, with food and clothes collected from inhabitants. People here have already experienced this before, so the practice of raising money is more likely to be supported.

Volunteers can practice their skills as fundraisers to sustain an already existing project, or to initiate sponsorship campaigning for a various range of issues, from social cases to environment. Fundraising is fun, challenging, rewarding and a great opportunity to meet lots of new people. There is a whole range of activities that volunteers can put in practice to raise money or other materials for different causes.

Cultural & free time

The cultural life of most communities exists through local traditions and habits and a series of celebrations and activities organized by schools or the city hall. The church is also an important actor in the cultural and religious local life but it is important especially for elders. In some communities the cultural house is active and it hosts the activity of different clubs, dancing or singing groups.

In terms of free time, the rural or the small urban communities do not offer a various range of options for youngsters to spend their free time. Most of youngsters go to Targu Jiu, where they can find clubs, cinemas and theatres.

Tismana for example provides for youngsters the following range of activities for free time: the Cultural House where can be developed theatre show, where there is access to library, museum of traditional costumes, craft stuff, 2 hermitages of monasteries. As spending free time there is the opportunity to go on a trip to the mountains, or play football on land specially arranged, gym.

Tismana is situated at 33 km from the capital city of Targu Jiu, and there are regular busses as means of transportation where youngsters can enjoy all entertaining opportunities of the town.

Volunteers have various opportunities to take part of the cultural life in Bustuchin where there are the Cultural House, Euro House Bustuchin, Info-Center equipped with internet, computers and also five libraries.

There are two big football grounds and small ones in every village and within schools as well, and a sport gym.

You can get from Bustuchin to the capital city of Targu Jiu by bus, given the distance of 55 km.

Taking into account that all of these communities are small ones, there are no clubs, malls or cinemas, the volunteers have the role and the opportunity of enriching the cultural life of the communities by organizing intercultural parties, campaigns, and different ranges of activities to engage the locals.



Learning activities



On arrival, the volunteers will enter in a Capacity Building program. During this program they will receive trainings to build their competences on animation, conflict management, project management, group dynamics, community youth development.

They will also be provided with Romanian language classes to have a minimum of language skills. The volunteers will have the responsibility to attend all language courses according to the schedule as well as to make every effort in studying and learning the language. The Coordinating Orga-

nizations will provide Romanian Language Courses for the entire period of the EVS according to the following draft schedule:

- The first month – an intensive language course will take place for the Volunteers with a frequency of 2 hours/day – 5 days/ week.
- The next weeks – the language courses will be provided on to all volunteers with a frequency of 1 session/ week.

The language courses will be provided free of charge for the entire period of the EVS project.

Throughout the whole project, every single volunteer is to benefit from a personal development plan being coached by trainers and experts to reach his/her personal potential. The volunteers will build the development plan together with the management team, the mentor and the monitor.

The volunteers will have the opportunity to meet new people from the community and he/she can be a part of the local projects of the school, library and even city hall. They can learn how the institutions work and also help or create new projects within these institutions. The non-formal education opportunities will directly and actively involve young people in activities designed to meet the needs of society in a wide range of fields.

Accommodation & food

There are possibilities to ensure within the communities living conditions that respect the minimum of standards - each volunteer has its' own room and access to the bathroom with hot and cold water, access to a kitchen- but the volunteers should not

expect luxury. Volunteers can be hosted in families, which will facilitate even more their integration within the local culture and life, or where possible, they will be hosted in small flats.

In Tismana the volunteers are hosted in rented a house of three rooms close to the school. In Bustuchin the place where the volunteers will live is an apartment with two rooms for 2 volunteers, single room for each of them, common bathroom and kitchen, running water.

For the food, the volunteers will receive a monthly allowance and pocket money which they can spend as they want. They are responsible for buying and preparing their food.

The volunteers are also responsible for maintaining cleanliness and not to damage the things inside the hosting placements. The accommodation expenses will be covered from the project budget.

Organizations

There is a local network of organizations working in partnership, sharing expertise, resources and a wide range of partnerships for the implementation of EVS projects in local communities:

ARDR – Regional Association for Rural Development is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that aims to create opportunities for people to play an active part in the life of their community and facilitate the build up of self-governing capacity of local communities for economic and social development, serving the South West Development Region in Romania. ARDR promotes the partnerships between schools, local businesses, public administrations, and non-profit organizations that are necessary elements of healthy development.

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EURO-HOUSE Bustuchin Association is a non-governmental organization which was founded in 2007, who succeeded in the three years of existence to bring Europe closer to young people in the area Bustuchin.

The proposed projects and actions managed to develop a spirit of initiative among young people, to make them more aware of the need for preservation and perpetuation of traditions and customs of the Romanian people and especially those in our area, raising awareness among young people need an environment surrounding healthy spirit of enhancing the formation of active European citizenship.

Contact person: SINDRINARU Marian, active chairman, Tel. 0040744905434, marian.sindrinaru@ehb.ro

Asociatia Libera Initiativa si Antreprenoriat Tismana (ALIAT) is non-profit, apolitical, non-governmental association and was established in Gorj County, Romania in March, 2009. Association was created on the basis of the young leaders/group of youngsters from Tismana community. ALIAT is association with the mission to build bridge of friendship, dialogue and mutual understanding among youth from different and also Romma Communities (Place where lives "gipsy people", with less-privileged cultural, geographical or socio-economic background). Association aims to support youth's educational development by different programmes, to promote solidarity and tolerance, human rights and peace-building, to promote intercultural relations in youth. Our target group is children, youth and students from different and also Romma Communities.

Contact person: CAPRITA Daniel, active chairman, tel: 0040765386022.

The Association "Youngsters without Borders" was established in 26 of June 1997. It caters to youths between 15 and 35, regardless of race, language, and religion, especially rural areas.

The YWB's aim is strictly related to youngsters' life and problems.

YWB works mainly for youth living in rural areas. Apart from organizing youth exchanges the organization deals with running courses for the youths in the area and for the gypsy communities - courses like English competences, computer literacy, civic education, intercultural learning.

Contact person: MARCULESCU Romulus Caralicea, active chairman carmarom@gmail.com.

Mehedinti County

Mehedinti county is an old land bordered by the Danube River, and symbolically a place with all geographic and relief characteristics of Romania.

The county of Mehedinti is located in south-west Romania and stretches over 4,900 sq.km. The Danube, the largest river in Europe, runs along the 192 km long southern county line. The historical vestiges at Drobeta – Turnu Severin are telling proofs of the importance of this area along the centuries.

Today, Mehedinti County is one of the developed and balanced areas in Romania. Its economic potential is given not only by its local resources, tradition and experience in the majority of the activity sectors, but also by its favorable geographic location-as a border area-having as neighbors Serbia and Bulgaria, at the crossroads of important internal and external commercial routes.

In Mehedinti County the youth workers visited communities where EVS has never been implemented before. There were included into the analysis both urban and rural communities, like Simian, Strehaia, and Orsova. There were both similarities and differences discovered by the jobshadows regarding the openness of people, infrastructure or community cohesion:

- **Strehaia** - a small city, 25km from far from Severin – the capital city of Mehedinti county - and 60km from Craiova. It is close to Hungary and Bulgaria and surrounded by few other villages; it has 30,000 inhabitants of which 30% are Roma people. It has 1 high school, 2 general schools -5/8 grades, one NGO i.e. Horizontal association, working on the promotion of youth issues but currently not functioning, and the Euronet NGO, working for the integration of the Roma people, which has recently managed the graduation of two Roma students for the first time in their history.

- **Simian** - a large village comprising others smaller villages, 5 km far from the city of Drobeta Turnu Severin. In the community live 10.000 inhabitants, of whom more than three thousand are young, both Romanian and Roma people. Regarding the education, there are five kindergartens, six general schools and one high school.

There is an NGO called Enthusiastic, doing activities with the students from the school and those coming from neighboring villages to study. Also some of the teachers are involved in the activities of the NGO, as a support of the student's initiatives.

- **Orsova** - the Danube marks the way to get to this town located about 25 kilometers from the capital city Drobeta Turnu Severin. It is situated just above the Iron



Gates, on the spot where the Cerna River meets the Danube. The town has 15000 inhabitants, of whom more than seven thousand are young. Regarding to the education, there are four kindergartens, two generals schools and one high school and as Orsova is a port city there are two nautical high schools.

There is an NGO called German Forum, working since 1992 doing cultural and artistic activities for Orsova's young people.

Volunteer work

The needs and opportunities analysis has revealed that these communities are opened and willing to host EVS volunteers, offering opportunities of mutual learning, through extracurricular activities, working with ethnic minorities, environment and social campaigns. The risks that need to be taken into consideration are related to the lack of experience of local stakeholders in working with foreign volunteers and in responding properly to the different phases of an EVS project so that they may avoid crisis and maximize impact. Also, the new communities may bring difficulties in finding a mentor or a stable action group to support EVS projects.

Even though the local institutions seemed willing to support the EVS projects, building a stable relation with them it is a long process during which stakeholders might lose interest. Therefore for these communities it is essential to set up a risk management plan and it is important to revise it frequently.



• School tutoring and extracurricular activities

In all communities visited, the schools have the ability to organize, simultaneously their curricular activities with a very full schedule of extracurricular activities that students from the same schools do. Since these communities have no experience with EVS, the activity of the volunteers will start in schools, where they can have an organized

working climate, and support persons that can help them into integrating the activities and expand then at the community level.

The NGO's here have some experience in working with youngsters, and they are open to partnerships development with more experienced organizations, to become able to implement EVS projects in Mehedinti County. Even though these organizations are at the entry level or inactive, they can be easily activated with the help of volunteers, since they manifested a great willingness for colaboration.

These communities offer a good opportunity to implement an EVS program because the stakeholders are very open and keen on offering a real support to the volunteers. The students from the school seem motivated with the idea to continue developing extracurricular activities.

- **Social inclusion**

Having the fact that there is a significant number of Roma people living in Mehedinti County, especially in Strehaia, there is a great opportunity for developing projects regarding ethnic minorities, anti-discrimination and social inclusion. Local authorities and organizations are permanently working for the integration of Roma people and for raising their educational level. Working with Roma people is an opportunity for the volunteers to interact with a different culture, and different traditions.

- **Touristic promotion**

The fact that this area is full of hystoric semnification and with beautiful landscape, is a starting point for promoting these touristic areas. Also, the nature in its unmodified state is an opportunity for environmental projects or protection of the flora and fauna.

The volunteers can easily promote these areas and gain experience in conducting awarness and information campaigns.

Cultural & free time

All the communities, especially the urban ones, provide for volunteers a wide range of cultural activities. There can be found Cultural Houses where can be developed theatre shows, they can have access to library, museums and monasteries. Trips on the Danube or visiting the historical relics are also pleasant options for youngsters to spend their free time.

Being well developed communities, youngsters can find here clubs, bars and other places for leisure and commercial centres.

Learning activities

On arrival, the volunteers will enter in a Capacity Building program. During this program they will receive trainings to build their competences on animation, conflict management, project management, group dynamics, community youth development.

They will also be provided with Romanian language classes to have a minimum of language skills that will help them to carry out better their activities and to cope with the community.

Throughout the whole project, every single volunteer is to benefit from a personal development plan being coached by trainers and experts to reach his/her personal potential.

Accommodation & food

The volunteers can be hosted either in rented apartments of three, four rooms in the urban areas, or hosted by a family in the rural communities. Each volunteer will have its own room and access to the bathroom with hot and cold water, access to a kitchen. The living conditions respect the minimum of standards, and the volunteers should not expect luxury. They are responsible for maintaining cleanliness and not to damage the things inside the hosting locations. The accommodation expenses will be covered from the project budget.

For the food, the volunteers will receive a monthly allowance and pocket money which they can spend as they want. They are responsible for buying and preparing their food.

Organizations

ARDR operation in Mehedinti County, a newly set up branch of the Regional Association for Rural Development, a non-governmental, non-profit organization that aims to create opportunities for people to play an active part in the life of their community and facilitate the build up of self-governing capacity of local communities for economic and social development, serving the South West Development Region in Romania. ARDR promotes the partnerships between schools, local businesses, public administrations, and non-profit organizations that are necessary elements of healthy development.

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Dolj County

Dolj County is located in the south-western part of Romania, and is crossed from the North to the South by the Jiu river, actually bearing its name: Doljiu means the “Lower Jiu”, 6% of the county’s area is a desert.

The total area of 7717 km represents 3.1 percent of Romania’s surface and shares the borders with the following counties: Mehedinti in the West, Gorj and Valcea in the North, Olt in the East. To the South, there is the Danube establishing a 150 km border with Bulgaria.

The Dolj County takes up 3.1 percent of the total surface and 3.9 percent of the country’s farmlands. Farming offers the greatest number of jobs, representing a major part in the internal product of the county. The county has a land that is ideal for growing cereals, vegetables and wines. All other industries are mainly located in the capital city - Craiova, the largest city in south-western Romania.



The communities analysed were both urban, as rural. The particularity of these communities is that the rural ones were experiencing a first EVS project. The Regional Association for Rural Development had newly developed partnerships within the rural communities of Dolj county, while the Roma neighborhoods were experiencing already a third EVS project:

- **Craiova** - Romania’s 6th largest city and capital of Dolj County -with a population of 312.200 is situated near the east bank of the river Jiu in central Oltenia. As a part of Craiova, there are three Roma neighborhoods: Mofleni, Popoveni and Lascar Catargiu.

- **Mofleni** - a peripheral neighborhood located in the south-west of Craiova City, situated close to „Parcul Tineretului” (The Park of Youth”), 5 km away from the center of the town.

- **Catargiu** - a neighborhood located in the outskirts of Craiova, in the South part, near the biggest space for leisure in town, called „Parcul Tineretului” (“The Park of Youth”). There are means of transportation to down town: bus n° 14.

- **Popoveni** – a neighborhood located in the South of Craiova, with a population of 1,000 people of which about 70% are Roma ethnics. There are means of transportation from down town: bus No 24, and No 1.

- **Dabuleni** – a newly declared city (2004) that can be traced all the way to the 15th century; it has almost 20 000 inhabitants and is situated in the south of the Dolj

County at 80 km distance from Craiova. The area is also known as a „Romanian Sahara”.

The city is placed in the meadow of the Danube river and is known throughout Dolj as a rather rich community. Most of the population is involved in agricultural activities correlated with small businesses and by far ,the most common and profitable activity here is watermelon harvesting – the region is actually called „, The Watermelon country”.

Valuing the educational process, Dabuleni has 5 kindergartens, 3 primary schools and 2 high schools.

- **Giurgita** - situated in the central part of Dolj County, south-west from the City of Segarcea and 40 km away from the most important city in the county – Craiova, in the geographical region known as Oltenia Plain.

The hole area is situated very close to the Danube river so relief and the economic profile of the region are common for the southern-fluvial Romania.

Two main features (from an environmental and touristic point of view) distinguish Giurgita from the rest of the communities in Dolj county: very valuable architectural sites and highly potential touristic areas low-valued and unutilized for local amusement.

- **Melinesti** - is a commune in the center-north of Dolj county with a population of approximately 5000 inhabitants; the area is divided between 13 small villages and the main occupation of the people here, like in almost all Dolj's villages, is agriculture .

The commune is situated on and benefiting from the small river of Amaradia and the Amaradia Plain, suitable for cereal and vegetables harvesting.

The northern geographical region of Oltenia is in a process of economic restructuring by decreasing the number of oil based activities, primary developing the agriculture and commerce.

The community benefits from a number of 7 kindergartens and primary schools and a local high school.

- **Daneti** - a commune situated in the south-east of Dolj County, in Romanati Plain, east of Jiu river and 50 kilometers south-east from Craiova. The commune has 4 villages in administration: Brabeti, Braniste, Locusteni and Daneti and a population of 7211 inhabitants.

- **Amarastii de Jos** - a commune with almost 7000 inhabitants, situated 60 kilometers south from Craiova – the most important urban center of the historical region Oltenia (Southern- Eastern Romania), in the Romanati Plain ,bordered by the Olt County.

The rivers Pesceana, Nimoi and Aninoasa cut through the plain relief of the commune garnished with a few fertile hills, suitable for vineries and orchards.

The city hall administrates three villages : Amărăștii de Jos, Praporu, Ocolna. The commune has four kindergarten , three primary schools and a high school that educates youngsters also from the surroundings : Amărăștii de Sus, Dobrotești, Daneți,Celaru,

Bucinișu (Olt county). The first public school was open here at the beginning of the 19th century with 18 male students. Now, the Theoretic High school of Amarastii de Jos also includes a Technical Department with an agricultural profile.

▪ **Segarcea** - a town situated approximately 30 km south of Craiova – the biggest and most important city of Dolj County and of the Romanian historical region of Oltenia. The population of the city is somewhere around 10 000 inhabitants or even less. The name of the city comes from two Latin words : secer = field, fertile land and arcesitus = wanted, looked for. From the name itself you can guess that in Segarcea the lands are very productive so the agriculture still plays a big role in the economic life of the community.

Segarcea is renowned in Romania and beyond by his vineries and wines : Pinot Noir, Merlot, Burgund Mare, Cabernet Sauvignon.

The city is not placed in a highly touristic potential area, but there are a few offers that could positively influence the agro-touristic development of the region: an orthodox fortified monastery called „Adormirea Maicii Domnului” (from 1547), the Royal Palace – build as a summer place for the king Carol I, surrounded by a beautiful park or The Old School, a massive building from the 19th century that use to work as a school for girls.

Volunteer work

• Information and awareness campaigns

An important fact to mention is that the education offered by the civil society is not seen as an opportunity yet. Working as a volunteer in an organization is still something new for the youngsters in Dolj County and especially for those from rural communities. Most of them are not aware of the opportunities to learn and to gain experience by working as volunteers or by getting involved in non-formal activities.

Volunteers can create and design information and awareness campaigns, or information caravan through which they can:

- inform the youngsters and raise their awareness on the benefits that volunteering brings at personal and professional level
- organize campaigns, seminars, debates on a diverse range of topics of current interest like: environment, human rights, labor market, health, antidiscrimination, free time and leisure, etc.
- information campaigns on the of the opportunities that a diversity of European programmes can offer to youngsters to improve their education.

All these campaigns will be designed and organised with the support of the management team, mentor and monitor, in order to facilitate experience transfer and mutual learning.

• **Extracurricular activities**

The extra-curricular education is a very useful tool in volunteer work to bridge the gap between informal and formal education. The results of the analysis have proved that not only that the formal education doesn't manage to develop practical skills or to determine a clear area of interest for youngsters but it can also be too rigid, too abstract, disconnected from the new realities or not reachable for certain disadvantaged groups. The extracurricular activities manage to bring education closer to these groups, to spread the need for education, to develop practical skills, to discover one's abilities.

Most schools, especially in the rural areas have expressed their willingness to activate the extracurricular calendar of activities, in order to innovate teaching skills through non-formal education and to attract more children to schools.

Volunteers can work on extracurricular education by using their knowledge, personal skills, experience and imagination, and they can develop them in school, youth centers or cultural houses.

Therefore, the volunteers can:

- provide language classes for children and youngsters in schools.
- work on non-formal education with youngsters and children in schools.
- work with disadvantaged groups like Roma people to help them integrate in the Romanian society
- develop a program of extracurricular activities on subjects that concern the youngsters the most: environment; sports; art & culture; health education, etc.

These activities can be developed in the Cultural Houses or in the schools, with the support of the teachers or interested persons.

• **Intercultural communication and multi-linguism**

Most rural communities have at least few Roma families or even a significant number of Roma people who need to integrate and to benefit from the same opportunities like the rest of inhabitants. The volunteers can contribute to their integration by developing intercultural activities, parties or thematic seminars, workshops and round tables. These Roma communities are also a special case due to the problem of segregation and discrimination that young people suffer from, and also from rivalry among families from the same community.

In Popoveni, Mofleni and Catargiu the only places where volunteers can work is inside the schools, benefitting from the help of Roma NGO's and teachers.

• **Organizational development**

As previously mentioned, youngsters are not aware of the value that the education offered by the civil society has for their personal and professional development. Working as a volunteer in an organization is still something new for the youngsters in Dolj County and especially for those from rural communities. Most of them are not aware of

the opportunities to learn and to gain experience by working as volunteers or by getting involved in non-formal activities. Therefore it is very difficult for them to set up local action groups to contribute to promoting their interests and community interest.

The volunteers will have, obviously, an impact on the organization in which they will be working. They can choose to focus their work on organizational development by supporting the staffers in their initiatives and developing strategies together with them; putting in place youth clubs, youth associations, youth enterprises, working with the network of focal points on youth activities; help in the creation of a database of the categories of organizations for youth, their main activities, and the needs they have to better manage their activities. They can also do researches on community development in general and community youth development in particular, or setup strategies to approach local authorities for partnerships development between the local social actors – schools, City Hall, local NGO.

Developing a culture of collaboration and association is one of the concrete needs identified within these communities.

Cultural & free time

The cultural life of rural communities is based on the local habits, history and traditions and even local occupations. Institutions which provide cultural events are quite few: mainly the cultural house, the city hall on certain occasions and the schools. These communities do not have a variety of options in terms of spending free time: bars and cafes can be found only in the largest of them; cinemas and theatres or large shopping centers cannot be found in these communities. The capital city is connected to its surrounding rural communities by regular means of transport.

Craiova has a rich cultural life sustained by institutions with tradition. Youngsters can find here museums, a university, libraries, theatres, cinemas, parks – the landmark of Craiova is Romanescu park, one of the largest and most beautiful in Europe; clubs, bars and other places for leisure and big commercial centres.



CITY TOUR

The Nicolae Romanescu Park (Romanian: Parcul Nicolae Romanescu) in Craiova, Romania, is the largest and best-known park in the city.

Botanical Garden - The garden was laid out by the botanist Alexandru Buia and was opened in 1952. The main purpose of the garden was to facilitate the students' activities and research for the academic staff of the Agriculture and Horticulture Faculties of the University of Craiova.



Craiova Art Museum - the building that houses the museum was built in 1896, following the plans of the French architect Paul Gotereau. Its main attraction is the art gallery dedicated to Constantin Brancusi, exhibiting six of his early sculptures (including variants of his best-known works): *The Kiss* (1907), *Vitellius* (1898), *Woman Torso* (1909), *The Vainglory* (1905), *Boy's Head* (1906), *Miss Pogany* (1902).

Museum of Oltenia - founded in 1915 and divided into three sections: ethnography, history and natural science. The collection is based on donations made in 1908.

Madona Dudu Church - built between 1750 and 1756, renovated in 1844, after being destroyed by an 1831 earthquake. Murals were completed by Gheorghe Tatarescu.

The Singing Fountain - situated in the city centre, is a replica of the similar construction in Lisbon, Portugal.

Dabuleni is a suitable place for youngsters: a very active youth organization- Clubul Copiilor Dabuleni - works here, a lot of hangout areas are waiting for participants; the Danube river is practically part of the community and can provide a local flavoured place for fishing, sunbathing and even swimming.

On the 16th of August, a Watermelon Festival is organized, quite unique in Romania. The schools are known for organizing also local and regional music, theatre, dancing events.

Giurgita has a rather impressive amount of cultural activities spread throughout the year, festivals and events that illustrate the active and lively spirit of the locals. We can mention here a few:

24th of February - Dragobete, local festival for the youngsters organized in collaboration with the local informal group Fortin

23th of April – folkloric festival that involves the local band – Dorulet –(Romanian traditional dance & music)

22th and 23th of July – a two days festival that celebrate the summer and the crops

Melinesti has an active Cultural House and a lot of touristic potential: two archaeological reservations – the Roman site from Godeni - „La Pleasa” dating back the 2nd century and the settlement from Godeni - „Piscul cu Jidovi” from the Bronze Age.

A natural reservation – Padurea Boiereasca – and a mansion from the 19th century contribute also to the touristic picture of the commune. The commune has internet, cable and telephone connection.

Daneti has a Cultural House and a community space for relaxation in the centre. There are busses from here to Craiova, and the commune has internet and telephone connection.

Learning activities

On arrival, the volunteers will enter in a Capacity Building program. During this program they will receive trainings to build their competences on animation, conflict management, project management, group dynamics, community youth development.

They will also be provided with Romanian language classes to have a minimum of language skills that will help them to carry out better their activities and to cope with the community.

Throughout the whole project, every single volunteer is to benefit from a personal development plan being coached by trainers and experts to reach his/her personal potential, along with the management team, the mentor and the monitor.

The communities have proved to be open to networking activities between them and their institutions. This kind of activities have already been done by EVS volunteers, like “Global village” or “Dolj got talent”, where children, teachers and representatives of local authorities from several communities took part. The networking events have proved to have a significant impact on the stakeholders, volunteers and youngsters.

In terms of most common risks for these communities, in relation to EVS projects, the findings of the analysis have revealed:

- Collaboration between institutions within local communities is often at the formal level - in rural communities (or small urban ones) the main institutions are the school, the church, the city hall and in some cases the cultural house-; the Cultural Houses are often not active or have a limited activity, and collaborate with the other institutions almost only at a formal level, the city hall often supports the school only financially but it does not get involved in shaping youth policies or in empowering youth for local governance; schools have fewer and fewer students because they either leave rural communities for urban ones, either they do not attend classes with a normal frequency

being engaged in housekeeping and agriculture activities

- Mentality of locals – they have proved to be opened to hosting foreigners and they are friendly and willing to interact with them, but sometimes they can be quite conservative and they can judge the volunteer's behaviour, gestures or even outfits

- Fewer opportunities - youngsters do not have proper opportunities for educational development, cultural life and free time, and participation in local governance. The rural communities often complain about the fact that youngsters are leaving the communities. Yet, they are willing to collaborate with the volunteers, but once they graduate general school or high schools, they leave towards towns, and the only one left there are young kids, which can be considered to be harder to work with

The risks and challenges that may appear during the project constitute at the same time learning opportunities because they determine the volunteers and the coordinating organization itself to plan and to revise plans according to the specific social context after an in-depth knowledge and evaluation of the community status quo.

Accommodation & food

The volunteers can be hosted either in rented apartments of three, four rooms in the urban areas, or hosted by a family in the rural communities. Each volunteer will have its own room and access to the bathroom with hot and cold water, access to a kitchen. The living conditions respect the minimum of standards, and the volunteers should not expect luxury. They are responsible for maintaining cleanliness and not to damage the things inside the apartment. The accommodation expenses will be covered from the project budget.

The risk of accommodation can be a serious problem for some volunteers, given the fact that the conditions although respect the minimum standard, there can be misunderstandings regarding the behaviour of the volunteers or the fact that the house is shared with a family that has a very low knowledge of English. The volunteers may also be hosted in rural communities, in traditional houses, where they share the space with a family. Sometimes it can be quite challenging to adapt to the daily life of the



locals, or to the accommodation conditions. In small communities, access to hot water may not be possible daily, whereas in bigger ones, the volunteers can have its own room with free access to the kitchen and bathroom

For the food, the volunteers will receive a monthly allowance for food and pocket money which they can spend as they want. They are responsible for buying and preparing their food.

Organizations

ARDR operation in Dolj County is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that aims to create opportunities for people to play an active part in the life of their community and facilitate the build up of self-governing capacity of local communities for economic and social development, serving the South West Development Region in Romania. ARDR promotes the partnerships between schools, local businesses, public administrations, and non-profit organizations that are necessary elements of healthy development.

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European Platform for Youth Development (EPYD) is the fruitful outcome of the project Networking 4 Tomorrow that came as follow up to sequential programmes developed by “Youngsters Without Borders” in the EU and partner countries since 2003:

- Youth Caravan, 2003
- Regional Info Centre in the SEE, 2003
- Seminar on Networking, 2004
- International Conference- Youth and Local Governance, 2004
- Multilateral EVS, 2005/2006

Networking 4 Tomorrow is a programme developed by a multilateral team of Youth NGOs from Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Malta, Italy, Spain, Greece, Poland, Denmark, Romania, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia aimed at setting up premises for a European Platform - EPYD.

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IV. FAQ - Frequently asked questions on the European Voluntary Service

1. What is the European Voluntary Service (EVS)?

EVS is a partnership project between two or more organisations allowing young people to do a voluntary service in another country.

The aim is to develop solidarity and promote tolerance, mutual understanding and active citizenship (particularly European citizenship).

A strong focus on training and personal and task-related support helps young people develop skills and competences which will be useful in their future employment or education.

2. How can I apply to become an EVS volunteer?

An EVS project is a partnership between two or more promoters (organisations). These promoters are responsible for recruiting volunteers for their project. If you want to be an EVS volunteer you have two options:

a) Contact an organisation that is recruiting volunteers for a granted project

OR

b) Contact an organisation to discuss starting a project

You can contact organizations accredited in working with EVS by following: www.yesforevs.eu, www.clickonevs.eu, www.ardr.ro.

A volunteer participates in EVS through a Sending Organisation in the country where he/she is legally resident and a Host Organisation which receives and hosts the volunteer during the Service period.

In order to get in contact with an organisation you may consult the database of accredited organisations (<http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/>).

3. What are the criteria for becoming a volunteer?

Age: volunteers must be 18 - 30 years old on the application deadline (young people with fewer opportunities can participate from age of 16).

Home country: volunteers must be legally resident in the country of the Sending Organisation.

4. Do volunteers have to pay anything?

EVS is free for volunteers, and you receive free accommodation and food, insurance and pocket money. The only thing you have to pay is a small part (maximum 10%) of your travel costs.

5. How long does an EVS project last?

- Service period abroad: 2-12 months (or a minimum of 2 weeks for young people with fewer opportunities and groups of 10 or more volunteers)

- Total duration of the project, including preparation and follow-up: max. 24 months

6. What type of work do volunteers do?

There are many possible fields, e.g. culture, youth, sports, children, cultural heritage, arts, animal welfare, environment and development cooperation.

7. What countries can volunteers go to?

Eligible countries are listed on page 17-18 of the Programme Guide.

Volunteering can take place in any 'Programme Country', 'Neighbouring Partner Country' or 'Other Partner Country of the World', but volunteers from Partner Countries must carry out their Service in a Programme Country.

8. What restrictions are there on the voluntary Service?

The Service must:

- take place in a country other than volunteer's country of residence
- be unpaid and non-profit making
- last between 2 and 12 months (except for young people with fewer opportunities and large groups - see Question 5)
- represent a clear European or international added value
- benefit the community
- not involve job substitution

9. Can young people with fewer opportunities participate in EVS?

Yes - EVS is open for all young people, whatever their background and no prior knowledge should be required.

Special efforts are made to help young people with fewer opportunities, including those with disabilities, to participate.

10. What do volunteers learn through EVS?

Volunteers acquire and improve skills related to their personal, educational and professional development, e.g. through:

- personal support (from a mentor)
- task-related support (from a supervisor)
- language training

There are also common trainings for all volunteers (normally organised by the National Agency or SALTO) covering issues such as:

- basics of social engagement and voluntary work
- conflict resolution
- group dynamics
- intercultural learning
- values of EVS

The learning in EVS is referred to as “non-formal learning”. This is learning which, although being carefully planned, is voluntary and takes place outside the formal education system through active participation.

11. Do volunteers get a certificate after the project?

Volunteers have the right to receive a Youthpass after completing their Service. The EU uses the Youthpass to ensure voluntary activity is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning. An achievement report is filled in jointly by the volunteer and the Host or Coordinating Organisation and given to the volunteer.


12. I still have a question - where can I get help?

There is more information in the Programme Guide.

Do not hesitate to contact at any stage the various groups that are here to give you help, training and advice - your National Agency (or the Executive Agency, if your country does not have one), the Eurodesk network and SALTO Youth Resource Centres.

Also, feel free to contact any of the organisations mentioned in the present guide.

They can provide information or advice on things such as how to develop your project ideas, find a partner organisation or fill in your application form. They are available to help you before and after your project is set up.



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