Management of
EVS Group Projects
in Local Communities

Kit on EVS
2nd series

i.e.p

About the autors

Florin Păsătoiu was born in Romania, in Musetesti Gorj county and he graduated in Letters (University of Craiova, Romania) and European Studies (University of Aalborg, Denmark). He used to work as a trainer for the National Agency for Youth in Romania and for SALTO Centres. He has been a consultant for numerous NGOs in Romania and worldwide. Currently he teaches in development at Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Craiova, Romania, and he is currently involved in his PhD project focusing on the impact of good governance on development. But, definitely the international youth field is to stay as part of his hobby preoccupations. He has been mentoring and counselling for several years teams of youngsters working in the international youth field, contributing to their development and to the development of fruitful initiatives and projects.

Few words about EVS: ,,The best action of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Union that I have worked with so far. It gives individuals, organizations and communities capacities and chances to make change happen.''

Robin Konieczny is an experienced youth worker who specialises in the active involvement of young people in democracy and decision-making, and is currently employed as County Active Citizenship Co-ordinator for Norfolk Children's Services having responsibility in implementation of the Hear by Right Standards for Active Involvement of Young People in Democracy; support to school councils in the County's High Schools; election and support of Norfolk's Members of the UK Youth Parliament; Ensuring that young people's voices are heard in the development, commissioning and quality assurance of the services they receive; Regional coordination of the UK Youth Parliament in the East of England. Robin's career in youth work, spanning 30 years, has included running youth centres, specialising in work with boys and young men and International Youth Cooperation. He is also active within his trade union being a national lay member sitting on several national committees.

Raluca Bărbuleanu graduated the Faculty of Sociology at the University of Craiova, Romania and also an MA programme in Community Development and European Integration. She worked in numerous EVS group projects and currently she is in charge with delivering monitoring and evaluation for EVS group projects in the South of Romania and she is a worldwide volunteering manager for Latin America and South Africa . She considers EVS projects as one of the most complex and challenging programmes which may generate outstanding impacts.

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Târgu Jiu, Romania
May, 2010

The current KIT is the fruitful outcome of years of work with EVS volunteers and dedication from my colleagues building on the innovation and diversity developed in their projects.

Throughout the whole KIT I often make reference to concepts and explanations used in the first KIT on Community Youth Development through EVS. Therefore, I intentionally did not dwell on explaining over again so that the reader would be eventually determined to get to skim through the whole first KIT as well in a quest for earning a comprehensive picture of the added value that EVS may bring to community youth development.

The development of the current KIT is part of the the Youth Empowerment Programme-YEP implemented by Regional Association for Rural Development Romania jointly with the effort of other six partner organizations: Norfolk Childrens' Services UK, Association Jeunesse Verte du Cameroun, Organizacion Argentina de Jovenes para las Naciones Unidas, Jovenes de Buena Voluntad Peru, NBV/Euromeet Sweden, Chibuzor Human Resources Development Organization, Sierra Leone.

Special dedication also need to be made to my colleagues Andreea Tarapana, Alexandru Diaconescu, Antonio Tomoniu, Mihaela Jilavu, Marian Sindrinaru, Anca Popescu, Daniel Caprita for their valuable comments, observations and support in my work.

I would very much appreciate to receive your comments that would stand as contribution to the third series that is already in the pipeline and which is more on work development and methodology in the EVS projects.

Florin Păsătoiu
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Chapters

Chapter 1: General consideration on the European Voluntary Service (EVS)

Short History

The history of EVS begun with UNESCO, which was the first international institution that brought a significant contribution in the field of EVS. In 1948 UNESCO founded the Coordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS). From the very beginning CCIVS functioned as an umbrella organization for all NGOs in this field. CCIVS aimed at sharing experiences between the member organizations, to lobby for better conditions for IVS programmes and to provide information about these opportunities.

The two major European institutions, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, started to become active in this field in the 1990s. The main aim of the Council of Europe's engagement is to push its member states to provide more favourable (legal) conditions for the mobility of young volunteers and to abolish barriers to mobility. In March 2000 the Council of Europe passed a European Convention on the Promotion of a Transnational Long-term Voluntary Service for Young People, stating minimum quality standards in the field.

Since the beginning of the 1990s the European Commission has funded International Voluntary Service projects for young people within the framework of the "Youth for Europe" programme. In 1996 they established the" European Voluntary Service" (EVS) programme which offers financial support for primarily long-term voluntary service projects for young people (between 16 and 30 years old) within the European Union member states. Since 2000 it also offers volunteering opportunities for and in the pre-accession countries[1].

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[1] Text copy lifted from the T-kit on International Voluntary Service, Council of Europe and European Commission, July 2002

EVS stands for **European Voluntary Service.** The European Voluntary Service represents action 2 of the Youth in Action Programme, that supports youth participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both inside and outside the European Union.

The meaning of the ,,voluntary service'' concept is to develop a diversity of types of activities, unpaid, for the mutual benefit of those involved, in a structured frame, with objectives established and efforts oriented towards certain results and also with the previous agreement of parties.

The projects within the European Voluntary Service and the promoters who submit them must adhere to the EVS Charter which states the quality standards of these projects and their principles.

The European Voluntary Service is:

- performing voluntary activities for a limited period of time, up to 12 months, in a foreign country
- non-profit and unpaid activity
- promoting European values like tolerance, solidarity, equality, dialogue
- building partnerships at a local, regional and national level
- offering the participants the opportunity to become more aware of their culture and to understand other cultures
- offering the youngsters the opportunities to develop on a personal and professional level and to explore their identities
- bringing an added value to the host organization and the local community
- a tool for social integration of youngsters in general and of those with fewer opportunities in particular
- a tool that can improve employability
- a tool to promote non-formal education as a learning method

- occasional, unstructured, part-time volunteering
- internship in an enterprise
- a paid job and must not substitute a paid job
- recreation or tourist activity
- language course
- exploitation of cheap labour
- a period of study or training abroad

How does it work?

The dimensions that EVS projects imply can be defined concerning the following aspects:

The geographical scope – the European Voluntary Service is actually an international voluntary service, which has as an inherent and challenging component, the intercultural interaction.

As a rule, a volunteer from a Neighbouring Partner Country or from Other Partner Countries of the World must conduct his/her voluntary service in a Program Country

Duration – in terms of duration, the EVS projects can be:

- Short –term projects, lasting between two weeks and three months
- Long- term projects, lasting between six to twelve months

As a rule, the voluntary service can have duration of minimum 2 months and maximum 12 months. A minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 12 months are accepted if the EVS activity implies youngsters with fewer opportunities.

Structure of activity - according to the number of promoters and volunteers involved, the EVS activity can be defined as:

- EVS Individual Activity, which means two promoters involved (one Sending Organization + one Hosting Organization) from different countries, of which at least one is from an EU country
- EVS Group Activity: two or more promoters (one or more Sending Organization plus one or more Hosting Organizations) from different countries from which at least one is an EU country; A Group EVS Activity can also be linked to a specific event; in this case the Activity requires a solid partnership with the organizing body of the event and the volunteers' tasks must all relate to the event.

The projects within the European Voluntary Service have the suitable format to approach a whole range of themes and to orient their intervention towards various fields of action. The list below mentions few of the most utilized themes and fields of work in EVS projects:

Projects approaching this field are oriented towards work with disadvantaged groups such as minorities, immigrants, orphans, elderly, people with disability, etc, mainly with the purpose of facilitating their integration

Social work

These are rather tools for working, sharing knowledge and interacting with people, following objectives like facilitating communication, developing the sense of tolerance, finding a common language, etc.

Art and culture

Most of these projects aim at raising awareness on the need to protect the environment and on promoting responsible behaviours towards it

Environment

Is rather used as a tool to facilitate communication, to promote healthy behaviours and team spirit

Sport

Educational projects

Although all EVS projects have an educational component, some of them are clearly setting education and training as objectives, regarding different issues like health, discrimination, etc. Projects that follow this kind of objectives do not necessarily require specialized volunteers

Rural development

These projects are focused mainly on education and promoting among youngsters the international study possibilities or other type of international trainings as the youngsters living in these communities are considered to have fewer opportunities and more difficult access to different types of education

Youth leisure

These projects are focused on promoting creative and educational ways of spending free time, for example by practicing hobbies or by creating clubs where youngsters can gather and practice some artistic skills.

Gender equality

These projects are focused on stimulating the balanced active participation of men and women in issues concerning the social or political life, or education and to stimulate recognition and respect of rights of men and women

European awareness

These projects are focused on promoting the European values and intercultural interaction, for example by stimulating the interest of youngsters to participate to elections for the European Parliament or by conducting information campaigns on the possibilities that different international programmes can offer to youngsters to improve their education and professional experience
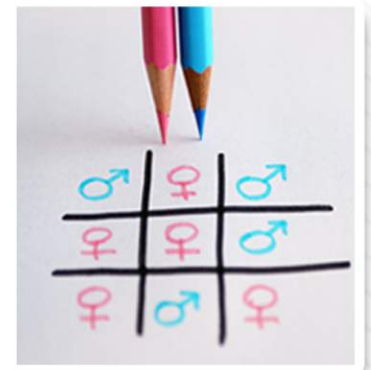
Media and communication

Projects focused on learning to communicate through media and to improve IT knowledge

Inter-religious dialogue

Projects focused on establishing a common language of communication between different beliefs, to develop the sense of tolerance and to see differences as learning opportunities

EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle is an important component of the EVS activity; the promoters involved in the EVS Activity must ensure that each volunteer participates in:

pre-departure training - gives volunteers an opportunity to talk about their expectations, develop their motivation, and obtain information on their host country and on the Youth in Action Programme.

on-arrival training - takes place upon arrival in the host country. It introduces volunteers to their host country and their host environment, and helps them to get to know each other.

mid-term evaluation (for a Service lasting more than 4 months) - provides volunteers with an opportunity to evaluate their experience so far, as well as to meet other volunteers from different projects throughout the host country.

evaluation of the Activity - It brings together the volunteers and their Sending Organizations and it addresses the realization of the EVS Activity: aims, objectives, motivation, expectations, and tasks performed during the Service.

In Programme Countries the training/evaluation is organized by the National Agencies (including for those volunteers selected in projects approved by the Executive Agency).
In South East Europe (SEE) the training/evaluation is organized by SALTO SEE Resource Centre (including for those volunteers selected in projects approved by the Executive Agency).

Moreover, quality and technical support to young people and promoters is provided by National Agencies and the EVS Advice and Support Organizations at national level, and by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the Commission at European level. The core service consists of helping, on request, with the identification of volunteers and EVS Sending, Host and Coordinating Organizations and supporting the matching of volunteer and organization based on mutual interests, profiles and expectations.

The EVS projects have a structured format with specific rules and actors having defined roles and responsibilities. The main actors involved in an EVS project or the EVS partnership is composed of:

> **Volunteers**

> **Sending Organization**

> **Hosting Organization/Coordinating Organization** – it coordinates the whole project and applies for funding on behalf of the partnership with other organization interested in hosting volunteers; a Coordinating Organization can be at the same time a Sending Organization and a Hosting Organization

Volunteers

The volunteers can be youngsters aged between 18 and 30 years old, legal residents in one of the EU member countries or in countries participating in the Programme. The youngsters with fewer opportunities may participate in EVS projects from the age of 16 years old.

As for the number of participants, in an EVS project can participate between 1 and 100 volunteers. If a project involves Partner Countries, the number of volunteers from Partner Countries can not exceed the number of volunteers coming from Participating countries in the Program. The volunteers are the key actors of an EVS project, as the projects are developed using their creativity, their will and their energy.

Sending Organization (SO)

Any youngster who wants to participate in an EVS project must contact a sending organization. The sending organization has the responsibility to fulfil the sending procedures. The SO needs to be accredited either by the National Agency from its country or by the Executive Agency for Education and Culture.

Hosting Organization (HO)

A hosting organization is responsible of administrative aspects like providing accommodation, food, monthly allowance, identifying a mentor and supervising the volunteer's activity. The HO needs to be accredited either by the National Agency from its country, or the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture.

Coordinating Organization (CO)

It is officially in charge with managing the budget of the project and the administration of the entire project; there is only one CO per EVS project, regardless of the number of EVS Activities and promoters foreseen in the project. The CO doesn't necessarily have to be a SO or HO in the project (although it may be). In EVS projects involving only one volunteer, either the SO or the HO acts as CO.

The Sending, Hosting, Coordinating Organization, are called promoters. Each promoter must be:

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

Accreditation

In order to be able to submit an EVS project or to send a volunteer, the organizations need to be accredited. The accreditation is a certification that the organization has the human and material resources and motivation to get involved in an EVS project and that it complies with a minimum of quality standards.

The accreditation can be obtained by submitting an Expression of Interest (EI) to the National Agencies in the Programme Countries or to the Executive Agency or SALTO Youth Centers for organizations located in South East Europe. The Expression of Interest is a form that has to be filled in by the organization, describing the ideas and motivation for getting involved in EVS projects.

These forms can be submitted at any time to the bodies mentioned above, who will make the evaluation. (see Commission's webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/forms/forms_yia_en.html).

However, promoters are strongly invited to submit their request within reasonable time before the submission of the EVS project application (in principle, at least 6 weeks before). This is in order to avoid the EVS project being rejected by the National or Executive Agency due to the fact that some of the promoters involved in it are not accredited by the time the application is assessed.

All promoters must apply the principles of the EVS Charter at all stages of the project; this is a basis for accreditation.
The organizations from Other Partner Countries of the World do not have to be accredited.

The accreditation is valid for the period indicated in the EI; however, the maximum eligible duration is three years. After the expiration of the validity period, the accreditation can be renewed by submitting a new EI.

EVS Insurance

Every EVS volunteer must be enrolled into the Group Insurance Plan for EVS volunteers foreseen by the Youth in Action Programme, which complements the coverage by national social security systems - if applicable.

The Coordinating Organization, in cooperation with the Sending and Host Organizations, is responsible for the enrolment of the volunteer(s). This enrolment must be done before the departure of the volunteer(s) and cover the duration of the Service. An insurance Guide including all the information on the coverage and support provided, as well as instructions on the online enrolment process, is available at **www.europeanbenefits.com**

Youthpass

Every person who has taken part in a Youth in Action project under this Action is entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate, which describes and validates the non-formal and informal learning experience acquired during the project. For more information on Youthpass, please consult Part A of this Guide or **www.youthpass.eu**

Rules of funding

All EVS projects are based on a simplified system of flat rates and fixed amounts. The grant never covers 100% of an EVS project and is considered as co-funding. Therefore the organization must show when applying that has the financial resources to sustain the project throughout its development.

Funding rules for sending organizations
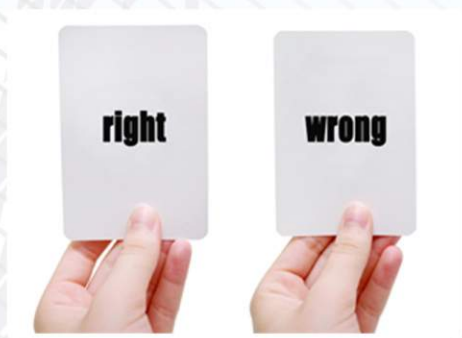
- Volunteer's visa and vaccination costs are totally covered by the grant

- The sending organization receives 90% of the travel costs from home to the venue of the project as they are responsible of buying a plane/ bus/train ticket for the volunteer to get to the hosting country. 10% of the travel costs are supported by the volunteer

- The sending organization receives a fixed amount of money for preparing the volunteer in a proper way before leaving

- Exceptional costs and an Advance Planning visit are covered by the grant if the project involves young people with less opportunities

Funding rules for hosting organizations

- The hosting organization receives an amount of money to ensure the accommodation, the food, language training, guidance and support, local transportation, mentor, communication, health insurance for the volunteers; the amount of money received by the hosting organization to cover the costs mentioned depends on the host country

- The hosting organization provides pocket money (volunteer allowance on a weekly or monthly basis); the allowance that has to be paid to the volunteer depends on the host country and is covered by the grant.

- Exceptional costs are covered by the grant if the project involves young people with less opportunities.

There are four deadlines for application submitted at European level and three deadlines for Other Partner Countries of the World per year for projects starting approximately 4 months later:

European level:

When your project can be applied	When you can start your project activities
1 February	1 May and 30 September
1 April	1 July and 30 November
1 June	1 September and 31 January
1 September	1 December and 30 April
1 November	1 February and 31 July

Other Partner Countries of the World:

When your project can be applied	When you can start you project activities
1 February	1 July and 30 November
1 June	1 November and 30 March
1 September	1 January and 31 July

Chapter 2: EVS and community youth development

It is about benefiting from innovation, solidarity and skills from international volunteers in a quest for competence build up, attitude change and partnership fostering. It is about boosting active citizenship with young people, which means getting young people understand, roles and obligations, as active citizens in all fields of the community which concerns them, such fields as decision making, public representation, volunteerism, employment, education, leisure whilst being aware of the responsibilities this brings . It is a giving and a taking for the community.

There has not been a single definition worked out, as well as not too many on a trial. Hence, it is the authors and the numerous participants to their training courses and projects that added ideas and stirred creativity to assemble the actual one; every reader is warmly encouraged to shape it as wished.

Community youth development by means of EVS is an approach based on participation, partnership, empowerment and accountability as ways to:

- Build young people's connections to their own identity, culture, and membership to community
- Recognize that young people are assets to and experts about their own communities
- Engage young people as community leaders on issues that matter to them and in the run up of their habitat, in ways that build on young people's strengths and give them hope for the future and build a vibrant local environment
- Bring young people and adults together to work as equal partners

Community Youth Development by means of EVS should be looked at from two aspects:

- As an ideology, mechanism that balances the force rapport within a given community empowering young people to practice democratic rights and actively be involved in a participatory manner in the governance of their local community.

- As a managerial tool to facilitate local youth sustainable development by means of horizontal management networks and construction of local public policies. It aims at creating institutional synergies and cross- sectoral programming, designing an integrative approach that takes into account the whole community as such and not addressing youth problems individually[2].

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[2] Copy lifted from KIT on Community Youth Development through EVS, 2008, www.ardr.ro

According to the Community Youth Development concept, an EVS volunteer may intervene according to her/his training at one of the levels below; therefore, to a great extent it depends also on the stage the community itself has reached to in terms of community youth development. Hence, assuming that there is capacity already created for community youth development, a volunteer should not get to start with the first stage as there is the risk of becoming redundant and it may lead to loosing interest on the community side.

On the other hand, the hosting/coordinating organization must have a clear long term strategy and planning for each of the potential hosting communities concerned; a clear picture of the work delivered in a community must be introduced to the volunteer so that, in a joint endeavor with the EVS staff to decide the level of intervention the volunteer needs to proceed at:

1. creating the capacity for community youth development

- to raise awareness for community youth development processes through meetings with young people, elected officials and citizens
- to encourage the public-private partnerships
- to support the set up of youth local action groups (public-private partnerships)
- to train the members of youth local action groups (trainings on topics such as project management, strategy development, partnership construction, community development, etc.)

2. providing expertise for the build up of community youth development strategies

- to collect relevant data for the involved communities
- to elaborate a diagnostic study on the community youth development potential
- to identify local needs and youth leaders
- to mobilize youth leaders and the youth community at large
- to design the strategic planning
- to elaborate operational planning for community youth development main strategic directions
-to ensure evaluation and monitoring

3. assisting in the implementation of community youth development strategies

- to develop projects for community youth development to be supported by local, national or international/EU resources
- to constantly evaluate and monitor developments of the operational planning

4. facilitating inter-territorial and trans- national youth cooperation

- to facilitate the participation of local youth leaders in international study trips, seminars, conferences, trainings, intercultural exchanges in order to exchange best practices, know-how - to develop innovative methods and techniques to value local youth potential
- to support the creation of intra and inter- community youth networks

Pluses and minuses for EVS in local communities

+	−
Encourage youth volunteerism in the community	Way too demanding for volunteers
Boost local active citizenship	Extensive efforts and continuous coaching for volunteers
Raise youths interests into their community life	Way too risky for the partnerships the hosting organization has established in the communities. As the local community associates volunteers with the hosting/coordinating organization, there is a high risk that volunteers' misbehaviour to impact negatively on the image of the organization as well
New ideas	Potential conflicts amongst volunteers
Exchange of practice	Acts of xenophobia
New potential knowledge	Lack of sustainability
Exchange of culture	May backfire negatively on the youth participation if no strategic planning
Added value	Open project that may bring risks any time
European/international dimension	Divergence of interests in between hosing community and the volunteer
Extra- resources	Not prepared community to host volunteers
Open windows for expanded European/international collaboration	Lack of local resources

Chapter 3: EVS Project Management in the framework of Community Youth Development

Compared to a single EVS project or a project that is developed in a single organization, with scarce or no link to the local community, where volunteers get exposed solely to the day-to-day routine within the respective hosting institution, a European Voluntary Service programme which runs within an open local community, requires a tailor made project management.

It starts with the assessment of both the organization and the local communities, continues with the design of the project, managing international partnerships, looks at implementation process, monitoring, evaluation, valorisation and the follow up.

A: Assessing the community capacity and openness to host an EVS project

Nothing could be as harmful as having a hosting community unwilling to team with volunteers and nothing to work on.

Of tremendous importance for the Hosting Organization is to know very well the communities that are going to host volunteers and to trigger enough dynamic and set in place support mechanism by the time the volunteers arrive.

? The questions that need to be posed and answered during this stage are, *To what extent is the community ready to host volunteers? What resources are set in place? What are the immediate and long-term steps that both the community needs to endeavour to get prepared for hosting volunteers? What is the scope of the EVS project intervention? What are the target groups and the beneficiaries of the EVS project? What are the opportunities and threats related to the implementation of the EVS project?*

The scenario that may happen is that both the hosting organization, for emergency reasons, and the potential hosting community for no reasons, end up signing agreements without a thorough exploration of both challenges and added value for the getting involved in an EVS project.

The very actors in the community that need to be involved in the assessment, and on which the sustainability of the EVS projects rely to a large extent, are the local government, the local administration, local schools and any other government organizations. It is critical to raise their awareness on practical obligations that the whole community needs to work on, win their consent on the immediate and long term action plans that have to ensure an appropriate implementation of the EVS projects.

At a second tier, lie NGOs, local businesses, informal groups that are to be involved in the actual implementation of the projects and in working on the follow up of the EVS projects. What often occurs, is that in a quest for novelty in community life, for organizational political reasons, the public organizations in the community, schools, local administration are keen to engage and commit to hosting EVS volunteers, promoting a sort of rhetoric that may jeopardize the whole process at a later stage.

No doubt that the assessment procedures require solid planning and funding from the hosting organization. Therefore, by skipping this stage, the hosting organization needs to be aware that they build the premises for dissatisfaction, weak performance on the volunteers' side but also bad investment from the community as they either do not allocate time, personnel, infrastructure and finances at all or all of these are rather scarce.

In terms of objectives to conduct a community assessment, we identify:

- getting a sense of the *social, economic, cultural, political realities* in the community

- evaluating the *openness, availability and capacity of the community* in hosting volunteers

- identify *needs, opportunities, expectations* that may shape the design of the EVS project in that particular community

- construct the *profile of the volunteers* to be able to respond to the expectations of the community

- agree on the *intervention plan* that is to prepare the community for hosting volunteers

- document on the *community profile*

- striking a *balance amongst several competing objectives: respecting the local priorities, encouraging local people to get involved, developing synergies with other initiatives in the community*

As for the steps that an organization needs to follow in conducting a community assessment, a possible roadmap may look like:

Step 1

compiling the dossier on introduction to the European Voluntary Service Programme. Even if the EVS programme is new or not for the communities that are to be assessed, the organization to conduct the evaluation needs to prepare a dossier that must comprise: description of the EVS programme (history, values, aims, structure), technical aspects (actors involved, timing, finances), best practice examples (prior EVS projects), where the EVS programme fits with the Hosting organization (strategy, planning, team involved) and the protocol to be signed with the potential partners (EVS programme methodology, technical aspects).

thorough in - house documentation on the potential hosting community; effort must be spent on identifying local NGOs, informal groups that may have an interest in getting involved in the management of the EVS projects in their community. Way ahead visiting the potential hosting communities, there is a need for searching for prior initiatives relevant for the EVS projects in the communities, current local legislation that may be in support to the EVS projects, local existing infrastructure, key formal and informal persons in the community.

developing the *assessment plan*; that must include setting targets (persons to meet, results), assembling the assessment team, ascribing responsibilities, and establish deadlines.

establishing contact; hence, *a presentation letter* introducing both the EVS programme and the proposal for the first meetings is to be sent by fax to all local public organizations, NGOs and informal groups relevant for the EVS programme. Couple of days later, direct phone contact is to be made in order to confirm the meetings.

site visit; besides meeting local stakeholders, at this stage the team in charge with the assessment is to spend some time on community discovery - wandering up and down the streets in the community, deeply involved in active observation, establishing contact with the locals, getting a sense and a felling of the community; during the meeting with the representatives for the local institutions, the team needs to introduce the dossier on EVS and encourage the interlocutor to any concerns and observations in relation to the opportunity and implementation of the EVS project in their community. The team will ask also for any local document that may be relevant for the EVS project implementation: local strategies, action plans, legislation, other relevant local stakeholders, prior initiatives.

At the end of the site visit, the assessment team must be able to complete a *Community Resource Inventory*[3] that is to be part of the assessment report:

• The services and programs that exist in the respective community (faith-based services, voluntary organizations/programs, etc.);
• The financial resources that community has (state and local grant funding, foundation or for-profit funding, non-profit funds, donations, etc.);
• The infrastructure resources that community has (e.g., technological resources, equipment, office space and supplies);
• The human resources community has (e.g., staff, volunteers, champions); and
• The training and technical assistance that is needed and available and how to access these resources

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[3]Pasatoiu, F., Konieczny, R., Community Youth Development by means of EVS, 2009, pages *14-21*

Step 6

drafting the assessment report; based on the information gathered the assessment team (including also the community resource inventory) is to compile the assessment report that needs to consist of the following minimum elements: status quo on availability, capacity, openness and clarity in hosting EVS projects, theme and scale opportunity for the EVS project, immediate and long term steps that need to be made, recommendations. The assessment report is to be sent either by email or mail at least one week before scheduling the second visit in the community.

Step 7

exploring collaboration; an email/fax invitation for a plenary discussion on the findings of the assessment report, is to be addressed to all local stakeholders that were initially interviewed. The meeting is to be organized jointly with the local government and/or the local administration and the local main school. In case during the first site visit none of the aforementioned institutions show interest and availability, then an organization from the second tier of community actors need to be involved in convening the meeting. The assessment team must encourage the local stakeholders to invite for the meeting other relevant people from the community, including youths, women, ethnic minorities and elder people.

The meeting needs to start with the introduction of the assessment report findings by the assessment team. Copies of the assessment report need to be prepared for all participants to the meeting. Ideally, a power point presentation, not more than 4-5 slides needs to be prepared in advance. In the programme, there must be room for interventions from representatives of local institutions and any other person that is willing to intervene.

The result of the meeting must be a preliminary agreement signed with the local institution/group willing to engage in the partnership for the EVS project, and an immediate action plan to complete all tasks by the starting point of the EVS project. The date for the last site visit needs to be established during this meeting.

During this meeting, the "why", "what", "for whom", "how" to conduct the EVS project in the local community must be agreed upon. There needs to be explored also the possibility to link the EVS project with the local agenda on youth, culture, sports, leisure, "what" exactly is the EVS project expected to focus on, and "how" action is going to be conducted.

Step 8

expanding collaboration; during this stage, a last site visit is to be undertaken by the assessment team when also the "partnership" to endorse the collaboration within the EVS programme framework is to be signed. The assessment team needs to conduct thorough check ups on the accommodation, volunteers' office, interviewing with the local mentor and local counterpart. A final action plan is to be drafted by the local counterpart, local mentor and the assessment team, that is to encompass the span of time in between the last visit, the arrival of volunteers in the community and the termination of the project.

Looking at the organization that is willing to embark on EVS project management is as critical as assessing the potential hosting communities. In most cases, organizations willing to proceed with EVS project rush ahead without having conducted a thorough organizational scanning as to its capacity, willingness and shared commitment amongst members and staffers.

As part of the assessment process, one needs to identify capacity gaps when there is still time to narrow the scope of the project, or phase it over a longer period of time (to lighten the capacity required), or introduce capacity-building activities. Addressing capacity gaps enable you to avoid risks later during the EVS project implementation, and improve your project 's quality as a whole. Apart from analyzing managerial areas that yield for improvement, at this stage of project design, one has to make sure there is enough willingness within the organization to embark on an EVS project.

Instituting an EVS programme in an organization should not be done either instantaneously or supply driven, but it must be organizational and community demand driven; managing an EVS programm triggers a new dynamic within the organization and may cause damages rather than enabling the organization and the staff to perform more effectively and efficiently; routines and organizational practices are changed ranging from new budget lines to new job profiles, working relationships, policies and regulations specially designed to accommodated the new comers;

Some levels are worthwhile looking at while conducting the needs and opportunity analysis:

a. Vision, mission - does the EVS programme fit to the whole organizational vision and mission? If not are you ready as an organization to tune in your vision and mission to accommodate also the EVS programme?
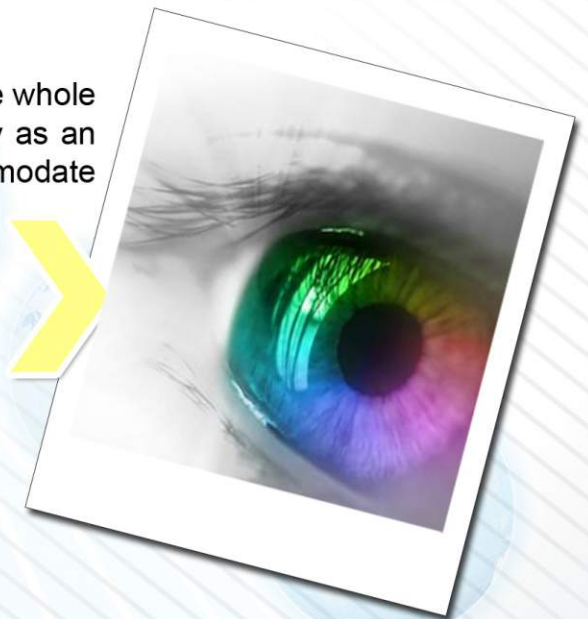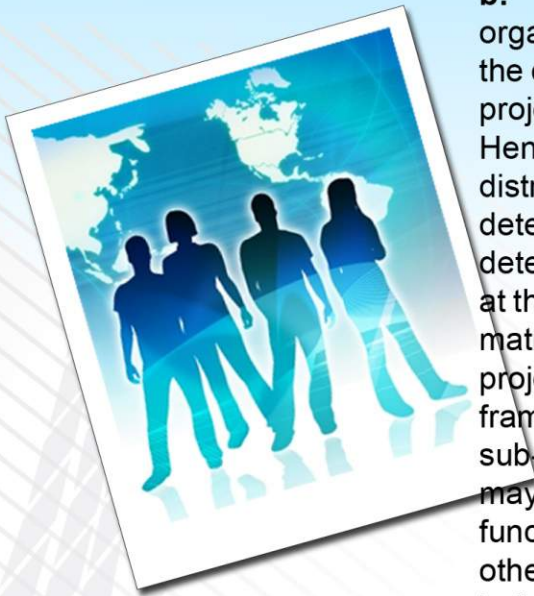
b. Human resources - to what extent is the staff of the organization fit and ready trained to deal with volunteers? Has the organization got enough staff to do the work prescribed in the project? Have they managed similar programmes before? Hence, it is very much about crossing the border line of formal distribution of tasks within the organization and realistically determine the "working level" of personnel involvement, to determine "what they have to do", "whose capacity is to do that"; at the end of this level of analysis try to construct a task allocation matrix that helps you visualize human resources picture in the project. No wonder you may have worked out the project logical frame but, each project objective must be further split into sub-tasks, roles and responsibilities; at the end of the day, you may find appropriate to create or outsource some of the functions that need to be performed in the EVS project; on the other hand, if time allows, you may want to develop a capacity building programme for the respective unit or the organization as a whole.

c. Finances- does the organization has at its disposal various funds that can be tuned into the volunteer programme if needed in order to supplement unplanned costs? It is not that easy to make financial forecasting- no novelty about that! Nevertheless, that is the backbone of the entire project success; rough estimates are not the way you may want to deal with that. An accurate analysis of any collateral funds you may need for executing various steps in the project is a must. What is the likelihood that budgeted funds will not be released on time? Have you set in place prevailing rules regarding the release of funds? What financial back up you may use if needed? Have you got already arrangements in place to minimize late funds release, or to cope with it? Asking these questions and giving pertinent feedback to that, it may save you a lot of problems.
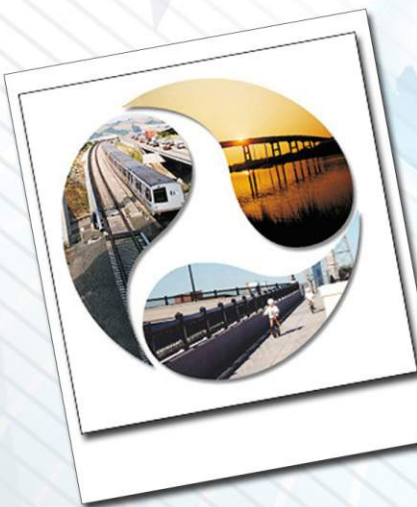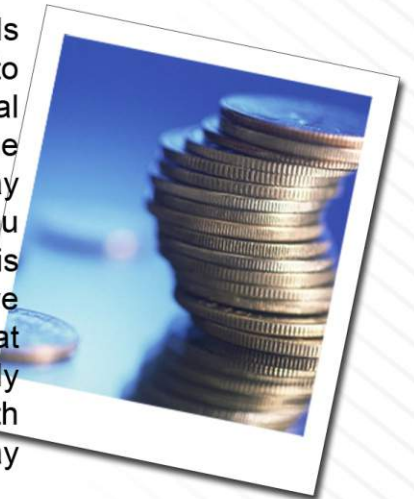
d. Infrastructure - Can the organization make use of infrastructure, such as physical facilities, vehicles, machinery and equipment, as well as the software, systems for the whole implementation of the project? If the project is developed in remote disadvantaged areas, can the organization provide volunteers with a friendly working environment (space, PCs, web connection, etc.)? What additional material or resources cam make the organization perform better its tasks within the EVS project?

e. Workload - is there an existing short term and long term activity planning that the volunteers can be tuned in? Quite simple described in the EVS programmes regulations, hard to attain in practical terms! Having volunteers in your organization as an extra-helping hand is a great asset an organization wish to have. Nevertheless, plenty of volunteers chose to quit their project before project completion. Why? In most cases due to the lack of "job". As simple as that. Organizations fail to dissociate in between a short term and long terms work plan for volunteers, or at lest are not able to alternate both. Obviously there is a working plan advertised well ahead of recruiting volunteers; still, it is of great help to tune in the working plan as soon as the volunteers arrive in the organization and even more when they are placed in the hosting local communities. Community first contact and days to come spent in there may unveil different contextual aspects that would lead to building obstacles for work delivery by the volunteers in the community; either the locals, partners, beneficiaries gradually lose interest in the EVS project or the volunteers is by far well equipped and is ready to get involved in larger scale initiatives; hence, be ready to accommodate in the project working plan new routes that have to meet both the project outcomes and outputs and the volunteers' expectations as well.

f. Partnerships - has the organization got well-established partnerships that can support the EVS programme in the community and with its overall implementation?

Keep in mind that in case of an EVS project on community youth development it takes more that an organization to do it; it has a harsh spill over into the larger community; at this stage in your assessment you have to refer to organizations and organizational units that may be available to dedicate extra-work, time, energy to assist you in managing the EVS project, in addition to their routine tasks. Make sure your partners are aware that there is another level of accountability that they are to take over within the framework of the EVS partnership.
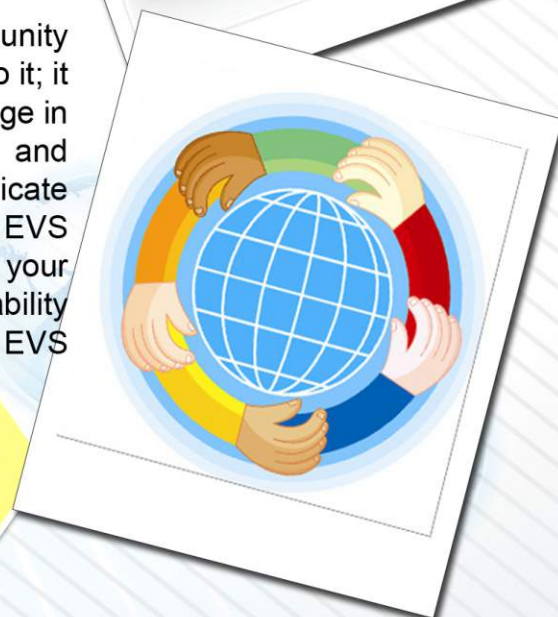
Once you set off with the six fold dimensions assessment methodology, it is helpful to receive clear answers to the following questions by all staff in the organization:

1. What is your organizational vision and mission?
2. What are you trying to accomplish in the targeted communities? What is the Community Youth Development program's purpose?
3. How do volunteers fit into the program's mission, strategies, and goals?
4. How could volunteers best meet the program's needs to serve more people and make a greater difference in the community?
5. How can volunteers help meet program goals?

You may want to use the following diagram for assessing your organizational capacity to manage an EVS project:

STEPS	Activities
1. tune in the organizational vision and mission	1.1 explore and define with all the staff what is the vision, mission and how the EVS programme possible fits into (if you have got none, you better work on!)
2. human resources	1.1 nominate a team for the EVS management 1.2 elaborate on the job profiles of all members 1.3 establish roles and responsibilities 1.4 agree on a professional development plan for the staffers to be involved in the EVS management
3. finance planning	2.1 plan strictly the income and the expenditure of the organization before, during and after the EVS programme starts 2.2 agree on a fund-raising strategy and plan
4. methodology and procedures	3.1 developing the "how we do" approach; here, you need to address the following questions: - is there a methodology set in place as on how to manage the EVS projects? - are there clear procedures on a communication, financial, human resources, crisis management, safety and protection, and partnerships? - is there a monitoring and evaluation plan already build up? - is there a reporting plan set in place already?
5. reaching out, focusing in	4.1 strategy and operational calendars- where, when and how the EVS can fit it; update them if needed 4.2 conduct a SWOT analysis: address the following questions with all the staff: a) "What external changes could affect the organization in running the EVS programme?" (e.g. stakeholders, values, resources, power, etc.; changing rules and regulations; expectations and resources from beneficiaries, donors, partners; expected shifts in needs for EVS programmes; availability of leadership and staffing; and what other current or new organizations provide similar services? b) "What could be the effects of these changes in terms of threats or opportunities?" c) "What changes must we make to address the threats?" d) "What strengths can we build on to take advantage of the opportunities?"

C: Project design

Once there is a clear picture of what are the needs, capacities and opportunities to link local action with an EVS project, the hosting organization needs to proceed with the framing of the EVS project.

It is of critical importance that all partners involved in the EVS project are given the opportunity to contribute to the project identity, ownership, monitoring, evaluation and valorization of the results.

In technical terms it has to consider the flow in between motivation to host the EVS project, aim to develop actions, the objectives necessary to reach, the risk assessment and crisis management, the workload and activities that have to be performed, project duration, the results to be produced by the end of the EVS project, marketing, monitoring, evaluation, dissemination and valorization.

Very important is also the fact that when making the project design, all organizations need to take into account the objectives, the priorities and the important features of the Youth in Action Programme as failing to do that may lead to the EVS project not being granted. Also, they need to look at the priorities that the National Agencies may have.

Motivation to host EVS

A critical attention need to be given to the link that can be established in between the potential hosting communities and hosting organizations to host EVS projects and the interest of the sending organizations to send volunteers. One needs to make sure that there is a convergent set of interests that all actors agree on. Here, the theme (-s) of the project needs also to be defined and described how the theme(s) will be dealt with in the project. The Users' Guide provides a comprehensive although non-limiting list of choices. Be aware not to select more than 2 themes as that causes the rejection of your application right from the evaluation of administrative criteria compliance stage.

Please tick no more than 2 boxes.

- ☐ European awareness
- ☐ Inter-religious dialogue
- ☐ Anti-discrimination
- ☐ Art and culture
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Minorities
- ☐ Gender equality
- ☐ Non-discrimination based on sexual orientation
- ☐ Other – If so, please specify:

- ☐ Post conflict/post-disaster rehabilitation
- ☐ Urban/Rural development
- ☐ Youth policies
- ☐ Media and communications/Youth information
- ☐ Education through sport and outdoor activities
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Development Cooperation
- ☐ Roma communities

The formulation of a commonly agreed **aim** of the EVS project is of critical importance. That looks to respond to the question *what does the EVS project looks to have accomplished by the end of it?* This is to facilitate direction, structure, define commitment of all partners involved and calibrate effort along project implementation. Moreover, the EVS activities are to be developed in line with the overarching aim of the EVS project.

Once the aim is established, defining the EVS project objectives must not be overlooked. These have to be clearly linked to the reality in the hosting communities and they must fall under the direction of the project aim.

Being given the wide diversity of EVS volunteers profiles, it is recommended that the hosting organization sets realistic, time defined **objectives** that do not require the recruitment of very particular profile of EVS volunteers, but leave room enough for diversity in terms of competences. It is critical that volunteers are introduced to objectives that can produce concrete results during their EVS project and do not yield visible products only in the aftermath of the EVS project. That is to create a high level of satisfaction and "job fulfilment" feeling amongst volunteers that may boost their input into the EVS project.

Based on the definition of objectives, activities can be operationalized during the project. Setting too high objectives that may lead to constant failure from volunteers to execute tasks and also eventually may backfire on the hosting organization partnership with the hosting communities and in the long run with the EVS project beneficiaries.

Project activities

The challenge is to strike a balance in between hosting organization control in EVS development, hosting community contribution to volunteering development and leaving enough space for innovation and personal identity from volunteers themselves.

When you design the activities, one needs to take into account long term and medium term objectives, daily work and scale events, as much as horizontal continuous actions.

Caution needs to be given to avoid the development of routine volunteering activities. Hence, once again we remind you how important is to have a clear picture of the possibilities in the hosting communities, local stakeholders' interests, and strategy of the hosting organization in such a way that diversity in volunteering and personal and professional learning opportunities are created.

The activities must target not only the needs of the local community but also should enable the volunteer to acquire self- confidence, social and professional skills.

Project methodology

One has to be reminded that the EVS projects fits within the whole concept of the Youth in Action Programme that dwells on the non-formal education methodology. The project methodology has also to be in line with the qualitative criteria of the EVS Charter.

In effect, no matter what is the local partnership set up in the framework of EVS projects, the methodology needs to be looking at establishing a good match in between the number of volunteers and hosting organization capacity to offer learning opportunities for volunteers.

According to the theme of the EVS project, one needs to look for specific non-formal methods that can be used during the implementation. For instance, if an organization looks at community youth development by means of EVS, then participatory planning methodology and animation techniques need to be considered.

Linked also to the project methodology, it is the definition of a monitoring and evaluation methodology (M&E). For further on this, please look at the chapter on M & E. It looks not only at the evaluation of the project compliance with the objectives and responsibilities as assigned by the granted application form, but it also has to monitor and evaluate closely the evolution of the personal and professional development of volunteers, and the EVS staff too.

As to the composition of the team involved in managing the EVS project, a minimum team profile needs to include the following positions:

- Project manager
- Project assistant
- Financial assistant
- Project monitor
- Mentors
- Site counterparts
- Language tutor
- Trainers

Further on the team profile it is to be explored in KIT on EVS, third edition that is due next year.

The partnership in the framework of an EVS project may last up till 24 months. Though, that needs to be differentiated by the duration of the volunteering service that cannot last more than 12 months.

A rough estimation of the main stages duration would split into:

- Project preparation- up to 1 month
- Recruitment of volunteers- up to 1 month
- Application writing (including the circulation of all papers from partners)- up to 2 weeks
- Application approval- up to 2 months
- Contract signing- up to 1 month
- Visa arrangements – in between 1 month and 2 months
- EVS activities- in between 2 weeks- 12 months
- Project implementation (including also monitoring, evaluation, dissemination and valorization)- in between 2 weeks -24 months.

When it comes to the eligibility period, the interval of time which corresponds to the 'project duration', the project must neither start earlier than the project start date nor finish later than the project end date. The costs are eligible only within this period.

Intercultural learning and European dimension

Any project that is financed by the Youth in Action programme needs to encompass in its methodology the intercultural and the European dimension. It means that during the EVS project, various structured instances to promote and the develop both dimensions need to be created.

How to work on the intercultural learning?

The hosting organization has to work on creating learning opportunities to raise young people's positive awareness of other cultures, promote dialogue and intercultural encounters with other young people from different backgrounds and cultures, prevent and fight against prejudice, racism and all attitudes leading to exclusion, and fostering a sense of tolerance and understanding of diversity.

How to develop the European dimension?

Part of the project activities, there has to be a horizontal theme that is the European dimension and which looks at developing young people's sense of European citizenship and their role as part of the present and future of Europe.
It may be part of any activity by raising concerns on common issues for European society, such as racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism, drug abuse.

No matter of which is the theme of the EVS project, the hosting organization should not hesitate to include also activities that focus on the founding principles of the EU, i.e. principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law or any other relevant EU topics, such as EU enlargement, the roles and activities of the European institutions, the EU's action in matters affecting young people.

The European dimension is about making volunteers aware of the communality of Europe wide current topics and of the need to work on joint efforts and responses to challenges lying ahead.

It is of critical importance to organize scale events related to the European Days such as 9 of Europe, Youths days, Rroma days, the Week of Diversity, etc. that may help you expand the local partnership and also attract a larger audience.

D: Managing international partnerships

In order to be able to run an EVS project, a hosting organization needs an international partner organization (sending organization). Often, the stage when a hosting organization initiates contact comes at a very late stage, when applying for funds.

Hence, the contribution of the sending organization to the design of the project is nil. Apart from that, the sending organization needs to be thoroughly involved in the project finance definition and in recruiting of the volunteers at an early stage.

Nevertheless, it is quite a challenge to get to work internationally within a stable environment.

On the one hand, there are few international organizations that work within a network that facilitates long term visioning, planning, trust and consistency in work. That means that a lot of international organizations do "partners hunting". It goes without saying that in few instances, an organization needs to initiate for the first time contact with a special region, therefore an open call needs to be launched and select organizations.

Though, when the whole EVS project relies on first – basis international partnerships there is a high likelihood that lack of sustainability, misunderstandings, lack of work coherence, risk of blockage may occur at various stages during the project. Even worse, that may snowball into crises that have knock on implications upon the volunteers and the hosting organization.

On the other hand, NGOs, particularly the young ones, are quite sensible to staff changes and financial inconsistency. Very often, you are to encounter an email announcing that *"Please note that our EVS project manager…..changed her/his job, is on sick leave, got married….and soon we will let you know who takes over; we are sorry but currently we face a funds shortage in our organization"*. Therefore, that "soon" may become very late, might be even when the project is over.

The European Commission has developed a simple although thorough piece of partnership that consists of the **Part III. Partner promoter(s)** (A. Details of the partner, B. Profile and role of the partner, C. Preliminary agreement of the partner) and the **Activity Agreement.**

Part III. Partner promoter(s)

A. Details of the partner

Name			
Street address			
Postcode & city		Country	
Region		EI reference	
Email		Website	
Telephone		Telefax	

Person in charge of the project (contact person)

Family name *(Ms/Mr)*		First name	
Position/function			
Email			
Telephone		Telefax	

B. Profile and role of the partner

Type and status	☐ Non profit/non governmental organisation	☐ Public body
	☐ Body active at European level in the field of youth	☐ Profit-making organisation[6]
	☐ International governmental organisation	☐ Other – please specify:
Activity level	☐ Local ☐ Regional ☐ National ☐ European/international	
	☐ Member organisation of the applicant	
Role	☐ Sending Organisation ☐ Host Organisation	

Please give a short description of your organisation (regular activities, member of, etc.):

C. Preliminary agreement of the partner

I, the undersigned, on behalf of (repeat the name of the partner)

confirm our participation in each stage of the project (repeat the title of the project as stated in Part I):

The project will respect the provisions of the EVS Charter and the Programme Guide of the Youth in Action Programme. I am aware of the right and obligation of the volunteer(s) to participate in the EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle offered by the National Agencies in Programme Countries and by the SALTO-Youth SEE Resource Centre in South East Europe. If part of this training and evaluation session is carried out by my organisation (according to provisions indicated in the Programme Guide), such events will fully respect the European minimum standards and guidelines for EVS volunteer trainings.

I declare having reached an agreement with all the promoters involved in the project with regard to the share of EU grant my organisation is entitled to receive in order to implement the project.

Furthermore, I confirm my undertaking to ensure visibility of the European Union support for the project and to ensure dissemination and exploitation of its results.

Name in capital letters:

Place: *Signature:*

Date:

- to structure the formal responsibilities of all parties involved in the project, the sending organization, the hosting/coordinating organization and the volunteers.

- to describe the structure and the activities in the project

- to explain the conditions for the volunteers (accommodation, food, finances, etc.)

Compared with the *Part III. Partner promoter(s)* that need to be signed only by the sending and hosting organization, the Activity Agreement must be signed also by the volunteer.

Therefore, history has proved that partners rarely revise their *Activity Agreements;* at best they change technical data. Here, a way too much gap in between what is described and what is in reality exists. If both partners may not find initially a problem with that, both the hosting organization and the volunteers may get into serious problems at a later stage when the misfit in between the Activity Agreement, that the volunteer signed as well, and the reality backfire on the relationship in between the organizations and the volunteer that may lead even to the termination of the project.

Nevertheless, in order to facilitate initial contact and partnership build up, both for potential volunteers, sending and hosting organization, the European Commission has set up a detailed database with EVS accredited organizations that can be found on the European Commission website: **http://ec.europa.eu/youth/program/sos/hei/hei_en.cfm**

Experience has also proved that long term established partnerships and networks constitute the most appropriate forms to foster EVS project development. Hence, the Youth Empowerment Programme network, was created to set the framework for sustainable and qualitative long term EVS partnerships.

In the Youth in Action Programme Guide it is articulated that when speaking on the quality of the partnership the following factors should be taken into consideration: "the level of networking, cooperation and commitment of each promoter in the project; the profile and background of promoters when the nature or target of the Activity would necessitate the possession of certain qualifications; a clear and commonly agreed definition of roles and tasks of each promoter involved in the project; the capacity of the partnership to ensure effective dissemination of the results achieved through the Activity. Group EVS Activities linked to a specific event require a solid partnership with the organizing body of the event."[4]

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[4] Youth in Action Programme Guide, 2007-2013, p. 70

Visa procedures

One aspect needs to be taken into consideration and that is the VISA arrangements for volunteers. Even though it seems no complication, for non- EU countries that may turn into real nightmare for the volunteers. First of all, because both the sending and coordination organization do not start in due time, at least two months in advance, the visa procedures. Sometimes it may be a real "discovery trip" to put together all the papers required for visa granting. It is recommended to make enquiries both in the hosting country for the volunteers and also at the respective international authorities of the hosting country in the country where the volunteers are to come from. You may not be surprised that you get different instructions from the two institutions.

Nevertheless, no matter what is the format of the application you need to fill in for the volunteers, make sure you send also a support letter that must comprise reference number of the project, full name and address of the sending/coordinating organization, full name and address of the host organization, voluntary activity dates, purpose of the project, locations where the project takes place and where volunteers are to be hosted, the volunteer's name, date of birth, home address, passport number/date of expiry. **Further info you may get by checking on GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VISA/RESIDENCE PERMIT APPLICATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS[5] developed by the European Commission.**

Challenges	Tips
Expired passports	**Check the validity of the passports expiry dates**
Different institutions may require different types of papers for volunteers in order to grant them the visa	Do not try to convince them on what the law says about the papers you may be right about. Just compile documents taking into account what both the embassies and the hosting country institutions require.
The period to issue the visa may not correspond to the one defined by the regulations	Start way ahead with the visa procedures
Poor communication from the side of the institutions involved in issuing the visa	Do not wait to be contacted by the institutions issuing the visa. With the risk of becoming annoying, once you send a document, maximum one day later make an inquiry and see if the document was received by the persons/department it was addressed to and that it has the right information required.
Further questioning on the volunteers visa dossier	Ask the National Agency/Executive Agency to deliver for the volunteers support letters. In non-EU countries where there are no National Agencies, it is also possible to contact the EU local Delegation in the country, which could provide advice and information. For projects involving Neighboring Partner Countries in South-East Europe, Eastern Europe and Caucasus and the Euro-Mediterranean region, the relevant regional SALTO Youth Resource Centre may also provide advice and assistance. Their contact details can be found at: http://www.salto-youth.net/ .

[5] http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc405_en.htm

Travel arrangements

Apart from visa procedures, the travel arrangements for volunteers are the shared responsibility of the sending and the coordinating/hosting organizations.

What may happen though is that funds may not arrive in time for the coordination organization to be able to make the transfer for the volunteer travel.

Here, what happens and what goes against the principles and values of the Youth in Action Programme and against the Activity Agreement in between promoters, is that the one to take care of travel is the volunteer himself/herself. Taking into account that in non-EU member states covering the travel expenses is a real issue, asking volunteers to cover their own travel may endanger the realization of the project itself.

Here, all promotes have to discuss in advance possibilities to meet financial needs in case the money does not arrive in due time.

Promoters need to work on the travel itinerary from departure location of volunteer till the very location in the hosting community. The volunteer should not be left alone to arrange it by themselves. Ideally, the coordinating/hosting organization should arrange a shuttle to pick up volunteers from the airport.

It is of critical importance to arrange arrival of all volunteers at the same time, day, in the hosting country. That helps to build the group dynamic but also to avoid further inconveniences for the coordinating/hosting organization in spending resources.

Challenges

Late volunteers' recruitment may cause expense travel
Lack of finances that determine the coordinating organization to buy one way ticket
Volunteers missing flights
Late arrivals in the night, no train or busses to catch

Tips

Make several reservations that have the deadline of payment close to the departure of volunteers
Buy return ticket because you end up paying more
Make sure you do not book flights that have to tight connections
Book flights that have a close arrivals time or be prepared to arrange a shuttle/cab to pick up the latest arrivals

Responsibilities of promoters

Responsibilities of the SEDING organization (SO)

Before

- Help the volunteer to find a project that meets his/her expectation concerning theme of the project, type of activities, hosting country, duration of the project
- Facilitate the contact and communication between the volunteer and the Hosting Organization
- Provide a proper preperation for the volunteer before leaving in a project by ensuring his/her participation in the Pre-Departure training
- Conduct a risk assessment with the volunteer
- Offer any useful information about the country where he/she will leave and about the EVS activity
- Check also the motivation of the volunteer, the extend to which he/she is ready to leave abroad
- Take care and negotiate all the practical arrangements of the EVS stage, like: travel details, health insurance, accommodation, allowances
- Make thorough inquires on the volunteer health and criminal record
- Provide volunteer with language training if need
- Agree on a communication plan with the volunteer
- Work on the visa procedures

During

- Maintain communication with the volunteer and with the Hosting Organization
- Be ready to provide help when needed throughaut the project
- Contribute to the dissemination of project result

After

- Go through an evaluation session with the volunteer upon his/her return from the EVS project
- Encourage the volunteer in dissemination and exploitation of results
- Provides support to volunteer(s) to help reintegrate them into their home community
- Give volunteers the opportunity to exchange and share experiences
- Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities
- Work on the project follow up
- Help the coordination organization with the project report

Responsibilities of promoters

Responsibilities of the HOSTING organization (HO)

Before

- Make arrangements for accommodation
- Describe throughly the hosting placements: geography, history, accommodation, cultural life, leisure, learning opportunities, local stackeholders, risks. Upload all that information on the hosting organization website
- Develop the *volunteer profile* and make sure it is duly advertised with the open call
- Develop the *aplication form* for potential volunteers to fill in
- Compile the *open call* and disseminate it via international email groups, websites, newsletter, National Youth Agencies, Euro Desk network
- Recruit volunteers: analyze applications and conduct interviewing with the shortlisted applicants
- Identifies a mentor who is responsible for providing personal support to the volunteer(s)

During

- Provide decent living conditions for the volunteers concerning accommodation and food
- Ensure that the volunteers have accessible means of transportation
- Give monthly or weekly allowances to volunteers
- Provide personal support to volunteer(s)
- Provide *a mentor* for the volunteer who is a support person him/her, to help the volunteer integrate easier in the community
- Provide language training
- Ensure task-related support to the volunteers, which means guidance in developing their activities
- Ensure the participation of the volunteers to the EVS trainings and evaluation: on-arrival training and mid-term evaluation
- Identify learning opportunities for the volunteers
- Dissemination
- Give the volunteer(s) the opportunity to integrate into the local community, to meet other young people to socialise, to participate in leisure activities, etc.
- Encourage contact with other EVS volunteers whenever possible

After

- Compile the project report
- Valorization
- Follow up

Responsibilities of promoters

Responsibilities of the COORDINATING organization (CO)

Before

- Takes responsability for some administrative tasks shared with the sending and with the hosting organiaztion

- Takes care together with the SO and the HO of some practical arrangement like:
    - subscribing the volunteer to the health insurance system;
    - providing support to the volunteer for obtaining the visa

- Ensures together with the SO and with HO the participation of the volunteers to the EVS trainings and evaluation cycle

During

- Deliver reinforced mentorship schemes

- Conduct monitoring and evaluation

- Dissemination

After

- Issue together with the SO and the HO the Youthpass certificate for the volunteers who want it at the end of the EVS stage

- Valorization

- Follow up

As soon as the acceptance of the projects selected by National or Executive Agency has been notified, the coordinating organizations should immediately contact the relevant National Agencies (EVS in programme countries) or the SALTO SEE Resource Centre (EVS in South East Europe) in order to allow those structures to organize the Training and Evaluation sessions for the volunteers involved in their project.

The granting Agency (National or Executive) may, exceptionally, grant funds to a beneficiary to organize itself all or some of the Training and Evaluation sessions relating to their project, if there is a particular situation duly justified in the application form. In these cases, the EU contribution to carry out the training/evaluation sessions must be requested by the applicant in its application form and must be in line with the funding rules indicated in this Guide.

In all other Partner Countries the training is organized by EVS Sending, Host or Coordinating organizations in line with the Volunteer Training: Guidelines and Minimum Quality Standards of the European Commission (see Support documents for European Voluntary service(Action 2), http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/action2_en.php). Financial support is provided to beneficiaries that organize these sessions (see funding rules); the additional financial support must be requested in the application form.[6]

In Eastern Europe and Caucasus, the SALTO EECA Resource Centre provides support for the EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle organized in the EECA countries, mainly through training of trainers and promoters.

When it comes to young people with fewer opportunities, there are specific measures set in place in order to conduct an appropriate analysis of the profile and special needs of the young people and a corresponding tailor-made and supportive approach. Here, promoters can agree on Advance Planning Visits to the Host Organization prior to the actual Service as to facilitate the establishing of a solid partnership and the active involvement of young people with fewer opportunities.

Another tool available is the reinforced mentorship which is defined as a tool to increase personal support of volunteers with fewer opportunities on the sending and/or hosting side; it is shared between the Sending and Host Organizations according to their responsibilities. The Youth in Action Programme enables promoters, particularly the hosting organizations, to employ further personnel into the project staff so that it can respond to the actual needs of volunteers on a case by case basis.

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[6] excerpts copy lifted from the Youth in Action Guidelines, 2007-2013, p. 58

- **Volunteer profile and recruitment process**

The Coordinating and/or Host and/or Sending Organisation(s) undertake(s) to select Coordinating/Host/Sending Organisation(s) undertake(s) to maintain the overall accessibility to EVS and to aim at gender balance.[7]

The recruitment process should start before even applying the project for fundraising. Though, in most cases, organizations initiate the recruitment once they are notified that their project is approved. There are pros and cons whether to wait till an organization knows whether its project is funded. There is time in between applying the project and proceeding with action and one needs to take into account also the possibility that the application may fail. In this case, a selected volunteer registers a delay in his/her project of minimum six months. Then one should expect that most of volunteers would quit their participation in the project. Hence, we would recommend waiting, but then being cautious and giving at least one-month time for the recruitment before the EVS hosting starts.

Even before staging the recruitment process itself, critical questions to plan for volunteer requirement need to be answered:

?
1. Why does the organization want to involve the volunteers?
2. What volunteers will do and how they will do?
3. What skills/qualities these volunteers need to have?
4. How would the organization find the volunteers?
5. How will the organization select which volunteers it wants?
6. How will the organization manage the volunteers after the selection?

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[7] Excerpt from the Youth in Action Guide, 2007-2013

1. Why does the organization want to involve the volunteers?

Here, the hosting organization needs to list things that need to be done but currently they are not, and on which one would like to involve volunteers. One needs to be cautious not to include work that is in the job profile of the work staff. Meaningful functions and roles for the volunteers need to be created. Basically, you need volunteers to fill in the plus value that prevents your organization to accomplish its mission. To find out what is that, you may want to continue the statement "If only we could…".

On the other hand, by developing a range of volunteering options, the hosting organization maximizes the number and profile of people that may sign up for the EVS project.

2. What volunteers will do and how they will do?

The hosting organization must also consider all the issues that might influence potential volunteers to sign up for its project and organization; answering the following set of questions may give more clarity:

- WHY ? Make sure the work you propose is meaningful and brings clear and identifiable benefits to the volunteer, community, and the service users

- What will the volunteer be doing? Highlight flexibility and variety. Combine in your offer limited as well as long term assignments

- When and where volunteers will carry out their role? Think outside of the employment model that very much relies on rigid, regular patterns! More "structured flexibility" means less management effort in the long run, as that pushes volunteers for achieving results rather than completing tasks. Working place is critical: combine office and field action.

- Who will the volunteer work with? Balance solitary, one to one and group action! A special attention needs to be given to the relationship with the staff of the hosting organization.

- What supervision and support will be offered to the volunteer ? Initial induction, coaching, mentoring, training! Offer volunteers a "trial period" when they work in a more "controlled" environment with substantial support from the hosting organization. Keep in mind practical forms of support like seeds money, local transportation, logistics.

- What is in for the volunteers ? Here speculate on both "rational choice" and "normative isomorphism": values, career, social, intercultural learning

3. What skills/qualities will the volunteer need?

Very often, organizations design EVS projects for the ideal profile of volunteer. Although they may be aware of the difficulty to recruit particular profile and that it is against the concept of the EVS programme, they are still keen on that. Hence, one needs to balance in between what is desirable and what is truly needed. It is very important to consider what is essential for volunteers to possess before they enter the project and what can be worked on during the capacity building programme and ongoing coaching. Updating the "job profile" must be the core of all recruiting processes. Organizations need to know what they are looking for, otherwise they are not able to get there!

! **Recruiting wrong volunteers is worse than no volunteer!**

4. How would the organization find the volunteers?

Marketing your vacancies. Is there anybody out there?

When it comes to the marketing their vacancies, most organization limit themselves to sending an open call via email groups. Nothing wrong so far. Though if the call is not encompassing enough in giving all technical and content details as well, it may raise more questions to potential volunteers rather that determining them to respond to the call. The offer must be a sum total of the need, target group, roles, image, message, technical details, that define the EVS project.

In addition to the open call, the organization launching *the open call* must have on its own website a thorough description of the volunteering vacancies; that may comprise data on the hosting communities, hosting country, personnel involved in the project, an overview of the volunteering opportunities, testimonials from former volunteers, etc., and any other data that may be relevant for a better understanding for volunteers.

You may want to have a look at the section *Volunteering Profiler* on **www.yesforevs.eu** portal to understand how marketing vacancies look like.

It goes without saying that being part of stable international networks gives to one organization a structured and reliable environment to recruit volunteer and it helps also an organization to position on the international volunteering market.

Most organizations, in the quest for missing volunteers and desperate to fill in the missing places, are getting into social networks such as facebook, twitter, hi5, etc. which indeed may lead to a large group of potential volunteers. Therefore, the other side of the coin is that you do not want your organization to be bombarded with dozens of applications. That may take you days to give replies to their emails and concentrate on those that are really into doing the volunteering project.

5. How will the organization select which volunteers it wants?

Making the right choice!

Receiving hundreds of applications for your EVS vacancies it is not what you dream of! You can imagine the staff responsible for the project spending hours on end to select those to fit in with the profiles you look for. Although, you need to make *the right choice!* And the right choice is not to be made by a single individual in your organization. You need to ensure that the project manager, one member of the board and possible one representative of the local communities are to stand as the selection committee. That is to avoid subjectivism and make responsible decisions. On top of that, the selection committee needs to make clear the methodology by which the volunteer(s) will be selected among the candidates and how the openness and transparency of the selection process will be ensured.

What you need to work on is to make sure that those people attracted by your open vacancies they are able to make informed decisions. Here are few documents you need to develop to facilitate the recruitment process:

- Information package – that is the equivalent of the open call content; you need to make sure that once a potential volunteer reads this package he/she may be clear about selecting your EVS vacancies from dozens available. At this stage, some potential volunteers may already get in contact with you to make various enquiries. Be prepared to reply in real time and keep the level of an informal chat. In the information package there must be also a link to the application/registration form for potential volunteers.

- Application, registration form - the point of asking potential volunteers to fill in is twofold: to get committed volunteers ready to dedicate time and energy to fill in preliminary papers and secondly to get references and be able to shortlist volunteers. Make sure you ask in the application form not only personal and educational background data but also on health, references and other activities that may be relevant for the advertised volunteering vacancies. Writing a half a page motivation essay would be helpful also.

• Interviews- there is no wonder that one would prefer to have a face- to- face interview. Yet, as volunteers live thousands of kilometers away from the places they want to volunteer, scheduling a series of online interviews, using skype, yahoo messenger or any other online communication platform is the most appropriate one.

Once you shortlisted candidates for your volunteering vacancies, it is high time you started a close personal discovery. It is because so much risk can be avoided for later by having a short time before the candidates are given a positive or negative answer. Besides exploring reasoning for picking up the volunteering vacancies, you may want to be keen on assessing the level of language competences. Besides, questions to reveal the full understanding of the EVS project description, responsibilities and the very particularities of the placement, need to be asked during the interview. In case there lay doubts in regards to any other aspect, the interviewer needs to get in contact with references of the candidate. Still, at the end of the interviewing process, the list of successful candidates needs to be made public both on the website of the organization in charge with the recruitment and also by email to all applicants. Establishing a "waiting list" may be a good idea as often, with no reason or whatsoever successful applicants decline participation in the EVS project in the last moment.

6. How will the organization manage with the volunteers after the selection process?

Matching - at this stage, despite the fact that in most volunteering projects, the matching in between the volunteer and his/her position is already completed before arriving in the project, in case of EVS, particularly a group EVS involving volunteers from various continents, proceeding with the initial match of selected candidates to the roles and functions in the EVS project it is not only unrealistic but it is also too early. We get back to this topic in the Capacity Building Programme when we talk about *matching volunteers.* Therefore, it is good to learn as much as possible on prospective personal routes for each single volunteer in the EVS project.

Welcoming volunteers

A number of documents and actions need to be in place time before volunteers land into the EVS project.

Once the recruited volunteers group is established, it is recommended that an email group is developed in order to facilitate socializing amongst volunteers themselves and volunteers and the EVS project staff. Volunteer will be encouraged to exchange thoughts on the preparation of their arrival, common hobbies, etc.

Apart from that, compiling a **White Book on EVS** is a critical must to prepare the welcoming of the volunteers.

The White Book on EVS is designed as a structural intervention tool that aims at increasing the quality and sustainability of European Voluntary Service. It must be delivered to all volunteers upon arrival and proper sessions during the Capacity Building Programme have to be dedicated to an active exploration of the White Book on EVS jointly by the project staff and the volunteers.

It has a threefold objective:

1. to give an overview of EVS project, both content and technicalities
2. to increase transparency and clarity of the EVS project
3. to foster a learning process
4. to provide insights into the socio-cultural-economic-political environment of the hosting country

As it is foreseen to cover aspects that range from project overview to everyday living and working styles, any White Book should comprise several chapters following a **logical structural scheme.** As for the minimum chapters that such a White Book on EVS needs to comprise, based on the field action, we suggest the following:

An **Introduction into the coordinating/hosting organizations** chapter needs to be organized. Do not get tempted to dwell on a myriad of aspects, as websites should be suggested for further learning on the organizations. Though, an overview of the *history, organizational culture, staff and past and current projects* has to be described. Thus, volunteers get familiar with the organizational profiles and may construct links in between their work expectations and what the organizations may be happy to develop.

While introducing this chapter of the White Book on EVS, ideally a representative on behalf of the Board of the coordinating/hosting organizations should be offering a lead in session. That would give a high profile to the first encounter in between volunteers and the coordinating/hosting organizations and also lay the foundations of a confident relationship for the volunteers- a brief session on Questions and Answers has to be arranged and a socializing break.

Then, a chapter on **Project overview** has to comprise the following data: why the current EVS project, what are the aim and objectives, activities foreseen, locations and period. As there may be some time passed in between the open call for recruiting volunteers and the actual start up of the project, all necessary updates of the projects must be described. At this stage, the coordinating/hosting organization should clearly explain where does the EVS project fits in the whole strategy of the organizers. Few lines need to be dedicated for the hosting placements in terms of geography, history, culture, and what makes them distinct for having been chosen as project locations.
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A distinct chapter on **Actors involved** needs space in the White Book on EVS. Here, all sending, hosting organizations and particularly the EVS volunteers have to be introduced: brief description, contact details and pictures of all volunteers and an overview of their reasoning for choosing a volunteering with these respective organizations, themes, and country.

A chapter on **Roles and responsibilities** needs to follow. Here, a presentation of the official Charter of EVS must be introduced but also a tailor made reading as it may be the case with the current EVS project, when the coordinating/hosting organization may want to further regulate the relationship with the volunteers.

As further into the White Book on EVS, a chapter on **Technicalities** is to be clearly organized. Here, thorough explanations on food, accommodation, travelling, leave days, finances, reporting and representation, medical insurance, residence permits must be given.

The **Project methodology** is separately described. Each stage of the project is further explained, the communication with the coordinating/hosting/sending organizations, the monitoring and evaluation of the project, thematic trainings.

Best practices box is a chapter that introduces former volunteers initiatives in general points and also the contact details of the volunteers as initiators.

Mishaps in the projects aims at introducing examples of difficulties that previous volunteers went through due to particular reasons; here, no special indications as to the persons has to be made; an anonymous approach is to be constructed.

Useful information chapter contains information on emergency contact details, ideal places to travel to in the hosting country, cheapest restaurants and pubs in the area, websites for the travel agencies, railway companies, weather forecasts, etc.

During the implementation, few stages are of seminal importance to go through: volunteers' preparation for departure, capacity building programme (residential training, community discovery, planning), EVS activity, coaching and mentoring, monitoring, evaluation, dissemination, valorisation and follow up.

Volunteers' preparation for departure

As described in the Technical Assistance section, each volunteer is entitled to receive a *pre-departure* training that aims at getting volunteers as prepared as possible on joining the EVS project they were selcted for.

Though, apart from the pre-departure training each sending organization needs to organize a series of *counselling sessions* when thorough introduction into the EVS project, an overview of the hosting country need to be delivered. Special attention needs to be given to any particular health or other personal needs that the volunteer may have- though may sound very sensitive, an enquiry into the health and criminal record needs to be performed by the sending organization in case there is anything that needs to be brought to the attention of the hosting organization.

Very critical is to establish with the volunteer *a communication plan* for the whole project; that is meant to ensure a structured communication in between the sending organization and the volunteer. Another aspect is related to the *health insurance* and *visa arrangements* that need to be approached at the same time. Generally, when applying for visa, most of the embassies would ask volunteers to present a health insurance card for the whole duration of the EVS project; in terms of responsibility it is both the coordinating organization and the sending organization that jointly need to work on. The dossier for the visa may delay considerably the approval of the visa as being the case of a long- term residence permit, embassies may ask supplementary paper. Be informed time in advance on the future –to-be hosting country visa regulations.

It is also the sending organization that needs to arrange *the trip* from departure location to the airport in the hosting country. Volunteers need to produce the co-funding for the travel, if there is any as required by the Youth in Action Guide, otherwise, the seding organization jointly with the coordinating/hosting are the responsible to ensure that the trip is paid and arranged.

A critical attention needs to be given to the Capacity Building Programme (CBP) that is meant to ensure a smooth landing of the volunteers into the hosting placement, into the hosting organization and within the group of volunteers itself but also to structure an approach to the personal and professional skills build up throughout the whole project.

At this stage, all EVS staff needs to be provided with the curriculum vitae and motivation letters of all volunteers.

The EVS staff need to meet several times before the start of the Capacity Building Programme in order to receive briefings from the project manager and reanalyse the task distribution during the Capacity Building programme and the whole EVS project itself.

Meetings with all mentors and counterparts are to be also convened beforehand when responsibilities and the CVs and the motivation letters of all volunteers are to be introduced.

The CBP needs to have the following **objectives:**

- to get to know each other and break the ice in between hosting organization and the volunteer and in between volunteers themselves
- to build an enabling environment that facilitates getting to know each other and self-discovery (discover yourself (fears, expectations, strengths), discover us (hosting organization: culture, team, annual agenda, etc.)
- to unveil for the volunteers the very design, strategy and results from the EVS project
- to strike a balance in between pre-defined set of expectations of volunteers and the reality of hosting placements as it is
- to strengthen the profile of volunteers with skills needed to perform activities in the hosting placements
- to project short term and long term action planning for volunteers' actions in the hosting placements
- to design a personal development plan for each volunteer
- to trigger solidarity within the volunteers' group
- to match volunteers in community EVS teams
- to structure joint thematic action interests within the volunteers group
- to prepare the volunteers for Inter-cultural shock and inter-personal crisis
- to foster organic links in between hosting organization (-s) and volunteers
- to facilitate the acquisition of the minimum technical information in need for volunteers so that they can successfully perform action in real time (money reimbursements, rights and responsibilities, AXA insurance)

The CBP has three parts: *residential training , community discovery and reaching out-focusing in.* Here are the constitutive elements in the Capacity Building Programme:

RESIDENTIAL TRAINING

The residential training includes distance learning and in-house formation.

A. Socializing

Socializing volunteers using Information and Technology Communication (ITC) that may consists of setting up an email group inviting volunteers to sign up, or a forum on the hosting organization website, or any other online tool that may foster an inter-personal learning environment and process even before volunteers physically meet each other.

Although, various targeted discussions such as arrival dates, booking on the same flights for volunteers if possible, visa issues, weather forecasts, minimum vocabulary to learn before coming, etc.

B. Ex- ante evaluation

That looks at defining the personal and professional profile of the volunteer even before she/he arrives in the EVS project. That is to help the hosting organization to tune in elements in the Capacity Building Programme. Not having an ex-ante conducted that may create a high risk of not being able to tailor-made the Capacity Building Elements in due time.

That helps the hosting organization in establishing already convergence and divergence path within the group of volunteers, that on the one hand can help in readjusting the programme of the Capacity Building Programme to tailor made sessions according to the needs of volunteers but also to see possible paths for matching volunteers at a later stage.

Assuming most of the volunteers score their knowledge and ability to present in front of a big audience, that must determine the designers of the Capacity Building Programme to structure sessions in the programme that deal with the presentation skills of the volunteers!

The CBP is to combine answers from volunteers perspectives, hosting organization perspectives and also the hosting placements perspective and reshuffle the project volunteer signed up for with the up to date socio-cultural-economic-political reality they are to settle in for the duration of their volunteering programme:

The CBP looks at answering the following questions:

WHY am I here?
WHY they (hosting organization and the hosting community) want us here?

WHERE I want to be
at the end of my project as personal development and input into the project? WHERE they (hosting organization and the hosting community) want me to be at the end of my project as personal development and input into the project ?

HOW do I want to get there in terms of personal development and input into the project?
HOW do they want me to get there in terms of personal development and input into the project?

Keep in mind that both the organization and the volunteers are to benefit out of the CBP- the organizations need volunteers that are fit and ready to proceed with the action planned in the project, and volunteers are entitled also to receive proper training that would enable their personal development and to perform action in the programme.

C. Building *togetherness*

The first part of the residential training looks to ensure a **first contact** in between volunteers themselves, volunteers and the hosting organization (-s) and the hosting placement (-s) environment.

During the first two days of the Capacity Building Programme, different games to push for learning about each other, amongst volunteers themselves and volunteers and the hosting organization, need to be organized. It aims at building stances for volunteers to **get to know about their educational, professional background but also about personal profile (habits, values, attitudes).** Getting to know each other, icebreakers and team building exercises must be heavily used in the first days in order to trigger the group dynamic and the inter-personal process.

In order to assess the entry level of expectations, concerns and fears but also the stock of strengths (personality traits, practical skills and professional competences), exploratory sessions need to be dedicated to these topics; therefore, the hosting organization (-s) staff is recommended to actively take part in these sessions as participants.
Exploratory sessions on volunteers' background, expectations, strengths and fears need also to be developed.

Highly critical is to build a common stage and understanding on the volunteering culture back home, being given the cultural and social background they carry from back home, tradition of volunteering in the hosting country and the very culture of volunteering promoted by the hosting organization.

The hosting organization must structure into the programme sessions on the **concept design** and the **workload structure** during the EVS project. The general aim and all specific objectives of the EVS project need to be further explored by the hosting organization and the volunteers.

In addition, you may want to add daily intensive language classes and intercultural evenings when volunteers can introduce their own culture.

D. Project presentation: why, what, how, when, for whom, with whom, how

Even though it is the responsibility of the sending organization to duly inform volunteers on the project concept, target group, activities, etc. it is highly recommended that the hosting organization broaches this topic again during the Capacity Building Programme.

Here it is very important to link the aim of the EVS project with the strategy of the hosting organization (-s); very important to answer the question: where does this EVS project fit into our hosting organization strategy? What is your role as volunteers in our organization?

Particular attention needs to be given to the fact that critical aspects must be dealt with in these sessions which are innovation and task assignment, activities proprietorship, and identity, diversity and multiple speed approach. All of these aspects stand as the core principles that must be respected throughout the project.

Elements on rights and responsibilities (hosting, sending, coordination and the volunteer), financial distribution, AXA insurance, reimbursements, need to be discussed here as well even though hypothetically they should have received that during the pre-departure training.

E. Training Needs Assessment

The CBP has to fill in the gap in between the current set of skills, competences and attitudes that volunteers have and also, not the desirable ideal ones but those that your organization needs the volunteer to have once they are in the project. That means also clarifying the purpose for each role, and then breaking it down into tasks, and then defines what skills, knowledge, understandings and attitudes are needed to perform the activities in the EVS project. Because that helps to define a results oriented project and not a task assigned.

Hence, one organization needs to be thoroughly involved in scanning the volunteers and agreed on what competences and skills they need to have their volunteers developed. As for the identification of the volunteers needs, one need to clear the overall development needs that volunteers have in relation to the objectives of the organization to be achieved during the project.

F. Personal and development plan

Moreover, as there is a continuous need for volunteers to strengthen their skills and their capacity to work on, the hosting organizations have to structure the needs into clusters of volunteers so that realistic plans for training intervention can be developed. That helps also to define the volunteer role description further into the project in the long run.

Still, it does not entail to design residential trainings or face-to-face meetings- it looks also at the way you design instances that volunteers are exposed to. Taking into account that the YiA is a programme based on non-formal education, here one should praise the learning by doing and the experiential learning as key methodology that can help a lot to build sustainable development routes.

Draft programme - CBP part 1:

The duration of Part I should be in between 6-7 days and it must take place in a residential guesthouse, preferably in the countryside, and where volunteers are able to manage themselves the house (a cook may join in to prepare at least the main meals).

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
8.30 - 9.30		*Breakfast*				
09.30 – 11.30	*Arrival of the Volunteers Accommodation*	Who are you (education/formation training, likes & dislikes, hobbies)?	Introduction to history, social context and lifestyle in Romania (law, formal and informal rules in the local communities)	Roles and responsibilities (volunteers, hosting and sending organization) EVS Charter	Community discovery I	Counselling session II
11.30 – 12.00		Break				
12.00 – 13.30		What have you brought with you (strengths, expectations, fears) I?	Intercultural learning	Personal and professional development plan	Community discovery II	Decalogue of EVS project
13.30 – 14.30		Lunch				
15.00 – 16.30		Getting to know each other	EVS concept design	Conflict management	Insights into the hosting communities	Community discovery III	Departure to hosting communities
16.30 – 17.00		Break				
17.00 – 19.00		Intro into the Programme Rules of the house	Team building exercises	Intro into the **White Book on EVS I**	Intro into the **White Book on EVS II**	Matching volunteers and communities	
19.00 – 20.00		Dinner				
20.00 – 22.30		Socializing evening	Team building exercises	EVS intercultural café	EVS intercultural café	Counselling session I	

G. Insights in

At this stage insights into the history, culture and social context, and lifestyle of the hosting country needs to be delivered. These sessions need to go beyond power point presentations and combine dynamic and interactive series of staged events on tasting food, local drinks, music, and dancing.

An overview of the communities where volunteers are to be located needs to be delivered also during this first stage: power point presentations or short video clips may be used to present the geography, history, daily life, institutions, etc. in the hosting communities. That helps volunteers to gradually become familiar to the places they are to spend months with and also to prepare them in terms of psychological behaviour for the time when they get settled in the communities; in other words, that may contribute to avoiding various shocks that volunteers may be going through while being located in a complete new social, cultural, etc. environment, with possible different accommodation and infrastructure conditions similar to those back home, with a local population hardly speaking any foreign language. Ideally, keynote speakers may be invited.

Thorough presentations and discussions need to be devoted to *challenges and tips* to deal with the local community.

Besides, some sessions on intercultural learning, cultural shock and crisis prevention and conflict management need to be included as well.

H. Matching volunteers

Here, during the first part of the Capacity Building Programme, one day before departure to the hosting communities, the hosting organization jointly with the trainers and facilitators need to proceed with setting up community teams, teaming up volunteers, in group of two, or even four if there is a large hosting community.

That is not an easy step in the project as most of the volunteers may be dissatisfied and feel bad about their match. What is a must is that all criteria used to pair volunteers have to be described and explained in details so that the hosting organization wins the empathy of the volunteers. Yet, volunteers need to be explained that it is a volunteering based relationship that ideally should turn into a friendship one.

There are few criteria that need to be considered when you do the matching:

- *Competence fit:* it would be foolish to expect that all volunteers would have the same competence profile. On the other hand, it is not recommended to couple two volunteers with good fit into the project, well qualified or two volunteers that need close care; despite the fact that volunteers are entitled to have mentors, a 24 hours a day close care can not be realistically delivered; here, having a mix of profiles would ensure an "internal volunteers' team mentoring" when one of the volunteers, indirectly is prompting the other.

- *Inter-national fit:* in order to spur inter-national learning and understanding, in a quest for building bridges of collaboration, it is highly important that volunteers from different countries end up as teams in communities; teaming up volunteers from the European Union and the non-EU countries would be an ideal stance to work on.

- *Psychological fit:* based on the ex-ante evaluation the hosting organization and the team of trainers are able to match volunteers according also to their psychological profile; it is out of question that two "followers" would end up in the same team; as the aim of developing EVS in the local communities is to push for local dynamic, one need to ensure that at least one of the volunteers can play this role. On the contrary, volunteers with strong personalities need to be avoided to be teamed up as for two "leaders" would be difficult to start work and would be more keen on proving and preaching to each other the "right" way to do something.

- *Community call:* it may sound weird but sometimes, hosting communities are very keen on welcoming a particular profile of volunteer: either a girl or a boy, either one nationality or another.

- *Community profile:* a careful attention needs to be given also to the status quo of hosting community in terms of human resources available for the EVS project, their qualification, the openness of the local public institutions, the sensitivity and dynamic in the community as a whole; in a community like that one needs to avoid stationing volunteers that can not act like drivers.

As the matching process is a very cumbersome one at the end of which few volunteers may have a crash, outburst in tears, etc. at the end of the day, counselling sessions need to be structured on an individual basis and give volunteers a structured intimate space that they can "debrief" on what are their feelings, how they feel about it, etc. Be prepared to have volunteers that would refuse to team up with someone and to go to a community. Difficult to handle, but you have to face it through one to one counselling and close care to the respective volunteers. Avoid any confrontation via negating the right of the volunteers to refuse another peer or community. Spend effort in making them understand why the situation they are exposed to is necessary. Presuming there is fierce opposition and a volunteer is very keen on not accepting the case, you need to reshuffle the whole set up and see where you can get more understanding- again only in extreme cases, otherwise it may have a knock-on effect for the others.

COMMUNITY DISCOVERY

Community discovery stands as the second part of the Capacity Building Programme that starts once, volunteers are teamed they are to spend two weeks in the communities they are assigned to. The community discovery consists of *exploring the community, getting a sense of geography and human settlements, setting appointments with local public figures, introducing oneself, actively observing the hosting community and finding out what are the community agendas for the whole duration of the EVS project.*

At this stage it is very important to let the community know *"hey, I am here"*, redefine expectations, re-assess plans and end up the two weeks with having completed the *community profile* filtered through the eyes of the volunteers and also to enable them to **gradually rescale their expectations** according to the new environment.

At least one-day sessions need to be dedicated for the community discovery in order to answer the questions: *why, what it is, steps, how you conduct it.*

Most of the volunteers burn to start putting into practice their ideas, dreams. One needs to underline the importance of learning about community expectations and ideas on how the EVS project can contribute to their community.

Here, a study case may be introduced with volunteers that rushed ahead to plan and develop activities without having a clear understanding, link, confidence won, a clear picture of the stakeholders in the community, what is doable and what is not, and what is within the scope of volunteers, from the hosting community. Eventually, they ended up with developing a conflict relation with the community as they thought that the community is "dumb" and "old fashioned" just because the community did not follow volunteers' wishes. In the end volunteers realized that their initial proposals are not realistic at all and they have to negotiate with the hosting community a plan of action. All is good that ends well but in this volunteer case, the situation created triggered a 4 months delay in starting their EVS project.

The whole enterprise must be a thoroughly planned one, with clear defined objectives and applying structured instruments: interviewing, questionnaires, photo essay, community mapping. A critical aspect here is to give volunteers tools to conduct the community discovery; during the sessions, after giving introduction into what is each of the tools, practical exercises need to be developed. To complete the community profile, mapping, stakeholder analysis, and the SWOT analysis have to be accomplished.

One may not need to expect that all volunteers would complete this stage. Community discovery is to be continued also for the next months while volunteers are settled in the community. Therefore, at this stage, it is very important that volunteers get an overview of the community so that they can realistically plan in the third part of the Capacity Building Programme. For further info on how to conduct community discovery do read the respective chapter in the first KIT on Community Youth Development through EVS.

That stands as the third part of the Capacity Building Programme and it looks at planning the course of action within the EVS project. Here, the programme starts with the introduction of the community profiles by each of the EVS teams. The aim of this part is to set clear objectives and structure volunteering tasks during the whole project with a short- term and a long- term view, linking the personal, organizational and community agenda into a logical continuum and order with the volunteers' expectations. Scenario workshops need to be developed here.

At the end of third part, all volunteers should be clear about the immediate steps they need to take in terms methods, target groups, timing and action.

A good idea it would be to invite volunteers as giving real life examples on how to plan and develop work in the local communities.

Toolboxes need to be made available for the volunteers at this stage; tool kits on project management, fund-raising, animation, etc. must be introduced by the organization.

Good sources of materials are **www.salto-youh.net** where thousands of instruments can be used, and **www.training-youth.net** when the whole series of the Council of Europe T-kits can be downloaded for free.

I: Monitor and evaluate the Capacity Building Programme

Various methods of monitoring and evaluation need to be used along the entire Capacity Building Programme in order to be able to track any developments in the groups dynamics, relation to the EVS project and objectives accomplished as defined initially in the CBP.

The EVS project team and the trainers/facilitators need to meet on a daily basis in order to discuss the performance, behaviour, input and data collected from the volunteers. Critical observations need to be developed in relation to every single volunteer. On top of that, this total sum of data collected, perceptions, etc. are to enable the project team to make informed decisions when coupling volunteers.

A CBP looks both at working on horizontal development as much as for the vertical development.
Despite the fact that it is a costly methodology, demanding substantial financial input and stretching out not only the team in charge with the EVS programme management but the most of the human resources active in the hosting organization, local partners in the hosting community, skipping the capacity building programme brings a high risk that an organization needs to be aware of: volunteers faced with depression, clashes with the hosting organization, low participation in the volunteering placement, lack of volunteers' adaptation into the hosting communities.

Draft programme - CBP part 2:

The third part that aims at taking stock of the latest expectations and fears of volunteers, spur group dynamics, and gauge group interest into drafting a short term versus long term roadmap for the whole project. It may last in between 5-7 days.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
8.30 - 9.30	*Arrival of the Volunteers* / *Accommodation*	Breakfast			
09.30 – 11.30		Tuning up expectations (strengths, expectations, fears)	Domain and levels of intervention in local communities	Plan your journey II	Recap of **White Book on EVS**
11.30 – 12.00		Break			
12.00 – 13.30	Intro into the Programme	Workload structure: daily, horizontal, and scale events	Best practice examples from previous volunteers	Efficient team build up	Recap of **White Book on EVS**
13.30 – 14.30		Lunch			
15.00 – 16.30	Community discovery findings I	Planning a course of action: short term versus long term planning I	Plan your journey I	EVS team consultations with the EVS project team I	Departure to your hosting communities
16.30 – 17.00		Break			
17.00 – 19.00	Community discovery findings II	Planning a course of action: short term versus long term planning II	Plan your journey II	EVS team consultations with the EVS project team I	
19.00 – 20.00		Dinner			
20.00 – 22.30	EVS intercultural café	EVS intercultural café	EVS intercultural café	Socializing party	

EVS Activity

There is no questioning on the added value of EVS group projects. Nevertheless, there are challenges in matching volunteers to tasks and produce results.

> The project should enable the volunteer(s) to acquire self-confidence when they are confronted with new experiences, attitudes and behaviors; to acquire or cultivate skills, competences and knowledge contributing to social or personal development. The project should also ensure the character of EVS as a "learning service", i.e. providing non-formal and informal learning opportunities to young people[8].

As working in an open community require a good understanding of the surrounding and having stable relations with local stakeholders, for the first couple of months, it is recommended that volunteers are involved in working within a controlled environment for instance a school, kindergarden, homeless people shelter, daily care centre, etc, in community: constructing a group of work, learning the community, making links etc.

Gradually, once volunteers are gaining in confidence and expanding links with the community, it is about to getting the volunteer focusing more on community events, reaching out more to other local groups.

During the EVS core part, volunteers have to receive ongoing support from all the promoters in terms of personal, task-related, linguistic and administrative support.

Daily, horizontal, scale events

The calendar of activities of each EVS project is built taking into account a certain ,,dynamic" of the project, tightly connected with the need to maintain an optimal level of motivation and interest of the volunteers. The project must contain daily activities or horizontal and scale-activities/events.

The **daily activities** must cover the entire calendar of the project. The daily activities must ensure a positive routine for the volunteers by giving them the chance to become familiar with a certain type of activities and responsibilities, forming a sense of self-discipline and structure, helping them to adapt easier to a certain rhythm of work, but also to maintain some ,,control" on the volunteer's and staff's input.

In terms of **horizontal activities** one could work on: some office hours covered by the volunteers; the weekly evaluation and planning meetings; filling in the weekly summaries/recordings; promotion activities – like promoting EVS; the daily preparation for the regular activities set in the project etc.

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[8] The Youth in Action Programme Guide, 2007-2013, p. 71

The **scale-activities**/events are meant to continuously stimulate the volunteers and to avoid the routine that often leads to lack of motivation. This type of activities should mark the project by offering visibility, offering the occasion to mobilize all the actors in the project, to commission new stakeholders, to generate stronger impact and in terms of evaluation, to give you a sense of the organization's and the volunteer's group capacity to sustain such events, to mobilize people and to generate impact.

This type of activities can be: linked to a certain event celebrated by/involving a large group of people (religious, cultural, political, from the NGO field, etc, like celebrating Europe Day, The international week of volunteering, The International Children's Day, etc); linked to the project's objectives (organizing a summer camp for children coming from disadvantaged groups).

Effective matching between tasks and volunteer profiles should be targeted. Their tasks should, as far as possible, reflect their individual abilities and desires. Volunteers should not carry out tasks of professional staff, in order to avoid job substitution and/or excessive responsibility for the volunteers. Routine tasks should also be limited to the maximum extent. The tasks of the volunteers include contact with the local community. EVS volunteers may not carry out tasks which serve to support another EVS project (i.e. may not be responsible for project management or for the selection or training of other EVS volunteers)[9].

To this end, the expected learning outcomes and learning processes should be described in general terms in the grant application.

Therefore, the number of volunteers carrying out simultaneously their Service in a given Host Organisation should be as low as possible, and be proportionate to the nature of the EVS project, as well as the capacity of the Organisation to offer valuable learning opportunities to several volunteers at the same time.

Group EVS Activities ensure that learning takes place not only on an individual basis, but also in the group. Joint meeting(s) and contacts between the volunteers are foreseen.

Dissemination and visibility

As that is a very technical topic, we extracted excerpts from the Youth in Action Programme Guide in a quest for conformity.

All projects funded under the Youth in Action Programme must develop measures aimed at ensuring the visibility of their project and of the Programme.

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[9] The Youth in Action Programme Guide, 2007-2013, p. 70

Visibility consists in spreading information about the project, its objectives and attended results, as well as in promoting the contribution of the EU Youth in Action Programme to the realisation of the project. Visibility measures mainly occur before and during the implementation of the project. Such measures can be for example: developing information or promotional material; issuing ''press releases'' or writing articles for newspapers, magazines, websites or newsletters; creating an e-group, a web space, a photo- gallery or blog on the Internet, etc.

Enhancing the visibility of the Youth in Action Programme also means that activities and products funded within the Programme clearly mention that they have received the European Union's support.

Promoters should commonly reflect on measures aimed at enhancing the visibility of their project and the visibility of the Youth in Action Programme in general. The creativity of promoters and volunteers offers additional potential for spreading information about the EVS, the activities of the promoters, as well as the opportunities offered by the Youth in Action Programme.
Such measures can be divided in two broad categories:

Visibility of the project

Promoters and volunteers should'' publicize'' the project - as well as its aims and objectives - and spread the ''youth message'' throughout the implementation of their project. In order to raise awareness of the project they could for example: develop information material; do a mail shot or SMS mailing; prepare posters, stickers, promotional items (t-shirts, caps, pens, etc.); invite journalists; issue ''press releases'' or write articles for local papers, websites or newsletters; create an e-group, a web space, a photo-gallery or blog on the Internet, etc.

Visibility of the Youth in Action Programme

First, the organisations and volunteers involved in the project should be made aware of their participation in EVS.

As well as the compulsory use of the official logo of the Youth in Action Programme each project should also act as ''multiplier'' of the Youth in Action Programme in order to increase awareness about the opportunities offered by the Programme to young people and youth workers in Europe and beyond. Promoters are invited to include information about the Programme (for instance, information on the Programme Actions, or its objectives and important features, target groups, etc.) in all measures undertaken to increase visibility of the project (see examples above). Promoters could also include information sessions or workshops during the Service of the volunteer. They could also plan participation in events (seminar, conferences, debates) organised at different levels (local, regional, national, international).

Valorization / Exploitation of results

Dissemination and exploitation of results relates to the use and practical application of a project's outcomes and it is the full responsibility of all promoters involved into the project. Ideally, volunteers themselves should be involved in this process.

Standard dissemination and exploitation measures may have the same format as visibility measures indicated in the section above; the main difference is that dissemination and exploitation measures focus on project's results, rather than on the Service itself.

In Youth in Action Programe Guide two types of exploitation are introduced:

- Multiplication which takes place at the individual level, for instance by convincing a project promoter to use the results of a previous project either as they are or by adapting them to a new context

- Mainstreaming which takes place at the level of policies through a structured and planned process of convincing decision-makers to use successful results from certain projects by incorporating them into local, regional, national or European systems and practices.

Additional dissemination and exploitation of results As well as the standard dissemination and exploitation measures, promoters could set up additional measures to spread and highlight the value of their project's results. The Youth in Action Programme offers a further financial incentive for such measures (please consult the Funding Rules of this sub-Action). Examples of additional dissemination and exploitation measures: organising public events (presentations, conferences, workshops……); creating audio-visual products (CD-Rom, DVD, short- movies……); setting up long-term collaboration with media (series of radio/TV/press contributions, interviews, participation in different radio/TV programmes……); developing information material (newsletters, brochures, booklets, best practice manuals, etc.); creating an Internet portal, etc[10].

Furthermore, the Directorate-General Education and Culture has developed an electronic platform called "EVE" in order to support promoters in the dissemination and exploitation of the results of their projects. More information on EVE can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve

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[10] The Youth in Action Programme Guide, 2007-2013, p.70

Follow up

In order to ensure that sustainability and the multiplying effect of the project results, already at the design stage, promoters have to take into consideration what would be the objectives and the steps to continue the current EVS project.

This involves to develop a long term strategy by taking in consideration the findings provided by the community needs analysis when one should make an idea of the type of interventions and the time needed to apply those interventions in order to obtain visible and true results. Of course the strategy may change while implementing the project.

For example, building relations with a certain community during the limited period of implementation of a certain EVS project, often requires continuity and development of this relations through another EVS project or initiatives within an EVS project (recruiting new human resources from the community, empowering them by providing trainings; commissioning new stakeholders, discovering other needs and opportunities in the community, etc).

Monitoring & Evaluation

Why monitoring and evaluation in EVS projects?

The monitoring and evaluation process is essential to organizational planning, informed decision making and management support. However, due to lack of emphasis, at times it is being sidelined or under -utilized in organizations where the thrust of work is founded on implementing activities and not on achieving results. The system performs four primary functions; i.e. identify facts, reflect upon facts, analyze and propose alternative action where necessary.

The benefits of using M&E are multiple:

• *Track the project and the volunteers' progress*

It is important to take stock of achievements. It is important to recognize, name and give value to the achievements of the volunteers and management team. The EVS projects are learning processes that imply different stages and phases. Measuring and taking stock of the progress means to be aware of what you are trying to achieve, helps becoming aware of what you can do and it prevents from losing the results or not using them sufficiently.
Identified results can be consolidated by making them explicit at the end of the evaluation process. The description, sharing and further use of results are natural follow-up steps of evaluation.

- *Identify threats and opportunities in planning and/or implementation*

The monitoring and evaluation process should show which parts of the project are working, for which people and in what circumstances, and provide a warning if something is going wrong. These are key findings for the management team that needs to decide what action to take. Monitoring and evaluation helps to plan things better, in order to prevent negative consequences and to compensate for possible shortcomings.
Taking stock of the achievements gives also the occasion to reveal opportunities for new plans, new strategies.

- *Provide real-time feedback that can be used to improve strategy*

Through monitoring, the information on the project and volunteer's evolution is always updated which allows to make changes where necessary, in real –time. Without continuous monitoring and evaluation, the project in general and the volunteers may get easily into a routine that can affect motivation or that may give a lose rhythm to the project's course. On the other hand, receiving feed-back constantly, allows also to adapt to new situations and challenges or to the volunteer's limits and capacities.

- *Information generated from evaluations contributes to organizational learning*

Sharing the information within your project will help you to become a learning organisation. Management can improve its decision-making, and staff and volunteers will appreciate the value of the work that they do and understand how they can make further improvements.

- *Assess whether the original objectives are still worth trying to achieve*

The evaluation will also provide information for the next plan. It will help to review your objectives. You may discover that the project's objectives direct your actions to areas that do not respond to the real needs of the community or that some of them are simply not achievable because the volunteers do not have the abilities to do that. The monitoring and evaluation process helps you confront the reality of the project with the design of the project, which may take you to the conclusion that you need to readjust things in order to adapt .

Monitoring and Evaluation, by whom?

In EVS projects, the M&E can be made by:

- **Monitor**

A person who is in charge with conducting, adapting and improving the monitoring and evaluation process. The monitor has the responsibility to set up a monitoring system by creating the instruments to collect data, to analyze it, to report the findings and to propose solutions. The monitor needs to collect information from different sources like the volunteers themselves, the project coordinators, the mentors, the beneficiaries and the stakeholders. The monitor also needs to make regular site visits, to check the situation ,,on the spot", verifying and observing directly the relationships between the volunteers and the beneficiaries, the ,,effects" of the volunteer's work, the atmosphere, the environment of their work.
The instruments used by the monitor should be adapted to the EVS projects and they should be built to measure the volunteer's abilities, the volunteer's satisfaction, the volunteer's input and the coordinating team's input, the impact of the project.

The monitor should make reports, regularly, about the volunteer's progress, based on which planning and evaluation sessions can be performed.

The monitor can be from outside or from inside the organization but he/she cannot manage the project. The project manager can do monitoring and evaluation, especially because it coordinates the whole project; but it is recommendable to have another person in charge with doing monitoring and evaluation because in the project manager's case may intervene the subjectivity, or sometimes, being responsible also with the concrete administration of the project, important details may escape his/her attention.

Although the monitor doesn't spend every day with the volunteers, he/she establishes clear, measurable indicators to follow the project's progress; the monitor brings an exterior look to the project, being able to detect change easier and more accurately than the project manager or the mentor. The person doing the evaluation influences the tone of the evaluation a lot. Ideally evaluation should be done in a supportive and constructive atmosphere. So the person doing the evaluation should best not have a position that would be too high up for the volunteers to feel comfortable with. And the evaluator should not judge but rather work together with the volunteer on the future of the project.

- **Mentor**

The mentor is a person assigned by the hosting/coordinating organization to the volunteer to offer practical assistance, to offer advice to the volunteers, to support and encourage them in implementing their activities. Besides the support that the mentors will offer to the volunteers, they will also be responsible for monitoring their activities, their progress or obstacles during the implementation of the project and communicate them to the coordinators and/or to the responsible for monitoring.

The mentor has the responsibility to offer technical support or suggestions to the volunteer in developing his/her activities but the mentor is not responsible for actually creating and implementing the activities. The mentor should though maintain permanent communication with the volunteer, should help the volunteer organize his/her activities, should have regular meetings with the volunteer and pay attention to the volunteer's behavior and general wellbeing and undertake a regular review, together with the volunteer, of his/her activities.

Therefore, the mentor's role in the monitoring and evaluation process of the project in general and the volunteer's in particular is very important as the mentor would be the person closest to and most familiar with the personal situation of the volunteer during the service. The mentor should keep a diary with the volunteer's evolution and activity or fill in regularly observation lists for the volunteers and submit them to the project manager and to the monitor. The mentor should also take part to evaluation and planning sessions together with the volunteers and the project coordinators.

The mentor can not assume the role of monitor and evaluator of the entire EVS project as a mentor can be a person with no experience in EVS projects or any other type of youth projects. Moreover, according to the recommendations of the National Agencies, the mentor can be a support person for no more than five volunteers. The mentor joins the volunteer in his/her activities every day, if necessary. Therefore the mentor may not have the necessary time or objectivity to play the monitor's role. The mentor is one of the sources of information for the monitoring and evaluation process.

- *Project Manager*

Being the person who coordinates the whole project, the course of action and the volunteer's input, the project manager is not only one of the most important provider of valuable information in the monitoring and evaluation process, but he/she is also the person who needs to receive information and different perspectives and points of view concerning the implementation of the project, the volunteer's satisfaction and input, the beneficiaries' needs, staff's input, the project's impact. The information needed by the project manager is crucial, as it concerns decision making, improvement and change of strategy. This type of information can only be obtained through monitoring by continuously following the changes and providing information in real time and through evaluation, by analyzing and reflecting over.

The project manager is the one who bears the responsibility for decision making, not the monitor who can only make suggestions and proposals.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation actions that can be taken by the project manager are site visits and discussions with the volunteers, with the beneficiaries, with the mentors; evaluation and planning sessions; observation lists, etc.

- **Volunteers**

The volunteers are the key actors, together with the community/beneficiaries; they are agents of change and action and at the same time, they are also the ones suffering changes and, to some extent, directly experiencing the impact of the project. The evaluation made by the volunteer is actually the reflection of the project itself and of its impact but is also an indicator of the volunteer's involvement and participation in the entire learning process of the EVS experience.

The volunteers are constantly providing feed-back on their evolution and the project's evolution, through evaluation instruments; they are constantly monitoring their activity by keeping diaries or making reports and planning.

The volunteers are conducting two types of evaluation: ,,operational evaluation'', measuring change and improvement of concrete, visible aspects like change of tools, formats, methods, places, targets and ,,personal or self evaluation", measuring changes at a personal level which are less visible than the ones measured through operational evaluation: changes of attitudes, of values, of ways of understanding.

- ***Beneficiaries (the community, the target group)***

The beneficiaries are constantly offering feed-back on the project's impact. Their feed-back is a direct reflection of the project's impact. The feed-back is offered either through evaluation instruments, either informally, through daily interaction with the volunteers. The monitoring process is often conducted through site visits, agendas of activities, discussions between the beneficiaries and representatives of the coordinating/hosting organization. The evaluation instruments (questionnaires, focus groups, interviews) are often created and applied by the coordinating/hosting organization. The beneficiaries may have their own evaluation instruments but the evaluation process in their case, may also face difficulties like the lack of literacy skills, insufficient time, the intensity of analytical work to be undertaken during the evaluation, and the fact that many of the issues covered during the evaluation are not directly relevant to community members, which may constraint their participation in the evaluation process.

When and What to evaluate? Levels to conduct an evaluation

When to evaluate?

The monitoring and the evaluation process is an ongoing one. Plans are essential but they are not fixed. If they are not working, or if the circumstances change, then plans need to change too. Monitoring and evaluation are both tools which help a project or organization know when plans are not working, and when circumstances have changed. They give management the information it needs to make decisions about the project or organization, about changes that are necessary in strategy or plans. Through this, the constants remain the pillars of the strategic framework: the problem analysis, the vision, and the values of the project or organization. Everything else is negotiable.

Monitoring and adjusting will happen several times before being ready to evaluate and re-plan. Then evaluations should be repeated at regular intervals in order to grasp the evolution.

What to evaluate? Levels to conduct an evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation process can be carried out at different levels. The regular monitoring and evaluation (weekly, monthly, mid-term) can be more easily carried out at the following levels:

- Volunteer's activity, evolution and satisfaction – questionnaires and interviews measuring the volunteer's entry level, at the beginning of the project; questionnaires assessing quantitative data like the number of hours worked, number of hours spent in the office/in the community; the objectives stated for each month of activity versus the objectives achieved; the difficulties met and the strategies adopted to overcome them; the support needed from the organization; their learning objectives for each month; their satisfaction concerning technical aspects meaning accommodation, food, office, materials, etc.

- Staff's input – it usually gets to be measured by the volunteers, through questionnaires applied regularly. The volunteers get the chance to express their satisfaction or discontent regarding the staff's input and to make recommendations. The staff can also have an immediate feed-back concerning its efforts and needs for improvement.

- Impact – measuring regularly the ,,effects" of the actions taken will offer information on the immediate impact perceived either by the beneficiaries, by the volunteers, either by the organization, but it will also help to reassess needs and to adjust strategies to obtain a long term impact. Measuring the impact involves evaluations carried out regularly also with the beneficiaries/community

Gathering monthly, for example, the information stated above will make easier to have an updated overall view of the project and to track the differences between each month and the evolution or the constant aspects in the project.

Evaluating results

Means taking stock of what has been achieved through the project, directly and indirectly. It should be evaluated the results achieved (at all levels), distinguishing those that have actually been planned from those that were not planned and happened anyway.
By results, we are talking about changes in the social reality that we intended to address in the first place, but also changes in people (social educational processes), in organizations and partnerships, in the community relations, in volunteers, etc.

Evaluating objectives

The natural implication of a final evaluation will be to confront the results with the original objectives, provided that these were concrete and assessable. The more concrete the objectives
were the easier it will be to evaluate them. More than achieved / not-achieved the evaluation will look at what extent they have been met. Many educational objectives are by definition difficult to evaluate, because they are hard to quantify, to measure and even to assess. Hence the importance of defining at least some measurable objectives at the time of elaborating the project. When presenting the evaluation you will have then some figures, some quantitative aspects, to back up your qualitative evaluation.

Evaluating financial management

The evaluation of the financial management is important in any project, not least because usually you will need to provide a financial report to the donors. More than just finding out the extent of the deficit (if there was one), the report is also good to check whether there are now new sources of funding for the organization, where did most money go, etc. And it is of course useful to check how some money or resources could have been used differently.

Evaluating the impact on the organization, beneficiaries, volunteers

It is interesting to evaluate the impact on the organization, beneficiaries and volunteers for projects which represent a significant innovation or for projects whose intervention target disadvantaged groups, minorities . The impact may come through new experience and expertise, new members, new partnerships, accrued reputation, additional resources, ability to reach new people, etc.

Evaluating the process

Then results are not only tangible aspects.They may also be learning results, experience acquired in a certain field or area. In order to take note of them and to understand them it is necessary that the process that people went through in the planning and management of the project is evaluated. What would have been done differently? What could be learned about project planning and management? What could people learn through the process of running the project?

Collecting the data

To collect the data, it needs to be established what is going to be evaluated (the use of resources, the volunteer's satisfaction, the educational methods, the results, the impact, etc.). These objectives will determine the indicators or criteria (qualitative, quantitative) and the time when evaluation should start.

The indicators and criteria being established, the next process is actually getting the information (data) needed (how many people participated, what did they learn, what did they do afterwards, etc.). The criteria and the objectives will determine the way of collecting the information (questionnaires, interviews, during the project or after, etc.).

To have a complete image of the results, it is necessary to collect both qualitative and quantitative data as they will complement each other.

Qualitative research examines not the prevalence but the nature of the issue(s) under investigation. It explores how people think about things and what issues are important and relevant to them. Personal accounts, although subjective in nature, can provide in-depth and highly contextualized information about the subject under evaluation.

Examples of qualitative data:

- Improving relationships in the community
- Raising interest towards a certain type of activity
- Satisfaction of the beneficiaries
- Volunteer's satisfaction
- Gaining abilities and skills (both by the volunteers and the beneficiaries), etc

Quantitative research is concerned more with objectivity and the precise measurement of the activities and events that are being evaluated. Examples of quantitative data:

- Number of hours that the volunteers have worked
- Number of training hours for volunteers
- Number of beneficiaries
- Number of activities developed by the volunteers

Evaluation strategies often combine qualitative and quantitative methods in various ways and to varying degrees.

Methodology

The most common and appropriate methods, techniques and instruments used in the monitoring and evaluation process in an EVS project are:

- *Questionnaires* – are instruments regularly used throughout the project, in order to ensure a constant feed-back from the volunteers/beneficiaries

- *Interview* – it is a technique used mainly at the beginning of the project when assessing the volunteer's profile

- *Focus group* – it is a technique used at the beginning of the project when conducting a community needs analysis and in the field visits, with beneficiaries, stakeholders, members of the community

- *Field visits* – are techniques used throughout the project, periodically, when the monitor and the project manager are going in the communities to check the volunteer's work ,,on the spot", the relationship with the beneficiaries, the interaction between volunteers and beneficiaries

- *Observation lists* - the main monitoring instrument that can be used by the mentors, project manager and monitor, filled in periodically for each volunteer

The questionnaire

It is used mainly to assess the evolution of the project. The questionnaires can be applied throughout the duration of the project, regularly, in order to collect information systematically from volunteers and beneficiaries.

The questionnaires used throughout the duration of an EVS project, with the purpose of measuring it's evolution are usually semi-structured questionnaires, combining open and closed questions, which allow to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

For qualitative data the questions are open, in order to allow in-depth exploration of a subject by encouraging the respondent to provide detailed information in their own words. This enables the monitor/evaluator to establish the context and the reasons behind the responses. Open questions require greater effort on the part of the respondent and the responses themselves may sometimes be difficult to interpret and summarize.
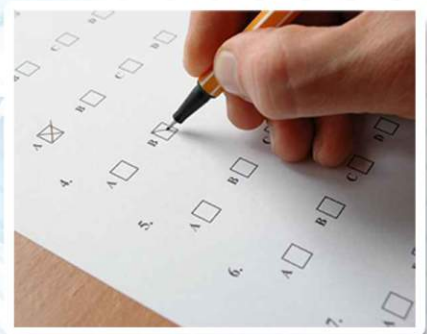
For qualitative data, restricted or closed questions are used. Here the respondent marks "yes" or "no", gives short answers, or checks an item from a list of suggested responses. Closed questions are easier and less time-consuming to complete but do not provide the contextual detail provided by open questions. For EVS, it is common to use Attitude Scales which are a type of closed questions.

This technique assigns a scale value to each of the (most commonly, five) responses: for example, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. Responses to this type of question are considerably enhanced if the respondent is given the opportunity to elaborate on the reasons for their answer. Validity is improved because it is more difficult for the respondent to conceal their true attitudes and express socially acceptable opinions.

It is recommended to design these types of questionnaires for self-completion as it will allow the volunteer/beneficiary to express freely, openly, with more sincerity.

The questions are built according to some established indicators relevant to the topic of the questionnaire.

Interview

The Semi-structured interviews

Are the most common interviews used usually at the beginning of EVS projects not as part of a research but they are, in this case, simply instruments to facilitate and structure at the same time the interaction with the volunteer and knowledge of the volunteer's profile, skills, expectations, fears. This interaction takes place within a previously designed framework of themes and topics related to the subject of the interview.

The semi-structured interviews contain sections of pre-defined questions to gain specific information about key issues which are used in conjunction with unstructured exploratory discussions.

The most accurate way to document an interview is to tape-record the discussion with the respondent's consent. The transcripts generated by the interviews then need to be analyzed. Usually thematic/content analysis is best fitted for this type of information. This means to cluster the emerging patterns or common themes and analyze them in relation with the purpose of the interview.

The Focus Group

Focus group discussions in EVS projects provide opportunities to study interchanges between participants to collect information and feed-back.

The focus group is usually moderated by someone who is knowledgeable about the project (the project manager or the monitor) and skilled at group facilitation. The focus group develops around a 'thematic topic guide' similar to that used in an unstructured interview (for example, when conducting a community needs analysis, the questions can be built around topics like the needs, opportunities, initiatives, obstacles, in terms of education concerning youth from a certain community). The moderator will ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to contribute their views and not allow one or two individuals to dominate the discussion. Groups can be re-convened on more than one occasion, which is useful if there is a need to absorb and reflect upon information presented on previous occasions.

Focus group discussions are often used at the initial stages of an EVS project's evaluation. They can also be used to explore the range and diversity of views on an issue; to consult members of the community/members of a group about an issue or a proposed plan for action; to enable people in similar circumstances to discuss their common experiences and needs; test reactions to project proposals.

The information obtained through focus groups can be analyzed in a similar way to an unstructured interview, using thematic/content analysis. Particular note should be taken of points of consensus and disparity.

Example of focus group – description of a focus group

A partner organization of ARDR had planned an EVS project concerning the integration of Roma youngsters and children living in large numbers in neighbourhoods located in the outskirts of Craiova town.
The activities were planned to be carried out in three schools with significant number of Roma children, from three neighbourhoods.
It was necessary to conduct a community needs analysis to find out the exact needs and opportunities existent in the communities. In each community was conducted a focus group with representatives of the schools (directors, teachers, school programme coordinators) and representatives of several organizations working for improving Roma people's situation.

The themes of discussion concerned statistic data regarding Roma youngsters, school attendance rate, educational services existent, partnerships, human/material resources, specific educational needs of Roma youngsters, difficulties faced by Roma children, opportunities to approach the three communities.
The results had shown common needs concerning education – improving school attendance, fighting against the Roma children's parents reluctance to education – but also differences between the three communities and schools as each one of them had its own particularities and supported only certain types of intervention from the EVS project.

Field visits

It is a technique used to check the situation ,,on the spot", verifying the conformity between the situation described in reports and meetings and the real situation, by observing directly the relationships between the volunteers and the beneficiaries, the interaction between them, the ,,effects" of the volunteer's work, the atmosphere, the environment of their work.
 The field visits, in EVS projects are actually meetings conducted by the monitor and project manager, together with the other actors: mentors, beneficiaries, the community.
The field visits should be carried out periodically allowing to take the pulse of the project to observe its dynamic and gradual changes in attitudes, behaviors, relationships.

The main instrument used in field visits is the observation list. The field visits, as a technique, involve the direct interaction with the volunteer's working environment, that is with the community and with the beneficiaries, collecting their opinions, reactions and recommendations and observing the volunteers in action.

Observation list

It is an instrument that in EVS projects is used mainly by the mentor, for each volunteer; by the monitor during field visits or weekly/monthly evaluations and can be used also by the project manager. The observation lists are useful to structure and to select the information that you get to collect while monitoring and evaluating. It helps to collect regularly the information, ensuring a data base of information for the final evaluation.

There is no standard model for observation list. The observation lists are built by establishing indicators according to the subject of the observation. This instrument helps to highlight specific features or constants of the volunteers, activities, beneficiaries; it has a continuity characteristic as it follows constantly the evolution of a certain situation/person.

Indicators

The monitoring and evaluation system tracks and measures objectives that were set before starting the project. Indicators are measurable or tangible signs that something has been done or that something has been achieved. For example, an indicator of community empowerment might be an increased frequency of community members speaking at community meetings.

Indicators are an essential part of a monitoring and evaluation system because they are what you measure and/or monitor. Through the indicators you can ask and answer questions such as: *who? how many? how often? how much?*

In EVS projects, these objectives lie in different areas which can be measured by establishing indicators:

- *The work and related outcomes:* learning skills, learning opportunities, developing projects, objectives set versus achieved;

- *Social integration:* new friendships/relationships; relationship with colleagues

- *Intercultural dimension:* knowledge about the hosting community; knowledge of hosting community language;

- *Personal issues:* motivation; level of adapting; conflicts

- *Technicalities:* food, accommodation, transport facilities; materials provided; etc

Applied monitoring and evaluation methodology in EVS projects

Each organization can create its own monitoring and evaluation system according to its resources, needs for strategic development, engagement, etc.
One type of applied monitoring and evaluation methodology in EVS projects can be the following:

1. EX-ANTE EVALUATION

Involves applying questionnaires to volunteers at the beginning of their volunteering programme with the purpose of outlining the profile of each volunteer and a personal development roadmap. The questions are built to find out the volunteer's professional skills, volunteer's personal features, working needs, vision on the project. The questionnaire may be built as a semi-structured one, to combine closed questions with open questions. The open questions, besides the fact that allow you to see the volunteer's way of thinking and expressing, may also give you the opportunity to have further discussions with him/her, starting from his/her answers.

Benefits:

•   The ex-ante evaluation questionnaires may help in ,,breaking the ice'' between the volunteer and the organization as some of the volunteers will feel more free to express themselves through writing and he/she will have the feeling that the organization is interested in discovering his/her potential
•   It is useful to collect the information from the volunteers in a structured way
•   It is useful to compare the volunteer's entry level with his/her achievements at the end of the project

Drawbacks:

•   The information may not express the reality as the volunteer may not be able to evaluate himself/herself (they may underestimate or overestimate themselves)
•   Some of the volunteers may not be comfortable with the idea of being evaluated through questionnaires.

2. WEEKLY MEETINGS – EVALUATION & PLANNING

At the end of every week the volunteers, the project coordinators, the mentors and the monitor meet to discuss the volunteers' activities, problems, successes, and to plan ahead for the next week to come. The meeting is based on open discussions, giving both parties – the volunteers and the coordinators – the opportunity to discuss on the topics they are interested in and to receive quick answers and reactions. The volunteers are required to write a weekly summary and a weekly planning and present them during the meeting.

A weekly summary's structure is: describing the activities developed during the past week, the good and bad points of the past week and suggestions to make the activities better. A weekly planning's structure is: to describe the activities and the schedule for each working day of the coming week, to name the person and the resources needed for fulfilling the tasks.

The monitor compares the results and the planning of the past week, planned versus achieved, and proposes solutions and ideas where necessary. The weekly meetings can be transformed in real debates, brainstorming, all meeting in a group effort of finding the best solutions, opportunities, ideas.

Benefits:
•   The weekly meetings are very beneficial because it allows the project team to dwell more deeply in volunteers' project, ask more probing questions, and find out why a project is either succeeding or failing.
•   It gives the volunteers an outlet in which to express themselves
•   It helps developing a relationship of mutual trust in between the coordinator and the volunteers as the interaction is face to face
•   It gives the opportunity to find out in real time the needs and obstacles the volunteers are facing.

Drawbacks:

•   When there are many volunteers, the meeting can become a bit chaotic, with everyone trying to talk above everyone else
•   The weekly meeting duty may become rather tedious for project coordinators; they rather call the external monitor to update on their own version and have a quick briefing with the volunteers.
•   It requires tight scheduling from volunteers side which is a plus but on the other hand it may become too rigid.

3. MONTHLY MEETINGS - EVALUATION & PLANNING

At the end of every month, the volunteers, the project coordinators, the mentors and the monitor gather in a meeting to evaluate the past month and to plan the next month.
The meeting is structured on several sessions with open discussions on the following matters: a back-casting and fore-casting session when the past month will be evaluated and working sessions on planning the next month; sessions on technical issues such as money reimbursements.

This monthly meetings may be organized *as residential monitoring and evaluation meetings,* keeping together in the same place (preferably outside the usual working environment) for two full days the volunteers, the project coordinators, the mentors and the monitor. This type of meetings should be organized when the project has reached a certain stage of development (after two months from its beginning; midterm of the project, when everybody has accumulated facts, opinions, experience, changes) and it is necessary either a good planning or an in depth evaluation to overcome possible bottlenecks or to improve an existent strategy of action to obtain a greater impact. The residential monitoring and evaluation meetings help create a stimulating working environment, stimulating also the interaction (including the confrontation of opinions) between participants and the team building.

- *Monthly evaluation*

Every volunteer will fill in, at the end of each month, a monthly evaluation questionnaire which will be handed to the monitor. The evaluation sessions are based on the report provided by the monitor, compiling findings of monthly evaluation questionnaires and the regular collection and analysis of data.

- *Monthly planning*

Each volunteer has to write a detailed planning of their activities for the next month containing: a description of what the volunteers plan to do for the next month, deadlines and the resources needed. The volunteers will work together with the project coordinators, the mentor and the monitor on structuring the plan for the next month, taking in consideration the needs for improvement and the ,,blocking stones" encountered.

Benefits:

- The monthly evaluations give a good overview of how each project is unfolding. It allows external monitor give advice to the project team to address the big issues facing each volunteer.
- It gives the volunteers the chance to voice their concerns regarding their activities
- It gives the project team the opportunity to find out the volunteer's overall view about their efforts, and on what aspects the team is doing well and also where they may need improvements
- It gives the volunteers the opportunity to value and ,, to weigh" their own work by making a selection of their own achievements
- It gives the project team an idea about the group cohesion
- It is necessary for creating a data base helpful for the monitoring process and for improving it

Drawbacks:
- • Some problems, although often written on the weekly summaries, are not written on the monthly evaluations because the volunteers sometimes don't like to be critical on themselves or remind the team the failure in their responsibilities (failing to finish an activity, delaying etc.).
- • Lack of comments: A volunteer may rate a certain issue as "failing" but does not give further comments as to why they gave a "failing" mark. Therefore, unless the team questions the volunteer further, the team may never know what it was they were doing wrong.

4. ON SITE VISITS

A complete monitoring and evaluation system should combine the in-house monitoring with the field visits. The in-house monitoring refers to the information collected through documents, (questionnaires, weekly summaries, observation lists) discussions with the volunteers and through regular evaluation meetings. Although the in-house monitoring provides valuable information and ensures structure, the project's picture will not be complete and truthful without going in the field. The field visits give the monitor a sense of the real dynamic of the project as the field visits imply the direct contact with the community/beneficiaries and direct observation. Also the field visits ensure the objectivity of the monitoring and evaluation process by involving other entities (beneficiaries, stakeholders) which represent extra sources of information and a diversity of points of view.

Every two weeks, the responsible for monitoring, the mentor and the project manager will carry out monitoring on site visits according to the following structure:

- separate discussion with the mentor – checking his perception on the volunteer's evolution
- separate discussion with the volunteer – checking his perception on it's own work and on it's impact
- common discussion with the mentor and the volunteers – getting to know their common points of view and the differences between them
- open discussions with beneficiaries of EVS volunteer activities – checking on their satisfaction concerning the volunteer's activities; recommendations of improvements; impact of volunteer's activities
- direct observations on the location where volunteers conduct their activities – do the volunteers have a schedule known by everybody; how are they welcomed at their working locations?, did they become familiar with the location and the people?
- analysis of their weekly summaries and weekly planning
After each in site visit the monitor has to provide a report containing details about the degree of satisfaction of volunteers, beneficiaries and partners, the evolution and impact of activities undertaken by volunteers under the monthly and weekly schedules and recommendations to improve the volunteer's performance.

Benefits:

• Enable far coordinators to gather relevant data from all the actors involved in the EVS activities, providing an overview of the real situation of the project
• Gave possibility to the project coordinator to check directly, ,,on the spot" on the EVS action
• Made all the actors involved in the EVS activities more aware of their responsibilities
• Created a positive routine of the project, contributing to modelling a certain discipline of the volunteers regarding their activities

Drawbacks:

• It is a time consuming method although the information obtained through it was very useful
• The information often become confusing due to the multiple points of view that had to be taken into consideration
• The in site visits become quite tedious for the coordinators but also for the others involved in the project which may not follow its structure with the same involvement every time

5. MENTOR'S OBSERVATIONS LIST

The main monitoring instrument used by the mentors is "the observations list" for each volunteer, for every week of activity. The mentor has to fill it in weekly, and send it to the monitor and to the project manager. The observation list used by the mentor, is usually tracking the following aspects: the relationship volunteer- activities; the relationship volunteer-mentor; the relationship volunteer – external environment (meaning the relationship with the beneficiaries, with the representatives of the institutions where they are working, the satisfaction regarding some technical aspects, the accordance between their planning and the real development of activities) their personal features ; the relationship of the mentor with the organization, the mentor's opinion about the impact of the project and his overview of the project.

At the end of every month, the mentors have to send all the observation lists to the monitor so all the data could be aggregated in a report.

Benefits:

• The observation lists help the mentors to focus their attention on the essential points regarding the volunteer's performance and evolution of the project
• The observations lists make easy to track the volunteer's development, the strengths and the weaknesses of the project so they and/or the coordinators could intervene punctually whenever was needed
• The observation lists help the mentors to develop self-discipline regarding their responsibilities towards the volunteers
• The mentor's observations lists help the monitor to compare his/her observations with the mentor's who, by the nature of his/her role has closer relationships with the volunteer

Drawbacks:

• The data collected through the observations lists, may sometimes generate confusion, because of the different points of view (the observation lists contain the volunteer's perception and the mentor's perception on the aspects mentioned above)
• Filling in the observation lists may become a tedious routine, which leads to making shallow observations or even to lack of comments where they are needed in order to explain a statement

Reporting

Whether you are monitoring or evaluating, at some point, or points, there will be a reporting process. This reporting process follows the stage of analyzing information.
You will report to different stakeholders in different ways, sometimes in written form, sometimes verbally and, increasingly, making use of tools such as Power Point presentations, slides and videos.

Structure of an evaluation report

Executive summary - Usually not more than five pages – the shorter, the better – intended to provide enough information for busy people, but also to tease people's appetite so that they want to read the full report

Preface - Not essential, but a good place to thank people and make a broad comment about the process, findings etc.

Contents page - With page numbers, to help people find their way around the report.

SECTION 1: *Introduction:* Usually deals with background to the project/organization, background to the evaluation, the brief to the evaluation team, the methodology, the actual process and any problems that occurred.

SECTION 2: *Findings:* Here you would have sections dealing with the important areas of findings, e.g. objectives, results, impact, volunteer's profile or the themes that have emerged

SECTION 3: *Conclusions:* Here you would draw conclusions from the findings – the interpretation, what they mean; It offers an overview of the project

SECTION 4: *Recommendations:* This would give specific ideas for a way forward in terms of addressing weaknesses and building on strengths.

APPENDICES: Here may be included Terms of Reference, list of people interviewed, questionnaires used, possibly a map of the area, etc

EVS mentoring, counselling and coaching

The question to be addresses is how to support volunteers as they start their placement and throughout the time they spend on the project. We explore this topic at large in the third Kit on Work and Methodology during EVS.

Mentoring is a hotly debated concept as part of the EVS projects. In between assigning a mentor and giving to the volunteers the chance to "recruit" their own mentor there is a wide gap to fill in. In between mentoring for getting your way around by showing the "ropes" and mentoring in confidence and skills there is role variation that may lead to confusion for volunteers. Is the mentor volunteers' second daddy and mummy? Is the mentor supposed to feedback to the coordinating/host organization?

Generally there are two forms of mentoring – sponsorship mentoring and development mentoring. Sponsorship mentoring is where a more experienced senior colleague who knows there way around the organization supports a junior colleague by showing them the ropes. A development mentor may be at a similar level to the person being mentored and may not belong to the same organization. The aim is different from the sponsorship mentor, here the focus is on building confidence and skills.

The coordinating/hosting organization needs to be aware that volunteers are in need for being mentored, counselled or coached. No matter if there is an inter- personal clash or volunteers need to work on his development path, they need a counsellor, sooner or later. Counselling is usually a short-term engagement where the counselor listens non-judgmentally without any requirement to undertake any action by the counselor or the volunteers.

Once volunteers identify professional interests in work, the coordinating/hosting organization has to be prepared to arrange meetings with a coach. Counselling is usually a short-term engagement where the counselor listens non-judgmentally without any requirement to undertake any action by the counselor or client. Coaching requires action to follow. Ideally, already during the Capacity Building Programme volunteers should be structured in thematic working groups in such a way that professional path can be easily approached by the coordinating/hosting organization.

Protection, safety and risk assessment

Protection and safety of young people involved in Youth in Action projects are important principles of the Programme. All young persons participating in the Youth in Action Programme deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential in terms of social, emotional and spiritual development. This could only be assured in a safe environment, which respects and protects rights of young persons and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

In its simplest form, protection and safety address every young person's right not to be subjected to harm. In that perspective, there is no issue that is not potentially in some way related to young person's safety and protection. Protection in this context covers all kinds of inappropriate behavior, including sexual and moral harassment, but also intercultural problems, insurance, accidents, fire, alcohol and substance abuse, neglect, bullying, degrading treatment or punishment, etc.

The fundamental objective is to ensure that all those who work together with young people recognize a duty to safeguard the protection of young people and are able to fulfill this duty.

To this end each promoter participating in the Youth in Action Programme should have in place effective procedures and arrangements to promote and guarantee the welfare and protection of young people. This will help to enhance the young people's experience as a safe, effective and enjoyable learning experience.

With this regard, all participants directly involved in Youth in Action projects must be insured against the risks linked to their participation in these projects.

In any circumstances, the following areas must be covered:
-    wherever relevant, travel insurance (including damage or loss of luggage)
-    third party liability (including, wherever appropriate, professional indemnity or insurance for responsibility)
-    medical assistance, including after care
-    accident and serious illness (including permanent or temporary incapacity)
-    death (including repatriation in case of projects carried out abroad)
-    legal assistance fees
-    wherever relevant, special insurance for particular circumstances such as outdoor activities. [11]

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, during the EVS project, could cause harm to volunteers, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.
Volunteers have the right to be protected.

Particularly when working with volunteers with less opportunities or when locating volunteers in conflict zones or remote areas further insights into where potential risks may arise from need to be given. Lack of volunteers' access to water, sanitation, food and travel opportunities may put at high risk both the volunteers and the promoters.

Though, in EVS project management it is also the project itself that needs to be assesses in terms of reaching or failing objectives, following or deviating from the development plan, and so forth.

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[11] The Youth in Action Programme, 2007-2013, p.9

Therefore, promoters need to understand that nothing could be as risky as not having a plan to prevent and counter-act risks.

What risks are there in relation to the EVS project?

• accidents, injury or death
• poor performance by volunteer that may lead to an organizational damaged image and lack of credibility
• volunteers taking over "leadership" roles that may lead to the dissolution of the organizational authority
• loss and damage of assets from the organization
• breach of confidentiality
• volunteers inappropriately speaking for/ misrepresenting the organisation
• misappropriation of funds, fraud
• tensed, violent relations amongst volunteers
However, a through analysis of the project in tandem with the risk assessment done by all promoters that may create good premises for avoiding and controlling risks. Further on this topic is to be explored in our third Kit.

Reporting

The organization (which is the coordinating organization) that manages the grant received for the implementation of the EVS project must compile several reports during the project. A medium term and a final report. Basically, a report is "a form which has to be filled signed and sent to the National or Executive Agency within two months following the end date of the project in order to describe how the project has actually been implemented, and to account for the actual financial aspects (cost actually incurred and income).

Forms can be downloaded on the Commission's website:
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/forms/forms_yia_en.html

There are two stages during the EVS project when the hosting/coordinating organization is to compile a report to the National Agency/ Executive Agency: that is a mid term and final report.
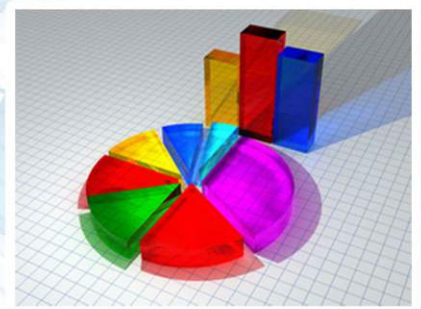
As reporting is a critical task of the EVS project staff, a particular attention needs to be given to the administration of documents (narrative, financial, media) of any event organized in the framework of the EVS project.

In terms of structures, a narrative report is to comprise the report standard that is made available from the National Agency or the Executive Agency, the monitoring report for the whole project and any documents (narrative, media - articles from newspapers, screen shoots from email groups, websites, etc. - that you used to disseminate info about the project, press releases, pictures and video clips)

Still, volunteers need also to compile reports. For the final report they have to fill in and sign a form specially designed for them. The form can also be downloaded from the Commission's website mentioned above and it is compulsory for a proper reporting activity to submit them too to the National/Executive Agency. This reports require to the volunteer a description of activities; of the support received before and during the project from the organization and from the Agency; a description of the results perceived and/or obtained by the volunteer; comments and opinions.

Volunteers need to be aware that it is also their responsability to complete a report as part of the project fulfillment. Although, one has to take into account the fact that few volunteers look at this report as "paper work" and if they do not refuse to fill that in then they trifle with jotting down few words. Hence, it is the responsability of the coordinating/hosting organization to organize in due time a working session with all volunteers on how to write a good final report. On the other hand, beyond the formal report, volunteers must be thoroughly involved in gathering relevant data and papers to be transfered to the next volunteers to take over from them the positions in the communities.

More on the methodology and methods to be used while managing European Voluntary Service is to come with the third Kit on EVS.
Please do not hesitate to send your comments that may help us to improve the current version on the following coordinates:
Email: office@ardr.ro

ARDR (Romania): has piloted the first group EVS project in Romania and has engineered various tools to support the quality in managing EVS group projects. It has a good experienced staff in managing EVS programmes and it has a good local network of various stakeholders that uphold the EVS projects.

Contact data:
Barbuleanu Raluca, Worldwide volunteering manager,
raluca.barbuleanu@ardr.ro
www.ardr.ro

NBV (Sweden): it is the biggest and oldest network of organizations in Sweden and has a wide coverage spread all over Sweden. They also work in close relationship with the local authorities. In this case they have a big potential to disseminate information and also to manage EVS projects in the filed.

Contact data:
Bengt Soderlind, EVS country coordinator,
bengt.soderlind@nbv.se
www.nbv.se

Norfolk Childrens Services (UK): is a public authority that has extensive experience in developing tools for increasing participation in volunteering action and active citizenship. The very pilot programme that they worked on at a national scale in England, is Hear by Right. Therefore, all over Norfolk they run dozens of youth and volunteering centers.

Contact data:
Robin Konieczny, in country EVS coordinator,
robin.konieczny@norfolk.gov.uk
www.norfolk.gov.uk

Association jeunesse verte du cameroun (Cameron): one of the biggest networks of volunteers in Cameron with extensive experience, capacity to disseminate and profesional staff to follow up in the current Network on EVS..

Contact data AJVC:
Marie Tamoifo, EVS country coordinator,
tamoifo@gmail.com
www.ajvsurf.org, www.jeunesevertecameroun.org

CHIDO (Sierra Leone): very active on volunteering programmes and on active citizenship militant campaigning. Not so much having an international dimension in their work but a well trained team that is ready to commit to a long term network.

Contact data CHIDO:
James Ebube, EVS country coordinator,
chiddo3000@yahoo.com

Jovenes de Buena Voluntad (Peru): a local and regional organization deeply involved in community volunteering; they have a strong local taken in all their programmes involving a numerous group of stakeholders.

Contact data JBV:
Jose Luis Quiñones, EVS country manager,
j_quinones_c@hotmail.com
http://jovenesdebuenavoluntad.blogspot.com/

OAJNU (Argentina): a wide network with strong interlinks with various international big organizations and with a substantial network over the country; they have big potential to disseminated, local infrastructure and human resources.

Contact data OAJNU:
Responsible of the Program Hector Gabriel Valfre –
gvalfre@oajnu.org
http://www.oajnu.org/

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Germany, September 1st 2010 - September 1st 2011, Haus Trillup ... read further

Turkey, 1st September 2010 – 31st July 2011, Pink House ... read further

Spain, May 15th 2010 - November 15th 2010, Darkness full of Light and Colour, ... read further

Spain, May 15th, 2010 - May 15th, 2011, Asamblea de Jovenes Alarca ... read further

Germany, August 10th 2010 - August 10th 2011, After-School-Club... read further

.e.p Youth Empowerment Program- YEP

The ideas on cooperation in the youth sector in between the EU , Africa and Latin America is is in line with the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership- A Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Latin America Regional programming document 2007-2013 but also with the specific papers that touch on youth volunteering, White Paper on Youth, European Youth Pact and the newly launched strategy "Youth – Investing and Empowering".. Read further

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Promoting YEP and EVS in Peru
The partner in the Youth Empowerment Network, from Peru, started in January a series of actions with the purpose of promoting YEP and EVS among organizations working in the youth field. Jovenes de Buena Voluntad had a structured and consistent work, unfolding until March in the region of Ventanilla-Lima, as following...read more

National tour in Cameroon for promoting YEP and EVS
In Cameroon, under the coordination of Marie Tamoifo, the president of Jeunesse Verte du Cameroon, the partner organization in the network of Youth Empowerment Programme, it was organized a national tour of seminars, covering almost all the regions of the country ... read more

Seminars in Argentina promoting YEP and EVS, February – March, 2010
Argentina of Youth for the United Nations) has it's area of action - to inform their referents about the European Voluntary Service and Project YEP, and to introduce them on how the program works....read more

ⓘ **Meet a volunteer**

**Francesco
Italy**
EVS volunteer in Romania
I like go arond in the forest and swim like a fish,and if you want to make me happy please Zambiti and share with me chocolate and wild flowers. One of my friend say about me(and i love this):matto al punto giusto da far stare meglio anche chi si vede il mondo crollare addosso.

ARDR | 'Youth in Action' Programme | Education and Culture DG | EACEA Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency | EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR Youth DEVELOPMENT

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