

2023

**QUALITY VOLUNTEERING
GUIDE**

**Founded by European Grand Tour Erasmus
KA2 Project**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

European Grand Tour

THE WORD OF THE PROJECT COORDINATOR:



BENJAMIN SIBILLE, FOUNDER AND
CEO OF THE COLLECTIF POUR UN
SERVICE CIVIQUE EUROPÉEN

“

This cooperation was initiated after a successful experimentation of a unique mechanism entwining national civic service and the European Solidarity to reach more inclusion in European Mobility. It was launched with Unis Cité in 2020, in Metz, France. Unis Cité is considered to be the leading association that started the national program in France (125 000 full time youth volunteers a year up to date), and then expanded, notably to the partners of Erasmus KA2. This event inspired the main youth announcement of the French Presidency of the Council of the Union 2022.

We don't only want to spread and promote national civic service in other countries of Europe (another key result of our cooperation), but widen the opportunities brought already through any kind of volunteering, such as the European Solidarity Corps, with a specific focus on inclusion. Hopefully this reading will equip you with the necessary ground experience, tools and processes to enable you to engage more in hosting volunteers, ensuring both their well-being and benefiting society in a greater way than before. Even a slight progress regarding this matter will make us proud of the achievements of these partnerships, as volunteering and especially European Mobility volunteering and civic engagement change each year the lives of thousands of young people, shaping thus the future of the continent; a figure that we hope to contribute to grow.

Special thanks

to the French Government and their Youth Ministry and Agency of the National Civic Service, which supported our initiative since the beginning, up to an official Presidential endorsement during the Presidency of the Union. The Council, which followed with the adapted April 2022 recommendation on volunteering, enticing more cross over between National and European schemes. And the French German Youth Organization and the Grand Est Region, which supported directly several key steps of this cooperation.

A special mention to the Governments of Malta, Poland, and the relevant administrations of Italy, Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Greece and Estonia, who devoted time to make of this common endeavor a success. Thank you to Foundation Hippocrene, our longest standing supporter.

Many thanks to the Cities of Strasbourg, Paris and Bologna, and the European Parliament who confirmed their historical role in the successful buildup of our European Union, by hosting the major on ground features and events of this project.

”

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	01
---------------------	-------	----

01. <u>RECRUITMENT'S ADAPTED PROCESS AND OUTREACH METHODS</u>	.....	02
• <u>Ecogenia</u>	.....	03
• <u>Recruitment Process: How to do?</u>	.....	04
• <u>An Example of Communication: Mission Infokit</u>	.....	08

02. <u>YOUTH WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES</u>	.....	10
• <u>Dobrovolnické centrum</u>	.....	11
• <u>Typology of special needs</u>	.....	12
• <u>Team Preparation Tips</u>	.....	15
• <u>A specific support: Inclusion buddy program</u>	.....	16

03. <u>MONITORING AND INCLUSION PROCESS</u>	.....	18
• <u>Unis Cité</u>	.....	19
• <u>Prepare to Host Youth with Fewer Opportunities</u>	.....	20
• <u>A Charter for Inclusion: the European Civic Service project</u>	.....	22
• <u>Mentors, what's that about?</u>	.....	24

04. <u>CHARTER OF VALUES EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE NETWORK</u>	26
--	-------	----

05.	<u>MONITORING AND QUALITY MISSION</u>	32
•	<u>International Youth Association EstYES</u>	33
•	<u>Housing and accommodation</u>	34
•	<u>Best practices on monitoring</u>	37
•	<u>Inter-volunteer relations and mutual help</u>	38
<hr/>		
06.	<u>TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS</u>	40
•	<u>Associazione InCo</u>	41
•	<u>Pre-departure process for the European civic service volunteer</u>	42
•	<u>The volunteer experience: Continuous learning</u>	47
<hr/>		
07.	<u>EVALUATION AND VALORIZATION OF SKILLS</u>	54
•	<u>Scambieuropei</u>	55
•	<u>YouthPass for European Solidarity Corps volunteering experiences</u>	56
•	<u>Civic Service in Italy</u>	57

08. <u>NON-FORMAL LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION</u>	
<u>TECHNIQUES</u>	61
• <u>Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector</u>	62
• <u>Development of Skills in Missions</u>	63
• <u>Self development</u>	67
• <u>Personal project</u>	71
09. <u>GLOBAL ASSETS AND IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING</u>	74
• <u>CreativePlus NGO</u>	75
• <u>A specific Example of integrated multi vectorial volunteering action</u>	76
• <u>Addressing specific societal needs by volunteering</u>	78
 <u>ANNEX I</u>	 81

INTRODUCTION

We want to open up European mobility to all types of young people, especially those who find themselves with fewer opportunities and who are still often excluded because of it, despite the advantages of existing programs. Without any formal prerequisites (language, school cursus, skills), we allow young volunteers to successively carry out 6 months of volunteering in their country and 6 months of volunteering in another Member State with the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). To make access to the European Solidarity Corps more inclusive, the first volunteering experience is held in one's own country, allowing the volunteer to prepare and facilitate the second one, which is carried out in another Member State. Therefore, we aim to establish a network of local and national partners in multiple Member States who have a track record in advocacy and project management. They all have acquired the experience of voluntary, national (national civic service), and/or European work, through the European Solidarity Corps. We thus articulate for the first time these two types of mechanisms: national and European. We allow volunteers to start a national voluntary service at home country, preparing and facilitating then their departure in mobility abroad in European Solidarity Corps.

Thanks to this innovative gradual approach, which awarded us the Charlemagne Youth Prize in 2020 from the European Parliament, we are significantly reinforcing the social inclusiveness of the European Solidarity Corps. This project was already successfully tested in France, but also in Italy and in Malta, where it effectively facilitated the expansion of national civic service programs.

Moreover, we are promoting the quality and innovation of the socio-educational animation in the field of volunteering, as well as the recognition of this experience throughout the Union.

Through this cooperation, all our partners wish giving access to the advantages of volunteering and European mobility for as many young people as possible, thus promoting the experience of common values, civic commitment and participation of young people, in particular, by creating links between volunteers throughout Europe. At the same time, we are bringing new Member States to test and measure the value of full-time, compensated national civic service, as we have done previously in Malta. In this way, we promote the dissemination of youth policies that are already at the origin of major instruments of social inclusiveness and non-formal education in France, Germany, Italy and Luxembourg. By encouraging the promotion of these instruments while articulating them with the European Solidarity Corps, we allow the engagement, the connection and the empowerment of young people, on a European scale.



01. RECRUITMENT PROCESS & OUTREACH METHODS

ecogenia
γενιά με όραμα

Presentation of the NGO

Ecogenia offers civic engagement opportunities for youth as a framework to elevate the climate action and sustainability agendas in Greece.

The model promotes a skills-first and localised approach to sustainable development and prosperity. Leveraging the civic service model, Ecogenia provides paid service opportunities for youth (18-30) who are unemployed/underemployed, beginning their careers, or shifting industries.

Each programme brings together youth in cohort teams to deliver climate and sustainability impact projects in underserved communities. Cohorts are created based on skills and interests, and partnered with organisations/municipalities, so-called 'host sites', to undertake a project that responds to a community need while advancing local sustainability goals.

Ecogenia has ran 2 pilot in 2022, engaging 17 youth in 1,600 hours of community service, and is launching its third programme in May-July 2023.

Statement on the EGT project

Empowering youth is key to building an equitable, prosperous and sustainable society. Civic service provides an effective channel to do so, while at the same time serving big societal needs and addressing some of the most prominent challenges of our times.



RECRUITMENT PROCESS

STEP 01

Create a clear job description

The first step to a successful recruitment, outreach and onboarding process is to have a clear defined job description for the service position. This should state, very evidently, what the benefits are, including: payment, housing, food, transportation, vacation/time off, language courses, etc.

In addition, any opportunities for participants with special needs should be highlighted. If there are specific qualifications, requirements, or special skills for the role, it needs to be specified.

STEP 02

Setting goals

The key to successful recruitment and outreach is to set goals. Goals help to define the outreach process and help to determine a strategy for achieving your set recruitment intentions.

For example:

- Define your target audience, their age range, background, etc.
- How many people do you need to secure? In order to achieve this number, how many applicants do you need? Does gender balance matter for the applicant pool and for the final team?
- Do you have diversity and inclusion goals? This can include: gender breakdown, geographical diversity, socio-economic backgrounds, etc.

STEP 03

Identify recruitment partners & developing an outreach strategy

Once you define your goals for both the applicant pool and the final team make up, you can create a successful strategy to reach those goals.

Key considerations for developing a sound recruitment strategy are:

- How do you reach your identified target audience?

For example: are they university students? If so, university campuses, student clubs, and professors/teachers could be useful to add to your potential recruitment partners list.

If you are looking for participants with a specific skill set, or special needs, take that into consideration when you identify recruitment partners.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS



Tip – create a mapping of where you may be able to reach your target audience, list out all of the possibilities on a piece of paper, white board, etc. Focus groups can also be helpful in creating this list.

- Once you have a list of ideas on how to reach your target audience, create a detailed list of organizations, partners, individual contacts, etc. at these respective places/organizations, etc. This will become your outreach partner list.



Tip – create a spreadsheet with columns designated for the organization, contact name and information, email address, etc. Including a column with notes as to why you think they would be a good recruitment partner is useful. Also, be sure to include columns for the status of your outreach (for example, have you asked them to support your recruitment efforts yet – if so, have they agreed to support you? This will take some time and research, but most information can be found online.

- In addition to recruitment partners, are there search engines and/or portals where you can include your offer?

STEP 04

Create a recruitment partner toolkit

Create a packet of information (virtual or physical copy) with all the details needed for your recruitment partners to help you with your recruitment efforts. This will make it as easy as possible for them to support your recruitment efforts and ensure the messages are consistent with your brand and overall communications.

Things to consider including in the recruitment partner toolkit are:

1. A description of the job/role you are looking to fill (in a pdf, word, and/or website link)

Be sure the benefits they include are very clear and obviously stated at the top – amount they are paid, housing, hours expected to work, etc. These are critical details that will help a candidate decide whether they can/should apply.

Are there special considerations for applicants with special needs? This should also be included and stated very clearly at the top.

2. Communication materials

A flyer (digital and in person) – which they can either print and post in a physical space or share digitally (like in a newsletter or direct email).



Tip – QR codes are helpful for the in person versions.

3. Social Media posts

Create a few social media posts (the title and a corresponding caption with hashtags) that your recruitment partners can use and/or reshare.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

4. Image quality and diversity

Be sure to include a variety of pictures that demonstrate the breadth of work as well as racial, ethnic and gender identity. The more potential candidates can identify with the people featured in recruitment materials, the more likely they will apply.

Refer back to your goals in Step 1 to ensure you are representing your target audience.



5. Links to any storytelling media you have

Tip – videos, testimonies, pictures, etc. can all really help paint the picture of what their experience will be like.

6. Links to anything else that is relevant

Examples: website, youtube videos, webinar links, etc.

STEP 05

Host a webinar and/or in person information session

Provide a space for potential applicants to meet you, ask questions, meet other potential candidates, and even hear from past participants. You can do this virtually via a webinar to answer questions, you can table at an event, etc. If you do this, be sure to include the information in the recruitment partner toolkit

STEP 06

Develop your social media calendar

Create a calendar of posts for your promotional/recruitment period. Be sure to mix up the messaging to capture the interest of various applicant pools, and be sure to refer back to your goals from Step 1 to make sure your messaging is speaking to your target group! Mix up your posts with stories, pictures, videos, graphics, etc.



Tip – tag partners in your post, and use hashtags. And be sure to reshare any posts your recruitment partners share;

Tip – make sure links are easily available to any application portal pages;

Tip – make sure the application deadline is clearly stated and repeated in posts

STEP 07

Start recruiting

After you have confirmed your recruitment partners and sent them the toolkit, it's a good idea to send them a few reminders to help you promote during your promotional period.

- Assess the quality of your applicant pool as you go to determine if you need to adjust and/or adapt recruitment efforts.



Tip – be sure on your application you ask “where did you hear about this opportunity” so that you can see what recruitment strategies are working best.

--> You can also ask people that have applied to let their friends know about the opportunity

--> Keep a list of all applicants (whether they are accepted into the program or not) so you can email them about future opportunities.

- Include opportunities on your website, in any newsletters, emails, email signatures, etc. so that the messaging is consistent and across all channels and points of entry.

Selection Process

- Do you have selection criteria that is consistent during the application and interview process, to help select final candidates? Is this information transparent and available for applicants before they apply?
- Offer letters should be sent for the position with clear instructions on how to accept/deny the position
- Those not selected for the position should be encouraged to apply again for another opportunity, and potentially redirected to other opportunities that currently exist if there are any

Pre-service Orientation

- Once people are selected, they should attend a mandatory “pre-service” orientation to ensure they know everything they need to know before arriving to their host site.
- Things to include in a pre-service orientation are:

- o Relevant staff and emergency contact information
- o Packing lists
- o Housing considerations
- o Expectation setting for their workday
- o How to travel to/from the work site
- o Any other considerations that affect their day to day life in their service work

EXAMPLE MISSION INFOKIT

DO YOUR EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS IN MALTA!

HOSTING
ORGANIZATION
Aġenzija Support
Malta

*Service
Civique
Européen*
Grandir ensemble

CONTACT

- CV + lettre de motivation à envoyer à l'adresse mail :
info@service-civique-europeen.com

EXPLORE MALTA

EXAMPLE MISSION INFOKIT

LOCATION

Malta is an archipelago of islands between Italy and Libya. Malta, Gozo and Comino form the Republic of Malta and is blessed with many beautiful beaches surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea.



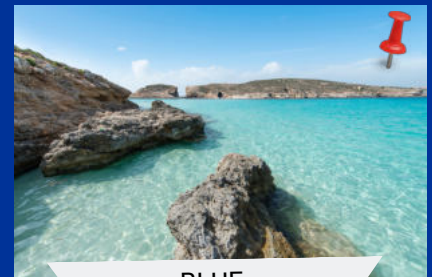
MALTA FREEPORT



MELLIEHA



VALETTA



BLUE LAGOON

MALTA

We're looking for a volunteer for a **7-month** assignment starting **from now**.



<https://mouvement-europeen.eu/service-civique-europeen/>

HOSTING ORGANISME

Aġenzija Sapport is the National Agency for persons with disabilities. The Agency provides professional and innovative services to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities. The Agency's vision is to be the leader in guiding the community which promotes ability rather than disability.

MISSIONS

- 38 hours per week - flexible
- Befriending service users on an individuals basis.
- Offer assistance in our social groups, which are aimed for adults with disabilities to engage in activities of their choice in the community.
- Offer assistance in our youth group, which offers informal education opportunities for young persons with disabilities and space to socialise with their peers.
- Create and implement social activities and projects.
- Assist the Sharing Lives team in strengthening the community of volunteers.
- Support the team with the implementation and logistics of other EU projects and activities.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

ACCOMMODATION :

Costs related to accommodation throughout the duration of the volunteering experience will be funded by the European Solidarity Corps project. Accommodation will be located close to amenities and public transport. Facilities would also include WiFi, adapters, towels, hairdryer, etc.

FOOD :

Food budget will be allocated monthly. Volunteers will be responsible to do their own shopping.

POCKET MONEY :

The pocket allowance will be provided on a monthly basis.

TRANSPORTS :

The main mode of transportation will be public transportation. The volunteer will be supported to apply for the local Tal-Linja card. The card will be topped-up monthly.

INSURANCE :

Volunteers coming from the European Union are encouraged to obtain an E111 Health card. Moreover, the sending organisation will support you to apply for Cigna Insurance in order to have coverage in emergency situations.

02. YOUTH WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES



ALL PARTS OF THIS REPORT WERE WRITTEN COLLECTIVELY BUT INDIVIDUAL SUB PART WERE COORDINATED BY PARTNERS MORE SPECIALIZED ON THE MATTER

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities and accesses, inclusion, diversity, and equity in all our volunteering activities. Volunteers with limited opportunities are in the centre of these aims. We feel it is essential to attempt to classify the types of limitations, in order to describe as clearly as possible, the types of young volunteers that organisations may encounter and work with, while also becoming more aware of what specific types of individual needs can be defined. From our experiences, we are in harmony with the Inclusion & Diversity strategy launched by the European Commission for 2021-2027, which focuses on an increasing number of people with fewer opportunities, among others, for volunteer activities.

Any young volunteer who does not have the same opportunities as their peers should generally be treated with understanding and sensitivity to their specific circumstances, background, health, mental state, etc.

Presentation of the NGO

Dobrovolnické centrum (DC) is a non-profit and non-political NGO established in 1999. Our accredited programs are: mentoring programs, volunteering in sports, and culture, in the event of major emergencies, and Voluntary Service Management.

DC participate in international volunteering within the European Solidarity Corps program and support youth exchanges in cross-border cooperation with Germany.

We are intensively involved in the integration of Ukrainian refugees, for a year we coordinated a regional aid coordination centre for Ukraine and subsequently opened a Cultural Club for the UA community.

DC is also the Regional Volunteer Centre for the Ústí nad Labem Region. We create and provide professional background for volunteers and promote volunteering as a natural part of life and society.

Statement on the European Grand Tour project

We very much appreciate this opportunity to exchange experiences and we are excited to build a network which can empower the common idea: Volunteering for everyone!

dobrovolnické
centrum



TYOLOGY OF SPECIAL NEEDS (AND NEW SPECIAL NEEDS AFTER PANDEMIC)



N° 01 - Social disadvantages

Young people: facing discrimination (on grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), with limited social skills or anti-social or risky sexual behaviour, in precarious situations, (ex-) offenders, (ex-) drug addicts, young and/or single parents, orphans, young people from broken homes, youngsters in conflict with the law, etc.



N° 02 - Economic barriers

Young people with: a low standard of living, low income, dependence on the social security system, long-term unemployed, homeless, in debt or in financial difficulties, etc.



N° 03 - Cultural differences

Young immigrants or refugees or descendants of immigrant or refugee families; young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; young people with problems of language adaptation and cultural integration, etc.



N° 04 - Geographical Barriers

Young people from remote, rural or hilly areas; living on small islands or in peripheral regions; from urban areas with problems; from areas with poor services (limited public transport, poor facilities, abandoned villages...), etc.



N° 05 - Intellectual disabilities

Young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory, or other disabilities; with chronic health problems, serious illnesses or psychiatric conditions; with mental health problems, etc.



N° 06 - Learning disabilities

Young people with learning difficulties; who have dropped out of school and left school early, those with low or insufficient qualifications; young people who have not navigated the school system; with poor school performances due to different cultural/linguistic backgrounds, etc.

In order to get people with learning and intellectual disabilities or people with limited knowledge of the local language excited about volunteering and to support them in their commitment, the German partner and the Dobrovolnické centrum, z.s. from Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic) have developed a "simple language" version of the ProVol training and tested it with volunteers with disabilities.

The experience and results of the first training show: this approach works and the first participants with intellectual disabilities have found their volunteer jobs in a retirement home, with the fire brigade or in their village.

The project was supported from September 2016 to March 2019 by the EU Erasmus+ program. People usually think of the topic "People with disabilities and volunteering" only in the sense of involvement FOR people with disabilities, but not in the sense of involvement BY people with disabilities FOR OTHERS.

People with disabilities are not seen as actors yet, as active potential volunteers. Therefore, there are still hardly any examples of voluntary engagement with people with disabilities, especially not with people, who have learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities. Yet the coexistence and interaction of all members of a social and inclusive society are important.

And all those, who would like to engage in volunteering and who want to take an active part in coexistence and interaction, should be given the opportunity to do so.

Our vision is that in volunteer engagement we do not look at people in isolation, whether they have a disability or not, but focus in consequential ways

WHEN THINKING ABOUT INCLUSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS IN VOLUNTEERING, WE SHOULD BE LED BY THE FOLLOWING POINTS :

- a. What motivation, willingness, time and competence can someone bring to the engagement?
- b. Where and how can someone with this potential get involved?
- c. Which workplaces are suitable for this? Or how can these workplaces be organised?
(e.g. wheelchair access, use of plain language, the openness of colleagues), so that the involvement of people with disabilities is enabled and becomes commonplace?
- d. How can we get those, who are responsible for the workplace, excited about inclusion?
- e. What support is needed for this and how can such support be organised?
- f. How to support the motivation and mental strength of volunteer/trainer staff?



Reflections on qualitative mission preparation

In order to help people with disabilities to carry out their leisure activities independently and to a large extent, it is necessary to provide them with a customised approach - depending on their existing skills and abilities.

This can be done, for example, through:

- preparation of your team for the most common disabilities.
- support and assistance with task placement and instruction.
- training on general topics such as communication and teamwork, conflict resolution or action planning and implementation.
- design of repetitive and constant activities that give the volunteer opportunities for progressive improvement and confidence.

For this reason in particular, we have adapted the volunteer training course 'With Competence in Volunteering' in terms of content and also in simple language, so that people with learning and intellectual disabilities can also be prepared for their involvement in volunteering.

Impact on the monitoring of volunteers- increased social risks

" If I do not learn the way you teach, teach me the way I learn."

To be an actor in volunteering for people with disabilities, it needs increased organisational and financial resources. Many of the day-to-day cosuetudes of work have to be reorganised, taking care not to create big differences between the young beneficiaries.

For example, support services such as transport to the workplace, wheelchair accessibility and the use of simpel language, as well as one-to-one support in problematic situations. For these reasons, it is often necessary to have people working in facilities, who have confidence in people with disabilities and sufficient time to support them.

It may happen that complex procedures are not sufficiently understood, that a task or mission becomes too tiring, that they do not know how to handle critical and negative feedback or that they simply cannot handle a task due to their mental or physical limitations.

Therefore, it is important to make people with disabilities aware of these limitations in advance and to clarify how well they are able to handle them, so that every possible failure can be turned into an opportunity to highlight improvements. The attitude towards this audience must always be positive but without sacrificing honesty about the feedback we provide to the volunteer.

Best practices for communicating with this target audience

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Repeat content often, preferably in different words, and give examples.
- Use everyday expressions and avoid foreign and technical terms, compound words, phrases or complicated and longer sentences.
- Make more use of gesticulation, facial expressions and body language and use pictures, symbols, and pictograms to convey the content in a pictorial and thus comprehensible way.
- Include only one idea per sentence; a sentence should generally consist of no more than 15 words.
- Be patient and give yourself, but above all to the participants, enough time
- Repeatedly using the same terms in order to make it easier to memorise

Note - Inclusive volunteers will most probably not be able to carry out activities in the same way you are used to volunteering.

TEAM PREPARATION TIPS

- 1** Be sure to thoroughly prepare your organisation's team for the arrival of the volunteer. Talk about colleagues' expectations, natural concerns and possible solutions. It is also advisable to choose a facilitator to help guide the discussion. Ask an organisation that has experience of PWLD/PWID volunteers to share good practice.
- 2** The environment must be welcoming and safe for the volunteer and your team.
- 3** Plan activities and meetings well (Plan activities even better than with regular volunteers -> Unexpected changes in meeting dates and times can stress volunteers)
- 4** They will probably need to split the activity - they will do the activity in smaller units than you are used to because of the focus.
Start with smaller tasks, only move on to the next when you are sure the volunteer can do them.
- 5** Expect to need increased assistance (buddy, another volunteer, mentor) to accompany the volunteer not only in the beginning of the volunteering activity, but also to support him/her in routine tasks (public transport, canteen, doctor, etc.).
- 6** The role of the coordinator is also very important for this type of volunteer.
- 7** Especially at the beginning of the cooperation, we recommend one contact person to whom the volunteer will primarily turn. This should be the person who will instil confidence in the volunteer and in your organisation.
- 8** Always make sure that the recipient of the volunteer's help agrees to be carried out by a PWLD/PWID volunteer and vice versa, that the PWLD/PWID volunteer understands his/her work and knows whom to contact in case of difficulties (Buddie, another volunteer, mentor...).

Inclusion buddy

Experience from project IMProVE 2:0 – Inclusive Method in Professional Volunteering in Europe, the project led by Dobrovolnické centrum is oriented to improve Inclusive Volunteering.

One of the crucial recommended roles in working with an inclusive volunteer is what we called a "Buddy".

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Attend a training for inclusion buddies
- Responsible for the volunteer as long as he/she works voluntarily
- Responsible for making people with disabilities feel safe
- Be the contact person for PwID
- Ensure communication between all parties involved (e.g. in case of cancellations) and that communication structures are clear and transparent
- Keep an eye on whether everything is going well and only intervene when necessary
- Report potential problems or difficulties to the organisation/the project coordination and approach possible solution (If a volunteer can't do it him-/herself)
- Coordinate and organise the transport

Inclusion buddy

GOALS

- Accompany people with Intellectual disabilities (=PwID) in their volunteering well and safely, that people with disabilities feel taken care of, recognized and valued because they can make a meaningful contribution to society
- Ensure that communication and cooperation between people with Intellectual disabilities, their place of living and place of work go well and smoothly
- Contribute to reducing resistance, fears, and anxiety on the part of the organisations, parents, caregivers, etc

TARGET GROUP

- People who regularly have free time
- People who are already active in this field or people who are willing to become active
- National and European volunteer service holders
- Retired people
- People who are currently doing a traineeship in the field
- Students
- People who are interested to help somebody

The inclusion buddy has to be managed by the organisation (to effectively ensure the replacement in case of his/her's sickness)

Long term cooperation is recommended (1 year) and the time available for the mission should be 3h/per week.

03. MONITORING AND INCLUSION PROCESS



We have defined what we understand under the term “Youth with fewer opportunities” (YWFO) and see how we can best communicate to recruit them.

Now that they are volunteering in your team, it’s about keeping them!

Often we focus on volunteer retention because their help is needed to ensure the activities are completed. But you should also consider: why should the volunteer stay? What makes him or her feel comfortable and motivated while volunteering at your organisation?

In this section, we will try to find some tips to manage youngsters with fewer opportunities so that their volunteering will be the best it can be and with the least possible problems, as much for the volunteer as for the organisation.

Presentation of the NGO

Near 30 years ago Unis-Cité was created as a pioneer organisation to prove the feasibility and necessity to establish a national community service as a normal step in the life and education of every young person in France. The four women who founded Unis-Cité inspired themselves from American City Year.

Unis-Cité supported many volunteers and advocated in order to foster the creation of a national scheme, which was introduced by the law of March 10th 2010 on Civic Service in France.

As the pioneer and expert association of Civic Service, Unis-Cité is a privileged partner of the State and local authorities in France.

We are convinced that Civic Service should be part of the life course for all young people, wherever they come from and whatever their future project is. We simultaneously believe that this volunteering experience enables them to learn about themselves and about others (coming from various backgrounds) and to gain experience and self-confidence and which in return, empowers them.

Currently active in more than 120 territories (including La Réunion), Unis-Cité engages youth in teams (from 8 up to 24 volunteers) where diversity is ensured: young people from priority neighbourhoods of the city, graduates, young people with disabilities, refugees, etc. We engage them on major social and environmental causes. More than 35.000 young people have already completed a Civic Service at Unis-Cité. 15% of the time of the volunteering is dedicated to civic and citizenship training and to support each young participant in reflecting on her/his future and preparing for it.

Since 2015, Unis-Cité has also been helping other associations, mutual companies, social housing providers, foundations and public services, to implement the Civic Service.

Statement on the European Grand Tour project

We believe that in order to build resilient and peaceful societies, every young person should devote one year (or 6 to 12 months) of their lives to community service, and that this "year of service" should be organized in teams of youth from all social and cultural backgrounds to promote the respect of diversity. This "year of service", that we call "Civic Service" in France, has a triple impact : it helps young people enter civic and professional life, it allows society to benefit from the energy and creativity of young people, and it fosters national cohesion and solidarity.



PREPARE TO HOST A YWFO



What is important to strengthen, first, is that YWFOs are often people that have higher needs in terms of security and safety. Depending on their background, they may need more attention and time from your side to make them feel comfortable and safe in your organization. This is relevant for physical, and emotional safety and security.

Therefore, a person with a physical disability may encounter certain difficulties regarding working in the office, such as: is it reachable for a person in a wheelchair? Are the desks appropriate? Can they have a specific computer or materials adapted to their disabilities? etc.

Another example of emotional safety can be: a person who has faced discrimination in their life because of their sexual orientation will be very careful regarding how the organization deals with these topics. is it part of their values? is the staff trained and/or aware of the matter?

The volunteer will need to feel comfortable and secure within your organization and be sure they won't suffer their disadvantages at your place.



- Be sure you have shared with all your team the fact that you would like to welcome a volunteer with fewer opportunities, and that this idea is shared among the team (staff, volunteers, mentors, etc.)
- Be sure you have prepared for the welcoming of a volunteer with fewer opportunities: specific arrangements at the office or place where the volunteer will be and in the accommodation, rules and values of the organization, etc
- If the volunteer is hosted with other volunteers, small talk with all the team could be necessary, to make sure everyone is comprehensive and will be attentive to specific needs or behaviours.

Diversity and inclusion is a process that begins with the recruitment of volunteers, especially YWFO. If you would like to host volunteers that are less likely to apply by themselves, you should be in touch with organizations that work with this type of young people and ask them to support you as a recruitment partner. Therefore, you should reach out to several organizations, individuals, or educators that are specialized in or are experts in working with young people with specific needs in order for them to support your recruitment efforts. Some examples might include: youth houses, adults or organizations who work with marginalized people, foster houses, organisations fighting discrimination, etc. Be in touch with educators and adults working with youth, explain the meaning of what a volunteer is, and how it could be a great opportunity for them to engage! Remember that the mission should be inclusive and adapted for YWFOs. Try to focus more on what the volunteer could learn instead of what he could bring to your organisation (apart from diversity and open-mindedness). Often, YWFO don't feel concerned about the European Solidarity Corp or being a volunteer abroad because they fear several restraints, whether real or imagined, such as the language barrier, money, the unfamiliarity of traveling abroad for the first time, etc. You should address these concerns to provide responses and solutions to potential barriers the participants may perceive or imagine. In this way, you will make the person feel more secure and more likely to encourage themselves to do voluntary work abroad.



TIPS

- Be sure the mission can be adapted in terms of working hours, place of work/office, switch between formal activities and non-formal activities, diversity of proposed activities, etc.
- Highlight the activities and monitoring process proposed in your Info-Kit: if you propose language courses, team volunteering, if there are other volunteers from the same nationality/language in your organization or city, if there will be a dedicated mentor or tutor, etc. Be sure you mention it to the volunteer.
- Try to propose an adapted recruitment process: motivation letter highlighting what they are most interested in your project, their wishes, example of achievements instead of in a formal resume, etc

Lastly:

Welcoming and monitoring a YWFO can take some time. The volunteer may not be very autonomous, they may need more time to process information, find their way in the city, learn the language, talk with other people, etc. You should not underestimate this extra time and find a way to share the possible workload it may represent.

Remember you are not alone: you can share responsibilities and tasks within your team, but also with persons outside of the organization. As the proverb says "it takes a village to raise a child" - well, the same goes with monitoring a youngster. The more people involved, the easier it's going to be for you and for the volunteer to adapt and reach out to different people around them. This said, having multiple interlocutors is not easy and can be stressful for the volunteer if they are shy or doesn't know whom to call when a particular issue arises. Thus, even though there are several persons working with the volunteer, you should consider nominating one or two principal contact persons that will deal mainly and in priority with the volunteer.

You have engaged a volunteer with fewer opportunities!



"Volunteering is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mould the present into a future we can all be proud of". - Helen Dyer

As emphasized earlier, the objective is to make the volunteer feel safe and secure in your organization. This is always applicable, regardless of the background of the volunteer, but it is even more important for YWFO.

To do that, you should consider organizing several activities within the first weeks/month to make the volunteer feel welcome and comfortable. There are plenty of examples of energizers and ice-breakers on the internet, and certainly, some others that you or people in your organization know: use and take advantage of them!

Indeed, those ice-breakers will help introduce the volunteer to your community and organization and will help him/her get to know the people that will be around him/her during his/her volunteer work.

To make the mission accessible to every young person, you should also consider with great value the **training** of the volunteer. You can propose language courses, and training about the topics the volunteer will deal with, but also transversal topics that can help the volunteer as well in their tasks and in evolving in your community. Be aware that the volunteer may not know much about your field or area of work, about your country, or about how a non-profit organization works. Remember it may be their first experience in the world of work, so they may not have the right codes and appropriate behaviors. Your role will be to help them in this discovery and to get those references.

Furthermore, the volunteer may not speak your language but also English, so you should come up with other ways to communicate (at least at the beginning) and plan a great language course. All in all, regarding training, better plan too many than too less.



Plan the first week as a **welcoming week**: use ice-breakers, informal moments, lunch with the team, activities on the weekend, plan time with the volunteer to explain what you do and how your organization works, a city tour, etc.



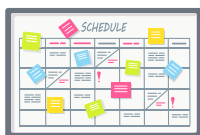
It's always nice to **feel welcomed and expected**: a welcoming breakfast for the first morning, a shared lunch on the first days, maybe even a welcoming box with nice words from the team, On the opposite, avoid important meetings or tasks on the first day of arrival of the volunteer, so you can be available for them.



At the end of the first week, plan a meeting with the volunteer to share your **first impressions** and see what should be adjusted if needed.



A **picture** is worth a thousand words: use visual animation, like drawings and pictures; this is particularly accurate with persons who do not speak your language or who have mental disabilities



Avoid an intensive training program in the 2 first weeks and then nothing for the rest of the voluntary work. There is a high probability that the volunteer will quit because this will be too intensive and not concrete enough. You may consider **ongoing training allocated for several weeks**, and rotation between learning/training moments and action.





Mentors, what's that about?

While the project coordinator is focused on the project, the tasks to be realized, and the administrative tasks related to hosting an European Solidarity Corps volunteer, the mentors are meant to accompany the volunteer more on a personal level. If possible, try to find a mentor who is dedicated to the volunteer and will help them with different aspects related to the tasks they have to accomplish as well as the daily life in your city.

The mentor can alternate roles:

- **Coach:** he will help the volunteer gain self-confidence, exit from his comfort zone, and discover more what are her/his skills (often volunteers think much less of themselves than they can do, and just need someone who trusts them and opens the road to reveal who they are and what they can bring to the society)
- **Trainer:** he will help the volunteer learn about the language, the mission, how to do the proposed activities, ...
- **Coordinator:** help the volunteer understand what mission expect from them and to know what to do and when, the schedule, the activities planned, etc
- **Friend:** when the working hours are over, the volunteer is still there! the mentor will be welcome to help the volunteer in daily life (go for a coffee, visit the area, discover the local way of life, traditions, etc)

*If we understand that those roles are important for every volunteer welcomed in your organization, we can assume that they are even more important for YWFO. In our opinion, a **mentor dedicated to the volunteer, with regular follow-up, a great understanding and knowledge of what the volunteers may face while being abroad, and whom to refer to help the volunteer, is a key point of your project.***

Since the mentor (or mentors) can not be available at any time or even found - depending on the city and the local community - good advice would be to **host 2 (or more) volunteers** at the same time.

While it may seem even more work to coordinate, manage and mentor several volunteers, it can be easier since the volunteers will help and support each other in their mission and their daily life. This is a great experience for the volunteer since they won't feel lonely (loneliness and homesickness are one of the main reasons why a volunteer doesn't like their experience and why things go wrong, leading sometimes to ending the ESC).

The additional work you may have had to host a YFWO will be compensated somehow by the fact that the two (or more) volunteers will help each other, be more creative and come up with new ideas to propose inventive and creative activities for their missions.

Regarding the **activities**, you may consider very concrete and basic activities, at least at the beginning. You may go with higher expectations by the time the volunteer feels more confident and more comfortable in their tasks.

Volunteers with lower education will mostly not feel well sitting at a desk the whole day to do computer work.

On the contrary, they will most likely be happy to do concrete work (outside activities, activities with people, etc). The best way to know is definitely to ask them: **involve the volunteer in the definition of the mission**. Even though you have planned a framework of activities and tasks, be open-minded to new ideas and let the volunteer propose their ideas.

Regularity may also be important and reassuring for YWFO. If possible, try to have a **fixed schedule** with some activities that are the same every week: meeting on Monday to see how the previous week went and what is planned for this week, lunch on Thursday with all team, etc. Here again, you can use drawings to help the volunteer remember and situate on time when what happens.

Timelines, timetables, and schedules can be useful tools for the volunteer.

On the same page, you could propose regular meetings (like once a month) with the volunteers, where you can both express what has been done in the last months, what is going well, what are the difficulties, what can be improved, and also prepare slowly the homecoming of the volunteer: what are their plans, maybe help to achieve them, etc. You may consider inviting the people who also interact with the volunteer (like the mentor, social worker, but also if relevant, the sending organization).

TIPS

- **The diversity of activities is important:** try to propose different activities and alternate between them (activities alone, activities in the team, team-building, learning times, workshops, etc)
- **Be in touch with an educational team:** if applicable, try to find among the possible mentors or people in your organization, those who work with YWFO and/or who can be a resource in case of an issue with the volunteer (for instance, social workers, psychologist, teachers, etc)
- **Make sure the volunteer isn't alone:** if you host only one volunteer, try to reach out to organizations hosting European Solidarity Corps volunteers (or even national volunteers) and make the volunteers get to know each other. It will be much easier for the volunteer to integrate into the community, get to know the area, and enjoy their volunteer work!
- **Avoid as many as possible last-minute changes,** and propose fixed activities that are reassuring for the volunteer so they know when and with whom they will have their next meeting.
- If there are several volunteers in your organization, **splitting into work groups** during the mission can be very helpful. Working with the same person can be very beneficial for the objectives to be achieved. At the same time matching volunteers in groups that change from time to time allows them to have a richer experience and to be in contact with different personalities and backgrounds.

04. CHARTER OF VALUES

EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE NETWORK

The partners gathered around the project, by signing the present text, agree to its respect and application, collective and individual

This text brings together the partners implementing the "European Civic Service": that is to say an experience of civic mobility based on a first experience of national volunteering, in order to prepare to continue it in another country of the European Union, all in immersion within multinational teams of European volunteers.

Volunteering is understood to be an activity of general interest, not replacing a normally salaried task, and corresponding to learning and individual development objectives, while making oneself useful to society and the missions of the organization hosting the volunteer. Any new Member, joining the network structured around this project, agrees in advance to these principles.

- **The network partners share the objective of increasing European mobility through civic service.**

They want to open up volunteering in another Member State to as many and as diverse young Europeans as possible, especially Young People with the Fewest Opportunities (JAMO).

- **They trust each other and show solidarity with each other for this purpose.**
- **They want to make a positive difference in the lives of the young people involved, to strengthen the sense of belonging of European citizens, and revitalize the European Union in general.**

INTRODUCTION

By "the Collective", we mean the Collective for a European Civic Service, an association under French law in charge of the project's management and coordination on behalf of and with all the partners. By "the partners", we mean all the signatories of this document, participating in the operational implementation of the volunteering project and the cooperation modalities described here.

Distribution of roles within the Network

The Collective, as coordinator, proposes orientations that are then discussed and validated with the partner associations. It responds to requests from them (for example: putting them in contact, direct responses to requests, etc.) and seeks to facilitate their involvement in the common system as much as possible. In accordance with the orientations validated within the network, the Collective has a mandate from the associations to represent them (as a network) in discussions/advocacy with public authorities concerning the organization, functioning and development of the network.

The partners remain the masters and the first actors of the operational deployment of the European Civic Service Scheme in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity which commands the functioning of the network.

CHAPTER 1: PROJECT IDENTITY

ARTICLE 1 Within the framework of the European civic service, the partners set themselves the objective and strive to organize their groups of young volunteers into mixed groups or teams, bringing together both young nationals and young people from other European Union countries. They encourage the recruitment of volunteers without any prerequisites, in order to guarantee an experience open to all, thanks to the principle of European mobility, prepared beforehand in one's own country.

ARTICLE 2 The partners undertake to contribute to the network by sending and hosting volunteers, according to their logistical and financial capacities. In the long run, they will allow the exchange of young people within the network, in reciprocity, accomplishing missions of general interest within multinational groups, half of them made up of young people from their country and half of them in mobility, coming from another Member State, first in their country and then in another of their choice.

ARTICLE 3 The partners commit themselves to take all the measures for the financing of the European Solidarity Corps places, or other financing, necessary for the implementation of their commitments within the project. For this purpose, they can rely on the technical assistance of the other partners, or of the Collective, for coordination purposes, in particular in the form of a centralization of funding requests. Projects of co-financing of the system (strategic partnerships Erasmus + etc.) have the approval in principle of the partners, provided that they are presented in good time, upstream, in their details.

CHAPTER 2: RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

ARTICLE 4 In their recruitment, the partners try to target young people with the least opportunities (JAMO), according to objective social and geographical criteria, recognized by the European Union. However, this recruitment should not be exclusive, as the objective of diversifying the integrated profiles is the essence of the project.

ARTICLE 5 The partners trust each other within the network:

A/ They recognize the quality and reliability of their partners' recruitment and reception procedures (since the latter implement the present quality guarantees);

B/ They adhere to and implement the principle according to which all young volunteers who have completed the first phase of the program (6 months in their own country, with another partner) have a "right" to an assignment in SWC, and can therefore only be refused in the case of objective elements, duly justified, that endanger the young person himself, the host structure or the completion of the proposed assignment;

C/ European Solidarity Corps positions are therefore allocated and reserved for the European Civic Service project among the host partners;

D/ They collaborate in a transparent way during the recruitment phase, and remain available to exchange in order to facilitate the outcome of the process. Candidates proposed by the partners (after having been screened and examined at their level in all cases) are considered to have priority, as a matter of principle and because of this process, over candidates from outside the network.

CHAPTER 3: QUALITY OF VOLUNTEERING

ARTICLE 6 The partners are committed to guaranteeing the quality of life and the quality of the experience of the young volunteers hosted. This translates in particular into:

A/ Adequate housing conditions ;

B/ Missions with high added value for the personal development and professional integration of young people, not fulfilling a normally salaried activity but falling within the logic of volunteering (it is not a professional job);

C/ Support and supervision throughout the mission (for example, a coordinator or point of contact within the structure to ensure that the mission runs smoothly and that the needs of the young people are met), with the ability to communicate effectively with the young people (demonstrating an adequate level of language skills), and with a suitable level of competence (training or experience) and probity (no criminal record).

ARTICLE 7 The partners agree on the administration of common questionnaires, allowing for the examination of the volunteers' feedback, as well as shared content on the mid-term and final follow-ups of the volunteering. All these elements, proposed to the Network by the Collective, and duly approved collectively, are shareable and usable by each of the members, notably for public communication.

ARTICLE 8 The partners agree on the main principles and generic common procedures for managing crises and conflicts related to volunteering, particularly concerning relations between partners. All these elements, proposed to the Network by the Collective, and duly approved collectively, can be shared and used by each member.

CHAPTER 4 : TRAININGS

ARTICLE 9 The partners commit themselves to allow as much as possible the delivery (by themselves or with the help of the Collective) of face-to-face language courses, alternatively in English, or in their national language, for all the young Europeans hosted in mobility. Online courses, in order to prepare the departure, are proposed by the Collective and available for all volunteers doing their first phase of volunteering, at home.

The initial and final language level reached will be measured by common tools, set up by the Collective, in particular through partnerships with a view to the certification of the levels reached, with regard to the European Framework of Reference for Languages. Our network, in accordance with the directives of the Erasmus programme, accompanies young volunteers in using Youthpass: the official tool to identify and valorize the non formal learning outcomes and the soft skills acquired. The partners are committed to developing specific support training for young people with fewer opportunities.

ARTICLE 10 The partners undertake to allow as much as possible the delivery (by themselves or with the help of the CSCE) of trainings, seminars or workshops allowing young people to apprehend the subjects at the heart of the priorities of the European civic service (e.g. European citizenship and the European Union in general, the environment, equal opportunities and professional insertion, solidarity, etc.)

Based on the sharing of good practices and a common learning process, the list of priority training in this sense will be progressively established and then enriched jointly by all the partners.

CHAPTER 5 : COMMUNICATION

ARTICLE 11 The communication on the common achievements of the network, the participation of the partner structures in it, and the general support of the device and its general principles, is possible permanently, in a public way, by each of the partners. This is delegated and carried out mainly by the Collective, as the network's coordinator. Each partner undertakes to relay the communication around the project and to participate as much as possible in the common actions organized for this purpose.

ARTICLE 12 The communication of an action specific to a partner, of an event organized by it, or of the experience of volunteers hosted within it, requires, in particular for media exposure, the prior agreement of the partner in question. The Collective informs the partners in advance of any communication action, even collective, in order to give them the opportunity to express their opinion on the opportunity.

CHAPTER 6: FOLLOW-UP AND INTEGRATION OF VOLUNTEERS

ARTICLE 13 The partners undertake to implement, or to allow the network to implement, a continuous and qualitative follow-up of the volunteers during and after their experience. This is primarily the responsibility of the partner in the volunteer's country of origin, but can also be carried out collectively, at the level of the Collective. For example, through support towards employment or the resumption of studies at the end of the experience, membership in a network of former volunteers, etc...

ARTICLE 14 This follow-up involves concrete support from the partners, which can take many forms as orientation towards structures specialising in job search or training guidance, (introduction to companies, presentation of other programs and integration options, tutoring). The help, if needed, for the creation of a CV in the national language and in English is a minimum requirement.

CHAPITRE 7: FINANCIAL SOLIDARITY

ARTICLE 15 A common amount for the Network is fixed by all the partners, concerning the costs of sending volunteers, based on the Convention specific to the European Solidarity Corps program, as well as the principle of a contribution to coordination activities.

THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

FOR SIGNATURE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL PARTNERS

THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

FOR SIGNATURE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL PARTNERS



05. MONITORING AND QUALITY MISSIONS



Presentation of the NGO

International Youth Association EstYES is non-profit non-political NGO established in 1991 with the purpose to promote youth and cultural exchanges for better understanding, peace and fair world. It is a pioneer organization in the field of international voluntary service in Estonia. Our activities

- organize voluntary camps in Estonia and send Estonian volunteers to those abroad;
- participate in European Solidarity Corps program as sending, hosting and coordinating organization;
- organize and run youth cultural exchanges, training activities, study visits with various themes for youth foreign groups in Estonia and for Estonians abroad;

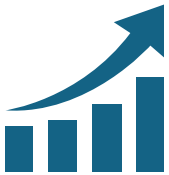
Statement on the EGT project

Undoubtedly, international voluntary service is efficient method for education, personal development as well as for development of local communities, serving as a powerful tool for global peace.



Housing and accommodation

Housing/ accommodation of volunteers is a very important (if not crucial) element when it comes to the quality of the project. No wonder – we talk about the reallocation of a young person to another country for a relatively long period from 6 to 12 months. We have to offer decent conditions for a stay that are comfortable enough, thoughtful logistically, and supportive of the learning process. Failure in accommodation solution may easily lead to a failure of the whole service as it may become a rather disturbing factor demotivating volunteers thus affecting negatively the whole project.



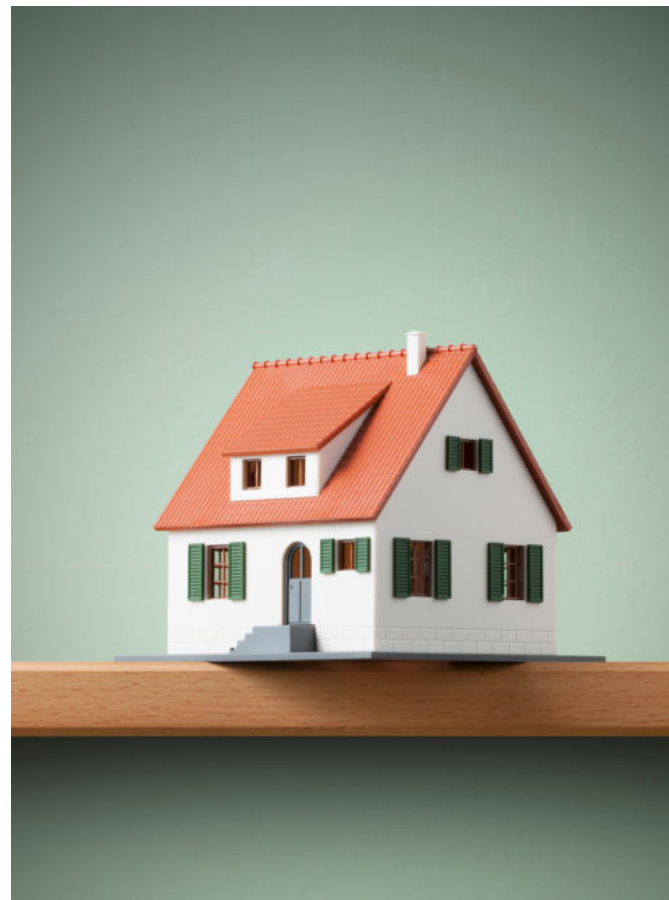
Unfortunately, when planning accommodation we have to deal with the ESC funding reality. Lump sums allocated to support project implementation have not been changed since 2017 and gradually became extremely low in nowadays reality with the highest level of inflation in decades, an unprecedented increase of communal costs, especially electricity and heating and constantly growing renting prices. In this situation providing good accommodation becomes more and more a “mission impossible” for hosting and LEAD organizations.

In the ideal world, we may expect that hosting organizations contribute to solving the accommodation puzzle by offering support in cash towards accommodation costs or kind by proposing housing for volunteers. Some of them do so. However, most of the hosting organizations very much rely on the support of LEAD organizations, which in their turn may have diverse smart solutions thanks to their previous experience and as they host many volunteers at the same time and can have more space for various combinations.

It looks like in the current situation the most feasible accommodation solution is multiple accommodations in the so-called “**Volunteers flat**” or “**Volunteers house**” where a good number of volunteers can stay together under one roof. With such a solution, volunteers have their rooms when possible or shared between 2-3 volunteers, a common living room for socializing, a fully equipped kitchen, bathroom, and toilet. In some cases, more than 4-5 volunteers live in the same place, therefore, it is important to have at least two bathrooms/showers and toilets.

Needless to say, good beds, mattresses, pillows, and linens have to be provided in sufficient amounts. There should be furniture necessary for living (chairs, working tables, bedside tables, cupboards, wardrobes, etc.) The bathroom should be well organized and clean before the arrival of new volunteers. The kitchen has to be fully equipped with enough pots, pans, plates, cups, and cutlery. The fridge should be large enough for the group to stay together (in some cases there should be a second one). It is a great idea to also have a washing machine at the accommodation.

Consider exploring thrift or reuse shops when preparing accommodations for volunteers. You can get a lot of good stuff there without spending a fortune. At the same time, you will support the concept of “reuse”, giving things a second life which will certainly make your volunteers happy as young people care about it.





Volunteers' responsibility

As hosting organizations are responsible for ensuring decent housing conditions for participants, volunteers in their turn are responsible for the good use of the accommodation they are offered. There are some rules and certain obligations volunteers have to follow and it makes a lot of sense to fix them in the accommodation agreement/contract which the hosting organization should conclude with volunteers and sign. Such agreement may include various positions such as general rules of apartment use, regular cleaning, water, and electricity consumption, taking good care of things and equipment provided, the reaction in case of any emergency or irregularity, etc. It should also set the level of responsibility for broken things or misuse of apartments and equipment. It is advised that volunteers pay a deposit when they get accommodation. It will be paid back in full if things are given back in good order or which can be used to cover the damage caused by volunteer action or mismanagement



Domestic rules

One important element of the agreement is to explain domestic rules regarding curfew hours. In some countries, after 10 pm, no loud activities are allowed which puts limits on volunteers' plans. Generally, some questions may be answered in different ways depending on the actual situation – whether to allow guests in the apartments or not, visitors (friends, relatives) coming to see volunteers for a longer time, and parties in the apartments – just to mention a few. Relations with neighbors are a very important aspect. In some unlucky cases, it can complicate volunteers' stay quite a lot!



Energy use

The topic of energy and water saving has to be well addressed in the agreement and explanation when you accommodate volunteers. It is not only about keeping control of running costs. It is very much about responsible sustainable consumption of resources which has to be explained to everyone and become a regular good habit.



Single accommodation?

There are certain advantages and disadvantages to both. Of course, **single accommodation** gives more privacy and can be quite comfortable as a volunteer may organize living the way they wish. In the case of some projects, especially those located in **small towns, and villages**, this is the only way since there are no other volunteers around. In such cases, **a host family** may become a solution. However, in some countries, there is no habit of it. Also, the host families immediately create a lot of limits for the participant. On the other hand, this is a great tool for learning about the country and practicing the language. Also, it helps a lot quicker integration into the local community.



Shared accommodation?

Shared accommodation means a lack of privacy. However, it proved to be a **good solution for young volunteers** who usually enjoy staying with other young people coming from different countries and having various backgrounds working on different projects. It gives a fantastic opportunity for **intercultural learning** but also for learning about yourself, raising tolerance, flexibility, and necessary social skills. Thus, it becomes an important part of the whole project raising a lot of its educational dimension and adding to the project's overall quality.



Public Trasports

Knowing how to valorise the impact of one's project in local communities is a fundamental skill to obtain support for volunteers and their integration in the city or province. Many cities are willing to provide international volunteers with free season tickets for local public transport. In other cases, cities may provide bicycles if the city has public sharing facilities. This can allow you to shift resources to other aspects of your project.



Help on food allowance management

A good method can be to accompany volunteers in their responsibility for balanced food shopping. Show them how to choose the best products at low cost and how to obtain a complete and energetically balanced meal through small cooking demonstrations. Many cities (if you are in town) have discount cards for students and volunteers, very cheap canteens and partner shops for young people.

If you don't enjoy such agreement (for lunch time they are usually easy to obtain, so just ask your local school or governmental canteens), it is recommended to give instead an allowance to the youth, which depending on local living costs, alternate between 150 and 350€ euros a months to cover all meals, for one person.

If you go for an allowance, plan to train volunteers on how to care about themselves, best spots to do affordable grocery shopping and how and what to cook. Sharing an apartment and the kitchen make it also more affordable for all to feed themselves and collective meals should be encouraged as also a key element of the social experience of volunteering.

Single accommodation?

Best practices on monitoring

The quality of the project is largely supported by regular monitoring of the course of the service and volunteers' well-being. There are different means and methods of doing it. The fundamental ones, of course, are institutional training, which is part of the European Solidarity Corps program and which is often provided by National Agencies.

As on-arrival training usually takes place sometime after the volunteer's arrival to the country it can be used to get a first signal about the service on the project, even though the aim of this training is different. Then mid-term evaluation usually takes place several months after arrival and has the direct aim to get deeper feedback from volunteers to understand how the service is going. The problem is that in some cases it may be too late. And final evaluation is a very important instrument to evaluate the whole project but at that point, nothing can be improved for the volunteer as they will be finishing service very soon. This is why ongoing evaluation is so important for a successful project and quality of service! It can be done in many different ways such as:

Regular individual meetings with volunteers

which are especially important at the beginning of their service

Getting feedbacks

from the project tutor or person in charge of the hosting organization visits to the hosting projects, which could have certain regularity. They also show that both parties – a volunteer as well as a host – are equally important for the LEAD organization.

from assigned volunteers' mentors. Sometimes volunteer does not dare to tell about problem or doubts directly to the host or general coordinator but is willing to share them with their mentor, provided they have a good trustworthy relations. Mentors can give volunteers some advice but also send feedback or alarming signal to the host or LEAD organization to warn about a possible problem

Spontaneous meetings

meetings with volunteers on various occasions when a LEAD organization runs special events for volunteers like hikes, sightseeing, and gatherings (e.g. pre- Christmas). You may get valuable feedback from your participants in the informal setting

A special evaluation and information meeting

for all volunteer organization coordinators in addition to a mid-term evaluation run by a national agency. The such meeting, which should be long enough (a couple of days), gives excellent chance to have a deeper evaluation with volunteers, see common problems and shortcomings, offer common solutions but also discuss the possibilities of improving projects/services and creating some extra activities

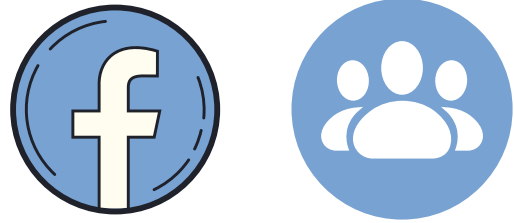
Monthly volunteer diary

is a great way of getting regular feedback from volunteers. It does not have to be too long, one A4 is sufficient in most cases. It could be made in the form of a questionnaire containing simple logical questions on the course of service, integration, possible problems, and ideas. The written form of it helps volunteers to focus better on their achievements in the project or problems they see and report it. (The sample of such form is added.)

Inter-volunteer relations and mutual help

When coordinating numerous hosting projects involving many volunteers staying at the same time, organizations have an excellent opportunity to create a supporting “net” for volunteers protecting them from failure. We mean here a network of all present volunteers but also those who did the same or other similar projects before. It is not difficult to do yet the outcome is worth it!

It can be done in different ways. The easiest is to keep open a **Facebook group** of former and current volunteers giving them an easy platform for communication. It can be also one of the messenger tools.



A more efficient way, which however demands more resources, is to organize **volunteer meetups** where they can meet in person and establish friendly contacts naturally. Knowing when the majority of the volunteers you coordinate arrive at their projects you have to plan an event that most of them can join. Such an event should be quite informal giving a chance for young people to meet each other in an easy environment, enjoy an evening with some activities together, exchange contacts, and ...start to communicate with each other after.



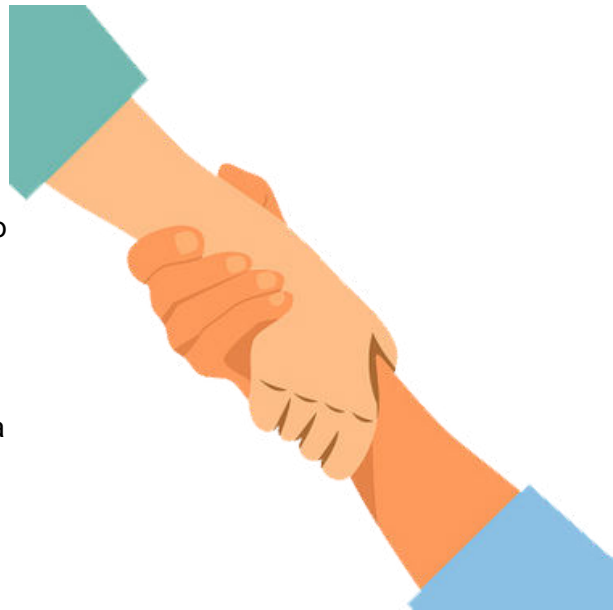
If volunteers share the same accommodation this dynamic is coming naturally. In this case, you may still have a meeting with volunteers living in the same place to encourage them to mutual support. Also, it is still a very good idea to bring together volunteers staying in different locations.

The value of good regular contact between volunteers cannot be overestimated. Besides intercultural learning, which is an important feature of **voluntary service abroad and peer learning** in general, volunteers can support each other in daily life – whether there are domestic or personal problems, give good advice for improving the service, give a friendly hand in a hard situation or suggest a collaboration between projects which will increase the quality of service and certainly created added value for the project as well as for volunteer’s experience.

Even if working on quite different projects in different settings volunteers find themselves in similar situations, facing similar problems and challenges, going through similar psychological dynamics and somebody’s previous experience shared at the right time can become extremely useful and supportive.



Contact with previous participants who did the same project earlier can be a fantastic reference for a volunteer on one hand. On the other hand, there is a risk of transferring the occasional negative experiences of someone to a new volunteer, which may negatively affect his service from the beginning. This is something which has to be explained before the departure: **every experience is unique**, it comes from the combination of various factors, so it is better to live on your own rather than repeating the one of somebody, perhaps copying old mistakes. This is a risk to be aware of. But generally, the support of former volunteers is usually very helpful. Many of them become mentors for new volunteers and this is the best solution for hosting organizations as they know how to support newcomers as they have just been in a similar situation themselves.



When it comes to inter-volunteers relations, let's keep in mind that it is not always positive and supportive, it could be also very tense, and hostile, leading to serious **conflicts**. Usually, there are some interpersonal reasons behind but this certainly cannot be just ignored.

In some cases (fortunately not frequent) a volunteer may have to be moved from one accommodation to another for the sake of a healthy atmosphere in both.

It may also happen, when two or more volunteers work on the same project, that one becomes negative and has a **strong personality to impose their own opinions and emotions** on the others, which results in a negative approach. In such a situation it makes sense to split volunteers - moving the one who does not fit the project to another one. Normally everybody – volunteers and hosts – are winners with such a solution.



Problems need to be cared for and drawn attention to; in the vast majority of cases, mutual support and efficient interactions between present volunteers is the important key to the success of each project as well as the program in general. Therefore a good amount of effort has to be spent to ensure that it works well.



06. TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Presentation of the NGO

InCo - Interculturalità & Comunicazione APS is a non-profit social promotion association. Founded in 2004 with the aim of promoting international exchanges and contacts among young people, today InCo organizes and manages several international mobility projects for young people. At a local level we promote international mobility through orientation, information, meetings in schools but also training courses that focus on communication and intercultural learning. Locally, we also develop European Solidarity Corps projects as well as Youth Participation Activities projects.

Statement on the EGT project

European civic service - volunteering for ALL young people!

It is a challenge that gives younger people a chance to develop themselves. Volunteers can have the possibility to act creatively and share their points of view, but also to gain practical experience and orient themselves professionally. Moreover, all these opportunities take place in an international context where the contribution of each individual can help to change the world for the better!



PRE-DEPARTURE PROCESS FOR THE EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE VOLUNTEER

Criteria of the volunteer's profile

Tip - Consider holding workshops/training on how to write the CV and the motivation letter to apply for a volunteering project.



The motivation to volunteer is often a mixture of goodwill and a willingness to learn and develop oneself. The typical motivations for young participants are a desire to help others, feel useful, acquire new skills or improve them for a future job, meet new people, or learn about a new culture.

Supporting volunteers offers a unique opportunity for development that is different from a standard professional development opportunity. Participating in a community service project can empower them, give meaning to their own experience, help them to feel part of a larger community, and to feel they are creating a positive impact.

For these reasons, choosing the right volunteering project and hosting organization is crucial, as well as matching the personal interests and expectations of the volunteer with the needs of the host organization. It leads to a positive working atmosphere and the development of the volunteer.

The supporting organization should take into consideration the needs or preferences of the volunteers regarding:

- ▶ The volunteering field of action
- ▶ The activities foreseen by the various volunteering projects
 - ▶ The duration of the experience
 - ▶ The location (which country, in a city or in a rural area,...)
- ▶ The aim of the future volunteer when deciding to do this experience (to improve their professional skills, to grow at a personal level, to do a practical experience in a specific job field, etc.)

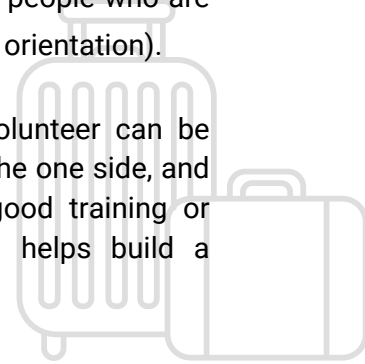


Preparing the volunteer for the mobility

After the application and selection process is completed, the best procedure to follow before the beginning of the volunteering experience is to organize **two meetings** with the future volunteer:

1. **Individual meetings** face-to-face between the supporting organization and the volunteer
2. **Group meeting** during which the volunteer can get in touch with other young people who are going to start volunteering themselves (this could be considered a pre-service orientation).

During these two meetings (which we also call pre-departure training) the volunteer can be prepared for the bureaucracy and formal part of the volunteering experience on the one side, and get mental and emotional preparation on the other side. It is proved that good training or orientation of the project reduces volunteers' anxiety and uncertainty, and helps build a successful experience and its completion



PRE-DEPARTURE PROCESS FOR THE EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE VOLUNTEER

The first meeting

During the first meeting, more focused on bureaucracy and formalities, the volunteer is given information about:

1. The **volunteering contract**: the agreement is looked at together in all its parts, and any question or doubt expressed by the volunteer is discussed and answered
2. **Health Insurance**
3. **Money management**



For European Solidarity Corps projects, further information given is about **Youthpass, a self-assessment, and a self-written document assessing the volunteering experience and the competencies** acquired during the volunteering period. Since this document is written by the volunteers themselves, it encourages them to think deeply about the activities they undertake during their volunteering work, to see and recognize which skills they are putting into practice and which competencies they are developing. This self-assessment is guided by the framework of **8 key competencies** for lifelong learning (singled out by SALTO-YOUTH):

PRE-DEPARTURE PROCESS FOR THE EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE VOLUNTEER



Multilingual competence:
the ability to communicate in different languages



Personal, social, and learning to learn competence: the ability to manage one's learning (time and information management); working with others; develop at a personal level



Citizenship competence:
the ability to act as responsible and active citizens



Entrepreneurship competence: the capacity to act upon opportunities



Cultural awareness and expression competence:
understanding how ideas are expressed in different cultures



Digital competence:
includes, among others, the ability to make responsible use of technology



Mathematical competence and competences in science, technology, and engineering: the ability to use mathematical thinking, to use knowledge, to base opinions on the evidence



Literacy competence: the ability to understand and express thoughts, feelings, and facts

Volunteers are invited to think about their experiences and what they might be learning through them, and to keep track of the skills, knowledge and competences developed on a weekly or monthly basis.

PRE-DEPARTURE PROCESS FOR THE EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE VOLUNTEER

The second meeting

The second meeting (or the second part of the meeting in case only one meeting is arranged) is focused on the following topics/activities:

Fears and expectations



Wheel of learning



Letter to the future self

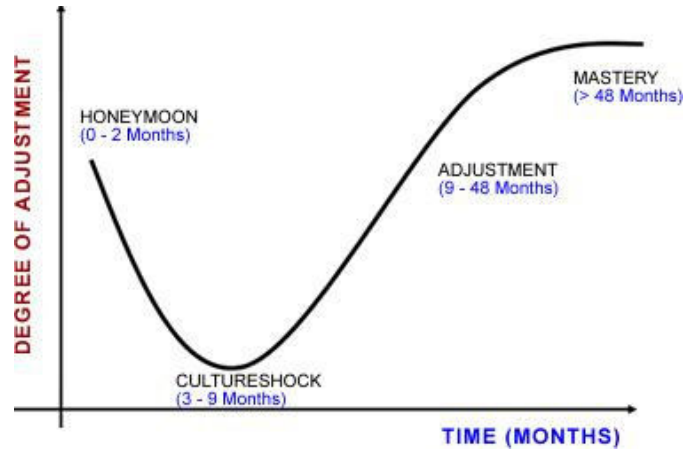


PRE-DEPARTURE PROCESS FOR THE EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE VOLUNTEER

Interculturality



Cultural shock



Work-life balance



Conflict management



THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Volunteering time is a complex learning experience. Living and working together with other people and exchanging thoughts, ideas, or experiences in everyday life is a good basis for diverse learning from each other. The participants have many opportunities to learn **planned** and **unplanned** (unintended).

When we talk about theory, **planned learning** is divided into formal learning and non-formal learning.

Formal learning is the category of learning that does not occur that often in volunteering experiences

Circumstances, where young people would benefit from it, would include for example language courses or IT training at the school.

The second type of planned learning that represents the most important part of the volunteering experience is **non-formal learning**.

This type of learning is not provided by a traditional educational institution, but happens through experiences, learning to result from daily activities, which means learning by doing, like internal training, hobby classes, or workshops.

Countless learning processes happen also not planned, informally. Participants recognize informally gained learning outcomes, sometimes after they have already come back home. This kind of learning takes place in everyday life, it can't be planned.

An instrument that could also help a volunteer to get to know himself not only during the service but for his whole life with self-development is named Learn to Learn.

"According to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competencies for lifelong learning 2006/962/EC): Learning to Learn is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organize one's learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles to learn successfully."...

"Following the Recommendation of 2006 on key competencies for lifelong learning we consider Learn to Learn competence consisting of **five abilities**:

Ability to motivate yourself and to develop your self-esteem.

Ability to reflect on learning experiences.

Ability to manage your time.

Ability to organize information.

Ability to learn in groups.

<http://www.learntolearn.eu/>



THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: CONTINUOUS LEARNING

In the learning process of the volunteer, we distinguish a responsible for different roles and tasks like supporting supervisor, a supervisor in the host organization, a trainer from the coordinating organization, and the training organized by NA.

For the young person is crucial to choose the right volunteering program and hosting organization. Taking into account the personal interests/expectations and the needs of the host association leads to a positive working atmosphere and the development of the participant.

The project abroad is learning by doing constantly and for participants full of adventures, experiences, and inputs. All these experiences in an intercultural context are much more difficult to understand. Therefore participants need time for reflection and need someone to support them during their learning processes. Volunteers cooperate with the supervisors from the supporting, hosting, and coordinating organizations.

All these contributors help and support the volunteers in the learning process, they support volunteers in acquiring new skills and fostering their capabilities.



The supervisor of the coordinating organization plans:

- On-Arrival-Training,
- Mid-Term evaluation,
- And the meeting at the end of the experience.

During training, through non-formal activities, the involvement of the young participants is the heart of the learning process through the exchange in small groups, analysis of experiences, cooperative Learning, and personal contribution. These 3 trainings aim to motivate the volunteers and give them time for self-reflection.

THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: CONTINUOUS LEARNING

On Arrival meeting (c.a. after 1 month of the arrival)

At the beginning of the meeting, it is important to conduct ice-breaking games to make a group and/or 'get to know each other's games to learn names and different realities.

The following is a list of tips and possible activities for conducting group monitoring meetings. These tips are intended as a guide for the facilitator and should be declined and adapted to the characteristics of the group.

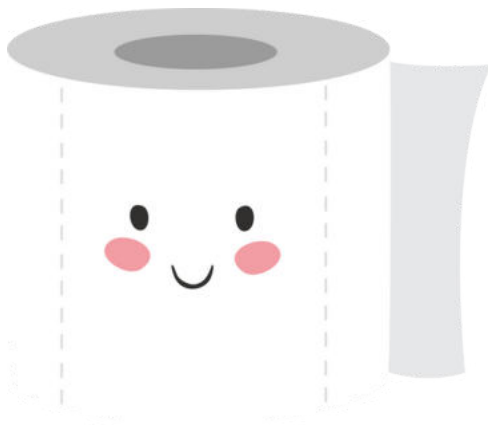
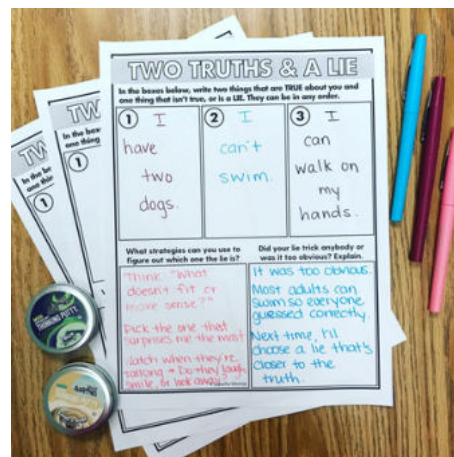


The coach can propose a game named **Speed Dating**.

During this game, every participant has 2 min time to speak and make questions to another person. After 2 min participant should change the partner and start a new conversation. The game is finished after everybody spoke to everybody.

Another game that could help in a funny way to know each other is **Two Truths and One Lie**.

During this game, all participants share three statements about themselves – two true, and one false. All participants try to guess which is the lie by asking questions. This icebreaker game helps volunteers to learn about each other and gives also to introverts the to reveal themselves



One more Icebreaker- **Toilet Paper**.

During this game a roll of toilet paper is needed. Pass toilet paper around, and have everyone take off as many pieces as he/she might think to use. When everyone has taken off a few squares, they should count them. The amount they have is equivalent to how many fun facts the participant should reveal about themselves.

THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: CONTINUOUS LEARNING

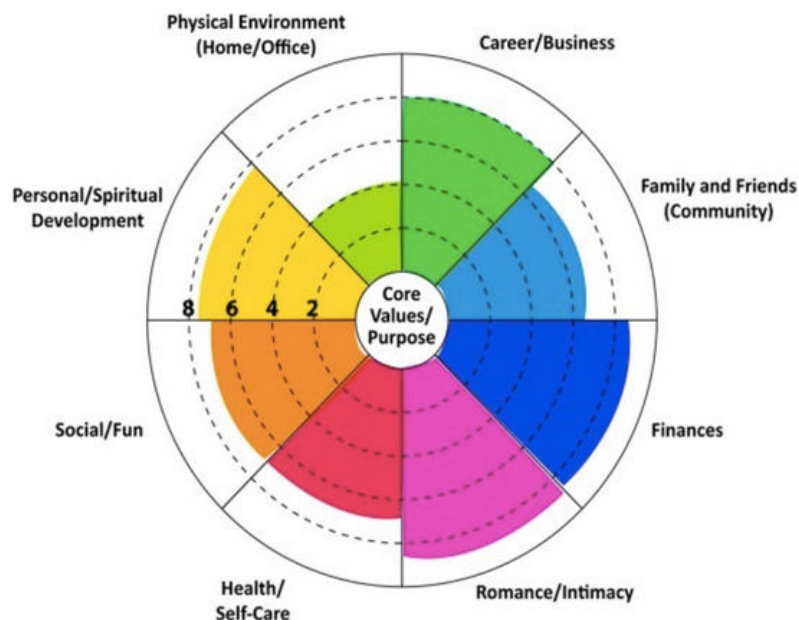
On Arrival meeting (c.a. after 1 month of the arrival)

After ice breaker games, during the first meeting, it could be proposed to work in focus groups, the so-called **Mind Map**.

In small groups, the participants are given topics such as expectations, multiculturalism/cultural shock, stereotypes, general feelings, integration in the mission, objectives, youth pass and have to work on it (they should find solutions or talk about concrete experiences) and share the results to a larger group. This game helps the volunteer to set the expectations right about the upcoming tasks, changes in life, and the local culture.

During the second part of the first meeting, the participants should have time to reflect on what they have learned in the last weeks and on the goals during the project that were set by the volunteers.

An example of an activity could be a circle with expectations (see the image below). Within 10 min the participant should think about goals, which he/she would like to achieve during the coming months. **Common goals could be: language learning, social interactions, acquiring new skills (e.g. cooking, hiking, social media), time management, budget management, etc.** The volunteer can choose the goals that most fit his/ her situation.



For each goal, the volunteer gives a score based on his/her current situation/ skills.

This score can be reviewed and/ or changed during future evaluations.

The final result is a self-assessment by the volunteer of the goals reached during the experience.

THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Mid-term evaluation

In this phase, it is important to assess how the volunteer has understood and processed his previous experiences, and where they see themselves in the group. What goals have they achieved, and where do they still have to work?

For the moment of self-reflection, they can describe themselves where they see themselves on the tree.

The second moment of self-reflection could be to go through the circle with the expectations and again to identify what was learned in the past 6 months and what has changed in their life. As in the example with the circle above. The volunteer has the chance to think about his goals, to speak to the supervisor, on the other hand, the supervisor needs to develop positive relationships with volunteers and should take time to gather the volunteers' input. The evaluation should include a review of past duties, a discussion about the present performance, and plans for future goals.

As group work, the participants could work on **SWOT Analysis - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats** could be discussed



Goal: create an opportunity for all participants to be involved, establish a feeling that others have similar experiences to create a sense of solidarity, and explore and identify solutions for any challenges or issues.

The supervisor supports volunteers in their learning processes and gives them knowledge due to the non-formal education methods. This helps the participants to experience a successful learning process and to reflect and recognize learning outcomes.

THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Final training - the end of the experience

Continuous learning is the process of learning new skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis. The final training allows them to grasp, and **remember the challenges and the experiences of the last months in which the volunteers have been immersed**. During the volunteering period, participants gained new knowledge and developed new skills. Now they can look at it from a different perspective and take the next step.

The last monitoring meeting aims to **enhance the skills acquired**.
Translating them into something concrete.

An important tool for documenting and recognizing non-formal learning outcomes is **Youthpass**

<https://www.youthpass.eu/it/>

“Youthpass is a certificate that recognizes their learning achievements by including their self-assessment in the official certificate. Using Youthpass increases the value of the project as a learning experience. While writing their self-assessment for the certificate, the volunteers learn to reflect on their learning, to explain their learning outcomes, and to become more aware of learning as such.”



Towards the end of the volunteering, the participant may need help in writing their self-certification. Where possible, additional guidance can be offered by the supervisor.

For example, taking a filled circle with expectations from previous monitoring. The supervisor and the volunteer can evaluate the experience together and record any learning progress.

Additionally people with fewer opportunities could be offered a course on how to write curriculum vitae and motivation letters.

07. EVALUATION AND VALORIZATION OF SKILLS



In this section, we will present different ways to recognize and value skills.

Recognizing and validating learning acquisition experiences is an essential step in volunteering experiences, especially considering that the current learning framework is lifelong and life-wide acquisition. There is still a lack of a common system and this can be perceived in the differences between European Volunteering (European Solidarity Corps – ESC) and National Civic Service in Italy.

Presentation of the NGO

Scambieuropei is a cultural association founded in 2009 by young people who want to set up activities and services for their peers. Our activities include non-formal education, cultural, local and European projects, international cooperation, social entrepreneurship and social development of young people in national and international settings. We work mainly with Erasmus + program. We are sending and hosting organizations for European Solidarity Corps projects. We work as a hosting organization for the Italian Civic Service Program.

Statement on the EGT project

European civil service for a voluntary and supportive Europe. Europe united by volunteers is the most united Europe.



YouthPass for European Solidarity Corps volunteering experiences

YouthPass is a tool to recognize and document the learning outcomes acquired in volunteering projects. Given the lifelong learning and the non-formal learning methodology applied in such projects, the certificate is structured in a way that promotes individual reflection and awareness about the personal learning path.

The certificate and tool are based on the **8 key competencies** for lifelong learning and be issued in several languages.

It is divided into three sections, as stated on the Youth Pass website:

1 The first page confirms the participation in a given project and lists the main facts about the project. It also provides background information about the general context and value of the activity. It has to be signed by a legal representative of the organization.

2 The second section informs about the project in more detail. The organizations in charge are mentioned, and the aims, activities, and results of the project are described. This part of the certificate has to be signed by the person responsible for the project.

3 In the third section, participants reflect upon their learning and the outcomes. They are encouraged to describe what they have learned in the course of the project, adhering to the eight key competences for lifelong learning. If applicable, a dialogue partner is also invited to sign the third section. Participants are not limited in how much they can write, nor are they required to include every single competence.

YouthPass is a power tool for participants and volunteers. To make it even more efficient, it is important to present the policy behind the tools, and the key competencies in order to explain how to properly use them. It is important to stress the reflection process.

Advantages:

- it is certified by the organizations, and it still maintains a reflective framework set by the volunteers themselves;
- as it is a process and volunteers can fill as many YouthPass as many projects as they participate in, the reflection is ensured in the long-term process. If interested, it can give great credit to the individual learning and reflection boosting the awareness of strengths and weaknesses;
- it is a guided process and volunteers do not feel overwhelmed;
- it is framed inside the lifelong learning and adult education setting

Disadvantages:

- most formal settings in Italy do not recognize it and volunteers can perceive it as a waste of time. Some universities may recognize it as a workshop exam giving on average 3 credits/ECTS. Most of the formal sector still does not recognize it at all;
- in the labor market it is still not known, thus recognized. Experiential learning is not then evaluated in the interviews as the private sector mostly does not know how volunteering works and its potential. As they do not know what a YouthPass is and what the European Solidarity Corps is, they do not take them into account. A valorization of the volunteering experience is missing;
- if not guided and understood, volunteers do not see the power of filling it in.



The Example of Civic Service in Italy

A final certificate is available at the end of the volunteering experience. The volunteers can issue the certificate themselves through the official website www.serviziocivile.gov.it. The certificate can be issued 3 months after the end of the service and not beyond the next 24 months. To have the certificate the volunteer should implement at least 12 months of experience or 6 months in case s/he had to interrupt it in advance due to health reasons or forced majeure.

As for the reflection, all the volunteers must attend a training process at the beginning. The training aims at increasing the active participation in social life among volunteers and at raising awareness on the meaning of the volunteering experience. As the civic service wants also to increase employability among volunteers, the general training is accompanied by specific training in the project topics by providing volunteers with tools, methods, and supports to carry out the volunteering activities.

During the volunteering, awareness regarding the learning acquisition reflection is achieved through the methods of the organizations hosting the volunteers.

Civic service in Italy is very well known. Italian society recognizes it as a learning process and as an important step for young people to develop their potential and their professional careers, even if improvements are still to be made. The certification is not very well known and often a self-declaration is enough in private entities.

Advantages:

- formal education recognizes the activity and gives extra credit. Depending on the University, it can give up to 9 ECTS and substitute one or more of the exams students have to choose from in their curriculum;
- in public tenders, the volunteering activity gives volunteers extra points

Disadvantages:

- a common framework for a long-term reflection process during the activity should be set;
- the validation of the credits is up to the students. There is no direct conversion.
- a lifelong acquisition framework should be stressed in the policy background.

What Scambieuropei does

During both European Solidarity Corps and Civic service experiences, we apply **Non-Formal Education methods** to support volunteers in reflecting on their learning path reinforcing their empowerment and boosting their capacity to understand their strengths and their weaknesses to improve. The process is always guided and it is explained not as a method to judge, but on the contrary as a way to reflect, raise awareness and grow as persons, professionals, and citizens.

As we operate in the framework of non-formal education, we do not believe in someone validating individual perspectives and learning. Instead, we propose volunteers a different range of tools based on a specific methodology and education framework to raise volunteers' awareness.

Some of the tools we use:

- **the river of learning** as a way to reflect on the learning process during the projects;
- **individual reports** both as monitoring tools and as validation of competence for volunteers;
- **filling in the YouthPass** each month of the European Solidarity Corps volunteering experience;
- at the end of each project, we have a meeting with volunteers to **follow up on the learning acquisition reflection**.

Surely, these are just some of the methods we adopt in responding to the current framework of the EU and National validation and recognition system. Challenges are still ongoing and some progress should be implemented for volunteers to boost their experience also in the public and private sectors.




Solutions

In societies in which life-long learning is now the basis and competitiveness in the labour market requires constant education (adult and life-wide education), young people must acquire the tools to understand and address their learning (learning to learn competence). **Self-monitoring and evaluation are the basis to recognise the learning outcomes.** It should be done through work in the communities to raise such knowledge among labour stakeholders, formal education sectors, public sectors and so on to appropriately spread the tool.

What we would propose, according to our experience, is a mixture of promoting the current opportunities as a way to raise competencies among stakeholders, a **common volunteering certification recognised at the European level, and also at the educational level**, and new methods for self-awareness as an EU e-portfolio of learning. More in particular:




1) **Advocating and lobbying campaigns by EU institutions, associations and formative centres to recognise and spread the value of volunteering experiences in the labour market.** Volunteering is a full experience that allows volunteers to grow not only at an individual level but also at a social and professional one. To recognise this, stakeholders from the private sector should first know the opportunities and appreciate them. Information and a common advocating framework should be set by the public level (Youth Departments, Ministries, etc) in collaboration with associations implementing such projects and volunteers;



2) **Common volunteering certification and framework recognised at the EU and national levels.** The more certificates there are, the more confusion is created for those who are not completely familiar with these opportunities. EU countries and the EU should make an effort to combine all the certificates for volunteering in a common system. The volunteering certification should follow the same principle adopted in the formal institutions with ECTS and diplomas: a common framework shared by all the EU and countries. In this way, the EU will be reinforced and volunteers' experiences could be recognised in the Union in the same way.


Samely, it should be agreed on a **common conversion for universities and public sectors** to give credits to the volunteering experiences in graduation and/or public tenders.



3) New methods such as an **EU portfolio for competencies filled in by volunteers** and validated by the organisations. The e-portfolio should be filled in during the project and validated at the end. It should be visible at the end to all the stakeholders to get to know better the candidate. This is an already implemented method in life-long education and could be extended to volunteering experiences.



CERTIFICATION



Words from the leading organisation for this guide

Scambieuropei ETS is an association dedicated to youth established in 2010 aiming at supporting young people in developing professional skills and reinforcing their social and participative engagement.

Scambieuropei ETS promotes an **active European citizenship** through the use of Non-Formal Education methodology and participatory process among young people and youth workers. We actively boost among young people the sense of **intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and active participation**. On the other side, Scambieuropei ETS is also involved in youth entrepreneurship and employability promoting skills development and tools to create young people's own future choices by feeling empowered and ready to accept challenges and new initiatives. Scambieuropei has a deep focus also on digital media, podcasting and communication as tools to engage young people and to provide innovative practices for youth workers.

In 2009, the association developed a website to promote among Italian young people free and open opportunities to experience European (or extra-European) mobility, through the promotion of **Universal Civic Service**, youth exchanges, volunteering, job offers, scholarships and internships. Our portal www.scambieuropei.info attracts over **800.000 youth viewers** per month, around **2 million of monthly impression**. The number of followers on our Facebook page totals well over 100.000, while our newsletter has more than **27.000 monthly subscribers**.

In 2019 Scambieuropei started to work with the **National Civic Service** and launches its first programme of national scope (in the Media and Communication field). We developed more than 5 projects involving the creation of podcast episodes regarding topics such as social inclusion, social entrepreneurship, and active participation.

Scambieuropei collaborates together with the Europe Direct of the Region Marche to bring citizens' closer to the EU policies. We organise meetings in high schools to campaign Europe, activism and European possibilities, organize debates, projects and infodays in schools. Moreover, we manage social media campaigns to raise awareness on the EU policies and on the planned events in the territory. Since 2019 we have an infodesk open to young people up to 35 years inside the InformaGiovani (Youth Department) of the Municipality of Bologna. "**Finestra sul mondo**" is a free advice desk aimed to have individual meetings with young people where they can express their needs and backgrounds to assess together the better possibilities to continue or change their path. Scambieuropei is part of the network "**Erasmus+ Students and Alumni Alliance**" (ESAA) as member of **garagErasmus** (gE) and part of "**Europiamo**", the Italian meeting point between young ambassadors of European mobility and active stakeholders operating in the youth sector.

Scambieuropei is also the Italian branch of **European Youth Press** (EYP), a network of 30 youth media organizations in Europe that works to build a society where empowered young media makers are actively participating and contributing to the public sphere by creating fair, independent and responsible media, fostering the development of democracy, international development and a sustainable future. In 2013 Scambieuropei ETS moved its headquarters to Bologna where it remains at present.

08. PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING



Introduction:

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector has 3 main programmes aimed at the participation of youth within the Maltese volunteering sector. Another main premise of these programs is aimed to promote the development of soft skills, hard skills and competencies among the young participants. Different approaches of participation techniques and non-formal learning are implemented for the successful fulfilment of each program.

These programs are briefly described below:

1) Youth Voluntary Service – Local Programme

This programme supports local voluntary organisations and youths to collaborate for a local volunteering service of a maximum period of 6 months.

2) Youth Voluntary Service – Overseas Programme

This programme aims to support local voluntary Organisations and youths to collaborate on a volunteering mission outside of Europe.

3) YVS – Youth Engage scheme

This programme supports local voluntary organisations and youths facing behavioural challenges to collaborate for a local volunteering service of a maximum period of 12 months.

In the below report, the different methodologies applied in the above programme are highlighted to give a better understanding of our processes and how these can be applied or improved on a European level.

Presentation of the Partner (Off. MT Body)

Our aim is to support the development of a more effective and efficient voluntary and community sector in Malta and Gozo through the delivery of a range of support and capacity building services including information, advice and training. We also aim to support the development of a more influential and cohesive volunteering and community sector in Malta and Gozo by facilitating networking and partnership within the sector, and between the same sector and the private and public sectors.

Statement on the European Grand Tour project

A valuable project with aims and goals to increase the well being, solidarity and support within the European community. We hope and aim to be of assistance and support to all volunteers and entities which would also like to see the growth and unification of a European community.



Development of skills in missions

Throughout the 3 youth programs, MCVS directs the local host organizations to support the youth in their learning process and acquire well-rounded skills. Host organizations teach the young participants to perform operational tasks to be able to fulfill the work required in their designated roles. Additionally, young people are also supported to acquire knowledge and understanding about the development of specific abilities and competencies which are gained throughout different circumstances of the voluntary service.

Such support is given to youths via the implementation of a learning and development process, provision of adaptive teaching methodologies, effective monitoring and performance processes, emotional and mental support reflected in a good organizational culture, facilitating the acquisition and development of skills during the voluntary service.



Acquisition of operational and organizational skills



Technical skills, general organization, time management, ability to follow directions, digital competencies, comprehension and logic.

The young participants must be introduced to the voluntary work by their host organization providing the necessary training, enabling participants to fulfill their designated role in the organisation. Monitoring of their performance is done to ensure that the participants are grasping the operational needs of their role. If issues are identified, these are addressed by providing alternative teaching methods to meet the learning requirements of different youths.

Such teaching methodologies can include:

➤➤➤ Mentoring approach

where a young participant is partnered with a more experienced volunteer and learns on the go how operational processes work.

➤➤➤ Group approach

where two or more youths are directed to fulfill tasks together and assist each other.

➤➤➤ Personalised approach

where youths are assisted with aid to help them fulfill their tasks. Aid can vary and can vary depending on the person's needs. Such aid can be written or visual instructions, notes, visual signs or recordings.

The voluntary organizations provide further support for the development of operational and organizational skills by **giving guidance, communicating expectations, and providing assertive feedback.**

Constructive criticism is communicated in an empathic way, addressing actions or behaviours without criticizing one's character. Trainers and mentors aim to motivate youths to do better and not get discouraged by failures, but rather to believe in themselves.



Acquisition of self-direction and leadership skills

Skills and competencies such as – Decision making, creative thinking, conflict resolution, problem-solving, communication skills, collaboration, and meeting deadlines.

Throughout youth programs, it is not unlikely that young participants are trusted to help in projects such as planning events, organization of activities, creating social media material, and assisting collaborators in delivering services. The involvement of youths in projects and administrative work is crucial to the survival of a voluntary organization and to ensure active participation in solidarity missions from younger participants. Involving youths in important work and validating their contribution can help participants feel valued and possibly instill passion and drive within them, promoting their active participation.

Youths can be involved in project management within the different phases of the project.

Conception phase

Youths can be involved in the brainstorming phase and encouraged to share their ideas. Mentors help youths to develop ideas and develop concepts facilitating the development of creative thinking and collaboration among participants.

Planning and execution phase

To involve participants in the planning phase of the project, mentors are to communicate expected outcomes and assess the direction of the project from time to time. Mentors should allow youths to self-direct their tasks and methods, giving them space to work autonomously, make mistakes, problem-solve, and take decisions. Mentors should provide feedback and motivate the participants to re-direct themselves when necessary. This will help the participants to think analytically and develop their mental capacity to reason things out.

Implementation and completion phase

The implementation and completion of a project tend to be the most crucial phase, where doing the utmost effort to meet deliverables is essential to achieving a successful outcome. Some host organizations revert to using the group approach, assigning participants several responsibilities to fulfill together as a team, at times under the direction of a team leader. A mentor monitors the youth from time to time and provides feedback regarding the direction of the implementation, nonetheless, the youths are motivated to take charge together and achieve expectations as a team. Allowing youths to work together during demanding tasks helps them collaborate whilst motivating them to persevere and adapt individually. Youths are guided by their mentors to actively listen to each other, cooperate and resolve conflict to reach their group goals.

Acquisition of life skills and people skills



When **involving** youths in solidarity missions, they will automatically be predisposed to the acquisition of several life skills due to the circumstances which take place during their voluntary service.

Developing communication skills, people skills, and empathy

When **collaborating** with other volunteers and when there is involvement within a specific community, youths will be in contact with different individuals and they will have to learn to respond adequately and appropriately in a situation. Mentors can help youths to resolve conflict and respond appropriately.

Discussions regarding effective communication, validating others' experiences, and assertiveness can help youths to develop themselves further.



Developing domestic skills

Such as cleaning, parenting, flexibility, budgeting, groceries, etc

Many a time, youths in programs are completing voluntary services within residential homes or sanctuaries where domestic tasks are part and parcel of their voluntary work. Mentors at the organization encourage youths to fulfill their tasks by showing them how tasks need to be completed and by also addressing the value of domestic work within the organization. Sharing different domestic tasks amongst youths and volunteers helps the young participants to not feel bored or in charge of menial tasks. When younger participants see the value in their work, they are more prone to learning valuable life skills that they apply throughout their lives.



Developing self-motivation and drive by choosing creativity, fun, and optimism.

When youths are involved in a voluntary programs, they get to work with other volunteers and mentors who are passionate and driven within their community. Consequently, they are open to positive influences. Host organizations and communities which project a warm and optimist approach are more likely to facilitate the active participation of youths. Positive attitudes where mental well-being, consideration for others, and fun approaches are integrated within the members of a host organization, participating youths are very much inclined to develop themselves to become well-rounded individuals.

Time management, adherence to work schedules, learning to wake up early in the morning and rest at stable times (very difficult for young unemployed people), and consistency in structuring a healthy daily routine.



Self development

Voluntary organisations must promote the self-development of young people in all their projects by encouraging them to reflect on themselves, their achievements and their surroundings. Designing different tasks within each programme to help young people identify problems, challenges and areas of success to facilitate their self-development. In order to help young participants develop holistically, one must make sure to embrace the following values and promote a positive mindset.

Self-discovery and self-acceptance

Self-discovery and self-acceptance

Learning new skills

Connection

Sustainable Lifestyle

Prioritising Health

Positive Mindset

Confidence and Assertiveness

Confidence and Assertiveness

These values are promoted through various activities and tasks put in place specifically to internalize these values and act accordingly. Below the implementation of several activities in the youth programs:

Example of promoting self-awareness and self-discovery in MCVS:

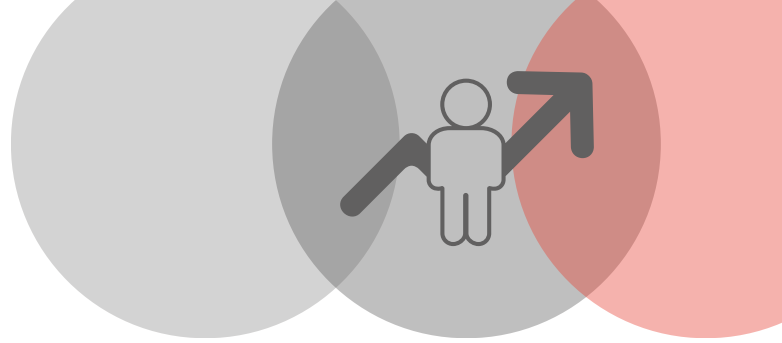


Who are you?

Throughout the first stages of registering for MCVS youth programs, the youths are asked to write a report to describe themselves, their hobbies, and their aims. Additionally, we set up a meeting with each participant before the start of the volunteering service to learn more about them. Each youth is allowed to express himself, his likes and dislikes, and their preferred activities to help us bridge them with an organization that best aligns with their goals and aims.

Our goal is to place youth with an organization that will enable their growth and self-development in a manner that best suits them as an individual. Careful consideration is given to the youth's mental health and physical demands, their self-confidence and creative thinking, their communication skills, and also their preferred types of activities. Having a good understanding of their needs and areas of interest is imperative to be able to choose the correct organization where mentors will help the youth to self-develop and flourish in the new environment.

Mentors and host organizations encourage the youths to discover who they are as individuals by making use of specific energizer games and activities where youths consider and ponder their assets, their goals, challenges, and setbacks but also their value to themselves and the community.



Journaling and Reporting

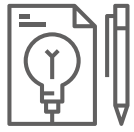
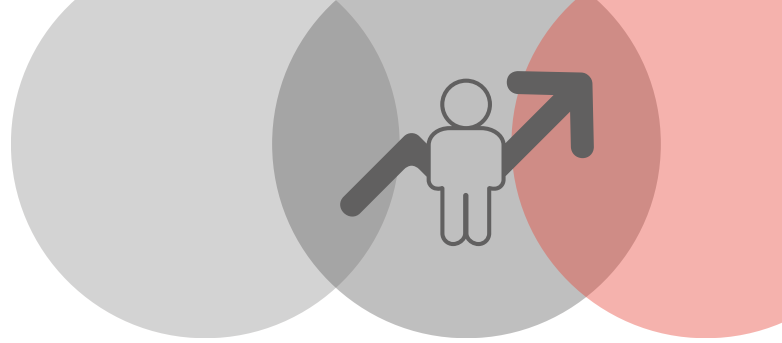
Participants are assigned several tasks where they are asked to journal and reflect on the challenges they face, their achievements, their place in the world, and their emotions.

Youths participating in the Youth Engage scheme are asked to write a weekly reflection as part of their attendance sheet. Not only are they required to carry out a self-reflection to identify their strengths and weaknesses, but they are also asked to ponder on what makes them unique from everyone else and are encouraged to find the value in their uniqueness.

Youth Volunteers who participate in the Youth Voluntary Service are also given the Youth Volunteer Journal (found in Annex 1) where they are asked to complete several tasks which are designed for the youths to reflect and embrace the above values.

Task 1 – VO Mission Report, Task 3 - Activity Diary, Task 5 – Why Volunteer? aim to promote a sustainable lifestyle, self-awareness, and connection. Youths are asked to write about the activities they participate in throughout their voluntary service and how these activities benefit them as volunteers, about the organization which is striving in its operations, and about the community which is reaping the labor of the volunteers and the organization. The youths are encouraged to recognize their value in society which promotes self-acceptance, the value of sustaining a well-adjusted lifestyle, and the importance of community and connection.

Task 2 – Inspiring Interview, Task 4 – New connections, Task 7 – Inspiring Person aim to highlight the importance of connection, friendship, and the value of others in society. Throughout the reports or interviews that youths are asked to complete in the above tasks, they deliberate how others inspire them, how others have helped them, and how the community benefits from individuals who embrace doing good for others.



Being Present

To promote a healthy lifestyle, self-confidence and a positive mindset, some activities are set up to support youths in embracing these values. Different host organisations promote being present in different ways according to the premise of their organisations. Below are several activities which promote being present, practised by different host organisations under our programmes.

Embracing Nature

Some host organisations encourage youths to practise mindfulness when working with animals. Youths are encouraged to focus and stay present with the animals or whilst being in nature, giving value to their time and their circumstances. This helps the youths to practise mindfulness organically whilst performing their voluntary service.

Meditation and Gratefulness

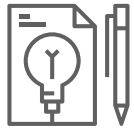
Some organizations choose to actively practise mindfulness by having sharing circles weekly where youths can express gratitude, share their troubles and reflect together before starting their voluntary activities.

Creative expression

Some organizations help youths to practise mindfulness by engaging in artistic or creative activities. Focus and concentration on the act of expressing oneself through the creation of art have very therapeutic effects on participants. Such activities help to achieve a quiet mind.

Workshops and info-sessions

Host organisations also conduct talks and discussions where healthy choices and mindfulness are promoted. Youths are encouraged to share their ideas and how they can implement self-awareness, good health and a positive mindset in their lives.



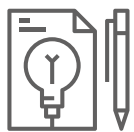
Ideas of networking from Malta Council for Voluntary Sector

To promote connections and social skills, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and the host organizations organize fun mixers and events where the youths can connect and enjoy each other's company in a casual setting.

The importance of connection and working together are very important throughout voluntary service. Not only are youths grouped to work in a team, promoting the healthy development of social skills, but additionally, youths are in a safe space where they can explore friendships and social settings, learn how to cooperate, and collaborate with others to benefit them on an individual and community level.

Mentors support the youths by helping them navigate different social scenarios, encouraging them to communicate assertively and collaborate effectively, and recognizing assets in themselves and each other.

To further promote connection among participants, MCVS has an online platform where resources, opportunities, and information are shared. Youths can also comment and share ideas on social media posts, providing the participants with a platform where they can remain connected.



Youth Voluntary Service

Throughout the youth voluntary service, youths are in a position to harness better the value of learning new skills and gaining confidence in overcoming obstacles and challenges.

Mentors and hosts promote the value of learning by teaching the youths new operational skills, encouraging youths to delegate and communicate with others, and participating effectively in projects by sharing their ideas.

When participating in voluntary service, youths are bound to be exposed to new practices which they can find challenging for one reason or another. At times the youths can be discouraged when they are finding difficulty to execute a task. Other youths can find sharing ideas and speaking out more difficult. Some youths can find it more difficult to keep organized and deliver work as requested... Throughout the service, the youths will receive different types of support to enable them to succeed in their work. Youths will be supported to develop and acquire new soft and hard skills, develop self-confidence, and persevere through challenges and setbacks.

The youth voluntary service also promotes self-awareness and self-discovery from a multitude of aspects:

- The youths will be able to discover further their inclinations and their weaknesses, making them more aware of themselves as individuals.
- They will be able to practice self-awareness, empathy, and healthy conflict resolutions when collaborating with other individuals within the community.
- Youths learn their value in society and the community.

Youths are more prone to harness good values and lifestyles when being surrounded by and supported in a positive community.



Personal projects

Personal projects are a means for an individual to be inspired by their curiosity rather than by the work demanded. When working on a personal project an individual is in a position to set their standards, expectations, and time management and execute tasks for self-set results.

Working on a personal project can help youths to develop creative thinking on their terms based on their inspiration rather than demand at work or school. During the youth voluntary service, MCVS and host organizations support youths in persevering in personal projects by giving them different types of support and opportunities.

»»» Motivation and Encouragement

An efficient way to support youth in developing a personal project is by providing them with support and encouragement. A mentor can support them by encouraging the youth to share their ideas, giving them direction regarding the execution of the project, and motivating them to create achievable goals. Another means of supporting the youth is to direct them towards schemes and initiatives which may align with the youth's motives.

»»» A Platform and a Voice

Host organizations can support personal projects by providing the youth access to their platforms to execute their project. It is not uncommon that an individual would be inclined to do a fundraiser or organize an event for charity. A way of supporting youth in a charitable personal project is by giving them access to the organization's brand. The organization can promote and market the project as a collaboration between the entity and the youth, in turn elevating the exposure for the success of the project.

»»» Financial and Technical Support

A way to provide the youth with support to execute and deliver a personal project is by guiding them to financial support schemes and funds if available. Mentors and host organizations can provide technical support by partnering with the youth and giving him a helping hand. This can help the youth to make use of the organization's resources such as human resources, connections, and sponsors, as a means to reach the objective.

*Proposed
Tool!*

Youth volunteer Journal

Monthly tasks

Youth Volunteers can choose 1 task from the below to complete each month. A task cannot be chosen more than once. Tasks need to be completed by the last Friday of each month. Youth Volunteers are to send the completed tasks to the voluntary organization by the stipulated deadlines. MCVS will choose the best material and post it on social media.

Task 1: VO Mission Report

Write a report describing the voluntary organization and its mission in 200 to 300 words. Include photos or logos of the voluntary organization. Please send the report in PDF form or Word doc.

Points that can be included:

Who is the Voluntary organization? What is the Mission of the VO? Who founded the VO? What are the services that the VO offers? How is the VO helping the community? What are the values of the voluntary organization? Can you describe the community within the organization and its members and Volunteers?

Task 2: Inspiring Interview

Choose an inspiring member or volunteer at the voluntary organization and interview them. The interview can be in video form of under 3 minutes OR in the form of a write-up including the interviewee's photo (Please send in PDF form or Word doc).

Task 3: Activity Diary

Take 5 to 8 photos of an activity/activities or event/s you participated in at the voluntary organization. Write a short paragraph describing the event (50 to 100 words). Please send it in PDF form or Word doc.

Task 4: New connections

Show us 3 new connections you made thanks to the voluntary service. Take a photo of yourself with each person and caption each photo by telling us who this new connection is and what you learned from them. Please send it in PDF form or Word doc.

Task 5: Why Volunteer??

Make a post on Facebook and tag and [LIKE] the Youth Voluntary Service Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/youthvolunteerscheme/>

Let your friends know why volunteering is beneficial and why a young person should choose to volunteer. Please write a motivational post to encourage other youths to participate in youth voluntary service.

Points that can be included:

Why did you choose to volunteer? How did you benefit from volunteering? What does volunteering mean to you? What do young people have to gain from volunteering?

Task 6: let's get creative

Let us know what volunteering means to you.

Create a 2d representation of what volunteering means to you in 2d format

[painting/drawing/collage / take a photo / digital image] Feel free to get creative as much as you want.

Send a photo of your work (jpeg / PNG) MCVS will choose the best artwork to be exhibited (please keep the original work).

Task 7: Inspiring Person

Give us an outline of an inspiring young person in 200 to 300 words.

Choose a local or international personality who has done inspiring work in their community.

Describe their work and impact on their community and include a photo of them. Please send the outline in PDF form or Word doc.

Points that can be included:

Who is this person? Are they Maltese or foreign? What is the work they did in the community?

Why do they inspire you?

09. GLOBAL ASSETS AND IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING



Any kind of volunteering programs, be it European Solidarity Corps, or national volunteering such as the ones already existing in France, Germany or Italy, has several key impacts:

- Involving youth in a large number of solidarity projects, fostering their civic spirit;
- Great benefits in the development of the municipalities, regions and country in general as it conducts to reduction of inequalities, to the engagement in ecological projects and social and professional integration;
- An available pool of workforce to impact positively national causes and general interest actions through public administration and NGOs;
- Promote the mobility of young people, even for programs at national level, through the development of missions throughout the country, and bring young people from different regions together. National missions are thus the ideal first step for European mobility;
- Promote the integration of young people from minorities into the national body, including immigrants;
- To enable young people with fewer opportunities or young people not in academic or vocational training to develop skills and become involved in community projects that give them a sense of purpose and self-esteem;
- In general develop real world skills and experience which favor largely later insertion into the labor market.

Presentation of the NGO

CreativePlus NGO puts volunteering activity at the center of its existence. The motto is "here you find your playground for non-formal learning" because we engage, connect and empower the local youth, giving them the opportunity to test their ideas and implement them in the activities. Before the pandemic, we were constantly part of the volunteering promotion in the local high schools through visits, fairs, common activities, and partnerships. After the pandemic, we learned that we can stay connected online as well, but we continue to do activities with the youngsters open air. The coordination of EVS, Erasmus+ Volunteering, and European Solidarity Corps projects allowed us to put together youngsters from Europe and local youngsters..

Statement on the EGT project

It is a challenge that gives younger people a chance to develop themselves. Volunteers will have the possibility to act creatively and share their points of view, but also to gain practical experience and orient themselves professionally. Moreover, all these opportunities will be possible in an international context where the contribution of each individual can help to change the world for the better!

CREA+
TIVE
PLUS



Context

Volunteering, as a public policy, has the (positive) peculiarity of combining crossover effects and aims, enabling several positive impacts for society.

First it is both a collective and individual self-development program:

- Individually: it educates, brings skills and experience, enables professional networking and facilitates late insertion on the labor market
- Collectively: it inserts the youth in Society, improves social inclusion, reduces violence and feelings of exclusion by bettering societal cohesion, and enables the fulfillment of important societal needs, while having all the positive effects of any educational program.

Usually programs of volunteering are specifically designed to address one national (or larger) priority, while of course having indirect positive effects on the others. The European Solidarity Corps has the specificity of including all equally, namely:

- Educating: volunteering being one of the main vocational and real life experience acquisition tools available to European Youth, with internships.
- Inserting: one in life and especially in access to future work, by developing necessary skills and experience.
- Developing the feeling of citizenship: through active on ground action and direct experience of the non merchant sector.
- Providing public services: through missions in NGOs, administrations, and hugely helping the stressed out environment of deliveries of national and European policies in dire need of such support.

An example of reflective action on volunteering: Romanian “Euro Café”.

“Euro Café” was to promote solidarity as a value, mainly through volunteering, to enhance the engagement of young people and organizations in accessible and high quality solidarity activities as a means to contribute to strengthening cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe, while also responding to societal challenges and strengthening communities, with particular effort to promote social inclusion. We sought there the development of a prosocial attitude by realizing the difference between the passive and the active attitude active in the community, for students from schools and high schools in Constanta and its surroundings.

An example of reflective action on volunteering: Romanian “Euro Café”.

CONCRETELY, OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED WERE:

- Increasing the degree of information about the way in which a person can intervene to save a victim of social aggression (harassment, conflict, physical or verbal abuse), in conditions of preserving the personal safety of the rescuer.
- Increasing the number of volunteer hours by 50%, by involving at least half of the young people participants in more substantial and funded local or European projects/actions/initiatives.

Through this project, we aim to develop the civic skills of young people and their participation strong young people's democratic and civic life. We estimate that the development of a prosocial attitude leads to the increase of involvement in the life of the community through carrying out voluntary actions in local or European projects/actions, and this leads subsequently to the development of a more intense participation in the democratic life of the community. We believe that effectively informing young people about the European opportunities of Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps leads to the development of a pro-active attitude towards involvement in community life and in local and European projects and activities. In addition, participants feel a greater desire to get involved in the democratic life of the community.

Enhanced promotion of European programme opportunities helps to increase the quality of future projects by stimulating access to those opportunities and increasing their accessibility to those young people who really need the programmes. The European dimension cannot be experienced by local people if they remain isolated in their communities. These initiatives will lead to local volunteers being more confident in taking up these opportunities. In addition, Young people directly involved in Euro-cafe will practice their leadership skills and will come forward with personal, realistic and approachable initiatives in the future. They then become themselves leaders for other volunteers to engage.

Discriminations and Social Inclusion

The concept of discrimination has acquired, both theoretically and practically, dynamic interpretations with different meanings and approaches. Therefore, discrimination manifests itself on multiple, complicated and nuanced levels, determining differentiated treatments, depending on people's characteristics, which can be perceived in various ways and circumstances, in public and private places, but also within public services, in the relationship with local authorities, in the medical system, on the Labour market, etc.

VOLUNTEERING IN GENERAL HAS TWO TREMENDOUS EFFECTS ON THIS ASPECT:

- When integrating potential victims of discrimination as volunteers, it has a transformative effect, by empowering a passive situation (the victim) into an active and societally positively seen function (the helper delivering public policies).
- At the same time, through the mobilization of volunteering work it enables ambitious and labor intensive actions towards minorities: often based on free dialogue and mutual understanding processes which often can't be directly invested by official State administered programs. Volunteering, as a public policy, has an horizontal quality which can improve its efficiency by making the beneficiary population feel integrated in the process of their self-help.

On a more underlying level, by mixing volunteers among themselves, but also with the public they help, it creates mutual understanding alleviating tension, misunderstanding and fears which could lead to hatred in Society.

Discrimination based on race, with all its undesirable behavioral consequences, represents one of the most widespread problems of intolerance. The term "racial discrimination" means any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin that has as purpose or effect the annulment or reduction of the recognition to exercise equally the fundamental rights and freedoms of men in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

In this case, the encounters, dialogue, and real life experiences enabled by volunteering has a proved and determinate impact on societal cohesion and the feeling of belonging to a whole: volunteering in this spirit is particularly effective in fractured Societies, including a high level of diversity (be it a high inequality environment, or a large political construction like the European Union, or through the presence of immigration or large national minorities).

Human rights

One of the basic principles of human rights is the principle of equality and non-discrimination, which means that we are all equally entitled to our rights without distinction based on sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language spoken or disability. Volunteering makes those principles a concrete reality as volunteers are placed in an equal situation while delivering their missions, and valued by Society for such actions.

Human rights are often seen as theoretical and abstract concepts, and volunteering is in many people's lives the only occasion to actually embody those principles on a daily basis.

Several principle can and should thus be included when building a volunteering mission:

- The principle of interdependence means that all rights are related to each other, and the guarantee of one depends on the respect of the others;
- The principle of inalienability – rights cannot be denied or alienated arbitrarily and the principle of indivisibility assumes that all rights are of equal importance and cannot be denied in favor of others.
- The principle of participation and inclusion assumes that human rights issues are to be analyzed and decided with the active involvement of the population and especially of the representatives of vulnerable human rights groups, including people with disabilities (motor, sensory, intellectual, and psycho-social), members of discriminated communities, like for example the Roma or immigrants, and other ethnic and religious minorities and other groups that those decisions may disproportionately target.

These goals can and should be addressed by including in the volunteering programs specific trainings and sessions sensitizing to those three principles and matters, and also open dialogue sessions where the volunteers assess and criticize together the implementation of those in their own life as volunteers.

Intercultural relations and adaptation

Intercultural education, open to various cultural values, constitutes one of the answers to the existential needs of the individual and of any community, under the conditions of the Society of our time. The importance of intercultural education increases considerably under the conditions of widening the possibilities of free movement of citizens. In an era of economic and cultural globalization, people from different countries and cultures communicate and work together. They must know each other, and this knowledge is not only limited to knowing the language in which the other communicates, but also to knowing the culture and the conditions in which it was formed.

Under such context, volunteering is a all-encompassing experience which, at the same time:

- Mix up people, be it volunteers or beneficiaries.
- Enable probably for a lifetime opportunity, to engage people in missions of general interest and their related fields (education, medical, social, etc) they wouldn't have otherwise.

When speaking specifically of European Volunteering, it has moreover the added value of confronting a foreign culture and environment, developing thus attached intercultural and linguistic skills. In the face of this cultural pluralism, it is necessary for education to incorporate, in its contents and objectives, elements aimed at the formation of consciousness and the individual capacity to communicate and relate to other cultures, tolerance and avoidance of intercultural conflicts. Such skills are usually developed more easily concretely than theoretically and volunteering has an incredible potential regarding this.

Developing real world skills and inserting one's in today Society and Economy

Today's world is characterized by an accelerated path of progress and social, technical and economic changes which lead to permanent self actualization. In such an environment, real world experience is a dire need. Internships programs and vocational training seek to offer such experience but are insufficiently developed across Europe, subject to the critic of exploitation of "free" work and usually selective in their access.

On the contrary, volunteering:

- Democratize access to a first real life experience to all, accessible usually without prior skills and enabling to develop them on the way.
- Is a good first "lower" stake professional experience, where "free" work is given to Society, excluding any private interest, and can then maximize the educational and vocational aspect of such specific experience.

As an added value, it combines, when later on assessed by a potential recruiter, real missions, with important societal responsibility, leading to proven skills developed on the field, with an exhibit of an ability to engage on a personal level for a greater purpose and in a selfless manner.

During the whole Erasmus KA2, all measures developed and described in this report, were directly applied through an original Mobility project

70 

Operational partners in our network beyond direct partners of KA2

10 

Countries where the project was deployed already (FR, ITA, GER, MAL, CZ, RO, AT, GRE, POR, ESP)

635 

Young people did their European Civic Service in 2021-24 within the Framework of this KA2

PILOTS 

Full program of National Civic Service Launched in Malta
Piloted with State support in Greece
Tested through NGOs initiatives in Czech Republic and Romania

Inclusivity

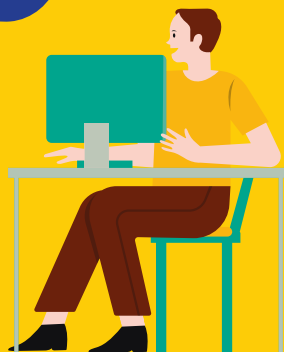
Volunteering

Immersion

Double experiences

Mixity

Language classes



A unique mobility and civic engagement project, co-financed by the European Union and national governments. It aims to reach 50% of young people in European mobility, and to make it inclusive and open to all.

A two steps approach and combination of programs enabling inclusion of all youth

THE EUROPEAN CIVIC SERVICE

- **6 or more months of civic service, fully supported by national funds, in their own country, to live and commit to a team of young people from all over Europe (50% from their own country, 50% mobile from another European country).**
- **then 6 to 12 months of European citizenship mobility in the country of Europe their choice, as part of the European Solidarity Corps or Civic Service.**

A unique mix Group on each site for the whole Duration



Half Nationals



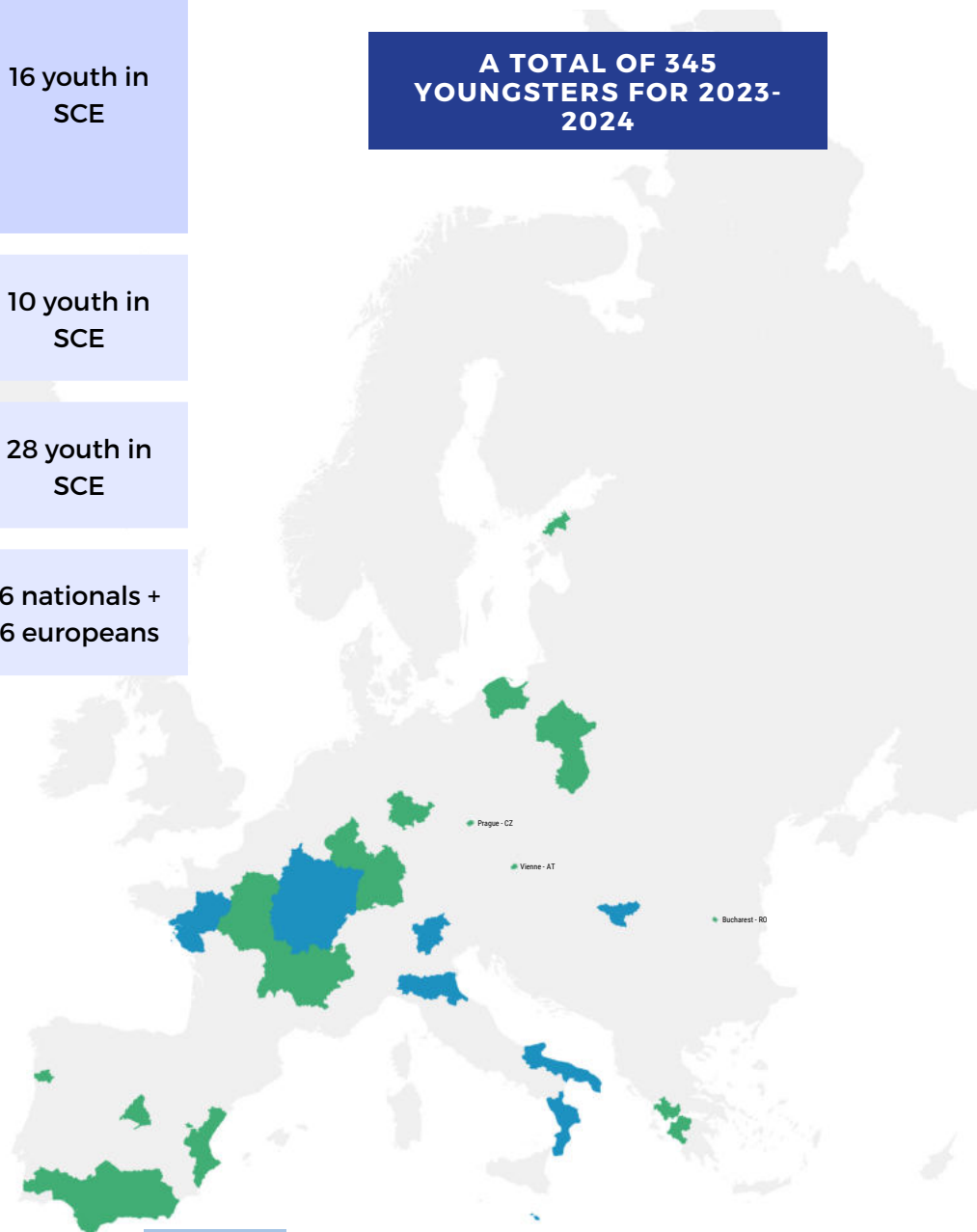
Half from other EU countries

During our collaboration, 635 young people gained a full experience of European Civic Service for 6 months in their own country and 6 months in another. The national Civic Service was officially developed in Malta and a National Civic Service pilot project was officially tested in Greece with State support. All other countries have launched awareness-raising processes for their national agencies and pilot tests run by NGOs have taken place in the Czech Republic and Romania.

Deployment by the end of the project

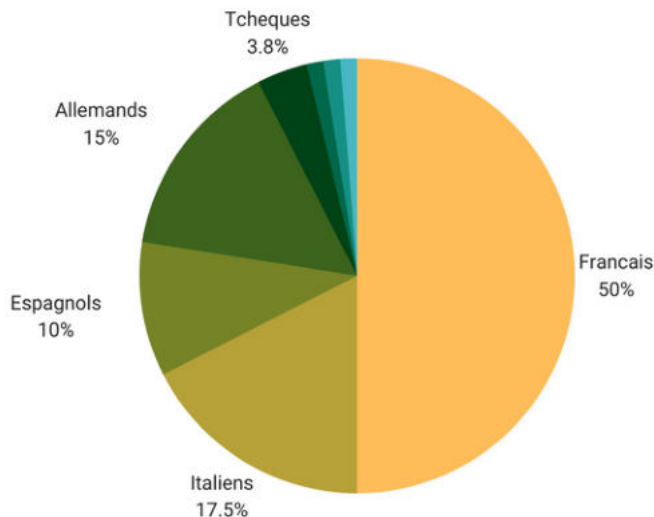
Country	Promotions	Total of youth	Czech republic	PILOT	4 nationals + 4 europeans
France	7 promotions	100 youth in SCE	Portugal	PILOT 2 promotions	4 nationals + 4 europeans
Italy	3 promotions	35 youth in SCE	Greece	1 promotion	50 youth in civic service
Germany	4 promotions	58 youth in SCE	Estonia	PILOT 1 promotion	10 nationals + 10 europeans
Malta	1 promotion - 1 institution LEAD en CES	16 youth in SCE	<div data-bbox="954 943 1434 1064" data-label="Text"> <p>A TOTAL OF 345 YOUNGSTERS FOR 2023-2024</p> </div>		
Austria	1 promotion	10 youth in SCE			
Romania	2 promotions	28 youth in SCE			
Poland	PILOT 3 promotions	6 nationals + 6 europeans			

- SCE deployed (full scheme or pilot tested)
France, Italy, Malta, Romania, Greece and Austria
- Upcoming full SCE promotions
Poland, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Estonia and Czech Republic

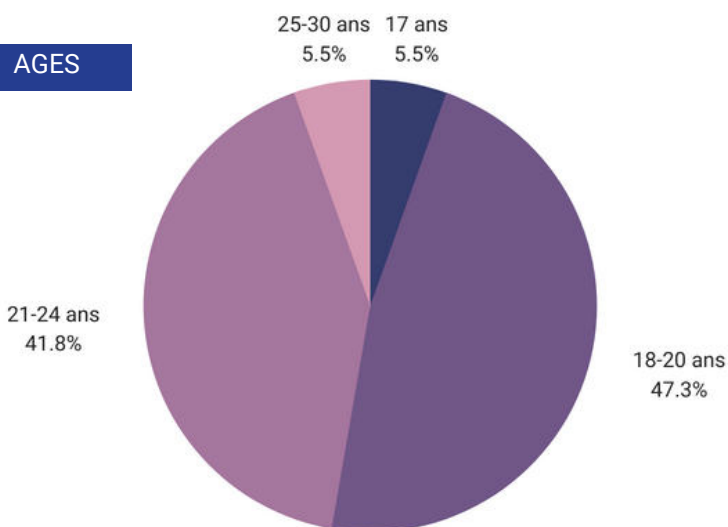


A UNIQUE MIXING UP EXPERIENCE

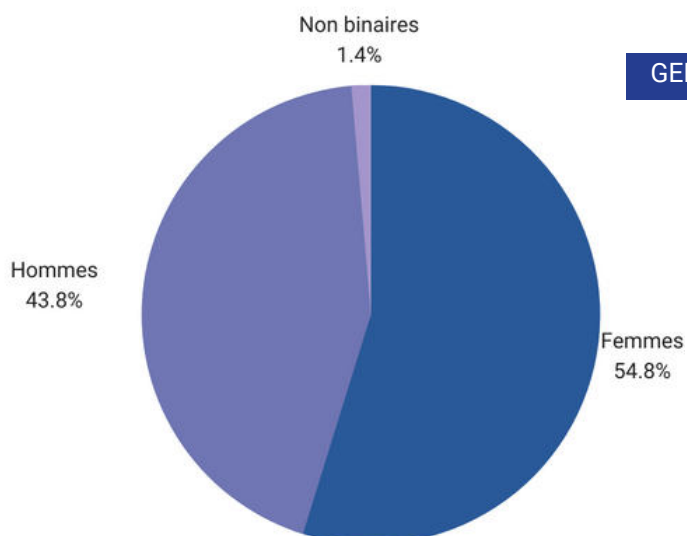
Current composition of European civic service volunteers (principle of double experience and tandem)



AGES



GENDERS



PRIORITY INCLUSION: OPENING EUROPE TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

« Youth with less opportunities always composed at least 50% of our volunteers abroad »

A Youth is considered with Fewer Opportunities if:

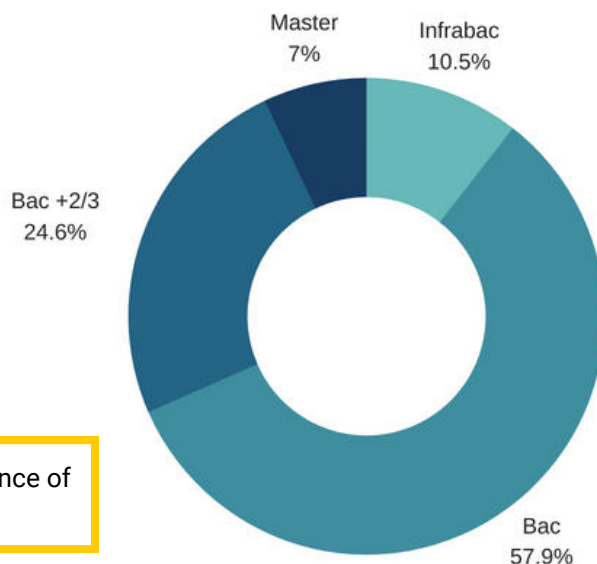
one has low level of education, social conditions, migratory origins or belong to an ethnic or sexual minority, encounters disability, or constrained economic or geographic conditions (rural area or urban periphery with below-average GDP).

Among our volunteers, 90% did the full experience until the end . Only 8% don't go further into step 2 - mobility in Europe - after the national experience, but get prepared for a future mobility project

2% gave up the experience (always in the first 2 weeks)

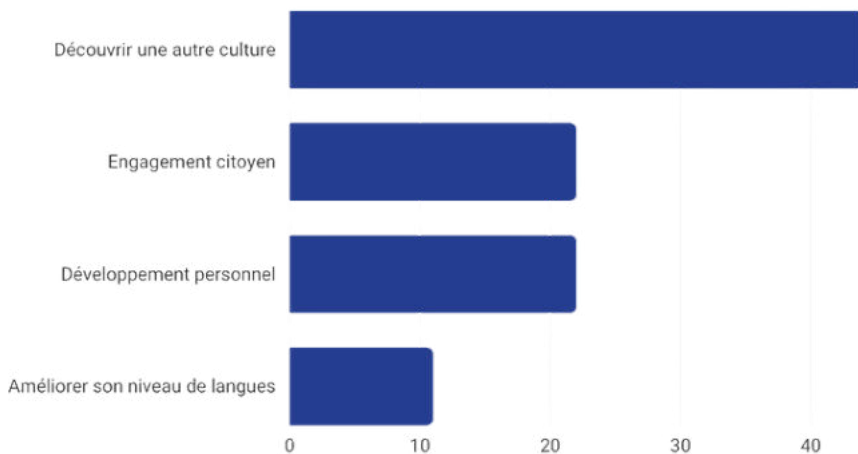
Among the youth that lived the experience, none had previous experience of going abroad more than 10 days previously

STUDY LEVEL



IMPACT ON CITIZENSHIP FEELING

Motivations des jeunes pour faire un Service Civique Européen



What do Youth hope to gain

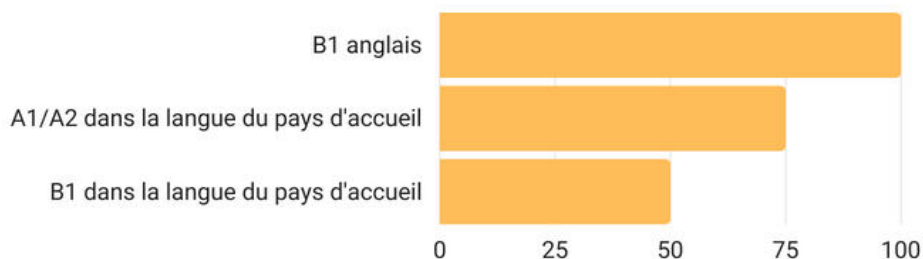
- 20% want to complete their curriculum
- 30% hope to orient themselves on a new professional path
- 30% want to feel useful
- 10% want to develop new connections

« 100% of all our volunteers have declared that 6 months abroad (and before at home) was an ideal balance, time wise »

RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

ALL VOLUNTEERS FINISH THEIR WHOLE EXPERIENCE WITH SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVES ON LANGUAGES SKILLS

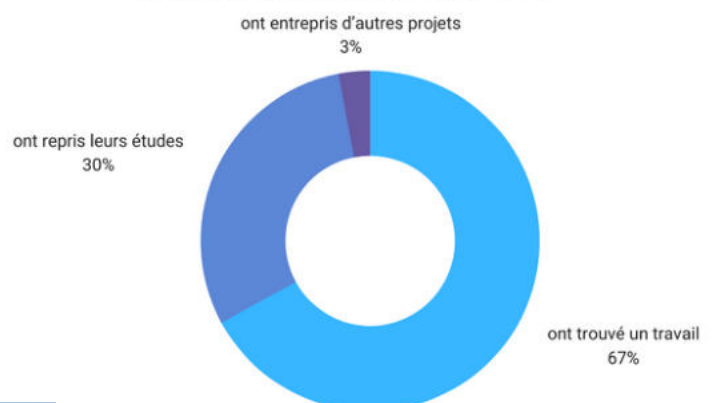
NATIONAUX



EUROPEENS



Insertion des jeunes européens après leur SCE



90% of Youth declare feeling "Europeans" after the program (against 30% at beginning)

We have up to now only 6% drop out (always in the 3 initial weeks) and 97% of Youth completing the program immediately transition towards work or studies

THANK YOU!

We are extremely thankful to the **French National Agency Erasmus+** and all the **Erasmus+ Programme** for their valuable contributions. **All the partners in the project** have been essential in promoting active citizenship, volunteering, and social cohesion. Their initiatives have instilled a sense of duty and responsibility in young people, empowering them to make a positive difference in their communities. Through engaging in civil society projects, these young people have gained essential skills, knowledge, and experience that have benefitted both them personally and the communities they served.

The Erasmus+ Programme has played a vital role in fostering intercultural understanding and cooperation among European countries. By providing opportunities for young people to study, work, and volunteer abroad, it has broadened their horizons and fostered a sense of European identity and solidarity. The integrated promotion of active citizenship, volunteering, and intercultural exchanges has left a lasting and profound impact on the lives of numerous young people.

As a testimony of commitment to Youth programs in Europe, all associated partners led by the end of the Program and for upcoming EU elections, a campaign gathering eventually supports (combined, organizations representing more than 30 000 volunteers and 1000 youth workers) to increase Youth and especially European Solidarity Corps funds in Europe



Co-funded by
the European Union



European Grand Tour