

# BOOKLET

# Quality preparation, support and mentoring of EVS volunteers

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# Preparation

## SELECTION CRITERIA PROCESS

### **Roles of the Coordinating Organisation (CO) / Sending Organisation (SO) / Hosting Organisation (HO)**

As soon as the project is approved, the CO enters in contact with all partners involved (through emails, skype calls, chat, etc) to inform them of the project's approval and discuss about practicalities, venue, budget, recruitment process of the volunteer, activities, agreements, travel, expectations, etc.

SO mobilizes its network of local and national youth centres, schools, universities, and other stakeholders to promote the project. They can use online tools such as Facebook, organisation's website and stakeholder's social channels.

SO prepares an open call for participants with a link for an online application form (with information about the project, duration, age, email contacts for more information, details about hosting organisation, sending organisation, CV + motivation letter guidelines for the application, activities, activity dates, accommodation, food and travel covered by Erasmus+ Programme).

SO starts the pre-selection process according with the requirements, activities and needs of the HO and specifics of the project. The candidates must send their CV and Motivation Letter in English and/or in the language of the hosting country if the volunteer is familiar with it.

SO will preselect the candidates and will forward to the HO for the final list of candidates for interview/selection. During this interview/selection, both HO and volunteer have the chance to get acquainted and discuss about practicalities, doubts, fears, contributions and expectations. After in case the selection ends up with a positive result, the HO contacts the SO in order SO could start the practicalities and the pre-departure training.

In case of visa requirement, HO sends an invitation letter to support the process.

CO will prepare the learning/activity agreement.

## CHECK LIST FOR EVS VOLUNTEERS

SO and HO should recommend the volunteers to:

- Bring ID/Passport (both if possible) or any other documents and verify the expiration dates (it is recommended that passport is valid 6 months after end of service).
- Make copy of passport/id and have it on email and bring it on paper to service.
- Read the EVS infokit, insurance guidelines and Youthpass materials.
- Keep invoices, booking confirmation, boarding pass in original or PDF generated, bus and/or train tickets.
- Communicate eventual special needs and/or food requirements with HO.



- Verify if his/her own mobile are compatible to a foreigner SIM.
- Bring their medical treatment and prescription, if required. Small medical bag for travel.
- Give family member access to banking etc for emergency situations.
- Bring European health insurance card.
- Get police check and vaccination cards (if required by project).
- Print guidelines with HO organization contact information /directions how to get there.
- Bring Lonely Planet or other travel guide of the country.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

SO/CO/HO provides the volunteers with:

- safety instructions for travel and legal duties;
- emergency numbers;
- organisations contacts;
- information on the insurance;
- information on culture, behaviours, attitude and cultural issues of their hosting country, in order to avoid conflicts and misunderstanding with local community;

The CO must ensure that all parties sign the agreement, deliver all the documents in time to be used for the project's final report, ensure visibility of the project, guarantee the security of the volunteers during their activities and free time, and that they provide the volunteers with accommodation, food allowance, pocket money, language classes and mentoring.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The HO makes sure that each volunteer has a mentor who is not the coordinator.

## **TECHNICAL PRACTICALITIES**

CO prepares the agreements and sends them to all partners for control and modifications. After approval, all parties have to sign it;

SO enrolls the volunteer by CIGNA, sets up meetings with the volunteer and organises the pre-departure preparation and sends volunteer to pre-departure training organized by national agency (if available);

SO organization informs volunteer about Youthpass;



HO is responsible for arranging accommodation for the volunteer, set up the safest itinerary from the volunteer's city to the hosting organisation's city and prepares the local stakeholders for the arrival of a new volunteer;

HO is responsible for arranging local transportation, when required.

### **CULTURAL PREPARATION – Pre-departure preparation**

SO provides the volunteer with a booklet made by the HO about the venue of the activities, its culture, traditions, specificities, laws, etc.

SO prepare the volunteer for the possibility of the cultural shock (stereotypes, prejudices and ask the volunteer to share his/her expectations, fears and contributions...). Volunteer can also write a letter for his/her future self, etc.

### **LINGUISTIC SUPPORT**

When required, HO can provide the volunteers with language course in English or the HO country language (can be online or face-to face meeting);

The volunteer has to take the test on OLS Platform before departure.



# Support for the EVS volunteers offered by the Sending and Hosting associations

## SENDING ORGANIZATION

1. Keep contact with the volunteers, hosting association and mentors
2. Make sure the volunteer is doing well (Skype meeting, emails, social media)
3. Use specific instruments/tools for monitoring and evaluating (written reports + photos in different stages of the project)
4. Support conflict resolution

## HOSTING ORGANIZATION

1. Support the volunteers in getting to the accommodation place
2. Welcoming event + general details for accommodation in the new community
  - Details about Erasmus + Program and specially about EVS (rights and responsibilities)
  - Meeting the mentor
  - General details about the European health insurance (Cigna) and the European Health Card - according to the features of the hosting country
  - Presenting the hosting association team + the person responsible for the actual project
  - Tips how to live in the new community (the location of the main institutions + local 'rules')
  - Details about the project activities and the general future plan
  - Signing several agreements for assuming own responsibility
3. Creating the daily agenda + working plan
4. Language courses
5. Thematic courses + special preparation for specific activities (in case needed)
6. Facilitate free time activities (sport, cultural, artistic) through discounts, human or material resources
7. Personal development courses (psycho-emotional support, body care, self knowledge, self aid)
8. Team building activities + discovering the surroundings
9. Use specific instruments/tools for monitoring and evaluating (written reports + photos in different stages of the project)
10. Periodical evaluation meetings with project team + activities facilitators + mentors + local partners
11. Keep in contact with the National Agency who funded the project for all organizational aspects, with the Embassy or Consulate according to the volunteer nationality and with different institution for the volunteer safety (local police)
12. Update the project page in the Mobility Tool platform
13. Support conflict resolution



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION in attention of the volunteer

Challenge/Crisis	Prevention	Solution
Personal problems of participant (alcohol, drugs)	Face to face meeting between volunteer and sending organization – interview with volunteer.	Support from mentor, special assistance, medical support
Lack of interest in project topic /low motivation (different motivation)	Interviews with sending and hosting organization as a part of selection process, face to face meetings with sending organization, SWOT analyses, plan B.	Use the plan B, try different methods, different tasks. Talk about learning needs of volunteer.
Project doesn't meet volunteer's expectations	SWOT analyses	-“-
Conflict with sending, hosting organization or other volunteers	Separated meetings with mentor and coordinators	Talk about the problem with the mentor, if mentor cannot help, with sending and hosting organization. If bigger problems, turn to National Agency/EACEA.
Lack of support from host organization. No mentor or mentor is the same as coordinator.	Good cooperation between sending and hosting organization. Defining mentor before the service.	Ask host organization to find new mentor. If no success, contact sending organization.
Different lifestyle and way of living in host country	Cultural preparation by sending organization, contact and information from host organization. Attending pre-departure training. Meeting with previous EVS volunteers who have been to same country/area.	Adoption with the support of host organization and mentor.
Cultural differences (religion, mentality, gender conception, family relations)	Cultural preparation by sending organization. Attending on arrival training in host country, additional preparation by host organization. Knowledgeable mentor.	Support from host organization, mentor. More time to get used to local reality.
Language barrier /communication difficulties / gestures, taboo topics	Preparation by sending organization. Language lessons in host country, good mentor.	-“-
Food issues	Get information about food in host country before the project. Notify host organization about special needs.	Cook his/her own food.
Lack of facilities (hot water, Internet, sharing	Make EVS insurance, notify volunteer how to use it. Volunteer and host organizations should be in constant	Find alternatives and be creative. Ask host



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space) and access to medical help /security	contact before voluntary service, so volunteer would know the local reality.	organization to help to find solutions.
Climate and geographical area (from flat land to mountains).	Volunteer and host organizations should be in constant contact before voluntary service, so volunteer would know the local reality. Preparation by sending organization.	Try to find solution to get things need (like clothes) on spot.
Medical risks (specific diseases), accidents (don't know local reality, traffic). Vaccinations needed.	Volunteer should have EVS insurance made before the service and European Health Card, also specific vaccinations depending of destination country. Volunteer should be guided by mentor to get to know local reality and risks.	Ask help from host organization to find solution (for example get vaccinations in host country or receive medicine by post). Use EVS insurance if needed.
To be accepted by locals (integration with locals)	Volunteer should be in contact with host organization before the project, find out local customs. Should attend on-arrival training and have mentor from whom to ask.	Try to explain cultural differences and educate the local community her/himself and if that doesn't work, then contact host organization for help, maybe mentor can join in activities.
Political situation, conflicts, economic situation, crime, extreme groups, mines	Host organization should provide volunteer and sending organization information about local reality and possible problems and dangers.	Try to stay safe, if situation is very serious, leave the country (quit EVS).
Emergency situations: earthquakes, floods, snakes.	Hosting and sending organization should have emergency contacts of volunteer. Volunteer must have EVS insurance and know how to use it. Volunteers should have information of first aid services (closest hospital etc). Volunteers should be prepared before the project for possible emergency situations and should know how to behave (action plan)	Use emergency plan.
Lack of opportunities to spend leisure time.	Online meetings between volunteer and host organization before to know local reality. Psychological preparation of volunteer for local reality.	Make your own leisure time activities. Collect your vacation days and use them to travel.
Not enough information about the project before. Not enough and not	Sending organization needs to provide adequate preparation for the volunteer and make sure volunteer	Attend on-arrival training ask additional



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specific training before the project.	attends pre-departure training. Volunteer should be in contact with host organization before the service.	support from host organization.
Job-substitution and not enough supervision to do the tasks. The roles and tasks are not clear.	Volunteer must be prepared by sending organization so he/she knows his/her rights and responsibilities. Define tasks with agreement before the service. Have professional coordinator and supportive mentor.	Ask mentor or sending organization for help and clarification.
Too difficult tasks for volunteer.	Volunteer should know tasks before the service. Assistance from host organization.	Do what you can as good as you can. Relax.
Lack of space for learning reflection.	Volunteer should attend pre-departure, on-arrival and mid-term evaluation meeting. Have learning reflection together with mentor.	Ask to attend EVS training cycle. Reflect yourself with help of learning diary or other tools.

## RETURN

- For sending organization
  1. Ensure the volunteer's reintegration back home
  2. Help the volunteer to share EVS experiences with the local community
  3. Support EVS project reporting - make sure the volunteer fills out the online questionnaire after their mobility (CO)
  4. Involve the ex-volunteer into preparation of the future EVS volunteers
  5. Guide the ex-volunteers to become mentors for incoming volunteers
  6. Help the ex-volunteers to join the annual EVS-event
  
- For coordinating / hosting organization (in case that CO and HO are the same) or the tasks are splitted in case that they are different
  1. Reporting the EVS project for the National Agency
  2. Give recommendation letters to the volunteers
  3. Promote the volunteers developed activities and their results
  4. Send to the sending association materials obtained and feedback
  5. Organize different follow-up activities
  6. Finalize the financial aspects with all the partners included
  7. Keep in touch with the volunteers and sending association for future cooperation





# Mentoring

## Profile of Mentor

- ✦ Has good knowledge of:
  - Erasmus+ and EVS
  - the hosting organization
  - the Hosting country & traditions
- ✦ has intercultural awareness
- ✦ is motivated to participate, learn, expand his/her horizons
- ✦ supportive
- ✦ has language and communication skills
- ✦ empathetic, understanding, active listener, available & open minded
- ✦ open to other cultures and customs
- ✦ willing to dedicate 2-5 hours per week
- ✦ preferable to have a psychological or social educational background

## Tasks of Mentor

- ✦ mediating between hosting organization and the volunteer
- ✦ supporting the integration of volunteer to the hosting culture
- ✦ supporting volunteer's learning process & reflection
- ✦ reflecting on existing activities and supporting the volunteer during the project
- ✦ accompanying during the first days (example: helping volunteer to buy a sim card , creating a bank account etc)
- ✦ informing volunteer about healthcare system and safety rules
- ✦ creating opportunities for social gatherings
- ✦ creating a safe environment
- ✦ helping volunteer to follow Youthpass process and support filling the Youthpass self-reflection part before the end of the project
- ✦ staying in touch with volunteer after the end of the project
- ✦ helping with conflict management and crisis

## Relations between Mentor and Volunteer

- ✦ structured, but friendly
- ✦ mutual respect
- ✦ based on the learning process
- ✦ confidential
- ✦ open for exchanging ideas

## Relations between the Mentor and Hosting Organization

- ✦ there should be signed contract in which the responsibilities and rights of both sides are defined
- ✦ mutual understanding about the mentorship should be created
- ✦ both sides need to realize their duties, responsibilities and rights
- ✦ relationship should be based on confidentiality, ethics, interaction and cooperation



## Time management

- ✦ regular meetings between volunteers and mentors. In the beginning more frequent and then at least once a week
- ✦ regular meetings between host organization and mentors depending on the needs (but at least once a month)
- ✦ mentor should connect the volunteer before the arrival (Skype, Facebook)
- ✦ deadlines should be respected

## But how do we motivate volunteers?

Mentor should:

- ✦ take initiative to contact volunteers
- ✦ create a sense of responsibility and importance of their tasks in the community
- ✦ help them implement their own ideas
- ✦ encourage them to take the initiative and become active
- ✦ support them during the whole process
- ✦ understand and explore their interests
- ✦ reward them when they achieve their goals

## How do we support volunteers through daily problems and stressful situations?

- ✦ Support them by offering new methodologies and approaches
- ✦ Be the “third party” of the problem and make them understand the others' point of view
- ✦ Support them to say “NO” when they don't feel ok with a situation
- ✦ facilitate relaxing methods and outdoor activities
- ✦ connect them with the local society and help them interact with others

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