



Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

International voluntary service



EUROPEAN UNION



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

T-KIT

International voluntary service

edited and written by Tony Geudens
with contributions by Simona Costanzo,
Peter Hofmann,
Luis Amorim
and Luba Pavlovova

Revised edition

Council of Europe Publishing

Welcome to the T-Kit series

You may have wondered: what does T-Kit mean? We can offer at least two answers. The first one is as simple as the full version in English: “training kit”. The second one has more to do with the sound of the word that may easily recall “ticket”, often needed while travelling. We would like to invite you to go on a trip, a journey to discover new ideas useful while working with young people.

More specifically, we would like to address youth workers and trainers and offer them theoretical and practical tools to work with and use when training young people. The T-Kit series is the result of a collective effort involving people from different cultural, professional and organisational backgrounds. Youth trainers, youth leaders in NGOs and professional writers have worked together in order to create high quality publications, which would address the needs of the target group while recognising the diversity of approaches across Europe to each subject.

The T-Kits are a product of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. Besides the T-Kits, the partnership has resulted in other areas of co-operation as training courses, the magazine “Coyote”, research and youth policy activities and an Internet site hosting also the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.

To find out more about developments in the EU-COE youth partnership (new publications, training course and seminar announcements, etc.) or to download the electronic version of the T-Kits, visit our website: <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>.

The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be translated, reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic (CD-Rom, Internet, etc.) or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the Directorate of Communication (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int).

Cover photo: Shutterstock

Cover design: Council of Europe

Layout: Documents and Publications Production Department (SPDP), Council of Europe

Council of Europe Publishing

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

<http://book.coe.int>

ISBN 978-92-871-7660-8

© Council of Europe and European Commission, July 2013

Printed at the Council of Europe

Contents

Introduction	5
The T-Kit is divided into five chapters and three appendices _____	7
1. The concept of international voluntary service	9
1.1 Words and their meaning _____	11
1.2 Different dimensions of voluntary service _____	11
1.3 Background of international voluntary service _____	13
1.4 Reasons for international voluntary service _____	18
1.5 Fields of work: some examples _____	20
2. Planning an international voluntary service	25
2.1 The actors _____	27
2.2 The project cycle _____	31
2.3 Finding the right partners for your project _____	40
2.4 Funding and budgeting _____	47
3. Getting ready for take-off	55
3.1 Recruitment and screening of volunteers _____	57
3.2 Preparing the actors _____	70
4. On the road	83
4.1 Induction and on-arrival orientation _____	85
4.2 Motivation _____	88
4.3 Ongoing support of volunteers _____	93
4.4 Conflict management _____	100
4.5 Crisis management _____	105
5. Returning home	111
5.1 Evaluation _____	113
5.2 Follow-up _____	116
5.3 Recognition and certification _____	119

Appendices	123
<hr/>	
Appendix 1: Glossary _____	125
Appendix 2: Overview of international voluntary service organisations, programmes and platforms _____	127
Appendix 3: Further reading _____	128
The authors	133
<hr/>	

Introduction

“International voluntary service is not an aim in itself but a tool”

Ever since the beginning of the movement, volunteers have been driven by the wish to contribute positively to today’s societies, working towards peaceful and just living conditions through a common effort. Peace and international understanding, friendship and co-operation form part of the overall aims of voluntary service. These are pursued through a common commitment based on a free personal decision and through the coming together of individuals and groups of different backgrounds. At the same time the volunteers contribute to concrete projects in need.

But not only society or concrete projects benefit from volunteering. These international voluntary service (IVS) projects also have an educational impact, both on the participants in such projects as well as on the communities in which they act. Through working and living together, volunteers and local people exchange their views, learn new skills from each other and hopefully adopt an open and constructive attitude towards (cultural, religious, sexual, organisational and other) difference. The international dimension allows them to learn from and with people from another background than their own.

These aims and objectives are at the centre of IVS. However, not all of them are self-explanatory, nor do they become automatically apparent to everyone involved in an IVS project. A lot of the learning processes outlined above need to be facilitated; otherwise a project intended to foster intercultural learning could well turn into an experience of cultural frustration, if, for example, the volunteers are not properly prepared for the experience abroad. Even though an IVS project is based on voluntary and unpaid contributions by individuals, the organisation of such a project needs to be carefully planned and requires adequate preparation and follow-up and considerable human and financial resources.

This T-Kit has been developed as a tool for youth workers to support the process of organising an IVS project. It was revised and updated in 2011, the European Year of Volunteering and the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteering. The T-Kit describes a number of framework conditions that contribute to a successful voluntary service project. The text outlines some of the traps to avoid and offers ways of introducing both the volunteers and the organisations to the voluntary service adventure. At the same time it can be used as inspiration for trainers in the field of IVS activities.

IVS relates closely to the objectives of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, within which this T-Kit was developed. The two partner institutions attach a high importance to the issue of volunteering, in particular that of young people. The Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth supports the development, quality and recognition of youth work in Europe and one of the priority topics is indeed volunteering. Given this framework and the limited number of pages, we decided to focus on a European audience, even though most of the described principles also apply in national or intercontinental projects. We will focus on youth projects, but you can use or adapt the tools for all ages. And for the sake of accessibility to IVS programmes, we will specifically address projects with non-specialised volunteers (see also Chapter 1.2 “Different dimensions of voluntary service”). So it is up to you to pick and adapt those elements from this T-Kit that you feel appropriate for the kind of project you are organising.

The T-Kit is divided into five chapters and three appendices

Chapter 1 goes more deeply into the concept of IVS, explaining the meaning of some words (1.1), the dimensions of voluntary service (1.2) and the socio-historical framework (1.3). It reflects on the reasons why people volunteer (1.4) and gives some examples of possible fields of work (1.5) for inspiration.

How to implement an IVS project is discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 addresses issues related to planning the project, describing who the actors are and their responsibilities (2.1). It gives an overview of the project cycle of an international voluntary service project (2.2). Last but not least it gives some attention to where you can find money and how to manage it (2.3).

Chapters 3 to 5 give a chronological overview of the IVS and the actions to be taken. First of all Chapter 3 describes how to get ready for the departure of the volunteers, addressing topics such as partner finding (3.1), recruitment (3.2) and the preparation of all actors involved (3.3). Chapter 4 tackles the tasks that would ideally be carried out during the IVS: induction and on-arrival training (4.1), keeping volunteers and also staff motivated (4.2), providing the necessary support for the volunteers (4.3) and dealing with conflicts (4.4) or crisis situations if they arise (4.5). Chapter 5 gives suggestions on how to use the end of an IVS as the beginning for something new: evaluation and taking stock is an important element in this process (5.1) but there are also ideas for follow-up arising from the voluntary service abroad (5.2). And increasingly on the agenda of different institutions is the recognition and certification of such non-formal learning experiences (5.3).

In the appendices you can find additional resources. Appendix 1 gives you the definitions of some key words that the authors of this T-Kit use. Appendix 2 gives an overview of different organisations and their IVS programmes, and their contact details of course. Last but not least Appendix 3 provides you with suggestions for further reading if this T-Kit has given you the taste for more ...

Get inspired!

1. The concept of international voluntary service

1.1 Words and their meaning

“Volunteering” or “voluntary service”: is there a difference? Knowing that every concept has different national and local connotations, we wanted to clarify the distinction we make between these words and the main issues underlining these concepts.

1.1.1 Volunteering?

We may as well start from the beginning and look at the original Latin word *voluntas*, which is synonymous with free will, personal choice or option. “Volunteering” implies a wish to offer one’s time, effort, skills and goodwill for the accomplishment of various tasks, such as collecting litter in a park or helping young children with their homework. Voluntary activities performed on an individual or non-structured basis are also called “informal volunteering”.

1.1.2 Service?

Let us look at “service”. The word is again an original Latin word, *servitium*, and synonyms often used to describe it are words such as duty, work, employment or labour. Intrinsic to this expression is thus the notion of providing something to someone and doing so within a certain period of time and in view of a previously agreed outcome, mostly of mutual benefit for those involved in this arrangement. This type of structured and organised volunteering is sometimes also labelled “formal volunteering”.

1.1.3 Voluntary service!

So, like “volunteering”, “voluntary service” is also spontaneous, based on individual free will and unpaid (although, sometimes, some form of financial compensation may be offered for costs incurred). However, besides this, voluntary service is also a structured activity during a fixed period of time, based on an agreement that provides all the parties involved with an appropriate framework of rules and procedures that inform all the partners about their duties and rights. Voluntary service implies a more formal definition of objectives and means, and is thus usually implemented by specialised voluntary service organisations that people can join in order to respond to their personal wish for volunteering.

Therefore we will be talking about “voluntary service” in this T-Kit.

1.2 Different dimensions of voluntary service

1.2.1 International or European

In this T-Kit we will be talking about international voluntary service (IVS). So one dimension determining voluntary service is the geographical scope. The challenge in involving participants from different countries is an intercultural one. IVS can be a valuable learning experience, but equally a disaster if not well prepared. The intercultural dimension can, however, also be present in a project at a national or local level where different (religious, ethnic, sexual, etc.) groups from the same country are involved. Travel costs or visa problems can make you opt to bring people together around a cause at a national or regional level.

Since this T-Kit is a co-operation between two different European institutions, you could ask yourself why we do not talk about European voluntary service? That is because we do not want to create confusion between this T-Kit and the activities of the European Commission’s Youth in Action programme called European Voluntary Service (EVS). The ideas in this T-Kit

are valid for any type of international voluntary service, thus also for EVS. We look at EVS in more detail in Chapter 2.4.2.

1.2.2 Short or long term

Voluntary service projects vary greatly in their nature and duration. In terms of their duration we can distinguish between short-term projects, generally called “work camps”, lasting between a few days and one month. Some organisations even organise weekend work camps aimed at local volunteers who are not available during the week. The second and third categories in terms of duration are “medium-term projects”, lasting between one and six months, and “long-term projects”, exceeding this length of time.

Voluntary service projects can be group projects, where individuals or small groups from different backgrounds work together as a larger mixed group. This is usually the case in work camps. Medium- and long-term projects more often work with individual placements of one or a few volunteers for a longer period of time. These volunteers are sometimes called MTV or LTV respectively (medium- or long-term volunteer).

1.2.3 For young people

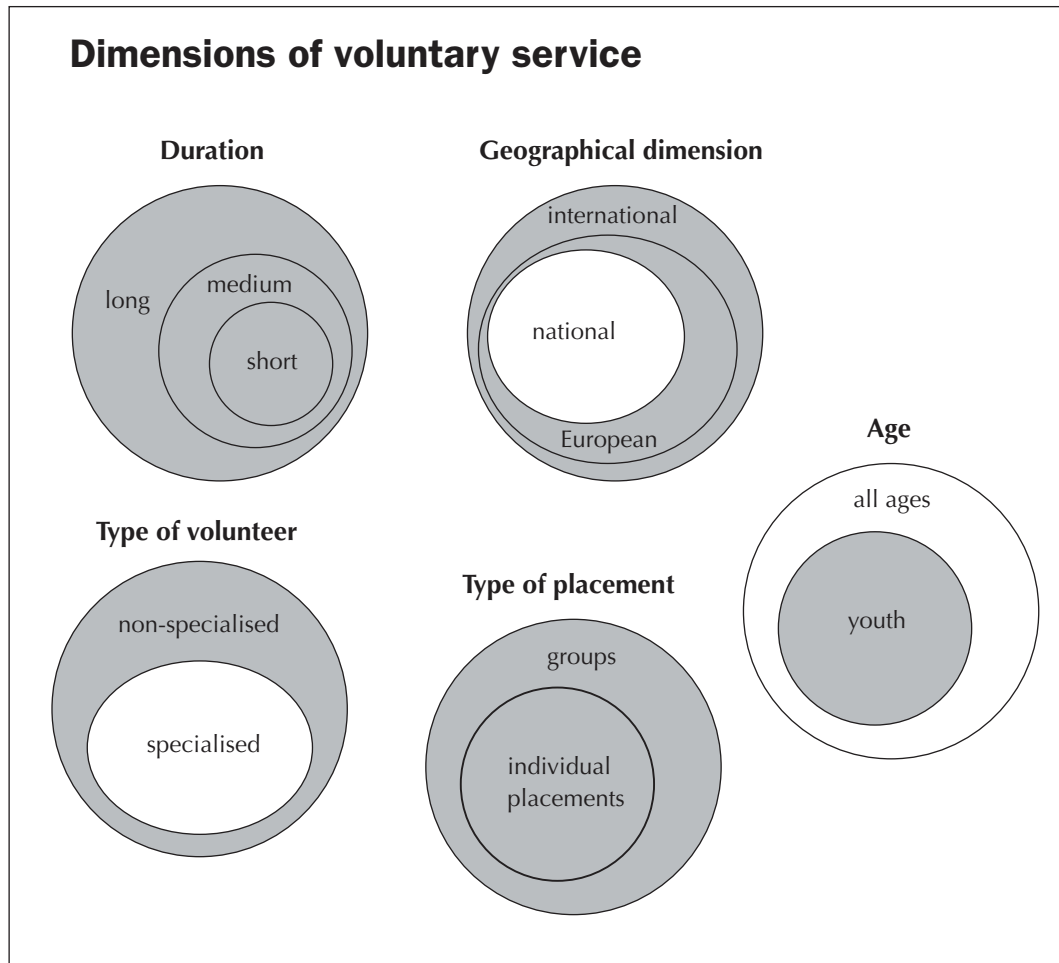
In the framework of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, we will mainly be talking about IVS programmes for young people. The age definition of “youth” varies from one organisation and country to another. Usually 18 years is the lower age limit, because of the legal responsibility of the project organisers for younger participants, but some specific volunteering projects are open to teenagers below this age. The upper limit lies generally between 25 and 30 years of age, referring to the period of transition between the completion of secondary education, the period of professional orientation and the stabilisation of life patterns.

1.2.4 Non-specialised or professionals

Depending on their focus, voluntary service organisations can work with non-specialised volunteers or volunteers with specific required professional skills. Organisations working with volunteers with a certain professional experience tend to work with adults who are placed on long-term projects (for example, United Nations Volunteers). Organisations focusing on youth voluntary service are generally open to participants without specific professional skills. On the contrary, they use voluntary service as a tool for acquiring skills and experience in a certain field, at the same time as contributing to a project. Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of voluntary service organisations and their respective focus.

1.2.5 The focus of this T-Kit

To conclude: this T-Kit focuses on voluntary service projects of an international European nature of any duration, working with non-specialised, mainly young volunteers, starting at 18 years of age. The placements can be either individual or in groups. It only takes a bit of imagination to adapt the tools offered in this T-Kit to your type of voluntary service. In Chapter 1.5 “Fields of work: some examples”, you will find a number of specific examples to get a better understanding of the range of possible projects.



1.3 Background of international voluntary service

International voluntary service programmes do not exist in a vacuum. They usually have deep roots in history and are reactions to the needs of (young) people and of society in general. Therefore we will have a brief look at the historical development of IVS programmes and at the relation between such programmes and the social welfare system.

1.3.1 A bit of history

The beginning

Esne, France, 1920: a group of young people from different European countries came together to help rebuild some of the houses destroyed in the First World War. The initiative for this first international voluntary work camp came from the Swiss pacifist Pierre Cérésolle. He was convinced that a joint international group effort to help people in need would be a means of building human bridges across the deep trenches made by the war and a way of promoting peace and understanding. This work camp marked the beginning of the era of private organisations setting up international voluntary youth service programmes: programmes with strict voluntary participation, open to both sexes, in a co-operative atmosphere, with space for personal development.

At the same time some national governments in Europe – in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Hungary – were trying to develop compulsory service programmes for young men, offering similar educational outcomes to those of military service. The reason for this was that the peace treaties after the First World War prohibited compulsory military service in the “defeated” countries while their governments still wanted to “educate” their young men according to national values and strengthen their national identity. However, due to international opposition none of these programmes was implemented. Up to this day there is a tension between voluntary service and compulsory civil service replacing conscription, in particular where it is related to the question of state investment in the latter.

1920 to 1945: youth service programmes in the context of military conflicts

The four horrific years of the First World War left Europe in ruins and its people in despair. Some believed that international encounters of young people who jointly engage in work for the community would lead to bonds and friendship across national boundaries and so could prevent future conflicts. Out of this belief several organisations (a majority of them with a religious background) started international voluntary service programmes. Three of these still exist today: Service Civil International, Youth Action for Peace (Deutschland) and the International Reconciliation Union (Internationaler Versöhnungsbund).

All three organisations were fairly revolutionary for their time – not so much regarding their aims but regarding their principles. Their activities were open to both sexes (in a time when women were still fighting for their basic rights) and they avoided all kinds of military drill in their work camps. They believed strongly in the principle that the young people should engage voluntarily in their activities, principles that have remained valid up to today.

However, at the beginning of the 1930s the big economic recession after the crisis in 1929 made national governments play with the idea of big youth service programmes as a remedy for (youth) unemployment. The best-known example of such a governmental youth service programme in those days was the *Freiwillige Arbeitsdienst* (Voluntary Work Service) in Germany. Introduced in 1931, the programme allowed young unemployed people under 25 to do voluntary service for up to 20 weeks, mainly in the field of youth and social work. Soon the programme was enlarged, the government got more and more involved and enforced stricter rules and regulations. Once the National Socialist Party came into power they introduced the compulsory *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (*Reich* Work Service) for all young people. The nature of the work often changed according to the specific needs resulting from the war. They provided services for civic and agricultural but also military construction projects.

After 1945: civil society slowly taking over

The situation in 1945 in western Europe was very similar to the one 27 years earlier, in terms of people in need, necessary rebuilding and the need for new bridges between nations. The difference was that civil society could draw on past experiences and thus could more quickly set up numerous IVS programmes. Right after the war the focus of most of the programmes was on reconstruction but towards the second half of the 1950s a lot of organisations were looking for new fields of work. It soon appeared that there was a huge demand for support in the social care sector – hospitals, homes for elderly or disabled people, children and youth centres. Later on, with the student protests and demonstrations in 1968, there was a strong movement to develop a political profile within most voluntary service non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Lectures and discussions were introduced in the work camps and they co-operated, for example, with anti-nuclear power movements or peace initiatives.

The situation in eastern Europe was quite different under socialist rule. Communist authorities tended to control any type of association, including volunteering, and people’s leisure time e.g. through mandatory unpaid supplementary work, sometimes called voluntary or patriotic

work. This caused most people to have negative associations with “voluntary work”, which explains why the involvement was not as high as could be expected.¹

After a few years of preoccupation with reconstruction in many western European countries the discussion of compulsory military service resumed again. By 1955 they introduced such a service again, especially in the light of the developing cold war (between the Soviet Union and the United States). Confronted with groups of young people strongly opposed to military service, most governments in western Europe developed the idea of alternative “civil service” for the good of the community. In most countries, however, service for the community took place under less favourable conditions – it was longer, involved more working hours or got less financial support. With the first post-war generation (after 1968) the number of “conscientious objectors” boomed, to the extent that the social care sector became gradually dependent on them. Hence the problems arising from terminating compulsory military service and establishing a professional army.

The role of supra-national institutions and organisations

UNESCO was the first supra-national institution to play an active role in the field of IVS. In 1948 UNESCO founded the Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS). From the very beginning CCIVS functioned as an umbrella organisation for all NGOs in this field. It aims to share experiences between member organisations, to lobby for better conditions for IVS programmes and to provide information about these opportunities.

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

Since the early 1990s the European Commission has funded international voluntary service projects for young people within the framework of the Youth for Europe programme. In 1996 they established European Voluntary Service (EVS), which offers financial support for mainly long-term voluntary service projects for young people (18 to 30) in the European Union and EFTA member states and to a certain extent also with other regions in the world. Since 2000, EVS has become part of the European Commission’s programme for youth, currently called Youth in Action. A shorter version of EVS has been created for young people with fewer opportunities, who would not be able to go on an EVS experience otherwise (see also Chapter 2.4.2 “Funders and funding possibilities”).

Last but not least the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations and the European Volunteer Centre should be mentioned here as major umbrella organisations of international NGOs in this field. The Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO) strives to achieve recognition of voluntary service as a powerful tool for social change, and for its non-formal educational value. AVSO carries out research and lobbies at European level to remove barriers to long-term volunteering and the mobility of volunteers. The European Volunteer Centre (CEV) from its side brings together national and regional volunteer centres from across Europe under one umbrella. CEV supports and promotes voluntary activities and speaks for volunteerism in the European Union. It provides a platform for exchange and networking among its members.

1. See “Volunteering in Eastern Europe: one of the missing links?” Paper for the Round Table on Globalization, Integration and Social Development in Central and Eastern Europe, Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, 6-8 September 2003, online at: www.iccv.ro/oldiccv/romana/conf/conf.sibiu.2003/abstracts.htm (fourth link).

A European Year of Volunteering

The United Nations launched the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. This was a key initiative in raising awareness of the role and potential of volunteers worldwide. Some 10 years later, the European Commission declared 2011 the European Year of Volunteering (EYV). The EYV set out to celebrate the voluntary commitment of millions of people in Europe. Roughly a quarter of Europeans work in their communities in their free time without being paid. EYV recognised the contributions to society of numerous volunteering organisations and put many volunteering initiatives in the spotlight. At the same time, EYV challenged the three quarters of the European population who do not do any volunteering (yet).

The European Year of Volunteering was co-ordinated by the EYV2011 Alliance, which organised many events, exhibitions, live demonstrations and other activities. A number of key conferences laid the foundations for policy work and reform initiatives in the European Union member states, to create better conditions for volunteering in Europe.

There were also many other initiatives – of the UN, Red Cross and various international and other organisations – supporting further promotion and development of volunteering. It is fair to say that EYV created a long lasting legacy. See more at www.eyv2011.eu.

Suggestion for training

In the course of preparation for long-term voluntary service abroad, it is a valuable exercise for volunteers to do some historical research. They could have the task of gathering some information to answer the following questions:

- What kinds of voluntary service programmes for young people exist in your country? Since when have they been running?
- Who set up these programmes and why?
- What kind of programmes existed in the past but stopped?
- Why did they stop?
- What was the role of the government in former times and now in respect to IVS?

When the volunteers come together again for a preparatory weekend they should bring along a short summary of their findings in poster form (or using other creative means). In the group they should exchange their findings and discuss what they found surprising or interesting.

Through this exercise the volunteers can become aware of the role such programmes play in a broad political context. This awareness can help to develop the intercultural sensitivity of the volunteer while abroad.

1.3.2 Current discussions

There are several political discussions in European countries about voluntary work. Firstly, there is the discussion about the contribution of volunteers to the economy and society, and what governments should provide to the voluntary sector in return. Secondly, there is the delicate relation between voluntary work and the labour market: are volunteers looking for work experience, rather than contributing to society? Last but not least, if volunteering is a great learning experience, how do we then recognise what volunteers learn? In the limited space of this T-Kit we want to make representatives active in the field of international voluntary service aware of the political discussion and their potential role in it.

The economic weight of volunteering

According to the organisers of the European Year of Volunteering, approximately one quarter of Europeans carry out some tasks for the benefit of the community without getting paid for it. Millions of European citizens contribute voluntarily to the welfare of society, to leisure time provisions, to social networks, to environmental issues and so on. It is impossible to imagine what would happen if all volunteers stopped their unpaid activities. Society would probably suffer dearly.

The European Volunteer Centre lists in its Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe that “the time devoted to volunteering in associations in France is equivalent to 716 000 full-time jobs in 2002. Belgians devote five hours per week to non-paid voluntary activities ... equivalent to 200 000 full-time jobs. In the UK, 23 million people volunteer each year, providing a workforce equivalent to 180 000 full-time workers. In Poland around 5.4 million citizens volunteered in 2004, which is 18.3% of the population.” The Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project in 37 countries across the world² revealed that 44% of the workforce of non-profit organisations in those countries is actually composed of volunteers.

This is a weighty argument to convince policy makers of the benefits of volunteering. Advocacy organisations, like the European Volunteer Centre, use economic data to ask for better framework conditions for volunteers, because it is clear that the contribution of the voluntary sector is vital for society, but also for the economy. An estimate puts the contribution of formal volunteering in the UK at 7.9% of GDP (about 65 billion euros).

Governments realise more and more that they need “active citizens” who give time, energy and resources to the community at large. They would not be able to finance all the contributions by volunteers to the social welfare system, to local communities, to the health sector or to associative life. Many countries have therefore improved the conditions for volunteering or launched national volunteering programmes.

The flip side of the coin is that trade unions argue that voluntary work replaces paid jobs, which brings us to the next hot issue.

The delicate relation between voluntary work and the labour market

Indeed, there is often strong competition between schemes supporting the integration of young people in the labour market on the one side, and voluntary service programmes on the other. Voluntary service programmes often lack recognition and face the difficulty that in hardly any country do “volunteers” exist in legal terms – either you are paid to work or you are in education. As a consequence the status of volunteers is very shaky (for example, for taxes or social security). Different organisations and countries are pushing for legislation on the status of volunteers. Germany for example, provides legal status to volunteers doing their *Freiwillige Soziale Jahr* (Voluntary Social Year) or European Voluntary Service.

In an ever changing society, voluntary service is looked at to address new needs. In times of economic crisis, for instance, young people are the first victims of unemployment. Their lack of experience and skills makes it difficult for them to find a job and become economically independent. Worse even, they are at risk of long-term unemployment and social exclusion. To avoid a lost generation drowning in the storm of a job market in crisis, national and European policy makers set out to combat youth unemployment. One way to do so is to make formal and vocational schooling more adapted to the labour market. Another way is to increase the employability of young people and give them “work experience”. Voluntary work can respond to this need and thus contribute to young people’s chances of finding a job.

But is it the role of youth work and voluntary service organisations to support employment?

Volunteering and competences

Maybe you never thought of it, but volunteers actually learn a lot in their voluntary activities. They learn and practise many practical competences, whether through activities with children, administration and paperwork for the non-profit organisation, working together with other volunteers, and so on. This list could go on forever.

2. See <http://ccss.jhu.edu/research-projects/comparative-nonprofit-sector>.

Leaving aside the question whether acquiring competences should be the main reason for volunteering, volunteers do gain valuable experiences through the roles and tasks they carry out. At some stage in life, a volunteer might want to use this experience to find a job, to get credits for school or to move up in the organisation. Then we inevitably come to the question: how can a volunteer or the organisation show the competences gained?

There have been many initiatives to deal with this question. Organisations (local or national) have created volunteer portfolios or volunteer passports documenting achievements and experiences. In some countries, centres have been set up to assess your prior learning and even give you a qualification (diploma) based on your experience (if you reach certain minimum standards).

Within the European Commission's Youth in Action programme, all participants (e.g. EVS volunteers) are entitled to a Youthpass certificate, describing not only the project the young person participated in, but also the key competences gained. The Council of Europe's Youth Directorate has developed a portfolio in which (voluntary) youth leaders and youth workers can identify, assess and describe their competences, based on European quality standards. Within the Europass framework, a European Skills Passport is being developed to document competences gained in informal learning, volunteering or other experiences.

Documenting the competences gained from volunteering is beneficial, not only for the volunteer but also for the organisation in which the volunteer is active. The organisation can show its contribution to developing people's potential. This, in turn, leads to more recognition of the good work done. The organisation can profile itself as a learning provider.

Questions for reflection

Any organiser of – national or international – voluntary service programmes for young people should be conscious of these discussions. Try to answer the following questions to find out what political situation you are in:

- Do your volunteers potentially replace paid workers? Have you any written agreements about this with your hosting organisations?
- Where do you draw the line as to what volunteers can provide and what only paid staff should provide?
- Does your programme aim at providing the volunteers with skills and/or professional qualifications? How do you follow up on that? What recognition tools do you use?
- Is voluntary service a means of supporting the integration of young people into the labour market? Why (not)?
- What is the role of governments vis-à-vis private voluntary service programmes?
- Are there any laws in your country about voluntary work in general or international voluntary service?

1.4 Reasons for international voluntary service

1.4.1 Are you an idealist or a pragmatist?

Different people and organisations will have diverse opinions on the benefits that international voluntary service brings to society as a whole and to volunteers in particular. Some organisations will see IVS as a way of fostering tolerance, intercultural learning, social and cultural progress and the overall development of local communities. Other organisations will see IVS as a great opportunity for young people coming from difficult backgrounds in terms of personal capacity building, training for skills and even social reintegration in some cases.

Knowing the reason that your organisation wishes to engage human and financial resources in implementing IVS is important not only because it relates directly to your overall mission, but also because a project without a fundamental reason for existence will not be easy to evaluate in terms of success. Therefore we invite you to answer the following questionnaire.

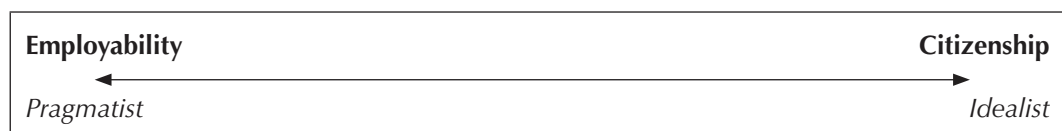
Questionnaire: Why do you do it?

Tick a circle on the continuum between “I do not agree” (on the left) and “I agree” (on the right)

<i>Spectrum citizenship–employability</i>	<i>I do not agree</i> <i>I agree</i>
Voluntary service, as the word says, is there to serve others in need	O ₁ – O ₂ – O ₃ – O ₄ – O ₅
Doing voluntary service is making a political statement about society, showing what is lacking (social care, help to communities in need, etc.)	O ₁ – O ₂ – O ₃ – O ₄ – O ₅
Voluntary service is a good preparation to get a better job	O ₅ – O ₄ – O ₃ – O ₂ – O ₁
Voluntary service is an altruistic philosophy of life	O ₁ – O ₂ – O ₃ – O ₄ – O ₅
Voluntary projects look good on your CV	O ₅ – O ₄ – O ₃ – O ₂ – O ₁
<i>Spectrum organisational growth–personal growth</i>	<i>I do not agree</i> <i>I agree</i>
Volunteers are extra motivated hands for a project	O ₁ – O ₂ – O ₃ – O ₄ – O ₅
It is important that volunteers learn something new during their voluntary service	O ₅ – O ₄ – O ₃ – O ₂ – O ₁
Volunteers are the most important actors in a voluntary service	O ₅ – O ₄ – O ₃ – O ₂ – O ₁
Even though they are volunteers, they still need to do a good and efficient job	O ₁ – O ₂ – O ₃ – O ₄ – O ₅
Voluntary service has to provide the volunteer with enriching experiences	O ₅ – O ₄ – O ₃ – O ₂ – O ₁
Total points:	
<i>Sum up the points associated with the circles of your answers. If your score is above 40, you are most likely an “idealist”; if you reach less than 20, you are probably a “pragmatist”. Read more about these profiles below.</i>	

The following profiles describe extremes of different dimensions. Most organisations represent a mix of these opposites. You can put your organisation to the test and see if everybody's perception of the reasons for doing it are similar.

Spectrum: employability–citizenship



- **Idealists**

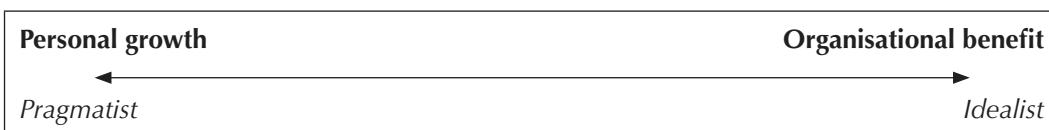
These organisations will put the accent on citizenship as the reason why they run international voluntary service. Citizenship in this sense is understood as the active participation of individuals in society, a form of commitment not only to others but also to the community in general. Organisations that look at volunteering from a specifically altruistic point of view would argue that the main reason for putting together international voluntary service projects

is to allow young people to give their free time for the benefit of other individuals and society in general, and in this way to promote citizenship.

- **Pragmatists**

On the other extreme of the spectrum there will be those who put the accent on employability, which refers to the individual's potential to find work. It relates thus to the sum of qualifications and skills that people have and that make it possible for them to attain a certain career or job. Organisations that take the view that young people need to be made employable if they are to succeed in life will look at international voluntary service as an instrument to build their capacity to achieve that. They will recruit young people to join their international voluntary service, not so much for the benefit of the community, but to increase their skills, give them some work experience and make it easier for them to find jobs.

Spectrum: personal growth–organisational benefit



- **Idealists**

These organisations will run international voluntary service because they see volunteers as essential human resources to accomplish their tasks and provide their client groups with specific services. Their attention will be on the content and outcomes of their activities and the way volunteers can help to enrich and deliver things efficiently. In this case, if the organisation does not benefit directly from international voluntary service they will see no point in doing it.

- **Pragmatists**

In this case, organisations will consider volunteers to be the centre of their attention and the main purpose of their activities. They will dismiss the impact on the local community as a purely theoretical exercise and will thus decide to concentrate their efforts in helping the volunteers to be exposed to new personal experiences, to expand their horizons and in the process to learn more about themselves and to grow as human beings.

Organisations that put an emphasis on citizenship also tend to see international voluntary service as more related to the benefits that it can bring to the organisation. Those that see employability as one of their main guiding principles will emphasise more the personal gains of international voluntary service. These opposite concepts are a continuum and all positions between the two extremes are possible. In practice, every organisation needs to find the right balance between benefits for the community or the organisation and for the volunteer. None of these dimensions needs to exclude completely the other. In fact, only the combination of both renders a project potentially successful; the satisfaction of a volunteer about the experiences and skills acquired remains incomplete without the sense of having effectively contributed towards a useful project for the local community.

1.5 Fields of work: some examples

Go to people, live with them, love them, learn from them. Start with what they know, build with what they have, and work with the best leaders, so when the work is done, people can say “we did this ourselves”. (Lao Tzu, 700 BC)

The areas of work of international voluntary service projects can be very varied. We try in this chapter to give an overview of different fields of work. The various projects cannot easily be classified, because they are often working in different fields at the same time.

However, all voluntary service projects are based on some common aspects: the exchange and encounter between people with different cultural backgrounds, living together and sharing everyday responsibilities. The aim is not to teach the persons they work with, but to develop skills together, to exchange experiences, to live together and to grow with each other. Even without specific knowledge in a given field, with the help of some experienced project leaders everybody together develops amazing results. The activity of the volunteers often adds an additional dimension to the daily work carried out by professional staff without replacing them in their chores.

1.5.1 Social projects

In social projects, volunteers work with people facing difficulties. Projects can centre around work with refugees, minorities, children, elderly people or disadvantaged youth – for example organising play schemes for children in poor urban areas or creative activities with elderly people. Art is often used as a tool to develop activities with the intended beneficiaries. Other projects focus more on a theme (like environment or cultural heritage) but include participants with special needs (see also 3.1.4 “Voluntary service for ‘disadvantaged young people’”).

Some inspiration from Raval Pluricultural

The Raval Pluricultural project of SCI-Catalunya aims to enable the different immigrant populations of a deprived area of the city of Barcelona, the Raval, to live together. Each year international volunteers work together in a work camp with youngsters coming from immigrant families, who spend their leisure time in special centres (*Casals*). The international environment helps to raise the youngsters’ awareness of their own identity while they learn to respect the difference of others and the richness of multiculturalism. Between the work camps, which take place in the summertime, a series of activities carried out with local volunteers crystallise the work. Activities have included an exhibition of paintings by the youngsters on the theme of immigration, which was shown in different places in Barcelona. The idea was to interest their parents and involve them, step by step, in the *convivència* (cohabitation) process through discussions and encounters with and between other parents and the local population. These activities also helped to create new links with various local institutions. The partnership between institutions and NGOs is seen as a way of dealing with conflicts in areas of cities where the classic method of police control is not appropriate any more.

1.5.2 Environmental projects

Many organisations are engaged in protecting the natural environment by creating biotopes, planting trees, cleaning rivers and the sea or constructing educational paths in a protected environment. Environmental projects may also focus on methods of waste reduction and creative ways of recycling. The projects raise awareness – among the participants, the local population and visitors – of the richness of the nature around them and the need to protect it.

Some inspiration from FUDEBIOL

FUDEBIOL is a non-profit organisation that aims to preserve the sources of drinkable water in the Perez Zeledon region in Costa Rica. Three volunteers (from Spain, Italy and Portugal) went to work in the organisation’s educational centre in the mountains near the Quebradas River. The centre raises awareness about rainforest preservation among the local community. The volunteers organised activities for young people to get involved in nature protection in the area; they also developed educational activities and new routes for ecotourism.

1.5.3 Educational projects and professional training

All projects include educational elements to some extent. Educational projects are explicitly aimed at disseminating a skill or raising awareness about certain issues (for example, health or racism) among a specific group of beneficiaries. Educational projects play an important role, especially in developing countries. Projects are often ongoing, with international volunteers supporting local volunteers who are familiar with the specific local needs, such as teachers of basic education in literacy and numeracy programmes. Volunteers establish libraries or produce teaching materials. Even though some of these educational projects require a more specialised volunteer profile, there are also projects based on the participatory approach of peer-to-peer education, on an equal level with the beneficiaries (such as pottery workshops or sharing agricultural skills). Products from such projects can add another source of income.

Some inspiration from ABC with Carlitos

This community-based educational project in Honduras aims at creating *ludotheques* (game libraries), given the absence of alternative methods of teaching and learning. The centres are set up with the help of European volunteers, who also engage in fund-raising activities for the centres. Some *ludotheques* are based at schools, others are linked to the municipality. Their activities and their success depend largely on the commitment and effort of the volunteers.

1.5.4 Emergency action, prevention and reconstruction

Some organisations specialise in intervention after human-made and natural disasters. They tend to work with local stand-by volunteers who know what action to take and get frequent training. Short-term international volunteers can contribute to activities related to prevention of disasters or after the immediate emergency relief of the experts, when the terrain is relatively safe and when many helpful hands are needed. Examples of such projects include forest-fire watches during the dry season, the reconstruction of public buildings after conflict situations, educational campaigns in endangered areas for natural disasters, helping to ensure the basic necessities of food or sanitation and the psychological care of the victims.

Some inspiration from L'Aquila

The earthquake of 6 April 2009 destroyed large parts of L'Aquila. The Abruzzo Support Network (Rete di Economia Solidale Abruzzese) was created to attract attention and solidarity to the region. Alongside the architectural and structural reconstruction, the network also focused on reconstruction of social relations in an area affected by such an unexpected event. International volunteers helped reinstate places of social interest: cleaning the local park, renovating playgrounds for the children, repairing drinking-water fountains, etc.

1.5.5 Rural development and renovation

Many rural communities, especially in less developed countries, suffer from a lack of infrastructure. Volunteers help to alleviate this situation by constructing simple latrines to prevent diseases, wells to provide clean drinking water or schools to foster education. Projects in rural areas are often accompanied by educational elements. Renovation projects, usually focusing on the renovation or improvement of run-down public buildings, are common in industrialised countries. Groups of international volunteers can work with school students to paint murals in schools, repair damaged furniture or create a sports field together.

Some inspiration from UNA Exchange

UNA Exchange has organised a series of over 100 work camps in Carmarthenshire, a rural area suffering from economic difficulty and depopulation in Wales, UK. These projects have reopened historic footpaths (used for access to work, pilgrimages, tourism or moving animals) to provide a footpath network along with information boards that recall the history of the area. This has multiple benefits: improving public access, encouraging tourism and the local economy, raising awareness of local heritage and conserving the built and natural environment.

1.5.6 Peace and reconciliation

International and intercultural voluntary service projects aim at promoting dialogue and the resolution of conflicts. Projects focusing on peace and reconciliation are often based on a mix of study and work projects. They bring together people from different backgrounds to discuss issues of human rights, a culture of peace or simply to share experiences from the realities of their different daily lives. As a work project they may reconstruct or renovate something together, as a gesture demonstrating the potential for co-operation. The simple fact of living together for some time and sharing the experience of dividing everyday chores can bring about important insights for the participants in such a project.

Some inspiration from the Mostar Intercultural Festival MIFOC

This project is run by a network of two French and nine local organisations. It began with the creation of an intercultural festival, but the project now has three pillars: European exchanges, the festival and local social action to build up civil society. The French organisations also run activities with volunteers in France to raise awareness there of the situation in Mostar.

1.5.7 Cultural heritage preservation

As in the projects related to emergencies, in projects dealing with cultural heritage preservation, volunteers often work alongside professional experts. The involvement of non-specialised volunteers in such projects fosters the development of simple preservation techniques. These projects raise awareness among the participants and the local population of the value and importance of the patrimony surrounding them. Cultural heritage refers to both the tangible heritage (renovation of historic buildings, archaeological projects, etc.) and intangible heritage (transmission of traditional knowledge and handcrafts).

Some inspiration from Union Rempart

The French organisation Union Rempart every year restores historic monuments with the help of volunteers from all over the world. The castle of Sémignan was restored in order to create a space for cultural and pedagogical activities, a conservatory for regional arts and traditions in order to pass on the ancient knowledge to young people. The volunteers cleaned the surroundings and were involved in restoring the foundations of the castle.

1.5.8 Support for youth work

Volunteers in youth organisations are an undeniable source of support and innovation. Many youth organisations are voluntary structures with no or few paid staff. Therefore youth organisations depend greatly on the contributions of motivated people who want to create leisure-time and non-formal learning opportunities for young people.

Some youth organisations are run 100% by volunteers, so the voluntary tasks are as diverse as in any organisation: running activities and events, creating promotion material, budgeting, motivating the young people, capacity-building administration, bookkeeping and cleaning.

Some inspiration from Arendonk

The 't Onkrooid youth club in Arendonk, Belgium, is a youth centre that is entirely run by volunteers. Young people with ideas can come to the meetings and propose their activities. If a majority approves the idea, the activity can be organised by the young people. Different volunteers are responsible for organisation, budgeting and bookkeeping, communication and promotion, actually running the activity and cleaning up after it. And if members of the youth club want to get better at organising, they can follow training from the Flemish federation of youth centres – voluntarily of course.

1.5.9 Virtual volunteering

In this day and age of the World Wide Web, virtual volunteering has become a reality. You no longer have to go out to dedicate time to a cause: you can do it from your computer, and many volunteers do carry out tasks “off-site”. Other terms used for it are micro-volunteering, crowd-sourcing and tele-mentoring. Bite-sized assignments are executed by a large group of volunteers who each chip in a bit of time.

Some examples of online volunteering are: forwarding information within social networks, rating or activating fellow profiles, taking part in online questionnaires, translating information on a multilingual website, posting an answer on a forum or contributing to information online; Wikipedia and SALTO's Toolbox for Training are the result of collective online volunteering.

Some inspiration from UNV

Maybe you know the United Nations Volunteers? They support development projects all over the world. They have now also created an online platform, www.onlinevolunteering.org, where you can contribute your talents for a better world – over the Internet. Organisations working for sustainable human development can post cyber-volunteering opportunities in the database and volunteers can contribute their talents whenever it suits them.

2. Planning an international voluntary service

2.1 The actors

In this T-Kit we consider three main actors within IVS. The people without whom there would not be any voluntary service are, logically, the volunteers. They get information about a project abroad and the “sending organisation” takes the necessary steps to send the volunteer to an international voluntary service project. Abroad, the volunteers are hosted in a local structure where the voluntary work will take place, which we will call the “hosting organisation”. After a shorter or longer period, the volunteers return to their own country again and hopefully do something with the experience they gained abroad.

2.1.1 The volunteers

The volunteers are the key actors in IVS. They are the people who contribute of their own free will to a certain project, with their energy, ideas and active participation. Depending on the reasons for your IVS project (see Chapter 1.4 “Reasons for international voluntary service”) the volunteers and their volunteering can be seen as tools to help a community in need or the volunteer can be seen as the target of a process of personal or professional development. Most likely the volunteers’ motivation in embarking on IVS entails a bit of both. It is important for the voluntary service organisers to check whether the volunteers’ motives are compatible with the reasons for offering voluntary opportunities of their own, using, for example, the questionnaire in Chapter 1.4 “Reasons for international voluntary service”.

So the volunteers that we are talking about could be genuinely altruistic people who are out to change the world through the contributions they can make to a project. But they could just as well be young people who see the benefits of engaging themselves in a project abroad to gain valuable skills that can serve as a springboard to a brighter future. On the one side volunteers can be self-motivated young people who know what they want and easily find opportunities to build their path through life, but on the other side international voluntary service can be a tool for youth and social workers to foster self-esteem and social skills in the young people they work with (see also 3.1.4 “Voluntary service for ‘disadvantaged young people’”).

Or it could be you ...

2.1.2 The sending organisation

A young person is thinking about doing IVS. The easiest way to do this is to contact an organisation in his or her country that either has international links or could establish them (see also Chapter 2.3 “Finding the right partners for your project”). This local organisation can take care of all procedures needed to send volunteers to a partner organisation in another country and welcome them back. Therefore we call this local entity the sending organisation.

We have to point out that there is not always an active sending organisation involved in IVS projects, or sometimes there is no sending organisation at all. Some IVS organisations (for example, United Nations Volunteers) require people to apply directly for a volunteer position within a specific project. Even though this is possible, it is not the ideal situation since the volunteers themselves then have to take care of all the preparatory steps of an administrative, organisational and communicational nature, which could be undertaken by a sending organisation. If you are a beginner in the field of IVS, this could be too big a load to carry on your shoulders. Often, the role of the sending organisation for an international voluntary service project is underestimated and the organisations themselves do not always realise how much they can contribute to the overall success of the project.

Some tasks to consider for a sending organisation

- The sending organisation promotes the values of the IVS project. They give information about the work they are doing and the opportunities they are giving to young people. This is good publicity for the organisation but also for the voluntary sector in general. It could also attract more candidates for voluntary projects.
- The sending organisation should develop and take care of their partnerships with hosting organisations from different countries where their volunteers carry out activities (see also Chapter 2.3 “Finding the right partners for your project”). This entails regular contact and, if possible, meetings or visits. Effective and efficient communication channels should be put in place. Building up a common working culture and understanding in the field of international voluntary service would be beneficial to such projects.
- The sending organisation should act as a filter in the recruitment of volunteers, to avoid sending people who do not have the necessary maturity or attitude for the project and who could harm the project more than contribute to it (see also Chapter 3.1 “Recruitment and screening of volunteers”). Of course the sending organisation needs to collect sufficient information on conditions at the hosting organisation to execute this task properly.
- The sending organisation should negotiate and agree on all practical arrangements for the volunteers with the hosting organisation (for example, accommodation, food, type of work, working times, insurance and safety, travel options, fees, pocket money or not). If the minimum standards of the sending organisation are not met, they have the responsibility to postpone the project until improvement has brought the project up to standard (see also Chapter 2.3.2 “Quality standards”).
- The sending organisation should collect all necessary information about the voluntary service abroad and pass it on to the (potential) volunteers or interested third parties. This information can be directly linked to the IVS project, as mentioned (accommodation, work, food, etc.), but may also be linked to the volunteer’s needs or wishes (wheelchair accessibility, possibility to practise sports, etc.).
- The sending organisation has a responsibility to prepare the volunteers and check their motivation and expectations in embarking on IVS. Preparation should be based on the requirements of the project but also on the needs of the volunteer. Bad or no preparation can cause a lot of frustration and increases the danger of the volunteers leaving the project early. The bigger the cultural difference between the sending and the hosting community and the longer the stay abroad, the more thorough the preparation must be (see also Chapter 3.2.1 “Preparation of the volunteers”).
- In the case of long-term voluntary service to a country with a different language, language training would be appropriate, especially if the tasks of the volunteer will involve a lot of communication. For methodologies on how to provide language training in an interactive and culturally sensitive way, you can consult the *T-Kit on Methodology in Language Learning* (available to download from <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>).
- In the case of problems, the sending organisation can play an important role liaising between the hosting organisation and the volunteer (for example, mediating in conflicts – see also Chapter 4.4 “Conflict management”) or between the hosting project and the family of the volunteer (in the case of crises and language challenges – see also Chapter 4.5 “Crisis management”). In each case it is important to make a list of all relevant phone numbers and e-mail addresses for emergency contacts.
- The sending organisation informs the hosting organisation about the procedure for recruitment and selection. The sending organisation should inform the host organisation about the kind of preparation they have organised and keep them updated about any changes. It is important that the sending organisation passes on the profile of the volunteers (especially if they have special needs) and details of their travel arrangements.
- When the volunteers return, the sending organisation could organise an evaluation seminar or meeting, which might help the volunteers to review their experiences and exchange information with other volunteers (see also Chapter 5.1 “Evaluation”).

- The sending organisation might integrate the volunteers, with their new experiences and skills, into their own work or provide suggestions for follow-up after their IVS (see also Chapter 5.2 “Follow-up”).
- The sending organisation needs to ensure it has funding for dispatch of the volunteers, for international contacts, for preparation of the volunteers before leaving and for follow-up after their return (see also Chapter 2.4 “Funding and budgeting”).
- The co-operation between the partner organisations should be evaluated after each project.
- It is important to document all significant information about the project (in a project file), regardless whether the IVS is long- or short-term.

A sending organisation could be any non-profit organisation working in a variety of fields, ranging from environmental bodies to youth clubs, from medical institutes to municipalities. It can be either a non-governmental or a governmental organisation (including local authorities). It can be part of an international network of voluntary service organisations that offer volunteering opportunities every summer, or it can be a small local entity that meets up with a hosting organisation by chance and sends one volunteer in a lifetime.

Or it could be your organisation ...

2.1.3 The hosting organisation

Once volunteers have made the jump to the other country, they are looked after by what we call the hosting organisation. This organisation accepts volunteers coming from another country to support their work in all kinds of non-profit activities. They take care of the day-to-day life and work of the volunteer while on their IVS, but hopefully they are also already an active player in the preparation of the project.

Some tasks to consider for a hosting organisation

- The hosting organisation should provide sufficient information to volunteers about their new life and work (upon arrival but perhaps also beforehand). This can greatly reduce the volunteers’ anxiety about the unknown and increase their self-assurance. It also allows them to develop more realistic expectations. A welcome pack – for example, with practical information about the hosting organisation, the local community, the place where they will be staying and the work they will be doing – could be forwarded to volunteers.
- The hosting organisation should provide appropriate induction or on-arrival training (see also Chapter 4.1 “Induction and on-arrival orientation”) – or, if needed, specific ongoing training for their assigned tasks. Especially in the case of long-term volunteering, language training will be useful.
- The hosting organisation is usually also held responsible for ensuring the safety and security of volunteers, so make sure that the volunteers are working in an adapted working environment that fits the purpose of their tasks. At the same time the hosting organisation can expose its volunteers only to an agreed level of risk in their activities (for example in the case of construction work). It could be useful to set up a strategy to deal with crises as outlined in Chapter 4.5 “Crisis management”.
- The hosting organisation provides supervision and support for the volunteers, not only for the work to be done, but also in their free time (suggestions for excursions, meeting people, etc.). In the case of long-term voluntary service, it might be a good idea to assign an individual support person to a volunteer in case of homesickness, to promote their social integration and so on (see also Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”).
- In order to make the most out of voluntary service for all involved, it is useful to have a system for regular monitoring and evaluation. When the hosting organisation carries out regular assess-

ments of the volunteers, their work, their personal life and other relevant factors, it can adapt the project before things go wrong. Information from the volunteers' support persons, as well as from other project actors, can help with this (see also Chapter 4.2.1 "Motivating the volunteer" and Chapter 5.1 "Evaluation").

- The hosting organisation could give each volunteer a certificate, detailing the work they did on their IVS and the skills they gained, or a letter of recommendation from their supervisors or the director. This would boost confidence and might support the volunteers in the next steps in their lives (see also Chapter 5.3 "Recognition and certification").
- The hosting organisation needs to ensure funding for all the tasks it is supposed to carry out, including administration, communication, equipment needed for the volunteers' tasks, insurance, food and lodging, and sometimes also pocket money. Do not forget to budget staff time for the support of volunteers (see also Chapter 2.4 "Funding and budgeting").

A hosting organisation could be any non-profit organisation, working in a variety of fields such as drug prevention or child care, youth information services or nature reserves. It can be either a non-governmental or a governmental organisation (such as a local authority). It can be part of an international network of voluntary service organisations that offer volunteering opportunities every summer, or it can be a small local entity that organises one work camp in a lifetime (see also Chapter 1.5 "Fields of work: some examples").

Or it could be your organisation ...

2.1.4 The co-ordinating organisation

For practical reasons, there often one organisation that is responsible for co-ordinating the overall project and all the actors involved. The co-ordinating organisation is responsible for the general organisation, administration and finances for the IVS project. In many smaller (bilateral) IVS projects, either the hosting or the sending organisation takes this co-ordinating role. But in bigger IVS projects, which involve sending and hosting several volunteers, there is often a central structure that co-ordinates the whole project. In that case, the co-ordinating body does not (always) have voluntary work within its own organisation, but works with different placements in organisations in the field. The co-ordinating body also manages the co-operation between the project partners (sending and hosting organisations).

In the case of European Voluntary Service (in the Youth in Action programme), the co-ordinating organisation takes on the role of applicant and carries the financial and administrative responsibility for the entire project. The co-ordinating organisation gets extra funding for this co-ordination role, as explained in Chapter 2.4.2.

The international voluntary service project co-ordinator

Organisations embarking on IVS can have various formats. But one thing they mostly have in common is that in every voluntary service project there are people (or sometimes one person) taking up the role of co-ordinator even though they do not necessarily have this title. We mention the project co-ordinators here as some of the main actors in an IVS project, without whom there would probably be no voluntary service. The co-ordinators are the engines of an IVS project, but often they find themselves caught in the middle between their colleagues' opinions on IVS, the partner organisation and the volunteers' wishes. This T-Kit wants to provide some tools to make the life of the project co-ordinator easier.

It is important that this project co-ordinator has a clear idea of the work (see also Chapter 2.2 "The project cycle") and its benefits for everyone (see also Chapter 1.4 "Reasons for international voluntary service"). If the co-ordinator has a realistic view of the positive and perhaps also negative

implications of such a project, it is easier to convince others of the added value of such IVS (see also Chapter 3.2.2 “Preparation of sending and hosting organisations”). Finding partners might be one of the challenges of the co-ordinator, but Chapter 2.3 “Finding the right partners for your project” could help with that. There might also be some fund-raising and budgeting in the job description, and this is touched upon in Chapter 2.4 “Funding and budgeting”. The project co-ordinator can find a fair amount of tools and inspiration on how to set up and manage a project in the T-Kit on *Project Management* (available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>).

In the hosting organisation the project co-ordinator is often also the support person for the volunteer, though he or she could bring in different persons for work-related coaching, for personal issues, to promote intercultural learning or during the volunteers’ leisure time as we outline in Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”. But the volunteer should not be the only focus, since there are other people working at the placement, hence the importance of taking care of staff working with or next to the volunteers and keeping them happy. Chapter 4.2.2 “Staff motivation – The forgotten dimension”, deals with this complicated issue.

And perhaps this project co-ordinator could be you!

If you are the project co-ordinator ...

Have a good read through this T-Kit and perhaps some of the other T-Kits available at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int> (project management, intercultural learning, language learning methodologies, etc.).

Get inspired by people and organisations that have done it before. It is no use reinventing the wheel all by yourself.

Form a group around you that can help you think through the project, to exchange ideas, to give feedback, etc. The more minds, the more ideas.

Try not to do it on your own. Involve colleagues, friends, etc. The more shoulders, the less the weight to carry.

Allow time for things to happen and do not give up. In the end it is worth it!

2.2 The project cycle

2.2.1 From an idea to a concrete plan

A lot of good ideas for projects appear when you least expect them: in the bar, while shaving, on the loo. But ideas take time and especially effort to crystallise and to become reality. They need careful planning and good management. Project management is like putting a stick next to a tomato plant – the plant will grow in the direction of the stick but still hangs a bit to the left or the right. Needs analysis, SMART objectives, a thought-through strategy, a good partnership, a clear division of tasks, realistic time planning and careful budgeting will prevent your tomatoes from resting on the ground.

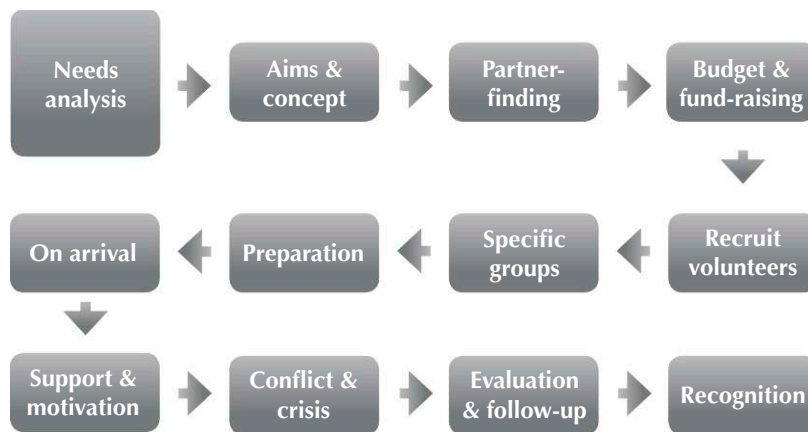
Managing a project is described step by step in Chapter 3 of the T-Kit on *Project Management* (available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>). You can use the tools there to complement this T-Kit; here we narrow our focus to some specific issues in dealing with IVS. Or you can ask advice from organisations or people who have done similar projects before.

Real life ...

To see a real-life application of the different tools in this T-Kit, we take you through the example of ELKA at various stages.

ELKA is a youth club in the small town of Velho. Since the town is located in a gorgeous mountainous region, ELKA's activities are focused on nature and environmental protection. During the last few years the club members have put a lot of effort into clearing and maintaining footpaths in the forest, to be able to use them for hiking through the mountains.

And then there was the idea from Susan, one of the active members, to exploit the paths more and better: she was thinking along the lines of making the paths more accessible to "green tourists" with signposts and rest areas. Another idea was to use nature and adventure walks as an activity for groups of youngsters. Since resources are scarce, Susan thought that volunteers were the ideal solution to implement these ideas. A 14-day work camp could put in place the signposts and rest areas along the paths and two long-term volunteers could guide groups through the forest and do adventurous activities with them.



Needs and resources

An idea never exists in a vacuum. People also have their own opinions about it. Check what the "social opinion" is about this project. A project idea should not be there just to please yourself. That is why it is important to see if there is a need for what you are suggesting. This is called "needs analysis".

- What does the local community think of the project (neighbours, parents, politicians, other youth organisations, etc.)?
- What do potential users of the project think (your members, clients, visitors, beneficiaries, etc.)?
- What does your organisation think of the project (the board, staff, volunteers, etc.)?
- Do similar projects already exist? Would you be in competition or duplicating their work?
- Is there another aspect ...?

The mirror reflection of the needs analysis is the resource analysis. If the idea for the IVS is agreed by all actors involved, do you also have all the (practical, human, financial) resources needed to implement such a project? You can have a closer look at your strengths and weaknesses as an organisation to see if you have what it takes or where to add resources. And a closer look at the external opportunities for, and threats to, international voluntary service will give you indications on how to proceed, making optimal use of the opportunities and finding a way around the threats.

Real life ...

Susan discussed her idea with some of the members and the other youth workers of the club and since the first reactions were positive, she decided to present her idea at a board meeting. The reactions were mixed because some thought that it was up to the town council to develop tourism in Velho, including the signposts and rest areas along paths in the forest. So a meeting with the town council was arranged and the ideas were discussed. The town council saw the benefits of the project and agreed to support ELKA with the materials needed, if they would organise the work camp. As for the usefulness of nature and adventure walks, ELKA sent a letter around to the local youth organisations to see if they would be interested in this. Some 12 positive replies came back. So ELKA decided that the two projects would be of benefit to the community, but also good for their reputation.

**SMART aims and a thought-through strategy**

The project idea has to germinate and grow into a complete plan or strategy. However, a strategy is only a way of getting somewhere. So it is important to set ourselves objectives before we embark on our journey, or we may never be sure whether we have reached our objectives, because we do not know exactly what they are.

The central question of course is why we are going to invest time, money and effort in this international voluntary service. What do we want to achieve and are these goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed (see also T-Kit on *Project Management*, available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>)?

Usually there is a complex structure of different aims. In order to avoid confusion, it would be good to make all aims explicit and have a common understanding of the most important one(s). You can even write them down in a statement (you will have to write them down in an application for funding) so that everybody adheres to the same ones.

Real life ...

Susan thought a lot about the aims and objectives of the work camp and the two volunteer placements, because she had to present her ideas several times to her colleagues, to the board, to the town council and others.

One of the main aims for the work camp for example was to increase the number of “green tourists” going for a walk through the forest and mountains by the following summer. This aim specified clearly what they wanted to achieve (more green tourists). Once the summer season had started (time), it would be easy to measure if there were more tourists using the paths. With the agreed material help and an information campaign by the town council of Velho, this was achievable and realistic.

Of course, at the same time, the work done gave ELKA a better reputation as a nature organisation. It improved co-operation with the town hall and with other youth organisations that would be using the paths, and the voluntary service gave an international dimension to the work that ELKA does.

Even though Why? is the central question, we can also combine it with the other W-questions (inspired by the Laswell method – see T-Kit on *Project Management*, p. 32).

- **Who** will be involved in this IVS (partner organisations, staff, volunteers, support persons, funders, local authorities or others)? And why these people?
- **What** will you do during the IVS (work, programme, leisure activities, etc.)? And why exactly this?
- **Where** will the IVS take place (work place, accommodation, distance from supplies, etc.)? And why in these places?
- **When** will the IVS take place (timing, which season, how long, etc.)? And why in this specific time frame?
- **How** will you manage the IVS (methods used, support structures, with what kind of resources, etc.)? And why in this manner?

The most important thing is to ask yourself (and your partners in the project) why you are doing things in a certain way, and also why you would not want to do them in any alternative way.

Real life ...

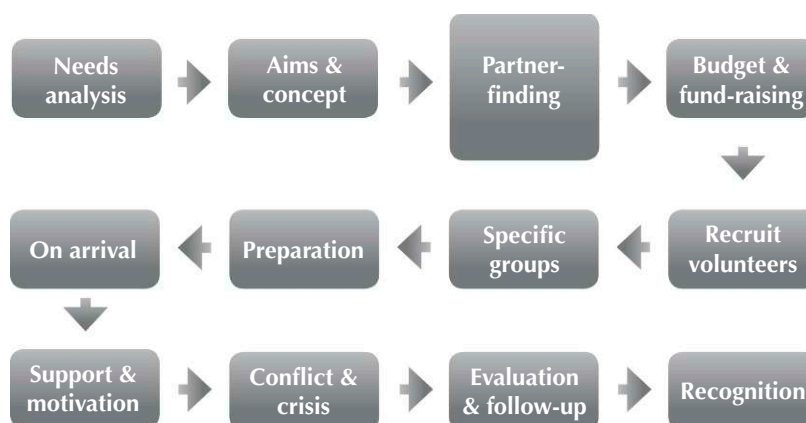
In the case of long-term IVS developing the nature and adventure walks for instance, discussions went on in ELKA about whom to invite and why. They decided to take volunteers from abroad. Why? In order to give the project an international dimension, and, with the pooled language skills of the volunteers and ELKA staff, they could also guide international groups coming for adventure walks. ELKA wanted two volunteers. Why? So that they could work together on the project, keep each other company and find peer support. For ELKA it was also quite important to have the town hall as a partner. Why? In order to get the necessary recognition but also some practical support for the work that they are doing. Likewise in the choice of partner organisation they asked themselves the who and why questions.

As for what and why, ELKA decided to rely on long-term voluntary service. Why? Because it takes a while before the two volunteers get to know the possibilities of the forest and before they develop an interesting and adventurous programme. How they will do it is gradual. Why? Because the volunteers are not necessarily experts in this field, so they will first get some training in adventure techniques, then they can run an adventure walk together with one of the staff members and after a while they can do it alone. Time will also allow them to learn the host language and get more confident in it.

Some considerations which influenced the decision as to when and where the voluntary service should take place were, of course, the season and the forest. The volunteers would start in spring. Why? So that they would be trained and confident in taking youth groups through the forest by summer, which is the busiest season for these kinds of trips. Even though the work obviously takes place in the forest, ELKA opted to lodge the volunteers with host families in the town centre. Why? In order to make it easier for them to integrate in the local community by having host brothers and sisters, and because it is more convenient to take part in social activities (going out, cinema, meeting people) in the town centre than it would be living near the forest.

An example of how ELKA envisages working together with the volunteers is what they call the “tandem technique”. Each volunteer is teamed up with a personal support person with whom they have weekly meetings. Why? In order to build up confidence between the two and to discuss needs, wishes, problems and so on before they grow out of proportion and become irremediable.

Of course this is only a fraction of the thinking process that took place before and during the projects.



A good partner and a realistic schedule

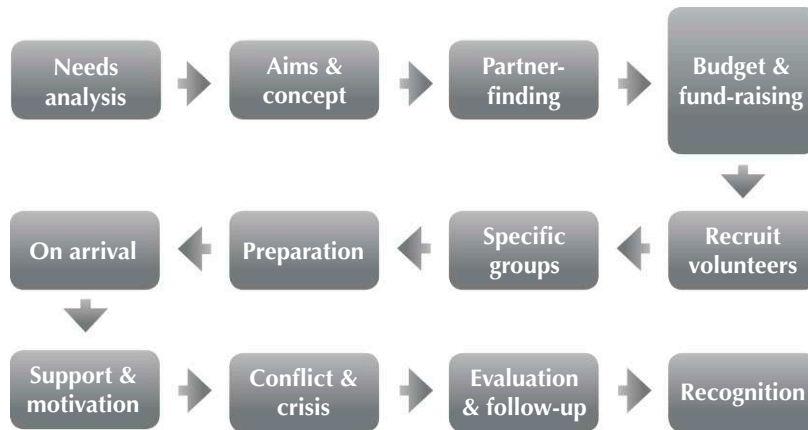
But you are never alone in an IVS project. If you are planning to host some volunteers, you need to have contacts with organisations that could send you some. In the case of a sending organisation, you want to find the right project to host your volunteer. Hence the importance of a solid and trustworthy international partnership. How to find the right partner for your project will be discussed in Chapter 2.3 “Finding the right partners for your project”.

With your partner you can discuss the time frame needed for your IVS. It is important to allow enough time and resources for each step, but also to be fast and efficient enough to keep all partners in the project enthusiastic. Long waiting periods between steps can demotivate the volunteers or the partner organisation.

Real life ...		
The time frame for a work camp		
Month	Hosting organisation	Sending organisation
1	Needs analysis: check the need for a work camp with colleagues, partners, local community, authorities, etc. Find potential partners that could send volunteers	Needs analysis: check if there is interest from young people to participate in a work camp abroad Explain what a work camp is, if necessary Find out their interests and motivations
2	Develop the aims, concept and strategy for the work camp Discuss these aims and a time frame with your partners Develop the programme (work and leisure) Draw up a budget of all costs and apply for funding	Find potential hosting organisations and select the most appropriate one Discuss your aims, concept and a time frame with your partners Make a budget and secure funding for sending your volunteers
3	Send out detailed work camp information and programme to the selected sending organisations	Potentially a preparation visit to the work camp site

Real life ...		
The time frame for a work camp		
<i>Month</i>	<i>Hosting organisation</i>	<i>Sending organisation</i>
4	Registration of candidates with the sending organisation Discuss the support for volunteers with special needs	Put forward the young people you plan on sending and send their volunteer profiles to the hosting organisation Discuss the support for volunteers with special needs
5	Select the appropriate volunteers Arrange the practicalities for the hosting	
6	Prepare the people in the host project Send final information to the participants (travel directions, etc.)	Prepare the volunteers Arrange technicalities such as visas, insurance, tickets, etc. Provide your volunteers with information about the hosting organisation and the host country
7	Three-week work camp On arrival, introduction to the project and practicalities Regular feedback sessions to check the volunteers' motivation Intervene in case of conflict and crisis Publicity about the project and its results Certificate of participation or other recognition tool	Departure of the volunteers for the work camp Contact to see how things are going Intervene in case of crisis
8	Evaluation between partner organisations	Evaluation with the volunteers upon return and offering follow-up possibilities e.g. to become active in the sending organisation
9	Financial reporting to the funders	Financial reporting to the funders

The time frame for long-term voluntary service		
<i>Month</i>	<i>Hosting organisation</i>	<i>Sending organisation</i>
1/2	Needs and resource analysis: Check the need for volunteers in the organisation with colleagues Check the available resources within the organisation: financial, staff time resources (project management as well as mentoring the volunteers) Drawing up the aims and objectives for the project	Resource analysis: Check the available resources within the organisation: recruiting volunteers, preparing volunteers, finding partners internationally Drawing up the aims and objectives
3	Develop the placement descriptions with all details about the organisation and the tasks the volunteers will be engaged in Develop a profile of the kind of partner organisation you are looking for	Recruitment of volunteers: Develop a profile of the kind of hosting organisations you need for your volunteers Keep in mind possible special needs of your volunteers and how the hosting organisation can support them
4/5	Partner finding	Partner finding
6	Preparatory visit: Agree on the volunteers for the project Develop partnership agreement, including details about the placement, the communication between the partners, the responsibilities, the financial implications	Preparatory visit: Agree on the volunteers for the project Develop partnership agreement including details about the placement, the communication between the partners, the responsibilities, the financial implications According to the required budget organise funding or do fund-raising
7	Perhaps send in applications for funding the project or do fund-raising	Start preparation process for the volunteers
8/9	Preparation of the responsible team within the organisation for the project: Preparation of the induction period for the volunteer Regular contact with the volunteers	Language course Arranging practical issues (social security, employment office, visa, etc.)
10	Volunteer arrives Induction and on-arrival training	Regular contacts with the volunteer and hosting organisation
13	Mid-term evaluation Constant monitoring and support – feedback sessions to check the volunteer's motivation Intervene in case of conflicts and crisis	Participating in the mid-term evaluation Regular contacts with the volunteer and with the hosting organisation Intervene in case of crisis
16	Final evaluation and return home Recognition of the experience and the competences gained	Meeting with the volunteer upon return Recognition of the experience and the competences gained Suggestions for follow-up
17	Evaluation between the partner organisations	Evaluation between the partner organisations
18	Financial reporting to the funders	Financial reporting to the funders



Funds, budgeting and division of tasks

One of the essential tasks in IVS, without which a project may have to be abandoned, is securing funding. One of the early steps in organising voluntary service is to draw up a budget and apply for money, since this can be a time-consuming process. At European level there are several sources of funding for IVS, such as the European Voluntary Service and the European Youth Foundation, but you can also draw upon other sources of funding. Later we go into more details of these money matters (see Chapter 2.4 “Funding and budgeting”).

For the smooth running of IVS, it is a big help to know what needs to be done at different stages during the project and who will do it. Making a list with the division of tasks and responsibilities can considerably reduce confusion and will prevent “holes” in your IVS. We have already largely detailed the different tasks of the different actors in voluntary service earlier in this T-Kit (in Chapter 2.1 “The actors”), but we will also give you a rough sketch of responsibilities in the long-term voluntary project by ELKA.

Long-term voluntary service task division	
<i>Task</i>	<i>Responsible person(s)</i>
Overall co-ordination	Guy from the ELKA board will take on the administrative and financial responsibility as “co-ordinating organisation”. However, for specific tasks, Susan is carrying out all necessary steps for the hosting organisation and Tomas does the same for the sending organisation.
Finding the right volunteers, providing the right information and preparing the volunteers	Tomas (on the basis, of course, of the volunteer profile he gets from Susan)
Communication and agreements between hosting and sending organisation all through the project	The practical co-ordinators in both organisations, who document decisions and agreements and pass them on to all the people involved in the project – Guy is informed regularly about the decisions

Long-term voluntary service task division	
<i>Task</i>	<i>Responsible person(s)</i>
Communication with the local authorities and other youth organisations	The president of ELKA, because this is more of a political task
Drawing up a budget and application for funding for the host organisation, financial reporting	Guy in co-operation with Susan and based on realistic cost estimates from both sending and hosting organisations; Tomas in the sending organisation organises fundraising for extra costs not covered by the grant application
Preparation of the hosting arrangements and a detailed programme of work	Susan will contact all persons involved (host family, work support person, social support, language support, etc.)
Training and work-related support	Jason, who will also be working on the adventure walks, together with Susan
Language support	The sending organisation sends the volunteer on an intensive course prior to departure; in ELKA, one of the members is a student in translation who will continue language teaching in an informal way
Support for social life (leisure time activities, introducing the volunteers to people and organisations etc.)	Susan's brother, who is the same age as the volunteers
Link to the "home front" (friends, family, administrative procedures back home, etc.)	Tomas, the co-ordinator of the sending organisation
If something goes wrong (conflicts, illness, accidents, homesickness, crises, etc.)	Susan will be co-ordinating measures to be taken and will be in permanent contact with Tomas in the sending organisation; if a big crisis occurs, Guy will step in
Documenting the project (outcomes, PR, articles in the local press, financial reporting, etc.)	Susan takes care of this and communicates financial items to the bookkeeper who will prepare the financial report together with Guy and Susan at the end of the IVS
Evaluation (at regular intervals and after the IVS) Providing a certificate	Susan will have meetings with the volunteers and with her brother (social support) and Jason (work support); at the end of the placement, there will be a meeting between the volunteers and the sending and hosting project co-ordinators, at which all partners involved will prepare and sign a certificate
Reintegration and follow-up after the project.	Tomas will see how to make best use of the experience gained by the volunteer and by the sending organisation

2.3 Finding the right partners for your project



Partner finding is one of the first tasks when planning an international voluntary service project, and it is crucial. Finding the right partners is undoubtedly a major key to success. This chapter provides some useful tips and advice on where to find partner organisations, what they could be like and how to check whether they are suitable.

2.3.1 Partner finding

Before you go hunting for partner organisations, you should be fairly clear about what you are looking for. The following questions can guide your consideration.

Questions for consideration

- What are your aims behind the exchange of volunteers? To what extent should your aims be similar to your partners' aims? (See also Chapter 1.4. "Reasons for international voluntary service")
- What type of young people are you working with or do you (not) want to be working with (specific target groups, for example disadvantaged, or none in particular)?
- What kind of placement do you have to offer or are you looking for (only in a special area of work, for example environmental, or no specific field)?
- What type of work has to be done (manual or intellectual work, previous skills needed, risks at work, knowledge of foreign language required, etc.)?
- What support and practical arrangements can you offer the volunteers (training, appropriate support, food and accommodation, pocket money, insurance, etc.)?
- What do you require from volunteers (linguistic or computing skills, no skills, financial contributions, only from specific countries or specific sex, etc.)?
- What can you offer and what do you expect from the partner organisation (meetings, communication, financial or other resources, specific knowledge and experience, minimum standards, etc.)?
- How many volunteers are you planning on sending or hosting (individual one-off placement or many groups a year)?
- What size partner organisation are you looking for (small-scale and flexible, or large-scale with a lot of opportunities)?
- Do you have to meet formal requirements for your organisation, for the funding scheme (age limit, specific eligible countries, medical or police checks, etc.)?
- ...

Suggestion for training

Meet the people of the board or committee that is helping in conceptualising or organising this IVS. To facilitate in-depth discussion you can form small groups or pairs, using a marker and a flip chart. They should answer the different questions and write them down in keywords on the flip chart. When everyone comes back together, you can compare the opinions by hanging the flip charts on the wall and discussing the reasons behind the answers.

Once you are clear about what you are looking for and what you can offer (and what not), you can start your quest for partners.

If you are a newcomer in the world of IVS, you do not have to reinvent the wheel. You can contact and co-operate with an established organisation in the field of IVS (you can find a list of such organisations in Appendix 2: Overview of international voluntary service organisations, programmes and platforms). They have the necessary international contacts and structure to send your volunteers abroad or to provide you with some. Of course you will be bound by their criteria and way of working. If you want to do your own thing and develop your own strategic partnerships (for example in a specific field of work, with a specific target group, in a specific way), this is possible but it also takes more work and time.

Ways to find partners

The Internet is a valuable source of information, where you can find organisations active in your field of interest in the desired countries. Most, if not all, international voluntary service organisations mentioned in this T-Kit have websites with links to partner organisations in different countries (see Appendix 2: Overview of international voluntary service organisations, programmes and platforms).

In most countries there exist databases, lists or brochures with all registered youth, social, cultural and other non-profit organisations. The government information services in different countries should be able to inform you about this.

You can also get more information about youth organisations in a country by contacting the national youth council, or you can ask a European umbrella organisation for a list of its branches in different countries. You can find a list of national youth councils and European non-governmental umbrella organisations at www.youthforum.org. If your organisation is part of a larger international network, you can use this structure for your partner search.

International training courses and seminars are also interesting places to start new partnerships. You can either participate yourself in these meetings or ask a colleague or friend who has attended one. Some European-level organisations and institutions that often offer international training courses, study visits and seminars linked to the topic of international voluntary service are the Partnership between the European Commission and Council of Europe in the field of Youth (<http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>), the network of SALTO-YOUTH resource centres (www.salto-youth.net), the national agencies for the YOUTH programme (a list of addresses is available at www.ec.europa.eu/youth), the Directorate for Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/youth), the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (www.avso.org) and the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (www.unesco.org/ccivs), among others.

You can also make use of one of the existing Internet databases on volunteering opportunities. Within the European Voluntary Service programme there is a database on all the hosting placement opportunities available (www.ec.europa.eu/youthevs/aod/hei_en.cfm). You can be listed in this database upon approval of an “expression of interest” form, which you can get from your national agency of the Youth in Action programme. The SALTO-YOUTH network

also has a partner-finding database called Otlas (www.salto-youth.net/otlas) for projects within the context of the Youth in Action programme. A worldwide database is offered at www.idealists.org.

Note! It has to be said that the Internet and databases are not the ideal means to find strategic partners, unless you also make personal contact (in a seminar, during a meeting, a prospecting visit, during your holidays, etc.).

2.3.2 Quality standards

The aim of partner finding is not to find just any partner, but to find a good partner for your project, one who can assure minimum quality standards to make your IVS project a success for all actors involved. The minimum standards that you set yourself depend largely on the type of project (for example, living conditions in work camps are mostly rougher than they would be in an individual placement), the kind of organisations involved (for example, local authorities have stricter rules than a self-managed youth club) and the type of volunteers (for example, disabled or disadvantaged volunteers need more support).

Within a European Voluntary Service project, each partner has to adhere to the principles of the EVS Charter, which highlights the roles of the EVS sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations. This charter is part of the Youth in Action programme guide.

Note! Some of the standards below apply to the sending organisation, some to the hosting organisation and some to both.

Communication standards

Partnership

Do the partners know each other well enough? Should there be a minimum number of preparation meetings? Should the partner organisations be prepared to send representatives to training or meetings organised within the programme?

Communication between hosting and sending organisation

How much contact between sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations is expected, how often and via what communication channels? Is it clear who can contact whom in what circumstances (for example, in emergency situations)? What information has to be communicated (for example, about the volunteers' criminal past)? Is there the necessary fluency in a common communication language, by how many people in the organisation?

Co-operation between hosting, sending and co-ordinating organisations

How detailed should the division of tasks be? What should be the procedure for unforeseen circumstances? What possibilities are there to meet and discuss issues?

External communication

Is there a special strategy to follow to make links between the project and officials, press, the local community and members of the sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations? What will be done to make the project results visible (dissemination) and make them used by others (exploitation and impact)?

Preparation standards

Before the project

What are the prerequisites (language, background reading, etc.) for participation in the IVS? Is there a need to have a preparation seminar? What should be addressed in the preparation? What information should be provided?

On-arrival training

How soon upon arrival should this orientation session take place? What should be the content of this training? Who should be present at this training?

Logistical standards

Board and accommodation

Is the hosting organisation able to provide meals? Are living conditions safe and secure? Do the volunteers have single rooms or do they have to share a room with other volunteers? What kind of sanitary standards does the room have? If there is a group of short-term volunteers, is it okay to have a common sleeping-room? Is it possible to cater for vegetarians or other dietary restrictions?

Location

Accessibility of local transport facilities. How easy is it for the volunteers to travel between the work and the living quarters? If the placement is in a rough neighbourhood of a city, what kind of security is provided? If the placement is in a remote environment, what kind of leisure-time opportunities can be provided?

Task-oriented standards

Activities proposed to the volunteer

Does the hosting organisation have a clear idea, a clear description, of what the volunteer will do? Are there options to change activities? What can the hosting organisation expect of the volunteer, and what not? How does the project take advantage of non-formal and intercultural learning opportunities?

Working hours

What should be the limit of working hours per day or per week for the volunteer? How much holiday is the volunteer entitled to? How flexible can the hosting organisation be?

Group or individual work

Is the volunteer part of a team? Are there other volunteers involved in this work? What is the level of co-operation between the staff and the volunteers?

Safety issues

Especially concerning manual work, what kinds of safety procedures are in place? Do the volunteers receive safety equipment (helmets, gloves, etc.)? What does the insurance cover and what not? Is there a plan for crisis management if something goes wrong?

Job substitution

Is there a clear distinction between the tasks for volunteers and tasks for staff members? Does the volunteer replace paid labour? What is the risk that the volunteer is perceived as taking away local people's jobs?

Support-oriented standards

Support for the volunteers

Should there be one staff member in a clear supervisory position towards the volunteer? How much time and resources should this person devote to supporting the volunteer? Did or should this person have some training in supervising? What mechanisms of feedback should there be towards the volunteer? Is there adequate support for volunteers with special needs?

Free-time support

Should it be a responsibility of the hosting organisation to support the volunteer also in his/her free time? What kind of support is (not) appropriate? Is there a link to the local community?

Language support

Is there a common language in the project? Do the colleagues of the volunteer speak a common language? Is there a possibility to receive language training?

Task-oriented training

How much training and preparation do the volunteers receive in order to fulfil their tasks? Are there experts coaching the volunteers for the more specialised tasks?

Evaluation and follow-up

Is there a need for regular evaluation and reporting on the volunteers or on the project? What has to be evaluated, in what format? What steps should be taken upon the return of the volunteer to the home country? Should there be a certificate at the end of the voluntary service? If so, what kind?

Financial standards

Project-related

Which party pays for which costs? What kind of bookkeeping is needed (in what currency and what language)? What are eligible and non-eligible costs? What are the responsibilities in financial reporting after the voluntary service ends? What flexibility is there in unforeseen circumstances? What administrative support does the co-ordinating organisation provide?

Volunteer-related

What financial contribution is the volunteer expected to make to the project, to the travel costs, for the free-time activities? Is there pocket money: how much and how often?

Suggestions for training

Divide the group of project organisers in two. Ask one group to elaborate and describe the ideal IVS (ideal in terms of one or more standards). The other group should imagine the worst possible IVS (by the same standards). The groups should draw or write their findings on a big piece of paper. When ready, they compare the two extremes and discuss what the minimum standards should be in order to go ahead with the IVS.

Assessing your partner organisation

How do you assess whether they can fulfil the requirements? On the basis of a list of minimum standards, you can develop two assessment instruments: an application form and a guide-sheet for an assessment visit.

An application form

The application form is basically a list of questions that address the most important issues from the list of quality standards. This way, not only do you get the necessary information to take the decision to work together with this new partner organisation, but the form also shows your partner what you find important and thereby sets a frame for your co-operation. If the partner organisation has never been involved in an IVS project before, the questions in the application form show the different elements of a volunteer project.

Some tips for the application form

- Concerning the tasks offered to the volunteer: instead of just asking about the tasks offered, ask them to describe a potential working day from the morning to the evening. Often it is fairly easy to write words such as “helping the team here or there” but it does not tell you exactly what the volunteer would do.
- Include questions on the skills and information needed for the proposed tasks.
- It is important to find out how many people are involved in the decision-making process about the voluntary project. Have the staff members who will be in contact with the volunteer been asked for their opinion concerning the idea of getting a new team member?
- Include a section on the concept of volunteering. Why does the organisation want to host a volunteer? How do they think they will benefit from it? What are their thoughts or opinions concerning the role of volunteering in general?

If you need a lot of details from this form for use in other documents, try to have the form filled out in an electronic version to avoid retyping parts of the form.

Try to make the form inviting to fill out: a nice layout with some symbols or cartoons in it supports the motivation to sit down and answer the questions. If you think an application form would be too official and scare your partners off, you can also ask these questions by phone.

A guide-sheet for an assessment visit

It is advisable not to take a decision only on the basis of an application form. It is so much easier to get a picture of your partner organisation if you have seen the place and got to know the responsible people. If your resources are limited, you could still complement the questions from the application form with an extensive telephone interview with a person from the partner organisation.

For an assessment visit it is very helpful to have a prepared guide-sheet with some questions or doubtful points resulting from the application form. The advantage of a visit is also that it is easier to explain to interested colleagues or volunteers what you have seen with your own eyes, rather than just referring to a written description by a potentially biased insider.

Some tips for the assessment visit

Within the course of the visit you should try to talk to more than one person, including some other staff members or volunteers (if available).

Try to see the proposed working and living places for the volunteer in the host organisation.

Try to get a feeling as to why they want to send or host a volunteer.

Immediately after the visit write a report while the memory is still fresh.

...?

How do you motivate organisations to participate in your programme?

It is generally easier to find young people motivated to go abroad for voluntary service than it is to persuade organisations or institutions to join your international voluntary service project and offer places for foreign volunteers. Depending on how far volunteering is known and appreciated in the organisation or the country, they will take more or less persuasion. So here is some advice to address any doubts and reservations on the side of the potential hosting organisation as to whether they should participate in the programme.

Helping organisations warm to the idea of international voluntary service

First of all, do not try to push any organisation into participating just because you are in urgent need of a hosting placement. It should be a well-planned decision of the entire organisation since it requires a lot of energy and resources.

Often the contact person or organisation feels it is too much of a burden. In this case, explain that a lot of tasks (in the area of support and administration) can be delegated to different people inside or outside the organisation. You could suggest the creation of a “volunteers’ team” within the organisation.

It can also be helpful to invite people from the organisation to training events or meetings where they meet other representatives of hosting organisations and gain some confidence through listening to the experience of the others. Perhaps you can create a kind of support system, where you link an experienced organisation with a newcomer.

Show the benefits of taking part in IVS (see Chapter 3.2.2 “Preparation of sending and hosting organisations”). These benefits could be positive image building, enhanced international contacts and partnerships, a new wind blowing through the organisation, support for tasks that would not be done otherwise and so forth.

Build up trust with your partner organisation and respect their worries and working rhythm. Be honest and transparent.

Take care of the personal touch in your contacts. Partners should be more than just business relations. Do not forget that the people on the other side of the phone or Internet are also human.

It might also take some perseverance or patience to do the trick.

2.3.3 Concluding with a contract

Even though trust is at the basis of IVS, we still strongly advise that you put down the duties of all parties in writing (especially in the case of a long-term commitment). In an IVS project there are usually a lot of actors involved, a lot of challenges and also a lot of money. Therefore it is only respectful to all partners and to the volunteer to draw up a contract detailing the commitments that the parties agreed upon. People might be suspicious of contracts, but they should not limit flexibility in the project. Contracts create transparency and prevent things from going horribly wrong. In most cases funders ask for a signed letter of endorsement from all the partners in the project.

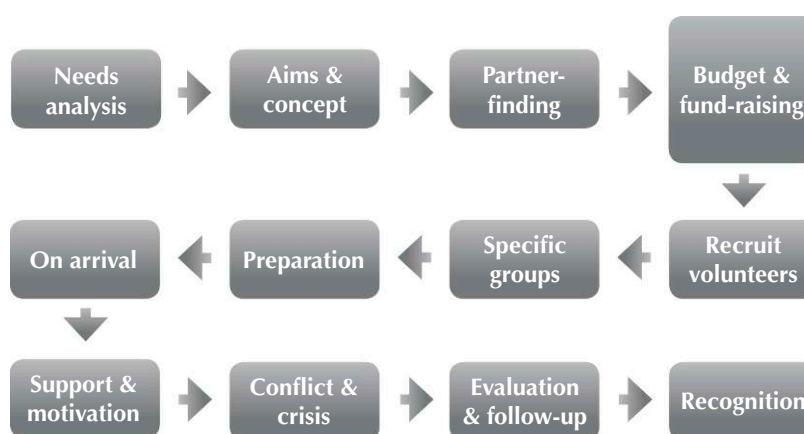
Note! There are different models and contract examples. In different countries the requirements for contracts can be different. Check with knowledgeable persons or with a legal adviser for the situation in your country.

Usually, a basic contract includes the following:

- the name and address of the parties signing the contract (in our case the volunteer, and the sending and hosting organisations, including the names of the authorised persons);

- the name of the IVS project and its beginning and end dates;
- a detailed description of the duties and obligations of all parties signing the contract. This will mostly be the volunteer's job description and aspects of the minimum quality standards for the partnership agreed between the sending and hosting organisations;
- signatures on behalf of the sending and hosting organisations and the volunteer;
- the contract should stipulate that the volunteer's work is unpaid, non-profit in nature and not substituting for any paid job.

2.4 Funding and budgeting



Projects sometimes get stuck when it comes to the cost–benefit comparison. As a project coordinator you are in a position to see the benefit of an IVS, but you are probably also well aware of the resources that are needed to make it happen. If we consider money to be the fuel of a project, you are the one that will have to find one or more petrol stations to fill up your fuel tank.

Nowadays you can find many publications, as well as people, that can give you advice on how to apply for funding. Here we would also like to draw your attention to the *T-Kit on Funding and Financial Management* (available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>), which contains useful hints and tips on applying for funding as well as advice on managing your financial resources. This chapter will not repeat all the details in T-Kit No. 9 on funding and fund-raising, but it aims to make you aware of some basic principles when drawing up a budget and it presents some existing financial resources for IVS, both short and long term.

2.4.1 Budgeting

A budget is like a financial mirror of the IVS. It is an estimate of the expenses that you expect to incur on the one side and the income you have arranged. Drawing up a realistic and balanced budget is an art that is sometimes difficult to master. Therefore we present you with some golden rules for budgeting.

Golden rules for budgeting

- Careful planning of all financial needs and resources is an essential part of international voluntary service and should accompany your project from the early stages to the very end.
- Financial planning should correspond to the real costs of the project as far as possible (for example, check prices of tickets, insurance costs, communication means, local transport, office supplies, meals, etc.).
- In a non-profit project such as IVS, what comes in, must go out. At the same time you should not have more expenses than income, otherwise your project has a deficit. The income in a budget always has to equal the expenditure.
- Transparency is important: make sure that all partners have a clear view of planned income and expenditure. This way you can avoid a lot of painful misunderstandings and confusion.
- Check at the beginning what you will need in the end (for example, receipts, financial reports, copies of produced materials, etc.). You will very probably have to collect proof of all costs and income (perhaps abiding by specific formal criteria).
- Involve people in your organisation (or from outside) who have experience with budgets and/or project finances. You can share or delegate financial responsibilities to a person who is more experienced in budgeting and accounting.
- Do not try to do it on your own. Try to get a financial green light from different people involved in the project. This way you also avoid getting yourself in a position where you might be accused of a lack of financial clarity or even fraud (if nobody else knows where money goes and comes from).
- Check your budget at regular intervals during the IVS and keep the partners updated on progress (how much you have, how much you still need). Accounting is a useful tool if done regularly and properly.
- Do not forget to account for allocated staff time, which is also a cost for your organisation.
- Check which costs are eligible and which not. Some costs or some co-funding (for example, contributions in kind) could be refused by the funder.
- Have you also thought about any other specific expenses relating to your IVS, for example, staff training or preparation on issues like intercultural communication, project-related information technology; volunteer preparation or training in language learning, work-related skills; rental costs arising from project implementation, the need for interpretation, etc.

2.4.2 Funders and funding possibilities

When looking for funding there are lots of sources available at different levels – local, regional, national, European and international. Funding can come from individuals, foundations, institutions, authorities, companies, etc. The source of funds for your IVS depends largely on your context, on the type of project and on your initiative.

Step 1: Get a broad idea as to who could be potential funders

One way of getting information on sources of funding is to get inspired by similar projects or similar organisations. The Internet is one valuable source of information: www.eurodesk.org provides information about European funding schemes, and the European Foundation Centre (www.efc.be) offers details of a range of European and worldwide foundations.

Step 2: Find out the motivation and criteria of the funders

All funders, private or public, have certain motives for giving money to certain projects. If you want to obtain funding, it is important to discover why funders give. Your international volun-

tary service should not only be in line with their funding scheme but your application should highlight this. It goes without saying that you first have to collect information on the funder in order to find out what exactly they fund (which costs are eligible and which not), to what extent (co-funding necessary?) and what procedures (before, during and after your project) you have to follow. This way you avoid wasting your and their time and money.

Step 3: Select the appropriate funders and prepare your application

Once you have determined which funders would be most appropriate, you can tailor your application to suit the procedure set up by the funder. Do not send the same standard letter or application for funding to different funders: adapt it to their aims, criteria, costs, etc. Find out who your contact person is within the funding institution and keep regular contact. Sometimes it may be useful to split up your budget into several parts and ask different funders to contribute to specific costs in line with their criteria. Inform your funders of the co-funding asked from elsewhere.

Step 4: Follow up on your applications

Do not just send in heaps of paperwork. Check with your contact person at the funding organisation to see if your application arrived, if anything is missing, and perhaps ask for some feedback on the content or information on the selection procedure. When not selected, do not drop your contact; the funder may be able to help with another project in the future. Feedback on the reasons for rejection can be useful. When your application is accepted, the work is not finished. During your project it is a sign of good public relations to send information (or even a simple postcard) at regular intervals (depending on the duration). And it is not finished until after the final report, including finances, and a thank-you letter.

Note! Do not look only for money. Often you can get contributions in kind, such as free accommodation or meals for your volunteers, some materials or technical equipment for the project (office equipment, building materials, etc.), a free phone line or Internet connection that could be provided by a company. Also sponsorship is an option.

More hints and tips can be found in the *T-Kit on Funding and Financial Management* (available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>) and in the bibliography of this T-Kit.

European Voluntary Service

The most prominent programme financially supporting IVS is the European Voluntary Service (EVS), which offers the opportunity within the Youth in Action programme to volunteer up to 12 months in a variety of activities and organisations.

Aims

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) gives young Europeans a unique chance to:

- express their voluntary commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country,
- develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus contributing to social cohesion, and
- enhance their active citizenship.

Criteria

- An EVS project involves between one and thirty volunteers aged from 18 to 30 (young people with fewer opportunities can participate from 16 years old).
- Volunteers must be legally resident in the country of the sending organisation and do their EVS in another country.

- Voluntary service lasts for a minimum of two months up to maximum of 12 months (from two weeks for young people with fewer opportunities or group EVS).
- The project promoters (sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations) need to be accredited: having an approved “Expression of Interest” (EI) and EI reference number.
- All partners involved sign an EVS agreement (detailing tasks, responsibilities and practical arrangements) and adhere to the EVS charter.

Type of projects

- One or more volunteers from a programme country can carry out their EVS in another programme country or in a partner country. Volunteers from partner countries can only do EVS in a programme country (EU, EFTA, pre-accession countries and Switzerland).
- There are individual EVS projects involving just one volunteer; other projects have various volunteers doing their EVS individually (in different organisations/placements). Or an EVS project can host a group of volunteers at the same time in the same placement.

Application procedures

- Centralised application by the executive agency: European/international youth organisations, organisations from partner countries, intergovernmental organisations, large-scale events.
- Decentralised application to the national agency: all other eligible organisations/applicants.

Funding rules

EVS projects are financed on the principle of co-funding; the European Commission’s grant only complements other resources raised by the project partners. Funding is largely based on a system of lump sums fixed per country and some funding based on actual costs:

Lump sums

- Lump sum for sending costs and hosting costs per volunteer.
- Lump sum for co-ordination costs per promoter (sending and hosting organisations) and per volunteer involved in a multilateral or group EVS.
- Fixed monthly allowance for the volunteer (for communication, support, etc.).

Actual costs

- 90% of eligible travel costs.
- 100% of visa and vaccination costs (including visa-related costs).
- 100% of eligible costs related to the on-arrival training and mid-term evaluation for volunteers.
- 100% of additional costs related to dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Young people with fewer opportunities

Some costs related to advance planning visits, reinforced mentorship and special needs (exceptional costs) are covered when the volunteers are young people with fewer opportunities.

Deadlines

- There are three deadlines a year for projects starting three to five months later.
- EVS projects with placements lasting less than two months involving young people with fewer opportunities can apply up to two weeks before the meeting of the selection committee.

For detailed information on EVS, download the programme guide of the Youth in Action programme or contact your YiA national agency for information in your language: www.ec.europa.eu/youth.

Council of Europe funding

Apart from the EVS financial scheme, there are other funding possibilities for IVS. For example, for work camps you can apply for a grant via the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. You need to meet several criteria when applying for a Category A grant:

- Participants from at least seven member states of the Council of Europe have to be involved in the project.
- 75% of volunteers should be under 30 years old.
- The activity should be held in a member state of the Council of Europe. (Derogations are possible, depending on the topic of the activity.)

Consult the European Youth Forum (EYF) website (www.eyf.coe.int/fej) for detailed information on Category A projects.

Besides the funding offered through the European Youth Foundation, the Council of Europe offers a programme of study sessions, based on co-operation between partner organisations and the Council of Europe's Youth Department. Study sessions are international youth events that last between four and eight days and take place in one of the European Youth Centres. They bring together members of youth organisations or networks and experts to discuss specific subjects and draw conclusions relevant to the priorities and programmes of the Council of Europe Youth sector.

A study session is not a work camp or an IVS project, but it can be a valuable contribution to the development of IVS programmes run by different international organisations or networks. Many of them have used the opportunity of study sessions to improve the quality of their programmes and produce guidelines and good practices. You can find their reports at www.coe.int/t/dg4/youthTraining/Study_sessions/Study_sessions_reports_en.asp and more about study sessions at www.coe.int/t/dg4/youthTraining/Study_sessions/default_en.asp.

Real life ...

An example of a budget, for inspiration

As we mentioned, ELKA was going to organise a work camp to develop paths and rest areas throughout the mountains and also host a volunteer to develop the idea of adventure walks for youth groups and accompany them. Of course the budgets were prepared after consultation with all international partners in both the IVS projects, who themselves also had a budget for sending their volunteers.

Budget for the work camp developing paths and rest areas (in euros)

Expenditure	€
Travel:	
International travel for 26 volunteers	8 120
Local transport for 45 young people	1 350
Accommodation:	
Host families in Velho	3 650
Food:	8 960
Preparatory work:	
Two meetings	940
Document preparation (information, welcome brochure)	230
Telephone, fax, post, e-mail connections	410

Insurance: For 46 persons	2 533
Visas: For 26 persons	612
Administration and co-ordination costs:	650
Environment inspection (paths and rest areas development):	2 600
Expertise on tourism: Two professional trainers (fees)	3 600
Social activities: For 46 persons (cultural events, four trips to historic places near Velho, coach hire, intercultural evenings and programme – cinema, theatre, final party, etc.)	3 680
Video preparation	2 200
TOTAL	39 535
Income	
	€
ELKA's own contribution	4 855
IVS partners' contributions	8 000
Participants' contributions	2 300
Municipality	3 300
Ministry of the Environment grant	4 000
Private sponsors	2 550
District Office, Department of Regional Co-operation and Tourism	2 450
Foundation for Social Development	3 500
Local Youth Council	2 320
In-kind contributions	6 260
TOTAL	39 535
Budget for the EVS project (in euros)	
Expenditure	
	€
Pre-departure preparation organised by the sending organisation: Language training course (2 volunteers, 15 days, intensive): € 1 200 Information materials: € 75	1 275
Travel costs: Return 2nd class rail ticket from volunteers' homes to Velho: 2 × € 230	460
Accommodation for 2 volunteers in Velho: Arranged and costs covered by a family (in kind)	4 300
Food for 2 volunteers, full duration of 11 months: Breakfasts and dinners (covered by a family)	4 460
Lunches	4 110

Allowance for 2 volunteers: € 92/month	2 090
Local transport:	1 320
Language course organised by ELKA (in kind)	
Intensive part (at language school)	540
Provided by a volunteer of ELKA	260
Social activities and leisure time (social integration):	
Planned cultural trips and social events	1 880
Administration:	
Tel., fax, e-mail connection: 11 × 65 = € 715	
Paper, pens, Xerox, materials for working with youngsters – rope, information brochures, etc.): € 620	1 335
Visa and residential permit for 2 volunteers	220
Medical certificate (on infectious diseases) for 2 volunteers: 2 × € 45	90
Dissemination of good practice:	
Publications on	
– green tourists statistics and adventure activities (100 printings)	800
– project outcomes	320
Ongoing training (2 volunteers × € 650)	1 300
Evaluation	220
TOTAL	24 980
Income	€
ELKA's own contribution	850
Sending organisation's contribution	500
City Council	500
Velho School's contribution	120
District Office – Department of Environment Protection	1 200
Private sponsors	800
Foundation for civil society development	1 200
In-kind contributions	957
European Commission grant (EVS)	
90% travel costs = € 414	
Sending costs (lump sum/volunteer) = € 960	
Hosting cost (lump sum calculated per volunteer per month): € 11 000	
Co-ordination cost (lump sum per volunteer+lump sum per organisation): € 200 + 260	
100% of visa & vaccination costs: € 310	
Allowance for 2 volunteers: € 95/ month = € 2 090	
Training costs (100%): € 2 795	19 149
Dissemination costs: € 1 120	
TOTAL	25 276

3. Getting ready for take-off

3.1 Recruitment and screening of volunteers

In this chapter we look at different ways of recruiting volunteers for IVS. Although primarily aimed at organisations that send volunteers abroad for both long- and short-term assignments, this chapter should also be of interest to host organisations that recruit their volunteers directly without the help of a sending organisation. The majority of our suggestions and tips are targeted at organisations that deal with long-term voluntary service, but they can easily be adapted to shorter programmes. As we pointed out earlier, you do not necessarily have to do all the work yourself: you might opt to co-operate with an existing network (see Appendix 2: Overview of international voluntary service organisations, programmes and platforms).



3.1.1 Basic steps in volunteer recruitment

1. Get to know your programme

Before you start looking for volunteers, you should of course know what you want them for. As pointed out in Chapter 2.2 “The project cycle”, you need to know why you want to work with volunteers, to check if there is a need and backing for the project and finally to develop or receive a detailed “job description” for your potential volunteers, including information such as the aims and place of the project within the hosting organisation, the responsibilities and tasks to be taken up, required skills or qualifications, benefits for the volunteer and the project, time commitment, location, support and training provided, free-time possibilities and the type of evaluation and follow-up.

If you are a sending organisation make sure that the information that you receive from your host partner is what you really need to advertise the existing placements. A good way of doing this is by being involved in the writing of the placements’ description.

2. Get to know your target group

Either you decide what type of people you are targeting, for example by creating an ideal profile of your volunteer, or – looking at it from the other end – you can ask yourself what kind of young people might be interested in your programmes?

3. Create a clear application procedure

Potential volunteers are often discouraged by the lack of a clear application procedure. A lot of confusion can be avoided by having information about the voluntary service opportunities

given by the same person(s) who provides other information (for example, details of the aims, the hosting organisation, the job description). The next step could be an information pack with an application form or an interview or group meeting. It should not take longer than 48 hours for an information request to be followed by a telephone call or a letter!

4. Get a user-friendly message

Adapt the language used in your information hand-outs to your target group and get straight to the point. Make sure that your hand-out answers typical questions new recruits usually ask: What will I be doing? How often? Where and when? What support will I get? But also an answer to the underlying question: Why should I volunteer for your organisation?

You can compose your recruitment message in three parts: a statement about the need or problem to be solved (the cause); what the volunteer can do about it (the task) and what others and the volunteer will get out of it (the benefits). For example:

Adolescents should be given the opportunity to grow up in a caring and safe environment. Unfortunately, not all adolescents have the chance of living in such conditions [the cause]. You can help them by participating in our project in Denmark where we run a shelter hostel for adolescents in distress [the task]. You will be able to help them to learn new skills and start their lives anew. You will also be given the chance to meet new friends and learn about the hosting culture [the benefits].

Of course, this basic message may need to be expanded by supplementary information on each of the three points. You can do this by bolstering each of the three parts with a fact, a personal testimony, a quotation or a personal experience. Whatever your message: be honest. Avoid making things sound too good if the tasks in question are indeed difficult and require a lot of energy.

Recruitment techniques: pros and cons

There are many ways to get your offer to potential volunteers, but all of them have some arguments in favour and some against. The choice is yours.

Word of mouth

The best publicity that your volunteer programmes can get is the one made by your previous and current volunteers, as well as their family and friends. Those who work for you and those who benefit from your volunteers' work will also talk about international voluntary service in positive terms. You could optimise this kind of publicity by systematically asking your volunteers and staff to talk about your volunteer programmes abroad to friends and relatives on a one-to-one basis.

Pros: it is a highly personally engaging method, very user-friendly and with no cost.

Cons: it happens at random and you will have little overview of how and what information is given, both positive and negative.

Meetings of small groups

One way of trying to combine the benefits of word-of-mouth recruitment with a more structured approach is to convene meetings of small groups of people interested in international voluntary service. Previous volunteers could bring their friends or relatives along. To make this more appealing you can organise a little event around it, such as a lunch or a party. Returned volunteers can bring out the more personal aspects of their experience and a staff member could provide more formal input on the programme and application procedure.

Pros: it allows you to reach out to a group of people in both an informal and formal way, who will themselves become multipliers and bring new people in.

Cons: people may be reluctant to commit themselves to anything more than just listening. You should be prepared to invest some of your resources in following up closely after the meeting (for instance by calling, sending more information).

Presentations, speeches and special events

You can organise an open door day where you present the voluntary service opportunities to a wider audience. You could also ask to have a stand or presentation at certain meetings or seminars, especially ones about volunteering, youth or about professional or educational opportunities for young people.

Pros: these types of activities will allow you to reach a bigger audience and to circulate a lot of your materials. They also help your organisation to raise its public profile.

Cons: they are less personal and only a small percentage of those showing an interest will actually ask for more information. So, do not get your hopes up too high.

Printed materials such as brochures and newsletters

A leaflet or brochure explaining the work that you do, with nice pictures and testimonies from volunteers, will give potential candidates a permanent reminder to go back to when deciding to volunteer. You could have a preliminary application form or a detachable slip asking for more information. Remember to make your message user-friendly. In a newsletter, you can include information about your current IVS opportunities and application procedures next to an appetising article about volunteering, for example, a letter from a volunteer abroad, etc.

Pros: printed materials are a good way of getting information out in big quantities for example in mailings or at bigger events and they can be used by other organisations or information services to inform others about your programmes.

Cons: printed materials get easily out of date and they can be costly.

Internet, social media and electronic newsletters

Nowadays it is very common to refer to a website or social media page instead of giving a phone number or a leaflet. You can put easy-to-read appetisers on your website helping people warm to the idea of volunteering. Visitors can also find out more background information on your organisation via Facebook or other social media sites, as well as an overview of the application procedure or even an online application form. You can easily share links to useful related sites. You can market your website at the other recruitment occasions (for instance meetings, articles, brochures, discussions forums, social media).

You can also send newsletters (see above) in an electronic version via e-mail. Or you can use social media to keep your followers updated about the recruitment steps for your project.

Pros: the information on the Internet is dynamic – all it takes is a click on a link. Interested volunteers can access the information from anywhere and you will always have the latest information. The e-mail newsletter is very cheap as it does not need printing and posting.

Cons: an appealing website can be costly. Both your website and your presence on social media need to be updated regularly, so you need to invest enough time in them. They rule out people without access to computers and the Internet.

The media

Getting to know your local or national media (for example newspapers, radio, television) and establishing good relations with some key people can get you some free publicity. Most probably they will not run ads for your programmes but they might be willing to have an article, interview or display about your volunteers and their work. Send regular press releases to the media informing them of your activities and achievements.

Pros: an article in a newspaper, a radio interview or a television show can put you in touch with thousands of people at the same time. Being in the media can boost people's confidence in your programmes.

Cons: you can get a massive response and not be ready to deal with it. Journalists may be interested not only in the nice aspects of your programmes but also in exploring their shortcomings. Be prepared to handle this wisely.

Advertising

An ad can be both paid and unpaid. You can use your own publications and your website, for instance, to run ads about your IVS and respective vacancies. You can do the same, and for free, with publications from organisations friendly to your cause. Alternatively, you can decide to pay for publicity in the media. In these cases, you can ask businesses or others to sponsor your ad.

Pros: ads, depending on their circulation, can reach a lot of people. If catchy they can be a great way to put you on the map in people's minds.

Cons: ads can be very expensive to make and run. Results are not always as high as expected and they can also give the impression that you are desperate to get volunteers.

3.1.2 Volunteer screening techniques

Recruiting volunteers is not only about getting as many volunteers as possible, it is also about getting the right volunteer for the right project. Therefore screening becomes necessary in order to match the appropriate volunteer with an appropriate project. Two basic screening techniques are the application form and the interview.

The application form

Whether doing long- or short-term IVS, you will see that there are many advantages in having an application form for each of your candidates. An application form is not just a way of collecting personal information for filing, it is a powerful instrument that allows you to assign volunteers to their placements and gives you the chance to know more about the people you are attracting and in this sense to review your future recruitment strategy.

What should an application form look like? You should make it short but there are a few basic things that you ought to put in:

- personal details (for example, full name, address, telephone, age, gender);
- duration of the programme (for example, if you offer placements of variable duration);
- preferred projects/activities (for example, if you offer projects in multiple areas of interest);
- preferred country/region (for example, if you have placements in more than one country or region);
- health and special needs (for example, allergies, dietary needs, disability, medical care, etc.) and the contact details of next of kin in case of emergency;
- these are the hard facts of an application form, but there are also soft facts, enquiring about motivation, expectation, attitudes, needs and fears, which are even more important sources of information for finding the right volunteer for an IVS;
- you can also leave space for feedback from the applicant. Is there something you would like to ask or tell us? How did you get to know about this project?

If you need to pass on all this information to different people or partner organisations, you might want to consider having electronic application forms. Registrations via the Internet can also reduce invalid applications (for example, missing details, wrong data) and facilitate computerised data management (printing lists, mail merge letters, etc.).

Some organisations are very careful in drawing up their application forms because some questions might scare people. How will a candidate react when you ask about certain skills, if this person does not have these skills (yet)? You could instead opt to find out this information indirectly, in an interview for example. Also bear in mind the privacy of personal details.

Using the Internet

The Internet is used more and more for collecting information about candidates, whether it is for a job or a volunteering position. It is easy to search the Internet for someone's name and find information that would not be mentioned in an application form or interview.

However, information on the Internet often is pulled out of context. What people write on a personal blog has a different value to what they contribute on a professional forum. And what a candidate wrote 10 years ago is maybe not relevant any more (even though that information often remains available on the Internet). Funny (or compromising) pictures or statements of a person that were meant as a joke should not be taken as seriously as a letter to the editor on the website of a newspaper. Also, make sure that you only consider information about the right person as there are many people with the same name online.

The bottom line is: use online information with care, if at all.

The interview

Many organisations skip meeting their applicants on a one-to-one basis because it is either too time-consuming or because they are satisfied with the data on the application form. But an interview can give you more information about the applicant's level of commitment and it allows you to better match the applicant and the specific placement abroad.

Tips for conducting an interview

1. Choose the setting

The interview should be held in a friendly environment, not too formal and not too informal (for example in a quiet room, not too big, in your offices), ideally without any physical barrier between you and the applicant (such as a desk or counter).

2. Introduce yourself

Tell the volunteer your name and explain your link to the organisation (for example your title or function). This shows openness and transparency.

3. Break the ice

Try to put the candidate, and yourself, at ease by exchanging a few words on neutral things such as the weather, the trip to the interview, tea or coffee.

4. Start with a thank you

The person sitting in front of you has shown an interest in what you have to offer so you might want to thank the applicant for considering volunteering with your organisation.

5. Confirm the data

Check that this is the person you are supposed to be meeting (right person coming for the right project). The application form will come in handy at this stage.

6. State the purpose

Explain briefly the purpose of the interview, tell the candidate about its duration and give one or two examples of the type of questions that will be asked. Inform the candidate that he or she can also ask questions about your organisation and voluntary service.

7. Introduce your organisation and programme

Take some time to explain the background of the voluntary service (aims, strategy, job description, etc.) before starting to question your applicant.

8. The questions

A set of prearranged questions can be a guideline for an interview, but should not come across as artificial. Add or leave out certain questions depending on the evolution of the interview. Avoid yes-no questions. Some open questions could be:

- Why is volunteering important for you?
- What experience do you have of volunteering in this field?
- What did you enjoy about your work or previous volunteering experience?
- Have you ever lived abroad and, if so, what was it like?
- How would you handle conflicts with people in the hosting organisation?
- What do your family and friends think about your choice?
- Why do you want to volunteer in this particular area/country/project?

Give feedback as the applicant answers your questions; this can be a nod of your head, a "yes" here and there, or more elaborate comments on what you are hearing. Do not overdo your questions – 10 to 15 questions should be enough – but go back if you were not happy with one answer or if you have doubts about something.

9. Conclude the interview

Conclude the interview by making sure that you have covered all the questions you wanted to ask and that the applicant has nothing more to say or ask. Explain to them what will be the next steps (how long it will take for you to get in touch, will it be by letter or phone, etc.).

3.1.3 When extra screening of volunteers becomes a must

When working with so-called vulnerable client groups (children, minors, the elderly, people with a mental or physical disability, people who suffer from chronic illnesses such as cancer or Aids, former alcoholics or drug-users), you want to know that your clients are safe with the volunteer. Therefore extra screening (and preparation) can help minimise risks and optimise the service to your client group. We do not want to instigate paranoia, but promote a conscious and transparent screening strategy. Here are some principles that can help:

1. Clarify the nature of abuse or misconduct

Your organisation should be clear on what is considered (by law or according to your own ethics) as abuse or misconduct in the way your volunteers deal with and relate to your clients. These guidelines defining abuse or misconduct and the procedure to follow when misconduct happens should be written down. Both staff and volunteers should be informed about them and adhere to them (for example, what is appropriate in terms of physical contact with children and adolescents, the use of alcohol at the project premises, etc.).

2. Check the volunteer's job description

The description of the tasks of the volunteer, the required supervision, the skills and experience needed, for example, will tell you if the voluntary service is of high risk. Accordingly you can decide to have extra screening through a longer application form, special written tests, personality questionnaires, interviews with different people in your organisation or simulation games.

3. Include different people in the screening

During an interview, for instance, one person may pick up certain signals that others have missed. Peer interviews (by former or current volunteers) again can shed another light on the candidate, from the point of view of someone who really knows the job.

4. Collect information from multiple sources

If you think that the tasks of the volunteer will require someone with a sound and trustworthy background, you should consider asking for personal referees who have first-hand experience of the applicant's work with the client group in question. Ask them specific questions such as:

- Do you have any concerns about this person working with our client group?
- Would you recommend this person for the post and, if so, why?
- If we were to take this person, what type of training would you suggest or do you think that this person would require a lot of supervision?

5. Trial period

For certain high-risk clients you may wish to introduce a trial period for your volunteers. This will complement your initial screening process and will give you the chance to assess the suitability of the new volunteer before making a definite decision.

6. Police checks

In certain countries (the United Kingdom, for example) police checks may be routine or even compulsory for volunteers dealing with special client groups, for example children. In other countries there are declarations of “good behaviour” for these purposes, stating that you have no criminal record. You should make sure that your organisation fulfils the legal requirements in your country for recruiting and screening volunteers for certain posts with certain people, without of course scaring off the volunteers.

Note! Respect the right to privacy. The purpose of extra screening is not to delve into the private life of candidates, but to know them well enough to make a judgment about their capacities and limitations. The personal information about the volunteer should only be communicated to the people who need to know (such as the support person in the hosting organisation) and be kept confidential from others. Be sure to comply with national legislation regarding the use and storage of personal data.

3.1.4 Voluntary service for “disadvantaged young people”



What is in a word ...?

First of all, we should be careful with the term “disadvantaged” young people. It has a lot of negative connotations and tends to stigmatise the people we are referring to in this chapter. Mostly the young people themselves do not want to be labelled “disadvantaged”. Then what should we call those young people in precarious situations?

In the inclusion strategy of the Youth in Action programme, this sensitive issue was solved by talking about “young people with fewer opportunities”. This term actually regards young people as people first, and then adds that they have fewer opportunities compared to their peers. This can be because of various obstacles – social, economic, educational, cultural, geographical, disability or health.

This definition also takes the particular situation of the person into account. In a country where most buildings are accessible, a person in a wheelchair will not necessarily be at a disadvantage. It depends a lot on how the person deals with a particular social situation. Coming from an ethnic minority can engender social exclusion, but a black person may well gain access to the same opportunities as the rest of society. Therefore, in this chapter we use the term “young people with fewer opportunities” for those who need special support and additional resources for participating in a voluntary service programme.

Voluntary service as a tool

IVS projects should be accessible for all, and maybe especially for those young people who all too often fall out of the boat. International voluntary service could be a life-changing experience for a young person with fewer opportunities. Being part of a volunteer project

abroad provides some opportunities for change that are all too often lacking for those target groups.

But IVS is not a goal in itself. Sending a young person with special needs abroad will not solve all problems. What is more, IVS can do as much harm as good if not planned properly.

IVS is a tool that youth workers or mentors can use with young people when they are ready for it. This implies that there is a process before and after the international project. IVS is just one step in the longer-term pathway of young people with fewer opportunities. There are aims beyond IVS that are set from the beginning of working with them (such as independent living or finding a job). So it is more likely that a youth social worker will initiate IVS than one of the young people with fewer opportunities themselves.

Preparing for the big jump

Preparing young people for a longer stay in another country has many facets. The general preparation remarks are valid for young people with fewer opportunities too, but some issues require special attention, depending on the target group. Find out what is important for the young volunteers you work with.

Reduce uncertainty

Young people with fewer opportunities rarely have the chance to go abroad or to cope independently with new situations. New and uncertain situations are scary, especially when you do not have a lot of practice in dealing with them. One way to prepare volunteers for IVS is to gradually familiarise them with the kind of situation they will end up in. International exchanges or holiday travel could give the volunteers a better view of what it is like to be in another country (buying train tickets, being confronted with a different language, a different religion, etc.), but still in the safe environment of a group of friends from their own country who speak their language.

Other methods and techniques of working on intercultural sensitivity are described in the T-Kit on *Intercultural Learning* (available to download from <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>).

The voluntary service aspect can be stimulated by gradually increasing involvement and tasks in volunteering in the home society. Before leaving for an ecological project abroad, the volunteers could take up some responsibilities within a local nature organisation. This way they can already get a feel for working in a project, carrying out tasks, working with others and so on. The stay abroad can be short at first, but gradually prolonged if wished, or longer in a future IVS project.

A relation of trust

Other concrete measures you can take, to increase the volunteers' ability to cope with the new situation, could be a familiar person that joins in the project. This could be a friend, a youth worker, a peer volunteer in the same situation or simply someone who can speak their mother tongue. Visiting the project with the volunteers before the actual (longer-term) voluntary service can reduce considerably the anxiety about where they will end up.

It is very important to build up a trust relationship with your volunteers, so it is advisable to have regular (informal) meetings with them to show that they are respected and listened to. Always involve the volunteers in decisions that concern them. Furthermore, sending volunteers to a foreign country where the same language is spoken could make the stay considerably less challenging and frightening for them.

Use adapted methods

The way you go about preparation and the whole project is very important. Especially when working with volunteers who have learning difficulties or a turbulent (or short) school record, a formal academic approach might pose a lot of obstacles. Some volunteers might even be (semi-)illiterate, so in this case visual material (video, pictures, etc.) or oral contact would probably work best. It is advisable in this case to do away with everything that reminds them

of school. In this case, the most appropriate way to learn skills, tasks and even language is learning by doing, on the job.

One of the aims of voluntary service is to give back some necessary self-esteem to the volunteers and to move away from life in the margins of society. Achievement is beneficial to enhance self-esteem, whereas failure punches it down. Therefore it is very important to create successive successes for the volunteers, starting with small tasks but gradually providing bigger challenges, always, however, with enough support and follow-up. Positive feedback (from significant others such as colleagues or peers) is an important element in raising self-esteem. Failures should be put in perspective and used as a learning experience for the future.

Keep up the motivation

Besides work satisfaction, there should also be an atmosphere in which the volunteers feel at ease. You can easily make volunteers feel welcome by making time for a chat, some jokes, a little attention, etc. However, be careful not to create situations that make the volunteer feel awkward or a burden by overdoing it (see also Chapter 4.2.1 “Motivating the volunteer”).

Sometimes motivation is a big problem for socially excluded youngsters, especially when the idea of voluntary service comes from someone else. It is therefore important to closely monitor the level of motivation and keep it up by using the methods mentioned in the chapter on motivating volunteers. In order to keep motivation of the volunteer high, it is important to limit the delay between the decision to do IVS and leaving for the actual placement.

And even if you manage to keep the volunteers’ motivation high, do not forget that they are not isolated persons – sometimes you also need to convince parents or explain the project to peers.

Clear and confidential communication

Given the diversity of the target group of socially excluded young people, it is essential that the sending and hosting organisations communicate with each other about what this “social exclusion” actually entails for the young people. The background and profile of the volunteer should be clear to both sides.

This raises, however, the issue of confidentiality: what do you communicate about the volunteer and to whom? The support person in the host organisation is probably the one who should get all the necessary details about the volunteers in order to coach them in the best possible manner and to ensure the physical and moral safety of all. Previous health or drug problems should be communicated, as well as possible offences (theft, sexual abuse, etc.), preferably with the consent of the volunteer. Other workers or volunteers in the host organisation mostly do not need to know these private details, unless they need to know to be able to co-operate with the volunteer.

When the going gets tough ...

Support at different levels

During voluntary service, it is very important that the volunteers get support to help them cope with the new situation. This support should take place at several levels, as mentioned in Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”: intercultural (explaining cultural differences or misunderstandings), professional (training support: induction to tasks and work environment) and personal (social support in the day-to-day life of the volunteer, for instance, arranging social activities to meet new people). It is important not to take any skills or knowledge for granted.

If the volunteers have limited social skills or language problems, it is important to structure their free time in such a way that the situation offers them what they need: friends, contacts in their own language, fun and so forth. Peer groups can be very useful – you might introduce the volunteers to young people in the host country who share the same music taste, who have a similar background, or who can speak the same or a related language. One important need the project should address is the need to belong and to be part of a group.

Regular feedback moments

For the well-being of the volunteers, regular contacts with the “home front” may be crucial. This provides them with a safety valve, talking to someone they know in their own language or dialect. It also shows that people back home are interested in what the volunteers are doing and have not forgotten them.

It is necessary to have regular meetings with a support person in the project, to discuss the work and the volunteers’ living conditions, feelings and motivation. This is an important thermometer mechanism to check whether the volunteer is still keen on the project (see also Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”). If motivation gets a bit low, more time can be put into fun or leisure activities.

Be ready for emergencies

Just in case something goes really wrong – incredible homesickness, problems at work, accidents and the like – it is important to establish an emergency procedure with the volunteer. This can be a phone number, a sealed envelope with some extra money, an emergency packet of cigarettes for a person that recently quit smoking, and so on. The conditions in which the emergency procedure can be used should be known to all people involved (volunteer, host project, youth worker at home). See also Chapter 4.5.2.

Deal with language problems

If language could be a problem, it is important to keep things very visual – instead of explaining a task verbally, you can show it. Contact through working together on practical tasks works best. Free-time opportunities should be provided in which the volunteer can do non-verbal things with others. Instead of going to the pub for a chat, you can go and play darts. Talking about your trip becomes showing the photo album. Talking to friends could be playing sports instead.

However, through all these little active things the volunteer will probably learn a huge amount of practical vocabulary. The volunteer should also be prepared for these ways of communication in the preparation process.

Different interactive language learning methods are described in the T-Kit on *Language Learning* (available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>).

You have not finished yet

Prepare re-entry

What counts for “classic” volunteers probably counts double for volunteers coming from a disadvantaged background. After the IVS you are not finished yet! One of the things every volunteer will bump into is re-entry shock. The volunteer might have progressed or changed tremendously during their IVS, but mostly the home front has not. Back home the friends and family expect the volunteer to be the same as before and the situation often provides them with the same temptations as before (drugs, criminality, social problems, etc.).

So it goes without saying that it requires decent preparation to go home again and face the old reality and the people who have not experienced IVS and grown as the volunteer has.

Reflect on the experience

It is important in work with young people to make an inventory, to see what they have learned and gained during their period abroad in voluntary service. It is beneficial to the volunteers’ self-esteem to see improvement and to talk about this achievement with other people, to express themselves. This gives social status and recognition to the volunteers, which before was perhaps not there.

Another way to make volunteers feel valued is to involve them in preparing future volunteers. This way you let the volunteers know that they possess something very valuable – experience

that they can share. The youth worker in the sending organisation back home is also vital in supporting the volunteer if the experience abroad was not felt as positive. The youth worker should be able to turn the volunteer's experience around in a constructive way and combat the feeling of failure.

Solve practical problems

Returning home might seem easy, but often – when dealing with young people from difficult social backgrounds – there are all kinds of practical challenges, such as obtaining housing support, unemployment benefits or social security after having spent some time away from home, outside the system.

Getting back into the system might require quite a lot of help from the youth worker of the sending organisation (see also Chapter 5.2 "Follow-up"). Besides these practicalities, the end of IVS and coming home is also a time to reflect on the next steps to take in the volunteers' pathways, depending on the objectives that the volunteer and/or youth worker (preferably both together) had set for the project.

Jump into the future

Perhaps they were striving for more independence and the voluntary service abroad has been a successful test, so the volunteers now feel comfortable enough to go and live on their own. If not, perhaps next time the volunteers could try a longer placement. Perhaps the volunteers are now skilled and can find a job in the area of work done in the placement, or they can begin education or training in this direction. Giving them a Youthpass or other certificate to recognise the competences they used and developed during the IVS project can support them in their next steps. See also Chapter 5.3 "Recognition and certification".

Basically, the volunteers go on to plan their lives – better.

3.1.5 Gender in international voluntary service

"What's gender got to do with it?"



Statistically, more women than men volunteer. For example 70% of young people taking part in European Voluntary Service in Youth in Action programme countries are female and only 30% male (2005). In Western countries, there seems to be a trend for more women than men to join voluntary service activities.

It is not always easy to explain why more women than men volunteer. Some traditionalists might justify this difference in terms of women's perceived "natural interest" in caring activities. Given the fact that most voluntary activities are in the social field and given the fact that many women in our society still play the role of primary carers (as mother, housewife, nurse, etc.), voluntary work might be more appealing to women. Our view is that women's role as carers is an effect of socialisation and not a natural trait. Nonetheless, caring and volunteering are still perceived as feminine activities, so more women go on IVS than men.

Male social representations of voluntary work are often less positive. Men attribute low social status to unpaid activities in the social and cultural field and this diminishes their motivation to join voluntary service activities. Besides this, many of the personal qualities that voluntary service programmes look for in their candidates are more often found in women than in men, again due to the socialisation experienced by both genders (for example, interpersonal skills or co-operative working methods). Of course men can develop the same level of quality in their human relations, but in general the gap is still there to be bridged by them.

The problem of recruiting male volunteers

The lack of male volunteers to run voluntary programmes and activities is felt by many organisations as a major shortcoming. Organisations working in the social field should be representative of society at large. By equal participation of men and women in volunteering, the social sector can help to define a caring positive image of men and provide role models for other men who might feel reluctant to volunteer because of the lack of male examples they can identify with. Here are some suggestions that could help you to balance gender participation in your voluntary service:

- Ask your previous or current male volunteers about their motives in joining your IVS.
- Ask men outside your organisation what would make them wish to join an IVS project.
- Use their answers to create a recruitment message that addresses their points and change your programmes accordingly.
- When presenting your programmes to a wider audience, make sure you have a male speaker too.
- In your publications, use images of male volunteers doing traditionally feminine activities, such as working with children or cooking; this can help other males to identify themselves with these activities. Conversely, you can also show your male volunteers doing more traditionally masculine activities, such as building a wooden bridge in a forest, to attract others to join your programmes.

The problem of recruiting female volunteers

In contrast, in some cultural contexts the difficulty is to recruit female volunteers, especially for voluntary service abroad. If you are aware of the particular difficulties that some young women face when deciding whether to participate in voluntary activities abroad, that can give you an insight into how to recruit, guide and support them. For example, a group of young immigrant women from Morocco showed significant interest in joining the programme, but they were not able to face their parents' opposition. Their parents were not only negative about their participation but also could not understand what their motive might be for joining the programme. Factors such as age, employment history and personality played a role in their determination to go against their families' wishes. Here are some possible ways to overcome such obstacles:

- Try to involve their families in the process as much as possible (for example, involving an older brother or sister, or another relative open to your programme, could help the parents to change their minds).
- Be ready to clarify their families' doubts and dispel their fears by foreseeing them and responding clearly and directly to questions about, for example, separate male and female living quarters, the type of supervision (and sex of the supervisors) or opportunities to contact or visit their daughter.
- Try to see whether or not some of your activities could become more gender-oriented (for example, certain activities could be developed in all-female groups).

- If your IVS project has been successful in recruiting female volunteers who experienced strong cultural barriers, ask them to help you to reach out to other young women in the same situation and use them as role models in your recruitment campaigns.

Gender and culture

Gender plays a role in your voluntary service programme, not only in equality of participation but also in perceptions, which vary from culture to culture. Some cultures are very open to socialising between men and women while others tend to separate men from women in very rigid ways. A female or male volunteer coming from a more open culture to a closed type of culture, for instance, could experience particular problems in adapting and integrating. Situations of this nature are usually intensified by the size of the host community. The smaller the community, the higher the risk of “gender shock” (comparable to culture shock).

One way of dealing with this is to refer to gender issues when preparing the volunteers.

- If you realise that your volunteers are going to do their IVS in a country where gender relations are very different, make sure you have this as one of the elements of your preparation activities, highlighting the potential points of conflict.
- It is more important to teach your volunteers how to find the right negotiation strategies to cope with the potential for “gender shock” than simply to describe the cultural differences at stake. If you are a sending organisation, ask your host partner to advise you on the best strategies that your volunteers could use.

Sexual harassment – The darker side of gender relations

Sexual harassment is an important element to take into account when looking at the gender dimension of voluntary service. Experience and numbers show that women are its victims more often than men, and that the main perpetrators of sexual harassment are men. It is important to have a look at what is considered – in your country or in the context of your organisation – as inappropriate or illegal, and what is not. This could again be part of the preparation of the volunteers.

Some organisations see the sharing of living space by men and women as part of their working philosophy. However, the people involved may not be mature enough to deal with the ensuing sexual tension, and organisations that promote voluntary work in group settings need to be aware of this. Men and women can, of course, share the same living space (for example, a dormitory) without it necessarily becoming problematic, but when young people are involved, this can create opportunities for sexual tension and sometimes harassment.

Whether or not your volunteers share the same living quarters, you should make sure that your organisation has thought about sexual harassment and how to deal with it. Here are a few things for you to consider about mixed living quarters.

- Make sure that male and female volunteers are conscious of the advantages and disadvantages of sharing the same living quarters.
- Make sure that your staff or other volunteer support persons are aware of the potential for sexual harassment and violence in this type of placement and that they know how to handle these cases.
- Volunteer preparation activities for this type of placement should not avoid tackling difficult questions such as: What are your doubts and fears about sharing the same living quarters? How to deal with sexual desire? What constitutes sexual harassment? What are the formal procedures for dealing with it?
- Facilitate the agreement of both gender groups on a common set of rules to be followed by all in the community for the entire duration of the placement and make sure that these rules are followed by all.

Discussing these issues requires the organisers to be open-minded enough to admit that desire is an important dimension to take into account when men and women are brought together under the same roof. Confronting people with this reality does not interfere with harmonious living; on the contrary, it increases the chances of managing the situation in a rewarding way for everybody.

Gender discrimination is not always a bad thing

Some voluntary placements may require volunteers to be either female or male, depending on the context and tasks to be executed. Although we tend to see men and women as equal and thus capable of doing the same things, there are circumstances where it might be justifiable to target specifically a female or male volunteer. This is not because the tasks in question are perceived as being either more or less feminine, or more or less masculine, but because there is a strong and legitimate reason to require a person of one gender to do the work.

For instance, an organisation supporting women battered by their male partners may wish to engage a volunteer to help the women with their personal healing process, and they may have very strong and legitimate reasons for wanting a female volunteer. In such a special situation it may be advisable, if not an absolute criterion, that the volunteer in question be a woman.

A similar but opposite example could be the case of an organisation working with street gangs in a run-down neighbourhood that would like to engage a volunteer to help them with their outreach work. Street gangs are frequently male-dominated and structured around masculine role models. Therefore, it would be legitimate for the organisation in question to argue that a man would be more suitable for the work than a woman.

In both these examples it would be inappropriate to accuse the organisation of discrimination, since they would only be trying to match the right person to the right job and the gender sensitivity of the work would plainly justify their choices.

3.2 Preparing the actors



IVS is about creating new perspectives by confronting different realities – of organisations and their people. The success of an IVS project depends to a large extent on the quality of the preparation of all actors involved. A lot of crisis and conflict situations can be prevented by thorough preparation.

3.2.1 Preparation of the volunteers

As pointed out in Chapter 2.1 “The actors”, the preparation of volunteers for IVS is largely the responsibility of the sending organisation, even though it should ideally be the product of negotiation with the hosting organisation, which can in this way complement the preparation and fill some gaps (see also Chapter 4.1 “Induction and on-arrival orientation”). Some of the

elements described below are more appropriate for long-term stays than for short-term projects. Generally speaking, the longer the period abroad and the more different the host culture, the more intense the preparation should be.

Preparation of the volunteer can be structured around three axes: motivation and expectations, the work and living conditions at the placement and the intercultural preparation.

Why does the volunteer want to do it? Motivation and expectations

Knowing why volunteers want to participate in IVS is essential to avoid misunderstandings from the very beginning. It is equally important to raise the volunteers' awareness of the hosting organisation's motives in receiving volunteers from abroad. The expectations from both sides should be adjusted to each other (see also Chapter 1.4 "Reasons for international voluntary service").

Next to these specific motivations, it can also be valuable to give new volunteers an introduction to the voluntary service movement, to place their own engagement in its socio-historical perspective (see also Chapter 1.3 "Background of international voluntary service").

The following exercises can be used to discover and document the volunteers' and other people's reasons for being part of an IVS project. When the volunteers realise that the motives of the host organisation are not 100% congruent with their own, they might be more willing to let go of some of their original ideas and prepare themselves for the needs of their hosts in order to satisfy the needs of both sides as much as possible. The same is true the other way around.

- **Motivation brainstorm**

Ask the volunteers to take some time to reflect on their reasons for going abroad. Let them write down their expectations and concerns about their stay. In a second step, ask them to think about the expectations and concerns that the hosting organisation might have about their stay. When they are finished, ask them to get together in small groups and discuss the results. Ask them to give feedback in the plenary about the items they wish to share with the others.

- **A letter to myself**

Ask the volunteers to write a letter to themselves about their reasons for choosing a given project, and the expectations and concerns connected to it. Provide a relaxing atmosphere (for instance music, a comfortable room) that allows the participants to let their thoughts wander. The letter then remains strictly confidential: it is sealed and kept by the sending organisation until the evaluation meeting at the end of the project. This method allows the participants to be very honest with themselves, without having to expose the letter to anybody.

The debriefing exercise takes place at the evaluation session months later. It allows the participants to remember the state of mind and the ideas they had before their departure and helps them to see the development they have gone through.

- **Creative expression of fears and expectations**

Provide a few metres of white wallpaper and lay it on the ground; then ask the participants to gather around it and to draw what comes into their mind when they think about their stay abroad. Calm instrumental music can provide the appropriate atmosphere for this exercise. Change or interrupt the music from time to time when you ask them to move and start on a new drawing/element. They could also add things to the drawings of other volunteers.

- **What is a volunteer?**

If the group of volunteers at your preparation is an international one, it can be interesting to explore with them the meaning of the word "volunteer" in different languages and countries in order to highlight the different notions (and implicit motivations) linked to the term in different cultural contexts.

Information about working and living conditions

The hosting organisation must be sure that it has given the volunteers (through the sending organisation) all the information necessary to have an idea of the working and living condi-

tions during their IVS. The immediate comfort of the volunteer depends on reducing the uncertainty linked to a jump into a new project and country. Having appropriate information – having answers to questions and doubts, having the feeling of being taken care of, having a nice place to sleep and eat and having a fairly clear idea of what to expect and what is expected – will reduce the volunteers' anxiety and make them feel welcome in the project. Here is a checklist of the things the volunteers (and the sending organisation) will probably want or need to know.

Checklist for an information session

About the project

- Detailed project description and job description (aims, tasks, benefits, time frame, etc.)
- Volunteer profile requested (age limits, skills, language skills, etc.)
- Support available during the project (training, support person, language training, etc.)
- Description of the host organisation and the different people working there
- Safety rules and a code of conduct for volunteers (if made necessary by the cultural background or special requirements of the host project)
- ...?

About the living conditions

- Practical details (insurance, financial, health, social security, emergency procedures, etc.)
- Food and housing arrangements, location of the work and living quarters
- Travel arrangements (visa, travel instructions, local transport, etc.)
- Financial arrangements (contributions, pocket money, etc.)
- General information about the host country (cultural, economic, social and political)
- ...?

Note! A sending organisation can ensure full preparation of volunteers only if communication between the two organisations is already efficient before the project starts. Especially in the case of long-term projects, it is useful to put the volunteer in direct contact with the hosting project at an early stage to allow them to resolve any further questions directly and get to know each other from a distance.

Information should be transmitted by a variety of methods:

- Keep the session interactive, even if a lot of information just needs to be “given” – always open the floor for questions, suggestions and discussion.
- Invite former volunteers to give their testimony.
- Invite people from the host country to give presentations on the country.
- Use games and audiovisual material to introduce the country.
- Let the participants discover parts of the information themselves through literature or websites that you provide, and ask them to present the results to the rest of the group in a creative way.
- Provide a fact pack with basic information and details of the contact person in the hosting organisation.

Intercultural preparation

The third element of preparatory training is the intercultural aspect of voluntary service across borders. An intercultural pre-departure session should raise awareness about cultural concepts that exist, the volunteers' own cultural background and the culture of the host commu-

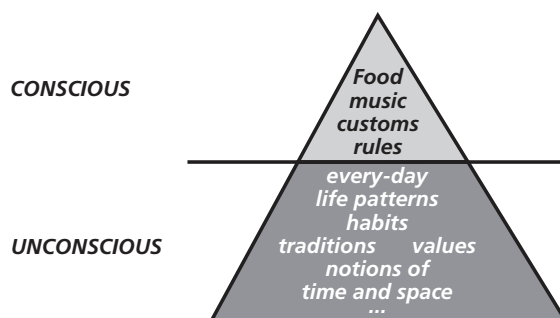
nity. It should strengthen the volunteers' sense of observation and prepare them for difficulties they might encounter in this respect, though without providing the volunteers with behavioural recipes. Since there is a T-Kit on *Intercultural Learning* (available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>) and an education pack on informal intercultural education (available at www.coe.int/ecri), we will not go into extensive detail about intercultural preparation here.

When going to work and live abroad, it is important to see the influence that culture has on people, but also the diversity that exists within a country or culture, depending on factors like age, belief or sexuality. Culture gives people a sense of belonging even though they do not personally know all the other members of the group. This principle might also affect the volunteer who has to live without his/her original (cultural) group, but still needs to belong to some group (age, music, sports) in the host country.

A number of exercises explore personal and cultural identity, and train the volunteer to deal with complexity instead of using stereotypes. An exercise of this kind is the "onion exercise", which is based on the idea that any person is shaped by many different layers, not only culture but also family, friends, education and so on (see T-Kit on *Intercultural Learning*, p. 43: "the onion of diversity").

It is also useful to convey certain notions of culture, because this helps people to understand how it functions and what influence it has on us. Another way to visualise the complexity of culture is the "iceberg model", which describes culture as being defined only to a small extent by visible elements like fine arts, music, food and dress whereas the great majority of cultural elements are invisible and also unconscious (for instance: attitudes, role models, notions of time and space). Other models allow a gradual classification of countries according to certain values, which may be interesting for the volunteer and help them see what in general will be different from the own culture. The T-Kit on *Intercultural Learning* goes into more detail about concepts of intercultural learning.

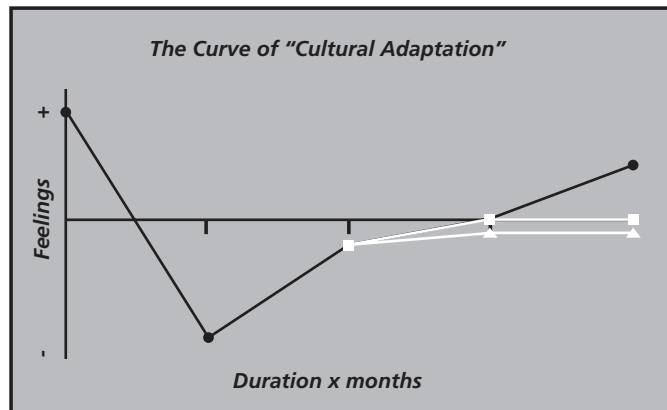
The triangle of culture



(Adapted from "Training Course on Project Management and Transnational Voluntary Service: Final Report (7-14 March 1999)", Council of Europe Youth Directorate, DJ/TC VOL(99)2, p. 29).

Finally, it is helpful (especially for long-term stays) to discuss the typical development of a stay abroad through the "adjustment cycle". This tries to visualise the various phases one might go through during a stay abroad, highlighting the possibility of living through a period of "culture shock", which can develop into a phase of adaptation and stability of varying degrees, depending on the way the person digests the negative feelings and moves on from there. At the preparation meeting it is useful to introduce the idea of a development that the participants will live through, and then come back to it at the evaluation, asking participants to draw the actual line of what they experienced.

The adjustment cycle



(Adapted from Grove and Torbiörn, "A New Conceptualization of Intercultural Adjustment and the Goals of Training", in M. Paige, *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth, 1993.)

This list of tips for overcoming culture shock can be introduced to the participants as a tool that they can refer to in case of necessity.

Culture shock?

If you feel bad during your stay abroad, take some time to reflect on the reasons behind these feelings before you confront everybody else around you with your anger.

- Of course you will find hundreds of specific little things that justify your miserable feelings, but try to distance yourself a bit from all the small things to get the whole picture of what might be happening to you.
- Explain to the people around you how you feel. Try first to solve your problems on the spot with the people concerned. Avoid emergency phone calls or letters to those closest to you at home. You will unnecessarily worry them and by the time they answer the situation might already have completely changed. Writing a diary can be very helpful to clarify your thoughts. If the problems persist you should, of course, inform your hosting and sending organisation so that a solution can be sought.
- Try to share some elements of your culture with the people around you: cook for them or organise an evening about something that you find interesting about your own country (for example: cultural traditions, the situation of young people, education, politics or economic system).
- Try not to judge. Even if it sounds trivial, try to tell yourself: it is not better, it is not worse, it is just different!
- It can be helpful to have a change of scenery for a few days in order to look at everything from a distance in a more relaxed way. However, do not run away from your problems. If you want your host country to become your second home, you should think of investing more time in building human relations in this place.

Minimum standards for training and evaluation within EVS

Within the European Voluntary Service of the Youth in Action programme, minimum quality standards have been developed for the preparation and training of volunteers. A volunteer should receive:

- adequate preparation before departure;
- participation in pre-departure training;

- on-arrival training at the start of the placement;
- language-learning opportunities;
- mid-term meeting or evaluation;
- final evaluation upon return in the host country.

You can find these quality standards in the Youth in Action programme at www.ec.europa.eu/youth.

3.2.2 Preparation of sending and hosting organisations

It is not only the volunteers who should be prepared; the sending and hosting organisations should also get ready for their tasks. The following suggestions for preparation are perhaps more valid for the hosting organisation than for the sending organisation, but both parties are responsible for ensuring that these preparatory measures are taken, irrespective of where they are taking place. Here are some issues to consider.

Why are you embarking on an international voluntary service project?

As we mentioned in Chapter 2.2 “The project cycle”, the first step in your project is to define the aims and to determine whether there is a need for IVS. Not only the project co-ordinator, but the whole organisation (board, colleague, volunteers, etc.) should know, and preferably be convinced, of the aims and benefits of this enterprise. Having volunteers for the first time can have a significant impact on your organisational culture and is often a source of anxiety. Therefore it is vital that colleagues who will be working with the volunteers are involved in the development of the whole project, to ensure it has their backing (see also Chapter 4.2.2 “Staff motivation – The forgotten dimension”).

Potential reasons for organisations entering into IVS:

- strengthened international relations;
- enriching work;
- positive impact on clients;
- creation of opportunities for young people (or people with special needs);
- promotion of the idea of volunteering in the local community;
- more prestige for the organisation among funders, clients and partner organisations;
- improved working atmosphere in the organisation;
- enhanced co-operation with the partner organisation;
- the ability to realise an idea that you would not have the resources for otherwise.

For a practical example see the story of ELKA in Chapter 2.2 “The project cycle”.

Note! It goes without saying that you need to know beforehand what you want to achieve, in order to be able to measure whether you were successful in your IVS project. Evaluation should be an integral part of any project from the very beginning. Think about the tools you want to use for evaluation (for example: a diary, interviews, questionnaires) to be able to plan accordingly (see also Chapter 5.1 “Evaluation”).

What needs to be provided for the volunteers?

Studies have shown that one of the major reasons for the early return of long-term volunteers is an unrealistic placement in which basically there was no real need for a volunteer, and so no adequate work for them. Organisations should therefore have a clear idea of the tasks for

the volunteers and ensure the technical needs or tools necessary for these tasks are in place – before the volunteers arrive, naturally.

If they feel they cannot contribute to the work of the organisation (because of lack of work or tools), volunteers will have severe difficulties in integrating. Answers to the following questions about the work to be done are at the basis of volunteer care.

Volunteer care

What needs doing? Where is there a real need for help in the organisation?

Based on the needs assessment, what is one project, job, assignment or task in which you could involve volunteers?

What is the job? What will the volunteers do?

Is the job meaningful to the volunteers and to the organisation?

Are there any opportunities for the volunteers to grow and learn in this job?

Will the job give the volunteers a sense of ownership and responsibility?

What are the qualities the volunteers should have for this job?

Suggestion for training

Devil's advocate

Divide the group into two camps. One camp has to come up with as many arguments as possible in favour of having the volunteer and IVS. The other camp (or the facilitator) should find as many arguments as possible indicating that the placement would not be suitable for the volunteer. After 15 to 20 minutes of brainstorming, one representative of each camp is given five minutes to defend their extreme point of view. After this a discussion can take place about the validity of different arguments, both in favour and against.

Even more essential than the content of the work is the whole framework of the project that ensures the volunteer's basic human needs are satisfied. If the board and lodging provided, for example, do not meet the desired standards of the volunteer, there is little hope for success. It is absolutely vital to arrange appropriate living conditions for the volunteers, depending on their needs. Social and leisure needs also need to be satisfied before you can expect fruitful work. Information for the volunteer on the placement therefore should include details of board and lodging and options for leisure-time activities (sports, bars, music, disco, etc.) nearby.

Some ideas for board and lodging

Lodging:

- in a student house;
- in a host family;
- in a shared flat with other volunteers;
- in a dormitory;
- ...?

The living situation of the volunteer is very important for the success of the project, so it can be a good idea (in long-term voluntary service at least) to find out the needs and preferences of the volunteer before making final arrangements. Accommodation in an individual room in a student hostel is probably great for volunteers with social skills, but a host family might be better for more insecure or dependent volunteers. Generally, the longer the project, the more need for private space, so it is an absolute must that volunteers in long-term projects have a room for their private use. For a short period (a work camp, say) dormitory accommodation is mostly okay.

Food:

- daily lunch allowance;
- deal with a local restaurant or cafeteria that provides meals;
- weekly or monthly food allowance;

- meals in the host family,
- ...?

In group projects with international volunteers, it is good to take turns in cooking a meal for the rest of the group.

Generally the start of any IVS should be devoted to making the volunteer feel welcome and at ease. The first day of the volunteer in the new environment sets the tone for the rest of the stay. It can be detrimental to the whole project if the volunteers arrive and nothing has been organised. The importance of little gestures on the first day, such as picking the volunteers up at the airport or station, a tour of the organisation to meet all the colleagues, explanations of the board and lodging facilities and a welcome drink, is often underestimated (see also Chapter 4.1 “Induction and on-arrival orientation”).

Who is involved in the implementation of the project?

The success of the project depends to a large extent on whether it is a team effort or not. To guarantee the co-operation of other staff members, a project manager should inform and prepare them. Everybody involved should understand the role of the volunteers in the organisation and the distribution of responsibilities regarding volunteers. Last but not least, there should be an understanding of the specific intercultural situation the volunteer is in – as a newcomer not only to the organisation but also to the whole living environment.

As part of the preparation process, the roles of supporting the volunteer have to be clarified. There are several needs for support, but not all tasks have to be done by one person. Generally you divide the support tasks between three main functions:

- dealing with the broader aspects of living in another country and a different culture, because it is important to help the volunteers to acclimatise, to deal with their emotional problems and come to terms with their situation so that they can contribute effectively, and learn and develop from the experience;
- giving the volunteers support in their daily tasks, agreeing a plan of work, ensuring they have the necessary skills and sorting out problems related to the job;
- being a resource person who helps volunteers to integrate into the social life of the local community where the project is situated (this obviously applies more to long-term projects).

(See also Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”.)

Training of people supporting volunteers

It is advisable that people who are in direct contact with the volunteer, and fulfil one of these roles for the first time, attend some training. Becoming competent in supporting international volunteers requires quite a lot of knowledge (trends affecting volunteering, rights and duties of volunteers, roles and responsibility of supervising staff, legal issues), skills (delegating tasks, interviewing, conflict resolution, communication, motivation, performance reviews) and attitudes (valuing volunteers, intercultural awareness, willingness to share). It is up to the support person, depending on the situation in question, to decide on the training needs.

Training for people supporting volunteers is offered through various channels. In countries where volunteering has a long tradition, training courses are often offered by volunteer centres or even by private companies. Possible providers of such training at an international level are, for example, the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/youth) and the European Voluntary Service programme (check with the responsible national agency for the YOUTH programme in your country; you can find the addresses at www.ec.europa.eu/youth). A training session for support persons could look like the following.

One-day training for volunteer support person in the hosting organisation

Background

A hosting organisation co-operating with several local organisations providing the placements for their international long-term volunteers offers a one-day training session for the support people of the volunteers.

Objectives

- Participants should be able to create a job description for volunteers.
- To raise the participants' awareness of their role vis-à-vis the volunteer.
- To clarify their expectations towards the volunteers.
- To develop a common understanding of the rights and duties of volunteers.
- Initiation of a support network between the participants.
- Clarification of co-operation between the hosting organisation and local hosting projects.

Methods used

As preparation, participants are asked to discuss the following questions in their organisation: What would a volunteer do in their organisation? What tasks do they envisage for the persons supporting the volunteer? What do they expect from the volunteer?

Programme

Programme elements	Time needed (approx.)	Objective	Brief description of method
Introduction of the programme and objectives for the day	15 min.	Participants should have a clear indication of what is happening throughout the day	Visual presentation (flip chart, which remains visible on the wall all day)
Getting-to-know exercise, ice-breakers	15 min.	Participants should feel comfortable in the group and get to know the names of the others	Any kind of lively, interactive exercise (focus on people, not their organisations)
Presentation of all placement descriptions for the volunteers	45 min.	Participants should get to know the other organisations present; and they should learn what information is needed for a volunteer to make a choice	Participants are asked to produce a marketing poster for a fictitious forthcoming volunteers' fair, where volunteers can choose a hosting place (they can be as creative as they want); once all posters are on the wall, the participants should imagine they are volunteers about to choose a project and look at all the posters and make a decision for one
Discussion of the needs of volunteers versus expectations of the hosting projects	1 hour	Participants should learn about accommodating the needs of volunteers in the light of the expectations of the organisations	In small groups (4-6 people), participants should share the choice they made and explain why. They should discuss how much information they as volunteers would want before choosing a project and how does that affect the preparation needed in the organisation

Summarising input	30 min.	Participants should get a better idea of how to prepare for receiving a volunteer	In the plenary, participants should say how they would change their description now, and why. What follows should be a summarising input on preparation for hosting long-term volunteers in the hosting organisation
lunch break			
Roles of support people	1.5 hours	Participants should get a better understanding of their role vis-à-vis the volunteer	Participants should first individually reflect on what they think are the five most important tasks of a support person and the qualities needed for it. Then work in small groups and try to come up with (on one sheet) the five most important tasks. Groups should report back in the plenary and then close the session with a summarising input on supervising volunteers
Discussion of rights and duties	30 min.	Reaching a common understanding of the rights and duties of volunteers	Explain the legal administrative requirements and legal framework, then discuss with the group rights and duties (working time, free time, board and lodging, training, etc.); try to come up with an agreement
Discussion of future co-operation	45 min.	Participants should discover that they can use the contacts in this group to support each other	Explain how you see future co-operation in terms of sharing work concerning the volunteers' stay and then do some brainstorming regarding other ways of co-operating

3.2.3 Obstacles to mobility

One of the main objectives of IVS is mobility across borders, mobility to co-operate on international projects, mobility to live an intercultural experience, mobility to foster solidarity without frontiers. The freedom to cross borders to another country is one of basic conditions for running IVS activities. However, there are still obstacles to international mobility that you will need to surmount when organising your IVS.

The obstacles to mobility differ from country to country. The table below gives an overview of different mobility situations (at the time of writing) according to the country of origin of the volunteer and the hosting country. Within the European Union, freedom to move around is nearly unlimited, apart from some administrative procedures. Between other countries the situation is often more complicated, especially for a stay of more than three months.

- There is useful information on travel and mobility in Europe at www.europa.eu/travel.
- Contact the embassy of the country in which you will carry out your voluntary service for the latest up-to-date information.
- The national agencies of the Youth in Action programme can also give you more information as they send and receive hundreds of international volunteers every year.

Volunteer comes	from an EU country and has citizenship of this country	from an EU country, does not have citizenship of the country but has a permanent residence permit there	from a European non-EU country	from a non-European country
Country in which the IVS takes place				
EU country	EU law is applicable; for IVS lasting longer than three months it is necessary to apply to the authority of the hosting country (need to obtain a residence permit)	Some specific conditions can apply; it is necessary to check these conditions with the authority of the host country	National law in the EU country governs it. Some EU countries have a specific agreement among themselves regarding mobility. Necessary to check specific requirements for short (less than three months) and long stay (more than three months) in their territory	National law in the EU country governs it. Some EU countries have signed bilateral agreements with non-European countries regarding the free movement of persons. Necessary to contact the authority of the hosting country
European non-EU country	National law of the country governs it. Necessary for presentation of medical certificate as regards infectious diseases	National law in the country governs it. Possible requirement of a visa, medical certificate as regards infectious diseases	National law of the country governs it. Necessary to check all specific requirements with the authority of the hosting country	National law in the country governs it. Necessary to check all specific requirements with the authority of the hosting country
Non-European country	National law in the country governs it	National law in the country governs it	National law in the country governs it	National law in the country governs it

What to think about when sending your volunteer abroad

Visas

Volunteers from an EU or EFTA country going to an EU or EFTA country do not need a visa. Volunteers moving between non-EU and EU countries generally need to get a visa to enter the host country. In general, visas for short stays (for example, work camps) are valid for a maximum of three months. In most cases volunteers need to have a valid passport and fulfil some additional criteria (for example: passport valid for at least six months, certificates of health insurance). Usually, they are asked to present a letter of confirmation from the hosting organisation and sometimes they may be interviewed by embassy representatives. The cost of a visa varies from country to country; obtaining a visa can take from a week to several months, so start the procedures early enough. When running long-term IVS, the visa is a precondition to get a residence permit in the host country.

Residence permit

One possible obstacle listed in the table above is obtaining a right of residence for the full duration of the volunteers' IVS. A residence permit authorises a person to reside in the host country. It is usually required for a stay of three months or longer. It is important to check in

advance what kind of documents the volunteers might need in order to get this permit (for example: a certified translated birth certificate, proof of sufficient resources, insurance cover, visa, letter of the hosting organisation, police check).

Work permit

IVS is not a substitute for work. However, in some countries volunteers need to get a work permit because these countries do not have a legal category for “volunteers”. In this respect, volunteers may be considered as workers and the hosting organisation has to obtain work permits for them from the local employment authorities. Check before sending your volunteers whether they need a work permit in the host country, and if they do, where to apply and what procedure to follow.

Social insurance schemes and additional insurance

The social insurance schemes differ from country to country. It is also important to find out whether the volunteers are insured or not under the social security scheme of the host country. In some cases volunteers must take out additional insurance (for repatriation in case of illness or accident or death, for third-party risks). Some countries have signed bilateral agreements on medical treatment. Find out, via your social insurance office or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, what the situation will be.

Taxation

So-called compulsory contributions, which include tax and social security contributions, could create a nasty financial aftertaste during or after your voluntary service. Some countries regard pocket money or board and lodging as taxable income. In this respect, volunteers can be subject to deductions at source or after the voluntary service. The risk of double taxation (once in the host country and again in the home country) also exists, even though it should not. Contact your tax office to clarify what regime the volunteers will be under during the voluntary service abroad and after returning.

Necessary medical certificates

When going abroad, volunteers may also need documents to certify that they do not have any infectious diseases. Sometimes it is enough to hold such a medical certificate, issued by a health institution in the volunteer’s country of origin. However, some countries do not recognise such certificates and may ask volunteers to get an additional medical examination in the host country. Your IVS partner can help you by passing on information about the rules applicable in the host country.

Unemployment and other benefits

Going abroad often has consequences for certain benefits that young persons may receive in their host country. When coming back, procedures to obtain the benefits again often have to be started from scratch. Therefore it is important to lobby your unemployment office or social welfare office about the benefit of IVS and hopefully find some understanding in the system. In some countries there are even partnerships between the employment office and IVS organisations for giving unemployed young people a voluntary work experience abroad. In financially challenging cases, when coming back from IVS, there should be considerable support from the sending organisation in order to rearrange the life of the volunteer.

Steps towards volunteering-friendly policies

As part of the European Year of Volunteering 2011, a road map towards the creation of an enabling environment for volunteering across Europe was drawn up. It aimed to mainstream volunteering in different policy agendas so that no policy initiatives would have an adverse effect on volunteering or voluntary service. Stronger mechanisms will be created at EU and national level to support organisations, programmes and conditions for volunteering.

4. On the road

4.1. Induction and on-arrival orientation



Just as important as the preparation before departure is the introduction for the volunteers once they have arrived. The volunteers are anxious and somewhat insecure because they do not know what they will find. The first impression they receive is crucial, to reassure them and make them feel safe in their new environment. A host organisation that receives many volunteers may not realise how it feels to be starting your first day of voluntary service in another country: what may seem easy routine to the host is the start of an uncertain adventure for the volunteer. As a general rule it can be said that the less experienced the volunteer – and the longer the stay – the more important is proper on-arrival training.

The question of a proper reception of the volunteer is particularly relevant in the case of an individual placement. When a group arrives somewhere together they have each other as a reference, which absorbs the on-arrival shock to some extent. The length of on-arrival training will also depend on the type of project and placement; it can range from a few hours in a welcome meeting to several days of seminars.

Apart from the first impact, the arrival at the host organisation is also the moment of truth for both sides: the images of the place and persons created beforehand in each other's heads do not necessarily correspond to what they find. Especially if the culture of the volunteer and that of the host are very different, the expectations about how to welcome a person can differ a lot. The host organisation should take these intercultural considerations into account and facilitate the first contact for the volunteers as much as possible. Step by step, the volunteers will adapt to the customs and communication patterns of the host organisation and community.

The on-arrival training should complement the preparatory training already given by the sending organisation. The better the communication between the sending and hosting organisations, the better the hosts will be able to fill any gaps the sending organisation has left. On-arrival training should include information about the local culture and an introduction to the project. The time of "dry swimming" is over; now the volunteer wants to experience the water. When it comes to an introduction to the project, make sure you leave enough space for the volunteers' ideas and suggestions. Try to find out their expectations and ideas about the project and invite them to ask questions. Now is the best time to prevent misunderstandings.

Suggestion for training

Invite a friend, colleague or relative (preferably from abroad) into your house for a new activity. This can be playing a new card game, a session of fortune-telling or a party on a strange theme. Try to make the visiting person as comfortable as possible, using some of the suggestions above (picking the person up at the railway station, breaking the ice, introducing other people present, explaining what will be happening). Ask afterwards if the visitor noticed your efforts and what kind of effect they had on him or her. Deduce principles from this experience and apply them to the hosting of your volunteer.

4.1.1 Using young locals to introduce the volunteer

An excellent way of introducing a volunteer is through peer education. You can prepare a number of local young people or active members of your organisation to receive the incoming volunteers. Let them introduce the volunteers to local realities. In this way, from the beginning you provide the volunteers with a network of social contacts and people to refer to. The locals will feel responsible for the well-being of the volunteers and give them a much better introduction to the place than an employee of a hosting organisation ever could.

You need to prepare the locals first, so you may want to introduce them to some intercultural concepts like the iceberg, the onion and the adjustment cycle (more in the T-Kit on *Intercultural Learning* available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>) to help them understand what the international volunteer might be going through and to make them more open to the volunteer. These concepts help the local young people to reflect about their own culture, as well as the presumed culture of the volunteers, and become more open to a process of intercultural learning. Avoid, however, asking too much from the volunteers during the first days. The volunteers should not feel harassed by over-enthusiastic teenagers who have found a new toy to play with. As in any emotionally intense situation, the volunteer will need some quiet time to reflect as well.

4.1.2 Topics to consider in an on-arrival training programme

It is the responsibility of the host organisation to make sure that all the (technical and content) aspects of the IVS project that they have prepared for the volunteers are communicated to them (see also Chapter 3.2.1 "Preparation of the volunteers"). The volunteers need to be given a chance to react and explain their motivation and their specific needs and skills for the project.

In the following box you will find some issues that should be dealt with in on-arrival training. The exact programme of such training will depend on the time frame available for it. As far as the methodology is concerned, everything depends on whether you are welcoming one or several volunteers. If you are dealing with a group of volunteers you should let them work in small discussion and brainstorm groups as much as possible and avoid lecturing situations.

When the volunteers arrive

- Welcome

Try to pick up the volunteer at the airport/train station, especially in the case of a long-term project – this will make the volunteer feel safe and wanted. First take care of the immediate needs of the volunteer: hunger and thirst, needs for a toilet or a shower, phone call to parents. Afterwards you can organise a reception or dinner with the main players of your organisation at your office or in another place. Take into consideration time and food differences and the effect this may have on the volunteers. Make sure you deal with the volunteers from the first moment they arrive. You may not have a lot of time, but make sure you dedicate at least 30 minutes immediately for the items mentioned above, explain what is going to happen next and when, and then take the volunteers to a place where they can relax. Never leave volunteers totally unattended during the first hours of their stay. Their support person should be around from the beginning.

Items to deal with in the first two days

The following items should be dealt with as soon as possible and certainly within the first two days, to make the volunteers feel safe and provide some basic orientation. Volunteers tend to arrive with the expectation that the project corresponds 100% to what was written on paper and that everything is perfect, planned and prepared. Even if this is not exactly the case, it is important to discuss all relevant issues and to inform the volunteers about the state of things. It is important that they understand that you care for them and that you are committed to finding solutions for any aspects that are not perfect yet. The volunteers might even be happy to discover that the frame of the project is still flexible enough to take into consideration their special wishes, needs and capacities.

- Introduction

Introduce the volunteer to the responsible people in the organisation, as well as other staff and volunteers. Explain each person's role and explain who else is involved but is not in the office (for example, board members).

- Technical aspects

Explain any rules related to the accommodation and anyone sharing the living space, whether already there or still to come. Clarify questions related to food (where will the volunteers eat every day?), pocket money if applicable, insurance, language training, holiday regulations, any option to make phone calls from the office or in town, where to find foreign newspapers or have Internet access, etc.

- The host organisation

Introduce the aims, activities, structure and people in the organisation. It is important to explain the framework and larger goals of what you do. It can be frustrating to be asked to work on a given task without any idea of what the final aim of the project is. The volunteers need to understand that if you make photocopies, cook for a group or carry heavy stones, you do it for a larger goal and that specific action is a precious and valuable contribution to it.

- The work project

Show the volunteers the physical working place, refer to the original project description, explain any changes, explain who else is working on the project and put the project in the context of your overall activities. Allow the volunteers to comment and offer ideas; they need to feel ownership in the project and be able to bring in their personality and experience.

- Motivation

Explain to the volunteers why your organisation chose to embark on IVS and what experience you have had with such projects. Ask the volunteers to explain their motives and expectations for this project, but be aware that for reasons of politeness they will probably not have the courage to be very explicit on this point on the first or second day. It is important to come back to this point regularly as part of the ongoing support for the volunteers. You will have to renegotiate your own and the volunteers' expectations a number of times during the project.

- The region and country

Other volunteers from your organisation or a group of young locals could organise an evening or a day out to introduce volunteers to the local reality and get to know each other. They can organise a tour of the town and take the volunteers to some nice place to spend an evening. You could take them to visit any sister organisation or outlying work project. You should also introduce them to any special rules and traditions that they need to take into consideration, if there are any.

- Intercultural learning

It can be useful to run a session like the ones suggested for pre-departure training, bringing together local young people and volunteers. This can bring out a lot of information about the volunteers' background and introduce them well to the reality of the host community. Later on you can also ask the volunteers to share some elements of their own culture with you: perhaps cooking for colleagues, or organising an evening about the situation in their country. Leave it to the volunteers' personality to decide if and when they are ready for this kind of event.

- Introduction of the volunteer and his/her organisation

You could give the volunteers a chance to speak about their background and organisation, but leave it to the volunteers how intensively they want to do this at the start. It is important to have a clear idea of the previous experience of the volunteers and the type of projects/organisation they have been exposed to, in order to understand what elements of the host organisation and project might be new or strange for them. Give the volunteers a chance to explain what it means in their country to be a "volunteer", a "leader", a "co-ordinator", a "board member". Let them explain what kinds of project their sending organisations run. Clarifying these questions will help you to avoid misunderstandings based on different concepts of volunteering.

4.2 Motivation



4.2.1 Motivating the volunteer

So your IVS is planned and set to go. It takes quite an effort to get everything on the road, and it would be a pity to lose your volunteers along the road. Therefore it is important to give some special attention to keeping your volunteers motivated.

What is motivation? Handy (1997) calls it the “E-forces”: energy, excitement, enthusiasm and effort. But volunteers are not genuinely altruistic persons doing your work for nothing. Their E-forces are not given for free, but only in exchange for the fulfilment of certain needs of the volunteer. The volunteer (unconsciously) calculates whether the effort expected is appropriate in relationship to the hoped-for benefit. This perhaps sounds quite strong and opportunistic, but volunteers are mostly looking for a symbolic or social return for their contributions. Volunteer management means keeping volunteers happy to be volunteers. Either they like voluntary service or they will leave it; that is why an organisation has an interest in fulfilling the needs of volunteers in order to maintain their E-forces.

Needs

As already pointed out in Chapter 3.3.2 “Preparation of sending and hosting organisations”, the hosting organisation plays an important role in satisfying the basic needs of the volunteers. If these basic needs, such as appropriate food and shelter, the necessary safety and security, relationships and social belonging to the group or to the project, are not met, it will be difficult for the volunteer to contribute freely and generously to the project. So, to achieve the ideal mixture in a voluntary project between personal development of the volunteer and a valuable contribution to the project, it is important to address problems of poor accommodation or “challenging” food first, to deal with feelings of insecurity in the new environment or with problems in communicating and making new friends. It is only after these important needs are met that the volunteers can really get into the job and achieve goals that are rewarding for them and for the project.

Volunteers have different motives for giving their time and effort to a project. By definition they will not do it for material benefits but more for symbolic ones (social, pragmatic and psychological benefits). Still, the occasional little present (a T-shirt of the organisation, a CD on the birthday of the volunteer) can do wonders for their motivation. Mostly volunteers are looking for social benefits: they want to get to know people and have a good time, they want status and recognition, they want to belong to a group. Also the pragmatic dimension should not be neglected: volunteers want to help people, do something useful, acquire skills, increase their employability. A voluntary placement can, furthermore, be part of expressing one’s identity (psychological benefit): distinguishing oneself, acting out one’s values, finding one’s way in life.

Suggestion for training

Ask your trainees to think back to a moment in the past when they volunteered. Ask them to list a number of material, social, pragmatic and psychological benefits they received through volunteering. These could be compared and discussed between members of the group. Make sure you do not get stuck in a discussion of whether a certain benefit is social rather than pragmatic, for example. The aim of the exercise is to look at the symbolic benefits that you get through volunteering, not to be able to classify these benefits.

Matching needs

To motivate your volunteers and release their E-forces, you have to either address their needs or stimulate their needs with what you can offer. In the management of motivation it is important to know your volunteers and their needs, but also to know what the organisation wants of the volunteers and can offer them. The needs and offers of both parties can then meet in the middle. This process of determining the ideal mixture of giving and taking should be ongoing and it should be perceived as balanced by both parties.

Besides their different needs, volunteers also have different preferences of work. Some of them will be more skilled and/or interested in social tasks, others prefer creative activities, while some are happy with practical tasks. Providing the volunteers with work that is in line with their preferences is a plus for motivation.

Last but not least, ownership is an important factor in the motivation of volunteers. Therefore the project organisers should always involve the volunteers in setting the aims and determining the tasks, so the volunteers feel responsible for them. The project becomes their project, the organisation becomes their organisation.

Mapping the motives

Motivation, needs and goals are very abstract things that are difficult to explain, but you can map the motivation of your volunteers in a visual way by drawing two hands or stairs. These drawings could be the basis for a sort of “psychological contract” between the volunteer and the project, or serve intermediary evaluation purposes (see also Chapter 5.1 “Evaluation”).

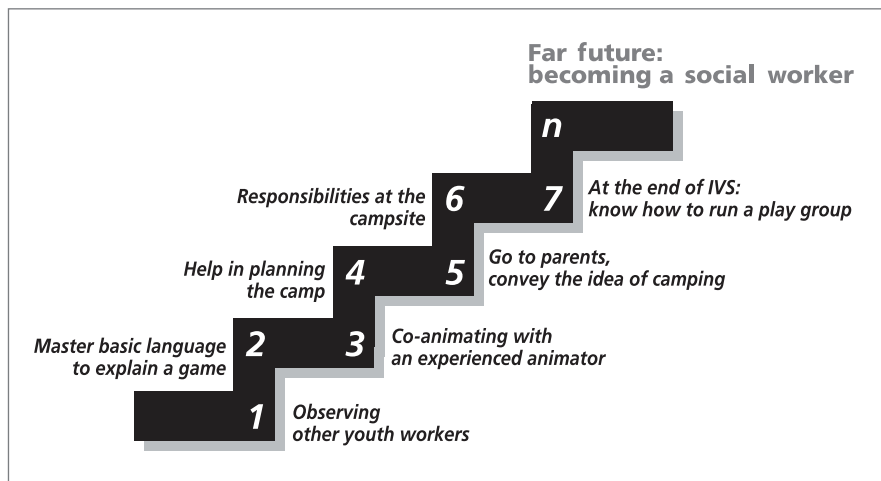
Two hands

Draw a “giving hand” in which the volunteers write or draw what they can contribute and a “taking hand” in which they put what they want to receive from the project.



The stairs

Draw stairs on a piece of paper with the final goal at the top of the stairs. Break down the final goal into different smaller consecutive steps that lead the volunteer to the top. You can ask the volunteer to write, draw or make a collage of different stages.



You are what you do

Another way to create a motivated volunteer is to start by creating a motivating job:

- The job should be real (the work really needs to be done – so volunteers feel needed).
- The job done should be appreciated by the staff (appreciation and recognition) – so it will help if you consult the staff to find out what is essential or really needs doing at this moment (see also Chapter 3.3.2 “Preparation of sending and hosting organisations”).
- The work should be interesting, challenging and rewarding, while taking into account the specific needs and preferences of the volunteers (so get to know the volunteers before creating a detailed job description).
- Make the goals clear, constantly review them and ensure they are achieved. Increasing difficulty, complexity and challenge will keep the volunteers on their toes. Keep records of the results of the job and of the volunteers’ performance – regular feedback sessions should be built in. Monitor the development the volunteers go through, both personal and professional (see also Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”).
- Share responsibility for results. The job description should be formulated in terms of hoped-for results and not just a series of activities to execute. Focus on a meaningful end product.
- Create space for symbolic rewards: socialising, fun or out-of-work activities, dinners, weekend outings, learning new skills, little gifts.
- Volunteers should have or share ownership of the work they are doing (involve them in drafting the job description). Put them in charge of something but give support when needed.
- Give the volunteers the authority to think for themselves and not just follow orders (they are not machines) – as a consequence, staff should delegate some of their responsibility but not without guiding the volunteer whenever needed.

Some practical tips that motivate!

Different things work on different people, but here are some suggestions that are very likely to keep your volunteers happy. You can add your own ideas.

- People like to feel good (a word of thanks, a little present, a genuine compliment, taking them into account as part of the team, asking their opinion).
- Make sure you give more positive than negative feedback.
- Make sure you base your feedback only on objective, observable facts, to avoid it being taken less seriously (giving compliments out of mere politeness).
- Negative feedback is best given by someone that the volunteer has good relations with or looks up to.
- If volunteers make a mistake, do not take it out on them; just explain and ask them to learn from it for the future.
- Deal with “dissatisfiers” in the work environment, such as stressful working conditions (noise, no access to computer, unusual working hours) or lack of interpersonal relationships (no time for talking during work, no coffee breaks).

Red flags

It is not always natural to talk about motivation and needs, so your volunteers might not always tell you if their enthusiasm takes a dip. Here are some “red flags” that could indicate that something is wrong. Keep an eye out for them and check them out.

- The volunteer is absent more often than he or she used to be.
- The volunteer starts doing excessive overtime for no reason.
- The volunteer starts surfing the Internet without any reason.
- Phone calls to the home country increase significantly.
- The volunteer is easily offended and takes things personally.
- The number of sighs per day soars to unknown heights.
- The volunteer remains silent and does not react any more.
- The work rate is slowing down.
- The volunteer breaks down and starts crying.
- The quality of the work of the volunteer hits rock bottom.
- Complaints from the client group start coming in.
- The volunteer’s favourite home band/radio is constantly on.
- The volunteer does not join friends or colleagues for common lunches any more.
- Going for (alcoholic) drinks seems to be the only pastime of the volunteer.
- ...?

4.2.2 Staff motivation – The forgotten dimension

“Treat volunteers as you would the paid staff, and treat paid staff as you would volunteers”
(YMCA Resource Kit)

After paying rather a lot of attention to the motivation of the volunteer, we run the risk of falling into the trap of forgetting the paid staff members who work side by side with the volunteer.

Most of the suggestions for motivating volunteers are also applicable to paid staff. Unfortunately there is one major difference: the employees of the hosting organisation are paid, which is often a bad excuse for neglecting to take care of their motivation, especially when they should be training, supervising or working alongside the volunteer. Their level of motivation will undoubtedly spill over onto the volunteer, either in a good way or in a negative way. (From here on, for convenience, “paid staff” will be referred to simply as “staff”.)

Arguments for foreign volunteers

- They bring an intercultural learning dimension into the hosting organisation.
- We can provide someone with a life-changing experience.
- They have a different, fresh look on things we do.
- We can show them what we are doing and they can use it back home.
- They have chosen our organisation and they like the work we do.
- We can develop their skills and confidence, which they might not acquire otherwise.
- They are an extra pair of hands and a fresh head with new ideas.
- We can promote the idea of IVS.
- They are very motivated and eager to learn.
- We could become friends for life.
- They bring an international dimension to the work we do.
- We can learn how to manage and coach volunteers.
- The volunteers sometimes bring additional funding for the organisation or for staff time.
- We can become more culturally sensitive and skilled in intercultural encounters.
- ...?

If your staff are convinced that having an international volunteer in their workplace has every one of these benefits, you can praise yourself to the skies. But this is not always the case. Staff might not much like the idea of volunteers coming because they fear that “cheap” volunteers could take over (part of) their jobs; or perhaps they are worried about the additional burden the volunteers might bring with them (preparing tasks for them, lots of meetings, supervision, paperwork for funding and evaluation); or the job they are doing is so close to their hearts that they do not want to share it or they are afraid that volunteers might be unreliable and not do the work as well as they would.

Even though these arguments are mostly irrational, it is a fact that these phantoms could wander around in the heads of some staff in your organisation. So it is paramount that you, as voluntary service organiser, deal with them.

- The first step is to find out the paid staff’s attitude to volunteers. (Do/did they ever volunteer themselves? What do they see as the potential advantages of working with volunteers?). A simple questionnaire, interview or informal chat would do.
- A lot of resentment about working with volunteers can be avoided by involving staff in the entire process of getting volunteers, as we argued in Chapter 3.3.2 “Preparation of sending and hosting organisations”. Involving staff from the very beginning, informing them of new ideas and asking their opinion could bring you an extra couple of shoulders to support the voluntary service. Imposing an idea or ferociously defending it, slapping staff down with arguments, usually drives them into a corner and makes them defensive.
- If staff are supposed to do some kind of supervision of volunteers or work closely with them, then this new skill should be recognised and valued (new job description, training future volunteer supervisors, new title, pay rise, etc.) because it does bring additional skills and responsibility.

- When working with an international group of volunteers, intercultural training should be an integral part of the staff's preparation.
- You should also involve staff in creating the volunteers' job description, since the volunteers will need to be accepted and given space in what is the staff's traditional work territory.
- Last but not least, work with volunteers should not come on top of regular work, but should be carefully planned and therefore also budgeted for (financially and time-wise) in the overall work plan of the organisation.

Staff members have an important influence on volunteers, who will sense if staff are putting up with them reluctantly; volunteers will then try not to be where they are not wanted. Staff can also make a big difference on the positive side, through little signs of appreciation (for example, a thank you, a gift, an article in the newsletter/local paper, an invitation, a non-work-related chat) that make the volunteers belong, feel at home, respected and valued. That is why it is important to have staff on the voluntary service's side.

It is important that all actors involved know the framework of the voluntary service: why the organisation does it and who has what role:

- There should be a clear distinction between the volunteers' and the staff's role and status, which justifies one being paid and the other not, one that justifies paid staff being asked to do overtime but volunteers not (unless they agree), etc. If this "contract" is clear from the beginning there should not be too many hiccups in working together.
- The volunteers and staff that an organisation works with could be seen as a team with complementary roles.
- This team spirit can be increased by a common evaluation of the work team (volunteers and staff together) and not only an assessment of the volunteers by the staff worker.
- And when there are little rewards (for example: a dinner, a little gift) make sure you do not leave out the staff workers providing the vital support for the volunteer.

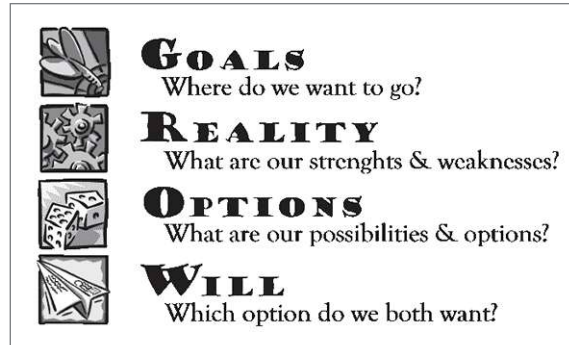
4.3 Ongoing support of volunteers



It is quite a challenge for young volunteers to go and have a taste of life and voluntary service abroad, even more if it is their first time, if the host culture is very different or if the stay is longer than most. Therefore volunteer support throughout IVS is vital for the well-being of volunteers and the success of the project. Especially with long-term voluntary service, there should be a support person (sometimes called a mentor, coach, volunteer manager or tutor) who guides the learning process of the volunteers and their contribution to the project. See the end of this chapter for some things to think about in support for short-term voluntary service.

GROWing

A framework for supporting volunteers is the GROW model developed by John Whitmore. The support person in the voluntary service is there to facilitate the “growth” of the volunteer within the project and into the new environment. Every letter stands for an area to address in work with your volunteers. Addressing these different letters of the GROW model one after another helps you structure the way in which you make the most of the volunteers’ potential – both for your organisation and for the volunteers.



The **G** stands for Goals. It is essential to sit down with the volunteer to define the goals of their voluntary service, both for the hosting organisation and for the volunteer (the importance of this has already been mentioned several times in this T-Kit when talking about preparation). If you do not determine (in both the short and the long term) where you want to be heading, you will never be able to assess if you did indeed get there (see also Chapter 5.1 “Evaluation”).

The **R** refers to Reality. Once the goals are set and clear to both parties (transparency is the mother of a good project), it is important to see how far the reality – the actual situation of the project and the volunteer – allows the goals to be reached easily. You need a description of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the project. What is the reality that you face in striving to reach your goals?

This will lead to a discussion of the **O** of Options – if you found in the previous stage that there are certain learning points for the volunteer or certain areas for improvement in the placement that need to be addressed, then you should also come up with different options and actions that will make things (even) better. Come up with a menu, with different specific actions to take, that will improve the voluntary service.

Finally, the **W** of Will refers to the will or decision to implement one or more of these options for improvement, one that both parties can agree on. Options that have been negotiated on an equal basis have more chance of success. You could also determine a time span after which you check on the progress made and decide either to continue with the chosen option or to try another or an extra one.

Sometimes you may get stuck at one stage of the model and then it may be necessary to take one step back and reconsider the goals you really want to achieve or to look realistically to the possibilities that your organisation or the volunteer can offer (back to reality).

4.3.1 The volunteer support person

Now, if you are (going to be) the volunteer support person in your IVS project, you should ideally ensure that someone is carrying out each of the functions described in the rest of this section (4.3). You can be superman or superwoman and do this all on your own, but in most cases you will bring in other people (colleagues, returned volunteers, your family) to fulfil parts of the full range of functions. You can only take on as many functions as you have time to do properly.

Within IVS, we want to highlight three areas – learning, culture and social life – that are particularly prominent and that need special attention from the support person. Since we are talking in this T-Kit about unskilled volunteers, often they need to adopt or adapt the work culture and develop some new skills first, to become more efficient in their tasks; well-planned learning or training support can promote this. But the volunteers do not only work; they also have to build a new life in their new environment. Part of this is coming to grips with the different culture (even if the culture at first does not seem different) and volunteers will usually benefit from intercultural support. Besides the intercultural component, there is also the need for a new social life, for which social support (varying with the independence of the volunteer) will be a great help.

Qualities needed in volunteer support

Besides these specific points of focus, the volunteer support person should have (or develop) the following qualities:

- First and foremost, a support person must be available. He or she is the person that the volunteers must be able to turn to when they need it most, so try to create a system and an atmosphere in which the volunteer knows when and how they can reach the support person. Volunteers should be made to feel comfortable enough to interrupt the support person in his/her normal work when necessary.

You could draw up an alarm-bell procedure. This can be any agreed signal (writing an e-mail with ALARM in the subject, giving a red card, pulling the support person into the meeting room or just saying you are fed up), to be used in agreed circumstances (when having personal problems, when you have had enough of it all, when depressed, when missing home, when having big worries or physical problems). When the volunteer or support person rings the “alarm bell”, they should give each other their undivided attention, talk and listen, and work on solutions.

- The support person should follow up suggestions and keep an eye on needs. The people responsible for volunteers play a key role in the orientation and induction sessions built in at the beginning of the voluntary service. They should be the ones following up the needs, suggestions and expectations of the volunteers as discussed in these orientation sessions. It helps to record these needs and expectations, and check at regular intervals during the voluntary service if they are being met or not.

Perhaps you can visualise them on a flip chart on your “volunteer wall” in the office or on the volunteer bulletin board to make sure that neither you nor the volunteers will forget. Of course expectations can change so you might have to update your flip charts.

- The support person should also make sure that the volunteers get the resources and tools needed to accomplish their tasks but also for their personal needs. This can be obvious things related to the task, such as a work space in the office, sufficient and appropriate tools for the manual work the volunteers are doing, a computer for word-processing. But a job-related push in the back can also take the form of training, job shadowing, question-and-answer sessions, buying a new manual or reference book (in the volunteer’s language) and so forth.

For personal needs you might think of checking they have e-mail to keep the link to friends and family back home, laundry facilities, contacts with a local sports club to keep in shape, or continuing a hobby (this is especially important for long-term stays) – basically everything that will ensure a pleasant stay in the host country.

- Another important task is monitoring or assessing the performance of volunteers, focusing on the positive achievements as well as the learning points (see also Chapter 5.1 “Evaluation”); this requires meetings at regular intervals, making volunteers feel respected and steering them. It is important to give volunteers the same treatment as

employees: consider volunteers as part of your staff and, for example, refer to the two as volunteer staff and paid staff. This extra recognition is the icing on the cake.

- Since the volunteers are coming to live and work in a new environment to them, giving feedback to the volunteer is crucial: it lets the volunteers know where they stand. A prerequisite to giving feedback is creating a “fearless” atmosphere in which both parties understand that the comments are only steps in a learning process and not a definitive judgment on someone’s personality or capacities.

Often feedback or evaluation focuses on the things that went wrong, but you should not forget to mention the positive things as well. If there is reason to give negative feedback, it is important to focus on an objective description of the situation. Explain clearly why the action or behaviour of the volunteer was problematic and negotiate together how you could learn from this for the future – in other words, what the volunteer will or could do differently next time if something similar happens. Turn the problem into a constructive learning experience.

When giving feedback, it is best to use “I” statements clarifying that this is your position or feeling. “You” statements tend to put people down and blame them for something that happened. They are also more likely to cause a defensive response. (So, for example, say “I don’t like the way you arrange your papers” instead of “You are a disorganised person”.)

- Active listening is another skill that you will certainly need as a support person. First of all, the surroundings should be adapted to the seriousness of the conversation – do not have your meetings with volunteers in the middle of the office with other ears listening in, with the noise of copying machines or colleagues, or with a distracting computer screen within reach. Take your time instead of rushing to a quick-fix solution. Active listening is about making the other person feel comfortable enough to tell you his or her story; it is about letting the other person talk and, more importantly, trying to understand what the other person is saying (not only the obvious but also reading between the lines).

Show that you are listening through little nods, smiles and encouraging questions (without overdoing it!). To make sure you have understood the (hidden) message, rephrase it in your own words and ask for confirmation (“Do I understand correctly that you want ...?”), but do not take over talking. If you do not understand, ask for clarification (do not guess). Do not judge, but try to understand the message.

- All these techniques are very useful but they rely a lot on a good command of a common language. So what can you do if there is a language barrier? Poor mastery of the language does not equal no command of the language. So sometimes it helps simply to repeat questions more slowly, use different and/or simpler words or allow more time to understand the question and phrase a reply. Take your time. If this does not work, you can make things more visual by drawing, using symbols or pointing at objects or acting it out. (Words can be used in parallel – do not stop talking altogether.) Or what about pointing out a word or sentence in a phrase book? If you have the skills or resources, you can use another language that the volunteer is more comfortable in (perhaps their mother tongue or English). What will not help is giving up and letting communication breakdown. Laughing generally does not make the volunteer feel any better either. Instead of embarrassing the volunteer, make him or her feel at ease and explain that it is normal in the beginning to struggle a bit with the language – “It will soon be better”.
- Managing volunteers also means managing their motivation; this is crucial in the success of IVS, so there is a chapter just on this topic (see Chapter 4.2.1 “Motivating the volunteer”).

4.3.2 Training support

As mentioned earlier, the support person has a role in determining the training of volunteers for their job. This benefits not only the host organisation, which gets its tasks done more efficiently and to a higher quality, but also the volunteers: setting up training will make them feel more integrated, more at ease in their job, more valued and recognised, and in the end more motivated. Even in short-term voluntary projects, such as work camps, it might be worth your while to include a workshop on the task you are doing, whether it is painting, fund-raising or cleaning techniques. It is rewarding if you do not just do what you are told to do, but get some explanation as to why things are done in a certain way.

In an orientation session with volunteers at the beginning of their IVS, a specific training plan can be negotiated. Obviously this plan should be monitored continually and you should be ready to change it according to the needs of the volunteer, which sometimes become apparent only in the course of the work. The plan can be made up of different activities, not only job-related training, but also observing or taking part in meetings, question-and-answer sessions with a colleague, one-to-one meetings, reading background manuals or using training material (CD-Rom, school books on the subject). Peer training by another volunteer is often very much appreciated because it gives the insight of someone in the same position. You are basically limited by your inspiration and by the resources you planned for this.

Example of a training plan

Going back to our example of ELKA, the ecological youth club that is hosting two volunteers to develop nature and adventure walks through the mountains (see Chapter 2.2 "The project cycle"), Jason, the support person of this project, developed the following training plan.

On their first full working day they will receive a half-day of induction training about the aim, work and structure of the ELKA youth club. They will be introduced to all the staff and active volunteers in the course of a common lunch. In the afternoon they will be introduced to the area. This day is organised and led by Susan, the project manager.

Within the first four weeks, the volunteers should attend a one-week course on outdoor education and adventure walks run by the National Association of Outdoor Education near the capital. They will also receive books on outdoor education techniques and reports from other organisations that have done similar things before.

They can participate in the annual meeting of the network of national environmental youth organisations that ELKA belongs to; there is always a three-day seminar on nature issues linked to it.

Within the youth club they can use Gerard as a resource person, because he has been to two adventure camps in the south of Europe before.

Besides this they should take part in the regular team counselling sessions (once a month, half a day) concerning the day-to-day work at ELKA.

The programme guide of the Youth in Action programme details minimum quality standards for European Voluntary Service. This could serve as inspiration for your IVS. Download the programme guide from www.ec.europa.eu/youth.

4.3.3 Intercultural support

We are mostly unaware of the importance of our own environment, our familiar neighbourhood, friends and family for our feeling of security and comfort, unless we have left it for a while. Living and working in a different cultural context leads to confrontation – between the familiar and the unknown, the regular and the first-time, the rituals and the new. After an initial phase of excitement with the exoticism of their new life, the volunteers nearly always reach a phase in which they experience reduced efficiency in their day-to-day interactions and absence of familiarity within the host culture. This is called "culture shock" (see graph of the adjustment cycle in Chapter 3.2.1 "Preparation of the volunteers").

The support person should keep an eye out for the symptoms of culture shock, which can be physical (lack of hunger, sleeplessness, tiredness, minor aches) or psychological (homesickness, anger, fear of being cheated, resentment towards locals, impatience, defensive or aggressive behaviour). The ability to handle culture shock varies from person to person (according to personality, but also according to previous intercultural experiences) but it also depends largely on the preparation for this confrontation before departure (see Chapter 3.2.1 “Preparation of the volunteers”), which can be developed and built on during voluntary service.

The way of addressing culture shock should be adapted to each case, depending on the volunteers and the preparation they have had. Here are some suggestions as to what you can do as support person:

- Make sure that the volunteers know that there is something called “culture shock” and the way to recognise it (for example, by the symptoms quoted above). Culture shock is neither good nor bad; it is just a situation that many people go through when abroad for a long time.
- Take time for culture shock, some time to breathe and reflect: let the volunteers air their frustrations; listen to their stories. A day off work or an excursion (away from it all), with the support person to talk through things, could do wonders.
- Try to avoid judging cultures. Instead, explain them as far as you can. Give information about the culture, the country, the system, the people. Information takes away the uncertainty and lack of efficiency that the volunteers experience.
- Motivate and encourage the volunteers to see it as a challenging learning experience. Make a game out of interpreting culturally different behaviour and give feedback as to whether the volunteer is right, or add what the meaning really is.
- Put the volunteers in contact with former volunteers who have gone through a similar experience, perhaps in the opposite way (having been to the country of the volunteers), in order to get peer support from each other.
- Or give them a break from the different culture and different language, by arranging a meeting with a fellow expatriate (a friend, family, volunteer from that country) or possibly getting some magazines, books or videos from home, or phoning home.
- In order to reduce the feeling of missing home, try to find activities from home in the host country (for instance: sports, TV show, hobbies, fast food), probably in an adapted way (water-skiing instead of skiing, chips with mayonnaise instead of vinegar).
- Encourage the volunteers not to give up, but on the contrary to engage in even more social interaction with the host culture in order to decipher its different ways and become more fluent in intercultural interaction with others (trying out the new way of greeting, guessing what someone would find tasty or not, etc.).
- Encourage the volunteers to take the intercultural learning process as it comes and, if necessary, to review the objectives they had in mind for their voluntary service, if the intercultural component takes more time than expected, without it having to be a failure.
- Promote complexity in thinking, distinguishing between one person and the rest of the group, between a particular situation and all situations (because one person was rude in a stressful situation does not mean that all persons from that country are always rude).
- Focus also on similarities between the host country and the volunteers’ country of origin so they realise that they already have a lot of cultural baggage with them. However do not play down the importance of culture shock or cultural differences.
- Value diversity and difference. The world is so much more beautiful and more efficient with different approaches to similar issues. The volunteers are going to have two approaches incarnated in themselves (their own and the host culture’s – to an extent).

- You can photocopy the box on culture shock in Chapter 3.2.1 “Preparation of the volunteers” for the volunteer to reflect on.

The development of the rest of their voluntary service depends a lot on the joint ability of the volunteers and the hosting organisation to overcome this first phase. If a good relationship based on trust and mutual understanding results from this phase, it is to be expected that other periods of emotional downs can be handled successfully.

For more details of the concepts of culture and exercises to raise intercultural awareness, see the T-Kit on *Intercultural Learning* available for download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>.

4.3.4 Social support

Hosting organisations tend to overlook the fact that volunteers actually spend more time away from work than on the voluntary job. The satisfaction of volunteers in their free time is just as important (if not more so) for the success of the voluntary service as the tasks in the project. Staying in one’s room, being reduced to watching television or reading books, despite the fact that there are so many exciting new opportunities outside, could lead to a feeling of isolation and wanting to return home.

For some volunteers it is sufficient to introduce them to some leisure-time facilities in the neighbourhood and invite them along to some social gatherings or events. Others, however, may need a bit more support to open up to new people and new opportunities – especially if the lack of language skills is still a barrier. The extent of support needed in this respect should become clear through talks with the sending organisation beforehand and with the volunteer personally during their voluntary service.

Measures to integrate volunteers into the local community

- Check the special interests and hobbies of the volunteer before arrival

Knowing the interests and hobbies of the volunteer beforehand can help you to be ready with some names of contact persons or addresses of clubs and facilities on arrival. This is certainly a sign that makes the volunteer feel very welcome.

- Organise meetings with other volunteers or exchange students in the area

If there are several volunteers in one area, they can share common on-arrival training at the beginning of their placement. Apart from the educational value of these events, they create an early small network of friends. Since they are all in the same situation, they can obviously relate well to each other. If there are too few volunteers in the area for such an event, you could also provide contacts with other foreign young people in the area.

- Introduce a peer system

Especially for volunteers who are not “high-flyers” in making contact with people and adapting to new situations, it can be very helpful to have a peer contact person acting as a bridge into the local community. This peer should be roughly the same age, ideally share some interests and understand the volunteer’s situation. Using former volunteers is a good solution, because of their understanding of the situation that the new volunteers are in. At the same time they have an opportunity to stay in contact with the world of IVS.

As you can see, support persons have a lot of responsibilities on their shoulders, so they should get some support and training themselves in different fields. Have a look around to see which organisations deliver training on the topics mentioned in this chapter. One of the important issues certainly is intercultural learning. Possible providers of training courses on intercultural learning at an international level are the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/youth) and the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (www.efil.afs.org). In the framework of the European Voluntary Service programme there are regular courses targeted at volunteer

support staff (check with the national agency for the YOUTH programme in your country at www.ec.europa.eu/youth). Or you could check out some of the references given in the bibliography and webography.

Support on short-term projects

Obviously the extent of personal support needed on short-term projects is limited in comparison to long-term projects. Nevertheless there are a few aspects that organisers of work camps or other short-term projects should take into account.

Dedicate enough time to an orientation session on the first day. Considering the relatively short duration of the stay, organisers tend to neglect this part of the programme where volunteers get the chance to become familiar with the board and lodging arrangements, the immediate environment, the local people involved in the project and so on. Do not start with the actual work right on the first day. The effects of travel and the volunteers' nervousness about meeting new people in a different environment is the same as for a long-term project.

Plan for some ice-breaking and team-building exercises on the first day. Much more work will be achieved when there is a good team spirit.

For this task the responsible support person for voluntary group projects should get some training in team-building, intercultural learning and conflict management. Conflicts in such groups are possible, but should not affect the whole group. As a responsible support person you should be sensitive to conflicts that arise and try to intervene carefully but in a determined manner (see also Chapter 4.4 "Conflict management").

Support staff, especially in work camps, should be present at all times. Such a person will not be accepted as a responsible and trustworthy leader if he or she only shows up once a week.

4.4 Conflict management



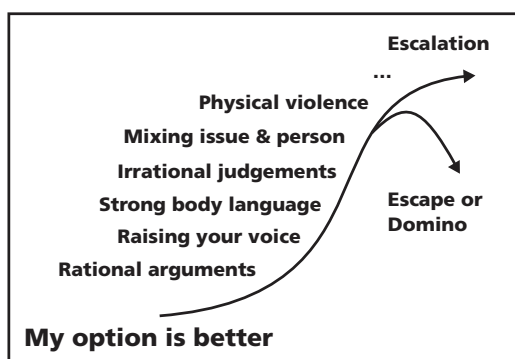
IVS is a complex project which involves people from different backgrounds working together towards common goals, up to the moment that differences appear and then become conflicts. But differences do not equal conflicts. It is no problem if people have different opinions, values, wishes or aims. However, a conflict arises when people or groups that are (or have to be) working and living together act in different directions at the expense of the other because of their differences.

For example, the project leader might find punctuality very important whereas the volunteer does not. No problem, but they will probably end up in a conflict on the morning when they are about to leave on a field trip together, with the project leader waiting in the car and the volunteer surfacing an hour later. Or perhaps an organisation asks the volunteers to finish the

new meeting room before its general assembly on Monday, but the volunteers want to spend time at the lake nearby at the weekend.

Unfortunately, conflicts can evolve from little jokes into major crises. In a conflict where there are opposite points of view, what often happens is that one side wants to convince the other that they are right, that their option is better. The parties try to outdo the other, first by rational arguments, which may be reinforced by the appropriate body language and tone of voice. If no victory is in sight yet, irrational judgments and accusations that confuse the issue and the person can surface. The next step may be an escalation to physical violence. If at a certain moment one party outdoes the other and the loser cannot reciprocate any more, the escalation is avoided; but what often happens is that the losers take it out on themselves or on other people around them that are weaker, who then take it out on even weaker persons, and so on. This is also called the domino effect.

Escalation in conflicts



For example, one of the volunteers at a work camp in a village wears a nose ring at the renovation works of the little church. The work camp leader thinks this is not appropriate and argues that this will give the work camp and the organisation a bad reputation. The volunteer replies that the nose ring is part of his identity and that showing something different to the local people is good: it challenges their “narrow views”. The voices get louder and fists are banging on the table. “You will not come to work if you do not take it out” threatens the camp leader. Instead of sticking to his opinion about the nose ring, the volunteer puts the work camp leader down as an authoritarian person. When they are about to leave for work, the volunteer with the nose ring follows, but is pushed back. After some pushing and pulling the work camp leader rips out the volunteer’s nose ring. Furiously the volunteer takes his bags and leaves the living quarters, pushing over an old lady on the sidewalk.

As you can see from the examples, this chapter will focus more on social conflicts at a micro-level, meaning conflicts between individuals. There are also conflicts on a meso-level (between groups, for example workers and management in a factory) or macro-level (between big entities, for example between countries) but these conflicts need a more structural or political approach. We will stick to what you as a youth worker or support person can do in the event of conflicts at a voluntary project.

4.4.1 First aid in conflict management

As support person, you will often have to provide first aid to rising conflicts in the project but, when conflicts are too big or getting out of hand, you should consider getting (professional) support. The following scheme tries to give you a structured step-by-step route through a conflict, which allows you to deal with conflicts in a consistent way without having to be an expert in the field.

Steps through a conflict



0. First of all, if you come across a raging conflict (arguing or fighting) between two or more persons, the warring parties should be separated and time should be allowed to let emotions cool down. You, as a mediator, should take measures to prevent the conflict from getting worse, for example by giving the volunteer another task, giving them the day off, putting them to work with a different partner, calling upon other persons who can help (friends, director of the organisation, parents, etc.). When peace is restored you can move on to the next step.

1. The first step in managing conflict is to see and acknowledge that there is a conflict. All parties involved, individuals or groups, should be aware (or made aware) that something is wrong. You can point out some facts that for you could indicate a conflict, without judging or interpreting. It is up to the people involved whether they admit there is a problem or not.

2. If they indeed see the problem, the next step is to take the decision as to whether they want to deal with the conflict or run away from it. In most situations it is best to take up the conflict constructively, but in certain circumstances (such as limited time or energy, unequal power relation, violence) it is better to leave the conflict as it is, trying to put up with it or to escape from the situation. You can try to break up the conflict yourself, but you can also seek external assistance (a professional mediator, for example) when it is above your capacities.

3. When both parties realise that there is a conflict and want to do something about it, you move to the stage of information gathering. Sit down with the different parties separately first and try to get answers to the following questions.

What issues are at stake? How do the parties see the key moments in the development of the conflict? What are the roots or reasons of the conflict? – from the perspective of the different sides. What are the underlying differences causing the conflict?

Before starting the face-to-face meeting between the parties, it is important as a mediator that you negotiate a list of ground rules with the opponents. Some rules could be:

- listening to the other person and not interrupting (one way to see if they are listening is to ask them to repeat the other's message before having their say);
- always use "I" (instead of "You didn't listen" say "I think you didn't listen to me");
- no judging or blaming;
- no leaving the room until an acceptable solution is found;
- everything that is said will stay between those walls;
- ...?

It is important that all the participants in your mediation meeting agree on these ground rules.

4. The next phase is generating possible solutions to the problem, as in a brainstorm. How could the parties involved imagine changing the situation for the better?

- Perhaps the whole situation rests on a different interpretation or understanding of the facts and clarifying the different visions of things can help the process forward (for example: explaining that the feedback given was not meant as a reproach).
- In conflicts of interest (for example: the project needs a report written – the volunteer wants to do creative work) compromises can be proposed as a sort of middle way (for example, do part of the administrative work but also some creative work).
- In conflicts of values, beliefs, opinions and the like, positions are difficult to negotiate so a non-compromising creative solution will have to be found (for example: the Muslim volunteer is asked to organise a cooking workshop so that local people know what he or she can eat and what not).

5. Once several suggestions for solutions have been proposed by all sides, the process of negotiation can start with different options. Which proposals are the conflicting parties most comfortable with? Which options are out of the question? One exercise that shows clearly people's preferences is writing the different solutions on a piece of paper and passing it around the table, asking the parties to underline the acceptable solutions in different colours: the most often underlined solution wins. This process highlights common ground, involves all parties actively in the solution and shows a way forward. You could even formalise the agreement by putting it in writing and have the parties sign it for extra commitment.

6. Next comes implementation of the proposed solution, by all the people involved. A way to monitor how well the solution functions is the red flag system. You ask the participants to define their "red flags" – situations that would increase tension again or move them back to a conflictual situation. For example, a red flag could be "the volunteer surfs more than an hour per day on the Internet for leisure purposes" or "the colleague does not speak to me for a whole day". The red flags should be exchanged between the different parties so that everybody knows what is considered "going too far". It is important to check that all parties are happy with the solution and that the solution is not considered a defeat, because this could lead to demotivation or disengagement of the volunteer or staff person, or they could take their frustration out on someone else.

7. After a predetermined period of time, you check the results: whether things have got better or whether red flags are popping up. If the evaluation is negative and if tension or frustrations remain, you should return to previous steps. So, even though this step-by-step approach seems linear (one step coming after the other), it might be necessary to go back on your steps when the process of conflict management is blocked at any stage.

Hot conflicts versus cold conflicts

These seven steps are based on a conflictual situation where the different parties are actively and openly involved in the conflict: this is called a "hot conflict" (because sometimes things get really hot). It is easy to find out what the issues are and who the opposing parties are because in general the different parties even want to convince you as a mediator of their point of view. Since the people involved seem comfortable enough to take up the confrontation with each other, it is most likely that they will also be willing to work together on conflict resolution on an equal footing and to engage in a process of open, fearless communication.

Sometimes, when there is no equal power relation between the conflicting parties, or when a party gives up retaliating at some stage in the escalation of the conflict, they may disengage from the confrontation completely. They will not fight openly for their cause any more but tacitly boycott or sabotage the other person or the work. This is a "cold conflict" where people stay cool (no arguments, no confrontation, no open fights). In this case it is necessary to work with

this person to gain their motivation again and to establish an atmosphere of trust in which open communication is possible (and only then can you start the steps through the conflict).

4.4.2 The mediator in the middle

You as a youth worker or project organiser might find yourself in the middle of a conflict, trying to make the best of it. The following tips might be of use when you are taking on the role of mediator, helping people to work through a conflict.

- First of all, the mediator should be neutral and accepted by both sides. If you are not in this position, then it is best to get someone else in to be the mediator.
- Listen to people and do not take sides (any side) – make sure that you address equal time and energy to both parties. Do not give the parties any reason to become suspicious about your relationship with their opponents.
- Encourage people to talk and let them talk (do not interrupt one person by telling them about your own experiences of conflicts and their outcomes). Be a sounding board.
- Ask open questions.
- Do not judge, nor give advice – just paraphrase the message to check if you understood all the details.
- Make sure that the opponents listen to each other. You could make them repeat the message of the opponent before they can make their own point.
- Make sure people use I-statements. Instead of saying “he has done a bad job” it is better to say “I don’t like the job he has done”.
- Involve all parties actively in the search for a satisfactory solution. Do not let people slip into a “cold conflict” situation.
- Do not try to find easy or quick solutions – take your time.
- Help the person to explore where the roots of the conflict could be: for example, different values, opinions, habits, norms, goals, cultural backgrounds.
- Try to understand how the parties feel and think.
- Try to find out what roles or strategy both parties are using in the conflict.
- Ask the conflicting parties if you could help in any way.
- Make a strict distinction between the particular issue and the person (for example, someone who comes late a couple of times is rapidly categorised as lazy, even though there were valid reasons for being late in most cases).
- Keep track of the progress of the conflict management in writing and check your notes with the conflicting parties.
- You could try to visualise the conflict in order to make the views of both sides (and yours) clearer – it also helps in focusing on the actual issues.
- Help them to clarify the situation – perhaps the conflict is based on a misunderstanding (intercultural?): avoid judging what you do not understand and promote tolerance of ambiguity.
- Do not impose your cultural norms, but try to understand the cultural rules on both sides.
- Ask the parties whether they have an idea of how the opposite party might be feeling.
- Encourage each side to talk to the other party in the conflict. If both are ready for this, help to establish a fearless atmosphere where open communication is possible (neutral territory, with an external mediator, etc.).

- It is never too late to get other people in to help you get out of this situation. Do not feel you have to solve the conflict on your own.
- ...?

You may want to add your own golden rules.

There is more about conflict management in T-Kit No. 12 on *Youth Transforming Conflict*, available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>.

4.5 Crisis management



One of the main issues organisations have to face when organising an activity is the capacity to foresee disaster and manage it effectively should it occur. We seldom think that things can go wrong, but crises do happen and being aware of that is the first step towards working out ways of preparing for and managing them. Our purpose is not so much to tell you how to prevent a crisis, since a crisis is in its nature unexpected. Instead, we will try to raise your awareness of the main elements that constitute a crisis and to give you some examples of successful strategies already used by other voluntary work organisations to deal with crises. In this chapter we look at crisis management from a global point of view and from an IVS angle.

Some of the examples in this chapter may seem far-fetched to you (for example fire, flooding, drug overdose) but, unfortunately, all our examples are based on true stories. Of course, in general, most voluntary service organisations show very small percentages of crisis situations.

Defining a crisis

You have a crisis if the situation is:

- unexpected,
- requires immediate attention,
- is potentially serious and harmful to your organisation or people related to your project,
- causes (or threatens to cause) one or more of your partners, or your organisation, to stop their normal activities to respond to the situation.

Note! As you can see, we are not talking about a misunderstanding that results in a problem or conflict, but an event that due to its proportions strongly destabilises the work of your organisation and forces you to stop your normal activities to respond to it. Of course, a misunderstanding, if not properly tackled, may lead to a serious enough problem to create a

crisis in your organisation: for example, a volunteer overhears his tutor saying how terrible his character is, the following day the volunteer refuses to show up at work, the tutor gets upset, the volunteer insults him, the tutor slaps the volunteer in the face, the volunteer sues the tutor for physical abuse and the project is closed down.

4.5.1 A few general features

It is often difficult to decide precisely on the contours of a crisis. A crisis may present interchangeable characteristics and you will seldom know when it all started, even if there were indicative signs that you could have read, or how the incident will evolve. A great deal of your intervention will be in terms of making sure that a crisis does not put your organisation and the people you work for and with at too big a risk, and that you can keep “business as usual”. Of course, your response will always depend on the context and the resources that you have available.

Here are some examples of crises:

Case 1: a key staff member in a sending organisation ran off with the organisation’s money. The bank blocked their account and a group of volunteers that was supposed to leave for their host placements in a week’s time saw their tickets cancelled by the travel agency for lack of payment. The sending organisation was unable to pay its debts and was forced to declare bankruptcy, closing down all of its projects.

Case 2: a major flood destroyed the site where a host organisation had its work camp. The volunteers were not injured but an emergency evacuation operation was necessary. The entire region was under water for three days and the work camp was in a rather inaccessible spot. The volunteers and their tutors remained in the camp without food and clean water for two days until a helicopter was able to rescue them. Alarmed parents and relatives invaded the offices of the sending organisations looking for news and some of them flew immediately to the country where the flood took place and demanded the host organisation’s support with logistics.

Case 3: a volunteer working in a kindergarten was accused by one of the families of sexually abusing their child. The volunteer was arrested and, though no evidence against the volunteer was found, the host organisation decided to stop all their IVS activities. The volunteer became extremely depressed and attempted suicide while in the host country. The family of the volunteer brought the host organisation to trial for emotional and psychological damage to their own child.

In some cases (natural disasters, riot) it is quite obvious that the hosting organisation cannot be held responsible, but the situation becomes a lot more tricky if there is reason to believe that the crisis stems from negligence and mismanagement by the hosting organisation or one of its collaborators (in the case of sexual abuse, fraud, etc.). In this case the organisation will get a lot of (negative) media coverage and they will be judged on the professionalism of their reaction. In general the speed of the reaction and the spreading of appropriate information to the relevant persons are crucial in dealing with a crisis. As a hosting organisation, you are responsible for ensuring the volunteers’ safety in any situation and preferably the continuation of the IVS project.

4.5.2 Preparing for a crisis – Be sure to prepare well in advance

Preventing a crisis is something that most of the time we cannot do because of its unexpected nature; it is therefore best to be prepared beforehand on how to deal with it when it happens. An organisation can prepare its staff and volunteers by discussing potential problematic situations in advance. Below you will find some steps that can help you be ready for a crisis, but remember: no management tool is a ready-to-use solution. You must therefore adapt the steps below to your own organisational reality.

Step 1: create a special team to deal with crises

If you have a predetermined group of people in your organisation to deal with a crisis, when it happens you will be able to respond a lot more quickly. In this way you will avoid having to decide who does what; you just activate your crisis team. We recommend that you have in this team:

- a co-ordinator,
- an internal and an external liaison person (i.e. one person responsible for keeping the organisation informed and another in charge of all contacts with the outside world),
- a reporter (someone that writes reports on the crisis and makes sure that all documents are filed and easy to find),
- a media spokesperson (if necessary).

Please note that one person can have more than one role. Do these people need to have special skills to deal with different types of crises? Where can they get these skills? There is no point in putting together a team to deal with crises if you do not provide its members with the necessary training to do their job correctly.

Make sure that everybody in your organisation has the contact details of the crisis team members and that they can be reached at all times. One more point: dealing with a crisis can be psychologically draining, so sometimes it will be good to give your team a break. Therefore, make sure that you have a back-up group of people to allow for rotation of team members when the crisis becomes too prolonged.

Step 2: create a group of external experts

Many times you will realise that you actually need outside expertise to deal with a crisis (for example a lawyer, a psychologist, a conflict mediator, a translator). We thus recommend that you try to secure professional contacts with experts in advance of a crisis (they can either be paid or voluntary). Distribute among your staff and key volunteers a list of the names and addresses of these experts and a description of each person's role and skills, with clear instructions of how and when to contact them.

Step 3: create detailed contact lists

Many organisations find themselves in quite a bit of trouble when in the midst of a crisis they do not know how to get in touch with their staff, the volunteers, their families, the sending or host partner and other relevant organisations or people. To avoid this happening to your organisation we recommend that you create contact lists for:

- staff,
- volunteers,
- volunteers' families,
- sending and host partners,
- emergency numbers of hospitals, police, fire brigade, etc.,
- diplomatic contacts and other governmental authorities,
- newspapers and other media,
- sponsors of your programme.

Make sure that your lists have notes on how and when to contact these people and ensure that the lists are regularly updated. This is a must for your volunteers' list and for your sending and hosting partners. In a crisis situation, for example when a volunteer needs to be evacuated, the last thing that you want is to find out that your volunteer is not living at that address any more.

Step 4: create a communication protocol (a set of rules and procedures)

Who should contact the different parties involved? What are the preferred means of communication (e-mail, telephone, mobile, beeper, fax)? How fast must communication be? What should be the format and content of this communication? These are some of the questions

your protocol should try to answer. Make sure that someone is always available 24 hours a day to respond to a crisis.

Step 5: prepare a crisis headquarters

Select an alternative location for managing the crisis if your office is not adequate or available. This is particularly true in the case of a natural disaster that might make access to your premises impossible; during this time you must find somewhere else to do your basic tasks. This alternative office should have the necessary basic equipment (including a telephone) and this should be prepared in advance.

Step 6: prepare a media kit

Many crises attract unwanted media attention. In these cases you should have information on your organisation ready to use: a media kit. Sometimes a situation gets out of hand because people in your organisation do not know what to say to the media, or because they give conflicting messages to different media. A well-prepared media kit can help you in making sure that whatever is said about your crisis is what you want people to know and not something else. Update your media kit regularly and address the specific training needs of your media spokesperson and staff, namely on how to deal with media enquiries. In this way you will be able to use the media to help you solve the crisis and not to make it worse.

Step 7: create a crisis plan

Make sure that you write down in a single document all the steps to be taken and procedures to be followed when dealing with a crisis in your organisation and distribute this among the members of your crisis team as well as staff or key volunteers. A crisis plan should be concise and easy to read and, most of all, easy to find when needed.

Step 8: make appropriate copies of everything and store in a secure location

Copy the crisis plan and all relevant contact lists, and store a hard copy of these documents in at least one secure location in addition to keeping a hard copy in your office. If this sounds like a lot of work, once more it is up to you to analyse your needs and adapt these suggestions to your organisation. But remember, if your office falls victim to a burglary or a fire, the chances of retrieving vital information to keep on doing your work may be very slim. Having some files of basic information kept in a safe place outside your office can save you from a lot of hassle.

Step 9: get adequate insurance coverage

Having the right kind of insurance can save you a lot of trouble. Many insurance companies are used to providing services to IVS organisations and they will be able to help you to choose the insurance policy best adapted to your needs (for example, work-camp placements versus long-term voluntary work).

4.5.3 Responding to a crisis – What to do immediately?

Very well, we have looked at ways of preparing for a crisis, but what do you do when it happens? The following are some of the simple steps to take when dealing with a crisis.

Step 1: activate your communication protocol

Step 2: activate your crisis team

Step 3: designate the necessary external expertise to deal with the crisis

Step 4: get in touch with your insurance company

Step 5: document what is happening

Remember: having accurate records is the best way to respond to potential criticism and is crucial if you wish to evaluate your own response to the situation.

Step 6: update and co-ordinate the response

Identify people who should receive information on the crisis on a proactive basis. Do not let people come to you with questions about your handling of the situation; take the initiative of informing them of what you are doing and showing how professional you are.

Step 7: wrap up the crisis

Determine when the crisis is over and identify the follow-up to be taken. Do not forget to conduct a post-crisis evaluation.

The importance of post-crisis evaluation

How do you make sure that you have learned from your crisis and that you can prevent similar things from happening again – or, if they do, that you can handle them better and more efficiently? The answer is simple: you must evaluate your management of the crisis when it is over. The following is a concise but helpful checklist for your post-crisis evaluation:

1. How do you feel the crisis was managed (extremely well, well, fairly well, poorly)?
2. Did the members of your crisis team work together successfully?
3. Did the crisis team deal well with the internal and external contacts and with external expertise?
4. Did the crisis team deal well with the media?
5. Was a consistent crisis report available?
6. Is there a complete crisis file?
7. Was there any point at which the crisis seemed to have changed for the better or worse?
8. Were there any areas where you felt that management of the crisis could have been improved?
9. What procedures could you implement to incorporate these improved methods into future crisis-management situations?

5. Returning home

5.1 Evaluation

5.1.1 Evaluation, not just a couple of questions at the end ...



Evaluation is a lot more than the traditional few questions before the volunteers go home after their IVS. Although we have put evaluation in this chapter on “Returning home”, we would argue that evaluation should be an integral part of your whole IVS project and it goes hand in hand with Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”.

One thing that all evaluations have in common is that they measure goals that were set before starting the project, because it goes without saying that you need to have defined where you were going if you are to measure whether you have reached this destination or not.

In IVS these goals lie in different areas: the work and related outcomes (learning skills, taking training, doing projects, being efficient), social integration (getting to know friends, having fun, getting along with colleagues), the intercultural dimension (getting to know the people, learning a language, experiencing the country) and personal issues (motivation, homesickness, conflicts). And, last but not least, the practical arrangements (food, accommodation, transport, free-time arrangements) should also be evaluated. These are areas in which regular evaluation can prove useful in improving a voluntary service project for all involved – better sooner than too late.

Evaluations can have a lot of different functions and can take very diverse forms. Here is a rough overview of the different kinds of evaluation.

5.1.2 Evaluation: why, oh why?

Evaluations want to find out whether the aims were reached, but for different purposes:

- The best-known kind of evaluation is probably “summative evaluation”. This generally comes at the end of a project (or at the end of a project phase) and tries to sum up the outcomes and the results achieved. Often it also leads to a judgment on the quality of the project, which may lead to a decision to give a certificate to the volunteer, to allocate more money to the project or to repeat the experience in the future – or not. These evaluations are not very comfortable because a lot depends on them.
- In contrast, “formative evaluations” focus on the process and not so much on the result. They aim to analyse how the project and the volunteer are doing and allow for influence on their development. Formative evaluation helps the volunteers to learn and reflect on their experience. It is held all through the IVS and it provides feedback about

the project and the people involved in it: whether it is going somewhere or where improvements could be made in the future. It allows the volunteers to let some steam off and exteriorise ideas and frustrations: “why, oh why didn’t we/did we have to ...?” However, constructive evaluation is also very motivating.

- This type of evaluation is less judgmental, and instead creates an atmosphere of openness and caring where concerns can be voiced in a safe environment. By putting compliments and problems on the table, the formative evaluation is a way of making the volunteer co-responsible for his/her learning experience.

Summative Evaluation	Formative Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * focus on result * looking to the past * to judge * summing up * consequences * at the end 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * focus on process * looking to the future * to help * steering * development * through out

If we consider IVS as a learning experience, it is evident that formative evaluations are a necessity to help steer the development of the volunteer, but also of the other actors involved, including the project organisers, to make the project a success. That is why this chapter focuses on the ongoing formative evaluation. However, the organisation will have to make a summative evaluation as well at the end of the IVS for the funders, but also for themselves to take stock, see if the goals were reached and decide whether to repeat the experience or not.

5.1.3 How to evaluate?

There are many different formats of evaluation. Some are very formal and structured, but this information can be complemented by informal indicators.

In schools you often find very formal evaluation methods, such as exams, because they allow more objectivity. In IVS you could use the services of an external evaluator, who would come and interview people using a grid to assess whether your objectives have been reached or not. It is not surprising that these methods are mostly used for summative evaluation purposes.

In the case of formative evaluations, the most formal and structured method uses “evaluation sessions”. These entail taking some quality time at regular intervals and using some of the many exercises available (see below). Using the same method several times allows you to monitor a development that is going on. Different exercises can keep the evaluation sessions fresh and exciting. Sometimes there might not be any specific exercises, but more of an evaluation chat, in which the volunteer and the support person can bring up topics of concern. Of course exercises can be combined with opening the floor for any other feedback. These evaluation sessions offer a clear framework for the parties involved to come up with positive or negative criticism. A safe atmosphere of trust and co-operation will contribute to making the project a success.

Evaluation does not always have to be done with someone else. Self-assessment is also a valid tool for evaluation. The advantage is that volunteers can do this at any moment they choose. It allows them to actively monitor their learning process and take all their feelings, experiences and observations into account to construct their big picture. Of course the results

should be communicated regularly to the support person in the project, to share responsibility for the voluntary service together. Self-assessment can be done using a grid showing the different goals of the volunteer (or of the project), but it can also take the more free format of a diary.

Information from formal evaluation and self-assessment can be complemented by informal evaluation elements – information gathered randomly about the project, the volunteer or other actors involved. This can help to reveal the motivation of the volunteer (spontaneous overtime or absenteeism, the look on the face), the quality of their work (incoming complaints or compliments, speed of tasks accomplished), co-operation with other staff (reactions of staff to the volunteers, time spent together, friction) and so forth. These indicators can then be interpreted and discussed at a formal evaluation session, to find out what they really mean.

5.1.4 Do you want to evaluate with me?

The person doing the evaluation influences the tone of the evaluation a lot. Ideally, evaluation should be done in a supportive and constructive atmosphere, so it is best if the evaluator does not have a position that is too high for the volunteer to feel comfortable. And the evaluator should not judge, but rather work together with the volunteer on the future of the project.

If the evaluation is done individually, it can be tailor-made, addressing specific needs of the volunteer. This makes it more personal and it should be confidential. Evaluating in a group with other volunteers has the advantage of each person comparing their experience with the impressions of others. This can be reassuring and motivating. In any case, evaluation should be done in an appropriate space (no people walking through, no noise, no phones) and in a clear time frame (everybody should know how much time there is for how many subjects).

Tips for evaluations during your IVS project

- Make sure you have clearly defined your objectives in a measurable way – what are the criteria that allow you to say that you are on the right track in reaching your objectives?
- If language is a difficulty for the volunteers, use more visual methods or use a language that the volunteers are more comfortable in.
- Evaluations should be confidential, unless all involved agree to inform others.
- Therefore evaluations should also take place in a private atmosphere and not in the middle of the office where others can listen in.
- Evaluations should be repeated at regular intervals to grasp how things are developing.
- Sometimes it can be useful to put some time and distance between the evaluator and a very recent, strong experience, to evaluate it more objectively.
- Try to use neutral words in your questions (not “bad” but “needs improvement”, instead of “don’t you think it would have been better to xyz?” try “what do you think could have been better?”).
- Sometimes it is easier to use symbols or drawings than to explain feelings.
- Invite the volunteers to do self-assessment and give feedback afterwards.
- An evaluation should be a two-way discussion.
- Build up confidence and trust with your volunteers in order to get the real information out.
- Do not let little difficulties become bigger; take evaluations seriously and act on them.

5.1.5 Some methods

- Draw up learning points, and strategies to achieve them – for example a step-by-step approach (see Chapter 4.2.1 “Motivating the volunteer”).
- Draw a thermometer and at regular intervals invite the volunteers to mark on it their motivation (very low motivation below zero, high motivation at 50°).
- Ask volunteers to write a letter to themselves stating where they will be in, for example, a month’s time. You give or send this letter to them after this period.
- Make a list of red flags (negative experiences that put the volunteer off) and green flags (positive experiences that keep the volunteer going), check how often green and red flags happen; work on strategies to hoist more green flags and get rid of the red ones.
- Draw a circle with different sectors (like a darts board). Put an element you want to evaluate in each sector. Ask everybody to put a symbol in this sector, either more towards the middle if they liked it, or more towards the outside edge if they did not. Different symbols can be used for different people or for the same person at different times.
- Find a multifaceted picture with a lot of people/buildings/items; ask volunteers to identify with one of them and explain why (“I am this jumping man because I feel energetic in my project” or “I am this highway because things are going too fast for me”). A variation could be to find an object that symbolises their feeling about a topic you decide.
- ...?

If you want more models of evaluation, check T-Kit No. 10 on *Educational Evaluation in Youth Work* (available to download at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>).

5.2 Follow-up



For many organisations, voluntary service is defined mainly as the period of time a volunteer spends on a specific project; everything that happens before and after that period is considered of less importance. In previous chapters we have already seen how important preparation is for a successful experience abroad. But also, after the placement abroad, there are many possibilities for follow-up that could be taken into account when designing an IVS project.

5.2.1 Coming back after being abroad

Volunteers often suffer from reverse culture shock when they come back home after a long stay abroad. They have gone through an experience that the people at home do not necessarily understand. The volunteers have developed during their voluntary service, without people at home knowing. The volunteers' behaviour may have changed and be frowned upon when back home, because they expect to get back the same person who left them some months before. The volunteer thinks that people will react in a certain way and in reality they do not.

Volunteers often complain that little attention is given to their needs after they conclude their voluntary assignments abroad and that in most cases they experience reintegration difficulties on returning to their home countries. During their stay abroad in the project they were perhaps the centre of attention and lots of new things were happening, whereas back home they are faced with their old reality again. The volunteers seem to have returned to where they left off.

But going back home should not be the end of it all – it could be the start of new things, when planned properly. Hopefully, the volunteers went through a lot of interesting experiences when abroad, but this learning could be taken further. The support person of the hosting organisation may be vital to monitor and optimise the learning process of the volunteer during the project, but it is up to sending organisations to provide their volunteers with follow-up opportunities. Sending organisations can guide and support volunteers in doing something with what they gained during their voluntary service.

In fact, follow-up opportunities should be planned as much as possible right from the start of IVS. Sending organisations are in a particularly good position to do so since they are also responsible for preparing the volunteer before departure. They can work with the volunteer on a plan of action to match the interests and wishes of the volunteer and sending organisation. Follow-up in the end is nothing more than making sure that IVS has maximal impact.

5.2.2 Follow-up meetings

One way of addressing follow-up is to organise one or more meetings with your volunteers, either in groups or individually; in the case of long-term volunteering, you would ideally have both types of meeting. A follow-up meeting with your volunteers can be used for:

- evaluating the IVS in general;
- comparing expectations or objectives with actual outcomes;
- identifying the main negative and positive outcomes;
- helping the volunteer to deal constructively with negative experiences abroad;
- helping the volunteer with particularly difficult reintegration problems (reverse culture shock);
- providing the volunteer with opportunities to share his or her experience with other volunteers who went through a similar experience;
- informing the volunteer about other volunteering possibilities or commitments within the same or other organisations.

5.2.3 Educational and professional opportunities

With some target groups, or in some sending organisations, the aim of sending a volunteer on IVS is to develop skills (language, social, practical skills) outside the regular schooling or training opportunities for their future pathway. In such cases, it is important to keep this educational perspective in mind right through their voluntary service, but especially when going back to the home country, to a next stage in their life project. After IVS they will be able to decide better on what they wish to do with their lives, and whether what they did abroad will

be of use to future activities. For example, doing voluntary service with the disabled might trigger a professional career in this sector, or the volunteer might have developed an interest in the language of the host country. The sending organisation is a vital player in facilitating the development of such new educational or professional perspectives as much as possible upon the young person's return.

5.2.4 Social security

Another issue that may need special attention is social security. Most European countries do not have laws defining the status of volunteers, so volunteering abroad often has an effect on social security payments like unemployment benefits, housing support or minimum income. Most long-term volunteers lose their social benefits once they leave the country. But sometimes, on their return, volunteers even stop being eligible for other benefits or student allowances. National authorities can be very bureaucratic and reluctant to accept any claims made by volunteers, so sending organisations must often intervene as mediators between the two of them to explain what the voluntary scheme was about. Preparing in advance for these eventualities is by far the best way of avoiding them once the volunteer is back.

5.2.5 Follow-up for sending and hosting organisations

Follow-up should not be seen as benefiting only the volunteer. Sending organisations can see their participation in IVS as a learning experience too and one that can benefit them in many tangible ways. For a sending organisation, after evaluating their experience, follow-up could mean, for instance:

- the continuation, or interruption, of a specific partnership;
- the search for new partners in the same or different areas of work;
- the integration of new working methods in response to suggestions made by the volunteer or observation of best practice in the host organisation.

Sending organisations can also see returning volunteers as important resources to help them with their work, for instance:

- The sending organisation may invite the volunteer to join them and introduce what he or she learned abroad in their current activities.
- The volunteer may start helping them with the recruitment and preparation of new volunteers by sharing his or her experience with them.

Host organisations can also follow up IVS by reinforcing or revising their partnership strategies and by using the volunteer to further develop their activities. After evaluating the voluntary service project, the host organisations may also decide to introduce new working methods and activities, following suggestions by the volunteer or simply by realising that things could be better if done differently. Quite often having a fresh look at your organisation by a foreign volunteer allows you to improve your activities by making you more aware of how things are actually done and how they could be changed.

5.3 Recognition and certification



IVS is not only a great experience and a way of supporting communities in need. At the same time – like it or not – voluntary service also benefits volunteers. Some sending organisations even send volunteers with the main purpose of providing them with a learning experience, gaining skills and increasing their employability. Even though we argued that there should be a balance between the personal development of the volunteer and the altruistic contribution to society (see Chapter 1.4 “Reasons for international voluntary service”), it would still be a missed opportunity not to recognise the benefits of voluntary service for volunteers.

Some of the competences that volunteers gain are:

- life experience, social competence and maturity, which have an impact on their future personal and professional development;
- a complex of so-called soft skills, such as the abilities to communicate and co-operate with people, and to create contacts and partnership at personal and professional levels;
- communication skills in the sense that volunteers abroad often learn to use various means of communication (Internet, e-mail, phone, etc.);
- knowledge of how to work in a team, make decisions, and be flexible and autonomous;
- professional knowledge and practical skills in certain areas of work like administration, social care/services, intercultural communication, accountancy and environment;
- specific language abilities from being in a language environment other than the native one;
- intercultural skills, understanding another culture, trying not to judge/interpret behaviour wrongly, tolerance of ambiguity, learning to see things from different perspectives.

5.3.1 Reflecting and documenting learning

Youth workers are probably convinced that young volunteers gain certain competences from IVS. But it is not only the youth worker who should know about the progress a young person has made while on a voluntary project. It is also important that the young people themselves reflect on their experience and the competences gained. The mentors or youth workers involved in the project can raise the young persons’ awareness of their learning through the use of a variety of methods:

- dialogue: regular discussions about what the young people have learned;

- a learning diary (or images, drawings, songs): young people record daily what they learn;
- competence thinking: a youth worker introduces key competences and the volunteers measure themselves regularly on one or more of these competences;
- peer reflection: several volunteers discuss (on an equal footing) their experiences and the competences gained.

If this reflection is done throughout the project, volunteers become more aware of their learning process. It is then easier at the end to sum up what the voluntary experience brought to them. The volunteers can document their learning in a variety of ways: in a portfolio, in a certificate, in their CV.

5.3.2 Recognition of IVS

The aim of documenting a volunteer's learning is to get recognition for the experience. But "recognition" is a word that can have many different meanings:

- Self-recognition: the young persons have become aware of their own learning and are able to use these learning outcomes in other fields.
- Social recognition: social players acknowledge the value of the young person's IVS – the competences acquired, the work done within the activities and the organisations involved.
- Formal recognition: the "validation" of learning outcomes and processes by certificates and diplomas that formally recognise the achievements of an individual.
- Political recognition: the recognition of voluntary service (and the actors involved) in legislation, in political strategies and in funding.

Depending on the type of recognition, you can build different elements into your IVS. Self-recognition has been largely described under the heading "Reflecting and documenting learning". The youth worker in the project can work with the volunteers to make them more conscious of all the things they have learned.

If the learning also has to be recognised by other players, then the documentation of acquired competences is more important. The format or tool used to show the impact of the voluntary service should be adapted to the receiver. For example:

- If young people want to use their experience in job applications, the certificate or letter of recommendation should be adapted to what an employer is looking for: a quick overview of an applicant's competences and experiences, some referees and so on.
- If the organisation is looking for political recognition, it will have to show the impact the voluntary projects have on society and how it contributes to social provision or prevention of unwanted situations.
- If voluntary activity is to be formally recognised, a thorough description of the learning, the methods used, the outcomes, the support structure and other details should be submitted to an educational authority for validation, so that the certificate given at the end of IVS will be formally recognised.

5.3.3 Youthpass – More than a certificate

Within the Youth in Action programme, all participants are entitled to a Youthpass. This is a certificate that describes what the young people or youth workers have learned during their European Voluntary Service, in a youth exchange or on a training course. It uses the European key competences to visualise what young people have gained through international activities.

But Youthpass is more than a piece of paper at the end of the project. Youth workers are invited to set up a whole reflection process during the project, to make participants and volunteers aware of their learning. The young people create their Youthpass certificate together with a support person. This way the learning outcomes, and the Youthpass certificate based on the international experience, are far richer.

As such, the Youthpass process supports young people's reflection on non-formal learning and personal development; it contributes to active European citizenship and increases young people's employability on the labour market. Youth organisations making active use of the Youthpass process contribute to the social recognition of youth work.

5.3.4 Getting the most out of a certificate

An easy and common way of documenting skills gained in voluntary service is a certificate – a written statement certifying that the volunteer has participated in IVS in the hosting organisation over a certain period of time. More and more, as in the Youthpass certificate, it is possible to add information about the competences gained during IVS.

But a certificate is only a piece of paper, unless you think about it strategically. To give certificates more weight, you could do the following:

- Detail the tasks and responsibilities of the volunteer during their voluntary service.
- Write a letter of recommendation to go with the certificate.
- Add the contact addresses of some referees to the certificate.
- Show what skills the volunteer gained in voluntary service and how you can prove this.
- Create a portfolio of the outcomes of the volunteer's tasks (pictures, articles or posters of the events that the volunteer organised).
- Try to link up with educational institutes or authorities that could certify the learning that happened during the IVS.
- The visual aspect of the certificate is also important – make it look serious and provide it with the necessary stamps and signatures.
- Consider having the certificate in a widely known language (or even bilingual), keeping future readers of it in mind.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

IVS

International voluntary service: in the context of this T-Kit, international voluntary service is considered to be a project that is limited in time and involves sending one or more volunteers to another country to do voluntary work for which no specialist skills are required.

EVS

European Voluntary Service: this voluntary service programme of the European Commission involves sending individual volunteers to another country for a period of six to 12 months, or between three weeks and six months for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (see also EVS under Chapter 2.4.2 “Fundings and funding possibilities”).

Work camp

This is a short-term gathering (two to three weeks) of volunteers, mostly from different countries, to help out – typically in a community in need that could not afford to have the work done otherwise. At the same time it provides an intercultural group experience for the volunteers and the project.

Sending organisation

This is an organisation, generally based in the home country of the volunteer, which provides information about IVS and (ideally) takes responsibility for the recruitment and preparation of the volunteer, for communication with (potential) hosting organisations and the volunteer during their stay abroad, and for following up the volunteer on return to the country of origin. The sending organisation provides the link between the volunteer and the hosting organisation (see also Chapter 2.1.2 “The sending organisation”).

Hosting organisation

This organisation receives the volunteers and provides them with voluntary work, either within their own organisation or in an external placement. The hosting organisation also takes care of living conditions (food, accommodation, free-time suggestions, contacts with local community, support, etc.) for the volunteers and their work-related needs (necessary training, materials, safety and insurance, etc.). The hosting organisation is the contractual partner of the sending organisation and the volunteer (see also Chapter 2.1.3 “The hosting organisation”).

Co-ordinating organisation

The co-ordinating organisation takes care of the overall co-ordination and responsibility for the international voluntary service project. It applies for funding on behalf of the partnership. In smaller voluntary service projects, either the hosting or the sending organisation can take the role of co-ordinating organisation. In larger projects involving many volunteers and sending/hosting organisations, this can be a separate body that is not directly involved in sending or hosting volunteers.

Placement

The placement is the actual workplace of the volunteer. This can be situated within the hosting organisation, or they may rely instead on an external placement, which generally then takes responsibility for living conditions and work-related needs, though the hosting organisation remains the administrative partner in the triangular relationship between the volunteer and the sending and hosting organisations.

NGO

Non-governmental organisation: in the context of this T-Kit an NGO is a not-for-profit organisation which is independent of any governmental authority. Most organisations active in the field of IVS are NGOs.

Support person

In an IVS it is important that the volunteers are supported in different areas. In the ideal case there should be work-related support (tutoring, training, etc.), personal support (learning process, conflict mediation, etc.), intercultural support (dealing with the differences) and free time or social support (for example excursions, interaction local community). This could be done by one person or by several. Their names can be manifold – tutor, supervisor, mentor, buddy, work camp leader, coach, facilitator, volunteer manager – depending on the cultural or organisational context (see also Chapter 4.3 “Ongoing support of volunteers”).

Fund-raising

The different activities that are carried out with the aim of bringing in money for a project or an organisation. This can range from a raffle to a flea market, from a benefit concert to a fund-raising party. Fund-raising is less formal and less administrative than funding (see also Chapter 2.4 “Funding and budgeting”).

Funding

This is considered to be money coming from institutions, authorities or foundations, for which certain administrative procedures have to be followed (applications, selection committees, etc.). The sums of funding are generally larger than the money coming in from fund-raising activities (see also Chapter 2.4 “Funding and budgeting”).

Disadvantaged

We would like to avoid labelling and stigmatising people as “disadvantaged”. Therefore we talk in this T-Kit about “young people with fewer opportunities” instead. People in this group are considered to have a lack of opportunities because of their socio-economic situation, because of a disability, because of the deprived urban or rural area they come from, because of their minority status, etc. (see also 3.1.4 “Voluntary service for ‘disadvantaged young people’”).

Youthpass

This is a tool to visualise and validate learning outcomes in Youth in Action projects. Youthpass is part of the European Commission’s strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning.

Competences

Within the youth sector, competences are seen as the combination of knowledge (head), skills (hands) and behaviour (heart). The European Union promotes a set of eight key competences for lifelong learning, and these are instrumental for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

Appendix 2: Overview of international voluntary service organisations, programmes and platforms

Co-ordinating bodies: international or national organisations that do not implement projects directly, but instead lobby and facilitate contacts with third parties (institutions and agencies), organise various activities/seminars and produce publications in order to improve the quality of exchanges.

International organisations: are bodies with an international/European secretariat and national branches/members subscribing to some extent to a common identity; the international organisations themselves generally do not organise IVS projects directly. Such projects are the responsibility of their branches or members, and vary in character:

- any indications of geographical coverage, duration of projects and age limits for volunteers are only a guide to the main types of activity run by (the members of) a given organisation;
- in general, long-term projects use individual placements whereas short-term projects often consist of volunteers working as a group, even if they have travelled to the location of the project individually.

Some important umbrella organisations and programmes in the field

Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), www.unesco.org/ccivs

Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO), www.avso.org

European Volunteer Centre (CEV), www.cev.be

The Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations, www.alliance-network.eu

European Voluntary Service (EVS), www.ec.europa.eu/youth

United Nations Volunteers (UNV), www.unv.org

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), www.vso.org.uk

Appendix 3: Further reading

Commented bibliography

Amorim L. (2000), "Screening of volunteers working with vulnerable client groups", Structure of Operational Support for the European Voluntary Service (SOS), Brussels.

This short document (10 pages) focuses on the EVS programme but is general enough to be of use for other types of voluntary service programmes. It is based on many talks with experts working in the field and tries to answer the needs of those responsible for managing things at global level.

Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (2000), "Intermediate report – Step-by-step to long-term volunteering", AVSO, Brussels.

Step-by-Step is one of the most experienced and successful networks in Europe aiming at involving young people at risk in international voluntary service activities. This intermediate report provides a good insight into the difficulties and the success stories behind this special network. Since they talk openly about the lessons they have learned since the beginning, this report is good background material for organisations trying to get started with this particular target group.

Blackman S. T. (1999), *Recruiting male volunteers: a guide based on exploratory research*, Corporation for National Service, Washington DC.

In this study you will find practical guidelines to improve your programme's capacity to attract male volunteers, as well as information about the reasons why men volunteer and what their special contribution to volunteering can be. It is also full of good advice for recruiting volunteers in general, whether they are male or female.

Brislin R. (1993), *Understanding culture's influence on behaviour*, Harcourt Brace, Fort Worth TX.

This is an easy-to-read but enlightening book about what culture is and does to people. It gives both theories and practical examples of culture's influence on our daily lives and on our interactions with others.

Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) (1998), "Guidelines for inter-regional volunteer exchange", in CCIVS, "South-South: North-South Seminar", CCIVS, Paris.

Specific guidelines for intercontinental voluntary service.

Cook T. (1999), *Avoiding the wastepaper basket: a practical guide for applying to grant-making trusts*, Voluntary Service Council, London.

Advice for voluntary organisations on applying to grant-making donors. It uses real-life examples to highlight mistakes made by voluntary organisations in applying to donors.

Cotton D. (1988), *Keys to management*, Unwin Hyman, Edinburgh.

For those who want to increase their knowledge of management in theory and practice. Some 14 units deal with important aspects of management such as the manager's role, planning and strategy, goal setting, motivation, communication, etc.

European Commission (2000), "Final report of the working group on risk prevention and crisis management", Structure of Operational Support for the European Voluntary Service (SOS), Directorate General Education and Culture, Brussels.

This report focuses very much on the EVS programme. However, the examples, the guidelines for solving problems and crises, and the manual-type structure make it a very good tool for those managing voluntary service activities at international level.

Faller K. et al. (1996), *Konflikte selber lösen. Mediation für Schule und Jugendarbeit*, Verlag an der Ruhr, Mülheim an der Ruhr.

An accessible practitioner's book with different frameworks and methods for training young people to deal with their own conflicts in a classroom or youth club situation. It is structured in eight topics that can be used separately in training sessions or in combination.

Fine N. and Macbeth F. (1992), *Playing with fire: training for the creative use of conflict*, Youth Work Press, London.

This is a fully integrated, easy-to-use training course. It provides a coherent set of methods and texts to use to explore conflicts in their different forms and how they affect our lives.

Gaskin K. and Smith J. D. (1995), *A new civic Europe: a study of the extent and role of volunteering*, Volunteer Centre UK, London.

Good background reading on volunteering. The study analyses the extent of volunteering in 10 European countries and provides interesting data in this respect.

Glasl F. (1999), *Konfliktmanagement: ein Handbuch für Führungskräfte, Beraterinnen und Berater*, Haupt, Bern.

A thick handbook on conflict management, explaining in detail the diagnostics of a conflict, the dynamics of conflict escalation, and theories and methods of conflict management.

Guggenberger B. (2000), *Jugend erneuert Gemeinschaft, Freiwilligendienste in Deutschland und Europa*, Nomos, Baden-Baden.

For people interested in a more scientific approach to the topic and for those able to read in German. In over 40 essays on more than 700 pages, different authors cover a wide range of interesting topics around voluntary service for young people: from the value of such programmes for society at large to the role of governments in this respect.

Handy C. (1997), *Understanding voluntary organisations: how to make them function effectively*, Penguin, London.

After reading this book, you will have the impression that you understand voluntary organisations. It provides a wide range of practical suggestions for making non-profit organisations work more efficiently and effectively. It discusses the people at work, but also the structures of organisations.

McCurley S. and Lynch R. (1998), *Essential volunteer management*, Directory of Social Change, London.

A clearly structured and readable guide for new volunteer managers, dealing with all aspects of having volunteers in your organisation: motivating volunteers, supervision, keeping volunteers, volunteer-staff relations, recruitment, screening and so on.

Mizek B. J. (1994), *Management of volunteers*, Support Centres International and Slovak Academic Information Agency, Bratislava.

A training manual on the management of volunteers.

National Centre for Volunteering (1999), *Safe and alert – Good practice advice on volunteers working with vulnerable clients*, NCV, London.

This guide, although catering mainly for UK organisations, has a lot of simple and ready-to-use practical advice for those who wish to make sure that their volunteers have what is necessary to provide "clients" with the right kind of "service".

Paige M. R. (1993), *Education for the intercultural experience*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth.

A collection of articles based on research arguing that you can and should prepare for a long-term stay abroad. They emphasise experiential learning and shed light on issues such as culture shock, intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural training and orientation, intercultural adjustment and re-entry.

Patfoort P. (1995), *Uprooting violence: building non-violence*, Cobblesmith, Woodstock NY.

This book explains with graphs and diagrams how we can counter the spiral of conflict escalation through a non-violent approach. Theory is illustrated with real-life examples from both interpersonal and group conflicts.

Schroeder K. (2009), *Use your hands to move ahead. Using practical tasks to increase the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in EVS projects*, SALTO Inclusion, Brussels. Available at: www.salto-youth.net/useyourhands.

A practical booklet on alternative educational pathways through EVS for young people with fewer opportunities. This educational manual focuses on more relevant hands-on task-sets for young people as opposed to the “traditional” volunteering in the socio-cultural sector.

Whitmore J. (1996), *Coaching for performance (people skills for professionals)*, Nicholas Brealey, Naperville IL/London.

The author that developed the GROW model for coaching volunteers. It points out the importance of coaching to increase the performance of personnel. Can be adapted for the voluntary sector.

Wroblewski C. J. (1994), *The seven Rs of volunteer development: a YMCA resource kit*, YMCA of the USA, Champaign IL.

An extensive manual that covers just about anything to do with working with volunteers (from an American and YMCA perspective). It is structured around the seven Rs: Reflection, Research, Readiness, Recruitment, Retention, Recognition and Resources. It comes in a practical ring folder. A very practical tool for organisations preparing to involve volunteers for the first time; it provides valuable advice, ready-to-use forms and guidelines for organisers of international voluntary service programmes.

Commented webography

www.cev.be

The website of the European Volunteer Centre has many publications, resources and policy documents about volunteering in Europe.

www.coe.int/youth

The website of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, with information on their educational programme, funding possibilities and international youth policy, also with many links to organisations in the youth field in Europe.

www.coe.int/ecri

The website of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has an education pack on informal intercultural education online (among other resources for anti-racism work), which could be a valuable source of methods for working on intercultural sensitivity with your volunteers.

www.energizeinc.com

A publishing house in the USA that focuses on books and other materials solely on volunteering, volunteer management and voluntary service. Not much on international dimensions of voluntary service.

www.nationalserviceresources.org

Tools and training for volunteer and service programmes. One of the online resources is: “Becoming a better supervisor: a resource guide for community service supervisors”. This is a great manual for supervisors of volunteers, available to download in PDF format.

www.eurodesk.org

Eurodesk has a sea of information about all kinds of European funding possibilities for different types of projects. It has a Europe-wide network of regional information offices where you can get more information.

www.ec.europa.eu/youth

This website brings you to the Youth in Action programme of the European Commission. You can find a variety of forms here to apply for funding and links to the national agencies that implement the Youth in Action programme in the different European countries.

www.ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm

This database contains information on all the organisations that are accredited for EVS. Each organisation is presented through a short description, its motivation and EVS experience, the themes of work and contact details. It also mentions whether the organisation offers possibilities for young people with fewer opportunities.

www.idealist.org

One of the biggest databases with volunteering opportunities worldwide. Organisations offering placements, seminars or events on volunteering can publish their information through this website (enlist online!).

www.independentsector.org

This website gives you statistical information about the situation of volunteering in the USA and documentation about volunteering in general.

www.salto-youth.net

SALTO-YOUTH is a network of resource centres supporting European priorities in the youth field, such as inclusion, diversity, participation and co-operation with neighbouring regions. SALTO has valuable online tools such as the Otlas partner-finding database, a toolbox for training and a training calendar.

<http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>

The website of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth has all the T-Kits online, as well as the trainers' magazine Coyote. It also hosts the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.

www.youthforum.org

This is the website of the European Youth Forum (EYF), which aims to give a political voice to young people in Europe through youth organisations. The website has links and descriptions of EYF member organisations, which are international non-governmental youth organisations and national youth councils in Europe. It also has various policy texts online.

The authors

Tony Geudens (tony@Geudens.com)

Tony Geudens (writing and editing) started his career as a volunteer. He spent a lot of his free time in Service Civil International, going on international work camps (former Yugoslavia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Japan) and also preparing volunteers for them. Tony currently works as a freelance copywriter and for the SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion resource centre in Brussels.

Peter Hofmann (peho@a1.net)

Peter Hofmann (writing) was involved with the AFS Intercultural Programmes in Austria for seven years after a year as an exchange student in England. He has studied history and political sciences in Vienna. He was in charge of the European Voluntary Service programme in the Austrian National Agency for Youth for Europe from 1996 to 1999. Having participated in the first Long-term Training for Trainers course funded by the YOUTH programme in 1999/2000, he now focuses on training at European level with a special emphasis on international voluntary service programmes. Since July 2001 he has been working as a freelance trainer based in Vienna.

Luis Amorim (amorim@freegates.be)

Luis Amorim (writing) currently co-ordinates the Community Philanthropy Initiative of the European Foundation Centre in Brussels. Previously, he worked as senior project manager for the Structure of Operational Support of the European Voluntary Service. He has also worked as education and mobility project officer for the European Youth Forum and as national director for Intercultura-AFS Portugal. He enjoys doing youth training activities because they keep him in touch with a group of people who question traditional assumptions and are not afraid of being idealistic.

Luba Pavlovova (lubica.pavlovova@mail.shmu.sk)

Luba Pavlovova (writing) lives in the Slovak Republic, but is of Bulgarian origin. She is a freelance trainer specialising in youth work in central and eastern Europe, especially in the field of vocational training and non-formal education. One of the many examples of her work is a town-twinning project on environment issues.

Simona Costanzo (simonacostanzo@yahoo.it)

Simona Costanzo (writing) has been fascinated by intercultural issues since an early age. She has taken part in and organised numerous voluntary service projects in various countries and acted as a representative of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations in the European Youth Forum. In her academic life she wrote her doctor's thesis in social geography on the effects of recent immigration from North Africa to the European Union. She is currently the director of CCIVS, the Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service, an NGO based at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

The T-kit series
(available in English and/or in French)

T-kit 1:
Organisational Management

T-kit 2:
Methodology in Language Learning

T-kit 3:
Project Management

T-kit 4:
Intercultural Learning

T-kit 5:
International Voluntary Service

T-kit 6:
Training Essentials

T-kit 7:
Under Construction – Citizenship, Youth and Europe

T-kit 8:
Social Inclusion

T-kit 9:
Funding and Financial Management

T-kit 10:
Educational Evaluation in Youth Work

T-kit 11:
Mosaic – The Training Kit for Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work

T-kit 12:
Youth Transforming Conflict

Sales agents for publications of the Council of Europe Agents de vente des publications du Conseil de l'Europe

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE

La Librairie Européenne -
The European Bookshop
Rue de l'Orme, 1
BE-1040 BRUXELLES
Tel.: +32 (0)2 231 04 35
Fax: +32 (0)2 735 08 60
E-mail: info@libeurop.eu
<http://www.libeurop.be>

Jean De Lannoy/DL Services
Avenue du Roi 202 Koningslaan
BE-1190 BRUXELLES
Tel.: +32 (0)2 538 43 08
Fax: +32 (0)2 538 08 41
E-mail: jean.de.lannoy@dl-servi.com
<http://www.jean-de-lannoy.be>

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/ BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE

Robert's Plus d.o.o.
Marka Marulića 2/V
BA-71000 SARAJEVO
Tel.: + 387 33 640 818
Fax: + 387 33 640 818
E-mail: robertsplus@bih.net.ba

CANADA

Renouf Publishing Co. Ltd.
22-1010 Polytek Street
CDN-OTTAWA, ONT K1J 9J1
Tel.: +1 613 745 2665
Fax: +1 613 745 7660
Toll-Free Tel.: (866) 767-6766
E-mail: order.dept@renoufbooks.com
<http://www.renoufbooks.com>

CROATIA/CROATIE

Robert's Plus d.o.o.
Marasovičeva 67
HR-21000 SPLIT
Tel.: + 385 21 315 800, 801, 802, 803
Fax: + 385 21 315 804
E-mail: robertsplus@robertsplus.hr

CZECH REPUBLIC/ RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

Suweco CZ, s.r.o.
Klecakova 347
CZ-180 21 PRAHA 9
Tel.: +420 2 424 59 204
Fax: +420 2 848 21 646
E-mail: import@suweco.cz
<http://www.suweco.cz>

DENMARK/DANEMARK

GAD
Vimmelskaftet 32
DK-1161 KØBENHAVN K
Tel.: +45 77 66 60 00
Fax: +45 77 66 60 01
E-mail: reception@gad.dk
<http://www.gad.dk>

FINLAND/FINLANDE

Akateeminen Kirjakauppa
PO Box 128
Keskuskatu 1
FI-00100 HELSINKI
Tel.: +358 (0)9 121 4430
Fax: +358 (0)9 121 4242
E-mail: akatilaus@akateeminen.com
<http://www.akateeminen.com>

FRANCE

La Documentation française
DILA – Administration des ventes
23 rue d'Estrées
CS10733
FR-75345 PARIS cedex 07
Tel.: +33 (0)1 40 15 70 00
Fax: +33 (0)1 40 15 70 01
E-mail: commande@ladocumentationfrancaise.fr
<http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr>

Librairie Kléber
1 rue des Francs-Bourgeois
FR-67000 STRASBOURG
Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 15 78 88
Fax: +33 (0)3 88 15 78 80
E-mail: librairie-kleber@coe.int
<http://www.librairie-kleber.com>

GERMANY/ALLEMAGNE AUSTRIA/AUTRICHE

W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co KG
Auf dem Esch 4
D-33619 BIELEFELD
Tel.: +49 521 91101 13
Fax: +49 521 91101 19
E-mail: uno-verlag@wbv.de
www.uno-verlag.de

GREECE/GRÈCE

Librairie Kauffmann s.a.
Stadiou 28
GR-105 64 ATHINA I
Tel.: +30 210 32 55 321
Fax.: +30 210 32 30 320
E-mail: ord@otenet.gr
<http://www.kauffmann.gr>

HUNGARY/HONGRIE

Euro Info Service
Pannónia u. 58.
PF. 1039
HU-1136 BUDAPEST
Tel.: +36 1 329 2170
Fax: +36 1 349 2053
E-mail: euroinfo@euroinfo.hu
<http://www.euroinfo.hu>

ITALY/ITALIE

Licosa SpA
Via Duca di Calabria, 1/1
IT-50125 FIRENZE
Tel.: +39 0556 483215
Fax: +39 0556 41257
E-mail: licosa@licosa.com
<http://www.licosa.com>

NORWAY/NORVÈGE

Akademika
Postboks 84 Blindern
NO-0314 OSLO
Tel.: +47 2 218 8100
Fax: +47 2 218 8103
E-mail: support@akademika.no
<http://www.akademika.no>

POLAND/POLOGNE

Ars Polona JSC
25 Obroncow Street
PL-03-933 WARSZAWA
Tel.: +48 (0)22 509 86 00
Fax: +48 (0)22 509 86 10
E-mail: arspolona@arspolona.com.pl
<http://www.arspolona.com.pl>

PORTUGAL

Marka Lda
Rua dos Correeiros 61-3
PT-1100-162 LISBOA
Tel: 351 21 3224040
Fax: 351 21 3224044
Web: www.marka.pt
E mail: apoio.clientes@marka.pt

RUSSIAN FEDERATION/ FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE

Ves Mir
17b, Butlerova ul. - Office 338
RU-117342 MOSCOW
Tel.: +7 495 739 0971
Fax: +7 495 739 0971
E-mail: orders@vesmirbooks.ru
<http://www.vesmirbooks.ru>

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE

Planetis Sàrl
16 chemin des Pins
CH-1273 ARZIER
Tel.: +41 22 366 51 77
Fax: +41 22 366 51 78
E-mail: info@planetis.ch

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI

The Stationery Office Ltd
PO Box 29
GB-NORWICH NR3 1GN
Tel.: +44 (0)870 600 5522
Fax: +44 (0)870 600 5533
E-mail: book.enquiries@tso.co.uk
<http://www.tsoshop.co.uk>

UNITED STATES and CANADA/ ÉTATS-UNIS et CANADA

Manhattan Publishing Co
670 White Plains Road
USA-10583 SCARSDALE, NY
Tel: + 1 914 472 4650
Fax: +1 914 472 4316
E-mail: coe@manhattanpublishing.com
<http://www.manhattanpublishing.com>

Council of Europe Publishing/Editions du Conseil de l'Europe

FR-67075 STRASBOURG Cedex

Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 81 – Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 10 – E-mail: publishing@coe.int – Website: <http://book.coe.int>



International voluntary service

In 1998, the Council of Europe and the European Commission decided to take common action in the field of youth. Both institutions initiated a partnership agreement with the aim “to promote active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension”.

In 2003, additional agreements were signed in the fields of “youth research” and “Euro-Mediterranean youth co-operation”. Since 2005, the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth activities have focused on the following topics: European citizenship, human rights education and intercultural dialogue, quality and recognition of youth work and training, better understanding and knowledge of youth and youth policy development.

The partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth brings together the two institutions’ experience in non-formal education, youth policy, youth research and youth work practice. Activities organised within its framework gather representatives of those areas who share their knowledge and experience for the benefit of enhancing evidence-based policy, practice, quality and recognition of youth work and training.

Results and other material are made available on the partnership website (<http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>) and in various publications, including the Training Kits (T-Kits).

T-Kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers and experts and constitute easy-to-use handbooks for educational activities.

All activities and publications enhance the exchange of experience and good practice between the actors involved and contribute to the implementation of the political objectives of both partner institutions.

<http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>
youth-partnership@partnership-eu.coe.int

www.coe.int

*The **Council of Europe** has 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. Ever since it was founded in 1949, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Council of Europe has symbolised reconciliation.*

*The **European Union** is a unique economic and political partnership between 27 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens — in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).*

ISBN 978-92-871-7660-8



€12/US\$24

<http://book.coe.int>
Council of Europe Publishing