

## d) Summary of the "hot issues" discussions and feedback of monitoring group

### *Summary of group discussions*

#### **\*\*\* PARTNERSHIP**

Partnership between NGOs means a formal agreement between two or more parties that have agreed to work together in order to achieve common purposes or goals.

***The process of partnership can face many obstacles:***

According to my group, there are many obstacles of building partnerships between Meda and European NGOs:

- One of the main *obstacles* is that there is no balance of *power between* all these actors of partnership and especially when we talk about partnership between a Euro organization and a Mediterranean organization.
- There is no bond of trust and demonstrate openness, lack of honesty among the actors of these organizations.
- The lack of communication between a team, for consensus and consultation. The result of these obstacles is misunderstood of the expectations and limits of each partner.
- Most of case we find that there is no Share of power, risks nor responsibilities. So as a result of that the European NGO has the authority to decide because it has the power to apply in many cases.

***Some suggestions which might solve these obstacles are:***

- Making some seminars in Mediterranean countries not only in Europe
- Establishing PBAs which can be a strategy to define the expectations, the role and responsibilities of each partner.**
- Establishing and developing networks for more data information's about the NGOs' activities and missions.

#### **\*\*\* INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

**Integration, adaptation, communication, religion**

##### **Why it's hot?**

- cultural shock
- don't know each other and what to expect
- different level of English language, as a working language – misunderstandings
- global world
- religion – for some people is not comfortable to talk about it
- lack of understanding comes unexpected and surprising
- communication problems
- habits
- if it is in small village/or in the big town (depends on the background of the volunteer)
- free time problem

##### **Example from practice:**

- different level of self-managing of the volunteer – wish to be leaded or to be more free (connected with educational system in the home country), taking the responsibility
- the volunteer doesn't want to ask again about the task/issues even that he didn't understand it

##### **Solutions:**

- PREPARATION PHASE – for all partners – volunteers, SO, HO, NA,
- better planning, information, data base of volunteers' experience
  - dialogue
  - keep clarify till everything gets clear

ALL THE PHASES: supplied with the necessary " ingredients" for successful and joyful growing of the project, the volunteer, the organizations. Support!

All the phases are important but for intercultural understanding the preparation one and the very beginning of the voluntary service of the youngster are of utmost importance. As well

all the partners have their roles and they must be clear and the communication between them must be clear, regular and fruitful.

### \*\*\* EVS AWARENESS IN MEDA COUNTRIES

Hot Issue	Solution
Less information about EVS in Meda Countries	Multipliers, Workshops, Seminars, Training Courses, media coverage, website in different languages: Arabic, French and English..
To make sure the volunteer will be back home. Other: visa issues. Other: less information about EVS in the Embassies.	Good Cooperation between sending and hosting organizations. Easier process. More information about EVS to be available.
Lack of information about the Value of the voluntary service between the Youth in Meda Countries and about the EVS/ EuroMed programs/ Voluntary work between the parents/ families.	Direct contact with youth / volunteers for increasing the awareness (at the schools, universities, organizations, clubs ...etc). Previous visit for the hosting organization by the volunteer to avoid any culture shock.
Long process to the EVS : Applications, approvals, visa approvals, etc.	Easier process and less steps to start the EVS.

### \*\*\* PROFILE AND SELECTION OF THE VOLUNTEER

The discussion inside our group was dedicated to see how we can select the right EVS volunteer for the right EVS project.

The group confirms that the respect of the following points is very important to reach the goal of selecting the best volunteers.

#### **Expectations and motivation of volunteers**

Participants should understand their role as volunteers, to explore their own expectations, and what will be expected of them. They should be given clear guidance on their minimum rights and responsibilities and on the support they can draw upon.

#### **Practical and technical information**

At the sending organization, the volunteers have to get a pre-departure preparation where he is going to know about insurance, pocket money, working hours, rights of the volunteer etc...

#### **EVS Charter -Roles and responsibilities of main EVS actors**

The volunteer has to agree and sign the acceptance of the EVS charter, acceptance of his roles, tasks, responsibilities and his rights.

#### **Intercultural Learning**

Intercultural learning should equip volunteers with an understanding of the processes of living full-time in another culture, and provide them with strategies for dealing with the effects.

#### **Crisis management and problem solving**

The potential volunteer has to show competencies of ability to solve problems that he may face during his EVS project.

#### **Personal Competencies**

- Flexibility, responsibility, patience, maturity.
- Common sense and assertion.
- Strong motivations.
- Be sociable so as to be able to work with the Group circle in his project.
- Be able to initiate programs and initiatives according to the aims of the project.

#### **Selection Procedure**

- Prepare an application form where main of the personal questions and volunteer background, and his motivations...

- Fill in applications which will be the assessment/ selection in close co-operation with the host organization.
- Check the Motivations of the volunteers.
- Estimate the ability of the volunteers to fit in the project.
- estimate how the project can fulfill the expectations of the volunteers.
- offering possibilities to young people with fewer opportunities

### **\*\*\* PREPARATION OF THE VOLUNTEER**

#### **Why it's hot issue?**

- 1-Source of all problems
- 2-You never knew in advance how the volunteer will act/react during the project

#### **Examples/solutions**

- \* Good communication between partners: we send volunteers to host origination we are ready met in seminars, TC, ...etc),
  - always fund the APV not just for short term
- \* preparation center in each country
  - reinforce prep/adapt preparation for volunteers who are going to Meda countries
- \*share and collaborate tools to follow up during the all process of the EVS
- \*preparation is between all partners
  - 1-sending organization
  - 2- volunteer
  - 3- local communities in sending and hosting organization

### **\*\*\* FINANCIAL ISSUES**

Financial issues were represented as "heart" as it is the heart of all issues and projects.

#### **Four main obstacles/ problems were identified;**

- o Different economic levels among different countries
- o Late payment
- o Non-transparent financial policy by the NAs and EMYUs
- o Insufficient information

Those obstacles were represented as heavy burden on the heart jeopardizing the heart to sink down!

#### **To overcome those obstacles, four solutions were proposed:**

- o Practical training about proposals writing and reporting particularly the financial part
- o Transparent funding policy
- o Punctuality in payment

Dedicating extra amount of money for more expensive countries

## *Feedback of the monitoring group*

### **Intercultural understanding** (Rosa Ferreira – Portuguese NA)

The issues that have been pointed out as potential problems within a EUROMED EVS project are the following.

-Intercultural understanding can be influenced by different things such as not to know better each other and what the others are expecting from one another. Because expectations and understanding is depending on a lot of cultural codes, that means there must not be any lack of understanding and every point should be discussed between partners in order to avoid any unexpected surprise.

But there is also something that has to be taken into account, and it is the fact that English language is the most speaking language. As a consequence it can generate misunderstanding because we both work with different level of skills in this English...

- Communication:

Religion, habits, different traditions can generate a cultural choc that is the reason why communication is a key element among partners and volunteers. Indeed, some volunteers do not feel comfortable to talk about problems and this can have repercussions on well being, crisis management – see partnership workshop-

The solutions proposed by the group were working on a better planning, which include APV, sharing information among the partners, to have a consultation from NA/EMYU before the application is submitted. They also proposed creating a data base with volunteers experience for help the newcomers.

Portuguese NA adding: collaboration and cooperation is the key point to develop a good project, and communication between all partners (5) is compulsory to avoid any surprise.

### **Partnership** (Salima Boudoukha– French NA)

Three main difficulties that have been stressed out, these issues are concerning:

- the balance of power between programme countries and MEDA countries

Indeed participants pointed out that only one participant is funded, and as the EuroMed youth IV is not launched, only programme countries can be directly funded under youth in action programme. This situation can lead to difficulties within the partnership because the one that is not funded is depending on the other one.

- Finding partners reliable and sustainable

And this is a key element because the quality of a project depends on these factors.

- The Communication between partners

The communication has to be considered as an essential point in the strengthening of the partnership, but this raise questions such as: how to communicate when NGO' are so distant? Or when countries have such different specificity in terms of culture? And when in can still have an influence on the project? Etc.

The different solutions brought by participants were to use more and more the so called "Partnership Building Activities" in its most extended definition that means:

- Contact making seminars, Communication and Information New Technologies tools (Skype, facebook, etc.)
- databases of NGOs who participate in a granted EuroMed project, former volunteers
- seminar in Meda and not only programme countries

French NA was adding: the influence of cultural differences is more and more pointed out as a key element in the crisis management and well being of volunteers, but also in the partnership. It seems that volunteers coming from or to MEDA and NGOs need a specific preparation to ensure that the EVS project will go on in a good and stable way. The difficulties that may be repercussions of these cultural differences can be summed up as

## **Preparation of EVS project**

During this workshop, it has been observed that preparation should be viewed from 2 different levels:

### ➤ At the Volunteer level

It has been stressed that the lack of contacts between partners before the start of the project can lead to a lot of difficulty. As an illustration, some NGOs do not communicate with their partners about the special needs, tempered person the volunteer is, so that the hosting organisation can cope with this features as best as it can.

Concerning, the volunteer & NGOs themselves, it has been noticed that volunteers and NGOs were not properly trained to the specificities of hosting/be hosted in a MEDA country when it is an EU volunteer – e.g. dress codes, Ramadan- or when it is MEDA volunteer in an EU country – space to pray, girl and boys mixed, etc.- what to do or not to do?

### ➤ At the organisation of the EVS project level:

For a better preparation of the EVS project; NGOs observed that there is no interested person in helping the volunteers getting the visa. In order to avoid this difficulty, embassies should be informed of what is EVS and volunteer should be guided by the sending organisation in order to fulfil and succeed in the administrative procedures -and sometimes burden- that getting a visa is.

There is also a very important point concerning the local community/ organization because they do not appropriate EVS hosting maybe because they were not informed of the fact that a EU volunteer will come. Anyway, it seems important that the hosting organisation informs, promotes and prepare the local community to host someone who does not have the same cultural background.

MEDA NGOs also added specifically that it could be interesting – because needed - to create a Volunteers Centre, a space independent from EMYU, to deal with EVS related questions.

## **Financial Issues** (Katrine Daviknes – Norwegian NA)

Most of the observation and feedback of this workshop are related with real example of faced situations.

The unequal economical situation has been pointed out as an issue because funding rules are made according to the standards of livings and there is a lot of difference from a country to another. Participants proposed to be more flexible toward this issue in matching economical status extra money to support volunteers going to expensive countries. The Norwegian NA propose to use – if the volunteer is YWLO - the exceptional costs:

e.g. a Palestinian volunteer coming to Norway, he/she does not have enough money to afford specific clothes – lower temperatures-. In this case it is possible to use the budget post “exceptional costs” to have extra money and buy these clothes.

Another solution pointed out is the co-funding, it consists in the hosting organisation adding to the volunteer allowance extra money or to ask local authority, different partners to provide additional funding.

Concerning the delay in payments and NAs instalment:

in the financial agreement and in the programme guide it is quoted that the payment has to be done within 45 days – when application complete-

Concerning the delay in payments and partner’s division of grant and instalment:

The key document is the activity agreement detailing the division of grant, and partners have to agree on when it has to be installed by the funded organisation.

The group also observed that there should be more transparent financial policy and proposed practical training of applicants as a solution.

## **Profile of the volunteer** (Peter Markov – Bulgarian NA)

The group was discussing how to balance needs of hosting NGOs with needs of EVS volunteers. They proposed to have personal interviews with the volunteers face to face and also use the planning visit as a tool to ensure they have the same expectations.

Another issue was the obstacles that youth with fewer opportunities meets because they will have difficulties with expressing themselves, finding information and also with the mobility. They also wanted information about how many projects involving youth with fewer opportunities which has been granted.

Another issue was the motivation of the volunteers and motivation of the organisations involved in the project. Some of the participants had experience with lack of motivated volunteers who wants to go abroad. They also had a discussion about how to choose the right volunteer for the right project.

The group spoke about how to integrate EVS criteria / priorities like European citizenship with Meda countries. The emphasis should in this case be on citizenship in general.