

# INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE



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PARTNERSHIP

COUNCIL OF EUROPE & EUROPEAN COMMISSION

TRAINING-YOUTH

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**T-Kit**  
on  
**International  
Voluntary Service**

## Welcomme to the T-Kit series

*Some of you may have wondered: what does T-kit mean? We can offer at least two answers. The first is as simple as the full version in English: "Training Kit". The second has more to do with the sound of the word that may easily recall "Ticket", one of the travelling documents we usually need to go on a journey. So, on the cover, the little figure called "Spiffy" holds a train ticket to go on a journey to discover new ideas. In our imagination, this T-kit is a tool that each of us can use in our work. 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 has been the result of a one-year 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 Agreement on European Youth Worker Training run by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Besides the T-kits, the partnership between the two institutions has resulted in other areas of co-operation such as training courses, the magazine "Coyote" and a dynamic internet site.*

*To find out more about developments in the partnership (new publications, training course announcements, etc.) or to download the electronic version of the T-kits, visit the Partnership web site: [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net).*

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# Introduction



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*"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, etc.) 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 an 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 a voluntary and unpaid contribution of 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. We will describe a number of framework conditions, which contribute to a successful voluntary service project. The T-kit 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.

Given the limited number of pages, we were obliged to narrow down the focus of this T-kit. In the framework of the Partnership between the council of europe and the european Commission for Training and Youth (European Partnership for Training and Youth), we will mainly cater for a European audience, even though most of the described principles also count in national or inter-continental 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 six 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 a 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.

The concrete implementation of an IVS project will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 will address issues related to planning the project, describing who the actors are and their responsibilities (2.1). It gives an overview of the specific project cycle of an







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International Voluntary Service (2.2). Last but not least it gives some attention as to where to 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 which 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 if they arise (4.4). Chapter 5 gives suggestions as to 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 also ideas for follow-up arising from the voluntary service abroad will be commented on (5.2). And increasingly on the agenda of different institutions is the recognition and certification of such non-formal learning experiences (5.3).

Chapter 6 aims to bring up topics that are often forgotten or discarded. What about organising an IVS for young people who normally would not have the opportunity to do so (6.1)? Did you take gender into account when planning your International Voluntary Service (6.2)? And do not forget to recognise and fight the obstacles to mobility (6.3). And even if you think that crises only happen to others, it still does not hurt to be prepared for them (6.4).

In the appendices you can find additional resources to these different chapters. Appendix 1 gives you the definitions of some of the key words that the authors of this t-kit uses. Appendix 2 gives an overview of different organisations and their IVS programmes, and their contacts of course. Last but not least Appendix 3 provides you with suggestions for further reading if this T-kit gave you the taste for more...

Get inspired!

# 1. The concept of International Voluntary Service



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## 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 made between these words and the main issues underlining these concepts.

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 different tasks such as collecting garbage in a park, helping young children with their homework, etc.

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.

So like “volunteering”, “voluntary service” is also spontaneous, based on individual free will and unpaid (although, sometimes, some form of financial compensation may be foreseen for costs occurred). 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 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

In this T-kit we will be talking about International Voluntary Service (IVS). So one dimension determining a 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 as well a disaster if not well-prepared. The intercultural dimension can, however, also be present in a project at a national 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, it will mainly focus on the intercultural dimension in European initiatives.

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).





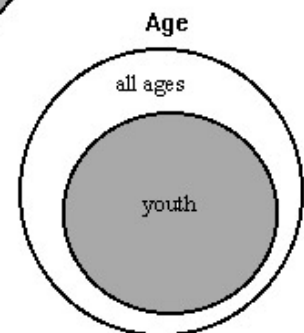
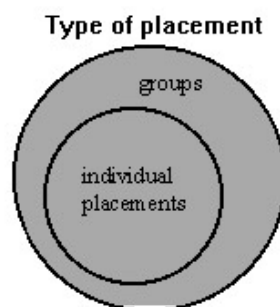
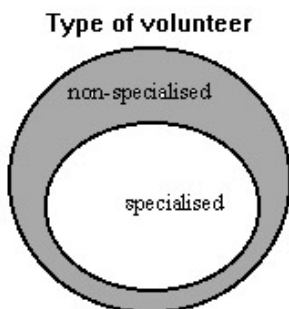
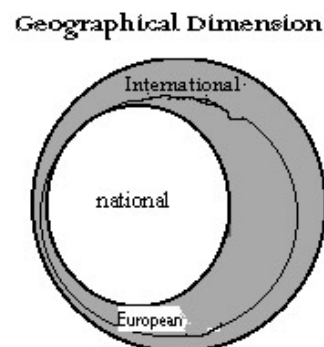
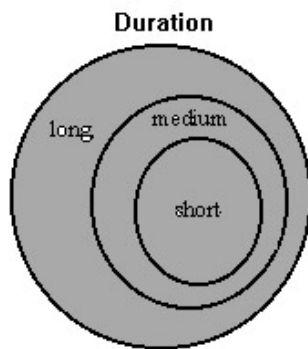
In the framework of the “European Partnership for Training and Youth”, we will mainly be talking about IVS programmes for young people. The age definition of “youth” varies from one organisation and country to another. Usually 18 years is the lower age limit, because of the legal responsibility of the project organisers for younger participants. 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.

Depending on their focus, voluntary service organisations can work with non-specialised volunteers or professional volunteers. 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 like “Youth Action for Peace” or “International Cultural Youth Exchange” 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.

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.

## Dimensions of voluntary service





## 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 is a means of building human bridges across deep trenches torn up by the war and 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, etc.

At the same time most of the national governments in Europe were trying to develop compulsory service programmes for young men, the simple reason being that the peace treaties after the first world war prohibited compulsory military service and the governments still wanted to "educate" their young men according to national values and strengthen their national identity. However, due to international opposition none of the European countries were able to implement such a programme.

This tension between governmental versus private initiative and voluntary versus compulsory service is like a red line all the way through the history of youth service programmes up to today.

#### 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 lead to bonds and friendship across national boundaries and consequently 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 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 which have remained valid up to today.

However, in the beginning of the thirties 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 for 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 a voluntary service for up to twenty 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.

#### After 1945: civil society slowly taking over

The situation in 1945 was very similar to the one twenty-seven years earlier in terms of people in need, necessary rebuilding, the need





for new bridges between nations, etc. 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, etc. Later on, with the student protests and demonstrations in 1968, there was a strong movement to develop a political profile within most voluntary service NGOs. Lectures and discussions were introduced in the work camps and they co-operated, for example, with anti-nuclear power movements or peace initiatives.

After a few years of preoccupation with reconstruction in most European countries the discussion on compulsory military service resumed again. By 1955 most countries in Europe had 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 an alternative “civil service” for the good of the community. In most countries, however, the service for the community took place under less favourable conditions – it was longer, involved more working hours, got less financial support, etc. With the first postwar 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 (see also Chapter 1.3.2 Current discussions).

### 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 the 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](http://www.coe.int)).

Since the beginning of the 1990s the European Commission has funded International Voluntary Service projects for young people within the framework of the “Youth for Europe” programme. In 1996 they established the “European Voluntary Service” (EVS) programme which offers financial support for primarily long-term voluntary service projects for young people (between 18 and 25) within the European Union member states. Since 2000 it also offers volunteering opportunities for and in the pre-accession countries (see also Chapter 2.3.2 Funders and funding possibilities).

### Suggestion for training

In the course of preparation for a 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 according to the following questions:

- What kind 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 a 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 contribute to the development of the intercultural sensitivity of the volunteer while abroad





Last but not least the “Association of Voluntary Service Organisations” should be mentioned here as the major private umbrella organisation of international NGOs in this field. In 1989 a few of the major International Voluntary Service NGOs established a “steering group” to indicate and describe barriers to international voluntary service at the national and international level and to work together towards the elimination of these obstacles.

You can find details on all mentioned organisations in Appendix 2.

### 1.3.2 Current discussions

There are currently two major political discussions in western European countries about voluntary work. On the one hand there is the discussion about the role of volunteers in the provision of social welfare, which is normally provided by the governments. Secondly there is the delicate relation between voluntary work and the labour market. In the limited space of this T-kit we want to make representatives active in the field of International Voluntary Service aware of these political discussions and their potential role in it.

#### The role of volunteers in the provision of social welfare

With the abolition of compulsory military service, a lot of countries (such as the UK, France and Belgium) were confronted with the challenge of compensating for the past contribution of big numbers of “conscientious objectors” to the social welfare system. Central to this discussion is the question of setting up governmental community service programmes for young people – voluntary or even compulsory – to deal with the human resource shortfall in the social welfare system.

Voluntary service programmes contribute to the functioning of the social welfare system, even though not intended as such by the organisers. If you added up all the volunteer contributions and translated this time into economic value you would end up with an enormous figure. Governments largely depend on the volunteer contributions to their social welfare system. Political discussions show that there is limited willingness to finance all the human resources needed for the social welfare system. That is why governments realise they need “active citizens” who give time, energy and resources to the community at large.

The United Kingdom/Great Britain is a good example of this as the government in the

“Thatcher era” exploited the tradition of volunteering and dramatically downsized the social welfare system. Nowadays the enormous contribution of volunteer programmes and organisations, as well as the educational value for the volunteers themselves, is well acknowledged by the government. In 2000 they even launched a big national voluntary community service programme called Millennium Volunteers ([www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk](http://www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk)). In other countries similar governmental community service programmes are being developed, even though 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 – you either work or you are in education. As a consequence the status

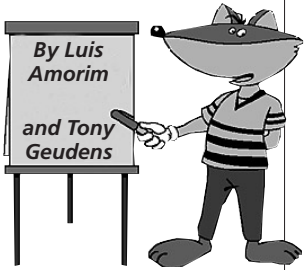
#### Questions for reflection

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

- Do your volunteers potentially take away paid jobs? 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 professional qualifications? How do you follow up on that?
- Is voluntary service a means of supporting the integration of young people into the labour market?
- What is the role of governments *vis-à-vis* private voluntary service programmes?
- Are there any laws in connection with voluntary work in general or International Voluntary Service?



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of volunteers is very shaky (for example for taxes or for social security). Different organisations and countries are pushing for legislation concerning the status of volunteers. Germany for example, provides legal status to volunteers doing their *Freiwillige Soziale Jahr* (Voluntary Social Year) or a European Voluntary Service.

### Take a stand and take some action:

- Collect information on the current debate in your country about any plans to abolish compulsory military service.
- Develop a stand, a position in the current debate reflecting your experience. Talk with volunteers and staff colleagues in your organisation about this.
- Discover who the stakeholders are at the political level and their position in this discussion.
- Talk to other organisations in the wider field: other NGOs organising voluntary service programmes, organisations lobbying for conscientious objectors, social welfare providers, etc.
- Build little networks; it can help to lobby the government when they are planning any legislation on IVS or voluntary work in general.

## 1.4 Reasons for International Voluntary Service

### Are you an idealist or a pragmatist?

Different people and organisations will have diverging 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 not only important 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)

Spectrum C-E	I do not agree	I agree
Voluntary service, as the word says, is there to serve others in need	<input type="radio"/> 1 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 5	
Doing voluntary service is making a political statement about society, showing what is lacking (social care, help to communities in need, etc.)	<input type="radio"/> 1 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 5	
Voluntary service is a good preparation to get a better job	<input type="radio"/> 5 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 1	
Voluntary service is an altruistic philosophy of life	<input type="radio"/> 1 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 5	
Voluntary projects look good on your CV	<input type="radio"/> 5 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 1	
Spectrum O-P	I do not agree	I agree
Volunteers are extra motivated hands for a project	<input type="radio"/> 1 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 5	
It is important that volunteers learn something new during their voluntary service	<input type="radio"/> 5 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 1	
Volunteers are the most important actors in a voluntary service	<input type="radio"/> 5 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 1	
Event though they are volunteers, they still need to do a good and efficient job	<input type="radio"/> 1 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 5	
Voluntary service has to provide the volunteer with enriching experiences	<input type="radio"/> 5 - <input type="radio"/> 4 - <input type="radio"/> 3 - <input type="radio"/> 2 - <input type="radio"/> 1	
<b>Total points:</b>		

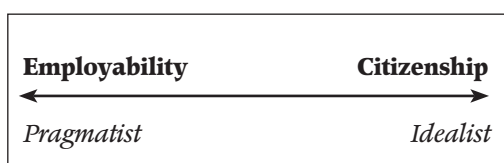
Sum up the points associated with the circles of your answers. If your score is above 40, you are most likely an "idealist", if you reach less than 20 you are probably a "pragmatist". Read more about these profiles below.



The following profiles describe extremes of different dimensions. Most organisations represent a mix of both 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 versus Citizenship



#### • Idealists

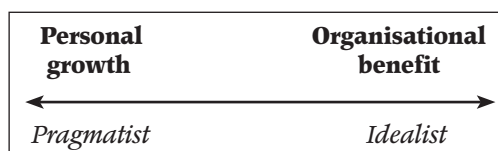
These organisations will put the accent on citizenship as the reason why they run International Voluntary Service. Citizenship in this sense is understood as the active participation of individuals in society, a form of commitment not only to others but also to the community in general. Organisations 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. Employability 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 and make it easier for them to find jobs.

### Spectrum Personal growth versus 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 will 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 also 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 will try in this chapter to give an overview of different fields of work. The various projects cannot easily be subdivided as 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.

### Social projects

In social projects volunteers work with persons facing difficulties. Projects can be centred around work with refugees, minorities, children, elderly people or disadvantaged youth. Examples include the organisation of play schemes for children in poor urban areas, creative activities with elderly people, etc. Art is often used as a tool to develop activities with the given beneficiaries. Other projects focus more on a certain theme (for example environment, cultural heritage,...) but include participants with special needs (see also Chapter 6.1 Voluntary service for "disadvantaged young people").

### Some inspiration from Raval Pluricultural:

The project "Raval Pluricultural" 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 facilitates a process which raises the youngsters' awareness of their own identity while learning to respect the difference of the others and the richness of multiculturalism. Between the work camps, which take place during the summertime, a series of activities carried out with local volunteers crystallise the work. Activities have included an exhibition of paintings made 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 "convivencia" 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 within areas of cities where the classical method of police control is not appropriate anymore.

Contact: SCI Catalunya:  
sci@pangea.org <http://www.pangea.org/sci>

### Environmental projects

Many organisations are engaged in the protection of the natural environment through the creation of biotopes, planting of trees, cleaning of rivers and the sea or the construction of educational paths in a protected environment. Environmental projects may also focus on methods for waste reduction and creative ways of recycling. The projects raise the awareness of the participants, the local population and visitors of the richness of the nature surrounding them and the necessity to protect it.



### ***Some inspiration from Legambiente***

The Italian organisation Legambiente, specialised in environmental volunteering, each year organises an environmental awareness-raising day. In 2001, for example, 400 000 volunteers from Italy cleaned selected beaches in a collective effort to fight the growing pollution of the Mediterranean Sea and its surroundings and to foster an environmental consciousness. About 3 000 diving volunteers are also engaged in underwater cleaning actions at 150 sites. Locally various EVS volunteers participated in the action as part of their service. Over the years many municipalities have taken over the daily responsibilities, inspired by the example given by the organisation.

**Contact:**  
[legambiente.vol@tiscalinet.it](mailto:legambiente.vol@tiscalinet.it)  
[www.legambiente.com](http://www.legambiente.com)

### **Educational projects and professional training**

All projects include educational elements to some extent. Educational projects are explicitly aimed at disseminating a skill or to raise awareness about certain issues (for example health, 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 (for example pottery workshops, sharing agricultural skills, etc.). Products resulting from such projects can add an additional source of income.

### ***Some inspiration from the "ABC with Carlitos"***

This community-based educational project in Honduras aims at the creation of "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 are also engaged in fundraising activities for the centres. Some ludotheques are based at schools, others are linked to the municipality. The activities of the centres and the success achieved depend largely on the commitment and effort of the volunteers.

**Contact:**  
[icye@icye.org](mailto:icye@icye.org) [www.icye.org](http://www.icye.org)

### **Emergency action, prevention and reconstruction**

Some organisations are specialised in intervention after human-made and natural disasters. They tend to work with local stand-by volunteers who are familiar with the actions to take and get frequent training. Short-term international volunteers can contribute in this field to activities related to the 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 related to food, sanitation and the psychological care of the victims.

### ***Some inspiration from Concordia***

Reconstruction after the storm. Various projects and work camps have been organised by the French organisation Concordia after a devastating storm in 1999 in order to clean national parks and reconstruct public infrastructure. The volunteers worked under the guidance of the park authorities after the most dangerous situations were under control.

**Contact:**  
[concordia@wanadoo.fr](mailto:concordia@wanadoo.fr)  
[www.concordia-association.org](http://www.concordia-association.org)



### Rural development and renovation

Many rural communities, especially in less developed countries, suffer from a lack of infrastructure. Volunteers help to alleviate this situation through the construction of simple latrines to prevent diseases, wells to provide clean drinking water or the construction of schools. Projects in rural areas are often accompanied by educational elements at the same time. Renovation projects are also common in industrialised countries. Projects of this type usually focus on the renovation or improvement of run down public buildings. Groups of international volunteers together with school students can paint murals in schools, repair furniture which has been destroyed or create a sports field together.

#### *Some inspiration from UNA Exchange*

Since 1995 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 open historic footpaths (used for access to work, pilgrimages, moving animals) to provide a tourist network along with information boards which recall the past history of the area. This has multiple beneficial effects: improving public access, encouraging tourism and the local economy, raising awareness of the local heritage as well as conservation of the built and natural environment.

**Contact:**  
[unaexchange@btinternet.com](mailto:unaexchange@btinternet.com)  
[www.unaexchange.org](http://www.unaexchange.org)

### 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 their different daily life realities. 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 of such a project.

#### *Some inspiration from the Mostar Intercultural Festival MIFOC*

This project is implemented by a network of two French and nine local organisations. Originating in the organisation of an intercultural festival, the project has three pillars: European exchanges, local social action to build up civil society and the festival. The French organisations also run a number of awareness-raising activities with volunteers in France in order to inform the public about the situation in the region.

**Contact:**  
[mostarinterculturalfestival@yahoo.com](mailto:mostarinterculturalfestival@yahoo.com)  
[www.kolaps.org](http://www.kolaps.org)

### 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 the awareness of the participants as well as of 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 (transmittance of traditional knowledge and handcrafts).

#### *Some inspiration from Union Rempart*

The French organisation Union Rempart every year restores historical 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 the restoration of the foundations of the castle.

**Contact:**  
[contact@rempart.com](mailto:contact@rempart.com) [www.rempart.com/](http://www.rempart.com/)

## 2. Planning an International Voluntary Service



### 2.1 The actors

In this T-kit we will consider three main actors within an IVS. The persons 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 steps deemed necessary in order 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 of time the volunteers return to their own country again and hopefully do something with the experience they had abroad.

#### 2.1.1 The volunteers

The volunteers are the key actors in an IVS. They are the persons that contribute of their own free will to a certain project, with their energy, ideas and active participation. Depending on the reasons for your IVS (see Chapter 1.4 Reasons for International Voluntary Service) the volunteers and volunteering can be considered as a tool 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 to embark on an IVS entails a bit of both. Important for the voluntary service organisers is to check if 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 genuine 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 in order to gain valuable skills which can serve as a springboard to a brighter future. On the one side volunteers can be self-determined young people that

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 in order to foster self-esteem and social skills in the young people they are working with (see also Chapter 6.1 Voluntary service for “disadvantaged young people”).

Or it could be you...

#### 2.1.2 The sending organisation

A young person is thinks about doing an IVS. The easiest way of developing this possibility is to contact an organisation in his or her country which either has international links or could establish them (see also Chapter 3.1 Finding the right partners for your project). This local organisation could take care of all procedures necessary to send the volunteers to a partner organisation in another country (and to welcome them back). Therefore we call this local entity the sending organisation.

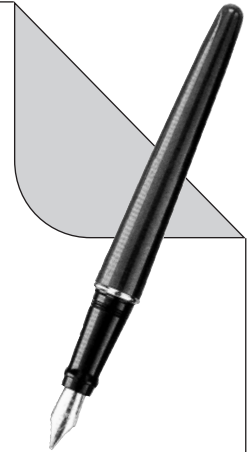
We have to point out that there is not always an active sending organisation involved in IVS projects, or sometimes there is no sending organisation at all. Some IVS organisations (for example United Nations Volunteers) ask to apply directly for a volunteer position within a concrete project. Even though this is possible, it is not the most ideal situation since the volunteers themselves then have to take care of all the preparatory steps regarding matters 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 could promote the values of the IVS. They could propagate 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 3.1 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 the projects.
- The sending organisation should act as a filter in the recruitment process of volunteers in order 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 3.2 Recruitment and screening of volunteers). Of course the sending organisation needs to collect sufficient information on the conditions at the hosting organisation in order 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 3.1.2 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 can be information directly linked to the IVS as mentioned above (accommodation, work, food etc.), but also linked to the needs or wishes of the volunteer (wheelchair accessibility, possibility to practice sports, etc.).
- The sending organisation has the responsibility to prepare the volunteers and check their motivation and expectations for embarking on the 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 a preparation is required (see also Chapter 3.3.1 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 would 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 [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)).
- In the case of problems, the sending organisation could 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 6.4 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.







- Upon the return of the volunteers the sending organisation could organise an evaluation seminar or meeting, which could help the volunteers to review their experiences and exchange information with other volunteers (see also Chapter 5.1 Evaluation).
- Perhaps the sending organisation could 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 funding for the sending of the volunteers, for the international contacts, for preparation of the volunteers before leaving and for follow-up after their return (see also Chapter 2.3 Funding and budgeting).
- An evaluation of the co-operation between the two partner organisations should be made after each project.
- It is important to document all important information regarding the project (in a project file) both for the long- and short-term IVS.

A sending organisation could be any non-profit organisation working in a variety of fields ranging from environmental organisations to youth clubs, from medical institutes to municipalities. It can be either a non-governmental or a governmental organisation (local authorities etc.). It can be an organisation that is part of an international network of voluntary service organisations who 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 life time.

Or it could be your organisation...

### 2.1.3 The hosting organisation

Once the 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 already before). This can reduce to a large extent the anxiety for the unknown and increase the volunteers' self-assurance. At the same time, it allows the volunteers 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, the work they will be doing, etc., 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 would be useful.
- The hosting organisation is mostly also held responsible for ensuring the safety and security of volunteers, so make sure that the volunteers are working in an adapted working environment which 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 6.4 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 (such as suggestions for excursions, meeting people etc.). In the case of a 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, etc. (see also Chapter 4.3 Ongoing support of volunteers).
- In order to make the most out of a voluntary service for all involved, it is useful to have a system for regular monitoring and evaluation. When the hosting organisation carries out regular assessments of the volunteers, their work, their personal life etc., 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 prepare a certificate for the volunteers at the end of their IVS which details the work they have done, the skills they have gained or a type of letter of recommendation from their supervisors or from the director. This does not only boost confidence but 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 the different tasks that it is supposed to carry out. This should include money for administration and communication costs, for necessary equipment for the volunteers' tasks, insurance, food and lodging, sometimes also pocket money. Do not forget to budget staff time for the support of the volunteers (see also Chapter 2.3 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, etc. It can be either a non-governmental or a governmental organisation (local authorities etc.). It can be an organisation that is part of an international network of voluntary service organisations who 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).

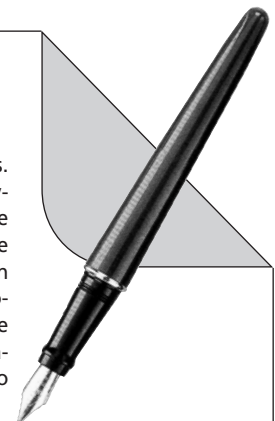
Or it could be your organisation...

In some cases, it is possible that hosting organisations only act as a co-ordination body for IVS. The co-ordinating structure does not have voluntary work in its own organisation, but works with different placements in organisations in the field who they co-operate with. This means that one such organisation can provide different types of work according to the wishes and needs of the volunteer and it generally has built up experience in supporting the different organisations in their network.

### ***The International Voluntary Service project co-ordinator***

Organisations embarking on an IVS can have a lot of different 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, without whom there would probably be no voluntary service. The co-ordinators are the engines of an IVS, but often they find themselves 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 benefits involved for all (see also Chapter 1.4 Reasons for International Voluntary Service). If the co-ordinator has a realistic view on the positive and perhaps also negative implications of such a project, it is easier to convince others of the added value of such an IVS (see also Chapter 3.3.2 Preparation of sending and hosting organisations). Finding partners might be one of the challenges of the co-ordinator, but Chapter 3.1 Finding the right partners for your project could help with that. There might also be some fundraising and budgeting involved in his





or her job description which is touched upon in Chapter 2.3 Funding and budgeting. The project co-ordinator could 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 [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)).

In the hosting organisation the project co-ordinator is often also the support person for the volunteer, even though he or she could involve 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 [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net) (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

### 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, etc. 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.

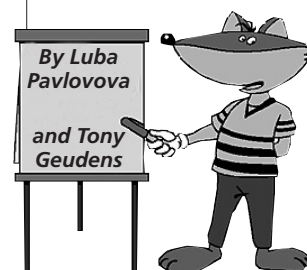
The process of managing a project is described step by step in Chapter 3 of the T-kit on Project Management. Therefore we will narrow our focus in this T-kit to some specific issues when dealing with IVS and invite you to complement it with the tools from the T-kit on Project Management (available to download at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)). Or you can ask advice from organisations or people that have done similar projects before.

### Real life...

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

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 in to clear and maintain footpaths in the forest in order 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 path more and better: she was thinking along the lines of making the paths more accessible to “green tourists” with signposts and rest areas. The other 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 fourteen-day work camp could achieve 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.







An idea never exists in a vacuum. People also have their opinion about it. Check what the “social opinion” is about this project. A project idea should not be there just to please yourself. That’s 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 competition or doing double work?
- ...?

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 and threats in relationship to the International Voluntary Service gives 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 the 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. Twelve positive replies came back. So ELKA decided that the two projects would be of benefit to the community, but also good for their reputation.

The project idea has to germinate and grow into a concrete 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, otherwise we can be sure never to meet our objectives, because we do not know them.

The central question of course is why are we 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 [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net))?

Most of the time 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 (or 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 specifies clearly what they wanted to achieve (more green tourists). Once the summer season has started (time), it can easily be measured if there are more tourists using the paths. With the agreed material help and an information campaign by the town council of Velho, this is achievable and realistic.

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



Even though *Why?* is the central question, we can also combine it with the other *W*-questions (inspired from the Laswell method – see also *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 commodities, 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 is to ask yourself (and your partners in the project) why you are doing things in a certain way, and alternatively why you would not want to do them in a different way.

### **Real life...**

In the case of long-term IVS developing the nature and adventure walks for instance, discussions went on in ELKA about who 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 of ELKA staff together, 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 question.

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 to take 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 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 etc. 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.

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 3.1 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 one of the steps, but at the same time also to be fast and efficient enough in order to keep all partners in the project enthusiastic.

Long waiting periods between different steps might demotivate the volunteers or the partner organisation.



### *Real life...*

#### The time frame for the 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 and the 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 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
4	Registration of candidates with the sending organisation	Put forward the young people you plan on sending and send their volunteer profiles to the hosting organisation
5	Select the appropriate volunteers Arrange the practicalities for the hosting	
6	Prepare the people in the host project  Send the last 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 hosting country
7	Three week work camp  Publicity about the project and its results	Departure of the volunteers for the work camp  Contact to see how things are going
8	Evaluation between partner organisations	Evaluation with the volunteers upon return and offering possibilities to become active in the sending organisation
9	Financial reporting to the funders	Financial reporting to the funders



### The time frame for the long-term voluntary service

Month	Hosting organisation	Sending organisation
1/2	Needs and resource analysis: Check the need for volunteers in the organisation with colleagues Check the available resources within the organisation: financially, 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 the 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 are looking for for your volunteers
4/5	Partner finding	Partner finding
6	Preparatory visit: Agree on the volunteers for the project Develop partnership agreement including the 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 the details about the placement, the communication between the partners, the responsibilities, the financial implications
7	Perhaps sending in applications for funding the project	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 onarrival training	Regular contacts with the volunteer and hosting organisation
13	Mid-term evaluation Constant monitoring and support	Participating in the mid-term evaluation Regular contacts with the volunteer and hosting organisation
16	Final evaluation and return home	Meeting with the volunteer upon return 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



One of the essential tasks in an IVS, without which the project is sometimes abandoned, is securing funding. One of the early steps in the voluntary service is to draw up a budget and to apply for money, since this can be a time-consuming process. At a 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. Further on we will go into more details of these money matters (see Chapter 2.3 Funding and budgeting).

For the smooth running of the 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 a voluntary service earlier in this T-kit in Chapter 2.1 The actors, but we will also give you a rough sketch of the responsibilities for the long-term voluntary project in ELKA.

### Long-term voluntary service task division

Task	Responsible
Overall co-ordination	Susan, the project co-ordinator for the hosting organisation and Tomas, the project co-ordinator 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 project co-ordinators in both organisations, who document decisions and agreements and pass them on to all the people involved in the project
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	Bookkeeper of ELKA in co-operation with Susan. On the sending organisation's side Tomas also applies for funding for travel, administration, communication and follow-up.
Preparation of the hosting arrangements and a concrete 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 has the same age as the volunteers
Link to the “home front” (friends, family, administrative procedures back home, etc.)	Tomas, the project 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 the co-ordinator in the sending organisations. If a big crisis occurs, the president 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 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, the sending and hosting project co-ordinators. At this meeting a certificate signed by all partners involved will be prepared
Reintegration and follow up after the project.	Tomas will see how to make best use of the experience gained for the volunteer but also for the sending organisation



## 2.3 Funding and budgeting

Projects sometimes get stuck when it comes to the cost-benefit comparison. As a project co-ordinator 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. In this respect, we would also like to draw your attention to

the *T-kit on Project Management* (available to download at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)), which contains useful hints and tips on applying for funding as well as advice regarding the management of your financial resources. Therefore, this chapter will not repeat all the details regarding funding and fundraising, but it aims to make you aware of some basic principles when drawing up a budget and to present some existing financial resources for IVS, both short- and long-term.

### 2.3.1 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 foreseen. Drawing up a realistic and balanced budget is an art which is sometimes difficult to master. Therefore we will present you with some golden rules for budgeting.

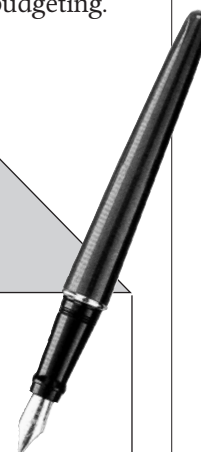


#### Golden rules for Budgeting

- Careful planning of all financial needs and resources is an essential part of your International Voluntary Service and should accompany your project from the early stages till the very end.
- Financial planning should correspond to the real costs of the project to the extent of the possible (for example check prices of tickets, insurance costs, communication means, local transport, office supplies, meals, etc.).
- In a non-profit project such as an 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 confusions.

- Check at the beginning what you will need in the end (for example receipts, financial reports, copies of produced materials etc.). You most likely will have to collect proof on all costs and income (perhaps abiding by specific formal criteria).
- Involve people in your organisation or from outside that 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 financial unclarity or even fraud (when 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've got, how much you still need). Accounting is a useful tool if done regularly and properly.
- Do not forget to account for the staff-time allocation, which also costs money 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 specific expenses in relation to your IVS, for example staff training or preparation on issues like intercultural communication, project-related information technology; volunteer preparation or training concerning the language learning, work related skills; rental costs arising from the project implementation or need for interpretation, etc.







### 2.3.2 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. It depends largely on your context, on the type of project and on your initiative, who could be funding your IVS.

**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 another valuable source of information. [www.eurodesk.org](http://www.eurodesk.org) provides information about European funding schemes. [www.fundersonline.org](http://www.fundersonline.org) offers details on a range of European and world wide foundations.

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

All funders, private or public, have certain motivation for giving money to certain projects. If you want to obtain funding, it is important to discover why funders give. Your International Voluntary Service should not only be in line with the funding scheme but your application should also 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 prepare

your application tailor-made according to 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 might 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, perhaps ask for some feedback on the content or information on the selection procedure. When not selected, do not drop your contact as the funder can be of help for 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 PR to send information (or 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 Project Management* (available to download at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)) or in the bibliography of this T-kit.



## **European Voluntary Service**

One of the most prominent programmes financially supporting IVS is the European Commission initiative European Voluntary Service (EVS). EVS is an opportunity within the European "YOUTH" programme, open to all young people between 18 and 25. Voluntary activities can take place, for example, in the field of environment, arts and culture, children, young or elderly people, heritage, sport and leisure.

### **Aims**

- Participation, non-formal and intercultural learning;
- Solidarity, mobility, inclusion of young people with less opportunities;
- Fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination;
- Development of local communities, new partnerships and good practice exchange.

### **Criteria**

- Volunteers are aged between 18 and 25 at the beginning of their voluntary activity.
- Volunteers are legally resident in an eligible country. Eligible countries are: 30 European "Programme countries" and the following third country priority regions: 12 Mediterranean partner countries, 7 states in the CIS, South East Europe and Latin America.
- The voluntary activity lasts between 6 and 12 months.
- Short-term projects between 3 weeks and 6 months are tailored to the needs of young people with fewer opportunities, who are a main priority of the YOUTH programme.
- Any type of non-governmental organisation, an association, a local authority or any other non-profit-making local initiative can be a sending or host organisation.
- Activities take place in a country other than that where the volunteer lives.
- EVS projects are implemented as joint activity between three partners: sending organisation, host organisation and volunteer.

### **Type of projects and procedure**

- One-to-one projects: these projects are developed on a bilateral basis and are selected and managed by the National YOUTH Agencies in the countries of the sending and hosting organisation (decentralised procedure).
- Europe-wide projects (multilateral) and projects of European NGOs are submitted directly to the European Commission.
- Under the third country strand it is possible to implement one-to-one projects or multilateral ones. They are submitted to the National Agencies or the European Commission depending on the priority region.
- A database of approved host projects in Programme countries, which are looking for participants, can be found at [www.sosforevs.org](http://www.sosforevs.org) or <http://youth.cec.eu.int>.

### **Funding rules**

All EVS projects are based on a simplified system of flat rates and fixed amounts. The grant never covers 100% of an EVS project and is considered as co-funding.







### Funding rules for sending organisations

- Volunteer's travel, visa and vaccination costs are totally covered by the EC grant.
- Preparation/contact with volunteer/follow up consists of a fixed amount per sending organisation and a flat rate that is proportional to the number of volunteers and the duration of the voluntary activity.
- Exceptional costs and an Advance Planning visit are covered by the EC grant if the project involves young people with less opportunities

### Funding rules for host organisations

- The allowance that has to be paid to the volunteer depends on the host country and is covered by the EC grant.
- The activity costs consist of a fixed amount per host organisation and a flat rate that is proportional to the number of volunteers and the duration of the voluntary activity.
- On-arrival training can be covered under certain conditions by the EC grant.
- Exceptional costs are covered by the EC grant if the project involves young people with less opportunities.
- In Europe-wide projects and multilateral third country projects the EC grant also covers to an extent co-ordination and volunteers' meetings costs

### Deadlines

- There are three deadlines at European level and five deadlines at national level per year for projects starting approximately 4 months later.

For further details please consult the YOUTH-website and the User's Guide of the European Commission at [www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html). You will also find contact details about your National Agency on this web-site.

### Council of Europe funding

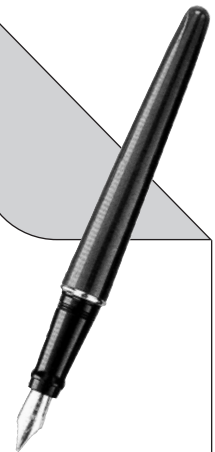
Apart from the EVS financial scheme there are other funding possibilities for IVS. For example, for work camps you can also apply for a grant via the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. In this respect several criteria have to be met when applying for a grant:

- Participants/organisations from at least four 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
- The principle of co-funding should be proved

The Directorate of Youth and Sport also manages another funding scheme, the Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility (FSMJ), designed especially to cover the travel costs of participants to international projects. In this case the criteria to be met are:

- It should be a mobility project
- For groups of at least ten travelling young people
- Coming from a disadvantaged background
- Travelling by rail

For more detailed information on the European Youth Foundation and the FSMJ consult [www.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth) (click on funding).





## Real life...

### An example of a budget for inspiration

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

### Budget for the work camp developing paths and resting areas (in euro)

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		Two professional trainers (fees)	1000 €
Travel:		Social activities:	
International travel for 26 volunteers	3120 €	For 46 persons (cultural events, four trips to historical places in the Velho vicinities, renting a bus, intercultural evenings and programme – cinema, theatre, final party, etc.)	1680 €
Local transport for 45 young people	1350 €	Video preparation	1000 €
Accommodation:		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18 505 €</b>
Host families in Velho	1650 €	<b>INCOME</b>	
Food:	3960 €	ELKA own contribution	1855 €
Preparatory work:		IVS partners' contributions	3000 €
Two meetings <sup>340</sup>		Participants' contributions	920 €
Document preparation (information, welcome brochure)	100 €	Municipality	2300 €
Tel., fax, post, e-mail connections	210 €	Ministry of environment grant	1000 €
Insurance:		Private sponsors	550 €
For 46 persons	1533 €	District Office, Department of Regional Co-operation and Tourism	1450 €
Visas:		Foundation for Social Development	1500 €
For 26 persons	312 €	Local Youth Council	320 €
Administration and co-ordination costs:	650 €	In kind contributions	5610 €
Environment inspection (paths and resting areas development)	1600 €	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18 505 €</b>
Expert on tourism			



### Budget for the EVS hosting project (in euro)

EXPENDITURE		Dissemination of good practice:	
Pre-departure preparation organised by the sending organisation:	125 €	Publications on	
Language training course (2 volunteers, 15 days, intensive):	100 €	– green tourists statistics and adventure activities (100 printings)	500 €
Information materials:	25 €	– project outcomes	120 €
Travel costs:	260 €	Ongoing training (2 volunteers x 650 €)	1300 €
Return rail ticket from the home place of volunteers to Velho and vice versa, second class train: 2 x 130 €		Evaluation	120 €
Insurance:	296 €	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19 026 €</b>
2 volunteers, full duration of 11 months: 2 x 148 €		<b>INCOME</b>	
Accommodation for 2 volunteers in Velho	3300 €	ELKA own contribution	850 €
Secured and covered by a family (in kind)		Sending organisation's contribution	500 €
Food:	5280 €	Volunteers' contribution: 2 x 175 €	250 €
2 volunteers, full duration of 11 months:		City Council	2200 €
Breakfasts and dinners covered by a family	3960 €	Velho School's contribution	120 €
Lunches: 11x30x6x2=1980 €		District Office – Department of Environment Protection	1800 €
Local transport: 660 x 2	1320 €	Private sponsors	800 €
Language course organised by ELKA (in kind)		Foundation for civil society development	1200 €
Intensive part (at language school)	240 €	In kind contributions	1306 €
Provided by a volunteer of ELKA	160 €	European Commission grant (EVS programme)	10 000 €
Social activities and leisure time (social integration):	880 €	Sending organisation:	
Planned cultural trips and social events: 11x40x2=880 €		2 x 600 € (preparation, administration and follow-up)	
Administration:	935 €	Support and communication: 2 x 11 x 20 €	
Tel., fax, e-mail connection: 11x50=550 €		Travel costs: 2 x 130 €	
Paper, pens, Xerox, materials for working with youngsters – rope, information brochures, etc.):	385 €	Hosting organisation:	
Visa and residential permit for 2 volunteers	220 €	On-arrival training, language training: 2 x 600 €	
Medical certificate (on infectious diseases) for 2 volunteers: 2 x 5 €	10 €	Food, lodging, local transport and support: 2 x 11 x 300 €	
		Pocket money for two volunteers	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19 026 €</b>

## 3. Getting ready for take-off



T-Kit  
on International  
Voluntary Service

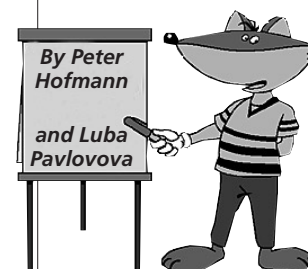
### 3.1 Finding the right partners for your project

Partner finding is one of the first and crucial tasks when entering into International Voluntary Service. Finding the right partners undoubtedly is a major key to success. This chapter will provide some useful tips and advice on where to find partner organisations, what they could be like and how to check if they are suitable.

#### 3.1.1 Partner finding

Before you go hunting for partner organisations you should be fairly clear as to what you are looking for.

The following questions can guide your reflection:



#### Questions for reflection

- What are your aims behind the exchange of volunteers? To what extent should they be similar to the 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

Sit together with the people of the board or committee that is helping in conceptualising or organising this IVS. Send everybody away in small groups or in pairs with a marker and a flip-chart. They should answer the different questions and write them down in key words on the flip chart. When the people come back together you can compare the opinions by hanging the flip charts on the wall and discuss 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 also takes more work and time.

#### Ways of partner finding

- 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 also Appendix 2: Overview of International Voluntary Service organisations, programmes and platforms).
- In most of the countries 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](http://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 that has attended. 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 on Training between European Commission and Council of Europe ([www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)), the National Agencies for the YOUTH Programme (a list of addresses is available at [www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html)), the Directorate for Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe ([www.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth)), the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations ([www.avso.org](http://www.avso.org)) and the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service ([www.unesco.org/ccivs](http://www.unesco.org/ccivs)) amongst 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.sosforevs.org](http://www.sosforevs.org)). 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 Programme. If you are looking for partners in eastern and central Europe, [www.eastlinks.net](http://www.eastlinks.net) could be of help, and [www.movit.si/mladina/database.htm](http://www.movit.si/mladina/database.htm) provides a database with organisations in South-eastern Europe. A worldwide database is offered at [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) (accessible for free and with the possibility to enlist online).

Note! It has to be said that the Internet and databases are not the ideal means to find strategic partners, if not accompanied by personal contact (in a seminar, during a meeting, a prospection visit, during your holidays, etc.).

#### 3.1.2 Quality standards

The aim of partner finding is not only to find a partner, but to find a good partner for your project who can assure minimum quality standards to make the IVS 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 can 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).

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



## Communication standards

- Partnership  
Do partners know each other well enough. Should there be a minimum number of preparation meetings? Should the hosting organisation be prepared to send representatives to training or meetings organised within the programme?
- Communication between hosting and sending organisation  
How much contact between sending and hosting organisation 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 and sending organisations  
How detailed should the division of tasks be? What should be the procedure for unforeseen circumstances? What are the possibilities to meet and discuss issues?
- External communication  
Is there a special strategy to follow to make links between the project and officials, press, local community, the members of the sending or hosting organisation?

## Preparation standards

- Before the project  
What are the prerequisites for participation in the IVS? (language, background reading, etc.) 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? 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 OK to have a common sleeping-room? Is there the possibility 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 possibilities to change activities? What can the hosting organisation expect of the volunteer and what not?
- Working hours  
What should be the limit of working hours per day, 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 kind of safety procedures are in place? Do the volunteers receive safety equipment (helmets, gloves, etc.)? What does the insurance cover and what not?
- Job substitution  
Is there a clear distinction between the tasks for the volunteers and for the staff members? Does the volunteer replace paid labour? What is the risk that the volunteer is perceived as taking away jobs?

## Support-oriented standards

- Support for the volunteers  
Should there be one staff member in a clear supervisor 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?





- **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?
- **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 should be the steps to take upon the return of the volunteer to the home country? Should there be a certificate at the end of the voluntary service and what kind?

### Financial standards

- **Project-related**  
Which party pays for which costs? What kind of book-keeping is needed (in what currency and what language)? What are eligible and non-eligible costs? What are the responsibilities towards financial reporting after the voluntary service? What flexibility is there in unforeseen circumstances?
- **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 (in the field of one or more standards). The other group should imagine the worst possible IVS (in the same fields). 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 if 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 you do not only 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 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 other documents try to have the form filled out in 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.

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 than just referring to a written description by a potentially biased "insider".

For an assessment visit it is very helpful to have a prepared guide-sheet with some questions or doubts resulting from the application form.

### Some tips for the assessment visit

- Within the course of the visit you should try not only to talk to one person, but also to some other staff members or volunteers (if available).
- Try to see the proposed working and living place 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 a voluntary service than it is to convince organisations or institutions to join your International Voluntary Service and offer places for foreign volunteers. Depending on the extent that volunteering is known and appreciated in the organisation or the country, it will also take more or less convincing. 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 an IVS (see Chapter 3.3.2 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 wouldn't 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. Don't 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.



### 3.1.3 Concluding with a contract

Even though trust is at the basis of an IVS, it is still strongly advised to put down the duties of all parties in writing (especially in the case of a long-term commitment). In an IVS 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. Contracts might seem very suspicious but should not limit flexibility. Contracts are there to create transparency and to prevent things from going horribly wrong. In most cases funders ask for a signed letter of endorsement from the different 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, the sending and the hosting organisations, including the names of the authorised persons);
- The name of the IVS 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 matters regarding the minimum quality standards for the partnership between the sending and hosting organisation;
- Signatures on behalf of the sending, hosting organisations and the volunteer;
- The contract should stipulate that the volunteer's work is unpaid, of non-profit nature and not substituting any paid job.

assignments, this chapter will 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 programmes of shorter duration. As we pointed out before, you do not necessarily have to do all the work yourself: an option might be to co-operate with one of the existing networks (see also Appendix 2: Overview of International Voluntary Service organisations, programmes and platforms).

### 3.2.1 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, check if there is a need and backup 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.

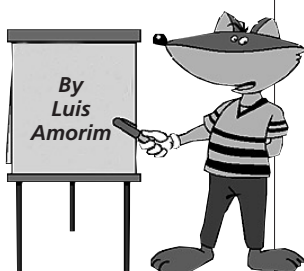
If you are a sending organisation make sure that the information that you receive from your host partner is what you really need to advertise the existing placements. A good way of doing this is by being involved in the writing of the placements' description.

#### 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 in a reverse fashion, you can ask yourself what kind of young people might be interested in your programmes?

## 3.2 Recruitment and screening of volunteers

In this chapter we will look at different ways of recruiting volunteers for IVS. Although primarily aimed at organisations that send volunteers abroad for both long- and short-term





### 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 the same person(s) giving information about the voluntary service opportunities mentioning the same information (for example details about 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 forty-eight 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 send-outs to your target group and be to the point. Make sure that it 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 developed with supplementary information for 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 on the way 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 and e-mail

Nowadays it is very common to refer to a website 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, as well as an overview of the application procedure or even an online application form. You can easily make links to useful related sites. You can market your website at the other recruitment occasions (for instance meetings, articles, brochures).

Via e-mail you can also send newsletters (see above) in electronic version.

**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 doesn't need printing and posting.

**Cons:** An appealing website can be costly to develop and needs to be updated regularly. It rules 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.

## 3.2.2 Volunteer screening techniques

Recruiting volunteers is not about getting as many volunteers as possible, but 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 different areas of interest);
- Preferred country/region (for example if you have placements in different countries or regions);
- These are the "hard facts" of an application form, but there are also the "soft facts" inquiring about motivation, expectation, attitudes, needs etc. which are even more important sources of information for finding the right volunteer for an IVS.

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 as some questions might scare people. How might a candidate react when you ask about any kinds of skills, if this person does not have these skills (yet)? You could then opt to find out this information indirectly in an interview for example. Also bear in mind the privacy of personal details.

### 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 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 organisation), ideally without any physical barrier between you and the applicant (for example desk, counter, etc.).

### 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, etc.

### 4. Start with a thank you

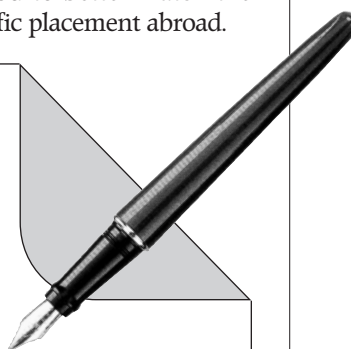
The person sitting in front of you has shown an interest in what you have to offer so you might want to thank the applicant for considering volunteering with your organisation.

### 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" or "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 describe your way of handling conflicts?
- What do your family and friends think about your choice?
- Why do you want to volunteer in this particular area/country?

Give feedback while 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, ten to fifteen 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 the candidate what will be the next steps (for example how long it will take for you to get in touch, will you send a letter or make a phone call, etc.).

### 3.2.3 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) abuse or misconduct in terms of how your volunteers deal 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 the other one has missed. "Peer Interviews" by former or current volunteers again 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 future tasks of the volunteer require someone with a sound and trustworthy background you should consider asking for personal referees that have had 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 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

You may wish to introduce in certain cases of "high risk" clients 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 persons that need to know (for example the support person in the hosting organisation) and be kept confidential to others.

### 3.3 Preparing the actors:

IVS is about creating new perspectives by confronting different realities – 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 a thorough preparation.

#### 3.3.1 Preparation of the volunteers

As pointed out in Chapter 2.1 The actors, the preparation of the volunteer for an IVS is largely the responsibility of the sending organisation, even though in the ideal case it should be the product of negotiations between the sending and hosting organisation. In this way the hosting organisation can 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.

The preparation of the volunteer can be structured around three axes: motivations 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 the reasons for the volunteers wanting to participate in an IVS is essential to avoid misunderstandings from the very beginning. It is equally important to raise the volunteers' awareness of the motivation that the hosting organisation has 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 be an added value to provide the volunteers with an introduction to the voluntary service movement in order to place their own engagement



in a more 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. When the volunteers realise that the

motivations 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 goes 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 the expectations and concerns they have related to their stay. In a second step ask them to think about the expectations and concerns the hosting organisation might have related to 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 the reasons for choosing a given project, the expectations and concerns connected to it. Provide a relaxing atmosphere (for instance music, comfortable room) which allows the participants to let their thoughts wander around. The letter will stay strictly confidential, it will be sealed and kept by the sending organisation until the evaluation meeting of the project. This method allows the participants to be very honest to themselves without having to expose the letter to anybody.

The debriefing of the exercise takes place at the evaluation session months later. It will allow the participants to remember the state of mind and the ideas they had before their departure and help 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, 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 to 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 the working and living conditions**

The hosting organisation needs to be sure to provide the volunteers (through the sending organisation) with all the information necessary to have an idea of the working and living conditions during the IVS. The immediate comfort of the volunteer depends on the reduction of uncertainty linked to the jump into a new project and country. Having

appropriate information, having answers to question marks, 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 with the things the volunteers (and the sending organisation) most likely want and need to know.



### Check list 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 foreseen 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 necessary according to the cultural background or special requirements of the host project)
- ...?

#### About the living conditions

- Practical arrangements (insurance, financial, health and 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! Only if communication between the two organisations is efficient before the project starts, can the sending organisation ensure a proper preparation. 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 solve any additional questions directly and get to know each other from the distance.

The information should be transmitted through 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 discussions;
- 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 an information pack with the basic information and the contact details of the person to contact in the hosting organisation.

#### Intercultural preparation

The third element of preparation training concerns the intercultural aspects of a voluntary service across borders. An intercultural pre-departure session should raise awareness about cultural concepts that exist and about the volunteers' own cultural background and the culture of the host community. It should strengthen the volunteers' sense of observation and prepare them for the 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 [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)) and an Education Pack on informal intercultural education (available at [www.ecri.coe.int](http://www.ecri.coe.int)) 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 culture has on people, but also the diversity that exists within one country or culture depending on factors such as age, beliefs, sexuality etc. 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 original (cultural) group, but still needs to belong to some other group (age, music, sports) in the host country.

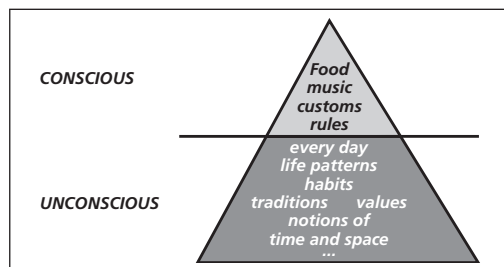
A number of exercises explore personal and cultural identity and train the volunteer to deal with complexity instead of using stereotypes. An exercise of this kind is the “onion exercise”, which is based on the idea that any person



is shaped by many different “layers”, not only culture but also family, friends, education etc. (see *T-kit on Intercultural Learning*: “the onion of diversity” p. 43).

It is also useful to convey certain notions of culture, as it makes people understand how it functions and what influence it has on us. One way to visualise the complexity of culture is the “iceberg model”, which describes culture as being defined only to a small extent through its visible elements: fine arts, music, food and dress etc. but that the great majority of cultural elements are invisible and also unconscious (different attitudes and role models, notions of time and space etc.). Other models allow a gradual classification of countries according to certain values, which could be interesting for the volunteer to help them see what in general will be different from the own culture. The *T-kit on Intercultural Learning* goes into more detail under the heading of “concepts of intercultural learning” (p. 17-35).

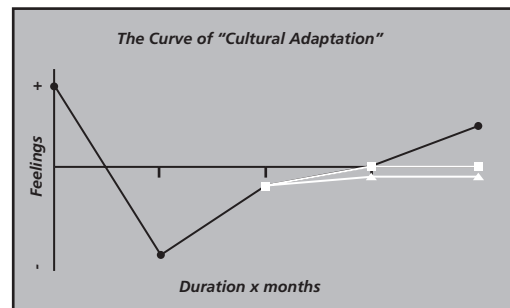
### The triangle of culture



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”. It tries to visualise the various phases one might go through during a stay abroad, highlighting the possibility of living through a period of “cultural shock” which can develop into a phase of adaptation and stability of different degrees, depending on the way the person digests the negative feelings and moves on from there. It is useful to introduce the idea of a development that the participants will live through at the preparation meeting and come back to it for the evaluation, asking the participants to draw the actual line of what they have experienced.

### The adjustment cycle



Adapted from Grove and Torbiörn “A new conceptualization of intercultural adjustment and the goals of training” in Paige, Michael, *Education for the intercultural experience*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth, 1993.

The following is a list of tips to overcome cultural shock that can be introduced to the participants as a tool 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 little concrete things that justify your miserable feelings, but try to distance yourself a little 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 your close ones 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, organise an evening about something that you find interesting about your country (for example cultural traditions, the situation of young people, the educational, political or economic system, etc.)
- 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 change air 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.





### 3.3.2 Preparation of sending and hosting organisations

But not only the volunteers should be prepared, the sending and hosting organisation 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 it is the responsibility of both 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?

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 an IVS. Not only the project coordinator, 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 to involve colleagues who will be working with the volunteers in the development of the whole project in order to have their backing (see also Chapter 4.2.2 Staff motivation – the forgotten dimension).

Potential reasons for organisations entering into IVS:

- Strengthening international relations
- Enriching work
- Positive impact on clients
- Creating opportunities for young people (or people with special needs)
- Promotion of the idea of volunteering in the local community
- More prestige for the organisation as regards funders, clients, partner organisations etc.
- Improves the working atmosphere in the organisation
- Enhances co-operation with the partner organisation
- Being able to realise an idea which 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. 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 early returns of long-term volunteers are unrealistic placements in which basically there was no real need for a volunteer, so also no adequate work for them. Organisations should therefore have a clear idea about the tasks for the volunteers and ensure the technical needs or tools necessary for these tasks, naturally before the volunteers arrive.

Without the feeling of being able to contribute to the work of the organisation (because of lack of work or tools) volunteers will have severe difficulties to integrate.

The following questions concerning the work are at the basis of volunteer care.

#### Volunteer care

- What needs doing? Where is 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 to 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 the 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 fifteen to twenty minutes of brainstorm one representative of each camp is given five minutes time to defend their extreme points 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 securing the satisfaction of the basic human needs of the volunteer. If the board and lodging provided, for example, does 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. The information for the volunteer on the placement therefore should include details on board and lodging and options for leisure-time activities (sports, bars, music, disco, etc.) in the vicinity.

### 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. Therefore it could be a good idea (in a 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 would probably be better for more insecure 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 own private use! For a short period, like for a work camp, dormitory accommodation is mostly OK.

#### Food:

- daily lunch allowance
- deal with a local restaurant or cafeteria which provides meals
- weekly or monthly food allowance
- meals in the host family
- ...?

In group projects with international volunteers it is nice 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 through the organisation meeting 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 is to a large extent based 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 the volunteer. Last but not least there should be an understanding on 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 between three main supporting functions:

- Dealing with the broader aspects of living in another country and a different culture. 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 the volunteer to integrate into the local social



life of the community in which the project is situated (this obviously is more valid for long-term projects).

(See also Chapter 4.3 Ongoing support of volunteers)

### **Training of people supporting volunteers**

It is advisable that the 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 impacting volunteering, rights and duties of volunteers, roles and responsibility of supervising staff, legal issues), skills (delegating tasks, interviewing, conflict resolution, communication skills, motivation, performance reviews, etc.) and

also attitudes (valuing volunteers, intercultural awareness, willingness to share). It is up to the support person and 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 on an international level are, for example, the Council of Europe ([www.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth)) and the European Voluntary Service programme (check with the responsible National Agency for the YOUTH programme in your country. you find the addresses at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html>). 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 awareness of participants regarding their role vis-à-vis the volunteer
- To clarify their expectations towards the volunteers
- To develop a common understanding concerning 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 a 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 the objectives for the day	15 min.	Participants should have a clear indication of what is happening during the day	Visual presentation (flipchart which remains visible on the wall all day)
Getting to know exercise, icebreakers	15 min.	Participants should feel comfortable in the group and get to know the names of the others	Any kind of interactive lively 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 an fictitious upcoming 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 chose a project and look at all the posters and make a decision for one.
Discussion on 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 which choice they made and explain why. They should discuss how much information they as volunteers would want before making a choice for a project and how does that effect the preparation needed in the organisation
Summarising input	30 min.	Participants should get a better idea on 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 <i>vis-à-vis</i> 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 exchange in small groups and try to come up with one sheet of five most important tasks. Groups should report back in the plenary and then close the session with a summarising input on supervising volunteers.
Discussion on rights and duties	30 min.	Reaching a common understanding of rights and duties of volunteers	Explain the legal administrative requirements, legal framework and 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 on 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

## 4. On the road



T-Kit  
on International  
Voluntary Service

### 4.1 Induction and on-arrival orientation

Just as important as the preparation prior to 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. It's sometimes not obvious for a host organisation which receives many volunteers to realise what it means to start a voluntary service in another country on the first day: 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 the on-arrival training will also depend on the type of project and placement and it can range from a few hours welcome meeting to a several day seminar.

Apart from the first impact, the arrival at the host organisation is also the moment of truth for both: the images about 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 is 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 to the 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 organisation, the better the hosts will be able to fill the empty spaces the sending organisation has left. The on-arrival training should include information about the local culture

and provide an introduction to the project. The time of “dry swimming” is over, the volunteer wants to experience the water! When it comes to the introduction of the project, make sure you leave enough space for the volunteers' ideas and suggestions. Try to find out about the volunteers' expectations and ideas concerning 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, etc.). Ask afterwards if the visitor noticed your efforts and what kind of effect they had on him or her. Deduct principles from this experience and apply them to the hosting of your volunteer.

#### 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 youths or active members of your organisation to receive the incoming volunteers. Let them introduce the volunteers to the local reality. In this way, you provide the volunteers with a network of social contacts and persons of reference from the beginning. The locals will feel responsible for the well-being of the volunteers and provide them with a much better introduction to the local reality than an employee of a hosting organisation ever could. In order to prepare the locals, you may want to introduce them to some intercultural concepts like the iceberg, the onion and the adjustment cycle (refer to Chapter 3.3.1 Preparation of the volunteers and to the *T-kit on Intercultural Learning* available to download at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)) to help them understand what the international





volunteer might go through and to raise their openness towards 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 towards 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.

### Topics to consider in an on-arrival training programme

It is the responsibility of the host organisation to make sure that all the aspects that they

have prepared for the volunteers (technical and content-wise) are communicated to them (see also Chapter 3.3.1 Preparation of the volunteers). The volunteers need to be given a chance to react and to explain their motivation and specific needs and skills for the project.

In the following box you will find some issues that should be dealt with in an on-arrival training. The exact programme of such a session will depend on the time frame available for the training. 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, etc. 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, so eventually just dedicate thirty minutes immediately for the items mentioned above, explain what's going to happen next and when and take the volunteers to a place where they can relax. Never leave volunteers totally unattended during the first hours of their stay! The support person of the volunteers should be around from the beginning.

The following items should be dealt with as soon as possible and certainly within the first two days in order 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 find solutions for any aspects that are not perfect yet. The volunteers might even be happy to find out that the frame of the project is still flexible enough to take into consideration their special wishes, needs and capacities.

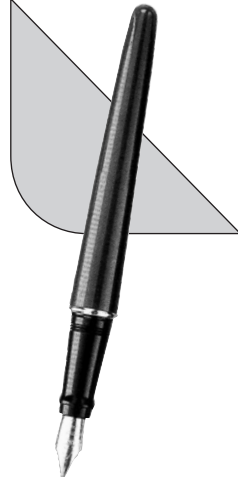
#### *Items to deal with within the first two days*

##### • Introduction

Introduce the responsible people in the organisation as well as other staff and volunteers. Explain the roles of the different persons and explain who else is involved but does not necessarily work in the office (for example board members).

##### • Technical aspects

Explain any rules related to the accommodation and any co-inhabitants 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, possibilities 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 involved in the organisation. It is important to explain the framework and larger goals of what you do. It can sometimes be frustrating to be asked to work on a given task without an idea of what the final aim of the project is. It is important for the volunteers to understand that if you make photocopies, cook for a group or carry heavy stones, you do it for a larger goal and that concrete 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 will work on the project and put the project in the context of your overall activities. Allow the volunteers to comment and suggest any ideas, the volunteers need to feel ownership for the project and be able to bring in their personality and experience.

### • Motivation

Explain to the volunteers why you chose to embark on an IVS project and what experience you have already had with such projects. Ask the volunteers to explain their motivation and expectations for this project. However, be aware that for reasons of politeness the volunteers 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 day out to introduce the 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 organisations or outlying work projects. 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 similar to the ones suggested for the pre-departure training together with 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 culture with you: cooking for colleagues, organising an evening about the situation in their country etc. Leave it to the volunteers' personality as to 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 in the first moments. It is important to have a clear idea about the previous experience of the volunteers and the type of projects/organisation the volunteers 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 kind of projects their sending organisations run etc. Clarifying these questions will help you to avoid misunderstandings based on different concepts of volunteering.

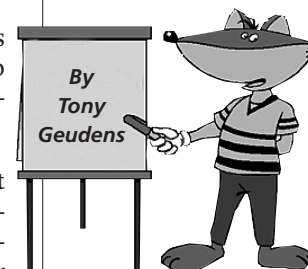
## 4.2 Motivation

### 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 keep 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 to give is appropriate in relationship to the hoped-for benefit. This sounds perhaps quite strong and opportunistic, but the volunteers are mostly looking for a symbolic or social return for their contributions. Volunteer management means keeping volunteers happy to be volunteers. They either like the voluntary service, or leave it; that is why an organisation has an interest in fulfilling the needs of the 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 has an important role to play 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 in order to achieve the ideal mixture in a voluntary project between the 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 (giving a T-shirt of the organisation, a CD on the birthday of the volunteer etc.) can do wonders for their motivation. Mostly volunteers are looking for social benefits: they want to get to know people, 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, get skills and increase their employability, etc. 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 which they volunteered before. 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 the discussion as to whether a certain benefit is social rather than pragmatic, rather one type of benefit than the other. 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

In order to motivate your volunteers and release their E-forces, you either have to address their needs or you can stimulate the volunteers' needs according to what you can offer. In the management of motivation it is important to know your volunteers and their needs on the one hand and to know what the organisation wants of the volunteers and has to offer them on the other side. 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 an ongoing process and should be perceived as balanced by both parties.

Besides the different needs, volunteers also have different preferences of work. Some volunteers would be more skilled and/or interested in social tasks, others prefer creative activities, 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 that 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, therefore you can map the motivation of your volunteers



in the visual way. 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).

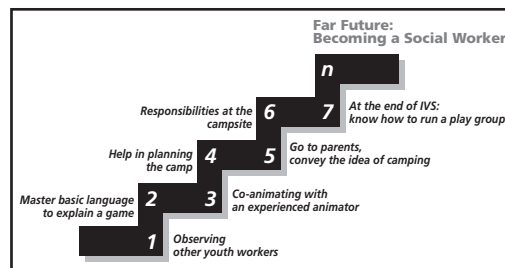
### Two hands

Draw a “giving hand” in which the volunteers write or draw what they can contribute and a “taking hand” in which they fill in 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 work

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 – the volunteers should feel needed).
- At the same time the job done should be appreciated by the staff (appreciation and recognition) – so a consultation process with the staff in order to find out what is essential to be done at this moment is a plus (see also Chapter 3.3.2 Preparation of sending and hosting organisations).
- The work should be interesting, challenging and rewarding and take into account the specific needs and preferences of the volunteers (so get to know the volunteers before creating the concrete job description).
- Make the goals clear and ensure achievement of goals. Increasing difficulty, complexity and challenge keep the volunteers on the tips of their toes. The goals should be constantly revised. Keep score 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 on the personal and professional level (see also Chapter 4.3 Ongoing support of volunteers).
- Share responsibility for results. The job description should be formulated in the form 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 activities, out of work activities, dinners, weekend outings, learning new skills, little gifts, etc.
- Volunteers should have or share in ownership of the work they are doing (involve them in the process of designing the job description). Put them in charge of something but give support when needed.
- Give the volunteers the authority to think and not just follow orders (they are not machines) – this has as a consequence that staff should abdicate 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 most likely will keep your volunteers happy. Add your own suggestions.

- People like to feel good (a word of thank you, a little present, an authentic compliment, taking them into account as part of the team, asking their opinion, etc.).
- Make sure you give more positive than negative feedback to the volunteers.
- In giving feedback make sure you only base yourself on objective observable facts in order 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 contacts 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, for example stressful working conditions (noise, no access to computer, unusual working hours, etc.), lack of interpersonal relationships (no time for talking during work, no coffee breaks, etc.).

### 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's 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 exaggerated 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 anymore
- The speed of work 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 volunteers favourite home band/radio is constantly on
- The volunteer does not join friends or colleagues for common lunches anymore
- 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 who are working 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, in a good way but also in a negative way (for practical reasons, “paid staff” will be referred to by using shortly “staff” in the remainder of the text).

### 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 like the work we do
- We can develop the volunteers’ skills and confidence that they would 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 to manage and coach volunteers
- The volunteers sometimes provide 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 about these values of having an international volunteer in their work place, you can praise yourself into the clouds. However this is not always the case. Staff might not like the idea of incoming volunteers too much because they fear that “cheap” volunteers could take over (part of) their jobs. 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, etc.). Or the job they

are doing is so close to their hearts that they do not want to share it or are afraid that the “unreliable” volunteers will 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 a voluntary service organiser, deal with them.

- The first step would be to find out about the paid staff’s attitude towards volunteers (Do/did they ever volunteer themselves? What do they see as the potential advantage of working with volunteers? etc.). A simple questionnaire, interview or informal chat would do.
- A lot of resentment towards working with volunteers could be avoided by involving staff in the entire process of getting volunteers, as we already 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 mostly drives them into a corner and has an opposite defensive effect.
- If staff are supposed to do some kind of supervision or closely work together with the volunteers, then this new skill should be recognised and valued (for example 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 involve staff as well in the creation of the volunteers’ job description, since the volunteers will need to be accepted and given the space on what is the staff’s traditional work territory.
- Last but not least, the work with volunteers should not come on top of regular work, but should be carefully planned and by consequence also budgeted financially and time-wise into the overall work plan of the organisation.





Staff members have an important influence on the volunteers. Volunteers sense if staff put up with them against their will and they 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's 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 which 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, which justifies that paid staff can be requested 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 the staff that an organisation is working with could be seen as a team with complementary roles.
- This team spirit could be increased by a common evaluation of the team of workers (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 when it is their first time, the more different the host culture is and the longer the stay will last. Therefore volunteer support throughout the project is vital for the well-being of the volunteers and for the success of the project. Especially within long-term voluntary service, there should be

a support person (sometimes also called a mentor, coach, volunteer manager, tutor, etc.) who guides the learning process of the volunteers and their contribution to the project. Refer to the end of this chapter for some things to think about related to support in short-term voluntary service.

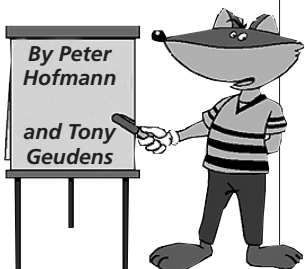
#### GROWing

A concrete model 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 the 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:

	<b>GOALS</b> Where do we want to go?
	<b>REALITY</b> What are our strengths & weaknesses?
	<b>OPTIONS</b> What are our possibilities & options?
	<b>WILL</b> Which option do we both want?

The **G** stands for **Goals**: it is paramount to sit together with the volunteer to define the goals of the voluntary service both for the hosting organisation and for the volunteer (the importance of this has already been mentioned on several occasions in this T-kit when talking about the preparation). If you do not determine (both for the short as well as the long term) where you want to be heading, you will never be able to assess if you did indeed reach this (see also Chapter 5.1 Evaluation).

The **R** refers to **Reality**: once the goals are set and clear for both parties (transparency is the mother of a good project), it is important to see to what extent the reality, the concrete situation of the project and the volunteer, allow for the easy reaching of goals. This should be a description of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the project. What is the reality which you are facing in relation to the goals?





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

The **W** of **Will** then refers to the will or decision to implement one or more of these options for improvement, which both parties can agree on. Options that have been negotiated together 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 after which you decide to continue the chosen option or to try another or an additional one.

Sometimes you could get stuck in one stage of the model and it could 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 (reality).

### 4.3.1 The volunteer support person

Now, if you are (going to be) the volunteer support person in your IVS, you should ensure in the ideal case the functions described below in this chapter. You can either be superman or superwoman and do it all on your own, but in most cases you could involve other persons (for instance colleagues, returned volunteers, your family) to fulfil this full range of functions. You can only take up as many functions as you have time for doing these functions properly!

Within IVS, we want to highlight three areas that are particular prominent and that need special attention from the support person. Since we are talking in this T-kit about non-skilled volunteers, often they need to adopt or adapt the working culture and develop some new skills first in order to become more efficient in their tasks; well-planned learning or training support could promote this. But the volunteers do not only work, they will also have to build up 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 most likely benefit from intercultural support. Besides the intercultural component, there is also the need for a new social life, for which social support (depending on the independence of the volunteers) would be a great help.

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

- The first and foremost quality of a support person is being available. He or she is the person that the volunteers need to be able to turn to when they need it most. Therefore it would be handy to create a system and atmosphere in which the volunteer knows when and how to reach the support person. The volunteers should be made to feel comfortable enough to interrupt the support person in his/her normal work when necessary.

You could for example draw up an “alarm bell procedure”. This can be any agreed signal (for example writing an e-mail with ALARM in the subject, giving a red card, pulling the support person into the meeting room, saying you’re fed up) which is to be used in agreed circumstances (for instance 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 persons responsible for the 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 on the needs, suggestions and expectations of the volunteers 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 paper 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 tasks such as a working 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 the personal needs you might think of e-mail facilities to keep the link to friends and family back home, laundry facilities, contacts with the local sports club to keep in shape, continuing your hobby abroad etc. (this is especially important for long-term stays), basically everything that enables you to have a pleasant stay in the host country.

- Another important task is the monitoring or assessing of the performance of the volunteers focusing both on the positive achievements and the learning points (see also Chapter 5.1 Evaluation): for example this involves meetings at regular intervals, making the volunteers feel respected, steering the volunteers. It is important to give the volunteers the same treatment as the other employees: consider volunteers as part of your staff and for example refer to them 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 would 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 to blame them for something that happened. They are also more likely to cause a defensive response (for example say “I don’t like the way you arrange your papers” instead of “you are an unorganised person”).

- Active listening is certainly also a skill that you will 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 different ears listening in, with 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, encouraging questions, etc. (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? Bad mastering of the language does not equal no command of the language. So sometimes it already helps to repeat questions more slowly, use different and/or simpler words or allow more time to understand a question and to 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 volunteers are more comfortable in (for example their mother tongue or English). What will not help is giving up and letting the communication break down. Laughing generally does not make the volunteers feel any better either. Instead of embarrassing the volunteers, make them 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. Since this is a crucial part for the success of an IVS, there is a complete chapter on this topic elsewhere in this T-kit (see Chapter 4.2.1 Motivating the volunteer).

### 4.3.2 Training support

As mentioned before, the support person has a determining role in the training of the volunteers for their job. This is not only of benefit for the host organisation to get the tasks done more efficiently and to a higher quality, but setting up training for volunteers will make them feel more integrated, more at ease in their job, more valued and recognised and in the end more motivated. Also in short-term voluntary projects such as work camps, it might be worth your while to integrate a workshop on the tasks you are doing, whether it be painting, fundraising 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 the volunteers at the beginning of their IVS a specific training plan can be negotiated. Obviously this plan should be monitored continuously and should be ready to be changed according to the needs of the volunteer which sometimes only become apparent 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), etc. Peer training by another volunteer is often very appreciated as 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 induction training about the aim, work and structure of the youth club ELKA. 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 two 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 as 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.

### 4.3.3 Intercultural Support

You are mostly not aware of the importance of your own environment, your familiar neighbourhood, friends and family for your feeling of security and comfort unless you 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 on intercultural adaptation in Chapter 3.3.1 Preparation of the volunteers).

The support person should keep an eye out for the symptoms of culture shock, which can be both physical (for example lack of hunger, sleeplessness, tiredness, minor aches) or psychological (for example 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 the personality, but also according to previous intercultural experiences) but it also depends largely on the preparation for this confrontation before departure (see Chapter 3.3.1 Preparation of the volunteers) which can be developed and built on to during the voluntary service.

The way of addressing culture shock should be adapted case by case, depending on the volunteers and on 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 such a thing called “culture shock” and a way to recognise it (through for example 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. Let the volunteers air their frustrations and 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. Some time to breath and to reflect.
- Try to avoid judging cultures. Explain them instead to the extent that you can. Give information about the culture, the country, the system, the people, etc. 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 that have gone through a similar experience, perhaps in the opposite way (having been in the country of the volunteers), in order to get peer support from each other.
- Or you could give them a break from the different culture and the different language, through a meeting with a fellow country person (for example friend, family, volunteer from that country), or possibly getting some magazines, books or videos from home, phoning home.
- In order to reduce the feeling of missing home, try to find the activities from home in the host country (for instance sports, TV-show, hobbies, fast-food), probably in an adapted way (for example 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 to 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 with their voluntary service, if the intercultural component takes more time then 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 the country are always rude).
- Focus also on similarities between the host country and the country of origin of the volunteers, in order to realise that the volunteers already have a lot of cultural baggage with them. However do not play



down the importance of the 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 about to be able 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 3.3.1 Preparation of the volunteers for the volunteer to reflect on.

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

For more details on the concepts of culture and exercises to raise intercultural awareness, see the *T-kit on Intercultural Learning* available for download at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net).

#### 4.3.4 Social Support

Hosting organisations tend to overlook the fact that the volunteers actually spend more time away from work than on the voluntary job. The satisfaction of the volunteers in their free time is equally important (if not more so) for the success of the voluntary service, than the tasks within the project. Staying in one's room 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 to invite them along to some social gatherings or events. Others however might 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 the voluntary service.

#### Measures for the integration of the volunteers into the local community

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

Knowing the interests and hobbies of the volunteer before can help to provide some names of contact persons or addresses of clubs, facilities, etc. on arrival. This is certainly a sign which makes the volunteer feel very welcome.

- Organise meetings with other volunteers, exchange students, etc. in the area

If there are several volunteers in one area, they could have a 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 getting into 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 have an understanding of the situation the volunteer is in. 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](http://www.coe.int/youth)) and the European Federation for Intercultural Learning ([www.afs.org/efil](http://www.afs.org/efil)). In the framework of the European Voluntary Service programme there are regular courses targeted at volunteer support persons (check with the National Agency for the YOUTH programme in your country [www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html)). Or you could check out some of the references given in the bibliography and webography.



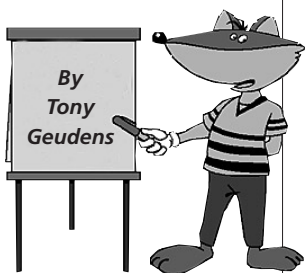


### Support for short-term projects

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

- 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, etc. Do not start with the actual work right on the first day. The travel, the nervousness of the volunteers 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.
- The responsible support person for voluntary group projects should get some training in team-building, intercultural learning and conflict management for this task. Conflicts in such groups are possible and should not affect the whole group. As a responsible support person you should be sensitive towards conflicts arising and try to intervene carefully but in a determined manner (see also Chapter 4.4 Conflict management).
- Support persons, 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 for example.

## 4.4 Conflict management

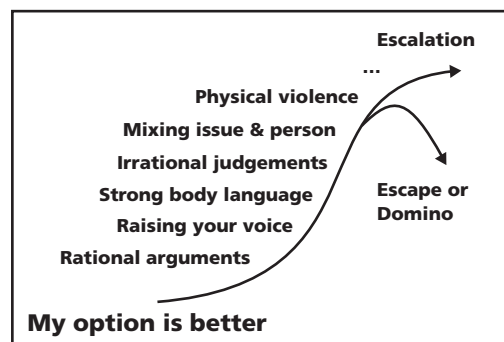


An IVS is a complex project which involves people from different backgrounds working together towards common goals, up to the moment that differences appear and become conflicts. Differences however do not equal conflicts. It is no problem to have different opinions, values, wishes or aims. However, 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, 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 to major crises. In a conflict in which there are opposite points of view, what often happens is that one 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 can be reinforced with the appropriate body language and tone of voice. If no victory is in sight yet, irrational judgments and accusations which confuse the issue and the person can surface. The next step could be an escalation into physical violence. If at a certain moment one party outdoes the other and the loser cannot reciprocate anymore, 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 weaker persons, etc. This is also called the domino effect.

### Escalation in conflicts



For example, one of the volunteers in a work camp in a village wears a nose ring at the renovation works of the little church. The work camp leader however 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 to challenge 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 to 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 the workers in a factory and the management) or macro-level (between big entities, for example between countries) but these conflicts need a more structural or political approach. We'll stick to what you as a youth worker or support person can do in the event of conflicts at the voluntary project.

#### 4.4.1 First Aid in conflict management

The support person will often have to provide a first aid to rising conflicts in the project. However 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 approach 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 there should be some time allowed to let the 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, work with a different partner, calling upon other persons that could help (friends, director of the organisation, parents, etc.). When peace is restored you can move on to the next step.

1. The first basic step in the management of conflicts is to see and acknowledge that there is a conflict. All parties involved (individuals or groups) should be aware (or made aware) that there is something wrong. You could point out some facts that for you could be indications of 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 would be 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 (for example limited time or energy, unequal power relation, violence) it is better to leave the conflict for what 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 for external assistance when it is above your capacities (a professional mediator for example).

3. When both parties realise that there is a conflict and want to do something about it, you move into 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 different 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 listen is to ask them to repeat the other's message before having their say)
- always use the I form (instead of "you didn't listen" say "I think you didn't listen to me")
- not judging or blaming
- not leaving the room until an acceptable solution is found
- everything that is said will stay between those walls
- ...?

It is important to have all the participants in your mediation meeting agreeing on these ground rules.

4. The next phase is generating possible solutions to the problem, like 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 clearing out 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 interests (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 a part of administrative work but also creative work)
- In conflicts of values, beliefs, opinions and the alike, positions are difficult to negotiate so an uncompromising 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 are the proposals that the conflicting parties are most comfortable with? Which options are out of the question? One exercise that shows clearly what the preferences are 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 grounds, involves all parties actively in the solution and shows the 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 the 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 "red flags" being situations that would increase tension again or move them back to a conflictive 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 monitor that all parties are happy with the solution and that the solution is not considered a defeat because this could lead to demotivation or disinvolvement 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 what the results are: 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 blocks at any stage.

### Hot conflicts versus cold conflicts

These seven steps are based on a conflictive situation in which the different parties are actively and openly involved in the conflict: this is called a "*hot conflict*" (because sometimes things get really hot indeed). 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 also accept to work



together on the 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 could disengage from the confrontation completely. They will not fight openly for their

cause anymore but tacitly boycott or sabotage the other person or the work. This is a so-called "*cold conflict*" in which 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 a 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" of working people 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 the 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 the opponents.
- Encourage the persons to talk and LET them talk (do not overthrow the other person with similar experiences you had of your own 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 persons 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 the persons clarify the situation, perhaps the conflict is based on a (intercultural) misunderstanding: 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 persons whether they have an idea about how the opposite party might be feeling.
- Encourage the person to talk to the other party in the conflict. If both are ready for this, help establishing 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.
- ...?

Add your own golden rules.

## 5. Returning home



T-Kit  
on International  
Voluntary Service

### 5.1 Evaluation

#### 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. Even though this chapter is put here in "Returning home", we will argue that evaluation should be an integral part of your whole IVS and goes hand in hand with Chapter 4.3 Ongoing support of volunteers.

One thing 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, in order to measure whether you have reached this destination or not. In an IVS these goals lie in different areas: the work and related outcomes (for example learning skills, training opportunities, doing projects, being efficient), the social integration (getting to know friends, having fun, getting along with colleagues, etc.), the intercultural dimension (for example getting to know the people, learning the language, experiencing the country) and personal issues (for example motivation, homesickness, conflicts). And, last but not least, the practical arrangements (food, accommodation, transport facilities, free time arrangements, etc.) should also be evaluated. These are areas in which regular evaluation can prove useful in order to improve the voluntary service for all involved – rather sooner than too late.

Evaluations can have a lot of different functions and can take very diverse forms. Here's a rough overview of different kinds of evaluation:

#### Evaluation why oh why?

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

- The best known evaluation is probably the "summative evaluation". This kind of evaluation generally comes at the end of a project (or of a certain period of the project) 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 then could lead to a positive decision to give a certificate to the volunteer, to attribute 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.

- "Formative evaluations", on the contrary focus a lot more on the process and not so much on the result. They aim to analyse how the project and the volunteer are doing and allow influence on their development. It is held all through the duration of the IVS and it provides feedback about the project and the people involved in it; whether it is going somewhere or where improvements should be made in the future. For the volunteers it allows you to let some steam off and exteriorise ideas, frustrations, etc. This type of evaluation is less judgmental and on the contrary 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

- \* focus on result
- \* looking to the past
- \* to judge
- \* summing up
- \* consequences
- \* at the end

#### Formative Evaluation

- \* focus on process
- \* looking to the future
- \* to help
- \* steering
- \* development
- \* all the way through





When we consider the 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, 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 and see if the goals were reached and to take the decision to repeat the experience or not.

### How to evaluate?

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

In schools you often find very formal evaluation methods such as exams, because they also allow for more objectivity. In an IVS you could use the services of an external evaluator who will 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 would be the “evaluation sessions”. This entails taking some quality time at regular intervals using some of the many exercises available (see below). Using the same method several times allows you to monitor an evolution that is going on. Different exercises could keep the evaluation sessions fresh and exciting. Sometimes there might not be any specific exercises used, but there is more of a evaluation chat, in which both 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 provide 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 towards 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 the volunteers can do this at any moment they choose. It allows them to actively monitor

their learning process and take all different 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 in order to share the responsibility for the voluntary service together. Self-assessment can be done according to a grid with the different goals of the volunteer (or of the project), but it can also take the more free format of a diary.

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

### 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 the person doing the evaluation should best not have a position that would be too high up for the volunteers to feel comfortable with. And the evaluator should not judge but rather work together with the volunteer on the future of the project.

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



### Tips for evaluating during your International Voluntary Service

- 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 in order to grasp the evolution.
- Sometimes it can be useful to take some distance from some strong experience that just happened in order to evaluate more objectively.
- Try to use neutral words in your questions (instead of “bad” use “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 the evaluations seriously and act upon them.

### 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 invite the volunteers to put a mark on it according to their motivation at regular intervals (very low motivation below zero or high motivation at 50°).
- Ask the volunteers to write a letter to themselves stating where they would be in, for example, a month’s time. You give or send this letter after this period.
- Make a list of red flags (negative experiences that put the volunteer off) and green flags (positive experiences that keep the volunteers going), check how often green flags happen and how often red ones; elaborate strategies to hoist more green flags and to 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 could be used for different people or for the same person at different times.
- Find a multifaceted picture with a lot of people/buildings/items etc. and ask the volunteers to identify with one of them and explain why (for example “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, there is a chapter on evaluation in the T-kit on Project Management (available to download at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)).

## 5.2 Follow-up

For many organisations voluntary service is defined mainly as the period of time a volunteer spends in 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.

### Coming back after being abroad

Volunteers often suffer from reverse culture shock when they come back home after a long stay abroad. The volunteers 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 might have changed and be frowned upon when back home, because they expect the same person that has left them some months before. The volunteer thinks that people will react in a certain way and in reality they do not.

Volunteers also 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 upon 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 might 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 could guide and support the volunteers in doing something with what they gained during their voluntary service.

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

### Follow-up meetings

One way of addressing follow-up is to organise one or more meetings with your volunteers, either in groups or individually, or in the case of long-term volunteering ideally both types of meetings.

A follow-up meeting with your volunteers could be used for:

- Evaluating the IVS in general;
- Comparing expectations or objectives with concrete outcomes;
- Identifying the main negative and positive outcomes;
- Helping the volunteer to deal with negative experiences abroad in a constructive manner;
- 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 that went through a similar experience;
- Informing the volunteer about other volunteering possibilities or commitments within the same or other organisations.

### Educational and professional opportunities

With some target groups or in some sending organisations, the aim of sending a volunteer on an IVS is to develop skills (language, social, practical skills) outside the regular schooling or training opportunities for their future pathway. In these cases, it is important to keep this educational perspective in mind right through the voluntary service, but especially when going back to the home country, into a next step in their life project. After the IVS they will be able to decide better on what it is that they wish to do with their lives, and whether what they did abroad will be of use to future activities. For example doing a voluntary service with the disabled might trigger a professional career in this sector, or the volunteer might have developed an interest for the language of the host country etc. The sending organisation is a vital player to facilitate the development of such new educational or professional perspectives as much as possible upon the young person's return.



## Social security

Another issue that sometimes needs special attention is that of social security. Most European countries do not have laws defining the status of volunteers, therefore volunteering abroad often has an effect on social security such as unemployment benefits, housing support, minimum income, etc. Most long-term volunteers lose their social benefits once they leave the country. But sometimes upon return, the volunteers even stop being eligible for different benefits or student allowances. National authorities can be very bureaucratic and reticent about accepting any claims made by the volunteers, and sending organisations must often intervene as mediators between the two of them in order 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.

## Follow-up for sending and hosting organisations

Follow-up should not be seen as benefiting only the volunteer. Sending organisations could see their participation in IVS as a learning experience too and one that can benefit them in many concrete ways. After evaluating their experience, follow-up, for a sending organisation, 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 due to the observation of best practices in the host organisation.

Volunteers who return can also be seen by sending organisations 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 on IVS by reinforcing or revising their partnership strategies and by using the volunteer to further

develop their activities. After evaluating the voluntary service, 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, it does not only support communities in need but at the same time – like it or not – the voluntary service also gives skills to the volunteer. Some sending organisations even send volunteers with the main purpose of providing them with a learning experience, of 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 the volunteers. Some of the skills that volunteers gain are:

- Life experience and maturity, which have an impact on their future personal and professional development;
- At the same time they get a complex of so-called soft skills, for example abilities to communicate and co-operate with people, 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.);
- They also acquire knowledge to work in a team and to make decisions, as well as to be flexible and autonomous;
- Young people also get a wide range of professional knowledge and practical skills in certain areas of work, for example administration, social care and services, intercultural communication, accountancy, environment, etc.;







- Having been in language environment other than their native language, volunteers also acquire specific language abilities;
- Intercultural skills, understanding a different culture, trying not to judge and interpret behaviour wrongly, tolerance of ambiguity, learning to see things from different perspectives.

It is important to recognise and accredit all these skills that the volunteers gained to a certain extent and preferably to document them as this might have an influence on the future perspectives of volunteers regarding job search. The IVS can be the experience that many employers nowadays ask for. When documented and certified properly, the volunteers' work and training completed within the IVS will stand in good stead for them in the future and are a plus on their curriculum vitae.

Within Europe, there exist a wide variety of formats of recognition and certification. In some countries you need to keep a portfolio with all your achievements while in others the voluntary service organisation has to be approved in order to provide certificates for gained skills. Some employers get in touch with the volunteer's referee whereas others base themselves primarily on diplomas and certificates. So depending on the situation of the volunteers, they might be helped by different types of certification.

One easy and common way of documenting the skills gained during the voluntary service is a certificate. This is a written formal statement certifying that the volunteer has participated in the IVS in the hosting organisation over a certain period of time. In order to give these certificates more weight you could do the following:

- Detail the tasks and responsibilities of the volunteer during the voluntary service;
- Write a recommendation letter to go with the certificate;
- Add the contact addresses of some referees in the certificate;
- Argue which skills the volunteer gained during the voluntary service and how you can deduct this;
- Establish a portfolio with the outcomes of the tasks of the volunteer (pictures, articles or posters of the events that the volunteer organised);
- Try to get links 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.



## 6. Did you consider...



T-Kit  
on International  
Voluntary Service

### 6.1 Voluntary service for “disadvantaged young people

#### What’s in a word...?

First of all, we should be careful with the term “disadvantaged” young people, since 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”. Instead the concept of “social exclusion” would be more appropriate, because it refers to the situation which excludes them and gives them only limited opportunities, and not to the persons. On top of this, the definition of “disadvantage” or “social exclusion” varies according to the situation the person comes from. In Sweden an unemployed person is considered “disadvantaged” whereas this would be inconceivable in the North of England where the high unemployment rate would condemn a ridiculously big part of the population to “social exclusion”, which is not the case. In the same way being a woman should not lead to social exclusion, but in some immigrant groups the position of the woman offers fewer opportunities. It also depends a lot on how the person deals with a particular social situation. Coming from an ethnic minority could engender social exclusion, but a black person could just as well have found access to the same opportunities as the rest of society. Therefore, in this chapter we refer to “young people that need some special attention and additional resources” for participating in a voluntary service programme.

There has been a lot of talk over the last years about IVS as a method to help socially excluded young people to improve their life conditions. But IVS should not be considered to be a goal at the end of the line for this target group. It is one step in the longer-term pathway of the young people in difficulty. There are aims beyond the IVS that are set from the beginning of the work with them (for example independent living, finding a job, etc.). So it is more likely that the youth or social workers initiate an IVS than the socially excluded young persons themselves.

Working with socially excluded people requires quite a lot of sensitivity and special care. Therefore it is desirable to co-operate with organisations with experience in the field of social inclusion. Working with young people

in difficulty brings extra work compared to working with the “classic” target group. However, projects giving young people who need it most a chance to go abroad and become involved in a project, are all the more rewarding and needed in society.

#### Preparing for the big jump

So if your volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds need more attention, what should the attention focus on? One of the big principles in the preparation of volunteers is uncertainty reduction. New and uncertain situations are scary, especially when you do not have a lot of practice in dealing with them.

Most of the time socially excluded youngsters have had very few opportunities to go abroad or to cope independently with new situations. One way to prepare volunteers for an IVS is to gradually familiarise them with the kind of situation the volunteer will end up in. International exchanges or simply holidays 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 that speak their language. Other methods and techniques to work on intercultural sensitivity are described in the *T-kit on Intercultural Learning* (available to download from [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)). 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 the volunteers already get a feel for working in a project, carrying out tasks, working together with others etc. The stay abroad can be short at first, but gradually prolonged if wished, or longer in a future IVS.

Other concrete measures you can take in order 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 that could speak their mother tongue. Visiting the project with the volunteers before the actual (longer-term) voluntary service could 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 the 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.

The way you go about preparation and the whole project is very important. Especially when working with volunteers with learning difficulties or that have 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 the 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; failure punches it down, especially when the volunteer feels responsible for the result of his actions. 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, peers, etc.) is an important element in raising self-esteem. Failures should be put in perspective and used as a learning experience for the future. But besides work there is also an atmosphere in which the volunteers should feel at ease. You can easily make the volunteers feel welcome by making time for a chat, some jokes, some little attentions, etc. However be careful not to create situations that can 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 a 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 of doing an IVS and leaving for the actual placement. And even though you might manage to keep the volunteers' motivation high, do not forget that they are not isolated persons – sometimes convincing parents, explaining the project to peers etc. is also needed.

It is also important to “tailor-make” the preparation for volunteers coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, since every single one of them might face specific difficulties. Therefore it is best that youth workers who know the young volunteers in question are closely involved in the preparation in order to focus attention on the specific needs or problems that the volunteer might face.

Given the diversity of the target group of socially excluded young people, it is essential to communicate between the sending and hosting organisation as to what this “social exclusion” actually entails for them. 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 to whom? The support person in the host organisation is probably the one that 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 for their co-operation with the volunteer.

### **When the going gets tough...**

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



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

For the well-being of the volunteers, regular contacts with the “home front” could be crucial. This provides them with an escape valve to talk 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 also necessary to have regular meetings with a support person in the project in order to discuss the work, their 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.

Just in case, it is also important to develop an emergency procedure with the volunteer in case something goes really wrong: incredible homesickness, problems at work, accidents and suchlike. This can be a phone number, a sealed envelope with an extra amount of money, an emergency packet of cigarettes for a person that recently quit smoking etc. The conditions in which to use the emergency procedure should be known to all people involved (volunteer, host project, youth worker at home).

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 [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)).

### It is not finished yet

What counts for the “classic” volunteers probably counts double for the volunteers coming from a disadvantaged background. After the IVS it is not finished yet! One of the things every volunteer will bump into is the re-entry shock. The volunteer might have progressed or changed tremendously during the 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 that did not go through such an experience and evolution as the volunteer did.

It is important for the work with young people to make an inventory to see what they have learnt and gained during their period abroad in this 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 the volunteers feel valued is to involve them in the preparation of future volunteers. This way you let the volunteers know that they possess something very valuable – an experience to share. The youth worker in the sending organisation back home is also vital in supporting the volunteer when 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.

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, social security etc. 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 an 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 or youth worker (preferably together) had set for the project. Perhaps they strived for more independence and the voluntary service abroad has been a successful test, so that 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 to find a job in the area of work done in the placement, or they start an education in this direction. Basically the volunteers go on to plan their lives – better.

## 6.2 Gender in International Voluntary Service



### “What’s gender got to do with it?”

Statistically, more women than men volunteer. For example the European Voluntary Service – a programme of the European Commission (see also Chapter 2.3 Funding and budgeting) – registered in 1999 a significantly higher percentage of female participants (75%) than male ones (25%). There seems to be a trend for more women than men to join voluntary service activities in the western world.

It is not always easy to explain why more women than men seem to 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 (for example 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. However, caring and volunteering is still perceived as a feminine activity, so more women go on an 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, co-operative working methods, etc.) Of course men can develop the same level of quality in their human relations, but in general the gap is still to be bridged by them in this respect.

### 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 both men and women in volunteering, the social sector can help to redefine a caring positive image of men and provide role models for other men who might feel reluctant to do so due to the lack of male examples they can identify with. Here are some suggestions that could help you in balancing the gender participation in your voluntary service.

- Ask your previous or current male volunteers about their motivation to join your IVS.
- Ask men outside your organisation what would make them wish to join an IVS.
- 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.
- Use images of male volunteers in your publications (for example pictures of male volunteers doing traditional feminine activities, such as working with children or cooking, can help other males to identify themselves with these activities. Conversely, you can show your male volunteers doing more traditional masculine activities, such as building a wooden bridge in a forest, to attract others to join your programmes).





### **The problem of recruiting female volunteers**

On the contrary, in some cultural contexts the difficulty is to recruit female volunteers especially for voluntary service abroad. Being aware of the particular difficulties that some young women may have to face to when deciding to participate in voluntary activities abroad can provide organisers with an insight into how to recruit, guide and support them. In the example of young immigrant women from Morocco the young women in question showed significant interest in joining the programme, but they were not in a position to face their parents' opposition. Their parents were not only negative about their participation but were also incapable of understanding what their motivation might be for joining the programme. Factors such as age, employment history and personality play a role in their determination to go against their families' wishes. Some suggestions to overcome these obstacles could be:

- 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 regarding for example separate male and female living quarters, regarding the type of supervision (and the sex of the supervisors), regarding possibilities to contact or visit their daughter, etc.
- Try to see whether or not some of your activities could become more gender oriented (for example certain activities could be developed in groups of only female volunteers).
- If you have been successful in recruiting female volunteers who experienced strong cultural barriers to join your IVS, 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 does not only play a role in equality of participation in your voluntary service programme, it also surfaces in IVS because of the potential cultural differences. Gender perceptions vary from culture to culture. Some cultures are very open when it comes 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 an open type of culture to

a closed type of culture, for instance, could experience particular problems in terms of adaptation and integration. Situations of this nature are usually intensified by the size of the host community. The smaller the community the higher the risk for "gender shock" (as for "cultural shock").

One way of dealing with this is to refer to gender issues during the preparation of 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 to 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 "gender shock" than to describe solely 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 not. This could again be part of the preparation of the volunteers.

Some organisations see the sharing of the same living space by men and women as part of their working philosophy. However, the level of maturity of the people involved may not be sufficient to deal with the ensuing sexual tension. Organisations that promote voluntary work in group settings, where men and women share the same living quarters (for example a dormitory) could be the scene of sexual harassment. Men and women can, of course, share the same living space 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 from the organisers the openness of mind 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 impinge on their harmonious living; on the contrary, it increases their 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 develop the work.

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

A similar but opposite example could be given in 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 on hand than a woman.

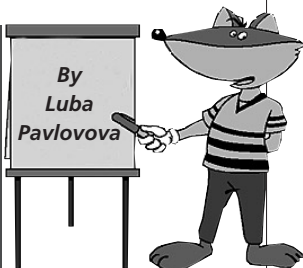
In both cases given as examples it would not be appropriate to accuse any of the organisations of discrimination, since they would only be trying to match the right person to the right job and the gender sensitivity of the work would plainly justify their choices.

## 6.3 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 should 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, despite the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on youth mobility (*R(95)18*) and on the promotion of a voluntary service (*R(94)4*) (see [www.coe.fr/youth](http://www.coe.fr/youth) > policies). Additional useful information on mobility of volunteers within Europe can also be found on the following website: [www.sosforevs.org](http://www.sosforevs.org) > Volunteer’s mobility





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 duration of the IVS 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

When running short- or long-term IVS activities, very often volunteers may 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, etc.). Usually, they are asked to present a letter of confirmation from the hosting organisation and sometimes an interview conducted by

the embassy representatives could be held with them. Different countries also have different visa costs. Obtaining a visa can take from a week to several months, so start the procedures early enough. When running a long-term IVS the visa is a pre-condition to get a residence permit in the host country.

#### • Residence permit

One of the possible obstacles already listed in the table above can be the obtaining of a “right of residence” for the volunteers for the full duration of their IVS. A residence permit authorises a person to reside on the territory of the host country. It is usually required for a stay of three months and 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, etc.).

- **Work permit**

The 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 could be considered as workers and the hosting organisation has to obtain working 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 (repatriation in case of illness or accident or death, third-party insurance, etc.). Some countries have signed bilateral agreements regarding medical treatment. Find out via your social insurance or through 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 the volunteers may also need documents, which certify that they do not have any infectious diseases. Sometimes

it is enough to hold such a medical certificate, which is 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 regarding the rules applicable in the host country.

- **Unemployment and other benefits**

Going abroad often has consequences for the different 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 an 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 these financially challenging cases, when coming back from an IVS, there should be considerable support from the sending organisation in order to rearrange the life of the volunteer.

## 6.4 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, however, 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 implemented so far by other voluntary work organisations to deal with crises. In this chapter we will look at crisis management both 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, etc.) 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 crisis

You have a crisis if the situation is:

- unexpected
- requires immediate attention
- is potentially serious and harmful to your organisation or the 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, the project is closed down.

### 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, 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 is accused by one of the families of sexually abusing their child. The volunteer is arrested and although 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 damages to their own child.

In some of the cases (natural disasters, riot, etc.) 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 from 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 is 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.

### 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 find some steps that can help you be ready for a crisis, but remember, no management tool is a ready-to-use recipe, 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 pre-determined group of people in your organisation to deal with a crisis, when it happens you will be able to respond a lot quicker to it. 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 one 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 team members and that they can be reached at all times. One more point: dealing with a crisis can be psychologically draining, thus, 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, etc.). 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 amongst 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, volunteers, their families, sending or host partners and other relevant organisations or people. To avoid this from 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 that they are regularly updated. This is a must for your volunteers' list and sending and hosting partners. In a crisis situation, for example when a volunteer needs to be evacuated, the last thing that you want to happen is to find out that your volunteer is not living at that address anymore.

### **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 to. Make sure that someone is always available 24 hours a day to respond to a crisis.





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### **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 (for example 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 the other way around. Update your media kit regularly and address the specific training needs of your media spokesperson and staff, namely on how to deal with media inquiries. 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 and procedures to be taken when dealing with a crisis in your organisation and distribute this amongst 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 the 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. It sounds like a lot of work but, 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 getting back vital information to keep on doing your work can be very slim. Having some fundamental files kept in a safe place outside your office can prevent 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 provide 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).

## **Responding to a crisis – what to do immediately after?**

Very well, we looked at ways of preparing for a crisis but what to 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 the post-crisis evaluation

How can you make sure that you have learned from your crisis and that you will be able to prevent similar things from happening or, if they do, that you can handle them better and more efficiently? The answer to this question is simple; you must make sure that you 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 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 the management of the crisis could have been improved?
- 9 What procedures could you implement to incorporate these improved methods into future crisis management situations?

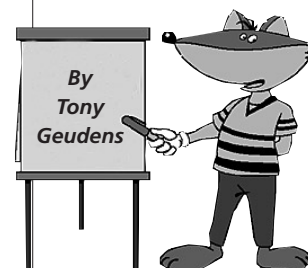


## Glossary

- **IVS:** International Voluntary Service: in the context of this T-kit on voluntary service, International Voluntary Service is considered to be a project limited in time, which involves sending one or more volunteers to another country for a period of time doing voluntary work for which no specialist skills are required.
- **EVS:** European Voluntary Service: this is a voluntary service programme of the European Commission which involves sending individual volunteers to another country for a period of six to twelve months, or between three weeks and six months for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (see also EVS under Chapter 2.3.2 Funders and funding possibilities).
- **Work camp:** this is a short-term gathering (two to three weeks) of volunteers, mostly from different countries, to help out 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 country of the volunteers, which provides information about the IVS and which ideally takes responsibility for the recruitment and preparation of the volunteer, for the communication with the (potential) hosting organisations and with the volunteers during their stay abroad and for the follow-up of the volunteers when returning 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 the living conditions (food, accommodation, free time suggestions, contacts with local community, support, etc.) of the volunteers and the 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).

- **Placement:** the placement is the actual work place of the volunteer. This can be situated within the hosting organisation, but sometimes the hosting organisation can rely on an external placement which generally then takes over responsibilities for living conditions and work-related needs. In this case the hosting organisation remains the administrative partner in the triangular relationship between the volunteer, the sending and the hosting organisation.
- **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, etc. depending on the cultural or organisational context (see also Chapter 4.3 Ongoing support of volunteers).





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- **Fundraising:** the different activities that are carried out with the aim of receiving money for a project or an organisation. This can range from a raffle to a flea market, from a benefit concert to a fundraising party. Fundraising is less formal and less administrative than funding (see also Chapter 2.3 Funding and budgeting).
  - **Funding:** this is considered to be the 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 fundraising activities (see also Chapter 2.3 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 from disadvantaged backgrounds” instead. This group of people 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 Chapter 6.1 Voluntary service for “disadvantaged young people”).



## Overview of International Voluntary Service organisations, programmes and platforms

Co-ordinating bodies: do not implement projects directly, lobby and act as facilitator for contacts to third institutions and agencies, organise various activities/seminars and publications in order to improve the quality of exchanges. Member organisations are international or national organisations

International organisations: structures with an international/European secretariat and national branches/members subscribing to some extent to a common identity; the international organisations themselves also generally do not organise the IVS projects directly. They

are under the responsibility of their branches or members

- the indications related to geographical extension, duration of projects and age limits are only an indication as to the main type of activities run by (the members of) a given organisation
- duration: in general the long-term projects concern individual placements whereas short-term projects are often projects in which volunteers work as a group, even if they have travelled to the location of the project individually



For more details, see the chart on the next page.





Name	Type of organisation	Website	Duration of placements	Geographical focus of activities	Main topics and activities	Special requirements of volunteers	Age range
Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)	Co-ordinating body since 1948. 144 member organisations in 100 countries	<a href="http://www.unesco.org/ccivs">www.unesco.org/ccivs</a>	Short- and long-term	Global	Peace Sustainable development Inter-regional exchanges	Non – specialised volunteers	No limit
Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO)	Co-ordinating body since 1993. 13 member organisations	<a href="http://www.avso.org">www.avso.org</a>	Long-term	Europe	Legal status of volunteers Central and eastern Europe Inclusion of disadvantaged volunteers	Non – specialised volunteers	Mainly under 30
The Alliance	International network since 1982. 21 full and 9 associate member organisations	<a href="http://www.alliance-network.org">www.alliance-network.org</a>	Mainly short-term	Europe	Inclusion of disadvantaged volunteers Training and exchange for staff and volunteers Develop medium- and long-term voluntary service	Non – specialised volunteers	No limit (Average under 30)
Action d'Urgence Internationale (AUI)	French branch of a network of organisations since 1977, member of CCIVS	<a href="http://www.aui-ong.org">www.aui-ong.org</a>	15 days - 1 year	France, Europe, Latin America, Southeast Asia	Natural hazards (short missions) Development projects Preparation seminars – catastrophe management	Non – specialised volunteers Preparation seminars	Min. 18
International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE)	International organisation since 1949. 27 national committees and 4 regional bodies. Member of CCIVS and AVSO	<a href="http://www.icye.org">www.icye.org</a>	6 - 12 months	Global	Training to improve the quality of long-term voluntary service Seminars on issues such as youth mobility	Non – specialised volunteers	18 - 28



Name	Type of organisation	Website	Duration of placements	Geographical focus of activities	Main topics and activities	Special requirements of volunteers	Age range
<b>European Federation of Intercultural Learning (EFIL)</b>	International organisation since 1971. 23 members. Member of CCIVS and AVSO	<a href="http://www.afs.org/efil">www.afs.org/efil</a>	Long-term	Europe	Secondary school exchange EVS Training seminars	Non – specialised volunteers	15 (min. for school exchange) – 25 (max. for EVS)
<b>Service Civil International (SCI)</b>	International organisation since 1920. 33 branches and groups. Member of CCIVS and AVSO	<a href="http://www.sciint.org">www.sciint.org</a>	Short-term (and some medium- and long-term)	Europe, Asia and North America	Peace International understanding Sustainable development Respect for the environment	Non – specialised volunteers Obligatory preparation seminars for projects in the South	No max. Min. 21 for South otherwise min. 18
<b>Voluntariato Internazionale Donna Educazione Sviluppo (VIDES)</b>	International organisation since 1987. Member of CCIVS	<a href="http://www.vides.org">www.vides.org</a>	1 month to 2 years	Global	Peace Debt relief Promotion of women Street children Globalisation and solidarity	Non – specialised volunteers	Min. 21 for long term Otherwise min. 17 Max. 35
<b>Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)</b>	International organisation since 1961. Partner of CCIVS	<a href="http://www.vso.org.uk">www.vso.org.uk</a>	2 years	Global	Information evenings Global education Teachers networks Activities on issues like Aids with partners	Substantial professional experience Technical skills	30 - 35
<b>Youth Action for Peace (YAP)</b>	International organisation since 1923. 15 branches and groups. Member of CCIVS and AVSO	<a href="http://www.yap.org">www.yap.org</a>	Short- and long-term	Europe (east and west), Latin America and Mediterranean	Peace Social change Sustainable development Environment	Non – specialised volunteers	Min. 18



Name	Type of organisation	Website	Duration of placements	Geographical focus of activities	Main topics and activities	Special requirements of volunteers	Age range
European Voluntary Service (EVS)	Part of the programme 'YOUTH' of the EU implemented by 31 National Agencies	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html">www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html</a>	Long-term (short-term for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds)	Mainly Europe (with possibilities in Mediterranean and CIS countries)	Mobility Intercultural Learning	None	18 - 25
Internationaler Versöhnungsbund	International network since 1914	<a href="http://www.versoehnungsbund.de">www.versoehnungsbund.de</a>	Shortand medium-term	Global	Ecumenical Peace	Non – specialised volunteers, Christian	Min. 18
United Nations Volunteers (UNV)	Specialised programme of the United Nations Development Programme	<a href="http://www.unv.org">www.unv.org</a>	Mainly medium-and long-term	Global	Peace Sustainable development	Substantial professional experience	30 - 40



### Further reading

#### Commented bibliography

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

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

Association of Voluntary Service Organisations, Intermediate Report – *Step-by-Step to Long-Term Volunteering*, AVSO, Brussels, 2000.

*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 tell openly about the lessons they have learnt since the beginning, this report is good background material for organisations trying to get started with this particular target group.*

Blackman, Stephanie T., *Recruiting Male Volunteers: a guide based on exploratory research*, Corporation for National Service, Washington DC, 1999.

*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, Richard, *Understanding Culture's Influence on Behaviour*, Harcourt Brace, Fort Wroth, 1993 (ISBN 0030758971).

*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.*

"Guidelines for Inter-regional Volunteer Exchange", in CCIVS, *South-South: North-South Seminar*, CCIVS, Paris, 1998.

*Specific guidelines for intercontinental voluntary service.*

Cook, Tim, *Avoiding the Wastepaper Basket: a practical guide for applying to grant-making trusts*, Voluntary Service Council, London, 1999 (ISBN 1872582613).

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

Cotton, David, *Keys to Management*, Unwin Hyman, Edinburgh, 1988 (ISBN 0 7135 2744 7).

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

Dewitt, J., *Volunteer Legal Handbook*, available at [www.ptialaska.net](http://www.ptialaska.net) (26 January 2000).

*Although this handbook sounds sometimes far too legal and is very much related to the US reality, it raises a number of interesting issues about crisis prevention that will be an "eye-opener" for many working in this field in Europe.*

European Commission, "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, 2000.

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



Faller, Kurt et al., *Konflikte selber lösen. Mediation für Schule und Jugendarbeit*, Verlag an der Ruhr, Mülheim an der Ruhr, 1996 (ISBN: 3860722204).

*An accessible practitioner's book with different frameworks and methods to train 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, Nic and Macbeth, Fiona, *Playing with Fire. Training for the creative use of conflict*, Youth Work Press, London, 1992 (ISBN 0861551449).

*Playing with fire 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., *A New Civic Europe, a Study of the Extent and Role of Volunteering*, Volunteer Centre UK, London, 1995.

*Good study for background reading on volunteering. The study analysed the extent of volunteering in ten European countries and provides interesting data in this respect.*

Glasl, Friedrich, *Konfliktmanagement: ein Handbuch für Führungskräfte, Beraterinnen und Berater*, Haupt, Bern, 1999 (ISBN 3258060223).

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

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

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

Handy, Charles, *Understanding Voluntary Organisations: How to Make Them Function Effectively*, Penguin, London, 1997 (ISBN 0140143386).

*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.*

National Centre for Volunteering, *Safe and Alert – good practice advice on volunteers working with vulnerable clients*, NCV, London, 1999.

*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".*

McCurley, Steve and Lynch, Rick, *Essential Volunteer Management*, Directory of Social Change, London, 1998 (ISBN 1900360187).

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

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

*A training manual on the management of volunteers.*

Paige, Michael R., *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth, 1993 (ISBN 1877864250).

*A collection of articles based on research argue 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.*

Patfoord, Pat, *Uprooting Violence: Building Non-violence*, Cobblestone, Woodstock, 1995 (ISBN 0891660151).

*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.*

Whitmore, John, *Coaching for Performance (People Skills for Professionals)*, Nicholas Brealey, Naperville, London, 1996 (ISBN 1857881702).

*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, Celeste J., *The seven Rs of Volunteer Development. A YMCA Resource Kit*, YMCA of the USA, Champaign, 1994 (ISBN 0873227565).

*An extensive manual that covers about anything that has to do with working with volunteers (from an American and YMCA perspective). It is structured around the seven Rs, being 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.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth)

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

[www.eastlinks.net](http://www.eastlinks.net)

*A very useful site for organisations looking for partners (mainly short-term) for International Voluntary Service projects in central and eastern Europe. It is the website of a regional network of IVS organisations in this area.*

[www.ecri.coe.int](http://www.ecri.coe.int)

*The website of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has an education pack on informal intercultural education online (amongst 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](http://www.energizeinc.com)

*A publishing house in the US which solely focuses on books, materials on volunteering, volunteer management and voluntary service. Not much on international dimensions of voluntary service.*

[www.etr.org/nsrc/pdfs/BBS/bbs.html](http://www.etr.org/nsrc/pdfs/BBS/bbs.html)  
(3-3-2001)

*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](http://www.eurodesk.org)

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

[www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html)

*This website brings you to the YOUTH 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 programme in the different European Countries.*

[www.fundersonline.org](http://www.fundersonline.org)

*Funders Online offers information about a range of European funding and grant-making sources.*

[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)

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

[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org) & [www.ccp.ca](http://www.ccp.ca)

*These two websites are very much worth a visit. Whether you are interested in obtaining statistical information about the situation of volunteering in North America, or documentation about volunteering in general, these two sites will not leave you disappointed and they have many interesting links.*

[www.movit.si/mladina/database.htm](http://www.movit.si/mladina/database.htm)

*A database with youth organisations active in Southeast Europe, one of the priority areas of work of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. This could be the start of a partner search for an organisation in that area.*



T-Kit  
on International  
Voluntary Service

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[www.sosforevs.org](http://www.sosforevs.org)

*Useful information for organising a European Voluntary Service, as well as on practicalities when moving around in Europe (conditions for right of residence, visa needs, mobility issues, etc...)*

[www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)

*The website of the Partnership in Training and Youth between the Council of Europe and the European Commission has all T-kits online, as well as some training course reports,*

*the trainers' magazine Coyote and all kinds of information about training opportunities.*

[www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)

*This is the website of the European Youth Forum which aims to give a political voice to young people in Europe through youth organisations. They have links and descriptions of their member organisations which are international non-governmental youth organisations and national youth councils in Europe. They also have various policy texts online.*



## The authors

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**Simona Costanzo** 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 Northern Africa to the European Union. She is currently the Director of CCIVS, the Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service, an NGO based at Unesco Headquarters in Paris. [simonacostanzo@yahoo.it](mailto:simonacostanzo@yahoo.it)

**Tony Geudens** (writing and editing) is one of those "professional volunteers". He has spent a lot of his free time in Service Civil International, both going on international work camps (former Yugoslavia, Ghana, Sri Lanka

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# INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE



In 1998, the COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DECIDED TO TAKE COMMON ACTION IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN YOUTH WORKER TRAINING, AND THEREFORE INITIATED A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT. THE AIM OF THE AGREEMENT, WHICH IS LAID DOWN IN SEVERAL COVENANTS, IS “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”.

THE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO INSTITUTIONS COVERS A WIDE SPECTRUM OF ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS, AS WELL AS DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR FURTHER NETWORKING.

THREE MAIN COMPONENTS GOVERN THE PARTNERSHIP: A TRAINING OFFER (LONG TERM TRAINING FOR TRAINERS AND TRAINING ON EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP), PUBLICATIONS (BOTH PAPER AND ELECTRONIC VERSIONS OF TRAINING MATERIALS AND MAGAZINE) AND NETWORKING TOOLS (TRAINERS POOL AND EXCHANGE POSSIBILITIES). THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO RAISE STANDARDS IN YOUTH WORKER TRAINING AT A EUROPEAN LEVEL AND DEFINE QUALITY CRITERIA FOR SUCH TRAINING.



2000



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