



TWIST AND SHAPE YOURSELF

Training Course about Competences Assessment
Methodology applied to EVS training and
evaluation

PUBLIC REPORT and TOOLKIT



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Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

About P.E.CO. – Progetti Europei di Cooperazione

P.E.CO is an association born in June 2013 to promote opportunities of mobility and inter-cultural learning for youngsters from Genoa and its region. The association works with local NGOs and institutions in order to involve local organisations and local communities in international projects. This network helps us to involve local participants, when possible with fewer opportunities. As it is a young organisation our experience comes from previous activities in other youth organisations, so we are looking for long-term strategic partnerships in order to create our network. Our main activities are: Youth Exchanges, training courses and European Voluntary Service within the Erasmus plus programme; events in local communities on different themes.

Our goal consists in stimulating the personal growth of youngsters, by raising their sense of citizenship, an active participation inside society and a real awareness about their role as European citizens.

We try to educate youngsters to a peaceful cohabitation with people coming from different cultures, countries and social conditions, by giving them the opportunity to confront themselves within an inter-cultural environment which stimulates the development of a conscience about the complexity of our society.

Our activities are youth exchanges, training courses, and sending Italian youngsters abroad, thanks to the European Voluntary Service programme: we have been accredited as sending and coordinating organization for EVS in July 2014 and coordinated so far (March 2017) 36 EVS volunteers.

More info at: <http://en.peco.genova.it/>

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Project Summary

“Twist and Shape Yourself” was a project made up of several activities focusing on volunteering topics, on the recognition of competences gained during non formal education experiences, intercultural learning and work in socio-educative contexts.

The overall objective was two folded:

1°- Provide volunteers with an intercultural learning experience and new competences in the socio-educative field enabling them to grow from a professional point of view.

2°- Provide new methodologies and tools to youth workers involved in EVS volunteers support.

The project ideas has been developed following P.E.CO.'s positive experience in EVS volunteers' coordination and the attempt to extend EVS opportunities both for volunteers and sending/hosting organisations.

The project tackled also the demand of appropriate training and support for EVS volunteers using new approaches, especially the “Competences assessment methodology”, inspired by RDA (Reconnaissance Des Acquis) method.

This approach focuses on identification, evaluation and recognition of non formal competences. It was adapted by our staff to be applied to EVS volunteers' support and to help them while filling in their Youthpasses.

During the project EVS coordination we applied this methodology. The mobility of youth workers gave us the opportunity to share it with sending and hosting partners.

“Twist and Shape Yourself” comprised two major processes: the coordination of 12 volunteers among 5 hosting organisations in Italy and France, and the mobility of youth workers for the support of EVS volunteers focusing on the “Competence Assessment methodology”.

Volunteers have been hosted from february 2016 in the following institutions: CeLIM in Milan, Associazione Il Ce.Sto. Onlus in Genova, Cooperativa Sociale Mignanego in



Mignanego (Genova), and from March 2016 in Istituto Walden Cooperativa Sociale in Menfi (Agrigento), in Cooperativa di Sperimentazione Territoriale per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile – CEA Panta Rei in Passignano sul Trasimeno, (Perugia) and in Initiative et Développement Citoyen association in Lastours (Carcassonne - France).

The mobility of Youth Workers took place from 15 to 21 December 2016 in Genoa, involving 20 youth workers engaged in the support of EVS volunteers.

The EVS coordination activities had an important professional and personal impact on volunteers, resulting from the life experience and their services in a new context. Still, the presence of the volunteers inside the established reality stimulated the development of knowledge, competences and skills useful not only in social and educative work, but also in everyday life.

Volunteers had the chance to know new contexts and methodologies, develop communicative, relational and supportive competences and new practices as they used new methods to work with children, migrants and local communities.

The impact of the project has been very important for P.E.CO. too: the staff improved its own intercultural competences and EVS coordination capacity.

The effect for the hosting organisations have been substantial in terms of intercultural learning and exchange of competences.

The impact on participants in the mobility of youth workers has been positive too: they acquired new skills and experience that we are sure will positively impact their community, both in the short term – improving their relation with volunteers and the support they can provide them getting better the association's work with EVS and local volunteers - and in the long term.



The future EVS volunteers, indeed, will be better supported during their experience and will acquire more awareness about non formal competences developed during their experience within EVS.

In addition to this, this project enabled us to test the application of the “competences assessment” methodology with youth workers interested in reproducing it in local contexts.

Participating organizations

Support for Youth Development	Romania
Adefis Youth International	Spain
Outward Bound Croatia	Croatia
Associação Juvenil Rota Jovem	Portugal
Jugendwerk der AWO Württemberg	Germany
NGO Öökull	Estonia
Asociación Ser Joven	Spain
Youth Service – Murcia City Council	Spain
Research-Intellectual Club “Dialogue of Generations”	Georgia
Team for Youth	Romania
YUPI	Portugal
PEN – Peer Educators Network	Kosovo
IDC - Initiative et Développement Citoyen	France
Associação Social Recreativa Juventude de Vila Fonche/Juventude	Portugal
Proyecto Kieu	Spain

RDA Methodology – Competences Assessment

“The Reconnaissance des Acquis,” which literally means “recognition of acquired skills, is a methodological approach that takes place through individual and collective paths, designed to bring out, to structure, to evaluate and reinvest in a project the competence and processes acquired during the course of life through more and diverse experiences.

The “Reconnaissance des Acquis” regards the fellow carrier of potential and resources and attempts at involving the whole human being, with its complexity, in a process of retelling his/her history, his/her relationship with knowledge, his/her construction of awareness.

This method born in France in the 1980s and has been applied in the employment field to help the staff and unemployed people thinking about their competences, skills, strengths and weaknesses points. It is focused on how specific competences have been acquired and on why people did specific choices.

We advise to perform step 1 and 2 during on the arrival training, steps 3 and 4 during the EVS experience and step 5 during the final evaluation.

Step 1

Determination of personal objectives

Definition of personal objectives alone or in a group

Goals achievable and re-directable

Step 2

Life Panorama

Reconstruction of one's own way of life related to training and experience: in groups of 3-4 people, each one tells his/her own experiences and the others take notes on what they believe important for the personal development of who's speaking in order to give him/her feedbacks and allow him /her to draw a graph or write a textual representation that could shows periods, places and moods in which the personality has been built.

Step 3

Identification and decryption of one's own learning

It deals both with professional and personal experiences, specific ones and not: how I learned to write, to swim, to deal with someone else, to talk, which competences I acquired and where I put them into practice, which values I discovered.

Work in small groups: tale of a personal, professional and social experience that helped me in growing up, that I understood and put into action or didn't apply.

The others take notes about what they judge important of each one's experience in order to give him/her back notes and allow him/her to write, describe and analyse the experiences and competences gained.

Step 4

Determination of pillars of competence - soft skills

Work on personality structure leading to transversal elements found inside each experience.

Determination of general elements (knowledges, behaviours, attitudes, social skills) and specific or technical (bound to a profession, a situation, a culture)

This kind of work could be done individually or with another person who has taken notes during the previous step.

Step 5

Translation of learning

Conciliation of discovering strong points (pillar of competences) and of failings or demands for a specific job, for a certain objective, for a determinate validation, for the exercise of a specific activity.

In this step we can work individually or in a group and search the necessary information on internet.

In this phase priority shall be given to people and all different aspects of their personality, so to identify points, knowledges and skills to be acquired or reinforced.

Step 6

Formalisation and construction of Portfolio

Self-assessment process (individual work) in which we try to demonstrate through accessible documents (photo, qualifications, certificate, cv, letters, papers, drawings) the declared competences and ability to respect the objectives set out during the first step.

The competences portfolio showed to the group will be a "photography" of the skills and personality of the person both in terms of content and in terms of its shape (it is important to demonstrate creative competences).

Why Competence Assessment Methodology in EVS?

This methodology has the aim of identifying, assessing and recognising capacities, skills, abilities and knowledge that we acquired through life experiences.

In the youth work field it is important to validate the learning process, recognizing how it was acquired and which competences have been developed; in particular because unfortunately not always non formal education certifications are recognized outside of this sector.

We believe that this method is particularly suitable for helping EVS volunteers believe and give the proper value to non formal competences acquired during EVS, and support them in the preparation of Youthpass.

The main propose is to involve EVS volunteers in a path that lead them to a renewed awareness of their competences: the volunteers can take time for themselves and share ideas, goals and ways to learn so to have a general overview of their life and start the EVS more aware of themselves and of their capabilities.

The whole approach is based on simple methodologies and concepts that must be shared to help volunteers during their EVS experience.

For P.E.CO. is crucial to measure non formal competences given the variety of learning areas inside non formal education and their communicative aspects.

Competence Assessment

"The Reconnaissance des Acquis," (recognition of acquired skills), it's a methodological approach that takes place through individual and collective paths, designed to bring out, to structure, to evaluate and reinvest in a project the competences and the processes acquired during the course of life through more diverse experiences.

Competence Assessment in EVS

This method has the aim of identify, assess and recognise capacities, skills, abilities and knowledges that we acquired through life experiences. We believe it is particularly suitable to help EVS volunteers to recognise and give the proper value to non formal competence learnt during the EVS and to support them in the preparation of Youthpass.

Five Pillars

We advise to perform step 1 and 2 during on arrival training, steps 3 and 4 during the EVS experience and step 5 during final evaluation.



Define your objectives



Create your "River of learning"



Share your experiences



Define your mainstays



Create a Portfolio



1° Step - Define Your objectives

Team of 3-4 members. After some minutes to think about his own objectives individually, each person presents his/her goals to the group and the others take notes. At the end, the group will report the objectives of all participants.



2° Step - Create your "River of learning"

Group Interviews (3-4 participants) to talk about their own River of Learning or View of your life. Participants imagine their life from an outside point of view emphasising the most important moments for one's own learning, emotions and challenges. Everyone tells his/her experience and the others take notes and then get it back. Everyone creates his/her River of Learning with paper, colours, glue and sets it out with all.



3° Step - Share your experience

2 experiences for each participant, whom tell his/her experience while the other 3/4 participants take notes and then get it back.



4° Step - Define the mainstays

It's time to know which competences, skills and knowledge are important for one's own life and which emotions and competences volunteers put in the professional/personal life. Thanks to comparison with the mentor and the work on the "youthpass diary", participants will have ideas, experience and material to share. In this way participants will be able to create their "Maps of Mainstays" and to expose it to others.



5° Step - Create your Portfolio

During the competence assessment, the photos, opinions and other graphic representations done into the methodology may be inserted in the Portfolio. This is a continuously updated document, so it will be just a beginning of what they can do subsequently.

P.E.CO.' proposal

In a nutshell, P.E.CO.'s idea is to use this method to help volunteers exploit their competences.

We adapted the methodology and propose it made of 5 pillars:

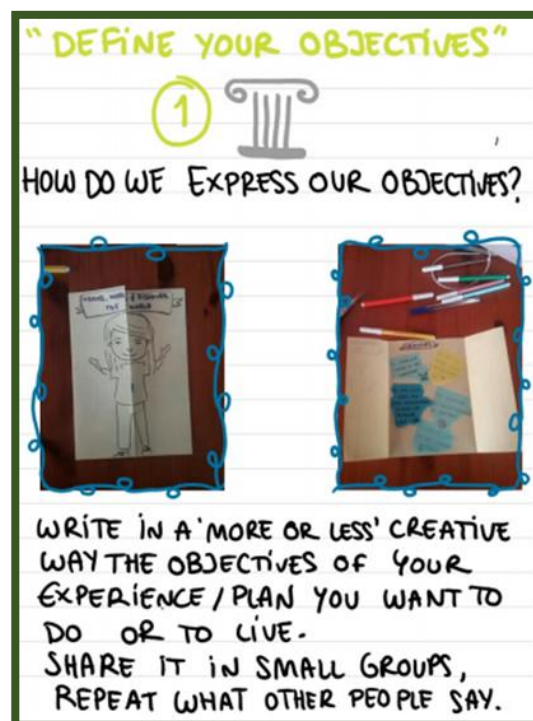
1. Define your objectives – attention focused on what we really want and obtain;
2. Create your “river of learning” – putting emphasis on what has been important for the personal development: books, experiences, people, (not necessarily related to formal education).
3. Share your experiences;
4. Define your mainstays;
5. Create your Portfolio.

1° Step - Determination of personal objectives

If we have too many participant, we can divide them into teams of 3-4 members. After some minutes thinking about his/her own objectives individually, each person presents his/her goals to the group. At the end, the group will report the objectives of all participants.

It's important that the feedbacks given to who is talking are neutral and that they are reported the same words used by the person who spoke. After this phase, we leave participants the necessary time to create a graphic representation of their own goals.

If we have few participants, we can ask them to map their goals for their EVS experience and tell them while drawing/using colours.





2° Step – Create your River of Learning

(with at least 4 participants, otherwise individual preparation and presentation in plenary)

Interviews in groups of 3-4 people about one's own River of Learning or View of your life.

Participants imagine their life from an outside point of view emphasising the most important moments for one's own learning, emotions and challenges.

Everyone tells his/her experience and the others take notes which will be given back.

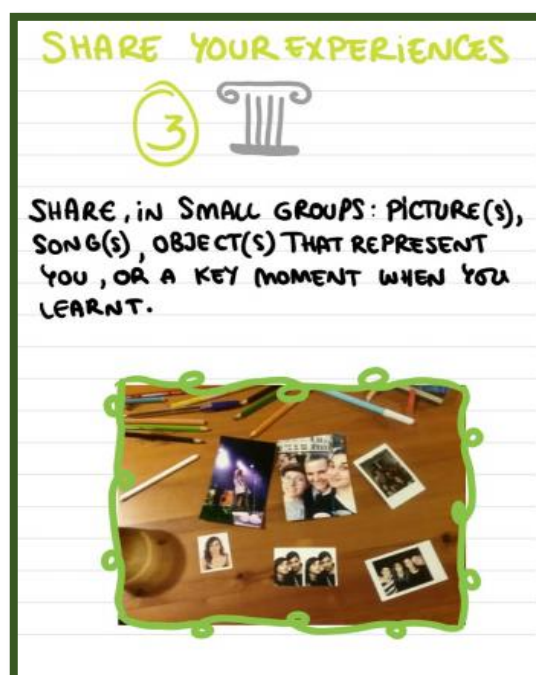
Everyone creates his/her River of Learning

with papers, colours, glue and sets it out with all.

3° Step – Share our experience

2 experiences for each participant, who tells his/her experience while the others take notes and then get it back.

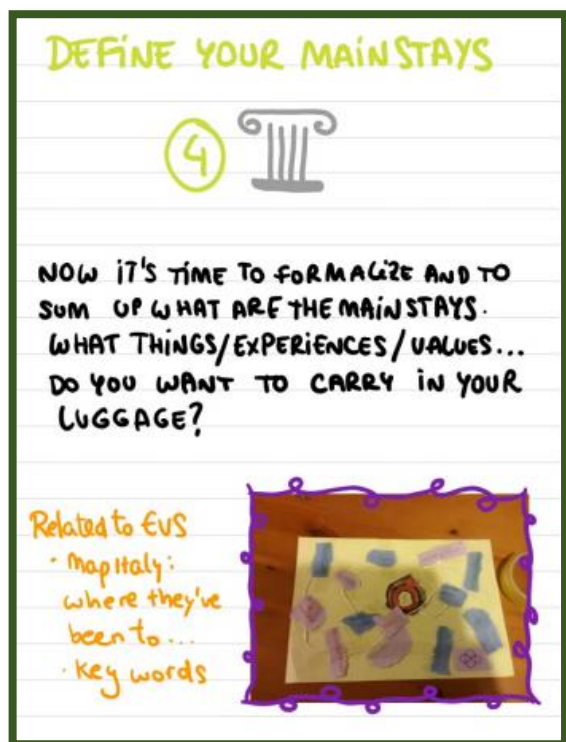
We leave the time to think about one's own experiences and the related acquired competences (what you have learned, how, when and where) which will be mapped in the next step. It is important to give volunteers suggestions to reflect (documents about knowledge, being able to do, behavioural attitudes, communicative and ethical talents).



4° Step - Define the mainstays

After a deep reflection, it is time to know which competences, skills and knowledge are important for one's own life and which emotions and competences volunteers put in their professional/personal life.

Thanks to comparison with the mentor and the work on the "youthpass diary", where we usually put materials useful to reflect on each one of the 8 key competences, participants will have ideas, experiences and materials to share. In this way participants will be able to create their "Maps of Mainstays" and to expose it to the others.



5° Step - Create your Portfolio

Creation of volunteers' own Portfolio of competences and skills.

Introduction: what is a Portfolio, how to create it and why (provide example – internet)

During the assessment of competences the photos, opinions and other graphic representations done during previous steps of the methodology may be put into the Portfolio. This is a continuously updated document, so it will be just the beginning of what it can become after EVS.

Practical application within EVS coordination “Twist and Shape Yourself”

1- On Arrival training contents

Step 1- 2 plus introduction on the topic of resilience (connected with EVS training and with other tools of non formal education that we usually use like “ fears, expectations and contributions” the “wheel of life”, the “9 gold’s rules”, get to know each others’ and team building activities).

Youthpass notebook: to be given to volunteers with the 8 Key Competences. This can work as “dairy of competences”.

Questionnaire on learning styles.

2- Project monitoring and support to Youthpass preparation

Regular meetings with the mentor.

Step 3-4 to be implemented during the meetings, so it is possible to do single meeting or in groups/couples.

3- Final evaluation

Step 5 and non formal education methodologies of evaluation. Possible use of a questionnaire on competences.

Training Course Twist and Shape Yourself 15-21 December 2016 - Sassello

Day One

The first day of training began with a preliminary presentation of participants: name and organisation.

The first phase was to stimulate team spirit and get to know each other's. In this perspective we organised team building activities as well as "speed date", "name game" and other little cooperation exercises.

In second instance we introduced the timeline and the work activities/tasks that had been done during the week.

Presentation of the topics:

- Introduce Skill Assessment Methodology
- Offer participants the opportunity to try and introduce new activities
- Evaluate Skills Assessment Methodology
- Meet potential partners and partners active in EVS project and build future partnerships.

This was also the opportunity for participants to write some posts about their ideas, feelings and emotions throughout the Training Course and share those with the other members of the team: "Reflection Time - Fears, Expectation, Contributions and Elevator Pitch".

After that participants knew each other's more, we could split the team into small groups, which helped participants focus on the following topics:

- Youthpass and mentoring
- Coordination/sending/hosting organisation



- Long/short term fewer opportunities

Team reflection and presentation of the team work.

The last step of the day is the presentation of the partner Associations:

Rota Jovem (Portogallo), Pen (Kosovo), Ser Joven Association (Spagna), Peco (Italia), Yupi (Portogallo), Outward Bound (Croazia) have show how they work in their countries.

Day Two

Start with Partners Presentation

Ayuntamiento de Murcia (Spagna), Associação Social Recreativa Juventude de Vila Fonche (Portogallo), Öökull (Estonia), Support 4 Youth Development (Romania), Team for Youth Association (Romania), Adefis (Spagna), Proyecto Kieu (Spagna), Jugendwerk der AWO (Germania).

Then we introduced the first topics of the TC:
Key Competences in YouthPass

“Space to think” on what Youtpass is, how it works, which competences are required/included? and which is the role of the mentor.



Presentation of Best Practices

Focus on Hosting Organization: Some members of the group shared their experiences within their own organizations and their experiences within European Voluntary Service.

Focus on Sending Organization: It is crucial to stay in contact with sending volunteers. How? By creating a blog to share experiences and organizing events, and where old and new volunteers can share their views, information, projects.

Intercultural dinner

Day Three

After a walk near Gulli's Lake, split into four groups, participants reflected on competences elements:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Behaviour

After this activity, we started explaining a specific **method of analysis of competences**.

This method born in France in the 80s and developed into employment field to help unemployed people thinking about their competences, skills, strengths and weakness points in order to re-access job market. It is focused on how specific competences have been acquired and on why people did specific choices.

PECO's idea is to use this method to help volunteers exploit their competences. Participants were therefore asked to put themselves into a simulation activity on "Competences Assessment Methodology" starting from their own personal life experience.

To put in practice this method there are 5 pillars:

1. Define your objectives – attention focused on what we really want and obtain;
2. Create one's own "river of learning" – putting emphasis on what has been important for the personal development: books, experiences, people, (not necessarily related to formal education).
3. Share of experiences;
4. Define the *mainstays*;
5. Create one's own Portfolio.

Museum visit with the Mayor.



After return to the venue, participants started working on the first pillar: **“Define your objectives”**. They were divided into 4 group of four members each.

The activity consisted of two sessions: the first one included an individual analysis and in the second one participants shared within their group what they wrote.



Day Four

After having defined their objectives, for the participants it was time to create their own **“river of learning”** in which they identified and set out moments for their personal development.

Later on they discussed with their group members about their “river of learning” and shared reflections about their experience helping with objects, photos and songs.

Then we moved on with the fourth pillar: Definition of the “mainstays”.

As for the other pillars, first part was done individually and then shared within the group.

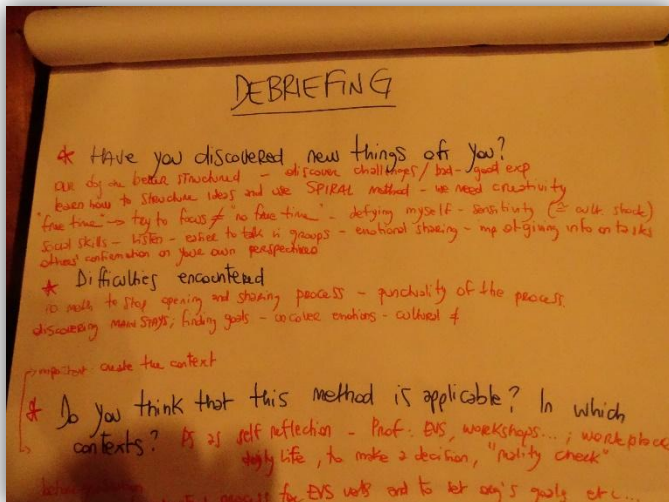
Now the task was to establish which are their “pillars of life”.

At the end everyone needed to **create his own Portfolio**.

The day finish with a plenary presentation of participants’ portfolios.

Day Five

Debriefing



Split into groups, participants analysed the work done during the two days before starting with specific questions:

- Have you found out something new about yourself?
- What difficulties have been encountered?
- Do you consider that this methodology could be helpful and applicable to other contexts too?
- Good and bad points.

- Suggestions.

This was the **outcome:**

This method could be applied in different contexts, especially in the field of EVS volunteers, helping them in their path.

At the same time, it would be better to create a suitable context for sharing, respectful of the working method of each volunteer, and apply this method when possible to two or more participants.

It would be useful to propose this methodology to National Agencies for EVS training cycle.

Open space on future projects

Time to share experiences and create new collaborations among participants.



Final Evaluation. The goal was to share the experiences and considerations to give new inputs for the future.

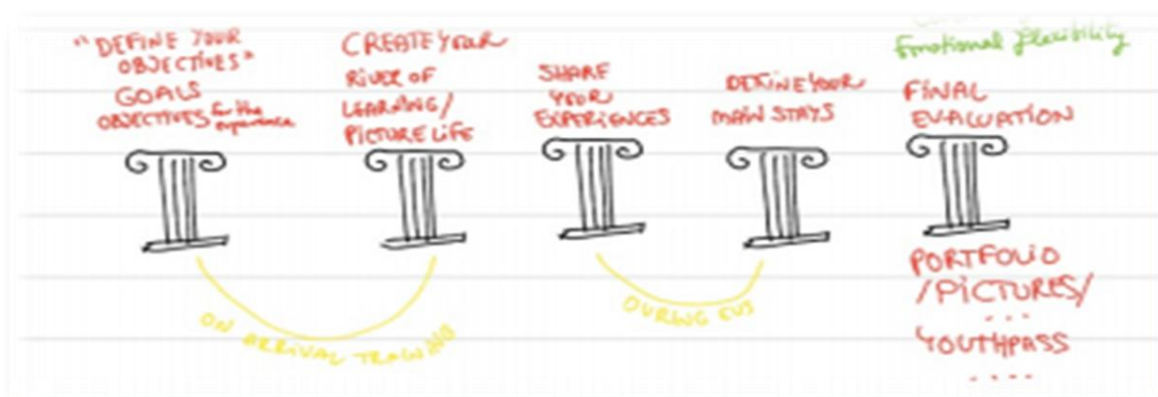
Write what you want bring home

Write what you want leave

Write what inspired you or if you had a new ideas

Write what isn't clear for you

Participants have shown a strong interest for the method; indeed during the evaluation many of them asked to investigate how to apply it in the right way.



This toolkit has been developed by P.E.CO. staff in January-March 2017.

Thanks to:

- EVS volunteers who “tested” the methodology and gave us feedbacks;
- the youth workers who attended the Training Course and gave us their suggestions to improve
- Ana Elena for providing us with her colourful notes and drawings and Chiara for graphics ☺