

Call for Participants

'Creating opportunities - Young People with learning disabilities participate in the Youth in Action programme European Volunteering Service'

1. Project description

'Creating opportunities' is a project coordinated by the Estonian foundation Maarja Village. The foundation offers community living service to young adult people with learning disabilities. Within the framework of European Volunteering Service Maarja Village is accredited as a host organization, as a sending organization as well as a coordinating organization.

According to one of the priorities of the European Youth in Action programme, Maarja Village wants to make the European Volunteering Service accessible for his own inhabitants with learning disabilities. Organizing a training will be the first step in preparing a successful and meaningful volunteering service. Before implementing the European Volunteering Service for young people with learning disabilities, Foundation Maarja Village wants to exchange ideas and experiences with other similar foundations to make clear what are the extra needs and which are the possibilities available within the framework of Action 2 of the Youth in Action programme. The training will make it also possible to create a network of potential sending and hosting organizations where people with learning disabilities could work as a volunteer.

In Maarja Village (young) adult people with learning disabilities live away from their parents or family members they grow up with during childhood. They have the possibility to learn necessary life skills in a secure and familiar environment with support persons living together with them. This creates the possibility to develop as an independent adult person who can make her or his own decisions in life.

Most of the young people with learning disabilities don't have access to information about the possibilities of staying abroad, have lower possibilities in using a foreign language and needs more support to make a longer stay abroad successful. The idea of leaving the familiar environment for a longer time to engage in something new and unknown is for many of them a very big challenge. But participating in a European Volunteering Service is also an important possibility to develop their daily-life and working skills in a new environment. It gives them a more positive self-image and the belief that they can manage their own life.

2. Project objectives

- Investigate what are the requirements to make European Volunteering Service and Youth Exchanges successful for young people with learning disabilities (e.g. language support, preparation, individual support person) and what are the possibilities within the framework of the Youth in Action programme. During the project participating organizations get more knowledge about the possibilities of the Youth in Action programme.
- Promoting the personal development of participating young people with learning disabilities and improving their social integration.
- Participating organizations establish an open network and select a coordinating organization that will be responsible for keeping the network active. In the bright future this network could be a council for Youth in Action (or other projects) in the field of 'young people with learning disabilities' issues, be helpful in creating policies, etc.
- there will be at least 3 EVS projects and 1 youth exchange project launched between participating organizations in 1 year.

Summarized the project aims to implement the social inclusion priority of the European Youth in Action programme by organizing European Volunteering Services and Youth Exchanges for young people with learning disabilities.

3. Schedule

- November 2010: Initializing the project, discussing first ideas.
- December 2010: Call for participants.
- January 2011:
 - 15th of January 2011: Deadline for partners to apply for the training.
 - Selection of partners and confirmation of participation.
 - Preparation of application to organize a training – deadline of application: 1st of February 2011.
- 25th till 30th of May 2011: Training in Estonia (Days of travel included).
- Summer 2011: Developing the network + evaluation and final report of the training.
- November 2011: Evaluation seminar organized by one of the partner organizations.

- May 2011 – May 2012: The organizations that participated in the training organize at least 3 European Volunteering Services and 1 Youth Exchange.

4. About the training (25th of May till 30th of May 2011)

Objectives:

- Exchanging ideas about making the Youth in Action programme and especially the European Volunteering Service accessible for young people with learning disabilities.
- Learning what are the possibilities of Youth in Action programme in general and getting to know what are the possibilities offered by the programme for people with special needs.
- Defining what are the requirements of a potential host organization for young people with learning disabilities.
- Creating a network of potential host and sending organizations that are ready to organize European Volunteering Services or Youth Exchanges for young people with learning disabilities.

Programme:

	Wednesday 25th of May	Thursday 26th of May	Friday 27th of May	Saturday 28th of May	Sunday 29th of May	Monday 30th of May
BREAKFAST						
10.00 till 13.30		Introduction Who we are, what are our hopes?	How to build YiA project?	Visiting Maarja Village	YouthPass and Time for project planning.	Conclusion and Agreements
LUNCH						
15.00 till 18.30	ARRIVAL	What YiA* offers?	Support measures for young people with learning disabilities.	Sharing good practices of previous project	Creating Network	DEPARTURE

*YiA = Youth in Action

Costs:

Participants have to cover 30 % of their travel expenses and will be asked to pay a participation fee of 50 euro. Food and accommodation will be offered by Foundation Maarja Village.

5. Evaluation of results

In November 2011 one of the partner organizations will host a seminar to evaluate the cooperation, the preparation of projects and the current situation of the new established network. The evaluation seminar will also support organizations that are new in the Youth in Action programme to prepare a European Volunteering Service.

Based on the evaluation it will be possible to make recommendations to future Youth in Action projects for young people with learning disabilities.

6. Funding of projects

- The training and the evaluation seminar will be organized in the framework of Action 4.3 of the European Youth in Action programme. (p. 95 of the programme guide)
- European Volunteering Services needs to be arranged according to the rules of Action 2 of the European Youth in Action programme. (p. 53 of the programme guide)
- The Youth Exchange project will be organized according to Action 1.1 of the European Youth in Action programme. (p. 24 of the programme guide)

7. Expression of interest and further information

Any organization or institution that is organizing activities and services for young people with learning disabilities is invited to participate in the project. Previous experience with the Youth in Action programme is not necessary. Participants are asked to send a motivation letter with expression of interest together with contact and profile information of the organization to Foundation Maarja Village.

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