

Life Love Youthpass

Supporting EVS learning process

The training

Life Love Youthpass is a training that aims at training EVS mentors, tutors and coordinators to support the Youthpass learning process of EVS volunteers during their projects. The training was held in Ireland on May 2014.

The team

Sophie Breuker background is in International Development and she recently completed her masters in Public Health. She is a co-founder of Fishbowl Youth, a youth organisation that works both at a local and international level. She is a youth worker and freelance trainer by trade and her interests lie in social issues, human rights, development education, personal development and non-formal education and learning processes.

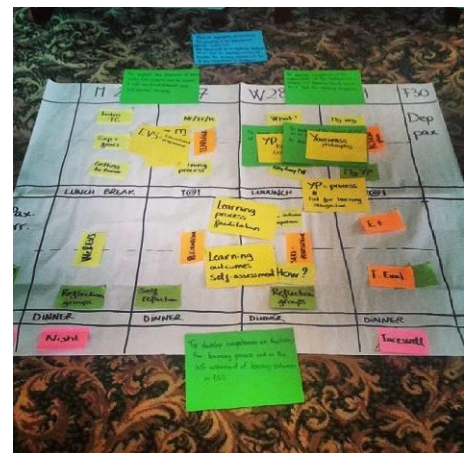
Clara Giberga, from Barcelona, is currently board member of SCI Catalunya and she's working in Nexes Interculturals de Joves per Europa as Training coordinator and International Mobility projects officer. Previously, she worked for 2,5 years in COCAT as Long-term volunteering and EVS coordinator and for 6 months in SCI Catalunya as Volunteering coordinator.

Laura Pierfelici, Italian trainer mainly focused on inclusion and non formal education.

Phd at the Faculty of Education of the University of Florence running a research about the history of Non Formal and Informal Education. Co-founder and coordinator of the Italian NGO called Vicolocorto which works as hosting and sending EVS in Europe, Asia, Africa and South-America.

The prep-meeting

During the 2nd – 4th May weekend, the prep team, trainers and logistical person, met in The Inn at Dromoland, same place where the training would take place, to plan Life Love Youthpass Training Course. After that and before the training, participants were asked to do some preparatory tasks by starting with an activity that would continue with them along the whole training, the M&M's, a bit more details about it below.



Day 0: Arrival of participants

Participants started to arrive in the evening. By dinner time almost all of them were there so we had a lovely dinner, after which we started to get to know each other. We proposed them to have a romantic speed dating game in which we asked them to get into couples, with a candle in between, and to answer to some questions about themselves and travelling, dreams, studies and job, etcetera.



Day 1: Getting to know each other, personally and professionally

Monday came and the training officially started. Still we had some new participants who arrived later at night so we started the day with some other get to know each other games. After that, we jumped to the first reflective part of the training: expectations, fears and learning goals? For that, we turned into an arty-mood: we proposed them to create some origami boats which were placed on a river we had previously drawn, the boats would represent their feeling along the week; we asked them to write expectations and fears on fishes and raindrops respectively, which were also placed on the river. Finally, we offered them a notebook to decorate which would be used as a journal to record their learning and asked them to start reflecting on their learning goals.



After lunch and some time to rest, we moved to a more professional getting to know each other: we created a “world cafe” with questions about their organisations, their role in it and their connection to EVS. We discovered the diversity in the group: some were EVS coordinators, some were EVS mentors, some were ex-EVS; some were new organisations within EVS, others had already hosted, sent and coordinated several volunteers. This diversity made the training much more interesting, as everyone brought their perspective into the second part of the evening in which we explored the characteristics of the ideal mentor.



After the session we had the first M&M session: M&M, which means Mentor&Mentee, is an activity we specially developed for this training course that run along the whole week and represented a key element to personally experiment how it felt to be a mentor but also how it felt to be mentored. The first session was just a starting point for them: connecting to their M&M couple and sharing a bit on the learning goals for the training.



The day had gone fast and we were already sitting on our tables waiting for dinner to bring back some energy to us just before heading to the last activity of the day: the intercultural night. We were specially surprised by how much heart participants put in presenting bits and pieces of their culture by bringing their favourite food and drinks but also by singing some wonderful traditional songs to the group or by teaching how to dance some folk dances.

Day 2: Learning to learn

Tuesday arrived like if we were running and we found ourselves in the wonderful world of Learning to Learn. The day started with a reflection of the different learning contexts and styles and how did they match with EVS experiences: which are the main learning contexts in EVS? How do we consider different learning styles when preparing an EVS project?

Again, after lunch and enjoying a bit the SPA facilities of the Inn, we started the evening sessions: now it was time for individual reflection and, again, some arty activities. We proposed participants to go back to their first learning moment and to draw a river that represented all the main learning outcomes in their life. They should highlight those things which helped them to learn, those things which blocked them. After drawing the river, they would share it with their M&M couple to get a deeper insight on the other person's learning process. After sharing, we asked them to break their learning into different layers by highlighting the learning context, the learning style and how the different validation moments happened. After that, we had a group discussion on validation, which appeared to be a challenging concept to the group.



The reflection had been intense that day, so we splitted into the reflection groups to evaluate the day and to gather doubts, worries and challenges about what had been tackled along the day.

Day 3: Assessment of learning

Wednesday woke up ready to challenge participants again with Assessment of Learning. We slowly started the day with some activities on facilitation skills: active listening, observation and feedback. After that, we went into the big topic of assessment: for that, we proposed them to watch a cartoon, Shawn the sheep, and to observe the learning outcomes of several characters, then, in the small group they were in, to pick one of them and to dissect that learning outcomes and transfer them into competences.

After lunch and some rest, we went into exploring the 8 Key Competences by playing some games: posting a photo on facebook, completing a sudoku, helping another couple to fulfil their tasks, ... and then we had a silent discussion to give some examples for each of them connected to competences that EVS volunteers can acquire during their projects.

Before closing the day we opened the Pandora box of Youthpass origins, going back to the sixties with Pink Floyd and their "We don't need no education" as the Original Soundtrack in the background and getting to nowadays and the creation of the 8 Key Competences and the recognition of Non-Formal Learning.

That night was a special one: we went outside for dinner! So we had a nice walk from the Inn to the Castle and beyond, passing by a very nice flower garden.



Day 4: Action plan

Thursday arrived by surprise and we found ourselves in the last day of the TC, the action plan was waiting for us.

We started the first session sharing resources and challenges: On a first round we proposed to those participants who felt like sharing their tools with the group to present them and to explain the way they were using it with their volunteers. On the second round we gave the opportunity to those participants facing some challenge or having some doubt on their work with EVS volunteer to share it with the group and to receive ideas, tips, experiences and proposals from them.

After that, we moved into the Action Plan itself, by giving some individual reflection time and by offering ourselves as consultants if needed. After that, they gathered into the M&M couples and they shared their action plans so they could have an additional point of view on it.

Our last evening arrived with two main tasks: Youthpass and Final Evaluation. We gave them some M&M time to share about the competences they had acquired along the way and to start to put them into words. Some of them finalised the youthpass there, some of them preferred to take some time back at home to close it.



After, we did the final evaluation and for last we gathered for the closing ceremony: we proposed participants to go back to the river of the first day, with the boats, raindrops and fishes and to have an arty-moment by adding or removing things. To add the cherry on the top of the cake, we gave each of them the chance to share some words to the group and to express whatever they had felt and lived along the week.



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