

SALTO-YOUTH
TRAINING AND COOPERATION
RESOURCE CENTRE



Erasmus+



SOHO

International Training Course

SOHO

Sending Organisation Hosting Organisation

European Training Course

Info Pack

for

Participants

Info Pack for participants
about SOHO – European Training Course
Season 2016 - 2017

SOHO – European Training Courses
Co-ordinated and monitored by SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre
Organised by the network of National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme
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SOHO - EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE

DEAR PARTICIPANT,

We are looking forward to meeting you at the SOHO European Training Course (TC)!

In this training course we will go deeper into subjects that are closely linked to the European Voluntary Service (EVS). We hope that this training course will contribute to increase the quality of EVS projects. The methodology used in this training activity is based on experiential learning. The working methods are dynamic, and we hope that you will participate actively.

The main subjects of this training course are:

- **Understanding the concept of EVS**
- **The learning dimension of EVS service**
- **How to set up a competent support system**
- **The partnership in EVS**

This **Participant Info Pack** includes:

- A brief presentation of the SOHO European Training Course
- The day-by-day programme of your course (the programme is flexible and may change!)
- A brief presentation of the European Voluntary Service – EVS, and the EVS charter.

Your National Agency (NA) will inform you about all logistic details regarding your SOHO Training Course.

WHAT TO BRING

We kindly ask you to bring:

- Clear information (in English, if possible) about the main activities of your organisation, so that you can present it at the organisation gallery during the training course. Please be aware that your presentation would be very brief!
- Map, posters, postcards about your country/region/town to be displayed during the SOHO International Evening.
- Some gastronomic specialities (food and/or drinks) for the SOHO International Evening. Please do not bring too much, and note that it may not be possible to cook or heat food at the training centre!
- This Participant Info Pack, with the information about the EVS Action.

For more information, please contact your National Agency.

We wish you a pleasant journey and look forward to meeting you.

Best regards,

Your SOHO trainers and National Agency team

SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE

THE TRAINING COURSE

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE

1. WHAT IS THE SOHO TRAINING COURSE?

SOHO is a Network Training open for all 35 National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme and targets at two of the three main partners of a long-term European Voluntary Service project: **Sending Organisation and Hosting Organisation**.

By bringing together representatives of Sending and Hosting Organisations from different European countries the SOHO TC aims at improving the international co-operation and consequently increasing the quality of EVS projects.

The international dimension of the SOHO TC is given by the different nationalities of participants and trainers team. This is an asset for the intercultural dimension of the course!

The course methodology is based on the concept of experiential learning, in an atmosphere where participants can learn a lot from each other and have a lot of fun!

2. TARGET GROUP

The training course is designed for those who are **directly involved** in the support system around the EVS volunteer (mentors and task-related support persons) on the hosting, sending and coordinating side.

The participants from Sending and Hosting organisations should already have some **experience** in EVS (minimum of being in the process of sending or hosting a volunteer, better having been already sending or receiving the first volunteer).

Usually the group of participants in SOHO courses is very diverse - people gathering from 8-11 countries. Check participant list for your SOHO course!

We expect that participants should be able to work and communicate in English (working language!).



3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The **overall aim** of the SOHO training course is:

- To increase the **quality** of EVS activities through development of competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of key actors involved in the support system around the volunteer in the EVS projects developed within the frame of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme.

The **specific objectives** of the SOHO course are:

- To get a better understanding of the concept of EVS as “learning service” and related quality aspects in EVS
- To improve the ability for co-operation and working in international partnership
- To reflect on the roles, responsibilities and challenges within the EVS volunteer support system
- To raise awareness of the learning dimension in EVS and provide tools for learning support
- To support the recognition of non-formal learning in EVS through the competent implementation of Youthpass
- To provide up-to-date information about the new European programme for youth



An additional benefit of the training course is the showing the value of EVS through the exchange of best practices and experiences among participants. All previous SOHO participants are most welcome to join Facebook SOHO group of ex-SOHO course participants thus continuing networking after the course.

In the training course participants have the opportunity to meet and to get to know other organisations, but contact making is rather a side effect of the course, not directly a priority of the training course.

4. THE PROGRAMME

The programme of the SOHO TC is built around the **main quality aspects** implementing EVS project. During the course participants and trainers will analyse the identified quality aspects through simulation exercises, case studies, and working groups. Besides, the trainers’ team will provide activities to improve the group dynamics.

EVS as reflected practice: we will favour a common ground among participants to understand the concept of EVS. We will reflect on its values, reasons, interests and needs of all actors involved. We will support the process of understanding EVS as “learning service”, linked with the concept of European citizenship.

The learning dimension of EVS service: EVS is very much about learning – non-formal and informal. It is about acquiring new life experiences, but also gaining new **competencies** – getting new knowledge, improving skills and developing attitudes. Young people can really learn a lot in EVS! But in order to learn effectively and efficiently, young people need to be properly

supported by – YOU! During the course you will go through the different stages of the learning process and you will get acquainted with the concept of Key Competences and Youthpass.



Creating support system in EVS project: whether you are a mentor or a task-related support person in a sending or in a hosting project, it is important to know your role and responsibilities, and to develop competences. We will explore the different dimensions of supporting an EVS volunteer. After this training course you can define your role in the context of your organisation and use the practical experience to develop this role.

International partnerships in EVS: issues as the importance of building up a partnership with the partner organisation and the volunteer, keeping the contact, communication and co-operation, and the intercultural dimension of international partnerships will be dealt with. A good partnership is of great value for the success of an EVS project. Please note though, that this is not a partnership seminar, even if there will be opportunities to meet and discuss in an informal way among the participants.



SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE - PROGRAMME FOR PARTICIPANTS

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
	Introduction to Erasmus+: Youth in Action EVS as reflected practice	Support and guidance in EVS International partnership	EVS as a learning service	
	Introduction to SOHO My learning in SOHO EVS in Erasmus+: Youth in Action	Effective EVS Partnership and quality in EVS project cycle	Learning in EVS How to support the learning of the volunteer: helpful approaches and tools	Departure of participants
	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch	Lunch
Arrival of participants and check-in in the venue BEFORE 6 p.m. BEFORE Dinner (in case all participants will be already there) Getting to know...the place, the team and the group	EVS as reflected practice Making the Match: how to choose the right volunteer Daily reflection Preparation of SOHO Gallery	Guiding and supporting EVS volunteers Daily reflection Leaving the venue at 18:00	Recognition of learning in EVS: Youthpass process Daily reflection and self-assessment of learning Evaluation of the SOHO TC	
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner in town	Dinner	
Getting to know each other. Official opening	SOHO Gallery of organisations		Farewell Party	

SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE - ANNEX

EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) strand of the European Union's Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme (2014-2020) aims to support young people taking part in voluntary activities abroad.

This activity allows young people aged 17-30 to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary service for up to 12 months in another country within or outside the European Union. Young volunteers are given the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations dealing with youth information and policies, young people's personal and socio-educational development, civic engagement, social care, inclusion of disadvantaged, environment, non-formal education programmes, ICTs and media literacy, culture and creativity, development cooperation, etc.

A project can include between 1 and 30 volunteers who can do their voluntary service either individually or in group.

Participating organisations are responsible for:

- ✓arranging subsistence, lodging and local transports of volunteers;
- ✓envisaging tasks and activities for volunteers that respect the qualitative principles of the European Voluntary Service, as described in the EVS Charter;
- ✓providing to volunteers an on-going task-related, linguistic, personal and administrative support throughout the duration of the activity.

The participation in an EVS activity must be free of charge for volunteers, with the exception of a possible contribution for travel costs (if the Erasmus+ grant does not fully cover these costs) and additional expenses not linked to the implementation of the activity. The essential costs for volunteers' participation in the EVS activity are covered by the Erasmus+ grant or through other means afforded by the participating organisations.

Besides the support provided to the volunteers by the participating organisations, the National Agencies or regional SALTOS organise a Training and Evaluation Cycle to be attended by each volunteer and consisting of: a) an on-arrival training; b) a mid-term evaluation, for voluntary services lasting more than 6 months.

The following activities are not considered as a European Voluntary Service within the framework of Erasmus+: occasional, unstructured, part-time volunteering; a work placement in an enterprise; a paid job; a recreation or tourist activity; a language course; exploitation of a cheap workforce; a period of study or vocational training abroad.

The Youthpass

Every person who has taken part in EVS is entitled to receive a Youthpass Certificate, which describes and validates the non-formal and informal learning experience and outcomes acquired

during the project (learning outcomes). Furthermore, Youthpass is to be considered as a process of becoming aware, reflecting on and documenting the learning within the different phases of the project. For more information on Youthpass, please consult the Youthpass guide and further relevant material presented at www.youthpass.eu.

You can get further information on the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme and the EVS Action from your National Agency and reading the "[Programme Guide](#)" of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. You can also visit the website of the European Commission: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/>

The training-kit on "**International Voluntary Service**", published in the framework of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, can serve as a useful tool for planning and implementing EVS projects and is available at www.training-youth.net/tkits.htm.

THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE CHARTER

The EVS charter describes the role of EVS organisations acting as sending, receiving or coordinating organisation and defines the main principles of EVS and the minimum quality standards that must be respected within an EVS Activity.

Full EVS charter could be downloaded here: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/evs-charter_en

Here is a suggestion on how the roles and tasks of organisations involved in EVS could be shared (in some cases these roles must be compulsorily performed by a given organisation).

COORDINATING ORGANISATION:

- ✓ submits the application and bears the financial and administrative responsibility for the entire project towards the National Agency or the Executive Agency;
- ✓ coordinates the project in cooperation with all sending and receiving organisations;
- ✓ distributes the EVS grant between all sending and receiving organisations;
- ✓ ensures that the volunteer(s) receive(s) the EVS Info Kit and attend(s) the full EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle;
- ✓ provides support to the volunteer(s) it places in the receiving organisation(s);
- ✓ carries out all or some of the administrative tasks of the sending or receiving organisation(s) involved in the project;
- ✓ ensures, with the sending and receiving organisations, that each volunteer is in possession of the European Health Insurance Card (if applicable) and is covered by the obligatory EVS Insurance plan foreseen in the Erasmus+ Programme;
- ✓ arranges, with the sending and receiving organisations, a visa for the volunteer(s) who needs it. The National/Executive Agencies can issue visa support letters, if needed;

- ✓provides support for the learning/Youthpass process. Completes, with the sending and receiving organisations and the volunteer, and issues, a Youthpass Certificate for those volunteers who want to receive it at the end of their EVS.

SENDING ORGANISATION:

Preparation

- ✓helps the volunteer(s) to find and contact a receiving organisation;
- ✓provides adequate preparation for the volunteer(s) before departure, according to the individual needs and learning opportunities of the volunteer(s) and in line with the Volunteer Training Guidelines and Minimum Quality Standards of the European Commission;
- ✓ensures, in cooperation with the receiving organisation, that the volunteer receives support in carrying out language preparation (if applicable, support to carry out the online language course and assessments provided by the Commission);
- ✓ensures the participation of the volunteer(s) in the pre-departure session, if organised by the National Agency or SALTO.

Contact during the voluntary activity

- ✓keeps in contact with the volunteer(s) and with the receiving organisation(s) during the project.

Upon volunteer's return

- ✓provides support to volunteer(s) to help reintegrate them into their home community;
- ✓gives volunteers the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes;
- ✓encourages the involvement of the volunteer(s) in dissemination and exploitation of results and learning outcomes;
- ✓provides guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities;
- ✓ensures the participation of the volunteers in the annual EVS event organised by the National Agency in their country.

RECEIVING ORGANISATION:

Mentor

identifies a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteer(s):

- ✓personal support,
- ✓support to carry out the online language course and assessments provided by the Commission (if applicable)
- ✓support to carry out a self-reflection on the learning outcomes of the EVS activity (through the use of Youthpass).

Task-related support

- ✓offers supervision and guidance to the volunteer(s) through experienced staff.

Personal support

- ✓ provides personal support and support during the learning/Youthpass process to volunteer(s);
- ✓ gives the volunteer(s) the opportunity to integrate into the local community, to meet other young people, to socialise, to participate in leisure activities, etc.;
- ✓ encourages contact with other EVS volunteers whenever possible.

EVS training and evaluation cycle and language support

- ✓ ensures the participation of the volunteer(s) in the on-arrival training and mid-term evaluation organised by the NA or SALTO;
- ✓ arranges language learning opportunities and support to volunteers undertaking language courses.

Principles of EVS

- ✓ ensuring universal accessibility to EVS: receiving organisations cannot specify that volunteer(s) should be of a specific ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc.; neither can they require qualifications or a certain educational level in order to select the volunteer(s);
- ✓ offering to the volunteer(s) the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, allowing some of the volunteer's ideas, creativity and experience to be integrated;
- ✓ identifying clear learning opportunities for the volunteer(s).

Accommodation and food

- ✓ providing suitable accommodation and meals (or a food allowance, covering also the holiday period) to the volunteer(s).

Local transport

- ✓ ensures that means of local transport are available for the volunteer(s).

Allowance

- ✓ gives the due allowance to the volunteer(s) on a weekly or monthly basis