

# Voluntlearn Toolkit

A guide to EVS volunteering cooperation between Europe and South-East Asia



## Where is this coming from?

The toolkit you are reading is the result of a Erasmus+ project.

The project “VoluntLearn” involved six organisations from different countries of Europe and South- East Asia:

- Initiative Développement Citoyen (IDC), France
- Associazione di promozione sociale Joint, Italy
- Hajdúsági Hallgatókért és Civilekért Egyesület (HAHA), Hungary
- Science of Life Studies (SOLS) 24/7 Malaysia
- Science of Life Systems (SOLS) 24/7 Timor Leste
- Gawad Kalinga, Philippines

The project was funded through the **European Commission**, as part of Erasmus+ Programme: KA2 – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices - Capacity Building in the field of Youth.

The partner organisations of VoluntLearn, as the name suggests (Volunt from the Latin verb “will to”), aimed to learn from each other and develop a structured network which can work together on the qualitative and effective volunteer projects, following the principles of a European Voluntary Service, but not necessarily funded through the Erasmus+ Programme.

The project aimed to promote volunteering both among young people and private enterprises as a means of skills development and social cohesion. It also contributed in the establishment of a developing network between partner organisations from different areas of the world, to reach a common agreement on the methodology behind the implementation of a voluntary activity with young people.

At the same time the main focus was on the collaboration between private and public entities on how to recognise the voluntary work carried out by volunteers and how to achieve more possibilities of project fundings either through private donors, profit or non-profit parallel activities.

Moreover, the aim was also the creation of this toolkit for encouraging new organizations and european partners that face for the first time an Erasmus+ project.



What	When	Where
M1 – Kick off Meeting	19 – 22 September 2015	Carcassonne, France – IDC
M2 – Training and Capacity Building	23 – 29 September 2015	Carcassonne, France – IDC
M3 – Mobility of youth workers (Study visits in Europe)	30 September – 6 October 2015	Carcassonne, France – IDC
M3 – Mobility of youth workers (Study visits in Europe)	7 – 13 October 2015	Milano, Italy - Joint
M3 – Mobility of youth workers (Study visits in Europe)	14 – 20 October 2015	Debrecen, Hungary – HAHA
M4 – Mobility of youth workers (Study visits in South-East Asia)	18 – 24 November 2015	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – SOLS 24/7 Malaysia
M4 – Mobility of youth workers (Study visits in South-East Asia)	25 November – 1 December 2015	Dili, Timor Leste – SOLS24/7 Timor Leste
M4 – Mobility of youth workers (Study visits in South-East Asia)	2 – 8 December 2015	Manila, Philippines – Gawad Kalinga
M5 – EVS in South-East Asia	1 November 2015 – 30 June 2016	15 EVS volunteers in Malaysia and East Timor
M6 – EVS in France	1 April 2016 – 30 August 2016	3 EVS volunteers in Carcassonne, France - IDC
M7 – Conferences with stakeholders / Local info workshops	1 day in March - September 2016	Each organisation in each participating country
M8 – Evaluation meeting	6 – 11 October 2016	Genova, Italy – Joint

## The benefit of hosting volunteers from EVS project

We may wonder why should we host and send EVS volunteers, and how it can help our organization. The following are some of the main benefits your organization can get through the EVS experience.

- More international contacts and opportunities of international cooperation.
- Giving the chance to the young people in the youth centres to gain international experience, develop their tolerance and sense of solidarity and to widen their horizons.
- More exciting and stimulating elements in the daily work for the staff.
- Acquire experience in managing projects and coordinating volunteers.
- Have more experience, as an organisation/youth centre, in managing international projects (useful when you apply for youth exchanges, training courses, study visits).
- Develop the language skills and abilities for all the staff.
- New intercultural perspectives and experiences.
- Possibility to respond better to the young people's needs by hosting a volunteer with specific skills that the staff might not have.



## Reasons to invest in EVS in time of economic crisis

EVS is considered a tool to enable more people to enter into the Labor Market, especially youngsters at the first job placement or NEET - Not (engaged) in Education, Employment or Training - by increasing their chances due to the development of new skills and competences. This statement is supported by the results of several researches done by the National Agencies and European Commission.

For example, a recent impact study shows that between 50%-80% of respondents affirms that the Youthpass Certificate issued at the end of the EVS service enhances chances of young people especially when they apply for a traineeship or internship, employment or further education ("Youthpass Impact Study. Young

People's personal development and employability and recognition of youth work" TARU M., KLOOSTERMAN P, 2012).

These goals are not only impressive but they could be even crucial for the socially or economically disadvantaged people or less qualified, drop-out or people already out of educational cycle. This is possible because EVS provides an alternative learning experience to achieve skills and competences. Indeed, EVS is considered a learning opportunity even if there is nothing related to schools or traditional educational system. It is common agree that learning is not only regarding the knowledge we got at school. It happens in everyday life and in every contexts: it happens even when there is any intention to learn something.

For example, we can learn foreign language singing a song or we can develop teamwork skills by playing volleyball! This is what is called informal learning. Thinking about learning in this new perspective, it is clear that what we learn at school is only a little part of the whole learning happening in our life.

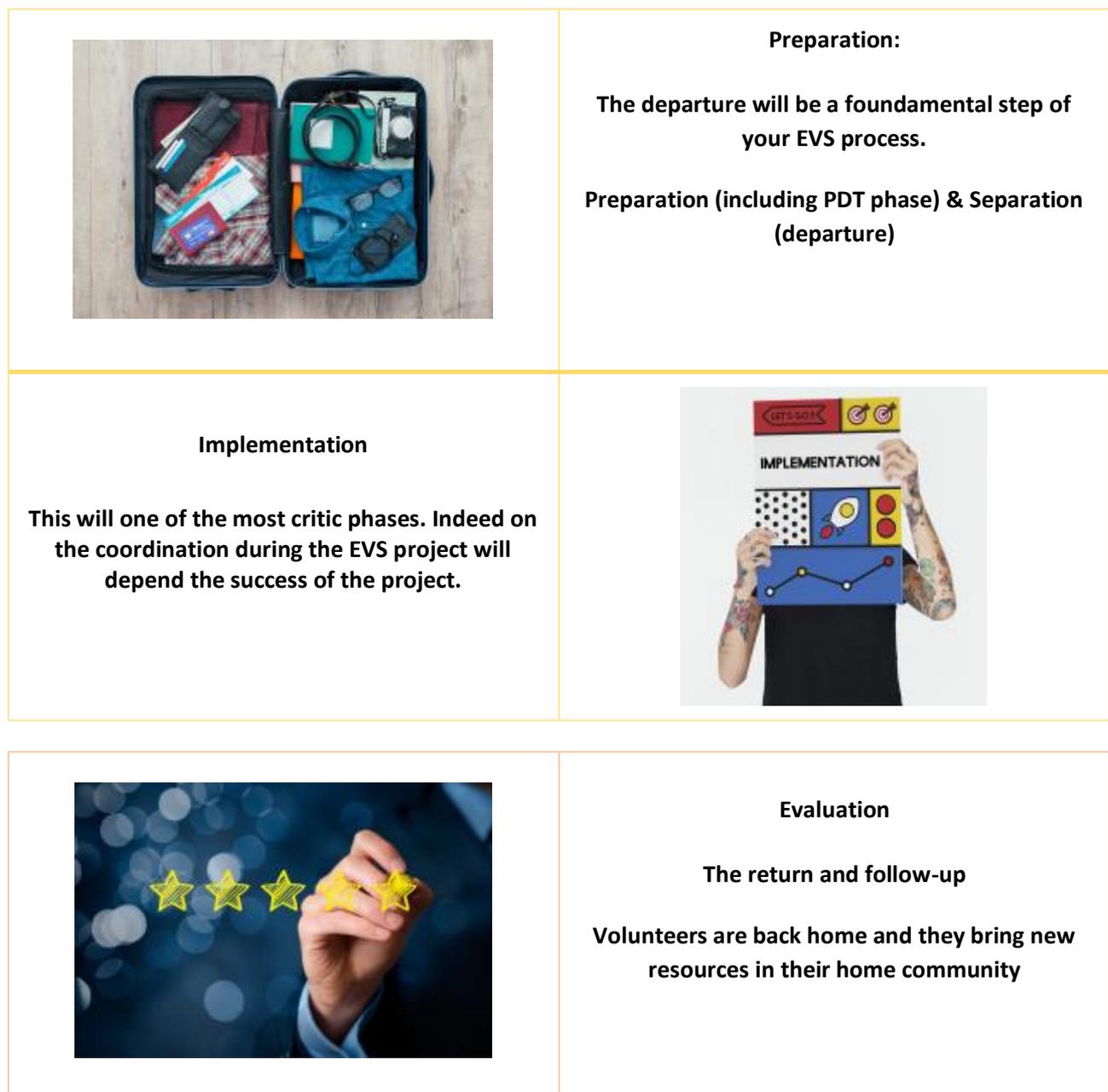
Some research shows that more than 70% of the learning comes from informal learning: we learn even more in alternative ones than in school system! ("The Anholt project. The informal adventure that makes people grow", PETERSEN, LIND et al., 2014).

Already more than 80 years ago, an educational reformer called John Dewey claimed the need of a radical change in the educational field based on reducing the distance between the learning happened in the school system with the one happened out of this setting.



## The EVS cycle

If you understand how the EVS process works, you'll be able to support your volunteer in the best possible way! The EVS is composed of three different parts:



This structure gives a clear picture of the project and it helps to describe activities and results.

We must add that is fundamental the involvement of both the organizations which take part in this process: Sending Organization and Hosting Organization. Indeed, would be shallow consider responsible just the sending organization for the departure part.

Actually, neither of both figures is responsible of only one-step; their involvement is requested in all of the three steps and their tasks are much more than it may appear at a first sight.  
How is it possible to get the main picture of the EVS project including also the environmental factors that influence the experience of each volunteer and, at the end, the success of it?

### The Hero's journey

An alternative method is necessary and lately it is getting popular to represent the EVS cycle like a childhood tale. It's called "the **Hero's journey**" and it is based on the concept introduced by Campbell in 1949 of a common template of a broad category of tales. In other words, it means that in each story, EVS included, you can find the same elements.

The core of this method is based on the process of comparing the EVS to an adventure and it works because it makes this story familiar to some pattern we know since the childhood, like a fairy tale.

Indeed, the representation of the "hero" has a big power on the imagination of each person because of its deep symbolic effect. The advantage of using it is represented by the fact that this method provides a key to "read" the complexity of the EVS and, at the end, we can easily analyze the elements of the story.

In other words, it creates a kind of map which allows us to see all the actors, steps and phases in the journey of the volunteer and, based on that, we can easily plan which resources we should provide to better support each volunteer in any personal story.

Let's start from the beginning.

Each story starts in a certain moment because **something happens**; then everything become an adventure out of daily life. A lot of new things happen as well as difficulties and challenges but there is an **external guide** to support and to give advice to the hero (**the mentor**).

At a certain moment, there is a big challenge for the hero, so huge than s/he gets unsafe starting doubting about his/her own ability to solve it. Most of the time the problem is solved and the winning shows the hero empowered by the awareness of his own strengths. The success brings a final reward and the story ends with the return to daily life.

If you reflect about the tales you know, you may discover they are all this pattern, with only few exceptions. Now, if you try to adapt the EVS story on this frame you can better see at which phase your hero is living now, and even a complex story can become familiar.

If we apply these methods (the process of framing each individual EVS story into something familiar to relate it) is easier to "read" better the whole story and, what is relevant for us, it allows us to plan our intervention in the EVS cycle to support better our volunteers.

The results is that we can understand better the complex experience and we can conduct deep analysis of key moments related to the EVS step, orientating our actions on that. In few words, to know how can we support the volunteers.

Campbell, described the basic narrative pattern as follows:

*"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man".*

C. Vogler develop Campbell's theory proposing the 12 stages of the hero's journey:

- The Ordinary World
- The Call to Adventure
- Refusal of the Call
- Meeting with the Mentor
- Crossing the Threshold: entrance to the "special world"
- Tests, Allies and Enemies
- Approach to the Innermost Cave
- The Ordeal or turning point
- Reward
- The Road Back
- The Resurrection
- Return with the Elixir.

#### The Ordinary World:

For example, a young person finish high school and he/she does not know if going to university or not and, in a bigger perspective, he/she does not know what to do in life.

#### The Call to Adventure:

It can be a inner sensation connected to the wish to change something in life or to a concrete happening like a public selection for a EVS vacancy.

#### Refusal of the call:

Volunteers can have doubts: "Do I really want it?" "Is it really worth it?" "Am I strong enough for this experience?" That's why a meeting with the SO could give some support.

#### Meeting with the Mentor:

There is a specific step dedicated to Your roles and this should clearly show how much there is need of You in the story! So this exercise it's usefull also for understand our role in the volunteer history and how hard and seriously we should play according with the needs of our volunteer.

#### Crossing the Threshold: entrance to the "special world":

The Evs steps literally in a new world: he/she concretely moves to another country crossing borders and changing language through a real travel. Family and friends could try to convince him that EVS is a dangerous situation or a waste of time.

#### Tests, Allies and Enemies:

EVS needs to orientate, settle down in the new world and get ready. EVS meets other EVSs and starts new friendship.

#### Approach to the Innermost Cave:

This is the moment when the EVS tells you: "I want to interrupt the project because I don't like the activities and I don't like to live here".

### The Ordeal or turning point:

This is the big battle where the hero faces his/her own fears and risks to die. The death represents the end of his/her previous personality and the re-birth of a new awareness and empowerment. Nothing will ever be the same anymore.

### Reward:

That is the Youthpass certificate!

### The road back:

This is the moment of goodbyes for EVS, to organize the travel back home. Family and old friends are waiting to celebrate the return.

### The resurrection:

This is not the biggest challenge, but it is the final one. There are new tests because the rules which made the hero winning in the extraordinary world may not work in the ordinary one. Is the hero able to transfer them into another context?

### Return with the Elixir:

EVS goes back home and he has to integrate in the community again. It could be not so easy and this is the moment when s/he needs support. S/he needs time to realize that life is not Evs but EVS is only one of the adventures in life. Some former volunteers are not able to go out from EVS syndrome. They need to learn that there is a cycle and there is an ending.

## Pre-Departure

Now that we have clear what does it mean to take part in an EVS experience we can go with order analyzing the three principal phases

PDT plays an important role on equipping the volunteers to their adventure.

If you still doubt about the importance of the PDT, imagine the importance of the preparation for a trekking in the Alps mountains or a travel which last one year.



### Find the top to climb



The PDT should help the volunteer to identify the goal (the top of the mountain) and the motivation as well as should reflect about the meaning of this experience and on the aspects that make it a learning experience. A first discussion should be focused on personal motivations and expectations of the volunteers regarding this experience; this is a good starting point to focus on personal learning goals and to help the youngster to create his/her own personal project. In few words, PDT worker should help the youngster to define his/her own educational goals or, in other words, to make clear what the volunteer really wants from climbing a mountain called EVS.

### Tools



Once the volunteer has defined why and where s/he wants to go, the PDT should equip the volunteer to this EVS adventure providing the tools and the information to overcome the challenges of this adventure. You should prepare the necessary tools to climb without sliding down: Intercultural aspects, conflicts resolution and flexibility are always good tools to bring in one own luggage to never fall down!

Don't forget to provide a language preparation because now with the new programme the linguist support has become an obligation and it has to be done before the departure!

### Info



Let's know your mountain! What will you find there? Maybe a lake or maybe the snow.. so, during the PDT, you should provide project related information like Evs Agreement, Insurance, and administrative aspects and the roles of people involved in the project (mentor, coordinator, tutor).

### Network



What are you passing through is not an unusual experience and it can be a collective adventure. People are important, they can tell you how they managed or they can walk with you for a while in the same paths. That's why PDT should provide the opportunity to meet other volunteers (potential and former) to bring people in touch among them.

## Trust & teambuilding



PDT represents the opportunity to strengthen the relation between coordinator & volunteers. If you build a relation based on trust, it will be easier for you to support your volunteer during the service abroad. In few words: PDT is a teambuilding activity between you and the volunteer. Well, sometimes with mom too!

Keep in mind and put it in your agenda a meeting with the volunteer's family because they could need to know and to trust the SO too.

## Contents in the PDT

The following are the contents that generally must be provided to every volunteer about to leave for an EVS experience.

### Project related information:

Discuss on the meaning of the European Voluntary Service and the essence of volunteering. Provide all the info about the EVS project: the project cycle, the methods (non-formal and informal education), the Youthpass certificate, the financial aspects and rules (Evs Agreement and EVS charter), the insurance. Make sure to highline also the duty a volunteer has participating in EVS program.

### Project related information:

Presents the Hosting Organization, the context of work, the environment and the main activities. Read the info-pack with them and all the EVS related information (accommodation, tasks, etc..). Highline all the most important aspects such as meeting new people, being far from our comfort zone, dealing with a new language a so on..

### The roles of the youth workers involved on it: mentor, tutor & coordinator

Clarify the different roles and identify the tasks and meaning of each: in this way the volunteer will know how to direct his/her own needs to the right responsible.

### Motivation, Expectation and Learning goals:

“Why this project?”: it helps the volunteer to express clearly the personal motivation and to not judge: there is no right or wrong motivation! Your task is to match the motivation of the volunteer with the Evs project content. This discussion should bring the volunteer to set his own objectives and stimulate personal ideas. In this way the volunteer can benefit of learning and result oriented activities. It's a good idea to invite the volunteer to write a “letter to his-self”.

### Risk crisis prevention and “crisis package”

Make the volunteer aware of the challenges he's going to face and present the “curve” of adaptation. At intercultural level introduce the iceberg of culture and improve the intercultural awareness. Let's equip the volunteer on conflict resolution issues and improve problem solving competences.

## Cultural preparation

Provide a cultural guideline regarding the hosting country and a linguistic support.

## Dissemination aspects

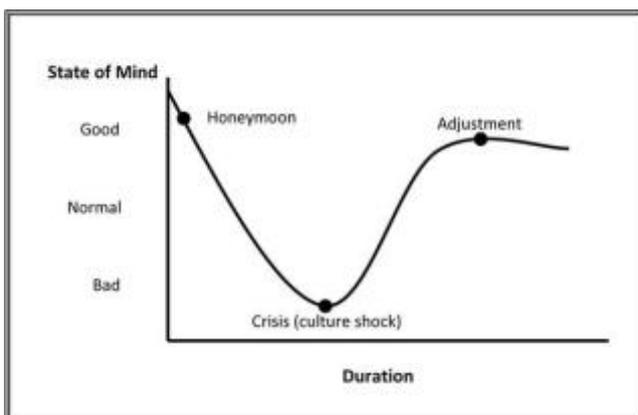
Invite them to share with peers using the digital channels (website, blog, etc.). This aspect it's very important especially for the future volunteers and for keep a track of his history as assciation/organization.

## The cultural iceberg



Culture has a deep influence on people and it has to be taken in consideration if you go to live abroad. If we think that culture has an iceberg is easier to visualize its complexity: On the top we find everything is visible immediately (arts, music, food, language, etc.) but the bottom is the biggest part where contents are invisible and also unconscious (different attitude and role models, notion of time and space, etc.).

## The curve of adaptation



A long-term experience abroad has different phases: the "honeymoon", the crisis and the adjustment. At the beginning everything is wonderful and exciting (honeymoon). Then things get more and more difficult and you feel really bad, disoriented and unsatisfied. This is called "cultural shock" and its impact depends on the way people react and reflect on it, to overcome the negative feelings and move on from there. Then it turns to adaptation process and stability.

## Pre Departure Tools

### Give them a diary

A diary is always a good instrument to reflect and document own personal development, it's easy to bring and to travel with and it's economically cheap. Not everyone likes to write down own emotions and stories or to draw them so don't worry and keep it voluntary. If you want a special diary, you can find some of them in Salto-Youth Tool Box with prefilled sections for EVS.

### Letter to myself

The volunteer writes a letter to him/herself during the PDT or at OAT and leaves it to the SO to keep it for an agreed time, usually till the end of the service or in the middle of it. Regardless the timing of writing, thanks to this letter, the volunteer will discover the changes and the learnings happened during this experience in an emotional and unforgettable way. And you, are you going to introduce it during your PDT or are you waiting for the OAT?

### Farewell postcard

There is a new proposal, to introduce a tool to let the volunteers reflect upon the reasons that pushed him/her to leave home for this kind of experience. Since the farewell is usually one important aspect of pre-departure time, the idea is to give some personal space to the volunteers, after most of the PDT activities, to let them reflect upon their reasons to leave by expressing it concretely through words - or other ways like any kind of art piece or symbolic mean - to address to their friends/family to let them know it too. The invitation for the EVS is to write the letter to the persons s/he must worried about and send it to them. It will give the possibility to understand and formulate why s/he wants to do EVS

### SVEopoli

SVEopoli is a tool inspired by 2 popular games like Monopoly and Goose Game. Materials and resources needed are in the SVEopoli Kit (SVEopoli board, SVEopoli cards, Learning points and SVEuro and 1 dice). The duration can be from 60 to 90 minutes depending on the number of participants (maximum 8) and the purpose of activities and it is adaptable according to the event's needs.

### The Train

This is a good tool for starting thinking about prejudice and cultural differences.

#### Instructions:

Once everybody has made the individual choices, form groups of 4 or 5 and come up with a common list of the 3 most preferred and the 3 least preferred companions (the 3 pluses and the 3 minuses) by consensus. During the discussion share also individual choices and the reasons behind. Compare all of them and check where there are similarities. In plenary, ask each group to present its conclusions, including the reasons for their common choices followed by a debriefing.

#### The scenario:

You are boarding the « Deer Valley Express » train for a week- long ride from Lisbon to Moscow. You are

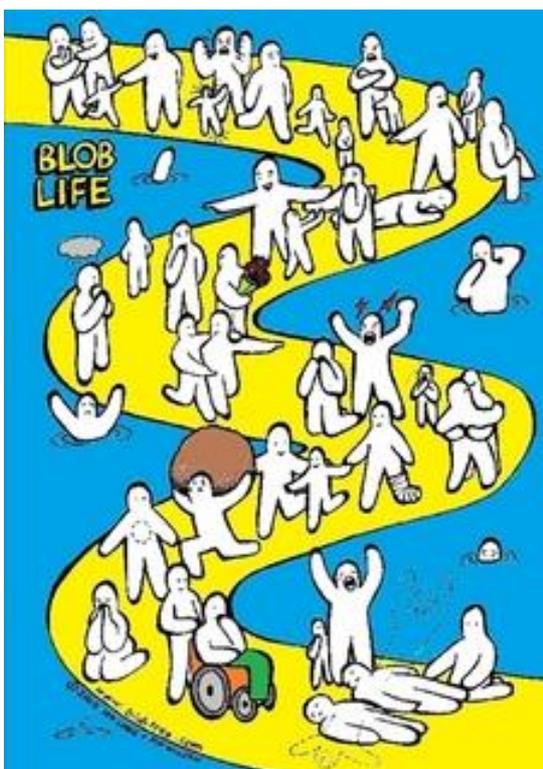
travelling in a couchette compartment which you have to share with three other people. With which of the following passengers would you prefer to share?

1. A Serbian soldier from Bosnia.
2. An overweight Swiss financial broker.
3. An Italian disk-jockey who seems to have plenty of dollars.
4. An African woman selling leather products.
5. A young artist who is HIV positive.
6. A Roma man (Gypsy or traveler) from Hungary just released from jail.
7. A Basque nationalist who travels regularly to Russia.
8. A German rapper living a very alternative life-style.
9. A blind accordion player from Austria.
10. A Ukrainian student who doesn't want to go home.
11. A middle-aged Romanian woman who has no visa and a 1 year old child in her arms.
12. A Dutch hardline and aggressive feminist.
13. A skinhead from Sweden ostensibly under the influence of alcohol.
14. A wrestler from Belfast apparently going to a football match.
15. A Polish prostitute from Berlin.
16. A French farmer who speaks only French and has a basket full of strong cheese.
17. A Kurdish refugee living in Germany who is on his way back from Libya

## Mentoring Tools

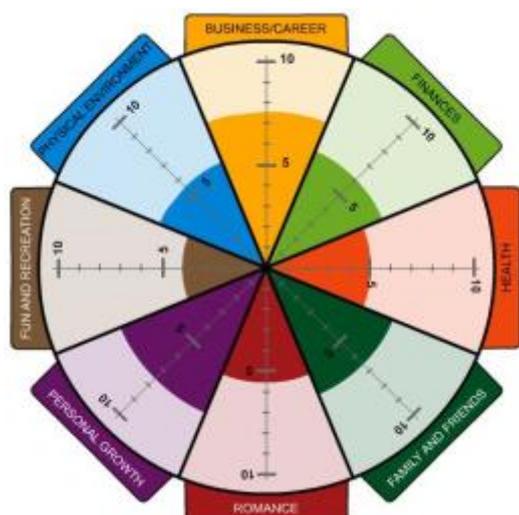
Here we introduce some useful tools for the mentors. These instruments allow the mentor to stay updated and aware about the EVS experience of his volunteer.

### Blob tree



A graphic tool with different characters pictured while climbing a tree in different positions and moods. The activity is divided in two phases: first there is an individual reflection about the character that most represented the volunteer before leaving the EVS, after arriving in the hosting country and finally in the present moment of reflection. Secondly, a sharing phase in peers is used to explain the feelings in the different moment of the experience. The "Blob tree" images can be looked at: <http://www.blobtree.com/>

## Wheel of life



A coaching tool that can be used in several moments to self-assess each own competences and clarify goals in life. Graphically, a wheel is divided in 8 sections or categories in order to compose a balanced life for the participant. Next, taking the centre of the wheel as 0 and the outer edge as 10, the volunteer should rank his/her level of satisfaction with each area and then draw a line with a new outer edge according to the levels. The template can be downloaded at: [https://www.thecoachingtoolscompany.com/free\\_resources/wheel-of-life-coaching-tool/](https://www.thecoachingtoolscompany.com/free_resources/wheel-of-life-coaching-tool/)

## Sea of learning

It is a visual exercise to make people reflect on their learning in life: different phases, accelerations, pauses, what they've learned, how, when and where. The activity is composed by the individual reflection, the sharing and the feedbacks/comments part.

Explanation available at: [https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2623/YP-unfolded\\_method\\_08.pdf](https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2623/YP-unfolded_method_08.pdf)

## The apple tree

Before to start EVS, it is important for the volunteer to reflect about expectations and fears that are moving or blocking his/her involvement in the adventure and to clarify the objectives to be achieved with the project. That's why is important to discuss it again when the mobility experience is going to the end; it makes possible to check if the project was successful in matching them with objectives achieved.

This tool aims to **clarify** the **motivation** of the volunteer and to identify their personal strengths and wishes by facilitating the process of setting up the personal goals.

It's enough to have a paper where the trainer can draw the shape of an apple tree. Roots, trunk and apples are symbols of motivation, fears and strengths. This drawing can help the volunteer to express and formulate own thoughts.

The volunteer write in the roots all the possible fears - also ridicules, Indre says - and in the trunk everything that the project can offer. The leaves are the space to express hopes & dreams. The three apples represent three goals of the volunteers to achieve with EVS. The limit of choosing 3 goals will make easier to identify specific goals and to focus on priority. Everything that the project can offer.

## Mentor's tasks

While the tutor is the responsible of the task within the EVS Service, the mentor should help the volunteer to deal with problems and situations and s/he should facilitate the integration in the new community.

**Supporting**, **guiding** and **connecting** could be considered the three task most representative for each mentor. Let's see more in details what they means.

## Supporting

If we use the metaphor of the mentor as gardener and education as the way the tree grows, we can see the mentor as the pole that supports the tree until it becomes bigger. Then the tree is big enough and knows how to get to the water or avoid the obstacles (stones, etc.). The mentor supports the volunteer until they are strong enough to do by themselves.

## Guiding

The mentor facilitates the way by showing possibilities and facilitating choices. The mentor should not give answers to the volunteer but “guide” them to find a solution by themselves. The mentor does not replace the volunteers: simply guide them.

- Cat: Where are you going?
- Alice: Which way should I go?
- Cat: That depends on where you are going.
- Alice: I don't know. Cat: Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

*Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

## Connecting

The mentor facilitates the interconnection among people helping to strengthen relationships with as many people as possible (young and local community).

## Issues for mentors: Learning aspects

### Learning awareness

The mentor is in charge of support and guidance of the EVS learning pathways and recognition of the competence acquired by the volunteer: in few words, the learning aspect of EVS.

Indeed, any action of the mentor (guiding, supporting and connecting) should be addressed towards the possibility to maximize the EVS learning outcomes.

The learning aspect in EVS is gaining more and more interest in the recent years by the EU Commission because this project represents a valuable experience not only at a personal level but also from a job perspective.

The main problem is to find a way to let the volunteers aware of their learning and of their personal development.

Indeed, learning might not be the first idea the volunteers come up with when they talk about their EVS experience and often what they got from the experience is not even seen as a learning result.

In reality, everything that is going to happen in EVS, including the informal elements of the daily life, has an impact and it represents a valuable learning opportunity.

For example, EVS learn by meeting new people, by simple tasks like shopping in a foreign country or by managing the pocket money. It is learning too!

In our everyday life it is not so common to take time to reflect on everything we learn. Usually there is a

teacher to tell us and everything else that happen out of school remain unknown. Mentors can help on this and this is what we means when we say: “mentor facilitates

the self-assessment of the volunteer making the learning more visible”.

Competences are often acquired in different moment and situation during the whole project, it could be hard to immediately recognize them and there could be the risk the remain hidden.

Mentor can guide to look on what EVS did as a learning process and to describe the results as learning outcomes. In few words, the

mentor helps the EVS to see and to recognize the “happening” as learning opportunity and to give value to that and words to express it.

As a result, not only the volunteers avoid to forget some learning outcomes but also it makes them aware about what they are able to. In few words, volunteers can get aware of own competences and their values and, as a result, this has an impact on their self-esteem and their empowerment.

### How Learning happens

The work on the learning aspect of the EVS experience facilitate the development of awareness also regarding the personal way of learning and, building upon that, it allows to define a learning path to follow to reach own objectives. In other words, volunteers learn to learn.

It is complex process, that’s why one of the task of the mentor is to help the volunteers to get responsible of own learning and to organize it.

First of all, it’s good to be aware of the different learning moments:

The “comfort zone” is a safe and a comfortable place where we usually operate using the skills and abilities we already have. There are not specific challenges and at the same time we cannot make progress or develop new skills because we do tasks we can already do easily. If new experience happens here the new knowledge is superficial because personal values, convictions and perceptions remain relatively untouched. Regardless that, It is still an important zone because it gives us a place to return from the other zone, to reflect and find a sense of what happen.

The “stretching zone” is where the learning is most effective. In this zone, questions are involving also personal perceptions, attitudes or behavior, that’s why the change is possible. At the same time we can become uncertain and vulnerable as our personal values and convictions could be under discussion.

If particularly sensitive points have been touched, convictions and perceptions have been weakened, the stretching zone goes too far and it starts the “panic zone”. Here people panic,

they bloc, they fall back on comforting certainties and the learning become impossible because all the energy is used up for managing/controlling the anxiety. Even if anxiety can be a valuable learning experience, it is not recommended to go there because at this stage they might undergo emotional processes that cannot be contained and dealt in a project like this one.

EVS should be supported and stimulated to reach the stretching zone but it should be avoid to push the volunteers into the panic zone where all the action are stopped and situation is blocked.

### Learning recognition

EVS volunteers are entitled to receive a Youthpass Certificate. Often presented as “more than a

certificate”, it is also a tool to self-assess the learning outcomes.

Indeed, Youthpass gives the possibility to write every ability of a volunteer, in few words, everything s/he can do successfully in a specific field. For that reason, the volunteers should work on the learning aspect by using Youthpass

already during the Evs. In this way they can take benefit of this tool dealing with the whole learning to learn competence and they could avoid the risk to forget some learning outcomes!

The problem is how to express the learning outcomes in an accessible way and how to put into an official framework that can certificate the value of the experience.

It is not easy, that’s why the mentor should facilitate the use of Youthpass and help the self-assessment of the volunteers on the competences, but also let them practice how to communicate it in an official document.

It is also important to discuss with the EVS about their expectations about Youthpass: if they want to use it as a tool to reflect on learning to learn competence is different than the use of it as a certificate to add in the CV. It changes who is going to read it and the way to work at communication level: in the first case it is not a matter of putting a right title in the right box (the most important part is to find the essence of what the EVS wants to communicate) while the second one requires a different language: the jargon of the Competences.

It is important to translate the learning in concrete experiences and understandable concepts. Indeed, it may happen that EVS express it in this way: “I learn how to give lesson on how to fuck about things”. In this case, the mentor should help the EVS to define the outcomes more formally and in line with a vocabulary which is understandable for the rest of the world and for the Labor Market. Can it be “translated” in this way: “I learn how to teach others to avoid to stress themselves”?

In the second case, Youthpass uses the Key Competences as categories which provide a frame where the volunteers can describe abilities with own words. At the same time EVS can decide where to allocate own learnings according to personal choices: for example, the ability above can be considered a civic competence but it can be expressed even in more categories!

## GOOD PRACTICES FOR EVS

**SELECTION:** Open, based on motivation, not competences! CVs, motiv.letters, Skype, ends with signing volunteering agreement.

**RISK MANAGEMENT:** Insurance, security measures in office and flat, phonenumbers to all services, conflict-resolution path, prevention by honesty and transparency! Procedures, incl.opt-out in agreement..

**MOBILITY TOOL:** Hosting Organization updates MT with current data, uploads changes and data of the volunteer.

**LINGUISTIC SUPPORT:** Online support + stationary course or at least tandem courses. Additional options for learning organised.

**WELCOMING:** Picking up, welcoming in a flat with full fridge, SIMcard, tickets to bus/tram and info-kit, personal space in a flat provided (single rooms if possible).

**TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE:** On-arrival TC and midterm Ev.serve monitoring, practicalities and

selfreflection. Treated seriously

**MENTOR:** Competent, outside of NGO (with fresh eye), responsible for integration and psychosupport, always approachable! Personal relations and non-violent communication are important here!

**RECOGNITION:** REAL safe space for evaluation, support in doing Youthpass. Different tools should be used, e.g. learning mandala, diary, heaven-hell origami, revision of blogs etc.

**MONITORING:** Specified in agreement. Project news reported to sending o. Expenses and budget-transparent and regular (set dates for pocket money etc.).

**COOPERATION:** All contact persons know each other, have direct contacts and met on Skype at least once. Constant communication and transparency of documents.

**PREPARATION:** Sending Organization informs on rules, rights, obligations, procedures and facilitates setting learning objectives, expectations etc.

**SUPPORT:** All volunteers dealt individually, and during weekly/monthly meetings, but also: learning diary, blogs, vlogs, origami, mandala. Personal contacts with mentor/coordinator, psychologist „just in case“, social events, integration.

## Corporate Social Responsibility

What is 'Corporate Social Responsibility and why is it important to our project?

Corporate social responsibility, often abbreviated "CSR," is a corporation's initiatives to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on environmental and social wellbeing. The term generally applies to efforts that go beyond what may be required by regulators or environmental protection groups.

CSR may also be referred to as "corporate citizenship" and can involve incurring short-term costs that do not provide an immediate financial benefit to the company, but instead promote positive social and environmental change.

CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) represents "A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies express this attitude:

1. Through their waste and pollution reduction processes,
2. By contributing educational and social programs
3. By earning adequate returns on the employed resources."

(Business dictionary)

CSR in Malaysia began in the form of small contributions which was traditionally driven by religions and racial motivations. The potentials of the country were many for an expansionist Western market, and multinationals started to economical networks and branches overseas. Overtime, as more companies are

formed and businesses received financing from the West; corporate contributions became more structured and linked to corporate strategy. With Malaysian government's increasing focus on CSR, frameworks for implementation of CSR initiatives for the country's business were developed. Among these frameworks is the CSR Silver Book launched from government-linked company (GLC) transformation programme, which provides firms with scorecards and guidelines to measure CSR ideas and to measure the effectiveness of corporate CSR policies.

In year 2000 Malaysia got introduced with the term of CSR for something that was existing in the heart, soul and the mentality of Malaysian Small Medium Enterprises since they started to operate. For centuries, Malaysia's multicultural society has been united by companies' socially responsible behavior and the consideration shown by the members of society for one another.

In Malaysia, three important conditions lead companies to CSR:

- TAX exemption (since 2014)
- "Jajasan status" (at least 50% of the company members must be ethnically Malaysian: Malay or native Orang Asli)
- Free of charge leaders (no salaries for directors)

Some examples of CSR projects involved in VolunLearn project from the Malaysian partner organisation SOLS 24/7 include:

#### SOLS TECH

As the technology arm of SOLS 24/7, SOLS TECH provides government certified Computer System Technician courses for SOLS 24/7 students and runs an innovative project to provide donated and refurbished digital devices to the underprivileged.

Around 10 million Malaysians still don't have access to computers or the internet, yet literacy and access to information can make a big difference for young people to find opportunities and better jobs. In cooperation with companies and foundations, SOLS TECH provides free technology and IT education for underserved communities and organisations in Malaysia. Project is to collect used computers and electronic devices from companies and individuals, refurbish and donate them to underprivileged communities and non-government organisations.

#### NGOHUB.ASIA

ngohub.asia is a platform developed by SOLS 24/7 and founded by 7-Eleven as it's CSR partner. This platform is for non-profit organisations and individuals to find the resources they need to grow and contribute more in whichever field they're working in, to develop the third sector in Asia.

Mission is to provide visibility, resources and connections for NGOs and a structured volunteer platform with verified placement and donor opportunities for individuals who care.

Made up of staff, volunteers from SOLS 24/7 Malaysia and partners, the ngohub.asia team is committed to changing the NGO and volunteering landscape in Malaysia.

#### COMMUNITY CENTERS (previously Project 100)

Has been running for 3 years providing free English education around Malaysia, funded by Tan Sri Vincent

Tan's Better Malaysia Foundation as a CSR partner. EVS volunteers have been placed in community centers across the country as Project Management Executives (PME) and supported the teaching of English language and fostered the community development, administration and student recruitment process.



THANKYOU