

# EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE takeoff:



## Tips for **SENDING** Organisations

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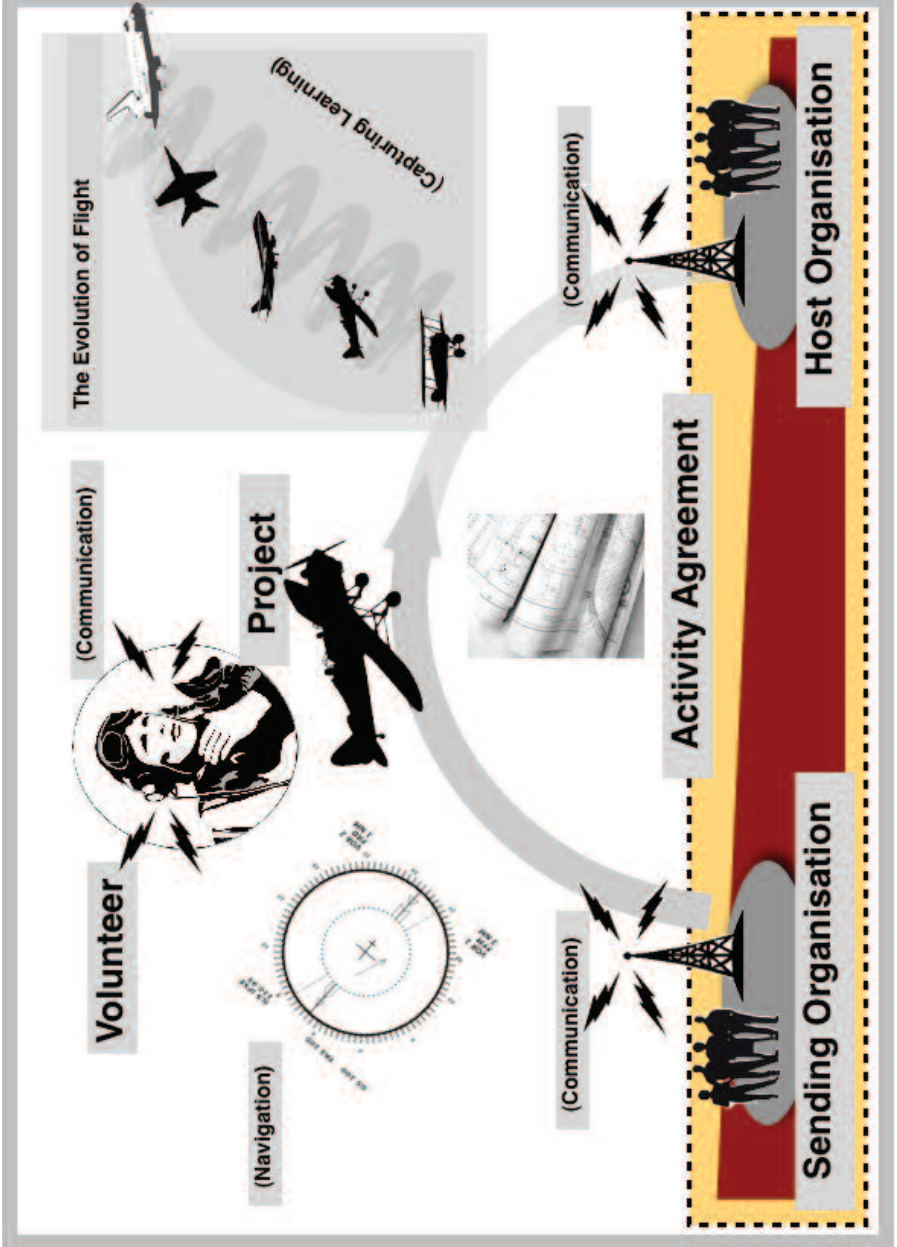
Youth



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# 1. Welcome to the world of travel

In this booklet, we will present some of the possibilities that Youth in Action's Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (EVS) can offer to young people and present the work that needs to be done in order to successfully prepare for and implement the role of the sending organisation in an EVS project.

## **What is the network of international airports? (What is EVS?¹)**

The aim of European Voluntary Service (EVS) is to develop solidarity and promote active citizenship and mutual understanding among young people. European Voluntary Service enables young people to carry out voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their country of residence. It fosters solidarity among young people and is a true 'learning service'. Beyond benefiting local communities, volunteers learn new skills and languages, and discover other cultures.

As in all of the Youth in Action actions, there are some adaptations for young people with fewer opportunities in order to support their learning, trans-national mobility and participation.

1 For more information please check Youth in Action Programme Guide, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm)

## 2. Getting Ready for EVS

### Do you really want to become an international airfield?

Before we can become an active organisation in EVS, we have to think about ourselves and our work. Do we want to be an EVS organisation? Is facilitating non-formal and informal learning a part of our mission? What are the learning opportunities we can provide to young people? Do we have time and people to devote to this? Do we have experience in youth work in general? Do we have international experience already? Do we fit into the Youth in Action Programme at all?

It's worth thinking about these things before we start. Planning is usually more than half of the work, and if we skip this phase it may haunt us in the accreditation process and also in the implementation of the EVS project.

Would you like to provide young people with the opportunity to learn in an international environment and are you ready to support them in their path? If your answer is an enthusiastic 'Yes', then continue reading. If there are some doubts, now is the appropriate time to have a discussion with the other members (stakeholders) of your organisation.



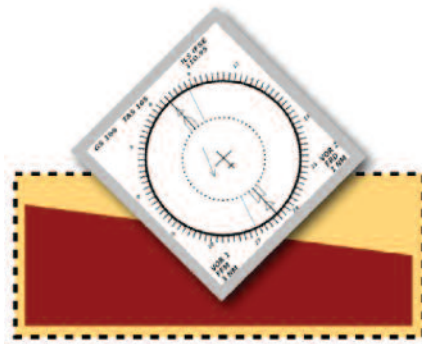
# 3. The Accreditation Process

## Putting the flight control systems in place

The accreditation process is the stage that prepares the organisation to assume its responsibilities towards its potential volunteers. The process starts with filling out the Expression of Interest. This document contains the information on the organisation and the possible projects it wants to implement.

During the process, the organisation is checked by accreditors, in order to see if all the information is correct and to help the potential sending and hosting organisations to prepare the procedures that will really help the volunteers.

The accreditation process therefore assures the quality of preparation for organisations and (in most countries) supports the organisations in their preparation. Expressions of interest of accredited organisations are posted in the European database on EVS accredited organisations<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>2</sup> Visit:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm)

# 4. Contracting the Volunteers

## Contracting the pilots

When the accreditation process is finished, it is time to find the volunteers to send them abroad. The interest for going on EVS varies from country to country, so in some cases a lot of effort needs to be invested in order to attract volunteers.

There are different experiences in attracting the volunteers. Many organisations offer the EVS experience to volunteers they already know (their members, participants of different activities) and some organisations offer the experience to “any young person that walks through our door”.

In any case the volunteer and organisation need to define their needs and expectations from each side. The needs of volunteers may vary in accordance with their age, gender, ethnicity, religious background, etc. Also, the needs of organisations may vary depending on their experience and need to know the volunteer. The agreement is the basis for the future support of the volunteer by the sending organisation.



# 5. Project Preparation

## Making the flight plan

The first step in project preparation is finding partners who are ready to host your volunteer. It is not uncommon that partnerships between organisations can last for a number of years, and can be explored in different frameworks and used for a variety of projects. If you already have international partners, try with them first; maybe it will work.

There's always the opportunity to find partners through different databases, but the main thing we want to achieve is the common understanding of the learning opportunities for the volunteer and the common understanding of the project.

The role of the sending organisation in this phase is to ensure the needs of the volunteer are met in the project and to advocate for the best situation possible for the volunteer. Therefore, the knowledge of the youth workers working on the project plan is crucial.

Special sensibility needs to be in place on all sides when dealing with people with fewer opportunities. Their project and support needs to be defined with even greater care. To address this, Youth in Action provides some special support measures, like reinforced mentorship and advanced planning visit.



# 6. Communication with air traffic control

## Support During the Project

The work of the sending organisation is not finished when the volunteer goes abroad. Each volunteer needs some kind of support. Sometimes the support is already defined within the contract between the volunteer and sending organisation, but most likely the sending organisation will have to do its best to stay in touch with the volunteer and to provide him with all the information he needs.

Support can be anything from sending an e-mail or talking to the volunteer on the telephone, to sending them some treats from their home country, intervening in any conflicts that may arise, or explaining the differences between cultures etc.

Communication can also facilitate the volunteer's reflection and keeping track of the events. If the volunteer writes a blog, it will help them in the later stages of the project, when the evaluation and capturing learning take place.



# 7. Evaluation

## After flight debriefing

Evaluation is one of the most crucial steps to capturing the learning of all people involved in the project. Evaluation allows us to reflect on things that happened during the project, what we have learned and also to put our achievements into some perspective.<sup>3</sup> The proper evaluation doesn't show just the learning of the volunteer, but also presents the learning of our organisation and the learning from the hosting side as well.

The process of evaluation is often neglected and is seen as just as another obligation that needs to be done in order to finish the project. If tackled in this way, it is very hard to expect any real learning from it. Furthermore, when the evaluation is just done by questionnaires, it can often be misused in order to receive the things we want to hear. Real evaluation will be a participatory process, where the result is not known in advance, but will emerge along the way and provide us with information on how to continue similar activities in the future. Also, a good evaluation is often used as a starting point of a new activity or project.



# 8. Capturing and Sharing Learning

## Improve your airport

On the one hand, evaluation helps the young person to categorise their learning achievements. Through the process of preparing a Youthpass<sup>4</sup>, the volunteer identifies learning achievements and categorises them in line with eight Key Competencies of Lifelong Learning. The experience gathered during the EVS placement is usually an added value for the volunteer compared to his peers competing on the labour market.

On the other hand, the learning of the organisation needs to be interwoven into the principles of the organisation's work. The experience gathered can help us in preparation of new activities and it can also affect the policies of our organisation.

The knowledge gathered about different cultures is often used to promote EVS and the EU in general and to attract new volunteers into the Youth in Action Programme. There are also some funds available in order to improve the visibility of the results. In this way, the activities are supported by the programme itself. Good luck in your next activities!

*For more information please contact your National Agency of the Youth in Action program.*



<sup>4</sup> For more information on YouthPass, please check out: [www.youthpass.eu](http://www.youthpass.eu)

This publication is an outcome from the EVS Takeoff training course, held in Maynooth Ireland, May 20 - 24 2010. The training course brought together participants from six European countries to discuss and learn about the roles and responsibilities of sending organisations within the EVS framework. The topics in this booklet represent the main themes from the training course as well as some of the key points that emerged. It has been compiled by the two trainers for the course, Sašo Kronegger and David Backhouse.

Both the EVS Takeoff training course and this booklet are joint ventures, supported by a partnership between four different Youth in Action National Agencies:



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## References and Resources

### Partner Finding:

<http://www.youthnetworks.eu>

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm)

### T-Kit 10 : Educational Evaluation in Youth Work:

[http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/10/Tkit\\_10\\_EN](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/10/Tkit_10_EN)

### Youth In Action Programme Guide (available in many languages):

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm)

### Hopscotch to Quality in EVS (handbook for EVS promoters):

<http://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2006>

### YouthPass:

<http://www.youthpass.eu>

