**Principles of cooperation**

The concept of training within the framework of the Cycle of Training and Evaluation

of Erasmus+ volunteering projects

The Cycle of Training and Evaluation is one of the main components of Erasmus+ volunteering projects, which provides support to the young participants in the process of non-formal education before, during and after the stay in the host country.

The Cycle of Training and Evaluation of Erasmus+ volunteering projects aims to provide young volunteers with continuous support during a project. The cycle contributes to the development of and learning by every young person. Moreover, it helps to resolve conflicts, counteracts risks and facilitates the evaluation of the experience gained during the implementation of a project.

The quality of the project is the main objective of the project preparation phase and the Cycle of Training and Evaluation. In view of the diversity of the countries participating in projects, varied character of National Agencies and the strong diversification of the volunteers, considerable degree of flexibility in the scope of the type of training is allowed, however, special emphasis placed on the quality should be common to all training courses. A National Agency or a relevant SALTO regional centre (together with the project promoter) should ensure that the training is adapted to specific needs of individual volunteers.

**Assumptions:**

The assumptions of the training programme are based on the document published by the European Commission entitled “E+ volunteering training and evaluation cycle guidelines and minimum quality standards” and practical experience of the SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre resulting from training offered to volunteers in the years 2000-2017 in the framework of the YOUTH, Youth in Action and Erasmus+ Youth programmes.

The training programme should be addressed to foreign volunteers coming to carry out projects in the Eastern Partnership countries and in Russia and to the coordinators coming from the host countries who are directly responsible for the volunteers and for other projects, which support the operation of the whole programme.

Seminars are based on active methods taking account of the experiences, interests and needs of participants, as well as the needs and objectives of the SALTO Centre. The final contents of each training programme are to be agreed by the trainers and the participants, in order to ensure the ownership of the success of the meeting. The methods used must be based on the non-formal education methodology and must include: simulation games and role plays, discussions, work in small groups, drama techniques, integration games and plays, and the use of the arts. The programme may be complemented by city tours/thematic walks and meetings with experts aimed at learning about the local history and culture. The concept of key competences and Youthpass should be included.

 The objective of the training is not to offer a ready-made ‘survival-kit’. The trainers should offer a framework, which will help the participants discover various elements of their stay abroad; working as a volunteer, and confronting a different culture and tradition, and which will help them identify their strengths and weaknesses in order that they are able to find their own ways and methods of handling difficult situations. Apart from transferring specific knowledge, it is equally important to show the participants where and how to look for useful information on their own.

As far as possible, the trainers should complement each other in terms of language skills. They should have experience in working with youth and volunteers coming from different countries, in particular those involved in international voluntary service projects. The team should be familiar with pedagogical concepts in the field of youth work in other countries participating in the programme and should jointly make preparations for and summaries of successive programmes.

The number of training courses depends on the number of applications approved by the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ programme concerning Erasmus+ volunteering projects.

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 Evaluation event

Objective: evaluation of the experience gained by the volunteers during the Erasmus+ volunteering project abroad; reflection on the learning process, acquired competence, skills and world view. Discussing possible culture shock related to coming back to the country. Providing further information and practical advice on navigation in the labour market, looking for other forms of voluntary activities, and pursuing further training.

**Target group**: volunteers who returned home after the completion of projects abroad: 10 at the minimum, 40 at the maximum.

**Duration**: 3 days.

Training date: Approximately 12 months after volunteers’ return after the completion of projects abroad.

**Contents of the training may include:**

1. Presentation of projects by volunteers (interesting titbits, key moments, difficult and positive experiences);
2. Intercultural education, including culture shock resulting from being exposed to the culture of a foreign country and the one experienced upon return to the home country;
3. Informal education, reflection on acquired skills, competences and world view; Focusing attention on the learning process and development of individuals;
4. Principles, exchange of experiences, project management;
5. Continuing the learning process, i.e. life after the project; European CV; conditions on the labour market at home and in the European Union; how to establish a non-governmental organisation, start a business or take up other forms of volunteering at home and abroad.

**In addition:**

* Invited experts;
* Creativity workshops and other unconventional workshop methods

**Seminars for young people from abroad coming to the Eastern Partnership countries and to Russia**

The contents of the programme and the methods used should take into account the multicultural character of the group, which impacts on the language used during the programme. The working language is mainly English, although it cannot be assumed that all participants will speak it. Additional language skills displayed by the trainers will prove helpful, and in special cases will allow for communication in the mother tongue of individual group members.

**On arrival training:**

***Objective****:* preparing for work at a host organisation and for a few month’s stay in a new country; providing an opportunity to meet other Erasmus+ volunteers and learn about other volunteering projects.

***Target group:*** young volunteers from EU countries carrying out projects lasting longer than **2 months** coming to organisations in the Eastern Partnership countries and in Russia.

***Duration***: 5 days.

***The number of participants:*** 6 at the minimum, 25 at the maximum (+2 as an option, to be agreed with trainers).

***Training date****:* at the beginning of the stay

***Language***: English + interpretation into the language(-s) spoken by the majority of the participants of a given meeting.

***Contents****:*

1. Reminding of basic information on **voluntary service** (e.g. obligations of the sending and host institution, mentor); Verifying the situation concerning insurance and visas of volunteers;
2. **Project work** -- communication, working with target group, difficult situations, conflicts, support system, teamwork, local community and project’s impact on the local community;
3. **Intercultural education.**

**In addition the programme of on arrival training may include**:

* different roles in volunteering projects: a volunteer, mentor, etc;
* city tour;
* “National evening” - workshops;
* Youthpass - introducing the concept and its possible use;.

# Mid-term evaluation meeting

***Objective*:** evaluation of the course of the project; exchanging experiences; staging another meeting of volunteers and providing them with an opportunity to meet other volunteers; providing information about various educational and professional opportunities, e.g. other volunteering programmes and programmes related to professional training.

***Target group***: young volunteers carrying out projects lasting **at least 6 months** coming to organisations in the Eastern Partnership countries and in Russia.

***Duration***: 4 days.

***Training date***: approximately halfway through the project.

***Language****:* English or other language spoken by the group (e.g. Russian)

***The number of participants:*** 6 at the minimum, 25 at the maximum (+2 as an option, to be agreed with trainers).

***Contents****:*

1. **The evaluation** of the course of the project (working in the organisation, integration, new skills, experiences);

Exchange of experiences with other volunteers; Reflecting about the other half of the project - what can be improved/changed and how?

Providing feedback to SALTO and NA;

1. **Problems and conflicts** in the project and outside of it - the identification of problematic aspects of professional and private life and developing a strategy for conflict resolution;
2. **Plans for the future** - what to do when you return to your country and how to use the newly acquired skills on the labour market; Youthpass - introducing the concept and its possible use;

**In addition a mid-term meeting may include**:

* city tour;
* sightseeing in attractive places, like a museum or theatre, related to the meeting sessions.