

# Roles and partnership

Although it seems that EVS project is only a matter of sending and receiving organisations and a volunteer, we can distinguish many different subjects that can help us improve the impact of our project to our local communities. In every EVS projects we can identify following roles:

**Receiving organisation (RO)** – the responsibility of receiving organisation is first of all in assuring of safety working environment of the volunteer. It is necessary to identify the real need why the receiving organisation needs a volunteer and consider not only the amount of the working tasks but also the learning opportunities that can receive organisation offer to volunteer. Organisation environment should be well prepared for accepting a volunteer because it can cause a lot of changes and misunderstanding. It is necessary to speak with all employees of the organisation about aims/ objectives of EVS, what EVS projects can bring and also where can be any potential risks, even during accreditation procedure and before EVS volunteer come to the receiving organisation.

**Sending organisation (SO)** – sending organisation is first of all responsible for all the process of sending. It means helping a young person to find a suitable project, speaking with him/her about the motivation and expectations and also explaining the opportunities that EVS project can bring for improving the future position in a labour market. Sending organisation should prepare a volunteer also for a culture shock and speak with the volunteer about his/her worries. In the process of starting the cooperation between sending and receiving organisation we strongly recommend to be in touch regularly and set up ways of solving potential problems. The partnership is one of the most important issues of EVS project and if it works well it can be very helpful for both organisations and also for a volunteer.

**Coordinator** – coordinator is a person of sending and receiving organisation that is necessary for the EVS project. In sending organisations coordinator is a person that is in touch with the young person in the process of choosing the project and preparing for his/her stay in foreign country. During the stay of volunteer abroad coordinator of sending organisation should be in regular touch not only with the volunteer but also with the coordinator of receiving organisation. As soon as the project is over sending organisation should be again in touch with a volunteer and help him/her exploit gained knowledge and skills as much as possible. Also at this time, it is very important that the sending organisation supports an EVS volunteer in re-integration process in the home country. Coordinator of receiving organisation is first of all responsible for direct work with the volunteer, planning and monitoring of learning outcomes, managing all necessary practical issues and solving all problems that may appear. The coordinator is pretty important for a volunteer because it is just the first person that volunteer meets in a new country. The coordinator should meet the volunteer regularly and speak with him about his work, successes, development or troubles as much as possible. During common meetings, there should be space for feedback of EVS volunteer as well coordinator mapping involvement of EVS volunteer in previous activities as well space for planning activities for next period, including the topic of learning aims/ process of EVS volunteer as well summarisation related to the whole long-term EVS project. The coordinator is also responsible for ensuring of long-term coherence of the whole EVS project (setting and evaluation long-term aims of EVS in the receiving organisation/ educational aims, how those aims are reflected in concrete activities the EVS volunteer is involved in).

**Mentor** – mentor is a young person who is in touch with a volunteer and helps him with integration to the local community. It can be a person at the same age as the volunteer but we also know some organisations where the mentor is much older than volunteer and it works very well. The mentor shouldn't be an employee of the receiving organisation although it is an advantage if s/he knows the organisation surrounding. The mentor is more a friend that can speak with a volunteer about all troubles and help him solve it. It is very important if the communication between coordinator of receiving organisation and volunteer doesn't work well. It is necessary that the EVS coordinator respects the role of the mentor and is open to his/ her inputs/feedback/ sharing the information about running of EVS project. The mentor should be active in touch with the volunteer, introduce him/her to members of local community and help him find new friends and new contacts.

**Activity leaders** – during EVS project volunteer can cooperate also with other employees of receiving organisation – leaders of activities where volunteer helps. It is important for a volunteer to know all the responsibilities within receiving organisation, what he can solve with whom. In the beginning of EVS project, it is necessary to introduce all leaders to volunteer and set up mutual meetings and ways of cooperation. Also, it is important that activity leaders are well informed about aims of EVS project in the RO, educational aims of EVS volunteer and rights and responsibilities of the RO and EVS volunteer, still before EVS volunteer come to the receiving organisation. It is also very useful if at least once a month volunteer can participate in a meeting with his/her coordinator and activity leaders and speak about their mutual cooperation.

**Coordinating organisation** – Coordinating organisation is responsible for managing the awarded grant and deliver it throughout all project partners. There are three different possibilities.

- Coordinating organisation as a receiving organisation – the most common situation we can meet. For receiving organisation, it is much easier to deal with the grant amount if they also have the capacity to be coordinating organisation.
- Coordinating organisation as sending organisation – especially for projects receiving volunteer in Partner countries. Partner countries cannot apply for grants, so if volunteers want to participate in some projects in partner countries, usually sending organisation take responsibility.
- Coordinating organisation as an umbrella organisation for other partners – sometimes coordinating organisation can also be an organisation that is not sending or receiving in the project, but is just experienced enough in the field of Erasmus+ project and managing grants and take the responsibility of project coordination.

**Local community** – during the EVS project volunteer must be in touch with the local community. The volunteer shouldn't be closed only inside the receiving organisation, it is important for him to find new contacts and new friends within the local community. Integration of volunteer to the local community can be also a great opportunity for the receiving organisation to be more visible and to attract new people for various activities. If volunteers aren't integrated into the local community, there is a big risk of losing motivation. Volunteer needs somebody who can help him overcome his/her homesick, especially during weekends. Meeting other members of the local community also enable him to get to know the lifestyle and culture of receiving country better.

**Other organisation** – it is a big advantage of an organisation if there are more organisations within the city with EVS projects. A volunteer can meet other volunteers who have more than less the same experience with staying in a foreign country. Other volunteers can also help him integrate into local community easily. For coordinators it can be great opportunity to share best practice, to help each other and also to organise international events together.

Receiving organisation can also in EVS project cooperate with other organisations, for example schools, kindergartens, youth centres, other NGOs etc. Many of them don't have the opportunity to receive own volunteer but can be very grateful if volunteer comes to visit their activities and prepares some presentation about him/herself and country where s/he is from. It can also bring new contacts for receiving organisation and start new cooperation. For volunteers, it is great opportunity to develop new skills and learn also from good practice of other organisations.

Before the EVS projects start we recommend the receiving organisation to make a plan of potential cooperation in the project, not only with receiving organisation but also with other organisations within the local community.

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