

Example of Good Practice

European Voluntary Service	
Title	Roma Short Term EVS
Aims & objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase awareness of Roma culture, heritage and equality issues throughout Europe. - Tackle discrimination of Roma throughout Europe - Personal development and progression of Roma young people - Development of future projects working with Roma in Wales - Allow Roma volunteers to meet and discover many different cultures and people
Target Group	This project works only with Roma volunteers from a partnership called Roma Gadje Dialogue through Service (RGDS). It aims to target activities at young people in Wales and also at other international volunteers in Wales.
Description	This project gives Roma young people an opportunity to take part in a volunteering project in the UK without any need for English language ability which is often a barrier to their participation. They have the opportunity to come to Wales for 1 month in which they will spend 2 weeks learning English and developing ideas of how to share their Roma background with people. Following this they will spend 2 weeks on a volunteering project with 10 other volunteers from all over the world helping the Countryside Council to repair footpaths and build bridges for the local community. During this time the volunteers will be living and working in a diverse international group which gives those many formal and informal opportunities to share their heritage and culture with many people. In addition to this the volunteers were keen to link up with organizations in Wales which worked with Roma children who lived in Wales. This can and will lead on to future development of projects working with Roma children living in Wales and give the opportunity for these Short Term EVS volunteers to return on a long term project and develop their skills in communication and leadership.
<p>Challenges in this project and how to overcome them.</p> <p>What approach was particularly successful or very difficult?</p>	<p>One challenging element was working out small cultural differences. One in particular arose out of food habits. Neither volunteer was used to shopping for their own food or managing a budget. They soon ran out of money as they were buying really expensive meat and groceries. We overcame this by talking about the issues and arranging for a Hungarian speaker to take them to the shops and advise them on how to budget and buy cheap good food. Another way of resolving this in the future is to ensure good training and set out clearly what should be spent on food and how they can do this.</p> <p>Both Roma volunteers responded brilliantly to the intercultural exchange between volunteers and the team work of living and working in a mixed group. Neither had experienced this before and it gave them a lot of pleasure and encouragement to see how working as a team was so effective and enjoyable.</p>

<p>Tips, hints</p> <p>What to keep in mind when organizing a similar project?</p>	<p>Food habits can be quite different with Roma volunteers – especially if it is a vegetarian project this could have a huge effect on their happiness on the project.</p> <p>Roma volunteers might need a bit of encouragement to talk about their heritage and background as they may have spent most of their life being discriminated for it or trying to hide it. Similarly they were sometimes negative about their own abilities and skills because they are not used to being praised for anything.</p>
<p>Outcomes, results, effects</p>	<p>The Roma volunteers have gone through a lot of personal development during the project. They have increased their English language skills and also developed skills in team working, cooking, environmental work and problem solving. As a direct outcome of this project we have developed the possibility of a new long term EVS hosting project in Wales working with Roma young people in schools.</p> <p>In addition to this it has increased the awareness of Roma culture amongst young people in Wales and the international volunteers in the group and helped to break down barriers and confusion which often leads to discrimination of Roma.</p> <p>Their presence has also been a catalyst for meetings with different representatives working with Roma, gypsies and travelers in the Welsh Assembly Government and has made them aware of the possibilities of the Youth In Action Programme for addressing issues of inclusion of Roma volunteers and tackling discrimination.</p>
<p>More information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SALTO toolbox • National Agency • Website • 	