

SALTO-YOUTH
TRAINING AND COOPERATION
RESOURCE CENTRE



Education and Culture

SOHO
Sending Organisation Hosting Organisation
European Training Course

Info Pack
for
Participants

Info Pack for participants
about SOHO – European Training Course
Season 2010 - 2011

SOHO – European Training Courses
Co-ordinated and monitored by SALTO-YOUTH Training and Co-operation Resource Centre
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SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE

DEAR PARTICIPANT,

We are looking forward to meeting you at the SOHO European Training Course (TC)!

In this training course we will go deeper into subjects that are closely linked to the European Voluntary Service (EVS). We hope that this training course will contribute to increase the quality of EVS projects. The methodology used in this training activity is based on experiential learning. The working methods are dynamic, and we hope that you will participate actively.

The main subjects of this training course are:

- **Understanding the concept of quality in EVS**
- **The learning dimension of voluntary service in EVS**
- **How to set up a competent support system around the volunteer**
- **The effective international partnership in EVS**

This **Participant Info Pack** includes:

- A brief presentation of the SOHO European Training Course
- The day-by-day programme of your course (the programme is flexible and may change!)
- A brief presentation of the European Youth in Action Programme, with a focus on Action 2 – European Voluntary Service – EVS, and the EVS charter.

Your National Agency (NA) will inform you about all logistic details regarding your SOHO Training Course.

WHAT TO BRING

We kindly ask you to bring:

- Clear information (in English, if possible) about the main activities of your organisation, so that you can present it at the information gallery during the training course. Please be aware that your presentation will be very brief!
- Map, posters, postcards about your country/region/town to be displayed during the SOHO International Evening.
- Some gastronomic specialities (food and/or drinks) for the SOHO International Evening. Please do not bring too much, and note that it may not be possible to cook or heat food at the training centre!
- This Participant Info Pack, with the information about the EVS Action.

For more information, please contact your National Agency.

We wish you a pleasant journey and look forward to meeting you.

Best regards,

Your SOHO trainers and National Agency team

SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE

THE TRAINING COURSE

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE

1. WHAT IS THE SOHO TRAINING COURSE?

SOHO is a Network Training open for all 33 National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme and targets at two of the three main partners of a long-term European Voluntary Service project: **Sending Organisation and Hosting Organisation**.

By bringing together representatives of Sending and Hosting Organisations from different European countries the SOHO TC aims at improving the international co-operation and consequently increasing the quality of EVS projects.

The international dimension of the SOHO TC is given by the different nationalities of participants and trainers team. This is an asset for the intercultural dimension of the course!

The course methodology is based on the concept of experiential learning, in an atmosphere where participants can learn a lot from each other and have a lot of fun!

2. TARGET GROUP

The training course is designed for those who are **directly involved** in the support system around the EVS volunteer (mentors and task-related support persons) on the hosting, sending and coordinating side.

The participants from Sending and Hosting organisations should already have some **experience** in EVS (minimum of being in the process of sending or hosting a volunteer, better having been already sending or receiving the first volunteer).

The participants come from 4 – 6 European countries, equally from Sending and Hosting Organisations, and they are max. 26 people.

The participants should be able to work and communicate in English (working language!).

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The **overall aim** of the SOHO TC is:

- To increase the quality of EVS activities through development of competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of key actors involved in the support system around EVS volunteer.

The **specific objectives** of the course are:

- To get a better understanding of the concept of EVS as “learning service” and related quality aspects in EVS
- To improve the ability for co-operation and working in international partnership

- To reflect on the roles, responsibilities and challenges within the EVS volunteer support system
- To raise awareness of the learning dimension in EVS and provide tools for learning support
- To support the recognition of non formal learning in EVS through the implementation of the Youthpass

An additional benefit of the training course is the valorisation of EVS through the exchange of best practices and experiences among participants.

In the training course participants have the opportunity to meet and to get to know other organisations, but contact making is **not** directly a priority of the training course.

4. THE PROGRAMME

The programme of the SOHO TC is built around four quality aspects relevant to the support system implemented in an EVS project. During the course participants and trainers will analyse the identified quality aspects (concept of EVS – international partnership – learning dimension of EVS – support system) thanks to simulation exercises, case studies, and working groups. Besides, the trainers' team will provide activities to improve the group dynamics and a final evaluation.

5. THE MAIN SUBJECTS

Understanding the concept of quality in EVS: we will favour a common ground among participants to understand the concept of quality in EVS. We will reflect on its values, reasons, interests and needs of all actors involved. We will support the process of understanding EVS as "learning service", linked with the concept of European citizenship.

The learning dimension of EVS service: EVS is very much about learning – non-formal and informal. It is about acquiring new life experiences, but also gaining new **competences** – getting new knowledge, improving skills and developing attitudes. Young people can really learn a lot in EVS! But in order to learn effectively and efficiently, young people need to be properly supported by – YOU! During the course you will go through the different stages of the learning process and you will get acquainted with the concept of Key Competences and Youthpass.

Implementing a competent support system in an EVS project: whether you are a mentor or a task-related support person in a sending or in a hosting project, it is important to know your role and responsibilities, and to develop competences. We will explore the different dimensions of supporting an EVS volunteer. After this training course you can define your role in the context of your organisation and use the practical experience to develop this role.

Partnerships in EVS: issues as the importance of building up a partnership with the partner organisation and the volunteer, keeping the contact, communication and co-operation, and the intercultural dimension of international partnerships will be dealt with. A good partnership is of great value for the success of an EVS project. Please note though, that this is not a partnership seminar, even if there will be opportunities to meet and discuss in an informal way among the participants.

SOHO EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSE

THE TRAINING COURSE

DAILY SOHO TC DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR PARTICIPANTS

Day 1	Day 2 Introduction to YiA and EVS	Day 3 The EVS activity Support and guidance in EVS	Day 4 EVS as a learning service	Day 5
Arrival of participants at the airport or train station BEFORE 6 p.m.	Energiser Introduction to the team and to the programme of the course Reflection on learning in SOHO My SOHO Introduction to YiA	Energiser Checkpoint exercise: how to organise a good EVS activity	Energiser Learning to learn Learning in EVS How to support the learning of the volunteer	Departure of participants
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Knowing you, knowing me Introduction to SOHO	Presentation of the EVS Action Making the Match: how to choose the right volunteer Learning groups - Reflection on learning Preparation of SOHO Gallery	Exercise on guiding and support Learning groups - Reflection on learning	Recognition of learning in EVS – key competences. Introduction to Youthpass Learning groups – Self-assessment of learning Running through the programme once more Evaluation of the SOHO TC Closing ceremony	
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner in town	Dinner	
Knowing us!	Tastes of SOHO: SOHO Gallery and intercultural evening	Night out activity	Farewell Party	

ANNEXES

- **THE EUROPEAN YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**
- **ACTION 2 – EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE**
- **THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE CHARTER**

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States of the European Union have agreed to establish the **Youth in Action** Programme, which puts into effect the legal framework to support non-formal learning activities for young people. It will run from 2007 to the end of 2013.

The **Youth in Action** Programme makes an important contribution to the acquisition of competences and is therefore a key instrument in providing young people with opportunities for non-formal and informal learning with a European dimension. It contributes to the fulfilment of the aims set out in the revised Lisbon Strategy, the European Youth Pact, the framework of European Cooperation in the youth field and the Commission's Plan D for democracy, dialogue and debate and aims to respond at European level to the needs of young people from adolescence to adulthood.

The **Youth in Action** Programme builds on the experience of the previous Programme "Youth for Europe" (1989-1999), the European Voluntary Service and the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006).

Objectives of the Youth in Action Programme

The general objectives stated in the legal basis of the **Youth in Action** Programme are the following:

- Promote young people's active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular;
- Develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, in particular in order to foster social cohesion in the European Union;
- Foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries;
- Contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field;
- Promote European cooperation in the youth field.

These general objectives shall be implemented at project level taking into consideration the following permanent priorities.

Priorities of the Youth in Action Programme

1) European citizenship

Making young people aware that they are European citizens is a priority of the **Youth in Action** Programme. The objective is to encourage young people to reflect upon European topics including European citizenship and to involve them in the discussion on the construction and the future of the European Union.

On this basis, projects should have a strong European dimension and stimulate reflection on the emerging European society and its values.

2) Participation of young people

A main priority of the **Youth in Action** Programme is the participation of young people in democratic life. The overall objective for participation is to encourage young people to be active citizens. This objective has the three following dimensions, laid down in the Council resolution on the common objectives for participation by and information for young people:

- to increase the participation by young people in the civic life of their community;
- to increase participation by young people in the system of representative democracy;
- greater support for various forms of learning to participate.

Projects funded under the **Youth in Action** Programme should reflect these three dimensions by using participation as a pedagogical principle for project implementation.

3) Cultural Diversity

The respect for cultural diversity together with the fight against racism and xenophobia are priorities of the **Youth in Action** Programme. By facilitating joint activities of young people from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, the Programme aims to develop the intercultural learning of young people.

As far as the development and implementation of projects are concerned, this means that young people participating in a project should become aware of its intercultural dimension. Intercultural working methods should be used to enable project participants to participate on an equal basis.

4) Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities

An important priority for the European Commission is to give young people with fewer opportunities access to the **Youth in Action** Programme.

Youth groups and organisations should take appropriate measures to avoid exclusion of specific target groups. The **Youth in Action** Programme is a Programme for all, and efforts should be made to include young people with special needs.

In close cooperation with the National Agencies and the SALTO Resource Centres, the European Commission has established a strategy for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the **Youth in Action** Programme, targeting in particular young people from a less-privileged educational, socio-economic, cultural or geographical background, or with disabilities.

In addition, annual priorities may be fixed for the **Youth in Action** Programme and communicated on the Commission and National Agencies website.

ACTION 2 – EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

1 What is European Voluntary Service?

European Voluntary Service (EVS) supports transnational voluntary service of young people. It aspires to develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, primarily to reinforce social cohesion in the European Union. It promotes active citizenship and enhances mutual understanding among young people.

These general objectives shall notably be achieved by:

- supporting young people's participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both within and outside the European Union;
- giving young people the opportunity to express their personal commitment through voluntary activities at European and international level;
- involving young people in actions fostering solidarity between citizens of the European Union;
- involving young volunteers in a non-profit-making unpaid activity for the benefit of the general public in a country other than his or her country of residence.

European Voluntary Service is a "learning" service: throughout non-formal learning experiences young volunteers improve and/or acquire competences for their personal, educational and professional development as well as for their social integration. The learning elements consist of a mutually agreed definition of the expected learning outcomes, processes and methods, the certification of the acquired competences, the participation of the volunteer in the EVS training cycle and the continued provision of task-related, linguistic and personal support, including a crisis prevention and management mechanism.

2 What is a European Voluntary Service activity?

An EVS activity allows a young person, aged 18 – 30, and in special cases from 16 years old, to be a volunteer in another country for a specified period, normally between 2 and 12 months. Voluntary service activities can take place, for example, in the field of the environment, arts and culture, activities with children, young people or the elderly, heritage, or sports and leisure.

3 Who are the partners in an EVS activity?

Each EVS project and activity is based on a partnership including the following project partners:

- one or more volunteers
- one or more sending organisations;

- one or more host organisations;
- one coordinating organisation (applicant), which can be (but does not have to be) one of the sending organisations or one of the host organisations.

4 What are the partners' obligations?

A solid partnership between EVS sending, host, coordinating organisations and the volunteer is the basis of every EVS activity. An adequate match-making between the volunteer profile and the tasks has to be in place. An *activity agreement* is signed by all the partners before the beginning of the activity.

- The sending organisation is in charge of the preparation and support of the volunteers before, during and after the EVS activities.
- The host organisation has to ensure safe and decent living and working conditions to the volunteer throughout the entire activity period. It has to provide adequate personal, linguistic and task-related support, including the identification of a mentor for the volunteer.
- The coordinating organisation (applicant) has the role of facilitating the implementation of the project by offering administrative and quality support to all project partners and enabling their networking.

5 How to involve young people with fewer opportunities?

One of the most important priorities of the Youth in Action Programme is to give young people with fewer opportunities access to the activities within the programme

Special efforts are made and incentives given in order to allow young people with fewer opportunities, including young people with disabilities, to participate actively in EVS. These 'inclusion' activities are open to 16-30-year-olds, provided that competent and tailor-made preparations, accompaniment and follow-up are provided.

6 What training sessions are parts of European Voluntary Service?

The project foresees the volunteers' participation in the EVS training cycle. It consists of pre-departure training, on-arrival training, mid-term meeting and final evaluation. EVS volunteers have the right and obligation to participate in these training sessions, which are provided by or on behalf of the National Agencies or by EVS sending, host or coordinating organisations in line with the "Volunteer Training: Guidelines and Minimum Quality Standards" of the European Commission (see: Commission website).

7 How is a project financed?

Community financing of an EVS project is based on the principle of co-funding, with other public and/or private contributions. This means that contributions, in kind or in cash, from the sending and host organisations are necessary to cover the total cost of the project.

The Community grant is based on a combination of:

- participation in the actual costs for certain types of expense;
- flat rate amounts for certain other types of expense; and
- amounts based on scales of unit costs for certain other types of expense.

8 The Youthpass

Every volunteer is entitled to receive a Youthpass, which describes and validates the non-formal learning experience. This document can be of great benefit for the future educational or professional pathway of the volunteer. Through the Youthpass the European Commission ensures that the voluntary activity is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning and informal learning. The achievement report is filled in jointly by the volunteer and a representative of the host organisation, is signed by both and handed over to the volunteer directly at the end of the voluntary activity abroad.

You can get further information on the Youth in Action Programme and the EVS Action from your National Agency and reading the "**Programme Guide**" of the Youth in Action Programme. You can also visit the website of the European Commission: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/>.

The training-kit on "**International Voluntary Service**", published in the framework of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, can serve as a useful tool for planning and implementing EVS projects and is available at www.training-youth.net/tkits.htm.

THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE CHARTER

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) Charter is part of the 'Youth in Action' Programme Guide and highlights the roles of EVS sending, host and coordinating organisations and the main principles and quality standards of EVS. **Each EVS organisation adheres to the provisions set out in this Charter.**

EVS partnership

A solid partnership between EVS sending, host, coordinating organisations and the volunteer is the basis of every EVS activity. An adequate match-making between the volunteer profile and the tasks has to be in place. An *activity agreement* is signed by all the partners before the beginning of the activity.

- The sending organisation is in charge of the preparation and support of the volunteers before, during and after the EVS activities.
- The host organisation has to ensure safe and decent living and working conditions to the volunteer throughout the entire activity period. It has to provide adequate personal, linguistic and task-related support, including the identification of a mentor for the volunteer.
- The coordinating organisation (applicant) has the role of facilitating the implementation of the project by offering administrative and quality support to all project partners and enabling their networking.

EVS principles to be ensured

- The non-formal educational and intercultural learning dimension, through a clear definition of a learning plan for the volunteer.
- The service dimension through a clear definition of the non-profit making character and the volunteer tasks. Full-time service and active role of the volunteer in implementing the activities have to be ensured. EVS volunteer activities must not substitute any employment.
- The benefit to and the contact with the local community.
- EVS is free of charge for the volunteers.
- Accessibility and Inclusion: when recruiting EVS volunteers, the organisations maintain the overall accessibility of EVS for all young people, without prejudice related to ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation or political opinion. If the project targets volunteers with fewer opportunities, facilities and capacity in providing tailor-made preparation, support and follow-up have to be in place.

EVS quality standards to be ensured

Support to the volunteer

- before, during and after the EVS activities, in particular in crisis prevention and management;
- for insurance, visa, residence permit, travel arrangements and all the EVS administrative procedures;
- by facilitating the volunteer's participation in the EVS training cycle (pre-departure training, on-arrival training, mid-term meeting and final evaluation);
- by foreseeing proper evaluation measures;
- by encouraging a follow-up activity: every volunteer has the right to plan and implement a follow-up activity.

Information

- All EVS partners have the right to receive complete information on the activity and agree on all aspects.
- Visibility, dissemination and publicity measures have to be in place.

Recognition

- Each EVS volunteer is entitled to receive a Youthpass.