



Youth and European Social Work Forum - Encouraging young people

Report “YES to Volunteering!” 1st Complementary Activity Strategic EVS – Athens, 13-15 June 2018



The “YES to Volunteering!” Strategic EVS is a new YES Forum project which will implement, with a total of 10 partners in 6 EU countries (for now!), **19 European Voluntary Services by mid-2020**. The project will ensure **accessibility to youngsters facing additional obstacles** compared to their peers. It also ambitions to **promote volunteering as a powerful educational tool and change-making experience** among its network ... and beyond!

YeToVo’s 1st Staff Training

The 1st YeToVo Complementary Activity focused on the one hand on providing space to the project partners for the **exchange of experience and planning of the future EVS activities**. The project is involving 5 “newcomer” organisations who are starting their involvement in the EVS field: they could benefit from the more experienced EVS partners’ experience.

On 13 June, after indispensable reminders on the project objectives, all participants joined a “World Café” to exchange views on volunteering: this way, they developed a **common understanding of volunteering** in general to make sure the newcomers and experienced EVS organisations start the project with the same expectations.

Later on, the World Café results were **compared to EVS for a “reality check”**, focusing on providing all partners with the basics of EVS: the partners’ responsibilities, finances, administrative procedures etc.



On 14 June, the entire morning was dedicated to the matching of:

- **Experienced EVS organisations and newcomers**, so that the partners newly involved in EVS could share about the more experimented partners’ experience with the European Voluntary Service, with a more specific look at their methods to implement EVS activities and support the young volunteers before, during and after their experience.
- **Sending and Hosting Organisations for each planned EVS Activity**, in order to provide space for each “pair” to plan in more details their future EVS exchanges. The partners set more precise provisional dates, detailed the content of the future EVS Activities, and exchanged about the profile of their respective target groups to make sure the youngsters with fewer opportunities who will volunteer will get appropriate and adaptable support.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Finally on 15 June, all partners focused on an essential step for the newcomers: **EVS Accreditations**. The partners newly involved in EVS learnt about the process and requirements for getting the relevant accreditations to be able to implement their future EVS Activities.

“Say YES to Volunteering!”

In addition, the Complementary Activity involved additional guests – beyond the YeToVo partnership – in several sessions under the theme “Say YES to Volunteering!”. The objective was to provide more insight on EVS and volunteering in general not only to YeToVo partners themselves, but also to the whole YES Forum Network, to **encourage more organisations in the youth and social field to get involved in volunteering**.



To do so, the afternoon on 14 June was dedicated to the presentation of various projects related to volunteering. EVS was the main focus of course, but YES Forum also widened the scope to address other volunteering opportunities for young people.

The most relevant presented projects were:

- [YeToVo!](#) itself, in order to invite additional organisations to get involved in the project thanks to the flexibility offered by the Strategic EVS specificities.
- The work of [Volonteurope and VolunteeringMatters](#), who are extremely experienced in international volunteering and are now implementing their own Strategic EVS, representing additional volunteering opportunities for interested participants.
- The [Erasmus+ KA3 project ACT](#), which combined EVS opportunities for youngsters with fewer opportunities with capacity-building in working with refugees and migrants in Greece and Italy.

Finally, on 15 June morning the YES Forum organized a **“Human Library” focused on volunteering**. 10 Human Books presented their experience to multiple small groups of “Readers” during informal exchanges. The “Books” represented current and former volunteers – in EVS but also through other public schemes such as FSJ in Germany or the Civil Service in France – as well as organisations involved in volunteering, as sending or hosting organisations especially in EVS.



The participants could therefore get a better – and more personal! – understanding of the many benefits of international volunteering. With already motivating outcomes: several participants reported their new interest in getting involved in volunteering!

And for more sunny pictures of the event, simply have a look [there!](#)

Final Programme

13 June		
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Welcome Lunch</i>	
14:00 – 14:30	Introduction(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of the YeToVo! Project: Objectives, Activities, Timeline - Partners & Participants' Presentations
14:30 – 16:30	World Café: Volunteering: Why, how, when?	YES to Volunteering ... but let's figure out the basics together! Why volunteering, especially abroad? What are the benefits both for the volunteers and their host organisations? What does the perfect volunteering opportunity need?
16:30 – 17:00	<i>Break</i>	
17:00 – 18:30	The World of EVS ... and its many rules 😊	Time for a reality-check: comparing our World Café's results with the real world of EVS. What is actually expected from EVS organisations?
19:00	<i>Dinner</i>	
14 June		
9:30 – 10:00	EVS as a Learning Opportunity: A closer look	Reminders about the objectives of EVS in terms of learning outcomes, the topics covered by EVS, a look at a "typical" EVS activity, YeToVo focus on Youngsters with fewer opportunities etc.
10:00 – 12:30	YeToVo: Let the Matching Begin!	Exchanging international volunteers requires a close collaboration between the Sending and Hosting Organisations. During this session, YeToVo partners will get to know each other's organisations better, and design, review and adapt the EVS activities they are going to offer.
13:00 – 14:40	<i>Networking Lunch</i>	
14:30 – 16:00	<i>Internal YES Forum Meeting</i>	<i>As many YES Forum members are present for the event, let's use this opportunity to take care of some statutory matters!</i>
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Break</i>	
14:00 – 18:00	Say YES to Volunteering! "YES Forum's new horizons"	YES Forum has new achievements to celebrate ... and has expanded to broader horizons thanks to new partners in the past few years. We'd like to showcase a few specific projects to inspire our participants, with a specific focus on volunteering of course!
19:00	<i>Networking Dinner</i>	
15 June		
09:30 – 12:00	Human Library "Say YES to Volunteering!"	Because there is no better way to understand the benefits of volunteering abroad for young people than by hearing real life experiences, come and meet with current and former volunteers, as well as people dedicated to make volunteering possible!
12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:00 – 14:30	YeToVo: A proper welcome for newcomers in the world of EVS!	Session dedicated to helping newcomers among the YeToVo partners to prepare their "Homework": applying for their EVS Accreditation!