



“YES to Volunteering!”

Erasmus+ KA1, Strategic European Voluntary Service

Description of the Project

Project Name: „YES to Volunteering! “ (YeToVo!)

Application: Erasmus+ KA1, Strategic EVS including Staff Trainings

Over the course of 30 months (February 2018 – July 2020), the „YES to Volunteering!“ project will further **develop volunteering within the YES Forum network** through the organisation of **EVS activities dedicated at youngsters with fewer opportunities**, while supporting their implementation and ensuring the sustainability of the project through **3 Staff Trainings**.

As a Strategic EVS and in accordance with the Erasmus+ programme Guide, “YES to Volunteering!” will involve a balanced **mix of experienced and prospective EVS organisations**.

ACTIVITIES

The “YES to Volunteering!” project will combine the implementation of regular EVS activities within its partnership with 3 Staff Trainings, these activities contributing to their mutual quality.

EVS activities

“YeToVo!” will on the first hand focus on implementing quality EVS activities thanks to the exchange of volunteers between its partner organisations. The activities will be dedicated to youngsters with fewer opportunities, with a mix of short- and long-term EVS in order to adapt each activity to the volunteers’ profiles.

The implementation of these EVS activities will follow two steps:

- **Phase 1:** Experienced EVS organisations, having already the relevant EVS accreditations, will first implement EVS activities starting during the first half of 2018.
- **Phase 2:** Prospective EVS organisations, after they have received the relevant EVS accreditations thanks to the training and support provided through the first Staff Trainings, will in turn implement EVS activities starting in the first semester of 2019. As these will be their first EVS, they will be accompanied by the rest of the partnership in this process in order to ensure the quality of these placements.

The EVS volunteers, besides their regular activities within their host organisations, will also take part to the Staff Trainings which will occur during their placement. This way, the Staff Trainings will:

- Include direct youth input as the EVS will share their experiences, expectations, wishes and remarks as volunteers with the partners’ staff during the trainings;

- Provide additional learning opportunities to the EVS volunteers, as they will get to discover the European youth and social field through the “YeToVo!” partners, experience international seminars, and receive the knowledge shared during the Staff Trainings in addition.

Staff Trainings

3 Staff Trainings will accompany the whole process in order to strengthen the capacities of organisations already involved in the EVS strand of Erasmus+, give prospective EVS organisations the indispensable training and support they need to start their involvement in EVS, and facilitate the transition of all partners to the upcoming European Solidarity Corps.

Staff Training 1 (2 days): In June 2018, the 1st Staff Training will be a Contact-Making Event allowing partners to get to know each other, fostering ideal conditions for the later exchange of volunteers during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the EVS exchanges. The event will also address the following themes in order to start preparing prospective EVS organisations to get involved in EVS:

- The benefits of volunteering for volunteers, participating organisations and local communities;
- Presentation of and discussion on the existing public schemes, with a focus on EVS;
- The organisational, financial, administrative aspects of EVS;
- The transition from EVS to the ESC.

Staff Training 2 (2 days): In September/October 2018, the 2nd Staff Training will address the following themes in order to complete the training of the prospective EVS organisations before Phase 2 of the EVS exchanges begins:

- Recruiting volunteers: How to ensure a good match between a volunteer’s aspirations and an EVS mission;
- Preparing the volunteers: The role of Sending Organisations;
- Welcoming the volunteer: The first days of Hosting a volunteer;
- Supporting the volunteer: The first days, How to create the best learning experience, Mentoring and Tutoring on site;
- Taking stock: Evaluation and Capitalization, Formal recognition of skills, Transition to the labour market;

Staff Training 3 (2 days): In September 2019, while the last EVS placements are being implemented, the 3rd Staff Training will consist of a Contact-Making Event in order to ensure the long-term impact of “YeToVo!” through:

- Networking activities;
- Developing new project proposals focused on volunteering, with a focus on the then implemented European Solidarity Corps.

In addition to the 3 Staff Trainings, the YES Forum will provide ongoing support to all partners in order to help:

- Experienced EVS organisations in their transition to the European Solidarity Corps;
- Prospective EVS organisations in the application process to receive the relevant EVS accreditation and be able to implement their first EVS activities in 2019.

Note: The use of a Strategic EVS in that context is especially adapted, as partners need an EVS accreditation only at the start of the EVS activity and not when the project is submitted: it will therefore enable “YeToVo!” to train and support prospective EVS partners at first, and allow them to implement their first EVS activities during the second half of the project.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

If approved, the project will be **funded according to the rules of Erasmus+ KA1** Strategic EVS projects, thus covering, based on the amounts set by the Erasmus+ Programme Guide:

- EVS Activities: Travel, Organisational Support, Individual Support, Linguistic Support;
- Staff Trainings: Travel, Organisational Support (e.g. Accommodation, Subsistence).

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

As a Strategic EVS and in accordance with the Erasmus+ programme Guide, “YES to Volunteering!” will involve a balanced mix of experienced and prospective EVS organisations in order to achieve the following primary objectives:

Create systemic impact on the local, regional, national and European levels

By involving both experienced and prospective EVS organisations in the implementation of EVS activities and adapted Staff Trainings, “YES to Volunteering!” will:

1. **Strengthen the capacities** of organisations already involved in the EVS strand of Erasmus+;
2. **Bring new actors into this field** by giving prospective EVS organisations the indispensable training and support they need to start their involvement in EVS, and accompanying them in the implementation of their first EVS activities.

Develop new opportunities for Youngsters with Fewer Opportunities

As members or partners of the YES Forum, all “YeToVo!” project partners will be youth and social organisations whose work focuses primarily on helping youngsters with fewer opportunities, whether they are experienced or prospective EVS organisations.

Because of the very nature of the organisations it will involve, the project will therefore directly create **new mobility opportunities dedicated to disadvantaged youngsters through EVS placements** within organisations with the necessary expertise, who will also implement specific mentoring solutions adapted to the volunteers’ profile.

Moreover, the organisation flexibility provided by a Strategic EVS will be an advantage to involve youngsters with fewer opportunities, whose situation often prevents any long-term planning: their recruitment and preparation will begin after the project is approved only, shortening the time between the volunteers’ selection and the start of their EVS activities.

Raise awareness of the value of volunteering: an EVS4All Follow-Up

“Yes to Volunteering!” will build upon the results achieved through the “European Voluntary Service for All” (EVS4All, evs4all.eu) project, in which the YES Forum contributed as a partner. Concluded in mid-2017, EVS4All aimed at opening up existing European exchange and volunteer programs to a wider audience.

EVS4All led to the development of policy recommendations, online promotion material and training publications which will be incorporated into “YeToVo!”, through:

- The **increased expertise of the YES Forum** which will ensure the proper implementation of the EVS activities on the one hand;
- The **use of all EVS4All project results** in the 3 Staff Trainings on the other end.

The project will therefore contribute to the sustainability of EVS4All while continuing its efforts to open EVS to a wider audience. It will in particular do so by training prospective EVS organisations and supporting them to start their involvement in EVS and volunteering in general, thus bringing new actors into the field of volunteering and therefore contribute to, in the long term:

- **Promote volunteering among NGOs and young people** themselves in Europe;
- **Increase the offer of volunteering placements** adapted and available to the most vulnerable young people.

COMPLEMENTARY OBJECTIVES

Moreover, the project will create complementarity and foster synergies with current and future developments in the field of volunteering at the European level, in particular:

Erasmus+ Priorities

In addition to the above-mentioned primary objectives, “YeToVo!” will contribute to several Erasmus+ key priorities, namely:

- **Improve the level of key competences and skills of young people**, with a clear focus on youngsters with fewer opportunities, who will develop new key competences and increase their employability;
- **Foster quality improvements in youth work**, thanks to the improvement of the relevant skills among experienced EVS organisations, and the development of new volunteering-related skills among prospective EVS organisations
- **Enhance the international dimension of youth work**, by bringing new youth and social organisations into the volunteering field at the European level and strengthening existing cooperation structures within the YES Forum network.

Transition to the European Solidarity Corps

Finally, the “YES to Volunteering!” project will contribute to **ease the transition to the Solidarity Corps** within its network.

As the European Solidarity Corps will enter its first year of implementation in early 2018, more details about its procedures shall be known while “YeToVo!” will be undergone. Even though the volunteering strand of the ESC will draw upon the EVS, it will also include important changes and novelties for stakeholders in the field of volunteering, which will therefore need to adapt to this new legal and financial framework.

Through its 3 Staff Trainings and depending on the parallel progress of the ESC implementation, “YeToVo!” will thus facilitate the transition from EVS to the ESC within its network by:



- **Preparing experienced and prospective EVS organisations to the modified and/or new procedures and features** (e.g. applications, ESC Quality Label, Solidarity Projects) brought forward by the ESC, making sure they can jump on-board the ESC without delays;
- **Foster synergies between the ESC and other EU and non-EU volunteering programmes** and funds, so that partner organisations also involved in other volunteering schemes (i.e. national programmes such as the French Civil Service, German FSJ) are aware of the possible synergies with the ESC.