

**European Conference on Youth: Mobility of Young Volunteers
across Europe
Prague, March 12 and 13, 2009**

Summary of the outcomes of the workshops – Key messages

Who cares about the ones caring about volunteers?

**Building the capacity of, and creating bridges among, the organisers of
volunteer activities**

1. To support the financial and organisational capacities of organisations by involving businesses and support them building up their Corporate Social Responsibility strategy around cross-border volunteering.
2. To make grant schemes less restricted in terms of variety and possibilities of volunteer activities and the use of grants, etc.
3. To simplify the administration procedures and application forms of the grant programmes.
4. To encourage local governments to support volunteer activities financially as well as through non-financial contributions.
5. To improve the compatibility of cross-border volunteering grant schemes (allowing cofinancing from several programmes) maintaining the diversity of the programmes.
6. To support cross-border volunteers in organisations by other, experienced volunteers (using f. e. ex-volunteer structures in a greater way).
7. To establish support centres in order to increase the capacity building of providers at national or regional levels. They should serve as consultants, advisers and as resources of information on what measures are needed to support organisations in their cross-border volunteer work.
8. To create or use existing networks at international, national, regional and local levels to create a space for volunteer organisations to share practices (portals, exchange of good practice). This might help smaller organisations to host volunteers with the help of the network (administration, mentoring, training, applying for funding). Networks should be supported by more diverse means, i.e. they should be able to apply for grants at all levels (European, national or local) regardless of their official location.
9. To use the results of projects' evaluations. The potential for capacity building based on the previous experience of others is limited today.
10. To provide training on all relevant aspects of work with volunteers (e.g. soft skills, coordination, people management, conflict resolution, etc.).
11. To use existing grant programmes for language training of youth workers and members of organisations to enable them to communicate in other languages as it brings new opportunities to their work (i.e. by involving skilled youth workers in peer education).

12. To draw attention to the recognition of the work of leaders, youth workers and organisations and value their work.
13. To compare the legal basis of volunteering in different countries in order to obtain a better understanding of the volunteering field in Europe.

How to move ahead.

Creating new opportunities for cross-border volunteering

1. To identify the opportunities provided by the existing instruments (such as volunteer placements, programmes, schemes etc.) and to make the best possible use of them for setting up new opportunities for cross-border volunteering. This can be reached by the sharing of information, good practices and bilateral cooperation.
2. To support the networking and sharing of good practices in the volunteer field in Europe (and beyond) by providing and promoting, for example, study visits, job shadowing and/or new technologies.
3. To support cooperation with non-EU countries and to lobby for the removal of any administrative obstacles (i.e. visa, taxes...) where appropriate.
4. To encourage local, regional and national policy makers and other relevant partners to create non-financial and financial incentives in order to encourage young volunteers to participate in volunteer programmes (i.e. free public transport, lower travel fares...).
5. To support young people, especially those with fewer opportunities; as they create new opportunities themselves.
6. To encourage local authorities and other relevant actors to facilitate cross-border volunteering.
7. To develop common short and long-term volunteering guidelines in order to clarify which benefits volunteers could benefit from and which responsibilities volunteers and volunteering organisations should care for.
8. To support and further promote flagship projects and/or pilot projects in order to enhance innovation and creativity in volunteering. Rather than on the achievement of predefined goals, the emphasis should be placed on the organisational learning process resulting from these projects.

How to get the message across.

Promotion of cross-border volunteering

1. Results of existing research of cross-border volunteering (consolidation of existing academic research and possible new research on the benefits (individual, organization, society) is instrumental to promote cross-border volunteering towards businesses, public authorities, media, non-governmental organizations and individuals), good practices and individual testimonies

should be used in order to name and promote positive aspects and outcomes of cross-border volunteering.

2. The application process and reporting process should be simplified (less paper work, youth friendly language) and training tools for volunteers and organizations working with volunteers should be developed.
3. Ex-volunteers should be supported in becoming messengers, mentors or trainers and best practices should be promoted to attract media to disseminate these pieces of information to a wider public.
4. Trainings should be organized for youth workers and community leaders in order to inform them about cross-border volunteering and to enable them to promote cross-border volunteering to young people with fewer opportunities.
5. Cooperation among non-governmental organizations working on cross-border volunteering should be stimulated and the network should be visible, in order to promote together all the different possibilities and outcomes of cross-border volunteering.
6. The recognition of learning outcomes of cross-border volunteering is an important tool in order to promote the cross-border volunteering.
7. The awareness of common fields of interest between businesses and the volunteer sector should be increased through the creation of a common language on, and understanding of, skills and competences acquired during cross-border volunteering and required by the global business environment.
8. The language used should be clear and adapted to the target group, when promoting cross-border volunteering.
9. The promotion of cross-border volunteering has to be adapted to the daily life of young people in order to make it more appealing.

What brings “the fruit” in volunteering programmes?

Quality aspects in cross-border volunteering

The group focused on 3 cornerstone topics and 1 general aspect of quality assurance in CBV:

- Security
 - Internal and external quality assurance
 - Peer review - an external quality assurance process (QAP), which complements the internal QAP with peer organisations (with similar backgrounds, fields of activities, etc.) aiming at mutual learning and the building of trust in the internal quality assurance process.
1. To ensure the same health insurance and social security conditions for incoming volunteers as have other volunteers in that country.
 2. To ensure that there is a contact person(s), both in the host country and country of origin of the volunteer, providing volunteers with all necessary support and remaining in personal contact with them (i.e. mentoring).

3. To create the tools for ensuring all necessary information and legal requirements for living in a new environment, respecting the specificity of each programme (i.e. by information package in shorter volunteer programmes or on-arrival training or seminars in longer volunteer programmes).
4. To identify the quality indicators with the common basis but also respecting different realities (in legislation, culture and volunteer programmes) in each member state/region/communities.
5. People/institutions should be trained in common ways of supervising/assessing/evaluating based on identified quality indicators (both for internal and external supervision).
6. External supervision can be performed in different ways:
 - a) Special NGO – watching processes in CBYVP
 - b) Peer review
7. Official structure under the state (official inspection)
8. To create tools for match-making in order to find appropriate peer partner.
9. Peer reviews should be voluntary.
10. To build “fair play” and a trustful environment between different organizations involved in mutual peer reviewing:
 - a) by encouraging mobility of volunteers/employees/youth leaders between organizations with the aim of sharing experiences and to promoting job shadowing in mutual cooperation.
 - b) by publishing the feedback/results/outcome of realized peer reviews in order to assure quality to the public (and other stake holders).
11. To allow peer reviews not only among cross-border partners, but also among organisations from the same country. That means peer reviews can be done on different levels (regional, national, international).
12. The system should be provided with relevant funding opportunities.
13. To ensure equal opportunities (accessibility) for every volunteer to participate in the programme irrespective of social, cultural, geographical, physical ... background and ensure appropriate additional support and funding for disadvantaged groups if necessary.

Better volunteering through higher recognition

Recognition of volunteering and non-formal education and learning

1. Use the European year 2011 to promote the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes of volunteering, including cross-border volunteering, at all different levels.
2. Youth organizations have to promote the importance and the benefits of non-formal learning within volunteering among their members and the people they work with.
3. Promote individual learning that comes from volunteering (especially with the employers) by means of campaigns.

4. Increase recognition of cross-border volunteering through the creation of mutual understanding of the impact and benefits of its outcomes, within:
 - the formal education systems
 - the labour marketusing specifically tailored processes which include all stakeholders.
5. Increase research in the field of non-formal education and learning at all levels, ensure comparability of data and use it to promote better understanding of the impact and image of cross-border volunteering.
6. Share good practices in the training of volunteers, improve training according to volunteers' needs and focus it on the benefits of all types of learning outcomes. Specific attention should be paid to the support of host organizations in those efforts.
7. Create vocabulary, definitions and examples in the field of cross-border youth volunteering.
8. Employers and formal education systems, as avenues of recognition, should facilitate opportunities and provide time to enable young people to develop skills within crossborder volunteering through existing frameworks.
9. Develop and describe instruments to show, measure and prove improvement from the beginning to the end of the volunteering experience.
10. To create space to share experiences to establish quality based more on the output than on structure in order to respect the variety and diversity of cross-border volunteering opportunities.
11. To broaden the concept of Youth- and Euro-pass to open it up to all cross-border volunteer activities and at the same time to develop common recognition strategy (for volunteering).