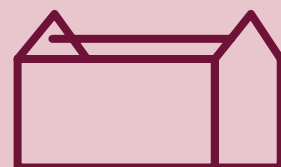


Guide for Support Organisations within European Solidarity Corps



mucf



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Introduction

This guide for Support Organisations within the European Solidarity Corps Quality Label was compiled by the trainers Toni Mallach and Marie Heimborg on request of MUCF (Swedish National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth and Sport and European Solidarity Corps) that supported the content.

Information in this guide is based on research and multiple expert interviews that gave access to experience of organisations working with youth in Sweden in the context of volunteering under the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). For general information about volunteering under the European Solidarity Corps, please refer to <http://youth.europa.eu>.

Navigating the European Youth Portal, trying to understand the framework and rules around finding, supporting, receiving and sending volunteers within the ESC can feel overwhelming. We get it, sometimes it is easier to have a checklist and relevant aspects summarised in a shorter document, or a collection of useful tools that you can put into practice when working with youth. It's your lucky day, because that is what we attempted with this guide: a concise summary of aspects you need to consider when supporting volunteers in the project cycle before, during and after the volunteering period. We hope this document provides inspiration and guidance on how to successfully perform your role as support organisations and give participants and organisations in the ESC a solid start into the volunteers journey.

A special thank you goes out to the experts that provided content for this document:

Berka Nilsson, Örebro kommun

Sara Björnald, Globala Kronoberg

Hanna Flemström, Örnsköldsvik Kommun

Liv Robén, MUCF

The authors:

Toni Mallach – freelance trainer, human development guide

Marie Heimborg – freelance trainer and facilitator

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Objectives and Content of this Guide

This guide has been created as a first-of-its-kind resource specifically for Support Organisations within the European Solidarity Corps. Its aim is to strengthen the capacity of organisations already holding, or in the process of applying for, a Quality Label. Meaning organisations working with youth and youth organisations, who want to support young people who want to (or already are) volunteers in the European Solidarity Corps.

The guide provides practical tools, advice, and information to support the daily work with volunteers. It outlines the administrative responsibilities of Support Organisations, offers tips for effectively supporting young people throughout their volunteering journey and includes guidance on how to find a good project match. In addition, it recommends further resources for continued learning and development.

By sharing this knowledge, the guide also aims to increase the number of organisations in Sweden that are willing and able to host and send volunteers, and to contribute to the overall quality of volunteering experiences across Europe.

It is based on the principles of non-formal learning and participation during the research process. The content of this guide is shaped by the experience of actors in the field, an exchange of tools and collaboration with the authors. The reader is encouraged to bring a flexible mindset, understanding that practices shared, regulations, and tools provided are evolving - this guide is a living resource, not a fixed manual.

The guide works as a toolbox, you don't have to read it from start to finish. Instead, explore the sections that match your current needs or questions. Whether you are preparing for a new volunteer, reviewing your routines, or training colleagues, you'll find practical tools, reflections, and tips to support your work.



1

Cooperation and Matching between Organisations

As stated in the ESC Program Guide “for cross-border individual volunteering activities, a minimum two organisations are involved – a supporting and a hosting organisation.” This chapter covers the process of finding the right match between volunteers and projects within the European Solidarity Corps, with a strong focus on the collaboration between Support and Hosting Organisations. You will find more detailed information about the responsibility of a supporting organisation in the chapter “supporting a volunteer” later in this guide.

The chapter walks you through the key steps of collaboration between the supporting and hosting organisation: from early planning and matching, to signing agreements, preparing the volunteer, maintaining regular check-ins, and evaluating the cooperation after the project ends. You’ll find tips on how to involve all three actors (supporting organisation, hosting organisation and volunteer) from the very beginning, as well as how to follow up and reflect together afterwards.

Whether you’re supporting a young person who wants to volunteer or searching for someone to fill a placement, this section offers practical guidance on both. You will get an overview on all the steps to consider from establishing a partnership with another organisation to how to register a volunteer in the ESC Portal, support them in creating a profile and application, to how to promote volunteering opportunities through networks, events and online platforms.

At all stages of the project cycle special attention should be given to the topic inclusion – making sure the supporting and the hosting organisation can meet the volunteer’s needs – and to building shared expectations between all involved parties. Find a combination of theory and practical methods on how to manage inclusion in international projects in the Inclusion A to Z manual provided by SALTO Inclusion and Diversity.

www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusionpublications/inclusionatoz/

Find helpful further resources, recommended platforms, and references in the end - such as the ESC Portal, Eurodesk, SALTO, and National Agency tools - they are provided to help you strengthen your role and find additional information. The chapter includes safeguarding practices and guidelines from SALTO ESC that explain how to ensure the volunteer experience is safe, meaningful, and well-supported throughout.

www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4627/Safeguarding+Guidelines_SNACvol.pdf



Before a Match



Project Planning and Preparation

If the organisation does not yet have a Quality Label – apply for a Quality Label (as support organisation = SO, hosting organisation = HO, or even both).

Partnership building

Initial contact and relationship building, SO and HO connect and plan a cooperation, building trust, establishing a good partnership.

- **Responsibility SO:** Supporting and preparing the volunteer before departure, maintaining contact and doing follow-ups, being available in case of challenges.
- **Responsibility HO:** Offering a meaningful experience, providing mentorship and safe conditions, managing logistics (accommodation, defining project tasks etc.)

Project design

SO and HO agree on purpose and scope of the project (start date, duration, etc), define aims, activities, volunteer tasks, learning objectives, agree on communication and cooperation during the project.





Administrative and financial agreements

- SO and HO decide if SO will be compensated for their tasks, if yes: clarify what will be included in the grant.
- SO and HO draft and prepare a partnership agreement (it will be signed by all parties later when the volunteer is selected, but it should be discussed earlier).

Prepare a call

- SO and HO define the ideal volunteer profile based on their interests and motivation.
- SO and HO identify the needs of the volunteer for example in terms of health, physical condition, economical conditions, etc.

SO AND HO AGREE ON HOW THEY WILL RECRUIT OR SEARCH FOR A MATCH:

- SO may already have a candidate or they promote the position.
- HO outlines the volunteer opportunity (including admin information such as accommodation, tasks, learning support etc.)
- HO may publish the call in the PASS database and other channels (<https://eurodesk.eu>, social media, organisation website etc.)
https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/it-tool-organisation-portal_en





Matching and Selection

How to find a project for a willing volunteer

SO supports the volunteer in preparing their profile in the ESC Portal, support in application process, create Europass (online CV), help the volunteer to navigate the online database.

Target group fewer opportunities/ inclusion

Make sure the host organisation can accommodate the volunteer's needs, check in with all involved parties and identify the volunteer's needs.

How to find a volunteer for a placement

Use different channels and contacts

- **Recommendation to use alumni networks/ ambassadors:** invite former volunteers to share their story and learnings to motivate other youth to participate. Contact [Eurodesk.eu](https://eurodesk.eu) or the EuroPeers network europeers.org (both are active in Sweden).
- **Youthwork initiatives:** places where young people meet and can have access to information.
- Reach out to colleagues working with the target group (youth workers, civil society in the city, etc).
- **Schools:** e.g. sending a letter to all graduates from Gymnasium through the school, include information for parents.

- **Fairs/events:** e.g. Europe Day in schools, or going to info fairs for graduates and students.
- **Social media:** especially good to pitch a concrete project that needs a volunteer (include details, storytelling).
- Keep a list with interested people, sometimes the timing is right at a later point (follow-up on their interest).

Promoting an ESC position

- HO can promote a project with details and find a person that is a match for the project (e.g. on social media).
- Promoting the project in the European Youth Portal-PASS.
- SO can get contacted by a volunteer that has already found their position, but need a SO now.
- **Target group fewer opportunities/inclusion:** it is very important to make sure the information is tailored to their needs (e.g. neurodiversity, refugee background, other).



Criteria for a good match and questions to ask

- HO reviews applications, conducts interviews and assesses the fit based on the scope of the project and the volunteer profile that was defined earlier during the preparation phase.
- Evaluate motivation and values alignment of both volunteer and organisation.
- Understand what the young person needs, tailor the information to the specific young person.
- Investigate and discuss the inclusion needs and capacities of both volunteer and organization.

TIPP!

1. Sometimes information material is not the right way to go, you need more interpersonal contacts to create trust.
2. Find a list with good questions to ask here in the toolbox under administration and organisation ("questions for the matching process").

Pre-Departure Arrangements

Decision and signing activity Agreement

Once a match is found HO, SO and volunteer confirm the participation and sign the mandatory activity agreement. Activity agreement defines responsibilities, projects dates, learning goals, support, working hours, days off, pocket money etc.

SO and HO agree: what will the support organization provide, and what is the amount agreed for the SOs compensation/reimbursement.

Travel and insurance

SO and HO organise travel and insurance together with the volunteer (Register in the Insurance is made automatically after the registration of the volunteer in PASS).

If needed: support for Visa /residence permi.

Pre-departure training

- Conducted by SO or National Agency: For volunteers residing in Sweden, the pre-departure training is organized by SO.
- Covers ESC values, intercultural learning, volunteer rights, safeguarding and information about the Youthpass.

Hosting preparation

- HO prepares accommodation, task schedule, local support and a mentor.
- HO makes practical plans for local integration and orientation upon arrival of the volunteer.





Volunteering Period



Arrival and Onboarding

- Volunteer is welcomed and oriented: local area, housing, transportation.
- Safety and emergency contacts are provided.
- Organisation's structure and team is introduced.

On-Arrival and Midterm Trainings

- Provided by the National Agency in the host country.
- Support reflection, learning, conflict resolution, peer exchange during the project.

Mentoring and support

- **HO:** Regular meetings with a mentor, continuous learning support, personal development planning (see more in “Supporting the Volunteer”).
- **SO:** Should check in remotely and stay accessible (intensity of support depends on the needs of the volunteer and can vary).

Project Monitoring:

- Ongoing communication between SO, HO and the volunteer.
- Address challenges early and adapt the placement if needed.

After the Volunteering Period

End of the volunteering project

Project closure meeting and final reflection

HO conducts a final reflection with the volunteer:

- What was learned?
- What was achieved?
- What could be improved in the future?

Youthpass Certificate

A tool to recognise learning outcomes, good to guide the volunteer through the process. The volunteer reflects on 8 key competences and receives a certificate signed by the HO.

youthpass.eu/en/

Debriefing the experience

- SO provides emotional and professional transition support for the volunteer when back home.

Evaluation and follow-up



Partnership evaluation

SO and HO have a follow-up meeting after the volunteering period to check how the cooperation went.

- What went well? (to check-in, learnings etc)
- What needs improvement? (continue to adapt partnership)
- Would they work together again? (prepare for future projects)

Volunteer Feedback

Evaluate your own work as Support Organisation (ask the volunteer, check feedback, check what can be improved for the future). Volunteer submits evaluation via the European Youth Portal PASS and to their National Agency youth.europa.eu/solidarity.

Final Reporting

Organisations submit final reports to their National Agency (including learning outcomes, challenges in the project, results, activities for dissemination and budget report).

Dissemination

- Share results, stories, lessons learned, methods developed.
- Improve future projects based on feedback.

STAY ACTIVE IN THE ESC COMMUNITY

Invite returning volunteers to get involved in alumni networks, to participate in trainings, to follow-up new projects ideas.

Eurodesk: Eurodesk informs young people about mobility opportunities and encourages them to become active citizens, find an overview of Swedish information points via the map function. They also have a network of ambassadors that is open to former volunteers. eurodesk.eu

EuroPeers: An international alumni network consisting of former volunteers that are actively promoting European opportunities to their peer group of young people, they are active in Sweden and can support you when promoting projects. europeers.org





2

Supporting a volunteer





This chapter covers the role of the Support Organisation once a volunteering match is made. According to the Erasmus Programme Guide, the Support Organisation's role is to “prepare, support and train participants before departure, to mediate between them and their host organisation, and to provide support to participants upon return from their activity”. The Support Organisation - while being located in the home country - walks alongside the volunteer through their journey, giving input on the learning path, offering a hand for emotional support if needed, and catching them in case of crisis. They are a guide, support and safety net from afar.

The support should cover the dimensions of logistics and administration, learning preparation and emotional well-being. Which ways of support are most important (or needed) depends on the individual circumstances, capacities and needs of each volunteer. By meeting the volunteer in person and getting to know them, you will be the best to judge where to put your focus.

Here is a list of must-dos and possible conversation topics. You can also use it as a checklist while preparing the volunteer. If you need more detailed information on any of the following items, please refer to the ESC Infokit for volunteers (link below).



Preparation phase



Your role as supporting organisation usually begins a few months before a young person starts their volunteering time. In the months and weeks before departure, you can support the young person on three levels:

1. **Logistics and administration** – one the tasks of the Supporting Organisation is to make sure that all is set in place for the volunteer to start their ESC.
2. **Learning and reflection** – an ESC is not only a time spent in service to a cause, but also an opportunity for the volunteer to learn and grow as a person. As the Support Organisation, you can help the volunteer to clarify their personal goals and hopes for this time.
3. **Emotional support** – going abroad and entering new cultural surroundings and working context comes with its own challenges. You may prepare the volunteer for eventual challenges, so they will know how to face them, or where to ask for help if needed.

Logistics and administration

- Support with acquiring a Visa/residence permit (if needed).
- Make sure that volunteer receives, understands and signs a volunteering agreement.

NOTE:

A template for the agreement is available and usually send by the responsible National Agency to the leading organisation together with the project contract.



The agreement should include all involved organisations (host, support, and leading – the latter is often the same as the host or support organisation). This agreement should include a learning and training component, expectations towards the volunteer (e.g. tasks, working hours), the volunteer's rights (accommodation, food, youthpass, pocket money, travel reimbursement, free days).

- Recommend that the volunteer gets a European Solidarity Corps Youth card.
<https://eyca.org/volunteers-card>
- Ensure that the volunteer has a European Health Card (if applicable) + additional insurance (provided for all volunteers and paid by ESC).
- Provide volunteer with ESC InfoKit, eventually go through it together.
http://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/young-people/training-support_en

Dissemination

Agree with the volunteer on what activities both you and the volunteer are interested in involving the volunteer in sharing their experience with others – Social Media posts, an article in a local newspaper or on the hosting organisation's website, an exhibition in the local library, an event at the youth center or a visit to a school where the volunteer shares their experience with other young people.

- Support the volunteer with arranging the travel.
- Support the volunteer with writing a Packing list if needed.
- Accompany the volunteer on their travel (if necessary).



Learning and Reflection Support

- Inform the volunteer about training opportunities and preparation:
 - Encourage volunteer to take part in General Online Training offered on the EU Academy platform and accessed through the European Solidarity Corps portal.
 - Language preparation (OLS) (for 4+ months volunteering).
 - Ensure participation in pre-departure training by NA or Salto, if applicable.
 - Arrival and mid-term training (6+ months) in the country of destination.
 - Inform them that they should have a social mentor and a learning mentor in the country of destination.
- Introduce Youthpass, including competence-frameworks, www.youthpass.eu/en/help/faqs/competence-frameworks/. you can also use ELD Competence Website: eldkompetens.se
Experience – Learning – Description (ELD) is a dialogue and documentation process to identify valuable skills, talents and character traits shown through real experiences. Reflect on motivation, hopes, personal priorities, expectations, learning goals. Introduce Union of Skills https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/union-skills_en as a context for competence and skill development in the European Union, with the goal of empowering people through life-long learning.
- Reflect on motivation, hopes, personal priorities, expectations, learning goals.
- Ask the volunteer to fill out a questionnaire about their current competence level in areas relevant for your project and the volunteers development. This will be followed up after the project to measure the impact of the program.



Emotional Support and Safety

Depending on age and maturity of the volunteer: offer an info session for the volunteer's caregivers/family/friends so they, too, understand what the ESC is about, how they can support their child/friend/close one, how often and how they can be in contact.



INTERCULTURALITY:

- Talk about what it means to be in a foreign country, get informed about important laws and social rules in the country of destination, reflect on cultural differences that are to be expected or might be surprising, encourage the volunteer to be open-minded towards other ways of viewing the world (see toolbox “The Iceberg of Culture”).
 - Talk about what it is like to be away from family and friends, in a new environment, with new people, surrounded by an unknown language, culture, and work, possibly living on one's own for the very first time. How can the volunteer prepare emotionally?
- Provide guidance on conflict prevention and crisis management – you can find helpful information and resources in the Safeguarding Guidelines.
https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4627/Safeguarding+Guidelines_SNACvol.pdf
 - Conduct a risk assessment and create a response plan.
 - Create an emergency contact list (friend, next of kin, support/host/leading organisation, mentor, SOS numbers).
 - Talk about how often you want to be in touch during the volunteering period and which communication channels you will use (email, phone, text messages etc.), set up a startplan for contact (e.g. once a month), and let the volunteer know that you are available if they need help at any moment during the project cycle, and let them know how to reach you.

PREPARATORY VISIT (OPTIONAL)

If applied for by the leading organisation. This can be a good idea in case you know that additional inclusion support is needed, in order to ensure that the host organisation is able to accommodate the volunteer's needs. For more information on inclusion, please refer to the Manuals “Inclusion from A to Z” <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusionpublications/inclusionatoz/> and “Engage in inclusion” [salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4510/Engage%20in%20inclusion%20EN.pdf](https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4510/Engage%20in%20inclusion%20EN.pdf).



Volunteering phase

How much contact you will have with the young person during the volunteering period will largely depend on the volunteers needs and wishes. For some young people more regular calls, emails or text messages (weekly, or even daily) might be important, especially during the first days and weeks of their volunteering period, while others will be largely independent. Ask the young person you are working with what their needs are, and also trust your own instinct. We recommend that you check in with your volunteer via email or telephone within the first week of their volunteering period, and then at least every few months, depending on the individual needs and according to what you agreed upon during the preparation phase.

Logistics and administration

- Support dissemination activities (e.g. social media post).

Learning and Reflection Support

- Provide learning check-ins, such guidance with filling in the Youthpass and other reflection methods.
- Offer learning support, such as revisiting goals and writing a learning plan.
- Consider using the **Experience – Learning – Description (ELD)** method to identify valuable skills, talents and character traits.

Emotional Support and Safety

- Check-ins with the volunteer on their well-being.
- Check-ins with the hosting organisation – in order to hear also their side of how things are going, preventing possible conflicts.
- Provide emergency support if needed.
- Mediate with hosting organisation in case of conflicts.
- Support during crisis, Troubleshooting.







Integration phase – Coming back home

Following up and reflecting on the volunteer's learnings and experiences is an important part of the project cycle as it supports the volunteer's integration process. You might do this in both one-on-one settings with individual volunteers as well as in small groups, if you have several volunteers coming back home around the same time, allowing the young people to connect with each other. Moreover, there are opportunities to connect offered by the National Agencies and volunteering networks (see below).

Learning Evaluation and integration

- Evaluation of learnings and experiences: support with the reflection on learning outcomes, including support with filling in Youthpass.
- Ask the volunteer to fill out the same questionnaire as before the volunteering period about their current competence level in areas relevant for the project and the volunteers development in order to measure the impact of the program.
- Reflection on how the young person can use their learning for future engagement in activities, work, studies etc.
- Ensure that volunteer receives a Youthpass from the leading organisation.
- Encourage the young person to update their Europass profile.
<https://europass.europa.eu/en/create-europass-cv>

Follow-up

- Support with Dissemination: this could be done through Social Media posts, an article in a local newspaper or on the hosting organisation's website, an exhibition in the local library, an event at the youth center or a visit to a school where the volunteer shares their experience with other young people.
- Ensure that volunteer fills in the online participant report.
- Evaluate your work as Support Organisation together with the volunteer.

Emotional Support – Connecting with home and exchanging experiences

- Talk about a possible reverse culture shock.
- Provide opportunities to exchange experiences with other volunteers.
- Share opportunities to stay active and involved: existing alumni networks such as EuroPeers and Eurodesk Ambassadors.
- Encourage the young person to participate in the annual ESC event by NA.
- What now? Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities.



3

Toolbox

Lastly, we want to offer some concrete tools that you can use when supporting a volunteer.

We hope that these examples of what you could do will give you some ideas and inspiration, while recognizing that this toolbox is not exclusive, and there are many other good options of tools and methods. We invite you to be creative and bring your own personal strengths and life experience into the relationship with the young person that you are supporting!

Below, you find a list of the tools provided in this chapter, sorted by dimension of support they cover, and a reference to the recommended moment of implementation.

1

Administration and Organisation

- Checklists – the chapters “Cooperation and Matching” and “Supporting a volunteer” may be used as internal checklist for the Support Organisation during all project phases.
- Example questions for the matching process.

2

Learning and Reflection Support

- A Letter to Yourself – preparation and integration phase.
- Pizza of Potential – throughout all project phases.
- Reflective questions – preparation and integration phase

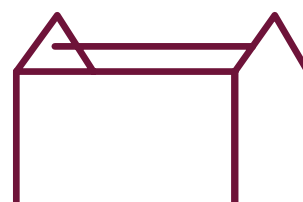
Recommended resource

Youthpass (<https://www.youthpass.eu/en/>) – throughout all project phases.

3

Emotional Support and Safety

- The Energy Tank method – Volunteering Phase.
- The Iceberg of Culture – Preparation Phase.
- The Mini-Risk-Method – Preparation Phase.



1

Tools for the administration and organisation process

Questions for the Matching Process

Questions to ask the volunteer

Motivation and Expectations

- Why are you interested in this project specifically?
- What are you hoping to learn or experience during your ESC project?
- How do you see your role as a volunteer?
- What are your expectations of the hosting organisation?

Personal Needs and Preferences

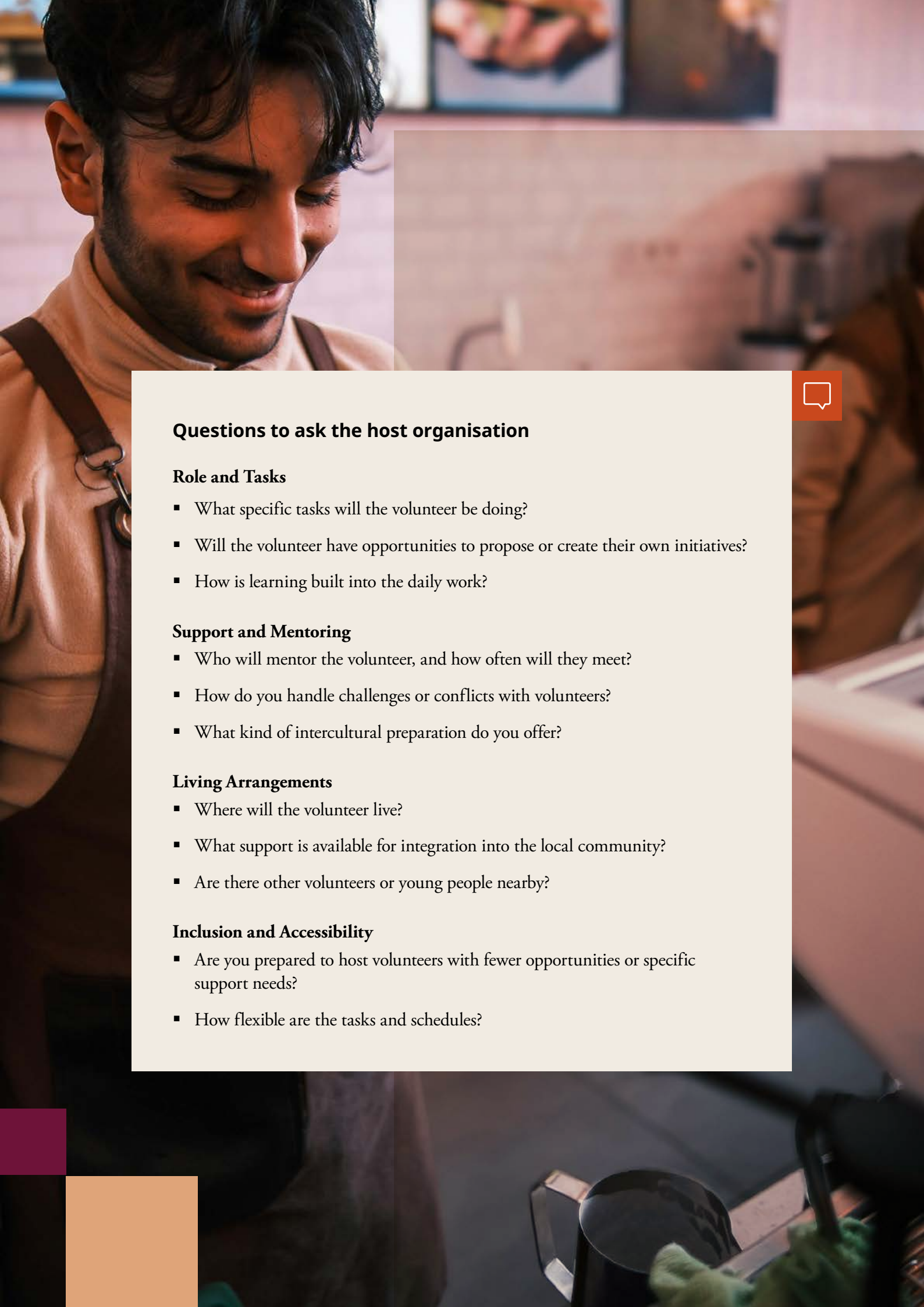
- Do you have any specific needs (health, diet, accessibility)?
 - if the volunteers has specific needs, make sure that the project and hosting organisation can provide the required needs
 - be specific with the needs in order to best prepare the project
- Are you comfortable living with others / sharing space?
- How do you handle challenges or being in unfamiliar environments?

Skills and Background

- Have you volunteered before? If yes, what did you learn?
- What are your strengths, and how do you see them contributing to this project?
- Do you have any relevant experience related to the project's theme?

Communication and Language

- What languages do you speak, and what's your level of English/host country language?
- Are you open to learning a new language?



Questions to ask the host organisation

Role and Tasks

- What specific tasks will the volunteer be doing?
- Will the volunteer have opportunities to propose or create their own initiatives?
- How is learning built into the daily work?

Support and Mentoring

- Who will mentor the volunteer, and how often will they meet?
- How do you handle challenges or conflicts with volunteers?
- What kind of intercultural preparation do you offer?

Living Arrangements

- Where will the volunteer live?
- What support is available for integration into the local community?
- Are there other volunteers or young people nearby?

Inclusion and Accessibility

- Are you prepared to host volunteers with fewer opportunities or specific support needs?
- How flexible are the tasks and schedules?



Questions for both organisations

Partnership and Communication

- How will we keep in touch before, during, and after the project?
- Who is the main contact person on each side?
- What are our shared responsibilities for the volunteer's well-being?

Risk Management and Emergency

- What is your approach to handling emergencies or safeguarding concerns?
- What experience do you have with intercultural conflict resolution?

Learning and Evaluation

- How will we support the volunteer's Youthpass learning process?
- Do we have a shared plan for pre-departure and on-arrival learning objectives?



2

Tools for Learning and Reflection Support

A Letter to Yourself


Aim of the method:

To clarify aims and intentions, to support learning integration by raising awareness for the process made.


Moment of implementation:

Preparation and integration phase.

Instructions

Step 1

A few days or weeks before a young person leaves for their volunteering position, invite them to write a letter to themselves - with pen on paper. The letter will be set into an envelope, which will be closed and marked with the volunteer's name and home address.

SOME PROMPTS FOR THE LETTER COULD BE:

- How are you feeling at this moment, knowing that soon you will leave home, in order to live in a foreign country and work in a new environment?
- As you are getting ready for your time abroad, what are your expectations, hopes and fears?
- What qualities and skills do you wish to develop?
- What would be the best thing that could happen during your time as a volunteer?
- What challenges might arise for you? What resources do you already have that can help you to get through them?
- What advice do you want to give yourself for your time as a volunteer?
- Write down anything else that feels right and important to you.



Step 2

The Support Organisation keeps the letter safe during the volunteering time.

Step 3

Upon returning home, or a few weeks later, the letter is sent to the volunteer, either via post or handed over in person. This gives the young person the opportunity to meet their previous Self, the one that had written the letter many months ago. It usually is quite a magical experience, as most people forget that they have written the letter and it comes as a surprise. Reading the letter allows the young person to remember their thoughts and feelings before the volunteering time. Moreover, they might use the information from the letter to reflect on the outcomes of their time as a ESC volunteer. How did they change and grow? What did they learn? What was different from how they expected it to be? Which hopes have come true, and which challenges were they able to overcome? You might invite the young person to answer these questions in writing.

Pizza of Potential



Aim of the method:

To formulate and reflect on learning goals.



Moment of implementation:

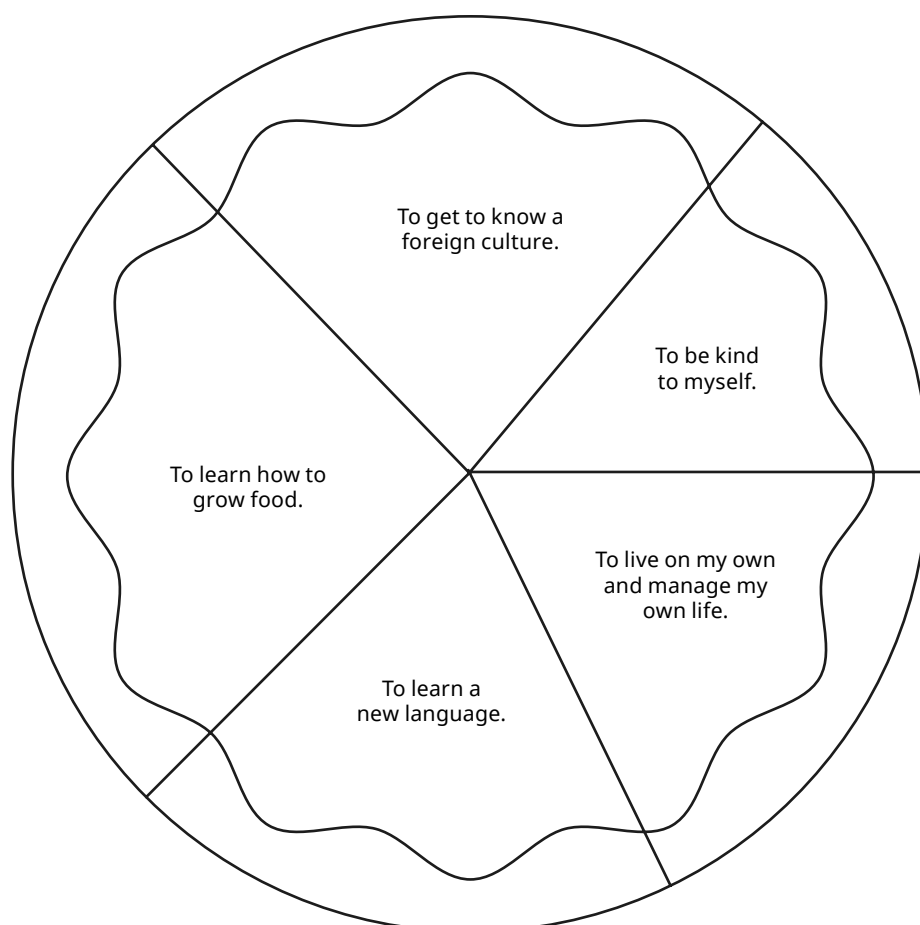
Before, regularly during (e.g. once a month), and after the volunteering period.

Instructions

Step 1 – before the volunteering time begins

Draw a large circle on a piece of paper. It symbolizes your Pizza of Potential. Now divide the pizza into slices. You can choose how many slices there should be, and how big each one is. Each slice represents an area you want to develop in. A larger slice means greater development potential and motivation than a smaller one. Write a few words in each slice to explain what it represents.

Here is an example of what it could look like:

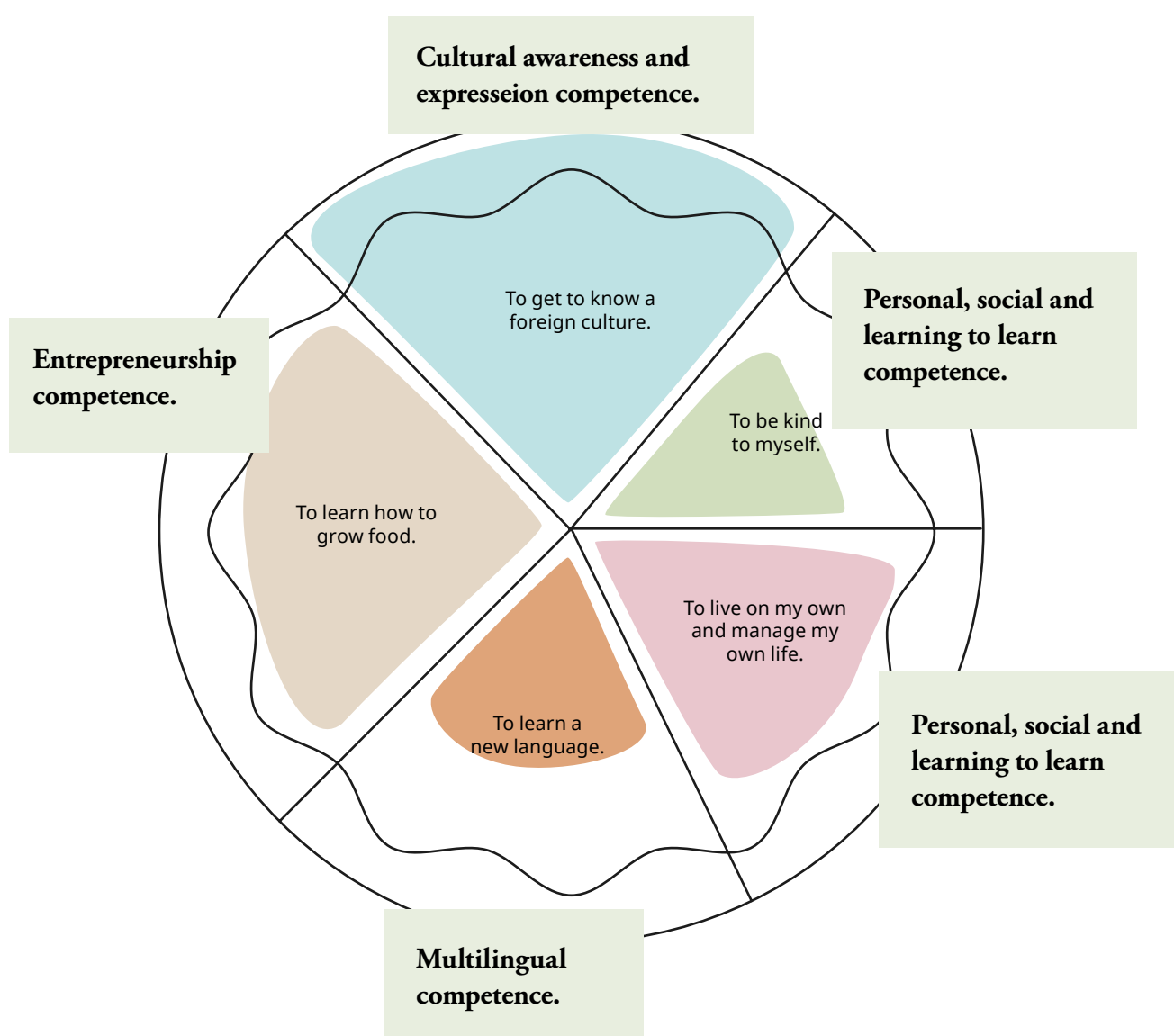


Step 2 – during the volunteering time

With help of your pizza, evaluate what you've learned about once a month:

Color in each slice of your pizza intuitively, depending on how much you feel you've achieved within each goal. A fully colored slice means: "I've learned everything I wanted to in this area during the volunteering period." An empty slice means: "I haven't learned anything in this area during the volunteering period." You might also notice that your goals have changed, or that you have learned something else which you hadn't expected. That is okay, and very welcome! Feel free to create another pizza with additional goals and achievements that come up over time.

Here is an example of what your pizza of potential might look like in the end:





Step 3 – after the volunteering time

Look at your pizza(s) one last time and fill in your learnings.

Then, translate your learnings into the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – the model that is being used for your Youthpass. Take the model and ask yourself which key competence each of your learnings fits. Write the name of the key competence next to the corresponding slice. In a final step, fill in your learnings into your Youthpass, in order to have them certified.



You can find the Competence Model here

(<https://www.youthpass.eu/en/help/faqs/keycompetences>), or use this list:

THE KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING ARE:



1. Multilingual competence
2. Personal, social and learning to learn competence
3. Citizenship competence
4. Entrepreneurship competence
5. Cultural awareness and expression competence
6. Digital competence
7. Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
8. Literacy competence

Reflective Questions



Aim of the method:

1. To clarify aims and intentions, to support learning and learning integration.
2. To collect information about the learning progress and the positive effects of volunteering projects on the volunteer.



Moment of implementation:

Preparation and integration phase.

Here are some general questions that you might share with the volunteer in order to support their learning experience. You might invite them to share them in conversation with you, in writing (e.g. through an online form), or to journal about them.

Moreover, it can be useful to ask some questions through an online evaluation form, and on a scale system. This will provide you with measurable information about the effects of the volunteering project on the volunteer, and will be useful when you report the project.

Preparation questions – before departure



- Why did you want to join a volunteering project through the European Solidarity Corps?
- What are you hoping to learn or experience during your time abroad?
- What do you think will be your biggest challenges?
- What are your strengths that you think will help you during your project?
- How do you feel right now about going abroad? (excited, nervous, unsure...?)
- What kind of support do you think you might need from us as your sending organization?
- Have you thought about how you want to document your learning? (e.g., Youthpass, journal, photos, blog...)
- What are your expectations of the host organization and your role as a volunteer?
- What do you already know about the culture or country you are going to? What would you like to know more about?
- What are your thoughts about living and working with people from other cultures or backgrounds?
- What are your plans for after the volunteering project?

Follow-up – after completing the volunteering period

- How was your volunteering experience?
- Can you identify any changes in yourself? (self-confidence, attitude, beliefs, practical skills, etc.)
- Did it turn out the way you expected? What was different and how do you feel about that? What are your thoughts now, in relation to the expectations and plans you had before the project?
- What are your thoughts now, in relation to the expectations and plans you had before the project?
- What does your near future look like?
- Feel free to share one or more moments from your time as a volunteer that you will carry with you into the future.
- What can we as the sending organization improve?

Questions for the evaluation of the effect of the volunteering project on the volunteer – ask before AND after the volunteering project

You may choose any questions that are relevant for the specific project and volunteer, and use the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning for inspiration and as a framework.

<https://www.youthpass.eu/en/help/faqs/keycompetences/>



The following questions are examples.

ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10 (1=NOT AT ALL, 10=FULLY YES)...

- How confident are you of your abilities?
- Do you have a clear idea about your further educational path?
- Do you plan to engage in further education opportunities (formal, nonformal, vocational training)?
- How well do you speak the language of the country where the volunteering takes place?
- How confident do you feel in new social situations?
- How skilled are you at [...] (fill in a skill according to the project, e.g. "gardening")



3

Tools for emotional Support and Safety

The Energy Tank Method

**Aim of the method:**

To improve well-being by raising awareness for one's current state of energy, and to create a concrete action points to enhance self care.

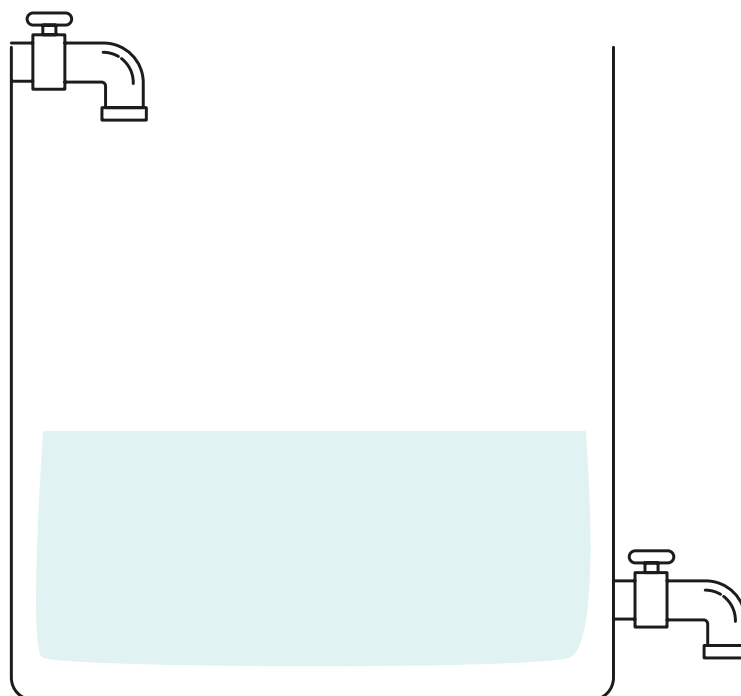
**Moment of implementation:**

During the volunteering period.

Instructions

Step 1

Draw a water container on a sheet of paper, and add two faucets: one at the top through which it is filled, and a second one at the bottom through the container is emptied. The container should be big, covering almost the entire paper and could look something like this:





Step 2

This water container represents your Energy Tank. When it is full, you have a lot of energy to be active and do activities such as work and meeting friends. When it is (near) empty, you need to rest to regenerate. You probably feel depleted, have less energy for activities and are more reactive emotionally.

- How full is it at this moment? Mark your level of energy by drawing a line. How much water is in your tank?

Step 3

This upper faucet represents what gives you energy.

- Next to the faucet, write down 5 things you can do to fill up your tank.

Step 4

The lower faucet represents what drains your energy.

- Next to the faucet, write down 5 things that empty your tank.

Step 5

- Based on the water level in your tank, reflect on how well you have been able to manage your energy in the past days and weeks.
- Choose one thing/activity that energizes you and commit to make time for it this week.
- Then, look at what drains your energy. Which point can you reduce this week?

The Iceberg of Culture

**Aim of the method:**

To raise awareness for interculturality and prepare the volunteer for the social component of travelling abroad.

**Moment of implementation:**

Preparation phase.

One of the challenges that a young person that goes abroad as an ESC volunteer might face are cultural differences. Every group of people – be it a family, an institution, a social group or a country – has their own way of doing things, their own spoken and unspoken rules, behaviours, traditions, language etc. – all these can be summed up under the word culture.

As we grow up, the variety of cultures we are exposed to differs from one person to another. Some grow up around people that all speak the same language, have the same faith, and a similar way of communicating within the family. Others live around, or in between different cultures already as children – this is for example the case for people with a migration background in the family.



Generally speaking, it is likely that the further we travel from our family roots and the place we grew up in, the more cultural differences we face. In the best case scenario, the interaction with people from a different culture is fruitful: we learn about each others' ways of being, for example by exchanging traditional recipes and discussing our habits. We joyfully experience interculturality – the exploration and interaction of people from different cultures.

On the other side, it is very likely that being in an unfamiliar culture, especially when it is the first time, can be surprising, challenging and at times even disturbing. We have grown up with considering a certain way of being as “normal” – and being around people who act differently from what we have experienced as being the norm all our life can feel confusing and leave us with a feeling of uncertainty: how am I supposed to behave? How can I connect with the other person? What am I allowed to do in this country and what would be impolite?

One of the most important invitations we can give a young person who soon will live abroad is to be openminded: to expect that others will act differently to what they are used to, and to meet those differences with curiosity instead of judgement. There is seldom a right way of doing things, and others' points of view are just as valid as yours!

Instructions

When talking about this with a volunteer, you might watch these videoclips depicting different scenes of cultural differences as a starting point. <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/sereneneeds-videos-intercultural-understanding-for-young-people-being-abroad.4367/>



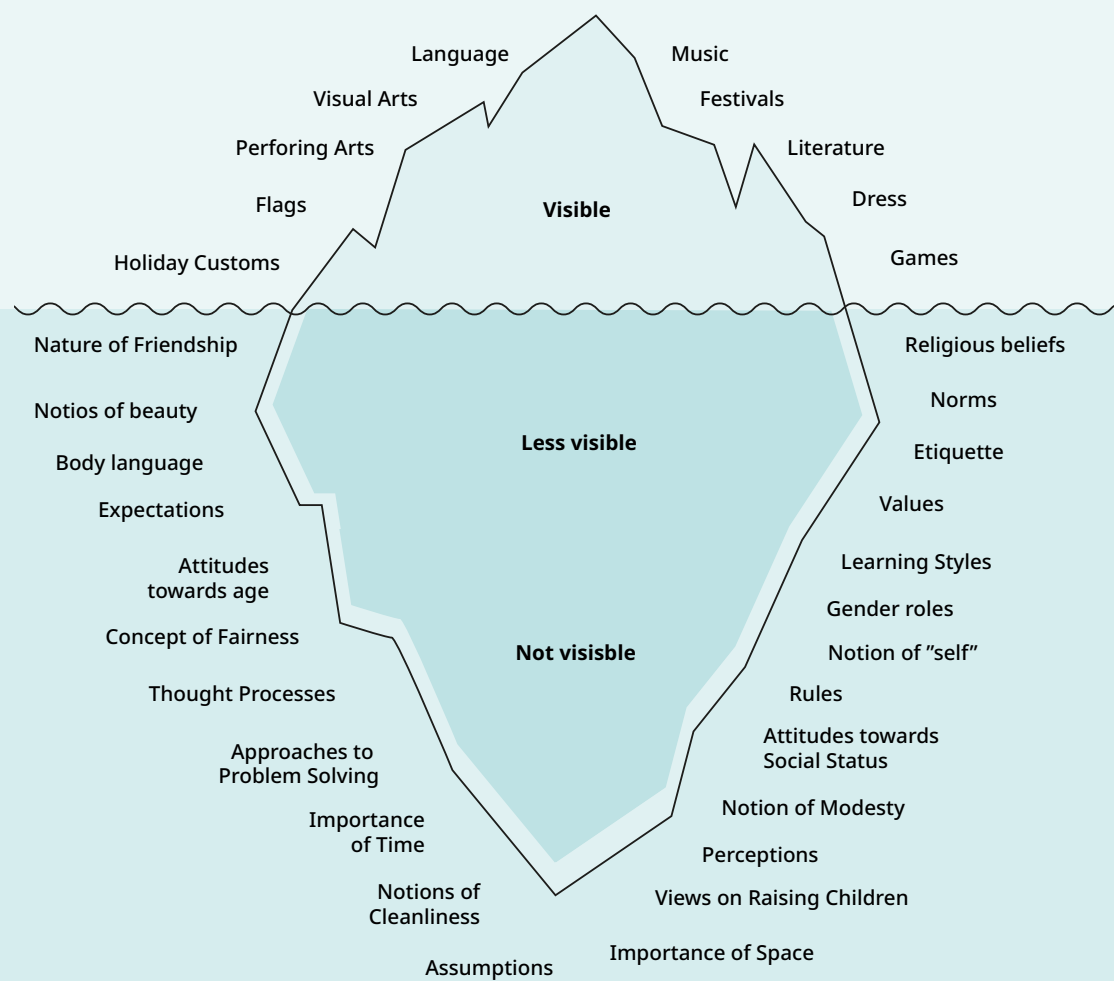
Then, you might reflect together on some of the following questions:



- What is your experience with different cultures so far? What examples of cultural differences have you encountered in your life, in your home town or during a holiday?
- Have you lived/traveled abroad before? What was different in that country and how did it feel to you to be there?
- What are ways in which you could meet people from the other country and get to know their culture? What are you curious about?
- What fears or insecurities do you feel when thinking about living on your own in another country?
- What could be good ways to act when something happens around you that seems strange to you?



With help of the Model of the Iceberg of Culture, discuss what is the norm in the young person's home culture, and do some research about the same aspects of culture in the country of destination.



The Mini-Risk-Method



Aim of the method:

To identify the biggest risks, and create a response plan.



Moment of implementation:

Preparation phase.

Instructions

Of course, we all hope that the ESC volunteering time of a young person will go smoothly and without bigger problems or crisis, however, life happens, and therefore it is wise to think about what could go wrong ahead of time. For this purpose, we are proposing the “mini-risk-method”:

1. Create a version of the table below.
2. Create a list of possible risks – everything that could go wrong, allow yourself to be creative here – , which you fill in under the column ”Risk Event”.
3. Try to assess how likely it is that the risk will occur (column 2) and how grave the consequences for the would be (column 3) on a scale of 1–5 with 1 being low and 5 being very high.
4. Calculate the risk value for each risk by multiplying the values of column 2 and 3.
5. Develop an action plan only for the risks with the highest risk values, as these are the most important to focus on.

Here is an overview of the table, including an example.

Risk Event	Likelihood (1-5)	Consequence (1-5)	Risk Value (Likelihood x Consequence)	Action Plan
The volunteer doesn't get along with their social mentor.	2	4	2x4=8	The volunteer talks about it with their contact person of the hosting organization. Ask if they could mediate, or if it is possible to switch mentors. Inform the support organisation, and ask for help if further support is needed.



Important Resources for Organisations

European Solidarity Corps

E.g. a training for mentors. It is a good way to meet potential partners for volunteering projects and learn more about mentoring, inclusion, risk management, etc.

Participate in trainings and networking

<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/solidarity/>

Training for mentors

<https://hop.saltonetwork.eu/courses/Mentors>

MUCF

Attend MUCF webinars and trainings for Quality Label organisations (check the [MUCF website](#) and tips right now).

MUCF webbsite

<https://www.mucf.se/utbildningar-och-konferenser>

Tips

<https://www.mucf.se/aktuellt-just-nu-eu-tips>



Salto, TOSCA, Mentoring under construction

<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/solidarity/training-support-community/>

Salto, Search for anything you have questions around in the Salto toolbox

<https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/>

SALTO resource centers, they support beneficiaries and National Agencies for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, focussing on 7 different thematic areas

<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/>

HOP Training Platform, aims to foster online learning in Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps

<https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/hopabout/#:~:text=The%20HOP%20aims%20to%20foster,HOP%20council>

MOOC Solidarity, Discover the ESC here

<https://www.youtube.com/@moocsolidarity205/videos>

Pass IT tool and organisational portal, The portal is designed to help organisations that hold a Quality Label, search for and recruit ESC participants for the activities they plan to carry out

https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/it-tool-organisation-portal_en

Safeguarding Guidelines, from SALTO ESC that explain how to ensure the volunteer experience is safe, meaningful, and well-supported throughout.

https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4627/Safeguarding+Guidelines_SNACvol.pdf

European Solidarity Corps, general information for organisations.

<https://www.salto-youth.net/about/>

Publications by Eurodesk,

<https://eurodesk.eu/publications/>

QUESTIONS?

Contact MUCF if you have any questions esc@mucf.se





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