

“Erasmus for All, Erasmus for Inclusion”

Best Practices and Tips for Social Inclusion Projects



Този проект се изпълнява с финансовата подкрепа на
Програма Еразъм+ и Център за развитие на човешките ресурси



Introduction

In this booklet you will find ideas about organising international voluntary work and international exchanges with and for disadvantaged young people. It is based on the experience of a number of European SCI-branches who have been involved in social inclusion activities since the mid-eighties.

The handbook is a valuable tool for ways to share our experience with other groups and individuals, and to make all the relevant documents easy to find.

Some parts will be more relevant to some than others, but we hope that you will find everything you need to know about the informal group of organisations, called YUWG and its mechanisms.

The booklet is divided into four parts or sections. The first one is general tips about work with youngsters with fewer opportunities. The second part will contain information about the things to keep in mind when organizing an international Youth Exchange with young people. The third part will be devoted to technical advices how to include people with fewer opportunities in workcamps of SCI. The last part is about placing youngsters from the target group into EVS projects.

Types of Exchanges

There are different types of international voluntary work or exchange for young people, available in SCI and through the Erasmus+ Programme:

1. International Youth Exchange

This is an exchange where more than two countries participate. For the target group in question, usually the total number of participants should be still kept at around twenty with equal numbers of participants and leaders from each country taking part.

2. The YUWG Friendly Workcamp

This is a concept of sending youngsters with fewer opportunities, who already have some experience in other projects, to SCI workcamps (International projects) with the support of their sending and hosting organization. These exchanges are usually “the next step” for the youngsters and require some more self confidence, knowledge and skills, that they acquire through other activities.

3. Longer Term Volunteering and EVS Projects

Young people who have participated in a youth exchange or a workcamp may want to go abroad for a longer period of time. SCI offers some medium or long term volunteering opportunities, but these again may be a very big step. Some support shall be offered for the youngsters at all stages of their involvement in such projects.

It is a very good opportunity for youngsters to get experience, if they are placed in projects of the 'European Voluntary Service', an action that is part of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission. It is meant to enable young people between

the ages of 17 and 30 to volunteer in another member state of the European Union for 2 to twelve months.

Food for thought **What do we mean by “disadvantaged”?**

So far, we have been using the word 'disadvantaged' or “young people with fewer opportunities” as if it is clear. In fact, it is highly problematic, and there has been lots of discussions about it in YUWG.

Behind the word 'disadvantaged' lies the assumption that most people have the potential for selfdevelopment, for successfully following an education, and active participation in society, but this potential often stays hidden because of circumstances outside of them.

Usually the word refers to people who have less access than others to education, culture, paid work and politics, because of their socio-economic backgrounds. The word 'disadvantaged' is often linked to 'social exclusion'.

In many countries, young people are excluded from mainstream society because their family has no money, and there is a tradition of early school leaving, alcoholism, apathy and sometimes crime. Even if education is free, these young people leave school earlier than others because they may lack self-confidence or get little support from home. No diploma often means no job, which means a low self-esteem... etcetera.

Often, belonging to an ethnic minority means a bigger risk of leaving school early and of unemployment. But being Asian in Western Europe for example does not necessarily mean a bigger risk of unemployment. And being rich does not necessarily mean you will probably have a lot of confidence. In fact, in many countries there are growing numbers of homeless people from middle-class backgrounds. The barrier can be practical (money, diploma's) but also cultural or psychological. This is why some of us don't only look for participants who might be called 'disadvantaged', but simply look for people who they think would benefit most from the experience of a Youth Exchange. But even if you do use the term in a socio-economic sense, it means different things in different countries.

Why Youth Exchanges?

We think “young people with fewer opportunities” can benefit from the experience of visiting foreign countries and living in an international group. It broadens their horizon and gives them a new perspective on their own situation, as well as a sense of pride for having done something very challenging.

Voluntary work is an important element to social inclusion work. It is a tool through which young people from different backgrounds can put aside their difference and work towards a common goal.

Why Workcamps?

The practical nature of some of this work means the young people can overcome language and cultural difficulties to work together as a team. The sense of achievement they may get from completing a project is crucial to their personal self esteem. They also learn practical skills and competencies through the work on both a personal and professional or social level. Most importantly, it gives young people who are often on the margins of society, the opportunity to be part of a small community, and to realise they can make a positive contribution to this community.

Why Long Term Volunteering (EVS)?

People often say that the little positive bubbles that appear during Youth Exchanges and Workcamps and make the youngsters feel an equal part of society are false realities. Whereas we think they are not false, but small and shortlasting realities. That is why an experience like the European Voluntary Service will bring stable and longlasting positive effect on the attitudes and self esteem of vulnerable youngsters and will once and for all prove them that they too have something to offer.

I. General tips for Social Inclusion activities

Listening to your future participants

As we have said before, it is important that we organise activities with young people as much as possible. It is a waste of time to organise things which no one is interested in. Organising everything for your participants is also a missed opportunity to let them feel involved and appreciated, and to offer them learning experience. Too many things are being organised for young people without anybody ever asking them what they think.

Once you have a programme in place, you can ask the young people involved what they want, and encourage them to take responsibilities in the programme - which is often a scary thing, for the adults as much as for the young people! Before you start, you could try and find out more about young people why visit youth centres or other places in your 'network'.

It is important to find out what the young people want. It is also important to remember what your aims and goals are: you are not there to organise just anything at participants think would be fun. Once again, you are looking for a balance.

Organising an exchange

In this section we will look at the different aspects of organising an international exchange project for young people. We think a lot of the following information can easily be adapted for other exchanges or activities.

Planning

Here is an overview of things which need to be done before, during and after the project.

In the following overview, you will find things which need to be done by hosting groups, by travelling groups, or by both.

Document: Checklist for organizing a Youth Exchange (Annex, p. 20)

II. Exchange of youngsters with fewer opportunities on Youth Exchanges

- **Make an estimate budget** for the elements of your Youth exchange. Keep in mind following points: preparation, food, accommodation, insurance, programme, transport, administration, evaluation, miscellaneous, travel and travel insurance, registration fee (make sure there is no registration fee), funding, fund-raising, contributions from your own organisation, contributions in kind;
- **Recruitment and Selection**
Try to know as much as possible about your participants. *Ask yourself the following questions while planning the recruitment: How do you recruit participants? What background do they have? What age are they? How well do they know each other? Do they have any previous experience with going abroad, voluntary work, living in a group? What do you know about their motivations to participate? What languages do they speak?*
Recruitment activities can be done:
 - ◆ Through your own work
 - ◆ Through networking with youth organisations
 - ◆ Recruiting through former participants
- **Agenda for an APV (Advanced Planning Visit)**
This meeting is especially useful by Youth exchanges. It is meant for the leaders and coordinators of the Youth exchange to meet up, work on the programme of the exchange together, get-to know each other and create a common working style. On this meeting

the organizers team sets together the rules of the exchange and exchange information about the participants. Usually this is a two day meeting before the exchange and after the meeting all leaders talk to their groups to prepare them for the exchange.

Topics to discuss at that meeting would be things like:

- ◆ **accommodation:** indoors or out in tents, mattresses, cooking facilities, showers
- ◆ **cultural differences:** the usual example being attitudes to drink and soft drugs
- ◆ **work:** type of work, how much work every day
- ◆ **styles of leadership:** any definite rules to be set, what should be done about stealing or heavy drinking on camp, etcetera
- ◆ **the group:** how many, what ages, what kind of background
- ◆ **aims and objectives:** what are the most important things we want to achieve, can we help the integration of the two groups, what subject for study-part?
- ◆ **finance:** which side pays for what, share infoon sources of finance
- ◆ **location:** exact address, travel directions,maps, photographs, any information
- ◆ **what to bring?:** should the group bring sleeping bags, summer cloths or warm cloths,workcloths, etc.
- ◆ **preparation:** how are we going to prepare all the groups in the same way?

The project

If you organise an exchange for young people, the ingredients usually are: two or more groups, a place to stay, a project (practical work or other, something you are going to do), a social programme and a study-part (non-formal or otherwise).

If you are organising a workcamp, there would be for example work in the garden of a centre for refugees, work on a farm and camp on one of their fields.

The organisation, called project partner, provides food, accomodation, all necessary instruments. The initiative to do a project together may come from them or from you.

The easiest projects to organise are often the ones where one of the people involved is both a member of your working group and involved in the sponsor organisation.

But you could also start looking for youth-centres, organic farms, peace-communities, nature parks, or any other organisation that might have some work and an interest in young people.

New or ready made groups?

If you recruit young people through your network and through open recruiting activities, you will probably get a mix of young people from different backgrounds: urban / rural, middle / working class, black / white etcetera. Many of us look for

individuals or maybe for a number of young people from one youth training project. They will be placed in a group which is formed for the camp/youth exchange.

Another way of recruiting is to find 'ready made groups'. This means that you offer a project, a partner group and maybe leaders to an existing group from a youth club or training centre. Reasons to prefer this method could be:

For different reasons, certain groups of young people are very reluctant to participate in programmes on their own. This could be because they don't have the individualistic attitude that SCI seems to expect from its participants, or because their community is isolated from other groups in society. In Northern Ireland it was felt that working with ready made groups makes it easier to recruit Protestant young people; in the Netherlands this is true for young people from the Moroccan or Surinam communities, for example. By working with two projects from communities which don't easily mix, we can encourage relationships to develop at a structural level (between the projects themselves), as well as at an individual level. The same is true for bringing together a group from your own country with a project in another country. Since the young people already know each other, they could be more involved in the preparation. The same is true for the youth workers from the centre or youth club. It might also make the programme more attractive to funders

There can also be disadvantages:

It can be more difficult to organise the project according to your own aims and philosophies, since you are not the only one to decide what the aims are. Going on a camp with the people you already know well, may make it easier for the young people not to mix at all with new people; the unusual mix of people is, for many groups, one of the aims of a camp. For many young people it would be a good experience to get out of their normal environment, especially the group they are normally with.

Parents

Often you will also meet parents, or talk to them on the phone. And even if you don't have any direct communication with them, their role is important. Do not try to avoid contact with them, on the contrary. Sometimes the young people want to go, but the parents are worried or absolutely against it. This can be a personal thing, but also there can be a cultural or political barrier. For example in the Netherlands, many Muslim parents don't want their sons to go away with a group that might be drinking alcohol, and they don't want their daughters to go away with strangers at all. Try not to get caught up in conflicts between parents and children. Take the motivation of the young people seriously, and explain to the parents that you think this is important, but take their worries and questions seriously too. Show them you respect their culture and/or their concern for their children. Be clear about the rules on camp, and never lie! Parents will be happy to hear that we have a 'no drugs' rule. But you cannot guarantee, for example, that on a young women's camp the participants will not mix with men at all.

The big frustration for many adult volunteers is, that we tend to expect things from possible participants, which then turn out to be unrealistic. We expect they will hear about the camp, fill in a form, pay their fee and turn up in time for a preparation day, or at least tell you early enough that they cannot come. In fact, many young people don't trust forms, have no money and have a problem asking parents or others to help them, don't feel responsible for the project, might be afraid of you, and will drop out for reasons that you may find crazy. All you can do is try to see it from their perspective, to keep in touch with them and to gradually help them to take some responsibility for the project.

Preparation of participants

This is a very important part of the organisation of any exchange project. In this part, try to make participants familiar with each other, with the type of exchange they will go through, the rules and responsibilities of participation, practicalities about travel; programme and activities of the project. Here are some tips and ideas.

- **Introduction activities**

A first step in the preparation of participants would be to give them an impression of what international projects are all about and what kind of activities you are organising that year.

Visits to youth centres, where you show slides and talk about the programme are a good way to do that.

Make sure you get the group to talk as well!

You can organise an orientation weekend. These weekends would involve going away to a place in the country, to do some voluntary work there, lots of games, cooking and doing the dishes together, and talking about expectations. The participants will get a taste of what it is like to live and work in a group. After such a weekend, a selection could take place. Sometimes a person's behaviour at the weekend is a reason not to send them on a camp.

- **Preparation**

Once people know which camp/exchange they will be doing, there should be a more direct preparation. Elements are: practical information about the camp and the country they will be visiting; the development of a group contract; discussion about rules; contribution of the group to the programme, which could just mean they discuss what they would like to do, but also they could for example prepare an evening with songs, food, games, slides etcetera of their own country.

Some organisations organise separate orientation and preparation days. They start with activities for the whole group, and later split up for practical information about specific camps and for group discussion between people who will actually be going on a workcamp together.

Elements of an introduction or preparation weekend

- Games; name games, ice breakers, fun games.
- Practical work; to create the feeling of a youth exchange. Usually this would be three hours or so on the Saturday afternoon.
- Sports or outdoor activities such as swimming, football, obstacle course, an adventurous walk
- Slides of workcamps; this is a good one for Saturday evening after dinner. It can also be a starting point for a discussion about.
- Hopes and fears: get people to talk, first in small groups, then in the big group, about what they think or hope will be good about a project, and what they are worried about.
- Information about the other country: what do they know about it? Try not to turn this into a geography class.
- Information about your organisation, SCI, the programme for young people.
- Rules, contract.

A preparation weekend should be full of activity: the group could easily get bored because they do not know each other well enough to take their own initiatives or to have long conversations together. Also, because it is only a weekend, they will expect a lot will happen. So make sure you have lots of ideas for games.

Contract

A 'Social contract' to be used for groups who are going on a camp (see Appendix, p. 25) This contains some basic rules for each camp, but also things participants can expect from the organisation or from the leaders. The purpose of the contract is:

- to have some rules and ideas on paper which are the same for all YUWG-groups, so that leaders have a good basis to work together,
- to have a starting point for discussion with the group about rules, and about how to live together in such a way that everybody will feel safe and respected;
- to have something to refer to when a participant shows bad behaviour: you can remind them about the fact that in the beginning they did agree with certain rules;
- to show parents or guardians what your rules are, and to have some proof that you act responsibly (you might need this if parents complain about leadership on the camp)
- to develop a sense of shared responsibility in the group

It has been agreed that all groups in exchanges use the contract.

Info sheet

All participants receive an info-sheet containing the following information:

- Where is the project, what kind of accommodation, what kind of work, aims, some information about the programme;

- Travel directions: even though the group will be travelling together, they will all want to know how they are going to travel. It is also possible that you lose someone on your way to the camp/exchange: they need to know how to get there on their own;
- name, address, telephone number of the venue, for the same reasons;
- contact address of hosting organisation;
- names and addresses of leaders and co-ordinator of the project
- list of things they need to bring, including sleeping bag, work clothes, swimming gear, some advice on pocket money (what will they need it for; what kind of things will be paid for them?), advice on things they should keep in a handbag because they may not be able to keep all their luggage with them during the trip.

Remember that many of the participants will have no experience with international travel, so things that might be obvious for you are not clear for them. For example do they need to bring food? What will the weather be like in the other country? Will it be hot or cold on the train? Where should they keep their money while travelling?

Information for parents/guardians:

Give each participant a sheet of paper with contact addresses for their parents or guardians: they need to know who they should contact in case of an emergency. This paper should also contain the exact dates of the camp/exchange.

Finding, selecting and preparing the leaders

To be a leader in a teenage project or youth exchange is usually great fun, but also very demanding. Although experience is probably the best way to learn how to do it, a good preparation can make it a lot easier, and can give the leaders lots of new ideas they may use on the camp. Some of the elements described in this section are even vital.

Selection of Leaders

You could try:

- Schools or colleges for youth-work;
- Youth-centres;
- Centres for voluntary service;
- Volunteers linked to the project

Training

Try to organise a training-weekend or event for leaders. Here are some tips and ideas on how to prepare it.

If you organise training weekend, make sure you use the experience which is already there, you can learn a lot from each other! Of course it can be a good idea to invite experts to do sessions on certain things.

One way of setting up a training for workcamp leaders, is the 'mini-workcamp' scenario. Make the whole weekend a bit like a workcamp/youth exchange, so that people will actually experience some of the good and the complicated things of a workcamp.

Start by giving everyone a piece of paper with their jobs for the weekend on it. If possible, let those who will be leading a workcamp together be a team on this weekend, too.

Expectations. Start with a session on what the group expects from the weekend.

Presentation of the youth exchanges / workcamps. If leaders already know which camp they are going to do, ask them to present it to the rest of the group.

Games. Practice different games during the weekend. Ask the group to come up with games or game-like activities they know at different moments. Discuss different types of games and their different goals. Try to include games from the following categories: ice-breakers, name games: games to hear and learn everybody's name, energisers, introduction games, action games, sitting games, co-operative games, trust games, simulation games, discussion and evaluation games.

Leadership styles. Explain to the group about three basic styles: authoritarian, laissez faire, supportive.

Worst case scenarios. Talk with the leaders about about disasters that could happen on a camp/exchange. This keeps them alert on prevention and gives them the time to think about a situation before it happened and to react faster in case it happens.

Conflicts. Prepare some role-plays on conflicts that might occur on workcamps/exchanges. Brainstorm about some typical conflict-areas in teenage workcamps. Think of a scene where the conflicts become manifest. Play conflicts with the group. Then give the group a method for conflict resolution.

Rules and agreements in YUWG. Prepare the leaders about all procedures and agreements that are developed to support a quality exchange.

These would be:

1. **The Leader Contract (see Annex, p. 24)** – a document describing the roles and responsibilities of leaders of teenage exchanges'
2. **The Social Contract (see Annex, p. 25)** – a document describing the responsibilities and rights of participants in the group
3. **The Coordinator's role (see Annex, p.23)** – a document, describing the role of a coordinator of a youth exchange/workcamp

Cultural differences. Games related to cultural difference can be used both to make leaders more aware of their own attitude, and to explore how teenagers might react and what you could do with this.

Evaluation. Do an evaluation of the weekend, using one or more of the methods described under 'evaluation'.

Evaluation

Evaluations are important for the group which organises an exchange, but also for the leaders and the participants.

Evaluation and reflection:

- Midterm evaluation: To check and see what is going wrong and to try and change this. To expand on the good things. To listen to suggestions and plan the rest of the camp/exchange.
- Evaluation at the end of the camp, with the group. Aims: to give each participant a chance to say how they feel about the project. To learn from mistakes, and from the things you did well. To see if the camp has fulfilled your expectations, and those of the group. To record people's opinions for a report
- After the camp project: to find out what went wrong and what was good. To use the experience in a positive way, to list what you want to do differently, or what you should do the same next time. To clear the air if there have been conflicts or tensions.

Methods: Open discussion, Dartboard, Two sides of the room, Drama, Wallpaper; Hand, Heart, Feet; What I liked, what I didn't like; Evaluation Tree, Questionnaire

The Process of the Exchange

Youth Exchanges usually go through different stages which are more or less the same for each exchange.

The Beginning:

When people arrive, they will feel tired, worried, curious, insecure, eager to start, threatened. Although they are probably looking forward to the exchange, it is very common that participants are wondering why they are doing this. Language can be a barrier, people have to get used to speaking a foreign language, to speaking slowly or not being able to speak with some others at all. Also, being confronted with a group of complete strangers is very threatening. Most participants will be afraid that nobody will like them.

The group needs to: to get used to the situation; to learn names; to discover or create some structure;

What you can do:

- Name games and ice-breakers are important now. The focus will be on getting some basic information about who is who and where we are. Games that establish

the first communication between the groups, without getting very personal, should be used here.

- Give participants some structure by telling them what the programme for this day is, by explaining things about the house or place where you are staying and about house rules. It would be nice if the caretaker of the building or somebody from the sponsor organisation could welcome the group and explain a few things.
- Don't worry too much if groups don't mix well in the beginning. Give them time to get used to the situation.

The First Day:

Soon, people will start wondering why they are here and what is going to happen. There will not be many initiatives coming from the group, because people will not feel confident enough yet. Sub-groups will start to form, or participants will stay close to the people they already knew before the exchange.

The group would need to:

- to get clarity about what the exchange is all about
- to develop a feeling that 'this is our exchange' and that 'I am going to enjoy this'
- to get to know each other a little better

What you can do:

- Not too long after the arrival of the group you should get everyone together and discuss the programme, rules, and a rota for cooking and cleaning. For the purpose of clarity, repeat the things you have already explained in the beginning.
- Encourage people to ask questions about the programme and to come up with ideas, even if you think they will not do this yet. Sharing the responsibility may start with thinking about what you could eat for dinner.
- Usually, you will start work on the second day. This will give the group the feeling they have "really" started. They will begin to see what the exchange is going to be like.
- Even if people are still tired, a lot of physical activity will be appreciated. So organise more active games, or for example play football, go swimming or cycling. This will also give the group the opportunity to have fun together even if they still don't know each other well or find it difficult to speak in a foreign language.

The next issue which will come up after one or two days is 'Who is the boss?' It will become clear who the leader figures in the group are. People will approach each other on the basis of first impressions. The young people will also try to find out how strict the rules are and what you are like as a leader. Personal agendas will become apparent (I am here to party!).

Tasks for the group:

- to move out of power struggles
- to see behind cliché roles and first impressions

What you can do:

- Meet regularly as leaders, right from the beginning. This does not have to be very formal, but make sure there is enough communication about how things are going. It is essential that leader meetings happen on a daily basis, regardless of what time it is!

- Be very clear about rules. Try not to go along with a false polarisation between participants and leaders as 'the ones who want to have a good time' and 'the ones who want rules'.
- Encourage the group to mix with everyone, for example by changing the subgroups for work, or by organising games in teams. Form these teams by using other little games, not by just telling people 'I want you to be in a group with Igor2'.
- Focus on positive things that happen in the group, positive activities that you are going to do, and try to relate to everybody in a positive way. For example, try to shift the attention from what people are not allowed to drink to the interesting activity some people have prepared for tonight.
- Try to understand why certain people might be testing you and talk about this with the other leaders.
- Finally, try not to worry about how popular you are at this stage.

The Third Day:

After the first two or three days, people will feel more relaxed and confident. This can lead to a situation where individuals or small groups start to do things on their own and where you might lose (part of) your group, or, the other extreme, the group will gradually become a community where everybody is respected and everybody feels responsible for the project and the well-being of the whole group. As a leader, you cannot force the group to become the "ideal" group, and you may not even want to do this. Tasks for the group:

- to develop a sense of responsibility for the project and all members of the group
- to move out of subgroups and be open to everyone

What you can do:

- Offer a lot of activities, including games and other things that invite people to speak their mind, use their talents and get to know each other better.
- Be very active in including everybody: Don't become part of a subgroup yourself but divide your time and attention over the whole group.

The Fourth and Fifth Days:

At this stage, some conflicts may have become apparent. People will have opinions about how things are going, and ideas about what they would like to do. There will also be questions about what will happen in the second week: are we just going to do the same things as we did this week, and are we ever going to visit that city I hoped we would visit? Tasks for the group:

- to speak ones mind about the exchange and the group
- to think about how the exchange is going and what the group and each individual in it can do to improve it
- to face conflicts and deal with them

What you can do:

- Organise a midway-evaluation
- Make a programme for the second part of the exchange, by discussing it with the whole group
- Use the weekend to stay up late or to do things that take a lot of time (e.g. visiting a city if you are not in a city, going to the beach if you are not near a beach). The group

might want to go away for the whole weekend, or do things in smaller groups. What you can or should do depends on the atmosphere in the group, the maturity of the participants and of course on some practical factors, but usually it is a good idea to do something completely different".

The Second Half of the Exchange:

After the weekend it may feel a bit strange to get back to normal exchange life. Sometimes the energy is gone completely at the beginning of the second week. Also, people might want to spend some time on their own, just to read a book or go to bed early.

Tasks for the group:

- to refocus on the work-project and the programme for the second week
- to deepen the contacts and friendships in the group
- to get a more profound understanding of what the project is about
- to begin to think about what people are gaining from the Youth Exchange experience and what they might do with this when they go home

What you can do:

- A lie-in on in the morning could be a good idea, if the weekend / mid-exchange period was very active.
- If possible, get the sponsor to introduce something new in the work-project or preferably draw the work project to some conclusion, and mark this with a celebration / party / ceremony.
- Leave space in the programme for people to go shopping or to just sit in the sun
- Ask the participants to organise activities for the evenings, for example cultural nights' where they teach each other songs, dances, or games from their own country.
- Organise a group discussion on SCI or on topics connected with the work project, using games, video, creative methods or drama. Get the group to talk about their impressions of the project, their countries, their opinions and experience in relation to this topic.

The Last Day:

On the last full day people will be looking forward to going home and at the same time feel bad about having to say goodbye. You may want to finish the work-project, and there will be all sorts of things which you want to do before everybody leaves

Tasks for the group:

- to become aware of that you want to do with the Youth Exchange experience after you have gone home
- to make some decisions about follow-up
- to say goodbye

What you can do:

- Organise a goodbye party. Maybe you want to invite people from the work-project as well. Give them a goodbye present: if the group can think of something they could give or do, so much the better. You could have a little ceremony where each individual member of the group is mentioned and thanked.
- Organise a big clean-up!
- Do a final evaluation.

- Discuss some possible follow-up activities with the group. Maybe you have already planned reunion-weekends. Maybe you want to do a 'second leg' of the exchange. But the group can also decide to keep in touch with each other in some organised
- Give each participant a list with all the names, addresses and telephone numbers.

III. Exchange of youngsters with fewer opportunities in Workcamps

This type of exchange is seen as a step further for the volunteers in their development and self esteem. It is also a bigger challenge, as the support system for the vulnerable ones is less developed. The idea of the participation of a workcamp is to place the youngsters gradually in a more “real” situation, where they will have to work in a group and develop communication, team and working skills.

The workcamp would be a suitable option for youngsters, who already have been to a Youth exchange, or such, who are more independent and selfreliable.

It is meant to involve one or two people with fewer opportunities, who will be mixed with the rest of the volunteers on these projects.

Each project has a coordinator, who is supposed to be experienced, trained and aware of the participation of any participants that will require more support during the project.

Since the programme of a workcamp does not involve a strong support for the process of a group forming, all participants have to actively work for this to happen.

Conflict and tense situations are foreseen, but not controlled as much as in a youth exchange. This means that the youngsters will face a structure, which is much closer to what they will face in reality outside of their institution. Nevertheless the environment is friendly and supportive, as well as camp coordinators will be in the role of attendants and will work to make this experience a positive one for the vulnerable youngsters.

Principles of the exchange:

- Keep the information about the profile of the participant only to the camp coordinator. It is not needed for the rest of the participants to know that there is youth with different background.
- Include in the agenda workshops about inclusion and against discrimination.
- Make sure that camp coordinator is well prepared and experienced.
- Limit to the number of participants with vulnerable background will be 2, so that they can be included directly in the group.
- Sending no hosting organisation do not charge a fee for participation of youth from the target group.

- Hosting organisation and the camp coordinator ensure higher level of support for volunteers on such projects: organizing activities for group building, cultural understanding, solidarity, conflict resolution, reflection, evaluation
- Sending and hosting organisation stay in touch about the participants before, during and after the exchange.
- It can be that a youngster from the target group gets an individual support – a friend, social worker, attendant to be placed together with them on a camp.
- There should be an extended preparation for the volunteer and the person who is going to support him/her.
- Camp coordinator should receive a training on how to work with vulnerable people.
- Close an agreement between about the sending or hosting organizations about the conditions under which youngsters will be placed.
- Create a disclosure policy and appoint a designated person.

Accommodation:

- Accommodation should be suitable for the respective health conditions
- Divisions of male and female rooms should be kept according to the profile of participant
- Information about venue is required in advanced

Activities:

- If the workcamp coordinator observes lower group dynamics, exclusion, conflict it is recommended to deliver some inclusion sessions, intercultural awareness, teambuilding, trust building activities, conflict resolution if needed.
- Participants should participate in the same activities as others.

Camp leader

- Should receive specific training and experience
- Contact some already experienced leaders

Sending and Hosting organisation

- Sending and Hosting organisation set the parameters of exchange
- They are in communication from planning to evaluation phase
- SO and HO agree on financial terms for the travel of the participant

Selection

- Always pick a project together with the volunteer
- Offer to the participant other opportunities
- Prepare the participants for the type of project
- Target only youngsters, who are ready for the “next step”

IV. Exchange of youngsters with fewer opportunities in EVS and LTV Projects

This type of projects are seen as a very good opportunity for young people with fewer opportunities to get life experience, which will help them in their professional realisation. There is a big potential for these projects to be able to help the youngsters develop self esteem and skills that will place them in a better position on the labour market. However, it is very difficult to realize these opportunities for vulnerable young people. Many times the reason is the youngsters unwillingness to be part of it. This section is going to give some principles and mechanisms in which we see the first steps towards placement in EVS projects.

Planning

Hosting organisation:

- Take your time to plan your project well in advance
- Make sure that you will ensure support for the volunteer at all times
- Beware the placement will be sometimes more consuming, then the product of the work, but remember – it is worth it!
- Plan the Agenda of the project and share precicely with the sending organisation what are you planning for the activities of the volunteer. Give as much details as possible to ensure the correct flow of information to the volunteer
- Plan the agenda in a way that you leave more time for adaptation
- Best is to plan the project together with the volunteer and sending organisation

Sending organisation:

- Select and recruit your volunteer as early as possible
- Be ready for an extensive preparation of the outgoing
- Try to meet the volunteer with people, that have been in a similar project before
- Try to work with the volunteer on the agenda of the project
- Keep communication with the hosting organisation frequently
- Create a support system for the volunteer

Activities

To develop skills of young people with unstable personal foundations, it is helpful to plan the project as a process. The successful models of implementation show, that if the project starts with a few months of physical and practical work, this gives to youngsters a solid ground to first adapt properly and second – be sure that they are doing their tasks correctly.

A support system of appreciation and positive feedback should be developed from the start of the project and is an important part of the placement of the different stages of the project.

After a few months of physical work, a youngster is starting to realize, that s/he is good at something and that he/she is also useful.

This may be the right moment to add a challenge to their work and to add a responsibility to their tasks. Gradually you can add up more responsibilities. Be careful that the youngster should be able to take his own responsibilities and to choose them.

When this process takes place properly, there should be a moment, when the volunteer will be ready to build things him/herself. This will result in motivation in taking more tasks or bigger tasks.

Gradually and without pressure, the volunteer can be offered to create his/her own project.

Beware, that the youngsters may be very shy and may not be aware themselves of their qualities. It will be the role of the mentor or hosting organization to try to figure these and help the volunteer to see them too.

Mentoring

Try to implement a system of Monitoring, Support and Mentorship. Make sure that the volunteer has a Mentor or/and a person, trained or willing to work with vulnerable people.

Selection

Try to find a youngster that has enough international experience, is not completely incapable of communicating in a foreign language and has developed a sound self confidence. You may have to make a difficult choice to say someone no, or to take the risk, that the project might be too big for the person and will cause the opposite effect.

Selection has to be very careful and very well based on volunteer behavior, history and self awareness.

Evaluation and Reflection

As hosting organisation, try to make sure that at all time the youngster has the settings to speak freely about how he/she feels. Talk to them in informal conversation to find out how they feel in the project.

Midterm evaluation. Try to make an official evaluation with the volunteer around the middle of the project.

Feedback from successful implementation:

The volunteers come back with broadening horizons, language skills, self confidence and the knowledge, that they also have something to offer to the world.

EVS is usually a strong experience for any volunteer. We believe that for vulnerable youth it is indeed life changing.

Annex

Checklist for Hosting a YUWG Youth Exchange:

1. Recruitment of Leaders:

- Leaders have a full understanding of their responsibilities during a YUWG Youth Exchange. They understand that a YUWG exchange is not a work-camp and leaders are responsible for the wellbeing of the participants.
- New leaders (and coordinators) have been screened. In some countries this will involve a Police check (Ireland), in others it simply means thoroughly checking references from past jobs, etc....
- Leaders have attended YUWG leader training where possible.
- Leaders have read and signed a YUWG Leader Contract.

2. Recruitment of Participants:

- Participants have been recruited as early as possible and given the opportunity to take part in preparation activities.
- Participants have completed and returned an application form that includes the information in the YUWG Application Form template.
- Communication has been made between partner branches about serious difficulties or challenges facing the participants, which may arise during the exchange, and this information will be treated as strictly confidential.
- Participants have signed and understand the Social Contract, including their rights and responsibilities.

3. Accommodation:

- All details and information regarding standards of accommodation have been communicated promptly and accurately to partner branches.
- Accommodation is suitable to geographical / weather conditions.
- Possibilities for washing and showering have been planned into the schedule if the facilities are limited.
- There is a common room or space that can host activities as an alternative during rainy weather.
- There are separate sleeping areas for Leaders, and male and female participants. If possible, those under 18 and over 18 should also be separated.
- Accessibility of the venue has been checked for safety reasons e.g. can an ambulance get into the venue in the case of emergency.

4. Food:

- Food Safety regulations will be adhered too i.e. storage and preparation of food.
- A basic list of guidelines regarding food safety has been displayed in the cooking areas.

5. Work:

- There is an alternative work plan for rainy weather (always have a plan B).
- There are enough working tools and they are suitable for the planned work.
- Work projects involving tools or machinery will be supervised.
- The General working schedule will not exceed 3-5 hours, 5 days a week.

6. Emergency Procedures:

- The coordinator of the exchange has provided the leaders of the exchange with all the relevant emergency information.
- Leaders have to know the Emergency Procedure before the YE (each branch / organisation has to give leaders and coordinators all documents related the emergency procedure).
- Leaders and coordinators must be familiar with and understand the YUWG Disclosure Procedures Document.
- In cases where the participants will take part in water sports, swimming or diving, there is a suitable person present who is aware of water safety procedures.
- A first aid kit is available at all times, and a person who can carry out First Aid is available.

7. Insurance:

The Hosting Organisation provides all participants with the insurance available in SCI but recommends all Sending Organisations to make an additional insurance for the groups.

8. Coordination:

- A suitable coordinator has been appointed for the FULL duration of the project.
- The coordinator is the key person in the organisation of the exchange and will be responsible for serious problem solving when necessary.
- The coordinator has to insure health and safety measures are followed.
- Coordinators should be present at the exchange at all times, but when they are not they should be fully contactable and within a reasonable distance to the project. If the coordinator has to be absent, someone else should assume his tasks.
- The coordinator has read and agreed to the Coordinators Role Description document.

9. Documentation:

The following documents must be completed;

- An Application form, including all the information outlined in the sample YUWG participant application form, must be completed and sent to the hosting branch one month before the exchange.
- The YUWG Info Sheet must be completed by hosting branches and sent to all partners at least one month in advance of the exchange. The Info Sheet must at the same time be sent to the Steering Group member responsible for Multilaterals.
- The Leader Contract referring to the roles and responsibilities of leaders must be used and signed.
- The Checklist for Hosting Youth Exchanges must be used and made available to all leaders / coordinators involved in YUWG Youth Exchanges.
- A Social Contract must be used by all YUWG groups.
- The document outlining Emergency Procedure must be made available to all leaders and coordinators.
- The YUWG Disclosure Procedure document must be introduced to leaders and coordinators and followed by all organisations / branches.
- The YUWG Evaluation sheet must be completed by leaders and sent to the hosting branch and to the SG. A written / paper evaluation must be completed by participants and kept for YUWG records.
- The SCI Travel Reimbursement Form must be used for all requests for reimbursements between partners.

The Steering Group will send reminders regarding these documents.

We hope this will help us all organise safe and successful exchanges, for the benefit of leaders, coordinators and participants alike!

Youth Exchange Coordinator Role Description

1. As the coordinator of the youth exchange (YE) I am aware that I am responsible for the logistics of the project as well as for the finances and dealing with practicalities, unless someone else from the host organisation has taken on some of these tasks.
2. I am responsible for managing the programme content and all the activities, and should ensure that the various elements of the programme happen as they were planned, unless the team agrees to change the programme for particular reasons.
3. As the coordinator, I should be present during the whole exchange. If not, I should be within a reasonable distance and in contact with the leaders' team.
4. I am responsible for ensuring steps are taken to keep the participants safe and well, and communicating any health and safety issues to the leader team and the host organisation.
5. My primary role is not the one-on-one contact with the participants except when needed - this is the role of the leader.
6. I will make sure daily leader meetings and daily reflection and evaluation take place, as well as acting as a mediator in case of conflicts in the leaders' team, supporting the leaders and insuring a good leaders' group dynamic.
7. I will organize the evaluations of the YE or insure they take place and are recorded.
8. I know that I can participate in the workshops when needed, and in doing so observe that they are going well for the participants, and if not to make necessary changes or give feedback.
9. I understand that my role is to keep an overview of the project, and know what's happening in the various elements (participant group dynamic, leader group dynamic, programme, logistics, etc...).
10. I am aware that I need to have access at all times to a folder/pack with all the important information – emergency phone numbers, etc....
11. I understand that I am not allowed to have sexual and/or exclusive relationships with the participants OR THE OTHER LEADERS.
12. I SHOULD BE TOLERANT, OPEN-MINDED, HELPFUL BUT RESPONSIBLE TOWARDS THE PARTICIPANTS. I should assist the leader team in facilitating the communication and integration of the participants into the Youth Exchange.

LEADER CONTRACT

1. As a leader of this project I am aware that my full involvement is needed and that certain tasks will be asked of me.
2. In order to ensure the smooth running of the Youth Exchange, I agree to take part in the leader training provided by the organization and the Advanced Planning Visit.
3. I agree to participate in the evaluation events offered by SCI.
4. I agree that I am obliged to accompany the participants of my group to and from the Youth Exchange (according to the guidelines of my organization).
5. I agree to be present at all times during the Youth Exchange, to be available to my group. If I need to be absent I have to inform the leader group and have a telephone to be reached at in case of emergency.
6. I have to keep an open mind and always try to reach a common understanding and position on the rules with the other leaders.
7. As member of the leader team I have to be clear around the rules and make sure that the participants follow them.
8. I agree that I also am subject to the rules set on the Youth Exchange.
9. I have to make sure that I have the following necessary documents with me: Details of insurance, participants' contract, participants' application form and all the emergency numbers. In case of an emergency situation I have to refer to and follow the emergency procedures.
10. I have to keep a list with all the contact information of THE HOST ORGANIZATION AND THE PROJECT VENUE, my organization and the families of the participants.
11. I HAVE TO check with my branch that the participants have signed the social contract and that they fully understand their engagement to it. For all participants under 18 I have to make sure that the legal guardian signed as well.
12. I am aware that I have to be informed of the whereabouts of my participants at all times during the project.
13. I have to know and understand the procedures for dealing with disclosures of abuse, and be familiar with the YUWG disclosure policy.
14. I have to know my participants and communicate all important information to the leader group at the Advanced Planning Visit.
15. I SHOULD BE TOLERANT, OPEN-MINDED, HELPFUL BUT RESPONSIBLE TOWARDS THE PARTICIPANTS. I am responsible to facilitate the communication and integration of the participants into the Youth Exchange. I have to make sure that there will be Evaluation meetings (all participants) and Leader meetings throughout the whole duration of the Youth Exchange in order to solve possible problems and in order to evaluate the process.
16. I understand that I am not allowed to have sexual and/or exclusive relationships with the participants or the other leaders.
17. I will support the program-coordinator in organizing and running the international youth exchange.
18. I am expected to follow all of the above unless some specific rules are adapted during the APV, in agreement with all the leaders and coordinator of the project.

SIGNED:

DATE:

SOCIAL CONTRACT / AGREEMENT

Introduction:

SCI gives young people the opportunity to take part in international youth exchanges with young people from other countries. These exchanges are organised for a number of reasons, the main one being to give young people the chance to meet people of their own age from other countries and make new friends. This is part of our work to promote social justice, international understanding and peace between the peoples of the world.

The aims of this agreement are to:

1. Inform participants of what is involved in participation on a teenage exchange.
2. Pass on information to parents and guardians.
3. Clarify the rights and responsibilities of the participants.
4. Foster a spirit of cooperation.

This agreement is meant as a set of rules to ensure the smooth running of the exchange.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS AS A PARTICIPANT

1. As a participant of this project I am aware that my full involvement is needed and that certain tasks will be asked of me. I will try to make this project an unforgettable positive experience for all of us. I understand that I must respect everyone else on the exchange and be tolerant of their culture. I understand that picking on someone else because they are different in some way can lead to people feeling hurt or bullied.
2. I understand that the exchanges are held in a cooperative and tolerant manner and so prejudice of any kind is not welcome.

3. I agree to participate in the preparation and evaluation events offered by SCI.
4. I agree that on the exchange the aim is to operate as a group so I must stay with the group unless given permission to leave by the leaders. Decisions about free-time will be taken by the group including the leaders.
5. I understand that SCI wants the participants to benefit from a group experience, therefore the group should stay together as much as possible.
6. SCI discourages any exclusive or sexual relationships on camp.
7. I am responsible for my behaviour during the exchange. I will respect the place where the exchange is taking place and will not damage any property. If I break something I will pay for it.
8. I will respect everyone else and their possessions.
9. I accept that drinking alcohol is forbidden.
10. I accept that I cannot drink alcohol while travelling to and from the project and while working during the project as this can be dangerous.
11. I will not use drugs on camp.
12. I will do my share of the cleaning-up, washing the dishes etc.
13. I agree to work for between 4-6 hours per day (except, of course, on days off).
14. I realize that I make a commitment to do the whole exchange.
15. To ensure a safe working environment, I agree to the safety rules.
16. I accept that smoking in the sleeping and cooking areas is not allowed. The rules relating to where you can smoke and who does the cooking, washing-up etc. will be drawn up at the start of each exchange.

17. I agree to follow the rules mentioned in this agreement, even if I am over 18 years old.
18. I accept that there may be occasions when I must abide by the leaders' decisions.

MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT

1. SCI will organise travel to and from the project for me.
2. To make the project successful, SCI will organise a preparation event before the exchange and an evaluation event afterwards for me and other participants.
3. Before the exchange begins I will receive as much information as possible about the project.
4. SCI will provide food and accommodation for me during the exchange.
5. SCI will try to ensure a safe working environment for me but I must respect the safety rules.
6. I have the right to the help and support of the leaders during the camp.
7. I can expect the leaders to listen to any problem I feel I need to talk about.
8. I may expect the leaders to encourage good relations and communication between people on the exchange - for example, by translating if they can.
9. Like all other participants, I have the right to express myself. I also have the right to evaluate the exchange. Everyone is given a say and everyone can contribute to the decisions taken during the project.

This agreement is valid from to

Name and surname of the participant in capital letters.....

Signed by participant.....

Signed by parent or guardian (if minor).....

YUWG Disclosure Procedure

Defining Disclosure

If a participant reports a case of abuse (that happened on the project or at any point in their past) your leaders should know how to react, while also protecting the confidentiality of the participant.

Defining Abuse

Abuse is defined differently according to each country, but according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) the general definition of abuse is:

Abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and / or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

In the Youth in Action Programme Guide, it is suggested that a disclosure procedure is in place for all Youth Exchanges, to ensure the protection and safety of the participants.

Steps for dealing with a disclosure on a Youth Exchange

- 1. Listen to the participant. Offer him/her reassurance without making promises and take what the participant says seriously. Never promise to keep the disclosure a secret.**
- 2. Never stop a participant who is freely recalling significant events. Stay calm but explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell (i.e. Designated Person). Never question or interrogate the participant or make him/her repeat the story unnecessarily.**
- 3. Record the discussion accurately using the language of the participant as soon as possible after the event even if it is information you do not fully understand.**
- 4. If the alleged abuse has taken place during the Youth Exchange, the coordinator should be informed. If the abuse has taken place in the participant's home country, make direct contact with the Designated Person of the sending organisation of the participant. Do not share information with people unless it is absolutely necessary. Avoid telling people on the project unless they *need to know*.**
- 5. Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.**

Signed:

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- ✓ Establish **the nature** and extent of the emergency, ensure safety of yourself and others involved;
- ✓ If they are injuries, **establish the medical situation (consciousness)** of those injured, **the extent of their injuries** and administer appropriate first aid;
- ✓ Ensure **all other group** members are accounted for and safe;
- ✓ Call whichever **emergency services** are required (the police will take any statements-police statements may be required for any insurance claims);
- ✓ Arrange for **the remainder** of the group to return to base;
- ✓ If any casualties require a visit **to a hospital**, ensure they are **accompanied by one of the leaders**. Arrange air evacuation home if necessary
- ✓ **Restrict access to telephones** until you have made contact with your emergency contact person at home and until he/she has had time to contact those directly involved. Provide your emergency contact with the following information:
 - Your name
 - Nature, date and local time of incident
 - Location of incident
 - Names of those involved
 - Details of injuries
 - Action taken so far
 - Telephone numbers (and fax if available) for future communication
- ✓ **Do not discuss or admit legal liability** (this may prejudice insurance cover);
- ✓ If the **incident is serious** (death or arrest), contact the **Local Embassy or Consulate** for further advice and help with any special arrangements.

- ✓ Leaders should **write down all relevant details as soon as possible** whilst they are still fresh in the memory. Keep a record of the **names and addresses of any witnesses**. Any equipment should be kept in its original condition.
- ✓ Contact your office contact.