2. Planning an international voluntary service

2.1 The actors

In this T-Kit we consider three main actors within IVS. The people without whom there would not be any voluntary service are, logically, the volunteers. They get information about a project abroad and the "sending organisation" takes the necessary steps to send the volunteer to an international voluntary service project. Abroad, the volunteers are hosted in a local structure where the voluntary work will take place, which we will call the "hosting organisation". After a shorter or longer period, the volunteers return to their own country again and hopefully do something with the experience they gained abroad.

2.1.1 The volunteers

The volunteers are the key actors in IVS. They are the people who contribute of their own free will to a certain project, with their energy, ideas and active participation. Depending on the reasons for your IVS project (see Chapter 1.4 "Reasons for international voluntary service") the volunteers and their volunteering can be seen as tools to help a community in need or the volunteer can be seen as the target of a process of personal or professional development. Most likely the volunteers' motivation in embarking on IVS entails a bit of both. It is important for the voluntary service organisers to check whether the volunteers' motives are compatible with the reasons for offering voluntary opportunities of their own, using, for example, the questionnaire in Chapter 1.4 "Reasons for international voluntary service".

So the volunteers that we are talking about could be genuinely altruistic people who are out to change the world through the contributions they can make to a project. But they could just as well be young people who see the benefits of engaging themselves in a project abroad to gain valuable skills that can serve as a springboard to a brighter future. On the one side volunteers can be self-motivated young people who know what they want and easily find opportunities to build their path through life, but on the other side international voluntary service can be a tool for youth and social workers to foster self-esteem and social skills in the young people they work with (see also 3.1.4 "Voluntary service for 'disadvantaged young people'").

Or it could be you …

2.1.2 The sending organisation

A young person is thinking about doing IVS. The easiest way to do this is to contact an organisation in his or her country that either has international links or could establish them (see also Chapter 2.3 "Finding the right partners for your project"). This local organisation can take care of all procedures needed to send volunteers to a partner organisation in another country and welcome them back. Therefore we call this local entity the sending organisation.

We have to point out that there is not always an active sending organisation involved in IVS projects, or sometimes there is no sending organisation at all. Some IVS organisations (for example, United Nations Volunteers) require people to apply directly for a volunteer position within a specific project. Even though this is possible, it is not the ideal situation since the volunteers themselves then have to take care of all the preparatory steps of an administrative, organisational and communicational nature, which could be undertaken by a sending organisation. If you are a beginner in the field of IVS, this could be too big a load to carry on your shoulders. Often, the role of the sending organisation for an international voluntary service project is underestimated and the organisations themselves do not always realise how much they can contribute to the overall success of the project.

Some tasks to consider for a sending organisation

- The sending organisation promotes the values of the IVS project. They give information about the work they are doing and the opportunities they are giving to young people. This is good publicity for the organisation but also for the voluntary sector in general. It could also attract more candidates for voluntary projects.

- The sending organisation should develop and take care of their partnerships with hosting organisations from different countries where their volunteers carry out activities (see also Chapter 2.3 "Finding the right partners for your project"). This entails regular contact and, if possible, meetings or visits. Effective and efficient communication channels should be put in place. Building up a common working culture and understanding in the field of international voluntary service would be beneficial to such projects.

- The sending organisation should act as a filter in the recruitment of volunteers, to avoid sending people who do not have the necessary maturity or attitude for the project and who could harm the project more than contribute to it (see also Chapter 3.1 "Recruitment and screening of volunteers"). Of course the sending organisation needs to collect sufficient information on conditions at the hosting organisation to execute this task properly.

- The sending organisation should negotiate and agree on all practical arrangements for the volunteers with the hosting organisation (for example, accommodation, food, type of work, working times, insurance and safety, travel options, fees, pocket money or not). If the minimum standards of the sending organisation are not met, they have the responsibility to postpone the project until improvement has brought the project up to standard (see also Chapter 2.3.2 "Quality standards").

- The sending organisation should collect all necessary information about the voluntary service abroad and pass it on to the (potential) volunteers or interested third parties. This information can be directly linked to the IVS project, as mentioned (accommodation, work, food, etc.), but may also be linked to the volunteer's needs or wishes (wheelchair accessibility, possibility to practise sports, etc.).

- The sending organisation has a responsibility to prepare the volunteers and check their motivation and expectations in embarking on IVS. Preparation should be based on the requirements of the project but also on the needs of the volunteer. Bad or no preparation can cause a lot of frustration and increases the danger of the volunteers leaving the project early. The bigger the cultural difference between the sending and the hosting community and the longer the stay abroad, the more thorough the preparation must be (see also Chapter 3.2.1 "Preparation of the volunteers").

- In the case of long-term voluntary service to a country with a different language, language training would be appropriate, especially if the tasks of the volunteer will involve a lot of communication. For methodologies on how to provide language training in an interactive and culturally sensitive way, you can consult the *T-Kit on Methodology in Language Learning* (available to download from http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int).

- In the case of problems, the sending organisation can play an important role liaising between the hosting organisation and the volunteer (for example, mediating in conflicts – see also Chapter 4.4 "Conflict management") or between the hosting project and the family of the volunteer (in the case of crises and language challenges – see also Chapter 4.5 "Crisis management"). In each case it is important to make a list of all relevant phone numbers and e-mail addresses for emergency contacts.

- The sending organisation informs the hosting organisation about the procedure for recruitment and selection. The sending organisation should inform the host organisation about the kind of preparation they have organised and keep them updated about any changes. It is important that the sending organisation passes on the profile of the volunteers (especially if they have special needs) and details of their travel arrangements.

- When the volunteers return, the sending organisation could organise an evaluation seminar or meeting, which might help the volunteers to review their experiences and exchange information with other volunteers (see also Chapter 5.1 "Evaluation").

- The sending organisation might integrate the volunteers, with their new experiences and skills, into their own work or provide suggestions for follow-up after their IVS (see also Chapter 5.2 "Follow-up").

- The sending organisation needs to ensure it has funding for dispatch of the volunteers, for international contacts, for preparation of the volunteers before leaving and for follow-up after their return (see also Chapter 2.4 "Funding and budgeting").

- The co-operation between the partner organisations should be evaluated after each project.

- It is important to document all significant information about the project (in a project file), regardless whether the IVS is long- or short-term.

A sending organisation could be any non-profit organisation working in a variety of fields, ranging from environmental bodies to youth clubs, from medical institutes to municipalities. It can be either a non-governmental or a governmental organisation (including local authorities). It can be part of an international network of voluntary service organisations that offer volunteering opportunities every summer, or it can be a small local entity that meets up with a hosting organisation by chance and sends one volunteer in a lifetime.

Or it could be your organisation …

2.1.3 The hosting organisation

Once volunteers have made the jump to the other country, they are looked after by what we call the hosting organisation. This organisation accepts volunteers coming from another country to support their work in all kinds of non-profit activities. They take care of the day-to-day life and work of the volunteer while on their IVS, but hopefully they are also already an active player in the preparation of the project.

Some tasks to consider for a hosting organisation

- The hosting organisation should provide sufficient information to volunteers about their new life and work (upon arrival but perhaps also beforehand). This can greatly reduce the volunteers' anxiety about the unknown and increase their self-assurance. It also allows them to develop more realistic expectations. A welcome pack – for example, with practical information about the hosting organisation, the local community, the place where they will be staying and the work they will be doing – could be forwarded to volunteers.

- The hosting organisation should provide appropriate induction or on-arrival training (see also Chapter 4.1 "Induction and on-arrival orientation") – or, if needed, specific ongoing training for their assigned tasks. Especially in the case of long-term volunteering, language training will be useful.

- The hosting organisation is usually also held responsible for ensuring the safety and security of volunteers, so make sure that the volunteers are working in an adapted working environment that fits the purpose of their tasks. At the same time the hosting organisation can expose its volunteers only to an agreed level of risk in their activities (for example in the case of construction work). It could be useful to set up a strategy to deal with crises as outlined in Chapter 4.5 "Crisis management".

- The hosting organisation provides supervision and support for the volunteers, not only for the work to be done, but also in their free time (suggestions for excursions, meeting people, etc.). In the case of long-term voluntary service, it might be a good idea to assign an individual support person to a volunteer in case of homesickness, to promote their social integration and so on (see also Chapter 4.3 "Ongoing support of volunteers").

- In order to make the most out of voluntary service for all involved, it is useful to have a system for regular monitoring and evaluation. When the hosting organisation carries out regular assess-

ments of the volunteers, their work, their personal life and other relevant factors, it can adapt the project before things go wrong. Information from the volunteers' support persons, as well as from other project actors, can help with this (see also Chapter 4.2.1 "Motivating the volunteer" and Chapter 5.1 "Evaluation").

- The hosting organisation could give each volunteer a certificate, detailing the work they did on their IVS and the skills they gained, or a letter of recommendation from their supervisors or the director. This would boost confidence and might support the volunteers in the next steps in their lives (see also Chapter 5.3 "Recognition and certification").

- The hosting organisation needs to ensure funding for all the tasks it is supposed to carry out, including administration, communication, equipment needed for the volunteers' tasks, insurance, food and lodging, and sometimes also pocket money. Do not forget to budget staff time for the support of volunteers (see also Chapter 2.4 "Funding and budgeting").

A hosting organisation could be any non-profit organisation, working in a variety of fields such as drug prevention or child care, youth information services or nature reserves. It can be either a non-governmental or a governmental organisation (such as a local authority). It can be part of an international network of voluntary service organisations that offer volunteering opportunities every summer, or it can be a small local entity that organises one work camp in a lifetime (see also Chapter 1.5 "Fields of work: some examples").

Or it could be your organisation …

2.1.4 The co-ordinating organisation

For practical reasons, there often one organisation that is responsible for co-ordinating the overall project and all the actors involved. The co-ordinating organisation is responsible for the general organisation, administration and finances for the IVS project. In many smaller (bilateral) IVS projects, either the hosting or the sending organisation takes this co-ordinating role. But in bigger IVS projects, which involve sending and hosting several volunteers, there is often a central structure that co-ordinates the whole project. In that case, the co-ordinating body does not (always) have voluntary work within its own organisation, but works with different placements in organisations in the field. The co-ordinating body also manages the co-operation between the project partners (sending and hosting organisations).

In the case of European Voluntary Service (in the Youth in Action programme), the co-ordinating organisation takes on the role of applicant and carries the financial and administrative responsibility for the entire project. The co-ordinating organisation gets extra funding for this co-ordination role, as explained in Chapter 2.4.2.

The international voluntary service project co-ordinator

Organisations embarking on IVS can have various formats. But one thing they mostly have in common is that in every voluntary service project there are people (or sometimes one person) taking up the role of co-ordinator even though they do not necessarily have this title. We mention the project co-ordinators here as some of the main actors in an IVS project, without whom there would probably be no voluntary service. The co-ordinators are the engines of an IVS project, but often they find themselves caught in the middle between their colleagues' opinions on IVS, the partner organisation and the volunteers' wishes. This T-Kit wants to provide some tools to make the life of the project co-ordinator easier.

It is important that this project co-ordinator has a clear idea of the work (see also Chapter 2.2 "The project cycle") and its benefits for everyone (see also Chapter 1.4 "Reasons for international voluntary service"). If the co-ordinator has a realistic view of the positive and perhaps also negative

implications of such a project, it is easier to convince others of the added value of such IVS (see also Chapter 3.2.2 "Preparation of sending and hosting organisations"). Finding partners might be one of the challenges of the co-ordinator, but Chapter 2.3 "Finding the right partners for your project" could help with that. There might also be some fund-raising and budgeting in the job description, and this is touched upon in Chapter 2.4 "Funding and budgeting". The project co-ordinator can find a fair amount of tools and inspiration on how to set up and manage a project in the T-Kit on *Project Management* (available to download at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int).

In the hosting organisation the project co-ordinator is often also the support person for the volunteer, though he or she could bring in different persons for work-related coaching, for personal issues, to promote intercultural learning or during the volunteers' leisure time as we outline in Chapter 4.3 "Ongoing support of volunteers". But the volunteer should not be the only focus, since there are other people working at the placement, hence the importance of taking care of staff working with or next to the volunteers and keeping them happy. Chapter 4.2.2 "Staff motivation – The forgotten dimension", deals with this complicated issue.

And perhaps this project co-ordinator could be you!

If you are the project co-ordinator …

Have a good read through this T-Kit and perhaps some of the other T-Kits available at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int (project management, intercultural learning, language learning methodologies, etc.).

Get inspired by people and organisations that have done it before. It is no use reinventing the wheel all by yourself.

Form a group around you that can help you think through the project, to exchange ideas, to give feedback, etc. The more minds, the more ideas.

Try not to do it on your own. Involve colleagues, friends, etc. The more shoulders, the less the weight to carry.

Allow time for things to happen and do not give up. In the end it is worth it!

2.2 The project cycle

2.2.1 From an idea to a concrete plan

A lot of good ideas for projects appear when you least expect them: in the bar, while shaving, on the loo. But ideas take time and especially effort to crystallise and to become reality. They need careful planning and good management. Project management is like putting a stick next to a tomato plant – the plant will grow in the direction of the stick but still hangs a bit to the left or the right. Needs analysis, SMART objectives, a thought-through strategy, a good partnership, a clear division of tasks, realistic time planning and careful budgeting will prevent your tomatoes from resting on the ground.

Managing a project is described step by step in Chapter 3 of the T-Kit on *Project Management* (available to download at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int). You can use the tools there to complement this T-Kit; here we narrow our focus to some specific issues in dealing with IVS. Or you can ask advice from organisations or people who have done similar projects before.

Real life …

To see a real-life application of the different tools in this T-Kit, we take you through the example of ELKA at various stages.

ELKA is a youth club in the small town of Velho. Since the town is located in a gorgeous mountainous region, ELKA's activities are focused on nature and environmental protection. During the last few years the club members have put a lot of effort into clearing and maintaining footpaths in the forest, to be able to use them for hiking through the mountains.

And then there was the idea from Susan, one of the active members, to exploit the paths more and better: she was thinking along the lines of making the paths more accessible to "green tourists" with signposts and rest areas. Another idea was to use nature and adventure walks as an activity for groups of youngsters. Since resources are scarce, Susan thought that volunteers were the ideal solution to implement these ideas. A 14-day work camp could put in place the signposts and rest areas along the paths and two long-term volunteers could guide groups through the forest and do adventurous activities with them.

Needs analysis	→	Aims & concept	→	Partner-finding	→	Budget & fund-raising

On arrival	←	Preparation	←	Specific groups	←	Recruit volunteers

Support & motivation	→	Conflict & crisis	→	Evaluation & follow-up	→	Recognition

Needs and resources

An idea never exists in a vacuum. People also have their own opinions about it. Check what the "social opinion" is about this project. A project idea should not be there just to please yourself. That is why it is important to see if there is a need for what you are suggesting. This is called "needs analysis".

- What does the local community think of the project (neighbours, parents, politicians, other youth organisations, etc.)?
- What do potential users of the project think (your members, clients, visitors, beneficiaries, etc.)?
- What does your organisation think of the project (the board, staff, volunteers, etc.)?
- Do similar projects already exist? Would you be in competition or duplicating their work?
- Is there another aspect …?

The mirror reflection of the needs analysis is the resource analysis. If the idea for the IVS is agreed by all actors involved, do you also have all the (practical, human, financial) resources needed to implement such a project? You can have a closer look at your strengths and weaknesses as an organisation to see if you have what it takes or where to add resources. And a closer look at the external opportunities for, and threats to, international voluntary service will give you indications on how to proceed, making optimal use of the opportunities and finding a way around the threats.

Real life …

Susan discussed her idea with some of the members and the other youth workers of the club and since the first reactions were positive, she decided to present her idea at a board meeting. The reactions were mixed because some thought that it was up to the town council to develop tourism in Velho, including the signposts and rest areas along paths in the forest. So a meeting with the town council was arranged and the ideas were discussed. The town council saw the benefits of the project and agreed to support ELKA with the materials needed, if they would organise the work camp. As for the usefulness of nature and adventure walks, ELKA sent a letter around to the local youth organisations to see if they would be interested in this. Some 12 positive replies came back. So ELKA decided that the two projects would be of benefit to the community, but also good for their reputation.

Needs analysis → Aims & concept → Partner-finding → Budget & fund-raising

On arrival ← Preparation ← Specific groups ← Recruit volunteers

Support & motivation → Conflict & crisis → Evaluation & follow-up → Recognition

SMART aims and a thought-through strategy

The project idea has to germinate and grow into a complete plan or strategy. However, a strategy is only a way of getting somewhere. So it is important to set ourselves objectives before we embark on our journey, or we may never be sure whether we have reached our objectives, because we do not know exactly what they are.

The central question of course is why we are going to invest time, money and effort in this international voluntary service. What do we want to achieve and are these goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed (see also T-Kit on *Project Management*, available to download at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int)?

Usually there is a complex structure of different aims. In order to avoid confusion, it would be good to make all aims explicit and have a common understanding of the most important one(s). You can even write them down in a statement (you will have to write them down in an application for funding) so that everybody adheres to the same ones.

Real life …

Susan thought a lot about the aims and objectives of the work camp and the two volunteer placements, because she had to present her ideas several times to her colleagues, to the board, to the town council and others.

One of the main aims for the work camp for example was to increase the number of "green tourists" going for a walk through the forest and mountains by the following summer. This aim specified clearly what they wanted to achieve (more green tourists). Once the summer season had started (time), it would be easy to measure if there were more tourists using the paths. With the agreed material help and an information campaign by the town council of Velho, this was achievable and realistic.

Of course, at the same time, the work done gave ELKA a better reputation as a nature organisation. It improved co-operation with the town hall and with other youth organisations that would be using the paths, and the voluntary service gave an international dimension to the work that ELKA does.

Even though Why? is the central question, we can also combine it with the other W-questions (inspired by the Laswell method – see T-Kit on *Project Management*, p. 32).

- **W**ho will be involved in this IVS (partner organisations, staff, volunteers, support persons, funders, local authorities or others)? And why these people?

- **W**hat will you do during the IVS (work, programme, leisure activities, etc.)? And why exactly this?

- **W**here will the IVS take place (work place, accommodation, distance from supplies, etc.)? And why in these places?

- **W**hen will the IVS take place (timing, which season, how long, etc.)? And why in this specific time frame?

- Ho**W** will you manage the IVS (methods used, support structures, with what kind of resources, etc.)? And why in this manner?

The most important thing is to ask yourself (and your partners in the project) why you are doing things in a certain way, and also why you would not want to do them in any alternative way.
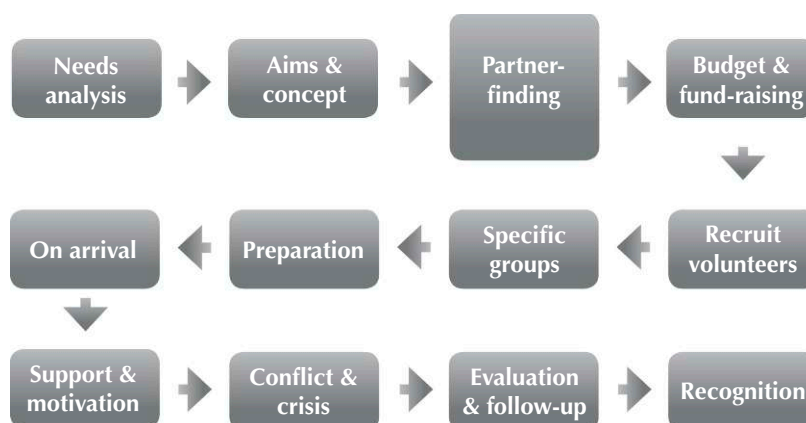

Real life …

In the case of long-term IVS developing the nature and adventure walks for instance, discussions went on in ELKA about whom to invite and why. They decided to take volunteers from abroad. Why? In order to give the project an international dimension, and, with the pooled language skills of the volunteers and ELKA staff, they could also guide international groups coming for adventure walks. ELKA wanted two volunteers. Why? So that they could work together on the project, keep each other company and find peer support. For ELKA it was also quite important to have the town hall as a partner. Why? In order to get the necessary recognition but also some practical support for the work that they are doing. Likewise in the choice of partner organisation they asked themselves the who and why questions.

As for what and why, ELKA decided to rely on long-term voluntary service. Why? Because it takes a while before the two volunteers get to know the possibilities of the forest and before they develop an interesting and adventurous programme. How they will do it is gradual. Why? Because the volunteers are not necessarily experts in this field, so they will first get some training in adventure techniques, then they can run an adventure walk together with one of the staff members and after a while they can do it alone. Time will also allow them to learn the host language and get more confident in it.

Some considerations which influenced the decision as to when and where the voluntary service should take place were, of course, the season and the forest. The volunteers would start in spring. Why? So that they would be trained and confident in taking youth groups through the forest by summer, which is the busiest season for these kinds of trips. Even though the work obviously takes place in the forest, ELKA opted to lodge the volunteers with host families in the town centre. Why? In order to make it easier for them to integrate in the local community by having host brothers and sisters, and because it is more convenient to take part in social activities (going out, cinema, meeting people) in the town centre than it would be living near the forest.

An example of how ELKA envisages working together with the volunteers is what they call the "tandem technique". Each volunteer is teamed up with a personal support person with whom they have weekly meetings. Why? In order to build up confidence between the two and to discuss needs, wishes, problems and so on before they grow out of proportion and become irremediable.

Of course this is only a fraction of the thinking process that took place before and during the projects.

A flow diagram showing steps: Needs analysis → Aims & concept → Partner-finding → Budget & fund-raising → Recruit volunteers → Specific groups → Preparation → On arrival → Support & motivation → Conflict & crisis → Evaluation & follow-up → Recognition

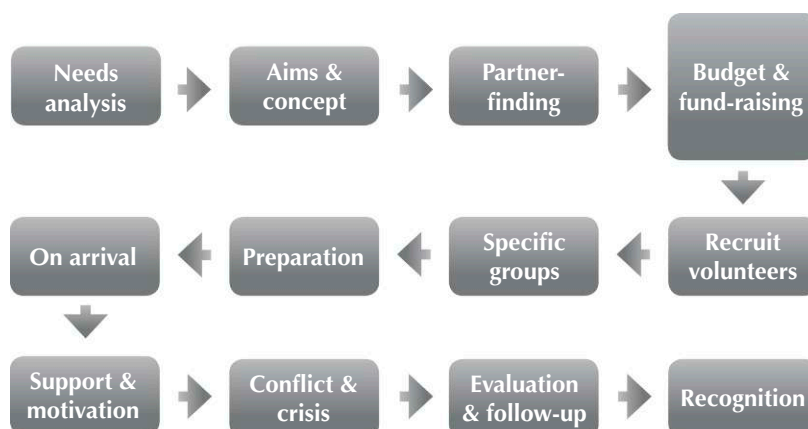## A good partner and a realistic schedule

But you are never alone in an IVS project. If you are planning to host some volunteers, you need to have contacts with organisations that could send you some. In the case of a sending organisation, you want to find the right project to host your volunteer. Hence the importance of a solid and trustworthy international partnership. How to find the right partner for your project will be discussed in Chapter 2.3 "Finding the right partners for your project".

With your partner you can discuss the time frame needed for your IVS. It is important to allow enough time and resources for each step, but also to be fast and efficient enough to keep all partners in the project enthusiastic. Long waiting periods between steps can demotivate the volunteers or the partner organisation.

Real life … The time frame for a work camp		
Month	*Hosting organisation*	*Sending organisation*
1	Needs analysis: check the need for a work camp with colleagues, partners, local community, authorities, etc. Find potential partners that could send volunteers	Needs analysis: check if there is interest from young people to participate in a work camp abroad Explain what a work camp is, if necessary Find out their interests and motivations
2	Develop the aims, concept and strategy for the work camp Discuss these aims and a time frame with your partners Develop the programme (work and leisure) Draw up a budget of all costs and apply for funding	Find potential hosting organisations and select the most appropriate one Discuss your aims, concept and a time frame with your partners Make a budget and secure funding for sending your volunteers
3	Send out detailed work camp information and programme to the selected sending organisations	Potentially a preparation visit to the work camp site

Real life … The time frame for a work camp		
Month	*Hosting organisation*	*Sending organisation*
4	Registration of candidates with the sending organisation Discuss the support for volunteers with special needs	Put forward the young people you plan on sending and send their volunteer profiles to the hosting organisation Discuss the support for volunteers with special needs
5	Select the appropriate volunteers Arrange the practicalities for the hosting	
6	Prepare the people in the host project Send final information to the participants (travel directions, etc.)	Prepare the volunteers Arrange technicalities such as visas, insurance, tickets, etc. Provide your volunteers with information about the hosting organisation and the host country
7	Three-week work camp On arrival, introduction to the project and practicalities Regular feedback sessions to check the volunteers' motivation Intervene in case of conflict and crisis Publicity about the project and its results Certificate of participation or other recognition tool	Departure of the volunteers for the work camp Contact to see how things are going Intervene in case of crisis
8	Evaluation between partner organisations	Evaluation with the volunteers upon return and offering follow-up possibilities e.g. to become active in the sending organisation
9	Financial reporting to the funders	Financial reporting to the funders

The time frame for long-term voluntary service		
Month	*Hosting organisation*	*Sending organisation*
1/2	Needs and resource analysis: Check the need for volunteers in the organisation with colleagues Check the available resources within the organisation: financial, staff time resources (project management as well as mentoring the volunteers) Drawing up the aims and objectives for the project	Resource analysis: Check the available resources within the organisation: recruiting volunteers, preparing volunteers, finding partners internationally Drawing up the aims and objectives
3	Develop the placement descriptions with all details about the organisation and the tasks the volunteers will be engaged in Develop a profile of the kind of partner organisation you are looking for	Recruitment of volunteers: Develop a profile of the kind of hosting organisations you need for your volunteers Keep in mind possible special needs of your volunteers and how the hosting organisation can support them
4/5	Partner finding	Partner finding
6	Preparatory visit: Agree on the volunteers for the project Develop partnership agreement, including details about the placement, the communication between the partners, the responsibilities, the financial implications	Preparatory visit: Agree on the volunteers for the project Develop partnership agreement including details about the placement, the communication between the partners, the responsibilities, the financial implications According to the required budget organise funding or do fund-raising
7	Perhaps send in applications for funding the project or do fund-raising	Start preparation process for the volunteers
8/9	Preparation of the responsible team within the organisation for the project: Preparation of the induction period for the volunteer Regular contact with the volunteers	Language course Arranging practical issues (social security, employment office, visa, etc.)
10	Volunteer arrives Induction and on-arrival training	Regular contacts with the volunteer and hosting organisation
13	Mid-term evaluation Constant monitoring and support – feedback sessions to check the volunteer's motivation Intervene in case of conflicts and crisis	Participating in the mid-term evaluation Regular contacts with the volunteer and with the hosting organisation Intervene in case of crisis
16	Final evaluation and return home Recognition of the experience and the competences gained	Meeting with the volunteer upon return Recognition of the experience and the competences gained Suggestions for follow-up
17	Evaluation between the partner organisations	Evaluation between the partner organisations
18	Financial reporting to the funders	Financial reporting to the funders

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│  Needs   │ ▶  │  Aims &  │ ▶  │ Partner- │ ▶  │ Budget & │
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│motivation│    │  crisis  │    │& follow-up│   │          │
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Funds, budgeting and division of tasks

One of the essential tasks in IVS, without which a project may have to be abandoned, is securing funding. One of the early steps in organising voluntary service is to draw up a budget and apply for money, since this can be a time-consuming process. At European level there are several sources of funding for IVS, such as the European Voluntary Service and the European Youth Foundation, but you can also draw upon other sources of funding. Later we go into more details of these money matters (see Chapter 2.4 "Funding and budgeting").

For the smooth running of IVS, it is a big help to know what needs to be done at different stages during the project and who will do it. Making a list with the division of tasks and responsibilities can considerably reduce confusion and will prevent "holes" in your IVS. We have already largely detailed the different tasks of the different actors in voluntary service earlier in this T-Kit (in Chapter 2.1 "The actors"), but we will also give you a rough sketch of responsibilities in the long-term voluntary project by ELKA.

Long-term voluntary service task division	
Task	*Responsible person(s)*
Overall co-ordination	Guy from the ELKA board will take on the administrative and financial responsibility as "co-ordinating organisation". However, for specific tasks, Susan is carrying out all necessary steps for the hosting organisation and Tomas does the same for the sending organisation.
Finding the right volunteers, providing the right information and preparing the volunteers	Tomas (on the basis, of course, of the volunteer profile he gets from Susan)
Communication and agreements between hosting and sending organisation all through the project	The practical co-ordinators in both organisations, who document decisions and agreements and pass them on to all the people involved in the project – Guy is informed regularly about the decisions

Long-term voluntary service task division	
Task	*Responsible person(s)*
Communication with the local authorities and other youth organisations	The president of ELKA, because this is more of a political task
Drawing up a budget and application for funding for the host organisation, financial reporting	Guy in co-operation with Susan and based on realistic cost estimates from both sending and hosting organisations; Tomas in the sending organisation organises fund-raising for extra costs not covered by the grant application
Preparation of the hosting arrangements and a detailed programme of work	Susan will contact all persons involved (host family, work support person, social support, language support, etc.)
Training and work-related support	Jason, who will also be working on the adventure walks, together with Susan
Language support	The sending organisation sends the volunteer on an intensive course prior to departure; in ELKA, one of the members is a student in translation who will continue language teaching in an informal way
Support for social life (leisure time activities, introducing the volunteers to people and organisations etc.)	Susan's brother, who is the same age as the volunteers
Link to the "home front" (friends, family, administrative procedures back home, etc.)	Tomas, the co-ordinator of the sending organisation
If something goes wrong (conflicts, illness, accidents, homesickness, crises, etc.)	Susan will be co-ordinating measures to be taken and will be in permanent contact with Tomas in the sending organisation; if a big crisis occurs, Guy will step in
Documenting the project (outcomes, PR, articles in the local press, financial reporting, etc.)	Susan takes care of this and communicates financial items to the bookkeeper who will prepare the financial report together with Guy and Susan at the end of the IVS
Evaluation (at regular intervals and after the IVS) Providing a certificate	Susan will have meetings with the volunteers and with her brother (social support) and Jason (work support); at the end of the placement, there will be a meeting between the volunteers and the sending and hosting project co-ordinators, at which all partners involved will prepare and sign a certificate
Reintegration and follow-up after the project.	Tomas will see how to make best use of the experience gained by the volunteer and by the sending organisation

2.3 Finding the right partners for your project

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┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐
│  Needs   │ →  │  Aims &  │ →  │ Partner- │ →  │ Budget & │
│ analysis │    │ concept  │    │ finding  │    │fund-raising│
└──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘
                                                      ↓
┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐
│On arrival│ ←  │Preparation│←  │ Specific │ ←  │ Recruit  │
│          │    │          │    │  groups  │    │volunteers│
└──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘
     ↓
┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐
│Support & │ →  │Conflict &│ →  │Evaluation│ →  │Recognition│
│motivation│    │  crisis  │    │& follow-up│   │          │
└──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘
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Partner finding is one of the first tasks when planning an international voluntary service project, and it is crucial. Finding the right partners is undoubtedly a major key to success. This chapter provides some useful tips and advice on where to find partner organisations, what they could be like and how to check whether they are suitable.

2.3.1 Partner finding

Before you go hunting for partner organisations, you should be fairly clear about what you are looking for. The following questions can guide your consideration.

Questions for consideration
- What are your aims behind the exchange of volunteers? To what extent should your aims be similar to your partners' aims? (See also Chapter 1.4. "Reasons for international voluntary service")

- What type of young people are you working with or do you (not) want to be working with (specific target groups, for example disadvantaged, or none in particular)?

- What kind of placement do you have to offer or are you looking for (only in a special area of work, for example environmental, or no specific field)?

- What type of work has to be done (manual or intellectual work, previous skills needed, risks at work, knowledge of foreign language required, etc.)?

- What support and practical arrangements can you offer the volunteers (training, appropriate support, food and accommodation, pocket money, insurance, etc.)?

- What do you require from volunteers (linguistic or computing skills, no skills, financial contributions, only from specific countries or specific sex, etc.)?

- What can you offer and what do you expect from the partner organisation (meetings, communication, financial or other resources, specific knowledge and experience, minimum standards, etc.)?

- How many volunteers are you planning on sending or hosting (individual one-off placement or many groups a year)?

- What size partner organisation are you looking for (small-scale and flexible, or large-scale with a lot of opportunities)?

- Do you have to meet formal requirements for your organisation, for the funding scheme (age limit, specific eligible countries, medical or police checks, etc.)?

- …

Once you are clear about what you are looking for and what you can offer (and what not), you can start your quest for partners.

If you are a newcomer in the world of IVS, you do not have to reinvent the wheel. You can contact and co-operate with an established organisation in the field of IVS (you can find a list of such organisations in Appendix 2: Overview of international voluntary service organisations, programmes and platforms). They have the necessary international contacts and structure to send your volunteers abroad or to provide you with some. Of course you will be bound by their criteria and way of working. If you want to do your own thing and develop your own strategic partnerships (for example in a specific field of work, with a specific target group, in a specific way), this is possible but it also takes more work and time.

Ways to find partners

The Internet is a valuable source of information, where you can find organisations active in your field of interest in the desired countries. Most, if not all, international voluntary service organisations mentioned in this T-Kit have websites with links to partner organisations in different countries (see Appendix 2: Overview of international voluntary service organisations, programmes and platforms).

In most countries there exist databases, lists or brochures with all registered youth, social, cultural and other non-profit organisations. The government information services in different countries should be able to inform you about this.

You can also get more information about youth organisations in a country by contacting the national youth council, or you can ask a European umbrella organisation for a list of its branches in different countries. You can find a list of national youth councils and European non-governmental umbrella organisations at www.youthforum.org. If your organisation is part of a larger international network, you can use this structure for your partner search.

International training courses and seminars are also interesting places to start new partnerships. You can either participate yourself in these meetings or ask a colleague or friend who has attended one. Some European-level organisations and institutions that often offer international training courses, study visits and seminars linked to the topic of international voluntary service are the Partnership between the European Commission and Council of Europe in the field of Youth (http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int), the network of SALTO-YOUTH resource centres (www.salto-youth.net), the national agencies for the YOUTH programme (a list of addresses is available at www.ec.europa.eu/youth), the Directorate for Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/youth), the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (www.avso.org) and the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (www.unesco.org/ccivs), among others.

You can also make use of one of the existing Internet databases on volunteering opportunities. Within the European Voluntary Service programme there is a database on all the hosting placement opportunities available (www.ec.europa.eu/youthevs/aod/hei_en.cfm). You can be listed in this database upon approval of an "expression of interest" form, which you can get from your national agency of the Youth in Action programme. The SALTO-YOUTH network

also has a partner-finding database called Otlas (www.salto-youth.net/otlas) for projects within the context of the Youth in Action programme. A worldwide database is offered at www.idealist.org.

Note! It has to be said that the Internet and databases are not the ideal means to find strategic partners, unless you also make personal contact (in a seminar, during a meeting, a prospecting visit, during your holidays, etc.).

2.3.2 Quality standards

The aim of partner finding is not to find just any partner, but to find a good partner for your project, one who can assure minimum quality standards to make your IVS project a success for all actors involved. The minimum standards that you set yourself depend largely on the type of project (for example, living conditions in work camps are mostly rougher than they would be in an individual placement), the kind of organisations involved (for example, local authorities have stricter rules than a self-managed youth club) and the type of volunteers (for example, disabled or disadvantaged volunteers need more support).

Within a European Voluntary Service project, each partner has to adhere to the principles of the EVS Charter, which highlights the roles of the EVS sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations. This charter is part of the Youth in Action programme guide.

Note! Some of the standards below apply to the sending organisation, some to the hosting organisation and some to both.

Communication standards

Partnership

Do the partners know each other well enough? Should there be a minimum number of preparation meetings? Should the partner organisations be prepared to send representatives to training or meetings organised within the programme?

Communication between hosting and sending organisation

How much contact between sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations is expected, how often and via what communication channels? Is it clear who can contact whom in what circumstances (for example, in emergency situations)? What information has to be communicated (for example, about the volunteers' criminal past)? Is there the necessary fluency in a common communication language, by how many people in the organisation?

Co-operation between hosting, sending and co-ordinating organisations

How detailed should the division of tasks be? What should be the procedure for unforeseen circumstances? What possibilities are there to meet and discuss issues?

External communication

Is there a special strategy to follow to make links between the project and officials, press, the local community and members of the sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations? What will be done to make the project results visible (dissemination) and make them used by others (exploitation and impact)?

Preparation standards

Before the project

What are the prerequisites (language, background reading, etc.) for participation in the IVS? Is there a need to have a preparation seminar? What should be addressed in the preparation? What information should be provided?

On-arrival training

How soon upon arrival should this orientation session take place? What should be the content of this training? Who should be present at this training?

Logistical standards

Board and accommodation

Is the hosting organisation able to provide meals? Are living conditions safe and secure? Do the volunteers have single rooms or do they have to share a room with other volunteers? What kind of sanitary standards does the room have? If there is a group of short-term volunteers, is it okay to have a common sleeping-room? Is it possible to cater for vegetarians or other dietary restrictions?

Location

Accessibility of local transport facilities. How easy is it for the volunteers to travel between the work and the living quarters? If the placement is in a rough neighbourhood of a city, what kind of security is provided? If the placement is in a remote environment, what kind of leisure-time opportunities can be provided?

Task-oriented standards

Activities proposed to the volunteer

Does the hosting organisation have a clear idea, a clear description, of what the volunteer will do? Are there options to change activities? What can the hosting organisation expect of the volunteer, and what not? How does the project take advantage of non-formal and intercultural learning opportunities?

Working hours

What should be the limit of working hours per day or per week for the volunteer? How much holiday is the volunteer entitled to? How flexible can the hosting organisation be?

Group or individual work

Is the volunteer part of a team? Are there other volunteers involved in this work? What is the level of co-operation between the staff and the volunteers?

Safety issues

Especially concerning manual work, what kinds of safety procedures are in place? Do the volunteers receive safety equipment (helmets, gloves, etc.)? What does the insurance cover and what not? Is there a plan for crisis management if something goes wrong?

Job substitution

Is there a clear distinction between the tasks for volunteers and tasks for staff members? Does the volunteer replace paid labour? What is the risk that the volunteer is perceived as taking away local people's jobs?

Support-oriented standards

Support for the volunteers

Should there be one staff member in a clear supervisory position towards the volunteer? How much time and resources should this person devote to supporting the volunteer? Did or should this person have some training in supervising? What mechanisms of feedback should there be towards the volunteer? Is there adequate support for volunteers with special needs?

Free-time support

Should it be a responsibility of the hosting organisation to support the volunteer also in his/her free time? What kind of support is (not) appropriate? Is there a link to the local community?

Language support

Is there a common language in the project? Do the colleagues of the volunteer speak a common language? Is there a possibility to receive language training?

Task-oriented training

How much training and preparation do the volunteers receive in order to fulfil their tasks? Are there experts coaching the volunteers for the more specialised tasks?

Evaluation and follow-up

Is there a need for regular evaluation and reporting on the volunteers or on the project? What has to be evaluated, in what format? What steps should be taken upon the return of the volunteer to the home country? Should there be a certificate at the end of the voluntary service? If so, what kind?

Financial standards

Project-related

Which party pays for which costs? What kind of bookkeeping is needed (in what currency and what language)? What are eligible and non-eligible costs? What are the responsibilities in financial reporting after the voluntary service ends? What flexibility is there in unforeseen circumstances? What administrative support does the co-ordinating organisation provide?

Volunteer-related

What financial contribution is the volunteer expected to make to the project, to the travel costs, for the free-time activities? Is there pocket money: how much and how often?

> **Suggestions for training**
> Divide the group of project organisers in two. Ask one group to elaborate and describe the ideal IVS (ideal in terms of one or more standards). The other group should imagine the worst possible IVS (by the same standards). The groups should draw or write their findings on a big piece of paper. When ready, they compare the two extremes and discuss what the minimum standards should be in order to go ahead with the IVS.

Assessing your partner organisation

How do you assess whether they can fulfil the requirements? On the basis of a list of minimum standards, you can develop two assessment instruments: an application form and a guide-sheet for an assessment visit.

An application form

The application form is basically a list of questions that address the most important issues from the list of quality standards. This way, not only do you get the necessary information to take the decision to work together with this new partner organisation, but the form also shows your partner what you find important and thereby sets a frame for your co-operation. If the partner organisation has never been involved in an IVS project before, the questions in the application form show the different elements of a volunteer project.

Some tips for the application form

- Concerning the tasks offered to the volunteer: instead of just asking about the tasks offered, ask them to describe a potential working day from the morning to the evening. Often it is fairly easy to write words such as "helping the team here or there" but it does not tell you exactly what the volunteer would do.

- Include questions on the skills and information needed for the proposed tasks.

- It is important to find out how many people are involved in the decision-making process about the voluntary project. Have the staff members who will be in contact with the volunteer been asked for their opinion concerning the idea of getting a new team member?

- Include a section on the concept of volunteering. Why does the organisation want to host a volunteer? How do they think they will benefit from it? What are their thoughts or opinions concerning the role of volunteering in general?

If you need a lot of details from this form for use in other documents, try to have the form filled out in an electronic version to avoid retyping parts of the form.

Try to make the form inviting to fill out: a nice layout with some symbols or cartoons in it supports the motivation to sit down and answer the questions. If you think an application form would be too official and scare your partners off, you can also ask these questions by phone.

A guide-sheet for an assessment visit

It is advisable not to take a decision only on the basis of an application form. It is so much easier to get a picture of your partner organisation if you have seen the place and got to know the responsible people. If your resources are limited, you could still complement the questions from the application form with an extensive telephone interview with a person from the partner organisation.

For an assessment visit it is very helpful to have a prepared guide-sheet with some questions or doubtful points resulting from the application form. The advantage of a visit is also that it is easier to explain to interested colleagues or volunteers what you have seen with your own eyes, rather than just referring to a written description by a potentially biased insider.

Some tips for the assessment visit

Within the course of the visit you should try to talk to more than one person, including some other staff members or volunteers (if available).

Try to see the proposed working and living places for the volunteer in the host organisation.

Try to get a feeling as to why they want to send or host a volunteer.

Immediately after the visit write a report while the memory is still fresh.

…?

How do you motivate organisations to participate in your programme?

It is generally easier to find young people motivated to go abroad for voluntary service than it is to persuade organisations or institutions to join your international voluntary service project and offer places for foreign volunteers. Depending on how far volunteering is known and appreciated in the organisation or the country, they will take more or less persuasion. So here is some advice to address any doubts and reservations on the side of the potential hosting organisation as to whether they should participate in the programme.

Helping organisations warm to the idea of international voluntary service

First of all, do not try to push any organisation into participating just because you are in urgent need of a hosting placement. It should be a well-planned decision of the entire organisation since it requires a lot of energy and resources.

Often the contact person or organisation feels it is too much of a burden. In this case, explain that a lot of tasks (in the area of support and administration) can be delegated to different people inside or outside the organisation. You could suggest the creation of a "volunteers' team" within the organisation.

It can also be helpful to invite people from the organisation to training events or meetings where they meet other representatives of hosting organisations and gain some confidence through listening to the experience of the others. Perhaps you can create a kind of support system, where you link an experienced organisation with a newcomer.

Show the benefits of taking part in IVS (see Chapter 3.2.2 "Preparation of sending and hosting organisations"). These benefits could be positive image building, enhanced international contacts and partnerships, a new wind blowing through the organisation, support for tasks that would not be done otherwise and so forth.

Build up trust with your partner organisation and respect their worries and working rhythm. Be honest and transparent.

Take care of the personal touch in your contacts. Partners should be more than just business relations. Do not forget that the people on the other side of the phone or Internet are also human.

It might also take some perseverance or patience to do the trick.

2.3.3 Concluding with a contract

Even though trust is at the basis of IVS, we still strongly advise that you put down the duties of all parties in writing (especially in the case of a long-term commitment). In an IVS project there are usually a lot of actors involved, a lot of challenges and also a lot of money. Therefore it is only respectful to all partners and to the volunteer to draw up a contract detailing the commitments that the parties agreed upon. People might be suspicious of contracts, but they should not limit flexibility in the project. Contracts create transparency and prevent things from going horribly wrong. In most cases funders ask for a signed letter of endorsement from all the partners in the project.

Note! There are different models and contract examples. In different countries the requirements for contracts can be different. Check with knowledgeable persons or with a legal adviser for the situation in your country.

Usually, a basic contract includes the following:

– the name and address of the parties signing the contract (in our case the volunteer, and the sending and hosting organisations, including the names of the authorised persons);

– the name of the IVS project and its beginning and end dates;

– a detailed description of the duties and obligations of all parties signing the contract. This will mostly be the volunteer's job description and aspects of the minimum quality standards for the partnership agreed between the sending and hosting organisations;

– signatures on behalf of the sending and hosting organisations and the volunteer;

– the contract should stipulate that the volunteer's work is unpaid, non-profit in nature and not substituting for any paid job.

2.4 Funding and budgeting

Needs analysis →	**Aims & concept** →	**Partner-finding** →	**Budget & fund-raising**
On arrival ←	**Preparation** ←	**Specific groups** ←	**Recruit volunteers**
Support & motivation →	**Conflict & crisis** →	**Evaluation & follow-up** →	**Recognition**

Projects sometimes get stuck when it comes to the cost–benefit comparison. As a project co-ordinator you are in a position to see the benefit of an IVS, but you are probably also well aware of the resources that are needed to make it happen. If we consider money to be the fuel of a project, you are the one that will have to find one or more petrol stations to fill up your fuel tank.

Nowadays you can find many publications, as well as people, that can give you advice on how to apply for funding. Here we would also like to draw your attention to the *T-Kit on Funding and Financial Management* (available to download at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int), which contains useful hints and tips on applying for funding as well as advice on managing your financial resources. This chapter will not repeat all the details in T-Kit No. 9 on funding and fund-raising, but it aims to make you aware of some basic principles when drawing up a budget and it presents some existing financial resources for IVS, both short and long term.

2.4.1 Budgeting

A budget is like a financial mirror of the IVS. It is an estimate of the expenses that you expect to incur on the one side and the income you have arranged. Drawing up a realistic and balanced budget is an art that is sometimes difficult to master. Therefore we present you with some golden rules for budgeting.

Golden rules for budgeting

- Careful planning of all financial needs and resources is an essential part of international voluntary service and should accompany your project from the early stages to the very end.

- Financial planning should correspond to the real costs of the project as far as possible (for example, check prices of tickets, insurance costs, communication means, local transport, office supplies, meals, etc.).

- In a non-profit project such as IVS, what comes in, must go out. At the same time you should not have more expenses than income, otherwise your project has a deficit. The income in a budget always has to equal the expenditure.

- Transparency is important: make sure that all partners have a clear view of planned income and expenditure. This way you can avoid a lot of painful misunderstandings and confusion.

- Check at the beginning what you will need in the end (for example, receipts, financial reports, copies of produced materials, etc.). You will very probably have to collect proof of all costs and income (perhaps abiding by specific formal criteria).

- Involve people in your organisation (or from outside) who have experience with budgets and/or project finances. You can share or delegate financial responsibilities to a person who is more experienced in budgeting and accounting.

- Do not try to do it on your own. Try to get a financial green light from different people involved in the project. This way you also avoid getting yourself in a position where you might be accused of a lack of financial clarity or even fraud (if nobody else knows where money goes and comes from).

- Check your budget at regular intervals during the IVS and keep the partners updated on progress (how much you have, how much you still need). Accounting is a useful tool if done regularly and properly.

- Do not forget to account for allocated staff time, which is also a cost for your organisation.

- Check which costs are eligible and which not. Some costs or some co-funding (for example, contributions in kind) could be refused by the funder.

- Have you also thought about any other specific expenses relating to your IVS, for example, staff training or preparation on issues like intercultural communication, project-related information technology; volunteer preparation or training in language learning, work-related skills; rental costs arising from project implementation, the need for interpretation, etc.

2.4.2 Funders and funding possibilities

When looking for funding there are lots of sources available at different levels – local, regional, national, European and international. Funding can come from individuals, foundations, institutions, authorities, companies, etc. The source of funds for your IVS depends largely on your context, on the type of project and on your initiative.

Step 1: Get a broad idea as to who could be potential funders

One way of getting information on sources of funding is to get inspired by similar projects or similar organisations. The Internet is one valuable source of information: www.eurodesk.org provides information about European funding schemes, and the European Foundation Centre (www.efc.be) offers details of a range of European and worldwide foundations.

Step 2: Find out the motivation and criteria of the funders

All funders, private or public, have certain motives for giving money to certain projects. If you want to obtain funding, it is important to discover why funders give. Your international volun-

tary service should not only be in line with their funding scheme but your application should highlight this. It goes without saying that you first have to collect information on the funder in order to find out what exactly they fund (which costs are eligible and which not), to what extent (co-funding necessary?) and what procedures (before, during and after your project) you have to follow. This way you avoid wasting your and their time and money.

Step 3: Select the appropriate funders and prepare your application

Once you have determined which funders would be most appropriate, you can tailor your application to suit the procedure set up by the funder. Do not send the same standard letter or application for funding to different funders: adapt it to their aims, criteria, costs, etc. Find out who your contact person is within the funding institution and keep regular contact. Some-times it may be useful to split up your budget into several parts and ask different funders to contribute to specific costs in line with their criteria. Inform your funders of the co-funding asked from elsewhere.

Step 4: Follow up on your applications

Do not just send in heaps of paperwork. Check with your contact person at the funding organisation to see if your application arrived, if anything is missing, and perhaps ask for some feedback on the content or information on the selection procedure. When not selected, do not drop your contact; the funder may be able to help with another project in the future. Feedback on the reasons for rejection can be useful. When your application is accepted, the work is not finished. During your project it is a sign of good public relations to send informa-tion (or even a simple postcard) at regular intervals (depending on the duration). And it is not finished until after the final report, including finances, and a thank-you letter.

Note! Do not look only for money. Often you can get contributions in kind, such as free accommodation or meals for your volunteers, some materials or technical equipment for the project (office equipment, building materials, etc.), a free phone line or Internet connection that could be provided by a company. Also sponsorship is an option.

More hints and tips can be found in the *T-Kit on Funding and Financial Management* (available to download at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int) and in the bibliography of this T-Kit.

European Voluntary Service

The most prominent programme financially supporting IVS is the European Voluntary Service (EVS), which offers the opportunity within the Youth in Action programme to volunteer up to 12 months in a variety of activities and organisations.

Aims

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) gives young Europeans a unique chance to:

- express their voluntary commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a for-eign country,

- develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus contributing to social cohesion, and

- enhance their active citizenship.

Criteria

- An EVS project involves between one and thirty volunteers aged from 18 to 30 (young people with fewer opportunities can participate from 16 years old).

- Volunteers must be legally resident in the country of the sending organisation and do their EVS in another country.

- Voluntary service lasts for a minimum of two months up to maximum of 12 months (from two weeks for young people with fewer opportunities or group EVS).

- The project promoters (sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisations) need to be accredited: having an approved "Expression of Interest" (EI) and EI reference number.

- All partners involved sign an EVS agreement (detailing tasks, responsibilities and practical arrangements) and adhere to the EVS charter.

Type of projects

- One or more volunteers from a programme country can carry out their EVS in another programme country or in a partner country. Volunteers from partner countries can only do EVS in a programme country (EU, EFTA, pre-accession countries and Switzerland).

- There are individual EVS projects involving just one volunteer; other projects have various volunteers doing their EVS individually (in different organisations/placements). Or an EVS project can host a group of volunteers at the same time in the same placement.

Application procedures

- Centralised application by the executive agency: European/international youth organisations, organisations from partner countries, intergovernmental organisations, large-scale events.

- Decentralised application to the national agency: all other eligible organisations/applicants.

Funding rules

EVS projects are financed on the principle of co-funding; the European Commission's grant only complements other resources raised by the project partners. Funding is largely based on a system of lump sums fixed per country and some funding based on actual costs:

Lump sums

- Lump sum for sending costs and hosting costs per volunteer.

- Lump sum for co-ordination costs per promoter (sending and hosting organisations) and per volunteer involved in a multilateral or group EVS.

- Fixed monthly allowance for the volunteer (for communication, support, etc.).

Actual costs

- 90% of eligible travel costs.

- 100% of visa and vaccination costs (including visa-related costs).

- 100% of eligible costs related to the on-arrival training and mid-term evaluation for volunteers.

- 100% of additional costs related to dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Young people with fewer opportunities

Some costs related to advance planning visits, reinforced mentorship and special needs (exceptional costs) are covered when the volunteers are young people with fewer opportunities.

Deadlines

- There are three deadlines a year for projects starting three to five months later.

- EVS projects with placements lasting less than two months involving young people with fewer opportunities can apply up to two weeks before the meeting of the selection committee.

For detailed information on EVS, download the programme guide of the Youth in Action programme or contact your YiA national agency for information in your language: www.ec.europa.eu/youth.

Council of Europe funding

Apart from the EVS financial scheme, there are other funding possibilities for IVS. For example, for work camps you can apply for a grant via the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. You need to meet several criteria when applying for a Category A grant:

- Participants from at least seven member states of the Council of Europe have to be involved in the project.

- 75% of volunteers should be under 30 years old.

- The activity should be held in a member state of the Council of Europe. (Derogations are possible, depending on the topic of the activity.)

Consult the European Youth Forum (EYF) website (www.eyf.coe.int/fej) for detailed information on Category A projects.

Besides the funding offered through the European Youth Foundation, the Council of Europe offers a programme of study sessions, based on co-operation between partner organisations and the Council of Europe's Youth Department. Study sessions are international youth events that last between four and eight days and take place in one of the European Youth Centres. They bring together members of youth organisations or networks and experts to discuss specific subjects and draw conclusions relevant to the priorities and programmes of the Council of Europe Youth sector.

A study session is not a work camp or an IVS project, but it can be a valuable contribution to the development of IVS programmes run by different international organisations or networks. Many of them have used the opportunity of study sessions to improve the quality of their programmes and produce guidelines and good practices. You can find their reports at www.coe.int/t/dg4/youthTraining/Study_sessions/Study_sessions_reports_en.asp and more about study sessions at www.coe.int/t/dg4/youthTraining/Study_sessions/default_en.asp.

Real life …

An example of a budget, for inspiration

As we mentioned, ELKA was going to organise a work camp to develop paths and rest areas throughout the mountains and also host a volunteer to develop the idea of adventure walks for youth groups and accompany them. Of course the budgets were prepared after consultation with all international partners in both the IVS projects, who themselves also had a budget for sending their volunteers.

Budget for the work camp developing paths and rest areas (in euros)

Expenditure	€
Travel:	
International travel for 26 volunteers	8 120
Local transport for 45 young people	1 350
Accommodation:	
Host families in Velho	3 650
Food:	8 960
Preparatory work:	
Two meetings	940
Document preparation (information, welcome brochure)	230
Telephone, fax, post, e-mail connections	410

Insurance: For 46 persons	2 533
Visas: For 26 persons	612
Administration and co-ordination costs:	650
Environment inspection (paths and rest areas development):	2 600
Expertise on tourism: Two professional trainers (fees)	3 600
Social activities: For 46 persons (cultural events, four trips to historic places near Velho, coach hire, intercultural evenings and programme – cinema, theatre, final party, etc.)	3 680
Video preparation	2 200
TOTAL	39 535

Income	€
ELKA's own contribution	4 855
IVS partners' contributions	8 000
Participants' contributions	2 300
Municipality	3 300
Ministry of the Environment grant	4 000
Private sponsors	2 550
District Office, Department of Regional Co-operation and Tourism	2 450
Foundation for Social Development	3 500
Local Youth Council	2 320
In-kind contributions	6 260
TOTAL	39 535

Budget for the EVS project (in euros)

Expenditure	€
Pre-departure preparation organised by the sending organisation: Language training course (2 volunteers, 15 days, intensive): € 1 200 Information materials: € 75	1 275
Travel costs: Return 2nd class rail ticket from volunteers' homes to Velho: 2 × € 230	460
Accommodation for 2 volunteers in Velho: Arranged and costs covered by a family (in kind)	4 300
Food for 2 volunteers, full duration of 11 months: Breakfasts and dinners (covered by a family) Lunches	4 460 4 110

Allowance for 2 volunteers: € 92/month	2 090
Local transport:	1 320
Language course organised by ELKA (in kind) Intensive part (at language school) Provided by a volunteer of ELKA	540 260
Social activities and leisure time (social integration): Planned cultural trips and social events	1 880
Administration: Tel., fax, e-mail connection: 11 × 65 = € 715 Paper, pens, Xerox, materials for working with youngsters – rope, information brochures, etc.): € 620	1 335
Visa and residential permit for 2 volunteers	220
Medical certificate (on infectious diseases) for 2 volunteers: 2 × € 45	90
Dissemination of good practice: Publications on – green tourists statistics and adventure activities (100 printings) – project outcomes	800 320
Ongoing training (2 volunteers × € 650)	1 300
Evaluation	220
TOTAL	24 980

Income	€
ELKA's own contribution	850
Sending organisation's contribution	500
City Council	500
Velho School's contribution	120
District Office – Department of Environment Protection	1 200
Private sponsors	800
Foundation for civil society development	1 200
In-kind contributions	957
European Commission grant (EVS) 90% travel costs = € 414 Sending costs (lump sum/volunteer) = € 960 Hosting cost (lump sum calculated per volunteer per month): € 11 000 Co-ordination cost (lump sum per volunteer+lump sum per organisation): € 200 + 260 100% of visa & vaccination costs: € 310 Allowance for 2 volunteers: € 95/ month = € 2 090 Training costs (100%): € 2 795 Dissemination costs: € 1 120	19 149
TOTAL	25 276