GRUNDTVIG SENIOR VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR A GOOD PROJECT

Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

January 2009

This document has been produced by the service responsible for Grundtvig in the European Commission to help organisations and volunteers prepare their Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects.

For any question or suggestion about this guide, please contact:

European Commission
Directorate General Education and Culture
Unit B4 - Adult Education; Grundtvig
MADO 13/03
B-1049 Brussels
geraldine.libreau@ec.europa.eu

December 2008

Table of contents

Introduction

The European Community programme for education and training is the Lifelong Learning programme[1] (2007-2013). It aims to offer educational opportunities to people of all ages, to facilitate formal, informal and non-formal learning. Within this programme, the Grundtvig sub-programme is dedicated to adult education.

Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects are projects of a new kind, proposed in the wake of successful past experiences of transnational (senior) volunteering projects funded by the Socrates II programme for European cooperation in the field of education (2000-2006).

Volunteering is increasingly recognised as a very valuable informal learning[2] experience for people of all ages. Senior volunteering in particular has been recognised as a way of offering new learning opportunities to senior citizens in Europe promoting the process of active ageing and emphasising the contribution of senior citizens to our societies. This Action therefore offers a new form of mobility to European senior citizens and will allow them to learn — and to "give" — in a European country other than their own.

This new form of mobility is also a new form of Grundtvig partnership between the organisations which will send and host volunteers. It should allow new types of organisations to join the Grundtvig programme, enrich their work through the exchange of good practice, and create sustainable European collaboration between them.

---

[1] Decision N° 1720/2006/EC — see http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm for more information.

[2] Informal learning takes place through activities in work, family or leisure; it is not structured and typically does not lead directly to qualifications. It is opposed to formal learning, organised in institutions and non-formal learning, which is structured, intentional, but generally not provided by formal Education and training organisations.

Main features of the action

Formal objectives

(1)   To enable senior citizens to volunteer in another European country for any kind of non-profit activity, as a form of informal learning activity.

(2)   To create lasting partnerships between the host and sending organisations around a specific topic or target group, and thanks to the exchange of volunteers.

Expected outputs

For the volunteers: increase of personal, linguistic, social and intercultural skills, contribution to the development and implementation of non-profit activities, and beyond this, contribute to the community as an active citizen, and possibly the acquisition / development of specific task-related skills.

For the sending and hosting organisations: exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices; development of European collaboration around a particular theme (or several themes) and an intensified European outlook.

Bilateral and reciprocal partnerships

Each organisation will be expected to send 2–6 volunteers within a 2-year period, and to host 2–6 volunteers within the same period.

Volunteers may move in a group or individually. Volunteers can only participate once.

Sending and hosting may take place at the same time but do not necessarily have to coincide.

Profile of volunteers

The action is open to all adult citizens aged 50 or over and who are legally resident in one of the Programme countries. It is expected that in many cases volunteers will be experienced local volunteers and this will enhance the exchange of experiences between the host and sending organisations. However, this is not compulsory, and volunteers may also be adult learners wishing to volunteer for the first time.

When possible, particular emphasis will be given to encouraging the participation of volunteers from socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities, thereby helping to strengthen their integration in Europe and to combat racism and xenophobia. Equal participation of both genders should also be encouraged.

Profile of sending and hosting organisations

Any organisation may send and host volunteers; however please note that the sending and hosting organisations are expected to create working partnerships: they should therefore have similar or complementary profiles.

Duration and type of the activity

The Grundtvig grant will cover volunteering (mobility) periods lasting between 3 and 8 weeks. If, however, both partner organisations and the volunteer(s) are willing to extend this period beyond 8 weeks, they may do so, provided they find the appropriate funding to cover the costs attached to this extra period.

The mobility period will take place within a 2-year project (including preparation and debriefing periods).

What is volunteering?

For the purpose of the Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects, the European Commission has adopted the following definitions, based on the definition provided by the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO):

<u>Volunteering</u>: The term refers to all forms of voluntary activity, whether formal or informal. It is undertaken of a person's own free will, choice and motivation, and is without concern for financial gain. It benefits the individual volunteer, communities and society as a whole. It is also a vehicle for individuals and associations to address human, social or environmental needs and concerns. Formal voluntary activities add value, but do not replace professional, paid employees.

<u>Volunteer</u>: A volunteer is someone who performs or offers to perform service out of his or her own free will, without payment, usually in support of a non-profit organisation, mission-based initiative or community.

It is worth noting that throughout Europe, there are wide gaps in the understanding of the concept of volunteering between countries and in some population groups. There might even be reluctance in some countries and from some people to engage in volunteering, as a non-paid activity.

What you need to know

Key elements of a good project

To ensure your project is a success for both the partner organisations and the volunteers, you should take care over:

- ✓ Cooperation between the two organisations

- ✓ Active involvement of both organisations and of a maximum number of staff in the project

- ✓ The volunteer selection process

- ✓ The preparation phase

- ✓ Provisions to include people with fewer opportunities

- ✓ The volunteering period and the volunteers' tasks

- ✓ The support and training offered to volunteers

- ✓ The role of the mentor

- ✓ Risk prevention and management measures

- ✓ Active involvement of volunteers in the activity

- ✓ Social and personal development of volunteers, including the learning opportunities the project offers the volunteers

- ✓ The acknowledgement of the volunteer's contribution

- ✓ Adequate practical arrangements (board and lodging, transport, insurance, linguistic support, etc.)

- ✓ Evaluation of the project

Main resources

A range of resources are available to support organisations and volunteers. Some are relevant for volunteering in general, others for adult volunteering, and we will list some of them in the following chapters. Many were developed under the European programme 'European Voluntary Service' (EVS) for young people[3], but most of the methodologies and recommendations apply equally to senior volunteers.

However, we particularly recommend that you consult the handbook '**Learning opportunities for senior volunteers — Managing trans-national exchanges'**. It is targeted at senior volunteers, sending and hosting organisations, potential coordinators, local authorities and educational institutions, and is available at the following addresses:

- ▶ in English: http://www.seven-network.eu/site/files/handbook-eng.pdf

- ▶ in French: http://www.seven-network.eu/site/files/handbook-fr.pdf

- ▶ in German: http://www.seven-network.eu/site/files/handbook-ger.pdf

- ▶ in Italian: http://www.seven-network.eu/site/files/handbook-it.pdf

- ▶ in Polish: http://www.seven-network.eu/site/files/handbook-pl.pdf

We also invite you to consult another invaluable set of resources which was developed under a former Grundtvig project, **'Still Active!'** which tested transnational senior volunteering and developed several guides to help organisations and volunteers willing to undertake similar activities. The following documents are available:

- ▶ **Guidebook for civil society organisations interested in hosting senior volunteers**

- ▶ **Handbook for volunteers**

- ▶ **Training course for senior volunteers**

The three documents are available in English, French, German and Italian on the web page: http://www.seven-network.eu/site/?q=node/93.

Lastly, the **'Teaming up!'** project produced a **'Guidebook for local governments interested in international exchange programmes for Senior Volunteers'** which is available in English, German and Italian on the web page: http://www.seven-network.eu/site/?q=node/94.

All these documents are hosted by a website which is being developed by another Grundtvig project called 'seVen' (Senior European Volunteers Exchange Network); it offers other interesting information and examples which you might find useful for your own work.

---

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc82_en.htm

Roles and responsibilities of the partner organisations

The primary responsibility of both partner organisations is to define the short- and long-term objectives and methods of your partnership, along with your partner, including the role that volunteers will play to achieve these objectives.

The organisations will then have different roles and responsibilities depending on the role they play:

…as a Sending Organisation (SO)

- ✓ Select suitable volunteers

- ✓ Arrange travel and other practical issues (including insurance and visa where necessary)

- ✓ Appoint a mentor / tutor

- ✓ Provide adequate preparation for the volunteers before departure, according to the individual needs of the volunteers

- ✓ Help the volunteers to communicate with the Host Organisation

- ✓ Keep in regular contact with the volunteers and with the Host Organisation during the project

- ✓ Ensure that the volunteers contribute to the evaluation of the project

- ✓ Support volunteers' reintegration into their home community

- ✓ Give volunteers an opportunity to share their experiences

- ✓ Encourage volunteers to get involved in dissemination and utilisation of results

- ✓ Give guidance on further educational, social and volunteering opportunities

- ✓ Arrange some form of recognition / acknowledgement of the experience, together with the Host Organisation and the volunteer

… as a Hosting Organisation (HO)

- ✓ Identify a tutor to provide personal support for the volunteers

- ✓ Arrange supervision and guidance of the volunteers by experienced staff; identify mentors

- ✓ Provide personal support to volunteers

- ✓ Help volunteers to adjust to the new environment, e.g. by giving them opportunities to integrate into the local community, to meet other people, to socialise, to participate in leisure activities, etc.

- ✓ Encourage contact with other (Grundtvig) (senior) volunteers whenever possible

- ✓ Arrange language learning opportunities and linguistic support if needed

- ✓ Introduce the volunteer to the organisation, its staff and its activities

- ✓ Offer the volunteers the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, taking account of the volunteer's own ideas, creativity and experience

- ✓ Agree on a schedule and activity programme with the volunteer

- ✓ Identify clear learning opportunities for volunteers

- ✓ Insure the volunteer

- ✓ Provide suitable accommodation and meals (or a food allowance) to volunteers

- ✓ Ensure that adequate means of local transport are available for volunteers

- ✓ If appropriate, pay allowances to volunteers on a weekly or monthly basis

- ✓ Communicate regularly with the Sending Organisation

- ✓ Cooperate with the Sending Organisation on follow-up and evaluation matters

Implementation of the project

A partnership between two organisations

Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects are not just about exchanging volunteers: they are about creating a long-lasting relationship between two organisations with shared interests in a particular topic or target group. The exchange of volunteers should reinforce this cooperation.

It is therefore recommended that partner organisations consider the following steps:

1. Start by defining the objectives of the project.
   - ✓ Examples around a common topic: reinforcing or developing twinning activities between two towns, exchanging ideas about how to run a local history museum or a hospital library, setting up an exhibition for both cities to help discover each other's national culture, etc.
   - ✓ Examples around a common target group: exchange of experience between organisations working on social inclusion of specific target groups (e.g. ex-offenders, disabled people, etc.), exchange of experiences between cities on projects to improve the integration of migrants, development of methods and projects for intergenerational cooperation, etc.

2. Decide on the methodology and processes of the project

3. Study how the exchange of senior volunteers can support this project. Volunteers could then be of two categories:
   - ✓ experienced local volunteers who can support the project through their knowledge and experience of the organisation's activity
   - ✓ members of the target group of the two organisations, for whom volunteering abroad may be a new experience or a step towards their reintegration / participation.

So the project should not stop once all volunteers have returned home, but should carry on, with the volunteers' participation as far as possible, and develop into a sustainable partnership.

Defining the volunteering activities

Identify your needs and write down the tasks of the volunteer

It is advisable for the host organisation to carry out a needs analysis, starting by listing all the tasks performed in the organisation and discussing the reasons for hosting a volunteer. This will help to define potential tasks for a volunteer. A detailed task description should then be written, setting out the volunteer's tasks, as a basis for discussion with the sending organisation and the volunteer.

It is recommended that:

- ✓ the volunteer's activities should be meaningful for the organisation (why are they important, and to whom?) and fit into the larger framework of the partnership between the two partner organisations

- ✓ the staff of the hosting organisation should be involved in the project and especially in defining the volunteer's tasks and organising the support system

- ✓ there should be space for volunteers to develop their own project, or at least the project should offer enough flexibility for volunteers to propose new ideas

- ✓ volunteers should have enough activities throughout the week to keep them busy. But care should be taken that the physical / health situation of volunteers allows them to be active all week long, as more flexible hours may be more suitable

- ✓ the task description provides examples and percentages of the tasks as well as an indicative daily or weekly timetable

- ✓ the tasks present a real interest for the volunteer. E.g. the task should not include too much administrative work (unless the volunteer is really keen in this).

- ✓ volunteering activities should give volunteers a chance to discover or be in contact with the local community

- ✓ the HO identifies the skills, competencies and qualities required for the task to be performed

- ✓ tasks are clearly defined, and a learning agreement is signed between HO, SO and V.

Popular fields of activity for volunteers are: arts and culture, protection of heritage, equal opportunities, social exclusion, intergenerational activities, European awareness, environment, anti-racism and xenophobia, health, media and communication, active ageing, citizenship.

> **Developing volunteer job descriptions**, Mary V. Merrill, World Volunteer Web, 2005, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/resources/how-to-guides/manage-volunteers/doc/developing-volunteer-job-descriptions.html

Bear in mind

The volunteering activity should…

- ✓ be non-profit-making

- ✓ provide real learning opportunities

Grundtvig senior volunteering projects are not…

- ✓ occasional, unstructured, part-time volunteering

- ✓ an internship in an enterprise

- ✓ a paid job and must not substitute paid jobs

- ✓ exploitation of cheap workforce

- ✓ a recreation or tourist activity

- ✓ a language course

- ✓ a period of study or vocational training abroad or a study visit

Dissemination and exploitation of results

The achievements and results of the project, including the volunteering activities, should be disseminated and exploited in order to optimise their value, strengthen their impact and ensure

that the largest possible number of people and organisations benefit from them. This means the outcomes must be communicated to the stakeholders concerned, so good results can be replicated on a larger scale.

▶ A whole section of the Directorate General Education and Culture's website is devoted to helping you disseminate and exploit the results of your project: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/index_en.html

Visibility

Each project should highlight the European Community support provided and give information on the SVP and the Lifelong Learning programme to the outside world (e.g. by using the European and Lifelong Learning logos). The volunteers should be made aware that they are taking part in a European Union programme.

The volunteers

Recruitment and selection

Volunteers should be chosen regardless of their ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or more than basic language knowledge should be required. A more specific volunteer profile might be drawn up if justified by the nature of the tasks to be performed or the project context, but even in this case selection must not be on the basis of professional or educational qualifications.

You might want to involve people who already volunteer for your organisation, or adult learners attending activities of your institutions; alternatively, you might wish to start recruiting senior volunteers. In any case, the following references can help you identify and recruit senior volunteers:

- **Volunteering in retirement,** a study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005, http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/pdf/0115.pdf

- **A golden opportunity — A guide for attracting and retaining older volunteers**, Janet Rutherford, 2006, http://www.reach-online.org.uk/assets/publications%20pdf/goldenop.pdf

- **16 tips in recruiting adult volunteers**, Jason Scott, World Volunteer Web, 2006, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/browse/volunteering-issues/senior-volunteers/doc/16-tips-in-recruiting.html

- **Selecting and recruiting volunteers**, Mary V. Merrill, World Volunteer Web, 2005, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/resources/how-to-guides/manage-volunteers/doc/selecting-and-recruiting-volunteers.html

- **Interviewing potential volunteers for specific jobs**, Mary V. Merrill, World Volunteer Web, 2005, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/resources/how-to-guides/manage-volunteers/doc/interviewing-potential-volunteers-for.html

- **How do I interview a potential volunteer?,** Volunteering England, 2005, http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/information/50frequentlyaskedquestions/26 howdoiinterviewapotentialvolunteer.htm

- **Volunteer Application form**: see Annex 4 of the following document: http://www.salto-youth.net/download/1305.pdf

Involving people with fewer opportunities

One of the objectives of the Lifelong Learning programme and of Grundtvig in particular is to enable people with fewer opportunities to participate in the various mobility actions. Partner organisations are therefore encouraged to involve them in Senior Volunteering Projects.

However, past experiences and studies have shown that it may be difficult to engage people suffering from social exclusion in local / national volunteering activities, for a variety of reasons such as:

- *Psychological reasons*: lack of self-confidence, prejudices against volunteering itself, (perceived) lack of time, real or imagined prejudices against acceptance as volunteers, fear of losing welfare benefits, etc.

- *Physical / material reasons*: over-formal or over-long recruitment process (especially difficult if in another language than the native one), long delays, lack of information on volunteering opportunities, physical access difficulties (especially for disabled or older people), lack of or insufficient pocket money, delayed reimbursement of expenses, etc.

The difficulty of engaging this target group in transnational volunteering should therefore not be underestimated, and the above problems should be taken into account when designing the project. You should however keep in mind that anyone can volunteer and has something to contribute, whatever their age, skills and personal situation, as long as the volunteer receives adequate preparation and support. A few ideas to encourage participation by people with fewer opportunities can be found below:

✓ Try to involve such people in local volunteering before offering them the opportunity of a Grundtvig senior volunteering project, to boost their self-confidence and help you to get to know them better.

✓ 'Reinforced mentorship' might be considered as a way of giving increased personal support to volunteers with fewer opportunities on the sending and/or hosting side.

✓ Sending volunteers in a group rather than individually might ease the experience.

✓ Take advantage of the opportunity offered by Grundtvig to hold a Preparatory Visit to prepare your project. This can help you to get to know your partner better, discuss the volunteers' specific needs, understand better the context in which the volunteer will stay and work, etc.

✓ Before the arrival of a volunteer with special needs, you should carefully assess:

  o His/her technical needs: if the volunteer has a physical disability, carefully check the location of the volunteering activity and the accommodation, in terms of access, special equipment, width of doors, etc.

  o His/her personal needs: can the participant stay (sleep, eat, wash) alone or does s/he need a personal assistant? What are the things s/he can and cannot do alone? What kind of special equipment is needed by the participant and/or her/his personal assistant? Are there any special requirements (care, medicine, equipment, etc.)?

  o His/her emotional needs, individually and in relation to a group, the project staff, etc.

Some more ideas can be found in the following references; some of these documents relate to youth or British local volunteering but many ideas can be adapted to a more senior population, and to transnational volunteering:

▶ **Including all with the 'Youth' programme — An inspirational booklet**: see in particular pages 5-8, http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusioninspiration/

▶ **Use your hands to move ahead:** includes a methodology and ideas of tasks for volunteers with fewer opportunities , http://www.salto-youth.net/useYourHands/ (in English and Czech)

- **The good practice handbook,** by the Goldstar project, managing volunteers from socially excluded groups**,** http://www.goldstar.org.uk/documents/GoodPracticeHandbookNormalResUpdated.pdf

- **Toolkit for involving older black and minority ethnic volunteers**, by Sally Price, for the project 'VITA — Volunteering in the third age', 2006, http://www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/strategy/documents/involving_older_bme_volunteers.pdf

- **Toolkit for involving older disabled volunteers**, by Jaya Gajparia, for the project 'VITA — Volunteering in the third age', 2006, http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/207D7D73-6EB4-4DC6-8CF7-8D58A9E8AD78/0/G_Toolkitforinvolvingolderdisabledvolunteers_FINAL.pdf

- **A guide to involving young disabled people as volunteers**, Leonard Cheshire and Scope, 2006, http://www.lcdisability.org/?lid=3671

- **Recruiting ex-offenders,** Volunteering England, 2007, http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank/Information/Recruiting+ex-offenders.htm

- **Looking beyond the homeless label**, Volunteering magazine article, issue 98, May 2004 http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank/Core+Themes/recruitment/lookingbeyondthehomelesslabel.htm

- **Volunteering for Everyone — A guide for organisations who want to include and recruit volunteers who have a learning disability**, Volunteering England and Mencap, http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E24F3E46-5033-4134-A83D-2E858CC49330/0/mencap_final.pdf

- **Working with deaf or hard-of-hearing volunteers,** http://www.rnid.org.uk/howyoucanhelp/work_with_us/volunteering/dhohvolunteers/

- **Asylum seekers and volunteering in Europe: a transnational report based on experiences in Hungary, France and England,** http://www.easidp.org.uk/pdf/Exchanges%20Report.pdf

Preparation and support

Adequate support for volunteers throughout the project is the key to a successful experience, both for volunteers and partner organisations.

Here are the various stages and types of support which the sending and hosting organisations should provide:

When	Type of training / support	Provided by
Before leaving	**Linguistic preparation** (if needed)	To be chosen by the volunteer together with the sending organisation
	Pre-departure training Participants' perception, adaptability, expectations, raising cultural awareness, legal issues, safety, information on host project / country, tasks to be performed, readiness for an international experience, identification of skills which could be used, etc.	Sending organisation
Immediately upon arrival	**On-arrival training** Introduction to the country, city, organisation, staff, users, tasks, expectations, linguistic introduction, etc.	Hosting organisation
During the stay	**Linguistic support** (if needed)	
	Task-related support for performance of the volunteering tasks	
	Personal support for integration in the project / country	
Upon return	**Debriefing** Reintegration and evaluation of the stay abroad	Sending organisation, in cooperation with hosting organisation
	Follow-up Using the experience back home	Sending organisation

A few tips which have proved successful:

> *On the sending side*

- ✓ Involve the volunteer's family as much as possible, to make sure that the volunteer is supported in this experience; contact details of the family members should be available to both sending and hosting organisations, to maintain contact and in case of emergency.

- ✓ Explain to the volunteer how the finances of the project are organised: which organisation gets what, what's covered for him/her, and what's not, cost of living in the host country, etc.

✓ Make sure that the volunteer is physically and psychologically able to go abroad and perform the task expected in the host organisation.

✓ Assist the volunteers when they come back home and help them into further education, training or possibly employment.

✓ Give them space to share their experience with others (meeting, conference, website, newsletter, etc.)

✓ Finally, and most importantly, the volunteers should stay involved in the activities of the sending organisation, especially in relation to the Grundtvig project.

On the hosting side

✓ The hosting organisation should prepare a folder with all the information a volunteer needs, including: phone list, what to do in case of emergency, practical directions for answering the phone, opening / closing the office, sending mail, etc.

✓ Ask Grundtvig senior volunteers to work alongside other local volunteers — don't leave them alone!

✓ Ask ex-volunteers to help new volunteers for a short while to develop their talent in a specific area.

✓ Create crisis prevention and crisis management mechanisms.

✓ It may be useful to appoint a mentor <u>and</u> a tutor for the volunteer. Mentors are more particularly in charge of supervising volunteers in the performance of their tasks, while tutors give more personal support.

Some useful recommendations and ideas can also be found in the following documents:

▶ **Use your hands to move ahead** — see especially Annexes II and III for the various elements to be included in pre-departure preparation and in evaluation and follow-up, http://www.salto-youth.net/useYourHands/ (in English and Czech)

▶ **Working Group on Risk Prevention and Crisis Management**: Chapters II and IV give useful recommendations on how to avoid and manage a crisis. http://www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/374.html?&type_id%5B%5D=9&topic_id%5B%5D=13&date_from=&date_to=&search=&pagerCurrentOffset=7

▶ **Supervising volunteers**, Mary V. Merrill, World Volunteer Web, 2005, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/resources/how-to-guides/manage-volunteers/doc/supervising-volunteers.html

Recognition

Recognition of the skills and competences acquired by volunteers is key to acknowledging the volunteers' contribution to the project as well as its learning outcomes. It could be very formal or quite informal, but it should always be a joint effort by both partner organisations. Here are some recommendations and ideas for providing it:

- **Europass**: The Europass Mobility is a record of any organised period of time (called *Europass Mobility experience*) that a person spends in another European country for the purpose of learning or training. The Europass Mobility is intended for any person undergoing a mobility experience in a European country, whatever their age or level of education, and is perfect for recording a volunteering experience. The template for the certificate is available in most EU languages. http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/InformationOn/EuropassMobility/navigate.action?locale_id=1

- **Assessing Voluntary Experiences**: **A portfolio of skills learned through volunteering**: a tool developed under a Leonardo da Vinci project, aiming to help volunteer identify and present the skills they have learnt in their volunteering activities, when looking for a job - http://www.ivr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/546077B9-3C92-4145-BF55-5A386D768A2C/0/Assessing_Voluntary_Experiences_Sept_06.pdf

- **Recognising volunteers**, Mary V. Merrill, World Volunteer Web, 2005, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/resources/how-to-guides/manage-volunteers/doc/recognizing-volunteers.html

- **100 ways to thank, support your volunteers**, Volunteering Ireland, World Volunteer Web, 2006, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/resources/how-to-guides/manage-volunteers/how-do-i-manage-volunteers-additional-reading/doc/100-ways-to-thank.html

- **Saying thank you to volunteers**, Volunteering England, 2006, http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank/Information/Thankyou.htm

Linguistic issues

Linguistic support and/or training must be provided if needed, both before departure and during the volunteering period. The format, duration and frequency can vary depending on volunteers' needs and abilities, the tasks to be performed and the capability of the organisation to accommodate such needs. Language training must be free of charge for the volunteer.

Here are a few suggestions to help organisations and volunteers face linguistic challenges:

- ✓ Sufficient funding for linguistic pre-departure training and on-site support should be secured

- ✓ Participation of two or more volunteers from the same sending organisation, to support each other

- ✓ If volunteers are 'shy' or lacking in language skills, send them to a country with the same language, if possible

- ✓ Engage in activities which do not require a strong command of the language (e.g. environmental protection, artistic activities, activities with young children, etc.)

Practical arrangements

Travel

Volunteers might not be experienced in travelling, especially abroad. The sending organisation should therefore:

- ✓ discuss this topic with the volunteer in advance,
- ✓ ensure the volunteer is fit and feels comfortable to travel,
- ✓ choose the most suitable means of transport,
- ✓ consider giving extra support to the volunteer, such as: advice on packing (using the right luggage, bringing the right clothes for a different climate, bringing all necessary medicine), drive the person to the airport, make a detailed plan for travelling to the host organisation, make sure that someone will pick up the volunteer on arrival, give phone numbers in case of emergency, etc.

Accommodation

The host organisation is responsible for providing adequate accommodation and catering facilities, as well as arranging other practical details, such as local transport. It is advisable to establish good communication, in advance of the volunteering period, between the hosting and sending organisations and the volunteers. The volunteers should be consulted in order to identify their accommodation preferences (individual, in a family, in a community), their potential specific needs in terms of meals (particular diet, can they cook for themselves) or transport (can they drive, walk easily, etc.).

Volunteers' special needs should be accommodated and their preferences should be taken into account as far as possible. However, volunteers must also be made aware that the hosting organisation may have limited capacities to accommodate their preferences. They should also be made aware in advance of specific rules which they might need to follow if they stay in a live-in community.

In any case, good communication is essential before departure, so that the volunteers know what to expect when they arrive in the hosting organisation.

Pocket money

Senior volunteers usually already earn some sort of living and it could be argued that they should therefore not need to receive pocket money. However, it cannot be assumed that this is the case for all volunteers; additionally, the cost of living in the host country may be significantly higher than in the volunteer's country, thus reducing their purchasing power. All volunteers' costs are normally covered by the project, but the sending and hosting organisations should nonetheless discuss with volunteers if they need any financial help to face personal expenses linked to participation in the project (e.g. purchase of a suitcase, warmer clothes, payment of higher phone bills to call home, etc.). If this is the case, sending and hosting organisations should agree on a sum to be allocated to the volunteer, including the following elements: amount, timing, form. This sum should come from the grant given to the organisations for their participation in the project, and could come from either the sending or hosting organisations, or be split between the two.

If the volunteers' needs are already known at the project application stage, a request for funding of special needs could also be included in the grant request.

Insurance

Both organisations should make sure that volunteers are well insured from the time of departure to their return home, and throughout their travel and stay abroad. They may be well covered by their current insurance, but complementary insurance might be needed; this is particularly true for health / repatriation insurance or for insurance related to specific tasks during the volunteering activity (e.g. driving the host organisation's vehicles).

Insurance of older volunteers is a sensitive issue. A British study on upper age limits in volunteering organisations showed that the difficulty or high cost of insuring older volunteers for some tasks (e.g. driving) or any type of task, was the main reason for setting these age limits. It was also noted that many insurance companies asked unacceptably high premiums for these target groups. As upper age limits are not acceptable in Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects, and as we do want to enable anyone to participate, we recommend that you report any difficulty you may encounter to your National Agency and/or the European Commission.

No group insurance is currently offered to Grundtvig senior volunteers, but to gain an idea of items to be insured, partner organisations may wish to consult the cover offered to young participants to the European Voluntary Service programme:

- **Group insurance plan for young European volunteers**:
  http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/library/insurance_en.htm

- **Insurance for volunteers**, Volunteering England, 2008, gives detailed advice on which should be covered by a volunteer's insurance:
  http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank/Information/Insurance+for+Volunteers.htm

Other administrative issues

Other administrative issues, such as the need for a visa, should be taken into account. Normally there should be no such problems, as volunteering periods should not exceed 8 weeks and the volunteers should be legal residents of one of the participating countries, but it is advisable to check whether there are visa requirements by contacting the Consulate or Embassy of the country to be visited.

Finally, all administrative issues should be discussed with the volunteer: ID card / passport in order or still valid, possible administrative duties to maintain unemployment benefits, etc…

Little reminder on procedures and finances

How to submit an application

Grant applications must be submitted within the framework of the annual Lifelong Learning call for proposals, and should be sent to the Grundtvig National Agencies. Both partner organisations need to fill in the grant application form and submit it, separately, to their respective National Agencies. Most of the questions in the form are designed as common questions and should be filled in jointly. They aim to provide the National Agencies with the information needed to evaluate the quality of your proposal, but they are also a guide to help you prepare your project. Some of the questions, especially concerning your identity (contact and bank details, budget) should however be filled in separately.

The grant

Each partner organisation receives a grant composed of two parts, to cover its costs as the sending or the hosting organisation. The volunteer does not receive anything directly. The grant is therefore composed as follows:

Activity covered	Item	Costs covered	Basis for calculation
Sending	Travel costs	International travel of volunteers	Real costs, per participant, to be accounted for on a real cost basis
	Grant for organising mobility	✓ Contacts with partner organisation ✓ Pedagogic, linguistic and cultural preparation ✓ Communication with volunteers when abroad ✓ Follow-up ✓ Other organisation costs	Flat rate per volunteer sent — paid as a lump sum
Hosting	Subsistence costs	✓ Board and lodging ✓ Local travel ✓ Insurance ✓ Personal, pedagogic, linguistic and cultural support	Lump sum per volunteer (based on subsistence rate in the specific host country concerned)
	Grant for organising mobility	Organisation costs	Flat rate per volunteer hosted — paid as a lump sum

Please check with your National Agency which are the flat-rate and lump-sum amounts for your country.

If needed, additional amounts can be requested, either on the sending or hosting side, to accommodate the special needs of volunteers. These should be justified and accounted for on a real cost basis. It also implies that volunteers and their specific needs have been identified at application stage.

Additional references

Lifelong Learning Programme: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

List of National Agencies: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/national_en.html