

'Towards a More Inclusive Europe: The European Voluntary Service for All'

European Policy Recommendations

Volunteering increases social integration and social cohesion. On a European level it can be a thrilling experience of mutual understanding and solidarity despite - or perhaps because of - differences and diversity. The two-year pilot project European Voluntary Service for All (EVS4ALL) wants to overcome mental borders and social inequalities. It conducted reflections, national studies and experiments to identify the remaining barriers to the involvement of young people in **European Voluntary Service (EVS)** activities.

Through their joint efforts, the **14 consortium partners**, along with the **20 youngsters with fewer opportunities** who experienced a short-term EVS in the framework of the project, as well as the **national and European stakeholders** involved in the discussions, have identified ways to make EVS more inclusive for youth in all its diversity.

Here are their key recommendations for the improvement of the EVS strand of Erasmus+ Youth in Action



Accessibility & Flexibility

To limit the organisational, administrative and financial hazard imposed on actual and aspiring applicants, thus improving the access to Erasmus+ Youth in Action as well as increasing its flexibility for both organisations and volunteers, EVS4ALL recommends to:

Facilitate the accreditation, application and reporting processes for all EVS organisations, especially small-scale organisations and organisations focusing on the involvement of youngsters with fewer opportunities.

Provide a simplified, more interactive and target-specific Programme Guide, complemented with online support, e.g. online trainings and videos on how to prepare a good Erasmus+ application.

Set Europe-wide uniform standards and procedures to National Agencies for the publication of application forms in due time, shortened selection procedures and the prompt transfer of grant instalments, thus facilitating long-term planning for both applicant organisations and candidates to an EVS.



Communication, Sharing & Networking

To further foster the exchange of ideas and mutual support between former and aspiring EVS volunteers, current and future applicant organisations, as well as with public stakeholders, EVS4ALL recommends to:

Create an official one-stop online platform to act as a focal point on EVS and complement existing, non-EVS dedicated websites (e.g. SALTO-YOUTH, European Youth Portal) with a more visible platform allowing not only the access to relevant information, but also exchanges and discussions between all EVS stakeholders.

Improve communication, feedback mechanisms and the transparency on the selection of applications carried out by National Agencies, which are currently inconsistent and lack clear standards.

Implement a peer-to-peer learning mechanism through the above-mentioned online platform giving the opportunity to new and aspiring EVS applicants to get support from experienced EVS organisations and their staff.



Support

To improve the support and mentorship provided to the EVS volunteers, especially youngsters with fewer opportunities requiring additional attention, EVS4ALL recommends to:

Provide linguistic support to short-term EVS volunteers, by funding pre-departure language courses and granting them access to the Online Linguistic Support, while revising it to take into account learning difficulties.

Strengthen the funding opportunities and simplify procedures related to reinforced mentorship to allow organisations to allocate more time to support youngsters with fewer opportunities before, during and after their EVS.

Provide specific guidelines for the use of digital tools to complement the current promotion as support methods to accompany EVS volunteers before, during and after their mobility experience.



Promotion & Dissemination

To enhance the visibility of the EVS strand of Erasmus+ Youth in Action and therefore attract more Civil Society organisations into EVS, EVS4ALL recommends to:

Continue and strengthen Europe-wide EVS-awareness campaigns to reach a wider diversity of Civil Society organisations and, in turn, inform more youngsters with fewer opportunities about EVS.

Step up outreach efforts targeting local Civil Society organisations, which are more likely to reach youngsters with fewer opportunities than public and formal education institutions.



Funding

To improve and better adapt funding opportunities to the needs and structures of EVS organisations, EVS4ALL recommends to:

Increase funding amounts to provide fair funding conditions to organisations involved in non-formal education.

Cover the staff costs incurred during EVS projects to strengthen small-scale Civil Society organisations' capacity to get involved in the EVS strand of Erasmus+ Youth in Action, and diversify the EVS "ecosystem".

Better adapt the funding amounts to the cost of living across the European Union, for instance by including a regional approach in the Organisational and Individual Support amounts.

EVS 4 ALL

European Voluntary Service for All

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The European Policy Recommendations are a synthesis of the project's 1st Intellectual Output, which was prepared and submitted by Volonteuropa. The present document is a summary arranged by YES Forum. For more information about the EVS4ALL project or to obtain the full European Policy Recommendations, please visit our website evs4all.eu or contact us directly at info@evs4all.eu.

The Partnership



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