



**‘Towards a More Inclusive  
European Voluntary Service’**  
*European Policy Recommendations*

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# Erasmus+

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE EUROPEAN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

European Voluntary Service for All, EVS4ALL, was a two-year Erasmus+ Key Action 2 project initiated by Allianz Cultural Foundation, implemented in cooperation with Volonteuropa and coordinated by IKAB-Bildungswerk. It was aimed at showcasing the need for making European Voluntary Service (EVS) more inclusive of young people with fewer opportunities and one of its key intellectual outputs is this set of European policy recommendations, entitled “Towards a More Inclusive European Voluntary Service”.

The following introduction to the European policy recommendations results from the work of 14 consortium partners from France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom, ranging from foundations and civil society organisations, to partners with extensive experience in the field of youth and voluntary work in Europe. We recommend reading the entirety of this document, to fully appreciate and understand the reasoning behind the different sections of the recommendations.

EVS, as a broad European youth mobility programme, promoting different forms of volunteering and aimed at engaging diverse volunteers from across the European Union (as well as partner countries further afield), strengthens the values of solidarity, social justice, dignity and respect for human rights, democracy, cohesion and integration in Europe.


Europe and its people are facing a plethora of challenges which erode the values upon which the EU was founded; communities and society are increasingly unequal and more people than ever are facing social exclusion, particularly young people. We are seeing ongoing cuts to funding and services across Europe. The original crisis of financial markets has turned into a crisis of public spending, where increasing numbers of people, including young people facing multiple challenges, are finding themselves in vulnerable situations. The neo-liberal model is producing more and new forms of social exclusion. These times of crises are also increasing the divisions in societies and communities. In several European countries with the rise of far-rights or populist movements we are witnessing the escalation of xenophobic sentiments and the research of a scapegoat to blame. These broken communities are turning their backs on the weakest of society, leaving behind people with fewer opportunities. Civil society organisations in Europe, therefore, need to play an even stronger role, both in policy and practice, to ensure that social injustices and exclusion of the most vulnerable people in our societies can be effectively challenged.

The EVS4ALL consortium reaffirms that programmes such as EVS, other EU mobility initiatives such as EU Aid Volunteers, EU Solidarity Corps and programmes at national level, are needed more than ever. In the context of this project, we welcome the funding received from Erasmus+ programme; the work carried out over the last two years enabled the consortium to showcase that, while we generally have a very healthy state of youth volunteering in Europe, unfortunately too often the most vulnerable young people, with fewest opportunities, are left out of volunteering and cross-border mobility programmes such as EVS.

The funding received and the work undertaken by the EVS4ALL consortium enabled us to create long-standing partnerships to promote youth volunteering across Europe, a very important feature of EVS as a programme in general. Nevertheless, studies carried out at both EU and partner country level by project partners confirm that there are still many, often compounding, barriers to engaging young people with fewer opportunities in cross-border volunteering. EVS remains a mechanism for mobility which tends to favour and benefit (because of its design and implementation at Member State level, amongst other factors) those young people, who will have already volunteered before, travelled abroad, who speak foreign languages and will have or will engage in higher education.

The EVS4ALL consortium calls for improvements in the implementation of EVS to make it more inclusive of young people with fewer opportunities, so that it reaches youth furthest from volunteering and thus helps them develop and nurture their individual potential, knowledge and experience. In EVS, as well as other, more recent EU mobility initiatives, there is a need to concentrate more effort on those young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, who can benefit from volunteering the most.

Improvements need to happen at both EU, as well as Member State level, in the areas of: communication, sharing and networking, promotion and dissemination, support, quality and accessibility, and flexibility. Organisations engaged in EVS need also to address their engagement with young people with fewer opportunities; their capacities to do so need to be adequately supported.



EVS4ALL really was a rich experience that gave me a lot, I was able to meet people from different countries, travel abroad, and discover new organisations, while feeling useful.

Claire, EVS4ALL Volunteer

## PREFACE

**EVS has recently celebrated 20 years of promoting youth mobility in Europe, while 2017 marks three decades of Erasmus in the European Union. Both are major milestones which reaffirm a strong record of the Union and Member States in facilitating the rights of freedom of movement bestowed to Europeans under the conditions of EU Citizenship. Cross-border mobility of young people, to engage in studying, employment or volunteering, strengthens the European Union and civil society's engagement in promoting solidarity, peace, social justice, as well as human rights, democracy and social cohesion.**

**Young people and their mobility, in the context of EU2020 Strategy, are a very important pillar of the overarching strategy, aimed at ensuring stability, fairness, economic and social wellbeing, amongst others, for the people of Europe. EVS and more recent EU initiatives, such as EU Aid Volunteers and EU Solidarity Corps, strengthen the provision of opportunities for mobility, especially so for young people. However, the access to these programmes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and with fewer opportunities is often limited and varies across Member States. This was previously pointed out in major European policy reports such as the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (published by the European Year of Volunteering 2011 Civil Society Alliance), as well as various EU Institutional reports on youth mobility and promotion of cross-border voluntary activities.**


**In this context, a pan-European campaign, “We are Europe! Manifesto for rebuilding Europe from the bottom up”, was launched by Ulrich Beck, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and the Allianz Cultural Foundation. It called for a ‘European Year of Volunteering for Everyone’, appealing to Europe's citizens and civil society stakeholders, to take a more active and participatory role in the European project ([www.manifest-europa.eu](http://www.manifest-europa.eu)).**

**Building on the momentum of the campaign, Allianz Cultural Foundation collaborated with IKAB Bildungswerk and Volonteurope, to develop a proposal for an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership aimed at promoting more inclusive and accessible EVS in Europe. Successfully approved by the German National Agency for the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme, the consortium consisted of 14 partners from France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom, ranging from foundations and civil society organisations, to partners with extensive experience in the field of youth and voluntary work in Europe. Over the course of two years, the project partners completed national studies assessing the different and often multiple barriers to cross-border mobility for young people with fewer opportunities. They engaged in consortium meetings and discussions, including with their respective national stakeholders, to**

develop guidelines for implementing inclusive EVS placements. These were subsequently tested in short-term EVS mobilities, funded through separate Key Action 1 projects, between the different project partners.


Upon the completion of the EVS mobilities, Volonteurope and its host organisation, Volunteering Matters, collected feedback from questionnaires from partner organisations and from interviews with volunteers and mentors. Volunteering Matters also gathered evidence on the usefulness of using digital learning in blended mobilities for young people with fewer opportunities, which is contained in a second intellectual output of the EVS4ALL project, a helpful guide for EVS organisations entitled “Blended Mobilities: Discovering Digital Learning”.

The EVS4ALL consortium is delighted to be able to present this document, a range of European policy recommendations aimed at showcasing the need for making EVS more inclusive of young people with fewer opportunities. We acknowledge the invaluable support received during the project and the process of compiling the recommendations, in the form of co-financing from the Erasmus+ programme, financial and intellectual support from Allianz Cultural Foundation, as well as the input of partner organisations and, most importantly, the young European volunteers who took part in EVS4ALL and helped to make this initiative a resounding success.



EVS4ALL helped me realise the different ways I can contribute to society, and the experience helped me to grow as a person. I met people from many different cultures, and now I know we're not really that different!

Kamila, EVS4ALL Volunteer

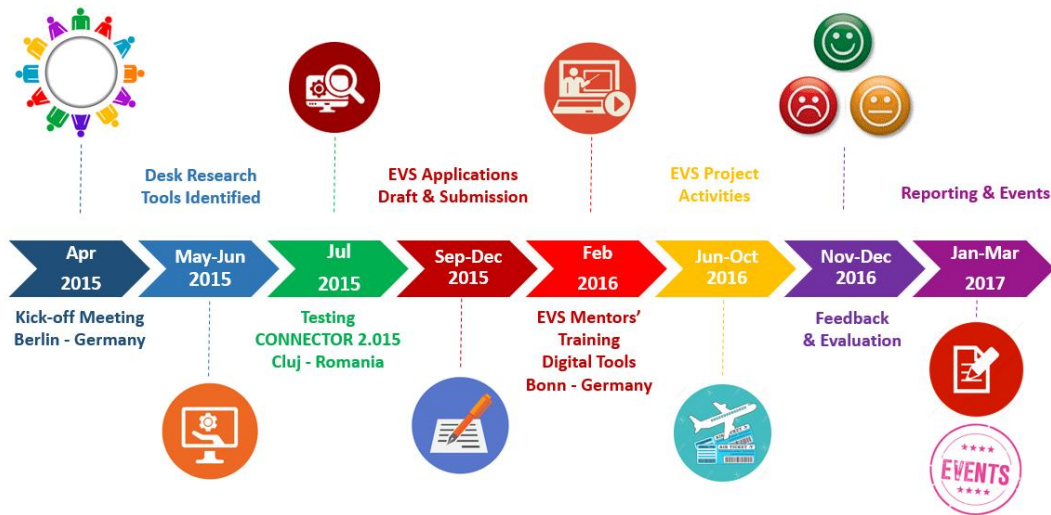


I would say that EVS4ALL was a great opportunity to have new experiences, meet new people, new cultures, and new cities, learn new languages and collaborate with others on a good cause while opening our minds.

Daniel, EVS4ALL volunteer



## TIMELINE OF EVS4ALL ACTIVITIES



## QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

### The EVS4ALL Consortium recommends the following:

Make the programme more accessible facilitating the accreditation process for small size CSOs and organisations that are more likely to involve volunteers with fewer opportunities.

Small size CSOs often face administrative barriers, or difficulties of accessing to funding or reporting duties are too demanding. National agencies should provide more information and support for accreditation. Funds should also aim at supporting building the capacity of small, local organisations and strengthening civil society supporting the diversity and independence of CSOs across Europe.

The funding could include a budget line to cover staff cost to make sure that small size CSOs have the capacity to access and run EVS exchanges.

Simplify the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, so that information on youth mobility through EVS is easily accessible.

Make the Erasmus+ Programme Guide more interactive, more target specific, providing tools for support in preparing applications, for example, online training, videos.

Extend the time frame between accessibility of application and deadline, as well as shorten the application process to enable long-term planning. The assessment of an application takes place quite late (applications of April are processed as late as July, sometimes even August). Especially, for volunteers coming from smaller organisations this requires short-term planning and a high risk of not being able to complete in time the administrative procedures necessary to make the placement possible.

Install uniform standards and procedures to be used by all national agencies. Some National Agencies are late in releasing the correct application forms, in selecting the projects, preparing contracts of approved projects, transferring the money to the coordinating organisation, and in granting the final 20% of the grant. National agencies should have a common approach concerning costs, budget and deadlines.



## COMMUNICATION, SHARING AND NETWORKING

### The EVS4ALL Consortium recommends the following:

The creation of a unified and harmonised online communication platform, which will become a focal point for the sharing of information between European Voluntary Service alumni and potential new participants. While there are a number of sites that contain information about EVS, there is no 'one stop' site functioning as the primary, and clearly Erasmus+ affiliated and endorsed, website for information. With the creation of a harmonised online communication platform, as an extension of the primary EVS site, the platform would then become the first port of call for both potential volunteers and for potential and already accredited EVS organisations, to communicate with each other, and to collect and share good practice and information on the possible barriers to inclusion. Furthermore, it will be a platform upon which interested parties can share advice on application processes, discuss guidelines, and post blogs about their experiences. For other stakeholders involved in EVS, the platform could host practice toolkits for mentors, sending and receiving organisations and be a repository for policy documentation. The platform could then become a place for fostering skills development and transfer of knowledge that could build both the capacity of the host and sending community.

Communication, feedback mechanisms and transparency on the assessment of applications from National Agencies should be improved. Currently it is inconsistent and lacks clear standards

Communication between the different official bodies engaged in EVS, including National Agencies, should be more harmonised, so that situations do not differ between the different Member States and from the formal European-level guidelines, good practices, recommendations.

Create a network of EVS mentors, share experience and seek advice. The network could share information on the unique EVS platform. The online platform could have a space for sending organisations and hosting organisations, mentors and other stakeholders, to share good practice and information on guideline for volunteering management practice.

Create guides and toolkits to be available on the unified website, in order to build capacity and enable smaller CSOs to be able to apply, as well as preparing themselves reducing costs for the project.

I think EVS4ALL is a great opportunity for young people and it is beneficial for those that want to improve their future prospects and experience new things.

Marta, EVS4ALL Volunteer

## SUPPORT

### The EVS4ALL Consortium recommends the following:

Provide additional funds for compulsory advanced planning visit, also to foster clear communication between sending and receiving organisation at all stage of the EVS placement (Planning, during the placement and after).

Facilitate visa procedures and administrative bureaucracy for sending and receiving organisations.

Provide language courses pre-departure also for short term EVS placements.

Courses should be both in the hosting organisation's working language but also in the local language. The hosting organisation should also provide a glossary of the most common words used during their work.

Create a more accessible online tool, taking into considerations the need of people with learning difficulties.

Provide extra funds for supporting people with special needs with the possibility of proving access to reinforced mentorship or support to be able to take part to EVS projects. The host organisation should have the capacity to set up regular meetings with mentors as well as being allowed enough flexibility to host more meetings to meet the needs of the volunteers.

The use of digital tools – Powtoon, Padlet and Open Badges which were all used in different combinations on EVS4ALL projects – should be encouraged. Participants should receive pre-departure training that introduces them to these tools and gives some guidance on how they can be effectively used while volunteering – both as a way of recording and reflecting on their own experience, and as a promotional tool for the hosting and sending organisations.

The provisions of the Online Linguistic Support should be altered so that volunteers on shorter placements (less than two months) are able to access it.

Provide extra funding for specialised mentorship of the volunteers – this is especially important in the context of increasing inclusion – to provide support for volunteers with varied support requirements

## FLEXIBILITY

The EVS4ALL Consortium recommends the following:

Increase the flexibility of activities required within the EVS programme.

Create opportunity for volunteers to be allocated in placements that engage and work in community based projects.

For all stakeholders, aim at reducing the level of bureaucracy involved in EVS.

Allow for more flexibility in terms of the numbers of volunteers and their profiles, remove the need for volunteers to be named in the application process, thus increasing its flexibility.

Allow more flexibility in adjusting the budget, particularly in relation to support offered to young people with fewer opportunities.



## PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION

The EVS4ALL Consortium recommends the following:

Create a Europe-wide campaign which reaches out to a very local level, to spread information on EVS programme to young people with fewer opportunities to overcome obstacle to participation, involving small grass root civil society organisations working in the EU.

The EVS programme (international) voluntary services have become known in many EU-member states, as it strengthens non-formal education and open-ended learning processes for young people and thus should be promoted and represented in the different countries as a specific form of civil engagement and non-formal education. The volunteers acquire personal competences and competencies which will improve their future chances on the labour market in a substantial way, by encouraging lifelong learning. European societies will benefit greatly. However, it would be too much to expect that all labour market related and / or socio-political goals of the EU can be met by the EVS programme. On the one hand the EVS programme already has become more labour market-oriented, which is useful for certain countries. On the other hand, the programme has lost some momentum as far as an educational and orienting year is concerned.

Create a Europe wide campaign that would target not only formal learning institutions taking a multi-level approach. Information about EVS opportunities should be shared not only in schools and universities but also in places where could be seen and accessed by young people non in education with fewer opportunities, such as community centres, local gyms, job centres, GP offices, or public places in rural isolated communities or most deprived areas of the country. These campaigns could enhance the possibility to inform about EVS reaching also young people that are less likely to be engaged in formal education. Local organisations and bodies should be also used for outreach work in spreading the word on EVS activities. For example, social workers and youth clubs, such organisations are more likely to be engaging young people with fewer opportunities than schools and universities.

The campaign should be disseminated with a multi-level approach sharing information not only with the national government and local governments and municipalities to be in charge to cascade it down to other organisation and in particular CSOs and bodies that work directly with young people in particular with those one with fewer opportunities.

To reach and inform more people a multichannel approach should be adopted using different media. Such as online communication engaging also with new social media such as snapchat or Vine, as well as taking a more face-to face approach.

## FUNDING

The EVS4ALL Consortium recommends the following:

Increase funding for dissemination of outcomes and results.

Provide further funding for provision of logistical and emotional support to volunteers who face multiple and complex challenges.

Funding should include covering costs for vital preparatory activities, such as Advance Planning Visits, as well as cover costs for high quality pre-departure training, or providing reinforced mentorship during placements.

Funding should include a budget line to cover staff costs to make sure that small-size civil society organisations (CSOs) have the capacity to access and run EVS exchanges. Funding should support building the capacity of small, local organisations, thus strengthening civil society and increasing the diversity, and independence, of CSOs across Europe.

Provide different levels of funding that are adapted to the varied costs of living in the countries in which the placement takes place.

Simplify and clarify how to access costs for additional mentoring to support beneficiaries with complex difficulties.

Provide funding for pre-departure language course for short EVS placements, particularly when engaging young people with fewer opportunities.

European funding for EVS should be supported by national funds. Member States should aim to invest more in the infrastructure and support their national CSOs with core funding to strengthen their capacity to successfully apply for EVS funding.

Only a handful of Member States have their own national and international funding programmes. Therefore, it is important to visualise EVS as a continuing independent funding programme.



**Working in the TV**  
I had the opportunity to work in the TV for my subject (Televisión de Galicia) in 2018.

**DVS in Hungary**  
The DVS gave me the opportunity to travel to Hungary and work in a kindergarten with children between 1 year and 4 years.

**Come back to the origins**  
My time in the TV is unforgettable because I met a lot of interesting people and it was a great experience in Galicia, a place where I grew up, since there I had completed my master's studies with short courses.




**My brilliant padlet**  
I made it to be useful for myself.

**Kamila's life**  
I was born in Mexico in the state of Jalisco, I went to school in France and Uruguay. I love to combine it all. I like to travel and to meet people from where I grew up.

**Kamila's school**  
On June 1st I had my 1st level at the school. (2022/2023)




**my story TRAVELLING**  
everywhere, starting with family and now alone or with friends, this is one of my passions.

**Uruguay**  
I was born and lived in Montevideo until I was 14.





**EMPLOYEE**  
**PACO**  
**OF THE MONTH**



**Where we are?**

**.MADRID**

**SPAIN**





## EVS4ALL - EVS PROJECTS



## THE PARTNERSHIP



More information about the EVS4ALL project can be found online:  
[evs4all.eu](http://evs4all.eu) and [facebook.com/evs4all](https://facebook.com/evs4all)