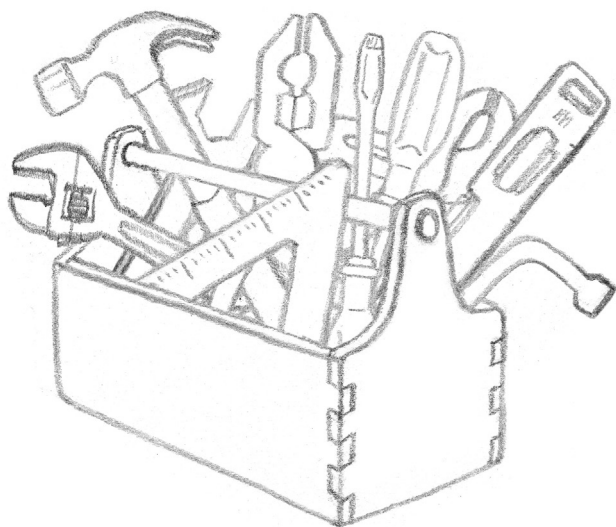


MENTORING GUIDE



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1. INTRODUCTION

This mentoring guide is connected to the European Solidarity Corps programme. The aim of the programme is to gather together European youths to build a more equal and just society where the voices of young people are heard and listened to. In the European Solidarity Corps young people can support those in need and solve societal issues both locally and on a European scale.

In practice, solidarity means that young people do something that brings joy and benefit to their local community. At the same time, young people learn from participating in the activity. The solidarity work done by the European Solidarity Corps always tends to a societal need, creates equal opportunities and has a positive effect on the wellbeing of different types of communities.

The European Solidarity Corps helps young people to transition into working life and offers them the opportunity to implement and participate in projects that strengthen European solidarity and cohesion. All young people between the ages of 18 and 30 are welcome to join the European Solidarity Corps. The European Solidarity Corps especially

strives to strengthen the opportunities of young people with fewer opportunities to participate and gain new experiences.

At the core of the European Solidarity Corps is volunteering. The young people of the European Solidarity Corps are ready to act unselfishly on behalf of local communities and for a more solidary and equal Europe. For this the volunteers need support.

This mentoring guide is meant for the people who support the volunteer during their volunteering period. Mentoring includes all the support that the volunteer receives during their participation in the programme.

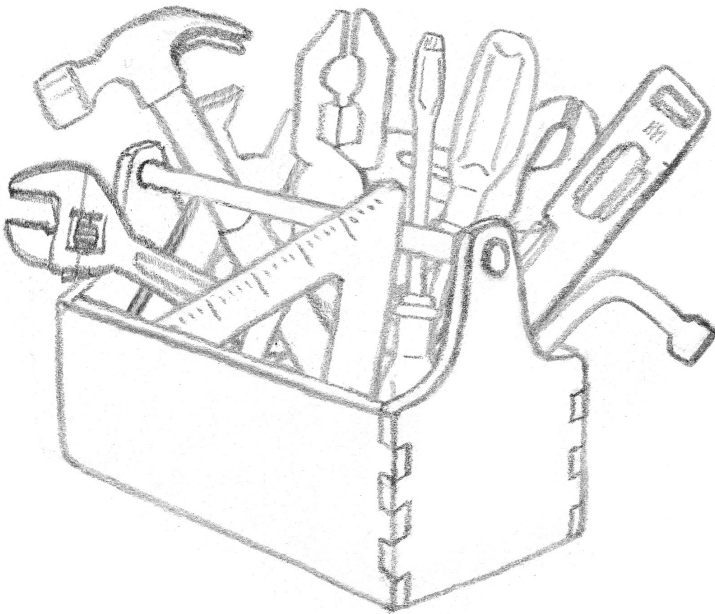
In the first part of the mentoring guide, we explain the basis of mentoring and examine its relation to other actions that support the volunteer. Then the volunteering period is described in its different stages. The description begins before the volunteering project starts with preparations done before leaving and the description continues to the start of the period, receiving the volunteer and to support during the period. In addition to this, the role of mentoring is described at the end of the volunteering project as well as after the volunteering. Different perspectives and

practical methods to support the mentoring are described for each stage. This guide gives answers to how the volunteer's learning process can be supported. How are dialogical practices used in mentoring? How does experimental attitude and action affect the success of the project? What should the participating organisations understand about feedback and evaluation?

This mentoring guide works as a concrete tool in supporting the volunteer. It also works as a description of the learning process, which can be used by both the hosting organisation as well as the supporting organisation. One of the objectives of the volunteering is to provide the young person with the best possible learning experience that they will benefit from in the future as well. At the same time, the participating organisations gain the opportunity to learn about their own operations and to create new international connections. The effects of the volunteer period are thus not only limited to the hosting organisation and the volunteer, but also reach out to the supporting organisation and to the communities around it.

One young person's volunteering period can have significant effects on national and international communities if the young person has enough support during the period.

The volunteering period is at best a fruitful and rewarding experience for all those involved. Interactions between different worlds of experience and encounters between different cultures promote internationalisation and democratisation. Genuine democratic coexistence is based on using each person's experiences in shared action and on developing the individual opportunities of all people. Guiding a volunteer from another culture in another country is an irreplaceable part of everyday democratic work in Europe.



2. THE BASIS OF MENTORING

In both sending and receiving a volunteer there are many necessary tasks. In this guide we discuss the mentoring which is included in the volunteering and which is the responsibility of the organisations. How these tasks are organised and how responsibilities are shared is decided by the organisations. Though the organisations are encouraged to carry out the mentoring with the help of many people and in cooperation with other organisations, each volunteer should have a specific mentor who is primarily responsible for arranging the mentoring. The volunteer requires personal support during their volunteer period. Arranging this support can be done in different ways depending on the organisations, their resources and their contacts. In this guide we encourage organisations to act creatively and to use their already existing knowledge and networks to give the best possible support to the volunteer. The most important thing is that the support corresponds to the volunteer's needs and is sensible for all those involved.

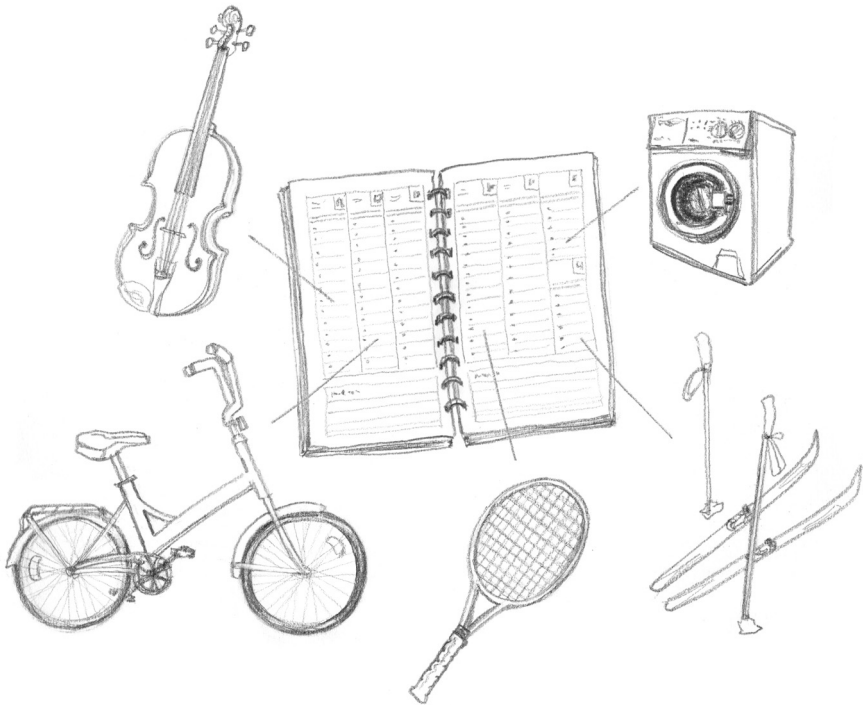
Mentoring means giving the volunteer personal support throughout their volunteering period. A mentor is a person committed to this task or a body named responsible for supporting the volunteer. The most central aspects of mentoring

are supporting the young volunteer in leaving home, settling into the new country and in returning home. The aim of mentoring is to help the volunteer recognise factors that promote their employability and that strengthen their learning experience. For the volunteer and the participating organisations to receive as much joy and benefit as possible from the volunteering period, mentoring should be invested in. It should not be done alone, but rather together with others. This makes it more rewarding and fun and it enables more diverse support for the volunteer. Mentoring can be organised by a group of adults and peers gathered together to support the volunteer and who have different tasks in the mentoring.

Mentoring offers one sure anchor for the volunteer that they will have from the beginning of coming to a new country. Mentoring should also support the volunteer's work with different types of organisations and support practical arrangements in the volunteer's free time. The person responsible for the mentoring should be a part of the project right from the start when choosing the volunteer and they should also be involved in planning their arrival.

The role of mentoring becomes apparent when it is compared to other tasks in the hosting organisation. The distribution of the tasks described below can be flexible and the same person

can act in many roles in relation to the volunteer. These tasks are implemented during the volunteer process, which begins with the hosting or supporting organisation being accepted into the programme and ends with reports of the volunteer period to the funding body.



ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

- *Writing the application*
- *Choosing a volunteer from the European Solidarity Corps database (PASS)*
- *Communicating with the partner organisations and managing financial matters with them*
- *Communicating with the volunteer in their home country*
- *Following the budget*
- *Basic information for the volunteer (living arrangements, work times, transportation, safety etc.)*
- *Insurances*
- *Organising language teaching*
- *Informing mentors and volunteers about trainings*
- *Living arrangements (leases etc.)*
- *Permits (electricity contracts, home insurance, possible visa)*
- *End reports*
- *Communicating with the national agency*

SUPPORT FOR WORK TASKS

- *Practical guidance in work*
- *Introductory training*
- *Ensuring work safety*
- *Making a written work plan (first this is done weekly, later a work description will suffice)*
- *Guidance into the receiving country's working life culture*

MENTORING

- *Mentoring before the period, including organising a leaving training in the supporting organisation*
- *Support for the volunteer during the whole period*
- *Regular meetings between the mentor and the volunteer, for instance once a week (at first regularly, then later this is usually done less frequently)*
- *Supporting learning*
- *Supporting goals and obtaining them*
- *Making successes and achievements visible*

- *Receiving the volunteer in the new place*
- *Making a plan for free time for the first months together with others*
- *Supporting building social networks*
- *Help for everyday tasks:*
 - *Registrations to the local register offices and the immigration services*
 - *Opening a bank account*
 - *Information about everyday living (laundry rooms, recycling etc.)*
 - *Getting to know the city*
 - *Finding a hobby*
 - *Nearby shops*
 - *Getting a bus pass, bicycle, walking routes*
 - *Getting a phone subscription*
- *Post-placement support for the volunteer*

The goals of mentoring

The goal of mentoring is to support the volunteer throughout their whole volunteering period starting from preparing to leave and ending in returning home. Mentoring requires time and the task requires careful effort. Successful mentoring expands and enriches the experiences

of all those involved. The young volunteer gains more from the period and the mentor has the opportunity to see their home and culture through the eyes of another. At best, the understanding of an unfamiliar culture for both the mentor and the volunteer is deepened and both can develop their own interactional skills and problem-solving abilities.

To support the young volunteer's learning process through mentoring, different practices and tools described in this guide can be used. It is good to keep in mind that the person responsible for mentoring is not working alone, but is rather a part of the hosting organisation and possibly part of a network of mentors.

Sometimes a volunteer may require special support and then they should have intensified, tailored mentoring, which may receive separate financial support. This type of support can mean for instance accompanying the volunteer to their flight, introducing working life skills and strong support in everyday activities.

3. MENTORING IN THE PREPARATION STAGE

There can be many types of paths behind the volunteering period. Some young people may be independently active in searching for a hosting organisation, whereas sometimes the volunteer and the supporting organisations have worked together to find a placement. What combines these paths is that usually in volunteer projects the volunteer needs at least two organisations to support them:

- ***The hosting organisation***, which works in the country where the young person carries out the volunteering. The hosting organisation takes care of for instance the young person's living arrangements, training and support during the volunteering.



- ***The supporting organisation*** works in the young person's home country. It helps the young person with

travel arrangements and offers the young person support both before and after the volunteering.



The hosting and the supporting organisations have frequent contact with the young person throughout the entire volunteering period.

Both organisations have their own tasks. A successful volunteering period however usually has a well-functioning cooperation relationship between these two organisations. This should be a focus straight away when the cooperation relationship is born.

The volunteering period always starts with an idea. Often the first moments after the idea are such that support is not yet needed. When the idea develops into a decision, the need for support and thus also for mentoring become actual. The volunteer needs mentoring both in their home country and in the receiving country. The success of the volunteering begins with careful planning in both the supporting

and the hosting organisations. Planning the mentoring can be considered one of the most important aspects of this stage. Preparation and orientation have central significance for the success of the volunteering. The time before leaving is also the period where the learning process starts and this should be supported by both the supporting and the hosting organisations in cooperation together.

Preparations in the hosting organisation

What types of concrete preparatory measures are required in the hosting organisation? First of all, it is good to think about organising the mentoring and the possible issues involved in that beforehand already when considering a volunteer. For instance these questions are good to consider beforehand: What types of learning experiences do we want to offer the volunteer? What resources do we have? Who do we have in our networks? Who would be interested in this? What joys and benefits are there for those involved? How can responsibilities be shared? How is the local mentoring network's cooperation organised? How do we mark the cooperation? What do we do when the volunteer returns home after the volunteering? How do we share what we have learnt from the cooperation and use this in the future?

When the volunteer is chosen and more is known about them, gathering the mentoring network can be more concrete and it can already respond to the needs and hopes expressed by the volunteer. In some cases the hosting organisation can be so small that the human resources for mentoring are few. Especially in such cases, there should be cooperation with other organisations. Though mentoring would be organised as a network's cooperation, the division of roles should be considered. Who is the primary mentor that the volunteer can rely on? Who will try to create a confidential relationship with the volunteer? During the volunteering period, these relationships can change due to mentoring needs and one person can naturally become more important than another. In such cases it is important to make sure that arrangements are done openly so that the volunteer and the others involved know who is doing what.

The hosting organisation should thus start preparations for mentoring but also the cooperation with the supporting organisation. First it is important to build a relationship with the future volunteer. This can be done by contacting them through an internet call or by writing to them. This stage is the start of the learning process and its expectations, fears and hopes for both the volunteer and the

participating organisations. These matters should be brought into a discussion that increases understanding, meaning a dialogue. Through shared understanding, different people obtain a clearer image of what aspects connected to the period should be arranged and what should be thought about them. Tense expectations also become apparent and build a base for functional cooperation.

It is good to encourage the volunteer to talk about themselves, their current life situation and to bring forth their expectations for the volunteering period. This can be encouraged by speaking about one's own experiences. The mentor can tell what they themselves think, feel, anticipate or are nervous for in relation to the volunteering. Talking about experiences in this way helps in forming an equal relationship. The volunteer can hear that the mentor is thinking about the same things as they are, though from a different perspective. This type of speech can help the young volunteer to grasp confusing matters in a different way than if they would merely answer the mentor's questions. Speaking about experiences helps in understanding the other person's different ways of experiencing the same things. This is meant to increase understanding of one's own thoughts and motives. At the same time there is increased understanding of the other person's

thoughts and of the approaching volunteering. All of this increased understanding is meant to support the volunteer's learning process and letting them get the most out of this period.

Though contact before the volunteering period might mostly be in writing, the mentor should at least once speak to the volunteer. This makes the relationship more personal and brings forth the language skills of the volunteer. This helps in orienting towards how the communication may possibly go at the start of the period and what types of work tasks would be good to have at the start of the period. Through an internet call a person's face becomes familiar, so both parties can recognise each other at their first meeting.

The mentor can help the volunteer adapt to the receiving country's culture and connect to their future place of residence by sending them information about the country, its culture and their home town beforehand. If needed, the volunteer can also be told about a different sense of time, working culture, environment and amount of light. All of these can be surprising to many people from elsewhere in Europe or from areas close to Europe. These matters should be discussed in an everyday and concrete way.

What does a small village mean in the country in question? What does it mean when it is hot or cold? Reality is seen by different people often in very different ways and therefore it is important to clarify matters about the receiving country at an early stage.

Preparations in the supporting organisation

The supporting organisation has an important role in supporting the volunteer throughout the whole process. The support offered to the volunteer starts in the preparatory stage and continues until the volunteer returns to their home country. The supporting organisation has the responsibility to organise support for the volunteer when leaving home. The content of this support has not been precisely defined, but it can be examined from the needs of the volunteer. What type of support do they need? Is it a matter of organising practical matters or of discussions to ease nervousness? Are practical life issues complicating the young person's leaving and can they be helped? How does the young person's partner respond to them leaving? What life situation is the young person coming from and what plans for the future is leaving an answer to? How does the volunteering relate to possible employment in the future?

Initiating and directing the learning process for the volunteer often requires outside support. It is completely understandable that leaving to another country includes nervous anticipation. For many young people it is a unique opportunity to detach themselves from their everyday lives and to do something new and different. Few volunteers consciously think about what they want to learn during the volunteering. It is good to talk about learning for instance through very concrete questions. Why is the young person leaving? What do they want to do and experience? What could they learn from these experiences? Many volunteers have said that these discussions have been beneficial and come to mind later during the process. Some volunteers leave home with very clear objectives. It is also important to support these volunteers in their learning and encourage them to be open to different types of things and teachings that they have not anticipated in their own mind.

Preparations require cooperation

The cooperation between the supporting and the hosting organisations should be initiated as soon as possible. This can have a significant effect on supporting the volunteer. Cooperation can be done from different bases and it can be

done on many levels. Some organisations know each other beforehand and have an existing connection, whereas for others the partner organisation can be a new acquaintance. The most essential thing is to create a connection and get to know the other's activities. Good cooperation gives the hosting organisation important information about what type of volunteer is coming to them. The supporting organisation benefits from the cooperation in that they hear from others than just the volunteer about how the preparations for the volunteering are going. There are examples of situations where the mentor at the supporting organisation has been told that all preparations are going well, but the mentor at the hosting organisation has had a very different view of the situation. Cooperation can help in clearing the situation and in supporting the volunteer.

TOOLBOX I

With these methods you can encourage the volunteer to talk about their own experiences

- Discuss examples based on your own experiences and life.

- Speak about thoughts and feelings arising in the here and now and encourage the volunteer to do the same.

For example: "Now that I am listening to you, this thought came to my mind..." "How do you feel when we talk about these things?"

- Ask the volunteer to talk about an event or situation that was significant to them.

For example: "Tell me about an event or a situation which has affected what you think about volunteering."

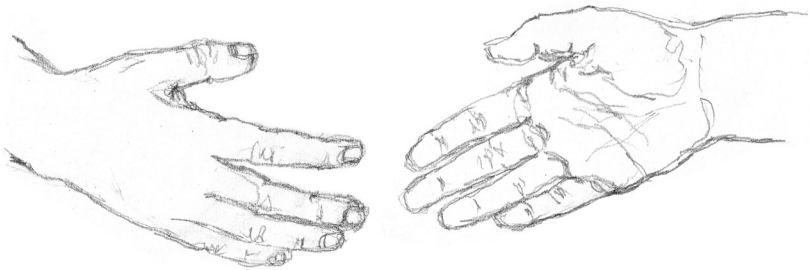
- Ask the volunteer additional questions about the different aspects of their experience: observations, thoughts, memories, feelings and imaginations.

For example: "Tell me more about what you saw/thought/felt/imagined, when you heard about your placement for volunteering for the first time?"

- Ask more about causes and effects.

For example: "What things led to you wanting to volunteer in this country? What effects have they had on your life?"

4. At the start of the volunteer period: Receiving the young person



The most crucial periods for the mentor are the first hours, days and weeks of the volunteering period. At best the relationship built between the young volunteer and the mentor before the period will deepen and the worst peaks of nervousness will subside. The most important questions are answered and new interesting questions arise for the volunteer to ponder. Practical arrangements for living, transport and work gain sufficient clarity. The mentor has to decide whether to take the volunteer during the first days or weeks to get acquainted to activities in which they can participate in the future as well. It has to be agreed who will help in the future with questions relating to the new home.

Especially the first weeks should be invested in. If the volunteering period starts well and trust is created from the beginning, this saves a lot of time and effort in the future.

For the volunteer to receive the support they need, mentoring should be considered something done as a community. It is good to understand that the volunteer often needs very many types of support. Therefore mentoring should be seen as a service provided by many people. At best the volunteer has a well-organised network of mentors who support the volunteer during the volunteering period and can respond to arising challenges.

A soft landing into the new country

In addition to the first weeks, the very first hours and days are significant. For the volunteering period to be successful, it is important that the volunteer has the feeling that they are welcome. What can the mentor concretely do so that the start is as good as possible? A welcoming package at the volunteer's residence can be a small, but significant gesture for the volunteer in supporting a good start. The package can include for instance chocolate, a small book about the country or new place of residence, or a welcome

card from the future work community. It would be good to include a small card in the package about the size of a business card that has the contact information of all those responsible for the volunteering period and those relevant to it. For emotional safety it is essential that the volunteer has a clear picture of whom they can contact. A welcoming dinner held with a larger group of people has often been a memorable experience for volunteers.

The support and guidance given to the volunteer in practical matters are highlighted during the first days and weeks. However it should be noted that settling down in a new environment can often be exhausting despite being exciting, and therefore it is important to ensure proper rest in the beginning. It is important that in the beginning the volunteer can become attached to their new environment through action and activities, but in suitable amounts, so that the volunteer also has time for their own consideration and settling down. In the beginning it is good to let the volunteer know that everyone wants the best for them and they want to help, and that the best methods for this are found together through experience and discussion.

Support in practical matters

To ensure the best start for mentoring, there should be enough time reserved in the beginning to solve arising questions. These are usually connected to living arrangements, transportation, organising hobbies and free time, and building social relationships. Some of the most important matters are the volunteer's living arrangements. Finding and furnishing an apartment are the responsibility of the hosting organisation and the mentor can participate in planning the furnishing of the apartment. Optimally, the mentor has seen the apartment beforehand so that they can answer any questions that arise about it. At the start of the period, starting the actual volunteering is an especially central matter, but questions connected to this should primarily be solved by the people who are responsible for the volunteer's support connected to work tasks.

Support in social relationships

At the beginning of the period, the most important thing is to build a relationship between the volunteer and the mentoring network. At the start of the period, the person responsible for mentoring should focus on creating trust between

themselves and the volunteer. As mentioned above, building trust should be started by having contact with the volunteer already before they arrive. Trust is usually best built when the mentor strives to be genuinely interested in the volunteer's life, points of interest and experiences. Nice experiences together at the start of the period also often help in generating trust. These can be for instance trips together to the movie theatre, sports events or museums. Cooking and eating together are also very natural ways to learn to know each other. What is central in creating trust is that the mentor keeps their word on what they have promised to the volunteer and listens with interest and an open mind to the volunteer's thoughts and experiences.

At the start of the period it should be ensured that the young person also gets to know other people than the mentor and the network participating in the mentoring. This is helped by building a broad network beforehand and a good knowledge of different opportunities for activities in the area. The volunteer can be helped with getting to know new people through a type of game, in which the volunteer is given the task of getting to know three new people during the first week. This experience can be discussed in the mentor meeting. Getting to know other people should be divided into small tasks.

Organising and initiating the mentoring

At the start of the period it is important to agree on scheduling the mentoring. Supporting everyday life is a crucial task for mentors, but in addition to these, regular mentor meetings should be arranged. At first these can be more frequent and later less frequent. Regular meetings with the mentor offer the volunteer an opportunity to structure their own experience and help the mentor to find out if the support offered to the volunteer is sufficient. Right from the start, the volunteer should be encouraged to express their experiences openly. The mentor should keep in mind and emphasise to the volunteer that adapting to a new environment takes time. All those involved should be given time to get used to the new situation. The tasks given to the volunteer and their participation in other activities in the area should be supported as the volunteer's courage, language and skills improve. Overall, it is good to make the volunteer a weekly schedule and give them a calendar.

The start of the period is also a time when the hosting organisation and the young volunteer should make some type of plan for the entire period. Here the mentor can have an important role. This does not mean that everything is fully scheduled, themed and structured. The

first months are good to plan in more detail, but the end of the period can be a lot more open. It is essential that the volunteer and the hosting organisation have a sufficiently similar understanding of the plan for the volunteer period. A similar mapping of the situation should also be done halfway through the volunteering period, so that any possible adjustments can be made to the plan.

Dialogue in deepening mentoring

Dialogue helps in creating a trustful relationship. Dialogical interaction also promotes learning from our own actions. Dialogical interaction means discussion where the volunteer can speak about their own experiences and where the mentor and the volunteer can calmly listen to each other. This type of interaction creates an atmosphere that promotes and stimulates learning and creativity.

Dialogue does not aim to immediately solve issues, but to increase understanding and learning from other people's experiences. Dialogue is a discussion which aims to increase understanding of one's own thoughts, others' thoughts and the subject at hand. Dialogue supports flexible thinking. Flexibility is increased when we are exposed

to different points of view and thoughts that can be very different from our own. Flexibility of thought can help on a broader scale to learn new things and do well in new situations.

How are matters discussed in a dialogue between a mentor and a volunteer? In dialogue, they are meant to discuss the experiences which have made the participants in the discussion think about things the way they do. The volunteer can be encouraged to discuss the experiences that have led to them thinking about a topic in a certain way. Because a dialogue is an equal discussion, the mentor should also discuss their experiences behind their own views. This type of experience-based speech helps us understand the views of others and it offers an opportunity to learn more deeply about each other.

The principles of dialogical interaction may at best allow for deeper examination of tensions and contradictions. It also helps in understanding their backgrounds. The first requirement is that we as people are genuinely heard with our own experiences. Only after that can we listen to other people's different experiences of the same thing. Often already this eases tensions. Sometimes clarifying conflicts does not end in consensus, but rather in the parties

stating that they still see matters in different ways. But due to being heard, this matter can be left as it is and people can understand different ways of perceiving and acting. Taking different perspectives seriously also creates an experience of seeing and hearing others as entire people. If we emphasise similarity and uniformity too much, we lose the ability to see the uniqueness in others.

For a dialogical discussion to work, it requires time and calmness. This means one should think about when would be a sufficiently calm moment to pause. The location also has an effect on the functionality of the dialogue. The place would be good to be such where no one interrupts and where it is safe to talk. If possible, it would be good to choose a space where there are no tables or other obstacles between people. There are good experiences of discussions held while walking or driving, where the scenery changes and direct eye-contact is not necessary.

TOOLBOX II

Dialogue in mentoring

- Listen to the volunteer in peace and listen to yourself as well: what thoughts are awakened in you? The experience of being heard is a basis for dialogue.

- Speak through your own experiences and encourage the volunteer to do the same.

For example: "I think like this, because in my life I have done/seen these things..."

- Discuss tensions and conflicts in peace and see them as an opportunity to learn something new.

For example: "We do not need to try to solve this conflict now. It is enough that we understand what it is about. We can think what we should do about it after that."

- Look for hidden perspectives.

For example: "We have talked about these things. Is there something that we have not discussed yet?"

- Make sure there is enough time, a comfortable place and a setting that supports the interaction and create a nice routine for it, for instance having coffee or going on a walk.

5. During the volunteering period

One of the tasks of mentoring is to support the volunteer's learning process. Learning is promoted by a sufficiently exciting but simultaneously safe environment. In generating this tension, mentoring is of great help. Sufficient tension is usually generated already merely by the fact that the volunteer is in a new country surrounded by unfamiliar people in an unfamiliar culture and usually living alone for the first time. Creating a sufficiently safe environment is done by arranged matters going as fluently and as planned, and in this, mentoring has a crucial role. Mentoring should be seen as a moving and flexible process, where the people around the volunteer give them space and support in a suitable proportion. The mentor should not be too worried, but they should be available when needed if the challenges generated by the volunteering period grow too large. It is thus important to offer the volunteer an interesting and a sufficiently safe learning environment.

Doing volunteer work in a new country and the residing that is connected to it can prove to be challenging for a young person and thus also challenging for the mentor and the hosting organisation. Those participating in the

mentoring should map out possible risks beforehand, so that challenges stay contained. One important aspect to take care of beforehand is clarifying the roles of those responsible for mentoring. Challenges and issues are often also situations where both the volunteers and the hosting organisations can learn significant things. Challenges should be faced with sufficient gravity and interest rather than have them be ignored or solved too hastily.

Clarifying objectives for the volunteering period

After settling down and completing the first weeks, the mentor and the young volunteer should return to clarify the objectives the young person has set for their volunteering period. Good objectives are flexible and stimulating. They help to direct action in a meaningful way. They are examined and adapted. Objectives are primarily guidelines so that experiences from the volunteering period either strengthen or modify the objectives. Therefore examining the objectives and re-structuring them is important. Because of this, it is beneficial to write down some notes from the mentor meetings. These notes can be used later to support and reveal learning and progress.

One useful tool for clarifying matters is to write oneself a letter. This can be done both at the beginning of the period and at the end. At best the volunteer describes a lot of their own thoughts, observations, experiences, objectives and questions relating to the approaching or ongoing volunteering period.

Another method that has proven to be useful in creating objectives for learning is “recalling the future”. The mentor can ask the volunteer to imagine themselves with their luggage at the airport on the day they are leaving back home after a successful and fruitful exchange. The mentor can help imagining the future by asking for instance:

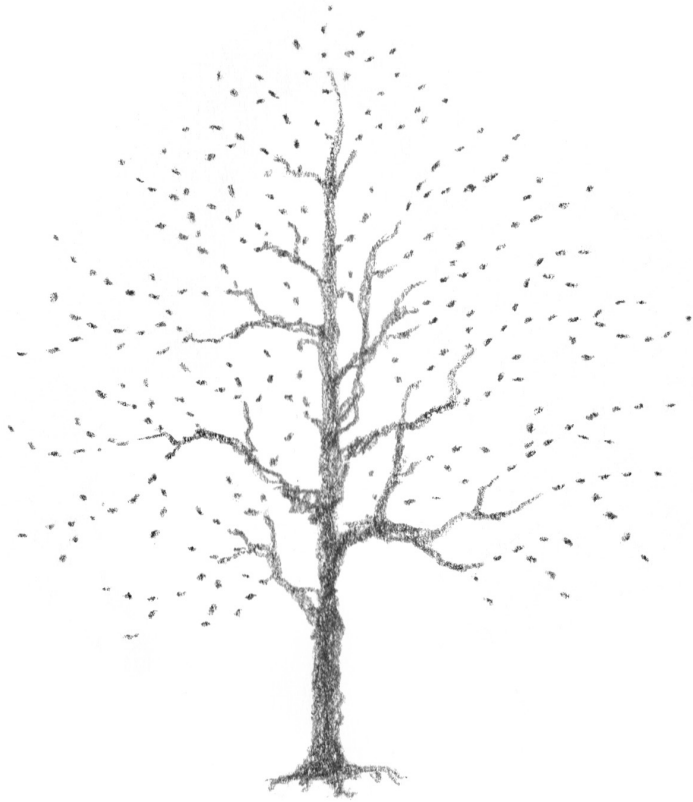
- *What do you think was the most important thing you learnt during this period?*
- *What experiences did you especially value?*
- *What types of challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?*
- *Who helped you?*

At the end it would be good to discuss how this image of the future should affect action in the present. It is also beneficial to write down these things on paper for both to see.

Experimental attitude and action

At the start of the period the volunteer uses a lot of energy to grasp the tasks planned for them and to get to know their new environment and the opportunities it offers. As time goes by, it would be good to ensure the dynamics of the volunteering. With this we mean that the volunteer should sufficiently affect their own action. Many volunteers have described how at some point in their volunteering, their life and volunteer work became routine, in both good and bad. Mentoring offers a good opportunity to ensure that the routine does not prevent the volunteer from learning and being excited. This can be promoted with experimental attitude and action.

The volunteer should discuss what they have done until now in regular meetings with the mentor and/or other people involved in the mentoring. It is essential to think with the volunteer about what types of consequences their actions have had on both themselves and on the surrounding community. With this increased understanding they can begin to think about what types of things the volunteer would still like to learn and experience and what the surrounding community could still gain from the volunteer.



Based on the discussion, the mentor can help the volunteer make plans for the experiments the volunteer will do. They can be small things or bigger experiments relating to the volunteer work which should be discussed with the person in charge of the work tasks. In addition to this, the mentor should agree with the volunteer when they should discuss

these experiments. The topic of the next meeting could be what the volunteer has done and what consequences these actions have had. And once again the increased understanding from this dialogue helps in thinking about future actions. This alternation between experiments and dialogues increasing understanding at best strengthen the volunteer's experience of their own agency, meaning that they can affect themselves and their surrounding community with their own actions. This is also energising, because the goals are not set in stone, but are drafts that are tested in practical action. This type of approach improves the young person's opportunities to do, experience, learn and be of benefit.

Meaningful free time

The hosting organisation should be aware beforehand of the volunteer's points of interest. Based on this information, they can map out opportunities that can be offered to the volunteer in the new country and map out the people who could help them find hobbies. Here peers can be in an important role. Especially the start of the period is a time when free time should be more planned, whereas towards the end of the period the volunteer has more responsibility for this.

The pricing of services should be clarified to the volunteer, so that wrong assumptions do not prevent them from starting a hobby. Free time also of course includes other things than just guided hobbies. Often these other actions are the best ways to get to know the local culture. Watching movies, reading local books, getting to know local habits or taking the volunteer out for a typical evening are excellent ways to help the volunteer adapt. One of the aims of mentoring is to make it possible for the volunteer to feel that they are a part of the everyday culture. Situations where the volunteer notices differences between their own culture and the local one are good opportunities for learning. These often arise especially in everyday situations.

Preparing for culture shock

When settling down in a new country, culture shock is often discussed. This means difficulty in adapting to a strange culture, which can result in psychological and physical symptoms on many levels. Connecting to a new country often results in smaller symptoms, which do not constitute culture shock. These symptoms can be road rage or hating the local food. Culture shock however is a comprehensive state, which means

that seeing positive sides of the new country is almost impossible. Often annoyance increases and one's own home country is seen in an exaggeratedly positive light. Symptoms can also include isolating oneself or having strong negative feelings towards other people.

CULTURE SHOCK USUALLY CONTAINS FOUR DIFFERENT STAGES:

1. THE HONEYMOON STAGE: When arriving in the new culture, there is excitement to see and experience everything from the point of view of an outsider. The new culture is seen in a good light without noticing its bad sides.
2. ON THE VERGE OF SHOCK: Small things become annoying and the bad sides and practical issues in the new culture become apparent. Exhaustion, depression and home-sickness are common symptoms in this stage.
3. ADAPTATION: Gradual learning, coping in different types of situations and understanding the reasons for different practices help to adapt to the new culture. People begin to feel more at home and communication issues decrease. The general stress from the new culture declines.

4. REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK: Returning to one's own culture can result in worse shock than the culture shock in the new culture. Readaptation to one's own culture can take time due to the experiences from the new culture and since one's image of oneself may have changed.

In mentoring one should prepare for the fact that many volunteers go through some of the stages described above. Often even merely describing the phenomena closely can help young people going through culture shock. It is important that these experiences can be processed with someone and thus more serious symptoms can be eased. Often meaningful action, the functionality of everyday life and a few good relationships are the best ways to alleviate the symptoms of culture shock.

Issues and difficulties

Issues and difficulties can arise throughout the process. It is essential that they are always taken seriously and that different people's experiences of the matter are heard despite differences in perception. Also, difficulties should be addressed as quickly and honestly as possible, so they do not worsen. Decision-making should be separated from

dialogical discussions which strive to understand the situation better. Also, the matter should be addressed and decisions should be made together with the whole network that is connected to the issue. Issues are often systemic and connected to each other. Therefore understanding the big picture and the underlying factors of the issues is important in solving them. Though the issue would only be one situation, it is important to try to perceive the whole picture which includes work, free time and social relationships in both the new country as well as at home. If the situations are difficult, it is essential that they are not dealt with alone. Support can also be found at the national office.

Making impacts visible

It can be difficult for the volunteer to notice what sort of international benefits or influence on the local community they bring through their own actions and being. The mentor and other members of the local community have an important role in this. They can see how shy young people begin to speak English. The young people no longer wonder at the presence of foreigners in their own actions. The cashier at the small local shop no longer finds the volunteer's questions in the shop strange. These are some of

the possible examples of the impact a volunteer can have on the local community which they need other people to point out to them.

TOOLBOX III

Supporting learning

- Create a simultaneously safe and sufficiently exciting learning environment
- Help the volunteer to find interesting objects of learning for themselves
- Connect new matters to the volunteer's earlier experience and knowledge
- Plan how the things learnt can be taken into practice

TOOLBOX IV

Experimental attitude and action

- Create a structure for the cooperation which alternates between dialogue and experiments
- Help the volunteer to create different (both big and small) experiments
- Examine the generated effects
- Create new experiments based on what was learnt
- Establish successful experiments as everyday practices

6. Preparing for returning home and leaving



If some of the most central stages for mentoring are the first weeks of the period, another extremely important stage is the period connected to the end of the volunteering. This is the time for concluding tasks and operations, clarifying what was learnt, giving and receiving feedback and creating new connections for future action. In addition to this it is also important to gain closure for relationships born during the period and build possible ways to continue them. The end of the period is also often the time to build new experiments.

Giving feedback to the volunteer

Throughout the whole period it is important to give the volunteer feedback on their actions. The central point of giving feedback is that the person has an understanding of what effects their actions have on other people and on the environment where they work. This can be helped by going back to earlier discussions and notes and materials from them. It would be good to give feedback on all types of things, both in work and in free time. This helps the volunteer learn from their own actions. Constructive feedback offers the volunteer an opportunity to compare their own understanding of themselves to the understanding that others shape of them. Thus they can change and develop their action in the direction they want. There is usually no need to organise a special situation to give feedback, as it should be a natural part of being together. It is important for the young person to hear feedback on good things. People do not always acknowledge what others appreciate in them, so feedback can help them to consciously develop in these aspects. In recognising learning, Youthpass and Europass are good tools.

As the period draws to a close and the volunteer's return home nears, the mentor should help them prepare for

matters connected to that. The mentor can have discussions with the volunteer about what the conclusion of the period means for them. For most volunteers the period has been their first significant independent phase of life. During it, meaningful new relationships have been born which will be left behind. The mentoring relationship will also end, though of course communication can continue after the period as well, if both want it to. The volunteer's learning process however continues with their return home.

Ending the volunteer period and support for the volunteer

A nice custom for the end of the period is having a farewell party for the volunteer: invite all the important people and celebrate! The farewell party is also an excellent occasion to give speeches. It can be very important for the young person to hear what they and their actions have meant to others. At the same time, the party is a good opportunity to thank all the participants. For the volunteer it may be very important that they can thank people and talk about what they have learnt and experienced.

The volunteer should be coached for returning home. Sometimes returning home can result in worse culture

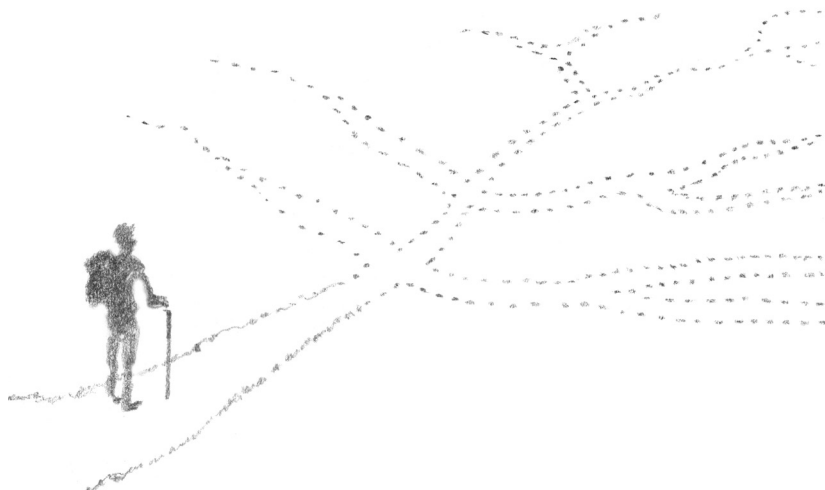
shock than coming to the exchange country. The people back home have probably barely changed, but the volunteer themselves may have changed a lot. Getting used to one's own culture again takes time, and at the start it can feel like a disappointment. The volunteer might strongly miss the exchange country and the people that became important to them. The mentor can ask the volunteer to think about what, how and when they want to discuss their experiences. The expectations for the family and friends at home for the reunion can be different than for the volunteer. It is good to ask the volunteer who will be picking them up when they return back home and what they think might happen next. It is also good to ask about concrete plans for instance for the week after returning back home. This lets the volunteer create a continuum for their own life and even a few planned situations help the volunteer to orientate towards home. At this point it may be essential to have contact with the supporting organisation, so that the continuum back home would be as meaningful as possible.

TOOLBOX V

Giving feedback

- Give feedback as soon as possible and connected to the situation at hand. Later the volunteer may remember the situation, but they may not grasp it experientially any more and may not internalise the feedback.
- Give as much feedback as possible about things that are going well. Positive feedback helps the volunteer to pay attention to their own actions' positive effects and raises their confidence.
- Concentrating on things that are going well and work well also strengthens the relationship between the volunteer and the mentor. If the feedback is always negative, it would also affect the mentoring relationship accordingly.
- Do not be afraid of giving critical feedback. Think of it primarily as an opportunity to learn.
- Help the young person understand the consequences of their own actions through feedback.

7. The return home and transforming what was learnt into impact



The volunteer programme is meant to support the learning of young people and to simultaneously create positive change on a broader scale in Europe and in surrounding areas. To create change, changes should happen both in the hosting country during the period and when the volunteer returns back home. The learning that happens in the individual should also benefit those communities to which the volunteer returns. It may be helpful for the supporting and the hosting organisations to keep in contact during the period for this. They can think together what type

of support the volunteer might need when they return and how their experiences might benefit both the young person themselves and the local community at home.

The mentor from the hosting organisation should be in contact with the volunteer at least once after they have returned home. When the volunteer has settled back home, they should be asked what the time spent in the hosting country feels like at the moment and what thoughts they have about the volunteering period. They can be asked who they have spoken to about the period and their experiences. Have they noticed other people whom they could still speak to about their experiences? How have experiences during the volunteering affected their future plans? The amount of contact with the volunteer can rely on the situation: sometimes contact is lost after the last message whereas some stay in contact for the rest of their lives.

The role of the supporting organisation during the young person's return home is naturally significant. The role of the supporting organisation is to receive the volunteer. At this point the support offered can be a lot of things, but it should especially relate to the young person's future plans and benefitting from what they have learnt. One of the central objectives of the European Solidarity Corps pro-

gramme is to support the employability of young people. It is good to help the volunteer think about how they can use their experiences from the period to support their studies or work. It is essential to understand that each young person is different and needs different types of support. The basic notion must however be that someone takes care of the young person and if needed, guides them towards suitable services.

When the volunteer has left to go back home, the people involved in the mentoring should still think about their actions as mentors. Nobody has to or should do this pondering alone, rather it should be done with the help of all the people who had responsibility for the volunteer. They should have a discussion where they examine everyone's role and mutual cooperation. On the basis of this pondering, they should also make possible suggestions for change for future volunteering periods.

TOOLBOX VI

The mentoring checklist – preparations and support for implementation

NETWORKS AND COOPERATION:

Who is who? – Creating a network to support the volunteer and agreeing on roles

Contact – Agreeing on contact with different actors (the young volunteer, the hosting organisation, the supporting organisation and other actors)

BEFORE – AT THE BEGINNING – IN THE END:

Leaving – Helping with practical matters and supporting the leaving

Arriving – Planning the receiving and the programme for the first days

Returning – Giving support in issues relating to returning and utilising experiences so that they would affect developments in working life capabilities

PRACTICALITIES OF LIVING:

Living arrangements – Guidance with practical details of living

Eating – Help with organising meals

Transportation – Introducing transportation in the area and the whole country

Acquaintance to the area – Giving basic information about the area and culture

Language – Supporting learning the language

WORKING LIFE PRACTICES:

Work tasks, working time and holidays – Clarifying details relating to periods in the volunteer work

Safety issues – Giving basic information about safety issues at work and in free time

Organisational culture – Usual practices and hierarchy in the hosting country's working life

PEOPLE AND SUPPORT:

Free time – Encouragement and direction for free time

Social relationships – Support in creating social networks

Motivation – Keeping up and encouraging motivation

Learning – Supporting learning for the volunteer and the organisations

