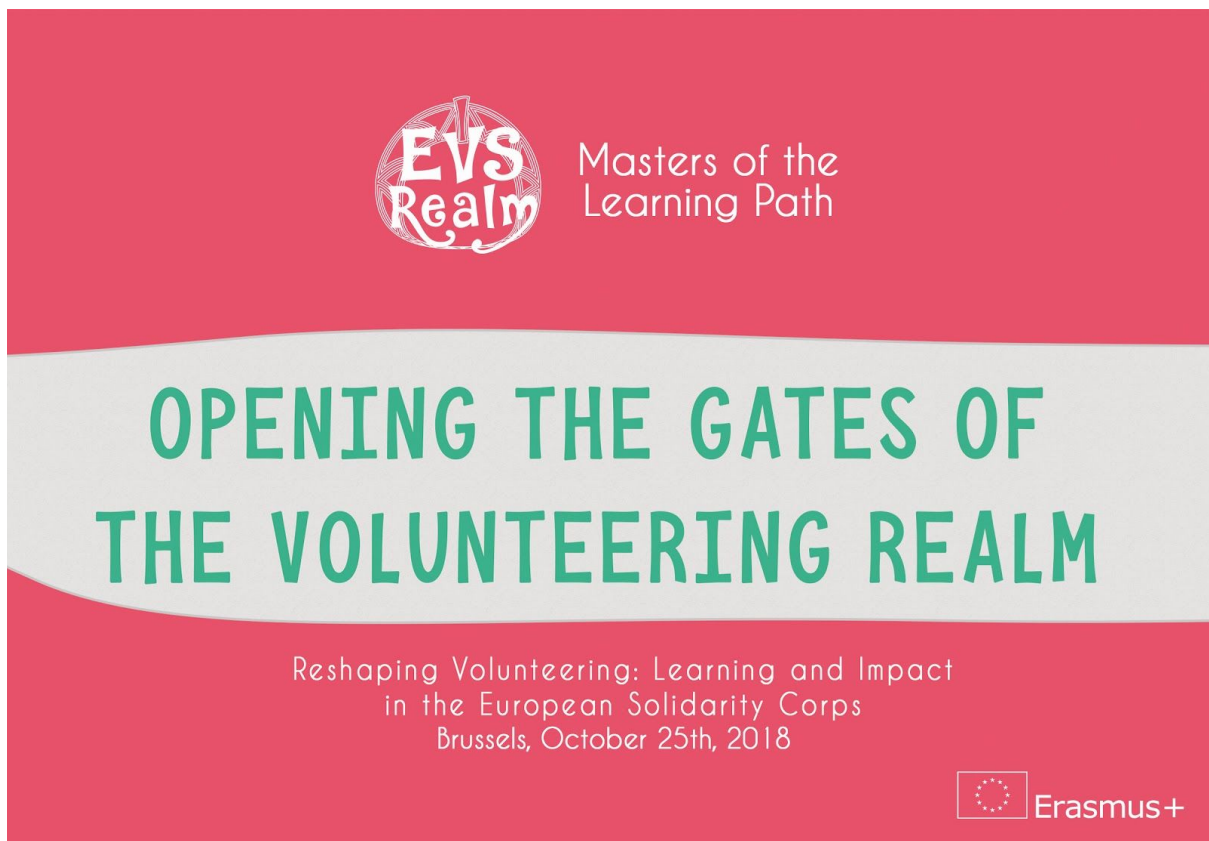**Final Report Multiplier Event**
EVS Realm Erasmus + Project

Opening the gates of the Volunteering Realm
Reshaping Volunteering:
Learning and Impact in the European Solidarity Corps

25 October 2018
Brussels, Belgium

Realised by
"EVS Realm: Masters of the learning path" Project partners
Pro Vobis (RO)
European Volunteer Centre (BE)
Politistiko Ergastiri (CY)
Anawoj (PL)

Outline

1.Introduction

The event "OPENING THE GATES OF THE VOLUNTEERING REALM, *Quality in Learning within Volunteering Projects*" held on October 25th 2018 in Brussels at "Mundo B" (11.00 - 18.00) was part (Multiplier Event) of the Erasmus+ KA2 project "EVS Realm: Masters of the Learning Path", partnership between Pro Vobis - RO- (Coordinator), Anawij -PL-, the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) - BE- and Politistiko Ergastiri -CY-. The Project aims to increase the quality of Full Time, long-term ESC volunteering projects, implemented all throughout Europe and especially in the 4 partner countries by developing the organizational capacity of volunteer involving organizations in relation to ESC projects, with a special focus on the mentoring dimension, highly underestimated and underused in ESC projects.

The objectives of the event were to:
- Introduce the mentoring "realm" and its current situation across Europe and specifically in the 4 partner countries.
- Raise awareness about the importance of a harmonized mentoring process and a coherent support process offered by hosting structures to the European volunteers.
- Present the results of the survey on:
  - The European volunteering programme and the role of mentors,
  - The tools developed to equip mentors around Europe with innovative and supporting techniques.
  - The training opportunities undertaken between 2017 and 2018 with organisations and mentors from the 4 countries represented by the project partners.

In order to achieve these objectives, the event was structured in 7 workshops, taking place throughout the day, exploring the different aspects of the EVS Realm Erasmus + Project from a more practical view and with a bottom up approach.

The workshops, that will be explained carefully in the following pages, were organised and delivered by the project partners, based on their field of expertise within the framework of volunteering projects and divided as follows (Workshop 2 and 6 are the same workshop repeated but showcasing different specific mentoring tools) :

➢ ***Workshop 1: Becoming a Strong House in the Volunteering Realm - Get ready to host European volunteers!*** *Moderated by: Corina Pintea (Pro Vobis) and Panayiotis Theodorou (Politistiko Ergastiri)*

The workshop focused on the organisational capacities needed to ensure quality in long-term, full-time volunteering and present the methodology, content and results of the training course created under the EVS Realm project, aimed at European Solidarity Corps (ESC) coordinators.

➢ *Workshop 2 & 6: Make mentors great again? Test, use, evaluate the "EVS Realm" ToolBox. Moderated by: Paulina Podolak and Emilia Misiuk (ANAWOJ)*
The workshop introduced the draft of the "Toolbox for Mentors" including innovative methods and approaches in which volunteers can be supported within the hosting organisation and community.

➢ *Workshop 3: The volunteering journey following the Stars. Ensuring quality in full-time volunteering placements as part of the European Solidarity Corps in Europe. Moderated by: Giulia Bordin (CEV). Speaker: Lope Gallego, European Commission ESC programme manager*
The workshop presented the draft "Policy Paper for ESC Quality" as developed by the EVS Realm project and provided the opportunity for discussion and reflection on this and stimulate interest in the ESC programme especially from organisations not yet involved.

➢ *Workshop 4: Saving Dorian Grey – the profile of the ESC volunteer today. Moderated by: Alexis Ioannou and Christina Chrysanthi (Politistiko Ergastiri)*
The workshop looked at the past, present and future trends and characteristics of the ESC Members. It considered the challenges that all actors involved (volunteers, mentors, coordinators) need to respond to when planning such projects.

➢ *Workshop 5: Build the Support in the Volunteering Realm: Focus on Mentoring. Moderated by: Corina Pintea (Pro Vobis) and Panayiotis Theodorou (Politistiko Ergastiri)*
The workshop focused on the support-structure needed to ensure quality in volunteering and presented the methodology, content and results of the training course created under the EVS Realm project.

➢ *Workshop 7: Digital mentoring. The role of mentor in a digital Europe. Moderated by: Igor Jojkic. Expert input from Sarah Bonoff (Volunteer Vision)*
The workshop started with two questions: how is digitalisation affecting volunteering and the role of the mentor? How can digitalisation support mentors in their activities? And it tried to draw a path for the future of volunteering and mentoring in the digital world.

➢ *Workshop 8: Living Happily Ever After – What impact for who? Moderated by: Diana Bere (Pro Vobis)*
The workshop explored the potential to change or influence people, organisations, mentalities, perspectives & communities, including the learning path of the volunteers and impact on their professional career path. And it considered how to best capitalise on ESC as a stimulus for further volunteering by young people beyond their engagement in the programme.

2. Workshop 1: *Becoming a Strong House in the Volunteering Realm - Get ready to host European volunteers!*
Moderated by: Corina Pintea (Pro Vobis) and Panayiotis Theodorou (Politistiko Ergastiri)

The Workshop was designed to introduce the aim, concept, content and development of the training design addressed to coordinators, organisations, stakeholders that would like to create a quality structure for future implementation of transnational volunteering projects, in the framework of ESC (with inspiration from the expertise gained in EVS implementation).

The group consisted of project coordinators, ex-volunteers, staff of organisations dealing with transnational volunteering but also with local volunteering programs. There was a specific interest in the future implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme.

2.1 Workshop development

The workshop opened its gates by introducing the metaphor under which the training was designed (a Kingdom with magical creatures and magical powers) offering a chance to the participants to introduce themselves but also introduce their role in volunteering projects. Participants picked an Avatar-character based on the question - "Who would You be in the kingdom? (from several characters already written on cards). The introduction allowed the moderators to easily pick up needs, interests, resources that referred to the content and the concept of the training design that was then presented.

2.1.1 Concept of the training design

A short explanation followed regarding the concept of the Project "EVS Realm: Masters of the Learning Path" – Strategic Partnership Project. Then the aims and flow of the training "Becoming a Strong House in the EVS Realm" were shortly presented. It was indicated that this was the first learning/training activity (C1) in a sequence of two trainings planned within the project structure, as chances to test the project intellectual outputs created by the partners' team. The second learning/training activity with the title "Mentors: Masters of the EVS learning path" (C2) focused on the role of mentors within volunteering projects.

2.1.2 Visual presentation

Following the verbal presentation, the moderators introduced a short video which explained the planning and process of the two trainings, with inputs and testimonies from participants, documenting the impact and content of their learning process.
(the video can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9gr0k_LeP8).

2.1.3 Practical activity

The workshop facilitators offered a practical activity giving participants the chance to experience a

fragment of the concept and process of work during the training.
The activity was introduced under the title "Discover the Needs of the Actors in Volunteering Projects". It aimed at listing and then clarifying tasks needed to be fulfilled and also how these tasks are to be assigned and to whom, so as to support the host organisation in structuring their team for the proper implementation of a transnational volunteering project, from the beginning till its very end.
The question given to the workshop participants was: "What are the main needs of

these projects for the V=Volunteer, C=Coordinator LC=local community M=Mentor ?" Participants split into 4 groups made a list of the needs of their group, defining WHO should be the one(s) to fulfil these needs, out of the different actors involved (based on their experiences or intuition). The needs would then be transformed into tasks. The result could be considered as the structure of roles and tasks for the persons involved in a European Volunteering project and could serve as a starting point in a planning process of project implementation.

2.5 Conclusions

The workshop concluded with questions and needed clarifications from the participants. These discussions referred to:

- the impact of the training on participants
- the possibility of the design of the training to be transferable in other contexts
- the possibility of future repetition and implementation of the training
- the links and connections amongst C1 and C2
- the concept of the project metaphor and its added value within the process of the training
- a question whether the training design would fit the newly introduced ESC programme and its
- connection to EVS was also addressed.

The response highlighted that the core of the Transnational Volunteering projects does not change and the effort is to elevate the quality within their implementation in all levels, focusing on both the service and the learning components. The overall reactions of the participants indicated an appreciation of the content of the presented training design and opportunities to use it in the ESC context and offer it to organizations in Europe.

3. Workshop 2&6
"Mentor TreasureBox" – Test, use the tools and gather feedback
Moderated by Paulina Podolak and Emilia Misiuk (ANAWOJ)

No. of participants: 31

During this workshop we introduced the results of our work - TreasureBox for Mentors. We prepared and collected tools, methods and ways, in which volunteers could be supported within their receiving organisation and in the hosting community.

These tools were presented to mentors and other participants (youth workers, coordinators, other support-people) who would like to support volunteers in their learning process and their professional and personal wellbeing.

During the workshop we shared the concept of this Toolbox, gave a space for participants to discuss some of the methods and tools included in it and gathered feedback for practical issues in supporting volunteers.

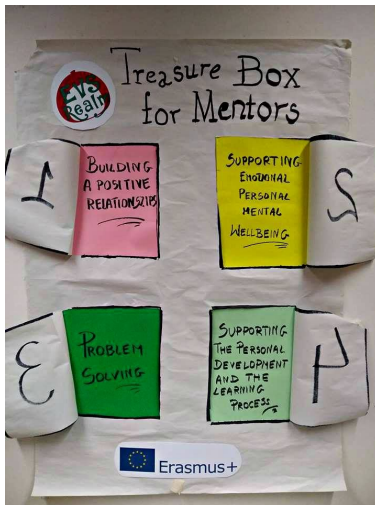### 3.1 Workshop development

3.1.1 Introduction
Welcoming participants and getting to know the group. After the introductions, we understood better the attendees' needs and expectations so we could adjust the content and focus better. We talked

about the aim of the workshop and we introduced the team. We gave participants the background of creating the publication (what is inside, the process of creating it, our focus and approach).

3.1.2 Content
The workshop was based on the 4 support-areas included in the Toolbox. We presented tools included in each of the topics:
   A. Building positive relationships within the volunteering project team. - we tested with the participants the tool „Expectations exchange" that is supposed to help creating a setting of collaboration with the volunteer, based on mutual understanding. We have also tried the Dixit cards – a popular game that can be used for building relationship between mentor and volunteers in the very beginning of the project.

   B. Supporting personal, emotional and mental wellbeing - Introduction to the topic and the idea behind including this important part in the toolbox. We presented some facts and research results from the World Health Organisation but also some experiences and case studies from the field of volunteering projects. We answered the question "Why it is so important?". During this part, participants tried two tools: "Letter of self-compassion" and "Negative Thought Stopping Worksheet".

   C. Problem solving – we presented the importance of preventing and resolving conflicts – which are very common in volunteering projects. We introduced participants to the tool „Mind mapping" based on real study cases from our volunteering projects, which attendees could discuss and analyze in small groups.

   D. Supporting the personal development and the learning process – in ESC, the learning process still plays an important role and so we chose a tool to present that supports the process of reflection on the learning of volunteers, which was the "The Volunteering Jengle" tool, during which participants could play with jengle wooden blocks containing reflection questions.

3.3 Conclusion
Participants were given an overview on the approach and tools included in the TreasureBox. We not only focused on transfer of knowledge, but also on discussions, exchange of experiences and feedback.

4. Workshop 3
The volunteering journey following the Stars. Ensuring quality in full-time volunteering placements as part of the European Solidarity Corps in Europe
Moderated by: Ms Giulia Bordin (CEV) Speaker: Mr Lope Gallego, European Commission ESC programme manager

No. of Participants: *25*

The workshop presented the "Policy Paper for ESC Quality" as developed by the EVS Realm project (IO4) and provided the opportunity for discussion and reflection on this in order to stimulate interest in the programme, especially from organisations not yet involved. **Annex I** presents the future steps on which both project partners and European Commission will focus on, based on the workshop results. **Annex II** consists in powerpoint presentation showed during the workshop.

4.1 Workshop development

The role of the "Policy Paper for ESC Quality" within the overall project and its various outcomes were presented to participants. Followed by the presentation of the different possibilities for volunteering in the European Solidarity Corps programme including the Full Time volunteering placements and also "Solidarity Projects" done by Mr. Lope Gallego, with a specific focus on the Quality Label.
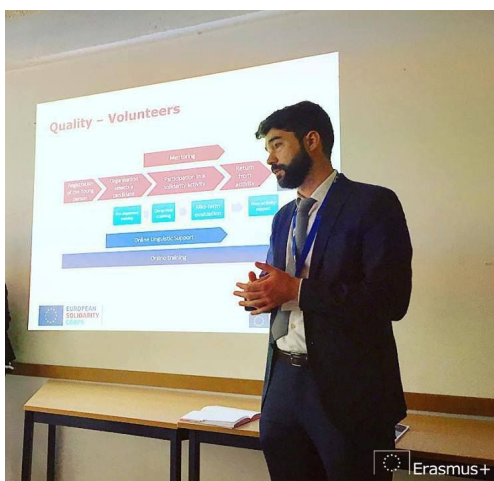
Subsequently an explanation of the rationale of each of the recommendations was done by Giulia Bordin, with reaction from Lope Gallego and discussion, accompanied by a collection of ideas, suggestions for improvements from the participants.

4.1.2 Recommendation 1 "Redefining the terminology and structure of the mentoring process"

- **Point 1.1 of the Recommendations:** Clarification on the role and a common understanding of the profile and competencies needed to be involved in the ESC mentoring process should be developed, mentors informed about it, and knowledge and practice of it for sending, hosting and coordinating organizations become a component of the ESC Quality label.
- **Point 1.2 of the Recommendations:** Role profiles should be created to define at least two distinct support person roles. One, to pay attention to guide volunteers through the integration process eg. show them around, introduce them to the culture, support them in administrative, technical and practical needs in the community, and another to support the learning and personal development process.
- **Point 1.3 of the Recommendations:** Adequate training for anyone involved in the mentoring process should be provided via the ESC portal and/ or in face-to face opportunities offered by NAs, including a focus on their role, intercultural learning, validation of non-formal and informal learning and other elements such as language and health & wellbeing etc. The training should lead to an ESC mentor certification, if the mentor desires.

What emerged from the discussion on the first recommendation is that inclusion is a fundamental aspect of the European Solidarity Corps that aims to focus on people with fewer opportunities and all recommendations for changes and re-definition of the Mentor's role should keep this in mind. Taking

this into account, this aspect should be more underlined and specified in the recommendation No. 1.1, by also supporting the idea of creating a table of requirements for mentors to be included in the European Solidarity Corps Guide 2020. This can guarantee all actors involved are aware of what mentors' role is and in particular as concerns supporting young people with fewer opportunities. Some concerns emerged about point 1.2, on splitting in two the mentors' tasks, because a division of roles can be an obstacle to small organisations in their engagement in the programme. While strong agreement was reached on point 1.3 of the recommendation, by starting first with a training for staff, in order to follow and strengthen the role of mentors, their involvement and understanding of their responsibilities and tasks.

4.1.3 Recommendation 2 "Resource allocation for the mentoring process"

- **Point 2.1 of the Recommendations:** Organizations should be provided with additional dedicated funds to be able to organize pre and post-placement meetings with their mentors and others involved in the support process, in addition to during the placement itself. More synergies between National and Regional level full time volunteering schemes and ESC should be made, leading to a more flexible and coordinated approach, including in relation to mentoring and other support mechanisms.
- **Point 2.2 of the Recommendations:** An online peer learning "community of practice" for people involved in the mentoring process for ESC members should be developed in order that knowledge and practice about mentorship in ESC can continue to develop. This should be available at both National and EU levels and be supported by annual meetings at national level for people involved in the mentoring process. Its implementation should be monitored by the ESC Resource Centre or other entity responsible for monitoring ESC implementation.
- **Point 2.3 of the Recommendations:** A specific budget devoted to the constant improvement and coordination of the mentoring process should be allocated at centralized level, including for the online "Community of practice", and with sufficient funds for all training and certification of ESC mentors and other support persons.

What emerged from the discussion on the second recommendation is that concerning the specific budget mentioned in point 2.3, the structure already used in other existing programmes, such as EU Aid Volunteers concerning the technical assistance and capacity building structures can be taken as model (especially if there is the idea to merge EU Aid Volunteers with ESC) and that European Youth organisations play an important role in training mentors, this is why it would be necessary to increase the funding for them (point 2.3).

Point 2.2 of the recommendation on the idea to build up a "community of practice", managed by NAs was strongly welcomed. It was recognised that engaging NAs in this way the question of language barriers could be better addressed.

4.1.4 Recommendation 3 "Connection between the projects and the real societal needs"

- **Point 3.1 of the Recommendations:** ESC volunteers should undertake their activities in projects that are designed to be implemented alongside local volunteers to ensure that they gain a better understanding of the local volunteering reality, contribute to the real local needs through local volunteering objectives, and gain a greater understanding of how volunteering in free-time can be part of their own post-placement lifestyle.
- **Point 3.2 of the Recommendations:** Post-placement integration and adjustment should be better supported through increased integration in the hosting local community that permits the volunteers to maintain a link outside the direct volunteering placement experience. The role of the mentor and other support person should provide adequate support in this regard.

What emerged from the discussion on the third recommendation is that point 3.1 of the recommendation can be considered already implemented through the possible "Solidarity Projects" in ESC and is also already happening in some organisations in case of full time and longer term volunteering placements. Participants expressed concern that creating a ruling on this issue can be

seen as an obstacle since this could result in a standardisation of the projects, risking to force organisations to follow a prescribed path. Concerning point 3.2 of the recommendation, the post-placement integration and adjustment should be guaranteed by both supporting and hosting organisations, particularly in the pre-sending phase. On this question participants agreed that it is a very important aspect of the project and both sending/supporting and hosting organisations should take special care to ensure the implementation of this point. In recognition of the challenges associated with ensuring quality for this aspect of the project some participants emphasized again that the distribution of the mentors' roles between two actors (point 1.2) could provide possible solutions to this and result in improved quality.

It was also stressed that if specific challenges or situations arise during the placement, or even afterwards, then it should also be clear how mentoring can be part of the support offered, particularly in relation to psychological issues both during and following the placement. The quality aspects for these requirements of the mentoring process should be clearly defined and suitable and timely guidance must be provided for all actors concerned.

4.2 Conclusions

Overall the workshop was useful to confront the different experiences and practical reflections within the ESC programme and on the draft recommendations written by the EVS Realm project partners. The participation of a representative of the European Commission presenting the ESC programme and giving a more legislative perspective on the programme helped to create the link between organisations operating at all levels (local, regional, national and European) and to develop additional thoughts or supportive arguments to the recommendations.

5. Workshop 4
Saving Dorian Grey – The profile of the ESC volunteer today
Moderated by: Christina Chrysanthi (Politistiko Ergastiri)
and Alexandros Ioannou (Politistiko Ergastiri)

The Workshop was designed in order to create a profile of the volunteer today, as it can be adapted in the context of ESC. It was addressed to coordinators, organisations, current and past volunteers and stakeholders that would like to create a quality structure for future implementation of transnational volunteering projects, organisations dealing with transnational volunteering but also with local volunteering programs. There was a specific interest in the future implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme.

5.1 Workshop development
5.1.1 Introduction

The workshop opened by introducing the participants and facilitators in the group, using their name, a word using the initial letter of their name that describes them and their role and experience with volunteering. The introduction allowed the moderators to easily pick up experience, needs, and resources that referred to the content and the concept of the training design that was then presented.

5.1.2 Concept of the training design
A short explanation followed regarding the concept of the Project "EVS Realm: Masters of the Learning Path" – Strategic Partnership Project. Then the aims and flow of the training "Saving Dorian

Grey – The profile of the ESC volunteer today" were shortly presented, separating the group into 4 smaller teams for better collaboration between the participants and better quality of information collected.

5.1.3 Practical activity

The activity aimed at listing and then clarifying tasks needed to be fulfilled and also how these tasks are to be assigned to volunteers and by whom, so we can understand how the term of a volunteer is being used in different concepts, around Europe.

The workshop facilitators offered a practical activity, separating the group into 4 smaller teams. Each team had a subject concerning the profile of today's volunteer. Each group had to write on a chart their thoughts on the following subjects: 1/ Why become a volunteer, 2/ What outcomes do you expect at the end of this experience, 3/ What are the challenges of being a volunteer, and 4/ What makes a volunteer. The participants had a time limit at each table and then they moved to another, until they covered all subjects. From the initial team created at the beginning of the activity, a representative was selected to stay on each topic from the beginning to the end, in order to be able to present to the others arriving what has been discussed and facilitate the conversation in order to gain more insight and diversity of information. The session ended with a summary of the results from the representatives that were at each station.

The result could be considered as a grounding for setting up the roles and tasks for the persons involved in a European Volunteering project and especially when it comes to the expectations and evolution of volunteerism through the ESC programme.

5.2 Conclusions

The workshop concluded indicating some challenges that current volunteering projects are facing. These referred to:

• the lack of management training and support network for better implementation of such projects
• the commitment needed from the volunteer and how to encourage the volunteering experience
• Understanding the motivations of becoming a volunteer
• How to measure the outcome after the volunteering experience and how to enhance this in the process

The overall reactions of the participants showed us a need of clarifying some terms commonly used, but implemented differently in each country, organisations across Europe (**Annex III**).

6. Workshop 5

Build the Support in the Volunteering Realm: Focus on Mentoring

Moderated by: Corina Pintea (Pro Vobis) and Panayiotis Theodorou (Politistiko Ergastiri)
No. of Participants: 10

The workshop presented the Mentors Initiation Journey Itinerary – a 6-day training design for current or future mentors and other support-persons involved in ESC Volunteering projects, one of the 4

intellectual results of the EVS Realm project. The workshop also provided a comfortable space for debate on the role of the mentor in transnational volunteering projects, inviting participants to share experiences and express their insights and concerns, while also presenting the conclusions from the learning activity which tested the design with 28 participants from the 4 project countries (Cyprus, Belgium, Poland and Romania).

6.1 Workshop development

The moderators opened the workshop with a getting-to-know-each other exercise, introducing participants in the project metaphor by inviting everyone to choose what character from the Realm of Volunteering they would be. They could select from tags already written with characters, such as – prince, queen, dragon, dwarf, blacksmith, fairy, cook, etc. – or they could name another character linking to their own personality.

Following this playful introduction, we showed the video of the 2 training activities implemented by the EVS Realm project team (in August 2017 in Romania and in June 2018 in Cyprus) to introduce everyone in the project atmosphere and the general flow of learning activities we created for youth workers in volunteering projects.

We then presented the training flow, explaining what we included in each of the 6 training days – following also the graphic recording of the training in Cyprus, as a visual aid for the workshop participants – who could see the agenda elements and how they were linked, while we also gave examples of activities and exercises we implemented and how participants reacted to them.

We presented also our main conclusions of the training, how it worked and what results it generated and we gave more information on the profile of the participants and their experience and perception on the mentoring role, which greatly influenced how they participated and learned during the training activity.

As the 2 workshop moderators were also the facilitators in the training and the creators of the training design, we wanted to also offer participants an opportunity to experience one of the exercises included in the design. We chose to present the Mentors' Decalogue – a set of principles which participants in the pilot training generated on the 6th day of the training, after all their discoveries and learning experiences, summarizing what they understood would be the minimum standards for a mentor in European volunteering projects. We had these standards categorized in 3 sections on a flipchart.

- Minimum requirements for abilities and attitude of a mentor
- Minimum support a mentor must offer to volunteers
- Minimum support a mentor should receive from the organization

The workshop participants could see on the flipchart how the training participants had voted – what minimum standards they formulated and also how they ranked them in importance. Then we invited our workshop attendees to also vote according to their beliefs and understanding of the mentoring role. And then we were able to compare the different results – as in some cases there were different degrees of importance allocated. This started a vivid discussion among the attendees and the facilitators on several interlinked topics, such as:

- what is in fact the role of a mentor?
- how should the mentoring relationship be set up and then implemented?

- what limitations does this relationship have?
- how do mentors deal with difficult volunteers or with those that do not recognize their role?
- are mentors in fact really needed in such projects or not?

From the debates, the previous experience of participants emerged, as some had sustained interaction with volunteers on local level, others had worked also with European volunteers within EVS, but there were also beginners in the field who were just trying to define as well as they could this complex role of a mentor and who could play such a support-role in their organization, based on what the requirement for the task would be.

Facilitators admitted the same discussions, debates and dilemmas were also experienced during the 6- day training with participants coming from 4 different countries, where the job description of the mentor varied greatly. This was recognized as an overall challenge of the program, as in the previous EVS program there was never a very detailed description of the mentor role and requirements, which allowed for very variable levels of involvement and expertise of those who took on this responsibility.

We discussed about the other intellectual outputs created in the project and how they are meant to support the increase in quality of European volunteering, relying on mentoring as a quality element. We connected the content of the 2 trainings we created – the first one for organizations designing quality volunteering projects and the second one preparing mentors to support the volunteers involved in these qualitative projects. We stressed the importance of connecting these 2 trainings and sustaining the quality approach with all support-persons involved in the projects – the project coordinator, the task manager, the sending coordinator, the mentors as well as any other support-persons with whom volunteers interact.

6.1 Conclusions

At the end of the workshop, we offered all participants the printed training design and asked attendees to review it and offer us feedback and suggestions for improvement, stressing the importance to start creating the community of mentors that can support each other in the future ESC projects coming in next years, not only with concrete tools and suggestions for methodology, but also with advice and different approaches used in dealing with a variety of young people who are volunteers.

7. Workshop 7
Digital mentoring. The role of mentor in a digital Europe.
Moderated by: Igor Jojkic. Expert input from Sarah Bonoff (Volunteer Vision)

No. of Participants: 14

The session's objectives were:
- To present key features of digital mentorship, its similarities and differences with offline mentorship;
- To discuss potential benefits of digitalization in mentoring volunteers;
- To present best practice examples and success stories in digital mentorship, quality assurance and learning recognition mechanisms.

7.1 Workshop Development

The session started with the introduction of the facilitator's and expert's background and experience in the field of mentorship. After a brief introduction, the topic of digital transformation was raised with the focus of its characteristics and its overall influence on everyday life both civil society organizations (CSOs) and individuals. The participants shared their experiences regarding digital transformation and how much influence it had on their everyday activities (professional and individual). Many aspects of digital transformation particularly in education, engagement and capacity building of volunteers and activists were discussed.

The participants shared their standings related to digital mentorship using Menti Meter App. In addition, pro and cons of digital mentorship were discussed together with necessary steps in any kind of mentorship (digital or traditional) such as building relationships, setting clear expectations, monitoring achievements, providing feedbacks.

Key question that was raised in the group was related to technological challenge (online platforms and their development, usage and management) and its liaison with mentorship together with additional

challenges in digital mentorship such as obstacles in communication, lack of available time and interest between matching pairs, etc. Based on all these inputs, through facilitated discussion, the group tried to design a "superhero mentor" nowadays with all needed competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) in order to get closer to potential mentees and to adjust learning approaches to their learning needs.

After this introduction, the floor was given to the key expert, Sarah Bonoff from Volunteer Vision who presented their platform which provides different possibilities for digital mentorship and also creates meaningful relationships between business and community. The roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees were thoroughly elaborated as well as potential benefits that both sides can obtain.

7.2 Conclusions

Sharing knowledge and professional experience together with making significant impacts on the community, improving soft skills and putting their expertise in good use can be the motivation of many to join the programme as mentors. On the other hand, a possibility to participate in such a programme for many of the attendees had been the first experience of this kind after their graduation. These digital mentoring solutions create a strong and close-knit corporate culture in which knowledge sharing becomes natural. This also enhances better understanding of social issues and challenges for business sector. Key features of the platforms were presented as well as most used digital mentorship programs for women and entrepreneurs' empowerment, language classes for migrants, etc. Most questions were related to the platform, its features and relationship building between a mentor and a mentee. Many aspects of the platform and previously discussed principles of mentorship were tackled in this part of the session.

8. Workshop 8

Living Happily Ever After – What impact for who?
True Stories of EVS/ESC Impact – on volunteers, communities and hosting organization.
Facilitated by: Diana Bere (Pro Vobis, Romania)
Guest speakers: Jakub Kurakiewicz (TRATWA Poland), Marina Bykova (CGE Germany), Sofiia Pyshnieva (CGE Germany), Alexandros Ioannou Peletie (Politistiko Ergastiri Cyprus)

No. of participants: 34

The workshop explored the potential of volunteering projects to change or influence people,organizations, mentalities, perspectives, communities. We touched on the volunteers' learning path and the impact on their professional career and formulated some good questions on how to best capitalize on ESC as a stimulus for further volunteering by young people beyond their engagement in the programme.

8.1 Workshop development
We each took turns to introduce ourselves and our connection to EVS.The group split around three tables, each with a different topic. We gathered our knowledge and experiences to offer examples of changes produced by a volunteering project on the volunteer, the organization and the community. Each table had one facilitator and the participants got the opportunity to have a sit at each table and add their thoughts.

Getting back to the large group, we took a minute to go through the list of results. Even though we did not have enough time to finish all our stories, the lists put together were rather impressive. Transnational volunteering brings with it plenty of changes. Some changes are good, others are not what we had planned for or even wished for, but either way, any project will have an impact.

8.2 Conclusions
By giving impact more thought, planning and measuring it efficiently, we can make sure that once we get that ball rolling, we know where it is going to land – at least to a better degree.

9. Multiplier Event Conclusions

The project event was the occasion to not just share pre-existing and acquired knowledge & experiences, but also to collect opinions, ideas, inputs and perspective on the future of long-term volunteering experiences, volunteering mentoring in the broad picture of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme.

Thanks to workshops tackling different aspects of the long-volunteering experiences and projects (from local to European dimensions, from more practical to more legislative aspects), participants felt this as an occasion to share and confront what they have experienced till now and what are their expectations towards the future, particularly how they see the work done through the EVS Realm Project as a milestone for future steps of volunteering opportunities.

An improved coordination and understanding of the mentoring structure and, overall, of the role of the mentor was stressed in several workshops. There is a common need of a more guided approach for organisations towards the role of mentors in their project, and in this a stronger connection and collaboration with the EU institutions was also emphasised. This connection will benefit especially the ESC programme in its constant update and capacity to address and answer young people interests and needs, organisations' projects and EU future goals.

Willingness to use the Mentors Toolkit (the TreasureBox) developed by the project partners has been underlined, and to include it as useful resources for the ESC Resource Centre.

Overall the event gathered stakeholders from organisations from local, national and European levels and representatives of the European Institutions. This allowed to create a fruitful space for discussion and networking, giving the possibility to put in practice strategies and steps to tackle issues using both a bottom-up (concerning reporting of local experiences & issues and proposing actions to be taken at EU level) and top-down approaches (mainly on future policies capable to solve local issues passing through the national dimension).

10. Annexes

Annex I

- Next steps that will be done following the fruitful results of the workshops:
  Constant dialogue between project partners and European Commission in order to further improve the ESC programme, particularly in the mentoring dimension;
- Include in the structuring of the recommendations the elements discussed focusing on the following aspects:
  - Highlight the need to further develop the tasks/roles to be performed as mentors, in order to guarantee further guidance and support to actors involved.
  - Training for mentors to be developed to support them with their tasks and role. The training should be make use of the online tools, but also be developed face to face in order to support higher quality training.
  - Community of practice to be put effectively in place: set up an online community for mentors to share best practices.

These are aspects on which feasible changes within the programme are possible and on which we can work on in the long and short term. What was underlined as basic and fundamental to be addressed in the short-term, in order to then built a strong and supportive mentoring structure, is to focus on defining and outline the role of the mentor, such us "quality minimum standards" within the ESC Guide 2020.

Solidarity Projects

Designed, developed and implemented young people

Group of at least 5 young people

Positive change in local community having European added value

2-12 months

Supporting organisation may support the young people

EVS Realm: Masters of the Learning Path"
DRAFT Recommendations for imProved ESC Quality

1. Redefining the terminology and structure of the mentoring process

1.1 Clarification on the role and a common understanding of the profile and competencies needed to be involved in the ESC mentoring process should be developed, mentors informed about it, and knowledge and practice of it for sending, hosting and coordinating organizations become a component of the ESC Quality label.

1.2 Role profiles should be created to define at least two distinct support person roles. One, to pay attention to guide volunteers through the integration process eg. show them around, introduce them to the culture, support them in administrative, technical and practical needs in the community, and another to support the learning and personal development process.

1.3 Adequate training for anyone involved in the mentoring process should be provided via the ESC portal and/ or in face-to face opportunities offered by NAs, including focus on their role, intercultural learning, validation of non-formal and informal learning and other elements such as language and health & wellbeing etc. The training should lead to an ESC mentor certification, if the mentor desires.

EVS Realm: Masters of the Learning Path"
DRAFT Recommendations for imProved ESC Quality

2. Resource allocation for the mentoring process

2.1. Organizations should be provided with additional dedicated funds to be able to organize pre and post-placement meetings with their mentors and others involved in the support process, in addition to during the placement itself. More synergies between National and Regional level full time volunteering schemes and ESC should be made, leading to a more flexible and coordinated approach, including in relation to mentoring and other support mechanisms.

2.2. An online peer learning "community of practice" for people involved in the mentoring process for ESC members should be developed in order that knowledge and practice about mentorship in ESC can continue to develop. This should be available at both National and EU levels and be supported by annual meetings at national level for people involved in the mentoring process. Its implementation should be monitored by the ESC Resource Centre or other entity responsible for monitoring ESC implementation.

2.3. A specific budget devoted to the constant improvement and coordination of the mentoring process should be allocated at centralized level, including for the online "Community of practice", and with sufficient funds for all training and certification of ESC mentors and other support persons.

EVS Realm: Masters of the Learning Path"
DRAFT Recommendations for imProved ESC Quality

3. Connection between the projects and the real societal needs

3.1. ESC volunteers should undertake their activities in projects that are designed to be implemented alongside local volunteers to ensure that they gain a better understanding of the local volunteering reality, contribute to the real local needs through local volunteering objectives, and gain a greater understanding of how volunteering in free-time can be part of their own post-placement lifestyle.

3.2. Post-placement integration and adjustment should be better supported through increased integration in the hosting local community that permits the volunteers to maintain a link outside the direct volunteering placement experience. The role of the mentor and other support person should provide adequate support in this regard.

And now let's explore our knowledge and experience!

Annex III