About us and the project

1. Summary

The i-Prepare tool is an interactive web surface offering volunteers the possibility to engage in an on-line learning process and offering supporting organizations (SO-s) a wide range of materials to support the volunteers' learning prior to departure. The tool functions both on pc and mobile devices. It includes many different types of activities (such as quizzes, videos, etc.) to treat a set of topics organised in modules. Combining the modules and selecting the topics/activities focusing on different issues makes it possible for SO-s to realise various preparation programmes adapted to each volunteer's individual needs. The tool is freely accessible on-line for all volunteers and SO-s.

2. Aims of the project :

- to support the pre-departure preparation of volunteers, increasing the level of preparation (quality and quantity), making sure that all volunteers get all the necessary information and a chance to reflect on the most relevant issues prior to their departure

- to help SO-s in their preparation activities, offering them a tool to organise the preparation of volunteers, making their work more effective and cost-efficient

Objective:

- to develop and create an on-line pre-departure preparation tool, which integrates and supports (but not substitutes for) the face to face preparation done by SO-s

3. The project team:

Gabriella Nagy (coordination, Module 6, 7) and Tamás Mahner (coordination, Module 2) from Egyesek Youth Association, Budapest, Hungary; Emiliano Bon and Anna Di Muro (Modules 1, 4, 9) from Xena Centro scambi e dinamiche interculturali, Padova, Italy and Helena Koskova (Modules 3, 5, 8) and Jan Latal (technical realisation) from Cia Cekija, Prague, Czechia. Web-design was done by NexGen, Czech Republic.

The project team has been composed of 3 organisations, Egyesek Youth Association from Hungary, Xena Centro Scambi e Dinamiche Interculturali from Italy and Cia Cekija from the Czech Republic. All organisations (and the team members personally, 4 of whom are EVS trainers, 1 of whom is accreditor of EVS expression if interests and 3 of whom are ex EVS volunteers) have significant experience with E+ KA1 and its precedent forms (YIA and Youth programmes), and in particular with EVS.

All participating organisations have wide professional networks and are connected with many EVS organisations both on a local and on an international level, and are part of umbrella organisations, too, such as Alliance network of European Voluntary Service organisations , CCIVS (Coordinating

Committee for International Voluntary Services) and RIVE (Rete Italiana Volontariato Europeo), which has helped us in reaching the target group during the research and test phases, and for dissemination.

4. Project period:

November 2017 - September 2019

5. How the tool has been developped?

The project idea

Working as EVS trainers and meeting with many volunteers coming from various countries and realities, we (the initiators of the project) have realised that there are immense differences between the quality and quantity of preparation activities offered by the different EVS SO-s. Unfortunately it is not uncommon to meet volunteers with very limited preparation.

Before applying for the EU grant, we carried out an on-line survey, in which out of 32 EVS HO-s 65,7 % agreed with the following statement: "There is an immense difference between the level of preparation activities (both quality and quantity) offered to EVS volunteers at different SO-s." Similarly, 87,5 % agreed with "The Program places responsibility on SO-s assigning them the task of the preparation of the volunteers, while very few support/supervision is offered to them regarding this task". 12,5% the answering HO-s indicated that 50% or more, 40,8% indicated that 25-50% of their volunteers arrived somewhat unprepared. Consultation with the EVS staff of the NA-s and other stakeholders reinforced our view that the issue of pre-departure preparation is worth being addressed to increase quality in EVS.

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Application

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Project is approved

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Preparation

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1st phase: Research

We carried out a research about EVS preparation activities to base our tool on.

Research was composed of the following parts:

- reviewing official program documents and recommendations concerning EVS preparation activities

- researching already existing on-line tools that can be used for EVS pre-departure preparation

- on-line surveying EVS organisations and ex- /present EVS volunteers about EVS preparation practices and preparation needs (52 EVS organisations and 155 volunteers from 31 countries answered)

To see the research report click here.

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2st phase: Creation of the content

We have created the tool composed of 9 thematic modules. Based on the research results, we identified the main topics and created the general framework for the modules, then we developped the content and methodology of each module (each project partner being responsible for 3 modules).

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3rd phase: Creation of the form

Technical development of the tool followed, including programming and design. We had to adapt our ideas to the technical possibilities and create a coherent and userfriendly structure, and an attractive form for the tool.

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4th phase: Testing

We tested the tool in two ways:

- open team meeting with the participation of 20 young people (future volunteers) from Hungary, Italy and Czechia. We had personal interviews and group activities with the young people who could test and give feedback on the tool and contribute with their ideas for its development.

- on-line testing. Feedback questionnaire (300 testees, both organizations and future/present/ex volunteers from all the EU and the partner countries)

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Finalising

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Dissemination activities and multiplier events (launching events in the 3 countries parallelly)

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Final evaluation and closure

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Survival of the tool after the end of the project, possible developments, translations

Do you want to translate the tool in your language? Contact us at contact@iprepare.eu!

6. Main difficulties we have met during the realisation of the project

The project period coincided with the end of the EVS program and the start of E+ volunteering and later on of the ESC volunteering scheme, that is, it was a period characterised by a great amount of uncertainty, making our work somewhat difficult.

When we applied for the grant there was still no news about the end of the EVS programme. We have created the tool based on our experience with EVS. Though at the moment it is only the ESC program which is open for new applicants, all through the tool we refer to the underlying scheme as EVS/E+/ESC volunteering, as until 2020 there still may be some volunteers leaving in the framework of one of the older programmes. As all three programmes follow quite similar guidelines, we don't think this will create particular difficulties.

A further doubt we have is that the ESC programme intends to create an own general on-line preparation tool. We got this news when we were already in the process of the creation of the tool. We met the people responsible for its realisation at the EC Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Unit B3, and got encouragement from there and also from out NAs to continue our work anyway – however, we still don't know what the ESC general on-line tool will contain and how much it will be interfering with our tool. After the release of the ESC tool the adjustment of our tool may be necessary.

7. Expected impact of i-Prepare

We expect the following impact:
Volunteers will be better prepared. The average number of hours spent with preparation will increase, and the differences in the level of preparation activities received by volunteers at different SO-s will diminish.

Expectedly volunteers will be more prepared especially as to the following topics:
- the ESC program
- the philosophy of volunteering and how the civil sector/NGOs work
- consciousness about their own motivation
- volunteering as a learning service (non-formal learning, Youthpass)
- problem solving and conflict management
- proceeding info about the project (reading and understanding activity agreement, info about the HO, the mentor, etc.)
- interculturality
- insurance (CIGNA insurance and the European Health Insurance Card) and other practicalities.
Departing with a higher level of consciousness, volunteers will benefit more from their projects.
The increase in the level of preparation will also facilitate the hosting organisations' work.

Supported by the on-line tool, SO-s will be able to prepare volunteers in a more efficient way. Preparation work will be more cost-effective and they will no longer be left alone with this important task. They will get access to a thorough list of topics to be covered during preparation, just as well as to concrete on-line exercises to suggest to volunteers and hints for follow up.

Does our tool have the above impact? Give us feedback at contact@iprepare.eu!

Thank you for your interest!