Volunteering – Way to Employment Volwem 1st international meeting of partners

|Meeting Minutes

Meeting date | time 11/27/2012 9:00 AM | Meeting location Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Type of meeting | Kick-off meeting of the “Volunteering – Way to Employment” project | | Facilitator | Alžbeta Mračková | | Note taker | Ramona Dragomir | | |  | | --- | | Attendees  Alžbeta Mračková, Miroslav Žabka, Jana Matejzelová, Michaela Skyba, Dominika Hradiská, Lenka Černá, Beáta Balogová, Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, Jana Andreasová, Eliane Reid , Grace Martin, Adrian Murtagh, Ramona Dragomir | |

# Agenda topics

Time allotted | 10 min | Agenda topic Welcoming | Presenter Alžbeta Mračková

Discussion: welcoming to the meeting

* Logistic information: English a second language – please speak slowly so everybody understands; the program : changed a little bit, discussion about the changes ;
* Introductions about the participants at the meeting: Betka – Platform ; Miro – Matej Bel university, responsabile for the financial management; Janka – Centrum Dobrovonictva BB; Michaela – Presov ; Dominika – Kosice; Lenka – Usti ; Beata – Nitra; Betka – Matej Bel ; Jana – Nitra; Eliane – VDS; Grace – VDS; Adrian – VDS; Ramona – Centrum dobrovolnictva Banska Bystrica

Time allotted | 15 min | Agenda topic Presentation about Local Volunteer Center in Usti nad Labem | Presenter Lenka Černá

Discussion: presentation about the Local Volunteer Center in Usti nad Labem

* Introduction about the organizational structure of the LVC; target group and main programs;
* Question from Betka – BB: what does it mean “manager accreditation”? Answer: it’s about getting an accreditation from the Ministry to be able to place/send volunteers to other volunteer involving organizations (either non-profits or public institutions who work with volunteers)

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Lenka

Time allotted | 20 min | Agenda topic Presentation about the Platform in Slovakia | Presenter Alžbeta Mračková

Discussion : - some aspects about setting up the Platform; activities of the Platform

* Question from Eliane: what is the relation between the Platform and CARDO (national volunteer centers)?
* Betka: it’s more of a pressure relation than cooperation;
* Question: what is the difference between CARDO and Platform?
* Betka: the activities of the Platform are orientated towards lobbying and relation with government and other organizations; whereas CARDO should do more promotion about volunteering at the national level.

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Betka

Time allotted | 10 mins | Agenda topic Presentation about Matej Bel University | Presenter Betka Brozmanová Gregorová

Discussion : a bit background of the University Matej Bel; information about the Faculty of Education and department of Social Work; gave examples of the cooperation between the University and volunteering activities: volunteer campaign, service learning, publications on volunteering and third sector, research on volunteering; awards of volunteers; events on volunteering (workshops, conferences etc.)

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Betka

Time allotted | 30 min | Agenda topic Presentation about Volunteer Development Scotland | Presenter Eliane Reid

Discussion: from a legal perspective, volunteering is set within the competences of the Scottish parliament, except some areas, which the UK government takes care of.

VDS is in the process of changing and reorganization.

VDS wants to focus on the experience of the volunteer: what the volunteer is doing, is seeing is experiencing; we want to concentrate on the volunteer. VDS still wants to support VIOs but mostly to make sure that there is an increase in the value of the volunteer experience.

A bit of information about the volunteer sector in Scotland: number, stakeholders involved etc.

VDS is a national resource center – provide resources to people and organizations in different ways.

Short description about the activities/areas of actions of VDS: legal “disclosure” services of volunteers / research and development/ public policy support / volunteering practice services and products

An overview of the results of the 27 years of experience of VDS: some main achievements of VDS over time.

In the future, VDS wants to radically change the approach to volunteer development in Scotland.

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Eliane

Time allotted | 10 min | Agenda topic Presentation about Local Volunteer Center in Kosice | Presenter Dominika Hradiská

Discussion: information about the history of the LVC, activities of LVC and plans for 2013 for future activities.

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Dominika

Time allotted | 10 min | Agenda topic Presentation about Local Volunteer Center Presov | Presenter Michaela Skyba

Discussion: introduction of the LVC: main aims and main activities, which are the program towards the development and collaboration of volunteering involving organizations and the program aiming to support the volunteers.

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Michaela.

Time allotted | 10 min | Agenda topic Presentation about the Local Volunteer Center in Banska Bystrica | Presenter Janka Matejzelová

Discussion : introduction about the LVC and main activities: the Volunteer Program and the Harm Reduction Program

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Janka.

Time allotted | 10 min | Agenda topic Presentation about the Local Volunteer Center in Nitra | Presenter Jana Andreasová

Discussion introduction on the setting up of the LVC; how volunteering is perceived in the local community; the objectives of the LVC are to raise awareness on volunteering in the local community, provide services of the people who want to volunteer and also to volunteer involving organizations.

The LVC in Nitra is an example of “good practice”, since it receives funding from the local municipality.

More detailed information available in the PPT presentation prepared by Jana.

Time allotted | 1 h | Agenda topic Overview of volunteering and unemployment in Slovakia and CZ | Presenter Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, Lenka Černá

Discussion points:

* Definition of volunteering and the law on volunteering in Slovakia (what the law defines and includes)
* Aspects related to the research on the context of volunteering in Slovakia undertaken during the European Year of Volunteering 2011: number of volunteers, intensity of formal volunteering, the social profile of the volunteers in Slovakia, volunteering infrastructure in the country
* Aspects related to unemployment in Slovakia: rate of unemployment, regional differences in the number of unemployed people, services for unemployment people;
* Connection between volunteering and unemployed: law on the employment services (no.5/2004) – there is a confusion of terms used to establish those who can get social benefits;
* Discussion about recognition of skills gained through non-formal education: it is not widely recognized in Slovakia and there is still a need to

Lenka: the average unemployment rate in Czech Republic is ….

* In Usti nad Labem LVC they were working last year with 45 unemployed people. There is a difference with working with long-term unemployed people and short-time unemployed people
* Accreditation in Czech Republic: there is a law on volunteering since 2002; they call volunteering “volunteer service” and there is a Volunteer Center within the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Non-profit organizations in Czech Republic receive accreditation from the Ministry to be work with volunteers and based in this accreditation, these organizations can apply and get funding from the Ministry for their activities.

More information about the overview on volunteering and unemployment in Slovakia is available in the PPT presented by Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová

Time allotted | 30 min | Agenda topic Volunteering and Employability – VDS experience | Presenter Eliane Reed

Discussion:

* Employability: is providing a person with the skills for getting a job; it does not mean or entail to support this person to actually get a job
* In the experience in Scotland, the research has proven that volunteering is not always a direct route into employment. Volunteering is not a solution on its own in term of employability
* Employability- related benefits for volunteers can be identified, though, which include in teaching commitment etc.
* Volunteering Options Programme (VOP) in Scotland: a short description of a programme aimed at getting unemployed people back into the work force through volunteering. The VOP had the following steps: the unemployed person would be assigned a unique number; with this number, they would go to the “Job center” – here, an adviser presented the unemployed person with several options as to how to keep active, volunteering being one of them; if the unemployed person chose to volunteer, they would be put in a data base and give a telephone number of a help line managed by Volunteer Development Scotland; if the unemployed person contacted VDS the VDS would do an assessment to identify areas in which the unemployed person wants to get involved, skills he/she wants to develop etc; following this, VDS transfers the unemployed person to a local volunteer center; the local volunteer center also conducts an assessment of the unemployed person so as to best match an unemployed person with volunteer opportunities available; after the unemployed person goes and volunteers, he/she must report back to the job center with a singed paper proving taking part in the volunteer activity.
* The program didn’t function very well because it proved to have too many steps in order to get the unemployed people to volunteer and there was no follow through with unemployed people and what they learned; the training program worked quite well – for the job centers and the VC to work with job centers
* Government is still putting lots of money into programs for unemployed people, especially at the local level
* From a national perspective, VDS is focusing on highlighting what are the benefits on the personal development of the volunteers in terms of employability, rather than pushing for an agenda that volunteering directly leads to finding a job.

More information can be found in the PPT presentation prepared by Eliane.

Time allotted | 50 min | Agenda topic V-Skills pilot program | Presenter Grace

Discussion:

* Topic items of the presentation: what we did, what we learned and where we are now
* Background of V-Skills program
* Purpose of the pilot program: to create a way to
* Steps undertaken in this pilot program: initial desk research, identified 4 volunteer centers at the local level, approached 2 local collages, set up an advisory group (members form the Scottish government; 4 VCs, 2 collages, the local job centers); focus group with volunteers to find out their views about the skills that they though they learned; engagement with the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) – to help VDS identify if this pilot project fits anywhere in the learning framework that SQA; the Employability Award / certificate is something that already existing within the SQA and this is the certificate program which finally was used in the pilot project; VDS had an important role to find a way in which the volunteers, through the volunteer activities, could go through the steps of accreditation for the Employability Award and get a certificate at the end.
* Employers in Scotland identified that there is gap in terms of the soft skills that some employees have when they go to the labor market. These particular soft skills can be developed through taking part in volunteer activities. This was important for the V-Skills project because this means there was a formal way to demonstrate the skills and competencies they gained through volunteering which could then be taken into consideration by the employers.
* There was an online resource created – learning community with reflection exercises, interactive ways of working etc.
* Learning journey: the volunteers begins volunteering; they have support form volunteer manager plus support from peers, they worked they way through the online learning community; all the evidences the volunteers had so far were sent to SQA to be evaluated and after receive the award/certificate.
* Lessons learned during the project: about 30 volunteers managed to get through all the steps of the certification process; the levels of support needed were far higher than initially anticipated; elements to be improved in the online learning community;
* How long does it take for the process for the volunteer? It really depends on the volunteer and how fast/slow they can learn and go through the assessment process
* It is a costly process because of the human recourse involved in guiding the volunteer to evaluate their learning experience and skills.

More information can be found in the PPT presentation prepared by Grace Martin.

Time allotted | 10 min | Agenda topic Vitej! / Welcome! method | Presenter Lenka

Discussion: presentation about a method that the LVC in Usti nad Labem uses when working with unemployed people

* Social profile of the unemployed people that VC Usti works with: unemployed for a period of 2-5 years; they don’t necessarily have high level of education but have some life experience (emotional intelligence): they either raised children or took care of their own parents when they were old.
* VC Usti tries to send the unemployed people to other volunteer involving organizations in the community

Time allotted | 1 hour | Agenda topic Project presentation | Presenter Alžbeta Mračková

Discussion: presentation of the project design; tasks and responsibilities;

* Set real expectations about the project activities and outcomes
* Project objectives
* Project outcomes
* Project Work Packages (WP):

1. WP1: transfer of the method Welcome – Vitej (October 2012 – April 2013)

2. WP2: pilot testing and adaptation of Welcome – Vitej method (May 2013 – December 2013)

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová: suggest having trainings for the people who work in labor offices in Slovakia to give them information about volunteering and working with volunteers

- Here it is important to map the skills and competences of unemployed people before and after their actual involvement in volunteer activities

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová: it is difficult to measure the “before competences” because you need to develop a set of tools for each of the competences we are talking about. It is also difficult because the people are not used with self-reflection and the results can only be applied to the specific cases of the volunteers and not generalized. Also, I feel we need more time to prepare for the transfer step so leave more time for the preparation step.

Question about the having some activities start earlier than other; will it be possible to have a meeting in Scotland either in February or March?

Eliane: There are some things we can supply electronically that we can give to the partners in SK before the training in Scotland, this way they will be more prepared for the visit and have some more information beforehand. Early March and April works best for VDS to have the training on V-Skills.

3. WP3: transfer of V-Skills for Employment (March 2013 – September 2013)

4. WP 4: pilot testing of V-Skills for Employment in Slovakia (August 2013 – March 2014)

Discussion points: accreditation committee – is there such a committee in SK? If not, should we create one? And who should be part of this?

Approach employees in SK to find out their attitudes towards volunteering and if there is find a way to monitor if there is a change in their attitudes.

5. WP 5: accredited training for VC and VIO on how to work with unemployed volunteers (March 2014 – July 2014)

6. WP6: project valorization (January 2014 – September 2014)

7. WP 7: project management (October 2012 – September 2014)

- please do reply to group mails containing deadline, until the given deadline

- project evaluation: one of the partners should take on the role of evaluating the project

More information can be found in the PPT presentation prepared by Alžbeta Mračková

| Action items | Person responsible | Deadline |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Set the meeting date for the training in Scotland: 2 days meeting + travel time | Adrian Murtagh, Eliane Reid | 31.12.2012 |

Time allotted | 1 hour | Agenda topic Project funding and financial management of the project | Presenter Miro

Discussion: grant agreement;

* Interim report – submitted until 31.10.2013
* Final report – submitted within 60 days after the end of the report
* Partners should send copies of their financial statement every 3 months
* Financial rules: eligible costs and non-eligible costs
* Budget lines: staff costs; travel and subsistence; daily rates; sub-contracting; other costs; overheads (indirect costs)
* Project agreements: signed and sent to UMB as soon as possible
* Also send to UMB statement from bank to certify validity of bank account of the partner organization
* More information can be found in the PPT presentation prepared by Miroslav Žabka

| Action items | Person responsible | Deadline |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Send time sheets template to project partners | Alžbeta Mračková , Miroslav Žabka | 15/12/2012 |
| Send partner agreements to project partners to be signed and send back to UMB | Miroslav Žabka, Alžbeta Mračková | 6/12/2012 |
| Send to partner project reminder about bank statement | Miroslav Žabka | 6/12/2012 |