



Project Summary:

Tools for Self Reliance has been hosting EVS volunteers funded by the EU for over 20 years and during this time we have seen so many young people from Europe come and go. We know that some of our daily volunteers have stayed in contact with several of them which shows the friendships that come out of these projects.

In the Summer of 2019, we said goodbye to Erik, Yvonne and Lilian. They had spent around 10 - 11 months with us, learning valuable skills that will stay with them for many years to come.

What was the purpose of the project?

Many of the volunteers come to the project immediately after finishing their A levels and want to experience European volunteering before returning to their country of origin to return to education or start employment. This experience gives the young person the opportunity to learn or enhance transferable skills in a non-formal environment which will support their personal and professional development. It also supports the development of intercultural and social, civic competencies.



The desired outcome for the volunteer will be to improve future employment prospects through the acquisition of skills and practical experience.

How do we measure the impact of the project?

Evaluation of baseline, mid-line and final surveys.

For us to be able to monitor the volunteers’ progress during their volunteering experience, it’s important that we capture their skill levels before they start their project. Our first point of collecting data is using the baseline survey which is sent to them around a month before they arrive in the UK. As you can see from the box below the surveys are repeated at the midway point and at the end of the project. This gives a good reflection of the progress the volunteer has made. The midline report is important as that can shape the remainder of the volunteers’ project e.g. if the volunteer has low confidence in problem solving we can support the learning in this area by ensuring that they have opportunities to practice problem solving and therefore increasing confidence in this area.

Baseline	Sent to the volunteer before their arrival in the UK
Mid-line	Midway through their project
Final	Sent to the volunteer six weeks after they return home



Final survey

When the volunteer completes their final survey, we ask them to provide a narrative on any observations from all three of the surveys. Interestingly, one of the volunteers said, **“generally I see that they (skills) got better and better, even if some at some point got worse, I just gained more perspective on those things which made me reflect on some things differently”**. Generally, academia is the style of learning the volunteers are most familiar with at that point in their life due to their age and experience and this can be reflected on the volunteers scoring when filling in the baseline survey e.g. awareness of individual learning style increases with participating in a different style of learning.

We also ask the volunteer to summarise their EVS experience, one volunteer said that **“in this year I made the most personal, practical and social development I have made in my whole life”**. The volunteers have left the project and returned to their country of origin with valuable transferable skills¹ as well as practical skills that will contribute to their personal and professional development for many years to come.



Evaluation

Tools for Self Reliance is keen to continually learn and improve our projects with young people in Europe who come to us to do their volunteering for a period of up to twelve months. To enable us to do this we ask for feedback from the volunteers once they return home at the end of their project. After a period of reflection, we send the volunteers an evaluation form which covers areas such as:

- Intergenerational working model
- Support during the project (mentors, daily volunteers and staff)
- Linguistic
- Practical arrangements
- Impact

Below are some of the responses from two of the volunteers who provided us with their thoughts on the project and its various components.

Both volunteers said that they believe that the intergenerational working has benefitted them a great deal and one volunteer said, **“intergenerational working is a different way of learning – it’s a learning you have for life”**. We are so happy to receive this feedback and it demonstrates the value of this method of learning but also that it increases/enhances the volunteers’ experience due to the support and guidance they receive from the daily volunteers.

¹ Communication, problem solving, teamwork, flexibility, diversity, task planning and time management



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Both volunteers said that they felt well supported at the project and knew who they could go to should they have needed support or guidance. They also felt that the task related training² they received was good and they always knew who to ask for help.

Both volunteers said that they felt supported with their linguistic skills and that everyone did their best to help them when they needed it. They were happy that they learnt new words and expressions.

For one of the volunteers, the project has led to them having increased independence and much higher self-esteem. Over the years, EVS volunteers have said that taking themselves out of their comfort zone and participating in something that they wouldn't have ordinarily has led to increased confidence and that it has been an empowering experience for them. This certainly applies to Erik, Yvonne and Lilian. It was quite noticeable that all three of them grew in confidence with one of the volunteers saying **“for me, the most valuable skills are the personal skills I reached. I got better self-esteem and more confident in what I'm doing. I'm proud of what I'm able to reach now”**

All three increased their confidence in their abilities and were able to recognise their skills areas as well as areas for development. It's a positive achievement to be able to identify the things you're good at and this will certainly benefit them in their lives.

Many of you will know that Erik, Yvonne and Lilian contributed additional support to Tools for Self Reliance by engaging with fundraising activities. Yvonne and Lilian refurbished some items which were put into Robin's Nest, a local crafts outlet, for sale. Erik organised a sponsored bike ride from Netley Marsh back home to Austria. He did some talks to some community groups to tell them about his trip and utilised his established links with Rotaract and Rotary club of Winchester, and they gave him a lot of support with sponsorship and during his volunteering experience. Erik's bike ride raised over £3000 for projects in Africa.



Table refurbished by Yvonne and sold at Robins Nest

The project at Tools for Self Reliance has provided the opportunity for all three volunteers to be able to have increased confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Our daily volunteers play a vital role in the young people's volunteering experience. They provide guidance and impart their skills and knowledge during the day to day work. As you can see from some of the comments above, the inter-generational element which forms the basis of the project is highly valued by many of the young people. This style of working is important to challenge stereotypes and provide the opportunity to have an informed opinion about everyone's role and participation in society. Another important point is that the inter-generational learning that occurs

² Health and safety, manual handling, tool refurbishing by hand and machine – delivered by Workshop Manager and/or daily volunteer



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is reciprocated with the young volunteers teaching us about their culture, the language and life of a young person in Europe today³.



Some of the daily volunteers have arranged social/cultural activities for the EVS volunteers including visits to Mottisfont, curry evenings, cream teas and paddle boarding. As well as all of this, volunteers welcome the EVS volunteers into their homes to meet their families. These additional activities are greatly appreciated by everyone at Tools for Self Reliance and again demonstrates the friendships that develop during the volunteering experience.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Erik, Yvonne and Lilian's time at Tools for Self Reliance.



**Erik Schmidt - Austria
Ready to leave Netley Marsh
for his sponsored bike ride to
Austria**

³ During tea breaks, daily interactions and social activities outside of work