



The role of group leaders

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"A leader is an ordinary man with an unusual will."

I. Introduction

This material was developed based on identified needs of youth exchanges Project management. Thus, it was noted that the group leader's roles are diminished, which leads to problems in project implementation.

This paper aims to:

- a. clarify the roles played by the group leaders for youth exchange projects
- b. Increase awareness of the importance of an active role of the leaders of the group
- c. Offer some useful tips on how the activity of the group leader can lead towards project success
- d. Build a group leader profile

II. Definition

Group leader is an adult accompanying the project participants of youth exchanges. It is he who shall ensure the protection and safety of participants, guiding them in the learning process and can have roles of facilitator, moderator and expert on the topics addressed in the projects.

Each national group must have at least one group leader.

III. The role of group leaders in all the stages of a project

Preparation

A group leader must fulfill the following roles:

- Participates in the selection of participants (participants profile established based on the themes and objectives of the project)
- Knows the level of knowledge / skills / abilities of each participant in connection with the profile established
- Holds frequent meetings with the young participants
- Participates in advance planning visit (AVP)
- Establishes the final program of activities with partners and young participants
- Establishes along with other leaders the safety & security measures adapted to the group needs.
- Engages in continuous communication with partners
- Keeps in touch with families and children, makes the necessary arrangements in order to obtain a parental agreement
- Ensures that any cultural differences are known to participants in the group
- Provides participants with information about other participants in the project, like culture, destination / venue, country laws
- Assess the potential risks that may arise in the project and what measures might be taken to prevent / solve them
- Ensures that the resource persons (trainer, facilitator, trainer, translator, medical personnel, expert) have adequate skills for specific project activities;

It is recommended that a group leader to fulfill the following roles:

- Distributes tasks and responsibilities for participants from the group or in accordance with their interests and knowledge
- Ensures that support materials are developed
- Where young people are minors, deals with visa and informs the members of his group of the steps to be taken;
- Facilitates communication of participants in national groups

Implementation

A group leader must fulfill the following roles:

- Reminds participants the protection and safety measures, practical and organizational issues, program activities, group rules, taking into account the identification of concerns and expectations
- Ensures that participants have all travel documents
- Ensures that participants are equally involved, active, flexible and voluntary, that there aren't situations of exclusion and do not encourage working on national groups.
- Ensures that activities are adapted in such a way as to meet the needs of young people with fewer opportunities
- Prevents and mediates conflicts arising
- Identifies their concerns and problems and discuss / settle in the coming days
- Ensures that participants' feedback is taken into account in implementing daily activities

- Ensures the proper implementation of program activities with other group leaders
- Ensures that language barriers are overcome and the communication is carried out efficiently
- Encourages participants to reflect on the learning process when issuing Youthpass certificates.
- Consults and continually monitors its participants
- Assess daily activities together with other leaders and / or participants
- Adapts the daily program of activities taking into consideration unforeseen circumstances
- Ensures that equipment / materials are appropriate for the activities
- Informs participants about the possibility of issuing a Youthpass certificate

● **It is recommended that a group leader to assume the role of facilitator of discussions**

Evaluation (& Follow-up)

A group leader must fulfill the following roles:

- Issues Youthpass certificates based on participants' self-assessment (set of abilities and skills)
- Project evaluations conducted at partnership / national group level

In some cases, different roles may be met through collaboration between the group leader and project coordinator (contact person), if they are different persons. Here they are:

- Ensures the proper implementation of program activities with other group leaders
- Ensures that the dissemination and exploitation activities are conducted according to the dissemination plan established under preparation phase.
- Measures the impact of the project amongst direct / indirect beneficiaries and community using tools and indicators previously established (in preparation phase)

IV. Profile of the group leader



- Interpersonal and communication skills
 - Strategic thinking, results-focused
 - Positive attitude and support
 - Team spirit
 - Attention to detail and promote a positive attitude
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- Coordination, planning and organization Skills
 - Multicultural communication skills
 - Knows the international language used in the project
 - Promoting active involvement, teamwork and discipline
 - Promote team effectiveness

- It is advisable to have knowledge of first aid
- Experience in volunteering, non-formal education and youth work
- Experience in working with vulnerable groups of young people
- Middle level IT skills (Microsoft Office, Corel Draw, Photoshop)
- Good negotiator, mediator
- Experience in fundraising activities
- Knowledge of writing press releases, messages to promote projects, etc..
- Has trainer, facilitator, coach, translator, and expert skills appropriate for specific project activities
- Knowledge of the competence assessment

Leader profile shown above is for guidance, is recommended and is not accidental!

V. Recommendations on types of project activities

a. Indoor Activities

- Ensures that participants have phones numbers in case of emergency
- Ensures that he/she knows where the participants are always
- Provides participants with information on historical and cultural sights to be visited in order to facilitate intercultural learning

b. Sports / mountain / teambuilding activities.

- Ensures that participants are properly equipped
- Ensures the use of specialized personnel
- Ensures that the activity is adequate to the group of participants.
- Ensures that activities / methods will not lead to exclusion (gender, race, sexual orientation, politics, age, etc.).
- Leader must have knowledge of first aid or, if it does not, he/she ensures that there are trained medical personnel
- Is informed in advance about the weather and in bad weather have
 - to have a backup plan

We recommend keeping a diary (during the project) by the leader and coordinator to facilitate the elaboration of the final report!

We recommend that participants should complete the individual evaluation sheets to facilitate completion of the YouthPass certificates.

VI. The role of project coordinator

From working experience we have noticed that the group leader is often the same person as the project coordinator (contact person) which entails a poor resource management and overload on the tasks that often lead to poor communication with stakeholders and emergence of various problems in project implementation.

Thus, we recommend that the group leader and project coordinator (contact person) to be two different people with different roles and

tasks, without neglecting the collaboration between the two when appropriate.

In an exchange project the coordinator must:

- Get in touch with service providers (accommodation, transport, meals, manufacturing materials, visibility, dissemination)
- Insures participants
- Be involved in attracting additional sources of financing for the project
- Maintain contact with local media partners / community
- Inform local partners and the community about possible changes in the project
- Ensure smooth implementation of program activities with other group leaders
- Send materials for dissemination to partner promoters and ensure that participants are involved in dissemination activities
- Communicate with local partners to disseminate and exploit the project's results
- Collect information and data about the dissemination activities undertaken by partner promoters in local communities
- Evaluate and measure the impact of projects and to which extent the objectives were fullfield.

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