

(DRAFT)

**BRIEF GUIDELINES FOR AN
INTERNATIONAL VISIT**

NOTE: These are only draft guidelines and will be further developed



Step 1: Thinking about an international visit

- Youth work staff have the opportunity to apply for funded visits, or to organise and fund their own visit.
- The visits must extend the programmes already on offer, and provide progression opportunities for young people to build upon previous knowledge and experiences. Young people must be actively involved from the start of the process and through all project phases.
- All visits must have a clear purpose, goals and outcomes for the young people attending.
- The project must fit within Regional/Local assessment of need, Curriculum Development Plan / Unit Action Plan.
- It is critically important that you identify a partner and nurture a positive working relationship with them.
- Educational Visits process (EVP) to be followed.

Step 2: Preparing for an international visit

Recruitment of young people is important to ensure that they are committed to being involved, and prepared to engage with all elements of the visit. Considerable effort is required to ensure that they are 'ready to go', including:

- Previous experience of involvement in residential activity and local/national travel.
- Clear expectations of the visit established from the outset.
- Contract / Code of Conduct agreed between the participants and youth work staff.
- Parental engagement is essential to ensure the project receives maximum support.
- Safeguarding arrangements are considered and aligned with organisational requirements.
- EVP process to be followed.

Step 3: Planning an international visit

It is important to:

- Ensure funding is in place before proceeding with planning and (if required), develop a fundraising strategy.
- Use the agreed organisational procurement process to book travel, accommodation, tours and attractions.
- Develop a balanced programme that will enable delivery of outcomes, 'chill out' time and reflective practice.
- Communicate regularly with your partner or organisation in order to build relationships, have a shared understanding of targets, ensure protocols are in place for dealing with unexpected situations or emergencies.

- Consider important dimensions including: accommodation, the leadership team, training, and completion of all required documentation.
- Research the destination to meet visa or other requirements e.g. inoculations, travel insurance needs, cultural norms, etc.
- Development of a risk assessment as per EV policy.

Step 4: Going on an international visit

The following should be considered when you are going on an international visit:

- If possible, staff are encouraged to undertake an advanced planning/study visit, possibly involving a peer mentor/volunteer.
- Agreement reached with partners on the dates, programme, travel arrangements, accommodation, etc.
- A thorough and comprehensive risk assessment should be completed of all aspects of the programme.
- Individual risk assessments of young people with particular needs should be completed, and if necessary parental guidance and permission sought e.g for young people taking medication, food or other allergies, etc.
- Ensure that passports are in date, available for each young person and a copy taken with you for emergency situations.
- It is important to bring all relevant documentation with you, collated into a travel pack (e.g. insurance, participant details, consent forms, tickets, etc.) and that you carry this at all times during your visit: a copy should also be given to your co-worker.
- A travel bag and/or hoodie can be procured in advance to provide a unique identity for the group during the visit.
- A travel pack with all pertinent information required for each young person involved in the project.
- Ensuring adequate staff numbers are accompanying the group, and they are fully briefed in advance of participation.

Step 5: Delivering an international visit

In terms of programme delivery, the following are vitally important:

- Food and water should be provided on arrival and the group quickly settled into their accommodation.
- The host organisation, in partnership with the project staff, should deliver 'on-arrival orientation' to include, for example, welcome, practicalities/logistics, programme introduction, cultural information, group contract, responsibilities, teambuilding, safeguarding, etc.

- The agreed programme should be activated and delivered with a daily review and reflection built in: this will ensure that required programmatic adjustments can be delivered, if required.
- Active involvement and participation of the young people is an essential component to ensure that they have ownership over the project and programme outcomes can be maximized.
- If the programme includes the delivery of accredited training, ensure that time is built in to enable workbooks to be completed.
- There should be space and time built into the programme to enable the leadership teams to meet regularly.
- Ensure that safeguarding and pastoral care mechanisms are in place to support and keep young people safe.
- The achievements of the young people must be recognized and their achievements celebrated on the final day.

Step 6: Evaluating an international visit

To put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation system, the following should be addressed:

- Systems for monitoring and evaluation should be developed prior to the programme and agreed with the host organisation.
- During the programme monitoring and evaluation should be carried out with young people, staff and host organisation.
- Having clear expectations and ground rules will make it easier to monitor progress and difficulties.
- Having built-in time for daily reflections and for the staff team(s) to meet, will greatly assist with monitoring and evaluation.
- Learning journals and creative evaluation techniques using blogs and interactive activities is encouraged.
- It is good practice and a condition of all projects that a full and final evaluation of the project is carried out: this should reflect on e.g. the programme aims and objectives, outcomes for young people, successes and challenges, recommendations for the future, etc.

The project lead must ensure that all relevant paper work and documentation is returned to project funders and organisational management to demonstrate the value of participation in international visits.

Step 7: Legacy of an international visit

Whilst participation in an international visit is of value in itself, the legacy from the project is important to consider:

- It can sometimes be difficult to maintain and sustain involvement post international activities so it is important that you have a plan in place to enable this to develop and/or to have progression routes or exit strategies in place.
- On return, ensure that you put in place a mechanism to debrief with staff and participants as there can often be a void or 'downer' following an intensive programme and supportive group environment.
- Based on their experience of the project, young people should be firmly in the driving seat for this phase and taking an active and leadership role in the delivery of initiatives that will enable legacies to emerge and evolve.
- Organising and delivering an event or activity where the young people can cascade the project experience and learning to a wider audience: peers, family, youth partners, the community, etc.
- What can the group do now as a result of their participation in this international programme: is there scope for local follow-up or social action linked to project themes?
- Successful partnerships should enable ongoing relationships to be built and future activity to flow from this international visit: multiplier activities and future projects should be explored and developed with your partner/others.

