

Start to Backpacker Europe



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1) INTRODUCTION

The Sac Ados project in France is one of the most successful projects to help, support, young people that never had the opportunity to travel, in their aim to discover their country, learn essential skills and gain citizenship. Enlarging the scope, targets, methodology of this project to a European scale could help youngsters that are for the moment excluded from the Erasmus+ program to discover Europe and take part to the European society. With some partners and the help of the Erasmus+ program we took the challenge to explore the possibilities to start a “Backpacker Europe” project. This Starters-guide gives you an overview of all the elements that you need to take into account if you want to start a BPE project into your country. It is not a bible, but a tool that can help you understand and build a Backpacker Europe project in your country. The guide helps you answering your FAQ’s and choosing the right direction

The Erasmus+ project was a collaboration between different partners. ISTO was leading partner and Vacances Ouvertes (France) the knowledge partner in the project. Other partners were ENDAS (Italy) BundesForum (Germany) , Kaleo (formerCBTJ)(Wallonia-Belgium) and Volkstoerisme (Flanders-Belgium). Special thanks to our Associated Partner Tourism Flanders for their knowledge and experience exchange support.

2) SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTNERS IN THE PROJECT

Bundesforum (Germany) is an association of nationwide institutions and organisations operating in the field of child and youth travel.

The common goals are based on diversity, openness, mutual enrichment and communication on an equal basis. The objective is to promote, develop and strengthen children and youth travel. The operational priorities are quality, professional exchange and representation of interest.

ENDAS (Italy) - National Democratic Institution of Social Action is a non-profit association founded in 1949.

Endas operates on a national and international level through grassroots sports associations and societies; cultural, social, recreational, environmental, travel and leisure clubs; social cooperatives, social enterprises, foundations, non-profits.

Kaleo (Belgium) , before CBTJ, is an association recognized by the Federation Wallonia-Brussels as an important actor of social tourism, a youth organisation and a youth center.

The association has a clear goal to promote social tourism for youth with a special attention to people who are culturally and economically disadvantaged.

Volkstoerisme (Flanders—Belgium) is a non-profit organisation which has the ambition or objective to develop social tourism or tourism for all and responsible tourism.

As an umbrella organisation it covers or coordinates 4 holiday centers: 2 camping sites for families and 2 youth hostels.

Vacances Ouvertes (France) develops social support programs by working in partnership with a diversity of local institutions and social support actors (500 in France).

Since 1990, VO has been working with professionals in public education, social work and youth fields. The “Holiday project” is used as a learning tool for autonomy, emancipation and mobility.

‘Holidays are for Everyone’ (Flanders—Belgium) is a service by Visit Flanders and Brussels. It strives to make holidays accessible for all, including people with a small income.

It targets persons and families in poverty, who for varying reasons, are unable to go on a holiday. The center facilitates a network of tourism partners, who offer discounts, and social organisations, who approach the target groups.

ISTO, the International Social Tourism Organisation is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to promote access to leisure, holidays and tourism for all i.e. young people, families, senior citizens and disabled people.

ISTO wants to stimulate the realization of this goal and the ensuing means that follow its the stakeholders, i.e. the states, social organisations and operators. It also wishes to promote sustainable and solidarity tourism to the benefit of the local population and with respect for natural and cultural heritage.

3) WHAT IS BACKPACKER EUROPE

Investing in discovering the European heritage for 16 to 25-year-olds is creating a European citizenship and a sustainable future for Europe.

Backpacker Europe is an initiative with which we try to help young people without any European travel experience to prepare and experience their holiday. The experience was developed on a local scale by Vacances Ouvertes (Sac Ados) in a number of French regions.

Problems and ambition

The free movement of goods and persons is one of the pillars of Europe. The Schengen zone is its realization in 26 countries. Citizenship is built and structured from a young age onwards. In 2017 (Eurostat) 26.5% of the Europeans (EU-28) were 24 years old or younger. About 10,9% of them were between 15 and 24 years old, but how many young people have already had the chance to visit another European region? And how many didn't? And why?

The question can be answered: it is not only due to the lack of money but also to the lack of culture and mobility experience. Within a European context, learning to have the skills for traveling forms a basis for multilateral understanding, for searching for work, to explore other cultures.

Factors of non-mobility are generally related to socio-economical categories but also to age and culture. Whereas the Erasmus initiative proved its importance for education and cultural exchange in Europe, there still is a group of young people who are not able to benefit from the positive effects of cultural exchange and the discovery of new European horizons.

The culture of exploring, learning and experiencing new ideas is at its height when one is 16 to 25 years old. That's the moment when you learn that you are part of society, that you can open new horizons, that you have your place in a European environment or... that you become disappointed, frustrated and afraid of the unknown.

Europe and its institutions are for many people something far away and what you don't experience, people are afraid of its workings or they don't understand.

The Backpacker Europe project wants to send a positive message to this target group to create a positive attitude for Europe. The idea must be "Europe is my country": the possibilities of travelling and exploring Europe's rich culture gives me a good feeling, I am part of a European population with a great history. But also with lessons learned: a large part of the heritage refers to a past when European people were at war. Backpacker Europe also wants to build an awareness for peace.

Proposal

The discovery of "the elsewhere" and 'the other' cannot be decreed, it has to be built. The challenge is to create a place where this is made possible. This is not just about travelling. It also requires arrangements, means, methods and social skills. It is a competence that not everyone has.

The proposal is for this young group, and especially for those who never went outside their country autonomously to visit another European country. To give them a methodological support and a financial boost to discover Europe for a few days. A Europe, where they can encounter other people .

We want to give young people a chance to get to know other European cultures, peoples, habits and ways of life.

Obviously, mobility skills and the experience of travelling also expands areas of competence in the search for work, Here we are talking about transferable, but essential competences, in this sense we can talk about travelling as a way of non-formal learning or non-formal education

4) AT THE ORIGINS - SAC ADOS

Sac Ados is a methodological support tool for young people to go on their first autonomous trip. It is proposed by Vacances Ouvertes to the entire set of structures that are active within the field of youth work.

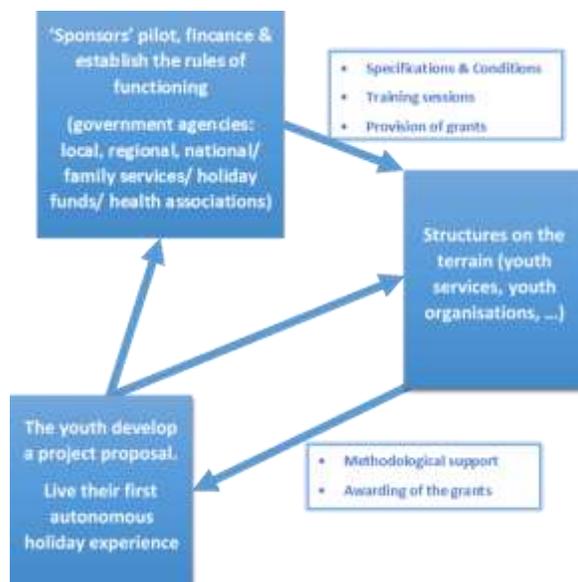
Sac Ados was created by VO in 1994. It wants to help young people, aged 16 to 25 that are generally left out of holidays, to set up their own holiday experience. The first autonomous holiday experience means a holiday outside a family or a group framework where the youngsters receive support at the destination. They only get support throughout the planning process.

Sac Ados

A diverse range of structures & organizations active in the field of youth work, leisure participation or holiday accessibility that stand close to the youth accompany the youth in the elaboration and setting up of their holiday project. Vacances Ouvertes provides youth professionals with formats, help with the specific set up and training sessions.

The originality of the device exists in the unique partnership on the ground with a diverse range of actors: the subsidizing government (local, regional or national; health services; family services; holiday funds; ...), the structures on the ground helping to communicate & implement the project working with the participants & last but not least the participants themselves who submit their holiday projects.

VO helps the partners in setting up the device



5) ISTO COMMUNITY

Together for a sustainable and solidary Tourism for All

DNA of ISTO

ISTO and its members work around 5 grand themes in the light of sustainable development in relation to holidays. Quality of life, Inclusion-Accessibility, Fair Business, Solidarity, Environment. These elements make up the DNA of a Fair and Sustainable Tourism for All.

This way the 'Tourism for All' community wants to contribute in its own field(s) of expertise to the Sustainable Development Goals that were put in place by the United Nations.

Backpacker Europe specifically focusses on Inclusion and Quality of Life.



6) HOLIDAYS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Intrinsic Value of Holidays

Benefits of holidaying

In the literature on holidays and its meaning in modern society, holiday-taking is viewed as a mentally and physically healthy pursuit that increases quality of life. Hughes (1991,p.195)² states that ‘Holidays can perform real functions that are beneficial to both individuals and society’. For those from disadvantaged backgrounds there is evidence that holidays provide beneficial effects. Studies showed that holidays provoke the following effects:

- “ Value in terms of social well-being. Increased social interaction.
- “ Essential break from emotional, mental and physiological stress. A break from routine.
- “ Mental health & physical well-being.
- “ Mitigation against family or relationship breakdown. Strengthening of family relationships.
- “ Quality of life in general. The broadening of experiences.
- “ The development of independence and a more proactive attitude to life.

Benefits of holiday-taking are felt more deeply by those for whom access to holiday-taking is most constrained. Holidays have a beneficial impact on alleviating the problems that stem from poverty, isolation, lack of family/ community support, stress at work and living in an unsafe neighborhood.

Studies also reveal that anticipation prior to and memories after the holiday are considered to be almost as valuable as the holiday itself. The evidence that the benefits of a holiday extend beyond the time-frame of the holiday itself. This is true both for longer holidays and day trips.

From a societal point of view, holidays could reduce the pressure on health and social services. Holidays extend beyond the individual and family realm, they can contribute to financial and social benefits for society. A core societal problem is that holidaying is not experienced equally. Holiday is one of the first essential items of family expenditure sacrificed in poverty (Ghate and Hazel, 2002).

Holidaying as a social necessity

Holidaying is a widespread social practice in advanced economies, as economic prosperity has created a situation where leisure is now regarded as an essential part of individual and community well-being (Dawson, 1988)⁴. Mitchell (1991) ascertains that tourism, based on activities and the attractiveness of destinations has become a total social fact, in the sense that it is an object of which the main characteristic is concerning all members of a society and at the same time, it is saying something about each one of its members individually.

Involuntary non-participation may be an indicator of poverty as it suggests an inability to participate in the commonly accepted style of life of the community (Hughes, 1991)⁶. Thus, not going on vacation appears as a vector for strengthening the disaffiliation of the disaffected (Flichy, 2004)⁷.

Policy makers have recognized this as such. The EU, as many of its member states, uses (not) going on holidays as an indicator of poverty and severe material deprivation.⁸ Also on other occasions the importance of holidays from a societal and social point of view has been stressed by other international organizations.

Internationally, the suggestion that access to holidaying opportunities is a social right dates to at least as early as 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights underscored that 'everyone has the right to rest and leisure' (1948, Art. 24), a right that is reiterated in the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966, Art. 7d), which noted the right to periodic holidays with pay (Shaw and Williams, 2002; Corlyon and La Placa, 2006; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

Manila Declaration (UNWTO, 1980) states that 'tourism is considered an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on social, cultural, educational and economic sectors of societies.'

The European Economic and Social Committee has identified a range of social benefits related to tourism, such as an improvement to well-being, increased citizenship and personal development (EESC, 2006).

Social exclusion: On Tourism and Social Intervention

Social Capital

Walker and Walker define social exclusion very generally as 'a dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society' (Walker & Walker in Hodgson & Turner, 2003, p. 266). Rodgers et al. opt for a more sociological and psychological definition: "Social exclusion refers, in particular, to inability to enjoy social rights without help, suffering from low self-esteem, inadequacy in their capacity to meet their obligations, the risk of long-term relegation to the rank of those on social benefits, and stigmatization" (Rodgers et al., 1995, p. 45).

An important concept in the discussion on social inclusion is social capital, social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures (Portes, 1998, p. 6). Social capital has been linked to general well-being. "As well as feeling satisfied and happy, well-being means developing as a person, being fulfilled, and making a contribution to the society" (Nef, 2004, p. 4).

Putnam argues that "precisely because poor people (by definition) have little economic capital and face formidable obstacles in acquiring human capital (that is: education), social capital is disproportionately important to their welfare" (Putnam, 2000, p. 318). Lacking the valuable connections and relationships between people can thus have an added detrimental effect of people living in poverty or on low incomes, making them not only financially poor, but also literally "socially excluded".

Above we have seen how holidaying has different benefits on matters of Social Inclusion and strengthening social capital. Further on we will see how the Backpacker Europe Project can provide young people with experiences and skills that positively impacts their ability to build and preserve social capital.

Participation in Tourism for Personal Purposes by age Group (Eurostat—11-01-2019)

Criteria

15 to 24 years - 4 nights or over - % tot. pop.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
BELGIUM	34.8 %	49.6 %	46.0 %	49.3 %	50.9 %	58.9 %
GERMANY	72.0 %	68.1 %	69.7 %	69.6 %	74.2 %	60.9 %
FRANCE	56.2 %	62.3 %	62.2 %	58.7 %	58.5 %	57.1 %
ITALY	44.3 %	41.1 %	32.8 %	37.5 %	38.4 %	41.3 %
average	51.82 %	55.28 %	52.66 %	53.73 %	55.52 %	54.56 %

These statistics only give us an idea of the number of youth that gets the chance to travel for a longer period of time. The statistics don't say for example whether it concerns international travelling.

In general we see that a lot of young people don't get to experience the benefits of travelling that we described above.

7) MISSION STATEMENT BACKPACKER EUROPE

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." Marcel Proust

Growing in Tolerance

A culture of exploring beyond the own borders

The culture of exploring, learning and experiencing new ideas is at its height when one is 16 to 25 years old. It's a moment where young people learn that they are part of a society, that new horizons can be discovered, that they have a place in a European environment... Or it's the age where people become disappointed, frustrated, even afraid of what they don't know.

Travelling teaches us that things aren't as black and white as they are often presented. Seeing how things work, how people interact and how certain aspects of life are valued in a different way in different places helps young people to enlarge their scope and to have a greater understanding and tolerance for what is different than the things they're used to.

Being away, having time to rest and relax in a new setting that often instigates curiosity, helps young people to enjoy simple things and reflect on their lifestyle at home. Travelling helps us to discover the 'other' in people, in culture or in nature. This in turn helps us to rediscover ourselves in a different way. Perhaps more curious, more creative, more tolerant, more understanding, more loving than we had imagined before.

A Common Identity : Europe and Belonging

Europe's Unity in Diversity

The Erasmus project is seen as one of the symbols for the construction of European identity. The aim of fostering European identity has been a key issue for EU policy makers over the last decades.

Unfortunately we can see a growing gap in many countries between people who can recognize the benefits and accomplishments of our Union and those for whom this is not so obvious.

Our feeling is, that although huge efforts have been made by the European Commission to reach out to the next generation, a whole group of young people don't get the chance to experience the benefits of what the EU has been realizing for them and is still realizing today. Many of the programs proposed by the European Institutions often benefit people who, in different ways, already profit from heightened access to opportunities in life. We could speak of a Matthew Effect here. Backpacker Europe is designed specifically for those young people who don't have this chances.

A sense of belonging to a community, a country or any form of collective life doesn't come by itself.

Backpacker Europe as a device provides different elements that are recognized as drivers of citizenship, identity-building and belonging.

Young people get the chance to meet peers from other countries and establish transnational relations.

The establishment of a Backpacker Europe project would help to include young people in the opportunity structures provided by European programs. More specifically those young people who on other occasions often fall out of it. They would actually feel part of the European Project.

Backpacker Europe would help young people to discover and experience the diverse and common cultural heritage.

Chances are big that at least some activity of cultural production, which is seen as engendering a sense of belonging, would take place. This could be through storytelling about the trip, a blog, a diary, an after movie of the trip.

Young people would discover that some of their values are profoundly European and that they are shared all over the continent. At the same time they would discover how encountering other cultures can contribute in a new way to the way they find and define their own place in the world.

Growing in Confidence

Vacances Ouvertes has carried out several studies on the impacts of holiday projects on young people. For more than half of young people who leave with autonomous holiday aid programmes, the holiday project is an opportunity to:

- refine their desires, interests and projects;
- to learn about themselves (to self-observe, to identify one's strengths / weaknesses);
- get closer to the other participants in the trip, learn about their ability to live in a group and accept others;
- to be reboosted, re-motivated but also soothed.

But also:

- learn to anticipate, manage their budget, travels, domestic tasks;
- strengthen the confidence that their parents have in them;
- to meet new people.

Changes in the psychosocial dimensions have been measured: holiday project aids enable young people to increase their sense of overcoming and learning. For 66% of the young people accompanied within the Sac Ados programme, the holiday project is an opportunity to achieve things they did not feel capable of.

- Better self-esteem: young people gain more pride in their academic and professional achievements, they enjoy more the company of others.
- Strengthened skills and know-how: make decisions, anticipate, solve problems, set goals, be more autonomous, more organized, more predictable.

- A decrease in the feeling of failure.

The effects are greater for the most vulnerable young people (looking for a job or a low level of education).

Significant effects are also detected on the **mobility** of young people: finding one's way in unknown places, leaving far from home, becomes possible thanks to autonomous holiday projects.

Nearly 90% feel more ready to move, to discover new places.

61% move more often when they return and 29% practice new hobbies.

The methodological support of the professionals of the youth structures is essential. Their support is considered useful and even indispensable by 83% of beneficiaries:

- accompaniment by the referent makes it possible to help to build the project and the budget;
- young people for whom the holiday project has been quite successful, explain it mainly thanks to the support of the professionals;
- almost half of young people have learned to build or better prepare a project.

Supporting young people in this context is also a way of attracting young people to the youth structures:

- for 3/4 young people, Sac Ados was a way to meet a referent they did not know;
- after Sac Ados, young people go to the structure for new reasons.

Simple holiday aid programmes (with easy rules and setup) make it possible for 93% young people to prepare their holiday project while learning and developing their skills. After their autonomous holidays, 70% of young people feel able to organize a new autonomous trip without help.

"Nobody can discover the world for somebody else. Only when we discover it for ourselves does it become common ground and a common bond and we cease to be alone." Wendell Berry

If you like to construct European citizenship you need not only create an environment of non-borders but also a network of people that support the idea of contacts between people. Traveling, learning the skills to understand each other, respect every ones differences is a great challenge.

Growing in Skills

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." Marcel Proust

Non-Formal Learning Effects with Mobility as a Vector

Vacances Ouvertes (France) has studied the effects and transversal qualities characterizing 'youth holiday projects'. It describes some of the effects as follows: "The transversality of the themes that are

addressed during the setup of a holiday project favors the mobilization and development of transferable skills in other dynamical projects. Such as professional insertion, studies, housing, personal projects, ...

The effects are manifold as many transferable skills that are of use in a professional context are being developed.

Mobility

Mobility is central in modern society but sometimes not self-evident for the individual. Therefore mobility should be learned, like a language. In this sense acquisitions should be made in three domains.

The first one refers to cognitive skills with regard to spatial cognition. Meaning knowing how to deal with GPS systems, public transport, railway stations, airports, parking meters, urban spaces and the way they are organized, ...

A second dimension of mobility has to do with situational and relational skills. These are part of personal learning. In this domain we can refer to new languages, being apart from family and friends, relational and cultural codes, establishing new relationships, ...

The third dimension of mobility that should be apprehended is that of the affection and emotions. Mobile society confronts us with particular emotions and sensations. It's a less tangible learning register than a subway plan, but therefore not less real or operating.

In Europe today, mobility is the norm. With the existing means, both to travel (cars, trains, planes...) and to search information and book on the Internet (computers, smartphones) and with the relatively low rates of some means of transport, one could think that traveling is accessible to anyone. However, we know that the financially poorer and the less educated young people are far less mobile than the wealthier or the students. And it is generally thought that there is a direct link between spatial mobility and social mobility.

To travel a short or a long distance requires the acquisition and the integration of several skills. Specific skills and know-how are essential to plan your holidays, book tickets and hotels, estimate the necessary budget etc. The same skills are needed, at another level, for longer mobility than holidays, such as study programs or internships abroad. Moreover, these same skills can be used after the mobility experiences, in the job search. These additional skills can make a difference in the job market. This is why mobility is at the center of public policy concerns for young people, with the aim of facilitating their professional integration.

What is the link between spatial mobility and social mobility? Spatial mobility is both a constituent element of social relations and a social marker (Eric Le Breton, 2006)¹. People with a high standard of living (and who are at the top of the social hierarchy) are very comfortable with mobility and practice it frequently for work and leisure. On the contrary, the poorest people (at the bottom of the social

¹ Texte de la 603e conférence de l'Université de tous les savoirs donnée le 7 janvier 2006 - Éric le Breton: «Mobilité et inégalités sociales».

hierarchy) only experience travelling within a few kilometers from their home, and leave little or not on vacation.

Does facilitating mobility promote social mobility? The question of social mobility is very broad, and too often limited to the issue of getting a stable, well-paid job. However, for 16-25 year olds with few means (weak social and financial capital), professional integration is one of the major concerns of young people themselves, as well as public policy makers', and is considered the key for access to social mobility. Even the education system for this age group is mainly focused on the possible job opportunities it offers. Being able to access good studies would provide access to a good job, so to social mobility. For that, it is desirable to be mobile geographically, in order to have access to more opportunities, both in education and in employment. This is particularly true for young people living in areas far away from employment areas (rural areas, areas in economic transition, etc.).

Youth mobility programs promote the acquisition of skills. Vacances Ouvertes studied the impacts of youth autonomous holiday projects (2017). Data on the effects one year after their trips, for young people experiencing difficulties in socio-professional integration, show that holiday projects promote an evolution of the personal and professional situation, and encourage young people in making new projects :

Two thirds of the young people surveyed have seen their educational or professional situation evolve from job search to training and to employment. A quarter of these young people themselves see a direct link with the holiday project.

Two-thirds of young people surveyed have seen their personal situation evolve, in relation to themselves and their environment (leisure and travel practice). 13% of these young people connect this directly to their holiday project, 57% see a probable link.

50% of the young people surveyed have developed new projects, mainly related to mobility. It is not a "new" desire but a desire transformed into a project, perceived as achievable.

The study of Vacances Ouvertes shows that the holiday project brings a remobilization potential by modifying psychosocial dimensions of well-being and self-esteem. This is especially true for economically dependent, non-mobile and isolated young people. These young people are more in need than others of accompanying professionals in setting up their holiday projects and are most likely to maximize the accompaniment potential.

The positive effects of mobility aid programs on young people are demonstrated. Yet it is crucial that these aids are long-term and that they provide methodological support to young people.

The acquisition of skills related to mobility is part of non-formal education, and deserves to be appreciated both by the formal education system and employers. These skills make it possible to broaden one's job search zone, to accept positions providing for geographical mobility (frequent trips in

the region or abroad). A subsequent skill to be acquired by young people who have experienced mobility, will be the valuation of their new skills in the labor market. This is not always easy, especially for young people with little education.

Hence the importance of mobility programs open to young people generally excluded from mobility, including professional support over time²: before (planning, building the project) and after the mobility experience (experience capitalization, putting into words the skills acquired).

In conclusion, it is not the mere existence of physical and digital means of access to mobility, but the internalization (acquisition, repetition, awareness) of mobility-related skills that enables young people to practice geographical mobility and achieve social mobility.

8) MOBILITY & SOCIAL PROGRESS

In Europe today, mobility is the norm. With the existing means, both to travel (cars, trains, planes...) and to search information and book on the Internet (computers, smartphones) and with the relatively low rates of some means of transport, one could think that traveling is accessible to anyone. However, we know that the financially poorer and the less educated young people are far less mobile than the wealthier or the students. And it is generally thought that there is a direct link between spatial mobility and social mobility.

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² Denis Anne, Julie Le Gallo, Yannick l'Horty. Faciliter la mobilité quotidienne des jeunes éloignés de l'emploi : une évaluation expérimentale. 2018. halshs-01878452.

³ Texte de la 603e conférence de l'Université de tous les savoirs donnée le 7 janvier 2006 - Éric le Breton: «Mobilité et inégalités sociales».

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The study of Vacances Ouvertes shows that the holiday project brings a remobilization potential by modifying psychosocial dimensions of well-being and self-esteem. This is especially true for economically dependent, non-mobile and isolated young people. These young people are more in need than others of accompanying professionals in setting up their holiday projects and are most likely to maximize the accompaniment potential.

The positive effects of mobility aid programs on young people are demonstrated. Yet it is crucial that these aids are long-term and that they provide methodological support to young people.

The acquisition of skills related to mobility is part of non-formal education, and deserves to be appreciated both by the formal education system and employers. These skills make it possible to broaden one's job search zone, to accept positions providing for geographical mobility (frequent trips in the region or abroad). A subsequent skill to be acquired by young people who have experienced mobility, will be the valuation of their new skills in the labor market. This is not always easy, especially for young people with little education.

Hence the importance of mobility programs open to young people generally excluded from mobility, including professional support over time⁴: before (planning, building the project) and after the mobility experience (experience capitalization, putting into words the skills acquired).

In conclusion, it is not the mere existence of physical and digital means of access to mobility, but the internalization (acquisition, repetition, awareness) of mobility-related skills that enables young people to practice geographical mobility and achieve social mobility.

9) BACKPACKER EUROPE— CONDISSIONS AND CRITERIA FOR A PROJECT ON EUROPEAN SCALE.

No professionals – No family accompaniment on the ground/ during the trip – Autonomous travelling

The autonomous travelling is at the core of the mission of BPE. If we are talking about the accompaniment also the support at destination level through the tourism accommodators is important.

However within the concept of learning travel skills , the importance of accompanied group travelling in the phase before “the BPE experience” is an important element. Within the context of this project it has been proved that organisations that are only specialised in group traveling could have a major role in detecting and promoting potential youngsters to take a further step in the autonomous travel experience.

Travelling in small groups is ideal for social interaction although it must be possible that individuals subscribe– groups shouldn’t be too big (maximum 6 persons) it is important not to travel in groups that are too big. The aspect of travelling autonomous might get snowed under, the bigger the group the smaller the involvement of some of the participants. The aspect of travelling autonomous might get snowed under, the bigger the group the smaller the involvement of some of the participants.

Minimum duration – 4 days (UNWTO)

A minimum duration for a trip plays an important role in the apprehension of new skills in an autonomous travel. Although for the target group not putting up (a new) barrier for people who are engaging in their first outbound travelling experience. Some youngsters might be scared off by a project that requires them to stay 5 days away from home.

The mean goal must be an outbound BPE project that establishes a minimum duration of traveling for 4 days. Within the preparing context it is preferable that BPE ambassadors should be admitted to work with a two-three step program to help the youngster to achieve this goal. The minimum duration of four

⁴ Denis Anne, Julie Le Gallo, Yannick l’Horty. Faciliter la mobilité quotidienne des jeunes éloignés de l’emploi : une évaluation expérimentale. 2018. halshs-01878452.

days has a strategic importance for the project and gives a clear distinction between leisure time and holidays.

Location – outbound trip to another European country

For this criterion, initially there was no agreement, some partners didn't see this as crucially important, and others however did. The reasons lay in line of the argumentation on the previous criterion and has to do with avoiding to put up new barriers that would inhibit youngsters to participate.

Having a European outbound trip plays a double role. Firstly one of the aims of the BPE project is to contribute to the construction of a sense of European citizenship for the youngsters that work out a project. A second element is the development of new skills, going to a different country confronts the youngsters with new situations to deal with. Foreign languages, different cultural ways of expression, food culture, etc. We see the European aspect of the BPE project as a crucial element that is at the core of what we want to do.

Period of the year: summer/ all year

All partners agreed that this criterion should be changed in the sense that youngster themselves should be able to make the choice about when to travel. In this sense it is a crucial criterion, departing from the idea that liberty goes hand in hand with autonomy.

Budget viability – auto financing by the youngsters (at least in part)

The partnership agreed that at least a part of the budget should be brought in by the youngsters, in the sense that it plays an important role in empowering the youngsters and making them realize what they can do themselves. They should own the project.

At the same time it is important to have a minimum financial support by the institutions, which should be minimum 1/3 of the total budget. One element of the BPE project is the link with local and European institutions.

Age criterion – 16-25

The partners agreed that it is important to establish an age category in which you can apply for a holiday project. One partner reminded however the legal barriers for unaccompanied outbound travel for minors in some countries where they should be accompanied.

1st time benefitting from project aid

Since we work with groups it might be an option not to just limit the participation to just 1, because possible spill-over effects could be annulled. We especially want to reach youngsters that otherwise wouldn't travel autonomously, sometimes having someone (known) in the group that has already experienced a holiday project might help to convince others.

However, attention should be paid to the aim of the project which is to help youngsters to develop their first autonomous holiday project. So limits should somehow be set. A proposition could be to have the youngsters make use of the device 2 times max., the second trip should be an outbound trip within Europe.

1st autonomous travel without 'adult' accompaniment

In general it is important to make a distinction between the target group and the eligible group. We want to reach as much as possible a specific group of youngsters and we want to avoid to only help youngsters that would normally find other ways to travel autonomously.

In line with the argumentation on the previous criterion we want to avoid excluding people from the eligible group. However it is important to use/ establish adapted partnerships, communication tools and working methods that enable us to reach out to our target group. Anyway one can never be sure either.

The role of the accompaniment in the preparatory trajectory therefore is of crucial importance. Groups can be mixed but the preparatory trajectory is a central element to the device.

Young people leaving little or not on a holiday

In line with the previous criterion. We aim at young people who don't get to experience holidays at all or very rarely. Again it is important not to work too strictly on the one hand, but to aim at reaching the target public on the other hand.

Spontaneous participation

It is important that the youngsters themselves show interest and commitment during the setup of a holiday project. Backpacker Europe is not an organised group trip, it is a device which wants to help young people to discover. Discover other European countries is one thing, discovering your own capacities and possibilities is another, therefore it is important to keep the involvement of the youngsters as high as possible during the preparatory phase of a holiday project.

However, none of this means that it should be left to the youngsters alone, especially if we want to reach the target group we set out. That means that we should use a network of social partners and modern and attractive communication tools to convince young people to hand in a project.

BPE Accompaniment – youngsters should come up with a holiday project themselves

The device is set up as a tool for long term accompaniment of young people towards the experience of an autonomous holiday experience. Partners stressed the importance however to avoid being too procedural. Young people should show their commitment, but not necessarily through filling in questionnaires every now and then. All depends on local characteristics.

We should reach an agreement on a clear framework and the main principles, the way things eventually are played out can vary with the preferences of the sponsors, social partners and local authorities.

The function of the accompaniment is to empower and facilitate, in the end the youngsters have to carry the project themselves, the ownership lies with them.

Just because holidays always demands for an investment of time it is important to ask something from the youngsters, it is a form of education. Some form of dossier should be implemented, also for evaluation purposes of the project in general.

Holiday as a purpose

Most partners agreed on the importance of holiday as a purpose for the trip within this project. Although cultural, sports or other activities might be included. The point of departure is that the youngster is free to choose and that we don't talk about an organised group trip.

Evaluation

It is important to somehow record the effects of a holiday experience on the youngsters, the reason is twofold. First of all, it is important for the youngsters themselves. They learn to reflect upon the experiences they do and to gather insights in the way they act, learn and relate to others and new environments.

Secondly, also for the project as such it is important to record the positive (or negative) effects that are generated by a first autonomous holiday. We know it is an important tool in the construction of citizenship, engendering tolerance and self-esteem for the participants and allowing them to grow in a psycho-social sense.

10) PREPARING THE HOLIDAY-COACHES

Holiday project grants intended to open up perspectives for young people who would not go on holiday have to be complemented by an offer of methodological support, in order to have a direct impact on youth skills and self-esteem.

In the Sac Ados program, professionals are trained by VO, inform and accompany young people in setting up their holiday projects and pre-select projects.

Most of the information is transmitted during a first interview. At the same time, a personalized awareness campaign can be conducted for the young people identified as being at the heart of the target group.

The support offered by professionals will be based on the needs of each group of young people. For the less autonomous, professionals will schedule several appointments, to talk about organizing holidays, prevention health, road safety etc.

During the accompaniment, the professionals get closer to the young people and can detect problems of these young people, unknown until then: difficulties to read, write or express themselves by telephone; gaps in some school learning etc. Youth professionals then have the opportunity to help young people find solutions that will help them far beyond the holiday project.

At the end of the project preparation, the professionals check that the file is complete. They verify that all the documents required by the regulation are included (photocopies of identity documents and driving licenses, parental authorizations for young minors ...). They can also train young people to make an oral presentation of their project before a jury.

On average, in the Sac Ados program, each structure charges 2 professionals to accompany young people. Generally, about 10 young people are accompanied by each structure per year. Each project requires 3 to 5 preparation sessions, which mostly take place in groups (73% via physical meetings, 18% by telephone).

Young people's difficulties identified by professionals during the accompaniment:

	2017	2016
Develop a budget	33%	20%
Plan the steps in time	22%	3%
Choose the possible options with regard to the constraints	7%	7%
Find an accommodation	7%	10%
Finance holidays	5%	23%
Constitute a group	3%	3%
Search information	3%	3%
Draft the project	0%	0%

Vacances Ouvertes, 2018

The majority of professionals ask feedback to young people, after their trips:

- oral feedback, observation and discussions with young people, exchanges on their involvement;
- return by email;
- friendly moments

Nevertheless, it is difficult for most professionals to meet young people again, when they return from their trips. This is one of the reasons for the difficulty for professionals to directly assess the effects of the holiday projects on young people.

VO has developed training courses and methodological tools that sweep all the aspects to know to accompany young people to set up their vacation plans:

- Targeting, selecting the public;
- The legal framework: the points of vigilance concerning the promotion of autonomous mobility for young people;
- The role of the professionals: to make young people do, rather than do at their place;
- The budget: the costs of an autonomous trip, and possible sources of funding;
- The existing means of transport and the purchase of tickets;
- The choice of the type of accommodation and booking;
- Balanced diet when on holiday.

Most of the training courses offered by VO, even if they deal with the themes from the point of view of the holiday projects, have a much more general character and can thus enrich any other project of social action or popular education.

The workshops generally proposed within the framework of Sac Ados are: "Technical framing" which presents the principles and the rules of the device; "Apprehend the legal framework" to know the specificities of an autonomous departure of young minors or majors; the "Assessment and exchange of practices" workshop, to bring out ways of improving the program. VO has also developed more specific topics, as "How to communicate and mobilize around a holiday project program" and "How to support European mobility projects".

In addition to training courses, Vacances Ouvertes provides professionals with tools to prepare for the accompaniment of young people, such as:

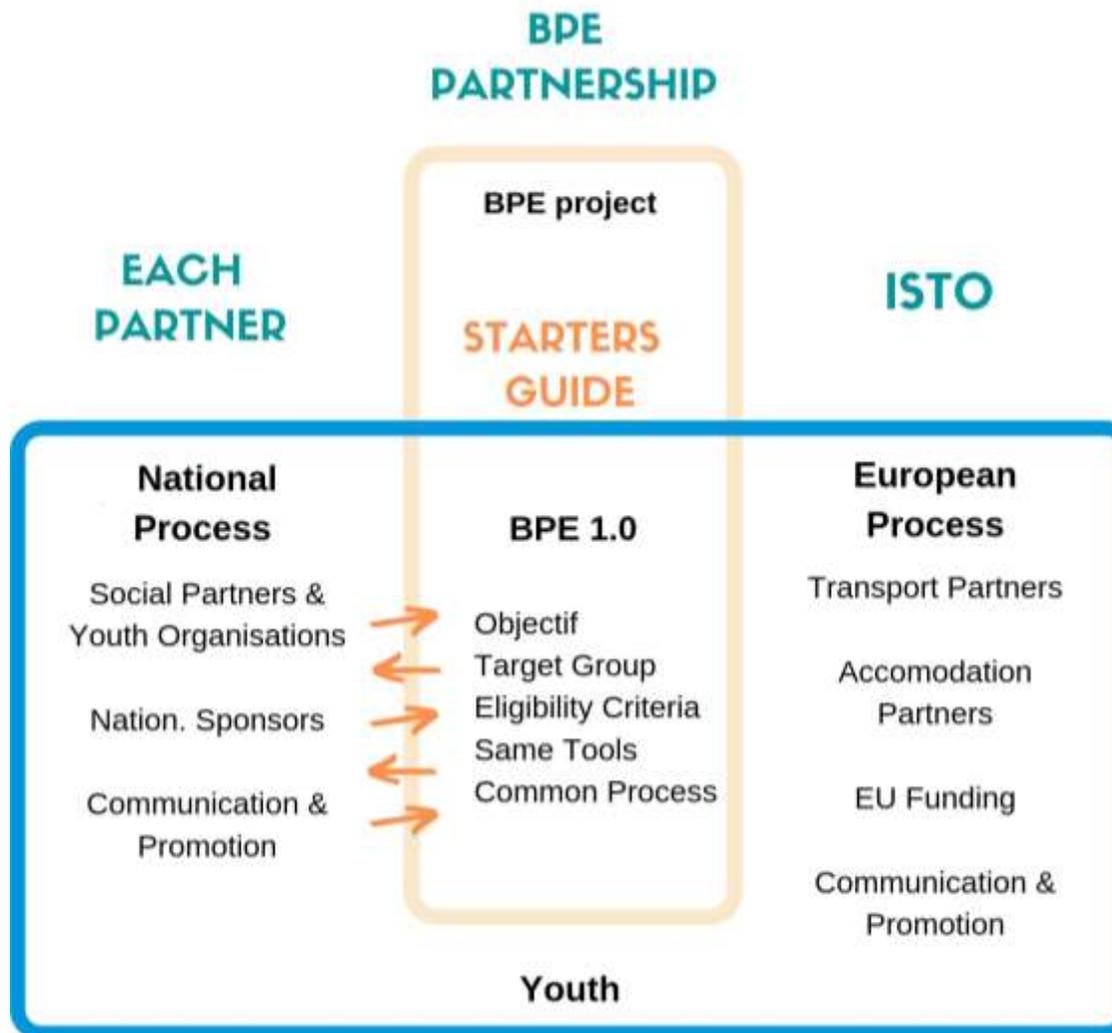
- Sample kits, to familiarize with the content of the pack for young people. In the kit proposed via Sac Ados, professionals find several brochures to help them talk with the youngsters about prevention, risky behavior, addictions (drug, alcohol), first aid actions, road safety. They also talk about liability insurance and repatriation assistance.
- Road maps (France, Europe), to help young people to understand the distances to travel during the stay;
- The " Young Traveler's Guide ", which allows to clear the path to go from the idea to the project. It presents the development of youth holiday projects step by step and encourages, through some tips and advice, an active search for information by the young people.
- USB keys, with matrices of documents useful for accompanying young people. These include:
 - the "Operator's Guide";
 - Examples of the main documents that young people must complete to obtain the Sac Ados financial aid.

In conclusion, preparing the holiday-coaches is crucial in order to:

- Set up a long-term action, so that all the stakeholders appropriate it and allow effective educational effects among young people and professionals;
- Make young people real actors of their projects (and ensure their spontaneous participation);
- Promote mutual trust between the youth and the financing entity;
- Act as closely as possible, by involving the existing youth structures and services on the field.

11) MODELS OF POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS TASKS TO BE FULLFILLED

Partnership model of Backpacker Europe



Different roles needed in the BPE project



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Which Message / Information ?

When / How Often ?

Who is in Charge of Communicating ?

Which Tools / Channels / Media ?

Framework of task that need to be fulfilled when you start BPE

Main actions	Specific actions	Organizations interested in
Financing	Finding financial partners	
Youth Accompaniment	Helping young people in their projects set up	
National situation analysis	Youth & travel + social field, existing devices...	
	Legal frameworks analysis	
Logistics	Insurance	
	Financial aid to youngsters	
	Tools for professionals & youngsters	
	Suppliers, delivery	
BPE smartphone App	Adaptation to country specifics	
Communication	Public actors	
	Financial partners	
	Social actors	
	Public (youth & more)	
Support the accompaniment	Tools for professionals & youngsters	
	Workshops for professionals	

12) THE SAC ADOS APP

Vacances Ouvertes has developed two digital tools: the youth mobile application Sac Ados and the associated web platform "Back-Office", for professionals of the youth structures and of funding entities.

The mobile Sac Ados App offers support for the organization of holidays, and facilitates the application to the Sac Ados program (in France). It helps **young people** to become aware of the skills they have mobilized through their holiday projects. Finally, it collects statistics on youth profiles, youth tourism practices and associated learning.

For **professionals** in the youth structures, simplifying the administrative part of the projects accompaniment makes it possible to devote more time to support on the substantive issues: budgeting, anticipating the difficulties on the place of stay etc.

Accompanying the progress of projects is more immediate and it strengthens the links between all levels concerned: professionals with young people, but also the funding body with the structures.

The two digital tools have a threefold function:

- support the social/youth organizations
- help the youngsters to set up their holiday project autonomously
- collect data to evaluate and improve the projects

For young people, the mobile application is a help in:

- Organizing group trips, communicating, assigning tasks during preparation;
- Calculating the budget (transport, accommodation, activities ...), per person and for the group;
- Geolocating the youth structures and seek the help of a professional;
- Sharing photos, texts, appointments, in an editable space;
- Applying for financial aid to the holiday projects;
- Self-evaluating on their know-how and their skills.

For professionals (both sponsor and youth structures), the Back-Office web platform means:

- Saving time: simplification of the holiday projects reading and validation;
- Immediate follow-up of awarded / validated / remaining kits, simplified distribution of kits on the territory;

- Monitoring of the detailed progress of young people's projects in the area (detecting blocking steps in each project);
- Collection and direct access to graphs on local data on profiles of young people and skills developed, destinations of stays etc.
- Future developments of the web platform include the possibility for professionals to notify young people of places of interest and events.

Both the mobile app and the web platform can be easily adaptable to a European scale. This would ask for some content adaptations. We should see how some aspects of the tools should be the same on a **European level** and where adaptations should be made in order to accommodate **local specificities**.

These tools should be **included from the beginning** as to make them must-have tools for all BPE projects. This would allow the data to be collected in a comprehensive and consistent way from the beginning.

The **data-collection** is a potential that could be valorized. The Sac Ados App collects anonymous and aggregated data about youth profiles, such as:

- sex, age, level of studies, professional / school situation, monthly financial resources of young people, autonomous housing / not,
- frequency of holidays, frequency of autonomous travel every day, previous experiences of autonomous holidays,
- places and length of the trips, distance between youngsters' home and the destination,
- means of transport, types of accommodation, activities chosen for holidays,
- cost of holiday projects for young people.

All these data can be reported to specific territories. Access to such data could be very interesting for public institutions and for the European tourism sector. The use of such tools makes the BPE project particularly attractive for multiform partnerships.

13) CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Backpacker Europe was for all contacted stakeholders a positive concept that needs the support of national, regional and European institutions;

Backpacker Europe needs teamwork between organizations and is still "tailor" work

Backpacker Europe is possible if you take into account the critical conditions mentioned in the stratersguide

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