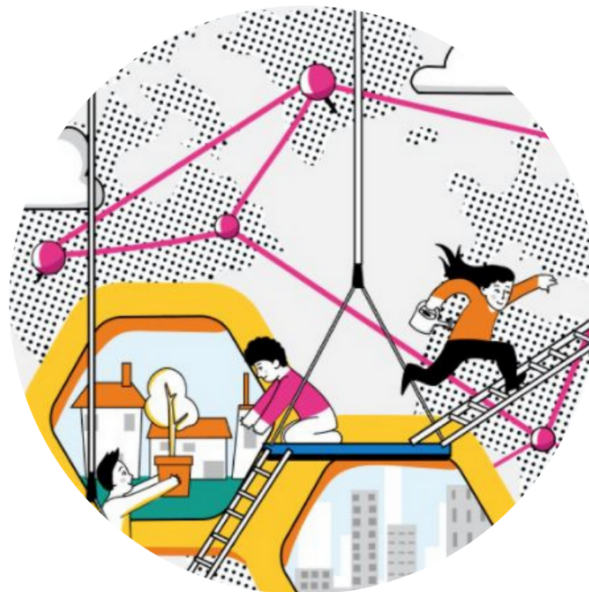
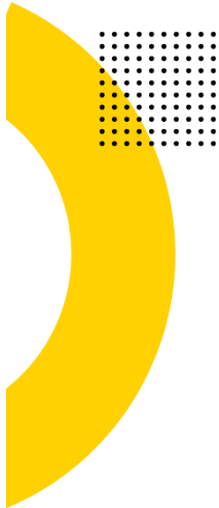




Exploring & Celebrating Impact in European Solidarity Corps Activities

Training Course



23-27 October 2023



Limassol, Cyprus



EXPLORING AND CELEBRATING IMPACT IN ESC PROJECTS



FINAL REPORT

Limassol, 23rd-27th of October 2023

CYPRUS

Title: Exploring and Celebrating Impact in ESC Projects
Dates: 23rd - 27th of October 2023
Venue: Atlantica Miramare Beach Hotel, Limassol, Cyprus
Organisers: SALTO ESC (Krisztina Molnar) and Youth Board of Cyprus (Eleftheria Christoforou and Doxia Mina)
Trainers: Justina Garbauskaitė and Eleni Stamouli

Context of the event

This training course is part of an ongoing exploration into how European Solidarity Corps projects affect local communities. [This initiative began with the European Platform for Learning Mobility \(EPLM\), which launched various studies](#) aimed at deepening the understanding of 'community impact'—how communities benefit from learning mobility programs, like those in the European Solidarity Corps.

As a key player in these efforts, the European Solidarity Corps SALTO Resource Centre, which is on the EPLM's Steering Group, collaborated with field experts to create a practical guide detailing the community impact of such learning experiences. They also hosted a seminar in 2021 to introduce this Practical Guide.

Across Europe, the conversation and actions continue. There's a concerted effort to further analyze and enhance the impact that learning mobility—and the European Solidarity Corps in particular—have on communities. The Cypriot National Agency (Youth Board of Cyprus) had also come across the need for a training course on enhancing the Impact of ESC Projects, so a joint venture between the National Agency of Cyprus and the SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre emerged.

This course was designed for people active in organisations implementing volunteering & solidarity projects. The training also welcomed young people who were involved in volunteering and solidarity activities and are still engaged in their organisations / groups on a voluntary basis.

Aim and objectives of the meeting

The overall aim of the training course was to support members of organisations active in the European Solidarity Corps programme in enhancing community impact of the activities they implement. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives were set:

- To develop participants' understanding of community impact within the unique framework of their individual projects.
- To equip participants with skills to effectively measure the impact of their initiatives on local communities.
- To provide a learning environment where participants can exchange experiences and strategies for creating and measuring impact.
- Create a space for celebrating and sharing the achievements of volunteering and solidarity projects.
- Offer a platform for participants to showcase their project activities and learn from others' examples.

Programme and Methodology

To achieve the aim and objectives of the training course, the following programme was developed.

	23 October Monday	24 October Tuesday	25 October Wednesday	26 October Thursday	27 October Friday
9:30-11:00	Arrival of participants	Who is here and why?	What hinders impact?	How to measure impact	Departure or 9:30 - 13:30 Field visit to organisations active in the ESC in Nicosia & walking tour in the old town (optional & only if a respected number of participants will join)
11:00-11:30		<i>Coffee Break</i>			
11:30-13:00		What is community?	Inspirational stories from outside the group	How to increase community impact	
13:00-15:00		<i>Lunch</i>			
15:00-16:30		Exploring (community) impact	Target groups - stakeholders	Vision – future plans Making waves	
16:30-17:00		<i>Coffee Break</i>			Recommend ed time for departures of participants taking part in the optional activity 16:00 onwards from Larnaca airport & 17:00 from Pafos airport.
17:00-18:00		Success stories from the group	Field visit	Evaluation	
19:00		Opening dinner	Dinner After Dinner Activity (optional)	Dinner	Closing dinner

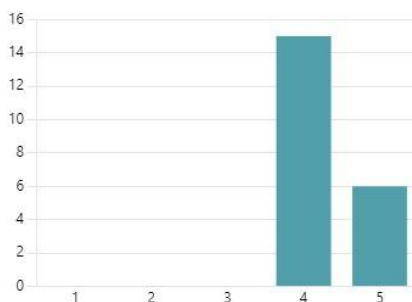
The project methodology was based on the principles of non-formal education (voluntary, experiential learning, active participation, group oriented) and involved group discussions, presentations, role-play, simulations, input sessions, brainstorming, theater, mapping, etc.

Educational activities were rated at 4.29/5 and Methodology was rated at: 4.14/5 by the participants of the training course.

23. How do you rate the quality of the educational activities?
1-extremely poor ; 2 -poor ; 3-average ; 4 -good; 5- excellent

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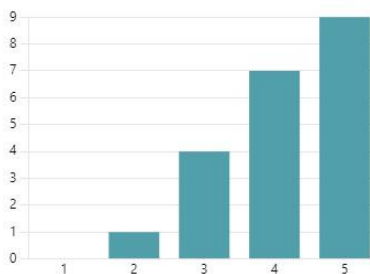
4.29
Average Rating



24. Did the chosen methodology support your learning?
1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully;

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

4.14
Average Rating



It is important to note, that the contact with the local organisations through the bike tour and the field visits that were organised was very valuable for the whole team of the training course. It showed that community impact is achieved by reaching out to the actual community and the stakeholders of each local reality. It was inspiring for

participants to ride bikes and get a tour of the city by a local immigrant organisation, try out archery in a nearby village and also learn about the digitalisation of the memories of the village through a solidarity project that was presented to them.

Profile of Participants

23 participants were present and engaged throughout the training course. They came from 11 different countries, namely (France (1), Croatia (5), Germany (2), Cyprus (5), Slovenia (1), Luxembourg (2), Poland (2), Austria (1), Italy (1), Spain (2) and Greece (1)).

The group was very diverse in terms of experience and involvement, but they all shared an interest and a commitment to learn and connect through the activities that were offered to them.

Evaluation of Participants

The assessment of the training course was conducted upon the conclusion of the educational programme. Time was allocated for participants to complete an anonymous evaluation form as part of the program's schedule. 22 out of 23 participants filled in the questionnaire. The feedback gathered from the participants indicated that various dimensions of the training course were rated favorably, with scores predominantly ranging between 4 and 5, on a scale where 5 represents the highest possible score. Notably, logistical arrangements (4.76/5) and the active engagement of all participants (4.76/5) received the highest marks. Environmental considerations received the lowest score (3.71/5), which nonetheless stands above the median. The cumulative rating for the training course was 4.19 out of 5, signifying that it was generally successful and approaches the threshold of being considered highly successful.

Overall rating of the training course: 4.19

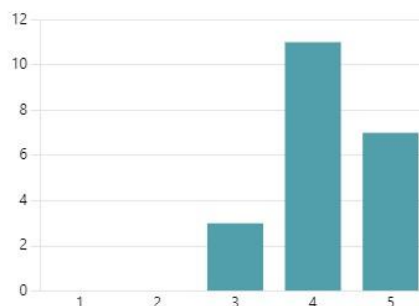
1. How do you rate this training overall?

1-not at all successful; 2 - somewhat successful ; 3-partly successful ; 4 -mostly successful; 5- very successful

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

4.19
Average Rating



Comments from the participants:

“I have learnt a lot about impact through an interactive and creative way. Participating in workshops allowed me to get to know people, create new connections and future collaborations and most importantly see different ways of thinking.”

“The training was very useful and inspiring, and I think the main task was fulfilled - to remind and talk about the importance of the European Solidarity Corps and the impact of projects on the community. I was inspired by my stay here, and I want to come back and organize activities in my project as soon as possible.”

“It was good I became aware of a lot of important things but I feel like something is missing. Maybe one more day because just today we can get a great group feeling.”

Understanding Community Impact: 4.38

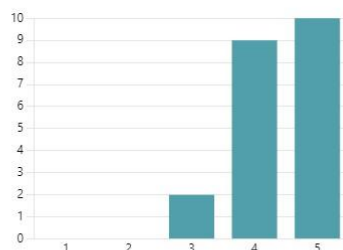
3. Understanding community impact in your own context

1 - not at all; 2 - poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 - fully;

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

4.38
Average Rating



Measuring Impact: 4.19

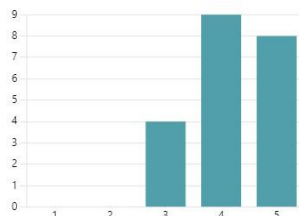
4. Get an insight in how impact can be measured

1 - not at all; 2 - poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 - fully;

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

4.19
Average Rating



Applying improvements in the projects: 4.14

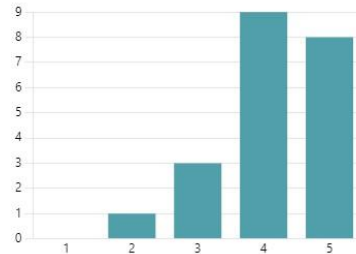
5. Learning how to achieve higher level community impact of your project

1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully;

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[Insights](#)

4.14
Average Rating



Celebrative component: 4.29

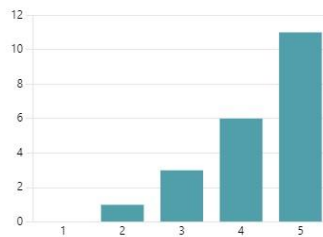
6. Be part of a celebrative event

1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully;

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

4.29
Average Rating



On the celebrative component, it should be stated that the training course was combined with a festive event to commemorate the 5 years of the Programme in Cyprus, organised by the Youth Board of Cyprus. The event showcased many local organisations, featured project presentations, involved experiences beneficiaries and newcomers and even invited the participants of another training course that was taking place in the city at the same time. There was music, food and lots of inspiration and networking and the participants gained a lot on getting to know each other and the local stakeholders, but also got a hands-on example on how to organise an outgoing, festive, impactful event at the end of an endeavor.



Comments from the participants on all objectives:

“A more nuanced discussion of impact in a broader variety of different types of projects would have helped me develop a deeper understanding of how to approach impact in the context of the project/activities of my organisation.”

“The explanations of the above aspects was very clear, we did useful and practical exercises to sediment the insights and sharing our experiences was inspiring and helpful.”

“I believe that all the aforementioned aspects and goals of the seminar were met in a nice, professional and creative way.”

Fulfillment of expectations was evaluated at 4.29 with comments such as:

“They were fulfilled since now I have a better understanding of the impact.”

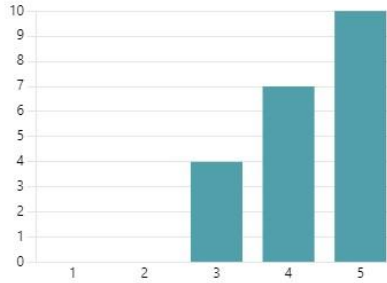
“Not only were they fulfilled but went over. I felt like I was acquiring knowledge with every session, and the structure the trainers gave us was easily understandable.”

“I wish we could have spend more time on practical tools to measure impact and disseminate results.”

8. Would you say that your expectations were fulfilled?
1-not at all; 2 -poorly; 3-somewhat; 4 -mostly; 5- fully

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

4.29
Average Rating

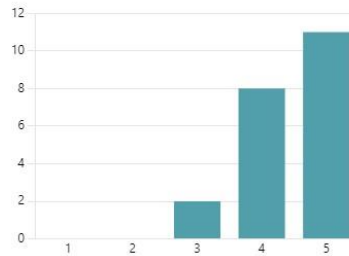


Diversity and Social Inclusion: 4.43

11. Contributed to promoting diversity and social inclusion
1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully; 6 - I don't know

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

4.43
Average Rating

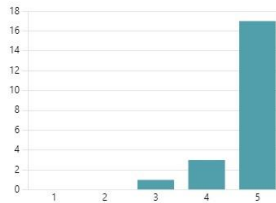


Active participation: 4.76

12. Encouraged active participation for all participants
1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully; 6 - I don't know

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

4.76
Average Rating



Conflict Management: 4.67

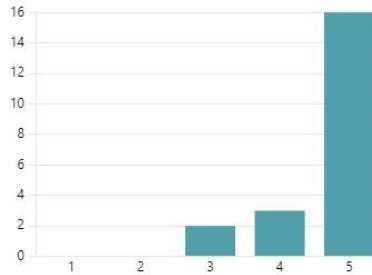
15. Dealt constructively with tensions and conflicts

1 - not at all; 2 - poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 - fully; 6 - I don't know

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[Insights](#)

4.67
Average Rating



Networking: 4.71

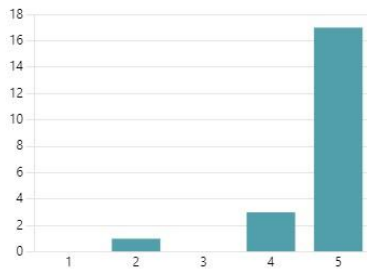
16. Encouraged and stimulated networking and cooperation

1 - not at all; 2 - poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 - fully; 6 - I don't know

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[Insights](#)

4.71
Average Rating



Inspiration for Social Change: 4.62

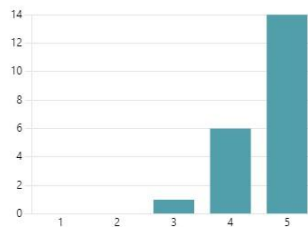
17. Inspired participants to be agents of social change

1 - not at all; 2 - poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 - fully; 6 - I don't know

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[Insights](#)

4.62
Average Rating



Environmental Sustainability: 3.71 (Lowest score)

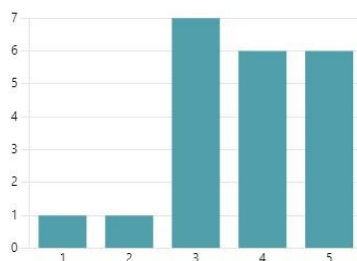
18. Demonstrated environmental concerns with regard to the training area and materials and encouraged participants to be mindful about these aspects

1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully; 6 - I don't know

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3.71
Average Rating



Comments from the participants on aspects reflected in questions 11-18:

“ I really liked the non-pressure approach, listening to all people, even those with low level of English (like me), I also liked the fact that if people did not want to participate in activities or speak in public, no one forced them or asked questions, I think in such an atmosphere even the most introverted people will open up.”

“I gave 4 to the networking because I regret that we didn't know in which field of which participant from the beginning”

“It was great to have the event in such an amazing hotel but at the same time I wish we discussed the environmental issues that stem from staying in such a place”

Relevance of the topics rated 4.19 out of 5.

Some of the comments from the participants on the most and least relevant sessions:

“3rd day was the best for me, you did more energizers which was make as more comfortable (at least me) and we get a reasonable tasks. I liked field visit too. 1st day was good also. 2nd day in the begining I was filing a little bit lost (zoom people I did not understand and it not fits with impact expecially conference, but the garden part maybe more).”

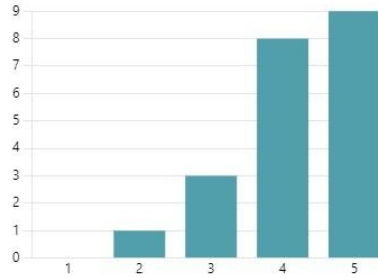
“The most relevant sessions were the one this morning where Justina was talking about measuring impact (because she said a lot of useful information) and the role playing activities (because we put in practice what we learned). The least relevant session was the one where we defined what a community is and what communities we belong to. I think it was too long.”

“The most relevant was finding the solutions to external and internal factors that can affect the impact. “

20. Were the topics covered in the programme relevant for you?
1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully;

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4.19
Average Rating

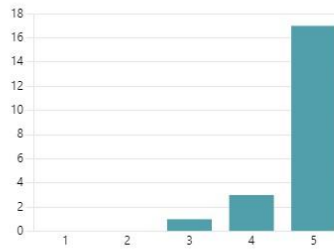


Logistical Aspect: 4.76 (highest Score)

26. Were the logistical aspects adequate for this event?
1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully;

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

4.76
Average Rating

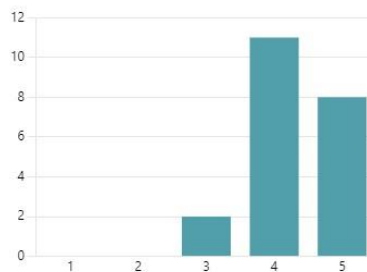


Application of the knowledge gained: 4.29

29. Is it possible to apply what you have learnt in this training once you are back home?
1- not at all; 2- poorly; 3 - somewhat; 4 - mostly; 5 -fully;

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

4.29
Average Rating



We also asked the participants to share their thoughts about the interactions with local organisations. What is important to note is that when naming the most relevant sessions the field visits got quite some mentions. Also the participants shared that:

“I am SUPER glad it was included in the program. Learning first hand about local initiatives made our course far more relevant.”

“Incredible idea to connect lively with local examples and successful stories of Cypriot local organisations. Also the element of 'leaving home' was essential for breathing new air and I have a wider perspective or seeing the bigger picture.”

“It was great. Learning about what life is like in Cyprus was such a richful and necessary experience. We were very lucky to be able to talk with locals and find out the sort of activities they carry though”

Results and conclusions by the trainers

All the outcomes of the sessions can be found in our common working space, [here](#).

- The team worked really well and was prepared. We managed to create a positive team atmosphere and engage the participants in the training course, in spite of the wonderful and attractive surroundings of the venue.
- The selection of participants was done well. It resulted in a group of learners that was diverse in terms of experience/relevance to the topic and this fact strengthened their exchange and sharing during the training.
- Logistics were very efficient: all participants were picked up from the airport, the hotel was both very beautiful and hospitable, the field visits were organised perfectly and the celebratory event that took place at the end of the training course was very inspiring.
- The support from SALTO and the organising team during both the preparation and the implementation of the training was very efficient and useful. They put trust in the trainers and helped where was needed.
- We tackled all the topics which were planned. The participants were active and they engaged in all the activities.
- We added the networking part, it was felt that it was needed by the group and the feedback on it was very positive.
- The field visits worked very well and were largely appreciated, as a way to connect with the local community and the different stakeholders.

Recommendations / Learning outcomes

- In a future implementation of this training course we would change the video conference of the external experts into another field visit - participants related much better to live interactions with members of local organisations.
- Maybe integrate the “what is community” session into “what is community impact”: there were some remarks about the community part being too elaborate. Alternatively, it could be transformed into a community + networking session.
- More time for networking and implementing the presentation of represented organisations and their activities during the first day.
- Contact with the local community works well.
- Maybe a more sustainable venue choice (village, agrotouristique, etc)

Annexes



