



**PINS**  
peer intervention in  
nightlife settings

## Peer Exchange Guidance 2016



Main objective of the PINS project is to create peers community in order to exchange and share information, knowledge and experience and to promote peer work in nightlife settings as important part of youth work in general.

This manual was created to promote peer exchange between European organizations, where all above objectives are fulfilled.

Peer exchange on bigger European festivals and parties brings many positive effects on both sides.

Peers will build competencies (language skills, learning about new culture, etc.) and learn about good practice in hosting organization. While hosting peers is added values to organization itself and present a good way to link the peers into bigger community.

Some personal thoughts from Amsterdam Dance Event, peer exchange with Unity as host organization:

*“Everything is organized for us, we just go to intervention, so we don’t have to worry”*

KIRA – Crew2000

*“We compare how we work and its always nice to meet new people”*

SIMONA – DrogArt

*“Sharing what we have in common and learning from what we don’t have in common”*

XOAN- E. Control

*“Having international peers at festival like AMF is really important and really cool, it is so many tourist and we work so well together it is awesome”*

CARL – hosting peer

For more information about PINS project visit our web page at [www.connectingpins.eu](http://www.connectingpins.eu) or send us an email on [info@connectingpins.eu](mailto:info@connectingpins.eu).



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## Peer exchange - Why, What, How, Who?

A peer exchange is a great way to share knowledge across organisations and countries. There is a lot of great work being done in lots of different areas and creating a pool of skills, knowledge and best practice.

This guide should help you in deciding if a peer exchange is right for you and your organisation, what to consider as a host or as an organisation sending peer(s) and how to select a peer.

### OUR TOP TIPS:

- Specify why you want to set up the exchange and what is it you want to achieve with the exchange, how does it help the community?
- Set up the exchange- goals, program of work, what is the project objective, how would you realize the project, what does the host organization expect from the project?
- Who would participate? Consider- how does it fit with your organization and how the organization you are inviting to participate fits into the plan, what would both organizations gain from it?
- Send the invites to the participating organization/s, see what and how they feel about the project, if they are willing and able to take part.
- Once the other organizations have confirmed the participation, work together to determine what the expectations are, discuss innovative ideas, and find out what the participants expect from the project. It is also a good idea to get feedback from the peers about the project.
- Set up a timeline for the project with the rest of the peers to make sure things are organised and on track.

There is a lot of work to put in to the exchange and it will take time, effort and commitment to reach success. There are many benefits however.

The receiving organisation will gain a new perspective, feedback on their current work and practice, gain new knowledge, expanding of skills and knowledge of their own peers. It is also an opportunity to create more international work and new exchanges - making friends all over the globe.

For peers they will get new experiences, become part of a network of peers. They will also feel a sense of accomplishment and pick up some good practice from the peer coming to the exchange.

The organisation sending their peer will also gain new information, new knowledge and skills. Their peer can see how the other organization works, and so they can see what works and maybe implement it at their home organization, see what the others are doing differently - also bring good practices to host organization, an opportunity for more international work, personal growth, self-development and awareness, opportunity for future collaborations, new friends, sense of accomplishment.

## Considerations for Hosting Peers

When hosting a peer from another organisation there will be benefits for both the host organisation, the visiting organisation and the individual peers.

It is a great way to share knowledge and best practice, share culture and form strong international contacts. The more we can work together the louder the voice in favour of harm reduction approaches will be. The peer exchange will also be a lot of fun and a really great way to make new friends from different countries and backgrounds.

A peer exchange can take a lot of planning and organisation so make sure that you have enough time to dedicate to all of the things involved. The most important part is to make the exchange as welcoming as possible and open the experience to as many people as possible.

## Financial Matters

Who will cover the costs of the peer exchange?

Funding a peer exchange might be covered in variety of ways, and since the exchange is beneficial to both the hosting and visiting

organisations as well as the individual peer it may sometimes be unclear who should cover the costs of the exchange.

Any the costs of the exchange to the peer should be avoided as far as possible to encourage peers who don't often get to travel the change to take part.

Some funding might be available through Erasmus+ so having a look on your website to see if opportunities for funding are available- "mobility" and "global citizenship" are both popular funding stream and may be relevant to the work you will be doing.

#### Cost that may arise will include:

- Accommodation
- Travel
- Food
- Pass/ticket to festival, event or party
- ID badge or pass
- Organisation T-shirt

#### Accommodation

Options where the peer can stay for free are a great thing to explore- if there is the chance that they can stay with another peer or worker from your organisation then this will not only reduce the costs but will give them a great contact for their visit.

Think carefully about who you offer as a host and try to match a peer and host as well as possible. Taking into account the possible anxieties that some peers might have while visiting somewhere new is also really helpful.

Any mobility or access issues should also be explored.

If the peer will be at an event where there is camping, make sure that they know this in advance and can arrange to have appropriate equipment- if it is possible that they can borrow a tent or sleeping bag then let them know as carrying things like this can be heavy and awkward for the peer if they are traveling a far distance.

If the peer will have to stay in external accommodation, then finding a cheap hostel should work. Try and allocate any visiting peers in the same place and in a location that will offer easy transport to and from the places they will be working.

## Travel

Looking at travel to and from the peer's home country again is something which may fall as a responsibility of either the hosting or visiting organisation.

Things to consider when looking at travel will be finding the lowest cost option and one which fits the needs of the peer.

It is also good to remember that not everyone likes flying so some peers might prefer the bus despite the journey being longer while some peers might only be able to take a short amount of leave from their employment or studies so will prefer to fly rather than a longer journey by train. Finding out about these things in advance and making it clear that negotiation over this is possible will make the peer feel more comfortable and again will prevent the peer from being put off participating if they don't want to seem awkward.

If the peer will have to travel to and from party venues during their exchange, then Looking into travel options for a peer will also be helpful- if there is a travel card they can use that will offer the cheapest travel around the location they are visiting or if there is the option for them to borrow a bike.

## Food

Let the peer know if food will be provided during shifts and give them a rough idea of how much they might like to bring for food. They are adults but if you live in an expensive city or they will be at an event where the food provision will be expensive then let them know that in advance so they can bring enough money to cover meals that they have when they aren't working.

The peer will need to have a pass or ticket to the event that they will be working at. This might mean that they are using one up from the quota usually assigned to your own peers. If this is an issue, then additional funding might be needed discussing this with the visiting organisation and the peer to look at options.

The peer might need an ID pass or badge- if so ask them to provide a photo and details for this as far in advance as possible.

## Organisation T-shirt

Let them know if they should bring their own organisation's t-shirt or if they will be provided with one.



## Communication

Find out the best way to communicate with the peer- do they have a smartphone? It could be a good idea to get them involved in a WhatsApp or Facebook group. There are many alternatives if they do not feel comfortable joining these groups so don't make them feel like they have to join.

If they don't have a smartphone, then be creative about how you can keep in touch with them.

### **What financial arrangements should a peer make?**

The peers are adults and should make their own judgements about how much money they should bring but if they are not used to travelling or have never visited your country then giving them some simple information about money can be helpful.

Remind them of your currency, let them know if travel or food is generally expensive and then they will have a better idea of how much money to bring.

### **Sleeping Arrangements**

Where will the peers sleep?

Let them know if they will be sleeping in a private room, a shared room and if they will have to bring any bedding or mattresses. Take into account whether they will feel comfortable sharing with member of the same or opposite sex.

### **Food**

Who will organise food for the peers? Visiting peers should be treated, as your own organisation's peers would be so if food is provided during an event then factor in food for the visiting peer too! Be sure to note any allergies or dietary requirements.

### **Mentor Roles**

Are the peers assigned a buddy? Are there going to be clear shift leaders?

Decide all of this in advance and give the peer as much information as possible so that they feel welcome before going along. Try to match the peers with a good buddy- if they have a specialist interest then

finding them a buddy who can share a lot of info about this would be great!

### What tasks will the peer undertake?

Some peers will have different experience and organisations will offer different training to their peer educators. The kind of work the organisations take part in (e.g. Education, welfare, and trip sitting) and knowledge of popularly used drugs will differ.

Finding out what kind of events the peer has worked at before and how comfortable they feel providing information or welfare to people about different kinds of drugs will be quite important, as you do not want to ask a peer to tripsit someone at an event if they have never witnessed someone under the influence of psychedelic drugs.

## Equality

Remember not everyone shares the same experience of life and might not expect the same treatment as other people.

It is good to consider the needs of peers that may exist and always be respectful.

Some things to remember might be that not everyone will fall into a gender binary- finding out in advance the preferred pronouns of a peer (he/she/they) can be helpful.

Some people might also have some learning difficulties that will affect some tasks involving reading, writing and numeracy. Being accommodating of any difficulties is important.

Peers come from many different backgrounds and some will have different reasons for becoming involved in peer education and harm reduction. Making sure that the exchange is safe for peers who might consider themselves to be “recovery” is also very important.

One in three people might experience mental ill health and being mindful of this will help keep all peers safe. Make sure that the exchange creates a welcoming environment where the peer can feel safe to seek help for or disclose any mental health problems that they may be experiencing.

## Insurance

Which organisation will arrange insurance? This can be a tough call and will be negotiated between the exchange connectors rather than the peers themselves.

If the peer is carrying out work at an event, they will need to be covered by insurance and this will probably be the host organisation. If there is a cost involved in this- it should be negotiated who should cover this.

The peer should also have personal travel insurance- if they do not already have this or cannot afford this they should speak with someone in their home organisation about booking this.

## Information to give the peer before coming along

Where they will be staying and whom they will be staying with- putting them in contact with their host or a representative of their accommodation as soon as possible will make the peer feel more welcome and ease any anxiety that they might feel.

Setting some ground rules about shift patterns and what is expected of them during the exchange is a good idea- if they might have to work three nights in a row then tell them this- equally if they will have to work late nights then this is a good thing to let them know in advance. Make it clear if options are flexible or inflexible to avoid any confusion.

Also, make it clear that they are to be treated as a peer from your organisation - they are representing your organisation at events and so should behave in a way that protects your reputation. They should also put in the same effort that your own peers do - we all have to work together!

## Paperwork

Does the peer need any accreditation to carry out the work? In some organisations, peers may have to comply with a criminal record check while others do not- if your organisation requires such checks then let the peers know this in advance.

Collecting emergency contact details for the peer is important- if something happens to them, a personal contact in addition to one with their home organisation will be helpful.

Nobody likes paperwork but getting some key information from a peer can be handy. You can copy a form at the end of this section.

Using a free online form builder such as Wufoo will streamline the process and means you can keep a database of peers taking part in exchanges.

Using the forms to find out the motivations of the peer and their current level of knowledge and experience is also useful.

## Finding funding and new opportunities

A great way to connect with other organizations who might be looking to take part in an exchange can be through Erasmus. The website allows you to post projects and areas of work you are interested in completing and offer an invitation to others viewing the website. You can also use this to find projects that you might want to join.

There is also an Erasmus hub for funding. Search through this to find funding that is suited to your idea for a project or for the work, your organisation already does. Harm reduction is not something that is readily funded by many people so looking at “innovation” that you can plan and focusing on connecting cultures and people across Europe is a great way to make sure your funding application might be successful.

There are many pots of money for pan-European projects- especially for innovation and digital projects. Each home country will have a different governing body to access these funds usually so a little research into these can be helpful.

## When something goes wrong...Trouble shooting

This is an important reason to have completed your paperwork properly so that you have a list of emergency contact details for the organisations involved and for the individual peers.

**In an emergency, call the emergency services.**

**Notes for organizations in selecting a peer for exchange:**

When selecting the best peers to take part in an exchange there are many factors to take into account. First, the chosen peer should be someone who is really engaged and active in the organization, who already has some experience when it comes to interventions and who knows a lot about the work of the organization. They must be reliable; someone who stands out of the group of peers and someone will make the most of the exchange.

You should also consider the subject of the exchange, because, there may be peers with more interest in some subjects than others, and therefore are best suited for the particular exchange. It is important to think about the languages that will be spoken during the exchange to0o- someone who can speak more than one or is willing to learn new phrases is important. It is also important that the peers have enough time for the exchange, they will be able to commit to all meetings, and any training required. People who can easily adapt to new situations would be most suites to the exchange.

The chosen peer(s) must be highly informed about all matters concerning the exchange, such as the goal of the exchange, the dates, the workload involved and other related aspects. The peers should think about the reasons why they want to participate in the exchange, and what could be the desired results of the exchange. The peer should also consider how much work he or she wants to invest in the exchange and how much time he or she has for the exchange.