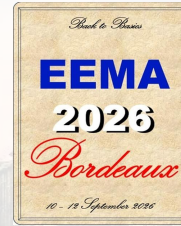


HOSTING WITH CONFIDENCE

Providing every host family with a dedicated written document and presentation

Guide for the committees of the Rotary Youth Exchange programme — long-term exchanges (LTEP) and short-term exchanges (STEP)



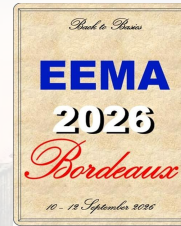
CHIARVETTO Roberto

Rotary Club Albenga | District 2032 | ITALY

RYE Italian Multidistrict Chair 2024-2026

- Software designer and developer, ICT consultant, independent history researcher
- involved in Youth Exchange since 2014





TOSINI Vinciane

Rotary Club Charleroi Val de Sambre | District 2150 | BELGIUM

Chair Rotary Youth Exchange, 2024-2027

- School principal
- involved in Youth Exchange since 2023



Contents

01

The observation: why this topic is urgent

02

LTEP and STEP: two formats, one same duty of care

03

The common core of points to convey

04

Why a written booklet AND a slideshow

05

What sets STEP and LTEP apart in the materials

06

Welcoming young people within the clubs

07

A unified process for all families

08

Action plan for programme managers

The observation

Hosting a young person cannot be improvised — and should never depend on a single verbal conversation

1

Verbal information, not recorded

What is said during a call or over coffee is neither consistent nor available for reference in case of doubt.

2

Volunteer turnover

Each new manager explains the programme in their own way: the content varies from one year to the next.

3

Poorly calibrated expectations

Without written reference points, families discover rules, responsibilities, or risks too late.

4

Risk to the young person and the family

A misunderstanding about safety, health, or daily life can jeopardise the whole exchange.

The purpose of this approach

1

Give EVERY host family, before the young person's arrival, a written booklet they can reread and a slideshow presented at a meeting.

2

Ensure that the essential hosting concepts are conveyed identically, regardless of the club, the district, or the manager in post.

3

Cover all exchange formats — long-term (LTEP) as well as short-term (STEP) — with a common core and specific tracks.

4

Involve the local Rotary club as a partner in hosting, not just the family.

EEMA Bordeaux 2026 TOSINI Vinciane and CHIARVETTO Roberto — Rotary District

LTEP and STEP: two formats, one same duty of care

LTEP — Long Term

- Stay of about one school year
- Student enrolled in a local school
- Several host families may follow one another
- Ongoing follow-up: health, schooling, morale
- Strong emotional bond, gradual adjustment

STEP — Short Term

- Stay of a few weeks to a few months
- Often reciprocal (camps, cross exchanges)
- A single host family, over a short period
- Intense pace: very fast integration
- Strong focus on discovery and leisure

In both cases: the same requirement for safety, communication, and family preparation.

The common core of points to convey

The same foundation, regardless of the exchange format or the family's profile



Host family charter

Role, commitments, and limits of the host family



Rotary values and framework

Intercultural goals and the programme's code of conduct



Safety and health

Emergency numbers, insurance, what to do in case of an incident



Communication

Language, active listening, handling what teenagers leave unsaid



Daily life

House rules, pocket money, schooling, transport



Rotary contacts

Family counsellor, club contact, youth committee



Alert procedure

Who to contact, when and how, in case of difficulty



Culture shock

Typical stages of adjustment and warning signs to watch for



End-of-stay review

Feedback from family / young person / club

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

Anticipating difficult families

What real-life situations teach us about the limits of training alone — and how a commitment contract can protect the young person, the family, and the Club.

Observations from the field

Training, even thorough, is not always enough on its own with certain types of families.

1

People hear what they want to hear

Families sign the commitments without always taking them on board: their immediate goal is getting their child to leave.

2

The "VIP family" effect

Once the young person is accepted, some families feel entitled to renegotiate the programme's rules.

3

The unspoken truth that protects appearances

A problem already known to the family (health, behaviour) may be kept quiet so as not to harm its image.

4

Threats as leverage

Threatening to involve a lawyer or take legal action is sometimes used to pressure the Club — without legal basis.

The problem often lies upstream: once the family has been accepted, it is already too late to act on its attitude.

FACILITATION TIP

Predict before you know

1

Present the situation

Read aloud a real, anonymised situation, without revealing the outcome.

2

Get the room to react

Ask: "What would you have done in the Club's place?" Collect 2 or 3 answers.

3

Reveal what happened

Reveal the actual outcome of the situation — often surprising for the audience.

4

Name the lesson together

Collectively formulate the reflex or rule that would have made it possible to anticipate the issue.

Three real situations — what would you do?

To be read aloud during the training, one situation at a time (see the facilitation tip above).

Situation 1

The unplanned chaperone

A mother wants to accompany her son as he settles in abroad, "to see how he is settling in." The District refuses. What would you have told the family?

Situation 2

The family's silence

A son is described by those around him as probably a kleptomaniac. No disclosure is made by the family before departure. What signs could have alerted the Club beforehand?

Situation 3

The non-negotiable life plan

The planned exchange in an English-speaking country is cancelled for organisational reasons. Excellent alternatives are offered. The family flatly refuses. How would you have handled this refusal?

What actually happened — and the lesson

The common thread in all three cases: the problematic information or behaviour already existed before the exchange.

Situation 1

What happened

Refused by the Committee; the family accepted, but the relationship remained tense throughout the stay.

The lesson

A clear refusal, documented and explained upfront, limits later tensions.

Situation 2

What happened

The young person helped himself freely at the host family's home ("dad's paying for it anyway"). The investigation revealed that the problem was known and had been kept quiet by the sending family.

The lesson

A family's silence on a sensitive point is a warning sign in itself — to be covered by the contract, not just by trust.

Situation 3

What happened

The family threatened to sue Rotary; no legal action followed, for lack of grounds.

The lesson

A rule explained and documented from the initial commitment defuses most disputes.

The family commitment contract

A complement to the charter: a written, signed framework that makes withdrawal possible in case of a deliberate breach.

The contract establishes that a deliberate breach of the following obligations may lead to the unilateral termination of the moral commitment between the family and the programme:

1

Medical information

Deliberate failure to disclose medical information needed to monitor the young person.

2

Support procedures

Failure to comply with the support procedures set by the Club and the District.

3

Interference in the exchange

Family intervention in the course of the exchange outside the agreed framework.

4

Programme values

Failure to understand or respect the Rotary Youth Exchange value system.

The contract does not replace the Club's judgement: it provides a written, enforceable framework to be used if needed.

Why a written booklet

1

A stable reference that the family can reread calmly, before and during the hosting period

2

A written record in case of disagreement, forgetfulness, or a question about the programme's rules

3

Identical content for all families in the same district, regardless of the volunteer presenting the file

4

A document that can be shared with other household members (spouse, children, grandparents involved)

Why a meeting slideshow

Allows for live discussion: the family can ask questions as the information is given

Makes the welcome meeting identical from one club to another, with a clear throughline

Makes it easier for the manager to speak, even if new to the role, thanks to a ready-to-use tool

Can be shown in clubs, committees, or at a family evening, alongside the booklet

One same set of materials, two specific tracks

The common core does not change; only certain chapters vary by format

Chapter of the materials	LTEP track	STEP track
Duration & organisation	School year, multiple families	Short stay, a single family
Schooling	Enrolment, monitoring of results	Rarely applicable
Pace of integration	Gradual, over several months	Accelerated, over a few weeks
Reciprocity	Not systematic	Often reciprocal (back-and-forth)
Review / follow-up	Regular check-ins	Debrief at the end of the stay

Welcoming young people within the clubs

The family is not alone: the Rotary club is the second pillar of hosting

1

Official introduction

The young person is introduced to members at a club meeting, with a few words about their country and background.

2

Designated club contact

A member is identified as a regular point of contact, alongside the family counsellor.

3

Shared club life

The young person takes part in the club's activities, outings, and events, not just family life.

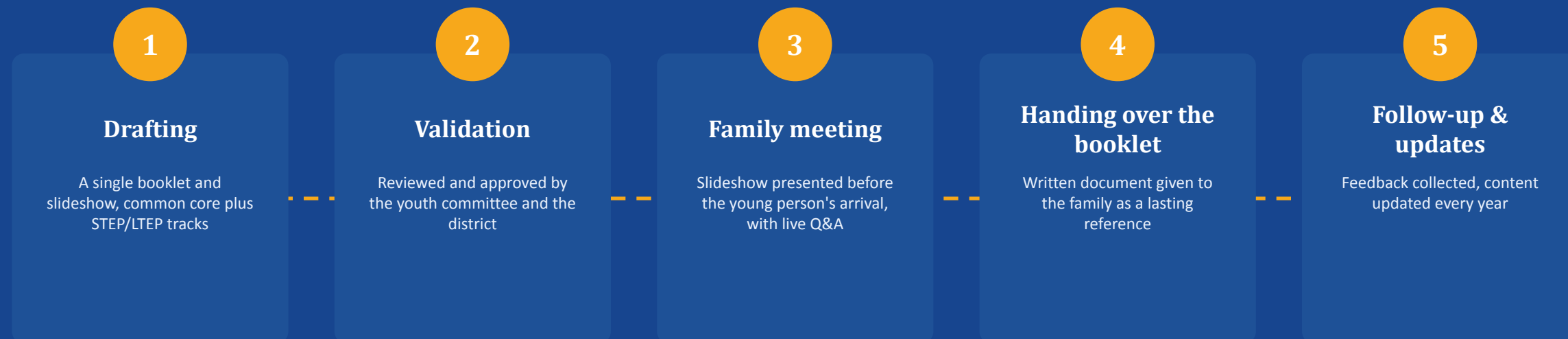
4

Support for the host family

The club passes on district information and remains available for any questions or difficulties.

A unified process for all families

LTEP or STEP, sponsor club family or host family: the same preparation process



EEMA Bordeaux 2026 TOSINI Vinciane and CHIARVETTO Roberto — Rotary District

Action plan for programme managers

1	Set up a working group	2-3 experienced volunteers (STEP and LTEP) + a safety contact
2	Draft the common core	Essential points applicable to all families
3	Add the specific tracks	An LTEP chapter and a STEP chapter, clearly identified
4	Produce in two formats	A PDF/printed booklet + a meeting slideshow
5	Have it approved by the district	Youth committee and youth protection officer
6	Distribute and train	Mandatory meeting before each hosting, booklet systematically handed out
7	Gather feedback	Family questionnaire at the end of the stay, annual update

One booklet. One slideshow. All families.

STEP or LTEP, host family or sponsor club: every family deserves the same quality of preparation and information before hosting a young person.
