



International workcamps' leaders

A. Project environment: profile of the organisation, regular activities and local community.

The project will be divided in 4 main parts, on-arrival training and language orientation (stage 1), preparation for the work (2), work in the field itself (3) and evaluation and planning for next season (4). Having explained that we can divide the local community where the project will take place as follows:

Volunteers will most likely be in Reykjavík during during stage 1, as SEEDS has organised the activities in/close to the capital of Iceland due to the easy connection to many insititutions, the possibilities to invite guests and lecturers and to organise study visits.

The second stage, will take place partly in Reykjanesbaer and partly in some of our workcamps in the country-side, there volunteers may be living at a small local township, village or in an isolated protected area.

After having received enough preparation and having acquired the basic knowledge, skills and competences to lead the projects, volunteers pass to the third stage, which comprises most of the time in Iceland and where volunteers work at different locations all around the country.

SEEDS Iceland works closely with local communities, their administration or authorities and with other Icelandic associations. Jointly we develop projects aimed at fulfil an identified need or to help in the development of particular actions that are already being undertaken. The projects may be hosted for example at a small isolated village, at a National park or protected area, in the capital of the country, its surroundings, at an island off the coast of Iceland, etc.

The last part of the project will be held at the permanent accommodation location of the volunteers in Reykjanesbaer and in the SEEDS office; EVS volunteers will have their residence in a shared house or apartment at the premises of a former NATO military base in the Reykjanes Peninsula, 45 Km away from the capital Reykjavík.

The former military base is being turned into a dynamic knowledge and academic community and SEEDS Iceland is happily being part of this process, as we are also contributing to make this happen.

The volunteers usually bond closely together, so the international EVS community is often a lively interesting environment in which to live.



While volunteers move from project to project between the months of June and October, the accommodation will be available for them to rest and to evaluate the projects, as well as to prepare and plan those coming up.

In this way, the EVS volunteers will have the unique opportunity to experience Iceland both in its main city and its surroundings but also to work and develop projects in different sites all around the country.

From the beginning on, the project is a group experience, as SEEDS hosts several EVS simultaneously and volunteers share the different tasks common to a usual household.

In some of our projects volunteers share a big room with all the participants (short-term volunteers) of the workcamps and in some others; there will be a couple of shared rooms. Conditions will change from site to site and depend on the facilities available from our local hosts; standards may be very different from one location to another one.

SEEDS always ensures that our volunteers have adequate lodging places that are well equipped; nevertheless some of them will be very basic; while others may be luxurious.

B. Proposed activities for international volunteers:

The scope of activities for the volunteers will change during their stay in Iceland and can be chronologically clearly divided in the already mentioned four (4) different stages:

- 1. Volunteers will arrive in Iceland in the spring, the latest in May. After arrival, SEEDS will organise and carry out an on-arrival training and language orientation workcamp-seminar. During this period volunteers will be given tools and theoretical knowledge combined with practical tasks in order to prepare them for the stay in Iceland and the activities to be undertaken on the field at later stage. Volunteers will be introduced to four main topics, the hosting organisation, Iceland, environment and leadership. Intercultural, recreational and integration activities will be organised with the active involvement of the volunteers.*
- 2. Before going alone (generally in couples with Environmental messengers) to lead the workcamps, volunteers have one or two "pilot projects" in May and June, where several EVS volunteers will participate and the conditions which are similar to those of the regular camps. This step aims to build self-confidence within a comfortable environment (with few short-term volunteers, if any) and to experience how a workcamps is run, to face possible challenging situations and to try out the tools given during the first stage as close to a 'real' situation as possible.*
- 3. The field work will take place between July and October and international volunteer camps will then be implemented and EVS volunteers will lead them.*

Workcamps are the most common form of short-term volunteering and are projects where a group of unskilled volunteers (generally under 25) work and live together on a project which has been identified by a local community or a project working with that community. They generally last for 2 weeks.



There are different types of projects depending on the identified needs of our hosting partners and they can be divided as follows:

- Nature conservation or environment protection: Ecological research, removing invasive growth, building walking paths or hiking trails, cleaning the coastline, reforestation and erosion control works, etc.*
- Renovation and restoration. Construction or renovation of a building, monument or community centre, etc.*
- Cultural and sports events: Support of festivals, celebrations, gatherings or happenings.*
- Agricultural projects: Organic farming, tree-nurseries*
- Awareness campaigns and global education projects.*
- Skills building/creative projects: language learning/photography projects*

International workcamps bring together volunteers from different nationalities and backgrounds, with the aim of building international understanding and encouraging peace while working for an identified need of a local community or association. Groups' sizes vary between 5 and 30 participants.

The responsibilities of a work camp leader will vary according to the hosting community and the type of project, but the following list gives an idea of what they could normally be responsible for :

- * Helping the volunteers feel comfortable with the project, welcoming and talking to them to establish a good individual relationship, ensuring that they do not experience avoidable problems and that they remain happy with the project.*
- * Acting as the link between the volunteers and the project host, explaining the needs of the one to the other.*
- * Acting as the link between the volunteers, the project hosting community and SEEDS, trying to ensure that the aims, needs and desires of all three can be combined to provide the best possible result.*
- * Budgeting and/or managing food and other costs of the volunteers.*
- * Motivating the group of volunteers to ensure that they are able to carry out the agreed programme, such as ensuring that everyone gets to work on time and takes a fair share of it.*
- * Co-ordinating the sharing of the domestic arrangements such as meals and cleaning to ensure that the basic needs of the volunteers are met.*
- * Ensuring clean water, sufficient food and other health and safety considerations of the volunteers.*
- * Ensuring that volunteers are not be exposed to any unnecessary risks to their health or to accidents in work or leisure activities.*
- * Trying to involve everyone in the project so that no volunteer feels excluded from the group and none is alienated from the project.*
- * Managing the group dynamics of the volunteer group so that it does not split into sub-groups.*
- * Providing the time and space for ideas to develop within the group, particularly in relation to the social programme, but also having ideas for activities that can be organised for the group in the evenings.*

Volunteers will need to take enough days free after each work camp in order to rest and prepare the next project. In any case the four (4) months between June and September are extremely demanding and volunteers will be highly active. This will require a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, self initiative, ability to work under extreme conditions, travelling and moving in Iceland very often, meeting new people and leaving them after relatively short periods of time.



During this stage volunteers will no longer be under personal supervision of the organisation, but in any case contact will be constant through telephone and visits to the sites by SEEDS staff.

- 4. After the end of the camp season, volunteers will return to their main accommodation base and a structured evaluation of their experience of the projects will be undertaken. After evaluating the work, all the feedback and input provided will be used in order to plan next years' projects and to raise the quality of the programme offered both for EVS as camps' volunteers.*

Additional to the in Iceland evaluation, volunteers will be in charge of organising a meeting for the Icelandic volunteers who were in projects abroad with our partner organisations around the world. Some of these enthusiastic home-comers (returnees) will hopefully become active members of our organisation; this will be stimulated through the organisation of different social and practical events to increase the involvement of new members.

To finalise, the hosting organisation -SEEDS- will organise an end-of-EVS meeting, where we will evaluate the experience as a whole for the volunteers in Iceland.

C. Target group:

We would like volunteers applying for this project to have a motivation for working with international groups on mostly nature-protection and conservation projects. English language skills are of advantage, while Icelandic is not a requirement.

Volunteer's enthusiasm and interest in order to engage with people, to work in teams but also willingness to accept personal responsibilities are highly appreciated.

A readiness to work with flexibility in changing or developing situations is essential, as well as an ability to occasionally work in high-pressure situations.

Particular interest in environmental and sustainability issues might be very useful when developing activities for the groups.

Gender is of no importance, but volunteers have to be between 18 and 30 years old.

Ethnic groups, religion, sexual orientation or political opinion are not taken into account.

There are no special or specific qualifications or practical skills needed, as training will be given.

In order to fill vacancies for this particular project, and once it receives the accreditation to host EVS volunteers; we will have at our disposal the very powerful tool of the European database on accredited host organizations which can be found on the Internet at: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm

Additionally, the project will be uploaded to our website and interested candidates can always follow the contact link and inquire about the possibilities to apply, visiting: <http://www.seeds.is>

Selection of candidates will be made according to the deadlines of the Youth in Action programme and the decision-making process will be based on volunteer's motivations to join the project. Guidelines are followed to ensure that our groups of volunteers are formed by a multicultural, international array of individuals and also to ensure that a gender and age balance are achieved.

Interested individuals that contact us will be asked to send us a carefully prepared Curriculum Vitae (CV), a motivation letter and a SEEDS questionnaire. Once received and evaluated, SEEDS' team conducts telephone interviews with the pre-selected candidates, and make decisions based on the combination of material received as well as presentation and the aforementioned phone conversation.

Recruitment is done through existing contacts in a number of sending organisations and also through new applications which we receive regularly.

Volunteers will not carry out routine tasks or the tasks of professional staff, in order to avoid job substitution, volunteers will be supervised and guided by experienced staff.

The work involved in this project:

- 1. Might be physically demanding and a reasonable level of physical fitness and health is required.*
- 2. Can be intensive and very demanding so both commitment and patience are required.*
- 3. Involves a lot of outdoor activities and, as weather conditions in Iceland are variable and often cold, we recommend volunteers to be prepared for harsh situations, to take with them warm, waterproof clothes and shoes. As working outdoors, we suggest volunteers to bring working and comfortable clothes as well as sturdy walking/hiking shoes/boots. A warm sleeping bag is a must.*
- 4. Means travelling in Iceland very often. Volunteers shall be prepared to be moving around the country for at least 4 months, changing living conditions every 2 or 3 weeks as projects end and start again.*

For more information on the project and details, please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_form_en.cfm?EID=40000054261

<http://www.seeds.is>

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