



SEEDS - Sjálfboðaliðar umhverfis landið

Grettisgata 3a

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EVS at SEEDS Iceland

Role and tasks of the volunteer:

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. **EVS Volunteers arrival.** SEEDS will organise an on-arrival project-specific & language orientation training. During this time volunteers will be given enough tools and theoretical knowledge combined with practical tasks in order to prepare them for the stay and the activities on the field. 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.

During the first two stages volunteers will have weekends free and work will be carried out within usual week-working-days, Monday to Friday.

2. **Before going** to lead the workcamps, volunteers have a “pilot project” where experienced leaders & few EVS volunteers participate; the conditions are similar to those of the regular camps. This aims at building confidence within a comfortable environment (with few short-term volunteers, if any), to experience “in real” how a workcamp is run, to face possible challenging situations and to try out the tools given in stage 1.

3. **On field work** takes place when the camps are implemented. Workcamps are the most common form of short-term volunteering and are projects where a group of volunteers live and work together on a project which has been identified by a local partner. They generally last for 2 weeks.

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

- *Nature conservation or environment protection: Ecological research, removing invasive growth, building of walking paths or hiking trails, cleaning of the coastline, reforestation and erosion control works, etc.*
- *Renovation and restauration. Construction or renovation of a building, monument or community building, etc.*
- *Cultural and sports events: Support of festivals, celebrations, gatherings or happenings.*
- *Agricultural projects: Organic farming, tree-nurseries.*
- *Awareness Campaigns and global education projects.*
- *Artistic projects*
- *Projects focused on environmental education*

International workcamps bring together volunteers from different backgrounds aiming at building up understanding & encouraging peace while working for an identified need, groups range from 5 to 30 volunteers.

International Workcamp leader – roles and responsibilities:

The responsibilities and role of an EVS 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:



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** Helping the volunteers feel comfortable with the project, welcoming and talking to them, to establish a good relationship and to ensure they do not have avoidable problems, and that they remain happy with the project.*

** Acting as the link between the volunteers, the hosting project and SEEDS, trying to ensure that the aims, needs and desires of all three can be compromised to provide the best possible result.*

** Budgeting 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 organising the day-to-day working schedule and ensuring that everyone gets to work on time.*

** Co-ordinating arrangements such as meals and cleaning to ensure that the needs of the volunteers are met.*

** Ensuring sufficient balanced food and other health and safety considerations of the volunteers..*

** Involving everyone so that no volunteer feels excluded from the group or alienated from the project and managing the group dynamics so that it does not split into sub-groups.*

** Providing the time and space for ideas to develop from 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.*

** Feeding back SEEDS regarding the outcome and evaluations of the single projects.*

Volunteers **need** to take enough days free (**in average 4**) between workcamps to rest and be ready for the next one. The workcamps will be ongoing one after each other in stage 3.

The work in the field is extremely demanding and volunteers will be highly active, which requires a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, self initiative and ability to work under extreme conditions, travelling and moving very often, meeting new people and leaving them after relatively short time.

During this stage EVS volunteers will be under personal supervision of the organisation, contact will be constant through telephone and visits to the sites by SEEDS staff.

In all of our projects with local hosts SEEDS has a **local on-the-site project coordinator**, who is running the specific project and who knows the local circumstances at its best. The local on-the-site project coordinator has been informed and trained by SEEDS in the different issues that entail working with international volunteers, as the safety and risk assessment for the project to ensure all quality, learning, and welfare standards of each volunteer.

SEEDS signs contracts and written agreements with all of our partners around the country to ensure the quality of the projects and the learning content for the volunteers participating.

Volunteers need to take enough days free (in average 4) between workcamps to rest and be ready for the next one.

Environmental Messenger – roles and responsibilities:

Environmental messengers will get the opportunity to organise several **environmental** work camps during their stay. They will be responsible as a group for organising activities, events and work that raise awareness in Iceland and amongst the volunteers about relevant environmental topics (e.g. recycling, waste management, water or air pollution, soil erosion, reforestation, fish stocks depletion, climate change, the UN MDGs, fair trade, healthy living, eco-tourism, etc.).

This will be an exciting opportunity for the volunteers to engage an active community to think about and act on environmental issues. To support the theoretical base for the work camp, volunteers will have the opportunity to go on excursions and arrange activities to put the theory into action. They will develop important skills in team-work, organisation and leadership. SEEDS will help the volunteers by providing access to a network of contacts and information as well as advice and



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support from their staff. A leader will always be present during this work camp so that the messengers can concentrate on the environmental activities.

These type of workcamps, called *Environmentally Aware: In Reykjavík* have been developed by former Environmental Messengers of SEEDS, and will be located in one of our SEEDS volunteers bases in Reykjavík. They are one of the main pillars of our Environmental messengers project.

During the normal workcamps the **responsibilities** of an Environmental messenger will vary according to the hosting community, the type of project and areas of interest of the participants.

During this time, environmental messengers may be required to support the role of the work camp leaders. As such, the activities they run as messengers will be in addition to the tasks they must complete as leaders. (E.g. Helping the leaders in carrying out and organizing the on-field work.) The main opportunity to develop their environmental focus will be during the environmental work-camps. As the environmental work-camps will be based in Reykjavík, during the other workcamps the Environmental Messengers will have the opportunity to work in the Icelandic countryside.

Additionally, they shall start drafting an “Environmental/Eco-guide” on a topic(s) of their preference, which will be then finalised at the end of their service. This “Environmental/Eco-guide” will serve as a knowledge database and an important tool to be used for future messengers to implement and develop.

In general, environmental messengers may be responsible for the following:

- * Bringing to Icelandic hosting communities, its inhabitants and international participants in the projects, activities related to environment, nature protection and sustainable development.

- * Developing activities such as study sessions, workshops, group discussions, role games, practical activities on the field, presentations, exhibitions, different exercises, etc. All those, as mentioned before, oriented to raise awareness, to exchange perspectives and knowledge but also to encourage partakers to become active citizens in the development and shape of the world and environment we live in.

- * Taking care of the adequate use of resources & supplies in the workcamps. Part of the messengers' task is to help in turning the activities more environmental by suggesting practical actions that should be taken.

- * Collecting, gathering and processing information of relevance for the volunteers, Icelandic hosts & SEEDS.

- * Producing resource materials, documents and information related to the workcamp, which will be then distributed at the end of the project to the participants and the hosting communities. This might include articles of particular interest, summaries of the activities organised, results achieved during the camp, pictures and videos made within the project, evaluations and reports of the actions, contact data of international and Icelandic participants, sets of recommendations for upcoming projects, etc.

- * Organising an International evening; which is a social event, where locals are invited to mingle and interact with the International volunteers. Through this, we aim at fostering the cross-cultural side of the projects and at giving Icelanders the chance to learn about volunteering, EVS, the YiA Programme & the different opportunities offered in this field.



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** Organising free-time activities for the participants. These activities might include hikes to discover the surroundings, field trips, sport exchanges with the locals, excursions, inviting locals to share their knowledge or skills with the International group, facilitation of events.*

** Helping the volunteers feel comfortable with the project, welcoming and talking to them, to establish a good relationship and to ensure they do not have avoidable problems, and that they remain happy with the project.*

** Updating constantly, either directly or through the staff of the organisation, the official web-site of SEEDS posting actual information about the past, present and future activities within the frame of their project.*

Volunteers need to take enough days free (in average 4) between workcamps to rest and be ready for the next one.

The work in the field is extremely demanding and volunteers will be highly active, which requires a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, self initiative and ability to work under extreme conditions, travelling and moving very often, meeting new people and leaving them after relatively short time.

During this stage EVS volunteers will be under personal supervision of the organisation, contact will be constant through telephone and visits to the sites by SEEDS staff.

4. **After the camps' season**, volunteers will return to Reykjavík and a structured evaluation of their experience will be undertaken. The feedback and input will be used in order to plan next years and to raise the quality of the service.

Volunteers will work a maximum five days a week, for a maximum of 38,5 hours a week (between 7 and 8 hours a day). Weekends are usually free but if requested by the hosting projects, volunteers might work during the weekend and get days off during the usual working days, Monday to Friday.

*After every workcamp, volunteers receive enough days free (**in average 4**) to rest and be ready for the next project. Volunteers are entitled to 2 days of holidays per every month of service at SEEDS; usually we are flexible on this especially when family or friends visit the volunteers while in Iceland.*

Food will be either provided by SEEDS, while volunteers find themselves in the accommodation in Reykjavík, or in the hosting projects during the different workcamps. Food shopping will be done according to SEEDS standard shopping list, ensuring that every volunteer has a balanced diet.

Volunteers will stay in a shared flat (with max. 4 people per room) in Reykjavík and will return there for the breaks between the workcamps. They will most likely stay at Miklabraut 40, a flat that SEEDS owns since 2013, located close to the center of Reykjavík. In this apartment for the Long Term Volunteers (EVS and other) they can relax during their free time between camps.

During the workcamps, accommodation is provided by the local hosts and as they will move from project to project, the situation will vary according to the facilities available. SEEDS ensures that hosting conditions meet quality standards, so that both EVS and camp volunteers enjoy a good and safe place to live in the workcamps.

Domestic transport to the workcamps and back to the accommodation in Reykjavík will be provided by SEEDS. In the accommodation in Reykjavík SEEDS provides them with bicycles for their free time and local transport.

During the workcamps in the countryside, volunteers stay there for periods of usually 2 weeks and no transport to Reykjavík is available (no matter if they are close to the city as in Mosfellsbaer or far away as Egilsstaðir).