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Call for Volunteers

Step Further – Discovering Interculturality EVS project in Guatemala

We are looking for volunteers for a unique project of European Voluntary Service that will take place in Guatemala.

You have the chance to become a real volunteer in a developing country and help the local community in this beautiful place!



Volunteers should come from: Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Luxembourg
Participants: 18 – 30 years old
Date: Date 1 (15 April – 15 June), Date 2 (1 July – 31 August) – the dates are provisional and can be changed
Duration of the voluntary service: 2 months
Hosting placement: Santiaguito Integral School – Pro Paz Association, Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala (a city with 45 000 inhabitants on the shore of Atitlan lake)

Information about the project

In order to promote the active citizenship of young people and to give them the opportunity to experience life in a different environment, develop their understanding of other cultures, and work on the understanding of the notion to be a European citizen, we wish to send 20 young volunteers to the project in Guatemala where they would be helping with different activities including social, cultural, practical and intercultural tasks.

The project is targeted at young people with “fewer opportunities” coming from different social and cultural backgrounds, that mean that young people with educational, financial, family or other problems are the main target group of the project. The EVS, especially carried out in a country outside Europe, will be a great opportunity for them to change their life in a positive direction, raise their self-esteem and develop their skills and competences.

20 young people from 4 different countries of Europe will spend two months voluntary service in Latin America. This large-scale project will promote also in the local communities involved the intercultural tolerance and dialogue and will fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia. As Guatemala and the whole Latin America has strong cultural links to Europe determined by the historical evolution, the project will also promote co-operation and friendship among the people of both regions.

The project will also develop solidarity and promote active citizenship among young people. Twenty young people from Europe, although facing difficult situations in their daily life, will come for two months to Guatemala, a developing country, to help the local community. They will undertake different tasks in



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the hosting organisation, be in contact with the local community in Guatemala and be useful for them. The volunteers with fewer opportunities will feel that their work is appreciated and helps somebody and this will raise their self-esteem as well as strengthen their active citizenship. It will be also great tool to promote participation of young people in solving problems of the local community as the young volunteers will work for the sake of the local community as well as propose their own personal projects during their EVS.

Profile of the volunteers

The project is open for young people with fewer opportunities. This means that the volunteers should be coming from a difficult social background, with family problems, financial problems, be unemployed and out of study, with low level of education, limited opportunities to travel, coming from a disadvantaged geographical locality, etc. There is no precise definition for young people with fewer opportunities, but the project aims to help those young people who do not have the same chances as other people in their age.

The volunteers should be:

- From the Czech Republic, Estonia, France or Luxembourg
- Between 18 and 30 years old
- Coming from a disadvantaged background, with fewer opportunities
- Extremely motivated to provide their energy, enthusiasm and time and help the local community
- Prepared for a strong intercultural experience in Guatemala

Voluntary placement in Guatemala – Santiaguito School

The hosting organisation in Guatemala is Pro Paz Association. Pro Paz is active in the whole country and runs a school in Santiago Atitlan, a beautiful town by the Atitlan lake, mostly inhabited by the indigenous Mayan people. The school combines kindergarten and a school. There are 145 young people attending the school and 10 teachers and members of staff.

The Integrated Bilingual School "Santiaguito" is a school which was built on the property of Asociacion Pro Paz Guatemala in the town of Santiago Atitlan, on the shores of the beautiful lake Atitlan and offers schooling from Pre-school up to 6th grade in the national official language as well as the regional indigenous language Tzutuhil.

At the same time the school also offers additional educational programs of on-going matter:

- Typewriting courses for school students as well as adults
- Computer classes for students and adults
- Environmental care classes
- English classes
- Volunteer programs



The school has been distinguished in the community by all these additional activities that have been and are continuously being carried out.



Besides the previously mentioned ongoing activities, other programs take place throughout the school year:

- Cultural events
- Sporting events
- Marching band competitions
- Regional (Sololá region) experiential learning exchange programs
- Ecological preservation projects
- Scholarship programs for students that were affected by Hurricane Stan.

Santiaguito School has been conceived as a help for the people in the area and has basically been mostly free of charge, and thereby only being operated by ways of donations made to the school.

Volunteers will be involved in the activities of the school as well as other activities in the town. The exact volunteering activity placement will be defined for each volunteer individually, based on the motivation, interests and skills of the volunteers and the needs of the local community. Some of the volunteers will be involved in teaching English, preparing music classes, computer classes or running sport activities for the children, others will help with the ecological projects, with community development in the town and in other NGOs. Our aim is to adapt the work as much as possible to the profile of each volunteer. Volunteers are expected to work around 30-35 hours per week. Some of the activities will be done in Guatemala City or cities around to give a better vision of Guatemala to the volunteer.



Volunteers will be accommodated in the Santiaguito school in simple double rooms. The school has two rooms in its main building and two rooms in a newly built bungalow. The accommodation is conforming to Guatemalan standard. As it is a voluntary service project in a developing country, volunteers should not expect a luxurious accommodation. The rooms are simple and proper.

About Pro Paz Association and Santiago Atitlan

The hosting organisation in Guatemala is Pro Paz Association (<http://www.propazgua.net>). The association has long-term experience and is active all over Guatemala. Among other activities, it also runs the Santiaguito school in Santiago Atitlan where the volunteers will work.

General Objectives:

- Provide Opportunities to increase personal initiative.
- Establish an Inter-cultural and Inter-religious space to create lasting friendships and break social, political, ethnic, cultural and religious barriers.
- Create opportunities for people to practice their faith and/or beliefs
- Offer alternatives to violence through education about conflict resolution.
- Implement and promote excellence in Integral Education, cemented in Family Values.



- Offer the opportunity to all people to satisfy their inherent good desires through working for the common good.
- Promote the development of personal character through altruistic service to others.
- Establish and Promote True Families, absorbed in the love of God, living for the sake of others and in peace with Creation.

Fundamental Values:

- Faith and Action
- Love and Family
- Initiatives and Development
- Service and Character



About Santiago Atitlan

Santiago Atitlán is a municipality in the Sololá department of Guatemala. The town is situated on Lago de Atitlán, which has an elevation of 1,556 m. The town sits on a bay of Lago Atitlan between two volcanos. Volcan San Pedro rises to 2,846 metres west of town; Volcan Toliman rises to 3,144 metres southeast of town. Volcan Atitlan, with a summit of 3,516 metres, is south-southeast of town. Major highways reach Lago Atitlan at San Lucas Toliman and Panajachel. A road links Santiago to San Lucas Tolliman. Boats connect the numerous communities around Lago Atitlan.

The majority of the residents are indigenous Mayans. It was the capital of the Tz'utujil people in pre-Columbian times and its name was Chuitinamit.

Role of the volunteers

Volunteers will work on different activities in Guatemala. The first week, they will participate in an on-arrival training course which will give them basic orientation in how EVS works, in what their project will be, receive knowledge about the culture and reality of Guatemala and get to know the work of local NGOs.

After that, the volunteers will start the actual work in Santiago Atitlan. We will carefully analyse what are the skills, strengths and interest of the volunteers and match them with the appropriate work for them. Volunteers are encouraged to propose their own ideas as well.

Volunteers are also expected to participate

- In a preparatory training provided by Together and in an international activity for a total of 8 days
- In the pre-departure and evaluation training, provided by the Youth in Action National Agency in their country. These trainings are obligatory, take usually around 2-3 days and volunteers must ensure they can participate in these.

Practical information

The project is financed by the European Commission, within the Youth in Action programme. The volunteers do not get paid for the work they will do.

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Together will finance from this grant the travel to/from Guatemala, simple accommodation and food, insurance, local transport in Guatemala, the on-arrival training, necessary vaccination for the volunteers, the Spanish language lessons as well as small allowance/pocket money for the volunteers (50 EUR per month). The average salary in Guatemala doesn't exceed 200\$ per month.

On the other side, the volunteers should be motivated and strongly willing to give their energy, enthusiasm and time to help the local community in a developing country. It is a great opportunity to get unique experience for the young people, but the primary goal should be to work voluntarily for the sake of the local community in Guatemala. EVS is not a holiday, a job, an internship or a language course.

Selection process

The volunteers will be selected by the sending organisations in their countries (Together Czech Republic, Together Estonia, Together France, Together Luxembourg). The volunteers should be motivated to provide their energy to the local community in Guatemala.

1. The applicants who are interested should fill in the application form and send it together with motivation letter to the sending organisation.
2. If the volunteer is pre-selected, there will be a lot of preparation expected from the volunteers:
 - The volunteers should research information about Guatemala
 - Write some articles about him/herself, his/her expectation, motivation. It will be uploaded to the website of the project and will connect the volunteer to the project and to the other volunteers all around Europe.
 - Ensure they have all the necessary vaccination (the costs of vaccination, agreed in advance by the sending organisation, will be reimbursed)
 - Arrange a written confirmation from a doctor - general practitioner that they are able to travel for 2 months to Guatemala for the voluntary service.
 - Participate in one international activity before their EVS project to get an idea about the work of the organisation. (for this activity the volunteer should cover 30% of the travel costs and pay 20 EUR participation fee for the activity)
 - Be interested to promote his/her experience and make visible the action s/he took part in and be an active multiplier in the sending organisation



If all this process is successful, the volunteer will have the chance to become a volunteer in Guatemala for 2 months.

If you are interested in becoming an EVS volunteer in Guatemala, please fill in the application form and send it to us together with motivation letter and other documents. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us:

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