

2010-CZ-46

OKO - vzdelavaci a rozvojove centrum, o.s.

Accreditation	Sending organisation, Host organisation, Co-ordinating organisation
Approval Date	20/01/2011
Validity Date	20/01/2014
Location	Rychnov nad Kneznou (Czech Republic)
Theme 1	Art and culture
Theme 2	Media and communication/Youth information
Inclusion	Cultural differences, Economic difficulties, Geographical difficulties, Social difficulties

Project environment

Project environment:

OKO centre is a young organisation with a clear goal to spread education, culture and to work on personalities general development. Our participants are children, youth and adults of all age.

We deal with educational activities, development, culture, publication and publishing activities. We arrange languages courses (English, German, French, Russian, Spanish and Italian for children, youth and adults), specialized courses and seminars (with topics communication, marketing, management, work with PC, psychology...), summer camps, youth exchanges and other actions (competitions, tourist trips, social and international meetings, recondition stays) and European Voluntary Service. We have established a branch of our centre in a small village, were we work with children and youth at the age of 7 - 16.

OKO centre has now 3 permanent employees, 2 Czech volunteers (1 support for EVS and 1 for youth exchange activities) and 18 external workmates. OKO centre cooperates with the external workmates intensively. We have an office and 5 clubrooms in Rychnov at our disposal.

Rychnov nad Kneznou is a small town with 12 000 inhabitants. It lies in the north of our republic near the border with Poland (25 km). It is about 150 km to Prague. It has a stadium, an ice-ring, fitness, a cinema, a park, a hospital and a swimming pool. There is a beautiful mountain-landscape here with a possibility of hiking and cycling. The Eagle Mountains with the possibility of skiing are only 20 km far from here. The volunteers will live in Rychnov nad Kneznou. Two volunteers will share one flat; each of them will have his/her own room. There is the kitchen corner, bathroom and toilet for both of them.

It is good to know that late night activity (noise) is not common in our town and country. The restaurants close usually at midnight, the shops are open till 5 - 5:30 p.m. The supermarkets are open till 8 p.m. The life here is rather calm and quiet.

Proposed activities for EVS volunteers:

Our aim is to offer more educational and leisure possibilities in our region and we hope to achieve it with the volunteers help.

Our organisation would like to find volunteers for 6-12 months. They will variegated activities and thinking

with their ideas. They will also work on small projects e.g. afternoon with children and youth full of creation and fun aimed best at art and culture or at nature. Other small projects are open house, intercultural afternoons, seminars, summer camps, youth exchanges, conversation with the local community,... Most of the listed activities for children, youth and adults (except displays and youth exchanges) are for fewer people (usually 6-8), to keep certain individuality of actions and to ensure enough space for the discussion with volunteers. There will be also the possibility of working on the website and other advertising materials. One of the main volunteer's activity is also preparing and making arrangements for the different exhibitions. We would especially appreciate new ideas and willingness to cooperate. The choice of specific topics depends on the ability of the volunteer. The volunteer will have enough time and space for his creation. We would appreciate average speaking skills in English.

And why is the project called PUZZLE? Because every single work and volunteer's activity will be a piece of the puzzle of free time activities for children, youth and regional community we promote.

The work is aimed especially at the intercultural learning and other forms of education. The volunteers also help with the organization of the free time activities for children, activities during summer camps, youth exchanges; they organize intercultural evenings, exhibitions, workshops, seminars and meetings. All these activities become more diverse and colorful with their help. They also inspire us and develop our creativity. All events realized with the help of volunteers received so far positively response from public. About 500 people visited the exhibition 'Christmas in Europe'. The display about Easter customs in Czech, Italy and France visited more than 600 people, which is a high rate for such small town as Rychnov is. Not only displays but also other activities (like meetings, workshops, intercultural evenings, seminars...) which were organized with the help of EVS volunteers were popular. Not only for their topics and perfect realization were the activities favored, but also because of the fact that children, youth and adults like to get to know many different cultures and it is very attractive that young native speakers introduce the cultural diversity of Europe.

The volunteers are enriched by intercultural learning and experience (they have the possibility to speak to many people from the local community, to take part in celebrations, Czech customs...), they are also improving in the communication, in motivation, work with the computer (they prepare presentations about their countries, customs and life of children, youth, about EVS... and they discuss these topics). They also prepare various competitions, games and free time activities for children and youth and through this, they learn how to work with them. They prepare and organize the photograph displays (about Christmas, Easter, Halloween customs..) - they improve their knowledge about their own customs and also the Czech ones in return. They learn to be independent (they look after themselves in their flat, some of the activities are also individual), to cooperate (with other volunteers and with employees of OKO), to organize and plan their projects, and to be discipline (need for keeping the time schedule of planned activities). Volunteers also inspire us - employees of OKO and develop in many cases our creativity. We would love to cooperate with 3-4 volunteers.

Working time of the volunteer: 30 - 35 hours per week, usually in the afternoon and it will be adjusted to the work on a specific project. According to the EVS conditions, the volunteer will have a title for a holiday (i.e. 2 days per month).

Specification of the activities:

1x per week for 2-3 hours - the volunteer will take part in the afternoon English (Germany, French) course - unformal conversations with students on general topics and giving information about his/her home country and culture in Rychnov. We would appreciate if the volunteer brings with him/her some photos, pictures, CD (about himself/herself, his/her town, his/her country). He/She will use these materials also for the summer camps or for the intercultural afternoons and evenings. Our courses are for 6-8, max. 10 people.

1-2x per month - the volunteer will prepare and realize one special action - a small project in Rychnov :
- Intercultural afternoon (evening) with the local community by his/her own idea (group of max. 10 people)

- A chat with youth - about a common topic (group of max. 10 people)
- Open house (we do it 3x per year - before Christmas, in May and in September)
- workshop (e.g. connected with Christmas or Easter time, dancing, painting on textile, painting on glass, photography etc.), (usually for the group of cca 10, max. 15 people)
- exhibitions (of photos and intercultural information - Christmas, Easter, live of youth, ...)

It is necessary to know that we will really appreciate volunteer's creativity, initiative, enthusiasm and independence. Anyway, there will be always a leader responsible for the project available for cooperation and for giving advice. We will support volunteer's activities according to our possibilities. These activities will take place usually in the afternoons. They include many small activities e.g. an idea, creation of the plan of realization of the action, making posters, decorating the room, reserve materials, creation and distribution of the invitation, preparing the programme with all details, realization, photo documentation, cleaning the mess after the action and an evaluation of the action. The volunteer can prepare all these things during the morning or during the afternoon, depends on the understanding.

During the summer holidays (July - August) - the volunteers will participate on 2-3 summer camps for totally 3-4 weeks. Their main duty will be organization of free time (games and competition for young participants).

Helping with the common work in the office will be rather extraordinary, max. 5% of all of the volunteer's activities. Most of the work will be work on concrete projects.

The volunteer will be able to adjust his/her working time, so he/she can prepare everything on time. We will be pleased if the volunteer would like to be part of our creative team.

About the volunteer's education: the volunteer can attend language courses of English, German and French in our language school free of charge. He/She can use the Internet in the office of our organisation from Monday to Friday also free of charge. He/She can attend a course of Czech language.

The activities in the working time of the volunteer in % :

- 15% education of the volunteer (1 hour per day), if he/she is interested in attending more language courses in our language school he/she can do it free of charge but only in his/her free time
- 10% assistance in conversation courses (for 6-8 people) of our organisation in close cooperation with the teachers (1x per week for 4 hours) in Rychnov
- max. 5% work in the office (cca 1x per week for 1 hour) in Rychnov
- 70-75% work on concrete projects (e.g. open house, workshops, intercultural afternoons, afternoons for children, exhibitions, cooperation with the production of OKO bulletin and web pages concerning EVS - mostly preparation of texts...)

Work divided depending on the age of the people in % :

- 60% work with youth 10 - 20 years old
- 30% work with adults - local community
- 10% work with children 6 - 10 years old

Volunteer profiles and recruitment process:

We don't have any special requirements for the selection of the volunteer. We would appreciate the ability and motivation for work with youth, the working knowledge on PC, independence, creativity and involvement in work on projects.

Number of volunteers hosted: 4

Special needs (if applicable):

We are also willing to welcome a volunteer with the cultural, social, economical or geographical difficulties. According to the fact, that our organization is placed close to the border, in the poorer region, and all our employees are fully open to respect other cultures, we are convinced, that we are ready and able to cooperate and to understand these volunteers, to give them more intensive communication. We are ready to ensure the needed support to this volunteer during the all EVS project.

Risk prevention, protection and safety:

The volunteers will live and work in a friendly and caring environment. They will not work with the people from the risky groups. The region is safe. Each of the volunteers will have his/her mentor. We will try to prevent any risks and crisis by the regular communication and feedback. We will inform each volunteer about health and safety at work and give them other useful tips. All volunteers will receive emergency numbers for CZ and other practical and useful information for their life in the Czech Republic. We are prepared to support EVS volunteers, f. e. by ensuring safe and healthy working environment (they will have adequate space and equipment to work and they will get instructions in the use of computer etc.) and by providing training, coaching and intercultural issues (which prepare them for some difficulties, challenges, questions and feelings that they might experience during their stay). With our help volunteers will learn methodology of working with youth and children, how to deal with conflicts and to integrate into the local community. We will suggest as well sources of help and support for their personal problems.

Motivation and EVS experience

We are hosting organization and we work with the volunteers since January 2007. The volunteers help us with the creation and realization of the activities dedicated for the local community - with the organization of the free time activities for children, activities during summer camps, youth exchanges, they organize intercultural evenings, exhibitions, workshops, seminars and meetings. Through these activities we succeed in fulfilling the main aim of hosting volunteers - widening and improving activities directly connected to intercultural learning: we promote it among volunteers, local community and our centre this way. The activities of volunteers give us a European dimension and make our activities more attractive. Cooperation with volunteers is motivating for OKO team. To the local community, it brings intercultural knowledge and also improvement in the language while speaking to the volunteers in the volunteer's language. By participating in the EVS young volunteers can win for themselves new skills and improve their personal, educational and professional progression. Volunteering gives the opportunity to learn a language and meet people with different perspectives. It shows that volunteer is up for a challenge and prepared to work hard for what he/she believes in. During period of EVS in our centre, volunteer will gain a lot of experience in formal and non-formal educating of children and youth.

We would like to be a sending organisation because we know that EVS is a very interesting possibility for our Czech youngsters. We experienced that EVS brings an intensive personal development (strengthening such qualities as independence, decision making, communicative ability, understanding to others and oneself, organization skills), technical development (according to volunteer's activities), intercultural learning including language knowledge and working experience. As sending organization we are ready to help, give information and advice to all who are interested in EVS. We help with the preparation of dotation (grant) request, with the securing all the activities and documentation from the sending of the volunteer to his/her return home. We will be a reliance friend for him/her for all the time of his stay and we will be open to cooperate after his/her service,. There are volunteers who would like to prolong their EVS experience and we want give them this opportunity. We will keep volunteers informed of our activities and social events and we will permit them to attend our workshops, youth exchanges and summer camp from time to time. If they want to be occasionally involved in volunteering activities, they can f. e. have their

experience concerning EVS by taking part in meeting with youth, doing exhibitions and presentations and being mentors for volunteers we actually host. We are pleased to help all interested people in this action.

We would also like to become a coordinating organisation. We are convinced that it is useful to have a status of the coordinator especially in case of cooperating with more countries within the frame of EVS. Coordinator will provide conditions which helps to communication and cooperation and also to solve the financial matter. The coordination surely help to mutual trust, better knowledge about both sides and it will make the cooperation easier. Smooth cooperation of partners will surely have the positive impact on the volunteer her/himself. According to fact, that we have already organized and coordinated few international and bigger projects, we are ready for this work. It will improve our cooperation with other partners.

Why EVS? We are convinced, that it is a great and a very well coordinated international action with the European Union guarantee which offers a brilliant opportunity to grow up personally, including the experience of working abroad, for all young people.

Description of the organisation

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We deal with educational activities, development, culture, publication and publishing activities. We are arranging languages courses (English, German, French, Russian, Spanish and Italian for children, youth and adults), specialized courses and seminars (topics: communication, marketing, management, work with PC, psychology...), summer camps and other actions (like ceilidh, competitions, tourist trips, social and international meetings, exhibitions, recondition stays,..), youth exchanges and European Voluntary Service (EVS).

You can find more information and photos about OKO centre here: www.oko-centrum.cz and visit our volunteers' blog: <http://evsoko.blogspot.com>.

Contact Point

Organisation: OKO - vzdelavaci a rozvojeve centrum, o.s.

Address: Stare namesti 46

Postal code: 516 01

Town: Rychnov nad Kneznou

Country: Czech Republic

E-mail: info@oko-centrum.cz

Phone: 777900818

Fax: n/a

Contact: Jitka Bartosova