

Imastu Residential School



About Receiving Organisation

Imastu Residential School is a state-owned enterprise that provides social welfare services to adults with special mental needs and serves as a substitute home and childcare service to children with special mental needs.

It is home for 110 psychically and mentally disabled children and young adults. The School uses a model of family style living, where children of different age and with different disabilities live together. Altogether there are eight family-groups: three for young adults (aged 18+) and five for children (aged 6 - 18) with different diagnosis under supervision and with assistance of well-experienced staff.

The staff regularly monitors children's health and development, provides medical, psychological and psychiatric care, teaches them basic skills, runs leisure time activities such as games, handicraft workshops, sport activities, excursions, etc. depending on age and disabilities of the children. Around 60 people are working directly with children. There is one big building for all activities and therapies (special-school, day-centre, snooze-room, bubble-bath room etc.).

Context

Imastu is a small village, situated in the Northern-Central part of Estonia, about 90 km from Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The volunteers will live in the closest town called Tapa (approximately 10 000 inhabitants). In Tapa, there are several shops, a post office and a library with internet connection. Tapa is an important railway junction and has some direct and indirect connections with bigger cities. About 30 km from Imastu lies Lahemaa National Park, the largest national park in Estonia. For additional information visit www.tapa.ee.



Proposed Activities for the Volunteer

The main educational value of this EVS project is in providing young volunteers with profound experience of social work and assistance to those in real need. This experience may determine future studies or field of work for some of the volunteers. Besides the project will give volunteer a chance to experience life deep in the countryside raising in an alternative way the European awareness.

The main task for the volunteer in this project is looking after the disabled children, organising different activities to them and supporting the staff with their work. The work is different in every group, but mostly the volunteer helps out with feeding and washing the children, brushing teeth, dressing for the day, sending kids to school, carrying out activities. Besides the main room, the volunteer can also use the day centre, dance class and senses' room to offer diverse activities to children and bring some positive change to their daily routine.

The activities for the volunteer in the Imastu are seen as follows:

- looking after the children and helping project staff in teaching them basic work skills (20%);
- playing with children (30%);
- arranging children's outings, e.g. culture visits, excursions, hikes, picnics, etc. (10%);
- offering extra activities for kids outside regular curricula (puppet theatre, handicrafts workshops, thematic parties, etc.) (20%);
- helping to feed children (10%);
- assisting with all other required activities (10%).

The division of the tasks may be changed and adapted according to the volunteer, depending on his/her personal interests and skills. Volunteers will be encouraged to propose their personal projects/initiatives related to the theme of this EVS project which can be supported by the receiving and/or coordinating organisation.

Another task of the volunteers could be to establish contacts with similar institutions for mentally handicapped children in his/her home country in order to have mutually beneficial co-operation/ exchange between institutions in future.

The working time will be around 35 hours a week. Volunteer will have 2 days off per week either during week or

at weekends. According to the volunteer's skills and project needs, priority tasks and more detailed working schedule (including holidays and periods of breaks) will be worked out together with the head of the project and staff. Volunteers will be working under supervision and with support of pedagogical staff of each family group.

A typical day would look like follows:

The volunteer starts with dressing the children and helping them to have breakfast; part of the children will leave for school, and the volunteer plays with others or takes them out for a walk (in case of group of young adults, volunteers assists to organise their work and helps to supervise it); if necessary the volunteer helps out in the kitchen to prepare the meals; he/she helps children to have their lunch in family groups; in the afternoon the volunteer plays with children and youngsters or runs various activities for them, reads books, takes them for a walk or organises outdoor activities, etc.

The organisation is willing to accept 2 EVS volunteers who will work in different family groups having generally similar tasks, which however may vary depending of age of youngsters and type of their disabilities.

Profile of Volunteer and Recruitment Process

The project welcomes mature, motivated and committed volunteers understanding the nature of the project and its particularities, such as working in a small village in the country side, working with kids having very serious mental and physical disabilities. Some previous experience in work with children in general or/and with handicapped people is an advantage, but not a must. Volunteers are expected to be positive, open-minded, flexible, friendly, helpful, warmhearted. He/she should be active, taking initiatives, responsible and reliable. Also the volunteer should be open to the challenge the project offers.

In order to apply, we ask you to fill out the specific EstYES EVS application form (find it either attached or in Open Placements on estyes.ee/en) and send it to evs@estyes.ee. After sending the application, the coordinating organisation EstYES will pass the applications to the staff of Imastu Residential School who will choose the volunteer according to the profile and interests that match the best with the proposed activities of the project. The staff will contact the volunteer first by e-mail to organise a Skype meeting. It is important to have a Skype-meeting to give you more information about the organisation, our expectations and also, what we can offer to the volunteer. The interview is our chance to see if the volunteer really understands the nature of the organisation and is motivated to volunteer here. After we have selected the candidate who suits us the best, we let the coordinating organisation know, so they can continue with the project preparations. During the project preparation phase, we stay in constant contact with the selected volunteer to discuss future plans, ask/answer questions etc.

Support

Volunteers are living in a rented apartment in Tapa, which is about 4 km away from the work place. The apartment is furnished and has all essentials for living. Accommodation is arranged together with the coordination organisation EstYES prior to the volunteer's arrival. To get to work its possible to use bikes (approximately 15 minutes) or walk (approximately 35-40 minutes).

The volunteer will have an 30-35h Estonian language course in the beginning of the service. It starts within the first month of the service. Receiving organisation in cooperation with coordinating organisation finds a proper teacher before the beginning of the service. Teacher is going to be someone who is able and willing to teach foreigners.

Before coming to the service, coordination organisation EstYES recommend the volunteers to start learning basic estonian by offering them different options for this:

<http://www.speakestonian.co.uk/>

<http://www.loecsen.com/travel/0-en-67-2-21-free-lessons-estonian.html>

<http://www.innove.ee/en/language-examination/keeleklikk>

<http://www.surfacelanguages.com/language/Estonian>

<http://www.livemocha.com/learn-estonian/aprender-estonio>

<http://www.digitaldialects.com/Estonian.htm>

http://mylanguages.org/learn_estonian.php

<http://en.eki.ee/index.php> - Eesti Keele Instituut web page where you can find Estonian Explanatory Dictionary, Estonian-English and Estonian-Russian dictionary and Estonian language rules.

Risk Prevention, Protection and Safety

The receiving organisation will ensure:

- that the volunteer's work is safe and been assessed for risk;
- that every effort is made that project meets high health and safety standards;
- that the volunteer is trained and familiar with the volunteering work and have access to adequate safety equipment if needed;
- that the volunteer will get all the mental support from the staff if needed

Coordinating organisation EstYES sends all volunteers who work with disabled people, to a training offered by organisation noOR. NGO noOR in cooperation with Tallinna Puuetega Inimeste Koda are organizing each year a training on the situation of people with disabilities in Estonia. Training is meant for European Voluntary Service volunteers who conduct their voluntary service at disabled peoples' organisations in Estonia.

Mentor and tutor will be offering psychological support to the volunteer. The volunteer is also always welcome to turn to the supervisor, coordinator of EstYES and sending organisation if necessary. Communication is the key to solve the problems that may occur.

As participants of EVS program, volunteers will be covered by Cigna insurance plan for EVS volunteers, which covers possible medical expenses and help to solve possible health-related issues during the EVS period.

Imastu and it's Surroundings in Pictures (taken by a previous volunteer)





