



Service RENFORTS **(2012-BEFR-14)**

The hosting Organisation :

The service RENFORTS is a part of the non-profit association ANDAGE, created in order to improve the quality of life of disabled people and their families. RENFORTS works especially on the inclusion of disabled young adults.

The goal of the service RENFORTS is to create local partnerships and social inclusion projects in order to allow young adults with disabilities to be part of local and community life of Marche and its surroundings. Every day, with the support of youth workers, about 30 young adults with disabilities work in team and help several local associations: help to the maintenance of the municipal kennel, cleaning stalls in a horse riding school, order the clothes in a second-hand shop, help in the school's kitchen and in the restaurant being part of the cultural center,...

Location of the project:

The office of **service Renforts** is situated in the center of Marche-en-Famenne. This is where the EVS volunteer will meet every morning the youngsters and the staff before leaving for different places where work is planned. In the building there are several working rooms, a kitchen, a living room, a computer space, a locker room and the eating room where the volunteer will eat together with the staff when not being at the partners' place.

The volunteer will live close from where s/he works, in Marche-en-Famenne, a small town situated in the south –French speaking - part of Belgium. With about 17 000 Inhabitants, the municipality of Marche counts with numerous villages: Hollogne, Waha, Verdenne, Champlon-Famenne, Grimbiémont, Lignières, Roy, On... S/he will be in contact with other evs volunteers being hosted in other projects in the municipality. If all of them are not living together, they'll live not far from each other and we'll do everything needed to put them in contact with each other as well as with the local youth.

If Marche offers all the modern facilities, it is however important to warn the urban style lovers that Marche is situated in a semi-rural area and the nightlife here is less vivid than in



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bigger towns. Nevertheless, Liège, Namur or Brussels are not far from Marche which has a good train connection.

The project:

During his/her European voluntary service, we hope the volunteer will learn a lot and gain constructive experiences.

To achieve this goal, we offer him/her:

- To discover the community life of the hosting town;
- To discover or to deepen his/her knowledge in the disability field;
- To be part of a motivated team of youth workers and build new projects with them;
- To receive a linguistic support in order to be able to communicate in French. At the beginning of the project, the volunteer will receive several hours of French course in a week. Afterwards, we will provide him/her with an individual support like conversation tables, book-reading advices and so on;
- To have the opportunity to discover several working fields and activities being in contact with Renfort's partners;
- To participate in pedagogical meetings organized within service Renforts and to meet resource persons assisting the team with professional advices;
- To participate in the staff meetings as well as the youngsters meetings;
- To have the choice to participate in the camp leader training organized by the coordinating organisation, l'Association des Compagnons Bâisseurs

Roles of the volunteer within the hosting organisation

We expect the volunteer to take an active part into the staff work. S/he will support and accompany the young adults with disabilities during their work. S/he will facilitate their investments in the tasks realization.

For example:

- During the envelope labeling at the youth center, the volunteer will be with the group, check the work done, suggest some improvement if needed, keep the good atmosphere during the work;



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- During the meal cooking at “Clair et net”, the volunteer will support the youngsters in the different tasks required: check the youngster has all the material needed before starting the work, try to find a task for all of them...

With the support of a youth worker, the volunteer will play a big role in the maintenance of a good relationship with the different partners, the youngsters and the staff of service Renforts.

S/he will:

- Create a social link with the youngsters;
- Share his/her knowledge with the youngsters in order to help them to accomplish their tasks (computer skills, cooking skills...);
- Given the opportunity to the youngsters to open themselves at the world around them;
- Raise awareness about volunteering among youngsters and partners;
- Be a resource of new ideas, new point of view about the way of working...;
- Be a support, somebody who listens at the youngsters.

Activities the volunteer could participate in or create:

- To think up and develop a project with the youngsters (try cooking recipes, cultivate chicories in caves...);
- To actively participate in staff meetings;
- To suggest some changes in order to improve Renforts, willing to evolve constantly;
- To take initiative;

The volunteer's activities can be adapted according to his/her skills and wills.

During the first week, s/he will meet the different partners and will be introduced to the several tasks dealt by the youngsters. Then, according with the agenda of the staff, s/he will have the opportunity to choose what activities and planning fit him/her the best.

Profile of the volunteer:

The selection process is divided in three parts:

- Our coordinating organisation send a call to all the EVS accredited sending organisations and to our usual partner network informing them of the free place in our project. It requests that all applicants send us a CV and a personal motivation letter.
- All the applications are treated individually. We select the applications that testimony of an



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actual and personal interest for the project. A complementary questionnaire or phone calls can be sent to the applicants in order to get to know each other better.

- Final selection is decided during a team meeting by our staff members

All the applicants are informed of our final decision by our coordinating organisation.

Our project is open to anybody motivated by volunteering and who wish to be involved in our organisation, regardless to their nationality, religion, believing, diploma, professional experience... Because of our youngsters don't speak any other language than French, having some knowledge of French is an asset.

We expect the volunteer to be open to the difference and ready to build an atmosphere of confidence and security with the youngsters; be ready to involve him/herself in the several tasks to do with the youngsters; be able to work together with the staff; agree with our philosophy of social inclusion and openness to the difference; willing to listen, communicate and care about the young adults with disabilities.

CAUTION: the volunteer will have to provide a certificate of good conduct (CGC) related with the work with children.

Project period:

EVS activity will start on 01/02/2014 for duration of 12 months

Contacts:

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Accreditation: Host organisation

Approval date: ?

Validity date: ?

Location: Marche-en-Famenne

Theme 1: disability

Theme 2: European awareness

Project environment

Proposed activities to EVS volunteers:

Example of what could be a typical week:

Monday:

Between 08:30 and 09:00 → meeting at the Renforts ' office

09:15 → cooking at the "Alouette" (partner), a hosting house for children

12:00-13:00 → lunch time at the "Alouette"

13:00 → Back to the Renforts' office

13:20-15:40 → wrapping cutlery at the hospital

16:00 → end of the day

Tuesday:

Between 08:30 and 09:00 → meeting at the office

09:15-12:00 → walking municipal kennel's dogs and clean the rooms

12:00-13:00 → Lunchtime at the office



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13:20-15:40 → Several tasks at the youth center (labeling, painting, cleaning, tidying up...)

16:00 → end of the day

Wednesday:

09:15-12:00 → Cooking or outside manual tasks at the Netinne castle

14:30-16:00 → Staff meeting (every Wednesday)

Thursday:

09:15-12:00 → Gardening

13:20-15:45 → Cooking at the cultural centers and watching a theater play occasionally

Friday:

09:15-12:00 → Tidying up lunch tables and helping in the kitchen of primary school at On

13:20-15:45 → Gardening at Pré Gourmand

This timetable will be changed in order to integrate the French lessons and the volunteers' wills.

The volunteer will also have the opportunity to participate in other activities out of the service Renforts but linked with the same target group such as board games evenings, movie nights organized by the Association des Compagnons Bâtisseurs or the various activities organized by the youth center, both situated very close from his/her accommodation and service Renforts' office.

Volunteer's profile and recruitment procedure

Number of EVS volunteers hosted:

One on this project but s/he will have regular contacts with the other EVS volunteers hosted in Marche-en-Famenne (around 4).

Risks prevention, protection and safety:

Safety at work: The EVS volunteer will always works under the responsibility of youth worker of Renforts. He will have the autonomy he'll need to develop his/her own initiatives and personal projects, but s/he won't be responsible of an activity on its own. S/he will always get the advice and support of a youth worker.

The activities s/he will take part in will always be prepared with the whole staff. Preparation meetings will allow the staff to inform the EVS volunteer about the rules to respect, about all in risks prevention and safety.



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Safety at home: The volunteer will be hosted in an accommodation with all the modern comfort and respecting the safety rules. When arrived, the volunteer will receive a list of phone numbers to call in case of emergency. S/he will also receive the phone numbers of his/her mentor and task-related support.

Risks and crisis prevention: Risks prevention is firstly linked to a good preparation. We will provide the volunteer with complete and true information before s/he decides to join our project. The sending organisation will be in charge to follow the volunteer during the pre-departure process, to inform him/her about the EVS programme, about the rights and responsibilities of the different actors involved, about the administrative obligations the volunteer has to respect before to leave his/her country, etc... The volunteer will also have to attend a pre-departure seminar if organized by the National Agency.

When arrived in Belgium, the volunteer will participate in the on-arrival seminar and the mid-term evaluation organized by the French speaking National Agency. At the starting of the project, we'll especially take care to welcome the volunteer, to show him/her interesting places of our town and Belgium and to present him/her to other young people. We'll also check that everything is in order with the insurance.

The EVS volunteer will participate in our weekly meeting in order to be integrated in the team and to have the chance to talk about the difficulties s/he lives. An evaluation of the EVS experience will be made on regular basis with his/her mentor. If there is a problem, a meeting with the project coordinator will be hold in order to solve it.

In case of crisis/emergency, we'll require the intervention of the specialise services required, according to the situation.

Our coordinating organisation, but as well our national agency in charge of the EVS programme, is resources that can help in case of any serious casual problem

Motivation and EVS experience

It is the first time that service Renforts is going to host an EVS volunteer. Nevertheless, the staff already had the opportunity to work with the EVS volunteers hosted at the youth center of Marche-en-Famenne these last 4 years. One of the youth workers being part of the staff is also working at this same youth center and therefore has some experience in the way to welcome an EVS volunteer.

We think that welcoming an EVS volunteer within our staff would allow our public of young adults with mental disabilities to open themselves to other cultures and to develop a new relationship with somebody. It would offer the opportunity to the staff to introduce their world to somebody foreigner to the department and to promote and value their work. Also, we think an EVS volunteer working at



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service Renforts will have the opportunity to meet a lot of people and departments of the town of Marche-en-Famenne, knowing that we are working with around 50 partners.

Description of the organisation

“Renforts” aims to encourage the social inclusion of young adults with disabilities in the local social life. “Renforts” is part of the non-profit organisation “Andage”, which goal is to allow young adults with mental and/or physical disabilities, able and willing to socially integrate and to be fulfilled thanks to a useful work. We propose them an adapted work according to their skills and knowledge with different partners.

It started in 2007 and was mainly focused on the Marche-en-Famenne municipality. When the department opened, three young adults with disabilities decided to try the chance. In 2009, they were 13 to believe in the project and to be fulfilled thanks to various activities related with the expectations. We currently have around 50 partners that we’re helping on a voluntary basis, fulfilling needs the community life can’t. The partner respects and interacts with the youngsters in order to integrate them in the social life. The tasks done by the youngsters working with Renforts are concrete and adapted to the partners as well as the youngsters: help in the kitchen, library, outside manual works, kennel, horse riding school, day nursery...

In 2010, the department is looking after more than 20 youngsters and, in 2011, a new branch is founded in Libramont and allows to answer the needs of new youngsters coming from somewhere else than Marche-en-Famenne and surroundings.

Now, the department is taking care of 30 young adults with disabilities and the staff is made up of three youth workers working full time and two people working part-time. Some volunteers give a hand when needed during the work.

Contact Point

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