

EVS project - Volunteering is in Our Nature!

Start: 1/2/2015

End: 31/8/2015

Place: Athens, Greece

Profile of volunteer: 18-30 years, available for the full period of the EVS (7 months)

Host organisation: ELIX - Conservation Volunteers Greece is a non-governmental not-for-profit organization, promoting since 1987, voluntary service and education. Main goal is the personal development of individuals as citizens of the world, through active participation. Environmental protection, cultural heritage conservation, culture promotion and social service are the main thematic fields of voluntary projects. Within this field, ELIX coordinates the following EVS programme which includes two separate activities:

Project description: The activity is hosted mainly in Athens, in the office of ELIX. Athens is a multicultural city offering many opportunities for social activities but also it is a city of social challenges. Against this backdrop, ELIX is trying to contribute actively, giving opportunities to young people for active participation. ELIX's office is an information center for thousands of volunteers willing to participate in volunteer projects, educational seminars and cultural exchanges in Greece and around the world. Moreover, ELIX's office is the main place where all the planning and coordination is done for various voluntary projects organized in local communities across Greece aiming to promote volunteering, active participation and new skills acquaintance within non-formal learning methods.

Each volunteer works closely with all the staff members of the organization and has the opportunity to be actively involved in all the necessary steps of the organization of several voluntary activities and especially voluntary workcamps. This service enables the volunteer to have a significant experience within a voluntary organization active in sectors of youth and lifelong learning, acquire new skills, get in touch with volunteers of all ages from Greece and around the world and last but not least live in a multicultural environment. Most of the service takes place in Athens while during the summer months (July and August) volunteers will participate in voluntary projects organized across Greece.

The volunteer is going to work directly in our organization, which aims to raise awareness of the meaning of diversity and promote intercultural dialogue through voluntary actions.

Each volunteer will have the chance to develop his/her organizational skills by being involved in the preparation and implementation of different kind of volunteer activities, improve his/her sense of responsibility and initiative towards the tasks undertaken, work in a team in a highly multicultural environment, meet different people and cultures.

Besides that, he/she will have the opportunity to develop a social network and participate in seminars, trainings and other cultural actions of ELIX or partner organizations.

Finally, all the services and advantages that the volunteer has the right to enjoy, will be provided, according to the ERASMUS+ programme Guide.

The volunteer will support ELIX during the preparation, implementation and evaluation mainly of the international voluntary projects organized all around Greece as well as of different projects and activities such as youth exchanges, trainings etc.

He/She will work closely with an experienced staff member of ELIX

Tasks of the volunteer:

-  supporting the organization of international voluntary projects (preparation coordination evaluation)
-  active participation in exhibitions, festivals and awareness campaigns to promote voluntary activities and ERASMUS+ programme (visit school classes, speak about volunteering)
-  supporting everyday function of ELIX office
-  involvement in the organization of 1- 2 day voluntary activities
-  participating in trainings and seminars of ELIX dealing with volunteering and informal learning
-  Cooperation and Communication with partner organizations of ELIX from all over the world
-  Supporting the coordination of international voluntary projects in Athens and in local communities.
-  Supporting the reception of volunteers in Greece (airport pick up, travel assistance)
-  Supporting the designing of European projects
-  Possibility of organizing his/her own voluntary project within the priorities of the organization

Volunteer candidates will have experience with environmental volunteering within their own country and are likely to have undergone placements within their sending organizations. Each volunteer will possess the following:

-  a strong interest in environmental issues and volunteerism
-  the ability to live and work as part of a European team of volunteers
-  an interest in intercultural experiences
-  a commitment to developing links with the communities in which they are placed
-  a commitment to using the experiences and skills gained during the programme to benefit their own community
-  the ability to work in a metropolitan city like Athens and also in isolated and remote villages
-  excellent computer skills (word, excel, outlook, internet)
-  excellent level of English

Candidates will complete an application form through which relevant information about their skills, suitability for the placement and commitment to the environmental, intercultural and community elements of the programme will be gathered.

Applications are open to all, regardless of their ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation or political opinion. We ensure transparency by providing a full description of the selection process to all candidates and by collaborating closely with partner organisations to select volunteers.

Youth with less opportunities, that we will be able to accept are those of financial or/and geographical difficulties and of discriminated culture. Our support will be psychological and consultative in relation to their best integration in an environment as urban and developed, as the city of Athens. For instance, we are going to provide them as much information as possible to make it clear how to move around the city easily, as well as propose options adapted to the volunteers budget. For the reasons mentioned, a mentor will be there to assist them, in case any problems or difficulties occur.

In order to prevent any kind of **crisis**, ELIX believes that the info given during the preparation of the volunteers plays a very important role. The detailed description of the activities, the possibilities for socializing, the accommodation and food and working conditions are very helpful for the volunteers in order to be orientated before their arrival. The volunteer receives a detailed info pack before arrival and a welcome pack upon arrival where she/he can find useful call numbers and emergency numbers as well as info for his/her better integration to the local society. He/She will also fill an evaluation form every month that will work as crisis prevention. Once the volunteer arrives he/she attends a 1 day orientation session in the ELIX office, where among other things he/she becomes aware of all the necessary instructions and measures for risk prevention for his safety in the house (house conditions, fire protection, use of electronic or gas devices etc), transport rules and habits, travelling, health prevention and local everyday life. Regarding the working place, before any assignments are given to the volunteer, we will make sure that he will have received proper training. Also, there will always be a responsible person from the institution in the working place. The volunteer will be provided with mobile numbers of his mentor, the EVS coordinator and the responsible person for the programme. He/she will be able to use these numbers 24 hours /7 days. We consider the best risk prevention to be clear prior definition of roles and tasks of all involved parts.

Things you should consider before applying to an EVS placement:

It is very wise to save some money before coming to Athens. The pocket and food money is decent for EVS, but won't leave you a lot of space to explore Greece. If you really want to enjoy your EVS, explore the country and meet up with other EVS volunteers in other cities we would highly recommend to have some other resources than the basic EVS allowances. Another fact is that your EVS insurance is not paying for any healthcare in advance as long as you are not administered in the hospital. This means that you have to pay in advance for your healthcare and have to wait weeks before MSH is reimbursing the money back to your bank account.

Interested candidates should send their CV and application form fully completed to volunteers@elix.org.gr until 12 September 2014.