European Solidarity Corps (ESC) with SEEDS Iceland

Role: Camp Leader

SEEDS camps encompass different types of projects and they can be:

1. Environmental awareness projects *(all year-round in Reykjavik)*
2. Photography projects *(all year-round in Reykjavik)*
3. Nature conservation or environment protection: removing invasive growth, building of walking paths or hiking trails, cleaning of the coastline, reforestation and erosion control works, etc. *(Summer season only - various locations in Iceland)*
4. Renovation and restoration: construction or renovation of a building, monument or community building, etc. *(Summer season only - various locations in Iceland)*
5. Cultural and sports events: support of festivals, celebrations, sport events, and other gatherings. *(specific events along the year in Reykjavik or other locations)*

All SEEDS camps bring together volunteers from different nationalities and backgrounds, aiming at building up intercultural understanding & encouraging peace while working for an identified need. The multicultural group of volunteers lives together during the duration of the project (1-2 weeks). All projects are provided with housing, full board and transportation.

The responsibilities and role of a camp leader will vary according to the type of project, but the following list gives an idea of what they could normally be responsible for:

* Being SEEDS ambassador and representative on the project sites. Representing SEEDS to the local host/community and to the short-term volunteers.
Helping the short-term volunteers (camp participants) feel comfortable with the project, welcoming and dialogue with them, to establish an empathic relationship, to ensure they do not have avoidable problems, and that they remain happy with the project. **Learning goals:** improve soft skills such as flexibility, empathy, open-mindedness and problem-solving.

Developing activities such as icebreakers, study sessions, workshops, group discussions, role games, practical activities on the field, presentations, exhibitions, different exercises, etc. All those, as mentioned before, oriented to raise awareness, to exchange perspectives and knowledge but also to encourage partakers to become active citizens in the development and shape of the world and environment we live in. **Learning goals:** communication skills, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, teamwork and creativity.

Taking care of the adequate use of resources & supplies in the camps. Part of the volunteer’s task is to help in turning the activities more environmental by suggesting practical actions that should be taken. **Learning goals:** willingness to learn, adopt environmentally-friendly behaviour.

Organising an International evening; which is a social event accompanied by typical dishes prepared by the participants and in some occasions with games and music or short presentations from their countries. Through this, we aim at fostering the cross-cultural side of the projects. **Learning goals:** develop intercultural understanding and cultural awareness

Acting as the link between the participants, the hosting project and SEEDS, trying to ensure that the aims, needs and desires of all three can be compromised to provide the best possible result. **Learning goals:** leadership, adaptability and integrity.

Motivating the group to ensure that they are able to carry out the agreed programme, such as organising the day-to-day schedule and ensuring that everyone is on time. **Learning goals:** time-management and effective communication.

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* Co-ordinating arrangements such as shopping lists, meals and cleaning to ensure that the needs of the short-term volunteers are met and the houses are clean. **Learning goals:** organizational skills and logistic management.

* Ensuring sufficient balanced food and other health and safety considerations of the participants. **Learning goals:** organization and leadership.

**The Camp Leader ESC experience will be chronologically divided in four (4) stages:**

1. **Volunteers arrival.** SEEDS will organise an on-arrival project-specific orientation training. During this time volunteers will be given enough tools and theoretical knowledge combined with practical tasks in order to prepare them for the stay and the activities on the field.

2. When going to lead the camps, volunteers have a “**pilot/test project**” where experienced leaders & ESC volunteers participate; the conditions are similar or the same to those of the regular camps. This aims at building confidence within a comfortable environment (with few short-term volunteers, if any), to experience “in real” how a camp is run, to face possible challenging situations and to try out the tools given in stage 1.

3. **On field work** takes place when the camps are run and implemented. Camps are the most common form of short-term volunteering and are projects where a group of volunteers live and work together on a project which has been identified by SEEDS or a local partner. They generally last between 1 and 2 weeks. During this stage ESC volunteers will be under personal supervision of the organisation and the volunteers will have regular contact and meetings with SEEDS staff.

4. **After the camp season,** an evaluation of their experience will be undertaken. The feedback and input will be used in order to plan next year and to raise the quality of the voluntary service.
Special remarks:

The camps can be very demanding and volunteers will be highly active, which requires a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, self-initiative and ability to work under extreme conditions and moving very often, meeting new people and leaving them after relatively short time.

In our projects with local hosts (Summer season only) SEEDS has a local on-the-site project coordinator, who is running the specific project and who knows the local circumstances at its best. The local on-the-site project coordinator has been informed by SEEDS in the different issues that entail working with international volunteers, as the safety and risk assessment for the project to ensure all quality, learning, and welfare standards of each volunteer. SEEDS signs contracts and written agreements with all of our partners around the country to ensure the quality of the projects and the learning content for the volunteers participating.

The volunteer will work a maximum of 38 hours a week. When leading a project, the volunteer might work during the weekend and get days off during the usual working days, depending on the project’s dates and weather conditions. Volunteers take enough days free (in average 4) after a camp to rest. Volunteers are entitled to 2 days of holidays per every month of service at SEEDS.

Depending on the time available before the next camp to start (variable), the volunteer is expected to spend some days at SEEDS office, preparing some of the following: write a report, upload pictures and answer a feedback questionnaire about the last camp; review the learning plan and work on the personal goals; prepare and develop new ideas for the camps (workshops, activities, games, events, etc.); participate in SEEDS actions (trash clean-up, tree planting, or other); develop an individual project; and/or other random assignments.

Food shopping will be done according to SEEDS standard shopping list, ensuring that every volunteer has a balanced diet.
In the camps happening outside of Reykjavík, the local project host will be in charge of providing food (summer season only).

Volunteers will stay in a shared flat (with max. 4 people per room) in Reykjavík and will return there for the breaks between the camps. They will most likely stay at Miklabraut 40, located close to the center of Reykjavík. In this apartment they can relax during their free time between camps.

While in camps, accommodation is provided also in shared rooms. As volunteers will move from project to project, the accommodation will vary according to the facilities available. SEEDS ensures that hosting conditions meet quality standards, so that volunteers enjoy a good and safe place to live in the camps.

Volunteers are not allowed to host guests, friends or relatives in workcamps or at SEEDS houses. The SEEDS houses are for the use of SEEDS’ current volunteers, interns/trainees and staff.

Domestic transport to the camps and back to the accommodation in Reykjavík will be provided by SEEDS. During the camps in the countryside (summer season only), volunteers stay there for periods of usually 2 weeks and no transport to Reykjavík is available (no matter if they are close to the city as in Mosfellsbaer or far away as Egilsstaðir).

The volunteer will be supported by SEEDS volunteer coordinator and mentor.

Smoking is not allowed in any of SEEDS accommodations. Use of alcohol should be moderate and be done with consideration and only during free time. The use of any kind of illegal drugs is strictly forbidden.

SEEDS does not accept any kind of discrimination in our workcamps and such cases will be strictly dealt with.