

European Solidarity Corps (ESC) with SEEDS Iceland

Role: Environment Camp Leader

Environment Camp Leaders assist the Project Manager in planning, implementing and participating in SEEDS' nature camps and learning camps in Iceland. In addition, they also take part in local social and cultural projects that raise awareness for intercultural cooperation and understanding as well as environmental awareness activities.

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

1. Environmental Awareness Camps (**all year-round in Reykjavík**)
2. Photography, Social & Environmental Issues in Iceland Camps (**all year-round in Reykjavík**)
3. Nature conservation or environment protection including the removal of invasive growth, building footpaths or hiking trails, cleaning the coastline, reforestation and erosion control work etc. (**summer season only - various locations in Iceland**)
4. Renovation and restoration including construction or repair of a building, monument or community building, etc. (**summer season only - various locations in Iceland**)
5. Cultural and sports events including support at festivals, celebrations, sports events and other gatherings (**specific events throughout the year in Reykjavík or other locations**)

All SEEDS camps bring together volunteers from different nationalities and backgrounds, aiming at building up intercultural understanding and encouraging peace while working for an identified need. The multicultural group of volunteers live together for the duration of the project (one-two weeks). All projects are provided with housing, full board and transportation. See further details in the general information section of this document.

The role and responsibilities of an Environment Camp Leader vary depending on the type of project, however, the following list gives an idea of what would normally be involved:

- Being a SEEDS ambassador and representative on project sites. Representing SEEDS within the local host/community and with short-term volunteers (camp participants).
- Helping short-term volunteers feel comfortable with the project, welcoming and communicating with them to establish an empathic relationship, ensure they do not have avoidable problems and 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-play games, practical activities in the field, presentations, exhibitions and different exercises etc. In addition, for photography camps activities include assisting and teaching participants how to improve their photography skills. All activities, as previously mentioned, are intended to raise awareness, exchange perspectives and knowledge but also 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.
- Managing the appropriate use of resources and supplies needed for camps. Part of the volunteers' tasks is to help make 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, this is a social event accompanied by typical dishes prepared by the participants and on occasions with games and music or short presentations from their countries. Through this,

we aim to foster the cross-cultural side of the projects. **Learning goals** - develop intercultural understanding and cultural awareness.

- Acting as a link between the participants, the local hosting project and SEEDS. Trying to ensure 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 they are able to carry out the agreed programme, such as organising the day-to-day schedule and ensuring everyone is on time. **Learning goals** - time management and effective communication.
- Coordinating arrangements such as shopping lists, meals and cleaning to ensure the needs of all volunteers are met and the houses are clean. **Learning goals** - organisational skills and logistics management.
- Ensuring a sufficient balanced diet and other health and safety considerations of the participants are met. **Learning goals** - organisation and leadership.

The ESC experience for the Environment Camp Leader are chronologically divided into the following four stages:

1. **Volunteers' arrival.** SEEDS will organise on-arrival project specific orientation training. During this time volunteers will be given enough tools and theoretical knowledge, combined with practical tasks, to prepare them for their stay and the activities in the field.
2. Prior to leading the camps, volunteers have a **pilot/test project** where experienced leaders and ESC volunteers participate and the Project Manager assists; the conditions are similar or the same to those of the regular camps. This aims to build confidence within a comfortable environment to experience in real time how a camp is run, to face possible challenging situations and to try out the tools given in stage one.
3. **Work in the field** takes place when our projects are running and implemented. This includes cultural or social solidarity activities with local partners, as well as SEEDS' camps. Camps are the most common form of short-term volunteering where a group of volunteers live and work together on a project that has been identified by SEEDS or a local partner. They generally last between one and two weeks. During this time ESC volunteers will be under personal supervision of the organisation and the volunteers will have regular contact and meetings with SEEDS staff.
4. **At the end of the project** an evaluation will be undertaken. The feedback and input will be used to plan the next year and to improve the quality of the voluntary service.

Special remarks

The camps can be physically demanding and volunteers will be highly active. A great deal of energy, enthusiasm, self-initiative and the ability to work under extreme conditions is required as well as a lot of physical work. Volunteers will also meet new people and must learn how to deal with leaving them after a relatively short time.

In our projects with local hosts (**summer season only**) SEEDS has a local on-site project coordinator who runs the specific project, knows and understands local circumstances. The on-site project coordinator is informed by SEEDS of the different issues that entail working with international volunteers as well as the safety and risk assessment for the project to ensure all quality, learning and welfare standards of each volunteer is met. SEEDS sign contracts and written

agreements with all our partners around the country to ensure the quality of the projects and the learning content for the volunteers participating are maintained.

Each volunteer works a maximum of 38 hours a week. When leading a project, the volunteer might work during the weekend and receive days off during the usual working week, depending on the dates of the project and weather conditions. Volunteers take enough free days (on average four) after a camp to rest. Volunteers are entitled to two days holiday per month during their work with SEEDS.

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

General information specific to all volunteers

The following Information is applicable to all volunteers and outlines details relevant to the overall experience rather than specific to a project or workcamp:

- Food is provided for everyone and the shopping is completed according to SEEDS' standard shopping list, ensuring that every volunteer has a balanced diet. During the camps that take place outside of Reykjavík, the local project coordinator will be in charge of providing the food (**summer season only**).
- Volunteers stay in a shared flat (max. four people per room) in Reykjavík and return there between camps. They will most likely stay close to the centre of Reykjavík, where they can relax during their free time.
- While in camps, accommodation is also provided in shared rooms. Every project is different and so the accommodation will vary depending on the facilities available. SEEDS will ensure the hosting conditions meet quality standards so all volunteers enjoy a good and safe place to live during the camps.
- Volunteers are **not allowed** to host guests, friends or relatives in workcamps or at SEEDS' houses as they are for the use of SEEDS' current volunteers, interns, trainees and staff only.
- Domestic transport between camps and the accommodation in Reykjavík will be provided by SEEDS. During the camps in the countryside (**summer season only**) volunteers stay for the duration, usually two weeks, as transport to Reykjavík is not available, this does not matter if the camp is close to the city such as in Mosfellsbær or far away in Egilsstaðir.
- Volunteers will be supported by SEEDS' Project Manager, as well as a local mentor.
- The main language used throughout the project is English. Basic introduction to the Icelandic language will be offered to the volunteers at the beginning of their stay, this is optional.
- Smoking is not allowed in any SEEDS' accommodation. Alcohol should be consumed in moderation, during free time only, and with consideration to others. 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.