

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 Reykjavík)**
2. Photography projects **(all year-round in Reykjavík)**
3. Nature conservation or environment protection including removing invasive growth, building walking paths or hiking trails, cleaning the coastline, reforestation and erosion control works 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 of festivals, celebrations, sport 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 (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 would normally be responsible for:

- Being a 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 communicating with them to establish an empathic relationship, 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 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.
- Taking care of the adequate use of resources and supplies in the camps. Part of the volunteers' task 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 in some 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 the link between the participants, the 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 the short-term volunteers are met and the houses are clean. **Learning goals** - organisational skills and logistic management.
- Ensuring sufficient balanced food and other health and safety considerations of the participants. **Learning goals** - organisation and leadership.

The Camp Leader ESC experience will be chronologically divided in four (4) 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 on the field.
2. Prior to leading the camps, volunteers have a **pilot/test project** where experienced leaders and 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 time 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 running and implemented. Camps are the most common form of short-term volunteering 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 one and two 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. They require a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, self-initiative, the ability to work under extreme conditions and a lot of physical work as well as meeting new people and 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 local 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 of our partners around the country to ensure the quality of the projects and the learning content for the volunteers participating are maintained.

Each 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 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 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 the 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 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. four 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 also provided 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 two weeks and transport to Reykjavík is not available (no matter if they are close to the city such as in Mosfellsbaer or far away in Egilsstaðir).

The volunteer will be supported by SEEDS volunteer coordinator and 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, as optional.

Smoking is not allowed in any of the SEEDS accommodation. The use of alcohol should be moderate and 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.