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PIC: 946486328, OID: E101102580



## **ESC, Volunteering project – Together we shine**

### **Activity description for Volunteering in OKO centre Czechia**

**Project number: 2020-1-CZ01-ESC11-078054 – project is approved!**

**Accreditation no: 2014-1-CZ01-KA110-012656, PIC: 946486328, OID: E10110250**

### **There is some basic information about our project:**

- 1. Main themes are: Education + Intercultural activities + Media and communications/Youth information.** Project is for **2 volunteers from European 2 countries.**
- 2. Date:** a volunteer can start his/her project activity from **Oct. 2020 – for 12 months!**
- 3. Area description: Town Rychnov is often small town** or village for our volunteers, but for some volunteers is Rychnov nice, calm and quiet town **with wonderful country site.** The town itself is small, with around 12,000 inhabitants. It is quiet in the evening and very peaceful with very little crime (if any) and it feels like a very safe place to live. For young people there is a lot of choice of leisure activities for such a small town; with a new swimming pool, gym and exercise complex, ice-rink, cinema, theatre, museum, castle, and nearby there is countryside with lakes, rivers and woods where it is possible to take walks or go cycling, a short bus ride away are the mountains for skiing in the winter...
- 4. Flat:** Accommodation - the volunteer will be offered accommodation in a single room in a shared flat with other volunteers. Kitchen and bathroom will be shared. The rooms and the kitchen are fully furnished and can be used by the volunteer. Usually two volunteers will stay in one flat - each of them will have his/her own room.
- 5. NO Racism.** We have a good experience with our local community. Our people are ready to welcome and accept every motivated volunteer. There are even looking forward to meet volunteers, because they have a good experience with EVS/Volunteering quit long time (we organize Volunteering for 13 years).
- 6. Both sexes are welcome!** We are able to accept a male and a female, too.

***Our project is varied and we would like to cooperate with volunteers who are creative, open and willing to work independently. We offer possibility of personal growth and you can use your ideas, thoughts and abilities.***

**Video about volunteering in OKO centre:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFkYGVEmpWk&feature=youtu.be>

**Our project description on-line:** <http://oko-centrum.cz/dospeli-evs-european-voluntary-service-in-oko/>

It is also possible to say, the project is suitable for future teachers, youth leaders or young people, whose enjoy or would like to try teaching and intercultural activities. It is very important also to know, that about 60% of volunteering tasks are activities with children or youngsters.

### **Volunteers will take part in these activities during the project:**

#### **Exhibition**

Every two months volunteers prepare an exposition for the town hall; these are based around specific topics. This activity is comprised of creation of posters, pictures, drawings and small written texts. Each volunteer is free to prepare his/her posters in a personal and creative style.

The topic of the exhibition is usually up to volunteers but these are also depending on the season; for instance we have had themes including: The European Day of Languages, Halloween, Volunteering, Youth in Europe,

ecology and Christmas and Easter traditions. As the exhibition opens the volunteers will take part in open days, presenting the exposition with games and activities for the children's classes coming to visit with their teachers.

Activities take place in the English language, and are connected with the topic of the exhibition: they can be small games, drawings, or speaking tasks to actively engage with the pupils, and challenge them to use their English. Age ranges vary, the youngest groups being around 5-6 years and the oldest around 14-15 years, so it important to be prepared with appropriate activities for their levels of understanding.



## Bulletin

The volunteers will write a number of "bulletins", a small and informative magazine of four or six pages in A5 format. The bulletin is about different topics, which are usually connected with the exposition's topics or intercultural issues. Volunteers can take pictures; write articles, interviews, reports, and so on, depending on the creativity of the volunteer.

Sometimes we create 'special editions' for children, with games and short stories (for Christmas, for example). We have it in English, German and Spanish or in Russian, French. It is not simply a translation of the same articles in different languages as each volunteer is responsible to communicate the cultural traditions of their original language and country, representing and respecting cultural differences also through languages.

## Updating web pages (volunteers' blog)

The volunteers' blog is an opportunity for the volunteers to write about the activities they are currently organizing, share experiences, showcase their achievements and involve more people in the work. It also may include making some advertising, and evaluation of the results of the activities they have already done.

We use blogger.com to create the sites, the volunteers can also decide on the design and content of their own blogs, use it to keep their participants of their conversation club updated with the topics they are following in classes or publish useful or interesting information from their countries, for example news, articles, music, videos or pictures.

Each volunteer keeps their own blog in their own language, and these must be updated weekly. There is also a collective volunteering's blog that everyone should contribute to. The aim of the blog is to get in touch with more people, especially youngsters.

## English/German/French/Spanish/Russian conversation clubs

The conversation clubs are an independent responsibility for each volunteer; it is up to them to tailor the experience for their own participants. It is typical to begin with an introduction of themselves and their country, but then they are free to organize the club as they wish; it could be with informal discussion, games, role play, listening and speaking activities, reading, or topical discussions, e.g. politics, culture, environment, media.

These clubs will give the individual a lot of experience to work on personal abilities, such as patience, flexibility, confidence, speaking in front of a group etc. English clubs are the most frequent, being 3-4 times a week; Spanish/French/German/Russian courses can expect to be 1-2 times per week, and each club lasts between 1/1.5 hours.

## Teaching assistance in English/French/German/Spanish/Russian courses

OKO is a language school that organizes language courses for children, youngsters and adults. The languages that are taught are English, German, French, Russian and Spanish. The centre has several courses for different levels: beginners, intermediate, advanced and so on.

There are about 5-8 students in each course, so groups are usually small with a familiar atmosphere. The volunteers will occasionally take part in these lessons and their task is to prepare some activities in order to help encourage the students to get speaking the foreign languages. Usually the teacher will ask the volunteer to prepare for a specific topic (it is also possible that the teacher helps with preparation of the lesson).

The teacher will usually be the classroom with the volunteer during the lesson, to help and translate when there are some communication problems. The lessons are mostly about informal conversation. The volunteer is usually free to choose the methods (power point presentation, games, questions...).

## Interaction with the Public

English is Europe's (and the world's!) international language and our aim is to help participants understand how important it is to learn so that we can communicate without learning all 25 official languages in the European Union.



The volunteers will occasionally prepare open days or presentations/ workshops for the general public; these projects vary from year to year but have included intercultural events where we present our own countries and traditions, with lessons about Germany, England, Georgia and Spain; or an educational presentation about the volunteering; or information days for the unemployed, with advice on interview skills in the English language.

Volunteers also visit some state secondary schools in Rychnov nad Kneznou or the surrounding area. Meetings are usually with the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> class and the pupils are aged between 11 and 14 years old. The task will be to prepare an activity (usually suggested by the teachers) to encourage the students; this will be 2-4 times per year.

## Intercultural evening

The Intercultural Evening is the biggest event of its kind in the region, and it takes place once a year in Rychnov. The volunteers will give a presentation where they have the opportunity to talk about their native country and share information about their culture with the general public, OKO and its partners. The demonstration is followed by typical food and drink from the different countries (usually prepared by the volunteers) along with informal discussion. It is then up to the volunteers to design the activities for the evening, which could include games or quizzes. The local people will gain an insight into the different cultures in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

## Actions for children (Bambiriada, Open day)

The biggest action for children is Bambiriada. It consists of two days, during which all the organizations working with children and youth in the area have the chance to present their work. It is usually held in May, in Rychnov's town park, but in case of bad weather it is held in the town hall. Each association has a space where they will prepare games or make some handicrafts with children, as they make their way around the event.

## Summer camps

Each year OKO organizes a summer camp for children aged from 9 to 16. The camp is held in the giant mountains during July or August. This is a chance for the children to practice the English skills they have learnt in school in a more relaxed, fun and social environment.

They will take part in some English lessons prepared by their Czech teachers during the mornings here, but in the afternoon and evening there will be leisure activities. It is up to the volunteers to prepare these activities, and they



could include physical challenges such as going for a walk outdoors, making a treasure hunt, competitions and campfires; as well as indoor games such as handicrafts and a disco in case of bad weather.

### Decoration and tidying

Volunteers usually tidy up their own office and OKO rooms once a week. We also prepare some decorations for Easter or Christmas, like coloured eggs and paper flowers, posters, the Christmas tree etc, so brightening up the hallway and offices for the visitors.

## What else can you do in/next to this project?

### What are the projects in OKO?



OKO will be organising two summer camps later this year for students, as well as a youth exchange.

As part of the project so far, the volunteers have prepared three exhibitions that have been displayed in the town hall in Rychnov. The themes have been Halloween, Christmas and currently Famous Persons. Preparing the activities and events to accompany the work has been interesting, and all the children that visited had fun and found out some new information about different cultures and traditions in other countries.

In the coming months there will be more exhibitions to visit, including a special creative project over the summer where the volunteers will take an outside view of the Czech Republic and interpret their experiences.

As part of the ongoing work to encourage young people and adults to learn a new language, preparation is underway for OKO's Intercultural Evening. This event is an opportunity for the public to engage with people from different countries in a celebration of culture, with the aim to involve and educate each participant. The volunteers will give a presentation demonstrating their nations' traditions and customs, which will be followed by a chance to try foreign cuisine and informal discussions. It will be the largest event of its kind in the region and we are very excited to be presenting such an occasion.



**visit our blogs for more info!**

EVS blog: [evsoko.blogspot.com](http://evsoko.blogspot.com)

Annabel: [okoenglishclub.blogspot.com](http://okoenglishclub.blogspot.com)  
Alberto: [clubspanishoko.blogspot.com](http://clubspanishoko.blogspot.com)  
Elise: [club-francais-oko.blogspot.com](http://club-francais-oko.blogspot.com)  
Hannah: [deutschclub-hannah.blogspot.com](http://deutschclub-hannah.blogspot.com)

Photo gallery: [picasaweb.google.com/evs.oko](http://picasaweb.google.com/evs.oko)



### Self-initiated activities

Depending on the volunteers' initiative, talents or specialities it is up to them to present new ideas for what they might like to do beside their regular work. For example there has been a cinema club, where participants can watch a film in another language then as a group discuss the topics; software tuition in English where students learn to use Photoshop or build a website; or participation in children's clubs to teach the first words in another language.

As every year there will be another group of volunteers in OKO centre, it could be possible to co-operate with them to design another project or discuss existing ideas.

**If you still need more information about our project or our organization, don't hesitate and contact us:**

**[info@oko-centrum.cz](mailto:info@oko-centrum.cz),  
skype: [jitkaoko](https://www.skype.com/jitkaoko)**



**Jitka Bartosova**  
head of OKO centre

**Thank you and look forward to working together!** 😊