EVS
European Voluntary Service
What is EVS?

European Voluntary Service (EVS) – Action 2 of the Youth in Action Programme

Offers young people the opportunity to volunteer for up to one year internationally on projects run by approved organisations, known as hosting organisations.
Why EVS?

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) provides young Europeans with the unique chance to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country within or outside the EU.

In this way, it seeks to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus contributing to reinforcing social cohesion in the European Union and to promoting young people’s active citizenship,
EVS is *not*

- A job or an internship,
- Nor a work placement,
- A humanitarian mission,
- A language course or,
- A holiday period.
Key Background Terms

- European Commission
- Youth in Action
  - Youth in Action is the EU programme for young people aged 15–30. It aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union’s future.
  - Youth in Action is a programme for all! It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their education, social and cultural background.
Who is Who?

- National Agency – Léargas
  - They support EVS volunteers and can help answer any questions.

- Sending Organisations – ALIVE, NUI Galway
  - We help you apply for EVS

- Hosting organisation
  - The hosts are the organisation you apply to and engage you in volunteering.

- Coordinating Organisation
  - They arrange for the funding for your EVS.
About Léargas

Léargas is a not-for-profit organisation that operates under the aegis of the Department of Education and Science. Léargas works on behalf of the Department to manage European, national and international exchange and cooperation programmes in education, training and youth and community work. Léargas has been managing such programmes for over 20 years.
Welcome to Léargas, the National Agency in Ireland for the management of national and international exchange and cooperation programmes in education, youth and community work, and vocational education and training.

This website contains information about all of the programmes we manage.

If you are seeking information about a particular programme, please:
  - select it from the Programmes drop-down list below and click Go, or
  - click Programmes in the menu above and choose the programme, or
  - click here and choose the programme.

If you are not sure which programme is appropriate for you, please:
  - use the Opportunities drop-down lists below to filter your choices, based on where you work/study, your interests and your age, and then click Go.
How EVS works

Volunteer

Sending Organisation – sends the volunteer (ALIVE, NUI Galway)

Coordinating Organisation
- coordinates travel, payment, insurance etc.

Hosting organisation
- where the volunteer is placed
Where can EVS take place?

- **Programme Countries**
  
  27 Member States of the EU
  Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

- **EFTA Countries**
  Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway

- **Candidate Countries**
  Turkey
What type of Activities?

- The European Voluntary Service spans a wide range of areas, such as:

  - Culture, youth, sports, social care, cultural heritage, the arts, civil protection, the environment, development co-operation etc.

- One thing all the activities have in common is a clear European and intercultural learning dimension.
Duration of EVS

- **Individual**
  - Anywhere from 2 months minimum to 12 months
  - 12 months is the maximum

- **Group**
  - 2 weeks to 1 month

*You only get to do EVS once!*
EVS funding includes the following:

- 90% of travel costs
- Hosting organisation to cover living expenses of the volunteer (e.g. food, accommodation, local transport)
- A monthly allowance for volunteers (This varies by the Host country)
- Exceptional costs for volunteers with special needs
Who can Apply?

- EVS is open to young people aged between 18 and 30 years.

- This means that volunteers have to be between 18 and 30 years old at the beginning of their voluntary activity.
The EVS Journey

- **Step 1 – Personal Reflection**
  - What do I want to participate in? What do I want to learn?

- **Step 2 – Meet your Sending Organisation**
  - NUI Galway students meet with ALIVE – your sending organisation to get more information.

- **Step 3 – Find a Hosting Organisation**
  - Search the database of opportunities and apply with an Expression of Interest Letter and CV.

- **Step 4 – Once the application is approved, get ready to go with pre-departure training.**

- **Step 5 – While you are there, keep in touch with ALIVE.**

- **Step 6 – When you return, tell others about your experience.**
Appling for EVS Step 1: Personal Reflection

- What are your motivations?
- What are your expectations?
- How will EVS meet your expectations?

First, ask yourself a few questions:
- What is your personal motivation? Meeting new and different people may be part of your motivation.
- What is the area in which you want to commit yourself?
- We all have are personal interests... Be realistic and truthful to yourself. It is the best way to get to a successful experience.
- For how long are you ready to commit yourself in an EVS project, including the search for a project, the preparation, the administration, the training, the service, the follow-up?
Co-operate closely with your Sending Organisation (ALIVE) in order to develop details of your individual projects. Start contacting potential Host Organisations through your Sending Organisation. Bear in mind that EVS is huge – with thousands of potential Host Organisation in different areas.
Step 3: Host Organisations – Applying

- Where do I get contact details of Hosting Organisation?

Contact details of potential Hosting Organisations are available in the two project databases:

- The European Commission database
- Youthnetworks
http://www.youthnetworks.eu/
- Links are available at www.nuigalway.ie/alive
Database

http://europa.eu/youth/evs_database

The European database on EVS accredited organisations

All organisations located in Programme Countries and South East Europe that are interested in sending or hosting EVS volunteers, or in coordinating an EVS project need first to be accredited. Accreditation is given on the basis of an Expression of Interest submitted to National Agencies or SALTO South East Europe (for details on the accreditation process, please refer to the Youth in Action Programme Guide.

This database contains information on all the organisations that are accredited for EVS. Each organisation is presented through a short description, its motivation and EVS experience, the themes of work and contact details. It also informs if the organisation offers possibilities for young people with fewer opportunities.

In addition, for all accredited host organisations, you find a description of the project environment, activities and volunteer profiles.

You can enter the database by selecting or combining...

Your search...

Country
Town
Type of accreditation
Theme
Inclusion
Approval Date
Short/Long Term
EI Ref
EI title/contents
Organisation name

Submit Query
How to search the Database

- Narrow down your interests
- Read everything
- Read what is not there
- Apply for several – to keep your options open
- Be patient – it takes time for people to respond
- Persevere in your search

The key is not to find any placement but the placement that corresponds to your interests and is ready to host you within the time limit you have. Keep in mind that preparing an EVS project takes time, both at administrative, organisational and personal level. Therefore, plan ahead, try to think of everything, stay motivated and it will work out for you!
How to Apply

- If you find a few Host Organisations on the databases that interest you.
- Email them directly with a Motivation letter – outlining your reasons for choosing them, and why you would make a good volunteer.
- ALIVE can help you with your motivation letter.
- Attached your CV also to the email.
When can I apply for my project and when can I start?

- In most cases, once you have found a project that you would like to volunteer with and they have agreed to host you, they will apply to their National Agency for the funding.

There are five **deadlines** each year and, if approved, you can start to volunteer three months after each deadline. For example, if you want to start your placement in December then you will have to apply by 01 September.

This means that you should begin to plan your EVS project as early as possible so that you have the best chance of being accepted by an organisation that you are interested in.
Deadlines

- 1 February, for projects starting between 1 May and 30 September 2014
- 1 April, for projects starting between 1 July and 30 November 2014
- 1 June, for projects starting between 1 September 2014 and 31 January 2015
- 1 September, for projects starting between 1 December 2013 and 30 April 2015
- 1 November, for projects starting between 1 February and 31 July 2015
Application Timing

- When can I be sure that I will go?
  - Either your sending or hosting organisations will apply for the funding for your project to the national agency in their respective country.

- This will need to be approved before the project can take place. This decision will be made by a grants committee approximately six weeks after each deadline. Only then can you be sure that the project can take place.
Once your application is approved... with your Sending Organisation arrangements will be made for:

- Training
- Insurance
- Preparation
- Communication with your Host Organisation
  - Food, what to expect, what to bring, accommodation
- Travel arrangements
Getting ready to leave...

Ready to go? Found a project? It’s only the start!

- Get in touch with ex-volunteers associations. They can help you to get a better idea of the development of a project, what to expect or not to better prepare yourself.
- Participate in the necessary pre-departure training (generally organised by the National Agency). It is a good opportunity to meet other volunteers ready to start their service.
- Gather as much information as you can about the country you are going to. Initiate personal contacts in your Host Organisation. Keep on asking questions...
Step 5: While volunteering...

- Training
- Experience
- Communication with Sending and Hosting
  - What is going well, where do you need help etc.
- Mentor
  - Your Host Organisation will nominate a personal Mentor for you. It is very helpful to have somebody nearby, with a good understanding of your situation and ready to give personal advice and support.

- Keep a Journal–Blog
- Reflect on your learning

Your Sending Organisation (Alive) is still here to support and help you all along your EVS project.

And, last but not least...Enjoy your EVS!
Don’t worry if you are new to French, Italian etc. Language Training is a valuable part of the EVS experience.

Do I need to know the language of my host country?
- The selection of volunteers should not be made according to language skills, unless a basic knowledge is needed for a specific task. Language training can be provided during the EVS in order to ensure the volunteer’s integration.

Are the language courses compulsory?
- The hosting organisation is responsible for the linguistic support of EVS volunteers, where it is necessary. Linguistic support should be appropriate to the volunteer’s needs and level but the type of support provided can vary from formal language classes to more informal learning methods. This support is based on helping the volunteer attain a working knowledge of the language so that s/he can carry out EVS duties, rather than aiming for language fluency.
Will I get any training during my EVS project?

- Sending and hosting organisations jointly assure the participation of their volunteers in a series of training events during an EVS project: pre-departure training, on-arrival training, mid-term evaluation and, if possible, a final evaluation session. Each type of training addresses several issues that are useful or necessary to deal with before and during the service period. Typically the training includes:

- Basics of social engagement and voluntary work
- Intercultural learning
- Conflict resolution
- Group dynamics
- Rights and responsibilities etc.
Step 6: After volunteering through EVS...

- **Youth Pass**
  - All volunteers who have completed their EVS project are entitled to receive a Youthpass. The Youthpass Certificate is awarded by the European Commission and ensures that the voluntary activity is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning. They achievement report is filled in jointly by the volunteer and the Host or Coordinating Organisation and handed over to the volunteer directly at the end of the Service.

- **Dissemination of experience**
  - Spreading the word about EVS
  - Offering information and support to fellow volunteers
  - Why not make a video about your EVS?
Is it possible to prolong a project? Unfortunately, it is not possible to prolong an EVS project.

So for example, if you apply and get approved for 5 months in a French organisation, you can not extend this.
EVS and NUI Galway

- Unique opportunity for NUI Galway students
- ALIVE is NUI Galway Sending Organisation
What is ALIVE?

- NUI Galway Volunteer programme
- Volunteer opportunities Locally and Internationally
- ALIVE Certificate awarded by the President
Contact

ALIVE Office
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www.nuigalwya.ie/alive
http://www.leargas.ie/

Visit ALIVE in the Hub, Aras na Mac Leinn