

Volunteer in Germany

Voluntary Service in Germany

Information for applicants for a voluntary service in Germany

To stay one year as a volunteer in Germany, work in a curative education centre, live together with the people there and doing so gain experiences, in short: to complete a voluntary service. This opportunity is offered through the international voluntary service scheme of the association Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V. (Friends of Waldorf Education).

People from all over the world are invited to apply for a voluntary service in Germany, which is provided by the Friends of Waldorf Education.

The volunteers work as co-workers in a curative education center or a institution for social therapy and share the life with the community, since they are usually accommodated within the institution during their voluntary year.

The voluntary service is intended to be a combination of learning and helping. We recognise the volunteers as learners within a new cultural and work context. Thus the voluntary service is a form of intercultural exchange and contact with the unknown. At the same time the volunteers valuably contribute through their personality and voluntary work to the life of their host organisation.

Organisation and Assistance

The voluntary service is organised and assisted through the association Friends of Waldorf Education. Our association aims to support initiatives that work on the base of waldorf pedagogy and anthroposophy all over the world. One way we do this is to enable international voluntary services.

As responsible institution for the voluntary service, the Friends of Waldorf Education coordinate the formalities regarding the service, ranging from insurance matters to help during the process of visa and work permit application. We inform and consult applicants and assist the volunteers and host organisations during their stay. The Friends of Waldorf Education provide lectures and seminars for the volunteers after arrival, during the service and at the end of their stay in Germany. Our role is also to mediate in cases of conflict or crisis.

Host Organisations

The volunteers work during their voluntary service in a social non-profit institution, which we call host organisation. At the moment almost all of our host organisations are in the field of curative education and social therapy. The tasks of the volunteers are according to this related to the needs of people which are disabled respectively in need of special care.

All host organisations within our voluntary service scheme work on the basis of anthroposophy. Many

of them are located in a rural environment.

Normally they are organised as communities where the employees live together with the cared-for persons and arrange their everyday life together. The volunteers are likewise integrated into the life of their host organisation. More about anthroposophical curative education and social therapy as well as the life and work within our host organisations is explained here. Another insight is provided at the homepage of the international 'Curative Education and Social Therapy Council'.

Conditions of Participation

The voluntary services within the international voluntary service scheme of the Friends of Waldorf Education are in principle open to all people whose permanent residence is located outside of Germany and who are willing to engage with mutual differences, to gain experiences, learn during their service and who bring along a strong motivation for voluntary work and are ready to share their life in a curative education or social therapy institution. A special education or other formal qualifications are not required. It does not matter whether someone has just finished school, completed a university study, a vocational training or is already has been employed for a longer time.

The minimum age for participants of the voluntary service is 18 years. An age limit does not exist.

Experience shows that the ability to communicate in German is an important condition for the success of the voluntary service. A basic knowledge of German is normally a precondition. The requirements differ according to the host organisation. In addition the willingness to improve one's knowledge of the German language before and during the voluntary service is assumed.

Interested people are asked to consider intensively the consequences of living abroad for a longer time in a unknown culture, to stay at a social institution together with people who are disabled respectively in need of special care and doing so face new ways of working, living and thinking. Every applicant should thoroughly read the leaflet about life and work in anthroposophic social therapy and curative education institutions.

As well we recommend to all applicants, who so far have not experienced curative educational or social therapeutical work to attend a short visit and work experience (e.g. 1-3 days) at a curative education or social therapy institution in their home country. This will help them to make a better decision on whether this is the suitable work for them. The 'Friends of Waldorf Education' can assist by providing contact addresses of appropriate institutions.

Timeframe

The voluntary service always starts in August or September. One week of on-arrival orientation seminar is followed by a 12-month stay in the host organisation. Added has to be the time of personal preparation for the voluntary service before the entry to Germany.

In general the voluntary service lasts one year, as explained above. People older than 30 years, who are employed or restricted due to their family situation can as well apply for a 6-month-voluntary service. Start of the voluntary service is in this case either late August or the beginning of March.

Benefits and Costs

The volunteers receive during their service the following benefits:

- an personal allowance of at least 150 € per month
- free board and lodging, normally at the host organisation
- free health, accident and third party liability insurance
- accompanying seminars after their arrival, during their service and at the end of their stay
- help and assistance from the Friends of Waldorf Education

There is no participation fee. However travel costs and visa costs have to be paid by the volunteer himself. One possibility to raise funds to cover the costs for ones own contribution is to ask other people (friends, relatives, politicians, local firms etc.) to donate a small sum and build up a group of donators this way. The Friends of Waldorf Education can assist with consultation and suggestions.

Application

If you want to apply for a voluntary service in Germany please download our application form and sent it best via E-Mail back to us, together with your Curriculum Vitae/resume and a photo of you.

We appreciate early applications. There are several selection rounds. The deadlines for the following selection rounds are:

- 1st February 2007
- 1st March 2007
- 1st April 2007

Application form can be downloaded at www.freunde-waldorf.de

Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding the voluntary service please contact us, best by E-Mail or telephone.

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