



“Solidarity, yes we can”

—EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS(ESC)



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Arrouquelas

Arrouquelas is a parish of the municipality of Rio Maior, with 27.81 km² and 850 inhabitants (2001). Density: 21.9 inhabitants/km². Our cultural heritage is the Mother Church, the Clock of the Sun and a Fountain of the Church. Our village is a small community where people are close to each other. H2O” is located in Arrouquelas, near the city of Rio Maior,

where we have a Library, a Theater, a Cinema, A Soccer Stadium, Restaurants, Shopping Center, Garden, Health Center and Clinics. Arrouquelas is at a distance of 30 km from Santarém, where we have a Hospital, University, Shopping centers and other services. Our village is also 80 km from Lisbon.

Public transportation is not so good. There’s no direct busses to Lisbon from Arrouquelas, so if you want to go there at first you need to come to Rio Maior or Santarém and to take a shuttle from there to Lisbon. During working days there few buses per day to and from Rio Maior and Santarém, but there’s no buses to and from Rio Maior and Santarém from Arrouquelas on weekends.

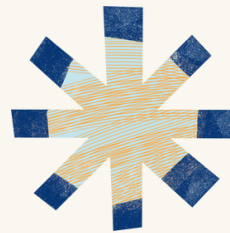
Coordinating organization

“H2O” – Associação de Jovens de Arroquelas

ESC (European Solidarity Corps, a program co-financed by the European Union (https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en). Since 2012, “H2O” has embraced this project, being an organization accredited at European level to coordinate volunteer project, receive and send volunteers. This project has a great importance for the organization, the young people and the community

Strategy “H2O” is based on the voluntary and committed work of its young people, using group dynamics to promote the communication between peers and acquisition of competences, for the social development of their community and personal formation of each one. We value teamwork with an attitude of accountability, and openness to innovation, without dogmas or preconceived ideas with respect for cultural diversity and fostering European awareness. We intend to develop local, regional and international initiatives with the active participation of young people.

Mission of “H2O” is to create forms of participation and communication of young people through the promotion of pedagogical projects at the local, regional and international level, based on non-formal education, creativity, innovation and irreverence characteristic of youth, promoting citizenship habits that accompany the development of young people.



Work camps



Adventure



- Special Education Center "O Ninho", Regional institution to support young people and adults with mental disabilities;
<https://www.facebook.com/ceeoninho.rio.maior>
- Fernando Casimiro School, School center frequented by the children of Arroquelas and other neighbour villages;
<https://www.facebook.com/associacaofernandocasimiro>
- Continuous Care Unit of Arroquelas "Naturidade" that supports people in their medical rehabilitation
<https://www.facebook.com/naturidade>
- Sociedade de São Vicente de Paulo that helps needy families in acquiring assets
<https://www.facebook.com/scvpferragudo>
- Agrupamento de Escolas Marinhas do Sal is another school center frequented by the children of Arroquelas and other neighbour villages
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063710126847>
- Patinhas de Rua - Associação Riomaioense de Protecção à Fauna e Flora is a volunteer association helps to street animals, take care of them and helps to find a new owner
<https://www.facebook.com/patinhasderuariomaior>

Description of the project and main activities

This is a **long-term project** that can last maximum 12 months and we intend to receive volunteers from different countries. During this time we will also have participants short term projects. Participants must be over 18 years old and the official language of the project will be English and Portuguese. Participants will learn Portuguese according to their motivation

The aim of this project is to give them the opportunity to get to know our country, our culture and our work. Volunteers will live in our local community helping children and trying to integrate them with the elderly population. Volunteers need to be prepared to team up with the "H2O" volunteers in all the work our organization does, both on a practical and logistical level. In Arrouquelas the population is mostly elderly, so we want volunteers to create a greater interaction between the young people and these people.

In general this project has as main objective the communication and the Education, because they will create various forms of communication between the association and our young people. In "H2O" all the members of the board are volunteers, so we have a characteristic way of working, but above all there are no limits to motivation and creativity. We intend to use non-formal education methods.



Volunteers should be able to promote the ESC program and represent the National Agency and "H2O" in the various events we participate in, such as exhibitions, newspaper interviews, TV and radio.



The volunteers will be divided into different work camps and the "H2O".

-At "H2O" they will take care of children after school hours, developing stimulating and creative activities. They will also create activities, trainings and workshops for young people in general and will learn and assist in the association's administrative work.

-They will develop an educational project of social inclusion in a Social Institution in the city of Rio Maior - "O Ninho" Special education center for people with mental problems. The users carry out educational, manual, artistic, agricultural, sports, handicrafts and other types of games. We intend that the volunteers integrate these activities and that they can develop other projects of their own that promote a greater interaction between our association and "O Ninho".

-Another field of work is the "Naturidade" - Continued Care Unit in Arroquelas, which supports the users in their rehabilitation, where the purpose of volunteering is to perform games, parties, conversations and activities that improve their self-esteem.

-There are also two other institutions where volunteers will do activities, the Fernando Casimiro Pereira da Silva school and Poeta Ruy Belo, giving support to leisure activities and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, where volunteers will provide support in the distribution of food and essential goods to Families in the Rio Maior region.

-Project "Rio Maior Refood" This is a social project developed in partnership with the "H2O" and the Conference of St. Anthony of Rio Maior - Sociedade São Vicente de Paulo, and its senior volunteers. The project focuses on working together on an intercultural and intergenerational linkage of the volunteers involved, where the tasks are focused on the daily food collection and distribution of the same to the poor population of the county of Rio Maior.



Observation



discover

Planning is carried out during the week or every week, always agreed with the volunteers. In addition to this typical program, there may be days when volunteers can present their own projects to be developed with the target group.

Short-term or long-term projects, for example, theater or choreography. Portuguese language courses - OLS (online language support provided by the program). We also provide additional support: Portuguese language training by local volunteers (basic level); depending on the season, the school in Rio Mayor can provide official Portuguese lessons outside of working hours with a certificate of Portuguese language level at the end of the course, but only on one condition - if the volunteers attend all the lessons of the course.

Events at H2O take place during school holidays and weekends, usually in the evening or at night. This schedule is consistent with the voluntary nature of our organization, which involves placing participants after school or work hours. Volunteers can join weekend activities if they agree, and they also have the option to participate on weekdays.

H2O offers activities for children and youth after school, known as ATL (After School Time). ESC volunteers can participate in the planning and organization of the association's activities if they demonstrate competence and willingness to participate in the association's dynamics. This involvement allows young volunteers to explore different areas of activity and establish close links with youth associations and their organizational structures. "H2O" stands out for its unique approach, where leadership is entirely based on volunteers.



We believe that being a long-term project is essential to break free from routines. Given the demanding nature of working with individuals with mental illnesses, this alternative approach has been highly valued. Furthermore, the dynamics of this project serve as a means to connect with the local community and reach a large number of people in a region where nothing similar has ever been attempted. It is intended to set a precedent and serve as an example for future endeavors.



Role of the volunteer



Volunteers will play an active role within the host organization. They should be prepared to collaborate on socio-cultural and sporting activities alongside the young volunteers of our association, as well as develop their own projects and activities. From the very beginning, the volunteer will receive personalized support.

The project follows a structured plan, but we are also completely open to any ideas that may emerge before or during the project. We are flexible in aligning the volunteers' motivations with our reality to ensure they have the best possible experience and gain diverse perspectives. Additionally, it's essential for the volunteer to engage in weekly project evaluations with their mentor and coordinator. They are also encouraged to contribute articles for our social media, where they can express and share their experiences with other young people and the wider public. We anticipate that ESC participants will be responsible and creative, bringing positivity to our organization and enhancing the work we do within our community and region.

explore



Volunteers are expected to return to their countries at the end of the project, thoroughly satisfied, having acquired a much deeper understanding of a different culture and new skills they did not possess before. New connections may be forged between the volunteers and the local population, possibly maintained over time, as previous experiences have demonstrated. It is hoped that the local community will similarly be influenced, potentially sparking new interests, such as foreign language learning. Local youth also receive a message of borderless volunteering and activism in the field of nature conservation, increasing their curiosity about similar activities and programs, often incorporating them into their lives, where they previously may not have been involved.

The main expected results of the activity include raising awareness of cultural diversity among different communities, including children, youth, and adults, both in rural and urban areas. Additionally, the project has a positive impact by promoting active participation, aligning with what the Youth Pass/ESC program proposes.

The project will also yield positive outcomes for ESC, as well as the communities, employees, and other volunteers involved. The ESC volunteer will develop additional competencies, while the association will expand its scope of work through intensified dialogue and other actions.

The target audience of "H2O," which includes elementary school students and the rural population, will benefit from engaging in projects centered on volunteer culture and cultural differences.

These projects serve as a small window to another part of the world, which is not always easy to access. Through their involvement with the organization and interaction with volunteers, they will continually learn about the lives of people in Portugal and, in turn, share information about their own cultures and developing countries.

Interpersonal and social skills



Practical arrangements



Working conditions:

"H2O" provides volunteers with a workspace that includes the space of the association's headquarters with activity rooms, an office, materials and equipment that will be the responsibility of the volunteers, as well as the space security (alarm code). 2 computers, Sound and Television, Internet, Office Supplies.

Other kind of support:

Volunteers will be supported by the mentor and young leaders of the association, who will help them with everything, even if they want to talk about a personal problem.



Accommodation, food and pocket money (life conditions of the volunteers)



The volunteers will be staying in the village of Arroquelas, in a rented house. We ask the volunteers to be responsible and careful. The house has a kitchen, 5 bedrooms (shared rooms, separated by gender), a living room with fireplace, 3 bathrooms, 4 multifunctional spaces and a patio with annex. All materials such as dishes, cutlery, towels, sheets and blankets are provided by "H2O". The kitchen is fully equipped, and the volunteers will have to share it and be able to cook for themselves.

The volunteers are responsible for taking care of the house, farm, that located behind the house, garden and the headquarters of the association, as well as their cleaning and hygiene, always with an ecological attitude. The separation of the garbage is fundamental in the house, to promote the recycling. Volunteers have access to the internet at home or at the "H2O" headquarters, but there are also other places in Arroquelas where participants can enjoy the internet

We will provide transportation to the work camps, outside of the village. We provide the food money or we go with the participants to the hypermarket or the local grocery store to get the necessary products. Anyway, when they buy food they should pay attention and buy the most economical products. Some meals can be made at work camp institutions. For each month of ESC, the host organization gives pocket and food money to each volunteer, according to the financial statement of the Erasmus+ program.



European Solidarity Corps

THE OBJECTIVE IS TO DEVELOP SOLIDARITY AND PROMOTE ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP, AS WELL AS A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE

This service promotes solidarity among young people in a true "learning service". In addition to bringing benefits to local communities, volunteers acquire new skills and learn new languages as well as discover new cultures. The principles and practices of non-formal learning should be presented throughout the project. An ESC project should affect a wide variety of areas such as culture, youth, sport, social work, cultural heritage, art, civil protection, environment and development cooperation. High-risk interventions in immediate post-crisis situations (e.g. humanitarian aid, immediate disaster relief) are excluded. This project is designed to implement one or more ESC activities.

Benefits of participating in ESC :

Meet new people and make friends; Contact with another culture; Make volunteers more autonomous and independent; Learning a new language; Improving skills and acquiring experiences.

What ESC is not :

Occasional, unstructured and part-time volunteering; An internship in a company; Paid employment; Replacement of a job; A tourist or recreational activity; A language course; Exploitation of cheap labor; Period of study or professional training abroad.







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