

Tallinna Laagna Kindergarten-Primary School



ORGANISATION DESCRIPTION

Tallinna Laagna Lasteaed-Põhikool combines kindergarten and elementary school. Our aim is to provide education for disabled children and teach them social skills so that they will be able to manage on their own in their future lives. We give opportunity for children's development providing secure, joyful, comfortable atmosphere and using individual approach to every child.

Our target group consists of 36 school children with special needs, aged from 7 to 17 years old. Our regular activities include lessons in accordance with compulsory educational programmes, followed by different activities provided by teachers, therapists and others. Children usually stay at school until 6 p.m. After obligatory classes they have rest, lunch break and optional leisure activities, including indoor and outdoor games; after that they usually do their homework with the help of teachers on duty and then go home.

PROJECT CONTEXT

The project takes place in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia (www.tallinn.ee). Tallinna Laagna Lasteaed-Põhikool is located in Lasnamäe, which is one of the residential areas of Tallinn. Local residents belong to middle-class with average level of income. Geographically the school is conveniently located with the city centre: it takes about 10 minutes to reach it by bus.



PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

The experience in our organisation will help the volunteer to acquire different social skills such as dealing with disabled children, learn more about their needs and abilities, understand their and their parents' psychology, as well as the process of integration children with special needs into social life. On the other hand volunteer will learn how to accept different cultures and live independently in new environment. Volunteer will have the opportunity to get to know life in Estonian capital. Should be mentioned that Estonian society is quite closed and getting friends with local people usually needs bigger effort.

EVS volunteer will be supporting the school or kindergarten personnel in looking after the children and running daily tasks such as looking after the children and helping project staff during the lessons and free time, playing with children, arranging children's outings, e.g. culture visits, excursions, hikes, picnics, etc. The volunteers are supposed to render assistance to children between and during the lessons, as well as during different events, such as performances, excursions and etc, and help the staff to organise leisure time activities. We would like to invite volunteers to assist the lessons of such subjects as art and craft, English and physical education. We mainly need their assistance during the breaks and after lessons to organise different indoor and outdoor games with children. These could involve different table games, ball games, etc. During the lessons sometimes our children need individual assistance in performing such simple tasks as opening books, taking a pen into their hand, switching on a computer etc. There can also be such moments when some children experience emotional breakdowns during the lesson and they need to be taken out from the classroom and calmed down individually.

Volunteer will be encouraged to propose his/her personal micro-projects/ initiatives related to the theme of this EVS project, which will be supported by the host and coordinating organisation in all ways.

Typical day in the school looks like follows:

8:15 Lessons begin

12.00 -13:00 Lunch

13:30 Lessons continuing

15:15 Afternoon snack

15:45 Time for leisure activities and homework

18:00 Children go home



PROFILE OF THE VOLUNTEER AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS

We are interested in people who are willing to work with disabled children and understand their specific needs. We would certainly prefer mature volunteers. As for personal profile, we would like to welcome a sociable, cheerful and considerate person. All sorts of artistic skills are welcome as they can be used in art lessons and other therapeutic activities.

MTÜ EstYES has been the coordinating organisation for Laagna Lasteaed-Põhikool for several years and will make the primary selection among volunteer candidates. All volunteer applications approved by EstYES will be forwarded to Laagna Lasteaed-Põhikool so that we could do the final selection. We are open to work with any competent sending organisation.

Accommodation will be arranged by coordinating organisation MTÜ EstYES. Volunteers will be placed in flats that correspond to normal Estonian living standards. All volunteers have either single or double room and common rooms: equipped kitchen, WC, shower/bathroom and living room. Normally in Tallinn volunteers share a flat with other international volunteers. They will use local city transport to go to work. Volunteers will be provided with monthly pocket and food money and they will buy and prepare their own meals. The volunteers will receive orientation information before their arrival about volunteering in Estonia, practical information about the country and cultural advice.

After arrival to their projects volunteers will be introduced their work and tasks by their tutor who will be providing task related support throughout the project. Volunteers will have weekly evaluation sessions with their tutors, on later stage during the EVS the evaluation sessions can take place once in 2, 3 or 4 weeks depending on volunteers' needs. Coordinating organisation EstYES is asking volunteers to fill in a monthly questionnaire to monitor the course of their voluntary service and get involved in any case necessary. To accomplish their ideas, volunteers will get support they need from the receiving and also from coordinating organisation. Personal support is also arranged by coordinating organisation EstYES through regular meetings with EVS responsible coordinator and the mentor.

Each volunteer will be provided a mentor - support person who is not in any direct way connected to volunteer's projects. Mentor is a person to who volunteer can turn to in case of any personal questions or problems. Personal support will be partly provided by the tutors as well. The coordinating organisation EstYES in cooperation with the receiving organisation is responsible for administrative support.

RISK PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND SAFETY

Our working environment is very friendly and supporting and the children are very warm and hearty. Laagna Lasteaed-Põhikool will ensure:

- that the volunteer work is safe and it has been assessed for risk
- that every effort is made that project meets high health and safety standards
- that the volunteer is trained and familiar with the volunteering work and have access to adequate safety equipment when needed
- provide a mentor for volunteer, to whom she can turn in case of problems, doubts, concerns, etc.
- ensure regular meetings with project supervisor to discuss the course of EVS project and see where the shortcomings are and how potential problems can be resolved.
- that the volunteer will get all the practical and psychological support from the organisations's staff or from professionals
- that in case of crises it will be dealt at once with full seriousness on high professional level with the use of all previous experiences collected during decade of dealing with EVS projects.

Laagna Lasteaed.Põhikool and the coordinating organisation MTÜ EstYES will support the volunteers in any conflict situation and look for the best possible solution. MTÜ EstYES offers also extra training seminars and gatherings where volunteers can take part and share their impressions and experiences with other volunteers and local community.