

CHALLENGE *Accepted*

A learner-centered approach to better understand personal challenges and work collaboratively towards self-empowerment.

WHEN AND WHERE?

'Challenge Accepted' is a training programme that is composed of the following phases:

September 2025:

online preparation for the participants



18-25 October 2025:

training course in Cantabria, Spain



November 2025 – February 2026:

implementation of the lessons learnt



February 2026:

online evaluation session



WHY SHOULD YOU ACCEPT THIS CHALLENGE?

There is a need for International Voluntary Service (IVS) actors to:



Better understand your **personal challenges** in being active in IVS activities



Learn to collaborate, ask for help, how to support each other, think out of the box, test and make mistakes, and **take ownership when you face challenges**



Discover **creative ways** to get to know (more confidence in) **your strengths, values and talents**



Be empowered in taking action of small **everyday steps to implement solutions** in your IVS practice with the aim to make more and better impact in society

Background

International volunteering offers youth all over Europe - and beyond - the opportunity to meet, work and live together. To create, to explore and to be challenged. To discover similarities, contrasts and to be surprised.

International volunteering is all about dealing with the unexpected - and actively pursuing it for the exciting opportunities it holds. Anyone that volunteers or works in IVS faces a diversity of (personal) challenges to respond to. **The project 'Challenge Accepted' therefore aims to increase creative problem solving skills in IVS.**

EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

Expected 'Challenge Accepted' participants consist of anyone involved in organising international volunteering or working (voluntarily) in an IVS organisation. We are looking forward to receive your application if you are:

- Based in an EU programme country.
- Interested in gaining creative problem solving skills.
- Committed to actively participate in all phases of the project.
- Excited about the idea of spending one week in Spain with an international group from all over Europe.
- Minimally 18 years old by October 2025.
- Able to speak sufficient English to be able to express yourself during the project.

Participants with fewer opportunities are highly encouraged to apply.



ARRANGEMENTS

- Accommodation and meals during the training course and evaluation seminar are provided

- There is no participation fee

- Compensation for visa costs for participants from Turkey (capped by EUR 125 each)

- Travel compensation: actual bus/train/flight costs with a maximum of (distance calculated from the place of residence to Villegar, Cantabria, Spain, on [Distance Calculator](#) | [Erasmus+](#)):

**Distance
traveled**

**Non-green
travel**

**Green
travel***

10-99 km

EUR 28

EUR 56

100-499 km

EUR 211

EUR 285

500-1999 km

EUR 309

EUR 417

2000-2999 km

EUR 395

EUR 535

* This maximum applies if you travel at least one way by shared car, bus or train


PLEASE DO NOT BOOK
any tickets until your
participation in 'Challenge
Accepted' has been confirmed!



About CANTABRIA

Our project will take place at **PAS Coliving** nestled in the beautiful rural area of Cantabria, in Villegar de Toranzo.

This coliving environment is designed to grant groups the chance to live connected to nature and to each other, and will provide a perfect setting for personal development, immersive learning and collaboration. In line with this, vegetarian/vegan meals will be provided at PAS Coliving.

About SIW.

SIW Internationale Vrijwilligersprojecten (SIW International Volunteer Projects) is a Dutch non-governmental, non-profit voluntary service organisation that was founded in 1953. The mission of SIW is to allow (young) people to discover their impact abroad. This is achieved by bringing volunteers into contact with different cultures. Every year, SIW sends approximately 150 volunteers abroad. Besides that, SIW organises around 9 IVS camps in the Netherlands every year in cooperation with Dutch organisations like the Dutch State Forestry, Emmaus (an international charitable movement to combat poverty and homelessness) and asylum seeker centres. SIW is part of international networks like CCIVS, the Alliance and SCI.

ABOUT CHALLENGE *Accepted*

'Challenge Accepted' is a project that is supported by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project is coordinated and implemented by SIW in close collaboration with its partners. The training course will be facilitated by:



ISABEL MCLEAN

is active in the field of IVS and non-formal education since the year 2017. Projects in different countries are mostly related to communication or entrepreneurship, leadership, and conflict management skills. Passionate about intercultural exchange and learning.

Let's change our perspective. Curiosity is my strength and I bring a creative spark to groups in trainings and education. My tools are improv theatre, a wide variety games and design based research. I want to avoid becoming reflecting zombies and instead develop flexibility in perspective taking and experimenting, also deep reflection on and while learning. I value diversity in groups and like to bring out different (dormant) talents in unexpected ways. Let's take on the challenge.



FRANK ELSDIJK



LIIS LEPPMAA

a teacher with 12 years of experience, educational technologist, volunteers' tutor and project manager in the host organization. Approaching everything creatively - arts, crafts, music - a fan of non-formal learning and self-development.

a passionate in improv theatre, non-formal education and international volunteering, which started by a learning process as a volunteer in South Africa and Indonesia.



ROB VAN LEEUWEN

WHATS NEXT?



Apply by **3 August** through the [online application form](#).
Results will be shared shortly after.

Any questions about 'Challenge Accepted'?

Contact Rob van Leeuwen through: rob.van.leeuwen@siw.nl !



Erasmus+

NEED FURTHER CONVINCING?

Here are quotes from participants of the previous SIW Erasmus+ training 'Challenge Accepted':



”

Challenge Accepted was way different than I first expected, and also way more interesting, deep and maturing experience that really was able to put each one of the participants in front of their limits and guide them towards the way to overcome and challenge them, in a protected space (where mistakes are allowed and encouraged!)

”

I joined the project with a personal challenge. I go back home with confidence to solve it.

”

A project that improves people and human relations and provides connections

”

I became more confident in speaking up and realizing my strengths. I feel I am therefore able to guide the European Solidarity Corps Outgoing team in a better way and also to structurize some processes within the team, as I am more confident in speaking my mind.

”

Excellent training and valuable challenge to be out of your comfort zone, learn something new, grow with the group and develop your skills. I would recommend everyone to join and try for yourself.

”

Go for it, you will gain a lot!

