

Voluntary Service offers in Germany International Voluntary Service Scheme of “Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V.”

Staying in Germany for one year as a volunteer, working in a curative education center, living together with the people there and gaining experiences; in short: to complete a voluntary service. This opportunity is offered through the international voluntary service scheme of the “Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V.” association (“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 an institution for social therapy or a curative education center and share the life with the community, as 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 recognize 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 institution.

Organization and Assistance

The voluntary service is organized and assisted by 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 helping during the process of visa applications. We inform and consult applicants and assist the volunteers and host organizations during their stay. The “Friends of Waldorf Education” provide courses 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 and support in cases of conflict or crisis.

Host Organizations

During their voluntary service the volunteers work in a social non-profit institution, which we call host organization. At the moment, most of our host organizations are in the field of social therapy, curative education and care for the elderly. The tasks of the volunteers are hence usually related to the needs of people which are disabled or elderly and “in need of special care”.

All host organizations within our voluntary service scheme work on the basis of Anthroposophy. Many of them are located in a rural environment.

Normally the host organizations organized as communities where the employees live together with the persons to be cared for and arrange their everyday lives together. The volunteers are likewise integrated into the life of their host organization. More about anthroposophical curative education and social therapy as well as the life and work within our host organizations is explained in a special leaflet. Another insight is provided at the homepage www.anthromedia.net

Conditions of Participation

The voluntary services within the international voluntary service scheme of the "Friends of Waldorf Education" are principally open to all people whose permanent residence is located outside of Germany. They have to be willing to engage with mutual differences, to gain experiences, to learn during their service and who bring along a strong motivation for voluntary work, and are ready to share their life in a social community.

A special education or other formal qualification is no precondition (with exception of Waldorf schools and Waldorf kindergartens: in these host projects normally only people with pedagogical experience or former Waldorf students are placed). It does not matter if someone just has left school, has already finished a study or vocational training or stays already for a longer time in employment.

All applicants, who have no **practical experiences** in the work with disabled or old people have to complete a short work experience (at least one week) in an according institution in their home country. This enables the applicants to better decide about whether this is the suitable work for themselves. The work experience can as well be completed after sending in the application. The "Friends of Waldorf Education" can assist by providing contact addresses of appropriate institutions.

The **minimum age** for participants of the voluntary service is 18. An age limit does not exist. Some host organizations, however, have determined age limits.

Experience shows that the ability to communicate in **German** is an important condition for the success of the voluntary service. Basic knowledge of German is therefore a precondition. The requirements differ according to the host projects. The language knowledge should be proven by certificates or in other appropriate ways if possible. 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 intensively consider the consequences of living abroad for a longer time in an unknown culture, to stay at a social institution together with people who are disabled and 'in need of special care' and doing so face new ways of working, living and thinking. Every applicant should thoroughly read the leaflet about possible fields of work.

Time frame

The voluntary service starts in August or September and entails a 12-month stay in the host organization. The time for personal preparation for the voluntary service before the entry to Germany has to be added to the 12 months. During their service the volunteers will participate in four accompanying seminars (one week each). These seminars give opportunity to discuss the many organizational, content, and cultural questions the volunteers might have and to discuss personal moods in groups.

Benefits and Costs

During their service the volunteers receive the following benefits:

- an personal allowance of at least 150 € per month
- free room and board, normally at the host organization
- free health, accident and third party liability insurance
- 20 days of seminars (free of charge) 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.

Travel costs to and from Germany have to be paid by the volunteer himself, however.

Further Information - How to apply?

You want to know more about the voluntary service in Germany? Please contact the “Friends of Waldorf Education”, preferably via email or phone. Your contact person is Mr. Claudio Jax. Information about the application procedure and the required application papers can be found online at www.freunde-waldorf.de

Contactpersons:

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