

## EVS: WHAT IT IS, HOW IT WORKS

### The Erasmus+ and the European Voluntary Service (EVS)



# Erasmus+

The **European Voluntary Service (EVS)** is an international exchange programme funded by the European Commission, aiming to raise international cooperation, understanding, and tolerance. It is part of the wider Erasmus+ programme: “The Eu programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport”, which gathers together different programmes for studying, working or volunteering abroad, within and without Europe. The EVS, because of its voluntary-based work, is not remunerated, but the European Commission covers the whole accommodation and living costs, transportation, language course and health insurance, together with travel costs. There is no need to pay any fee to become a volunteer, and a monthly pocket money is also provided to all volunteers. EVS projects last from a minimum of two weeks to a maximum of 12 months.

#### Who can become a volunteer?

All young people aged between 18 and 30 and legally resident in the European Union are eligible to do an EVS. There are no specific requirements for applicants, only the will to get to know other people and different cultures, to learn a new language, and to get out of one’s comfort zone. Living abroad not only means a change of place and people, but also of thoughts, behaviours and habits. Volunteers should be ready to change their whole concept of everyday routine and embrace a new one, questioning their own way of doing things and discovering their own limits and strengths.

#### How does the selection process work?

The selection process consists of two steps: first, you have to find a project you are interested in and send an application – or more, of course. Second, if the organisation you sent your application to is satisfied and curious to learn more about you, you will have an interview, usually online.

But how do future volunteers find projects and who helps them through the whole application process? There are many different national organisations who coordinate international exchanges and volunteering programmes, also the EVS’ ones. These organisations not only help volunteers to apply, but also throughout their whole stay abroad. They provide constant assistance for bureaucratic matters, advise and assist volunteers in need, and might also organise free-time social and cultural activities. To put it shortly: they are the main reference point for all volunteers.

For every EVS project there is a **sending**, a **hosting**, and sometimes a **coordinating** organisation. The main task of the sending organisation is to provide information and assistance during the application process and the pre-departure preparation. The hosting organisation is where volunteers work, whereas the coordinating organisation, as the name suggests, coordinates the communications and procedures between volunteers, sending organisations, and hosting organisations.

In my case, for example, the sending organisation is the Italian *Scambieuropei*, the hosting organisation the Danish school [Rejsby Europæiske Efterskole](#), and the coordinating organisation is [Dansk ICYE](#), the Danish branch of the [International Cultural Youth Exchange \(ICYE\)](#) organisation.



Ogni esperienza ha un punto di partenza



**Dansk ICYE**

**International Cultural Youth Exchange**

On the [European youth portal](#) it's possible to look for currently available volunteering projects, filtering your research by country of destination, field of work and duration of stay: <http://europa.eu/youth/volunteering>. It is also possible to directly contact a hosting organisation to discuss the possibility of starting a project. The full list of EVS accredited organisations can be found [here](#).

### **Why doing an EVS?**

The EVS is a great opportunity to experience something new and developing your skills while doing something useful and good for a community. The people you'll meet, the language(s) you'll speak, the challenges you'll have to face and the good time you'll enjoy will all contribute to making your time as an EVS unique and precious, and you'll grow both professionally and personally. There will be feelings you've never experienced, thoughts you've never done, things you wouldn't have known and moments you'll never forget... aren't these enough reasons?

*For more information about the EVS and available projects visit the following link:*

<https://europeanvoluntaryservice.org/>

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