

Livonsaaren yhteisökylä, Finland

EVS project 2017

Update 15.3.2017.

This project is funded by



Project in brief

Type of project

Helping in various tasks of an ecovillage, mostly outdoors, while living with the people of the ecovillage.

Title of project

Island of Opportunity

Applying to volunteer in this project

If you are 18-30 years old, have permanent residency either in Spain, Germany, United Kingdom or Poland, and have not taken part in EVS volunteering period before, you can apply. Please send you applications before 31st of March 2017 via email to livonsaari.evs@gmail.com.

Funding

Currently we are waiting for the decision about funding the project by the Finnish National Agency Opetushallitus. The funding decision will be given by the 30th of April 2017.

Dates

This is a five month EVS project.

Begin date June 1st, 2017

End date October 31st, 2017

All of our volunteers are expected to participate for the whole period of five months.

Venue

Livonsaaren yhteisökylä is an ecovillage. We are about 40 people who live in this collective.

We are located in the countryside, in the coastline of southwest Finland. More specifically, we are located on the island of Livonsaari, which is in the back country of the municipality of Naantali, 22 km west from Naantali town and 35 km west from the city of Turku. There is a bridge to this island.

Location in Google maps: <http://goo.gl/maps/oGdbI>

Traveling between the ecovillage and the city is arranged by bus, by an EVS car, and by rideshare.

Participants

Four volunteers will participate, each from different nationality: Polish, Spanish, German, and British.

We aim for balanced gender ratio so that two of the participants will be female and two male.

Sending organizations

Eurocircle Deutschland	Berlin	Germany	www.eurocircle.de
Momentum World CIC	London	United Kingdom	www.momentumworld.org
Fundació Catalunya Voluntària-FCV	Barcelona	Spain	www.catalunyavoluntaria.cat
Semper Avanti	Wroclaw	Poland	www.semperavanti.org

Work

So far our EVS volunteers have mostly among other things taken part in cultivation of vegetables in our organic garden cooperative, as well as taken part in maintenance, renovation, and development of our communal buildings, helped in building new houses, making firewood, cleaning, cooking, participating in big and small events, promoting the ecovillage in a variety of public events, and hosting our visitors. The majority of the work will be in the community garden. We expect that our future volunteers will be doing similar tasks and possibly even wider range of tasks.

Accommodation

The volunteers will be living in one of our communal houses. It is a conventional residential house built in the 1970's. It has a big kitchen and a big living room with fireplace. During recent projects we could offer every volunteer a separate room.

Food

Volunteers will prepare their own meals from ingredients they will buy from a local shop or supermarkets in towns, and during the harvest season they will also receive vegetables from our organic cooperative garden. Volunteers will participate in making the common lunches which other villagers will also take part in.

Pocket money and travel expenses

Volunteers will receive pocket money 125 euros per month.

The project will also cover moderate traveling expenses between the ecovillage and the volunteer's home town. We will buy those travel tickets for the volunteers. Moderate expenses of local trips will also be covered during the project.

Detailed info

The host, Livonsaaren yhteisökylä

Website: <http://yhteisokyla.net/english/>

This is an ecovillage. The word ecovillage means an intentional community that aims to sustainable and more natural lifestyle, sharing of resources, voluntary work for common good, and active social life. This ecovillage is twelve years old. We are now about 30 adults and 13 children who live in this ecovillage. Every year more people join us and start a new life here. We own 66 hectares of land together, on which we build houses mainly from natural materials, using partly traditional and partly experimental methods. About ten residential houses have been completed, plus some are in construction, plus we have communal buildings.

We have a non-profit co-operative garden that produces a wide variety of organic vegetables that mostly go to customers in the nearby city, Turku. There are many other small businesses here, including construction, agriculture, a bakery, and practitioners of traditional alternative healthcare, to mention a few.

We receive visitors and volunteer workers who want to see and experience our alternative and creative lifestyle. We are one of the successful ecovillages in Finland: we are growing, we have strong economy, we have recently bought more land and buildings, we have a very good reputation among the locals, among the public authorities, and in the ecovillage movement. We have a well functioning organisation structure and decision making systems, and we have enthusiastic and skilled people who devote much of their time to serve the community. However, no-one of our permanent residents is required to take part in working for the community, and the people have their privacy and run their own economies.

We want to both experiment and follow well-known principles on how to live ecologically and use the resources of nature in a sustainable way.

Let us define the main objectives of this ecovillage:

1. We want to create good resources for different beneficial activities to flourish, resources for people's creative endeavours that deal with:
 - 1) living in a natural way
 - 2) ecologically sustainable life
 - 3) ecological and natural building
 - 4) innovative building materials and techniques
 - 5) sustainable, innovative and beneficial small businesses that can also economically support the residents
 - 6) non-profit communal businesses
 - 7) civil actions of many kinds
 - 8) permacultural applications and experiments
 - 9) developing greater degree of self-sufficiency
 - 10) organising events of many kinds
 - 11) networking within the permaculture movement, ecovillage movement, and different intentional communities
2. We want to create a pleasant, well-functioning, beautiful, and original residential area for people who come to live here permanently and temporarily.
3. We want to create a showcase of a flourishing ecovillage that can inspire as many people as possible through visiting us, through word-of-mouth, and through media.
4. We want to be innovative and experiment with different ways of doing anything, and share all the know-how we have attained.

The communal real estate and equipment of the ecovillage is administered by a limited liability company, Livonsaaren yhteisökylä oy. The company owns the land and the communal buildings, and is paying back the bank loan that was needed to buy the place. People who want to become permanent residents must at one point pay the company a certain sum of money to become full members. This means that those people buy shares (stocks) of the company. This gives a person the right to live the rest of their life within

the ecovillage, and the right to get half a hectare of land for their own house. Currently the stocks that allow permanent residency cost 13000 €. The company also receives income mostly from renting indoor spaces and land.

Our experience as a host organisation

We have been a receiving organisation in five EVS projects during the last five years. Each year we have hosted two, three, or four volunteers for five to seven months.

During the last few years we have hosted:

- 15 EVS volunteers
- More than thirty other young volunteers, including refugees who have applied for asylum in Finland. Most of those volunteers have come through the WWOOF system (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) and similar systems
- One international work camp

Accommodation and communal spaces

The volunteers will probably be living in a communal house called Alitalo. In addition to residents, some of our short-term volunteers and visitors may be using the kitchen of this house while living outside the house. This house doesn't have a warm shower. It will be available in another building, about 100 m away.

The community owns another communal residential building which is a former school building. In this building, besides residential apartments, there are communal spaces, including a sauna, simple gym, and a 60 m² former classroom that we use for meetings, parties, courses, and as a common living room. There is also the third communal building which has a separate sauna building available for everyone.

All of the communal houses are equipped with a broadband internet connection with wifi.

We try to arrange own private rooms for everyone.

Besides these three buildings, we have a simple hut on the yard of Alitalo with two rooms and with no heating. Some shorter term volunteer workers have liked it staying there. And we have a yurt on the yard as well, for visitors.

Also we have a communal traditional sauna building (so-called smoke sauna) by the sea, which our volunteers can use any time. It takes many hours to heat it though.

Another communal building, which is currently in construction and is expected to be completed during spring, is a small simple hut in a forest that

anyone, visitors and residents, can use for sleeping overnight, for resting and for recreation.

Food

Our volunteers prepare their own food from the ingredients they buy from a local shop or supermarkets in towns. We give them food allowance, which they use for whatever foods they like. Also they get organic vegetables during harvest season from our cooperative garden. We have a common lunch system in effect, which means that every week one of EVS volunteers cook for the community members.

Transportation

We have a communal car that has been bought primarily to serve our EVS volunteers. Whenever the EVS volunteers don't need the car, other people of the ecovillage can use it. The volunteers can use the car to short trips to the city and beyond, in moderation.

There are daily bus connections to the city from 500 m away, except Saturdays. Also, our volunteers can use our abundant ridesharing possibilities. We have developed a ridesharing system that works in the internet. It is used by many people. Typically every day at least someone of us drives between the ecovillage and the city.

The volunteers will have their own bicycles, which are a bit old and maybe not in the best shape. Volunteers usually use bikes to get to different parts of our ecovillage, and to nearby places.

We pay the volunteers' local traveling expenses in moderation, including the local bus and use of the car. Travel expenses of long vacation trips are paid by the volunteers themselves.

Surrounding areas

The volunteers will be living and working mostly with the people of the ecovillage, on its land and in its buildings. Our own land is 66 hectares. The immediate area surrounding the ecovillage is peaceful countryside on the island of Livonsaari, on which some 300 permanent residents live, plus many other people have summer cottages on the island.

There is a small grocery shop 500 m away.

Seven km south there is a village, in which there is a small library, municipal healthcare, a gym, restaurants, a sand beach, and ferries to nearby islands.

Two km north there is a lake, which is a nice swimming place.

The nearest town is Naantali 22 km east, and the nearest city is Turku, 35 km east. Turku is the 6th biggest city in Finland, population 184000. Our

ecovillage is connected with Turku in many ways. The cultural life in Turku has much attracted our volunteers, and we support our volunteers' connections with the city.

Social life

The volunteers will be interacting mostly with the other residents of the ecovillage. We arrange communal happenings big and small. The most typical small social events are frequent sauna evenings, informal dinner parties, movie nights, board games, fishing, happenings in nearby villages, trips to nearby nature, and trips to the city. The volunteers are encouraged to arrange social events on their own, too. Also during summer we host many short term volunteers and visitors, from both Finland and abroad.

Many times our volunteers have visited other places that have EVS volunteers and their volunteers have visited us. Two years ago we did an exchange programme with another ecovillage. Their volunteers came to work here for a week and then our volunteers went there to work for one week.

Participation in the community decision making and information flow

The volunteers will be eligible to attend all meetings of the ecovillage, and in the meetings they can have influence in all our decisions. They will also be enrolled to our e-mail groups, in which they can address any concern and propose any ideas.

Mentoring

There will be a principal mentor plus assistant mentors. The principal mentor will be available throughout the five month period. In case the principal mentor cannot be reached or does not know the answer, the EVS project coordinator or the company chairman will be available for all urgent matters.

Mentoring is supported by all our social activity. The volunteers will be encouraged to address any concerns to anyone who is in contact with them.

Mentors are prepared to show the volunteers interesting places, activities, happenings, and peculiarities of Finnish life, and help the volunteers spend their free time together with locals.

During the first days the mentors will explain and teach the volunteers everything they need or want to know about the ecovillage, about local services and resources, about the resources of Turku, how all the practical matters related to the EVS project are conducted, and what it is to live in Finland.

The Finnish national agency called Opetushallitus arranges an on-arrival training camp in Kokkola. The volunteers will meet there with other volunteers who are in Finland. Another camp will be held in Sipoo in October.

Finnish language support

We offer an elementary Finnish language course of 20 hours in the ecovillage. However, Finnish is a difficult language, and we will not expect our volunteers to communicate in Finnish. We communicate with our volunteers in English, but of course some common words of Finnish are good to know. If someone is more interested in learning Finnish, we will support that intention.

Arrangements of working hours, meetings, and vacations

The working hours are 34 per week, which in a normal week would mean six to seven hours per day. However, a reasonable amount of flexibility of this schedule must be tolerated from both parties. Rural life often depends on unforeseen factors such as weather, availability of tools etc.

Work coordination meetings, mentoring meetings, the language course, and the trainings organized by the Finnish national agency will be included in the working hours.

The volunteers will normally have Saturdays and Sundays free, except for possible work and mentoring meetings.

Midsummer is a national holiday, which is a day off work.

In addition to the above mentioned days off, the volunteers will have a total of 10 days of vacation, which they can use according to their own wishes, in times when there is not very important work to be done. The vacations must be arranged in the work coordination meetings and in agreement with the work supervisors and the work coordinator.

Work supervision and safety in work

At the beginning of work every task will be supervised by one person. In the work meetings we will appoint a supervisor for each work assignment. The volunteers work in each assignment according to the particular supervisor's guidance. Supervisors will also take appropriate responsibility of volunteers' safety.

The volunteers are required to use all the safety equipment and safety features that their supervisor instructs them to use.

In case a volunteer feels that any particular task involves a risk to safety, they can refuse from working in that task until safety has been secured in a satisfactory way.

Types of work

1) One is agricultural work: working under supervision of a professional gardener in a non-profit co-operative garden (CSA, community supported

agriculture) that produces a wide variety of organic vegetables that mostly go to customers in the city and surrounding areas. Volunteers may also sometimes do the deliveries to Turku in case they have a driving licence. There may be some other farming-related work too, in addition to the co-operative garden.

2) The second major area includes helping with common tasks like making firewood, cooking for a communal lunch, cleaning communal indoor spaces and outside areas, participating in creating various kinds of events, hosting visitors, and anything else that is typical in rural and community life.

3) The third major area is buildings: constructing new buildings and maintenance and renovation of existing buildings.

What will the volunteers attain here

Through the project the volunteers will have a chance to:

- 1) experience alternative lifestyle in practice
- 2) contribute to the development of an ecovillage and its activities
- 3) get valuable in-depth understanding of how a well-functioning intentional community works and how it relates to wider contexts
- 4) get short-term and long-term friends and connections that can be exceptionally rewarding
- 5) learn profound understanding on many topics and learn a wide range of skills

The volunteers will learn a versatile range of tasks involved in both typical rural life and living in a collective. Especially farming and construction related skills. A valuable skill will be quite rare know-how about how a collective works in terms of how we make common decisions and how we work to achieve common goals together, etc. We have very well functioning systems here and are happy to spread the knowledge. Other valuable skill that our volunteers can learn from how we live our lives, is active citizenship: creating the world around us according to our own values and higher ideals by being active and creative. The volunteers will also see how people can sustain themselves in a rural area even with unconventional ideals and lifestyle.

Volunteers will get some knowledge of creative and advanced ways of building with natural materials, and using natural materials and resources of nature for various different purposes. They will learn principles of permaculture and how they are applied to real life situations. They will learn how to reduce their ecological footprint. They will also have many chances to learn to apply their own creativity to different situations. They will learn do-it-yourself skills, as well as do-it-with-others skills. They will meet and get to know many people who come from different paths of life and parts of the world, including many interesting personalities.

What qualities we expect from our volunteers

The attitude is important: attitudes towards living in an intentional community in the countryside, and towards sustainable, simple and natural lifestyle, and towards common rural work like farming and maintenance of buildings. Also the personal projects of volunteers related to our values are welcome and supported.

We will prefer those who show interest in this kind of lifestyle and to our values, who seem to have interest and physical capacity to manage with the types of work we offer, and who seem enthusiastic and willing to learn. We will also appreciate if our volunteers follow a healthy lifestyle and are relatively independent, sociable and creative.

We are not able to host physically handicapped persons. Our environment is such, and our work tasks require full physical capabilities. Neither are we willing to host volunteers who have recent history of abuse of drugs.

According to our funding-related agreements, we give preference to people who face one or more of the following difficulties: cultural differences (for example belonging to a minority group), economic obstacles, geographical obstacles, or social obstacles.

Contact

Livonsaaren yhteisökylä EVS project

Name of the organisation: Livonsaaren yhteisökylä oy
EVS accreditation reference as coordinating and receiving organisation:
2014-1-FI01-KA110-008579
National id: 1959973-8
PIC: 933826567

E-mail: evs@yhteisokyla.net or livonsaari.evs@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.yhteisokyla.net/english/>
Address: Pohjanpääntie 49, 21180 Livonsaari, Finland
Skype: livonsaarievs

Personnel in charge of the project

Elvira Dudkova, coordinator
Risto-Matti Rantanen, assistant coordinator, chairman
Henrik Schäfer, assistant coordinator, general manager

Applying

Let us present the prerequisites and schedule to applying to this year's project, as an example only, so that one can be prepared to apply next year. The process and the dates might be similar in next year's project if we have one, but it's not guaranteed. The countries and sending organisations will be different in each year.

1) Do you live in Poland, Spain, Germany, or United Kingdom? If yes, you can apply.

2) Are you willing and able to spend the whole period from first of June to the end of October 2017 with us in Livonsaaren yhteisökylä? If yes, you can apply.

3) Read this detailed description carefully through and ask yourself whether this is the kind of volunteering project you want to participate in.

4) Contact the sending organisation respective to your country, mentioned on the second page, and ask them whether they can be your sending organisation. If yes, you can apply.

5) Send your application to us, to evs@yhteisokyla.net. The deadline for applications is **31st of March 2017**.

During March we will select the participants. In April we will get back to the applicants who meet the most important criteria. We will interview the most prospecting applicants through Skype.