

## Volunteer projects in Germany

The volunteers service is a social commitment project to benefit society and people in need. Volunteers are working in the non-for-profit sector in assisting staff members. This means: Playing with children, reading newspapers to senior citizens, looking after biotopes or helping young people appreciate a museum or theatre - the range of voluntary assignments is as varied as German society itself. Volunteers do not need any specialist training to become a volunteer.

Volunteers are required to work full time. According to German standards this refers to 40 hours per week, usually split into eight hours per day, five days a week. Volunteers play an active part in their work environment and contribute to the daily work routine of the organization.

### Office assistance in the non-profit sector



Organizations in the non-profit sector are (for example) universities, social foundations, and educational centers. The volunteer's tasks would range from office work like administrative work, collecting information, corresponding via phone and e-mail, updating data and work like organizing programs and assisting on events.

### Assistance in seminar centers

Seminar Centers offer events and seminars on various topics, for example history, current social and political topics and issues, discussions, workshops, expositions, and on art and creative activities (concerts, music, dance, theatre, writing, painting). Often these centers are visited by people of certain



institutions and organization to gain knowledge in the field. The volunteer's tasks would range from office work to organizing and assisting on events and trainings and caring for the visitors. Please mind: Depending on your level of German, you might be asked to do garden work and kitchen work.

### Environmental conservation



Projects in the field of environment are often information centers and educational centers which inform visitors about the nature reserve, its diversity of plants and animals and its environmental protection. The projects take care of a certain natural reserve or area and promote environmental education to the public and live in a sustainable way with nature. Visitors and guests experience and

learn about nature and its protection, get to know handicraft works with natural materials and much more. Often these projects work with groups of children and school classes that are accommodated for several days to take excursions to the field and discover and study nature. Besides, further important work fields are seminars and events for adults about practical and theoretical knowledge of nature and nature protection. The projects often have expositions, information services and shops in their centers. Some even have small hotels and cafés which people may visit for bike tours, campfires or canoe tours.

### Outdoor education center: adventure-based learning and experiential education

Centers which host groups of students for educational excursions may require volunteers to guide those groups through the fields and environments as well as help in organizing the program and giving workshops and information. Also help with logistics and supervision will be needed. Some environment centers have visitors or overnight



guests as well as a shop or café. In this case volunteers will care for guests, give information, help in a shop or café, do kitchen duty or cleaning.

### Assisting the elderly in nursing homes



In Nursing homes the volunteers will support the patients in their daily life and accompany them through the day. They will assist in hygienic issues such as feeding, cleaning and changing clothes as well as engage the patient into activities like physical exercise and creative activities (taking a walk, ball games or drawing, reading to them - to name a few).

### Assisting mentally and physically disabled people

In workshops, people with disabilities (ages 19 years and older) get a chance to experience the “work life”, they collaborate in the process of making decorations, furniture, and other things that will later get sold. The volunteers will accompany and assist some of the people working here; that means help them in their work tasks, supervise and counsel them; but also may help them to eat and clean themselves. Participants can help free time activities and propose own projects like sports or music.



In schools and kindergartens, the volunteers will have similar responsibilities as in the workshop. They will accompany children, between 6 and 18 years old, and assist them in what they need, like changing clothes for gym class, support those in wheelchairs, help them eat or by changing their diapers. Participants are always welcome to share ideas!

## Driving service for elderly and sick people, and traffic safety



This project offers driving services. They operate in the field of accident help, traffic safety, and support to the police in case of disasters and missing people searches. They also support elderly people with

driving services. The volunteer's main tasks will be to arrange transportation; this includes actually driving transports as well as managing the logistics of patient transports. In addition, they will support traffic safety measures, act as road safety officer in our local municipality, and assist our staff members with other general activities. If needed, volunteers participate in national disaster management and emergency relief. Important! This project can only place male participants.

## Kindergarten

In kindergartens you play with the children (ages 2-5), which can be drawing and coloring, going to the park or forest, excursions, singing, reading, building, gardening and many other activities. Volunteers are invited to bring in own ideas and creative activities for the kids. They also help during mealtime (prepare the meal and/or feed the children, clean up afterwards), clean the kids (i.e. changing diapers), put them to sleep, and dress them up.



## School and boarding schools

In schools (ages 10-20) the volunteers will assist school staff. Volunteers can often get involved in language classes, free time activities and other projects. Depending on the volunteer's abilities, he or she could engage in many other activities like sports or arts. In boarding schools the volunteers might also help

students with their school work. They might also organize free time activities. The participant will live in the school and sometimes supervise and counsel the students in the evening or on weekends. The volunteer may propose new ideas and get involved in various creative or sportive projects. Please mind: You will not be working as a teacher. You will not be fully involved in running classrooms. Depending on your level of German, you might be asked to do garden work and kitchen work.

### Assistance in the youth work sector

In the youth work sector young people find help when they are in need of it. One example could be that young people can't live with their families anymore or they come as unaccompanied minor refugees to Germany. Furthermore youth work includes projects that offer free time activities for young people such as spending time together, playing games and making excursions together.



The volunteers sometimes live in the same houses as the adolescents, sometimes they stay in their own flat. Tasks for the volunteers are spending the afternoons with the young people, organizing free time activities and participating in them, having meals with the youngsters and helping them with their homework. According to your level of German, you might be asked to do garden work, kitchen work or do the shopping.

### Practical work: kitchen work, janitor assistance, garden work



There are projects like seminar centers, boarding schools or kindergartens that are especially looking for volunteers, who want to assist in the practical work sector. One field of work is helping out in the kitchen. You don't have to be a great cook to volunteer in this field, because your task is to assist the main cooks. Another field of work is assisting the janitor of a project, with repairing and maintaining things. For this work it would be of help if you are good with your hands. Some projects are also looking

for someone who is interested in working in the garden. Sometimes the three tasks mix according to your interest and skills, the weather and what is needed in the project. Practical work is a field that we especially recommend, if your level of German is not that good yet, as you can start working immediately and improve your German while working.

### Youth hostel: assistance in running a youth hostel

Youth Hostels are hotels that offer their rooms and service at rather low prices and often accommodate big groups of youth and international groups. Volunteers will be involved in services like reception work and helping the guests, kitchen work like cleaning and food preparation, maintenance around the house like reparations and garden work, guest service like room keeping and laundry. Volunteers in hostels will have a dynamic workplace working with people. They will have their accommodation within the hostel. Please mind: Depending on your level of German, you might be asked to do garden work and kitchen work.

