



ICYE

Volunteering Profile

Maailmanvaihto – ICYE Finland





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Introduction

Welcome to ICYE volunteering in Finland!

We're excited that you're interested in volunteering with ICYE in Finland! This Volunteering Profile will give you an overview of the types of placements available. It includes general information and examples of possible workplaces. However, not all projects are listed here, and availability may vary each year. While we do our best to match you with a placement that suits your preferences, we can't guarantee a specific workplace or location.

Opportunities in Education and Social Work

Most ICYE placements in Finland are in education and social work. The latter includes supporting elderly people and individuals with special needs. These services are mostly run by the government and municipalities, but many non-governmental organizations are also active in this field.

For the work placements, the most important qualities are a positive attitude, motivation to volunteer in the education or social work field, and a willingness to learn. Prior experience and basic English or Finnish skills can help you find a placement more easily.

At first, tasks may be quite practical, especially if you don't have previous experience in the field. Your tasks will also depend on your own initiative. Many placements allow you to shape your role based on your interests and skills. So, be proactive – share your ideas and get involved!

Matching Your Skills and Interests

We'll do our best to match you with a placement where you can use your skills, learn, and gain valuable experience. Please review the available options carefully and fill out the **Preference List**, which you'll find at the end of this profile. This form helps us understand your interests, skills, and experiences so we can find the best possible placement for you.

Volunteering with Additional Support

If you need additional support because of a disability or a long-term illness, for example, consult us about possibilities to volunteer in one of the voluntary workplaces. We will gladly see if there are suitable options available for you. Each description of the voluntary workplaces includes brief accessibility information to give you already a bit of further information, and we'll gladly tell you more.

We look forward to welcoming you to Finland and supporting you on your volunteering journey!

Types of projects

We offer projects of these ICYE categories:

1) Education

- **Kindergartens** in Finland care for children aged 1–6 whose parents work during the day. Volunteers help staff with daily tasks like playing with kids, assisting them with meals and dressing, and tidying up. This is a great way to learn the language! Some kindergartens use English or Spanish or pedagogical methods of Montessori or Steiner.
- **Primary and secondary schools** have together nine grades (ages 7–16), with a possible extra 10th year. Most are government-run. Volunteers help teachers, assist in organising international days and other events, and assist in daily tasks. The goal is to encourage intercultural learning and language practice for students. Some volunteers work in schools for students with special needs or vocational schools.
- **Folk high schools** are boarding schools for mostly young adults (16–30+), offering a variety of study programs and courses that vary from arts to languages and university prep. Many also teach Finnish to immigrants and refugees. Often, young people spend a gap year studying in a folk high school. Located in the countryside, the folk high schools provide a unique cultural experience. The volunteers' tasks vary according to their skills and interests. They may help with teaching, give language courses, organise free-time activities, and help in practical tasks like kitchen, library, office or garden work. It may be possible to combine volunteering with studying some subjects.

2) Health

- **Working with People with Special Needs.** Some placements support people with developmental, mental, or physical disabilities, or learning challenges. Volunteers assist in schools, day activity centers, arts & crafts workshops, farms, and living communities. Tasks range from helping with meals to supporting therapy, art, or agriculture, animale care, and gardening activities. The work can be challenging but rewarding. Learning Finnish is important, as many participants don't speak English.
- **Elderly homes** care for seniors who can't live alone, providing housing, meals, activities, and care. Usually the elderly live in the rooms of one or two people, and the houses include common rooms for all the inhabitants. Volunteers assist with daily tasks like dining support and engaging residents in activities. These homes focus on creating a warm, homely atmosphere. Since many elderly residents don't speak English, volunteers should be eager to learn Finnish.

Want to know why ICYE does not offer volunteering opportunities in orphanages? Read more here: [No Volunteering in Orphanages](#)

Locations

Many workplaces are located in the countryside, where public transport to nearby towns and cities may be limited. This means you might not be able to visit the city frequently. However, a key part of the experience is immersing yourself in the local community and culture.

There are also some placements in Helsinki, as well as in smaller cities and towns. Many volunteers are accommodated at their workplace, such as in folk high schools. Please note that placements with host family accommodation (e.g., in schools and kindergartens) are limited, and we can only confirm them once host families have been found.

Voluntary workplace	Location	Countryside setting
Kainuu College	Paltamo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The English Kindergarten of Kotka	Kotka	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kindergarten Mi Casita	Helsinki	<input type="checkbox"/>
Koskenrinne Care Homes	Kotka	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ristola Community	Helsinki	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kindergarten Pääskysaari	Ilmajoki	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Eurajoki Folk High School	Eurajoki	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Host projects

1) Kainuu College

- **LOCATION:** Paltamo
- **DURATION:** 6 or 12 months
- **ICYE PROJECT CATEGORY:** Education

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Kainuu College (Kainuun opisto in Finnish) is an inclusive learning institution and adult education center that offers a variety of learning opportunities. Its core values include a safe and supportive learning environment, pietism, and balanced and active citizenship.

PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

Kainuu College has around 100 students and a team of 20 staff members, including teachers, youth instructors, and administrative personnel. The college provides general education, vocational training, and support for lifelong learning, hobbies, and active citizenship.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The college is located in Mieslahti, a small village in the municipality of Paltamo. Mieslahti is located about seven kilometers east of the town center. Mieslahti has about 350 residents and is 29 km from the nearest city, Kajaani.

VOLUNTEER'S REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers should be open-minded, social, and motivated to work in a new environment. Interest in learning Finnish is encouraged, as the college operates in Finnish. English skills are needed for assisting in English language courses.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

Volunteers can take part in Finnish language courses, assist in English lessons, and support practical tasks such as kitchen duties, student affairs, cleaning, and dormitory support. They also help organize student events and activities. Upon arrival, volunteers will collaborate with staff to create a schedule based on their interests and skills.

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROJECT

Usually 1

ACCOMODATION

Volunteers live in a dormitory near the college, in a single room with shared kitchen and washing facilities.

WORKING DAYS/HOURS

The volunteers work from Monday to Friday, 30–35 hours in a week.

ACCESSIBILITY

The college buildings are not fully accessible for volunteers with physical or sensory disabilities, as they have multiple floors but no elevators.



2) The English Kindergarten of Kotka

- **LOCATION:** Kotka
- **DURATION:** 6 or 12 months
- **ICYE PROJECT CATEGORY:** Education: kindergarten

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The English Kindergarten of Kotka (*Kotkan englanninkielinen leikkikoulu* in Finnish) provides bilingual early childhood education in English and Finnish for children aged 2–6. The kindergarten is run by the Finnish-American Society and focuses on fostering a caring and respectful learning environment that instills a sense of global awareness and equity. There are 40–45 children in three groups, 4 teachers and 4 nursery nurses in the kindergarten.

PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

The kindergarten values every child's uniqueness, respect towards others and the environment, and good manners. Its goal is to introduce children to the English language and culture through play and structured activities and strengthen their self-esteem. Volunteers play an important role in this by engaging with the children and sharing their own cultural background.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Kotka is a coastal city in southeast Finland with a population of about 55,000. It is situated about 130 kilometers away from Helsinki. Kotka has good public transport connections and offers a variety of recreational activities such as music, sports, and gym facilities.

VOLUNTEER'S REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers should be comfortable communicating in English, enjoy working with children aged 2–6, and have good social skills.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

Volunteers support teachers with daily routines, play with the children, and help with cleaning tasks. They also introduce cultural diversity. The role provides opportunities to improve English skills, learn Finnish, and experience Finnish culture firsthand.

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROJECT

1-2

ACCOMODATION

Volunteers stay with a host family and should be open to adapting to family life. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided at the kindergarten on school days. Other meals are provided by the host family at other times.

WORKING DAYS/HOURS

The volunteers work from Monday to Friday, 30-35 hours in a week.

ACCESSIBILITY

The kindergarten is wheelchair accessible (entrance through the back door), with a toilet for smaller wheelchairs. However, the staff cannot provide intensive support, and the project is not suitable for volunteers with sensory disabilities. The nearest bus stop is located about 300m away from the kindergarten.





3) Kindergarten Mi Casita

- **LOCATION:** Helsinki
- **DURATION:** 6 or 12 months
- **ICYE PROJECT CATEGORY:** Education: kindergarten

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Mi Casita is a private Spanish-language kindergarten founded in Helsinki in 1994. It offers Spanish-speaking daycare and cultural knowledge of Spanish-speaking countries for children aged 0–6.

PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

The children of the kindergarten are mainly Finnish, from Spanish-Finnish-speaking families. All staff members are native Spanish speakers. Mi Casita is funded by parental fees, city support, and fundraising activities. Mi Casita has around 40 places for children including a group of pre-school children. Currently, the staff consists of nine employees.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Located near the center of Helsinki, Mi Casita has easy access to public transport, with a train station less than 500 meters away.

VOLUNTEER'S REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers should be fluent in Spanish and enthusiastic about working with children.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

Volunteers assist with daily routines, playtime, and educational activities. They help with dressing children, mealtimes, storytelling, games, and outdoor play. They also assist in kindergarten's visits to museums and other places. Depending on their skills, volunteers can introduce music, art, theater, or sports activities.

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROJECT

Usually 1

ACCOMODATION

Volunteers stay with a host family in the capital area and should be open to family life.

WORKING DAYS/HOURS

The volunteers work from Monday to Friday, 30–35 hours in a week.

ACCESSIBILITY

The kindergarten is not able to accommodate volunteers with physical or sensory disabilities.



4) Koskenrinne Care Homes

- **LOCATION:** Kotka
- **DURATION:** 6 or 12 months
- **ICYE PROJECT CATEGORY:** Health: elderly

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Koskenrinne Care Homes (*Palvelutaloyhdistys KOSKENRINNE ry* by its official name in Finnish) is a non-profit organization that provides various care services for the elderly, helping them maintain a good quality of life. The goal is to meet the unique needs of each old person and support their well-being by providing both social and healthcare services in a comfortable environment.

Established in 1945, Koskenrinne offers rental apartments, daycare services, home assistance, medical care, day and night care, and end-of-life care. Koskenrinne has four care homes for the elderly: Koskenrinteen Koti, Kotka-Koti, Karhula-Koti, Maria-Koti.

PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

The volunteer will work at Koskenrinne Home (*Koskenrinteen Koti* in Finnish), a care home for the elderly with around 150 residents and 60 staff members. The other three homes each accommodate 50–60 residents. Across all locations, over 100 employees provide care and support to the elderly.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Koskenrinne Home is located in Kotka, a coastal city in southern Finland with approximately 54,000 residents. The city is surrounded by beautiful parks and the sea, making it a pleasant place to live. Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is about two hours away by bus.

VOLUNTEER'S REQUIREMENTS

The most important quality for a volunteer is a genuine interest in spending time with elderly residents. No specific skills or experience are required – just kindness, patience, and a willingness to interact with people.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

The volunteer's main role is to engage with the residents and provide companionship based on their interests. Popular activities include music, singing, reading, talking, and going for walks. Volunteers can also help staff in everyday routines.

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROJECT

Usually 1

ACCOMODATION

The volunteer will live with a local host family. Lunch is provided at the workplace, and the host family will provide other meals.

WORKING DAYS/HOURS

The volunteers work from Monday to Friday, 30–35 hours in a week.

ACCESSIBILITY

The project is not able to accommodate volunteers with physical or sensory disabilities.





5) Ristola Community

- **LOCATION:** Helsinki
- **DURATION:** 6 or 12 months
- **ICYE PROJECT CATEGORY:** Health: disability

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Ristola Community (Ristola-yhteisö in Finnish) is a Waldorf pedagogical training school for young adults with special needs. The functions of the Ristola Community are based on curative education and social therapy inspired by Rudolf Steiner. The basis is an anthroposophical perception of a human being. The aim is to support the students to learn basic life skills and to become independent young adults.

PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

In Ristola Community, there are 36 student places available for young people with different special needs from age 18 on. The education lasts for five years. The students learn traditional handicrafts (textile, wood work, ceramics, and metal) and theoretical and artistic subjects. Ristola has its own kitchen in which the daily food is prepared.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Ristola Community is situated in the capital of Finland, Helsinki, in Southern Finland. Ristola is located in an area called Metsälä, about 6 km away from the center of Helsinki, nearby the nature and outdoor recreation area Central Park. The public transport connections include train and bus, and during the summer season public bicycles, too. A public transport ticket will be offered for the volunteer.

VOLUNTEER'S REQUIREMENTS

We are looking for an open-minded and active volunteer who is motivated to work with young people with special needs. Some skills and interest in handicrafts will be helpful and musical skills would be a great addition.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

Through welcoming international volunteers to Ristola, we wish to offer the students with special needs opportunities to experience and learn from different cultures and languages. As a volunteer, you will help the teachers and staff in their work of supporting the students to learn basic life skills and to become independent young adults, as well as teaching traditional handicrafts and

theoretical and artistic subjects. The tasks may include kitchen work at Ristola's own kitchen, too.

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROJECT:

1-2

ACCOMODATION

The volunteer will live in a school guest room with a shared bathroom. The volunteer will have access to the sauna and the laundry room of Ristola Community. The meals are provided by Ristola Community at the school restaurant (lunch) and cooking independently (other meals).

WORKING DAYS/HOURS

The volunteers work from Monday to Friday, 30-35 hours in a week.

ACCESSIBILITY

The buildings of Ristola, including the school guest room, are wheelchair accessible. Ristola, unfortunately, has very limited possibilities to support volunteers with disabilities as their resources go towards supporting the young adults with special needs who study at Ristola.



6) Kindergarten Pääskysaari of South Ostrobothnia College

- **LOCATION:** Ilmajoki
- **DURATION:** 6 or 12 months
- **ICYE PROJECT CATEGORY:** Education: kindergarten

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

South Ostrobothnia College is a multicultural learning environment with around 450 students, including many immigrants. There are about 70 teachers and staff members working on the campus.

The college hosts Kindergarten Pääskysaari, which provides a safe, nurturing, and positive learning environment for children aged 1–5 years. The kindergarten emphasizes warmth, acceptance, and supporting the well-being of both children and their families.

PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

Kindergarten Pääskysaari offers daycare services and early education. There are around 75 children divided into five groups based on age, with three teachers or caregivers per group. The kindergarten also serves as a training environment for college students studying childcare. The kindergarten is located about 2 km from the campus area.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The project is based in Ilmajoki, a small countryside town of about 12,000 people. It is a peaceful, rural environment. The college community is diverse, with students from different countries and backgrounds, including refugees from Ukraine. The nearest larger city, Seinäjoki (population 65,000), is about 15 km away.

VOLUNTEER'S REQUIREMENTS

Basic English skills, an interest in early childhood education and working with children aged 1–5, and a positive, active attitude are important qualities for volunteers.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

The volunteer supports kindergarten activities as an assistant and helps create an intercultural learning environment. Tasks include:

- Assisting children with dressing before and after outdoor activities
- Helping organize pedagogical activities such as music, outdoor play, games, and crafts
- Participating in everyday outdoor activities (warm clothing needed!)

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROJECT

Usually 1

ACCOMODATION

The volunteer will stay in a student dormitory on the college campus. Meals are provided at the kindergarten, weekend meals are provided by the volunteer. The kindergarten, college, and accommodation are all within walking distance (max 2 km).

WORKING DAYS/HOURS

The kindergarten operates Monday to Friday, and the volunteer's schedule is typically from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

ACCESSIBILITY

Working in a group of children and the limitations of the facilities set requirements for the volunteer's ability to work at the kindergarten. The volunteer's suitability for working in Pääskysaari is assessed on a case-by-case basis.



7) Eurajoki Folk High School

- **LOCATION:** Eurajoki
- **DURATION:** 6 or 12 months
- **ICYE PROJECT CATEGORY:** Education

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Eurajoki Folk High School (*Eurajoen opisto* – EKO) is an adult education institute that offers a diverse range of educational programs and courses, such as basic education, vocational education, and advanced education and continuing training. The school is dedicated to fostering community spirit, solidarity, and mutual respect while providing students with meaningful learning experiences.

PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

EKO provides high-quality education and welfare services to students of different ages and backgrounds, promoting lifelong learning and active citizenship. The institute offers a wide variety of programs, from music education and boat building to Finnish language courses. The curriculum emphasizes autonomous learning, community engagement, and student participation.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Eurajoki is a small countryside town in southwestern Finland, with a population of approximately 10,000. The nearest city, Rauma, is about 20 km away, with good bus connections available. The EKO campus is vibrant during the weekdays but quieter on weekends when many students return home.

VOLUNTEER'S REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers should have good social skills, an open-minded attitude, and the ability to interact with people of various ages and from various cultural backgrounds. A proactive approach, willingness to take initiative, and the ability to support practical tasks – such as kitchen work, gardening, or maintenance – are highly valued. Since Eurajoki is a small town, independence and the ability to network and organize activities during weekends are essential.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

Volunteers will be integrated into the school community and assist in organizing both educational and leisure activities for adult students. At EKO, volunteers can immerse themselves in Finnish language and culture while developing their skills and contributing to the school's community. Working with a diverse group of students, including teenagers with learning challenges and students from

immigrant backgrounds. The students range in age from 16 to middle-aged adults.

The tasks may include:

- Supporting teachers and students in lessons, including supervising group assignments, assisting students needing extra support, and engaging in learning games. The volunteers may support the students in leisure-time activities, too.
- Helping in food services by assisting with meal preparation, baking, cleaning the kitchen, and washing dishes.
- Assisting with property maintenance tasks such as cleaning, laundry, yard work, and furnishing.
- Participating in Finnish language courses.

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROJECT

1-2

ACCOMODATION

Volunteers will stay in one of the student dormitory buildings on campus. The dormitories house around 50–60 students during the weekdays. Volunteers will have a room in a shared dormitory, usually a double room with private toilet and shower facilities. Common areas such as kitchens, saunas, and recreational spaces are also available.

Meals are provided in the campus restaurant on weekdays (breakfast, lunch, and a takeaway dinner). On weekends and holidays, volunteers will receive a food package to cook for themselves.

WORKING DAYS/HOURS

The volunteers work from Monday to Friday, 30–35 hours in a week.

ACCESSIBILITY

Our college will be 99 years old this year and the building itself is even older. Thus, unfortunately, full accessibility is not possible. Whilst there is a ramp to the main building as well as to the building where most of the lessons are held, women's and men's dormitories are only accessible by stairs.



Additional Information

PREFERENCE LIST

Please indicate in order of preference your 5 most favoured voluntary workplace types (indicate in order of preference from 1 to 5). We try our best to place everybody to their favoured type of workplace, but unfortunately this is not always possible. So, please be prepared to make compromises.

- _____ Kindergarten
- _____ School / Educational institution
- _____ Folk high school
- _____ Work with people with special needs
- _____ Elderly home
- _____ Other: _____

Would you like to be placed in (mark with X):

- City
- Countryside
- No preferences

Would you prefer working with (indicate in order of preference from 1 to 5):

- _____ Children
- _____ Youth
- _____ Elderly
- _____ People with disabilities
- _____ Immigrants

Why would you prefer working in this type of voluntary workplace?

What are your expectations towards volunteer work?



Describe your skills and previous experiences which might help you in this voluntary work.

Additional information if needed:

- I allow Maailmanvaihto – ICYE Finland to handle and store the information given in this form and to share it with its voluntary workplaces. Maailmanvaihto will handle and store the information according to its Privacy Policy on the documents of incoming volunteers (please see <https://maailmanvaihto.fi/en/privacy-policy-documents-of-incoming-volunteers>). In case you would like further information about the handling and storage of the information, please contact hosting@maailmanvaihto.fi.

Volunteer & Country_____

Voluntary Work Year_____

Signature_____



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