



**Volunteering
Changes
Lives**

What is EDYN?









EDYN is a network of ecumenical, Christian, voluntary service programmes that send and receive volunteers world-wide. The programmes provide opportunities for long term (and occasionally short-term) voluntary service in social, environmental and educational institutions and church congregations.

The work of **EDYN** members is based upon a Christian view of humanity. The human being is seen in relation to others as a social being and as a free person who takes responsibility for themselves and others. The human being is unique in God's creation; self-determination, tolerance and respect are central values in our work. Because of this we offer our voluntary service programmes as a social educational year which includes practical activities within a nonprofit organisation as well as individual mentoring for the volunteer.

Voluntary service abroad provides the opportunity to gain experience in another country. Therefore the volunteer encounters a new culture, new living conditions and new people. The volunteer service effects non-formal and informal learning processes through the activities in the placement and the social environment. Voluntary service is a key part of a young person's biography. The successful preparation, paedagogical support and evaluation will encourage the volunteer to develop their identity and opinions, to gain a different view and will influence their behaviour strongly.

Objectives of the network are:

to organise exchanges of volunteers of all faiths and non-faith;

-  to co-ordinate non-formal education and support for the volunteers;
-  to share experiences, learn from and support each other nationally and internationally;
-  to develop common standards and goals for voluntary service;
-  to promote voluntary service within church and society;
-  to advise churches and church-linked organisations on setting up voluntary service programmes;
-  to offer best practices for staff and organisational support;
-  to encourage diversity and enhance access to volunteering by targeting volunteers with fewer opportunities;
-  lobbying for the improvement of voluntary service conditions at European level and worldwide.



Advantages of exchanging EDYN volunteers




The members of the Network share their experiences and perspectives based on faith that enables them to give and receive constructive criticism from one another in a spirit of forgiveness orientated to serving others. It is a Christian faith based organisation that encourages interreligious dialogue. EDYN is open to work with organisations and partners of other faiths.

- experience-based orientation of candidate;
- ensured quality in preparation and ongoing follow-up;
- support for members building up and managing a programme.



Goals and standards







Goals of voluntary service

-  to empower individuals, groups and communities in need;
-  to further the causes of justice, peace and the protection of the environment;
-  to express faith through service.

Learning objectives for the volunteers

By sending and hosting volunteers, the partners help the volunteers to develop their personality and spirituality and encourage the intercultural communication and awareness of everyone involved.

The objectives concerning the volunteers are:

-  to enable the volunteers' intercultural and ecumenical learning
-  to encourage their awareness of social and political responsibility
-  to deepen the volunteers' spiritual journey through practical engagement
-  to develop workplace skills
-  to increase their capacity to communicate and work in group situations
-  to help them decide about life and career orientation

Furthermore the volunteers' commitment will benefit the placements.

Structure standards and common process

Non-formal education

The sending and hosting organisations organise a non-formal education process through the period of service based on common learning objectives with phases of preparation before departure, orientation on arrival, mid-term, end of service in the hosting country and re-entry to sending country. This process involves individual and group experiences.

Sending and hosting organisations

There is regular contact between representatives of the sending and hosting organisations regarding volunteers.

A hosting organisation is a member of EDYN who organises and provides placements, individual mentoring and guidance for the volunteers.

A sending organisation is an EDYN member who recruits, selects and prepares volunteers in collaboration with hosting organisations. It is also a part of the support structure during and following the volunteers' service.

The sending and hosting organisations meet at least once a year and continue to work on common strategies and standards in order to strengthen and develop their relationships. The partners negotiate the programme details (hosting and sending) at the beginning of the annual recruitment process.

Supervision and mentoring

Professional guidance and individual mentoring of volunteers is provided by sending and hosting organisations in work and life situations.





A supervisor is a person at the placement who integrates and guides the volunteer in the placement. He/she arranges the volunteer's tasks and has regular evaluations with him or her. This person is prepared and supported by the hosting organisation.

A mentor is a person, outside the placements, who keeps in regular personal contact with the volunteer during the service. He/she helps the volunteer to integrate into the community, is responsible for the personal mentoring of the volunteer as well as being the contact person in crisis situations.

Recruitment of volunteers

Volunteers should be motivated to serve in social, environmental and educational institutions, projects and church congregations.

Volunteers should be made aware of the following responsibilities:

-  Volunteers consider themselves to be guests respectful of the communities, cultures and faith traditions within which they serve;
-  Volunteers help meet physical, mental and spiritual needs with respect for each individual's basic human rights;
-  Volunteers recognise, respect and follow the regulations of the sending and hosting organisation staff and the local supervisor(s);
-  Volunteers adapt their expectations and lifestyle to the reality of the local community within which they serve.

Volunteer application process and selection

There is a written application from each volunteer containing common information. A complete application consists of:

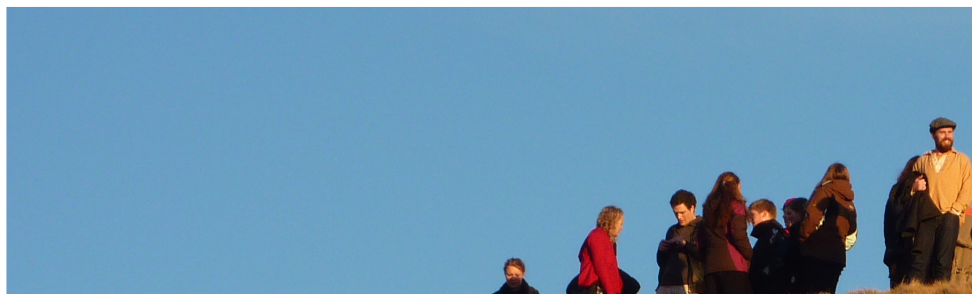
- Completed EDYN application form
- CV
- Letter of motivation
- 3 References
- Photos
- Medical certificate

Each volunteer is interviewed by the sending and/or hosting organisation. The partners take part in each other's interview events to get to know the candidates and to select the volunteers for the following year. If there is no interview event the candidates will be invited to a personal meeting or have at least a video interview. There will be no sending without a personal conversation.

Matching volunteer and placement

The hosting organisation ensures that the volunteer can work in a placement which suits their maturity as well as their professional and personal skills.

The matching process is done in close cooperation with the volunteer and sending organisation.



Written agreement - volunteer's service

The sending and hosting organisations, the placement and the volunteer have a written agreement confirming all details of the service.

Minimum requirements for volunteers

Accommodation - The hosting organisation ensures that the rooms, furnishings and equipment in the work place, as well as in the accommodation, correspond to the local danger protection regulations (e.g. anti-theft devices, accident prevention, fire safety) and health standards.

Food - The hosting organisation provides food and/or food allowance for the volunteer at an appropriate level.

Pocket money - The volunteer will get a reasonable amount of pocket money every month.

Seminars - The sending and hosting organisation provide the pedagogical support for the volunteers

Language support - The hosting organisation is responsible for organising language support for volunteers.

Insurance - The volunteers have to be insured for health, accident and personal liability. The sending organisation must oversee practical arrangements.



Non-formal education process

A non-formal education process organised around regular gatherings of volunteers in service for several days at a time is the form used by members to ensure the learning objectives are met. The process provides for preparation before departure, orientation on arrival, during and end of service reflections, and re-entry and debriefing regardless of the number of volunteers.

1. Preparation – if 5 or more volunteers are being sent abroad a group event of 3 days is considered the minimum. Volunteers are prepared by the sending organisation in a way that respects the learning objectives such as confirming and supporting the decision of the volunteers to undertake this new challenge, creating awareness about volunteering abroad and the necessary 'tools' for success.

2. On-arrival/Orientation seminar – if there are 5 or more volunteers in the hosting country, a seminar of at least 3 days is held. Volunteers are orientated on arrival/at the start of their service by the hosting organisation in a way that respects the learning objectives.

3. During service – if 5 or more volunteers, one or more gatherings of at least 3 days. Volunteers are invited to reflect together on their service in a way that acknowledges challenges, suggests strategies for facing them and draws the 'strands' of experience together.

4. End of service – if 5 or more volunteers, a gathering of at least 3 days. Volunteers are led to reflect on their service in a way that accompanies/supports the evaluation/reflec-

tion process, provides framework (time & space) to share, provides a ceremony/ritual of ending together, provides tools for leaving and going home, acknowledges change with a view to future (plans).

5. Debriefing - The hosting organisation conducts evaluations of each volunteer's service experience at the end of the service with the volunteer and the placement. These results are shared between all parties to the written volunteer agreement.

6. Re-entry – if 5 or more volunteers: a gathering of at least 2 days.

A re-entry event is held by the sending organisation after the volunteers return. It accompanies/supports the evaluation/reflection process, gives a framework (time and space) to share their experiences in different countries, provides a ceremony of looking back and forward and of sending on; recognizes and acknowledges new attitudes towards own country/culture, gives tools for settling in again, allows staff to listen and receive useful feedback about the programme and provides opportunities for future involvement.







Exceptions

In certain circumstances, exceptions to the above will be considered by the EDYN board upon receipt of an explanation and submission of an alternative schedule.









EDYN Membership

Conditions for Membership

-  **Legal status** as a non-profit faith-based organisation co-ordinating a voluntary service programme.
-  **Acceptance of and adhesion** to the essentials of the network
-  **Payment of annual fee**
-  **Participation in annual meeting of EDYN** (non-attendance for 3 consecutive years results in termination of membership)

Application for Membership

The application should be in English and include:

-  a presentation of the organization;
-  a motivation letter indicating that the applicant accepts the conditions of membership given above;
-  proof of legal status, statutes;
-  proof of financial capability;
-  names of board and executive staff;
-  copy of last annual report (if available);
-  statement of how the programme meets, or will work to meet, the essential conditions, goals and standards of EDYN;
-  references from church bodies.

Testimonies of volunteers

"Spending one year in the Czech Republic as a volunteer added a lot of value to my life. I got to learn a new language, acquire skills that I can use in my future profession and met really great people. (All sounds cliché, but it's true.) Looking back even after one year I still think my volunteer experience was one of the biggest, most impacting adventures I have had so far, and the Czech Republic became my 2nd home!"

Tímea, coming from Hungary and volunteering in Czech Republic



Testimonies of volunteers



"A region in Slovakia is called the "Slovak paradise". This name is applicable to such a year of volunteering. Paradise because of its lots of work experience. Paradise because of its endless fun. Paradise because of its big adventure. Paradise because of its occurrence in a foreign -unknown before- country. Paradise because of our evolving with independency personalities. Paradise because of meeting so many new friends and people around the globe. As a volunteer, I find paradise my job as well! The children at the school I am working are shaping a smile on my face. I am delighted. The power of the children gives me stamina, courage and fun."

Pauline, coming from Germany and volunteering in Slovakia

“Being a volunteer definitely changed my life.”

“I became braver and more creative.”

“I learned how to handle new situations and how to get to know new people. I got to know another culture and other living conditions.”

“Now it is possible for me to overcome stereotypes and prejudices and to have an intercultural sensitivity.”

“It really improved my language skills.”

“My volunteer year opened my horizons for trying new unknown things and letting me see more options for the future.”

“I feel like during this volunteer year I have learned to enjoy every day of my life more and to be thankful for everything I am blessed with.”

“This experience has just been incredible. My volunteer year helped me find out what my next step in life will be.”

“I recommend that people of all ages do voluntary service. It gives you a different view on the world; makes you challenge your own boundaries and lets you see what you are able to give”.

