



EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEERING

“MY GREEN STEPS THROUGH THE FOREST”



Co-funded by the
European Union



EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS

Agência Nacional
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Corpo Europeu de Solidariedade



“H2O” - ASSOCIAÇÃO DE JOVENS DE ARROUQUELAS

We are a non-profit youth organization based in the village of Arroquelas, in the municipality of Rio Maior, in the district of Santarém. Our association, founded in 1996 by a group of young people who lived in the parish of Arroquelas, arose from the need to fill the lack of opportunities for young people in the village.

The values and mission of “H2O” were defined and focused on a social and environmental level, creating and developing various projects and activities, locally, nationally and internationally, with a focus on the sustainable development of the village. Youth volunteering and non-formal education are our pillars and it is through these tools that we aim to raise awareness of the importance of environmental preservation and find ways to mitigate the social problems inherent in rural life.

Young people are our main focus and we aim to equip them with the tools they need to feel confident and self-assured, involving them in our associative work and our projects. In this way, we aim to prepare young people for the various challenges they will face throughout their lives, to be able to solve them and to find ways and means of becoming active and dynamic citizens.

We value teamwork, with a responsible attitude, openness to innovation, with no dogmas or preconceived ideas, respect of cultural diversity and fostering European awareness. All the members of “H2O” board are young volunteers.

We are from a very small village, Arroquelas, a rural area in centre of Portugal, that has around 600 inhabitants.





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This is a short-term volunteering project, from European Solidarity Corps in Arrouquelas, a small rural village in countryside in central Portugal.

The participating volunteers will participate in several activities of work, creation, responsibility and fellowship and interaction with locals of Arrouquelas.

The main objective of the project is to help our village preserve its surrounding forest and help prevent forest fires. This project will have a lasting impact by fostering ecological awareness and hands-on experience among young people. Through intercultural exchange and meaningful work—such as cleaning, painting, forest vigilance, educational sessions, and cultural visits—we aim to create better conditions for protecting our forests.

We also want to involve participants in a learning-based approach to inclusion, particularly in integrating people from diverse cultural backgrounds, including refugees seeking shelter in Europe. Intercultural activities and interactions with the local community will be key to this effort.

Additionally, we encourage participants to take an active role in shaping the program. They will have the freedom to propose and develop ideas together, always in line with the project's theme and European values.

Please note that some activities involve physical effort and manual work, such as cleaning and painting. However, all necessary materials, including gloves, hats, and t-shirts, will be provided. Tasks will be adapted to participants' capabilities, and outdoor work will take place during the cooler hours of the day.





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Activities to be carried out during the project:

- Maintenance of public spaces under “H2O” responsibility: fire surveillance tower; the fountains of the village; garden and green areas; village’s church; etc.
- Maintenance of some rural roads, which may be used in forest surveillance routes. These roads are obstructed by wild forest, due to the low utilization of them and desertification of the rural environment;
- Organizing the camping area for all the participants;
- Organizing and planning the daily program;
- Organizing and keep surveillance routes;
- Participate in the forest surveillance shifts in the watchtower, during all the project;
- Creation of a Facebook page, which will serve as a diary of the activities carried out and that will be updated by the participants;
- Organization of an intercultural night and intercultural events, that are team building activities;
- Participation and promotion of a workshop or similar related to awareness of fire prevention and promotion of good practices of forest preservation (no limits for creativity);
- Creation of a film/movie by the participants about the subject and about the project;
- Promotion of cultural activities with the population, accomplishment of an intercultural evening open to the population;
- Help some families in need to paint or small repairs in their houses;
- Participate in the *Recycling Tours*, that aim to encourage involving older people in recycling by helping those who have more mobility difficulties to take recycled waste to ecological islands.





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Activities to be carried out during the project:

- Organization of a final exhibition for the population of Arroquelas with photos and videos about the days of the project.
- During the nights of the project we intend to create conditions for the participants to create moments of animation and cultural sharing like music, games, etc;
- We would like also to rely on the collaboration of the participants to a pedagogical approach to the integration of people with cultural differences such as refugees who now seek shelter in Europe.
- Outside of the working period, the participants will be able to visit nearby cities, learn about Portugal, its history, habits, culture and language.
- We will organize engaging and entertaining activities to ensure that all participants remain motivated throughout the project. Additionally, we plan to take them on a tour of our region, showcasing sites of cultural and environmental significance.
- The association cares for a variety of animals, including dogs, cats, goats, and chickens. Volunteers are encouraged to assist in their care, ensuring their well-being and daily needs are met.





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The participants will be living in tents for all, in a camping area or if possible in H2O volunteers house. The accommodation (camping area) is inside the village and is located in one of the H2O spaces, namely in the farm area. All safety issues are guaranteed, the tents have 2 bedrooms, each participant will be in one of the rooms, the tent will be shared by gender. There will be showers shared by gender.

We will build the camp and this camping zone it will only be for our participants and volunteers, reason why everyone is expected to respect each other, with a way of being responsible.

Breakfast, lunch and some dinner will be provided by the organization to all participants during the project - but the dinner will be prepared each night by a group of participants, with the objective of creating intercultural meals, created by different nationalities.

For the intercultural night, shared by all the countries present in the project, every participating volunteer should bring something from their countries, related with their culture and gastronomy.

IMPORTANT: All participants should know that they will sleep in cantonment or tents. They should collaborate in preparation of the meals and the daily chores.





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PARTICIPATION PROFILE



We are looking for young people who:

- Demonstrate a strong environmental and social awareness.
- Enjoy outdoor activities and are eager to engage in hands-on experiences.
- Have an interest in rural development and sustainability.
- Are **18** years or older.
- Are ready to actively participate in all project activities, including physical outdoor tasks.
- Are interested in incorporating non-formal education methods into youth work within their organizations.
- Have experience working with diverse groups or are eager to gain experience in this area.
- Are motivated for professional growth and keen to develop projects within their local communities.

At the beginning of the project, participants will receive training on the activities to be carried out, ensuring they are well-prepared and confident in their roles.





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The project will take place in Arroquelas, a small rural village near Rio Maior. All the working spots, like fountains, fire vigilance tower, etc. are in the village.





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Practical Information:

- Working language: English;
- Insurance (kind of covers) – all participants will be insured. Working hazards, illness and personal accidents are covered by ESC Insurance.
- We cover travels to Portugal, which that should be agreed between the volunteer and the project coordinator before buying any tickets.
- All participants will receive Pocket money for their project - 6€ per day - according European Solidarity Corps rules.
- What to bring (personal things): all working tools will be supplied by the Organization but the participants should bring comfortable clothes, suitable for working in the field. We will do trips to nearby cities and to the shore, activities with community, Arroquelas summer party, so participants should also bring suitable clothes for these situations.
- The participants should bring their sleeping bag too, bath towel and swimming suit besides their personal hygiene items.
- All participants should fill in the **participation registration**, and authorize the use of your personal data, as well as the public use of photos and videos related to the project activities.
- All participants should be **registered on European Solidarity Corps**, follow the program rules, respecting all necessary administrative processes.



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Practical Information:

- All participants must **respect** each other, the institutions, the association and the village inhabitants.
- Working tools supplied by the association must be handled with **proper care** and the tents and common spaces must be kept safe and clean for everyone.
- Portuguese **rules** and **legislation** shall be followed and respected.
- The EU participants should bring their European Health Card.
- The participants need to keep their **travels documents** with them. The organization will need the originals documents (tickets, invoices, and boarding passes) to reimburse you.
- After the project is finished the participating volunteer should do a **dissemination activity**, for example, an article with photos about the project to publish in the volunteer social media and the social media of the organization. The reimbursement will only be done after this step is done.





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Meeting point will be arranged with the participants when all the participating volunteers arrive to Lisbon airport. The meeting point will be near the entrance of airport, close to the metro station.

Participants should be able to reach Lisbon by their own, by plane, train or bus. Please remember that before buying the travels, every participant should talk with the project coordinator, Alexandre Jacinto.

Useful Contacts:

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