

# European Solidarity Corps project 2020

## Island of Opportunity

in

Livonsaaren yhteisökylä, Finland

Created on October 27, 2019



## 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

If you are 18-30 years old and have not taken part in ESC or EVS volunteering period before, you can apply. Please send your applications (CV and free-form letter of motivation to participate) until 01.02.2020 via email to [livonsaari.evs@gmail.com](mailto:livonsaari.evs@gmail.com). The participants will be selected until 28.02.2020.

## Funding

The project is funded by the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) Opetushallitus.

## Project reference number

2019-2-FI01-ESC13-060996

## **Dates**

This is a seven month ESC project.

Begin date of activity is 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2020.

End date of activity is 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2020.

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

## **Venue**

Livonsaaren yhteisökylä translates as Livonsaari community village. There are about 40 people living in the community.

It is located in the countryside, in the coastline of southwest Finland on the island of Livonsaari, which belongs to the municipality of Naantali. The island is situated 22 km west from Naantali town and 35 km west from the city of Turku. There is a bridge to this island. The archipelago ring road runs through the island.

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

Travelling between the ecovillage and the city is arranged by bus or by rideshare.

## **Participants**

Five volunteers will participate, each from different nationality. We aim for balanced gender ratio.

## **Work**

So far our former volunteers have among other things taken part in cultivation of vegetables in our organic garden cooperative, in building new houses, helping to maintain, renovate and develop our communal buildings and private houses, making firewood, cleaning, cooking, participating in and/or organizing big and small events, promoting the ecovillage in a variety of public events, and hosting our visitors. We expect that our future volunteers will be doing similar tasks and possibly an even wider range of tasks.

## **Accommodation**

The volunteers will be living in the centre of Livonsaari in the property of local village shop, which is located 500 metres from the ecovillage land. There are four rooms upstairs, a kitchen, big corridors and separate entrance to the accommodation. There is a shower across the yard in the separate building (with laundry washing machine and the room to dry laundry), a compost toilet, as well as small guest house, storage buildings and spacey green yard. There are two rooms available for volunteers, shared by gender: the biggest room is shared by three volunteers and a bit smaller one by two accordingly.

The house faces the main island road from the front side and the forest in the back.

## **Food**

Volunteers will be provided with lunch in the shop during the lunch hour during the working days. The lunch will include soup, the second dish, bread with butter and cheese, as well as coffee/tea and dessert if available. Monthly fee for lunches (150 euro) will be deducted from food allowance.

During the weekends volunteers prepare their own meals from ingredients they buy from a local shop or supermarkets in the town, and during the harvest season they also receive vegetables from our organic cooperative garden.

## **Pocket money and travel expenses**

Volunteers receive pocket money 155 euros per month. The project will also cover moderate travelling expenses between the ecovillage and the volunteer's home town to the project and back depending on the distance.

## **Detailed info**

### **The host, Livonsaaren yhteisökylä**

Website: <http://yhteisokyla.net>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LivonsaarenYhteisokyla/>

It 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 common social happenings. The ecovillage was established in

year 2005.

We are now more than 30 adults and 13 children who live in this community. 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 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 most successful ecovillages in Finland: we are growing, we have a 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:

- living in a natural way
- ecologically sustainable life
- ecological and natural building
- innovative building materials and techniques
- sustainable, innovative and beneficial small businesses that can also economically support the residents
- non-profit communal businesses
- civil actions of many kinds
- permacultural applications and experiments
- developing greater degree of self-sufficiency
- organising events of many kinds
- networking within the 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 the 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 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 13 500 €. The company also receives income mostly from renting indoor spaces and land.

## **Our experience as a host organisation**

We have been a receiving and coordinating organisation in eight ESC (former EVS) projects since 2012. Each year we have hosted two, three, four or five volunteers from five to seven months.

## **Transportation**

There are several private cars available for ESC volunteers to book in advance and use for their needs. Also there is a ride-sharing system in use 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.

There are at least three bus connections a day to the city from Livonsaari, except on weekends.

The volunteers will have their own used bicycles, which they use to get to different parts of our ecovillage, and to nearby places.

Travel expenses of volunteers spare time and 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 there are some 300 permanent residents, plus many other people have summer cottages on the island.

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, with population 186,756 (2016). Our ecovillage is connected with Turku in many ways. The cultural life in Turku has much attracted our volunteers, and we support volunteers' connections with the city.

## **Social life**



The volunteers will be interacting mostly with the other residents of the ecovillage, their friends, families and possibly other residents of the island. We arrange communal events 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 and other communities. The volunteers are encouraged to arrange social events on their own.

Every year volunteers visit other places that host ESC projects and their volunteers have visited us. Several times 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 email groups, in which they can address any concerns and propose any ideas.

## **Mentoring**

There will be a principal mentor plus assistant mentors. The principal mentor will be available throughout the seven month period. In case the principal mentor cannot be reached or does not know the answer, the ESC project staff 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 mentor and ESC staff will explain and teach the volunteers everything they need and/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 ESC 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 in May. The volunteers will meet with other volunteers who are in Finland. Another midterm training camp will be held in Sipoo in October.

## **Finnish language support**

We offer an elementary Finnish language course of 20 hours during the project. It will be taught by a native speaker with experience in teaching. 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 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. If volunteers' help will be needed on weekends, they can have a day off during the week.

There will be two national holidays, which are days off work: the first of May and Midsummer.

In addition to the above mentioned days off, the volunteers will have a total of 14 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 at least 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 the supervision of a 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. There may be some other farming-related work too, in addition to the co- operative garden.

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

3) The second major area includes helping with common tasks like making firewood, maintaining 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.

## **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 stable 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. Our volunteers can learn from how we live our lives and create 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 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: attitude 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.

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## Contact

### **Livonsaaren yhteisökylä ESC project**

Name of the organisation:

Livonsaaren yhteisökylä Oy ESC accreditation reference as coordinating and receiving organisation: 2017-1-FI01-KA110-046606  
National id: 1959973-8 PIC: 933826567

E-mail: livonsaari.evs@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/livonsaari.evs/> Address: Pohjanpääntie 49, 21180 Livonsaari, Finland Skype: livonsaarievs

### **Personnel in charge of the project**

Elvīra Dudkova, project coordinator  
+358452001350  
dudkovaelvira@gmail.com

## Applying

- 1) You are 18-30 years old.
- 2) You are willing and able to spend the whole period from the first of April to the end of October 2020 with us in Livonsaaren yhteisökylä.
- 3) Read this detailed description carefully through and ask yourself whether this is the kind of volunteering project you want to participate in.
- 4) Send your application to us to [livonsaari.evs@gmail.com](mailto:livonsaari.evs@gmail.com). The deadline for applications is **Sunday February 1st**.

During February we will select the participants and interview the most suitable applicants through Skype. During the last week of February, at the latest, we will get back to applicants who meet the most important criteria.