

EMVS (Euro Med Voluntary Service) comes to Kfar Vradim, Israel

After one and a half year of SALTO training courses, Action 5s and 1s both as coordinators, hosting and sending structure, the "Kfar Vradim Euro Med desk" has almost finished its first successful volunteer project.

The project consisted of four volunteers (2 from Germany and 2 from Austria) working with disabled and disadvantaged young people.

One of the volunteers worked in the Druze village of Chofesh in the upper Galilee with children at risk and youngsters from very low socio economic background. The volunteer was involved in informal activities with these youngsters after school hours including such activities as arts and crafts, dance and help with homework.

Two volunteers worked in Maalot – Tarshicha, a multi cultural community in the Cochav (Star) Center working with autistic people. Their activities included working with them in arts and crafts, the carpentry shop, the plant houses and the special paper factory where paper is made in the traditional method from the bark of cherry trees. This paper was then used to make gift items (place-mats, cards, bookmarks, photos and so on).

All these activities were aimed not only at helping to occupy the participants and at helping them to physically and mentally develop, but also at providing a source of additional income to these participants plus a way for them to be accepted by the community.

The fourth volunteer worked in two places one in Kfar Vradim in the junior high school with youth with special educational needs and in Hadera with the minority Ethiopian community who are suffering from alienation, unemployment and socially related problems. The volunteer worked with these young people after school hours helping them in their school work and developing and implementing activities.

All projects allowed the volunteers to experience the different cul-

tures existing in Israel. The volunteers lived all together in Kfar Vradim. This gave the volunteers the opportunity to experience independence and the need for flexibility while living with others. All volunteers were given a 'family' (mentor) who they could visit and experience the daily life of a family in Israel and celebrate religious holidays and festivals.

▼ Description Kfar Vradim Euro Med Desk

The Kfar Vradim Euro Med desk was established 2 years ago. The desk is situated in the picturesque village of Kfar Vradim in the hills of the Western Galilee of Israel and although partly supported by the local council of Kfar Vradim, the desk's objective is to provide services and help to all organisations that fall within the framework of the region.

This includes all cultures, religions (Druze, Tchakazis, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Beduins).

Presently the desk is working with 2 regional councils, 1 local council and specific organizations that work with minority groups (Ethiopians, Muslims, Druze), disadvantaged groups (socio-economic) and disabled (autistic and mentally challenged).

A mid-term meeting was held with all volunteers in Israel under the hosting of the Israel National Coordinator (Mr. David Krausz). During the 10 months in Israel various trips were organized to see, learn and experience the different aspects of Israel, its history, cultures and geography.

We believe that the project was positive for all those involved (volunteers, participants, host & sending organisations and for the mentors).

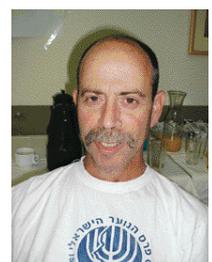
We thank Euro Med and SALTO for the possibility of this most successful experience and we hope that this will be the first of many.

▼ Dan Wollner

Director – EuroMed Desk (Kfar Vradim)

Dan has a Masters Degree in Commerce with majors in Industrial Psychology and Finance. He has had over 23 years success in the private business sector (specializing in the area of marketing), holding many executive positions.

Four years ago, Dan decided to change direction and attempt to make the world a "better place". The start in this direction was after hearing of Euro Med and the attendance in SALTO courses and Action 5 projects.



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