



eco-action inspired by simple living

Boskanter, in the Flemish part of Belgium, wants society to change radically so that living within the boundaries of the ecosystem becomes easy and self-evident. Resilience, cooperation with nature, fair distribution, low-tech and local where possible are parts of our solution. We are looking for volunteers who search a place where they can try out more simple living close to nature, together with like-minded people. We make time to discuss, share and reflect on how to find a place for that in the world and perhaps also for some action. Meanwhile you help us in the daily life on the farm and to further build out and organize the place. You become part of the team, having some say in which direction we take for the months to come.

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| from spring for up to 12 months | for 2 to 5 months in summer | pocketmoney 4/day, travel covered | food and lodging on the project |
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CONTEXT

The project consists of two farms at 8 km distance, each of them inhabited by a family with two teenage kids. Each farm can host two long term volunteers. Regularly we'll organise activities together. In the summer months, more international volunteers join the project.

The farms have an orchard, a soil-building permaculture garden, animals (chickens, horse/donkey, dogs, cats and sheep) grassland and woodland. They are partly built with cob and other natural construction methods. There is a library with inspiring books and there are, for the responsible and ambitious volunteer that takes initiative, recourses and tools to practise a lot of nature-bound crafts such as making wooden spoons, basketry, spinning and wool-dying, rope-making, ...

Be aware that this exchange is a full immersion. You live and work in the same place and with the same people (family and other volunteer(s)). To make it work it's important to share the values of the project and to invest in the group, so you can feel at home, and we too. To support that, we organise regular meetings and reflection moments. Of course weekends can be spent exploring Belgium and the villages around. Of course you can visit and invite friends and the mentors outside the project will help you find your way. Of course there are interactions with the neighbourhood and social activities. But you will live of the land with a family in the countryside, close to nature but away from any big city. Make sure that is what you want in the first place.

Boskanter is not a productive farm. We get a little bit of income from selling products, but the farming is in the first place in function of the self-sustainable life of the inhabitants and the visitors, to support the activities for the neighbourhood, to explore, to experiment and to inspire. The farms are also not self-sufficient in all aspects, and keep evolving in this respect with the help of the volunteers.



ACTIVITIES

You (help) run the garden a whole season long, build compost and fertile soil, scythe, coppice and shred greens and browns, harvest and preserve fruits and vegies, collect herbs and nuts, ...

You can learn to heat and cook in an efficient way on wood, to prepare food using the garden and some basic ingredients, to shop wood and do some crafts. You may help with fencing and animal care and help repair or construct parts of the buildings with natural methods.

When there are other volunteers, you help hosting them. This will be international short term volunteers during the summer months and sometimes local volunteers coming for half a day or young people needing a time-out. Then you can pass on the skills you already learned and supervise them in the (garden) work.

On regular moments, we will reflect on this way of living and how to apply the experience in the farm to support the transition to a more sustainable world in our private lives and trough the activities and blog of Boskanter. We will also make some excursions to inspire these reflections.

You help organise the activities for the neighbourhood such as pizza party, crafts evenings, work days and workshops.

PRACTICALS

Travel and arrival

Travel costs to the project are paid back with a maximum, depending on the distance. Europe pays some extra for sustainable travel and you get 31€ per travel day for food and lodging with a maximum of three days per trip.

Somewhere at the start of your stay, you will join a one week 'on-arrival training', organised by the Flemish national agency for the group of ESC volunteers that will start in that period. A second week will be organised somewhere halfway your exchange.

Accommodation and food

You stay on the farm in a private, not heated room or a wagon. The living conditions are simple, including a wood stove-heated communal kitchen/living room, outdoor dry toilets, a sun-heated outdoor shower in summer and stove heated warm water to use in a tub in winter. On the other hand, there is electricity, WIFI and a laundry machine.

The food provided on the project is local, organic, seasonal, mostly vegetarian and home-processed. You share the cooking and meals with the families.

Language

On the farm, you can practise speaking Dutch. Online courses are offered to learn it. During the summer, the main language might be English.



Moving around

There are bikes and you get a bus and a train card.

Both farms are located in the Flemish Ardennes, one of the most beautiful regions in Flanders, with a hilly and often surprising landscape. At biking distance, there are small towns with shops, parks, bars and restaurants, swimming pools and libraries. Bigger cities are reachable by public transport in about one-and-a-half hour (Brussels, Gent,...).

Organisation

- Meeting moment every morning to discuss the activities of that day and any urgencies.
- We try to make time every day/week, next to the work-work for more creative, playful, building together kind of work.
- Weekly meetings to plan the work, who's where when, ...
- You get two free days per month, to be taken up when you want in negotiation with the project.
- Five working hours per day, including meeting, excluding reflection moments, language course, cooking and shores.
- Flexibility with working hours is possible.
- Within the activity field of the project you have freedom to put your own accents, for example on gardening, food, bread making, eco construction, animal care, medical herbs, forest work, crafts, communication, activities with people, ...
- Also in the free time, there is a tendency towards social and nature-related activities such as making music, playing games, bike or walk in nature, read, artwork, crafts, ...

Money and insurance

- You get 4€ of pocket money per day.
- On free days when you are not on the farm, you can take food and you get 10€/day
- You are insured for accidents and reliability.

HOW TO APPLY?

Send an e-mail to esc@boskanter.be. Explain your motivation to join this project, what place it would take in your life and how you feel about the living conditions we described. We will answer, ask for more information and/or invite you for a talk to explore our future cooperation.

You can also just mail or call for more information.

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