

LOCAL VOLUNTEERING FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DURATION & TOPICS:

8 to 10 months
Nov'22 - Aug'23

Childhood & Youthwork

Community
development

Culture



ACTIVAR - ASSOCIAÇÃO DE COOPERAÇÃO DA LOUSÃ

Host and Coordinating Organisation

Activar is a non-profit association for local development. Its work on the community is based on the development of social and cultural projects in several fields of action, namely: childhood, youth, family, sports, nature tourism, vocational training and active ageing.

Activar has strong links with the

community and solid partnerships on local, national and international levels. In Activar we believe that sharing and cooperation are key drivers for improved learning, development and increased value.

The main Activities carried out by Activar are: Childhood activities (around 120 children aged 3-6); Youth office (activities and

individual support for young people aged 10 to 30); Local Contract for Social Development (social and community work at local level); Sports (Karaté, Krav Maga, Zumba, among others); Nature tourism activities (guided activities and "Casa da Eira" - a tourism office, local products shop and exhibition center in the schist village of Talasnal; Center for vocational training.

VOLUNTEERING FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The "who", "what" and "why" of this project

The project will integrate 2 volunteers from Italy and Turkey who will be offered several opportunities for personal growth and learning. The tasks and activities will lead volunteers to value collaborative work, creative work and the power of relationships to accomplish goals when working closely with children and teenagers.

Volunteers will be given the chance to work with small children or teenagers on a regular basis and to develop side activities and events for the general community.

LOCAL also aims to inspire the local youth to pursue their self-development through

volunteering and intercultural experiences, which is extremely important in a small town like Lousã, where non-formal education and less "standard" paths are barely considered, as well as promote its recognition among families and the local community in general.

WHAT ABOUT RESULTS?

Learning and growing by DOING is the best method in this project.

We expect participants to develop a wide range of personal, professional, social and citizenship skills while carrying out the project activities and their own personal ideas and contributes to the organisation,

as well as the ability to reflect about themselves as individuals and as members of a wide global society and to recognize their learnings, achievements and potential to keep being active citizens for a peaceful world.

"transformation is a process, not an event"

**John P. Kotter,
Leading Change**

Target groups and the community will benefit too and will become more aware, receptive, curious, and eventually actively involved in future actions regarding interculturality, volunteering and non-formal education.



WORKPLACES AND ACTIVITIES

The "where" and "how" you will do it

One of the volunteers will work daily with 3 to 6 year-old children in post-kindergarten activities in one or several of Activar's 3 kindergarten facilities.

The other volunteer will work regularly with teenagers from the

youth center as well as support the organisation on other activities at the main office.

While sharing the project goals and developing playful activities, bringing out the intercultural added value, each volunteer will

adapt strategies and ideas to their target audience, making use of their own skills, talents and personality. They will, of course, rely on the support of Activar's workers in kindergarten, youth office and main office teams during contact activities.



There are also activities which will be shared and done together by both volunteers:

- repair and/or create new toys to support children, youths and families with economical difficulties;
- promote volunteering among the local community, especially the youth;
- cooperate with other volunteers and staff members of Activar in the development of punctual activities for local development (ex: mass training in life support, local fairs, cultural events, etc.);
- disseminate the results of their activities (ex: on Activar's communication channels, dialogue with locals, creating a manual/exhibition with pictures and/or physical outputs of developed activities, etc.);
- develop a personal project;
- learn Portuguese language;
- having fun while contributing to society and living a unique adventure!

VOLUNTEER PROFILE AND VALUES

Are you cut out for this project?!

Young people often hear about how much they can get, earn and experience by becoming volunteers. It's definitely true that you can enjoy, learn and grow from all the experiences you will have in the project and from all the people, the places and the cultures you will get to know.

However, all of that is mainly just the setting for volunteering to take place.

The real growth and achievement will come from how much you involve yourself in the new context, how much you open yourself to the relationship with others, how much you give and leave your contribution and your identity in everything you do.

It's also a good reminder to highlight that long-term volunteering is no fairy tale... It can be a once in a lifetime experience, but the whole reason why it's so meaningful is because it's far from being perfect. You can expect great, joyful and fulfilling moments as well as struggling ones and all together they will allow you to evolve.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Mahatma Gandhi

But in the end, you will earn twice as much as you gave, if not more!

IN ORDER TO BE HAPPY IN THE PROJECT, VOLUNTEERS SHOULD SHOW:

- interest and pleasure to work closely with children and youth;
- awareness of their responsibilities as volunteers;
- sense of mission and purpose;
- solidarity/willingness to contribute to the community and/or non-profit organisations;
- flexibility and interest or openness for collaborative work;
- creativity and interest in handcrafting;
- a wish for self growth and self investment;
- curiosity and openness towards diversity and new cultures;
- openness to live in another country and adapt to a new environment;
- commitment to learning the portuguese language;
- willingness to have new experiences and share their own ones.



LOUSÃ - A TOWN OF MANY MOUNTAINS

A glimpse of the project destination



Lousã is a small town of around 17.000 inhabitants, surrounded by a beautiful natural landscape. It is famous by its typical schist villages, hiking and downhill trails and locally produced honey.

As a small town, it has all the basics for a comfortable living, such as supermarkets, bakeries, restaurants, cafés and bakeries, pharmacy, public health center, private health clinics, post office, town hall, public library, parks and some river beaches.

Sports lovers will find many opportunities, either in clubs or outdoors. There is also a gym and a swimming pool and Activar has its own sports practice groups and a checkers team.

For fans of culture, there are some events in Lousã, but one might need to head to the city of Coimbra for a wider offer. If we're talking about practice, Lousã has two music schools, a dance academy, a choir, a philharmonic band, a few traditional dancing groups and an amateur theatre group. Former volunteers have found their place in some of them!

Portuguese people are praised for their hospitality and Lousã is no exception. In shops you will be welcomed with a smile, even if accompanied by a little shyness towards speaking english! However, people are absorbed in routine and not always will be eager to embrace new activities.

The weather in Lousã can get really cold during the winter (sometimes we have a little snow at the highest peak) and really hot during the summer (up to 36°). Therefore, winter clothes as well as sunscreen will be much needed, not to mention a good raincoat or umbrella! You will notice that not all buildings are well prepared for the portuguese winter, for which we usually need winter clothes even inside buildings and an extra blanket for a warm and comfortable night of sleep.

Lousã is the place for a volunteer who enjoys small towns, nature, and a good challenge when it comes to going the extra mile to involve the locals for change.

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

All about accommodation, food, transports and volunteer support

ACCOMMODATION

Volunteers will share a rent flat located in the center of the town, at walking distance to the services mentioned before. There is free wireless internet access at home and 1 bicycle per volunteer.

FOOD

Food allowance will be given to the volunteers every month and they will be able to do all the shopping and cooking as the accommodation has an equipped kitchen.

TRANSPORTS

Volunteers will be able to reach the workplaces by bike or on foot and use Activar's van punctually for long-distance activities. There are local public transports as well as to the closest city - Coimbra.



LINGUISTIC SUPPORT

Volunteers will be given access to the Online Linguistic Support (OLS) platform where they will study and learn portuguese language. Support for clarifying doubts and motivation for oral practice will be ensured by the volunteer coordinator.

If wished, volunteers will receive options and support to contact qualified centers for language certification by the end of the project.

PROJECT SUPPORT

Regular meetings and integration in Activar's teams as well as "on the job" training will be provided to the volunteers on a regular basis. The volunteer coordinator will be part-time available for support at all project levels, as well as emergency situations.

Activar will also assign and introduce a mentor to each volunteer who will support the integration in the community and mediate conflicts if ever needed.

NATIONAL TRAININGS

Volunteers will also be enrolled on the On-arrival training and Mid-term evaluation provided by Portuguese National Agency.

These are intensive learning and reflection moments which can take place in any city in Portugal and gather together a group of volunteers who are currently carrying out their projects in Portugal. The first one is close to the beginning and the second around the middle of the project.

CONTACTS

If you feel that this project is for you, let us know



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SENDING PARTNER (OPTIONAL)

Sending
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