

Tallinn Centre for Children at Risk Lilleküla Centre

ORGANISATION DESCRIPTION

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Tallinn Center for Children at Risk is Tallinn welfare organization, where children who have been left without parental care or have behavioral or substance abuse problems, get professional help. This organization has two centres: a shelter in Lilleküla and a rehabilitation centre for children with different substance abuse problems at Nõmme street.

Lilleküla Shelter is the oldest shelter for children in Tallinn - it was founded in 1993 right after the Estonian re-independence. The shelter has 14 places for children and is open 24 hours a day. Children come into shelter for various reasons, most common are vagrancy, home negligence, family violence, parental alcoholism or drug abuse, and parental unemployment or loss of residence due to family poverty. Most of the children are brought to the shelter by the police or child protection worker.

The staff that works directly with the children consists of the manager of shelter, nine social workers and a nurse who all aim to provide the children a safe environment which helps to foster their personal development.

MOTIVATION AND EVS EXPERIENCE

Our organization, Lilleküla Shelter, has not co-operated with EVS before, but we have had many other volunteers from Estonia and abroad. We hope that the help of EVS will bring new positive dimensions and values into our children's life. At the same time the project will give a great learning opportunity not only for children but also for the volunteers.

PROJECT ENVIRONMENT

Tallinn Centre for Children at Risk Lilleküla Centre is located in Tallinn, which is the capital and the largest city of Estonia. It lies on the northern coast of Estonia by the Gulf of Finland. The city is an important industrial, political and cultural center and seaport. Tallinn's population is registered 416 144 (as of 1st of January 2012). In addition to the native Estonian language, Russian, Finnish and English are widely understood in Tallinn. Although extensively bombed by Soviet air forces during the latter stages of World War II, much of the medieval Old Town still retains its charm. The Tallinn Old Town (including Toompea) became a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 1997. Tallinn has also gained its glory as the European Capital of Culture in 2011.

Tallinn Centre for Children at Risk Lilleküla Centre is open for children of 3-17 years of age however most children are 7-14 years old. A child at risk may stay at the centre from one night up to a year. If possible then children continue to attend their own school but if it is really necessary, then they will change schools. Pre-school children stay in the shelter. Age-appropriate games and activities are carried out by the center's social workers.

The staff that works directly with the children, consists of the manager of the centre manager, nine social workers and a nurse. The manager of the shelter communicates with its surrounding area specialists for each child's case, it mainly includes the child's family, child welfare worker, a representative of the school, and sometimes even the police. Jointly they define the problem and find common objectives for positive solution for the case. Social workers help to obtain necessary hygiene habits and social skills. They help school kids with their studies and create favorable environment for learning habits. On arrival to shelter, the nurse evaluates each child's state of health and if necessary, organizes further research with medical specialists.

Approximately 80% of shelter children are sent back home after their stay in the centre. If necessary, they remain under the supervision of the social welfare worker.

* Participation of motivated EVS volunteer is seen as an exciting innovative element refreshing

the daily routine and bringing additional educational value to the pedagogical process. The main idea is to provide assistance and support local personnel in daily work, particularly in running various educational and free time activities for the children. It is also to provide some experience and practice of foreign languages and intercultural learning both for children and local personnel. At the same time it gives valuable field experience of the social and youth work to the EVS volunteer accepted to the project.

After on-arrival orientation meeting aimed at the integration of the volunteer to local realities and explanation of aims and activities of the host project, the EVS volunteer will be carrying out the following tasks:

- looking after the children and helping staff in teaching them different useful skills
- running additional educational activities in the house using its own facilities
- teaching children foreign languages through joined games, songs, sport, any other activities indoor and outdoor, which the EVS volunteer will be running
- presenting his/ her home country and its culture as a part of intercultural learning
- arranging children's outings, e.g. culture visits, excursions, hikes, picnics, etc.
- playing with children

Another task of the volunteer can be to establish contacts with similar institutions in his/ her home country in order to have mutually beneficial co-operation/ exchanges between institutions in future.

Typical week day in Shelter House looks like follows:

06:45 - children wake up

07:15 - breakfast

07:30 - children go to school

15:00 - children return from the school - time for games, sport, etc.

17:00 - classes, homework, preparation for the next day at school

18:30 - dinner

19:30 - different activities or free time

22:00 - children go to bed

The period spent at the shelter varies from days to a year. To shorten the time spent at the Children's Shelter, we try to improve cooperation with families (briefing parents on the opportunities for receiving legal advice and psychological counselling and the possibilities for receiving family-centred assistance) as well as with guardianship authorities (case discussions in the shelters) with the goal of helping the child return home or to a foster family as quickly as possible.

* The first priority is that the volunteer is motivated and interested in meeting and working with the target group. Previous experience of any kind of social work with young people is preferred but not necessary. The volunteer should be active, energetic, creative, taking initiatives, adaptable, open-minded, sociable, positive, responsible and reliable.

From our volunteers we expect that they are non-smokers and have no substance abuse or criminal history.

We also require a health certificate for not carrying any infections.

* We can host one volunteer at a time.

* The host organisation will ensure:

1) that the volunteer work is safe and been assessed for risk

2) that every effort is made that project meets high health and safety standards

3) that the volunteer is trained and familiar with the volunteering work and have access to adequate safety equipment if needed

4) that the volunteer will get all the practical and psychological support from the staff.

The volunteer will have an experienced tutor who will help the volunteer to understand the new environment and feel more comfortable. Volunteer will have the opportunity to learn Estonian

language.

Accommodation for volunteers will be organised by our coordinating organization NGO Noortevahetus Arengu Ühing ESTYES: the volunteer will live in apartment with convenient transport connectivity to the workplace, each volunteer either in a separate or shared room. Apartment is fully furnished with beds, bedclothes, bath/shower & equipped kitchen. As an alternative, the volunteer can live in a student hostel or in a respectable local family with the same conditions.

Food will be prepared by the volunteer at home, food money will be provided by our coordinating organisation. In addition, volunteers will be paid a monthly allowance according to EVS financing rules.