

# Ukraine Cultural Center

## ORGANISATION DESCRIPTION

The Ukrainian Cultural Center is a non-denominational organization open to people of all faiths. Our Center is located side by side with Tallinn's Ukrainian Catholic Church and Tallinn Paper Mill. Those of us who work at the Ukrainian Cultural Center are dedicated to promoting Ukrainian Culture in Estonia. We provide a place where local Ukrainians can preserve their language, culture, and traditions. The Center also makes it possible for Estonians and people of other nationalities to learn more about the Ukrainian way of life. The organisation serves as both a community center and a Sunday School for the Ukrainian Catholic parish in Estonia.

Since protecting ancient traditions and disappearing techniques is one of our main aims, we regularly organize workshops and courses that teach a number of different medieval arts and crafts. Our courses and workshops are usually organized for children and adult, so everyone who are interested in. They include papermaking, calligraphy, bookmaking, ceramics, weaving, icon painting and traditional woodwork. Sunday School for children is held every Saturday morning. We also constantly organize Ukrainian ethnographic exhibits and participate every year actively in the Old Town Days, a medieval family festival in Tallinn. It's hard to describe all our activities at once, for many of them are flexible, and we are permanently searching for ways of extending this list.

## Project context

Tallinn 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 (which is of the Finno-Ugric group, closely related to the Finnish 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.

Ukrainian Cultural Center is housed in a beautiful 14th Century building located within the medieval walls of Tallinn's Old Town. Tallinn's Ukrainian Catholic Church and Ukrainian Catholic Convent can also be found on the same grounds. The intriguing building, right alongside the city wall, is indeed medieval, but during its long history it has always served a secular purpose. The Ukrainian congregation thoroughly renovated the building and made it unusually charming - a sacred building which seems, at once, historical and modern. The church interior with Petro Gumenyuk's iconostasis is also remarkable.

## Proposed Activities

During their Service, the EVS volunteers will have a chance to participate in all activities of our centre. In other words, they are going to have unique opportunities of studying old techniques, medieval arts and crafts, including papermaking, calligraphy, book art, ceramics, weaving, icon painting and traditional woodwork. They can also be involved in various renovation works in our carpentry workshop or in designing the herbal garden on the grounds of the center. Apart from this, we expect our volunteers to participate in different cultural events organized by our center. They can also take part in concerts and exhibitions, and get practical as well as theoretical knowledge about art history.

There are many activities, which volunteers can be involved in. We have launched a large-scale project called the Scriptorium. The project is based on the idea that knowledge and talents of every human being are unique and important. By creating a place for keeping this knowledge, we save it from disappearing. The Scriptorium was created exactly for such purpose. People can come here to write letters to be stored at our church or write stories that are in some ways significant for them. These letters and stories are written on handmade paper made at our own

papermaking workshop. Volunteers can contribute to this project by helping us make paper and ink.

Volunteer will maintain the knowledge of handicraft paper making also during the project of Poetics Book for Endangered Species and Cultures. During that project, volunteer will meet different people from various cultures, who visit our place regularly.

Ukrainian Cultural Center maintains collections of nation items, which need complete organaizing and structuring. We will give an opportunity to consultate with professional restorers and museum workers. We have good connections with Estonian Open Air Museum, Tallinn City Museum and Estonian Museum of Art(KUMU). During that project, the volunteer will have an opportunity to communicate with representatives of Estonian culture.

Volunteers can also find themselves interested in creating Tallinn's Noah's Ark, which is a unique project aimed at preserving and protecting the world's endangered species. The project is based on the idea of collecting pairs of unique toy animals, hand-crafted in traditional folk techniques. Volunteers can contribute to the Noah's Arc project by producing traditional toys from their own culture. This way they can also help to promote the idea of protecting nature and form an environmentally friendly outlook on life. One of the activities for volunteers would be introducing the Noah's Ark project in Grusbeke tower and leading the excursions in the rooms of Ukrainian Cultural Center.

Volunteers will also be welcomed to participate in Sunday School for children, which take place every Saturday. There are various activities taking place in our Center every day and volunteers will be welcomed to join them all. They will also have opportunity to meet many different people, who come here everyday, among them artists, journalists, people interested in art, history and culture. These all can provide volunteers not only new learning opportunities, but also a great intercultural experience.

We will also offer opportunities to do workshops in Museum of Narva and Leisi School in Saaremaa.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to rent a small room for a reasonable price, which will be located on the grounds of the Center. This will help them participate in the daily life of the center and give the chance to truly immerse into the cultural and artistic atmosphere.

The working hours for the volunteer would be 6 hours a day, 5 days a week. We are certain that we can offer a continuous and interesting job and communication with different representatives from different cultures.

Volunteer will have the opportunity to practice Estonian and English.

## **Profile of Volunteer and Recruitment Process**

For most of our activities are focused on preserving culture, art and nature, we would like that volunteers who will come to our organisation will be interested in art, nature, environmental aspects and preserving old art techniques. It would also be very useful if volunteers coming to our organisation had a certain experience in those fields. However, the question of experience is not crucial. The personal motivation to work on these issues is the most important quality we are seeking in our volunteers.

We are ready to teach volunteers all we know and we are also open for new ideas that can be offered by the volunteers. It means that our volunteers will be considered as both students and colleagues. We expect from our volunteers the eagerness to widen their horizon on art and cultural history, nature and philosophy. The main characteristic of a future volunteer should be his or her own personal motivation and willingness to learn, cooperate and work with us. For we believe that in order to develop a profitable cooperation, volunteers should be active themselves, both in recruiting process and during EVS project.

We are open to all partners of our experienced coordinating organisation EstYES, who might have potential volunteers with artistic and historical interests and skills. However, art schools have a good possibility to offer matching volunteers for us. We are open to volunteers from Programme Countries, Neighboring Partner Countries and Other Partner Countries of the World.

## **Support**

We offer a private room which is located in our complex in Old Town. As it is close to the Center then main food stores and sightseeings are accessible by foot and bike. Close by is tram, trolley and bus stops and main train station.

The volunteer will have an 30-35h estonian language course at the beginning of the service. It starts within the first month of the service. Receiving organisation in cooperation with coordinating organisation finds a proper teacher before the beginning of the service. Teacher is going to be someone who is able and willing to teach foreigners. Before coming to the service, coordination organisation EstYES recommend the volunteers to start learning basic estonian by offering them different options for this.

All our staff is ready to support our volunteers with practical, emotional, artistic and professional needs. In case of problems that occur during the voluntary service, there are persons amongst the team who help to solve them.

The coordinating organization EstYES provides volunteer a mentor who will give personal support to the volunteer during their EVS period. Mentor will be support person who is not in any direct way connected to volunteer's projects; mentor is a person who volunteer can turn to in case of any personal questions or problems. The mentor will be available for the volunteer and will introduce the volunteer to other persons who might be helpful. The mentor also acts as the contact person between the volunteer and the local community; assists the volunteer with administrative formalities, should the volunteer be faced with any difficulties; monitors the volunteer's activities and make sure that he/she receives enough support; has regular meetings with the volunteer and pays attention to the volunteer's behavior and general well-being in order to provide the appropriate support.

## **Risk Prevention, Protection and Safety**

Ukrainian Cultural Center is housed in a beautiful 14th Century building located within medieval walls of Tallinn's Old Town, which is considered a safe living area. We also have the possibility to rent a living place for EVS volunteers directly at the project. This way, we will be able to take regular care of the living and working condition, providing necessary support and supervising. Volunteers will also be provided with a tutor throughout the project, whose responsibility is taking care of volunteers' daily duties and deal with issues and questions that may appear during volunteers staying in Estonia. Volunteers will also work closely with our staff, who will be working on creating a safe and friendly work environment for volunteers, as well as support them in their daily duties.

As participants of EVS program, volunteers should be covered by AXA insurance plan for EVS volunteers, which should cover possible medical expenses and help to solve possible health-related issues during the EVS period.

We believe that good communication is one of the main ways of preventing possible crisis, so apart from providing a tutor, we also plan to find a mentor, who will be able to support volunteers during their EVS period. Apart from this, volunteers will meet many people who come to our Center everyday and this way they will be able to easily integrate into the local community.