

ABOUT **FIYE** AND INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

FIYE is a vibrant Polish non-governmental and non-profit organisation. Ever since it was established in 1989, FIYE has been active in the field of voluntary service and particularly committed to international youth exchange programmes. Throughout the years, FIYE has developed and successfully carried out a considerable number of volunteer projects with special regard to short-term summer projects (workcamps) and long-term programmes lasting 6-12 months. FIYE considers voluntary service programmes as a unique and excellent form of maintaining international contacts, fostering youth exchange, enabling participants to fight cross-cultural barriers, and developing bonds of long-lasting friendships. Furthermore, FIYE aims at popularising the currently vital concepts of mutual help, solidarity, peace and civic awareness. Volunteers participating in FIYE's projects always emphasise the fact that due to their "Polish experience," they have grown more responsible, open-minded and above all, have managed to stand up to a challenge, test themselves in demanding conditions and initiate a cross-cultural dialogue, which they consider rewarding and valuable in today's world.

Each year over 200 foreign volunteers participate in FIYE's summer workcamps. Additionally, FIYE hosts around 12 young people for long-term programmes. Due to our successful co-operation with other organisations active in the field of volunteering, FIYE also has the pleasure of annually sending about 200 Polish youth abroad to take part in similar projects. Summer workcamps are usually organised in towns and villages and hosted by small communities and their local authorities. FIYE runs social projects for physically and mentally disabled people and also for those coming from abandoned, poor and disadvantaged environments. Additionally, volunteers may take part in renovation/construction projects or such that require simple manual work. The work which the volunteers undertake is particularly useful and valuable to the local people, because it would not be possible otherwise. Moreover, the volunteers have the opportunity to experience contact with the genuine local people, which guarantees a true insight into the community, its daily life and its customs.

SOME GENERAL INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS:

All volunteers who wish to take part in projects organised by FIYE are required to fulfil the following criteria:

- Be between 18 and 26 years of age (volunteers above 26 are also welcome to apply - individual cases will be considered)
- Speak some English, be able to understand simple instructions, follow safety regulations, and take part in workcamp life related discussions. Volunteers applying to work and teach English in the course of a workcamp must speak English fluently and possess some basic pedagogical skills in order to run workshops, teaching English to foreigners, etc. They should be open, interactive and tolerant.
- For certain social projects, volunteers are expected to be highly motivated and dedicated to working with disadvantaged and disabled individuals. They should be ready to provide all kinds of assistance to the local staff, be responsible both for themselves and others, and be flexible and open-minded. If explicitly stated, FIYE might require some recommendations or documents certifying language skills or previous experience and involvement in similar social projects.

SOME INFORMATION CONCERNING WORK:

Volunteers will be expected to work approximately 30 hours a week. The work plan is largely up to the co-ordinator(s), but suggestions from participants are more than welcome. Weekends are usually free, however, some social projects may require weekend work as well. In such cases, volunteers will need to be flexible and adjust to the institution's regulations. Leisure time is largely up to the group and co-ordinators.

WHAT IS PROVIDED ON THE WORKCAMP:

- FOOD – usually, the volunteers are served three meals a day in a local canteen. Alternatively, if explicitly indicated in the brochure, the volunteers prepare their meals themselves.
- ACCOMMODATION – is provided at local schools, youth centres or sometimes in tents, all having access to all basic facilities (toilets, showers). Sometimes the volunteers are requested to bring sleeping bags, as indicated in the brochure.
- One workcamp LEADER and possibly a WORK CO-ORDINATOR - The leader acts as a group co-ordinator and is responsible for assuring that the whole workcamp runs smoothly and that all potential problems and misunderstandings are quickly resolved. He/she is also a volunteer and doesn't get paid for being the leader. She/He makes sure that the volunteers feel well and that the food and accommodation are satisfactory. He/she monitors and supervises all works. Moreover, he/she tries to live up to the group's needs and is responsible for coordinating free time activities (e.g. organising trips and excursions). Above all, his/her role is to integrate the participants and to maintain a friendly atmosphere throughout the workcamp. Should there be a work co-ordinator, he/she is responsible for making sure that all volunteers are aware of their duties. He/she distributes and supervises daily tasks, makes sure that all volunteers have the proper equipment and is in close contact with the local host. All co-ordinators work alongside with participants.

WHAT THE VOLUNTEER NEEDS TO PROVIDE:

- The volunteer covers all costs related to travel and insurance (health, personal belongings and luggage)
- A sleeping bag/mattress if explicitly stated
- Pocket money: the volunteers receive no money in return for their work and need to cover expenses related to the leisure time activities (bus fares, pubs, museums, discos, restaurants and transportation).
- Proper work clothes: this is particularly important for construction, renovation and manual projects.
- In certain cases of educational camps, where the volunteers teach English to kids, they are expected to prepare respective teaching materials before coming to the workcamp.
- Any extra materials and supplies that a volunteer may need for interactive games and role playing. Something typical from his/her home country (a costume, album, tape or postcard) to present to others are more than welcome.