

SEEDS, SEE beyonD borderS, Iceland was founded in the year 2005 and its main office is located in Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. SEEDS, is an Icelandic non-governmental, non-profit organisation with international scope. Our main field of activities is related to the promotion of peace and cultural understanding through the work on nature-oriented, outdoors activities, cultural events, heritage work and environmental issues.

SEE beyonD borderS, SEEDS, aims at promoting respect for cultural diversity, mutual understanding and environment protection through activities which empower, promote and aid people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds. SEEDS provides them possibilities and opportunities to live, study, experience, exchange, research and work together.

Based on real projects as exchanges, international camps, research activities, on-field work, voluntary service, educational programmes, seminars, SEEDS, gives space, time and room to the participants in our activities to face challenging situations, which will enable them to broaden their perspectives, own opinions and positions about themselves, the environment we are living in and our active role in the future development of the world in terms of peace, tolerance, cross-cultural learning and environmental sustainability.

We want to empower people of all ages, cultures, and nationalities to protect the environment by effective citizen action. We involve both young people as adults in our activities to develop in them the values and skills for global citizen cooperation and earth protection.

Activities developed by SEEDS, SEE beyonD borderS, include:

- International workcamps
- European Voluntary Service
- Exchanges
- Seminars, training sessions
- Leonardo da Vinci Programme
- Practical and language training.

SEEDS, SEE beyonD borderS, in Iceland works closely with local communities, their administration or authorities and with other Icelandic associations. Jointly we develop projects aimed at fulfil an identified need or to help in the development of particular actions that are already being undertaken.

We are members of the Icelandic National Youth Council and internationally, we are partners of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations as of Service Civil International (SCI) and Youth Action for Peace (YAP).

SEEDS has just turned 2 years old and at the same time has successfully completed its second season of projects all around Iceland. The year 2007 was a very successful and fulfilling one for us; while the level of our activities increased significantly from the year before, roughly by twofold. During 2007, in total there were 24 different projects located in every corner of the Icelandic map, 335 International volunteers from 31 different countries took part in our projects, divided in groups of 7 up to 28 committed individuals.

Our projects made its way to every corner of the Icelandic map, from Sandgerði and Kírusvík to Kópasker and Raufarhöfn; from the Drangajökull and Hornstrandir areas to Þórsmörk and Sólheimar, from Reykjavík and Viðey to Þórshöfn and the Langanes Peninsula, including more locations as Akranes, the Bláfjöll mountain range, Dalvík, Hafnarfjörður, Patreksfjörður, Suðureyri and Tálknafjörður.

The types of the projects were mainly nature or environmental oriented, and volunteers performed different types of tasks, for instance ecological research, removing invasive growth, building of walking paths or hiking trails, cleaning up the coastline, reforestation and erosion control works, construction or renovation of a community building, monument or community centre, etc... In the cultural/festival related jobs, SEEDS came into action helping in the organization of the happenings and also taking part actively in the events. This is part of SEEDS' work through short term voluntary service to preserve the environment, promote cultural activities in Iceland while fostering peace and mutual understanding at a global scale.

By developing a diverse array of projects and bringing together people from dissimilar backgrounds, creating more alternatives and opportunities; we continue pursuing our vision and building on our fundamentals trying to promote intercultural understanding, respect for cultural diversity, encouraging peace and environment protection.

Our projects in Iceland are highly supported by the local hosts and the volunteers participating; additionally we received strong support for our long term projects from the Youth in Action and Leonardo da Vinci Programmes of the European Commission.

One of the basic pillars of responsible travelling is giving back, making a positive, personal or group contribution to the people and places we are visiting: Many of our participants wanted to visit Iceland and get to know the country from a different perspective, being able to interact with locals and at the same time dedicating some of their time to support particular projects and addressing specific needs of the hosts.

All parties involved in our projects benefited: The individual volunteers, the local hosting communities and Iceland as a whole! While working in teams tackling the needs and projects, SEEDS also addressed among them human, social and environmental concerns, promoting intercultural and common learning.

The rewards for the volunteers, communities and ecosystems were massive, while mingling with Icelanders, volunteers learned about the local culture and had the opportunity to build friendships; additionally, they developed new skills working under challenging and unfamiliar surroundings and SEEDS tried to pass Environmental messages to International and local participants in our projects.

SEEDS wants once again to express its gratitude to all local communities and associations, both in Iceland and overseas, that trusted us, that allowed us to work with them during our second year of activities and in the same way we hope we managed to fulfil their expectations and responded in an adequate way to their wishes and hopes.

Last, SEEDS wants to thank all those committed individuals that volunteered for us, people that dedicated part of their lives to our cause and that triggered the consequences of our endeavours. Icelandic and foreign volunteers that took aside precious time, from 10 days up to one year, to drive forward this initiative and shape the association, to continues seeing the fruits and results coming from SEEDS spread, laid out and now growing up!

Practical information about our projects:

1. Participation Fees. Participation fees are usually paid to take part in our workcamps and some of the reasons behind to charge the fees are:

- Income to bear the administrative expenditures of the association: Rent, office bills (energy, phone, heating), personnel, external representation, mail, website, postage, equipments, supplies, banking costs, legal formalities, etc.
- Lack of financial support and resources to develop some of our activities (e.g. To pay food in some of the projects and the development of particular study sessions during the camps).
- We also face a particular challenge as voluntary service is not very attractive to Icelanders yet; therefore the income generated by outgoing volunteers is still non-existent for SEEDS.

In the meantime SEEDS is also taking actions in order to send Icelanders overseas and to raise funds in different ways to expand the sources of income for the organization.

The amount of the fees will be stated for each camp in their descriptions.

2. Insurance. Volunteers are asked to obtain health and accident insurance for the whole duration of their travel, prior to the arrival to Iceland and bring with them all needed documents, contact numbers, etc. European volunteers are advised to take with them the European Health Insurance Card or the forms E-111 or E-104. SEEDS itself does not provide any type of insurance for international volunteers, therefore volunteers without insurance will not be allowed to participate in our projects.

3. Study part / Educational Content – Environmental Messengers. Please note that most of our workcamps will have an educational / awareness-raising approach on environmental, nature-protection and sustainable development topics. We will have, apart from the leader(s), a person fully dedicated to organize and develop activities for both the international volunteers and the local communities we work with. This person called the “Environmental messenger” (HEI 2006-ISL-2) will be in charge of activities aiming at raising awareness about environmental issues both within Icelanders, being hosts of SEEDS workcamps, and among the International volunteers taking part in them. Furthermore than the raising awareness content, Environmental messengers will be a source of knowledge on specific topics of significant relevance about environment, nature protection and sustainable development but also will encourage the actors in those projects to undertake simple but easy-to-implement actions which will affect the way we use our resources and we deal with the environment and the world we live in. S/he will be in charge of delivering ecological and global education messages to both, International volunteers and local hosts. S/he will arrange and organise few activities as workshops, presentations, simulations, discussions, games on topics related to environment, nature protection and sustainability as use of resources, globalisation, millennium development goals, climate change, fair trade, recycling, consumption, etc.

4. Transport to Iceland. Concerning the travel to Iceland and being conscious that it might be the most expensive item of the volunteer experience; we have done some research which might be helpful for our participants when arranging their transportation. There will be 5 main airlines flying to Keflavik International Airport:

Iceland Air: www.icelandair.net

Iceland Express: www.icelandexpress.com

British Airways: www.ba.com

Scandinavian Airlines: www.scandinavian.net

Lufthansa: www.lufthansa.de

Germanwings: www.germanwings.com

It is getting easier every day to get to Iceland and now there are these 6 airlines offering scheduled flights all year round to this beautiful country of ice and fire.

If volunteers have plenty of time to spare, the Smyril Line operates a ferry service to the east of Iceland. This is a four to seven days sea adventure for travellers and stops off at the Faeroe Isles on the way! www.smyril-line.com.

5. Arrival and Departure dates. We suggest our participants to arrive to Iceland the latest one day before the workcamp starts, as travel to the project, if arranged by SEEDS (see point 6 below), will leave Reykjavik on the first day of the camp (arrivals day) in the morning. If volunteers choose to go by different means, they might need more than one day to reach the destination by public transportation services. In the same way, volunteers shall not book their return journey the day the camp ends, the earliest one day after the camp finishes. In this way volunteers ensure they will be able to join the camp for its full length.

6. Domestic transport – Minibus. As last years, SEEDS will organise for all of the workcamps a shared transport to and from the workcamps. The meeting point will be in Reykjavik on the first day of the camp, in the morning. Apart from being more convenient and cheaper than public transportation services, this alternative allows volunteers to meet fellow campers and eventually the leaders earlier and have a relaxed trip to the camp site, while stopping on the way for interesting and tourist sites.

7. Accommodation. Concerning accommodation in Reykjavik, SEEDS has made an agreement with the Hostelling International Association in Iceland and our volunteers will receive discount prices in the Reykjavik City Hostel. The hostel has already reserved a number of beds (or places in tents, if the Hostel is fully booked) for SEEDS' groups. The price for a top quality dormitory including all facilities is of ISK 1800 (about EUR 18) a night and ISK 900 (around EUR 9) in tents with access to all facilities.

8. Language. Icelandic knowledge is not needed in our projects, English is officially the language used by leaders and basic knowledge of English is therefore expected from participants, even though it is not a requirement to fulfil.

9. Age. At the moment we are able to receive volunteers aged 18 or over, but hopefully in the future we will receive also teenage participants in our projects. We do not have any upper age limit.