

Description of the Projekt: castle and landscape park Altdöbern by the „Brandenburgische Schlösser GmbH Gemeinnützige Betriebsgesellschaft“ (host organization)

A. Project environment:

The placement is the 66 acre big historic landscape park in the small town of Altdöbern / Brandenburg. It is one of the most important castle- and park complexes in the Lower Lausitz. The park is containing a french baroque garden and a 13 acres big lake, preserved historic trees. The surrounding former brown coal fields are in process of recultivation.

Volunteers from Germany and from abroad work together on the preservation and reconstruction of the historic park monument, guided by an experienced garden engineer. They will live together in a house where cooking and living facilities are provided.

The former mine activities in the area provoked heavy damages to nature and challenges the aim of a qualified restoration of the park ensemble. Care has been neglected for years. By carrying out garden work divided into smaller action projects the volunteers will get to know the fields of tasks of the preservation work, see environmental problems and work in an international team which will promote an intercultural learn experience. The volunteers can develop own small projects.

Place and surroundings: Altdöbern is located in the south of Spreewald and has about 3.500 inhabitants. The village is situated about 35 km from Cottbus (north-east) and Senftenberg (south). The station is located in 10 min walking distance from the volunteers' house. Regional trains take 2 hours to Berlin. The village has two supermarkets, two restaurants, a public swimming pool, sportsclub and a youth club. The walking distance to the park is about 15 min. Bikes are provided.

The house: The volunteers' home will be a house of 9 individual rooms equipped with basic furniture and internet access (WLAN). The common facilities are 2 kitchens, 4 bathrooms, 1 laundry room, 1 living room with TV, 1 dining room and garden. A landline phone is available in the house. EVS volunteers are living together with German volunteers. The volunteers take care of their meals by themselves (money for food is paid via iJGD). An equipped kitchen is provided.

Volunteers can take a German language course. Thanks to the international community in the house volunteers can by their own initiative also form tandems for language exchange.

B. Proposed activities for EVS volunteers:

The work field of the volunteers would be preservation and restoration of historic parks and gardens in form of practical gardening and restoration work as well as introduction to the theoretical and cultural background (elements of style, cultural heritage, garden artists and art in the region). As example: volunteers would work in restoration of historic architectural elements of the park (sight axis, pavillions, bridges), make woodwork-tasks and get further information (names, qualities and use of plants, trees, sorts of wood...).

The following activities can be offered to volunteers:

- Locate historic parks paths and their restoration, maintenance
- Restoration of grassland areas
- Reconstruction of historic water systems and water features

Further park-preservation and restoration related tasks and activities can be discovered:

- Brickwork
- Natural stone work
- Woodwork, wood construction work
- Paving
- Gardening and park care tasks
- Handling of a power saw, string trimmer,...
- Mapping

The daily of the volunteers is supervised and guided by an experienced garden engineer.

Through the EVS-programm an interculturally, internationally mixed group live and work together in the project. Accordingly we can offer tandem- and language animation acitivities as well as workshops focussing the exchange on coutry & culture related topics of participants origin countries. The coming together of German participants from different regions and international participants promote daily exchange and a new consciousness for european identity.

Active participation in local projects, festivities, cooperation with Schools/freetime activities for kids, environmental education will create a personal contact between volunteers and population. The EVS-volunteers will act as "embassadors" for their countries, and create personal bonds, thus contributing to international understanding. In this spirit, EVS-volunteers are invited to bring up their own ideas and realize them in own projects.

C. Volunteer profiles and recruitment process:

The candidates apply at ijgd (coordinating organization). Ijgd organized an information and interview day via skype. The selection is carried out together with the BSG GmbH and the volunteer.

Profile of the applicant:

- interest of living together with other young people from the host country
- interest in the cross-border and cultural background of the region (Brandenburg, Lower Silesia Poland)
- interest in "green" professions (gardener, mason, landscape architecture...)
- motivate to do practical work, garden work
- motivate to work outside
- interest in environment related topics, botany, activity fields of the preservation of parks or monuments
- basic knowledge of German can be an advantage foreign volunteers
- open to all graduations, no pre-formation necessary