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# Info-Kit: Social volunteer programme

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The *Info-Kit* (A) and the *Volunteer Agreement* (B) together constitute what we hereby define as the contract. By signing the contract you agree to have read, understood and accepted the terms and conditions of the volunteer program consisting of A and B.

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## ***The Hostelling International mission:***

*«To promote the education of all young people of alle nations, but especially young people of limited means, by encouraging them a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside and an appreciation of the cultural values of towns and cities around the world, and as ancillary thereto to provide hostels or other accomodation in which there shall be no distinction of race, nationality, color, religion, sex, class, or political opinions and thereby to develop a better understanding of their fellow men, both home and abroad.»*

## **The Hostelling International idea**

Hostelling International (HI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing cultural interchange by facilitating worldwide travel - especially for young people with limited means. HI believes that travel through hostelling creates profound and lasting personal impact. Therefore HI aims to provide opportunities for guests to interact with one another and reflect on their experiences through activities at the hostel or in communities/local hosts programs. The activities must be relevant to the mission and as such designed with the explicit focus of promoting intercultural understanding.

The HI principles and values constitute the foundation of youth hostels in all 77 member nations – including Norske Vandrerhjem (HI Norway) that joined the organization in 1932.

## **Social volunteering – get and give**

In order to materialize our goals and thus carry out our mission, we have in HI Norway established a social volunteer program. It's important to stress, that

a) social volunteer program is two-sided: it helps us towards the realization of the organizational

goals, but is first of all beneficial for the volunteers themselves: by creating tools and developing and facilitating activities the volunteers are equipped with the skills and experiences they need to be active, civic-minded citizens who promote peace, sustainability, and intercultural understanding.

b) social volunteers do not undertake work that would otherwise have been done by staff at youth hostels in HI Norway.

## **Gaining means for reflection**

Hostel vibes depends on everything from the layout of a hostel to the interaction of staff with guests. In co-operation with the hostel the social volunteer provides opportunities for increased interaction of travelers within the hostel, in such ways as using common space to promote guest interaction, facilitating activities open to all guests and social events within and outside the hostel encouraging interaction. The activities will be designed with the explicit focus of promoting intercultural understanding.

By social volunteering it is possible to create a hostel vibe that attracts its primary audience while promoting the mission and connecting guests with one another and the local community.

Both guests and volunteers will gain a means to reflect on the different communities and develop a greater appreciation for diverse people, cultures and societies.

## **The volunteer**

Want to see more of the world? Discover new places, meet new friends, improve language skills and gain confidence? These are just some of the benefits of volunteering.

The volunteer program is for outgoing, confident people who believe that there are people for whom their time, their friendly attitude, energy, skills, and enthusiasm will make a difference – and that this difference gives them a lot in return.

The volunteers - coming from different countries bringing in a wide range of backgrounds and different experiences - play an integral role in fulfilling the mission of promoting global understanding through travel. They are an essential part of the hostelling movement, playing a key role in sharing their own life experiences and passion for travel with hostellers locally and from around the world.

The volunteers will be vital contributors to the future of hostelling by providing innovative ideas, resources, and serving as hostelling ambassadors in their local communities.

## **What to do then?**

Initiating activities related to the HI mission and assuming the role as originator and "the one who press the start button" are typical tasks of the social volunteer. The social volunteer undertakes activities such as: excursions, sports, games, quizzes, barbecue, cultural kitchen, talk, hikes, fishing, sightseeing, coffee and cookies, waffle baking, music - all in the name of cultural exchange and bringing people together.

But most important is perhaps *coffee and cookies* in the afternoon. Not because of the free coffee, but because this is where and when the social volunteer by virtue of his/her presence is able to press the conversations start button. This is when the guests in the living room let go of their books and laptops and begin to communicate. Now we hear stories about the rivers in Bosnia only surpassed by those in France – according to the French. Now we are told why the tax system in Germany is preferable to that of Scotland. And it was while drinking coffee a boy from Australia told the Norwegians and Danes about the history of the Vikings. Coffee and cookies make a perfect platform for spontaneous agreements on joint barbecue next day, hiking, playing games – or going to town the very same evening.

The volunteer program enables volunteers to get involved in the activities of the hostel as well as put forward suggestions for development of new ideas to expand and realize the organizational goals.

Specific daily schedules and activities will be determined between volunteers and the supervisor(s) at the hostels.

We do ask you to act professionally as a representative of HI Norway within your capacity as a volunteer. Hostels have varying rules and policies when it comes to when and where to be silent, if or if not alcohol is allowed, places to smoke or no smoking at all etc. As a social volunteer we expect you to follow the rules applicable at each single hostel. But need we remind you that taking drugs or getting drunk is not what we consider as acting professionally at all and that violation of the contract on these issues (and indeed other mutually agreed issues) can lead to immediate termination of the contract?

## One of us

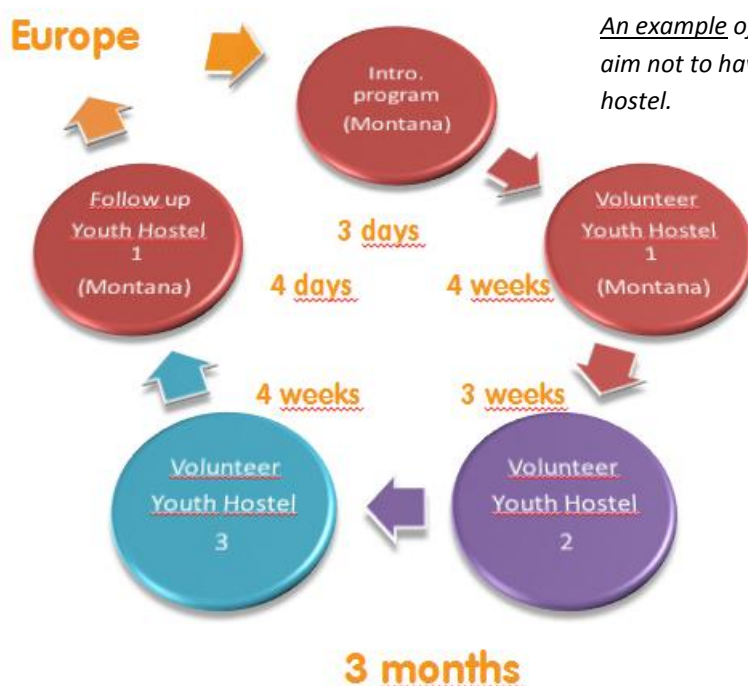
The social volunteer is during the performance of his/her services expected to assist in the marketing, promotion and development of Hostelling International, Western Norway and sustain and promote our volunteer program. How can you do that? You can provide us with photos and write/blog about your experiences and adventures as a social volunteer - and let us use it in our campaign for promoting the hostelling experience and the social volunteer program.

You don't exactly have to write a diary during your stay, but the program ends with following up on the program based on your views, so recording in different ways makes it a lot easier. It is valuable for both parties. Take pictures, make videos and write down along the way and give us your honest opinion – what's hot and what's not – before you go.

## How does it work?

Normally the volunteering program covers stays at more than one hostel and a total period between six weeks (minimum) to six months (maximum). A six-week period is likely to cover just one hostel, though. No matter how long a period is agreed upon you always start out in Bergen with an introductory program at Bergen Hostel Montana. Unless we agree on terminating the whole thing during the introductory program (hopefully we don't...) you carry on as social volunteer at your first hostel: Bergen Hostel Montana. After an agreed period of time (e.g. 3-6 weeks) you continue to the next hostel - and so on. No matter how long your total volunteering period is and how many hostels you have volunteered at, you always end up at Bergen Hostel Montana. Here we conclude the

program with a follow up-theme, where you tell us about your experiences – highlights and downfalls (if any) – in order to further improve our program.



*An example of voluntary work for three months. We aim not to have stays less than three weeks at each hostel.*

Hopefully the volunteering period has given you confidence from a supportive environment, helped you developing skills which will be useful in your future employment or education – and provided you with an intercultural dimension useful in all aspects of life. Before we say goodbye you get your certificate stating that you during your period as social volunteer have acquired skills related to your personal, educational and professional development through non-formal learning: voluntary, planned learning that takes place outside the formal education system through active participation.

## Practical information

Hostelling International, Norway is a member organization. The volunteer is therefore assumed to be a member or become a member of a HI Youth Hostel Association before the voluntary period begins. You can get information about how to purchase a membership card on <http://www.hihostels.com/web/membership.en.htm>

The program usually includes stays at different hostels in Norway - though a short volunteering period may mean a volunteering period at one single hostel. The shortest stay is 6 weeks and maximum is 6 months. If you volunteer more than 90 days you must get an application from Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and register in person at the local police office in Norway. This must be done during the first 3 months of volunteering and *cannot be done before arriving Norway*. You find the application form here: <https://selfservice.udi.no/en-gb/ApplicationGuide/>

Youth hostels are youth hostels - meaning there is no guarantee that you get your own room at every

hostel. Or at any hostel for that matter. You may get a double room (another volunteer might be your roommate) but we will do our utmost so your stay will be a pleasant one.

Towels and linens are provided during your stay. Volunteers are also welcome to use the hostel facilities such as the communal kitchen, TV lounge, washing machines and internet. Facilities differ from one hostel to another.

A weekly food allowance for dinner is provided. Generally, volunteers cook in the common kitchen as part of the program. Breakfast is included daily.

Ideally it will be difficult to separate volunteering services from free time. But you can count on having two days off a week (not necessarily Saturdays and Sundays). An estimation of weekly volunteering services lies around 35-38 hours (approximate normal work week) depending on activities. The amount of hours of volunteering services may vary on both daily and weekly basis. In your free time we encourage you to explore the hostel surroundings and get to know the hostellers travelling through. That's a good way of getting to know Norway and make new friends which are both essential parts of the program.

## **Not included in the program:**

International Airline tickets or fees related to travelling from home to destination (Bergen, Norway).

Travel and health insurance (a travel insurance that includes repatriation in case of emergency or death is required of ALL volunteers). See the Volunteer Agreement for more practical information about insurance.

Costs associated with vaccinations and personal medications.

Meals or food outside of the program.

Expenses related with cultural and/or tourist activities during free time.

Personal expenses / Items for personal use.

## **Who can volunteer?**

Our volunteer must be at least 18 years old and have no major health problems. He or she must have an *open mind, be enthusiastic, outgoing and support aims and objectives of the program/the Hostelling International idea*. Due to lack of facilities at the moment we are unfortunately not able to take wheel chair users.

Good English language skills are mandatory!

## Do you need a visa in order to visit Norway?

It's not a part of Hostelling International, Norway's volunteer program to assist in applying for visa or other possible documents needed for getting to Norway.

We therefore strongly advise you to visit UDI's homepage <http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Visa/Who-needs-a-visa/> where you can find information about who needs visa to get to Norway.

The main rule is that every foreign national need a visa in order to visit Norway. There are however exceptions to this rule:

If the duration of the volunteering period is less than 90 days and you are an **EEA (EU and EFTA countries)** or a **Schengen** national you don't need visa to get to Norway. Nationals of these countries can therefore travel freely into Norway, without applying for a visa. However if you volunteer *more* than 90 days (still talking about EEA and Schengen nationals) you must get an application from Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and register in person at the local police office in Norway. This must be done during the first 3 months of volunteering and cannot be done before arriving Norway. The maximum period of volunteering according to our program is 6 months.

Exemption to the visa requirement also applies to **nationals of countries outside EEA/Schengen that have visa exemption agreements with Norway**. Nationals from countries with exemption agreements can stay in Norway for up to 90 days. People that are *not* EEA or Schengen nationals cannot volunteer for more than 90 days.

**Nationals from countries outside EEA/Schengen AND countries without visa exemption agreements with Norway** need visa in order to visit and volunteer in Norway. Nationals from these countries cannot volunteer for more than 90 days.

## How to apply for the Volunteer program?

Please contact our Social Volunteer Program Coordinator, Jesper Munck by email at: [jesper@hihostels.no](mailto:jesper@hihostels.no) - or by filling out the form at our homepage [www.volunteering.no](http://www.volunteering.no)