

ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEER WORK IN THE ISLAND OF MENORCA

Proposed activities for EVS volunteers:

Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Naturalesa de Menorca (GOB Menorca) has a variety of projects for the European volunteer in which he or she can take part mostly with a team of professionals and volunteers

who have already spent time working in these areas. The volunteer will have at his or her disposal all of the organisation's locations: the central office in Maó, which is in a converted windmill originally for grinding flour in the 18th century (a point of interest for tourists); the nursery garden for autochthonous plants situated near the industrial estate of Maó; the Recuperation Centre for wild animals in Ciutadella; the market garden in Es Migjorn, allotted to GOB for projects for both training purposes and for developing local horticultural varieties, etc. The volunteer will have a training session on arrival bearing in mind the particular tasks to be carried out with the organisation.

The volunteer project aims to work across the whole of the organisation. The volunteer will work under the tutelage of the different people responsible for each project, and will thus be able to get to understand the complete variety of work undertaken by the organisation: The Centre for Wild Animal recuperation, Environmental Education, Vivarium of Autochthonous plants, central office help, Voluntary work, etc.

The project would like the volunteer to take part for approximately 35 hours per week (which here includes the language courses) within the organisation. These will be mostly in the mornings, but on some days or at certain times of the year, the activity will take place more in the evenings. A language course is offered at the Official School for Adults (Spanish for anyone who does not speak it) of three hours per week during two evenings. Equally, there is the possibility of learning Catalan or improving Spanish with someone from the "Bank Time", a very common way of learning languages in the Minorcan community.

The person responsible for Environmental Education and Volunteers will be in charge of coordinating the work of the volunteer in the organisation but also there will be other supervisors from the organisation depending on the sphere of activity in which the volunteer is involved. The volunteer will be able to seek advice from a coach who is not an employee but a volunteer in the organisation and who knows it from the inside.

As the organisation is small, the employees usually perform other jobs apart from their own areas of work. In the same way, the volunteer will be encouraged to participate actively, to



contribute ideas and help as a new line of work is opened or whenever a situation calls for it. Working in the organisation implies feeling a part of it, sharing in its philosophies of life centred on sustainability.

We would like the volunteers to be involved in different projects. They can help at the Recuperation Centre at least once a week, and equally at the nursery garden for autochthonous plants. The different types of work of the organisation vary depending on the time of the year. During the school terms (October to June), the volunteer will assist the Environmental Education Service in courses for school children, with suitable activities (excursions, etc.). During the spring when there is a great demand, they will help with the campaign to train volunteers to care for bird chicks. In the summer they will help with visitors to the Recuperation Centre as well as expanding on ideas for children's activities at the Centre. They will also be involved in the special volunteer days in the project for custodial agriculture. An important part of their tasks will be helping in the management and reinvigoration of volunteer programmes which already exist in the organisation.

Through this method of involvement for obtaining environmental technical knowledge (botanical, nursery garden, veterinary, biodiversity, environmental education, etc), the volunteer will be able to develop his or her social skills such as initiative, self-sufficiency, creativity (for developing activities of his or her own design and execution), the ability to adapt to new situations, working with an organisation, leadership (of other volunteers), etc. Also, the volunteer will be able to increase his or her language competency as much with Spanish (weekly classes) as with Catalan (a form of exchange at Minorcan's Bank Time).

Description of the organisation:

Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Naturalesa (GOB) is a non-profit making organisation which works in the Balearic Islands. The section in Minorca was created in 1977 and has become established as an important part of Minorcan society (with more than 1,200 members on the island). Its basic objective is to help the conservation of environmental values while balancing human activity with nature.

The institution is politically and economically independent. Its aim is to participate within civil society to enforce the democratic right of people to voice their opinions and for them to engage with all matters and discourses concerning environmental issues. An environmental policy: to influence the use made of land and its natural resources; to analyse the consequences of human activity and promote alternatives orientated towards sustainability.

Project Environment:

The island of Minorca is advantageous to the project for European Volunteer work. Minorca is situated at the northeast of the Balearic archipelago in the Mediterranean. It was declared

a Reserve of the Biosphere in 1993; it is an island of important natural value distinct in character from the rest of the Balearic islands. Though hardly 700 square kilometres with 220 kilometres of coast, it has a very diversified countryside.

The head office of GOB Menorca is in Maó and although there is an office in Ciutadella it is used much less. The Wild Animal Recuperation Centre which is managed by GOB is in Ciutadella in some quarries now being used for cultural entity. GOB has a nursery garden specialising in autochthonous plants close to Maó. GOB organises many activities all over the island (excursions, volunteer work, courses etc). The European volunteers will live in the town of Maó, where the main office is situated, but will be able to travel around the island in order to carry out their tasks.

The two GOB volunteers will be lodged in an apartment together. There are bicycles for short distances and for getting to know the country lanes in free time. The volunteers will have at one's disposal pocket money each month for their personal expenses (leisure, personal purchases not directly related with feeding facilities, etc.), also food and hosting expenses are covered.

The project will have a duration of 12 months, starting from October.

Number of volunteers hosted:

This project is for one volunteer. The same association hosts a second volunteer and the volunteers will live together.

Volunteer profiles:

The volunteer who wishes to participate in the project must demonstrate a high level of motivation in order to do the work which is carried out by the organisation on the island. The person must be keen on environmental matters with a philosophy of life similar to that which is promoted by the organisation. What is most important is for the volunteer to have the enthusiasm for working in a team and for being an active citizen. It would be valuable if the volunteer has participated in volunteer work previously. It is not necessary to have a high level of knowledge of environmental matters, but it is important to be interested. We are looking for an independent person with initiative who can adapt to the frequent changes of work situations which take place within the organisation.

The person should be open minded with no rigid views and be able to accept new ways of working together when necessary. We would appreciate that the person has a driving licence which will be very useful for the activities of the organisation (and facilitate the volunteer's own mobility around the island). It is also necessary that they like animals and be able to be near them (for tasks in the Recuperation Centre), and though their confidence will increase it is important not to feel any initial repugnance with the creatures. The volunteer should have the ability to work outside in the countryside and although the work is not hard they should be physically able to do it.

A minimum of English or Spanish is required for to be able to communicate with the supervisors and the organisation staff.

Selection will take place from written applications sent by the volunteers. There will be a selection committee who will evaluate the covering letters and curriculum vitae of the candidates. This group will consist of the person in charge of volunteers, the coordinator of the organisation and the coach.