



Volunteering team project
Elf Around

2.11.-18.12.2025



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*Volunteering team project
Villa Elba, Kokkola 2.11.-18.12.2025*

Welcome to Villa Elba!

Elf Around is a volunteering team project that gathers 18 young people from all around Europe to a small Finnish town of Kokkola. During the project, volunteers will experience the true magic of Christmas by being actively involved in various activities such as painting wooden elves and other Christmas decorations, organizing activities for the Elf Path, and acting as an actual elf for children and families.



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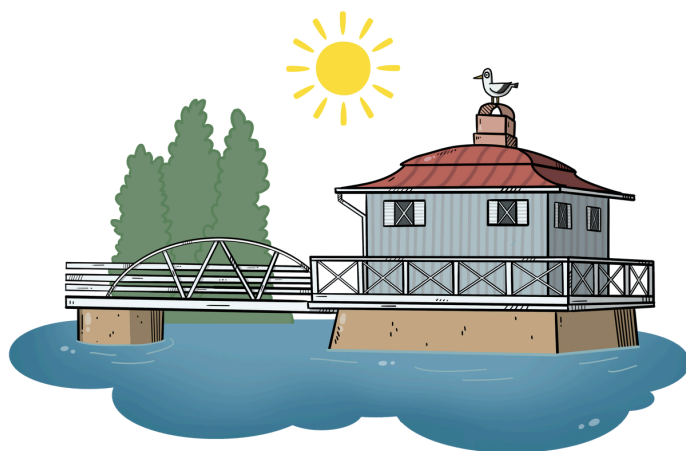
Youth Centre Villa Elba

Youth Centre Villa Elba is a National Youth Centre supported and observed by the Ministry of Education. We are specialised in youth work and our function is to develop the methods used in the field of youth work. We work under the Finnish law covering youth work and by the Ministry of Education.

Our goal is to offer youngsters the possibilities of learning in multicultural environment and finding their own strengths and abilities through international activity.

Our work consists of international mobility for young people and those working with young people, voluntary services, training courses, International Club activities, advice and guidance on international programmes, project activities and coordination of volunteering projects.

Check out
Virtual tour of
Villa Elba from
[here](#)



www.villaelba.fi/en

Profile of participants:

The participants are young people seeking new possibilities to their lives. The volunteers can be unemployed, face educational, economic, social or physical challenges or have low language skills. We wish that the volunteers are interested in working with children and ready to experience Christmas fully by acting as an elf. There is no need of previous experience, just the interest to try it out and learn more!

We offer the volunteers:

- a chance to live in a new culture
- possibility to do impacting volunteer work for the local community
- a chance for intercultural learning
- a project where you can use your creativity

Volunteers should be prepared for:

- darkness and cold
- living with other people and finding new friends
- listening to a lot of Christmas music
- adventures



We expect from volunteers:

- flexibility
- respect towards everyone
- ability to follow the rules and schedule



Tasks

After the on-arrival training, volunteers will begin working on a variety of tasks related to the main theme.

With the support and guidance of our staff, volunteers will help with Christmas preparations and organize the "Elf Path" for local kindergartens, families, and other visitors. This event takes place along a nature trail near Villa Elba. Volunteers will take on the role of elves and lead different interactive activities along the path. For example, children may learn essential elf skills such as peeking through windows, performing the elf dance, finding hidden presents, and more.

We are looking for volunteers who enjoy working with children—even without a shared language.

Another key part of the project is organizing and participating in the Elf Path public event, which is open to all visitors.

Volunteers will also help bring Christmas spirit to the area by crafting elves and other decorations, and placing them along the trail. After the event, volunteers will assist with cleanup and taking down the decorations.





Some volunteers will be in charge of documentation of the whole project. The team can use the media equipment that Villa Elba has and use their own creativity for planning the methods of documentation.



We encourage participants to bring in their own ideas and competences when planning and realizing the content of the different events and activities organized during the project. Planning and preparing the tasks will include for example, making elf costumes, making Christmas decorations, planning games for children and planning how to promote intercultural learning.

Creating activities to the Elf path teaches volunteers to work in creative ways both with practical task and leading activities.



Videos from previous years for your inspiration:

[Elf Around 2018](#)

[Elf Around 2021](#)

[Elf Path's Instagram account](#)



Saint Lucy's Day

As part of work, volunteers will take part in traditional Lucia day festivity. The day is celebrated yearly on the 13th of December and is particularly popular in the Swedish speaking parts of Finland. On Lucia day there is usually a Lucia with her group singing and a traditional pastry is eaten (St Lucia saffron buns).

If you want to learn more about the Lucia tradition in Finland, you can look here: [Finland's Lucia - Briefly in English](#) or here [Luciamorgon 2023](#)

Volunteers will be singing in Swedish, Finnish and English and reciting poems for public with help of Villa Elba staff. No singing skills are required, only good attitude and wish to participate! Volunteers are encouraged to bring their musical instruments.

Examples of songs and poems for Lucia's Day:

Sankta Lucia (Cottrau)

Ute är mörkt och kallt, i alla husen
lyser nu överallt de tända ljusen.
Nu kommer någon där, jag vet nog vem det är:
Sankta Lucia, Sankta Lucia.
Nu kommer någon där, jag vet nog vem det är:
Sankta Lucia, Sankta Lucia.

"Käsi kädessä kuljemme rauhan tietä, askel
askeleelta, kohti parempaa huomista. Toivon
liekki palaa sydämissämme, valaisee pimeyden ja
antaa voimaa."



Orientation and On-arrival training

First 2 days of the project will be an Orientation day and On-arrival training in Youth Centre Villa Elba. The aim of the orientation and the training is to get to know other participants and learn about European Solidarity Corps. Volunteers will learn about aim of the project, intercultural learning and about their rights and responsibilities.



Working hours and holidays

The volunteer will work 5 days a week, approximately 35 hours. The working hours are usually from 9-16 including lunch break, but sometimes work times can vary depending on events that we are taking part in. In that case, work can also be in evening time for example from 14.00-20.00 or 7.00-14.00.



Support measures

Support persons role is to support the volunteers in coping with everyday life and adapting to the new environment. They are available to support the volunteers especially if any challenges arise during the project. They are there to listen, guide, and support that the group will manage to take care of practical matters such as cooking, cleaning, and free-time activities. In case of difficulties, support persons can be contacted and are available to help 24/7.



Accommodation and meals:

During the project, the volunteers will live in Villa Elba in Lassela or in cottages.

Cottages

The cottages fit 8 people each and are uniquely furnished and have a toilet, shower, kitchenette, WIFI and TV.

Lassela

Lassela is an old villa building in the garden of Villa Elba, right by the sea. Lassela has beds for 12 people in two separate rooms, a small kitchen, a lounge, a toilet, WIFI and a shower.



You can see pictures of the accommodation from [here](#)



Volunteers will share a room with others. Therefore it requires patience and flexibility, as you will share the space with other people during the whole project.

Please note that from 5th to 7th of November, Villa Elba will be hosting the National Youth Centre Network Staff Days, which will occupy the full accommodation capacity of the centre. During these two nights, temporary group accommodation will be arranged in alternative spaces at the youth centre, in host families, or at a nearby camping area in cottages. The exact arrangements will be confirmed once the accommodation needs of the staff event are clarified.

Meals are served in Villa Elba during On-arrival training, and during the rest of the project on working days volunteers will get lunch in Villa Elba but other meals will be prepared themselves together - food money for groceries is provided.



Villa Elba project staff

Work leader:

Is in charge of instructing the volunteers in daily work tasks. Work leader organizes the work and gives instructions on how to do the work.

Support persons:

Support the volunteers during the whole project. Their task is to help volunteers to fulfill their commitments and to support them to manage their everyday life. In case of problems, the support persons are available 24/7.

Mentor:

Meets the volunteers regularly to help them to reflect their learning outcomes.

Project administration:

Project coordinator deals with administration: applications, final reports and collection of travel documents, organizes practical arrangements like pickups from train station or airport, accommodation and other practicalities.

Office clerk deals with the financial issues; pays the pocket money, and makes payments to sending organisations.

Development manager has the overall responsibility for the project.

Tips for travelling to Kokkola:

We encourage volunteers to use green means of transportation, there are good train connections for example from Copenhagen to Stockholm or from Berlin to Tallinn. You can also travel one way with the flight and the other with trains and boats. If you have to fly to Helsinki, please remember about sustainability and pay extra fee for CO2 emissions.

You can read more about green travel and helpful tips for more sustainable travel from Villa Elba's [Green Travel - A Helpful Guide](#)

CO2 EMISSIONS IN COMPARISON *



TRAVELLING BY TRAIN WILL LOWER YOUR CO2 EMISSIONS BY MORE THAN HALF

* 1000 KILOMETERS

From Helsinki Airport the most convenient and green way to travel to Kokkola is by train. You can find tickets here: <https://www.vr.fi/en> (Helsinki Airport -> Kokkola)

Please notice that accommodation is booked between 2.11.-18.12.2025. Please schedule your travels so that you would arrive on the arrival day 2nd of November. We recommend to buy tickets in advance because prices are increasing dramatically closer to departure day.

If you are taking train from Helsinki Airport, then on your way there will be one short transfer at Tikkurila station. Please, be very careful and check all the information: train track number etc. in order not to miss the train. There are displays everywhere as well as information via speakers in english.



What to bring along:

- In November-December weather can be very unpredictable and cold - anything from +5 to -30. Take warm winter clothes with you (waterproof winter jacket, snow pants, winter boots, gloves, scarf, winter hat, wool socks).
- **European health card (very important, you will need it if you need to go to health center / hospital!)**
- Personal medication and hygiene products
- Swimming suit if you want to wear them in sauna or want to go to swim
- Something typical from your country to present your culture (music, dances, some traditional snacks etc.)
- **All your travel documents!**



Important to note:

At Villa Elba we will provide you with bedsheets and a towel, so don't worry about those. In case you need another towel you can bring one with you or just wash the one you get here - we have a washing machine that the volunteers can use for free.

To ensure a comfortable environment for everyone, our youth centre is a fragrance-free space. We kindly ask all participants to avoid using strong perfumes, scented products or fragrances during their stay. Some people are sensitive to strong scents, which can cause discomfort or health issues. Avoiding fragrances helps to make the space more accessible and enjoyable for all.

Financial issues:

Travel grants

Travel grants are paid after the project according to the funding rules of Erasmus+: Travel grants depend on the length of the journey and for measurement of the journey we use Erasmus+ distance band calculator: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/distance-calculator_en

Villa Elba will arrange pick ups for volunteers from the Kokkola train station or Kokkola airport, costs for transport are deducted from the travel compensation. We try to organize common rides to keep costs as low as possible. We highly encourage volunteers to arrive to Kokkola by train because taxi from the airport is pretty expensive, around 60-90 € one way.

Non-green travel:

10 – 99 km	28 €
100 – 499 km	211 €
500 –1999 km	309€
2000 – 2999 km	395€
3000 – 3999 km	580€
4000 – 7999 km	1188€
8000 -> km	1735€

Green travel:

100 – 499 km	285€
500 –1999 km	417€
2000 – 2999 km	535€
3000 – 3999 km	785€
4000 – 7999 km	1188€
8000 -> km	1735€

Payment is done only after volunteer has finished their reporting obligations (the EU Commision report) and after we have received all original travel documents, as well as the invoice from the local transportation if needed. Please not that Christmas holidays may cause a delay in the payment date.

Pocket and food money

The pocket money is 7 € / day which will be paid in parts in cash during the project.

Food money is paid every week in cash and divided between cottages.

Hopefully, this infopack helped you to get to know more about the project. You are about to start an amazing adventure so don't hesitate and participate in everything! We have a very supportive staff, in case you have any kind of questions - you are more than welcome to ask.

www.villaelba.fi

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See you at Villa Elba!

