

INTERCULTURAL JOURNEYS



As we look back on the past year, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the incredible journeys and connections made through our work. From fostering cross-cultural competences to empowering youth to create meaningful change.

www.nuorisovaihto.fi



Allianssi Youth Exchanges

Welcome to this year's edition of Intercultural Journeys!

In this issue, we bring you a glimpse into our work in the past year, sharing snippets of our projects in 2024. Our newsletter reflects our core values, showcasing the meaningful projects and initiatives we're passionate about. We invite you to join us in amplifying our work and making a greater impact.

Allianssi Youth Exchanges fosters intercultural learning and global awareness by providing mobility opportunities for young adults to engage with diverse cultures and perspectives.

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Meet our team

The dynamic team behind Allianssi Youth Exchanges office consists of Tiina, Hilla, Mari, Siru and our ESC volunteer Lydia, who all bring their skills and knowledge to run our operations with youth oriented approach. Our strong commitment to creating opportunities for young people drives everything we do. As a part of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations network we focus on providing meaningful experiences that help young individuals grow, connect and thrive as active global citizens. We are inspired by the potential of the next generation and are excited to continue empowering and supporting them.



We focus on a variety of impactful programmes designed to meet the needs and goals of youth, targeting especially young people with fewer opportunities. These include volunteering projects that foster community engagement and sustainability, vocational education initiatives that build practical skills for future careers, youth exchanges that encourage intercultural understanding and environmental awareness, and training courses that prepare participants for life's challenges while emphasising the importance of sustainable practices.

Volunteer spotlight!

ESC Short term

Länsi-Saimaan 4H is a non-profit youth organization that focus on organizing and promoting leisure activities for children and young people. They have hosted several short-term ESC volunteers in their activities.

Mariia was a short-term volunteer in Länsi-Saimaan 4H from April to June 2024. Her tasks involved helping the organisation plan and organise activities for children and young people.



ESC Long term

Dodo ry is a Finnish environmental NGO based in Helsinki addressing environmental issues societally. Their current key operation areas are urban gardening and food, urban planning and building, climate action and global development.

Francesca was a volunteer at Dodo from April to August 2024. She helped Dodo in planning and executing various environmental initiatives and events, as well as supporting in the organisation's urban green house.



One of her favorite aspects of volunteering at Dodo was spending time in the greenhouse. From planting seeds to nurturing plants, Francesca gained valuable knowledge about sustainable gardening. She feels incredibly grateful for the experiences, friendships, and skills she gained during her time in Finland. Exploring the country has been a wonderful journey for her, as its stunning landscapes and vibrant culture have made her feel truly welcome.



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ESC Volunteering teams

This summer was a season of growth and impact as we coordinated ESC volunteering teams in Finland and abroad. These dedicated volunteers engaged in diverse activities, from world heritage to art and nature projects, making a meaningful difference in the communities they served. Their efforts fostered connections, built cultural bridges, and left a lasting legacy of collaboration. We're inspired by their passion, resilience, and the relationships they forged along the way.

“Anti-racism days” volunteering team March 2024, Brčko, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Anti-racism days was a volunteering team held in Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2024. The Finnish volunteers worked together with Svitac volunteers with preparation and running anti-racism workshops for children and young people and worked in other local activities that promote diversity and intercultural understanding.



“Spring Joy in Georgia” team in May 2024, Rustavi, Georgia



Spring Joy in Georgia team was organised in May 2024 in Rustavi together with Georgian Youth for Europe. The volunteers worked in planning and organising activities for children as well as in environmental tasks such as removal of invasive plants together with local volunteers.



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World Village ESC team May 2024, Helsinki

The volunteers supported in the build-up and break-down of the multicultural cultural festival called World Village as well as in tidying, maintenance and recycling during the festival.



Kaurisniemi Animal Home ESC team June 2024, Salo



The volunteers helped the host to renovate, build and clean the Animal home facilities as well as build new fences for animals.

Alpo's Savannah Recycling Art Park ESC team August 2024, Kauhajoki

The volunteers helped to clean and sort out the buildings Alpo Koivumäki had stacked full of potential material for his DIY art over decades. The team was organised together with friends of Alpo's Savannah.



Suomenlinna ESC volunteering team August 2024, Helsinki

Suomenlinna World Heritage ESC volunteering team was organised in August 2024. Volunteers worked with the Suomenlinna governing body in landscape maintenance and restoration. An open camp day was organised during the project. The participants got to share their tasks with local volunteers and the project patroness Suzanne Innes-Stubb (spouse of the president of Finland).



More about ESC teams

To discover more about our volunteering teams and gain insight into the experiences and lessons learnt by our dedicated volunteers, we invite you to visit our website at **nuorisovaihto.fi**.

On our English-language page, you'll find information about exciting journeys, impactful projects, and enriching experiences shared by our volunteers. Have a look into diverse projects and valuable lessons learned during their time in service and get a deeper understanding of the positive impact they have made in various communities.

Workcamps

Aukusti Work Camp: A Global Gathering of Youth and Finnish Culture

The Aukusti Work Camp, a renowned event held nearly 20 times in the past, took place in Jalasjärvi, Finland. This vibrant initiative brought together enthusiastic young volunteers from Europe and Asia. The group contributed to the Aukusti Cultural Festival.



Despite the demanding nature of tasks such as setting up fences, and assisting with carrying and cleaning both before and after the festival, the work was efficiently divided among participants. This careful planning ensured everyone had ample energy for evening adventures. Throughout the camp, stories, laughter, cultural exchanges, and engaging activities enriched the experience, leaving participants with unforgettable memories.

The Oulainen Work Camp: A Memorable Journey



This work camp provided an invaluable opportunity for teenagers to come together in the serene rural setting of Finland's North Ostrobothnia region. Their primary responsibility was to support the organization of a festival cherished by the local community.

During their time in Oulainen, teenage volunteers immersed themselves in Finnish culture, discovering regional traditions. From foraging for wild cloudberry to mastering the art of making local delightful dessert lettua.

Vocational mobilities

EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS)

Allianssi Youth Exchanges is a partner in the Finnish EURES network and a member in the EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS) coordinated by Sweden.



EURES TMS is developed by the European Commission to reduce youth unemployment in Europe. The programme assists young people to gain valuable work experience in another European Union member state. We have been actively involved in supporting over 80 people find a job in and relocate to another European country this year.

Ready for Life

Ready for Life is an Erasmus+ VET programme for recent vocational graduates from all fields. We offer our participants on-the-job training in their own field in several European countries and outside of Europe. Ready for Life mobilities are often 1 to 4 months long.

This year we have supported around 30 young people in developing their working life skills through the Ready for Life programme.

We have compiled our participants experiences in a report, which can be found [here](#) (in Finnish).



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Network for Learning Together in Youth Work

Learn YoWo

Network for Learning Together in Youth Work is a Finnish network formed by Allianssi Youth Exchanges and 10 vocational schools across Finland with the aim of promoting the internationalisation of the youth and community guidance field.

As a consortium, we run an Erasmus+ VET mobility programme Learn YoWo, which offers vocational youth and community guidance students and experts opportunities to develop their skills through on-the-job training and staff mobilities. Moreover, Learn YoWo offers students and experts a valuable opportunity for networking, and therefore strengthening the cross-sectoral cooperation of youth field across Europe.

This year we have had the pleasure of coordinating international mobilities for around 40 youth and community guidance students and staff across Finland through the Learn YoWo programme.

Vilma did a LearnYoWo training in Germany, hosted by IBG in Stuttgart. During her project, Vilma for example guided different youth groups across Germany. The experience sparked a will in Vilma to continue with international projects in the future as well.

IBG made a podcast episode featuring Vilma! You can listen to the episode [here](#).



KEY ACTION 2 COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Coordinating Locally to Initiate More Changes (C.L.I.C) with the European Solidarity Corps is a Key Action 2 Cooperation Partnership project, including 10 partner organisations, under the ERASMUS+ Programme. The main purpose of the project is to coordinate organisations at the local and regional levels to develop and disseminate methods and tools to increase support methods for volunteers.

One part of the project was that volunteers had a chance to plan and implement their own personal projects. Read below what kind of projects our volunteers Manon and Mar finalised!



Manon wrapped up her personal project, a magazine to help newcomers and especially foreigners to feel at home in Helsinki, giving people new perspectives to answer this question: "How can you feel at home in a place that is not home?".

In the magazine, you can find tips, pieces of advice to get involved at the local scale and day after day, creating this home for you in the city. This includes tips about local life, activism, sustainability or even public transports and how to move in the city.

In Mar's C.L.I.C. personal project, she fostered discussion among multicultural community on a fundamental issue: misconceptions about women's bodies and sport.

Mar prepared a workshop at her host organization Monaliiku, that invited participants to reflect on the diversity and strength of women's bodies in sport, along with Ayisat Yusuf, who shared her experience with sports and being a woman. Mar's workshop will be a new feature of the Fit4Life project next year.



HOTSPOTS



Connecting European Suburbs through Smart Youth Work

HOTSPOTS was an Erasmus+ KA2 partnership coordinated by our partner Lunaria. In the project we developed non formal education tools and methods enhancing intercultural learning among young people, both online and offline.

Project results

The HOTSPOTS project has three project results: two publications and one board game.

The first publication, Toolkit for Diagnostic and Tools Sharing, focuses on the results of field research and presents already existing tools for intercultural learning.

The second publication, Handbook for a Smart Youth Work, is a handbook that compiles the workshop methods developed and tested during the project into one volume.

The purpose of the HOTSPOTS blended learning board game is to provide a concrete tool for addressing intercultural learning in youth work.

You can find all the material on [our website](#).



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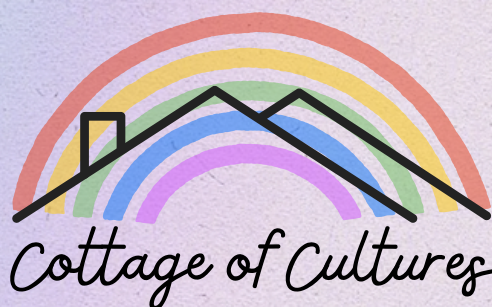
Cottage of Cultures

Cottage of Cultures, run by a group of local and international volunteers, is an ESC Solidarity Project. This initiative was inspired by the growing need to foster cultural exchange and strengthen connections between international residents and Finnish locals. Through this platform, we aim to celebrate diversity, promote tolerance, and encourage the inclusion of minorities in community life, all while nurturing intercultural understanding. In September, we kicked off a fresh series of activities centered on active citizenship.

Here's what the Cottage of Cultures events are all about:

- Project Presentations: each event hosts present aspects of their project as well as their experiences with volunteering or engaging in with local and international communities
- Interactive Workshops: Hands-on activities like cooking, dancing, all related to each host experience or personal interests.
- Insightful Discussions: Conversations on key topics surrounding active participation in a community.
- Social Gatherings: The events are concluded by enjoying vegan cuisine, connecting with others, and building a sense of community.

For updates and more information, visit our [website!](#)





A year full of Cottage of Cultures
A year of getting closer



Thanks for reading this year's
newsletter compiled by our ESC
volunteer Lydia Papadopoulou.

Please contact us if you wish to get
any further info:

www.nuorisovaihto.fi

