

Info Kit

ESC: “Culture of perma-Culture”

February 2025 - January 2026

Prenčov, Slovakia



Here you can find some useful information about this project that you need for your preparation and your stay in Slovakia as a volunteer with ESC.

Please, read it carefully!



About Us:

ART KRUH (Agentúra Rozvoja Tradície, Kultúry, Remesla, Umenia a Harmónie) is a civic association established in 2004. It is a corporation of artists, craftsmen, creative and natural people.

Our mission is to promote cultural heritage preservation and develop traditional values in the fields of arts, crafts, and sustainable lifestyle specifically in rural areas. Our philosophy is based on principles of Permaculture and we are the part of larger association „school of Permaculture“ in Slovakia

The aim is to create a space for education, expression, exploration of oneself through creative and artistic means in everyday-life activities.

We want to motivate people to live an active, creative, meaningful, sustainable lifestyle. Our main target group is youngsters but we also work with children and adults. Throughout the year we organize several events such as training courses, seminars, camps, workshops, and festivals.

Venue:



Our organization is located in Prenčov, a small village in the middle of Slovakia, in the region of Banská Bystrica, under the hill of Sitno and surrounded by beautiful natural landscapes. The village has many folkloric houses, a rich cultural heritage and living traditions. Life in the village is strongly connected to the nearby town of Banská Štiavnica. This town is a part of the UNESCO cultural heritage and it is one of the most popular destinations in Slovakia especially in summer, with many cultural events throughout the whole year.



The region of Hont, where we are settled, is mostly rural with a lot of small traditional villages and a beautiful environment, but a lack of work, educational and social opportunities. Sadly, consumerism is becoming the leading motivation thus making traditional, rural methods and crafts slowly disappear. People are losing the relationship and the contact with the soil, nature and with themselves. As a result, rural areas are losing productivity with a rising level of dependence on national budgets or EU grants. The lack of working opportunities leads young people to passivity,

migration to cities or abroad which leads to depopulation. We are reacting to this situation with our long-term goal to explore possibilities of sustainable lifestyle in the rural area and the role of the individual within the community. We want to support the process of change in our region towards a modern rural sustainable lifestyle, with an emphasis on interconnecting cities and rural areas.

Description of project:

The title we chose for this project is “**Culture of perma-Culture**” for its metaphorical but also its practical meaning. For many people, permaculture mainly means caring about the garden and plants.

Permaculture however is a wider concept that includes in addition to earth care, caring about the people and their needs. It is based on relationships that should grow and support each other.

Growing inside can be approached either in a philosophical, emotional, or mental way in our vision and understanding of the world. Growing outside can be related to gardening, relationships, nature, or our skills.

Perma comes from permanent –something that can be sustainable. **Culture** is a complex of specific spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits of a society or social group, which also includes a common way of life, lifestyle, value system, traditions, and faith.

We will explore together “What is perma-Culture?” not only in a material way, but also in philosophical, social, and also personal ways.



This project will offer to the participants opportunities of:

- developing social and community skills
- gaining Permaculture knowledge and skills
- gaining manual working skills (using many different working tools for building, gardening, woodcraft, pottery, smith...)
- gaining knowledge and skills in organization and project management (workshops, cultural events, courses, youth exchanges...)
- experiencing life in a rural area in Slovakia and acquiring basic knowledge of living with the environment



We are learning and applying the philosophy of Permaculture, which means building sustainable, productive, and lively human settlements.

Main activities:

- Gardening (planting, plant care, soil care, water, trees, bushes ...)
- Propriety maintenance and reconstruction (cutting wood for heating, cleaning the spaces, painting ...)
- Permaculture design
- Composting, Recycling, Up-cycling
- Preparing, planning, managing and carrying out projects and educational activities
- Non-formal activities for children in the local school and local community (English/language sessions, creative workshops., cultural exchange...)
- Organizing cultural events (local festivals, street theater, market places...)
- Woodcraft, pottery, jewelry, medicinal cosmetics and other products





We want to support volunteers in becoming skilled and competent in a variety of tasks that are important for living in rural areas and in a community. We want to encourage and develop their creativity and entrepreneurship as they discover the potential and the different sources offered by this natural environment in order to enable people to live in a more meaningful and respectful way in rural areas.

4 seasons

Our life is closely connected with the rhythm of nature. Our activities are dependent on the seasons and also on weather conditions. In Summer, days are long and warm, there is a lot of life around, beautiful nature with hills and lakes, and just as much cultural events and festivals whereas winter days are short and colder meant for calmer activities and introspection.



Winter is the "dreaming time" period when people together with nature, shrink their life energy back to the roots. It is also time for creativity, planning and by then you may have first insights about yourself. You will heat with wood, repair tools, prepare and plan for the next season and upcoming projects. Furthermore, it will be a significant period of community building as you will have time to get to better know the members of the local community and the other volunteers with whom you will live and work with.



In **Spring** everything is born again - nature, the garden and also ourselves. Spring is an awakening period of life. We are starting new things: working outside again, putting seeds to the ground, preparing the garden. We also prepare our environment and background for our various projects for the late spring and summer. Most of the work will need to be done during this period, but it is very important to invest our energy here, to get the abundance back later on.



Summer is a mix of doing and celebrating life. We have a lot of festivals and cultural events all around. We take part in a few events and also organize our own. Sometimes it gets so hot in Summer that the best plan is to enjoy one of the many lakes around here ! But it is still important to take care of our plants because they still need our care and we are responsible for them. If we don't give them what they need, we will get not back what we want, so we need to water them every day.



Autumn is the time for harvesting, not only fruits and vegetables but also our skills and knowledge. It is important to name and celebrate what we have learned and experienced. It is time to finish the work outside, clean up and prepare for winter, as the long rest is getting near. Slowly, it is time to settle into slumber, and dreaming.



Management

At the beginning of the volunteering project, we will look together on a one-year plan with all the larger activities (projects, courses, cultural events and also common and personal holidays). At the end of every month there will be a monthly assessment, with what has been learned so far and how we feel and things to work on.

Every week, we will have regular meetings where we evaluate previous work, share successes and failures, plans, tasks and needs. We will make a list of future activities and divide roles and tasks for each person or group. Volunteers will work together in groups or alone depending on common or personal needs.

There are 2 supervisors: the director and coordinator and on top of that one mentor who cares about personal development and learning progress. We also a Slovak teacher (Slovak lessons are optional but encouraged).



Dragon Dreaming

As a managing tool for our projects, we are using, testing and developing the Dragon Dreaming project design methodology, where individual positions and tasks are distributed according to the topic of the project and the capabilities and needs of all participants.

This methodology born in Australia is used to organize and structure projects whether individually or in a group.

Dragon Dreaming consists of four essential parts:

Dreaming: gathering ideas, awareness, motivation

Planning: testing, prototyping, designing strategies, considering alternatives

Doing: implementation, administration & management, monitoring progress

Celebrating: acquiring new skills, transforming results and discerning wisdom

Each of the four parts are based on three pillars:

1. Service to the Earth,
2. Community building,
3. Personal growth.



Practical arrangement

Duration of the EVS:

The project is designed for 11 months. Final end date will be arranged with the volunteers. It is very important to start with all of the four volunteers around the same time, to provide the best possible setting to develop a strong community/team from the first day on.



Working Time:

Usually, we work from 9:00 to 17 with 1 hour break, 5 days per week. For possible work on the weekend, volunteers get compensatory time according to the oral contract, to fit the actual conditions. For each month, volunteers have 2 days of holiday. We are not always following the working time, the most important is to fulfill actual needs of necessary works, garden and also needs of all our community.



Accommodation:

Because of reconstructing plans for volunteers', accommodations could change during the project. At the moment we provide for volunteers a separated part of a house – a flat with two bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and toilets where we can accommodate four persons at the same time. In the same house but separately, there is also the head office of ARTKRUH with ceramic and woodcraft workshops and another flat, where the director of ARTKRUH and his family lives.



Food:

Volunteers have their own kitchen. In the village there is a small grocery store. Usually they go to the nearby town to do bigger shopping trips in a supermarket. The volunteers usually cook or eat all together, as this is a part of living in a community, but there are no rules given by the organization, the volunteers make their own choices about their living together. Right now we eat all together as a community with different cooks daily. We grow our own food as much as possible!

Money:

In the first week of each month, Volunteers will get pocket money: 180€. Plus another 120€ per month for food and usage.

Slovakia uses Euro, for those of you coming from countries that don't use it, be prepared by either changing money before your travel, changing money at the airport or in the exchange places in the town or if you prefer just bring your bank card and withdraw money in the ATM's or pay with card, anyway it's always nice to have some pocket money with you at the beginning.

Costs:

This project has been funded with the support of Erasmus+. Accommodation and travel costs will be covered by the project grants.

Travel costs: We will reimburse your travel costs up to the defined limits by the country (up to 300 euro). Travel costs will only be refunded after we receive all related tickets (keep them preciously !) and invoices, including boarding passes. This means participants (or their sending organizations) will have to advance the money themselves and they will be reimbursed after the arrival.

Volunteer profile:

We are looking for volunteers who are willing to participate actively in all the process, who are open to work and learn in a wide range of activities and be responsible for the duties and agreements. We search for volunteers who are looking for living and working in a rural area connected with nature and community, who feel concerned about climate change issues and are willing to learn and live responsibly. We appreciate it if volunteers have some manual skills of using working tools, or other skills needed in rural areas, but it is not required. However some preconditions for rural and community life is needed.

Special Needs

In case you have some diet requirements/ food allergies/ medical conditions that could influence your participation etc., please let us know soon, so that we can arrange accordingly and be ready to support you.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

- The participants commit themselves to actively participate in the whole process, including: read all the information carefully, communicate timely with the organizers, prepare adequately for the EVS, take actively part in the full duration of the activities, participate in the evaluation process after the EVS
- Pictures, videos, images taken at the project, as well as the materials produced during the activities, can be used to document the activity in reports or websites or social networks, or for promotional material

- Providing information on special needs, does not remove the participant's personal responsibility for ensuring their own health and safety.

To register the application, please fill in the application form:

<https://forms.gle/QgBXniVsmCUbN2ia7>

Please think in advance which activities are most interesting for you and send us your feedback, CV and motivation letter according to the info kit!

For any question or support, contact us at info@artkruh.org or +421 905 723 958

We are looking forward to hearing from *you!* - **ART KRUH crew**



Here is some overview of our activities in pictures

