

Description of the organization

The **Cultural Center Babilonia** was founded in 2014 in order to promote freedom of expression, education, creativity and intercultural dialogue. Its major objective is to foster values such as tolerance, respect among coexisting cultural groups with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and solidarity in order to combat and eliminate prejudices and stereotypes. The target group concerns people of all ages, economic and cultural background; hence the centre functions as an “intersection” of generations, cultures, ideas and different forms of expression.

Our Volunteering Activities - Launching a Solidarity Corps long term project

Our Organization's major objective is to foster values such as tolerance, respect among coexisting cultural groups with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and actively contribute in an inclusive society. The tasks and activities the volunteers will undertake revolve around our goals and objectives. It is designed to offer volunteers, the opportunity to be mentors and positive role models for young migrants/refugees and young people with fewer opportunities, helping them integrate into the European Society and the local Community.

After specific training from our organization, the volunteers will undertake certain tasks and be involved in certain personal and team projects. The actions we foresee for the European volunteers are the following:

1) Provide themed workshops (e.g.arts and crafts, dance lessons) **and linguistic support in their mother tongue or English** (if they are advanced users of the language) to young Greek people with social or economic obstacles who cannot afford it or to young migrants and refugees in our Cultural center.

2)"Hour of the mentor": The volunteer will be a mentor and positive role model for a young Greek or migrant (ages 15-21).The volunteer will boost his/her responsibility, confidence, mentoring and management skills by providing advices, guidance about education, life, interests and the sense of friendship and caring to a young person with fewer opportunities in life, who is in need of a mentor/friend to guide him in the adult life.

The volunteers will have the opportunity to get involved in team based activities and projects with the help and guidance of our staff and local volunteers. Our proposed team based events and activities:

3) 1st cultural festival of Thessaloniki. Activities and actions around the city, which promote multiculturalism and the inclusion of people with different social and cultural backgrounds into the local community. The proposed activities are Concerts, social kitchen, screening of movies and

documentaries, speeches to promote human rights and the power of diversity and finally activities for the children based on non-formal education.

4)Language and Cultural exchange programs "Tandem", once per week.

5) Human Library events. The Human Library is designed to build a positive framework for conversations that can challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue. An event where real people are on loan to readers.

6)Creation and organization of a childrens' theatre play, against racism and xenophobia. This event will be prepared by our volunteers local and international and will be held in our cultural center.

7)Providing trainings and visits to local high-schools, promoting intercultural and human rights education, using non formal tools and methods of education.

The volunteers will be responsible to make all preparations necessary and participate in some or all of our team-based projects. They will collaborate with staff, local volunteers and community in all proposed projects. It is an essential factor in order to mix with the local community, form friendships and foster their management, social skills.

Flexibility is an important factor in the ESC experience. Our organization realizes it that is why we offer our volunteers, the possibility to pursue and create their own individual project according to their needs, talents and interests. Our proposed individual projects are:

8)Supporting other Humanitarian organizations in the field(collection of clothes, cooking for susceptible groups, creative activities with children).

9)Media: Video storytelling and short documentaries promoting human rights, multiculturalism etc published on Youtube. Themed articles, Social media online and offline campaigns.

10)Empowering people with fewer opportunities to work and volunteer as musicians artists and cooks. The volunteers will work as mediators, building connections with local cafes, bars, restaurants and individuals who wish to support and promote inclusion tactics for young people with few opportunities.

In terms of additional learning opportunities. Our organization can offer Greek lessons for basic users, English lessons for advanced users and themed workshops(theatre, Arts and crafts, video editing, etc.

Participants' profile

All participants need to meet certain eligibility criteria in order to get involved in our organization's projects and activities; namely candidates should:

- 1) Be between 18 and 30 years of age.
- 2) Speak English in an adequate level. This criterion is important for their participation in local activities and projects with the local community and young migrants/refugees in the area of Thessaloniki.
- 3) Have a strong motivation to participate in our projects revolving around human rights, inter cultural learning and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

- 4) Previous volunteering experience and social studies background will be taken as a qualification although they are not mandatory for a candidate to apply to our project.
- 5) Artistic talents/competences (arts and crafts, acting, musical instruments etc) will be greatly appreciated.
- 6) Be tolerant and open-minded towards people with different social, educational, racial backgrounds.

Our City

The volunteering projects will take place in the city of Thessaloniki, Greece. Thessaloniki not only is the second largest city in Greece but also one of the most important cities in the wider area of the Balkans.

The most recent challenge that the city has to face is the migratory flows from war-torn countries of Asia and Africa. However, the state and the citizens with the help of organizations and volunteers from all over the world have acted effectively enough to help and welcome the refugees in their new home. Refugees not only enriched the city's multicultural mosaic but also activated the citizens' solidarity in helping each other when in need. Seeing that the city needs more and more people willing and eager to help the newly arrived refugees and immigrants to integrate in the local community, the ESC volunteers' contribution to this cause will be invaluable. The volunteers will actively promote and show to the world the multicultural character of the city while at the same time they will inspire youngsters with fewer opportunities to take action and cooperate with the local community for the improvement of the general living conditions.

As far as the social context is concerned, Thessaloniki could be characterized as a youth city full of students who arrive from all over Greece in order to study in one of its two universities or in one of the numerous technical public and private institutes. Moreover, many international students, mainly from the Balkans come to Thessaloniki to study and do their internships as the universities of Thessaloniki are among the top universities in the Balkans. In this way, the city becomes an intersection of cultures and different ideas, as young people from Greece and all around the world find a prolific ground to come together, interact and develop both individually and socially. Thessaloniki is home to numerous festivals and events that promote the intercultural interaction, human rights and arts.

Our Office and your Home

The volunteers will live in an apartment of 70 square meters near the center of Thessaloniki and 20 minutes away from the Office. The apartment has 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, living room, dining room and a balcony. It is fully equipped with furniture, couches, independent heating system, washing machine as well as Internet connection. The organization will cover all the expenses of the house (electricity, water, heating, internet connection) as well as any sort of maintenance work. The 5 volunteers will share the 2 double rooms available according to gender and individual needs. The house has a big living room for the volunteers' leisure time. Each volunteer will receive food money at the end of every month.



The office of Babylonian Cultural Center is located in Navarinou Square, Thessaloniki, Greece. It is a four-storey building with individual spaces for language classes, art and music workshops, dance lessons, theater activities, movie and exhibition/event halls, library and 2 offices for volunteers and staff.

The distance between the house and the Cultural Center is a 20-minute ride by bus. Bus is the only public means of transport in Thessaloniki, Greece. The volunteers will be provided with a transportation card, that needs validation every month, to reach every possible destination within the county of Thessaloniki. The organization will cover all the costs for the transportation cards as well as any other possible transfers, such as transfer from and to the airport, within the budget limits of the project.



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