



International Workcamps



IBG

Internationale Begegnung
in Gemeinschaftsdiensten e.V.

What is an International Workcamp?



At a Workcamp, young people from all over the world come together to volunteer on a community service project for 2 to 3 weeks.

A wide variety of projects in the fields of nature conservation and environmental protection, construction and renovation, archaeology, and in the social or artistic spheres offer a wide range of employment opportunities.

Who can take part?

An international Workcamp is open to anyone who wants to use their own labor for a charitable purpose and live in an international group for 2 to 3 weeks. Most camps take place in the summer, between June and September, but there are isolated offers throughout the year.

Is there an age limit?

Most projects are open to volunteers 18 years and older. In some projects there is an upper age limit (mostly 30). There are also Workcamps for teenagers (between 15 and 17) and for older volunteers. If there is a certain minimum or maximum age in a project, it is mentioned in the respective project description.



I have always wanted to participate in a beach cleanup since I was young. Cleaning up a beach made me feel like I was doing something to help improve this worldwide problem in addition to reducing [our] waste on a daily basis.



**Patricia (23), Volunteer in a Workcamp in Denmark
(Translated from German)**

What do I need to take part?

As a rule, the camp language is English, so a basic knowledge of English is a prerequisite for participation. For Workcamps in France or Spain, we also recommend a basic knowledge of French or Spanish. In Central and South America, knowledge of Spanish is often even necessary.

For social projects, a letter of motivation is often required and/or the submission of a police clearance certificate ("certificate of good conduct" or "CGC").

It may also be that some Workcamps are unsuitable for volunteers with certain allergies or health restrictions. Such and all other project-related restrictions are mentioned in the respective project description.

How much work is done in a Workcamp?

The working time differs from country to country and depends of course on the project. In most cases, about 30 hours are worked 5 days a week. Normally the weekends are free.

In camps for teenagers, working hours are reduced (about 20-25 hours a week).

Where will we be staying?

The accommodations are mostly very simple and can be for example in school rooms, forest huts, tents, scouts' homes or community centers. In most projects you have to bring your own sleeping bag.

What exactly applies to your camp is either already stated in the announcement or at the latest in the info sheet that you will receive a few weeks before the start of the camp.



These two weeks in Pinós were the best experience of my whole summer and I am so glad that I had the opportunity to participate. Besides the two of us from Germany, there were participants from Mexico, Italy, France, China, Turkey, Estonia, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Cataluña. I took home an extremely valuable gift from Pinós: I now have friends all over the world.

Miriam (18), Participant in a Workcamp in Spain
(Translated from German)





How much does it cost to participate?

The placement fee for Workcamps in Germany is 48€ and for camps abroad 150€. The fee is only due upon successful placement.

The travel costs to the project are paid by yourself. Since all participants in a Workcamp come from different countries and regions, the travel is organized by the volunteers themselves.

Accommodation and meals on site are provided to the volunteers. In some countries there is an extra fee on site, as these organizations do not receive any government funding. For teen Workcamps there is usually also an extra fee due to the higher organization and supervision effort. This is usually between 50€ and 250€.

Additional costs may be incurred for your international health insurance or for your visa.

How can I sign up?

You can search for projects via the Workcamp database on our website and also register online there. You can find all current announcements under ibg-workcamps.org/workcamps

There is no application deadline. If you are flexible in terms of project type and country, you can still be placed at very short notice, as places are always available.



Before my Workcamp, I was a little nervous because I would be living with complete strangers for two weeks. But this fear turned out to be unnecessary. All the participants were super nice and sweet, and it was really fun with them. Besides, it was really interesting to meet people from so many different countries and to see the differences in our culture.

Charlina (18), Participant in a Workcamp in Wales
(Translated from German)



Are there funding opportunities?

We would like to enable all motivated volunteers to participate with the means at our disposal. For this purpose, we offer every year various special projects, such as bi- and tri-national camps or projects that are supported by the European Commission, which are specially funded. In addition, there is also the possibility to receive funding through the solidarity pot of IBG: 10% of all placement fees paid go into this solidarity pot, so that the volunteers we place together enable other volunteers to participate in Workcamps.

Back to Nature Camp

I am standing at the train station in the Czech town of Marianske Lasne. Slowly, a small mountain train pulls into the station and comes to a screeching halt. The train takes me to Tachov, where I meet the other international volunteers. All kinds of nations are represented: Russia, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Italy, France, Spain and even from Japan two volunteers.

By bus we continue to Lesna and from there we have to walk into the Czech forest to the camp. Fortunately, we don't have to carry our luggage all the way, it is picked up by car. After about two hours of walking we are finally there: A clearing in the forest opens up in front of us. We can already see the tents in which we will sleep for the next three weeks.

The kitchen is outside: wooden tables, a small earth fridge, wooden benches around a fireplace. So is the bathroom: a stream with clear, cold water running through the camp. We sit around the campfire and talk. Everyone is curious about what the others are up to. We talk about Japanese food, German and French politics, and whether "compote" is a drink or something like jam.




The next day we start to work. Our main task is to cut a meadow near the camp, rake the grass and transport it away. All this has to be done by hand, because the ground is uneven and partly swampy. The meadow is located in the nature reserve and rare plants grow here. By cutting the grass, the seeds of these plants can spread better.

But also in the camp itself there is enough to do: We want to build a kiln for ceramics, clear the beds of the small tree nursery from weeds and dig up more small trees for the tree nursery, because they can't grow big on the road. The idea behind this is to give participants of workshops offered at the camp a small tree to plant. In the course of its life, the tree will then absorb CO₂ produced, for example, by the participants' travel to the camp. In this way, the camp is to become a zero-emissions camp.

In addition, wood must always be collected, sawed or split. Because wood is needed all the time: For cooking, on cold nights for heating and for the sauna. We have two days off per week. We use these to go on excursions. One of the most beautiful ones for me is the hike to an old tower. The way there goes through the forest and from the tower you have a great view over the hills of the Czech Republic and Germany. There are also various recreational activities at the camp: You can try your hand at archery, carve, or just lie down somewhere on the grass and read.

When we all go back to Prague after three weeks, it feels a bit strange. Suddenly there's hot water again, a proper toilet and the air seems pretty bad. Somehow it was nicer in the forest...

**Friederike (25), Participant in a Workcamp in the Czech Republic
(Translated from German)**





**How can I
prepare for my
Workcamp?**

Are you taking part in your first Workcamp and wondering what to expect? You have never been on your own and need tips for your trip? You are registered for a longer volunteer service and want to prepare for it?

We are always happy to answer your questions in person, by email or by phone at the association office. You are also welcome to participate in one of our preparation seminars!

Content of the preparatory seminars

We deal with the following topics, among others:

- Volunteer rights and duties
- Group life
- Conflict management
- Anti-discrimination
- Safety and practical tips for the trip

In addition, there are many testimonials from our teammates and other former Workcamp participants, so that the personal exchange of experiences among each other is the focus of the seminars.

How much does it cost?

The participation in a preparation seminar is already included in your placement fee.

Registration

The seminars take place every year in early summer. You can find the exact dates and the link to the online registration on our website: ibg-workcamps.org/vorbereitungsseminar

14 things we pack for Workcamp

Toothbrush, passport, info sheet and tickets already packed and you wonder what else you will need at the Workcamp...? We asked our volunteers what should not be missing in their backpack.

1. Sturdy shoes: For mud, bog and whatever else the Workcamp ground has to offer. And as an alternative to your favorite sneakers also suitable for hikes and trips on the weekend.

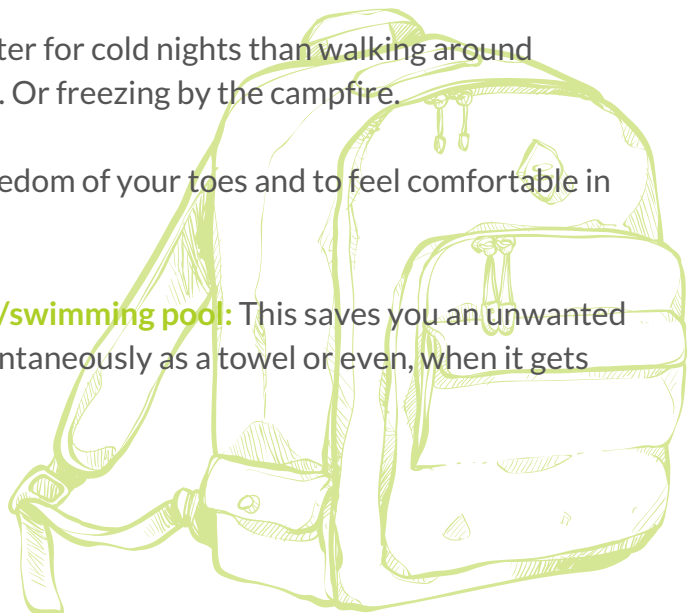
2. Rain/sun protection against any weather: That means hat, glasses, thin rain jacket, sunscreen... The goal is to be prepared for all weather variations.

3. Robust work pants and old T-Shirts: Be sure to pack clothes that can get dirty. After all, just like in your childhood, you should be able to get dirty without a guilty conscience and not have to worry about your favorite shirt at work.

4. A thick sweater: Much better for cold nights than walking around wrapped in your sleeping bag. Or freezing by the campfire.

5. Flip-Flops: Both for the freedom of your toes and to feel comfortable in the shower or pool.

6. Large thin towel for beach/swimming pool: This saves you an unwanted sand peeling, can be used spontaneously as a towel or even, when it gets cold, converted into a scarf.



7. Mosquito repellent: Mosquitoes love hot summer nights or chilling on the shore of a lake just as much as we do. So make sure you don't get bitten by them.

8. Torch: ...because it gets dark everywhere. With a torch, the way back to the accommodation or the trip to the toilet at the other end of the site is much easier. Good to use also for night hikes.



9. Your own drinking bottle: Firstly, so you never dry out and secondly, to reduce plastic waste.

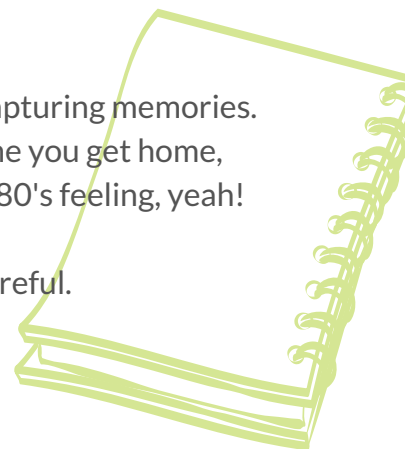
10. Portable speaker or/and musical instrument: ...because music and singing simply make the world a better place (most of the time, anyway). What better way to end a Workcamp day than making music together around the campfire?

11. Earplugs and sleep mask: If you experience a lot, you also need to sleep well and recover. Earplugs and a sleep mask can help you sleep well even if you share a room with other Workcampers. Or even if you don't share the music taste of your fellow campers (see point 10).

12. Scissors and nail file / clipper: These small and useful tools are often forgotten and then missed. Practical is of course also a pocket knife, where these are already included.

13. Personal notebook and a disposable camera: For capturing memories. You may forget some of the pictures you took by the time you get home, and then rediscover them while developing the photos. 80's feeling, yeah!

14. Small first aid kit: ...because you can never be too careful.



Have fun packing and have a great trip!

About us



„Internationale Begegnung in Gemeinschaftsdiensten e.V.“, IBG for short, was founded in 1965 with the aim of contributing to peace and international understanding through international youth community service (Workcamps).

IBG is organized as a non-profit association based in Stuttgart. In addition to several part-time employees, the work is supported by a volunteer board of directors, about 120 members and many indispensable committed volunteers. IBG is neither religious nor politically affiliated and is recognized as a provider of extracurricular youth education.





The association is, among others, a member of the "ALLIANCE of European Voluntary Service Organizations" and the "Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service" (CCIVS) of UNESCO. Through these networks we have more than 50 reliable partner organizations worldwide. IBG is financed, among other things, by grants from the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and from the European Union.



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Erasmus+

For all questions about Workcamps, registration and conditions just contact us directly:

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100 years of Workcamps!

The idea of the international Workcamp goes back to the engineer and pacifist Pierre Cérésolle, who organized the very first international project with volunteers from France, Switzerland, England and Germany at the gates of Verdun in 1920. At the time, it was a courageous attempt at reconciliation and reconstruction. And to this day, this origin shapes the character of Workcamps as a special instrument of peaceful coexistence and international solidarity.

For more info on the history of Workcamps and the 100th anniversary, visit ibg-workcamps.org/100years.



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