



Workcamps in der Schweiz

Partner: Workcamp Switzerland

“Workcamp Switzerland“ ist eine noch junge Organisation. Die wenigen Workcamps sind meist schnell belegt.

Alter: ab 18 J.

Benefit and aim of Workcamp Switzerland

Workcamp Switzerland is organising Workcamps and sending volunteers into national and international Workcamps. Young people are working beneficially to support local projects in the social, ecological or cultural field. In the meantime the volunteers get the opportunity to get to know other countries, to meet people from different cultures and to learn something from the society and the environment they're working for.

The aim of these workcamps is not only to support needy projects but to learn from the intercultural youth exchange. It's a way to fight against racism and it advances young people to act social, to think globally and to get education through the work and travel experience. And it is an experience for life that the volunteers will never forget. A workcamp means unconventional holidays, a memorable time far away from the tourist destinations, to get to know culture and the inhabitant of a region very closely and to work for a good purpose.

Workcamp Switzerland

Workcamp Switzerland was founded as an association in 2004. It is politically and confessionally neutral. Workcamp is about to become a member of the international network “Alliance of European Voluntary Services”.

The idea behind the foundation of Workcamp Switzerland had Sophie Kaiser. She was a volunteer in different projects in Europe and Latin America. Her experiences got it on to organise Workcamps in Switzerland and to place volunteers abroad. With her background of social work (FH) she brought along the skills to work on this field. Other people got enthusiastic about the idea of Workcamp Switzerland and so on the 10th of January 2004 the association was founded.

Our Workcamps

This year we want to offer some new workcamps and some classical camps we were running for several years now. Because of the financial situation we had to change our strategy and create some new, interesting concepts that get support from a sponsor, because we don't get sufficient funds from the government of Switzerland. Because of the fact that foundations don't want to spend in “normal” activities of organisations, we decided to run Workcamps with some different approaches:

SeenTeen: What happens if you mix young and old volunteers in an intergenerational Workcamp? This pilot project should offer a platform to make friendships and experiences with another age group and try to build up friendship and better understanding.

You(th)Change: We want to invite Volunteers from Eastern European Countries to spend their time with Swiss Volunteers. One day of workshops, where the participants can share their similarities and talk about cultural differences and how to prevent prejudices. Through the media there is a picture shown of some Eastern European Countries, which isn't that positive.

All our workcamps will last about two weeks and will be supported by one or two campleaders.

Important Information about the workcamps

Expectations: As a volunteer don't expect the Workcamps to be a holiday camp where you come to relax and enjoy your time. The main part of the Workcamp is "work" and any sightseeing trips must be planned on the weekends or when you are off. Don't expect luxurious accommodations. It's usually basic and simple with dormitories and simple toilets and showers.

Starting date for placements: We will start to accept Volunteers after the Technical Meeting. The official starting date will be on Monday the 15th of March. As we won't be present at the Technical Meeting there will be no reservations from none of our partner organisations. This will give a fair chance to everyone. Thanks for your understanding.

Work: If not mentioned different the volunteers will work around 6 hours a day. Usually the weekends are off. Most of the Swiss Workcamps are physically hard work and take place outdoors.

Free time Activities: The volunteers have to pay for any sightseeing trips themselves. The project partner isn't responsible for the weekend programme.

Language: Normally the workcamp language will be English. But this year again several workcamps will take place where the participants have to be able to speak another language (French or German). Some workcamps will take place in the French part of Switzerland. As usual some workcamps will be in the German part of Switzerland.

Insurance: The volunteers are responsible to organize their own health insurance and any other insurance they might need when they travel to Switzerland.

Important Information about Switzerland

Geography: Switzerland is a landlocked country with the alpine massive in the middle of Europe. Switzerland borders Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Italy and France. The capitol is Berne. The scenery in Switzerland is very diverse and beautiful.

Language and Culture: Switzerland is multicultural. In regions around cities the amount of foreigners is pretty high. The average of foreign people in Switzerland is 20% of the entire population. The four official languages are Swiss German, French, Italian and a language called "Rätoromanisch". Traditional dishes are cheese fondue, raclette and potatoes. Switzerland is more than bancs, chocolate, clocks and high living expenses. The young population is open against different cultures and in the cities there is a wide range of cultural events going on. Even though Switzerland has a high living standard there are poor people living here.

Climate: The climate in different regions of Switzerland varies. The south part of Switzerland (Tessin) and also the western part of Switzerland (French part) is mild and Mediterranean while in the mountains it can be freezing cold. In the mountains there is even snow in summer. Switzerland can be mild and warm in summer.

Federal System: Switzerland is a democracy which consists of 26 independent cantons with their own languages/ dialects and laws. The representation of the people is the Federal Assembly with the council of States and the National Council. The head of state is the President of the Federal Council. The government consists of seven Swiss Federal Councils who are responsible for one department. Every four years they get elected again.

Economy: Switzerland is a highly developed industry nation. Nearly half of the employed persons are working in industrial firms or trading enterprises. They also work in the fields of agriculture and forestry. Like in other European countries economical problems have grown since the 90ies. The jobless figures increased and the gross domestic product got smaller. Besides microtechnology and pharmaceutical companies, banks and insurances have their head quarters in Zurich, Geneva or Basel.

Currency: The currency in Switzerland is Swiss francs sfR/ CHF. Credit cards and EC cards are accepted in many places, such as the airport, railway stations, in shops, restaurants or hotels. EURO are not accepted everywhere and exchange rate is maybe not too good. It's always helpful to have some cash with you for emergencies.

Security: Switzerland is one of the most safe countries in Europe. In crowds of people and in railway stations you have to watch out for grifters and thieves. Switzerland is ideal for travelling as a woman, because most places are not dangerous. Late at night you shouldn't walk around in empty, dark streets.

Workcamps 2010

WS10TH 21/08/10 – 04/09/10 BEATENBERG CONS PROJECT

Members of the union called Region Thunersee are municipalities around the lake of Thun. The aim of the union is to take care of the cultural landscape in the region. One big and ongoing project is to maintain the old pilgrim-path. It is part of the famous trails leading to Santiago de Compostela. Around the lake of Thun this path fits nicely in the landscape between lake and mountains. It's a beautiful old trail, not only for pilgrims, but also for nature-lovers and hikers. In order to maintain the path this project called "Treffpunkt Pilgerweg" needs the help of volunteers.

WORK

The volunteer-task consists of maintenance work on the pilgrim-path around the lake of Thun. One of the main tasks will be to repair dry stone walls. The volunteers will also build new dry stone walls.

Be aware that the work is physically demanding and you have to stay outdoors all the day. Volunteers need to be physically strong, patient and have a certain skill for manual work. Normally the weather in August can be hot, but there could also be rainy days. The working time is 6 hours.

ACCOMMODATION

Volunteers will live in a nice guesthouse belonging to a religious institution, but clearly it is open for all people, no matter what you believe. The volunteers need to bring sleeping bags. In the mornings and at night you will do the cooking yourselves. For lunch Volunteers have to prepare sandwiches. The village lies on a terrace above the lake and offers a fantastic view to the alps of Berne with it's majestic four thousand meters high Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau.

LOCATION

The pre-alp region along the right riverside of the lake of Thun offers different possibilities for trekking. Close from here is the "Niederhorn" with a nice panoramic view. You can discover the caves "Beatus" or visit the close by alp town Thun with its magnificent old castle and historical town centre. Walk along the old streets and enjoy a cup of coffee in one of the pretty street cafés. From Thun you can reach Berne in 20 minutes by train. Berne is the capitol of Switzerland and UNESCO world heritage.

REMARKS/ SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

In the alpine region there can be objective natural hazards (for example steep paths, falling rocks). That's why volunteers need to be confident and fit and they have to bring good, weather proved clothes. This includes robust, water proofed hiking shoes and rain clothes. As you can get dirty during your work, you also have to bring old working clothes. You will have to carry around many heavy stones. The work can be physically demanding that's why you shouldn't have any health problems.

AIRPORT

Next airport is Berne. Bigger airports are Zurich, Basel or Geneva.

LANGUAGE

English

WS10SCH 04/09/10 – 18/09/10

SCHATZALP

ENVI/AGRI

PROJECT

In the beautiful region of Davos (Schatzalp) there is the „Alpinum“, a huge botanical garden in the mountains. An association was founded to support this garden and to save some rare species and the nature over there for the next generation. In this botanical garden guests can find many rare plants and more than 3500 different types of species and cultivars. This magic place is for everyone who loves nature.

WORK

Volunteers will help out in the botanical garden. The work can vary, but people have to be aware that it can be physically demanding. Depending on the fitness of everyone, different works will be done such as taking out trees that had been cut before, to damp compost, to weed and to plant. The volunteers have to bring along their own working hand gloves.

ACCOMMODATION

Volunteers will sleep on the second floor of the hotel in the old flats of the staff. There will be two or three mattresses per room. Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided from the personal canteen. Breakfast is around 8 o'clock. The work will start at 9 o'clock.

LOCATION

Set in an exceptionally beautiful bowl of mountains Davos is the highest town in Europe at 1560 meters. In Davos there is the world class ice hockey, cross country skiing and ice skating, Volunteers will stay at the hotel Schatzalp. With a peaceful location 300 meters above Davos this traditional hotel is reached by a short ride on the Schatzalp funicular from the main street and enjoys glorious panoramic views across the valley.

REMARKS / SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The motivation of the volunteers has to be very high to work outdoors and it can be physically demanding. The weather might change (rain). Volunteers should be interested in gardening. That's why a MOTIVATION LETTER is required. Volunteers should bring along warm, robust working clothes (water proofed), trekking shoes (suitable for the mountains) and hand gloves (strong working gloves). Smoking during the work is not allowed.

FREE TIME ACTIVITIES

In their leisure time volunteers can go for a hike in the nearby mountains. There are many hiking trails close by. It is also possible to take the cable car (free) to go down to Davos and have a look. One afternoon, the responsible gardener will guide the volunteers through the botanical garden and one evening he will hold a presentation.

TERMINAL

Bigger Airports: Zurich, Basel, Geneva, there is a connection to the train station Davos Platz. From there volunteers can take a cable car.

LANGUAGE

English