

Green HI Hostels – Green messengers at HI Iceland



Summary

The main aim of the project is to raise awareness about sustainability issues among international guests of HI Iceland, the staff of the HI hostels and the local community by maintaining the already developed sustainability policy of HI Iceland and developing new ways to increase sustainability consciousness in the daily activities of the HI hostels.

In order to do so HI Iceland has designed the *Green HI Hostels* and run it for the last 10 years. The project is funded by the EU Erasmus+ fund (Youth in Action). The aim of the fund is to inspire a sense of active European citizenship and it promotes mobility within and beyond the EU's borders.

Objectives

The overall aim of the project *Green HI Hostels* is to raise awareness about sustainability issues, within the local community, the International guests of the HI Iceland, as well as the in-house team.

National HI Association

HI Iceland

Hostels

Reykjavík City HI Hostel

Reykjavík Downtown HI Hostel

Loft HI Hostel

Borgarnes HI Hostel

SDG Contribution



The volunteers, that participate in the *Green HI Hostels* project, are called *Green messengers*. Their role is to explore different ways of promoting sustainability in the HI Hostels. At HI Iceland, we welcome new ideas of the Green messengers that contribute to the sustainability work of the organisation.

The objectives of the activities proposed are in harmony with the project's objectives and main aim, which is to raise awareness about sustainability issues, among the international guests of HI Iceland, staff and local community. Overall the main task of the volunteer is looking for new ways of spreading the eco consciousness and developing new activities of promoting Icelandic culture and help visitors and locals alike to increase their appreciation and understanding of it.

Activities

Activities are categorized into three main areas:

1. Environmental management – by regularly auditing the key areas of the hostels as well as find new ways to monitor the various processes the volunteers are actively engaged in the hostel operations. The volunteers review regularly the Sustainability Action Plan in collaboration with the hostels' staff and set up daily actions that can help achieving the goals for the Swan Eco Label report at the end of the year. This involves also sharing of findings, problem solving, participating in staff meetings and observing progress.
2. Environmental education / Education for sustainability – Engaging in training processes for greening the HI Hostels, inspiring and encouraging our staff, our guests and locals alike to contribute to the sustainability work at the HI Hostels and finding ways to share and educate those in interaction. Thus, actively promote sustainability related educational activities and cross-cultural experiences of guests and staff members at the hostels in Reykjavík, but also to local population.
3. Events – Bringing to guests, staff and interested individuals alike, activities and events related to environment, nature protection, responsible tourism, culture values and sustainable development. Apart from raising awareness, sharing of knowledge and teaching of easy-to-put-in-practice skills on particular issues, stimulate the inter- and cross-cultural side of the life in the hostel. Organizing workshops, green screening (movie nights), promotional events (e.g. Earth Hour) and other events (e.g. clothes swapping) to bring attention to opportunities for everyone to green up their daily life. These events are open to public and create an open space for creativity, art and sharing.

Economic

Supporting the HI Mission

EU funding

Social

Youth development

Non-formal education

Education for sustainability

Environment

Monitoring resource usage

Eco activities at the hostels

Environmental awareness



Methodology

Youth in Action Programme foresees five operational Actions, of which European Voluntary Service (EVS) is one. The aim of the EVS is to support young people's participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both within and outside the European Union. Under this Action, young people take part individually or in groups in non-profit, unpaid activities.

Young people and youth workers naturally constitute the main target population of the Programme. However, the Programme reaches these individuals through promoters. Conditions for participation in the Programme therefore relate to these two actors: the "participants" (individuals participating in the Programme) and the "promoters" (in most cases, legally established organisations).

HI Iceland is an accredited organisation by the National agency of Erasmus Program Youth in Action. This means that HI Iceland fulfils the criteria for being beneficiary body of the Programme, thus a promoter for Youth in Action projects.

The Green HI hostel project is designed in accordance with the EVS charter which highlights the main principles and quality standards of EVS as well as the role of all participating bodies, individuals and organisations alike.

During the project, the volunteer will develop strong skills in the eight key competences areas defined by the Youth in Action programme:

- Communication in foreign languages as the daily language used will be mainly English.
- Communication in the mother tongue might not always be applicable but as mentioned above the volunteer will be living and working in an international environment where many languages are spoken.
- Learning to learn as the volunteers will have the chance to organize and develop their own learning and will always look for ways to promote sustainability aspects in interesting ways.
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship as the volunteers will have the chance to materialize their dreams and implement their ideas in an engaging and motivated environment.
- Cultural awareness and expression by living in an international environment and also by learning to integrate step by step in the Icelandic society.
- Social and civic competence will be highly developed through workshops, educational activities and daily engagement with staff members and partners
- Digital competence by compiling and gathering information into leaflets, posters and all kinds of educational materials. During the project, part of the communication will be conducted online, through emails and written materials on the social media like facebook etc.
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology will be mainly developed during the preparation of Swan Nordic Ecolabel annual report in collaboration with the staff members of HI Iceland.

Every person who has taken part in EVS is entitled to receive a Youthpass Certificate, which describes and validates the non-formal and informal learning experience and outcomes acquired during the project. Furthermore, Youthpass is to be considered as a process of becoming aware, reflecting on and documenting the learning within the separate phases of the project.

The Green HI Hostels project is divided into five main parts:

- a) On arrival training



During the first weeks of the volunteers stay in Iceland he/she will have several introduction and training meetings as well as on-site training by the various Reykjavík HI Hostels. The volunteer will learn about the EVS project, Iceland and the Icelandic culture as well as the operations of HI Iceland.

b) Working towards practical sustainability at one of the Reykjavík HI Hostels.

This is the main part of the project and is carried out throughout the whole timeline of the project:

- Maintaining the sustainable policy by regularly auditing the key areas in the Reykjavik Hostels and looking for new ways to make the HI Hostels more sustainable.
- Review regularly the Sustainability Action Plan in collaboration with the staff and set up daily actions that can help achieving the goals for the Swan Eco Label report at the end of the year.
- Informing and organizing educational activities on topics of importance as recycling, efficient use of energy and its conservation, biological/organic agriculture, the importance of nutritional equilibrium to health, fair and social responsible trade and travelling/tourism.
- Bringing to guests, staff and interested individuals alike, activities and events related to environment, nature protection, responsible tourism, culture values and sustainable development. Apart from raising awareness, sharing of knowledge and teaching of easy-to-put-in-practice skills on particular issues, stimulate the inter- and cross-cultural side of the life in the hostel. Tasks like giving aid and advice, making information available, easy to find and understand tools etc.

c) Developing a more sustainable environment in the franchised hostels (*Flexible, not always part of the project*).

Some years it is possible for the volunteers to visit other HI Hostels in Iceland during their annual audit together with the HI Iceland's Quality and Sustainability Manager. During these visits the volunteer will have the opportunity to participate in quality and environmental audit of the hostel as well as work on ideas on how to improve the sustainability work of the franchised hostels.

d) Preparation of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel annual report.

All three Reykjavík HI hostels hold the Swan Nordic Ecolabel certification. Reports on their performance are published annually. Throughout the year the volunteers gather data for the Swan report and in January these documents are prepared in order to report the outcome of the environmental management of each hostel.

e) Evaluation and planning stage for the upcoming volunteers

In the final period of the voluntary service, the volunteer will have the time to evaluate her/his whole experience and the results of the work. At the end of her/his stay in Iceland, she/he shall prepare a set of recommendations and/or suggestions to continue with the tasks by a new volunteer, as well as train them. Advice and guidance concerning the stages and possible sources of information, contacts and gathered data should be offered in order to smooth the transfer of responsibilities.

Swap 'til you drop

Swap 'til you drop is a clothing market held at Loft HI Hostel every month. This is one of the most popular event of Green HI Hostels project and is well known among locals in Reykjavík.



The last Tuesday every month, lost-and-found items and left-over-clothes are brought from the other hostels to Loft where participants in the market can swap their clothes for something different. Each time over 100 people participate in the Swap making it a bustling scene at Loft HI Hostel.

Clothes that are left when the Swap is over are brought to the RedCross in Iceland.

Green training of staff

Training of new staff members is one of the tasks of Green messengers. All staff members are trained in daily tasks that affect the environmental management at the hostel. This includes methods of chemical usage, water and energy consumption as well as recycling processes.

Regularly, other staff members are offered uptraining, a shorter version of the training to refresh their memory and implement new solutions.



Green screening

To promote environmental awareness and cross-cultural experiences of guests and staff members at the hostels in Reykjavík screening of documentaries is offered weekly at the Reykjavík City HI Hostel. Topics are of various kind; nature protection, responsible tourism, culture values and sustainable development. After the screening attendants participate in debates and share opinions and experience related to the documentary.



Technical details

Funding: The *Green HI Hostels* project is funded by Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme.

Target audience: International guests, staff of HI Iceland and locals.

Duration: The *Green HI Hostels* project is 12 months long.

Partners involved: HI Iceland has worked with various organisations from all over Europe. This year volunteers participating in the project come from France, Spain and Turkey.

Would like to know more about this initiative?

Contact: Helena Westhöfer Óladóttir,
Quality & Sustainability Manager, HI Iceland

Email: helena@hostel.is

Follow HI Iceland on



Follow the Green Messengers of the Reykjavik Hostels [here](#)

Read more about EVS projects and Erasmus funding [here](#) and [here](#)



Erasmus+



EVROPA UNGA FOLKSINS

