

Detailed description of EVS at Cloughjordan Community Farm

Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary (Ireland)

Theme 1 Urban/Rural development

Theme 2 Environment

Inclusion Economic difficulties, Social difficulties

The project is Cloughjordan Community Farm which is Ireland's only CSA – Community Supported Agriculture Farm and will take place in Ireland's only eco-village which is set within Cloughjordan itself. It is surrounded by 50 acres of beautiful land dedicated to woodland and active food production. The eco-village is home to approximately 50 households (more on the way) along with a hostel, our community farm and a number of non-profit educational enterprises such as Feasta, Cultivate and Sustainable Projects Ireland Ltd. Cloughjordan Community Farm is a non-profit project owned by its members (the residents of Cloughjordan) and which aims to improve the quality and quantity of food provided locally while also reducing the environmental impact of food production and transport.



In the case of individual EVS placements, the volunteers will be accommodated a house with other volunteers. They will be provided with their own room and access to necessary facilities. They will have the opportunity to integrate with other volunteers from all over Europe working on different projects who will be also staying in the eco village. Group EVS volunteers will be accommodated in the onsite hostel, Django's Eco Hostel, which has been used as a venue for Youth Exchanges and other group projects. Volunteers

will have access to farm produce as well as pocket money to purchase additional items. There is a bulk buy system in place for all residents which enables people to buy ethical / organic food economically on a monthly basis. The eco village itself is located in the original village of Cloughjordan, so there is access to a number of shops and pubs as well as a cafe and bookshop. There is also good direct access by train to Limerick and Dublin, as well as the opportunity to take bus services from nearby Nenagh or Moneygall. The strong sense of community in Cloughjordan, means there is ample possibility to integrate with local initiatives and there is a huge variety of activities taking place in the evening such as Aikido, Tai Chi, Irish language classes, pottery, music classes, book clubs, and so on, as well as weekly traditional Irish music nights. Due to the nature of the eco village as a learning centre, there are also regular groups from universities, NGOs, and so on, staying in the village and as a result there are huge opportunities for additional learning for the volunteers, who are often welcome to join parts of such activities. There are also weekly community meals which take place in the home of residents, and allow volunteers and members of the community to integrate and interact regularly.

The Cloughjordan Community Farm with its varied educational activities and its location within the eco-village provides a rich service and learning opportunity. For the EVS volunteers, the main focus of their volunteering will be learning about organic, biodynamic and sustainable farming on a CSA through hands-on work experience in our polytunnels and on the field. They will also get the opportunity to be involved in any of our farm support groups – e.g. Membership, distribution, finance etc. which will help them learn and understand how a CSA is run. We are a young organisation (5 years old) and so are learning a lot ourselves. The EVS volunteers will have the opportunity to learn and grow with us.

Cloughjordan Community Farm organises a number of events throughout the year which the EVS volunteers could play leading roles in. Farm Camp, a CSA Conference, student visits and educational tours could be further developed by the volunteers.

Volunteers will be given on going supervision, and will only be given tasks which they are suitably prepared for. Mentorship will be provided and the well-being and integration of the volunteer will be paramount to the project. In the case of placements with young people with fewer opportunities, VSI will provide additional support and training opportunities for mentors, and coordination support for particular projects. The project will not host volunteers under the age of 18 years.

Volunteers will be inducted into the environment of the community and into any elements of their role that may require certain knowledge to ensure their safety. The volunteer will be provided with all the required information they would need in case of an emergency – contact details for mentors / supervisors, local pharmacy and hospital information, language support and so on.



In the past 2 years, the farm has developed a relationship with the Youth Programme of VSI, and provided a series of immersive learning days on the farm, as well as benefiting from the inputs of various volunteers over that period of time. The community farm, currently hosts 4 EVS volunteers who work on the farm, and would like to further develop its teaching/educating capacity.

The EVS volunteers will play a vital role in the working of our farm and be provided with a great opportunity to increase their knowledge in organic, biodynamic and sustainable growing as well as learning the importance of food security production through CSA's. They will also be giving the farm the opportunity to connect with young people, share their experiences and knowledge and diversify the existing community demography. The Community Farm would like to host volunteers in 2014, and to maintain this connection for some time. We are interested in hosting both long-term individual volunteers, and short-term EVS group placements (with the support of VSI).

Cloughjordan Community Farm is a member owned and operated Community Supported Agriculture initiative based in Cloughjordan Ecovillage. As a social enterprise the Community Farm aims to promote a healthy food culture and guarantee secure local food supply, as well as hosting training in resilient food systems and sustainable agriculture. The Cloughjordan Community Farm, in association with locally based national NGO's Cultivate Living and Learning and Feasta: The Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability offer a number of hands-on courses throughout the year in subjects around food production and storing, seed saving, nutritional resilience, rearing animals, Permaculture, adding value to agricultural produce and training events for those interested in setting up and maintaining CSA initiatives. Learning experiences for primary schools and gap year secondary school classes are hosted with the Cloughjordan Cookery School.

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