



## EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

**A.L.E.M – Lisbon, Portugal**

October 2015 to August 2016

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## 1. Project Environment

The EVS project takes place in Belém and mostly in Ajuda area, the western parts of Lisbon. Lisbon is the largest city in Portugal with a population of around 700.000 inhabitants, while the Lisbon Metropolitan Area has a total of more than 2 million inhabitants. The city is the wealthiest region of Portugal and its political center.

Belém and Ajuda are two districts marked by the economic difficulties its residents and many of them are illiterate. Both neighbourhoods are a bit isolated from the rest of the city, but in the last years public transportation has become much better due to the university which was built in Ajuda. From Ajuda to the city center it takes around 35m by bus and 15m by tram from Belém.

Regarding cultural activities, Belém has many famous museums (e.g., Contemporary Art Museum, Ethnographic Museum and Centro Cultural de Belém) and monuments (e.g., Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, Torre de Belém). It is a highly touristic area. Its gardens and promenades by the riverside are a popular leisure spot in the city for families and youngsters. Ajuda, on the other side, is a working class neighbourhood and it serves mostly its own residents.

The headquarters of A.L.E.M - the Eça de Queirós Centre - is set in a high-school (Escola Secundária Marquês de Pombal) with a long tradition in Lisbon, located in Belém area.

Most activities of this EVS project will be developed outside ALEM'S headquarters, namely in the social neighbourhood of Casalinho da Ajuda, in Ajuda district. The apartment blocks were built by the city council in the 1960's, the 1980's and later in 1990's. The inhabitants are mainly emigrants from Africa and Portuguese Roma families, which were given house here after the city council demolished the illegal slums in which they were living. The relocation of these families was problematic because the different groups didn't want to live together and there are still tensions between them and between these new families and the local community which had been living there before. In Ajuda school rates are low and the population faces unemployment /precarious work. There are also some cases of unstructured families and children who are brought up by relatives because they were abandoned by their parents or those are in jail.

When it comes to education, most of these children/ youngsters have serious difficulties at school, be in term of learning process but also on sociability/ behaviour issues. Many of them are not motivated at all to be in school and their parents also do not see the benefit of education, which very commonly leads to disagreements between teachers and parents. In fact, the complicated relationship between teacher and parents is a key issue in the all the difficulties involved in dealing with these children. Another trait of these children is that they are "closed" in their own home/ethnic environment and do not have much contact with different people, outside of their local neighbours.

The volunteers are therefore an important support to the work of the teachers and educators in these schools/ kindergartens, because they bring a new input and can connect to the children in a different way.

## 2. Description of the Organization

A.L.E.M. (Associação, Literatura, Literacia e Mediação) is an association whose aims are to study the role of literature in the process of learning to read and to train reading mediators (families, teachers, volunteers) who will support the children in the process.

In addition, the Association develops actions for various schools and social-educational projects. The Centre also manages an archive of literature for children, open to educators and teacher who wish to have access to children's books and where they can find resources and advices on how to approach literature with their pupils.

One of the projects, **Literature and Literacy Project** ([www.leituras.net](http://www.leituras.net) or [literaturaeliteracia.no.sapo.pt](http://literaturaeliteracia.no.sapo.pt)) - participated, with the initiative of the Portuguese Education Ministry, in the program *Schooling for Tomorrow* promoted by OCDE. In 2001, in order to continue the previous program, it was created the "Eça de Queirós Literature and Literacy Study & Resource Centre, located in Escola Secundária Marquês de Pombal, a high-school in Lisbon - Belém area.) At the Centre there is a children's book library (Biblioteca Matilde Rosa Araújo) and the secretariat of the Center.

A part of the intervention of the Association is developed in a social neighborhood (Bairro do Casalinho da Ajuda), mainly inhabited by African emigrants and Roma families. Here, the association leads the Project "*Social Bond*" with several partners: the local group of schools (Agrupamento Francisco Arruda); the centre for adult education belonging to a high-school (Centro Novas Oportunidades- Escola Secundária Marquês de Pombal); a Roma association (Pastoral dos Ciganos); a cultural institute (Instituto do Oriente); the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences - University of Lisbon; an educational association (Associação de Protecção da Infância da Ajuda); a cultural association (Associação de Actividades Culturais do Bairro 2 de Maio) and an association that promotes social inclusion of people, of all ages, with disabilities (Fundação -Liga)

The "Social Bond" project aims at promoting social inclusion of the inhabitants and the social cohesion and positive esteem between the different cultures in the area. Some of the activities developed in the neighbourhood since 1997 were: organization of Solidarity Parliaments (UNESCO model) ;Youth Councils for Citizenship; edition of the newspaper "O Cidadão" e "O Casalinho" (done by children); organization of training sessions on how to create a business; and development of theatre courses and plays. The place where these activities were carried out was closed and the intervention focus moved to the local kindergarten + primary school which is nowadays still happening. All this patrimony of experience is now under the tutelage of A.L.E.M., under the guidance of the same team.

EVS volunteers will cooperate in the kindergartens and in the primary school in Casalinho da Ajuda. This part of the project is called "Sonhar a Utopia" (Dream with Utopia) and focuses on improving children's literacy levels through literature reading in order to promote the pleasure for reading, reading skills and reading habits. These aspects underlie school achievement and, consequently, help to prevent early school-drop out and improve social inclusion. This project is a research-action project and there is a strong theoretical support assured by the Eça de Queirós Centre.

The team works daily in the "Proximity Library" in the school with small groups of children (up to 12) reading and exploring books and texts, mainly traditional literature for children and poetry, through the translation of the stories and linguistic contents into different languages: plastic, musical and dramatic,

and their recreation through "evocative objects" and study visits. This experience fosters children's oral and written language acquisition and development, thus promoting their school achievement and bond to the literate culture. The project also promotes the mobilization of parents and educators to support children in reading at home and the access of the community to books. In order to achieve these aims, the Unit will start the "Street Library" in the neighbourhood.

Since the scholar year of 2009/2010, the number of foreign youngsters assigned to the Project has allowed them to visit different schools and other partner associations, having the successive evaluations of their contribution been highly positive.

### 3. Involvement of Volunteers

This project will offer volunteers the chance to work with a multicultural group of children and to be involved in their education, as well as with the whole community. Volunteers will get to know more about the role of reading in the prevention of school and early-drop out and how school education can promote social inclusion and citizenship. Accordingly, volunteers will develop practical skills in engaging children with texts through creative, expressive / artistic means, thus developing their ability to handle children and their own creativity.

Volunteers will have the chance to learn or improve Portuguese language and also to learn about Portuguese culture by visiting many heritage spots with the children and getting involved with Portuguese literature and cultural references.

### 4. Tasks of the Volunteers

Volunteers will have different types of tasks and roles and each volunteer will be involved in two or three main project areas according to their profile and interests. Volunteers will be involved in the projects at the headquarters, at schools, in Fundação Liga and also in the community. They will be engaged with the children or youngsters, together with the teachers and with A.L.E.M team:

#### A) After-school activities and leisure / educational activities at the Schools

Volunteers will help teachers that come daily to the Schools after lessons to provide students with lessons on Music, Drama, Plastic Arts, English and Sports (within a governmental programme - "Atividades de Enriquecimento Curricular"). These activities are more informal than "regular" classes and volunteers can provide students with extra support to develop activities and give ideas. Volunteers can focus on the activities they prefer and according to the needs of the teachers.

Throughout the project at schools and kindergartens volunteers are expected to share their skills by developing leisure and educational activities with the children (dance, theatre, sports, environmental activities, etc.) and to introduce their culture by presenting their language, traditions, food, traditional games, music, dances and also children stories from their country to make pupils willing to read more about it and to show different realities.

Volunteers will share the school system and learning methods used in their countries with the staff and educators, thus allowing an enriching exchange and learning process for all the parts.

There are at the moment 5 schools and two kindergartens involved in the project.

## **B) Activities to promote Literature and Reading in the Middle-School, Primary Schools and Kindergartens**

Volunteers will be actively engaged in the tasks meant to promote that children become close with and begin to appreciate books and reading. Namely, volunteers will help the staff in the following tasks:

- Representing book stories in different languages (through visual arts, performances, etc.)
- Building stories with the children
- Accompanying children in the visits to the local heritage and study visits
- Preparing material for the reading activities (boxes of evocative objects, images, sound files, etc.)
- Managing the book home lending system
- These sessions to promote reading and explore books and stories are led by A.L.E.M. staff or volunteers, with the supervision of the class teacher, and are attended by small groups of around 12 children every day.

## **C) Fundação Liga**

The volunteers will help in all the activities carried out in Casa das Artes (House of Arts), which promotes cultural and artistic opportunities to stimulate and develop the creative potential of every person, at any age and physical functional status, mental or social, in increasing their self-confidence and social recognition.

The volunteer will be engaged in the following tasks:

- Accompanying groups that attend the art Workshops with mental and physical disabilities;
- Assisting and helping activities in the workshop of contemporary dance, attended by people with physical disabilities;
- Giving support in meal time;
- Helping the implementation of art projects (exhibitions, dance performances, etc.);
- Supporting the cultural events (Christmas Party, Carnival, Santos Populares).

Each of the volunteers will be responsible for different tasks according to the preferences and skills of the volunteers and nature of the tasks. Volunteers can also be asked to help also in each other's' projects when there is a bigger flow of work. Many times volunteers will cooperate and work together.

**OBS:** in Fundação Liga you will work with people either with physical or mental disabilities.

## **D) Projeto ao Sabor das Palavras – Quinta do Cabrinha and Casalinho da Ajuda**

This project combines both the aims of the Association for the Defence of Diabetics (Associação de Defesa dos Diabéticos- ADD) and those of an association which promotes the right to literacy, as it is the case of ALEM. The project aims therefore at nutrition education and promotion of healthy life styles taking into consideration the protection of the diabetic people and the promotion of literacy among children and youngsters. Nutrition education is of utmost importance for people with lower levels of literacy, because, as it has been documented, this population is more prone to consume carbohydrates and caloric food, which increases the risks of obesity and also diabetes. By using written texts to approach the concept of food and the value of good nutrition, it is expected that children will become more aware about health issues (mainly diabetes) and what can be done to prevent it. At the same time, children will also be in contact with literature, thus improving their relationship to reading. The volunteers will therefore be involved in the following tasks:

- Working with the Roma population (Literary Education and health education and Entrepreneurship II)
- Help on textile workshop in Quinta do Cabrinha;
- Helping organising and in the dynamization of the Solidarity Councils (meetings for adults to discuss in a constructive way the problems the community faces and to actively look for creative solutions);
- Collaborating in Adult Literacy;
- Virtual Driving School;
- Recovering bicycles workshops;
- Urban Gardens;
- Helping to organize cultural events for the community that bring together different cultural expressions and different generations;
- Helping to dynamize reading and writing sessions of tales and poems focused on food;
- Performing theatre or music plays with the children about these issues;
- Helping the educators and children in collecting texts and creating thematic portfolios (proverbs, folktales, games, history of food, world cuisine traditions, food conservation processes and so on);
- Helping to dynamize cooking activities for children (soups, salads, healthy desserts...);
- Dynamizing outdoor activities for children, such as long walks, dance and traditional games;
- Helping escorting the children in study visits to different museums (Botanical Garden, Meteorological museum, Oriental Museum, "Pavilhão do Conhecimento" and others of the kind).

#### **E) CASA INDEPENDENTE /Intendente- Projecto Penélope (newst project)**

Casa Independente is a cultural association/café in Intendente, an area characterized by drugs and prostitution. This association has just started its collaboration with ALEM. Projecto "Penelope" aims at bringing together the resident community in the local area through art and art-related projects that range from literature, to plastic arts, theatre, dance, music.

The project is based on the concept of the greek *Paideia*. By exploring the principles of art - education and collective creation, it is intended that the partner schools launch challenges to the community in order to foster social cohesion. The connection with literature will allow children to look around, understand the reality and intervene critically.

There will be organized different artistic activities that will bring together all different local actors, being inclusion the common goal. The volunteers will support in the activities developed by ALEM and its partners.

#### **IMPORTANT INFO:**

ALEM has also other local projects which the volunteers could integrate, but they depend largely on the annual partnerships and they cannot always be put into action. Some of these small projects also depend on a very specific volunteers' profile and Portuguese linguistic skills, therefore they might not be available at all time. However when the volunteers arrive and during the school year it is possible to join them in case they are active:

#### **A) Activities in the Library and Resource Centre (located in Marques de Pombal High School)**

Volunteers will contribute to the daily run of the Eça de Queirós Literature and Literacy Study & Resource Centre, helping the staff in the following tasks:

- Assisting and giving information to visitors;
- Lending books to teachers and educators;
- Preparing material for the reading activities (boxes of evocative objects, image files, sound files, etc.);
- Managing the archive (classify new books, make registrations, dispose books, etc.);
- Preparing sessions for educators on how to animate books and reading;

**OBS:** This is a very administrative work. However if the volunteers are interested and have some background/interest as librarians they could possibly join.

**B) Different project in which current volunteers are participating this year:**

- Organizing Workshops on Gender and Human Rights issues for teenagers during lessons;
- Participating and organizing small sessions for **Senior University**.

## 5. Volunteer's Profile

We consider that the following profile features are particularly important to the adaptation of the volunteer to this project:

- Motivation to participate in this specific project;
- Interest in literature / reading;
- Appreciation for cultural diversity and personal values of non-racism and equal value of all cultures;
- Interest in working with children from different ethnic backgrounds and sometimes with school problems;
- Dynamism and creativity to suggest, plan and develop activities with the children and with the community;
- Willing to develop projects related to plastic arts or theatre with the children;
- Equal gender (which allows both girls and boys at school to have "reading models" which whom they can identify themselves);
- Basic knowledge of English and/or Portuguese or motivation to learn;
- Open mind and flexibility;
- It's positive if the volunteers has artistic/ musical skills;
- Willingness to work with people with physical/mental disabilities.

We don't require any particular qualification however personal love for books and reading skills and habits could help the volunteer to fit the idea of the project.

All candidates applying will be considered in the selection process regardless of their nationality, ethnical groups, religion, sexual orientation or political opinion. We are open to volunteers with emigration background or from ethnic minorities.

The selection procedure will include a specific "application form", where the Sending Organization should give a brief presentation of the candidate. For the final selection, we'll make phone interviews.

In the end, an email will be sent to selected and non-selected volunteers as well the Sending Organizations.

During all process, the team will also try to identify EVS partners that are fully engaged in promoting the quality of EVS project, so we can ensure the success of the project.

## 6. Volunteer's Conditions and Logistics

### 1) Language course and cultural programme

In the first month and half, more or less, the volunteers have a small language course (in case the EU online course is not yet active!) and a small cultural programme which includes some visits to important historical places in the area of Lisbon. During this time they are free to discover the city and get used to their new EVS life. They will visit the project, get to know the people but will only start really working after the end of the language course.

### 2) Working hours and Days off

The standard timetable of volunteers is from 10-17h, varying according to their placement and tasks. Volunteers have days off on Saturday and Sunday. If there's an event during the weekend and volunteers are working in it, they can take 2 days-off to compensate.

Volunteers will be entitled to 2 holiday-days for each month of volunteering. However, as the schools have their own holidays we ask the volunteers to take their holidays during school holidays.

### 3) Food, transport and pocket money

The volunteers receive an individual monthly allowance for their food expenses and on weekdays they lunch in the canteen of the schools. Plus they receive extra money to be managed in group for house expenses. Each month they will get transportation and pocket money. The money is given in cash in the beginning of the month and it is the responsibility of the volunteer to manage it well.

### 4) Lodgement

Volunteers will share an apartment in the center of Lisbon with other EVS volunteers. The house is fully equipped and the location is near to metro and bus station, supermarkets, pharmacy and shops. By metro it takes 7 minutes to the city center, by walking 15 to 20 minutes. Most volunteers will share a double room.

## 7. Applying for the Project

**ROTA JOVEM** ([www.rotajovem.com](http://www.rotajovem.com)) is the coordinating organization (CO) and **ALEM** (HO) the host organization. Volunteers applying for the project "Social Bond" will not work in Rota Jovem at all, but will always be able to join the activities of the coordinating organization whenever they want. As CO Rota Jovem is responsible for all the administrative process regarding your application, as well as the implementation of the project and its management. The final selection of the volunteers is done together by Rota Jovem and A.L.E.M.

If you wish to apply for this project please read very carefully its description, the requested profile of the volunteers, and why you would like to join it. Think critically why this project might interest you, what it can bring to you and what you give in return. Do not choose a project just because you like the country or the city where it takes place! And most of all be aware that you will be developing your activities in schools in complicated neighbourhoods and with particular characteristics. Unfortunately sometimes not

everything goes as planned and this project will demand from you capacity of adaptation, managing frustration, lots of patience and re-assessment of expectations. But in the end it will show you a whole new world and new people and help you find out a bit more about yourself (hopefully!!!!) Are you ready for this challenge?

Application deadline: **10<sup>th</sup> April 2015.**

**IN ORDER TO APPLY FOR THE PROJECT YOU HAVE TO :**

1. **FILL IN AN APPLICATION FORM** (click [here](#)) and send it to [apply4evs@rotajovem.com](mailto:apply4evs@rotajovem.com)
2. **Fill in the google form:** (click [here](#))

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

1- If you have never heard about EVS in your life, please check the following website from the European Commission for more information about it: [http://europa.eu/youth/eu/article/46/73\\_en](http://europa.eu/youth/eu/article/46/73_en)

2- If you don't have yet an accredited **Sending Organisation** (you can't apply individually to EVS and therefore you need an EVS organization in your home country ) contact the National Agency in your home country (if it is a Programme Country, mostly EU countries): [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/national-agencies\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/national-agencies_en.htm) or if you come from South East Europe, Eastern Europe and Caucasus please contact the Salto Resource Center of your area: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/>

**CONTACTS**

**Rota Jovem (Coordinating Organization)**

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