



Tallinna Lasteaed Kiikhobu

Volunteering in Estonia

Brief recap about my first three months as Teacher Assistant ESC Volunteer



from [Alessio Piras](#), April 24th, 2022

About me and my expectations

I'm Alessio, from Italy, Sardinia region. I chose Estonia as a ESC volunteering destination mostly because of its weather and distance from my hometown, to step out of my comfort zone as much as possible. I'm discovering and experiencing different nature, culture, traditions. I chose to volunteer in a kindergarten because I see my future self into teaching and I considered this opportunity as a good first step toward this direction.

What is ESC?

“ESC” stands for European Solidarity Corps: it’s a program that helps young people participate in projects that benefit communities, either abroad or in their own country. These projects are a great opportunity to help where needed, to learn new skills, to spend time abroad, and perhaps to learn a language - volunteers will definitely come back with great life lasting memories.

Life in Tallinn

My first months in Tallinn as a volunteer have been so strange and exciting at the same time. The first thing I noticed was (almost!) not seeing people in the streets! In Italy, streets and cities are always so full of people (I have learned that Estonian people love their time home); of course I couldn’t expect differently since I arrived in January with a very extreme weather - but even now (as I’m writing in late April) with warmer weather and upcoming spring, things got better but still not so much people as I was used to; I have to say that I love this side of Estonians, as it fits better with my personality.

Since the first days I’ve never felt alone, as I found great and beautiful friends - arrived on the same day - among other volunteers, with whom we hang out regularly and handle settling tasks together, from ID documents to daily support when it comes to campus’ life.

Life in Kiikhobu

After a 5 days self-isolation, January 24th has been my first day as a Teacher Assistant in Kiikhobu, Naksitrallid group (5 years old children). As of today I can say that my experience has been quite fulfilling, although some adapting (normal) difficulties.

Few days before my arrival I have been asked to prepare a brief slideshow to introduce myself: my first day in Kiikhobu started by showing my slideshow to children and they have really appreciated it! They had the chance to discover a little bit more about me, that long time ago I’ve been their same age (unbelievable!), about my family, my hobbies and pets (that I might miss a lot!).

Due to COVID I had to spend the first weeks in Kiikhobu with very few children, but the situation got better and I had the chance to spend time with all of them and socialize a lot. When I think about my first days now I feel so grateful considering how much I have improved since then, from hardly remembering all their names and almost no interactions to current days, with a lot of hugs, games and more interactions with easy estonian sentences and words.

I help the teacher with daily activities, from logic, math, painting, drawing, playing to dressing, feeding - although they are pretty independent from this point of view.

Recently I had the opportunity to spend some time with the kindergarten's logopedist and I had the chance to see how I could help some children when it comes to speech's training. I am now starting to write some projects and activities by myself as I feel confident enough to do it. Every single person I work with in Kiikhobu is so supportive and kind, I feel way more integrated after these months here and I am really grateful for this.

My expectations about the upcoming months are mostly about improving all the things mentioned above, from language and interactions to personal activities and projects in Kiikhobu. I still have 9 months here and I'm pretty sure that the best is yet to come.

Alessio



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