

INFO SHEET: EXPERIENCE AUSTRIA

Project: Childcare Simalabim Zwerge

■ WHAT IS IT?

Childcare Simalabim Zwerge is a parental organized private childcare in Vienna. The name of our children's group is the 'Simalabim Zwerge', translated into English it means the "Hey Presto Dwarves". It was founded over 10 years ago by parents for children between 2.5 and 6 years. The group is organized and administrated by the parents themselves. The experience of self organization gives the possibility of meeting the needs of individual children and was really great for almost all parents over several "child-generations". Our organization is characterized by the division of responsibilities between the parents, kindergarten staff, and – whenever possible – of our children.

■ WHERE IS IT?

The Project is located in Vienna, capital of Austria. Vienna has 1,6 million inhabitants. Located in the centre of the new Europe and heavily influenced by it's history as the capital of the Austrian Hungarian Empire, it builds a bridge between east and west. Many historical buildings offer loads of sight seeing opportunities, but fortunately Vienna is also influenced by modern times: it has a lively night life, many opportunities to practice sport and a large cultural programme.

The project is located in the 3rd Viennese district not far from the city center.

The location of the Kinder group is divided in 4 main rooms: The so called "Tobezimmer" (Riot room), the community room, the Kuschelzimmer (cosy room) and the kitchen where we also eat our meals.

■ WHAT IS GRENZENLOS DOING?

Grenzenlos is a Vienna-based NGO different from the project. We are supporting the project and the intern/volunteer before and during her/his stay, and we are organizing the logistics.

Grenzenlos identifies and prepares hosting projects, organises the accommodation, offers a basic introduction and orientation for the participant after arrival, helps with finding language courses if needed, offers a mentoring program, helps with all administrative matters and conducts the evaluation meeting at the end of stay.

■ JOB DESCRIPTION

There are many reasons for us to host a volunteer. Firstly the group of children will be refreshed by up to six new members with an age below three years. A volunteer will have the possibility to play and to give special attention to the very little kids without any drawbacks for the older ones.

Secondly we believe that meeting other cultures is very enriching and should be further aided. At the moment we have four children where at least one parent's mother tongue is different from German – two of them speak English, one speaks Spanish as well as Serbo-Croatian, and one is from Finland. We furthermore have one member of staff who originates from the Nederland. Moreover, our children attended an English course where they had a lot of fun. All these experiences with other cultures and languages had really positive resonance from the children, the kindergarten staff, and the parents. An international volunteer could extend these experiences and be an extra impulse for our children to be open and tolerant towards other cultures.

There is no normal day in the Simalabim children's group – but below is an example of what could happen.

08:00 – 10:00: Children arrive one after the other. They say goodbye to their parents and begin to play, volunteers are asked to help with the arrival, dressing off and to play with the kids

10:00 – 10:30: Morning snack, e.g. fruits, cucumbers, tomatoes, cheese, bread, sausage, cornflakes,



volunteers should help the kids if needed and can also join the breakfast

10:30 – 13:00: Outdoor activity, park, swimming, zoo, theater, ...

13:00 – 14:00: Lunch prepared by parents in alternating manner.

14:00 – 14:30: Resting time, i.e. reading books, sleeping and silent playing.

14:30 – 16:00: Educational games, playing in the kindergarten, slipping down our indoor-slide. Children are also getting picked up one after the other at alternative times.

The volunteer will work together with the staff of the kindergarten team. At the moment we have four employed staff members and at least two of them take care of the children at the same time. There are 14 children at maximum present in the kindergarten. Depending on the profile of the volunteer he/she will have tasks like doing activities with the children (e.g. reading and playing), feeding the children, taking care during transportation and some household chores. Furthermore, it would be very nice if the volunteer can come up with some individual projects introducing the volunteer's home country and culture to the children. Feel free to bring songs, games, recipes, pictures etc from your home!

■ FACTS & NUMBERS

Employees: 4 part time workers

support for volunteers:

During the working time volunteers can eat their meals in the kindergruppe. We take care the most of the food is biologically produced. The Simalabim children's group benefits from many highly engaged parents who build up a very dynamic – sometimes also crazy and funny – group. There are quite a lot of activities from the parents beside the kindergarten where the volunteer probably will be welcome.

Volunteers are invited to take part in all staff-meetings as well as in the meetings with the parents. One of the parents will function as the volunteers mentor and will be available for feedback as well as for further needs of the volunteer and support the communication between the staff as well as with Grenzenlos if any matter occurs.

Furthermore volunteers are invited to join the regular meetings and free time activities organized by Grenzenlos.

Volunteering duration: min. 6-9 months
(September to June)

■ REQUESTED SKILLS

The main requirement for any volunteer/intern is her/his openness and respect towards the children. The volunteer has to be an open minded enthusiastic person who likes children and is interested in working with them. It would be very nice if she/he would be social with good communication skills. Previous experience in working with children can be from advantage. She/he should speak basic English **or** German.

■ HOW TO APPLY?

Send your Volunteers Motivation letter together with your CV to grenzenlos: austria@grenzenlos.or.at
The selection will be made by the Hosting project itself.

■ CONTACT

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For infos, see also: www.experience-austria.org

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