

Ecumenical Youth Volunteers Programme “South-North-Exchange”

Basic Information for Young Christians of the EMS Fellowship

1. The Evangelical Mission in Solidarity

The Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) is a fellowship of 25 churches and five mission societies in ten countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe working for worldwide mission and ecumenical inter-church cooperation. Its members have long been connected in equal partnership by their common faith in Jesus Christ and in their hope for God’s Kingdom.

Our shared EMS policy expresses the close connection between a common witness and service of our neighbour. It is put into practice in the core area “Sharing through cross-cultural witness and service”.

2. The Ecumenical Youth Volunteers Programme

The Ecumenical Youth Volunteers Programme (EYVP) is a programme for young people from the worldwide EMS Fellowship. With its volunteer exchange in three directions (North-South; South-North and South-South), the EMS wishes to open up possibilities for ecumenical learning in which the volunteers can gain intercultural skills. It also aims to strengthen the peaceful coexistence of people living in our societies through the experience of diversity in an ecumenical community. The ecumenical and intercultural learning will deepen the volunteers' understanding of “the other” and improve their social skills. After the exchange, the volunteers can function as multipliers for ecumenical-missionary themes by passing on their experiences in their home countries, thereby strengthening the network between the churches of the EMS-fellowship through personal encounters.

The South-North Exchange is one of the three exchange directions of the EYVP. It offers young adults from churches of the EMS Fellowship in Africa, Asia and the Middle East the opportunity for a volunteer service in Germany. The voluntary service is officially recognized and co-funded by the German government (Bundesfreiwilligendienst) to promote a commitment to civil society.

The voluntary service consists of practical assistance at institutions that are focused on the common good and is performed full-time (39 hrs/ week). It takes place every year from March to February the following year. Places of service can be in schools, Christian conference centres, kindergartens, youth and adult education centres, and other social and community projects etc. In addition to the place of service, EMS facilitates connections to local church or partnership groups.

Volunteers are usually accommodated either in a student hostel or in a flat-share with other young people. They have a mentor in the host organisation/partnership group, who helps them with challenges and questions during the programme.

The EYVP team conducts three seminars throughout the year to help the volunteers to adapt to German culture, reflect on intercultural communication challenges and broaden their mind on general social and developmental issues. General information about the EMS Fellowship and Germany are also given during the seminars.



3. Requirements for admission

- 18 – 27 years of age;
- Active member of one of the churches of the EMS Fellowship;
- Willingness to learn more about other cultures and countries and adapt to it;
- Capability to adjust to a different way of life and live and work with people with different world-views;
- Very good English language skills and willingness to learn German;
- Active participation in all programmes and seminars of the EYVP;

4. Application process

If you are interested in taking part in the EYVP, please send the provided application form together with your CV and a recommendation letter of your local church leader to eyvp@ems-online.org. Short-listing and interviews will take place between August and September 2025.

5. Preparations for the stay in Germany

If your application was successful, the EYVP Team will choose an appropriate place of service and prepare a contract and all other necessary papers for the visa application. They will also assist during the visa application process and with travel arrangements. In this preparatory phase several video conferences will take place to get to know the place of service and discuss administrative questions and issues. The home church will support in this process as much as possible. An introductory language course in German should be taken.

6. During the programme

Placements will have arranged for an introductory schedule and provide a dedicated mentor to discuss any questions and challenges. A German language course will be taken in addition to the work schedule. Throughout the year, the volunteer is entitled to 30 days of holiday.

The EYVP Team will organise and conduct introductory, midterm and evaluation seminars and accompany you during your service. They are available for support throughout the entire service for questions and problems encountered by the volunteers and the place of service. The EYVP Team will assist in conflicts and times of crisis.

The volunteer is expected to write three reports at different stages of their service and submit it to EMS.



7. Cost arrangements

The program is financially supported by weltwärts (<https://www.weltwaerts.de/en/>) and therefore co-funded with EMS. The following costs will be covered:

- Return flight to Germany
- Visa application costs/ residence permit
- Preparatory German language course in the home country
- Health, liability and accident insurance during the service

The hosting congregation covers costs for:

- Board and lodging
- Monthly pocket money of 250 €
- Monthly ticket for public transport, if applicable
- German language course in Germany

The volunteer is responsible for any additional personal expenditure (e.g. personal needs, SIM card, postage and cost of overweight luggage etc).

If you have further questions please contact:

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