



Le Créneau

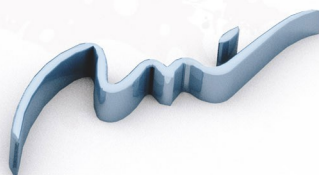
The project: Solidarités Jeunesses is an organisation that works for non-formal education. It runs a number of small community centres in rural environments and organises short and long-term international workcamps, social integration projects, training programmes and actions for international solidarity.

Created in 1993, the association 'Le Créneau' is the delegation of Solidarités Jeunesses in Auvergne/Rhône-Alpes.

Its objectives are the following:

- To have a meeting and hosting structure where the dominant theme is intercultural exchanges through group life and workcamp.
- To help enliven and develop the region by working in cooperation with the local government and education centres (recreation centres, clubs, schools, disability center, etc.).
- To support projects sponsored both by our association and the community by organizing international work camps and international meal to present their country around food and animation.
- To help people with social and professional difficulties get back on track.

Location of the project: The project is based out of the Château des Prureaux, in the village of Montcombroux-les-Mines in the centre of France. The nearest towns are those of Vichy (45km, pop. 26,000), Moulins (50km, pop. 22,000) and Roanne (60km, pop. 40,000). Clermont-Ferrand is the nearest city (90km, pop. 250,000). The château is surrounded by fields and forests, and itself rests on a piece of hedged farmland. Montcombroux-les-Mines is a small village with around 400 inhabitants, and both the name of the town and the architecture reflect it's mining past. The region is rich in natural and architectural beauty, but marked by an ageing population. With little to no industry, the locals here rely on green tourism, the sale of artisan goods and quality farming dominated by cow breeding. There is little public transportation, and the closest train stations are St. Germain-des-Fossés (35km) and Digoin (25km). The château itself is located in a very isolated spot, 6km from the nearest services. However, the presence of the permanent team make up for the relative isolation.



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The castle is a bourgeois mansion that was built in the 19th century over the foundations of an old farm. In addition to the main building there is a small forest, a farmyard, a vegetable garden, and several smaller buildings that make up a courtyard. Since 1993 the association has been devoted to the restoration, maintenance and revival of the area by promoting the artisan traditions of the region (basketry, bread making, etc.) and other local actions and organizing international work camps that host volunteers from all origins.

Role and tasks of the volunteers:

The volunteer will work an average of 30 hours per week and will take his/her free time in accordance with his tutor and the needs of the association.

The work :

1) The main part of the work consists in restoring the buildings and keeping them in a good state, as well as laying out the gardens, farmyard, etc.



2) Throughout the year groups of people will join us at the Château, many of them with social difficulties. Volunteers will help in planning activities, workshops, etc. according to their personal interests.

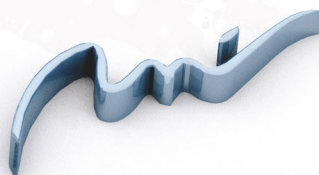
3) Other opportunities may include organizing workshops in the schools, participating in and/or leading an international summer work camp, gardening, and promoting the association through local events like the international meal.

4) Individual project: We strongly believe that is important for the volunteer to implement, during his/her voluntary service, one or several personal ideas in

accordance with the values and the project of the association. We think voluntary should also be an opportunity to reflect, to experiment and to take initiatives. Time is set aside each week in order to allow to the volunteers to dedicate themselves to their personal projects.

The volunteer will participate in the group life, together with the staff, the official members and the guests and will contribute:

- to the general renovation: masonry, painting, maintenance;
- to the daily tasks: cooking, cleaning, shopping, bread making;
- to the general organization: weekly meeting, host and transportation of the guests;
- to the activities implemented: video projections, debates, games, happenings, trainings.



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Accommodation: The volunteers will share rooms with other volunteers, sometimes guest or/and teenagers. The rooms are in a little house at 500m of the castle.

Languages and specific skills : We do not have any specific criteria of selection. We want to offer an opportunity to share in the experience here to all kinds of people, regardless of their age, their social origin, their level of French language, or their skills.

We just ask that the volunteer :

- to participate to the whole project, which will at times include evenings and weekends;
- to have the willingness to join other people, share impressions and ideas and to live a sometimes hard but very rich collective experience for several months;

to note that Le Créneau is situated in a very remote place, in the middle of the countryside, without any public transport.

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