



# SEM&VOL

délégation de Solidarités Jeunes

Presentation of the project



# SEM&VOL

## delegation of

# Solidarités Jeunes



**SEM&VOL** is the eighth independent association of the Movement of Solidarités Jeunes, which is located in Dordogne, Nouvelle-Aquitaine (a region in the south-west of France).

**Solidarités Jeunes** ([www.solidaritesjeunes.org](http://www.solidaritesjeunes.org)) is a youth and community education association, under the French law of 1901, belonging to several international networks.

In France, Solidarités Jeunes consists of 7 affiliated territorial associations and 1 partner organisation. Based on commonly established goals, the affiliated associations reflect the dynamic of the movement at a local level. Most of these structures host international volunteers as well as young people in need of social integration and are involved in the local development of their regions through a variety of activities.

Altogether, the movement has over 1200 members, of whom 300 are involved in actions all year round.

This movement brings together people of all ages, united around common projects and social responsibility practices, with the aim of acting:

- In favour of an active and responsible citizenship ;
- Against the exclusion of the most disadvantaged ;
- In favour of a local development respectful of the individual, the environment and cultural heritage ;
- In favour of the breaking down of boundaries between generations, cultures and nations ;
- In favour of tangible peace-building actions.

 **Sem&Vol** was founded in 2013 in a village called Le Buisson de Cadouin, on the occasion of its first international project. Since this year, several European exchanges (Erasmus+) have been hosted by the delegation, bringing together many people from around the world and the local population. All the exchanges were highly successful. In 2015, the municipality of Le Buisson de Cadouin offered us to use the premises of the school in Cadouin, which had to close due to a shortage of children and the proximity of the school in Le Buisson, to host young people coming from elsewhere. Nowadays, Sem&Vol located the volunteers hosting centre in the centre of this village – a small vibrant and welcoming village of only 300 inhabitants, which is attached to the larger rural community of Le Buisson (around 2600 inhabitants). It permitted Sem&Vol to expand its activities by proposing other local development and grassroots actions: over this period of time, more than 40 international voluntary workcamps were hosted by different villages in the Dordogne.

The association Sem&Vol, affiliated to Solidarités Jeunes, works towards:

- the voluntary participation of all in social life – at local, national and international levels,
- a local development respectful of the individual, the environment and cultural heritage,
- intergenerational, intracultural, intercultural and international meetings and exchanges,
- tangible peace-building actions,
- reflection, practices and projects in the field of environmental education in line with a sustainable development approach.

The association is also expanding the action of the National Movement of Solidarités Jeunes in

Dordogne, supporting the momentum in favour of rural life. We are trying to allow as many people as possible to actively contribute to the development of their region (*cultural heritage, heritage sites, environment, social life*), take part in national and international mobility programs (*short-, medium and long-term volunteering*), have access to diverse cultural and intercultural practices (*territory development, presence of international volunteers, European exchanges*), benefit from the resulting dynamic atmosphere, which encourages people to get involved in other projects and actions adapted to the Périgord, (the Dordogne) and connect with people, create new openings and broaden their horizons.

The main objectives of our actions are:

- To host local youth on civic service missions and volunteers under the European Solidarity Corps program, to help develop our association and promote the different activities we carry out in our region.
- To support already existing activities of the association and create new ones to maintain the link with local people through participating, organizing and managing intercultural and working activities.
- To develop our short-term projects in the region (*workcamps, international exchanges, training sessions, hosting groups ...*) in order to enable international experience close to home to local youth to have and to gain more autonomy through intercultural and interpersonal learning as well as the experience of collective life.
- To boost the promotion of volunteering to the local youth (*training sessions, forums, presentations in secondary schools, “local missions” – community aid projects for young people – youth information centres, ...*) to inform them about international mobility, civic engagement and volunteering.
- On a broader level, through our actions, we are working towards breaking down barriers between different publics, and working on the projects where the experience of living and working together contributes to the fight against social exclusion.

One of the values of our association is developing partnerships with different municipalities of the region (Nouvelle Aquitaine), as well as with public institutions and local associations. Each project is designed in partnership with a local organisation and our involvement provides support to a local action by bringing the international component and our popular education values.

## VOLUNTEERING WITH SEM&VOL



Hosting French and international volunteers is a fundamental part of our mission: these medium and long-term exchanges are the direct expression of our values and will to contribute to our territorial development.

Volunteers come with the desire to experience collective life (*sharing responsibilities: cooking the meals, washing up, housework, spending time together, discover the region ...*), but also to discover new activities with concrete learning objectives – for example, manual, technical and linguistic skills.

Right from the start, Sem&Vol focus its priorities on local development through the activities undertaken with local partners. Every volunteer is working with these local associations and institutions participating in existing projects and developing new activities depending on their abilities, skills, motivations and wishes (*ex : leading extra- curricular activities, intervening in primary and secondary schools, organising activities for the EHPAD's residents – nursing home for elderly people, taking part in local festivities – marching band, theatre, fabricating scarecrows, etc.*).

In this way, the volunteers will be actively involved in the development of our associative project and our activities. They will have the opportunity, if they wish to, to develop a personal project in relation to the collective project. Through the activities volunteers will improve how to work in a team, how to communicate and handle an intercultural context.

At the same time, we wish to host and organize specific projects with groups of local young people as well as with young people in difficulty and/or training groups. The volunteers are taking part in these projects as well as in the setting up of actions to promote international mobility within the area (*meetings, forums, sharing their experiences with groups of young people, encountering the association's institutional partners ...*).

During summer, Sem&Vol organizes international volunteer workcamps and youth exchanges in the area. They usually take place over a three-week period in surrounding rural communities. There are different kinds of projects: renovation or restoration of local heritage sites (*fountains, old public washing places...*), the promotion of cultural heritage (*recovery of historical memory and cultural identity through reports, exhibitions, ...*), the protection of the environment (*cleaning a riverbank...*), the organisation of arts and/or cultural activities, festivals...

In order to lead international volunteer summer projects, the volunteers hosted by our association will be encouraged to take part in internal training courses.

In addition, volunteers will be helping to transform a disused school into a collective living space. Cadouin's inhabitants were deeply affected by the closing of the school at the end of 2015 and most of them are looking forward to the transformation of these premises.

We encourage volunteers to take on responsibility at different levels and we foster the learning of organisational and logistics skills; we also offer the possibility of exploring creative and artistic activities which can be used in workshops where people can express themselves verbally, corporally and/or artistically.

Thus, it is important for everyone to identify the needs and to assess the interests as well as the objectives to be reached. In this way, we seek to empower and guide the volunteers towards a certain amount of autonomy and active citizenship.

The monthly timetable that we have established will give you the opportunity to gain technical knowledge and skills in various areas:

- **Daily workcamp** (*minor masonry work, woodwork, painting, environmental work*)
- **Organisation and participation in local intercultural** activities such as interventions in schools, creative workshops for specific audiences (*you can choose: children, teenagers, elderly people, ...*), local events as well as language classes once a week ;
- **Building networks between local and our associations**, to guarantee better communication and a greater coherence in territorial actions ;
- **Promotion of the association and volunteering** (*presentations, creation of communication media for Sem&Vol, etc.*)

In addition, once a week, a group team meeting will take place to work together on activity planning, budget management and to evaluate the week. These moments of sharing also serve to defuse certain conflicts that are not uncommon in an intercultural setting. We propose a democratic and collective approach to decision-making in order to develop the positioning and critical thinking necessary for constructive cohabitation.

*Example of typical week (the rules of collective life are set together):*

MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
 08h30 - 09h00: Breakfast/Housework  
 09h00 - 12h30: Work site/projects  
 12h30 - 14h00: Lunch and cleaning up after  
 14h00 -17h00: Activities and local interventions, language classes, meetings (regulation and coordination)  
 19h30: Dinner

SATURDAYS and SUNDAYS are dedicated to discover the region and French culture and, occasionally, to host groups and/or take part in local cultural events.

Many of these activities will take place in the volunteers' accommodation premises or in the host village, but also in neighbouring villages and throughout the Dordogne department.

### **Participants profile:**

We wish to welcome people from different backgrounds in keeping with our social equity values. Our aim is to enable everyone to develop skills, but also to pass on their own knowledge to the others. We believe this will help each person to see him or herself as an individual within a group and to grow in respect and consideration for others.

We expect our volunteers to have a good understanding of our overall project and to be motivated to be part of a team. We regard volunteering as an exchange between a volunteer who offers his/her time and energy to a collective project and a host community that in turn provides the volunteer with learning and testing ground as well as a space for personal development.

It is important for us, that is why we await from the volunteers to invest themselves into technical part of the work, by **bringing energy and technical knowledges**, as well as, to invest into animation and intercultural part of the activities by **bringing ideas and organisational abilities**.

Nevertheless, the most important element for our association remains the motivation and the willingness of the volunteers to invest themselves wholeheartedly in Sem&Vol.

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION:**

### **Few words about the hosting village:**

Sem&Vol is located in Cadouin in the department of Dordogne, in Nouvelle Aquitaine, known for its prehistoric sites.

In a very rural context, the main economic activity in the area is cultural and green tourism. It is a lively rural community lying in the heart of unspoilt land, by the Dordogne river, close to a forest of 25 000 hectares. The village is surrounded by vineyards, medieval fortified towns (“bastides”), medieval castles, prehistoric caves and shelters (Lascaux, Les Eyzies, Maxange): the quality of life here is high. The population living here is mainly working class but many inhabitants work in Périgueux, Sarlat or Bergerac: Cadouin is located between these three towns.

The municipality and the local counsellors of this rural community have been organising activities hosting young Europeans since 2013; they are deeply involved in local associative life, encouraging international mobility as well as young people.

Nearly 50 associations are to be found in Le Buisson and its neighbouring villages (Cadouin and Paleyrac). They are spaces for public debates, run principally by committed volunteers. They offer the opportunity to acquiring skills about living in community and encouraging citizenship awareness. These associations play an important role in the rural community and are the backbone of many activities which take place there: sport, leisure activities, cultural activities, cultural heritage and social actions...

To learn more about the area, go to this link:

<https://www.pays-bergerac-tourisme.com/fr>

### **Do not forget to take with you:**

- Sleeping bag or duvet and 2 fitted sheets
- A good pair of walking shoes and work clothes
- Wet weather clothing and warm clothes
- Musical instruments, recipes, music, photographs, etc.
- Swimwear if you wish to swim
- Student card if you have one

 ***For EU residents, you need to procure a European Health Insurance Card and bring it with you. For non-EU residents, you need to take out an adequate social security insurance coverage for the duration of your stay and bring the attestation with you.***

### **Contacts:**

**Address of the association:** 6 bis rue du Saint Suaire – 24480 Cadouin

The nearest airports are the airports of Bordeaux or Toulouse. You will then have to catch a train to the station of Le Buisson.

Information on train timetables and itineraries is available at <https://www.oui.sncf/billet-train>

**Contact/Project coordinator:** Valeria Baccigalupi

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# SEM&VOL TEAM

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/semetvol/>

Instagram: @semetvol

We are looking forward working together and hope to hear from you soon

