



INFORMATION FOR ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN ESC WITH CROOKED HOUSE

Crooked House | 1 Main Street | Newbridge | County Kildare W12 KV29 | Ireland

- PROJECT TYPE** We are a youth theatre organisation. The work of ESC participants will be helping to run drama workshops, so experience of making theatre will be important. There is also administration associated with the job (keeping records of young people, scheduling shows, updating our social media and website, etc).
- ESC** For all countries within the European Union the programme we run is the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). Participants from EU countries need to be registered with the ESC before applying. Here is information: https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en
- Countries not in the European Union who are eligible to take part in Erasmus+ activities and ESC can still send volunteers'
- PROJECT NAME:** ESC 8: Acting For Change
- Dates:** In September we begin this new project. Applications need to be with us before the 15th of March 2021. We apply to our National Agency in April for projects that begin in September.
This project therefore will be **from 1st September 2021 to 31st August 2022**
- Location:** Newbridge, Ireland
- Host Organisation:** Crooked House Theatre Company, Newbridge, Ireland [incorporating Kildare Youth Theatre – www.kildareyouththeatre.com]
Our work is mainly with young adults (aged 11 to 20) who are interested in theatre and in acting. We run a variety of drama workshops (devising theatre, actor training, performance techniques etc) and stage several plays each year. The 'Workshops' section of our website will tell you about what we do.
- Organisation Details:** Postal Address: 1, Main Street, Newbridge, County Kildare W12 KV29, Ireland
Websites: www.crookedhouse.ie and www.kildareyouththeatre.com
PIC: 948190812. OID: E10012295
Telephone: 00353 872 759 420
Email for applications: crookedhouse.applications@gmail.com



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Organisation Profile: Crooked House was established in 1993. We create performance activities with young people aged 11 to 25 (such as plays, films, workshops, and projects) in Newbridge, County Kildare, and tour these in Ireland and abroad. We conduct research actions into theatre, young people, and arts education; and we develop educational and training programmes in theatre and the arts. We work in our own spaces in Crooked House, and also in local schools and youth clubs.

Contact People: **Peter Hussey**, Artistic Director. Email info@crookedhouse.ie
Vasiliki Psarra, Company Administrator. Email: vasiliki@crookedhouse.ie
Telephone: 00353 872 759 420

Sending Organisations: Every participant needs to find a Sending Organisation from their own country. The ESC is a contract between organisations. One of them sends the participant, and the other hosts the participant. We are hosts.

Participants: **We have places for 8 participants each year.**

We prefer participants who are aged between 22 and 30. Our ESC volunteers usually come from youth theatres in their own country. Or they have actor-training, or they are studying Applied Theatre, or Drama or Theatre Studies. While they are with us they will be helping to run drama workshops with teenagers. They will also get the chance to direct and to devise plays. And they may get the chance to be in performances themselves. Some of them have also got experience in designing and maintaining websites. And they have experience managing social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, etc). We have one place for an administrator who can also do archiving and reporting.

How to apply If you wish to apply to us for an ESC please fill in the **Application Form** on our website:

<https://www.kildareyouththeatre.com/volunteer>

Please also submit a CV **in English** which shows your **experience in theatre**. This should be attached to the application form in a pdf format

Include contact details and PIC of your sending organisation. In case you do not have any information about ESC and sending organisations here is a link that may be helpful: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-individuals/young-people/european-voluntary-service_en

Irish National Agency: Léargas, Ireland www.leargas.ie



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Project Type:

The activity is an ESC. It is with our theatre which works with young people aged 11 to 25. A number of groups of young people come to our centre in Newbridge every week for regular workshops where they devise plays and rehearse work for performance. They come to 6 separate workshops, each one tailored to their age and interests. We also work with other groups in an Outreach context. This means that we visit youth clubs, schools and youth projects where we deliver either once-off drama workshops, or more usually, 10-week drama projects.

In all cases the drama work focuses on helping the young people develop **resilience**, acquire **performance** skills, and re-learn the skills needed for **active citizenship**. We have published material online about how we think drama does this (and it can be accessed here: <http://www.kildareyouththeatre.com/reading-room>).

Our volunteers can train to be drama facilitators, and directors, and develop their acting skills. There are seven places available for volunteers who would like to follow this path.

Or they can become project administrators, managing websites and social media, organising records, promoting plays and dealing with the media, scheduling workshops etc. They could also write reports, and compose Erasmus+ applications for new projects. There is one place available for volunteers who would like to follow this path. Volunteers on this path need to have a very good level of written and spoken English.

In each pathway, volunteers will learn the methods and techniques of drama-work, and they will also gain experience in the administrative and support work that needs to accompany direct-workshop contact (session planning, scheduling, registering participants, understanding policy, etc).

Project Purpose:

The **purpose** of our ESC is to share with our volunteers our working methods in applied theatre, specifically in the field of youth theatre. Crooked House will support them to develop their (a) acting skills, (b) drama facilitation skills, and (c) theatre-project management abilities. They will do this through involvement in the annual programme of work that Crooked House runs in its Kildare Youth Theatre project.

Our ESC projects **aim** to give volunteers in-depth experience of using drama to explore issues with young people. They also aim to provide a training and learning space for volunteers to practice drama facilitation, acting, running a youth theatre project, and managing a theatre company. The projects aim to help volunteers develop and implement their own personal creative projects.



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The volunteers will shadow experienced drama facilitators in their work; plan and implement their own drama and/or film projects with our youth theatre; take part in productions along-side their peers; and receive one-to-one mentoring support. The project links to the Erasmus+ objective by enhancing youth employability, and by strengthening arts and culture between our EU organisations.

Every volunteer will attend weekly training in Drama Facilitation with our Trainers Anna Galligan and Martina McCormack.

Typical Project Activities: During the course of the ESC placement the volunteers will take part in the following activities:

1. Work with directors to assist in youth theatre productions:
 - a. learn about using drama with young people
 - b. practice administration and organisation skills such as keeping attendance records, composing information letters for parents, updating the social media and website
 - c. develop marketing skills by assisting in promoting the performances
 - d. practice stage management abilities
 - e. become aware of and gain knowledge in health and safety issues associated with rehearsal, workshop and performance.
2. Assist workshop facilitators in running drama workshops:
 - a) Acquire new techniques and learn new drama games and activities
 - b) Deepen knowledge about group dynamics and group development
 - c) understand how to structure and manage a workshop
 - d) find and support key learning moments in workshops for participants
 - e) encourage participants with mixed-abilities to work together
 - f) plan and deliver their own short workshop programme
 - g) be supervised and receive feedback and support from experienced professional facilitators.
3. Facilitate the young people in their developmental work (ie help them arrange their own projects and events). Here they will develop their organisational and logistical skills (such as planning, record keeping and accounting). They will also develop an understanding of peer-learning. They will learn about theories of youth work that focus on creating learning environments for young people that facilitate independent learning.
4. Organise access to the building for groups when necessary. This task gives responsibility and helps the volunteers become aware of security, access, timetabling and administrative tasks associated with running a youth theatre.
5. Network and liaise with other agencies and youth projects in the community along with Crooked House staff and volunteers. This will broaden their cultural knowledge and also give them an insight into Irish models of youth work and of youth theatre.



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6. Attend theatre training and youthwork development courses provided by Crooked House. They will develop their knowledge here and also learn how to apply theory to practice.
7. Perform along-side their Irish peers in devised and other performances for the public. This develops a range of skills and aptitudes including confidence, presence, problem-solving and collaboration abilities.
8. Update blogs, websites and social media accounts for the organisation
9. Write reports for our funding agencies
10. Compose funding applications for Erasmus+ projects.

- Volunteer Criteria:**
- We ask for people **who have training or extensive experience in performing** in theatre.
 - Volunteers should be **aged 22 to 30**.
 - Volunteers should have initiative – i.e. they are able to start their own work
 - Volunteers should be prepared for cold, dark and wet winters
 - Volunteers should be able to work in flexible, changing, and organically structured environments.
 - Volunteers should be able to work alone and in groups.
 - Volunteers from outside the EU must obtain a visa to work here, and they must guarantee that they will adhere to the conditions of that visa.
 - Volunteers must be vetted by the Irish police force, An Garda Síochána, before they can volunteer with us.
 - We positively encourage young actors who have one or more of the following criteria to apply:
 - You are LGBTQI+
 - You are from a migrant background, or your family has migrated
 - You may be experiencing difficulties in your home society related to your beliefs, cultural identity, gender, religious background (including being atheist), or ethnicity
 - Your human rights are being denied or repressed
 - You are an actor from a neighbouring country to the EU.



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Stages of the project: TIMETABLE

In the first stage (September and October) the volunteers will have an induction period, where they will be introduced to the following

- (1) the other volunteers, the young people and the staff team of the project
- (2) other youth services and schools in the area; other theatres and arts providers in the region
- (3) the locality itself, Dublin and surrounding towns and amenities
- (4) the policies and procedures of the project, including Child Protection, Health and Safety and specific policies to do with theatre
- (5) the way of working – ie the methods and processes of using drama (although he will be familiar with these from his own theatres).

During this induction period, volunteers will also have one day per week training in Drama Facilitation, Child Protection, and Health and Safety with Crooked House. They will also attend 3 days of On Arrival Training with Leargas, the national agency, in Dublin.

They will also begin assisting (or job shadowing) Crooked House's facilitators and directors in their weekly workshops and performance projects. Volunteers will choose which of these they wish to become involved in.

In the **second stage** (October to December) volunteers continue their Drama Facilitation training until the end of December. This training is a weekly workshop with Trainers Anna Galligan and Martina McCormack. It is in Youth Drama Facilitation. It is every Friday from 10.00am to 1.00pm.

Volunteers will work in pairs facilitating one hour drama workshops with young people in local schools.

Volunteers begin their Individual Personal project (IPP) during the time too. This can be any project that develops the volunteer's artistic or facilitation abilities, such as providing movement workshops; preparing to audition for acting college; designing and running a programme (eg Movement Workshops, Yoga Classes, Film Project, etc); or make a short film; etc. Some of these projects can be done together – such as perform a play.



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In the **third stage** (January to April) the volunteers will continue those projects already begin. They will also move onto the second step in drama facilitation, where they will work in pairs or small groups to design a drama programme (of 20 hours) for a local youth group. They will design and plan the programme in January and run it in local youth clubs and schools from late January to Easter. If they are involved as performers in any of the youth theatre's work they will perform with the cast during this time. If they are administrators they will put together an application for funding under the Erasmus+ programme.

In the **fourth stage** (May – June) the volunteers will conclude their projects, and help prepare for summer exchanges and festivals.

In the **fifth stage** (July – August) the volunteers will begin the work of reflecting on their learning and on their experiences for the year. They will also make plans for their future. There will be time here to visit other parts of Ireland that they may have had a chance to visit in the past year. And they will begin to plan for departure – creating learning blogs, online tools that they think would be useful for other young people in this area, evaluating their projects and their experiences, and managing the transition into the post-EVS/ESC stage.

Length of work:

Throughout the project volunteers will work **for 30 hours per week** with the organisation and they will receive 2 full days off during the week. In some cases it will not be possible to have those two days off every week, and so the volunteer will 'build up' a time-off bank and take their free time at another stage in the month.



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Typical Weekly Activity Schedule:

The typical weekly schedule that follows below is flexible and is a draft for discussion with the sending organisation and the volunteer. It applies to all our ESC volunteers.

This activity is an ESC. The project is a theatre-making one. It uses theatre as a main working tool with young people. The work takes place in:

- (1) Crooked House and Kildare Youth Theatre's venue in Newbridge. Here there are weekly workshops for different age groups. There are also rehearsals, and devising sessions. Most of the work results in a staged performance. The performances can be held in our local theatre in Newbridge (www.riverbank.ie), or in non-traditional venues such as cars in a car park, or tents in the park. The performances may also be created for conferences and events. Some may be toured to other youth projects.
- (2) Outreach work involves us going to schools, youth clubs and projects around the greater Kildare area. Here we may provide a two-hour workshop on a theme chosen by the participants (e.g. mental health, anti-bullying, etc.). We use drama to explore this. Or the youth project might ask us to work in collaboration with them to deliver a 10 or 15 week project that results in a play exploring the issues selected by the participants.
- (3) Education work involves us making a 40 minute performance for young people. This is then taken to local schools and performed there. Our volunteers will have the chance to create it and to perform it, if they wish. It is often followed by a workshop with the audience.
- (4) Language class. In addition to the Online Language Support, volunteers can avail of free, small-group English language class with our teacher Annmarie. There are two of these per week, usually in the mornings.



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Accommodation:

Because accommodation is very expensive in Ireland (and especially in Newbridge) we locate our volunteers with families that we know. It is not possible, financially, to rent a house for volunteers only, as the cost is well beyond the budget that we receive, and we also have to rent it for a full year. Therefore we find accommodation for our ESC volunteers and we have done so in family homes.

You have the use of the kitchen to cook your own meals. It is important to take note that the family does not cook for you. We will give you a monthly budget of €450 to pay for food and other necessities. This budget includes the individual pocket money.

In most cases you will be with a family and each volunteer will be in a different house. We pay the owner directly €350 for the rent (this includes all costs for heating and water etc). Most houses are within 1 kilometre of the town, but some are 2 kilometres from the town centre and we give each volunteer a bicycle to come and go to these.

Child Protection:

In Ireland the law is very strict about protecting children, and young adults. We must have every volunteer 'vetted' or 'screened' by the Irish police force. The Irish police are called An Garda Síochána (or the Gardaí).

Basically, they ask you to fill in all the addresses you have ever lived in and then they check with local police in your country if you were ever convicted of a crime. It doesn't matter if you have crimes to do with cars, theft, drugs or whatever - you need to declare those.

If you are accepted as a volunteer with Crooked House we will send you a pack containing forms for your Garda Vetting. These will have to be completed before you arrive.

Bank Account:

If you find that your bank charges you a lot of money to use your card here, then it will probably be cheaper to open a bank account with an Irish bank. To do this you will need to bring to Ireland:

- Photographic ID – your passport is best
- An official letter from your bank sent to your new address (that proves you live there). They will accept a bank statement from your current bank sent to your new address in Ireland.

Then when you arrive here you can go to the bank and present these documents asking to open an account.

Solidarity Corps:

Volunteers need to be registered with the **European Solidarity Corps**. https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en



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Phones:

You may need an Irish sim card or an Irish phone. You can get great deals with several phone operators.

<https://www.justlanded.com/english/Ireland/Ireland-Guide/Telephone-Internet/Mobile-phones>

The following are popular:

3 mobile: <http://www.three.ie/?gclid=CMzD1tOO3tUCFcG37QodkcAIJw> They have a shop in Newbridge and you can walk in and arrange your new phone etc.

Eir Meteor: https://www.meteor.ie/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI1MPR647e1QIVZyrTCh33-QRnEAAYASAAEgK17_D_BwE Also have a shop in Newbridge

Weather:

Ireland is very wet! You will need rain gear and shoes that don't leak! It will also be coming into winter, so days will get shorter. The sky is mostly cloudy in winter, and days can be depressing if you are not busy. Don't expect the romantic view of Ireland – at winter darkness is at 4.30pm! It will be colder than you are used to. Average temperatures in winter are about 5C. You can buy any of these clothing items cheaply in Newbridge (warm clothes and rain gear) in a large store called Penney's.

<https://www.primark.com/en/products>

Language Support For ESC:

Each ESC participant is required to take an online brief assessment of their facility with English. You do this before you come here, or shortly after you arrive. The tool you use is called OLS (Online Language Support). After taking the first language assessment, participants will have the opportunity to take language courses for free. They will be able to undertake their online language course (please refer to the User Guide to do this). <https://erasmusplusols.eu/assessment-test/>

To begin, we have to enter your email address into the system and it will send you an email for you to begin the programme. We also have adult volunteers who will give private lessons in the mornings to volunteers in English.

Supports:

For our ESC volunteers, and also for our Erasmus interns, we have set up a Volunteer Support Person. She is a trained youth and community worker who has also experience in the arts. She will meet everyone shortly after you arrive for a welcoming session. Then she will schedule fortnightly or weekly sessions with each of you. These sessions will be to support you in settling in, keeping yourself motivated, helping you reflect on what you are learning, and a place where you can confidentially discuss any issues that may bother you.

Payment:

Payment is made by online bank transfer from our bank to your account. It will happen at the start of each month, beginning on your first day with us.



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Deductions:

We deduct the cost that the Sending Organisation charges for preparing and sending volunteers. This is usually between €500 and €600 for the year.

The participant will receive between €450 per month for spending on food and other living costs.

Insurance:

Each volunteer should be enrolled on the CIGNA insurance scheme by the Sending Organisation. Each volunteer should also apply for a free European Health Insurance Card (in Ireland you apply here: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/schemes/ehic/>)

Exclusions:

Volunteers are not permitted to be registered participants on any other Erasmus+ KA1 activity (such as a youth exchange). They may take part on such an activity but they would have to pay everything themselves – the EU budget cannot pay for them.

Volunteers can not take part in this project if they have already done a long term European Solidarity Corps Volunteering project.

Holidays:

Each volunteer is entitled to 2 holiday days for every month they work. They are also entitled to 2 days off per week. They are also entitled to 2 weeks holiday at Christmas and 1 at Easter.

Contacts:

Our website is www.kildareyouththeatre.com

Our main communication tool is Facebook (for better or worse). You can apply to join Kildare Youth Theatre on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/kildareyouththeatre/>

Crooked House has a Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/CrookedHouseTheatre/> and a website here: www.crookedhouse.ie (One of our volunteers' jobs will be to update and upgrade this website).

We use Facebook mostly for work purposes, and for sharing videos and news about our work.

We also use Slack for organising teams and work.

Films of many of our projects can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3bMAccraZXxV5FfT2O5fKw>

About Newbridge: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newbridge,_County_Kildare