

CONCORDIA'S CHARTER FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMPS

The objective of this charter is to clearly state the requirements considered by Concordia to be the essential elements for an international work camp. Concordia is committed to this charter.

Concordia's aims (statutes):

- To contribute to the enhancement of social life through the involvement of **French and foreign volunteers** in public **projects of common interest**.
- To facilitate **the circulation of people and ideas** through global exchanges with a view to promoting knowledge, mutual understanding and peace.
- To promote an educational aim, encouraging active citizenship for a **democratic, united and participative society**.

The organization works primarily in rural areas.

It is in this context that Concordia designs and sets up international work camps based on 5 criteria:

1. Work camps are intercultural meeting places

The international work camps representing a mixture of different nationalities and social backgrounds, a meeting of generations, the juxtaposition of urban and rural cultures, the will to integrate oneself as fully as possible into the life of the hosting areas, via the community living which typifies them:

*facilitate meetings between cultures in a perspective of willingness to get to know others.

*work camps thus encourage mutual understanding, tolerance and international friendship and *promote a peaceful resolution of conflicts through discovery learning and mutual respect.

2. International work camps are necessarily involved in projects of common interest.

International work camps for young volunteers help foster educational, social and cultural values, solidarity and useful cooperative labor. To this end, the following principles are applied:

- As guarantors of common interest, local authorities are expected to cooperate fully during work camps.
- work camps generate sustainable facilities.
- the result of this work in partnership is open to everybody. We are active in different fields such as built heritage, natural heritage or living environment. * Our concern for general interest is also reflected in our choice abroad of the community partners who help us organize the exchange of volunteers. Concordia does not work for the private sector.

3. International work camps are part of a process of local development

- preparing and organizing work camps stimulates the emergence of local initiatives in a spirit of economic, social and cultural revitalization.
- work camps enable volunteers to be rallied for the development of cultural, natural or built heritage.

Therefore, the local development of a population area or of a larger territory represents an economic, social and cultural dimension for Concordia.

For that purpose, the choices and implementation of projects are based on the mobilization of local partners, organizations, local authorities and key partners, who guarantee of the durability of actions.

4. Work camps encourage citizenship education

International work camps for young volunteers educate them as citizens through

- the work camp organization, i.e. the rules to be adopted by the group in order to jointly achieve the set objectives.
- the development of discernment and the application of dialogue as a means of conflict resolution.
- constant debate with active and participative democracy with the aim of avoiding any sort of arbitrary judgment or prejudice.
- bringing together young people and local elected representatives.

5. International work camps are places for work and training

Work camps for young volunteers must lead to high-quality, valuable and properly finished work, which should be beneficial to the local living environment and lifestyle.

Although the organization of work camps requires the use of financial resources, they fall outside of “market logic”, in that work is appreciated in terms which far exceed its actual monetary value. International work camps are places for training leading to

- the acquisition of technical skills through manual work, know-how and work organization
- social development through the respect of other people and the capacity for self-expression, listening and living in community
- political development through learning to apply participative democracy, peaceful resolution of conflicts and intercultural understanding.

We make sure that the dynamics of our charter are present during

- the training of our leaders and the managers of the association.
- the presentation of our projects to our volunteers, partners and to the media.
- daily life in work camps.
- interaction with the local population.

A work camp contributes to the transformation of social relations by challenging individual and collective practices. The work camp is not an end in itself, but a means to promote values, which should bring transformation both on an individual and a collective level.

This charter was adopted by the Concordia's Board of directors on 29 May, 1994.