

Infosheet for Volunteers

FI-KVT W12.4

When modern arts and old traditions meet

When: 3.6. - 13.6.2026

Where: Kärsämäki, Northern Ostrobothnia, Finland



If you have any questions, please contact:

KVT - the Finnish branch of SCI

Address: Veturitori 3

FIN 00520 Helsinki

Tel. +358 45 1049 829

incoming@kvtf inland.org

www.kvtf inland.org

Table of Contents

Dear Volunteer,.....	3
Who Are We?	3
What Do We Expect From You as a Workcamp Participant?	4
Welcome to Kårsämäki!	4
Camp Host.....	4
Work and Schedule.....	5
Study Themes.....	5
Food and Meals	5
Accommodation	6
Free Time	6
Weather	7
What to Bring with You.....	7
What NOT to Bring.....	8
Traveling to Finland	9
Arrival to the Campsite.....	9
Camp Language	10
Camp Rules and Safety	11
Insurance.....	11
Contact Information.....	12

Dear Volunteer,

“You are warmly welcome to Kärsämäki!

We are very happy that you decided to participate in our camp. Alongside volunteering, we want to offer camp participants opportunities to learn new things, express themselves, network, and create unforgettable memories. You will be introduced to Finnish street art scene and local everyday life: food culture, countryside living, nature and of course Finnish sauna traditions.

I will be “one of the volunteers” myself and will be around during the whole camp. If you have any questions concerning travelling, timetables, or other practical matters, don't hesitate to contact me before or during the camp! My contact details are at the end of this letter.”

- Jaana Koski, Art Association Elsuupa

Who Are We?

Kansainvälinen vapaaehtoistyö ry (KVT) is the Finnish branch of **Service Civil International (SCI)**. KVT has been a member since the 1980s. SCI is a peace organisation with 42 branches and more than 80 partner organisations worldwide. The organisation was established in 1920. SCI believes that all people are capable of living together with mutual respect and without recourse to any kind of violence to solve conflicts. You can read more about SCI on their website: <https://sci.ngo>

The main activity of KVT is organising volunteer work camps in Finland and sending volunteers abroad. The aim of our volunteering activities is to promote peace, cooperation, equality and active citizenship. KVT was established in 1947 when the first volunteers came to Finland to help rebuild Finnish Lapland after the Second World War.

Get to know KVT more through our website:
www.kvtfinland.org/en



What Do We Expect From You as a Workcamp Participant?

- That you show a willingness to work and to learn more about the specific topic of your work camp.
- That you participate in the workcamp from its very first till the very last day.
- That you participate in daily tasks (cooking, cleaning, setting the table, etc.).
- That you help to share responsibility by making suggestions for group activities, discussions, games etc.
- That you commit to a group experience and help making decisions and solving problems.
- That you respect the people in the hosting project.
- That you try to live in an eco-friendly way. Your personal attitude counts!

Welcome to Kärsämäki!

The volunteer camp organized by Taideyhdistys Elsuupa ry – Art Association Elsuupa combines art and culture themes and introduction to Finnish countryside landscapes and traditions. Volunteers will be assisting artists and local art community in bringing up a street art and contemporary art exhibition as well as cleaning and upkeeping summery tourist spots. During the camp, participants can take part in creating community art or their own art as part of the Demolition house GUTS project.

Kärsämäki is a small municipality in central Finland with about 2,500 inhabitants. It is located in the Northern Ostrobothnia region along Highway 4 (E75), one of Finland's main north-south roads. Local services include a health centre, a pharmacy, a library, two grocery stores, flea markets, a bank, a pharmacy, as well as restaurant and accommodation services.

Kärsämäki is known for ARS Kärsämäki art exhibition and street art alongside the E4 road. Main visitor attraction is Paanukirkko / shingle church, which is a landmark related to wooden construction and architecture.

Camp Host

Taideyhdistys Elsuupa ry – Art Association Elsuupa organizes ARS Kärsämäki exhibition, which has been held every summer for over 20 years. The exhibition is known for showcasing the future stars of contemporary art. The curator is usually one of the artists from previous years, and the themes of the exhibition vary annually. The main building, Art House Nahkuri, as well as the rustic Cowshed Gallery, reflect history and provide a unique setting for art. The murals created in the surrounding houses over the years are also worth stopping by to see. This year's exhibition has a street art theme and is curated by Otto Maja. You can follow us on Instagram (@arskarsamaki) and on Facebook (Ars Kärsämäki)!

Work and Schedule

Working days are approximately 6 hours per day, 5 days in a week. There will be no work on arrival and departure days. You will also have 2 free days during the camp.

Work includes prepping and priming walls for outdoor street art and indoor art exhibition as well as assisting the upkeep of local cultural travel spots by cleaning and farmyard-type garden work and clearance. When preparing the street arts and mural areas, the volunteers can assist the local artists in preparation work.

Study Themes

Every camp has a study part where campers get to learn a bit more about the theme of the camp. On this camp, the volunteers get to learn of themes of arts, culture and passed-on traditions.

Food and Meals

All the meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner, will be free of cost. The volunteers will participate in cooking their own food, but the ingredients are provided by the camp organiser. You will be also introduced to local food traditions. Vegan, lactose-free and gluten-free options are provided if required.

In your applications, you have already provided KVT with the dietary restrictions that we will take into account during the camp. If you have a specific diet (vegan/vegetarian, allergies, etc.) that you haven't mentioned yet, inform us about it as soon as possible.



Accommodation

Accommodation is arranged in artist residency AiR Frosterus (airfrosterus.org, locals call it pappila). The rooms accommodate 2-3 people. Showers and toilets are shared.

The residential house and some work spots in the volunteer project have staircases and are not easily accessible with wheelchairs or other mobility aides.

Free Time

During the camp, the camp host will arrange some activities depending on the participant's wishes, schedules and the weather, such as sauna-evenings, visit to local farm, an introduction to forest potato farming, learning to bake traditional Karelian pies (karjalanpiirakka) or Finnish sweet cardamom buns (pulla) trips to the nearby beaches, or short hiking excursions. It is also possible to arrange cultural events with the local people in the evenings. During the camp, some program related to Oulu2026 European Capital of Culture will take place in Käsämäki (and other municipalities along the Pyhäjoki river).

<https://www.pyhajoki.fi/en/kohdekortti/singing-river>

You can also choose your own free time activities. Please note that free-time activities are not covered by the camp budget. You are more than welcome to bring your own ideas and wishes to us, so we can try to arrange things according to volunteers' interests.

The nearest bigger city Oulu (around 125 km away) can be reached by bus and can be visited for sightseeing during the free time of the volunteers. We ask that you act responsibly during the free time too and stay safe.



Weather

Keep in mind that during early summertime the temperatures can still be somewhat cool and rainy in Finland, so sweatshirts and sweatpants are suitable work clothes, and trainers/hiking shoes a good option for work shoes.

You might get sunshine, a bit of rain, and everything in between, so layers are your best friend! A light jacket, comfortable clothes, raincoat and waterproof shoes will go a long way.

What to Bring with You

Bring clothes for warm summer days, but also enough warm clothes for colder evenings and for damp weather. You might also need clothes that are suitable for painting that can get paint stains on them. Take also your swimming suit with you. Insect repellent and something for the stings are useful, we have plenty of mosquitos and some ticks. Tap water in Finland is of very good quality and we recommend bringing a reusable water bottle so that you could have good drinking water everywhere you go!

You can bring your own toiletries, personal hygiene items, sun cream etc. with you or you can buy them in e.g. in Helsinki or Oulu before arriving at the camp or from local grocery store in Kärsämäki. The prices in Finland might be a bit higher than you are used to though.

Please also bring your passport, any medication you might need, and a record of your traveller's insurance (+European health insurance card (EHIC) for EU citizens). Light sleepers may find earplugs helpful. Even a sleeping mask might be useful as the sun rises early during the summertime in Finland.

If you wish to bring some game ideas, recipes, illustrative items, face paint, poetry, musical instruments etc. representing your culture and interests to share with others, that would be great. If you wish to present your local food culture, spices for cooking or snacks are also most welcome!



Here is a check-up list of all the recommended items:

- Working clothes and shoes suitable for working outdoors
- Clothes for cold weather
- Clothes for warm weather
- Clothes for rainy weather
- Rubber boots, if possible - you can also borrow them at the camp!
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Water bottle
- Swimming suit
- Personal hygiene items
- Mosquito repellent
- Earplugs and eye mask
- Any medication you might need
- Passport
- Other travel documents
- Record of your traveller's insurance (+European Health Insurance Card EHC for EU citizens)
- Information about your home country, photos, musical instruments, songs, games, food items, ideas for free time activities etc.
- An open mind for new experiences, cultures and people!

What NOT to Bring

Please note that it is against Finland's laws to possess, use or sell drugs. Also avoid strong perfumes in case someone is allergic.

Traveling to Finland

Finland can be reached by land, sea and air. Helsinki-Vantaa airport is the destination for many international flights, so it will be your likely arrival point, if you arrive by plane.

We understand that for long distances traveling by land or sea might not be an option. Unfortunately traveling by air has also negative impacts: It is the most polluting option and consumes much more energy (fossil fuel) than other means of transport. Fossil fuel is the main reason for global climate change. As an organization promoting sustainable development and respect for the environment, we want to offer you as much information as we can regarding alternatives to air travel.

For direct flights to Finland see for instance:

<https://www.finnair.com/fi-en>

Arrival to the Campsite

Volunteers are expected to arrive at Kärsämäki on Wednesday 3rd of June. If you cannot make it on time, or you want to arrive earlier, please inform us as soon as possible.

From Helsinki-Vantaa airport there are two main ways to get to the Helsinki city centre: a train (I or P lines) or a bus (line number 600) to the Central Railway Station. Please note that you can buy a ticket in the bus or train only via contactless card payment, or you can either buy a ticket from a vending machine at most of the railway tracks, or download the HSL-app in which you can buy a ticket after adding a debit card.

The address of the location is:

Taidetalo Nahkuri, Keskuskatu 25, 86710 Kärsämäki

Bus company Onnibus reaches Kärsämäki the best. Onnibus departures from the terminal below the Kamppi shopping centre, located around 1 km from the Central Railway station.

Onnibus from Helsinki to Kärsämäki takes around 6,5 hours. If you have a flight to Oulu (instead of Helsinki), Onnibus from Oulu to Kärsämäki takes 1,5 hours.

<https://www.onnibus.com/home>



Camp Language

The camp language is English and English is widely spoken in Finland. It is recommended for all the participants to communicate in English as much as possible to avoid excluding anyone from the group. If someone's English skills are not at a sufficient level to communicate in English, other languages may be used.

Here are a few useful words and expressions in Finnish:

Hi!	Hei! / Moi!
Thank you	Kiitos
Sorry / Excuse me	Anteeksi
How are you?	Mitä kuuluu?
Yes	Kyllä / Joo
No	Ei
Welcome	Tervetuloa
Good morning	(Hyvää) huomenta
Good night	(Hyvää) yötä
Bye!	Heihei!
I'm lost	Olen eksynyt
Help	Apua

Camp Rules and Safety

Finland is in general a very safe country. The camp organizers will do everything in their power to ensure your safety. To ensure camp life is safe for all, there are some rules to be followed at the camp, e.g., smoking inside and using drugs is prohibited. We will also follow general safety recommendations to prevent, for instance, forest fires and to ensure safety while swimming/rowing on the lake. KVT does not approve of any discrimination or personal attacks based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age etc. and rules of mutual respect and safe space will be established at the beginning of the camp.

In case of emergency, the general emergency number in Finland is **112**, we recommend saving this number to your phone.

Insurance

All the 16 - 70 years old volunteers are covered by SCI's health insurance during the work camps. SCI's insurance only covers accidents and sudden illness during the camp. It does not cover loss of luggage or other personal belongings. Please note that SCI's insurance is only valid for the period of the camp, so it does not cover the period of travel to and from the camp.

We strongly recommend that you get your own travel insurance as well.

Citizens of the EU can also get the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from their national social insurance office for the cheap health services in Finland.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559>



Contact Information

Camp Host

Host organization: Taideyhdistys Elsuupa ry (Art Association Elsuupa)

Contact person: Jaana Koski

Address: Taidetalo Nahkuri, Keskuskatu 25, 86710 Kärsämäki

E-mail: jaana.koski@proton.me

Tel: +358 44 313 5555

Hosting organisation of SCI

KVT - the Finnish branch of SCI

Rauhanasema, Veturitori 3

FIN-00520 Helsinki

Tel: +358 45 1049 829

E-mail: incoming@kvtf Finland.org

Web: www.kvtf Finland.org

If you encounter any issues during the camp, we appreciate it if you let us know as soon as possible. Many issues can be addressed straight away if we are aware of them. Depending on the issue and what feels most comfortable to you, you can talk to the camp leaders and the camp host or contact the KVT office directly.

However, we appreciate hearing from all the amazing camp experiences, as well. You can send us pictures, videos or greetings to share your memories.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you need any more information or help. We are looking forward to meeting you!

**With the kindest regards,
KVT staff and the camp host**

