

GEA VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION

The GEA Volunteer Association was born in 1995, characterized by an ethical and humanistic sense of service to society, nature and life. In GEA, the volunteer action encompasses the care and preservation of the planet earth and all the beings that inhabit it. But it also strives to be imbued with an attitude of solidarity, harmony, fraternity and respect for nature.

How did the idea of creating the organization begin?

The first activities took place in the field of ecology in 1987, carrying out reforestation of forests and care of urban natural sites in deteriorating conditions. In 1995 it became a National Association.

Subsequently, the humanitarian activities of solidarity and aid to people, and the rapid action of search and rescue of people as a result of earthquakes and other natural phenomena arose, which structured the areas of Social Action and Emergency Action. In April 2010 the Association modified its statutes incorporating the aforementioned areas, calling itself GEA Volunteer Association in allusion to the Latin name of the planet.

The scope of action is national; currently there are branches in 14 cities: Alicante, Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Gandía, Granada, La Coruña, Huelva, Ibiza, Jaén, Madrid, Málaga, Sevilla and Valencia.

GEA is made up of a team composed entirely of volunteers, who seek to channel human values and make them a tool to build a better world in which dignity is the beginning and the end of the work, without any financial remuneration.

GEA understands that volunteer work is a way of human development through which will, love and intelligence are expressed as fundamental values of development both for the volunteers who develop the projects and for those in whom the solidarity and fraternal service to the living beings that inhabit the planet is invested.

What are the main objectives of the organization?

GEA's objective is to contribute to the improvement of the planet we inhabit and the society we live in, from the practical application of a philosophical ethics based on the definition of morality.

A morality that means having respect for life, accepting the responsibility that each one of us has to leave a better world for future generations and committing to an active role in society, always seeking the common good.

Can you tell us about some of the initiatives or projects you carry out?

GEA carries out initiatives such as:

- Protecting and cleaning up the environment.
- Care of endangered animals and plants.
- Environmental awareness campaigns, through audiovisuals, videos, courses, excursions and mountain hikes.

In addition, they develop training workshops for volunteers in:

- Ecosystems and biological balance.
- Climate change and natural disasters.
- The natural environment in the province of Malaga.
- Guide of good environmental practices.
- Participative reforestation and forest maintenance.
- Responsible consumption - Recycling
- Water-Rivers with Life
- Responsible hiking.
- Vegetable garden workshop.

One of the projects that combines sport and environment is the regeneration and conservation project of "Monte Victoria".

Project: "Monte Victoria"

The "Monte Victoria" project consists of a series of environmental activities, such as cleaning and reforestation, among others, in one of the richest places for its biodiversity in the city of Malaga.

How did this initiative come about?

Since 2006, GEA volunteers have been carrying out this project to clean and reforest Monte Victoria. This initiative arose after assessing the green spaces within our city and detecting that an enclave of special uniqueness and high environmental value in the heart of the capital, such as this mountain, needed to be recovered and preserved.

What are the main objectives of this initiative?

The regeneration and conservation project "Monte Victoria" aims to convert this enclave of the city of Malaga in a space where the Environmental Volunteers can perform tasks of promotion and ecological awareness, through training of volunteers on the fauna and flora of the site, cleaning of the mountain, reforestation with native species and training through information panels and responsible hiking, for visitors to the mountain.

The activities proposed in this project are a civic offer that can be the beginning of subsequent activities in the Environmental Area.

Thus, activities are offered with a double aspect, educational and practical, such as training workshops where volunteers and citizens learn about the ecological value of "Monte Victoria", learn about its fauna and flora, awakening interest in nature and also trying to encourage the participation of citizens in the care of this ecological enclave.

The fruit of this work will be enjoyed by future generations, provided that respect for the environment as part of a natural legacy is preserved and transmitted to them.

Who are the target groups in this initiative?

The project is aimed primarily at the following sectors of the population:

- Environmental volunteers.
- Potential volunteers: people interested in environmental education and in participating in environmental volunteer activities.
- General public.

What challenges emerged during the implementation of this initiative?

The main challenge is the maintenance of the work done and also the lack of economic and administrative resources.

How are they addressed?

The maintenance of the work done is addressed through volunteer campaigns in which people are invited to collaborate, and responsible work by some very committed volunteers.

As for the lack of financial resources, we address it first of all with a lot of imagination, recycling materials, trying to conserve the working tools and with the donations of some volunteers.

What is the impact of the initiative on the target groups and how do you measure this impact if you measure it at all?

The impact in these years can be seen in the evolution of this environmental space in the following indicators:

- The area has been declared a protected Forest Park.
- Hikers who visit the area are aware of the work being done and some join in the tasks.
- The forest is increasingly populated with native vegetation and species.

Are there partners involved in the initiative? Where is the funding coming from?

Yes, there are partners involved in this project. They are volunteers committed since the beginning of the project, who have demonstrated their loyalty to the project.

The funding received has been minimal from the local administration, only two years at the beginning of the project we received a collaboration of approximately €4,000. As we have pointed out before, it is thanks to the donations of some volunteers and partners that we are developing this program.

How can this program be sustainable?

This program will be sustainable as long as there are volunteers committed to the purpose of the project. We do not really need too many material resources, unless we want to spend on unnecessary advertising materials, which among other things generate polluting waste.

Links:

* Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/geamalaga>

* Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/geamalaga/>

* Web page

<https://www.geaesp.org/>