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F E D E R A T I O N

Library of Experience

I. PERSONAL INTRODUCTION: *Who are you and what do you do?*

Nele Söber. Nature education specialist. Worked in different sectors (private, public and non-governmental), which has given me a broader view of organizational management. I have studied marketing and international business. My work history includes several project management positions. EU structural funds projects have been on nature tourism and nature conservation. I have 11-years of experience in leading and managing NGOs (one on local level and another on regional level). Leadership experience has given me additional skills – ability to communicate with key stakeholders and public, networking and strategic management skills. I have long experience in being in governance bodies of two non-governmental organisations – one operates in nature tourism, another in rural tourism and LEADER activities. Recently I am intrigued by nature photography, learning this on my own. I dance in a local folk dance group.



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II. TOP 10 QUESTIONS: *Please share with us your experience*

1. What is your earliest memory of enjoying or feeling connected to nature?

Maybe at the age of 5-6, when I was “shipped” during 3 summer months to my countryside grandmother. There I was close to nature, animals...and could see the connection between humans and nature.

2. Was there an incident, or situation in your life that inspired you into the field of work you now do?

Not really - everything has come naturally. However when we moved from a bigger city to where we live now in 2005, then I realized that I am surrounded by nature and nature friendly activities. Before 2005 I was involved in totally different field of work.

3. What book, or article, painting, photograph or TV or radio programme would you say has influenced you most in your work?

I do not have any concrete thing is this topic. But I like to watch national TV programme "OSOON", which explains everything that is going on in the nature or is connected with it in a very simple way so that the 6-grader can also understand. And it is important that nature topics are introduced and explained in KISS (keep it simple and stupid) method for the wider public, professional can get their information from other sources.

4. What person has influenced or inspired you most in your work and why?

I have been inspired by Kaja Lotman who has supported me all the way since 2005.

5. What advice would you give to your 20 year old self?

Responsibility towards nature issues could have started earlier, but I guess Estonia was not well developed in this field when I was much younger. And at that time I was in the university and living in the capital, where I was not connected to the nature at all. Therefore my advice would be - be curious in everything around you that is not connected with your field of expertise or work. Think outside the box!

6. What 3 words would you say to give advice to young people wishing to come into your area of work?

Be patient as sometimes processes take time (especially when you work in a state organisation), be passionate and fight for your nature-friendly beliefs and values.

7. What is the most fun thing about your work?

Being able to be creative and work partly remotely, being out in the nature.

8. What are the hardest thing to overcome and how have you achieved this

It is hard to overcome viewpoints of locals, in terms of why nature protection and conservation is needed. The only way this can be changed is through engaging locals in every way even if the issues are difficult.

9. What motivates you to continue?

People around me and my family!

10. What do you want your legacy to be?

Changing attitudes and behaviour towards nature and nature protection through children in the Junior Ranger programmes. Also helping the youth to more appreciate where we are living and the resources we are using.

Thank you very much for your time and dedication!

EUROPARC Federation

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