



GENK/BELGIUM, 24. OCTOBER 2012

# VIPs: How to meet their needs best through high quality volunteer management

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# Agenda

## **Background:**

### **EUROPARC Germany / EU-GRUNDTVIG-Project**

#### **(Re)connecting people with nature:**

- What are VIPs' needs?
- Experiences of the volunteer program in German PAs
- Recent study results

#### **(Re)connecting policy with practice:**

- EU-GRUNDTVIG Project „Volunteer Management of European Parks“
- What kind of setting do staff and VIPs need?
- Guidelines for professional volunteer management



## EUROPARC Germany

- Umbrella organisation of German PAs since 1991
  - Services in management tools
  - Services in public relations
  - Services in project management and networking
  
- Up to 20 years experience in various projects
  - Internship for the environment (Commerzbank AG)
  - Development and communication of our brand
  - Scientific study about CO<sub>2</sub> in moores and its economic value
  - ...

## What we can contribute:

- Competence check for VIPs
- Having adopted to the European and German Qualification Framework
- experience in two educational and voluntary programmes

**Ehrensache** Natur

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**JUNIOR  
RANGER**

## EU-GRUNDTVIG-Project „Volunteer Management in European Parks“ (2010-13)

### – Aims

- To develop and disseminate professional volunteer management in European Parks
  - To create learning opportunities for informal learning in Parks
  - To contribute to better acceptance of informal learning through volunteering in PAs
- Project coordination of 10 partners out of 8 countries:  
D, ES, I, IS, LT, LV, RO, UK
- [www.volunteers-in-parks.eu](http://www.volunteers-in-parks.eu)

## (Re)connecting people with nature: Meeting their motivation

“Volunteer involvement depends upon the creation of an **effective system** of working with volunteers. A programme that has insufficient **infrastructure**, inadequate **staff** and **leadership support**, insufficient **budgeting** or other defects in management will struggle to attract and keep volunteers”

Source: “Keeping Volunteers: a guide to volunteer retention” of Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch

## (Re)connecting people with nature: Meeting their motivation

- You need a management system for volunteers.
- Do not waste volunteers' time.
- Let volunteers do work what they want to do.
- Thank volunteers for their efforts.
- Do not automatically assume you have lost a volunteer.

Source: The Conservation Volunteers (UK)



## (Re)connecting people with nature: Meeting their motivation

– Think about what motivates yourself really:

– ...

– ...

– ...





## **(Re)connecting people with nature: Motives & expectations of German volunteers**

Source: Voluntary Survey, 2009

- 88% - Activity shall be fun & joy
- 82% - Helping other people
- 80% - Doing something for the welfare
- 80% - Doing something with nice and kind people
- 76% - Contributing their own knowledge and experience
- 74% - Meeting people of other generations
- 70% - Own responsibilities or possibilities of decisions
- 62% - Acknowledgement of their activity
- 58% - Bring in own interests

## (Re)connecting people with nature: Motives & expectations of German volunteers

The better we meet the needs of volunteers, the more we gain „return on engagement“

- **Return 1:** Strength of weak ties
- **Return 2:** Accumulation of social capital
- **Return 3:** Creating ones own lifelyhood circle

Source: Study „betterplace“, 2011

# (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

## 1. The PA expresses commitment to the involvement of volunteers and to the recognition that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits both volunteers and organizations.

- The PA has a **written policy** on involvement of volunteer based on principle of equality and diversity.
- The PA has a **policy** related to the involvement of **human resources** in volunteer management and to its **organisational values**.
- All staff of the organization have been informed about **volunteers needs**.
- The organization adopts **procedures** for regularly reviewing volunteer involvement.
- Volunteers have a **strategic input** into the organisation of volunteering.
- **Volunteers add value** and extend the services of the organisation. They do not replace paid staff efforts.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### **2. The PA commits appropriate resources for working with volunteers.**

- The PA designates responsibility for recruiting, selecting, supporting and protecting volunteers to a key person or a key-group of persons.
- The PA ensures that the volunteer coordinators have the relevant knowledge and experience.
- Time is given during staff meetings to discuss volunteering issues.
- There is an annual plan with objectives for volunteer involvement.
- There are sufficient material and financial resources allocated for volunteers role.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### 3. The PA is open and willing to involve volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community.

- The PA is open to involve volunteers from a **wide range of backgrounds** and abilities.
- **Information** about the PA and ways in which volunteers can be involved is made as **widely available as possible**.
- The organization **monitors** the diversity of the volunteer team and intends to increase diversity steadily.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### 4. The PA develops appropriate roles for volunteers that are of value to the volunteers.

- A **description** is drawn up for each volunteer role that **reflects the different volunteer motives** that can be met with this activity (e.g. aspects of lifelong learning, physical activity, socializing, special competences,...)
- The PA sets out the **necessary skills, attitude, experience and availability** needed to carry out the role.
- The PA describes a **variety of tasks** which will attract a range of people according to the aims of the organization.
- Where possible, **tasks are adapted** to suit the needs, abilities and interests of individual volunteers.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### **5. The PA commits that volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.**

- **An assessment of potential risk** to volunteers is conducted when designing the volunteer activity.
- Volunteers are covered by appropriate **insurance**.
- There is a **policy for reimbursement** of volunteers' out of pocket expenses.
- Volunteers' **personal details are protected**.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### 6. The PA is committed to use fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.

- People interested in volunteering are provided with **clear information** about opportunities, recruitment, selection.
- **Recruitment procedures** are appropriate to the volunteer role.
- Volunteers are **informed** about the selection results.
- The PA takes a considered approach to taking up **references** which is consistent and equitable for all volunteers.
- The PA has considered which types of **convictions/disciplinary actions** may or may not be relevant to the volunteering being undertaken.



## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### 7. Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to the PA, its work and its policies.

- Volunteers are made aware of the hopes and expectations the organization has about them, and also what they can expect from the PA to fulfill their role.
- All new volunteers are **introduced** to the relevant paid staff and other volunteers with whom they will come into contact.
- Volunteers are provided with the **necessary information** and/or training to carry out their role.
- Volunteers are **advised** how the PA will address situations where the volunteer has behaved inappropriately and about how they can **complain** about their treatment by paid staff, users, committee members or other volunteers.
- There is **clarity** between the volunteer and the PA about the boundaries of the volunteers' roles.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### **8. The PA takes into account the various needs of volunteers regarding support and supervision.**

- All volunteers know what **forms of support** the organization offers them, and who to contact regarding their role.
- Either one-to-one and/or **group support sessions** are offered, as appropriate which are relevant to the level of responsibility and emotional demand of the role.
- Volunteers **are aware** that they can refuse demands they consider unrealistic, beyond the scope of the role or that they do not have the skills to carry out.
- Volunteers **are asked for feedback** about their role and their involvement with the organization.
- Volunteers **are informed** of all relevant changes in the organization which affect their role.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### **8. The PA takes into account all the various needs of volunteers regarding support and supervision.**

- Either one-to-one and/or group support sessions are offered, as appropriate regarding the level of responsibility and emotional demand of the volunteer role.
- Volunteers **are aware** that they can refuse demands they consider unrealistic, beyond the scope of the role or that they do not have the skills to carry out.
- Volunteers **are asked for feedback** about their role and their involvement with the organization.
- Volunteers **are informed** of all relevant changes in the organization which affect their role.

## (Re)connecting policy with practice: Guidelines for quality volunteer management

### 9. The whole PA is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.

- The organization **recognizes** the value of volunteers' contributions and communicates effectively their appreciation to volunteers, both formally and informally.
- Volunteers **participate in decision-making** relating to their role and tasks.
- The organization provides volunteers the **opportunity to continue developing their skills and talents** within the roles on offer if appropriate.
- Volunteers leaving the organization, who have made a regular commitment to it, are offered a **reference** and/or other statement of their achievements.
- The organization endeavors to obtain **feedback** from volunteers leaving the organization.

## (Re)connecting society to biodiversity through volunteering:

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