VIPs: How to meet their needs best through high quality volunteer management
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 CO2 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 programs
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
(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:

  – ...
  – ...
  – ...

Bettina Soethe | Workshop at EFC12 | Genk/Belgium, 24. October 2012
(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 livelihood 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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