

Labour of love – experiences from Latvia, Nature Conservation Agency

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Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency

- long-term international volunteers (EVS program);
- local volunteer groups, usually staff members of big companies and organizations;
- local individual volunteers;
- public monitoring – voluntary researches about nature values in protected areas- mostly done by local people



Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency – long term international volunteers/EVS

- 2 experiences in Gauja National Park – a young man (France) and young woman (Germany) in 2007 (now a happy family still living in Latvia 😊) and two young women (France and Portugal) in 2008
- 2 experiences in Ķemeri National Park – two young men (Spain and Poland) in 2008, two young women (France and Spain) in 2009





Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency – long term international volunteers/EVS

Main conclusions:

- great experience and an ocean of new knowledge for both sides – volunteer and hosting organization
- lots of work being done
- specific and constant (on daily basis) time and human resources needed to ensure the benefits



Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency – local groups “demand before offer”

- groups of big organizations (and sometimes schoolchildren);
- PR, team-building, big proportion of time devoted to social activities implied (campfire, picnic, etc.)
- growing tendency, unused potential



Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency – local groups “demand before offer”

Main conclusions:

- great way of doing large-scale jobs
- good for establishing contacts and cooperation
- some action is needed to make these events less sporadic and sudden
- a to-do list of “large scale” jobs is helpful, created as a result of brainstorming in Administration staff



Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency – local groups “offer first”

- “clean-up” or “collective work” days
- smaller groups, individuals
- reserved attitude from middle and senior aged people – because of the Soviet experience (forced volunteering)



Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency – local groups “offer first”

Main conclusions:

- such events should be promoted and implemented as nature education activities;
- additional temptation is needed to create motivation to work, e.g., common campfire in the end



Volunteering experiences in Nature Conservation Agency – public monitoring

- 19 programmes approved in Nature Conservation Agency (birds during winter, secular trees, etc.)
- way of extending administrative capacity in research work
- educating and involvement of society



So ...

Volunteering is about creating good feelings –

for having done something useful
for helping somebody
for sharing experiences
for having met new friends
for seeing the work being done well

...

... and to really achieve this goal all kinds of resources are needed – human, time, financial - so volunteering is not “working for free” in the broader sense of the word 😊



Thank
you

for

your attention

Pierīga Regional Administration

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