

Germany Good Practices: 'ProVol: Professional Volunteering'

Main Goals

- Make volunteer work more professional and efficient
- Give participants skills which are useful for the implementation of volunteer projects and their professional career

Objectives

- Identify challenges occurring in volunteer work
- Find concrete ways of how to tackle these challenges
- Apply training contents in individual projects

Resources needed

- Space
- Beamer, flipchart etc.
- Funding
- An inspired trainer with experience and expertise in volunteering
- A contact person to stay in touch with participants

Challenges

- Participants with different experiences and personalities
- Making participants formulate concrete and realistic aims
- Finding funding and suitable facilities

We have noticed that many volunteer projects do not achieve a significant impact because volunteers lack the professional competences needed to make their projects effective. Because of this, our organisation has developed a training for professional volunteering that will help volunteers to increase the impact and efficiency of their projects.

The training is aimed at two target groups: volunteers from any background and any field of voluntary work and people who coordinate volunteers, either as full-time staff or on a voluntary work and have different amounts of experience.

The training can be adapted to fit the needs and interests of a particular group, but it always comprises ten modules: introduction to volunteering, defining goals, roles and objectives; project and time management; communication; management of volunteers; public relations; event management; networking; finances, taxation and fundraising; legal issues. It is very important to create an atmosphere of belonging and trust within the group. Because of this, we use ice-breakers and cooperation activities so that participants can get to know each other.

The training is meant to be very practical and all participants are encouraged to apply the contents to projects they are currently working at or to create new projects while the course is running. At the end of the course, all participants are given a certificate.

We found that evaluation worked best if done in a quick and easy way immediately after the training is completed. Oral feedback was encouraged as questionnaires did not prove to be an efficient evaluation method.

To advertise the training, we used local newspapers, facebook and our email-newsletter. Additionally, we continue to present the training at (international) conferences. In 2014, we developed a European version of the training, together with partners from the UK, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Also, we developed two manuals summarising the contents of the training, one for volunteers and one for volunteer coordinators. They are available in English, German, Czech and Slovenian on <http://professional-volunteering.eu/>.



ProVol partner organisations in January 2015



ProVol has helped me to think about all the steps necessary for establishing a local support group for refugees. Also, experiencing group dynamics in the training has been very helpful for my practical work.

- Anton from Germany

Facts and points:

- ✓ Training for both volunteers and volunteer coordinators
- ✓ Interactive training methods (group work, role plays etc.)
- ✓ The course is free of charge for participants
- ✓ 14 trainings with about 300 participants between 2010 and 2018
- ✓ Funding from different sources: Bavarian volunteer agency ("lagfa"), district of Passau, local institutions, Erasmus+ programme of the European Union
- ✓ Manuals with training contents in different languages