GUIDEBOOK FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS IN CAPE VERDE

Florence Gibert
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Get more volunteers!

Identify the countries you want to work with

You first need to identify the countries you want to work with:

Define a language which is comfortable for your work.

Ask low-cost companies which brings tourists in your island (such as Tui), with what countries they work. Indeed, the ticket price is a limiting factor for volunteers to come.

You can then target these countries in your search for volunteers.

Working with and for the turtles is the first motivation for volunteers to come… (Fundação Tartaruga)

Use platforms of international volunteering

Using a platform allows your organization to grow in visibility, thus to recruit more. It also allows to delegate part or all of the recruitment work, thus lightening your organization’s workload.

You need to identify platforms you can trust, both from an ethical point of view (they won’t ask volunteers for a large sum of money) and from a quality point of view (they won’t stuff your program advertisement with mistakes).

When you have identified platforms you can trust, you have to choose whether you want to continue recruiting directly through your website or to completely delegate the recruitment to the platforms. In the latter case, put on the application page of your website a link to your program’s page on the platform website.

If you recruit both through your website and through platforms, you will face the awkward situation that different volunteers pay different prices. To solve this issue, you may ask for administration fees to volunteers you recruit directly, that will match the platforms fees.

Remember to send your updated advertisement every year to the platform.

Your program’s announcements on the platform won’t mention the name of your NGO. You may want to to copy the text of the announcement on your website, to allow wit people to get in touch with you directly.

... but they soon find out is it also a great human adventure! (Fundação Tartaruga)

International volunteering is a great way to help you with your work. Here are some tips to recruit and manage volunteers.
USE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, SnapChat, Vine... Ask your international volunteers how they communicate with their peers. And be on these networks!

To save work, write your posts in a format that fits several social networks (beware of the text length for Twitter posts, for example).

Ideally, post one photo and a short comment. Visual, short.

Keep in mind that people from outside of your organization will read your posts. So when you celebrate an employee birthday, take the opportunity to talk about their work, so that the information remains relevant to a broader public.

Create a YouTube channel and post at least one video that shows the working and living conditions of the volunteers. This reassures candidates for volunteering.

This “shot list” is a great way to let volunteers know how they can help with their pictures (Projeto Biodiversidade)

TO HAVE THE SOCIAL NETWORKS ALGORITHMS PUT YOUR POSTS FORWARD:

• Have a dynamic page. Feed it frequently. Use stories on Facebook, for example.

• Encourage readers to comment or to like your posts. For example, use quizzes (“Are turtle eggs aphrodisiacs?”). Indeed, the more clicks, the more forward the post will appear in the threads.

• Pay attention to the moment when you post (for example: Facebook readers browse in the evening).

TO USE THE CONTENT POSTED BY THE VOLUNTEERS:

• Be part and post on the same social networks as your volunteers: this will allow you to see and forward their posts. This will also allow you to recruit similar young people.

• At the time of their registration, ask your volunteers the name of their Facebook page, Instagram account, etc. Ask them also permission to forward their films and photos. At the end of the season, go to their pages and relay their posts related to your organization’s program.

• Create a Facebook group of your organization’s volunteers, where they can post the photos of their stay. Set up the parameters so that only accepted people can publish (your volunteers) but all public can read (including potential volunteers).

• Create a hashtag for your organization, and ask volunteers who are posting about their experience to use this hashtag. Mention this hashtag on your application page, for potential volunteers to find information about your organization on social networks.
An easy way to get trained in social networks is to use MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). A MOOC is a course of study made available over the Internet, generally without charge. It's a way to get quality training for an affordable cost. You can easily use MOOCs to improve the competences of your organization.

Here are examples of MOOCs you could attend:

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

This could help you answer the following questions:
- On which social networks be present and active?
- Should we have a different communication strategy for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter?
- How to solve the puzzle of the language to use?
- Is it worth paying for a Facebook ad?

For example, look at the following MOOCs
- In Portuguese: [https://www.academiadomarketing.com.br/curso-de-redes-sociais-online/](https://www.academiadomarketing.com.br/curso-de-redes-sociais-online/)

**MAKE A VIDEO PRESENTATION**

Videos bring a huge added value to communication once you’re on social media. Some volunteers said they were convinced to apply by a video presentation of the program, which made them clearly visualize the work to provide and the life in the camp.

The following MOOC is delivered in French by a major school of “image”. It gives an idea of the type of MOOC you can surely find in Portuguese or English: [https://www.gobelins.fr/mooc-realiser-videos-pro-avec-son-smartphone-est-de-retour-pour-4eme-session](https://www.gobelins.fr/mooc-realiser-videos-pro-avec-son-smartphone-est-de-retour-pour-4eme-session)

**INVESTIGATE NEW GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

- Tourist companies in Cape Verde, in order to reach their clients.
- Foreign embassies in Cape Verde, in order to reach their nationals.
- The Cape Verde diaspora, in order to reach their entourage of expatriation.
- Environmental protection associations (Greenpeace, WWF...), in order to reach their volunteers.
- Scouting associations, in order to reach their members.
- Universities, in order to reach their students in biology, veterinary, environmental and marine sciences...
- American universities. They usually work with Costa Rica, but you can insist on Cape Verde lower price and better security.
- Networks of nature lover, dynamic, young people: youth educators, nature facilitators...

Also, the secluded environment make it possible to work with people looking for places for disconnection: detoxification therapy, nutrition therapy...
OTHER IDEAS TO HAVE MORE VOLUNTEERS

UPGRADE YOUR PROGRAM:

Work on the beauty of your camps. The camp of Joao Barrosa (Bios CV, Boa Vista) is a reason in itself for volunteers to come.

Add an activity to the work with turtles (afternoons may be long and boring): yoga, language classes, spiritual retreat...

Set up internet by radio, if it’s a problem for your volunteers not to have it.

GET INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Be curious of other organizations, in other countries or other fields of action. For example, dig into the way Costa Rican organizations promote their work and recruit volunteers: which platforms do they use, which social networks, how is the recruitment procedure, how do they organize the work on the spot...

WORK ON YOUR WEBSITE:

Ask your volunteers which keywords they used in their internet searches ("holiday, meaningful, fun, beach...") to insert them as tags in your organization’s website, in order to improve its visibility through search engines.

USE ONLINE BOOKING WEBSITES:

- Airbnb Experience (https://www.airbnb.fr/s/experiences)
- Workaway (https://www.workaway.info)

This campsite is set up within a stand of acacias, and the shower is within the trunk of a baobab! Volunteers just fall in love with the place. (Bios CV)
Use a real job title, such as «Conservation Assistant», «Turtle Protector»... Indeed, the word «volunteer» express your organization’s point of view: volunteers are, among the program workers, the ones who are not paid. But it is only a legal status and does not describe the mission. This word may disengage people to whom it applies, because it highlights the lack of remuneration. It is even sometimes understood as implying a lower professional commitment. It is best to consider the applicant's point of view and use an inspiring job title.

Stress the strengths and the added value of the position:
- strong and unique experience,
- important and real conservation work,
- scientific training and professional experience in biodiversity,
- beautiful setting in a remote place,
- community life in a multicultural context,
- discovery of Cape Verde culture.

Describe the important requirements of the stay:
1 / Working conditions require good physical shape (work at night, long walks in the sand)
2 / Accommodation conditions are very simple (camping in tents, showers with buckets, no WIFI (though there is 3G), participation in the camp chores, mosquitoes, difficulties to charge smartphones...)

Don’t list all difficulties as to not discourage applicants nor have them miss the important information (there has been volunteers who found out once arrived that the work was at night, for example).

Use the « Sandwich technique » in your approach, and finish on a positive note by describing the atmosphere of the stay, which is so unique. For this:

Publish positive comments that volunteers wrote on their feedback forms.

Give the links of your organization’s social networks. Put the link of the volunteers Facebook group and/or mention the hashtag they use for their posts.

Put the link of a video which presents the program and shows the working and living conditions of the volunteers.

Here are examples for Fundação Tartaruga:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x v6419EX-Q
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yP1k2YdG84o

Have an efficient application page on your website

DESCRIBE THE CONTENT OF THE MISSION

Playing chess on a home made chessboard is a great way too!

(Bios CV)

Playing “Win, lose or draw” is a great way to spend the afternoon. (Projeto Biodiversidade)
Describe the « international volunteer » legal status: there is no salary nor reimbursement of fees. “You don’t weigh on the organization’s finance and thus have a real added value.”

Address the issue of the length of stay and justify a minimum duration of three weeks (or whatever duration you find best):

• “Our organization commits to providing volunteers with amazing experience and valuable training, we need in return volunteers to commit for at least three weeks”.
• “We understand you are tight of your time and want to accumulate experience, but all the volunteers who came for two weeks or less cried their eyes out when leaving”.

Create two status of volunteers, according to the length of stay. For example, only volunteers staying for three weeks and more will receive training in turtle care and conservation. Below this length, volunteers are just « little hands ».

Describe your organization’s pricing policy. You can have a decreasing price:

• with the length of stay (with a real threshold from 3 weeks on);
• if the volunteer is recommended by someone, if they come as group, if they come back...

Try to turn difficulties into positive experience: they are challenges one must try!

• “Are you ready for the bucket challenge?” (no shower)
• “Zero waste life?”
• “Endurance at night?”
• “Non verbal communication?” (nobody speaks your language)
• “Eat the perfectly balanced, healthy, local, seasonal food” (which is the same every day...)

Beware: experience shows that young volunteers don’t read documents. Your organization may be skilled at drafting documents aimed at donors. These are perfect for the volunteers’ parents. For young people, make documents which are very visual. Use pictograms, for example:

Everyday food at the camp? Well that would be nice! (Fundação Tartaruga)
SET UP AN ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

If you want to delegate the management of applications to a volunteering platform, put on your website the link toward your program’s page on the platform website.

But if you are ready to manage some or all of the applications, automate the procedure with an online form, such as:
• Google Form: https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/
• Office Form: https://forms.office.com/
• Framasoft Form: https://framaforms.org/

This form should be a simple expression of interest / contact form, short enough not to discourage people to fill it in. A more in-depth form will be sent in a second time, if the stay is confirmed, to obtain the volunteer’s administrative information: emergency contact, passport number...

This form should arrive directly in a mail box, on a dedicated e-mail address for applications, entrusted to the person in charge of applications for the season.

This form contains the questions that will sort out quickly if the stay is possible: “When can you come?”, “For what duration?”, “What is the price of the plane ticket from your place to ours?”. This should save the time spent on applications, with the applicants cancelling ones they find out they can’t afford the trip..

To keep discussions about the dates to a minimum, you can chose to have the volunteer planning, with available slots, visible online (using a google calendar, for example, embedded in the application page: “Before contacting us, please check out available slots on this calendar”).

In addition to the patrols, volunteers are a precious support to sensitization, either with adults or children. (FMB)
Here are the documents you can prepare for sending to the applicants:

- A registration form with all the administrative information. It can be an editable PDF or, even better, an online form, so that the information can be directly copied and pasted into the volunteer information spreadsheet.

- The list of the steps to be taken for the registration to be final: payment of part or all of the cost, transmission of the plane ticket, transmission of the insurance certificate... Think of the difficulties your organization usually encounters.

- Documents to sign, such as a permission to use photos posted on social media...

- A FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). While preparing their stay, applicants may ask a lot of naive questions (e.g. «Are there doctors in Cape Verde?») and this can be very time-consuming. Save time by drafting a document with all the questions asked by mail. Each time a volunteer asks a question, update the FAQ with the answer, and send the later to the candidate: “You are a cautious traveler! Your question is important that’s why we have answered it in our FAQ (attached). Please refer to it, as the turtle protection requires that our time spent in front of a computer be kept to a minimum ;-)”

To manage volunteers requires organization, whether with the patrols or the individual needs in electricity! (Fundação Tartaruga)
To manage your volunteers, you want to have the following follow-up tools:

A calendar with the slots available for volunteers. It can be a spreadsheet or an online calendar.

A volunteer information spreadsheet with, for each volunteer:
- Their name, age, country, e-mail, phone number...
- Date of arrival, date of departure, number of days (automatically calculated), amount to pay (idem), amount paid, amount remaining to pay (idem),
- Passport number, flight of arrival, flight of departure,
- Emergency contacts, blood group, possible allergies,
- Documents sent, documents received,
- Size of T-shirt (if you provide one), facebook ID, instagram ID...

To save on your time, define which days of the week you want to welcome volunteers. To decide of these, observe which days of the week they usually arrive (which correspond to the flights).

Communicate clearly on the fact that you will receive volunteers on these days only and that volunteers will be by themselves before that.

Think of a real welcome procedure: you can make a presentation of your organization, gather other volunteers/workers for a drink, make a tour... You can combine it with the departure drink for volunteers who leave...
SET UP A FEEDBACK FORM

MODALITIES

Have the volunteers complete the evaluation questionnaire before they leave (when sent by e-mail after they return, the questionnaire is rarely filled out...)

Ideally, set up an electronic form that aggregates responses into a spreadsheet. For camps that do not have 3G, provide for paper forms.

Choose whether the questionnaire will be anonymous or not.

CONTENT

To refine your recruitment strategy: ask how the volunteer came to know your organization.

To improve the presentation of the program on the website: ask why the volunteer came, what they liked, what surprised them.

Put an open feedback question, that you will publish on the website (if positive!). For people who are more comfortable with manual writing: put a guestbook in the camp and collect the testimonials at the end of the season.

Incite the volunteer to help you advertise for your program. Offer them to leave with a slideshow presentation and posters.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

At the end of the season, send an e-mail to thank all the volunteers, with a card summarizing the results of the season.

Good luck!