



SEE TURTLE VOLUNTEERS



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



Florence Gibert
Nov. 2019



GET MORE VOLUNTEERS!



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

IDENTIFY THE COUNTRIES YOU WANT TO WORK WITH

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

Pick a language that is comfortable for your work.

Ask low-cost companies that brings tourists to your island (such as Tui), with what countries they work. Remember, 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 decide 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 we-

bsite 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** from volunteers you recruit directly, which 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 copy the text of the platform's announcement on your website, to allow wit people to get in touch with you **directly**.



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

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).

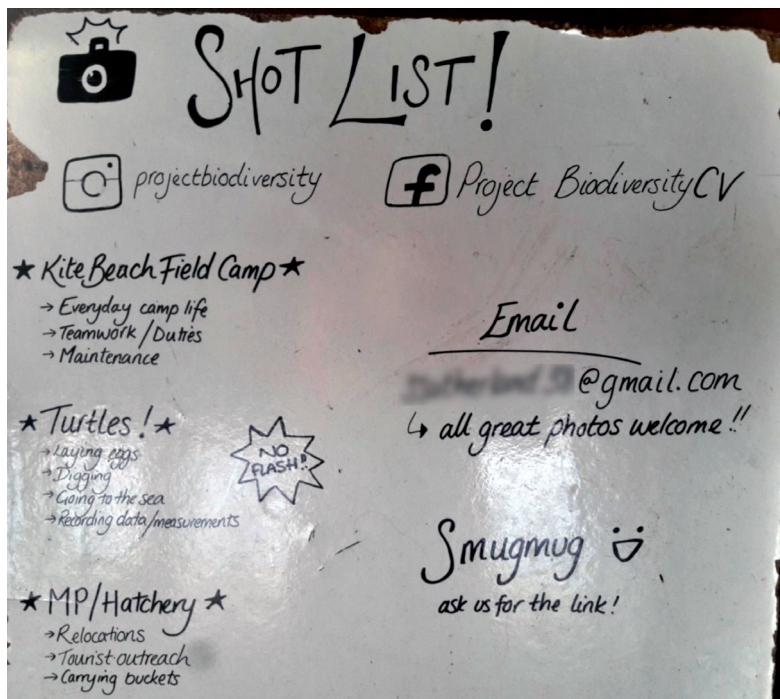
Ideally, post **one photo and a short comment**. Visual, short.

Keep in mind that videos are more watched than photos, which are themselves more watched than texts. If you can, post **videos**.

Keep in mind that people from outside of your organization will read your posts. So when you celebrate an employee birthday, for example, 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 considering volunteering.

This "shot list" is a great way to let volunteers know how they can help through 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 on or to like** your posts. For example, use quizzes ("Are turtle eggs aphrodisiacs?"). Indeed, the more clicks, the higher up the post will appear in the threads.
- Pay attention to the **time of day** when you post (for example : Facebook readers browse in the evening).

TO USE THE CONTENT POSTED BY THE VOLUNTEERS:

- Be part of 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. Also ask them for permission to forward their films and photos. At the end of the season, go to their pages and **forward or repost 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 (your volunteers) can publish (your volunteers) but all of the public (including potential volunteers) can read.
- 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.

INVESTIGATE NEW GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

An easy way to get trained in social networks is to use MOOCs (Massive Open On-line 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 should you be present and active?
- Should we have a different communication strategy for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter?
- How to solve the puzzle of which 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/>
- In English: <https://www.diygenius.com/10-free-online-courses-in-social-media-and-inbound-marketing/> (presentation of 10 MOOCs)

MAKE A VIDEO PRESENTATION

Videos add a lot of 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 helped them clearly understand the work they would do and what life is like in 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>



Volunteers who have been reluctant to commit for more than a few days or weeks regret it bitterly when it's time to leave. (Natura 2000)

Here are ideas of crowds to dig in for volunteers:

- 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 community of expatriates.
- 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 sell Cape Verde's lower price and better security.
- Networks of nature loving, dynamic, young people: youth educators, nature facilitators...

Though the idea is a bit far fetched, the secluded environment makes it possible to recruit people looking for a place where they can disconnect: detoxification therapy, nutrition therapy...

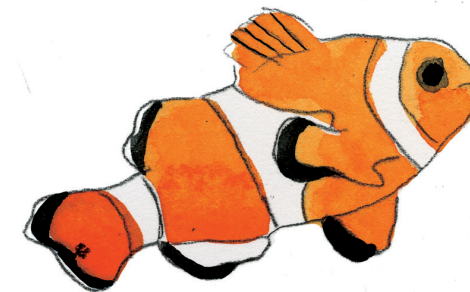
OTHER IDEAS TO HAVE MORE VOLUNTEERS

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 internet.



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)

GET INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Be curious about how organizations recruit volunteers, 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, what is the recruitment process like, how do they organize the volunteers' work...

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>)



HAVE AN EFFICIENT APPLICATION PAGE ON YOUR WEBSITE

DESCRIBE THE CONTENT OF THE MISSION

Use a real **job title**, such as “Conservation Assistant”, “Turtle Protector”. The word “volunteer” expresses 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:

- Compelling 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 volunteer’s 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 their stay**, which is so unique. For this:

Publish positive comments that volunteers wrote on their feedback forms.

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

Provide a link of a video that 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=yP1k2YdGB4o>



Playing “Win, lose or draw” is a great way to spend the afternoon. (Projeto Biodiversidade)



Playing chess on a home made chessboard is a great way too! (Bios CV)



DESCRIBE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF THE MISSION

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.”

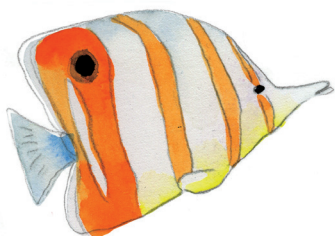
Address the issue of the **length of stay and justify a minimum duration of three weeks** (or whatever duration you find best):

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

Create **two statuses 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...



Everyday food at the camp?
Well that would be nice!
(Fundação Tartaruga)

PROVIDE DOCUMENTS FOR DOWNLOAD

General presentations: of the organization, of the volunteer program, of the sea turtles species, of the island and the country...

An in depth presentation of the **conditions that volunteers stay in:**

Take into account the negative feedback of your former volunteers and be very clear about the difficulties. This will sort out candidates, so only the suitable ones apply. It will also guarantee better satisfaction for the volunteers (as you want to avoid disappointment and unmet expectations)

Be careful not to drown out the important information (work at night, no WIFI...) which must remain clearly visible.

Try to turn difficulties into a 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 that are very visual. Use pictograms, for example:



SET UP AN ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

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



In addition to helping with the patrols, volunteers also help support sensitization, with both adults or children. (FMB)



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

This form should contain the questions that will quickly sort out if the stay is really possible: "When can you come?", "For what duration?", "What is the price of the plane ticket from your place to ours?" (there have been many cancellations because volunteers discovered afterward they could not afford the price of the plane ticket).

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

SEND DOCUMENTS FOLLOWING THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST ON THE WEBSITE

Here are the documents your 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 finalize 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 and address them here.
- Documents to **sign**, such as a permission to use photos posted on social medias...
- A **FAQ** (Frequently Asked Questions). While preparing for their stay, applicants may ask a lot of naive questions (e.g. «Are there doctors in Cape Verde?») and responding can be very time-consuming. Save time by drafting a document with all the questions asked by email. Each time a volunteer asks a question, update the FAQ with the answer, and send a note 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 organizing patrols or individual needs like electricity!
(Fundação Tartaruga)

PATRULHAS / PATROLS				VIVEIRO / HATCHERY					
	BE ☾		AD ☀	BE	BE1	BE2	BE3	BE4	BE5
1ª PATRULHA 20:00 - 00:30	João + ALICE Ⓡ	PE x	CiCi + Jo + FLO	Hatchery	1/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4
				In-Situ	0/4	0/4	0/4	1/4	0/4
2ª PATRULHA 00:00 - 06:00	ELISIANO + STEPHANY		NHUK + KATE Ⓡ	AD	PA	PPe	AD	PolS1	PolS2
				Hatchery	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4
				In-Situ	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4
CENSO 06:00 +	PASTOR + GRANT Ⓡ	SARAH + AGUIAR		PRAIA		NINHOS		PARA VERIFICAR	
				BE	931			BE1	
HATCHERY 19:00 - 04:00	HALEIGH			AD	1798				
RELOCATION = Ⓡ	João / Nhuk / Sarah			LAC	1068				
				C. VELHO					
				P. PESQUEIRA					
				NORTE					
				CANTO					
				GATAS					
				CRUZ DO MORTO					



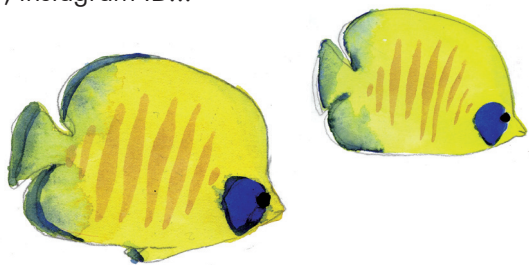
SET UP VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT TOOLS

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 (automatically calculated), amount paid, amount remaining to pay (automatically calculated),
- 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 arrive at camp for the first time is always an impressive moment. (Bios CV)

WELCOME VOLUNTEERS

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

Communicate clearly 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 event**: you can make a presentation about your organization, gather other volunteers/workers for a drink, provide a tour of camp... You can combine it with the departure drink for volunteers who are leaving...



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

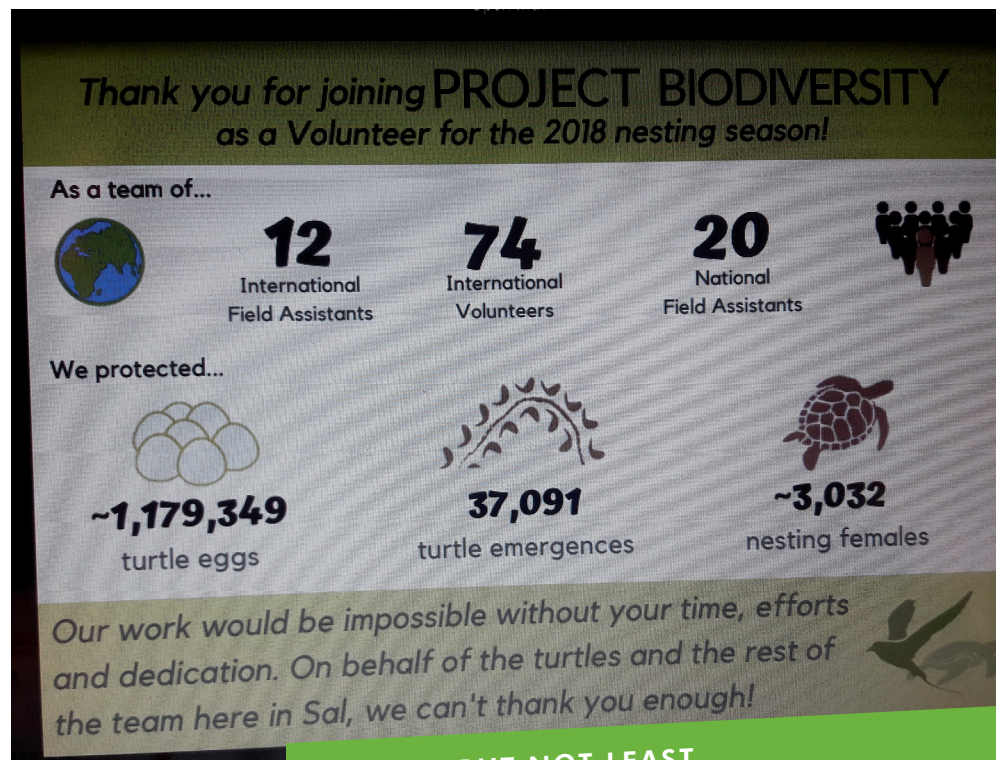
To refine your recruitment strategy: ask how the volunteer learned about your organization.

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

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

Incite the volunteers to help you advertise your program. Offer them a slideshow presentation and posters when they leave.

Sending the results of the nesting season is a great way to thank volunteers. (Projeto Biodiversidade)



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!