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M1. MOTIVATION IN THE WORK OF A VOLUNTEER

„If you wish to build a ship, do not divide the men into teams and send them to the forest to cut wood. Instead, teach them to long for the vast and endless sea.“ (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

THE ESSENCE OF MOTIVATION

Motivation is a concern of scientists, psychologists, sociologists, managers, teachers, parents, coaches, as well as politicians, military service, doctors, athletes. The problem is complex and deep and does not give a clear answer "what to do to feel like wanting to want?" How to influence yourself, an employee, a volunteer and a pupil in order to motivate yourself/ her/ him to act? Where we are dealing with human nature, where emotions, values, meaning are at stake, many other factors can influence motivation by strengthening or weakening it.

Motivation is the drive that prompts a person to take actions resulting from internal (autonomous) needs or which result from the expectations of others. The goals that he/she decides to pursue may have an instrumental meaning for her/him (I do something because I have to, I should, it would be proper, I earn money, I don't want criticism, I want prestige, etc.) or have an immense value - it is important to me because I want to, because I like it, because I have satisfaction from meeting the standards that I believe and support. In such situations, we can talk about intrinsic motivation that is the engine of initiating actions.

According to scientists, practitioners and experts on the subject, the source of internal motivation is the need for subjectivity, individual identity and social identification¹.

The expression of **subjectivity** is our sense of causative agency, the belief in one's own ability to shape reality in accordance with intention, competences, giving oneself space for creativity, making attempts, and a constructive approach to mistakes.

Individual identity is expressed in striving to maintain consistency between the declared and implemented standards. Striving to close the gap between ideas about yourself (your role) and feedback from the environment and self-esteem. For example, if a person is defined as an "empathetic person", a "good volunteer", the internal drive will make them take actions that are consistent with their vision of themselves. Any discrepancy brings frustration and a feeling of unfulfilling.

Social identification - belonging to a specific community or group entails adopting its norms, principles and goals as one's own. Even if they are imposed, it is enough when members of the community command respect and authority, then tasks are undertaken as personal, internally motivated.

TYPES OF MOTIVATION

Differentiating the sources of motivation between the environmental (external) and coming from the inside is of particular importance. It would be wrong to say that the only sources of motivation in case of volunteer work are internal motivators: altruism, helping, kindness, and the desire to be useful. Both the Polish research and the report of the Norwegian partner indicate on one side purely altruistic but on the other side also instrumental and external motives. There is nothing wrong with that, but it is worth knowing that various reasons may lead to taking actions for the benefit of others: declared ones that sound good (for the volunteer, his surroundings, for others), and undisclosed ones (because they are unconscious or the person prefers not to disclose them).

Internal motivation has tremendous power. It is autonomous, associated with values and identity, gives fuel to act, adds energy, increases satisfaction, a sense of meaning and - as research shows - affects better health! Which should not be surprising, because joy, satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment have a positive effect on the psyche, circulatory and endocrine systems.

What about motivation that stems from less altruistic needs? Is it worth stimulating it? Will it translate into better performance and commitment?

Even an instrumental approach to volunteering can bring benefits to organisations as well. The typology of social activists' motivation distinguishes such psychological functions as acting for a cause that is particularly important for a volunteer, as well as the fact that: 1) social activity looks

¹ J. Reykowski, *About two types of incentive mechanisms. The concept of psychology according to Tadeusz Tomaszewski.* Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw; *Psychological Journal*, 21, 1, 2015, 19-25

good in CV, 2) volunteering allows you to cope with your own problems, 3) maybe I will need help someday, or because 4) volunteering helps meet interesting people.

As noted by Dominik Buttler² the non-profit sector is being professionalized, affecting the change in motivation to social activity, which is noticeable in developed countries. The importance of motivations referring to more instrumental (selfish) needs on the one hand is growing, and on the other hand, the participation of citizens engaged in voluntary work is increasing, as can be exemplified by Norway.

MOTIVATION AND VALUES

In considering the driving factors for action, it is impossible to ignore values. From an ethical point of view, these are things/ states that are perceived as important, valuable, related to positive experiences that give meaning to human aspirations. Abstract concepts such as honesty, love, health, freedom, compassion, etc. are fuel for setting and achieving goals, an internal encouragement for motivation. When a person sets goals that are unrelated to and unconnected to his/her values, either she/he loses the motivation to act, or he/she feels empty after reaching the goal.

Unfortunately, values can also become a source of a conflict that is difficult to resolve when the values of a non-profit organisation are distinct from the values of a volunteer working in it. By choosing to cooperate with an NGO, a volunteer aims to act supporting the realization of his/her important values - helping others and feeling needed. However, he/she may encounter a conflict of values if, within the organisation, there is a culture of extensive control that is not in line with other values of this person such as freedom, responsibility, etc.

Working with the compass of values (see Appendix - exercise) can help you identify the values behind your motivation.

What threatens internal motivation? Research³ and experience are consistent in this regard. Internal motivation resulting from values has power, but it can be weakened when excessive control, adding a system of rewards and punishments take away the sense of autonomy, undermining faith in one's own competences.

The module *M1. Motivation* consists of three sections:

- M1.S1. – The Pillars of Motivation
- M1.S2. – The Flow
- M1.S3. – Motivating Development Interviews

² D. Buttler, *The importance of social activists' motivation in economic research of the non-profit sector*. Zarządzanie Publiczne; Nr 2–3(16–17)/2011 ISSN 1898-3529

³ Self-Determination Theory and Physical Activity: The Dynamic of Motivation in Development and Wellness Źródło: Hellenic Journal of Psychology, ol. 6 (2009) pp. 107-124

M1.S1. – THE PILLARS OF MOTIVATION

A simple formula for motivation makes you realize that the more the value of at least one factor decreases, the weaker the motivation becomes.

$$A \times F = M$$

$$\text{Attractive goal} \times \text{Faith in its achievement} = \text{Motivation}$$

The attractiveness of an objective may fade significantly in the face of the expected effort involved in moving far beyond the comfort zone. Fear of change and the uncertainty of its result can significantly lower your determination and affect the level of motivation.

According to the theory of self-determination⁴, people have three psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and connection. **Competence** is expressed in the belief that thanks to personal agency and possessed skills, one can influence the results of work. **Autonomy** relates to the experience of acting with a sense of influence on choice, will and self-determination. The **connection**, in turn, is the experience of satisfying and supportive social relationships. Under the influence of internal motivation, people have a choice and feel accepted and supported for what they do without needing external pressure or control. They see sense and meaning in it, in other words, **significance**. Satisfying people's needs for autonomy, competence and connection creates enduring internal motivation.

If the culture of a non-profit organisation supports these three needs, the process of adopting external standards and procedures as own takes place, creativity is unleashed, and volunteers act spontaneously, creatively and proactively. Autonomy, a sense of competence and social recognition make people value work and the carrot and stick method loses its raison d'être.

People with internal motivation work for passion, pleasure and interest. The training programme provides methods and tools to develop the competences and autonomy of volunteers, but a non-profit organisation can also implement ways to strengthen and consolidate autonomous motivation.

The purpose of creating an organisation culture that triggers internal motivation is to acquire and maintain committed colleagues, working with a sense of meaning and satisfaction. Six paths of change in the theory of self-determination can help to implement in a non-profit organisation a culture that supports autonomy, competence and connection, meeting the basic psychological needs of volunteers:

- Asking open-ended questions including inviting participation in solving important problems

The ability to ask open-ended questions is an art that can be learned. At the same time, it is worth remembering that the mere avoidance of starting questions with "Do/does..." does not yet

⁴ http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/SDT/documents/2009_StoneDeciRyan_JGM.pdf

determine a well-conducted interview involving the volunteer to participate, generate ideas and readiness to implement them. Even a conversation with only open-ended questions can turn into a kind of interrogation that the interlocutor will want to get away from as soon as possible. Both the leader of an NGO and the volunteer him-/herself can learn it in cooperation with a trainer, coach and/or mentor.

- Active listening. The ability of acknowledging the interlocutor's perspective

It will not be an exaggeration to say that we, as modern people surrounded by technology, cannot listen. Listening and hearing are two different things. Listening, reflecting, paraphrasing (see module M3. Communication), reflective listening is pretty high-grade stuff, but skills that still can be learned. An interesting observation is the fact that people who can listen carefully are perceived by others as interesting... interlocutors.

The way in which a volunteer is listened and heard translates into his ability to actively listen to his/her pupils. Taking care of children at risk of exclusion with difficult past requires a special ability to gain their trust. One way is to give them attention and build the belief that they are noticed and listened to, that the volunteer dealing with them can demonstrate understanding of their way of seeing the world.

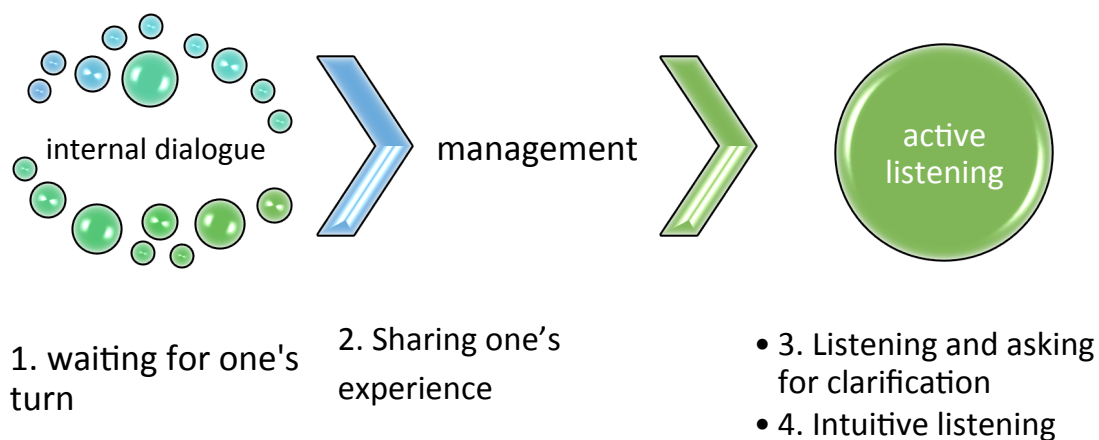


Figure 1. Five levels of listening (by Carol Wilson, Best Practice in Performance Coaching, MT Biznes 2010)

Offering a choice of possible actions

Individual choice and responsibility go hand in hand. There are many ways of approaching the tasks, volunteers also come to the organisation with their own experience and can point to a completely new approach to the problem. Giving a choice of a path (how to do) after agreeing on the goal (what to do, what problem to solve) translates into a sense of autonomy and responsibility. At the same time, it is important to outline the limits in which it is possible to navigate when introducing changes,

to provide a reasonable justification, which even a boring activity or an uninteresting task can make worth the effort.

- [Providing sincere, positive feedback that acknowledges initiative, and factual, non-judgmental feedback](#)
-

Each mistake can be a lesson and an opportunity to improve skills. Reporting bad news is more emotional and activates defensive strategies. Therefore, discussing failures along with open-ended questions and active listening encourages you to discover the full range of problem-solving options so that even failure can become a beginning of success.

Praise can weaken motivation when unskillfully conducted in order to manipulate or control, or motivate by promoting competence and autonomy. Effective praise is sincere and specific; recognises exceptional and extraordinary merits. Praise, which confirms proactive commitment and initiative, supports the competences and independence of people.

- [Minimising coercive controls such as rewards and comparisons with others](#)
-

Excess control and external stimuli (rewards and punishments) weaken internal motivation. Working in an organisation where culture supports the theory of self-determination, volunteers will be less interested in carrots and sticks, and more in the implementation of the organisation's mission, welfare of their pupils and personal satisfaction.

- [Developing talent and sharing knowledge to enhance competence and autonomy](#)
-

Offering opportunities to learn new skills and increase autonomy brings positive motivational effects. It acts as a flywheel of internal motivation - the more skills a person has and the more freedom in solving problems on her/his own, the bolder she/he takes on more difficult tasks, and this increases her/his competences and self-confidence. Internal motivation increases and the reward is personal satisfaction.

The theory of self-determination draws attention to three components of needs, the satisfaction of which builds long-term motivation. The introduction of the above principles is by no means easy to implement, so a non-profit organisation that wants to build a culture that supports the internal motivation of its volunteers should consider taking parallel activities, in two ways: in addition to training the volunteers, provide support to the coordinators/ leaders of the organisation (who are sometimes also volunteers).

When a person who has a choice (autonomy) knows how to solve a problem (competence) and receives social support for his/her achievements (connection), he/she acts using her/his resources to the full. He/she also takes up difficult challenges creatively, especially when she/he feels supported by the organisation. It should be noted, however, that promoting autonomy requires the courage

and trust of non-profit organisations in volunteers. As a result, this is the most effective approach as it maintains the volunteer's relationship with the organisation for more than just one season.

Scientific studies on sources of happiness and satisfaction were a domain by, among others, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi⁵, who for over a quarter of a century was studying the conditions of flow, that is, optimal experience. Perhaps there is no person in the world who would not experience the flow state at least once in their life, during which absorbed in a task, not feeling tired or exhausted, she/he was engaged, extremely focused, and at the same time, as if he/she had moved into a different reality, losing track of time. Work done in the flow state brings satisfaction. This is a category slightly different from pleasure - you can enjoy a lot of pleasure for most of your life without necessarily being satisfied. The appearance of satisfaction is influenced by several factors, including the fact that a task is likely to be completed, requires commitment, but does not lead to exhaustion of resources (physical, mental), there are conditions for concentration, goals are clearly defined and feedback is provided, there is no anxiety, the sense of time changes.

There are people who experience flow state in their daily activities, and others who experience it with difficulty. You cannot force yourself to experience the flow, but you can define favourable conditions for its occurrence. They include:

1. The task to be performed must keep the balance between its difficulty and skill level. A big challenge with low skills causes anxiety (and sometimes panic), while small challenges for a highly qualified person is a perfect recipe for boredom. To create the conditions for flow, the challenge level must meet such a level of skill to create the conditions for their growth.
2. Intense, focused concentration on the present moment and loss of relative self-awareness.
3. A sense of deep focus and effortless commitment that makes other needs negligible.
4. An experience where action and awareness blend.
5. Sense of satisfaction with the action itself, not with the expected result (reward).
6. There is immediate feedback on progress as the participant engages with the exercise and believes in the potential success.
7. At each stage, the goals to be achieved are clear.
8. There is no fear of being judged by others.
9. A sense of personal control or causative agency in action.
10. There is a sense of time distortion (e.g. time seems to be slowing down or passing quickly).

The flow state is the result of a conscious attempt to face challenges. The work of volunteers, in which they use their skills, makes them feel more efficient and creative, which translates into an increase in the level of satisfaction. They are ready to invest their own energy, believing that their lives become fuller and more valuable, make sense.

The creator of logotherapy, Viktor Frankl⁶, proclaimed that life asks us a question about meaning, and the search for it is the basic human motivation. Choosing the type of attitude, in the face of what

⁵ M. Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*, HarperCollins US 2008.

⁶ V. Frankl, *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Application of Logotherapy*, Meridian/Plume 1988.

fate brings, you can find meaning even in the most difficult situation. Work that makes sense brings fulfilment, no matter how paid (well or not at all - as is the case with volunteers).

M1.S3. – MOTIVATING DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWS

A non-profit organisation does not hire a volunteer for payment, but one way or another evaluates his work. The quality of this assessment and the way it is carried out can be decisive for the continuation of the cooperation. The progressing professionalization of the 3rd sector covers more and more areas of operation, also influencing a change in the way of management, which is closer to the practices common in the business environment. So it is good to implement what works and serves the development of employees of commercial companies, while avoiding (like the plague!) corporate anomalies.

An internally motivated volunteer will not need any additional stimuli, especially based on a system of punishments and rewards. When a non-profit organisation creates conditions conducive to the autonomy and development of competences of a volunteer, the goal of each interview will be to solidify this approach. Therefore, the coordinator/ leader, the organisation and the volunteer benefit from a well-conducted motivating development interview. The coordinator develops the ability to support the internal motivation of the volunteer, the non-profit organisation gains a loyal colleague, the volunteer has a feeling that he/she is needed, develops, increases her/his competences and is ready to take responsibility more and more boldly.

A motivating development interview requires good preparation. When conducting it for the first time, the coordinator/ leader may - as part of the training programme implemented in the organisation - discuss and even practice with the trainer the following scheme.

STAGES OF PREPARATION AND CONDUCTING A MOTIVATING DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW - A GUIDE FOR COORDINATORS (LEADERS) OF A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION.

STAGE 1. CONSIDERATION

That is a very honest answer to some important questions:

1. What is the purpose of having the interview?
2. What should it bring to the volunteer?
3. What should it bring to the leader/ coordinator?
4. What should the organisation gain from the interview?
5. What impact should the result of the interview have on the protégés (in the short and long run)?

In spite of appearance, these are not trivial questions. From the answer to the first "What?" all the rest depends. It is even worth making a list of things that answer this question, e.g. because:

- I have the opportunity to talk longer with the volunteer;
- I want to give her/him fair feedback, tell what I and the organisation care about,
- I want to find out what he/she cares about and what about her/his job makes him/her “want to want acting”;
- I want to ask how he/she sees his development in the last x months and what are his/her expectations for the future;
- I want to assure her/him that I support her/his independence;
- There has not been a chance so far to tell him/her that I appreciate his/her cooperation etc.

If you think that you don't have to talk about support and give special appreciation, because the volunteer knows about it him-/herself, because as a volunteer he must obviously be motivated, then... you are thinking wrong. Let us leave room for guesswork in quizzes not in real life.

The above list shows that you need to set aside time to prepare and include in your calendar the schedule of meetings with volunteers, if there are several of them. One thing can be certain - when a volunteer sees that the coordinator is well prepared for the interview, that he cares not only about the constant inflow of new volunteers to the organisation, but also makes real efforts to provide the volunteers with an environment for increasing independence and development of skills, such a volunteer will feel appreciated. It is important to remember that one of the factors of burnout is a situation in which a volunteer who is wholeheartedly committed to cooperation is met with indifference, a lack of feedback, or the approach "I will not invest in the development of the volunteer and will not last as long, and others will come." Failure to continue cooperation is the effect, not the cause of this approach.

STAGE 2 - PREPARATION

1. Schedule time

To prepare for the interview, especially if it is going to be conducted for the first time, you need to book the time. Reserve 1 hour in the calendar for the interview.

2. Prepare location

If you do not have space in the organisation's premises, choose a café or book premises made available for free to non-governmental organisations, in summer it may be an open-air place. It is important that the place provides intimacy and freedom of conversation.

3. Tell the volunteer in advance

With this, you will give the volunteer a chance to think over and prepare for the interview, and to plan appropriate time.

STAGE 3 – MOTIVATING DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW WITH A VOLUNTEER. SIX GOLDEN PRINCIPLES.

1. First Golden Principle – Environment of Respect and Trust

It is true that you build trust longer than during one interview, so by starting it, especially using strictly the coaching method (see the GROW model), you must already have some ground of understanding and trust. When you do this for the first time, make sure that the volunteer feels respected, show him/her that your time and attention are now exclusive to her/him. In addition, you should:

- put away your laptop, e-mail and other distracting devices. Reading emails, checking posts, likes in social media in the meantime, destroy the chances of any meaningful conversation. Multitasking is a (proven) myth! And peeking at the smartphone while talking is still rude.
- turn off (mute) the phone,
- mute internal voices,
- turn off the temptation to immediately evaluate the content of the message before you hear it to the end,
- focus on the interlocutor: his/her voice, posture, body language - these are also messages,
- turn on curiosity, without assuming anything in advance,
- always show respect for your interlocutor.

2. Second Golden Principle - Openness, including to a different point of view

If you are a trusted person and you really intend to give the volunteer space to comment, be prepared for a different point of view, for a surprising opinion, and maybe even criticism (of your decisions or of solutions introduced by the organisation). The fact that a volunteer disagrees with you on certain issues should not obscure the real picture. Coordinators and other managers, who find it difficult to accept other views than their own, miss out the opportunity to take a fresh look at some matters!

What do you gain from openness? More involvement, even more trust, more knowledge about the possibilities and potential of the volunteer. It is possible that you gain also a completely new approach to a topic, which you did not take into account, and which is worth considering.

3. Third Golden Principle - Honesty and sincerity, including towards yourself

First of all, take a look at yourself. If you prefer to praise and avoid communicating unfavourable information like the plague, you will likely have that tendency during the conversation. However, an interview in which you spend most of your time flattering the volunteer will have no effect. In internal motivation, the feeling of satisfaction has more power than external praise. If, on the contrary, you do not overlook any misstep, and you treat the great-performed tasks as a standard that is not worth commenting on, your conversation will be heading in the direction of pointing out mistakes and weaknesses. When you focus on slip-ups, the volunteer bends under the weight of criticism loses motivation, which will prevent him/her from continuing involvement in your organisation. She/he will either quit volunteering or look for another non-profit organisation.

This interview is to be about development, so it is legitimate to show the volunteer areas for development, because you give her/him the opportunity to learn something new and you get a chance that he/she would better carry out his/her tasks. You also use the growth potential - both your own and that of the volunteer.

However, under no circumstances should you skip talking about strengths, even if you feel that the volunteer is fully aware of them and you have a firm belief that compliments should not be overdone.

As confirmed by numerous studies and practice, building your development plan based on strengths gives much better results than spending all your energy on improving weaknesses. Therefore, you, the leader of a non-profit organisation, can have an impact on the future development of the person who started cooperation with you. Who knows, maybe in the future she/he will identify you as one of the Angels in her/his life!

4. Fourth Golden Principle – Listening at a deep level

Don't just listen to the words. Also notice the way in which the volunteer expresses him-/herself, what he/she talks about with enthusiasm, what about discouragement, what values are important to her/him. If you are not absorbed by your own internal monologue and you are completely present, you will notice everything that results from verbal messages, body language and tone of voice, as well as what your intuition suggests. This is the essence of reflective listening, which was discussed on page 5.

5. Fifth Golden Principle - No judging

The tendency to judge results, on the one hand, from a natural preference for perceiving the world, and on the other hand, from habits. Even if your interview has elements of work evaluation, do not confuse evaluation with judgment.

Feedback, especially if it relates to failures and difficult lessons, must relate to behaviour, not personally to people. Therefore, together with the volunteer, it is worth analysing individual elements of the project or task. Questions like "Which stages went well?" (and giving credit for it), "Which ones failed?" (and asking what contributed to it), "What lessons can we learn from this for the future? What would you do differently now to be successful?" can be helpful. A coordinator in a non-profit organisation should also have the courage to ask: "What support did you expect and did not receive?"

6. Sixth Golden Principle – Constructive questions

These are mostly open-ended, future-oriented and solution-oriented questions. "Why?" should be avoided as it draws attention to the past and provokes defence rather than seeking solutions. Do not use the word "but" after a positive statement as it contradicts the positive tone and thus eliminates it. Approach the emotions that a volunteer may show during the interview with sensitivity and empathy.

Concentrating on the developmental aspect of the interview, the following questions addressed to the volunteer will be helpful:

1. How does she/he feel in the organisation?
2. Which tasks were difficult? How did he/she deal with them?
3. What results did her/ his work bring the children? How do he/she know it?
4. How does he/she evaluate his/her own development? How does it affect the children?
5. What is she/he proud of? What went great?
6. What did he/she learn? How does she/he assess the effects?
7. What would he/she do better? What differently? How would this have affected the results?
8. What did he/she learn from the leader/coordinator? What from other volunteers? What did he/ she teach others?
9. When did she/he feel inspired? What allowed him/her to spread his/her wings, and what caused a decrease in motivation?
10. Which of the experiences in cooperation does she/he consider the most important and crucial for her/his own future?
11. What promoted development and autonomy?
12. Is he/she ready for and interested in further cooperation? What influences the decision? What factors have impact on it?
13. What does she/he expect from the organisation? What can the organisation do better, what less, what in a different way, so that all (volunteers, children) can succeed in the implementation of the mission?

The above questions are only examples. There is no universal list of questions. Nevertheless, such an interview will result in a very insightful, honest and fair assessment of the cooperation between a non-profit organisation and a volunteer.

A coordinator of an NGO can benefit greatly from regular motivating development interviews with volunteers. He/she will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the sources of motivation of people working with him/her, learning how to support and manage it. A sign that the conversation went really well may be the fact that on this occasion the leader him-/herself received feedback.

The culmination of a good interview is a written (yes, yes!) development plan for the volunteer. And if the volunteer continues to work with the non-profit organisation, taking the role of a mentor by the leader/coordinator will be true mastery.

HOW WILL THE PUPILS OF THE VOLUNTEER BENEFIT FROM HIS/HER MOTIVATION?

Working with children does not always give the opportunity to receive feedback from pupils (e.g. from small, very sick, passive or mentally disabled children); some effects can be observed through changes in behaviour, but sometimes even such a result is difficult to expect. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the volunteer's activities will therefore be the result of their own self-assessment in terms of commitment, impact and satisfaction, as well as conclusions based on observation (by the leader, guardians, parents, teachers, etc.)

Taking care of children is usually satisfying and rewarding, especially when there is no shortage of opportunities to notice pupils' progress. Sometimes, however, their sad experiences, poor health or other difficult situations will have a strong impact on the volunteer. Children feel more than they know, which is why a motivated, efficient, creative person can do more to support the development of their pupils than you might think. Both the non-profit organisation and the volunteers themselves should do everything possible to fuel and sustain the internal motivation of the cooperating volunteers like the flames in a fireplace.

RECOMMENDED METHODS AND TOOLS

1. Compass of values - individual work (alone or with a trainer/coach)
2. Experiencing the flow state - individual work during workshops
3. Volunteer development plan - a tool for working with the NGO coordinator
4. Developing autonomy - an example of a development plan.

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