

V4V Good Practice Case Studies: Suomen Latu - the Outdoor Association of Finland

Sport / Activity: Outdoor adventurous activities

Country: Finland



Which of the four pillars does the example cover?

- Volunteer strategy and planning
- Volunteer recruitment and deployment
- Volunteer management and retention
- Volunteer development and training

Focus of volunteer intervention: Online training and workshops

Objective(s):

Suomen Latu is the national umbrella organisation for outdoor activities in Finland whose aim is to make outdoor activities a hobby for all. They have 184 local associations representing multiple sports including skiing, Nordic walking, winter swimming, hiking, canoeing, trail running and mountain biking. A key concern of the organisation is to ensure that there is adequate training for volunteers, as without volunteers their member associations cannot function.

Activities undertaken:

The Outdoor Association of Finland has engaged in a partnership with Sivis. Sivis is the national educational institution for organisations and organises and implements training and related materials that promote active citizenship, organisation activities, and volunteering. Through this partnership, the Outdoor Association of Finland organising a series of online training workshops for its member associations. These focused on volunteer training, association training and communication training. Each training programme included three webinars; Each of them is including three webinars: opening, halfway and closing webinars with set tasks provided between the sessions. Additional financial support for the training programme was provided by Regional Association and some local municipalities.

Challenges faced:

There have been issues with volunteers dropping out of the online training programme and not completing tasks into between the webinars. Attempts have been made to reduce this using a written contract that the volunteer is asked to sign before starting the training, but this can be hard to regulate. Furthermore, the Outdoor Association has also highlighted the value of the training to volunteers and how it will help them undertake their volunteer role more effectively.

Impact:

Online training is very cost effective and can reach a much larger number of associations and members than face-to-face courses. This ensured a much higher take-up of the webinars resulting in a greater number of volunteers and associations receiving training.

This in turn resulted in improved skills amongst volunteers and associations and meant that associations and clubs were able to increase provision of activities and attract new participants and members.

Attendees at the training also reported an increased sense of community as the webinars enabled them to make connections with volunteers from different member associations all of whom had a shared love of the outdoors.

For further information: <https://www.suomenlatu.fi/> and <https://www.ok-sivis.fi/>