

# Virtual Consulting Platform for Volunteering

**Eugen Baldas / Ulrike Berger**

**Deutscher Caritasverband / Freiwilligen-Zentrum Brandenburg**

**CEV Multi-stakeholder Symposium, Valencia, 29.4.10**

# Virtual Consulting Platform for Volunteering (ViCoVol)

## Introduction

1. What is ViCoVol?
2. Who uses ViCoVol?
3. How does ViCoVol work?
4. Combining virtual- and face-to-face consultation

## Summarising remarks

## Questions for the workshop

## Introduction

**ViCoVol was set up as the virtual part of the model project: Volunteer Service for all Ages (2005 – 2009)**

**The Caritas Consultation Platform for Volunteering is part of a virtual consulting project regarding issues as:**

- addiction of people under the influence of alcohol; pregnancy advice, debt counselling
- social advice; advice for disabled people and those with psychologic problems

# 1. What is ViCoVol?

caritas

## **Virtual Consulting Platform for Volunteering (ViCoVol) – It is there to**

- **ask questions about and around volunteering**
- **discuss volunteer issues in a chatroom**
- **It is a platform to get/exchange ideas for volunteer activities**

**The internet access is: [www.beratung-caritas.de](http://www.beratung-caritas.de)**

**or: [www.caritas.de](http://www.caritas.de)**

---

Not sehen und handeln.  
C a r i t a s



# 1. What is ViCoVol?

caritas

## **Virtual Consulting Platform for Volunteering (ViCoVol) - Examples**

- **Questions: What about insurances while volunteering?**
- **Chat: Reimbursement of expenses – how much?**
- **Looking for activities: Volunteering with migrants.**
- **Giving offers: Offering a trainee working**

## 2. Who uses ViCoVol?

caritas

### **Virtual Consulting platform for Volunteering (ViCoVol) - Who uses ViCoVol? People ...**

- **who are already volunteers and have questions on their volunteer activity and want to consult an objective person**
- **who are looking for volunteer activities late in the evening or during the weekend, when the volunteer centre is closed**
- **who are interested in volunteering but have no volunteer centre in the neighbourhood or at short distance**

## 2. Who uses ViCoVol?

caritas

### Short insight

**ViCoVol has had experiences for about two years;  
Online-service for international volunteering since 2003**

- **Young people ask for different types : EVS, FSJ,**
- **People before retirement ask for possibilities**
- **People from 14 to 75 years ask**
- **There are between 10 and 40 questions weekly;**
- **People look for volunteer activities, also overseas**

# 3. How does ViCoVol work?

caritas

## Virtual Consulting Platform for Volunteering (VoCoVol) How does it work?

- **Easy access for people to a safe virtual consulting:  
coded domain**
- **Offering email and chat-consultation:  
replies within 48 hours on working days**
- **Expert platform exclusively for the consulting team:  
volunteers and staff work together in the team**

# 3. How does ViCoVol work?

caritas

## **Virtual Consulting platform for Volunteering (VoCoVol) How does it work? - Structure**

- **24 local participants all over Germany – 15 of them are located in Volunteer Centres**
- **8 People – 4 staff and 4 volunteers in the consulting team**
- **the consulting team receives training and have two annual real meetings and a monthly virtual meeting**
- **the ViCoVol manager of the staff team of Caritas Germany, based in Freiburg, works together with the volunteer centres**

# 3. How does ViCoVol work?

**Experience in different Volunteer Centres shows:**

- **creating an pleasant online-consulting setting:**
  - **answering as fast as possible (but replies within 48 hours not always feasible), explaining delays to the users**
  - **using appropriate language according to the user**
  - **respecting the user´s needs**
  - **not in any case: face-to-face-consulting afterwards wanted**
- **a good virtual-consulting creates confidence**

# 4. Combining virtual and face-to-face Consulting

caritas

**How do virtual consulting and face-to-face consulting come together?**

- **Virtual-Consulting is preparation for face-to-face-Consulting**
- **offering option for face-to-face-consulting for an adequate settlement**
- **overcomes inhibitions concerning face-to-face-consulting**

*f. ex.: user receiving disability pension inquires repeatedly information about volunteering and finally asks for an appointment*

# 4. Combining Virtual and face-to-face Consulting

caritas

## What does it mean for the Volunteer Centre?

- **fear of some Volunteer Centres that virtual-consulting could substitute face-to-face-consulting**
- **others consider it as an additional instrument to the „traditional“ ones and combine it with further new media**  
*f. ex.: Caritas Berlin publishes volunteer activities and a video about volunteering on the homepage*
- **changes attitude concerning consulting:**  
**What means successful consulting?**

## Summarising remarks

- **Easy access and 24 hour service for volunteers**
- **Answers for various questions in volunteering**
- **Also answers for full time volunteer overseas services**
- **Competent consulting team**
- **Links between Volunteer Centers and virtual platform**
- **Virtual consulting should be part of a Volunteer Center**

## Questions for the workshop

- 1. Are there other examples/further experiences with the method “virtual consulting on volunteering and commitment” in your country?
- 2. What do you think about linking online-consultation and face-to-face consultation in Volunteer Centres?
- 3. How about creating an international chat room on volunteer issues and using the method “platform in volunteer questions” for CEV-members or others?

# Virtual Consulting Platform for Volunteering

caritas

**For further information:**

[www.caritas.de](http://www.caritas.de)

[www.beratung-caritas.de](http://www.beratung-caritas.de)

[www. caritas-berlin.de](http://www.caritas-berlin.de)

**Thank you for your attention!**

---

Not sehen und handeln.  
C a r i t a s

