

## Danish festival requires the deposit of volunteers



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A Danish music festival - Northside Festivals in Aarhus - has introduced rules where volunteers have to pay a deposit fee when they join, they may also require a penalty of several thousand kroner. This is very problematic for the view of what ideal commitment is, the Forum means in a comment.

The Forum considers that Northside Festivals decision on deposit and punishment demonstrates an approach whereby the organizer practically sees volunteers as their employees and where an effect of decisions may be that people with less financial frameworks may withdraw from the non-profit engagement.

We realize that there are certainly problems with volunteers who do not show up to their assignments and that, of course, errors can be committed. But the way to handle this should not be deposits and penalties but instead collaborate with local idea-based organizations that can recruit volunteers and provide ongoing skills development.

That music festivals use volunteers to carry out their arrangements is common and something that has been happening for a long time. This is of course usually good. Through a volunteering feature, people get a chance to experience and contribute to something they appreciate, music and folklore. The volunteers work also enables festival organizers to keep their costs down, which can keep ticket prices down and the experience can be made available to more people.

But there are of course also risks that festivals use volunteers. One risk is that the organizers overuse volunteers' efforts and replace paid services, where they were important, with volunteers. Volunteer groups can then become too heavy, the needs to meet may also require higher skills than can be expected by a volunteer. The voluntary group deduction becomes too heavy and similar to regular employment, but without pay and other benefits that come with employment. This boundary between employee and volunteer also seems unclear in the Danish festival.

In order to avoid a development where the volunteer / non-profit person is overused in the individual case and where ideal involvement in a social perspective becomes a way to dump wages and increase profits, the CEV, where the Forum is a member, has developed a relevant approach:

- Volunteer troops are basically for public purposes
- It is preferable that volunteers at music festivals are engaged through an idea-based organization
- Avoid job substitution in all modes
- Treat the volunteer with respect
- The organizer will ensure that people with different financial conditions can be volunteers

In the case of the Northside Festival in Aarhus, Denmark, it is important for us to recall CEV's approach, especially when Aarhus has been chosen as the year's capital of the year 2018.

You can read the original article in Swedish [here](#).