FAWCO Region 4 Meeting

November 7-9

The Hague, The Netherlands

**Lift Up: Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers**

Mary Adams, facilitator

**Description:** Fish bowl session. Two chairs facing each other in the middle of a circle with the remaining chairs in a circle to form the fish bowl.. Two "volunteers" will start a conversation about volunteerism in their clubs, after the facilitator asks a leading question. The group listens. When someone wants to make a comment, they tap one of the speakers on the shoulder and take their place to continue the conversation.

**Introduction:** The session began with a fast review of the ***Seven Deadly Sins of Recruiting Volunteers*** by Thomas W. McKee.

**Summary:**

1. *(Sin) Expect an announcement to get volunteers.* AWC The Hague has had success with general published announcements followed up by personal email to targeted individuals. Understanding the interests of volunteers is important to get a good match. What are the natural talents or interests in your club? AWC Amsterdam reviews their database to find good matches. Discussion included:
   * The personal touch (email or face-to-face) always conveys more energy and interest in a member to volunteer.
2. *(Sin) Go it Alone.* Munich IWC forms teams or committees to work together to breakdown volunteer events and activities into bite-sized chunks. With a JOIN IN attitude. Teams consist of 3 -7 people. Regular Board meetings based on activities can last 2 hours facilitated by an agenda. Discussion included:
   * Teams can be a mixture of new and long-term members that can develop mentor/assistant relationships.
   * Teams can watch interactions and evaluate good work performances.
3. *(Sin) Recruit for lifetime.*  Short-term positions are better options for volunteers. In this way, successful events can build confidence, create new friendships through teamwork, and encourage members to keep volunteering. Discussion included:
   * Sustaining volunteers can be through “re-upping” of the same person or asking a volunteer leaving a position to back-fill or nominate their own replacement.
4. *(Sin) No means never.* AWC The Hague had two members who want to be more involved with the club, but other duties (job and small children) keep them from volunteering. Their message was “No, not now… but keep asking! Don’t forget me. I want to be a part of the club even though I can not be active now.”
5. *(Sin) Fall in the BIC trap.* Ask yourself, is an empty chair better than one filled by the wrong person? AAWE Paris shared a story about a member who was not suited to a position. The group discussed how to correct a mismatch:

* As yourself, is this a critical position?
* A team approach can help with mentoring a member to understand and fulfill the volunteer duties. AWC Amsterdam uses volunteer descriptions to ensure volunteers understand their role.
* Consider a Vice Chair or Volunteer Coordinator position, that enables volunteers to ask for coaching, voice new ideas or act as ombudsman in conflict resolution.
* Don’t force it!

1. *(Sin) Be people-driven and not position-driven.* For effective volunteer work, ensure that clear role descriptions are provided with exactly what you want the volunteers to do. Discussion included:
   * Be open to volunteers’ creativity to enhance existing positions.
   * Be open to deleting or adding new events/activities based on new interests from members in your club.
2. *(Sin) What’s in a name?* Developing a fancy name that sounds official can intimidate or confuse volunteers. Be specific – don’t give the position the wrong title that will draw members with the wrong type of skills or personalities to volunteer.