



**SCHOOL for  
THINKTANKERS**

On Think Tanks



# Governance and Management of Volunteer-Based Organisations

Lukas Hupfer & Maria Isabelle Wieser



# Introduction

That's us!



Lukas Hupfer, Director  
Before: Head of Regional Group Bern



Maria Isabelle Wieser, Deputy  
Director - Head of Romandie &  
Think Tank Hub  
Before: Head of Regional Group Lucerne  
& Head of Thematic Group Gender

# foraus - A «Grassroots» Volunteer-Based Model

## **Why a particular session on volunteers?**

- Lessons learned from volunteers → similar challenges & opportunities
- Public Engagement

## **Today's programme**

## **Assignment**

You will hear some questions about your own engagement. Keep your camera on if the statement applies to you, switch it off if it doesn't.

**Camera on = YES**

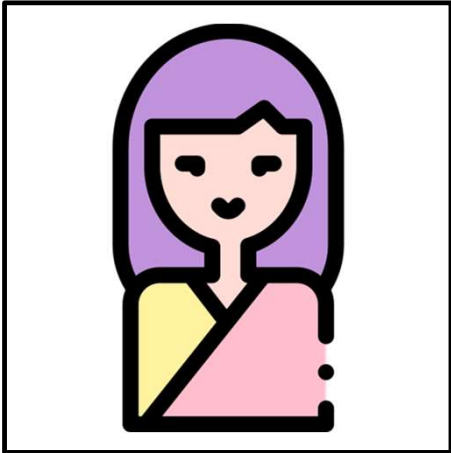
**Camera off = NO**

## foraus - A «Grassroots» Volunteer-Based Model

### **Assignment**

What is the persona of a volunteer?

→ We will split you in groups of 4. Discuss how you would describe a typical volunteer.



**Name:** Rosalia **Role:** Co-Lead of foraus-Programme on Europe

### Behaviours

Career focus and ambitious  
She goes running every morning  
Very consistent and strict  
She likes statuses and titles

### Facts & Demographics

27  
Swiss  
Manages the foraus-programme on Europe with 15  
volunteers  
Hates zoom

### Needs & Goals

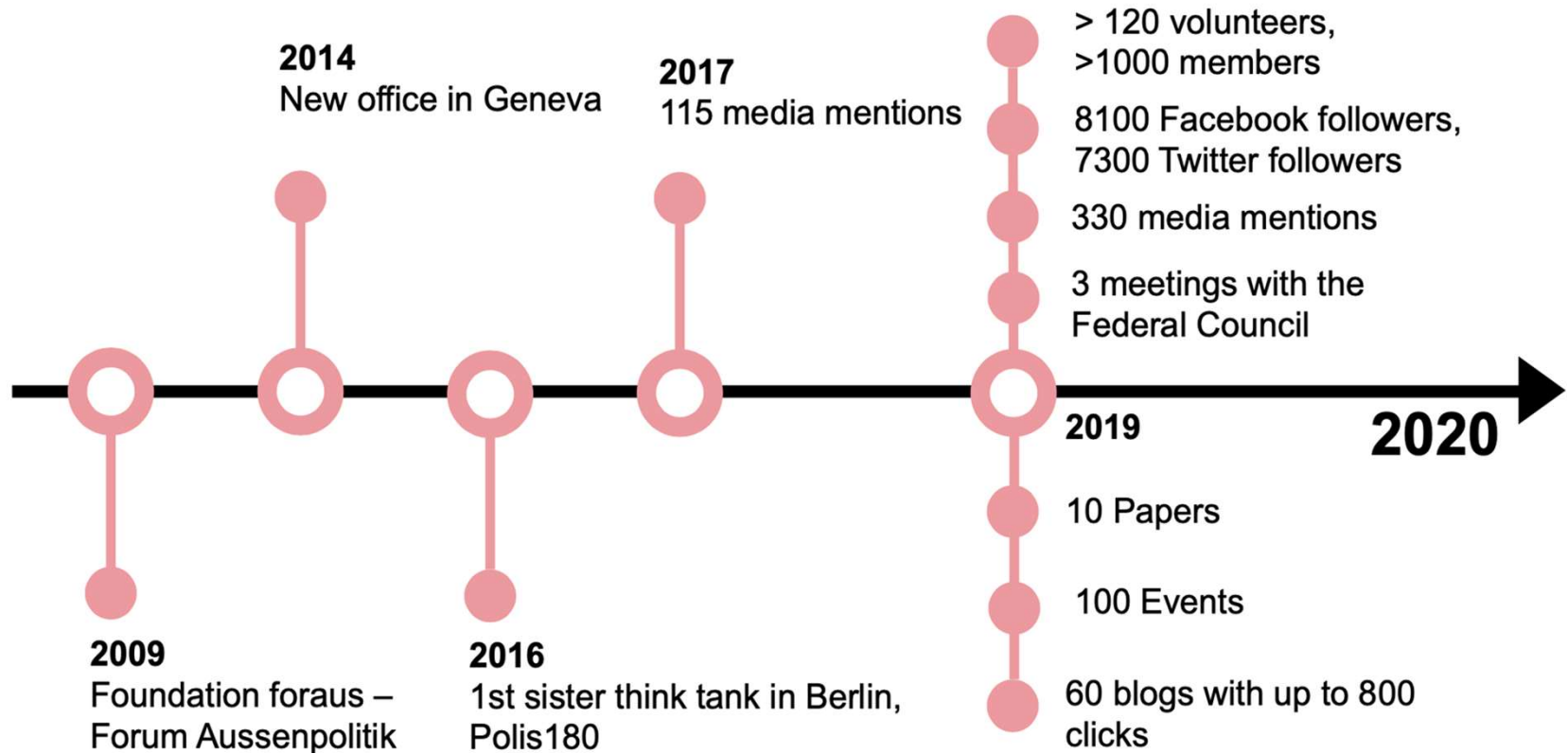
Under pressure due to her PhD at the University of  
Zurich  
Get visibility within the organization and reach out to a  
lot of people.  
Engage people without being a pain for them  
Sign-up for the diplomatic exam at the Swiss Foreign  
Ministry



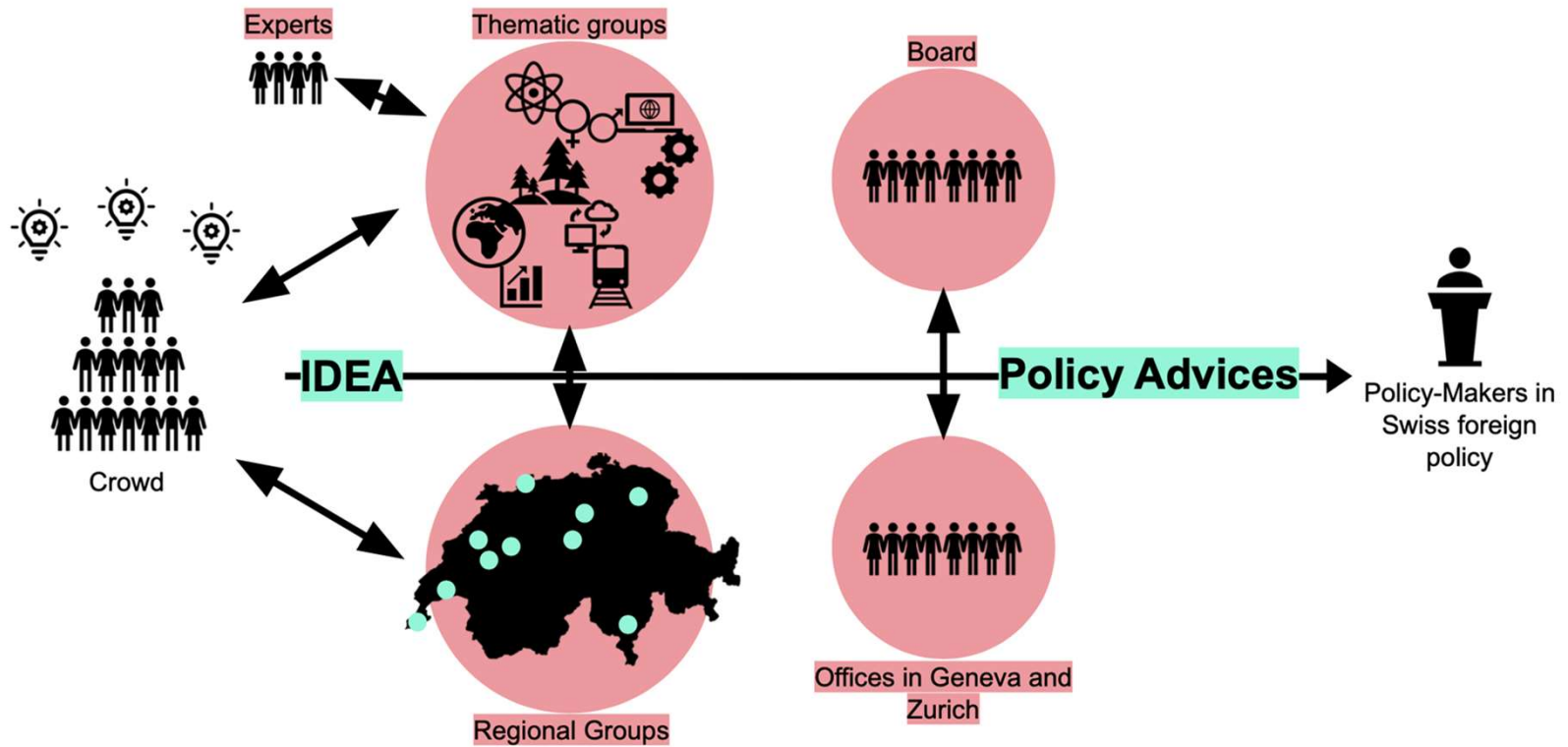


foraus - the Swiss Think  
Tank on Foreign Policy

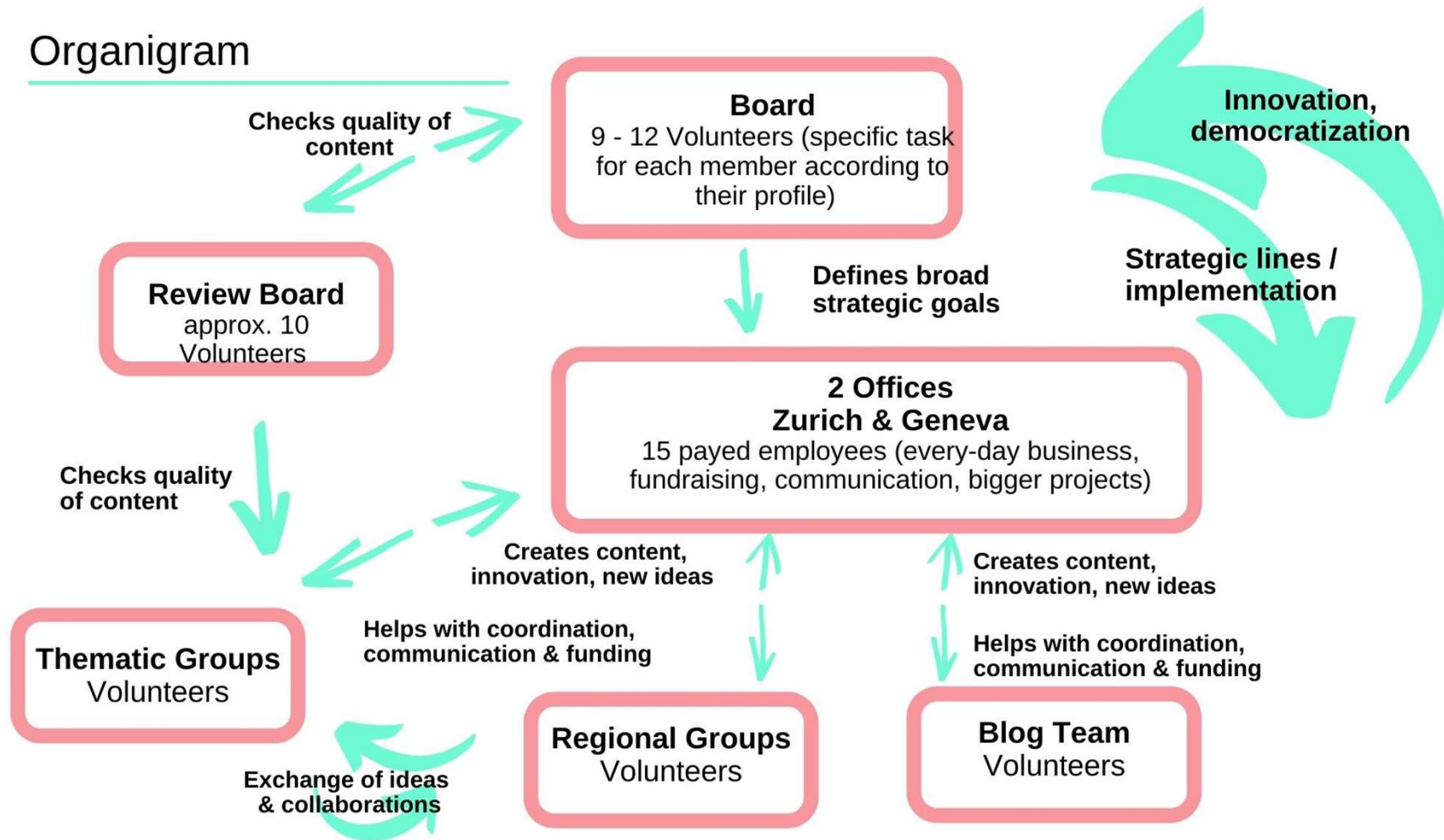
# The story in numbers



# The foraus model



# Organigram





Opportunities

**In your opinion, what are the chances and opportunities of a volunteer-based organisation?**

# Governance

- 1) Who takes the decisions?
  - a) Flat hierarchy
  - b) Democratic decision-shaping and making process
- 2) Where do the ideas for content and agenda-setting come from?
  - a) Diversity in content
  - b) Creativity
  - c) Recognising emerging topics
- 3) How can we create impact?
  - a) Spread the ideas through a big network → local impact & size and reach of network
  - b) Young talents → they stay faithful to the organisation throughout their career
  - c) Voice of civil society

# Management

- 1) What are the advantages of a volunteer-based network for managing such an organisation?
  - a) «Young» & agile team → ideas, flexibility, open to new ways of work/innovation
  - b) Ressources! Volunteers organising lots of activities, bringing in broad network of expertise (content & skills)
  - c) Entry-point for young people → easily accessible and possibility to develop within the system





# Challenges

# Governance: Top-down “versus” Bottom-up

- 1) Who defines the vision and the strategy?
  - a) Method: volunteers part of the process
  - b) Content: common understanding, values and identity?
  - c) What if you don't agree?
  
- 1) How much self-organization by volunteers?
  - a) Legal status of sub-groups
  - b) Budget
  - c) Corporate identity: titles, communications etc.
  
- 1) How much “professionalism”?

## Management: How much “Professionalism”?

- 1) Professionals “versus” volunteers
  - a) different speeds, different expectations, different skills
  - b) Who manages?
  
- 1) Quality control and knowledge management
  
- 1) Profil of volunteers
  - a) What kind of volunteer profile(s)?

# Tools for Voluntary- and Public Engagement

## 1) Community and Engagement Manager

- a) Go to person, Regular check-ins
- b) Information management
- c) Professional recruitments and Coachings

## 1) Monitoring Mechanisms

- a) Review Board
- b) Impact Measurement

## 1) Platforms

- a) Physical meetings: retreats, workshops
- b) Policy Kitchen

# Concrete Tool: [www.policykitchen.com](http://www.policykitchen.com)

## Challenges

The screenshot shows a challenge page with the following details:

- Challenge:** Publication and Impact | 30 Sep - 31 Dec 2020
- Title:** What should a feminist foreign policy look like in the 2020s?
- Stats:** 89 ideas, 184 participants, 6 phases.
- Phases:**
  - Ideation (6 Mar - 15 May)
  - Refinement (18 Jun - 21 Jun)
  - Writing the publication (22 Jun - 31 Jul)
  - Review (1 Aug - 31 Aug)
- Idea Stream:**
  - IDEA:** Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Section write-up following 2.0 group discussion. Includes a 'Vote' button.
  - IDEA:** Change Mobility Infrastructure in Cities. One measure to fight climate change could be to tackle gendered mobility issues which currently hinder a wide use of public transport in... Includes a 'Vote' button.
  - IDEA:** Weapons Sales and Feminist Foreign Policy.

## Groups

The screenshot shows a group page with the following details:

- Group:** Global Health (Public group)
- Stats:** 35 members, 0 events, 2 topics.
- Actions:** UNFOLLOW (on challenge page), JOINED (on group page), Add image, Public, Post.
- Stream:**
  - Upcoming events in the group: No upcoming events in this group.
  - All upcoming events.
  - Newest topics in the group.
  - DISCUSSION:** Multilateralism and global health in times of Covid-19. 2 Sep 2020 · Moritz Fegert. Includes a 'Read more' link.

# Concrete Tool: [www.policykitchen.com](http://www.policykitchen.com)

## Collaborative Text

Summary \*

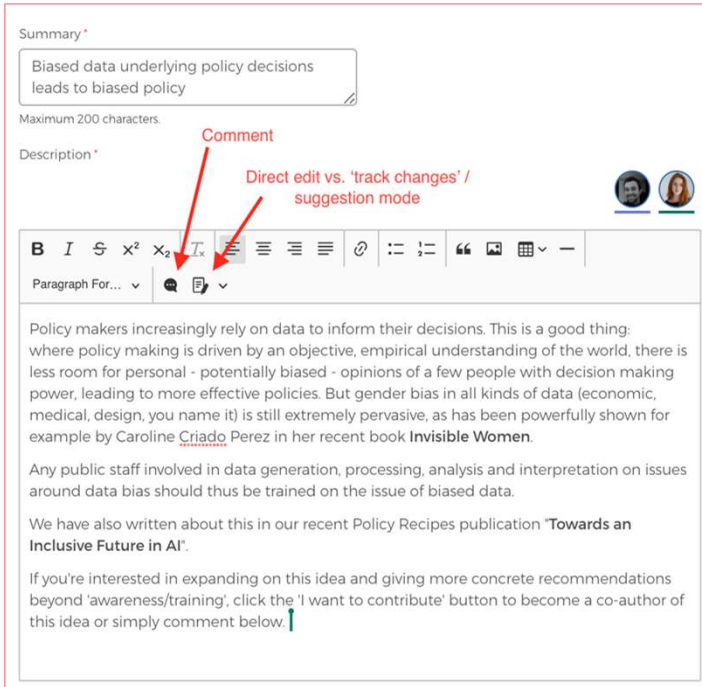
Biased data underlying policy decisions leads to biased policy

Maximum 200 characters.

Description \*

**Comment**

**Direct edit vs. 'track changes' / suggestion mode**




Policy makers increasingly rely on data to inform their decisions. This is a good thing: where policy making is driven by an objective, empirical understanding of the world, there is less room for personal - potentially biased - opinions of a few people with decision making power, leading to more effective policies. But gender bias in all kinds of data (economic, medical, design, you name it) is still extremely pervasive, as has been powerfully shown for example by Caroline Criado Perez in her recent book *Invisible Women*.

Any public staff involved in data generation, processing, analysis and interpretation on issues around data bias should thus be trained on the issue of biased data.

We have also written about this in our recent Policy Recipes publication "**Towards an Inclusive Future in AI**".

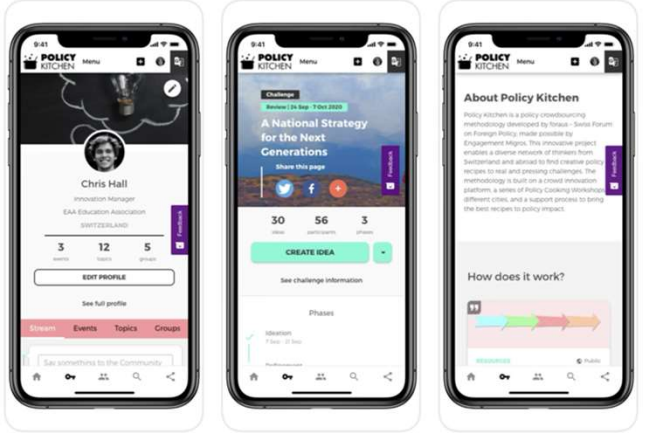
If you're interested in expanding on this idea and giving more concrete recommendations beyond 'awareness/training', click the 'I want to contribute' button to become a co-author of this idea or simply comment below.

## App



**Policy Kitchen**  
Soziale Netze

**ÖFFNEN**



# **COVID-19: A Challenge for Volunteering and Volunteer-Based Organizations?**

# Sources

## Websites

- [www.foraus.ch](http://www.foraus.ch)
- [www.policykitchen.com](http://www.policykitchen.com)
- [www.openthinktank.org](http://www.openthinktank.org)
- [www.thinktankhubgeneva.org](http://www.thinktankhubgeneva.org)

## Articles

- Lukas Hupfer, [Collective intelligence: Is the grassroots think tank model only possible in Switzerland?](#) (Presentation at the OTT Conference 2019, also on OTT-TV)
- Lukas Hupfer, Empowering the Public (OTT Annual Review 2018)





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