# VOLUNTEERS FROM GERMANY AT THE VIKOS-AOOS GEOPARK, APRIL 2021

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The Vikos-Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark welcomed two volunteers from Germany, Friedrich Krentz (19) and Fabian Lübken (25), in the framework of new cooperation between the Greek and German National Commissions for UNESCO. This cooperation gives the opportunity for the five Greek UNESCO Global Geoparks to host young people from Germany for a six-month volunteering service. The volunteering service is provided by the partner organization “kulturweit”.

The main objective of the program is for young people to join the Greek UNESCO Global Geoparks and to participate in various activities in order to acquire specialized knowledge, skills, and work experience. It highlights the natural and cultural heritage of the region and the geoparks and helps to understand their operation and how they are managed. The volunteers’ basic expenses are covered by German National UNESCO Commission.

The Vikos-Aoos Geopark welcomed the two volunteers in March 2021. After attending introduction courses on geomorphology, geology, and the natural environment in general and the particular cultural elements of the Vikos-Aoos Geopark, the two volunteers started their volunteering service, which is divided into office work and field work. Furthermore, they offer valuable assistance in translating geopark promotional texts and communication material into the German language and in promoting the geopark through social networks.

Interesting is their personal view of the particular characteristics of the geopark. While in the context of their

obligations, including the preparation of small projects on issues of the park and the preparation of small projects on the geopark, they contributed to the operation of information centres, promoting the geopark in central events (e.g., Zagori Mountain Running), support projects with Germany (e.g., Erasmus+ program between high school in Konitsa and the Gymnasium in Bad Berleburg) and much more.

The Vikos-Aoos Geopark seeks to host youth internship programs, contributing significantly to the training of young scientists, geopark-related professionals, and geo-explorers. The reception and integration of young people from the geopark further lead to the creation of a network of young people who, after completing their internship or volunteering service, will be ambassadors of the Vikos-Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark worldwide.