

6 things organisations should know about young volunteers

Young people aren't turning away from volunteering - they're looking for opportunities that fit their lives, values and interests.

Here's what organisations need to know.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?

Young people volunteer for many of the same reasons everyone else does, to:

- make a difference
- meet people and feel connected
- learn new skills
- gain experience
- support causes they care about
- build confidence

The biggest drawcard? Knowing their contribution matters.

WHY IS IT HARDER TO ATTRACT YOUNG VOLUNTEERS?

Many young people are juggling study, work, sport, family commitments and rising living costs. Volunteer roles that require fixed weekly hours or long-term commitments can be difficult to fit into busy schedules.

Offering flexibility can make a huge difference.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

Young people are often attracted to:

- events and one-off opportunities
- project-based roles
- creative and digital volunteering
- environmental and community projects
- peer-led initiatives
- opportunities to learn and lead

They also want a chance to contribute ideas, not just follow instructions.

WHAT STOPS YOUNG PEOPLE FROM GETTING INVOLVED?

Some of the most common barriers include:

- transport challenges
- lack of time
- financial pressures
- complex application processes
- limited awareness of opportunities
- feeling unsure or out of place

Sometimes small changes, like clearer role descriptions or a faster response to enquiries, can make volunteering far more accessible.

HOW CAN WE BE MORE YOUTH-FRIENDLY?

- Flexible commitment options
- Clear and simple communication
- Online sign-ups and applications
- Welcoming and inclusive environments
- Opportunities for young people to lead
- Asking young volunteers for input and feedback

Young people are more likely to stay involved when they feel heard, trusted and valued.

HOW DO WE KEEP YOUNG VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED?

Retention improves when volunteers:

- Feel connected to the organisation
- Can see the impact of their work
- Develop new skills
- Build friendships
- Receive recognition and encouragement

A simple thank you, regular check-ins, and opportunities to grow can go a long way.

DID YOU KNOW?

Volunteering can support young people's confidence, wellbeing, sense of purpose and connection to their community – while helping organisations build stronger, more diverse volunteer teams.

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**Esperance Volunteer
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